

GOOD PRACTICE DESCRIPTION

Name of the good practice

Flexible learning pathways

GENERAL INFORMATION

Country	Place (town, village, region)
Hungary	Gyula
Name of the Institution	Type of institution
Gyulai Szakképzési Centrum – Vocational Training Centre, Gyula	Second chance school
Sector and Level of education according to ISCED (if applicable)	
Vocational training ISCED 3	
Target Group	Stage of implementation
Young people aged 16 and over who have left the education and training system without a basic education or vocational qualification.	The good practice presented here has been completed as a project, but has been incorporated into the school's work without project funding.

A brief background of good practice

In 2017-2020, flexible learning pathways have been developed in the school to better take into account the life situation of each student. Reasons for the new initiative: A significant number of students had other important commitments for part of the day:

☐ They have to support themselves or their children and therefore have to take a job, or care for a child or family member. Many young people would not have been able to participate in a permanent, compulsory schooling programme because of these responsibilities.

☐ A further difficulty was that they were at different levels of knowledge and skills, so that individual learning pathways were needed to obtain the same vocational qualification for all.

☐ The frequency of school attendance was also made difficult by the fact that many lived in small settlements far from the school, where infrequent and costly public transport made regular, frequent travel difficult. The school therefore developed a different training regime for each individual, with which was partly attendance-based and partly distance learning;



each pupil was able to take part in the in-service training, taking into account his/her other commitments;
 each student could progress at his or her own pace towards the vocational examination;
 each student could take the vocational examination at his/her own pace, even in more phases.

Good practice description (aim and objectives; provided services – activities, approaches, methods)

The school has been second chance school programme since 2008. So far, this has been mainly through 3 different projects initiated and supported at national level: 2008-2011, 2013-2015, 2017-2020. In the periods where the project conditions for the implementation of the second chance school were not met, the school maintained the second chance school programme within the given legal framework and with reduced resources. The system has been continuously maintained (and is necessary to implement the good practice presented here):

a) Mentoring system: each student has a permanent adult mentor who provides complex support (social, mental, cognitive) to his/her mentored student. The mentor may be a teacher of academic or vocational subjects or a trainer. The mentor helps to solve possible life problems, to set up a study plan and to successfully implement an individual development plan. The mentor and the mentee talk at least once a week. This can also take place in an informal setting.

b) Individual development plan: each student, with the help of his/her mentor, sets aims that he/she wants to achieve in the school year. The development aims include both academic and personal development goals. The path to achieving the aim is broken down into shorter stages of 1-2 months with achievable goals. For each of these stages, specific activities are planned to bring the student closer and closer to achieving the aims. At the end of each stage, the mentor and the mentee jointly assess the successes also discuss the reasons for failure and use these as a basis for defining the tasks for the next period.

c) Team work: the people working with the students (teachers, mentors) hold team meetings on a weekly basis. In team meetings, they share their experiences with the students and help each other to deal with and solve any problematic situations. In each team meeting they talk about each student.

Mentors have been given a key role in coordinating the flexible learning pathways training for 2017-2020. Students made commitments about which days and times of the day they could attend and when they would prefer distance learning, based on their own other commitments. The mentors coordinated the students' individual timetables on this basis. So each of the student timetables were different. The mentors also monitored whether the students were actually present and completing their distance learning assignments. The practical training was the one that could only be done in the form of face-to-face teaching, all other areas were done in a combination of face-to-face and distance learning. The English teacher was present during the practical training, and the teaching was bilingual.

The further study fields were: vocational theory, science, IT, communication and social studies. These all fields were taught mainly through individual projects. The development of transversal competences was achieved through a complex programme, RLG. This programme (Reaching the Lost Generation) was developed in the framework of an international project, and could be considered also as a good practice in its own right. See: <https://rlg.edunet.hu/project/summary> and <https://rlg.edunet.hu/project/results> Everyone could leave the training when they were sure they could meet the exam requirements. Some people only took the practical exam first because they needed more time to prepare for the vocational theory examination.

Results (developed skills and attitudes; good practice's impact on the participants' life, professional realization, health, self-confidence, motivation to learn, etc.).

Young people who were unable to participate in the traditional, compulsory timetabled training have gained marketable vocational qualifications. Their self-confidence has increased significantly, as for them, vocational training was previously an unattainable dream. Today, 85% of the boys are working in their profession. 50% of Roma girls also work in their profession, the rest either do community service or look after their young children.

Evidence of effectiveness of the practice

Following the project, more and more young people are looking for this school. The young people who graduated came from an environment where one young person in five streets had any vocational qualification. Now the friends and peers are also interested, as it is a form of training where you don't have to stay in school all the time, you can learn a vocation in a flexible framework, according to your own possibilities. The school has become nationally known. Other teachers, school leaders and education policy makers are also relying on its professional experience.

Factors and conditions for the successful implementation of the good practice

Dedicated, flexible leadership, prioritise compensation for disadvantage for this section of society

Flexibility on the part of management and teachers
Teachers' attitude + pedagogical, psychological knowledge and a rich pedagogical methodological toolkit

Autonomy - dare and want to act as an autonomous person, but also have the opportunity to do so!

Teamwork

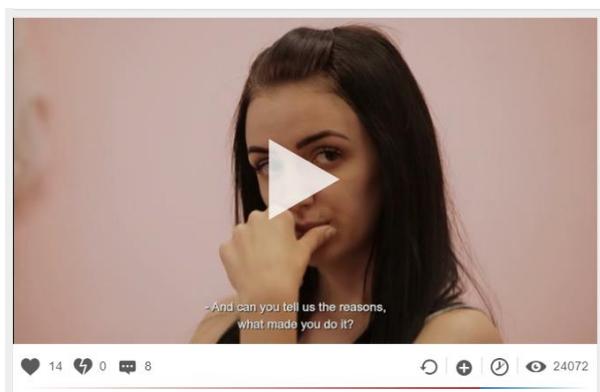
Evaluation of the practice

The project was professionally accepted and the professional implementation was good. No formal evaluation has been carried out, but word is spreading among the students, other schools participating in the national "School desks recharged" project have requested professional materials and have adopted the method. The final national project study also highlighted it as a good practice.

Resources

This programme was part of a 3-year national project called "School desks reloaded", which supports second chance schools. The school's ambition for the project was to qualify 32 young people with no qualifications - and they have succeeded. The project involved 8 teachers, 2 of whom were vocational trainers. They all had mentoring responsibilities and previous experience of working in second chance schools. Since then, they have developed a desire to improve their skills by learning a helping profession (psychology, mental health, social work). They increasingly see that for effective second chance school work, the proper personal attitude (empathy, tolerance, unconditional acceptance) is not enough, a well based theoretical knowledge is also needed.

Images, Videos, other documentation



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