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# A Second Chance with Lifelong Guidance in Northern Hungary

## INTRODUCTION

*'Think globally, act locally' – measures for Sustainable Development Goals*

The United Nations treaty on Sustainable Development Goals (2015), adopted unanimously by 193 countries, envisions a just world by 2030, in which fewer people live in poverty and starvation, and have significantly more access to quality inclusive education and job support, where inequalities are reduced and well-being increases.

It is particularly important that people belonging to vulnerable groups who are disadvantaged on account of their gender, age, ethnicity or disability have access to the acquis necessary for their full participation in society.

In addition to the importance of creating a global agenda responding to crises, the treaty celebrates the different approaches, visions and models of each country and the availability of a wide range of implementation tools to achieve Sustainable Development Goals in line with the circumstances and priorities of the states involved. The activities of small communities, local civic organisations and partnerships lend people-centred and diverse content to supranational ideas, and are therefore of paramount importance.

The focus of this study is a research and development activity that examines the possibilities and limitations of career development in a highly disadvantaged region of Hungary, with a multidisciplinary approach. The research team uses educational, psychological, social scientific and economic approaches in order to obtain a more complete response to the issues of multi-disadvantaged children of mainly Romani ethnicity, and in some cases children with disabilities, with regard to their lifelong guidance, career development and subsequent integration into the labour market.

### *Multidisciplinary aspects*

The complex process of career development can primarily be analysed through the personal psychological features of a child or an individual. The evolution of a career path is greatly influenced by the choices that an individual has, which are in turn influenced not only by the environment, but also by the stable, conscious functioning of

the personality. Therefore, it is particularly important that all programmes widening the range of opportunities should be included as an inescapable part of the development of the individual's self-knowledge. Self-knowledge development covers the ability to explore the capabilities and skills of realistic appraisal of the development options for the formulation of interests, motivating factors, desires and values. The individual's awareness of their emotional-volitional properties and social skills is important. An insight into communication skills, cooperation, empathy, tolerance and conflict management skills is key to the effective management of social situations.

The two components of the self are the self-concept that individuals have about themselves and the self-esteem they feel towards themselves. With regard to career guidance, young people with sufficient self-knowledge are able to answer questions on matters such as dexterity, or, for example, how precisely they can perform tasks, or how to overcome tension, etc. Self-awareness is key to controlling thoughts, feelings and behaviour and delivering results in performance situations. Self-awareness allows the individual to find the situations and life path suitable for their qualities and skills. Good, fitting choices are accompanied by positive feelings such as joy, pride and success, while situations that hinder the self give rise to negative feelings, such as fear and anger (Smith, Mackie & Claypool, 2016). The image we have of ourselves feeds on our own thoughts, feelings and interpretations of our freely chosen behaviour, the reactions of others towards us, or the results of comparisons between ourselves and others. The reactions of others mainly affect people who have uncertain self-concepts. Comparison with others is effective when compared not with extreme (strong or weak) examples, but with individuals of similar abilities.

The image of self and the image of the future self (ideal self) has an effect on self-esteem, and it is also decisive in the evolution of an individual's way of life. A person's basic ambition of self is to maintain satisfaction with themselves and their self-esteem. Positive self-assessment is reinforced by the positive evaluation, recognition and unconditional acceptance of others and successes achieved (Rogers, 2018; Körössy, 2017). Given that self-functioning is characterised by the maintenance of self-esteem, whether positive or negative, it is extremely important for children to receive feedback from their environment that creates and maintains a realistic, positive self-image. Furthermore, the environment must support the creation of an achievable self-ideal, thereby encouraging a positive chance in life.

The educational and social scientific approach addresses the opportunities and inequalities of opportunity to access knowledge, school and social inclusion.

According to Katalin Szabó, 'Opportunity – in the most general sense – means that someone is capable of doing something or possessing something. The possessed information and experience about possibilities, its quantity and quality, the self-awareness and the knowledge of the situation determine the outcome of the struggle for opportunities. Opportunity assumes activity. In the life of a community, disadvantage means a limitation or loss of the possibility of participation with others on an equal basis, and discrimination against disadvantaged people and their environment. This approach focuses on the shortcomings of the environment and of many organised activities in society (e.g. providing and disseminating information, communication, education) that hinder or block equal participation' (Mihály, 1999; Nahalka, 2008; id. Szabó Á-né, 2014, 3).

Family environment also has a strong impact on the possibility of equal participation. The Hungarian Child Protection Act considers a disadvantaged child one whose parent or guardian has, at most, primary education or low employment status, or if the child's living environment and housing conditions are insufficient. A multiply disadvantaged child is who meets at least two of the former criteria, or a child in foster care, or a child of student status living in after-care (Act XXXI of 1997 on Child Protection and the Administration of Guardianship).

According to the Hungarian Act on Public Education, disadvantaged and multiply disadvantaged students require special attention. The Act on Public Education also states that if there are several primary schools operating in a settlement, efforts must be made to distribute disadvantaged students evenly among the institutions (Act CXC of 2011 on Public Education). This regulation is intended to prevent the segregation of schools. However, the study of Kertesi and Kézdi (2014), among others, shows that the level of school segregation in Hungary has increased since the 1980s, and the distribution of Roma and non-Roma students between schools has become more unequal. The segregation index, which measures ethnic segregation, has more than doubled. This trend was most prevalent in major cities. According to the research, the degree of segregation in primary schools is mainly determined by the extent of student mobility, the local proportion of Roma pupils and the leaning of local education policymakers towards segregation or integration (Kertesi & Kézdi, 2014).

The latter trend is also shown by the PISA results (PISA 2018 Summary Report, 2019). It reveals that Hungary unfortunately ranks highly among OECD countries in the degree of school differentiation based on the social status of parents, which means that there are some schools where only Romani pupils study (Parliamentary Resolution 47/2007 (V. 31.) on the 'Have a Better Childhood!' National Strategy, 2007–2032).

Equal opportunities in education in Hungary are regulated by Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities and Act CXC of 2011 on Public Education. According to the law, no one in Hungary is excluded from accessing education services, moreover education is compulsory for 6- to 16-year-old children. However, the legislation can primarily act against direct segregation, but in the field of education, a number of so-called 'hidden segregation' mechanisms can be found.

The term 'equity' means that it is necessary to eliminate disadvantageous distinctions, but this does not adequately ensure truly equal opportunities. Differences in society (inequities) have to be recognised and compensated for, and in order to provide equal opportunities supportive measures are needed.

One such 'inequitable factor' is the so-called assimilation constraint, which may result in marginalisation or selection and segregation. In fact, public education undertakes to eliminate the effects of inequality of opportunity through integration and inclusion. 'Of all the social strategies, inclusion (mutual inclusion) is the one that offers efficient solutions based on the concepts of equal opportunities and equity. Inclusion applies the prohibition of discrimination accompanied by equitable services providing real access, so that different social groups or individuals could live together successfully (in a way that creates opportunities)' (Varga, 2015, 24). Integration, especially in its more rigid forms, only amplifies the disadvantages that are based on differences (Réthy, 2004), if it is not accompanied by supportive measures and effective actions. Hidden selection mechanisms have to be taken into account, such as selection among the different types of schools on the basis of social prejudice

(Lannert, 2004). A significantly larger proportion of disadvantaged or Roma students study in segregated, often poorly facilitated schools and classes in Hungary.

The issue of equality in education is also the subject of examination in the PISA studies. Thus the question of fairness also appears alongside the dimensions of efficiency and effectiveness. Fairness emphasises the extent of efficiency and effectiveness to all students, in other words, the ability of a country's education system to compensate for the diversity of the students' sociocultural and economic backgrounds (PISA Summary Report, 2015).

The latter is closely linked to the concept of the added value of education systems, which examines the effectiveness of schools, depending on the socio-cultural environment (family background, settlement and environment). The schools that are considered to have high added-value are those that do not reproduce existing social inequalities, but increase the students' chances of social mobility (Frigy, 2012).

One of the most important determinants affecting students' effectiveness is the socio-economic status of parents and guardians. It is typically measured by examining the parents' education, income and occupation (Lannert, 2004).

It is not only the mechanisms of the education system that can influence the trajectory of an individual's life but also the quality of the social capital they can utilise in achieving personal goals. The main types of social capital are the following: (1) capital of competence, (2) property capital, (3) relational capital, (4) capital of social qualifications, (5) information capital, and (6) individual social capital. Capital of competence includes, for example, civil rights, the right to vote and to be elected. Property capital equates to the economic interpretation of capital. Relational capital is the sum of an individual's social relations. Capital of social qualifications includes all qualifications: such as degrees, vocational training and foreign language certificates. Information capital means having access to exclusive information, while individual social capital includes the personal qualities of a person (Farkas, 2013).

The most certain way to avoid poverty is to have a job providing a suitable income. However, finding a job in the labour market, having decent working conditions and avoiding poverty as an employee is a major challenge for many people worldwide, particularly for vulnerable, disadvantaged groups with a low level of education (International Labour Organisation, 2019). A person's future success in the labour market is adversely affected by that individual having a low level of education and insufficient competences, especially in the knowledge-based economy of our time. These factors serve to maintain poverty and inequality. Hence, developing competences and obtaining a higher level of education can reduce the risk of unemployment, increase the level of income and improve living standards. It is also beneficial for communities, as labour productivity increases, the area becomes more attractive for investors and higher added value jobs are created, with higher wages paid (World Bank, 2018).

Roma people – the largest ethnic minority in the European Union – are subject to strong discrimination in the labour market, while equal access to employment would provide the key to their social integration and struggle against poverty. In the early 2010s, only 28% of Roma people over the age of 16 had a paid job in the EU member states; 23% of them were casual labourers, 21% were self-employed and 9% were in part-time work. Among young people (16–24 years), 24% were employed (European Agency on Fundamental Rights, 2014).

Prejudice, discrimination, segregated housing conditions and low levels of education are among the reasons for their exclusion from the labour market. Among Roma youngsters (18–24 years), the share of early school leavers is significant: 72% in the Czech Republic, 82–85% in Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Slovakia, and 93% in France, Greece, Portugal, Romania and Spain do not complete secondary education (European Agency on Fundamental Rights, 2014).

## 1. OBJECTIVES

Our Life Path Research and Development Project was initiated to examine the situation of disadvantaged pupils, including students with disabilities, in a region of Hungary for the development of life path building skills in a state school environment and with the help of an out-of-school child programme. In our research, we have sought to explore the current role and opportunities of public education in connection with life path building skills and labour market integration. We examined the effects that contribute to social exclusion and their influence on these factors.

Among the main areas of career development competencies, there is always self-awareness and self-efficiency, the main elements of which are knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses, interests, values, the development of a positive self-image, and the ability to effectively shape interpersonal relationships.

The main areas of Career Management Skills (CMS), namely, self-knowledge, awareness of opportunities, decision-making and transition management skills, should form an integral part of development training programmes, as these may create a solid basis for the design, development and implementation of a career. Children, adolescents and adults of any age, and in any form of service, should be supported in acquiring and deepening their self-knowledge, and increasing the effectiveness of their interpersonal skills. In addition, it may be necessary to develop specific career management skills at a particular point in their career span, such as developing the ability to cope with changes caused by career modification, periods of unemployment or, for example, changes caused by transition to part-time work. In addition to expanding an individual's knowledge of the labour market and improving their skills for employment, flexibility development, flexible adaptability, effective management of uncertainty and environmental factors also play a key role (Vuorinen & Watts, 2013).

Development of self-knowledge, realistic self-image and self-worth and strengthening of self-confidence are overarching elements of career-building skills development. The development of career-building competences has a strong basis if the use and synthesis of knowledge, decision-making and the development of the necessary skills are linked to self-knowledge. Accurate and realistic self-knowledge allows the individual to be effective in, for example, processing knowledge of careers, related decision-making, seeking a job and keeping it etc. A young person who is aware of his or her qualities, skills, motives and desires has a higher chance of making good decisions, which leads to success, therefore building confidence and laying the foundations of a prosperous career. Another essential requirement for successful career building is the motivation itself. An important task of the environment is to generate and strengthen the motivation for career building. Conscious planning and

shaping of the future, and the urge to do so, are not implicit, they are highly influenced by socialisation.

An important part of career skills development includes, therefore, the development of realistic self-esteem, the strengthening of self-confidence and creating a sense of self-efficiency (Billédi, 2018; Perlusz, 2018). An important task of all professionals involved in the process is to develop the social, communication and cooperation skills and personality traits of children and adolescents by supportive and constructive feedback (Gordon, 2001).

Programmes aiming to develop career management skills can be organised for young people and adults alike, with key elements of developing self-worth, exploring and structuring strengths and interests, supporting critical thinking and thus strengthening personal efficiency (Vuorinen & Watts, 2013).

A part of self-knowledge development is encouraging the child or adolescents to practise self-reflection, which, in the development of career-building skills, means the exploration, comprehension and realisation of values, interests and skills connected to the world of work. A person-centred and solution-focused approach provides an effective theoretical background to the development of self-awareness in children and adolescents, working and encouraging them. Carl Rogers' (2018) person-centred approach emphasises that ensuring the positive development of a personality, whether in everyday life or in a therapeutic relationship, is linked to three basic conditions. These conditions, namely unconditional acceptance, empathetic understanding and congruent communication, allow an individual to look at themselves realistically, without any kind of defensiveness or aversion, on the basis of their own choices and decisions. According to Steve de Shazer (1985, id. Berg, 2004), a solution-focused approach is an essential component of finding solutions and resources to focus. Instead of focusing on problems, finding solutions is also about trying to find resources, which means encouraging the individual to practise self-reflection, to boost their confidence and faith in themselves.

The development of self-knowledge is a constant but not always effective part of family and institutional socialisation. In addition to the content and methodological aspects of the direct development of a young person's self-knowledge, including self-knowledge programmes and self-knowledge groups, attention should be paid to the important actors involved in this process, such as parents, teachers and counsellors. Adults, parents and professionals supporting the development of self-knowledge in young people can be effective if they themselves have realistic self-knowledge and confidence, enabling their communication and feedback to be supportive and constructive. Thus, parent groups or professional training can be an integral part of the process (Billédi & Csákvári, 2019). A strengthening family approach based on protective factors is an excellent backdrop for the complex phenomenon of the development of career-building skills. The building-up and reinforcing of the following five protective factors – parental resilience; social relationships; knowledge of parenting and development; specific support in an emergency; and the social and emotional competences of children – ultimately contributes in a complex way to improving the young person's self-knowledge, confidence, problem-solving skills, and effective career development (Kas, Billédi, Cs. Ferenczi, Csákvári & Tánczos, 2015).

## 2. INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS

The 2020 Strategic Framework of the European Cooperation in Education and Training specifies four strategic objectives intended to improve the quality of life of as many European citizens as possible (including vulnerable and cumulatively disadvantaged students supported by our Life Path programme). These goals directly frame our programme, in which lifelong guidance and career development are implemented to prevent early school leaving, as part of a second chance children's programme. The concept of early school leaving, according to the official definition in the European Union, includes those 18–24-year-old people who do not (yet) have a secondary qualification (ISCED level 3, vocational school certificate or certificate of secondary education), and do not participate in education or training.

According to the Council of the European Union, the aims of a second chance programme are the following:

- To implement lifelong learning and mobility, the development of more open education and training systems that can respond further to change;
- To improve the quality and efficiency of education and training, raising the level of basic skills (literacy, reading and numeracy), making Maths, Natural Sciences and Engineering more attractive, and strengthening language competences;
- To promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship, so that all citizens can develop their professional skills throughout their lives, regardless of their personal, social or economic circumstances;
- To develop innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training, as they are the main drivers of sustainable economic development (Council of the European Union, 2009).

Early school leaving, which affects 10.6% of European citizens aged 18–24, is a serious problem as these young people face increased difficulties in the labour market: In 2019, 4.9% of young people were in work, 3.5% were not employed but wanted to work; and 2.2% were not employed and did not want to work (Eurostat, 2019).

In Hungary, the government regulation (Government Decree 1729/2016 (XII. 13.) on the Action Plan for the Strategy against Early School Leaving) on its medium-term strategy to prevent early school leaving without qualification recognised demographic and educational reasons for the statistic of 11% for early school leaving. This means, on the one hand, that in the decreasing school population the rate of the disadvantaged and cumulatively disadvantaged students with special educational needs is constantly increasing, and that the state education and training system cannot respond effectively to their needs, while the systematic reduction of early school leaving would improve the life chances, employability and adaptability of those affected.

In her research (2013; 2019; 2020), Szilvia Schmitsek emphasises the increasing numbers of Romani students leaving school early. According to her surveys, only 15% of Romani students attend secondary school after primary school, and only 2% continue their studies in higher education (Schmitsek, 2013). However, personalised support for individual learning and career pathways for learners can increase their success in the labour market or higher education (Schmitsek, 2019).



### 3. DOMESTIC FRAMEWORKS – NATIONAL CORE CURRICULUM, GUIDELINES, LOCAL CURRICULA

Public education should play an important role in improving career development skills, further education and lifelong guidance, and in realising the right career choices (Borbély-Pecze, Gyöngyösi & Juhász, 2013). As in previous decades, Act CXC of 2011 on Public Education ranks the day-to-day responsibilities of schools and teachers as 'further education and guidance', though it does not conform with the most modern approach. However, this is not the greatest problem. Domestic legislation treats the issue of career choice as a priority development area – i.e. as content that can be incorporated into each grade of each subject – as stated in both the previously mentioned Act and in Government Decree 5/2020 (I. 31.). Among the key competences of the new National Core Curriculum, which came into force by government regulation, are those of 'employee, innovation and entrepreneurial competences', but these areas are barely present at the level of each subject framework curriculum and teachers do not have the competence to develop careers. Although the tasks of Education Assistance Services include guidance for careers and professional support for the lifelong guidance activities of teachers (Act CXC of 2011 on Public Education 18.§. 2f; and Decree of the Ministry of Human Capacities 51/2012. (XII. 21.) 26. §), this guidance is also limited, mainly due to a lack of human resources, capacity and coordination. By way of illustration, here are a few examples: within the scheme of the school course in 'Civics' it is mentioned that students shall consciously prepare for their future role as employees, thus they shall learn about the basic legislation affecting the world of work and learn about the role of the labour market, and the situation and changes in the labour market. They should recognise its role in social division of labour as listed in the 'Learning Outcomes' list, and understand and interpret the basic legal conditions and framework of student work, while also gathering information on the employment situation and changes in the structure of the various professions. Similar examples can be found in the school course in 'Technology and Design' under the heading 'Preparing for the World of Work', which states the following:

1. They shall work together with their peers according to the division of labour in group work;
2. They shall recognise the importance of working for each other, and the value of the division of labour;
3. They shall become familiar with the characteristics of observable professions and professions in their surroundings.

It can be seen from the above that the guidance provided in Hungarian schools is not a process that is built according to a plan, with the same emphasis and expanding theme in successive grades, but it is rather based on an individual or group service available in education services, which does not provide a real opportunity for the target group affected by our research and development programme. In other words, it does not fit those who need it most.



## 4. GOOD PRACTICES FOR COMPENSATING DISADVANTAGES

### 4.1. Psychological aspects

The periods of transition between different ages are always challenging. The tasks required for further studies, career choices and the responsibility of making decisions and their consequences all create a wide range of emotions in young persons, which affect their ability to cope with life tasks.

Almost all compensation programmes for disadvantaged children and/or children with disabilities affect their need to develop self-awareness. There are several programmes and good practices for developing self-knowledge. In general, a wide variety of activities are suitable for the development of self-knowledge. A key element in these programmes is the opportunity for the young to take responsibility without anxiety, to have an opportunity for self-reflection, and to receive effective feedback (criticism and praise) from their environment. In addition to self-knowledge groups, individual or group activities for different purposes (such as artistic self-expression and skills development) also have an impact on self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge groups of all ages suffice to provide a safe space for rethinking personal characteristics and dilemmas, as well as assessing traits, talents, abilities, skills, desires and career opportunities. In addition, self-knowledge groups provide a good framework for learning to express and control emotions and learning how to deal with critical situations, as well as harnessing feedback. Self-knowledge groups aim to clarify strengths and weaknesses, rethink values and define social roles. The designation of self-knowledge groups refers to the fact that, based on different methods (such as free interaction, encounter and psychodrama), the activities are aimed at improving the participants' self-awareness. The management of self-knowledge groups requires the assistance of a qualified professional, since these benefits can only be achieved in appropriate, expertly led groups (Kalamár, 2003; Sütőné Koczka, 2003; Bácskai, 2005; Rudas, 2007).

Artistic activities (fine art and film, music, dance, etc.) enable, among other things, self-reflection, the processing of emotions, the development of self-knowledge, and understanding other people's self-expression through the opportunities afforded by creation, creative activity and self-expression. Artistic activities contribute to physical and mental endurance, and development in emotional, social and cognitive fields. Artistic groups can also operate within educational frameworks or in therapeutic quality through specialists trained in their respective methods.

Various skills development groups and programmes (such as problem solving, communication skills, emotional and social skills, conflict management development, etc.) have a positive effect on self-knowledge, self-confidence and social relationships. Sport, or movement in a comprehensive way, has a developing effect on the physical, cognitive, affective and behavioural functions of the young person. As a result of sports and exercise, children and young people gain a sense of success, while their stamina improves and their self-confidence increases.

Different kinds of games – from logic games to puppet shows or drama games – help young people develop skills in several fields. Through the self-forgetting act of playing, intellectual skills develop, such as the mastering of the rules of social relations and of emotion-regulation abilities.

The tasks are organised around thematic projects, and the sets of common objectives can provide opportunities for planning, organisation, creativity, discussion, decision, ownership, cooperation, experience and exercise.

Voluntary assistance of others provides a good opportunity to strengthen positive self-esteem, even when the helpers themselves need help and support in other respects. Young people can practise making contact with others, listening to them and collaborating with them.

## 4.2. *Second chance programmes as aspects of education*

In most OECD member states, secondary education has become a minimum condition for later labour market prosperity or further education. At the same time, in many countries there is a significant number of students who become school leavers without having any qualifications (Lamb & Markussen, 2011). In addition to the supranational and national policies previously presented, non-governmental networks and complex developments that could represent a second chance for these students and their families play an important role. In the following, we present international and domestic initiatives that see career development as one of the possible ways of overcoming disadvantages.

### 4.2.1. **The European Association of Cities, Institutions and Second Chance Schools**

The European Association of Cities, Institutions and Second Chance Schools, or E2C, is the only European network that deals exclusively with the networks of second-chance schools and their development. The organisation has set out the following clear criteria for second-chance schools, which have since been applied in many member states, including Hungary, not only in the framework of schooling, but also in other development programmes:

- 'Such a school has dedicated resources for the site and staff.
- Educational processes are characterised by versatility and innovation, as well as their flexibility and individualism.
- IT tools are highly important in the education process.
- The alternation of theoretical and practical education is a central component of the system and aims to play a key role in the acquisition of professional and social competences.
- They consider it important to support and support a professional project for young people, a personalised educational approach.
- The educational procedures used are designed to ensure that pupils are left behind in their mother tongue, foreign languages, Maths and information technology' (Schmitsek, 2010, 116).

#### 4.2.2. Modules of the Dobbantó (Springboard) Programme – ‘Bridge to the World of Work’

The national programme, developed, introduced and monitored between 2008 and 2011, was designed to provide the preparatory 9th year class for the preparation of the then vocational school. The aim was to provide pupils who are not in formal education or who have already dropped out with training and life path planning/building services based on individual roadmaps to pupils with behavioural and learning difficulties, or other special needs (Mártonfi, 2013).

The modules of the programme called ‘Bridge to the World of Work’, in response to the needs of the pupils concerned, have set a complex goal: to support the development of a positive image of young people, to strengthen their competences in relation to employee and employability, and to acquire and expand their career building experience, in order to successfully find pathways between school and the world of work (Fehér, Györfi, Katona, Kádár, Kovács, Szitó & Tóth, 2009).

The Bridge modules, which accounted for 40% of the school year as a highly important element of the programme, include basic employee knowledge, career building knowledge and basic knowledge of groups of professions, as well as job-shadowing and experience of the world of work (Kovács & Katona, 2010).

#### 4.2.3. The role of Second Chance Education Programmes

Second Chance Education Programmes (‘Tanoda’ in Hungarian) have been operating in Hungary for more than two decades. ‘The Second Chance Education Programme is an institution that seeks to enhance the skills of disadvantaged students, primarily the skills of those Romani students, who, due to discrimination, find themselves in a much more difficult educational situation.’ (Kerényi, 2005, 15). According to a survey conducted in 2005, 76% of children and young people attending this programme participated in a guidance programme and 69% participated in a further study programme (Németh, 2005). At the same time, studying the operation of the Second Chance Education Programmes in Hungary (they number about 100), it can be concluded that the activity of these programmes extends far beyond the basic activity for which it was originally created.

The activities can be classified as the following:

- Building a complex chance-creating model,
  - Community development (community programmes, community building),
  - Scholarship programmes,
  - Contributing to solving crisis situations,
  - The creation and exploitation of income-generating activities, and
  - Training programmes for different local participants.
- It is clear that dealing with children with multiple disadvantages, especially those who are even more affected by discrimination – precisely because of the complexity of the problems – requires multidisciplinary and intersectoral cooperation, in each case focusing on the person, the child.

#### 4.2.4. InDaHouse pilot-programme

Since 2014, the InDaHouse Hungary Association has been working with disadvantaged, mainly Romani children, in four small towns in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, with the help of volunteers. The aim of the organisation is to support the education and further education of the 100 children involved and, in the long term, to help them become self-fulfilling, responsible and self-fulfilling adults. The programme is implemented in the township of Hernádszentandrás every weekend during the school year. In this programme, individualised development sessions and group sessions take place in the school, and individual early childhood development sessions are conducted in families' homes. Every week, children involved in the school development programme are provided with a task sheet that corresponds to their individual learning goals, abilities and interests. Additionally, every child has a task sheet volunteer, and the goal is for each child to have a mentor who tracks their individual development path. The school has time slots, so every child has a one-and-a-half- to two-hour time slot when they go to the school. The professional foundations of the programme are focused on individual development and education through play. It is a professional goal to strengthen the children's self-awareness and self-confidence. The latter is especially important as the children participating in the programme typically face failure and negative feedback in educational institutions, which reduces their self-esteem and motivation to participate in education and to continue learning. Furthermore, it is important to note that the Association is not only concerned with the development of children, but also as an employer in the affected settlements. The children are transported to school by two of the fathers as paid workers. Furthermore, the Association operates a guesthouse in settlement of Pere in the form of a social enterprise, which also creates a workplace.

The Life Path Programme brought a new career path, a career orientation focus, and an approach to the operation of InDaHouse. It helps identify and organise operations that are already in place, but which support sporadic career guidance, and facilitates the integration of new elements of guidance.

## 5. THE LIFE PATH RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The aim of our research and development programme was to support the more efficient operation of these services by exploring the skills of the chosen municipality and its environment, while developing career building skills and improving its existing organisational and network operations. Our model is similar to the approach of the new rehabilitation paradigm, which 'captures and strives to deliver the various services as gap-free, gear-like interlocking in time', and interlocking, with an alternating focus, so that the help we need arrives without delay and in a well-coordinated manner' (Borsay 1979; Weiss 1974, id. Könczei, 2009, 19). As Könczei claims: 'This approach helps focus on the person at the heart of the process: between the gears that move at the same time, interconnecting and driving each other, there are no more important and less important gears, because they all have to rotate, otherwise the process will stop' (Könczei, 2009, 19).

The Life Path Research & Development Programme consists of three elements in this regard. In the framework of our research the relevant international and domestic literary background has been reviewed and fieldwork of a qualitative nature has been conducted, and the insights that have been gained will support the career planning of students participating in the InDaHouse Children's Programme.

In the development section, building on the results of the research, a complex methodological package will be compiled for students and their schools, in order to provide specific professional support in the field of career development and career guidance to the volunteers of the Children's Programme. The aim is to help educators working in the students' schools, while preparing a personal career plan for the students who will be involved in the programme.

Elements of the methodological package will be tested in the coming academic year and a partnership will be developed to ensure the sustainability of developments at local level. The strengthening of these synergies, on the one hand, can lead to the alignment and networking of stakeholders in different sectors, such as children and their families, educators educating children, volunteers and mentors in the children's programme, local employers and municipalities. On the other hand, further input and other impacts will appear during the process, adding more value to the effectiveness of the programme.

## 6. RESULTS

Our study is one of qualitative research, in which we conducted semi-structured interviews with local actors supporting the development of careers of disadvantaged, mainly young Roma people, in the InDaHouse Hungary children's programme, in order to become acquainted with their opinions and suggestions on the subject. We focused territorially on Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, including Miskolc as the county seat, and on the four municipalities of the Encsi region (Hernádszentandrás, Hernádbüd, Ináncs and Pere), where the children of the InDaHouse programme live. During the first phase of the research, we conducted interviews with the teachers of a secondary school in Miskolc, a career guidance specialist from the education service in Miskolc, a nursery-school social worker working in the district and the mayor of one of the four small towns mentioned. The findings of these first interviews are summarised in this section.

### 6.1. *The context of the research*

#### 6.1.1. **The labour market situation in the county**

With regard to the employment data of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, there has been a positive labour market process in recent years, specifically a significant decrease in the jobless rate and the number of jobseekers. However, disadvantaged groups in the labour market have not been able to take advantage of these positive developments. The county has a remarkably high rate of jobseekers with only a primary school education, which means their not having any kind of qualification; in the Encsi micro-

region, where the present research was conducted and the development programme is implemented, the rate is the second highest in the entire county (Expanzió, 2018).

The interviewees emphasise the problem of unemployment, which has exploded since the change of regime in the area where, typically, they had previously lived from agriculture. The mayor of the village notes that there are still good but currently unexploited resources in agriculture due to a lack of relevant systemic strategy and innovation in the area. There are limited job opportunities in the small settlements that we examined. Typically, the main employers are the local authority, the nursery, the school, social institutions and small shops. There are job opportunities in Encs, but they typically require expertise, and are located around Miskolc, in factories, that are owned by international companies. The latter are highlighted by the principal of the Miskolc secondary school as the main job possibility for students who have graduated from the school. Since 2012, public work schemes have been available for low-educated or unskilled workers, and unskilled labour and undeclared work is also available on the region's construction sites. There are also bottom-up job creation initiatives, such as the Bioszentandrás Organic Gardening Social Enterprise in Hernádszentandrás. In addition to the possibility of work experience and workplace socialisation (acquiring, for instance, a capacity for failure tolerance, cooperation or following schedules and rules), Bioszentandrás also supports the completion of further training for its employees and serves as a springboard to the open labour market.

The region is characterised by the emigration of young people and qualified skilled labour.

*'Increasingly, those who have strong connections or no chance of going anywhere else remain in the small settlements. At best, they have a certificate of primary school attendance as the highest qualification but some do not even have that.'* (The mayor)

### 6.1.2. The situation of children and families living in small settlements

According to the teachers' interviews, students and their families typically face numerous failures and prejudices against Romani people during their school careers.

*'I do not know. I do not want this. I'm not very good at this. I'm not smart. These are the typical sentences I hear from children.'* (Secondary school teacher)

*'Most families have struggled a lot already. They are very, very down. They have a lot of life management problems. As I see it here [...] I tend to have children whose families are already falling apart.'* (Nursery and school social worker)

In addition, family patterns and family background have a significant effect on their early school leaving and further studies. For families with financial problems, making money and working are preferred over the children's further studies. For girls, traditional gender roles and having children can also divert them from further studies.

*'I can't go to school because I can't buy food for myself.'* (Young girl quoted by secondary school principal)

*'He can't study at home because his wife has to clean up.'* (Secondary school principal)

*'Contrary to stereotypes, young people are not like that. They would like to get good things and opportunities. They want to have a better life. And when one gains their trust, they can move on. They can only move on for a certain amount of time because they are often in families that create an awful force pulling them back.'* (Nursery and school social worker)

If young people also decide on further studies or vocational training, the decisive factor affecting their choice is the geographical proximity of the training and not whether it meets their interests. Families living in small settlements are often extremely afraid for their children's safety, which can hinder their mobility and further studies.

*'Recently I was in a small school and there, thanks to a grant, the pupils could go to the cinema and on an excursion. We had to talk to each parent to let the children go, because the parents are afraid that their children might be stolen, that their organs might be sold. So they fear for their children to such an extent.'* (Life guidance specialist)

Insufficient levels of access to digital tools and digital competences can hinder young people's further studies. Typically, children typically use social media sites exclusively on their smartphones, but they are unable to find information on the internet. Currently, the information needed for further studies is mainly available digitally, which these children and families typically do not have access to.

### **6.1.3. Major institutional actors relevant to career development**

#### **6.1.3.1. School**

According to the principal of the secondary school, their funding is low and unreliable, which hinders professional work. For this reason they undertake a wide variety of tasks in which they see opportunities for improvement. For example, a workshop will be established in the school from September, where a partial vocational certificate will be awarded in addition to graduation. He mentions as a difficulty the variable nature of the legal environment and the low number of students in upper secondary schools, as the world of work is more attractive to many young people than that of studying, due to, among other reasons, the lowering of the minimum school leaving age (to 16 years).

They try to encourage young people to continue their education after primary school by various means. They regularly visit primary schools, where they also motivate the students, their families, and teachers. They typically face the fact that primary school teachers have also had numerous experiences of failure, not believing that their students would be able to obtain a certificate for a profession or for graduation. The low number of students attending the school (60–70 people) provides an opportunity to build relationships and an atmosphere of trust. Great emphasis is placed on strengthening the young people's self-confidence, self-knowledge and personal support through individual mentoring. The school provides a youth hostel, which creates the opportunity for those students who live far from the school to attend. The youth hostel also plays an important role in developing and consolidating learning habits and time



management skills. They also organise clubs and leisure programmes. A scholarship scheme is available, also funded by the state, which is very motivating for families and young people. A scholarship programme is also offered, in addition to work, in which the young people are already working while still studying at school.

*'Our students are very happy that they not only waste their time at school, but get paid for learning.'* (Secondary school principal)

The secondary school supports students in two main career directions, specifically towards obtaining a graduation certificate and, if possible, pursuing higher education, or towards vocational training. They are in contact with higher education institutions such as Eötvös Loránd University, Corvinus University and the Central European University, where visits are organised to show the students that Romani people can obtain Bachelor's or Master's degrees.

*'We build trust that they are able to study at universities.'* (Secondary school teacher)

They also cooperate with vocational schools and regularly visit factories around Miskolc, which also receive their students as trainees.

In the secondary school, the social worker of the nursery and the school has been delegated as the person responsible for lifelong guidance. An important factor in her case is that she has several years of experience of working with disadvantaged children in the Lyukó Valley, so she can also establish positive relationships with their students.

#### 6.1.3.2. Education Assistance Service and lifelong guidance

According to the lifelong guidance specialist, there is a shortage of capacity and specialists in the education assistance service, and as a result, their lifelong guidance work unfortunately does not extend to all primary schools in the county. Schools are enrolled in their programme, which includes lifelong guidance classes and days in grades 7 and 8 of primary school and secondary school. However, the career choice exhibition is open to all schools. Additionally, in Miskolc, individual lifelong guidance counselling is available at their headquarters. The expert emphasises that small-town schools, which are the focus of the present research, are at a disadvantage as opposed to urban schools, as they have more limited transport and other adverse circumstances, making it more difficult for them to access further training and lifelong guidance. She describes it as a problem that students typically lack knowledge about professions and have high school dropout rates. On the other hand, it can be a supporting factor if a parent works in a certain profession and involves the child in becoming familiar with it, because this can give the child a positive role model and motivation. However, this is not evident in families in which parents do not work, or work predominantly in public work schemes. The principal of the secondary school also stresses that students coming from a village or from a town have completely different knowledge. For instance, a child in Miskolc learns many more professions indirectly than a child growing up in a small village, simply because there are more diverse job opportunities in a larger city.

### 6.1.3.3. Social work in nurseries and schools

Nursery and school social work services have been operating in the district since 2018. They aim to identify and address social problems in nurseries and schools. The responsibilities of social workers include preventing school-based violence and conducting lifelong guidance sessions. The social worker also confirms the opinion of the lifelong guidance specialist that young people's knowledge of the profession is very low. Therefore, she organises factory, business and institutional job shadow visits to employers in the area for schools, where students can learn about different professions.

*'I want to get the kids to come back to a place regularly, and have a mentor there to have connections to someone, because there is fear in them, as I say to the outside world. If you already have connections to someone, you have confidence, you can ask better, you will not be so shy. You experience the misconceptions you may have in your mind about non-Romani people.'* (Nursery and school social worker)

### 6.1.3.4. InDaHouse Hungary Children's Programme

According to the findings in the interviews, there is no active cooperation between the lifelong guidance specialist of the education assistance service, the social worker of the nursery and the school and InDaHouse Hungary Children's Programme. These actors have a limited view of each other's work.

The secondary school principal considers the work of InDaHouse Hungary Children's Programme important, as it provides a supportive background for students and their families, which reduces dropout.

*'It's good they were standing behind the two kids!'* (Secondary school principal)

The mayor acknowledges the professional work of InDaHouse Hungary Children's Programme. He sees the key to its sustainability in finding synergies with local actors and embedding in the community.

*'They have to understand that in a small town, whoever comes from far away at first looks strange as a stranger. [...] In addition to doing what they do very well, there is also a focus on making contact with other environments where the child is also in focus – like parents and, school professionals, in order to start that kind of synergy.'* (The mayor)

## CONCLUSION

In our research and development programme we focus on children, and especially on students (Ferge & Darvas, 2011). In our study, we presented a form of research utilising a gear-like operating model, which focuses on strengthening students. We formulated our goals based on the conviction that the support of labour market integration also highly depends on public education. In our interpretation, career development is an immanent element of an education system and at the same time it presents an opportunity. We sought to show the inner strength of collaboration between various actors with regard to a specific children's programme.

We attempted to show that stakeholders, who had previously worked independently, are able to generate common activities for the same purpose, in the best interests of the children and students, if they cooperate and have the tools to do so. We present some good practices on supporting the life path planning of disadvantaged Roma students who are particularly in need of professional support to compensate for the socio-economical disadvantages caused by their family background.

Our research also reveals that focusing on children, developing and strengthening their abilities cannot be realised solely by working with them, but also by involving people around the children, those who might have impact on their lives. Supporting and helping these people (parents, teachers and , helpers) is at least as important for the development of the adults as it is for the children.

All these not only directly serve to strengthen the children's and students' career development competence and empowerment skills, but organisations and actors also face synergies of working together and their ability to make an impact. In disadvantaged areas, cooperation and the utilisation of available limited financial and human resources are even more crucial. In this case, notions such as sustainability and innovation are not merely empty words, but they become a part of everyday practice based on multidisciplinary professional collaboration. Our research may not only provide a basis for developing stronger cooperation between the professional actors in the examined area, but also represent a starting point for making educational policy decisions, developing intersectoral collaboration and facilitating the networking of local communities.

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