

## Preparing teachers for human rights education

### Case study

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This case study is a result of the project "A More Human Approach to Human Rights Education in Slovakia", in the framework of which the research team analysed the issues of preparing teachers for human rights education in comparison with the situation in Norway, where this issue has a much longer tradition. The differences between the two countries were highlighted in an analysis by E. Gallová Kriglerová and M. Píšová (2022). For the purposes of this study, we highlight a few strong findings:

- "Norwegian pupils are exposed to human rights much earlier than Slovak pupils" (p. 35)
- "...in Norway we encounter much more of their plurality in the field of human rights. While in Slovakia, human rights education is rather limited to memorising the names of documents or individual rights" (p. 35).
- "Learning there also focuses more on practical skills, project work, argumentation and critical thinking or empathy" (p. 35) .
- "In Norway, attention is paid to topics that are still taboo in our schools and, if they are not described in the curriculum, teachers do not know how to deal with them or do not want to deal with them" (p. 35).
- "In Slovakia, human right are being taught within the school subjects, such as civic education, in Norway they are more embedded in the curriculum as a whole" (p. 38)

The reasons for the observed situation are very complex. However, the level of teacher preparedness is also a significant contributing factor. In 2016, a roundtable of experts discussed this issue and noted several major obstacles on the part of teachers and their preparation (Vančíková, 2016):

1. Slovak teachers do not demonstrate the ability to work with the framework educational programmes. They demand manuals, assignments, precise instructions. As a result, they fail to grasp the implicit content of human rights education and to integrate cross-cutting issues into their subjects. They see the content of their subjects as the primary objectives of their presence in schools.
2. A transmissive way of teaching prevails in schools. This statement is supported by the results of the extensive research of the Learning Makes Sense initiative, according to which rather passive forms of learning prevail in our schools (Fridrichová, 2019).
3. Discipline prevails in our schools. Teachers predominantly use forms of work that do not allow for democratic classroom life.
4. University students do not gain the necessary insight and perspective and therefore turn out to be "subject teachers" who cannot implement cross-cutting issues.
5. The pedagogical-psychological and didactic component in teacher training is significantly underdeveloped (Turek 2001; Černotová and Vincejová 2009; Miškolci 2019, Vančíková, Basarabová, 2022). Teacher education students learn mainly the content and methods of

particular disciplines and not what they will actually need as teachers in real practice (Porubský 2010).

6. The two-tier structure of teacher education has reinforced the tendency to undermine teaching practice. In the first three years of their studies, students hardly experience school reality (Miškolci, 2019).
7. The system does not motivate university teachers to develop their pedagogical competences. The emphasis is mainly on the quantity of publications (see also Miškolci, 2019).
8. There is a constant spirit of authority and a strong hierarchy in the environment in which students become teachers.
9. Most students enter teacher education programmes without an admission process to test their aptitude for the profession.

All of the above problems have a direct or indirect impact on how teachers are able to understand and implement human rights education. We have looked at how one particular university is addressing these issues. Without claiming to be exhaustive, we present our findings on the preparation of teachers for human rights education at the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (hereafter UMB).

The university is located in the centre of the country and consists of six faculties, three of which offer teacher education programmes. In the academic year 2022/23, 19 teaching programmes were active (Table 1). In 2021, 1,780 male and female students were preparing to become teachers at UMB.

Teacher education at the university is based on cooperation between faculties. The subjects of the teacher education programmes for pre-primary (ISCED 0) and primary (ISCED 1) education are guaranteed and taught by teachers from the Faculty of Education, which also provides the teaching of subjects within the so-called pedagogical-psychological and social-scientific basis for all teacher education programmes focusing on secondary education (ISCED 2 and ISCED 3).

Table 1: Teacher education programmes at the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica

<b>Faculty of Education</b>	
Preschool and Elementary Pedagogy (Teaching for Pre-primary Education)	daily and external form
Teaching for primary education	daily and external form
Teaching Psychology	daily form
<b>Faculty of Arts</b>	
Teacher of Slovak language and literature	daily form
Teaching English language and literature	daily form
Teaching Russian language and literature	daily form
Teaching French language and literature	daily form
Teaching German language and literature	daily form
Teaching Philosophy	daily form
Teaching History	daily form
Physical Education Teacher Training	daily and external form
Physical Education Teaching and Coaching	daily and external form
<b>Faculty of Natural Sciences</b>	
Teaching Mathematics	daily form
Teacher Informatics	daily form
Teaching Techniques	daily form

Teaching Biology	daily form
Teaching Physics	daily form
Teaching Geography	daily form
Teaching Chemistry	daily form

**In the case study, we sought answers to the following questions:**

- Q1: How are the thematic areas of human rights education saturated in the formal curriculum of selected teacher education programmes at UMB?
- Q2: What are the expectations of students of teaching regarding human rights education at the beginning of their studies?
- Q3: What are the expectations of students of teaching in relation to their preparation for the implementation of human rights education?
- Q4: In what ways does pre-service teacher education fail in the area of human rights education?

**Methodology used:**

As indicated in Table 2, we sought answers to the questions posed through qualitative procedures. Three methods were used: 1) content analysis of documents, 2) individual semi-structured interviews, and 3) group semi-structured interviews – focus groups.

Table 2: Methodological procedures and sample

Question	Methods and techniques	Sample
O1	Content analysis of documents	information sheets
O2	Individual semi-structured interview	10 1st year female students
O3	Individual semi-structured interview	10 1st year female students
O4	Semi-structured group interview - focus group	9 primary school teachers from the region

**Q1: How are the thematic areas of human rights education saturated in the formal curriculum of selected teacher education programmes at UMB?**

The presence of topics that are directly or indirectly related to human rights education was measured through a content analysis of the subject information sheets (IS), which are part of the accreditation file and represent an obligation for the teachers. We included teaching subjects within the compulsory and compulsory optional scheme. The information sheet defines (among other things) the learning outcomes in terms of acquired competences (performance standards) and a concise outline of the content of the subject (content standards) (Appendix 1). These parts of the IS were analysed.

The theoretical framework for coding the meanings was the broader concept of human rights education of the team of authors of the KOMPAS (2008) handbook, which consists of several thematic areas: 1) personal and social education; 2) citizenship education; 3) environmental education; 4) legal education; 5) peace education; 6) intercultural and anti-racist education; 7) global education; 8)

development education. Open coding was used not only for explicit but also of latent content. In other words, we indicated the presence of content related to preparing students for human rights education wherever we saw room for content under each of the thematic headings. In doing so, we took into account not only the knowledge, but also the skills and attitudes of future teachers. The results need to be interpreted in the context of the formal curriculum, not the implemented curriculum. That is, our findings do not answer the question of how the declared content of individual subjects is actually implemented in the classroom.

The content analysis focused on the subject information sheets (IS):

- of the Teacher Education for Pre-primary and Primary Education (for ISCED 0 and 1)
- the Study Programme for the Teaching of History (for ISCED 2 and 3)
- the Study Programme for the Teaching of Slovak Language and Literature (for ISCED 2 and 3)

Two criteria have been applied in the selection of programmes: 1) to gain a better understanding of the preparation of teachers who will work at different levels of education (ISCED 0, 1, 2, 3) and 2) to deliberately select programmes that, by their nature, create a greater space for human rights issues. Since UMB does not currently have the legal right to offer a study programme focused on the preparation of teachers of ethics and civic education, we have chosen the teaching of history and the teaching of Slovak language and literature.

Table 3: Number of information sheets analysed and quantitative results

<b>Study programme/ part</b>	<b>Number of analysed IS</b>	<b>Number of IS with identified HR content</b>	<b>Proportion of IS with identified HR content</b>
Teaching for pre-primary and primary education (ISCED 0 and 1)	74	22	30%
Teaching History (ISCED 2 and 3)	84	26	31%
Teaching Slovak Language and Literature (ISCED 2 and 3)	106	13	12%
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>264</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>23%</b>

\* 18 IS of pedagogical-psychological and social-scientific basis are included among the Study Programmes of Teaching History and Teaching Slovak Language and Literature.

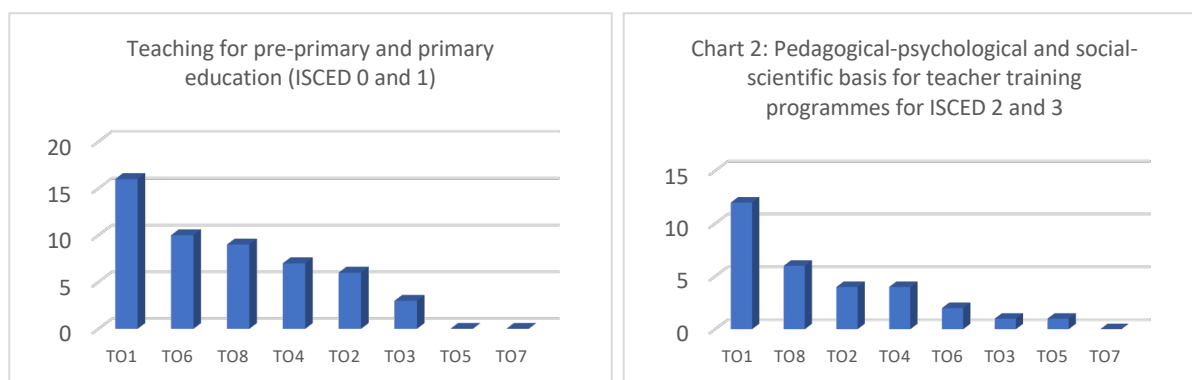
As can be seen in Table 3, 264 information sheets were analysed. The highest proportion of IS with at least one mention of human rights content was identified in the programme of teaching history (31%). In this case, however, it should be stressed that the IS were counted from all subjects that referred to historical periods accompanied by wars. It is difficult to conclude from the IS of a subject whether the curriculum is presented in a rather factual way or whether teachers also create space for solving dilemmas regarding the freedoms and human rights concerned, thus implementing peace education. A similar result (30%) was observed in the study programmes aimed at the preparation of teachers of pre-primary and primary education. In the case of teaching Slovak language and literature, we found implicit references to the topic under study in 12% of the IS.

It is important to note that in the case of the teaching of history and the teaching of Slovak language and literature, we have also included in the analysis the subjects of the so-called pedagogical-psychological and social-scientific basis (hereafter referred to as PPSSB). This is a compulsory part of all university teacher training programmes for ISCED 2 and 3. In fact, it may have had a more significant impact on the occurrence of the content sought. Indeed, in the PPSSB part, up to 60% of the subjects

were identified as having a reference to human rights education. However, the PPSSB subjects represent a minority component in terms of the number of courses offered. In the teaching of history, the offer of PPSSB compulsory and optional courses in the curriculum accounts for just under 40%. In Slovak language and literature it is only 30%.

As we can see in Chart 1, in teacher education for pre-primary and primary education, the greatest amount of space seems to be devoted to the **education of personal and social values**, which is not surprising given the target group of children. Other topics that are more strongly represented are intercultural and development education. The content analysis also points to the presence of the themes of legal education and citizenship education. On the basis of the content of the IS, it cannot be concluded that there is room for **peace and global education** in these curricula.

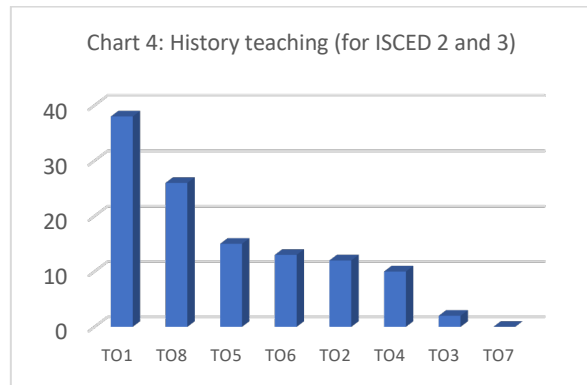
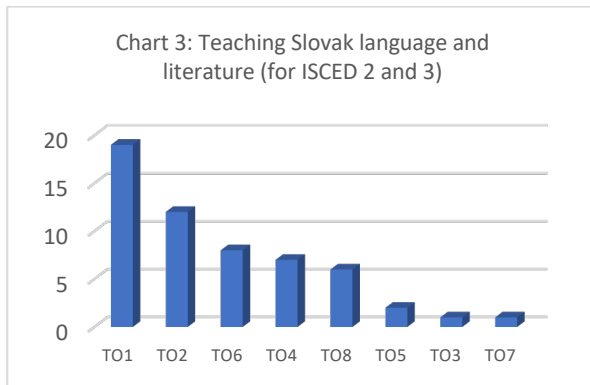
With regard to the training of teachers for ISCED 2 and 3, it is interesting to look at the representation of areas of human rights education in the PPSSF. As we can see in Chart 2, the emphasis is on **education for personal and social values**. Development education and legal education were also more represented in the IS of these subjects. Global, environmental and peace education had minimal or no presence.



**Thematic areas of human rights education:** TO1 Education for personal and social values; TO2 Education for citizenship; TO3 Environmental education; TO4 Legal education; TO5 Peace education; TO6 Intercultural education Education against racism; TO7 Global education; TO8 Development education.

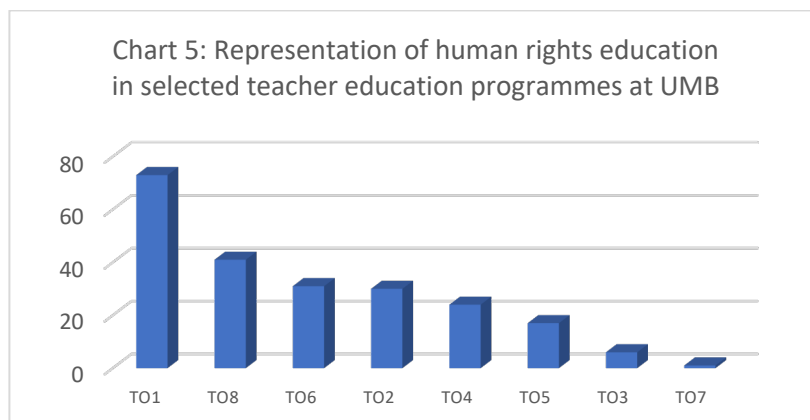
In the study of teaching Slovak language and literature, **education for personal and social values** was the most represented in the IS of the subjects (including PPSSB subjects) (Chart 3). Civic education was also very prominent, as was, to some extent, intercultural education. Peace education, global education or environmental education seem to receive only marginal attention in this study programme.

The distribution of subjects is different in the teaching of history. Again, the IS of the PPSSB subjects were included in the analysis. As we can see in Chart 4, here too, as in the other programmes of study, **education for personal and social values** is one of the dominant themes, but **development education** and **peace education** also come to the fore. However, as indicated above, in this case, the war events to which the IS of the course referred to were also considered as coded content. Given the nature of the study, it is to be expected that intercultural and citizenship education would also resonate in the subjects. Environmental education issues were covered to a minimal extent. Zero occurrence was noted for global education.



**Thematic areas of human rights education:** TO1 Education for personal and social values; TO2 Education for citizenship; TO3 Environmental education; TO4 Legal education; TO5 Peace education; TO6 Intercultural education/education against racism; TO7 Global education; TO8 Development education.

Summarising the results of the three teacher education programmes at UMB that prepare teachers for ISCED 0 to ISCED 3, it can be concluded that in the formal curriculum, represented by the subject information sheets, most of the identified topics fall into the area of **personal and social education** (Chart 5). It can also be assumed that students are exposed to development education topics, and that intercultural education and civic education are more prominent. The least amount of content was recorded in relation to **global** and **environmental education**.



**Thematic areas of human rights education:** TO1 Education for personal and social values; TO2 Education for citizenship; TO3 Environmental education; TO4 Legal education; TO5 Peace education; TO6 Intercultural education/education against racism; TO7 Global education; TO8 Development education.

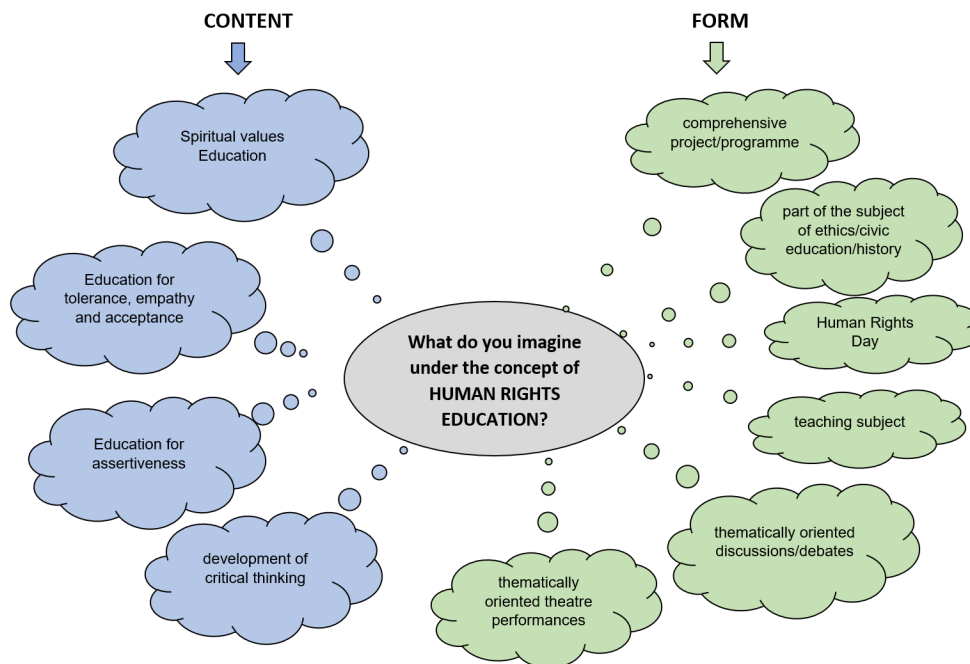
**Q2: What are the expectations of students of teaching regarding human rights education at the beginning of their studies?**

Students' ideas about the concept of human rights education were identified through a content analysis of the transcripts of the individual interviews. The responses captured their views on both the content and the organisational form of this educational issue.

As shown in Figure 1, in terms of content they interpreted it as education for tolerance, empathy and acceptance, education for assertiveness and education for spiritual values. Education for human rights was also described as a strategy for developing critical thinking. In terms of form, their perspectives differed. Some students envisioned a coherent educational programme or project that is

systematically implemented in the school. Several students thought of a subject-specific curriculum, mentioning civic education, ethics and history. In one case, they imagined human rights education as a separate subject. They also described the possibility of organising a Human Rights Day, as well as thematic discussions, debates or theatre performances.

Figure 1: Students' perceptions of the concept of human rights education



In the following question, we investigated whether, in the perception the students, human rights education is intended for all ages. We asked whether it should be taught also at the first stage of primary school. Some respondents rejected the idea that some topics should be left out: „I think it is difficult to answer the question of which topics should be included and which should not, because I think we should talk about all human rights with children. We should mainly let children find out for themselves what is going on in the world today, we should listen to them" (S5); „I think there is no topic that literally does not belong in the first stage of primary school. It really depends on how you introduce it to which grade. I think we should inform children about everything right from the very beginning. Maybe not right in first grade, but by the end of the first stage of elementary school (4th grade) they are able to take in this kind of information. " (S1) Age, as a factor influencing the choice of topics, was perceived by the students as follows: „At the first stage of primary school, I would probably include the kind of human rights that are the easiest for children to understand....the basic ones, that's, I think, that's the first category of human rights. Those can be best understood by children, I think." (S7)

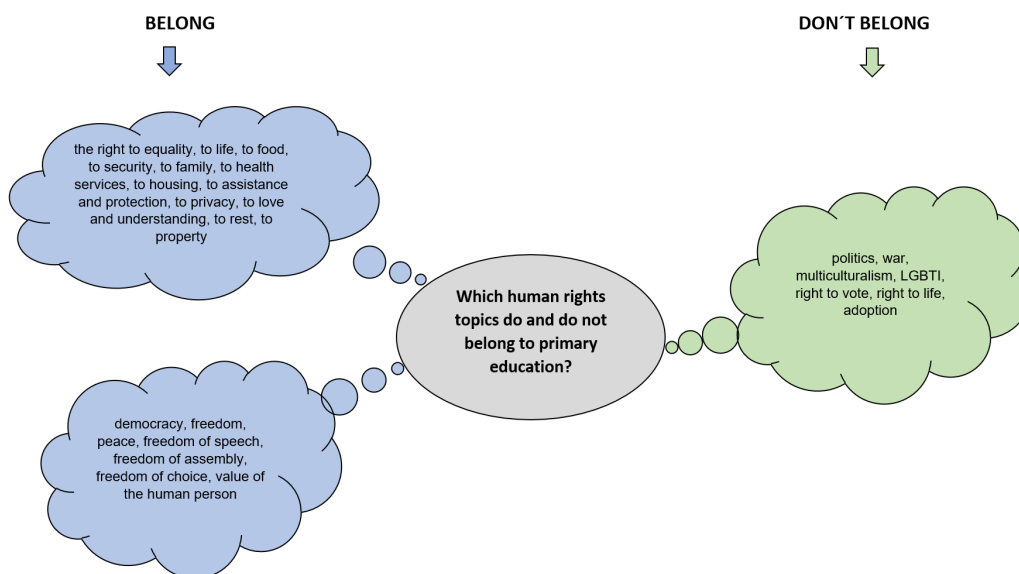
The interviews also included specific recommendations on what should and should not be offered to children as part of primary education. As shown in Figure 2, the respondents felt that children aged 6-10 years should learn more about specific rights that they believe directly affected their lives (right to equality, health care, family, privacy, property, etc.) at school. They also felt that the content of human rights education at this level of education should be the basic pillars of democracy and humanism. They mentioned the very notion of democracy, freedom and the value of a human being.

On the left side of Figure 2 we can see the topics that they felt were too difficult or controversial and therefore did not belong in the first stage of primary school. They argued that the topics do not concern

children at this age" *"Well, it would certainly be unnecessary to mention the right to vote, the right to petition to children, I don't think it concerns them at all yet."* (S6) They would also avoid topics that are not socially agreed upon and require a well thought out learning strategy. For example, one student defended her view that the topic of LGBTI does not belong in the classrooms of so-called first graders: *"Even though it's important to talk about it, maybe it would be good to somehow unite in society or maybe even in science first to come up with some guidelines on how to present it to the children."* (S6)

The analysis of the interviews also revealed conflicting views. These related to the issues of multiculturalism, the rights of the LGBTI community and the right to life.

Figure 2: Students' views on human rights issues that do and do not belong to primary education



### Q3: What are the expectations of students of teaching in relation to their preparation for implementation of human rights education?

In the next part of the interview, we asked the students about their expectations for the content of their university education in order to prepare them to implement human rights education in their practice. We also asked about the methods their teachers should use in the classroom and the personal qualities of a university teacher who embodies human rights.

Students' views on the content of their university education can be divided into two areas. The first relates to important social issues that should be discussed in the classroom. These are issues such as **social inequalities, segregation in education, the rights of people with different sexual orientations, issues of identity or multiculturalism**. Current political events have led them to highlight the topic of **war** and **occupation**, but also the issue of **freedom of speech in the context of social networks**. The debate on **freedom and responsibility** should also be addressed in the study. The second area concerns pedagogical and psychological issues. Respondents expect to learn **strategies on how to implement human rights education, how to work with multiculturalism in the classroom, how to build relationships with pupils, and how to manage communication with parents**.

In terms of using appropriate methods, the students particularly emphasised the need for **open discussion**: *"I think they should communicate a lot with the students. Have discussions on the topic."*



(S1); "Because at university it's no longer that the teacher teaches and the students listen, but it's more about discussing with that teacher." (S2) They stressed the importance of a safe climate to allow students to express their opinions, "I think with these topics, students who have a negative or positive opinion should be able to express themselves, they shouldn't be afraid to voice their opinions." (S5)

The emphasis on discussion was also evident in the call to **limit monologic methods**, "[...] so I think it shouldn't be like that anymore, that the teacher tells us about these rights and we actually listen to him and internalise it" (S2). They would welcome a **critical analysis of model or real situations**: "Teachers could give students situations that can happen or have happened in reality and the students' task would be to evaluate them from a human rights perspective in terms of what should happen and what should not happen." (S2). They also see room for experiential learning in teacher training, for example through **dramatisation of fictional or real situations**. They also expect to be given an opportunity to participate in an educational field trip focused on human rights issues, as "this is the quickest way to get it into the people's heads" (S6).

The interviewed students also had a clear idea of what qualities a university teacher should have in order to embody the values that are the pillars of human rights. In addition to being **knowledgeable about current social events**, he or she should be a **partner** to students who practices **respectful communication**, who is **trusting** and **open to different perspectives**, who is **fair** and **respects the principle of equality**, who is **sensitive to the individual differences of his or her students**, **humane**, **empathetic**, **helpful** and **authentic**.

#### Q4: In what ways does pre-service teacher education fail in the area of human rights education?

We sought answers to this question in a group interview with practising teachers. However, we first asked them why human rights education is not being taught in schools. **Fear** often came up as a reason in their answers. In their opinion, many teachers are afraid of the reactions of school management, colleagues, and especially parents. Some see this fear in their colleagues: „Teachers are afraid of being attacked by parents if they raise an issue that they do not accept or that is not defined in this society as something that can be discussed at all“. Concerns were also expressed by the focus group participants themselves: 'We have fears and worries that arise with these issues, about how parents will react, how colleagues will react, how the school management will react'; „I have also recently experienced that teachers have opened up an issue but they were misunderstood by their colleagues“.

The analysis of the interviews also revealed some sources of fear. For some, the fear is linked to the **conservative climate in the society**. We see a lot of xenophobic behaviour and a black and white view of the world. This is how the interviewees commented on it:

- "We have defined absolute truths here."
- "What happens in the society is black or white, and nothing in between. And the xenophobia that we have in our society!"
- "We have some set norms in society around particular values and human rights, and that can be the problem."

Another reason why teachers are afraid to address human rights, or simply don't do so, is their **lack of preparation**. In particular, respondents mentioned teachers' **lack of ability to facilitate discussions** and thus create space for the exchange of ideas and perspectives:

- *"The teacher may not be well prepared. He may even be willing to have a discussion with the children, but he may be afraid that the children will have different opinions and he may not be able to facilitate the discussion"*
- *"If we don't know what to do..."*
- *"Teachers are not able to facilitate the discussion so that the children feel that it is a discussion about life and how they perceive it and how they feel about it."*

Other obstacles to the implementation of human rights education were identified by teachers as being **closed to different opinions, educational stereotypes that** force them to view the child as an object of education, or **being comfortable** and **unwilling to step out of their comfort zone**:

- *"Children are more open and willing to discuss than we are."*
- *"Let's tell it like it is, it is a personal change of approach to the child from being an object of education to being a partner in learning. And some people can't even imagine that."*
- *"We find it very difficult to step out of that comfort, that experience, that comfort zone. We don't want to prepare ourselves better, to look for new ways."*

This part of the interview also reveals some problems in teacher training. In response to the direct question: „In what ways does teacher training in the field of human rights education fail?“ the interviewees identified specific problems. They commented on their own preparation at university or shared their experiences with recent graduates or trainees. The **strong focus on knowledge of the subject** that the student is preparing to teach was criticised: „The difficulty of the subject for the purposes of primary education is to the detriment of being able to work with these people, for example, in the area of their personal development. That subject being taught is so difficult that they will never ever need what they learn at the Faculty when teach this subject in primary school.“ According to the participants, this is at the expense of developing skills that are much more important for practice and human rights education: "Children are not wired to sit and listen to someone for 45 minutes. You can't get them very interested, use other forms of work. They lack the focus on those soft skills and techniques - they haven't got the coordination or facilitation skills from the university."

**They also see some gaps in pedagogical and psychological training.** It is also more theoretical, as a result of which the graduate teachers know how to teach their subject, they know the didactics or the procedures of how to prepare a structure of training, *"but they are often surprised by such ordinary things as not knowing how to work with discipline, with group work, with evaluation [...]. They are surprised that they can't manage the class as a whole."* They also see **pedagogical practice** as a problem. They recalled with disappointment their opportunity to peek into school practice: *"When I did my practice, I never experienced other learning than a pupil standing in front of the blackboard, pupils listening. I saw a lot of pupils in the classroom but I don't know if I ever saw a pupil ask a question."* The fact that student teachers are not taught how to facilitate discussions is seen as a major problem, and even teachers do not set an example for them in this respect: *"I have not experienced any exchange, any facilitation. Only one teacher facilitated the seminars, shared the rules for discussion. You have to experience it to know that it exists."*

The **prevalence of monologic methods** in universities, as shown by surveys (Miskolc, 2019), is not only related to the delivery of the curriculum, but also to **examination** methods. According to one of the interviewees, students are constantly scored and have little space to present their opinions and perspectives: *"So I've only had written exams, we've only had a few oral exams [...] I would like to see*

*other ways of testing knowledge. I would like to talk, to show my personality and how I see things. That creates space for differences of opinion and individual approaches and respect for one's own uniqueness."*

In addition to the problems mentioned above, the focus group participants also identified a **lack of interest in teaching among young people** as one of the causes: *"Fewer and fewer young people want to teach... Few want to go into teaching when they leave university."* They also notice the reality of **poor selection of candidates** for teacher education. Since universities do not assess their qualifications for the profession, students who do not represent the country's elite get admitted to study. One teacher commented bitterly on this situation, *"There is even less or no selection at all in universities. So the average graduate is like the average Slovak. And we know that half of Slovakia would like to live in Moscow."*

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

### Presence of human rights education themes in teacher training programmes

Through the content analysis of the course information sheets, we found that human rights education is represented in the formal curriculum of teacher training at the UMB in Banská Bystrica. It is more saturated in some programmes, less so in others. Most explicit and/or latent references were found in teacher education for primary and pre-primary education, where personal and social education dominated. The least amount of content was identified in the programme that prepares teachers to teach Slovak language and literature. This programme also had the most references to personal and social education.

In addition, development education dominated the subjects of the pedagogical-psychological and social-scientific basis, which is a compulsory component of all teacher training for ISCED 2 and ISCED 3. Intercultural education and education against racism were present in the IS of subjects of the selected programmes, but it was difficult to identify education for peace there. The latter was more strongly saturated in the teaching of history.

A review of the results of the analysis of all three programmes preparing teachers for pre-primary, primary and secondary education showed that the content of the university studies was dominated by **personal and social education**. Topics related to **development, intercultural, and citizenship education** are also more prominently represented. Based on the results, it could be assumed that at the level of these programmes, the issues of **global, environmental and peace education** receive the least attention.

### The ideas of students of teaching programmes on human rights education at the beginning of their studies

The content analysis of the transcripts of the individual interviews with the students who have just completed the first semester of their studies shows that the **prospective teachers have a realistic idea** of what human rights education is, although they have missed out on some important areas. We could say that their ideas are dominated by **a rather narrow concept** that includes intercultural education and personal and social education. **Their ideas on the organisation of human rights education** largely **coincide with the views of the national curriculum developers**, except for the idea that it is a subject in its own right. Their views on when to start with it differed. The **students reflected on age limits** and

they would prefer to avoid some topics, such as war, right to life, sexual orientation, etc., in the first stage of primary education.

### **The ideas of students of teaching programmes on their preparation for human rights education at the beginning of their studies**

In relation to teacher training, the respondents formulated quite clear expectations in the interviews. They **would like to discuss** important **social issues and problems** in lectures and seminars, but as future teachers they would like to acquire the **knowledge and skills to implement human rights education in a meaningful way**, to communicate with children and parents, and to work with diversity in the classroom. These competencies should be acquired through **activating teaching strategies**, which they believe should be used as much as possible by university professors. Monological methods should be replaced by lively and **open discussion** in an atmosphere of trust. This is why they call for a **partnership** between teachers and students and emphasise qualities such as fairness, helpfulness, humanity, empathy, etc. They stressed the importance of **respectful communication**.

### **Problems of pre-service teacher training in the context of human rights education**

The group interview with practicing teachers helped to reveal some of the problems in the preparation of teachers at universities. They pointed out **too strong a focus on acquiring knowledge about the subject they are going to teach** (history, physics...) at the expense of developing important teaching skills. According to the focus group participants, teachers **do not know how to work with the class and facilitate discussions**. As a result, they are afraid to raise more controversial issues and create space for open discussion. The results also suggest a **lack of skills in working with parents**, who are seen by teachers as a threat on some issues. The methods of teaching and examination at universities should also change, according to them. In both cases, **monological methods should take a back seat**. However, practising teachers think that the situation in schools is also influenced by the general **social climate** in Slovakia, which tends to be **conservative**. At the same time, human rights education requires **motivated and committed teachers** who can step out of their comfort zone, and in their opinion, there are **fewer and fewer** of them.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. A content analysis of the formal curricula of the selected teacher education programmes has shown that about a quarter of the compulsory and compulsory elective courses contain content that creates a prerequisite for human rights education. However, the proportion of such subjects varies from programme to programme, depending on their focus. It is important to emphasise that the researchers included in the coding all the content that they perceived as an opportunity for human rights education. We recommend that this opportunity be sufficiently utilized and that **the content identified in the course information sheets be taught in such a way as to develop not only knowledge, but also the skills and attitudes necessary for the implementation of human rights education in school practice**.
2. In the case of the programmes preparing teachers for ISCED 2 and ISCED 3, subjects with human rights content were saturated especially in the educational psychology and social science basis component of the curricula. **We recommend that curriculum developers also find space within the subjects of study** (history, mathematics, Slovak language and literature, etc.). At the same time, **we recommend increasing the proportion of subjects with a**

*pedagogical-psychological and social-scientific basis* in order to better develop teachers' competences.

3. We found that some areas of human rights education dominate the study programmes, while others are not represented. We recommend ***working with a broader concept of human rights education*** in the design and implementation of learning, reflecting also on issues of global education, peace education or environmental education. It is also a way to develop the right ideas about the content and forms of human rights education in future teachers.
4. We recommend ***strengthening awareness of the importance of human rights education*** at all levels of education and ***age-appropriately conveying the philosophy of this concept*** to children. We recommend to ***purposefully develop the courage and skills*** of future teachers ***to make room for this cross-cutting theme*** in their teaching ***and to convey its contents sensitively***. At the same time, we emphasise the need to pay attention to the issue of ***developing the capacity of future teachers to support the identity of pupils***, to work with ***multicultural classrooms*** and to ***communicate with the families*** of children and pupils.
5. We recommend that training programmes for pre-primary (ISCED 0) and primary (ISCED 1) education programmes for teachers should include a ***broader discussion*** of what ***human rights content*** is ***accessible*** to children of a given age and ***how it can be meaningfully communicated***.
6. In relation to the identified expectations of students, we recommend that ***a workshop on various human rights topics be held at the Faculty of Education*** (by 10 December), in the form of a discussion, an invited guest, a living library, or a film screening. The topics to be discussed are democracy, human rights but also the creation of civic space, which we see as important in building a better society for present and future generations.
7. Student of teaching call for a broader discussion on important social issues. We recommend creating more space for ***critical analysis of current social events*** and the application of methods and strategies that convey to future teachers the ***experience of facilitating discussions*** with opposing viewpoints.
8. Based on the results of the discussions with students and with teachers, we recommend that teacher training should ***place more emphasis on the development of a wide range of teaching skills*** at the expense of the subject knowledge, and that teacher training should provide ***more space*** for the ***application of experiential and activating forms of learning*** at the expense of monologic methods.
9. Preparation for human rights education does not only take place through the formal curriculum, but especially through the hidden curriculum, within which the personality of the university teacher plays an important role. We recommend ***that the quality of education should also be monitored*** through questions aimed at the ***personal qualities of teachers***, with an emphasis on partnership, respectful communication and the application of the value of human dignity.

10. We recommend that ***the selection of applicants to teacher education programmes be strengthened*** and ***that their suitability for the teaching profession be assessed*** when they are admitted to higher education.
11. ***Develop methodological support*** (methodologies) for individual study programmes ***to strengthen the awareness and importance of human rights*** in cooperation with students.

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The article was written and financed within the project "A more humane approach into human rights education in Slovakia", which is supported by the EEA and Norway Grants 2014-2021 and the state budget of the Slovak Republic.

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2023