

Green Book  
FOR THE RENEWAL OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN HUNGARY

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FOR THE RENEWAL  
OF PUBLIC EDUCATION  
IN HUNGARY

Round Table for Education  
and Child Opportunities

THE HUNGARY OF  
TOMORROW

Editors: Károly Fazekas • János Köllő • Júlia Uarga

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ROUND TABLE FOR EDUCATION **HUNGARY**  
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Editors Károly Fazekas  
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The papers in this Volume were debated by the Round Table for Education and Child Opportunities and approved by a majority.

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# Foreword

The world is rapidly becoming a different place, and the challenges to individuals and societies posed by globalisation and modernisation are widely acknowledged. Increasingly diverse and interconnected populations, rapid technological change in the workplace and in everyday life, and the instantaneous availability of vast amounts of information represent but a few of these new demands. In this globalised world, individuals and countries that invest intelligently in education benefit socially and economically from that choice, and increasingly so. Among the OECD countries with the largest expansion of tertiary education over the last decades most – and few countries more so than Hungary – have still seen rising earnings differentials for tertiary graduates, suggesting that an increase in knowledge workers does not lead to a decrease in their pay as is the case for low-skilled workers.

The other player in the globalisation process is innovation and technological development, but this too depends on education, not just because tomorrow's knowledge workers and innovators require high levels of education, but also because a highly-educated workforce is a pre-requisite for adopting and absorbing new technologies and increasing productivity. Together, skills and technology have flattened the world such that all work that can be digitised, automated or outsourced can now be done by the most effective and competitive individuals, enterprises or countries, wherever they are. The scale of the impact of these developments was magnified by the collapse of communism, India's turn away from autocracy and China's shift to market capitalism. This allowed another three billion people who had previously been locked out of the global economy because they lived in largely closed economies with vertical, hierarchical political and economic structures, to collaborate and compete with everyone else. All of this has led to a growing productivity gap between those who are well educated and those individuals – and nations – who struggle with the transition to the knowledge economy.

For a long time, global educational comparisons suggested that Hungary was well positioned. Enrolment in education has traditionally been high and still two decades ago Hungarian students consistently outperformed their counterparts in much of the industrialised world in international tests of mathematics and science performance. However, the most recent PISA assessment in 2006 showed Hungarian 15-year-olds performing just around the OECD average level in science, Hungary's traditional strength, and in other subject areas below OECD standards. Equally important, the results showed large variations