

Springboard (Dobbantó) of Hungary, FSZK

Organisation

The Public Foundation for Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (Fogyatékos Személyek Esélyegyenlőségéért Közalapítvány – FSZK) was set up by the Prime Minister of Hungary at 20th July 2007 as a merge of Public Foundation for the Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities and the National Public Foundation for Catching Up Children, Students with Disabilities. The overall objective of the Public Foundation is to advance the equal opportunities, social integration and complex (re)habilitation of persons with disabilities; to coordinate the activities of entities contributing to the complex rehabilitation. Furthermore, its objective is to implement the planned development of the institution system contributing to the care of and benefits for children, students with special educational needs; to work out and implement pedagogical programmes, solutions, procedures that serve the education, training of children, students with special educational needs.

The Springboard (Dobbantó) Programme is a national programme that was initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture and is supported by the National Fund for Vocational Education in years 2008-2011, is co-ordinated by FSZK. The Dobbantó Programme is aimed to help participating schools to develop complex and personalised systems of services based on individual development plans for students with special educational needs (SEN) and early school leavers.

Edu-coaches and trainers provide teachers with trainings on new innovative methods and educational principles. Furthermore they also hold trainings providing continuous on-the-job support for teachers and leaders of vocational schools. Schools receive a grant to implement the objectives of the project.

As a result, teachers can lead/facilitate differentiated activities adapted to student needs and offer career guidance based on personalised career plans made in cooperation with the students. Professionals also help young people who have a series of failures behind them (early school leavers) finish their studies and acquire competencies required on the labour market. The professionals of the Dobbantó Programme will help school leaders to establish and develop successful cooperation with relevant local partners. Edu-coaches provide support for leaders to be able to assess the current situation and create a school improvement plan (aimed at competencies-based education). The programme encourages the participating vocational schools to develop a regional network.

Background

In Hungary the number of students with learning difficulties and behaviour problems is on the rise. Most of them go to vocational schools after basic education (which students start at the age of 6 and supposed to finish successfully after 8 academic years) because of the particular characteristics of the selective Hungarian education system. Unfortunately, they often drop out, do not finish their studies and do not acquire a qualification. According to the 126.§ of the Act on public education, their catch up is to be solved by providing an adequate setting for the preparatory 9th year class(es). This task should be implemented by the assigned vocational schools. However, most of these schools are not prepared to provide personalised education; school staffs lack the adequate knowledge and competencies. The Dobbantó programme implements all of these, based on national/international development programmes and also functions as an action research, giving reference point for future innovations.

THE PROJECT

The Dobbantó Programme is aimed to help 15 participating schools all over Hungary to develop complex and personalised systems of services based on individual development plans for student with special educational needs (SEN).

The development work will include the following:

- ❖ psycho-social support and improving mental health
- ❖ improving learning
- ❖ career guidance
- ❖ functioning network with local social, family and youth support organisations and employers

This way the participating schools can design the operation of the preparatory 9th year of education in view of the conditions of long term sustainability and to meet their related responsibilities (obligations) at a high professional standard even after the end of this programme.

The Dobbantó Programme will:

- enable schools to sustain their own change processes over long periods and to rely on them when external support is no longer available.
- help school leaders and local educational officers (LEO-s) to establish and develop successful co-operation with relevant local partners who can make a contribution to satisfying the individual needs of their students.
- provide schools with easy-to-use self-assessment methods, procedures, occasionally providing help to the exploration and analysis of complicated interrelationships.
- promote the development of a regional network among the participating schools.
- help schools to analyse their current situation based on criteria whose fulfilment is necessary for the implementation of the programme and to set and achieve objectives based on such assessment.

The programme will employ and train mentors, who will work with the participating teachers as change facilitators. The technical assistance provided to the teachers will include:

- ❖ access to existing good practises — also through publications and films provided by the programme;
- ❖ Dobbantó curriculum package, including principles, teaching materials, tools and an assessment system. This is a modular curriculum with compulsory and elective components.
- ❖ trainings in the following fields : communication, conflict management, capacity building and skills development, team building, innovative methods of instruction to support personalisation, preventing burnout;
- ❖ in the second school year of the programme, personalised support on a monthly basis, adapted to school level conditions and the individual needs of each participant.

Mentors will be change agents whose task is to enable teachers to increase their effectiveness in the areas listed below:

1. using adaptive and differentiated instruction in the classroom (using pedagogical diagnoses for personal development; drawing up and implementing individual

- development plans with students; using individual approaches, differentiated instruction and occasionally co-operative learning);
2. using a repertoire of teaching methods to support learning (competence based programme package)
 3. personal development/mentoring (helping teachers to convert their relationship with the students into a co-operative and supportive student-teacher relationship; approaching students with a more accepting attitude and more empathy; narrowing the gaps in the social competences of their students)
 4. career guidance (creating realistic career plans)

The heads of the school will receive continuous individual support from edu-coaches employed by the programme to ensure successful change management.

Twice a month, face-to-face meetings will provide an opportunity to discuss the issues of decision making, the development of organisational culture, the paradigms of vocational training and education, and the progress made in the implementation of the programme. The edu-coaches will help school leaders to monitor the success of ongoing change processes, to develop a leadership approach involving regular reflection on results and to plan and evaluate the required interventions. Drawing upon their experience in the world of business, edu-coaches will be able to help school leaders to develop a mindset which is closer to that of the competitive sector and facilitates communication with employers, because today's schools are also required to build relationships with potential employers offering practical training opportunities with a view to make it easier for students to find a job after completing school.

Edu-coaches will work partly as shadow coaches, which mean shadowing the head of the school and a deputy and providing support in the following areas:

1. identifying the paradigm and viability of vocational training and education (assessment of the current situation; defining a feasible model for school improvement; creating coherence between the expectations of LEO-s, the media, the students' parents and the vision of the school)
2. change capacity of vocational schools (changing resistance of teachers; preparing teaching staff to understand the importance of updating skills; supporting the use of new classroom management skills)
3. leadership skills required in vocational schools (encouraging teachers to introduce and apply individualised methods in their schools; monitoring changes and adapting strategies)
4. sustainable school improvement (renewing the relationships of the school; creating a local network of contacts, further improving existing network; schools are required to build efficient co-operation with employers)

The programme schedule is as follows:

Induction phase: Jan-March 2008: detailed project plan

Awareness phase: Apr-Oct 2008:

- form action groups, elaborate the Dobbantó concept
- advertise the programme and recruit schools
- prepare change facilitators and edu-coaches to work with schools, teachers, school leaders

Preparation phase: Nov 2008-Aug 2009:

- start to work with schools:
 - support schools and teachers for learning more about students' personal learning and career needs
 - support schools to work out and implement ways to adapt to student needs
 - support teachers in using offered modules in a flexible and adaptive manner (focussing on students' needs)
 - support mentors and edu-coaches

Implementation phase: Sep 2009- Aug 2011

- support schools and teachers:
 - in broadening their adaptive practice
 - in helping their students to select suitable personal curriculum and find the possible best career path
 - in working with partners outside the school
 - raising awareness of their results and finding ways to sustain and improve them

Evaluation and conclusive phase: Sep-Nov 2011

- finalise modules and curriculum offered under Dobbanto programme
- define the critical features and prerequisites to run a Dobbanto school
- prepare policy recommendations to sustain the programme

For any further information:

<http://www.fszk.hu/dobbanto/>

E: dobbanto@fszk.hu

Mária Bognár, Fogyatékos Személyek Esélyegyenlőségéért Közalapítvány

H-1139 Budapest, Pap Károly u. 4-6.

T: +36-30-756-8880

E: bognar.maria@fszk.hu