

Health School

The Blue Point Drug Counselling Centre has been the leading transformer of the drug policy strategy of the civil community in Hungary. Throughout the past 10 years its progressivity, creativity and openness has been proved several times. Its harm reduction projects were amongst the first that were set up in the capital.

The Blue Point Counselling Centre that has overgrown the frameworks of the conventional drug prevention has turned to the health-centered drug prevention programmes. Since at the Blue Point we are looking at the drug-phenomenon as a complex social question that the drug addiction is only a part of we redesigned our programmes according to this new aspect.

Health School is the name of the Blue Point Drugprevention Workshop's new project that was launched in 2007. The base of this project was designed (within the framework of a state tender) in 2006 and it has been improving ever since.

Health School is a day-long, outside-the-school activity for high school students.

While developing the project our main aim was to introduce healthy lifestyle from a holistic approach to explain the development of the late modern age and the causes of the current situation. Health is only a base pillar in our theory that we can build our future, and our sustainable growth upon.

H-School is not a regular 4-wall classroom, it is a mobile, changeable and easily set up installation that can be built almost anywhere taking consideration only of the weather and the energy supply. Anywhere but in a school.

Every element of the program is adapting to the idea of sustainable growth. We believe that the world of human beings is worth to sustain and that a new age is on the way where health means not only the human health but also the health of our Planet and its nature, and where freedom and possibility for self-development is provided for everyone.

Our teachers are mainly sociologists and psychologists but there is also a yoga instructor and a communication professional in our team. We are all active participants of the civil society and have been dealing with the development and the operation of progressive drug policy models. The structural construction of the Health School is democratic, avoids the asymmetrical power-structure.

The funds for the program is currently based on donations from bigger firms. Donators can finance H-School sessions for schools and organisations chosen by them.

Structural framework

Throughout the program high school students arrive to the location where we previously set up a bigger (70 sqm) and four smaller (30 sqm) classrooms to help the interactive learning process. The smaller ones are used as classrooms and the bigger one is a common room used during the breaks and where the opening and closing ceremony is held. While furnishing the class-rooms we try to create a practical yet comfortable formation. In this case it is a circle that is only broken by a laptop and a projector. We also set up several pale-lighted lamp installations to create a more intimate atmosphere. H-School teachers don't use any of the traditional disciplining tools. They don't give grades, or warnings either.

They use softer methods. H-School's policy is built on a thesis that kids are easier to get involved in discussing serious matters when they are treated as persons who can really make a difference. The lessons are 40 minutes long, the breaks are 10. The real teachers cannot be present during the classes.

We organise a little opening ceremony before the lessons where we point out the differences between the H-school and the traditional school, and we introduce the main rules and frameworks of our work. The traditional roles are existing (director, teacher, student) in the H-School though the relations between them are different. The director becomes the organiser and the activist. The teachers are learning with the students while they are thinking together about the topic. During the breaks we play rare?? music that can't be heard on commercial radios, and other unique volumes of voice such as slam poetry.

At the end of the opening ceremony we give each student a plastic bracelet (well know from concerts and parties) of the colour of his or her group. After this the teachers are escorting each group to the class-room and from then it all rotates until the closing ceremony.

The location

To pick out the right location is a crucial part of the Heat School project. The exclusion of the school building makes it a little harder but the cooperative teacher-staff can help a lot. The best place that suits all the requirements of the program is a large community hall, a sport centre, a temporary empty office building or a bigger factory building. The location has to send the message that something is about to happen or should be happening.

The staff

As we previously expressed it is a democratic organisation. Each teacher has autonomy to set the frameworks for his or her own class –obeying the priority of the central topic of course. Any of the teachers can be the director if he or she feels that she bears the skills required to fulfill this position. The permanent staff consists of the founding members who are working for the Blue Point Drug Counselling Centre’s harm reduction and drug counselling programs. The permanent teachers founded the school with developing the 4 modules, but right in the beginning they set the aim at extending the topics discussed thus we designed a flexible method that makes it possible for guest teachers and presenters to participate. We have already fit the first new module to our program.

Classes (modules)

The modules are aimed at introducing healthy lifestyle and promoting usefulness, moderation and deliberation. Each module brings the children closer to understand how the world and our society works. In the creation of further modules we consider the feedback we receive from our students. We would like to create topics that interests them and what they would like to talk or hear about. Parallel with that we would like to involve the social phenomenon and cultural issues that we value in the aspect of the health of a future society.

H-School is not about selective waste management, or about organic milk. During the classes it’s teachers are discussing the issues that are rarely discussed in Hungary. For instance the modernisation, it questions the sustainability of consumer society as it is nowadays. We would like to provide the children with useful knowledge that they can use in their life so they can really feel that they are part of the society and thus they can make a change.

We help the understanding with video material. These short movies are giving an impression and try to bring up thoughts rather than flood the kids over with data.

They come with various topics one of them is about the everyday-life heroes who talk about the importance of community work, the other is visual similar to the ones shown at parties that is supposed to generate creativity, and the third one is an interview with a climate expert made by the main communal radio Tilos Radio. None of them is longer than 10 min. Some of them are played in one others are divided according to the class work and the time limit.

The first four topic covers the fundamental values that, according to the founders helps the adaptation to the new challenges and creates a new sustainable society.

These 3 values are: consciousness, moderation and usefulness.

Consciousness means the freedom of choices, a tool that helps us to understand the present and change the future. Moderation stands for the appropriate usage of our resources. The priority of moderation brings back the harmony in the relation of human and nature. It refers to the happiness that is brought by community work that we would like to promote to the youth. These 3 values appear in every module in everyday-life contexts thus it catches the attention of the children even after the course.

Global warm-up

This module tries to clear-up the blurry relation between carbon monoxide and climate change while avoids final statements. The end of the consumer society and climate change will all affect us at the same time in the near future so adaptation and taking action as a society will be unavoidably connected.

The children born in 1989 are often referred to as the „abandoned generation“. They were the first that were brought up without any global society-transforming plans, without goals that we can fight for together as one.

They are the first generation that is only considered as potential consumer and political supporter. But not more than that. We are trying to show what they can do, how they can change society and routines.

Community work

It sounds a bit strange amongst teenagers nowadays. Money as the only benefit of a job receives sharp critics in this module. We show the importance of voluntary and community work. We teach the students how much depends on one person who believes in the power of act as an individual. During the classes we discuss cases about young adults who are able to gather their neighbours willingness and energy towards creating new projects for the community.

Personal Consciousness

This module refers to the role that drugs (legal and illegal) plays in our life. Smoking appears to them as the adult-role that they can buy in the stores. We explain them it's deeper relation with health care, economy and health-insurances. This module packed with surprises shows all aspects of individual group and social drug usage.

We connect this with the moderation (one of our main values) that is missing in today's consumer society and all the commercials that promotes consumption. Whether drug usage is a personal matter or not is an interesting question this can also be discussed with our teachers who have been working on alternative cures for this problem for years.

Shopping-spree

Consumer-dream has been existing for almost 100 years. Shopping fever destroys our celebrations, our cities and streets are covered with giant posters and bill-boards. Malls are growing like mushrooms. They are made out of crap material and waste, promoting that „consumption is above all“. Who is responsible for all this who creates fake desires? Is it really my choice, of how I dress or how I look? The age of individuality is gone. We can buy everything but it is hard to find something special, something exclusive. The God of the western civilisation is money, that's what we pray for and that's what we cherish.

In this module we are looking for the answer for the old question: Is it really fashion who tells who you are? The western citizen forced to buy constantly can hardly realise the power of it's consumption. It is also critics of fake desires and aimless consumption.

Incredible India

Finding the personal path and profession brightens the life of the individual and the community. This module shows the way to the world that is inside. Amongst the instructors there is a yoga instructor who has received his experience partly in India. It is highly important for the western civilisation to get to know and understand the values of the east. We have to start to respect nature, because our life is depending on that. We have to find the harmony in our life because it is the way to a healthy soul. These teachers are greatly valued amongst students and they can experience the incredible east for a few minutes by modern technology.

Further modules (plans)

It is an important element of H-School to extend the modules. It is important because we can add and discuss new topics that we don't think are that important now but might be in the near future.

The other reason is the method often described as the „oil stain extension“. Teachers who develop new modules will take part in the work on the school, thus new alternatives and valuable relations will appear providing constant improvement for the project and working as catalyst for other programs. New modules that we are planning: Smell of cash (critics of capitalism for advanced learners) Sex and sex industry (real and cyber sex), Runaway Man (guest nations and their hosts) Organic Construction (from the village hut to block houses) Budapest Underground (street art and hip hop)

Closing ceremony

After the last class the teachers and the students gather in the common room again. The director and the teachers tell their feelings about the event, the morals that they received the strengths

and weaknesses of the groups. The students also have the possibility to express their thoughts and feelings. They will also be asked to grade the teachers, the topics and atmosphere of the group discussions. The two-way assessment and the feedback is a very important part of the closing ceremony this gives the real benefit of the work amongst equal partners. On the school's website students can view the short-film shot during the day, or if they have photos we can place them on the site. They can also send messages to the teachers and the director.

After the closing ceremony the key is in the hands of the students to make their life and our life better with using what they have learned in the Health School. They have the knowledge to build a future where health and healthy lifestyle is the main value.

Facts

H-schools until now: 8
Students attended: 545