

RDTCs Decisions Are Taken Little into Account by Vocational Schools

– Summary in English –

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It is a very important requirement for skills training in the public education system that students obtain the skills and trades necessary for long-term access to the labor market. One important condition is that the schism between trades obtained at vocational school and the needs of the labor market be narrowed. In order to facilitate this goal, the Hungarian government developed a system in which the Regional Development and Training Committees (RDTCs) between 2008 and 2012 proposed a vocational training school structure on a regional basis. The IEER latest analysis examines how training schools responded to the proposals of the RDTCs education structure, and how proposals have been taken into account when making enrollment decisions. A key finding of this analysis is that RDTCs decisions have only minor influence on the future development of student numbers.

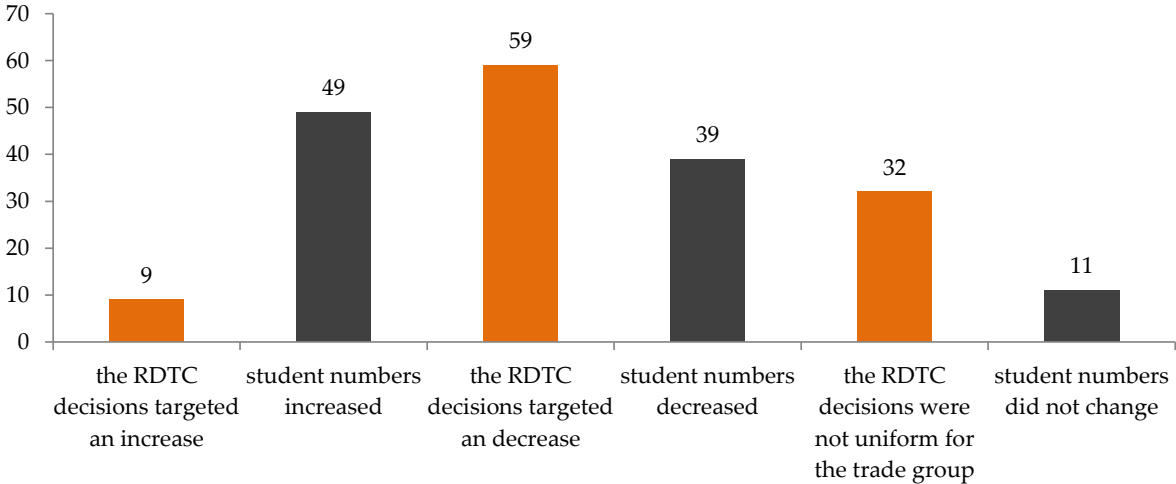
To implement changes to the vocational training system so as to fulfill the demands driven by the labor market, for four years running from 2008 the responsibilities of the Regional Development and Training Committees (RDTCs) were expanded: it had to determine enrollment rates and direction of development of vocational training programs. The aim was that with the informed decisions of the RDTCs vocational training would consist of only those professions and in as large numbers as the economy currently requires. To this extent, the RDTCs determined year after year how much aid to give certain vocations for the next school year in a given region (later county).

In relation to the effectiveness of the system two fundamental questions arise. For one, how reliably can the labor market demand of this kind be forecasted – both at the vocational and regional (later county) levels. The other is how vocational schools align their enrollment decisions with the RDTCs decisions.

The fresh analysis of the Economic and Business Research Institute (IEER) sought to answer the latter question. Our research, which examined the implementation of the 2012 decision, reinforces earlier results according to which it was found that RDTC decisions had only a minor influence on the development of student enrollment. Vocational schools -- contrary to expectations -- typically didn't follow the guidelines proposed for downsizing a vocation. School enrollment decisions instead were influenced more by the desire to increase student numbers. This is because an acceptable increase in student enrollment was more likely to come about in the case of decisions increasing vocations. Yet, decisions that would lead to a decline in student enrollment were observed at high rates. Thus, vocational schools were more likely to act on RDTC decisions when they targeted an increase in enrollment as opposed to proposed reductions. Likewise, they more likely did not take into account decisions when the guidelines called for downsizing in preference to an increase in enrollment.

The analysis also devotes space to consider the efficacy of RDTCs, and based on the available data their decisions appear feasible only to a limited extent. Firstly, frequent modifications of the RDTC decision-making process severely limited the comparability of each year and, secondly, the various data sources used a different system to the NQR identification numbers for the time period, which makes it difficult to compare RDTC decisions and their effects.

RDTCs decisions broken down by the direction of the trend as well as the number of students in 2012 (by county and occupation group) percent (N = 266)



Source: 331/2012. (XI.28.) Govt.; STAT EMS

Note: The total of the orange bars is 100%; the total of the gray bars is 100%.