

**Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI)**

**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**

## **IN SEARCH OF INNOVATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS**

The [OECD Centre for Educational Research and Innovations \(CERI\)](#) is identifying concrete cases of innovative learning environments (ILEs) to provide examples to inspire practice and to provide pointers for enriching mainstream education in systems around the world. We are analysing how young people learn and under which conditions and dynamics they might learn better. We are exploring how desirable change might come about.

The international Innovative Learning Environments project in 2010 produced a substantial volume published by OECD on research into learning and its implications for educational practice: *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice* (edited by Hanna Dumont, David Istance and Francisco Benavides). We are now complementing this by an extensive compilation and analysis of concrete cases of learning innovation in different countries and contexts.

We are contacting you because we have seen reference to your ILE and would like to add information about it to our compilation of innovations as part of the project's "universe" of ILEs. This information may eventually go into the public arena as part of the knowledge base we are now constructing. These will also be synthesised for the next substantial project publication.

We are compiling information about the innovations using a common template or grid of questions, attached. If you would like to contribute your experience to this international project, we would be very grateful if you would complete this template and send it back to us.

For more information on the Innovative Learning Environments project please contact: Vanessa Shadoian-Gersing ([vanessa.shadoian-gersing@oecd.org](mailto:vanessa.shadoian-gersing@oecd.org)).

### **What Counts as an "Innovative Learning Environment"?**

We have deliberately avoided the language of "innovative schools" as well as definitions couched in terms of "classroom", "school", leadership structures etc. as these focus on the school as an institution, not on how learning is organised. Moreover, not all the learning of interest to us takes place in schools or classrooms. Nevertheless, of course, many of the ILEs of interest to us are located in places called a "school", whether as a whole or as an innovative "school within a school". In other cases, the learning environment is partly or entirely outside the formal school system.

An "innovative learning environment" in our project meets the following criteria:

- It *serves the learning needs of children and adolescents* (approximately aged 3 to 19 or some band within that), whether exclusively or in mixed-age environments where either younger children or older adults are also involved.
- It is an intentional departure from the traditional approach of the large body of general or vocational education in its own context in order to respond better to the needs of learners – *i.e.* it is ***deliberately innovative***.
- It refers to ***holistic learning arrangements for learners in the same context through time***, rather than very part-time supplements to the main menu of learning they experience. Hence, it means more than particular learning episodes or even courses. It also means more than a “setting” for learning (e.g. physical or technological environments).
- It is not reliant only on the charisma or commitment of a single innovator(s) but it enjoys ***a broader organisational foundation***, holding the promise to be sustainable even when it is relatively new.
- The ILE does not depend on highly elevated tuition fees that might severely limit its ***potential to be replicated***.

Learning arrangements for ***specific subgroups*** of students (e.g. indigenous/native students, migrants, the gifted or those with learning difficulties) are often both innovative and tailored to optimise learning. These cases are highly relevant for our project, especially so when their approach is potentially transferable to wider groups of young people. ***Vocationally-oriented learning*** is also highly relevant so long the ILE in question meets the above criteria.

While an ILE may be generated by a general initiative or policy promoting innovation, an ILE is not the same thing as a general initiative. This is because this project is examining real cases on the ground rather than broad intentions. We are looking for cases that are open to description and evaluation in their own context. Hence, we are more interested in cases with a track record that are embedded in practice rather than prototypical ideas, however experimental and promising, that have not yet been implemented.

## OECD/CERI Innovative Learning Environment (ILE) project

### Template for submission to the ILE ‘Universe’ of innovative learning cases

Please use the following questions to describe your innovative learning environment. Questions 1-10 are core, particularly Question 7 on how learning is organised; Questions 11 and 12 allow for supplementary additional information to be submitted if you so wish. These submissions need to be in one of the OECD’s official languages (English or French). Responses are typically 5-10 pages in length, but you may wish to add more pages.

Templates should be submitted electronically to [vanessa.shadoian-gersing@oecd.org](mailto:vanessa.shadoian-gersing@oecd.org).

**Name of the Innovative Learning Environment (ILE): Dobbantó (Springboard) project of FSZK (Public Foundation for the Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities), Hungary**

**Location/Address(If available): Pap Károly u. 4-6. Budapest, 1139 Hungary (leading organisation of the project), 15 schools all over Hungary**

**Website (if available): [www.fszk.hu/dobbanto](http://www.fszk.hu/dobbanto)**

**ILE submitted by: FSZK**

**Questions answered by: Mari Bognár**

**A leader of this case**     

**A teacher/facilitator of this case**     

**A student/learner or family related to this case**     

**Someone from the local, regional or national education authorities**     

**Other**

**1. Rationale:** Why is this ILE so worthy of international attention? How does it respond to 21st century learning challenges? Please tell us about how/why this case is innovative in its own context.

Low levels of education and early school leaving act as serious barriers to economic and social development around the world. The European Commission published an action plan to reduce early school leaving on 31 January 2011. The document takes as a starting point that “more than six million young people in the EU leave education and training with lower secondary level qualifications at best. They face severe difficulties in finding work, are more often unemployed and more often dependent on welfare benefits. Early school leaving hampers economic and social development and is a serious obstacle to the European Union's goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Commission today approved an action plan that will help Member States to achieve the Europe 2020 headline target of reducing the EU average rate of early school leavers to under 10%, from the current level of 14.4%, by the end of the decade.” According to the action plan, the measures that can help to solve the problem of early school leaving fall into three categories: prevention, intervention and compensation. The recommendations of the Commission were adopted by the Education Ministers on 24 May 2011 in Brussels.

Early development measures are the most effective solutions for preventing early school leaving. This is also supported by international experiences. However, prevention is only possible in cases where the likelihood of school failure can be anticipated either well before or at the time of entry into school, e.g. for children who are first or second generation immigrants, come from different ethnic, low status cultural or unfavourable social backgrounds, or whose special educational needs are detected in time. In many cases, behavioural and learning difficulties arise later, in spite of the student's successful initial integration and good performance at school, and these problems may lead to frequent misconduct and underperformance and then to repeated absence, unacceptable academic results or even dropping out of education and training. Such failures rarely occur through the fault of the student. The root cause of the problem is often a change in the life of the family (divorce, death, new marriage, loss of work or work ability, etc.), the non-inclusive, hostile or humiliating attitude of certain teachers or the peer group, or the existence of unrecognised or unprofessionally addressed special educational needs. In such cases, *a range of intervention or compensation measures are needed to give a second chance to these students. The programme described below offers a good response in these situations.*

The legal basis of launching the *Dobbantó Programme* - and implementing it under the leadership of the Public Foundation for the Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (FSZK) - was the 2007 amendment of the Public Education Act. The programme began in 2008 with 15 participating schools – 5 from the capital city and 10 from other regions – selected from applicants across Hungary. The participating vocational schools implement the *Dobbantó Programme* in one or more groups of 12 to 16 students who complete a “preparatory ninth year of education”. The students joining the *Dobbantó* groups are 15-to-24-year-old young people who have already dropped out of education and training or are about to leave the system, and do not have any secondary or vocational qualification. The Programme offers them an additional year of education to understand and overcome their earlier failures at school, in learning or in their personal lives, and to find the best way to move on, i.e. to return to the school system or to enter vocational training or the world of work.

*The Dobbantó Programme began in January 2008 and is due to end in November 2011.* It has two main strands of activities:

- a) Developing teaching and learning materials for the additional year of education made possible by the law. The purpose of these materials is to support the development and reintegration of students based on their individual needs, in other words to create new, complex (innovative) learning environments that can help to change the views the participating students have about school as a result of their earlier school failures. These ILEs are different from the traditional learning environments in terms of
- the physical learning environment;
  - the organisation of learning;
  - the learning content;
  - the instruction methods;
  - the pedagogical approach and practice (pedagogical paradigm).
- b) Providing training and support to the teachers working with the students and the heads of their schools. Here, the objective is to help the replacement of the so-called traditional focus on the teaching of subjects by approaches and practices that focus on the individual progress of students, and to enable teachers to securely navigate in the new complex learning environments that reflect the pedagogical paradigm of the Dobbantó Programme.

In the preparation phase, which lasted from January to October 2008, a team of invited experts developed the conceptual framework and outlined the content of the Programme according to the professional instructions of FSZK. Calls for applications were published to recruit professionals to support implementation (educoaches to work with the heads of the schools and mentors to support teachers and the implementation of the required changes at the schools), and the training of the successful applicants began. The participating schools were selected in an application procedure. The period between November 2008 and August 2009 focused on preparation, which involved the development of a modular curriculum, the provision of additional training and ongoing professional support to the professionals supporting implementation at the school level, the preparation of the participating schools, and the selection of independent external organisations for monitoring and evaluating the Programme.

The Dobbantó Programme was piloted in the 2009/2010 school year. At that time the teacher teams have completed part of the preparatory training and were ready to pilot the Programme – the modular curriculum and personalised development at individual pace – with the first Dobbantó groups in the newly created learning environments. Many teachers documented their experiences in this phase, and these experiences were used to revise the modules and the other resource materials. These revisions were also informed by the evidences from monitoring and evaluation. Naturally, throughout this period, the teachers and the heads of the schools could rely on ongoing professional support rooted in practice, which has not changed ever since. In the 2010/2011 school year, the participants could already build on the good practices derived from the pilot, the revised modules and resource materials, and on an accredited Dobbantó framework curriculum. As another new feature, a third independent organisation has been engaged to follow up the success of the students who completed the first school year of the Programme. As the data collected in the first school year suggest that the results of the Programme are good and may be worth sharing, we are now presenting these results in various forums and looking for opportunities to develop Dobbantó into a programme that is suitable for wider dissemination and application.

## **2. Background: Who initiated it? When? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?**

The Dobbantó Programme was initiated in response to the 2007 amendment of the Public Education Act, in particular Article 126. Pursuant to this Article, the authorities responsible for education at the county level are required to designate vocational schools to offer personalised development programmes for 15-24-year old students who have been so far unable to complete secondary school or obtain a vocational qualification due to learning and behavioural difficulties that are not of organic origin. These schools may organise small sized preparatory classes for such young people, i.e. offer an additional “ninth” year of schooling before entry into the mainstream vocational school programme. Considering that no ready-made programme was available to implement this statutory requirement, and that vocational school teachers are typically not prepared for using personalised development programmes adapted to the students’ own pace of progress, the state secretariat responsible for education within the Ministry of National Resources (Ministry of Education in 2007) provided to FSZK, the successful applicant for undertaking the task, HUF 850 million from the central budget of improving vocational training and education (Training Component of the Labour Market Fund) in support of implementation. At the moment, there is a fully developed programme for the preparatory year, which can be effectively implemented based on the experiences of the 15 schools participating in the pilot. There is also a framework curriculum, which was accredited a year ago, and the accreditation of the training programme for the participating teachers is in progress. These two are the necessary conditions of scaling up the Dobbantó Programme and of developing it from a pilot programme into an approach that is suitable for mainstream application In Hungary.

## **3. Learning Aims/Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE: What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired by learners? What curriculum is used?**

### **Requirements in the Dobbantó Programme**

In the Dobbantó Programme, teachers set specific requirements for each individual student as part of personalised pedagogical planning. Therefore, the requirements listed below do not apply to each and every student. The specific objectives to be achieved are embedded in individual development plans drafted after getting to know the students, considering their earlier achievements and identifying the possible areas of development.

The Dobbantó Programme defines the potential requirements to be applied in the development of students within a system of competences. The development work focuses on five main competency areas. The following section defines the related competences in more detail:

### **A) Communication competences**

#### *1. Communication as a form of social interaction*

Students can recognise communication situations and intentions, and apply the related social principles effectively in everyday life.

#### *2. Speaking and understanding, interpreting and creating oral texts*

Students are aware of the basic features of verbal and non-verbal communication, can notice when there is a mismatch between the verbal and non-verbal messages being conveyed, and are able to resolve it in cooperation with the other party involved in the conversation, observing the socially accepted rules.

### *3. Reading, understanding written texts*

Students can read and understand a range of written texts, summarise the main points briefly in their own words, and ask questions about the text.

### *4. Writing, creating written texts*

Students can express their thoughts in writing in an appropriate and grammatically correct manner.

### *5. Visual communication and using images*

Students can interpret well-known and socially accepted sign systems based on images; interpret figures, pictures and charts inserted in written texts, and add figures, pictures and charts to their own written works.

### *6. Communication through electronic media*

Students can evaluate and interpret the information received through various electronic media, and use such information selectively, based on their own values. Students are able to initiate communication by using their available means, and strive to acquire basic user competences.

### *7. Communication through art*

Students show openness toward music, visual arts and artistic performances, can interpret these for themselves, and use art as a means of self-expression according to their own interests and possibilities.

### *8. Evaluating communication*

Students can understand and interpret the aims and intentions of their communication partners, argue for and against the topic of a debate, and use critical thinking in communication situations.

## **B) Learning competences**

### *1. Image of self as a learner*

Students view themselves as learners, and form a refined and positive image of themselves as learners, which then becomes an integral part of their self-evaluation and self-image.

### *2. Perception of learning*

Students perceive learning as a lifelong process extending to all fields of life and offering opportunities for growth, in which the student - i.e. the learner – must play an active and constructive role.

### *3. Planning and organising the learning process*

Students manage their own learning, view learning holistically, as a process, plan its stages and circumstances, and organise these in such ways that ensure effective and efficient learning.

#### *4. Finding sources of learning*

Students explore the sources that should or may be used for achieving their learning objectives, consciously select their sources of learning, and identify, analyse and evaluate the sources that may be relevant for them.

#### *5. Processing sources of learning*

Students interpret the sources selected in the learning process, and memorise and acquire them to the extent necessary, thus improving their skills and abilities and shaping their views.

#### *6. Using sources of learning*

Students test, apply and practice the acquired knowledge, the experiences gained in the learning process and the developed skills and abilities in accordance with their learning objectives, in the given learning situation and in other learning situations and everyday situations, and interpret the outcomes of learning based on their own views.

#### *7. Understanding, applying and evaluating different learning methods*

Students are familiar with and try out a range of learning methods, techniques and strategies, and consciously apply the effective ones in different learning situations.

#### *8. Evaluating the learning process*

Students continuously reflect on their own learning, evaluate their learning performance in a realistic and subtle way, and consider learning as an opportunity for growth and development.

### **C) Social competences and competences required for a healthy life**

#### *1. Cooperation*

Students can ask for, provide and accept help and constructively participate in group activities by respecting the personality and opinions of others and observing the general rules that are widely accepted by society.

#### *2. Social integration*

Students take efforts to find and accept their place and role within the organisation and their social environment, effectively adapt to the changing circumstances of these, and strive to manage the conflicts that may arise in socially accepted ways.

#### *3. Healthy life*

Students can create and maintain the environmental conditions of a healthy life (order and hygiene) and develop proper daily routines, including regular exercise, and strive to develop healthy eating and effective stress management habits in their personal lives in order to protect their health.

## **D) Core employment competences and career building competences**

### *1. Self-awareness and self-organisation*

Students are able to identify their strengths, areas for development, fields of interest, preferences and sources of motivation; strive to gain experiences in as many field as possible, and develop an essentially positive self-image based on the feedback received from others.

### *2. Competences needed for adapting to change*

Students can recognise the external and internal signs indicating the need for a change, flexibly define objectives based on these, prepare an action plan, and find the available sources of help to implement it.

### *3. Competences related to career development and lifelong learning*

Students are aware of the expectations of employers, know how to align those expectations with their own needs, recognise and exploit the learning opportunities arising in their environment, and strive for continuous self-development, as demanded by the recognised changes in the labour market.

### *4. Job seeking, labour market and advocacy competences*

Students are familiar with different job seeking techniques and apply them as required by the principles of supply and demand, including the adequate obtaining and handling of documents required for taking a job, and are able to advocate their interests as employees in accordance with the law.

## **E) Work competences**

### *1. Basic health and safety competences*

Students understand the importance of observing the fundamental rules of health and safety at work, and handle working instruments, products and the physical working environment in an environmentally conscious manner.

### *2. Job-specific communication, social and learning competences*

Students can understand and follow instructions in the working process, listen to others, and use forms of communication that are appropriate to their roles; organise their work efficiently and carefully to produce quality, collaborate with others and take into account the views of others that may differ from those of their own; consider new situations arising in the course of the working activity as problems to be solved, and use the learned strategies effectively in solving them.

### *3. Job-specific competences*

Students strive to continuously improve their job-specific competences within the job category chosen on the basis of the working opportunities offered by the school and their own interests.

**4. Learners:** Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there and in what age range? Are they in the same place or are some participating at a distance?

As mentioned earlier, the target group is defined as 15-24-year old young people with learning and behavioural difficulties who have already dropped out of school or are on the verge of dropping out. On average 12 – but not more than 16 – such young people can join for one school year a Dobbantó class set up within a mainstream vocational school. After that year, the students have three options: return to formal education (remain at the same vocational school or choose another school to complete a vocational school programme or a general secondary school programme leading to a general certificate of secondary education), enter adult training, or take a job (and possibly continue their training while working).

**5. Teachers/Facilitators:** Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles? Are they involved at a distance as well as face-to-face? Are families and communities involved in teaching/facilitating?

Teachers are key to the success of the Dobbantó Programme. The Programme builds upon teachers who can work in teams and use teamwork to make their work as a teacher more effective. Therefore, selecting the right teachers, training them and enabling their collaboration are highly important. The professionals of the various institutions participating in the Dobbantó Programme work in two closely cooperating teams (the teacher team and the competence development team).

*a) Teacher team:*

This team comprises the teachers who work with the students in the Dobbantó classes, i.e. teach them and have permanent and direct contact with them. Ideally, each Dobbantó class should have 3 to 5 permanent teachers, and team teaching should be used in 40% of the total time spent in the classroom. In general, three Dobbantó teachers – one specialised in arts, one in sciences, and one in VET – are responsible for developing competences and covering the modules in the Dobbantó class, and at least one Dobbantó teacher must have SEN expertise and experience.

*b) Competence development team*

The members of this team are involved in drafting individual development plans and providing support for the students. Indispensable members of this team are the student and his or her parents/relatives and teachers (class teacher/mentor, etc.), and it may also have such members as the school's psychologist, the teacher responsible for child protection, a family counsellor, a special teacher, etc. This team has two types of members:

- permanent members: e.g. the school's psychologist, the teacher responsible for child protection, special teacher, teacher, etc.
- temporary members: e.g. student, parents/relatives, family counsellor, etc.

As a key feature of the Dobbantó Programme, each participating student has a “partner”, i.e. an adult either in the teacher team, or in the competence development team, who has regular contact with the student and sits down with him or her at least once a week to reflect on progress, provide guidance, etc.

**6. Facilities, Resources and Technologies:** How are resources used for learning? How are technology and digital resources used? Are families/communities used as a resource? What does the physical learning environment look like and are there particular uses of learning space?

*a) The learning materials used in the Dobbantó Programme and the developed modules*

The learning materials developed for the Programme – at a high level of methodological detail – are organised into modules that are available in print and offer a wide choice to enable adaptation to the individual learning needs of the students. The modules of the altogether 5200-page material fall into three thematic categories: 1. subject modules (mathematics, science, communication and Hungarian language, foreign languages (English and German), social and contemporary studies) based on the National Core Curriculum (NCC); 2. modules for developing core employment competences; and 3. modules introducing students to the world of work and occupations from various job categories (of the 21 job categories defined for vocational training purposes, schools are required to offer six selected job categories based on the students’ needs and the local conditions). For the teachers participating in the Programme, the printed learning materials are also available on the Internet. In addition to using the readymade modules, teachers are encouraged to further improve the proposed learning materials by adapting and supplementing the modules based on the needs and interests of their students and by exploiting the local opportunities (the Programme can offer financial rewards for such efforts).

*b) The physical learning environment*

Since drop-outs tend to have a negative image of school, it is not enough to offer them learning situations that are different from what they are used to. The learning environment should also be innovative, pleasant and motivating. Therefore, it is essential for the Dobbantó classroom to be very different from traditional school settings.

Classroom arrangement and furniture:

- own classroom/room;
- mobile desks + tables;
- access to school library and, where possible, reference books, resource materials, toys and games and software supporting learning/development in the room;
- at least 3 computers and Internet access, printer and, where possible, copier in the room;
- audio-visual equipment (CD and DVD player, TV set, VCR, or projector, etc.), musical instruments;
- shelves and cabinets for storing CDs, DVDs, student portfolios, etc.;
- shelves and glass cabinets for displaying the students’ works;
- chat (cosy) corner with carpets, cushions, bookshelves, beanbags, etc.;
- full-body mirror (showing the whole body);
- cork strips and noticeboard on the wall;
- toys, sports equipment;

- many plants and, where possible, an aquarium;
- tea kitchen (table, chairs, kitchen furniture and, where possible, a microwave oven or a cooker, etc.)

**7. Organisation of Learning in the ILE:** How is learning organised – over a typical learning day, week or longer? How do learners and teachers/facilitators interact? With what kinds of pedagogies and in what mix? How are learners grouped? What sequencing of learning activities? What assessment strategies and forms of feedback are used?

A typical school year has 36 weeks. Of these, the first week is used for getting to know one another and for planning, and the last week is for reflection, feedback and looking ahead. This means that 34 weeks – approximately 1020 hours – are available for effective work, of which 60% should be spent on NCC related learning and 40% should be devoted to the development of competences required in the world of work – also taking into account the need for coordination. The schools are free to structure the school week in any way, but for practical reasons they are recommended to use 3 days for covering NCC modules in the classroom and 2 days for activities related to the world of work. Of these 2 days, the students should spend one day inside and one day outside the school focusing on core employment competences and career building competences or on career orientation.

- School days begin with orientation (20 to 40 minutes), i.e. preparing for learning and working together throughout the day, and discussing the tasks and the schedule of the day, and the individual needs and progress.
- Then a longer period (60 to 90 minutes) is spent on working on a selected module, using methods and arrangements adapted to the characteristics of the individual students and of the group.
- This is followed by a group activity whose purpose is firstly to let the students relax after the demanding “school type” learning activities and secondly to develop other types of competences (40 to 60 minutes of sports, dance, drama, photography, etc.);
- The day is closed by giving feedback at both individual and group level (20 to 40 minutes). This session can also be used for selecting works for and reflecting on the student portfolios.

	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Objectives</b>
<b>4 days/ week (school days)</b>	Period 1: Opening session	Group activity.	Orientation. Planning.
	Periods 2 and 3: Working on the modules	Organisation of learning is adapted to the characteristics of the individual students and of the group.	Developing competences.
	Period 4: Sports, relaxation, break	Group activity.	Developing communication and social competences.
	Period 5: Working on the modules	Organisation of learning is adapted to the characteristics of the individual students and of the group.	Developing competences.

	Period 6: Closing session	Individual and group level.	Teachers and students jointly reflect on the day and on the student portfolios.
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The above schedule is used on all days of the week, except the day that the students spend outside the school in order to gain experience in the world of work. (While any day of the week may be used for this purpose, depending on the local conditions and the needs of the participating employers, it may be less productive to select the first or the last day of the week).

Most schools participating in the Programme are quite flexible as far as the school year is concerned. This means that students may also join the Programme after the beginning of the school year, provided that there is a vacancy in the group. If a new applicant is admitted in the spring and apparently needs more time for gaining personal strength, then he or she may remain in the Dobbantó class for the next school year. Likewise, if it turns out during the school year that a student could make more progress in another training programme, or needed less time for gaining personal strength, then he or she may leave the Programme before the end of the school year in order to join that other programme or to start working in a job, provided that he or she has ceased to be of compulsory school age.

**8. Learning Context:** In which social and cultural contexts does learning take place? Are parents or community resources involved in the learning? Does the social and cultural context importantly shape the content of the learning?

The Dobbantó classes are heterogeneous in terms of the age, cultural and ethnic background and (special) educational needs of the students. The Dobbantó students constitute a separate, relatively segregated group within the mainstream schools participating in the Programme, but they participate in all school events. In the Dobbantó Programme, learning takes place in three locations: in the classroom, at the school and its facilities, and outside the school. The participating schools are required to organise visits to workplaces within the community, and the modules are also based on the observation of or even participation in real life situations. The budget of the Programme allows the schools to organise outings and visits to the theatre, cinema or museums for the students. The tea kitchen, where the students can have meals together or invite parents or other students from the school, the various games and the chat corner provide opportunities for students to practice everyday social interactions. Many schools have organised longer trips or camps where the students could spend several days together.

**9. Funding:** How is it funded now? Are there specific plans to change the funding?

The Government provided HUF 850 million in support of the Programme for the period from December 2007 to November 2011. This amount is distributed among the main activities as follows:

Programme management	7.4%
Programme development and development of learning (resource) materials	30.7%
Rollout in schools (supporting schools, professionals assisting school improvement)	49.7%
Monitoring and evaluation	5.6%
Communication and dissemination	6.6%

The continuation of the Programme would require future funding for maintaining programme management and for running it at the schools. The other activities only have “maintenance” costs. While the ministries sharing the responsibility for the prevention of early school leaving recognise and highly appreciate the results of the Dobbantó Programme, and even include it in their development plans, it is not clear how its continuation in the next school year or its rollout in further schools will be funded.

**10.Evidence on Outcomes - Cognitive and Non-cognitive:** Is there information regarding the learning outcomes achieved, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes – what does this information show? What about motivation and learner engagement?

Initially, the Dobbantó team defined student retention and the students’ successful exit from the Programme as the most important indicators of success. The tables below show the results achieved in the completed 2009/10 school year and the first semester of the 2010/11 school year:

*Student fluctuation during the school year*

<b>15 June 2010</b>		<b>Number and fluctuation of Dobbantó students during the school year</b>	<b>1 March 2011</b>	
174	100%	Number of students in September	187	100%
47	27%	Joined during the school year	30	16%
191	110%	Completed the Dobbantó year (remained in the class in the 2010/11-school year)	201	107%
30	17%	Total of those who left Dobbantó during the school year	16	9%
of which:				
11	6%	Moved to another training programme during the school year	9	5%
9	5%	Started work during the school year	1	1%
5	3%	Left Dobbantó during the school year for other objective reasons	4	2%
<b>5</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>Dropped out during the school year</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1%</b>

*Paths taken by students completing the first school year of the Programme*

<b>Paths taken by the Dobbantó students who completed the 2009/10 school year</b> (Data of 15 September 2010)			<b>Number of students</b>	<b>As a percentage of those who completed the Programme</b>
<i>Total</i>			191	100
Continued education	full time programme within	9th year class of vocational school	60	31.41
		10th year class of vocational school	19	9.95

and training after completing the Dobbantó class	the school system	ten-month training for closing gaps	10	5.24
		twenty-month training for closing gaps	2	1.05
		repeated Dobbantó year	8	4.19
		“fast track” VET	29	15.18
		VET following 8th year of education	21	10.99
		9th year class of a secondary school programme leading to general certificate of secondary education	15	7.85
	adult training	training for a vocational qualification listed in the National Register of Qualifications	5	2.62
		9th year class of a secondary school programme leading to general certificate of secondary education	1	0.52
<i>Total number of those continuing education and training</i>			<i>170</i>	<i>89.01</i>
Did not continue education and training	found employment	13	6.81	
	unemployed	8	4.19	

The success of the Programme is measured by three organisations from three different perspectives. The outcomes of the Dobbantó Programme are evaluated by an external evaluator, the improvement processes of the Programme are monitored by another organisation, and the future success of students who completed a Dobbantó year are also followed up as of the 2010/11 school year.

#### *a) Evaluation of outcomes*

The Programme is evaluated by Qualitas T&G Tanácsadó és Szolgáltató Kft. ([www.qualitas.hu](http://www.qualitas.hu)). This organisation has been engaged to prepare biannual reports in order to:

- ensure accountability for the use of public funds;
- ensure professional accountability;
- provide data and information for ongoing reflection;
- provide information to the Programme Manager, the Professional Advisory Board and the Programme Office on the operation of the Programme; enable the presentation of the achieved results and changes; and provide input for the corrections to be made to the process of development.

#### *b) Monitoring the Programme as an improvement process*

The Programme is monitored by Tárki-Tudok Tudásmenedzsment és Oktatáskutató Központ Zrt. ([www.tarki-tudok.hu](http://www.tarki-tudok.hu)). This organisation provides regular feedback and monitors the following:

- Do the teachers participating in the Programme receive adequate support to be able to assist effectively the progress of Dobbantó students?
- Do the heads participating in the Programme receive adequate support to be able to use the Dobbantó improvement plan within the school improvement process?

- Do the mentors and educoaches participating in the Programme receive adequate support (enough or adequate training) to be able to perform their duties?
- Do the teams of professionals involved in the Programme development work (Working Groups) receive adequate support from the Programme Management?
- Does the adopted improvement model works well?

c) *Following up the success of former Dobbantó students*

Gallup Hungary, the organisation engaged to perform this task, will deliver its report by 31 August 2011. The section below shows some of the findings disclosed in their first partial report based on interviews made with students who continued their education and training in the formal school system:

	Yes	No
When I think about last year, I am happy that I was a Dobbantó student.	97.6%	2.4%
I know what I need to change to improve.	89.0%	11.0%
I am aware of my strengths, and I know what I am good at.	90.6%	9.4%
I definitely do not want to drop out of school.	90.6%	9.4%
The Dobbantó gave me a lot of knowledge an practical skills that I find very useful in my life.	87.4%	12.6%

Former students found the following five practical outcomes to be most useful (quoted in order of frequency of mention):

1. Learning how to write a CV
2. Information on employers, visiting workplaces, gaining work experience
3. Job selection criteria
4. Self-awareness (increased self-confidence, better understanding of who I am and what I can do)
5. Personal development, improved manual skills
  - Learning to learn (learning has become easier, acquired a different learning method)
  - Cooperation (helping others, working together with peers, listening to others)

**11. Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE:** Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)

a) *The Dobbantó Programme has extensive documentation. The following are available on the Internet:*

Website: [www.fszk.hu/dobbanto](http://www.fszk.hu/dobbanto); student recruiting pages (made available to the schools by the Dobbantó Programme): [www.dobbantok.hu](http://www.dobbantok.hu); blog of the camp organised for the students of the 15 participating schools in June 2011: <http://dobbantotabor.blogspot.com>

b) *Printed documents and resource materials developed for the Programme in addition to the modules:*

- The pedagogical model of the Dobbantó Programme
- Recommendations for implementing inclusive education – resource material for inclusive teachers

- Bridge to the world of work – resource material
- Methodological manual – for organising and implementing job-shadowing activities in the Dobbantó Programme
- “Student Support Booklets” series (Booklets 1 to 4)
- Personalised development – but how?
- Formative and supportive assessment – but how?
- Networking – but how?
- Learning to learn – but how?
- Beyond the classroom – but how?
- Cards for starting conversations with students in order to identify their existing competences
- What can the Dobbantó do? – a collection of good practices submitted by teachers
- Work Book – a pocket book for students about work and employment.

Since its beginning, the Programme has published six newsletters and a student newsletter with articles written by students, all of which can be downloaded from the Dobbantó website. Before the end of the Programme, two more newsletters and one student newsletter are due to be published.

#### *c) Films*

The final cut version (cca. 70 minutes) of the documentary on the Dobbantó Programme will be available by mid-October 2011 (with English subtitles). The film will be first shown to the public on the Programme Closing Event on 26 October 2011.

Several other shorter films on the Programme, and cca. 15-minute documentaries on each school are also available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cUgSrerMMU4> and – with English subtitles – at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x46uJPR2Ag8&feature=mfu\\_in\\_order&list=UL](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x46uJPR2Ag8&feature=mfu_in_order&list=UL).

The media coverage of the Dobbantó Programme (professional journals, radio, TV) is also available on the website under “Media Coverage” at: [http://www.fszk.hu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=316:sajtohirek&catid=68:programok&Itemid=117](http://www.fszk.hu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=316:sajtohirek&catid=68:programok&Itemid=117)

#### **12. Other Information** you consider to be relevant to describe the ILE.

A more complex description – within the Dobbantó conceptual framework – of the two essential components of the Programme mentioned in Point 1, i.e. changing the learning environment in its complexity and providing support for teachers and school leaders to securely navigate in the ILE, is considered necessary.

##### *a) Complex changes in the learning environment*

The Programme is based on changing in a complex and fundamental way the broadly understood learning environment, including

- the physical learning environment,
- the organisation of learning,

- the learning content,
- the instruction methods, and
- the pedagogical approach and practice (pedagogical paradigm),

which played a role in the earlier school failures of the students and shaped their views of school, learning and themselves.

*The physical learning environment* does not resemble anything that might be associated with the image of a traditional school. The Dobbantó students find themselves in a truly pleasant, aesthetic and motivating setting where every condition is given for relaxation, leisure activities, socialising and more importantly for different ways of acquiring new information and exploiting formal and informal learning opportunities. A typical Dobbantó classroom has an adjacent tea kitchen, an inviting relaxation corner for having a chat with others, a range of sports equipment and educational toys and games, at least three computers with Internet access, learning software, and a resource library.

Small groups are a key feature of the *organisation of learning*. A Dobbantó group may not have more than 16 members, who work with 4 or 5 Dobbantó teachers. As learning is not organised around subjects, teachers may spend more time with the students over a week, which allows them to really get to know the students and also helps the evolution of trust and bonds between the teachers and the students. Wherever possible, two teachers work simultaneously with the class in 40% of the total teaching time. In the schools, the teacher team is assisted by other professionals, such as a school psychologist, a SEN teacher, a special teacher, teaching assistants, the school's teacher responsible for child protection, a teacher specialised in social pedagogy, school-based social workers, etc., depending on the local conditions. Where necessary, these partners also include youth workers. A growing number of employers play an increasingly important role in helping to introduce students to the various job categories. The structure of a school day is also different from the usual: each day begins with a period of whole class orientation, which is followed by longer periods of learning and a so-called "free period", which can be used for relaxation, sports, socialising, eating together, etc. Weeks are also organised in an innovative way, because students spend one day of each week outside the school. This day is typically used for workplace visits, but there are also many outdoor programmes and learning opportunities.

Essentially, the *learning content* focuses on three main areas: 1. developing communication, social and learning competences needed for continuing formal learning or entering vocational education and training; 2. developing core employment competences and career building competences needed for managing future life; and 3. supporting the personal development and growth of each individual student in order to improve the students' self-image, self-awareness and self-confidence, which is the most important area. 5200 pages of learning materials have been developed to support instruction in a more conventional meaning. Owing to their modular structure, these materials offer a rich resource for teachers to adapt instruction to the students' individual needs. While helping to meet the requirements of the National Core Curriculum, the content of the modules developed for learning communication, social and contemporary studies, English and German as a foreign language, mathematics and science is practical in nature and relates to real-life situations. The "Bridge to the world of work" curriculum, which has been developed for the development of core employment competences and career building competences, is unique in Hungary. Its eight modules building upon one another intend to direct students toward more realistic career choices by helping them to learn directly and indirectly about the various job categories.

As regards *instruction methods*, the Programme gives preference to the approaches of the so-called alternative pedagogies, i.e. it encourages the application of the appropriate variations of cooperative

learning and project-based learning, as well as the various forms of individual learning. Formative assessment plays a key role in the Dobbantó, as it strengthens reflective attitudes and practices among students and teachers alike.

The Dobbantó teachers must follow a student-centred *pedagogical approach*. In other words, teachers focus on the individual students and on individual progress. To this end, personal development plans are made with the involvement of students and, where possible, the parents. The PDPs lay down the personal objectives, define the actions to be taken to achieve those objectives, and provide a basis for reflecting on and assessing the achievements at three-month intervals. As it is considered important to help students learn how to take responsibility for their actions (and progress), contracts and agreements may be made for shorter periods, as necessary. Each student has a so-called partner among the teachers, who sits down with the student to talk every week. These conversations are often more informal than formal. The teachers work in a team, help one another, and discuss problems at their weekly team meetings. This makes their work significantly easier, because they are not left alone in managing the problems of their students, which are often difficult to handle and solve.

#### *b) Professional support to changing/improving schools*

Pedagogies ensuring attention and personalised care to each individual student are increasingly proposed as a solution for reducing early school leaving. (The so-called Bridge Programme included in the draft Public Education Bill also intends to build on a wide range of modern pedagogical methods, in particular individual and personalised development programmes, a lot of group work, and communication and lifestyle exercises.) On the other hand, it is hardly mentioned that teachers may find it very difficult to meet this demand without help. This is because introducing personalised approaches to schools would require teachers to abandon deeply established routines, which is a task that typically takes a very long time and necessitates professional intervention.

Since the age of 6 (i.e. the time of entry into school or the very start of preparing for the teaching profession), most teachers and school leaders have had most experience with frontal teaching. Their own primary and secondary school teachers must have treated all students more or less the same and not let their authority in the classroom questioned. Such personal experiences – gained in 11,000 or more lessons – inevitably lead to the development of a *deeply rooted mental model*, which is only strengthened by a higher education system that tends to treat students uniformly and measures performance by testing. This means that personal experiences accumulated, reinforced and internalised over 16 or 17 years need to be deleted and overwritten for a teacher to be able to securely navigate in the complex learning environment demanded by the Dobbantó paradigm, or to use any other approach that focuses on supporting the progress of individual students instead of covering the material scheduled for the day.

Changing such deeply embedded views and practices is a long interactive process. In constructivist terms, it requires a *conceptual change*. Becoming an informed and experienced user of a student-centred approach takes more than merely switching to new teaching materials and learning content, or extending the teaching repertoire. This explains why curriculum reforms and new learning resources introduced in isolation and initial or in-service teacher training programmes disconnected from everyday classroom experiences have never been able to deliver the expected results. *Only gradual steps and reflective pedagogical thinking and practice, based on constantly looking ahead and back at the same time, can lead to the evolution of a firmly based practice of consciously selecting the content, tools and methods that are appropriate to a particular individual or situation.* The Dobbantó Programme has embarked on a journey of this latter type. After two and a half years of continuous interaction with the participating teachers and school leaders, half or perhaps two-thirds of the journey has been completed. At the

current stage, where the participants already know where they need to improve, the following solutions are applied:

- Every teacher team receives support from a so-called *mentor*, who receive training and supervision under the Programme to be able to help implementing changes at the school. The mentor visits the school every month to facilitate reflective thinking and change processes, which includes offering possible solutions to the team, should it get stuck. Through his or her presence and activities, the mentor is to provide a role model of student-centred and supportive teacher behaviour. One of the mentor's important task is to help the participating teachers become a team.
- As an important means of promoting and improving reflective thinking in teachers (and school leaders), the Programme offers financial rewards to the participants who submit observations and comments on their *own practice and experiences*. Such products can relate to any teaching activity and have already been written about work in the classroom, the experiences with the modules, the work done with the students (case studies), the results of professional development, training or experimenting with certain methods, and the school leaders' experiences. The formative assessment of teacher performance is the responsibility of the heads of the schools, but the Programme Management provided them with formative assessment models in the first two semesters. (Teachers' products can be uploaded continuously to <http://www.fszk.hu/moodle/>. Access is free to all after registration.)
- School leaders are supported in improving their leadership practice through reflection by so-called *educoaches*, i.e. professionals who have been trained to adapt their wide experience in business coaching to the special conditions of the education sector.
- *School leaders* can also benefit from two-day training sessions organised annually on any topic that may be considered useful in the light of the progress of the Programme, and participate in meetings to discuss operative issues 2 or 3 times a year, or as needed.
- The Programme maintains good relationships with the *local authorities* of the schools, provides them regular information on the results of the participating schools, and organises meetings for school leaders and administrators to discuss achievements and the opportunities for exploiting or taking forward those achievements within the community.
- "*Regional*" exchanges are organised twice a year, in three locations each time. These meetings are not attended by all school teams and leaders (but every team can participate in one meeting at least in each semester). Each regional meeting is hosted by a different school. The objective is to provide opportunities for a direct exchange of experiences and for learning from one other (teachers like these events so much that many of them applied for and participated in all the three regional exchanges organised last year).
- When the Programme began, 8 key aspects of development (buoys) were defined for the participating schools / Dobbantó teams to help them moving toward student-centred practices

that can be used effectively to prevent early school leaving. This was considered necessary, because the fifteen schools that had joined the Programme represented different stages of development and different levels of quality in terms of applying personalised teaching and learning and the willingness/capacity to change. As the buoys were seen as a useful aid to understand the essence of Dobbantó, the schools were asked to diagnose their current situation and set objectives in these eight key areas. On the basis of these, each school/team prepared an improvement plan and an action plan for a semester, whose implementation was evaluated at the end of the semester, and a new action plan was adopted (with the necessary amendments) for the next semester. The formative assessment of these reports and action plans was carried out by the Programme Management.

- The Programme Management monitors all processes and acts or intervenes, as appropriate, upon detecting good practices or issues in the following:
  - memos written by mentors and educoaches about their visits to schools;
  - records of case discussions by mentors or educoaches;
  - reports made by the schools;
  - regional meetings;
  - training sessions organised for school leaders;
  - meetings organised for school leaders;
  - documents written by the teachers;
  - feedback received from the monitor or external evaluator of the Programme.

In conclusion, our (evidence based) experiences suggest that at least 3 years – more realistically 5 years – are needed to achieve an authentic and fundamental change in deeply embedded pedagogical views. From the perspective of cooperation with students, the objective is to develop student-centred, personalised approaches and practices. In the case of teachers/school leaders, this is to be achieved by applying constructivist tools and methods.

## Dobbantó Buoy

Buoy	Description	Support provided by the Dobbantó Programme
<b>Individual learning path</b>	The school should provide a real opportunity for adaptation to individual development needs by ensuring personalised development paths. Personalisation may be extended to objectives, the competences to be developed, the learning content, the depth and width of learning, the ways of organising teaching and learning, the learning time, the methods of assessment, and the learning environment as a whole.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• individual development plan</li> <li>• learning contract</li> <li>• learning materials</li> <li>• resource materials: <i>Student Support Booklet 2</i> <i>Modules</i> <i>Competence cards</i> <i>“But How?” series</i></li> </ul>
<b>Teamwork</b>	Teamwork is an essential feature of the Programme. The objective is to achieve broad based cooperation with the involvement of as many people as possible, regular consultations, and concerted work by the team members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mentoring</li> <li>• professional background</li> <li>• resource material: <i>Student Support Booklet 1</i></li> </ul>
<b>Career building</b>	The Bridge component is meant to help transition from school to the world of work. It offers a diverse range of activities for developing and reinforcing a positive self-image in students by building upon their individual strengths. It focuses on the development of competences for employability, improving self-awareness, and introducing jobs and occupations. Another important feature is that the students are provided with regular opportunities (on a weekly basis) for visiting workplaces / gaining work experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mentoring</li> <li>• building connections to the world of work</li> <li>• resource materials: <i>Job shadowing</i> <i>Networking – But How?</i> <i>Modules</i></li> </ul>
<b>Student support</b>	Complex – psychological, social, learning – support for students, involving efforts to understand the students’ personal life situations and ideas about the future, and the provision of professional and special assistance for changing these, as appropriate. Student support means personalised development and services that are adapted to the students’ individual abilities and needs, and contribute to reducing or removing the obstacles to achieving their objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mentor</li> <li>• building connections to the local support system</li> <li>• training sessions of regional meetings</li> <li>• resource materials: <i>Student Support Booklets 1 to 4</i> <i>Newsletters</i> <i>Teachers’ works</i></li> </ul>
<b>Cooperation between schools and coaches and mentors</b>	Every school works with a coach, who supports the head, and a mentor, who supports the teachers on an ongoing basis. The schools are required to develop arrangements that will ensure successful collaboration with these external participants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mentoring for teachers</li> <li>• coaching for school leaders</li> <li>• support for mentors</li> <li>• support for coaches</li> </ul>
<b>Whole school involvement</b>	The isolation of the Dobbantó class and the teachers working with the Dobbantó students is not desirable. Consequently, the schools are required to work out the ways of spreading the new mindset and methods among the whole teaching staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work of Dobbantó team</li> <li>• coaching</li> <li>• resource materials: <i>Case studies by school leaders</i> <i>Exchanges for school leaders and regional meetings</i></li> </ul>
<b>Finding and retaining earlier drop-outs</b>	Schools are required to develop procedures for finding, attracting and retaining earlier drop-outs living in the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• development vision</li> <li>• teachers (mentoring)</li> <li>• school leaders (coaching)</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resource material:</li> <li>• <i>Recruiting students</i></li> </ul>
<b>School improvement programme</b>	Each school is required to draft a school improvement plan whose implementation is considered feasible within the period of the Programme in the light of the diagnosis of its current situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• defined sets of criteria</li> <li>• resource materials: <i>Model improvement plans</i></li> </ul>

### **The schools participating in the Dobbantó Programme:**

- Addetur Foundation’s General and Vocational Secondary School, **Budapest**
- Budai-Városkapu Nursery School, Primary School, Vocational School, Special Vocational School and Elementary Art School, **Pécs**
- Éltes Mátyás Primary School, Special Vocational School, Children’s Home, Dormitory and Educational Support Service, **Nyírbátor**
- “Esély Education Centre” Primary School, Special Vocational School, Integrated Educational Support Service, Educational Consultant, and Learning Ability Assessment and Rehabilitation Board, **Békéscsaba**
- Esély Kövessi Erzsébet Vocational and General Secondary School, **Budapest**
- Göllesz Viktor Primary School, Special Vocational School and Dormitory, **Iregszemcse**
- Harruckern János Public Education Institution, Gyula, **Szabadjógyós** Member Institution
- Kecskemét Technical Vocational School, Special Vocational School and Dormitory, **Kecskemét**
- Kiskunfélegyháza Secondary School, Vocational School, Special Vocational School And Dormitory, Kossuth Lajos Member Institution, **Kiskunfélegyháza**
- Martin János Vocational Training School, **Miskolc**
- Öveges József Teacher Training Secondary School and Vocational School, **Budapest**
- Szász Márton Primary School, Vocational School, Special Vocational School and Integrated Special Education Institution, **Tapolca-Diszel**
- Szolnoki Service Sector Vocational Secondary School and Vocational School, **Szolnok**
- Than Károly General and Vocational Secondary School and Vocational School, **Budapest**
- Bercsényi Miklós Food Industry Vocational Training Centre, Dormitory and Teacher Training School of the Central Hungary Agricultural Vocational Training Centre of the Ministry of Rural Development, **Budapest**

