

## **Media and Information Literacy Policies in Slovakia (2013)**



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**1. Dimension****(Short) Historical background**

The issue of media literacy development does not have a long tradition in the conditions of the Slovak Republic and until recently it has not been paid appropriate attention in comparison with other countries. An important milestone that contributed to increased efforts for implementation of necessary measures and processes in this area was the adoption of the Concept of Media Education in the Slovak Republic in the context of lifelong learning (Ministry of Culture, 2009). The Concept adopted by the Government of the Slovak Republic in December 2009 defined key objectives, strategies, procedures and prerequisites for integration of media education into individual areas of the public life.

In developing this legal document have been involved a wide range of experts from various fields (universities, NGO, researchers, teachers, ministry of education, ministry of culture, etc.).

The concept deals with the situation concerning media education, stresses the importance of formal and informal education initiatives in the field, describes the main participants and major initiatives and plans in this area.

**2. Dimension****Legal policy framework**

Constant development of media and new communication technologies poses stronger challenges to individuals as well as the society and it brings the need to ensure innovative solutions and to monitor the latest trends of implementation of media education into the everyday practice. In this context, media literacy is identified as one of the primary outputs of complex and structured educational, awareness-raising and scientific activities which bring, in synergic realization, qualitative changes at both individual and social levels. The complex of these activities in Slovakia context is defined as media education. It is a multidisciplinary concept that integrates knowledge and scientific apparatus of the wide range of social sciences (in particular mass media communication, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, information and library science, etc.)

and that contributes to their application in the process of lifelong learning and the current needs of social practice.

The main legal document framing media education policies is the Concept of Media Education in the Slovak Republic within the context of lifelong learning valid since 2009.

The document presents the following principal goals of media education within the lifelong learning process:

- Media literacy improvement within all age groups among the population;
- Update of media competencies, responsible and critical approach to media, effective use of media and new communication technologies;
- Teaching the individuals to learn and make use of possibilities offered to them by media and new communication means to their own benefits;
- Protection of children and adolescent youth against threats presented by media and new communication technologies in the content offer and way of communication;
- Protection of specific groups (specific groups of adult population, seniors) against contents and service which might threaten them by their nature and those which they are not able to assess due to the insufficient level of media literacy;
- Prevention of all forms of generation 'communication and information stagnation' (Ministry of Culture, 2009).

The Concept of Media Education in the Slovak Republic in the context of lifelong learning is the response, in addition to other legislative instruments, also to European Audiovisual Media Service Directive (Directive 2007/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2007)<sup>1</sup> establishing the obligation for EU member states to submit regular reports on the level of media literacy in the country concerned. Under this directive, the Slovak Republic is obliged to submit regular evaluation reports on the current state and level of media literacy in the Slovak Republic. Fulfilment of this task in the conditions of the Slovak Republic has not been systemically solved yet and due to insufficient funds it has not been realized in effective way. The obligation to submit reports on the state of media literacy was, in conditions of Slovak republic, transposed to the Act No. 308/2000 on broadcasting and

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<sup>1</sup> See: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2010:095:0001:0024:EN:PDF>

retransmission<sup>2</sup>, as amended, while Art. 5 Sect. 1 (j) thereof establishes the obligation for the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission to submit documentation related to evaluation of the state and level of media literacy in the Slovak Republic. Given the fact that the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission does not have sufficient capacities to fulfil these tasks, it delegated this task on the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.<sup>3</sup> To implement the project of evaluation of media literacy levels in Slovakia, university received a grant from Slovak Research and Development Agency. The objective of this research activity is to implement, in the Slovak conditions, the most appropriate research strategies enabling to measure and evaluate the level of media literacy in the whole range of age categories, levels of education, residence and other social and demographic indicators.

At the Faculty of Mass Media Communication there is the IMEC - Centre of Media Literacy<sup>4</sup> which is the coordinator of all educational, research, development and advisory activities in the area of media and information education in Slovakia. The Centre also ensures the support in the methodological, technical, research, advisory and promotional area and in other areas for teachers and other interested parties.

Investigating team composed of scientific workers, teachers and postgraduate students of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of UCM in Trnava has all prerequisites for the successful realization of these tasks.

**They can be summarized as follows:**

- Sufficient number of qualified and experienced university pedagogues who ensure the project activities.

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<sup>2</sup> See: [http://www.rvr.sk/\\_cms/data/modules/download/1390832132\\_zakon\\_308\\_2000\\_2014-01-01.pdf](http://www.rvr.sk/_cms/data/modules/download/1390832132_zakon_308_2000_2014-01-01.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See: <http://www.ucm.sk/en/faculty-of-mass-media-communication/>

<sup>4</sup> See: <http://www.medialnavychova.sk/>

- Strong tradition and reputation of the faculty as an expert workplace focused on the issues of media and marketing research as well as research in the field of media education and multimedia.
- Positive image and reputation of the faculty as an expert workplace which deals with the issue of media competence development, media education and creation of a wide range of media communicates.
- Satisfactory material and technical possibilities as well as premises for implementation of the project in the conditions of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of UCM.

The competencies regarding media education are divided among the department of education and department of culture. The competencies of the Slovak Ministry of Education <sup>5</sup>cover media education in formal and informal education, accreditation of educational programmes and education of teachers in the area of media education. Among the competencies of the Slovak Ministry of Culture<sup>6</sup> there is the monitoring of the current state of media literacy, support of educational projects and media activities connected to media education. It is a case of financial support for production of some public television programmes, support for production of films and other audiovisual works, etc.

As media education is a multidisciplinary category its effective functioning requires structural relations among actors who are active in the area of public and private sectors. In Slovakia and its media education area there are mainly the subjects from academic sector, public education, culture and non-profit sector cooperating intensively. One of such important actors is the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre in Bratislava<sup>7</sup>. It is a public institution within the authority of the Ministry of Education of the Slovak republic. The centre puts into practice important educational programmes and offers methodical help to teachers and educators. Within the programme called Motivating methods in education, which is supported by the European Union, this organization also

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<sup>5</sup> See: <https://www.minedu.sk/about-the-ministry/>

<sup>6</sup> See: <http://www.culture.gov.sk/>

<sup>7</sup> See: <http://www.mpc-edu.sk/o-nas/english>

supports production of audiovisual educational programmes and didactic aids for the media education area.

Important social actor promoting media education in Slovakia is non-profit organisation eSlovensko<sup>8</sup>. This NGO is specialized in raising awareness of responsible use of Internet, mobile communication and new technologies. In Slovakia the organisation is an implementation subject of a program "Zodpovedne.sk" which is implemented in the framework of the Community program of the European Union "Safer Internet plus". Its partners in raising awareness of responsible use of Internet and new technologies are, for example, the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic<sup>9</sup>, Slovak Committee for UNICEF<sup>10</sup>, Research Institute for Child Psychology and Pathopsychology<sup>11</sup>, the international research project EU Kids Online III<sup>12</sup>, dozens of elementary and secondary schools and other subjects. Non-profit organization eSlovensko regularly organizes seminar, workshops and other events focused on raising awareness of responsible use of Internet, mobile communication and new technologies.

The main activity of the project is the eponymous national awareness raising centre Zodpovedne.sk<sup>13</sup>, which main tasks are to raise awareness and to spread information about a safe use of the internet, mobile communications and new technologies, and to perform a crime-control. Another part of the project is an operation of the free-of-charge helpline Pomoc.sk and a participation in the international networks. Third important part of the project is the national centre for reporting of an illegal content on the internet Stopline.sk. This hotline fights against child abuse (child pornography, child exploitation, grooming etc.), racism and xenophobia and other content and criminal activities on the Internet.

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<sup>8</sup> See: [http://www.eslovensko.sk/start\\_en.htm](http://www.eslovensko.sk/start_en.htm)

<sup>9</sup> See: <http://www.minv.sk/?ministry-of-interior>

<sup>10</sup> See: <http://www.unicef.sk/>

<sup>11</sup> See: <http://www.vudpap.sk/en/>

<sup>12</sup> See: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/ParticipatingCountries/Slovakia.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> See: <http://www.zodpovedne.sk/>

Another part of these activities is the subproject OVCE.sk. The animated stories and an internet portal are aimed at spreading the awareness about risks of the Internet, mobile phones and new technologies. It is meant to give a first idea about these issues to children, to set a mirror of the youth’s inappropriate behaviour on the Internet and, at the same time, it should teach and amuse the adults. OVCE.sk is a new Slovak animated story building upon the traditional animated work for children and teenagers. In parallel with the stories there was set up an internet portal with a plenty of instructive and amusing materials.<sup>14</sup>

The discussion between the professionals from academic, public, non-profit sectors and media industry is carried out in form of seminars and conferences. The most important event is the international conference Megatrends and Media which is organized regularly by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication UCM in Trnava. An individual section focused on media education is part of this conference. This workshop is an important platform for the exchange of experience, opinions and examples of good practice. It also offers space for discussion on current questions regarding media education policies at national and EU level.

The obligation to submit reports on the state of media literacy has been, in conditions of Slovak republic, delegated to the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission. (regulatory media authority).

<b>3.1 Dimension</b>	<b>Capacity-building: teacher training</b>
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In 2012 the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava was awarded the accreditation for a new study program called “Applied Media Studies”. In bachelor and master and PhD. studies students obtain complex knowledge about media education, media competence development as well as theoretical and practical aspects of media communication. A graduate of the study is an expert in preparation of a wide range of media communicates, in particular communicates of public and educational nature and also programs whose primary target groups are children and young people (Vrabec, 2012a).

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<sup>14</sup> <http://sk.sheeplive.eu/>

This new interdisciplinary degree programme currently helps improve situation with teacher's training process in the field of media education in the Slovak education system. As a part of this project university also prepared curriculum, training modules, methodologies, courses syllabi and other teaching documents and materials. This programme includes the preparation of secondary schools teachers and other school professionals responsible for media education. However, the graduate's profile is broader. Graduates are able to assert themselves as experts in the following fields:

- production of educational programmes;
- dramaturgy and screenwriting, focusing on children and youth audience;
- creating serious computer games;
- creating educational materials and methodologies for other media literacy teachers.

In 2010 the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava was awarded the accreditation of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic in the area of training of media education teachers and it offers the accredited educational program of continuous education for teachers called "*Qualification study of Media Education school subject for secondary school teachers*". It is the only educational project allowing secondary school teachers to obtain the full qualification for teaching of a separate school subject of Media Education. This two-year educational programme was successfully completed by first 27 teachers from all parts of Slovakia in February 2011 (Vrabec, 2012b).

Educational courses for teachers in kindergartens, basic and secondary schools are organized by the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre and some non-profit organizations (e.g. citizens' association Žabky, association eSlovensko and others).

In accordance with education legislation in Slovakia, media education can be taught in two ways:

1) Media education as a subject on its own. Each school may include media education in its curriculum as a separate subject. It is not a compulsory subject, therefore, it depends on the particular school whether the subject is inserted into curriculum or not. In fact, in Slovakia there are very few schools which teach media education as a



separate subject. This might be reasoned by the absence of qualified teachers. According to existing surveys, schools are interested in this issue.

2) Media education as a topic integrated into other subjects. This form of media education is compulsory for every school (primary and secondary). However, the form is very formal and inefficient. The main reason is lack of teacher's knowledge in this field. Many teachers do not understand the essence or basic principles of media education. Some educators confuse media education with educational use of media technologies – for example with using interactive board, power point presentations, etc. To conclude, many Slovak educators still do not know how to integrate elements of media education into lessons effectively.

According to the Concept of Media Education in the Slovak Republic in the context of lifelong learning following competencies within the context of lifelong learning should be developed:

- rising the media literacy within all age groups in the population;
- responsible and critical approach to media, effective use of media and new communication technologies;
- development of individuals' learning skills; learning how to make use of possibilities offered to them by media and new communication means;
- development of individuals' skills to differentiate and protect oneself against the risks when using the Internet;
- eliminating various forms of communication and information stagnation (mainly with specific population groups – physically handicapped, seniors, etc.);
- eliminating any forms of social exclusion due to insufficient media literacy level. (Ministry of Culture, 2009).

Media education of preschool children and pupils at basic schools in Slovakia is focused on the development of basic media competencies. It deals mainly with the development of skills and abilities related to media and new communication technologies, shaping critical and selective approach to content offer of media and basic knowledge about real functioning of traditional and new media.

Media education with secondary school students as for their age and specific interests is a combination of advanced knowledge about media, their possible influence on audience, development of media competencies and critical thinking.

Media education with adult population, i.e. parents, seniors and disadvantaged groups is program-focused on the development of competencies necessary for practical use of media technologies and development of basic critical thinking skills in relation to media contents.

<b>3.2 Dimension</b>	<b>Capacity-building: Teaching/training materials and other relevant content</b>
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One of the essential parts of media education in Slovakia is the education in the sphere of intellectual property. Relating to media and media contents this education refers to two basic areas. The first one being the use of media contents which the protection of intellectual property rights applies to. The second area of interest is the legal treatment of author’s creative activity itself.

Other important topics are:

- protection of personal data;
- protection of citizens’ privacy and right to information;
- risks regarding information security and possible misuse of personal data mainly by the Internet.

There is a real scarcity of educational resources and materials on protection of intellectual property in Slovakia. The reason for that is mainly the lack of financial sources for design, production and distribution of such information and educational materials to schools.

Main research a support institution regarding media education in Slovakia is IMEC – Media Literacy Centre. The organization is part of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. The main aim of the organization is to interconnect all initiatives of media education in Slovakia and provide the professional and non-professional public with complex and regularly updated information on the media literacy and media education issues.

- Monitoring the situation regarding media education in domestic and foreign contexts, presenting information on all educational and research projects focused on topics such as: media education, media literacy, information literacy and digital literacy.
- Creation of a database and archiving of research materials focused on media education in Slovakia and abroad.
- Managing and regular addition of publications into the library of domestic and foreign sources on mentioned issues (including teaching texts and methodical materials).
- Creation of an archive of multimedia materials (including demonstrations and examples of teaching media education as a course at schools and within the informal learning).
- Implementation of research projects in the area of media education and media literacy.
- Operating a web portal [medialnavychova.sk](http://medialnavychova.sk) focused on media education.
- Learning activities for teachers focused on media education issues.
- Co-organization of bachelor, master and post gradual studies focused on preparation of professionals who will be active in the areas of media education and programme production of public media (in cooperation with the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of UCM in Trnava)
- Co-organization of international conferences, seminars and support of public discussion on issues related to media literacy issues.
- Lifelong informal learning activities focused on parents, educators, and people working with young people and other target groups who might be interested in the topics of media education.
- Publishing activities and publishing the information and materials on media education (university textbooks, articles, research reports, presentations from conferences, promotional materials, etc.)
- Preparation of audio-visual materials on media education in sound and film studios of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of UCM in Trnava.
- Organization of information campaign focused on the need to develop media literacy.

In next two years, a testing centre will be gradually established in the conditions of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava. This centre will allow an intermediate measurement and evaluation of the media literacy level. The aim is to provide, in the conditions of the Slovak Republic, professional capacities and background for regular testing of the results of media education and media literacy even after the completion of pilot testing.

The Faculty of Mass Media Communication of UCM in Trnava has most of the technical equipment necessary for these purposes. In the framework of the project, it is important to carry out pilot testing of the most appropriate research methodology and to create instruments for its regular evaluation, updating and innovation according to the latest trends and theoretical and application aspects of this field of research. It will be important to carry out regular operationalization of theoretical framework necessary for the development of practical research instruments and strategies. Those should, in addition to precisely set and quantifiable indicators, enable a flexible response to new applications of information and communication technologies which must be included in the research framework on the regular basis.

There is not a sufficient amount of educational materials necessary for teaching media education in Slovakia so far. Teachers mostly use materials and publications produced by foreign professionals (in English or Czech language). The reason is the lack of finance for publishing such materials and textbooks.

The content of texts financed by the Ministry of Education is assessed by committee of teachers who have experience with media education teaching.

<b>3.3 Dimension</b>	<b>Capacity-building: funding</b>
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The sphere of media education in Slovakia is financially absolutely insufficient. Both the government and the ministry allocate minimal sources from the state budget. The only relevant financial support was the one for the publication of media education textbook for basic schools and support of research focused on studying media literacy among the Slovak population.

The most important sources of financial support for media education projects in Slovakia are the structural funds of the European Union. In 2013 a project called

Motivating methods in teaching was supported among them. It covers also the support of teacher and educators training in the media education area.

IMEC activities – the Media literacy centre is in full measure financed by the Faculty of Mass Media Communication at the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava.

Some minor activities regarding media education are financed by private companies, e.g. the telecommunication operator Orange Slovakia supports e-deti.sk. This project teaches children, their parents and teachers to use new communication technologies safely.

<b>4. Dimension</b>	<b>Role of actors (outside school system)</b>
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Main social initiatives outside the school system are provided by NGO’s. Especially active are the following organizations:

**Laura – Association of Salesian Youth.** They organize media school, activity in non-formal education for children and young people in media skills.<sup>15</sup>

**Žabky.** Non-profit organization implements non-formal educational activities for children and young people focused on the use and production of media content. Members have own website [medialnaskola.sk](http://www.medialnaskola.sk) content of which is created by young people.<sup>16</sup>

**Web portal Rodina a media (Family and Media).** The Online project is run by the Catholic University in Ružomberok. The portal is intended for parents and educators mainly. Its aim is to help the target group to be well informed about the world of media overlapping with the education of children.<sup>17</sup>

The Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission is an administrative authority executing the state regulation in the area of radio and television broadcasting,

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.medialnaskola.sk/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.zabky.sk/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://rodinaamedia.ku.sk/>

retransmission and providing audiovisual media service on request. The role of the council is to advance the interests of the public when exercising the right to information, freedom of speech and the right to access cultural values and education. The council cares about information plurality in news programmes of broadcasters who broadcast on the basis of law or a licence by such a law.

The telecommunication operator Orange Slovakia supports the e-deti.sk project. It teaches the children, their parents and teachers to use the new communication technologies safely.

In Slovakia there are neither organizations uniting media education teachers nor journalistic organizations with this scope active so far.

The parental associations do not participate in cooperation regarding media education yet.

There are some occasional activities in the area of media education prepared by media, e.g. the daily SME has prepared a project for schools called Sme v škole. One part of this informal educational project focused on media education.

The public television has prepared a 40-episodes cycle of educational programmes for children and youth. The programme called Media spies is devoted to media education issues.

The main idea of the programme is the search for answers to the question: what is the right approach of recipients to media, how to perceive media, how to use them, how to identify and eliminate the influence of manipulative elements. The main protagonists of the TV series Media spies are children who give inquiring questions and investigate various aspects of running the media.

The Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava organizes conference Megatrends and Media held in the Smolenice castle. One of the conference sections deals with media literacy and presents a platform for cooperation and exchange of ideas between a wide range of experts on media education from Slovakia and abroad.

In the future the university intends to organize some lifelong informal educational activities for parents, educators, people working with young people and other target groups, which may be interested in the topic of media education.

IMEC - Media Literacy Centre regularly updates the website [medialnavychova.sk](http://medialnavychova.sk), where visitors find an overview of domestic and foreign research and information materials regarding the context and individual aspects of media and information literacy. The Centre publishes a wide variety of professional publications and also regularly organizes seminars and supports the public debate on issues related to the topics of media, information and computer literacy.<sup>18</sup>

<b>5. Dimension</b>	<b>Evaluation mechanisms (inside and outside school)</b>
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The tasks of this kind are provided by the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission. Under the Act No. 308/2000 Statue book, the Council for Broadcasting and Retransmission is a public administration body the main goal of which is to promote the interests of the public, supervise the observance of legal regulations and when requested provide the administration in the area of broadcasting and retransmission within the extend defined by the law. Within the Council's authority there is also the sanctioning of broadcasters and retransmission providers who have breached particular legislation.

The Assessment of the level of media literacy does not to have a long tradition in Slovakia. Some partial information on various aspects of media literacy in Slovakia can be found in the studies carried out during last 7 years.

In 2007, the first research conducted a project focused on assessment of young people's media literacy level in Slovakia. Quantitative empirical research methods were used in the research – combination of a questionnaire with written tests and their content analysis and evaluation. Overall number of respondents was 674. The sample was stratified according to age, gender, place of residence and educational level.

The research strategy distinguished 4 basic characteristics of media literacy: the ability to get access to information from media, to analyse them, to expose them to evaluation

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<sup>18</sup> See: <http://www.medialnavychova.sk/>

and be able to form information independently. These components make up the basis of capacity that should be adopted by media literacy person (Vrabec, 2008).

**In 2009, second research project was carried out** in Slovakia to assess the level of online competence among young people aged 13 to 30 years. Data collected from a sample of 3,350 respondents was based on online questionnaires. Results and recommendations formed by research serve as a suitable underlying document for better understanding of the young generation and for a systemic approach in preparing youth policies (Vrabec, 2009).

**IMEC - Centre of media Literacy conducted two surveys targeted on the scale and the form of the representation of media education in the educational system in Slovakia.** These surveys were focused on the comparison of the level of media education strategies at different schools in the country. The main aim was to map current level of the implementation of media education into the curriculum in elementary and secondary education in the Slovak Republic.

**First survey carried out in 2011** was focused on current status of media education teaching at secondary schools. Research team collected data from 631 schools – this represents 82% of all schools in Slovakia (Kačínová – Kolčáková , 2012).

**The second survey was conducted in 2012** on the representative sample of 567 elementary schools from different municipalities and regions in Slovakia.

In both surveys, data collection was carried out by the method of telephone interview with teachers or school directors. This method was combined with curriculum analysis (Kačínová – Kolčáková, 2013).

**Both studies show some interesting findings and conclusions:**

- Only 10 % of schools taught the media literacy as a subject on their own. It means that only a very small number of schools include media education in their curriculum as separate subject.
- About 54 % of schools reported they use some elements of media education in other subjects – especially at Slovak language and literature, ethics, informatics.
- Approximately 22% of schools tend to use more practical methods of media education - especially in the form of school magazines.



- And 14% school reported they use other forms – e.g. film screenings at schools, discussions with journalists, etc.

The significant finding is that more than 90% of teachers have never completed any training related to media education. We suppose this is one of several reasons why it is necessary to continue with massive training programmes for teachers.

IMEC - Media Literacy Centre conducted research targeted on the media literacy of senior population. Quantitative empirical research methods were used in the research carried out in 2013. Overall number of respondents was 1022 aged 55 to 94 years. The specific objectives of the research was to analyze the levels of media literacy in relation to (a) skills in the use of media and communication technologies (b) knowledge about the functioning, behavior, benefits, risks and media relations, (c) attitude towards the media (Petranová, 2013).

In 2013, the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava received a grant from Slovak Research and Development Agency (SRDA) for a project oriented to evaluation of media literacy in Slovakia. The project was entitled "Implementation of quantitative and qualitative research strategies of monitoring and evaluation of media literacy level in the Slovak Republic."

The main objective of the project is the pilot testing of a complex system of measurement and assessment of media literacy levels of the Slovak population in accordance with questionnaire, methodology and recommendations set out in the Testing and Refining Media Literacy Levels (2011) and Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels (2010).

The objective of this project is to implement, within the conditions in Slovakia, the most appropriate research strategies which enable us to measure and evaluate the level of media literacy in the whole range of age categories, levels of education, places of residence and other social and demographic indicators. Given the fact that media literacy makes part of our everyday life and is connected with many influences, contexts and measures, it will be inevitable to use a complex solution for research data collection and their assessment. These instruments will be used for data collection: (a)

questionnaire survey by means of online questionnaire, (b) standardized interview with respondents carried out by a trained interviewer.

A research sample will include respondents aged from 8 to 75 years – students of elementary schools, secondary schools and universities, working persons and elderly persons. The sample is planned to include respondents from all self-governing regions of Slovakia with the balanced representation of rural and urban settlements. Regarding the sample size there should be around 1,000 respondents in total.

In the framework of this activity we plan to establish, in the conditions of the Faculty of Mass Media Communication of the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, a testing centre allowing an intermediate measurement and evaluation of the media literacy level. The long term aim is to provide, in the conditions of the Slovak Republic, professional capacities and background for regular testing of the results of the processes of media education and media literacy even after completion of the pilot testing.

The complex report on media literacy level in Slovakia has not been prepared yet. The preparations will be carried out in 2014 and 2015 and it will be part of the above mentioned project focused on research of individual factors and environmental factors related to media literacy in Slovakia.

Every citizen of any age should have opportunities, in both formal and informal education, to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to increase their enjoyment, understanding and exploration of the media. Media affects the lives of everyone - from the smallest children to pensioners. In Slovakia, media education is therefore defined as a lifelong process. It is not just a matter of formal school education system. Many useful activities are done in non-formal education. For example volunteers in Association of Salesian Youth (Laura). They organize informal media lessons for young volunteers and many other activities in development of media skills of children and young people.

Another example is IUVENTA – Slovak Youth Institute. It is a state institution, directly managed by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. Its scope of activities includes youth work outside school and family and the youth policy in the Slovak Republic and beyond. The aim of its activities is to implement the state policy towards children and youth. The organization supports a

wide range of programs of non-formal education and youth participation, including research and educational activities focused on media and information literacy of youth.

<b>6. Dimension</b>	<b>Main concepts and legitimizing values</b>
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An important part of media education in Slovakia is education to critical thinking. The aim of media literacy courses is not tell what programs to watch and what not, or prohibit young people the using of certain media tools or programs. Experience from Western Europe and North America shows that such educational treatment is ineffective. The aim of media education is not prohibitions and guidelines, what content follow in the media. Better way is to build a series of core competencies and skills and how use media in effective way and benefit from them on the individual and societal level. It means to know how and why media contents arise; that the media content producers pursue their own commercial interests, not interests of audience. In the context of applied educational paradigm students should realize that the media are trying at all costs to attract the attention of the audience because audience's attention is the greatest treasure in their hands and they can sell it to advertisers.

In addition, systematic protection of the minors and youth against illegal and inappropriate contents is important. Importance of such protection increases with the variety of persuasive strategies focused on drawing attention and on influencing percipients. The preventive education paradigm draws attention to the need to deal with the newly arising phenomena related to the mass spread of the Internet and new media. It is in particular online pornography, the degrading and stereotyped portrayal of women, the portrayal and glorification of violence, racist expressions, solicitation (grooming), the recruitment of child victims of trafficking in human beings, bullying, stalking and other forms of harassment, which are capable of adversely affecting the physical, emotional and psychological well-being of children.

There are two basic approaches to media education in the Slovak education system. The first approach is a critical-hermeneutic. This approach is mainly based on critical thinking. Important part of this approach is the understanding of media context and analysis of media products created by professional journalists and other media content producers. According to this paradigm media literate people should be able to:

- Understand how and why media content is produced;
- Critically analyze the techniques, languages and conventions used by the media, and the messages they convey;
- Develop critical skills in analyzing and assessing the media;
- Gain access to, and make informed choices about, a wide range of media forms and content from different cultural and institutional sources;

Second, widespread approach is called learning-by-doing. Young people are learning about media through practical activities - produce a newsletter, write own blog, create podcast, shoot a short video, etc. Basically, kids and young people learn about media by doing practical media activities

The aim of this approach is to:

- Learn to use media creatively to express and communicate ideas, information and opinions;
- Develop creative skills in using media for expression and communication, and participation in public debate.

It is important to note that in the era of new media, these two approaches to media education must coexist. Young people are very skilled in using new media; they often have more experience than their teachers. However, they lack a deeper knowledge about the process of media communication, about how the media work. Children and youngsters have little knowledge that not only the media have a critical role in the control of the society, but also audience members should be critical to the news and other media products. Really media literate person should choose media content which is in accordance with really his/her interests, may be beneficial and supports some of the individual or societal needs.

Within the conditions in Slovakia one of the main goals of media education is to teach all age groups to approach media and media contents responsibly, to teach them how to use new communication technologies and protect the minors against illegal and inappropriate contents.

The aim of such an approach is to guarantee the development of competencies which give the children and youth access to wide range of knowledge and skills, mainly those

who aim at the development of child’s personality, his/her talent and cognitive and physical abilities.

Reinforcing the respect for human rights and basic freedoms, reinforcing the respect for parents of a child, for own culture, language and Christian values are also part of this educational endeavour.

The preferred model of media education in Slovakia assumes interconnection between the activities of a state and activities of non-governmental and civic sectors both on horizontal and vertical levels. On the background of mutual confrontation, exchange of information and experience the aim of these activities is to establish a coordinated educational programme focused on the development of media and information competencies.

There are several non-profit organizations active in the area of media education in Slovakia and their activities are a valuable contribution to spreading the awareness of this issue (mainly among children, youth and teachers). However, relatively weak is the position of general public (mainly parents, seniors, socially and physically handicapped, etc.). There are organizations which would systematically deal with these groups and support their participatory activities (e.g. monitoring and reporting unsuitable contents and service presented in media and contrary to the valid legislation).

<b>7. Dimension</b>	<b>General appreciation (and recommendations)</b>
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The risk of misunderstanding the nature of media education is real - among some teachers. We need to start somewhere; we can expect that qualified teachers of media literacy will appear from nowhere. Media education has been entirely unknown concept in Slovakia. Unfortunately, even today many schools do not know what is going on in this area or they have totally mistaken ideas about the subject. It is therefore necessary to start a systematic training of qualified teachers of media education at universities.

**Recommendations:**

- 1) Each aspirant to teaching profession should acquire skills of media, information and digital literacy. Current children and youth are different from the students from ten years ago; they grow up with new technology, as digital natives. Teachers and tutors

must adapt their teaching strategies to this fact. Teachers should integrate world of new media into their courses. Schools should acquaint their students with the awareness not to allow media to manipulate them. A better way is to use the media in accordance with our individual and societal interests. This approach should be based on examples of good practice, common approaches and challenges described in the relevant research.

2) It cannot be expected that all teachers will become experts on media literacy. Therefore, it is also necessary to create separate educational programmes at universities that will prepare professionals in this field. They could act as advisors, tutors and training specialists for other teachers, parents, vulnerable youth and adults, etc.

<b>8. Dimension</b>	<b>Good practices</b>
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To illustrate, we can mention one example of good practice from Slovakia:

In 2012 the Faculty of Mass Media Communication, University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava was awarded the accreditation for a new study program called “Applied Media Studies”. This new interdisciplinary degree programme currently helps improve the situation with teacher training process in the field of media education in the Slovak educational system. In bachelor and master and PhD. studies students obtain complex knowledge about media education, media competencies development as well as theoretical and practical aspects of media communication. A graduate of the study is an expert in preparation of a wide range of media communicates, in particular communicates of public and educational nature and also programmes whose primary target groups are children and young people.

This programme includes preparation of secondary schools teachers and other school professionals responsible for media education. However, the graduate's profile is broader. Graduates are able to assert themselves as experts in the field:

- production of educational programmes,
- dramaturgy and screenwriting, focusing on children and youth audiences,
- creating serious computer games,
- creating educational materials and methodologies for other media and information literacy teachers.

Media are all around us and it is logical that the education system should prepare students for life in the world of ubiquitous media. Schools must develop the core competencies. The aim of media education is to teach young people to not be passive victims of media but active users and participants in media communication.

9. Dimension	References and resources
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