

Country note - Hungary

Policy example: Snétberger Music Talent Centre, 2011-2014

Description: The Snétberger Music Talent Centre was founded in 2011 to provide high-quality music education and mentoring for talented youth. The explicit mission of the centre is to promote the social and economic integration of the young generation living in a disadvantaged situation in Hungary, primarily but not exclusively young Roma people. The main goal of the centre is twofold: to help the young participants to improve their skills and to strengthen their self-esteem, and to help starting their professional life (including self-employment) or continuing their musical education.

Problem addressed: In 2012 the proportion of pupils in a disadvantaged situation reached 35% in elementary schools, around 30% in vocational schools, and almost 10% in high schools in Hungary. The proportion of early school leavers (11.5% in 2012) in Hungary is much above the average of the neighbouring countries. The main reason behind this figure is the number of dropouts in vocational schools – notably, the schools where pupils in disadvantaged situation are over-represented (MPT 2013). The situation of the Roma is even more extreme. An impact assessment study run in schools with a special education programme shows that one result of the programme provided in integrated classes was the improved self-assessment and self-esteem of Roma pupils in the treatment groups (Kézdi-Surányi 2009). About 6 % of Roma children drop out of education right after primary school (compared to 1% of their non Roma peers) and many fail to finish secondary school (Kertesi and Kézdi 2009a). Even among Roma children with above-average skills, only 30 % go to grammar school (compared to 80% of non-Roma peers) and the majority go to vocational schools that focus on practical skills rather than the development of basic competences. Two-thirds of the gap between Roma and non-Roma kids in school choice can be attributed to the poor schooling and poverty of their parents that tends to lower their aspirations on what their children may achieve (Kertesi and Kézdi (2009b). Children from a disadvantaged background often lack the motivation to study, which may be related to their low self-esteem and the lack of positive role models in their community (Feischmidt et al 2010). An impact assessment study run in schools with a special education programme shows that one result of the programme provided in integrated classes was the improved self-assessment and self-esteem of Roma pupils in the treatment groups (Kézdi-Surányi 2009). Successful young Roma musicians may become role models for their community and may impact on majority attitudes as well.

Approach: The programme combines three main elements: education in classical music, personal mentoring and peer-assistance, and career-support services. The lead behind the Centre is Ferenc Snétberger, a world class jazz musician of Roma origin whose original idea was that talent, education and competence building should be an effective driver of for social mobility. In June 2011 the Centre opened with the first, six week-long camp for 68 participants in Felsőőrs (village in Western part of Hungary). Since the first year an additional 145 young pupils participated in the comprehensive teaching and mentoring programme. The Centre hires experts to visit disadvantaged areas to recruit talented children. The participants receive teaching and training courses (in the so-called camps), tailor-made personal mentoring, and peer assistance. Along with the formal courses the Centre also appoints personal mentors to each of the participants. By 2013 the Centre had 6 mentors, all of them with college degree in pedagogy, sociology or social work. The Centre provides post programme mentor services and strives to help its alumni by disseminating career-development information (information on stipends, performance opportunities, etc.) and organising stage performances on a regular basis. It is anticipated that many participants will become self-employed, as a typical way of earning a living as a musician. The total budget since the beginning of the programme (including the building of the Centre) is HUF 1.2 bn (€3.9m).

Impact: Since 2011 the total number of the participants has been 213, and the Centre close contact with about 90 alumni. With the help of the Centre the participants have performed on more than 100 occasions – in Hungary and abroad. Though there is no formal evaluation, the Centre runs each year a feedback survey among the pupils the results of which indicate high proportion of pupils being satisfied with the programme structure and the curriculum.

Conditions for success: The Snétberger Music Talent Centre is a unique and exemplary initiative in the Hungarian context. A German music school established for teaching music to talented Roma and Sinto youth inspired Ferenc Snétberger, the founding father. The novelty and the pioneering role of the Hungarian centre are in combining training and professional counselling and mentoring in a systematic way. The relatively stable and flexible funding allowed the founders and the managers to gradually develop the programme.

References

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Kertesi, G. and G. Kézdi. 2012. Ethnic segregation between Hungarian schools: Long-run trends and geographic distribution. Budapest Working Papers on the Labour Market. BWP 2012/8.

Kézdi, G. and É. Surányi. 2009. Egy sikeres iskolai integrációs program tapasztalatai. Educatio Kht. Budapest

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Programme documents provided by the Snétberger Music Talent Centre:

Methodological Handbook, 2013

Summary of the results of the pupils questionnaires, 2011-2013

Statistics on the pupils accepted and on the applicants, 2011-2013

Memos on the curriculum of the camps, 2013

Summary of the development project (carrier offices, music recording studio), 2014