

Hungary

**Gyermekek Háza Alternative Foundational Programme
(Kuno Klebelsberg Primary and Grammar School)**

This primary school for students' aged 6 to 14 uses reform pedagogy inspired differential teaching methods in heterogeneous classes that include children with special needs. The main objective is to offer learning opportunities to all children according to their ability, so that they can learn actively and independently, assess their own work and learn to cooperate in mixed-ability teams. The school uses a local curriculum, and materials and books designed by the school staff to allow students to work at one of three complexity levels, but on similar contents. Parents are engaged in different formal and informal meetings and in demonstration (open) lessons during which they can observe their children in school learning situations. Teachers take part in each other's lessons to learn from each other, and beginning teachers are paired with an experienced colleague to help them prepare the lessons. The school is involved in teacher-training programmes at university and it is a model school that is open for visitors.

Main Focus of Innovation: LEARNERS, CONTENT, ORGANISATION

Other Keywords: alternative philosophy, equity

General Information

Name of the ILE: Gyermekek Háza Alternative Foundational Programme (Kuno Klebelsberg Primary and Grammar School)

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Website: www.gyermekekhaza.hu

ILE submitted by: The Hungarian ILE Steering Group

Rationale

Why do you suggest that it should be included in the project? How does it respond to 21st century learning challenges?

Gyermek Háza School is a primary school in Budapest, the student's range in age from six to fourteen years. The school's name in English is "Children's House" which expresses that every child can find his/her sense of security and a home. The school is open to any student from the local district, including those with disabilities. There are eight years in Gyermek Háza.

In every class there are about 2-3 special needs students and talented student too. Children spend the whole day in school; from 8h to 16.00h.

The special needs children spend nearly their whole school time with the other children, they study all subjects together. Gyermek Háza School assures special needs children of a support teacher and a curriculum for mainstream (integrated) education. According to the children's skills the learning process could be in different rates and using different pedagogic methods. It is our belief that inclusion is good for every student. Especially for the handicapped children who are not torn away from their everyday environment. They can attend school near by their homes. The medium of healthy (typical) students is natural for them as well as in the adult world. Healthy children can experience that handicapped classmates are the same like them, only they have other possibilities in some aspects. But then again isn't this true for every single one of us? Everybody has stronger and weaker areas of abilities and that may be more salient for the handicapped children. That's all. This is natural for children. We only have to help them to keep it like this.

The school is controlled by the local government, but it has got its own pedagogic program. The principles of the program fit to the government's central recommendations. Our school gives chance for every student and helps for the social mobility. The main point is to offer each child the same learning opportunities, but according to his/her own ability. In our school the students are in the centre of the education instead of the curriculum. That makes our school inclusive. So, the different kinds of students and their abilities determine the working of our school not the standard curriculum. We try to get acquainted with our students, their social milieu and to work up personal relationships. The school starts with "talking circle". It means, every day children sit in a circle and they have informal conversation about their everyday. We've made a differential learning environment. Our teaching methods are not standardized so they ensure diverse learning ways. Our students can go on slowly or rapidly in the acquirement of knowledge and key skills. Teachers apply the differential teaching methods and cooperative learning instead of "frontal teaching". In this manner they can go by the diversity of their students and by the idiosyncrasy (specific individual needs) of handicapped children.

The evaluation is a bit different from the Hungarian general education system, because in the first six years pupils get "a written evaluation" (a school report) and only in the seventh and eighth years get marks (from 1 to 5) and also a school report. Our concept of evaluation is based on helping in children's development instead of classification.

Learning Aims / Intended Learning Outcomes of the ILE

What are the core learning aims and which knowledge, skills or attitudes are to be acquired? (These may include outcomes related to learners' social, interpersonal, or meta-cognitive development)

Gyermekék Háza School staff sees the school as a welcoming place for all the children. We believe every child should:

- fully develop their abilities
- play an active role in the process of learning
- be able to learn independently
- be able to realistically assess their own work
- accept themselves and their peers
- be able to cooperate with each other
- have access to a broad scale of differentiated learning possibilities
- study the same topic
- be supported in a positive learning environment.

Learners

Which group(s) of learners is it aiming at? Who is eligible to take part? How many learners are there? What are their ages?

Gyermekék Háza School is a primary school in Budapest, the student's range in age from six to fourteen years. The school is open to any student from the local district, including those with disabilities. There are eight years in Gyermekék Háza. In each year there is only one class. There are about 20-25 students in every class, in each class there are about 2-3 special needs students, and sometimes talented student too.

There are 185 pupils in our school and 30 of them are special needs students:

- physical disabilities: 8
- hearing impairment: 5
- visual impairment: 1
- learning difficulties: 6
- speech- and language disorder: 9
- autism: 1

Facilitators

Who are the teachers/facilitators? Who are the leaders? What are their professional backgrounds? What are their roles?

The staff includes 16 full-time teachers, three remedial teacher and one speech therapist. One of our teachers is the leader called Marietta Lányi Kókay. Three of us are public education expert. Four of us have got higher pedagogical examination.

Our fundamental principle is that every member of the staff is responsible for the successful functioning of the school. Everybody is an "owner". We make our decision together. The school staff work together, the teamwork goes very well and we share materials, worksheets, ideas, etc. We learn a lot from each other, for example we can take part in each other's lessons and that helps us. We teach and also study the differential learning methods in continuing professional educations. The beginners (teachers) can choose a colleague who helps them in the preparation for the lessons. We regularly hold teacher's meetings where we talk about educational situations.

Organization of the ILE

How is learning organised? How do learners and facilitators interact? What kind of pedagogy do they follow? What curriculum is used?

Our school has developed a local curriculum. The principles of the program fit to the government's central recommendations- "A sajátos nevelési igényű tanulók iskolai oktatásának tantervi irányelvei". The main point is to offer each child the same learning opportunities, but according to his/her own ability (the Educational Ministry 2/2005. (III. 1.)).

The School staff published their own curriculum materials, and wrote books in Mathematics, Hungarian and Nature as part of our curriculum innovation. The books present graded tasks which allow students to work at their own level and pace, but with similar content.

Teachers had to change a lot of things in their practice. They apply the differential teaching methods and cooperative learning instead of "frontal teaching". In this manner they can go by the diversity of their students and by the idiosyncrasy (specific individual needs) of handicapped children. We often apply Cooperative Learning in the Gyermek Ház. Children experience that they can easier do the exercises together, they can count on each other and everybody is a valuable member of the group.

Learning Context

In which context does learning take place? What does the physical learning environment look like? Are community resources used to facilitate learning and how?

We've made a differential learning environment. Our teaching methods are not standardized so they ensure diverse learning ways. Our students can go on slowly or rapidly in the acquirement of knowledge and key skills. We also differ the curriculum into three levels of complexity. We work with cards and workbooks that contain the knowledge in three levels. (Gyermek Ház coursebook -Konsept-H Press, Piliscsaba, Hungary).

We often apply Cooperative Learning in the Gyermek Ház. Teachers have to supervise the process of getting every group member a fitting role, however the group itself does the casting. There are many different roles e.g.: "time-monitor", "chief of silence", "spokesman", "writer". It is important for the students to experience that they can depend on each other and they have mutual responsibility. During the cooperative learning students work in mixed groups.

In differentiated studying forms children do such exercises that are suitable for their basic needs, their actual states, their previous knowledge, and their learning styles. In this studying form groups of the children do the same exercise, but they don't cooperate with each other, they do their work by their own or with the teacher's help.

Soros Foundation chose Gyermek Ház School as a Model School, which means that our children are at the centre of the school's life, and visitors are welcome. We strive to have good connection with parents. Gyermek Ház is an "open school", its door is opened for parents all the time. We believe, child rearing is our collective challenge. This is why we have to work together, take each other's point of view into consideration and know each other's educational principles. Than we might be successful.

Parents can find the teachers with their questions, requests, problems or happiness whenever they wish. We have special parents meeting. When we put chairs around, and we speak about different topics. But it is a bit informal; it's about parents' general rearing problems or questions. We have special 'Parents forum', when we invite a specialist (e.g. psychologist) and we think and speak about the topic together. We and the specialist can offer books in the topic and exercises for solving specific problems.

We regularly have demonstration (open) lessons for parents. They can see their children in learning situations, how they can work in groups, pairs or alone. Parents are also regular participants for school events. It's very important for us and the children too, and these situations show that child rearing is our collective task.

Gyermekek Háza School is associated with Eötvös Loránd University Faculty of Special Education and Budapest Teacher-Training College. The student teachers come for teaching practice in our school. We offer postgraduate studies for teachers too. In postgraduate studies the teachers can study integration and differentiated learning as well as observing and practising them. These postgraduate studies are accredited by the Ministry of Education.

History of ILE

Who initiated it? For what reasons was it started and with what purpose? Have these changed since?

The school was founded in 1991 by experienced teachers, and although their experience was very useful, the Reform pedagogy (for example: Montessori) was determining factor too. It was obvious that there were and there would be more and more students who would require individual care, personal education and teaching. More and more students struggled with different kinds of problems, such as behavioural disorder or deviance. Many of them had learning disabilities and difficulties, which inhibit them from studying well. The school status of students with special needs is an important question for us. Strong segregation is peculiar to Hungarian Education, which raises a lot of problems.

Funding of the ILE

How is it funded?

Gyermekek Háza is maintained by the local government (Budapest, 2nd district) and it is also supported by parents' foundation.

Learning Outcomes

What are the learning outcomes achieved by the ILE, including academic, social, interpersonal and meta-cognitive outcomes? How is learning assessed?

Learning is assessed in the first six years with a written evaluation (a school report) and only in the seventh and eighth years pupils get marks (from 1 to 5) and also a school report. Our evaluation in school is based on a personal system, containing the different levels of student' achievement. The special needs children get their own special evaluation guidelines.

Learning outcomes are balanced. Nobody drops out and nobody should stay down for a year. Index numbers of further education are quite good, every student - special needs students too - can continue their studies in secondary schools.

Results of the National Measurement of Students' Competences:

In 2006 the results of the 8th graders

Mathematical competence:

Average point of Hungarian students: 494

Average point of the students of Gyermekek Háza: 575

Reading competence:

Average point of Hungarian students: 497

Average point of the students of Gyermekek Háza: 602

In 2007 the results of the 8th graders

Mathematical competence:

Average point of Hungarian students: 491

Average point of the students of Gyermek Ház: 502

Reading competence:

Average point of Hungarian students: 497

Average point of the students of Gyermek Ház: 551

Prizes and participation in international programmes:

Unesco published the document 'Welcoming Schools' in 1999, in which Hungary is represented by Gyermek Ház.

Soros Foundation chose Gyermek Ház School as a Model School, which means that our children are at the center of the school's life, and visitors are welcome.

Gyermek Ház School took part in the TEMPUS Program, which was announced by the European Economic Community.

2005. Charter of Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

2008. Prize of Budapest

The principle of the month January of 2009: Mrs Kókay Lányi Marietta (www.inclusiveeducation.ca)

Documentation describing or evaluating the ILE

Is there documentation on this learning environment? Is there a website? Films? Research reports or evaluations? Other forms of documentation? (please supply references or links)

Films:

- Alternatív Pedagógiák – Gyermek Ház (Alternative pedagogies – Gyermek Ház). Director and cameraman: György Pál, SuliNova, 2004.

- Becsöngettek (The school bell has rung). Director and cameraman: György Pál, SuliNova, 2005.

- Természetesen (Naturally). Director: Éva Varga, Országos Foglalkoztatási Közalapítvány, NFÜ.

Books:

Gyermek Ház coursebooks, Konsept – H Kiadó, 1998.

Kókayné Lányi Marietta: Könyv az integrációról. Sajátos nevelési igényű gyerekek együttnevelése a Gyermek Házban (Book about the integration. Integration of students with special educational needs in Gyermek Ház), SuliNova, 2007.

Kókayné Lányi Marietta – Vojnitsné Kereszty Zsuzsa: Könyv a differenciálásról (Book about the differentiating pedagogy), Educatio, 2008.