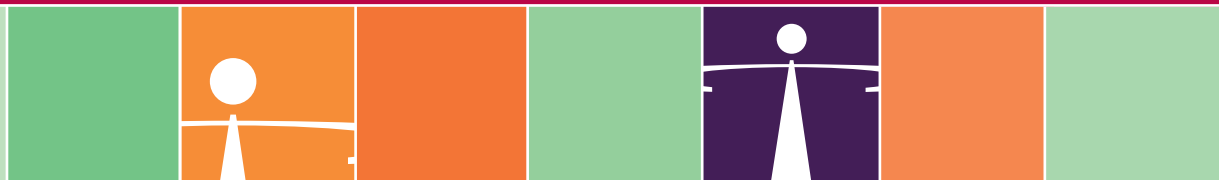




**The best Comenius,
Leonardo da Vinci and Grundtvig
projects in Hungary**

2014

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION QUALITY AWARD 2014



The Recognition of Quality

International projects of outstanding standards supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme

The experts commissioned by Tempus Public Foundation have selected 13 projects out of over 300 applications to be awarded with the Quality Award in 2014. The exemplary and high-standard partnerships were supported by the Comenius, Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes of the European Union.

The recognition was awarded to such institutions of public education, VET and adult education which processed certain topics through excellent project management within European partnerships, and whose achievements had an outstanding impact on the entire organisational culture.

The awards were presented to the representatives of the projects on 21 May 2014 by Krisztina Kolosyné Bene, Deputy Head of Department, Ministry of Human Resources, and Péter Tordai, Director of Tempus Public Foundation.

From 2014, the Comenius, Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes have been unified under the new Erasmus+ programme, offering a range of opportunities to implement partnerships and mobilities in the areas of VET, adult education as well as higher education.



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION QUALITY AWARD

AWARDED PROJECTS IN 2014:

COMENIUS

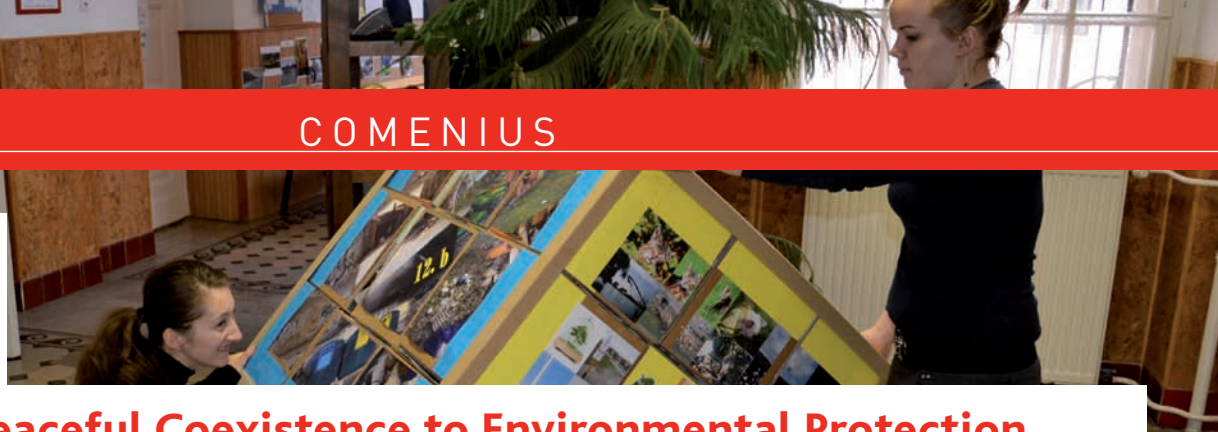
- **Creative Earth Charter Challenge for Youth** | Eger Small Region Multifunctional Municipality, Andrassy Catholic Business Academy (Eger), and their partners
- **Environmental Protection for Future Generations through Education, Ethics, Business and Politics** | Földes Ferenc Secondary Grammar School (Miskolc)
- **Walls Talk. Picturing Cultures on the Walls** | Katedra Secondary Grammar School, Secondary School of IT and Arts (Kecskemét)
- **Hand in Hand for a Happier World** | The Felsőpetény Member Institution of the Nőtincs Primary School (Felsőpetény)

LEONARDO DA VINCI

- **Viable Ways for Career Starters to Integrate into the World of Work** | Government Office of Békés County – Labour Centre
- **Nature Train: Hands-on Training in Nature Conservation. Enhancing Employment Prospects for Conservations.** | Barn Owl Foundation (Orosztony)
- **Placement for VET Students in Health and Social Fields** | Raoul Wallenberg Secondary School and Vocational School (Budapest)
- **Learning for Lakes – A European Lake Management Training Scheme** | Association of Non-Governmental Organisations of Lake Balaton
- **FoodDrinks – Quality Food & Drink European Training Plan** | Károly Róbert College
- **Catering Placements in Europe** | Hansági Ferenc Vocational School and Secondary School for Catering and Tourism (Szeged)

GRUNDTVIG

- **PROTECT: Prisoners Opportunity to Educate Children by Telling Stories** | The Prison and Correctional Facility of Budapest
- **Mother Centers Developing Support Structures for Active Volunteer Involvement** | Holdam ("My Moon") Self-Help and Educational Association (Miskolc)
- **Sing-Song – Dialog Between Past and Future** | Szent Gellért Mixed Choir of Diósd Association



From Peaceful Coexistence to Environmental Protection – the Earth Charter as an Approach Creative Earth Charter Challenge for Youth

INSTITUTION:

Eger Small Region
Multifunctional Municipality,
Andrassy Catholic Business
Academy (Eger),
Figedy Primary School
(Noszvaj), Bükk National Park
Directorate (Eger)
Varosgondozas Eger Ltd (Eger)

COORDINATORS:

ÉVA MERCZEL,
ÉVA KÁLMÁN

THE COMENIUS REGIO PARTNERSHIP involved ten organisations. The coordinator was the local authority of Bournemouth, England, and Avonbourne School demonstrated how the principles of the Earth Charter worked in practice in everyday teaching. Deputy Director Éva Kálmán, Andrassy György Catholic Business Academy of Eger, one of the main coordinators of the project told us about their experiences.

• The two-year common work was based on the principles of the Earth Charter. What were they?

The Earth Charter is an initiative that concerns the entire human coexistence: how we can coexist sustainably in a way which everybody can benefit from, from our environment to animals, people and religious communities. When we started planning the project it turned out that two years wouldn't be enough to discuss all the four basic principles in detail, so we chose two. One of them was environmental protection, which our British partners agreed with, too, since it's a current educational issue for them, as well, even though they're ahead of us in this field. For example, the British school is studying exhaust gas emission in detail, while we're still only discussing selective

waste collection and saving energy. The other issue, peaceful coexistence, was suggested by the British partner, as they attach special importance to educating children to love peace and how to tolerate each other's opinions. We completely agreed with this objective, as one of the most important methodological cornerstones of our school, too, is teaching children to love.

• How could you integrate all this into your classes?

The project did not primarily seek to teach the principles to the children, but to develop their skills to apply them. The goal of the project was to develop curricular programmes, lesson plans and a framework curriculum through which we can tell the teachers of maths, music and history how to integrate the Earth Charter principles into the classes and children's thinking. Humanities were mostly developed by the British partners, whereas we worked on the details of science subjects. It was very interesting, for example, to learn about various countries by examining how a given Earth Charter principle was realised in that particular country. In Saudi Arabia, for example, we focused on the situation of women, in Ireland on religious equality

and in Sweden children studied the area of the equality of men and women.

● **At Avonbourne School, the principles have not only been integrated into the curriculum, but also into their attitude and way of thinking. Did you see any examples of that?**

It was interesting to see that they had integrated antimilitarism into the education of history. To our teachers it was strange that history was taught not with an emphasis on years and dates, and not on who started a war and who won. They described how soldiers and civilians suffered from war and what it all meant to those who remained at home. As an assignment, for example, they had to write a letter from the trench, in which they had to describe what life was like in a battlefield. The teacher did not correct but censored the assignments, and gave them back to the children saying that if they had been real soldiers, their mothers, wives or girlfriends would have received these letters instead of theirs.

● **How did you as a teacher of tourism hold classes focusing on the principles of sustainability or even peaceful human coexistence?**

For example by teaching responsible tourism, which, as opposed to England, is not included in the Hungarian curriculum – the textbook devotes only two pages to the subject at an advanced level. One of the tasks was how to establish a holiday resort on a Pacific island in a responsible manner, that is, in a way that locals can also benefit from it: by involving as many local suppliers as possible and considering environmental factors, too. Then the children visited nearby hotels to see which ones they thought complied with the principles taught.

● **From a methodological point of view, did you have any experience which was crucial and attitude shaping?**

Yes, we've learnt new methods to assess children's knowledge and skills without marks. Their examination



system was completely different, too. In England, the advanced exam in tourism included 30% knowledge and 70% skills. In Hungary, it's 100% content knowledge. But they've learnt from us, too. We could, for example, show them what a forest school is like, which they hadn't known, and they also learnt new things about extracurricular activities here.

● **I understand that the Earth Charter programme had another very special benefit.**

Yes, there was one I'd like to highlight. One of the sponsors of the Avonbourne School, Great Britain's second largest insurance company, offered free team and group leader training courses for 14 of our students. All of our students passed the exam successfully at the end of the course held in English. The certificates were presented at the closing event of the project.



sites.google.com/site/ceccproject/
<http://ekszi.hu/index.php/palyazataink>



RÉKA FINTA-HIDY



Adventure Park from Steel Works – Economy, Ethics and Creativity in an Environmental Project

Environmental Protection for Future Generations through Education,
Ethics, Business and Politics

INSTITUTION:

Földes Ferenc Secondary
Grammar School (Miskolc)

COORDINATOR:

KRISZTINA KÉRI

The project focused on the ethical and economic aspects of sustainability through practical experiences, in an attitude-shaping manner. The main topics were based on water, waste processing, agriculture, nanotechnology and climate change – in a way that children could identify with the issues. Project coordinator Krisztina Kéri told us about their adventures and experiences.

researches and gathered data on the given subject. We processed the results at irregular biology classes, and during the meetings we compared them jointly with our foreign partners. Supported by the Ministry of Rural Development, we launched a series of activities in Miskolc, promoting examples of sustainable food consumption, in cooperation with the German Ministry of Environmental Protection.

• Were children involved in developing the topics?

Yes, they wanted to discuss issues within environmental protection which directly affected them. So they didn't want to start with the melting icebergs but how they can identify and solve environmental problems in their own lives. Therefore we laid great emphasis on how the issue arises in our own region and we compared it to the others.

• The role of economy is emphasised in the project title. How was it represented among the activities?

We linked the issues of sustainability and economy by creating a number of opportunities for the students to meet economic experts and specialist fields. In our school, students specialising in biology and chemistry and disadvantaged children involved in the Arany János Talent Management Programme participated in the work together. We went on a lot of field practice in Miskolc, and before the international meetings, we conducted

• You participated in varied and very consciously organised field trips. Could you highlight a few of them?

We visited the Bay Zoltán Foundation for Applied Research Institute for Nanotechnology, in the laboratory of which we were shown a special material, a metal foam produced as a by-product, formerly treated as waste, but later found to be excellent for energy efficiency and to be used in the construction industry. The children liked it immensely. Then, when discussing water treatment, we visited Waterworks Ltd. in Miskolc and when the topic was waste management, we went to the Engineering Directorate of MÁV (Hungarian State Railways) to see how waste oil was stored and processed again. This latter visit had a clear impact on the future studies of one of our students: he chose the Faculty of Transportation Engineering at university, and he was also invited to work at the Directorate of Engineering.





<http://ffg.hu/iskolankrol/nemzetkozi-projektek/comenius-projekt>

We, from Miskolc, had a great experience concerning a visit to a steelworks in Germany. Since our city used to be well-known for its Metallurgical Works, once employing 20,000 people, but leaving behind only broken down and rusty units by now, the children were shocked to see a former centre of the German steel industry turned into an adventure and leisure park, a venue for irregular weddings and concerts, where climbers practice in the huge steel furnaces.

● **Why did you consider it so important to emphasise the ethical aspects of environmental protection, too?**

As far as ethics are concerned, our main goal was to develop a sense of responsibility in the children for their actions and their consequences. We sought an answer to the question of what we owe to the generation of the future, and we tried to make them aware of the fact that they should not only think very seriously about the present, but the future, too.

● **What questions of ethics does water treatment raise in teenage students?**

Our Czech partner applies an interesting water treatment method: they use plant roots. It spares the environment but takes a lot more time, and it can't satisfy the drinking

water needs of a bigger town. "So, does man or the environment matter?", the children asked. What is more important: the short-term goal to supply clean water to as many people as possible or thinking in the long term, applying more environmental-friendly technologies, which, on the other hand, may not satisfy the needs of so many people?

● **What do you consider the most important achievement?**

We teachers have realised that our teaching badly needs some practical training. Group work is very useful and children motivate each other very much, so it's not only up to the teacher to motivate them. Of course, the teacher should be there as a guide or conductor if you like, but children can give each other a lot of strength and learn from each other and from their practical experiences.

RÉKA FINTA-HIDY





Forbidden Fruit – Legal and Artistic Graffiti in Kecskemét and Europe

Walls Talk. Picturing Cultures on the Walls

In a two-year Comenius partnership programme, secondary school students from seven countries addressed the issue of graffiti and street art. We asked project coordinator Gyöngyi Lukács arts teacher about the "Walls Talk" project.

• What slogan would you choose for the project?

"The language of creation is universal – in the creative process, people instantly unite, everyone can identify with the task, both in pace and thinking."

Joint creative work requires a high level of openness, tolerance and cooperation.

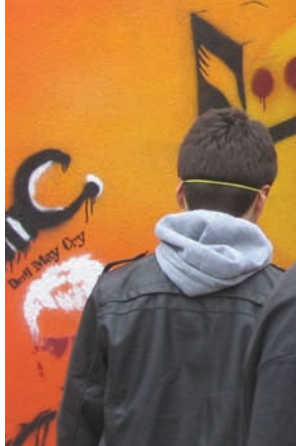
• It's a current and exciting topic. What do you consider the most important impact of the visual project?

Street art and graffiti were a new discovery for everyone – the teaching staff, students and colleagues –, despite the fact that contemporary art is present in our everyday life. We tried to discover, understand and accept this form of subculture which is present in the community spaces of our cities, and which, like it or not, becomes part of our everyday lives and shape public taste. That was the real task for the two years, whose realisation was a lot of fun and a great experience for us. Another thing I consider important is that it was a visual project, which

developed students' personalities in complex and varied ways. Becoming familiar with contemporary artists gives students some direction to the culture of their own age. Our colleagues have also learnt a lot from discovering the history of graffiti and the technical solutions applied: we have become familiar with various trends, renowned artists and special tools. We have also gained a lot of experience concerning how people of various mentality and from different cultural backgrounds can cooperate, how difficult it can be to adapt, and how important it is for us to accept others' way of thinking and work pace, which are different in Southern and Northern Europe as well as among various peoples of Europe.

• What a starting point is discovering the works of contemporary artists to knowing and understanding each other better for children who are particularly sensitive to arts?

Our topic touched on the areas of tolerance, cultural and religious diversity and global thinking, too. During the two years, we completed a number of tolerance tests which revealed that people abroad knew very little about famous Hungarian scientists, artists and inventors. So we looked very much forward to being able to present well-known figures or historical periods, in an enjoyable way,



INSTITUTION:

Katedra Secondary
Grammar School,
Secondary School of IT
and Arts (Kecskemét)

COORDINATOR:

GYÖNGYI LUKÁCS



"The language of creation is universal – in the creative process, people instantly unite, everyone can identify with the task, both in pace and thinking."

to students from other countries at the project meetings, which could be common points between our countries: our students held a presentation in English about artists with Hungarian roots, from Vasarely to contemporary photographers, who'd become famous in France. We also tried to emphasise the historical bonds between the countries; our presentations on the rulers we shared with the Poles or all the expressions and words we have in common with the Turks were very successful.

● **What was the most spectacular result?**

The children graffitied a number of walls, which was preceded, of course, by a lot of research, training and planning. As a first step, they painted folk motives combined with graffiti typography on the school walls, and then we prepared the set scene for an urban musical. At the Hungarian project meeting, students could paint their messages on the outer wall of the youth centre HELPI, located in the heart of the Széchenyiváros housing estate, using stencil technique. These works can still be seen.

● **What other concrete outcomes did the project have?**

A lot of products were made during the two years, too many to list, but I'd like to highlight the catalogue that we designed and which was press-printed, a wall calendar featuring students' works and a publication containing the expressions of the subculture in 7 languages. But you can also browse a graffiti dictionary on our website or find a glossary of the expressions used most commonly in young people's conversational culture, along with a lot of colourful, youthful graffiti. We surprised our partners with an exhibition of photos taken at former meetings, and our students prepared screen-printed T-shirts and linocuts. We

have compiled an entire collection of DVD's of the events and happenings of the past two years.

● **But graffiti is illegal in Hungary, isn't it?**

Indeed, graffiti is a forbidden, unaccepted thing which we made legal for a week, having it approved by the local government and youth communities, and we also got the citizens to accept it. Even a newspaper article was published bearing the title "Graffiti Without Sanctions in Kecskemét". Otherwise the fact that they could paint a set scene in the town or do something forbidden when graffitiiing the wall mentioned, made the work even more exciting for the children. Moreover, we've also received inquiries about painting grey firewalls and continuing to decorate the town.

RÉKA FINTA-HIDY





Educating for Life – Hand in Hand for a Happier World



<http://gimczerwonak.weebly.com/index.html>
<http://www.iskola-felsopeteny.blogspot.hu>

INSTITUTION:

The Felsőpetény Member
Institution of the
Nőtincs Primary School
(Felsőpetény)

COORDINATOR:

ERIKA SZABÓ-CSORBA

The Felsőpetény Member Institute of the Nőtincs Primary School is a tiny school; still, it has already been involved in a number of international partnerships. In this environmental project, recognised with a Quality Award, they cooperated with 6 European countries. We asked the head of the member institute, Erika Szabóné Csorba about the project.

● **Despite the fact that it's a very small school, it's not the first time that you have been involved in an international partnership. What motivates you most?**

We are indeed a small school: we only have lower primary classes with nearly 20 children. The Comenius project that we have just closed addressed environmental protection, and we cooperated with 6 European countries. We had already been involved in environmental protection before, but the project and working in cooperation with foreigners gave us lots of new ideas. Having to meet the standards and requirements of an international team was very motivating for us. I think one of the greatest benefits of such a partnership is that we perform better, and there is more internal motivation in such a big, extensive project


involving a number of countries. And, of course, it's a huge experience for the children, too. When the project started, we also had students from a children's home, for whom it particularly meant a lot to participate in international programmes and trips, but it was also the same for village children.

● **The key word in the title is "happy". What caused the most happiness about the project?**

Having won this grant was already a great pleasure for us. We are also very happy that even a small school like ours can create and do something which is also interesting to others. But what we are the proudest of is whoever came to us could see the great togetherness and team work and how happy the children were. They also told us it was apparent that everything was done for the children.

● **How did you make the topic of environmental protection interesting and concrete for little children?**

We tried to respond to any current situation in a way that was easy to understand, concrete and practical for children, too. Following the nearby forest fire, for example, we went



out with the children and participated in the reforestation. As part of the energy week, we invited a local entrepreneur who grows energy cane. He even brought samples which the children could touch and then draw whatever captured their imagination of the presentation most, and the photos taken were used for a calendar. But we also collected garbage, wrote a Comenius story – which we also performed several times –, and organised an exhibition of the objects children in the village made, with gifts from abroad and the partners' flags. We showed what we had done to anyone who was interested with great pleasure.

• **Were the protagonists of the story the pupils of Felsőpetény?**

Yes. We invented a story collectively, in which, after many difficulties, the children of Felsőpetény manage to clean a lake from a huge oil spill. There were fairies in the story, too, some magic and a lot of excitement, and then we performed the play at the partner meetings, abroad as well as in Hungary.

• **All the children were taken to the meeting in Spain, which is a very special thing. What has left of the journey for the children?**

We worked a lot to help the children retain the many new experiences, the knowledge they acquired and the memories as long as possible. When we came home, we organised an obstacle race where they had to answer

questions and complete tasks related to the countries and environmental protection at each station. The children remembered very many things. We also recalled the journey at literature classes when we talked about the treasures of Barcelona – they even wrote a composition about it. They will surely remember for a long time how rice grows near the River Ebro and the lemons on the trees, or what it feels like when the juice of the freshly picked, sweet orange runs down on you. We don't know how it may influence their future, but my former pupils confirmed me that we'd educated them for life. That also confirms me that we're on the right path.

RÉKA FINTA-HIDY





An Easier Path for Young Career Starters

Viable Ways for Career Starters to Integrate into the World of Work



INSTITUTION:
Government Office of
Békés County –
Labour Centre

COORDINATOR:
ÉVA NÉMETH-
VIDOVENYECZ

The Labour Centre of the Government Office of Békés County took part in the two-year international project as a coordinator. The Leonardo partnership, implemented with the involvement of a German and a Portuguese training institution, an English social enterprise and the labour centre, was aimed to develop a guide providing useful and up-to-date information for professionals and career starters. We asked project coordinator Éva Némethné Vidovenyecz about the project.

• **Your institution has been very actively involved in applications and international projects, and you are renowned for your successful programmes. Where does all this enthusiasm and motivation come from?**
Indeed, I can't say we're beginners, as the Director of the Labour Centre of the Government Office of Békés County is very supportive of these initiatives and innovative ideas, and therefore the Office has years of experience in applications. We generally consider it important to emphasise the areas of both labour and education in our applications, so it was essential for us to win the German vocational training institution for our partnership. Also, improving the labour market situation of career starters is a key priority in the European Union as well as in Hun-

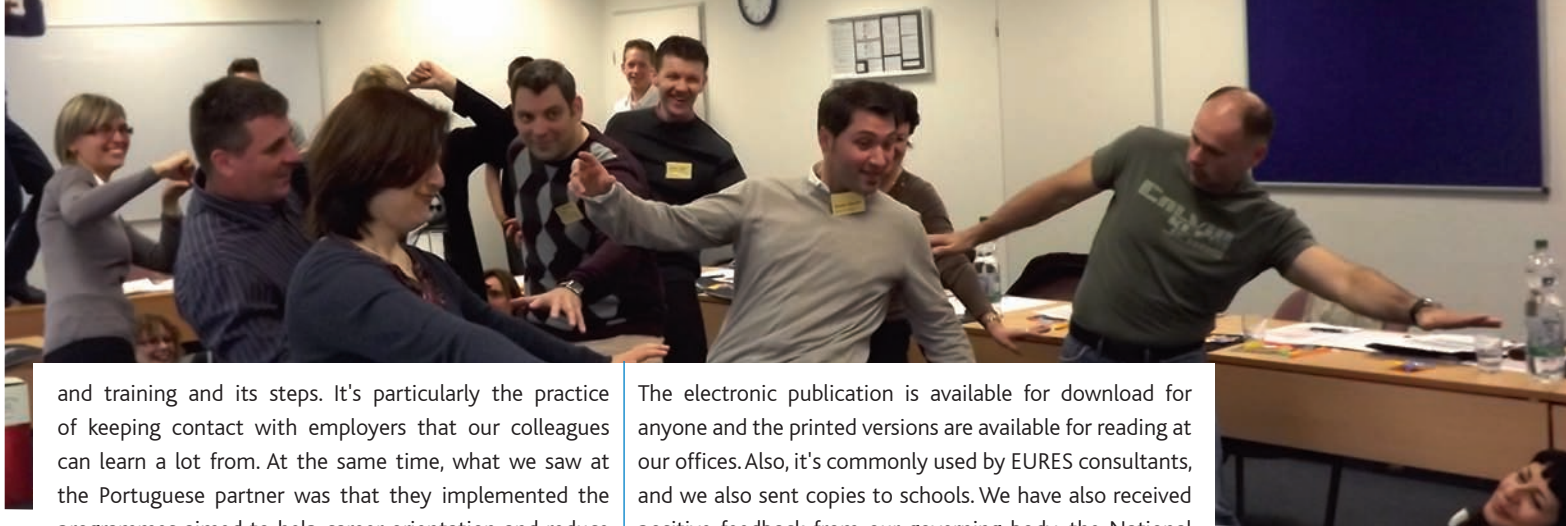
gary. At a European level, the rate of unemployment among young people is double the overall rates, and in Békés county it's 2.5 times higher. So we brainstormed about what else we could do besides the existing means to support young career starters. It was important for us to give more than what the laws require from us, and to try to capture the human side of things.

• **Does that mean there's strong European as well as local demand for such programmes?**

Yes, that's right. Basically, we seek not only to deal with clients when they have been entered into the system as job seekers, but also to help them on their way there, that is, in career orientation and making career decisions. That's why we organise career fairs, too, where we work in cooperation with schools.

• **The partners involved in the project come from very different countries – the situation of a Portuguese career starter differs from that of a German one in many aspects. What was there to learn from each other? What experiences proved to be useful?**

At the German partner we sought to learn about their long-established dual system of vocational education



and training and its steps. It's particularly the practice of keeping contact with employers that our colleagues can learn a lot from. At the same time, what we saw at the Portuguese partner was that they implemented the programmes aimed to help career orientation and reduce dropout in cooperation with VET schools, within one programme, which is important because the Portuguese employment system works very much like ours. As far as the English partner is concerned, they lay great emphasis on preventing dropout. Therefore they only have programmes which address that issue. These programmes are highly elaborate and mostly VET-oriented, aimed to teach in-demand vocations to young people who dropped out of education for some reason, in order to prevent losing them. All in all, we have seen and learnt a lot of things that keep us going. The experiences gained during the visits have been integrated into our own activities, too. For example, inspired by what we had seen at the Portuguese partner, in the career fairs we introduced a message board where participants can send us messages about what they think should be changed or improved. Therefore we have learnt about good practices and methods through this project which can later constitute the basis for an innovation development project.

• **As part of the project, you also published a guide for professionals and young career starters. Have you received any feedback on that, and have others used it?**

The electronic publication is available for download for anyone and the printed versions are available for reading at our offices. Also, it's commonly used by EURES consultants, and we also sent copies to schools. We have also received positive feedback from our governing body, the National Labour Office. They, for example, showed the publication to foreign colleagues at a meeting, who in turn contacted us to inquire about the details of the project.

• **You mentioned that you wanted to integrate your experiences into future projects. Do you already have concrete plans?**

We plan to continue the programme in the Erasmus+ programme. As the opportunity is given, the Government Office of Békés County will apply, which is also a great opportunity for us, because through the Government Office we have expanded with a number of institutions and administrative bodies with whom we'd only had an informal relationship before. Thus, on the one hand, we can submit an application which is strategically even better structured, and, on the other hand, we will also be able to disseminate the outcomes in other forms and channels.

LEA PLÁNTEK



<http://bekes.munka.hu/>





Placement to Facilitate Employment

Nature Train: Hands-on Training in Nature Conservation. Enhancing Employment Prospects for Conservations

INSTITUTION:

Barn Owl Foundation
(Orosztony)

COORDINATOR:

ÁKOS KLEIN

Due to the Leonardo mobility project of the Barn Owl Foundation, twenty career starters or unemployed environmental professionals were given a placement opportunity at the not-for-profit organisation Ambios in England. According to the Hungarian project coordinator Ákos Klein, the experience and specialised language skills thus acquired may greatly help the young people find employment.

• **When and where did you first hear about Leonardo grants?**

First an English organisation invited us to their project, and that's how I learnt about the whole mobility system. That means we became project partners first, and then, after several years of partnership, submitted our first independent application.

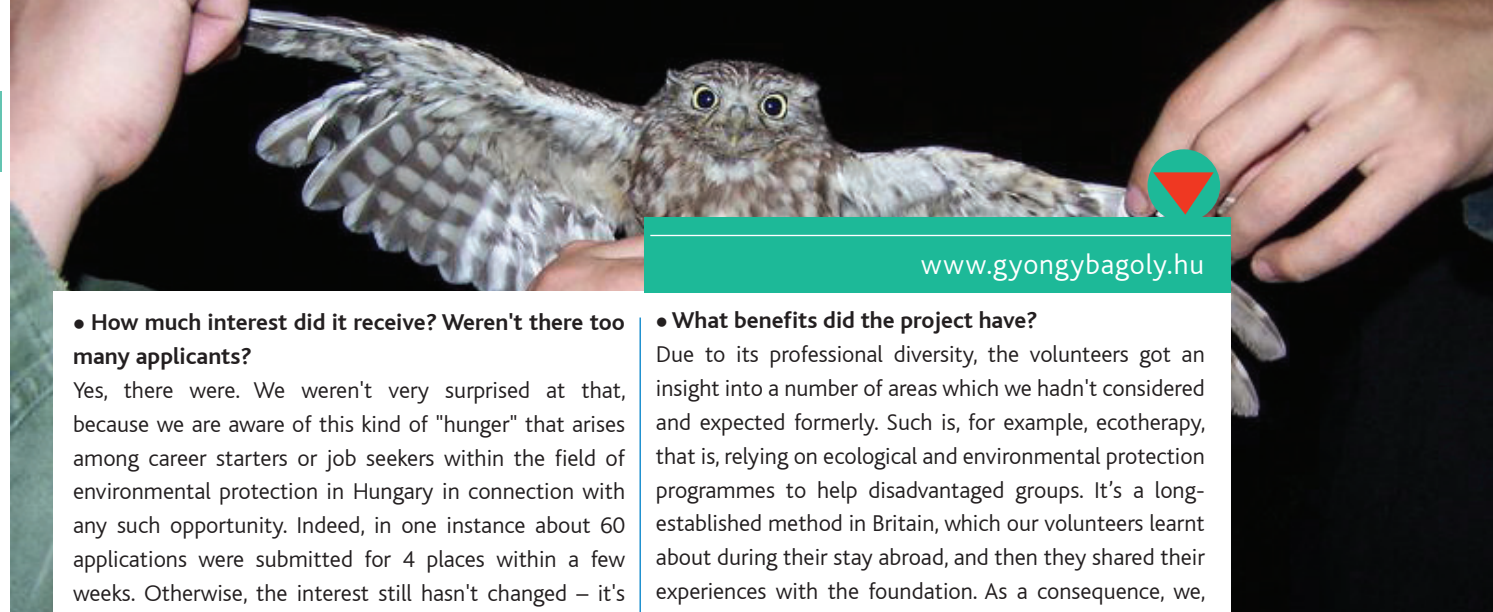
• **How did you meet the English organisation?**

It was more or less by chance. I won a scholarship in England, and I visited the English organisation engaged in the protection of barn owls. As is customary in England, I was first taken to a picnic where I met the representatives of a number of non-governmental organisations. That was when the first professional relationship was established; they asked me whether the Barn Owl Foundation was

interested in receiving English environmental volunteers for placement in Hungary within a mobility project or whether it was possible at all. We thought that the project could greatly improve the operation of our foundation, as although we have Hungarian volunteers, their presence and help is rather seasonal. However, helpers within a mobility programme generally spend nine weeks here, so our young visitors from England could be our volunteers for a longer period. That's why we became a partner organisation.

• **Why did you decide to launch your own project? What was your purpose with that?**

In Hungary, many students specialise in some field related to environmental protection at various universities, but their chances of employment as career starters are rather poor. It's because in most cases they have no practical experience and few of them speak foreign languages at an advanced level. Therefore, our most important goal was to help career starter job seekers through the project to remedy such shortcomings. Since environmental protection has its own specialised language in English, too, we thought it was already an achievement if somebody could improve the quality of their professional portfolio due to the 3-4-month placement in England.



www.gyongybagoly.hu

● **How much interest did it receive? Weren't there too many applicants?**

Yes, there were. We weren't very surprised at that, because we are aware of this kind of "hunger" that arises among career starters or job seekers within the field of environmental protection in Hungary in connection with any such opportunity. Indeed, in one instance about 60 applications were submitted for 4 places within a few weeks. Otherwise, the interest still hasn't changed – it's similar with our current, second mobility programme.

● **What were the criteria of selecting the participants?**

We specified two important criteria. On the one hand, we made it clear that, although specialist qualification was important, the lack of it was not an excluding factor. What we consider most important is whether you have gained some former experience in the field of environmental protection on your own initiative. So particularly that's how the applicants needed to prove that they had the determination and persistence to remain in the field and that they had long-term career plans in environmental protection. Another important criterion for selection was that the applicants' language skills had to be suitable for the journey – neither too poor nor too advanced. In all cases, we chose people with intermediate communicative skills whose English could and needed to be improved. We didn't want to serve as a stepping stone for participants who only wanted to benefit from the language learning opportunity, only to find employment in a completely different sector later, not environmental protection.

● **What benefits did the project have?**

Due to its professional diversity, the volunteers got an insight into a number of areas which we hadn't considered and expected formerly. Such is, for example, ecotherapy, that is, relying on ecological and environmental protection programmes to help disadvantaged groups. It's a long-established method in Britain, which our volunteers learnt about during their stay abroad, and then they shared their experiences with the foundation. As a consequence, we, too, could launch an ecotherapeutic programme in Hungary. That is, for example, a welcome and unexpected benefit of our project.

● **What do you think makes your project better than an average project?**

I think it's definitely one of our strengths that we tackled a very sensitive, in-demand area, and the project responded to a topical issue, since our mobility programme helped job seekers of the environmental sector to obtain practical experience and specialised English language skills. Besides, our programme has a strong professional basis, as we developed an intensive specialised language training for our volunteers, and therefore they are completely satisfied with the project in England.

NÓRA FRANK





Students' Work is a Key Element of the Project

Placement for VET Students in Health and Social Fields

INSTITUTION:

Raoul Wallenberg
Secondary School and
Vocational School
(Budapest)

COORDINATORS:

ÁGNES JUBA-NAGY,
SZILVIA SZÁLTELEKI

"We are glad to inform you that based on your performance you are invited to participate in the traineeship programme in the Netherlands in 2012. To put it simply: YES!"

That was the initial message of the one-month mobility programme in the Netherlands, organised by the Raoul Wallenberg Secondary School and Vocational School, in which 14 students specialised in dental assistance, special education assistance, paediatric nursing and nursing participated. To be exact, the story had begun much earlier: the relationship dates back to five years and a number of successful projects earlier. The two committed coordinators of the project, Ágnes Juba-Nagy and Szilvia Száltekei told us about their experiences.

• Did you need to encourage the students to participate in the programme?

There are some students who don't need to be encouraged at all, and also some others who need it because they're afraid: they don't trust their language skills, or have never flown before, or simply they have never spent so much time away from their families. During recruiting, we talk to these students several times – especially when we know they could do it –, and we can usually convince them. Finally we always have more applicants than available places – on one occasion, there were 72 applicants and only 14 had a chance to travel.

• How did the students generally spend their days?

With a lot of work. They got very tired every day, since they needed to communicate in English all day, in an

entirely new environment. After work, they went home, did some shopping, cooking, surfed the Internet, wrote blogs and kept work logs. They needed to process a lot of new experiences.

• We can also read about the students' experiences on the online blog they created, available on the school's website. Where did the idea come from?

One girl in the 2010 group had the idea of writing about her experiences abroad. Then we thought why couldn't the group write a common blog. We tried it, and it still works fine. First our Dutch partners used Google Translate to translate it for themselves, because they wanted to know what the Hungarian students had written, so we finally made an English version, too. The Dutch partners liked the idea, and now the Dutch groups visiting us write a blog about their experiences, as well.

• Is there anything else that the Dutch partners have adopted from you?

Yes, for example, certain elements of the preparation. Before the travel, our students spent three days in a team-building preparatory camp, which was very useful to get to know each other, since abroad they would have to live together for a longer period of time in a relatively small room. Initially, the Dutch partner didn't pay much attention to that aspect, and their first students came here rather unprepared, but since then they have tried to follow the Hungarian example and adopt some elements of the preparation.





● **How did the programme affect the students' career?**

An important benefit of the programme is that once you've completed it, you'll have much more self-confidence to communicate and speak English. Some of our dental assistants, for example, now have a job where there are a lot of foreign patients, and for them it was a very important criterion that they had worked abroad in their own specialist field. In another instance, a girl participated in the programme as an infant and child nurse, but the Dutch partner could only offer her placement at a nursery. That was when she realised that this field suited her better, so the programme had given her an impetus which affected her career. Generally, many of our former students have reported that their Leonardo placement came up at a job interview and the employers appreciated it. In many cases, it was exactly the foreign placement that caught the employers' eyes in the CV.

● **How did the accompanying teachers spend their time?**

We plan the projects so that we can take turns with the students. During the first week, we visit the schools, the placement venues, various hospitals and special education institutions. During the last week the accompanying teacher visits the placement venues, meets the trainers and they jointly assess students' work. When we're abroad, we talk to the students every day and listen to their latest experiences. Besides, of course, we also manage any issue that may arise, as well as administration and finances, throughout the entire project.

● **What motivates you to launch a new project year by year?**

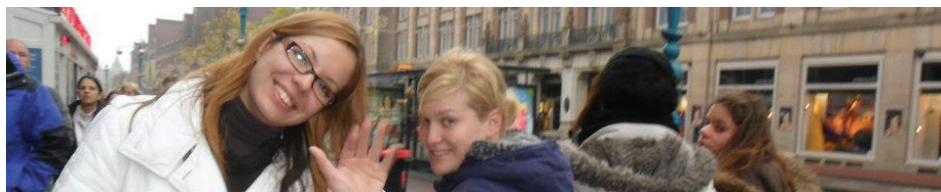
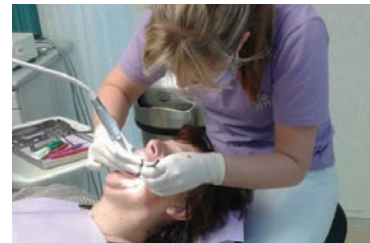
The programme enables us to work together with a group of motivated students. It allows a different kind of work and relationship with the students, and we get to know

them better as we have time and opportunity to talk to them more in depth. With some of them we still keep in touch. It would be nice to work with the students like this all the time. One of our main motivations is that when they come home we can see how much they've improved, how their self-confidence has grown and how they're becoming more independent. We feel that they appreciate our work which has allowed them to participate in this programme. We think it's enough to be worth it.

● **What are you proudest of with regard to your work?**

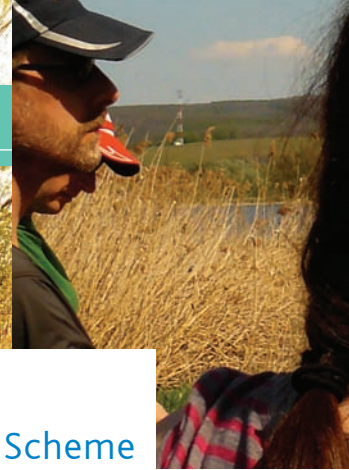
The fact that we have improved the international relations of the school, that the other colleagues can also identify with the programme, and that the entire school knows that this programme exists and is successful. We help a lot of students overcome their own limits and thus broaden their opportunities. In fact, the students we are proudest of are the ones for whom we know it was a great achievement to be involved in such a programme. But we are also proud when we complete and finalise the final report and click the Send button, because we put a lot of effort into each project; and we are of course proud when a few weeks later we receive the positive assessment about the content and the finances. At that point, we normally send a message to the students involved, too, to thank for their work, because we shouldn't forget that what they do is one of the most important elements of the project.

ADRIENN BENKŐ-NAGY





LEONARDO



Together for Lakes

Learning for Lakes – A European Lake Management Training Scheme

INSTITUTION:

Association of
Non-Governmental
Organisations of Lake
Balaton

COORDINATOR:

ERZSÉBET SZÉKELY

The Association of Non-Governmental Organisations of Lake Balaton was involved in the Leonardo partnership "Learning for Lakes" as a partner. In the project, organisations from five countries, actively involved in environmental protection and more closely with lake management, cooperated to learn about sustainable lake management through informal learning methods at partner meetings, to assess the deficiencies of vocational training and education related to the issue, and they have also developed an e-learning material. We talked to the Chairwoman of the Association, Erzsébet Székely about their experiences.

• Why do you think your project has received a quality award?

It's a current issue, as lake management and environmental protection interests and affects many people; moreover, according to the feedback we've received, the outcomes of our project are very useful for others, too. The representatives of NGOs, professionals and young volunteers can find a lot of useful information in the e-learning materials available on the website of the German partner, Global Nature Fund. The case studies demonstrate good and bad practices concerning, for

example, wetland rehabilitation or the development of fishery, agriculture or tourism.

• Your project also has an extensive impact due to the diversity of the people concerned.

Our association is an umbrella organisation: we have a variety of members, water rescuers, an ornithological association or a women's NGO, so we are connected with a lot of people who wish to do something for the Lake Balaton through their work or otherwise. This project presented a great opportunity for them, too, as they had a chance to get involved in the implementation of the programmes in Hungary, as well as to join the international programmes. Most organisations belonging to us have set the goal of protecting the Lake Balaton, and we couldn't have launched this project without their experts. In addition, those people who could thus acquire foreign experience and information in other countries can also use this new knowledge in their everyday work. I also wish to highlight the involvement of university and PhD students working for various NGOs as volunteers, as they also gained important knowledge which they can use for their current studies, researches and future work.



- **What benefits could the project offer to these motivated people and organisations?**

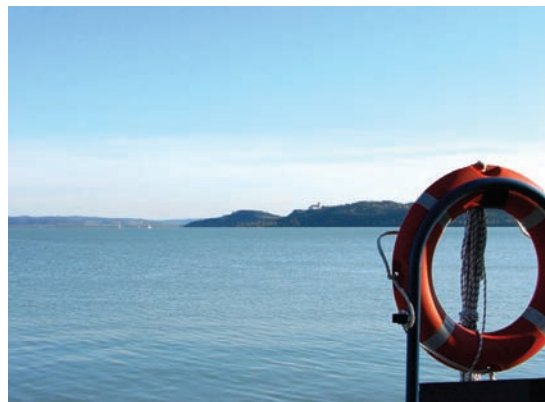
Our members involved in the programme had already been engaged in protecting the Lake Balaton and in tourism, but they hadn't had such an extensive insight into what other countries do and how. However, after they'd seen how ecotourism worked in Germany, or what eco camping was like, they were given good solutions to how it could be implemented in Hungary, too – even such apparently simple things as what signs should be posted in these areas. It was also useful to see how they mobilised local citizens to help in various matters. We've also done these things before, but we saw a lot of good ideas during the project which could be integrated into our programmes to make our work more effective. The project gave us a broader view: besides simplifying and replanning certain things also found in Hungary, we learnt a lot of new things, too.

- **What are your experiences concerning local partnerships?**

Due to the project, we have a stronger relationship with a number of organisations now. For example, we'd had relations with the Pannon University and the Balaton

Uplands National Park, or German research institutes, but now our cooperation is much closer and we can also organise joint programmes. The spreading reputation of our association was of great help, because now they know about us, contact us and count on us, so the role we play in the region has definitely moved to the right direction. It's also confirmed by the quality award we've received, because this recognition enhances our credibility and reliability and proves that it's worth working with us.

ZSUZSANNA GYŐRPÁL





What Does the Labour Market Requires in the Food Industry

FooDrinks – Quality Food & Drink European Training Plan

INSTITUTION:

Károly Róbert College

COORDINATOR:

DR. LÁSZLÓ DINYA

Within the partnership project of Károly Róbert College, various institutions – universities, chambers, non-profit organisations and players of economy – from seven countries cooperated. The goal of the project tackling food safety was to develop education and training for future professionals which meets the real needs of the labour market. We talked to one of the project coordinators, Dr. Zoltán Bujdosó about the training programme as well as the experiences gained during the project.

● **Where do you see the importance of your project?**

We should emphasise that the project did not only involve partners, but a much wider circle, too, whom we needed in order to provide for the curricula being developed and the training programmes a basis which builds from the bottom up, and takes professional requirements into consideration. We cooperated with food production companies and enterprises, NGOs and chambers, because we were curious to know their opinions and expectations, as well as the competencies which they thought our current training programmes lacked.

● **How was your project structured?**

In the first part of the project we examined the experiences of companies and enterprises active in the food industry concerning the current education and training, as well as their expectations towards qualified professionals. After summarising the findings, we received recommendations on what competency development to integrate into the

training programme, and then we started to elaborate the training plan. At the last three project meetings, the external partners had a chance to evaluate the work we'd done, so we received instant feedback from employers.

● **What deficiencies did they point out in the current training programmes?**

They found, for example, that IT skills and language teaching needed improvement; however, what they missed most was a "comprehensive view", meaning the comprehensive knowledge of a certain technology or even an entire industry.

● **Who is this jointly developed training programme designed for?**

It's basically designed for people who have basic competencies in the food industry and food safety and who want further education in these fields. It's very much like food safety technician training, and it's available at the Károly Róbert College for those with either secondary or higher education; also, it can be adapted by other institutions if they have the necessary laboratory, infrastructure and qualified teachers.

● **What specific areas does food safety include?**

Most people first think it's about producing healthy foods and drinks, but in fact it's much more than that. It covers the entire process of food production, as well as the safe operation of each process. So it does not only seek to



produce healthy foods, but also to ensure that the raw materials and ingredients supplied, as well as catering are healthy, using a technology which is more environmental friendly, sustainable and meets the demands of the modern age.

● **What were your most interesting experiences during the project?**

At each project meeting, we visited food producing units where this process had already reached a high level. They gave us a lot of inspiration. I should mention the countries which are a bit more distant from us, both geographically and culturally. In Turkey, for example, we visited companies which I hadn't thought would apply such advanced food safety procedures. In Greece, on the other hand, we found a level of cooperation between food producers and processors which can be exemplary for other countries, too.

● **What did the involvement in the project mean to the college – and the recognition that followed?**

The college is involved in a number of international partnerships, and the experience gained from them have also contributed the success of this project. Any recognition means great prestige, especially to those involved in a given activity. However, this quality award also has an outstanding role in the internal PR of the college, as it enhances the commitment and loyalty of the staff. And as far as outward communication is concerned, it

improves the reputation of the college, since winning the quality award as a small higher education institution is a great achievement.

ZSUZSANNA GYŐRPÁL



www.karolyrobert.hu



The Young Ambassadors of the Catering Culture

Catering Placements in Europe

INSTITUTION:

Hansági Ferenc Vocational School and Secondary School for Catering and Tourism (Szeged)

COORDINATOR:

KLÁRA JANCSEKIN-SMICSKÓ

The school designed the mobility project in 2009 to send their students abroad for a month to gain professional experience, as well as to receive students from foreign partner institutions. The partnership began with Germany, Finland, Spain and Italy, and now their students can also apply for traineeships in Greece, UK, Austria, Sweden, France and Romania. We talked to Klára Smicskó Jancsikinné about the experiences.

● **How did you find your partners?**

Our first connection was a vocational school in Munich, back in 2000. On the occasion of its 100th anniversary, the German vocational school organised a Leonardo conference, to which they invited all their foreign partners, including us. That was a great opportunity to make new contacts, and that was where our partnership with most countries began, although the Spanish partner came through a contact which one of our language teachers made at a training programme abroad.

● **Why did you decide to launch this project? What gave you the idea?**

For us it's very important that our students can see beyond the borders of Hungary and gain professional experience abroad, too, because it increases their value in the labour market. Of course, apart from that, language learning is also of crucial importance.

● **Who could participate in the project? How did you select the students?**

A large number of our vocational school and secondary school students applied, as this programme is very popular. They need to submit a motivational letter and a CV, and since 2008, we've had a written system of criteria to assess and select the applicants. Besides, we also hold a team session for teachers to discuss who is suitable for the travel and who can participate in the programme. This programme is not a reward for the best performing students. The point is that the students should be capable, open and inquiring, because that's how they can gain professional experience, and they should of course be good at their trade, too. It's not a problem when someone's not that good at foreign languages, because they will experience at first hand how much language skills are necessary and it can motivate them to learn.

● **How does students' involvement in the project help their professional development?**

There are countries where we are in direct contact with the business entities, for example with hotels. In these cases, the students can learn about the normal operation of the foreign restaurants and hotels, which they can compare to the lives of Hungarian companies. In other cases, we keep in touch with the partner schools that ensure work practice to our students along with theirs at external locations, and they also provide a specialist teacher to teach cook, waiter or pastry cook students at the school. We should



emphasise that we have a reciprocal relationship with most schools.

● **How is this reciprocity manifest itself?**

For example, recently we've had a dissemination and Europass awarding ceremony, also attended by a Michelin-starred chef from our Lower Saxon partner school, who gave a live presentation, as their students were just staying with us at that time. It was a very valuable and interesting experience for our teachers, our students and the representatives of the external traineeship venues, as well.

● **In what ways did the team planning and implementing the project improve during the project?**

Looking back at the past few years, our experiences have been very interesting. We felt that we needed to lay greater emphasis on students' psychological preparation, and our opinion was also shared by our directress, who is also an expert in mental hygiene. In one instance formerly one of our students lost 10 kg in one week, because psychologically she hadn't been prepared properly for the programme, and due to her illness we had to bring her home. However, we haven't had that problem since then. We've also learnt that we should be a bit more diplomatic when negotiating with Hungarian entrepreneurs. In one instance, for example, their attitude obstructed the implementation of the project because they only considered the short-term situation and they told the student that if he chose to go abroad

for a month they would take on somebody else. So that's how we started off, and there have been a lot of changes since then.

● **It's not the first quality award the school has received. Why do you think your projects are repeatedly recognised?**

Indeed, we also received an E-Quality award for a former Comenius language project, and our Leonardo mobility project in 2005 was also recognised with a quality award. Besides, in 2008 we received the UNESCO Associate School title, too. I think it's due to the fact that the school's foundation pays special attention to applications, as well as to foreign mobilities. An entire team was formed to implement the projects, including the directress, the school's financial manager, PR professional, quality manager and me. We truly work as a team, and it definitely shows in the standards of the projects.

NÓRA FRANK





Tales from Behind the Bars

PROTECT: Prisoners Opportunity to Educate Children by Telling Stories

INSTITUTION:

The Prison and
Correctional Facility of
Budapest

COORDINATOR:

RITA VARGA

The Prison and Correctional Facility of Budapest implemented the Grundtvig learning partnership project in cooperation with experts from five countries, Poland, Lithuania, Italy, Romania and Turkey, seeking to facilitate a better relationship between imprisoned fathers and their children. Besides examining the social and family relationships of the prison population in a research, they also used the findings to hold skills development training for the inmates, who were also actively involved in writing a story-book for their children. The project was explained in detail by law enforcement First Lieutenant Mónica Peremiczki, project coordinator.

Imprisoned fathers are not a typical target group for adult education. Why did you still think it was necessary to launch a programme aimed to improve family relations?

The idea came from two directions. On the one hand, law enforcement has a very important task to help reintegrate inmates into society. Education and training are crucial factors in that, since a considerable part of the inmates are undereducated. So we'd like to fill their years spent in prison with positive impacts in this regard. The other reason why we launched the programme was that formerly the researches focused on the relationship between imprisoned mothers and their children, although a significant proportion of imprisoned parents are men, and therefore children often have to experience the lack of their fathers. In fact, the Prison and Correctional

Facility of Budapest only holds male inmates, and that's how we came to focus on the subject – to enhance the relationship between fathers and children through stories and education.

It's all about people in a special situation, with special needs. In their case, what skills and competencies needed to be developed?

We sought to develop the social and cognitive skills of the inmates involved in the programme, such as tale writing, story telling, active listening, communicating with peers, as well as to develop parental competence itself and enhancing their relationship with family members. As part of the reintegration process, it's particularly important so we can prevent long-term inmates from becoming distant from their children, and to help them maintain their relationships and raise their children fully aware of their parental responsibility after they're released.

What were your criteria when selecting the participants? How receptive and open were the inmates to an international programme such as yours?

Application to any training and education here is voluntary. We inform the inmates through probation officers and psychologists about the research and the project. Those who have children and were interested in the project, started individual sessions in small groups,



lead by our psychologist colleague. The ones who later remained in the group for the other training programmes because they were truly interested, began these targeted social and cognitive skills development sessions. Otherwise, we received very positive feedback from the group: it was also reflected by the fact that they began to appreciate the knowledge acquired at school more and more, and therefore some of them even applied for formal education as a consequence and went to school. They became calmer, more balanced and self-confident, as they could feel that they were not completely cut off from the outer world and their families, and they also felt much closer to their children than their peers who didn't want to participate in the programme.

Based on what you've said, it seems to me that the institution implements a lot of projects. What's new about being involved in an international programme? What experiences have you had?

We've been involved in a number of ESF projects before, providing various training programmes to inmates, but at an international level, this Grundtvig learning partnerships project has been the first one – and we hope it won't be the last. The programme received very positive feedback. We are still using these methods, and regardless of the end of the project, we have training programmes which focus on active listening, story writing and communication. Internationality wasn't very obvious at the inmates' level, as they were living in their own world, focusing on the improving relationship with their children. It was more of a challenge and responsibility for our colleagues and those involved in the project. Learning

about new cultures, as well as the development of their professional and language skills have all played a part in the successful implementation of the project. Besides the professional implementation of the project, the visits paid to the other countries and the exchange of experiences have also contributed to the result. All the partners were very committed to the PROTECT programme, and the professionals invited by the partner countries were also very cooperative. In order to be able to disseminate our results – even internationally –, we have jointly created a website with the five countries.

After such positive experiences, the question comes naturally: are you planning to continue this work, either independently at an institutional level or within the Erasmus+ programme?

Since the project, implemented in nearly two years, has proved very useful, we definitely want to do something similar again. If we can find a subject which captures the interest of both the managers and the inmates, we will definitely launch a new project, either on our own or seeking partner countries.

LEA PLÁNTEK





A Focus on Motherhood

Mother Centers Developing Support Structures for Active Volunteer Involvement

INSTITUTION:

Holdam ("My Moon")
Self-Help and Educational
Association (Miskolc)

COORDINATOR:

RITA KISHONTHY-
KARDOS

The first mother centre in Northern Hungary, "Holdam", was opened in spring 2011, and then Holdam Self-Help and Educational Association soon joined a Grundtvig learning partnership project implemented in cooperation with 11 countries. We talked to Rita Kishonthy-Kardos, Co-Chairwoman of the Association, about the operation, the structure and the spirit of the association and the mother centre.

How did these events come about in the life of the association?

Holdam Self-Help and Educational Association was established in 2007, primarily to facilitate experiencing motherhood and femininity. At that time, we were focusing on expectancy and childbirth; then, as our children were growing up, the emphasis shifted to the difficulties of parenting and returning to work. Two years later, I attended the International Mother Centres Conference in Slovakia, organised by the MINE (Mother Centres International Network for Empowerment), where I met women from all around the world who thought similarly to our community, and I considered it important for us to join. At that time, we were focusing on getting a place of our own, a community space operated according to the principles of mother centres. These centres are run self-sufficiently by mothers all around the world, from Africa through the Americas to Europe. In June 2010 we managed to get hold of a property owned by the local government, in return for renovation and operation; that was how 'Holdam udvar', now operating for three

years, started off. The idea of this Grundtvig project was also inspired by the programmes of MINE. 11 countries, including Hungary, joined the project.

You said that you'd gone through considerable changes during the project both from an organisational and human point of view.

Yes, we had impacts from various directions which confirmed and justified us. When we started the project, most mothers who were very active locally, only knew our quite new mother centre. Through the project, they could learn about mother centres operating in other countries for as long as 20 years. Such was, for example, the House of Generations in Stuttgart, operating their own small kindergarten and conducting activities based on small groups and community work. But we could also see that, although each mother centre worked somewhat differently, and each group and community shaped the place to their needs and developed their own systems, the approach was the same.

How do you motivate mothers in Miskolc to be actively involved in the life of the mother centre?

The mother centre operated by the association is an open community space: mothers can come in between 9 am and 4 pm daily, to change nappies, breastfeed their babies and talk to each other, which often leads to new ideas. We've recently launched a community support system in which mothers who wish to implement minor projects, such as sewing or cooking classes, can apply. A basic



www.holdam.hu

condition to the operation of the mother centre is that it shouldn't be dependent on having an employee, so we have a hostess system of volunteers: we can operate the place relying on mothers on child care allowance or child care benefit who bring their own children here in turns, so we don't need an external employee. You should imagine a large community living room with a separate kitchen section, providing enough space for 8-10 mothers with their children to play and talk.

What were your most inspiring experiences during the project?

We were mostly interested in childbirth and expectancy, but we were also inspired in other fields. In Graz, for example, we saw the Red Tent Festival, where the programmes focused on our relationship with femininity and how to cultivate them creatively; we liked the festival so much that we've adopted it and hold it every year in Miskolc with our own programmes. We've also learnt a lot about operating and maintaining mother centres, as well as the power of lobbying, since mobilising mothers also has a social significance. We may have set an example for mother centres which are even younger than us; for partners who don't have their own permanent place for a mother centre and therefore can't conduct their activities on a daily basis. What they could learn from us was what to do at a local level to make the local government support the initiative. We also went to Bulgaria to visit Roma mother centres; there we realised the importance of providing similar opportunities to women in a more disadvantageous situation than ours, so they can get together, too, and gain strength from being a member of a community. We also started to think about how a

self-organised women's group can be developed into an organisation which maintains and operates its own space and retains the basis of a community, and we began to develop our own methodology. Within the framework of a Swiss project, we do a lot of field work – in a maternity home for homeless mothers, and in Germany and the Netherlands in mother centres operated for immigrants, so we've seen various examples. After such experiences many of us came home with the feeling that we should do something not only for ourselves, but also for those in a socially disadvantaged situation. So in the past nearly two years we've visited such places not to provide service but to develop a community.

Is there a specific development goal, something you'd like to achieve through the mother centre?

Due to the project, we have an organisation development plan, but I think that although we have become employees, we've also remained mothers, which continuously presents new situations. The mother centre can expand as our children grow up, and then one day we'll be grandmothers, and these situations will definitely bring personal experiences into our community life, too. We should pay attention to what life brings us in this regard: currently the fact that there are more and more single parents, so we are also turning to single mothers. The mothers tell us what they need, so we don't set very specific management goals; they are specified by the target group who visit the mother centre every day. That's exactly why we have a community support system, so they can realise their ideas together; our task is to create the necessary resources and opportunities.

ESZTER TILLY



Music is the Common Language

Sing-Song – Dialog Between Past and Future

INSTITUTION:

Szent Gellért Mixed Choir
of Diósd Association

COORDINATOR:

ILONA VALÉRIA SZABÓ

The project was based on the cooperation of five choirs from four countries. The Hungarian partner was the 20-year-old Szent Gellért Mixed Choir of Diósd Association, consisting of 30 enthusiastic amateur singers. During the two-year programme, the members of the choirs were provided theoretical and practical training in each partner country, including voice coaching, learning compositions compiled together and an exchange of experiences on music learning methods. We talked to Valéria Ilona Szabó, one of the Hungarian organisers of the project.

Where did you hear about the Grundtvig programme?

When we created the website of our choir, we also created an English site, and that was how the Polish choir found us. They'd organise a number of international projects before. First they invited me personally to a one-week individual project which took place in Warsaw in summer 2010. Our next invitation to a much larger-scale project was based on this acquaintance. It became known as Sing-Song, which we were happy to be part of between 2011 and 2013.

So the coordinator was a Polish choir. How did the other three musical ensembles find the project?

Apart from us, the project finally included two French and a Greek choirs. The Varsovians found them on the internet and through their connections. The search criteria included a similar level of knowledge and quality, but it was also

important that various voices should be represented in the choirs, that is, they should be mixed choirs.

What differences did you see between the work of the choirmasters of the host countries at the music workshops you attended?

Choirmasters, as teachers usually (since here we were "adult students"), use various leadership styles and methods to reach their goals. The best example may be that of one French choirmaster. Catalan culture has a strong presence in Saint Esteve (Southern France), and the choirmaster there also brought a Catalan piece for the project choir. He gestured a lot more than what is common, and he achieved his goal using language less, whereas others talked and explained more. Some focused more on voice coaching, while others wanted to explain the background of the pieces better. What we saw as a good practice which we have also been using since then was the warm-up exercise of the choirmaster from Bordeaux. Now we begin our rehearsals similarly: with various physical exercises.

How was the work at the partner meetings conducted?

Each time, we sent 5-10 people to the current project choir. It was an important criterion that each one of our members should be able to visit at least one of the locations. Each choir brought a basic piece to the meetings, and the current host country added two more which we



only sang then and there. When we went to the next country, we sang the whole repertoire and two more pieces added by the next host country. When organising the music workshop, our choir mistress Katalin Szabó chose pieces which represented our musical culture and traditions best. Within the given time, she formed a homogeneous-sounding project choir of the international singers, which successfully performed, among others, "Dana-dana" by Lajos Bárdos, a piece which also reflects Hungarian temperament. The spontaneous joy of music and rhythm went on at the surprise dance event that followed the concert. It's become a tradition that we started, and later it was also adopted by the other choirs.

What did the choir benefit from the Grundtvig project?

The pieces that we learnt from other choirs have become an integral part of our musical repertoire. It's a great benefit. Another great benefit is the extensive network of mailing and e-mailing contacts. The project started a flow of information which nobody wanted to miss. Some had already been proficient with up-to-date technology, whereas others were motivated by the project itself to learn to use it. We created our own Facebook profile, as

well as a common website for the project members, where we collected a lot of online auxiliary materials which can help us prepare for the works. Short videos, to practice certain pieces even according to voices. We also put on the phonetic transcriptions of the Hungarian, Polish, Greek and French songs, as well as the translations, so that we can know what we sing about. We should also highlight the importance of the international project from the point of view of developing language skills. The improvement was obvious with each choir member. As far as we organisers are concerned, we've gained a lot of experience in how to conduct a discussion with international participants. The greatest benefit, however, is that when we finished the project, we immediately launched a second one, coordinated by one of the French choirs, which already included as many as nine choirs from seven countries.

KRISZTINA SPANYÁR



www.gellertkorus.hu

Imprint

Edited by:

Adrienn Benkő-Nagy

Réka Finta-Hidy

Nóra Frank

Zsuzsanna Győrpál

Lea PlánteK

Krisztina Spanyol

Eszter Tilly

Translation:

Sándor Földő

Layout:

Bernadett Baukó

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Tempus Public Foundation

H-1093 Budapest,

Lónyay utca 31.

Infoline: +36 1 237 1320

e-mail: info@tpf.hu

web: www.tka.hu

From 2014, the Comenius, Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes have been unified under the new Erasmus+ programme, offering a range of opportunities to implement partnerships and mobilities in the areas of VET, adult education as well as higher education.

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Tempus Public Foundation

1093 Budapest,
Lónyay street 31.

Phone: +36 1 237 1320

E-mail: info@tpf.hu

Web: www.tka.hu

