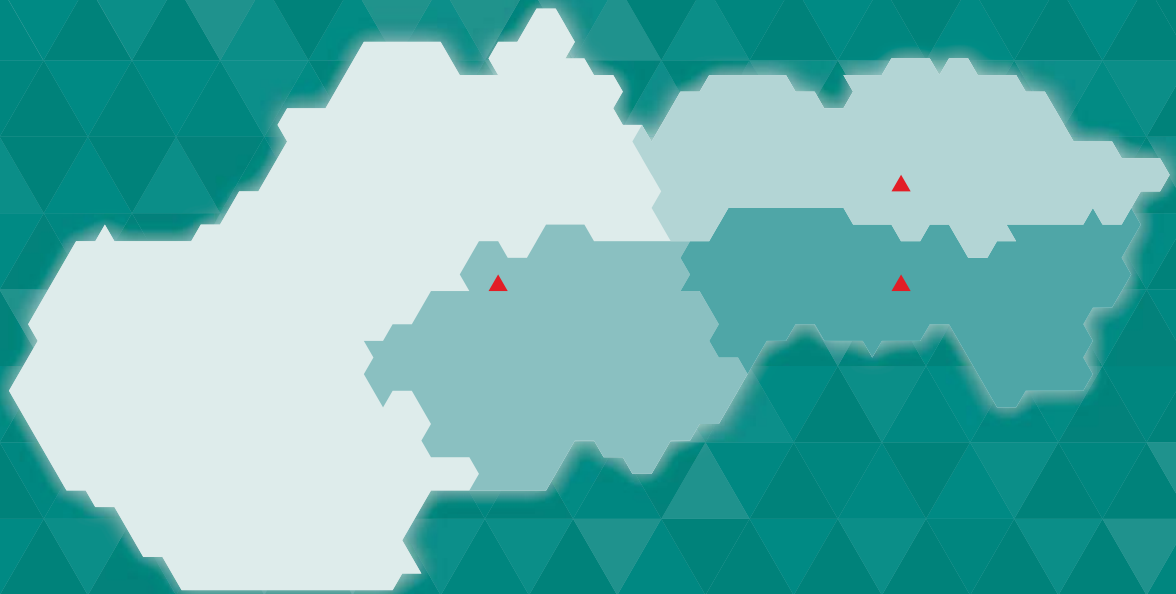


SLOVAKIA CATCHING-UP REGIONS 5

SUPPORTING THE INCLUSION
AGENDA IN SECONDARY EDUCATION
IN THE BANSKÁ BYSTRICA, KOŠICE,
AND PREŠOV SELF-GOVERNING
REGIONS



PREŠOV
SELF-GOVERNING
REGION



KOŠICE
SELF-GOVERNING
REGION



BANSKÁ BYSTRICA
SELF-GOVERNING REGION



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MINISTRY
OF INVESTMENTS, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BBSK	Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region
CC	Community Center
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CuRI	Catching-up Regions Initiative
CVTI	Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information
DES	Dual Education System
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECTHR	European Court of Human Rights
ETF	European Training Foundation
EQAVET	European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET
EU	European Union
IIP	Integrated Investment Package
KSK	Košice Self-Governing Region
LSVE	Lower Secondary Vocational Education
MIRDI	Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the SR
MNA	Material Need Assistance
MRC	Marginalized Roma Communities
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NP	National Project
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLSAF	Office(s) of Labor, Social Affairs and Family
OP	Operational Program
PSK	Prešov Self-Governing Region
SCCI	Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry
SST	School Support Team
SVS	Secondary Vocational School(s)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VET	Vocational Education and Training
WB	World Bank

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents an overview of the SK CuRI component for year 5 of the program, which addresses inclusion in secondary vocational education (VET) across the regions of Prešov, Banská Bystrica, and Košice. The component focused on enhancing the quality and inclusivity of VET, with specific attention to marginalized Roma communities (MRC). A range of methods was used to identify challenges and propose potential solutions related to inclusion.

The report examined the challenges of inclusion in Slovakia and outlined steps intended for integration into national and regional long-term strategies. It emphasised the necessity of stakeholder collaboration and a data-driven policymaking approach to support an inclusive educational system. The methodologies applied and recommendations provided serve as a basis for future policy development toward a more inclusive educational environment.

Several activities were implemented, beginning with information gathering and culminating in suggested policy and program adjustments.

- Structured surveys involved students, schools, and employers to collect information on challenges and opportunities within VET. These data underpinned targeted interventions and policy suggestions.
- Stakeholder engagement included schools, employers, local governments, and NGOs consultation sessions were held to explore approaches for supporting disadvantaged students.
- Workshops, study visits, and focus group meetings facilitated dialogue for strategy development and the incorporation of practices from other countries.
- Various programs were developed to address inclusion in education and training, such as establishing training centers that provide students with practical skills in dual education formats, supported by mentoring and counselling services, with attention to students from MRC backgrounds.
- Pilot programs were initiated in selected schools to address proposed changes.
- Support was given to regional proposals seeking EU funding focused on inclusion.

Overarching challenges

- **Early School Leaving:** Elevated rates of early school leaving among MRC students present a significant barrier to educational attainment and employment prospects. Influencing factors include limited attractiveness of VET programs, language barriers, and restricted access to support services.
- **Inclusion Strategies:** Many schools lack extensive inclusion strategies, necessary for addressing diverse student needs. Limited cooperation with stakeholders, including NGOs and employers, constrains the implementation of inclusive environments.
- **Labor Market Mismatch:** Discrepancies persist between the competencies provided by VET programs and those demanded by the labor market, impacting graduates' employability.

Students' perspective

- **Program Selection:** A survey of 936 students indicated that those in less advanced F programs frequently chose their institutions based on family or social recommendations, while students in H programs prioritised program choice for educational strategy.
- **Employer-Based Training:** Lower interest in employer-based training was noted among Romani-speaking students, correlated with household unemployment and perceived discrimination, suggesting the need for targeted engagement strategies.

- Support Needs: Students across all programs requested more financial support (scholarships, internships), improved facilities, and enhanced educational assistance, such as tutoring.

Schools' perspective

- Surveys revealed that systemic inclusion strategies are often absent. Insufficient cooperation with NGOs and employers limits the effective implementation of support measures.
- Schools reported challenges in engaging parents and motivating students, both important for creating supportive educational settings.

Employer perspectives

- Employers identified a need for streamlined administrative procedures in dual education to facilitate student workforce integration.
- Calls were made for more flexible regulations concerning youth employment, enabling better alignment with educational participation.
- Interest was expressed in training center models to help MRC students develop soft skills for employability.

Regarding legal frameworks, the report noted the importance of adherence to Slovakia's obligations under international and EU law to enable equitable access to education and prevent segregation, which is considered essential for promoting inclusivity and equality in education.

Recommendations addressed schools, parents, employers, and other stakeholders in several areas:

- Improving school choice through strengthened collaboration between primary and secondary institutions, improved career guidance, and development of VET programs aligned with labor market requirements.
- Increasing student motivation by introducing scholarship programs, mentoring, and accessible tutoring services.
- Strengthening the educational ecosystem via cooperation among schools, employers, local authorities, and NGOs; developing training centers; simplifying the dual education system; and encouraging diversified funding sources for sustainability.
- Applying evidence-based interventions and impact evaluations to inform policy, with improvements suggested for data collection, pilot design, and analysis. The creation of a comprehensive inclusion assessment system was also recommended.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE CATCHING-UP REGIONS INITIATIVE 5

This report is the outcome of the Slovak Republic's Catching-up Regions Initiative (CuRI), a joint program of the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy of the European Commission (EC – DG REGIO) and the World Bank. The report focuses on three regions in the Slovak Republic involved in the initiative – the Prešov, Banská Bystrica, and Košice self-governing regions. CuRI is being implemented through the cooperation of the following partners: the European Commission, the Ministry of Investments, Regional Development and Informatization of the Slovak Republic (MIRDI), the Prešov Self-Governing Region, the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region, the Košice Self-Governing Region, and the World Bank.

The goal of CuRI is to identify and address the development challenges faced by so-called “low-income regions”. These regions are primarily located on the eastern periphery of the European Union, where regional GDP per capita, despite slow growth over the long term, remains at less than 50% of the EU average. Low-income regions face two key challenges: 1) ensuring the long-term sustainability of growth, and 2) eliminating the risk of development patterns typical of regions with low growth rates.

The stated goal is being pursued through individual CuRI components specific to each region, which the partners have jointly identified and defined. The Vocational Education and Training (VET) component, which is also the subject of this report, is the only component being implemented in all three participating regions.

The recommendations of the World Bank team in this summary report are therefore focused on creating the conditions for the development of comprehensive and functional vocational education and training systems at the regional level as part of lifelong learning, proposing investments in high-quality and attractive learning environments for students of secondary vocational schools (SVS), and supporting the flexibility of the education system. In the fifth year of the initiative, the recommendations and solutions specifically address the inclusion of students from marginalized Roma communities (MRC).

1.2. OVERVIEW: THE CURI COMPONENT OF INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

Maintaining Slovakia's competitiveness requires the implementation of strategic interventions in inclusive VET in response to labor market trends and the decline in the working-age population in Slovakia.

The World Bank team is convinced that the outcomes of CuRI and the proposed solutions will contribute to the essential changes needed to make the Slovak VET system higher quality, more flexible, and more inclusive.

Significant social changes and reforms have necessitated a gradual shift to new operational models. However, the system faces several new challenges, requiring the creation of new school ecosystems, changes in the relationships between schools and stakeholders, evidence-based decision-making, a stronger focus on outcomes, and long-term impact.

The implementation of the fifth phase of CuRI took place during a period when school founders were undergoing the process of optimizing the network of secondary schools, gradually implementing a wide range of national projects at both national and regional levels, impacting the content and form of VET. This included the implementation of new investments in selected schools, prepared in consultation with the relevant ministries and coordinated with MIRDI as joint outputs of the CuRI regions and the World Bank’s technical assistance.

As part of Programme Slovakia, all calls for funding integrated investment packages designed and approved during CuRI IV were announced in 2024. A significant added value is the ability to make funding decisions for priority investment projects at the regional level, significantly reducing the approval time for SVS investments and enabling their implementation as early as in 2024.

BOX 1.1. What is being prepared

At the national level, the implementation of the curricular reform continues, alongside preparations for the next phase of optimizing the network of secondary schools, supporting investments in digitalization, and promoting inclusion. At the EU level, initiatives and programs within the European Education Area¹ will continue, aiming to achieve the following:

By 2025

- at least 60% of recent graduates from VET should benefit from exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training,
- at least 47% of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months.

By 2030

- less than 15% of 15-year-olds should be low-achievers in reading, mathematics and science,
- less than 15% of eight-graders should be low-achievers in computer and information literacy,
- less than 9% of pupils should leave education and training early,
- at least 45% of 25–34-year-olds should have a higher education qualification.

Source: Authors, 2025.

As part of the CuRI component “Support for Inclusion in Secondary Education in the Banská Bystrica, Košice, and Prešov Regions”, joint activities were implemented in all three regions, along with region-specific activities – see their overview in the following table.

TABLE 1.1. Overview of joint and region-specific component activities by region

Activity/region	Prešov region	Banská Bystrica region	Košice region
Joint activity 1	Thematic survey focused on inclusion in VET and proposal of recommendations	Thematic survey focused on inclusion in VET and proposal of recommendations	Thematic survey focused on inclusion in VET and proposal of recommendations
Joint activity 2	Webinars focused on sharing experiences and best practices	Webinars focused on sharing experiences and best practices, proposals for legislative changes	Webinars focused on sharing experiences and best practices, preparation of new investment proposals
Joint activity 3	Regular monitoring and evaluation of IIP/IP implementation and provision of consultations for 14 pilot schools	Regular monitoring and evaluation of IIP/IP implementation and provision of consultations for 13 pilot schools	Regular monitoring of IIP/IP implementation preparation for 8 pilot schools and shared infrastructure of SVS
Region-specific activity 1		TAIEX study visit	Consultations on the Košice-Šaca Campus concept
Region-specific activity 2			Consultations on the establishment of a pilot training center

Source: Authors, 2024.

1.3. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC IN 2024

Continuing education reform

Slovak secondary education is under pressure from negative demographic trends. Over the past 30 years, the number of young people of secondary school age has decreased from 362,000 to 215,000. Accordingly, the number of students in secondary schools (particularly in grammar schools and SVS) has also declined. At the beginning of the 2023/2024 school year, out of these 215,236 children aged 15 to 18, as many as 212,811 were secondary school students. According to last year's analysis by the Slovak Centre of Scientific and Technical Information (CVTI), although the number of teenagers has been growing since 2019, no significant generational wave is expected in secondary education. In 2025, the youth population aged 15 to 18 is projected to reach approximately 227,600. The network of secondary schools has been slow to adapt to this demographic trend.

TABLE 1.2. Development of secondary education from 1994 to 2024

Indicator	School Year 1993/1994	School Year 2023/2024	Change in %	Notes
Total number of secondary schools	895	665	-25.7	The distribution of secondary schools is regionally uneven; the number of grammar schools, including secondary sports schools, has increased by one-third, while the number of SVS, including conservatories, has almost halved.
Total number of secondary school students	342,833	212,811	-37.93	The decline in SVS enrolment was more significant (50%), while the number of students in grammar schools increased, reflecting the growth in the number of grammar schools.
Average number of students per school	383	320	-16.44	The decline in SVS enrolment was slightly more pronounced than in grammar schools.
Number of secondary school teachers	26,027	20,123	-22.68	
Student-teacher ratio in secondary schools	13.17	10.58	-19.71	

Source: CVTI, authors, 2024.

At the national level, several significant changes in vocational education and training were prepared and initiated in 2024, including increased attention to inclusion and desegregation.

The “Velvet Revolution in Education”, as a set of approved legislative changes, represents dozens of practical reforms aimed at improving the quality, accessibility, and efficiency of Slovak education. The goal of these changes is to support projects for improving education in kindergartens, primary schools², and secondary schools.

The legislative package also includes a new Adult Education Act. Its goal is to make education accessible to citizens at any age, provide a second chance for those with insufficient qualifications, and create a clear set of rules for employers. The approved bill reflects current social and technological changes, including digitalization and automation.

One of the most significant changes and challenges has been the initial steps toward optimizing the network of secondary schools and preparing a curricular reform in vocational education and training, followed by changes to the legislative framework effective from January 2025. At the regional level, a key area is the optimization of the secondary school network, aimed at revitalizing the network through measures prepared in cooperation with self-governing regions and employers. The changes focus on more efficient student capacity planning, simplifying the admission process,

and streamlining administrative procedures for school mergers. The optimization of the secondary school network is part of the broader education system reform and modernization effort, with the goal of better preparing students for the new challenges in the labor market.

The optimization of the secondary school network represents a systemic, primarily organizational and managerial change in the management of vocational education and training, carried out in cooperation with school founders. The Ministry of Education has called on both public and private secondary school founders to submit their network optimization projects by the end of August 2024. The conceptual plans prepared by the self-governing regions form the most important part of this planned reform in secondary education – the first step toward achieving gradual changes not only at the level of individual schools without potential, but also at the level of schools not included in the optimization process, through the support of innovation, new curricula, and funding for the modernization of the educational environment.

The first step resulted in 67 optimization projects and a total of 89 optimization changes. These changes primarily affected the regions involved in CuRI – the Košice, Prešov, Banská Bystrica, and Žilina Self-Governing Regions. The project plans included many extensive changes to the secondary school network. Eight of the prepared optimization projects were successfully implemented as of September 1, 2024.

The Prešov Self-Governing Region has been implementing the optimization of its school network since 2019. One example is the “first secondary school campus” project in Stará Ľubovňa, which was developed based on the recommendations of World Bank experts and integrated investments in one of the pilots SVS from 2019 to 2023.

In the second step, in March 2025, school founders will submit final applications for changes to the secondary school network (an estimated 68 optimization projects) so that the network optimization can take effect from the 2025/2026 school year.

The factors that have influenced and led to the launch of the secondary school network optimization include:






- a high number of secondary schools that lack the potential for quality improvement and are not sufficiently responsive to labor market demands, with 34% of secondary school programs experiencing low demand,
- insufficient financial resources to maintain the existing network of secondary schools with fewer than 250 students; in the 2024/2025 school year, there were a total of 84 secondary schools in Slovakia with fewer than 100 students,
- a shortage of qualified teaching and professional staff, partly due to an aging population and the continuously increasing demands for their professional development,
- the need for networking among schools with different specializations and the possibility of sharing educational infrastructure, including qualified teaching and professional staff.

Self-governing regions and non-state founders that have already embarked on the path of optimization are seeing positive results and impacts (as evidenced by the results of pilot SVS supported within CuRI, as mentioned in the electronic publication attached to this report). The Ministry of Education aims to support and accelerate these necessary and effective processes at the national level.

According to the draft optimization proposal, the optimization in the Košice Self-Governing Region is expected to affect 22 schools and 3 educational institutions. The working version, which the founder discussed with school principals, school staff, and KSK representatives from individual districts, did not specify the names of the individual schools. According to the Ministry and the KSK, the result of the optimization should be secondary schools that become stronger partners for companies and universities, better preparing students for the labor market or higher education. Improving the quality of VET is also intended as a solution to several regional challenges, including brain drain and the loss of a skilled workforce.

The Prešov Self-Governing Region has also started the process of optimizing secondary schools, gradually implementing this approach since 2019, in parallel with a new method for determining the capacities of SVS. In 2019, there were a total of 75 secondary schools within the administrative scope of the Prešov Self-Governing Region, 34 of which were church-affiliated or private. In this phase, the optimization will affect 7 SVS in the districts of Bardejov, Humenné, Kežmarok, Snina, and Svidník, along with their organizational units.

At its meeting on November 28, 2024, the council of the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region approved the Regional Strategy for Education for the years 2025 to 2027. One of the strategy's key points is the plan to create secondary school campuses established by the region. As of September 1, 2025, the region plans to merge 29 schools into 13 campus-joint schools. Currently, there are 57 secondary schools, which will be reduced to 41 after the change. The initial proposal was repeatedly discussed in meetings with the principals of the affected schools, regional council members representing individual districts, and, when necessary, with regional employers, from September to November 2024. Among the most significant positive changes expected from the optimization of the secondary school network are:

-  Alignment of secondary school programs and education with labor market needs
-  Overall improvement in the quality and strengthening of the position of secondary schools
-  Development and emphasis on non-formal and lifelong learning
-  Development and emphasis on non-formal and lifelong learning
-  Stronger partnerships with companies and universities, facilitating smoother transitions for secondary school graduates

Change is necessary. As many as 34% of secondary school programs face a lack of student interest, with an average of only 300 students per school. Moreover, 59% of programs are attended by just 2% of all students. The goal of the optimization is not just to save money, but to make funding more efficient, improve the quality of education, and create space for further infrastructure development in SVS. The shared objective is a 21st-century secondary education system – strong, modern, and ready for the challenges of the future.

Other planned changes impacting secondary schools, including SVS, include the following³:

- More efficient and improved processes for determining the number of first-year students in full-time secondary school programs – the ministry prepares the initial proposal, the self-governing regions review and submit their amendments, while the final decision on the number of first-year students remains with the regions, and the ministry retains its role in appeal procedures
- Simplification of the admission process to secondary schools, including accepting applicants for “unfilled places”
- The option to combine classes for students from different year groups within the same vocational program at vocational schools
- Retake deadlines for secondary school applications
- Students admitted to talent-based programs are excluded from further applications to non-talent programs; talent admission exams are held earlier, with results communicated to students before non-talent admission exams (previously, the confirmation deadline for admission to secondary schools was uniform)
- Simplified administrative procedures for merging schools and creating combined schools – “affiliated schools” will smoothly become organizational units without being formally dissolved
- Adjustment of employment relationships for staff during school mergers
- Changes to the naming of organizational units within combined schools to better reflect the focus of the secondary school

- Introduction of an early warning system for early school leaving (supporting the so-called “Early School Leaving” project by the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology) and the definition of a “student at risk of early school leaving”
- Change in the definition of the duration of compulsory schooling to the end of the school year in which the student reaches the age of 16
- Introduction of a compensatory allowance for teaching and professional staff
- Individuals with a third-level university degree who have been teaching at universities for at least three years will be recognized as qualified without the need for additional pedagogical studies
- Simplification of rules for international programs – the rules of the state to which the program applies will be respected
- Simplification of staffing requirements for teachers coming to Slovakia as part of bilateral cooperation
- Allowing the employment of a person in a vacant position only until the end of the school year (rather than for a full school year as currently required)
- Clear guidelines: if a school decides to provide education beyond the scope of the school educational program or beyond innovations registered in the innovation catalog, it will be able to do so based on discussion in the school’s pedagogical council and school council or with the informed consent of parents.

Another significant change is the continuation of the curricular reform also at secondary schools, requiring a redesign of the system and groups of study and training programs as a rapid response to the demands of the changing labor market. Changes in the portfolio of training and study programs at schools will be implemented in parallel with the process of optimizing the secondary school network. The curricular reform should focus primarily on new programs and so-called long-term shortage programs based on labor market analysis and forecasts, in close collaboration with employers. This will require school founders to conduct thorough data analysis as well as develop a vision for a future functional network of educational institutions in the region. The aim is to create stronger secondary schools with high-quality management that can respond to labor market changes and demands.

Other systemic measures include setting criteria for high-quality schools and creating a mechanism for regular school evaluation based on logical and measurable indicators. Important changes also include the launch of new national projects building on the education reform, particularly in the areas of support for desegregation, inclusion, the introduction of individual learning accounts, pilot testing of the training center concept, digital education, new forms of lifelong learning, and the recognition of learning outcomes, including micro-credits and micro-certificates, funded by EU funds.

Desegregation and inclusion of Roma as a priority topic in vocational education and training

Several years after the “Velvet Revolution” in Slovakia, a turning point occurred in society’s view of vocational education and training, particularly apprenticeship training, employment, and the possibility of securing a livelihood through unemployment benefits. These changes affected the entire society, as the obligation to work was abolished, and the first wave of unemployment emerged, significantly impacting the Roma population. Long-term unemployment had a negative impact on subsequent generations of young Roma. Many saw little value in further education, at least at the apprenticeship level (lower vocational education), and began seeking occasional work in the informal sector or abroad (initially mainly in the Czech Republic and Austria, and later in Belgium and England).

This led to an interruption in the education of young Roma, especially in marginalized communities, and a decline in their vocational skills in various fields, as well as an increase in the proportion of students who did not complete their education with at least a vocational certificate. The main reasons for leaving school were a lack of motivation and the belief that a vocational certificate or high school diploma is not a guarantee of employment. Nevertheless, in recent years, all three CuRI regions have seen a growing interest among young Roma in secondary education, though not

all are able to complete it successfully. Overall, only 51% of Roma students with completed primary education continue to further studies, but this number decreases after the first year (depending on the training or study program), and after the third year, it is often lower than 3%.

There are significant differences between groups of students from families receiving material need assistance (MNA) and those from families not included in the MNA system. In the first group, less than 1% of secondary school students from marginalized Roma communities (MRC) attend grammar schools or technical high schools, while 20% attend SVS. This reflects a higher interest in trades and services but also highlights generally poorer educational outcomes among children from MRC or families in the MNA system, as well as their still higher participation in the special education system or F programs designed for students who have not completed primary education. These differences were also confirmed by findings from surveys and thematic research conducted by the World Bank (more details in the chapter on analyses and findings).

Children's attitudes toward education are shaped by a combination of various external and internal factors. For children from Roma communities, the attitudes of parents and the broader community toward education, the environment in which they grow up, parenting styles, the division of roles within the family, and their relationship with the majority population all play a particularly strong role.

For many Roma, their attitudes toward education are influenced by their own experiences. Most current SVS students did not attend preschool education and first encountered the formal education system only in the first grade of primary school. Until then, they were under the protective environment of their community and had little direct experience with failure, segregation, or racism. Such negative experiences can lead students to believe that school is neither a pleasant nor a safe place for them, which in turn is reflected in low motivation to complete primary education successfully and continue to secondary education with a high school diploma or vocational certificate. This observation was also confirmed by participants in the focus groups conducted as part of the thematic survey.

Various surveys, including those conducted by the World Bank, indicate that the reasons for early secondary school dropout among boys and girls often stem from the traditional division of roles within the family and family expectations. For boys, the biggest challenges are:

- *Financial independence* – money as part of their economic support to the family, helping older community members with their income-generating activities, and the possibility of irregular earnings (often through informal work). Education is not their top priority.
- *Caring for their own family* – pregnancy and motherhood of their partner, the need to provide for the family, and a strong attachment to their family.
- *Learning* – they usually do not achieve good results, lack a positive attitude toward learning, and see leaving school as a sense of “freedom,” while perceiving school as a “waste of time”.

For girls, the influence of traditional culture and values, as well as the gender-based division of roles within the family and community, is more pronounced. Girls are also more heavily influenced by their families and under greater pressure from their communities. The most common barriers to completing schooling and obtaining adequate education for girls are:

- *Household responsibilities* – from the age of twelve, girls are often involved in running the household, leading to a shortened childhood and accelerated maturity.
- *Pregnancy and motherhood (at the beginning or during their studies)* – girls leave the education system due to early pregnancy and motherhood, which is linked to traditional family roles and a lack of education in relationship skills and reproductive health.
- The still prevalent *belief that education is not necessary for household management* – neither a high school diploma nor a vocational certificate is seen as essential.

As a result of these barriers, preferences, and attitudes, many girls do not complete even primary education, leading to difficulties in choosing and obtaining adequate higher education and employment opportunities.

It has also been found that the social sphere and education provide the most suitable spaces for the inclusion of Roma into the majority society, and vice versa. This includes various leisure activities for the broader public, as well as events organized by community centers and civic associations.

The education reform includes a comprehensive approach to Roma inclusion, encompassing access to quality education and measures to support inclusive education from pre-primary to higher education, within the context of lifelong learning.

The goal of support measures for schools and students is to promote equity and reduce disadvantages. Schools with a high proportion of students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds exist in many education systems and often face challenges related to academic performance and school climate (OECD, 2016a). To address the challenges faced by disadvantaged schools, central authorities can implement several policy measures: correcting imbalances in the socioeconomic composition of schools, providing targeted support to disadvantaged schools, and encouraging good teachers to work in these schools.

TABLE 1.3. Summary of determinants and proposed solutions

Area	Main identified determinants of social exclusion	Possible solutions	Responsible body, resources
Vocational education and training	Limited access to education (attractive study fields, lifelong learning programs)	Support for curricular reform – changing the portfolio of selected secondary vocational schools (pilot schools, scaling innovations, etc.) Support for the use and teaching of the Roma language Personalization of VET (percentage of practical training and recognition of learning outcomes)	Region together with relevant ministries
Support services	Low number of “intermediate labor market” enterprises) Community centers as a social service Integration of support services linked to life situations	Networking of social enterprises and SVS Linking support services for various life situations Support for self-help solutions and community-led services “Halfway there” concept	SVS and NGOs
Desegregation and inclusion (culture, language, ethnicity)	Fear of acceptance by the majority Poor housing quality	Extracurricular activities linked to vocational education and training	Local administration, community
Coordination and cooperation / ecosystem for inclusion	Lack of cooperation and coordination	Creating platforms using new technologies and digital tools	

Source: Authors, 2025.

A positive trend is that the self-governing regions involved in CuRI have invested in the development of strategic documents at the level of secondary vocational schools and in the training of teaching and professional staff at these schools, either through their own national projects or by participating in national projects implemented by ministries and their organizations.

The updated Action Plans for the Strategy for Equality, Inclusion and Participation of Roma by 2030 for the years 2025 – 2027 cover all five areas – education, employment, housing, health, combating anti-Roma racism, and promoting participation. These plans define key goals, measures, and indicators

aimed at improving the educational attainment of Roma men and women. One of the partial goals in the field of education is to improve the academic outcomes of students from marginalized Roma communities (MRC) from early childhood care to better integration into the labor market, through cooperation and connection with all new and existing resources and opportunities provided by the various sectors in the field of inclusive education.

Measures in the new document, in the context of the World Bank's proposed recommendations, include: establishing an early warning system to prevent early school leaving, monitoring the number of students in F programs and their transition to H programs, continuing second-chance education (until legislative changes are made), supporting career guidance for students from MRC, legislative adjustments for the provision of scholarships, standardizing data collection on students from MRC, and supporting education at all levels (including secondary schools) in the students' native Roma language.

The Action Plans for the 2030 Strategy for the years 2025 – 2027 represent concrete commitments by the state and are regularly evaluated and monitored at the government level.

Ensuring the right to education as an obligation and commitment

The aim of the legal summary is to establish the right to equal education as an obligation of Slovakia, arising from international, European, and national legal regulations. The goal is not to provide an exhaustive description of the entire legal system, but to emphasize that all involved actors have a duty to actively strive for equality in the education of marginalized pupils and students in the country.

International level

The right to education is enshrined to varying degrees in international treaties, pacts, and other documents that are binding on states. For an overview, we briefly list the documents that commit Slovakia to strive for equal education for all, which we have used as a basis.

The cornerstone of the human right to education is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which explicitly sets it out in Article 26 (UDHR, Art. 26). Following the adoption of the UDHR, the principle of equal right to education for all was enshrined in the Convention against Discrimination in Education, adopted in 1962 and ratified by Slovakia in 1993 (CADE, UNESCO). Six years later, it was included in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, specifically in Article 13 of the Covenant (ICESCR, United Nations General Assembly).

The *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) is a fundamental document that must be continuously highlighted and considered (CEDAW, United Nations General Assembly). CEDAW specifically addresses non-discrimination in education in its Article 10, requiring states to ensure equal access to education, including secondary, technical, and vocational education, for both men and women. Section (c) calls for the elimination of any stereotypical concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms. In the case of Slovakia, considering the geographic distribution of Roma in the country (Atlas of Roma Communities 2019, Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities), Article 10 should be read in combination with Article 14 of the convention, which addresses the non-discrimination of women in rural areas.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, in addition to its four fundamental principles that form the basis for all decisions related to children, also contains specific provisions and articles related to education (CRC, United Nations General Assembly). Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child deals specifically with education and sets out the obligations that states must fulfill.

Access to equal education and the principle of non-segregation are not just current trends, but long-established principles firmly rooted in the international community.⁴

Council of Europe

In connection with the obligations arising from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), we will briefly summarize the landmark case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECTHR) on school segregation and its significance in practice.

- D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic (special schools);
- Sampanis and Others v. Greece (satellite campuses);
- Oršuš and Others v. Croatia (separate classes);
- Horvath and Kiss v. Hungary (testing not taking into account language);
- Lavidia and others v. Greece (purely Roma schools in municipalities where other schools are also available constitute segregation, even without the intent to segregate).

European Union

With regard to EU-level commitments, we note that the European Commission has referred Slovakia to the Court of Justice of the European Union over the segregation of Roma children in education (Case C-799/23, CJEU).

National level

At the national level, the fundamental document prohibiting segregation in education is the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, for example, Article 12 in combination with the specific Article 42 on education. The general law requiring non-discrimination in all areas of public life is the Anti-Discrimination Act, which also transposes European legislation. The full title is the Act on Equal Treatment in Certain Areas and Protection against Discrimination and on Amendments and Supplements to Certain Acts (Anti-Discrimination Act). Specifically, the prohibition of segregation and the principles of inclusion are enshrined in the basic definitions and principles of the Education Act.

National courts, such as the Regional Court in Prešov in the case of the school in Šarišské Michalany (Case No. 20Co/126/2012) and the Supreme Court of the Slovak Republic in the Podsadek, Stará Ľubovňa case (Case No. 5Cdo/102/2020), have ruled that unlawful acts of segregation in schools have occurred.

The *Desegregation Methodological Guide for Schools* provides a good summary of the challenges associated with segregation. It explicitly identifies segregation practices, differentiating the severity of various types of segregation. The *Segregation Risk Monitoring Report* complements this by providing information on schools at risk of segregation. These two documents should be considered as foundational and should not only inform recommendations for schools and founders but also lead to legislative changes that motivate schools to implement corrective measures.

Inevitable change and good practice examples

Slovakia is not the only country where vocational education is generally less attractive to students, and a relatively large proportion of its graduates struggle to find employment or adapt to the labor market. The OECD has therefore provided clear recommendations on how to reform vocational education to better respond to the rapidly changing labor market and its demands on workers (OECD, 2023). In summary, this means: expanding access to vocational education for students at risk of early school leaving, graduates with low labor market participation, and as part of lifelong learning; creating a foundation for frequent changes in the world of work, ensuring that graduates acquire skills they can build on through lifelong learning; and innovating the content of education and strategies in line with modern technologies and employer requirements.

There are many ways to apply these recommendations in practice, and there is no single solution that fits all contexts. We can draw inspiration from neighboring countries and try to incorporate what would work best in our system. In this section, we briefly present measures that are also applicable in Slovakia.

Perhaps the best example among neighboring countries is Poland, which, through gradual reforms since 1998, has managed to make its education system more efficient. In addition to improving PISA results, it has also increased the employability of graduates both within the country and abroad. A key change was the modification of compulsory schooling, which included the introduction

of a mandatory three-year training period with an employer for those not enrolling in secondary school. Employers play a significant role in the development of school curricula. In 2012, the system became more flexible for career changes, as some similar programs now share the same qualifications, allowing graduates to easily supplement their qualifications in related fields (vocational or academic) and gain access to additional careers. In 2016, the Integrated Qualifications Framework came into effect, aligning with European standards and providing greater flexibility in obtaining professional qualifications (certifications) regardless of the conditions under which the graduate acquired the necessary skills – it doesn't have to be only in a school setting.

Positive examples also include Romania, which modernized its curricula (2016 – 2018) and updated study plans in collaboration with employers, placing greater emphasis on practical skills and digital competencies, and introduced new programs responding to industry needs. This includes the creation of regional partnerships between schools, employers, and local authorities, leading to better planning of student numbers in specific programs based on regional needs. Without a doubt, this also includes the creation of continuous education programs for vocational teachers and efforts to improve their qualifications. Some of Romania's vocational education reforms have focused specifically on students from marginalized, primarily Roma, communities. Positive changes include targeted programs in some regions to support Roma students in vocational education, the introduction of scholarships specifically for Roma students in technical fields, and the establishment of partnerships between schools and Roma communities in several districts (Cedefop Romania, 2022).

In the Netherlands, the adaptation of vocational education to adult education is a source of inspiration in the context of dual education and the flexibility of the educational system. The provision of various qualification levels, combined with a well-developed dual system, supports the upskilling and reskilling of adults. As a result, the Netherlands has significantly higher adult participation in education, which is an ideal approach for “upskilling” employees (PAQ Research, 2024).

In each of the countries mentioned, efforts to improve the efficiency of the dual education system also included making it more attractive to employers by simplifying administration and increasing state funding. We consider Poland to be the most suitable source of inspiration for Slovakia, where this type of funding has successfully increased the participation of small employers in dual education.

It seems essential to gradually transform the support for satellite campuses of schools that primarily offer F programs and other vocational programs, emphasizing that there are alternative ways to provide practical training to students and adults at employers' premises without concentrating them in a single location. This is necessary even if F programs currently address the effects of segregation and lower-quality education at the primary school level. It will then be necessary to financially incentivize schools and employers to accept students from marginalized Roma communities in numbers that are sustainable given the capacities and quality of education. The motivation for schools should not be to enroll as many MRC students as possible, but rather to accept a number that allows for comprehensive education tailored to their needs.

Proposed (simple) changes

During the implementation of the project in cooperation with self-governing regions as school founders, we developed a proposal for several straightforward changes that would simplify the education process for MRC students and simultaneously improve the legislative environment for their education and employability. These are changes that can be implemented quickly and at low cost. However, they are not intended to comprehensively address segregation in education.

In proposing these changes, we started from the assumption that F programs are the result of segregation in primary schools, unequal education, and insufficient support for students from MRC. In other words, F programs primarily serve as compensatory measures for students who did not obtain lower secondary education at the primary level. It is true that the fact that a large proportion of students in F programs are children from MRC and socially disadvantaged backgrounds is largely a consequence of their exclusion from mainstream education as early as primary school. One of the goals of F programs is to enable these students to obtain lower secondary vocational education and to facilitate their reintegration into mainstream education. Unfortunately, F programs

themselves – especially at satellite campuses – often reinforce segregation in education and represent a continuation of this exclusion. Secondary schools and satellite campuses with exclusively Roma student populations are considered segregation under the law and case law.

Data from research conducted during the project indicate that graduates of F programs have very low employment rates. It is therefore in the public interest to facilitate the transition from F programs to other programs (e.g., H programs) that have higher employability. The current system does not sufficiently motivate students to continue their education after completing an F program (due to the overall length of study, conditions for transferring from F to H programs, the requirement for similarity of fields, etc.).

1.3.1. The flexibility of performance plans

In the short term, it would be helpful to make the performance plan more flexible for students transitioning from F programs to H programs. In addition to amending the relevant secondary legislation, it would also be necessary to revise the wording of §29b of Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on Vocational Education and Training and on Amendments to Certain Acts, or to adopt a new paragraph that would allow a greater number of students to make this transition.

1.3.2. Increasing the density of the network of schools designated for commission exam preparation

Currently, a student that has not achieved lower secondary education and is not attending a secondary school can only prepare for commission exams at primary schools designated by regional education authorities. This network is relatively sparse, and the need to travel to these schools presents a barrier for MRC. The goal of this change is to allow and fund such education at secondary schools as well, making education more accessible and simultaneously facilitating adaptation to the secondary school environment. This change requires an amendment to §31a of the Education Act, followed by the designation of secondary schools that can provide this type of education by regional authorities.

1.3.3. Adapting dual education

According to the current wording of §19 of Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on Vocational Education and Training and on Amendments to Certain Acts, students can only enter dual education from the first year. The goal of this change is to allow students who have transitioned from an F program to the second year of a related H program after obtaining lower secondary education to enter dual education linked to their program from the second year. The intended outcome is to increase the number of graduates from dual education. The change could also include simplifying processes, digitizing them, and eliminating unnecessary administrative burdens for employers.

In the context of dual education, there is also ongoing consideration and consultation regarding changes to K programs that would separate the practical and theoretical components of final exams. This would allow students to pass the practical part even if they do not pass the theoretical part of the graduation exam. In practice, this would mean that company personnel who only need a vocational certificate for career advancement would not have to repeat their entire education but could simply complete the practical component of the final exam.

1.3.4. Support measures and social scholarships

Currently, the assessment of eligibility for social scholarships is carried out by the principals of secondary schools, who are forced to rely on documentation provided by the student or their legal guardian. In the case of households receiving material need assistance, the situation is straightforward, as a formal certificate is issued for this purpose. However, the situation is different for students from households living below the subsistence level. The goal of this change is to introduce the option for principals to request a certificate from the Office of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family regarding this status as well. This change would ensure that a greater number of eligible students receive social scholarships. Implementing this change will require adjustments to the mutual agreements between ministries on the sharing of information.

To create suitable study conditions at the secondary school level, it is necessary to provide teaching assistants and other support staff. Currently, the system is well-structured at the primary school level. The same or a similar level of clarity and predictability needs to be established at the secondary school level as well.

To conclude

The education system in Slovakia needs a comprehensive change and a long-term strategy. The changes proposed in this text are partial measures that can provide a short-term response to the current unfavorable situation and require dialogue and agreement among stakeholders. A long-term strategy should include the gradual transformation of schools with exclusively or predominantly Roma student populations and those offering mainly F programs that compensate for segregation at the primary school level, as well as the adoption of a system that financially and methodologically incentivizes schools, founders, and legal guardians to be more inclusive.

Significant strategic investments from EU funds in vocational education and training

In the 2014 – 2020 programming period, EU funds were concentrated on the modernization of infrastructure for all types of secondary vocational schools. The majority of the funds was invested primarily in technically oriented SVS, specifically in the equipment and outfitting of specialized classrooms and, to a lesser extent, in curriculum content and digitalization. Changes occurred after 2018, when discussions began at the national and regional levels about the need for further optimization of the secondary school network in response to rapid labor market changes, demographic trends, and crises, and after 2022, following the development, approval, and commitment by Slovakia through the adoption of the Recovery and Resilience Plan.

In the 2021 – 2027 programming period, integrated investments have taken center stage as a combination of soft and hard investments, complementing ongoing national projects and reforms at the national level.

An example is the approved national project presented by MIRD I in December 2024 – vouchers that will be available to socially disadvantaged students, including children with special needs and children from families in material need. Each eligible student will register and receive a unique code, which they can then use with a selected broadband internet service provider. The subsidy, amounting to €20 per month, will cover costs for a period of two years, totaling €480. The voucher will provide: broadband internet access with a minimum speed of 30 Mb/s during peak times, a minimum monthly data allowance of 100 GB, and the necessary equipment for signal distribution (modem, router), including installation or activation fees.

The project contributes to achieving the main goals of digitalization, such as reducing digital poverty and improving access to digital technologies. Access to the internet for every child is a fundamental requirement, allowing all students, without exception, to develop their skills and receive an education. The internet is a basic tool that opens doors to education, information, and personal development. Social vouchers for internet access are one of the ways the state supports students from less favorable social backgrounds, including SVS students from MRC. For vocational education and training, this represents an opportunity to increase the level of digitalization in education and will also require changes in teaching, such as the creation and provision of digital content, the development of digital libraries, and the enhancement of teachers' digital skills.

In addition to the national projects supported for the Prešov and Košice Self-Governing Regions, the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic has also supported several projects implemented by the State Institute of Vocational Education (ŠIOV) and the ministry itself, which have a direct impact on the preparation and implementation of SVS activities and programs. This will also require the involvement of various stakeholders at the national and, to some extent, regional and local levels. More detailed information about these projects is available on the official regional websites and in the ITMS2021+ system.

From data to cooperation: Integrated solutions for pilot SVS

The shared goal of the World Bank team and the participating self-governing regions is the implementation of public policies, and the support of strategic planning, decision-making, and investment based on high-quality data and evidence. The use of data collected through surveys and research as open data in GIS applications supported within CuRI enables stakeholders to strategically plan further investments and create various models of cooperation.

The proposals of the World Bank expert team are based not only on the analysis of available public data but also on quantitative and qualitative data collected in 2024 from pilot secondary vocational schools, in accordance with a methodology developed and approved by the partners.

During data collection, it was necessary to consider potential risks associated with labeling students, which is why data was collected anonymously using so-called distinguishing data. Despite this, it was challenging to link the obtained data with national administrative data. Better “labeling” of students may, in the future, provide some explanation and confirmation of their problems and needs, as well as their interpretation. It is essential to weigh both the positive and negative consequences of labeling certain groups of students and to assess which data concerning which students it is worthwhile to disaggregate.⁵

Secondary vocational school as an inclusive educational environment

Interviews with representatives of selected pilot secondary vocational schools conducted by the World Bank indicate that there are many low-cost activities aimed at supporting inclusion in education and training within SVS, which have a significant positive impact on the entire community of students, parents, and teaching/professional staff or other stakeholders.

Key findings include the following:

- Secondary vocational schools do not have comprehensive long-term inclusion strategies.
- Secondary vocational schools collaborate with only a limited number of non-profit organizations and to a limited extent, usually based on an initiative from the non-profit organization. The most frequently mentioned non-profit or cooperating organizations in the survey were: Človek v ohrození (children, students, entire communities), Zdravé regióny (primarily in the area of health and prevention, originally a civic association), Teach for Slovakia (in cooperation with primary schools), the Roma Education Fund (scholarship programs, mentoring), Cesta Von, ETP Slovensko (practical education and self-help construction), and employers.
- Not all selected schools were included in the NP POP 3 project and have established so-called school support teams as part of the project, or in supported national projects implemented by their founders.
- Support for secondary vocational schools in the area of inclusion is not conditioned by any transparent criteria.
- Secondary vocational schools have limited opportunities to introduce social innovations into the school environment.
- Interregional and international cooperation is insufficient, and joint international programs for students from MRC are rare.

Findings are presented in the chapter Analyses and Findings.

Analysis of best practice examples at home and abroad as inspiration

At the national, regional, and local levels, there is a lack of systematic work with the Roma community, and in some areas (especially smaller districts), there is an absence of a third sector to provide essential support activities. There are only a few long-term initiatives, primarily supported by private and foundation sources, whose potential is not being fully utilized or coordinated. At the national level, the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic has been financing the “Healthy Regions” (Zdravé regióny) project for a long time, which, based on the OECD inclusion framework, can be classified as a program with a positive impact on the well-being and life satisfaction of its target group – including SVS students.

However, for real change in the area of inclusion and inclusive education, daily and systematic work by relevant stakeholders in specific locations – within specific communities – is required, covering all areas and stages of life. This also requires the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of achieved results and impacts, as well as the publication and sharing of so-called best practices in a centralized location. Therefore, when identifying and analyzing best practices, it is necessary to focus on understanding the role of individual actors in achieving positive change and the conditions for the successful transfer of analyzed best practices – including support for specifically local interventions and a set of tools for individual stakeholders.

Examples of best practices were not only described but also presented to Slovak partners during webinars and subsequently discussed by stakeholders. Some of them were also visited and analyzed in person (separate evaluation sheets were prepared for different stakeholder groups – best practice owners, local public administration, primary target groups, beneficiaries, employers, and NGOs).

A positive example can be found in the Czech Republic, where a digital platform publishes best practice examples from various fields in one place (organized according to the strategic areas of the 2030 Agenda) – including in the field of education⁶.

At the EU level, inspiration can be found on the CEDEFOP website, which was also the first source of information for preparing the analysis of best practices and professional events for pilot schools and their founders⁷.

The analyzed and presented examples of best practices are included separately in Annex 6 of this report, along with a proposed template for creating a catalog/database of best practices in the field of inclusive vocational education and training.

As part of this activity, BBSK representatives participated in a study visit to Romania, where they gained a closer understanding of several projects.

Partners of the initiative identified three types of key success factors:

- 1) **Organizational and institutional conditions**
- 2) **Thematic focus**
- 3) **Technical conditions**

1) Organizational and institutional conditions

The first and most important area is the mapping and networking of all relevant stakeholders involved in implementation: “The key is to have the widest possible network of stakeholders, from educational institutions to individual volunteers.” Once again, the most important finding is that without good cooperation, there is no good practice, and the most important stakeholder, apart from the secondary vocational school, is the local municipality, without which it is not possible to continuously achieve the expected results in the long-term. It is also crucial that the implementing organization has a good reputation at the local or community level, is trustworthy, has a clear mission, and sufficient capacity.

2) Thematic focus

The success of an intervention depends on well-defined goals and the identified needs of the target group that the intervention addresses, such as accessibility, lack of student self-confidence, fear of acceptance in a new environment – whether at school or in the workplace, and similar factors. A common feature of the analyzed best practice examples was also the provision of support services, not only those focused on the transition from school to the labor market but also more comprehensive support services.

3) Technical conditions

The analysis of best practice examples showed that technical conditions, including a suitable business model, joint management of stakeholders, and developed capacities, are just as important for success as thematic focus and collaboration.

One of the outcomes of the World Bank's activities is the creation of a draft Best Practice Database, which will, in the future, become part of a knowledge platform for inclusive VET, linked to the CEDEFOP database. Examples of best practices, prepared according to the proposed template, are included in a separate annex.

Examples of best practices abroad and in Slovakia were initially identified in collaboration with pilot SVS, through field research and consultations with regional education departments, and then, in the second step, evaluated with a focus on analyzing critical success factors and future pilot activities.

The analysis and evaluation of best practice examples were carried out based on eight jointly approved criteria.

Findings from the analysis of best practice examples in Slovakia and abroad indicate the following as essential:

- Without the support of local actors, particularly local governments, it is challenging to achieve the expected results.
- It is crucial to identify the needs of the target group as precisely as possible.
- Allow strong non-profit organizations and/or specialized associations to join forces, with the possibility of long-term employment of professional staff and continuous close cooperation with public administration and secondary vocational schools – a specific local external factor.
- Wherever possible, co-create planned interventions with the target group.
- Define measurable outcomes and the expected impact of interventions in advance.
- Conduct consultations with experts and stakeholders throughout the entire project/intervention cycle.
- Consider the specific context, such as the culture of the secondary vocational school (an internal factor), previous experiences, and similar aspects.

1.4. INCLUSION IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Measuring inclusion in vocational education and training has proven to be challenging, as it requires the analysis of various policy areas within education systems while also considering the different roles of the system, school, and classroom. One possible solution is to apply the input-process-output model for measuring and evaluating inclusion in education through key indicators that the various system stakeholders can jointly design and adopt.

The diverse use of the term inclusion and its overlap with concepts like equity and integration complicates efforts to measure and monitor ways to improve the inclusivity of vocational education and training at all levels. Greater equity and inclusion in VET cannot be achieved without increased efforts to collect and analyze data on the most excluded population groups.

Creating a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system can provide evidence (data, documentation) on the state of the education system in Slovakia, as well as inputs for other processes, such as funding and resource allocation, comparison of results with those in comparable countries, and similar analyses.

Indicators can be used to achieve various goals with different scopes in education, including the use of data collected through World Bank surveys and research.

More specifically, indicators can be used in reforms and strategic planning for:

- measuring the impact of implemented reforms,
- monitoring changes in various areas and anticipating potential risks,
- taking specific funding needs into account,
- targeted support for areas requiring improvement,

- comparing the performance of the education system or its components with other education systems,
- involving schools in the monitoring and evaluation process, including support for self-assessment.

For example, monitoring the outcomes of all students, with a particular focus on diverse and vulnerable students, could provide education systems with insights into potential improvements or declines in student performance. The latest PISA study results, for instance, showed that in some countries, the performance gap between students from lower and higher socio-economic backgrounds has widened, along with differences between immigrant and native students and between girls and boys (OECD, 2019).

1.5. METHODOLOGY

The World Bank expert team, in close collaboration with the regional education departments, agreed that subregions and specifically selected schools would be the basic methodological units for all implemented activities. This approach will not only support newly established and emerging local and regional platforms, but also achieve complementarity and synergy with the ongoing national projects of the PSK and the BBSK.

The approach also includes support for sharing experiences and results, with selected activities implemented jointly for all three regions – thematic surveys on the level of VET inclusion, joint focus groups, webinars and workshops, for example, on the transfer of best practices from abroad. The World Bank team also introduced joint consultations with the regions and intensified the promotion of results in the area of secondary vocational education in the media. Through marketing activities and collaboration with the media, the results and joint educational activities of the regions were continuously communicated to the general public. The goal was to open a discourse on inclusion and highlight the importance of supporting secondary vocational education and training as part of a comprehensive solution for disadvantaged population groups. All three regions, as well as regional and national media, communicated about these activities through their respective communication channels.

1.6 KEY FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES IN ALL REGIONS

Multilevel cooperation is a necessary prerequisite for the successful transformation and adaptation of inclusive models and approaches in vocational education and training.

Local and regional platforms are the main forums for aligning the supply and demand for the skills of secondary vocational school graduates. They provide space not only for cross-sectoral and territorial dialogue among stakeholders, but also make a significant contribution to the application of inclusion principles as part of improving the quality of vocational education and training.

The starting point for all proposed solutions, future investments, and interventions must be high-quality quantitative and qualitative data on the regional vocational education and training system, which must also be accessible to all relevant stakeholders in the territory. The absence of such data is a barrier to increasing the effectiveness of interventions at all levels.

At all levels of management, there is a lack of a support, evaluation, and monitoring system for inclusion in vocational education and training, as well as that of a shared understanding among stakeholders, including a single source of information.

It is essential that the development of inclusion in vocational education and training becomes an integral part of strategic development documents at the national, regional, and local levels, including the strategic and conceptual documents of secondary vocational schools.

1.7. CONSEQUENCES AND IMPACT

The management of secondary vocational schools, with the support of regional education departments, must focus on a systematic approach to collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data in the area of inclusion and use this data to align supply and demand, develop collaboration models with stakeholders at least at the local level, and create conditions for providing individualized support to students from MRC.

Secondary vocational schools and regional education departments, based on the experience and outputs of implemented national projects and provided technical assistance, must seek ways to identify the future needs of employers for graduates with lower vocational education (formerly apprenticeship programs) and adapt teaching and teaching methods to match the requirements for specific skills needed for particular job positions, as well as the new demands of the labor market.

Secondary vocational schools should respond to the new opportunities and benefits brought by digitalization in the field of inclusive education, particularly by creating and using digital content, changing teaching methods, and networking with organizations that provide support services.

The mismatch between the supply of SVS graduates and labor market requirements remains evident, particularly in the case of specific skills needed for certain job positions that only require a vocational certificate. However, this mismatch is decreasing in selected sectors thanks to intensive investments in selected pilot SVS, the sharing of experiences between schools and employers, and the support of new shared infrastructure between schools and employers (campus concept, training center concept).

Active support for practical training as an essential component of VET has been shown to produce positive results in creating inclusive environments, and contributes to improving the quality of vocational education and training, as reflected in the employability of secondary vocational school graduates.

In February 2024, the CuRI VET 4 Final Conference on vocational education and training was held in Bratislava, with the participation of representatives from state and local governments, secondary vocational schools, professional organizations, and employers. The conference, titled “Modernization of Secondary Education and Its Importance for the Economy of Slovakia and Its Regions: The Contribution of CuRI,” included a showcase of the results from selected pilot SVS.

During the conference, two sessions and two panel discussions presented not only the success stories of pilot SVS supported under CuRI 1-4, but also various perspectives and recommendations for the future of vocational education and training in Slovakia.

The conference resulted in a set of recommendations for local, regional, and national levels in the following areas: a) reform of vocational education and training, b) cooperation and multi-level governance, c) inclusion, and d) lifelong learning for the needs of local and regional labor markets. The conference outcomes are included separately in Annex 8 of this report.

1.8. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN SLOVAK REGIONS

Prešov Self-Governing Region

The Prešov Region was the first region involved in CuRI in 2018 and is also the self-governing region with the highest proportion of residents living in marginalized Roma communities. In line with the action plan, **Activity 1.4 Inclusion in Vocational Education and Training** was implemented in selected SVS established by the Prešov Self-Governing Region. The goal of the activity was to continue improving the quality of VET at selected pilot SVS and to align activities at the regional and local levels.

The results of the thematic survey indicated that the interventions implemented within CuRI will have a long-term positive impact on the quality of VET, including for students from MRC, and the attractiveness of the learning environment has increased.

Table 1.4. Summary of activities and outputs in the Prešov region

Activity 1.4. Inclusion in Vocational Education and Training at Selected SVS Established by the Prešov Self-Governing Region		
Methodology / Activities	Findings	Recommendations / Outcomes
Selection of at least 5 pilot SVS Selection criteria, evaluation, nomination, and selection of pilot SVS	Persistently high rate of early school leaving Unattractive training programs for the target group – students from MRC – and the need for content innovation	Short-term recommendations Set of interventions designed for selected pilot schools <i>Methodology for selecting pilot SVS as part of school self-assessment</i>
Thematic survey Collection of quantitative and qualitative data on pilot SVS Evaluation of the level of inclusion at pilot SVS Collection of quantitative and qualitative data on students at pilot SVS	Language barriers in practical training and during placements with employers Low level of innovations aimed at improving inclusive environments Uneven support for inclusive VET Functioning regional platforms with a focus on inclusion as part of supported NP PSK Increased attractiveness of the learning environment at pilot SVS Consideration of inclusive aspects in the optimization process	Long-term recommendations Systematic approach to collecting quantitative and qualitative data Proposal for legislative changes Synergistic and complementary projects to existing projects and activities at all levels
Consultations with stakeholders and facilitation of focus groups (parents, NGOs, employers, professional organizations, and associations)		Support for social innovations and scaling of best practices from other regions of Slovakia and abroad
Mapping and analysis of best practices in the PSK and abroad Workshops focused on presenting best practices at home and abroad Database of recommended best practices for scaling up		Updating strategic documents at the regional and school levels Curricular reform and VET – changing the content of education, at least for the group of F programs New educational model for students from MRC focused on skills acquisition and verification, including other support services (linking to social economy opportunities)
Capacity building and technical assistance Identification of investment and non-investment interventions for pilot SVS and complementary investments Working group for drafting recommendations and measures (tools, interventions, legislation, innovations) Consultations with PSK Education Department		Methodology for collecting qualitative data with a focus on inclusion in the SVS environment, including supporting documentation and forms Scenarios for facilitating meetings with stakeholders Proposal for investment and non-investment interventions for pilot SVS Updated methodology for developing integrated investment packages (IIP)

Source: Authors, 2025.

Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region

In the context of the challenges of regional and local labor markets and the inclusion of low-skilled workers, NEETs, future students, and SVS students, the activities aimed to map the needs and expectations of the target group and employers entering the labor market, as well as the extent to which these needs and expectations are reflected in the content and forms of vocational education and training at selected SVS, with a focus on selected educational programs – **Activity 1.2. Inclusion in Vocational Education and Training at Selected SVS Established by the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region**. The goal of the activity was to improve the quality of inclusive vocational education and training at four selected pilot SVS under the jurisdiction of the BBSK.

The results of the thematic survey revealed that significant barriers to vocational education and training for students from MRC and their entry into the labor market exist in various forms and to varying degrees, both at the school level and at the systemic level. Possible responses include short-term and long-term recommendations from the expert team, which have been discussed with relevant stakeholders at different levels.

TABLE 1.5. Summary of activities and outputs in the Banská Bystrica region

Activity 1.2. Inclusion in Vocational Education and Training at Selected SVS Established by the Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region		
Methodology / Activities	Findings	Recommendations / Outcomes
Selection of at least 4 pilot SVS Selection criteria, evaluation, nomination, and selection of pilot SVS	High rate of early school leaving in selected vocational programs Unattractive vocational programs for the target group Insufficient level of innovation Uneven support for inclusive VET at all levels Positive impact of implemented NP	Short-term recommendations Set of interventions designed for pilot schools and coordination of their providers Support for the creation and sharing of digital content Methodology for selecting pilot SVS as part of school self-assessment
Thematic survey Collection of quantitative and qualitative data on pilot SVS Evaluation of the level of inclusion at pilot SVS Collection of quantitative and qualitative data on students at pilot SVS	BBSK Increased student awareness of support services (career guidance)	Long-term recommendations Systematic approach to collecting quantitative and qualitative data and reporting Synergistic and complementary projects to existing projects and activities at all levels Support for social innovations and scaling up of best practices Updating strategic documents of SVS with the participation of relevant stakeholders Curricular reform of VET Methodology for collecting qualitative data with a focus on inclusion in the SVS environment, including supporting documentation and forms Scenarios for facilitating meetings with stakeholders Joint proposal for legislative changes in VET Proposal for investment and non-investment interventions for pilot SVS
Consultations with stakeholders (parents, NGOs, employers, professional organizations, and associations)		
Mapping and analysis of best practices in the BBSK and abroad Workshops focused on presenting best practices at home and abroad		
Capacity building and technical assistance Identification of investment and non-investment interventions for pilot SVS Working group for drafting recommendations and measures (tools, interventions, legislation, innovations) TAIEX study visit to Romania Workshop on opportunities for legislative changes		

Source: Authors, 2025.

Košice Self-Governing Region

The implementation of **Activity 1.3. Inclusion in Vocational Education and Training at Selected SVS Established by the Košice Self-Governing Region**, according to the approved Action Plan, focused not only on activities common to the BBSK and the KSK but also on aligning the needs of strategic investors with the offerings of SVS, and supporting local platforms for selected pilot secondary vocational schools. The activities of strategic investors in the region had a significant impact on strategic processes in the area of VET. A specific feature of the KSK is the absence of its own national project that would complement the ongoing infrastructure investments by supporting pilot SVS in the innovation of educational content and methods.

TABLE 1.6. Summary of activities and outputs in the Košice region

Activity 1.3. Inclusion in Vocational Education and Training at Selected SVS Established by the Košice Self-Governing Region		
Methodology / Activities	Findings	Recommendations / Outcomes
Selection of at least 5 pilot SVS Selection criteria, evaluation, nomination, and selection of pilot SVS	High rate of early school leaving Unattractive training programs for the target group of MRC students Language barriers in practical training and placement with employers Low level of innovation aimed at improving inclusive environments at SVS	Short-term recommendations Set of interventions designed for pilot schools to complement ongoing infrastructure investments <i>Methodology for selecting pilot SVS as part of school self-assessment</i>
Thematic survey Collection of quantitative and qualitative data on pilot SVS Evaluation of the level of inclusion at pilot SVS Collection of quantitative and qualitative data on students at pilot SVS	Uneven support for inclusive VET in relation to key topics Positive impact of strategic investor activities Interest of stakeholders in building a shared educational infrastructure Support from local governments and NGOs	Long-term recommendations Systematic approach to collecting quantitative and qualitative data Proposal for legislative changes Synergistic and complementary projects to existing projects and activities at all levels
Consultations with stakeholders (parents, NGOs, employers, professional organizations)		Support for social innovations and scaling up of best practices from other regions of Slovakia and abroad
Mapping and analysis of best practices in the KSK and abroad Workshops focused on presenting best practices at home and abroad		Updating strategic documents at the regional and school levels Curricular reform and VET – changing the content of education, at least for the group of F programs
Capacity building and technical assistance Identification of investment and non-investment interventions for pilot SVS Working group for drafting recommendations and measures (tools, interventions, legislation, innovations) Consultations with the KSK Educational Department		New educational model for students from MRC focused on skills acquisition and verification Methodology for collecting qualitative data with a focus on inclusion in the SVS environment, including supporting documentation and forms Scenarios for facilitating meetings with stakeholders Standards for shared infrastructure Proposal for investment and non-investment interventions for pilot SVS

Source: Authors, 2025

1.9. SUMMARY

The secondary vocational education subcomponent has been implemented within CuRI since its launch in 2018, with a systematic focus on identifying the mismatch between the offer of secondary vocational schools and the demand for graduates' skills on local and regional labor markets. In 2024, the focus shifted primarily to inclusion, education, and the employability of students from MRC.

The main goal of the subcomponent was, after assessing the baseline situation in the participating regions, to contribute to improving the quality of vocational education and training with a focus on inclusion. This was achieved through systematic data collection and analysis in close cooperation with regional education departments, leading to the design of targeted interventions not only at the level of pilot secondary vocational schools.

Within the subcomponent, the action plans for each of the three regions defined activities, outputs, and outcomes based on the specific needs of the regions and their readiness for change in vocational education and training.

A separate activity schedule was developed for each participating region with the aim of making full use of the technical assistance provided, focusing on results and practical application at the regional level. These are described in more detail in the chapters dedicated to each region.

2. METHODOLOGY

In preparing the methodology for selecting pilot SVS for the thematic survey, the process drew on experiences from surveys conducted by the World Bank between 2018 and 2022 (SVS survey, employer survey, expert-level events and focus groups, VET quality survey), as well as methodologies from the World Bank and other international organizations (OECD, UNESCO, CEDEFOP, ETF), and an analysis of approaches from national projects funded by EU funds at both national and regional levels.

The proposed methodology for selecting pilot schools and conducting the thematic survey was pilot-tested and adjusted to enable its later application to other SVS. The set of documents included in an annex to this report contains manuals, supporting documentation, and useful forms.

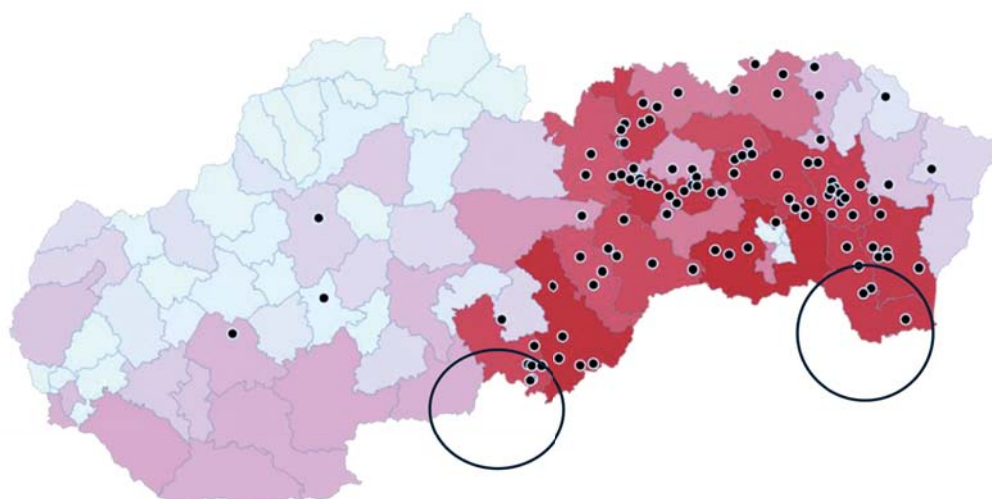
2.1. METHODOLOGY FOR SELECTING PILOT SVS FOR THE THEMATIC SURVEY

The methodology for selecting SVS is based on the approved methodology used in the selection of pilot SVS under CuRI 1-4. The evaluation and selection criteria were adjusted or supplemented to better reflect the inclusive dimension of vocational education and training in relation to the target group of students from MRC and, where applicable, other students from disadvantaged backgrounds, as well as the activities and outputs defined in the approved CuRI 5 Action Plan.

Regional partners – representatives of the PSK, BBSK, and KSK – proposed that the evaluation and selection criteria take into account already implemented investments in educational infrastructure, the untapped potential of SVS, the strategic goals of optimizing the SVS network, vocational education and training in F and H program groups, opportunities for providing practical training with employers, and educational support offered by other organizations.

The World Bank expert team further supplemented the evaluation and selection criteria with an emphasis on synergy and complementarity with already implemented or currently supported projects at the national and regional levels, including: the location of the SVS in a so-called priority district (additional selection criterion), the availability of vocational education and training in H group programs, planned significant/strategic investments in the territory, the school's potential (experience) in providing non-formal education, the accessibility of the SVS from municipalities with the presence of MRC (by public transport), and the outlook for quality employment opportunities (demand in the local or regional labor market).

FIGURE 2.1. Concentration of MRC population at the district and settlement levels



Source: Authors, 2025.

The evaluation and selection of the group of SVS were carried out in two steps:

In the first step, SVS nominated during the CuRI 1-4 selection process were reassessed (these included schools already selected for their focus on inclusive education and training, such as satellite campuses of SVS in Rakúsy and Stará Ľubovňa – Lomnička for the PSK, the Joint School in Poltár and the Secondary Vocational School – Szakközépiskola in Tornaľa for the BBSK, the Technical SVS in Rožňava and the SVS of Agri-Tech and Gastronomy Services in Pribeník for the KSK). At the same time, the size and importance of the location were taken into account – whether a village, town, or district town – with the exception of the SVS in Pribeník and Čaklov, which are not located in district towns but are close to municipalities with a high concentration of MRC.

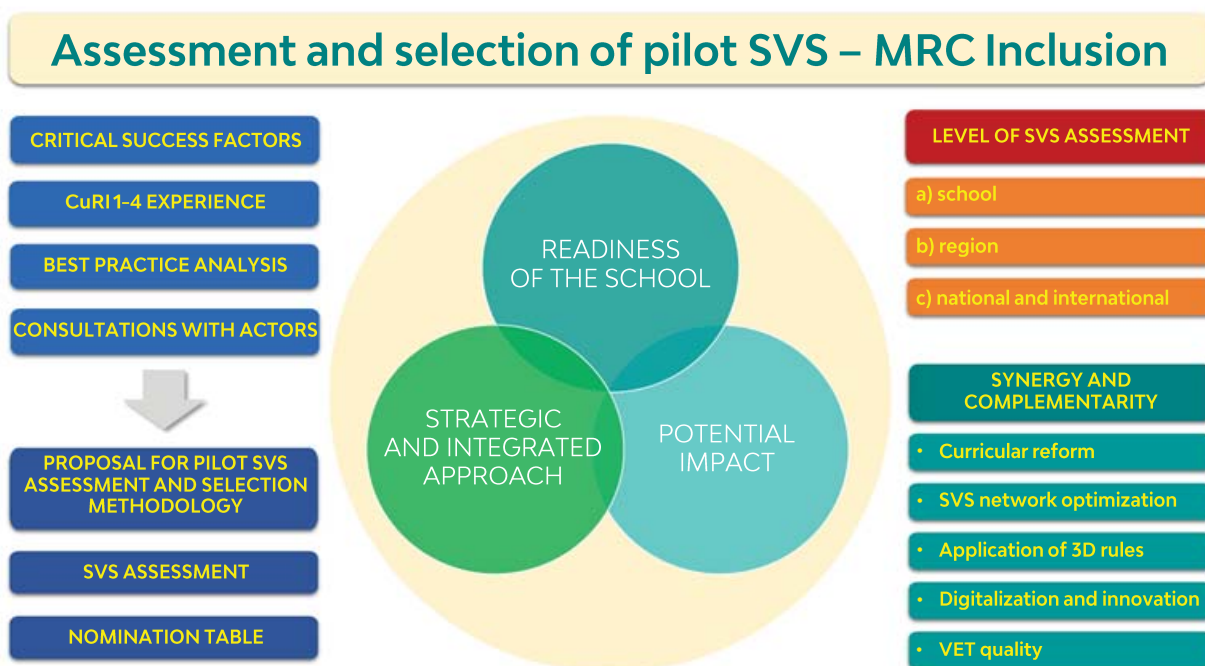
In the second step, the SVS from the first round were supplemented with additional SVS that met the expanded evaluation and selection criteria, ensuring that at least five SVS per region were proposed in the nomination table as pilot schools for CuRI 5.

The selected evaluation criteria for the selection process are divided into two areas:

1) Institutional prerequisites (including a clear vision and strategy, demonstrable school results in the field of inclusion, the school's adaptive capacity, cooperation with stakeholders in the territory, institutional conditions, school culture and climate, support from the founder, a suitable curriculum – presence of at least F programs or H programs, participation in national projects of the PSK or the BBSK, participation in previous phases of CuRI)

2) Resources (including human resources and capacities of the secondary school, existing/supported infrastructure, demand for qualified labor, potential for multi-source co-financing, cross-sector cooperation, etc.)

FIGURE 2.2. Thematic survey – Pilot SVS selection methodology



Source: Authors, 2025.

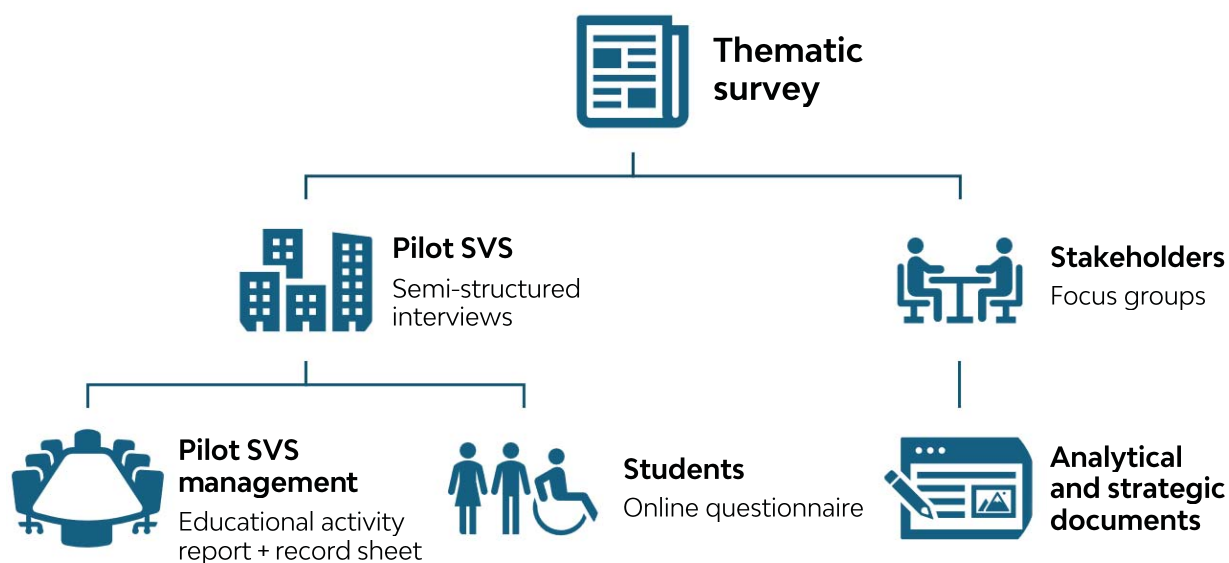
Each SVS was subsequently evaluated according to the agreed criteria by two experts from the World Bank, and the evaluation results along with the proposed nomination table were presented to the regional education departments prior to approval by the CuRI Steering Committee. The nomination table also included SVS that had not previously served as pilot schools in earlier years (three SVS under the authority of the self-governing regions, one private and church-run SVS), but which demonstrated the required level of readiness and inclusion.

2.2. METHODOLOGY FOR THE THEMATIC SURVEY ON INCLUSION IN VET

Based on the experience of the World Bank expert team, partner experts, and representatives of regional education departments, a comprehensive methodology was developed for the thematic survey in the field of inclusive VET. Its aim was to pilot the collection of primarily qualitative data, identify gaps in the availability of quantitative data at all levels of decision-making, assess the current state of inclusive approaches toward students from MRC, map best practices in pilot schools and among local stakeholders as well as abroad, and jointly develop a set of recommendations and interventions at the national, regional, and local levels.

The individual sections of this report provide a more detailed description of the approaches used in the thematic survey conducted at selected secondary vocational schools, focusing on the attitudes of students in lower secondary vocational education programs – specifically F and H programs – including analytical findings and proposed recommendations.

FIGURE 2.3. Thematic survey – Data collection methodology



Source: Authors, 2025.

The thematic survey was conducted in all three regions on a sample of selected secondary vocational schools – pilot SVS – that were recommended based on expert evaluation according to the approved methodology for selecting pilot SVS for the activities of the CuRI 5 Action Plan.

The intention behind selecting a limited number of SVS was to gain a deeper understanding of the local context and the ecosystem of each specific school, engage relevant stakeholders, and develop a set of recommendations and interventions aligned with the specific local baseline conditions of the selected pilot SVS.

The thematic survey at the level of individual pilot schools was conducted through a semi-structured interview (record sheet) led by two experts during an in-person meeting – with the exception of schools under the authority of the BBSK – and was supplemented by quantitative data obtained from publicly available statistical sources (public information databases) and by the results of previous surveys and assessments carried out by the World Bank expert team. Representatives of the pilot SVS also had the opportunity to participate in focus groups conducted with other stakeholders.

The thematic survey among students in F and H program groups was conducted, following consultations with the pilot SVS, through an anonymized online questionnaire developed by experts based on international methodologies and in consultation with SVS representatives.

Qualitative data from other stakeholders were collected through focus groups with actors forming the ecosystem of each specific pilot school, and were supplemented by roundtable discussions with the education departments of the Košice and Prešov Self-Governing Regions.

Thematic survey at pilot secondary vocational schools

The aim of the thematic survey at pilot SVS was to analyze the baseline situation in greater detail, identify problem areas that hinder the school’s ability to provide high-quality inclusive VET, and verify school-specific data obtained through the analysis of publicly available sources. These served as inputs for drafting concrete recommendations and proposing possible investments for each school. A key advantage of the World Bank expert team was their continuous involvement in all CuRI component activities since 2018 and their long-term monitoring of the progress of individual SVS.

The thematic survey at selected pilot SVS was carried out in agreement with the regional education departments in three steps:

- Informing the SVS about their inclusion in the thematic survey and the objectives of the CuRI 5 activity – setting a meeting date with school management and sending preparatory materials in advance
- Preparing the record sheet for the semi-structured interview by supplementing it with information from publicly available sources, interviews with representatives of regional education departments and World Bank experts prior to the meeting, including follow-up questions
- Conducting the meeting between World Bank experts and school leadership on the premises of the SVS (except for SVS in the BBSK), including the provision of expert feedback on the findings from the school assessment

The semi-structured interview with SVS representatives, lasting approximately two hours, was based on the methodology for assessing and selecting pilot SVS and consisted of two parts: 20 core questions and an open discussion on topics related to the inclusion of students from MRC. The core questions were the same for all pilot schools, while follow-up questions varied depending on the specific context or the availability of public data. The questions focused on the following areas: the school's readiness and culture in relation to inclusion, the potential impact of the school's activities on stakeholders, and the school's role within the local ecosystem.

The school's readiness and culture are crucial for interpreting the findings from the online student questionnaire and focus groups with stakeholders. These are often expressed through concepts such as acceptance, safety, engagement, openness, and support.

The potential impact of a school's activities allows for an assessment of how its vision and development align with its core values, helps identify gaps, and supports the design of targeted interventions to strengthen the role and position of the SVS within the local ecosystem and its specific territory. A dedicated part of the evaluation focused on the impact of the school's activities on the target group of students from MRC. Focus group participants perceive a school's potential impact in terms such as: attractiveness, opportunity, and being a high-quality and reputable school.

The position of the school within the local ecosystem is a key prerequisite for establishing a future network or cluster of SVS at least at the regional level, or for creating a local/regional platform as a cross-sector partnership. It can also serve as a foundation for the future specialization or transformation of the school – for example, into a corporate school, a joint training center for multiple companies, and similar models. Within focus groups, this dimension builds on participants' visions of possible scenarios and the future of VET in Slovakia.

The pilot-tested methodology can serve as one of the tools for school self-assessment in the area of inclusion, as part of the quality framework for vocational education and training developed and recommended by the World Bank under CuRI 2 and CuRI 3. A sample interview record sheet for the semi-structured interview with school representatives is provided in Annex 3 of this report.

Focus groups with stakeholders

For the facilitation of focus groups with stakeholders, a methodology pilot-tested by World Bank experts during CuRI 1 activities was used. The selection of focus group participants was based on consultations with regional education departments and school representatives. Priority was given to stakeholders operating or conducting activities near the school's location, those cooperating with the school, or those having a direct impact on the functioning and development of the SVS. Only in one case was participant selection carried out by an entity other than the expert team, in line with the methodology. A detailed scenario, introductory presentation, set of questions, and supporting materials were prepared for each focus group.

Online questionnaire survey for SVS students from MRC

The aim of the thematic survey among students from MRC enrolled primarily in F and H vocational programs at pilot SVS was to analyze their needs, attitudes, and opinions, their perception of inclusion and the school environment, their recommendations for improving the SVS, and to gather basic information about their studies and socio-economic background. The primary data collection method used was an online questionnaire survey.

The reason for the extensive collection of qualitative data from the target group of students from MRC was the fact that no such survey had previously been conducted in Slovakia, and the expert team did not have access to publicly available analyses of the required quality and scope.

The design of the online questionnaire was pilot-tested prior to its launch and subsequently adapted to the needs of the target group and the expert team's requirements for inputs and the scope of qualitative data.

The aim of assessing the views and needs of students at selected pilot SVS was to answer the following key questions and thematic areas:

1. What motivates the respondents (students) in choosing a particular school? *(How did they make decisions about their future?)*
2. How does their school support them in their studies and future decisions? *(What activities does the school undertake to encourage students to complete the SVS or continue their studies and succeed in the labor market vs. what support do students actually use? What support would students expect?)*
3. What barriers do students perceive in their studies and in successfully completing them? *(Do these barriers differ based on student profile, such as age, program type, motivational factors, type of internship, socio-economic background?)*
4. Does the school represent a safe and inclusive space for students, where they are treated individually and without discrimination, and where they enjoy spending time? *(What is the level of inclusion as perceived by students – how much acceptance, freedom, satisfaction, and individualized attention do they experience at school?)*

The online questionnaire survey consisted of three parts: basic information and student profile, level of inclusion and the school environment, and individual student responses (open-ended questions).

The research sample included students of all grades in full-time F and H vocational programs at the selected pilot SVS, including those at satellite campuses.

The online questionnaire also included instructions for the designated representative of each pilot SVS to ensure the successful implementation of the survey and the participation of students, in line with the consultations and agreements made with the school principals.

Analysis of best practice examples

The analysis of best practices in this document is based on the definition that a best practice is considered to be any positive intervention or action (mechanism, model, methodology, activity, or program) that supports active inclusion, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination in the described context in relation to the selected target group.

Characteristics of a best practice to be included in the Best Practice Database:

- It must be successful in addressing a challenge in the field of educational inclusion, results-oriented, and allow for assessment of its social impact.

- It should be innovative, bringing a new or different approach compared to traditional practices. Innovation is defined as a new or alternative solution that exists within a specific territory, sector, topic, or school level. The solution must be not only entirely new but also transferable to other contexts. Innovations may occur at the process level (e.g. evaluation, content, methods, approaches, tools), the object level (e.g. new challenge, new topic), or the context level (e.g. adaptation or improvement of existing conditions, networking, etc.).
- It must have the potential for multiplication or transferability to other areas or contexts (either horizontally as dissemination or vertically as integration or regulation).
- It must be sustainable (self-financing or self-sufficient), meaning:
 - a) it is based on a clearly identified need,
 - b) it is considered a service, and/or
 - c) it is capable of generating a benefit for society.

The analysis included best practice examples in the following areas:

1. Education and training (with a focus on vocational education and training): lifelong learning, apprenticeship training, and education that challenges existing stereotypes
2. Employability: transition from school to work, labor market integration, cooperation, and networking among stakeholders
3. Use of new technologies: digital technologies and support services, digital technologies and inclusive education

For each best practice example, a protocol was prepared (Annex 6a of this document), which includes the following information: title, theme (selected from the three thematic areas), keywords, brief description (limited in length, focused on context, objectives, participating institutions, and the characteristics of the target group), description of the innovation, brief summary of the approach and methodology, recommendations for transferability, and additional information, including contact details and related sources (protocols for the included best practice examples are listed in Annex 6b to this report).

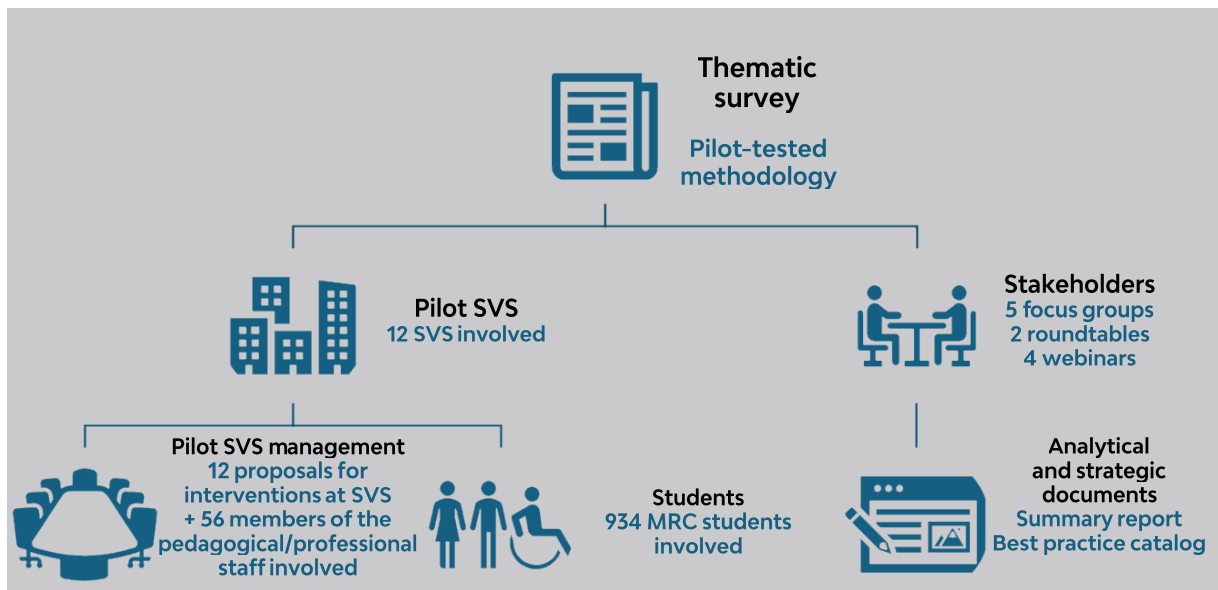
Summary

The Centre for Equity in Education, established at the University of Manchester, has defined three key areas for education reform aimed at creating a more equitable system. These should be taken into account during the reform process:

1. A more thorough analysis of the local context in which education takes place.
2. Creation of new educational opportunities based on connecting the school with the lives of different student groups, their family backgrounds, experiences, and expectations.
3. Introduction of leadership and accountability measures that strengthen relationships between the local and national levels, between education providers, and between the education system, students, their families, and communities.

As illustrated in Figure 2.4, the purpose of the thematic survey on inclusion in VET was to conduct, based on the proposed methodology, a more in-depth analysis of the local context at selected pilot schools, identify new educational opportunities and new types of interventions, engage relevant stakeholders in collaboration and co-creation of solution proposals, and present a set of recommendations to stakeholders for strengthening multi-level governance and cross-sector cooperation.

FIGURE 2.4. Thematic survey – Results achieved



Source: Authors, 2025.

3. ANALYSES AND FINDINGS

At the beginning of this section, we present the analytical findings from the various components of the thematic survey conducted at selected pilot SVS, including focus groups and the online survey targeting students enrolled in F and H program groups at these pilot schools.

3.1. THEMATIC SURVEY

The methodology for the thematic survey is based on international methodologies and the experience of the World Bank expert team, and builds on the methodologies and outcomes of previous phases of CuRI implemented between 2018 and 2023.

The aim of the thematic survey was to pilot-test the proposed methodology in the field, supplement existing publicly available data with qualitative data, and enable their use for strategic planning and the development of practical recommendations at the school or founder level, with the intended positive impact of improving the quality of vocational education and training and the level of inclusion.

The thematic survey was conducted in accordance with the developed and approved methodology, focusing primarily on the collection of qualitative data and the verification of selected quantitative data, specifically:

- at selected secondary vocational schools in the PSK, BBSK, and KSK,
- with students enrolled in F and H program groups at selected SVS,
- with selected employers located in the areas where the selected secondary vocational schools are based,
- with selected employer and professional organizations,
- with representatives of other institutions, public administration, and non-governmental organizations, and
- with parents of students attending the selected SVS.

A total of 12 secondary vocational schools participated in the thematic survey, including 11 public SVS under the authority of self-governing regions. The individual components of the methodology are presented in Annex 2.

3.2. SECONDARY VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS AND INCLUSIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The thematic survey was carried out through individual in-person meetings between World Bank experts (except in the case of SVS in the BBSK) and school management representatives, using a semi-structured interview format. The questions were based on findings about each specific school drawn from publicly available sources (such as the school's Educational Activity Report, CVTI databases, World Bank data, and others). The first part of the meeting involved completing the school's interview record sheet, while the second part was dedicated to an open discussion on related topics, which most often included: improving the quality of VET, student motivation,

educational innovations, cooperation and networking with local stakeholders, and suggestions from school leadership – e.g., regarding legislative changes.

The selection of pilot SVS was approved by the CuRI Steering Committee and was based on an assessment of all SVS under the authority of the PSK, BBSK, and KSK, using a comprehensive evaluation of each school’s need and readiness for change. The outcome of this process was the so-called nomination table (see Table 3.1). The evaluation was provided internally to the schools as feedback from an independent assessment and can serve as a basis for developing the school’s development strategy, inclusion plan, or other strategic documents.

TABLE 3.1. Final nomination table of pilot SVS

PSK (3)	BBSK (4)	KSK (5)
Joint School in Stará Ľubovňa and Practical Training – Satellite Campus in Lomnička	Secondary Technical Vocational School in Lučenec	Secondary Technical Vocational School in Rožňava
Army Gen. L. Svoboda Secondary Vocational Polytechnic and Services School in Svidník	Joint School in Poltár	Secondary Vocational School of Engineering and Services in Spišská Nová Ves – Satellite Campus in Krompachy
Joint School in Čaklov	Secondary Vocational School of Trade and Services in Krupina	Secondary Vocational School of Agri-Tech and Gastronomy Services in Pribeník
		St. Josaphat Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry in Trebišov
		Secondary Vocational School of Industrial Technologies in Košice-Šaca

Legend: green – pilot schools from the 1st group of pilot schools, red – pilot schools from the 2nd group of pilot schools, blue – pilot school selected due to support from a strategic investor

Source: Authors, 2024.

The preparation and implementation of the qualitative survey at selected pilot SVS represents one of the key inputs for planning the development and activities of the school in the area of inclusion of students from MRC. All pilot-tested tools can be used by school leadership, particularly in the process of self-assessment or peer-review evaluation, as part of the overall quality assessment of vocational education and training.

To develop a school policy and, subsequently, a school development strategy (which may also form part of a quality improvement plan for VET), it is advisable to establish a coordination group. This group should identify and, through consultations and discussion, propose development priorities for the school in the area of inclusive VET. This would represent a shift from a declarative approach to one that is genuinely monitored and evaluated, with the potential for benchmarking across schools. Currently, the selected SVS do not have a unified system for monitoring and evaluating inclusion, nor a defined set of indicators.

In the process of collecting qualitative data at selected SVS, we identified the following priorities of the schools in the area of supporting the inclusion and integration of students from MRC:

TABLE 3.2. Identified activities and priorities of pilot SVS

Priority / school	S 1	S 2	S 3	S 4	S 5	S 6	S 7	S 8	S 9	S 10	S 11	S 12
Introduction of school-based educational/welcoming rituals (e.g. for new students, school completion ceremonies)												
Organization of staff development activities to ensure inclusive VET / support for diversity												
Implementation of career standards for teaching assistants and other pedagogical/professional staff working with MRC												
Linking educational and extracurricular/leisure activities (e.g. growing vegetables on school grounds, joint meal preparation, composting), cooperation with local organizations												
Improving accessibility and barrier-free access for students and staff												
Integration of all forms of learning support												
Introduction of value-based literacy activities for students and staff (e.g. "Value of the Month")												
Organization of joint training sessions/workshops for pedagogical/professional staff and other collaborators involved in MRC inclusion												
Development of group-based learning among students, including cross-class learning												
Monitoring bullying and other negative phenomena and adjusting preventive measures accordingly												
Increasing student involvement in school decision-making and policies (e.g. through student councils)												
Promoting positive attitudes toward ethnic diversity through teaching and other activities												
Improving communication between the school and parents/guardians												
Preparation and implementation of study visits and mobility opportunities (e.g. Erasmus+) for students from MRC												

Source: Authors, 2024.

Individual in-person meetings between World Bank experts and representatives of the pilot SVS enabled the following:

- Better mapping of stakeholders (both active and inactive) who form part of the school's ecosystem, including the extent, form, and content of their cooperation
- Verification and acquisition of relevant quantitative and qualitative data to inform the development of data-driven proposals and recommendations, including inputs for the strategic or development documents of the SVS and its founder
- Generation of ideas for creating a model of the local ecosystem of the pilot school
- Enrichment of the best practice database
- Joint development of new approaches and social innovations aimed at supporting inclusion in VET

- Identification of potential barriers to improving the quality of VET, with a focus on the inclusion of students from MRC

During the meetings, it became evident that pilot schools often implement interventions “randomly,” based on guidelines from the ministry or its expert organizations, instructions from the school founder, or as a result of training completed by teaching or professional staff. These interventions are usually limited to a single area – for example, student support through mentoring – without integration with other measures, such as linking mentoring to practical tasks in the classroom, as recommended in the *Catalog of Support Measures*⁸. Although the Ministry of Education’s website provides basic resources – general information, the *Catalog of Support Measures*, accompanying methodological materials, and information on funding for support measures – overall awareness and understanding of these resources at SVS level is insufficient.

BOX 3.1. Example of possible interventions to support inclusive VET in selected areas

Interventions in the area of teaching organization	Interventions in the area of teaching methods and forms
Adjustment of the teaching schedule (time, location, blocks)	Individual work with the student
Establishment of an additional workstation for the student	Structuring of instruction
Alternative teaching arrangements	Cooperative learning
Modification of the seating arrangement in the classroom	Active learning methods
Reduction in the number of students per class	Instruction tailored to learning styles
Formation of classroom teams	Supporting student motivation
Education in non-school environments	Fatigue prevention and focus enhancement
Extracurricular stays and training programs	Regular checking of understanding
Organization of leisure time within the school	Teaching methods appropriate to the pedagogical context
Provision of social services on school premises	

Source: Own elaboration based on best practice analysis and thematic survey, authors 2024.

The thematic survey revealed, above all, the need for improved cooperation and experience sharing among SVS not only within regions (only 16% of pilot SVS reported active collaboration with another SVS in any area of potential cooperation), better awareness among schools about available opportunities to participate in national and international projects and support programs (only 50% of pilot SVS are engaged in international cooperation), and the need for targeted long-term financial support for inclusion across all SVS in order to achieve synergy. Not all schools have School Support Teams (SST) funded from EU sources; however, all pilot SVS are supported through national projects implemented by self-governing regions and have either formed an SST or at least designated a staff member responsible for inclusion or for supporting students from MRC.

Given that 75% of the pilot SVS involved in the thematic survey have been and will continue to be supported by EU funds as CuRI pilot schools – and that these investments will target not only physical infrastructure but also educational content innovation, training of teaching and professional staff, and support services through national projects – it is essential to monitor and evaluate the impact of these investments, particularly in relation to improvements in the quality of VET and inclusion. Monitoring and evaluation systems should include the systematic collection of qualitative data from students and partner organizations, as well as the involvement of MRC representatives – both students and parents – in school processes. Currently, 25% of SVS report having an MRC representative on the school board or otherwise engaged in school governance.

Among the most frequently cooperating entities – aside from employers involved in dual education – are the Offices of Labor, Social Affairs and Family (OLSAF), existing community centers, a small group of non-governmental organizations, and churches. Cooperation with local administration is also expanding. However, none of the pilot schools reported any collaboration with a research organization or university.

Representatives of the pilot SVS also emphasized the need to create more opportunities for funding small-scale pilot projects directly at schools, including those focused on the transfer of social innovations from abroad, tailored to the specific needs identified by each school. They highlighted the importance of supporting the development of the school ecosystem, including backing for school partners, as a foundation for creating a model of sustainable financing. In the future, it will also be necessary to reconsider the overall funding model for VET.

Findings

- With the exception of one SVS, schools did not include a clear vision and strategy for supporting inclusive VET in their strategic documents; secondary vocational schools lack comprehensive long-term strategies or plans for inclusion.
- SVS in the PSK and the BBSK cannot be directly compared with SVS in the KSK due to the targeted support of inclusion through national projects funded by the school founders; nonetheless, these schools achieve good results in the inclusion of students.
- SVS do not sufficiently implement the interventions proposed by the ministry, one reason being the lack of a systematic approach in practical application (improved awareness and simultaneous capacity building are needed).
- Not all SVS have established and EU-funded support teams, but in each SVS there is at least one teacher responsible for working with students from MRC, or the entire school operates as a support team. Not all selected schools were included in NP POP 2/POP 3 or in other supported national projects implemented by the school founders. However, every SVS has at least one pedagogical staff member responsible for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Cooperation between schools and networking with stakeholders is insufficient, and the forms of cooperation are more “traditional” than innovative. Secondary vocational schools cooperate only with a limited number of non-governmental organizations and to a limited extent, most often based on the initiative of the NGO – the most frequently mentioned non-profit or cooperating entities in the survey included: Človek v ohrození (children, students, whole community), Zdravé regióny (primarily in the area of health and prevention, originally a non-profit), Teach for Slovakia (in cooperation with primary schools), Roma Education Fund (scholarship programs, mentoring), ETP Slovensko (practical education and self-help construction), Greek Catholic Roma Mission (GRM, support activities).
- Schools identify communicating with parents and motivating students to achieve better academic results and to complete their studies at least with a certificate of apprenticeship as key challenges.
- There is no platform for the exchange of best practices and sharing of experiences among schools with a high proportion of students from MRC.
- Support for secondary vocational schools in the area of inclusion is not based on any transparent criteria.
- None of the pilot SVS has implemented a system for monitoring and evaluating inclusion using indicators.
- The rate of early school leaving among students from MRC is in reality higher than officially reported.
- Secondary vocational schools have low motivation and limited capacity to introduce social innovations into the school environment.
- Interregional and international cooperation is insufficient; joint international programs for students from MRC are rare.
- The annually published approved Reports on the Educational Activities of the school are not sufficient for monitoring and evaluating the level of inclusion in VET.
- Participation of students from MRC in school governance is not a common standard among secondary vocational schools, e.g. through student councils, representation in the school board, etc.
- Especially SVS supported by national projects implemented by school founders (the PSK and the BBSK) under CuRI are building their own ecosystem and school community, and are intentionally developing their school locality (networking of stakeholders, joint projects and programs).

Scholarship Programs: Financial Support Driving Academic Commitment

Slovakia has launched several fully funded scholarship initiatives aimed at both domestic and international students. These programs have significantly reduced financial barriers and incentivized consistent attendance and academic engagement.

- Slovakia Scholarships for Talented Students (2025–2026).
- Funded by the Ministry of Education, these scholarships offer up to €15,000 per student.
- Cover tuition, living costs, and public health insurance.
- Target students pursuing Bachelor's, Master's, or combined degrees at public universities.
- Include a monthly stipend of €500 for 10 months per academic year.
- Emphasize fields aligned with Slovakia's Smart Specialisation Strategy (SK RIS3 2021+), encouraging participation in priority sectors.

These scholarships have not only attracted high-performing students but also boosted retention rates, especially among those from disadvantaged backgrounds or rural areas.

Slovakia's government has adopted multi-year action plans to implement its Strategy for an Inclusive Approach in Education until 2030, with a strong focus on improving attendance and participation. Second Action Plan (2025–2027) was developed by a cross-sector working group including public officials, NGOs, and private sector reps. It focuses on: desegregation and removal of barriers in school environments; support systems for migrant and refugee students, including Slovak language acquisition; training for educators in inclusive teaching practices; and transparent admissions for secondary schools to ensure equity. Other actions helped also the

- Roma Inclusion Strategy Action Plans (2022–2024):
- Target marginalized Roma communities with measures like:
- Early childhood care programs.
- Parenting and family literacy support.
- Desegregation and inclusive curriculum development.

These plans have led to measurable improvements in school readiness, attendance, and long-term engagement among vulnerable student populations.

Employer Engagement: Bridging Education and the Labor Market

Slovakia has made strides in connecting students with employers, which has proven to be a powerful motivator for attendance and participation.

- Career Guidance and Employer Engagement Initiatives:
 - Programs involve workplace visits, mentoring, and internships to expose students to real-world career paths.
 - Employer-led activities help students develop soft skills, understand labor market expectations, and see the relevance of their education.
 - Vocational Education and Training (VET) Optimization. Regional authorities are merging schools and aligning curricula with local labor market needs. Also, employer input is used to shape training programs, making education more practical and career-oriented.
 - University-Employer Collaboration: Studies show that employers value engagement, adaptability, and willingness to learn, and universities are adjusting programs to meet these expectations.

These efforts have helped students stay motivated, attend regularly, and participate actively, knowing their education is directly linked to future employment opportunities.

3.3. FOCUS GROUP MEETING WITH PARENTS OF SVS STUDENTS

In line with the pilot-tested methodology, in addition to informal interviews with parents of students from MRC attending SVS, a focus group with parents from one pilot SVS was conducted in October 2024, following a pre-agreed scenario. The aim of the focus group was to supplement qualitative data, particularly in the areas of student motivation, family and community support, identification of factors influencing early school leaving, and school-family cooperation.

Findings

- Parents of students consider F group programs to be unattractive and lacking future employment prospects in their place of residence, district, or region, which diminishes the perceived value of education for their daily life.
- The offer of vocational programs does not align with labor market demand or the expectations and plans of parents.
- In choosing an SVS, parents often rely on their own experiences, with their greatest concern being whether their children will be accepted and not face discrimination, bullying, or segregation. This leads to a preference for F and H group programs with a high proportion of students from MRC or other disadvantaged populations.
- Parents perceive the school environment, its facilities, and equipment as outdated and inadequate compared to other SVS with fewer MRC students.
- Parents appreciate the school's atmosphere and culture, and the approach of its staff,
- Communication with the school via the Edupage portal is not considered suitable or sufficient for everyone. Likewise, participation in parent meetings is seen as insufficient. Parents prefer communication through a designated school staff member either in the community or at the community center.
- Parents pointed out that the school typically contacts them only in case of a problem; positive feedback or recognition is rare.
- Financial contributions would serve as motivation only if they did not affect already provided social benefits such as MNA or parental allowance.
- Practical training at an employer's site, with a subsequent employment commitment and adequate remuneration, would be a motivating factor for students in vocational programs to remain in education.
- The provision of interest-based education and leisure activities at school (with a preference for sports) would motivate both students and parents to choose, remain in, and complete education.

3.4. FOCUS GROUP MEETING WITH EMPLOYERS

During the event “Optimal setting of conditions in training centers from the employer’s perspective,” held in cooperation with the Regional Chamber of the Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) in Prešov in June 2024, two focus group meetings were conducted for the PSK and the KSK. These meetings complemented and expanded the qualitative data gradually collected through thematic research at pilot SVS, among students, and other stakeholders. During the meetings, participants answered the following questions in accordance with focus group guidelines:

1. What forms of support do employers expect when providing practical education and training for students from MRC in F and H group programs?
2. What do they consider the biggest barriers to providing practical education and training for students from MRC in F and H group programs?
3. How can employers actively participate in supporting students from MRC, including supporting their successful transition from school to their first job?

4. What will be decisive for an employer to actively participate in the pilot testing of the training center concept together with a selected SVS or multiple SVS?

The focus groups included employers headquartered or operating near the pilot SVS to ensure that the qualitative data gathered could be used in the development of a specific ecosystem for the pilot SVS. With employers from the BBSK, only informal interviews were conducted using the focus group questions, in cooperation with the Regional Chamber of SCCI in Banská Bystrica.

Findings

- The majority of participating employers have experience with implementing dual education and still perceive the system as highly administratively demanding, requiring additional costs to provide practical training and education for one of the pilot SVS.
- A major barrier is seen in legislation and the low level of flexibility in employment regulations, which prevents them from offering other forms of practical vocational training combined with financial remuneration to students under the age of 16 (partial legislative adjustment was introduced in 2024).
- Employers would welcome it if, alongside on-the-job training, schools provided support services and non-formal education to help students from MRC acquire soft skills.
- The combination of support tools for employers needs to be tailored specifically based on the employer's size, sector, type of practical training provided, and the student's vocational program.
- Employers are interested in aligning corporate vocational training methods with the theoretical and practical curriculum offered by schools.
- Employers supported the proposed concept of training centers and suggested the following conditions – group size limited to a maximum of six students, clear definition of trainer competencies, rules for the use of the training centre's material and technical equipment in cases of shared infrastructure, conditions for recognising learning outcomes from the training centre, clear legal conditions for providing financial compensation, additional use and support from EU funds in line with state aid regulations (synergy and complementarity at least with active labour market policy tools).
- Potential areas of cooperation: mutual exchange of information and data, mentoring and tutoring provided by the employer as part of school support services, engagement of corporate volunteers, and provision of non-financial benefits to students.

3.5. FOCUS GROUP MEETING WITH VET STAKEHOLDERS

The aim of conducting focus groups with stakeholders in the field of vocational education and training was also to gather qualitative data from other actors alongside employers. Two focus groups held in Košice and Prešov in October 2024 were attended by key stakeholders: representatives of the PSK and KSK Departments of Education, selected principals of pilot SVS, representatives of professional associations, representatives of state administration – Offices of Labor, Social Affairs and Family, the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, and representatives of non-governmental organizations. After an introductory presentation of the training center concept and recommendations based on a preliminary analysis of available quantitative and qualitative data, the focus groups focused on the following questions:

1. What constitutes the ecosystem of an SVS, who are the actors within this ecosystem, and what are their roles?
2. What hinders better cooperation among relevant actors at the local, regional, and national levels?
3. What kind of support would SVS providing VET in F and H group programs to students from MRC need?

Findings

- Most participants pointed to a high degree of information asymmetry caused by the fragmentation of information sources at various levels of the system, which often hinders more active involvement of actors in cooperation with SVS.
- Lack of financial support for joint/partnership projects of actors focused on building a local school ecosystem.
- SVS lack sufficient capacities to create a school ecosystem and engage in long-term cooperation; capacities include both methodological materials and skills.
- Actors have few opportunities to engage in co-creation of solutions or projects and to deepen understanding of differences, such as school processes and constraints on the employer side. Employers rarely participate in the development of school strategies.
- In some cases, legislation is a barrier to better cooperation between SVS and actors, e.g., state aid rules, regulation of schools' business activities, and provision of various forms of financial support to students.
- Sectoral models of cooperation with SVS, including models for multi-source funding, would be suitable for employers.
- Employers have specific suggestions for changes in completing VET (e.g., vocational master exams, issuance of a vocational certificate if students fail the final exam, etc.).
- Attention needs to be paid to the integration of services provided from different sources and by multiple ministries, both for students and for schools, communities, and employers.
- Use of temporary compensatory measures and the need for increased support for girls/women to attain higher qualifications.
- According to participants, SVS need to be supported systematically, over the long term, and comprehensively, based on clear criteria aligned with regional strategies and data-driven policies.
- Effective use of resources allocated to VET inclusion requires the application of a comprehensive, integrated, and specifically local territorial approach, building sufficient capacities, better coordination among actors, appropriate flexibility, space for innovation and experimentation, adequate time for project and program preparation and implementation, and, above all, reduced administrative burden.
- Strong interest was expressed among actors in implementing cross-cutting, inter-sectoral, and integrated projects across areas supporting students (education, employment, housing) in partnership.
- Importance of monitoring and evaluating implemented activities, projects, and programs.

3.6. STUDENTS OF PILOT SVS IN F AND H PROGRAMS

The aim of the thematic survey was to assess the opinions and needs of students from selected pilot SVS studying primarily in F and H vocational programs, their perception of the level of inclusion and the school environment at the SVS, their recommendations for improving the SVS, and to obtain basic information about their studies and socio-economic background. A questionnaire survey was used as the main method of data collection.

The questionnaire survey was preceded by the creation of the questionnaire, which was developed based on the approved methodology and the recommendations of the *Index for Inclusion: A Guide to Developing Schools with a Focus on Inclusive Values*. It was subsequently consulted with representatives of selected SVS and international experts from the World Bank. After incorporating the comments from the various stakeholders, an online questionnaire was created using the Google Forms tool due to its accessibility, ease of use by the target group, and the method of evaluation. The online questionnaire for students was aligned with the areas of inquiry at the pilot secondary vocational schools.

A total of 936 students from selected pilot SVS participated in the questionnaire survey, including 672 students from 10 public pilot SVS and 264 students from 1 private pilot SVS. Data collection took place between October 7–18, 2024 and November 14–20, 2024⁹. Along with the questionnaire survey, each SVS received instructions for teaching staff¹⁰ and a preview of the questionnaire.

In order to assess the opinions and needs of students from selected pilot SVS, we aimed to find answers to the following questions and areas:

1. What motivates the respondents (students) in choosing a particular school? *How did they make decisions about their future?*
2. How does their school support them in their studies and future decisions? *What activities does the school undertake to help students succeed in the labor market vs. what support do students actually use and need?*
3. What barriers do students perceive in their studies and in successfully completing them? *Do these barriers differ based on student profile, such as age, program type, motivational factors, type of internship, socio-economic background?*
4. Does the school represent a safe and inclusive space for students, where they are treated individually and without discrimination, and where they enjoy spending time? *What is the level of inclusion as perceived by students – how much acceptance, freedom, satisfaction, and individualized attention do they experience at school?*

3.6.1. Questionnaire structure

The online questionnaire survey consisted of three parts: basic information and student profile, level of inclusion and school environment, and individual student responses.

The first part of the questionnaire focused on gathering basic information about the students and their studies (attended SVS/satellite campus, vocational program, age structure, place of residence, means of transport to school), their socio-economic background (household structure, language proficiency¹¹, receipt of scholarship), their experience with on-site vocational training at an employer's workplace, plans after completing studies, motivational factors for choosing a specific SVS, the support provided by the SVS in making decisions about their future, and the support the student would need to successfully complete their studies.

The second part of the questionnaire concerned the level of inclusion and the school environment at the selected SVS. To express their attitude toward individual statements with regard to the target group of the questionnaire, a 3-point Likert scale in the form of emoticons was used. The statements focused on the student's relationship with the school and classmates, approach, support and level of trust from school staff, teaching methods, the school's approach to parents, and parental support for education.

The third part of the questionnaire consisted of three open-ended questions. In this section, students had the opportunity to express their opinion on the positive aspects of their studies and school, formulate their suggestions for improvements, or comment on other issues that were not covered in the questionnaire.

3.6.2. Research sample

The data collection was conducted online with the cooperation of the selected pilot SVS and their teaching staff. The questionnaire was intended for students of all grades in full-time study programs in F and H vocational programs at the selected pilot SVS, including their satellite campuses.

A total of 936 students¹² participated in the survey. The highest number of respondents came from St. Josaphat Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry in Trebišov (KSK), while the lowest number was recorded at the Secondary Technical Vocational School in Stará Ľubovňa. The survey included 10 public SVS, two satellite campuses, and one private SVS along with its satellite campus.

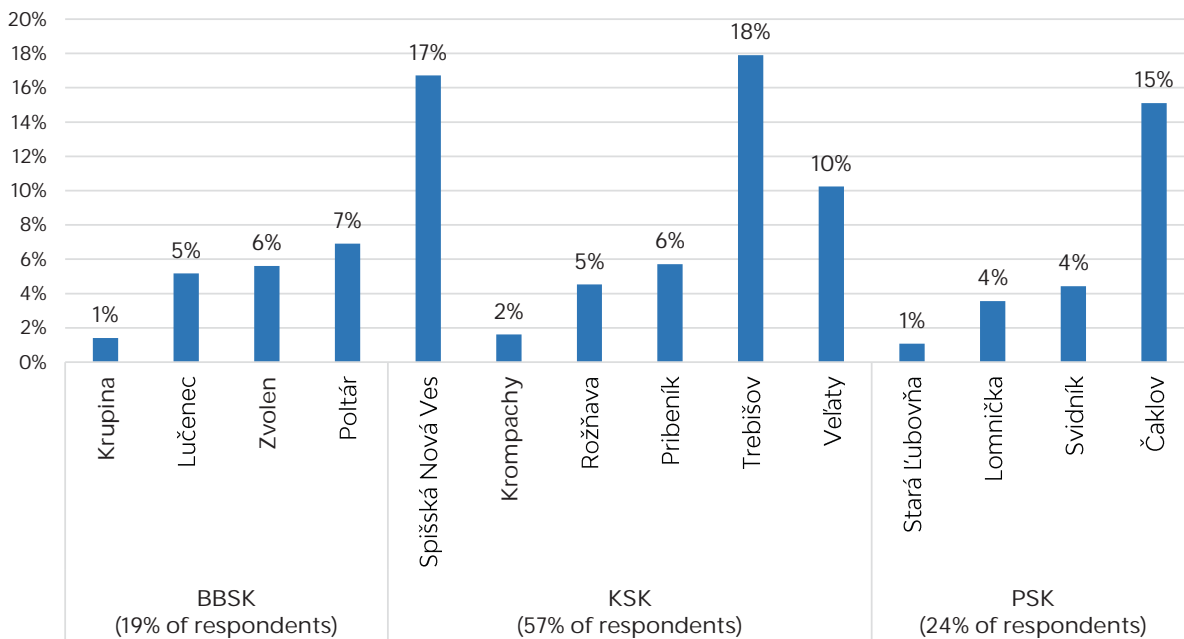
TABLE 3.4. Pilot SVS and satellite campuses included in the thematic SURVEY

Region	SVS type	Name	Town	2024/2025*
BBSK	state SVS	Joint School	Poltár	131
	state SVS	Secondary Technical Vocational School	Lučenec	93
	state SVS	Secondary Vocational School of Trade and Services	Krupina	93
	state SVS	Secondary Technical Vocational School	Zvolen	70
KSK	state SVS	Secondary Vocational School of Agri-Tech and Gastronomy Services	Pribeník	112
	state SVS	Secondary Vocational School of Engineering and Services	Spišská Nová Ves	529
		Satellite Campus as part of the Secondary Vocational School of Engineering and Services	Krompachy	150
	private SVS	St. Josaphat Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry	Trebišov	421
		Satellite Campus as part of St. Josaphat Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry	Veľaty	
PSK	state SVS	Secondary Technical Vocational School	Rožňava	94
	state SVS	Joint School	Stará Ľubovňa	303
		Satellite Campus as part of the Joint School	Lomnička	
	state SVS	Joint School	Čaklov	154
	state SVS	Army Gen. L. Svoboda Secondary Vocational Polytechnic and Services School	Svidník	183

Source: CVTI, RIS, authors, 2024.

* Number of students in the 2024/2025 school year enrolled in full-time F and H programs

CHART 3.1. Basic overview of participating pilot SVS involved in the questionnaire survey at the level of the self-governing regions

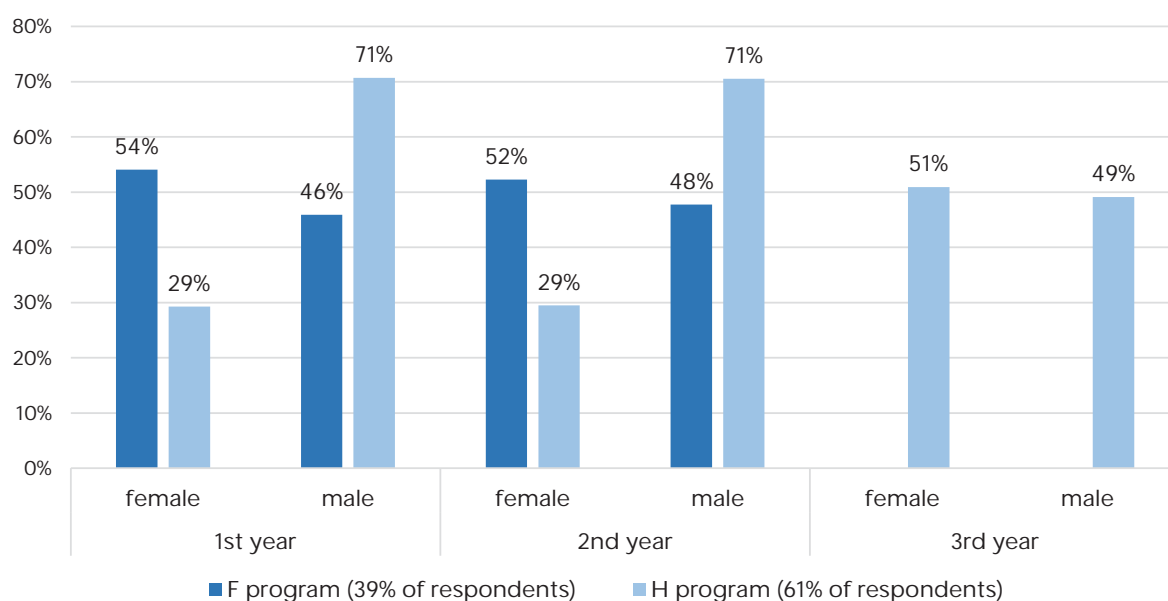


Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024. SVS are listed according to the location of the main school or satellite campus. The percentage of students participating in the questionnaire survey is shown as a proportion of the total number of participants.

Overview by program, year of study and gender

The questionnaire survey was intended for all full-time students enrolled in F and H programs¹³. The participation of students in the survey was managed by the individual selected pilot SVS. Within the research sample, nearly two-thirds of the respondents were students enrolled in H programs (3-year programs), while students in F programs (2-year programs) made up less than one-third of the sample. When comparing students by gender (see Chart 3.2), the proportion of male and female students in the F programs (without a certificate of apprenticeship) was similar (46% vs. 54%). However, in the H programs (with a certificate of apprenticeship), the ratio was two to one (66% male respondents, 34% female respondents). This difference may have been caused by an uneven distribution of the questionnaire by the individual SVS across the various programs and year levels.

CHART 3.2. Overview by program, year of study and gender



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Compared to publicly available data on the number of male and female students in the individual programs (Table 3.5), the proportion of female students out of the total number of students is around 40%. In the current school year, the proportion of female students in F programs is slightly higher compared to H programs (44% vs. 38%).

TABLE 3.5. Overview of the number of students at selected pilot schools for the school years 2023/2024 and 2024/2025

School year	Program	No. of students	% of women	Newly accepted into year 1	% of women	Last year's graduates	% of women
2023/2024	F	842	42%	441	40%	107	48%
	H	1 261	41%	451	39%	232	33%
2024/2025	F	920	44%	530	46%	192	48%
	H	1 413	38%	528	35%	275	32%

Source: CVTI 2024, authors, 2024.

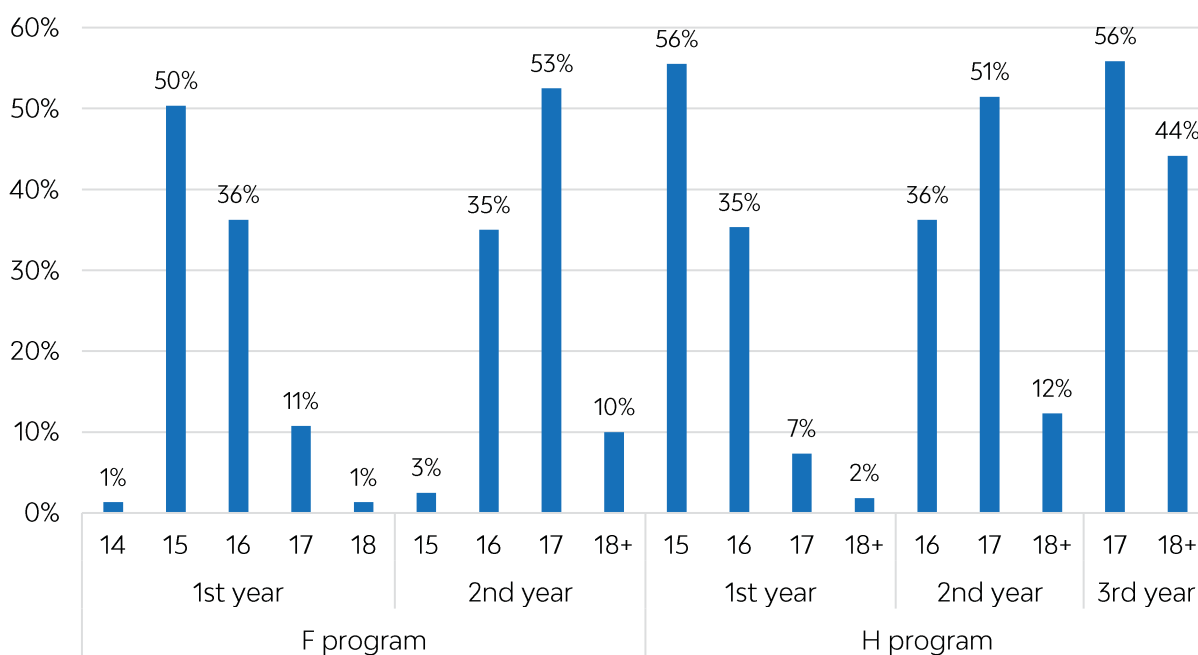
Age structure

Compulsory school attendance in Slovakia lasts ten years and continues at most until the end of the school year in which the student turns 16. Under normal circumstances, after completing the 9th grade of primary school (age 14–15), the student continues their 10th year of compulsory education at a selected secondary school (entry age 15–16). By successfully completing the 9th (final) grade of primary school, the student obtains lower secondary education. If this does not happen and the student has finished compulsory schooling (turned 16), they still have the opportunity to obtain lower secondary education by successfully passing a commission examination as part of the lower secondary vocational education programme (within the group of F programs)¹⁴.

The reasons for early school leaving from the perspective of the formal education system may vary – including attendance in year zero¹⁵ or repeating a year (or multiple years) at primary school.

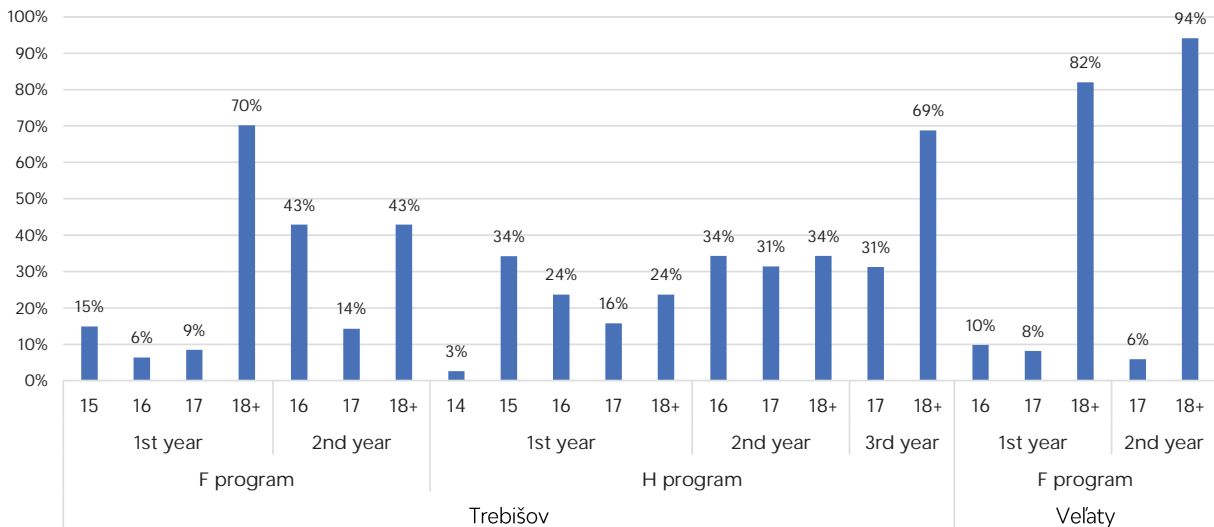
Looking at the age structure of students who participated in the questionnaire survey, students enrolled in the 1st year of F programs who are aged 17 and over make up as much as 79% of the total number of 1st year students at the private SVS in Trebišov and 90% at the satellite campus in Veľaty. In comparison, at the other participating SVS, this proportion is only 12%. From this, it can be inferred that most students at the Trebišov SVS and at the satellite campus in Veľaty are enrolled in F programs primarily due to early school leaving and the need to obtain lower secondary vocational education (LSVE).

CHART 3.3. Age structure by program and year, pilot SVS excluding St. Josaphat SVS of Services and Industry in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

CHART 3.4. Age structure by field and year of study, St. Josaphat SVS of Services and Industry in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty

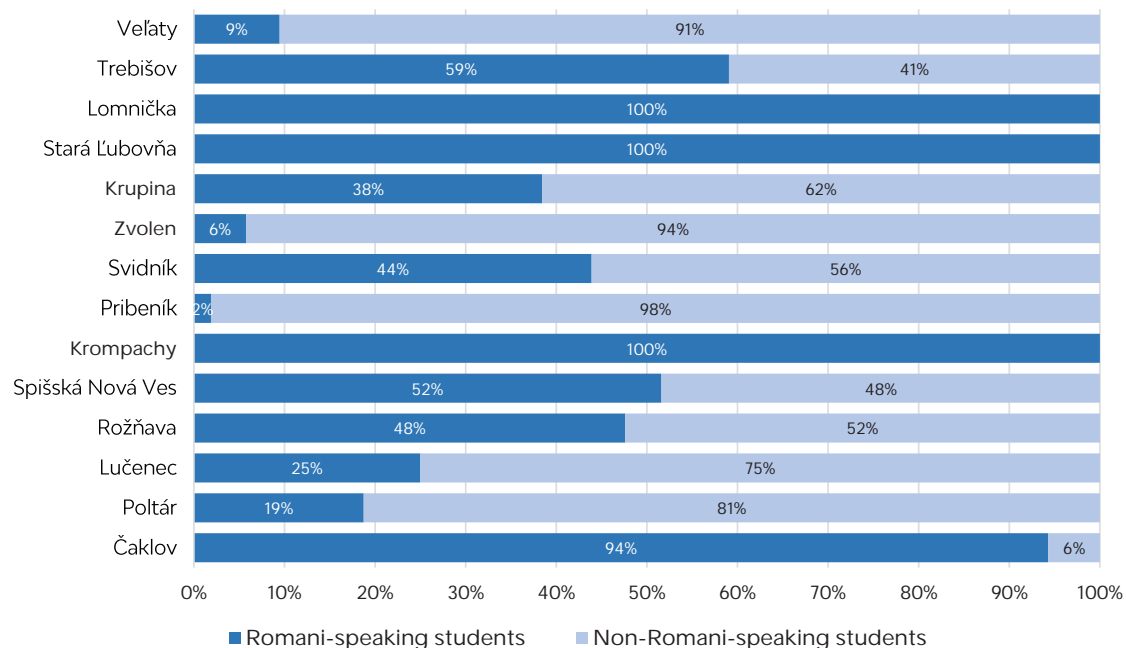


Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Language proficiency

As part of the questionnaire survey, we collected information about language proficiency. Respondents were asked to select the languages they speak in a mandatory question. They could choose from three pre-defined options – Slovak, Hungarian, and Romani – and also had the option to list other languages. This data on language knowledge was used as a potential proxy indicator for identifying affiliation with the Roma ethnic group¹⁸. Romani-speaking students made up 48% of the research sample, with the highest share of students declaring knowledge of the Romani language studying at the United School in Stará Ľubovňa and its satellite campus in Lomnička, at the Kropachy satellite campus of the Secondary Vocational School of Engineering and Services in Spišská Nová Ves, and at the United School in Čaklov, which also had a high proportion of students speaking Romani.

CHART 3.5. Knowledge of the Romani language



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Despite the assumption of a higher number of students of Roma ethnicity studying at the Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty – based on the students' age structure, their enrolment primarily in F programs, and information confirmed during a semi-structured interview with school representatives – students at this school and its satellite campus declared knowledge of the Romani language in lower numbers than the research team expected (59% and 9%, respectively). Students at the satellite campus reported knowledge of the Slovak language (100%), while students at the Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry in Trebišov declared knowledge of Slovak (98%) and also of Hungarian (7%).

Family, social and economic background

One of the questions aimed at identifying the socio-economic background of students was related to household composition. In this question, students were asked to indicate who they live with and the status of those individuals. We examined whether students live with both parents, one parent, whether the parents are employed or unemployed, or whether they live with other persons (e.g. grandparents) or in a dormitory. Respondents also had the option to specify a different household composition. This option was used mainly by students from the Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty, where a higher number of adult individuals study, and these often live with a partner (6% of respondents).

From the research sample, only 8% of respondents do not live with their parents (or a parent), but live with other family members, in a dormitory, in a centre for children and families, alone or with a partner. The remaining 92% live with their parents or a parent.

Regarding the number of children in the household, half of the students live in households with one to three children (54%), 13% live in households with four children, and one third of students live in households with five or more children. When comparing students by language, more than half of the Roma-speaking students live in households with four or more children (54%, with 39% living in households with five or more children). Students who declared no knowledge of the Roma language primarily live in households with up to three children (62%), with 27% living in households with five or more children.

Another indicator used to understand the students' socio-economic background was whether they receive a scholarship. In general, students may be eligible for four basic types of scholarships – social, exceptional, motivational, and pregnancy-related. In the questionnaire survey, the type of scholarship¹⁷ was not identified, since most secondary vocational school students are minors, the scholarship recipient is their legal guardian (usually a parent), and therefore the student may not be aware of the specific type of scholarship (on average, 9% of students did not know whether they received a scholarship at all – see Chart 3.6). However, as can be inferred from the following text, the type of scholarship received is the social scholarship.

The most common scholarship received is the social scholarship, which is linked to the student's overall academic performance on the report card from the previous semester (an overall passing grade is required) and the family's status of material need or minimum subsistence level. The amount of the scholarship depends on the student's grade average and is calculated as a percentage of the subsistence minimum. The maximum amount of the social scholarship in the 2024/2025 school year is EUR 62.56 (for an average grade between 1.0 and 2.0 (including 2.0)), and the minimum is EUR 31.28 (for an average grade worse than 2.5¹⁸). The scholarship is not granted to students who have been conditionally expelled or are repeating a year. This condition excludes students who might need this amount the most to complete their studies. In the 2023/2024 school year, 88% of the total number of scholarships were disbursed in the regions participating in CuRI, amounting to EUR 1,645,891.05 (which represents 87% of the total amount disbursed in Slovakia).

TABLE 3.6. Social scholarships in the 2023/2024 school year

2023/2024 school year					
Region	Material need	Minimum subsistence level	Total number of scholarships granted*	Total amount paid through social scholarship	Average scholarship amount
BA	288	86	374	€19,380.92	€51.82
TA	364	211	575	€28,841.21	€50.16
TN	453	244	697	€37,908.41	€54.39
NR	1,266	593	1,859	€94,983.21	€51.09
ZA	762	543	1,305	€72,182.63	€55.31
BB	5,442	657	6,099	€290,385.54	€47.61
PO	9,983	1,748	11,731	€553,192.13	€47.16
KE	11,935	4,581	16,516	€802,313.38	€48.58
SR	30,493	8,663	39,156	€1,899,187.43	€48.50

Source: CVTI, 2024.

* The total number of scholarships granted is reported as the sum of scholarships paid for individual months.

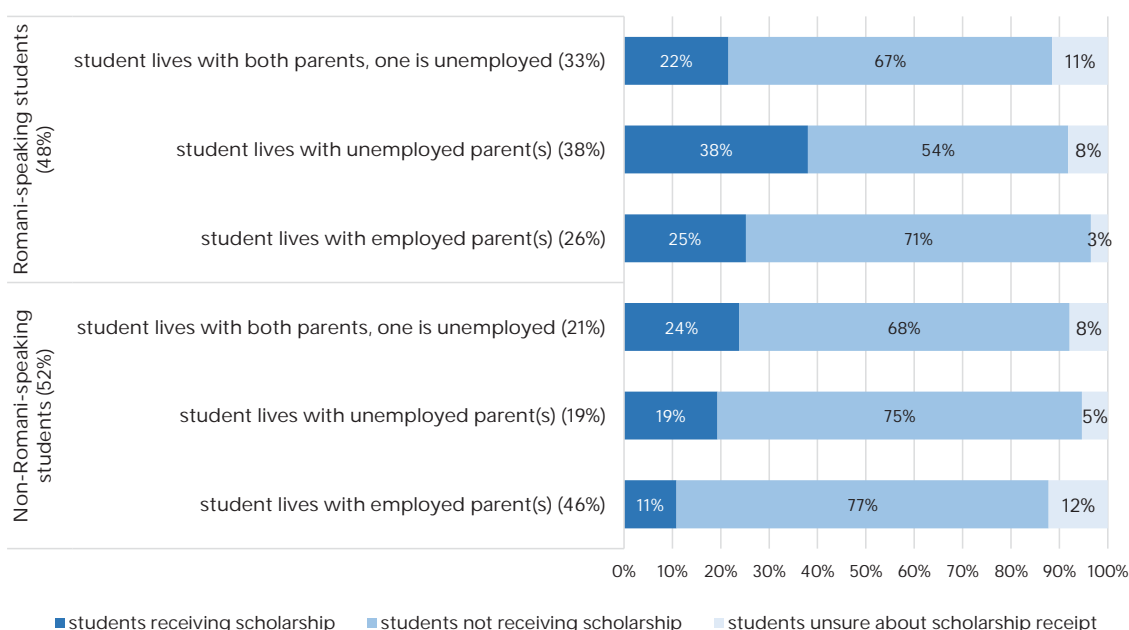
Another type of scholarship is the motivational scholarship. It is granted to students who are preparing for a profession, group of professions, or professional activities in a study or training program included in the list of study and training programs with an insufficient number of graduates for labor market needs. This list is published for each academic year, and shortage occupations are categorized by region. F programs are not listed as shortage programs. In the 2024/2025 academic year, none of the training programs offered by the pilot VET schools are included in the list of shortage programs by region. This means that none of the students are eligible to receive a motivational scholarship this school year.

The pregnancy scholarship may be granted to a female student who is of legal age, has permanent residence in the Slovak Republic, and is not entitled to receive pregnancy benefits under the Social Insurance Act. The pregnancy scholarship is intended primarily to cover increased expenses related to the student's health condition, material needs, and preparation for the birth of a child. Upon meeting the eligibility criteria, the student has a legal entitlement to this type of scholarship, which amounts to EUR 200 per month.¹⁹

Two-thirds of respondents do not currently receive and have never received a scholarship. Nearly one-quarter of students either currently receive or have previously received a scholarship, and 9% of them do not know this information. A higher share of scholarships is received or has been received by Romani-speaking students (29% compared to 15% of non-Romani-speaking students). When comparing household composition, the highest share of scholarship recipients are Romani-speaking students who live with unemployed parents or with both parents, one of whom is unemployed. Romani-speaking students primarily live with parents who are unemployed or where at least one parent is unemployed (71%). Half of the non-Romani-speaking students live in households with employed parents, and just under one-quarter live in households where one parent is unemployed.

Even when comparing students who live with employed parents (or a single employed parent), Romani-speaking students receive social scholarships at twice the rate of their non-Romani-speaking peers (25% vs. 11% of the total number of students living with employed parents in the given category).

CHART 3.6. Scholarship receipt by household composition and language proficiency



The answer "I receive a scholarship" also includes receiving a scholarship in the past.
 Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Findings

- 927 respondents from 11 SVS and 3 satellite campuses participated in the questionnaire survey.
- 1/3 of respondents study at the private SVS of Services and Industry in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty.
- 2/3 of respondents study in H programs (ending with a certificate of apprenticeship), 1/3 of respondents study in F programs (ending with a lower secondary vocational education certificate only, without an apprenticeship certificate or other relevant document for later employability).
- The gender ratio in F programs is balanced (46% boys vs. 54% girls); in H programs, the ratio is two to one (66% boys vs. 34% girls).
- 12% of students aged 17 or older are enrolled in the 1st year of an F program at schools other than the SVS of Services and Industry in Trebišov or its satellite campus Veľaty.
- 79% of students aged 17 or older are enrolled in the 1st year of an F program at the SVS of Services and Industry in Trebišov.
- As much as 89% of students aged 17 or older are enrolled in the 1st year of an F program at the Veľaty branch of the SVS of Services and Industry.
- 48% of respondents reported knowledge of the Romani language; the highest share of Romani-speaking students is at the satellite campuses in Lomnička and Krompachy (100%), followed by the Joint School in Čaklov (94%) and Trebišov (59%). The lowest share was at the SVS of Agri-Tech and Gastronomy Services in Pribeník (98% reported Hungarian language knowledge and 75% Slovak, due to the school's location and the ethnic composition of the area).
- 54% of students live in a household with one to three children; one third live in a household with five or more children.
- 39% of Romani-speaking students live in households with five or more children (vs. 27% of non-Romani-speaking students)
- Two thirds of students currently do not and never have received a social scholarship.
- 29% of Romani-speaking students currently receive or have received a social scholarship (vs. 15% of non-Romani-speaking students).
- Romani-speaking students mostly live with unemployed parents or at least one unemployed parent (71%); just under half of non-Romani-speaking students live with employed parents or parent.

3.6.3. Factors influencing the choice of SVS and vocational/academic program

Choosing a secondary school is an important decision in a student's life. Most students make decisions about their further studies in the 9th grade of primary school, at the age of 14–15, when they may not yet have a clear idea of what they want to do in life, what profession they want to pursue, or whether they prefer to study at a school with a general focus (lyceums, grammar schools) and later decide to attend university, or to follow a specific vocational path and start specializing in a selected field during adolescence.

There are several tools available to help students choose a school – schools, aiming to recruit new students, organize open days, present themselves at primary schools, and provide information to students and parents with the help of career counselors, teachers, and guidance counselors. At the regional level, dedicated websites are made available, publishing various types of information about schools under the jurisdiction of the given self-governing region²⁰.

Several overlapping factors influence a student's decision – area of interest, talent, academic performance in primary school, friends, parents, school accessibility, the school's reputation and focus, the secondary school admission process, and prospects for employment after graduation or continuation to tertiary education. As part of the survey, we focused on identifying the reasons students chose a particular pilot SVS. These reasons can be divided into three categories: 1) based on recommendations, 2) based on the school's profile and accessibility, and 3) based on rejection from the preferred school or other reasons. Students could select all the factors that influenced their decision.

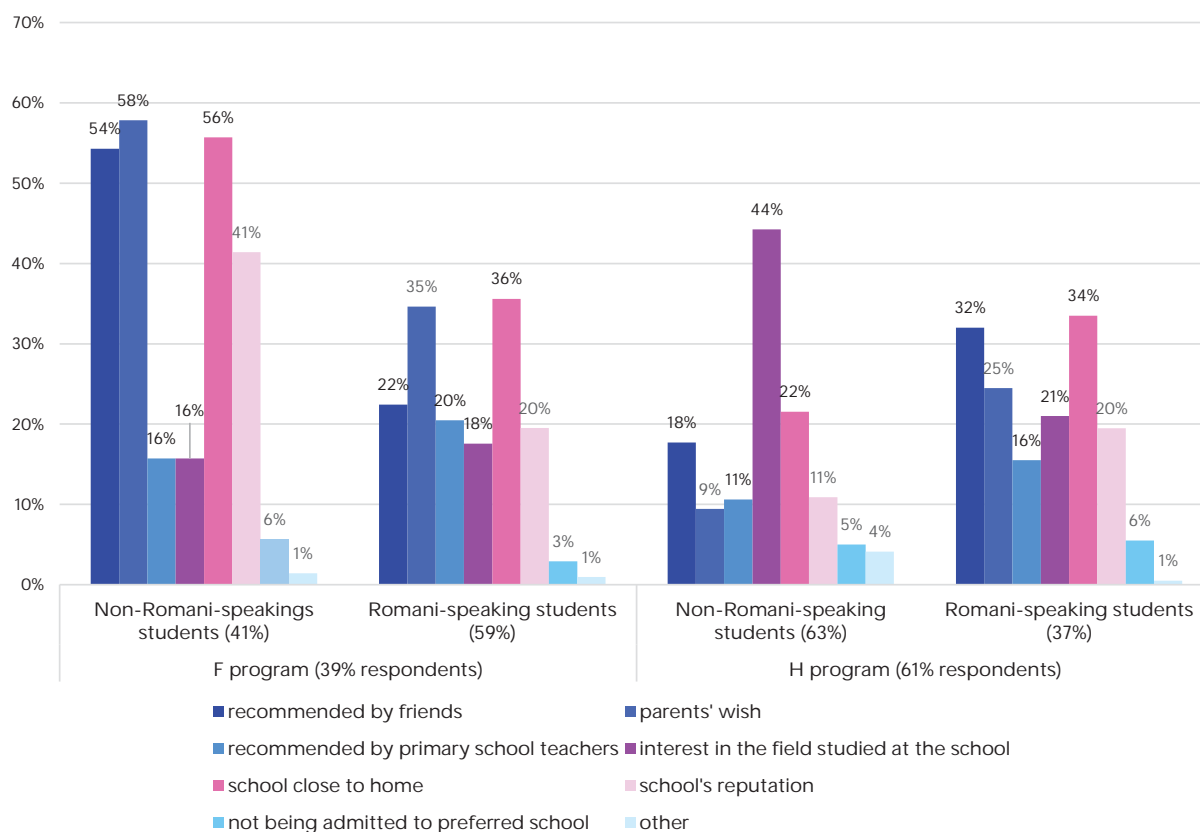
Differences in motivational factors are significant when it comes to the choice of vocational program, language, age, and gender.

Choice of school based on vocational program and language

Students tend to enter the less promising F programs, which lead to the attainment of LSVE without a vocational certificate, primarily based on recommendations from their immediate surroundings. They choose their school and vocational program mainly on the advice of friends and parents. Another significant factor influencing their decision is the school's proximity – that is, its physical accessibility – and its reputation. The field of study offered by the school, as well as recommendations from primary school teachers, play a less important role. When evaluating the results based on the language spoken by the students, it is important to consider that 45% of students enrolled in F programs attend the private Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty²¹. (For differences in decision-making regarding the choice of F programs based on language and the distinction between public SVS and the private SVS with a satellite campus in Veľaty, see Annex 3, Charts A.1 and A.2.)

The key factors influencing school choice shift in the case of students entering H programs, which lead to a vocational certificate and increase their chances of employment in the labor market. The influence of the family weakens, and the vocational program itself becomes the main factor – the field the student wants to pursue during their studies and later apply in the labor market or other economic activities. This change in motivational factors is especially observed among students who reported not speaking the Romani language. For Romani-speaking students, the influence of family and friends remains a decisive factor, as does the physical proximity of the school.

CHART 3.7. Key factors influencing the choice of SVS by program and language proficiency



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Note: 45% of students in F programs study at the SVS of Services and Industry in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty.

Choice of school by age and gender

As students grow older, multiple factors simultaneously influence their decision regarding school and vocational program choice, meaning that students tend to base their decision on a combination of factors. When comparing the motivations of first-year students in F programs by age, a decrease in the influence of primary school staff can be observed, along with a growing influence of parents and friends. This may be related to when the student enters the first year of an F program – whether immediately after completing primary school or after a gap in education. For students entering the first year of F programs as adults, in addition to recommendations from parents and friends, the physical proximity of the school and its reputation also play a role. This applies primarily to students at the private SVS in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty, who made up the majority of adult F program students in the survey. Among first-year students in H programs, the influence of parents and primary school staff is less decisive than for students in F programs – they are mainly drawn to the school by the offer of vocational programs, i.e., its focus (see Annex 3, Charts A.3 and A.4).

When choosing a school, the decision of parents and the fact that the school is located near their home are decisive factors for female students in F programs. Among male students, the influence of parents is weaker, while recommendations from friends play a greater role in their decision-making. In both cases, students tend to base their choice on a combination of several factors, which may be influenced by the higher proportion of adults studying in F programs. For students in H programs (boys and men make up 66% of the total number of students in H programs), the vocational program offered by the school – that is, its professional orientation – is the determining factor, while parental influence is not decisive. For female students, various factors play a role; the vocational program is not as determining as it is for male students. Their decisions are influenced by the school's proximity,

professional orientation, and recommendations from their surroundings. In both cases, students in H programs often base their decision on a single factor, rather than a combination of factors as seen with F programs. An overview of motivational factors by gender is shown in Annex 3, Chart A.5.

Motivational factors – findings

- Students choose F programs primarily based on recommendations from their immediate surroundings and the physical accessibility of the school.
- Among younger age groups (right after completing primary school), the influence of primary school teachers plays a greater role in decisions about school choice in F programs.
- For female students in F programs, the decisive factors in choosing a school are their parents' decision and the fact that the school is located near their home, while for male students, the influence of parents weakens in favor of recommendations from friends.
- Students choose H programs mainly based on the offered vocational program – that is, the professional orientation of the school. This factor plays a greater role among male than female students.
- As students get older, more factors simultaneously influence their decisions regarding school and vocational program choice – meaning they make decisions based on a combination of factors.

3.6.4. Vocational education and training at the employer's premises

Vocational education and training for students at SVS is primarily governed by Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on Vocational Education and Training. The act defines this concept as the educational process through which knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for performing a profession, group of professions, or specialized activities are acquired. It consists of theoretical instruction and practical training. The purpose of practical training is to provide students with the hands-on skills, abilities, and habits essential for performing a profession. It can take place in a school workshop or directly in real-life conditions at an employer's premises. Practical training is an integral part of vocational education and training at SVS. In the case of F and H programs, practical training is carried out in the form of vocational training and can take place not only in workshops but also at the employer's premises and at a practical training site if the student is enrolled in the dual education system (DES). Students in programs that lead to at least a vocational certificate (at minimum, H programs) are primarily directed into the DES, though placing students from F programs into the DES is not excluded. The advantage of vocational education and training in the DES is that students are trained in real-life conditions directly at the employer's premises, which shortens and streamlines the potential transition into employment with that employer or improves graduates' readiness for the labor market after completing their studies²². Vocational education and training can also be carried out at the employer's premises outside of the DES, based on a contract for the provision of practical training concluded between the school and the employer (school education system).

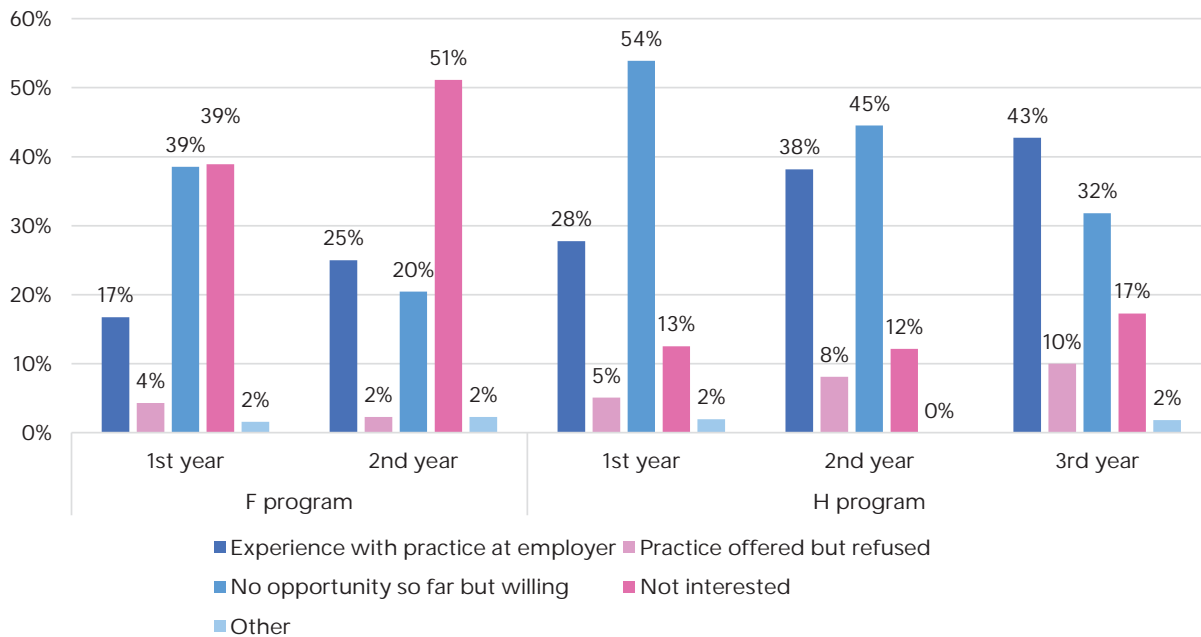
Vocational education and training by program and year of study

In the survey, we asked students at the pilot SVS about their experience with and interest in practical training at an employer's premises (i.e., vocational training conducted at the employer's site). The share of students who have had or currently have experience with vocational training at an employer's premises increases depending on the vocational program group and year of study, while the share of students who have not had such experience but would like to do so decreases (see Chart 3.8). This trend is related to the fact that employers show greater interest in students enrolled in programs that lead to at least a vocational certificate, and as students advance to higher years, they acquire more knowledge and skills in their field of study, making them more employable from the employer's perspective.

A striking difference at first glance appears in the level of disinterest in practical training at an employer's premises. Upon closer examination of the survey data, this difference is primarily driven by responses from students at the private pilot SVS in Trebišov and Veľaty (see Annex 3, Charts A.6 and A.7). As many as two-thirds of second-year F program students at the private SVS

expressed no interest in training at an employer's premises, whereas at public pilot schools, this share is lower compared to the first year, which corresponds with an increase in the proportion of students who already have experience with employer-based training. Despite this discrepancy between public pilot SVS and the private pilot SVS, students in F programs generally show a higher level of disinterest in employer-based training compared to their peers in H programs. This may be due to several factors – the lack of attractiveness of F programs to employers, the limited employability of F program graduates, low or no compensation (such as unpaid training or low pay for productive work), and the absence of a clear vision of future employment or a stable income.

CHART 3.8. Experience with employer-based training by program and year of study

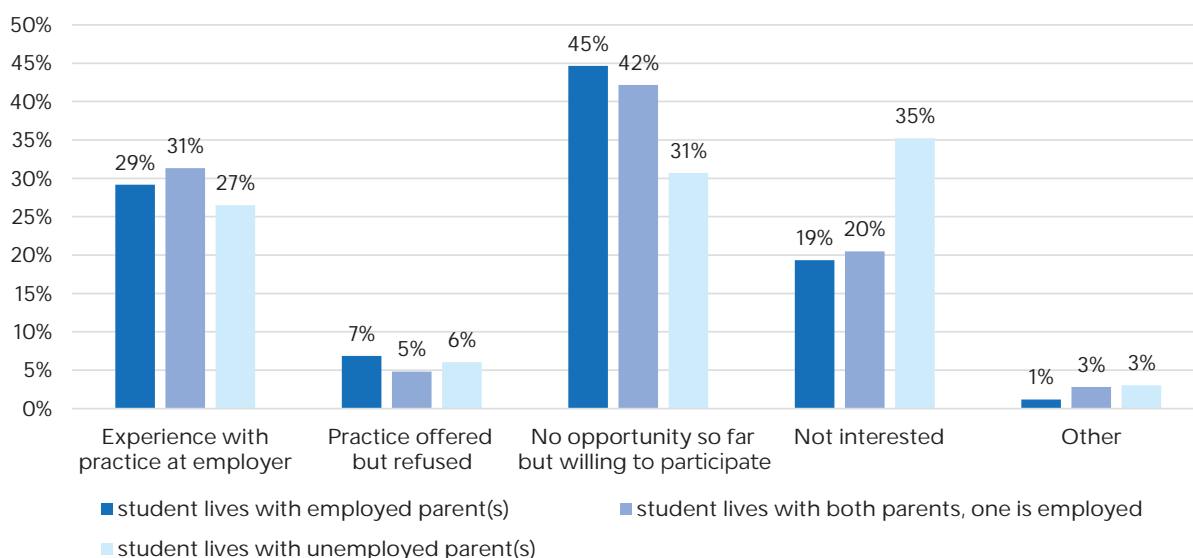


Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Vocational education and training by household composition and language

Another factor influencing interest in practical training directly at an employer's premises relates to the environment in which the student is raised. When comparing students based on their household composition, the lowest interest in training is shown by students who live with unemployed parents or a single unemployed parent (see Chart 3.9).

CHART 3.9. Experience with and interest in employer-based training by household composition



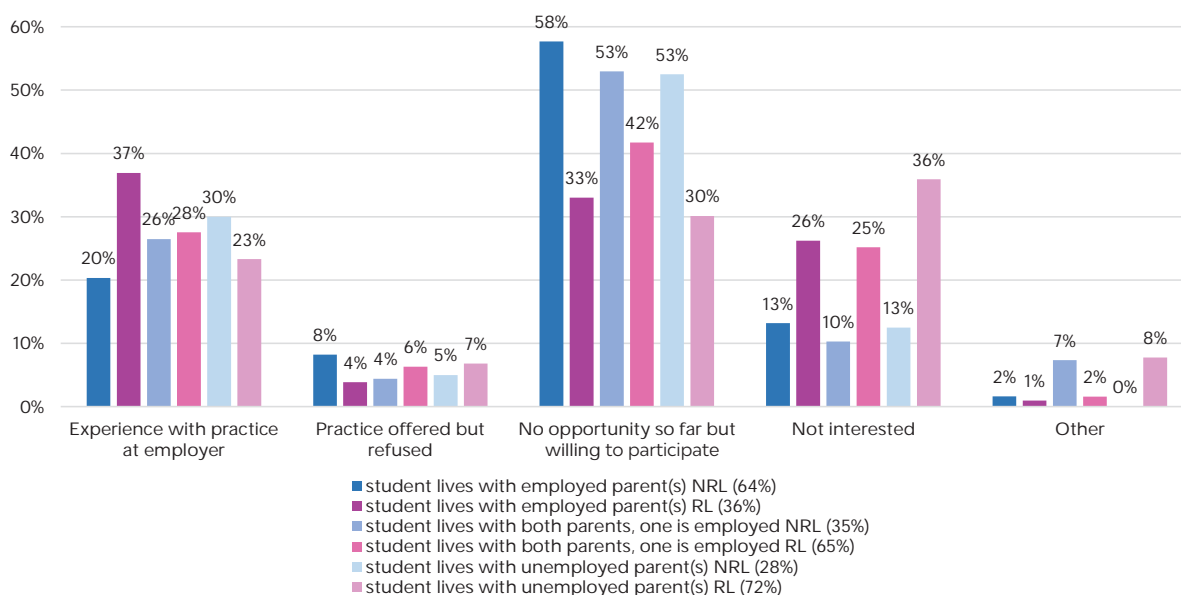
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

However, when looking at the language proficiency²³ of these students, the direct correlation between interest in practical training and household composition is disrupted. Students who reported not speaking the Romani language express interest or disinterest in employer-based training at comparable rates, regardless of their parents' employment status. In fact, students living in households with unemployed parents or a single unemployed parent report more experience with employer-based training. This may be related to the economic background of these households – for example, a lower need for the student to contribute to the household budget or sufficient financial support from parents.

In contrast, among students who reported speaking the Romani language, a high level of disinterest in employer-based training was also expressed by those living with employed parents (or a single employed parent) or in households where at least one parent is employed. One-quarter of respondents in these groups expressed such disinterest, and more than one-third of Romani-speaking students living in households with unemployed parents – or a single unemployed parent in single-parent households – reported the same (see Chart 3.10).

Compared to students who do not speak the Romani language, students who reported speaking Romani show an increase in experience with employer-based training as the employment status of their parents improves. Those whose parents are employed participate in employer-based training more frequently than their peers whose parents are unemployed (37% vs. 23%).

CHART 3.10. Experience with and interest in employer-based training by household composition and language proficiency



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

The lower interest in employer-based training among students who speak the Romani language can be explained by several factors:

1. the absence of adequate role models in the household (i.e., whether a parent or adult in the household is employed or unemployed),
2. persistent discrimination and unequal treatment that individuals of Romani ethnicity have long faced in the labor market.

The argument of lacking a role model in the household was frequently raised by school principals and teaching staff during semi-structured interviews. Students who do not have a role model in the form of employed parents (or a single employed parent or another adult) present in the household often struggle to recognize and appreciate the value of work experience and the importance of regular employment in life. Furthermore, when speaking about Romani communities, child-rearing is influenced not only by the immediate family but also by extended relatives and the wider community (Lukáč, 2015a).

Roma in Slovakia have long faced persistent ethnic discrimination, both in the job search process and in employment itself. This includes being confined to lower-skilled jobs, working under undignified conditions, experiencing job instability, and receiving unequal pay, among other issues (ERGO Networks, 2024; Lajčáková et al., 2017).

Area: Vocational education and training – findings

- Experience with employer-based training increases with higher-level vocational programs and year of study.
- Despite the upward trend in employer-based training experience, one-third of third-year H program students have not had the opportunity to train at an employer's premises.
- The share of students uninterested in employer-based training decreases with each level of education.
- Possible reasons for F program students' disinterest in employer-based training include: lack of attractiveness of F programs to employers, low employability of graduates, little or no compensation, and lack of a vision for stable employment.

- A higher share of disinterest in employer-based training is reported among students who speak the Romani language (2 to 3 times more than among those who do not speak Romani).
- Parents' employment status has no significant impact on disinterest in employer-based training among students who do not speak the Romani language; however, the absence of employed parents (or a parent in a single-parent household) has a negative impact on interest in such training among Romani-speaking students.
- Parents' employment status has a positive effect on the likelihood of having experience with employer-based training among Romani-speaking students.

3.6.8. Plans after graduation and support from the SVS in deciding on the future

As part of the survey, we examined students' plans after completing their studies, as well as the type of support provided to them by the SVS during their studies.

Students' plans after graduation

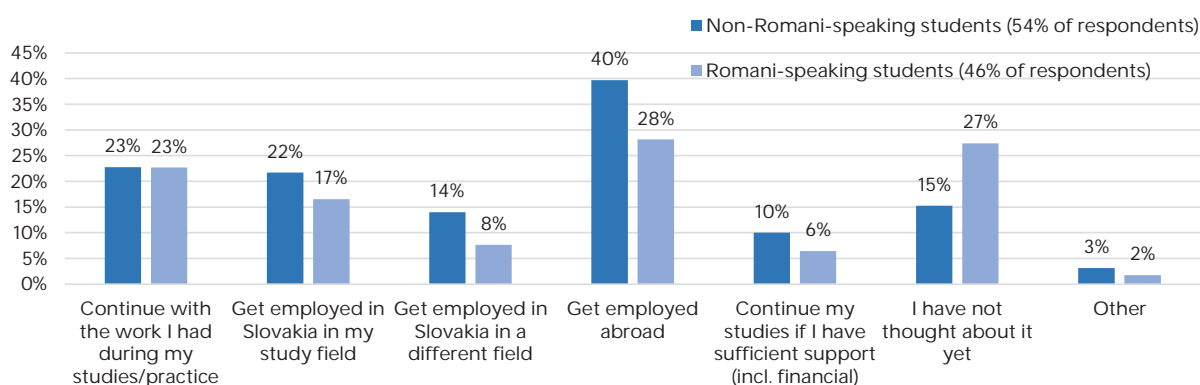
Students could choose multiple answers, which can be grouped into three main categories – entering employment, continuing studies, and other, including the absence of specific plans. The most extensive category, *entering employment*, includes options such as planning to work in the same or a related field, in a different field than the one studied, employment following practical training, or employment in Slovakia or abroad.

The responses show that 68% of students have decided to enter the workforce after graduation²⁴. Only 4% of students plan to continue their studies, provided they receive sufficient support, and currently do not see any alternative path for themselves.

A total of 21% of students – just under one-fourth – have not yet thought about their future²⁵. As students progress to higher grades and approach graduation, the number of undecided students decreases (18% of second-year F program students, 12% of third-year H program students). Among these undecided students, as many as 37% are not interested in employer-based training.²⁶

From a language perspective, there is a 12-percentage-point difference in two responses: planning to work abroad and having no plans for the future (see Chart 3.11).

CHART 3.11. Plans after graduation by language proficiency



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

More than one-quarter of respondents who speak the Romani language have not yet thought about their future plans.

While the share of Romani-speaking students who have not considered their future decreases with each year of study, their proportion in the final year of H programs – which lead to a vocational certificate upon successful completion – still reaches nearly one-fourth (21%; see Annex 3, Chart A.10). In comparison, the share among their peers who do not speak Romani is 7%. The absence of future plans is not directly linked to a lack of support from the SVS in helping them decide on future employment. Within this group of students, only 18% reported having no experience with any type of support activity (e.g., individual counseling, résumé or cover letter writing, company visits, etc.; see the section below and Annex 3, Chart A.11).

Support from the SVS in deciding on future employment

We explored what types of support schools offer to help students make decisions about their future. Students could select multiple options, ranging from individual support (consultations), deepening their knowledge in specific areas (creating basic documents – résumé, cover letter; starting a trade license or company; availability of a dedicated subject), to labor market-oriented support (various events, access to information), and aptitude tests.

All schools provide a combination of support activities. The most common types include opportunities for individual counseling with SVS staff (teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists), information about employment opportunities, and support with writing résumés and cover letters. Looking at the aggregated data by vocational program group (regardless of the specific support provided by individual pilot SVS – see Annex 3, Chart A.12), students in F programs report broader experience (or at least awareness) of the range of services offered. Compared to H program students, the difference is particularly notable in the area of individual counseling – more than half of F program students have experience with (or knowledge of) this service, 40% are informed about job opportunities, and nearly one-third reported participating in company visits organized by the school. On the other hand, H program students receive more education in starting a business or trade license. A low percentage of students (under 15%) have experience with alumni or professional talks, attending events such as job fairs, or undergoing diagnostics related to their interests and skills.

Of particular note is the higher percentage of students who, by the time of the survey, had not participated in any of the support activities offered by their school. As many as 19% of H program students had no experience with the activities provided by the school (compared to 8% of F program students). When comparing final-year students, who should theoretically have had exposure to the widest range of available services, this share drops by only 3 percentage points (16% of third-year H program students, 6% of second-year F program students; see Annex 3, Chart A.13).

Area: Plans after graduation and support from SVS in deciding on future employment – findings

- 68% of students have decided to enter the workforce after school.
- 21% of students have not yet considered their future plans, of which 37% are not interested in employer-based training.
- Romani-speaking students – more than one-quarter have not yet thought about their future; nearly one-quarter of final-year H program students (vocational certificate) have not yet considered their future.
- The most common type of support provided by SVS includes individual counseling (teachers, guidance counselors, psychologists), information about job opportunities, and assistance with writing résumés and cover letters.
- H program students receive more education in setting up a business or trade license (a 9-percentage-point difference).

- A low percentage of students (under 15%) have experience with alumni or professional talks, participating in events (e.g., job fairs), or undergoing interest and aptitude diagnostics.
- 19% of H program students have no experience with school-provided support activities (compared to 8% of F program students).

3.6.6. Support aimed at successful completion of studies

In addition to the support students currently receive from their school, we also examined what types of support they feel are missing – what would help them successfully complete their studies. They could choose from various types of support, including educational, financial, and improved physical accessibility.

The most desired form of support is financial – in the form of scholarships and paid internships or training at an employer’s premises. One-fifth of students would welcome access to a dedicated space after school where they could focus on studying and prepare for school in a suitable environment, and another fifth of students indicated that tutoring would help them.

TABLE 3.7. Type of support provided and its positive perception

Category of support	Type of support	% of positive answers
Educational	quiet environment where I could study after school	22%
	tutoring	20%
Financial	scholarship	35%
	paid internship or training at an employer’s premises	29%
	cheaper transportation ticket (e.g., bus, train)	12%
	more affordable school supplies	5%
Physical accessibility	school closer to my home	10%
	better transportation connections to school	9%
	other	2%

Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Financial support

As many as 35% of respondents would welcome a scholarship, and 29% would appreciate paid training at an employer’s premises. Other types of financial support, such as cheaper transportation tickets or school supplies, would also be helpful to students, but a smaller share of students expressed interest in them.

As many as 36% of Romani-speaking students at state pilot schools said they would like to receive a scholarship (compared to 19% of non-Romani-speaking students), and 55% of Romani-speaking students at the private pilot SVS expressed the same (compared to 54% of non-Romani-speaking students). In contrast, paid training at an employer’s premises is seen as a suitable and desirable tool for successfully completing studies by 46% of non-Romani-speaking students at state pilot SVS (compared to 15% of their Romani-speaking peers) and 27% of non-Romani-speaking students at the private pilot SVS (compared to 22% of Romani-speaking students).²⁷

17% of non-Romani-speaking students at state pilot SVS expressed a wish for cheaper transportation tickets, compared to 15% of their Romani-speaking peers. The private pilot SVS offers school bus transportation to its students, which is why the share in this group is very low.

We took a closer look at the data to analyze the correlation between spoken language and parental employment status across the different types of pilot schools (see Annex 3, Charts A.15 and A.16).

At public pilot SVS, among Romani-speaking students, there is a direct correlation between parental status (household composition) and the type of support requested. In the case of scholarships, the more prevalent the status of unemployment in the household, the greater the demand for scholarships as a tool to support successful completion of studies. However, in the case of paid training at an employer's premises, an inverse correlation is observed – the more unemployment prevails in the household, the lower the demand for paid practical training. As noted in the section on interest and experience with employer-based training, as many as 36% of Romani-speaking students living in households with unemployed parents (or a single unemployed parent) expressed no interest in employer-based training (regardless of whether it was paid or unpaid).

Among non-Romani-speaking students, the same pattern holds – the more *unemployment* prevails in the household, the less convinced students are that paid training will help them successfully complete their studies. Nevertheless, interest in paid training as a tool for completing studies is 3 to 4 times higher²⁸ than among their Romani-speaking peers. Interest in scholarships was highest among students living in households with two parents, one of whom was employed (31%), followed by those living with unemployed parents (8%), and was lowest (13%) among students living in households with employed parents or a single employed parent.

At the private pilot school, the trends are similar; however, the differences between Romani-speaking and non-Romani-speaking students are not as pronounced (see Annex 3, Chart A.16).

Educational support

Educational support included two options – tutoring and a suitable environment for studying after school.

Tutoring²⁹ is a formally recognized support measure defined in the School Act, introduced into the education system in 2023 and, under certain conditions, funded by the state. In accordance with the law, its objective is to improve students' knowledge and skills and to reduce the risk of grade repetition and early school leaving.

In 2024, an update to the catalog of support measures led to a narrowing of the target group – tutoring is now available only to students who are failing in one or more subjects at mid-year or at the end of the school year, or who are preparing for commission exams at SVS within F programs to complete their LSVE³⁰. The restriction of the target group and the unavailability of this measure for all students who may need tutoring is not viewed positively by schools or education experts.^{31,32}

In the survey, significant differences regarding tutoring were observed based on language proficiency at public pilot SVS. Given the varying levels of academic difficulty between F and H programs, students were categorized by program and language³³. Romani-speaking students enrolled in H programs identified tutoring as the most needed and desired support tool for successfully completing their studies – even more so than financial support in the form of a scholarship (38% vs. 31%). Their peers in F programs expressed less need for tutoring, viewing scholarships as a more suitable and desirable form of support. Among non-Romani-speaking students in H programs, nearly half preferred paid internships, with less demand for tutoring.

We also asked students whether a suitable study environment would be helpful for them. Some students come from marginalized Roma communities, where studying conditions are often inadequate due to overcrowded housing (Markovič, Plachá, 2020), household responsibilities such as caring for younger siblings, increased noise, and similar challenges. Nearly one-third of Romani-speaking students in F programs expressed a desire for a quiet environment, as did more than one-third of those living with unemployed parents or a single unemployed parent. This need could potentially be met by community centers (CC). According to the Act on Social Services³⁴, community centers should provide support to individuals in adverse situations, including help with school preparation and accompanying children, as well as organizing leisure-time activities. CC staff carry out less specialized tasks, particularly in client-facing roles, such as leading leisure activities for children

and youth, helping with school preparation, and organizing community events and activities. One frequently mentioned issue is the opening hours of community centers. These often do not meet the need to be accessible and offer services to young people in the afternoon or early evening, when children return home from school or extracurricular activities. This problem is especially prevalent in community centers run by municipalities. Some centers have extended hours on specific days (e.g., the ETP Community Center Luník IX is open daily from 9:00 to 17:00, with a youth club meeting on Wednesdays from 17:00 to 19:00), or operate on a schedule reserved for different groups or clubs (e.g., the Salesians of Don Bosco offer clubs and meetings for children based on grade level and gender; six boys' clubs, five girls' clubs, and one youth club).

Physical accessibility

Better transportation connections to school, as well as the school's proximity to students' homes, ranked in the lower third of the types of support requested. When analyzing students based on their mode of transportation to school, 20% of those who commute by car expressed a desire for improved transportation connections.

Area: Support aimed at successful completion of studies – findings

- Students prioritized financial support as the most appreciated type of assistance, followed by educational support services, while physical accessibility of the school ranked last.
- Scholarships are the most sought-after form of support among Romani-speaking students attending public pilot SVS (36% vs. 19%).
- Paid training at an employer's premises is the most desired support among non-Romani-speaking students at public pilot SVS (46% vs. 15%).
- Correlation between parental status and the type of financial support requested – direct correlation in the case of scholarships, inverse correlation in the case of paid training at an employer's premises.
- Interest in paid training as a tool for academic success is 3 to 4 times higher among non-Romani-speaking students than their Romani-speaking peers.
- Tutoring is the most requested type of support among Romani-speaking students enrolled in H programs.
- Nearly one-third of Romani-speaking students in F programs and more than one-third of those living with unemployed parents or a single unemployed parent would need access to a suitable environment for studying.

3.6.7. Inclusion and school environment

The second part of the survey focused on students' perceptions of the level of inclusion³⁵ at the selected SVS. Students expressed their opinions on selected statements using a 3-point scale represented by emoticons (agree – 😊, undecided – 😐, disagree – 😡).

The statements were grouped by similarity into six categories (relationship to the school; teacher-student relationship; level of trust in staff; teaching methods and teachers' approach; relationship with classmates; the school's approach to families and family support), and students' attitudes toward these statements were summarized at the general level, at the level of public pilot SVS, and at the private pilot SVS in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty, as shown in Table 3.8.

In general, students rated their peer relationships the most positively, while their attitude toward participation in extracurricular activities was the least favorable. When comparing public pilot schools with the private pilot school, students studying at the private pilot SVS in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty reported higher overall satisfaction.

When interpreting responses related to statement group no. 6 (the school’s approach to parents, parental awareness, and support), it is important to consider the age structure of the students. At the private pilot SVS and its satellite campus, as many as 63% of students are adults, and the school is not obligated to inform their parents about their studies.

TABLE 3.8. Perception of the level of inclusion at SVS

Group of statements	Statement	All pilot SVS	Public pilot SVS	Private pilot SVS
		average	average	average
1	I usually look forward to going to school.	1.5	1.6	1.3
	I like spending my free time at school and on the school playground.	1.5	1.6	1.3
	I enjoy participating in various activities organized by the school outside of lessons.	1.6	1.6	1.4
2	I like my teachers.	1.3	1.3	1.2
	My teachers treat me kindly.	1.2	1.3	1.1
	If I miss classes, teachers are interested in why I couldn’t come.	1.2	1.2	1.1
3	When I have a problem at school, there is an adult I trust and can talk to.	1.4	1.4	1.3
4	Teachers care that I try at school – making mistakes is okay.	1.4	1.4	1.4
	If I have a problem during lessons, teachers or assistants help me.	1.2	1.3	1.2
	I can ask anything during lessons.	1.3	1.3	1.2
	During lessons, we often help each other and work in pairs or small groups.	1.4	1.4	1.3
5	I get along well with my classmates at school.	1.2	1.2	1.2
6	The school regularly informs my parents about my studies.	1.4	1.4	1.5
	When I have a problem, teachers meet with my parents and talk to them.	1.4	1.4	1.6
	My family supports and encourages me in my studies.	1.3	1.2	1.5

Note: The value in the “average” column represents the average level of agreement with the given statement, with values assigned as follows: agree = 1, undecided = 2, disagree = 3. The darker the color in the average columns, the more negative the attitude.

Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Student evaluation and perception – by gender, scholarship, and age

Girls rated the statements significantly more positively than boys – with a difference of more than 9 percentage points³⁶. A smaller difference (less than 5%) was observed in the evaluation of three specific statements: “*I get along well with my classmates*,” “*I can ask anything during lessons*,” and “*My family supports and encourages me in my studies*.”

Students receiving a scholarship rated the statements in the first group significantly more positively (e.g., “*I usually look forward to going to school*,” “*I like spending time at school and on its grounds*,” “*I enjoy participating in extracurricular activities*”). They also expressed more positive views about having a trusted adult at school they can talk to in case of difficulties, and similarly rated the school’s approach to their parents more favorably (e.g., “*The school regularly informs my parents*,” “*When I have a problem, teachers meet with my parents to discuss it*”). On average, their positive evaluation was 14% higher.

Adult students, on the other hand, rated their relationships with classmates and teachers significantly more negatively, particularly in response to the statement “*I like my teachers*.”

Student evaluation and perception – by language

Only selected pilot SVS were included in the evaluation by language, based on the ratio of Romani-speaking to non-Romani-speaking students. Schools where the ratio exceeded one to five (i.e., where at least one in five students reported speaking Romani) were excluded from the evaluation.

Overall, a more negative attitude toward the statements can be observed among non-Romani-speaking students (for an overview of attitudes by language, see Annex 3, Charts A.22 and A.23). There is only one instance where non-Romani-speaking students expressed a more positive attitude – in response to the statement “*My family supports and encourages me in my studies.*”

Among non-Romani-speaking students, there is also a higher share of those who were unable to take a clear stance on the statements – either agreeing or disagreeing. On average, nearly one-third of these students chose the response “*undecided,*” compared to Romani-speaking students, among whom this share averaged 20%, or one-fifth.

The most significant difference between students lies in their overall attitude toward school. Romani-speaking students expressed, on average, 25% (one-fourth) more positive views about their school compared to their non-Romani-speaking peers. They enjoy spending time at school and on its grounds and usually look forward to going to school – an attitude that aligns with their responses to the other statements. Both groups of students, however, expressed more negative views toward extracurricular activities.

TABLE 3.9. Perception of the level of inclusion at SVS by language

Group of statements	Statement	Non-Romani-speaking students	Romani-speaking students	All pilot SVS
		average	average	average
1	I usually look forward to going to school.	1.8	1.4	1.5
	I like spending my free time at school and on the school playground.	1.7	1.4	1.5
	I enjoy participating in various activities organized by the school outside of lessons.	1.8	1.5	1.6
2	I like my teachers.	1.4	1.3	1.3
	My teachers treat me kindly.	1.3	1.2	1.2
	If I miss classes, teachers are interested in why I couldn't come.	1.3	1.2	1.2
3	When I have a problem at school, there is an adult I trust and can talk to.	1.6	1.3	1.4
4	Teachers care that I try at school – making mistakes is okay.	1.5	1.3	1.4
	If I have a problem during lessons, teachers or assistants help me.	1.4	1.2	1.2
	I can ask anything during lessons.	1.4	1.2	1.3
	During lessons, we often help each other and work in pairs or small groups.	1.6	1.3	1.4
5	I get along well with my classmates at school.	1.3	1.2	1.2
6	The school regularly informs my parents about my studies.	1.5	1.3	1.4
	When I have a problem, teachers meet with my parents and talk to them.	1.6	1.3	1.4
	My family supports and encourages me in my studies.	1.2	1.5	1.3

Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Another statement that revealed differing attitudes between the two groups concerns the presence of someone they can turn to and confide in when facing problems. Only half of the students who reported not speaking the Romani language said they could find a trusted adult at school³⁷ to talk to when needed.

Among Romani-speaking students, the share is higher – up to two-thirds said they have a trusted adult at school they can talk to. A similar difference appears in students' responses to the statement regarding cooperation and interaction during lessons. A slight majority of non-Romani-speaking students agreed that students help each other during class and are encouraged to work in small groups.

Area: Evaluation and perception of inclusion and the school environment – findings

- Female students have, on average, a 9% more positive relationship with the school, staff, and classmates.
- Students receiving a scholarship rated general statements significantly more positively – they look forward to going to school, enjoy spending time there, and participate in extracurricular activities.
- Overall, non-Romani-speaking students expressed more negative attitudes toward the statements.
- Among non-Romani-speaking students, a higher proportion were unable to take a clear stance on the statements – agree or disagree.
- Romani-speaking students expressed, on average, 25% (one-fourth) more positive views about their school than their non-Romani-speaking peers.

3.6.8. Aspects students like about their SVS and suggestions for improvement

The final part of the online questionnaire provided space for students to list three things they like most about their school, followed by three things they would change. At the end of the questionnaire, students were also given the opportunity to share any additional information not covered by the questions that they wished to express.

We grouped the responses to both questions into 14 identical categories. The categories and their content in each section are presented in Annex 3, Tables A.25 and A.26.

Aspects students like about their SVS

A total of 89% of respondents took the opportunity to list three things they like about their school. On average, students mentioned two aspects in their responses.

Among the most appreciated aspects of the pilot SVS are relationships and the human dimension. As many as 60% of students mentioned the staff's approach as the aspect they liked most about their school, followed by 21% who valued the school community.

Within the "staff" category, students used phrases such as – the approach of teachers, vocational instructors, and assistants; good teachers, instructors, and assistants; excellent homeroom teachers; they treat us well; they help us, and similar expressions.

In second place – though mentioned two-thirds less frequently – students referred to the collective. This category includes terms such as: good group, students, classmates, girls, women, friends. Two-thirds of the students who mentioned liking the school community also stated that they liked the school staff.

Next, with only a slight difference in frequency, students mentioned practical training (work experience, vocational training), school equipment (classroom equipment, machines – especially the tractor, workshops, classrooms – particularly for sewing), teaching (the program itself, subjects,

breaks during lessons, foreign language lessons), and extracurricular aspects (activities, trips, discussions, competitions). Over 10% of students also highlighted the school grounds (the school building, facilities, playground, courtyard, environment) as something they liked.

Aspects students would like to change at their SVS

A total of 82% of students took the opportunity to share suggestions for improvement, with 23% of them stating that they would not change anything about their school. This means that 63% of students shared specific proposals for improvement. The average number of comments per such student was 1.55.

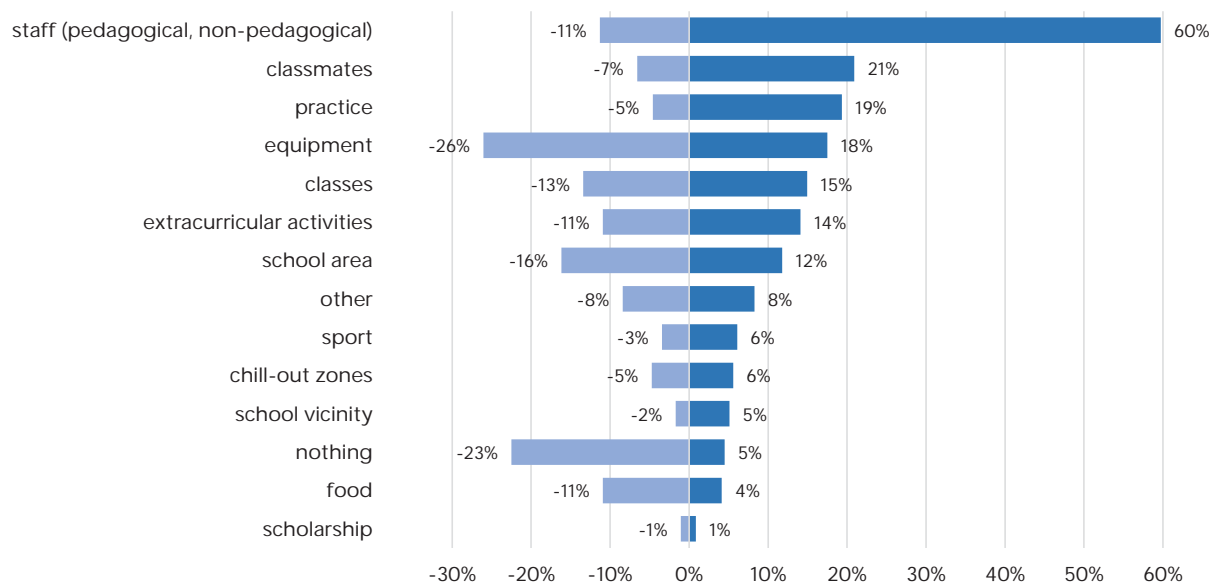
The most common suggestion for improvement concerned school equipment. One-fourth of students pointed out shortcomings in material and technical resources. Students expressed a desire to modernize classroom equipment, equip the school with wireless internet and computers, and replace worn-out items with new ones (e.g., new machines, greenhouse, etc.). Closely following the topic of equipment was the school’s physical environment. Sixteen percent of students wished to modernize the school, refurbish old furniture such as desks, lockers, chairs, and broken blackboards, have their own lockers, improve toilet facilities (e.g., cleaner restrooms, available toilet paper), or replace worn-out flooring.

Other suggestions that were mentioned in over 10% of responses included improvements to teaching, extracurricular activities, meals, and staff.

In terms of teaching, students would welcome adjustments to the schedule to better align with transportation – starting later and finishing earlier (in the case of commuting), eliminating zero periods or the last class of the day, having longer breaks, fixing the school bell system, adding more theory instead of practice, or opening new programs. 11% of students would like more activities outside of school – trips, clubs, or more time spent in nature. A similar share would like to see changes in the approach of the staff or of certain teachers or vocational instructors.

In the area of food services, suggestions included replacing vending machines with a cafeteria, ensuring access to drinking water, offering more affordable prices, providing regular meals, making food available for purchase, introducing the option of school lunches, and offering free lunches.

CHART 3.12. Comparison of three things students like about their SVS and three things they would change



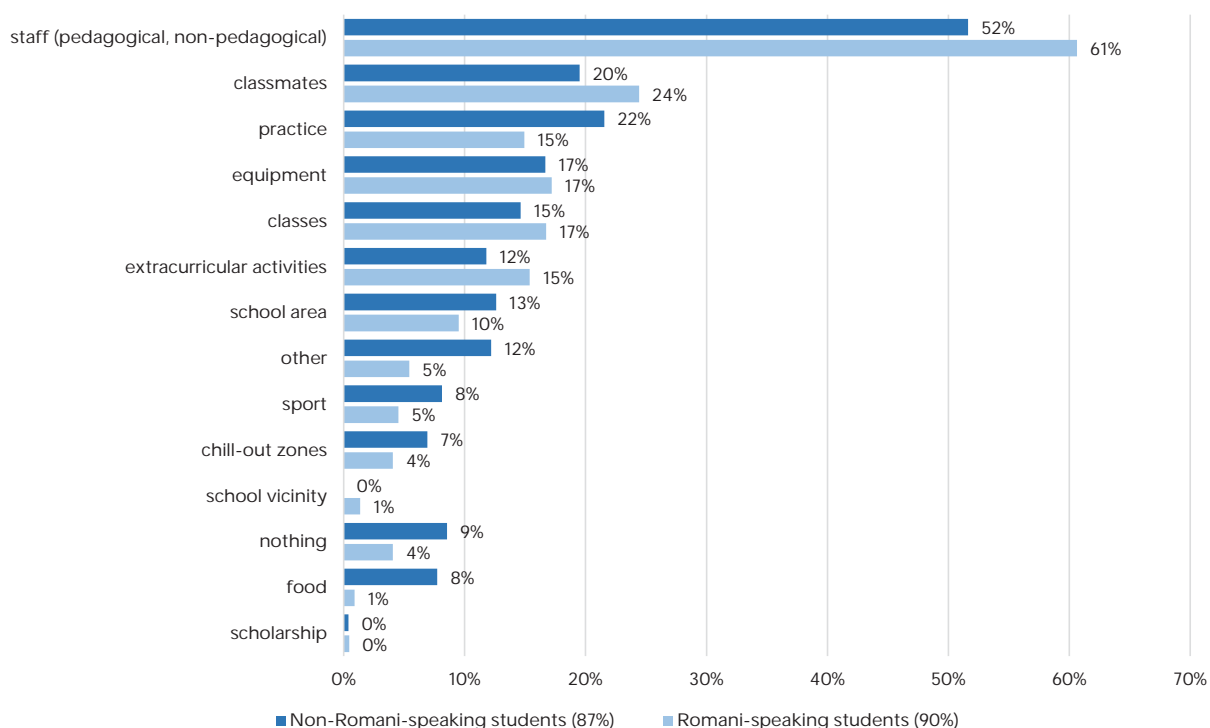
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Aspects students like about their school and those they would change – by language proficiency

As part of the evaluation, we also examined potential differences at selected pilot SVS based on language. Similar to the analysis of the section on inclusion, only those pilot SVS were included in the evaluation where the ratio of students who reported speaking Romani was at least one in five³⁸.

In terms of the aspects students appreciate about their school, there are no significant differences between language groups. The largest difference appears in the category of “staff”, which Romani-speaking students perceive more positively than their non-Romani-speaking peers (a difference of nearly 10%). A smaller, yet still notable, difference is found in the “school community” category, also within the realm of interpersonal relationships. These findings are consistent with earlier observations, including students’ attitudes toward practical training (see Chart 3.13).

CHART 3.13. Three things I like most about my school – by language proficiency



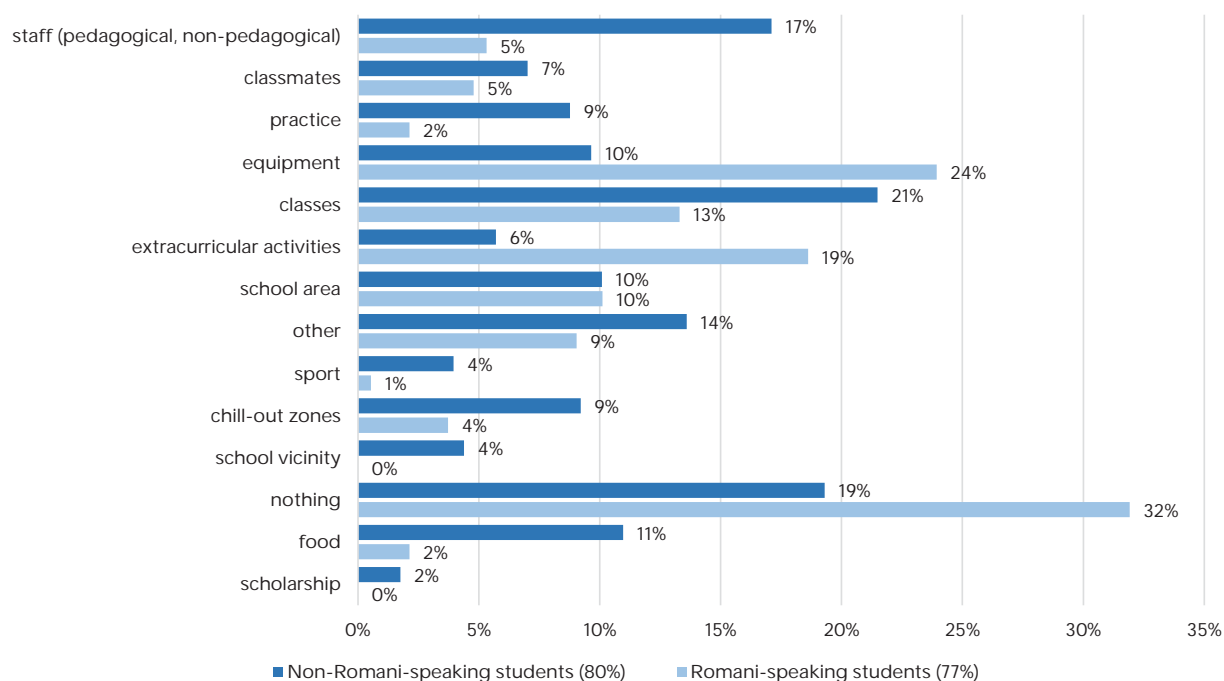
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

A shift occurs when it comes to desired changes and suggestions for improvement. One-third of Romani-speaking respondents who answered the question about proposed changes said they would not change anything about their school and are satisfied with it (compared to 20% of their non-Romani-speaking classmates).

One-fourth of Romani-speaking students would like to see improvements in classroom equipment (compared to 10% of non-Romani-speaking students), and one-fifth would like to have more opportunities for extracurricular activities, trips, and clubs (compared to only 6% of their non-Romani-speaking peers).

On the other hand, non-Romani-speaking students primarily expressed a desire to adjust the teaching schedule – eliminate zero periods, modify arrival and departure times, and change break times (21% vs. 13%). They also indicated a wish to see changes in staff attitude or to replace certain teachers (17% compared to only 5% of their Romani-speaking classmates).

CHART 3.14. Three things I would change about my school – by language proficiency



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank 2024.

Area: Aspects students like about their school and those they would change – findings

- More than 80% of respondents answered the optional open-ended questions.
- 60% of students appreciate the approach of the school's teaching and non-teaching staff.
- The most frequently requested change is the modernization of school equipment and facilities.
- For commuting students, adapting the class schedule to transportation options is a common request.
- Some students expressed a desire for a broader range of programs.
- Food services – affordability, access to healthy meals, and overall availability – are also areas where students sensitively perceive shortcomings.

Conclusion

Regular, methodologically guided surveys on the needs, expectations, and plans of students at secondary vocational schools could contribute to increasing the effectiveness of interventions aimed at improving the quality of VET and inclusion in education.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. THEMATIC SURVEY – ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS OF PILOT SVS

Recommendations on factors influencing school and program choice

- Strengthen cooperation between primary schools and SVS to promote vocational and academic programs, present collaboration with employers, highlight career-oriented opportunities, and showcase benefits offered by SVS; provide interest, talent, skills, and ability testing – ensure access to diagnostic tools and tests (e.g., simple publicly available online tests tailored to the target group).
- Work with parents – organize discussion sessions not only at SVS but also closer to communities (e.g., in community centers).
- Support career counseling at primary schools, or directly within communities.
- Ensure the availability of orientation brochures and user-friendly websites primarily targeting prospective SVS applicants (tailor websites to the target group, provide testing tools, ensure simple navigation and easy accessibility).
- Support the transition from school to the labor market, with an emphasis on employment prospects and employability – provide education on starting a business and developing entrepreneurial skills for F program students, as F program graduates face limited labor market opportunities and low employer demand; starting a business or an intermediate labor market enterprise/social economy enterprise may serve as an alternative to formal employment.
- Organize themed events, talks, and discussions with successful graduates and professionals to inspire students in a positive way.
- Promote educational and employment role models – support successful Roma men and women who can serve as examples for students, highlighting the importance of education for future success and the role of employment or other economic activity in improving quality of life, with emphasis on family support.
- Promote mentoring and career counseling programs that connect Roma students with mentors and counselors who can provide guidance on education, personal development, and career planning.

Recommendations in the area of student motivation

- Revise the conditions for granting social scholarships – increase the amount of the scholarship and expand eligibility to include students repeating a grade.
- Scholarship programs – support existing or introduce new scholarship programs supplemented with mentoring and tutoring.
- Establish a peer mentoring system – a “buddy” system, where senior scholarship recipients guide younger ones; mentorship between students in vocational and academic programs.
- Tutoring or other forms of assistance should be accessible to any student who is struggling with the curriculum and needs help.
- Increase the number of teaching assistants or other professionals according to the needs of the school or students.

- Collaborate with community centers – adjust service availability (e.g., opening hours) to better align with the needs of youth and children; use community center facilities not only for crisis intervention services but also for integrating social services.
- Introduce new services in community centers – position them as spaces for expansion, training/skills centers for employers, and in cooperation with employers and NGOs.

Recommendations in the area of values and culture

- Develop and implement training modules on cultural competencies – focusing on the history and culture of Roma and the specific challenges Roma students face, including building empathy and inclusiveness among educators.
- Provide targeted professional development – training modules for teachers on strategies for addressing the needs of diverse classrooms, including differentiation techniques and trauma-informed practices.
- Develop culturally relevant curricula – incorporate elements of Roma history, language, and culture into the curriculum to make education more relevant for Roma students, empower them within society, and help build self-worth and identity.
- Provide language support for students who may not be fluent in the primary language of instruction to support their academic integration.
- Offer mentoring and academic support for girls – mentoring and tutoring programs involving professionals, older students, or female role models from the community to support motivation and strengthen self-confidence, including activities outside school, such as in community centers. These centers can offer safe spaces, especially for girls, where they can receive additional tutoring and social support.
- Support Roma mediators who work closely with families, connecting students, families, communities, and schools. They can play a key role in addressing absenteeism and parental concerns (particularly for girls), thereby strengthening community commitment to education.
- Support cultural and youth programs – artistic, musical, theatrical, and sports initiatives aimed at connecting majority and minority communities.
- Develop women’s empowerment programs – for example, workshops on gender equality, financial literacy, reproductive health, relationship education, and domestic violence prevention.

Recommendations in the area of linking VET with practice

Creating an effective network of employers for practical training, including the dual education system, is key to ensuring a successful transition of SVS students from school to the open labor market. Below are several recommendations that could help improve the situation:

A) Employer networking

- Organizing regular working meetings and roundtables within existing platforms and professional associations, where employers can share their specific experiences, needs, and solutions. This will help SVS build their own ecosystem – a stronger community – and attract more engaged companies in the region and in the field of human resources (<https://www.hrcomm.sk/>, Slovak Chamber of Commerce and Industry, www.aces.sk, etc.)
- Establishing online platforms or forums where employers and schools can share information, job offers, good practices, results of pilot projects and social innovations, and case studies

B) Training and competence centers

- Collaboration between schools, employers, and local governments in building training and competence centers at the employers’ premises, intended both for practical training and for the development of future employees,
- Sharing best practices in operating existing training centers (e.g., Whirlpool/Beko, Volvo, Volkswagen, KIA Motors, Tesco, etc.)
- Joint thematic events – job fairs, recruitment sessions in cooperation with OLSAF, and mandatory excursions for primary and vocational school students to selected and accredited employers
- Training and competence centers as an official temporary affirmative measure.

C) Reducing administrative burden

- Analyze and simplify the accreditation process for employers participating in dual education.
- Create support materials such as guides or training sessions for employers, including visual info sheets, to help them better understand the accreditation process and requirements.
- Provide support and motivation for employers based on their size and area of focus.
- Offer specific financial incentives, grants, or calls for proposals for employers who engage in practical or dual education.
- Develop programs to support employers in training students – for example, specialized training or mentoring.
- Promote targeted cooperation with self-governing regions, with more active involvement of the regions in the process of supporting and promoting practical/dual education in their regions.
- Support strategic planning – take regional needs into account when creating strategies for cooperation with employers.
- Foster targeted, results-oriented cooperation with OLSAF, including their active involvement in the promotion and support of dual education and employer-based practical training in their regions.
- Consider employers' needs in preparing and recruiting young job seekers through support programs and activities.

D) Monitoring and evaluation of outcomes of cooperation with employers

- Introduce a system for monitoring and evaluating the success of employers involved in practical or dual education; this may also include collecting feedback from both students and employers.
- Implementing recommendations from the monitoring process can contribute to the development and stabilization of the dual education system and improve cooperation between schools and employers.
- Paid internships for SVS students are an important aspect of their education, bringing numerous benefits to both students and employers. Below are some key points: a combination of various benefits for students, recognition of learning outcomes acquired during paid internships at the employer's premises, additional financial support – the possibility to earn income during internships can help students cover study-related and personal expenses, the option of receiving practical training at multiple employers.

Recommendations in the area of supporting student inclusion

- Regularly evaluate student satisfaction with selected aspects of the school (with the option of reusing the online questionnaire designed by the World Bank).
- Actively involve students in improving the educational environment – for example, through co-designing changes, voting on proposed changes, etc.
- Enable students to provide feedback to teaching and non-teaching staff, as well as to instructors at employer training sites, in an appropriate manner.
- Pay attention to the quality of school facilities – modernize school equipment and premises, including for F and H programs.
- Adapt teaching schedules to the availability of public transportation in cases where a large proportion of students' commute, or support new forms of sustainable mobility. Also, pilot innovative models of school meal provision and school bicycles).

BOX 4.1. Importance of local coordination, flexible program design, and modest financial support

It has driven meaningful change in education across Europe—alongside the persistent challenge of ethnicity-sensitive data systems:

Local Coordination: Tailoring Solutions to Community Needs

Local and regional authorities (LRAs) play a crucial role in implementing education reforms and bridging gaps between national policy and grassroots realities.

- LRAs act as connectors between schools, families, employers, and social services.
- They help adapt national strategies to local contexts, ensuring relevance and responsiveness.
- Projects like LeadEx, which unite diverse European regions, show how local partnerships foster excellence and inclusion.
- The European Committee of the Regions emphasizes LRAs as strategic partners in the European Education Area, not just implementers.

Flexible Design: Adapting to Diverse Learners and Settings

Rigid, one-size-fits-all programs often fail to meet the needs of marginalized groups. Flexibility allows for innovation and personalization.

- Programs like Design Management at UIBS offer modular structures and multiple entry points, making education more accessible.
- The Digital Education Action Plan encourages hybrid learning, digital tools, and tailored support for vulnerable learners.
- Flexibility also enables rapid response to crises, such as adapting curricula during the COVID-19 pandemic or supporting displaced students.

○

Modest Financial Support: Small Investments, Big Impact

Even limited funding—when well-targeted—can unlock significant improvements in attendance and engagement.

- Scholarships and grants help reduce barriers for disadvantaged students. Erasmus+ and national schemes offer living stipends, tuition waivers, and travel support.
- Local initiatives like Belgium's Socioeconomic Monitoring Project use minimal resources to uncover patterns of disadvantage and inform policy.
- The European Students' Union calls for systematic coordination of education funding and exclusion of education from deficit rules to boost investment.

The Data Gap: Ethnicity-Sensitive Systems Still Lagging

Despite progress, Europe continues to struggle with collecting and using data that reflects racial and ethnic disparities.

- Many countries lack standardized, self-identification-based data on ethnicity, limiting targeted interventions.
- Concerns over privacy, misuse, and historical trauma contribute to resistance from some communities.
- The EU's Guidance Note outlines ethical and legal principles for collecting such data, but implementation remains uneven.
- Without robust data, it's difficult to measure discrimination, track progress, or design inclusive policies.

Europe's experience shows that local leadership, adaptive design, and strategic funding can drive real change—even without massive budgets. But to ensure these efforts reach all students, especially those from racialized or marginalized backgrounds, the continent must close the gap in ethnicity-sensitive data systems. Only then can inclusion be truly evidence-based and equitable.

Source: Authors, 2025.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS: SCHOOL – SCHOOL LOCATION – SCHOOL ECOSYSTEM

- Develop/approve a methodology for increasing the level of inclusion in VET and its evaluation at secondary schools.
- Define clear criteria for selecting SVS for the funding of support teams from EU funds.
- Improve awareness and the presentation of support measures by clustering interventions into areas such as: organization of teaching, modification of teaching methods, extracurricular and support activities, assessment, lesson preparation, classroom management, improvement of the learning environment, use of new technologies, etc.
- Create a platform for sharing experiences and best practices.
- Support social innovations in inclusive VET and pilot activities at SVS in partnership with relevant stakeholders.
- Revise the mandatory structure, content, and format of the school's Educational Activity Report so that it becomes part of the quality evaluation of VET (EQAVET standards, Peer Review, and school self-assessment) using new technologies.
- Develop cooperation and partnership rules for local and regional governments with the aim of long-term and strategic collaboration in inclusive education, or with other stakeholders at the local and regional levels, particularly in areas without established regional/local platforms.
- Ensure innovation in the curriculum of F and H programs, with strengthened practical training and implementation of the curricular reform.
- Open up new educational pathways for selected groups of students from marginalized Roma communities (e.g., women returning from maternity leave).
- Launch new integrated projects funded from multiple sources and implemented through local partnerships.
- Introduce a unified system of inclusion indicators for VET with the possibility of regular evaluation and comparison of SVS.
- At the level of school founders, consider creating the position of inclusion coordinator for VET.
- Support self-evaluation at SVS based on selected foreign/international models.
- Expand the pilot-tested methodology with a questionnaire for teaching and professional staff, and potentially for NGOs and employers/tradespeople.
- In the process of optimizing the SVS network, take into account the needs of students from MRC (e.g., ensure a sufficiently dense network of F and H programs at SVS with a higher share of MRC students to ensure geographic accessibility; ensure a follow-up offer of H programs at SVS with F programs to increase transition opportunities from F programs into mainstream education).

4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS: PARENTS

- Jointly define appropriate forms of communication and actively engage in communication with SVS – either directly or through support professionals.
- Allow parents to choose the method and form of communication with the school.
- Involve parents in activities organized by the SVS – extracurricular activities, parent-teacher meetings, cultural programs.
- Increase the attractiveness of F group programs in cooperation with employers.
- Reevaluate the range of F and H group programs offered by SVS based on labor market demand trends.
- Introduce regular school climate assessments and a feedback system at SVS as part of the VET quality evaluation framework.
- Invest in SVS with a higher proportion of students from MRC equally as in other SVS in the region.
- Regularly recognize teachers and professional staff who contribute to increasing inclusion.
- Introduce an award system for students and their families from MRC in cooperation with employers and partner organizations.

- Create legislative conditions for providing motivational scholarships and other incentives for students without causing a loss of eligibility for existing family support.
- Introduce a “guarantee for SVS students from MRC” – support for a guaranteed first job placement.
- Link formal and non-formal education within the SVS environment.

4.4. RECOMMENDATIONS: EMPLOYERS

- Simplify the dual education system, especially for small employers (as dual education represents an administrative and staffing burden for them).
- Legally adjust the employment of individuals under the age of 16, with an emphasis on flexibility, and recognize skill development through work as productive work.
- Jointly design targeted programs that combine support services, VET, and practical training for various sectors or target groups, taking into account, for example, the size of the employer.
- The combination of support tools for employers should be tailored specifically according to the size of the employer, the sector in which they operate, the form of practical training provided, and the student’s vocational program.
- Pilot recognition of learning outcomes with employers and link forms of corporate vocational training with the content of theoretical and practical training at school, including joint student assessment by two evaluators – one from the SVS and one from the employer.
- Use different models of networking and school establishment in the process of optimizing the SVS network.
- Pilot and implement the concept of training centers.
- Support mobility programs for students from MRC.
- Pilot selected forms of cooperation, for example: mutual voluntary information sharing and data provision, mentoring and tutoring provided by employers as part of school support services, the use of corporate volunteering, and the provision of non-financial benefits to students.

4.5. RECOMMENDATIONS: OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

- Improve information sharing to better engage stakeholders in supporting improvements in the quality and inclusiveness of VET – consolidate information in one place.
- Use EU funds, including support from Integrated Territorial Investments, to fund joint projects of stakeholders at the local, subregional, regional, or sectoral level.
- Build professional capacities within SVS focused on developing the school ecosystem.
- Support schools in creating joint solutions with local stakeholders as part of their school development concept and within the VET quality assessment framework.
- Involve the widest possible range of relevant stakeholders (such as school founders, employers, NGOs) at all levels in the development of legislation and legislative proposals related to VET or education through an open consultation process.
- Develop sector-specific models of cooperation with SVS in accordance with Slovak legislation.
- Reconsider the forms of completion of vocational education and training.
- Ensure the integration and clarity of services and support measures provided by various ministries for the same target groups.
- Launch an expert discussion on the use and effectiveness of temporary affirmative measures.
- Provide systematic, comprehensive, and long-term support for SVS based on clearly defined criteria.
- Strengthen the implementation of a comprehensive, integrated, and locally specific territorial approach.
- Support cross-sectoral partnerships of stakeholders at local, subregional, and regional levels for high-quality and inclusive VET.
- Ensure consistent monitoring and evaluation of interventions implemented to support VET.
- Support investment in shared education infrastructure.

TABLE 4.1 Overview of proposed solutions to support inclusion in VET by themes and frameworks

Thematic focus	Feasibility			
	Legislative framework	Financial framework	Institutional framework	Time framework
Continuity and long-term VET strategy (regional and sectoral strategies)	#	#	#	S
Platform for inclusion in education			#	S
Local/sectoral dataset	#	#	#	S
Synergy in the education ecosystem	#	#	#	L
Support for social and educational innovation		#	#	S
Introduction of multi-source financing	#	#	#	L
Attracting and motivating young teaching and professional staff	#	#	#	L
Support for cross-border/international cooperation		#	#	S
New educational pathways		#	#	S
Introduction of a quality and inclusion assessment system at SVS	#	#	#	L
Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented interventions			#	S
Personalization of support tools	#	#	#	L
Targeted use of new technologies		#	#	S

Legend: S – short-term framework, L – long-term framework

Source: Authors, 2025.

Continuity and long-term VET strategy (regional and sectoral strategies)

- One of the biggest challenges in VET is the long-standing mismatch between the content/form of education provided to students from MRC and the actual needs of the local/regional labor market. A significant proportion of successful graduates from lower vocational education (F and H group programs) face difficulties transitioning from school to their first job. The employment rate for graduates of F programs is reported to be only 30–40%, with an even lower rate among women.

Local platform for inclusion in education

- As part of support through national projects in the PSK and the BBSK, local and regional platforms of stakeholders and relevant actors were established as cross-sector communities that actively participate in the modernization and improvement of the quality of vocational education and training.
- We also propose the establishment of a national-level platform for inclusion in VET. Its aim should be strategic and professional forecasting of labor market needs, with a specific focus on the employment and further education of lower vocational education graduates (primarily F and H program groups), the optimal setting of education policy across the formal and non-formal education systems, and more effective monitoring. Activities of the platform should support proper planning and development of the network of educational institutions, including SVS, in line with the specific needs of regions and lead to better coordination among stakeholders. The platform could be a continuation of the inter-sectoral working group established in 2023 by the Ministry of Economy of the Slovak Republic or could be developed within one of the nationally supported projects funded by EU funds.

Local/sectoral dataset

- Despite significant progress in collecting quantitative and qualitative data in the field of education, their availability and quality remain insufficient for evidence-based policymaking.

- We propose that all levels of governance pay adequate attention to the scope, quality, and publication of quantitative and qualitative data in standardized datasets. It is essential to take a systematic approach to data collection and to support strategic and analytical capacities at the regional level as well.

Synergy in the education ecosystem

- The field of education is facing one of the greatest societal shifts – rapidly changing qualifications, new job positions, the impact of artificial intelligence, new employment models, and the need for new skills are also influencing the life strategies of students from MRC and the operation of SVS.
- We recommend that not only the selected pilot SVS but all schools promptly reassess their vocational programs, support specialization, and establish new networks of SVS that allow for the sharing of capacities and resources within the territory (local ecosystems), enabling the provision of high-quality education and support services.

Support for social and educational innovation

- Due to the low innovation capacity of SVS, schools with a high proportion of students from MRC often lag behind in the quality of vocational education and training. As a result, they are perceived by students and parents as unattractive and inadequately equipped in terms of materials and technology.
- We propose that, similar to schools designated as Centers of Vocational Excellence (COVP) or future CoVE, innovation should also be supported in SVS providing lower vocational education and training.

Introduction of multi-source financing

- Public spending on vocational education and training, including EU-funded investments for its modernization, has increased in recent years. In 2024, the Ministry of Education, through SVS founders, launched a process to optimize the secondary school network as a result of public finance consolidation, demographic trends, labor market needs, and data on the state of secondary education. A lack of financial resources at the school level affects the quality of the learning environment, the availability of support services, and the motivation and performance of students from MRC.
- For the sustainability and further development of the system beyond the optimization phase, it will be necessary to further increase financial resources and improve their efficiency. We recommend exploring the possibilities of multi-source financing, including opening a discussion on the advantages and effectiveness of normative funding, combining public support with private sector contributions, or other hybrid financing models, which would allow for more effective and targeted services for students.

Support for cross-border/international cooperation

- The EU supports several programs aimed at promoting the mobility and participation of SVS students during and after VET, but these opportunities are underutilized, despite special support available for disadvantaged youth. Among the most commonly used international programs is ERASMUS+, but this also includes cross-border cooperation programs, particularly through the so-called Small Project Fund, which is administratively simple and allows schools to implement small, specifically targeted projects (Interreg SK-PL, SK-HU, SK-CZ). Only one of the CuRI pilot SVS has regularly participated in international cooperation. The European Commission has also published several new publications focused on supporting mobility for students from disadvantaged groups and those in apprenticeship training.
- We propose improving awareness and motivation among SVS to participate in various international EU initiatives and programs, ensuring the support and engagement of school founders, and considering cooperation among multiple SVS within a single international project.

New educational pathways for students

- As shown by the results of the thematic survey, most SVS students from MRC do not have a clear idea of their career or educational path. It is necessary to increase the attractiveness of lower vocational education and training programs, including the most commonly preferred ones from group F, and to enable more flexible educational pathways for students from MRC in cases where they are at risk of early school leaving without obtaining a qualification.
- One solution for retaining and developing students from MRC is to introduce an effective system of counseling services with a mandatory career guidance module and the development of a career plan for every student. In cooperation with employers and with the support of NGOs, various career paths of successful MRC students should be promoted, with regular and appropriate communication about career opportunities in their chosen field. Schools should also organize an annual series of joint events involving students, employers, and career counselors in their local area. It is recommended to draw on the experience of corporate assessment and development centers, as well as corporate training centers focused on practical skills.

Attracting and motivating young teaching and professional staff

- All pilot schools have long struggled with a lack of qualified and highly motivated teaching and professional staff, particularly for vocational subjects.
- Based on an analysis of the current situation, it is necessary to identify barriers and opportunities, and to design targeted financial and non-financial incentives and changes. Attracting and motivating young teaching and professional staff will require the involvement of employers and universities – not only in defining the required competencies but also in the preparation and funding of ongoing training, and in the creation of joint sectoral teams of lecturers, instructors, and experts.

Introduction of a quality and inclusion assessment system at SVS

- The majority of Slovakia's Roma population resides in the three CuRI regions – and especially in the PSK and the KSK. While this represents a significant economic and social potential, it also poses a challenge in terms of utilizing this population as a future source of skilled labor. Employers point out that the acquisition of essential skills and habits must begin in pre-primary education, and that early school leaving among students from MRC must be prevented, with the goal of at least obtaining a vocational certificate.
- We propose that greater attention be paid to improving quality and inclusion at SVS with a higher proportion of students from MRC or other disadvantaged groups. The achievements of successful SVS and good practices should be promoted, and pilot projects and initiatives should be carried out in cooperation with relevant stakeholders, while significantly strengthening the permeability of the education system. We also propose that selected CuRI 5 pilot schools be prioritized for participation in the curriculum reform of vocational education and training and that EU funds from the 2021–2027 programming period be utilized through a targeted call.

Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of implemented interventions

- We propose establishing an inter-sectoral working group with the goal of creating a joint evaluation and monitoring system that would overcome data-related limitations (such as missing, unreliable, or outdated data, and lack of synchronization in the collection of quantitative and qualitative data), political barriers (policy-making based on data and evidence), implementation issues (jurisdiction of multiple ministries, differing monitoring and decision-making mechanisms, administrative burden, standards for publishing data and analyses), and parametric challenges (harmonized setting of output, outcome, and impact indicators).
- Systematic monitoring and evaluation would also enable discussion about data-driven changes in SVS funding models, with a focus on results. Funding calculations would no longer be based solely on student numbers but could include additional parameters, allowing for extra contributions to address the specific needs of individual schools or school locations.

Personalization of support tools

- Only one of the pilot SVS reported irregularly using any form of feedback collection from students, and occasionally from graduates. Activities of School Support Teams working individually with students can be partially considered a form of individual feedback collection. However, school representatives stated that individualized support is most often targeted at students with behavioral or academic issues.
- Current new technologies, the support for establishing School Support Teams, the gradual training of teaching and professional staff with a focus on inclusion, various EU-funded projects, interventions by NGOs, and available methodological materials create space for the personalization of support tools even at the individual level. A first step could be the development of a career/educational plan for every first-year student as a shared commitment between the student and the school.

Targeted use of new technologies

- All focus groups conducted during the thematic survey (especially the focus group with parents) revealed that SVS with a higher proportion of students from MRC lag behind in the use of new technologies. This may be due not only to low investment in SVS infrastructure but also to the content and methods of teaching in F and H program groups, where the focus is primarily on practical training and skills.
- In connection with the national project of MIRDI, we propose that, alongside the financing of digital vouchers for students, investments also be made in digital educational content and related support services for students and teaching/professional staff.

CONCLUSION

As an EU Member State, Slovakia will need to continue supporting the development of skills and quality jobs while ensuring social justice in response to the changing geopolitical landscape. The foundation of competitiveness in catching-up regions lies in their people, a sufficient number of qualified workers, strong education and training systems, inclusive labor markets, non-discriminatory legislation, and innovation. However, the European labor market is undergoing profound transformation. While in 2023, employment in the EU rose to 216.5 million people – bringing the employment rate to a new record high of 75.3% and unemployment down to a historic low of 6.1% – the shortage of skilled labor remains. For example, nearly four out of five small and medium-sized enterprises in the EU report difficulties in finding workers with the right qualifications.

To ensure alignment between skills and labor market demands, self-governing regions must continue to support initiatives focused on skills development and pursue strategic investments recommended by the World Bank – adult education and lifelong learning, the development of future-proof skills, skills retention, the attraction and reintegration of skilled talent, and the recognition of various forms of vocational training.

Upskilling and reskilling the existing workforce in the regions are essential to enable transitions between jobs and occupations. A regional skills space should include a strategic education plan in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), an action plan for basic skills focused on school-based education, and the European strategy for vocational education and training, as well as strengthen university alliances.

The relevance of skills and occupations for the labor market also requires intensive dialogue with social partners, the facilitation of skills recognition and validation, and the collection of evidence on current and future labor market skills and trends. Future interventions should include support for initiatives that ensure the transferability of skills, aiming to facilitate the recognition of acquired competencies in cases of mobility.

In addition, Slovakia is facing a decline in the working-age population, making it necessary to increase the participation of women, young people, and older citizens who wish to remain economically active in the labor market. Access to the labor market is also difficult for low-skilled workers, persons with disabilities, and other underrepresented groups.

And finally, the world of work is changing, and while new, rapidly growing economic sectors are emerging, workers need ways to adapt in order to retain or find employment. At the same time, they need a safety net and support during transitional periods – particularly young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including students from marginalized Roma communities.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1A

Methodology for selecting CuRI 5 pilot SVS

ANNEX 1B

Selection of pilot SVS for the implementation of CuRI 5 Action Plan activities focused on supporting students from marginalized Roma communities

ANNEX 2

Thematic survey methodology for evaluating inclusive VET

ANNEX 3

Thematic survey – students from MRC at pilot SVS

ANNEX 4

Interview sheet – semi-structured interview (individual/in-person meeting with the management of CuRI 5 pilot SVS)

ANNEX 5

Minutes and conclusions from the focus group “Optimizing cooperation between SVS and employers in practical training of MRC students” (October 15, 2024, Košice)

ANNEX 6A

Good practice form

ANNEX 6B

Catalog of good practice

ANNEX 7

Media outputs of the VET MRC component within CuRI (January – December 2024)

ANNEX 8

Summary report from the final CuRI conference titled “Modernization of Secondary Education and Its Importance for the Economy of Slovakia and Its Regions: The Contribution of CuRI” (February 6, 2024, Bratislava)

ANNEX 9

Systematic approach to the education of students and young people from marginalized communities (Training Center concept)

Annex 1a – Methodology for selecting CuRI 5 pilot SVS

For the successful implementation of the activities of the CuRI 5 Action Plan focusing on MRC, it was essential to select, based on appropriate evaluation criteria, secondary vocational schools that have the best potential for successful implementation of the CuRI 5 Action Plan activities according to regional needs. The selected evaluation criteria for choosing the pilot SVS were divided into two areas:

- a) institutional prerequisites (clear vision and strategy, demonstrable results of the SVS in the field of inclusion, organizational adaptability, cooperation with territorial stakeholders, institutional prerequisites, school culture and climate, support from the founder, suitable national curriculum),
- b) resources (human resources and capacities of the SVS, existing/supported infrastructure, demand for a qualified workforce, opportunities for multi-source co-financing, cross-sectoral cooperation, etc.)

The evaluation of the SVS also included alignment with the strategic and conceptual documents of the relevant territory (catchment/target area) and the potential to achieve complementarity or synergy with national projects being prepared or implemented by selected ministries from EU funds (ESF+, ERDF, and others) under the competence of Managing Authorities/Intermediate Bodies, as well as the World Bank team's experience with implementing pilot activities of CuRI 1–4.

Proposal of the methodology for selecting pilot SVS for CuRI 5

The methodology for selecting SVS was based on the approved methodology for selecting pilot SVS in CuRI 1–4, and the evaluation and selection criteria were modified or supplemented to better reflect the inclusive dimension of vocational education and training in relation to the MRC target group, as well as the activities and outputs of the approved CuRI 5 Action Plan.

Partners in the territory – representatives of the PSK, BBSK, and KSK – proposed that the evaluation and selection criteria should primarily take into account already implemented investments in educational infrastructure, the untapped potential of the SVS, the strategic goals of optimizing the SVS network, vocational education and training in F programs, and the possibilities for providing practical training at employers' premises.

The World Bank team further supplemented the evaluation and selection criteria with synergy and complementarity with already implemented or currently supported projects at the national and regional levels, the location of the SVS in a so-called priority district (supplementary selection criterion), opportunities for vocational education and training in H programs, planned major/strategic investments in the territory, the potential (experience) of the SVS to provide non-formal education, accessibility of the SVS from municipalities with the presence of MRC (by public transport), and the prospect of quality employment (demand in the local or regional labor market).

The evaluation and selection were carried out in two steps. In the first step, SVS that were nominated during the selection process of CuRI 1–4 were reassessed (even during that selection process, SVS were chosen as schools focused on supporting inclusive education and training – for example, the satellite campuses of SVS in Rakúsy and Stará Ľubovňa for the PSK, the Joint School in Poltár and the Secondary Vocational School – Szakközépiskola in Tornaľa for the BBSK, the Technical SVS in Rožňava and the SVS of Agri-Tech and

Gastronomy Services in Příbeník for the KSK). In the second step, the SVS from the first round were supplemented with additional SVS that met the updated evaluation and selection criteria, so that at least three SVS were nominated as pilot schools for CuRI 5 in each region.

Table 1: Detailed description of evaluation criteria for selecting pilot SVS (inclusion)

Name of criterion	Description of criterion	Evaluation method	Source	Criterion weight / points
<p>Clear strategic plan/concept of the SVS in the field of inclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence and development of the school's vision and mission into a concrete school plan in the field of inclusion, with an emphasis on inclusive aspects in VET and support for MRC Specific objectives of the school for the coming years in the area of integrating students from MRC and placing them into the labor market Interest of the school/school facility in implementing innovations and experimental programs in the field of inclusion with an emphasis on MRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus of the school on key aspects of inclusion – focus of study/vocational programs – existence of F programs or H programs Number of students from disadvantaged/low-stimulus environments Curricula, cooperation especially with social economy entities (SEE), innovations implemented in the past three years to support inclusion and students from MRC, etc. Does the school have a vision and mission that support inclusion and students from MRC? Does the SVS have the potential or already provide further education in accordance with applicable legislation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School website – published concept, school vision Internal school documentation (if the concept/vision is not published) External evaluations – available from public sources (regional media, etc.) Report on educational activities, their results and conditions Interview with school management and experiences from CuRI 1-5 	<p>0–5 / *0.3</p>
<p>Demonstrable results of the SVS (including in the MRC group)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SVS included in the nomination table of CuRI 1-5 School performance in evaluated areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> academic performance of students from disadvantaged/low-stimulus environments, from MRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the school conduct self-assessment in the area of inclusion and integration of students from MRC or not Evaluation of the school by employers (SSE)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on educational activities, their results and conditions WB report – needs of employers WB report – SVS Register of school cooperation agreements TREXIMA statistics 	<p>0–5 / *0.3</p>

<p>Strong/competent school management with a clear agenda focused on MRC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ evaluation of schools by employers (including SEE) ● Employment of graduates from F or H programs on the labor market ● Employment of graduates in other vocational programs ● School activities focused on innovation and experimental testing for students from MRC ● Cooperation with employers – other forms of cooperation beyond dual education ● Success/participation of students from disadvantaged environments and from MRC in various events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ evaluation of schools by employers (SEE) – involvement of students from F and H programs and other vocational programs ● Employment of graduates from MRC in selected fields on the labor market ● School engagement in facilitating internships and scholarships for students from MRC ● Support for mobility and internships for students from MRC ● Support for further education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Employment and feedback from graduates in F and H programs or vocational programs in the region/catchment area – do students from disadvantaged environments and from MRC continue in education? ● Implemented investments from IROP and other EU funds ● Number of supported students in mobility and internship programs ● Number of students from MRC receiving a social scholarship ● Number of students from MRC continuing their studies at universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interview with school management and experiences from CuRI 1-5 ● Amount of ESIF invested in supporting students from MRC ● Interview with selected employers and experiences from CuRI 1-5 ● Projects supported from ESIF ● Interactive application on secondary school graduate employment: https://institutsocialnejpolitiky.sk/absolventi/ 	<p>0-5/ *0.2</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ability of the principal and/or leading teaching staff to contribute to the development and improvement of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ability of the principal/management to recruit and retain teaching staff (teacher age + performance) for inclusion and support of students from 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussions with the principal and school management/engagement during the interview 	

<p>Support from multiple partners and the ability to cooperate with others, including social aspects and employers</p>	<p>inclusion and support for students from MRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability of school management to network with various stakeholders at the local and regional level, with an emphasis on SSE and the non-profit sector • Ability to develop projects and activities related to inclusion support and support for students from MRC • Teacher training (systematic) and participation in programs for inclusion and support of students from z MRC • Ability to ensure so-called productive school activities • Proactivity of school management/responding quickly to various programs 	<p>MRC (e.g., extracurricular education, presence of a school psychologist, special education teacher, student assistant – that is, a school support team)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in international projects • Success of cooperation and activities with other stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal documentation, school website • Report on educational activities, their results and conditions • Media outputs • Participation of school representatives in working/expert groups • Portfolio of productive activities • List of innovative actions • Mobility projects • WB Report – data on material and technical equipment, staffing 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support from the founder (for example, the PSK Regional VET Council) in the field of inclusive VET • Cooperation with other stakeholders – local government, NGOs, entrepreneurs... inclusive labor market • Established school NGO – cooperation with legal guardians of students, 2% tax assignment, and support for MRC • Cooperation with other stakeholders – employers, associations – professional, school associations, other sectoral ministries, local government, members of the school community, students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of cooperation agreements signed with a focus on inclusion and support for students from MRC • Number of joint projects aimed at students from MRC • Other joint activities by stakeholders (presentations, excursions, etc.) targeting students from MRC • Evaluation/satisfaction from the school's partners • Types of support provided by partners (financial, organizational, administrative, promotional – school promotion and advertising, publicity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal school documentation • School website • Websites of cooperating partners • Feedback on satisfaction from school partners (WB Report on employers) • Report on educational activities, their results and conditions • Report – section on VET provision, evaluation of teachers and management staff • Other supporting evidence from partners and cooperating stakeholders (e.g., media and PR) 	<p>0–5/ *0.1</p>

	<p>from MRC, student council, universities, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Internal cooperation" – internal communication and collaboration in supporting students from MRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of partnership agreements signed with a focus on support for students from MRC • School membership in associations and chambers, professional organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicly available outputs of the school/teachers on specialized platforms • Teachers' publishing activity 	
<p>Support for non-formal education and learning focused on disadvantaged population groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-formal educational activities (leisure activities and interest groups, linking education with the creation of practical solutions) also accessible to students from MRC • Existence of programs/projects in the field of non-formal education with a specific focus on students from MRC (e.g., peer learning) • Use of the potential to involve disadvantaged groups, including students from MRC, in education – community work, school promotion • Level of inclusion at the SVS level (index) • Cooperation with stakeholders whose goal is the education and development of disadvantaged population groups and students from MRC in the area of non-formal education and recognition of the results of non-formal education • Cooperation with primary schools in ensuring the continuation of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility (barrier-free environment) • Proportion of disadvantaged student groups • Number of awarded scholarships (motivational + social) • Other forms of motivation and support for students from MRC and disadvantaged groups • Cooperation with stakeholders focused on the development and support of disadvantaged groups and students from MRC • Cooperation with the broader community (parents, young people or activists from MRC) • Provision of programs that are attractive and promising for these groups (intent, structure – academic/vocational fields) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal school documentation • Examples of best practices at the SVS level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School facilities – e.g., accessibility, availability of specialized teachers and assistants, provision of infrastructure (e.g., transport, accessibility of the institution) • Feedback from stakeholders working with disadvantaged groups and students from MRC • Feedback from disadvantaged groups and students from MRC • Feedback from primary schools (primary school management and founder), especially those with students from MRC • Provision of career counseling in cooperation with NGOs or other support services for students from MRC 	<p>0–5 / additional</p>

	<p>compulsory school attendance and education for students from MRC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of second-chance programs and other projects focused on inclusion and support for students from MRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of existing/potential clients • Forms of practical training at employers and at school – which ones? • Equipment and conditions for practical training – material and technical equipment and qualified human resources for productive activities • Joint workplaces with employers (existing, potential) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal school documentation • SEE catalog • Human and technical resources of the school • Report (sections focused on students' practical training) – types of internships, partners • Financial analysis of the school's resources 	0–5/ *0.1
<p>Potential for developing various forms of productive activities (social economy activities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of financial support for the implementation of practical training and productive school activities to support MRC • Entrepreneurial/economic activities of the school and support for MRC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of projects/activities implemented using the school's own capacity • Number of activities carried out to support students from disadvantaged backgrounds • Participation in expert/working groups and regional/local platforms and chambers, professional associations • Number of lifelong guidance and lifelong learning programs and services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal school documentation, school website • Minutes from school board meetings • Report on educational activities, their results and conditions 	0–5/ additional
<p>Capacity to implement the strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong team – ability to prepare and implement CuRI 5 pilot activities and supplementary activities by involving the school's own capacities • Proactive communication with the founder in the field of inclusion and support for students from MRC – interest in addressing the situation • Working and expert groups (composed of various stakeholders and school partners) focused on supporting students from MRC 			

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction with and functionality of the school board Involvement of students, community members, and employers in shaping the school's vision and mission Forms and frequency of staff/employee meetings at the school 		
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School's dependence on per capita funding and subsidies – the school's ability to be financially independent Type of organization – contributory/budgetary/public/private – budgetary constraints Existence of its own NGO – acquisition of other financial resources, sponsorship Productive work and activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % share of other sources in the school's total budget Overview of other sources secured by the school (projects, grants, tuition fees, per capita funding, subsidies, etc.) Number of sponsorship/donation agreements Share of productive work in the school's income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School financial data Analysis of available financing methods accessible to the school Report – school's "freedom" in financial decision-making (acquisition and investment) Orders/contracts for service provision to various entities 	0-5 / additional
Subregion and labor market needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 1 SVS within the subregion/catchment area from the Atlas of Roma Communities with an emphasis on specialization and accessibility, key employment sector, and future investments Position and reputation of the school within the subregion/catchment area Location of the SVS in a priority district Location of the SVS in a subregion with a planned major/strategic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School profile corresponding to the strategic goals of the Program of Economic and Social Development (PHSR) and the development concepts of the city/subregion/region The school and current labor market needs in the region/catchment area, labor force migration Expected labor market developments and demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWOT analysis for the territory – prospective sectors and industries PHSR and other strategic documents (municipality/city/region) Atlas of Roma Communities List of national projects focused on inclusion and support for MRC and other relevant NP 	0-5 / *0.1

	investment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross-border subregion 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of schools in the sector with similar vocational program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the school's production potential and competitiveness • Sectoral policies, education concepts (existing strategic documents) 	0-5 / additional
Sector/industry					
School size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stable (or increasing) number of students from MRC • Ratio of school size to the number of inhabitants and potential students from disadvantaged backgrounds or MRC/number of inhabitants with low or no qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of admitted students in F and H programs and total vocational programs • Current number of students from MRC • Number of students in the upcoming school year (interest in programs and study) – primary schools with a share of students from low-stimulus environments and students from MRC • School capacity /maximum number of students • School attendance (% share of students from other municipalities, including those from the Atlas of Roma Communities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal school documentation • Demographic data (e.g., educational structure of the catchment area) • Data from the “EDUzber” and school computing centers • Data on the number of inhabitants, young people and/or NEETs 	0-5 / additional	
Significant/potential impact of the school on local and regional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the school on local or regional development – contribution to the local economy/social economy • School participation in volunteer activities for the region/territory/municipality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributing to the development of the local or regional economy (e.g., training students for businesses, social entrepreneurship, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of the economic potential of the territory, analysis of the competitiveness of the region/territory compared to others over time • City/region/territory development plans (e.g., PHRSR) 	0-5 / *0.1	

Annex 1b – Selection of pilot SVS for the implementation of CuRI 5

List of proposed pilot SVS for CuRI 5

In line with the applied evaluation criteria, the World Bank team, after consultations with the PSK, KSK, and BBSK Departments of Education, prepared the following selection of SVS:

SVS Name	Subregion/Catchment area	School's focus
PSK		
Satellite Campus of the Joint School in Stará Ľubovňa	Stará Ľubovňa/Podolíneec – Lomnička	Agriculture, forestry and construction
Army Gen. L. Svoboda Secondary Vocational Polytechnic and Services School in Svidník	Svidník – Stropkov	Services
Joint School in Čaklov	Vranov nad Topľov – Čaklov	Agriculture, services
KSK		
Technical SVS in Rožňava	Rožňava – Dobšiná – Štítnik	Industry / VOLVO
Satellite Campus of the SVS of engineering and services in Spišská Nová Ves	Krompachy	Services
Secondary Vocational School of Agri-Tech and Gastronomy Services in Pribeník	Pribeník – Kráľovský Chlmec	Agriculture, food
BBSK		
Technical SVS in Lučenec	Lučenec	Industry, construction
Joint School in Poltár	Poltár	Agriculture, forestry, food and glass industry
Technical SVS in Zvolen	Zvolen	Services, industry
SVS of Trade and Services in Krupina	Krupina	Services, industry

Information provided by the BBSK for the selection of CuRI 5 pilot schools

1. Participation in the approved BBSK national project under the call PSK-MSVVS-007-2023-NP-ESF+ titled "Modernization of Secondary Education in the BBSK"

- Five secondary vocational schools that were selected from the group of schools proposed by World Bank experts and for which integrated investment packages are being prepared as part of the continuation of CuRI (nomination table of pilot SVS from CuRI II and CuRI III):

1. Secondary Vocational School of Information Technology, Tajovského 30, Banská Bystrica
2. Secondary Medical School, Tajovského 24, Banská Bystrica
3. Secondary Technical Vocational School, Dukelských hrdinov 2, Lučenec
4. Joint School, Železničná 5, Poltár
5. Secondary Industrial School of Transport, Sokolská 911/94, Zvolen

- Six secondary vocational schools that were selected based on the following criteria:

- the school offers programs that are in demand on the labor market
- a perceived gap between the school's potential and its current state
- potential for diversified practical training and deepened cooperation with companies in this area

6. Secondary Technical Vocational School, J. Švermu 1, Zvolen
7. Secondary Vocational School, Hlavná 425, Hnúšťa
8. Secondary Vocational School of Trade and Services, M. R. Štefánika 8, Krupina
9. Secondary Vocational School, Poľná 10, Veľký Krtíš
10. Secondary Vocational School, Generála Viesta 6, Revúca
11. Samuel Mikovíni Joint School, Akademická 13, Banská Štiavnica

2. Secondary vocational schools that have active F programs for obtaining lower secondary education with a higher number of students:

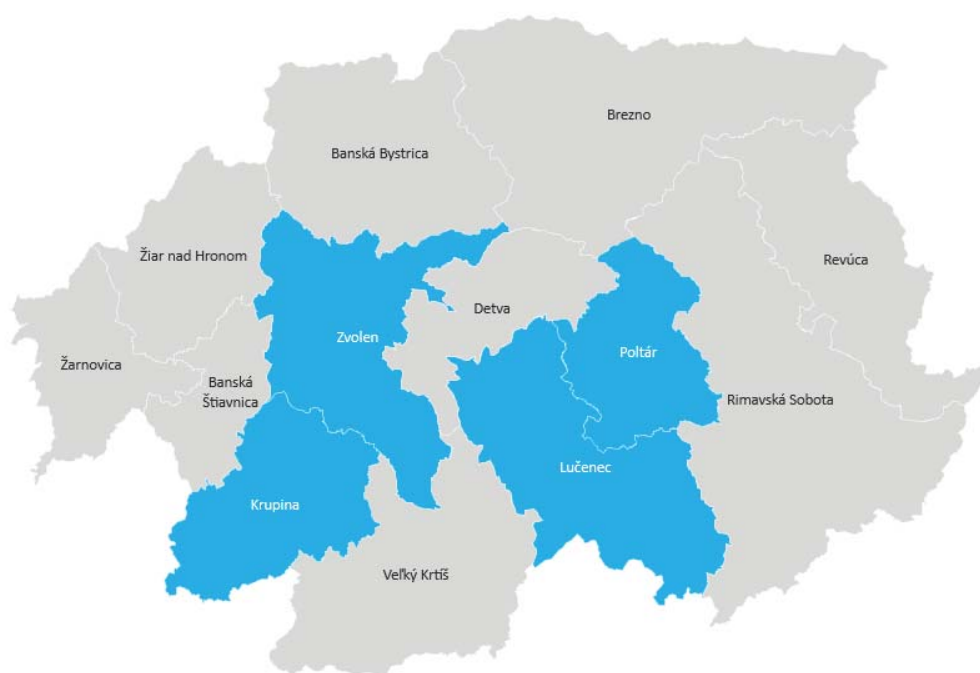
Table 1: Number of first-year students in F programs in the 2023/2024 school year

Name and address of school	Program code	Name of program	Number of first-year students as of September 15, 2023
Secondary Vocational School of Services and Forestry, Kolpašská 1586/9, Banská Štiavnica	3686 F	Construction production	11
	3178 F	Clothing production	10
Total			21
Secondary Vocational School of Engineering and Services, Laskomerského 3, Brezno	2479 F	Engineering production	16
	3178 F	Clothing production	8
Total			24
Secondary Vocational School of Trade and Services, M.R.Štefánika 8, Krupina	2982 F	Food production	11
	2487 F	Engineering production	5
Total			16
Secondary Technical Vocational School, Dukelských hrdinov 2, Lučenec	3686 F	Construction production	25
Total			25
Secondary Vocational School of Hotel Services and Transport, Zvolenská cesta 83, Lučenec	4572 F	Agricultural production	11
Total			11
Secondary Vocational School – Szakközépiskola, Kalinčiakova 1584/8, Filakovo	2487 F	Construction production	7
	3178 F	Clothing production	5
Total			12
Joint School, železničná 5, Poltár	4579 F	Forestry production	8
	2752 F	Utility glass production	5
	4572 F	Agricultural production	0
	2982 F	Food production	12
Total			25
Secondary Vocational School – Szakközépiskola, Šafárikova 56, Tornaľa	3169 F	Practical work	10
	3383 F	Wood processing	13
	3686 F	Construction production	0
	3178 F	Clothing production	0
Total			23
Secondary Vocational School of Trade and Services, Športová 1, Rimavská Sobota	3686 F	Construction production	31
Total			31
Secondary Technical and Agri-Food Vocational School – Múszaki, Mezőgazdasági és Élelmiszeripari Szakközépiskola, Okružná 61, Rimavská Sobota	3169 F	Practical work	18
	2498 F	Technical services in car repair	14
Total			32

Secondary Vocational School, Poľná 10, Veľký Krtíš	2487 F	Engineering production	9
Total			9
Secondary Vocational School, Gottwaldova 70/43, Želovce	4572 F	Agricultural production	9
	2982 F	Food production	9
Total			18
Joint School, Jarmočná 1, Modrý Kameň	3686 F	Construction production	3
	3383 F	Wood processing	1
	3178 F	Clothing production	0
	3169 F	Practical work	1
Total			5
Secondary Technical Vocational School, J.Švermu 1, Zvolen	6449 F	Technical services in car repair	10
Total			10
Secondary Vocational School of Trade and Services, Osvety 17, Nová Baňa	2982 F	Food production	12
	3686 F	Construction production	0
Total			12

The four selected pilot schools in the BBSK for CuRI 5:

3. Secondary Technical Vocational School, Dukelských hrdinov 2, Lučenec
4. Joint School, Železničná 5, Poltár
5. Secondary Technical Vocational School, J. Švermu 1, Zvolen
6. Secondary Vocational School of Trade and Services, M. R. Štefánika 8, Krupina



Annex 2 – Thematic survey methodology for evaluating inclusive VET

BACKGROUND

The share of young people aged 15 to 29 who were not working or in education in Slovakia in 2023 stood at 11.3%. However, this so-called NEET¹ category does not consist only of so-called "slackers," but also includes people who care for children or seriously ill household members.

Young people with a low level of education are three times more likely to become NEET than those who have completed university. The risk of long-term unemployment after losing a job is higher among young people than among those over 30, as they lack established work habits and skills, and employers face additional costs to train them.

Terminology and definitions in the context of the Slovak Republic

Inclusive education is the joint upbringing and education of children, pupils, students, or other participants in education and training, carried out on the basis of equal opportunities and respect for their educational needs and individual characteristics, and supporting their active involvement in the educational activities of the school or school facility.

A special educational need is a requirement determined by diagnostics in counseling and prevention facilities for the provision of a support measure in the education of a child or pupil according to Section 2 (j–p) of Act No. 245/2008 Coll., and applies to a child or pupil whose state of health, social conditions, language abilities, giftedness, behavior, cognitive abilities, motivation, emotionality, creativity, or skills require the provision of a support measure.

The aim of the prepared methodology is to introduce a unified procedure for the integration and harmonization of data in the field of inclusive vocational education and training, and to pilot test the methodology within the activities of the CuRI IV Action Plan, with the goal of improving the inclusion of disadvantaged groups (primarily MRC) in secondary education.

Mutual cooperation between state administration bodies, regional and local governments, and entities of other legal forms such as civic associations, professional, non-governmental, and non-profit organizations, as well as employers whose activities are directly linked to specific target groups of social inclusion – students and participants in education from MRC – plays an important role in ensuring effective support for social inclusion in practice. These stakeholders will be involved in the research process through workshops and focus groups.

¹ NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) – the term NEET is used to refer to young people who are neither employed nor engaged in education or vocational training (source: <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sk/topic/neet>). The term, as defined by Eurostat, encompasses all inactive youth, and therefore better reflects the group of individuals who are not participating in any form of education or employment, thus representing a higher risk of labor market and social exclusion.

As part of the preparation of events, the developed evaluation sheets of pilot SVS and the methodology for selecting pilot SVS, which was approved by the CuRI Steering Committee, will be used. The preparation of quantitative data will be carried out in close cooperation with CVTI, the education departments of individual self-governing regions, and in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic and the Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities, as well as other relevant ministries.

Quantitative inputs:

- Statistical data from CVTI (reports for SVS)
- Statistical data from self-governing regions (evaluation reports) and pilot schools
- Data from the "new" DCS (Data Capture Sheet) developed within CuRI

Qualitative inputs:

- Reports from CuRI 1-5 focus groups, reports from the CuRI 5 workshop with business entities
- Final CuRI 5ET reports from previous years
- Published reports, surveys, and analyses from analytical units of relevant ministries and other entities (universities, self-governing regions, schools, NGOs, etc.)
- Other sources – surveys and analyses from international organizations, etc.

Proposed procedure/steps and timeline:

Step 1: Presentation of the proposed methodology and consultations with self-governing regions

- Individual consultations with the regions (education departments) must be carried out with the aim of presenting the next steps and jointly agreeing on the expected outputs and coordination with ongoing national projects
- Jointly propose the "new DCS" to supplement quantitative data (additional data not currently monitored), making use of published open data

Step 2: Collection and acquisition of qualitative data

- Conduct individual consultations with participating SVS
- Prepare recommendations individually for each pilot/participating SVS (summarization and ongoing analysis of obtained qualitative and quantitative data, additional anonymization of data)
- Consult with other relevant stakeholders at the national and regional levels

- Conduct a workshop with representatives of selected ministries (presentation of preliminary findings from the survey and evaluation of the baseline situation at pilot SVS)

Step 3: Finalization of analyses and AP/development of inclusive plans for pilot/participating SVS (including integrated project packages)

- Supplement quantitative data using the "new DCS"
- Prepare and conduct focus groups (minimum 3; at least 1 conference per self-governing region)
- Finalize the report
- Create an intersectoral panel of experts (linked to the implementation of the NP TC)

Detailed description of the activity – Individual consultations with pilot SVS included in CuRI 5

Objective:

During a one-day meeting at the premises of the pilot SVS, obtain **relevant qualitative data, supplement the acquired quantitative data**, and verify certain statements (hypotheses, responses to questions) and data obtained from available public sources.

Expected results:

- Mapping of stakeholders (active and inactive), the extent and content of their cooperation within the specific territory (in a particular local context or sector); the output is a stakeholder map/matrix for the pilot SVS – in relation to the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in education and subsequently in the labor market
- Relevant inputs (quantitative and qualitative data) for the analytical outputs of the CuRI 5 Action Plan; the output is an analysis of the specific local context of the pilot SVS and recommendations for developing a concise inclusive development plan (max. 10 pages), including proposals for investment and non-investment measures
- Ideas for creating a local ecosystem model of the pilot SVS; the output is a contribution to the school's inclusive development plan – a model of territorial cooperation
- Mapping and subsequent analysis of best practice examples; the output is a database of best practices in the sector or for the target group or specific local context
- Suggestions for drafting recommendations, new procedures, methodologies, and tools; the output includes recommendations and proposals for new procedures and effective tools for the school itself (e.g., including the need to change/update study programs), as well as for the sector/target group

- Mapping the needs of stakeholders in addressing the integration of MRC students into working life; the output is a report with recommendations for public administration and the creation of an expert panel/panels or platform

Thematic survey – Secondary vocational schools

Interview – individual/in-person meeting with the management of the pilot SVS

Note: Questions build on findings from available public sources.

Main criteria	Sub-criteria	Questions (building on findings from the school's available documents and recorded in the baseline assessment form of the school)	Notes
School readiness and culture in relation to inclusion (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear strategic plan/concept of the SVS in the field of inclusion • Strong/competent school management with a clear agenda focused on MRC • Demonstrable results of the SVS (including in the MRC group) • Support (from multiple) partners and the ability to cooperate with others, including social aspects and employers 	<p>How does the school apply the concept of inclusion?</p> <p>Is there a person in the school management responsible for the agenda focused on MRC? Do you have a representative of the MRC community on the school board?</p> <p>With whom does the school/school management cooperate on this agenda (please list all entities you cooperate with)? Follow-up question: How do you cooperate with the Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family (OLSAF) and companies in the region in the area of MRC employment?</p> <p>What specific activities related to MRC does the school implement and/or plan to implement?</p> <p>What are the school's human resource capacities for supporting inclusion? Teaching/student assistants, psychologist, career counselor, others.</p> <p>Please provide an example of a successful project or best practice, if available.</p>	Institutional prerequisites

		<p>Do you cooperate or plan to cooperate with other SVS or primary schools?</p> <p>Do cooperating companies participate in supporting inclusion in any way? How?</p> <p>Does the school work with families of students from disadvantaged backgrounds? How?</p>	
<p>Potential impact of school activities (4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to implement the strategy in the area of MRC inclusion • Support for non-formal education and learning focused on disadvantaged population groups • Potential for developing various forms of productive activities (social economy initiatives) • Sustainability of programs and support services for students from MRC 	<p>How many students and how many programs does the school currently have in the network, and how many did it have, and which were opened in the past five years?</p> <p>What is the average number of students from MRC, and what programs were they most interested in?</p> <p>What is the early school leaving rate among MRC students?</p> <p>In your opinion, what would motivate MRC students to obtain higher qualifications? Or to complete their studies?</p> <p>What is the employability of students from MRC or from F programs?</p> <p>What do you consider the biggest barriers to education for students from disadvantaged backgrounds at your school?</p> <p>Do you know the employability of your MRC graduates in practice?</p>	<p>Institutional prerequisites</p> <p>Existence of the school's professional capacities or the school's overall capacity</p>
<p>Strategic position of the school (5)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future labor market needs (catchment area, subregion, commuting patterns) • Significant impact on the local/regional economy and cohesion 	<p>What is the expected future development on the local labor market?</p> <p>Which F professions are most in demand in your area, from companies or possibly local governments?</p> <p>Follow-up question: Can you describe the trend of future demand?</p>	<p>Resources and potential of the school</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with strategic and conceptual documents at the national and regional levels • Potential for the development of various forms of practical training 	<p>Are you aware of any new or planned investments in the area (please include all investments by local governments and other entities)?</p> <p>What impact do you anticipate your school's activities will have on local/regional development?</p>	
Supplementary criterion	Sub-criteria		Notes
Representativeness (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector, industry • School size 	School focus – priority sectors School size	Other, supplementary

Thematic survey – Students from MRC attending SVS

Alternative 1 – Interview – meeting with students from disadvantaged backgrounds, students in F programs, and other national curriculum programs

Questions will be formulated in consultation with external experts (e.g., FSEV UK). The aim is to understand students' attitudes and opinions in pilot SVS (attitudes toward education, educational experiences, career aspirations, school attractiveness).

Preliminary draft questions:

- Why did you choose this particular school or field of study?
- Do you prefer learning in the classroom or in the workshop/on the job – and why?
- Does your teacher or trainer pay attention to you – do you understand what they expect from you?
- Who is your role model in your family, at school, and at work?
- Do your parents encourage you to study and then work?
- What makes your studies most difficult? (Study difficulty, study-related costs, commuting, low family support, other...)
- What kind of support would you prefer when preparing for a job? (Financial, social support, working with a designated professional, other?)
- Is it motivating for you to become a trained professional and work long-term in a company?
- Where would you like to work after finishing school?

Alternative 2 – Online questionnaire for students from MRC in pilot SVS, and students in F and H programs

The draft online questionnaire for students, including instructions for its use, is part of this document.

Thematic survey – Employers

Alternative 1 – Interview – meeting with representatives of employers

Main criteria	Sub-criteria	Questions (building on findings from the school's available documents and recorded in the baseline assessment form of the school)	Notes
Representativeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector, industry Size of the entity/number of employees 	<p>Employer focus – priority sectors</p> <p>Size of the entity</p> <p>Type of organization (natural person, legal entity – SME, legal entity – large enterprise, legal entity – foreign entity)</p>	<p>Other, supplementary</p> <p>Statistics on the "sample"</p>
Employer strategy in the area of inclusion and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to whom the employer provides any form of practical training 	<p>Does your company have an inclusion and diversity strategy or policy, or a CSR/ESG strategy that includes employing members of MRC and cooperating with SVS?</p> <p>Has your company implemented the Diversity Index?</p> <p>Is your company a signatory of the Diversity Charter?</p> <p>Has your company implemented temporary affirmative measures? If yes, could you specify which ones?</p> <p>Beyond your inclusion and diversity strategy and CSR/ESG strategy, do you carry out activities directed toward MRC – both within and outside the company? Do you have a dedicated plan for preparing, developing, and educating employees from MRC – how do you motivate them?</p> <p>Do you currently employ members of MRC? If not, do you plan to, and to what extent? What positions are they employed in?</p>	<p>Inclusion and diversity strategy / CSR/ESG strategy</p> <p>Diversity Index</p> <p>Examples of best practices</p> <p>Employment of graduates</p> <p>Temporary affirmative measures*</p> <p>Employee training and development plan</p> <p>Labor market trend analysis</p>

		<p>How satisfied are you with the quality of SVS graduates, particularly those from MRC?</p> <p>Do you carry out or plan any activities targeting MRC – inside or outside the company? Do you have a specific plan for preparing MRC employees? How do you motivate them to pursue further education?</p> <p>Which professions from F programs are most in demand by your company? Do you expect this demand to grow or decline over the next five years?</p> <p>How many graduates of F programs or vocational programs have you hired in the last 3–5 years?</p> <p>How do you adapt school graduates in your company? Do you do anything specific for graduates from MRC backgrounds?</p> <p>Please provide relevant performance indicators, KPIs, or other data related to the above questions for the past three years.</p> <p>What impact do you anticipate your company's activities will have on local/regional development?</p>	
<p>Networking and cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of cooperating SVS • Number of cross-sector partnerships 	<p>Which SVS in your area have you been cooperating with for more than 3 years?</p> <p>Which SVS in your area have you been cooperating with for a short time?</p> <p>Do you participate in the development of study programs and/or in practical training at SVS? If so, how?</p> <p>Do you cooperate in employment with OLSAF or commercial staffing agencies?</p> <p>Which SVS do you plan to cooperate with in the near future?</p>	<p>Level and scope of stakeholder cooperation</p> <p>Model of territorial cooperation</p> <p>Database of best practice examples</p>

		<p>Do you organize company visits or excursions?</p> <p>Does your company offer part-time jobs for SVS students and internship opportunities for graduates?</p> <p>Which primary schools do you cooperate with?</p> <p>Which NGOs do you cooperate with?</p> <p>Are you a member of any employer associations, federations, or alliances? If yes, please list them.</p> <p>Do you cooperate with relevant OLSAF in the employment of MRC? If yes, please provide examples.</p>	
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Alternative 2 – Focus group with representatives of employers

Alternative 3 – Online questionnaire for employers

(It is recommended to use the questionnaire from the CuRI I or CuRI III employer survey.)

Thematic survey – Stakeholders, other actors

Alternative 1 – Interview – meeting with representatives of other/cooperating entities

Main criteria	Sub-criteria	Questions (building on findings from the school's available documents and recorded in the baseline assessment form of the school)	Notes
Representativeness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector, industry Size of the entity 	<p>Entity focus – priority sectors</p> <p>Size of the entity</p> <p>Type of organization (NGO, public sector, etc.)</p>	Other, supplementary Statistics on the "sample"

Strategy and organizational culture in the area of MRC support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds to whom the organization provides any service 	<p>What type and scope of services do you provide for this target group?</p> <p>What impact do you anticipate your organization's activities will have on local/regional development?</p>	Mapping of existing services for the target group Mapping of proposals for new activities/services
Networking and cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of cooperating SVS Number of cross-sector partnerships 	<p>Which SVS in your area have you been cooperating with for more than 3 years)?</p> <p>Which SVS in your area have you been cooperating with for a short time?</p> <p>Which SVS do you plan to cooperate with in the near future?</p>	Level and scope of stakeholder cooperation Model of territorial cooperation Database of best practice examples

Alternative 2 – Focus group with representatives of employers

Alternative 3 – Online questionnaire for employers

OVERVIEW OF PILOT SCHOOL DATA

Note:

Registration of an inclusively educated student (in the official CVTI system)

If the student is from a socially disadvantaged background:

- In aScAgenda, the attribute "From a socially disadvantaged background" is selected on the student card under the Residence tab
- In eškola, the attribute "Disadvantaged background" is selected on the student card under the Basic Information tab

According to Section 2(o) of Act No. 245/2008 Coll., a child from a socially disadvantaged background or a pupil/student from a socially disadvantaged background is a child or pupil living in an environment which, due to its social, family, economic, and cultural conditions, insufficiently stimulates the development of the child's or pupil's mental, volitional, and emotional traits, does not support their socialization, and does not provide them with adequate stimuli necessary for the development of their personality.

A/ QUANTITATIVE DATA

Overview of quantitative data – DCS of the pilot school (DCS CuRI, school evaluation reports, CVTI, information from the founder)

Basic information about the school

- Name of school
- Year of establishment
- School address
- Type of school
- Website
- Founder
- School management
- Information about the School Board

Data on students, teaching staff and professional staff of the school

- Data on the number of students at the school, including students with special educational needs (complete table as of September 15 of the relevant year)
- Data on the number of students admitted to the first year of secondary school (by vocational and academic programs, number of applicants – admitted – enrolled)
- List of academic/vocational programs offered by the school (number of classes and number of students by grade), including a note on updates
- Educational programs of the school in the dual education system (number of classes and number of students by year)
- Data on the number of employees and fulfillment of qualification requirements for school staff (separately for teaching, professional, and non-teaching staff)
- Data on continuing education of the school's teaching staff

Data on education and its outcomes

- Data on student assessment and grading results (average grades, missed classes)
- Detailed assessment and grading results by program and form of study (e.g., 4-year programs, full-time study)
- Results of graduation exams (separately for internal and external parts, written and oral)
- School performance in preparing students for employment and their success in entering the labor market or being admitted to further studies
- Data on professional instruction delivery (whether lessons were taught by qualified teaching/professional staff)
- Data on satellite campuses
- Information on areas in which the school achieves strong results (competitions, student awards, other achievements)
- Information on the outcomes of inspections conducted by the State School Inspectorate

Data on additional school activities and outcomes

- Data on additional activities organized by the school for students during their free time (education vouchers, cultural vouchers, and other activities)
- Overview of implemented professional internships (list of employers and number of students)
- Overview of professional excursions for students
- Data on projects the school is involved in (e.g., Erasmus+)

Data on school funding, material and technical resources, and investments

- Overview of school investment activities (by scope and type of investment)
- Data on financial and material support for the school's educational activities (detailed table) + school financial report – number of specialized classrooms and their equipment, number of buildings, land plots, etc.

Data on activities related to school promotion

- Overview of the school's marketing activities

Overview of quantitative data – survey at the pilot school

- ✓ Information on the school's cooperation with parents of children or students or other natural persons
- ✓ Information on the school's cooperation with legal entities in ensuring education and training
- ✓ Information on the provision of educational and career counseling

B/ QUALITATIVE DATA

Overview of qualitative data – publicly available information (at the school and founder level)

- ✓ Vision and mission of the school
- ✓ SWOT analysis of the school
- ✓ Criteria for admitting students to secondary school
- ✓ Evaluation of professional development of school staff
- ✓ Information on spatial and material/technical conditions of the school
- ✓ Information on activities in line with tasks derived from strategic and conceptual documents of the founder (high-school professional activity [SOČ], competitions, etc.)
- ✓ Concept for developing physical activities (support for sports and other physical activities)
- ✓ Concept for youth work development (subject Olympiads, competitions)
- ✓ Support for student participation – school parliament
- ✓ Information on the implementation of a quality management system

Overview of qualitative data – survey/interview with the management and teaching/professional staff at the pilot school (field survey)

- ✓ Existence of a concept – inclusion plan, strategy, expression in the school's vision
- ✓ Motivation of the school and teaching/professional staff

Overview of qualitative data – survey through focus groups

- ✓ Existence of cooperation models in the area of inclusion support in education
- ✓ New forms of cooperation
- ✓ Tools (motivational, financial, etc.)

C/ OTHER SOURCES/ANALYSES (TO BE COMPLETED GRADUALLY)

- Methodical guideline for updating sectoral data into the Central Register for the 2021/2022 school year, Ministry of Education
- Statistical Yearbook of Education (published annually, CVTI)
- Determining the number of first-year secondary school students for the 2025/2026 school year
- Verified additional labor market needs – <https://www.trendyprace.sk/sk/plan-vykonov>

- [Youth in the EU \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [Eurostat: Statistics on young people neither in employment nor in education or training \(NEETs\) | CEDEFOP \(europa.eu\)](#)

CVTI DATA STRUCTURE

TIME SERIES

Basic data on schools at the VÚC level since 2007

ABBREVIATIONS

ATLAS	Atlas of Roma Communities
BBSK	Banská Bystrica Self-Governing Region
CD	City District
CRS	Corporate Social Responsibility
CuRI	Catching-Up Regions Initiative
ESG	European Sustainability Reporting
EU	European Union
ESF	European Social Fund
ERRC	European Roma Rights Centre
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
KSK	Košice Self-Governing Region
MNA	Material Need Assistance
MRC	Marginalized Roma Communities
MJ SR	Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic
NP	National Project
PSK	Prešov Self-Governing Region
SO SR	Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic
SR	Slovak Republic
TC	Training Center
PDR	Public Defender of Rights
OotP	Office of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Roma Communities

/2/ Act No. 245/2008 Coll. on Education and Training (the School Act) and on Amendments and Supplements to Certain Acts

Štatistická ročenka školstva
Stredné školy

Tab 1 a 2	Počet škôl	podľa foriem štúdia organizovaných školou podľa vyučovacieho jazyka školy
Tab 3	Učebne, vyučovanie v 2. z mene	
Tab 4	Triedy	útlmom podľa ročníkov podľa vyučovacieho jazyka
Tab 5 až 17	Žiaci	útlmom podľa ročníkov podľa vyučovacieho jazyka podľa druhu štúdia a ročníkov opakujúci v odbornom výcviku a súvislej praxi
Tab 18 a 19	Novoprijatí žiaci do 1. ročníka Absolventi štúdia z minulého školského roka	
Tab 20	Žiaci podľa štátneho občianstva a národnosti	
Tab 21	Žiaci učiaci sa cudzí jazyk	
Tab 22 a 23	Zamestnanci a učiteľia	
Tab 24 a 25	Žiaci, novoprijatí, odborný výcvik a prax podľa druhu, dĺžky a odboru štúdia	

Zoznam použitých skratiek

Dĺžka	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	1 ročné	2 ročné	3 ročné	4 ročné	5 ročné	6 ročné	7 ročné	8 ročné
Jazyk	BG	bulharský	SK-DE	slovenský a nemecký bilingválny				
	CS	český	SK-DE-MP	slovenský a nemecký s medzinár. programom				
	DE	nemecký	SK-EN	slovenský a anglický bilingválny				
	EN	anglický	SK-EN-MP	slovenský a anglický s medzinár. programom				
	ES	španielsky	SK-FR-MP	slovenský a francúzsky s medzinár. programom				
	FR	francúzsky	SK-IT	slovenský a taliansky bilingválny				
	HU	maďarský	SK-IT-MP	slovenský a taliansky s medzinár. programom				
	IT	taliansky	SK-RF	slovenský a francúzsky bilingválny				
	LA	latinský	SK-RU	slovenský a ruský bilingválny				
	PL	poľský	SK-RU-MP	slovenský a ruský s medzinár. programom				
	RU	ruský	SK-SP	slovenský a španielsky bilingválny				
	RY	rómsky	SK-SP-MP	slovenský a španielsky s medzinár. programom				
	SK	slovenský	SK-ZH	slovenský a čínsky bilingválny				
	SKDE	slovenský - nemecký	SK-ZZ	slovenský a iný bilingválny				
	SKHU	slovenský - maďarský	SK-ZZ-MP	slovenský a iný s medzinár. programom				
	SKRI	slovenský - rusínsky	ZH	čínsky				
	SKRO	slovenský - rómsky	ZM	iný (matvy jazyk)				
SKUK	slovenský - ukrajinský	ZZ	iný					
UK	ukrajinský							
Druh štúdia	KOD	NAZOV	Pripustný kód odboru so znakomna 5. pozícií	POZNAMKA				
	1PX	zvlášť upravené učebné plány, pracovný zácvik	E, F	(učiteľ, praktická škola)				
	2VX	stredné vzdelanie	H, G, I	(záverečná skúška - záverečné vysvedčenie, výučný list)				
	3GX	gymnázium - 4 - 5 ročné úplné stredné vzdelanie	J	(prvá maturita)				
	3VX	odborné - 4 - 5 ročné úplné stredné vzdelanie	K, M	(prvá maturita)				
	3G6	gymnázium - 6 ročné úplné stredné vzdelanie	J	(prvá maturita)				
	3G8	gymnázium - 8 ročné úplné stredné vzdelanie	J	(prvá maturita)				
	4VX	odborné - nadstavbové štúdium	L	(prvá maturita po získaní stredného vzdelania bez maturity)				
5VX	po maturitné štúdium kvalifikačné	N	(druhá a ďalšia maturita)					
6VX	vyššie (pomaturitné špecializačné) štúdium - 1 - 6 ročné	Q	(absolventská skúška)					
6V8	vyššie (pomaturitné špecializačné) štúdium - 8 ročné	Q	(absolventská skúška)					

ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS FROM MRC / PILOT SVS

Dear student,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this survey. By completing it, you will help create proposals for improvements at your school.

The questionnaire is anonymous and will be processed statistically solely for research purposes.

Completing the entire questionnaire should take you about 15 minutes.

Part I

Please read each question carefully and mark your answers according to the instructions for that question. Please answer based on your personal experience and in relation to your studies.

A red * means the question is mandatory. The word "other" means "iné" in Slovak, and you can write your own answer in the box provided.

- 1) **In which town is your school located?** *(please fill in the town name)*
- 2) **Are you a student of** *(choose 1 answer)* *
 - first year
 - second year
 - third year
- 3) **What program are you studying?** *(please fill in the program name)* *
- 4) **How old are you?** *(please write a number)* *
- 5) **Are you** *(choose 1 answer)* *
 - a woman
 - a man
- 6) **In which town/village do you live?** *(please fill in the name of the town/village)* *
- 7) **How do you most often get to school?** *(choose all answers you agree with, or add your own)* *
 - by bus
 - by train
 - by bike or scooter
 - on foot
 - by car or motorcycle
 - other (please specify)
- 8) **How many children besides you live in your household?** *(write a number; if no other children live with you, write "0")* *

9) **Who do you live with?** (choose 1 answer; if you live with your parents, also indicate whether they are employed) *

- I live with my parents and both are employed
- I live with my parents and one of them is employed
- I live with my parents and both are unemployed
- I live with one parent and he/she is employed
- I live with one parent and he/she is unemployed
- I don't live with my parents but with other family members (e.g., grandparents)
- I live in a dormitory
- Other (please specify)

10) **Which languages do you speak?** (choose all that apply, or add your own) *

- Slovak
- Hungarian
- Romani
- Other (please specify)

11) **Do you receive a scholarship?** (choose 1 answer) *

- Yes
- I received one in the past, but not this year
- No
- I don't know

12) **Have you done or are you currently doing practical training with an employer?** (choose 1 answer, or add your own) *

- Yes, I am doing practical training with an employer this school year
- I did practical training with an employer in previous years, but not now
- No, I was offered practical training with an employer but declined
- No, I have not yet had the opportunity to do practical training with an employer but would like to
- No, I am not interested in practical training with an employer
- Other (please specify)

13) **What are your plans after finishing secondary school?** (choose all answers you agree with) *

- Continue working in the job I had during my studies/practical training
- Get a job in Slovakia in the field I am studying
- Get a job in Slovakia in a different field
- Get a job abroad
- Continue studying if I have sufficient support (including financial)
- I haven't thought about it yet
- Other (please specify)

14) **Why did you decide to study at this secondary school?** (choose all answers you agree with, or add your own) *

- A friend recommended it to me

- My parents wanted me to
- My teachers at primary school recommended it
- I was interested in the field studied at this school
- It was close to my home
- The school has a good reputation
- I didn't get accepted to the school I originally wanted to attend
- Other (please specify)

15) What support does the school provide you with when deciding on your future job? *(choose all answers you agree with, or add your own) **

- I can consult with teachers, a guidance counselor, psychologist
- The school helps us write CVs and cover letters
- The school informs us about employment opportunities
- We learn how to start a company or business at school
- The school organizes talks (e.g., with alumni or people from various professions)
- The school conducts tests of our skills and interests
- We attend events presenting job opportunities (e.g., job fairs, Profesia days)
- We have excursions to employers
- We have a separate subject on this topic
- I have not yet participated in any similar activity at school
- Other (please specify)

16) What would help you successfully complete your studies? *(choose up to 3 most important, or add your own) **

- Tutoring
- A quiet place where I could study after school
- Cheaper transport ticket (e.g., bus, train)
- Cheaper school supplies
- A school closer to my home
- Scholarship
- Paid practical training with an employer
- Better transport connections to school
- Other (please specify)

Part II

For each statement, please mark with an emoji whether you:

agree 😊

are undecided 😐

disagree 😡

Statement No.	Statement	Agree 😊	Undecided 😐	Disagree 😡
1.	I usually look forward to going to school.			
2.	I like spending my free time at school and on the school playground.			
3.	I get along well with my classmates at school.			
4.	I like my teachers.			
5.	I can ask anything during lessons.			
6.	The school regularly informs my parents about my studies.			
7.	When I have a problem, teachers meet with my parents and talk to them.			
8.	My teachers treat me kindly.			
9.	If I miss classes, teachers are interested in why I couldn't come.			
10.	During lessons, we often help each other and work in pairs or small groups.			
11.	If I have a problem during lessons, teachers or assistants help me.			
12.	Teachers care that I try at school – making mistakes is okay.			
13.	I enjoy participating in various activities organized by the school outside of lessons.			
14.	When I have a problem at school, there is an adult I trust and can talk to.			
15.	My family supports and encourages me in my studies.			

Part III

We would be glad to know what you like about your school and what you would like to change.

- A. **These are the 3 things I like most about my school** *(for example, teachers' approach, classroom equipment, extracurricular activities, and others)*

.....
.....
.....

- B. **These are the 3 things I would like to change at my school** *(for example, teachers' approach, classroom equipment, extracurricular activities, and others)*

.....
.....
.....

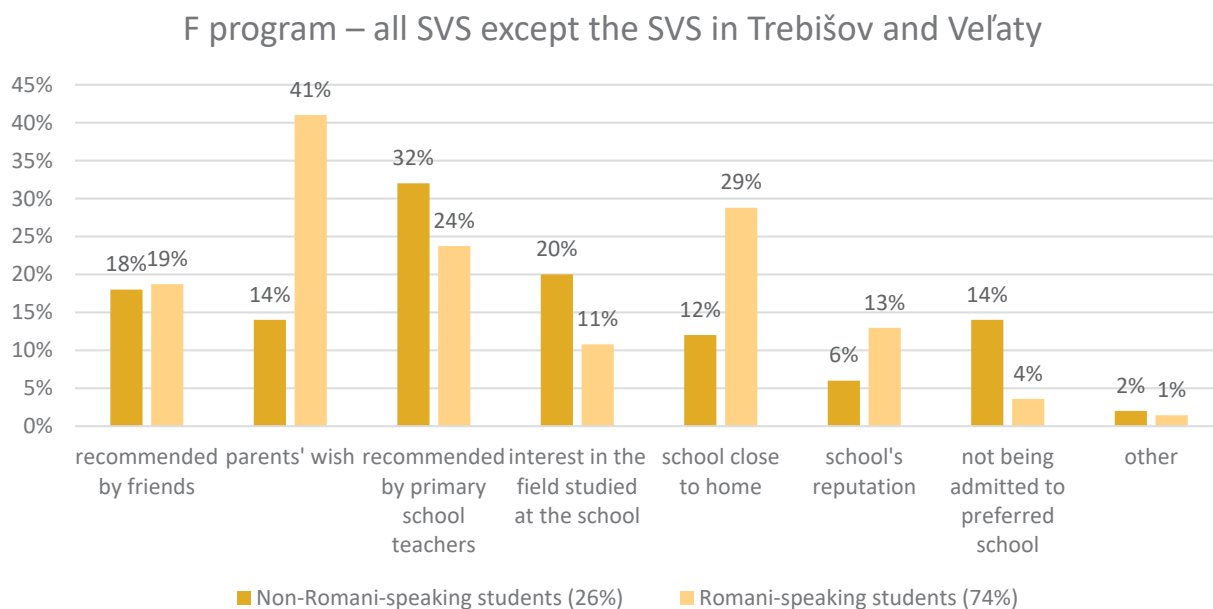
- C. **If you want to write us anything else, you can do so here.**

.....

Thank you for your time.

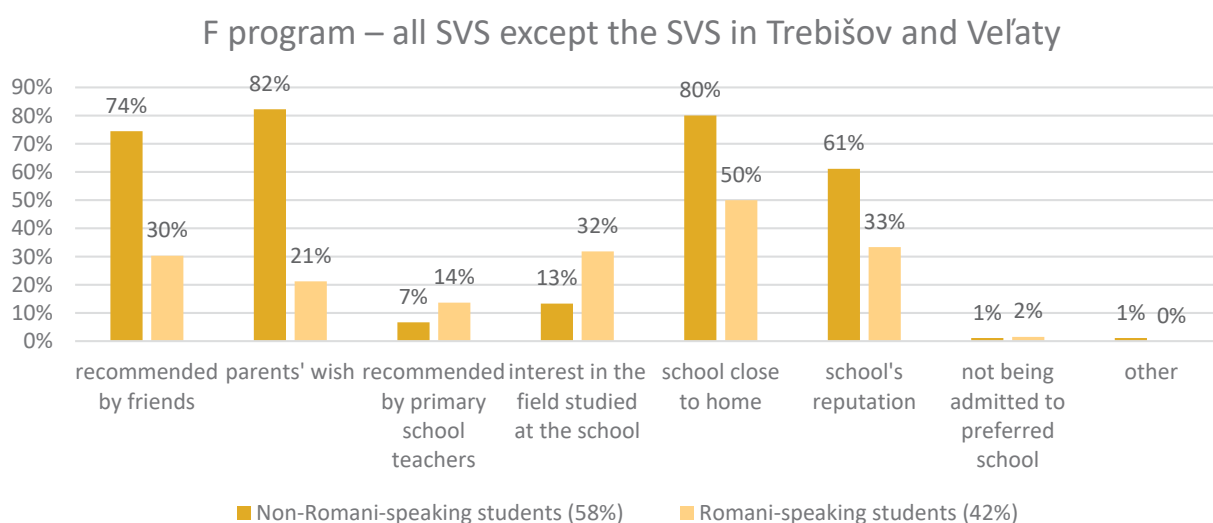
Annex 3 – Thematic survey – students from MRC in pilot SVS

Chart A.1 Key factors in choosing an F program – state pilot schools



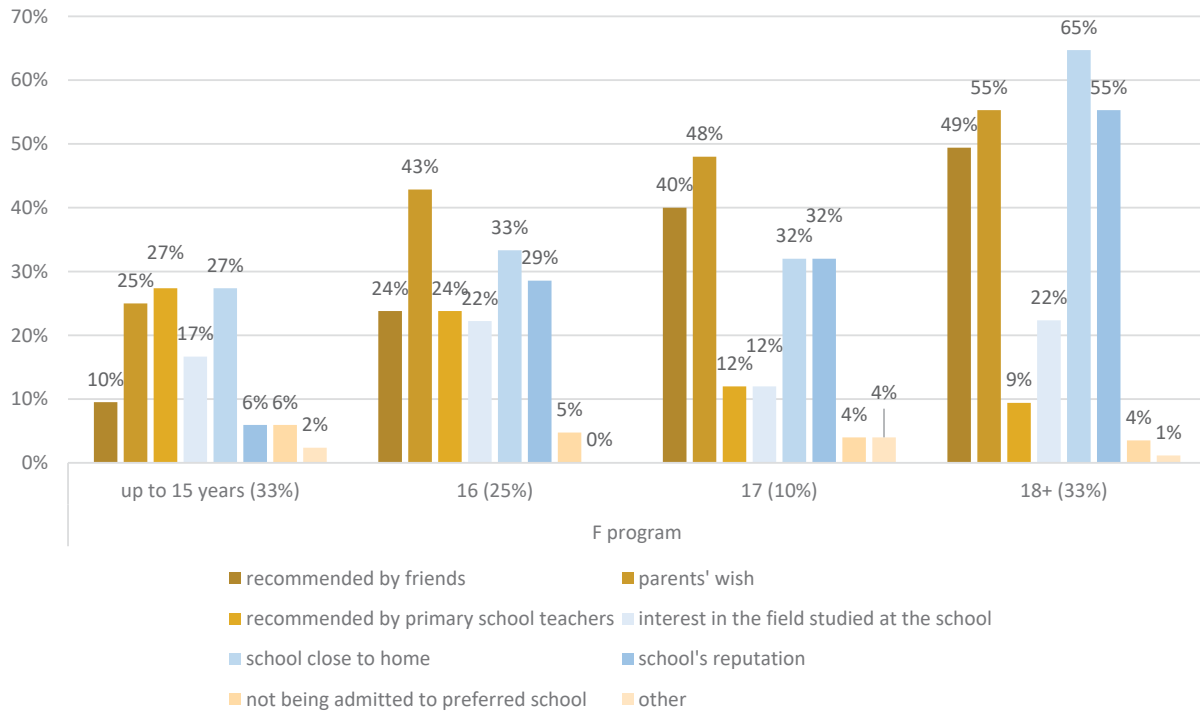
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.2 Key factors in choosing an F program – private SVS of Services and Industry in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľatý



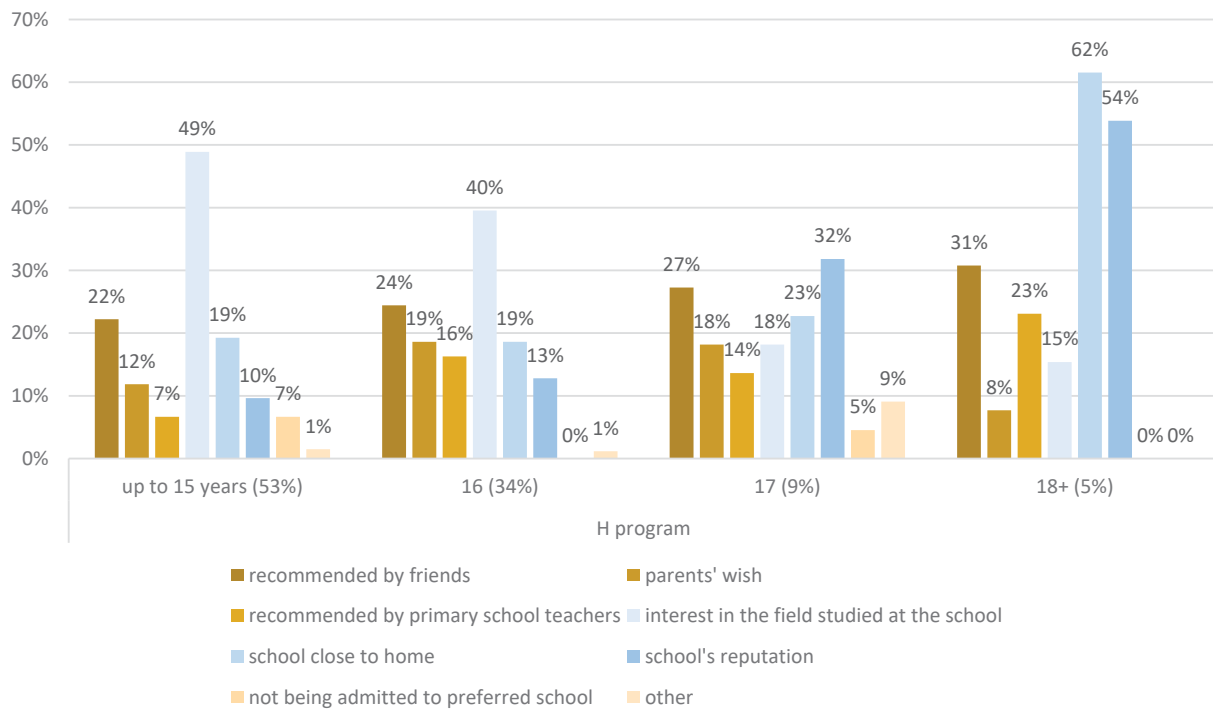
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.3 Key factors in choosing a school by age – 1st year, F program



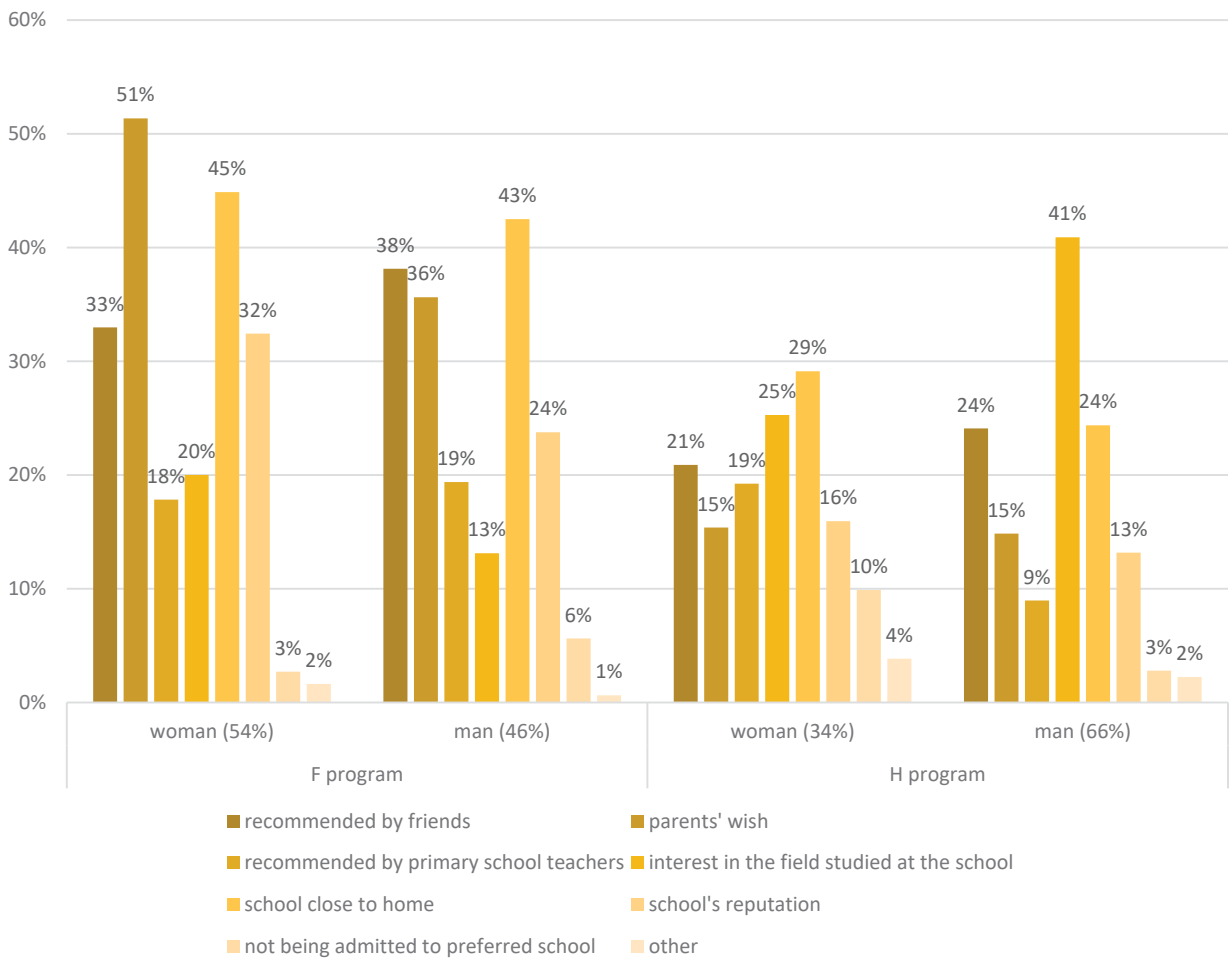
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.4 Key factors in choosing a school by age – 1st year, H program



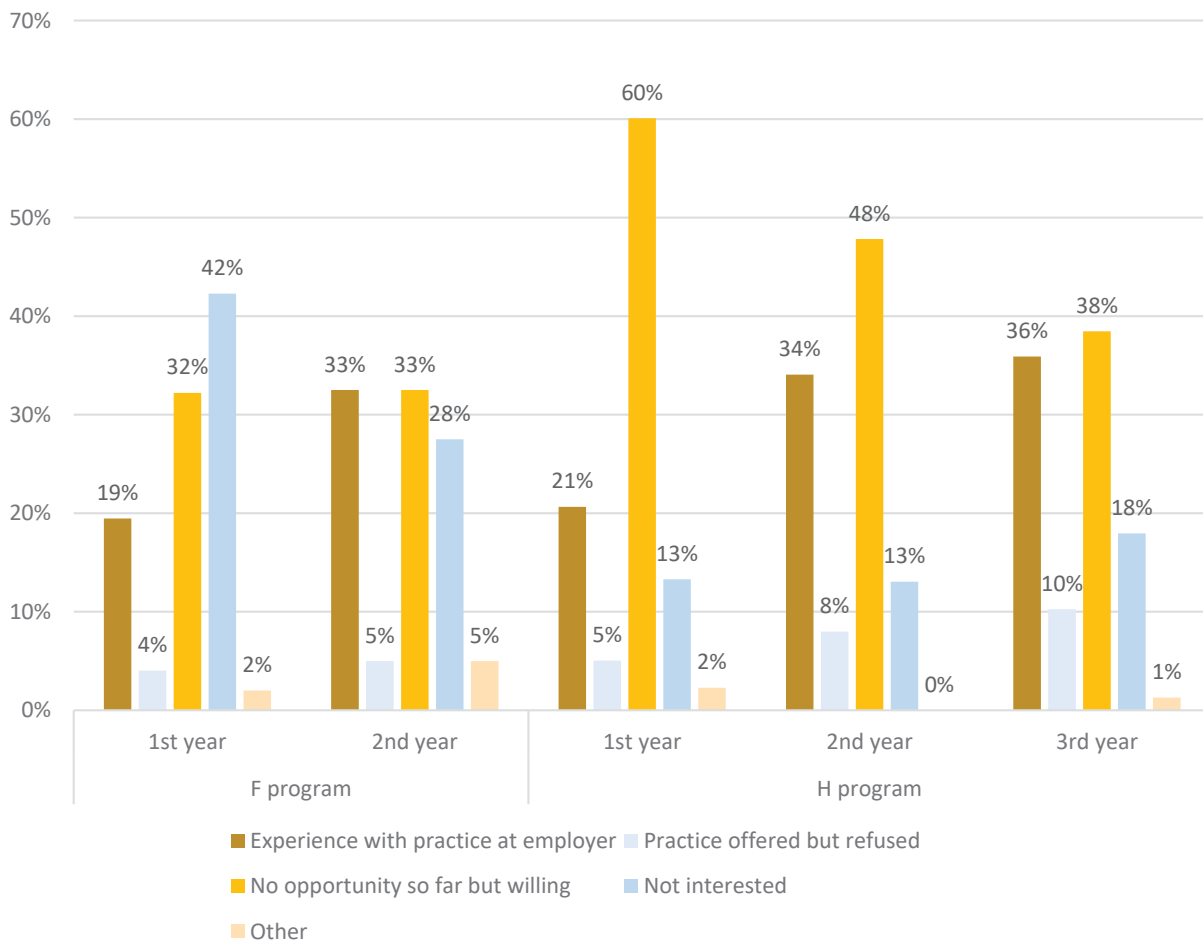
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.5 Key factors in choosing a school by gender and program

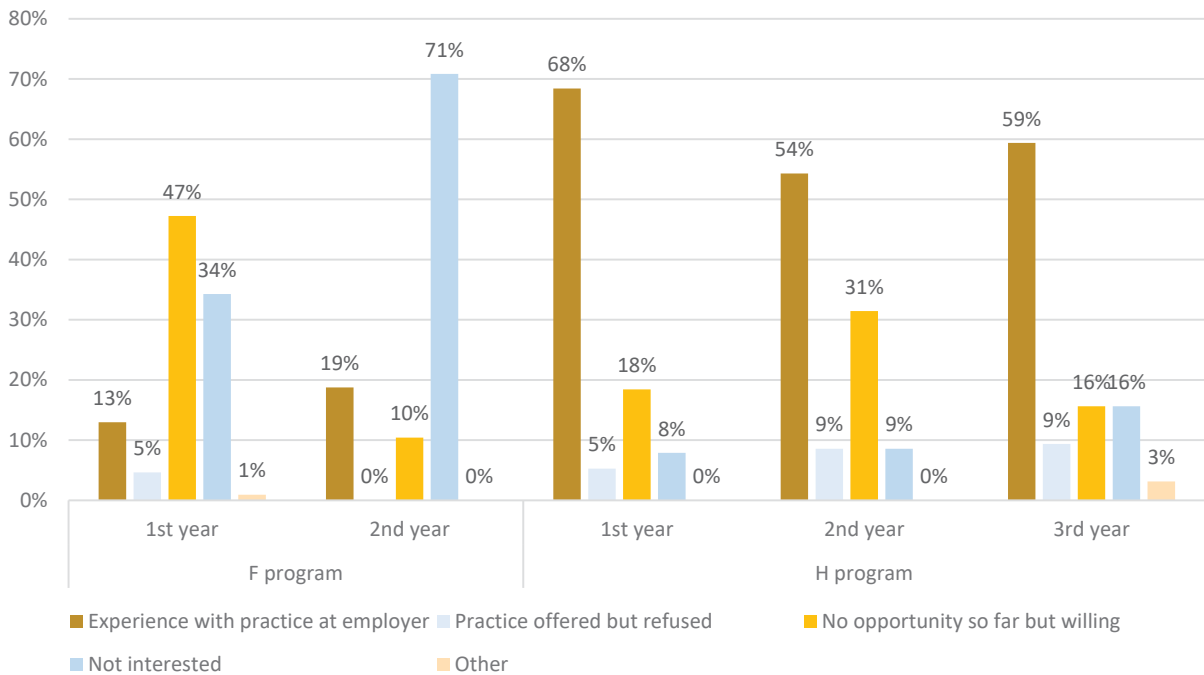


Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.6 Experience with practical training at employers – state pilot SVS

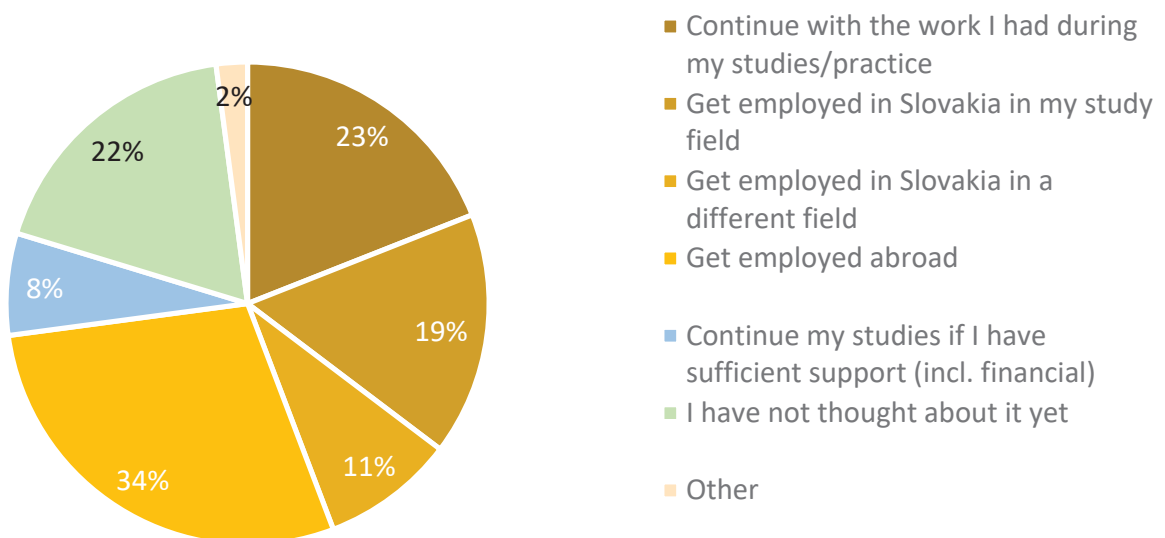


Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.



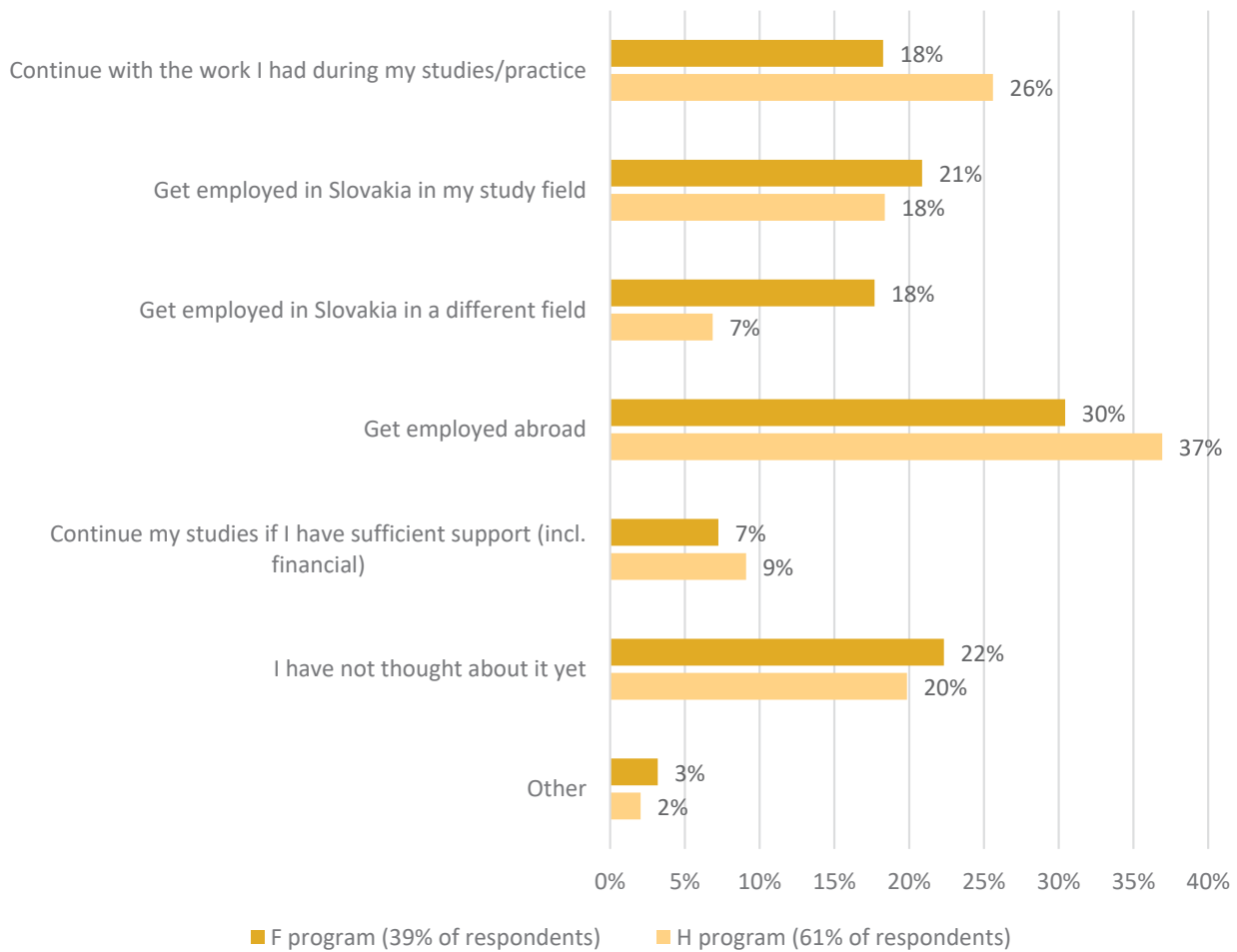
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.8 Plans after finishing studies – multiple-choice selection



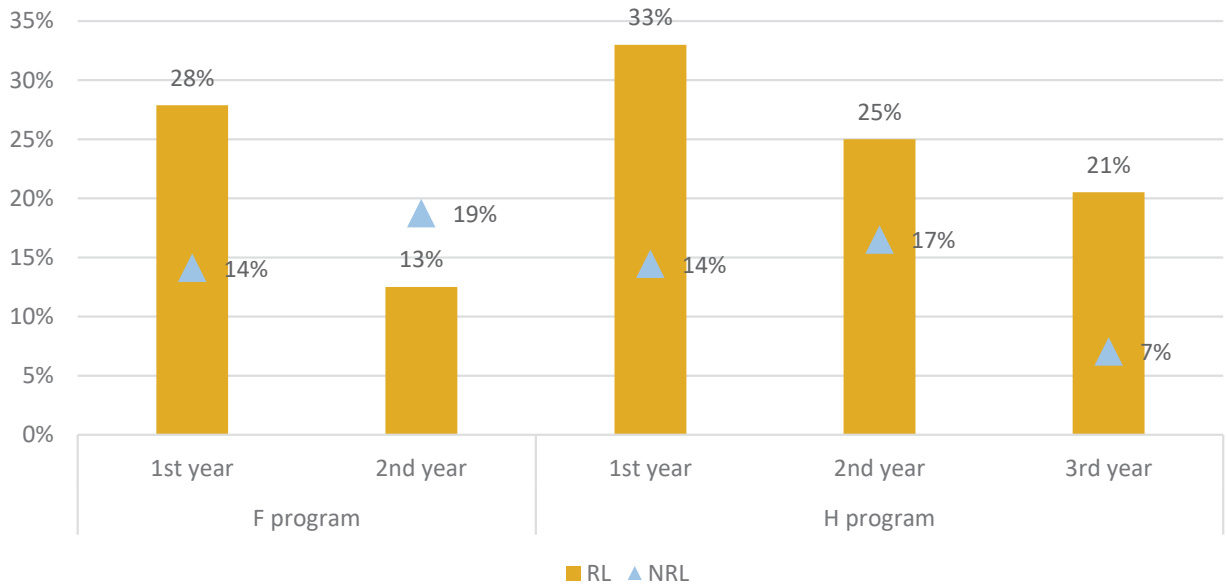
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.9 Plans after finishing studies by program – multiple-choice selection



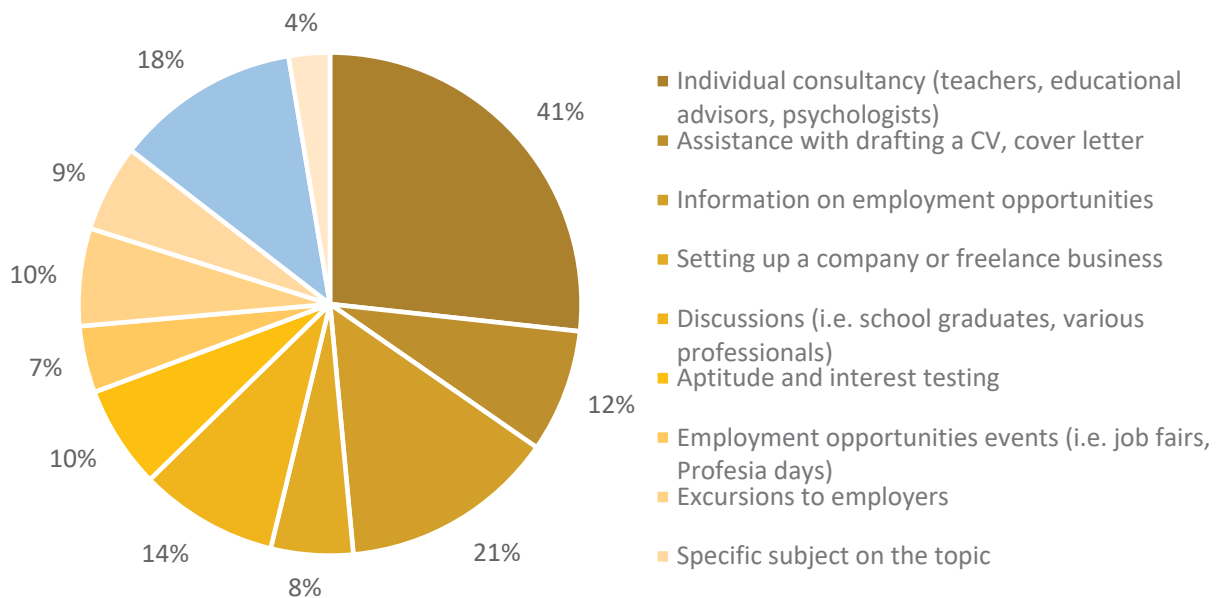
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.10 Plans after finishing studies – absence of future plans by language



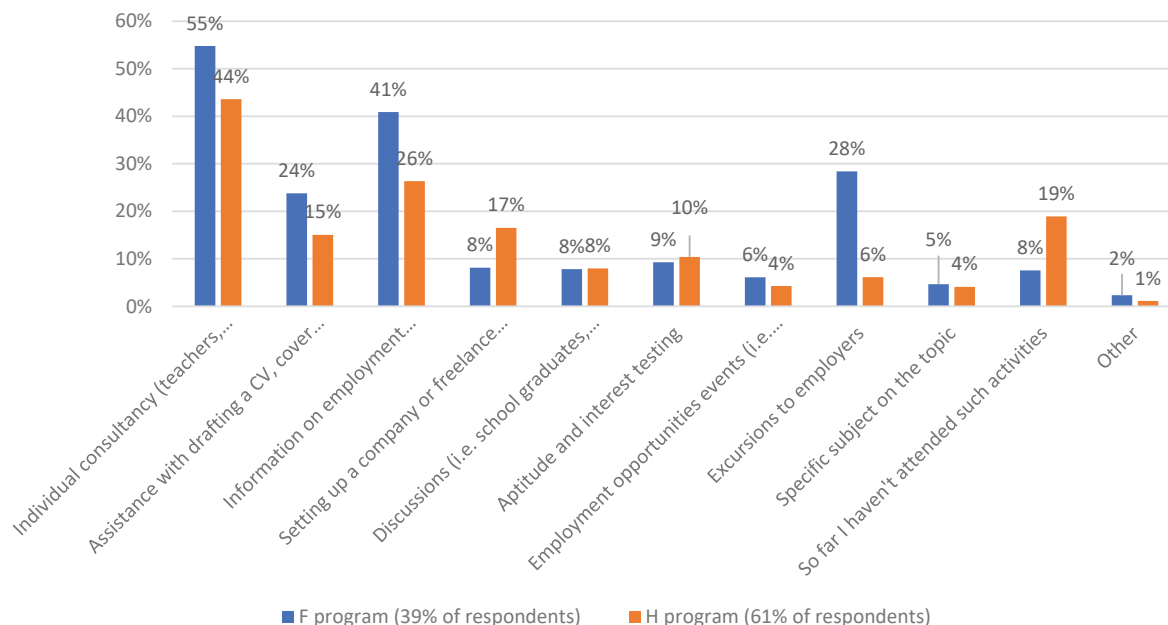
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.11 Plans after finishing studies – absence of future plans and support from SVS in deciding on future work



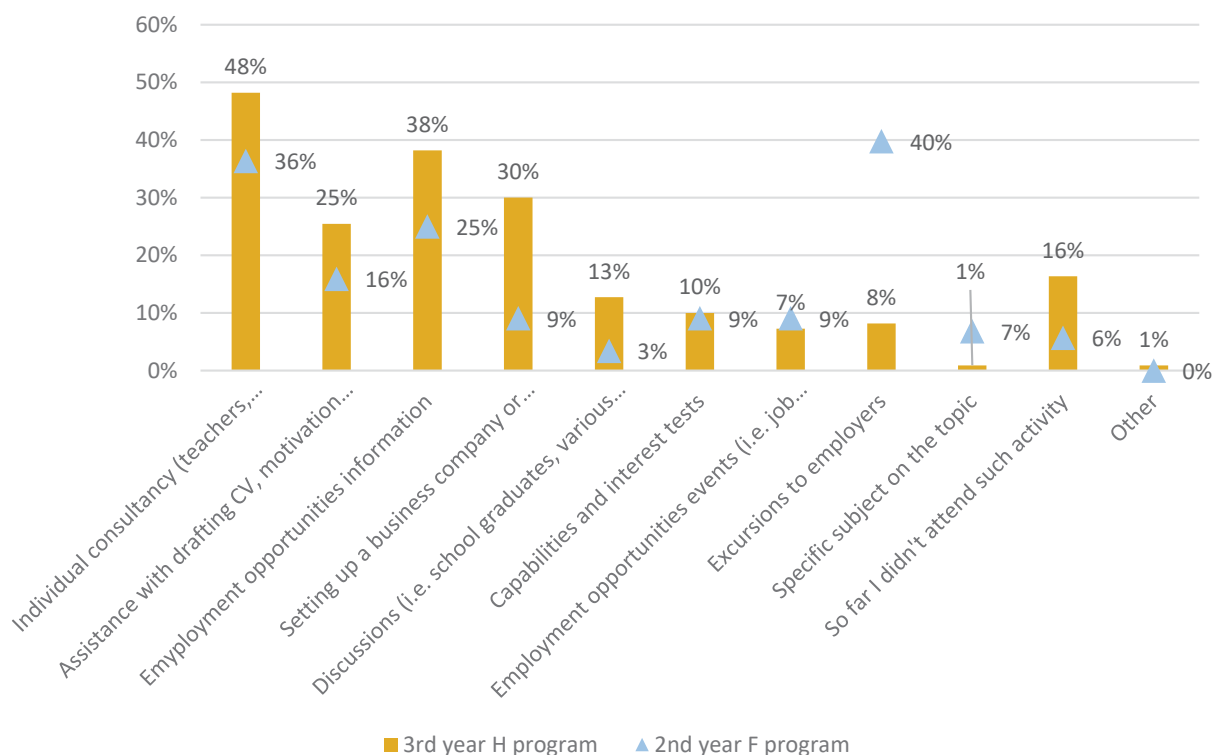
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.12 Support provided by the SVS in deciding on future work by program



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.13 Support provided by the SVS in deciding on future work by program – final year



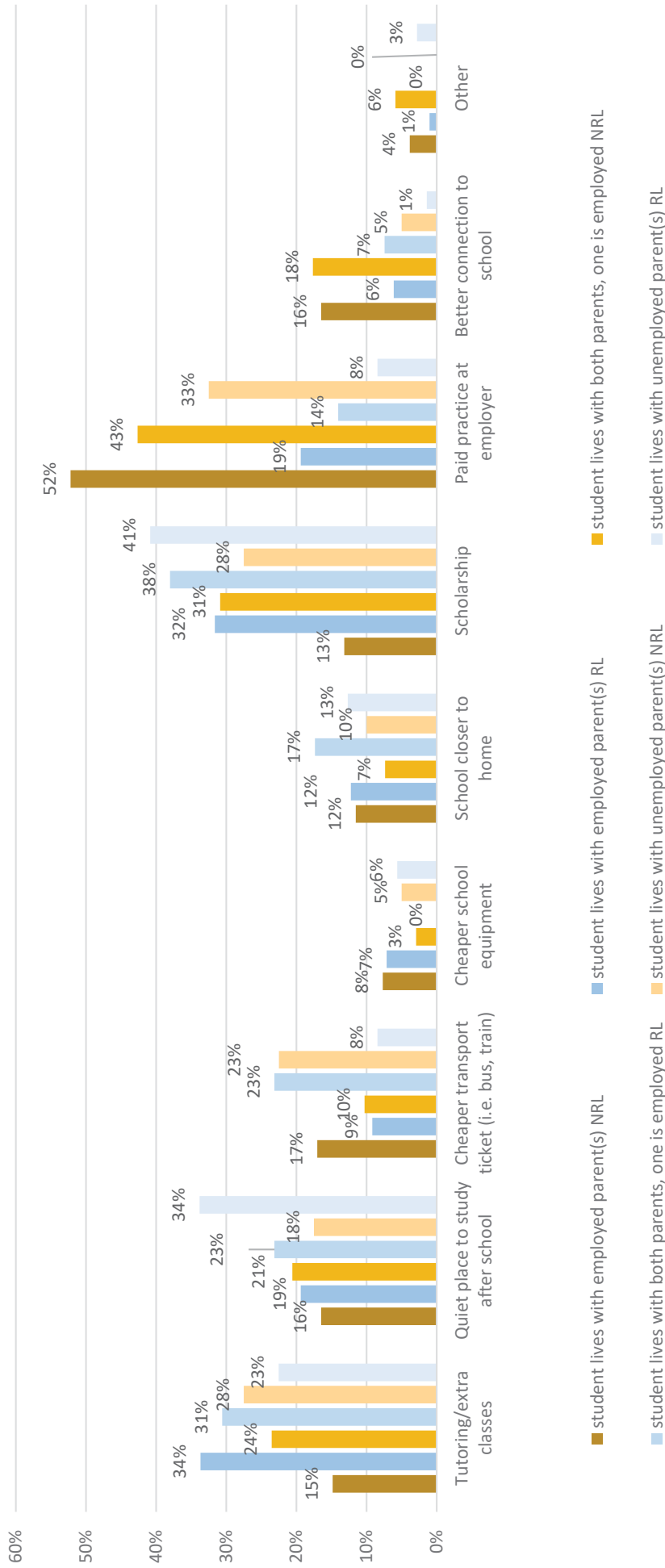
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Table A.14 Support aimed at successful completion of studies by language proficiency – state pilot SVS and private pilot SVS

Category of support	Type of support	Private pilot SVS in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty		State pilot SVS	
		NRS (59%)	RS (41%)	NRS (52%)	RS (48%)
Educational	tutoring	10%	13%	17%	30%
	quiet environment where I could study after school	21%	25%	18%	24%
Financial	scholarship	54%	55%	19%	36%
	paid internship or training at an employer's premises	27%	22%	46%	15%
	cheaper transportation ticket (e.g., bus, train)	5%	3%	17%	15%
	more affordable school supplies	3%	9%	6%	4%
Physical accessibility	school closer to my home	8%	1%	11%	14%
	better transportation connections to school	7%	5%	14%	6%
	other	1%	0%	4%	1%

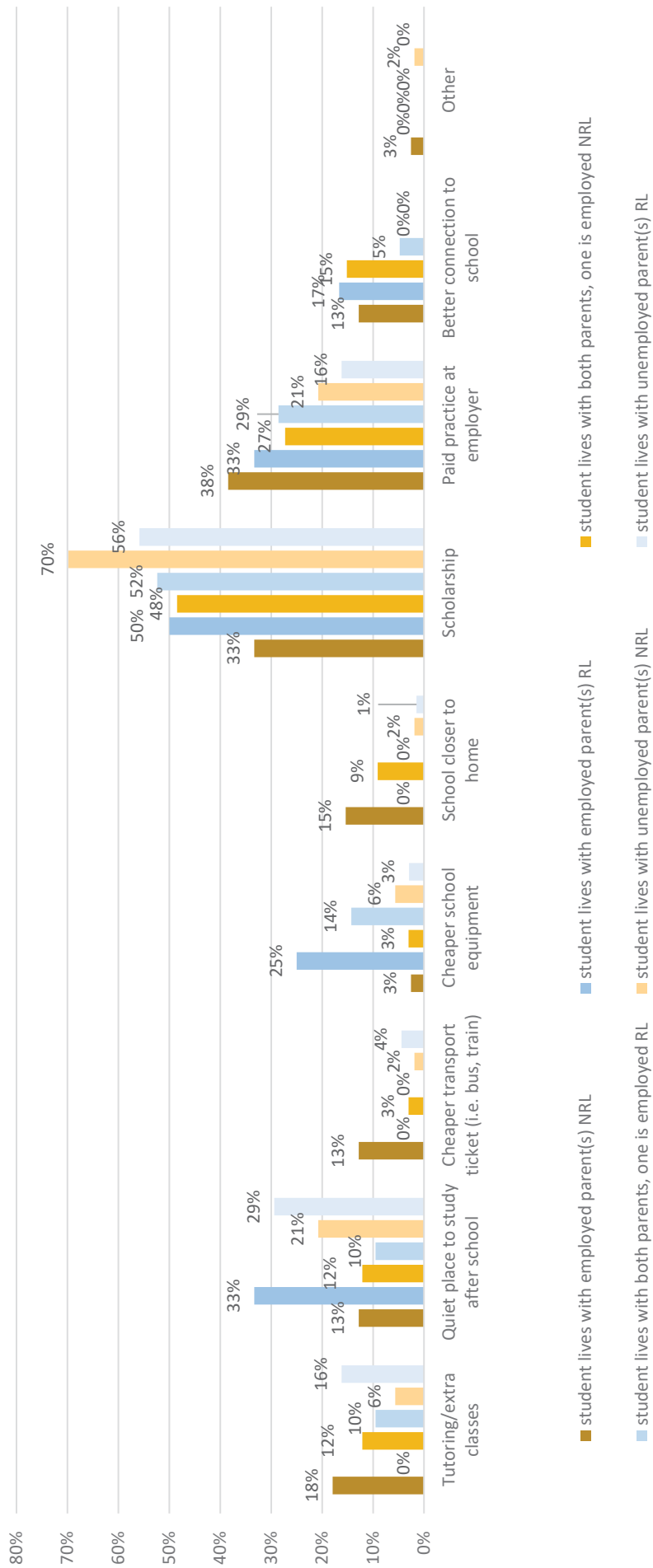
Note: NRS – non-Romani-speaking students; RS – Romani-speaking students.
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.15 Support aimed at successful completion of studies by language proficiency and household composition – state pilot SVS



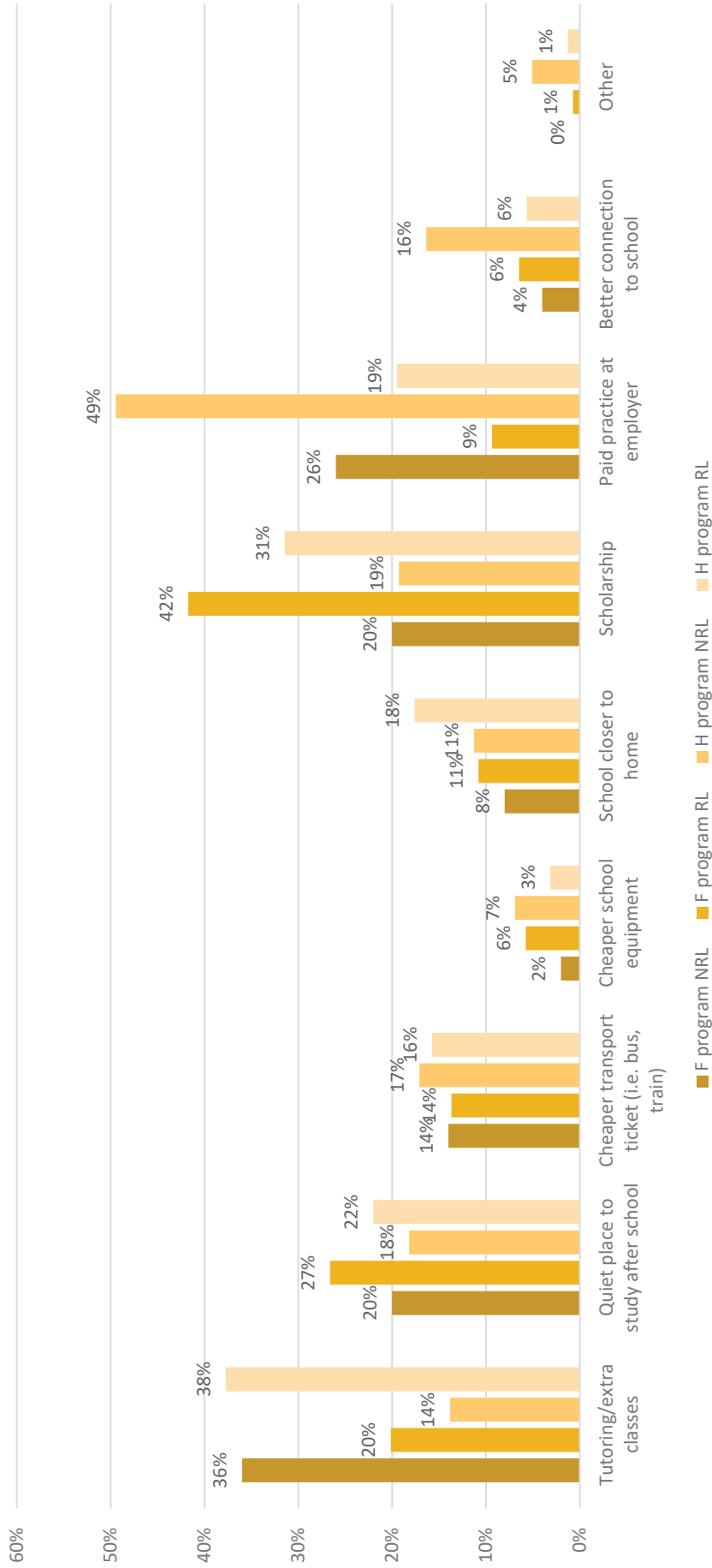
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.16 Support aimed at successful completion of studies by language proficiency and household composition – private pilot SVS in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľatý



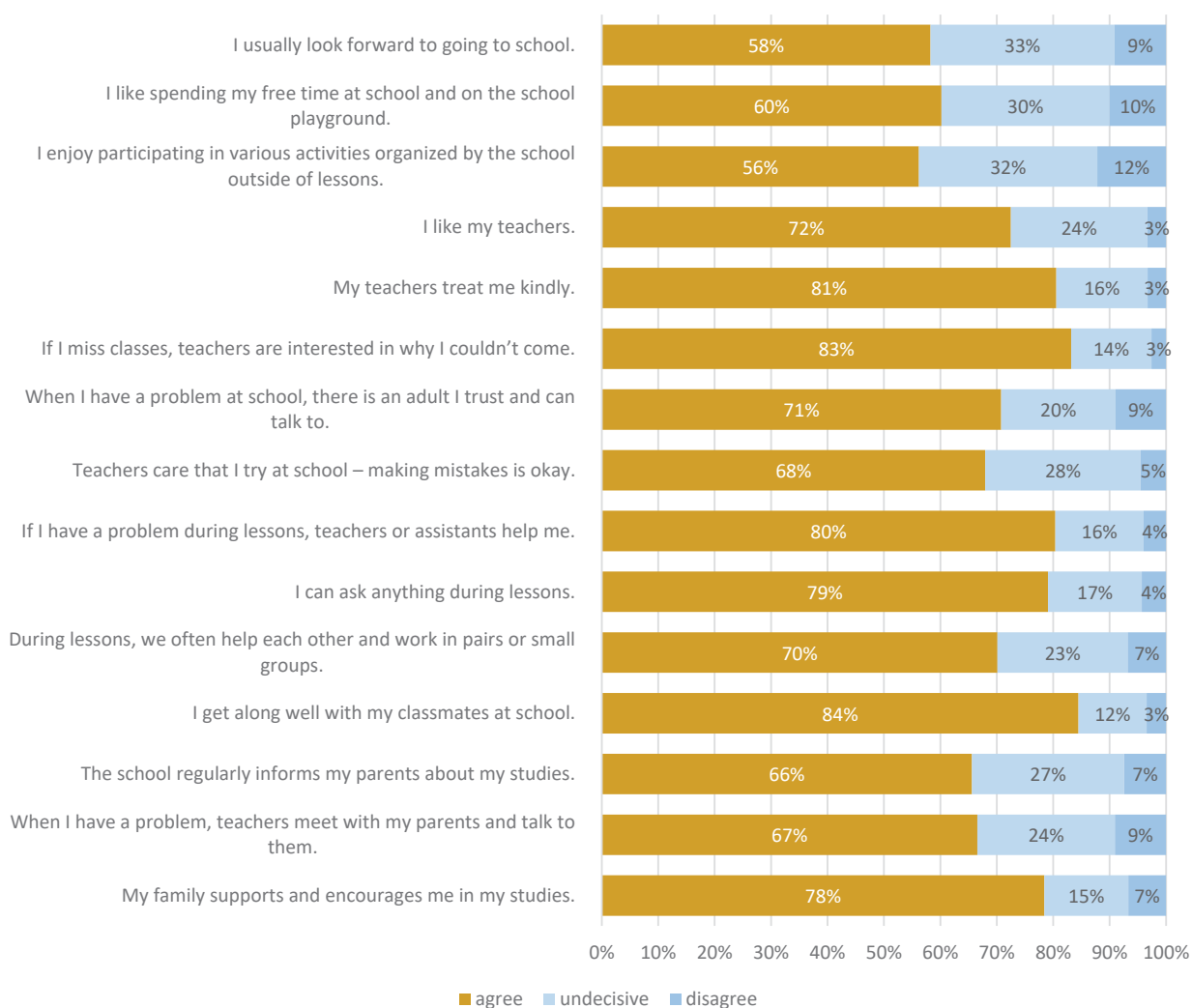
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.17 Support aimed at successful completion of studies by language proficiency and program – state pilot SVS



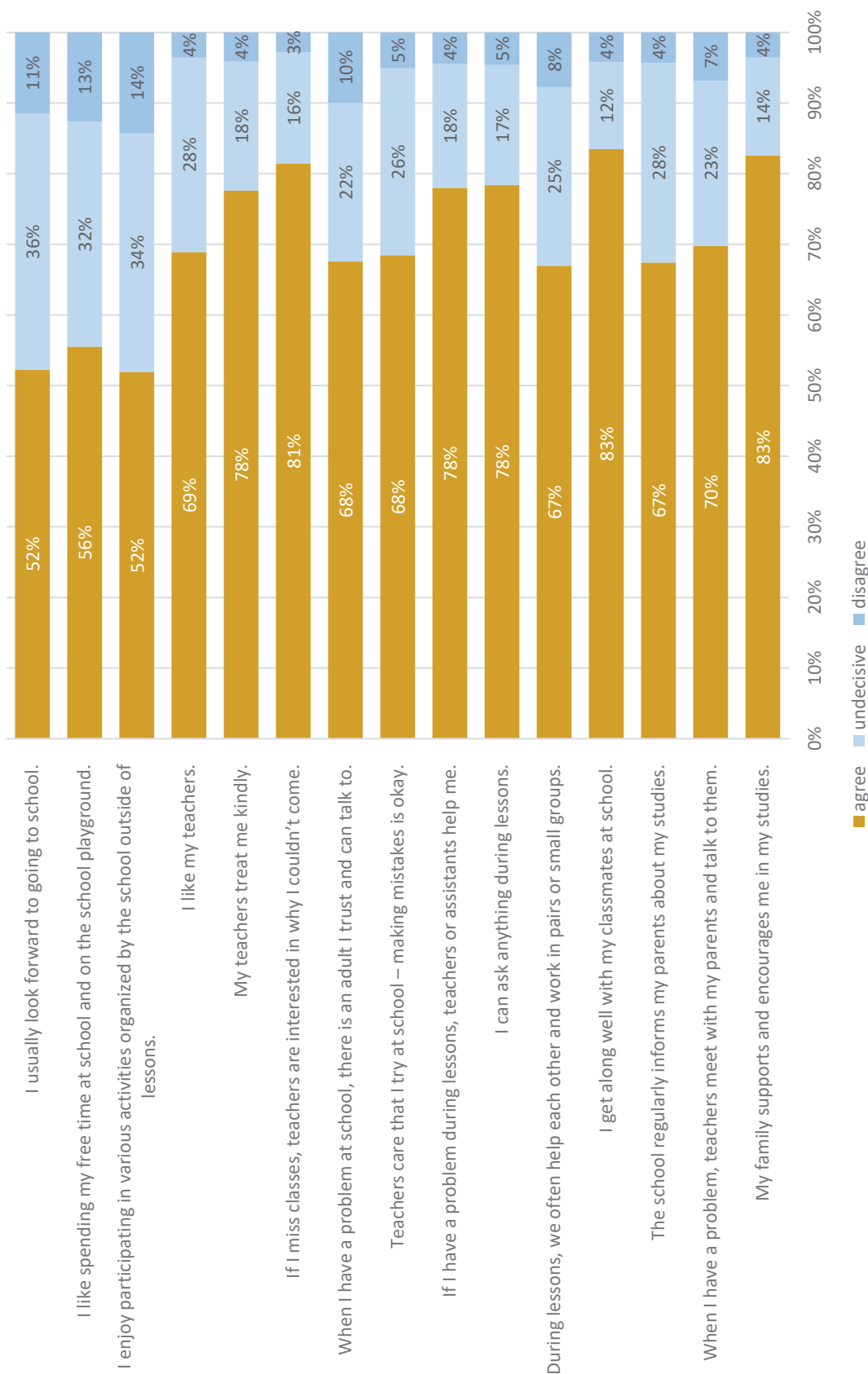
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.18 Inclusion and the school environment



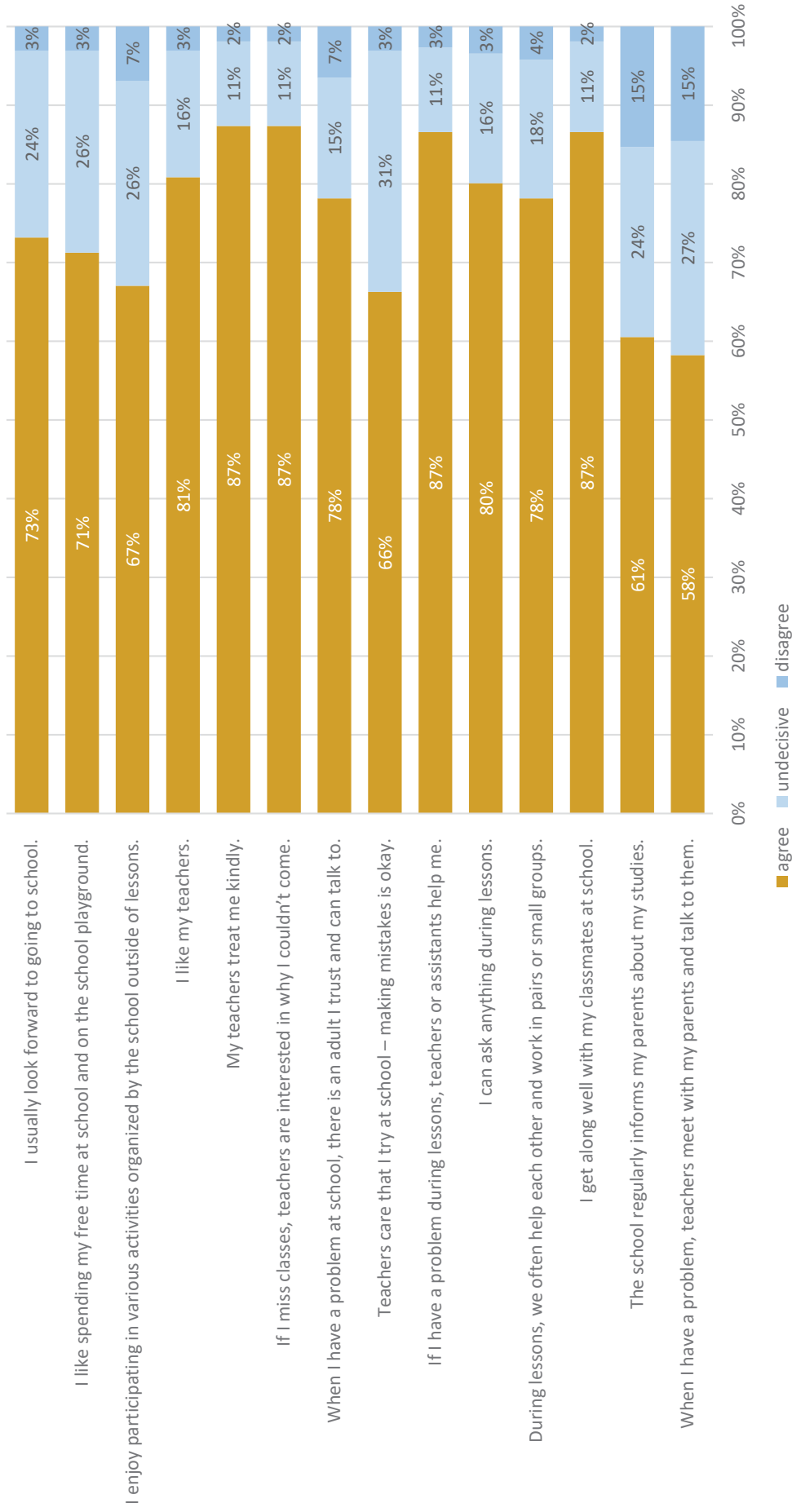
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.19 Inclusion and the school environment – state pilot SVS



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.20 Inclusion and the school environment – private pilot SVS in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Vefaty



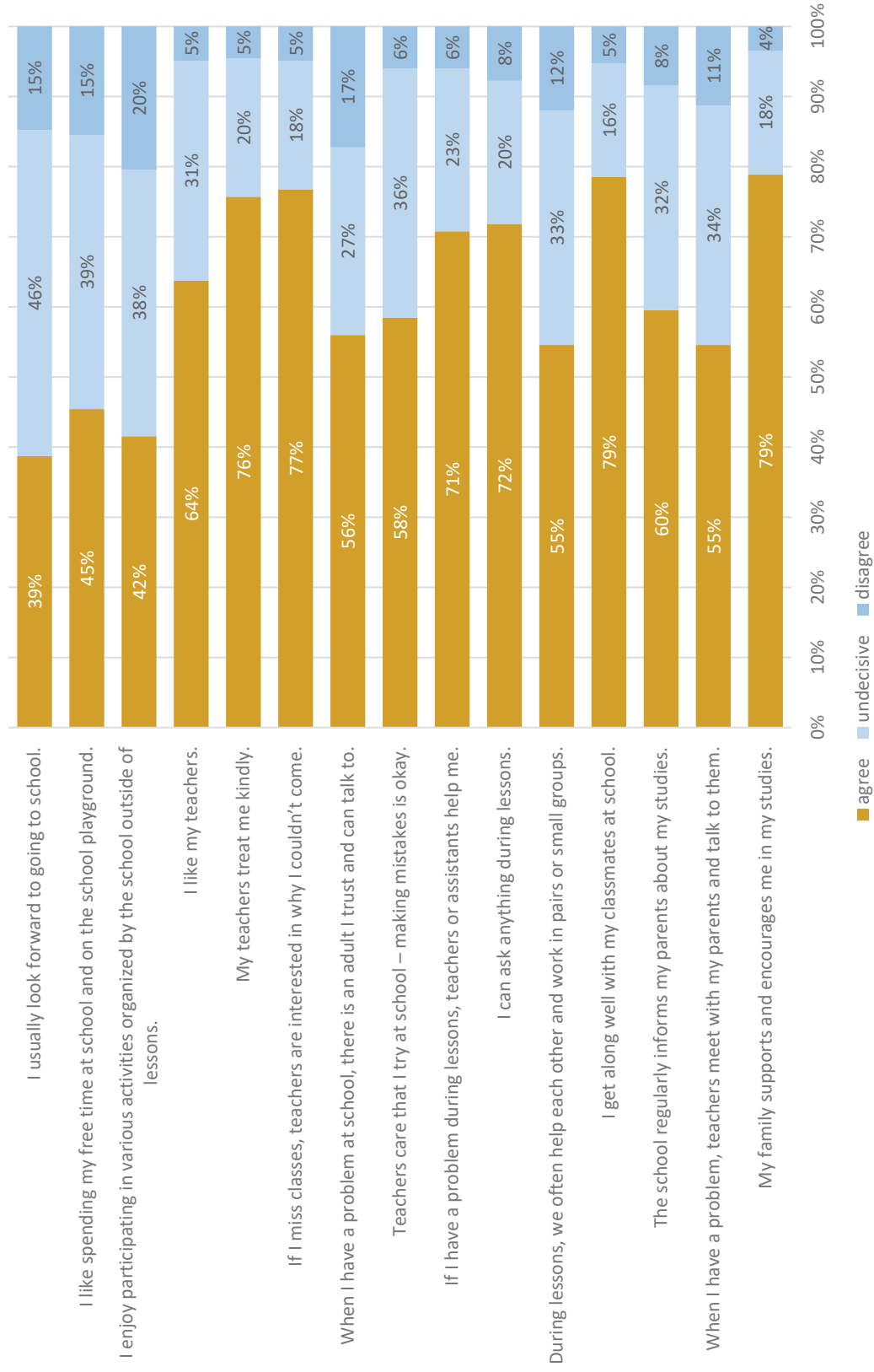
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Table A.21 Inclusion and the school environment – proportion of Romani-speaking and non-Romani-speaking students, all pilot SVS

Pilot SVS	Non-Romani-speaking students	Romani-speaking students	Total number of respondents
Joint School, Poltár	81%	19%	64
Technical SVS, Lučenec	75%	25%	48
Technical SVS, Rožňava	52%	48%	42
SVS of Engineering and Services, Spišská Nová Ves	48%	52%	155
Satellite Campus of the SVS of Engineering and Services, Krompachy	0%	100%	15
Army Gen. L. Svoboda Secondary Vocational Polytechnic and Services School, Svidník	56%	44%	41
SVS of Trade and Services, Krupina	62%	38%	13
St. Josaphat SVS of Services and Industry, Trebišov	41%	59%	166
Satellite Campus of St. Josaphat SVS of Services and Industry, Veľaty	91%	9%	95
Joint School, Čaklov	6%	94%	140
SVS of Agri-Tech and Gastronomy Services, Pribeník	98%	2%	53
Technical SVS, Zvolen	94%	6%	52
Joint School, Stará Ľubovňa	0%	100%	10
Satellite Campus of the Joint School in Stará Ľubovňa, Lomnička	0%	100%	33

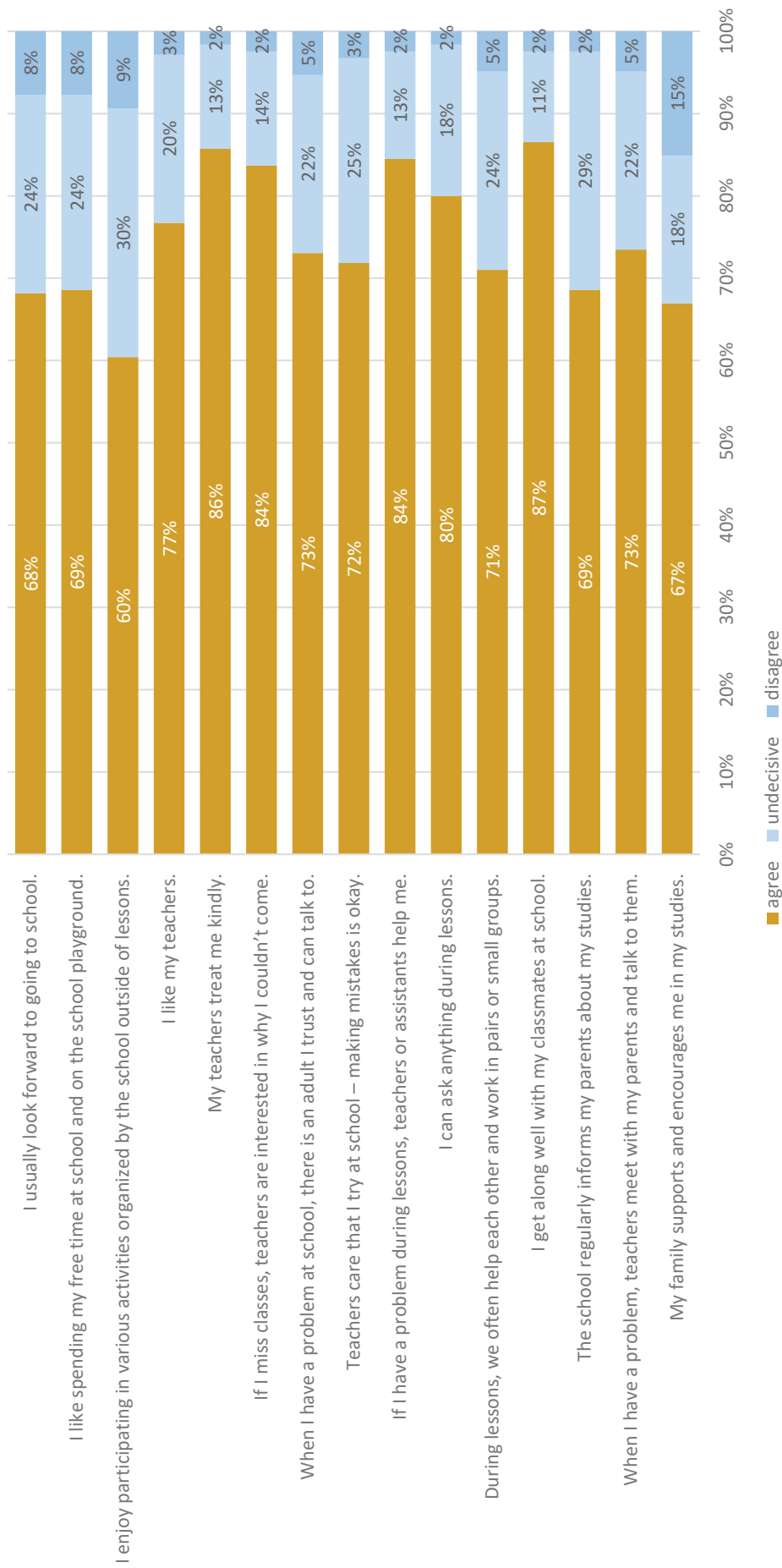
Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.22 Inclusion and the school environment – non-Romani-speaking students, selected pilot SVS



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Chart A.23 Inclusion and the school environment – Romani-speaking students, selected pilot SVS



Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Table A.24 Appreciated aspects and suggestions for change – overview by region and pilot SVS

Region	School	Town	Number of students participating in the survey	3 things I like most about my school Student participation	3 things I like about my school Average number of comments per student	3 things I would change about my school Student participation	3 věci, které by som na škole zmenil/a Average number of comments per student 3 things I would
BBSK	Joint School	Poltár	64	95%	1.85	88%	1.18
	Secondary Technical Vocational School	Lučenec	48	58%	1.82	58%	1.18
	Secondary Vocational School of Trade and Services	Krupina	13	85%	2.09	85%	1.36
	Secondary Technical Vocational School	Zvolen	52	77%	2.23	71%	1.30
KSK	Secondary Vocational School of Agri-Tech and Gastronomy Services	Pribeník	53	72%	1.61	70%	1.16
	Secondary Vocational School of Engineering and Services	Spišská Nová Ves	155	93%	2.09	92%	1.46
	Satellite Campus as part of the Secondary Vocational School of Engineering and Services	Krompachy	15	100%	1.00	93%	1.00
	St. Josaphat Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry	Trebišov	166	88%	1.64	81%	1.35
	Satellite Campus as part of St. Josaphat Secondary Vocational School of Services and Industry	Veľatý	95	100%	1.77	100%	1.56
	Secondary Technical Vocational School	Rožňava	42	98%	1.83	43%	1.33
PSK	Joint School	Stará Ľubovňa	10	100%	2.70	100%	1.00
	Satellite Campus as part of the Joint School	Lomnička	33	97%	2.09	100%	1.00
	Joint School	Čaklov	140	89%	2.32	84%	1.89
	Army Gen. L. Svoboda Secondary Vocational Polytechnic and Services School	Svidník	41	88%	1.83	66%	1.19

Note: values below the category average are marked in color.

Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Table A.25 Appreciated aspects – legend

	Area	Keywords
3 things I like most about my school	sport	gym, fitness center, various sports, physical education, tournaments
	scholarship	scholarship
	chill-out zones	clubroom, common room, relaxation room, park, mini go-kart, smoking area
	staff (teaching, non-teaching)	good/nice teachers/masters/assistants, approach, possibility to arrange things, individual approach, possibility to confide, problem-solving approach, helpful staff
	classmates	classmates, friends, excellent team, cooperation among classmates, mixed group
	equipment	tools, machines, workshops, studios, classrooms, classroom equipment, textbooks, teaching aids
	extracurricular activities	trips, events, activities, going outside, clubs, competitions, excursions, talks, extracurricular activities, possibility to sing at events
	practical training	vocational training, practice, opportunity for practice, work during practice, schedule – one week school and one week practice, practical work, possibility to take home products from practice, practice at construction sites and in the community, dual education, sewing and cooking
	school proximity	proximity to school, close to bus stop, school location, school bus transportation, free transportation
	teaching	subjects, driving school, interesting field, curriculum, languages, teaching, teaching methods, easy curriculum, no homework, fewer lessons, breaks, free lessons, substitutes, tutoring, school reputation, learning outdoors, learning new things
	campus	school campus, school grounds, dormitory, courtyard, going to the courtyard during breaks, order, cleanliness, playground, stairs, lights, trash bins, environment, warmth, toilets, kitchenette, changing rooms, artificial turf, multifunctional playground, vestibule
	don't know	nothing, don't know
	catering	food vending machines, drink vending machines, lunch, buffet, canteen, free lunches
	other	everything, great school, liturgies, company excursions

Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Table A.26 Proposals for change – legend

Area	Keywords
sport	poor gym, gym modernization, sports competitions, more sports, more sports activities
scholarship	merit-based scholarship, higher scholarship amount, tutoring
chill-out zones	no smoking, social games, school games, walks outside during breaks, possibility to leave school grounds during lunch break, more music
staff (teaching, non-teaching)	approach of teachers/masters, some teachers, teachers are not fair, approach to students
classmates	behavior of (some) students, misbehavior during lessons, so no one mocks anyone, bullying, vulgar language, disruptions, lack of hygiene in some students, more girls, noisy classmates
equipment	new machines, new tools, modernization (classrooms etc.), classroom/school equipment, garden improvement, new greenhouse, more work tools, teaching aids, internet connection (Wi-Fi), newer computers, more materials
extracurricular activities	more activities, clubs, dance club, extracurricular activities, more leisure activities, school activities, more outdoor trips, more excursions
practical training	better equipment for practice, more practice, reward for practice, more breaks during vocational training, more practice less teaching, shift start time of practice, more comfortable clothes for practice, more freedom during practice, practice closer to home
school proximity	better transport connections, earlier school dismissal
teaching	fewer classes, more classes, new programs, more theory and less practice, more breaks, longer breaks, subjects, no homework unrelated to studies, start and end of lessons, adapt lessons to transport connections, malfunctioning bell, improve lessons, cancel zero hour, cancel last hour, reduce number of subjects, change grading
campus	park, school modernization, new desks, lockers, chairs, broken boards, own locker, temperature (cold in workshop, reduce temperature), book lockers, nicer toilets, toilet paper in toilets, cleanliness, floor eraser, broken boards
don't know	don't know
catering	replace vending machine with buffet, request for normal food, water, reasonable prices, possibility to buy meals, introduce school lunches, change lunch system, longer buffet opening hours, free lunches
other	mobile phone use, more freedom, improve school reputation, order, everything, don't pressure students, wearing caps, reduce camera presence, cheaper driver's license, equal opportunities for more kids, more joy at school, bullying, more church attendance, vulgar expressions, extend holidays

Source: Questionnaire survey, World Bank, 2024.

Annex 4 – Data Capture sheet – Semi-structured interview (individual/in-person meeting with the management of CuRI 5 pilot SVS)

Data Capture Sheet

Interview – Individual/in-person meeting with the management of the pilot SVS – pilot testing CuRI 5

Note: The questions build on findings from available public sources. The second part of the individual/in-person meeting with the pilot school management is an open discussion on related topics and any other relevant questions led by the WB team.

Participants of the meeting:

Other provided documentation/materials:

Date and place of meeting:

Area	Question topics	Questions	Answers and notes
School's readiness and culture in relation to inclusion (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear strategic plan/concept of the SVS in the field of inclusion • Strong/competent school management with a clear agenda focused on MRC • Demonstrable results of the SVS (including in the MRC group) • Support (from multiple) partners and the ability to cooperate with others, including social aspects and employers 	<p>Does the school's development concept include a section dedicated to inclusion?</p> <p>How does the school implement the concept of inclusion?</p> <p>How does the school apply the measures recommended by the ministry in this area?</p> <p>Is there a person in the school management responsible for the agenda focused on MRC? Do you have a representative of the MRC community on the School Board?</p> <p>With whom does the school/school management cooperate on this agenda? (Please list all entities you cooperate with.)</p> <p>Follow-up question: How do you cooperate with the Central Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family (OLSAF) and companies/employers in the region regarding the employment of MRC?</p>	

		<p>Who would you like to involve in cooperation?</p> <p>What specific activities related to MRC does the school implement or plan to implement?</p> <p>What are the school's human resource capacities for supporting inclusion? For example: teaching/student assistants, psychologist, career counselor... others.</p> <p>If you know, please provide an example of a successful project or best practice you have implemented or are aware of.</p> <p>Do you cooperate or plan to cooperate with other SVS, or possibly primary schools?</p> <p>How do you cooperate with employers and companies? Do cooperating companies/employers participate in supporting inclusion in any way? How?</p> <p>How does the school work with families of students from disadvantaged backgrounds?</p>	
<p>Potential impact of the school's activities (4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity to implement the strategy in the area of MRC inclusion • Support for non-formal education and learning focused on disadvantaged population groups • Potential for developing various forms of productive activities (social economy initiatives) • Sustainability of programs and support services for students from MRC 	<p>How many students and how many vocational programs does the school currently have in the network, and how many did it have, and which were opened in the last five years?</p> <p>What was the average number of students from MRC and what programs were they most interested in?</p> <p>What is the early school leaving rate among MRC students in H programs at your school, and what are the most common reasons?</p> <p>What is the early school leaving rate among MRC students in F programs at your school, and what are the most common reasons?</p> <p>In your opinion, what would motivate MRC students to obtain higher qualifications or to complete their studies?</p> <p>What is the employability of MRC students or graduates from F programs in your region?</p> <p>What do you consider the biggest barriers to studying for students from disadvantaged backgrounds at your school?</p>	

Strategic position of the school (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future labor market needs (catchment area, subregion, commuting patterns) • Significant impact on the local/regional economy and cohesion • Alignment with strategic and conceptual documents at the national and regional levels • Potential for the development of various forms of practical training 	<p>What is the expected development on the local labor market?</p> <p>Which F professions are most in demand in your area, from companies or possibly local governments? Follow-up question: Can you describe the trend of future demand for qualifications and job positions?</p> <p>Are you aware of any new or planned investments in the area around the school (please include all investments by local governments and other entities)?</p> <p>What impact do you anticipate your school's activities will have on local/regional development?</p>	
Area Representativeness (2)	Question topics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector, industry • School size 		Notes Other, supplementary

Note: Registration of inclusively educated student (in the official CVTI system) – Supporting document from CVTI/record.
Source: World Bank, 2024.

Annex 5 – Minutes and conclusions from the focus group "Optimizing cooperation between SVS and employers in practical training of MRC students" (October 15, 2024, Košice)

Minutes from the focus group

"Optimizing cooperation between SVS and employers in practical training of MRC students"

October 15, 2024, Košice

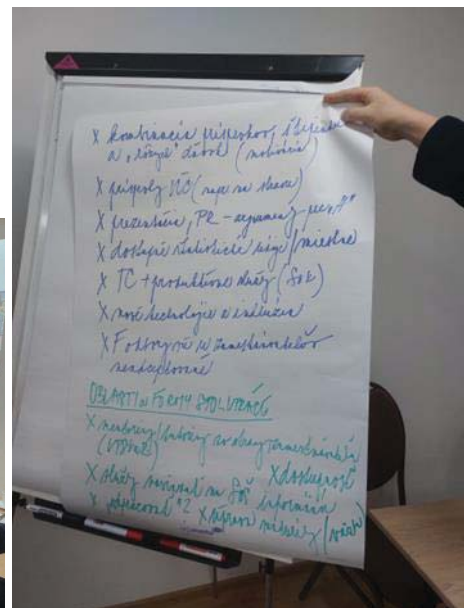
1. Welcome, introduction, and presentation of the meeting agenda
2. Introduction to focus groups (attached presentation)
 - Information on quantitative and qualitative data collection – thematic survey at SVS (semi-structured interviews at 11 SVS) and ongoing questionnaire survey among students of selected 11 SVS
 - Presentation of rules for conducting and facilitating the focus group,
3. Presentation of the Draft Concept of Training Centers (TC) (attached presentation)
 - Presentation of the TC concept draft, mission of the TC, role of stakeholders involved in the TC concept
 - Presentation of possible tools for inclusive vocational education and training within the TC concept
 - Participants expressed support for the TC and willingness to participate in the pilot project to test the functioning of the TC (U.S. Steel, Office of the Plenipotentiary, SVS)
4. Key outputs and points from the focus group:
 - Input/example: The connection concept at SVS Čaklov (approx. 20% success rate of completing education in F programs), a cooperation proposal developed between neighboring municipal governments and SVS Čaklov – SVS supply system (crops, flowers) → neighboring municipal governments; positive example: successful dual education system + possibility to obtain a driver's license during studies at the SVS as motivation also for students from MRC
 - **Observations/inputs from focus group participants:**
 - **Barriers to successful completion of education** – low support for students from their families, the role of gender aspects in division of family tasks (man = financial provider = work; woman = family care)
 - **TC** – to provide both **vocational and academic programs** simultaneously
 - **TC** – to be organized as a "**regional enterprise,**" **the degree of orientation of the educational institution towards productive activities and work**
 - **TC** – setting conditions and requirements regarding employment = enabling **study alongside work and other forms of qualification acquisition**
 - **Low school profiling** – offering a broader range of programs – fragmentation (higher school profiling in the past)

- Previous legislation allowed **completing primary education at SVS and subsequent study directly in H programs** (under current legislation, it is necessary to complete an F program first, then continue in the 2nd year of an H program = 5 years of study to obtain a vocational certificate – a time-consuming process aimed at obtaining the certificate), which does not align with the needs of the target group
 - The **Youth Guarantee (Záruka pre mladých)** project – establishment of single contact points – creation of SPACE centers in the KSK at SVS – spaces to support student mothers, childcare during lessons, and other innovative support services – coordination among support service providers
 - The Office of the Plenipotentiary in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic – preparation of a motivational/merit-based **scholarship program** for SVS students in the 2025/2026 school year + offices for mentors and tutors; scholarships for students who do not receive social scholarships, linked among other things to school performance, being good role models for others, and the possibility of combining financial support
 - **Lower support for SVS vs. primary schools** from the state – e.g., free lunches; the KSK **introduced lunch contributions at SVS satellite campuses** as part of motivation and non-financial support for students from its own resources – not a systemic solution but a good example (need to evaluate effectiveness)
 - High education requirements even for simple helping professions
 - Problematic: **low to absent basic literacy** (reading, writing, reading comprehension) among individuals who have completed primary education.
- **Proposed solutions and recommendations:**
- Support for families under the condition of successful completion of education and qualification attainment
 - **Differentiation of funding norms** (state schools vs. non-state schools = private, church)
 - **Need for a follow-up H program after F programs**, possibility to **continue after completing an F program directly in the 3rd year of an H program – to align with the needs and expectations of the target group**
 - Allow persons who have completed the 7th grade of primary school to **complete their primary education at SVS** in the 1st year of an **F program and subsequently transfer to study in an H program**; for persons who have completed the 6th grade, allow progression to an H program after completing 2 years of an F program
 - Support for families and mothers, e.g., through the **establishment of so-called child groups at schools, personalized education and support services**
 - **"Hour for the School"** – an activity carried out by employers in favor of SVS – activities of employees at SVS such as presentations, discussions, work demonstrations, coaching, etc.
 - Increasing the amount of **social scholarships to fulfill their role without endangering other family benefits**
 - **Strengthen data collection and updating** – to the micro-region level, including involvement of small employers
 - **Link funding norms to school results and quality of education provided** – students leave primary school without basic literacy (writing, reading, reading comprehension), absence of control mechanisms for primary schools – creating an education ecosystem
 - Simplify the system for obtaining the graduation/vocational certificate for persons with already acquired skills (e.g., employees) – **simplify the system of skills verification and qualification acquisition**

- **Profiling SVS** according to market needs in the region/sub-region
- **Increase availability and clarity of information** – e.g., the confusing website of the Central OLSAF, low promotion of projects among potential applicants
- **Support for mentors/tutors for talented students** – e.g., by employers aiming to develop potential future employees
- **Charging for studies/introducing numerus clausus/retention of graduates in employment = education as a benefit** – return on the state's investment in education – requires targeted media communication and campaign
- **Separate the graduation certificate and vocational certificate** – separate the practical part of the graduation exam from the theoretical part; after passing the theoretical part, the student receives the vocational certificate, after passing the practical part, the graduation ("maturita") certificate; keep foreign language as optional (barrier in obtaining vocational and graduation certificates)
- **Lack of information for MRC students about options for handling various life situations**, including decisions about their educational/career path
- **Linking school activities** with activities of other entities – social entrepreneurship

5. Conclusion

- October 22, 2024 – focus groups in Prešov, PSK
- December 5, 2024 – roundtable in Bratislava marking the conclusion of the CuRI 5 project – presentation of results and conclusions



Annex 6a – Good Practice Form

Good Practice Form

/for compiling a database/

CODE (If we use codes, the system can assign them automatically. The code should at least indicate whether it is an application at the local, regional, national, or international level, and whether it represents best practice from Slovakia or abroad.)

TITLE – Project/Good practice name:

THEME – Theme, focus (main or predominant focus):

COUNTRY – Country, location of implementation*:

KEY WORDS – KEY CONCEPT – maximum 10 lines:

DESCRIPTION – 5 lines for each description area:

- 1) Context
- 2) Objectives
- 3) Institutions involved
- 4) Target group (type and number)

INNOVATION – maximum 5 lines:

DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY – Implementation process, step-by-step methodology (maximum 3 lines per step):
Specify individual steps

IMPLEMENTATION AND DISSEMINATION METHODOLOGY – maximum 10 lines:

- 1) Results/outputs
- 2) Continuity
- 3) Difficulties found in application

TRANSFER – Transfer of good practice:

- 1/ Recommendations for implementation
- 2/ Recommendations for application in other contexts

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – contact, sources, etc.
*not mandatory

Annex 6b – Catalog of good practice

Best practice is any positive intervention, action (mechanism, model, methodology, activity, program) that supports active inclusion, equal opportunities, and non-discrimination in the described situation related to the selected target group.

CODE (If we use codes, the system can assign them automatically. The code should at least indicate whether it is an application at the local, regional, national, or international level, and whether it represents best practice from Slovakia or abroad)

SK – Slovakia, OC – other country, L – local level, R – regional level, N – national level, INT – international level, 0x – sequential catalog entry number

Good practice – INTERMEDIATE LABOR MARKET ENTERPRISE

CODE (If we use codes, the system can assign it automatically.): **SK-L-01**

Project/Good practice name:

Podnik medzitrhu práce, n.o. (Intermediate labor market enterprise, nonprofit organization) Banská Bystrica – Linking employment and social service systems at the local level

Theme, focus (main or predominant focus):

The result of the pilot-tested tool in employment services in the conditions of the regional city of Banská Bystrica, involving employers at the local level on the principle of subsidized employment under the name "From Benefits to Paid Work," is the establishment and successful operation of the Intermediate Labor Market Enterprise as a nonprofit organization and registered social enterprise. The project's focus is addressing long-term unemployment of low-skilled individuals in Banská Bystrica and its surroundings.

Country, location of implementation*:

Slovakia, the city of Banská Bystrica

Key words, key concept:

long-term unemployment, low-skilled, local/urban level, new instrument, intermediate labor market

The key concept of the project and the functioning instrument stems from the limited possibilities of existing employment services provided by labor offices and the possibility to support social economy entities so that the long-term unemployed with low or no qualifications gradually move first to the protected labor market and then to the open labor market.

Description:

1) **Context**

In 2011, the city of Banská Bystrica, while preparing strategic documents, identified the need to address long-term unemployment among citizens from MRC and low-skilled citizens beyond the scope of provided social services in accordance with applicable legislation. Together with partners – the Banská Bystrica Regional Development Agency, the Education Center of Nonprofit Organizations in Banská Bystrica, and the

Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family in Banská Bystrica – they responded to the call of the Operational Program Employment and Social Inclusion to submit innovative models linking employment services with social services at the local level. The valid Employment Act did not create systemic conditions for systemic solutions to long-term unemployment.

2) **Objectives**

- To provide temporary employment linked to activities aimed at increasing employability
- To create a set of support activities provided jointly by a local partnership
- To pilot new models of cooperation among stakeholders at the local level

3) **Institutions involved**

The City of Banská Bystrica

Banská Bystrica Regional Development Agency

Education Center of Nonprofit Organizations in Banská Bystrica

Office of Labor, Social Affairs and Family in Banská Bystrica

4) **Target group (type and number)**

The target group consisted of long-term unemployed individuals (40 citizens of Banská Bystrica) lacking social relationships, with lost communication skills, loss of confidence in their abilities, absence of work habits, and burdened by additional social and pathological issues that accompany them when entering the open labor market and require a combination of various social interventions, without which their successful entry into the open labor market is unlikely.

Innovation:

Support for temporarily subsidized employment of long-term unemployed individuals who were simultaneously recipients of material need benefits and social services from the city of Banská Bystrica, combined with activities aimed at increasing their employability and other targeted actions.

Implementation and dissemination methodology:

The initial pilot project was carried out over 20 months in three stages.

In the first stage, activities focused on creating conditions for the development of local partnership, establishing the intermediate labor market enterprise, selecting cooperating employers, and preparing a set of activities, measures, and procedures needed for the second stage of the project.

The second stage was the period of active integration of 40 intermediate labor market employees ("employees") into the work process. This stage lasted 5 months through a three-level integration process (preparatory stage – personal development, training stage – skills acquisition, and professionalization stage – improving work skills within temporary employment).

In the final third stage, an analysis of project outputs and results was conducted both at the level of project participants and project partners, followed by presentation of the project results to the professional public.

Implementation and dissemination:

1) Results and outputs

A verified and standardized process for selecting and placing job seekers in temporary jobs, restoring work habits and acquiring new work skills among the target group, strengthening social bonds and contacts, increasing the ability to gain employment in the open labor market, creating a set of support services, and a functioning local partnership as a condition for project sustainability. The project's benefits can be assessed in the long term as both social and personal. Among the most important social contributions are: savings of public funds, individualization of employment services, a proven functional joint model of service provision for the selected target group, and strengthening the resilience of the local economy.

2) Continuation

The Intermediate Labor Market Enterprise, nonprofit organization, has existed since 2011 and, since 2020, also as a registered social enterprise (<https://registre.socialnaekonomika.gov.sk/registrovane-sp>) as a result of a successfully implemented pilot project. It gradually applies new tools in the active integration of the long-term unemployed in the city of Banská Bystrica and the functional urban area of Banská Bystrica. Selected activities of the enterprise are supported within national projects and projects funded by the EU. Support for social economy in the city of Banská Bystrica remains one of the priorities for the development and prosperity of the city.

3) Difficulties found in application

- Insufficiently legislatively defined status of an "intermediate labor market employer"
- Establishing optimal financing for verified innovative instruments of active integration and solutions for long-term unemployment, including involvement of local actors
- Consistently applying socially responsible public procurement, especially in public administration

Transfer of good practice:

1/ Recommendations for implementation

- Allocate sufficient time for the preparation phase – pilot testing of activities and co-creation of the so-called future operational model
- Strong local partnership and close cooperation with local employers
- Formation and thorough preparation of the team responsible for project/instrument implementation
- Highly targeted and individualized support as a reflection of the specific life situations of the "employees"

2/ Recommendations for application in other contexts

- Start on a smaller scale by implementing pilot activities involving stakeholders and representatives of the target group
- Define in advance the nature of the performed work as public-benefit work and work in the general interest
- Ensure functional and sustainable financing for at least 24 months (project and enterprise startup period)

- Integrate employment services comprehensively and effectively with the provision of social services within the local partnership.

Additional information – contact, sources, etc.

www.pmpbb.eu

Good practice – Joint School in Poltár

CODE (If we use codes, the system can assign it automatically): SK-L-02

Project/Good practice name:

Networking the school with the student's home environment

Theme, focus (main or predominant focus):

Vocational education and training

Country, location of implementation*:

Slovakia – Banská Bystrica Region – Poltár District – the town of Poltár

Key words, key concept:

absences, prevention of school absenteeism, parents, cooperation, networking of stakeholders, student recruitment

Description:

1) Context

A large portion of students at the Joint School in Poltár come from surrounding Roma communities (estimated 90% in F programs, 40% in H programs, and 10% in graduation programs).

In connection with organizing the Open Day, aimed at promoting the school and studies at the school with the goal of recruitment for the next school year, the school reaches out to nearby primary schools. Not all potential applicants for study at the Joint School in Poltár have the opportunity to attend the Open Day. The purpose of this good practice is to enable these potential applicants and their parents to participate in the Open Day and submit their applications for study.

The Joint School in Poltár cooperates with the mayors of municipalities with marginalized Roma communities, community centers, and field social workers to address various situations of students at the Joint School who primarily come from MRC. The most frequently addressed issue is school absenteeism.

2) Objectives

Student recruitment for the Joint School in Poltár, addressing issues of students from MRC at the Joint School in Poltár with a focus on eliminating school absenteeism.

3) Institutions involved

municipalities / local government representatives

field social workers

community centers

primary schools

4) **Target group (type and number)**

Students in the final grade of lower secondary schools (primary schools) from MRC, parents of these students, students of the Joint School in Poltár from MRC, and their parents

Innovation:

The Joint School in Poltár provides individualized targeted support to potential applicants who, due to personal obstacles (e.g., lack of financial resources) or objective reasons (absence of publicly available transportation), would be unable to attend the Open Day, where the school presents its educational program and study opportunities aimed at recruiting students for the new school year by arranging individual transportation.

The Joint School in Poltár has introduced a multi-level mechanism to address the issue of school absenteeism among students primarily from MRC, involving municipalities, community centers, and field social work.

Implementation and dissemination methodology:

Targeted support aimed at student recruitment for the new school year

1. **Outreach and identification** – the Joint School in Poltár has established cooperation with approximately 35 primary schools in its vicinity. As part of school promotion and recruitment for the new school year, it identifies children and students in the final grade of primary schools who do not have the means to get to the Open Day at the Joint School via public or personal transport and who primarily come from MRC.
2. **Individualized support** – the Joint School in Poltár provides personal car transportation for families who would otherwise not attend the **Open Day** due to lack of transport options (absence of public transport connections, financial costs, etc.). During one recruitment period, there are typically three to four such cases. Parents and children thus have the opportunity to personally see the school environment, facilities, and dormitory, gaining a personal experience. As a result of this experience and the school's activities, these students ultimately submit their applications for study at the Joint School.

Addressing more serious situations with students

The Joint School in Poltár has established a multi-level mechanism for working with students and their home environment regarding absences.

1. **Personal interview** – in case of attendance issues (and not only those), a personal interview is first held with the specific student by the class teacher or another designated person.
2. **Interview with a mentor** – if the first interview does not lead to the desired outcome, the student then meets with a mentor.
3. **Personal contact with parents** – the next step involves establishing personal contact with the student's parents, either electronically or through a written invitation to the school.

Home visit – if the family does not respond, school staff visit the family personally at their home. Usually, the class teacher and the vocational training instructor visit the household on behalf of the school.

4. From personal home visits, the class teacher records a **report of the conversation with the parents**. These reports include the reasons for the visit. During the visits, information is provided, usually covering topics from class meetings – the student's academic progress, suggestions for resolving problematic situations, and any attendance issues. In most

cases, personal visits achieve the desired outcome. In some cases, visits need to be repeated. The sustainability of this approach/tool is questionable in the long term.

5. **Involvement of third parties** – if the parent(s) do not cooperate, field social workers and community center staff, preferably of Roma origin, are involved in contacting the parent(s).

Let's get to know each other

For parents of first-year students, the Joint School in Poltár organized an event called **Let's get to know each other**. The goal was to create a space for mutual meetings between parents of students from MRC, class teachers, and educators. The first step was **outreach** – the principal of the Joint School, in cooperation with the mayors of the concerned municipalities, contacted parents through the local public announcement system. The school was exempted from the fee for the public announcement by the mayors of those municipalities. In addition to the local public announcement system, invitations to the joint meeting were conveyed directly to specific parents by field social workers active in the respective municipalities.

Through targeted outreach and intensive work of the involved entities, a 60% success rate was achieved.

Implementation and dissemination:

1) Results and outputs

- **Individualized support for students and parents** – based on the school's experience, a 100% success rate can be stated. The number of cases is low – 3 to 4 families per year.
- **Mechanism for solving attendance problems** – outcomes depend on the specific case; the school records positive results from the implemented attendance mechanism.
- **Let's get to know each other** – approximately 60% of contacted parents participated in the event.

2) Continuation

The *Let's get to know each other* activity is no longer continued by the Joint School in Poltár.

3) Difficulties found in application

- **Individualized support** – not sustainable with a larger number of families, financially demanding, dependent on the engagement of the principal of the Joint School.
- **Mechanism for solving attendance problems** – long-term interventions lack continuity; some students may repeat the same problems, requiring repeated home visits.

Transfer of good practice:

1/ Recommendations for implementation

The multi-level mechanism for addressing student attendance issues is a transferable proven good practice. The mechanism relies on mapping and subsequent networking with involved institutions – staff of community centers and field social workers in the municipality where the student resides.

Individualized support entails increased financial investment on the part of the implementing school. This support depends on cooperation with the teaching or non-teaching staff of the primary school, who can identify suitable families – potential applicants for study at the given secondary school.

The *Let's Get to Know Each Other* activity is a recommended good practice. If multiple parents of students come from the same municipality or from municipalities within walking distance, it

is advisable to hold the activity in a community center. If needed, it is appropriate to involve, besides community center staff, other professionals working in the field, such as field social workers, development team members (if present in the municipality), local civic preventive service workers (MOaPS), the mayor, and others. In the future, attention should be given to coordinating the activities of various entities, such as support teams.

2/ Recommendations for application in other contexts

After evaluating the entire mechanism, part of the individualized support can be transferred within the planned curricular reform to the school community or class community. An opportunity lies in utilizing support for social innovations related to "risk" factors within the target group, such as internships/work for the local community and support for community-led services.

Additional information – contact, sources, etc.

N/A

Good practice – ŠUTO ORIZARI

CODE (If we use codes, the system can assign it automatically.): OC-L-06

Project/Good practice name:

Initiatives in Education and Community Support for Roma Girls

Theme, focus (main or predominant focus):

Education and training

Country, location of implementation*:

North Macedonia, **Šuto Orizari**

Key words, key concept:

school absenteeism, girls, parents, cooperation, scholarship programs

Description:

1) Context

The town of Šuto Orizari, near the capital city Skopje, is home to one of the largest Roma populations in the country. With approximately 30,000 inhabitants, it is estimated that 70–80% of the population identifies as Roma. The local Roma community is predominantly urban, living in closely connected neighborhoods where most families face socio-economic challenges. The community is characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and low formal education attainment.

The rate of early school leaving remains high within the community, especially among girls, due to factors such as early marriages, family expectations, pressure to perform household duties, economic dependence, and the threat of poverty.

2) Objectives

Through various educational activities, the town aims to:

- **reduce the rate of early school leaving, with a focus on girls** (special programs)

- **encourage families** to send their daughters to school and support them in continuing education after completing primary school

3) **Institutions involved**

the town of Šuto Orizari

local schools

nonprofit organizations such as the Roma Education Fund

community mediators

4) **Target group (type and number)**

Roma youth with a focus on girls (number unknown)

Innovation:

School principals from the community, supported by various NGOs including the Roma Education Fund, **regularly organize meetings with families** to raise awareness about the importance of girls' education.

To further motivate school attendance, **the initiative of "conditional cash transfers"** was incorporated into the national scholarship program for high school students in North Macedonia. Within this program, families receive financial support if they ensure their daughters remain in school.

Implementation and dissemination methodology

1. **Meetings with families** – the management of local schools, in cooperation with the nonprofit sector, regularly organizes joint meetings with families of girls from local communities to raise awareness about the importance of children's education, especially girls, for their future.
2. **Conditionality of the scholarship program** (*Conditional Cash Transfer*) – one of the conditions of the national scholarship program for secondary school students is that girls must remain in the educational process until its proper completion. This means that the family of a child who is a recipient of the scholarship program is obliged to ensure that their daughter stays in education.
3. **Mentoring and academic support** – mentoring and tutoring programs developed and provided by NGOs. Older Roma students and professionals are involved in mentoring and academically supporting younger girls. This provides the girls with academic assistance and role models who motivate and strengthen their self-confidence.
4. **Community centers** – play a key role in supporting Roma families. Community centers (CC) provide the following services:
 - Educational support: after-school tutoring, literacy courses, and language classes are offered at CC
 - Health and social services: assistance in accessing healthcare, vaccination programs, and prenatal care for young mothers
 - Legal aid: help with obtaining identification documents, resolving housing issues, and addressing discrimination cases
 - Employment and vocational training: skills training, support in job searching, and small business development programs
 - Cultural and youth programs: artistic, musical, and theater initiatives aimed at preserving Roma culture and engaging young people
 - Women's empowerment programs: such as seminars on gender equality, financial literacy, and domestic violence prevention

- 5. Safe educational environment and the role of community mediators** – community centers provide girls with a safe space where they can receive additional tutoring and social support. Roma mediators work closely with families to ensure girls stay in school and address any parental concerns, further strengthening the community's commitment to education.

Implementation and dissemination:

- 1) Results and outputs
In the 2018/2019 school year, 52 girls received financial support, of which 13 completed internships with employers or practical training (public health), and 13 scholarship recipients (both girls and boys) completed university or higher education.
- 2) Continuation
Expansion of access to other locations and to the level of primary education.
- 3) Difficulties found in application
Coordination of policy at the national level and at the level of local government.

Transfer of good practice:

1/ Recommendations for implementation

Creation of a safe space for the education of girls, as well as other vulnerable groups and groups with multiple disadvantages, within existing institutions such as community centers – places/spaces that are physically and geographically accessible and trusted and known by parents.

Work with families and networking of families with other actors such as schools, field workers, community workers, mediators, and similar.

Conditionality of scholarship programs on remaining in the educational process.

2/ Recommendations for application in a different context

Change in the legislative framework shifting the focus of community centers from crisis intervention and social services to supportive services for the local community.

Additional information – contact, sources, etc.

The current government of North Macedonia, often in cooperation with international organizations, provides financial assistance to Roma students continuing their studies in secondary and higher education. There are plans to expand scholarship opportunities to primary school students to support education in disadvantaged communities, including Roma families.

The Roma population in Šuto Orizari is relatively young, with a large proportion of residents under 18 years old, meaning future investments in education could have a lasting impact on breaking the cycle of poverty and improving the community's long-term prospects. Educational initiatives in Šuto Orizari not only address the immediate needs of Roma students but also lay the foundation for a more inclusive and equitable future for the next generation. Thanks to the continuous focus on these proven practices, the community is gradually overcoming longstanding educational barriers that have hindered its growth and development.

Documentary film: <https://filmfreeway.com/1338456>

Good practice – AGHIA VARVARA

CODE (If we use codes, the system can assign it automatically.): OC-L-07

Project/Good practice name:

Initiatives in Education and Community Support for Roma Girls

Theme, focus (main or predominant focus):

Education and training

Country, location of implementation*:

Greece, **Aghia Varvara**

Key words, key concept:

school absenteeism, girls, parents, scholarship programs, language support, mediators

Description:

1) **Context**

In Aghia Varvara, near Athens, lives a significant part of the Roma population. In the past, this population has been marked by high levels of socio-economic disadvantage, unemployment, and poor living conditions, all closely linked to lower educational attainment. Roma children here often face various barriers to accessing education, such as poverty, the inability to afford school supplies, lack of financial resources, and similar challenges. Their needs, especially regarding language, cultural integration, and social support, are not always adequately met in schools.

Additionally, cultural norms within Roma communities generally prioritize early work over education, particularly for girls. This leads to a higher rate of early school leaving, with girls being especially vulnerable to leaving school at an earlier stage. Further issues, such as discrimination and prejudice in schools, complicate the education of Roma students even more, as they may be segregated into classes with lower educational levels or treated differently by teachers and classmates.

2) **Objectives**

The government and non-governmental organizations, in cooperation with the local government, have implemented a number of initiatives to support Roma students and encourage their greater participation in education. One of the key strategies was the creation of educational programs focused on Roma boys and girls, aimed at increasing school attendance, reducing the rate of early school leaving, and promoting higher educational outcomes.

- Ensuring higher participation of Roma girls in education
- Reducing the rate of early school leaving
- Enabling attainment of a higher level of education

3) **Institutions involved**

government
non-governmental organizations
local government
local schools

4) Target group (type and number)

Roma youth with an emphasis on girls (number unknown)

Innovation:

Support for the education and motivation of Roma children through tutoring, mentoring programs, and the provision of language courses to reduce barriers to access and retention in the education system. Work with families and communities to promote a culture of education and the importance of education. Work with the school environment, especially with teaching staff, to support diversity, inclusivity, and the fight against discrimination and entrenched stereotypes.

Implementation and dissemination methodology

1. **Targeted educational support including extracurricular tutoring, mentoring programs, and language courses** – many Roma children speak Romani at home, which can hinder their ability to succeed in the Greek education system, where Greek is the primary language of instruction. Language support programs have proven to be extremely effective in helping students transition into classes and better integrate into the main education stream.
2. **Community centers** – in addition to academic support, community centers play an important role in engaging families and raising awareness about the importance of education. These centers provide resources, seminars, and counseling services for students and their parents, helping to promote a culture of education within the Roma community. Through these programs, Roma families are encouraged to send their children to school regularly, and parents are educated about the importance of staying in school, especially in the case of girls.
3. **Inclusivity of curricula** – local schools in Aghia Varvara are making efforts to improve the inclusivity of their curricula. Teachers are increasingly being trained in cultural sensitivity and inclusive practices, which helps reduce discrimination and foster a more welcoming environment for Roma students. By incorporating Roma culture and history into the curricula and promoting a more diverse approach to learning, these schools aim to create an environment where Roma children feel valued and motivated to achieve academic success.

Implementation and dissemination:

1) Results and outputs

The results include: established language support programs, family programs implemented by the community center, and the teaching of Roma culture and history within the curricula.

2) Continuation

The continuation of the project depends on maintaining the school culture and support at the national level.

3) Difficulties found in application

The difficulty lies in overcoming the entrenched gender division of roles and the position of women/girls in the Roma family at the expense of education.

Transfer of good practice:

1/ Recommendations for implementation

The importance of networking among various actors from the community, local government, through schools and teaching staff.

2/ Recommendations for application in other contexts

The need for scaling in accordance with the locally specific context.

Additional information – contact, sources, etc.

*not mandatory

Despite the progress made, educational outcomes in Aghia Varvara remain a challenge. Although the school attendance rate of Roma children has improved, the rate of early school leaving – especially among girls – is still high. Financial difficulties, social exclusion, and persistent discrimination remain significant obstacles. However, the efforts of local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and the Roma community itself are slowly beginning to bring about change.

Focusing on early education, better access to resources, language support, and community involvement are fundamental components of the strategy to improve the educational outcomes of Roma students in Aghia Varvara. These initiatives, although still in the process of full implementation, have great potential to eliminate educational disparities between Roma and non-Roma populations and offer Roma children in Aghia Varvara an opportunity for a better future.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJoM4QXudsg>

<https://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2015/local-engagement-roma-inclusion-multi-annual-roma-programme>

Good practice – ŠKOLA GANDHI

CODE (If we use codes, the system can assign it automatically): OC-L-08

Project/Good practice name:

Inclusive education with an emphasis on a safe environment in secondary school

Theme, focus (main or predominant focus):

Education and training

Country, location of implementation*:

Hungary, Pécs

Key words, key concept:

non-attendance, girls, parents, language support, Roma teaching assistants, cultural mediators

Description:

1) Context

Gandhi School was established as a model school in 1994 and is located in a Hungarian region with a significant Roma population. Although the students of this school often face obstacles such as poverty, discrimination, and cultural barriers, the school has achieved significant success in creating an inclusive educational environment that aims to empower Roma youth.

The school, as the first secondary school for Roma students in Hungary, is funded by the government, EU grant funds, and donors.

In the past, Roma students in Hungary, including students at Gandhi School, struggled with lower educational outcomes compared to their non-Roma peers. Factors such as socio-economic disadvantage, poorer access to resources, and discrimination contributed to a high rate of early school leaving and weak academic performance.

Many Roma children come from families living in poverty, and school attendance often comes at the expense of economic survival, especially for older children who are expected to work and financially contribute to the family budget or care for younger siblings. In addition, many Roma children face a language barrier – Romani is spoken at home, but Hungarian is the language of instruction at school.

2) Objectives

- Increasing school attendance, improving academic performance, and strengthening the sense of inclusion of Roma children through the adoption of diverse strategies.
- Efforts to address gender disparities in the Roma community, where girls often face additional challenges related to early marriage or family expectations. By providing safe learning spaces for girls and offering specific support tailored to their needs, Gandhi School has succeeded in reducing gender gaps in educational outcomes.

3) Institutions involved

government
NGOs
local government
local schools

4) Target group (type and number)

Roma youth with an emphasis on girls

Innovation:

One of the key elements of the school's approach is the use of Roma teaching assistants and cultural mediators. At the same time, the school supports children in overcoming language barriers by providing Hungarian language courses.

The school offers training to its staff on Roma culture, history, and language and encourages the integration of these topics into the school curricula. This enables the school to build a more inclusive environment while also empowering Roma students.

1. **Roma teaching assistants and cultural mediators** – play an important role in bridging the gap between the school and the Roma community, helping to address cultural differences, supporting parental involvement, and providing additional support to students facing educational challenges.

2. **Language support programs** – programs designed for Roma children who speak Romani at home. These programs focus on improving Hungarian language skills so that students can fully participate in lessons and understand the educational content. The school offers after-school language courses and tutoring, helping Roma students build the language knowledge necessary for academic success.
3. **Inclusive and culturally sensitive environment** – training on cultural awareness provided to the school's teachers, and support for teachers in integrating Roma history and culture into the curricula. This encourages Roma students to take pride in Roma culture, traditions, and their ethnic identity, while also fostering understanding among non-Roma students. By promoting diversity within the school community, Gandhi School strives to break down stereotypes and reduce discrimination, which is often an obstacle to the academic success of Roma students.
4. **Retention and continuation mechanisms** – the school has introduced programs aimed at supporting Roma students to stay in school and continue to higher education. Scholarships, mentoring programs, and extracurricular activities provide Roma students with resources and motivation to pursue education beyond secondary school.
5. **Safe environment for female students** – the school has succeeded in creating an environment that provides emotional and psychological security to its students, especially Roma girls. This does not refer to physically designated spaces, but to a school atmosphere described by graduates as a "cocoon" during their adolescence – a safe place that helped build their self-confidence and offered opportunities that changed their lives. Roma teachers and mentors of Roma students and parents play a very important role in building this safe space at Gandhi School.

Implementation and dissemination:

1) Results and outputs

Targeted interventions and a commitment to inclusivity have led to significant improvements at the school – better academic outcomes for Roma students, as well as a growing sense of empowerment and pride within the Roma community. Since 2002, the school has also offered second-chance programs. On average, the school is attended by 400 students and 300 adults, with more than 50% continuing their studies at university.

2) Continuation

The school is supported by the local municipality and at the national level.

3) Difficulties found in application

None are known.

Transfer of good practice:

1/ Recommendations for implementation

Without support at the national level, full implementation in Slovakia is not possible.

2/ Recommendations for application in other contexts

Pilot testing of the approach at an existing secondary school would be a possible scaling strategy.

Additional information – contact, sources, etc.

Gandhi School is an example of a secondary school where targeted interventions and a commitment to inclusivity have achieved significant improvements in school attendance and academic performance. The success of the school's initiatives is evident in the better

academic results of Roma students, as well as the growing sense of empowerment and pride within the Roma community. By providing the tools Roma students need to succeed – whether through language support, cultural inclusion, or financial assistance – Gandhi School helps create a more equitable educational environment.

Good practice – Early Warning System

CODE (If we use codes, the system can assign it automatically): OC-N-08

Project/Good practice name:

Early warning system at the national level

Theme, focus (main or predominant focus):

Education and training

Country, location of implementation*:

Romania

Key words, key concept:

early school leaving, training of school staff

Description:

1) Context

To address the high rate of early school leaving, the Ministry of Education in Romania implemented an Early Warning System (EWS) in 2019 and 2022. The system was developed and piloted by the World Bank with financial support from the European Union as part of technical support (TSI).

2) Objectives

- Reduction and gradual elimination of early school leaving
- Increased participation and performance in national exams

3) Institutions involved

World Bank
Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM)
Ministry of Education of Romania
participating schools
school inspectorates

4) Target group (type and number)

secondary school students in lower years – students at risk of early school leaving (number unknown)

Innovation:

The Early Warning System is a set of measures and activities focused on three components: prevention, intervention, and compensation, and is based on real-time data collection. The system includes a developed Vulnerability Index as well as an online educational platform.

Components of the system:

- Preventive component – measures ensuring that all students have access to and benefit from better teachers and a positive, inclusive school climate
- Intervention component – measures to provide individual educational and support services based on identified needs, with the intervention component relying on screening outcomes that monitor students at risk of early school leaving
- Compensation component – focuses on children who have stopped attending school and on migrants. Measures in the compensation component include registration and re-enrollment in the main education stream, second-chance programs combined with vocational training and qualification, evening classes, classes with reduced frequency, and similar initiatives.

Implementation and dissemination methodology

EWS instruments:

- **SASAT (Success at School Assessment Tool)** – a tool for assessing school success – a questionnaire designed to collect data on students' attitudes, characteristics, and beliefs regarding their academic success and to monitor early school leaving. The questionnaire is divided into 3 parts:
 - student's family background
 - school environment
 - future plans
- **Observation sheet** – answers 5 questions regarding attendance, academic performance, grade repetition, history of any disciplinary actions (sanctions); based on the observation sheet, a so-called case file (or "case") is opened if interventions are needed
- **Assessment sheet** – focuses on 23 risk factors related to the student, family, school, and community
- **Case file ("case")** – the homeroom teacher records current information about the student requiring interventions in the case file – for example, family situation, living conditions, relationships with classmates and school staff, learning difficulties, parents' education level
- **Intervention plan** – based on the information in the case file, the school develops a plan of interventions – for example, remedial programs, counseling and career guidance, parent education, and community involvement (mediator, social worker, volunteers, non-governmental organizations)
- **School vulnerability index to early school leaving** (ESL School Vulnerability Index; ESL – Early School Leavers) – a data module that is part of the Educational Management Information System managed by the Ministry of Education in Romania

- divides schools into 3 risk groups – high, medium, and low risk
 - the system includes 5 indicators at the school level; indicators relate to substitute teachers (1), students repeating a grade (2), students who have left school early (3), school enrollment (4), and results in the national assessment (5)
 - the data module uses a combination system of observation sheets and self-reporting screening tools to identify at-risk students and tracks targeted activities such as personalized educational plans and progress through student files.
- **Self-paced online training module** – an online course aimed at staff involved in implementing the EWS at the central, regional, and local levels (individual schools)
 - the course provides appropriate knowledge and interactivity to clarify the various tools and components of the early warning system for early school leaving
 - **Supplementary tools** – scholarships, hot meals, school infrastructure, teaching and study materials, extracurricular activities, and counseling services

Implementation and dissemination:

1) Results and outputs

A comprehensive methodology for addressing early school leaving focused on the phases of prevention, intervention, and compensation of early school leaving; the methodology is supplemented by practical support for individual schools and written guidelines intended for local authorities

Self-paced online training module – over 47,000 graduates (primarily teachers)

Vulnerability index – 4,600 schools divided into 3 risk groups – based on the vulnerability index, the Ministry of Education selected schools eligible to receive grants to address the issue of early school leaving (2,500 grants awarded within the national Recovery and Resilience Plan)

2) Continuation

Based on Ministerial Order No. 600/2021, the Early Warning System was expanded nationwide in 2022. This system for identifying, supporting, and monitoring the progress of students at risk of early school leaving was originally focused on lower secondary school students. In 2023, the system was also extended to primary school students.

The Early Warning System has become an important tool of the National Program to reduce the number of students who leave school early, for which the European Commission approved funding of €543 million under the national Recovery and Resilience Plan.

3) Difficulties found in application

None were identified.

Transfer of good practice:

1/ Recommendations for implementation

Opportunity to share experience in implementing the National Program of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic supported by EU funds, focused on early school leaving.

2/ Recommendations for application in other contexts

Additional information – contact, sources, etc.

*not mandatory

The projects were implemented based on recommendations aimed at improving the inclusivity of the Romanian education system and contributed to the national reform program (especially the national reform program and the strategic framework for education). The Early Warning System was embedded in the Romanian Recovery and Resilience Plan, which expanded its implementation at the national level and offered further strengthening of schools' capacities to apply the methodology developed with support from the European Commission.

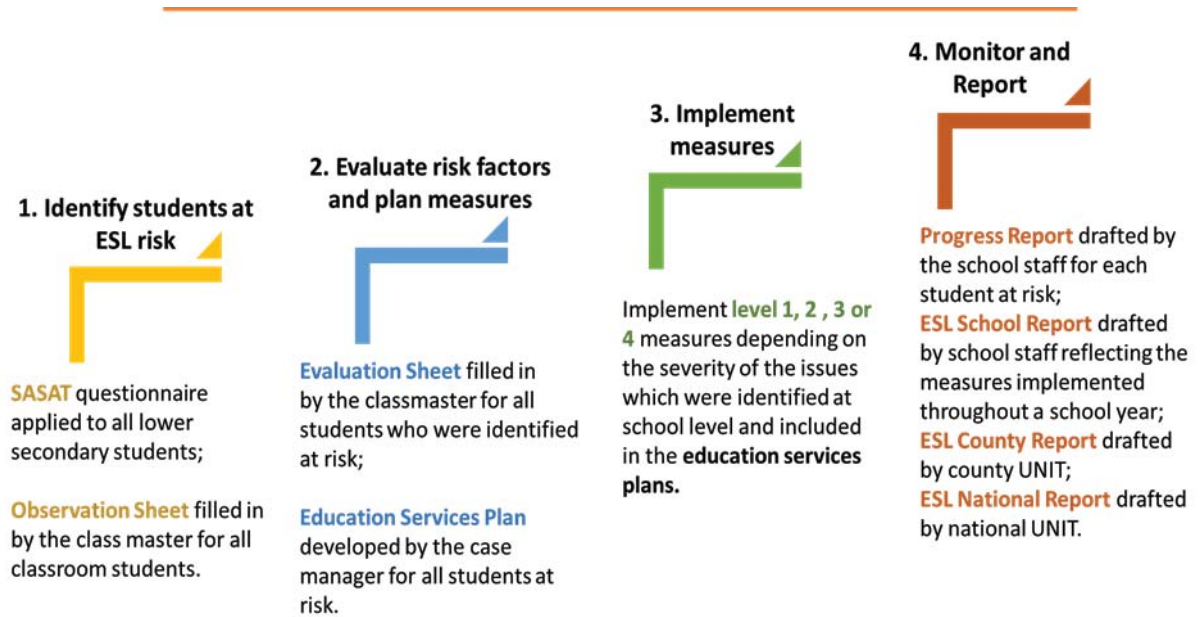
Since 2010, the number of children aged 6–14 not attending school has doubled to a quarter of a million. Furthermore, according to data recorded in the Early Warning System on students at risk of early school leaving in 2023, two out of three at-risk students lived in marginalized areas, and two out of five students came from poor families, from parents who are teenagers, or from parents working abroad.

After two years of implementing the Early Warning System and school grants in 1,409 schools, significant improvements were observed compared to similar schools that did not receive funding. The results indicate a reduction in the rate of early school leaving and an increase in participation and performance in national exams. Investments in Early Warning System measures – such as scholarships, hot meals, school infrastructure, teaching and study materials, extracurricular activities, and counseling services – led to better access to quality education for vulnerable students and improved educational outcomes.

The Early Warning System for early school leaving is cited as a good practice example in the World Bank report *Learning Recovery to Acceleration*, published in 2023.

The output of the first project was the development of a methodology along with a detailed guide for schools. The second project expanded the early school leaving system in 10 districts and provided practical support to more than 150 schools. The goal was to extend and strengthen capacities at the central (state) and local levels to support the nationwide implementation of the mechanism (its scaling).

Chart illustration of the Early Warning System



[Tackling early school leaving in Romania – European Commission](#)

[Learning Recovery to Acceleration](#) – a 2023 World Bank report

[online training module](#)

[map of schools participating in the online training module](#)

Good practice – Scholarship Programs

CODE (If we use codes, the system can assign it automatically): SK-N-04

Project/Good practice name:

Scholarship programs and support for Roma youth

Theme, focus (main or predominant focus):

Education and training, employability

Country, location of implementation*:

Slovakia

Key words, key concept:

early school leaving, mentoring, labor market skills, tutoring

Description:

1) **Context**

Since its establishment in Slovakia in 2014, the Roma Education Fund (REF) has supported hundreds of Roma pupils and students through scholarship programs (the support project for female students of secondary pedagogical schools, the SHAPYR project), the creation of an innovative online tutoring center ([AMOS ACADEMY](#)), and currently through the implementation of the Roma Youth Pride project aimed at empowering Roma youth.

2) **Objectives**

The goal of the projects is to contribute to reducing educational disparities between Roma and non-Roma populations and to support inclusive education by improving school outcomes, acquiring skills and experiences needed for success in the labor market as well as in civic life.

3) **Institutions involved**

Roma Education Fund
participating schools
employers (businesses, municipal offices, etc.)

4) **Target group (type and number)**

Roma pupils of primary schools, secondary schools, graduates of programs implemented by the REF

Innovation:

Within its various activities, the REF also implemented the Chance for the Future project – supporting the establishment of the innovative online tutoring center [AMOS ACADEMY](#). The project's goal was to improve students' academic success by creating an online tutoring center and providing online tutoring to support and enhance academic achievement and prevent early school leaving. As part of the project, an online tutoring methodology was developed in the form of a manual [1].

Implementation and dissemination methodology

Tools used within scholarship and other support programs:

- **financial support** – scholarships provided to cover study-related expenses
 - in the support project for female students of secondary pedagogical schools, financial support was divided into 2 types: support to cover study costs at secondary school (travel, meals, accommodation costs, possibly tuition) and a financial scholarship in the 3rd and 4th years – the scholarship covered study-related expenses that had to be documented
 - scholarship during bachelor's studies in Preschool and Elementary Pedagogy or Pre-primary Education (female students of secondary pedagogical schools)
 - professional and financial assistance to schools in the form of grants to implement knowledge gained during training of secondary pedagogical school graduates in practice (purchase of school supplies, school equipment, and implementation of activities with students)

- **mentoring** – support for personal development and counseling, number of mentors depending on the project (Roma Youth Pride – 10 mentors for 20 mentees; SHAPYR – 1 mentor for 5 mentees; secondary pedagogical schools – 1 mentor for 10 mentees)
 - connecting Roma students with successful Roma professionals to support personal development and academic success (Roma Youth Pride)
 - mentor assigned as needed; the mentor played an important role in providing education and counseling in financial literacy (support for female students of secondary pedagogical schools)
 - recruitment, mentoring, and tutoring – assistance and support in the final year of primary school in choosing a secondary pedagogical school
- **tutoring** – in the support project for female students of secondary pedagogical schools, tutoring covered IT, Romani and English languages, and Roma culture - main activity of the Chance for the Future project (Amos Academy)
- **increasing employability**
 - assistance with job search (SHAPYR, female students of secondary pedagogical schools)
 - support in gaining work experience (SHAPYR – connecting and performing internships in companies, civic associations, municipal offices, sports clubs, etc.)
 - help with arranging mandatory internships
 - assistance with university entrance interviews
- **support for personal development**
 - workshops focused on leadership – training Roma youth in developing leadership skills to strengthen their ability to contribute to their communities (Roma Youth Pride)
 - training and courses aimed at acquiring soft skills needed for employment – provided by REF staff in cooperation with various organizations and mentors (SHAPYR)
 - training aimed at strengthening cooperation among Roma female teachers, provided to graduates of secondary pedagogical schools – former students working in schools or pursuing higher education in pedagogical fields
- **cultural events** – cultural events and campaigns aimed at raising awareness – supporting Roma cultural heritage and breaking down social stereotypes to promote greater understanding and cooperation (Roma Youth Pride)
- **networking and international cooperation** (support provided to former female students of secondary pedagogical schools)
 - providing information and technical support for both informal and formal collaboration opportunities among Roma female teachers to create a platform – exchanging information and experiences, offering mutual support during studies and teaching practice, and pursuing further education
 - participation in an international education program focused on acquiring new skills, learning new educational approaches, and improving teaching abilities to bring positive change to schools and help create conditions that enable children to fully realize their educational potential
 - exchange stays in the United Kingdom
- **tutoring center Amos Academy** – provided support:
 - tutoring in subjects such as mathematics, chemistry, physics, and languages
 - assistance in overcoming possible learning difficulties
 - support for social integration of students within the school environment
 - facilitation of cooperation between the school and the student's family
 - development of an online tutoring methodology in the form of a manual

Implementation and dissemination:

1) Results and outputs

AMOS ACADEMY – online tutoring center and provision of online tutoring (creation of an innovative online tutoring center) aimed at supporting and improving academic success and preventing early school leaving (Chance for the Future project)

Methodological manual *Online tutoring proces, komunikácia a príprava didaktických materiálov [Online tutoring process, communication, and preparation of didactic materials]*, Dubayová, T., Hafičová, H., Rosinský, R., Publisher: Roma Education Fund Foundation – organizational unit of the foreign foundation Roma Education Fund, 2022, online, available at: <https://amosacademy.sk/metodika-online-tutoringu-dostupna-aj-v-online-verzii/>

SHAPYR – 200 scholarships, 45 young adults; the project also provided retraining courses (76)

Support for Roma female students studying at secondary pedagogical schools – 206 female students in Slovakia, 42 in the Czech Republic; 47 female students successfully completed education at secondary pedagogical schools; exchange stay in the United Kingdom

2) Continuation

Scholarship programs depend on funding from external sources

Creation of an Alumni network – sharing information, networking, opportunities for further cooperation

3) Difficulties found in application

Selecting the most suitable employer considering the student's field of expertise given the local context and opportunities.

Transfer of good practice:

1/ Recommendations for implementation

Earmarking (of parts) of expenditures in the case of financial support (e.g., for clothing, tuition, travel, school supplies, etc.)

Financial support supplemented by supportive mechanisms – tutoring, mentoring, assistance with job search, soft skills development, working with the scholarship recipient's family

Selection of scholarship recipients – setting criteria for selecting specific beneficiaries depending on the purpose of the scholarship program (assessment, applicant's socio-economic background, recommendation letter, etc.)

The importance of networking among various actors from the community, local government, through schools and teaching staff.

2/ Recommendations for application in other contexts

Scaling needs to be done in accordance with the locally specific context.

Additional information – contact, sources, etc.

Roma Youth Pride – <https://www.romaeducationfund.org/the-roma-education-fund-slovakia-olaunches-roma-pride-youth-project/>

<https://www.facebook.com/refslovakia>

The REF is part of an international network operating in four countries (Romania, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovakia). The REF's mission includes supporting Roma students in Slovakia by improving their academic performance, acquiring skills and experiences needed for success in the labor market and civic life, and, importantly, promoting inclusive education. The REF also serves as an information and advocacy center.

The Roma Youth Pride project – an ongoing project (2024–2025) focused on supporting education, developing leadership skills, and social inclusion with the aim of reducing early school leaving through mentoring and peer networking support.

Projekt SHAPYR – Shaping Academic and Employment Skills for Young Roma – support for education and skills acquisition of young Roma, 2018–2023; the project aimed to increase the number of Roma students completing secondary vocational education equipped with the education and soft skills necessary for successful labor market integration.

Support for Roma female students studying at secondary pedagogical schools – a project lasting nearly 10 years (2014–2024), aimed at increasing the number of Roma female teachers in kindergartens in Slovakia to positively impact the enrollment of Roma children in kindergartens and better prepare them for transition to primary school. In 2022–2023, the project continued by providing further education to former female students of secondary pedagogical schools who are working in schools or pursuing higher education in pedagogical fields.

Good practice – EDUCATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In this section, we separately present good practice examples from the United Kingdom, provided by international experts, which can be particularly inspiring for developing cooperation between secondary vocational schools and primary schools or other education providers. We include this practice due to the frequent migration of Roma families abroad for work, where students attend schools with a similar approach to inclusion.

Table P1: Overview of good practice examples from the United Kingdom

Case study / good practice name	Context	Implemented strategy	Results	Notes
Kingsholm Church of England Primary School and Nursery, Kingsholm, Gloucestershire	Kingsholm Primary School has a significant number of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) students, many of whom enroll later – after the start of the school year or at an older student age	Community engagement: The school supports strong relationships among students from different communities and actively combats discrimination. Initiatives include meetings that raise awareness about cultures, such as those of GRT). Attendance policies: A dedicated attendance officer works closely with GRT parents to emphasize the importance of regular attendance and explain the potential consequences of unauthorized absences. Support for mobile families: The school understands the work-related mobility of some families and collaborates with them in planning travel periods, encouraging dual registration to minimize interruptions in education.	These approaches have led to improved attendance and outcomes among GRT students, with the school being rated as outstanding.	The English abbreviation GRT is used for Roma families who live a nomadic lifestyle. In Slovakia, this could refer to families who spend part of the year living in another country. In 2025, legislative changes were announced regulating absences and school attendance. https://www.kingsholmprimary.co.uk/
Babington Community College, Leicester	Babington Community College provides education to a diverse student body, including a growing number of Czech and Slovak Roma students.	Specialized support: The school employs qualified teachers with expertise in English as an Additional Language (EAL) to provide tailored support to Roma students. Community partnerships: Collaboration with local universities and agencies has secured EU funding to develop strategies aimed at improving attendance and outcomes for Roma students. Cultural inclusion: Efforts are underway to integrate Roma culture into the curriculum and school activities, fostering a sense of belonging and respect.	The college has seen increased engagement and academic progress among Roma students, contributing to an inclusive school environment.	The abbreviation EAL stands for English as an Additional Language. The concept of the so-called community school is also presented in Slovakia. The integration of Roma culture into curricula and school activities is the subject of approved Action Plans (AP). https://www.babington.leicester.sch.uk/
The York Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Strategy	The City of York recognized the need for a strategic approach to addressing the challenges faced by the GRT community.	Multi-agency collaboration: The city-wide strategy was developed in partnership with various agencies and the GRT community to address issues such as health, housing, and education. Health and education assessments: Health needs assessments were conducted, and adult literacy courses were created to enable parents to support their children's education. Cultural awareness initiatives: Conferences and public administration internships were organized to	These initiatives have led to improved health outcomes, higher educational attainment, and stronger community relationships.	The Healthy Regions (Zdravé regióny) program provides support to Roma communities in the areas of health and health promotion outside urban areas. https://www.york.gov.uk/TravellerStrategy

<p>Shirley Community Nursery and Primary School, Cambridgeshire</p>	<p>Since approximately half of the students at this school come from minority ethnic backgrounds, including about 90% GRT, Shirley Primary focuses on inclusivity.</p>	<p>raise awareness and strengthen better relationships between the GRT community and the wider public.</p> <p>Parental involvement: The school found that GRT parents lacked confidence in supporting their children's learning. In response, they organized meetings to educate parents about the curriculum and effective support strategies.</p> <p>Student feedback: Interviews were conducted with GRT students to understand their perspectives and inform the school's approach to addressing their specific needs.</p>	<p>The result of these efforts is good progress among Traveller children, and the school is rated as good.</p>	<p>https://www.shirley.cambs.sch.uk/</p>
<p>Luton Roma Trust</p>	<p>Luton Roma Trust supports the integration of Roma families into the United Kingdom, focusing on overcoming barriers in education and employment.</p>	<p>Personalized support: Offers tailored assistance to Roma, helping them navigate the education and social systems of the United Kingdom.</p> <p>Advocacy and representation: Focuses on raising awareness of the challenges faced by the Roma community, advocating for fair treatment and opportunities.</p>	<p>The trust has successfully supported many Roma individuals in accessing education and employment, thereby promoting a more inclusive community.</p>	<p>https://lutonromatrust.org.uk/ Advocacy activities in Slovakia are primarily carried out by non-governmental organizations.</p>

Source: World Bank, 2025.

Annex 7 – Media outputs of the VET MRC component within CuRI (January – December 2024)

The VET MRC component of the World Bank regularly reports on CuRI activities in all three involved regions – PSK, KSK, and BBSK. Through marketing activities and collaboration with the media, it presents the results in secondary vocational education, as well as support for the inclusion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds in secondary vocational education, to the general public. All three regions, based on cooperation with World Bank experts, inform about these activities through their communication channels, as well as regional and national media.

JANUARY 2024

Detva Secondary School Gets a New Look: Students to Benefit from Practical Training

- <https://banskabystrica.zoznam.sk/stredna-skola-v-detve-dostala-novu-podobu-ucni-sa-mozu-tesit-na-prakticku-vyucbu/>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/banskobystricky-kraj-ukoncil-obnovu-di/765678-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2024010700000080>

BBSK Seeks Over €9 Million to Modernize Secondary Education

- <https://banskabystrica.zoznam.sk/bbsk-chce-na-modernizaciu-stredoskolskeho-vzdelavania-ziskat-vyse-9-milionov-eur/>
- <https://bystrica.dnes24.sk/bbsk-chce-zmodernizovat-stredoskolske-vzdelavanie-dotknut-sa-to-ma-11-skol-443489>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/bbsk-chce-na-modernizaciu-stredoskolsk/765367-clanok.html>

Pribeník Secondary School Acquires Unique Equipment for Future Winemakers

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/miestna-skola-v-pribeniku-ziskala-pr/768922-clanok.html>
- <https://www.kosiceonline.sk/vzdelavanie-studentov-vo-vinickach-zlepsi-novy-pristroj-na-sledovanie-parametrov-v-pode-na-tokaji>
- <https://kosice.zoznam.sk/miestna-skola-v-pribeniku-ziskala-jedinecny-pristroj-pre-buducich-vinarov/>
- <https://www.kosiceonline.sk/studentom-vinohradnictva-pomoze-nove-monitorovacie-zariadenie>
- <https://web.vucke.sk/sk/kompetencie/regionalny-rozvoj/aktuality/buducim-odbornikom-vino-pomoze-iot-monitorovacie-zariadenie.html>

Ministry of Education Actively Launches Support for Education, Skills, and Research from EU Funds in Programme Slovakia

- <https://www.netky.sk/clanok/ministerstvo-skolstva-v-priebehu-roka-2023-aktivne-rozbehlo-podporu-vzdelavania-zrucnosti-a-vyskumu-z-fondov-eu-v-programe-slovensko>

FEBRUARY 2024

Catching-Up Regions Initiative Brings Nearly €107 Million to Secondary Education (Press Release for Final VET Conference)

- <https://sita.sk/vskolstve/iniciativa-pre-dobiehajuce-regiony-priniesla-do-stredneho-skolstva-v-troch-krajoch-uz-takmer-107-milionov-eur/>
- <https://www.noviny.sk/slovensko/889251-na-skolach-sa-este-nedavno-vyucoval-odbor-prakticka-zena-modernizacia-slubuje-zmenu>
- <https://www.rtvs.sk/televizia/archiv/20110/449078#3002>(from 55 min)

- <https://www.rtv.slovensko/televizia/archiv/14026/448521#2587> (from 43 min)
- <https://www.noviny.sk/slovensko/889251-na-skolach-sa-este-nedavno-vyucoval-odbor-prakticka-zena-modernizacia-slubu-je-zmenu>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/iniciativa-pre-dobiehajúce-regiony-priniesla-do-stredneho-skolstva-uz-takmer-107-milionov-eur/>
- <https://psk.sk/iniciativa-curi-priniesla-do-stredneho-skolstva-uz-takmer-107-milionov-eur/>
- <https://web.vucke.sk/sk/kompetencie/regionalny-rozvoj/aktuality/iniciativa-dobiehajúce-regiony-priniesla-do-stredneho-skolstva-takmer-107-milionov-eur.html>
- <https://bratislavskespravy.sk/photos-from-banskobystricky-samospravny-krajs-post-147/>
- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/10945/>

CuRI Invests €10.6 Million in Training Polygon at Poprad-Matejovce Secondary School of Electrical Engineering

- <https://hnonline.sk/finweb/ekonomika/96133659-sef-odbornej-skoly-zamestnavatelia-potrebuju-vsetkych-nasich-absolventov>

Students Are Choosing Secondary Schools: What Criteria Should They Focus On?

- <https://sita.sk/vskolstve/ziaci-si-vyberaju-stredne-skoly-na-ake-kriteria-by-sa-mali-zamerat/>

MARCH 2024

Murgaš Industrial Secondary School Set for €6.5 Million Modernization

- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/banska-bystrica-strednu-priemyselnu-skolu-murgasa-caka-modernizacia-za-65-mil-eur/>

Ministry of Education Supports Vocational Training and Labor Market Linkages

- <https://dunajskostredsky.sk/ministerstvo-skolstva-podporuje-odborne-vzdelavanie-prepojenie-s-trhom-prace>
- <https://classicnews.jp/znizovanie-ekonomickych-rozdielov-medzi-regionmi-slovenska-je-nevyhnutne-pre-ekonomicky-rast-2/>

Ministry of Education: Supporting Modernization and Improvement of Education Through EU Funds

- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2024031800000353>
- <https://www.minedu.sk/ministerstvo-skolstva-podporuje-odborne-vzdelavanie-a-prepojenie-s-trhom-prace-projekty-su-zamerane-na-banskobystricky-a-presovsky-kraj/>
- <https://spravy.goodboog.com/ministerstvo-skolstva-prostrednictvom-fondov-eu-podporujeme-modernizacie-a-zlepsenie-skolstva>
- <https://slovanskenoviny.sk/ministerstvo-skolstva-prostrednictvom-fondov-eu-podporujeme-modernizacie-a-zlepsenie-skolstva/>
- <https://ereport.sk/ministerstvo-skolstva-prostrednictvom-fondov-eu/>

PSK to Enhance and Improve Ten More Secondary Schools with €6.5 Million

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/psk-zatraktivni-a-skvalitni-dalsich/782970-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2024032100000300>
- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/psk-zatraktivni-a-skvalitni-dalsich-desat-strednych-skol>
- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/11240/>
- <https://eastmag.sk/2024/03/20/presovska-samosprava-zatraktivni-a-skvalitni-desat-strednych-skol/>

- <https://sp21.sk/a/18035/vdaka-psk-prejde-v-presovskom-kraji-modernizaciou-dalsich-10-skol-po-uspesnej-prvej-etape-zacina-druha-etapa-narodneho-projektu>
- <https://www.partnerskadohoda.gov.sk/presov-kraj-za-65-miliona-eur-skvalitni-fungovanie-desiatich-strednych-skol/>

APRIL 2024

PSK Modernizes L. Podjavorinská Joint School in Prešov with €10 Million

- [https://www.ta3.com/relacia/936711/hlavne-spravy-z-28-aprila-\(od-18-min.\)](https://www.ta3.com/relacia/936711/hlavne-spravy-z-28-aprila-(od-18-min.))
- [https://www.rtv.s.sk/televizia/archiv/3328#467-\(od-7-min-47-s\)](https://www.rtv.s.sk/televizia/archiv/3328#467-(od-7-min-47-s))
- <https://bratislavskespravy.sk/photos-from-presovsky-samospravny-krais-post-682/>
- <https://presov.standard.sk/644148/presovska-skola-ma-najmodernejsie-strojarske-dielne-za-viac-ako-desat-milionov-eur>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/import/psk-zmodernizoval-spojenu-skolu-l-po/791573-clanok.html>
- <https://eastmag.sk/2024/04/30/presov-ma-spickove-centrum-vzdelavania-mechanikov-a-strojarov-za-12-milionov/>
- <https://bleskovky.zoznam.sk/cl/1005007/2747757/Psk-zmodernizoval-spojenu-skolu-l-podjavorinskej-v-presove>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2024042900000338>
- <https://presov.korzar.sme.sk/c/23323517/na-obnovu-skoly-islo-viac-ako-10-milionov-eur-prestavali-haly-telocvicnu-aj-sklad.html>
- <https://psk.sk/presov-ma-spickove-centrum-odborneho-vzdelavania-mechanikov-a-strojarov/>
- <https://www.kosiceonline.sk/spojena-skolu-l-podjavorinskej-v-presove-bola-zmodernizovana-pribudla-aj-nova-technika>
- <https://presov.dnes24.sk/vrazili-tam-10-milionov-eur-skola-na-sekcove-ma-po-obnove-moderne-prostredie-foto-448121>
- <https://slovenskodnes.sk/spravy/buduci-strojari-a-mechanici-mozu-studovat-vo-vynovenych-priestoroch-za-10-milionov-foto/>
- <https://presov.korzar.sme.sk/c/23323517/na-obnovu-skoly-islo-viac-ako-10-milionov-eur-prestavali-haly-telocvicnu-aj-sklad.html>

Banská Štiavnica School Equipped with State-of-the-Art Technology, Millions Flow In from EU Funds

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/v-b-stiavnici-dostali-ziaci-lesnicky/788844-clanok.html>
- <https://myzvolen.sme.sk/c/23318139/skolu-v-banskej-stiavnici-vybavili-spickovou-technikou-z-eurofondov-do-nej-pritekli-miliony-eur.html>
- <https://www.bystricak.sk/clanky/1399/foto-studenti-lesnickej-skoly-v-banskej-stiavnici-dostali-novu-spickovu-techniku>
- <https://www.priekopnik.sk/spravodajstvo/lesaci-v-banskej-stiavnici-sa-ucia-na-super-modernych-strojoch-vyuzivaju-aj-lanovku/>
- <https://polnoinfo.sk/ziaci-lesnickych-odborov-na-sos-v-banskej-stiavnici-dostali-novu-techniku/>
- <https://www.bbsk.sk/aktuality/lesaci-v-banskej-stiavnici-sa-ucia-na-super-modernych-strojoch-vyuzivaju-aj-lanovku>

BBSK Modernizes Eight Schools with Over €33 Million Thanks to EU Funds

- <https://obce.tasr.sk/clanok/9456/eu20:-bbsk-vdaka-eurofondom-zmodernizoval-osem-skol-za-viac-ako-33-milionov-eur>

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/banskobystricky-kraj-vdaka-eurofondom/788714-clanok.html>
- <https://bystrica.dnes24.sk/banskobystricky-kraj-zmodernizoval-8-skol-pomohli-desiatky-milionov-z-eurofondov-447636>

Facilities of Joint School in Vlkanová Renovated for Over €4 Million:

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/bbsk-skolske-dielne-vo-vlkanovej-zmen/786949-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2024040900000178>
- <https://myzvolen.sme.sk/c/23314084/skolske-dielne-zmenili-na-spickove-centrum-vrazili-do-nich-4-miliony-eur.html>
- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/61359/video-skolske-dielne-vo-vlkanovej-zmenili-na-moderne-centrum-pre-elektromobilitu>
- <https://www.priekopnik.sk/spravodajstvo/skolske-dielne-vo-vlkanovej-sa-zmenili-na-moderne-centrum-pre-elektromobilitu-2/>
- <https://sp21.sk/a/18464/zo-zastaralych-dielni-spickove-centrum-na-elektromobilitu-to-ponuka-spojena-skola-vo-vlkanovej>
- <https://www.bystricoviny.sk/spravy/skolske-dielne-vo-vlkanovej-sa-zmenili-na-moderne-centrum-pre-elektromobilitu/>
- <https://www.netky.sk/clanok/skolske-dielne-vo-vlkanovej-sa-zmenili-na-moderne-centrum-pre-elektromobilitu>
- <https://www.bystricak.sk/clanky/1317/video-rekonstrukcia-spojenej-skoly-vo-vlkanovej-stala-viac-ako-styri-miliony-eur-ako-to-v-nej-vyzera>
- <https://bystrica.dnes24.sk/takto-vyzera-4-milionova-investicia-skolske-dielne-sa-zmenili-na-moderne-centrum-foto-447309>

Prešov Engineering Secondary School Renovated and Modernized for €3.9 Million

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/psk-sps-strojnicka-v-presove-presla/791835-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2024043000000321>
- <https://presov.zoznam.sk/sps-strojnicka-v-presove-presla-obnovou-a-modernizaciou-za-39-miliona-eur/>

MAY 2024

Prešov Region Plans Reconstruction of Vocational Education Schools

- <https://www.kosiceonline.sk/presovska-zupa-chce-rekonstruovat-skoly-odborneho-vzdelavania>

Social Entrepreneurs on Employing People from Socially Disadvantaged Backgrounds

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/socialni-podnikatelia-sa-zaoberali-tem/797169-clanok.html>
- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/socialni-podnikatelia-sa-zaoberali-tem/797169-clanok.html>

First Regional Secondary School Campus Town to Be Built in Stará Ľubovňa

- <https://spis.korzar.sme.sk/c/23332764/v-starej-lubovni-vznikne-prve-stredoskolske-mestecko-v-kraji.html>

Major Investment Project at Ľ. Podjavorinská Joint School in Prešov

- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/presov-ma-spickove-centrum-odborneho-vzdelavania-mechanikov-a-strojarov>

Prešov Engineering Secondary School Undergoes Renovation for €3.9 Million

- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/11517/>
- <https://www.kampo.sk/clanok/sps-strojnicka-v-presove-presla-obnovou-za-3-9-mil-eur>
- <https://presov.dnes24.sk/strojnicka-skola-v-presove-ma-novu-podobu-investovalo-sa-do-nej-3-9-miliona-eur-foto-448225>
- <https://eastmag.sk/2024/05/02/sps-strojnicka-v-presove-presla-obnovou-za-39-mil-eur/>

Memorandum Between PSK and Central Labor Office Aims to Improve Vocational Education Quality:

- <https://presov.korzar.sme.sk/c/23324386/chcu-zlepsit-kvalitu-stredneho-odborneho-skolstva-v-kraji.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2024050100000175>
- <https://sita.sk/vskolstve/presovsky-kraj-uzavrel-spolupracu-s-ustredim-prace-v-oblasti-skolstva-foto/>
- <https://www.obecne-noviny.sk/clanky/podpis-memoranda-psk-s-ustredim-prace-ma-napomoc-skvalitnit-odborne-skolstvo>
-

JUNE 2024

BBSK Completes Modernization of Vocational Education at Its Secondary School in Detva

- <https://standard.sk/536224/bbsk-ukoncil-obnovu-pracovnych-dielni-pre-detvianskych-ucnov>

BBSK Seeks Over €9 Million to Modernize Secondary Education

- <https://standard.sk/536983/bbsk-chce-na-modernizaciu-stredoskolskeho-vzdelavania-ziskat-vyse-9-milionov-eur>

Representatives of the Catching-up Regions Initiative Discuss New Challenges in Košice

- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/11853/>

Lučenec Secondary School Modernized for Over €6 Million

- <https://www.teraz.sk/regiony/stredna-skola-v-lucenci-presla-moder/799837-clanok.html>
- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2024060500000201>
- <https://www.rimava.sk/spravy-z-regionu/foto-rekonstrukcia-za-miliony-hotelova-skola-v-lucenci-vari-v-najmodernejsej-kuchyni-v-regione/>
- <https://mynovohrad.sme.sk/c/23340791/ohromujuca-premena-za-vyse-6-milionov-priniesla-do-velkej-skoly-nieco-co-ine-v-regione-nemaju.html>
- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/61600/stredna-odborna-skolav-lucenci-presla-komplexnou-modernizaciou-za-vyse-6-milionov-eur>
- <https://www.spektral.sk/?q=clanok/stredna-hotelova-skola-ma-po-rekonstrukcii-najmodernejšiu-kuchynu-v-regione/90121>
- <https://www.bbsk.sk/aktuality/lucenecka-hotelka-presla-rekonstrukciou-za-miliony-ma-najmodernejšiu-kuchynu-v-regione>

Technical SVS in Prešov to Focus Its Teaching on Education in Green Skills

- <https://presov.korzar.sme.sk/c/23339373/ziakov-budu-vzdelavat-v-oblasti-zelenych-zrucnosti.html>

SEPTEMBER 2024

SVS in Rimavská Sobota Undergoes Modernization Worth Nearly Six Million Euros

- <https://www.ta3.com/clanok/959023/studenti-budu-moct-pocas-vyucovania-opat-piect-chieb-skola-po-15-rokoch-obnovila-pekarsku-dielnu>
- <https://sita.sk/vskolstve/lunter-predstavil-milionovu-investiciu-ktora-zmenila-prakticke-vyucovanie-v-strednej-odbornej-skole-v-rimavskej-sobote-fotovideo/>
- <https://mynovohrad.sme.sk/c/23382723/po-patnastich-rokoch-obnovili-pekarsku-dielnu-do-skoly-v-rimavskej-sobote-investoval-kraj-miliony-eur.html>
- <https://www.skolske.sk/clanok/62145/sos-v-rimavskej-sobote-presla-modernizaciou-za-takmer-sest-milionov-eur>
- <https://sobotnik.sk/2024/09/rimavska-sobota-stredna-odborna-skola-technicka-a-agropotravinarska-rekonstrukcia/>
- <https://www.rimava.sk/spravy-z-regionu/investicia-do-skoly-v-rimavskej-sobote-za-viac-ako-6-milionov-eur/>
- <https://www.netky.sk/clanok/rimavska-sobota-stredna-odborna-skola-presla-obnovou-nove-dielne-aj-vybavenie>
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- <https://www.tasr.sk/tasr-clanok/TASR:2024102100000242>
- <https://www.ahoj.tv/clanky/clanok/12530/>
- <https://psk.sk/psk-vybudoval-prvy-stredoskolsky-kampus-v-kraji/>
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- <https://myzvolen.sme.sk/c/23414178/detviansku-skolu-ovladli-roboti-inspiruje-cely-region-je-vzorom-moderneho-vzdelavania.html>
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Annex 8 – Summary report from the CuRI conference titled "Modernization of Secondary Education and Its Importance for the Economy of Slovakia and Its Regions" (February 6, 2024, Bratislava)

Summary report from the final CuRI conference titled

"Modernization of Secondary Education and Its Importance for the Economy of Slovakia and Its Regions"

The CuRI conference on vocational education and training (VET) took place on February 6, 2024, in Bratislava, under the title "Modernization of Secondary Education and Its Importance for the Economy of Slovakia and Its Regions: The Contribution of CuRI." The event was attended by 150 participants, including representatives from state and local government, the European Commission, the World Bank, secondary vocational schools, professional organizations, and employers. The program of the final conference is attached.

The conference aimed, through two sessions focused on presenting achieved results and two panel discussions centered on cooperation between employers and secondary vocational schools and inclusion in VET, to showcase not only the success stories of pilot SVS supported by CuRI but also various views and recommendations regarding the future of VET in Slovakia.

An accompanying event to the final conference was an exhibition of new technologies and innovations from selected pilot SVS from all CuRI regions (BBSK, KSK, PSK) in Slovakia.

World Bank Recommendations from the CuRI Conference on VET

The outcome of the conference is a set of recommendations for local, regional, and national levels in the following areas:

- a/ reform of vocational education and training
- b/ cooperation and multi-level governance
- c/ inclusion
- d/ lifelong learning to meet the needs of local and regional labor market actors

a/ Reform of vocational education and training:

- Enable SVS founders, SVS consortia with employers, and SVS themselves to combine EU funds and state budget resources, including involvement of sector-relevant ministries, to implement strategic investments in the development and quality of VET.
- Develop a financing model for approved integrated investment packages of priority CuRI SET schools in the BBSK, KSK, and PSK.
- Provide SVS founders, SVS consortia with employers, and SVS with sufficient methodological support to engage in cross-border and international cooperation (to increase financial resources for CuRI regions in the BBSK, KSK and PSK ITS, thereby supporting secondary

education with adequate financial allocation to implement activities planned in already prepared project documentation).

- Reassess the system for collecting, analyzing, and providing data for timely and effective decision-making by founders and SVS and their response to labor market trends and changes.
- Systematically conduct surveys of employer and SVS needs, track graduates using World Bank methodology or other international methodologies.
- In cooperation with local/regional and sectoral platforms (applying sectoral and territorial dimensions), create conditions for establishing Centers of Excellence for vocational education and training.
- Provide targeted support for SVS in digital transformation and the use of innovative approaches.

b/ Cooperation and multi-level governance:

- Support the activities of local and regional platforms established as a result of supported national projects (NP) within CuRI.
- Implement a quality assessment system for VET involving socio-economic partners, founders, and other relevant stakeholders.
- Utilize the advantages of social economy within practical training at SVS.
- Leverage the results of supported NPs and present them at the national level.
- Support all forms of practical training with the possibility of recognizing learning outcomes also by providers of practical education (with future linkage to individual education accounts).
- Regularly organize professional meetings focused on experience transfer, expert discussions, and development of new approaches in VET with the participation of relevant stakeholders (possibly including international participation).

c/ Inclusion:

- Support new forms of integrating disadvantaged population groups into the educational process through pilot projects and activities at local and regional levels, e.g., pilot testing of the concept of training centers, educational activities carried out in supported community centers, etc.
- Prepare legislation and create conditions for accreditation and certification.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to professionally discuss and propose changes to the content and forms of education in F programs, emphasizing the option to choose an "educational pathway".
- Support a comprehensive approach to the education of disadvantaged groups (personalized service packages).
- Initiate legislative changes regarding the completion of compulsory schooling with the obligation to educate until practical skills needed for the labor market are acquired.
- Establish a permanent intersectoral expert group to increase the participation of disadvantaged groups in lifelong learning.

d/ Lifelong learning to meet the needs of local and regional labor market actors:

- Enable the involvement of local and regional actors in developing lifelong learning program offerings tailored to the needs of specific labor markets.
- Develop models of "educational pathways" and motivate teaching and professional staff at SVS, emphasizing increasing job attractiveness for young teaching and professional employees.

Overview of Outputs from the Conference



Promotional video from the conference:

- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1tQuDbwMDW9NpeQhHjRK6luTPuK2pQdR8/view?fbclid=IwAR2LxXW6Cfcm2h6gXS35i2XtXrCEyfLh-HpX_8pXLnBJZ_Aj8IDQ5A-nZ1E

Media outputs:

- TV JOJ coverage: <https://www.noviny.sk/slovensko/889251-na-skolach-sa-este-nedavno-vyucoval-odbor-prakticka-zena-modernizacia-slubu-je-zmena>
- RTVS: <https://www.rtv.sk/televizia/archiv/20110/449078#3002> (od 55 min)
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Recording from the whole conference:

- Link to the recording:
<https://worldbankgroup.webex.com/worldbankgroup/ldr.php?RCID=415f751a52e03d9151b32c54ae77863c>

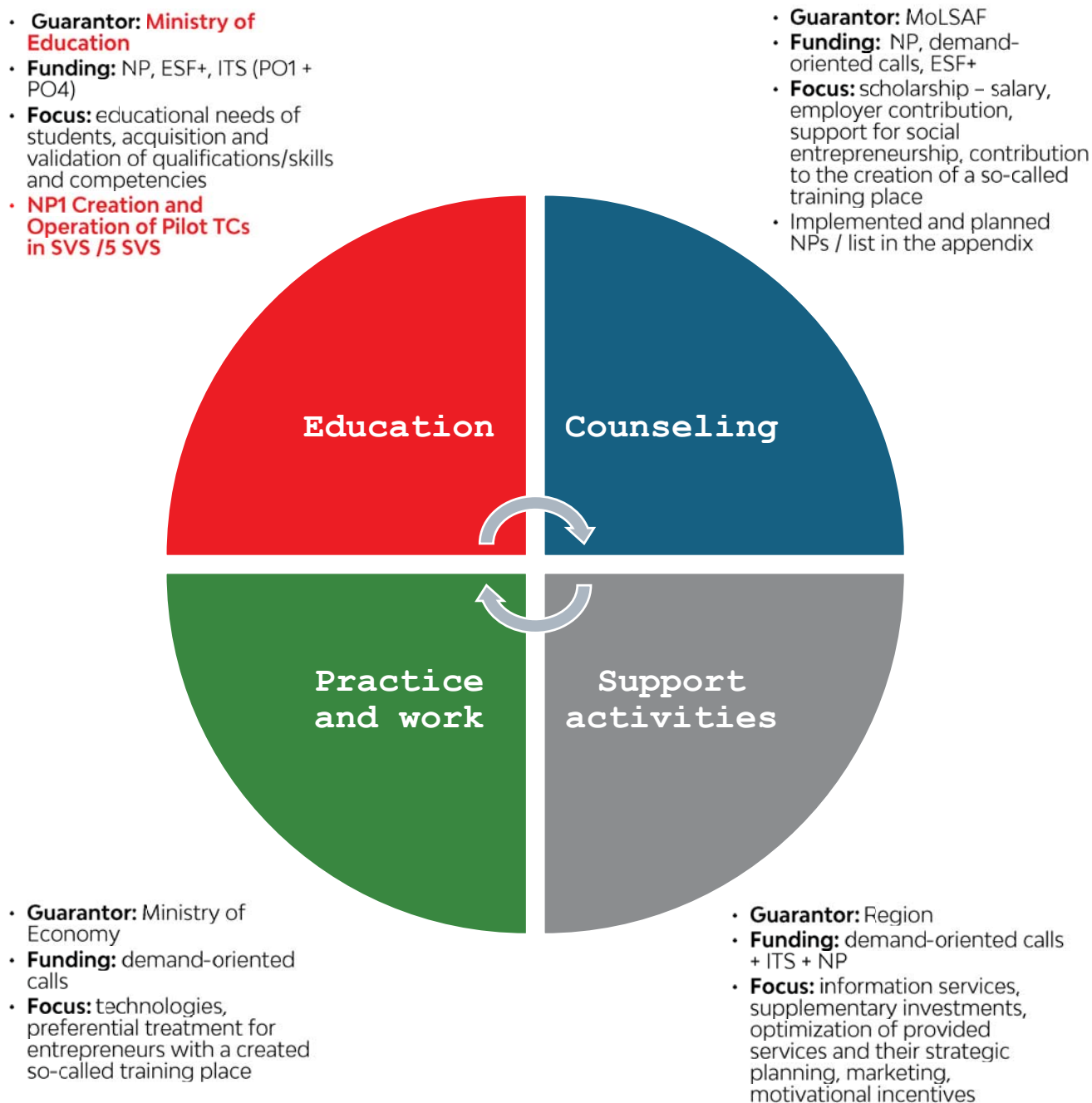
Annex 9 - Systematic approach to the education of students and young people from marginalized communities (Training Center concept)

Systematic approach to the education of students and young people from marginalized communities

(Document prepared in accordance with the recommendations of focus groups, survey findings, World Bank reports, and the final CuRI 5ET conference.)

Addressing the issue requires a **comprehensive approach and coordination of actors** at all levels. The **proposal of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic's National Project only covers part of the services of the Training Center (TC)** – education in the context of lifelong learning, which falls under the ministry's competence. We propose the TC as an **investment package/integrated investment combining multiple providers of EU resources and own resources** (a combination of sources including allocation from the regions' Integrated Territorial Investment) as illustrated in the following Figure 1, also through the implementation of other approved and upcoming NPs.

Figure 1: Training Center as an integrated investment package



Source: World Bank, 2024.

The integrated investment package "Training Center as New Educational Infrastructure" should consist of multiple separate projects based on the financing model for each training center individually (specific needs of the participating pilot SVS according to location, sector, and target group needs), prepared in close cooperation with relevant local actors.

The World Bank will utilize all experiences from the implementation of the CuRI 5ET I–IV pilot projects. The proposed NP1 – Creation and Operation of Pilot Training Centers in Secondary Vocational Schools – includes pilot testing and financing only a portion of the educational

activities within the competence of the Ministry of Education and in accordance with current and proposed legislation.

Proposed procedure (concurrently with the preparation of NP1 and AP CuRI 5) and principles:

- **Approval of NP1 – Creation and Operation of Pilot Training Centers in Secondary Vocational Schools** – represents funding for pilot testing over a 3-year period for selected experts and SVS. Project approval and the possibility of financing are expected from July 2024, with pilot operation verification of training centers anticipated from September 2025.
- **Selection of schools** – due to this project being a pilot project, we propose considering **diversity in the selection** of pilot SVS – sector/region/community type and location. We recommend the following SVS: KSK – Trebišov and Krompachy locations, PSK – Čaklov, and BBSK – Zvolen + one more SVS, and one SVS from BSK (Bratislava Region) as a more developed region (SVS seat). Because NP implementation is carried out by regions involved in CuRI (PSK and BBSK), only those SVS not included in other NPs will be selected (to prevent duplicate financing; no other demarcation can be made). The methodological approach developed by the World Bank for AP CuRI 5 will be used.
- **Partnership** – for each pilot TC as part of the pilot SVS, assign **partners** at the start of the project: at least one current/future employer, at least one municipality as service recipient, and one guarantor at the national level (sector ministry).
- **Coordination** – develop a joint schedule binding for all partners at regional and local levels for the pilot integrated investment in two phases: preparation and implementation, maximizing the use of EU funds and technical assistance from WB and EC. Concurrently with the preparation and first phase of NP1 implementation, AP CuRI 5 VET activities will also be carried out, so activities related to pilot SVS should be coordinated together (according to their degree of involvement in regional NP and NP "Training Centers")
- **Joint expert/working group** at the national level coordinated by the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Roma Communities.

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16. Pursuant to Act No. 18/2018 Coll. on the Protection of Personal Data, the processing of special categories of personal data is prohibited. Special categories of personal data include data revealing ethnic origin.
17. The possibility of granting a scholarship to a secondary school student is regulated by Sections 149 and 149a of the School Act and the relevant decrees of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic (Decree No. 224/2022 Coll., Decree No. 221/2024 Coll.). The motivational scholarship is governed by Act No. 61/2015 Coll. on Vocational Education and Training. Further information is published on the CVTI website, available online at: https://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve.html?page_id=8868
18. At an average grade of up to 2.0 inclusive, a scholarship amounting to 50% of the subsistence minimum (EUR 62.56) is granted. For an average between 2.0 and 2.5, the scholarship is 35% of the subsistence minimum (EUR 43.79), and for an average worse than 2.5, the amount corresponds to 25% of the subsistence minimum. The subsistence minimum amounts are regulated by Act No. 601/2003 Coll. on the Subsistence Minimum.
19. The list of paid scholarships is published on the CVTI website and is provided at the level of school type across the Slovak Republic. In the 2023/2024 school year, 866 scholarships (monthly totals) were paid at SVS in the total amount of EUR 173,200. At joint schools, 279 scholarships were paid out, totaling EUR 55,800. In the current school year (2024/2025 – September to December), 214 scholarships were paid at SVS totaling EUR 42,800, and 117 scholarships at joint schools totaling EUR 23,400. More information is available online at: https://www.cvtisr.sk/cvti-sr-vedecka-kniznica/informacie-o-skolstve/tehotenske-stipendium/aktualne-informacie.html?page_id=39091
20. The KSK has a dedicated website for prospective secondary school students at <https://www.strednapreteba.sk/>, where a brochure – serving as a guide to secondary schools established by the KSK – is available, along with information about individual educational institutions. In the PSK, the website <https://www.kampo.sk/> is intended for applicants, offering not only a guide to secondary schools but also a personality type test (providing three basic outputs: career type, personality characteristics, and examples of professions). The BBSK publishes basic information about secondary schools, the admission process, dual education, regional career centers, and unified contact points called “Space” on its website <https://idemnastrednu.sk/skoly>.
21. Only students enrolled in F programs study at the satellite campus, making up 28% of all respondents in F programs. At the SVS of Services and Industry in Trebišov, this share is 18%. A significant proportion of students in F programs at this school and its satellite campus are adults (18 years and older).
22. Additional benefits of the DES include remuneration for productive work, amounting to at least 50% of the hourly minimum wage for each hour of productive work performed. When determining the amount of remuneration, the quality of the student’s work and behavior are also taken into account, which can serve as motivational factors for participating in DES. The employer is also obligated to contribute to students’ meals and may voluntarily contribute to their accommodation in a school dormitory or cover their travel expenses to and from the SVS or the site of practical training. Other motivational tools available to employers include the option to award a company scholarship, the possibility of offering selected students work through a student work agreement or a work performance agreement during school holidays, opportunities to work with modern technologies directly at the employer’s premises, gaining experience from industry professionals, and the prospect of stable employment in the form of a pre-contract agreement with the student. For more details, see the Manual of the Dual Education System.
23. The private pilot SVS in Trebišov and its satellite campus in Veľaty were not included in the comparison due to the higher proportion of students aged 18 and over and the large share of students who did not report speaking the Romani language. As a result, this proxy indicator cannot be used to infer potential affiliation with the Romani ethnicity in this case.
24. These students did not choose any alternative option to employment. Continuing their studies is not an alternative for them, they do not belong to the category of students who have not yet considered their future, and they also did not select the “other” category.

25. The employment status of parents living in the same household has no significant impact on the absence of future plans. Across all three household categories (employed parents/parent, unemployed parents/parent, student living with both parents with only one employed), students responded at similar rates (30%, 34%, and 33%, respectively).
26. In correlation with employer-based training: 25% have experience with training, 7% have declined it, 30% have not yet had the opportunity but are interested, and 37% are not interested in employer-based training.
27. See Annex 3, Table A.14: Support aimed at successful completion of studies by language – public pilot SVS and private pilot SVS
28. The ratios of non-Romani-speaking to Romani-speaking students expressing a need for support are as follows: – 52% vs. 19% among students living with employed parents or a single employed parent; – 43% vs. 14% among students living in a two-parent household where only one parent is employed; – 33% vs. 8% among students living in a household with unemployed parents or a single unemployed parent in single-parent households.
29. More information is available in the Catalog of Support Measures published on the website of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic: <https://podporneopatrenia.minedu.sk/zabezpecenie-doucovania-alebo-cieleneho-ucenia-na-dosiahnutie-najvyssieho-individualneho-kognitivneho-potencialu-dieta-ta-alebo-ziaka/>
30. The list of all categories of students eligible for tutoring as a support measure can be found in the Catalog of Support Measures.
31. STVR, October 18, 2024. Available at: <https://spravy.stvr.sk/2024/10/rezort-meni-podporne-opatrenia-na-skolach-na-doucovanie-budu-mat-nar-ok-az-deti-ktore-prepadnu/>; “Schools are also pointing out changes in the funding of tutoring – in this case, a negative change. Until now, teachers could refer students for tutoring if their academic performance had declined. Under the new rules, only students who received at least one failing grade (a grade of five) on their mid-year or end-of-year report card are eligible for tutoring. ‘We view this very negatively – it’s no longer a preventive measure,’ says Viktória Plánková, a social pedagogue at Riazanská Primary school.” In GDOVINO-VÁ, D., BEDNÁRIK, M., REHÚŠ, M., ADHD, panické ataky aj sebaoškodzovanie. Boli sme v dvoch triedach a videli sme, že dieťa najprv potrebuje pomoc, aby sa mohlo učiť [ADHD, panic attacks, and self-harm. We visited two classrooms and saw that a child first needs help in order to be able to learn], Denník N, article from December 4, 2024. Available at: <https://dennikn.sk/4338069/adhd-panicke-ataky-aj-sebapokodzovanie-boli-sme-v-dvoch-triedach-a-videli-sme-ze-dieta-najprv-potrebuje-pomoc-aby-sa-mohlo-ucit/>
32. In addition to tutoring provided directly at school, to which a student is entitled after meeting certain conditions, tutoring can also take place privately, through activities at community centers, leisure centers, or be provided by the non-profit sector and similar organizations.
33. Annex 3, Chart A.17 Support aimed at successful completion of studies by language and program – state pilot SVS
34. Act No. 448/2008 Coll. on Social Services, available at: <https://www.slov-lex.sk/ezbierky/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2008/448/>; news report on the mission of community centers: <https://www.rtv.s.sk/televizia/archiv/21102/466704#0>
35. The 2021 Strategy for an Inclusive Approach in Education (Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic) defines inclusive education as “the education and upbringing of all learners, implemented on the basis of equal opportunities and without discrimination based on gender, origin, ethnic, cultural, religious, or linguistic affiliation, socioeconomic status of their families, lifestyle, health and emotional condition, level of giftedness, or affiliation with the majority or any minority social group.” Achieving inclusion in schools requires change at multiple levels so that the school “meets the needs, interests, and abilities of all children, pupils, and students, while also supporting the development of other stakeholders involved.”
36. The comparison included responses from students attending public pilot SVS.

