



Case Study Briefing

‘Tanoda’ –The Study Hall



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1. Overview

'Tanoda' is a complex extracurricular education program and an effective tool for social integration of disadvantaged children

The 'Tanoda' programme is a complex programme that helps increase the chances of disadvantaged (especially Roma) children for social integration and also strives towards the implementation of 'equal opportunity' in education and in the everyday life. The programme aims to help students with multiple disadvantages to be more successful at school, to continue their studies and, in this way, to boost their chances in the labour market and social integration. It aims to individually develop each participant's personality as a whole using various methods with free time and educational activities.

2. Key policy implications

The Tanoda provides safety and impulsive environment for disadvantaged children to compensate for the lack of socialization and to prevent falling behind at school.

- the program is based on individual needs and alternative, informal items of experiential education;
- the Tanoda's are organized by civil associations as a grassroots initiative,
- involvement of volunteering work in the process,
- networking between the people in the children's environment and the institutions
- the program ensures the shared experience of the child and the parent and it develops parental competencies,
- the program features methods that assist learning,
- it also applies effective forms of community development,
- this type of school treats students as partners, it gets them involved in forming and managing a timetable based on individual needs, group work and leisure time activities.

3. Context

The beneficiaries and their needs

The main victims of the aftermath of the collapse of socialism in Hungary were mainly the Roma minority and disadvantaged groups of society. Among them, there is a high rate of persons with low education levels and unemployment and it is also very common for these groups to experience various forms of poverty and social exclusion. In the past five years, Hungary has seen an increase in the number of children that decide not to finish their studies, which is due to the highly segregated nature of the education. The percentage of individuals who continue school in secondary education is low (approx. 10 percent) among them. The rate of leaving school among disadvantaged children is also significantly high, especially regarding secondary school, where it reaches 80 percent. In order to enhance the performance of children with multiple disadvantages (including Roma students as well) at school and to reduce the number of students that fail to finish their studies, the Hungarian Government and civil organizations attempt to support the improvement of the performance of early school-leavers and the disadvantaged Roma youth. This policy also attempts to help them catch up and fully develop their skills and talents through various initiatives such as the “Tanoda” program.

Who is involved

According to Public Education Act LXXIX 1993, Section 95, Paragraph (1), Point (m), the education minister’s task regarding public education development include the planning and promotion of extra-curricular activities (also including Tanoda-type programmes) that help enhance disadvantaged students’ performance at school. In the Tanoda program, the main actors are civil organizations with the support of a national grant program.

The main scope of the case study are two Tanodas. The “FakutyaTanoda” project was initiated by the Debrecen-based BIT Association (<http://www.bitegyesulet.hu>) and the project has been operated by them ever since then. Even though the project’s official time frame (01 June 2013 – 30 June 2015) has ended, the Association volunteered to continue organizing and hosting the aforementioned activities/sessions (twice a week) as well as organizing regular events like before. The “Huszárvár Tanoda” project was organized by HUMAN-NET Association in Nyíregyháza. (<http://www.humannet.hu/index.php/hu/>). They organized the Tanoda for disadvantaged students living in the Huszár Housing Estate in 2011. After the closing the segregated school mainly attended by Roma children, the Tanoda helped to integrate the children into the new school and to adapt to the higher school requirements.

Policy theme

The Tanoda’s target audience are (mainly Roma) children and young adults with disadvantages or multiple disadvantages between the age of 11 and 18. The number of children participating in the “FakutyaTanoda” program is 30, and in the Huszárvár Tanoda, it is 80. The main goal of the project is to improve the chances of students with disadvantages in further education and job seeking.

Innovation

The programme’s two main fields of activities are as follows:

1. Activities that can help compensate for social disadvantages: media camp, sports club, handcrafting events, drama club, “Opposite Days”, excursions, family days, social events, “Tanoda Cup”, Tanoda school year closing ceremony.
2. Activities that encourage improvement, boost/assist learning: study room for humanities, study room for sciences, study room for languages, Internet club, various training courses, skills development sessions (physical exercise, visual, learning and emotional intelligence), career orientation.

4. Sources of evidence

In order to construct the potential dimensions of the project evaluation, we analyzed the documents and datasets related to the target group, delivered by the staff of the projects; and prepared interviews with the experts of the program. The Associations provided its infrastructure and all kind of support during the process assessment.

The process evaluation draws upon data from three groups:

1. young individuals who have participated in the project (23 interviews, and dataset of 91 participants);
2. parents of the children who participated in the Tanoda program (11 interview)
3. the group of experts who participated in the Tanoda programmes. (7 interviews with project manager, teacher mentors, volunteers)

The assessment was carried out through 2 focus group interviews and 41 individual, face-to-face interviews were recorded. The interviews were prepared by the staff members and students of University of Debrecen, Department of Sociology and Social Policy. The individual and group interview research concentrated on the knowledge of the programme's objectives and the evaluation of their manifestation.

The most important analytical dimensions that have arisen throughout the assessment were:

1. what circumstances and/or variables had modified the project's initial objectives (to its advantage or disadvantage);
2. potential alternatives regarding the development of the project.

5. Main findings

In respect to academic achievements, no significant effects of the program could be detected, but improvement tendencies in the case of the children taking part in the program could be observed. We concluded that 39.6% of children did not perceive any changes, they did not get better or worse school grades. 56% of children could improve their school grades due to the developmental activities, while 44% of them received worse grades from one or more school subjects than a year earlier. Considering the fact that the target group has multiple disadvantages (socio-cultural background described above, the school in the housing estate was closed, so children had to attend another schools with higher expectations and less acceptance), such results are significant. It is possible that without the study hall program, more students would have received worse school grades and presumably we would not see any improving school grades.

Besides, we also examined how the developmental activities of the program were perceived by educators per students and per school subjects. We could perform this analysis only on 35% of the entire population (N=91) even after data merged. Experts expressed their slightly negative opinion about the result of the development in the case of only 2 children (2.2%) but experts were mostly positive. Generally, we concluded that children achieved 'a slightly positive' change at an average. Educators expressed strongly positive opinion about the development only in two cases (2.2%). In addition to the abovementioned effects, other improvements could also be detected among children due to program activities, which cannot be measured with school grades. The program was carried out among multiply disadvantaged children who were to prove their abilities in a school with well-targeted, child-centered preparation, programmes, and care of appropriate type and extent. Results were achieved not only in the area of education but also in other fields of life, fostering the integration process of the children.

"I think with us in the Tanoda they did not just receive academic knowledge, which was very important, but attitude as well. They enjoyed coming to us though the main activity was studying. They were to much lagging behind compared to the city schools and to catch up with all those, but they still enjoyed coming... More interested. Several of them go to do sport for example. They also pay attention to healthier eating now, it has become important for them. They are more pointful, more adroit, exactly because they have become wider in their thinking. These children have developed in every area."(Interviewee No. 35 – expert)

6. Impact & Implications

Although 51 children out of the 91 targeted children's could improve their school grades in at least one school subject during the period examined, the outstanding impact for beneficiaries of this short-cycle program were primarily significant on the non-cognitive areas: *"works independently with few errors", "has become more reliable", "slow development", "has improved their average result", "the development of these abilities", "better academic results", "the orientation of sense of success", "has become cooperative and motivated", "development of social skills", "solves tasks with little help", "safe solution of basic operations", "good orientation on map", "step by step development", "active participation during classes", "has got to like reading"*. The analysis of the data also verifies that the results of the development were considered positive by the teachers too. They learned new methods and developed, in most cases, new relationships also with problematic children, closed by any children with positive evaluation. During the program, it became more and more visible that there were differences in the children's family background, their housing circumstances, their fields of interest and their development. What seems to be visible for the teachers is that success is influenced by several aspects; both the family background and the educational program are determinative.

"The teacher didn't just teach but really nurtured, in the truest sense of the word, played unintentionally, but taught in a playful way during everyday activities. And what was most important, is that, as I said, the teacher taught, nurtured and loved the children. And the language of love, activities carried out through it, those will definitely stick with the children."(Interviewee No. 35 - expert)

An important impact of the program is the network created between the people in the children's environment and the institutions. The program ensures the shared experience of the child and the parent which develops parental competencies. The parent and the child can also evaluate the child's progress at school and the Tanoda.

In summary, we can state that the project has shown extraordinary success, if we consider the situation of the target group. However, the project was of a low budget, which had to be complimented by the implementers' in-kind and financial contribution. The implementers invested a lot of their own contribution in the project and its follow-up, which also indicates a high risk for the program in the future, because with long-term shortage of funds, these very important integration programs can't operate effectively.

7. Further information

To access the full report, please go to:

INSERT LINK TO FULL CASE STUDY

For further information on InnoSI: Innovation in Social Investment: approaches to social investment from the scientific perspective, visit our website at <http://innosi.eu/>

Authors:

-  **Ildikó Bihari, University of Debrecen, bihari.ildiko@arts.unideb.hu**
 -  **Dr. Judit Csoba, University of Debrecen, csoba.judit@arts.unideb.hu**
 -  **Dr. Katalin Ábrahám, University of Debrecen, abraham.katalin@arts.unideb.hu**
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