



**LLL2010: Sub-Project 5: Towards a Lifelong Learning Society  
in Europe-The Contribution of the Education System.**

## **The Role of Hungarian Educational Institutions for Promotion of Access of Adults to Formal Education**

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Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME)

Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre Adults' Secondary School

Digital Secondary School

Eszterházy Károly College

Government department official interview: Ministry of Education and Culture

Government department official interview: Ministry of Affairs and Labour

Non-formal education organisation: Változó Világért Alapítvány (Foundation for Changing World) – Horizont Programme

Non-formal education organisation: Váltóság Alapítvány (The Change Lanes Foundation)

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## Chapter 1:

### Profile of the Hungarian Educational Institutions

Participation rate in organized formal adult education and training in Hungary is low compared to other European countries. According to the Eurostat Adult Education Survey (AES, 2009) 2.5% of the Hungarian adult population (25-64 years old) participated in some formal education or training programme compared to 6,25% of the average of all participating countries. The difference between men and women participating in adult training programmes is not substantial, only 1 % in favour of women.

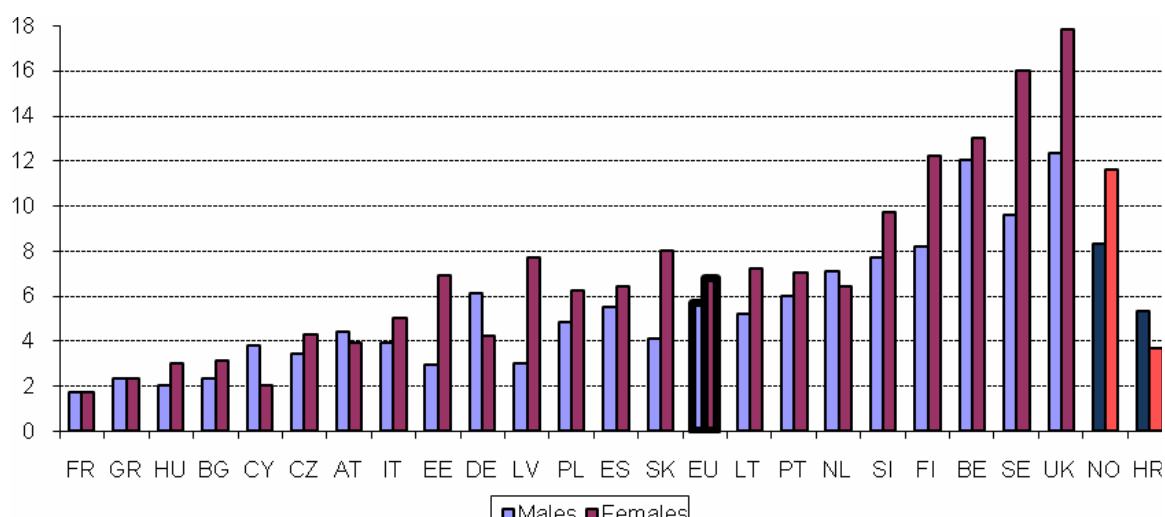


Table 1.

Participation in formal adult education and training, age 25-64, EU22 average, AES 2009

Rates of participation in adult learning (formal or non-formal) and in training programmes also remain far below the European average. According to the AES (2007), Hungary ranked as high as 22nd out of the 22 countries from the European Union with an average of only 9%.

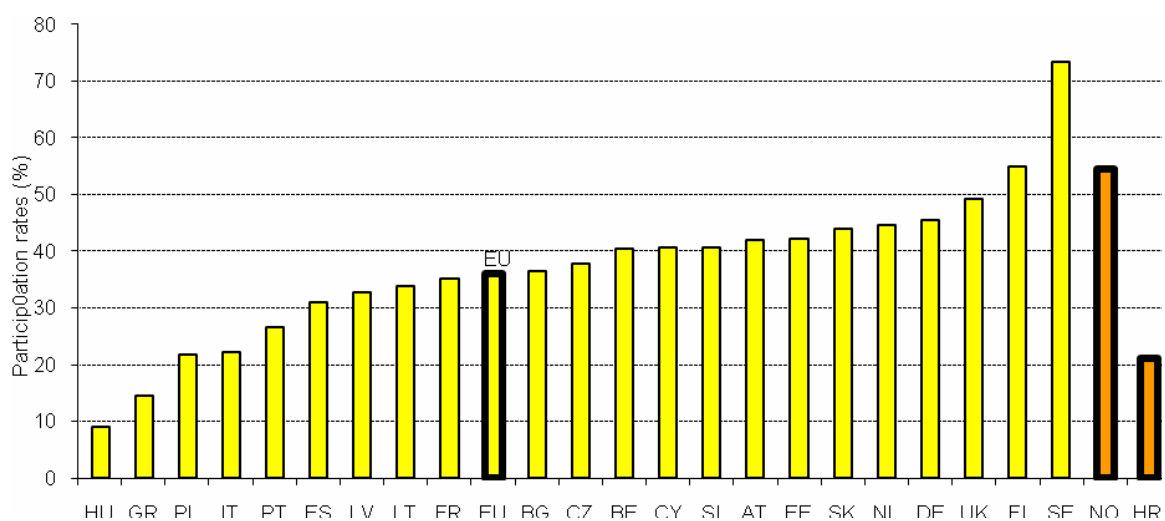


Table 2.

However, it seems to be very important to emphasize that the low participation rates in organized training programmes does not mean obviously the lack of learning itself. There are many important learning activities and contents being out of scope of the statistical data collection. Informal learning – especially different forms related to the workplace – can “replace” the courses or play the same if not more important role in the competence development process or in adaptation to new demands.

### **1.1. Target groups for access strategies**

#### **• *Early school leavers***

The National Institute of Vocational Education coordinates a pre-vocational training programme specifically for the 15-year-old children who dropped out from school system. It has been running for several years, and it is paid from training budget financed by the state. The programme involves young people who have no qualifications at all. Preparatory training programme is for development of general skills. After one-year preparation, participants can be involved in vocational education.

#### **• *Underrepresented social classes***

The results of the PISA survey proved that – compared to other countries – the influence of the social background in school achievement is very strong in Hungary and the very selective school education instead of compensating reproduces the social disadvantages. The same can be said on the post-compulsory education and training. The distribution of training opportunities is very unequal. So those with higher educational level profit much more from the education and training programmes than those who need the most – as underlined by Education at a Glance, 2002 (pp. 248).

Within the Ministry of Education and Culture there is a Directorate of Equal Opportunities with responsibilities of programme planning for highly disadvantaged population. This functions according to The New Hungary Development Plan. This Directorate mainly deals with professional planning of Social Renewal Operational Programme, also deals with preparing laws and legal works, and manages the operational tasks of implementation of legislation. Special target programmes are developed such as the Equity programme or the “One Step Ahead” programme aiming at decreasing the social inequalities by the school education. Regarding the appearance of disadvantaged people in higher education, a unique scholarship programme called “Útravaló” (the road to higher education) was introduced. There is, for example, a programme called “run to the front from the back desk” to help the school carrier of disadvantaged social classes (this is not typically adult education, because it rather focuses on the population, which is currently in the education system - on the disadvantaged, especially Roma pupils) and it is being encouraged to finish at least the high school. Furthermore, the EU has a programme called “social policy agenda”. This five-year programme has an important field, called social inclusion. This includes those educational and training activities, which are linked to the subject of social inclusion. The department of social affairs in The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour represents this political field on European level.

According to Lisbon Treaty, there is an open coordination and cooperation on social fields in connection with social inclusion. This is so called method of policy-coordination and cooperation.

In this framework the member states practically create action plans, which can be considered as political guaranties. In the framework of these action plans the governments ensure that these activities will be implemented in the next one or two years. This process is monitored by The European Commission but practically it has a common assessment. This European-type mechanism is adopted by the Hungarian government as well. This process has an inter-ministerial technical committee in Hungary.

- ***Ethnic minorities***

The largest group of minorities in Hungary is the Roma population. Their proportion is estimated around 5% of the total population and growing constantly. Roma population is the group with the most social disadvantages in Hungary. They can be characterized with several social disadvantages at the same time (effecting in a cumulative way). They live in large proportion in small villages. Important part of Roma population has very low level of education (they can be characterized by the lowest educational level). The unemployment rate is very high among them (only 29% of men, 16% of women have been employed in 2003), thus most of the accumulated underprivileged people have Roma origin where one of the parents is unemployed. They live usually under very poor living conditions and the social discrimination is also an important element in their situation (including the discriminative practice in many public schools). The need for special programmes to change their situation is declared in the Social Cohesion Action Plan. The education and training can be just one element of these complex programmes aiming at develop the settlement itself including the employment and living conditions.

- ***Older population***

The age is also an important factor in access to adult training opportunities. The younger adults (between 25-34 years) spend much more time (twice as much than on average) in continuing training than the older generation (55-64 years old). In the lifelong learning policy the older population is subject of special protection. There is a new measure under preparation to give the opportunity for adults over 50 to gain a new vocational qualification financed by the state.

- ***Long-term unemployed***

The Hungarian lifelong policy has very strong relation to the employment policy. This is not a new phenomenon – the interrelation of employment and education has been a standard element of the education policy documents and practice for a long time. The most important target group for the education and training consist of the unemployed persons.

Education and training, and especially adult education and training, is considered as an important tool for reintegration of unemployed people or undereducated population to the labour market (or give prevention from risks in the labour market). The employment strategy of the Ministry of Labour and Affairs (developed in harmony with the European Employment Strategy) stresses on increasing the number of participants in adult education, especially in retraining programmes. It also emphasises developing special programmes in order to integrate disadvantaged social groups.

- ***Adults with a disability***

According to the Pisa survey the problem is text comprehension in Hungary. This is a problem of several decades, but programmes do not focus on this problem. Such elements are likely to appear in certain adult training programmes, but those types of community colleges we can find in the UK (which deal with the problem just because it is generally important and not only to find a job), do not exist in Hungary.

## **1.2. Funding sources for formal and non-formal education, and prison education**

The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Affaires and Labour consider that lifelong learning policy documents' role is to give a legitimate frame to realize sector-policies (for public education, for vocational education, for labour market training sector) and the National Strategic Plan, the National Development Plan respectively give opportunity – providing important financial resources – to realize these separate sector-related programmes. Primary and secondary education, including the education at prisons and the formal adult education, is funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The non-formal adult education and training is financed by the Ministry of Affaires and Labour, and also by the enterprises themselves.

Formal adult education in the single structure eight grade primary schools (ISCED 2), in secondary schools (grammar school: ISCED 3a, vocational training giving nationally recognized qualification: ISCED 4c) or in tertiary institutions (ISCED 5a) provide the same qualifications and certificates as what are available in full time training. In this respect, full time education and adult learning do not produce different students.

Manifestly there is an old routine among policy makers to limit the education and training policy into the institutionalized provision. The idea is, that the most decisive period of the individual educational path is the first grades in the compulsory education, because this is the time when the most important competencies and motivation for the further learning are developed. Furthermore, the highest paybacks are from the investments in basic and public education at social level. This idea became a constant element of the strategy with large emphasis and is an important junction of the public education and lifelong learning policy. Even the Ministry of Affaires and Labour mainly supports formal trainings, because the labour-market accepts the formal NQR (National Qualifications Register) qualifications. Indeed, the companies in more than one third of the trainings, when sending their employees to trainings on their own money, order NQR education. It seems that non-institutionalized forms of learning are not “represented” in the policy thinking at the government level, and consequently there are no initiatives for stimulating individual learning activities.

Furthermore, the governing of school based formal education and the non-formal adult education is completely separated. The separate ministerial objectives do not cover all aspects of the lifelong learning as a system and they are not enough to rebuild the whole system of education and training for the long run. The two ministries are often in competition for financial resources what makes usually difficult to create the coherence in a comprehensive national strategy.

## **1.3. Background information on availability of free childcare or reduced childcare fees for socio-economically disadvantaged groups**

Although gender equality is not a hot issue in lifelong learning policy, because the participation rate of men and women are slightly different (in favour of the women) and there is no urgent need for intervention, special needs of women on childcare are recognized in different policy papers. Enlargement of part-time work opportunities and related allowances and special e-learning programme or specially designed child care services for learning mothers are on the agenda.

#### **1.4. Background information on availability of free access or reduced fees for formal and non-formal education for socio-economically disadvantaged groups**

Schools that provide primary, middle and secondary education are free of charge for the whole period of studies.

The Hungarian Government introduced tax allowance in order to enhance the participation in adult training. According to this measure employed people voluntarily engaging in further training may take advantage of an indirect public support in the form of a training-related tax allowance regulated by a separate piece of legislation of 2002. It provides that from 2003 an adult in employment, if studying in an accredited institution of adult training, may reduce his/her personal income tax by 30% of the tuition fees spent in that year. This measure is profitable mostly for those with sufficient resources to pay for training.

A very similar tax allowance scheme was introduced in 2003 in order to increase the number of home computers. This programme gave important financial support for middle class families to buy new PC-s at a reasonable price but did not increase at all the rate of population using the new technology (and especially did not ease the access to it for the social groups in need).

There are different civil scholarships, also supported by the government. For example the Arany János programme supports the high school education of the gifted underprivileged children. There is another programme called “Útravaló”, which helps the underprivileged ones getting into higher educational institutions.

However, the important efforts to reach and involve the most disadvantaged groups into adult education have lead to very modest results until now. More effective methods and complex projects are needed to step further in this field. Some small-scale local projects (initiated and supported by civil organizations) show that the clear objectives and appropriate tools (and well-prepared participants, continuing co-ordination of different agents and efforts and important financial resources) are necessary elements of the success.

#### **1.5. Distinctive features of contexts for learning in Hungary that impact on access and social inclusion issues**

##### ***1.5.1. Primary and secondary education***

Part of the formal educational system evening schools in all grades of basic and secondary schools are available for adult students (including prisoners – see below: 1.6.1. Prison education in Hungary). Both the evening schools and the schools at the prisons are state owned and financed, and the students who graduated from these schools have the same rights as the graduates from the daily schools.

##### ***1.5.2. Vocational education - Regional development concept***

The recent development programme of vocational education system – focuses on creating a new module-based system of training provision and the modernization of the content of curriculum. Vocational education policy programme by the modernization of the National Vocational Qualification Register (the Register has to define the content of vocational training) effects directly on the non-formal adult training.

Hungary can be characterized by important regional differences. While these differences always existed, market-driven change processes throughout the 1990s have resulted in the partial widening of gaps. The regional differences are present also in the distribution of training opportunities. Regional aspects are more and more present in the education policy and lifelong learning policy but using different terms. Based on the regional development concept (approved in 1998) administrative regions were developed.

Integrated vocational training centres had been established in every region as a result of a reform process and co-operation of the former vocational training institutions. Among other tasks they are responsible for the training of disadvantaged groups, and in connection with this they have a very close, day-to-day cooperation with the Regional Employment Centers. The target group of the training centres is not only the school age pupils but the adults too. It has an aspect of improving of cost-effectiveness and it is able to react more effectively to the demand of labour market needs. Regional development councils work out regional development plans and try to involve all stakeholders in the development process. The employers appear also in the governing board of these training centres so these centres can be considered not only as simple educational institutions but they also have a possessing managing board and the consortium has several members. The higher education institutions as “regional knowledge centres” and “knowledge transfer agents” are given a particular role in these regional plans.

### ***1.5.3. Higher education***

Students in higher schools can choose among full-time, part-time and evening forms of education. Higher institutions offer distance education, as well.

The Hungarian Universitas Programme – among many other objectives – aims at getting closer the economy and higher education institutions and opening the institutions for adult education programmes.

## **1.6. Brief introductory overview regarding the status and extent of prison and nonformal education**

### ***1.6.1. Prison education in Hungary***

The vast majority of the prisoners are low- or unqualified and unskilled early school leavers, and they have traditionally disadvantaged background. The national strategy for social crime prevention is being developed now, and the National Committee on Crime Prevention also exists, in which Social and Education Ministry representatives, civilian organizations and local authority representatives are present. In the crime prevention strategy priority is given to the training of prisoners and the preventive trainings for disadvantaged people. The Ministry of Justice and Public Order has a tendering programme, which focuses on the training of youth, and they also have a high priority project, which aims the development of the methodology in the field of crime prevention.

According to the law (IM: 6/96 - Ministry of Justice: regulation applying to enforcement of prisonment and commitment to prison), every prison should provide elementary education



programmes, and providing second school education is optional. Elementary educational programmes grant normal certificate (it is not assigned, that the participation of the educational programme is a prisoner). Second school education and vocational trainings are available only for prisoners with certification of elementary school. It is possible to start second school educational programmes, but because of low number of applicants it occurs rarely. However cooperation with other prisons ensures participation in these educational programmes for the concerned prisoners. The formal elementary and second school educational programmes in prisons are financed by the state budget after the number of the participants.

Labour market vocational trainings are also available for prisoners, but these trades are mainly out of fashion or there is an excess of these specialties in the country, so the prisoners who received vocational training have difficulties finding a job after discharge. Further problem is, that without financial possibilities these trainings can't provide modern, up-to-date appliances for the professional practice.

The non-formal programmes in prisons are financed by tenders. These programmes (e.g: drug-prevention programmes, conflict resolution trainings, guidance on labour market, self-knowledge trainings, artistic programmes, language courses) are organised mainly by external foundations (by tendering operations), by holy orders or by the Red Cross, and some of the programmes are initialized by the personnel or by the prisoners.

#### ***1.6.2. Non-formal education in Hungary***

There are several types of institutions of the non-formal education in Hungary: a large number of local institutions such as cultural centres, libraries, tele-cottages or tele-houses (a network of more than 1000 units offering access to ICT, that is PCs and internet and related learning opportunities), folk-high schools, enterprises which are not part of the education and training infrastructure.

The Act on Adult Education in 2001 regulated non-formal adult training along with services associated to the training in a framework-type piece of legislation. Three joint key elements of regulating the adult training were: compulsory registration of training providers, institution accreditation and programme-accreditation. Since 2003 only accredited institutes can get state support. Participants in training at an accredited institution can get a tax reduction. The Act requires the training provider to conclude a written contract with the adult learners. However evaluation of the changes can state that these regulations had little impact on the quality of the training provision.

Learning organization as a concept and practice is related to the workplaces especially to big international companies operating in Hungary. The companies represent a relatively close segment of the adult training sector – there are very limited opportunities to get a clear and general picture of their activity (particularly on new initiatives concerning the training of their employees and knowledge management practice). Workplace-learning and the stimulation of training of employees in private companies was always a difficult area of vocational training policy (not only in Hungary).

#### **1.7. Brief summary of major national policy documents on access to education**

Hungary joined the European Union in 2004 and became eligible for support from the EU Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund. (These funds intend to help reduce the disparities in development between Member States and regions). Hungary had to prepare a national

strategic document, the National Development Plan as a legal framework of support. This task and the EU policy requirements (or at least the government willingness to fit to EU policy goals as a new candidate country) played a very important role in development of national education policy. Policy expectations or requirements of the European Union were referred to in many internal policy discussions.

Hungary became an EU member state in a period when the role of coordination of educational policies within the European Union is of an increasing importance. Participation in the 'Lisbon process', aimed at achieving the 'future common objectives' of educational systems, forces Hungarian decision-makers and educational experts to re-consider the future of public education system in terms of quality and effectiveness, access to education and training, and equal opportunities. The National Strategy of Government (2005) identified the main points of intervention as it follows: basic skills and competency development in the compulsory education; enlargement of supply in the vocational and higher education and in adult; learning opportunities as a key element of enhanced adaptability; continual enlargement of the learning opportunities; guidance services for individuals and follow-up of school leavers; recognition of non-formal and informal learning; support for the most disadvantaged social groups and those in risk on the labour-market; developing and disseminating a new teaching and learning culture.

- **National Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper:** It has been prepared jointly by the Ministry of Employment and Ministry of Education at the end of 2005. This strategic paper of Hungarian Government can be identified as the most important policy document on lifelong learning for the moment. The measures formulated in the document focus on the following elements: the development of the institutional and methodological background of adult education and training; basic competences development in the public education; the development of vocational education and training system in order to fit better to the economic demands; and assisting higher education to adapt to the requirements of the changing economy.

- **II. National Development Plan (2007-2013)** – especially its Human Resources Development Operative Programme Chapter: By the European Structural Fund it provides very important financial resources to realize a complex list of different policy objectives. The objective of social inclusion (in the form of special programmes for the most disadvantaged groups in order to reintegrate them into the labour market) appeared in these documents as a specific element of the policy. As for the personal development – as a policy goal – the emphasis is on the skill development which can enhance the employability. Other important aspect of personal development in the documents is the increase of motivation and further capability for learning, which has to be developed during the first years of the compulsory education.

- **Hungarian Universitas Programme:** It aims at getting closer the economy and higher education institutions and opening the institutions for adult education programmes.

- **Act on Adult Education:** It regulates non-formal adult training along with services associated to the training in a framework-type piece of legislation. Three joint key elements of regulating the adult training were: compulsory registration of training providers, institution accreditation and programme-accreditation. Since 2003 only accredited institutes

can get state support. The Act requires the training provider to conclude a written contract with the adult learners. The Act on Adult Education contains a reference to the recognition of experience based knowledge.

- **IM 6/96 - Ministry of Justice: regulation applying to enforcement of prisonment and commitment to prison:** It regulates that every prison should provide elementary education programmes, and providing second school education is optional.

- Among EU programmes **TÁMOP 1** (Social Renewal Operational Programme) is related to development of employment while **TÁMOP 2** deals with improving the adaptability. **TÁMOP 5** is to strengthen the social inclusion. Each contains strong training components. These are quite complex programmes, which contain elements related to employment, education, and social services. The current UMFT TÁMOP concept will have a built in component, with the aim to create validation centres: If somebody wants to attend Master or Bachelor University courses, he or she might take exams. The law allows the same in vocational education and adult education in a certain measure. But this is costly, and the institutions are adversaries of this idea, because the training time would be shorter, and they would receive less money from the state.

- **Social Renewal Operational Programme:** It deals with preparing laws and legal works, and manages the operational tasks of implementation of legislation

- Special target programmes (**Equity programme**, **"One Step Ahead"** programme and **"Run to the front from the back desk"** programme) help the school carrier of disadvantaged social classes. This is not typically adult education; it rather focuses on the population, which is currently in the education system - on the disadvantaged, especially Roma pupils. It is being encouraged to finish at least the high school. **"Útravaló"** (the road to higher education) is a unique scholarship programme regarding the appearance of disadvantaged people in higher education.

**Chapter 2:** Seven Models of Good Practice (Recommended as Transferable to the Contexts of Other Countries)

The research was conducted under LLL2010 SP5

Country team leader: Peter Robert

SP5 project leader: Aniko Balogh

The interviews were conducted by Anna Józan and Ágnes Szöllősy

Sampling requirements	Institutions selected
A. Formal Education Organisations	Budapest University of Technology and Economics Eszterházy Károly College
B. Interviews with Senior Government Department Officials with responsibility for State policy in relation to Access and underrepresented groups	Ministry of Education and Culture Ministry of Affairs and Labour
C. Prison Institution	Prison
D. Non-Formal Education Organisation	Változó Világért Alapítvány Váltósáv Alapítvány
E. Institution in specific situation	Digital Secondary School
F. Secondary School	Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre Adults' Secondary School

#### **Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME)**

Name	Budapest University of Technology and Economics
Type	Formal education, third level institute
Location	Budapest
Foundation	1782
Ownership	State
Number of students	23,000 (8,000 in adult education)
Number of employees	n.a. (several hundred in adult education)
Activity	Mainly the education of engineers, but also offers a wide variety of postgraduate programs in all other fields of education (eg. further education of teachers)
Interviewee 1	Head of the Department of Technical Education and the Institute of Continued Engineering Education
Interviewee 2	Head of Development in the Centre for Learning Innovation and Adult Learning
Both interviewees were competent and helpful, they usually had the same opinion on all issues	
Date of interviews	Head of the Department of Technical Education and the Institute of Continued Engineering Education: 20th July, 2009 Head of Development in the Centre for Learning Innovation and Adult Learning: 3rd June, 2009

As Budapest University of Technology and Economics is one of the biggest universities in Hungary, one has to consider the organisational background of adult education before discussing it in detail. The main center of adult education in the institute is the Department of Applied Pedagogy and Psychology, which deals with adult students in several ways: It

1. offers adult education courses,
2. includes the Institute of Continued Engineering Education, an institute engaged solely in adult education,
3. coordinates adult education courses offered by all other departments of the university,
4. is engaged in several projects on adult education development, e-learning and methodology in its Centre for Learning Innovation and Adult Learning.

The focus of the case study will be only the adult education, other programs offered by the university will not be discussed. All mentioned objectives, target groups, etc. concern adult education and do not cover issues on undergraduate studies.

### **General information**

#### **Objectives of the practice**

The main objectives of the model – as mentioned by the head of the Department of Technical Education and the Institute of Continued Engineering Education – are as follows:

- *'It (BME) is an institute that definitely prioritizes quality education, we are not driven by statistics, but by providing education of the highest quality.'* Then he continues:
- *'In connection to this whole issue [of providing high quality education], the university sees it very well, that a diploma acquired some time ago might not meet the requirements set by the social or economic environment 10-20-30 years later, and so we try to implement the kind of structures – even in the undergraduate programs – that are connected to learning itself. We run dedicated courses for learning techniques and for different kinds of acquisition of knowledge, so that students do not only prepare for exams, and become open not only to formal education and learning, but that they also know the techniques of continuous learning outside the frames of formal education... These techniques – as we have experienced – can be implemented very well in the postgraduate specialization programs, where students already work and have their families.'*

As stated on BME's homepage,

*'The BME Centre for Learning Innovation and Adult Learning aims at facilitating the introduction of new technology and e-learning at the University. It coordinates and supports the University and its faculties in demonstrating their adult learning activities, providing a comprehensive and constantly updated database of information on adult learning courses offered at the University. One of its main focus is to promote the concept of lifelong education and the equal access to education by fostering links and cooperation between existing local*

*institutions and experts in the field of distance education, and furthermore, promoting links with similar units in the EU member states.'*<sup>1</sup>

The adult education programs offered at the university can be classified into three categories:

1. Post-graduate specialization programs: Students who already have a university or college degree acquire a supplementary degree in a specialized field. For many years these programs lasted two years, but since 2007 there has been a possibility to finish them in one year. The university offers 150-200 types of post-graduate specialization programs, varying from specialized engineering fields to the further education of elementary and secondary school teachers in management techniques. This large spectrum of specializations is offered in combination with distance and correspondence education, including e-learning and face to face consultations.
2. Continued education programs in engineering: Around one hundred courses are offered by the Institute of Continued Engineering Education, covering highly specialized fields of engineering, such as the operation of buildings with special technologies. Participation in these programs is compulsory for members of the Hungarian Chamber of Engineers (they must choose some courses from the one hundred courses on offer).
3. Vocational programs: 150-200 hour-long courses that usually offer some kind of supplementary education.

### **Target group**

Almost all students already have a college or university degree when entering the adult education of this university, and most of them also have a stable job. This institute targets the elite with the highest quality programs, as detailed by the Head of Development in the Centre for Learning Innovation and Adult Learning:

*'... so the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, okay, not as much as Yale, is an elite university along with ELTE and this and that, and I have to say, in our institute acceptance is determined by professional quality and not by social considerations. I think, this is still like this, so the question is if we can give a good quality planner engineer to Audi in Győr.'*

Students come from all over the country, but mostly from the capital and from the central region of Hungary. The journey to Budapest is often problematic, especially because students usually have full-time jobs, so distance education would be quite useful in some programs. However, many students still have prejudices against distance courses. Other universities, such as the ones in Miskolc, Győr and Pécs also offer adult education in engineering, and all have specialized programs that others do not provide.

Target groups in the three different kinds of programs offered by the institute are rather different:

1. In the postgraduate specialization programs

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<sup>1</sup> Word by word quote in English from <http://www.bme-tk.bme.hu/index.php?p=m&lang=en>

*'the target group, in terms of age, is around 35-40 years, people who already have a steady income and have acquired some experience in their profession. They also gained their degree 10-15 years ago and aspire to have a career in their own profession. This is a very high quality and stable group, firstly because it reproduces itself and also because they are very committed to learning - they don't have any doubts, like undergraduate students, concerning what they want to become, because they have a stable field of interest.'*

2. Continued education programs in engineering: The curricula offered by these courses are very diverse, so the target group is also highly segmented.
3. Vocational programs: these are the courses where the proportion of young people is the highest. In this group there might be some students who do not yet know exactly what they want to become or who currently work freelance or have no stable job.

### **Sources of Funding**

Adult education in this institute is entirely financed by the market, thus by the students themselves or by the company or institute they work for. Normative support is only available for undergraduate programs, and the university rarely applies for tenders for adult education.

Companies and institutes have the legal possibility to finance their employees' studies, but recently – due to the recession – fewer and fewer of them are spending money on educating their workforce. The most expensive courses – between 500,000 and 1,000,000 Forints (1,800-3,600 Euros) – are almost always paid by the companies, whereas some other programs – eg. those on real estate – are often financed by small businessmen (real estate agents) themselves. Funding teachers' further education has changed a lot recently:

*'When this kind of program started ten years ago, it was almost entirely the institute [school] that financed the education, because there were resources for this that were legally part of the education. ...Now, in the last few years we have seen that the institute [school] finances the teacher [teachers' further education] less and less and the proportion paid by the teacher has increased to 30-50-70%, which is – from one point of view – advantageous, because they become more involved. However, we have to see as well that 130.000 Forints (around 500 Euros) for a semester is a fortune for a teacher.'*

These inequalities among the different target groups are handled with great flexibility by the university: prices of the programs are adjusted to the financial situation of their target groups, so profit on some courses finances the participation of students in other ones.

The university (or at least those who are engaged in adult education) has very bad experiences with tenders: their administration is extremely complicated and bureaucratic and completely lacks any flexibility.

### **History / background of the model**



Adult education has long traditions at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, as detailed on the homepage:

*'The BME Institute of Continuing Engineering Education was founded on the 15th of August 1939 at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics. This was the first university based institute for further education in Europe. The mission of the institute as articulated at the moment of the foundation – to provide further education to practical professionals, to understand the development of the most up-to date theory and practice and to facilitate the acquisition of specialized professional skills – is still current.'*

### **Annual number of service users**

The total number of students enrolled in all kinds of adult education program at the university reaches 8,000, while the whole university, including undergraduate programs, counts 23,000 students.

Postgraduate specialization programs are the most popular, counting 4,000 students in total. The university is the market leader of these types of courses in Hungary – no other institute has more possibilities of specialization or more students enrolled on these programs.

Since some programs cover very specialized curricula, many of the teachers in adult education are not regular employees of the university but come from outside the institute. The number of teachers in adult education – including these external teachers – reaches several hundred.

### **Location**

The university and its adult education is entirely located in Budapest, not far from the city center. However, some courses take place outside the institute:

- In the most popular programs (for example, teachers' further education, which counts 1500 students) consultation centres were founded in several cities throughout the country. Consultations are held every second week and students only have to come to Budapest to take the exams.
- Some courses might take place at large companies, if there are enough employees enrolled on the same program.

### **Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the model used**

The perceived strengths of the university– according to the interviewees – are as follows:

- The university provides internationally renowned education of a remarkably high quality, which covers a very broad spectrum, and offers a large choice of specializations at several levels.

- The institute tries to adjust both the program offered and the infrastructural environment to the students' needs. Participants' feedback is taken seriously and the institute is flexible when there is a need for change.
- The university is open to all kinds of innovation and tries to implement new technologies as fast as possible.
- Thanks to the large size of the university, some programs – especially those for elementary and secondary school teachers – can be offered at a lower price by partially financing them from the profit of other programs targeted at more well-off groups.

Weaknesses and threats mostly – but not entirely – come from the social and economic environment:

- Although this is an elite university where the institute itself and its participants have less of a struggle with financial difficulties than an average third level institute, severe funding problems still exist: Companies are often reluctant to spend money on educating their employees, whereas individuals – especially in some professions – do not have the financial means to fund their studies.  
*'We try to make individuals open to learning, so that they see learning as a life activity and try to live it, despite all difficulties, as a harmonic activity, that, like sport, can compensate for all negativities with its joy and successes, even if it means burdens sometimes. However, it is the individuals who have the least financial means, so this really is a serious problem...'*
- The environment defined by law and by the state is extremely bureaucratic, and thus it is very difficult to register the programs or to apply for tenders.
- Another weak point  
*'is that commitment to learning depends on age. We see that the end of undergraduate life is delayed to the age of 27-28, which is connected to the change in lifestyle, but clients disappear above 50. The mentality that it's worth improving oneself even after 50 has not yet become common, ... even if this is not so much a characteristic of our students, this is disastrous at a national level'.*
- Last, but not least, the priority of the university is its master and doctoral programs, and therefore adult education is sometimes seen as less important.

### **Priority needs for the development and expansion of the model / service**

Adult education is still not as popular and accepted in Hungary as it should be, and all those involved in this market would need to develop in order to expand the model.

The legal environment of adult education is not at all suitable for the expansion of the model: Procedures are very bureaucratic, decisions are centralized and tax allowances that were much higher six-seven years ago have almost disappeared. Thus, the state could

- make procedures more flexible, with fewer sanctions and more encouragement.
- allow local governments, institutes and individuals to make decisions instead of the highly centralized decision process at present.
- give more tax allowances and other types of financial support to individuals.

The adult education market is highly segmented and has been stagnating for years. There is a need for a more dynamic market, and the head of the Department of Technical Education and the Institute of Continued Engineering Education says that they would be happy to have more competitors, even if some of them (such as the IBM Educational Centre) are more successful than they are. The structure of the market also needs to change:

*'...Hungarian adult education runs far below the necessary performance level, so it has a department which deals with the retraining of the unemployed, which is very complicated, and sorry for the term, operates as a highly corrupt system, which means that it's always the same people they retrain, so this department has a very serious disfunction. On the other hand, there is a certain part of the Hungarian population, around 60-70%, of which we take the best 10%, but then nobody cares about the rest. ... so if you try to ask the 40-50 year-old population in a survey [on adult education], you will find unemployed people who have already enrolled on five vocational courses but still have no job, you will find engineers who learn something every five years, and then there is a large gap. Around 70% of the people who acquired a vocational secondary school degree or whatever some time ago, would be able to study, but have not gained a university degree, because they could not get into university twenty-five years ago, and now, you can ask, their informal studies have not been more than learning fishing from their neighbor or whatever, and have not had a learning experience that has influenced their labour market position.*

Universities and colleges still don't see adult education as an important element of their portfolio, but instead almost always prioritize master and doctoral programs. These institutes also need to change their attitudes and give more financial means, attention and publicity to adult education.

Students' mentality should and will also change in some years. At present, participants in adult education belong to a generation that had bad experience with these kinds of programs, as they were forced to participate in them after the rapid and overwhelming changes of the 1990s' political and economic transformation.

The interviewee does not think that they should change their portfolio in order to attract less qualified people (the 70% of the society mentioned above, that has never participated in adult education), but they make great efforts to diffuse information on their courses. The two most important sources of information for potential students are the internet and friends or colleagues who have already participated in a program. Thus, the university provides a lot of information on its courses on the internet and signed a contract with Google to put their programs at the top of their search results. Even though it is more expensive to appear in the press, they do advertise in the biggest daily and weekly newspapers, so that information can be spread to the wider public. The professional press is also an important channel of communication, where more detailed and targeted information is diffused.

## **Methods of feedback / evaluation of courses**

Student feedback is taken seriously by the institute. Evaluations on courses, teachers and learning materials are conducted either electronically (in case of the postgraduate specialisation programs) or on paper, and are always treated statistically and studied intensively. If any of the indices are not satisfying, the university examines the causes behind and changes them (for example, by modifying the learning material or changing the teacher).

Adult education at the university is also certified by ISO which means that several elements of the programs are continuously evaluated.

## **Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model**

Since adult education in this institute is completely based on market demand, the recession had a significant impact on the model. Companies now are not spending money on the further education of their workforce, and individuals are also reluctant to enrol on the courses. On the other hand, there may also be some companies that send employees to further education courses, because these latter ones have less workload and more time now.

## ***Support for disadvantaged groups***

### **Disadvantaged groups represented**

As detailed above, this institute is an elite university and does not really target disadvantaged groups. It does not participate in the retraining of the unemployed, which is the 'disadvantaged part' of adult education. However, there are some students from disadvantaged backgrounds:

### **Roma**

Roma students are mostly enrolled on teacher further education courses, where the total number of students reaches 1500 annually. These teachers usually work in kindergardens or elementary schools and are quite succesful in their own environment: they have a stable job and generally a good position as these courses are usually for leaders. It is impossible to estimate the number of Roma students in the institute, both because there are no records made of students' ethnic origins, and also because most of them do not even come to Budapest, as they study at the local consultation centres all over Hungary. They are completely integrated in the study groups and do not receive any special kind of support.

### **Students with health problems**

The university offers special courses for deaf and / or blind people on the usage of special software, such as audiosoftware that helps reading. Besides these special programs, students with any kind of health problems may participate in any of the adult education

courses. The institute tries to meet their needs: they can take their exams with the help of a sign language speaker, their writing might be treated in a special way, and the buildings have been adapted for wheelchair users.

### **Financial support**

Despite the fact that this is an elite institute, students sometimes make a petition to ask for a reduction of their tuition fee. As this is quite rare, there is no special committee for these kinds of requests, and the decision is made by the head of the institute. The answer is usually positive and students can either receive a reduction or be allowed the possibility of paying by installments.

Teachers of the university might also receive financial support when they participate in internal training courses – they often only have to pay 10-20% of the tuition fee, so that they become more motivated to participate.

### **Career support**

Students might receive advice on employment issues, but they rarely need it since almost all of them already have a stable job. As there are professors who teach career counselling, all issues concerning career support are their responsibility. They have certain hours available for this, and both undergraduate students and adults can ask them for help.

On the other hand, there are quite some discussions on career opportunities among the students in the study groups, where informal relationships can be very strong. They might offer career opportunities to each other and these social networks might continue to function even after the end of the program.

### **Emotional and behavioural support**

Emotional and behavioural support is an interesting issue in adult education, since students might have more life experience than their teachers. Informal personal counselling and conflict management are the responsibility of the psychologists who teach in the department, but there is no dedicated emotional support service in the adult education.

On the other hand, many special training programs and courses are organised on conflict management and on other psychological skills as part of the curriculum in some specializations.

### **Literacy**

Education on literacy is not dedicated to disadvantaged students who have learning difficulties, but is offered rather as a high-level further education course for those who are already quite skilled in writing and reading.

Postgraduate specialization programs include some two- or three-day training courses where presentation skills are integrated into the curriculum, and discussed in detail.

The other possibility for further education on literacy is the dissertation: Students consult individually with their professors five-six times during its writing, and

*'they also have to give a presentation in the final exam, so the preparation for this is covered. They have special exercise books for this, how a dissertation should be written, presented and so on.'*

### **Research projects concerning disadvantaged groups**

Although the department does not offer courses to disadvantaged target groups, it works on several research projects concerning disadvantaged youth:

*'one of our most important international projects is the new accreditation mechanism concerning disadvantaged youngsters' vocational education, so together with the German project leader and in cooperation with six other countries, Spain, Austria, Bulgaria, Poland [he doesn't name the other two], we are definitely engaged in this kind of development. ... in disadvantaged youngsters' vocational programs there are special accreditation requirements to meet, which partly depend on the nature of the disadvantage, because it might be limitation of motion or a mental handicap. We study current international practice, and see how this could be standardized in Europe, so that the vocational programs of disadvantaged youth could be preliminarily evaluated and accredited in such a way so that these programs become more attractive.'*

### **Recognition of prior learning and work experience**

If a participant already has a qualification or some work experience, not more than ten years old, covering the curriculum of a certain course, it can be recognised and the student does not have to participate in that course. Requests are usually accepted, but

*'even if we are open and we diffuse information on this, we receive far fewer requests than we expect. People prefer to stick with the others and they almost hide it, if they have some experience, because they say that they will profit from this'.*

Recognition of prior learning is not centralized and depends strongly on the professor of the course: some teachers are very open to this (like the interviewee who is the head of the department), but others stick to the special curriculum and books they lecture on.

### **Distance education**

The head of the department summarizes their strategy on distance education as follows:

*'... the elite and those with conservative attitudes have prejudices towards a full shift [to distance education], so we are very careful with distance education. I could say that we combine the traditional form of education with elements of distance education'.*

Then he goes on:

*'quite early on we adapted well-known systems and branded learning, and we don't tell [students] to apply for distance education with e-learning, but they apply for a normal course, and at the same time they also have the possibility to*

*register and use all technologies provided by current internet-usage. In this system they will be part of a mailing system and will be able to see the entire course contents and documentation electronically. They can download it, use it and chat, if it is possible in the given course structure. We organise electronic consultations and electronic exams in some courses, exercises are given in and evaluated electronically. For more than a year we haven't even had a registration book to record grades, so we put options in the system that do not preclude the possibility of face to face teacher-student relationship, so lessons and consultations are still held, but students visibly need and appreciate this system.'*

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### **Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre Adults' Secondary School**

Name	Pestszentlőrinc-Pestszentimre Adults' Secondary School
Type	Secondary school
Location	Budapest
Foundation	1948
Ownership	Public (state + local government)
Number of students	519
Number of employees (permanent posts)	27 permanent posts for teachers, six for other employees
Activity	Secondary school for adults preparing for high school diploma
Interviewee 1	Principal since 1997, teacher of history
Interviewee 2	Vice principal, head of distance education, teacher of arts and literature
Both interviewees were competent and helpful, they gave the same answers for most questions – different answers are indicated in the case study	
Date of interviews	1st July 2009

### ***Background profile and introduction – according to p39-42***

#### **Objectives of the model**

The school's main objective is to prepare adults for the high school diploma in four years. The principal spontaneously mentioned that a further objective is the motivation of students for life long learning which often requires a high school degree. Besides further education, the students' main objective is to find a more qualified job after having graduated. Last, but not least, teachers underline the importance of general informal education and personality development, even if this is more difficult than in ordinary / regular high schools for children.

#### **Target group**

The school is open to anyone over 18, having finished elementary school and not possessing a high school diploma. In Budapest, this proportion reaches 40% of the adult population, whereas up to 80% of adult education institutes (including universities, colleges and vocational education) require a high school degree. Thus, the demand for secondary level adult education is rather high, while there are only few institutes offering these kinds of programs. The average age of students at the school is 26; most students are below 30 years and come either from Budapest or the surrounding region. In addition, since the institute offers a distance education program, there are quite some students who live in different parts of the country or even abroad.



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## Disadvantaged students represented at the institute

Since the school – especially one of its two buildings – is located in a rather poor neighborhood of Budapest, a significant number of its candidates come from disadvantaged backgrounds. There is no entrance exam, and all applicants are accepted in the programs. Thus, although the institute makes no special effort to recruit at risk students, they are largely represented in the classes.

*'Actually, it must be admitted, that we don't have a special program for this [to engage underrepresented groups], we are a bit spoiled, especially with distance education, because there is a large demand on enrolling the distance education, so there are lot of applicants, and thus we didn't really have to think about targeting special groups, because anyway, the demand has been great....We are lucky with our location, not really here, in the Hunyady building (main building), but, as I mentioned, we have two education programs. Our distance education is in the Csontváry school, we are tenants there and it is in the middle of the Havanna<sup>2</sup>, so we have an incredibly big intake from Havanna inhabitants. But this, of course, does not mean that we are only open to Havanna, although we are open to them, but it means that we also have students from the provinces and even from abroad.'*

No official database is available concerning social background, but – according to the interviewees' estimates – more than ten percent of the students are Roma, and quite some of the students live in poor living conditions.

Two initiatives were taken to involve disadvantaged groups in the education, but both of them failed. A cooperation agreement with the Roma minority would have given Roma students the opportunity to be offered a scholarship for studying at the school. However, the program could not be implemented because the Roma minority did not accept the person responsible for issuing the scholarships. The institute also wanted to engage prisoners in the education, but did not win the tender to do so.

Since we started a different kind of method in adult education, the headcount has significantly increased. Last year we had 519 students and actually we had to take advance bookings, because we couldn't accept as many people. Causes are multiple, actually, we are the only one [adult education institute] in the South-Pest region, because several adult education institutes were closed or fused with regular secondary schools.

## Sources of Funding

The school receives a certain amount per student from the state (around a thousand Euro per capita per year, which covers approximately 55% of the whole budget), and a fixed sum from the local government. According to a recent local government order students also have to contribute to the financial resources with a tuition fee based on their academic results.

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<sup>2</sup> A neighborhood famous for being very poor

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Upon entrance to the school this sum is 10% of the minimum wage. Following the first exams the amount payable varies between zero and 100 Euro per year. The tuition fee is the same for the two faculties (correspondence course and distance education).

### **History / background of the model, number of students and employees**

The institute, which has always focused on adult education, was founded in 1948 and moved to its present location in 1972. Formerly it had around 200-300 students in total who could enrol in night school classes or in correspondence courses. Today 519 students can choose from two faculties offering the same level of education in different forms: correspondence courses or distance education. Twenty-seven teachers (20 lessons each) and six other employees are responsible for the education and technical conditions.

*'Since we started a different kind of method in adult education, the headcount has significantly increased. Last year we had 519 students and actually we had to take advance bookings, because we couldn't accept as many people. Causes are multiple, actually, we are the only one [adult education institute] in the South-Pest region, because several adult education institutes were closed or fused with regular secondary schools.'*

### **Location**

Although the school moved premises in 1972, both current locations can be found in the same neighborhood on the outskirts of Budapest as the original school. Correspondence courses take place in the main building on weekdays, whilst distance education classes are held in another one, which is located in a rather poor neighborhood. Both buildings are shared with another educational institute: the main building also belongs to an ordinary / regular secondary school, while the other one is shared with an elementary school.

### **Perceived strengths and weaknesses**

The strongest point of the school is the high quality of its employees: teachers are motivated, well-trained and share the same objectives and views. Both interviewees are quite satisfied with the functioning of the school, and cannot really find weaknesses. The most important problem is students' difficulties concerning school attendance – either they do not have time to participate in the classes or their studies are not easily accepted at work.

### **Priority needs for expansion of the model / service**

Lack of money is the biggest problem for the institute: According to the interviewees' opinion, large sums are spent on the central communication of life long learning, but very little state support is given to schools that could use it for education in daily life. They have applied to be allocated EU funding, but their application was rejected.

### **Methods of feedback and evaluation**

The best feedback on the functioning of the school is the results of the final central exams for the high school diploma. Students are rather successful in these exams, and in addition, committees are usually satisfied with their knowledge. Another form of feedback is students' evaluation of the school, including feedback on teachers, learning materials developed by the tutors of the school and communication with teachers – these indicators usually show a level of general satisfaction.

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Students are evaluated continuously throughout the year and receive exam grades for both the mid-term and final exams in each semester.

### **Impact of the recession**

The impact of the recession can be perceived in the decrease in available resources. While last year the state provided 280 thousand Forint (around one thousand Euro) for each student, in 2009 this amount fell to 252 thousand Forint (around nine hundred Euro).

### **Mission statement**

Although the mission statement of the school is only eight lines in length, it underlines the importance of preparing students for life long learning and the cooperation with local communities in giving adults a chance to learn and get a qualified job.

### **Curriculum<sup>3</sup>**

#### **Curriculum in general**

The content of the curriculum and the requirements in the final exam is the same as in an ordinary / regular secondary school, but the organization of the education is rather different. There are two faculties, correspondence and distance education, both of which offer fifteen lessons as a maximum possibility for students who would like to have personal help in their studies. Schedules are flexible, but there is no possibility for studying in a credit or module based system. Although it is legally possible for the institute to recognize prior learning in a vocational school if the candidate passes a supplementary exam, students usually start their studies from the beginning. At the entrance, students are given an information booklet containing the flexible schedule for the whole year, the requirements and students' rights and duties. The curriculum starts with preparatory courses, as students finished elementary school many years before entering secondary education and thus have often problems with basic requirements. These preparatory courses might also include informal help in informatics, especially for those who have serious difficulties in using the internet.

#### **Correspondence education**

Students on the correspondence courses attend school three times a week, and get 15 lessons per week. As this is only two-fifths of the number of lessons in the traditional education, it is considered only correspondence education instead of night school. The latter is not popular nowadays, as employers do not accept employees' absence and people with families do not have time to participate in more than fifteen hours of school per week. In correspondence education, students attend classes from 4h30 PM until 8h15 PM three times a week. They can choose the three days from Monday to Thursday at the beginning of the school year. There are several groups (classes), each having courses on different three day combinations during the week.

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<sup>3</sup> This part on curriculum contains two key categories: 'A curriculum to engage at risk students' and 'Distance education and the school site'. This change in the structure of the case study was necessary, because distance education, as one of the main activities of the school, is an inherent part of the curriculum which – as a whole – is dedicated to help students staying on at school.

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According to the principal, participation in the courses is compulsory, and if the student attends less than half of the classes he / she cannot finish the current year. In contrast to this, the vice principal claimed that there was no attendance register on the courses and thus teachers did not even know how many students were absent. In his opinion, in most cases the cause of the absence is a lack of time or difficulties at work or home, so absence should not be punished if the candidate can pass the exams.

### **Distance education**

Distance education was launched at the school in 2003. The model is based on a special method developed by a group of experts working for a foundation of a Hungarian University (Széchenyi István University in Gödöllő) and for three secondary schools (Tatabánya, Pécs, Szolnok).

The point of the method is that students receive a different handbook for each subject, which is an important tool for the autonomous assimilation of the traditional secondary-school textbook. At the beginning it suggests a learning schedule, somewhat similar to a teacher's traditional work schedule that indicates when to start a certain chapter in the textbook and how much time to spend on it. The booklet contains different types of exercises, all based on the textbook: some of them are worked out at the end of the booklet, facilitating self-checking, others, having no solution in the book, should be sent to the teacher via e-mail for marking and evaluation.

As researchers say that learning from books is easier than using the computer, these helping materials are sold in the form of printed books (the price for all handbooks for one year is around 50 Euros). Handbooks are continuously being further developed, based on students', teachers' and external experts' opinions. So far, the development has cost 14-15 million Forint (around 55 thousand Euro) and – as the school has not received any financial support for it – a part of the work has been done without remuneration. It is possible to use them in other institutes, but they can only be published with the permission of the school.

Great efforts have been made to spread the model throughout the region, eg. teachers from the institute give lectures on andragogy to their colleagues from other schools and invite them to participate in the development of the handbooks. Within the framework of a cooperation agreement on distance education among five local governments, the institute has the opportunity to further develop the model: teachers share their experience with their colleagues in vocational schools so that the latter ones can write distance education handbooks for vocational school students.

The program is not a traditional distance education course, as it also offers ordinary secondary-school classes. Lessons are held on Saturdays, from 8AM to 8PM. The eleven lessons, covering all subjects, are traditional classes and not consultations (as in most distance education programs). They are not compulsory, students can choose among them according to their needs.

Besides Saturday classes, personal consultation is offered every Thursday and Friday from 4h30 to 8 PM, where problematic points of the subject material can be discussed in detail.

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Altogether, including ordinary classes and personal consultations, students can have a maximum of fifteen hours of personal communication with tutors, which is two-fifths of the number of lessons in an ordinary secondary-school. As this program is a distance education course, participants maintain daily contact with the tutors via internet and thus receive continuous feedback on their progress, even without a personal relationship.

*'Some of our students work abroad, they don't even come home, because they work abroad, but they can send in the exercises and ask questions via internet, so this is a method that seems to be effective. We can already say this, because the first group of distance learning students finished their studies last year, and they had very good results.'*

### **Evaluation**

The most important way of evaluating the students' knowledge is the midterm and final written and oral exams. The final exams are absolutely compulsory; whereas in the case of midterm exams the rules are less strict (students can continue their studies even if they have not passed them). In the correspondence courses there is some feedback on exercises prepared either at home or at school, and students rarely have oral evaluations. Candidates often work in teams and get feedback as a member of the team. In the distance education faculty, students regularly get detailed opinions of their work which helps them in their further progress.

Although the principal objective of the evaluation process is to assess the candidates' knowledge, teachers also use it as a means of motivation. They try to appreciate good results eg. by organising a free excursion for the best students or by giving them smaller rewards.

### **Arts and personal development**

Art history courses form part of the curriculum – students have one lesson per fortnight over four years, covering the whole history of art from the prehistoric ages to the postmodern.

*'There is an art history course, my colleague, as I have already mentioned, takes them [to museums], and we also have arts learning materials, that we completed with a CD, a colorful material, we can look at it, if you want to. They can use the internet for free, they can come in, this is not linked to a special course, if somebody wants to use it, he / she can come, we put a great emphasize on informatics, there are some who use it professionnally, but others have to be taught from the very beginning, but we think it is important that they learn it. So informatics is also used for enriching their knowledge.'*

Literature is taught in detail in separate courses, whereas there is no official music, dance or drama education. However, one of the teachers is involved in dramapedagogy and gives informal classes to those who are interested and have time to attend the courses.

Unfortunately there is not enough time for personal development besides the art courses. There is only one class per fortnight in the correspondence education where students talk freely about personal issues, whereas distance course students do not have any classes for these purposes.

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## **Accreditation**

According to the principal, accreditation of this school is a useless and expensive administrative process. Since they were the first to develop this method of distance learning and the learning materials, there is no benchmark and no competent expert who could judge them. However, as accreditation is obligatory, the learning materials are currently being accredited. Even if the administration forces the process, it will not gain any benefit or support for the school. This is an old institute with a successful history of more than sixty years and thus – according to the principal – it does not need this process.

## ***Supports for students to enable them to stay on at school***

### **On absence and early school leaving in general**

Absence is a big problem, since students do not have enough time because of their job or family life, or simply because their employers do not want them to attend courses regularly. Leaving school early is similarly a problematic issue – approximately 40-50% of students leave the institute in the first semester, either because they do not even start their studies or because they are frightened of the difficulties (high requirements, lack of time, etc.). On the other hand, the majority of those who pass the final exam in the first semester will finish the school and get a diploma. Counting on a high rate of early school leaving, the institute launches the classes with 40-50 students in the first semester – in some months, headcount in the classes drops down and this way students can start the second semester in classes with a normal size of 20-25. Thus, the institute can admit all applications and does not have to merge classes. Early school leavers often restart their studies – according to the present order, students can restart courses at the point where they dropped out, and – even if they left several years before -- do not have to restart them from the very beginning. There are several means to prevent leaving school early in the institute, and – besides financial support -- most of them are based on the quality work of the staff.

*'The best means of support is that it [learning] pleases them, because other support is difficult to imagine, he / she [the student] has to understand that he gets a chance from life. ... the teachers' contribution is primordial, frames are given and in this frame I try to employ people who feel happy here, very well-trained experts, we cannot offer them too much, because it [the salary] is as much as in other places, according to the normative categories, but twice a year they have always received premium, and they will now as well.'*

## **Financial support**

Those having difficulties with paying the tuition fee can apply for it to be reduced or waived, independent of academic results. Certain disadvantaged groups pay reduced fees without application:

- students from families where income per capita is lower than 57 thousand Forint per month (around 200 Euros) pay a 50% reduced fee
- students with three or more children do not pay any tuition fee
- ill students pay a reduced fee.

The decision on reduction was previously the responsibility of the principal, but recently he can only make suggestions, and it is the notary who makes the final decision.

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## **Learning and literacy difficulties**

Courses in the first three months are mainly dedicated to an orientation on how to start learning. This intensive education on learning methods is fundamental, because students lose motivation if they have serious learning difficulties. Although all teachers are involved in this process, it is the literature teacher who has the most important role.

Besides this general education, there are preparatory courses in each subject, covering specialist subject material, and helping students to acquire the minimum knowledge needed for secondary-school education. After the first three months, learning difficulties are discussed during individual consultations which are part of the general curriculum, rather than in the classes.

*'... there are individual consultations, if I can mention this, I might have not told you about this before, mainly in the distance education we have so called individual consultations, which means that on Thursday and Friday, in the given time, from 4h30PM to 8PM, in this period, teachers, teachers who teach there are scheduled, when they are in the distance education, and students can visit them, so in this case, consultations do not take place in classes, but there are individual consultations, and I think this can also be seen as a support system, because the student can find the teacher whatever his problem is.'*

## **Helping excellent students**

Teachers make efforts to motivate and educate gifted students – they get extra attention and might participate in local or national competitions. The two most important successes are the first prizes won in the national competition in history (among 56 schools) and at a student film festival.

## **Emotional and behavioural problems**

Since courses are not compulsory and students are adults, there are no behavioural problems in the classes. Teachers do not have to discipline students, they do not meet aggression, alcohol or drug problems.

*'No, here we have students, even if they sometimes use drugs or drink alcohol, when they do, they don't come to school, so I've never seen a student coming to school 'loaded' or drunken.'*

As there are great efforts at a national level to fight against drug abuse, the local government regularly sends experts (usually from the police) to lecture on drug prevention. According to the principal, these lectures are useful not only for the students but for the teachers as well.

Concerning personal and emotional problems, there are several formal and informal means of help: Students on the correspondence course have one class every fortnight dedicated to personal issues, while distance education students can discuss their problems with the tutors. One of the staff members is formally responsible for helping in personal issues, but in practice, all teachers are involved in supporting students in an informal way.

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## **Career management**

The school launched a career orientation program for students in the last two years of their studies: this covers a career plan assessment and lectures on career orientation. There is also a possibility for informal individual discussion, as teachers are open and highly motivated to advise students on career opportunities. According to individual needs, the institute contacts different schools that might admit the candidates. It has a cooperation agreement with certain third level institutes (Szent István University, Gödöllő and one of its faculty in Jászberény, Wekerle Sándor Business School, Atalanta), where their students enjoy advantages over other candidates (but only if they have the same results as other candidates). Those who want to get a job might find one on the information board especially dedicated to information on job opportunities.

## **Dropping out and its prevention**

The most important means of preventing students leaving school early is the personal relationship between teachers and students. If a student does not appear at the mid-term exam, his / her teacher contacts him / her via e-mail, telephone or postal mail. Communication also functions in the other direction: students often contact their tutors if they have problems with school attendance. In practice, even in the correspondence education, participation on the courses is not compulsory, but being absent at the mid-term exam is already a serious sign for the staff.

Re-take exams give a second chance to those who could not pass the final exams of the semester, but in the case of a second failure, the student has to repeat the school year. Students are automatically denied entry to the courses if they do not pay the tuition fee before the deadline, unless they have made an application to postpone the payment. Even if the student leaves the school, the institute is always open to taking him / her back.

## **Extracurricular activities**

Several extracurricular activities are offered for those who have time for them: The staff organises excursions in Hungary and abroad, a ball for the senior students, two to three guided tours to museums every year and visits to theatres. A new initiative called 'Tea and Science' was launched this year, where experts from different fields lecture on scientific topics in an easily understandable way.

*'Tea and Science, this is how it's called, the first was held by our chemistry teacher, actually she can teach in two languages and is very well-trained, she lectured on Chernobyl, she started by speaking about nuclear disintegration, and she finished by speaking about what it caused, the room was full, but not only with students, they could bring their family, anybody.'*

This is practically free (The cost is 20 Forint to cover the costs of sandwiches—less than ten Euro cents) and is popular even among students' family members and friends. Participation at the other events mentioned above depends mostly on how much time they take and how important they are in the school life: there was a rather high participation rate (70-80%) at the senior students' ball, but excursions are much less popular as they are usually longer and more expensive.



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**Support of families**

Many school events are open to family members (guided tours to museums, extracurricular lectures, etc.) because – according to the staff – educating the environment of students helps their own development as well. Staff members do not have any other ideas on how they could give further support to students' families.

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### **Alternatives to suspension / expulsion**

The official act of suspension or expulsion has never happened so far in the school, but students who do not pass their exams or do not pay the tuition fee are automatically denied entry to the courses.

### **Active citizenship at school**

Active citizenship outside the school (eg. in the local community) is not the responsibility of the institute – as students are adults, they decide on these issues themselves. Unfortunately, even if they were motivated to volunteer, they usually do not have time for it.

*[Student representation] is realized in the form of a student council, the council is made up of two students from each class, they have meetings once a month and work according to an annual work schedule, made by themselves.*

### **Adult education on the school site<sup>4</sup>**

Courses take place in two different buildings: correspondence courses are held in the central building, while distance education is located in a nearby elementary school.

The main building is shared with a regular secondary school – they use the location in the morning and early afternoon, whereas adult education takes place in the late afternoon and in the evening. In the building of the elementary school the institute has two classrooms and an office room all week long, and can use all classrooms at the weekend. On Saturdays, distance education courses take place in ten classrooms from 8AM to 8PM, altogether 110 lessons each Saturday.

There are no conflicts with the two other institutes, and sharing the buildings does not only mean disadvantages, but also benefits for all three schools.

*Yes, there are mutual advantages, we have a good relationship, there are no conflicts. We make developments and perform maintenance together, if we have the possibility ... we had training together with the university in Gödöllő, a kind of audiovisual assistant training, and we could completely renovate a room using funding we received for the training, so it was also beneficial for the [regular secondary] school.*

The major benefit is the sharing of maintenance and development costs, such as the common financing of the modernisation of classrooms. Another advantage for the adults' secondary school is the easy dissemination of information on the possibility of correspondence and distance education. People attending or visiting the two other schools bump into the news of the adults' school, and thus get informed on their courses. On the other hand, this is advantageous for the other schools as well, since an innovative method like distance education raises the image of an otherwise ordinary school in a rather poor neighborhood.

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<sup>4</sup> As the whole institute is dedicated to adult education, this chapter will discuss the use of the school site for purposes other than adult education.

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The most important problem arising from sharing the buildings is the shortage of classrooms and offices. The adults' school needs more rooms for special activities such as arts, but the number of rooms is barely enough for the ordinary courses. Another disadvantage of the common propriety is the issue of responsibility – in case of damages, it is difficult to decide who is to blame and who should repair them. Furthermore, as the principal users of the buildings are the other two schools, classrooms and corridors are decorated according to their needs – thus, adults learn in an environment which was developed by and for schoolchildren. Last, but not least, in the primary school furniture is made for small children, and – being too small for adults – are unhealthy for the students.

The institute has recently increased PR activities to disseminate information on its courses. Within the framework of a cooperation agreement with two other educational institutes focusing on adult education, they mutually advertise each others' activities in their leaflets and other communication materials (webpages, booklets, etc.). Local television and newspapers also help to disseminate information on the courses: staff members from the institute are often invited to appear on television, articles and calls for registration appear in the newspapers, and there are two permanent advertisements on the teletext of the local television.

### **Links between the school and third level**

As mentioned several times above, the school has a cooperation agreement with three other educational institutes: Wekerle Sándor Business School– a business school focused on practical professional education, Atalanta Educational Ltd., offering post-secondary vocational programs and Szent István University in Gödöllő, which has several faculties that admit students from the school and programs and initiatives on developing andragogy.

*'Basically, it is these three institutes, we made a cooperative agreement with them, so this is not a simple relationship, but it is based on a continuous cooperation, and the advantage that our students have it that they are prioritised in these schools [over other applicants].'*

Unfortunately – according to the principal's opinion -- universities and colleges rather admit students from ordinary secondary schools in general, as adult students are not really part of their target groups. Still, there are some institutes such as those mentioned above that target adults and make efforts to attract adult students to their programs.

In the three institutes mentioned above, students from the school receive an advantage in the entrance exams -- in the case of equal scores, they get priority over other candidates. Professors try to disseminate information on the courses their institutes offer: they come to the school and lecture on their programs and entrance requirements, also giving a possibility for individual discussions. Visits are also organised to these schools for those interested.

Another form of cooperation is the common development of distance education, both concerning written learning materials and the training of teachers (see chapter 'Distance education' on the development of learning materials, and chapter 'School climate and inservice/ preservice training for teachers' on teacher training).

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According to the principal, it is the responsibility of secondary schools, rather than third level institutes to make life long learning more accessible for underrepresented groups. There is a detailed information book on all third level institutes revised and published every year that contains all necessary information on third level programs. Based on this brochure, it is the secondary school teachers' duty to orientate students towards the courses that best suit them. Institutes might also send leaflets on their programs, but sending professors to secondary schools to give lectures is a waste of time for both parties (this is not true for the above mentioned schools, as they give advantages to the institute's students at the admission procedure). Furthermore, even if neither secondary schools nor third level institutes make efforts to motivate students for life long learning, there is a great social necessity of further education after the secondary school diploma, since it is quite difficult to get a job without any other qualification.

### **School climate and inservice /preservice training for teachers**

Teachers in this school are not ordinary pedagogues, but andragogues. Recently there are special university courses for becoming an andragogue, but they are still quite general and do not offer any training on how to teach a certain subject to adults.

Those who want to teach in the distance education courses in the institute have to attend a three-month-long tutor-training course, offered by the Szent István University in Gödöllő. After this diploma, there are inservice and more informal trainings at the school itself, eg. the last one, made up of six lectures, covered learning methods.

Staff members' further education plans – even if they are not closely linked to adult education – are almost always supported.

*'On the other hand, according to the vice principal, formal education may not be the most important factor of becoming a good teacher:*

*I think that to become a good teacher, one has to be committed and have one or two years of experience, where he can have an idea on things that he will not learn at university.'*

According to the principal's opinion, a way of developing adult education in Hungary could be the exchange of experience with experts in other EU countries. This would involve travelling to similar institutes outside the country, but schools cannot finance these trips and therefore would need state support for that. Teachers should have sabbatical years (or at least some months) to further educate themselves, and this should also be paid by the state. Last but not least, informal education and the exchange of experiences, such as amateur artistic workshops or trainings on cooking would make teachers' personality more colorful and thus they could give more to their students.

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### Digital Secondary School

Name	Digital Secondary School
Type	Secondary school
Location	Miskolc
Foundation	2003
Ownership	Public and private
Number of students	449
Number of employees	100 (most of them part-time)
Activity	Secondary school for disadvantaged adults, preparing for high school diploma
Interviewee 1	Educational director
Interviewee 2	Literature teacher
Both interviewees were competent and helpful, they gave the same answers for most questions – different answers are indicated in the case study	
Date of interviews	5th July 2009

### ***Objectives of the practice***

The Digital Secondary School's main objective is to prepare disadvantaged adults for the high school diploma by the means of distance education. Life Long Learning is the principal aim of many students: quite some of them want to continue their studies in post-secondary vocational education or in third level academic programs. Distance education – based on the internet and in several training centers in different small towns of the county (Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén) – enables students to study in a flexible workschedule without travelling long distances and without having their own computers, and thus gives them the opportunity to acquire a high school diploma even if they come from rather disadvantageous backgrounds.

### **History/ background of the model**

Based on social research there was an initiative at the beginning of the year 2000 to found a secondary school program that would enable disadvantaged adults to acquire a high school diploma and thus give them the chance to continue their studies at the third level. The ideological leader of the project is a well-known Hungarian sociologist, who – in cooperation with his colleagues – specified the details of the program and elaborated a world novelty.

The Digital Secondary School was founded in 2003 in the country's least developed region. It has the highest unemployment rates in Hungary, along with deeply rooted social problems, including tensions between Roma and non-Roma inhabitants. The project is an attempt to decrease the social tension and facilitate the economic development of the area. It was in 2007 that the first school-leaver class passed the final examinations, and the program fulfilled the hopes bound to it. The project has been a great success since it began, and is being continuously further developed based on student feedback and on the requirements defined by frequently changing legal rules.

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## Target group

The principal target group of the program are disadvantaged adults who come from the North-Eastern part of Hungary. Originally the project was aimed at Roma adults with political ambitions, but after some years it was opened to other candidates, who – coming from poor regions – are almost always disadvantaged as well. According to the educational director's estimations, the current proportion of Roma students in the school is around 50% (there is no official administration on ethnical origin).

## Funding sources

The school is financed by a consortium, made up of three institutes:

- Földes Ferenc Secondary School: the institute is located in the same city as the Digital Secondary School (Miskolc) and is one of the ten best high schools in Hungary. It is responsible for financing the courses and the tutors' wages. Besides financing the Digital Secondary School, it is also responsible for professional issues: many of its teachers give lessons in the Digital Secondary School and participate in the development of the special curriculum.
- The University of Miskolc: provides professional and methodological help regarding distance education.
- Innocenter Innovation Centre: founded in 2002, its main purpose is the development of innovation activity in the Northern region of Hungary. It finances Digital Secondary School from its own resources and from special support.

Funding has fluctuated since the foundation of the school. Since it is a unique institute, different to all other schools in Hungary, it was difficult to put it in one of the already existing institute categories, which made funding quite difficult. First it was categorised as correspondence education, and thus received only 20% of the normative support, which was far from enough to cover costs. Later, an agreement was achieved with the Ministry of Education and Culture on creating a separate educational category for Digital Secondary School – education could be classified as evening courses and thus the institute received 50% (instead of 20%) of the normative support of an ordinary secondary school. Recently, funding of all Hungarian secondary schools has changed, and now – instead of individual funding – it is based on groups of students. According to the Digital Secondary School's educational director, this decreases the quality of education in general, because group headcount is defined by law and schools are now encouraged to increase the number of students in the groups so as to cover their costs.

Funding difficulties seem to be the institute's most serious problem. The educational director came back to the issue several times during the interview, and underlines it again when asked if she had any additional remarks at the end of the conversation:

*'Perhaps I could underline, although I spoke several times about the lack of resources, that we won't be able to implement a truly effective and succesful adult education, unless its organisational and financial background is worked out. Perhaps, it is not the field of education where sources should be decreased, because the media, written press and literature all tell us that a higher proportion of GDP spent on education results in faster and more succesful economic development, as seen in either Finland or in Japan.'*

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## Organisation of the education, including location

One of the most innovative features of the institute is the organisation of education. The program comprises an online and an offline part, both of which take place in several different small settlements around the region. Generally, classes are held in the secondary school of the town, but in some cases they are hosted by elementary schools or local educational centers. Thus, education is organised in two different ways:

- Settlements where the program is organised with the help of the local secondary schools: There is a coordinator in each settlement, who acts as a vice principal and is responsible for the organisation of the education and the administration. Classes are held by teachers of the local secondary school, who are in permanent contact with the coordinator. Student headcount per year is usually around 4 to 8, thus there are 15-30 students in total in each settlement. Students from the same year form a group of 4-8 people, and each group has a tutor, who is also a teacher in the local secondary school.
- Settlements where the program is organised in elementary schools or local educational centers: Since there are no secondary school teachers in these institutes, the whole program is run by the teachers of the Földes Ferenc Secondary School.

Online education is supported by computers provided in the settlements by the Digital Secondary School, so that students who do not have a computer at home can also participate in the program:

*'We were able to provide computers at the beginning of the project with the help of the Department of Sociology of the Miskolc University eg. to minority governments, elementary schools, village centers, local governments, and here our students had the possibility to use them for twelve hours per week. These computers are still there, so if we have a student there, he / she can use these services. For example, we had a student in Cigánd, whose computer use problem was settled as follows: when the mayor finished his work, the student went to his office and sat in the mayor's chair, and could use the internet portal [of the Digital Secondary School] and study from there.'*

Originally the program was implemented in twelve locations, and each student had the opportunity to use a computer for 23 hours per week. Locations are in continuous change according to demand, and some of them do not have students from all years. Today, the project functions in eight locations, and students can use the computers for twelve hours per week.

Online education is based on the internet portal of the institute, where students can find the curriculum, communicate with teachers and receive evaluation of their work. Learning is facilitated with chat rooms and a video-conference system. As many students use the computers provided by the institute and placed in a certain location, there are teachers who help their work even in the online part of their studies. There is a teacher based in the computer room for a previously arranged period of twelve hours who can answer the students' questions. Usually the teacher's qualification corresponds to the current module (eg. when students study math, the teacher in the room is usually a math teacher).

Each module has a module-developer, who is a teacher from the Földes Ferenc Secondary School. He / she is responsible for the development of the online curriculum, the elaboration

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of the methods of assessment and the evaluation of students' work. During the seven weeks of their modules, they fix time periods in the afternoon and evening when they are online in the chat room of their own subject where students can communicate with them. Means of communication vary from simple writing to the use of the recently implemented video-conference system.

Offline consultations are held on Saturdays in the local schools or education centers, and have two major objectives: at the beginning, teachers answer students' questions, and in the time remaining they give a summary of the learning material and clarify the most problematic points. A module consists of seven weeks with three consultations in total: it always begins on a Monday, and consultations are held on the first, fourth and seventh Saturday. The module is closed with an assessment on the seventh Saturday.

Unfortunately, due to financial causes, the model had to be changed in terms of the number of compulsory study hours. As the level of financial support is much higher if the number of study hours reaches 50% of that in an ordinary secondary school, students are now obliged to spend 480-550 hours studying.

Offline consultations are compulsory, which might be problematic as many students work on Saturday, and even if the absence is certified, it cannot exceed 20% of the total number of consultation hours. In the online learning process, it is the computer that counts the number of hours spent studying, which also limits students' freedom: previously they could print the learning material and read it wherever they wanted to, but now they have to be online on the portal, so that the computer can register their presence.

These limitations are difficult for those who were used to the previous system, but were necessary, because otherwise the institute could no longer be financed. Even so, this system gives more freedom to students than an ordinary evening course, as they can choose the periods when they want to be online.

### **Number of service users annually**

According to the website of the school, total headcount was 449 in 2008-2009. The educational director gave estimations on the number of service users per year as follows:

*'It [the headcount] varies [from year to year], usually we have the highest headcount in the first year, but there is a higher dropout level. Those who have finished the first – thus, the ninth – year, have only a 10-15% dropout rate afterwards, and we have the lowest dropout rate in the eleventh and twelfth years. Today the 12th year counts 63 students and the ninth, when we started it, counted perhaps 251, sorry, I can't recall the exact numbers, and now I think they are around 130 [in the ninth], and by the time we have checked everything, all the learning requirements, this will be end of August, there might well remain only 90-100 of them.'*

The total number of employees is around a hundred, but most of them are employed on a part-time basis. Around twenty or thirty of them are teachers of Földes Ferenc Secondary School, while others teach elsewhere and have a contract with Földes.



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## Curriculum and assessment

The curriculum covers the same learning material as that of an ordinary secondary school. Since the school prepares students for the high school final examination, the curriculum is defined by law and has been checked by the Ministry of Education and Culture several times. On the other hand, the learning material is presented on a different way, adapted to the students' needs.

It starts at the very basics, as many of the candidates had bad results in elementary school, and / or left formal education decades ago. The curriculum progresses then from basic knowledge to the requirements of the final exam, containing even the material for the advanced level high school diploma. Another characteristic of the curriculum is its colorful and entertaining presentation, facilitated also by digital technology (films, audio materials, immediate feedback, exercises that can be repeated several times, etc.). Teachers who develop learning materials try to find topics that the target group might be interested in, and do not insist on the same highly intellectual ones that are usually used in ordinary secondary schools.

The literature and linguistics teacher on the spelling module:

*'Literature examples for those who want to practice it [the spelling] are difficult, and are not what encourages them to do it. Eg, a novelty in this learning material is that spelling examples are made to be easily digestible and entertaining, eg. jokes, sayings, funny kind of literature –not trash or slang – but the assimilation of simple literature. ... Or, exercises that are somehow linked to recent events, eg. in the year of the Olympic games, alphabetic ordering was practiced on the names of Olympic sportsmen and sportswomen.'*

Some modules are compulsory, others are not. For example, spelling modules are not compulsory, but recommended, as students have serious difficulties with spelling, and these kind of mistakes can be critical on the final exam. Another example of non-compulsory modules are final exam preparation modules that help to revise the learning material covered in the four years before the final exam. Exercises are either automatically checked by the computer or corrected by the teachers, depending on their nature - objective ones, such as spelling exercises are checked by the computer, whereas the more subjective ones such as writing exercises are corrected by teachers and returned with comments.

Students receive a basic artistic education covering art history, which is often linked to literature lessons. Personality development is a part of everyday life, but no course is dedicated officially to psychological issues.

Those who had previously started their secondary school studies but could not pass the final exam can take a preliminary examination, enabling them to enter in the second or third year. Thus, they don't have to restart their studies from the very beginning.

Assessment is based on modules, and students get both grades and detailed feedback on their work. An exam takes place at the end of each seven-week module, but if someone cannot take it at the arranged time, he / she can postpone it by two or four weeks, or even to the end of the semester. By the closure of the semester all exams have to be passed – this

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is defined by law and is necessary for the receipt of the financial support given to the school by the state.

### **Methods of feedback, evaluation of courses<sup>5</sup>**

There are three possibilities for students to give feedback on the school:

- Students are asked to fill in questionnaires on learning materials and methods at the end of every year. It is anonymous and not compulsory.
- An anonymous 'complaint wall' is available on the internet for all students concerning all kinds of problems. Answers to these complaints are generally given by the educational director on a certain internet forum.
- Students are encouraged to write directly to any teachers or even to the director, who generally answer all questions or complaints.

### **Cooperation with other institutes**

The whole organisation of the education is based on the cooperation between several institutes. These relationships have been advantageous for all involved.

Secondary schools participating in the program profit from it in terms of prestige. An innovative project like Digital Secondary School gives publicity to the school and increases its reputation. This can also be seen in augmenting annual enrolment numbers to these institutes. Sharing the school building between ordinary and adult education courses has never been a problem.

On the other hand, hosting the institute in ordinary secondary schools might also be a disadvantage for the ordinary high school:

*'In a certain mentality that I strongly disagree with but have to face, one can ask why we let Roma come to our school<sup>6</sup>, the school should not be a Roma school – we cannot really do anything against this attitude, we have to rise above it.'*

The Digital Secondary School cooperates closely with the University of Miskolc and with Innocenter, who are also owners of the institute.

### **School climate and inservice / preservice training for teachers**

As this is a new model, there were a lot of inservice training sessions at the beginning of the project: teachers were trained by those who developed the learning material prior to each module. This is still necessary nowadays as well, but has become impossible because of the lack of financial resources.

A conference was also planned with several workshops on previous experiences, results and necessary reforms, and – although it had already been prepared in detail – it had to be cancelled due to financial difficulties.

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<sup>5</sup> Assessment of students' work was detailed in chapter 'Curriculum and assessment', this part will only discuss students' evaluation of the school.

<sup>6</sup> She means Földes Ferenc Secondary School, which is an elite high school

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The institute does not get the normative support for teacher training that ordinary secondary schools receive, thus informal communication between teachers is the only possibility remaining for inservice training.

According to the educational director, the school climate does not really depend on preservice training but rather on the conditions that could allow the opportunity for teachers and students to practice their rights and duties (eg. teachers should have less administrative duties and more time for children).

### ***Support for students***

#### **Supported disadvantaged groups**

As detailed above, the institute's main objective is to support the most disadvantaged groups. Its location in the least developed region of the country means that a high proportion of the students come from a disadvantaged background.

#### **Roma students**

Roma students are highly represented and give approximately 50% of all participants. They were the initial target group of the institute, and quite some of those who have already passed their high school diploma act as political leaders or play an important role in community life.

#### **Prisoners**

Another disadvantaged group supported by the institute is prisoners: Education in a youth-prison was launched immediately after the foundation of the school, with the contribution of Földes Ferenc Secondary School teachers who went to the prison to give lessons. This cooperation between the institute and the prison has been successful since the beginning, even if providing education to prisoners is quite difficult. Young prisoners might spend only a short time in the same prison and thus class headcount often falls down from 15 at the beginning to 2 at the end of the year, which then causes financial problems. Prisoners' motivation and performance varies from rather poor to very high: some of them are almost illiterate, but others continue their studies in the institute even after their release, and continue to enter third level education.

#### **Students with health problems**

People with health problems are also represented at the school. In this case it was not the institute that took the initiative towards them, but it was them, who heard about the school and applied to enter the courses. Around ten deaf people from Budapest take part in the distance education, and the school makes great efforts to satisfy their special needs. The institute employs a teacher speaking sign-language, and online learning materials are also adapted when necessary (eg. exercises using audiovisual technology are modified).

#### **Financial support**

There is no tuition fee for students at the institute, because all students are regarded as disadvantaged (according to the law, in other schools tuition fee is compulsory in adult education). A special scholarship for all Roma participants was provided by public funds until 2007, but since then this automatic financial support has not been available. Information

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regarding each kind of scholarship is put on the school's website and students can individually apply for them.

Földes Ferenc Secondary School tries to support Digital Secondary School students in all possible ways, for example, this year it financed the final exam fees that adult students should have paid themselves.

### **Learning and literacy difficulties**

As students finished their elementary school studies long ago (and probably not with the best results) they often have learning and literacy difficulties. Teachers elaborated several methods to handle them, and have other ideas that have not yet been implemented.

Firstly, there is a two-week long preparatory module at the very beginning of the studies with two seven-hour long consultations on the first two Saturdays which helps students with computer literacy. It covers internet communication, e-mailing, chat and forum usage, word processing and the usage of the institute portal.

Digital Secondary School teachers developed special catch-up modules in spelling, reading and mathematics that can be continuously used throughout the four years. They consist of several modules, but unfortunately some of them are not entirely ready (eg. spelling is planned to include five modules but only two are available for the moment).

The educational director has further ideas for handling learning difficulties:

*'Based on several years experience, I would find it very useful if we could start this [preparatory courses] a semester earlier, and we could say that we start student recruitment in September, call them in January and give preparatory courses from February to June, similar to the year zero in some high schools. This would be a catch-up and skill development period, when everybody could face his / her deficiencies and we would try to correct these deficits and then we could start the real secondary school education in September – this would be very useful.'*

### **Helping excellent students**

Innocenter Kht (one of the owners of the schools) motivates students with financial rewards. The best student in each year and the one who passed the final high school exam with the best results receive an award of 20.000 HUF (around 75 Euros). Previously these awards were given twice a year to the three best students in each year, but due to financial reasons the system had to be changed.

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## Emotional and behavioural problems

There are no behavioural problems in the institute since adult students are not obliged to attend the courses. Emotional difficulties are treated in an informal way: coordinators in the local secondary schools and educational centers try to encourage students to continue their studies and they often discuss the students' private problems with them.

There are some typical difficulties linked to special disadvantaged groups:

*'There is a very serious problem in case of Roma women: if they start studying, their husbands may not tolerate it and unfortunately I have students who have got divorced or who were beaten because of this, and they suffered from different atrocities and in these cases I feel so helpless, I don't see how I could help them besides listening to them and discussing with them, and I try to give them some advice, something from my own experience.'*

## Career management

No official and formal career management is available in the institute, but all coordinators try to help students in an informal way, including both discussions on future plans and administrative help.

## Prevention of dropping out

The most important factor that can prevent dropping out is the flexibility of learning. Students can choose the time they want to study (besides the Saturday consultations) and even exam dates can be changed if they are not suitable for the participants.

Other ways of prevention are based on good personal relationships between teachers and students. Honest communication is regarded as a priority, students are encouraged to give their opinion on the institute, and these opinions are used as a basis of the development of the school.

When a student is at risk of dropping out, his / her coordinator contacts him: writing e-mails is the most common ways of contact, but local coordinators often go after students physically, ie. they go and see them at their own places. Personal discussions are dedicated to point out the most difficult problems, and teachers then try to convince students to reorganise family life or learning habits.

## Extracurricular activities

Officially organised extracurricular activities are rare in this institute: firstly, because students do not have the time for them and secondly, because of the lack of financial resources. On the other hand, informal community life can be very strong in the local centers:

*'It's in the small groups that community life is strong, in the local consultation groups, but there it can definitely be felt, they stick together strongly, very strongly, for example we already have a 'digital baby' who was born in a certain area and there, that group and those teachers formed a very strong community*

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*and they followed this with great attention and also helped [the couple], so not the whole school, but these small groups form a very strong community.'*

### **Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the model used**

The main strength of the model is the institute's success in helping one of the most disadvantaged groups in the country. Adult education in itself is a difficult project, but adapting it to disadvantaged students is even more challenging. Two main factors of this success are as follows:

- Well-trained and highly motivated teachers: the professors who developed learning materials and give daily classes to students come from one of the best high schools in the country, so participants receive a high quality education, even if the learning material is sometimes simplified when adapting it to special needs.
- Flexible work schedule: distance education and digital technology give students the possibility to choose when to study.

The model's main weaknesses result almost entirely from financial problems:

- The flexibility of studying had to be changed in September 2008 in order to receive a higher level of normative support from the state. Without this modification, the institute could not have been financed. Students now have to spend 480-550 hours a year on consultation lessons or on the portal, which is difficult for those who were used to a completely flexible work schedule. However, even so, it is more flexible than a traditional evening course, where the timing of lessons is strictly defined.
- Another weakness is the lack of mentoring, also due to financial problems. On the other hand, local coordinators often act as mentors and have a close personal relationship with students.
- Finally, the novelty of the model often makes life difficult: since the school does not fit in to any official category, there are continuous discussions on the frames of functioning with the ministry.

### **Development and expansion of the model**

The school was meant to be a pilot from the very beginning and the model was planned to be further developed and expanded both geographically and also concerning the level of education. Frames for expansion are ready, and the tender for the project was won by a public endowment. The model has already been partially adapted in three vocational programs, and there are plans to develop it for the last two years of elementary school, for third level education and for other vocational programs.

Concerning this particular institute in Borsod Abaúj Zemplén, the most important areas of improvement would be the acquisition of new computers, the development of online learning material and the broadening of the curriculum with courses on social competence and communication skills.

Public relation tools are widely used to recruit students and thus expand the model in the region: articles appear in the press and interviews are given on regional television and radio, local governments receive communication materials every year on enrolment and teachers lecture on the model at conferences. However, the most important 'PR tool' might be the

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satisfied students themselves, who often encourage family members and friends to enrol in the program.

### **Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model**

The recession influences school life at least two ways:

- It has an impact directly on the students who struggled with serious financial problems even before the recession. The infrastructure of the region is poor and it is often difficult and time consuming for the students to travel to the local education centers for consultations. For some of them, this is a critical barrier:  
*'Students had serious problems already before the recession. It makes me very-very upset that we have students who had good results in secondary school and on the final exam, were accepted to third level institutes but dropped out because they didn't have the money to go to consultations.'*
- The other way the recession influences school life is the decrease of funds: both the local government and Innocenter has had to cut back the support given to the school.

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### **Eszterházy Károly College**

Name	Eszterházy Károly College
Type	Formal education, third level institute
Location	Eger
Foundation	1829 / 1948
Ownership	State
Number of students	9000
Number of employees	600
Activity	Main activity: teacher training
Interviewee 1	Vice-college rector for education
Interviewee 2	Leader of student center
Both interviewees were competent and helpful, but in some questions they had rather different opinions. These topics are always presented from both points of view	
Date of interviews	23rd June 2009

### ***General information***

#### **Objectives of the College**

Based on the mission statement and on the interviews, the objectives of the college are as follows:

- To continue the long tradition of teacher training: to preserve traditions and modernise the college at the same time. This school has been one of the main teacher training centers of the country for fifty years.
- To increase the choice of specialisations. At present the college has four faculties (Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Teacher Training and Knowledge Technology, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences) and offers more than seventy specialisations
- To open to Europe as much as possible, eg. by offering joint degrees (programs in cooperation with other European third level institutes)
- To preserve autonomy: although many Hungarian colleges and universities were fused due to practical and financial reasons, Eszterházy Károly College is still independent and would like to preserve its autonomy.
- Life Long Learning: The Mission Statement says:  
*'We offer the possibility of Life Long Learning with our distance education, adult education, vocational and teacher training courses.'*

#### **History, background of the model**

The college is one of the oldest third level institutes of the region, and was the first Hungarian language teacher training school in the country (teacher training was founded in 1829 by the Arch Bishop of Eger). It functioned as a church teacher training school until 1948, when it became a state-owned institute. During the last fifteen years, several



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innovations have been introduced, and as a result of these initiatives, the college now offers not only teacher training but other programs as well.

### **Target group**

The college is a regional centre of education: its students mainly come from the surrounding counties (within 150 km), but in some specialisations not offered by other schools, participants come from all over the country and even from abroad (mainly Hungarians living in Romania and Slovakia).

Eger is in the eastern, less economically developed part of Hungary, which means that students often come from a less well-off background. Even if they are not disadvantaged, they frequently struggle with financial problems and have to be supported by the school. As the lack of students' financial resources is a well-known fact, handling this problem is part of the strategy of the institute.

In terms of age, full-time students are usually around 18-20 years, but participants in correspondence and distance education are generally much older and already have some work experience.

### **Curriculum**

The college has four faculties (Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Teacher Training and Knowledge Technology, Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences, Faculty of Natural Sciences) and offers more than seventy specialisations in full time, part time (evening and correspondence) and distance education: 'special post-secondary programs, traditional 4 year programs (to be phased out after completion of all existing programs) first cycle B.A., B.Sc. programs, traditional and supplementary MA programs, special post-graduate programs and post-graduate programs in preparation for a special examination in education' (quote from the homepage of the school, [http://www.ektf.hu/ujweb/index\\_en.php?page=61](http://www.ektf.hu/ujweb/index_en.php?page=61)). Teaching practice is becoming more important – a law is now being developed demanding that teaching practice should last the whole of the fifth semester of the MA program in a school officially contracted to the college.

### **Life Long Learning**

Quite some of the students in the MA programs and post-graduate programs graduated from BA or BSc programs at Eszterházy Károly College (or received a college degree in the former education system) and worked for several years as teachers afterwards. They come back to the school to further educate themselves so that they can teach at a higher level (eg. secondary school instead of elementary school). Teachers in general are obliged by law to participate in some educational program every seven years, and they often choose supplementary MA programs or post-graduate programs in preparation for special examination in the college.

### **Funding sources**

The college gives remarkable support to the students and finances significant infrastructural developments which is quite unusual among state-owned third level institutes (for example,

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all students enrolling on any kind of full-time program receive a laptop for free). These are funded by several resources:

- The college receives a normative support from the state, as do all other state-owned third level institutes.
- A tuition fee, paid by those who were not accepted to free of charge programs, and administrative fees (eg. in case of a repeated exam after a failure) also add to the financial resources.
- Tenders:  
*'We have a special office, dedicated to manage and organise all activities concerning tenders, so we participate in all kinds of tenders, and we usually win them. There is a certain team in the financial management department handling these issues, and a dedicated project office which deals only with tender applications.'*
- Rational management:  
*'We implemented several developments and innovations that are not spectacular, eg. maintenance of the heating system and energy network, modernising IT facilities, that helped us to save huge sums ... We believe in this: to bring money back to the education, to give it to the students, not in cash but rather in material instruments.'*

### **Number of service users annually**

The whole institute – including full-time and part-time programs – has more than 9000 students and more than 600 teachers. In the last fifty years more than 300 000 teachers were trained in the school.

### **Location**

The college is located in Eger, a county seat in the Eastern part of Hungary. It is an important tourist area with a lot of historical traditions.

### **Perceived strengths and weaknesses**

Strengths of the college cover several fields, as described by the leader of the student centrum:

*'... the broad offer [of specialisations], this is a serious strength, the location itself, tradition, student life, the modern services we offer, eg. in the field of IT, because all first-year full-time students receive a laptop for personal use both in the bachelor and in the master programs, the numerous dormitory beds, because we have more than a thousand dormitory beds, which is a great number. Developments have been conducted with rationality, all of our buildings have been renovated or newly built since 2000, the quality of our teachers, all these, I think, are the advantages of our institute.'*

There is only one perceived weakness, but the school has to face some threats. These all concern academic fields, whereas there are no weak points in the infrastructure of the institute.

*'I think that the weakness, if we can see it like that, is that it [the institute] is still called a 'college', even if it offers university programs, and the common opinion is that there are colleges and universities, even if the Bologna system changed this. I think that we don't have too many weaknesses, I don't feel that we have*

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*weaknesses, but there are threats that we have to be careful about. From one point of view, the broad offer of specialisation is a strength, but at the same time, it's also a threat, because it is difficult to keep all specialisations with a decreasing number of students. It is our region where the proportion of young people leaving the region is the highest [in the country], and this may be a serious threat for the institute. Having no PhD program might also be a weakness, but we are working on it so that we have some as soon as possible, and I think that we are really one of the best third level institutes in Hungary.'*

### **Priority needs for expansion of the model / service**

Both interviewees say that there is no need for expansion. Concerning development the most important point would be to recruit higher quality students. As secondary school education in general has deteriorated in the past years, it is quite difficult to recruit good students. The only way is to attract more applicants so that the institute can choose from a higher number of candidates on the entrance exam. The academic program could also be developed with the accreditation of programs and professors who have not yet received this kind of certificate.

The institute is quite strong in terms of infrastructural developments: Its main site, a beautiful 18th century baroque building will be renovated and modernised from this September. Besides general maintenance works there will be a completely new space under the building including an 'infatorium' with learning spaces, service rooms and an auditorium. The reconstruction will be partially financed from a tender totaling 5 billion Forints (around 18million Euros).

The students' poor financial situation is a great problem. As the state does not have more money for third level education, a solution to this would be a more flexible system for tuition fees and scholarships.

### **Methods of feedback / evaluation of courses**

Feedback on the institute is given in several ways, and is always anonymous:

- Since 2006, each student gives an evaluation on the final exam on the whole institute. This is financed by tenders and summarised in a special study by a dedicated committee. Despite these efforts, student participation in this evaluation process is rather low, and thus the validity of the results are doubtful.
- Evaluation forms are filled in after each course on the course and the professor – this is conducted in all Hungarian third level institutes and taken into consideration when promoting or premizing professors.
- The European Students Barometer is an international evaluation, which shows that students are more satisfied with the institute than the national or European average in almost all fields. The only exception is salary expectations, which are lower than both national and European averages. This is not surprising as teachers in Hungary are rather underpaid.
- Last, but not least, feedback is given by the Alumni organisation that follows students' careers after leaving school.

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## Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model

Financial problems might occur in the institute on two levels:

- On the students' level: Financial problems have become more serious in the last one or two years, but – according to the vice-college rector for education – this process had started already before the recession:  
*'I definitely feel this in the last one or two years, it increased [the severity of financial problems]. Honestly, sometimes I almost feel sick because of some requests, because I don't know how they could be treated, because there are no more possibilities, no more financial means, because we do have a limit, and usually it is the poorest students whose requests we accept, and I don't know how this could be handled in a governmental level, and I don't think that possibilities increase in the recession.'*
- On the institutional level: According to the student centrum leader the recession has not have a dramatic impact on the institute, since it had to use financial means in a rational way even in the previous years.

## Institutional climate

Quite some employees of the institute come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Their support is an institutional duty and is the responsibility of the Department of Human Resources. Disadvantaged employees may receive financial support and studios or dormitory rooms for a temporary period if they apply for them.

## Outreach

### Outreach in general

As one of the institute's primary objectives is to recruit higher-quality students, outreach activity is a priority. Some of the most important ways of attracting secondary school students are as follows:

- Roadshows, going to secondary school sites – not only in Hungary, but in parts of Romania and Slovakia as well where there is a significant Hungarian population:  
*'We have a very serious [outreach] program, I think, we have one of the most serious ones in the third level education. We meet 3-3,5 thousand graduating secondary school students a year, when we go to them to speak about the third level education system, the entrance system, the institute and its program offers ... These efforts are so-called road-shows, so departments prepare interviews, booklets, audiovisual materials, so information on specialisation, and professors speak about the program, but usually we go there also with a general presentation of the institute. So we present the institute, the infrastructure, the library, the student services, the broad offer of specialisations and also the town itself, since the institute is inseparable from the milieu where it is located.'*
- Open days with several lectures on the institute in general and on the departments.
- Motivating secondary school students with a first-semester scholarship for those having the best results on the entrance exam
- Forums for students and for secondary teachers twice a year.

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- Programs for elementary and secondary school students, such as showing them a museum with a magic tower located in the school.
  - Other initiatives of the departments, such as games, eg.

*'The department responsible for the International Relationships specialisation organised a one-year-long game for more than ten secondary schools, where the schools having passed all different rounds had meetings on the EU here in the assembly hall, they prepared their own materials for that and they presented them in front of an exceptional jury, where members were invited from Brussels and from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ... And we have similar things in the fields of foreign languages, English, German, French, because only very few students apply for these specialisations, and we'd like to motivate the applications.'*

### **Outreach to disadvantaged groups**

Concerning the outreach to disadvantaged groups, the two interviewees' opinions were remarkably different.

According to the vice-college rector for education

*'there are regions nearby, where there are quite some schools which have a lot of Roma students, and an effort is made, especially in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Knowledge Technology in case of Roma students, so we try to attract and recruit them, because it would be very important, please don't misunderstand me, that children are more open for instructions, the education for work and for learning from teachers of the same background, especially if he / she is an example of having lived under the same circumstances but now he / she is here, he / she teaches and enjoys it.'*

Although the institute cannot recruit Roma students one by one, they deliberately organise road-shows in schools where there are a lot of Roma, and

*'especially in areas where the number of Roma students are very high, they [Roma students] ask us a lot of questions'.*

On the other hand, the student center leader has a completely different opinion on the issue:

*'... my problem is that everybody is concerned about this, it's not this that we should be concerned about, that the disadvantaged are taken to third level education, this is not a solution. The solution would be to raise the disadvantaged situation, and this cannot be raised by taking the children of disadvantaged families to third level education, where they start their studies with a remarkable handicap and not because of financial problems, but mostly because – I don't think this would be a preconception – because of a lower quality of general education and they come from such a background that they simply can't compete with the others. They face a lot of failures and it's only a waste of money that is spent on this. ... They don't have a chance, they usually don't have a library at home that could help them, parents are not socialised to appreciate and support that the child attends a third level institute even at the age of 20-22, instead of working and giving the money to the family ... A lot of them only study to earn the cost of living, we can only use this bad term for them, they only come to higher level vocational studies, because they receive financial support, and it is very easy*

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*to be accepted, because they usually have the lowest entrance exam results that can be accepted according to the law.*

## **Supports**

### **Disadvantaged groups**

#### **Roma students**

There are a lot of Roma in the region, and – as detailed above – non-Roma have diverse attitudes towards them.

According to the vice-college rector for education, employees in the institute try to do everything for Roma students:

*'...they [Roma students] feel a mentality in the institute that they are not afraid to go and seek for help'.*

She says that all committees and offices in the school encourage Roma students to apply for the governmental support addressed especially to them by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

On the other hand, the leader of the student center who coordinates student offices and services says that:

*'... those who create tension, they belong to one ethnic group that can easily be recognised<sup>7</sup>, they are strongly underrepresented in the third level education. They are not accepted and I think that it's completely their fault.'*

This makes one think that an open and tolerant mentality as described by the vice-college rector is only part of the characteristics of the institute, and Roma students might have serious difficulties in getting support (especially because the second interviewee is one of the main coordinators of student services).

#### **Prisoners**

A well-known prison (Csillag, Szeged) made initiatives a year ago to start a cooperative relationship with the college, but it hasn't been realized yet. Professors from the college would teach 6-9 prisoners in distance education combined with some consultations in the prison.

### **Students with health problems**

Around 60-70 students with health problems study in the institute. They are all mentored and strongly supported, eg. with softwares for aloud reading, audio books etc., given to them for free. Their support is coordinated by the Committee for Students Living with Handicaps.

#### **Other disadvantaged groups**

Other disadvantaged groups are defined by law, such as orphans, those who were in state care as children, people with three or more children or simply those who come from a low-

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<sup>7</sup> he refers to the Roma

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income family. The number of disadvantaged students in the full-time programs altogether is 783, thus one quarter of the entire 3200 full-time student population.

### **Support in general**

Student services are run by several offices and services that are partially coordinated by the student centre. An initiative was made to build a more hierarchical system, where the head of all offices would be the student center, but so far many offices and services are run partially separately from others.

However, it is usually the student center where students first appear with their problems, and after an initial discussion they are directed to the service where their problem can best be treated. The daily number of contacts in peak periods might reach 500 in the student center, but even in a quiet summer day they see 20-30 students seeking help in the office.

The student center – together with other services that partially function below it – deals with all administrative issues, such as certificates, authentications, validation of student cards, etc., financial support, dormitory places, etc.

### **Financial and material support**

Several kinds of financial support are given to socially disadvantaged and / or excellent students. Regular and extra financial supports are funded from state resources and are given to socially disadvantaged students. On top of this, there are other possibilities as well, such as local government and foundation scholarships. An excellent student's monthly scholarship might reach 100 thousand Forints (around 360 Euros), which is almost 50% higher than the minimum wage. Students with excellent entrance exam results can even get financial support in the first semester, when others do not have scholarships. Decisions on financial support are made by the social scholarship committee composed of students and professors in a proportion defined by law.

Accommodation is an important issue and is financed partially by the state. Some years ago there was a high over-demand for dormitory rooms, but nowadays the institute has more than 1000 dormitory beds, and all applicants can find a room suitable for his / her financial situation.

A very important way of handling disadvantages in this college is to give students material support to facilitate their studies. All participants enrolling to the first year (both in bachelor and in master programs) receive a laptop for free. Wifi was made available long ago in all buildings of the institute, and also in several outdoor places in the town. Not only college students receive laptops from the college, but also children in those elementary and secondary schools where teachers trained by the college give their first lessons as teaching practice (these children cannot take home the laptops, but can use them at school). Another strong point of the college is its huge and modern library that is also dedicated to facilitating studies.

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## **Learning and literacy difficulties**

The need for preparatory courses handling learning and literacy difficulties

*'... is different depending on the specialisation. There are specialisations where catch-up is not so much a problem, and others, where it is, and catch-up courses will be a priority discussion topic next year, because it seems that we have to launch catch-up courses in the graduate programs. These preparatory courses do not appear in the curriculum, because they cannot, but we were facing a remarkable drop-out rate, and so we have to do it. The management has just decided to insert them [preparatory courses] in the specialisations with the highest drop-out rates, because now catch-up is provided in consultations and in the professors' calling hours, but I think it is not enough, so we would like to improve this, eg. in mathematics.'*

As many students have literacy and writing difficulties and type-writing deficiencies, catch-up courses are now organised both centrally and by the students themselves.

## **Helping excellent students**

There is a great emphasis on working with excellent students. Many of them participate in national competitions and they usually win several prizes.

## **Emotional and behavioural problems**

Emotional support service is run by students specialised in psychology and social pedagogy and it is a popular and successful network. They offer personal counselling and organise events to encourage personality and community development.

## **Career management**

Career management is organised and coordinated by the career support service. It has three main activities:

- Assessment of competencies, talents and skills to facilitate making career plans.
- Training on CV writing, conflict management, communication skills, outlook, etc., held mostly by professional trainers but sometimes also by students.
- Support in finding a teaching practice place or a job after graduation.

All services of the career support service are free and voluntary for the students of the college.

## **Opportunities for social interaction to promote social network supports**

Social networking is highly supported and encouraged both inside the college and in its broader environment.

- Mentoring

*'The way of mentoring is as follows: when the student takes his / her entrance exam, he / she can say that he / she is disadvantaged or has multiple disadvantages and thus he / she would like to have a mentor if his / her application is accepted and can start his / her studies. In the same time there is an invitation for application for college students to become a mentor, that appears on the homepage, and they have continuous training and an exam to pass before they can be mentors. Next year we'll have around 80 mentors and around 80-120 students who wish to be mentored, and they will be matched – since there are more mentorees than mentors, a mentor might have more than one mentorees.'*



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Mentors help mentorees in learning, and even in taking notes if necessary (eg. mentorees with health problems) and they receive ten thousand Forints per month in exchange from the college.

- **Alumni**

'... the most important activity [in the alumni] is follow-up... how they found a job and how competent they proved to be, if they would choose us again and are interested in our new supplementary course specialisations, what they feel useful from the curriculum of our courses, what was not useful and what they miss from the courses, so that we can reform the structure according to their opinion. Besides all this, we organise alumni meetings and alumni balls, we are in continuous contact with them, they receive invitations for our events. We also organise separate meetings for students who graduated in the same year. Now we are working on the launch of an Eszterházy-card system that would give reductions to those who graduated in the college, mainly in Eger and in the region, but maybe even in the whole country as well.'

- The college has a strong relationship with Eger and its students and teachers participate in many of the town's events as organisers. They run a blood-giving center, collect clothes, books, toys, contribute to the organisation of the youth festival and to the maintenance of the local hospital, etc. Thus, there is a great emphasis on active citizenship in the institute.

## **LINKS WITH PRIOR LEARNING**

### **Transition programmes**

Transition courses are organised for secondary school students by several departments to make the institute more attractive, recruit high-quality students and to measure the general level of knowledge of the students applying to the college. These courses – financed by tenders – might have attractive prizes, eg. the best participants of the preparatory courses for the international relationships specialisation are taken to a journey to Brussels where they are invited to the European Parliament.

### **Admission policies**

The admission process is ruled by law and is central in general. However, in the Masters specialisations, a part of the entrance exam is organised by the institutes themselves. Students can get a maximum of 100 points: 40 for their previous academic results, 50 for the entrance exam – which is an informal discussion in this college – and 10 for disadvantaged background, according to the rules defined by law.

### **Recognition of prior learning**

Previously acquired knowledge is recognised in the credit system, both in case of prior learning and work experience. Credit transfer is very popular in the first case (knowledge acquired in an other school), but is rare in the latter one. As recognition of work experience is a new possibility (was introduced a year ago), students usually do not know about it.

### **Distance Education**

The college was one of the first third level institutes to launch distance education, but the programme has not been very successful. According to the interviewees the reasons behind this are as follows: Firstly, disciplines taught might not be suitable for distance learning, as

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teacher training is a face to face education based on personal relationships. Students might miss consultations and prefer other types of programmes. Secondly, people still have a lot of prejudice against distance education, especially concerning quality.

Therefore the management decided to offer distance education only in some specialisations (eg. library information systems) and in certain courses of normal programmes. Disadvantaged students usually do not participate in distance education, since they do not have computer or internet at home or have difficulties with using the internet.

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## **Government department official interview: Ministry of Education and Culture**

### ***Structural issues***

- 1. Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:**
- a) social inclusion**
  - b) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups**
  - c) lifelong learning**
  - d) literacy**
  - e) the non-formal education sector**

Within the Ministry there is a Directorate of Equal Opportunities with responsibilities of program planning for highly disadvantaged population. This functions according to The New Hungary Development Plan. This Directorate mainly deals with professional planning of Social Renewal Operational Program, also deals with preparing laws and legal works, and manages the operational tasks of implementation of legislation. So such department exists.

This is a horizontal type of case. It is not only related to a particular expertise (i.e. not only related to public education or to higher education), but it is raised to a higher level. Previously, it was connected to Gergely Arato (under-secretary). For a year now, however, it is managed or supervised by the Minister, so it has a ministerial supervision.

In addition, the EU has a program called "social policy agenda". This five-year program has an important field, called social inclusion. This naturally includes those educational and training activities, which are linked to the subject of social inclusion. The department of social affairs in The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour represents this political field on European level.

According to Lisbon Treaty, there is an open coordination and cooperation, which differs from sectors to sectors. On social fields the cooperation works quite well in connection with social inclusion. This is so called method of policy-coordination and co-operation. In this framework the member states practically create action plans, which can be considered as political guaranties.

In the framework of these action plans the governments ensure that these activities will be implemented in the next one or two years. This process is monitored by The European Commission but practically it has a common assessment. So we have this European-type mechanism, which is adopted by the Hungarian government as well. This process has an inter-ministerial technical committee, in which the Ministry is also involved through the Directorate of Equal Opportunities.

In connection with the question about reading-writing. I can say that almost everyone can write and read. The problem is text comprehension according to the Pisa survey. This is a problem of several decades; programs do not focus on this problem. This is a little bit, as if we ashamed this situation. Such elements are likely to appear in certain training programs,

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for example, when an unemployed goes to the Employment Centre, and there is a program which he or she can take part, because it is necessary to get employed.

But those types of community colleges we can find in the UK, (which deal with the problem just because it is generally important and not only to find a job), In Hungary do not exist.

Regarding the appearance of disadvantaged people in higher education a unique scholarship program called “Útravaló” (the road to higher education) was introduced. But the low representation of disadvantaged in higher education is due to a number of factors, which can only partly be remedied by educational politics.

The international experience has shown that two components must be combined in one program (through the planning of “Útravaló” this was also considered). The first is an incentive component, where not the institution, but individuals should be encouraged with individual scholarships.

The second component is a person who provides personal help, called mentor. I think that this is a good approach. It must be reported to the government annually how successful the program is. I know that the sources become less and less: it started with 2.4 billion HUF in 2004-2005, and the last year was about only 1.8 billion HUF.

As the budget thickened, this program is also narrowed. And not just in higher education but this applies to the whole. There is, for example, a program called "run to the front from the back desk" to help the school carrier of those disadvantaged who were seated in the very back desk long ago.

This is not typically adult education, because it's rather focuses on the population, which is currently in the education system (on the disadvantaged, especially Gipsy pupils) and it is being encouraged to finish at least the high school. Because if one finishes high school successfully, will have a greater chance to enter the higher education.

The Labour Market Fund is the only available source of these programs. At the same time, the Labour Market Fund is running many training programs successfully. These programs were designed to support the disadvantaged, such as the “One Step Ahead” program.

Otherwise, our experience is that the most undereducated and disadvantaged ones are under represented in these programs. One fundamental problem is related to communication; the other is that the target group is not motivated. The motivation should be raised, but not by just saying: “here is a program, take part in it”.

Those who have a vocational certificate, but have not been employed for X years will probably participate. But those who have not finished the primary school will not participate because they say that they cannot learn. They should be taken into the system by methods specifically designed for them. It's a serious problem similarly to the non-formal learning as well.

*(Please see section 8 for the answer related to life long learning)*

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**2. If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees?**

I cannot give an exact answer to this question. I suppose, during the consultation period, these action plans will be harmonized through discussions with the affected national representative organizations. Probably there is a civilian circle as well, but I cannot define the way and mode of their existence. Concerning special political issues, the ministry have to consult with representative bodies as provided by law. Such issues are for example: creating new laws and new projects.

In many other cases strong civilian organizations based on unwritten laws intervene in discussions. There is a consultation period before decisions are made, when interest groups, professional circles, and civilian groups can express their views. According to Hungarian law the consultation is considered to be compulsory. The law defines the ways and modes of discussions, but in my opinion this is not a real partnership. I think, partnership is, when the partner organizations are involved right from the beginning of the process of planning.

The process of planning is mostly paperwork at desks, and only the minority of cases is characterized by real partnership. Generally, only the end-product or the planning documents are brought in to the discussion, which scarcely can be called partnership. And do the participating groups have the opportunity to express ideas at this point? The existence of the consultation is obligatory, but it has no compelling character. So if a professional organization expresses disagreement with a particular issue, though their opinion is recorded, the government cannot be forced to take account of this opinion. There are some bodies, which have veto rights in a sense, but the representation of disadvantaged groups is not supported by them.

This field is not represented by the Education Policy Council (which is essentially a political body) either. In this council school headmaster, representatives of work councils, maintainers and parents take part. The law specifies the manner in which the Education Policy Council has to be set up. It also declares the circles of represented people, and the legislative right of the Council. The council have rights for proposals and checks. Other groups in the field of public education do not have such a strong power as the Education Policy Council.

The National Interest Reconciliation Council (NIRC) has similarly strong power, but that is basically a discussion forum for employers and employees. The Ministry has to consult with this council before governmental decisions. But in matters, which are not about wages, and not covered by the Labour Code, the agreement of NIRC is not necessary and it does not have to be taken into account by the government.

**3. If no, are there any plans to develop committee's to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees?**

*(See section 1)*

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#### **4. What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry?**

*(See section 1: the interviewee delineated what kinds of factors impede the functioning of these committees)*

The effective operation of the committees has three basic assumptions. The first is the existence of an administrative body (in the committee or within ministry), which provides an administrative and logistic background, being responsible for example for coordination, the flow of information, the procurement, organising the agenda, giving free run of materials. This important condition is not given in many cases, because of the lack of capacity in the ministry (If the administrative body is not set up as a result of a governmental decision, the ministry is not likely to be able to cover the human and financial conditions).

The second condition is the trust in each other, and the belief in success of cooperation. The level of trust is rather low in many areas. A basic precondition of trust is transparent planning and cooperation and less ad hoc conciliation. The committees or organizations do not feel that they have a say in most of the issues. **Do you mean problems with trust between committees, or trust between the committees and the affected groups?** This is a mutual thing. For example, many groups do not believe that their opinions will be built in the project; however long term cooperation must be based on mutual trust. Participants do not feel that it is worth taking part actively because feedback is not provided to them in the majority of cases. Though transparency is a very important precondition, it is not a characteristic feature of law-making process. As a short sum, I can say that the second condition of trust is not given either.

I think the third condition stems from the fact that these interests are represented by different organizations can also represent different professional interests of diverse importance. These differences become real in a variety of ways in government decisions. Shortly, there is an unequal situation where every group runs for the same portal. The inequality exists due to the uncertainty of the budget.

So, all the three conditions need to be improved in many fields, and this is why the committees work less effectively.

#### **5. Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:**

- a) social inclusion**
- b) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups**
- c) lifelong learning**
- d) literacy**
- e) the non-formal education sector**

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward?

*(In connection with positions of responsibility see section 1, 8)*

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**6. Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:**

- a) social inclusion**
- b) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups**
- c) lifelong learning**
- d) literacy**
- e) the non-formal education sector**

There are not formal regional levels In Hungarian administrative system, however there are several efforts to make decisions regionally (i.e. establishing regional training committees). The aim of creating such committees is to allocate and distribute funds to larger regions than counties, concerning the characteristics and needs of that particular region.

The regional level exists as a political level where local and central political intentions confront. Individual political intentions cannot occur on regional level, as they do not exist. Practically, regional politicians are not elected; therefore regional circumstances (power, chance, concern...) cannot determine how funds are allocated. Regional interest is made up of two components. On the one hand, local groups try to transport their needs upwards; on the other hand, the government try to exercise an influence downwards to regional level. So the regional level is a vacuum at the moment. The funds, therefore, are not allocated on regional levels, but on county and local levels. Only negotiations are made on regional level. **So, local interests are the most characteristic ones, and the most depend on how local interest can appear on governmental level?** Yes, that is right. In my opinion, this is what happens with regional – operational programs. Basically this problematic political situation appears during the all projects.

**7. Does your government ministry provide any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level, i.e., Adult Education Organisers?**

This comes under the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour.

**8. Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas, between government departments of Education, Justice and Employment? How can this dialogue be improved?**

According to Hungarian law, adult education is a basic training within education system, it practically means that adults participate in general education. In legislative text there are uncertainties regarding the term adult education. There are several definitions we have to use, but we prefer the term adult learning in professional materials, because we approach the subject rather from aspects of “life long learning”. So we place the emphasis on demand aspects, rather than supply.

There are mandatory types of cooperation, especially on the fields of law-making. Planning committees (operated by the National Development Agency within the Ministry of Economic

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Affairs) are responsible for the fields of program planning and program making. These are essentially coordination forums, running on professional and operational level. Communication between them is vital. The success of harmonization of different professional views between responsible ministries depends on several aspects, such as traditional, political and human factors.

In 2005 the government adopted a life long learning strategy. This governmental decision laid down the guidelines of planning between 2007 and 2013. Practically, this means that this strategy has to be taken into account in relation with development of human resources. The planning process later on changed a lot, and the original strategy has been overwritten by other strategies on several fields. So we can conclude that structures exist, but many elements became empty during the long-term process. There are several reasons for this. One main factor is the money. If money has been already allocated, a particular group can lose interest easily in further cooperation and conciliation. **What do you think, how the communication can be made more effective between ministries or between the different organization units? And how the implementation and development of the principles of strategies could be made more effective?** One of the most important questions is the existence of groups with clear responsibilities. The Gyurcsany cabinet was interested in not to maintain such system. Since 2006 the responsibilities in coordination of planning has not been clarified between National Development Office, the ministries and the different managing authorities.

Another important feature is the principle of the bottom-up strategy, when the planning is based on the practice of earlier projects. This principle was not fulfilled either in Gyurcsany era. Additionally, the Gyurcsany cabinet established a Development Managing Board led by five under –secretaries with uncensored ties. In my opinion, the mission of Gyurcsany was the management of complexity of chaos with the substance of playing off the different interest against each other to be able to remain on the top of waves and maintain control over the processes.

Compared to Gyurcsany era, in times of Etele Barath the footing was clear (until 2006). He was the Minister without portfolio being responsible for European Affairs. His portfolio consisted of two main areas. These are the organization of European issues and coordination of development policies related to Structural funds. The concepts and boundaries of National Development Office were clear. There was a logical structure with operational committees and clear planning. An interdepartmental coordination forum also existed on governmental level (called Development Co-ordination Committee) where usually the deputy secretaries of state were present. This meeting was held monthly and was chaired by Etele Barath .

The main purpose of this forum was the coordination of planning. On this meeting the different departments and ministries had the chance to discuss and harmonize conceptions and interest and find answers to specific strategic questions. A plan or initiative, before was brought to the government level, always was discussed by this forum. This professional forum was terminated in 2006 and an unclear situation came after it. In my opinion the ministers have not been fully aware of their responsibilities and tasks since 2006. Adding or deleting things in the documents was possible by every of them. This process led us to a



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chaotic situation and in my opinion; the utilization of Structural Funds between 2007 and 2013 will be a huge failure in Hungary.

### ***Strategic issues***

**9. Is there a national and/or government strategy for:**

- a) social inclusion
- b) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups
- c) lifelong learning
- d) literacy
- e) the non-formal education sector

*(see answers in section: 1, 8, 13, 14, 26)*

**10. If yes, are there specific targets set for progress in this strategy?**

*(see answers in section: 1, 8, 13, 14, 26)*

**11. If yes, is there specific funding allocated for progress on key elements in this strategy?**

There is a governing board, which deals with allocation of funds for adult education, but this board is rather influenced by politics.

For disadvantaged groups there is about 4 billion HUF sectioned out for implementation of specifically planned projects at higher volume. The purpose of this allotment is to prevent these people from defenselessness due to becoming unemployed occasionally.

*(Also see answers in section: 6, 8, 26)*

**12. What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education?**

*(Exact answer is not provided (also see section 11). The support of non-formal education is related to Ministry of Affairs and Labour, but the interviewee, in section 18, explained what kind of difficulties may occur with following-up financial processes in case of non-formal education).*

**13. Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country.**

It is not easy to answer this question because of the several categories which come into sight. For example how an unemployed person can be involved into adult education. One category is when he or she is involved in a program running by labor market training funds. Another category is when attending courses he or she has to pay for. Seven regional labour market training and conversion centres had been created in the second half of 1990<sup>th</sup>

I do not know whether they are still running or not, because as soon as the World Bank support has been ceased, and no money was received from the labour market fund, these places have become such a phalansters. This was an example of Ireland which also was to be

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adapted in Hungary (it is a characteristic tendency to try to adapt everything, with more or less success).

So, there are regional conversion training centres, which effectively target group of unemployed, but anyone can participate. There are offers of some professions and the persons can select what they want to learn. These trainings have a cost, which can be supported or not. Such training centres are located in every region, but different courses can be organised in many other places regardless of the training centres.

There is also a new trend in the field of vocational training: integrated vocational training centres had been established as a result of a reform process and co-operation of the former vocational training institutions. It has an aspect of improving of cost-effectiveness and it is able to react more effectively to the demand of labour market needs.

The employers appear also in the governing board of these training centres so they can be considered not only as simple educational institutions but they also have a possessing managing board and the consortium has several members.

The target group of the training centres is not only the school age one but the adults too. So they may perform adult training activities too.

These centres represents more than being an institute in a given place. They work in a well directed network contributing in this way for development of the regions.

In addition, there are plans for enlargement of the profiles of the former community centres, "Telehouse", etc. and for their access for life long learning type objectives.

"Telehouses" can be found in approximately 170 locations in the country especially in the places where there was not anything. So there are plans, but the programs have not been started yet.

#### **14. Please comment on future plans by national government to develop lifelong learning at specific ISCED levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.**

I do not know how many percent of the population does not have basic qualifications.

I think 96-97% of the population terminate the primary school by their age of 18-20<sup>th</sup>.

In my opinion there is a layer of 4-5% of the population being below their 40<sup>th</sup> that do not have the primary school degree and this is likely concentrated to Gipsy population. This is a serious problem in their life, which makes their opportunities very limited.

The target group of the Social Renewal Operational Program for Second Chances is the one that do not have any education or qualification/profession or the group that has for example basic education (primary school) but do not have any vocational qualification.

In relation to the vocational education: the primary strategically goal of the lifelong learning strategy is to improve the employability the second one is to improve the quality of life. This can be facilitated by the changes and modernization in the system. These changes and reforms could impact directly the targeted groups in keeping them or returning them in the system.

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In case of “modulation” if someone falls out from the education system, but wants to continue his or her studies two years later, there is no need to start all over, because some modules have already been carried out, a part-qualification is already possessed. In this way if someone wants to obtain a fully-fledged profession it is not needed to restart the school from the beginning.

The aim of the territorial vocational training is to reflect better to the local and regional needs.

The goal of the competency-based reform of the public education system is to ensure that students will achieve further competencies for their further studies and not only simple knowledge to be pressed into their mind.

Important key objectives regarding adult education are distant trainings, e-learning and motivation of certain target groups (which of course is narrowing because of the budgetary situation, but there had been several examples before. I hope that some motivating elements can be introduced again in the near future such as tax relief, giving some additional scores to the underprivileged people on entrance exams, different financial motivation through social system, helping mothers getting back to labour market and attending courses).

I believe that there are a lot of useful elements and key objectives, but one of the greatest problems is that strategically these do not set into a coherent and clear goal. In many cases these can partly represent good aims and interests, but their effect fritters, consequently improvement cannot be observed in statistical data.

If we have a look in 10 years time perspective, we can see that the drop-out proportion is roughly the same, though the governments put billions into it. In my opinion, one of the reasons of this is the incoherence between the different actions done. There are actions that extinguish the effects of the others.

Millions of factors play role in this failure (horizontal coordination inside the government, planning counter-interests, lobby interests). But I think this is fundamentally governmental problem, which is something we always have to face. And this is mainly true in case of the underprivileged ones.

Let me say an example. In 1999 a big Phare program was running, roughly 1,5-2 billion HUF was put into the system. This program was introduced as a Gipsy Phare program. This continued with an even lower budget in 2001, but it had several components that reoccurred in the programs called New Knowledge and New School in Gyurcsány era.

The school failure begins, when the underprivileged children (most frequently coming from Gipsy families) do not attend kindergarten, and later cannot socialize to the school environment and drop out in the school. Without qualification their situation continuously becomes worse and worse.

To make the kindergarten not to be a hostile place for Gipsy children who arrive from a totally different cultural background within the framework of Phare program Gipsy nurses

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and kindergarten helpers were trained. Their salary and the taxes of the institution were insured by the program.

After Phare financing came to an end, and budgetary constraint hit the local authorities, local money became less, the first they got rid of was the Gipsy nurse. 4-5 years after the termination of the Phare program less than 10% of those Gipsy nurses were still working in the kindergartens.

So, I think, this is a serious problem. Through this example we can see that something promising began, then another type of thing extinguished it, or it was not manageable at all. Then the question remains. What has happened after spending 2 billion HUF on this program?

***National policy: formal sector***

**15. Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level?**

**What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?**

The ministry and the government do not have tools to influence one's preferences when entering the higher education. It would be possible to do this in two ways (but in the teacher training a strong counter-selection and an over qualification would appear): either with lower scores on entrance exams, (of course the institutions are against this idea) or by raising the norms of higher education. But this version is not supported by the institutions either.

Researches show that within higher education institutions teacher training faculties are at a low level. Margins are rather narrow to stimulate the underprivileged ones to emerge in teacher training. However, they could better deal with disadvantaged students.

I think it would be necessary to prepare the future teachers for the new situation in which homogeneous classes no longer exist. (Such programs are being planned and there are universities, where such courses have already been started - for example at ELTE the Multicultural Pedagogy Course or Intercultural Educational Course, which can be attended by the future teachers.

Long term programs for Gipsy children to become a teacher, does not exist. This would be good to have similar programs, but stronger, clearer and more opened intentions would be necessary from the government side.

I'm sure, that for example in United States in the 1980<sup>th</sup> there were such endeavours in the educational policy. As a result many black educators appeared, relieving the tensions between the blacks and whites. The same is true for the Spanish immigrants. So there are numerous examples to get ideas from.

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**16. Is there any State incentive for third level institutions to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other? What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?**

There are different civil scholarships, also supported by the government. On the other hand there are other entries for competition invited by the Ministry. For example the Arany János program supports the high school education of the gifted underprivileged children.

At the beginning of this program (started in 1999-2000) one of the biggest problems was that, the parents did not allow their children to be taken into Student Hostels for Gifted. This is a high-school program and after graduation a lot of students continue their studies in higher education.

There is another program called “Útravaló”, which helps the underprivileged ones getting into higher educational institutions. The essence of the program is to support students to attend faculties they want. The government cannot influence institutions for example to admit 10 Gypsies on Faculty of Law so that they run legal aid service for Gypsies after their graduation.

This could be done by knowing in advance that Gipsy students will achieve at least 100 points and for this reason the threshold can be 100. There are no scholarships for let’s say to educate more Gipsy economists.

The existence of special scholarships would help the system a lot. Independently from education areas the idea to have more educated Gypsies is a common effort but we cannot influence people on what to become: lower, economist, poet or translator.

**17. What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses?**

There are a lot of programs to motivate the institutes to do so. This basically depends on the leaders and owners of the institutes.

The institutions are interested in such solutions too, because they expect incomes and the conditions are also given. Offers, which make adults interested in taking part in such courses, do not exist. Infrastructure of institutions is not exploited except some sport activities.

**18. Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future?**

Adult education is a market where market rules dictate. There are big fishes, who took their part from this market, and who shared the market among themselves. Among them some have own local branches in almost every region of the country, and they rather work as training organizers using contractors for the real trainings. Because of this process the trainings become more expensive, and the accountability of the quality is more difficult.

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Furthermore there is a priority system in adult education, developed according to the needs, but I'm not sure whether it works according to the market logic. On the other hand there is a board responsible for fund allocations, but that is strongly influenced by politics.

There are some organisations, which can adapt easily to the different conditions being able to apply for “billions” advertised in the competitive operative programs (for education courses in small and medium sized businesses, computer, language, management skill courses etc...). This demand is generated by state grand funds. Other organizations cannot adopt flexibly, however they could provide much better courses.

The activity of this market is not well known. Financial data only gives us information about the amount employers provide to their employees' training, but there is not obligatory information about the characteristics of the courses, what is exactly paid for, how much time they spend with working etc... The number of researches on these fields is only a few because it would costs money.

Conclusions are being made on how much money has been flown into adult education market, and approximately what it has been spent for. But it is not possible to know exactly what the deficiencies are.

*(About the public health related manpower shortages and training deficiencies see answers in section 23, 24)*

***National policy: non-formal sector***

**19. Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations?**

In the Ministry of Affairs and Labour the vocational education and adult education department. This also deals with the secretarial tasks of the vocational funds within the workforce market.

**20. How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? Why?**

This information can be given in Ministry of Affairs and Labour.

**21. What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *personal development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?**

(See sections 14, 16, 26 and 29)

**22. What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *community development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?**

(See sections 14, 16, 26 and 29)

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## RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

### **23. What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system?**

We have been talking about this a lot, and we take over the specialisation politics, ideas, plans and slogans primarily from countries where this system is working well. According to the law, opportunities should be provided with the inclusion of the preliminary knowledge.

The current UMFT TÁMOP concept will have a built in component, with the aim to create validation centres. If somebody, let's say wants to attend Master or Bachelor University courses, and says, "I know a lot because I read and learn this and this..." he or she might take exams.

The same should be in vocational education and adult education (and the law allows this in a certain measure). But this is costly, and the institutions are adversaries of this idea, because the training time would be shorter, and they would receive less money from the state. I consider the *balance de competence* that the French have a good system.

According to this system if somebody for example worked 5 years in a position he or she can get an official declaration then with this he or she can take an exam at an independent examination centre without sitting in a classroom a single minute. He or she can receive the same degree as who attended a 3-year course in a school. This is a good system. This is the right of each single employee in France. But this costs much money.

There was a plan to establish an independent Vocational School Centre at regional level in the starting period around 2006. But it was withdrawn from the plan after political negotiations and bargains. This demands a serious infrastructure. The European supports would have provided an opportunity for this formation, and a similar one would be necessary, but operating such system costs serious money.

This kind of Examination centres work in France too on a regional basis, and vocational guidance is built on these. This system works well on fields of foreign language teaching.

If I want to enrol for a course, I am not told that I should register onto the beginner or to bring my certificates, but I say that my language knowledge is at intermediate level. Well let's check it!

I think there will be sectors where it is not possible to provide workforce reinforcement in a short time by training, for example nurses in the public health system. There are staffs in hospitals doing this kind of nurse work for years, for example giving injections to patients unofficially without possessing any certificate.

As for me the future situation will enforce application of this in certain sectors.

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The realization of French or Portuguese models does not have any chance since they are not included in the New Hungary Developing Plan. They will appear on the level of the sectors soon according to me, but at present there are not known practices for these.

#### **24. How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?**

One of the opportunities is not to look for a general solution. Solutions by sectors are worthy to search. For example there is a big chance to face with manpower shortages in the public health, or there will be a workforce demand and supply problem. Then, it is worthy to deal with that particular problem, for example how to transform the knowledge received informally to formal qualification (let's say, to be allowed not only to push the patient but to plaster his foot too what I have been being done for 10 years anyway).

An independent examination centre would have been a general solution, but general solutions can be diluted much more easily, on the other hand they are much costlier. One of the factors to overcome obstacles is to find solutions for solving of part problems in this sector more specifically.

The other possibility is to make the formal institution system more interested somehow which is currently interested in not to realise this.

The third possibility is to make the individual more interested. For this the individual has to recognize that "I know something".

Furthermore the general opinion about studying in Hungary is that studying is difficult, it is a hard work, and unfortunately the schools strengthen this opinion – I think this opinion has to be improved by communication.

The subtitle of the first accepted life long learning strategy was Joy of learning in Finland.

It is true that people do not do difficult things with pleasure. In addition there are a lot of people who know that studying helps with their promotion but the investment seems to be higher than the payback as the result of the learning. This is a communicational question also. It is necessary to indicate clearly that the payback is the highest at individual's level.

The OECD performed a lot of examination concerning the rate of learning's payback specifically from the life long learning's perspective, and it can be stated that the payback is the highest at individual's level: their wages increase, the quality of their life improves, etc. It can be seen that the highest paybacks are from the investments in basic and public education at social level. The money has to be invested in these because the deviances and the further social expenses will be lower.

There was a survey: Citizens' views on life long learning in 2001. The result of the survey was that there are 3 bottlenecks, which have to be considered by an efficient policy directed to life long learning from citizens' point of view.

One of the bottlenecks was the money, the other one was the time and the third one the ability. The money: who pays for it, employer, state, etc.

The tax relief is a good incentive, but for the most unprivileged groups is not, because they do not have any kind of tax revenue to be able to claim back. There has to be something else



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incentive for them, I am not sure if the voucher is the best one for them. The voucher is good for the service provider, but not for the individual. The individual learning account may be a good incentive but international experiences show, that it leads to corruption (it was introduced and wiped off in United Kingdom, and the experiences of this was not unambiguous in Netherlands either).

So the money is a very important element: who pays, for what and to whom.

The next is time: people said that they knew learning is important, I would like to study but I do not have time. The training has to be efficient in time also, it is important not to learn again what I know, let there be time discounts, let this be a part of labour agreement somehow.

The third is the ability: the citizen says in many cases that I know that studying would be important, but I am not able to do it, I am not suitable for that. So the ability is missing, and there are people, whose ability is really missing, and there are people whose self-evaluation (reliance) is wrong and there are some with wrong learning perception.

I think these three things have to be analysed separately: what is the problem, how would be possible to remedy it and then a complex activity should be knead from them.

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**25. What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State?**

*(see sections 23, 24)*

**FUTURE PLANS**

**26. What, in your opinion, is your government department's priority issues to improve access to education for those groups most at risk of under representation?**

In one hand it should be communicated in a well-harmonised way that "the possibilities are in you" and we want to promote this.

Secondly those programs should be fulfilled efficiently, which are included in the Social Renewal Operative Program and being at plan documentation level. These should be fulfilled according to their specification (for example Step One Forward Program or Start Program)

Thirdly it is necessary to make use of the institution capacities. Utilization of unused institutions which were not established for such aims is also possible. Fourthly it is necessary to relieve the borderline between the sectors in order to be able to move easier from one sector to another and to easier enter from outside of a sector into the given educational sector (this raises the topic of knowledge got in a formal way).

Fifthly, let there be determined endeavor for eliminating from the system those educational concepts which do not lead anywhere (nowadays the vocational education or vocational schools are such ways. There is no labour-market chance for those who graduated from these schools. This becomes a cemetery for underprivileged people because they do not get qualification which help them improve further in a branching manner).

Furthermore, the reduction of the selection and the segregation is also important. There are legal endeavours and programs against segregation. I think this process has to be carried out consistently. Such programs are as follows: transformation of the schooling districts, the obligatory reception of the underprivileged ones, maximising the proportion of the underprivileged ones in the classes, the integration norm (those that can motivate the institutions to continue the integration pedagogic program).

And one of the most important things, which should be done, is to have a very clearly defined, separate fund established for curing this problem. The institution which tries to accomplish vocational training and development for underprivileged ones should benefit not only from supporting vocational education but let there also be a dedicated source, which is distributed by competition.

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**27. What changes do you hope will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of under representation?**

Well, I can't judge this since a lot of idea had already come out but did not come true.

**28. What changes do you realistically expect will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of under representation?**

- reserved places yes or no
- free childcare
- access officers in each third level institution
- outreach strategies for each community
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*(The interviewee did not answer the question concerning to free childcare. Regarding the other areas see sections 13, 14, 15, 16 and 24.)*

**29. Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education.**

The underprivileged situation is a rather vague concept because underprivileged statuses can change in different periods. Currently such people are the ones who need special education, the underprivileged ones, the young Gipsies, the persons without any qualification, so the ones who fell from the educational system.

Young mothers on maternity leave can become very easily underprivileged if there are no opportunities for job but if there is demand in the labour market their opportunities are better.

I believe that the most important target groups for the Educational Ministry are those who fell out from the educational system for different reasons. Their drawback has to be reduced by adult training or adult training institutional system. The legislation of Public education gives a legal definition (I can not cite it) for underprivileged or cumulated underprivileged groups and for the group of children who needs special education as well (these groups contain children who fall out from educational system usually).

*(The interviewee answers this question in sections 14 and 16)*

Most of the accumulated underprivileged people have Gipsy origin where one of the parents is unemployed. The group of children who needs special education is composed of children suffering from disabilities with difficulties in learning, adaptation and others. The worst is when the accumulated underprivileged situation is associated with the latter problem (different disorders) and this situation appears unfortunately at Gipsy families mostly.

**30. What are the biggest obstacles to progress regarding promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy and the non-formal education sector?**

*(The interviewee mainly answered this in question in section 14, and partly in sections 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 18, 23 and 24)*

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## PRISON EDUCATION

**31. Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country? Please specify.**

What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education?

This belongs to competence of Ministry of Affairs and Labour.

## OUTREACH STRATEGIES

**32. How, in your opinion, can national government support *outreach* attempts to reach those who do not traditionally engage in the formal education system or who have become alienated from this system?**

*(See section: 14, 24, 26 and partly in sections 1 and 13)*

**33. Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education?**

*(See section 2)*

**34. What government ministries support childcare funding and availability for adults who want to attend education courses, whether formal or informal? Please describe the supports provided.**

*(The interviewee was not able to answer this because of lack of time. The interview in the Ministry of Affairs and Labour gives answer to this.)*

**35. Many people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds have no space at home to study. What alternative physical sites do you think could be realistically made available for them for their learning?**

*(The interviewee partly discussed this area in section 17 - making use of the cultural centres for adult education purposes.)*

**36. Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community? Please describe.**

*(The interviewee discussed this in section 13 and in the section 17 - talks about making use of the cultural centres for adult education.)*

**37. Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation?**

*(See sections 15 and 16)*

**38. Which government department funds the libraries in your country?**

The Ministry of Education and Culture.

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**39. Is distance education run from any libraries in your country?**

This is not realised very often.

**40. Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups.**

The aim of the competence-based reform of the public education is to give not only knowledge but also competencies, which are necessary for their further education.

The distance and e-learning are very important goals of the adult training or adult education areas.

**41. What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country?**

This is an exceptionally complicated question because the recession is fundamentally a budgetary constraint. The recession does not affect the life long learning process directly, indeed, funds were regrouped and isolated because the underprivileged ones can be affected even more seriously.

We have to consider that the formal education appears in the large life long learning system with on the one hand suffers from the recession and on the other hand it is affected by the budgetary restrictions. If for example you and me take part in the life long learning program, then the recession affects us badly, we can't pay for the course any longer.

I think the underprivileged groups basically are not affected so badly because we have separated about 4 billions HUF from the Market Labour Fund targeting the realisation of the planned actions in a larger volume in order to avoid situations when the underprivileged may become even more disadvantageous as a result of incensement of the unemployment rate.

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## **Government department official interview: Ministry of Affairs and Labour**

### ***Structural issues***

**1. Is there a central committee in your government department with specific responsibility for:**

- f) social inclusion**
- g) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups**
- h) lifelong learning**
- i) literacy**
- j) the non-formal education sector**

In this Ministry there are separate departments for people with a disability, and for those looking for a job. The Employment Department (which is part of the same under-secretariat) has a role to provide assistance to job seekers. Among other rules, it also contains that the person who is looking for a job may also take part in trainings. This is supported by Employment Support Centres in a given legal framework.

Though amounts for such programs have been decreased in recent times, serious EU resources has come into adult education at the same time. The EU is indeed helps a lot, for examlpe through the One Step Forward program. The Employment Support Centres is trying to offer courses according to the demands of labor market.

Some people think this is not really the case. In this context, it is difficult to do justice. The surveys are showing the effectiveness of the trainings, but obviously if someone gets employed only a year after the vocational training, it is no longer a measure of the current system; however his life comes to a solution eventually.

So there are the Employment Support Centres. Besides these, people with a disability have separate departments within the Ministry, where in addition besides different departments different social committees work as well (from elder to those who live with special disability). I believe that in Hungary all problems have their special institutions and there are organizations, which represent the interests of all specific strata.

It is certainly possible that temporarily we are not able to help; because there is no money, there is no capacity, no special equipment, etc... The economic crisis in this respect is obviously not good, because resources have been reduced. But it is also a fact that we have to argue many times, because we believe that it is not certain that the training can help in the way the committees or departments generally think.

*(Further information in section 2)*

**2. If yes, are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in these committees?**

There are permanent and ad hoc working committees. Within the Secretariat of Equal Opportunities there are specific organizational units dealing with people with a disability,

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Gipsies, women...separately. There is a Main Department dealing with children and youth. There is National Disability Council, Senior Council, Women's and Men's Council of Social Equality. These work permanently, and government organizations and organizations representing the interests of specific target groups take part as well.

And there are committees working in *ad hoc* manner. These are groups with the task to develop or to execute some strategies. For example, there was a group for strategies related to elderly or now we have a group dealing with social equality of women and men and another group working on realization of the strategic plan to encourage the integration of the Gipsies.

Now, we have a program running to develop a strategy to help the employment of people whom work abilities have changed. Representatives of previously mentioned groups also participate in this. I think that these people also take part in the rather interactive strategy making and implementing work groups as well.

**3. If no, are there any plans to develop committee's to develop policy and monitor its implementation in any of these areas where there are no current committees?**

*(See answers in section: 1, 2)*

**4. What are the obstacles to establishing any of these committees in your government ministry?**

*(See answers in section: 1, 2)*

**5. Is there a position of responsibility in your government department, specifically to develop and monitor implementation on these issues:**

- f) social inclusion**
- g) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups**
- h) lifelong learning**
- i) literacy**
- j) the non-formal education sector**

In other words, if progress is not made in these areas who takes responsibility to drive things forward?

*I represent the department of adult education and training, but I do not have direct decision-making powers. I am rather a mediator of the various views and suggestions between the two sides (between the official committees and the groups). My role is a kind of co-ordination: conciliation and liaison.*

**6. Are there any specific structures for communication at a strategic level between regional, local and national level with regard to:**

- f) social inclusion**
- g) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups**

- 
- h) **lifelong learning**
  - i) **literacy**
  - j) **the non-formal education sector**

In Hungary the issue of adult education exists at two levels at present: at the level of training institutions and at government level. There are nine regional training centres at the regional level. Among other tasks they are responsible for the training of disadvantaged groups, and in connection with this they have a very close, day-to-day cooperation with the Regional Employment Centers.

But besides this, institutions responsible for the adult education exist neither on regional nor on county or municipal level. Namely, the adult education is essentially market-based, so there are not similar management systems to the other fields of education system. Consequently I cannot really answer the question, because regional governing level is missing from the adult education. **So essentially communication exists only between the local and government level?** Yes, that's right. The adults who are looking for a job are being involved in the training process in such a way that the employment centres publish a list of needed courses and ask for bids. The market-based training institutions and the state owned regional training centres give in offers to the regional employment centres. The job seeker then can choose from the offers adopted by the particular employment centres.

This is the way someone can get involved in training programs supported by Employment Centre. **And how does the communication works between the ministries in these subjects (as, these issues are affected by more ministries, aren't they)?** Ministry of Affairs and Labour has been responsible for adult education since 2002 (when the law about adult education was created).

This Ministry has a normal state relationship with other ministries. For example cooperation exists in negotiations related to the bills, government regulations, and ministerial regulation plans. In particular cases Ministry of Affairs and Labour participate in funding the employment related training programs of other ministries. **In these entire issues are the Ministry of Education and Culture the Ministry of Affairs and Labour and legal and judicial bodies all involved?** Yes, that's right, and the Ministry for Development and Economic Affairs may participate as well.

**7. Does your government ministry provide any support for individuals with specific responsibility for developing adult education services at a local or regional level, i.e., Adult Education Organisers?**

The adult education is a market-based sector. According to my knowledge, in other European countries, adult education sector is not privatized as much as in Hungary. Therefore, I say that the state carries out good strategy when it focuses on helping the training of disadvantaged people, because, apparently, the other players in the market can solve their own problems in one way or another.

*(See answers also in section: 12, 17)*



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**8. Are there structures for dialogue and a common strategy on any of these areas, between government departments of Education, Justice and Employment? How can this dialogue be improved?**

*(See answer in section 6)*

***Strategic issues***

**9. Is there a national and/or government strategy for:**

- f) social inclusion**
- g) access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups**
- h) lifelong learning**
- i) literacy**
- j) the non-formal education sector**

*There are a lot of strategies in relation to social inclusion: strategy for integration of Gipsies, women and men social equality strategy, and strategy for the elderly. Each strategy displays a variety of training in several relations, on the one hand, professional trainings, on the other hand trainings for the target group itself.*

*We want to support the training of disadvantaged people specifically from state and EU funds. I can mention one exception (if it is well on track): there will be a key competence training, where the main standpoint is the competence of the trainee and not his disadvantaged situation. Key competence basically means digital literacy, entrepreneurial skills and language skills. For all other strategies the key aspect is the disadvantaged feature (unemployed, woman returns from maternity leave, Gipsy, the elderly, people with disabilities, etc.). **And are these programs are mainly realized by EU funds?** Yes, they are.*

**10. If yes, are there specific targets set for progress in this strategy?**

*(See answer in section 9)*

**11. If yes, is there specific funding allocated for progress on key elements in this strategy?**

*(See answer in section 9)*

**12. What percentage of your government department budget goes on adult education: a) formal education, b) non-formal education?**

*This ministry is mainly supports formal trainings. **And what is the reason for this?** Because the labour-market accepts these NQR (National Qualifications Register) qualifications. Indeed, the companies in more than one third of the trainings, when sending their employees to trainings on their own money, order NQR education.*

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**13. Please comment on measures taken by national government to support adult learning outside the major cities in your country.**

Although the country is fairly well supplied with training institutions, this is a legitimate question and a legitimate issue. Obviously, in a village with 500 citizens there is no training institution, but if there is one, it is not certain that it meets the given local requirements. In case of supported programs repayment of the travel expenses is part of the aid.

Furthermore, in connection to this, the government developed a program for the 33 most disadvantaged regions (the tender will be published in July. This also has a section about training and employment support.

**14. Please comment on future plans by national government to develop lifelong learning at specific ISCED levels 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively.**

We do not deal with those having higher education degree, because this is the stratum, which can achieve another diploma or a vocational qualification whenever they want. So, there is no problem on this field. Today, a characteristic feature of trainings in Hungary is, that those who would need the qualifications will not achieve much while those already have a degree or two will attend more and more courses (they are motivated to learn, it is important to them to reach knowledge from other fields as well - either because their job requires it, or because they think it is useful).

In case of those who finished the secondary education but have no vocational qualification, it is important to acquire one. In One Step Forward program (besides involving job seekers) another important objective is to involve people who have no vocation at all. Today the economy seems to prefer those who have some competence. (However, demand has increased for unskilled too, unfortunately, those jobs are accepted by a very few people, because it is not worth working for minimal wage.)

A lot of programs are running for those being disadvantaged in some terms. (The lack of qualification may be considered a kind of disadvantaged situation too). There are national and EU programs. Among EU programs TÁMOP 1 (Social Renewal Operational Program) is related to development of employment while TÁMOP 2 deals with improving the adaptability. TÁMOP 5 is to strengthen the social inclusion. Each contains strong training components. These are quite complex programs, which contain elements related to employment, education, and social services. The domestic-funded programs are paid from the training budget.

The program for development of vocational courses is also paid from this budget. This is a pre-vocational training program specifically for the 15-year-old children who dropped out from school system. It has been running for several years, and it is coordinated by the National Institute of Vocational Education. It involves young people who have no qualifications at all.

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Preparatory training program is for development of general skills. After one-year preparation, participants can be involved in vocational education. Besides this, for example, we have a complex program of training and employment of people with disabilities, or another to develop the IT skills of representatives in municipalities of minorities. These are external demands and they are set up according to the requests. **Have the affected people contacted the Ministry?** Yes, it happens that they contact us. Sometimes we initiate, sometime they. All the complex programs contain training elements. I consider this a kind of change in strategic direction in comparison with the previous period.

In the case of disadvantaged people (and particularly in case of the most disadvantaged stratum) we do not necessarily need to start with the training. On the contrary the conditions related to personal, internal motivation must be generated first so that to reduce anxiety in them before being seated in the classroom. We need to find special methods for this.

We consider the complex programs, and in particular the personal mentoring assistance extremely and strategically important. Members of this group should be given some incentive every day; it is worth to do more. The number of such complex programs for disadvantaged is growing. Mentoring assistance is always included in them. In addition, there is a separate program for mentor trainings; because we are facing shortages in qualified mentors (this is obvious, because this demand is just rising).

***National policy: formal sector***

**15. Is there any State incentive for third level institutions training teachers to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can be teachers at a) elementary school level, b) high school level?**

**What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?**

It is related to Ministry of Education and Culture.

**16. Is there any State incentive for third level institutions to reserve places specifically for underrepresented groups, such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups, so that they can enter courses for professions of particular influence in their local community such as a) law, b) social work, c) youth work, d) psychology, e) other? What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to development of such an incentive?**

There are labour-market programs, for example, to develop Gipsy communities or train Gipsy vigilantes, or Gipsy employment officers. **Is this a program supported by the government?** Yes, it is supported through employment organizations.

**17. What obstacles and/or opportunities in your opinion exist to use of the school building after school hours for adult education courses?**

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In adult education system only accredited training institutions may receive state aid after their students. The vocational education institutions can participate with a simplified accreditation, which is considerably cheaper and local visitation is not required, so we believe that they have the necessary materials and conditions to carry out the training. This is expected to be extended to all public education institutions.

Of course, the market-based-training institutions can feel disadvantaged because this benefit will only be distributed to the public educational institutions. But the fact is that the conditions are better in public educational institutions than in the just formed training institution.

**18. Are there particular gaps in employment and training for adults that you envisage developing in the near future?**

There are general problems. For example, less money will be allocated to the employment centers to offer their trainings to jobseekers. **Do you have to face financial shortages basically? Yes. And from employment point of view what are the areas, which will have a considerable deficit, so where you will have to face a lack of qualified personnel and could it be overtaken by adult education system?** The situation is contradictory because some regions have profession deficit; at the same time in other regions the same profession is over represented.

It is a general idea that this is caused by immobility of Hungarian workforce. Well, it should be acknowledged that it will not be more mobile within a reasonable period of time. This immobility is fairly understandable from the current mentality, public transport, and infrastructure and wage conditions. However, this ratio, where appropriate, show differences within one region, people are not willing to move within one region either. So what is the deficit and what is the excess is a very complex question, it simply cannot be answered.

In addition, due to the economic crisis this situation changes moment by moment. Now, for example the crisis has expanded to some economic areas, you never thought it would (for example, the automotive industry). **So it is not possible to predict?** I did not say that it is not possible, but first appropriate methods should be found and uncertainty factors of the economic forecasts should be properly defined. It is not possible to handle the concepts of shortages and the over education in such a simplistic manner.

This is question related to communication, also the question of changes in the economy, the issue of regional inequalities, and a question of many other things. And also a question of wages, because particular professions are not highly paid and cheap blackleg workers are hired instead.

**National policy: non-formal sector**

**19. Which government department has the main responsibility for funding non-formal educational organisations?**

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This Ministry.

(Also see section 12: This Ministry mainly supports formal trainings. **And what is the reason for this?** The labour market accepts the NQR qualifications. Indeed, in many cases, the companies send their employees to trainings on their own money and in more than one third of the cases NQR trainings are required.)

**20. How would you compare the status and development of the non-formal education sector compared with 5 years ago? Has it expanded or increased over the last 5 years? Why?**

Many of the accredited trainings have been established to develop competencies but they do not give a certificate. This is a market and a good investment, so it is worth running such trainings. I think, the number of these has increased however there are no accurate statistics to show that how many informal training were five years ago, and how many are there currently. The training range is indeed becoming differentiated, and the most varied new things appear.

**21. What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *personal development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?**

*For this we have the program called The Way to Work, in which they are being involved. I do not want to deny that they are forced to be involved. They either participate in a learning program or in a public work program, but if they do not do so, more aid will not be disbursed to them. Their only income is the aid at the moment. So this is a kind of compulsion. But whether the trainer will be able to manage them professionally, that is a good question.*

**22. What is your opinion on future developments regarding National Government support for *community development* classes in order to reach those groups most alienated from the traditional mainstream education system (e.g., early school leavers, long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities)?**

I think this would be an excessive demand on them. Firstly, this people should learn to read and write and communicate. The majority of them are Gypsies at the moment, who have not finished the primary school either.

## **RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING**

**23. What are the main obstacles to establishing a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system?**

I tell you honestly that I have no much information about recognition of qualifications achieved in the non-formal sector. Hungary is the country of administration. When someone gets a job, only the paper, which proves the qualification is required, then the real competence will be shown during the trial period.

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I would not say that everything is right with the recognition of qualifications acquired in the informal sector in Hungary. But the fact is that if someone wants to transform his or her acquired knowledge into a formal certificate, he or she is less and less hampered. This is true for the NQR trainings as well, because there is a very modern opportunity for someone to go to an Exam Centre, and based on his/her acquired knowledge pass an exam. Vocations where the completion of the course is required are exceptions (there are some, but not too many).

I feel this problem a little bit artificial. I understand that this is a problem in Sweden, in the Netherlands, in Belgium, in France, where the rate of immigrants is very high. It is clear that in these countries it does matter how to formally recognize the professions and skills of immigrants. But it is not a big problem in Hungary, because we do not have a large number of immigrants.

**24. How can these obstacles, in your view, be overcome?**

*(See answer in section 23)*

**25. What plans need to be developed for further flexibility of accreditation systems by the State?**

*(See answer in section 23)*

**FUTURE PLANS**

**26. What, in your opinion, is your government department's priority issues to improve access to education for those groups most at risk of under representation?**

*(See answers in section: 21, 22, 27)*

**27. What changes do you hope will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of under representation?**

At the moment I cannot think in 5 years period. **Is it possible to think only in a longer terms?** In case of this group longer-term thinking is possible only. In addition, the amounts for trainings are being diminished, and at the moment it is not possible to see when they will raise again. But there is something, which we have not talked about yet: there is a layer, which has not become disadvantaged yet because they still have jobs. Their training is designed to prevent them from unemployment.

This is supported by the 4+1 program. According to this program, in order not to dismiss the worker and not to close the plant due to the narrowing market, working days have been limited to 4 days and training are provided on the 5th day. The program pays for these trainings, and partially for the loss of wages. So, everyone can benefit from this.

This money comes from EU funds, but if this crisis did not emerge, we would not have located this type of program, and the government would have supported other courses in a greater extent. We do not really see how far we have to focus on trainings closely linked to crisis, so that is why I cannot think in 5 years term.

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**28. What changes do you realistically expect will be achieved in 5 years time to promote access to education for those groups most at risk of under representation?**

- reserved places yes or no
- free childcare
- access officers in each third level institution
- outreach strategies for each community

From these options I prefer the last one. For the underrepresented groups tailor-made involvement strategy should be developed. Surely there are families with childcare problems, but the solution is given, because correspondent vocational learning can be organized (if someone really wants to learn, can solve this). Childcare is not a problem. We consider complexities more important.

**29. Please list your priority target groups to improve access to third level education.**

This is a relatively minor problem in case of the social groups we are dealing with. There are probably specific groups of people with disabilities, where this can be a problem. As far as I know the higher education institutions are striving to help with similar issues.

**30. What are the biggest obstacles to progress regarding promotion of access to education for traditionally underrepresented groups, as well as social inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy and the non-formal education sector?**

My short answer is that besides money, the lack of appropriate methods is the main obstacle. **Do you mean the lack of appropriate methods on the level of educational institutions?** There are problems on level of education institutions and also on teachers' and antagonists' level. And on the level of program planners, too, because I think we have not been able to find the way how we can really involve them in the process of trainings. There are, however, positive movements towards the right direction to solve their problems by a more complex approach.

## **PRISON EDUCATION**

**31. Are there specific plans to improve access to education for adults in prisons in your country? Please specify.**

**32. What, in your opinion, are the obstacles to developing prison education?**

The detainees can carry out general mailing evening schools on primary level, and labour market trainings are also being provided for prisoners. In the EU-funded One Step Forward program also contained trainings that were carried out in prisons, there have been prisons, which are still available.

The national strategy for social crime prevention is being developed now, and the National Committee on Crime Prevention also exists, in which Social and Education Ministry

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representatives, civilian organizations and local authority representatives are present. There is a government regulation, which annually determines what kind of specific measures should be taken and what improvements should be implemented in this area.

In my opinion prison officers are pleased to see these labour-market trainings running, and that the staffs of Employment Centres and training centres deal with the prisoner. In the crime prevention strategy priority is given to the training of prisoners and the preventive trainings for disadvantaged people.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order has a tendering program, which focuses on the training of youth, and they also have a high priority project, which aims the development of the methodology in the field of crime prevention.

## **OUTREACH STRATEGIES**

**33. How, in your opinion, can national government support *outreach* attempts to reach those who do not traditionally engage in the formal education system or who have become alienated from this system?**

*(See answers in section: 9, 14, 21)*

**34. Are there representatives from the at risk target groups involved in a) designing, b) implementing outreach approaches to reach those most excluded from education?**

*(See answers in section: 1, 2)*

**35. What government ministries support childcare funding and availability for adults who want to attend education courses, whether formal or informal? Please describe the supports provided.**

*(See answer in section 28)*

**36. Many people from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds have no space at home to study. What alternative physical sites do you think could be realistically made available for them for their learning?**

The most important thing is that one has to be willing to learn. He/she will not take part in trainings, if it is just said to him that the library is available. This person will feel bad of this idea, because he has not even held a book in his hand since primary school. These people should not been approached with the judgment of an average people. The fact that these people have not finished the primary school has important reasons and this fact should be considered at first place.

**37. Have any efforts been made to get schools to be sites of adult education in the community? Please describe.**

*(See answers in section: 17, 35)*



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**38. Is there any national level strategy or support to provide for training/education of a) community leaders, b) teachers, in areas which experience most social deprivation and marginalisation?**

*I earlier mentioned the IT trainings organized for Gipsy minority self-government representatives. In addition, in the development program for disadvantaged there is a section which ensures the effectiveness of the trainings related to office work improvement of Gipsy minority self-governments (for example: how to handle the computer, how to write applications, manager-training, etc...).*

*The Education Ministry is responsible for postgraduate teacher-trainings. They must have such programs. Postgraduate teacher-trainings also can be found in vocational development program. To expand the repertoire of teaching methodology is a very important component of this program.*

*(Further information in section 16)*

**39. Which government department funds the libraries in your country?**

Ministry of Education and Culture.

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**40. Is distance education run from any libraries in your country?**

It is possible for libraries to be accredited for the adult education. But if they do not want to be accredited, adult education can be carried out completely free after registration. The market is absolutely free; so all libraries can take part as well.

Currently distance education is not realized because of the target group is not yet ready to learn on their own, however individual learning is an important criterion. Today, the vast majority of training in Hungary is still carried out within the confines of traditional classes, with the teacher's guidance. Being sufficiently mature is a condition of the remote training. In particular, disadvantaged cannot use this opportunity (exceptions are special groups such as those with disabilities or blind, who may be highly qualified but not being able to travel to a training institution).

**41. Please comment on ways to overcome the digital divide between different social groups.**

Today, almost every village has a so-called "Hungary Point" with Internet access. If we actually will be able to take advantage of this, it could also serve as a device of distance learning.

**42. What effects, if any, do you think the recession may have on lifelong learning in your country?**

*(See answers in section: 1, 18, 27)*

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## **Non-formal education organisation: Változó Világért Alapítvány (Foundation for Changing World) – Horizont Programme**

### ***Interviewees***

Both interviewees were fully co-operating.

- Senior manager: 35-40 years old women responsible for financial, PR- and staff-conditions of the Horizont programme; the length of the interview was 1,5 hour.
- One of the mentors of the Horizont programme: 25-30 years old women; the length of the interview was 1 hour.

### ***History/ background of the organisation (when established, its developmental progress)***

Változó Világért Alapítvány (Foundation for the Changing World) was established in 1999 by 6 Hungarian citizens. The aims were as follows: to provide information concerning labour market and educational programmes for disadvantaged groups and to help the social integration of these groups

The foundation has run several programmes by tenders in the last 10 years:

- FIT (Foglalkozási Információs Tanácsadó – Employment Information Counseling) – it was established in 2001 supported by the Public Employment Service. This service provides information and consultancy of the labour market and educational institutions. Furthermore it provides vocational guidance for young people, their parents, teachers and people with handicap. Films, magazines, professional publications and brochures in this topic are available for concerned groups.
- Rehabilitációs Információs Centrum (rehabilitation and information centre) – it was established in 2003. This programme focuses mainly on people with disabilities.
- Pályakezdő Hendikep Kisprogram (programme for entrants with a disability I.): it was established in 2001 supported by Soros Foundation. The programme helped youths from foster home in social- and labour market-integration, and provided them social and mental assistance.
- Pályakezdő Hendikep Program (programme for entrants with a disability II.): it was established in 2002 supported by National Employment Foundation. The aim of the programme was to prevent disadvantaged entrants between ages 16-25 from labour market exclusion.
- Horizont programme: This is the continuation of the programmes for entrants with a disability I-II. The programme has been running since 2005. This is a complex mentoring programme for 16-35 years old unemployed people with disadvantages (see below).

Two programmes run currently: FIT and Horizont programme. About 10.000 people have used the information service in the last 10 years, and 560 people have participated in the complex Horizont programme till now. The seats of the programmes are located in Szombathely (country town, close to the western border of Hungary). These programmes (FIT and Horizont) are coordinated by the Foundation for Changing World, but executed by two different teams. The interviews focused mainly on the more complex Horizont programme.

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## **Objectives of the practice**

### **Mission statement and strategic plan refer to lifelong learning and rehabilitation goals**

The main goal of the programme is to help 16-35 years old unemployed people with disadvantage to find educational programme/ vocational training and/or job that best suits his/her abilities and interest, and applying personality-focused trainings to prepare them for these programmes and job.

The mission statement is as follows:

*Website of Horizont: We are committed to helping disadvantaged groups. Our credo is to accept these young people with their problems and their personal connections, thus our joint work with them is based on trustful relationship. Our goal is to help young people excluded from the labour market to recognize their problems and mobilizing their internal and external resources to find solutions for their problems. Mentoring support is our special method. Attachment to mentors help young people to reach their goals. We employ specialists with extensive professional competence, and we work in partnership with other professional organisations.*

### **Background features/ objectives of the Horizont programme**

The Horizont programme involves 4 kinds of services: individual mentoring support, small group-trainings, transit employment programme and information service. Cooperation with other professional services, organization of professional conferences and meetings, and PR-activity are important parts of their work too.

The objectives of the practice are as follows:

- Individual mentoring support for participants: The aim of the first interview is to help participants review their problems and needs. One week after the first interview the participant and his/her personal mentor enter into cooperation contract (assumed obligations on the part of the mentor and participant). At weekly meetings they develop goals together. The mentor helps the participants to find the education or vocational programme and/or a job that best suits his/her abilities and interests, and help him/her to build up confidence in learning and working abilities (by personal self-awareness, communication and life-skills trainings). The mentoring programme includes after care too (6 months after entry into an education programme or job). In case of necessity external specialist provides information for youths about dangers of drug-abuse and about the methods of curing.
- Small group trainings for participants (10-12 participants / group): Self-awareness trainings, communication trainings, life-skills trainings, arts and crafts trainings are provided for the participants. These 4-week-long trainings are organised both by internal and external specialists. The aim of these trainings is to help participants in adaptation.

*Manager: These small-group trainings are important because these immature young people become adults in these peer-groups.*

The youths have also the possibility to participate in a 3-day-long off-site training every year. Usually unconventional artistic and leisure time activities are organised by the mentors.

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- “Transit employment” for participants: This programme provides full-time employment for 8 disadvantaged young persons for 6 months in a bicycle repair shop with guidance of a skilled mentor. These young people were not able to adapt themselves to their earlier workplaces (they picked a quarrel with their colleagues or principals). Some of them have never worked because of social and physical problems, or because of lack of qualification. This programme provides opportunity for them to get work-experience before they return to the labour-market. The goal of the programme is to recognize problems that obstruct their integration, and - supported by a mentor - to make them able to work responsibly and independently. The bicycles are from the storage of police (confiscated bicycles), and the repaired bicycles are offered for children living in disadvantaged families or foster home, furthermore also some of the citizens uses the service of this bicycle shop, thus the participants have possibility to experience the usefulness of their work.
  - Information service: Up-to date information service concerning employment and education courses for everyone.
  - Cooperation with other professional services: Cooperation with social organisations (for example employment agencies, drug-ambulances) to reach the young people in concern and to inform them about the programme. Partnership with social, educational and employment organisations to find adequate education programme and/or job opportunities for these people.
  - Organisation of conferences, meetings and auctions: Conferences with the participation of the members of the professional organisations. Meetings to make sponsors and citizens acquainted with the programme.  
The manager organises auctions lately with participation of sponsors, managers of regional companies and citizens: artistic creation of the participants, some of the repaired bicycles and artworks of well-known graphic artists, ceramists and painters are sold. The goal of these auctions is to involve employers and citizens and to make them acquainted with the programme and the participants. Furthermore the participants can experience that the outcome of their work is valuable. The total income is used for programme financing.
  - PR-activity: Editing brochures and publications for the target group and for specialists.

The number of the programmes and services provided for participants as well as the number of the participants has been expanding from year to year.

### **Number of participants/ service users annually**

About 560 young people have participated in the complex Horizont programme till now, and almost 300 participants got permanent job. In accordance with the tender conditions the foundation undertook the development of 120 young persons by Horizont programme and the placement into labour relationship and 6-month-long aftercare of 60 participants in the current 1,5 budgetary period.

### **Target groups/ participant's profile**

The participants are 16-35 years old unemployed persons with various disadvantages living in Szombathely (or it's close region), who need help to find a job and/or educational programme. These young people came from families with social or economic disadvantage:

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unemployed parents, or parents with physical problems, neglectful environment, one-parent families, unprocessed bereavement in the family, etc. Some of them have mental or physical handicap: for example epilepsy or movement-coordination problems. Most of them have accommodation- and conflict resolution problem. They are mainly low qualified (elementary graduation) early school leavers. Some of them are skilled, but unemployed.

Manager: *Neither the social, nor the educational or the employment sector can provide appropriate help for these young people. They need not only information and administration assistance, but also complex programme for their successful social integration.*

About 70 percent of the participants are men, because - according to the interviewees - most of the early school-leavers are men, and most women at this age is busy with children. The interviewees try to develop methods for taking into the programme more women (methods see below – Child care).

Manager: *Heterogeneous groups are more successful, because more topics are generated by the presence of both sexes.*

### **Outreach to marginalized groups**

The management cooperates with other social organisations (family-supporting organisations, drug-ambulances, social foundations, etc), employment agencies, the patrons and the police to reach the young people in need and to inform them about the programme. There are brochures at the offices of these organisations, and also the officers give information the youths about the programme. Sometimes the mentors go into these offices to give opportunity for the youths through personal meeting and talking to decide about joining the programme.

Manager: *It is useful for these offices, if we take the charge concerning these problematic clients off their hands. If we can help them to find workplace or educational programme, than it is useful for everyone.*

Recently, it is typical, that the participants inform their friends or relatives about the programme, and bring them to one of the leisure time activities or auctions. Many of these visitors take a fancy to participate in the whole programme.

### **Promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups**

According to the interviewees every successful social organisation develop own methods that best suits to the features of the target group and the special problems of the concerned town for reaching disadvantaged groups. For example, it is a typical problem of an other Hungarian country town (Pécs) that disadvantaged young people loaf in the town, thus social workers try to reach these people in the street. Loafing is not typical in Szombathely, and this town have widespread social system so the cooperation with these social organisations is a successful strategy in this town.

Many formal and non-formal organisation focus on the problems of disadvantaged groups in this town, however only the Horizont programme provides disadvantaged young people complex developmental service.

Manager: *I think the managements of the other organisations don't want to undertake the development of this group, because it is very difficult to handle their problems. Although most of them are 20-25 years old, they behave like teenagers, because their development has been stagnating. They are not able to behave and think consciously. Neither the employers*

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*like them because they reckon these young people as irresponsible. Only we undertake the development of this target group, thus many organisations direct these people to us automatically.*

According to the mentor, as compared with formal organisations, young people become released, because this organisation is more flexible, than a formal one, provides more pleasant environment, and focuses on the personal problems of the clients. Young people can open up more in a recipient atmosphere than in a formal office.

### **Location**

The seat of Horizont programme is in Szombathely (a country town, near the western border of Hungary). The office, the bicycle-repair shop and the training-rooms (calm environment, bright and spacious rooms, simple but modern equipments) are in a community centre. It is open four times a week. There is an information-office in Kőszeg, too (a little country town, near the western border of Hungary), it is open once a week.

### **Incentives, motivation**

Trainings and mentoring support are free for the participants, and the information service is free for everyone.

During the 4-week-long small group trainings the participants get scholarship (from 40.000 to 71.000 HUF – about 143-253 euro). According to the interviewees the scholarship is an important factor in starting to attend trainings.

*Manager: I have to confess, that our trainings are successful since we can provide scholarship for the participants. It is an important motivation factor for them in starting engagement in these trainings, because when they have been attending the trainings for a while, they feel well and stay here. Furthermore, many of them have to pay score, but they are unemployed.*

*Mentor: These young people don't know the training-method and are afraid of manifestating their feelings, but when they experience that there is no pressure, they open up for the peer group.*

The participants of the transit employment programme get payment. Building upon the motivation factor of contemporary companionship, the management plans that the most skillful participants will be employed as foremen in the bicycle repair shop in the future.

The interviewees emphasise that the short term of the trainings is a motivation factor too, because these young people are not stayers, thus the long term programmes are frightening for them.

Furthermore they come in for mentoring support in goal definition. However, according to the experience of the mentor, only the participants over 25 years (with own family particularly) are motivated to define their long-term goals. Odd job is sufficient for the younger participants.

Often the family and close social environment act upon the participants negatively. It is very hard for them to break out from the disadvantaged environment, however for some

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participants the most important motivation factor is that their friends or relatives participated in this programme successfully earlier (see below - Method of feedback, evaluation).

The recession has a negative effect on motivation (see below - Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model).

### **Perceived strengths and weaknesses**

*The interviewees' experience concerning strengths of the model see above (Mission statement and strategic plan; Background features of the programme; Promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups) and below (Challenges and hopes; Teaching/mentoring method).*

According to the interviewees the weaknesses of the model arise from financial insecurity of the non-formal sector.

*Manager: This is a very uncertain field both for short-term and long-term, thus it is very difficult for me to employ well-skilled specialists, because they don't want to leave their formal workplaces. Furthermore, this is a very special field, it is much time to get the hang of this work, thus it is very difficult to substitute our specialists.*

Further weaknesses see below (Challenges and hopes).

### **Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)**

The budget of every 18-month-long period is about 50 million HUF. Half of it goes for the payments, and another half for the programmes and PR-costs.

The Horizont programme is financed mainly by the Regional Public Employment Service and partly by several companies and citizens.

The bicycle repair shop was established through supporting activity of Mayor's Office of Szombathely, the police (the bicycles are from the storage of police - confiscated bicycles), other social foundations (PR-activity), a town school (hand tools), and the citizens (providing bicycles for the foundation).

### **Continuity of education**

#### **Connection to the formal education system**

Paths into formal education are determined by calling for tender, and the requirements have been changed in the last few years. As Horizont programme is funded by tenders, it has to follow tendering requirements.

*Manager: Returning these young people into formal education system (for example into elementary or second school) was acknowledged as a required outcome at our first programme, however it has been not considered as a successful result from 2006. OKJ-programmes (vocational education programmes included by National Education Catalogue) are considered as required output by tenders currently. Earlier we started educational assisting programmes for young people to get elementary graduation, and I think it is an important outcome for this unqualified target group, however it is not considered as a required outcome by the callings for tender yet.*



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At the same time, the manager explains, that *To my belief, these young people are not able to adapt their selves to the normal education system. People, who had problems with the teachers and peer groups, want to get rid of the education system. Short-term vocational trainings and recipient teaching environment is more important for them, than to return to the secondary school.*

As a solution, the manager plans interlocking formal educational programmes and non-formal trainings through establishment of a school with complex educational programme (educational and vocational programmes with social mentoring and art trainings) for these young people in the distant future.

The management tried to cooperate with formal education institutes (mainly with second schools) to reach early school leavers, but these institutes didn't keep the management or the mentors informed concerning endangered students, and didn't inform students about the programme.

### **Recognition of prior learning and work experience**

Participants of this non-formal programme have no prior work experience or their careers were unsuccessful. The Horizont programme provides mainly special personal mentoring support, which are not recognised as prior non-formal learning by formal education system. According to the interviewees, as most of these young people are unable to adopt themselves to the formal education system, providing special formal and non-formal educational programmes which suit to their requirements and problems would be necessary for them.

### **Support service**

There is not any procedure for identifying specific learning difficulties. If such problems are recognised, one of the mentors (graduated in education of special treatment) is available for the participant in concern.

### **Staff condition**

The founding always covers a 18-month-long period (see above – Founding sources). There are 7 specialists in the Horizont programme. The manager (responsible for financial, PR- and staff-conditions) and the professional leader organise and coordinate the programme. There is an employee responsible for the administration. Four mentors participate in execution of the programme - they are social workers, psychologists and a special educator.

These specialists have been participating in this programme for 4-7 years. Most of them (5 persons) are on long-term contracts, and 2 mentors are on short-term (the 18-month-long projects) contracts.

External specialists are always involved in the execution of the programme, too (an accountant and some trainers).

The manager wants to involve 3-4 new specialists for the expansion of the transit employment programme.

Manager: *Our goal is not the enlargement of the group, rather the formation of a well-coordinated and coherent professional group.*

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The salary of the mentors is a bit above the formal education sector. As the manager noted: *They make more sacrifices in this scope of activity than the teachers in formal education system.*

### **Teaching/ mentoring method**

At the beginning there was a prep training for the mentors (concerning topics as follows: employment, social work, education, juvenile delinquency, etc), and the mentors have been participating further internal and external professional trainings since then (for example career- orientation training last time). The management organises professional meetings with participation of external professionals regularly, thus the mentors have the opportunity to get up-to-date information on different fields.

The inner specialists have created a professional training for mentors working with most disadvantaged groups. The accreditation of this 60 hours training is under way.

The mentors' use adult education learning principles involving active contribution on behalf of the learner, opinion sharing with the participant, shared learning goals built upon the participant's life experiences.

The most important principles are as follows:

Manager: *As their lives are full of defeats, we have to take a point of view that everyone is a valuable person. Instead of focusing on their failures, we build up their development on the positive features of their life. Furthermore, we don't want to change their personality. We don't want to explain them, what we would do in his/her place; rather taking them into small groups we give them opportunity for recognising their own problems.*

*The personal and confidential relationship between the participant and his/her mentor is the background of their joint work. The most important task is to find the root of the participant's problem during the joint work, and then to create developmental goals step by step.*

Mentor: *The most important principle is that we have to accept these young people in their whole personality. We have to handle them accepting their relationship-system and problems. We have to support them and provide them opportunities, but they have to make the decisions.*

### **Methods of feedback, evaluation**

An important feedback information is the number of the participants committed to educational programmes or workplaces over 6-month-long after care.

Participants of trainings give written or oral feedback (some of them by drawing – as they want). During the personal meetings the participants give spontaneous feedback immediately.

An important feedback that friends and relatives of the earlier participants engage in the programme, too.

Manager: *It is very important that many of our clients bring along their friends and relatives with same problems. It is one of the most important output for us, because it means that these clients felt well here and were able to get somewhere in their lives, and the others noticed their success, thus they took a fancy to participate in our programme.*

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### **Priority needs for expansion of the model / Future directions**

Plan including the establishment of a school, which provides complex developmental programme for the special target group in see above (Connecting to the formal education system).

Future developments concerning the part time employment of women see below (Childcare).

### **Challenges and hopes**

According to the interviewees the biggest challenge facing the programme and the non-formal education sector in Hungary in the next 5 years is the financial insecurity. It is impossible to make long-term developmental plans, because the funding sources provide financial support for 1-2 years long period. Moreover there are no constant guidelines developed for special problems and needs of different disadvantaged groups. According to the manager only ad hoc arrangements are made on this field.

Furthermore, according to the manager a special monitoring system would be useful from the part of the European Union. Meetings and discussion-possibilities for the representatives of the non-formal organisation were provided by a monitoring system earlier, but there is no opportunity to bring on special problems recently, thus every organisation are have to face professional and financial problems alone.

According to the manager the biggest opportunity for the programme and the non-formal education sector lies in their professional flexibility. The non-formal organisations in contrast to the formal ones can develop their field of activity more flexible, thus these organisations have the possibility to specialize themselves for the required developmental areas.

The manager tries to fight financial problems by involvement of local sponsors:

*I try to enhance the relationships with the local supporters, because the local supporters "have face", we know each other, and we can communicate with each other.*

According to the interviewees the success of a non-formal organisation depends on the commitment of the representatives and specialists. On the other hand it is also very important to find the useful range of activities not covered by other organisations yet.

### **Distinct role**

Opinion of the interviewees concerning the distinct role the non-formal education sector can play in contrast to the formal education sector see above (Incentives, motivation; Perceived strengths and weaknesses; Challenges and hopes; Connection to the formal education system; Promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups).

### **National and regional strategy**

The interviewees have no information about the national or the regional strategy in Hungary to develop the non-formal education sector.

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Manager: *I am very sceptical, because I took part in a lot of strategy-building projects earlier, but I don't believe in the usefulness of these projects. I backed out of these meetings recently, because a lot of studies have been made till now, but – as I see – the experience of specialists are not included in the planning.*

According to the mentor a strategy with more connection between the formal and non-formal sector would be necessary. However she emphasises, that this strategy should be very special one that motivates the formal system for development of special education methods that suit more to the requirements of disadvantaged groups.

### **Links between non-formal education and the workplaces**

According to the manager the main problem is that most of the employers are not aware of the fields of activity of the non-formal sector, and the non-formal sector doesn't know the expectation (concerning the non-formal organisations) of the employers. The management of the Horizont programme organises meetings with participation of the representatives of the local companies for establishing more effective links with the workplaces (see above - Objectives of the practice).

Mentor: *We invited the leaders of for-profit companies for the auction. Many of them visited this auction and bought something. We have established regular relationship with some of them since then, because we had the possibility to know each other on that meeting, and our activity and the development of the participants of the programme was convincing for them.*

The mentor mentioned an initiation worked out by an other non-formal organisation: Brochures about the programmes of the local non-formal and civil social organisation were handed to the HR-managers of the companies. The HR-managers have a share in cooperation with these organisations, because they obtain up-to-date information concerning the local social network, and could provide information concerning these organisations for the employees. These social organisations can undertake the solution of some problems of the employees; on the other hand this relationship helps to find a job for the clients of the social organisations.

### **Childcare**

The programme doesn't provide childcare for the participants. According to the interviewees state day cares are available for the children of the concerned families, but the lack of part-time workplaces is a more serious problem for Hungarian women. The management plans to establish transit employment for women too (on the model of bicycle repair shop), thus provide part time work for women and also more opportunity to participate in the Horizont programme.

### **Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model**

According to the interviewees experience more and more young people want to take part in the programme every year, but less vocational trainings and less possibility of work are

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available for the participants recently. It is hard to motivate them, and the most serious problem is, that these young people become bereft of hope absolutely.

From the interviews for SP5:

Interviews with the senior management person in the organisation on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Interview with the mentor of the education programme on 18<sup>nd</sup> June 2009

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## **Non-formal education organisation: Váltóság Alapítvány (The Change Lanes Foundation)**

### ***Interviewees***

Both interviewees were fully co-operating.

- Senior manager: 40-45 years old women responsible for financial, PR- and staff-conditions, and the professional development of the foundation, and she participates as a teacher in the educational programmes and trainings too; the length of the interview was 1,5 hour.
- One of the mentors: 25-30 years old woman, she participates as social worker and teacher in the preparation programme for second school leaving exam, preparation programme for release and provides mentoring support and after care for the prisoners in their labour-market re-integration; she has been working at this foundation for 3 years; the length of the interview was 1 hour.

### ***History/ background of the organisation (when established, its developmental progress)***

Váltóság Alapítvány (Change Lane Foundation) was established in 2002 by teachers. Earlier they worked at a secondary school for deviant young people (Belvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány Gimnázium és Szakközépiskola - Downtown School Foundation Secondary School and Technical College) and developed a professional educational programme for young prisoners in 1997. This educational programme is the ground of the activity of Váltóság Alapítvány.

Beyond the regular programmes (see below – Objectives of the practice) the foundation has run several special programmes by tenders (founded by the European Union – HEFOP, TÁMOP) executed in prisons and reformatories (in the capital town and also in county towns) in the last 7 years:

- Social and labour-market re-socialisation programme for young released offenders (01. 05. 2006. – 31. 10. 2007.)
- Prevention programme for youthful prisoners – joint creation and learning methodology in small groups (01. 08. 2008. – 30. 11. 2008.)
- Civics and competency development for young female prisoners (01. 01. 2008. – 29. 02. 2008.)
- Development programme for young prisoners and released offenders: providing civil supporting system and after care, personal and grouped competency development, learning methodology, mentoring programme.
- Development programme for young people living in reformatory (01. 09. 2008. – 31. 01. 2009.)

### ***Objectives of the practice***

#### **Mission statement and strategic plan refer to lifelong learning and rehabilitation goals**

The main goal of the foundation is supporting the social, educational and labour-market re-integration of 16-35 years old prisoners and released offenders.

The mission statement is as follows:

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Website of the foundation: *"The Change Lanes Foundation is dedicated to the assistance of prisoners, released offenders and those with a criminal record in their reintegration in the society and the labour market, as well as increasing their chances of life. In our programme and projects, we primarily deal with young people between 16 and 35 years of age. The core of our activity lies in continuous (after)care and the operation of a civil helping system. According to our belief and experiences, building of secure human/helping/civil relationships in the penal institution, gaining of confidence, the establishment of continuous emotional security and the assistance of an accepting community are vital issues in the reduction of the crisis of release and in the prevention of re-offence."*

### **Background features/ objectives of the Horizont programme**

Regular activities and also short-term programmes are running currently.

*Regular activities are as follows* (the term of these programmes suits to the requirements of the participants):

- Assistance in the preparation for the secondary school leaving exam: Prisoners with certification of elementary school have the possibility to participate in a personality-based learning and teaching programme. In this programme the prisoners learn the 14 second- school subjects independently, and the mentors give intensive tutorial assistance to them once a week. The participants learn 2-3 subjects at a time, graduate from 5-6 subjects stepwise at an external education institution (Belvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány Gimnázium és Szakközépiskola - Downtown School Foundation Secondary School and Technical College).
- Preparation for release for young people in penal institutions: The mentors prepare the prisoners, released offenders and their families by personality-based consultancy and brochures for difficulties of civil life.

Website of the foundation: *"According to our experiences, release from prison is a pleasant but also difficult moment and process. Therefore, it should be pre-prepared carefully while in the penal institution and free life should be pre-planned. It is vital to think about housing, possibilities of finding a job and workplace, plans referring to managing money, family issues and other human relationships, possibilities of training and education. The gathering of the necessary documents (identity card, address card, health insurance card, tax card etc.) takes a lot of administration. The Changing Lanes Foundation provides help in housing problems, work and job issues, gathering of documents, money-handling issues, providing information concerning individual situations and questions."*

- Assisting in the reintegration in the labour market: through labour-market trainings and personal consultancy.  
Manager: *The main goal for the released offenders is finding and keeping job, because the Hungarian social network can't handle their problem for long term. Most of them have no work-experience yet.*
- Organizing professional meetings, coordinating methodology exchange.
- Methodological and research work concerning deviance and its possible treatments, with special respect to criminal lifestyle: The results of their research work are concluded in publications available for specialists - Pedagogic and social work in penal institutions and during after care; Crime prevention (issue for pedagogues);

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Plans concerning the “Halfway-house” model; Labour-market and social re-integration of released offenders.

*Periodic short-term programmes are as follows:*

- Small group trainings for young prisoners and youthful offenders: communication trainings, life-skills trainings, labour-market trainings, and crime prevention with the involvement of ex-offenders. The aim of these trainings is to help the participants in adaptation.
- Peer social support training for young people in penal institutions: The young prisoners after fulfilment of a 40-hour-long theoretical and 20-hour-long practical training provide peer social support for the others in the prison. They come in for 10 hours supervision at the beginning of their work. The manager worked out this programme from an English model.

*Manager: It is hard to establish such a model in Hungary. Hard to explain this idea to the staff of the prisons, furthermore macho-attitude is typical for the prisoners (they keep from the manifestation of their feelings).*

- Learning-competency development for low-qualified young prisoners: 20-hour-long small group education programme for young prisoners and youthful offenders without certification of elementary school.

*Manager: The participants consider it useful, because they want to get into formal education system. The programme includes the development of literacy, communication, mathematical skills, foreign-language competency, historical knowledge and arts (they are very open for arts). Of course this programme is very practical, we have to adapt the methodology to their level.*

### **Number of participants/ service users annually**

The range of activity of the foundation has been increasing and the number of prison institutions the foundation cooperates with has been expanding year by year. The number of the programmes and services provided for participants and also the number of the participants is roughly constant every year. Currently, about 15 people participate in the preparation programme for secondary school leaving exam, and about 80 young people take part in other trainings.

### **Target groups/ participant's profile**

The participants are 16-35 years old young prisoners and youthful offenders living in reformatories. These young people are low qualified (certification of elementary school or lower level) early school leavers, and came from disadvantaged families. The mentor emphasised that most of their parents were deviants, too.

Although most of the prisoners are men (there are about 15.000 prisoners in Hungary, and only 6-7% of them are women), the ratio of women is more than 6-7% in these programmes. Female prisoners are located in 3 prisons, and the foundation organises programmes in each of them. Furthermore, one of the earlier programmes was developed specifically for female prisoners (see above – History/ background of the organisation).



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### **Outreach to marginalized groups**

As a consequence of its national activity, the foundation has a coordination agreement with the National Headquarters of the Prison Administration. The foundation organises educational programmes and trainings in almost every Hungarian prisons and some of the reformatories. They cooperate with 8 prisons currently (1 in Budapest and 7 in country towns).

The mentors try to involve the prisoners through the staff of the prison, but most of the participants got information about the programmes from the others.

*Manager: A lot of prisoners know us, because we have been working in several prisons for years, and they commend our programmes for each other. Information about our programmes goes around usually in informal way between the prisoners, and we like this very much.*

### **Promotion of access for traditionally underrepresented groups**

The interviewees can't compare this organisation with other non-formal institutions. They emphasise that they like to work with less participants for longer time.

*Manager: We don't set our success against other organisations; rather we try to define our goals for ourselves over and over again. It is easy to say how many people sat their final examination, but it is not so simple for us. For example we discuss a lot about the re-integration possibilities of a client, because we want to support him suitably.*

### **Location**

The seat of the foundation is in Budapest. The educational programmes and trainings for prisoners are executed in libraries and classrooms of several prisons and reformatories (in the capital town, and also in country towns). The programmes for ex-offenders are provided at the office (two little rooms) of the foundation, and the timing of these meetings suits to the time-table of the participants.

The second school leaving exams are taken at an external educational institution (Belvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány Gimnázium és Szakközépiskola - Downtown School Foundation Secondary School and Technical College). The prisoners are transported into that external institution by the staff of the prison, and they take part in the exam wearing prisoner's clothing and under police supervision. However the manager emphasises:

*According to our experience the exam at an external institution is a very important step of the re-socialization. These young people got into a special subculture of the prison. The rules of this world differ from the conventions of the normal society, and usually these people sink into this world. However when they get to a civil institution, they meet peer-groups, and they communicate with civil young people and teachers.*

### **Incentives, motivation**

Every service provided by the foundation is free for the participants (including books and worksheets, too). The participant should pay the cost of the transport for the exam but usually the prison institute undertakes it.

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According to the mentor the most important motivation factor for the participants is that with certification of second school they have more chance to get a job. However their labour-market re-integration takes very long time: when they try to get a job, the employers often refuse them, and many of them give up finding work. The recession has a negative effect on motivation particularly (see below - Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model).

The small group trainings are very popular, because these programmes focus on the special problems of the prisoners and provide practical knowledges. It is particularly incentive for the participants if the trainer is an ex-offender (see below – Staff condition), because he is an authentic ideal person for them. Furthermore, released offenders participated earlier in the programmes of this organisation often provide crime-prevention talking for young persons living in their environment. These civil initiatives are independent from the foundation.

### **Perceived strengths and weaknesses**

According to the interviewees the main strength of their programmes is that the personality-focused feature provides opportunity to solve individual learning and social problems of the participants.

Furthermore, the mentors and other specialists are committed to their work, and the small number of the employees provides an effective communication network during the daily work and methodological development.

The manager emphasises that a formal educational institute (in contrast with a non-formal one) has more administrative engagement, and has to be more in accordance with the central principles.

*Mentor: I think our programme is likeable for them because they have to fulfil only few subjects at a time and they can go on step by step. Furthermore, they have possibility for work, too.*

The weaknesses of the model arise from financial insecurity of the non-formal sector, because they have to apply for tenders every year.

Furthermore, the manager emphasises that vocational education trainings are preferred by tenders lately, and programmes providing assistance in the preparation for the secondary school leaving exam are a bit neglected.

*Manager: According to our experience persons with certification of second school can get and keep a job easier, because they are educated, and it provides self-respect for them. Their communication skills are better, thus they are braver at the interview.*

### **Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)**

As the manager mentioned, the required budget of the foundation is about 30-40 million HUF / year. The most of it goes for the payments. The foundation is financed only by tenders.

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## **Continuity of education**

### **Connection to the formal education system**

Cooperating with a secondary school (Downtown School Foundation Secondary School and Technical College Belvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány Gimnázium és Szakközépiskola) this foundation provides paths for the participants into formal education through assistance in preparation for the second school leaving exam.

Sometimes they assist in preparation for the university entrance examination, too. The manager explained that it is hard to organise such an examination, because it requires a lot of paperwork both from the part of the university and the prison. Moreover, as the exam takes place at an external institute, the prisoners should be transported there, and have to take exam under police supervision. Tolerance of this degrading situation requires remarkable self-control from the part of the prisoner. Mainly ex-prisoners take part in educational programmes of the universities, because (as the mentor explained) *Most of the universities don't undertake providing consultancy in the prison and educational programme for prisoners.* However also the ex-prisoners need more flexible programmes from the part of the university.

Manager: *Diminishing prejudice would be very important. People have no realistic knowledge about this group. Furthermore, as I see, universities are very rigid: students (in general) are not considered to be adult and the universities can't handle individual problems. Our clients need individual schedule, because they are older than the other students and come from a special milieu.*

The foundation applies students as volunteers, and the representatives of the foundation give talks at universities.

### **Recognition of prior learning and work experience**

Prior learning and working experience facilitates the participants' latter study, but these are not recognised by the formal educational system. The manager emphasises that the experience of mentors at this foundation are not recognised as prior learning or working experience by universities either (ELTE Faculty of Social Sciences; ELTE Department of Social Work and Social Policy).

### **Support service**

There is not any procedure for identifying specific learning difficulties, however individual developmental educational programmes are provided by mentors for every participant (see below – Teaching/ mentoring method).

### **Staff condition**

The staff of the foundation consists of 6 people at the moment: a secondary school teacher, a social worker, a social teacher, an expert in social politics, a public educator, and a qualified narcology assistant. They work full-time and (as the founding of the organisation is from year to year) they are on short-term contracts. Salary of the employees is similar to the payment in the formal education sector.

Also external specialists (2 secondary school teachers and 3 administrators responsible for project management) and volunteers are involved. Usually some of the ex-offenders take

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part in the work of the foundation: for example one of their earlier clients became a trainer, and keeps civics training for youthful offenders at a reformatory currently.

Manager: *In 2003 and 2004 four or five ex-offenders worked with us, later only two and there is only one currently. On the one hand, their work is very useful for us, because they are authentic for the prisoners. On the other hand, working with them is a great expense to us, because it requires more attention. Moreover, I think, it is very important for them not staying here. They should go on and find their own way.*

### **Teaching/ mentoring method**

There is no prior training for the mentors, but most of the employees were volunteers at this foundation earlier (as university students), and through working with mentors became specialists. The specialists of the foundation have created a professional subject concerning mentoring work with prisoners for university students on social field.

The mentors' use adult education learning principles involving active contribution on behalf of the learner, opinion sharing with the participant, shared learning goals built upon the participant's life experiences.

The most important principles are as follows:

Manager: *Personality-focused attitude is the most important. Our educational method is built upon the client's personality, knowledge and learning tempo. At the beginning we offer them methods, and they choose the best liked one. The partnership is a base feature: we learn a lot from the clients, because they have widespread life-experience, thus we respect them.*

Mentor: *There is a special teacher-pupil relationship between us, because individual methods are applied for each person: I compile different worksheets for them, I apply different methods when I hear the lesson, and while one of them need only half year for a curriculum, the other one need 1 year for it.*

### **Methods of feedback, evaluation**

Participants of the trainings give written feedback (what did they liked/disliked, was it understandable or non, etc). During the personal meetings the participants give spontaneous feedback immediately. An important feedback that earlier participants bring the programmes of the foundation to the others' attention (see above – Outreach to marginalised groups).

### **Priority needs for expansion of the model / Future directions**

Similar to the future plan of the prison institute in Vác (see LLL-SP5 case study: Educational programmes in a Hungarian prison) the manager intends to establish a "half-way house" by analogy with Austrian, Latvian and German models. Prisoners without family could live here after they leave prison for a while, and a skilful staff would help them to find a job and to adapt themselves to civil life.

### **Challenges and hopes**

The biggest challenge facing the the non-formal education sector in Hungary in the next 5 years is the financial insecurity. According to the manager beyond short-term tender-possibilities continuous financial support would be necessary for the secure functioning of the non-formal sector.

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Furthermore, the labour-market re-integration of the disadvantaged group is expected by tenders, but it is very hard to be in accordance with this expectation in case of ex-prisoners.

Manager: *The employers demand a Good Behaviour Certificate. Furthermore, there are no free workplaces currently. These people are under-qualified and have a bad record, and most of them are Gypsies. The employers refuse them, because they are Gypsies, moreover have a bad record. It is a very difficult question.*

As the manager mentioned it is a big challenge for organisations on this field that the law enforcement agencies propose to develop standard formal educational programme for every prisoners, however such a program is not capable of handling the individual problems of the participants. The non-formal organisations try to convince the decision-makers about the necessity of the alternative educational programmes.

More administration is a big challenge for the mentor.

According to the interviewees new tenders in this sector may ensure hope and opportunity for the non-formal organisations. This foundation is considered reliable by the clients and the staff of the prisons, thus long-term and successful cooperations with them provide opportunities for the organisation in the future.

According to the interviewees the success of a non-formal organisation depends on the complexity of the educational programme they provide. Only the multi-faceted and flexible organisations are able to maintain a financial and professional existence.

### **Distinct role**

Opinion of the interviewees concerning the distinct role the non-formal education sector can play in contrast to the formal education sector see above (Perceived strengths and weaknesses).

The mentor emphasised: *We have the advantage of working in the civil service. We are successful, because our clients are motivated for learning. They are not forced by parents or employers, rather they want to learn.*

### **National and regional strategy**

The interviewees have no information about the national or the regional strategy in Hungary to develop the non-formal education sector. According to the manager stable and continuous financial support would be necessary for the non-formal sector too. The mentor emphasises that more connection and cooperation would be important between the formal and non-formal sector, and also between the different non-formal organisations, because only these cooperations could provide solutions for the complex problems of the disadvantaged groups.

### **Links between non-formal education and the workplaces**

According to the interviewees experience the employers show denial against ex-prisoners

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Manager: *It is difficult, because the employers will state that they don't discriminate, but they demand the Good Behaviour Certificate from the part of the employees. One of our volunteers wanted to make interviews with the employers, but most of them didn't want to speak about this. But some of the managers employing our earlier clients have positive experiences, and ask for employees again.*

### **Childcare**

As the lessons and meetings for released offenders take place mainly on weekends or in the evenings, some of the participants and also the mentors have childcare-problems. The programme doesn't provide organised childcare for them but (as the manager mentioned) they always find spontaneous solutions for this problems. Usually one of the mentors or participants provide childcare for the children in the office during the engagement of the parents.

### **Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model**

Tenders ensure financial existing of the foundation for the next year. However less working possibilities are available for the participants recently (most of the released offenders found job in the building industry earlier), thus their labour-market re-integration is almost impossible.

From the interviews for SP5:

Interviews with the senior management person in the organisation on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Interview with the mentor of the education programme on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2009

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## **Educational Programmes in a Hungarian Prison**

### ***Interviewees***

Both interviewees were fully co-operating.

- Senior management prison official: 45-50 years old commander; the length of the interview was 1 hour.
- Organiser of the educational programme: 40-45 years old women; the length of the interview was 1,5 hour.

### ***Objectives of the practice***

#### **Background features of the prison**

The state-owned prison, which was founded in 1770 and primarily was a boarding school for patrician youngsters, is located in Vác (a small country town - near by the capital town). The building has been functioning as a prison since 1855. It is one of the 7 highest security level prisons in the country.

The prison is overcrowded: There are 522 living accommodations originally, but currently there are about 640-650 prisoners in the prison. All of them are 18-70 years old men.

Senior manager: *"The number of the prisoners has decreased from 18000 to 14900 in our country in the last few years, and new prisons has been established, but the prisons are still overcrowded. "*

This prison provides both formal and non-formal educational programmes for prisoners, but because of the financial difficulties the opportunities are limited.

About 50% of the prisoners are employed: 70-80 prisoners work in the prison (dusting, gardening, doing repairs, washing-up), about 200-220 prisoners are employed by a state-owned company (next to the building of the prison, but it is independent from it – making wooden bins, leather ball, upper leather, breaking up electronic garbage) and about 10 prisoners are employed by other external companies.

#### **Prisoner profiles**

There is no correct information available on the educational levels of the prisoners in most cases, because the prisoners have no grade card (they have lost it or they have never got it). Often the prisoners give false information concerning their educational level, because they are not motivated in participating in educational programmes provided by the prison. The organisers of the education try to get the grade cards or some information from the families of the prisoners, from the educational institutions the prisoners attended earlier, or from the state archives, but it often falls flat (because

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the concerned school doesn't exist anymore or it takes long time to get the required information from the state archives).

According to the interviewees the vast majority of the prisoners are low- or unqualified and unskilled early school leavers, and they have traditionally disadvantaged background.

### **Target groups**

Possibility of engaging in most educational programme doesn't depend on the prisoner's age or type of crime (the only exception: the non-formal programme concerning the preparation for the secondary school leaving exam – see below – is organised for 18-35 years old prisoners). Sometimes also the older prisoners participate in elementary education programme, because they want to learn reading. The elementary education programme and the non-formal programmes are available for everyone.

*Organiser: There is not any restriction concerning the participation in education programmes. Every prisoner has possibility to apply for these programmes.*

The senior manager remarked: The only restriction factor is the term of the detention- if the term of education is longer than the term of detention, than the prisoner can't participate in it. But – according his experience – people serving life imprisonment are not motivated in learning.

Second school education and vocational trainings are available only for prisoners with certification of elementary school.

Participation in the non-formal drug-prevention training is adjudged by a committee. The prisoners engaged in this programme should sign a contract about the conditions of participation.

### **Promotion of access to education for prisoners**

According both to the organiser of the education and the senior manager, regarding the promotion of access to education of prisoners, this prison is less developed, than the others. Because of the current recession every prison has serious financial difficulties, but – according to the senior manager – this institute is one of the most under-financed prisons in Hungary, and the organisers of the educational programmes are not skilful enough in tendering operation in this institute.

Senior manager: The financial difficulties has a bad effect both on the attitude of the staff, and the life of the prisoners.

Furthermore, most of the prisoners are hard to handle (some of them got from lower security level prison into this high security level one because of their problems of discipline), and they are not motivated in participation in educational programmes. Most of them don't want to cooperate with the organisers of the education or they are not capable of cooperation.



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**Educational programmes provided for the prisoners; Number of participants/ service users annually**

This prison provides both formal and non-formal educational programmes for the prisoners. The non-formal programmes are performed mainly during the afternoon.

Since the prisoners attending the elementary educational programme at grades 1-5 don't work, these programmes run in the morning.

*Organiser: Prisoners, who participate in elementary education of lower level, are not suitable for working since they have not got the acquired skills.*

Since the prisoners attending elementary education at grades 7-8 are capable of working, classes take place in the afternoon.

*Formal educational programmes:* Usually three types of formal educational programmes are organised for the prisoners (in this institute), but only elementary educational programmes are available every year. This year 70 prisoners received formal education, all of them on elementary level.

- Elementary level: According to the law (IM 6/96), every prison should provide elementary education programmes but providing second school education is optional.

Elementary educational programmes are organised by an external educational institute (Pannon Oktatási Központ), and the programmes are carried out in the prison. The concerned prisoners are divided to classes by a knowledge-assessment exam. If they have writing and reading difficulties than it is necessary to start classes at elementary level 1-2. This year classes at 3-8 elementary level started. Because of low number of applicants two contracted classes were available for prisoners: a contracted class on elementary level of 3-4 with participation of 24 prisoners, and a contracted class on elementary level of 5-6-7-8 with participation of 46 prisoners. The educational institute grants normal certificate (it is not assigned, that the participation of the educational programme is a prisoner). The prisoners attend classes about 20-22 hours / week.

- Second school education: Prisoners with certification of elementary school have the possibility to participate in second school education. Prisoners without grade card (if they have lost it and it is impossible to get it from the educational institute they attended earlier) have the possibility to get elementary certification, if they attend elementary class on 8-th level again, and thus they get the grade card. It is possible to start second school educational programmes, but because of low number of applicants it occurs rarely. However cooperation with other prisons ensures participation in these educational programmes for the concerned prisoners (11 prisoners this year). In these cases, the prisoners attend classes in other prisons (mainly in Budapest or in Márianosztra). The prisoners attend classes about 20-22 hours / week.

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- Vocational trainings: Because of the financial difficulties and the failures in tendering operation, the last vocational training was organised 2 years ago. Bookbinder assistant, elementary knowledge of PC and paver are some examples of the vocational trainings provided earlier. As some of the prisoners are aware of the fact, that it is almost impossible to get work without any vocational qualification, there would be applicants for the vocational trainings, according to the organiser. As the organiser remarked, providing some vocational trainings (for example mason or truck-driver) for the prisoners would be worth for the prison too, because these prisoners could take part in renovation works in the prison.
  - However according to the commander, these trades are mainly out of fashion or there is an excess of these specialties in the country, so the prisoners who received vocational training have difficulties finding a job after discharge. Further problem is, that without financial possibilities these trainings can't provide modern, up-to-date appliances for the professional practice (for example the bench lathes are out of date). The commander emphasises, that up-to-date professional training with modern instruments would be necessary.

*Non-formal educational programmes:* The non-formal programmes are organised mainly by external foundations (by tendering operations), by holy orders or by the Red Cross. Some of the programmes are initialized by the personnel. About 80-100 prisoners received non-formal educational programmes this year. Both interviewees emphasised, that these non-formal programmes are popular among the prisoners, because they can acquire practical skills. All of these programmes focus on personal development of the prisoners.

Constant non-formal educational programmes: organised by inner initiations with maximum 10-20 participants.

Drug-prevention programme: organised by the psychologist of the prison (once a week). There are 18 participants currently.

- Conflict resolution skills: organised by a colonel of the prison (once a week).
- Scripture-reader club: organised by the cleric of the prison (one a week).
- Non-constant non-formal educational programmes: organised mainly by external foundations – about 3 non-formal educational programmes organized by external establishment takes place a year.
  - Guidance on labour market: It is organised by an external foundation. This is a practical training (20 hours; once a week) concerning necessary knowledge and skills on labour market – CV writing, providing information concerning administration, practice of interview-situation. The participants practice in small groups (10 participants/group; about 20 hours, once a week).
  - Stress resolution skills: It is organised by an external foundation. About 10 prisoners/ group. (about 20 hours, once a week)

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- Self-knowledge training: It is organised by an external foundation. About 10 prisoners / group. (about 20 hours, once a week)
  - Assisting in the preparation for the secondary school leaving exam: It is organised by an external foundation. It is a personality-based learning and teaching programme for young prisoners (18-35 years old). In this programme the prisoners learn independently, and the mentors give tutorial assistance to them once a week. The exam is transacted in an external educational institute. This year 3 prisoners attended this programme.
  - Artistic expression: these manual activities are organised mainly by the prisoners and the staff of the prison ensures room and instruments for it. The subject of these activities depends on the artistic skill of the initiator (making paintings or scale-models, music club, etc). According to the senior manager these artistic trainings could be applied as therapeutic trainings, but there are no appropriate instruments and skilful staff in the prison currently. (Foreign model mentioned by the senior manager: organised by skilful staff, the prisoners make wooden toys for hospitalised children.) Future plan mentioned by the senior manager is the appliance of the mural-therapy (freskó-terápia): it is a good practice applied in a Hungarian prison – the prisoners establish a community room decorated with artistic work in the prison.
  - Language course: it is organised by prisoners with command of English and Hispanic language. They teach about 20 prisoners twice a week. The staff ensures room and instruments for it.

### **Mentoring**

There are no personal mentors in this prison.

Organiser: *There's no money, possibility and staff for it. Every preceptor handle about 70-80 prisoners.*

Mentors from an external foundation give tutorial assistance to young prisoners in the preparation for the secondary school leaving exam (for 3 prisoners currently – see above).

There was a peer-mentoring programme for the quondam prisoners (with participation of about 20 persons) in the last few years. They came back into the prison to motivate and help the prisoners in learning or working, and they gave advices about starting civil life after leaving the prison.

### **Background of the model (when established, its developmental progress)**

There have been educational programmes in the prison right from the start (1855). Initially the clerics provided pastoral care and intellectual support for the prisoners.

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Vocational trainings have been available from the 1980-s. The prisons have been obligated by law to provide elementary and secondary school programmes from 1996, and the prison has been in contract (concerning formal educational programmes) with external educational institutions from then. The non-formal programmes have been organised by external foundations from 2002.

Both interviewees assume that the number of educational programmes and funding sources have declined in the last two years.

Senior manager: *There has not been significant development on this field in the last years. The education can't be successful without available funding sources. I think, we fulfil the elemental education, but I don't think that the overall education would be a great success in this prison. We have worked out a lot of useful programmes, there are clubs and trainings, but I miss a structured and expedient system. We can work out personal developmental plan for every prisoner involved, but there are not available educational programmes for realization. Thus, we can't provide adequate programmes for the prisoners; we just try to insert them into the existing educational programmes and we try to motivate them.*

### **Location**

The prison classes take place in the separate site of the building. The library and the office of the organisers are in this site too. There are about 10.000 books in the library (mainly old books – polite literature and penny dreadful). The librarian is a prisoner, too. The formal education programmes take place in the 3 class-rooms (calm environment, benches for 30-35 persons, board, projector). The non-formal education programmes take place mainly in the library (personal trainings and small group trainings), and sometimes in the class-rooms.

According to the organiser this prison has an advantage over the other prisons by having a separate site for culture and class-rooms. However according to the senior manager more rooms would be necessary for providing sufficient educational programmes.

### **Incentives, motivation**

As great majority of the prisoners are low- or unqualified, without appropriate learning skills and experience, they are not motivated to engage in education. Furthermore, according to the interviewees, most of the prisoners don't regard learning as a chance, as they consider it useless to learn and work for a low salary.

Senior manager: *It is an important question, whether a prison institute can develop a motivation-system for taking the prisoners into the education or not. Usually the prisoners are not active and initiative, thus we have to motivate them.*

Other problem remarked by the senior manager is, that the prisoners, who participate in education programmes, have to live with the others, and have to bear mockery of the others.

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The organisers try to motivate the prisoners. According to the interviewees the scholarship is an important factor in engagement in elementary formal educational programmes.

Senior manager: *That prisoner, who engages in the elementary education programme, get scholarship. The learning is his "job"- it is the same status. It is an important motivation factor.*

Organiser: *In case of the elementary educational programmes, the motivation factor is the money, nothing else.*

*Getting the elementary qualification and continuing studying becomes a motivation factor only at the last level of the elementary programme.*

According to the senior manager more prisoners would be motivated, if the scholarship were higher (about 4000 Ft / month currently – about 15 euro / month).

It falls into the senior manager's cognisance to decide about the scholarship at the second school programmes, however there is no scholarship at this level of education currently due to

the financial difficulties. Only few prisoners have appropriate qualification for starting the second school programme, and there is no remarkable motivation factor at this level. The organisers try to convince the prisoners of the usefulness of the high-school graduation, but the prisoners deem that they have chance neither with nor without a graduation for a job.

According to the organiser more prisoners would be motivated to engage in vocational training than to participate in second-school education programme, because getting some vocation is more useful for them. However there is no possibility to start vocational trainings in the prison (financial difficulties and lack of appropriate equipment - see above).

Non-formal educational programmes are relatively popular, because these short-term trainings are more practical and interactive than the formal programmes. In case of the non-formal programmes the organiser gathers together the concerned prisoners, and after the first occasion the prisoners decide whether they want to participate in the programme in the future or not.

### **Perceived strengths and weaknesses**

According to both interviewees the continual elementary education programme is the main strength of the model. The organiser emphasises, that prisoners with elementary qualification (in contrast with unqualified prisoners) have more chance to get work in the prison, and only they can start secondary educational programmes or vocational trainings in the prison or after discharge. The senior manager remarks, that there has been steady relationship between the prison and the educational institute (which provides elementary programme) for many years, and the teachers are well trained.

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The main weakness is the lack of vocational trainings in the last two years. According to the interviewees the prisoners would be more motivated in participation in these trainings, than in engaging in secondary school programme, and these trainings would be useful for the prison too (the skilled prisoners could carry out renovation of the prison), furthermore these prisoners would have more chance to get job in their civil life. Obstructive factors are: lack of appropriate instrumental environment, lack of skilful staff and slim funding sources.

Furthermore, one of the most significant setback factors of the educational programmes is the apathy of the prisoners. According to the senior manager more training regarding prevention and therapy, and an effective mentoring network would be necessary in the prisons, but there are no appropriate founding sources for these expansion currently.

**Mission statement and strategic plan refer to lifelong learning and rehabilitation goals**

The mission statement of the prison is established in accordance with the Hungarian law and the European legal regulation concerning the law enforcement agencies.

Formal education programmes must be ensured for the prisoners (elementary and secondary school), and the organisers have to make developmental plans for the attendants.

*Organiser: According to the law we have to announce the elementary and secondary school programmes every year. If we can't ensure secondary school programme in this prison, we have to get in touch with other prisons, which offers the programme for the interested prisoners.*

Both interviewees emphasise that the main goal is the re-socialisation of the prisoners.

*Organiser: The main goal of the law enforcement agencies is the re-socialisation. Those prisoners, who don't want to cooperate with us, are simply "retained" in the prison.*

*Senior manager: One of our most important challenges is the re-socialisation of the prisoners. It is not easy, because most prisoners don't deem learning and working as a perspective. It is necessary to teach them, how they can learn and work.*

**Funding sources (including non-standard funding sources)**

The formal elementary educational programme (provided by Pannon Oktatási Központ) is financed by the state budget after the number of the participants. The non-formal programmes are financed by tenders, however this prison is not successful enough in tendering operation.

*Senior manager: Prisons with well-trained and motivated staff are successful in tendering operation. The tendering operation requires professional skills, and there is no such specialist in this prison currently.*

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None of the interviewees could specify what percentage of the overall prison budget goes to education and/or rehabilitation services, but they emphasised, that the prison is under-financed (like most prisons in Hungary).

Organiser: *According to the law, the prison should provide instruments for the educational programmes (scholarship, course-books, exercise-books etc), but we have to solve it from a minimal budget. The prisons are on the verge of bankruptcy in Hungary. In the last year we had to spend about 200.000Ft (about 715 euro) on books and pens, but a book costs about 2000 Ft. Sometimes the prisoners have to ask their family for the necessary books.*

Senior manager: *The prisons have been experiencing financial difficulties for years. We can pay the overhead, the cost of food and payment of the staff, but nothing else. We have not applied for renovation or development fund for years. According to the expectation we should solve these problems from tenders.*

### **Continuity of education**

There is no particular procedure for continuity of education after getting out of the prison. Before leaving the prison (in the last 6 months of the restraint), the preceptors provide personal consultancy for the prisoners. The preceptors give necessary information and advices (information about public employment services, educational institutions etc), and together they try to work out a strategic plan concerning the prisoners' civil life, but they can't develop appropriate personal education plans (explanation of the senior manager see above – background of the model)

Senior manager: *Personal consultations with the prisoners concerning the personal educational demands and the establishment of the potential relationship-system are important for mobilization of their inner source of power. It is the part of the complex developmental plan. The most effective motivation is to find a job before they leave prison, however it is very difficult.*

In the near future a holy order will start a new programme that helps prisoners in re-socialisation after they leave prison, (APAK programme): This programme provides trainings not only for the prisoners, but also for their family. The aim of these trainings is the stabilization of family relationships, and the training helps the prisoner and his family together to prepare for civil life.

Senior manager: *Families are the most important fundamentals of the society. In this programme we try to stabilize these fundamentals, because the family can give a hand for these prisoners in their civil life.*

Establishment of a "half-way house" together with a holy order is one of the senior manager's long-term plans. Prisoners without family could live here after they leave prison for a while, and a skilful staff would help them to find a job and to adapt their selves to civil life.

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### **Distance education**

There are computer facilities, but there is no Internet access for the prisoners, thus they can't participate in distance educational programmes. Because safety regulations, there is no plan to implement it in the future, because Internet provides uncontrollable external relationships for the prisoners. (Earlier it had been used for distance education, but one of the prisoners installed spy-programme on the computer of the prison.)

### **Support service in prison**

Prisoners, who want to participate in formal elementary educational programme, undergo a knowledge-assessment exam. If they have writing and reading difficulties they may attend classes on elementary level of 1-2. However there is no procedure for identifying prisoners with specific learning difficulties, and there is no therapist available for these prisoners.

*Organiser: We have no capacity for such therapies. If the tutors detect such problems, we try to help prisoner, but we are not skilled for the re-education of these prisoners.*

### **Tutors in prison**

About 20 tutors participate in education (including both external and internal tutors). The internal tutors are on long-term contract, and the external tutors have short-term (term of the concerned programme) contracts.

Tutors in formal elementary educational programmes are teachers but they are not qualified for adult education. These tutors don't use adult education methods of teaching.

*Organiser: In elementary programmes we don't use adult education methods, because most of these prisoners couldn't learn like the adults in general. It is impossible to require more independent learning of them. And we can't relate the material to their personal life experience, because most of them have no profession.*

The non-formal education programmes are less structured, thus the prisoners are involved more actively in these programmes, and the subject always suits to the prisoners' actual problems.

### **Methods of feedback, evaluation**

The number of acquired grade cards provides feedback on formal educational programmes. Tutors on non-formal programmes gather feedback through questionnaires at the end of the programmes, but there is no procedure of sharing feedback-information with the staff.

The law forbids following the participants' path of life after they leave prison, thus the interviewees have no information about the long-term effects of educational programmes.



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### **Priority needs for expansion of the model / Future directions**

Financial difficulties are the most serious problem for every prison currently according to the senior manager.

Senior manager: *It is not possible to develop expedient and structured system without financial sources. Tendering operation must be the most important chance for us, thus we have to employ somebody for this scope of activity. The other chance is the professional qualification of our staff (for example, two colleagues of us participated in mediator-training last year). And we want to take more volunteers into training-activities.*

According to the organiser prisoners need marketable vocational trainings first of all. The prisons have no financial sources for it, but it could be carrying out with appropriate regional cooperation of the prison institutes.

Furthermore, the organiser emphasises, that it is more difficult to motivate prisoners for participation in long-term educational programmes, because most of them can not see it's purpose. Establishment of more short-term programmes (either vocational trainings or non-formal programmes) would be more helpful.

### **Perceptions regarding the impact of the recession on this model**

The interviewees have felt the negative impact of the recession on education system from the last year. Financial difficulties of the prison have become more serious.

Senior manager: *It is very hard to motivate prisoners for participating in educational programmes, when also the gratification of material needs presents difficulties. We had to limit the period of consumption of hot water and the TV must be switched off at 9 pm. It has occurred that the prisoners should have been put on short bread ration. If the prisoner's family from a distant town can't visit a prisoner, there is no possibility to transfer the prisoner to that town yet. These problems are heavier for the prisoners, than the difficulties of the education. Probably, the education will fall into the background because of these financial difficulties, but it won't be fall dead, because participation in education is a very important component in the prisoners' future-life. I think, it will be hard work to hold it on the regular level.*

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From the interviews for SP5:

Interviews with the organiser of the educational programme on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Interview with the senior manager on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2009

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### **Chapter 3: Influence of conceptualisations, divers on LLL policy & problems in practice**

#### **4.1. Improving access to adult education in the government policy vs Separated education sectors and governmental problems**

Two decisive documents represent Hungarian lifelong learning policy today. The National Lifelong Learning Strategy Paper has been prepared jointly by the Ministry of Employment and Ministry of Education at the end of 2005. (See: "A Magyar Köztársaság..., 2005.") This strategic paper of Hungarian Government can be identified as the most important policy document on lifelong learning for the moment. The measures formulated in the document focus on the following elements: the development of the institutional and methodological background of adult education and training; basic competences development in the public education; the development of vocational education and training system in order to fit better to the economic demands; and assisting higher education to adapt to the requirements of the changing economy. While this strategy paper reflects the requirements of the European Union concerning a larger concept of lifelong learning, the vocational adult education remained the focus of the strategic approach, because - as it was mentioned in Chapter 1 - labour market orientation is the key driver of the Hungarian lifelong learning policy. The interrelation of employment and education has been a standard element of the education policy documents and practice for a long time. The other important policy document is the II. National Development Plan formulating nearly the same objectives in its Human Resources Development chapter. The objective of social inclusion (in the form of special programmes for the most disadvantaged groups in order to reintegrate them into the labour market) appeared in these documents as a specific element of the policy. As for the personal development – as a policy goal – the emphasis is on the skill development which can enhance the employability. Other important aspect of personal development in the documents is the increase of motivation and further capability for learning, which has to be developed during the first years of the compulsory education. The Lifelong Learning Strategy of the government is not a separate policy document. It relies on other policy documents and results of those policies. There is a series of other strategic sector policy documents serving as the background analysis of the government's strategy paper explicitly related to LLL.

However one of the most important features of the Hungarian lifelong learning literature is that the different education sectors appear to be separated from one another. It is very typical - even from a general standpoint - that the different sectors like compulsory general and vocational education, higher education, school based adult education, or labour market training and other types of learning are organized separately. This kind of description suggests that lifelong learning means a simple aggregation of the separate educational sectors operating under the control of separate ministries.

As the interviewed officer of the Ministry of Education and Culture mentioned: "I believe that there are a lot of useful elements and key objectives, but one of the greatest problems is that strategically these do not set into a coherent and clear goal. In

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many cases these can partly represent good aims and interests, but their effect fritters, consequently improvement cannot be observed in statistical data. If we have a look in 10 years time perspective, we can see that the drop-out proportion is roughly the same, though the governments put billions into it. In my opinion, one of the reasons of this is the incoherence between the different actions done. There are actions that extinguish the effects of the others. Millions of factors play role in this failure (horizontal coordination inside the government, planning counter-interests, lobby interests). But I think this is fundamentally governmental problem, which is something we always have to face. And this is mainly true in case of the underprivileged ones.”

The structure of governmental institutions has changed constantly since the beginning of the nineties in Hungary and this fact had a rather negative effect on the policy development and implementation. In fact, there were governmental changes almost in every 4 year when a new coalition came to power after the elections. It can be considered as a special context that the division of responsibility for lifelong learning policy development has changed several times between the Ministry of Education and Culture and Ministry of Affairs and Labour in the last decade. The role of education and training is considered constantly as a key element in improving the labour market supply.

In addition, the interdepartmental co-operation is “traditionally” a weak point in the governmental work in Hungary. The classical form of it is the cross-check of different documents. As an impact of the EU requirements some new elements of content coordination appeared (e.g. interdepartmental coordination in teamwork) during the elaboration of the National Development Plan. The control of vocational education and training is also dissected on governmental level. Every sub-sector has a person responsible for a given function, though numerous tasks have been left without a person in charge – and very little real efforts have been formulated up to now in terms of interdepartmental or over departmental tasks.

According to the interviewed executive officers of the ministries, the effective operation of the committees should have the following basic assumptions:

1. Existence of an administrative body (in the committee or within ministry), which provides an administrative and logistic background, being responsible for coordination and for the flow of information, organising the agenda, giving free run of materials. This important condition is not given in many cases, because of the lack of capacity in the ministry.
2. Existence of professional groups with clear responsibilities.
3. Transparent planning and cooperation and less ad hoc conciliation. Though transparency is a very important precondition, it is not a characteristic feature of lawmaking process. Participants do not feel that it is worth taking part actively because feedback is not provided to them in the majority of cases, thus many groups do not believe that their opinions will be built in the project.
4. Stability of the budget. There is an unequal situation where every group runs for the same portal, and these differences become real in a variety of ways in government decisions. The inequality exists due to the uncertainty of the budget.

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#### **4.2 Weak point in the policy - Limited scope of learning**

The limited scope of learning can be identified as a weak point of lifelong learning concepts.

Beside the institutionalized forms of learning non-formal (including self directed individual) learning activities have less importance in the different policy documents. Although, the Act on Adult Education in 2001 regulated non-formal adult training along with services associated to the training in a framework-type piece of legislation, and since 2003 only accredited institutes can get state support, evaluation of the changes can state that these regulations had little impact on the quality of the training provision. As one of the ministry officer mentioned: „The non-formal adult education is a market where market rules dictate. There are big fishes, who shared the market among themselves. Among them some have own local branches in almost every region of the country, and they rather work as training organizers using contractors for the real trainings. Because of this process the trainings become more expensive, and the accountability of the quality is more difficult. Furthermore there is a priority system in adult education, developed according to the needs, but I'm not sure whether it works according to the market logic. On the other hand there is a board responsible for fund allocations, but that is strongly influenced by politics. There are some organisations, which can adapt easily to the different conditions being able to apply for “billions” advertised in the competitive operative programmes (for education courses in small and medium sized businesses, computer, language, management skill courses etc...). This demand is generated by state grand funds. Other organizations cannot adopt flexibly, however they could provide much better courses.”

The activity of this market is not well known. Financial data give information about the amount of employers provide to their employees' training, but there is not obligatory information about the characteristics of the courses, what is exactly paid for, how much time they spend with working, etc. Conclusions are being made on how much money has been flown into adult education market, and approximately what it has been spent for. But it is not possible to know exactly what the deficiencies are.

#### **4.3 Weak point in the practice - Lack of participation of stakeholders**

The lack of participation of the social partners (and other important stakeholders e.g. civil organizations) in the lifelong learning strategy development can be identified as an important gap. Both strategic documents of the government mentioned above represent – at least verbally – a new approach compared to previous policy papers. However these documents and the programmes formulated in them are not result of a consensus of different stakeholders. It was developed and formulated in the relatively close circles of experts and responsible officers of different ministries, so the text can not reflect the views of all relevant stakeholders.

The strategic policy document contains very important element of the further development but there is no strong social control built in the programme (and the government is now already late according to the schedule set for the implementation). The social partners and the civil sector engaged in the human resources development

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could play a part in the social control of the implementation but they have very limited role in the policy development at this time.

Instead of involvement in the concept development and identification of the key elements their role is limited rather to the additional consultations.

As one of the interviewed officer of the ministry mentioned: „During the consultation period, the action plans will be harmonized through discussions with the affected national representative organizations. Concerning special political issues, the ministry has to consult with representative bodies as provided by law. Such issues are for example: creating new laws and new projects. In many other cases strong civilian organizations based on unwritten laws intervene in discussions. There is a consultation period before decisions are made, when interested groups, professional circles, and civilian groups can express their views. According to Hungarian law the consultation is considered to be compulsory. The process of planning is mostly paperwork at desks, and only the minority of cases is characterized by real partnership.

Generally, only the end-product or the planning documents are brought in to the discussion, which scarcely can be called partnership. The existence of the consultation is obligatory, but it has no compelling character. So if a professional organization expresses disagreement with a particular issue, though their opinion is recorded, the government cannot be forced to take account of this opinion. There are some bodies, which have veto rights in a sense, but the representation of disadvantaged groups is not supported by them.”

#### **4.4 Enhancing the access of disadvantaged groups – Importance of the personal mentoring assistance**

The strategic policy documents contain very important complex programmes for disadvantaged groups, however, according to the interviewed representatives of governments, the most undereducated and disadvantaged ones are underrepresented also in these programmes.

According to the officers of the ministries one of the fundamental problems is related to communication. The general opinion about studying in Hungary is that studying is difficult, it is a hard work, and unfortunately the schools strengthen this opinion. This opinion has to be improved by communication. The subtitle of the first accepted life long learning strategy was *Joy of Learning* in Finland. It is true that people do not do difficult things with pleasure. In addition there are a lot of people who know that studying helps with their promotion but the investment seems to be higher than the payback as the result of the learning. This is a communicational question also. It is necessary to indicate clearly that the payback is the highest at individual's level. The OECD performed a lot of examination concerning the rate of learning's payback specifically from the life long learning's perspective, and it can be stated that the payback is the highest at individual's level: their wages increase, the quality of their life improves, etc.

The other problem is that the target group is not motivated. “Those who have a vocational certificate, but have not been employed for years will probably participate. But those who have not finished the primary school will not participate because they

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say that they cannot learn. They should be taken into the system by methods specifically designed for them. It's a serious problem similarly to the non-formal learning as well." In the case of disadvantaged people (and particularly in case of the most disadvantaged stratum) internal motivation must be generated first so that to reduce anxiety in them before being seated in the classroom. According to the officers two components must be combined in these programmes (through the planning of "Útravaló" this was also considered). The first is an incentive component, where not the institution, but individuals should be encouraged with individual scholarships. The second is the mentoring assistance. The number of such complex programmes for disadvantaged is growing and the personal mentoring assistance extremely and strategically important in them. In addition, there is a separate programme for mentor trainings, because there is shortage in qualified mentors. It is reported to the government annually how successful the programme is. However the sources become less and less: it started with 2.4 billion HUF (about 9,6 million euro) in 2004-2005, and the last year was about only 1.8 billion HUF (about 7,2 million euro). As the budget thickened, this programme is also narrowed.

#### **4.5. Regional aspect in the education policy vs Lack of regional administrative system**

Regional aspects are more and more present in the education policy and lifelong learning policy in Hungary. Based on the regional development concept (approved in 1998) administrative regions were developed and integrated vocational training centres had been established in every region. The aim of creating such committees is to allocate and distribute funds to larger regions than counties, concerning the characteristics and needs of that particular region. However, according to the officers of the ministries there are not real formal regional levels in Hungarian administrative system. The regional level exists as a political level where local and central political intentions confront, but individual political intentions cannot occur on regional level. Practically, regional politicians are not elected; therefore regional circumstances cannot determine how funds are allocated. Regional interest is made up of two components. On the one hand, local groups try to transport their needs upwards; on the other hand, the government tries to exercise an influence downwards to regional level. So the regional level is a vacuum at the moment. The funds, therefore, are not allocated on regional levels, but on county and local levels.

#### **4.4. Formal education as a closed system - Lack of recognition of prior learning**

As for the certification of learning outside of formal learning the Act on Adult Education of 2001 contains a reference to the recognition of experience based knowledge: "Adults when they apply for admission in a training programme can ask prior assessment of their learning level. The training provider institute is obliged to take into account the result of the assessment." Despite this entitlement of the participants recognition is not yet in operation. The government takes over the ideas and plans primarily from countries where this system is working well. The current UMFT TÁMOP concept will have a built in component, with the aim to create validation centres: If somebody wants to attend Master or Bachelor University courses, he or she might take exams. The law

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allows the same in vocational education and adult education in a certain measure. But this is costly, and the institutions are adversaries of this idea, because the training time would be shorter, and they would receive less money from the state.



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## Chapter 4: Policy Recommendations

As it was mentioned above, rates of participation in adult learning (and in training programmes inside the companies) in Hungary are increasing very slowly and remain far below the European average.

The Hungarian lifelong learning policy has very strong relation to the employment policy. Adult education and training is considered as an important tool for reintegration of unemployed people or undereducated population to the labour market (or give prevention from risks in the labour market). However this approach sometimes neglects that individuals are not only work-force but they need special knowledge for existing in the modern societies and this knowledge is often considered as being out of the competency of the formal compulsory education. Enhancement of the social cohesion, quality of life and improvement of citizens' life are similarly adequate objectives of a national lifelong strategy.

It also emphasises developing special target programmes (such as the Equity programme) in order to integrate disadvantaged social groups and to aim at decreasing the social inequalities by the school education. As for the social policy related to lifelong learning strategy the National Action Plan for the Social Cohesion represent a new approach of the development policy. The main aim of this plan is to create and launch complex regional and local development projects. However, in some cases the policy measures are not adequate and lead to the opposite direction as it was intended. Some target programmes were beneficial for population in advantaged position and did not help to decrease the disadvantages (for example, tax allowance introduced by the Hungarian Government in order to enhance the participation in adult training or PC-programme to increase the number of home computers - these programmes are profitable mostly for middle class families, but did not ease the access to it for the social groups in need). Thus, the important efforts to reach and involve the most disadvantaged groups into adult education have lead to very modest results until now. More effective methods and complex projects are needed to reduce the inequalities in access to adult education and training opportunities.

### More effective governmental work

· **National level co-ordination agency:** The competition for the financial resources between the different parts of governmental structure (especially the different ministries) is stronger for the moment than the intention for the co-operation. There is a need for a special national level co-ordination agency. A national level agency could provide the co-ordination for initiatives of different departments, involve the social partners and all relevant stakeholders, and provide the communication of the objectives and initiatives to the different target groups. Involvement of social partners and all other stakeholders, especially the civil organizations, into the process of developing such a concept is indispensable.

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· **More transparent system:** It would be important to pass the sector-bounded approach of lifelong learning. It ought to be more than an aggregation of separate sectors of education and training. Most of the policy analysis concerning the lifelong learning presents very often the adult learning as a simple combination of different sectors of education. A transparent system of support accessible for organized and individual learning activities is necessary.

· **More effective communication:** The lifelong learning as a strategic programme cannot be realized if the activity is limited to the government agencies. It is very important to communicate the concept and the main objectives – not only slogans or individual programmes – towards the largest public. As a part of it, it is vital to translate the general objectives and strategy steps into the perspective of the individual citizens. Only the transparency of the different learning opportunities and a general information system on the various learning incentives can help individual citizens to make their personal choices or rethink their learning itinerary. For this purpose larger and more professional guidance of the services is crucial. Regarding the special place that mass media has in the everyday life of Hungarian population (nearly 4 hours per 3 day spent on watching TV) it is reasonable to rethink the role of the (publicly funded) television as a stimulating tool of individual learning.

### **More effective target programmes**

· **Local development projects:** The enlargement of the training opportunities is just one of the necessary elements in the most difficult areas. In a given region characterized by the economic depression and massive unemployment – solely the education can not contribute to the increase of the level of employment. The training programmes – especially if the participants are given additional financial support – are attractive but first of all for those being unemployed for years and not having other resources for survival. Only complex programmes – training and investment, or general local development projects – can achieve the objectives.

· **Clear objectives and appropriate tools:** Some small-scale local projects (initiated and supported by civil organizations) show that the clear objectives and appropriate tools - especially well-prepared participants, co-ordination of different agents and efforts and important financial resources - are necessary elements of the success.

· **Special targeted incentives** must be introduced in order to motivate individuals - especially the less educated social groups - to engage in different lifelong learning programmes, and employers to support adult learners. Internal motivation must be generated with individual scholarships and with personal mentoring assistance. There is also need for developing new training methods to realise this objective.

· **More effective minority policy:** Roma population – as the largest minority – is the group with the most social disadvantages in Hungary. The need for special programmes

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to change their situation is declared in the Social Cohesion Action Plan. The education and training can be just one element of these complex programmes aiming at develop the settlement itself including the employment and living conditions.

· **Childcare, distance education and part-time work for mothers:** Gender equality is not a hot issue in lifelong learning policy in Hungary. However some specific area can be identified. The special needs of women on childcare are recognized in different policy papers. Enlargement of part-time work opportunities and related allowances and special e-learning programme or specially designed child care services for learning mothers are on the agenda.

· **More effective vocational policy:** In the labour market oriented adult training system – especially in the state funded training provision – the requirement of the cost effectiveness predominates. It results in mass training programmes in such areas where there is no real labour market demand. In the training provision the supply driven activities are very typical, certain training programmes are launched on the ground what kind of teachers with given competences are available. It is also typical that the labour market demand is overestimated in certain fields or certain types of training become “trendy” and will be supported by international programmes. These training provisions rely on the premise that the local governments can enlarge their social activities and environmental protection efforts and they will employ these retrained people. However, local governments may not have the necessary funding for such actions even if such activities would be important and useful.

· **Recognition of prior learning:** The limited scope of learning can be identified as a weak point of lifelong learning concepts in Hungary. Beside the institutionalized forms of learning non-formal (including self directed individual) learning activities have less importance in the different policy documents. As for the certification of learning outside of formal learning the Act on Adult Education of 2001 contains a reference to the recognition of experience based knowledge, however recognition is not yet in operation. There is a need for mechanisms for recognition of prior education (including the non-formal learning experiences) and to stimulate educational institutions to apply them, furthermore to make efforts for improving the interaction between the formal and non-formal education sectors.

· **Special programmes for early school leavers:** These young people can be characterized with several social disadvantages. It is very important to develop special programmes – especially individual mentoring assistance - for these dropout children and students, and thus help them in re-entering the formal or non-formal education system.

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