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TO BECOME A TEACHER

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To become a teacher

The Role of Reformed Church teacher training in the
development of the sociological processes of
vocational careers

Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary
Faculty of Pedagogy

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DEAN'S WELCOME

To be(come) a teacher.

The title of this volume is more than a play on words. Those participating in teacher training understand the number, motivation, preparedness, and expectations of applicants are fundamentally influenced by the image of teachers in society. Teacher training is a sensitive mirror of the teaching career. Who do we send and encourage into this career as parents and educators? What do the peer group, the circle of friends and the family think about choosing a career as a teacher? How does this affect the applicant's self-image, personal sense of vocation and career intentions? How can we help them choose their profession and stay on track as trainers?

The shortage of teachers and the situation of teacher training are public affairs, and in ecclesiastical universities, they are ecclesiastical public affairs. Not only because of its social importance but also because it is part of our everyday public discourse. Almost everyone has an opinion about it, but these opinions are often emotionally, or interest-driven. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a situation based on facts, scientifically based measurements, and data. The purpose of this volume is to provide a starting point for further reflection.

Reformed Church kindergarten educator and primary school teacher training is a special subfield of teacher training. The surplus of denominational formation can be seen, among other things, in the concept of vocation and the sense of vocation as part of our Reformation heritage. Is Reformed teacher training able to meet this expectation? Are there specific tendencies, added values and shifts of emphasis that characterise this subsystem?

Finally, the actual state of teacher training is only the starting point. The responsibility of trainers is formulated not only in the distant future but also in the 'here and now'. How can we shape our training to support students' career socialisation as much as possible? How can we respond to the challenges of the present in a way that is rooted in the traditions of the past but also meets the expectations of the future? How can we grasp the Reformed surplus that the specific mission of our institution requires?

This volume is the imprint of a subproject of a wide-ranging, multi-faceted research project. It is an attempt to examine teacher image and teacher training, vocation and career socialisation, theory and practice in a complex and complete way. There are more questions than answers in our volume. However, we believe that we do not have to find the answers alone; we are not alone in our mission. Standing on the committed legacy of the past, we look to the future with confidence:

'I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go. I will counsel you with my eye on you.' (Psalm 32:8)

Prof. Dr. Ferenc Pap
Dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy
Károli Gáspár University of the
Reformed Church in Hungary

INTRODUCTION

This volume was prepared within the framework of the **research project, *Results of Reformed Teacher Training on the Sociological Processes of Vocation and Careers***, conducted by the Faculty of Pedagogy of the *Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (KRE PK)*.

The members of our research group are mostly lecturers of the Institute of Practical and Further Education of Faculty. In its core activities, the Institute organizes and evaluates higher education professional training. In our research, we wanted to examine the main professional issues, using theoretical and empirical methods, that are most decisive for the quality of professional training and the professional environment that is the labour market for our trainees. In the latter question, we would like to reinforce the efforts of the Reformed Church in Hungary, the maintainer of the University, to make higher education teacher training suitable for providing teachers committed to the Reformed Church public education system who feel at home in the Christian intellectual and spiritual value system. Another goal of the project is to explore those moments along the way of teachers' career socialisation that can strengthen their commitment to their chosen career during studies, thus reducing rates of student 'dropout'.

Our research subproject aims to provide further knowledge in the field of careers and vocational sociology by analysing the career socialisation practice of the Faculty in connection with the research started earlier by the *Reformed Church Pedagogical Institute*, and by examining the alumni system of the faculty and other existing student services supporting career socialisation. The overall ambition of the research is therefore to use theoretical research, data analysis and qualitative methods, to better understand the factors helping and hindering career and professional socialisation, thereby making higher education programmes and their institutional framework more suitable to maintain, motivate and develop a workforce of appropriate quality and commitment.

Teacher candidates' socialisation, their entry and stay in education, and their succession have not only become part of professional policy

but of wider social discourse as well. There is no doubt that we have reached a turning point in many respects. If we fail to reverse the current trends – which are presented in detail in this volume – in the short term, this will have unforeseeable consequences for both Hungarian teacher training and the public education system as a whole.

In this volume, we examine the issue of career-oriented and vocational motivation from the point of view of kindergarten educators and primary school trainee teachers, and more specifically from the perspective of our University. In the first chapter, we summarise the **theoretical foundations of the vocational and career socialisation** of teachers, in the second chapter we review the issue of the supply of kindergarten educator and primary school teacher training **in the light of higher education admission statistics**. In the third chapter, we review an important aspect of our Faculty's career socialisation activity, the **student's career and personality picture, the exploration and gradual development of vocational motivation and teacher attitudes**. In the fourth **chapter, readers get an insight** into one of the most important, if not the most important areas of teacher training, the world of institutional practices, and in the fifth chapter we analyse how the **employment chances and careers of kindergarten educators and primary school teachers develop in the light of graduate tracking data**. In the sixth chapter, we seek to answer the question of what professional surplus the teacher training of the Faculty **contributes to** the achievement of church training goals.

We understand that we can only capture a snapshot in today's dynamically changing teacher training, but at the same time, we have good hope that our work can help shape the vision not only of the faculty but also of the broader professional and perhaps even education policy vision.

Nagykőrös–Budapest, June 2024

Authors

PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER MOTIVATION IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION

Factors determining career choice and entry into the profession

In recent times, the shortage of teachers, and consequently, the issue of teacher recruitment, has become a subject of wider social discourse. Despite numerous well-known and recognized studies demonstrating that the personality, qualifications, and motivation of teachers are crucial factors in the quality of education,¹ the unfavourable trends have not only failed to diminish in recent times but have intensified in strength.

The recruitment, selection, training, and further education of novice teachers are particularly crucial in those countries that have recognized the strong correlation between the quality of a nation's education and the success of its economy. Therefore, improving the quality of education is treated as a priority.²

In Hungary, the unfavourable perception of the teaching profession is not a new phenomenon. As research since the 1990s has revealed, unfavourable career advancement and income opportunities associated with the profession have grown,³ as shown by the following quotation:

‘The assessment of the teaching profession among students lags behind other professions in terms of both societal and financial recognition.’⁴

¹ Barber, Michael – Mourshed, Mona (2007): *Mi áll a világ legsikeresebb iskolai rendszereinek teljesítményének hátterében?* London, McKinsey & Company, ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023); OECD (2007): *A tanárok számitanak. A hatékony pedagógusok pályára vonzása, fejlesztése és pályán való megtartása*, transl. Ottlik, András ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

² Hermann, Zoltán – Imre, Anna – Kádár-Fülöp, Judit – Nagy, Mária – Sági, Matild – Varga, Júlia (2009): *Pedagógusok az oktatás kulcsszereplői. Összefoglaló jelentés az OECD nemzetközi tanárkutató (TALIS) első eredményeiről*. Budapest, OFI

³ Kocsis, Mihály (2002): Tanárok véleménye a pályáról és a képzésről, *Iskolakultúra*, Volume 12, Issue 5; Veroszta, Zsuzsanna (2015): Pályakép, szelekció a pedagóguspálya választásában, *Educatio*, Volume 24, Issue 1

⁴ Veroszta (2015) p. 49

Financial and Social Recognition of Teachers

The starting salary of teachers is one of the lowest in the EU, far behind the regional competitors. In Hungary, the annual salary of beginning teachers was 13,465 euros in 2020/21, compared to 13,319 euros in Slovakia and 17,977 euros in Romania.⁵ Furthermore, while between 2014/15 and 2020/21, teacher salaries in Slovakia increased by 39.2%, in Hungary, the increase was only 22.1%.⁶

According to the 2019 indicator system for public education:

'The relative income situation of college-educated teachers is better compared to other professions employing college-educated individuals, than that of university-educated teachers. Both groups experienced a significant improvement in their relative income situation between 2001 and 2003, following an average 50% increase in public sector salaries. In 2003, the salary of college-educated teachers was 71% of the salary of other college-educated workers, and the salary of university-educated teachers was 64% of the salary of other university-educated workers. However, the relative income situation of teachers worsened until 2013. In 2013, the salary of college-educated teachers was 56% of the salary of other college-educated workers, and the salary of university-educated teachers was 47% of the salary of other university-educated workers. In 2014, there was another significant increase in teacher salaries; The salary of college-educated teachers rose to 81% of the salary of other college-educated professionals, and the salary of university-educated teachers rose to 63% of the salary of other university-educated professionals' (Figure 1).⁷

⁵ Source: Eurydice (2022): *Teachers' and school heads' salaries and allowances in Europe 2020/2021*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of European Union ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Varga, Júlia (ed.) (2019): *A közoktatás indikátorrendszere 2019*, Budapest, KRTK KTI, p. 111

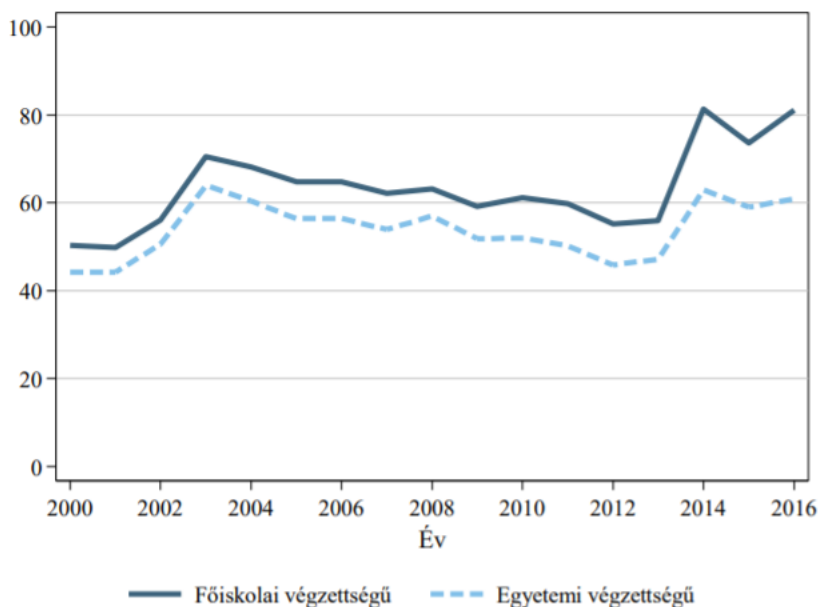


Figure 1 Salary of teachers as a percentage of the average salary of graduates with the same qualifications in other jobs (Főiskolai végzettségű: college-educated; Egyetemi végzettségű: university-educated)⁸

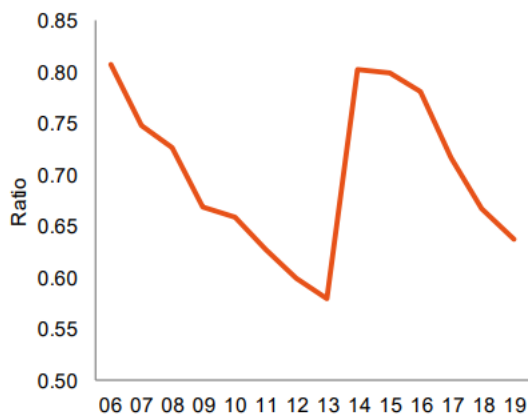
The level of teachers' salaries compared to the national average wage had already approached the pre-correction level by 2019, which had been gradually introduced since 2013 (Figure 2).

By 2020, the wage disadvantage of teachers became the greatest among the OECD member EU countries, with teachers' salaries amounting to only 58-66% of the salaries of other tertiary-educated individuals. As shown in Figure 3, this ratio significantly lags behind the average of the Visegrád countries as well.

The lag in teacher salaries is not merely an educational policy issue. In the 20th century, European Union education policies and various OECD reports turned their attention towards the development of novice teachers, recognizing the role of education's success and sustainability in competitiveness. Alongside entry into the profession, the phenomenon of teachers leaving the profession also came to the forefront of research and educational policy attention. The European Union has set two main educational policy goals concerning teachers:

⁸ Source: Varga (2019) p. 112

firstly, to attract the most talented individuals to the teaching profession, and secondly, to retain successfully working teachers in the profession for as long as possible.⁹



(1) average of teachers with no and 10 years experience, with Bsc and Msc degrees

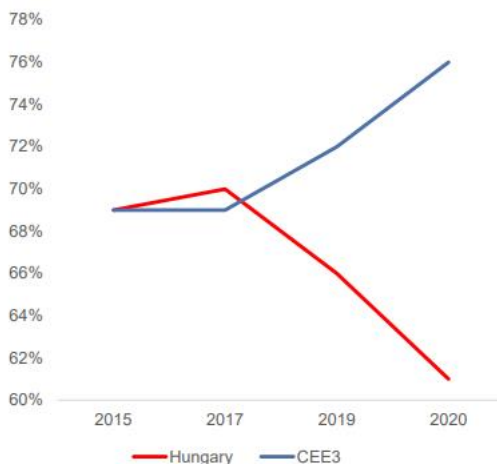
Source: HCSO, Acts on Budget, Act on public education

Figure 2 Average teacher salary compared to the national gross average salary¹⁰

It is no coincidence that the attractiveness of education and the teaching profession plays a prominent role in the competitiveness reports annually issued by the *Hungarian National Bank (Magyar Nemzeti Bank, MNB)*. According to the MNB's competitiveness report for 2022, the introduction of the teacher career model in 2013 significantly increased teacher salaries in Hungary. Since then, however, domestic teacher salaries have not kept up with the dynamic wage growth experienced in the economy. Below-expectation salaries diminish interest in the profession and lead to teachers leaving the profession.

⁹ Simon, Gabriella (2019): *A mentorálás elmélete és gyakorlata. A mentori kompetenciák attitűdelemei és a kezdő pedagógusok mentormodellek szerinti támogatása*, Budapest, KRE-L'Harmattan, p. 12

¹⁰ Source European Commission (2020): *Country Report – Hungary 2020*, Brussels, p. 39 ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)



(1) Teachers at lower secondary education
 (2) CEE3: CZ, PL, SK

Figure 3 Salaries of teachers compared to other tertiary educated workers (Hungary compared to other V4 countries) ¹¹

In 2019, Hungary allocated 3.8% of its GDP to educational expenses, slightly lower than the average of other Visegrád countries (4.2%), but significantly below the EU average (4.4%). State expenditures in Hungary amount to 3.1%, which is also lower than the regional average (3.7%) and the EU average (3.9%). Meanwhile, private funding is higher in Hungary (0.7%) compared to international averages (0.5%). However, the financial recognition of the teaching profession in Hungary is low, like in the region, compared to other occupations requiring higher education. The average salary of those working in public education is 61-66% of those with higher education, making it the lowest value among the OECD member EU countries. ¹²

The relative earning position of early career teachers has an impact on whether those who leave training stay in education: ‘Earnings of Hungarian teachers aged 25-34 working in nursery and lower secondary education are the lowest compared to those of tertiary graduates of the same age in the European countries for which data are available.’ ¹³

¹¹ European Commission (2022): 2022 Country Report – Hungary, Brussels, p. 9 ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

¹² Magyar Nemzeti Bank (2022): *Versenyképességi jelentés 2022*, Budapest, MNB, p. 95 ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

¹³ Varga (2019) p. 115

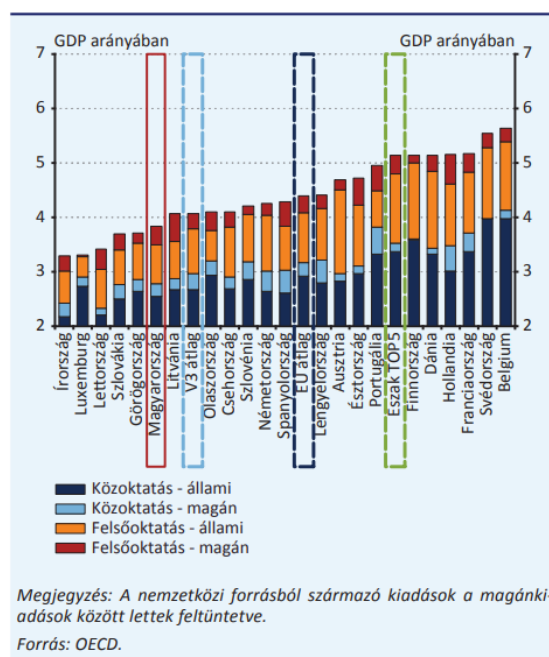


Figure 4 Education expenditure as a share of GDP, international comparison, 2018
 (Közoktatás – állami: pre-primary, primary and secondary public education; Közoktatás – magán: pre-primary, primary and secondary private education; Felsőoktatás – állami: higher education – public; Felsőoktatás – magán: higher education – private)¹⁴

As Figure 5 shows, the earnings status of the lower secondary teachers in our target group is below the average not only in the European Union but also in the V4 countries.

The question of social prestige cannot be separated from the question of material prestige (or the lack of it). If we consider only the training of kindergarten teachers, one of the main strands of our subsequent studies, the correlation calculations of the 2016 *micro census* show that there was a significant tension between the social utility of kindergarten teachers and the salaries they earn, as the difference between the scores on these grounds shows that kindergarten teachers were perceived by society as the sixth most underpaid occupation.¹⁵ In the twenty-first century, a career that combines maximum expectations in terms of professionalism with serious under-financing is not sustainable.

¹⁴ Ibid. 98.

¹⁵ Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (2018): *Mikrocenzus 2016 – 13. A foglalkozások presztízse*, KSH ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

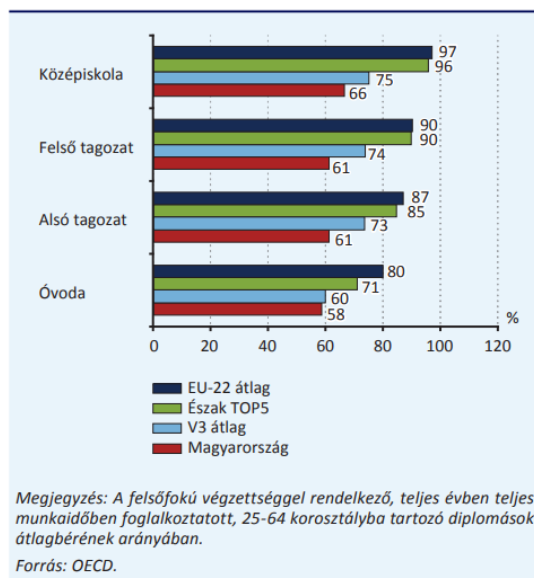


Figure 5 Teachers' salaries as a share of average graduate salaries in 2020, international comparison

(EU-22 átlag: EU-22 average; Észak TOP5: North TOP5; V3 átlag: V3 average; Magyarország: Hungary; Középiskola: secondary school, Felső tagozat: upper classes of primary school, Alsó tagozat: lower classes of primary school, Óvoda: kindergarten / pre-primary school) ¹⁶

The impact of the teacher career model on teachers' career prospects

One of the important objectives of the career path model introduced in 2013 was to ensure a promising career path for teachers:

‘One of the most important conditions for the renewal and improvement of teacher training is the introduction of a *teacher career-path model*, which provides adequate motivation and a predictable career path.’¹⁷

Theorists in teacher evaluation believe that:

‘Standards, if broken down into appropriate indicators, tangible activities and a system of assessment tools to evaluate them, will contribute to making it easier to assess teachers’

¹⁶ Magyar Nemzeti Bank (2022) p. 99

¹⁷ Thaisz, Miklós (2013): *Elkötelezettség és elhivatottság. Pedagógus életpálya*, KAPI ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

progress and to do so based on similar criteria at a national level¹⁸. According to Szőke-Milinte, the career development model should support teachers' internal motivation for competence and learning, while external motivation should be supported by the career development system, which should include informative feedback.¹⁹ Research by Paksi et al.²⁰ suggests that these basic aims of teacher evaluation are considered important by practising teachers, but that there are significant doubts about the unified evaluation criteria and the procedure itself. This is confirmed by Dabóczy's survey of teacher training students and early career teachers:

'The system of transparency and predictability of teachers' careers does not fulfil its role of motivating them to pursue a career but has the opposite effect in influencing the decisions of those who are attracted to a career'.²¹

Confidence in the evaluation system has been undermined financially by the decoupling of the teacher pay scale from the minimum wage in the year following its introduction, and professionally and in terms of social prestige, it also does not seem to have had the desired effect on teacher candidates. While there are undoubtedly some who see 'the career model as an opportunity for professional development, professional support, peer review, feedback, training, an incentive to perform better, greater financial recognition for quality work and an improvement in the social prestige of the teaching profession'²², no study to date has shown that the introduction of the career model has fully, or even largely, achieved its objectives. According to Horváth's research, 'the younger someone is, the more likely he or she is to have a positive attitude towards the career model'. However, the majority

¹⁸ Kotschy, Beáta (ed.) (2011): *A pedagógussá válás és a szakmai fejlődés sztenderdjei*, Eger, p. 17

¹⁹ Szőke-Milinte, Enikő (2018): A pedagógusok pályamotivációja a nemzetközi gyakorlatban, in G. Molnár, Péter – Szőke-Milinte, Enikő (eds.): *Pedagógiai valóságok*, Budapest, PPKE, p. 228

²⁰ Paksi, Borbála – Veroszta, Zsuzsanna – Schmidt, Andrea – Magi, Anna – Vörös, András – Endródi-Kovács, Viktória – Felvinczi, Katalin (2015): *Pedagógus-pálya-motiváció: Egy kutatás eredményei*, Budapest, Oktatási Hivatal

²¹ Dabóczy Lenkefi, Éva (2018): A pedagóguspálya választásának motivációi, in Kovács, Gábor (ed.): *Pannon Tanulmányok V., A Modern Filológiai és Társadalomtudományi Kar Tudományos Diákköri dolgozatai 2017–2018*, Veszprém, Pannon Egyetem, p. 236

²² Horváth, Szilárd (2018): A magyar pedagógus társadalom motiváltsága a jövedelmek alapján, *Közép-európai közlemények*, Volume 11, Issue 2, p. 71

'perceive the career model as a kind of external pressure, which also means additional workload, increased professional control and the risk of easier dismissal.'²³

What is directly relevant to our research is the motivational or demotivational impact of the career model on career entry and retention (Figure 6). Horváth's results are not encouraging in this respect either: in his study, more than half of the respondents consider that the career model does not prevent teachers from leaving the profession for other, possibly better-paid jobs.²⁴ Beyond the lack of financial motivation, the elements of the career pathway model in their current form serve little purpose in supporting the learning pathway with encouragement and guidance, other than a summative assessment and rating system. A support system linked to central management, rather than one based on trust, has so far been built into the model. It would be forward-looking to use the career model not as a means of certification, but as a support for a professional learning path, obviously with appropriate stages (incentives and sanctions), but more as a means of professional development linking the different stages.²⁵

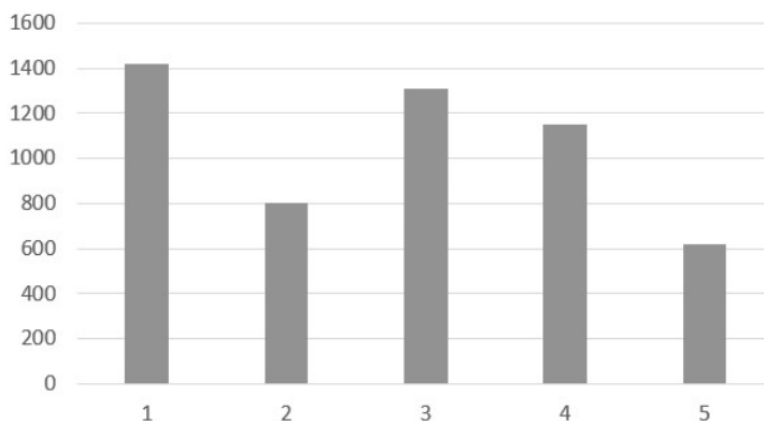


Figure 6 Responses to the motivational power of the teacher career model²⁶

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 73

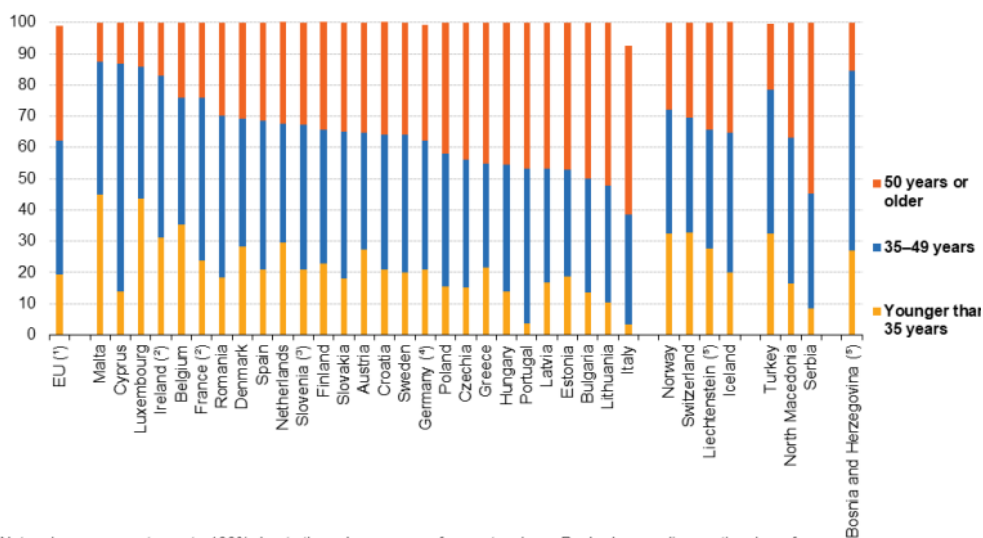
²⁵ Pedagógusképzés és szakmai közösségek - Interjú Kálmán Orsolyával és Rapos Nórával, in B. Tier Noémi - Szegedi Eszter (ed.) (2018): *Alma a fán. Pedagógusok szerepe és szakmai fejlődése a 21. században*, Budapest, Tempus Közalapítvány, p. 68

²⁶ Ibid. 72.

Teacher shortage, teacher supply

In 2020, 45.6% of teachers in Hungarian primary education (ISCED1) were aged 50 or over, and only 13.9% were under 35 (Figure 7). This ratio is not only worse than the EU average (19.3% of teachers in the EU aged under 35 and 36.6% aged over 50), but also significantly worse than in the region (18.2% of teachers aged under 35 in Slovakia and 18.5% in Romania, and 34.8% and 29.9% respectively of teachers aged over 50 in primary education). According to some analyses, “there are three main reasons for the teacher shortage: 1. few people choose teacher training; 2. the number of people leaving the profession is very high due to overwork, low pay and slow wage growth; 3. although it is possible to continue teaching after retirement age, few take up the opportunity due to burnout, cumbersome administration and poor financial incentives.’

27



Note: shares may not sum to 100% due to the unknown age of some teachers. Ranked ascending on the share for older teachers.

(†) Excluding independent private institutions for France and Ireland. Including lower secondary education for Slovenia.

(‡) Excluding independent private institutions.

(§) Including lower secondary education.

(*) Estimates.

(†) 2019.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: educ_uae_perp01 and educ_uae_perd01)

eurostat

Figure 7 Age distribution of teachers in primary education, 2020 ²⁸

²⁷ Egyensúly Intézet (2021): *Hogyan legyünk okos nemzet? Az Egyensúly Intézet javaslatai a magyar közoktatás megújítására*, p. 8 ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

²⁸ Eurostat (2020): *Age distribution of teachers in primary education 2020* ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

Another major problem, apart from the shortage of supply, is the high drop-out rate in teacher training, with less than half of graduates entering the profession.²⁹ The number of teachers starting their careers cannot replace the number of retiring teachers. The phenomenon is general but not evenly distributed in the country: it is most marked in disadvantaged areas, science subjects and foreign languages, and vocational education and training.

One of the prerequisites for successful (teacher) training is the possibility of proper selection, i.e. the existence of a sufficiently large applicant base. 'The aim (is) to admit the best qualified, most able and most motivated students. This is only possible if there is no shortage of interested students. Therefore, teacher training and career paths have to be attractive to compete with other courses and with other fields of education.'³⁰

The general admission procedures for teacher training in higher education in recent years have surprised even those professionals who already had few illusions about the popularity of the teaching profession and the quality of teacher training. In the last twelve years, with the atypical 2020 not being a reality due to the pandemic, but rather to the trend that year after year, fewer and fewer people have been choosing teacher training, and never before have so few students been admitted to this program, although the number of applicants to higher education is increasing (Table 1).

²⁹ European Commission (2020) p. 31–32

³⁰ Sági, Matild – Ercsei, Kálmán (2012): A tanári munka minőségét befolyásoló tényezők, in Kocsis, Mihály – Sági, Matild (eds.): *Pedagógusok a pályán*, Budapest, Oktatókutató és Fejlesztő Intézet, p. 12

Table 1 Applicants and successful candidates in teacher training in the general admission procedure (2010-2022)³¹

Year	Applicants total	Applicants first place	Admitted total	Ratio of applicants and admitted (%)
2022	11977	8732	6453	53,88
2021	13110	9901	7327	55,89
2020	11111	8245	6426	57,83
2019	17394	13610	8984	51,65
2018	17800	14221	9288	52,18
2017	18183	14572	9091	50,00
2016	20286	16041	10167	50,12
2015	18810	14818	9669	51,40
2014	17823	13730	9234	51,81
2013	14225	10585	7834	55,07
2012	13068	9838	6470	49,51
2011	16246	12471	7966	49,03
2010	15663	12041	7469	47,69

The more people who apply for teacher training, the more people the training institutions can select. While the number of applicants to teacher training programs increased steadily between 2010 and 2016, with a one-off dip, the number has stopped increasing since 2016 and has fallen radically since 2020 (Figure 8).

In light of the above, it is not surprising that young people start a career in education in all types of training, while the one per cent of new entrants into the teaching profession is not enough to replace retiring teachers and ensure a long-term supply (Figure 9).

³¹ Source: *Oktatási Hivatal: Felvi.hu* ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

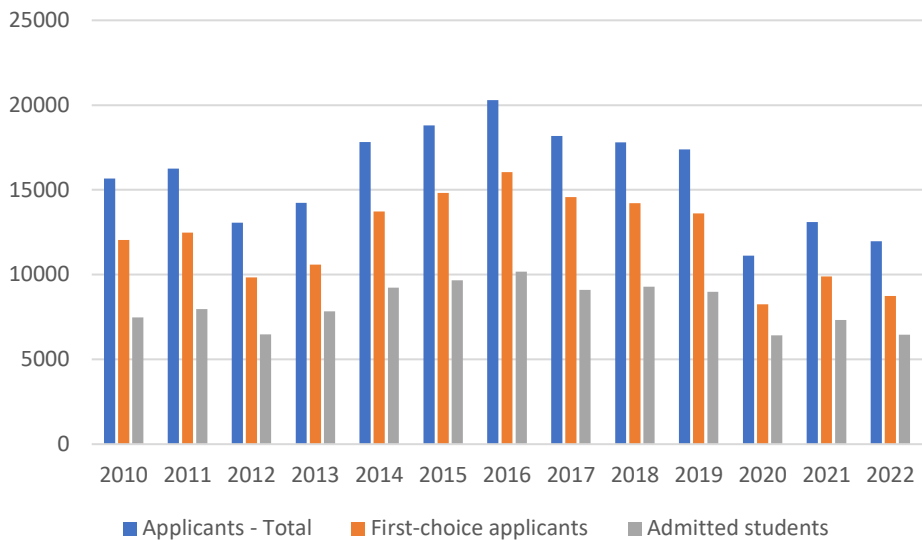


Figure 8 Applicant and admitted of teacher training in general admission procedure (2010-2022)³²

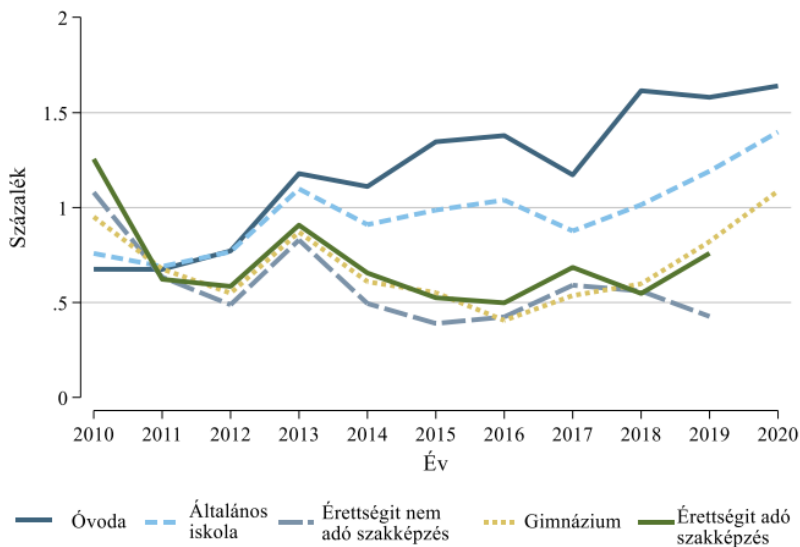


Figure 9 Percentage of early career teachers by type of institution (2010-2020) (Óvoda: kindergarten/pre-primary school, Általános iskola: primary school; Érettségít nem adó szakképzés: vocational training without baccalaureate; Gimnázium: secondary school; Érettségít adó szakképzés: vocational training leading to a baccalaureate)³³

³² Source: Ibid., author's editing

³³ Varga, Júlia (ed.) (2022): *A közoktatás indikátorrendszere 2021*, Budapest, KKRTK KTI, p. 92

This ratio would not be enough even if the age distribution of teachers were even. If we assume that the youngest age at which teachers can leave teacher training institutions as graduates is 22, and that teachers retire at the age of 65, then there are 44 teachers of all ages working in schools in any one year. If the age distribution of teachers were even, 2.2 per cent would reach retirement age in any one year, and that is how many new entrants would be needed to ensure a supply of new teachers.

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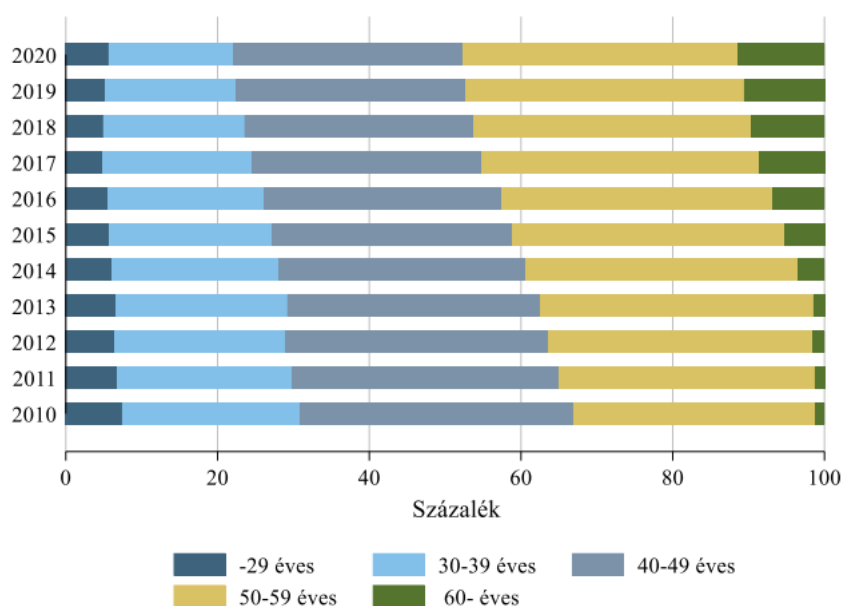


Figure 10 Percentage of teachers in each age group in primary schools (éves=years)³⁵

As the current age distribution of teachers is far from even, and the teaching profession has become much more feminised, with women retiring before the age of 65 after 40 years of service, the proportion of new entrants to the public education system would need to be higher than 2.2% each year to ensure a supply of new teachers.

According to some model calculations, nearly half of all teachers could leave the profession within a decade and a half. 'There are already more than a thousand teacher vacancies every year - but within a few years, the problem will bring the system to the brink of inoperability.'

³⁴ Ibid. p. 91

³⁵ Ibid. p. 79

The decline in pupil numbers is no relief either, as the fragmentation of the school system also makes human resource management 'wasteful'. Teacher overload is also exacerbated by the low number of teaching assistants.'³⁶

Alongside the decline in the number of people choosing a career as a teacher, the phenomenon of early career drop-out is at least as worrying. In 2011, 42% of those leaving teacher training did not choose a career that matched their qualifications when they started work.³⁷ There is no reason to believe that the rates have changed significantly since then. There is a relatively high level of consensus in the literature that the first few years after entry into a career are particularly characterised by high levels of emigration.³⁸ This reinforces the view that career recruitment efforts in the teaching profession need to be integrated with career competency efforts.³⁹

According to Máthé, 'The key to creating and maintaining high-quality education is to attract and retain teachers who are motivated to remain in the profession and who are of high quality. This requires an appropriate motivation system. If those who are capable are recruited, a positive self-generating process can be set in motion'.⁴⁰ It is hard to argue that 'one of Hungary's most important and urgent tasks today is therefore to find a solution to the problem of teacher supply. This means both a quantitative and a qualitative intervention: attracting more young people into the profession, but preferably the most talented ones - and keeping as many teachers in the profession as possible during the transition period, or even luring them back into the system, to remedy the chronic shortage.'⁴¹

³⁶ Egyensúly Intézet (2021) p. 8

³⁷ Chrappán, Magdolna (2013): Elégedettség és mobilitási esélyek a pedagógusképzésben végzettek körében, in Garai, Orsolya - Veroszta, Zsuzsanna (eds.): *Frissdiplomások, 2011.*, Budapest, Educatio, pp. 231-263

³⁸ Paksi et. al. (2015)

³⁹ Máthé, Borbála (2018): A pedagógusszemélyiség változása a tanári életpálya során az egyetemi padtól a nyugdíjig. A pedagógus magánéleti körülményeinek és munkájának kölcsönhatása, *Dissertation*, Eger, Eszterházy Károly Egyetem Neveléstudományi Doktori Iskola

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 18

⁴¹ Egyensúly Intézet (2021): *Hogyan legyünk okos nemzet? Az Egyensúly Intézet háttéranyaga a magyar közoktatás megújításáról*, p. 23 ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

The role of teacher training in career socialisation

According to Sági and Ercsei's research, the quality of teacher training is determined by two main factors. On the one hand, it depends on the motivation and talent of the students and, on the other hand, on what teacher training institutions train for, how and with what efficiency. Countries with successful and effective education systems select students at the application stage. The aim is to recruit the best qualified, most able, and most motivated students. This is only possible if there is no shortage of interested students. Teacher training and careers must therefore be sufficiently attractive to be able to compete with other courses and careers.⁴² According to Deutsch, "the aim of teacher training is to develop students' values in line with their chosen profession through self-awareness and career socialisation during the years of training."⁴³

It has long been stressed that teacher training should not be separated from everyday school (nursery) practice. This is not a one-way process, which should not be limited to organising the practice of aspiring teachers in schools, but it is also essential to support the experience of teacher trainers in schools. According to Stephenson;

'... It could be made compulsory for teacher training to be provided only by qualified teachers with teaching experience in their ... schools. Some countries allow teacher trainers whose last practical experience of teaching came from their ... school years to teach. To ensure that university teacher trainers have up-to-date knowledge of the school context, they should work in schools on a regular basis, e.g., for one semester every two or three years (in-service training). This would also provide an opportunity to train a new generation of teachers entering teacher training, who could then take courses with university teachers in professional development.'⁴⁴

⁴² Horváth (2018) p. 68

⁴³ Deutsch, Szilvia Zita (2018): A pályaszocializáció folyamata az énhatékonyság, érdeklődés, munkaérték és egyéni erősségek tükrében, in Bíró, Violetta (ed.): *A pedagóguspálya hívása és kihívása*, Baja, Eötvös József Főiskolai Kiadó, p. 82

⁴⁴ A pedagógusképzés megújításának nemzetközi irányvonalai – interjú Joan Stephensonnal, in B. Tier-Szegedi (ed.): *Alma a fán*, p. 57

As can be seen below, the focus of our research is on the provision of teacher supply, on lower teacher training (kindergarten educator training and primary school teacher training), and within this, on the methodological and organisational issues that can make education more suitable for effective career socialisation. There is great potential for career socialisation in lower teacher training, as a 2021 survey shows that the intention to enter the profession of kindergarten educator, primary school teacher and special needs educator and therapist is significantly higher (69%) among teacher candidates than among other teacher professions, with kindergarten educators being the most likely to want to enter a career.⁴⁵

Our previous research⁴⁶, as well as our recent findings, reported later in this monograph, show that the lack of moral and financial esteem in the teaching profession also poses serious risks for recruitment and retention in the profession. It is still true that among students 'the most frequently heard objection to the teaching profession is the lack of esteem; in addition to or within the complex category of social esteem, which includes social attitudes and professional elements, the financial disadvantages of the profession are most widely and frequently mentioned'⁴⁷.

We have found that these disadvantages override almost all intrinsic motivations in the long run and greatly complicate (if not prevent) the career socialisation mission of teacher training, as our results show - in line with other research⁴⁸ - that career choice is not associated with a favourable career concept for students. The literature suggests that, to a large extent, the choice of teacher training is only a decision to enter higher education and not a committed career choice.⁴⁹ It may be true today that 'a significant proportion of students enrol in college well motivated but with little awareness. Their motivation is based on their

⁴⁵ *Pedagógushallgatók pályára állási motivációi* (2021), 11. ([link](#)) (Last download: 04/01/2023)

⁴⁶ See Szontagh, Pál (2020): Pedagógusjelöltek hivatás- és pályamotivációja, kutatás a képzés különböző állomásain, *Pedagógusképzés*, Volume 19(47), Issue 3-4; Szontagh, Pál (2021): Hivatás- és pályamotivációs tényezők első éves óvodapedagógus hallgatók körében, *Iskolakultúra*, Volume 31, Issue 1.; Szontagh, Pál (2021): *Miért (nem) lesznek pedagógus? Hivatás- és pályamotiváció a Kárpát-medencei pedagógusjelöltek körében*, Budapest, KRE-L'Harmattan

⁴⁷ Chrappán (2013) p. 236

⁴⁸ F.e. Veroszta (2015)

⁴⁹ Hajdú, Erzsébet (2001): A harmadik évezred első nevelői lesznek, *Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, Volume 51, Issue 9; Kállai, Gabriella-Szemerszki, Marianna (2015): Pedagógushallgatók a képzés elején, *Educatio* Volume 24, Issue 1

school experience, the personal influence of their teachers and, in many cases, misconceptions'⁵⁰. Our results show that this naïve motivation to pursue a career is partly transformed into a conscious career concept during training and practice, but that students are often unsure of the working and living conditions of a teaching career.

The efforts to reform education, which are both urgent and essential, cannot replace the restoration of the material and moral authority of the teaching profession:

'In addition to attempts to improve training, it would also be necessary to rethink other aspects of professional development, such as teacher training. There is, however, a precondition for all this, which should be discussed as a kind of *ceterum censeo* at the end of the interview. Even the best training, professional support and further training will only be able to achieve apparent results as long as we do not ensure that the best people become teachers, i.e. as long as schools cannot select the best qualified and most committed candidates. One aspect of making a career attractive is undoubtedly to offer the opportunity for creative intellectual activity, but the other is, of course, to reward them financially. Whatever we talk about in relation to education, it comes down to the fact that the provision of resources is a *sine qua non*.'⁵¹

The Significance of Motivation in the Teaching Profession

Quality education is inconceivable without motivated educators - therefore, it is necessary to examine the motivations that attract individuals to the teaching profession and keep them there. 'The sociocultural theory defines motivation (and cognitive activities as well) not as an individual, context-independent phenomenon, but sheds light on the mutual dependence of cognitive and sociocultural activities.'⁵²

⁵⁰ Hajdú (2001) p. 35

⁵¹ Társadalmi folyamatok és pedagógiai kultúra - Interjú Knausz Imrével, in B. Tier-Szegedi (eds.): *Alma a fán*, 51.

⁵² Jármái, Erzsébet - Végh, Ágnes (2017): Motivációról a felsőoktatásban - az oktatói és tanulási motiváció kapcsolata, in Bukor, József - Strédl, Terézia - Nagy, Melinda - Vass, Vilmos -

Besides internal drive, the micro- and macro-social circumstances and group dynamics of the educational work also influence the decision to pursue a teaching career and teacher retention. This means that the commitment of prospective teachers and their motivation towards the teaching profession are interdependent and presuppose each other, as the following quotation reveals:

'The term 'career motivation' refers to the set of specific incentives that both orient individuals towards a particular career path and compel them to persevere in it; essentially, it can be seen as the first step in career development.'⁵³ While it is true that social perception - regardless of financial circumstances - has pushed teachers to the periphery of intellectual careers, it would be a mistake to solely seek career motivation in financial factors. 'Career motivation constitutes a highly complex motivational structure within the lifespan. It incorporates all the driving forces that ensure the selection and high-quality practice of a given profession.'⁵⁴

Besides competitive salary, several non-financial factors can influence career choices, such as job security, flexible working hours, career and advancement opportunities, favourable pension plans, relatively longer vacations, fulfilling work that aligns with personal interests, and a positive workplace atmosphere and environment.⁵⁵ As one commentator suggests, 'We can speak about work-related motivation when, while seeking to satisfy individual needs, we are willing to exert efforts towards achieving organizational goals.'⁵⁶

The Academic Motivation Scale, a frequently used tool for studying learning motivation, measures different types of motivation and

Orsovcics, Yvette - Dobay, Beáta (eds.): *Érték, minőség és versenyképesség - a 21. század kihívásai. A Selye János Egyetem 2017-es Nemzetközi Tudományos Konferenciájának tanulmánykötete: Pedagógiai szekciók*, Komarno, Selye János Egyetem, p. 65

⁵³ Holecz, Anita (2015): A pedagógusok pszichés fejlődését segítő képzési feladatok és lehetőségek a tanárképzés és továbbképzés rendszerében, in Kispál-Horváth, Mária (ed.): *Tanulmányok a pedagógusképzés 21. századi fejlesztéséhez*, Szombathely, NYME RPSZKK, p. 149

⁵⁴ Szőke-Milinte (2018) p. 230

⁵⁵ Horváth, Szilárd (2020): A pedagógus életpályamodell vizsgálata, *PhD-értekezés*, Kaposvár, KE Gazdaságtudományi Kar

⁵⁶ Bakacsi, Gyula (2010): *A szervezeti magatartás alapjai. Alapszakos jegyzet*, Budapest, AULA Kiadó Kft., Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem, p. 54

demotivation, or *amotivation*, across 28 (7x4) items. The most self-directed type of motivation is intrinsic motivation, where the reason for undertaking an action lies within the action itself, deriving pleasure and satisfaction from engaging in it. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is a comprehensive concept involving factors external to the action, such as rewards and punishments. *Amotivation* describes the absence of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation⁵⁷:

'Lortie divides the rewards of teaching into three main categories: extrinsic, ancillary, and intrinsic rewards. The first group includes factors analysed in prestige surveys (salary, social recognition, power). The second encompasses the distinctive and well-known time- schedule of teaching, which differs from other occupations. The third includes subjective values, everything that brings joy and satisfaction in the work.'⁵⁸

Among the internal (intrinsic) motivations, the pleasure of working with children and assisting students in achieving their successes can generally be identified among teachers. External (extrinsic) motivations heavily rely on social and economic factors: social prestige, good working conditions, job security, attractive working hours, and extended periods of leave.⁵⁹ According to Prather-Jones' two-factor model (Figure 11), teacher retention is influenced by two main factors, individual characteristics and external (institutional) support. The two main factors can be further broken down into sub-factors, as shown below:

⁵⁷ Bányai, Edit – Hegedűs, Réka (2017): Hallgatói motiváció – A szakmai és személyes fejlődés és fejlesztés háttérében működő motivációk kutatása, in Bányai, Edit – Lányi, Beatrix – Töröcsik, Mária (eds): *Tükröződés, társtudományok, trendek, fogyasztás*, Pécs, PTE Közgazdaságtudományi Kar

⁵⁸ Cited by Nagy, Mária (1998): A tanári pálya választása, *Educatio*, Volume 7, Issue 3, p. 533

⁵⁹ Watt, Helen M. G. –Richardson, Paul W. (2007): Motivational Factors Influencing Teaching as a Career Choice: Development and Validation of the FIT-Choice Scale, *The Journal of Experimental Education*, Volume 75, Issue 3

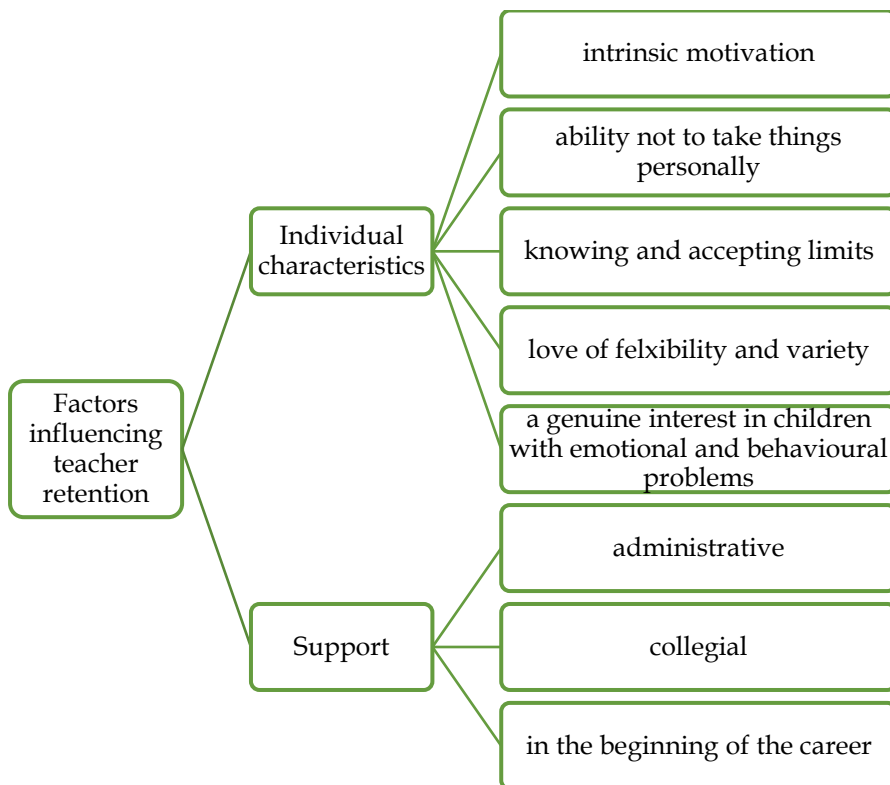


Figure 11 Prather-Jones' two-factor model⁶⁰

Taking the two-factor model into account, the development of individual characteristics is primarily the task of training and further training. It is an undoubted fact that 'the process of becoming a teacher begins long before entering university or college and is completed many years after graduation'⁶¹. Based on the literature, Paksi et al. emphasise intrinsic motivation as the determining factor in career choice and career persistence: 'If the role of individual and work-related motivations is examined, the dominance of work-related elements is revealed'.⁶²

⁶⁰ Source: Bacsa-Bán, Anetta (2019): A szakmai pedagógusok (pedagógusi) pálya elhagyásának vizsgálata több dimenzióban, *Opus et Educatio*, Volume 6, Issue 2, p. 262

⁶¹ Falus Iván (2004): A pedagógussá válás folyamata, *Pedagógusképzés*, Volume 13, Issue 3, p. 359

⁶² Paksi, Borbála - Schmidt, Andrea - Magi, Anna - Eisinger, Andrea - Felvinczi, Katalin (2015): Gyakorló pedagógusok pályamotivációi, *Educatio*, Volume 24, Issue 1, pp. 78-79

The difference between motivation for a vocation and motivation for a career

We hypothesise that today, motivation for a career as a teacher (including its existential, organisational, and infrastructural conditions) is different from the degree of commitment to a vocation in education (which can be experienced informally or outside the public education system). *Professional motivation* is understood as the set of motivational factors that perceptualize the task of education as a personal, intrinsic calling. This includes a focus on the long-term social impact of education, a commitment to community involvement, an intrinsic motivation to pass on knowledge across generations and a high level of emotional involvement.

According to Pinczés:

'... commitment to a vocation is a process of preparation and learning for the pursuit of a vocation, which we call professional socialisation. During this process, the personality is enriched in several dimensions: it acquires professional knowledge, practice, values and ideals, and in this way, the sense of vocation also indicates the individual's sense of mission, it marks a specific direction of commitment embedded in a life path, i.e., it reflects the maturity of the personality and its commitment to values.'⁶³

This kind of motivation often has a transcendent basis. A sense of transcendent calling is not necessarily linked to a theistic religiosity but implies some kind of inner calling beyond rationality. This educative motivation is not necessarily linked to a job or position as an educator. A sense of social utility or a response to a divine calling can be experienced in volunteering, working with children outside the school system or even in family life. If the organisational and existential conditions of a teaching career are not sufficiently attractive, even a strong motivation to work may not necessarily be matched by a career change.

Professional motivation, as opposed to *occupational motivation*, is linked to the choice of a *career as a teacher*. We include here those motives

⁶³ Pinczésné Palásthy, Ildikó (2017): A pedagógusok hivatásszemélyisége, *Magyar Református Nevelés*, Issue1, p. 7

that are related to the role of the teacher in institutional education. As with career motivation, we can observe external and internal factors. External career motivation can be the encouragement of family, teachers, friends, or the social micro-environment to choose a career as a teacher, but it can also include macro-social influences that make a career attractive through the prestige, financial and moral recognition of teachers and the quality of training. Internal career motivation can be provided by the specific organisational framework of the teaching profession, the working hours, the proportion and variety of individual and collective activities, and the usability and convertibility of knowledge acquired in training and practice.

Weakening or lack of *career motivation* can lead directly to leaving a career, even if, as we have seen above, career motivation remains strong. National research has mainly identified relatively low wages, preferential convertibility, poor career prospects, increasing workload and the resulting low social value as the primary causes of career abandonment.⁶⁴ Besides these negative self-selection and counter-selection approaches (deficit theories), there is also sociological research on educational sociology, focusing on the supportive forces, which focuses on the factors explaining career entry and retention of groups with specific occupational needs.⁶⁵ One of these factors supporting *professional motivation* may be precisely the conceptions of vocation and the work of professional socialisation in denominational teacher training, which is specifically examined in our research.⁶⁶

Vocation and career motivation merge, in a fortunate case, into career motivation. In his doctoral dissertation, Bús summarises ⁶⁷ London's theory of career motivation, according to which career motivation is the set of personal characteristics and career-related decisions and

⁶⁴ Chrappán (2013); Varga, Júlia (2007): Kiből lesz ma tanár? A tanári pálya választásának empirikus elemzése, *Közgazdasági Szemle*, Volume 56, Issue 7-8

⁶⁵ Pusztai, Gabriella (2015): Retenció és pályaszocializáció intézményfenntartó szerinti összehasonlításban - Az állami és felekezeti pedagógusképzés hosszútávú hatásai, in Pusztai, Gabriella - Morvai, Laura (eds.): *Pálya-modell. Igények és lehetőségek a pedagógus-továbbképzés változó rendszerében*, Nagyvárad-Budapest, Partium Kiadó

⁶⁶ More about this topic: Szontagh, Pál (2021): Hivatás- és pályamotiváció a világi és egyházi fenntartású felsőoktatási intézmények pedagógushallgatóinak összehasonlításában, *Magyar Református Nevelés*, Issue 2; Szontagh, Pál (2022): A protestáns hivatástudat megjelenése a pedagógusjelöltek hivatásmotivációjában, *Collegium Doctorum* Volume 18, Issue 2

⁶⁷ Bús, Enikő (2018): Tanárjelöltek szakmai énképének fejlesztése aktív tanulásra épülő kurzuson keresztül, *Dissertation*, Szeged, SZTE BTK Neveléstudományi Doktori Iskola Oktatásméleti Doktori Program

behaviours that reflect a person's career identity, the internal factors that influence career ('career insight'), and persistence in the face of adverse career circumstances ('career resilience').

According to Schein, without conscious planning of one's career, one's work and even life can feel aimless and meaningless. So-called 'career anchors' can help manage turbulent careers:

'Career anchors are the competencies, drivers and values that people hold on to, often unconsciously, throughout their careers. It is important to be aware of our career anchors because, without them, external incentives can force us into situations and jobs where we become dissatisfied: we develop a feeling of "this is not me'. [...] Knowing the career anchors will teach you to live with the stresses of the job and help you get through those difficult years when you are not doing what you want to do, or how you want to do it. Awareness of our career anchors also helps us to understand our colleagues' career anchors, to understand their drivers more deeply and to develop their competencies effectively.'⁶⁸

Paksi et al.⁶⁹ distinguish between individual and career-related motivations within extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. Individual intrinsic motivation is, for example, the sense of social importance of teaching, while work-related intrinsic motivation is, for example, the pleasure of dealing with people. Personal extrinsic motivation may be job security or the compatibility of work and family, while work-related extrinsic motivation may be, for example, a good work/teaching atmosphere or the role of role models. Jármai and Végh summarise the breakdown of motivations in Table (2) below.

⁶⁸ Cited by Tomka, János (2012): *A megosztott tudás hatalom*, Budapest, Harmat Kiadó, pp. 182-183

⁶⁹ Paksi et al. (2015)

Table 2 Factors of motivation based on Paksi et al.⁷⁰

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN TEACHER CAREER CHOICE AND RETENTION			
Individual aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-realisation • intellectual challenges • diversity • sense of social importance • The intrinsic beauty of knowledge transfer • The rewarding nature of the career • the creation of lasting value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The joy of working with children • supporting pupils • making an impact on student's lives • working with people 	Work-related aspects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the opportunity for professional development • job security • freedom • free time • salary and benefits • the possibility of a career as an intellectual • harmony with family life • environmental influence • mobility factor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive experiences of previous learning/ teaching • role models • perceived employer expectations • workload • workplace, staff atmosphere • job satisfaction • secondary career path (forced career path) 	
EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION IN TEACHER CAREER CHOICE AND RETENTION			

According to Australian researchers, ‘... intrinsic factors were the most predictive of career motivation, while extrinsic factors were the most predictive of career abandonment’⁷¹. In our research exploring the differences between career and professional motivation, the former may be a component of *professional motivation*, the latter a component of *career motivation*.

Several prior studies confirm that intrinsic motivation (commitment to a profession) precedes extrinsic motivation (career motivation) among aspiring teachers and teachers and that the choice of a career in education is most often a mature, conscious decision. Among other things, Simon's research shows that, to a lesser extent than professional

⁷⁰ Source: Jármai-Végh (2017) p. 66

⁷¹ Paksi et al. (2015) p. 65

competencies, the sense of vocation of early career teachers increases in the first years of their careers: 'In addition to the experience of becoming competent, the development of a sense of vocation was also supported by mentoring by example'.⁷²

Commitment is also of particular importance for career persistence: 'The concept of commitment has also gained new importance in the career transition process, through research on the relationship between work and integration, in addition to other elements related to career persistence'.⁷³

According to the research of Wyatt-Smith and his colleagues⁷⁴ in Queensland, Australia, student motivations, social contribution, shaping the future of children, and teacher self-perception (which, in the terminology of our research, can be considered questions related to vocational motivation) were prominent, while secondary career, benefits, and views related to teaching others had the least impact on students (in our interpretation, these are factors of *career motivation*).

The examination of professional motivation is important because public opinion – and often professional opinion as well – attributes significant, almost exclusive importance to vocation and dedication in the teaching profession. Often, this motivational factor is meant to compensate for what is perceived as an irrational career choice: it counterbalances the lack of social prestige, financial recognition, and appropriate working conditions. Dabóczy's question is still relevant today:

'Are teachers inherently destined for their vocation, as it is commonly believed, or is the profession learnable, and can it be developed to a professional level through the possession and application of scientific results in everyday practice? The answer to the question of the validity of beliefs and scientific results in the teaching profession is clear, and yet, I observe that the former dominates in the world of schools, which poses a significant challenge in teacher training.'⁷⁵

⁷² Simon (2019) p. 403

⁷³ Ibid. pp. 11-12

⁷⁴ Wyatt-Smith, Claire –Wang, Jin –Alexander, Colette –Du Plessis, Anna –Hand, Kirstine –Colbert, Peta (2017): *Why choose teaching? A Matter of Choice: Evidence from the Field*, Brisbane, Learning Science Institute

⁷⁵ Dabóczyné Lenkefi, Éva (2018) p. 214

Pedagogical ethics as a basis for motivation

The teaching profession requires both individual responsibility and committed community behaviour. The institutional hierarchy is not well-defined, as it lacks an actual middle management level, and the circle of collaborating partners is extremely broad and sometimes difficult to define. It includes not only children, students, and colleagues but also the families and acquaintances of the learners. The relationship between the educator and the learner is unique: it is both subordinate and collaborative, and communication possibilities are greatly influenced by the maturity of the children and students, as stated here:

'Teaching is both a service and a duty, encompassing the expectations of service marketing as well as the obligations prescribed by laws and regulations. Teachers work within the framework of laws and regulations, which give their chosen profession an "official" nature. They are under supervision and disciplinary responsibility, and they must report results in their work, both legally and in terms of educational activities. They must strike a balance between the official rules set by the school and their... work (which adds... additional content to the teaching process). This is achieved by combining educational aspects, which are also determined by the school's legal framework, with the positive elements of their... pedagogical personality.'⁷⁶

Interestingly, educational ethics cannot be limited solely to the professional ethics of teachers, as the following quotation explains:

'The actions of parents, educators (and generally all those who influence others' lives) are subject to judgment based on the moral criteria of justice, fairness, and humanity. The educational process, as a strongly moral-shaping process,

⁷⁶ Szenczi, Árpád (2017): A pedagógus elhívása, elhivatottsága, hivatala, in Erdélyi, Erzsébet-Szabó, Attila (eds.): *Az üzenetjét, azt kell megbecsülni. Tanulmányok Barabás László hetvenedik születésnapja alkalmából*. Budapest, KRE-L'Harmattan, p. 193

requires educators to become role models worthy of emulation, constructive examples'.⁷⁷

The basis of developing a school's values is that the teachers themselves possess a well-founded personality and a solid value system.⁷⁸ This inner attitude allows them to understand, respect, and accept other value systems. The most important elements of a teacher's personality are balance, inner harmony, and a human attitude, without which they would not be able to effectively educate their students through authentic role modelling. In the world of education, there coexists both *ethical relativism* as the personal values of teachers may differ from the institutional values of the school, and *ethical absolutism*, 'as no school can abandon the transmission of moral principles based on Christian theology, regardless of the ideological perspective it adheres to'⁷⁹.

Pedagogical ethics generally deals with two closely related but distinct topics: one is the moral content of education (the moral education of students), and the other is the ethics of education as professional ethics. We can only discuss the latter here. In this sense, teacher ethics is role or service ethics. As Hankiss put it as early as 1977, the teaching profession is (also) special in that, in addition to knowledge and labour, the teacher's "attitude and personality are bought, or at least used, by society"⁸⁰. In other words, 'there are few professions where the whole personality, of which morality is a natural part, is so important'⁸¹. According to Hankiss, teachers are treated by adult society as 'elite troops in the front line, as missionaries of sacrifice, as missionaries of law and order, as intelligence diplomats, as missionaries of education and of converting and educating savages'⁸².

In the decades since then, there has been a serious contradiction, which has not diminished much (if at all) between the maximum,

⁷⁷ Zrinszky, László (2002): *Neveléstudományok*, Budapest, Műszaki Könyvkiadó, p. 286

⁷⁸ On the professional identity of teachers, see also Pinczésné (2017)

⁷⁹ Györgyiné Koncz, Judit (2010): Etikai kihívások a pedagógiában, in Fenyő, Imre – Rébay, Magdolna (eds.): *Felszántatlan területeken. Tanulmányok Brezsnjányzky László 65. születésnapjára*, Debrecen, Csokonai, p. 321

⁸⁰ Hankiss, Elemér (1977): A tanári pálya foglalkozási ártalmairól. Lehet-e példakép az ember napi 24 órán át?, in Hankiss Elemér: *Érték és társadalom*, Budapest, Magvető, p. 255

⁸¹ Aáry-Tamás, Lajos (2003): Az etika és a jog határai, in Hoffmann, Rózsa (ed.): *Szakmai etikai kódex pedagógusoknak. Tanulmányok, normák és esetleírások*, Budapest, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, p. 49

⁸² Hankiss (1977) p. 254

idealising expectations of the role of teacher and the social prestige of the profession. Society's moral basis for setting high ethical standards for teachers is severely called into question 'if it does not itself value the work of the teacher accordingly, either in moral or material terms. [...] Can the teacher be expected always - in all circumstances - to be a role model?'⁸³

On these questions, on idealizing expectations, Hankiss states that 'moral-social norms are not intended, not designed to be fully observed'⁸⁴, and that they are exaggerated so that a fraction of them is sufficient for normal social functioning. Jelenits calls this an opportunistic position; in his view - and ours - the educator must fight to fully comply with the moral norms set before him: 'Sometimes he may fail, and then he does not despair, but neither does he say, "what is difficult, let us not force it', but he stands up and continues to fight'.⁸⁵

In the 2009 book of studies entitled *Wings and Burdens*, we read: 'The role of communities and culturally determined educators in preserving, transmitting, and creating value is of paramount importance. [...] One could say that every good teacher is also a moral teacher at every moment of education.'⁸⁶

This idea is not new in the pedagogical literature. In his theoretical work on pedagogy published in 1937, Fináczy wrote:

'The living word, which teaches morality, is also important, but even more important is the example, which captivates. A single bad example can act as a poison. Therefore, the one who educates and teaches the child must be a moral character, one in whom there is indeed what we have called independence of character and individuality of character. It must never happen that the educator ever strays from the straight path, or

⁸³ Petró, András (2000): *Olvasókönyv a pedagógusról. Személyiség, szakmaiság, pedagógusetika*, Budapest, BME, p. 104

⁸⁴ Hankiss (1977) p. 254

⁸⁵ Jelenits, István (2003): Szempontok egy pedagógusetikához, in Hoffmann, Rózsa (szerk.): *Szakmai etikai kódex pedagógusoknak. Tanulmányok, normák és esetleírások*, Budapest, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, pp. 27-33

⁸⁶ Csermely, Péter - Fodor, István - Joly, Eva - Lámfalussy, Sándor (2009): *Szárny és teher. Ajánlás a nevelés-oktatás rendszerének újjáépítésére és a korrupció megfékezésére*, Budapest, Bölcsök Tanácsa Alapítvány, pp. 82-83

that the pupil sees a contradiction between what he preaches and teaches and what he does'.⁸⁷

Eighty years later, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, a high school principal writes: 'The educator is necessarily a model mediator for his pupils. He or she is expected to live up to the moral standards of the school and the moral standards he or she has set'.⁸⁸ In other words, 'the educational situation is also an *ab ovo* ethical relationship'⁸⁹. In the words of Karácsony:

'To be a good teacher, you need to be wise, open-minded, open to problems, informed and philosophical. [...] A teacher must be a thinker who persistently strives to get the best out of both his students and himself. In the classroom, however, we must not only educate but also educate with our whole personality, our whole being. Authentically. We must behave in the same way in class and out of class, because if the student knows, feels, and sees the difference, then whatever we say will not have a real result. The role of the teacher is to guide in the right direction, while at the same time showing love and truth to the pupils.'⁹⁰

To sum up, it would be desirable for the teacher to have a well-established set of intrinsic values, so that, in addition to a knowledge-based society, the desire for a society based on moral values would also be increasingly desirable.⁹¹ This is far from being the case today, and the lack of a consensus basis for ethics not only in the teaching profession but in society as a whole makes it much more difficult to establish and adopt a generally valid set of ethical rules for teachers. This is also a relatively recent phenomenon, and the questioning of the ethics of the teaching profession and pedagogical ethics is *coeval* with the loss of

⁸⁷ Fináczy, Ernő (1995): *Elméleti pedagógia*, Budapest, OPKM hasonmás kiadás, pp. 120-121

⁸⁸ Kézdy, Edit (2016): *Etikai kérdések az evangélikus iskolában*, in Kodácsy-Simon, Eszter (ed.): *Értelmes szívvel. Etikai témák az evangélikus oktatásban*, Budapest, Luther Kiadó, p. 439

⁸⁹ Mihály, Ottó is cited by Fábry, Béla - Trencsényi, László (2015): *Párbeszédre készen - közös értékek keresése. A Magyar Pedagógiai Társaság véleménye, javaslatai a Nemzeti Pedagógus Kar Etikai Kódexéről, Új Pedagógiai Szemle*, Volume 65, Issue 11-12, p. 69

⁹⁰ Bognárné Kocsis, Judit (2009): *Református szellemiség és értékrend Karácsony Sándor filozófiája alapján*, *Studia Caroliensia*, Volume 9, Issue 2-3, pp. 68-69

⁹¹ Györgyiné (2010) p. 324

universally valid moral (educational) values. For a long time, philosophical theories of education were almost always derivations from the fundamental axioms of the ethical position of the time, which necessarily regarded itself as absolute in relation to other positions.⁹²

For centuries, the relationship between teachers and the ethical expectations of society, directly or indirectly, has been ambivalent.⁹³ How far can the teacher's responsibility extend? Can the teacher's exemplary behaviour be preserved in the face of unethical patterns of behaviour by society and the officials elected by society?⁹⁴ These questions are legitimate, and there are no (simple or easy) answers, but the fact remains that the teaching profession is one of those professions that:

'... has a particular impact on the fate of others, significantly influences the well-being of society, since its members are in a position of power over others, can decide the fate of others. It is therefore appropriate that, in addition to the legal regulation of their tasks and work, they should be guided by the strict ethical requirements of the profession. [...] This is also true when it comes to work and tasks that are less valued by society.'⁹⁵

Intellectual Prestige as the Basis of Career Motivation

In the motivation of educators, an essential question arises about whether the teaching profession is attractive to young people choosing their career path, detached from their specific life situation.

German researchers Weiss and Kiel examined the motivations of prospective teachers from various perspectives.⁹⁶ Based on their findings, a common characteristic among students preparing to become primary school teachers is their efforts to balance family and work. They showed lower levels of personal self-realization, but higher levels of

⁹² Oelkers, Jürgen (1998): *Nevelészetika* (transl. Glavina, Zsuzsa – Komáromi, Béla – Komáromi, Magda), Vince Kiadó, p. 10

⁹³ See an example in Tomka, János (2017): Kell-e etikát tanítani?, *Magyar Református Nevelés* Issue 1, pp. 21-22

⁹⁴ Petró, András (2000) p. 105

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 107-108

⁹⁶ Weiss, Sabine –Kiel, Ewald (2013): Who chooses primary teaching and why? *Issues in Educational Research*, Volume 23, Issue 3

social responsibility compared to those preparing for other professions (including secondary school teachers). The research indicated that future primary school teachers have higher motivation for pedagogy and less for subject-specific or scholarly knowledge, as opposed to higher-level teachers. This result is supported by Németh's national research, which states that "kindergarten educators and primary school teacher candidates consider the emotional and social status of children important in formal education, while teacher candidates value the transmission of professional knowledge more."⁹⁷ While to some extent this is natural and acceptable, it is essential during the BA-level teacher training to make students aware that teaching is a highly demanding profession requiring specialized theoretical and practical knowledge, and that working with children cannot be imagined without comprehensive theoretical training.⁹⁸ The practical (educational) and theoretical (academic) orientations should not be opposed; such an opposition is misleading and false.

It is undeniable that the teaching profession requires a high level of knowledge, skills, and moral standards, yet many still consider it a pseudo- or semi-profession. According to this view, teachers do not create knowledge; they only apply and convey it. Their specialty lies more in technical skills related to the application of knowledge rather than in actual creation. The profession is perceived as heterogeneous, with low prestige due to its employment status and limited professional autonomy. This phenomenon is not unique to the teaching profession but extends to various areas of life where knowledge monopolies are being questioned or lost due to the explosion of information and increasing general education and access to information in society. This leads to a decrease in the prestige of certain professions and deprofessionalization, especially for pseudo-professions like teaching.⁹⁹ Income conditions in the last decades, decreasing numbers of applicants for teacher training, and high attrition rates in the profession have

⁹⁷ Németh, Nóra Veronika (2012): Pedagógusjelöltek motivációi és elképzeléseik a pedagóguspályáról, in Benedek, András - Tóth, Péter - Venovatti, Anildo: *A munka és nevelés világa a tudományban. XII. Országos Neveléstudományi Konferencia - program és összefoglalók*, Budapest, ONK, p. 49

⁹⁸ Weiss-Kiel (2013); Watt, Helen M. G. -Richardson, Paul W. (2012): An introduction to teaching motivations in different countries: Comparisons using the FIT-Choice scale, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, Volume 40, Issue 3

⁹⁹ Erdős, István (2015)

undeniably strengthened this view, including in Hungary. On the other hand, in some places - in line with our particular stances - 'the literature speaks of a mature profession that... indicates the solid status of the teacher as a professional'¹⁰⁰.

An essential aspect of the prestige of the teaching profession is recruitment. The increasing feminization of the teaching profession raises numerous labour-market and, consequently, social issues. 'On the one hand, this may lead to selective quality among women choosing the profession, [...] on the other hand, it may increase the value of the characteristics associated with women's roles in the teaching profession (e.g., flexible working hours, time for child-rearing), affecting the motivation of those choosing the profession.'¹⁰¹ Another dual effect of feminization is that 'the lack of almost any career-building opportunity can least disrupt the career path of women with diplomas in the teaching profession.'¹⁰²

Research has shown that the intellectual prestige and self-image of teachers, both in their careers and those preparing for them, are negatively affected by the unreasonably heavy administrative burden, by the fact that: '...Teachers also engage in a great many activities for which they are not or only partially prepared or which they perceive as being far removed from their chosen profession. This is detrimental to career retention, mobility, and mental burnout.'¹⁰³

'In the national context, we can see that teachers are uncertain about what it means to be an intellectual as a teacher, or how well they can be autonomous professionals in the current system of relations. Unfortunately, neither in their training nor in their everyday work do they receive the kind of support that would prepare them for this role and help them to enjoy the freedom of professional choice.'¹⁰⁴

The social recognition of teachers depends to a large extent on whether their environment - and they - see teachers, tutors and kindergarten teachers as creative intellectuals:

¹⁰⁰ Szivák, Judit - Kálmán, Orsolya - Pesti, Csilla -Rapos, Nóra -Vámos, Ágnes (2020): A pedagógus professzió hazai megújításának esélyei a mesterpedagógus programok tükrében, *Iskolakultúra*, Volume 30, Issue 10, p. 4

¹⁰¹ Veroszta (2015) p. 48

¹⁰² Máthé (2018) p. 21

¹⁰³ Chrappán (2013) p. 235

¹⁰⁴ Pedagógusképzés és szakmai közösségek - Interjú Kálmán Orsolyával és Rapos Nórával, in.63.

‘An important question is, for example, whether and where prospective teachers have acquired the cultural capital that they, as teachers, are expected to pass on to their students. Can they cope with the future task of compensating for the lack of cultural capital of their future students, if they do not bring it from home?’¹⁰⁵

As educators, we are convinced that, alongside the development of professional knowledge, methodological skills and practical skills, the bachelor’s level kindergarten educator and primary school teacher training has always had the important task of preparing students to become independent intellectuals, and of creating the inner demand of intellectuals.¹⁰⁶ This basic premise is not self-evident or fully accepted even in professional circles:

‘Formally and in terms of content, primary school teacher training does not contribute significantly to the general education acquired by students in secondary school, nor is it necessary for the teaching profession. It is not an easy task to add “intellectual’ plus tasks to bachelor-level primary school teacher training since they require a lot of time, taking away from professional knowledge. [...] During the training, students must take courses that serve intellectual training, which takes time away from subjects focused on pedagogical professional training.’¹⁰⁷

The statements above are not only debatable from a professional point of view but also contradict the current legislation defining bachelor-level primary teacher training. According to *Annex 1 of the EMMI Decree 18/2016 (VIII.5.) on the Amendment of Government Decree 8/2013 (I.30.) on*

¹⁰⁵ Ceglédi, Tímea (2015): Kulturális és gazdasági tőke a hallgatók családjában, in Pusztai, Gabriella – Ceglédi, Tímea, Bocsi, Veronika – Kovács, Klára – Dusa, Ágnes Réka – Márkus, Zsuzsanna – Hegedűs, Roland: *Pedagógusjelöltek oktatásszociológiai vizsgálata II.*, Debrecen, CHERD-Hungary, p. 9

¹⁰⁶ Szontagh, Pál (2019): A pedagógusképzés mint értelmiségképzés, in Furkó, Péter – Szathmáry, Éva (eds.): *Népszerű tudomány, tudománynépszerűsítés. Studia Caroliensia – a Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem 2019-es évkönyve*, Budapest, KRE-L/Harmattan

¹⁰⁷ Benyó, Bertalan (2018): *A magyar tanítóképzésről.* ([link](#)) (Last download: 2023.01.04.)

the Training and Outcome Requirements of tertiary vocational programs, bachelor and master studies, as well as the Common Training Requirements and Training and Outcome Requirements of Teacher Training Programs, students can obtain a basic degree if they 'possess the knowledge, skills, attitudes required for their profession and tied to a certain circle of civic culture'.

The fact that relying solely on secondary school's uneven general educational foundations is insufficient is a daily experience. The student's family background, cultural heritage, and level of education are highly heterogeneous. When examining the choice of the teaching profession, researchers found that students primarily come from lower social status groups. The teaching profession traditionally plays a role in the education of intellectuals, and as such, it can be seen as an important stage of social integration.¹⁰⁸ Since most students do not come from an intellectual background, becoming an intellectual is not an easy task for them. Therefore, besides professional and methodological training, an equal objective of teacher training is to foster students into intellectuals.¹⁰⁹

Education is more than just knowledge transmission; it is complemented by the formative influence of the teacher's personality. For this purpose, confident and self-aware educators in their intellectual role are necessary. If we, as educators, are not all 'scholar-teachers', and if we do not receive the financial and moral recognition that comes with being a creative intellectual from society and educational authorities, we cannot become role models for the future generation. It is therefore essential 'positively to convey and follow the example to ensure that those entering the profession become intellectuals, not just diploma holders'¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁸ Dabóczyné (2018); Horváth (2020)

¹⁰⁹ Hajdú (2001)

¹¹⁰ Dabóczyné (2018) p. 220

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ÁGNES TOLNAI

THE FUTURE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER AND KINDERGARTEN EDUCATOR TRAINING

When talking about professional socialization and a sense of vocation, we cannot ignore the current conditions of the education system in Hungary, which several chapters of this volume address. In this chapter, we examine the teacher trainers in higher education institutions (*HEIs*) and the circumstances that have shaped the admission environment in recent years. For this, we rely primarily on the data from the *Admission Database of the Educational Authority (Oktatási Hivatal; OH)*, and for discussing the need for new entrants, we use data from *Eurostat* and the *Central Statistical Office (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal; KSH)*.

As seen in Table 1 of the previous chapter¹, the number of applicants for teacher training is as low from 2020, as before the pre-peak period of 2014-2019. This change affected primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training differently, indicating the strength of the profession's appeal even at the application stage.

The number of applications and admissions for various higher education programs, the number of announced places, the institution's full capacity, and the admission rates are indicators that provide insight into the popularity of a specific field of study or institution in the higher education market. The sheer numbers reveal how prospective students perceive a particular field of study, area of study, or institution each year. In this chapter, we focus on the situation of *kindergarten-educator* and primary school teacher training, based on the admission statistics.

Higher numbers of applications grant higher autonomy to higher education institutions to select students based on their scores, as highlighted by Pál Szontagh.² However, the admission rate did not change significantly between 2010 and 2022, indicating that the

¹ Szontagh, Pál (2024): Professional and career motivation in the teaching profession, in Szontagh, Pál – Tolnai Ágnes – Váradi, Ferenc – Váradi-Kusztos, Györgyi: *To be(come) a teacher. Results of Reformed teacher training on the horizon of the sociological process of careers and vocations*, Nagykovács, KRE PK, pp. 5-45

² Szontagh, *ibid.*

competency level and academic achievements of aspiring teachers remained balanced during the analysed period. This was even the case when the 2020, 2021, and 2022 admission procedures required at least one subject with an advanced-level secondary school leaving exam.

It is important to note here that the admission requirements for the teacher training bachelor's programs were a secondary school leaving exam at the intermediate level and a successful aptitude test, in addition to the minimum score set by the *Government Decree 423/2012. (XII. 29.)* on higher education admission procedure. This score was 280 out of a maximum of 500 points during the analyzed period. From the 2020 general admission procedure, the admission criteria changed, as the requirement shifted from intermediate level to advanced level secondary school leaving exam in one subject or a *Higher Education Entrance Examination (felsőoktatási felvételi szakmai vizsga, FFSZV)* in one subject for those who completed their secondary school studies before 2006. Those who held a tertiary degree, were exempt from the advanced level secondary school leaving exam and the *FFSZV*. It should be noted that tertiary vocational programs did not grant such an exemption, meaning that only degrees from former colleges/ universities or those obtained from a bachelor's, undivided master's, or master's program could be considered for exemption. From 2021, the changes in the admission rules made it possible for tertiary vocational programme degrees to replace the advanced level secondary school leaving exam/*FFSZV* obligation.³

When discussing the motivation and career orientation of teachers, the first thing to look at is whether there are enough applicants to motivate them. Higher education is a service market, where higher education institutions, as providers, compete for those interested in various programs. The bachelor's programmes for kindergarten educators and primary school teachers are offered in twenty-two and twenty locations, respectively, in Hungary. The competition between these institutions is huge, especially considering the continuously decreasing number of applicants for teacher training. The appearance of advanced-level secondary school leaving exams as admission

³ *Government Decree 423/2012. (XII. 29.) on higher education admission procedure.* ([link](#)) (Last download: 30/06/2023)

requirements significantly reduced the number of applicants for teacher training between 2020 and 2022.

To examine the HEIs' market position and embeddedness, it is first necessary to distinguish between the measurement indicators related to admissions. When announcing admission results, the Educational Authority publishes the total number of applications submitted to each program, the first-choice applications, and the number of admitted students. All applications submitted for a given program, whether they are listed as first or twenty-second choices, are included in the total number of applications. Due to the peculiarities of the admission system, only those applicants who listed the programme as their first choice are accessible to the institution on low-demand programs, such as teacher training. During the admission cut-off, those who reached the *HEI*, or the legal minimum score, and applied to the programme as their first choice, are admitted up to the capacity. If there is still capacity available after admitting all first-choice applicants, the second-choice applicants who achieved the minimum score are considered for filling the remaining places, followed by the third-choice applicants, and so on. As the institutional capacity for teacher training is generally higher than the number of first-choice applicants, comparing the number of first-choice applicants with the number of admitted students brings us closer to illustrating the actual situation of institutions.

The kindergarten educator and primary school teacher bachelor's programs are 6 and 8 semesters long, respectively, awarding 180 and 240 credits, leading to a tertiary degree and qualification. The regular (non-ethnic) and specialized (ethnic) programs are announced as separate programs by institutions. As the purpose of this analysis is to present the national situation related to the kindergarten educator training at the *Faculty of Pedagogy of Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (KRE PK)*, and the position of *KRE PK* in this context, the data do not include specialised ethnic programmes.

However, in order to forecast the recruitment side, higher education institutions also need to be aware of labour market movements so that they can determine their training capacities.

Between 2010 and 2019, the number of teachers reached its peak in 2016, with 154,386 teachers employed in public education institutions. This represented a significant increase compared to the 2012 figure of 149,778 teachers. However, after the peak in 2016, a continuous decline

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began. In 2019, the number of employed teachers dropped to only 149,362, which is the lowest data point in the examined 10-year period. The number of teachers has been steadily decreasing since 2016.

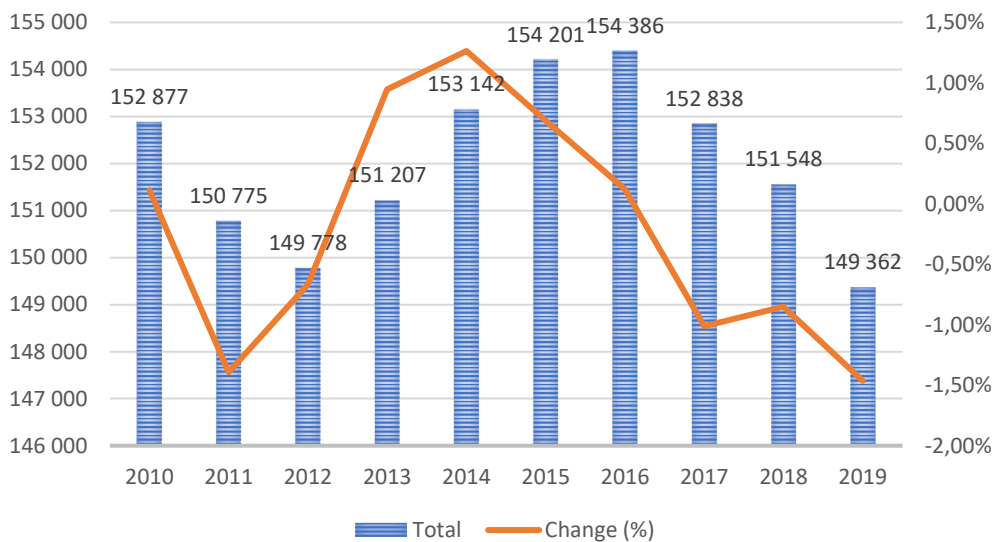


Figure 1 Number of teachers and its change compared to the previous year (2010-2019)⁴

Based on the breakdown of educational levels in public education institutions, we may observe that the majority of teachers in Hungary are employed in primary schools. They are followed by preschools, and then upper secondary vocational schools and upper secondary grammar schools are at a similar level. The list continues with vocational schools that ceased to exist from January 1, 2020⁵, and finally, vocational and skill development schools are at the lowest position.

Since 2010, primary schools and kindergartens have consistently increased their share of the employment of teachers, and in 2015, their

⁴ Source of data: Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (2023): *Összefoglaló táblák. Oktatás. 23.1.1.7. Óvodai nevelés* ([link](#)) (Last download: 30/06/2023) (author's editing)

⁵ Changes from 01.01.2020 of Act CXC of 2011 on national public education has abolished the provision of vocational schools, so that only teachers teaching in the phasing-out years are now available for vocational schools. The amendment to the *Act on the Teacher Education Act*, which came into force on 30.11.2016, has included upper secondary vocational schools in the public education system. Thus, between 30.11.2016 and 31.12.2019, vocational schools and upper secondary vocational schools appeared in the public education system in parallel. As the data series in this analysis focus on the period 2010-2019, the data breakdowns include both vocational schools and vocational secondary schools. *Act CCIV of 2011 on national higher education.* ([link](#)) (Last download: 30/06/2023)

combined proportion exceeded 70%. Primary schools and kindergartens are thus the largest employers within the public education system.

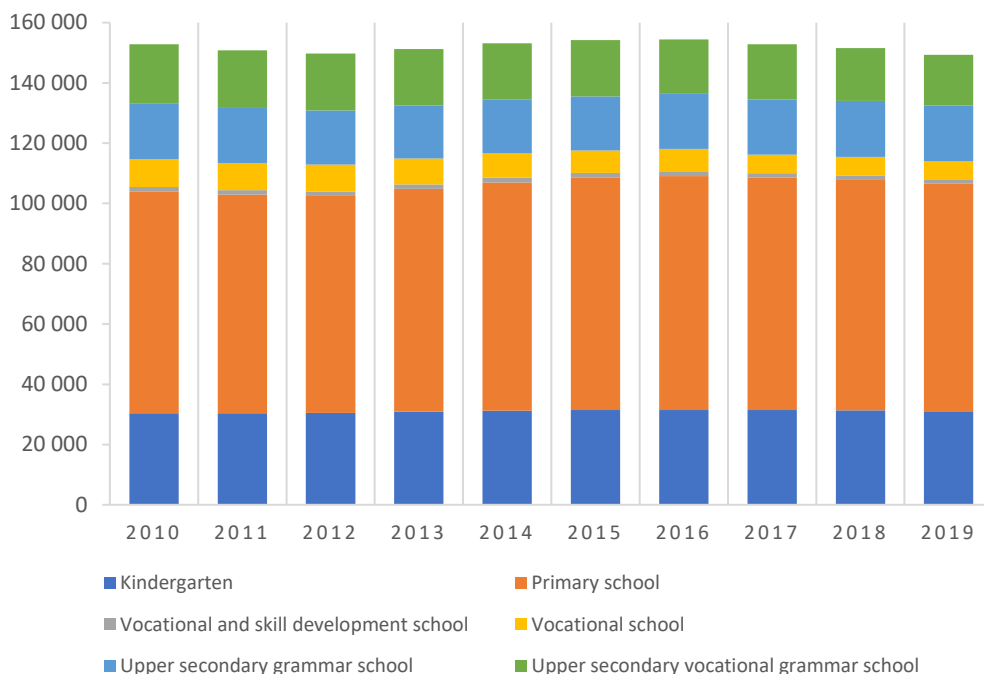


Figure 2: Number of teachers by type of institution ⁶

Since reaching its peak in 2016, the number of teachers has decreased by 5,024. The decline has had the most significant impact on vocational schools, upper secondary vocational schools, and primary schools. In 2019, compared to 2016, there were 2,205 fewer teachers in primary schools and 408 fewer teachers in kindergartens. The most substantial decline occurred in primary schools, while the number of teachers only increased in upper secondary grammar schools.

Higher education institutions have had to take these trends into account when planning their primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training recruitment procedures and institutional facilities.

⁶ Source of data: Ibid. (author's editing)

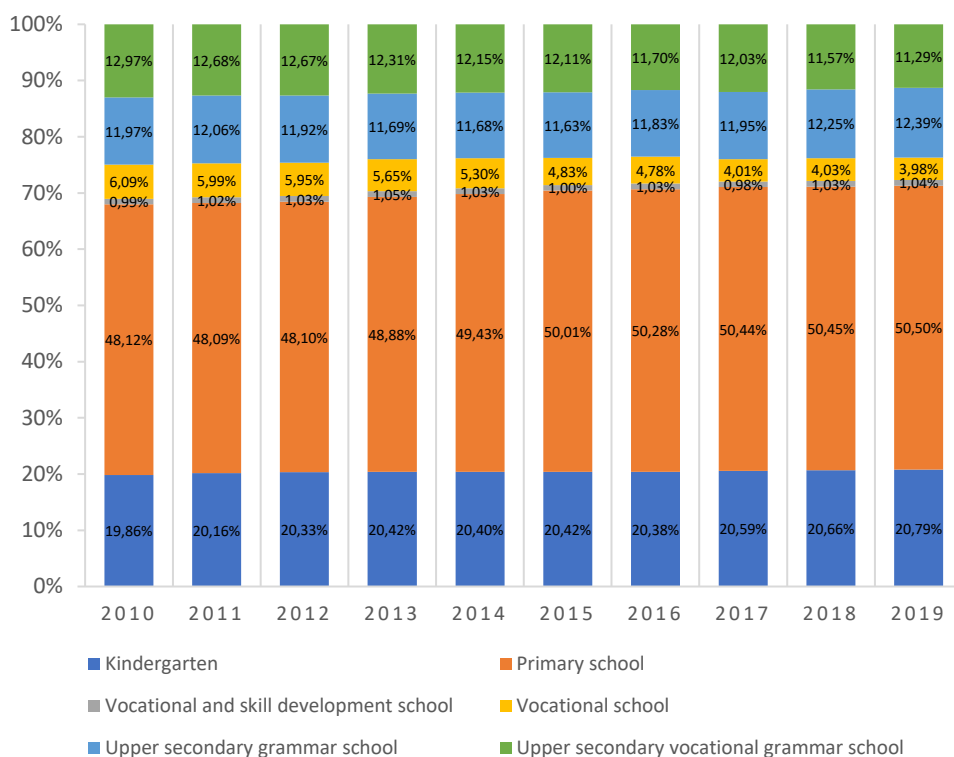


Figure 3 Ratio of teachers by type of institution⁷

Kindergarten-educator BA programme

Admission results

The introduction of the advanced-level secondary school leaving exam as an admission requirement starting in 2020 significantly reduced the number of first-choice applicants, resulting in more than a 45% decrease in both full-time and part-time (correspondence) study programs. The admission rate, however, decreased to a lesser extent. For those admitted to the full-time program, the number decreased by 28%, while for the correspondence program, it dropped by 38% compared to 2019. After the rapid changes in 2020, those aspiring to enrol in the kindergarten educator bachelor's program partially adapted to the altered admission requirements. On average, 10% more applicants

⁷ Author's calculation and editing based on Figure 6.

applied as their first choice compared to 2020. However, this adjustment did not reach the numbers seen in the baseline year of 2019. The expected improvement in the quality of applicants due to the requirement of an advanced-level secondary school leaving exam did not occur, as evidenced by the fact that in 2021, despite a 7.88% increase in first-choice applications for the full-time program, which typically attracts recent secondary school graduates without a degree, the number of admitted students from this group decreased by 8.23% compared to 2020. In 2022, there was again a significant decline in both first-choice applications and admissions. First-choice applications for both full-time and correspondence programs dropped by 20%. The admission rate for the full-time program decreased by 15%, while for the correspondence program, it declined by 39% compared to 2021.

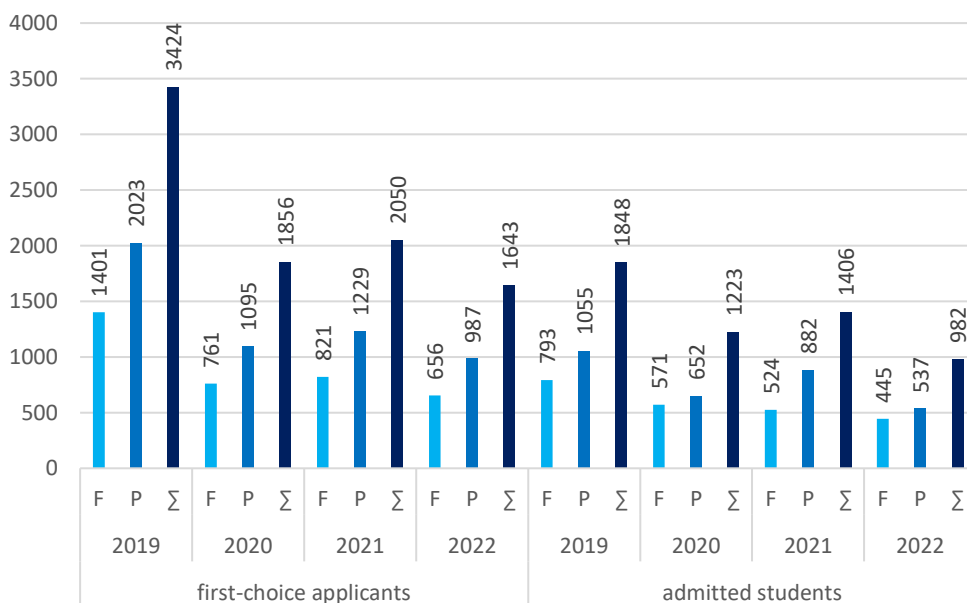


Figure 4: Number of first-choice applicants and students admitted to kindergarten-educator programmes (2019-2022) (F: Full-time, P: part-time)⁸

⁸ Source of data: Oktatási Hivatal (2023): *Ponthatárok, statisztikák. Elmúlt évek statisztikái.* ([link](#)) (Last download: 30/06/2023) (author's editing)

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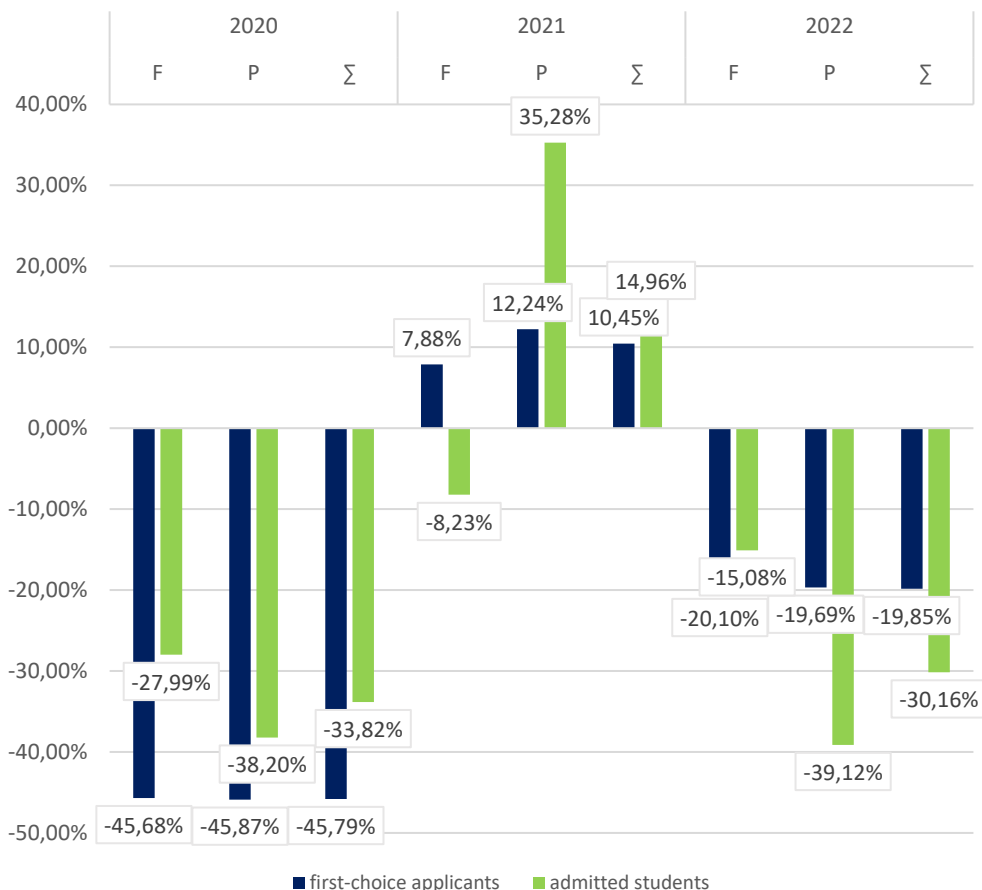


Figure 5 Number of first-choice applicants and students admitted to kindergarten-educator programmes compared to the previous year (2019-2022) (%)⁹

If we compare the first-choice application data and the number of admitted students for the years 2020-2022 to the figures for 2019, it becomes evident that the introduction of the advanced-level secondary school leaving exam as an admission requirement in 2020 had a significant impact on the kindergarten educator bachelor's program. None of the subsequent years came close to reaching the numbers seen in 2019, and the situation further deteriorated in 2022.

⁹ Source of data: Ibid. (author's editing)



Figure 6 Number of first-choice applicants and admitted students of kindergarten educator program compared to the base year 2019 (2020-2022) (%)¹⁰

With the introduction of the advanced-level secondary school leaving exam as an admission requirement in 2020, the number of first-choice applications decreased by an average of 45.79%, and the number of admitted students decreased by 33.82%. However, by 2022, the decrease in first-choice applications was 52.02%, and for admitted students, it reached 46.86% compared to 2019.

Compared to the base year of 2019, there were 1568 fewer first-choice applications for the kindergarten educator bachelor's program in 2020 and 625 fewer admitted students. In 2021, the number of first-choice applications was also lower than in 2019, with a decrease of 1374 applicants, and for admitted students, the decrease was 442. In 2022, the decrease was even more drastic compared to 2020. While 3924 students applied for the kindergarten educator program as their first choice in 2019, in 2022 there were 1781 fewer applicants. The year 2022 had the

¹⁰ Source of data: Ibid. (author's editing)

lowest admitted student numbers during the analysed period from 2019 to 2022. Only 982 students were admitted, which is 866 fewer compared to the figures of 2019.

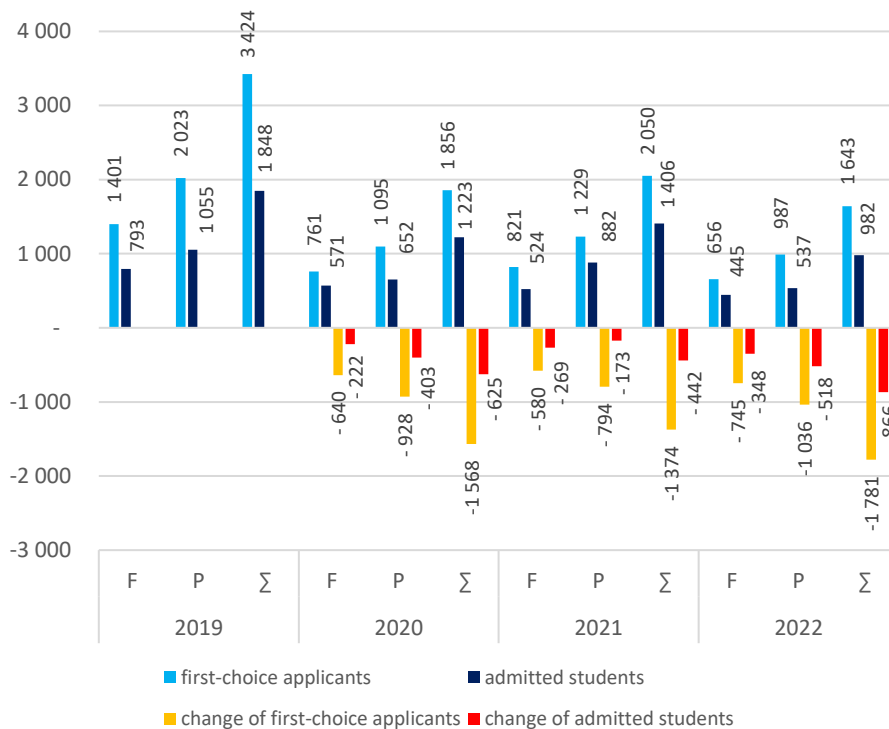


Figure 7 Number of first-choice applicants and admitted students of the kindergarten educator program compared to the base year 2019 (2019-2022)¹¹

Based on the above, the kindergarten educator bachelor's program has embarked on a highly negative path, where the profession is no longer attractive to applicants. Over the four years of analysis, the number of admitted students decreased by nearly half, with a decrease of 46.86%.

Meanwhile, the number of available places (i.e. the capacity of HEIs) continued to increase, which was a natural market reaction to increased student enrolment and the continuous pressure from the labour market. Based on the data from the *Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)*, the institutions' decision was well-founded, as the number of kindergarten educators had been decreasing, and the labour market was opened to increase the number of training places. Considering the market decisions

¹¹ Source of data: Ibid. (author's editing)

over a 10-year timeframe, the situation in kindergartens was the most stable in the public education sector. However, they did not foresee the admission trend caused by the introduction of the advanced-level secondary school leaving exam in 2020.

Changes in the number of kindergarten educators

The changes in the number of kindergarten educators highlighted the labour market impacts that the educational institution must consider when making decisions related to training. Since the admission results during the period between 2019 and 2022 followed the negative trends presented earlier, understanding the HEIs' market decisions requires examining the period with a longer time series. Previously introduced market trends, the possibility of replenishing the 2,613 teacher shortage in primary schools and kindergartens has been questioned due to the experiences of the general and supplementary admission procedures in 2020. The mandatory requirement of the advanced-level secondary school leaving exam significantly reduced the number of admitted students in both primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training programs.

Figure 9 provides a detailed breakdown of the changes in the number of teachers for each institution type and year between 2010 and 2019. In vocational education, there was a continuous decrease in the number of teachers in vocational schools and upper-secondary vocational schools throughout the examined period. As for vocational and skills development schools, their teacher numbers alternated between growth and decline in different years, showing no clear trend. In upper secondary grammar schools, the number of teachers increased annually between 2014 and 2018, but in 2019, a decline was observed.

As for primary schools, they managed to increase the number of teachers only in four years during the examined period, specifically between 2013 and 2016. Since 2016, the number of teachers in primary schools has been consistently decreasing. As for kindergartens, the decline in teacher numbers started to appear in 2018.

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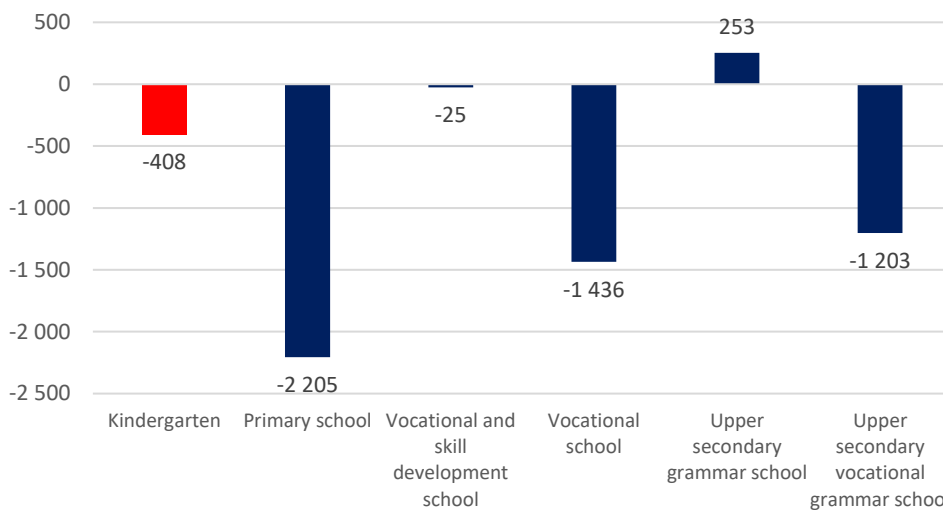


Figure 8 Changes in the number of teachers by type of institution between 2017 and 2019 ¹²

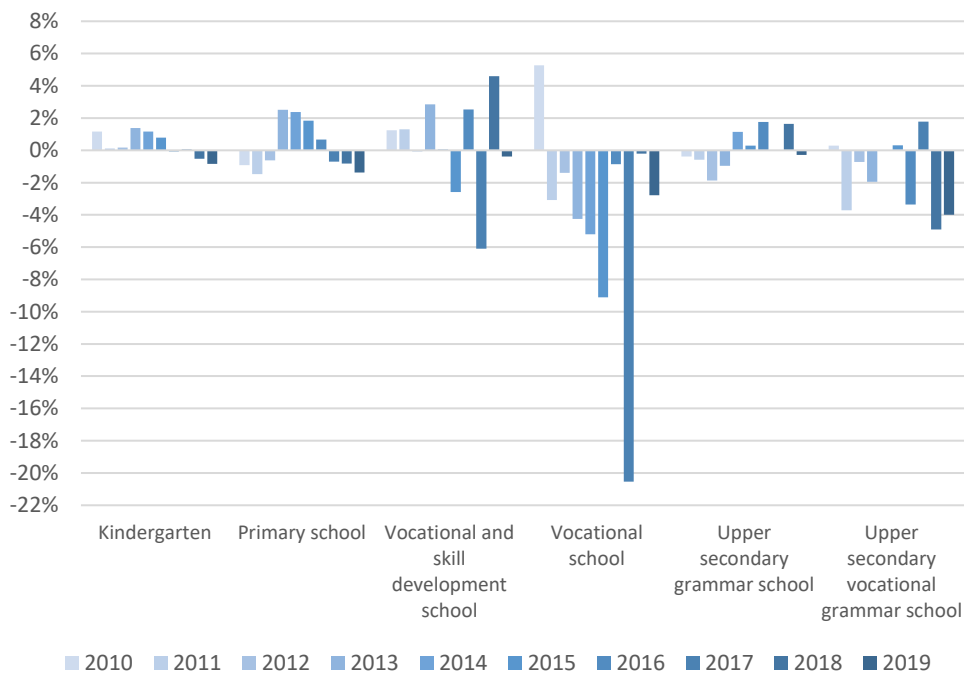


Figure 9 Percentage change in the number of teachers compared to the previous year¹³

¹² Author's calculation and editing based on Figure 6.

¹³ Author's calculation and editing based on Figure 6.

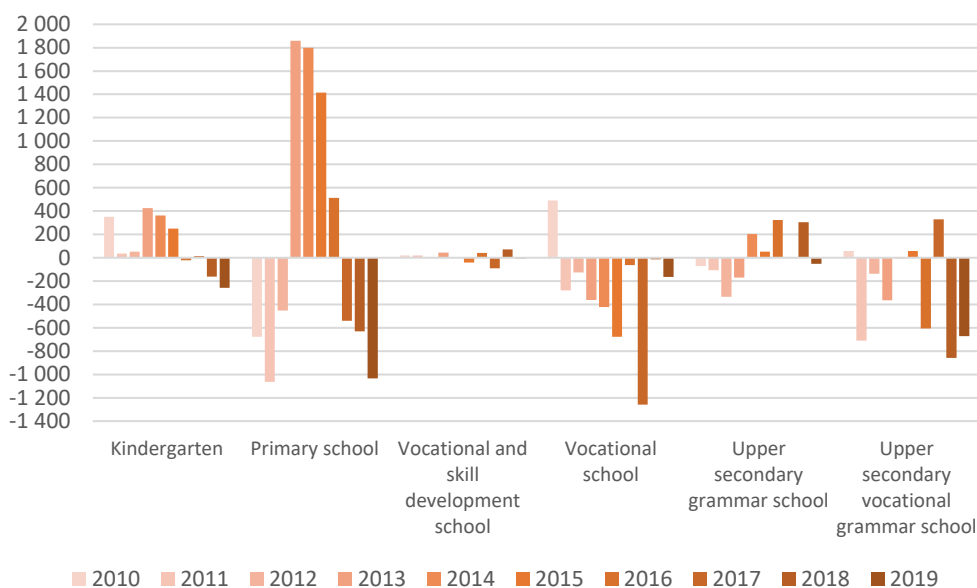


Figure 10 Nominal change in the number of teachers compared to the previous year¹⁴

Between 2013 and 2015, there was a total increase of 1035 kindergarten educators compared to the state in 2012. However, after 2015, despite a moderate growth of fourteen teachers in 2017, there was an overall decline of 422 teachers compared to the 2015 level.

The data from 2016 onwards by county shows that the decline was different; it had a stronger impact on certain regions. In Budapest, there was an increase of ninety-eight kindergarten educators in 2016, but by 2019, there were a hundred fewer teachers employed in this position compared to the previous year. In contrast, Pest County, which includes the agglomeration of Budapest, did not experience such a significant decline. In 2019, they employed eleven, and in 2018, twenty-seven fewer kindergarten educators compared to the previous years. Combining Budapest with Pest County, there was a shortage of 111 teachers, equivalent to a whole year's worth of teachers in 2019.

¹⁴ Author's calculation and editing based on Figure 6.

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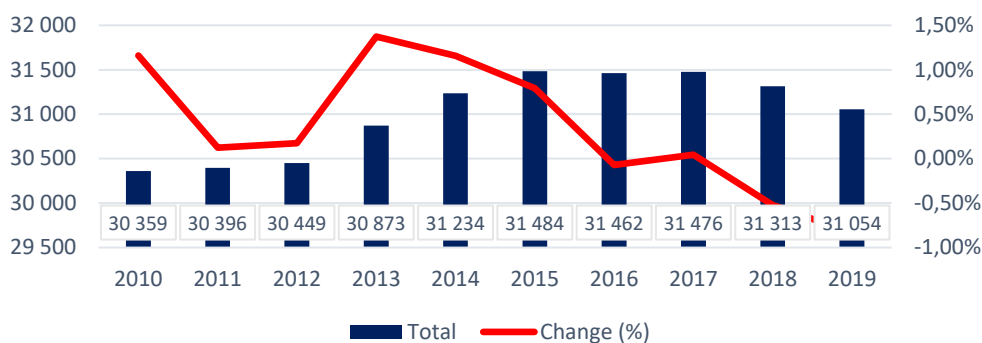


Figure 11 Number and kindergarten educators and the percentage change of their number compared to the previous year ¹⁵

The Central Transdanubian region saw a decline in all its counties following the growth in 2017. In Fejér, Komárom-Esztergom, and Veszprém counties, there were thirty-four fewer kindergarten educators in 2018 and seventy-one fewer in 2019. In the Western Transdanubian region, Győr-Moson-Sopron and Vas counties experienced an increase in employed kindergarten educators in both 2018 and 2019. However, in Zala County, there has been a continuous decline since 2016, totalling forty-three fewer teachers. The Southern Transdanubian region also witnessed a decline. In Baranya County, there were forty-two fewer kindergarten educators in 2019 than in 2016. Tolna and Somogy counties experienced a decline between 2016 and 2018, but in 2019, both counties had an increase of three kindergarten educators each.

Northern Hungary was heavily affected by the emerging trend. Compared to the twelve-teacher increase in 2016, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County had sixty fewer teachers in 2019 than in 2017. Heves County had thirty-three fewer kindergarten educators in 2019 due to the continuous decline since 2016. In Nógrád County, despite a six-teacher increase in 2018, the overall decline in 2016, 2017, and 2019 resulted in sixty-two fewer kindergarten educators. In the Northeastern Great Plain region, only Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok County managed to balance out the increases and declines in different years. However, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg and Hajdú-Bihar counties experienced continuous declines, resulting in ninety fewer and forty-three fewer kindergarten educators, respectively, compared to 2016.

¹⁵ Author's calculation and editing based on Figure 6.

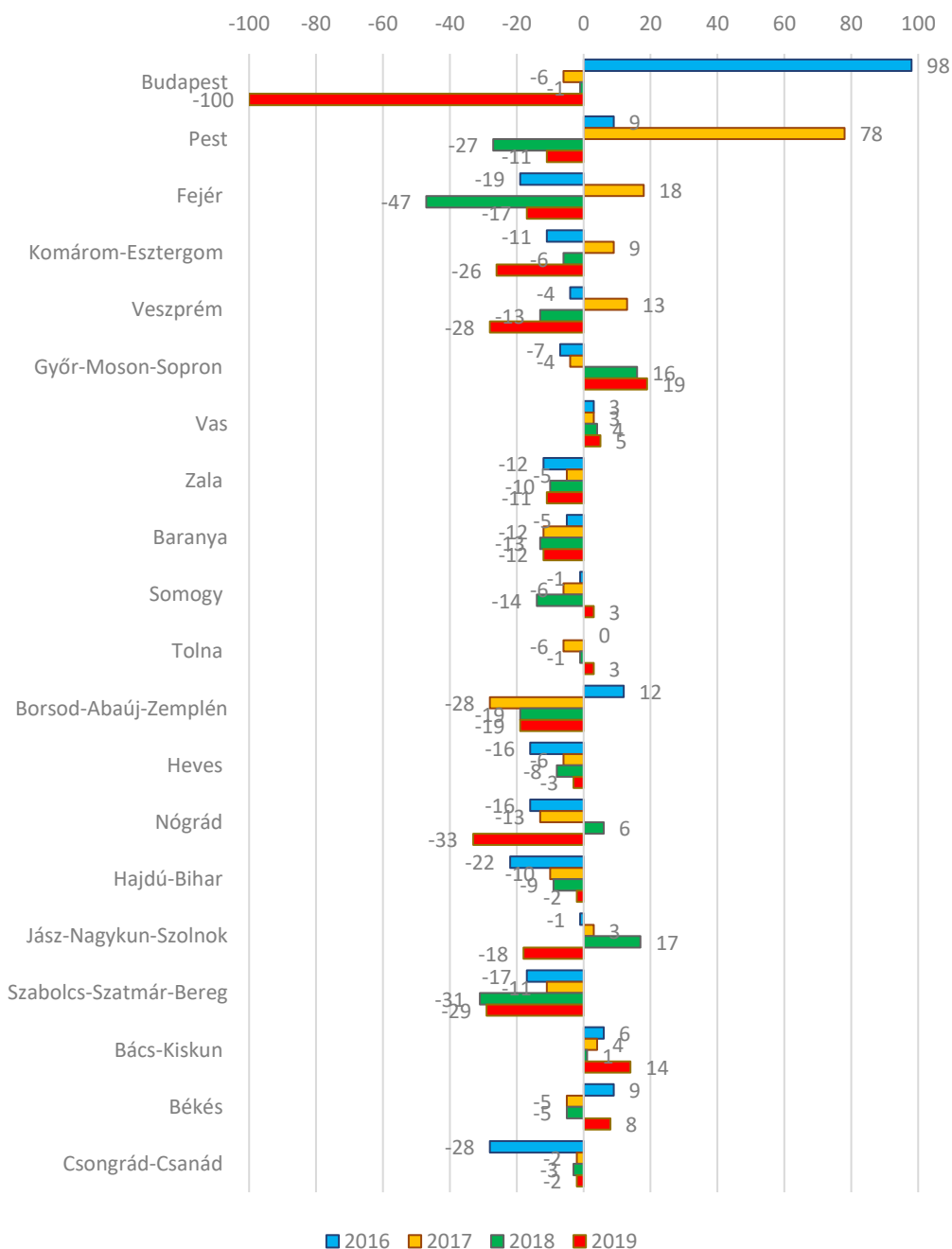


Figure 12 Nominal change in the number of kindergarten educators compared to the previous year by county¹⁶

¹⁶ Source of data: Ibid. (author's calculation and editing)

In the *Southern Great Plain* region, Bács-Kiskun County had an increase in kindergarten educators every year, while in Békés County, the increases offset the declines in different years. Only in Csongrád-Csanád County was there a decrease of thirty-five kindergarten educators during this period.

The data by county shows that the decline is widespread, but the extent of the decline varies in different regions and counties. The most significant decline occurred in 2019.

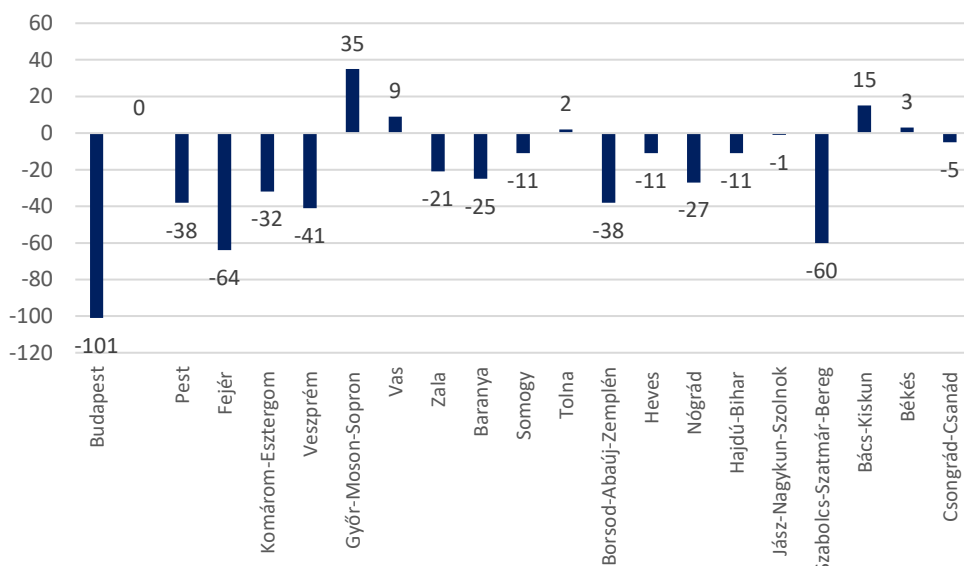


Figure 13 Nominal change in the number of kindergarten educators by county from 2018 to 2019¹⁷

The educational institutions, however, not only considered the current demand for training in different counties but also anticipated the future need for more kindergarten educators. Examining the age groups of kindergarten educators brings us closer to understanding why these institutions believed that there was a justification for twenty-two training centres in the Hungarian market. Between 2003 and 2018, the proportion of individuals under the age of forty visibly declined, while the percentage of those aged fifty and above increased. Although the younger age group nearly caught up with the 2003 level with a rate of 10.48% in 2018 compared to 11.13% in 2003, the proportion of the 30-39

¹⁷ Author's calculation and editing based on Figure 12.

age group steadily decreased from 29.49% to 17.2% over those same fifteen years. On the other hand, the percentage of those aged fifty and above increased from 16.49% to 38.35%. All of this indicates the continuous ageing in the profession of kindergarten educators.

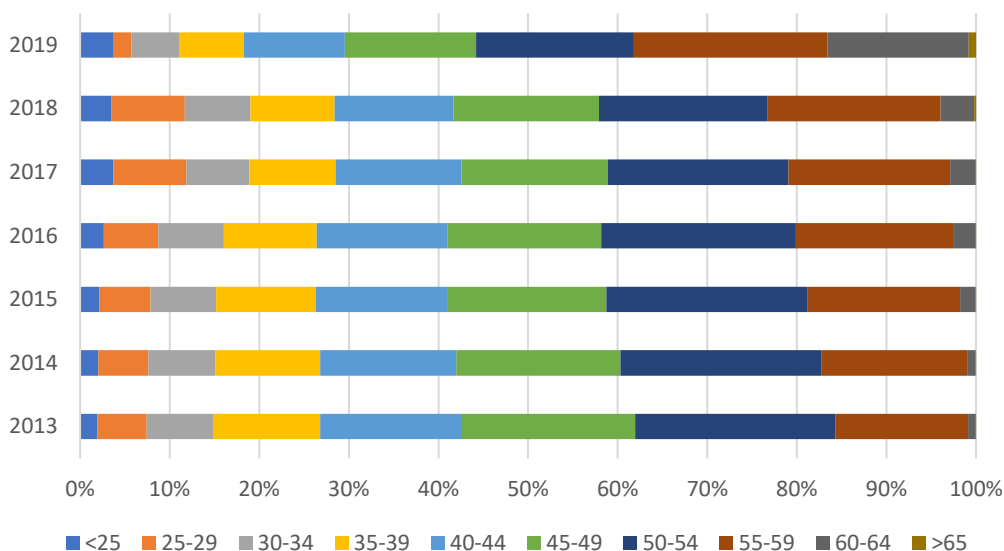


Figure 14 Kindergarten educators by age groups (%) ¹⁸

The year-on-year change in the distribution of each age group by five years, also shows that the largest group in the profession in terms of the overall number is the 50-54 age group, which as of 2018 is no longer followed by the younger 45-49 age group, as it is overtaken in terms of the number in the 55-59 age group. The ageing of the profession is also evident in this form, which indicates a higher demand for recent graduates in the future.

¹⁸ Source of data: European Commission (2023): *Eurostat Database: Population and social conditions/ Education and training/ Education personnel. Classroom teachers and academic staff by education level, program orientation, sex and age groups.* ([link](#)) (Last download: 30/06/2023) (author's editing).

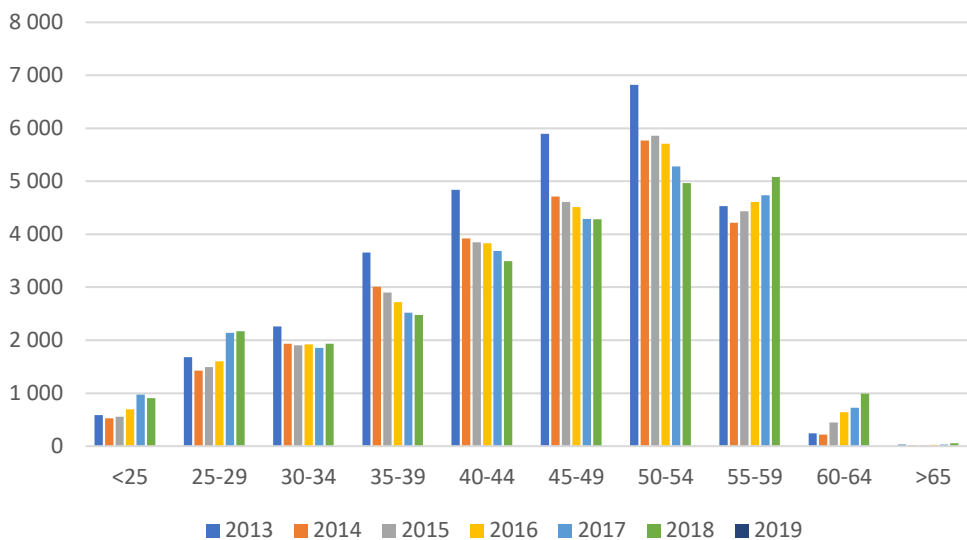


Figure 15 Nominal changes of age groups (2013-2018)¹⁹

Training Centres

This need for graduate recruits was advertised by twenty-two training centres across the country during the period 2019-2022. The *GFE*, *AVKF*, *PPKE*, and *SZIE*, as training providers in the countryside, have opened their Budapest training centres to *ELTE* and *KRE*. The number of training centres has thus increased from eighteen to twenty-two. However, if we look at the fact that Budapest showed the largest shortage of kindergarten educators in the period leading up to the decisions, we can interpret these openings as rational market decisions. Nevertheless, the training centres in Budapest can meet the needs not only of Budapest but also of the growing agglomeration, so the decision seemed to be justified. However, after 2019, the enrolment figures called these institutional steps into question and the problem of market capacity had to be faced.

¹⁹ Ibid. (author's editing).

Table 1 HEIs by training centre offering kindergarten educator BA programme between 2019 and 2022 ²⁰

	Training Centre / HEI		Training Centre / HEI
1	Baja / EJF	12	Kaposvár / SZIE/MATE
2	Budapest / AVKF	13	Kecskemét / NJE/KRE
3	Budapest / ELTE	14	Nagykőrös / KRE
4	Budapest / GFE	15	Nyíregyháza / NYE
5	Budapest / KRE	16	Pécs / PTE
6	Budapest / PPKE	17	Sárospatak / EKKE/THE
7	Budapest / SZIE	18	Sopron / SOE
8	Eger / EKKE	19	Szarvas / GFE
9	Esztergom / PPKE	20	Szeged / SZTE
10	Hajdúböszörmény / DE	21	Szekszárd / PTE
11	Jászberény / EKKE	22	Vác / AVKF

20-30% of the total admitted were to Budapest training centres. The remaining two-thirds divided between sixteen training centres in the countryside.

In Budapest, there are six HEIs to apply for a bachelor's degree in kindergarten education (BA programme). The AVKF, ELTE, GFE, KRE, PPKE and SZIE are offering this programme.

²⁰ Oktatási Hivatal, Ibid. AVKF: Apor Vilmos Katolikus Főiskola (Apor Vilmos Catholic College); DE: Debreceni Egyetem (University of Debrecen); EJF: Eötvös József Főiskola (Eötvös József College); EKKE: Eszterházy Károly Katolikus Egyetem (Eszterházy Károly Catholic University); ELTE: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem (Eötvös Loránd University); GFE: Gál Ferenc Egyetem (Gál Ferenc University); KRE: Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem (Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary); MATE: Magyar Agrár- és Élettudományi Egyetem (Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences); NJE: Neumann János Egyetem (Neumann János University); NYE: Nyíregyházi Egyetem (University of Nyíregyháza); PPKE: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem (Pázmány Péter Catholic University); PTE: Pécsi Tudományegyetem (University of Pécs); SOE: Soproni Egyetem (University of Sopron); SZIE: Szent István Egyetem (Szent István University); SZTE: Szegedi Tudományegyetem (University of Szeged); THE: Tokaj-Hegyalja Egyetem (University of Tokaj).

The future of primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training

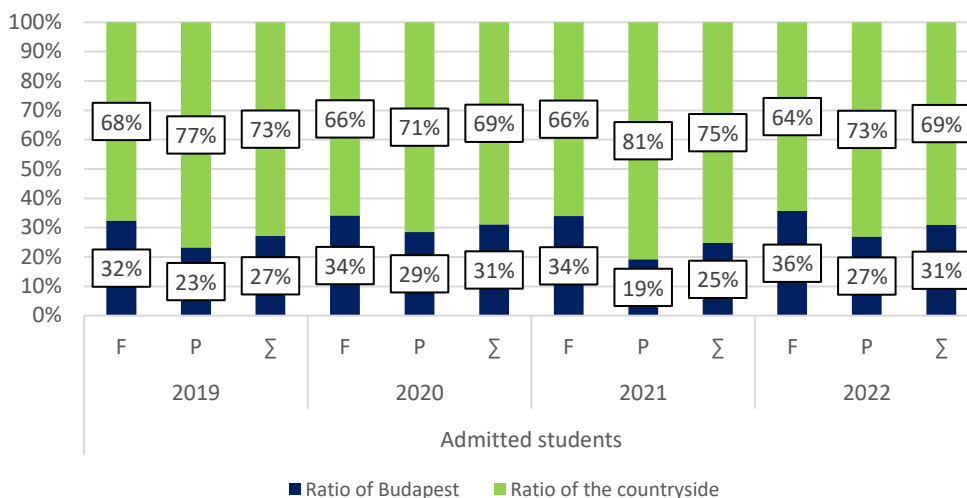


Figure 16 Ratio of admitted students by Budapest and countryside training places (2019-2020) (%)²¹

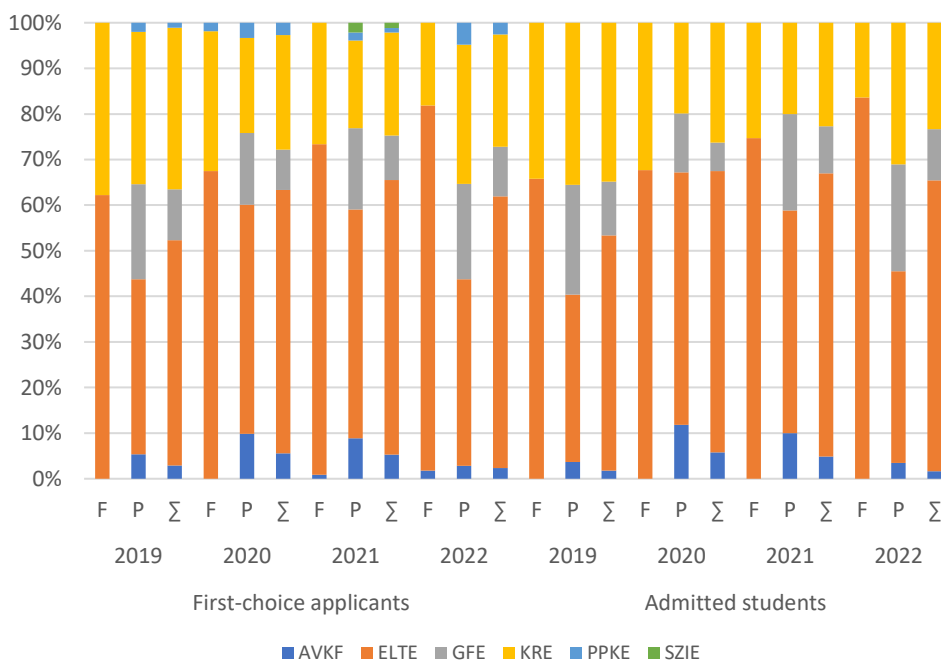


Figure 17 First-choice applicants and admitted students of kindergarten education BA program in Budapest by HEI (2019-2022) (%)²²

²¹ Ibid. (author's calculation and editing)

²² Author's calculation and editing

The Budapest market is clearly dominated by ELTE in both full-time and part-time education, with KRE in second place. GFE is also a strong competitor to KRE in the part-time (correspondence) program segment. In full-time training, only ELTE and KRE are among the top two providers, with KRE's share steadily declining. As training providers, PPKE and SZIE have not been able to launch any of the programmes advertised in Budapest, which shows the over-saturation of the Budapest market.

However, the number of admissions shows that ELTE, the market leader in Budapest, is also experiencing a decline. The full-time cohort, which started with 169 students in 2019, dropped to 132 in 2020, a number it has maintained since. In the part-time programme, the class of 90 students in 2019 fell to 61 in 2022. GFE has stabilised its position in the Budapest market for part-time programmes. AVKF could not maintain the results of 2020 and 2021 in 2022, with the number of cohorts starting in 2022 falling by a third. KRE's full-time programmes have declined significantly in Budapest compared to ELTE. While in 2019, KRE accounted for 38% of admissions to full-time kindergarten education BA programmes in Budapest, this proportion fell to 16% by 2022 in a shrinking market.

If we look at how the recruitment results of the Budapest training centre compare to those of the country, we do not get a consistent picture. During the period of national decline in 2020 and 2022, the Budapest market declined less than the national market. In 2022, however, the difference was already significant. At the national level, the number of full-time enrolments fell by 15.1%, but in the metropolitan area only by 10.7%. In part-time programmes, the national decrease was 39.1%, but in Budapest only 14.7%. But 2021 was a very special year, if we compare the Budapest and national figures. In 2021, the number of first-choice applications increased compared to the previous year, however, the national level was higher in this increase than the Budapest one. This was the year in which the number of students enrolled in higher education as, for the first time, degrees of tertiary vocational programmes became equal with advanced-level school leaving exams as had been the case with BA/ MA degrees before. The number of students admitted by part-time programs at the national level increased by 35.3% but decreased by 8.6% in Budapest.

The future of primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training

Those who had previously completed tertiary vocational programmes are now, typically in part-time programmes, continuing their studies while working. *HEIs* of the countryside used this new market much more intensively than those in Budapest. However, while the impact of former tertiary vocational graduates emerged only in 2021, in 2022, there was no such 'boom' in training.

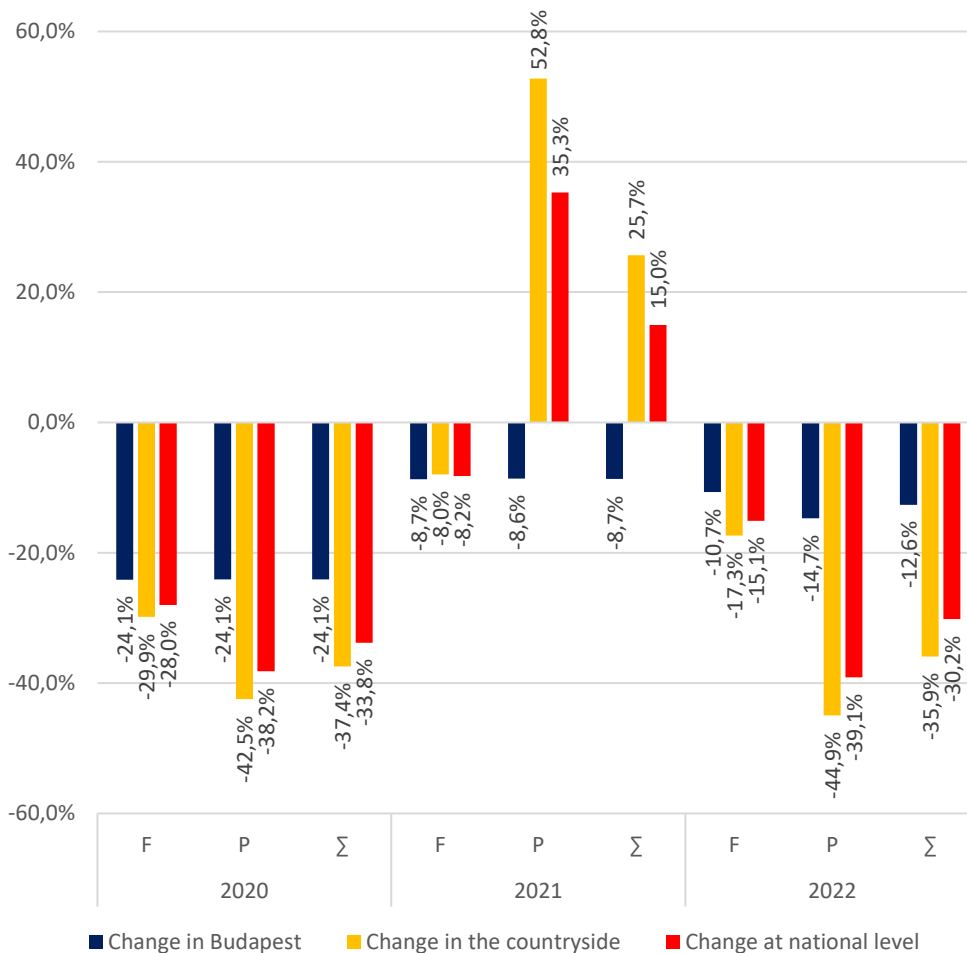


Figure 18 Percentage change of admitted students of kindergarten education BA program in Budapest, in the countryside and at the national level (2019-2022) (%)²³

²³ Author's calculation and editing based on Figure 17.

The different market share of each training centre also varies widely depending on regional attractiveness. Between 2019 and 2022, the established ranking of training centres has been completely transformed. The number of large training centres has been halved and small training centres have come to the fore. The admission year 2021 is notable in this respect, as the number of applicants for the kindergarten education BA program increased nationally, but not everyone was able to take advantage of this increase, as can be seen from the reordering of the ranking. Institutions that were more successful in attracting and re-entering their former graduates from higher education, which replaced the entrance qualification of the advanced-level school leaving exam from this year, were able to achieve better admissions results. In 2019, higher education institutions were still able to start programs with more than one hundred students in seven locations. A further seven training centres were able to offer programs with between fifty and a hundred students. However, PPKE Budapest, PTE Pécs and SZIE Budapest were not able to start the programme.

In 2020, after the introduction of the advanced-level school leaving exam as an entry requirement, the number of training centres starting a cohort of over a hundred students decreased to four, and the number of training centres starting with a cohort of between fifty and a hundred students remained at seven, but the number of the cohort of under fifty students increased from five in 2019 to nine. The viability of training for those starting courses without a minimum cohort of fifty was questionable, and sustainability had to be ensured by other programmes in these institutions. More particularly, PPKE and SZIE in Budapest were unable to start their programmes.

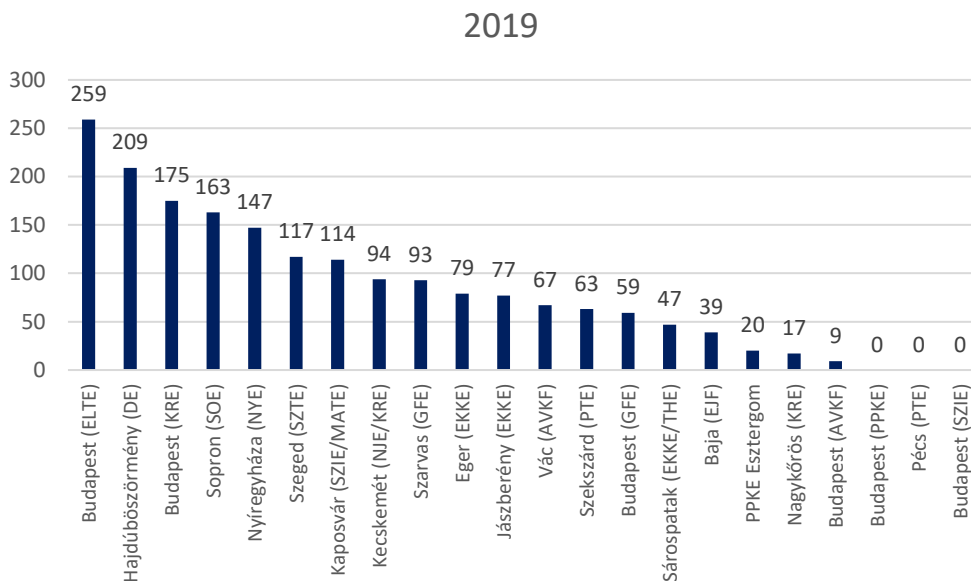


Figure 19 Admitted students of kindergarten education BA program by training centre in 2019²⁴

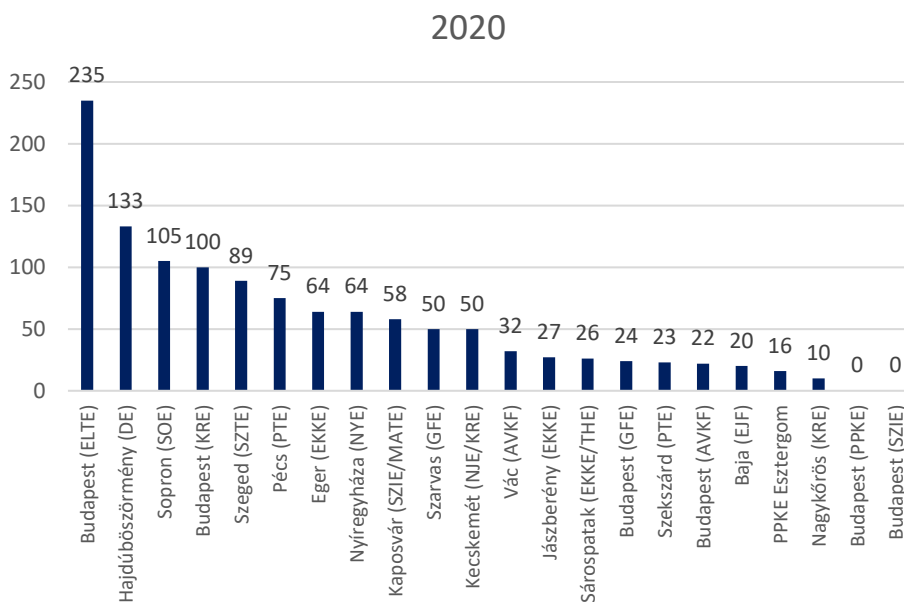


Figure 20 Admitted students of kindergarten education BA program by training centre in 2020²⁵

²⁴ Oktatási Hivatal, Ibid. (author's editing)

²⁵ Ibid. (author's editing)

In 2021, when the tertiary vocational programme degree could replace the advanced-level school leaving exam as the entry requirement, it also increased the number of students enrolled in the certain program, resulting in four training centres with over a hundred students in each, and seven with between fifty and a hundred students, and an increase in the number of students enrolled in those with under fifty students.

But the 2022 recruitment showed that the success of 2021 was only temporary. The largest training place, ELTE Budapest, saw a 25% decrease compared to 2019, with SOE only maintaining its 2019 position. DE's training centre in Hajdúböszörmény suffered a 51% decrease compared to its 2019 result. The number of admissions to KRE's Budapest training centre fell below a hundred. Only four training centres were able to start classes of between fifty and a hundred students, and only three of over a hundred students. PPKE and SZIE in Budapest were again unable to start the kindergarten educators' BA program, which clearly showed the over-saturation of the Budapest market. There were nine training centres in 2022 that started a cohort of less than fifty.

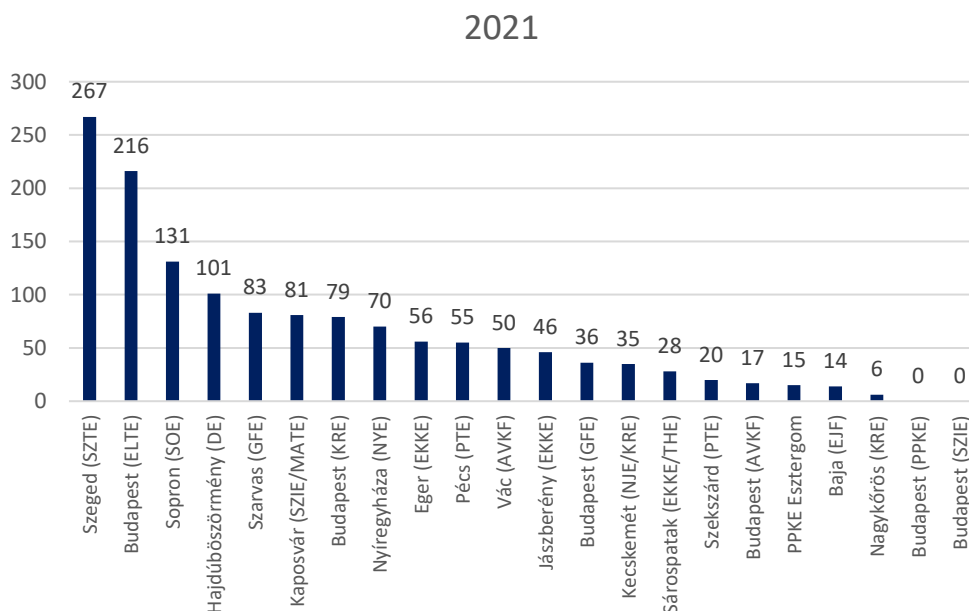


Figure 21 Admitted students of kindergarten education BA program by training centre in 2021²⁶

²⁶ Ibid. (author's editing)

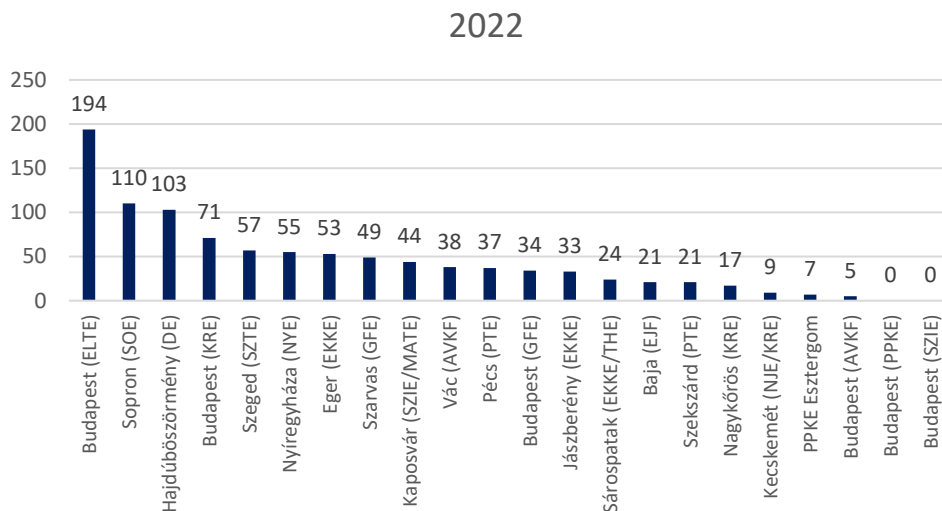


Figure 22 Admitted students of kindergarten education BA program by training centre in 2022²⁷

Based on the age structure of kindergarten educators and the demand for graduated kindergarten educators, the increase in the number of training centres foreseen for 2019 was not successful due to changes in the recruitment criteria. In particular, the Budapest market was saturated, with several newly opened training providers unable to launch their programs. Nevertheless, the age structure of kindergarten educators clearly shows that graduates are already in high demand and will be in the coming years, but the popularity of the program has declined significantly in the higher education market after 2019.

Primary school teacher BA programme

Admission results

The popularity of primary school teacher training is lower than that of kindergarten educator training, as shown by the number of first-choice applications and admissions. In the peak period in 2019, twice as many first-choice applicants applied for a BA for kindergarten educators than for primary school teachers, and the number of admissions in 2022 was also a third higher for a BA for kindergarten educators than for a

²⁷ Ibid. (author's editing)

BA for primary school teachers. However, the number of training centres is still just below the number of higher education institutions offering a bachelor’s degree for kindergarten educators, despite the lower number of applicants. The twenty training centres are therefore intended to serve the regional training needs and labour supply of primary school teachers in the countryside rather than to follow a market-based decision.

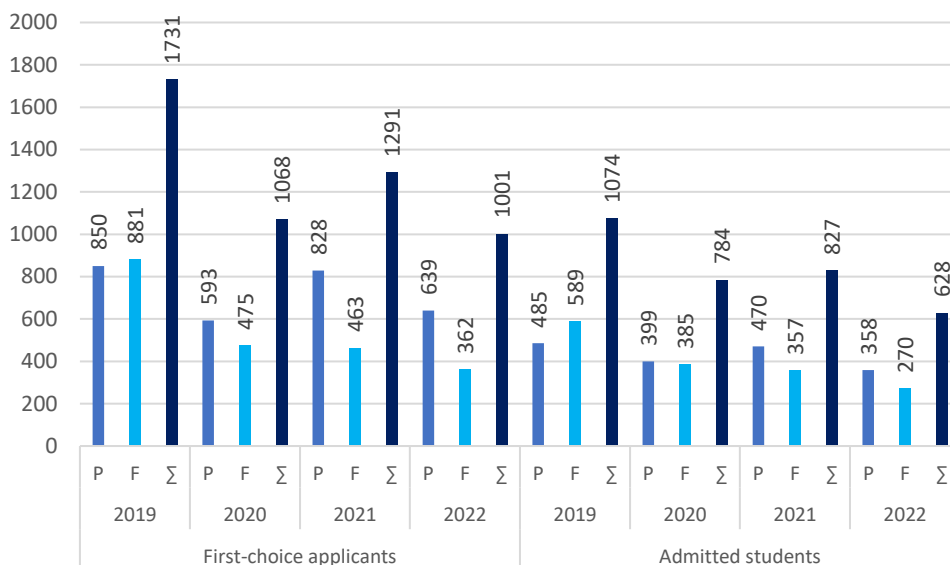


Figure 23: Number of first-choice applicants and admitted students of primary school teacher BA program (2019-2022)²⁸

In 2019, there were 1,731 first-choice applicants for the primary school teacher BA program, of which 1,074 were admitted. The introduction of the advanced-level school leaving exam as an entry requirement for the primary school teacher bachelor's degree has had a similar effect to the one for the kindergarten education BA program. The first-choice applications fell by 38.3% compared to 2019 when the entry requirement for admission was the intermediate school leaving exam in addition to the aptitude test. At the same time, the number of admissions also decreased significantly, though by only 27%. In 2021, a more significant increase in the number of part-time programs is expected at the national level, but this is due to the same phenomenon as the increased interest

²⁸ Ibid. (author’s editing)

in the kindergarten education BA program in the same year. In fact, those with tertiary vocational programme degrees were able to apply for the primary school teacher BA program in the same way as those who had previously obtained a BA/ MA degree, because it also replaced the entry requirement for advanced level school leaving exam. Apart from this increase, we can see that the primary school teacher BA program has not been able to return to anywhere near the results of 2019.

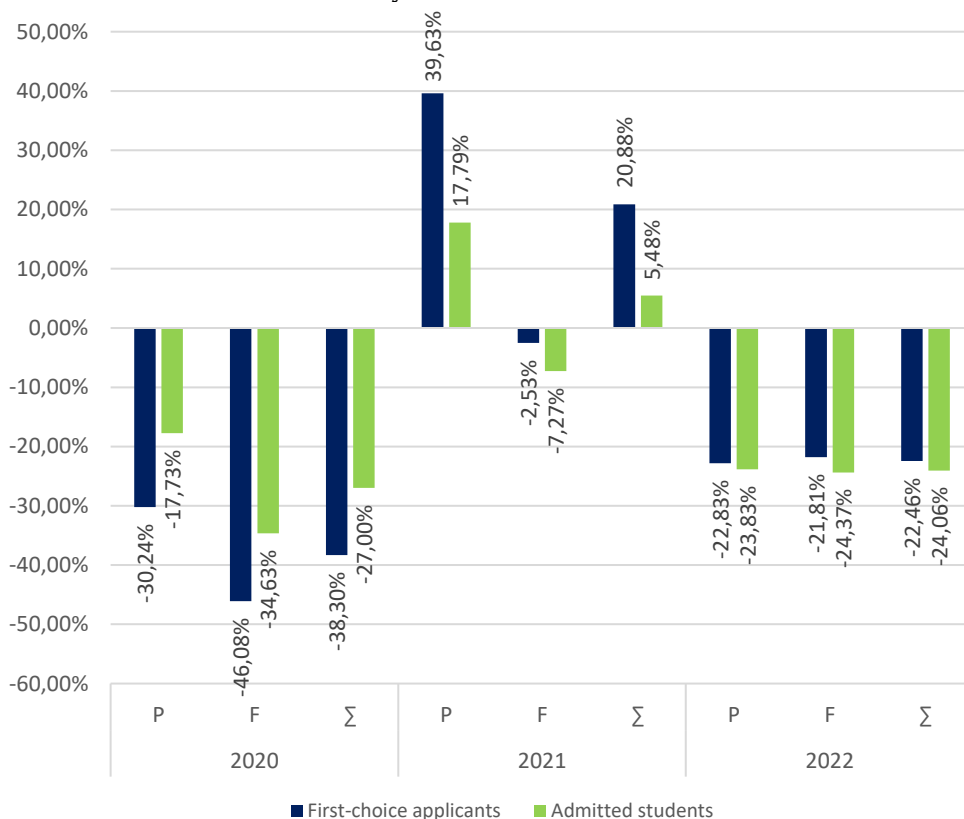


Figure 24 Percentage change of first-choice applications and admissions in primary school teacher BA program compared to the previous year (2019-2022) (%)²⁹

Taking 2019 as a base year, we can examine the concrete impact of the introduction of the advanced-level school leaving exam on primary school teacher training, where enrolment was not excessively high, and institutions did not have to deal with the problem of lack of capacity. In 2020, there was a clear decline, but if we analyse the increase from 2020

²⁹ Ibid. (author's calculation and editing)

to 2021 and compare the 2021 results with the 2019 base year, we can see that while part-time programmes, with their 2-3% decline, are approaching the 2019 level, full-time programs have still not recovered from the shock and the decline is still around 50%.

Training institutions have therefore had to adjust to a steadily declining enrolment in primary school teacher training from 2020, which has caused tensions not only within some training institutions but also in the labour market, where the number of primary school teachers is steadily falling.

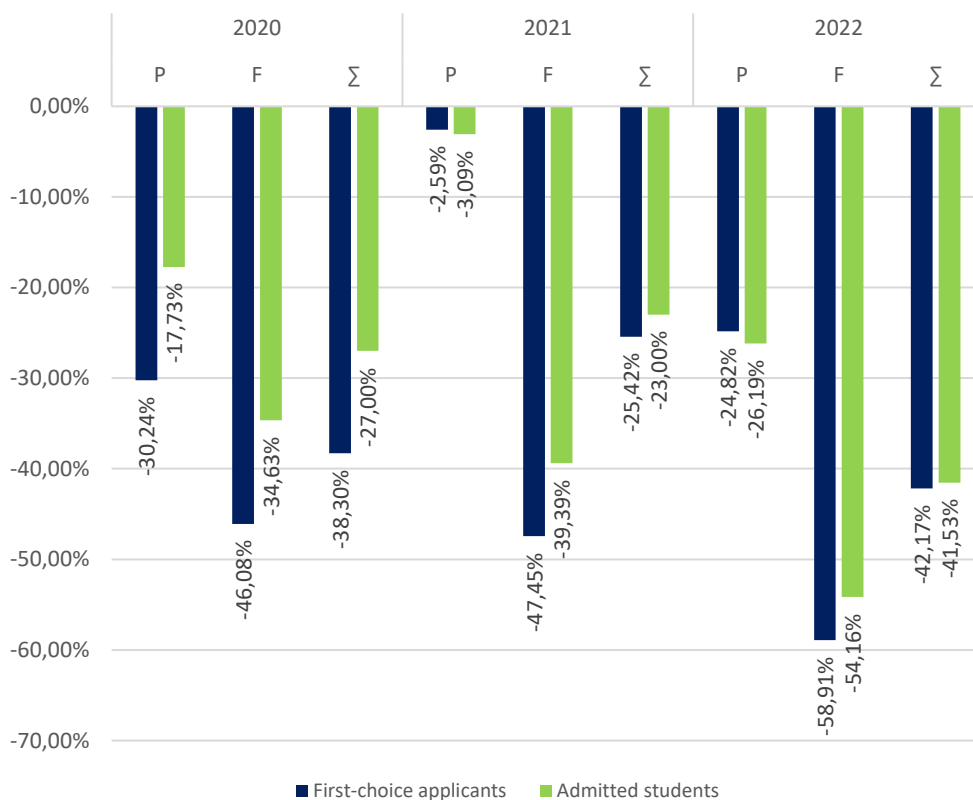


Figure 25 Percentage change of first-choice applications and admissions in primary school teacher BA program compared to the base year 2019 (2020-2022) (%)³⁰

³⁰ Ibid. (author's calculation and editing)

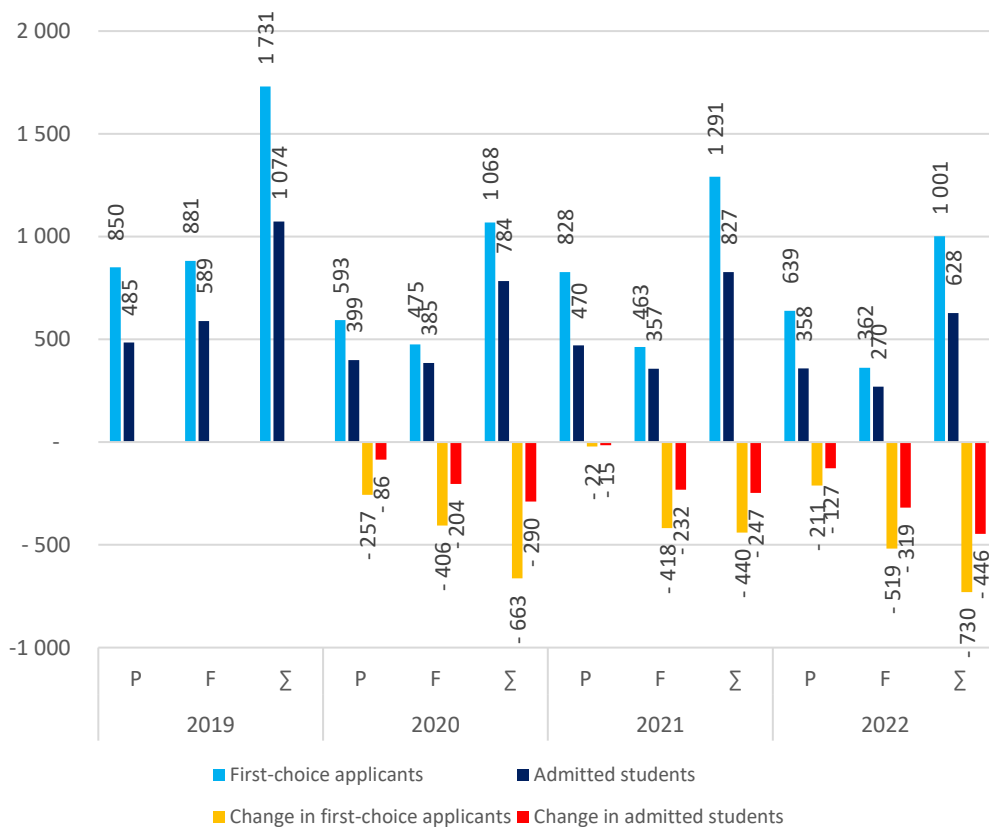


Figure 26 Nominal change of first-choice applicants and admitted students in primary school teacher BA program compared to the base year 2019 (2019-2022)³¹

However, compared to the kindergarten education BA programme, there is a much lower concentration of training centres in each region, and the regional distribution of training centres is much more balanced. The predominance of Budapest in the number of training centres and trainers is less definite, with only three higher education institutions offering the programmes, as opposed to six for kindergarten educators.

Training centres

Primary school teacher training was offered by fourteen higher education institutions in twenty training centres. The increase in the

³¹ Ibid. (author's calculation and editing)

number of training centres, as in the case of kindergarten educator training, was the result of mergers and restructuring of institutions in the past. Formerly separate institutions have been linked to larger universities, such as the Kaposvár training institution, which was transferred from the *University of Kaposvár (Kaposvári Egyetem)* to the *Szent István University (Szent István Egyetem)* and then, after the transformation of the SZIU, to the *Hungarian University of Agricultural and Life Sciences (Magyar Agrár- és Élettudományi Egyetem)*, or the *Tessedik Samuel College (Tessedik Sámuel Főiskola)* in Szarvas, which is now part of the higher education market as the *Faculty of Pedagogy of the Gál Ferenc University (Gál Ferenc Egyetem)*. But the same can be said of the training centres in Jászberény and Kecskemét, where the former is now the *Eszterházy Károly University (Eszterházy Károly Egyetem)*, later *Eszterházy Károly Catholic University (Eszterházy Károly Katolikus Egyetem)*, and the latter the *Károli Gáspár Reformed University (Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem)*. The *Berzsenyi Dániel Teacher Training College (Berzsenyi Dániel Tanárképző Főiskola)* in Szombathely was affiliated to the *Eötvös Loránd University (Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem)*, while the *Szekszárd training centre of Teacher Training College in Kaposvár (Kaposvári Tanítóképző Főiskola)* was affiliated to the *University of Pécs (Pécsi Tudományegyetem)*.

However, it was not only mergers but also the launch of new training centres that shaped the number of training centres. The launch of the *Pázmány Péter Catholic University (Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem)* and the *Károli Gáspár Reformed University* in Budapest, the *Gál Ferenc University* in Szeged and the *University of Pécs* in Pécs have led to an increase in the number of training places, in many cases reinforcing the regional crowding-out effect.

The future of primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training

Table 2 Training centres offering primary school teacher BA programmes by location (2019-2022)³²

	Training Centre / HEI		Training Centre / HEI
1	Baja (EJF)	11	Kecskemét (NJE/KRE)
2	Budapest (ELTE)	12	Nagykőrös (KRE)
3	Budapest (KRE)	13	Nyíregyháza (NYE)
4	Budapest (PPKE)	14	Pécs (PTE)
5	Debrecen (DRHE)	15	Sárospatak (EKKE/THE)
6	Eger (EKKE)	16	Szarvas (GFE)
7	Esztergom (PPKE)	17	Szeged (SZTE)
8	Győr (SZE)	18	Szekszárd (PTE)
9	Jászberény (EKKE)	19	Szombathely (ELTE)
10	Kaposvár (KE/SZIE/MATE)	20	Vác (AVKF)

Like the kindergarten educators' BA program, the emphasis is more on training centres of the countryside, and in the case of primary school teacher training, it is more emphasised.

This highlights the fact that the training centres are designed to meet regional needs, to ensure the region's economic sustainability and to provide a supply of teachers.³³ And the ability of the countryside to retain a workforce will not only be an issue for teachers when looking at primary teacher training, but the presence of the basic infrastructure

³² Oktatási Hivatal, Ibid. AVKF: Apor Vilmos Katolikus Főiskola (Apor Vilmos Catholic College); DE: Debreceni Egyetem (University of Debrecen); DRHE: Debreceni Református Hittudományi Egyetem (Debrecen Reformed Theological University); EJF: Eötvös József Főiskola (Eötvös József College); EKKE: Eszterházy Károly Katolikus Egyetem (Eszterházy Károly Catholic University); ELTE: Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem (Eötvös Loránd University); GFE: Gál Ferenc Egyetem (Gál Ferenc University); KE: Kecskeméti Egyetem (University of Kecskemét); KRE: Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem (Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary); MATE: Magyar Agrár- és Élettudományi Egyetem (Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences); NJE: Neumann János Egyetem (Neumann János University); NYE: Nyíregyházi Egyetem (University of Nyíregyháza); PPKA: Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem (Pázmány Péter Catholic University); PTE: Pécsi Tudományegyetem (University of Pécs); SOE: Soproni Egyetem (University of Sopron); SZE: Széchenyi István Egyetem (Széchenyi István University); SZIE: Szent István Egyetem (Szent István University); SZTE: Szegedi Tudományegyetem (University of Szeged); THE: Tokaj-Hegyalja Egyetem (University of Tokaj).

³³ Podráczky, Judit (2019): A hazai tanítóképzés helyzete (2000–2019), *Pedagógusképzés*, 18, 51–63. ([link](#)) (Last download: 31/07/2023)

Németh, András (2013): A pedagógusképzés és pedagógusszerep története. A pedagógus szakma kialakulása és differenciálódása; a pedagógusokkal szemben megfogalmazott elvárások a történelem során, Pécs, PTE ([link](#)) (Last download: 31/07/2023)

needed to create the service environment to serve the workforce can also have a significant impact from a macroeconomic perspective.

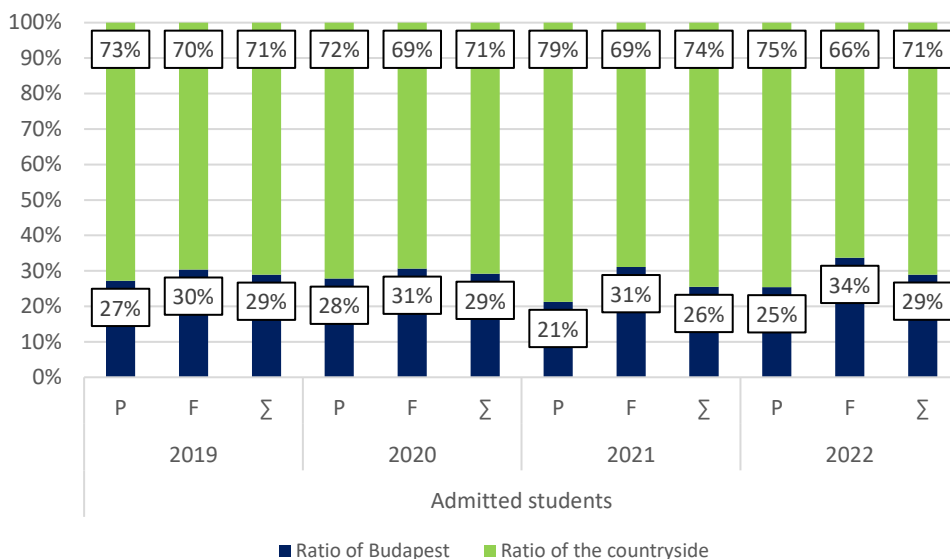


Figure 27 Ratio of admitted students by Budapest and countryside training places (2019-2022) (%)³⁴

To secure a region's workforce, living conditions must be created that are able to serve and sustain the working-age population of the region. For the working-age population aged 16-65, not only housing but also health, transport and education are essential services whose absence is immediately felt. Job-generating investment also looks at the infrastructure available to ensure the continued availability of labour over the investment period. The provision of training institutions is a factor that is needed to ensure compulsory participation in public education from age three to sixteen.³⁵ For this reason, regions with the educational infrastructure in place, i.e., the workforce in public education institutions, are more successful in retaining the young children on whom investors can build. The case of teacher training centres in the countryside is thus also supported from a macroeconomic perspective.

³⁴ Ibid. (author's calculation and editing)

³⁵ Tolnai, Ágnes (2010): *Nemzetközi gazdaságtan*. Budapest, Grotius

The future of primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training

Another question, of course, is the extent to which the otherwise low enrolment in primary teacher training can generate its own operating costs from its own revenues, i.e., how profitable is the higher education activity based on the number of students in each year group? However, if we look at the long-term benefits, public funding of low numbers of primary school teaching grades generates a higher profit than funding needs due to complex macroeconomic effects, including, *inter alia*, public revenues from salaries and consumption, in addition to local tax revenues.

When the locations of primary school teacher education are plotted on a map (Figure 28) and compared to the region in which graduates reside after graduation (Figure 29), it is clear that these teachers are typically located in the region of graduation, which also supports the case for and need for a smaller number of primary school teacher education training programs in the countryside.

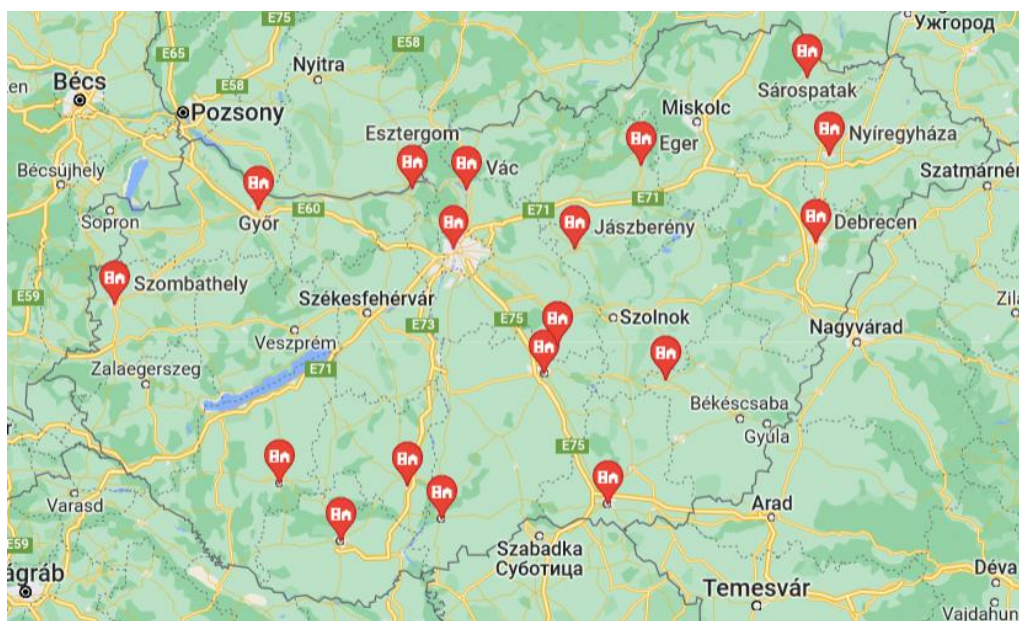


Figure 28 Primary school teacher training centres in Hungary (2019-2022)³⁶

³⁶ Author's editing with Google Maps based on Oktatás Hivatal (Ibid.) data

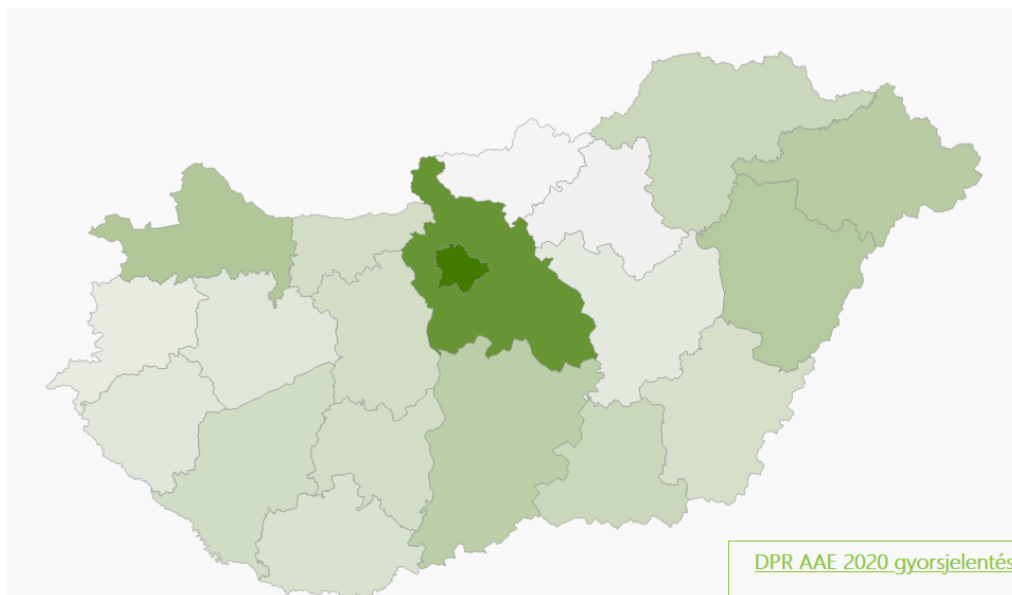


Figure 29 Residence of primary school teacher education graduates (December 2019)³⁷

However, higher education institutions in the countryside are more exposed to market changes in higher education than those in Budapest. After the introduction of the advanced level school leaving exam as an entry requirement, the number of first-choice applicants and admissions to primary school teacher training in Budapest fell by a smaller proportion in 2020 compared to training centres in the countryside. In 2021, when the change in entry requirements allowed for the advanced-level school leaving exam to be replaced by a degree from a previous higher education vocational training, smaller training centres in the countryside were much more successful in attracting and retaining their former graduates. However, after this buoyant year, as in the case of kindergarten educator training, primary school teacher training ran out of market supply and 2022 saw a further decline, with trainers outside Budapest also worse off as a result.

³⁷ Oktatási Hivatal (2020): *Diplomán túl. Adminisztratív adatbázisok egyesítése.* ([link](#)) (Last download: 2023.06.30.)

The future of primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training

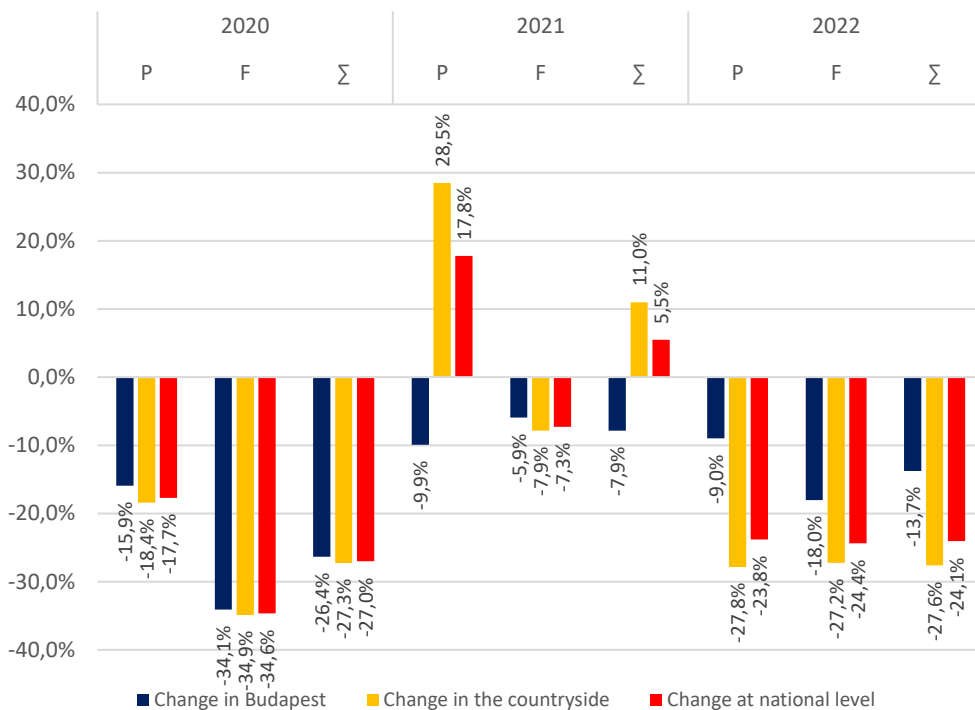


Figure 30 Change in the number of students enrolled in primary school teacher training in Budapest, in the countryside and nationally (2019-2022) (%)³⁸

The decline in the number of admissions and the shrinking number of classes is a serious disadvantage for training centres outside Budapest. The status of trainers has also been significantly reordered between 2019 and 2022.

In 2019, primary school teacher training was offered at eighteen training centres, three of which were able to start classes for more than a hundred students, and five for more than fifty students. Following the introduction of the advanced-level school leaving exam as an entry requirement, only the ELTE Budapest training centre was able to maintain a number of classes above a hundred, while the number of classes of the other training centres that previously had over a hundred students shrank to between sixty and seventy, and all of the training centres that had between fifty and a hundred students were only able to

³⁸ Author's calculation and editing based on Oktatási Hivatal: *Ponthatárok, statisztikák. Elmúlt évek statisztikái*

offer classes of less than fifty students. Among them, PPKE Budapest was unable to start its program.

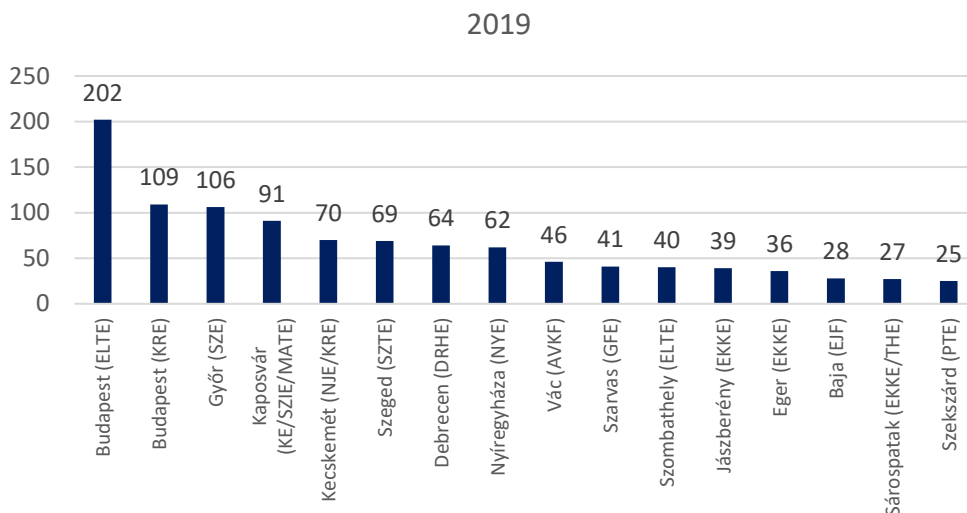


Figure 31 Number of students enrolled in primary school teacher training program by place of training in 2019 (number of students)³⁹

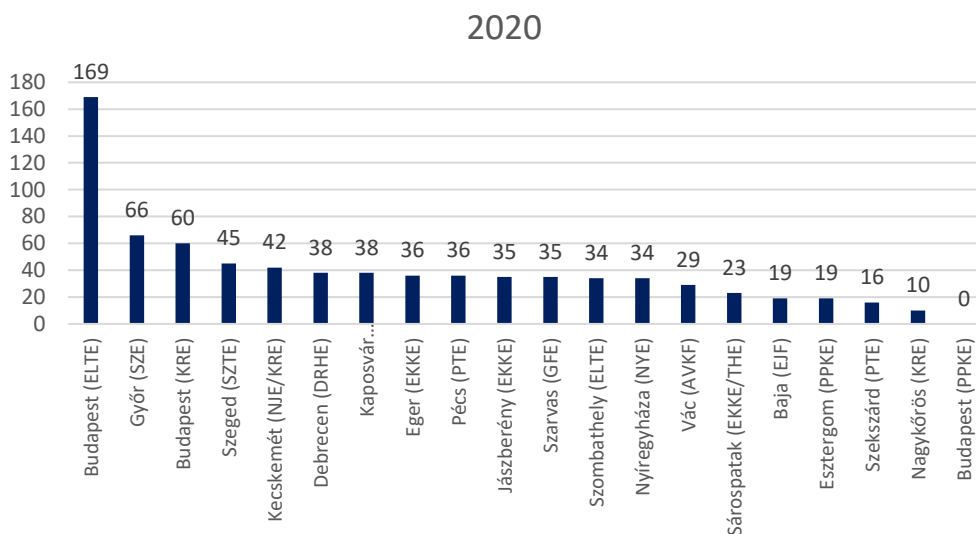


Figure 32 Number of students enrolled in primary school teacher training program by place of training in 2020 (number of students)⁴⁰

³⁹ Ibid. (author's editing)

⁴⁰ Ibid. (author's editing)

In 2021, the number of admissions increased, but once again only ELTE was able to start a class of over a hundred students at its Budapest training centre, and the number of students starting a class of between fifty and a hundred students was now six, compared to two in the previous year. However, the PPKE in Budapest and the KRE in Kecskemét were unable to start the programme, and this was the first year that the EKKE in Jászberény was unable to start a full-time primary school teacher training course. The figures for 2021 predicted the results for 2022 when primary school teacher training enrolment figures pushed most institutions to the other side of the economies of scale. In 2022, the PPKE could not start the program either in Budapest or in Esztergom, the KRE did not start it in Kecskemét again, and from 2023 onwards it withdrew primary school teacher training from this training centre, reducing the number of training places to nineteen. In Jászberény, the EKKE started with sixty-five students.

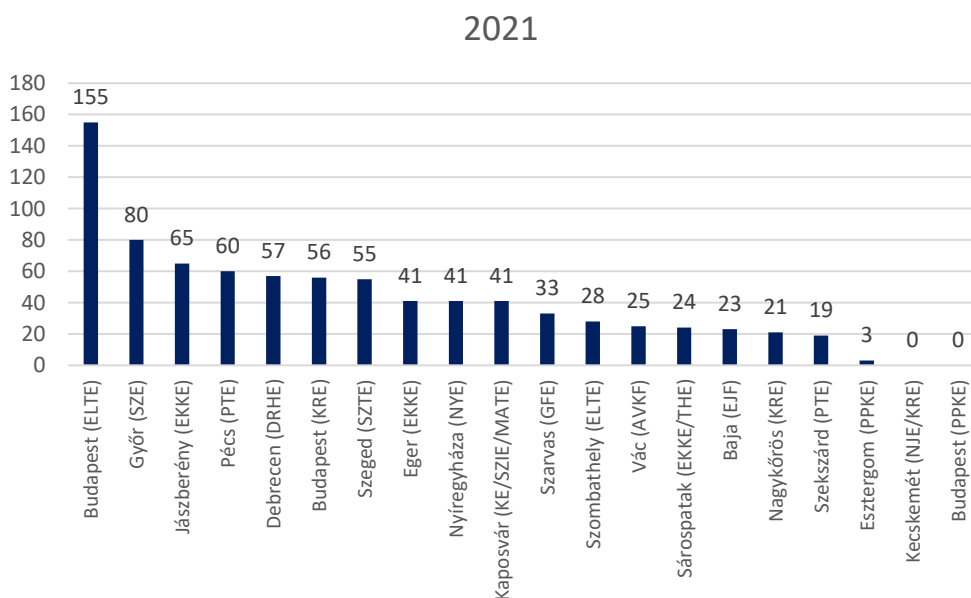


Figure 33 Number of students enrolled in primary school teacher training program by place of training in 2021(number of students)⁴¹

⁴¹ Ibid. (author's editing)

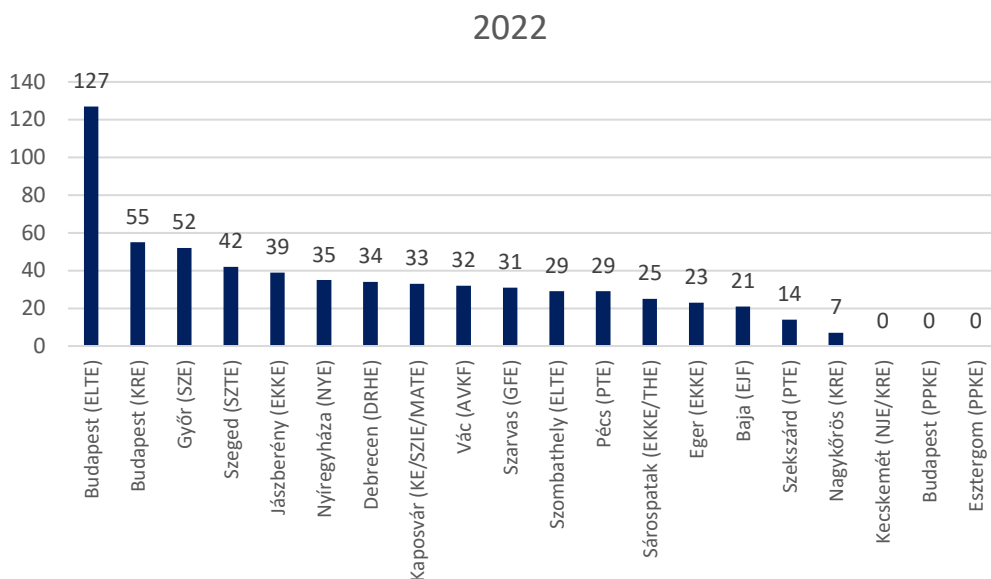


Figure 34 Number of students enrolled in primary school teacher training program by place of training in 2022(number of students)⁴²

Compared to the 2019 admission results, only ELTE was able to maintain a class of over a hundred students in Budapest by 2022, with a 38% reduction in the number of admissions by 2022 compared to 2019. The two training institutions that previously managed to start a class of over a hundred students also experienced a significant decrease from 2019 to 2022. The KRE Budapest training centre saw a 50% decrease, while the SZE Győr a 51% decrease. The other training centres could only start classes of less than fifty in 2022.

The market logic behind the continuous increase in the number of training centres is the same as for the kindergarten educator training, i.e., to respond to the emerging labour shortage. To understand this market response, it is necessary to look at the labour market figures that trainers were faced with during this period.

Changes in the number of primary school teachers

The KSH provides the number of teachers by type of institution, so in the case of primary schools, *middle school* (ages 10-14) and *junior school*

⁴² Ibid. (author's editing)

(ages 6-10) teachers are included together. A study by the Centre for Economic and Regional Research of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences⁴³ gives the proportion of teachers employed in primary ('elementary') schools to two decimal places. However, due to the size of the number of elements, a difference of one-thousandth of a percentage point results in a significant number of changes. Therefore, there is no freely available data series that shows how many primary school teachers were employed per county between 2010 and 2019. The number of teachers can be obtained from the *International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)* breakdown in *Eurostat's* database, but this is national data and does not include a regional or county breakdown.

Figure 35 shows how the number of primary school teachers has evolved between 2010 and 2018, based on the total number of teachers employed in primary school lower or *junior* and upper or *middle* classes, rounded to two decimal places. There was a decrease between 2010 and 2012, followed by an increase between 2013 and 2016. At the national level, the number of primary school teachers has been decreasing steadily since 2017.

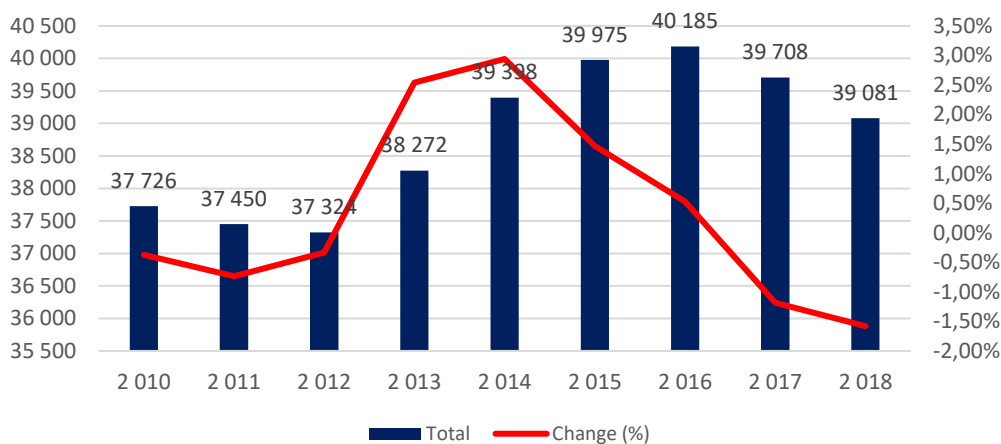


Figure 35 Changes in the number of primary school teachers ⁴⁴

⁴³ Varga, Júlia (ed.) (2022): *A közoktatás indikátorrendszere, 2021*. Budapest, MTA Közgazdaság-és Regionális Tudományi Kutatóközpont Közgazdaság-tudományi Intézet. B2.3.2. Az egyes végzettségi csoportokhoz tartozó pedagógusok százalékaránya az általános iskolákban (2010-2020) adattáblája. ([link](#)) (Last download: 30/06/2023)

⁴⁴ Author's calculation and editing based on European Commission (2023): Eurostat. *Database. Population and social conditions/Education and training/Education personnel. Classroom teachers and academic staff by education level, programme orientation, sex and age groups*. ([link](#)) (Last download: 30/06/2023)

Eurostat data show changes in the number of teachers by ISCED classification at the Member State level. For teachers in lower secondary education at ISCED 2, an age breakdown can be obtained with precise figures, so, unlike the breakdown by county, data by age of teachers are available.

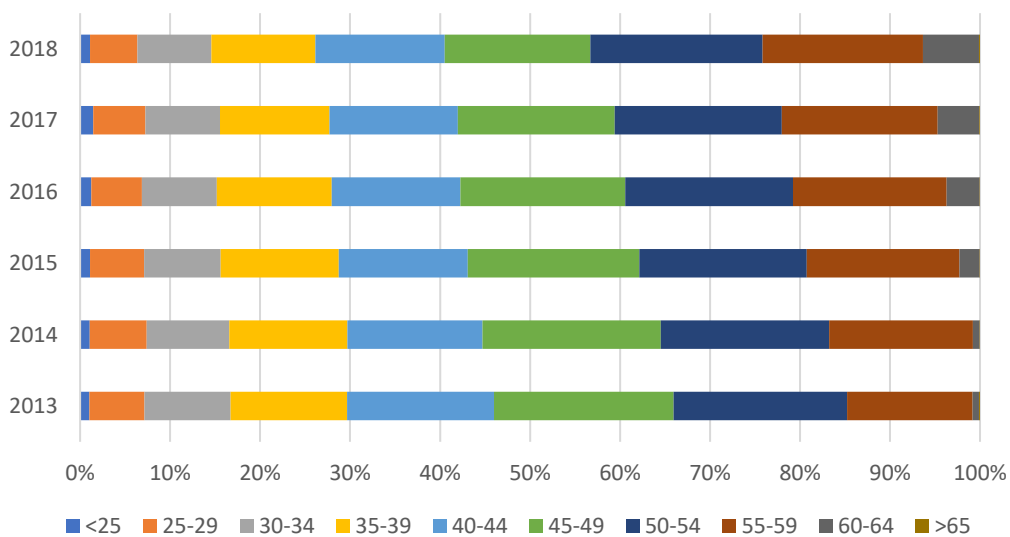


Figure 36 Primary school teachers by age group by year (%)⁴⁵

The number of primary school teachers under 25 is very low, and the number of aged 25-29 has declined moderately, as the entry age is being replaced by a lower number of the younger generation. The 45-49 and 50-54 age groups have similar proportions, but when looking at the age distribution over these years, it is obvious that there is an increasing proportion of fifty-five and sixty-year-olds in the sample. The slow shift to the left in the age groups 45-49 and 50-54 in the graph shows that the age profile of primary school teachers has changed significantly over 5 years at the national level.

Figure 37 illustrates the precise problem with age structure. In 2013 and 2014, the share of the group under twenty-five exceeded that of the group over sixty, the group affected by retirement. From 2015 to 2017, the share of under-twenty-fives increased, but this increase could not catch up with that of primary school teachers before retirement.

⁴⁵ Ibid. (author's editing)

A further aspect of the problem is the decline in the total number of primary school teachers since 2017, meaning that the total sample size is also declining. Thus, within a smaller sample, the proportion of under-twenty-fives is decreasing while the proportion of over-sixties is increasing, reinforcing the ageing process in the profession.

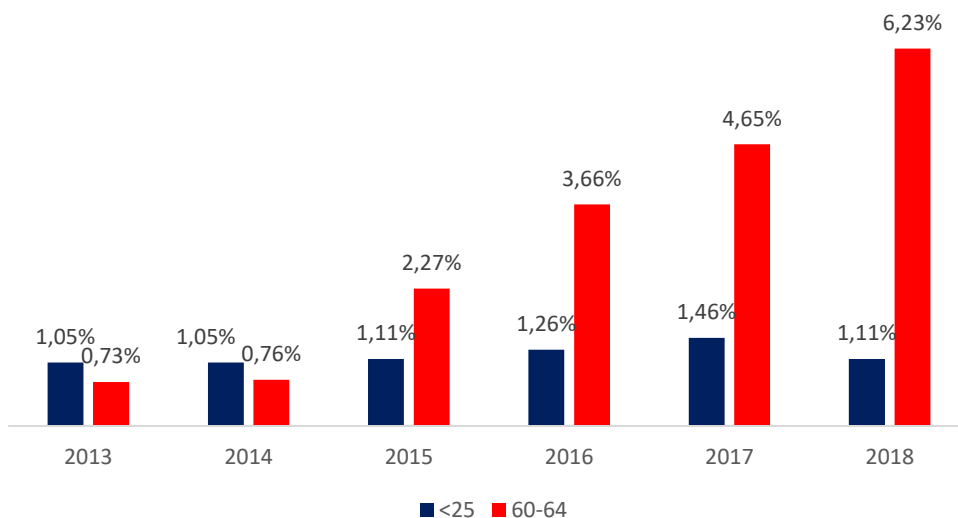


Figure 37 Proportion of under 25 years and 60-64 years primary school teachers (2013-2018)⁴⁶

In addition, a comparison of the number of people in each age group also illustrates the problem. The age distribution is shifting towards older age groups. The number of people in age groups over 45 significantly exceeds those under 45. In the 25-29 age group, there was a decline between 2013 and 2019, while the number of 30-34-year-olds stagnated after a decline. The number of 35-39-year-olds is steadily decreasing, while the number of 40-44-year-olds is increasing. The 45-49 age group is shrinking, while there are strong increases in the 50-54, 55-59 and 60-64 age groups. This also points to an ageing population and a lack of sufficient replacement.

⁴⁶ Ibid. (author's calculation and editing)

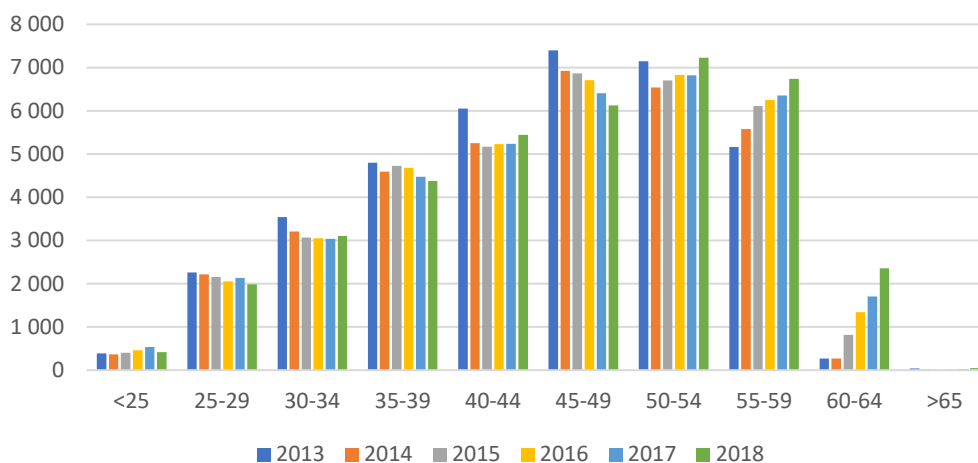


Figure 38 Nominal changes in age groups (2013-2018)⁴⁷

The same conclusion can be drawn for primary school teacher training as for kindergarten-educator training. The continuous demand in the labour market has encouraged trainers to open new training centres and to maintain and improve existing ones. The number of training centres has been maintained and increased to twenty with the opening of new ones. Based on the recruitment results for 2019, this decision by the trainers appeared to be justified, but due to the difficulty of the entry requirements for training, the number of first-choice applications and the number of admissions also fell sharply, which led to a significant reduction in the number of classes in the training centres. The former larger training centres have become medium in terms of student numbers and the number of classes cannot keep pace with the increasing demand on the labour market.

Expected impacts of change in admission procedure

In the admission procedure of 2023, the institutions were allowed to determine the admission point thresholds independently by amending *Government Decree 423/2012 (XII. 29.)* on the admission procedure for higher education and could waive the previous 280-point minimum point threshold. Another new element introduced by the amendment to the Decree is that, in addition to the point thresholds, institutions could

⁴⁷ Ibid. (author's editing)

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also decide whether to set an advanced level of school-leaving exam as an entry requirement for certain programs. In other words, the barrier that reduced the number of applicants and admissions in the 2020-2022 period has been removed in the 2023 admissions procedure, with institutions not setting an advanced level of school-leaving exam as an entry requirement for primary school teacher training and kindergarten-educator training. There were also differences in thinking about the thresholds. Some retained the 280 points when the programs were offered, while others did not set any minimum score at all, but set it when the thresholds were drawn, based on the number of applicants and the capacity of the institution.

Table 3 Ex-ante minimum points of admission procedure in 2023⁴⁸

Higher education institution	Training Centre	Primary school teacher BA	Kindergarten educator BA
AVKF	Vác	None	None
AVKF	Budapest	NR	None
DE	Hajdúböszörmény	NR	200
DRHE	Debrecen	None	NR
EJF	Baja	None	None
ELTE	Szombathely	280	NH
ELTE	Budapest	280	280
EKKE	Jászberény	280	280
EKKE	Eger	280	280
GFE	Szarvas	220	220
KRE	Kecskemét	NR	280
KRE	Budapest	280	280
KRE	Nagykőrös	280	NR
MATE	Kaposvár	260	260
MILTON ⁴⁹	Budapest	None	NR
NYE	Nyíregyháza	None	None
PE	Veszprém	280	280

⁴⁸ Oktatási Hivatal ibid.

⁴⁹ Milton Friedman University announced the first teacher training course in 2023.

Higher education institution	Training Centre	Primary school teacher BA	Kindergarten educator BA
PPKE	Esztergom	None	None
PTE	Pécs	None	None
PTE	Szekszárd	None	None
SOE	Sopron	NR	None
SZE	Győr	280	NR
SZTE	Szeged	None	None
THE	Sárospatak	None	None

NR: There was no recruitment for the programme.

None: there is no ex-ante minimum point for admission.

For the 2023 general admission procedure, the institutions determined the admission scores based on their available capacity and the number of applicants. The speciality of the system is that, if the institution has enough capacity, it can admit all applicants up to the minimum point. If no minimum point is set in the procedure, the point threshold is determined by the score of the last applicant admitted according to the number of available capacities. For example, there is a capacity of 160 available places in the teacher training at the institution level and there are 180 first-choice applicants for the advertised programs. If the minimum score is 280 points, then you can recruit as many of these as reach the 280 points. If there is no minimum point, then as many as there are free places. In this case, a hundred applicants for the kindergarten educator programme and eighty applicants for primary school teacher training. Twenty-three applicants for kindergarten educator training have a score below one hundred points, and all applicants for primary school teacher training have a score above two hundred points. One option can take all the applicants for primary school teacher training, leaving only eighty places for kindergarten educator training. Of the hundred applicants for the kindergarten educator training, twenty will not be admitted, and the eightieth admitted will be the minimum score, which can be as low as eighty out of the maximum five hundred points available. Another option is to set a point threshold for the kindergarten educator programme, e.g. two hundred points, and thus only admit those who have reached this, which could be as few as sixty. These

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decisions are the field of strategic decision-makers of the institution who determine the options for admitting applicants to their training.

Based on all this information, the institutional admission scores determined in the 2023 general admission procedure suggest that institutions wanted to take advantage of the changes in the admission procedure this year and admit as many students as possible to their programs, compensating for the shortfall in previous years. Scores above three hundred points were typically achieved in part-time courses and in places where the number of applicants had been low in previous years.

Table 4 Admission points for the kindergarten educator BA in the 2023 general admission procedure (state scholarship funding)⁵⁰

Higher education institution	Full-/part-time	Training Centre	Ex post minimum admission point	Ex ante minimum admission point
THE	Full-time	Sárospatak	180	None
THE	Part-time	Sárospatak	183	None
DRHE	Part-time	Debrecen	185	None
DRHE	Full-time	Debrecen	200	None
PPKE	Part-time	Esztergom	207	None
PPKE	Part-time	Budapest	209	None
EJF	Part-time	Baja	211	None
EJF	Full-time	Baja	237	None
SZTE	Full-time	Szeged	241	None
GFE	Full-time	Szarvas	242	220
AVKF	Part-time	Vác	250	None
AVKF	Full-time	Vác	250	None
SZTE	Part-time	Szeged	252	None

⁵⁰ In primary school teacher training, the number of places on state scholarships is essentially unlimited due to capacity under-utilisation in recent years, and the number of applicants for self-financed training is therefore not significant. Therefore, the table shows only the scores of the public scholarship places.

It should be added that for post-graduates applying for part-time courses, the score calculated on the basis of the previously obtained degree gives higher results than those calculated on the basis of the baccalaureate, and therefore the exceptionally high scores indicate that only people who already have a degree from another course applied for the course.

Higher education institution	Full-/part-time	Training Centre	Ex post minimum admission point	Ex ante minimum admission point
NYE	Full-time	Nyíregyháza	260	None
MATE	Full-time	Kaposvár	272	260
MATE	Part-time	Kaposvár	276	260
MILTON	Part-time	Budapest	276	None
NYE	Part-time	Nyíregyháza	276	None
EKKE	Part-time	Eger	280	280
ELTE	Full-time	Budapest	280	280
KRE	Full-time	Nagykőrös	280	280
SZE	Full-time	Győr	280	280
ELTE	Full-time	Szombathely	282	280
ELTE	Part-time	Budapest	283	280
KRE	Full-time	Budapest	283	280
ELTE	Part-time	Szombathely	284	280
KRE	Part-time	Budapest	284	280
EKKE	Part-time	Jászberény	288	280
PTE	Part-time	Pécs	288	None
KRE	Part-time	Nagykőrös	296	280
PE	Part-time	Veszprém	296	280
EKKE	Full-time	Eger	296	280
PE	Full-time	Veszprém	296	280
EKKE	Full-time	Jászberény	300	280
SZE	Part-time	Győr	314	280
PTE	Part-time	Szekszárd	316	None
PTE	Full-time	Pécs	322	None
PPKE	Full-time	Esztergom	339	None
GFE	Part-time	Szarvas	402	220
MILTON	Full-time	Budapest	do not start	None
PTE	Full-time	Szekszárd	do not start	None

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In this changed recruitment environment, however, there were two training places, the PTE training place in Szekszárd and Milton Friedman University, where the latest announced the training for the first time, that could not start the primary school teacher training on a full-time basis due to the low number of applicants. However, there was no such problem with the kindergarten educator training, which all the training providers were able to start at all the centres advertised.

Table 5 Admission points for the kindergarten educator BA in the 2023 general admission procedure (state scholarship funding)⁵¹

Higher education institution	Full-/part-time	Training Centre	Ex-post minimum admission point	Ex-ante minimum admission point
THE	Part-time	Sárospatak	180	None
THE	Full-time	Sárospatak	184	None
EJF	Full-time	Baja	205	None
EJF	Part-time	Baja	206	None
PPKE	Full-time	Esztergom	209	None
PPKE	Part-time	Esztergom	236	None
SZTE	Full-time	Szeged	240	None
AVKF	Full-time	Vác	241	None
AVKF	Full-time	Budapest	246	None
SZTE	Part-time	Szeged	248	None
GFE	Full-time	Szarvas	250	220
NYE	Full-time	Nyíregyháza	250	None
NYE	Part-time	Nyíregyháza	250	None
MATE	Full-time	Kaposvár	262	260
MATE	Part-time	Kaposvár	268	260
DE	Full-time	Hajdúböszörmény	272	200
PTE	Full-time	Szekszárd	274	None
PPKE	Part-time	Budapest	276	None
EKKE	Part-time	Eger	280	280
ELTE	Part-time	Budapest	280	280
KRE	Part-time	Budapest	280	280
KRE	Full-time	Kecskemét	280	280
PE	Part-time	Szekszárd	280	280

⁵¹ For the same reason as described for primary school teacher training, only the scores for state scholarship places are shown in the table.

Higher education institution	Full-/part-time	Training Centre	Ex-post minimum admission point	Ex-ante minimum admission point
EKKE	Part-time	Jászberény	281	280
SOE	Part-time	Sopron	281	None
ELTE	Full-time	Budapest	282	280
EKKE	Full-time	Eger	286	280
DE	Part-time	Hajdúböszörmény	288	200
KRE	Full-time	Budapest	288	280
PE	Full-time	Szekszárd	288	280
SOE	Full-time	Sopron	288	None
PTE	Full-time	Pécs	290	None
KRE	Part-time	Kecskemét	292	280
PTE	Part-time	Pécs	312	None
EKKE	Full-time	Jászberény	314	280
PTE	Part-time	Szekszárd	332	None
GFE	Part-time	Szarvas	402	220
GFE	Part-time	Budapest	402	220
AVKF	Part-time	Vác	411	None

Summary

The damage to both kindergarten educator and primary school teacher education, in terms of input between 2019 and 2022, the number of applications has decreased, and the number of graduated kindergarten educators and primary school teachers has decreased in these years. However, thanks to the changes in admissions in 2023, the low cut-off points show that people who were previously excluded from higher education because of their low scores, i.e., their poorer results in secondary school, can now enter the training. However, this former student population of less than 280 points poses new challenges for higher education, as more emphasis needs to be placed on catching up. The next few years will show the extent to which drop-outs will affect this student population and how many fresh graduates with these degrees will be on the labour market in three- or four years time, compared to the number of new entrants. In this new situation, it will be particularly important during the training period that the training institution reinforces the intention to stay in the profession by providing

strong career socialisation and motivation systems during the years of study ⁵².

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⁵² For more more about this topic, see: Szontagh, Pál (2022): *Hivatás- és pályamotiváció a KRE PK végzős óvodapedagógusai körében, In Furkó Péter, Csőke, Zoltán (szerk.): Tudomány és harmadik misszió : A keresztyén tudós társadalmi szerepvállalása, Budapest, L'Harmattan Kiadó – Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem; Szontagh, Pál (2023): *Óvodapedagógus jelöltek szerepfelfogása és hivatásmotivációja in Ambrus-Kéri Katalin, Józsa Krisztián, Kancz Nagy Katalin, Tóth-Bakos Anita, Borbélyová Diána, Mészáros Tímea (szerk.):14th International Conference of J. Selye University: Pedagogical Sections, Komárno, Selye János Egyetem,**

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PÁL SZONTAGH

VOCATIONAL, CAREER-MOTIVATION AND ROLE-PERCEPTION OF KINDERGARTEN-EDUCATOR TRAINEES

Introduction

At present, more than ever before, the issues of teacher shortage, teacher abandonment and teacher training are being raised prominently in professional and public discourses. Understandably – and largely justifiably – the wider public is primarily articulating the poor income situation of the teaching profession as the primary cause of the teacher shortage.¹ Without disputing the need for an immediate and radical improvement in teachers' wages, we will attempt to examine some other factors related to students' perceptions of the role of teachers and their motivation in the profession in light of our research among the trainee kindergarten educators of the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary.

According to Deutsch, 'the goal of pedagogical higher education is to develop the value system of students as much as possible in accordance with their chosen profession through self-knowledge and career socialization development during the years of training.'² In our analysis, we focused primarily on the career and professional motivation of kindergarten educator students. According to research among teacher candidates in 2021, the intention to find employment in the position of kindergarten educator, primary school teacher, special needs educator and therapist is significantly higher (69%) compared to other teacher majors, with kindergarten educators most likely to want to enter the

¹ European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice (2021): *Teachers' and School Heads' Salaries and Allowances in Europe – 2019/20. Eurydice Facts and Figures*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union ([link](#)) (Last download: 18/07/2022); Lannert, Judit (2021): *Zárótanulmány az emberierőforrásszükségekről a magyar közoktatásban – kutatási zárójelentés*, T-TUDOK Tudásmenedzsment és Oktatáskutató Központ Kft.

² Deutsch, Szilvia Zita (2018): A pályaszocializáció folyamata az érhatekonyság, érdeklődés, munkaérték és egyéni erősségek tükrében, in Bíró Violetta (ed.): *A pedagóguspálya hívása és kihívása*. Baja, Eötvös József Főiskolai Kiadó, p. 82

profession.³ As an institution that trains kindergarten educators (as well), this is why we consider the issue of career socialisation to be particularly important. We share the opinion of Bíró and Borszékiné that 'career socialisation and career identification are influenced not only by cognitive knowledge but also by their own experiences'⁴, the exploration of which is essential in successful orientation training.

The curriculum of our kindergarten-educator training consists of the subject *Teacher Attitudes and Ethics* (PK ON2111002) as a compulsory course for one semester, within the framework of which we had the opportunity to explore the students' career and professional motivational views. In addition, in the spring semester of 2021/22, we launched an optional course entitled *Teacher Attitudes; Professional Self-knowledge* (PK SZV139), for which was by sixty-one per cent of kindergarten-educator students were enrolled (in addition to twenty-four per cent of students from the infant and early childhood educator programme, this included fifteen per cent of students from the primary school teacher programme). Due to the optional nature of the course, we assumed – and this was confirmed by the personal interactions of the consultations – that it was the most motivated students, seriously considering becoming teachers, who applied for this course.

The premise of our research is that professional and career motivation is successfully realised at our university during the above-mentioned courses and institutional practices and that students' professional motivation is strengthened by the end of the training. It is also assumed that the denominational nature of the training influences the *ideal teacher* image of students.

Methods

In 2020 and 2022, students on the course *Teacher Attitudes and Ethics* wrote essays as a seminar assignment 'Why (not) become a kindergarten educator?'. In the first phase of our research, we tried to explore the professional and career motivational characteristics that influenced

³ N.N. (2021): *Motivations of teacher students to enter careers*. ([link](#)) (Last download: 18/07/2022), p. 11

⁴Bíró, Violetta – Borszéki Szabolcsné Gábris, Virág (2018): Pedagógusjelöltekkel szembeni szakmai elvárások. In Bíró Violetta (ed.): *A pedagóguspálya hívása és kihívása*, Baja, Eötvös József Főiskolai Kiadó, pp. 43-76

students in applying for the training by analysing the structured content of their essays. The requested essay was written by 52 (in 2020) and 20 (in 2022) full-time students, plus 71 (in 2020) and 38 (in 2022) part-time students. (Even from these data, the drastic decrease in the number of students among kindergarten educators can be clearly perceived.) In total, we examined 181 student responses.

The essays were analysed from several perspectives⁵, but in this study, we deal with career and professional motivational factors and students' self-perception regarding the profession. We compared first-year students' self-perception of their own strengths and areas for improvement with a control survey conducted among third-year students (N=50) in 2022, in which graduates' attitudes towards motivational and demotivational factors identified in their first-year essays were examined.

In exploring the role model of the exemplary teacher as a student, in our first-year seminars, students recalled the personality of an influential educator for themselves and then introduced this role model to each other in a small group. After the discussion, based on the reports of the groups, we compiled the catalogue of attributes that characterised those teachers' personalities which were most influential for the students.

In 2022, at the seminar *Teacher Attitudes, Professional Self-knowledge*, the participating students (N=21) – who, as mentioned, are presumably among the most committed candidates, collected in seminar sessions why they chose to become teachers, and then prepared a mind map of the concept of 'teacher' in small groups. In our study, we illustrate and validate the presentation of our quantifiable research results with quotations taken from student essays.

⁵ Szontagh, Pál (2021): Miért (nem) leszek pedagógus? Hivatás- és pályamotiváció a Kárpát-medencei pedagógusjelöltek körében, Budapest, L'Harmattan-KRE; Szontagh, Pál (2021): Hivatás, pálya, motiváció: Pálya- és hivatásmotivációk a KRE TFK óvodapedagógus hallgatói körében, in Furkó, Péter – Szathmári, Éva (eds.) Tudomány, küldetés, társadalmi szerepvállalás. Studia Caroliensia - A Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem 2020-as évkönyve, Budapest, Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem- L'Harmattan Kiadó, pp. 35-47; Szontagh, Pál (2022): Hivatás- és pályamotiváció a Kárpát-medencei óvodapedagógus- és tanítójelöltek körében, *Képzés és Gyakorlat*, Volume 20, Issue 1-2, pp. 41-49; Szontagh, Pál (2021): Hivatás- és pályamotivációs tényezők első éves óvodapedagógus hallgatók körében, *Iskolakultúra*, Volume 31, Issue 1, pp. 26-44

Background factors influencing the choice of teacher training

Most full-time students entered higher education directly after graduating from high school; only 12 (17%) reported prior work experience (not counting, of course, student work). All but one of them are 'professionals', six having graduated and worked as (special needs) pedagogical assistants, three as early childhood educators for a longer or shorter period of time, one as a medical assistant and one as a medical masseur, all continuing their studies as kindergarten-educators. One student became a beautician but did not practice the profession. At most, other students could write about university courses started but not completed, or about career dreams that had not come true. Four of them started other higher education courses, two of them in related professions (psychologist, conductor), and two in other fields (commerce and marketing, biology). They all reported that the training did not live up to expectations, and seemed difficult and/or uninteresting to them, so they switched:

'After graduation, I had a long-standing desire to study biology 230 km away from home. I didn't like either the school or the course, because I didn't study what I wanted at all, and the distance from my family also weighed quite a lot. It was a real refreshment when I could be among the children again on Sunday. [...] I was already certain that I would leave the career of a biologist and that I would like to start again in some direction of pedagogy, but it was not yet certain which direction. Towards the end of the semester, I spent time among my kindergarten children and among the schoolchildren, more precisely the primary and junior students, and I liked the kindergarten team the most and preferred to deal with them from the very beginning. So, I finally chose kindergarten education.'

For eight students (11%), kindergarten pedagogy is admittedly a 'second chance' instead of their desired career – they were not admitted to their first indicated major (dietetics, special education, coach, acting, graphic design), or they need some kind of teaching qualification (riding

instructor, sports instructor, dance teacher, somatologist) for their current job and further plans.

‘So, I don't want to be an ordinary educator, I learn to be a somatologist. Kindergarten pedagogy is only the first stage.’

Although several research hypotheses in the literature suggest that the teaching career is a kind of ‘backup career’ for students,⁶ this was only slightly confirmed in our sample. Rather, our results confirm research results that show that ‘I was not accepted elsewhere’ ranks last among student teachers.⁷

Among the other unrealized career goals mentioned in the papers, there is a wide variation, although many of these point towards later career choices (twelve mentions – upper-class teacher, primary school teacher, PE, social worker, coach, flight attendant, confectioner, fashion designer, archaeologist). There are those (in five mentions) who, in addition to college training, have specific career plans that differ from kindergarten education (horse trainer, graphic designer, actor, drama teacher, recreation and medical swimming). One student indicated that after graduation she would like to continue his life abroad, in a different career.

The sociological composition of part-time students, and in connection with this, their motivation structure also differs from that of full-time students. Based on Kelemen's research published in his doctoral dissertation⁸, the commitment to the profession of part-time kindergarten education students proved to be stronger than that of full-time students. We assume that this may be due to better career knowledge and stronger professional motivation stemming from work experience.

‘Learning has motivated me again, my life is not an endless wheel, there are small goals and deadlines in it. I enjoy what

⁶ E.g. Veroszta, Zsuzsanna (2015): Pályakép, szelekció a pedagóguspálya választásában, *Educatio*, Volume 24, Issue 1, pp. 47-62

⁷ E.g. Kovácsné Tóth, Ágnes (2007): *Pályaválasztási motiváció értékrendi alapjai diplomás ápoló és tanárképző főiskolai hallgatók körében*, Dissertation, Budapest, Semmelweis Egyetem Patológiai Tudományok Doktori Iskola; Szontagh (2021): *Miért (nem) leszek pedagógus?*

⁸ Kelemen, Lajos (2007): *Az óvodapedagógus-képzés és a pedagógusi képességek fejlődésének összefüggései*, Dissertation, Debrecen, Debreceni Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar

I do; I enjoy learning to play the flute, singing children's songs, and picking and learning fairy tales and poems. It feels good to write this assignment as well, so I can discover new things about myself.'

Almost all students talked about their career, original (previous) qualifications and work experience.

Regardless of the original qualification/profession, it can be stated that a good number of students (79 mentions out of 109) have already worked in children's institutions for a longer or shorter period, in jobs not requiring specialized higher education qualifications (pedagogical, special needs assistant, nanny, early childhood educator).

'Being a pedagogical assistant is still a huge challenge, as I don't have a group of my own I am an "external" assistant in six groups, which means that I don't belong anywhere, I can't accompany the groups because almost every year I ended up on another floor from where I was called to help. It's harder to build a lasting relationship of trust with children because I'm not fixed in any group.'

In addition to the above, ninety-five of the students named some original profession or qualification in their papers. In connection with teacher motivation, it is particularly valuable data on how the occupational status of career changers changes with career correction. Based on these, respondents can be divided into three large groups, within which distinct subgroups can also be formed (Figure 1).

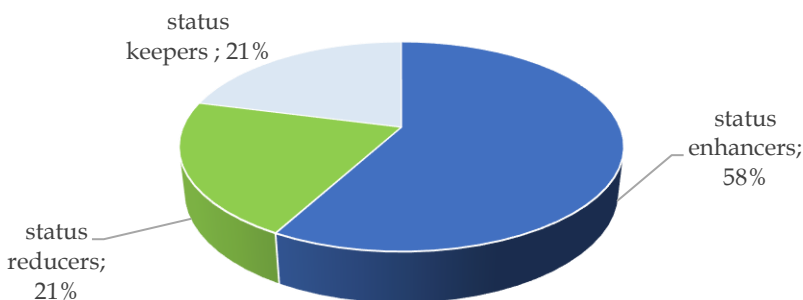


Figure 1 Expected change of status after graduation (N=118)

One prominent group of students are the so-called *status enhancers* (68 mentions – 58%). They are the ones who do not have a higher education qualification at the beginning of the training; a significant number of them also obtained their secondary school leaving examination as adults while working. Their typical life path is that after manual work they start working in a children's institution as early childhood educators, nannies or pedagogical assistants as a result of job loss, changes in family life situation or other external circumstances, they acquire the secondary and/or vocational qualification required for work while working, and they aim for the job of a graduate kindergarten educator due to some internal urge and/or external (family, workplace) encouragement.

'I was forced to look for a side hustle. It was purely by chance that I ended up finding a four-hour job in a kindergarten. Before that, I didn't have any real experience with children, and I never considered becoming a teacher. Now I know that the only reason was because I didn't have enough insight into this profession.'

The original jobs typically cover service, trade and catering (thirty-four mentions; e.g., nail artist, merchant, cashier, hairdresser, beautician, goldsmith, gardener, animal caregiver, waiter, bartender, pastry chef, ceremonial director, etc.). Some come from the field of health and social care (e.g., nurse, dental assistant, physiotherapist).

'Since I came to work in kindergarten (as a nanny), the head of the kindergarten has observed my work, my relationship with children, my attitude, and my cooperation with colleagues. Then she came up with the idea to apply to college because he sees in me the qualities and skills that would make me a good kindergarten educator. It is also no secret that, as in other settlements, they are struggling with a shortage of kindergarten educators. It is very difficult to find new staff to replace the retiring kindergarten educators, especially in such a small remote village where I live. Since I care about the development and fate of my native village, I decided to take the plunge. It is important that properly trained specialists work in our kindergarten.'

A similar number of people are considered by the traditionally customary social stereotypes who are so-called status reducers (twenty-five mentions – 21%), i.e., they would like to become kindergarten educators instead of a profession traditionally of higher social prestige than kindergarten educators, typically in the private sector. Burnout, the barrenness of office work, lack of human relationships at work and non-family-friendly working conditions most often appear in their motivation.

'I soon realized that I couldn't have chosen a more soul-killing and stressful job for my temperament. My whole day consisted of solving invisible problems appearing from out of the air, not to mention deadlines and daily meetings, where I had to discuss Hungarian taxation mostly with Indian or Mexican colleagues. I decided to finally try to do a job that gives me joy and where I face everyday problems that I have a chance to solve.'

Students are often forced into forced careers due to family pressure.

'My father said, "Choose a profession in which you won't starve.' So, I graduated from a currency cashier school and got a job in a bank. I loved the world of numbers; I worked in many types of financial institutions. I was never afraid of the responsibility of money; I was happy to do this kind of job. [...] While I was on maternity leave, I completed a higher professional qualification as a financial-accounting administrator and assistant project manager, so that if I go back to my job, I can get ahead. When my younger son turned two, I went back to work. I pulled off nearly two years at work, which was agony. I couldn't find my place in this world anymore, it wasn't kid-friendly at all, as they advertised themselves. [...] I had to realize that I didn't have a place here anymore because I felt like every day a small piece of my soul was lost and I couldn't recharge at all.'

Within this group, economists are overrepresented in our sample (nine mentions), but there are also HR workers, administrative

organizers, accountants, tourism administrators, environmental technicians, humanities majoring in Germanistics, architects, dancers, IT specialists, horticultural engineers, as well as white-collar professionals and entrepreneurs performing undefined office work.

'The HR profession is also interesting, you can get to know a lot of new people in a relatively short time through interviews, but this is only a certain part of the process. I miss being able to follow someone's life path and developmental phase. The thought of being able to help, to be around people, hasn't subsided since high school.'

The third large group included those who would like to switch to kindergarten education from some other human service or pedagogical area. They are called *status keepers* (twenty-five mentions - 21%). The sample also includes special education teachers, technical instructors, social pedagogues, social workers, theologians, sociologists, psychologists, sports coaches, (folk) dance instructors, and cultural organisers. It should be noted that career changes, coupled with status preservation, can already be reflected in full-time work schedules, especially in higher education institutions offering diverse forms of teacher- training.

'I applied to the University of Kaposvár for a teaching degree, specifically in the field of vocal literacy. My first year passed unsuspectingly, with great enthusiasm, a new environment, many new friends, freedom, and independence. Then, in the next second year, I moved in with a really good friend who was my classmate but was studying kindergarten education. [...] I accompanied her to internships, to special classes, and suddenly I found myself more interested in everything related to kindergarten education than in what I was studying, no matter how similar these two wonderful vocations are to an outsider. [...] I got close to that role and admitted to myself that I was going against something I always wanted to become. It is true that late on, but in time for action, I started to do something so that I could also become a kindergarten educator.'

Interestingly, a respondent already has a kindergarten educator degree, but since she obtained it a long time ago and has never used it, he would like to renew his knowledge during this training.

Overall, it can be stated that in 42% of the sample examined the continuation of kindergarten education studies, obtaining a higher education qualification is not the main motivation per se, but rather targeted and conscious career correction. Although it is only possible to compare our results with the research of Richardson and Watt with great care⁹, it should be noted that based on their results, more than half of the teacher students with prior work experience were status keepers, and approximately 25-25% were status enhancers or status reductionists. In our sample, 58% of students enhanced their status, while 21% retained or reduced their status. The two results are not directly comparable because, according to the 2006 Australian division, the teaching profession belonged to the second highest category of four, out of the five status groups they trained, which would not be a realistic classification under Hungarian conditions.

It is interesting to note that between the two data collections of our study (2020-22), the proportion of 'status-enhancers' increased significantly, which is mainly due to the institutional enrolment of professionals employed as pedagogical assistants or nannies. This indicates the preference for the most obvious local, employer solutions to the significant shortage of kindergarten educators. In fortunate cases, this is also accompanied by an inner urge and professional demand.

'The kindergarten educator must remain credible. These challenges matured in me the decision that I needed to further my education and acquire the knowledge that would give me security in certain situations. For me, a diploma will not only be a piece of paper, but a confirmation that I am doing what I am doing well and that I have the right professional knowledge.'

⁹ Richardson, Paul W. – Watt, Helen M. G. (2006): Who Chooses Teaching and Why? Profiling Characteristics and Motivations Across Three Australian Universities, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, Volume 34, Issue 1, pp. 27-56

Supporting and complicating factors in choosing a career

Among the factors supporting the choice, the most significant are school community service in the children's community (sixteen mentions), as well as other congregational, camping and scouting activities (seventeen mentions in total).

'In my Scout troop, I also agreed to become a patrol leader because I was curious how I could cope with the constant work with children. That's why they chose me as a leader from my station because they already saw in me that I could easily understand younger children and I was happy to deal with them.'

The emphatic appearance of community service confirms Molnár's statement that...

'In our ideas about education, in our vocation that once called us to careers, everything that means the pedagogical essence of the community service program is formulated: to set an example, to give an uplifting experience, to show the way - for life.'¹⁰

Service in the kindergarten environment is followed by mentions of dealing with children in the family or circle of acquaintances (20).

'I'm the biggest kid in our family, so I was the one who took care of the younger ones. Even then, I didn't feel like a burden to take care of others, I enjoyed playing with my brother and cousins.'

According to Hercz's research results, 'this 'professional background' was coupled with serious dedication and well-formed pedagogical

¹⁰ Molnár, Karolina (2015): Az ideáktól az iskolai gyakorlatig - és vissza, in Bodó, Márton (ed.): *Az Iskolai Közösségi Szolgálat bevezetésének tapasztalatai. Amit az IKSZ-ről tudni érdemes*, Budapest, OFI

views when entering the training, and without exception, it was accompanied by a beautiful career arc even later.’¹¹

‘When I was in my last years of school, the local charity organized various activities for the children, such as summer religious camps, Santa Claus, making an Advent wreath and much more. I was one of the facilitators in these sessions, which I enjoyed, I loved every minute of it. Even then, I realized that I wanted to be an educator and I always ran into situations related to children.’

Family support was mentioned by ten students, and encouragement from the environment and friends by seven students. Nine of them already had some kind of practical experience in kindergarten. Two of them mentioned that they would like to choose a family-friendly profession and find kindergarten education as such:

‘The family is irreplaceable, but we will always be replaceable at work, while the world is the world. This thought gave me the strength to choose not my dream job, but my dream family.’

Five of them expect their own creativity and artistic inclination to develop from kindergarten education:

‘Finally, I want to be somewhere my artistic orientation, which a lot of people think is worth nothing, is accepted [...] I want to be in an environment where I am accepted and not overly influenced. It would make me happy to work with children, as they can genuinely love and rejoice in everything.’

In addition to the above various types of direct support, indirect motivation also plays a significant role. As Iván Falus points out: ‘There is no single profession for which students can get so many impressions

¹¹ Hercz, Mária (2016): Narratívák, mint a pedagógusjelöltek szakmai szocializációjának indikátorai, in Reményi, Andrea Ágnes – Sárdi, Csilla – Tóth, Zsuzsa (eds.): *Távlatok a mai magyar alkalmazott nyelvészetben*. Budapest, Tinta Könyvkiadó, pp. 94–95

in the period before choosing a career.’¹² Most of the essays mention an exemplary individual teacher who influenced the student's further education.

‘I would like to make children's preschool years as happy and full of experiences as my teachers made mine.’

A total of 14 students reported positive and six negative kindergarten experiences that led them towards kindergarten education. As you can see below, negative experiences can also have a serious career motivational effect. In the families of twenty-two students, there are exemplary teaching personalities. This supports the conclusion in the literature that ‘family history of teaching occupations makes career choices somewhat more likely.’¹³ A good example can also be the life path of a college teacher, a girlfriend, or even a church role model (e.g. St. John Bosco). Some students view their career choice as an opportunity for their self-fulfilment:

‘I would like to create something lasting, and since I am neither a writer nor a poet, I have no particular talent for fine art, nor can I compose music, but I hope to succeed in leaving the deepest possible positive imprint on future people.’

Our results are similar to those of teacher candidates in Máthé's doctoral research.¹⁴ According to this, ‘family’ had the greatest influence on students' career choices, followed by the overwhelmingly positive teacher pattern and slightly fewer chose the profession due to the influence of their friends. In this study, 40.26% of respondents chose a career because they felt it was their vocation. This motif is reflected in our results:

¹² Falus, Iván (2004): A pedagógussá válás folyamata, *Pedagógusképzés*, Volume 13, Issue 3, p. 359

¹³ Paksi, Borbála - Veroszta, Zsuzsanna - Schmidt, Andrea - Magi, Anna - Vörös, András - Endrődi-Kovács, Viktória - Felvinczi, Katalin (2015): *Pedagógus-pálya-motiváció: Egy kutatás eredményei*, Budapest, Oktatási Hivatal, p. 47

¹⁴ Máthé, Borbála (2018): *A pedagógusszemélyiség változása a tanári életpálya során az egyetemi padtól a nyugdíjig. A pedagógus magánéleti körülményeinek és munkájának kölcsönhatása*, Dissertation, Eger, Eszterházy Károly Egyetem Neveléstudományi Doktori Iskola

‘There is no universally acceptable perfect vocation, but I think there is a perfect one for everyone, with all its difficulties.’

When asked why correspondence students would switch from their current career to kindergarten education, respondents made a total of seventy-two statements. Of these, twenty-four can be classified into career motivation and forty-eight with vocational motivation.

The OECD's 2005 survey identified the possibility of changing jobs, job security, the benefits of work, the joy of teaching, compatibility and compatibility with other activities and family life, and the possibility of self-education as motivating factors.¹⁵ These factors are emphasized in the life, vocation choice and career correction of correspondence kindergarten education students.

Intrinsic career motivation includes the hope of a family-friendly workplace (nine mentions) and career correction due to burnout (10).

‘I've tried my hand at all kinds of jobs over the past 30 years, I've been an entrepreneur, I've worked in an office, I've worked in a large community, but I've never felt like coming back the next day.’

Extrinsic career motivation is the need of the (work) local community (teacher shortage – two mentions), social utility and the possibility of a secondary career path (two). Interestingly, the increasingly pressing shortage of teachers can be not only a demotivating factor but also a motivating one in choosing a teaching career:

‘One of the things that motivates me – and it may sound a little strange, but I think it still crosses many people's minds when they start studying to be teachers – is the shortage of teachers. By completing this program, I will have a secure point in my life. I know that as a kindergarten educator, I can get a job almost anytime and anywhere because there is such

¹⁵ Quoted by Bús, Enikő (2018): *Tanárjelöltek szakmai énképének fejlesztése aktív tanulásra épülő kurzuson keresztül*, Dissertation, Szeged, Szegedi Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Neveléstudományi Doktori Iskola Oktatásméleti Doktori Program

a shortage of workers. For me, this gives me security, because we do not know what the future will bring.'

Many people have written about the depressing existential conditions of the teaching career, so an evaluation of the current conditions in Hungary inevitably appeared, although, as we can see below, from different aspects and with different conclusions:

'Thinking about it, I couldn't live on a teacher's salary alone. However, it has already occurred to me that I would not work as a teacher in Hungary, as I always wanted to go abroad...'
'Hungary needs excellent teachers, and the system has a duty to keep the Hungarian people at home, whether they are intellectuals or have professional qualifications. Emigration must stop. What will happen to our children, who will teach them?'

Intrinsic vocational motivation is the desire to care for children awakened after the birth of one's own children (thirty-one mentions), maternal instincts in the profession in the absence of one's own children (two mentions), and the processing of traumatic childhood or family memories (creating a happier childhood, supporting and protecting those entrusted to them – four mentions):

'Somehow, I feel like we women have an instinct encoded in us to raise children, to take care of children, to be around children, and that makes us happy. This is something so natural, deep within us that it is worth putting to good use in our lives. At the centre of the agenda of kindergartens is the child, the person, adapted to basic human needs. At the heart of an office's "agenda" is productivity and production. In office work, I feel like a "human resource", a machine that produces a product. In kindergarten, a kindergarten educator is a person, not just labour.'

Four respondents would like to gain new knowledge during kindergarten education training (dance instructor, coach, etc.) to keep their current profession or acquire a profession built on it.

‘What I do know is that right now, mental health attracts me more than teaching. However, to study that profession, I need a bachelor's degree of any kind, and I chose that.’

Extrinsic vocational motivations are presumably greater methodological freedom, a group of children better suited to the teacher's personality (three mentions – all three are secondary school teachers), family encouragement (four mentions), and divine calling (four mentions).

‘God can call you directly or through an intermediary. It was here that I understood that Samu was my mediator... During the many ministries, I received a lot of feedback from several parents about how good it is that I chose this profession because it shows that I enjoy being in the company of children.’

Another influencing factor is the mood of the kindergarten – experienced as a child. Interestingly, while twelve respondents wrote about their good kindergarten memories, eight also wanted to compensate for their own bad experiences in kindergarten, exceeding the results for experienced kindergarten educators.

‘I remember the kindergarten years well; I have mostly bad experiences. The educators were not nice, especially one of them, and it was obvious that they not only did not like their jobs but perhaps even the children. [...] Typically, there was the perception that if something is different about a child, behaves differently, doesn't react to things like the majority, then that child is condemned, labelled bad, problematic, and no one even thought about looking behind things, thinking that a child wouldn't be one way or another on its own. It is very infuriating to see that this view has not changed much – at least not in my environment, certainly not among my acquaintances. [...] Now I can confidently say that I would like to become a kindergarten educator because, in addition to loving children very much, I would like to give young children in kindergarten the support, developmental help and cheerfulness that I have always wanted. I would like to

use the experience stemming from my childhood grievances, the resulting understanding and knowledge.'

As already mentioned, role models play a major role in *students' career choices, even among adult people, even in part-time training*. According to the research results of Hercz and Takács, role models are of great importance in the career choice of kindergarten educator students:

'During the analysis of the narrative life interviews of kindergarten educator students, approximately 40% of the essays were written about the person of the teacher, role model, or kindergarten educator. About half of this rate, a little over 20%, mentioned a primary school teacher (primarily grades 1-2) as a role model. Interestingly, a slightly higher proportion of teachers with their own families were also slightly more likely than others to have a chance to be ideal kindergarten educators. "Anti-role models' from ideological or other sources (about 10%) and negative experiences (about 15%) appeared in significantly lower proportions in interviews.'¹⁶

In the essays, concrete or generally formulated negative experiences also appear.

'In today's world, it is disappointing for me that I know many adults in my immediate environment who are unfit to work with children. They are typically people who became teachers, for example, because they didn't know what they wanted to do and thought that working with children and teaching them would be easy and that they would not have to take any responsibility for them.'

In our study, there are a total of seventy-six mentions related to role models, with the largest number mentioning family members as teacher role models (thirty-eight mentions).

¹⁶ Hercz, Mária - Takács, Nikolett (2016): Óvodapedagógus és tanító szakos elsőévesek pedagógus példaképei a társadalmilag elvárt személyiségjegyek tükrében, *Gradus*, Volume 3, Issue 2, p. 400

‘When I was a child, when we walked down the street, we were greeted many times by young and old, and I remember that I was always surrounded by respect for my [teacher] grandparents. When I grew up and talked to older people, they could identify me by name; I always heard how much they loved and respected my grandparents, even though they were strict people.’

Not far behind these are the mentions of their own teachers (among correspondents, including teachers of their own children – 36 mentions):

‘The excellent teachers I had until I was fourteen still define my life today. I looked up to them, they motivated me, they helped.’

For students already working in kindergarten, their colleagues there served as role models (four mentions):

‘I feel like I've arrived, I understand, I feel every moment of my time there, I enjoy and love the little hands and hugs reaching out to me. I would like to contribute to this kindergarten, together with these people and professionals, so that together we can prepare for school and the world many, many young children who according to most people are “less photogenic”, and from whom they turn away politely, and who can show us the world we perceive in countless colours of the rainbow.’

One student even said that the goal of his career choice was to be able to become a role model in the lives of the children entrusted to him.

In the essays, there are a total of 26 mentions of factors that speak against choosing a career as a kindergarten educator. The most pronounced environmental effects (nine mentions) are when parents, friends and acquaintances try to dissuade the candidate from choosing a career as a kindergarten educator. Not surprisingly, but thought-provokingly, teachers who were, initially, also against choosing a teaching career were among these:

'At the school I attended, everyone wanted to be either a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer, and that's what our teachers expected us to do. I have never dared to take on what interests me and fills me with joy. When I had to apply to university in February, I applied to Semmelweis University, which I didn't want, but I didn't stand up for my decisions and instead applied for a programme I would have hated.'

It is a specific *indication of the* organisational and financial difficulties of the track that eight mentioned low salaries and two mentioned excessive administration. A more conscious career choice is indicated by the fact that this element is much less pronounced among part-time students than among full-time students. Most likely, due to their wider knowledge and life experience, they had already 'priced in' these adverse circumstances at the time of application, and therefore did not consider it necessary to emphasize it in the essays, or already have an appropriate 'avoidance strategy'.

'Of course, I have fears about the profession. Money is not one of them. I am lucky, as I have a high-earning husband, next to whom I can almost be a "hobby" teacher.'

Another career motivational deficit is that a student – who used to work as a teacher – has little regard for the methodological autonomy of kindergarten educators.

Other *vocational* question marks include the risk of burnout, the children's level of upbringing, difficulties in communicating with parents, and changes in educational principles and attitudes. These fears are present in the minds of both full-time and correspondence students:

'There is only one thing/issue that fills me with some fear about the teaching profession: it is mostly related to colleagues. I'm a little afraid of the sometimes burnout-prone attitude of those who have been on the field for decades (honour the exception!), the phrases "we do it this way because we've always done it this way and it's done". I will have to learn how to handle a series of situations like these. I am aware that my primary task is to take care of the children

entrusted to me emotionally, mentally, and physically, but it would be important for me if I could do this in an appropriate, supportive adult environment. I think finding this medium will be a real challenge for me.'

Fears that go beyond financial matters are also clearly reflected in students' views about parents (i.e., the parents of their foster children). Students were asked to describe in headings the factors that they feel are fearful about their career choice. In order of frequency of mentions, the following results were obtained: attitude of parents, lack of moral appreciation (twelve mentions), unfit for the career (11), burnout (9), low pay (8), work climate (6), children not accepted, difficulty coping with children (6). As you can see, the social prestige deficit accounts for a much higher proportion of fears than low pay or problems with making ends meet.

Especially in connection with the relationship and cooperation with parents (as an important indicator of social appreciation), we also asked students to write down in groups how they think parents see teachers and teachers see parents. As can be seen in the table below, suspicion and distrust are more characteristic of the relationship than cooperation and respect for each other – in both cases, negative characteristics outweigh positive ones (Table 1).

Table 1 Parent-teacher relationship through students' eyes

	POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS	NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS
How does a parent see teachers?	persistent, kind, caring, helpful, purposeful, devoted, sacrificial, versatile, creative, educated (10 characteristics in total)	non-empathetic, strict, favouriting, prejudiced, unqualified, inadequate, impatient, unfair, overwhelmed, scattered, elderly, many women (12 characteristics in total)
How does the teacher see parents?	loves your child, enthusiastic, cooperative, supportive, protective, kind (6 characteristics in total)	biased, contemptuous, prejudiced, abusing rights, 'knows everything better', pressure, stubborn, violent, subjective, non-conforming (10 characteristics in total)

The results point to dysfunctions of parent-teacher cooperation, which also indirectly refers to the social prestige deficit of (kindergarten) educators.

Based on the correlation calculations of the 2016 micro-census, it can be seen that there is a significant tension between the social utility of the profession of kindergarten educator and the earnings that can be achieved with them, since based on the difference in scores given to social utility and earnings, according to society, kindergarten educators were the sixth most underpaid occupation.¹⁷

Despite this, practising teachers – and through them, teacher candidates – do not feel the expression of social appreciation in their daily work: 89.5% of practising teachers believe that society does not value the¹⁸ profession, and according to graduate kindergarten educators, “kindergarten education is a respected profession’; “educators feel valued by society’; “the profession of kindergarten educator is a well-paid profession’ and that “teachers receive good salaries’.¹⁹

Strengths and areas for improvement based on students' self-perception

Although the students are still at the beginning of their training, in their essays they tried to consider the *strengths* that make them suitable for the profession of kindergarten educator. The most frequently mentioned traits mentioned by full-time first-year students (N=72) (103 in total) are, in order of frequency: patience (15), empathy (15), loving, kind, caring attitude (12), creativity, manual dexterity (11), communication skills (9), helpfulness, cooperation, attentiveness (8), enthusiasm, motivation, diligence, ambition (7), open, friendly, honest personality (6). Students also mentioned focused, determined (5), flexible, problem-solving (5), musical abilities (4), energetic personality (3), humility, and respect (3). First-year **part-time** students (N=109) also listed their *strengths* (64 mentions in total) that could help them during their training and later in the practice of their profession. Most

¹⁷ Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (2018): *Mikrocenzus 2016 – 13. A foglalkozások presztízse*, Budapest, Központi Statisztikai Hivatal ([link](#)) (Last download: 18/07/2022)

¹⁸ MoTel kutatás (2021): *A pedagógus tanulás. Országos felmérés. Gyorsjelentés*, Budapest, ELTE PPK ([link](#)) (Last download: 18/07/2022)

¹⁹ Szontagh (2021): *Miért (nem) leszek pedagógus?*

mentioned their own empathetic, accepting personality (11), patient, calm temperament (8), child-centred, loving attitude (8), and musical, movement and craft skills (7). Many people see a sense of humour, cheerful nature (7), good cooperation and communication skills (6), creativity (5) and intrinsic motivation (4) as strengths in staying on track, which one student described as a “strong desire to teach’. Other strengths were enthusiasm, helpfulness, cooperation, love of work, reflectivity, determination, playfulness, and sensitivity. From the above, there is significant overlap in the formulation of strengths between students studying in full-time and part-time schedules.

This catalogue of qualities can be compared with our survey conducted in 2022 among students of the course “Teacher attitudes, professional self-knowledge’ (N=21), in which students highlighted the following among their strengths: perseverance (8 mentions), flexibility, adaptability (8), helpfulness (8), patience (7), kindness (6), communication skills (6), empathy 5), positive outlook on life (5).

First-year full-time students identified their artistic abilities (singing-music, manual dexterity – eight mentions in total) **as areas to be improved**. It should be noted that students did not take an aptitude test during the admission process due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In another 44 cases, they mentioned personal qualities in which they needed to improve: confidence, determination (14 mentions), patience (4), concentration (3), time management (1), and sense of responsibility (1). Three of them feel that their communication (towards both children and adults) needs to be improved. Part-time students at the beginning of the course feel that their administration, attention-sharing skills, work pace, skills in planning and organization, consistency, problem-solving, communication, discipline and singing need to be improved, and they perceive inexperience and lack of self-confidence as problems.

At this stage of our research, we examined how the self-image of kindergarten education students changes during training. Since, according to recent research, in addition to existential difficulties, insufficient career socialization may also be among the reasons for teacher career abandonment, which is a primary deficiency of the years spent in higher education,²⁰ we considered it particularly important to

²⁰ Pusztai, Gabriella – Ceglédi, Tímea (2015): Pedagógushallgatók Kelet-Közép Európában, in Pusztai, Gabriella – Ceglédi, Tímea (eds.): *Szakmai szocializáció a felsőoktatásban. A pedagógusképzés*

examine the effect of profession-specific personality traits identified by first-year students among graduate students (N=50).

Full-time graduate students rated an average of 8.7 strengths per person out of the listed answer options. Empathy was the most indicated in both groups of respondents (89% of full-time students and 96% of part-time students). The lowest number (37% and 35% respectively) cited musical ability as their strength. There was a difference of more than 10% between the two groups of students in four factors. While full-time students consider communication, helpfulness, cooperation (82% and 70% respectively) and an open, honest attitude (70% and 57% respectively) to be their strengths, creativity (52% and 78% respectively) and intrinsic motivation and dedication (56% and 74% respectively) were more often mentioned as strengths among part-time students.

Among the areas to be developed, full-time students averaged 4.8 per person; part-time students were able to relate 3.8 statements to themselves. According to the questionnaires, graduate students have the same positive self-image as first-graders, they identify far more strengths in themselves than areas for development.

In both groups of respondents, the ability to concentrate and split attention was mentioned by the most (67% and 61% respectively), and their confidence and determination (63% and 57% respectively) were also generally considered to need improvement. Students feel least likely to improve their sense of responsibility (7% and 4%) and patience (7% and 13%, respectively).

The biggest difference in favour of part-time students is in the areas of administration and inexperience (67% and 39% respectively think they need improvement). Full-time students seem to be more confident in artistic skills (26% vs. 43% think they need improvement) and communication (19% and 30% respectively). These feelings are not independent of the fact that more time and energy is devoted to the targeted development of musical and communication skills in the daytime work schedule.

We also compare first-year and graduate results in tabular form in the field of strengths and motives for improvement. From the responses of third-year students, strengths were indicated in the table as marked by

most of the given student group (50% <) (Table 2). Among the areas for improvement, responses received by more than one-third (33 % <) were flagged (Table 3).

Table 2 Mentions of strengths among first- and graduate-year full-time and part-time students

INCLUDED IN FULL-TIME STUDENTS		STRENGTH DESIGNATION	INCLUDED IN PART-TIME STUDENTS	
FIRST-GRADERS	GRADUATES		FIRST-GRADERS	GRADUATES
X	X	patience	X	X
X	X	empathy	X	X
X	X	creativity	X	X
X	X	affectionate attitude	X	X
X	X	communication skills, helpfulness, cooperation	X	X
X	X	intrinsic motivation, dedication	X	X
X	X	open, honest attitude		X
	X	humour, cheerfulness	X	X
X		musical ability	X	
X	X	flexibility, problem-solving		X
X		concentration, determination		
X	X	energetic personality		
X	X	humility, respect		X

Table 3 areas mentioned for improvement among first- and graduate-year full-time and part-time students

INCLUDED IN FULL-TIME STUDENTS		NAME OF AREA TO BE DEVELOPED	INCLUDED IN PART-TIME STUDENTS	
FIRST-GRADERS	GRADUATES		FIRST-GRADERS	GRADUATES
X		artistic abilities	X	X
X	X	confidence, determination	X	X
X		patience		
X	X	concentration, divided attention	X	X
X	X	time, pace of work	X	X
X		sense of responsibility		
X		communication	X	
	X	administration	X	X
	X	inexperience	X	X
	X	planning and organization	X	X
	X	consistency, discipline	X	
		problem-solving	X	

As can be seen from the tables, based on students' self-perception, (self-)training cannot end with graduation, moreover, career socialization training elements can help to identify development needs. The internship period is supported by mentoring and in the long term only with the help of further training²¹ can a confident individual teacher be formed.

²¹ Tolnai, Ágnes (2024): After graduation – the situation of teacher-training graduates based on alumni research, in Szontagh, Pál–Tolnai, Ágnes–Váradi, Ferenc – Váradi-Kusztos, Györgyi: *To become a teacher. Results of Reformed teacher training on the horizon of the sociological process of careers and vocations*, Nagykorös, KRE PK, pp. 149-173

Teacher role perception – the ideal teacher

At our seminars, students are also asked year after year to compile a catalogue of qualities of teachers who are exemplary for them in group work. Considering the frequency of mentions, the following results were obtained in two consecutive periods of the research (2020: N=123; 2022: N=72) (Table 4).

Table 4 Ideal teacher attribute catalogue in order of frequency – only traits mentioned at least 4 (terms mentioned at both stages of the study highlighted in bold)

2020	2022
patient	humorous
dear	patient
sympathetic	loving
helpful	consistent
loving	caring
humorous	direct, loose
fair	committed
persistent	open
	creative
	definite
	empathic
	honest
	authentic

We compared this catalogue of properties with Máthé's doctoral research.²² According to the results, the most common answers given by students to the question 'qualities of a good teacher' were: kind, helpful, understanding, humorous, patient, and fair. As you can see, these adjectives are also included in the list compiled by kindergarten educators.

Preventive teacher research also shows that teacher candidates often develop into 'rather naïve, idealized, traditionally in the public

²² Máthé (2018)

consciousness' teacher formation.²³ The subjects of our study are no exception. It is also consistent with the research results of Sándor and Kopasz that the qualities formulated by students can be divided into two broad groups: the qualities of a 'good person' and a 'classical teacher'. In the results of the research conducted at Eszterházy Károly University, the personality traits characteristic of a 'good person' were: devoted, enthusiastic, harmonious, **empathetic, sincere, lovely, patient, kind, open, and helpful**. The 'classical teacher', on the other hand, lives a **consistent, dedicated**, exemplary life, **authentic**, fair, rigorous, authoritative, and **determined**²⁴. In the lists, we highlighted in bold the personality traits that also appear in our research. Unsurprisingly, the role ideal of kindergarten education students shifts towards the personality type of the 'good person', although it also bears many of the characteristics of the 'classical teacher'.

If we compare this ideal-typical teacher image with the students' self-perception described above, we find significant overlap between strengths (Table 5):

Table 5 Professional strengths of students based on self-perception (terms also in Table 4 highlighted in bold)

patience
empathy
creativity
affectionate attitude
communication skills, helpfulness, cooperation
Intrinsic motivation, dedication, commitment
open, honest attitude
humour, cheerfulness
musical ability
flexibility, problem-solving
concentration, determination
energetic personality
humility, respect

²³ Sándor, József - Kopasz, Adrien Réka (2019): 'Ha leszek, leszek...' - Tanár leszek? Pályamotivációs elképzelések tanárjelöltek motivációs levelei alapján, in Karlovitz, János Tibor (ed.): *Újítások és újdonságok*. Großpetersdorf, Sozial und Wirtschafts Forschungsgruppe, p. 94

²⁴ Ibid. pp. 91-92

The matches may confirm the findings of the literature that the closer the professional self-image and professional self-ideal of teacher candidates are, the greater the motivation of candidates in their career choice and work.²⁵

At the seminar 'Teacher attitudes, professional self-knowledge', the participating students (N=21) collected their reasons for choosing a career as teachers in seminar sessions. The love of children and the desire to care for children received the most mentions (sixteen mentions), followed by the transfer of values, the social impact of educational work (six), the influence of role models on career choices (five) and the possibility of diverse work (four). This finding is consistent with the results of the 2021 research conducted among practising teachers, according to which the love of working with children played an important role in the career motivation of practising teachers, followed by the example of an inspiring teacher and then the ability to teach.²⁶ As cited research states, our results did not prove that a large number of students/teachers chose the teaching profession as Plan B, for lack of a better one. The students prepared a mind map of the concept of 'EDUCATOR'. As is well known, a mind map is 'essentially a visually easier to process representation of our knowledge about a topic, a group of thoughts'.²⁷

The summary diagram of the mind maps prepared by the students in small groups after interpretation and discussion looks like this:

²⁵ Bús (2018)

²⁶ MoTel (2021)

²⁷ Gyarmathy Éva (2001): Gondolatok térképe, *Tanítani*, Issue 8-9, pp. 108-115 ([link](#)) (Last download: 18/07/2022)

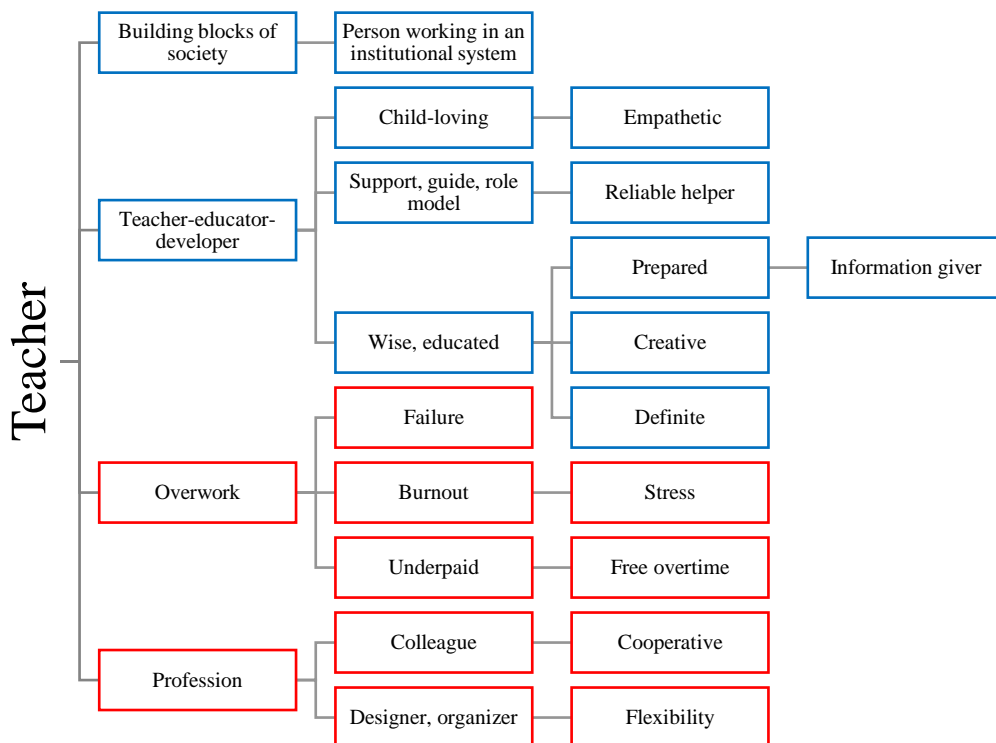


Figure 13 Teacher expression mind map (self-editing)

As shown in the figure, students identified four major points of thought in the formulation of the role of the teacher, two of which are marked in blue (Building blocks of society; Teacher-educator-developer) for professional motivation, the other two marked in red (Profession; Overwork) can be classified as career motivation (or demotivation). The results of the literature according to which the conversion of positive professional motivation into career choice is greatly hindered by (realistic) fears of overwork and underpayment. In line with the findings of the literature, it should be stated that ‘it is not low pay per se that pushes young people away from careers, but rather low value for money, i.e., working conditions and the nature of work.’²⁸

²⁸ Pedagógushallgatók pályára állási motivációi, pp. 16-17

Summary

Since 2020, based on our continuous student research conducted using various methods, it has been confirmed that the lack of moral and financial appreciation of the teaching profession carries serious risks in terms of entering a career. Based on our results, it can be concluded that the choice of teacher training, to a significant extent, is only a decision to start higher education studies and does not necessarily entail a committed career choice. Although the strong motivational motivations of students can be revealed during the training, these are not sufficient for conscious and lasting career choices and career retention in today's Hungarian socio-educational and political situation.

Contrary to our expectations, the career socialization elements of the training are not or only minimally able to compensate for social and existential difficulties and prestige deficits. As we have seen, students are uncertain about their career suitability as well as their career choice at the end of their training. This fact emphasizes the importance of teacher career care, the importance of mentoring during the apprenticeship period and beyond, and the need for further training based on and complementing initial training. In addition, it indicates the inevitable need for social awareness-raising, which goes far beyond the framework and possibilities of higher education or even the public education system:

'I get it from a lot of familiar and unknown people every day that you will only be a kindergarten educator. There is pity and pity on the faces of these people. They want to prove that this profession, which they think is so simple and irrelevant, is much more valuable. It deserves more respect and appreciation.'

Although our research results do not prove that denominational education develops in students an ideal of teachers with specifically Christian values different from the majority ones, there are specific elements among motivators (e.g., church activity in childhood, divine calling, sense of mission) and in the catalogues of qualities (e.g.,

humility) that are the personality²⁹of the Christian educator are projected into formation. Further research may be on the extent to which these motivators are already present when applying for denominational training, or whether they are formed or strengthened into true vocation motivation during training.

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²⁹ Váradi, Ferenc – Váradi-Kusztos, Györgyi (2024): The concept of Reformed church professional surplus in the context of higher education teacher training, in Szontagh, Pál-Tolnai, Ágnes-Váradi, Ferenc – Váradi-Kusztos, Györgyi: *To become a teacher. Results of Reformed teacher training on the horizon of the sociological process of careers and vocations*, Nagykovács, KRE PK, pp. 174-196

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FERENC VÁRADI

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXTERNAL PRACTICAL COMPONENTS
OF TEACHER TRAINING AT THE FACULTY OF PEDAGOGY OF THE
KÁROLI GÁSPÁR UNIVERSITY OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN
HUNGARY**

Organisational and legal background

Higher education teacher training in Hungary is characterized by specific, very characteristic historical traditions. While universities have proved their capability for training professionals in pedagogical tasks of certain levels of the public education system for centuries, primary school teachers and kindergarten educators were trained not at universities, but in institutions that are sharply separated from them, in fact, 'tertiary' institutions. Thus, although the school system seemed homogeneous in many respects, e.g. from the point of view of educational management), primary school (and similarly kindergarten) life took place in similar buildings and within the framework of work organization, the scientific and methodological background of the professional work carried out there was provided partly by universities. Partly, primary school teacher and kindergarten training institutes were sharply separated from the universities, which can be considered more modern developments. This interesting duality was not eliminated by the régime changes of the twentieth century but by the existing primary school teacher and kindergarten educator-training tertiary institutions being gradually integrated into higher education – first in the form of colleges – and then, in most cases, as they continued to function as the pedagogical faculties of larger universities. The fact that the structural separation between teacher training and kindergarten/primary school teacher training persisted for so long had specific consequences for both the public education system and teacher training as a whole.

In this historical context, the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary occupies a very special place. On the one hand, the teacher training institutes of the Reformed Church, which had almost a century of tradition before World War II

(and even older traditions of the collegiate system), represent its historical antecedents, so the former teachers and alumni of the institutions closed in 1957 were able to play no small part in organizing the teacher training that resumed in college form in Nagykőrös after the change of regime.¹

On the other hand, from the moment of its foundation, the primary school teacher training school in Nagykőrös was part of the first independently founded university in the history of the Reformed Church in Hungary, the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, thus creating the standard and conditions of university and academic operation on the one hand, but at the same time, following the aforementioned historical tradition (although no longer justified by the historical situation), separating it from teacher training at other faculties. The university, founded as a 'greenfield investment' after the regime change, was not able to become independent of these peculiar two facades of teacher training (although, especially in the beginning, part of the teaching staff could participate in teacher training at several faculties).

It follows from the above that the so-called (but never officially referred to as such) 'lower-level teacher training' inherently constitutes a separate unit in the palette of higher education teacher training for organisational reasons, but at the same time, scientific and methodological separation also followed from this separate position. Taking into account all these features, we can see that when considering the methodological and practical components of the (traditionally) 'college' level elements of teacher training, we examine the capabilities and developments of an independent field that is, for practical purposes, completely independent of other areas of teacher training (e.g. teacher training, engineering and art teacher training).

The Faculty of Pedagogy of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (as mentioned above) started in the early 1990s under the name 'Christian Education and Primary School Teacher Training College of Nagykőrös and Dunamellék', then became one of the faculties of the newly launched Károli Gáspár University of the

¹ Details of this process and the role of alumni are described in detail in Szenczi, Árpád (2018): A prepáktól a hallgatói presbitériumig... Az öregdiákok szerepe a nagykőrösi tanítóképzés szellemiségének rehabilitációjában, in Sepsi, Enikő – Szathmári, Éva (eds.): *Károli 25 (Studia Caroliensia)*, Budapest, KRE-L'Harmattan, pp. 271 – 287

Reformed Church in Hungary in 1993.² In the post-socialist higher education system still taking shape at that time, the institution carried out the teaching of teaching and catechist profession in organic unity under its ecclesiastical mission: the students were of the Reformed denomination, and their pedagogical training prepared them not only for primary school teaching tasks according to the state curriculum, but also for their catechismal tasks. (In the mid-1990s, higher education of church musicians, or cantors, was also launched, also in a form paired with the teaching department.) The very complex external practical components of the training (similar to the long-established state teacher training institutes) were implemented using their training school.

No training school was founded: the Arany János Primary School, which was again maintained by the local Reformed congregation, fulfilled this role. Thus, the re-building of the Reformed Church organisational identity of the so-called 'label exchange' institution coincided with the development and implementation of the external practical components of the local Reformed primary school teacher training, which – as can be understood – is an extremely difficult and laborious (?) task. In addition, in the last decade of the twentieth century, such unfavourable changes occurred in the state funding of the operation of training schools, which made classical practice school operation difficult, and at some point, even impossible (including the close integration of the teaching staff of the two institutions, the joint implementation of methodological trainings, the joint final examination of students, etc.)

The second phase of the history of the Nagykőrös-based institution, which continues to this day, began when the exclusive education of the classical catechist-teacher pairing was made impossible or at least reasonably unsustainable by the so-called Bologna education system adopted in Hungary. Within a few years, the Faculty started to announce its training in the form of separate bachelor-level programmes and also launched the training of kindergarten educators. At the same time, a relatively large number of students arrived at the institution, no longer committed to the Reformed denomination – and this process accelerated

² Those interested in the process can get information from the university's jubilee publication: A Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem alapítása és szellemi előzményei, in Kiss Réka – Lányi Gábor (eds.) (2023): *Károli 1993–2023. 30 év a református felsőoktatás szolgálatában*, Budapest, KRE, pp. 31–58

further with the launch of training places in Budapest and then in Kecskemét. The choice of specialist programmes available at the Faculty has also expanded and changed: among full-time training programmes, an infant and early childhood education tertiary education vocational programme was launched and then replaced by BA level programmes, and among part-time training programmes, various part-time and postgraduate courses preparing for teachers' professional exams appeared and became popular. In addition, the Faculty retained its denominational character, and the training of catechists and cantors remained a niche activity of national significance for the institution.

This *training palette*, which by now was becoming very diverse, required new approaches, partnerships, and procedures in the organization of external training site elements of the programmes. In addition, it was necessary to adapt to changes in legal requirements related to practical training.

While public education itself (for historical reasons) has always been one of the most structured and, as such, the best-regulated areas of the State (and formerly Church) humanistic policy, interestingly, the external practical components of teacher and teacher training have not (or have hardly) been integrated into the always elaborate system of the state institutions and curricula. While the benefits of allowing future teachers to participate in practical activities in parallel with their theoretical training have always been obvious to everyone, the public education system itself has not traditionally included the framework for this and does not include it today. Regarding the current system: public education institutions can only employ teachers starting their careers after they have completed their higher education studies, although they help the activities of graduates with various internship programs, mentoring (etc.). This process does not replace the teaching practice that takes place in tandem with higher education.

On the one hand, tertiary education and teacher training are regulated by a separate legal background: in many cases, the laws and regulations governing the whole and individual training programmes prescribe exercises outside the classroom that already practice the activities of the targeted vocational qualification as mandatory elements – however, they do not always set the framework for carrying out these practices. The duality described earlier is particularly prevalent here: the requirements of the external practical component of teacher training that

is regulated in detail by government decree prescribing the training requirements of the degree programme is entitled to special funding³. On the other hand, no such provisions have been prepared for the infant and early childhood educator, kindergarten educator and primary school teacher training.

Thus, in fact, in Hungarian 'college-level' teacher training, external practical activities were able to be carried out partly in forms preserving and sustaining the structures of earlier, tertiary-level teacher training, and partly following the forced paths created by the system of higher education conditions (and requirements) that have changed significantly since then. This also meant that individual training institutions could create very unique practical training systems specific to them - and perhaps partly because this field of training was less attractive to the often more academically interested leaders of faculties drifting into university settings. At the otherwise regular national curriculum consultations, not much attention was paid to the implementation of external practice in primary school teacher training and kindergarten educator training, involving greater standardisation nationwide. This would have, in any case, proved impossible to achieve because only some of the twenty or so different institutions had practice institutions of their own, while others, such as the faculty discussed in this study, did not.

In summary, today's Hungarian higher education teacher training shows a very colourful, mosaic form from the point of view of the practical preparation of students: On the one hand, there is an internal split between teacher training and the position of all other teacher training in higher education, and on the other hand, the training institutions themselves do not have any legal authority to participate in teacher training in some form. But since nothing prohibits this, they can and do participate. Higher education institutions strive to keep alive the traditions of both former tertiary-level and university-level teacher training, but the processes of innovation and coordination of the two domains are very irregular. After reviewing this background, we can present in more detail the activities of the Faculty of Pedagogy of the

³ 8/2013. (I. 30.) EMMI Decree on the common requirements for teacher training and certain training and output requirements of teacher training programmes. Annex 2, point 2.2. As of 31.08.2023. ([link](#)) (Last download: 31/08/2023)

Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary (KRE PK) at external practice sites.

Educational management tasks and dilemmas

The government decree defining the training and output requirements in the Faculty's longest-running and overall largest number of students: infant and early childhood education, kindergarten educators and primary school teacher basic programmes uses the term 'practice' in three senses. The first interpretation, which is common in higher education, i.e. that seminar work in smaller groups other than lectures is also called this way, is not discussed in this paper. The requirements of the other prescribed type of practice are not specified in the government decree, but their completion is summarised under the name of 'group and individual exercises'. The third type is the so-called extra-institutional continuous practice – which is separated from the previous one by the term '*continuous*', and whose credit value and, consequently, the number of hours are so high that it can only be completed in the last semester of studies.

This regulation, which contains little detail, lays the foundation for the model curricula of each institution compiled by itself – the first curricula of the programmes are tested during the accreditation process that allows the programme to be launched at the given institution. In the case of KRE PK, the curricula of the programmes have always been developed in cooperation with partner institutions that have been teaching the same programme for decades and with national curriculum development committees. Thus, regarding the timetable classification and division of the external practical components of the training programmes, the Faculty followed the practice traditionally existing in Hungary – moreover, it adapted it in the case of its denominational training (catechist and church musician) programmes. In general, this means that 'lower-level' teacher training students (as opposed to teacher training, and similarly to previous secondary education) participate in compulsory external exercises in almost all semesters of their training, some of which must be organised in groups.

For this activity to be feasible, at least two prerequisites must be met: on the one hand, the practice of each subfield must be preceded by the successful completion of the related methodological (theoretical)

teaching unit, and on the other hand, a professional environment must be available in the external training institution that allows the full practice of the given activity and provides the accompanying professional feedback.

It is also necessary to establish a certain integration between these two tasks: that is, methodological education should include an overview of the actual practices that students encounter in training institutions, and the pedagogical practice of institutions should rely to some extent on methodologies developed (and taught) in higher education.

The Faculty ensures the interdependence of external practices and methodological courses preparing them first of all at the curricular level. Both types of student assignments are announced as courses and are arranged in a prerequisite relationship according to the Student Requirements: that is, the successful completion of the methodological course is a prerequisite for the student to take the external practical course and start the completion (practical activity) itself. It is easy to see that from the student's point of view, this system is somewhat overstretched, strict, and cumbersome: for example, it makes it almost impossible for students to complete several practical courses in a single semester – on the contrary, failure to complete a prerequisite course can result in a domino delay of several semesters in studies. (Of course, such cases are rare, and their severity can usually be alleviated by discounts granted, based on individual requests.)

The specific implementation of external internships may differ from one programme to another and from one course to another, and the tasks and requirements are not the same for full-time and correspondence students.

The previously mentioned forms of work, partly laid down in legislation: individual, group and continuous – broadly define the framework of the exercises. In the case of an individual practical form of work, the student performs tasks related to the given practical course for a longer period – typically at least one working week – under the guidance of the practice leader. For example, in a primary school teacher programme, this may mean holding all the classes of a given subject announced in a given week independently. This is also the working form of continuous practices, but here students participate in the work of the public education institution almost as trainees, approaching full-time teachers.

Group practical work means that all members of a given group of students are present at the public education institution on a specific day of the week and observe or even participate in the work of their fellow students who are doing their teaching practice during the given week. The Faculty cannot provide this form of group work to part-time students, partly because it does not have training institutions/partner institutions with sufficient capacity for such work, and partly because these students often fulfil the requirements according to their particular life situation, in addition to their full-time job, at the expense of their holidays, even at practice sites located in various remote parts of the country.

Apart from the exercises of the part-time training system and the related exercises, the Faculty's Institute of Practical and Further Education establishes various forms of cooperation with the practice institutions that undertake and provide space for the individual and group internships of students. Since individual institutions – regardless of their maintenance structure, geographical location, etc. – require different forms of cooperation (from very close to relatively loose), it requires considerable organizational and administrative energy on the part of the Faculty and the Institute to establish and operate their framework. In addition to mutual professional benefits, these partnerships also require financial expenditure, which in most cases means compensating the work of the practice leaders with an assignment fee – but this solution does not consider the real needs of the institution providing the background for the practice manager's work.

It has been mentioned several times and requires a separate expansion of the issue of external internships for part-time students. The Hungarian legal background and institutional practice do not make a distinction between the content of studies completed under different delivery modes: the requirements of each programme must be fulfilled with the same amount of credits, in the same course structure, both full-time and part-time. At the same time, in the case of part-time training, the teaching institution can reduce the number of contact hours of each course (this essentially gives rise to the *raison d'être* of this form of training) – maximum and usually by two-thirds. In the case of external exercises. However, it is not always possible or worthwhile to use this reduction option, because ideally, students opting for part-time training study in this form (theoretical classes are on Fridays and Saturdays)

precisely as they already work in a public education institution during their studies in some kind of job. Here they also perform tasks relating to their future qualifications, so they can already work at their workplaces during their studies, e.g. as kindergarten educators, and in early primary years teaching duties. However, since this type of employment is not a requirement for enrolment in programmes, external placements should also take into account that some students (e.g. due to other types of employment) find it very difficult to complete external practice with a sufficient number of hours.

The KRE PK Institute for Practice and Further Education currently does not provide organized external practice places for part-time students – however, in the case of certain internships, especially religious training, they have the opportunity to complete certain elements of their practice in so-called *main training institutions* for a limited number of hours. This system encourages students to try to find a job following their intended future qualifications during their studies. At the same time, it also follows those self-organised external exercises, which differ from student to student, do not allow the organisation of group practical activities (also required by law). This problem exists in almost all part-time teacher training programmes in the country, so, this is not just a KRE-specific problem. The solution could be a possible legislative amendment, the organization of group exercises as contact classes (which is not a realistic chance given the current high number of theoretical hours), or the expansion of the relationship (and funding) with main practice institutions to such an extent that all part-time students could carry out at least certain practical activities here.

Development and changes of the external training institutional system

As it was clear from our historical overview, the training of KRE PK strives to keep alive the centuries-old traditions of Reformed teacher training, to implement the traditions of teacher training in modern Hungary, and to meet the expectations of the changing social and legal environment. These efforts, considering that the institution had to rebuild itself from scratch after 1990, necessarily resulted in the establishment of completely new relationships with public education institutions providing external practices.

Leaving aside another lengthy historical digression, it is important to mention that in Nagykovács, at the same time as teacher training began, the already existing (and originally Reformed Church-founded) primary school and grammar school were re-maintained by the church. This seemingly created the practical background for teacher training locally, but cooperation was not able to transform into real organic cooperation in the first decade. The reasons for this are numerous, and its consequences can be seen mostly in the fact that the real pedagogical practice of the school could not be sufficiently integrated into the methodological training of the Faculty. At the beginning of kindergarten educator training, there was no denominationally maintained kindergarten in the city – further loosening the framework of the originally envisaged ‘embedded’ operation.

After Nagykovács Primary School Teacher Training College became a faculty, together with the increase in the choice of teacher training majors, the personal conditions were slowly created for the Faculty of Primary School Teacher Training of the Budapest-based university to be able to advertise its courses in the capital as well. At the start of the training launched in Újpest after 2012, the Faculty was faced with the fact that in the highly developed public education system of one of the most populous districts of the capital, there is a huge demand among kindergartens, schools and even nurseries wishing to participate in the training of the next generation of teachers. There were many reasons for this increasing demand. For example, the competitive advantage of competitive enrolment, nostalgia for the more intensive professional life of the 1980s, or the attraction of added value attributed to denominational teacher training. The number of students in the initial courses was very large, which allowed the Faculty to maintain contact with dozens of public education institutions at the same time in the form of involving them in the training of a few groups of students per institution from among the students of full-time training. This was also a good form of cooperation in that the large number of institutions provided an opportunity to get to know different work environments and workplace cultures and to map the strengths of each institution. At the same time, planning and conducting training in this form meant orders of magnitude more tasks for the employees. Ultimately, this was also the reason why the Institute of Practical and Further Education was established in 2019 as an independent organizational unit, which has an

independent teaching and administrative staff, and one of its most important tasks is the successful operation of this complex system of training institutions.

The development of the external practice system of the Faculty can perhaps be understood primarily through the process mentioned above. The institutional organization, control and quality assurance of the practical elements belonging to teacher training were part of the operation of the institution from the very beginning. From the spontaneity and over-optimism of the 'greenfield' foundation to the increase in the number of students and the choice of courses, it has been a long way. During this journey, significant investments have been made in organisational, professional and financial terms, as a result of which the external placements for teacher training are carried out reliably and in an organised manner within high-quality training institutions.

In addition to identifying organizational development, the question may arise whether progress can be made in terms of professional content and quality. In this field, the Faculty has formulated several important objectives and is actively working towards their fulfilment.

The first is that in the case of external training sites, stable and mutually beneficial cooperation must be established with the Reformed Church education institutions. Several important developments have occurred in this field. In Nagykovács, there is stronger coordination of methodological training with the Reformed school, and the management and teaching staff of the school now have a considerable proportion of former students from Reformed Church higher education. In Budapest, and later, at the training site in Kecskemét, there was continuous networking towards accessible and high-quality Reformed education institutions, and many of these relationships were sufficiently strengthened and deepened. In addition to the unified goal definition given for the common maintainer, this strategic goal also confirms that although the majority of students do not have a Reformed background, they are open to Reformed Church institutions. Therefore, there is enormous growth potential in this area, and in the not-too-distant future, it would be a realistic objective that all external placements of students could take place in Reformed Church educational institutions.

It was also an objective (in cooperation with the Reformed Church Pedagogical Institute⁴) that the Faculty would provide training and professional conferences for public education institutions that make contact with it as external training grounds, which help everyday work and also contribute to the professional development of teachers. This kind of cooperation has also started to develop and has significant growth opportunities – the training development activities of the Faculty are greatly influenced by what is needed in the training institutions.

In recent decades, the quality policy of higher education, including Károli University and the Faculty, has changed a lot, and it can increasingly be said that the planned quality assurance and development activities can contribute significantly to the success of the institution. One of the tasks of this quality assurance system today is to collect data on external practices, helping the work of professionals planning and implementing training.

In connection with external practices, not only student satisfaction is measured, but the experiences of both practice leaders and school leaders are regularly collected and evaluated in questionnaire and personal form. Personal meetings and professional discussions take place every six months, questionnaire data collection takes place annually, also included in the work schedule of the faculty quality assurance manager.

In connection with the development of the network of training institutions, it is important to mention the qualitatively relevant characteristic, according to which the declared goal of most of the practice places is to ensure the supply of their workforce through the ‘in-house’ training of student teachers. Of course, while this phenomenon does not contradict the career guidance objectives of the Faculty, the current legal regulation of higher education teacher training does not facilitate the employment of undergraduate students. In any case, this is a problem that both the institutions and the legislators are currently working to solve, and changes are continuous. At the same time, it is still typical that a full-time student who is successful at his/her place of practice can only establish a full-time employment relationship after a

⁴ More on this: Jakab-Szászi, Andrea – Moncz, Anikó – Szontagh, Pál (2016): *The teaching of the Reformation - the reformation of teaching. Renewable professional service in Reformed public education*, Budapest, RPI

change of programme delivery mode to part-time, and the legal environment does not allow him or her to enter an employment relationship related to the qualification to be obtained later. To sum up, both the faculty education organization and employers can help high-performing students find employment through procedures based on mutual goodwill by using ad hoc solutions. Another important goal is to make these processes more efficient and predictable in the future.

Development directions and challenges

As the previous review shows, the external practices in teacher training are elements of Hungarian higher education that can point out many structural difficulties and unsolved tasks. Teacher training itself, which was able to 'grow up' with global higher education trends by integrating the traditions of teacher training, thus assigned theoretical training based on significant scientific achievements to indispensable methodological and practical studies. At the same time, the external practical component of training has not undergone the same development as, for example, in the case of so-called dual training, where private players entered the higher education market intending to promote the training of a high-quality workforce. Hungarian public education could not and cannot provide this possibility either in terms of intention, organisation or the possibilities of financial support. In addition to teacher training, it is true for all other areas of teacher training that the state-financed university programmes also do not allocate targeted resources for the implementation of external practices. Thus, it can be stated that although developments are necessary for everyone's optimistic outlook, their professional and financial background must be created separately by the training institutions using significant resources of their own.

For all these reasons, the development of the external practical system of teacher training at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary currently primarily means trying to keep up with the challenges arising from the increasing number of students and the constantly changing legal background in the operation of public education. The maintenance of practical activities prescribed in the curriculum of higher education and organised under

the provisions of the Public Education Acts requires serious efforts from semester to semester.

In addition to the core activity, the primary development area of the Institute of Practice and Further Education is to support student learning and development processes in the highest possible quality. To achieve this, the staff of the Institute must be developed and trained, moreover, there are infrastructural conditions so that students can receive help in their preparation and activities in classroom settings (even in small groups or individually) before or after their external practice. It is important that students' professional socialisation processes starting at external practice placements can be connected to the theoretical and methodological knowledge provided by higher education – their self-reflection and development are determined not only by the circumstances and opportunities given at the practice site but also by the opportunity to review their experiences from the point of view of modern methodological and pedagogical culture.

Another important development direction is to help the public education system as a labour market to utilise the innovation potential of teacher training in higher education. Although at present public education itself operates within a highly regulated curriculum framework and forms of work, ideally it would be in the interest of the state maintaining and managing both higher education and public education that the innovation results generated in higher education should be put into practice, thus improving the efficiency and quality of the whole system. Therefore, teacher training at the university level must be able to create the conditions for the spread of effective, forward-looking methodologies, for example by organising external student placements. Traditionally, the recognition of university practice schools and kindergartens has been partly based on this relationship – and in the case of the institution under discussion, this status as a caregiver of university practices (and in some cases the position of the privileged training institution, guaranteed by bilateral agreements) may also bring such benefits.

Finally, we should also mention that keeping the external practice system of teacher training in KRE PK is a task during the implementation of which the participants in the process face many difficulties and challenges.

We have already described several of these: the lack of dedicated funding, the difficult compatibility between labour market needs and the very rigid framework of tertiary education, and the different content of full- and part-time teaching practices.

At the time of writing this study, another external risk factor is the social devaluation of the teaching profession (and unfortunately in connection with this, higher education teacher training). This is a situation that is difficult to understand and has arisen as a result of a lengthy process, behind which lies the unfortunate misunderstanding that society is not aware of the real reality of the knowledge-based economy and, overall, is unable to recognize the significance of the common good that the public education system can produce. This situation makes all aspects of teacher training (and staying on track) difficult – including external practices during training.

The life situation, knowledge and attitude of newly enrolled teacher students are often very far from what is expected at practice sites – because they do not have the right patterns. From the outset, the decrease in the attractiveness of careers has also led to strong counterselection when entering teacher training: students with good academic results tend to choose other careers. Thus, in many cases, students' external practices are overshadowed either by their own previous failed school experiences or by confrontation with harmful pedagogical patterns experienced there. In these areas, teaching practices need to be guided by practice supervisors who are sensitive to the difficult situation of students, their negative experiences with the profession and possible pre-existing problems of self-evaluation.

Another challenge related to this area is that the real professional activity of external training places inevitably extends to areas that are not, or more precisely, do not yet form part of the curriculum of higher education teacher training. In these areas, it inevitably happens that the student acquires and carries on the practice of the given institution. This is not a problem, as these can be excellent and innovative practices. However, it is a risk for higher education that there is no direct influence on the possibility of harmful or even dangerous pedagogical practices being passed on to the new generation of teachers in such situations. Therefore, it is an indispensable task for higher education institutions to be continuously present in the life of external practice centres, observing the activities taking place there, and striving to cover everything that

occurs or may occur within the scope of the profession in its own theoretical and practical courses, without exception. It is partly due to this necessity that topics such as the pedagogy of children with special needs, the issue of inclusion, talent management, leisure pedagogy or moral education developed based on the Christian creed and value system are now much more important than before.

Summary

The implementation of the external practical components of teacher training is a process unfolding at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary over a time horizon of several decades. Its participants and stakeholders are numerous: in addition to the society acting as a client against the public education system and the education policy implementing its needs, the institutions constituting the public education system and the higher education institutions implementing teacher training are determining factors.

When implementing external practices, consensual professional decisions should be made in a field determined by the needs of these stakeholders – not least because practical training is a relatively costly area of higher education, and the financial conditions for its operation can only be created if as many of them as possible share this common purpose and see it through to reliable, and useful operation.

Optimally, this is an integrated process within the internship system and career model existing in the labour market, in the initial ‘university’ phase of which the harmonisation of theoretical knowledge and field experience is carried out at a high professional level. This involves the development of self-reflective behaviour and the creation of a supportive environment that helps to bear burdens and difficulties. The Institute of Practical and Further Education of KRE PK strives to achieve this easy-to-define objective in its daily operation and represents it in the work and educational processes within the organisation of the University, and the ideas outlined here determine its professional activity and quality assurance policy.

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ÁGNES TOLNAI

AFTER GRADUATION – THE SITUATION OF TEACHER-TRAINING GRADUATES BASED ON ALUMNI RESEARCH

Alumni research programmes focus on tracking and studying the career paths and achievements of graduates of higher education institutions. By understanding the careers of alumni, these programmes realise valuable insights and, based on the data collected, market benefits to various stakeholders. By providing valuable data and insights, the research contributes to the continuous improvement of educational programmes and career opportunities on the institutional side for both students and graduates. In addition, they strengthen the connection between educational institutions and the alumni community, fostering a sense of belonging and pride in their alma mater among graduates.

Objectives of Alumni Research

Alumni research systems (*Diplomás Pályakövetési Rendszer, DPR*) are fundamental segments of institutional operation. Melchiori drew attention in 1988 to the fact that properly applied methodology can provide an accurate map of graduates' preferences and opinions about their studies. It is true that, as the study explains, the main purpose of this research is fund-raising, which can provide the necessary information for strategic planning in the case of *Anglo-Saxon* universities operating with private funds.¹

In the case of alumni research, the institution must determine the purpose of using the research data to develop the applied methodology. These goals can be very diverse, as summarised in the study by Weerts, Cabrera, and Zulick.² On the one hand, institutional development may

¹ Melchiori, Gerlinda S. (1988): Applying Alumni Research to Fundraising. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, No. 60, Winter, pp. 51-65

² Weerts, David J.- Cabrera, Albert F.-Zulick, Bardford J. (2003): Encuestas a gooseberry: tres fundamentos conceptuales en el seguimiento de egresados universitarios. In Vidal, Javier (ed.):

be a goal since these research programmes provide valuable feedback to higher education institutions on the effectiveness of their training programmes. By monitoring graduates' careers, institutions can assess whether their programmes are in line with the needs of the labour market. This information allows them to make data-driven improvements to their curriculum, teaching methods, and services. Student counselling and support can also be defined as an additional goal. Current students gain information about possible career paths and opportunities from alumni research and can make more informed decisions about their majors, specialisations, and extra-curricular activities, leading to better career prospects. Network options also appear as another target. Alumni programmes can create networking opportunities for both current students and graduates. Institutions can foster relationships between alumni and students, allowing students to learn from the experiences and insights of successful graduates. Building relationships with successful alumni can also lead to internships, jobs, and mentoring opportunities. In the same way, they can build employer relationships, as institutions can provide a platform for the success of their alumni. It does not only improve their reputation but also highlights the importance of establishing relationships with employers, resulting in increased recruitment opportunities for current and future students.

In addition to the institutional side, policies should also be highlighted. Alumni research also plays a role in shaping higher education strategy, as government agencies and policymakers use the data from this research to understand the effects of education on workforce development and economic growth and to determine the future strategic directions of higher education.

The evaluation of programmes can now be done because of relevant information. Based on the reports of the Alumni Research System (DPR), we have a comprehensive view of the graduates of the programmes established at the time of the introduction of the Bologna system, but the data series of the Higher Education Information System on further

education and drop-out are also available, as well as the social needs reflected in applications for admission.³

Whichever goal is in focus, the question of long-term outcome evaluation arises with all of them. By tracking graduates over a longer period, institutions can identify trends in career development, market utilisation of their programmes, alumni satisfaction with training, and the impact of education on alumni lives. This also helps to develop higher education services that meet the needs of external and internal stakeholders. Monitoring and evaluation of results is therefore essential. However, all this falls within the scope of quality assurance. The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)⁴ define the key points of the institutional quality management system for higher education institutions. ESG 2015 recommends the functioning of the quality assurance system of higher education institutions based on the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) principle through the method of planning, implementation, monitoring and identifying additional intervention points. It monitors the implementation of goals formulated at the level of institutional strategic planning, expecting the application of measurement and evaluation techniques that are suitable for measuring the achievement of goals and the extent of their realization, based on which further measures, developments and intervention points can be determined. ESG 2015 standards and guidelines require broad stakeholder involvement in the planning and check phases to enable decision-makers to make information-based decisions. Whichever of the above-mentioned goals of alumni surveys is taken, in each interpretation the method is fundamentally related to the quality management system, i.e. alumni research, as part of institutional quality assurance, can serve institutional strategic planning along with different goals.

From the point of view of teacher training, which is the subject of this volume, strategic planning is just as important as in any other service

³ Government Decision No. 1785/2016 of 16 December 2016 on the adoption of the 'Gear change in higher education medium-term policy strategy 2016'. ([link](#)) (Last download: 30/06/2023) and *Changing gears in higher education - medium-term policy strategy 2016*. Government of Hungary, 24/2016 ([link](#))

(Last download: 30/06/2023)

⁴ *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)*. (2015) Brussels, Belgium ([link](#)) (Last download: 06/30/2023))

sector. Long-term planning based on labour market needs has already been presented in the volume determining recruitment capacities.⁵ This chapter aims to shed light on another side of strategic planning, namely graduate tracking.

Methodology

The question is what methodology we use for the chosen goal or goals. Since we are talking about a very large number of graduates, we need to move towards research based on questionnaires. However, as questionnaires are anonymous and voluntary, the methodological problem arises whether we can extrapolate the results from the answers to the entire population. The mass of students, and thus of graduates, is not homogeneous. Moreover, the data set consisting of voluntary and anonymous responses, and proportionality is questioned, since sampling relates to the entire alumni population and did not take place in a smaller group that ensured representativeness. Polling organizations work with a sample representative of society, by proportioning which general findings can be made for society. However, alumni research does not. In the case of anonymous answers analysed in institutional alumni research, the institution cannot know whether, for example, the reason for the outstanding income of graduates is that only those who have achieved high admission scores, completed their studies with excellent results, or only those gave feedback who are employed in better-paying multinational companies instead of in the public sector. All these uncertainties must be considered when interpreting the results of institutional alumni research.

As early as their 1987 study, Smith and Bers detailed the weaknesses of this research.⁶ Although they are still analysing the effectiveness of mail requests, adapting the situation in 1987 to today's ones, their findings can also be applied to requests received by e-mail. They point out that the willingness to respond is usually low compared to the number of respondents, so an alumni survey launched from the

⁵ Tolnai, Ágnes (2024): The future of primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training, in Szontagh, Pál - Tolnai, Ágnes - Váradi, Ferenc - Váradi-Kusztos, Györgyi: *To become a teacher. Results of Reformed teacher training on the horizon of the sociological process of careers and vocations*, Nagykovács, KRE PK, pp. 47-97

⁶ Smith, Kerry - Bers, Trudy (1987): Improving alumni survey response rates: An experiment and cost-benefit analysis. *Research in Higher Education*, Volume 27, pp. 218-225

institutional side will never produce results suitable for a complete number of items. In addition, as they note, the shorter the training period, the weaker the long-term relationship the student can establish with the institution, which therefore reduces the desire to respond in the case of graduates on shorter courses. It should be mentioned here that the three-plus-two-year model of the Bologna structure can generate such a phenomenon in the case of master's programmes, not to mention one-year programmes (e.g. one-year master's programmes or specialised postgraduate studies).

It is also necessary to take into account the basic microeconomic fact that individuals base their decisions on a cost-benefit analysis, i.e. they are likely to consider maximising profits concerning the time spent responding to an alumni questionnaire. These gains can be institutional benefits or winnings, but if they cannot be realised, willingness to respond will be greatly reduced.

In the field of graduate tracking surveys, institutions will therefore face the problem of not being able to produce results for the whole sample, and respondents will not be able to be represented in the entire graduate population at all, due to the anonymity of the questionnaires, as it will be unclear which subgroups received responses.

Due to the factors mentioned above, alumni research would be able to support strategic, qualitative, and operational planning objectives through the data provided. ESG 2015 highlights the need for institutions to incorporate graduate tracking practices into their quality management systems and use them in the decision-making process.

Until 14/02/2020, Section 25, paragraphs (1) to (4) of Government Decree 87/2015 (IV.9.) *on the implementation of certain provisions of Act CCIV of 2011: The National Higher Education Act*, regulated in detail the process of data collection and data storage of the DPR. According to this section, the institutions had to carry out the data among those who were present and those who obtained absolutorium for one, three and five years, using a uniform methodology. The methodology was published by the minister responsible for higher education. The institutions had to communicate the results of the research to the *Higher Education Information System (Felsőoktatási Információs Rendszer, FIR)*, and the annual analysis had to be published on their website. However, Article 8 of Government Decree No 191/2019 (VII.30.) *on the regulation of higher education and amending certain related government decrees is the Act on the*

Regulation of Higher Education repealed these provisions of Article 25, meaning that currently, Hungarian higher education institutions are not directly bound by law to operate the alumni research system. However, on the requirement to issue operating licences for higher education institutions, the Government Decree 87/2015 Article 8 (3) declares that institutional accreditation will be issued by the *Hungarian Higher Education Accreditation Committee (Magyar Felsőoktatási Akkreditációs Bizottság, MAB)*. The institutional accreditation is based on ESG 2015 standards and guidelines, which also includes the alumni research obligation. Indirectly, therefore, higher education institutions are already obliged to seek accreditation in this way.

Due to the above-mentioned methodological problems of alumni surveys conducted by higher education institutions, the *Educational Authority (Oktatási Hivatal, OH)* also conducts another type of alumni research. This is a non-voluntary, but anonymized system based on a complete sample. The *National Infocommunication Services Ltd. (Nemzeti Infokommunikációs Szolgáltató Zrt., NISZ)* linked the December 2019 data of those who obtained certain absolutorium with the *National Tax and Customs Administration (Nemzeti Adó- és Vámhivatal, NAV)*, the *National Health Insurance Fund Management (Nemzeti Egészségbiztosítási Alapkezelő, NEAK)*. Then the *Ministry of Innovation and Technology (Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium, ITM)* and the *Student Loan Centre (Diákhitel Központ, DHK)* linked the database of the Educational Authority in anonymised form, based on social security and tax identification numbers. The Educational Authority aggregated them and delivered them to higher education institutions, and the public through the Merging Administrative Databases.⁷

The last grade to obtain an absolutorium for which data can be obtained for all higher education institutions in all fields of study is 2017/2018, for which data were collected in December 2019. The four-year-old database is not presently able to provide relevant information for medium-term institutional planning, as wages, employment and employers may change very often, even annually, based on market movements. We must declare that nowadays it is not possible to plan five years from data from five years ago, but only to show where our

⁷ *Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése, 2020*, Oktatási Hivatal, Budapest ([link](#)) and *DPR Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE) intézményi adatterítés. (2020)* Oktatási Hivatal, Budapest

own higher education institution stood in the competition of the market four years ago, and how those who obtained an *absolutorium* held their own on the labour market at that time.

Teacher training in national databases

Based on the Data Repository of the Educational Authority Administrative Databases, teacher training can be compared with other fields of training for several indicators. The kindergarten educator and primary school teacher training programme is the topic of this volume, in the context of the basic training programmes of the teacher-training area. So, if we want to make an accurate comparison from a methodological point of view, we must compare these data with the basic programmes of the other training areas. The present analysis reviews the data of those who obtained *absolutorium* in the 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 school years and highlights through them why the development of intrinsic motivation and career socialisation should appear even more prominently in teacher training.

The individual figures show the situation of each group by field of study and within it in the academic year in which the *absolutorium* was obtained. The fifteen fields of study (agriculture, art mediation, arts, economics, humanities, information technology, legal studies, medicine, public governance, religious studies, science, social science, sports, teacher training, and technology)⁸ provide a total of forty-five elements in the three years examined, within which the results of the undergraduate courses of teacher training can be placed.

Based on the data of those employed in jobs requiring higher education, graduates of the bachelor's programmes in the teacher training area are in the top 10. After the information technology field of study, which dominates the first to third places, the fourth place with 88.95%, is for those who obtained *absolutorium* in the 2017/2018 academic year in teacher training. The seventh place with 87.26% is for the class of 2016/2017 and the eighth with 86.73% is for the class of 2015/2016 of teacher training. During the period under review, more than 86% of graduates of BA-level teacher training programmes were able to fill jobs that required higher education, i.e., the proportion of

⁸ The list of programmes classified for each field of study is available on the [following page](#). (Last download: 30/06/2023).

those who are unable to use their acquired diploma in a field that requires a higher education qualification is low in all fields of teacher training. For comparison, it is worth looking at the last place. Less than 60% of public governance graduates were working in jobs requiring higher education in December 2019.

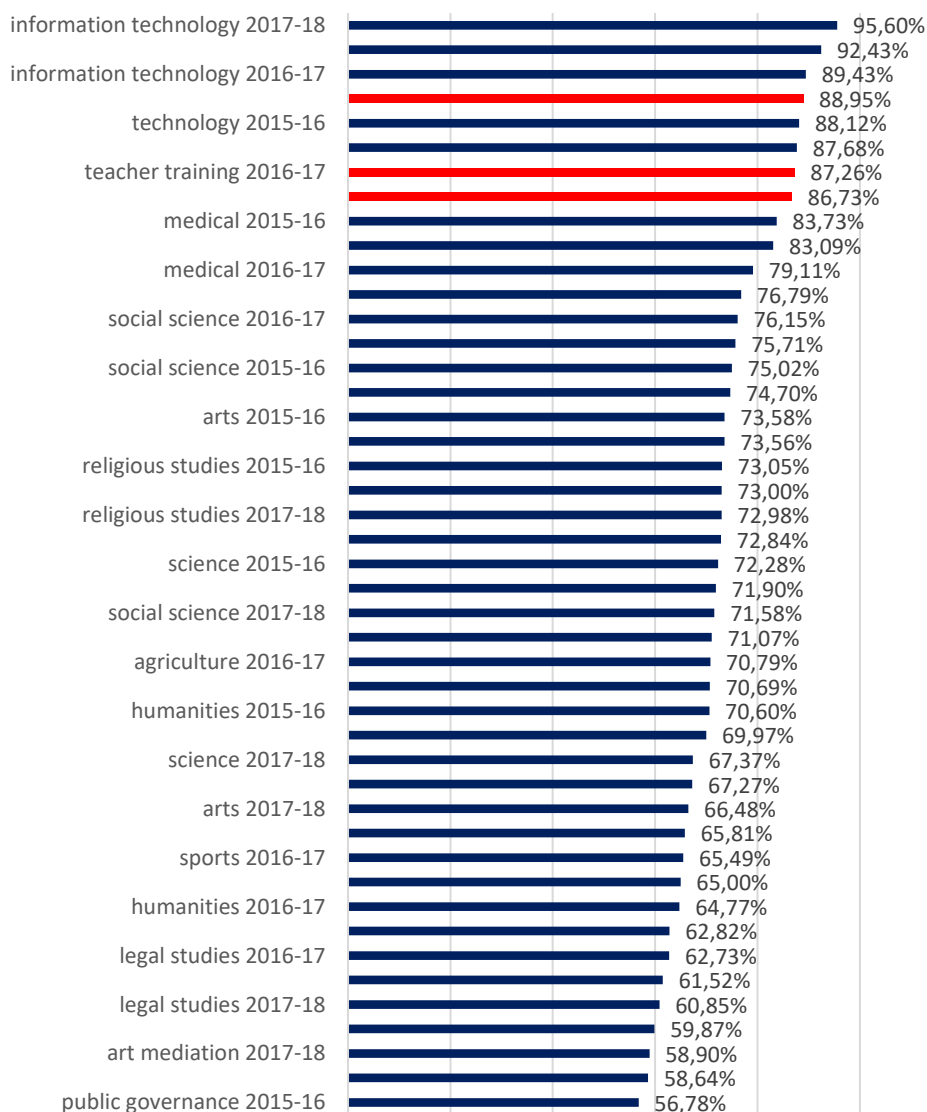


Figure 1: Data on employees in jobs requiring higher education⁹

⁹ Source: *Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.*

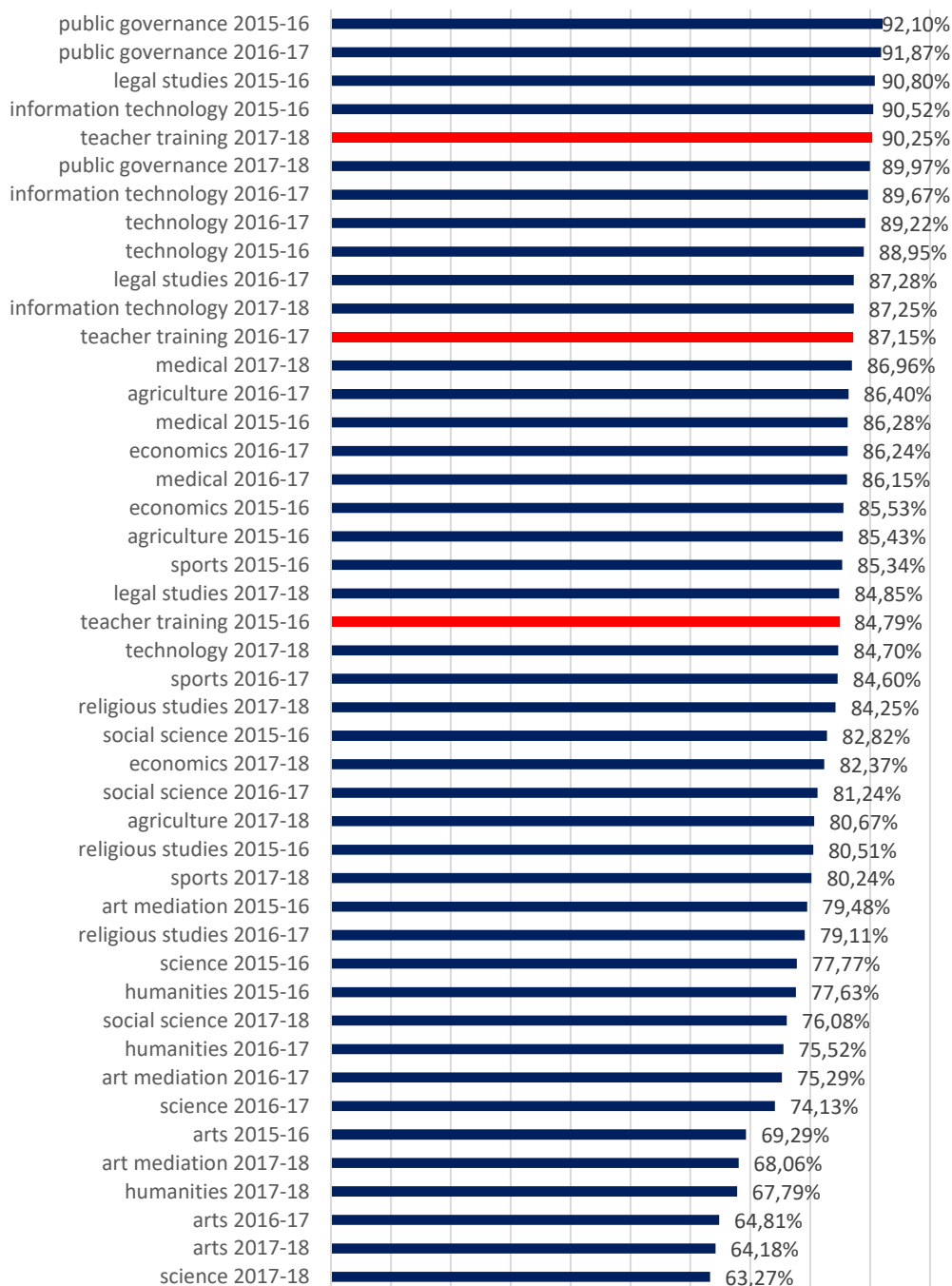


Figure 2: Data on persons in employment as of December 2019¹⁰

¹⁰ Source: Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.

The undergraduate programmes in the teacher training area performed well even in terms of active employment indicators. In the case of those who were¹¹ in active employment in December 2019 (Figure 2), those who obtained an *absolutorium* in the 2017/2018 and 2016/2017 academic years are in the first third with 90.25% and 87.15%, respectively. In the 2015/2016 academic year, those who obtained an *absolutorium* stood in the middle of the second trimester at 84.79%. This can be contrasted, for example, with the field of arts, where in all three years examined the proportion of those who were employed in December 2019 is below 70%. Graduates of teacher training have a degree that is valuable from the point of view of the labour market, which is partly due to the labour shortage described in Chapter 2 and the increasing labour demand of the Hungarian economy, which is indicated by the unemployment rate of 3.5% in 2019¹², which was the lowest value in the past 20 years. A comparison of the data of those in jobs requiring higher education qualifications (Figure 1) and those in active employment (Figure 2) clearly shows that a high proportion of graduates of bachelor's programmes in the teacher training field are active in the labour market for jobs requiring higher education qualifications, i.e., their acquired qualifications are valuable for the labour market.

In the case of other indicators, however, teacher training no longer ranks so high in the case of BA graduates. The rate of further education is particularly low in their case, and they are in the middle in terms of the time between obtaining an *absolutorium* and finding their first job. However, these have reasons related to the specifics of qualifications.

In the case of further education, it should be considered that the BA-level courses in teacher training, such as infant and early childhood educator, kindergarten educator, primary school teacher and conductor, provide qualifications with which they can perform their tasks until retirement, except for the seven-year further training obligation that can be fulfilled outside of higher education. Re-entry into higher education becomes important at the time of certification, which those in public

¹¹ According to the database of the Educational Authority, those who are actively employed include those who work, who raise children and work alongside them, and those who work alongside their studies.

¹² Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (2023): *Summary data tables (STATDATA)*. 20.1.3.3. *Unemployment data of the population aged 15–64*. ([link](#)). (Last download: 07/31/2023)

education were able to complete with the teacher's professional examination. However, a prerequisite for the teacher's professional examination is that the teacher has at least three years of professional experience. So, the earlier the year of graduation, the lower the proportion of further education graduates among those graduating from these programmes, as shown in Figure 3:

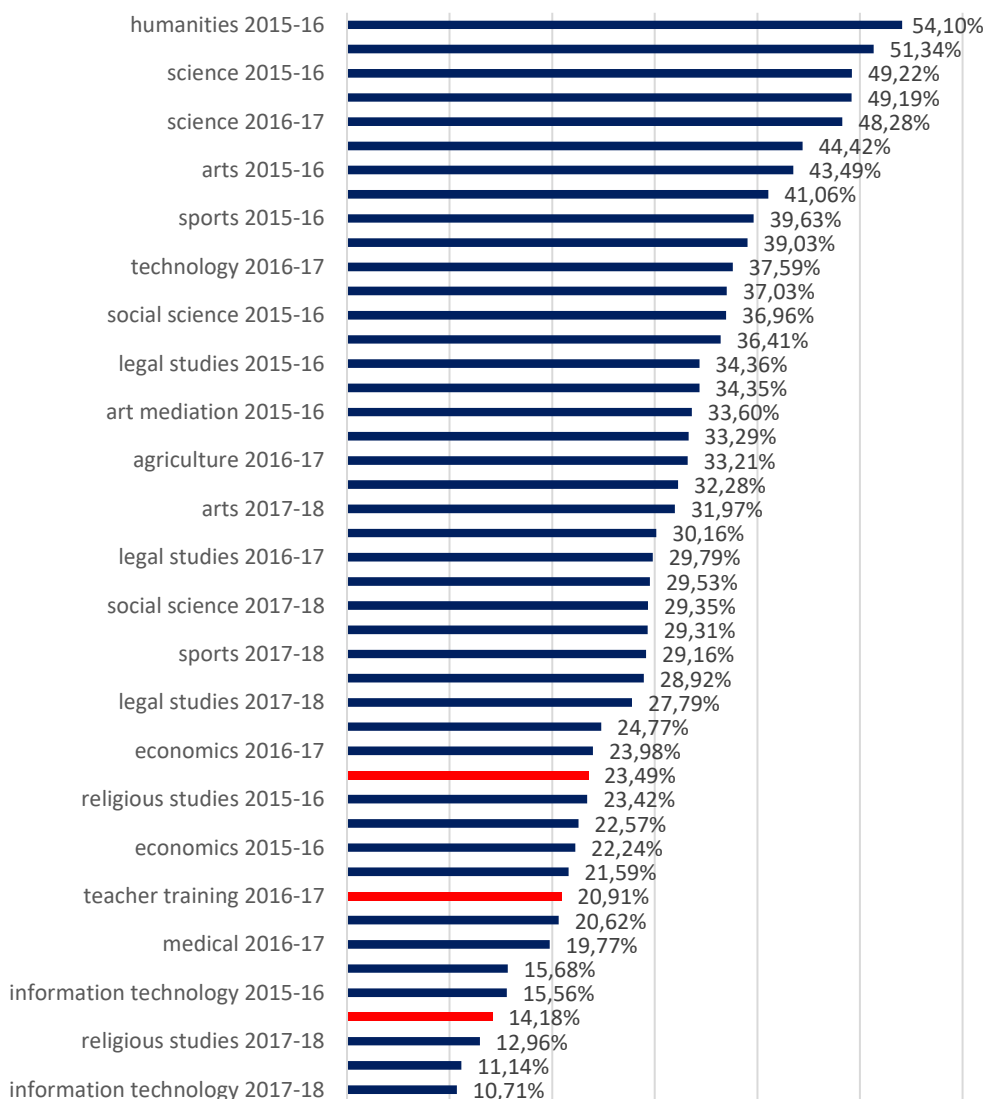


Figure 3: Data on subsequent studies¹³

¹³ Source: Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.

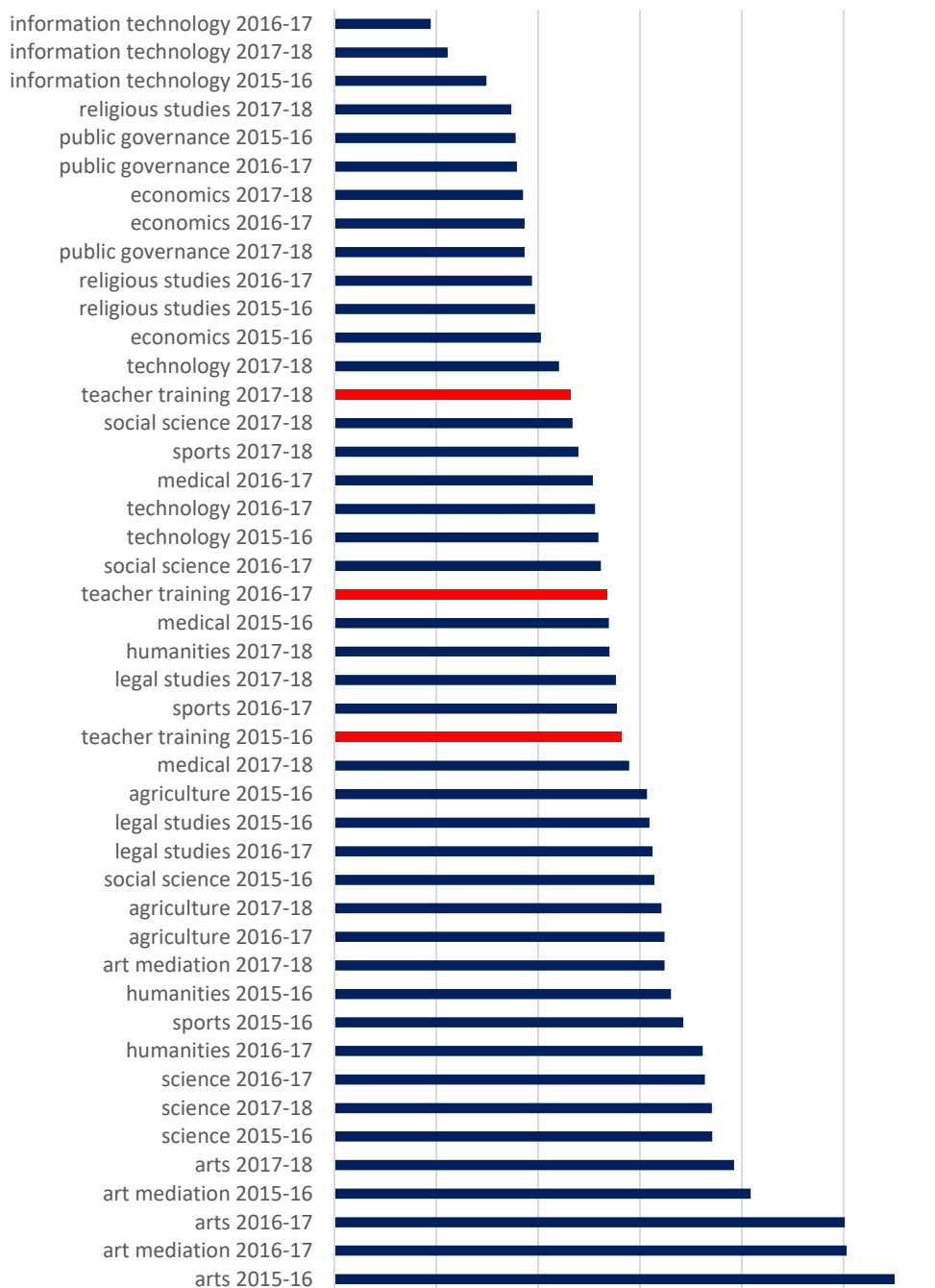


Figure 4: Time of employment (months) ¹⁴

¹⁴ Source: Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.

After obtaining the absolutorium, the time till the first job (Figure 4) is the shortest in the field of informatics, but typically they find a job within one month, and those who have obtained an absolutorium in the field of economics also find a job. Those who have obtained an absolutorium at BA-level teacher training have a period of between 1 and 1.5 months, thus they are in the middle of the field of study. However, if we look at the fact that in these six- and eight-semester-long programmes the absolutorium is obtained at the end of June or the beginning of July, schools do not hire new staff before the school year, and kindergartens do not hire new staff during the summer break-down due to cost reduction, then it can be said that July and half of August are typically spent without work by recent graduates. Except in cases typical of part-time programmes, when already with secondary education those working in education, or the social sphere continue their work in higher positions after graduation. For this reason, in their case, the time between absolutorium and entry into employment is zero. Whether we look at the indicators of further education or employment, we encounter the peculiarities of teachers' work, i.e., the position in the middle of the last third is not due to the failure of the training, but to the nature of the qualification.

In the case of two other indicators, however, this cannot explain the results of the undergraduate teacher training programmes, which achieved the worst rankings. They rank last in terms of average gross income and at the top of those residing abroad.

While graduates of bachelor's programmes in the field of IT earn an average gross income between 595,000 HUF and 678,000 HUF, graduates of BA-level teacher training rank in the last three places in the following order. Obtaining absolutorium in the 2017/2018 academic year is in forty-fifth place with 251,000 HUF, the 2016/2017 academic year is in forty-fourth place out of forty-five with 253,000 HUF and the 2015/2016 academic year places forty-third with 269,000 HUF. In the 2015/2016 academic year, those who obtained an absolutory degree in the bachelor's degree program of the IT training area achieved two and a half times the average gross income in December 2019 than the former students of the undergraduate programmes in the field of teacher training. Comparing all this with the guaranteed minimum wage, which is 195,000 HUF gross for those employed in jobs requiring at least

secondary education or secondary vocational¹⁵ training, then those who obtained an absoltorium in teacher training in 2017/2018 earned 56,208 HUF gross less than it while IT graduates earned 400,559 more than the guaranteed minimum wage.¹⁶

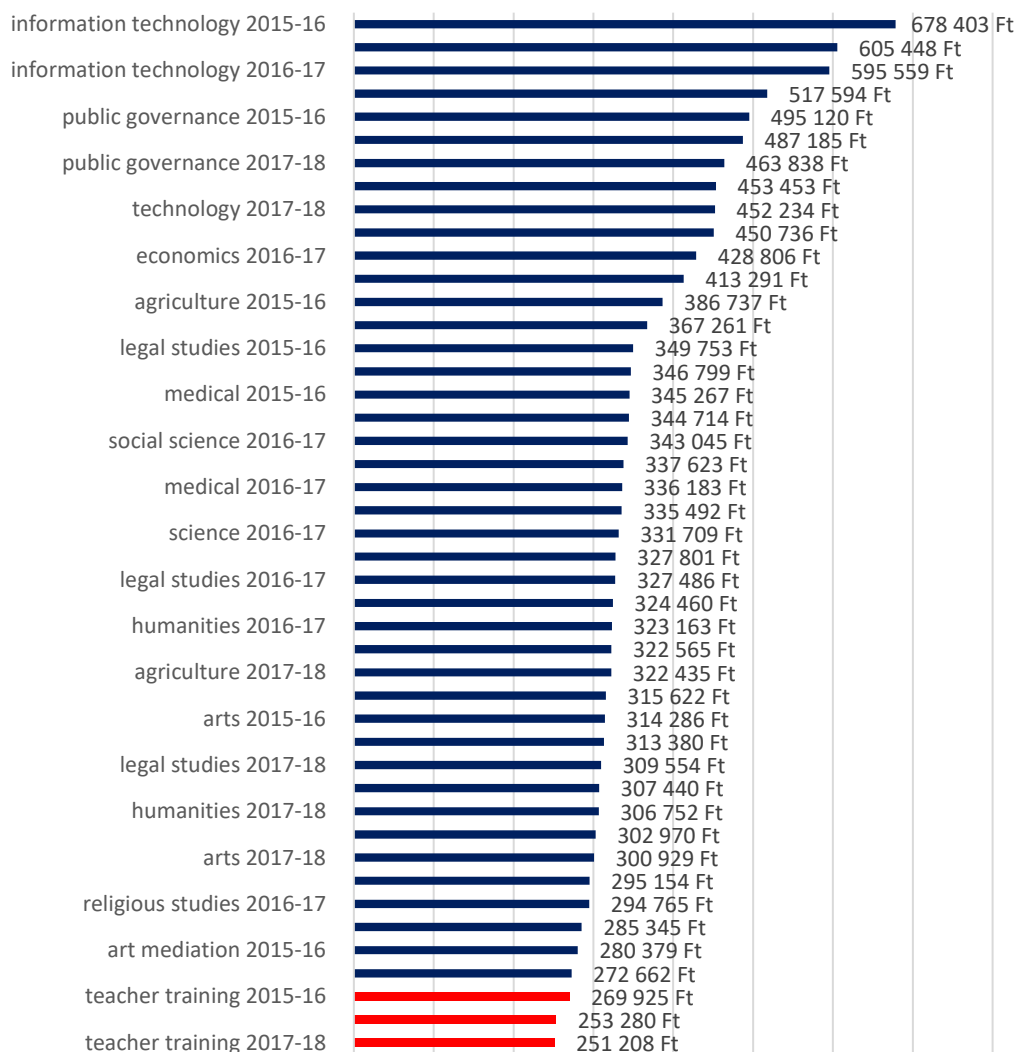


Figure 5: Average gross income (2015-2018)¹⁷

¹⁵ Government Decree No. 324/2018 (XII.30.) establishing the mandatory minimum wage and the guaranteed wage minimum in 2019. Status in force between 01/01/2019 and 31/12/2019. ([link](#)) (Last download: 07/31/2023)

¹⁶ Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.

¹⁷ Source: Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.

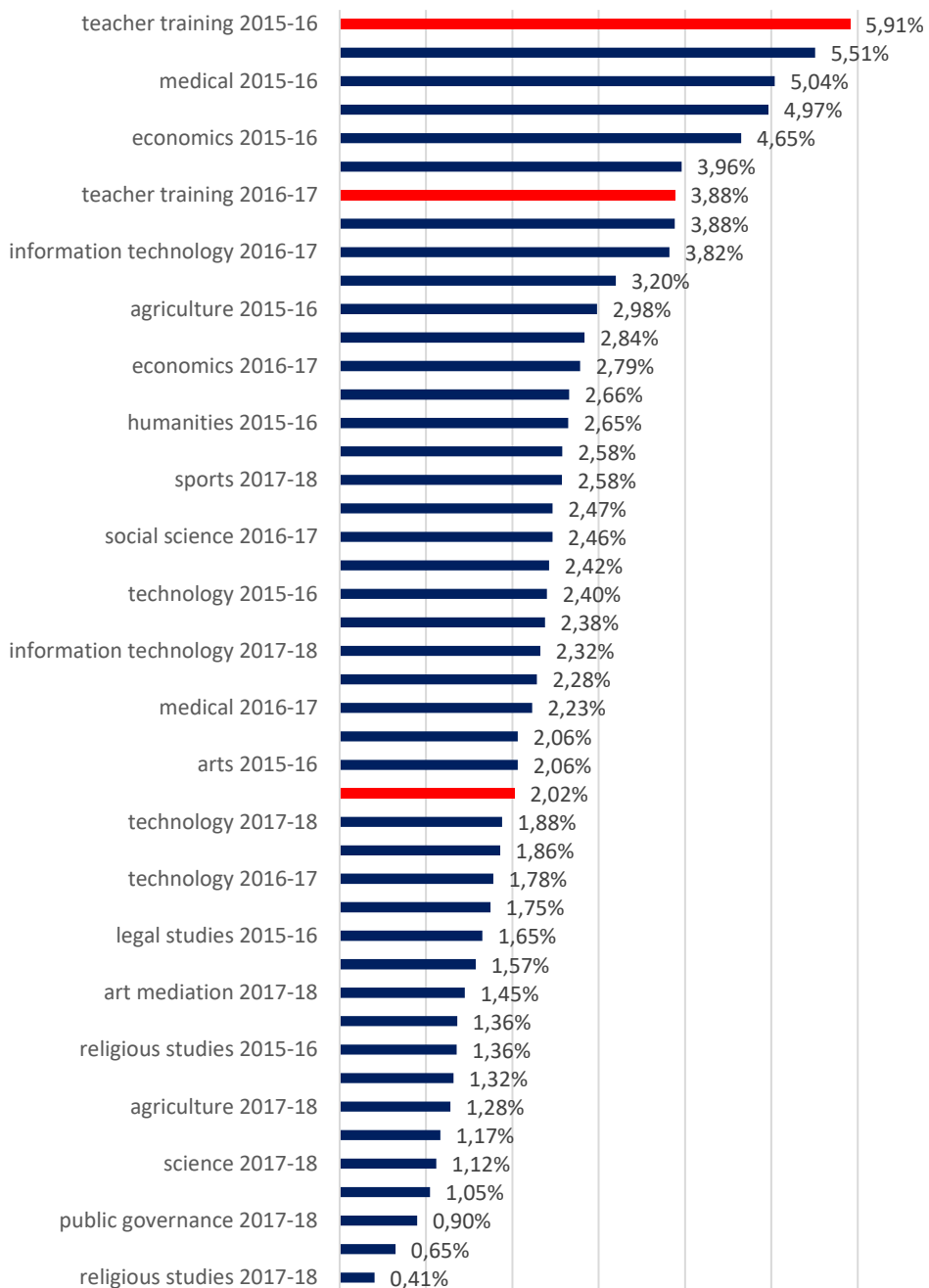


Figure 6: Share of people abroad in December 2019¹⁸

¹⁸ Source: Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.

The proportion of expatriates also highlights problems in this field of study. The most who left the Hungarian labour market are those who obtained absolutorium in BA-level teacher training in the 2015/2016 academic year 5.91% of them worked abroad in December 2019. They are the absolute first on the list of forty-five elements, ahead of those who obtained an absolutorium in sciences and medical fields of study in the same year. Among those who obtained absolutorium in the 2016/2017 academic year, the highest proportion (3.88%) of those working abroad is of graduates of teacher training programmes. They are ahead of those who obtained an absolutorium in the field of information technology (3.82%). For 2017/2018 graduates, the figure is only 2.02%.

The figures for average gross income and working abroad show a dramatic picture in the case of teacher training. As professional experience increases, more and more people are taking up work abroad, and the financial esteem of the career is the lowest among all fields of study. All this is a very big exclamation point for teacher training in higher education institutions, as students who remain in their careers and the Hungarian labour market must be trained with the lowest wage prospects and the highest willingness to emigrate.

The situation of newly graduated kindergarten teachers and teachers

The Merging Administrative Databases also provide an opportunity to view the results by programmes. So, the situation of kindergarten educators and primary school teachers can be compared with those who have obtained absolutorium in the entire teacher training programmes.

Both kindergarten educators and primary school teachers are employed in jobs that require higher education qualifications in higher proportion than those who obtained an absolutorium in the teacher training as a whole (Figure 7). However, it should be noted that in all cases the deviation is below 3%, which is not a significant difference. The proportion of those active in employment in December 2019 is also higher in their case, except for those who graduated from kindergarten education training in 2017/2018 (Figure 8). Therefore, the situation of primary school teachers and kindergarten educators is better than the average of the BA-level teacher-training graduates.

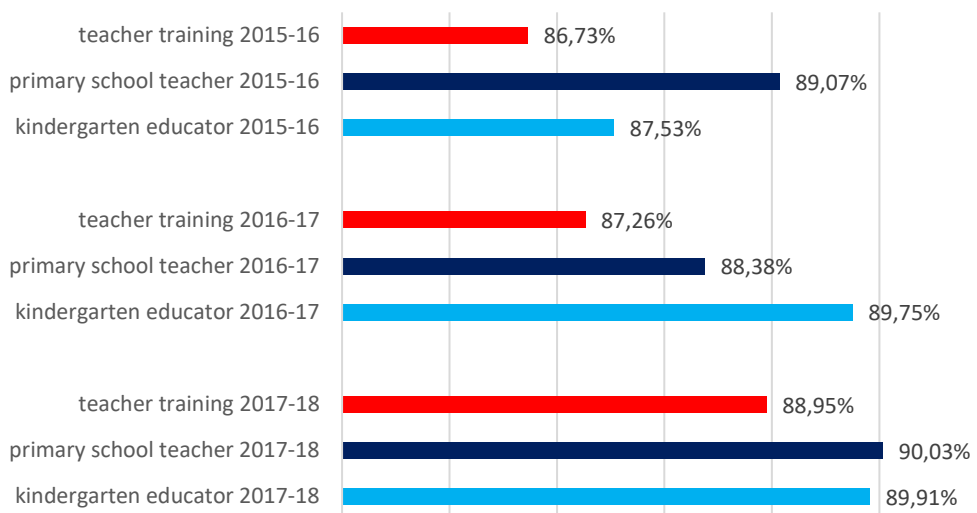


Figure 7: Share of people working in jobs requiring higher education¹⁹

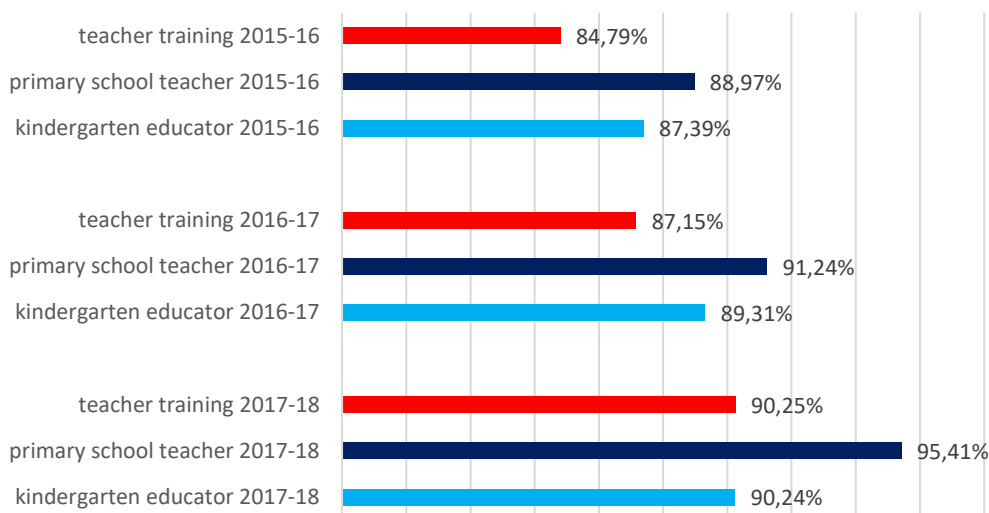


Figure 8: Share of people in employment in December 2019²⁰

The results are also better in terms of the first job. Compared to the average trainee teacher, both primary school teachers and kindergarten educators find jobs sooner, which can be attributed to the labour

¹⁹ Source: *Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.*

²⁰ Source: *Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.*

shortage described in Chapter Two of this book. The data in Figure 9 shows that this labour shortage has only intensified, as a primary school teacher and kindergarten educator who completed their study in 2015/2016 experienced an average of 1.2 and 1.28 months between obtaining an absolutorium and starting work. In the 2017/2018 school year it was only 0.95 months for primary school teachers and 1.08 months for kindergarten educators, meaning that the time to start work became much shorter in these two areas.

The shortage of skilled labour force in the field is also indicated by the number of people already employed at the end of the training (Figure 10). In the case of kindergarten educators, this has steadily increased from 48.37% to 54.56% in the three years under review. However, the results are more pronounced than primary school teachers. While 52.77% of 2015/2016 graduates were already working in the last month of training, this figure is 63.99% for those graduating in 2017/2018, i.e. six out of ten were already working at that time. However, as regards the specialities of the area, a note should be taken of the remark made in the section above. 'Kindergarten educator' training means the possibility of further education for nannies with secondary education who are already working in kindergartens, and primary school teacher training for teaching assistants working in schools. They are already active members of the labour market, and there is no gap between them completing studies and finding their first job, so they significantly improve the data. Another factor also modifies the numbers. In the last semester of all teacher training, a related internship (professional training) must be completed, where the school and kindergartens can get to know the trainees and sign them off.

Individual studies could accurately demonstrate whether the impact of the first or second factor has a more significant effect on primary school teacher and kindergarten educator training and has a greater impact on data, i.e., whether students already have a secondary education, and their presence is more relevant on part-time programmes, or whether they are already contracted in the last semester of studies. However, if holding jobs in the last semester were more frequent, the two indicators would be lower, as the value would also improve significantly for students on full-time training who are not yet working. Moreover, the higher proportion of part-time students in training and this statement taken together make it possible to assume

that the higher number of students wishing to obtain a higher level of pedagogical qualification in higher education brings about these improved results in kindergarten educator and primary school teacher training.

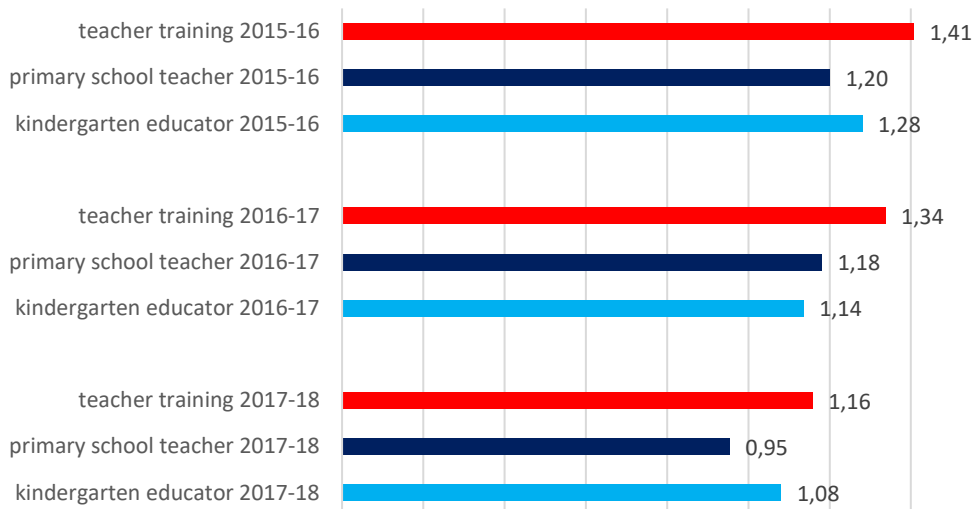


Figure 9: Job placement time 2015-2018 (month) ²¹

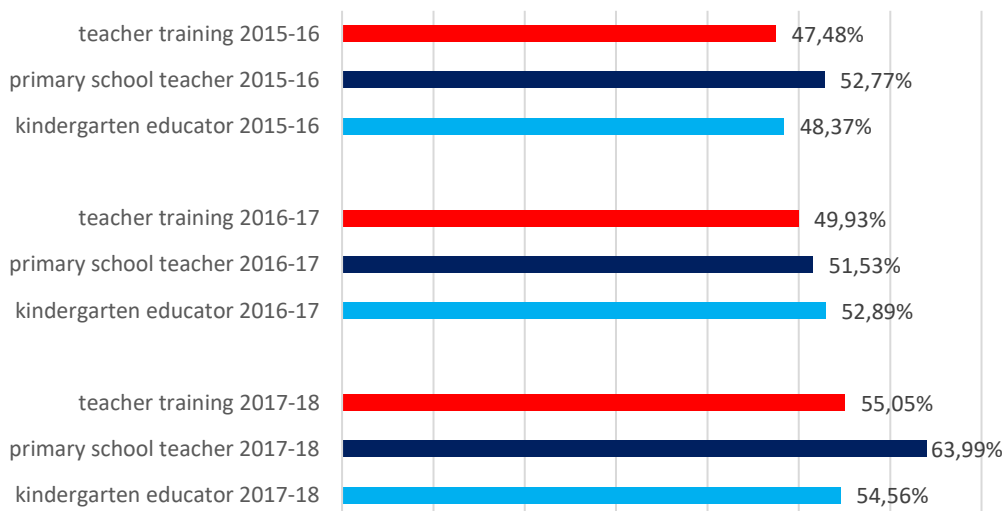


Figure 10: Share of employees in the last month of training (2015-2018) ²²

²¹ Source: Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.

²² Source: Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.

Compared to graduates of BA-level teacher training, the labour market situation of kindergarten educators and primary school teachers is more favourable: they find employment more quickly, and increasing numbers of them already work during training.

In the previous sub-chapter, average gross income was found to be the lowest of all fields of study for all three years examined. However, the average gross salary of primary school teachers increases faster than that of graduates of all bachelor's programmes in teacher training. And from the second year of work, it is higher than that of graduates of the other bachelor's programmes in teacher training. The average gross income of kindergarten educators, on the other hand, does not reach this average; their income is lower than that of teacher-training graduates, and the gap is constantly increasing. Thus, the financial esteem of primary school teachers is higher than that of kindergarten educators.

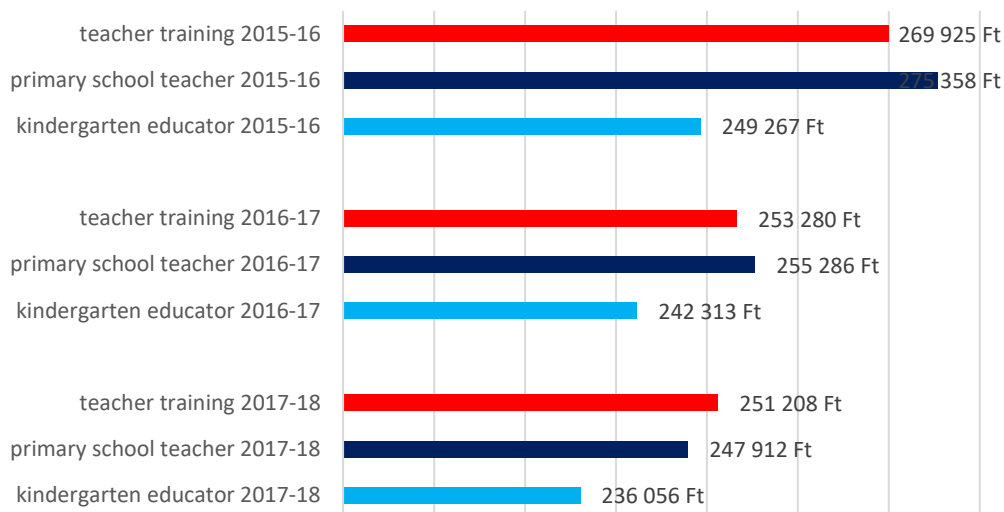


Figure 11: Average gross income (2015-2018) ²³

Residing abroad is the opposite. In the case of graduates of both programmes, the rate of leaving the country is lower than the average of undergraduate programmes in teacher training. It is worth noting, however, that while only 0.38% of newly graduated primary school teachers work abroad, this proportion increases more than fivefold after

²³ Source: *Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.*

the second year of graduation. In the case of kindergarten educators, 1.82% of recent graduates work abroad, and the increase appears in the third year, where the proportion is 3.95%, i.e. it more than doubles here as well.

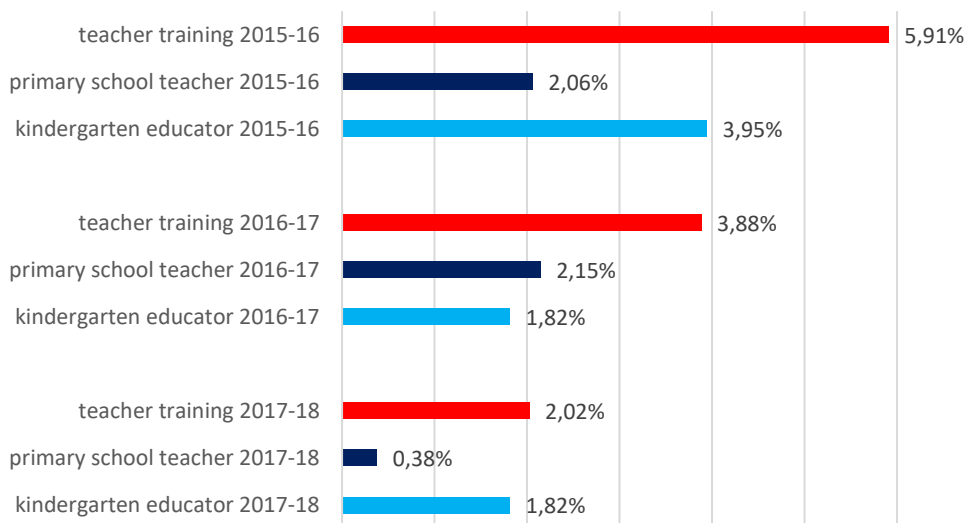


Figure 12: Proportion of people residing abroad (2015-2018) ²⁴

The situation of primary school teachers is more favourable in terms of gross average income, and fewer people choose to stay abroad than kindergarten educators. If we only look at average wages, it is clear that motivation systems and the strengthening of commitment, i.e. career socialization, must play an important role in training if trainers want to support staying on track.²⁵

However, we see worse results in subsequent studies of graduates (Figure 13). It seems that it is not the graduate primary school teachers and kindergarten educators who could increase the proportion of

²⁴ Source: *Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.*

²⁵ For more information, see Szontagh, Pál (2022): Hivatás- és pályamotiváció a KRE PK végzős óvodapedagógusai körében, in Furkó Péter - Csőke, Zoltán (szerk.): *Tudomány és harmadik misszió: A keresztyén tudós társadalmi szerepvállalása*, L'Harmattan Kiadó, Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem, Budapest, pp. 15-29 and Szontagh, Pál (2023): *Óvodapedagógus-jelöltek szerepfelfogása és hivatásmotivációja*, in Ambrusné, Kéri Katalin - Józsa, Krisztián - Kanczné, Nagy Katalin - Tóth-Bakos, Anita - Borbélyová, Diána - Mészáros, Tímea (eds.): *14th International Conference of J. Selye University: Pedagogical Sections*, Selye János Egyetem, Komárno, pp. 197-206.

graduates of basic teacher training – which is already low compared to other fields of training. In the case of primary school teachers, recent graduates have the lowest willingness to continue their education (9.27%), while as they reach three years of professional experience – which is the entry requirement for the teacher's professional exam – this proportion doubles (19.81%). It means that in the case of primary school teachers, the teachers' career system is a motivating factor in further education. For kindergarten educators, growth is more moderate, as it starts from a higher value.

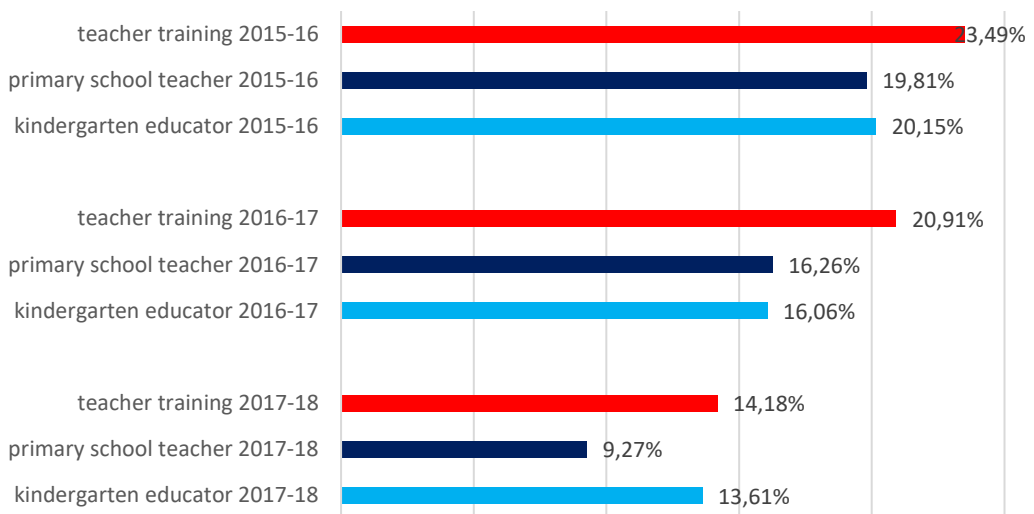


Figure 13: Subsequent studies²⁶

13.61% of recent graduates and 20.15% of those who have been in the field for three years continue their studies. Thus, in the case of kindergarten educators, it is typically not the three-year teacher examination entry barrier that appears, but rather they continue their studies at the same level (bachelor's degree) or higher level (master's degree) at the end of the training or choose specialized further training courses that do not give a teacher professional examination.

²⁶ Source: *Adminisztratív Adatbázisok Egyesítése (AAE), 2020.*

Summary

Graduate tracking provides data from both institutional and official sides for trainers and the labour market, as well as for those interested in careers. However, the representativeness of institutional DPR data is not suitable for drawing far-reaching conclusions about the labour market situation of former students of a particular training course or field of study due to the lack of willingness to respond and the limitations of projectability to the entire population. However, the data provided by the *Educational Authority* entitled *Unification of Administrative Databases* is, within the limits of up-to-dateness, a set of data compiled from valid sources covering each graduate, which provides an opportunity to compare the results of individual programmes and areas.

This comparison shows that a very high proportion of those who are in jobs requiring higher education are therefore active in the labour market. Those with teacher and kindergarten teacher qualifications perform well in these indicators compared to the average of those who obtained an *absolatory* degree in teacher training, and their job placement is also achieved more quickly. However, the picture of getting the first job after an *absolatory* is more nuanced than the data show, since due to the predominance of correspondence training, many people are already working in the last month of training.

However, success in the labour market is nuanced by the fact that the gross average income of graduates of bachelor's programmes in the field of teacher training is the lowest among the fields of training, and within this, the salary of kindergarten teachers is below the average.

Therefore, institutions teaching basic courses in teaching and kindergarten teachers must make serious efforts to orient students towards careers even during training, to strengthen their motivation and commitment to their chosen career, and to keep them in Hungary.

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THE CONCEPT OF REFORMED CHURCH PROFESSIONAL SURPLUS
IN THE CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHER TRAINING

Introduction

The activities of higher education institutions operating in Hungary providing teacher training are regulated in numerous ways. The legal-socio-economic environment in the European Union and, more broadly, globally creates the broadest context for the teaching profession, delimiting certain areas (e.g. human and children's rights) with specific codified rules.¹ At the same time, the basic conditions and professional framework of national education are created by the state itself, in the form of legislation, institutions and procedures – these include the decrees defining the higher education of teachers and defining the ‘training and output requirements’². These regulations regulate the relationship, role and proportion between the compulsory training activity and the educational content freely created by the institutions on their own initiative.

Changes in external circumstances determining the everyday life of public education (such as laws, decrees – or labour market developments) are not always systematically followed by legislation defining teacher training as described above. Similarly, the special teacher training institutions required by the structural characteristics of the public education system (e.g., the specific ‘forms of existence’ of private and denominational institutions) must also be implemented autonomously, complementing the central regulation. In this sense, the creation of the so-called professional surplus characteristic of certain institutions, tasks and situations follows from the basic operation of the system.

¹ The current summary of the Hungarian legal background is published by the Educational Authority. ([link](#)) (Last download: 31/08/2023)

² 63/2021 of 29 December 2021 ITM Decree on the training and output requirements of certain courses of the teacher training field. ([link](#)) (Last download: 31/08/2023)

If we look at the same issue from the point of view of teacher training, we can conclude that our parent institution, the *Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary*, trained specialists for all types of institutions of the Hungarian public education system in the third decade of the twenty-first century. The explicit goal of the Reformed Church in Hungary, which maintains the university, is to train professionals capable of supporting its own social mission. In this situation, it is natural and justified to use a scientific-professional conceptual framework that is suitable for formulating, planning and measurable the professional deviation/surplus through which *Reformed* teacher training can be defined and implemented during the training of professionals serving in public education.

There is considerable literature on the definition of pedagogy with Christian or even explicitly Calvinist roots. The comparison of the characteristics formulated and discussed here, and their interpretation in a common conceptual framework with ‘unclassified’ pedagogical systems, is a somewhat less developed professional field, but there are also very forward-looking and current works in this field.

The present chapter aims to summarize the results of these approaches and supplement them with research methodological considerations with the aim of helping the institution implementing Reformed teacher training in building and operating a scientific measurement toolkit supporting its own work and objectives.

Conceptualization

The problem of ‘professional surplus’

When it comes to establishing valid criteria regarding the quality of denominational pedagogical institutions, which can preferably be grasped by empirical measurement, there is a prerequisite to establish some connections related to the institutional (public) education system itself.

Although public education also exists in historical contexts and its mode of operation is greatly influenced by spontaneous social processes, on the whole it is considered to operate on the basis of planning and

expediency.³ In other words, although the everyday life of pedagogical institutions shows at least as colourful and complex operation as any other human community (this is why, for example, school anthropological studies are extremely successful), it is always just as justified to examine the operation of educational institutions *from the point of view of the goals defined and the expected results determined by the actors determining their operation.*

The concept of '*professional surplus*' can also be approached from this context. If we consider public education institutions as purposeful or even as result-oriented creations, we must also assume that to achieve the stated goals and desired results, the organisation must have a specific set of tools. There is complete consensus in the pedagogical literature that one of the determining factors of the activity (and thus effectiveness) of pedagogical institutions is the personality and activity/behaviour of the professionals performing pedagogical work there.⁴ One of the extremely important components of this complex of motifs, consisting of personality traits and behaviour, which inseparably belongs to the given colleague and professional community, is what *can be called* professional preparedness.

In essence, teacher training strives to delimit and establish this professional preparedness, simultaneously ensuring that student teachers acquire new skills, abilities, and attitudes, experience their practice, reflective judgment of the entire process, and acquire self-reflection.

Thus, research based on the concept of professional surplus in a special field – in our case, *the professional surplus* that can be created by *Reformed* teacher training must establish a connection between the named professional components, the *intentions and actual behaviour* of the personality applying them, *and the human-professional social context* surrounding all this and the *(self-)reflexive representations* created in this context.

³ Béla Buda gives a very precise definition of goal-orientation: 'Development can only be said if beneficial, negentropic development towards complexity and security, competence and additional performance takes place beyond the expected effect of the usual educational effects, and this is done through conscious and targeted interventions and under conditions created for these purposes.' Buda, Béla (1998): A pedagógus mint személyiségfejlesztő. In Gácsér, József (ed): *Gondolatok a nevelésről: a XX. század végi nevelés néhány speciális témájáról*. JGYF Kiadó, Szeged, p. 53.

⁴ He publishes the results of one of the most significant research projects conducted in the field: Kovács, Edina (2020): *Tehetséges Pedagógus*. Nemzeti Tehetség Központ Nonprofit Kft., Budapest.

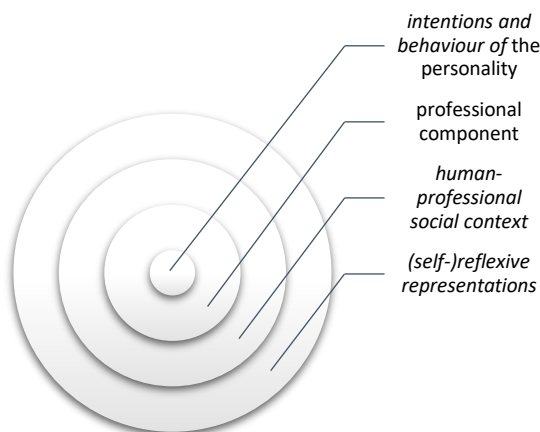


Figure 1: Layers/dimensions of professional surplus⁵

A significant part of the pedagogical literature creates focal points suitable for investigation in the context described above. The operation/effectiveness of public education institutions can be examined with good efficiency by observing the behaviour of those practicing the teaching profession. Moreover, research examining certain objectives almost always identifies the quality of the abilities, skills and attitudes of teaching professionals as determining factors. In addition, the quality assurance and qualification system introduced in Hungary in the past decade, covering the entire public education system, examines professionals performing educational work with the help of a complex ‘competence system’ – thus identifying all this as a key factor of the system of conditions⁶.

Based on the above, it can be stated that it is crucial for institutions providing teacher training to formulate as precisely as possible the sense in which they would like to increase the competence of the students participating in the training and how they would develop their personality. Similarly, it is vital to develop measurement methodologies by which a professional surplus can be identified on the output side of teacher training, and later even during graduate tracking, which serves to achieve the desired results in public education, understood as a targeted system.

⁵ Self-editing.

⁶ Guide to entering Teacher I and Teacher II in the teacher certification system. Sixth, modified version. Effective June 14, 2019 ([link](#)) (Last download: 08/31/2023).

The Reformed Church professional surplus

Since historically in Europe the phenomenon of public education itself is very strongly linked to the missionary activity of Christian churches, especially Protestant denominations, the concept in the title of this chapter (and research) can be interpreted primarily as a contemporary phenomenon from the point of view of empirical investigation. In other words, the situation in which public education is assumed to be a public matter of a broad and fundamentally secular society, and in which each denomination operates its own educational institutions in this system of relations, is recent and highly variable. In Hungary, denominational public education, which was almost completely abolished during the decades of communism, started to grow steadily and dynamically from this near-zero base at the time of the regime change, and qualitative changes also occurred with the change in magnitude. In addition to the 'label changer institutions', newly founded, specialized, highly diverse socio-cultural institutions have appeared, able to adapt to specific local needs.⁷

Because of all these qualities, research and professional statements are particularly valuable, which can formulate the vital questions of the educational mission of the Reformed Church in a theological way as well. In our present research, we cannot neglect to take a brief account of them either.

The Reformed Church in Hungary has been consciously building up in the field of education management in recent decades. Meantime, organizations and institutions aimed at ensuring the operation and development of the actual Reformed public education system were established, as well as research and resolutions formulating their work from a theological and scientific point of view. The publication of these professional results and research is published both in the Church's own forums (e.g., the publications of the College of Doctors and its journal, *Collegium Doctorum*; the Reformed Pedagogical Institute and its journal, *Hungarian Reformed Education*, Kálvin Publishing House) and in a form

⁷ The following volume gives a detailed and up-to-date overview of the system of Hungarian Reformed public education: Zoltán Pompor (ed.) (2017): *Háttér tanulmányok a református iskolarendszer fejlesztéséhez*. Magyarországi Református Egyház Református Tananyagfejlesztő Csoport, Budapest,

suitable for discussion at interdenominational, national and international scientific forums. In the case of scientific research, several international (both in the *Carpathian Basin* and globally) cooperation takes place, among which the decades-long joint work of the Reformed Pedagogical University of the Netherlands, *Driestar Educatief* and the Reformed Pedagogical Institute should be highlighted.

The research relevant to the issue of the Reformed professional surplus *chosen as the topic of our research* can be roughly grouped around two thematic areas. On the one hand, Reformed institutions can operate since a specific pedagogical plan and/or program, and the Church has made considerable efforts to establish these basic documents. The several years of preparatory work enabling the establishment of the Reformed Public Education Strategy should be particularly highlighted.⁸ In addition, curriculum and textbook development is continuous. In summary, the *professional surplus of the Reformed Church* can be grasped on the one hand by examining the curriculum documents, teaching and supporting materials and their application that underpin and regulate the work of institutions.

On the other hand, the professional surplus can also be seen through procedures parallel to the state teacher promotion system, which specifically examine the personality and competence of educators. The special situation, role, and expectations of the Christian or even the Reformed educator have been thematised by the professional-scientific public on numerous occasions. Behind the perception of the ‘Reformed teacher’ there may naturally be several human and professional dispositions that barely resemble each other: to the outside world, Reformed public education is clearly represented by all teachers working in a given institution, regardless of their worldview, human and professional qualities. Nevertheless, a number of people have tried many times to define the ideal-typical character of the Reformed educator as a definition⁹. In our present research, it will be important to maintain both points of view: since in the reality available for the study, very different pedagogical interactions and persons actually manifest

⁸ Ábrám Tibor (2019): *A Magyarországi Református Egyház köznevelési intézményrendszer-fejlesztési stratégiájának szcenárióelemzése*. Magyar Református Nevelés: Református Pedagógiai Szaklap, Issue 1, pp. 6-12., 7.

⁹ Szontagh, Pál (2016): *Kompetenciaértelmezés a keresztyén pedagógiában*, *Új Pedagógiai Szemle* Issue 9-12, p. 94

themselves as actors of Reformed education – however, it is also an inseparable part of the situation that the sustaining Church constantly strives to determine the personality traits and competences of *the 'Reformed teacher'* hoped for on a doctrinal basis.

Relationship with teacher training

So far, we have not mentioned that most of the phenomena described above are continuous. Educational activity itself unfolds in a linear form, in the time allotted to it, but the career of an educator, his professional enrichment and the maturation of his personality are equally processual. It is especially important to emphasise all this because the most talked about function of institutional education, the stimulation and implementation of various learning processes, is also essentially like this: the person in learning – both student and educator – always moves from ignorance to knowledge. This parallelism is at the forefront of modern *Christian* pedagogy, and with good reason.

From this point of view, we must reject the vulgarly conservative approach to teacher training, according to which it radically separates the trained teacher from the children entrusted to him through the rites of passage (aptitude examination / final examination / certification examination) that primarily affect him. On the contrary, just as modern higher education generally strives to develop skills suitable for independent learning and self-education (see introduction of the concept of *lifelong learning*), teacher training is particularly appropriate if it enables students to help the further development of their own abilities by continuously learning and 'further training' in their teaching career, on the one hand, and by their personal example as people capable of learning and fulfilling themselves encourage the children entrusted to them.

In this process-based approach, it is no longer difficult to determine *the position of the 'Reformed' professional surplus* – from the point of view of teacher training.

On the one hand, membership of the *Reformed denomination* or a favourable image of it can be a motivation for a given teacher candidate already during career choice. Thus, some students arriving at Reformed teacher training plan to develop their own professional identity by seeing some kind of positive correlation between educational work and

the (human) values represented / realised by Christianity. In this sense, the Reformed professional surplus may appear in teacher training and later in public education partly because future teachers enrich the community with it as an expectation brought and as an added value already present in their personality.

On the other hand, the explicitly denominationally maintained teacher training institution (in our case, the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary) strives to contribute to the development of students in this regard during the training of students with the help of a number of methods typical of higher education, direct and planned – or in many cases indirect, spontaneous, in accordance with its missionary nature. It is important to mention that the operation of higher education institutions is result- and quality-oriented¹⁰. When designing processes, tools should also be created to measure their effectiveness. When measuring results, adequacy and excellence in Reformed higher education, the defined Reformed *professional surplus* must also be defined and measured. This is of foremost importance, as it is partly the *raison d'être* of this type of teacher training.

It should also be emphasised that teacher training has traditionally been practice-oriented.¹¹ This means that students' theoretical training is continuously accompanied by internships during which certain tasks are performed under professional supervision, in a working environment corresponding to their qualifications. These so-called 'external practices' form a special transitional zone, a bridge between the reality of public education and academic training. In a certain sense, students take with them the values represented by the training institution and the specific competences acquired there, both if they work in a Reformed institution, but also if they are the only ones who represent the *Reformed professional surplus* in the given environment. In our research, we consider it particularly important to examine this transitional period / area between higher education and public education.

¹⁰ For a basic basis, see, for example, Dinya, László (1999): A felsőoktatás minőségbiztosítása és az EU-csatlakozás, *Magyar Felsőoktatás*, Issue 4, pp. 30–31.

¹¹ Váradi, Ferenc (2024): Implementation of the external practical components of teacher training at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, in Szontagh, Pál – Tolnai, Ágnes – Váradi, Ferenc – Váradi-Kusztos, Györgyi: *To become a teacher. The Role of Reformed Church teacher training in the development of the sociological processes of vocational careers*. KRE PK, Nagykovács, pp. 132-148

Thirdly, of course, the *Reformed professional surplus* appears in the reality of public education institutions through students and teachers starting their careers (traineeships). In addition to the world of explicitly denominationally maintained kindergartens, schools (etc.), Reformed educators are also present in other denominational or 'secular' institutions, either as catechists-religious teachers representing the institutional church, as professing Christian educators, or – perhaps most difficult to grasp, as professionals of other denominations or without religion, in a secular environment, *yet* as a representative of the Reformed pedagogical culture. In the years of professional fulfilment, of course, several support systems are available to colleagues, through which they can further develop and nurture practices that have already been lived and developed in practice, which are based on Reformed values and knowledge: first, the Reformed Pedagogical Institute founded and maintained by the Reformed Church provides professional support to colleagues already in the field, Training sessions. Reformed higher education institutions themselves offer certain further trainings, and obviously the otherwise very wide range of teacher training offers several elements that may be relevant to the Christian concept of values and practices studied (e.g., training courses related to mental health, traditional pedagogy, etc.).

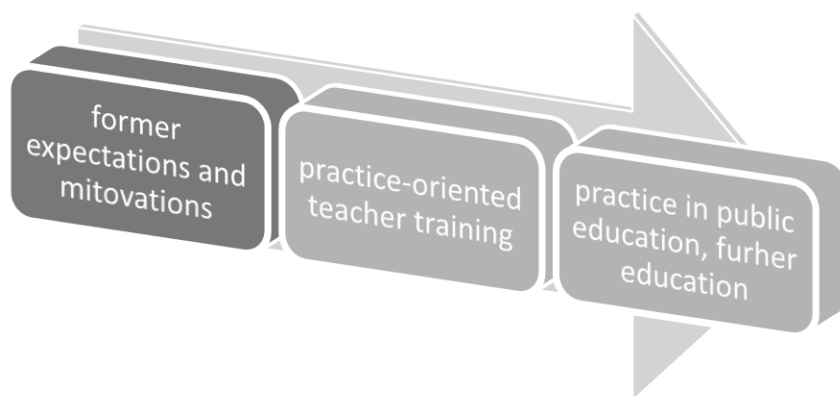


Figure 2: *Reformed professional surplus as a process*¹²

¹² Self-editing.

When we undertake to examine the relationship raised in the title of our study, we must base our research plan on this process-like, multidimensional approach.

Conceptual systems

During empirical measurement, of course, it is essential to be able to work with a clearly defined conceptual system. In the previous sub-points, we clarified that from the point of view of pedagogical professionalism and teacher training, the Reformed professional surplus develops primarily in the reality of the behaviour and professional practice of specific teacher candidates. This approach to the educator and his/her competences has a long tradition, so it is possible and worthwhile to base our research on the models available in the literature published on the topic.

The literature defining the Christian (Reformed) educator by his **personality traits** is very extensive (and in fact inter-denominational). Here it is inevitable to mention that Christian theological thought and biblical anthropology already have a kind of practice, vocabulary, conceptual system, based on which it is able to speak about human beings, behaviours and personalities from the approach of the Gospel. When Christian literature defines the educator by defining such personality traits, he applies this theological tradition to his specific field. Just as in preaching practice the Christ-like image of man is often defined as an ideal, a goal to be achieved, so from this approach the practice of defining personality traits should be read as a summary of real experiences.

From the extensive literature, we first highlight only one source here, the volume published in Hungarian under the title *The Essence of Christian Pedagogy*, which was renewed several times by Driestar Educatief in the Netherlands (first published in Hungarian by the Reformed Pedagogical Institute in 2012, then in a revised form, in 2019 by the Reformed Curriculum Development Group of the Reformed Church in Hungary¹³). The volume (in both Hungarian editions) is published in two parts. In subchapter 2.1 of ‘Teacher and Student,’ the

¹³ *A keresztyén pedagógia esszenciája*. RPI, Budapest, 2012. and de Mynck, Bram – Vermuelen, Henk – Kunz, Bram (2019): *A keresztyén pedagógia esszenciája: Rövid áttekintés*. Magyarországi Református Egyház Református Tananyagfejlesztő Csoport, Budapest.

Christian educator defines his personality through certain loosely structured hierarchical concepts. The textual thought process of the volume is reduced here to concepts, sometimes correcting the uncertainties between the two Hungarian translations on the basis of the English edition intended for international use¹⁴ (hereinafter referred to as the 'Driestar model'):

1. 'Spirit of discipleship' [Always a student] – continuous learning, self-education,
2. Self-image:
 - 2.1. modesty [humble],
 - 2.2. responsibility,
 - 2.3. confidence [confident],
3. Presence and attention [natural attention]:
 - 3.1. open-mindedness,
 - 3.2. involvement,
 - 3.3. sensitivity,
 - 3.4. Care [charity]
 - 3.5. patience,
 - 3.6. confidence,
 - 3.7. dependability,
4. professional knowledge and assumed identity [subject content and identity],
5. trust and responsibility [serving for responsibility] [the attitude of putting the responsible activities and experiences of students in the background at the centre of joint activity],
6. lead by example [example].

The referenced work defines these concepts in sufficient depth and, if necessary, interprets them by examples, so they can be considered suitable for using them as key concepts in participatory or other types of qualitative measurement.

Szontagh **writes** about the competences of CHRISTIAN TEACHERS in the most ¹⁵ detailed Hungarian literature. The basic system itself, consisting of dozens of competences, was created by a broad professional

¹⁴ *The Essence of Christian Teaching: A Concise School of Pedagogy*, Driestar University for Teacher Education, Gouda, 2018.

¹⁵ Szontagh, *ibid.*

consensus based on international research and standards in the second decade of the twenty-first century. These competences combine the opportunities and practices arising from the personality traits, knowledge, experience and attitude of the given teacher in a complex way. The author convincingly argues that the Christian educator can actually be identified with the educator who shows 'excellence' as defined by the system of competence.

The¹⁶ key areas of the competence system, also laid down in the government decree, are:

1. professional tasks, scientific, subject, curricular knowledge,
2. planning pedagogical processes and activities and self-reflections related to their implementation,
3. support for learning,
4. development of the student's personality,
 - 4.1. the enforcement of individual treatment,
 - 4.2. appropriate methodological preparedness necessary for the successful education and education of disadvantaged children, students with special educational needs or difficulties in integration, learning or behaviour together with other children and students,
5. helping and developing student groups and communities,
 - 5.1. creating opportunities,
 - 5.2. openness to different socio-cultural diversity,
 - 5.3. integration activities,
 - 5.4. class teacher activity,
6. continuous evaluation and analysis of pedagogical processes and students' personality development,
7. proficiency in environmental education, authentic representation of the value system of sustainability and the way attitudes related to environmental awareness are transmitted,
8. communication and professional cooperation, problem solving,
9. commitment and professional responsibility for professional development.

¹⁶ Decision No 326/2013. Government Decree, Section 7 (2) mentions these competences – 9 teacher competences are listed here, based on the text version after the amendment of 1.07.2018.

It can be seen that both systems of definition actually name large areas and tasks, which, on the one hand, are essential parts of institutional education, and on the other hand, their appropriate quality and the ability to implement them determine the quality of pedagogical work overall.

However, these complex systems only partially answer the question of where the excess of Christian identity, creed, and spiritual commitment can lead to substantial difference, quality, or effectiveness. When we try to define the concept of Reformed professional *surplus*, we look for these specific points.

Since the [missionary] function of institutional education is not explicitly thematized in Scripture, following the general method used in theological and pedagogical literature, we will use the characteristics set forth in the passage referred to as the 'fruit of the Holy Spirit' to attempt to improve the¹⁷ Reformed [Christian] surplus of *personality traits* [Driestar's model] and *competencies* [see Sontagh] and, if possible, describe it in measurable terms.

In addition, of course, it is also our task to make visible the fact that the concept of knowledge of 'unclassified' *pedagogy must always be harmonized with* the concept of *faith* in the case of Christian pedagogy, and that, in addition to Christian *ethical thinking*, Western/ global culture has created many parallel systems, and this also has consequences in the field of institutional education.

Key concepts of the Reformed professional surplus

In order to make it easier to understand, the models described in the previous chapter are treated in a unified structure, since although they look at the personality traits of the teacher developing during his professional activity from different directions [personality traits or competences], the two systems strive for completeness in themselves and show many overlaps - in other words, according to different logic, but in fact they name almost the same factors. Of course, beyond this point, we must also use the tools of Reformed theological thought to define how the surplus that the biblical view of man understands can be defined and how it relates to the previously named systems of attributes.

¹⁷ 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.' (Gal. 5:22-23.)

Driestar	Competency model
1. 'Spirit of discipleship' – continuous learning, self-education	8. Communication and professional cooperation, problem solving 9. Commitment and professional responsibility professional development
2.1. Self-image: modesty	
2.2. Self-image: responsibility	
2.3. Self-image: confidence	
3.1. Presence and attention: openness	3. Support learning
3.2. Presence and attention: involvement	4. Development of the student's personality
3.3. Presence and attention: sensitivity	4.1. Individual treatment
3.4. Presence and attention: care	4.2 Education methodological preparedness for special educational needs children, children with difficulties in integration, learning, behaviour
3.5. Presence and attention: patience	5. The development of student groups and communities, helping and developing 5.1. Creating opportunities
3.6. Presence and attention: trust	5.2. Openness to different socio-cultural diversity 5.3. Integration activity
3.7. Presence and attention: reliability	5.4. Class teacher activity
4. Professional knowledge and identity	1. Professional tasks, specialty, subject, curricular knowledge 2. Planning pedagogical processes and activities related to their implementation, self-reflections 6. Pedagogical processes and personality development of students, continuous evaluation and analysis
5. Trust and responsibility (the attitude putting itself in the background, putting the responsible activities, experience of joint activity of students in the centre)	3. Support learning
6. Setting an example	7. Proficiency in environmental education, authentic representation of the value system of sustainability, and the ways of transferring attitudes related to environmental awareness

Table 1: Comparison of competency concepts for professional surplus

A Christ-follower [including an educator who follows Christ] is in a unique position to ask: What are my characteristics of being a Christian, or in other words, derived from *them* in my various roles and beyond those roles?¹⁸

*How should we be like Jesus?*¹⁹ Endre Gyökössi puts it this way:

‘... there is, unfortunately, an artificial ‘mask-likeness’ to Jesus Christ, in which temporary, enthusiastic or ‘whining’ (or ‘complaining’) Christian-type people pretend to be Greek actors in their masks in a fictional, imaginary world.’

He continues:

‘But there is a real and true likeness to Jesus Christ, a similarity that begins from within; that is, it is natural, lifelike, and forms a true disciple. This disciple is neither a ‘whiner’ nor a fan, but a smiling, bright, Christ-like man. And that serenity radiates from within.’

John the Baptist, as the last Old Testament prophet on the border between the Old and New Testaments, *the Lord's way-maker*, points out his words about himself and Christ: ‘He [Jesus] must grow, and I must become smaller.’²⁰

Gyökössi states that the order is extremely important:

‘I do not start trimming myself, but Christ grows first in me, and to the extent that He lives in me, I begin to do the works of the ‘flesh’, to put off the ‘Old Man’ and put on the ‘New Man’. The starting point, then, in this case, is not me, not my effort, my goodness, my ability, but God the Holy Spirit.’

¹⁸ The *concept of role* is used here in the sense introduced by the social sciences. A good overview of this is given by: Tésenyi, Tímea – Joób, Máté (2013): Szerep-erőforrások a segítőszakmában. *Embertárs*, 20/3

¹⁹ Gyökössi, Endre (2017): *Hogyan hasonlítunk Jézusra?* Szent Gellért, Budapest

²⁰ John 3:30

From this perspective, what can we do for our growth; or, what can someone in the role of educator do? We can ask God for it, because He has promised that whoever asks for it will receive it. And while we ask Gyökössy to continue, we read, listen, ‘take and eat’ the Word so that it becomes part of us.

It is in this spirit that we read and listen to Jesus' last self-saying, *ego eimi* discourse about the true vine. The Old Testament imagery of the parable of is clear:

‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard man. ... I am the vine, ye are the branches: whoever abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit, for without me you can do nothing.’
(John 15:5)

It is clear from the above passage that the ‘fruit of a Christian’ can only be conceived through Christ, grafted into him.

‘God provides man's life, without God man cannot live. ...’

The true vine means the divine world, the world of truth. Jesus' existence provides his disciples with real life; together with “...*the care of the Father.*”²¹

So, it is the Spirit of God who produces the fruit of the Spirit in us. In the context of the above, the Apostle Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit from his circular letter to the Galatian churches [in the words of Gyökössy] lists the characteristics of Christ-like man, in such a way that the ‘fruits’ listed evoke a Christlike spirit, a Christlike temper, and a Christlike action:

‘The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. There is no law against such things.’ (Gal. 5:22-23.)

In his sermon of June 5, 1965, Sándor Joó²² wrote: ‘The fruits of the Spirit are indeed all received together by him in whom the Spirit of God

²¹ *Jubileumi Kommentár*, 1979. ([link](#)) (Last download: 08/31/2023)

²² Joó, Sándor (1994): *A Szent Lélek gyümölcsei*. In: *A korábbi tanulmányokban más formában szerepelt. Élő reménység. Dr. Joó Sándor igehirdetései 1965–1970*. Budapest, pp. 114–121, 115.

is at work. So, it is not possible that I have joy, but I lack peace: there can be no joy then. It is not possible that I have love, but I have no faithfulness, or favour, or temperance, for all this cluster belongs together, and all this together is the fruit of the Spirit.'

It is certainly no accident that the word fruit appears in the singular of Scripture, since this list, which may remind us of the lists of virtues known in antiquity, lists characteristics that belong together in the life of a Christian. At first glance, one can see how this 'list' differs from any form of philosophical ethics, since at the top of the list is ἀγάπη [agapē], i.e., *love* from God, which can be considered the driving principle of Christianity.

Before listing the fruit of the Spirit, Paul also speaks of *the works of the flesh.*' [He uses the term σαρξ ('sarx') **for the body**, which in its original language refers to the actions of *the flesh body*' - but by the term body he means the whole person, not only carnal desires, but also our spirituality.] When we act according to the 'flesh,' these actions are incidental, partial, and directed toward death. Humanly, there is no goal beyond death that fills earthly life with real hope:

'Life according to the flesh is a hopeless life. The apostle Paul contrasts this with the image of walking according to the Spirit. The difference between the two images is not that we are talking about sins and virtues, but that we acquire the works of the flesh ourselves, but we receive the things of the Spirit as 'fruit.' ' 23

Consequently, it is the fruit of the Spirit that naturally grows from the action of the Spirit [πνεύματος / *pneumatōs*, the Spirit of God/Holy Spirit] and is the natural result of it.

It is clear, then, that there is no brilliant pedagogical theory that can be put into practice to achieve the appearance of these fruits in ourselves or others. In this sense, it is possible to distinguish precisely the competences that can be developed and developed in the classical scientific sense from those personality traits that Christian theology explicitly considers as coming from the Spirit:

²³ Jubileumi Kommentár, *ibid.*

‘For what is marked in Scripture as the fruit of the Spirit are not noble human qualities, but Christlike attributes. Christlike attributes can only be exhibited by Christ himself.’²⁴

It also follows that just as a vine or fruit tree does not produce for itself, so the fruit of the Spirit is not for its own sake.

According to Alexander Maclaren²⁵, it is worth interpreting the nine ‘fruits’ as three closely related units. The first of these three triads involve love, joy, and peace, and all three have their source in a Christian relationship with God. They are not duties or virtues in the sense of the word that we develop these ‘good habits’ with heroic effort. According to Maclaren, these goods are the result of communion with God, manifestations of the Holy Spirit. We cannot produce the love at the top of the list, because the love we have is...

... ‘a reciprocated, meritorious, boastful, mood-dependent emotional outburst.’²⁶

Love from God is initiatory, unconditional, need-based, non-merit-based, hidden, forgiving, blessing the cursing. Thus, this *joy* is not achieved by reaching the peak of our natural talents. It does not depend on external circumstances or constitutional characteristics. But the joy mentioned in this passage is the joy that comes from love for ‘a serene, rejoicing, happy God,’ the joy of Christ in us.

The third member of this trinity, peace, is also not a human achievement or human attribute. Peace based on love and joy does not arise from the absence of external troubles, but from God's presence, and will transcend all understanding to the extent that we share and live in God's love.

As may be seen, the key concepts of this first triad in their pure form cannot be found among the categories of the comparison table. This endowment reinforces the observation that Christian identity (in this case, a *gift* in the form of the fruit of the Spirit) can be conceived as a precondition for certain abilities, competences, and practices. For example, patience, trust, and trustworthiness can be built on the love

²⁴ From the sermon of Kálmán Cseri, June 4, 2006 ([link](#)) (Last download: 08/31/2023)

²⁵ Maclaren, Alexander: *Expositions of Holy Scripture*. ([link](#)) (Last download: 08/31/2023)

²⁶ Joó, Sándor, *ibid*.

that underpins the relationship between teacher and student, just as *joy* and *peace* can also be the 'energising' factors that underpin such relationships.

The second triad of nine fruits lists concepts of *long-suffering/ patience, favour/ kindness, and goodness*. The first of these - *long-suffering/ patience* - is the kind of patient endurance that Christ-like man exerts in the face of those who cause offence or enemies. This patience is not aimless waiting, nor is it cowering, but comes from the knowledge that God is ultimately in control, that He has set 'His time' for everything.

In various Hungarian Bible translations, the concept of 'favour' or '*kindness*' is interesting in that it places emphasis elsewhere: in *the case of favour*, we can speak of the performance of duty by the 'heart' of the actor in which the Holy Spirit is also involved.²⁷

If the word '*kindness*' is used, Maclaren's explanation may also be correct for the English translation. In this sense, it means a Christian attitude that is independent of the behaviour of the other person, referring to a benevolent attitude towards one's fellow human beings in our actions. And the understanding of *goodness* is closely related to this. According to Albert Barnes's explanation in *Notes on the Bible* ²⁸, the apostle uses the word in the sense of charity or willingness to do good to others. These three fruits, then, are based on a relationship with God and are manifested in our attitude towards our fellow man.

In our comparison chart, we can already discover many of the concepts of this second triad: in Driestar's grouping, *patience* is specifically named, and the concept of *favour* is closely linked to the idea formulated as the motto of this vision: to teach is to touch the *heart* (and to move it to action).²⁹ *Kindness*, insofar as this attitude also has meaning in the pedagogical situation, emphasising that the educator acts in the name of goodwill even in difficult, conflictual or humanly difficult relationships, and therefore can largely be paralleled with the accepting, inclusive³⁰ and integrative approach found in both models.

The third triad – *faithfulness, meekness, temperance/abstinence* – points to a world of difficulties and opposites, according to Maclaren, and in

²⁷ Joó, Sándor, *ibid.*

²⁸ Barnes, Albert (1834): *Notes on the Bible*. ([link](#)) (Last download: 08/31/2023)

²⁹ Sullivan quoted in Márkus, Gábor (2020): Az emmausi út. *Magyar Református Nevelés*, 34-53, p. 48.

³⁰ Significant studies on the inclusive approach to Christian pedagogy can be found, for example, in the thematic issue of *Magyar Református Nevelés* 2019/4.

this world the Christian life can be recognised precisely by the presence of these three fruits:

‘Fidelity means that the believer uses everything God has given him to do. ... He uses his time, his body, his abilities, everything.’³¹

Meekness is a Christlike quality that goes hand in hand with humility. ‘Learn from me that I am meek and humble in heart: and you will find rest for your souls,’ says Jesus.³² In our case, meekness (‘humility’) will not be submission and helpless resignation if we know that God loves us humans with our flaws and weaknesses. The...

... ‘smallness and dignity of man are no longer opposites, but two facets of our lives. Humility reflects this dual reality. Therefore, humility cannot be preached or acquired as an ability. It springs up from other depths of our souls.’³³

The last member of the triad - *temperance/ abstinence* - points to the difficulties that the spiritual life can encounter in natural passions and desires. Abstinence, the control of the desires and passions of the flesh, the exercise of self-control without self-torture, is possible if I know that God is thinking of all our needs.

The concepts of the third triad – because they point to the conflicting relationship between the recipient and the world – come quite close to the most easily grasped challenges of the teaching profession. ‘Loyalty’ in this regard evokes the first category of our comparison chart: the recipient is responsible for the growth and use of the knowledge entrusted to him. ‘Meekness’ is associated with one of the most interesting components of the Driestar model: points 2.1 and 5 emphasize the importance of modesty and humility.

Summarizing the lessons of this chapter, we can agree with Maclaren that although the nine fruits discussed above are direct results of the Holy Spirit in our lives and will never bear fruit without its presence,

³¹ Kálmán Cseri, sermon quoted. ([link](#)) (Last download: 08/31/2023)

³² Mt. 11:29

³³ Ludwig, Ralph (2022): *Alázat, kishitűség, gőg. Az erény ösvényén, ‘Érted vagyok’,* April 7 ([link](#)) (Last download: 08/31/2023)

and we have a responsibility to obey the Holy Spirit who bestows the gifts upon us. In this sense, these gifts cannot be excluded from research examining the complexity of the *Reformed professional surplus* – although in terms of their origin and function they can definitely be distinguished from the connections revealed in the concept of ‘competence’ found in classical educational theories.

Conclusion

In connection with the Reformed professional surplus, *We have tried to* determine what measurement dimensions and conceptual systems can be used to approach the quality/excellence of teacher training, and later of the public education system itself. Two significant scientific features were emphasised with the greatest emphasis:

- On the one hand, it should be considered that although professional surplus is ultimately reflected in the point-like acts of educational work carried out, in fact it acquires its context in a process unfolding at the same time, including causal components/build-ups, and teacher training itself represents a relatively well-defined component in this process.
- On the other hand, when we strive to define Reformed / Christian education or education on the basis of personal endowments, knowledge and attitudes, it is worth applying a multidimensional conceptual system in which a scientific approach focusing on human endowments and development, but also grounded in theologically based knowledge and recognising the gifts of the Spirit behind human abilities and actions is fully present.

Thus, during operationalization and actual research, measurement tools must be developed and applied that are sensitive to these factors, capable of capturing the temporal extent of processes and the complex skill and motivational background of human actions.³⁴

³⁴ For the behavioural psychology background of these concepts, e.g., B. J. Fogg (2009): *A behavioural model for persuasive design*. Persuasive '09: Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Persuasive Technology, April, Article No. 40, pp. 1-7 ([link](#)) (Last download: 08/31/2023)

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To become a teacher

The title of this volume is more than a play on words. Those participating in teacher training understand the number, motivation, preparedness, and expectations of applicants are fundamentally influenced by the image of teachers in society. Teacher training is a sensitive mirror of the teaching career. Who do we send and encourage into this career as parents and educators? What do the peer group, the circle of friends and the family think about choosing a career as a teacher? How does this affect the applicant's self-image, personal sense of vocation and career intentions? How can we help them choose their profession and stay on track as trainers?

The shortage of teachers and the situation of teacher training are public affairs, and in ecclesiastical universities, they are ecclesiastical public affairs. Not only because of its social importance but also because it is part of our everyday public discourse. Almost everyone has an opinion about it, but these opinions are often emotionally, or interest-driven. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a situation based on facts, scientifically based measurements, and data. The purpose of this volume is to provide a starting point for further reflection.

'I will instruct you and teach you in the way which you shall go. I will counsel you with my eye on you.' (Psalm 32:8)

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