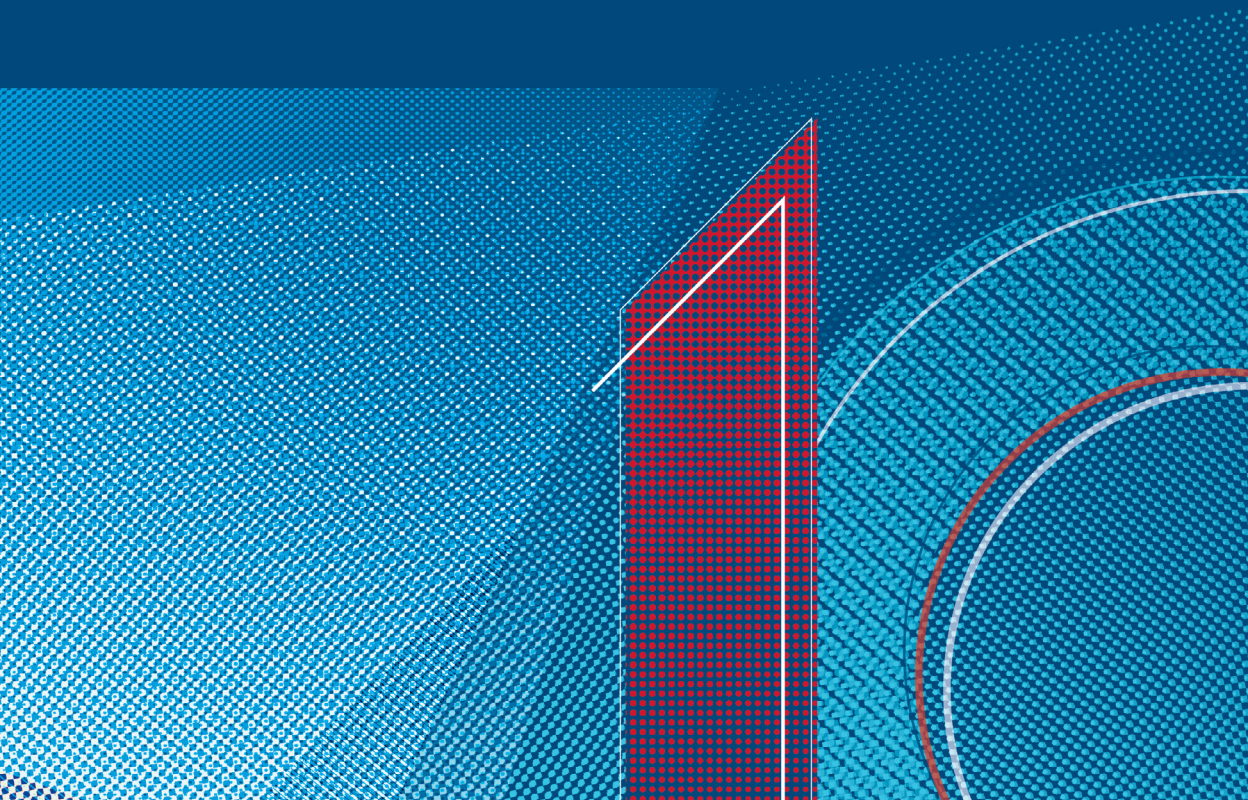


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Why is Education in Certain Regions Significantly Better than the Social Situation would Indicate?

Michal Ostrý, Václav Korbek, Karel Gargulák, PAQ Research

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The Czech Republic is a country where the social situation of the student and his/her family significantly impacts educational outcomes. In some locations in the Czech Republic, however, children's educational failure is successfully mitigated to a degree significantly higher than their initial social conditions would suggest. What is behind this? What good practice can we take away from these places? We present key characteristics of eight selected territories of municipalities with extended powers (MEPs) from administrative data, where the educational outcomes in those territories significantly outperform their students' social circumstances. For a better understanding, we go on to identify possible sources of success in the territories of Hlučín and Litvínov MEPs by means of qualitative interviews.

Introduction

Educational failure varies greatly across micro-regions. Although students' performance in the Czech Republic largely depends on social circumstances, some regions and schools are able to significantly mitigate failure. This is true not only for regions with a favorable social

situation, but also for certain greatly socially disadvantaged regions. What contributes to this? Can we find common features among them which could be applied in other areas and in the setup of the local educational policy?

This analysis aims to provide a comprehensive analytical view of the key characteristics and good practice of educational systems in the territories of municipalities with extended powers (MEPs) which boast significantly better education than the social structure of their students would indicate. In our data analysis, we thus focus on the eight most successful MEPs Bruntál, Hlučín, Kadaň, Kravaře, Krnov, Litvínov, Poděbrady, and Uherský Brod. A closer look in the form of case studies of Hlučín and Litvínov MEPs is added in this part, where we not only conducted a data analysis but also collected the testimonies of selected players. Why do we analyze the administrative territories of the MEPs in particular? There are 206 of them. This number is substantially lower than the number of municipalities (2,5 thousand out of a total of 6 thousand are school founders), yet it already allows us to observe spatial differences. The view is not, however, overly fragmented. For this type of analysis, the area of an MEP is thus more suitable than municipalities and regions. Cooperation is already ongoing at this level in many places in education, e.g., through Local Action Planning of Education Development (LAP) projects.

Main findings

- The successful MEP territories include a group with average social conditions (Hlučín, Kravaře, Poděbrady and Uherský Brod MEPs), but also a group with significant social problems (Bruntál, Litvínov, Kadaň and Krnov MEPs). Both of these groups of MEPs have been successfully reducing educational failure by 20–50% compared to socially similar MEPs. What are the contributing factors at play?
- In the socially disadvantaged MEP territories (Bruntál, Litvínov, Kadaň and Krnov MEPs), major differences can be observed compared to socially similar MEPs in the share of children in pre-school education, the share of socially disadvantaged students receiving support based on their special educational needs, the share of unqualified teaching and the share of education expenditure from municipal budgets. The group of socially average MEPs (Hlučín, Kravaře, Poděbrady and Uherský Brod MEPs) does not differ much from socially similar MEPs in terms of these factors, with factors that are more difficult to capture in the data (e.g., quality of teaching, cooperation between schools) in all probability playing a more important role.

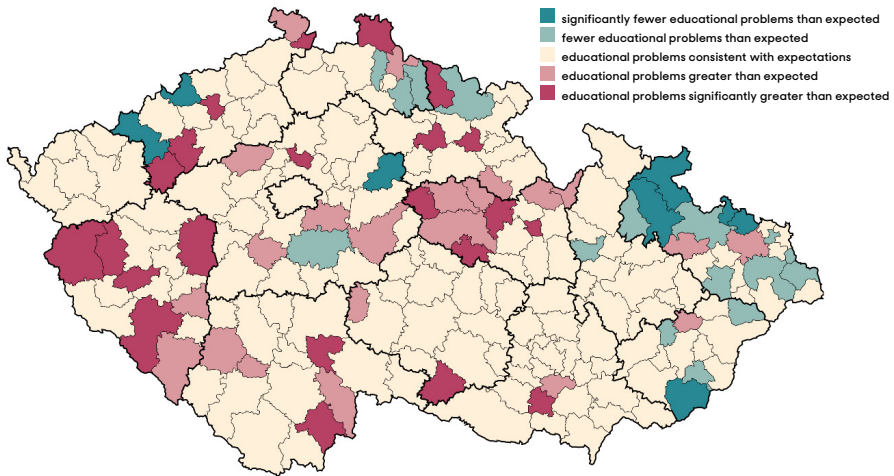
- A much higher number of socially or culturally disadvantaged students receives support in Litvínov MEP than in other socially similar MEPs. This is thanks to the identification of special educational needs. There are also many more teaching assistants in the schools. The quality work of a pedagogical and psychological counseling center and the more frequent involvement of special educators and psychologists in schools also plays a role in this regard. Elementary schools also receive above-average funding per student from municipal budgets within the MEP's area.
- Schools in the administrative district of Hlučín MEP rank among the best in the Czech Republic in assessments conducted by the Czech School Inspectorate (CSI), *Educators and Their Development* and *Teaching and Teaching Outcomes* (for more information on these areas, see the Case Studies chapter below, Hlučín MEP section). There is networking and cooperation not only between principals but also between teachers in the area. The local elementary schools enjoy a high degree of support from their founders. The Czech School Inspectorate has identified many examples of carefully conceived teaching at individual schools around Hlučín in its inspection findings.

What does administrative data tell us

Regions can have varying success in developing children's potential, notwithstanding their social conditions and degree of social disadvantage. We therefore used administrative data to calculate whether the educational failure rate in a given MEP is better, adequate or lagging given the social problems in the area. To put it simply – we do not want to compare Vítkov MEP and Říčany MEP, but two comparable regions, such as Jihlava MEP and Chrudim MEP. We measure educational failure as an index resulting from non-completion of elementary education, failing grades in elementary schools and absenteeism (excused and unexcused classes). Social problems consist mainly of parental debt and debt collection, poor housing of children and the proportion of people living in socially excluded locations. In this analysis, we focus on territories that exhibit much lower educational failure rates than we would expect based on the extent of social problems.

The map below shows that in the territories of eight MEPs, educational failure is significantly lower than would be consistent with social conditions. These are Bruntál, Hlučín, Kadaň, Kravaře, Krnov, Litvínov, Poděbrady and Uherský Brod. A full half of these MEPs are located in the Moravian-Silesian Region, which is generally characterized by a high proportion of MEPs where education is at least slightly better than we would expect in light of the social conditions. Four regions are represented and the MEPs with a significantly lower educational failure rate are thus not only concentrated in a particular part of the country.

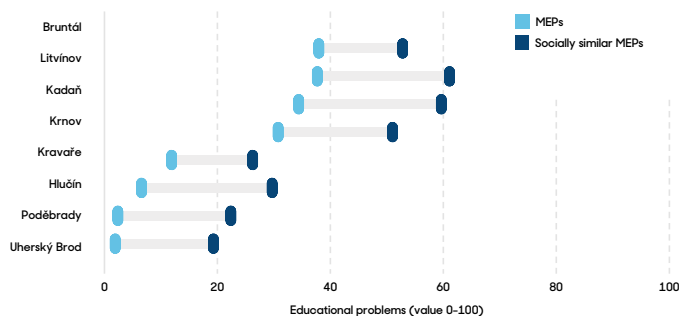
Educational lagging index versus social circumstances



The lagging index expresses whether educational failure is higher, consistent with or lower than social conditions would suggest. For the detailed methodology, please see the [Map of Education](#). Source: PAQ Research.

The graph below shows the educational failure index on a scale of 0–100 in the MEP area, where it has been successfully significantly reduced. The educational failure rate is on average 20 points lower than the average of 20 other MEPs with similar social circumstances. The biggest difference can be seen in Kadaň where the failure rate on the index scale is 25 points lower. The results also show that the successful MEPs include MEPs with both favorable and unfavorable social conditions. Bruntál, Litvínov, Kadaň and Krnov MEPs are among the territories with fairly poor social conditions and we would expect them to exhibit a relatively high failure rate, yet the players in the territories of these MEPs have managed to reduce the failure rate to average values. Hlučín, Kravaře, Poděbrady and Uherský Brod MEPs, in contrast, have been rising from average to top national values.

How much lower is the educational failure rate in successful MEPs compared to socially similar MEPs?



The educational failure index is on a scale from 1 to 100. The index comprises non-completion of elementary education, failing grades and absenteeism. The data presented is for 2019–2020 for non-completion and 2015–2021 for failing grades and absenteeism. For the detailed methodology, see the [Map of Education](#). Source: PAQ Research.

How significant is such reduction in the educational failure components – non-completion of elementary education, failing grades and absenteeism? **Very significant.** In the Krnov region, for example, the rate of non-completion of elementary education is lower by nearly half than in a socially similar MEP (4.8% vs. 8.3%). In the Kadaň MEP, the reduction amounts to 60% (3.7% vs. 9.8%). In the Poděbrady region, compared to territories of its socially similar MEPs, they have been able to reduce absenteeism significantly, to 49 classes per year per student as opposed to 84 classes. While these are some of the most striking examples, figures which are 20–50% lower than the figures for socially similar MEP territories are common in this successful group.

Hypothetical calculation of rate of return for the state budget from the area of Kadaň MEP

According to studies, every student who successfully completes secondary school will pay into the state budget approximately CZK 2.5 million more over his/her lifetime than a student with elementary education only (PAQ and IDEA 2020). The difference between uncompleted and completed elementary education will not be in all probability as high but will range between hundreds of thousands to millions per student (some students will complete secondary schools). In such case, **thanks to a higher number of students completing secondary schools in Kadaň MEP, the state would obtain dozens or hundreds of millions of crowns for the state budget.**

Such reduction is significant for the educational paths of children, but also for the economic prosperity of the country. Let us use the example of the area of Kadaň MEP. There are approximately 3.8 thousand students in elementary education in this MEP. Thanks to the successful development of these children, **230 more students** complete elementary education (i.e., Grade 9 of elementary school) than we would expect judging by social conditions.

Factors related to regional success

What are successful regions doing differently that they are succeeding beyond expectations in developing the potential of their students and achieving reductions in failure? Administrative data can provide a first perspective. From such data, we have selected five indicators whose importance has been discussed in literature,¹ namely:

- Percentage of children aged 3–5 who attend kindergarten.
- The proportion of students with special educational needs due to a different cultural background or other living conditions (“SEN CLC”) in elementary schools (on a general level, this involves support to socially disadvantaged students).
- Proportion of teaching done by unqualified teachers in elementary schools.
- Number of students per full-time teaching assistant in regular elementary school classes.
- Funding from municipalities per student per year dedicated to elementary school education.

The table below documents that successful MEP territories outperform socially similar MEP territories in the reduction of educational failure in a number of indicators. A large proportion of MEPs have a higher proportion of children in pre-school education, a higher number of teaching assistants, or they enjoy more substantial financial support from founders in the region. More substantial support for students through SEN CLC is less common. The results show that better educational outcomes and success are difficult to achieve without significant financial and staff support of students’ education.

1) E.g.:
Heckman, J. J. Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children. *Science*, 312(5782), 1900–1902. 2006.
Jackson, C. K., Johnson, R. C., Perisco, C. The Effects of School Spending on Educational and Economic Outcomes: Evidence from School Finance Reforms (No. w20847). *National Bureau of Economic Research*, 2015.
Chetty, R., Friedman, J. N., Rockoff, J. E. Measuring the Impacts of Teachers II: Teacher Value-added and Student Outcomes in Adulthood. *American Economic Review*, 104(9), 2633-79. 2014.

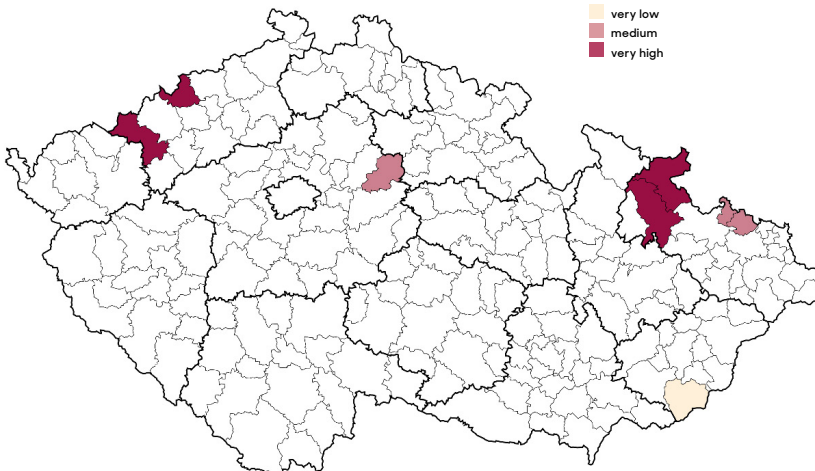
In what factors are MEPs better than socially similar regions?

Indicator	Microregion (administrative district of the MEP)
Proportion of students in kindergartens	Bruntál, Hlučín, Kravaře, Krnov, Uherský Brod
Support through special educational needs (CLC)	Litvínov, Poděbrady, Uherský Brod
Unqualified teaching	Bruntál, Kadaň, Kravaře, Krnov, Uherský Brod
Teaching assistants	Bruntál, Kadaň, Krnov, Litvínov, Poděbrady, Uherský Brod
Funding from founder	Bruntál, Hlučín, Kadaň, Krnov, Litvínov, Uherský Brod

Differences according to social conditions

The regions which have been successfully reducing educational failure do not form a uniform group. Although each MEP area is specific, they can be roughly divided into two groups. The first group can be characterized by a high degree of social issues, in particular destabilizing poverty manifested in the form of parental debt and debt collection and poor housing of children. This group includes the Bruntál, Kadaň, Krnov and Litvínov MEPs. The second group with better social conditions includes the Hlučín, Kravaře, Poděbrady and Uherský Brod MEPs.

Destabilizing poverty index in successful MEPs



The destabilizing poverty index closely relates to debt collection and poor housing of families, life in socially excluded areas and unemployment at times of recession. For the detailed methodology, please see the [Map of Education](#). Source: PAQ Research.

The groups differ in terms of factors. Major differences compared to socially similar MEPs can only be seen in the group with worse social conditions. This group has both a higher proportion of children attending kindergarten and significantly higher support for students in elementary schools. They have more full-time assistants, more frequent support through special educational needs, less unqualified teaching, and there is also a great difference in the resources directed by the municipalities into education. It is apparent in regions with a high proportion of socially disadvantaged children that investment into education – financial and personnel – is an important part of success. As the following section will illustrate, while this is not the only condition, it seems to be a necessary one.

In contrast to this, the group with better social conditions has only a slightly higher proportion of children in kindergarten and less unskilled teaching compared to socially similar MEPs. Based on quantitative data, we can only speculate what other factors may relate to educational success in the MEP territories. One possibility is that, because of the lower proportion of socially disadvantaged students and students at risk of educational failure, other tools – such as quality teaching by teachers and small differences between the quality of schools – may be more effective. Two indicators would suggest this: 1) the relatively low volume of unqualified teaching; 2) the Czech School Inspectorate’s assessment of teaching and staffing. Unfortunately, we do not have data for all the MEPs, but as the case study from the Hlučín region shows, it is the quality of teaching by teachers and the small differences between the quality of schools that seem to be crucial for successful reduction of educational failure.

Factors that may relate to successful reduction of educational failure by MEPs sorted by social conditions

	Bruntál, Kadaň, Krnov, Litvínov	Socially similar MEPs	Differ- ence	Hlučín, Kravaře, Poděbrady, Uherský Brod	Socially similar MEPs	Differ- ence
Proportion of children in kindergartens (aged 3–5)	88.6%	84.4%	4.3%	92.9%	91.7%	1.2%
Proportion of students with SEN CLC	5.6%	3.4%	2.2%	0.7%	1.3%	-0.6%
Proportion of unqualified teaching at elementary schools and traditional grammar schools	9.2%	12.4%	-3.2%	5.3%	6.5%	-1.2%
Number of students per assistant at elementary schools	43	56	-13	113	70	43
Municipal funding per student and year at elementary schools (CZK)	14,388	11,506	2,882	11,238	11,633	-395

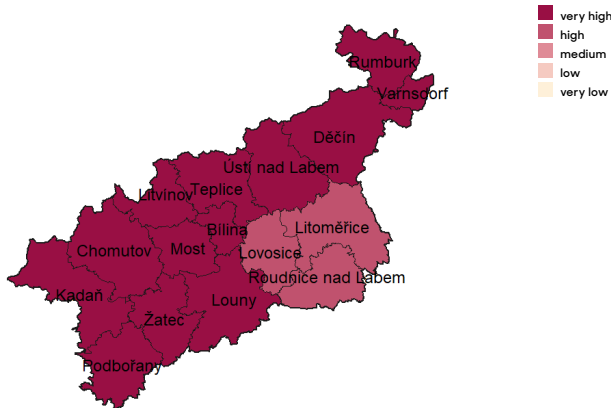
Source: Data for school year 2020/2021 as reported to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Case studies

Litvínov MEP

Litvínov MEP is located in the Ústecký Region where most territories of its MEPs suffer from significant social problems. It is estimated that 30% of parents in Litvínov have fallen into debt collection schemes and 2.5% of children live in poor housing. In addition, 16% of residents live in an excluded location. This is the highest value of all MEPs in the Czech Republic. Due to these difficult social conditions which greatly impact family life – from poverty, through stress, to frequent family breakdowns – a large proportion of students are at risk of educational failure.

Destabilizing poverty in the Ústecký Region (severity of problems)



The destabilizing poverty index closely relates to debt collection and poor housing of families, life in socially excluded areas and unemployment at times of recession. For the detailed methodology, please see the [Map of Education](#). Source: PAQ Research.

Litvínov MEP features several factors focusing on joint education and adequate support to students which may relate to the successful reduction of educational failure. A much greater proportion of students receive support (support measures) on account of special educational needs stemming from SEN CLC – which indicates that in addition to the MEP generally utilizing tools for identifying SEN and related support measures, it chooses different social conditions, rather than the (frequently used) diagnosis of a health handicap. There is also an above-average number of teaching assistants, and moreover, an above-average amount of municipal funding going into elementary school education. According to quantitative data, the utilization of support offered by “joint” education seems to be an important part of the success. On the other hand, the MEP area under consideration does not exhibit an

above-average proportion of children in kindergartens or a low proportion of unqualified teaching as compared to socially similar MEPs.

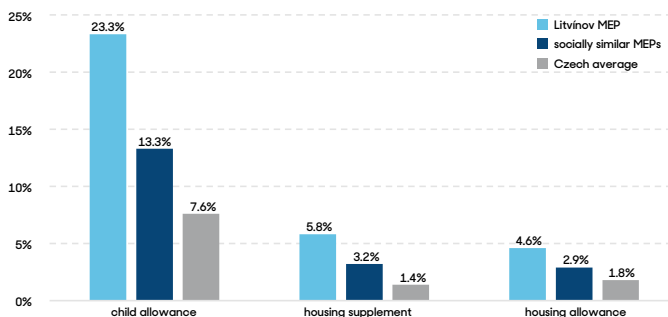
Factors that may relate to successful reduction of educational failure by MEPs

	Litvínov MEP	Socially similar MEPs	Czech average
Proportion of children in kindergartens (aged 3–5)	82.7%	82.4%	89.8%
Proportion of students with SEN CLC	16%	3.4%	1.8%
Proportion of unqualified teaching at elementary schools and traditional grammar schools	16.1%	13.2%	8.7%
Number of students per assistant at primary schools	39.5	50.9	65.9
Municipal funding per student and year at elementary schools (CZK)	13,629	10,969	11,459

Source: Data for school year 2020/2021 as reported to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Another interesting aspect is the effective utilization of social support tools – child allowances or housing supplements or allowances. Compared to socially similar MEPs, a significantly larger proportion has been drawing these benefits in Litvínov MEP. This form of support is supposed to target families in difficult social circumstances, and this may be reflected in the children’s education in a positive fashion. The above-described reality may also suggest that the social services and employment offices there work more efficiently than those in socially similar MEPs.

What is the percentage of families drawing social benefits in Litvínov MEP?

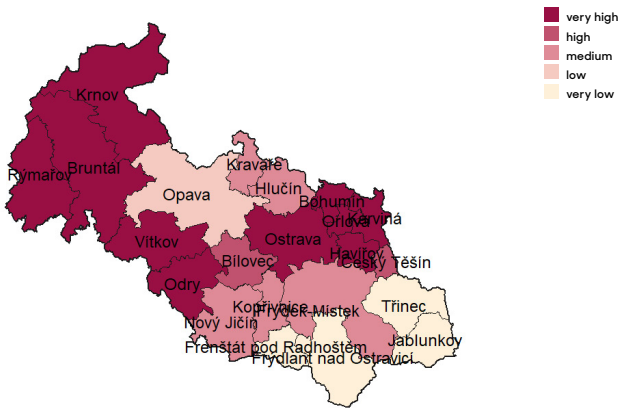


Source: Agency for Social Inclusion and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, 2020.

Hlučín MEP

The administrative district of Hlučín MEP lies in the Moravian-Silesian region. What is interesting about this is that the areas marked by significant social problems are next to areas with very favorable social conditions. Hlučín MEP falls into the group without significant social problems. The level of destabilizing poverty is average (see the map). The proportion of children suffering from poor housing is 0.5%, debt collection schemes apply to an estimated 8% of parents. Both values are well below the national average. No excluded locations have been identified in the MEP's area in 2015.

Destabilizing poverty in the Moravian-Silesian Region (severity of problems)



The destabilizing poverty index closely relates to debt collection and poor housing of families, life in socially excluded areas and unemployment at times of recession. For the detailed methodology, please see the [Map of Education](#). Source: PAQ Research.

In the area of Hlučín MEP, a high proportion of children attend pre-school and, moreover, an above-average amount of funding from municipal budgets is invested into education. Unlike in other socially similar MEPs, it has neither a high number of teaching assistants, nor a high proportion of identified special educational needs. That could mean that there are only a few students requiring this type of support because of different cultural and living conditions, or that other forms and tools are used to develop the potential of the schools.

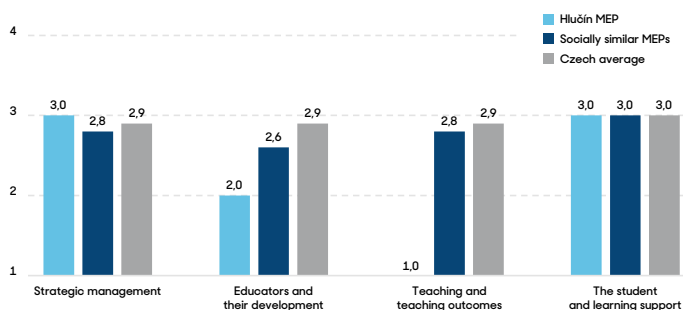
Factors that may relate to successful reduction of educational failure by MEPs

	Hlučín MEP	Socially similar MEPs	Czech average
Proportion of children in kindergartens (aged 3–5)	94.1%	92.1%	89.8%
Proportion of students with SEN CLC	0.2%	1.5%	1.8%
Proportion of unqualified teaching at elementary schools and classic grammar schools	5%	6%	8.7%
Number of students per assistant at elementary schools	104.1	65.9	65.9
Municipal funding per student and year at elementary schools (CZK)	13,184	11,417	11,459

Source: Data for school year 2020/2021 as reported to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

This is what the graph provided below suggests: it documents four areas consisting of multiple criteria applied at elementary schools by the Czech School Inspectorate using the “Quality School” model. These areas are *Strategic management*, *Educators and their development*, *Teaching and teaching outcomes* and *The student and learning support*. It is precisely in the *Educators and their development* and *Teaching and teaching outcomes* areas that schools within Hlučín MEP attain above-average results. In the area of *Teaching and teaching outcomes*, Hlučín MEP actually had the best results of all MEPs in the Czech Republic where the inspectors had inspected at least one third of schools by 2022 (a total of 125 MEPs). This points to good practice in the way that at least a majority of schools are run in Hlučín MEP. Teaching and teacher development will be the topics addressed in the part focused on quality. These areas may be an important factor for the reduction of educational failure in regions not plagued by significant social problems.

Czech School Inspectorate’s assessment of areas under the Quality School model



This is an average assessment in MEPs from all the elementary schools visited (33% of schools in Hlučín MEP were visited). The scale is from 1 (prevailing high quality within Czech context) to 5 (prevailing low quality within the Czech context). Source: Czech School Inspectorate, 2018–2021.

Case studies – the qualitative part

The quantitative analysis of Hlučín and Litvínov MEPs provided the above exhibited interesting results and differences from socially similar MEPs. This part strives to describe in more detail the situation in elementary schools in the MEP and identify the good practice followed by the founders, the individual schools, the locally active NGOs or other players that might be behind the relative success of both MEPs in reducing educational failure. To that end, we have conducted several semi-structured in-depth interviews and supplemented them with the conclusions drawn by the Czech School Inspectorate and other reports available.

The methodological structure of the interviews followed the results of the quantitative part. It demonstrated that the Litvínov MEP has been providing above-average support to socially disadvantaged students via special educational needs and support measures (teaching assistant), while Hlučín MEP performed excellently in the criteria of the Quality School model, in particular in the area of teaching. Relations with school founders and local specifics were examined separately in both MEPs. These are described in more detail for the individual MEPs.

Litvínov MEP

In Litvínov MEP, we focused on the relatively high number of students supported via special educational needs – different cultural and living conditions (SEN CLC) – as well as the frequent support in the form of teaching assistants in the teaching process.

Respondents:

- Mgr. Pavel Škramlík, principal, Private Sports Elementary School in Litvínov
- Psychologist, Pedagogical and Psychological Counseling Center (PPCC) in Most

Schools in regional context

There are a total of 12 elementary schools in the area of Litvínov MEP; out of that, seven schools are located in Litvínov proper. The data and responses of the people involved suggests that children from excluded locations and poor social circumstances mostly attend the Elementary School and Kindergarten in Litvínov-Janov and the Elementary School in Litvínov-Hamr. Data reported at the beginning of 2021/2022 school year then indicates that these two schools, together with the Elementary School and Kindergarten in Litvínov-Ruská, have virtually all their students diagnosed as SEN CLC within the entire MEP.

Good practice examples

Good practice was identified in the following three areas in particular:

- quality work of the pedagogical and psychological counseling center;

- schools' focus on working with teaching assistants;
- quality specialized educators (guidance counselor, special psychologist, etc.).

The Pedagogical and Psychological Counseling Center (PPCC) for the Ústecký Region has a branch office in Litvínov, to be found in the building of the Special Elementary School and Practical School in Litvínov. The branch office diagnoses SEN CLC based on guidance counselors' referrals. The interviews indicate that the pedagogical and psychological counseling center has been cooperating successfully with all the schools in the region. Some staff members of the counseling center work part-time as school psychologists or special educators in local schools.

“Yes, we work closely with schools in Litvínov. In addition, I work as a school psychologist in Janov. I work part-time in the counseling center and part-time at the school. A colleague of mine from the center then works as a special educator at the school at. We really know those schools well.”

Psychologist, PPCC Most

The pedagogical and psychological counseling center is frequently, although not always as a matter of standard practice, involved in networking and local collaboration with prevention methodologists, guidance counselors, teaching assistants and other school staff who work with children from socially excluded locations.

“I also organize meetings of guidance counselors from individual schools several times a year. These personal contacts are very helpful in resolving the problems of individual students. We also have a staff member who convenes meetings of prevention methodologists. They therefore receive methodological support from us, and when they are at a loss, they pick up the phone or we make arrangements and go see them.”

Psychologist, PPCC Most

Following a SEN CLC diagnosis, schools often take advantage of a staffing support measure – a teaching assistant. Filling these posts does not appear to be a problem, and sometimes the applicants even outnumber the posts available.

Both the interviews and CSI inspection reports suggest there is also good practice in follow-up work with students with special educational needs. There are often also school psychologists or special educators at schools. The Private Sports Elementary School has its own, comprehensively staffed, in-house counseling team.

“We have our own school counseling team consisting of a special educator, a social educator, and it will now also include a school psychologist, career advisor and preventionist.”

Pavel Škramlík

“The school has been successfully identifying students with special educational needs and creating conditions for their successful education. We currently have 20 students with special educational needs at the school. These students are given effective support in the teaching process by five teaching assistants.”

Elementary School and Kindergarten Hora Svaté Kateřiny, [2022 CSI inspection report](#)

The collaboration between teachers and teaching assistants is also described as positive.

“I was there when teaching assistants first began to appear in schools, when it was not yet entrenched in the law. Teachers at that time were worried this would entail extra work, that somebody would be checking on them in the classroom or that somebody would be there with them. But there has been a complete turnaround. Teachers have realized that a good assistant can provide them with support.”

Psychologist, PPCC Most

Another possible good practice are after-school clubs in junior elementary school and their extended offer for needy students in recent years. This option is welcomed by the teaching staff especially when it comes to gifted children who do not have adequate conditions for doing schoolwork at home.

“All the schools in the area have responded by filling up their after-school clubs. The number of children in the after-school clubs has increased, and the lack of space had to be addressed as a result. I think it is working fine now.”

Psychologist, PPCC Most

Hlučín MEP

The analysis provided above demonstrates that schools within the Hlučín MEP territory score well above average in the quality of teaching and teaching outcomes, and the quality of teachers' activity and development is also found to be high above average. We therefore focus on the verification and possibly also more precise identification of good practice in these two areas in this part.

Respondent: Bc. et Bc. Hana Paverová, LAP Project Manager, Local Action Group Hlučínsko

Schools in a regional context

There are 19 elementary schools in total in the territory of Hlučín MEP, all except one established by municipalities. Out of that, nine schools have under 100 students, and only two schools (Elementary School Hlučín-Rovně, Elementary School and Kindergarten Ludgeřovice) have over 500 enrolled. This MEP thus has a higher number of schools with

low student counts and this fact may be reflected in higher operating costs and in the index of municipal funding per student, both of which are above average in Hlučín MEP.

Good practice examples

Good practice was identified in the following three areas in particular:

- above-standard support by founders;
- networking, cooperation and forging of connections between both teachers and principals;
- excellent quality of teaching and systematic work with a variety of teaching methods.

CSI's above-standard assessment of the quality of teaching and teaching outcomes is also supported by individual inspection reports, which often mention systematic work with different methods and the carefully conceived teaching process. While negative assessments or suggestions for improvement also appear, they are quite rare.

“Systematic use of critical thinking methods in education by all of the elementary school teachers.”

Elementary School and Kindergarten Hlučín - Darkovičky, [2018 CSI inspection report](#)

“Carefully conceived way of conducting the teaching process in the school, based on stimulating and effective methods leading to the attainment of the defined goal, and systematic evaluation of the learning outcomes of the students.”

Elementary School Hlučín, Hornická, [2019 CSI inspection report](#)

“Pedagogical constructivism is gradually applied in the teaching process, with an emphasis on the use of the three-phase teaching model and active learning methods.”

Elementary School Hlučín – Rovniny, [2020 CSI inspection report 2020](#)

“Carefully conceived way of conducting the teaching process, selection and alternation of activities has a positive impact on student activity in class, including their motivation to learn.”

Elementary School and Kindergarten Vřesina, [2017 CSI inspection report 2017](#)

The interview also indicates that education and the good financial situation of schools is a priority for most municipalities in the territory of Hlučín MEP.

“Schools are the shop window of every municipality. Even the mayors themselves say so. As for future plans, many municipalities have, as their priority, the support of schools, their modernization, increasing the capacity of kindergartens, etc.”

Hana Paverová

Another interesting factor may be cooperation extending beyond the borders of individual municipalities in the Hlučín region. There is, for example, an informal association of principals in “Little Network”.

“I don’t know what the format of their meetings is now but the Little Network is an association of mainly ‘progressive’ principals. They have often been systematically supporting education in critical thinking, mentoring, external and internal assessment of the quality of school activities, etc. for several years.”

Hana Paverová

The respondent also speaks highly about collaboration in the field of education between different municipalities:

“With the arrival of LAP (Local Action Plan) in January 2016, education also came under the spotlight of inter-municipal cooperation, because each municipality had more or less dealt with education on its own until then.”

Hana Paverová

The interview with the respondent indicates that cooperation at the MEP level is an essential component of the functioning of individual schools. It is supposedly not uncommon for teachers to seek inspiration for their teaching outside their schools, and for instance, Elementary School and Kindergarten Ludgeřovice holds workshops on robotics or working with information technologies and their use in teaching in the region from time to time. Such above-standard cooperation could be one of the possible factors behind the excellent results of the MEP in the assessment conducted by the Czech School Inspectorate, and therefore a source of the MEP’s success in reducing school failure.

Recommendations for the Czech Republic

These recommendations constitute inspiration for measures that could help reduce school failure. The measures are based on areas identified in the quantitative analysis and further developed in the qualitative research.

What can be done at the level of the local education system and by the founder?

- Ensure the comparable quality of all schools within the micro-region. This represents a shift in learning for all, not just some students.
- Organize cooperation between all local bodies (schools, social workers and NGOs, child welfare authorities and others) in the prevention of absenteeism, truancy and overall school failure of children.
- Prevent the establishment of segregated schools and abolish the existing ones. Desegregation fosters integration, educational aspirations and social mobility.
- Create conditions and provide incentives to attract qualified and certified teachers in schools. Examples of incentives may include the provision of rent-controlled apartments, a signing bonus, cooperation with teacher training faculties and internships in desirable disciplines (e.g., scholarships, support for accompanying teachers in schools, their remuneration, etc.).
- Reflect on the evaluation criteria from CSI's Quality School framework in the selection, evaluation and remuneration system for principals.

How can the founder help alleviate social problems?

- Inform families that they may be eligible for a child allowance which is no longer a poverty benefit and may help the lower middle class finance extra-curricular clubs, trips, etc. – households whose income is under 3.4 times the subsistence minimum qualify for the allowance.
- As regards children with minimal family support and high absenteeism, to not use – as it is detrimental to the family and it is not very effective – the option of withdrawing benefits in case of absences, and instead to transfer the child allowance to the school and use it to pay for trips or supplies where appropriate.

- Waive kindergarten fees or fees for leisure-time activities (leisure centers, elementary art schools or school clubs). The target group can be the bottom 1/3 or so of families which can be administratively defined – child allowance and housing benefit recipients, lower income earners for whom the child credit converts into a bonus.
- Create a “case management” system - i.e., a system that helps families with housing, but also links them to other social and educational support.
- Establish cooperation with local labor offices to work truly pro-actively in the area of employment policy, but not restrictively in the area of state social support benefits (housing benefit, child allowance) and one-off benefits (emergency benefit) that can spare families from falling into social exclusion.

What can schools do and what should the founders emphasize in working with them?

- Increase children’s participation in school meal programs. It is advisable to offer free meal programs for children and students from low-income families.
- Monitor students’ performance and offer help to those who are struggling. Identification should be both proactive for at-risk groups and reactive based on the deteriorating performance of any student.
- Offer tutoring through a variety of channels: at school after class, in after-school clubs, outside the school offering support for homework, preparation for the next day and play, as well as focused 1:1 tutoring by school or NGO staff directly in the families.
- Make optimal use of the new model of regional education funding and the PHmax system to support quality education and learning. This entails the effective use of funding of support measures with a view to the needs of children with special educational needs.
- Use elements of formative evaluation, i.e., monitoring individual progress and setting achievable challenges so as to gather evidence of learning for all students.

- Make strategic management of the school more efficient: creating a vision and a realistic development strategy and reflecting them in the day-to-day activities of schools, managing pedagogical processes with effective use of self-evaluation, creating a positive climate or making optimal use of the school's material conditions to provide quality teaching.
- Support teachers' development through systematic planning of their further professional development: supporting teachers' professionalism not only in subjects but also in pedagogical processes and work with children, and long-term cooperation of the teaching staff, including mutual observation and effective teamwork.
- Work, on a long-term basis, with the educational potential and aspirations of students in schools to ensure that they choose an appropriate educational path, including the choice of secondary school. In addition, to support career guidance in education, create career advisor positions and have elementary and secondary schools cooperate in the transition to higher education.

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