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**Education through the Prism of Gender**  
**Aspects of Key Risks**

**CONTENT**

Introduction

1. The Education System and its Conceptual Model in the Slovak Republic
  2. Education Sector within the Context of the National Economy  
General Contexts – the Overall Labor Market Situation and Relation to the Private Sphere  
Education is one of the most feminized sectors in Slovakia  
The education sector has one of the lowest average salaries
  3. Gender Differences and Inequalities inside the Education System
    - 3.1 Gender Difference in Fields of Study  
Gender Difference in Study Interests of Students  
Formation of different study interests of women and men
    - 3.2 Differences in the Proportion of Women and Men in the Teaching Profession  
Women prevail at all types of schools  
Proportion of female teachers varies according to the school type  
Gender Differences at Colleges and Universities by Teaching Positions  
Gender Differences in Management Positions at Colleges and Universities  
Gender Pay Gap in the Education Sector
    - 3.3 Problems and Characteristics of the Teaching Profession
  4. Conclusions
  5. Recommendations
- References

**Introduction**

This study is a contribution to long-term efforts to map and reflect upon gender discourse and gender relations in Slovakia. The inquiry into the issue of *gender equality* in various spheres of society should lay foundations for a more differentiated thinking about gender in society as well as for the formulation of recommendations for both short-term and long-term policy-making. This study, the tenth from the series *Aspekty*, is one of the outcomes of a long-term cooperation of partner organizations from the Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine, and Slovakia with the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Warsaw office. This year the common theme focused on gender aspects of education in the given countries.

Our material sketches out some facets of the overall situation in education in Slovakia from the gender perspective. It mainly reflects the work of NGOs in this field (since the official circles basically do not pay attention to this *problematique*). Within the project [ruzovyamodrysvet.sk](http://ruzovyamodrysvet.sk) ([pinkandblueworld.sk](http://pinkandblueworld.sk)) *Gender Sensitization in the Educational Process at Elementary and Secondary Schools as Preparation for Future Job Desegregation* (Program of the European EQUAL Community Initiative) in cooperation with the Institute for Public Affairs and the FOCUS agency, ASPEKT has carried out gender research (based mostly on focus groups interviews with teachers of both sexes) the findings of which were published in the book *The Teaching Profession. Aspects of Gender Equality in School*, and which was the first of its kind in Slovakia.<sup>1</sup> It was also in part related to the publication *Equal Pay for Equal Work? Aspects of the Gender Pay Gap* published last year.

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<sup>1</sup> The whole project focused on gender sensitization of society, specifically on gender sensitive education and pedagogy as a possible tool of occupational gender desegregation. Further information on the project in English

In the presented study we identify the situation of the main actors i.e. teachers as one of the key risk factors in fostering gender equality in the heavily feminized education system. Especially in remuneration, the education system is an exemplification of gender-based inequality and injustice: on the one hand it affects both women and men in this feminized profession (when compared with other sectors of the national economy), on the other hand it impacts specifically women when compared with men working in education.

Given the limitations on the scope of the study as well as the lack of other gender research in education we decided to pay attention to some key risks that in our opinion either contribute to the construction and reproduction of several gender inequalities in schools (be it on the part of students, teachers or teaching methods, curricula and the like), or even directly prevent an efficient implementation of gender sensitive pedagogy. In this summary we present the main findings of the research.

## **1. The Education System and its Conceptual Model in the Slovak Republic**

In the past years, the once state-run education system with a centrally organized management has undergone a significant decentralization. The public administration reform of elementary and secondary schools in 2002 meant not only the shift away from the state administration but it also brought about change in the system of establishing, management and administration of schools and school facilities, including an important change in funding and ownership of schools. However, new authorities (district and regional governments) were not prepared to fulfill this task: “The achieved degree of application of democratic principles of governance is not adequate (in terms of professional and personnel quality, self-governance bodies, legal consciousness) which makes possible that various *individual, collective, regional, religious and other interests can influence the administration of education.*” (Pišút – Gregušová – Plesch – Šranková, 2002, p. 250)

Given the widespread acceptance of gender prejudices and stereotypes in society it can be assumed that among interests “influencing education” will also be the reinforcement and reproduction of the traditional gender order with its asymmetrical understanding of femininity and masculinity and a hierarchical gender division of labor. The degree of knowledge, implementation and acceptance of the gender agenda (but also e.g. of the broader human rights agenda) has been especially in the field of education and schooling rather problematic also at the level of central bodies, which have made a commitment to the gender equality agenda in relation to our EU membership. Therefore, the transfer of the gender equality issues to lower levels of public administration is equally problematic. It can thus be expected that in this sphere it will be difficult to find competent regional actors. However, some opportunities for cooperation of NGOs and gender education experts with educational institutions at the regional level are opening up – also due to the fact that in this case a lengthy process of obtaining an approval from distant central bodies will not have to take place.

The process of decentralization also concerns colleges and universities.<sup>2</sup> At present the education system in Slovakia is divided into two main groups:

- the regional school system of preschools, elementary school, secondary schools, schools for pupils with special learning needs, elementary art schools and language schools,

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and the summary of this publication are available on the website [www.pinkablueworld.sk](http://www.pinkablueworld.sk), the whole publication in Slovak is accessible on website of the project [www.ruzovyamodrysvet.sk](http://www.ruzovyamodrysvet.sk).

<sup>2</sup> Colleges and universities provide education on the basis of accredited curricula in three levels and on the basis of the systems of credits. In Slovakia the law permits to establish public, state and private colleges and universities.

- colleges and universities (public, state and private).

Schools falling within the regional system are divided according to their establishing body and consist of church, private and state schools. Most schools are state, but the number of private and especially church schools has been growing.<sup>3</sup> Since 2002 the number of church elementary schools has increased from 94 to 112, the number of church-run secondary comprehensive schools has risen from 38 to 55, in 2007 church schools made up 5% of all elementary schools and 21.8% of all secondary comprehensive schools.<sup>4</sup> Decentralization potentially creates more space for religious influences to reach also other types of schools at the regional level (via religious education, school boards and the like). In addition to providing quality education and schooling one of the goals of church and private schools and school facilities is to provide alternative education in terms of its contents, forms and methods. Beside others, these schools ensure the right of parents to freely choose a school for their children according to their conviction and conscience.

Given the fact that gender equality may not necessarily be compatible with the “conviction and conscience” of parents, but it corresponds with the civic principles of our state, a tension arises between parents’ freedom of choice on the one hand and adherence to human rights of children on the other. There is a reasonable assumption that church schools (mostly catholic) will not implement concepts of gender equality and gender sensitive education in their curricula. It is the Catholic Church who in the current public discourse is the most ardent advocate of traditional ideas about the role of men and women in the family and society. These worries are also corroborated by the existing practice in teaching of religious and ethical education in schools.

In 1998, the CEDAW committee reprimanded Slovakia for the existence of gender stereotypical so-called schools for girls. Also this year’s CEDAW shadow report<sup>5</sup> issued by NGOs underscored the risks related to these schools (that among others prepare their students “for marriage”). Although between the years 2001/2002 and 2007/2008 the number of these schools has dropped from 53 (3 church schools) to 3 (0 church schools) and the new law on education abolished them completely, it is still possible that they continue under a less explicit name or with a less explicit curriculum.

Education and schooling has undergone many changes – in the past 2 years 9 new conceptual models have been approved. As of May 2008 Slovakia has a new law on education (*Act No. 245/2008 on Education and Schooling*). According to this new law, education at elementary and secondary schools is free of charge and freedom of choice of a school is guaranteed. The law defines, among others, the principle of equality of opportunity in education, ban on discrimination and segregation and it also mentions equality of women and men to be fundamental principles of education and schooling.<sup>6</sup> Basic human rights as defined in Conventions<sup>7</sup> are listed among the goals of education.

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<sup>3</sup> Church schools are defined by the *Agreement between the Slovak Republic and religious communities about religious education and schooling* and catholic schools (established by the diocese bishop’s office), moreover also by the *Treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See on catholic education and schooling*.

<sup>4</sup> None of colleges and universities is church-established, but there are public universities that either have the adjective “catholic” in its name (Catholic University in Ružomberok) or in their charter they declare the religious value orientation (University of Trnava).

<sup>5</sup> CEDAW Shadow Report (*Tieňová správa pre Výbor pre odstránenie diskriminácie žien*) written by 8 Slovak NGOs. May 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Article 3 Point j) speaks about the principle of “preparation for a responsible life in a free society in the spirit of understanding and tolerance, equality of women and men, brotherhood among nations, national and ethnic groups and religious tolerance” (Act No. 245/2008 Z.z.)

<sup>7</sup> Article 4 Point g) reads: “to gain and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and principles” and point k) reads: “to obtain all information about the rights of children and skills for their application as defined by The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.”

According to the new law (effective from 1 September 2008) education and schooling is based on new state and school curricula. *State educational programs* define the obligatory content of the curriculum and are issued by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. They contain binding guidelines for the elaboration of the school educational program, drafting and evaluation of school books and evaluation of schools. *The school educational program* is the main school document and is issued by the director of the school. It must be in line with the principles and goals defined by the law (this compatibility is verified by the State School Inspection).<sup>8</sup> Elementary education is divided into two stages: *primary* (grades 1-5 years, the so called first level of elementary school) and *lower secondary* (grades 6-9 years, the second level of elementary school, i.e. middle school). The law stipulates that compulsory school attendance is 10 years (from the age of 6 years, or 7 years in exceptional cases), but no longer than until 16 years of age. There are four types of secondary education: *lower vocational, vocational, comprehensive with a diploma and vocational with a diploma.*<sup>9</sup>

Although the new law mentions the “principle of equality of men and women”, the state educational programs do not pay attention to gender equality or gender sensitive education. This begs a question: how are the principles declared in the law going to be implemented in concrete educational programs? Given the current situation characterized by the absence of the gender perspective in education and lack of linkages between the gender and educational policies in Slovakia there is a significant risk that the gender dimension will not be included in the new programs. Even if they in some way might reflect the proclaimed principle, it is likely that it will be rather superficial. Thus far, the whole gender equality agenda has been reduced to a general claim for equality of women and men and “locked” within certain “pertinent” subjects such as civics and ethics and the like. The above proclamation may become a springboard to deeper understanding of the issue, nevertheless much depends on the good will and interest of individual teachers since the gender perspective is inadequately systematically anchored. And yet another issue is gender sensitive pedagogy that requires an approach reaching beyond the framework of simple “equality”. From the gender perspective, the most problematic subjects are religion (teaching of this subject is organized by churches, esp. the Catholic Church) and ethics as well as so called education to marriage and parenting because these subjects openly reproduce gender stereotypes. However, the hidden curriculum and approach of teachers to a large degree reinforce gender stereotypes regardless of a concrete subject.<sup>10</sup>

Slovakia is a country with large – and not only economic and social – regional differences, and also the study OECD PISA pointed to these differences in student achievement. Therefore, the currently implemented model could in fact jeopardize the principle of equal access to education. Several problems could be seen already in the past – for instance the inappropriate assignment of Roma children to special schools or issues related

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<sup>8</sup> It contains the goals of education and schooling, but also educational standards, curricula and guidelines and the like.

<sup>9</sup> In addition to elementary and secondary education, the Act also recognizes pre-primary and higher professional education.

<sup>10</sup> For a long time, feminist NGOs have been opining to these risks, for instance in the *Opinion of the Members of the Expert Group for Education and Research, Gender Analysis and Statistics of the Coordination Committee for Women's Issues to the Framework Treaty between the Slovak Republic and the Holy See* (2001) and the *CEDAW Shadow Report* (2008). The respective chapter in the Shadow Report was elaborated by the feminist NGO Esfem that also carried out research on gender stereotypes in sex education textbooks, officially called education to marriage and parenting. In the curriculum of other subjects gender stereotypes do not explicitly occur and the inquiry into the hidden curriculum and approaches of teachers has been thus far limited to some probes initiated by NGOs (ASPEKT, Centrum rodových štúdií, Esfem).

to individual integration of students with special learning needs into elementary schools.<sup>11</sup> The decentralized system might threaten the existence of schools in small localities and children might have to start traveling greater distances to attend school, which could cause problems to children from families with lower social or cultural capital. In the nearest future, it will be important to look at changes in the education system through the prism of the gender analysis and to assess their impact. It also should be emphasized that in general there are many thus far unused opportunities to mainstream gender into education in Slovakia and also to study the education system from the gender perspective since many data are still missing, including data on multiple disadvantages.

## 2. Education Sector within the Context of the National Economy

### General Contexts – the Overall Labor Market Situation and Relation to the Private Sphere

The mass entry of women into the world of paid employment in Slovakia happened in the context of the *ideal* visions about building of socialism. However, it should be emphasized, that the world of labor fully opened itself up for women as a consequence of a *pragmatic* need of cheap labor. In the period of rising second wave of women's movement in the West, Slovak women did not have to fight separately as *women* to gain access to education and paid employment. Nevertheless, the degree of women's participation in the public sphere did not equally lead to changes in stereotypical division of labor between women and men in the private sphere. In many respects this did not happen in the gender division of labor in employment and other public positions either. These facts in an important way influenced also women's interest in civil society participation and activities.<sup>12</sup>

Neither before the year 1989 nor after it did the entry of women into the public sphere bring them equal positions with men – be it on the labor market or in politics. From the gender perspective, the Slovak labor market is characterized by long-term gender inequalities disadvantaging women. Data from 2007 show the following differences:

- the economic activity rate of women is in 17% lower compared to men (50.5% compared to 67.7%);
- more women than men – almost twice as many - are outside of the labor market (1,160, 000 compared to 699,900);
- women's employment rate is in 15% lower compared to men (53.1% compared to 68.4%);
- women's unemployment rate is in 3% higher compared to men (12.5% compared to 9.8%);
- neither horizontal nor vertical gender labor market segregation has been decreasing, which means:

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<sup>11</sup> The thus far carried out studies show that state financial subsidy per one integrated pupil has led to a race for these children when schools started to compete among themselves. However, due to the lack of qualified teachers and a high number of pupils per one class it is not possible to pay adequate attention to the needs of these pupils, which makes the whole process counterproductive. These facts were emphasized by E. Gallová-Kriglerová in her study entitled *The Impact of Measures for the Improvement of the Situation of Roma Children in Education* (2006). Also the findings of the research carried out by ASPEKT as part of the project pinkandblueworld.sk were similar (Filadelfiová 2008).

<sup>12</sup> Over a long time span, the civil society participation of women has shifted from their various activities as members of clubs and associations before 1948, through strictly ideologically controlled activity of a single women's organization (Socialist Union of Women) under communism, to a gradual self-understanding and rather hectic development of women's NGOs after the year 1989, but mostly since the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 1990s.

- a lower share of women in the business sector;
- a considerably higher share of women in services;
- a persistence of “female” and “male” occupations;
- a considerably lower share of women at higher positions and top management;
- women’s wage is lower than men’s in more than one fourth, wages in feminized occupations are the lowest;
- part-time work and other flexible types of work organization are in Slovakia minimal (full-time employment and fixed working hours prevail), and it is mostly women who work part-time.

These gender differences persist in spite of the fact that women’s level of education is equal or even higher than that of men. On the labor market, there are more women than men with complete high school education and even more women with college education. Although in general education is perceived as an efficient tool of social development and as a powerful tool of emancipation, labor market participation and social mobility at the individual level, it is apparent that these rules do not apply equally to men and women. The amount of education obtained does not predict professional positions and hence the wage of women and men in the same fashion. On the labor market, men are usually in a better position not only relative to other men and women with lower education, but also relative to women with the same or even higher amount of education. For instance, when we look at remuneration from the perspective of statistical and research data – in the publication *Equal Pay for Equal Work? Aspects of Gender Pay Gap* discussed mainly in the chapter *The Gender Gap* – we can see that “in Slovakia the growth of women’s educational level does not mean that the gender pay gap is decreasing. Statistical data indicate that even an opposite trend is taking place. The gender pay gap is the highest in the group with the highest amount of attained education.” (Filadelfiová, 2007, p. 33)

Therefore, on the labor market educated women have a relative advantaged only when compared to other women with lower education. This fact is emphasized by Kateřina Lišková and Lucie Jarkovská in their study *Gender Aspects of the Czech Education* (2008) and based on their comparison of the educational structure with statistical data on the labor market situation in the Czech Republic. They highlight that the expected “model (higher education = higher wage) does not work equally for all social collectivities” (p. 686), and that the so-called correlation hypothesis is not necessarily valid when it comes to gender (pp. 684-687).

#### **The Structure of Employed Women and Men in Slovakia by Education (1995-2007, in %)**

		1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
<b>Elementary education</b>	Wom en	13,7	9,1	8,3	7,3	6,5	6,5	6,0	6,1	5,6
	Men	8,7	5,1	4,5	4,2	3,9	3,9	3,5	3,5	3,6
<b>Vocational training</b>	Wom en	24,8	26,5	27,7	30,0	25,1	25,1	24,0	24,4	24,3
	<b>Men</b>	<b>40,3</b>	<b>42,4</b>	<b>43,1</b>	<b>43,6</b>	<b>40,5</b>	<b>40,5</b>	<b>37,7</b>	<b>38,1</b>	<b>38,2</b>
<b>Secondary education</b>	Wom en	5,9	3,2	2,4	2,0	1,7	1,7	2,2	2,2	2,3
	Men	8,6	4,9	3,1	2,6	2,7	2,7	2,8	2,7	2,8
<b>Vocational training with a diploma</b>	Wom en	2,3	3,3	3,7	3,8	4,0	4,0	3,7	3,8	3,8
	Men	3,9	5,8	5,8	5,9	6,1	6,1	6,4	6,4	6,3

<b>Complete secondary comprehensive education</b>	Women	5,8	7,4	7,0	6,2	6,4	6,4	6,5	6,4	6,1
	Men	2,7	3,6	3,2	2,8	2,8	2,8	2,7	2,8	2,9
<b>Complete secondary technical education</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>36,4</b>	<b>37,8</b>	<b>37,2</b>	<b>38,3</b>	<b>40,1</b>	<b>40,1</b>	<b>40,5</b>	<b>39,7</b>	<b>39,8</b>
	Men	22,4	26,2	27,5	28,4	29,7	29,7	30,8	30,0	31,1
<b>College education</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>12,8</b>	<b>12,6</b>	<b>13,7</b>	<b>14,4</b>	<b>15,1</b>	<b>15,1</b>	<b>15,5</b>	<b>16,0</b>	<b>16,9</b>
	Men	14,7	12,1	12,7	12,4	13,8	13,8	15,5	15,9	14,6

**Source:** *Statistical Yearbooks SR 1995 – 2004* (according to methodology used by Labour Force Survey). Bratislava, ŠÚ SR 1995 - 2004; *Slovstat*. Bratislava, ŠÚ SR 2008 ([www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd](http://www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd)).

The entry of women into the public sphere does not liberate them from the gender stereotypical perception of the private sphere as the primary area of women's responsibility. Compared to the year 1995<sup>13</sup> only little has changed in the real division of labor in the family and household:

- it is women who interrupt their employment to take care of newly born babies (men only exceptionally take a parental leave);
- similarly, it is women who take a leave from their employment to take care of their sick children;
- men spend significantly less time on house chores and childcare (on average per week it is 16 hours less when a woman works outside of the house);
- stereotypical division of work into female and male still persists;
- marriage liberates men from doing housework, while on the contrary it increases women's housework;

At the same time, however, ideas about the division of labor in the family and household are visibly changing:

- Ideas about the household division of labor do not correspond with reality – both women and men think that partners should share housework in a more equal way than it happens in reality;
- Women are more supportive of the participatory model (equal sharing of housework by both partners), men prefer the traditional model (the main burden of housework lies on women);
- The difference in ideas about household division of labor is the biggest between young men and young women (people younger than 45 who entered adulthood or grew up after the revolution, and we can see that while women's ideas have changed, men's have remained at the same level) – young women want more of men's participation and equal sharing of household and family responsibilities;

A richer public discourse about women's rights and their position in society which started to develop in the 1990s mainly due to activities of women's rights advocacy by NGOs<sup>14</sup> and

<sup>13</sup> The first relevant research data on this topic were published in the book *She and He in Slovakia* (data collected in 1995; published in 1996).

<sup>14</sup> NGOs such as ASPEKT, Aliancia žien Slovenska, Pro Familia, Fenestra, Esfem, Možnosť voľby, Piata žena.

under the influence of the European Union<sup>15</sup> got reflected also in the public opinion – between the years 2000 and 2007 the visibility of women’s problem and their disadvantaged position considerably increased:

- Nowadays most women but also men are aware of a disadvantaged position of women in the both the public and private sphere;
- Labor market inequalities – such as discrimination in hiring, income difference or general organization of work that disadvantage women more than men, are ranked at the top of the scale of disadvantages;
- People in Slovakia are also aware of women’s double burden by work and family responsibilities;
- Both women and men are aware of the problem of violence against women or of low representation of women in the public sphere and many others.

However, a higher visibility of women’s problems is not automatically reflected in a higher sensitivity to the gendered structure of society – many stereotypes about women’s and men’s roles are still alive:

- Although women’s housework load is in general seen as an important barrier to their position in the workplace and employment and to their active participation in politics, real patterns of behavior in the domestic sphere have not practically changed – gender division of labor and responsibilities is unequal and the main burden is still on women;
- Although the low participation of women in political decision-making is mostly perceived negatively, at the same time the role of women in politics is not regarded as very important;
- Although women’s claims related to employment and politics are seen as valid, homemaking and motherhood are still seen as women’s main domains.

### **Education is one of the most feminized sectors in Slovakia**

When we look at education in the context of other sectors of the economy we can see that from the long-term perspective statistical data offer a stable picture: in Slovakia, education is one of the most feminized sectors in Slovakia. The comparison of the proportion of women working in all sectors of the national economy in the past decade shows that the highest number of women worked in the education sector. In particular years, the share of women in the education sector was either the highest or the second highest – after health care and social work.

### **The share of women in particular sectors of the national economy (1997 and 2007, in %)**

<b>Sector</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2007</b>
Agriculture and Forestry	30,6	27,1
Extraction of raw materials	14,0	5,6
Industry	41,3	37,7
Production and distribution of electricity, gas and water	14,5	18,2
Construction	8,7	7,9
Commerce	57,8	62,2
Hotels and Restaurants	66,2	66,3
Transport, warehousing, postal services and telecommunications	30,0	27,0
Financial brokering	73,9	67,3

<sup>15</sup> Even though in the accession process issues related to gender equality played only a marginal role.



Real estate	41,7	41,0
Public administration, defense	47,9	50,6
<b>Education</b>	<b>80,6</b>	<b>79,3</b>
Health care and social work	79,6	83,6
Other public services	49,0	51,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,9</b>	<b>46,6</b>

**Source:** Portal SLOVSTAT. ŠÚ SR, 2008 ([www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd](http://www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd)).

In 1997, women represented more than 80% of all employees in the education sector and in the past decade this number has changed only a little. According to statistical data of 2007 the proportion of women working in education was 79.3%.

The degree of feminization in the sector of education is one of the highest in the EU: only 7 countries have a higher share of women (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia), feminization of education is in all other countries lower (the lowest percentage of women is in Malta 54.4%, Denmark 55.6%, the Netherlands 60.6% and Greece 60.8%, although even in these countries the share of women is more than a half).

### **The education sector has one of the lowest average salaries**

Another characteristic of our education is that for many years it has had one of the lowest average salaries when compared to other sectors and little has changed during the past decade. In 1997, education ranked as the fourth lowest among 13 sectors, in 2007 it was the fifth lowest. While in 2007 the overall average salary in the economy of the Slovak republic was 20.156 SKK, in education it was 16.632 SKK. Only employees of four other sectors had lower salaries: hotels and restaurants, agriculture and forestry, construction and other public services.

In the past decade (1997 – 2006), the salary in education even decreased. In 1997 it reached about 84% of the overall average salary in the national economy, but in 2007 it was only 82.6%. In Slovakia, remuneration in education is among the lowest and it shows no tendency of improvement. Although in the past decade, the salary has increased almost twice this growth has been slower than in other sectors (e.g. real estate, finances and insurance, transport and telecommunications and the like).

### **The average salary by sectors and the share of salary in particular sectors in the overall average salary in the national economy (1997 and 2006, in SKK)**

Sector of the Economy	Average salary in SKK		% of the overall average salary in the national economy	
	1997	2007	1997	2007
Agriculture and Forestry	7 363	15 766	79,8	78,2
Extraction of raw materials	10 485	22 219	113,6	110,3
Industry	9 197	20 024	99,7	99,4
Production and distribution of electricity, gas and water	12 212	29 769	132,4	147,8
Construction	9 970	15 561	108,1	77,2
Wholesale, retail, repairs	9 825	20 035	106,5	99,4
Hotels and Restaurants	7 743	15 045	83,9	74,7
Transport, warehousing, postal services and telecommunications	10 089	21 270	109,3	105,6
Finances and Insurance	17 886	40 871	193,9	202,9
Real estate	10 710	25 129	116,1	124,7

Public administration, defense, social security	11 240	25 637	121,8	127,2
<b>Education</b>	<b>7 771</b>	<b>16 632</b>	<b>84,2</b>	<b>82,6</b>
Healthcare and social work	8 373	17 540	90,7	87,1
Other public services	7 372	15 442	79,9	76,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 226</b>	<b>20 146</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Source: Portal SLOVSTAT. ŠÚ SR, 2007 ([www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd](http://www.statistics.sk/pls/elisw/vbd)).

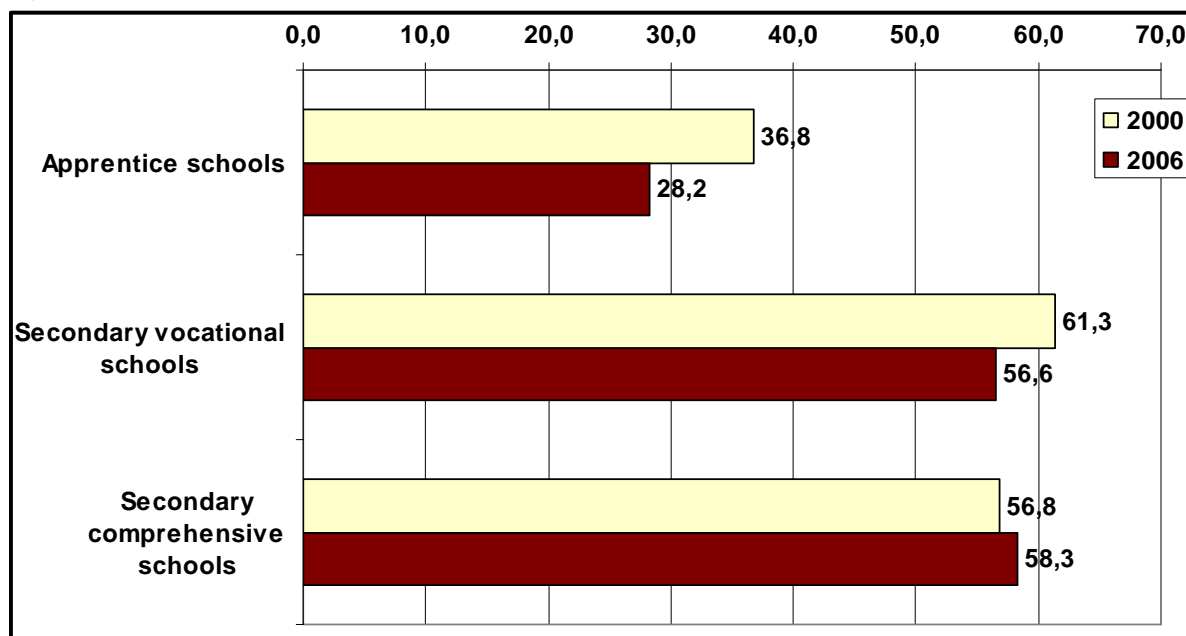
### 3. Gender Differences and Inequalities inside the Education System

#### 3.1 Gender Difference in Fields of Study

##### Gender Difference in Study Interests of Students

In general, women in Slovakia choose different fields of study than men, and public policy pay only little attention to this fact.<sup>16</sup> The difference in the education between women and men is already inscribed in the gender difference in the choice of the type of secondary education: boys more often choose to attend vocational and apprentice training while girls choose diploma-track secondary programs. In 2006 the proportion of girls in apprenticeship was 28.2%, at vocational schools 56.6% and at comprehensive (college-preparatory) secondary schools it was 58.3%. Compared to the year 2000, the share of girls at comprehensive secondary schools has increased, while their proportion at apprentice and vocational schools has decreased.

##### Proportion of Girls at Secondary School According to the School Type (2000 and 2006, v %)

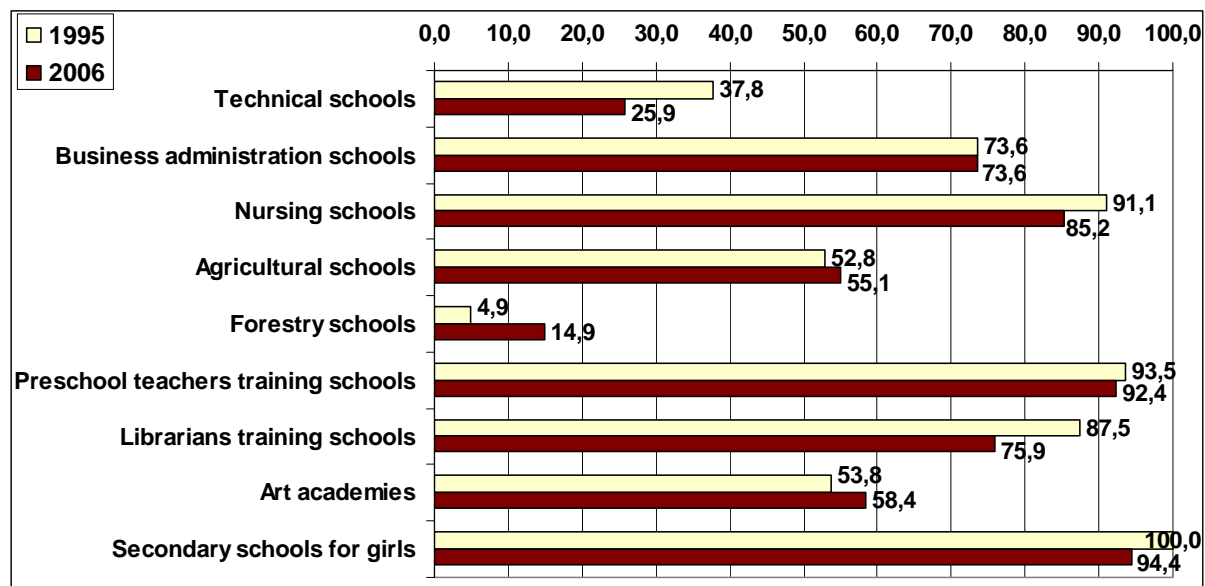


Source: *Statistical Yearbook of the SR 2002 and 2007*. Bratislava, ŠÚ SR 2002 and 2007.

<sup>16</sup> There is no targeted strategy and measures to support girls in their choice of technical and scientific fields of study, and boys in their choice of the social studies and humanities. In principle, thus far the only activity focusing on gender occupational segregation has been 2 EQUAL projects funded by the ESF and realized by NGOs (the project pinkandblueworld.sk was evaluated as good practice). Two research projects were directly supported by the EC (Sedová 2008, Piscová 2004).

Study interests of girls differ from those of boys also within particular types of schools. As concerns vocational training, girls prefer fields like seamstresses, shop assistants, shoemakers, waitresses and cooks, while boys tend to choose technical fields and construction.

### Trends in proportion of women among regular students of secondary schools (1995 and 2006, in %)



Source: *Statistical Yearbook SR 1995 and 2007*. Bratislava, ŠÚ SR 1995 and 2007.

Study interests of boys and girls also differ at vocational schools: boys' interest in technical subjects is mirrored in their enrollment in technical and forestry schools (75% and 85% respectively); girls focus more on healthcare and education or business administration. The proportion of girls at secondary nursing schools has for a long time been about 90%, at schools for preschool teachers it is close to 100%. Girls are also in majority at schools for librarians and business administration schools. The number of male and female students is balanced only at agricultural schools and art academies; at other types of schools there is a prevalence of either boys or girls. The comparison of the structure of secondary students in the past decade shows that the study interests of male and female students are rather stable. The data do not show any significant trend of change in the study interests; on the contrary – the proportion of female students at technical schools has even dropped, although these schools best meet the needs of the changing labor market.

### Colleges and Universities by Type – Proportion of Female Students (2000-2006, in %)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>All Colleges and Universities</b>	<b>49,0</b>	<b>49,7</b>	<b>50,5</b>	<b>51,0</b>	<b>51,6</b>	<b>53,4</b>	<b>54,7</b>
1 Natural sciences	49,9	50,4	49,8	49,7	55,0	56,7	57,3
2 Technological sciences	27,3	27,3	26,6	25,6	24,7	24,2	23,7
Agriculture, forestry, veterinary medicine	45,1	45,1	44,9	44,7	46,3	47,8	49,9
5 Medical and pharmaceutical sciences	65,6	67,9	72,9	75,0	77,5	79,1	80,4
6, 7	63,2	64,0	64,6	64,5	65,6	66,6	67,5

Social sciences							
8 Humanities	55,0	59,3	59,6	59,0	58,1	59,4	60,3
9 Military and defense			51,2	48,6	39,9	40,1	42,2

**Source:** Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (<http://www.uips.sk/statis/index.html>).

A similar gender difference can be seen at colleges and universities. The overall proportion of female college student slightly exceeds that of men (54.7% in 2006), but their share varies according to the actual field of study. The largest gender difference is at technical colleges, where female students make up about one fourth (with a decreasing tendency). On the other hand, 60% of all students of the social sciences, humanities, medical and pharmaceutical sciences are women. At natural sciences colleges the share of women is 57%. From 2000 to 2006, the proportion of women studying the social sciences, humanities, art or medicine increased, while men strengthened their position in the technical fields of study. Over a long period of time, the interests of women in particular fields of study have been significantly different from the study interests of men.

### **Formation of different study interests of women and men**

The gender difference in study interests is one of the key factors (and also consequences) of the existing gender segregation of the labor market – of course there is a whole plethora of factors at play here such as the structure of the economy, content of work, degree of automation, attitudes of employers, general gender stereotypes in society and others.

The gender occupational asymmetry, manifested in both horizontal and vertical gender segregation, is complemented and reinforced by the asymmetrical stereotypical division of labor in the household. It is based on the idea of a total difference between women and men (femininity and masculinity) due to which the female and male spheres of activities should be complementary but at the same time they exclude each other and stand at opposite poles. An important role is played by early childhood socialization, by influences coming from the family and other settings, the media and the overall representation of women and men in the given culture. Quite influential are also attitudes of teachers at all levels of education and schooling (from preschool to college). What could be relatively and from a short-term perspective influenced by educational policy is concrete institutionalized counseling on the choice of occupation (especially at elementary schools and secondary schools).

In Slovakia no official institution has thus far conducted relevant research on the presence of gender stereotypes at various types of schools and their influence on teachers' perception of school achievement and behavior of girls and boys. Overall, the gender perspective is only seldom applied in educational or sociological inquiry focusing on the educational process and system. Impulses for research in this field have been coming from NGOs or individual scholars; one the first studies thus far has been the qualitative research carried out within the project pinkandblueworld.sk (Filadelfiová 2008). The analysis of findings of focus groups interviews with female teachers (4 groups) and male teachers (1 group) confirmed that despite a widespread conviction of teachers about their equal approach towards both girls and boys gender stereotypical ideas about male and female roles prevail in Slovakia. They influence and shape different behavior of teachers towards boys and girls. This concerns the teaching style, channeling of interests of pupils or evaluation of reasons of their study successes or failures. These stereotypes are of course perpetuated when they are “confirmed” by children themselves in the style of the self-fulfilling prophecy, which is the most apparent in gender differences in study interests of pupils.

In this research, the starting point of the discussion about knowledge and skills of boys and girls were the findings of an international comparative study PISA from the year 2003<sup>17</sup> according to which boys performed better in mathematics while girls did better in reading.<sup>18</sup> The interviewees were asked to speak about their own teaching experiences and to think about possible causes of this difference.

“As concerns math, I would say their performance is also about the same, because girls catch up due to their hard work. But boys are smarter at math. Girls catch up with them because they learn. So the final effect is the same. (Female teacher, broader consensus).” (Filadelfiová 2008, p. 87) This statement of an elementary school teacher is an exemplification of the way in which teachers approach their pupils prevalent in the interviews: on the one hand, there is a declared equality of approach and evaluation, but on the other hand the “same final effect” obscures the fact that the assumption that girls are *more diligent* (but *less smart*) while boys are *smarter* (but *lazier*) creates an asymmetrical basis for the formation of an interest in the given subject and learning styles, and from a longer-term perspective also for the future decisions about the choice of occupation. *Diligence* may not be sufficient for achieving success in the study at a technical college, while *laziness* compensated by *smartness* is often interpreted as a kind of “Einstein’s effect”. The PISA research also showed that boys in Slovakia regard mathematics as more important for their future work than girls. Opinions about reasons for a greater inclination of boys to technical subjects and girls to humanities and languages were divided into two camps – “natural” causes vs. upbringing and traditional ideas.

Another impulse to speak about equal opportunities of girls and boys was also the discussion about the “technical education” subject where girls are usually stereotypically assigned to subjects like cooking, sewing, childcare, and boys are assigned to the workshop. Given the apparent gender bias of these subjects it would be quite easy to come up with measures aiming at the principle of equality of opportunity. However, this is hindered by the conviction – prevalent also in the cited research – that it is sufficient to let the pupils choose freely what subject they want to take. What is missing is the reflection on conditions and circumstances under which this “free choice” actually takes place. The same can be said about occupational choice counseling. Questions related to this issue revealed that teachers completely disregard gender aspects of this decision.

The research carried out in the frames of the project pinkandblueworld.sk confirmed, among others, that elementary school teachers do not reflect on the gender perspective when they deal with their pupils. It confirmed that the overall complete absence of the gender perspective in educational policy in many forms impacts the gender relations in education, and in this case it perpetuates gender stereotypes pertaining to the choice of the field of study and occupation.

### 3.2 Differences in the Proportion of Women and Men in the Teaching Profession

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<sup>17</sup> PISA SK 2003 – The National Report. Štátny pedagogický ústav, Bratislava 2005. In 2006 another round of this research project was carried out and the findings showed that little had changed in terms differences between boys and girls in Slovakia – this difference had just slightly decreased. These research findings were also mentioned by the Research Institute of Pedagogy but the gender difference remained at the level of a statement, no concrete steps have been taken.

<sup>18</sup> „In Slovakia, the findings show the biggest difference in performance (19 pts), the same as in Greece and similar to Italy (17 pts). Only Korea shows a bigger gender difference (23 pts). “The research showed that as concerns the bigger interest of boy in mathematics, Slovakia is close to other OECD countries. Another important fact is that in reading literacy achievement Slovakia ranked last of all participating EU countries.

Part 2 sketched out the situation of all employees in education irrespective of their position (including those who do not teach). Therefore, let us take a look at the particular situation inside the teaching profession and at different school types.

### **Women prevail at all types of schools**

The table below shows the number of all teachers at different school types and the number of female teachers. In the school year 2007/2008 the total number of elementary school teachers was 30,449 of which 25,986 were women. Out of the total of 6,894 teachers at secondary comprehensive schools 5,126 were women, of the total of 6,376 at secondary vocational schools 4,562 were women, at secondary apprentice schools the number of female teachers was 1,637 out of the total of 2,568 and at colleges and universities it was 4,327 of female teachers of the total number of 9,986 teachers.

In the school year 2007/2008 at all school types there was 41,638 female teachers and 14,563 male teachers (together 56,200 people).

### **Total numbers of teachers and number of female teachers at different types of schools (2000 – 2007, absolute numbers)**

		<b>2000</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Difference between 2002 and 2007</b>
Elementary schools	Total	39 745	34 914	30 449	- 9 296 (- 23,4)
	Women	33 246	29 388	25 986	- 7 260 (- 21,8)
Secondary comprehensive schools	Total	6 259	7 568	6 894	+ 637 (+ 9,2)
	Women	4 526	5 572	5 126	+ 600 (+ 11,7)
Secondary vocational schools	Total	9 882	7 869	6 376	- 3 506 (- 35,5)
	Women	6 858	5 437	4 562	- 2 296 (- 33,5)
Secondary apprentice schools	Total	5 805	3 254	2 589	- 3 216 (- 55,4)
	Women	3 857	2 095	1 637	- 2 220 (- 57,6)
Colleges and universities	Total	9 535	10 795	9 892	+ 357 (+ 3,6)
	Women	3 722	4 497	4 327	+ 555 (+ 12,8)

This table showing absolute numbers also indicates a relatively high decrease of the number of teachers at most types of school since 2000. The number of elementary school teachers has decreased in 23.4% and the number of teachers at secondary vocational schools has dropped in 35.5%. The biggest decline has taken place at secondary apprentice schools where the number of teachers has diminished in 55.4%. The number of teachers has grown at only two types of schools – secondary comprehensive schools (9.2%) and colleges and universities (3.6%).

The comparison of changes in the number of teachers at different school types also indicates another trend: with the exception of secondary apprentice schools the decrease in the number of female teachers was smaller than the overall total drop, i.e. fewer women than men left the system. At those types of schools where the number of all teachers increased (secondary comprehensive schools and colleges) the number of female teachers was higher than the number of male teachers, i.e. more women than men came in. This difference indicates that since the year 2000 feminization at all types of schools has deepened, as also the following table showing the percentage of female teachers confirms:

**Proportion of female teachers out of all teachers by the school type (2000 – 2007, in %)**

Type of school	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
All elementary school	83,6	83,6	83,8	84,0	83,8	84,2	84,6	85,3
Elementary schools 2nd level (Middle school)	90,2	90,1	90,2	89,3	88,6	88,5	88,0	88,4
Secondary comprehensive schools	72,3	73,5	74,5	73,9	72,1	73,6	73,7	74,3
Secondary vocational schools	69,4	69,4	69,0	68,4	69,1	69,1	70,1	71,5
Secondary apprentice schools	66,4	66,6	63,8	64,1	64,6	64,4	62,8	63,2
Colleges and Universities	39,0	39,2	39,4	40,6	41,9	41,7	42,2	43,7

**Source:** Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (<http://www.uips.sk/statis/index.html>).

In 2007 85.3% of all elementary school teachers were women. Compared to the year 2000 this proportion has grown in 2% (feminization is even more noticeable at the 1<sup>st</sup> level of elementary schools where in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> grades the number of women exceeded 88%). Women made up 74.3% of all teachers at secondary comprehensive schools, 71.5% of teachers at secondary vocational schools and 63.2% of teachers at secondary apprentice schools. From the perspective of a male-to-female ratio, all these school types belong to the category of feminized, since the proportion of their female teachers exceeds 60%. The only type of school with less than a half of female teachers is colleges and universities where the proportion of women was 43.7% in the last school year.

**Proportion of female teachers varies according to the school type**

A closer look at secondary schools and universities reveals that the proportion of women varies according to the type of school. Among secondary vocational schools, the share of women is the highest at schools of nursing, schools for librarians and schools for preschool teachers – about 80%.

The level of 80% reaches the proportion of women also at business administration schools; at secondary schools for girls and secondary comprehensive schools it is about 75%. A significantly lower share of women, but still about 60%, is at agricultural schools, art academies and secondary technical schools. At forestry schools female teachers make up less than 30%.

**The proportion of female teachers by the type of secondary schools (2000 – 2007, in %)**

Type of school	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Comprehensive schools	72,3	73,5	74,5	73,9	72,1	73,6	73,7	74,3
Technical schools	58,7	58,4	57,3	57,2	57,8	58,0	59,3	59,7
Business administration schools	80,0	79,9	80,5	79,9	80,0	79,6	79,6	81,2
Nursing schools	87,9	87,8	87,6	85,3	84,5	83,9	86,6	88,0
Agricultural schools	58,2	58,9	57,4	58,7	55,3	56,5	59,9	59,5

Forestry schools	24,7	27,0	26,8	28,4	28,0	28,6	29,7	28,3
Preschool teachers training schools								81,3
	77,6	77,7	79,1	77,8	81,1	80,7	80,4	
Art academies	57,6	61,3	58,9	58,5	60,9	58,9	59,8	59,8
Secondary schools for girls								80,0
	80,3	79,8	79,9	76,4	76,2	82,5	75,4	
Librarians training schools								80,8
	92,9	93,3	93,3	100,0	100,0	93,5	82,8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>69,4</b>	<b>69,4</b>	<b>69,0</b>	<b>68,4</b>	<b>69,1</b>	<b>69,1</b>	<b>70,1</b>	<b>71,5</b>

**Source:** Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (<http://www.uips.sk/statis/index.html>).

Differences in the proportion of female teachers according to the type study are visible also at universities. From a long-term perspective, their highest share is at faculties of economics (more than 50%) and than at liberal arts colleges (more than 40%); a lower number of female teachers is at faculties of agriculture (25%). At art and technical colleges the share of women is about one third.

#### **Female and male teachers at public universities and colleges in Slovakia by the type of study (situation of 31 October 2004)**

Type of study	Total number of teachers	Women		Men		Women in %
		N	%	N	%	
Liberal arts	6 109	2 698	57,0	3 411	49,6	44,2
Technical	2 949	933	19,7	2 016	29,3	31,6
Economics	1 425	764	16,2	661	9,6	53,6
Agriculture	573	144	3,1	429	6,2	25,1
Arts	556	191	4,0	365	5,3	34,4
<b>All Public Colleges and Universities</b>	<b>11 612</b>	<b>4 730</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>6 882</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>40,7</b>

**Source:** Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva, 2005.

These data attest to the fact that the proportion of female teachers is higher in the social sciences and humanities and lower in the natural and sciences and technical colleges. This inner segregation (as well as the overall labor market segregation) is to certain degree an outcome of the different study interests of women and men in Slovakia, although there are certainly also some other factors at play here.

#### **Gender Differences at Colleges and Universities by Teaching Positions**

When looking at gender differences in education we cannot omit the structure of teachers at colleges and universities. One rule applies here: the higher the position - the lower the share of women.

#### **Colleges and Universities – Teachers (2000-2007, in absolute numbers and %)**

	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
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<b>All teachers</b>	<b>9535</b>	<b>9910</b>	<b>10178</b>	<b>10365</b>	<b>10604</b>	<b>10795</b>	<b>10970</b>	<b>9897</b>
<b>Female teaches</b>	<b>3722</b>	<b>3884</b>	<b>4014</b>	<b>4205</b>	<b>4446</b>	<b>4497</b>	<b>4624</b>	<b>4327</b>
<b>Female teachers in %</b>	<b>39,0</b>	<b>39,2</b>	<b>39,4</b>	<b>40,6</b>	<b>41,9</b>	<b>41,7</b>	<b>42,2</b>	<b>43,7</b>
All professors	938	1017	1088	1228	1398	1497	1568	1452
Female professors	67	105	100	141	196	270	300	299
<i>in %</i>	<i>7,1</i>	<i>10,3</i>	<i>9,2</i>	<i>11,5</i>	<i>14,0</i>	<i>18,0</i>	<i>19,1</i>	<i>20,6</i>
All associate professors	2441	2500	2456	2249	2243	2181	2249	2045
Female associate professors	655	685	704	679	730	708	763	727
<i>in %</i>	<i>26,8</i>	<i>27,4</i>	<i>28,7</i>	<i>30,2</i>	<i>32,5</i>	<i>32,5</i>	<i>33,9</i>	<i>35,6</i>
All lecturers	5412	5654	5823	6024	5992	6176	6223	5660
Female lecturers	2591	2725	2799	2956	2994	3043	3078	2900
<i>in %</i>	<i>47,9</i>	<i>48,2</i>	<i>48,1</i>	<i>49,1</i>	<i>50,0</i>	<i>49,3</i>	<i>49,5</i>	<i>51,2</i>
All other college and universities employees	744	739	811	864	970	941	930	735
Women	409	369	411	429	526	476	483	401
<i>in %</i>	<i>55,0</i>	<i>49,9</i>	<i>50,7</i>	<i>49,7</i>	<i>54,2</i>	<i>50,6</i>	<i>51,9</i>	<i>54,6</i>

**Source:** Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva (<http://www.uips.sk/statis/index.html>).

While in 2007 in the overall structure the average share of women at colleges and universities was 43.7%, but this share differed by different teaching positions/degree. The share of female professors was less than 21%, at the position of associate professors there was 35.5% of women. At lower teaching position and other employees, the proportion of women was more than a half. So the trend is apparent – the higher the position the lower number of women. However, since 2000 there has been an observable positive trend: the number of women is increasing. The percentage of female associate professors has increased from 26.8% to 35.6%, and the percentage of female professors has grown from 7.1% to 20.6%.

### **Gender Differences in Management Positions at Colleges and Universities**

The same tendency can be observed when we look at the position of women and men in the management of colleges and universities.<sup>19</sup> There is only a small number of women at the highest management positions, and the topmost position so far accessible to women is the position of the bursar - where the proportion of women and men is equal – and the secretary where women prevail. There is only a small proportion of women at other positions. Until 2006 Slovakia did not have a single female rector. In December 2006 the first female rector was elected to this position at a public university (Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica), additionally there are two appointed female rectors at private universities.

### **Women and men among dignitaries of public universities (2004, total numbers)**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Public Universities in SR</b>	
	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Rector	20	0
Vice-rector	56	17
Bursar	10	9

<sup>19</sup> Gender disaggregated data on the number of male vs. female school principals and their deputies at lower levels schools are not available.

Dean	78	13
Vice-dean	219	88
Secretary	28	62
<b>Total</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>189</b>

**Source:** Website of the Ministry of Education SR (<http://www.minedu.sk/index.php?rootId=3>) and selected universities – situation as of 1 September 2004.

### **Gender Pay Gap in the Education Sector**

Despite very low remuneration, the educational sector is not free of gender pay gap. Women's remuneration in education lags behind that of their male colleagues. In 1996, women's income was in 1,624 SKK lower than men's; in 2005 this difference was 4,311 SKK.<sup>20</sup> (Barošová 2006) Slovakia has one of the biggest pay gaps in the EU (there are only 2 countries where the difference is bigger – Cyprus and Estonia, Estonia has also the highest degree of feminization, which can attest to a gender disadvantage of employees in education similar to Slovakia).<sup>21</sup> Over time, there has been no tendency of a decrease in the gender pay gap in this sector. On the contrary, the gender pay gap has grown: in 1996 the gap was 18.5% in favor of men, while in 2005 women's income lagged behind men's in 22.1%. Although this gap is smaller than in other sectors or in the economy as whole, but the difference of more than one fifth can still be regarded as big (see also Filadelfiová 2007).

Data on gender differences in the teaching profession presented in Part 3.2 show that the education system as a whole is marked by a severe gender segregation which due to unequal valuation of “male” and “female” work pushes education to the lowest ranks of the imaginary hierarchy of occupation. They also show that there are some other problems related to a pronounced horizontal (by the school type) and vertical (by the level in the system and position in management) segregation.

### **3.3 Problems and Characteristics of the Teaching Profession**

The analysis of the teaching profession highlighted many problems related to the education sector. First of all it is marked by feminization and related low remuneration lagging behind the average salary in the Slovak economy. An insight into the sector confirmed different degrees of feminization varying by the type and specialization of schools and persistence of several gender differences. The prevalence of women is the highest at elementary schools; it is slightly lower at secondary schools and at colleges and universities the proportion of women is less than a half. Relative to their overall number, women in the education system are little represented in managerial positions. The gender pay gap is also manifested within the education system. Due to organizational changes, the number of teachers is dropping. Education in Slovakia, in terms of its personnel, is growing older, which is related to the general demographic trend, but also to the fact that many young people do not go into teaching (most graduates of teachers colleges never even start teaching). Studies from

<sup>20</sup> The stated figures include respectively all women and men working in education. Available data are usually not gender disaggregated. These figures are quoted from a specific study by M. Barošová and the researcher calculated the gender difference from primary sources.

<sup>21</sup> According to the newest Eurostat data, investments of the Slovak Republic into education are 4.3 % GNP – for instance in Denmark it is 6.7%, in Hungary 5.5 % and in Sweden 6.6 %.

the past years confirm the prevalent sentiments of teachers that their profession is undervalued and its social prestige is declining.<sup>22</sup>

One part of this study deals with the teaching profession as the public policy issue. It reflects on problems in gender equality policy, employment and education and schooling. Their comparison shows that there is almost no correspondence between these policies. Although two so far issued strategic documents on gender equality<sup>23</sup> mention the labor market, they do not contain clearly formulated priorities or measures. The issue of the labor market segregation of the labor market was for the first time part of the policy goals through the *National Action Plan of Employment 2002-2006*. However, this document contained little more than the principles formulated in the Lisbon Strategy transferred to the national level; the proposed measures remained formalistic and they do not correspond with the stated goals. So far, the dismantling of the gender labor market segregation has never been a serious public policy goal in Slovakia.

Formally, a lot of attention is paid to the teaching profession as such. Thus far, each Memorandum of the Government has declared its importance for society, mentioned its problems and commitment to improvement. Nevertheless, it was as late as in April 2007 when the *Concept of the Professional Development of Teachers in the Career System* was approved. It wants to confront the problems of teachers by improving their professional qualification.<sup>24</sup>

Given the fact that the teaching profession, especially at lower levels of schools, is understood as some “extension” of women’s gender role in childcare, the question of “professionalization” is related to deeper issues connected with the status of women and men, gender division of labor and valuation of “female” and “male” work in society. However, the *Conception* contains no gender perspective. It sketches out the career path in principle understood in a linear fashion, and hence more in line with the “male” rather than “female” work biography. There is a danger that this will not resolve problems related to feminization (more precisely: gender-based problems) of this profession and improve the situation of

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<sup>22</sup> This is confirmed by findings of the research carried out by ASPEKT (Filadelfiová 2008) but also by other studies, for instance the publication of the Methodical Pedagogical Center in Prešov *Profesijný rozvoj učiteľa* (2006) (Professional Development of the Teacher), or by analyses conducted by the Institute of Information and Prognosis in Education (ÚIPŠ) *Kvalifikovanosť pedagogických zamestnancov a odbornosť vyučovania v regionálnom školstve* (2001 a 2006) (The Qualification of Teachers and the Quality of Teaching in the Regional School System). The ÚIPŠ analysis from the year 2006 identified these types of problems: the unclear professional status and identity of teachers, aging of teachers, feminization of the profession, lack of qualified teachers and their unequal level of qualification in different regions, low attractiveness of the teaching profession and inadequate quality of the human resources management strategy in the sector. It should be noted that in spite of the emphasized feminization of the profession, this analysis uses only the masculine to speak about all teachers, which also attests to the absence of the gender perspective in the education research.

<sup>23</sup> New priorities for the coming period will be part of the National Strategy of Gender Equality (in preparation).

<sup>24</sup> The document declares to correspond with the National Program of Education and Schooling SR for the coming 15-20 years, with the Lisbon Strategy, the Copenhagen Declaration and Memorandum on Life-long Learning. Its main goal is “the improvement of professional competencies and qualities of teachers” and “adequate valuation of their work taking into account the need to adequately recognize their work and bestow prestige upon the teaching profession“. Among the principles of the *Conception* are: the right and duty of teachers to develop their professional competencies, freedom to choose a career path, responsibility of the state and establishing body of the school for a professional growth of teachers, linkages between their professional development with their career and remuneration, multiple sources of funding for teachers’ education and equal chances of all categories of teachers. The document introduces a 4-tiered career system (beginning teacher, teacher, teacher with the first attestation, and teacher with the second attestation) and the option to choose between 3 career paths (maintenance of standard competencies, acquiring of expert competencies and acquiring of specialized or management competencies).

women, but that it will simply suppress feminization by giving more advantages to already advantaged men. It can be reasonably assumed that the selection of offered career paths will not adhere to the principle of gender equality. It seems that in many respects the teaching profession reinforces the stereotypical gender division of labor – also in the private sphere. For instance, the research carried out by ASPEKT (Filadelfiová 2008) showed that both the public opinion and teachers themselves regard as one of the few real advantages of their profession the possibility of work-life balance arrangements. At the same time this means that it is expected that female teachers will play a larger role in their homes, which could – if no special measures are taken – preclude their adequate career advancement. From the perspective of presence of gender stereotypes in society it is symptomatic that male teachers perceived the possibility to balance their professional and private duties as an advantage only for their female colleagues and for themselves. This, but also other moments (for instance the persistent perception of men as breadwinners), indicate that the gender bias in the teaching profession reinforces gender stereotypes of teachers – in relation to themselves and to their students.

#### 4. Conclusions

In our study on key problems of gender equality and gender sensitive pedagogy in the education system in Slovakia we mentioned not only risks but also possibilities for to address them. For instance, we arrived at the conclusion that one of the key risks is the lack of attention paid by the official circles (Ministry of Education, research institutions, education institutions) to these issues in a well-informed, systematic and continuous fashion, and the education system is a rather strictly hierarchically organized. On the other hand it is true that these issues are being dealt with by NGOs and individual experts who have initiated various activities directly in the school setting (a pilot project at an elementary school, cooperation with methodical centers, trainings and lectures for teachers, courses on gender sensitive education for students of teachers' colleges and the like). These resources can be used in the future, but this would require cooperation on the basis of partnership, not just the “utilization” of know-how.

We came to the conclusion that the **biggest reserves are in the absence of better and consistent interconnection between gender and education policies** and this concerns both gender sensitive pedagogy and the situation of key actors – teachers. If the ascertained problems and characteristics of the teaching profession are not reflected and resolved from the gender perspective, gender equality and gender sensitivity in school will remain illusionary.

#### 5. Recommendations<sup>25</sup>

**# Consequent interconnectedness of the gender and educational policies in terms of their content, form institutional support and implementation at the national and regional levels. It is necessary to develop gender policies as cutting across sectors as it is important to interlink them with other social policies such as the employment policy.**

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<sup>25</sup> Since this year's chapter for the CEDAW Shadow Report was elaborated by the NGO EsFem, therefore we also adopt recommendations from the Report. The first recommendations focused specifically on the CEDAW: to ensure consequent observance of Articles 5 and 10 and include information about CEDAW into human rights education at all levels of schools.

**# Consequent, non-formalistic, and concrete steps aiming at implementation of the EU policy and international human rights commitments.**

**# Strengthening of the social status of the teaching profession in a gender-sensitive and equitable manner.**

Creation of the Institutional Background and Tools:

- Strengthening and development of the cross-sectoral dimension of the existing Department of Gender Equality and Equality of Opportunity at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs or creation of a new body with a cross-sectoral purview and institutional support of the gender agenda also in cooperation of the Government Council for Gender Equality and its committees (development of possibilities of evaluation and monitoring e.g., through gender audit).
- Creation and strengthening of mechanisms of gender mainstreaming in schooling and education and monitoring of their implementation.
- Creation of the Department of Gender Equality at the Ministry of Education SR.
- Support to cooperation between and among public administration bodies and state institutions (e.g. the State Institute of Pedagogy, Methodical Centers, Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education) in the area of gender sensitive education and gender equality in general and NGOs on the basis of partnership i.e. also with financial participation of NGOs.

Creation of Content:

- Exploration of possibilities of introduction of the concrete gender equality and gender sensitivity dimension to existing and planned official documents.
- Gradual (top-down) introduction of gender sensitive language in official documents and working materials; creation of basic rules and recommendations of its usage. The presence of gender sensitive language contributes to visibility of gender issues.
- Support to and development of gender research in general and gender analyses of education in particular (e.g. the analysis of particular steps of implementation of the reform from the gender perspective, analyses of curricula, textbooks and the like).
- Support to publication and dissemination of study literature and materials on gender sensitive education; support to various forms of promotion of gender sensitive education.<sup>26</sup>
- Support to creation of gender sensitive teaching methods for working with textbook and other teaching aids that are often marked by gender asymmetry and stereotypes.
- Inclusion of information about contribution of women to science, art, culture and human history into curricula in such way that this information would be an integral part of education as a whole and not just its “separate” chapter.
- Inclusion of gender sensitive pedagogy into curricula at teachers colleges and overall improvement of the quality of both undergraduate and graduate education at these colleges.
- Inclusion of gender sensitive pedagogy into further education of teachers in the form of a long-term education, not just short-term measures.

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<sup>26</sup> For instance, parts of the project pinkandblueworld.sk are on a web portal or gender sensitive theater productions for children and grown-ups.

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Complete list of references is added to the Slovak version of this study.

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