

A report of the first project period of Van Helyed educational network

1. Setting up a professional Work Group

First, under the coordination of our professional leader, the Work Group has mapped all the possibilities and supplies of those recipient institutions relevant to the program that will enter the network. Furthermore, they have planned a professional cooperation. The Work Group has also worked out the criteria of the staff selection, as well as the process and the system of entering the program.

2. Selecting the staff members of Van Helyed educational network (Van Helyed Studio)

Staff employed since 1 February, 2014

Gyöngyi Baloghné Solti, a former a mathematics and physics secondary school teacher, who has been a volunteer at the organization for the last eight years, became the pedagogical leader of the program. Her tasks include, coordinating the preparatory work, and the pedagogical program, taking part in the selection and preparation of the staff members, doing developmental sessions, mentoring activities and the management of the Creative Centre.

István Vigh, also a former volunteer of the organization has become the finance manager.

Kriszta Bódis became the professional leader of the program. In addition to the implementation of the program her tasks include, methodological development, management, leading creative sessions, mentoring activity as well as the coordination of social and educational case handling.

Further staff

Edit Huszti, accountant

Beáta Bagoly, lawyer

Selecting the staff members of the team

We had been looking for pedagogues, social workers (Patronuses) and leaders of creative projects since 21 February 2014. Job advertisements were published on Facebook, which reached 75000 people. E-mails, regarding the job opportunity, were sent to local schools, social institutions and the nearby higher education institutions. There were 35 applicants for the positions of social workers and 17 applicants for the positions of pedagogues. Regarding the Patronuses, we needed someone primarily with a social worker qualification, who is local or is willing to move to Ózd. However the lack of qualification was not a ground for refusal in case the applicant had at least a year long fieldwork experience. Regarding the teacher positions, we expected primarily the applications of specialized teachers (literature, history, English, biology, geography, chemistry). Requirements were the awareness of experimental education and the person-centered pedagogy, the use of methods promoting cooperative and problem-oriented learning, as well as the knowledge of educational methods emphasizing reflective teaching and the use of computing devices. We were also looking for people who have the ability to develop a personal curriculum according to the abilities, the proficiency level and the school results of the children in the

program that is needed for studying further.

The selection process of the social workers

First, we interviewed our applicants from 1 March 2014 to 3 April 2014 on altogether six occasions. Next, the applicants joined as assistants to some creation oriented sessions as the organization continued their work with the local underprivileged Roma children even during the preparatory period. Their work was observed and rated by volunteers, based on a prearranged criteria. Each of the four applicants who reached the third and final round of selection had to plan and do a creation oriented session in pairs. The last round was held on 4 April, and after an evaluation and a consultation, two of the applicants were chosen to start their work from 1 May 2014. Their tasks during the preparatory period are, completing core assessments and testing the children recommended by the schools. During the program, they have to keep contact with the families and the community, to do social work, to take part in the creation oriented projects and pedagogical sessions, to mentor and monitor the children in the program and the problem-solving communication with the schools and the teachers of the children.

The selection process of the teachers

First, we interviewed the 17 applicants in Budapest and Ózd. Then, we observed the lessons of those four who we found suitable for the position. There were no applicants for the English teacher position, therefore the job advertisement was published again. Eventually, the applicant using the Helen Donor method was chosen, also we contacted the founder of the method hoping for a wider collaboration. The tasks of the pedagogues are to develop the children in the program in small groups 4-8hrs weekly, and to follow-up and mentor the development of the children together with the Patronuses and the team.

The selection of the leaders of the creation projects

We were looking for psychology and art professionals. As a psychologist and artist, the professional leader of the program Kriszta Bódis, has planned developmental sessions that combine creation and the instruments of several psychological aspects. In the first project, her partner will be Ádám Kiss György, coach, psychodrama coordinator and founder of a playback theatre.

3. The selection of the students participating in the program

Informing the institutions

In February, we informed the directors and the teachers of the schools, the minority council and the social institutions about the start of the VH Studio, with a presentation. We laid the foundation of a professional cooperation. We asked the teachers for references primarily of the underprivileged children. In Ózd there are 10 elementary schools with overall 3749 students in them. Out of these 2549 are underprivileged, of which 1239 are multiply disadvantaged. Most of this children attend only 5 schools. We asked for references as follows, the students had to be between 11-15, they had to have at least an average of 3,5 (in a five-point evaluation system) and/or have any kind of talent, they and their parents had to be motivated primarily Roma children.

References and contacting the parents

The references of 150 students were received in March, we worked-out an effective way to notify the parents and started to organize a parent conference. The social workers contacted the institutions through which we could legally contact and inform the parents . In April we introduced the schools to the screening (Talent Test) that was the criteria of getting into the program. We tested the children individually in three areas: Cognitive abilities, Motivation, Self-esteem/Future orientation and if needed, learning difficulty. In May we carried out the parent conference, where we informed them of the details of the program and the test. By returning a declaration altogether 96 parents agreed to the test.

The Talent Test

The Talent Test is a psychological screening package, which was developed for the program specifically, by a group of experts in order to be able to examine the recommended children, and to get an impression of the intelligence, motivation or probable learning difficulties. This profile will be the basis of the development of the personal curriculum. The volunteers of the organization working in Ózd were trained to be able to test. The tests were taken at the schools in school time from 12 May to 16 May by 11 colleagues.

Core assessments, contacting the families, getting started

The social workers have started completing core assessments with the involved families in May. The questionnaire, and the additional instructions put together by the professional leader, help to get familiar with the conditions of the families, by using an empowerment based method, which is stressing on interaction and the directed interview.

4. Creation oriented sessions

In the preparatory period of the program, as a continuation of the work at Hétes settlement, the developmental sessions were done by the volunteers of the organization 6 hours weekly. During thematic sessions (historical eras) the creating, creativity based elements combined with psychological self-knowledge games.

5. Work out a supporting IT system

After constantly consulting with a software developer, the plan for the IT system, which will be used from September is ready. The main aim is to be able to follow the development of the children. The users of the program will be the Patronuses (a.k.a. Social workers), the pedagogues, the leaders of the creative projects and the volunteers as well. Every session will be followed by a grouplog based on pre-established questions, therefore we can follow the development of every child. The program will store the personal data of the children, their profile based on the Talent Test, their personal curriculum, the core assessment results, all the feedback from their schools(grades, absences), the topics and evaluation of the sessions and the data based on the development of the children.

6. Development of the infrastructure

Tools

Purchasing automobiles (a 5 seater and a 7 seater) that will help the work of the pedagogical and the professional leader. They are used for transportation of the volunteers and staff members and the transportation of the children.

Creative Centre

The construction plans are ready, the aims are to establish a child- and student-friendly, homelike, secure and inclusive environment. As we obtained the building permits, the constructor bidding started. Among the three offers we chose the most suitable one.

Volunteers

Currently there are 20 constantly present volunteers, who took part in doing the creation oriented sessions, helped carrying out the parent conference and who will take active part in the VH Studio from September. We also work with Roma volunteers. We are constantly expanding our voluntary base.

Service Training, Conferences, Dissemination

The professional leader of the organization has taken part in the following conferences and trainings: a training regarding scholarships by NCSSZI Fiatalok Lendületben Programiroda, a conference of Tempus Organization, QALL-Végzettséget mindenkinek!, a workshop called 'Pedagógiai, módszertani eszközök a leghátrányosabb helyzetű fiatalokkal végzett közös munkában' (*Pedagogical and methodological tools when working with the most underprivileged youths*), a roundtable discussion about the situation of the Roma called 'Cigany-magyar határ'(Roma-Hungarian boarder), and another roundtable discussion 'Uzsora alulnezetbol' (Usury from the bottom). Every month the organization posts an entry to its website (www.cseppgyerek.hu), which reaches about 700 people, its most important events are shared on its Facebook site that has 1117 likes, which occasionally reaches thousands.

Our work in numbers

Elementary school students in Ozd: 3749

Underprivileged: 2549

We received 150 recommendations, from 4 schools, 2 social workers, 15 volunteers and the minority council.

We mailed 150 letters to the parents, and sent home 150 informational sheets.

We held four parent conferences.

127 people came to the parent conferences, out of 96 signed the declaration, an additional 7 parents indicated that they couldn't take part, but are interested.

96 children performed the Talent Test.

The job advertisements reached 80000 people

34 social worker applicants

17 pedagogue applicants

Volunteers did 8x3 2 hour long creative sessions, in which a total of 57 children took part.

Staff members

Registered volunteers: 116

Constant volunteers: 20

Talent Testers: 11

Social workers:2

Our website reaches 700 people monthly.

The average views of each of our Facebook post is between 500-2000