EDUCATIONAL PROVISIONS FOR THE GIFTED IN EUROPE: HUNGARY

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(In: Mönks, F.J. - Pflüger, R. (edrs.) : Gifted Education in 21 European Countries: Inventory and Perspective, 2005. Radboud University, Nijmegen The Netherlands, 73-81. p)

Introduction

Giftedness has made significant progress in the last decade. This development has some traditions in Hungary: already in the early 20th century talent nurture was in focus, and after the second world war teachers and experts have paid attention - even if sometimes not explicitly - to the development of the gifted.

A/ Legislation

In Hungary several legislative regulations exist for educational provisions for the gifted child. They are as follows:

- l993. n. LXXIX. The Law of the Public Education;
- The Regulation of the Government, n. 63./2ooo. about the Correction of the National Curriculum;
- The Regulation of the Ministry of Education, n. 28./2ooo. about the Frame-Curriculum;
- The Regulation of the Government, n. 111./1997. about the Requirements of Teacher-Profession;
- The Regulation of the Ministry of Education, n. 29./1997. about the "Talent- Developing Specialist" Postgradual Training Program.

The main important point of the legislations: "It is a fundamental task of the teacher to take into consideration the pupil's individual abilities and talent, the pace of his development, his sociocultural background and also his handicaps to assist him in developing his faculties, talent to the highest possible level, moreover to offer every deprived pupil the chance to catch up with the others." /l993.n.LXXIX.Law of Public Education, 1o. par.7.p./

B/ Provisions for the Gifted

Besides public schools, private schools and schools maintained by churches and foundations also participate in practical developmental tasks. Before the 80's schools built up some organisational frameworks for talent nurture: special faculty groups, workshops, special classes, but now the forms are richer. See them according to the questionnaire.

Acceleration is not general in Hungary, only in some private schools we can find skipping classes and shared classes with higher grades on the 1st , 2nd and 3rd school-levels.

Enrichment is varied, all the main forms exist: workshops and self study on the 2nd and 3rd level, extra-curricular programs are on 1st, 2nd and 3rd scool-levels and they are very popular in Hungarian schools. There are some general types of extra-curricular programs for the different school-levels.

- For 2nd level: The students' morning and afternoon lessons are organised into a single unit. The main task is that the children should carry out the requirements of the curriculum at the highest possible level meanwhile they expand their abilities during extracurricular activities. Subjects: maths, mother-tongue,foreign languages, science, visual arts, music,sport, firing glaze, folk and classical dance, wood carving, folk professions: waving, pottery, dyeing and textile.
- For 3rd level: It is a complex program for 14-18 years old students. The subjects of the extracurriculum in the afternoon: foreign languages, history, philosophy, social sciences, mother-tongue, science /chemistry, biology, geography, computer science/, fine arts: literature, motion picture, music, drawing, history of arts, physical education. This is a comprehensive program: it includes learning, games, work, cultural activities which aim at improving students' self knowledge and will power, developing their cooperative skills.

The most successful special fields are arts, mathematics, sciences and sports Since the late 80's so-called complex developmental programs have been implemented in schools. These have focused not only on skills and abilities development but also on the personal background of the individual. Basic arts schools (fine arts, music, dance, etc.) have a special position in gifted education. There are many music-schools and sports talents are catered for in special classes of elementary and secondary schools and also in the region-based sports schools. High ability is also advanced by the existence of special colleges, whose activities facilitate equal rights in education.

The tutorial system /**individual mentors/** is becoming an established form of talent nurture: professors, outstanding researchers help secondary pupils participate in research work. These activities are organised by the big universities.

The school system has a long tradition of local, regional and national **competitions**. One of the most significant competitions is the National Academic Competition of Secondary Schools, where the awarded win admission to universities. The number of competitions for elementary schools is increasing as well. More than one hundred competitions were organised by the Hungarian Ministry of Education and in addition to the countryside competitions the local institutes of pedagogy organise competitions for students in many abilities.

Many **summer camps, festivals and exhibitions** are organised by the schools and other regional institutes.

Psychological counselling is not general, there is only one Center for Gifted Children in Budapest, where psychologists help the gifted children in the next field: identification, to look for her/his special interest and best achievement. Counselling involves giving useful information for the parents. In addition to the work of this Center some psychologists of the University of Debrecen help the developmental work in some schools.

C/ Selection, indentification

This work is varied in Hungary. The most general indentification aspects for specific **intellectual provisions programs**: attention, reasoning, memory, problem-solving, evaluation of previeous teachers and the results of the competition of subjects. For the **provisions programs of arts and sports** teachers use special indentification criteria.

D/ Training of the teachers and specialists

The Regulation of the Hungarian Government /'111./l997./ regulates the program of the **teacher training** and one part of it is the education of gifted children. The main topics of this program: - the concepts of giftedness;

- indetification;
- giftedness and age;
- giftedness and creativity;
- school-programs for gifted children;
- the coopoeration of school and family;
- underachievement of gifted children;
- the special role of the teachers in the gifted education;
- the special fields of the gifted education /sport, music, math ec./;
- the international horizon of the gifted education.

The students deal with these topics generally in 2o-3o contact-lessons in taecher training at universities.

The University of Debrecen launched the Teacher of Gifted Education Programme in the year 1997/98. This is a four-semester **postgraduate in-service training** of more than 600 hours based on the training programme of the ECHA Diploma of the University of Nijmegen.The program started on the basis of the Regulation of Ministry of Education /29./1997./.

- Denomination of the degree:"talent-developing specialist".
- Objective: "To train experts with graduate teacher's degree /a/ so that they be competent in solving specific practical tasks involved in talent development, /b/ so that they make good use of their competence in public education /schools, dormitories, other educational institutions/ on the one hand, and in specific institutions /in educational counselling and career's advisory service, family protection advisory centres and cultural institutions/ on the other hand."
- Content of the program, fields of studies: "Theoretical background: history of talent development, talent and society, an up-to-dateconcept of high ability, its components and kinds. Methodology and development: indentification of talent, talent-developing programs, counselling and individual development, the role of the teacher in the development , underachievement , learning disorders. Special fields: provide a theoretical background in the fields of social pedagogy, curriculum development, mental hygiene and organational development - for pedagogical and managerial activity relevant to talent-development."

So far more than 2oo teachers and psychologist have finished the program, and now more than 1oo hundred teachers take part in this training. Last years the same program started at 3 other universities: Budapest, Szombathely, Kaposvár.

In every academic year schools organise 2-3 **internal further trainings**, and one of the most popular topic is gifted education.

In Hungary **two organizations arrange conferences for gifted education specialists**: The Hungarian Association for High Ability and "The Workshop of ECHA-Diplomas' ". Mostly the current problems and practice of gifted aducation are the topics of these conferences. The

conferences are very popular, in one conference 1oo-15o specialists take part from everywhere in Hungary.

The University of Debrecen and 4 schools took part in the **Comenius-HOBE Program** from 1998 to 2oo1. Four countries took part in it: England, Germany, Hungary and The Netherlands. The aim of the program was: to promote gifted programs in Europe, to prepare multilinguistic readers and to organise exchange visit for teachers. Several international and national conferences have been organised in these countries. We have planned a further program "Comenius-BEGA" from 2oo2 with six countries taking part in it : the four above and two new ones: Spain and Romania.

E/ Scientific research

The dynamism of the last decade has been reflected in research work as well: studies have been published in increasing number all over the contry at universities, colleges and research institutions. /You can see the book-list enclosed!/

There are **four institutes** where the gifted education is the main research topic:

- Department of Educational Psychology, University of Debrecen;
- Psychological Institute of Hungarian Science Academy, Budapest;
- Department of Education, Teacher training College, Szombathely;
- Center for Gifted of the Pedagogical Institute, Budapest.

The **main scientific topics** in Hungary on "provision of gifted child":

- school-programs for gifted children;
- indentification;
- self.concept of gifted children,
- extracurricular activities,
- gifted children in foreign languages,
- underachievement, counselling.

F/ Realization process

In Hungary last decade was a good period for the development of the "provision for gifted child".The **political recognition , the legislational fixation and the school actions** were on high level, so now we can fixe many results of gifted education. At the same time there are **some obstacles.**

- More and more teachers take part in further training, but more would be desirable. In every school it would be good if "gifted-education specialist" worked.
- The Government gives more and more money for gifted education, but it is not enough.
  There is a special program for gifted children in secondary school /Arany János Gifted Education Program/, the Ministry of Education finances it and it is very succesful and popular: 21 schools and more than 12oo pupils take part in it. It would be good if more secondary and elementary schools can get more money for special gifted-education programs.
- Last years sometimes the experts of gifted education got money for research, but more would be needed. Now only 4 institutes of investigations deal with this topic in Hungary.

If dynamism remains the same in the following years, gifted education will become comprehensive in Hungary and will cover up the gaps which still exist in the country.

Hungary, Debrecen, o1.o6.2oo2.

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