

Rethinking Education: Individualised, Competence-Oriented and Future-Ready

1. Current Situation

The existing education system in Austria and Germany is largely based on standardised age groups, fixed curricula and strongly exam-oriented performance assessments. This model emerged in an industrial society but is increasingly failing to meet the demands of a digitalised and dynamic world.

Many children and young people experience school as externally controlled, insufficiently individualised and strongly driven by performance pressure. At the same time, societal developments — particularly through digital media — are creating new challenges for concentration, motivation and learning behaviour.

A modern education system must therefore place greater emphasis on individual potential, self-directed learning skills and future-oriented competencies.

2. Key Challenges

From the perspective of Sovereign Youth, the following deficits are particularly significant:

Limited individualisation: A uniform learning pace despite differing abilities and talents.

Loss of intrinsic motivation: Learning is often driven by grades rather than genuine interest.

Lack of self-learning competence: Students learn content, but rarely how to learn independently.

Insufficient future skills: Critical thinking, problem-solving, media literacy and self-organisation are insufficiently developed.

Digital challenges: Early and intensive media consumption can negatively affect concentration and attention, while media literacy is simultaneously underdeveloped.

Rigid structures: Age-based class systems make flexible educational pathways difficult.

3. Guiding Principles for a Modern Education System

Sovereign Youth advocates the further development of the education system along the following principles:

Individual support instead of a one-size-fits-all model

Learning pathways should be more adaptable to pace, interests and abilities.

Structure in early years — increasing freedom over time

Younger children require clear frameworks, while older students should gradually receive more choice and autonomy.

Competence orientation instead of pure knowledge transfer

Key competencies include:

- Self-learning competence
- Critical thinking
- Problem-solving
- Digital competence
- Personal responsibility
- Creativity

Conscious use of technology

Technology is a central tool of the future. Education must both teach digital competencies and promote concentration skills and reflective media use.

Practice- and project-oriented learning

Learning should be more strongly connected to real projects, teamwork and practical experience.

4. Perspectives for Innovation

Sovereign Youth supports the development of innovative educational models through:

- Supplementary educational programmes and workshops
- Pilot projects and model initiatives
- Research into new learning methods
- Exchange with education experts and institutions

In the long term, such innovations can provide impulses for the further development of the existing education system.

5. Vision

Our goal is an education system that:

- strengthens individual potential
- preserves motivation rather than reducing it
- prepares young people for a complex future
- promotes independence and responsibility
- meaningfully combines freedom and structure

Education is the foundation of a free and innovative society. Its further development is therefore a central task for the future.