

## METHOD DESCRIPTION

### Name of the Method or Technique

**Support through the creation and inclusion of a new social model - "Living and Studing Together - My life is in my hands".**

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### Time required

The children study in small groups / classes - from 1-2 to 5-6 in a group / class. We believe that it is most effective to start at preschool age and to study at least until the completion of primary education, ie. 7th grade. It would be even better if they could complete their secondary education at school. In any case, after 7th grade, they remain connected and supported by the school until the completion of their secondary education.

#### Required resources

1. Human resources: teachers, psychologists, speech therapists, resource teachers, educators, social educators, actors, musicians, choreographers, coordinators, technical specialists. It is mandatory that all those who work with children from our target group are motivated to seek different approaches , methods and strategies, to rethink their expectations and to work on priorities from the point of view of the individual prosperity of each child.
2. Medical specialists providing health care.
3. Material base, providing the educational activity in school, the life in the dormitory, the maintenance of the yard and the play areas.
4. Material base for the arts and crafts: workshops, rehearsal halls, equipment and materials for this.
5. Communication relations with institutions and organizations involved in raising children and working with their parents (Child Protection Agency, local social assistance services, local government, Ministry of education, regional education authorities, non-governmental organizations with similar activities).

Applicability (form of training and target group for which this method/technique is suitable)

The social model provides:

- ☛ living in a sustainable physical environment with provided amenities - a home with

separate spaces (for sleeping, studying, eating, playing), food, hot and cold water, indoor bathroom and toilet, clothes and shoes according to the season. The aim is to form health and hygiene habits, attitudes towards a healthy lifestyle and self-esteem;

- ☛ supportive environment - an environment that gives love and sets boundaries, that supports and stimulates one's own choice, living in a community of adults and peers who are equal and different. The aim is to develop soft behavioral skills, proactive and assertive behavior;

- ☛ education - to overcome the basic learning deficits and gaps in education, to stimulate curiosity and personal progress. The aim is to realize that education guarantees a good independent life on the principle "My life is in my hands".

The target group is children from 4 to 16 years old (at the moment). The form of education is daily. The children live in a dormitory next to the school. This closes the full cycle of life and education, ensuring prosperity and inclusion in an independent and sustainable lifestyle. The target group is relatively small (25-30) children. It is obligatory to apply it in the present form - the children live and study at school, and during the vacations and holidays they are free to go home. Parents can visit their children at any time, but prefer to contact them by phone.

### Aims, objectives, outcomes

Our goals are:

1. Education, expressed in the cooling of knowledge and skills corresponding to the stage of education and guaranteeing a successful independent life.
2. Development of soft / key skills - communication, conflict resolution from the position of "win-win", skills for choice, time management skills;
3. Formation of emotional and social models - creating and maintaining relationships, leadership, trust, support.
4. Motivation to learn, stimulated by experiencing success and recognition.
5. Manifestation of gifts and development of talent through various performing and applied arts

### Organization environment

1. In a school by classes, the children being divided according to age. No matter how small they are, we prefer "clean classes". Mixing of two classes (for example I and II) we undertake only when the children are one of the age. The small number of classes presupposes the application of different forms of organization - circular, informal, as a focus group, mixing and combining groups of different classes, etc.

2. In the dormitory the children live as a community with established rules. We emphasize the formation of trusting relationships with educators - trustees. Here the children are organized in interest groups, groups for everyday activities, informal groups for games and

communication.

#### Implementation of the method or technique (steps; activities; teachers' and learners' roles)

Both teachers and educators play different roles: expert, partner, organizer, mediator, facilitator, mentor, trustee. The roles change depending on the situation and the priorities in the different activities (education, everyday activities, practical activities, art activities). It is important to build trust through all roles and for adults to be the bearers of the model of behavior that we affirm as acceptable for children.

#### Options of realization of the method or technique (if any)

The method is applied daily and constantly while the children are in school and dormitory, and the acceptable behavior is regulated by generally accepted group rules and value norms. Thus we begin to set boundaries, ensuring successful independent activity and skills to connect and maintain sustainable relationships with other people (adults and peers). For the children and students from our target group, this is a key moment, because until the moment of entering school they do not have such experience. Their experience is usually associated with traumas due to lack of affection, emotional connection, communication.

Within our method, an essential condition is the individual approach in view of the child's personal history, parental capacity and the ability to include parents as a factor, as well as the close environment and the prevailing behavioral pattern in the community from which the children come.

### Advantages of the method or technique

- 🌐 Children break away from the threatening environment in which they are doomed to neglect, poverty, mental and physical abuse and lack of education (as a rule, when parents decide to drop their children out of school and return them to their homes, children drop out of the education system - this shows our experience in tracing the lives of our former students);
- 🌐 Children see and try another way of life in which respect, support and comfort are dominant;
- 🌐 Through the new activities in which they participate and through the experienced small or bigger achievements, the children build self-confidence, motivation for purposeful efforts and pursuit of goals;
- 🌐 Children learn to choose responsibly and in terms of their strengths - so they engage with their own future and learn to plan it.

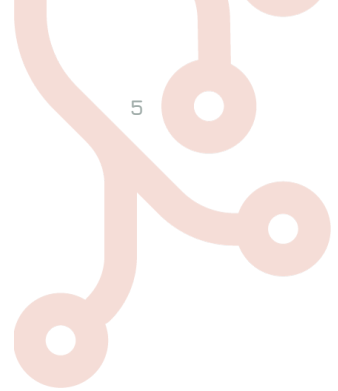
### Limitations of the method or technique

The limitations are related to:

- 🌐 Lack of institutional support in the sense of understanding the uniqueness of such an endeavor, which is the prevention of dropping out of school. We are convinced that children who drop out of the education system because it does not have the capacity and ability to work with so many different children should return to schools like ours, which give a second chance at an early age before children experience serious failures.
- 🌐 Lack of normative regulation and financing. Our school receives funding as a private educational institution. Generally, in private schools have very high fees and in Bulgaria only parents from upper-middle class could afford them. We are the only private schools with no fees. All schools in BG receive a subsidy from the state budget, which is connected with the number of students enrolled. Since our model provides for working with small groups and a small number of students, then the subsidy is minimal. The lack of stable funding deprives our work of security;
- 🌐 The process is effective when it is prolong. It is best for children to go to school at a pre-school age in order to prevent serious deficits and to receive sustainable care until they complete secondary education. We are currently watching our first five students in 8th and 9th grade who study in other schools, but we continue to take care for their living - home, food, clothes, etc. Thus, we check how stable our model is in new conditions-when these students change the educational environment, meet different social environment and could act without constant supervision from us. The results are quite positive and encouraging.
- 🌐 Our school, as one of the kind now in BG, can work with small number of children from these most deprived groups. But if Bulgarian society and government want to give a real second chance to all needy children and to achieve visible social impact, much more schools similar to our school should be established.

Images, Videos, other documentation

We attached links to Practice form



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