

Family Policy in Slovakia

Lessons for Gagauzia

Marek Plavcan

Department of Cross-cutting Strategies and Concepts

Outline

- I. Basic facts and figures: a cross-country comparison
- II. Tools of Family Policy
 - Subsidies
 - Leaves
 - Services
- III. Parenting Support as a Tool of Family Policy
- IV. Conclusions

PART I

BASIC FACTS AND FIGURES: A CROSS-COUNTRY COMPARISON

Basic facts and figures: a cross-country comparison

- Population of TAU Gagauzia slightly younger than the rest of Moldova, Slovakia and the EU
- Many more Gagauzians close to parenting age
 - average age of women at birth 27.3 years

Population by age group (% of total population)

	0 - 9	10 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 - 69	70+
TAU Gagauzia	12%	11%	18%	16%	12%	14%	10%	6%
Moldova	11%	11%	17%	17%	13%	14%	10%	9%
Slovakia	10%	10%	13%	16%	14%	13%	12%	12%
EU-28	10%	10%	11%	13%	14%	14%	11%	17%

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova; Eurostat

Basic facts and figures: a cross-country comparison

- TFR in TAU Gagauzia stable and close to Slovakia and EU levels

Total fertility rate

	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
TAU Gagauzia	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4
Moldova	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
Slovakia	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.5
EU-28	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova; Eurostat

- Women give birth 1.5 (3.3) years sooner compared to SK (EU)

Mean age of women at child birth

	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
TAU Gagauzia	26.3	26.4	26.6	26.6	27.1	27.3	27.1	27.5	27.3	27.3
Moldova	26.4	26.6	26.7	26.7	26.8	27.0	26.9	26.9	26.9	27.0
Slovakia	28.1	28.3	28.5	28.6	28.9	28.7	28.8	28.8	28.8	28.8
EU-28	29.7	29.7	29.8	29.9	30.1	30.1	30.3	30.4	30.5	30.6

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova; Eurostat

Basic facts and figures: a cross-country comparison

High frequencies of marriages and divorces in TAU Gagauzia have been going down,...

Crude marriage rate (per 1000 inhabitants)

	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
TAU Gagauzia	13.2	9.4	8.9	7.8	7.9	6.9	6.9	7.5	6.2	5.7
Moldova	8.2	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.3	6.8	6.9	7.2	7.0	6.2
Slovakia	5.1	5.3	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.9	5.3	5.5
EU-28	4.9	4.8	4.5	4.4	4.2		4.1	4.2	4.3	

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova; Eurostat

...but 48.2 % of marriages still break up in MD, compared to 31.1 % in SK.

Crude divorce rate (per 1000 inhabitants)

	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
TAU Gagauzia	7.9	5.6	3.9	3.2	3.0	2.7	2.5	2.8	2.5	2.1
Moldova	3.9	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.0
Slovakia	2.3	2.4	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.8	1.7
EU-28	2.1	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0	1.9	1.9			

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Moldova; Eurostat

Basic facts and figures: a cross-country comparison

- High proportion of births within marriage in spite of relatively high divorce rate

Proportion of live births outside marriage

	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Moldova	22.7	22.3	22.9	22.4	21.6	22.4				21.5
EU-28	35.1	36.1	37.1	38.1	39.3	40.3	41.1	42	42.5	42.6
Slovakia	28.8	30.1	31.6	33	34	35.4	37	38.9	39.2	40.2

Source: Eurostat

Demography

- Younger population, many people around parenting age
- Family behaviour converging to SK/EU values
- Few children born outside of wedlock

Economy

- High GDP growth (estimated 3.8 % in 2018)
- High level of remittances (21.7 % of GDP in 2016)

PART II

TOOLS OF FAMILY POLICY

Tools of Family Policy (General)

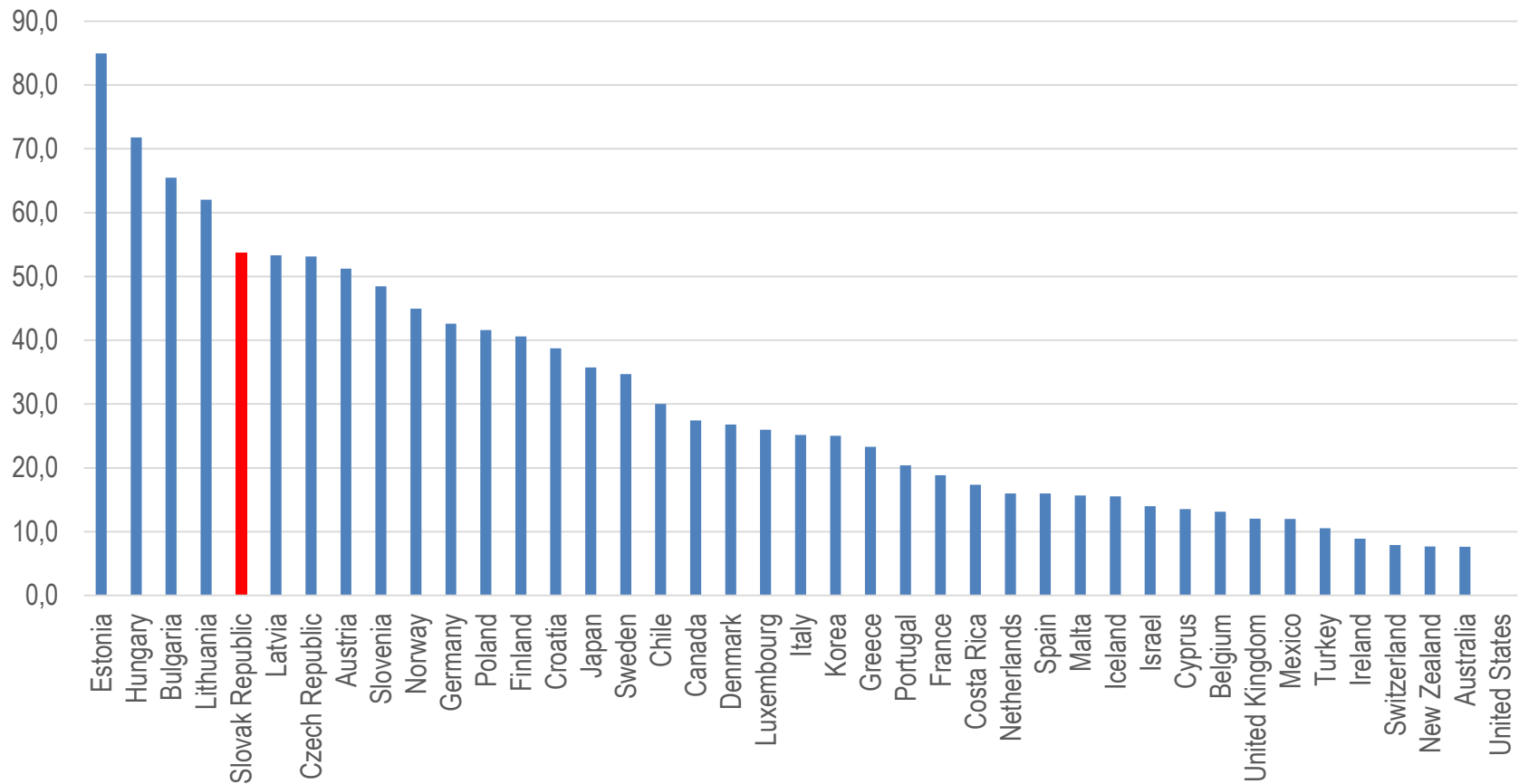
- **direct and indirect subsidies for parents** (family allowances, childcare benefits, vouchers, tax benefits and deductions)
 - Lump-sum / regular
 - Universal / income- or means-tested / selective (e.g. single-parent, disabled,...)
 - Cash / tax allowance or tax credit
 - State budget / social insurance
- **parental leave policies** (maternity, paternity, parental and child-raising leave)
 - Maternity / paternity (following the birth) / parental (after maternity leave)
 - Gender-neutral / parent-specific (quotas)
- **early childhood care and education services through public institutions** (nurseries, kindergartens, parenting support)
 - In facilities / at home
 - Public / private
 - ...

Tools of Family Policy: Subsidies and Leaves (Slovakia)

Benefit duration	Description
Lump-sum	Childbirth benefit (EUR 829.86) Conditional upon medical checks prior to birth
34 + 28 weeks	Maternity leave (100 % replacement of net income, capped) Paid out from social insurance 34 weeks for the mother + optional 28 weeks for the father
up to 3 years of age	Parental allowance (EUR 214.7 per month) Up to 3 years of age; up to 6 years of age if child is disabled Both parents can participate, but not simultaneously Length remains constant (no fathers' quota)
up to 3 years of age	Childcare allowance (up to EUR 280 per month) Reimburses the cost of childcare facility
up to 25 years of age	Child allowance (EUR 23.68 per month) Only if in education
up to 25 years of age	Tax allowance on child (EUR 48.8 p.a.) Only if in education

Total paid leave available to mothers

Full-rate equivalent, in weeks

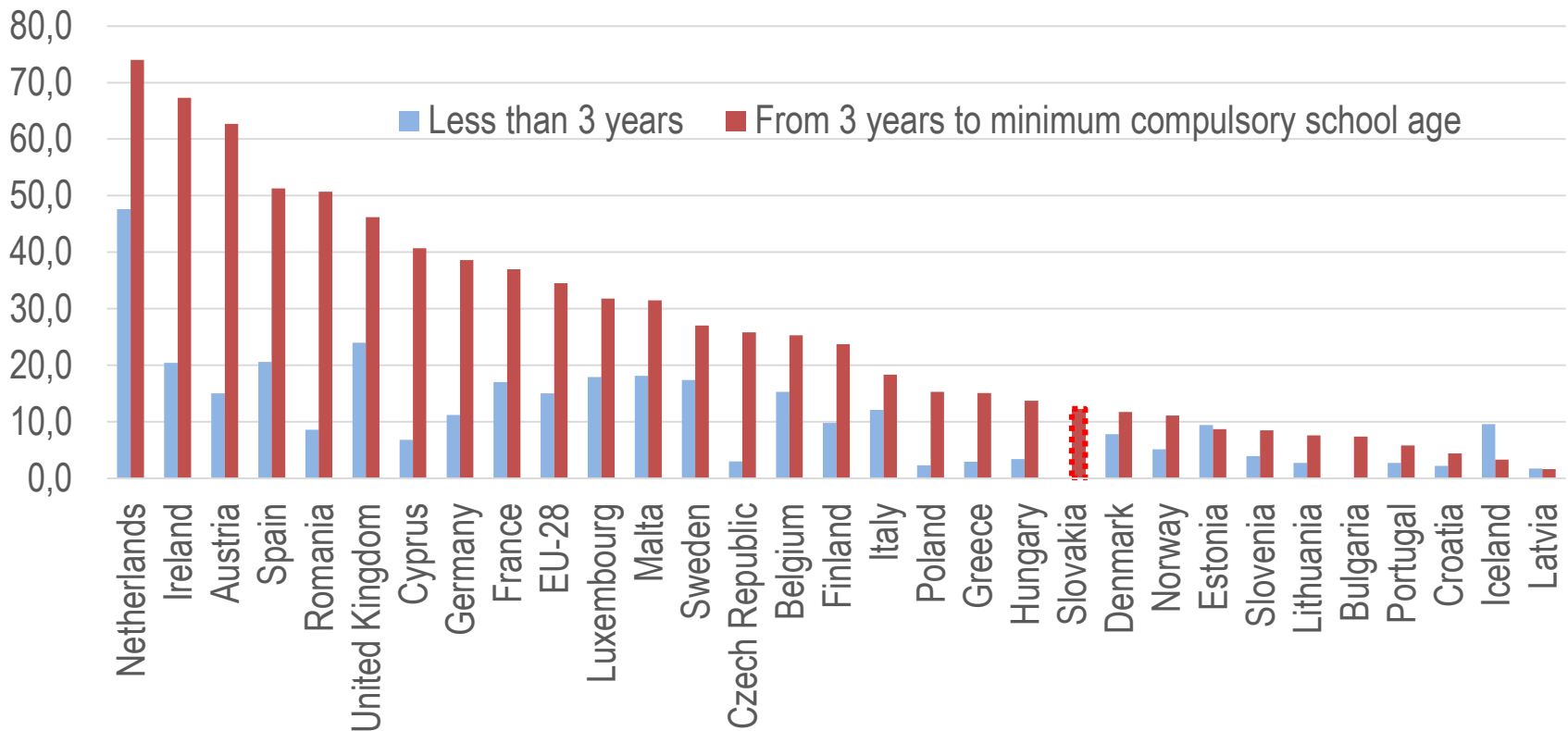


Tools of Family Policy: Services (Slovakia)

- Social Care Services (public)
 - Help with childcare (at home / in facilities)
 - Services to support work-life balance (au-pair, children's corners)
 - Nurseries and kindergartens
 - Early intervention / therapies
- NGOs and Private Initiatives
 - counselling, training courses, awareness
 - campaigns and learning materials
 - parenting support (not yet provided)
- Institutional support for families lags behind leaves and benefits

Tools of Family Policy: Services (Slovakia)

Children in formal childcare or education by age group
(% over the population of each age group)



PART III

PARENTING SUPPORT AS A TOOL OF FAMILY POLICY

Parenting Support as a Tool of Family Policy (Definitions)

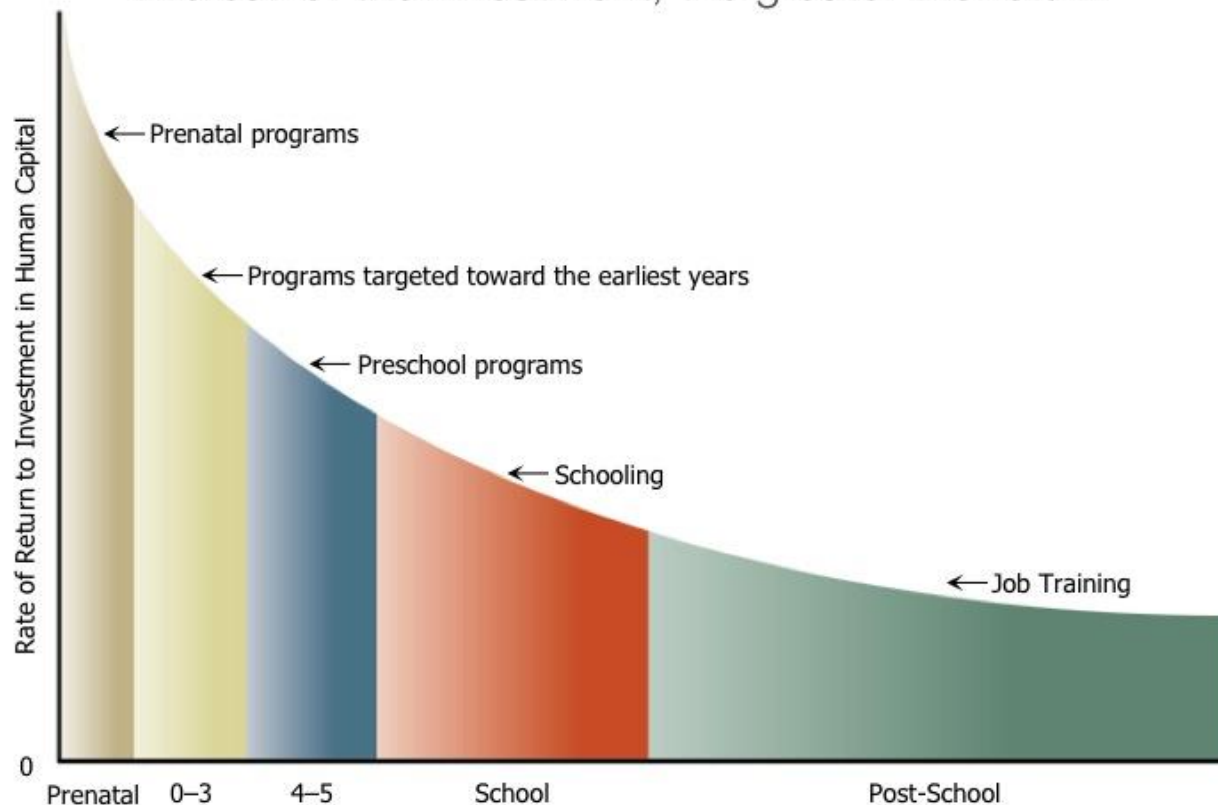
Parenting support is a kind of empowerment of parents, strengthening their parental competencies by providing special support in their individual parental choices, decisions and learning paths, with a focus on the uniqueness of each family. Parenting support contains all activities that seek to offer guidance to parents in solving all kinds of problems regarding social, health or educational issues, in a formal or informal setting (Molinuevo, 2013).

Activities of parenting support: information, support, education, training, counselling and other measures or services that focus on influencing how parents understand and carry out their parenting role

Goal of parenting support is to achieve better outcomes for children and young people (Mary Daly, 2011)

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IS A SMART INVESTMENT

The earlier the investment, the greater the return



Source: James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics

Parenting Support as a Tool of Family Policy

- Good parenting skills have a **highly positive impact** on the physical, emotional and intellectual development of children (Eurofound)
- **Early interventions** have the biggest impact on future well-being
- **Threats of public parenting support:** Preconceptions, reluctance, stigmatising, low take-up rate especially by fathers
 - Also: evaluation, quality control of services.
- **Framing and language:** Deficit view v. skill improvement view
- **Examples:** Marte Meo (NL), Incredible Years (US), 3P - Positive Parenting Programme (AU), PEKiP (DE), HIPPY (IL),...

Evaluation by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (2010)

1. Triple P-Positive Parenting Programme
2. The Incredible Years
3. Strengthening Families Programme
4. Parents as Teachers
5. Stop Now and Plan
6. Multisystemic therapy
7. Parent–child interaction therapy
8. First Step to Success
9. Guiding Good Choices
10. Parenting Wisely
11. Families and Schools Together
12. Staying Connected with Your Teen
13. Helping the Noncompliant Child
14. Positive Action
15. Family Matters
16. Strengthening Families Programme for Parents and Youth 10–14
17. Multidimensional Family Therapy
18. Nurse-Family Partnership
19. Families Facing the Future
20. Parents Under Pressure
21. Al's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices
22. Resilient Families
23. DARE to be You

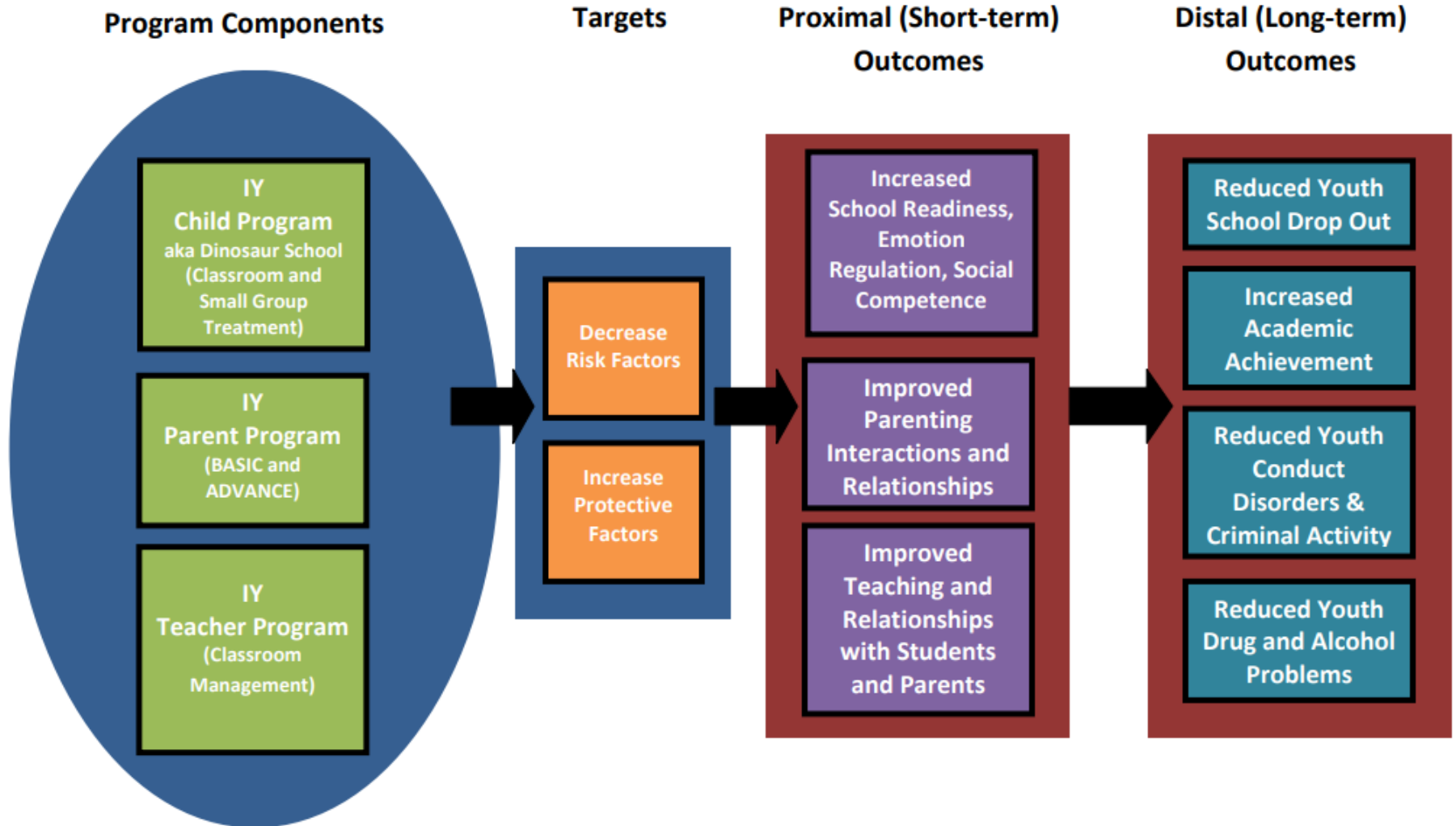
Source: *UNODC, 2010*

The Incredible Years Parent, Child, and Teacher Programs

Program developed by Carolyn Webster-Stratton, Ph. D., Professor and Director of the Parenting Clinic at the University of Washington.



Logic Model created by the Evidence-based Prevention and Intervention Support Center (EPISCenter) at Penn State University and Carolyn Webster-Stratton, Professor, University of Washington



Design of a parenting support scheme (1)

- **Topics:** health, early intervention, parent-child communication, protection against violence
- **Manualisation vs. flexibility:** international vs. country-specific
- **Target groups:** Universal (may be costly) vs. targeted (disabled, lone parents, socially excluded, teen parents, rural, divorced...)
 - „**Progressive universalism**“ = support available for all, with more support for those who need it most. Helps prevent labelling / stigma.
- **Availability:** wider range of forms increases the take-up
 - E.g. counselling, parent groups, awareness campaigns, education courses and materials
 - Go-to v. come-to
 - Compulsory v. voluntary

Design of a parenting support scheme (2)

- **Access:** low cost, peer support
 - in Sweden, the take-up of programmes by men and migrants has increased through the hiring of staff from these groups.
- **Quality:** qualified staff, low staff turnover, emotional intelligence
 - Experienced social workers achieve better results
 - Qualification may be necessary but not sufficient (HU)
- **Type of provider:** public, NGO, church (AT), private, school, doctor...
- **Legislation:** legislative change vs. strategy and recommendations (SE)
- **Funding:** Good legislation ineffective without continuous funding (EE, HU)
 - Project based vs. continuous

Parenting Support as a Tool of Family Policy

- If you cannot measure it, you cannot improve it

Example from Estonia:

Indicator	Baseline	Target 2015
The share of parents not aware of where to seek help and advice regarding child raising (European Social Survey)	44 % (2010)	Decrease
The share of parents accepting physical punishment of children (European Social Survey)	40 % (2010)	Decrease
The number of state-coordinated parental support programmes in different regions	0	2 in different regions

Conclusions

- **Main tools** of family policy: subsidies, leave policies and services
- In Slovakia, subsidies and leaves are provided **generously** while services and institutional support **lag behind needs**
- **Parenting support** is a newly discussed tool of family policy
- **Good parenting support is**
 - accessible (low cost), attractive, professional
- **Some challenges:** Design, low take-up, evaluation
- **Progressive universalism** can help better reach target groups
- **Measurable goals** may help evaluation

Resources

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

<https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/>

Council of Europe, Family Policy Database:

http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/familypolicy/Database/default_fr.asp

Eurochild <http://www.eurochild.org/en/policy-action/family-and-parenting-support/index.html>

European Alliance for Families: <http://europa.eu/familyalliance/>

OECD Family database

http://www.oecd.org/document/4/0,3746,en_2649_34819_37836996_1_1_1_1,00.html

MISSOC (Mutual Information System on Social Protection)

<https://www.missoc.org/>

Thank you for your attention

Marek.Plavcan@employment.gov.sk