

**HOW CAN QUALITY AND EVALUATION
CULTURE CONTRIBUTE
TO THE EQUITY OF PUPILS' ACHIEVEMENTS?**

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1 Introduction

Education plays an important role in every person's development. Its benefits are reaped during adulthood in the form of economic (higher income) and non-economic (better health, longer life expectancy) benefits. At the same time, positive socio-economic effects exist, e.g. relationships to economic growth, unemployment, crime rate, etc. Therefore, people who experience educational failure represent high costs for social and economic mechanisms like health care, child support and the social security system. Even the European Commission and the consultation paper on Europe's Social Reality point out that education and training policies can have a positive impact on economic and social outcomes, but that inequities in education and training have huge hidden costs (Šola za 21. stoletje 2007, 7).

In this paper, we are going to present the differences in educational achievements by region in two subjects according to the national assessment of knowledge that is held at the end of the primary education in Slovenia and we will make comparison to some other general characteristic of the region. We will also consider some of the reasons for the origin of these differences between the regions and ways of diminishing them. In the process, we deal with the fact that these differences or inequalities can be solved at the system level if we discuss the national or school levels, which we believe are far more efficient and qualitative. A similar opinion is expressed by Fend (1980, according to Medveš 2002, 28) who thinks that projects that tried to eliminate the hierarchical nature of the school system failed because the changes were introduced only on the global system level and did not include the schools' inner reorganisation.

Consequently, we see one of the options for improvement in self-evaluation, which will be further encouraged by means of the project received by our institution. Since the goal of self-evaluation, as seen through this project, ensures quality in schools while emphasising every schools' specifics and searching for our own answers on how to eliminate the schools' weaknesses, we believe that with the help of self-evaluation it would be easier for schools to establish their own identity, adjust to the regional features and offer children an adapted process. At the same time, we wish to encourage teachers not to wait for a solution provided by the state, but to try to use different data (national data, National Assessment of Knowledge [NAK], international data, etc.) with regard to self-evaluation and to try to harmonise these findings with users' needs and the region they work in. In addition, we will try to warn the participants in the project that results are not the only thing that matters.

2 Teachers between equality and pupils' achievements

The International Commission on Education which operates under UNESCO has pointed out that education in the 21st century should be based upon four pillars (Delors 1996): Learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. The same Commission established that quality primary education is the basis for lifelong learning. Quality education can ensure peace, freedom and social justice; therefore, the mission of schools is to enable the development of talents and creativity. European Union Member States and OECD share two hypotheses which have been confirmed by several studies. The first hypothesis talks about the quality of teachers and their professional development, which represent the foundation for ensuring equal opportunities for pupils and other participants in the educational process. The second hypothesis talks about how the quality of teachers' work means better results for pupils. The Delors Commission points out that especially for people who do not master the learning and thinking process, the presence of a teacher remains indispensable.

Such a view on the importance of teachers' work hardly needs much proof. It has been established many times before that no reform can ever be successful if it is not supported by teachers, who are the providers of the educational process. Any possible change prescribed by the schools' authorities cannot function in reality until teachers become aware of it and accept it as a challenge and an opportunity to improve their work and their pupils' achievements.

On the one hand, changes cannot be successful without teachers' efforts. On the other hand, we are facing the fact that exactly "school reforms are the favourite aspiration for a better society – partly because they do not require a lot of funds, because they do not demand anything from the rich and privileged, and because at the level of rhetorical ideological promises, they guarantee success since they exploit the people's 200-year-old belief that life can be improved by means of a better school system" (Milharčič-Hladnik 2003, 57). Often, we are trying to solve rising social inequality by introducing reforms and measures of the education system which ultimately represents only one part of the society and as such reflects the conditions within this society together with all the prevailing social processes. Bourdieu (2001) understands education as a model of social reproduction, where the success of democratic school projects within the socially differentiated society is not possible. According to him, the only one benefitting from every school reform intended to improve the educational possibilities of children from the lowest stratum of society, are children from the upper strata of society. This opinion is also shared by Ernev (Gaber 2006, 123), who thinks that "the feature or misfortune of every education system is that it will reproduce unequal social patterns and relations for so long as long as the society, whose part it represents, does the same".

2.1 Paradoxical role of teachers

A detailed review of the implementation of equity in education reveals several paradoxes. It is paradoxical that, in spite of the findings of several studies conducted in different countries that confirm the utmost importance of a good and motivated teacher in order for children to achieve a good educational success, schools' policies consistently try to avoid raising the reputation as well as the social and financial standing of their teachers (Milharčič-Hladnik 2003). Schools' authorities do not show any particular concern for the improvement of the situation of the people employed by the educational institutions. Therefore, the policy makers statements like "whether reforms are successful or not depends on the teachers" teacher find as a direct contradiction of their professional competence, an attack on their autonomy, and last but not least, as a search for a scapegoat to justify the countries' badly planned and unprofessionally managed system reforms in education.

The next paradox is the fact that teachers attribute good grades of underprivileged pupils to several factors that they themselves cannot influence. According to them, the most important factors are pupils' general motivation, their motivation to do their homework, and family relations. The empirical research implemented in Slovenia (Peček, Lesar 2006) with the goal of establishing teachers' viewpoints on girls and boys, Roma children, children of immigrants, children with special needs, and children from poor and rich families, showed that teachers do not feel responsible for the pupils' educational success. They see the causes for success in school to be in learning rather than as a result of teaching. The same results have been obtained in a study conducted in Hungary (Hegedüs and Forrai in Peček, Lesar 2006). The study pointed out that most teachers do not hold the school responsible for failure. Furthermore, they think that schools are powerless when working with children from lower-class socio-cultural environments.

The discrepancy between the rights determined by principles and declared rights that can be found in all documents representing the strategic directions of Slovenian schools, which are also known to the teachers who publicly declare for equal opportunities in schools, while supporting equal results of all pupils in any concrete situation, also points to another paradox with regard to equity in schools. As an example, we will mention children of immigrants or minority members whose culture and language are different, but are only able to develop them within their own families or communities. Such individuals are underprivileged for two reasons: first as a group, which experiences difficulties when integrating into a school due to the cultural and language differences, and second as members of families who live in less favourable family and socio-economic environments. Regardless of their intellectual abilities, the language and cultural differences cause difficulties in class since they have problems understanding the lectures due to a language that is much less understandable for them. Such a situation points out the inconsistency in providing for multicultural environments, and the lack of knowledge about the influence of two cultures on school achievement. Teachers claim that the presence of such children increases the feeling of solidarity and the awareness of differences in the classroom. They think that such children are equally capable as the rest of the children, and that their parents put just as much effort in their school achievements as other parents do and emphasise that they expect the same results from their children as achieved by their peers who are familiar with the culture and understand the language in which the classes are held.

The research among Slovenian teachers showed that teachers demand the same from children with poor parents as they do from the rest and see them as equally capable as their classmates who come from families with better socio-economic status. It is interesting that teachers do not feel responsible for the integration of such children into groups or classes. Besides the poor pupils themselves, teachers also stated other pupils' and their parents' behaviour towards them as factors important for their integration into classes. Several things depend on the social integration of pupils into classes: the extent to which the pupils will be able to develop into tolerant and sympathetic people; active involvement in congruent physical, psychological and social development; preparation for quality life; and independent, creative and critical thinking. Students in a class represent a social environment where the socialising function is carried out and where the optimal conditions for achieving learning efficiency are created. Therefore, since the child's social development depends on the quality of social interaction, teachers are responsible for creating a classroom environment which favours different pupils and where everybody feels welcome.

Another paradox is the non-conformity of the legally formal level which ensures the integration of unequal individuals into the public school system, where the reality is that the principle of equal opportunities exists only on the level of integration, and not of inclusion. While integration means integration of children with special needs into schools' regular class, inclusion represents a process which aims at every child's needs, with special emphasis on those who are underprivileged and exposed to banishment. Inclusion means the reduction of all banishment consequences experienced by pupils who are different than the rest due to any kind of development, sex-related, or socio-economic status problems, to racial, national, language or religious background, as well as child prodigies. Inclusion represents a process in accordance with the needs of every individual where all the procedures are directed towards achieving the set educational and pedagogical goals.

If, for the purposes of an equality-in-education discussion, we look at the interpretation of the PISA results (Program for International Student Assessment), which shows important differences between pupils from the privileged social class, who achieve the best results, and pupils from families from the lower stratum of society, who achieve the worst results (Van Zanten, Duru-Bellat and Suchaut in Peček, Lesar 2006), we can observe the third paradox. As long as numerous researches (Tolčič and Zorman 1977, Makarovič 1984, Razdevšek – Pučko et al 2002) confirm the fact, which has already been confirmed several times in the past, that

school achievement is related to the socio-economic status of pupils and that pupils from socially and economically less developed families represent marginal or underprivileged groups that achieve bad results in school due to the factors they have no influence on, the teachers cannot get rid of the feeling that a fair teacher is the one who treats all the children equally. Some teachers even point out that they do not ask about their pupils' socio-economic status, and that they are not interested in their pupils' living arrangements. They even regard this as proof of their ethical and honest behaviour. We assume that such a view is a consequence of thinking about righteousness when grading. Teachers approach numerical or descriptive grading in a very responsible way. They want to be as impartial and objective as possible, which is also why they are convinced that knowing the family situation could lead to reduced objectivity and unfairness. Peček's and Lesar's (2006) research pointed out that teachers show a low degree of sensibility with regard to obvious differences among pupils and that a belief is present that different pupils only need the same learning conditions. In the case of pupils with special needs and pupils of immigrant families, teachers are faced with a dilemma whether they are obliged to provide the unequal students with the same or different treatment.

The above-mentioned paradoxical role of teachers shows the importance of awareness about the forms of inequality and different views and measures taken with regard to it among teachers and within schools. Since the views about inequality and righteousness in schools are also a matter of personal psychological models that represent our ideas about the real world, the views are also different and the discussion among teachers in school about the subject that much more personal.

2.2 National assessment of knowledge in Slovenia

Among other methods, schools' policies are dealing with the occurrence of different results and achievements by introducing standardised tests and external assessments of knowledge. Such measures promote learning for tests or short-term goals that represents every teacher's basis with regard to the content and way of teaching. Due to the results of the external assessment of knowledge, teachers and pupils are under stress. Therefore, in the long term, such measures do not minimise, but increase the inequality and discrimination against the underprivileged individuals and groups. At the same time, they also force the uniformity of lessons.

On the other hand, measurements and mutual comparison of educational achievements also led to some positive effects, like enhanced possibilities of measuring and comparing the educational goals, transparency of requests and standards, development of forms and methods for assessing and marking knowledge and, finally, the comparison of learning results.

With regard to this comparison, which is promoted by the national and international knowledge assessments, a system is being searched for that would enable good results of all pupils. Nevertheless, we must pay attention to the processes that are carried out in the background but that still have a profound effect on the achievements. We cannot ignore the national tests, but learning for tests only gives short-term results of what a student knows at the moment. Tests never measure all-important knowledge, capacities, abilities, or skills. When we talk about a student's achievement, we must think about learning for life, and not only about knowledge for the tests or the current situation. The school's mission is to teach pupils and students how to get knowledge that they will be able to apply and use in different and new situations. Schools need to prepare students to be able to take part in real life. On the other hand, the main function of schools is to disseminate social norms and values. Their duty is to be a bridge between individuals and society.

In Slovenia, we have a **national assessment of knowledge (NAK)** which is an external written examination of pupils' knowledge in elementary school at the end of the second and third Periods. Pupils from Year 6 (aged 11 and 12) apply of their own accord. At the end of the third Period, NAK is obligatory for pupils from Year 9 (aged 14 and 15) and adults involved in elementary school education. Pupils carry out the NAK at the school where they are enrolled (Elementary School Act, Article 64). Our paper will discuss the NAKs carried out at the end of elementary school.

The implementation of NAK guarantees all pupils equal opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge because the knowledge assessment of all pupils is carried out under the same conditions and at the same time across Slovenia. The goal of NAK is to gain additional data on the pupils' knowledge in order to:

- Contribute to better quality of learning, teaching and knowledge
- Help efficiently and promptly monitor the quality of curricula
- Provide for equal educational opportunities to all students
- Contribute to a more unified criteria of knowledge assessment carried out by teachers

- Help pupils develop the ability to critically assess their own achievements (Izhodišča NPZ 2005)

The principles of NAK are also important from the point of view of clarity, usefulness for pupils, objectivity and reliability as well as validity, sensitivity and some other principles like engaging all users in the process. It is important to state that one of the use of NAK is to monitor the standards as written down in the curricula.

NAK is held at the end of the third Period. Pupils take tests in three subjects:

- Slovenian, Hungarian or Italian language
- Mathematics
- Third optional subject

The third subject is determined annually by the Minister. He/She chooses not more than four subjects that will be used as NAK subjects for the current year, and then later on decides which subject will be used as the third subject at an individual elementary school. In such a way, the principles of NAK are endeavoured to be fulfilled and the amount of learning during the pedagogical process needed for the tests reduced.

3 Results of NAKs according to regions and the correlation with other factors

There are several factors influencing pupils' achievements in elementary school. Among them, we can distinguish factors that are related to the pupils themselves (sex, age), factors that are related to their social environment (socio-economic status, parents' education) and factors related to the pupils' learning environment (social factors, education system).

In spite of our awareness of the high number of factors, as well as the fact that some factors can be influenced and others not, we have decided to connect the NAK results, with regard to the regions, primarily with socio-economic factors, i.e. factors that we have no or little influence on. We wanted to establish whether there is a connection between some of the general data about the development of an individual Slovenian region and pupils' NAK results in mathematics and Slovenian language in that region. Even though it would be useful to explore some other factors and determine their influence, this was not the purpose of this paper.

Statistically, Slovenia is divided into 12 regions. We rang the regions from 1 to 12 and chose five regions for our review according to the following scale:

- Two regions with the highest GDP per capita during the last three years (central Slovenia (1), the Littoral-Karst region (2))
- Three regions with the lowest GDP per capita during the last three years (Inner Carniola-Karst region (10), the Sava Valley region (11), the Mura Valley region (12))

With regard to the regions, we examined the following data for the last three years:

- Distribution of NAK achievements in Slovenian language; third Period
- Distribution of NAK achievements in mathematics; third Period
- Educational structure according to regions (no education, incomplete elementary school, elementary school / post-secondary or higher education)
- Share of children in kindergarten among children aged 1 to 5 (%)
- Share of students among the population aged 19 to 26 (%)
- GDP per capita in the region
- Official unemployment rate (%)
- Persons receiving pecuniary social assistance per 1,000 people

We were looking for correlations between NAK achievements with regard to regions and other data that we collected. This enabled us to determine that the best and the last region in 2008 and 2006 with regard to NAK achievements in the Slovenian language and mathematics took the same position when considering the GDP per capita in those two regions. There are no such parallels when considering the rest of the regions or the year 2007. This allows us to come to a conclusion that good social status (GDP), higher education of parents (educational structure), good educational infrastructure (kindergartens, schools, near-by faculties) and other development possibilities (purchase of books, didactic games, internet access, etc.) have a positive effect on the pupils' NAK achievements in Slovenia.

If we compare results in the Slovenian language and mathematics in both marginal regions – the best, central Slovenian region, and the last, the Mura Valley region – with the data that we gathered, we find out that the general features of the region, e.g. GDP per capita in the region, the educational structure, the share of students among the inhabitants, and the persons receiving pecuniary social assistance, are in accordance with the position that the students

from this region take with regard to the NAK. Nevertheless, it is interesting that the share of children aged 1 to 5 in kindergarten in the Mura Valley region is 67.5%. In comparison with other regions, the Mura Valley region takes third place, but early inclusion in the pre-school education is not reflected in the achievements. The assumption that pre-school education has no direct influence on the pupils' achievements at the later stage of the educational process would be interesting for further research.

On the one hand, there are clear correlations between the best and the last regions considering NAK achievements and some of the general regional features, while on the other hand, there are no real correlations between the other regions. With regard to NAK achievements in both subjects during all three years, e.g. the second best region according to the GDP, the Littoral-Karst region, takes only 8th place. Other regional features, e.g. education, official unemployment rate, share of children in kindergarten, share of students among the inhabitants and persons receiving the pecuniary social assistance take places from 1st to 5th when compared with other regions. Nevertheless, this cannot be observed in better NAK results in both subjects.

If we look at the penultimate region according to GDP per capita, the Sava Valley region, we find out that with regard to NAK achievements in both subjects during all three years, the region takes almost 6th place on average, which is even better than the region mentioned before. Other general regional features like educational structure, unemployment rate, share of kindergarten children, share of students among the residents and persons receiving pecuniary social assistance are, in principle, in line with the place that the region took with regard to GDP.

The graphs showing comparison in all five chosen regions is the appendix.

The comparison shows that with the exception of the two marginal regions (the best and the last), we cannot draw any overall conclusions since they are different with regard to our expectations. We assumed that pupils' NAK results in regions with best overall features would be great. Nevertheless, it turned out that learning factors are more complex and that any generalisation requires a much more extensive research encompassing several different views when searching for correlations.

If we analyse only pupils' NAK achievements in the Slovenian language, we see that the best region reached 64.7%, while the last, 58.1%. This means that the difference is 6.6% which, at

the national level, is not an excessive difference. This is a good starting point to consider the idea that with a unified elementary school, we accomplish the same possibilities as well as trying to achieve the same results. However, the difference between the best and the last regions with regard to results achieved in mathematics is 12.3%, which is twice as much. The difference is worth thinking about it. At the same time, it promotes a research study that would lead to conclusions about the causes for such a difference and, on the basis of the results, suggest possible measures that would minimise the differences.

According to Medveš (2002, 35), the ethical considerations with regard to fairness in schools lead to a conclusion that there is nothing wrong if different pupils are treated differently in order for them to be able reach the success standards that are set equally for everybody in order to exercise the right to education set by the education system. Therefore, every school must first recognise the differences that occur in pupils and, according to these differences, draft a plan of how to work with the pupils, since all the comparisons lead us to the conclusion that bad overall development of a region also negatively influences the NAK results, while good overall development does not positively influence them.

On the one hand, the comparison of collected data pointed out the complexity of the influences on pupils' achievements, and on the other hand – considering certain segments – it drew our attention to individual local or regional areas that schools are able to identify and thus try to improve or compensate for pupils by using various approaches to work. Therefore, the school takes the responsibility for every pupils' success or the quality of its work.

3.1 What have we found out?

The problem of different levels of achievement between pupils in different regions in our country is not rare. We know that every country has some economically, culturally and socially underdeveloped regions. The question is not whether the data about underdeveloped regions is right or which part of Slovenia is the most diverse. The problem is not related only to pupils from less developed regions or families with low living standards. Here, we talk about the lower results of pupils from a less developed region only for the purpose of pointing out that differences which are not a consequence of a lower intellectual ability on a pupil's reduced interest may have long-term consequences when an individual tries to find his place in the labour market.

We did not compare pupils' results achieved in the national knowledge assessments with regard to regions and their general statistical development in order to find strong evidence that would confirm which region in Slovenia is the most and which is the least developed. The NAK results according to years, subjects and regions were published and are available to everybody. We have only used it as an illustration of differences occurring over and over again if we measure the achievements of different pupils in the same way and if equity means equality of results.

The question that we find important is who is really responsible for the results of the educational process, learning results and pupils' achievements?

What can we define as pupil's achievement? Can the state navigate through the educational policy to ensure a long-term system where all groups and individuals will be ensured fairness and equal opportunities? Do we possess enough knowledge and time to integrate into the system the corrective elements that will eliminate the mistakes which prevent the full implementation of the principles of equality, equal opportunities, differentiation and social inclusion? Can we expect that the development of democracy and the increased awareness of society for the rights of individuals will enable equal opportunities and the right to be different to establish themselves on their own? Can we assume that due to the wide range of educational services, the equality of opportunities has improved?

In order to provide a good answer to all these questions, we first need to unify and explain the understanding of certain ideas that are important for the understanding of the problem and finding a solution.

A just and inclusive system available to everybody represents an important lever for establishing social equity. The OECD (Ten steps 2008, 2) mentions two dimensions of equity in education: Equity, which means that everybody has an opportunity to reach his/her educational potential regardless of their personal or social characteristics like gender, socio-economic status or ethnic background, and inclusion, which in this case means ensuring the minimum educational standard to everybody, e.g. to give everybody the opportunity to read, write and basic mathematical knowledge. These two dimensions are similar to the Rawls' understanding of equity as deontological value which comprises of two principles:

- First principle: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others.

- Second principle: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to be of the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society (Rawls after Medveš 2002, 33).

Based on both principles is one of the founding theses of the contemporary view on equity in schools, which can only be understood in such a way that everybody has the right to quality knowledge and conditions for development.

Therefore, two levels of equity are present in the school field: Equity at the level of opportunity, and righteousness with regard to care and responsibility of schools to achieve results that enable the implementation of both possibilities. This is the starting point of the new paradigm of equity that arises from the principle that everybody has the right to quality knowledge and development (Medveš 2002, 33). To promote such a new paradigm, several conditions must be met. In this paper, we are going to focus on the quality of schools and self-evaluation.

Schools are responsible for equality assurance. Now, the question is how can schools realise their role and mission? If we link this with another school responsibility, e.g. the responsibility for quality assurance, then we are talking about evaluation culture in the school. We see the system of seeking out and assuring the quality which enables schools their own quality evaluation as an opportunity for schools and their teachers to assure a qualitative approach to every individual pupil and, in such a way, accomplish the equality of opportunities. We see self-evaluation as an activity that is carried out on a daily basis at every school. If we look at the schools in an individual country, we can find that there are no significant differences because teachers are using national teaching programs and traditional instruction methods like, books, worksheets and lectures. Nevertheless, we can see a big difference in the level of expectations of all pupils and the willingness to help individual pupils. Professionally responsible teachers that are focused on their pupils' benefits do not immediately see the reasons for bad results in the lack of motivation, bad homework assignments or lack of parent support, but try to change their approach to pupils with the goal of stimulating more successful learning processes.

We see the culture of self-evaluation and the evaluation of your own work as an opportunity to develop the employees' responsibility, partner relations between schools, teachers and parents, and relations between parents and children. If we want to know how successful we

are at a particular school and how do the pupils perceive us, we have to ask for their opinion. We also have to monitor a number of other sources that can help us to evaluate our own work and plan improvements for every individual pupil. A comparison of teachers' viewpoints and evaluations with the evaluations of pupils, their parents and the environment can significantly assist in determining which goals have already been achieved and in which things teachers can still improve their work and approaches. Finding out the quality of the most important processes planned by the school and then carried out to achieve the program goals and fulfil the expectations of participants, as well as determining the relation between teachers, schools and pupils, must become regular practice at our schools. The determined deviation from the desired state or discovering problematic situations will enable us to plan more qualitative school activities and enable the development planning of quality assurance. We see the self-evaluation in schools as a tool for providing quality education-related work with the goals of improving the results, the feeling of acceptance and the well-being of pupils. In the teachers' staff room, the self-evaluation processes encourage expert discussions about learning, the methods of teaching and individual needs of pupils, as well as pursuing equal opportunities and inclusion.

During the self-evaluation process that we all strive for, schools will first determine the most important processes, and then determine the goals and standards that they will monitor.

At the beginning, the teachers must ask themselves "What can I do better for my student? What do I want to achieve? How far from their goals are my students? What kind of students do I teach this year, in this classroom, in this region? What do I need for the implementation of our goals? What is my input? What do I need to do to improve the starting position of my students?"

Students from undeveloped regions, poor or deprived students, students with learning or behavioral problems or disorderly students need more and a different type of moral support than others. They need extra help, additional lessons, a chance to use computers or books, encyclopedias, and/or extra curriculum. When teachers plan lessons or meetings with their parents or when they plan excursions or daily activities, they must answer the following questions: "What do I have to do to achieve the goals, what resources do I have, what do I know about my students and what do I need to know about them, how good and successful was I the last time? Why something did not work as good as it should? What do I need to improve? What will I do and how will I control my achievements? How can I improve my students? About which his or her experience I need to know more and how to involve these in learning process?"

The answers are very important for the quality of the learning process.

The project, which is funded by the European Social Fund and which was acquired by the National School for Leadership in Education, together with some other educational institutions and experts, has the goal of developing a nationwide system of assessing and assuring quality with regard to the education system in the Republic of Slovenia. In the framework of the project, we will define the quality of the upbringing and educational philosophy, and the relation between the internal and external evaluations. Most of all, we will try to influence the development of the self-evaluation culture within the framework of possibilities that schools and teachers have available for improving the quality of their own work.

We believe that internal self-evaluation means that schools and teachers can implement the process of assessment by themselves. This process must be supported by the process of permanent improvement. Self-evaluation is focused on the learning process and not only on effectiveness. It is the tool for managing all processes and, specifically, the learning process. Self-evaluation is an additional process for other external evaluations or other examinations. Self-evaluation helps solving problems at school.

Schools choose indicators to pursue different needs of different students in order to achieve equal opportunities for all students. Evolving quality and evaluation culture in schools is not easy. Public school organisations often blame the educators for bad results or for bad student achievement. Therefore, some teachers understand evaluation as external control of their academic capacities and teaching skills. They can recognise the national quality system as measuring the outcomes of students' and pupils' achievements, but they know that they haven't got the same input. Therefore, teachers can be strong opponents of involved indicators and standards of educational service. This would happen if the state includes a national quality system with the purpose of ranking schools and their head teachers. If schools have to compete to raise funds or for other state support, they may use the quality system to prove how good they are. If teachers use self-evaluation to improve themselves, they will develop the quality of their teaching process and provide equal opportunities regardless of diversity.

4 Conclusion

We do not understand equity in the sense of equal individuals or the same approaches to everybody primarily because inequity and injustice are created with the same approach to different individuals. The society's interest is not to create a perfect equality of individuals, but to create conditions where diversity means variety and quality. We strive for equity of different individuals. In particular, schools must ensure every individual the right to choose diversity. In school, we must enable different individuals to gain knowledge and develop skills in a way that suits them. When different individuals are treated the same in school, equity changes to discrimination. This means that schools must plan and carry out different forms and methods of work, implement remedial activities, adjust the organisation of lessons, create additional programs and plan the education processes in such a way that individual pupils can achieve as much as possible.

The schools' equity can be observed in the processes and activities that are equally available to everybody or in whether teachers are capable enough to independently and professionally justify the use of various methods and approaches to individuals because, in such a way, they enable the development of their potential.

Equal opportunities in education are understood as the right of an individual to be different and the right to put forward and develop concrete potential that is useful for an individual or for the society whose part he represents. The principle of equal opportunities is also the responsibility of society and its institutions towards their individuals so that they can achieve certain social positions that are not just formally accessible, but also in reality.

Results of the learning process are not observed merely as an educational success, but also as the moral, emotional and social development of an individual. Educational processes must always look for a balance between the educational achievements, knowledge results and competence formation that enables an individual to establish himself in the society and to be capable of planning his personal and professional development. We believe that the reforms of the school system that are based on standards or results are not always successful and that, quite often, they cause unexpected consequences and new social inequalities.

The overall situation must be addressed on four levels: National level, school level, teachers' level, and individual student-pupil level. Even though we are aware of that, we primarily dealt with the teacher level. Every level has different activities and solutions. Every level has the responsibility and duty to make improvements. But we cannot expect improvements unless all levels work together.

Teachers are responsible for their professional development. Professional decisions must be made independently, with a great deal of responsibility and with expert arguments. Teachers must constantly monitor and reflect on their work and bear in mind all their prejudices against any group or individual in school. Along with the expert knowledge, a teacher's personality is one of the most important factors in establishing an individual approach to pupils and really providing for equal opportunities for all pupils, regardless of their gender, socio-economic status of their family or their guardian, national or religious background, or lower intellectual or physical abilities. Therefore, we believe that a teacher must be aware of the importance of the classroom structure, the social status and classroom climate, he must be sensible with regard to pupils' well-being and their physical condition, health or psychological state.

However, we do not wish to reduce the pupils' role since they are just as responsible for their success and development as their teachers. They cooperate according to their abilities and the level of their understanding with regard to individual development programs. In some cases, it is the responsibility of the students with learning and discipline problems to participate in organised programs and attend school.

At the end, the questions of how to really ensure equity and equal opportunities of pupils in school still remain open. How to assure an actual, and not only formal, equity of pupils with unequal starting points? How to achieve that important human capital is not lost in society just because we evaluate pupils' achievements in a restricted way? We believe that every individual can participate in society according to his best abilities if he is enabled to recognise his potentials and interests and develop them in the way that best suits just him.

5 References

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6 Appendix

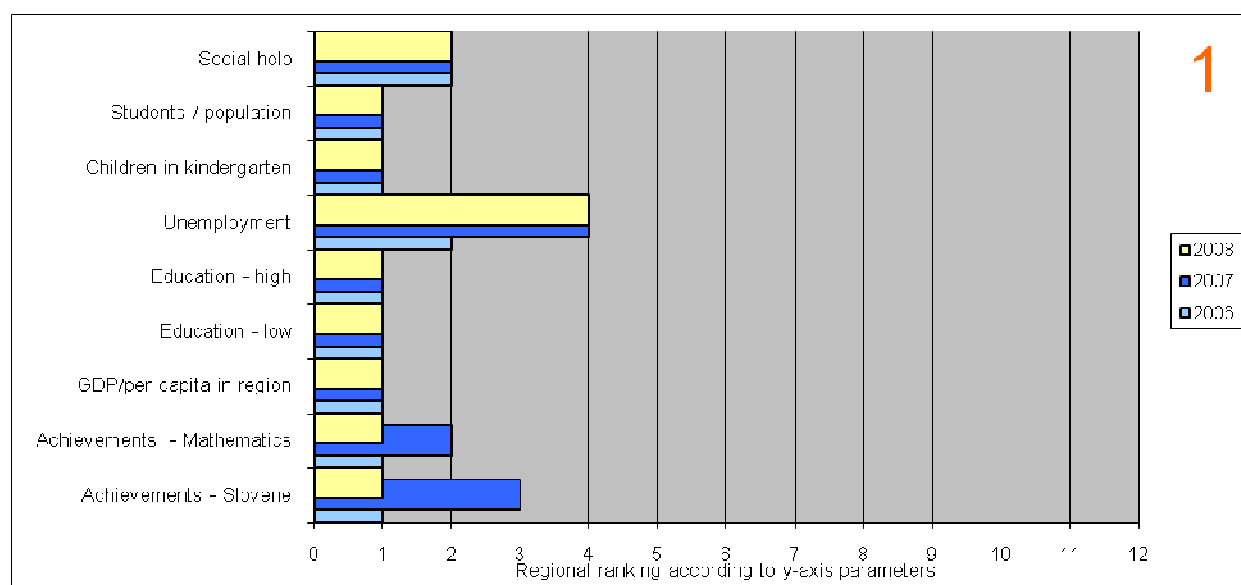
Statistically, Slovenia is divided into 12 regions. We rang the regions from 1 to 12 and chose five regions for our review according to the following scale:

- Two regions with the highest GDP per capita during the last three years (Central Slovenia (1), the Littoral-Karst region (2))
- Three regions with the lowest GDP per capita during the last three years (Inner Carniola-Karst region (10), the Sava Valley region (11), the Mura Valley region (12)).

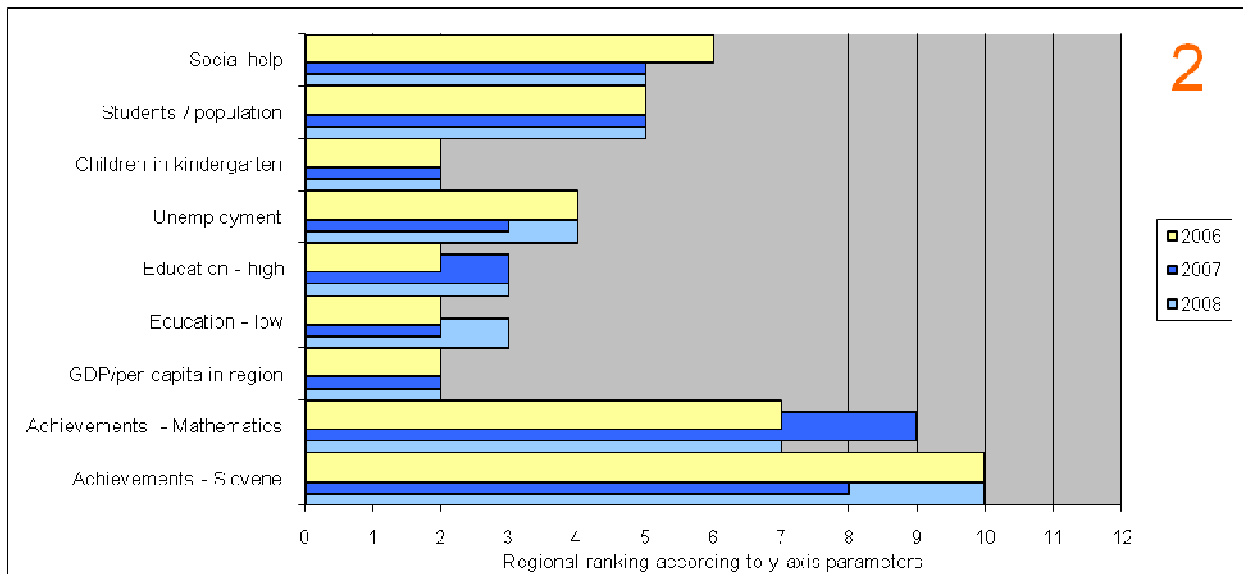
The table represents the numbers that indicates the regional ranking by GDP per capita in region in Slovenia in 2008.

Number	GDP	Region
1	144,3	Central Slovenia
2	103,5	Littoral-Karst region
10	74,5	Inner Carniola-Karst region
11	70,6	Sava Valley region
12	66,6	Mura Valley region

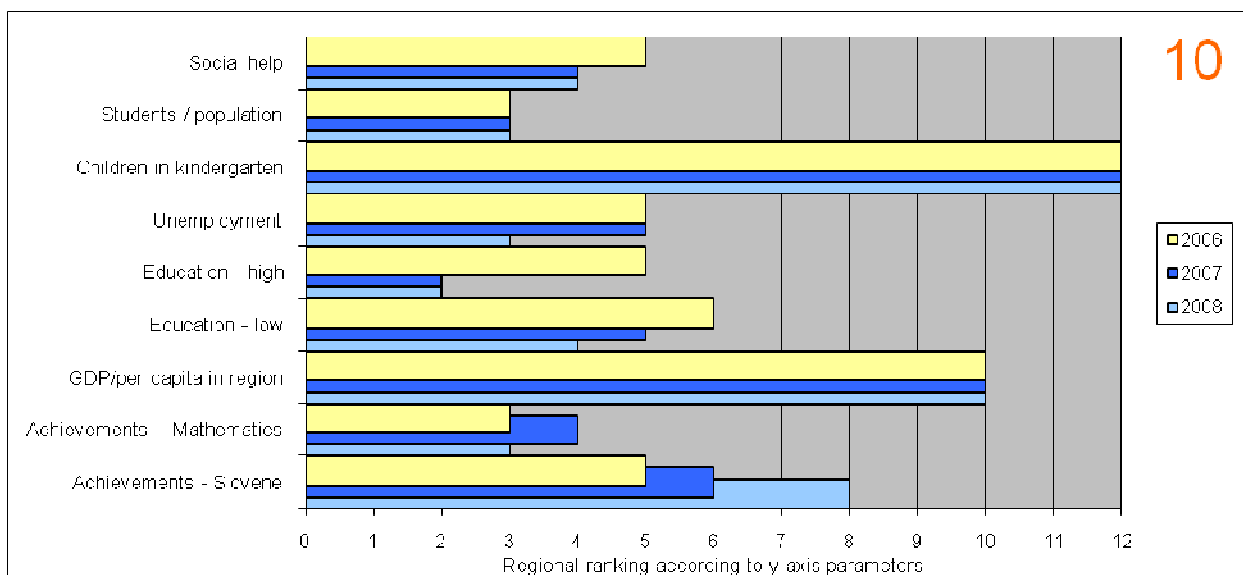
Graph 1: Regional ranking according to y-axis parameters in Central Slovenia, 2006-08



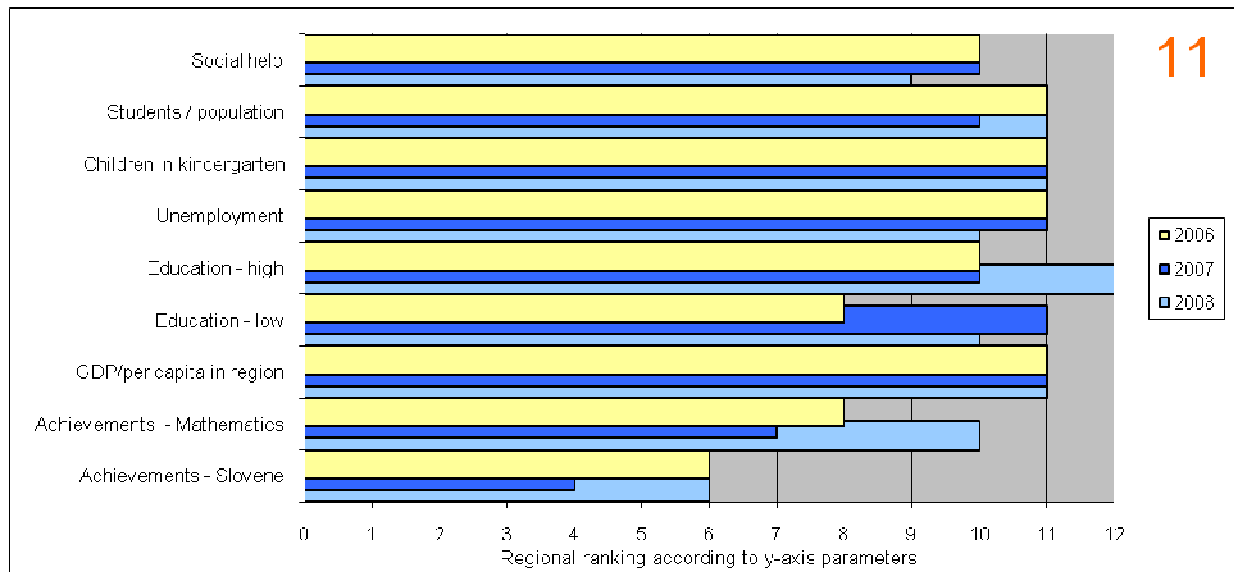
Graph 2: Regional ranking according to y-axis parameters in Littoral-Karst region, 2006-08



Graph 3: Regional ranking according to y-axis parameters in Inner Carniola-Karst region, 2006-08



Graph 4: Regional ranking according to y-axis parameters in Sava Valley region, 2006-08



Graph 5: Regional ranking according to y-axis parameters in Mura Valley region, 2006-08

