



A School that Helps for the Lost

1. Preface

The main idea of The **Belvárosi Tanoda Foundation Secondary School** is to implement a supportive youth institution where education, support and aid are in union.

Many young people are being dropped out of the educational system in Hungary. These youngsters have more disorders than an average adolescent, which are manifested in many kinds of life problems: problematic family background, drug and alcohol abuse, juvenile delinquency, mental and personality disorder, learning problems and so on. Among other things they cannot endure their school. Usually they are expelled from their schools because their teachers cannot tolerate their special problems, their unusual personality and their individual demands in teaching/learning and therapy as well. In the traditional schools the most important criteria is the achievement and not the individual! This is one of the greatest problems in the Hungarian education system. The more sensitive young people cannot exist in this unfeeling atmosphere. They cannot meet the impersonal requirements and cannot accept the intolerant attitude. So they generally drop out of school. This fact in itself can stand as a beginning of a deviant career.



At the same time, while having talked a lot with these deviant youngsters we were convinced of their real knowledge and desire and ability to learn; we became more and more sure, that they could fairly learn, develop and recover in an atmosphere of tolerance, acceptance and support.

An other problem we have realized that the different units of Hungarian system of care and support was specialized too much, that is, each institution was interested exclusively in one (or in a better case: some) problem/s, and not in the individual.

It is our firm conviction that the only way to treat the deviant youth leads through acceptance of their personality as a whole, and to develop it parallel – at the same time and place. The basic intention of our Tanoda-method is to create such an atmosphere and place, where an effective, impacting on the whole personality program of care and support can be realized.

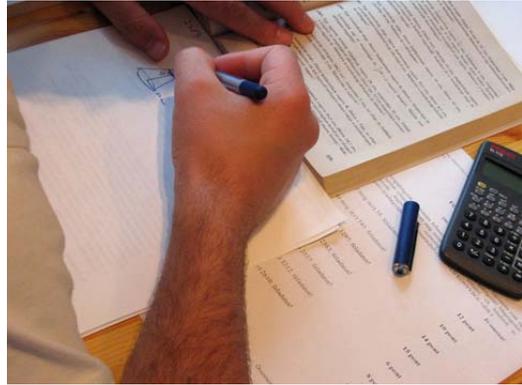
A School that helps

The aim of our *approach* is to find, to take care of and to educate neglected, dropped out and deviant young people between 16-35. The intention of the educational and supportive program is to provide such an atmosphere where a healthy personality can develop, to help in the students adaptation to society and to complete the secondary school with a successful final examination. It is very important to obtain this qualification for our students because it gives back their self esteem and opens the possibility for a new prospect in life.

The education and supportive methods could be different for each individual as the various personalities and the variety of problems demand different approaches.

The two main parts of the activities of our secondary grammar school are as follows: the personalised teaching-learning program, and the individual support.

The Tanoda is an independent secondary school, where education is free of charge; it may last from 1 to 3 years depending on the students' individual mental state and learning capacity. After entering the school, the knowledge, the willingness and the capability of each student are measured and a personal learning and achievement program is prepared for each of them separately in every subject. So the demands are not set by the age of the students or the curriculum, but by their knowledge, abilities, interest and the nature of their problems. The students work in small groups based on their real knowledge and their interpersonal relationships. These groups are reorganised semester by semester and as the groups change so does the time table. Syllabuses are planned term by term for each pupil and each learning-group.



We apply several teaching methods, which are based on conversations, questioning, and personal tasks. The teachers are respected because of their personality, and not their position.

Our students sit for the official final exam in front of an independent board. They receive that qualification they could not obtain in their previous secondary schools. This event is the greatest celebration of the Tanoda. After obtaining this document they have better possibilities for getting jobs, or studying at several trade schools or universities.

The other main field of our activities is the individual support. The several problems, careers and life styles of our students are constantly regarded and possible solutions are searched for by students and helper-teachers together.

The way we carry this out is the person-centred method. Each student has a teacher partner, we call it "**helper-pair**" in the school who is responsible for him/her. This helper-pair is that person whom the student trusts the most, can cooperate with and can discuss his/her problems with sincerely. There is a „one to one hour” every week for each student. This helping conversation contains the evaluation of the weekly work of the student, the tasks for the next week and the discussion of his problems. This helper-pair system is the most important characteristic of the Tanoda-method.

The other element of our person-centred method is the **contract system**. After entering the school each student makes with the helper-pair a Basic Contract on their yearly work, duties and expectations of both sides. This contract has to be signed by the student and his/her helper-pair as well. It can be revised and thought over time by time during the one to one hours. There is another type of contract which is used in problematic cases (like late-arrivals, bad results at study or uncompleted tasks, etc.)

Our Basic rules describe the minimal criterion and code of conduct. They clearly state the conditions under which a student is expelled from the Tanoda. Our students need these rules very much because they give them safety and guidance.

The most important control in the case work is **the staff meeting**. It takes place every week. Every helper-pair takes part in this session. We discuss all our

problems, make decisions together about the operation of the school and talk about each of our students every time.

We have about 150 students every year but about 4-600 teenagers come to the Tanoda a year. There is a personal interview with each applicant to decide how we will deal with their problems from now on.

Tanoda is a school that helps according to its basic philosophy: its task is to give an aid for lost students asking for help, who dropped out from secondary schools, fight with serious problems with regard to solving life problems, finishing high school and taking the final exams. We interpret this assistance as a uniform, interconnected process, which consists of all activities we do together with the students. We provide space and possibility for those young people who find us with an aim to learn.

They have the ability to learn, but somehow this ability is blocked since they could not get along in any other school. Our main principle is that it is not the **student intending to learn** who should fit in the school, but it is us who try to fit the institutional framework to his or her needs within lawful possibilities.

The most important elements of the method of the Tanoda:

- formulating and providing an accepting, safe, supporting school atmosphere;
- providing the possibility of structured activities for the whole day;
- helping pair system;
- helping work and the crew-like operation of the Tanoda;
- individual learning program and methods.

In this individual-centered supporting atmosphere, during the period the students spend here – which may be a personality-building process taking years and years – young persons acquire strengthened self-confidence on the one hand, and meaningful human relationships on the other hand, and find success in learning. The result of these together is that the problems they carry with themselves become less or even disappear.

StudeOur students

Students who attend Tanoda are often characterised by unstable psychic state, unreal self esteem, the lack of self confidence, meaningful activities and aims and future image. Most of them are uncommunicative, distrustful people for whom it is difficult to form relationships. They often reject adult society and the adult way of life because of disappointments and the experience of intolerance of adults towards young people. They are characterised by the lack of sincere acceptance of feelings and love. They have experienced a long sequence of failures in their emotional life, in their human relationships (parent, teacher and peer relationships) and also in their school life.



In addition they have learning problems in the background of which there are these other special problems mentioned above. Learning problems can originate from concentration disorders; attention that only lasts for a short period and is not deep enough, interrupted and periodical; learning method and learning technique

deficiencies; analysis (note-taking, essence-finding and drafting) and synthesis (realising connections) difficulties. The anxiety deriving from all the above makes them unable to perform at the school.

The essence of the individual-centered attitude typical of the Tanoda is that we simultaneously focus on the whole character and personality of the students, we try to improve their psychic state, the troubles caused by it, reveal the individual problems hidden behind the scenes and supporting the student in finding the solution.

Tools: special school **atmosphere**, whole-day **structured activities** and the **helping pair system**.

The atmosphere

We make every effort to provide a trustful, patient and supporting atmosphere for the students to live in at the Tanoda. They can feel that their teachers have confidence in them that they can accomplish their aims and they get support and patience for this. Our aim is to formulate and constantly provide an atmosphere where each young person accepts their own self, where they can experience open, authentic and sincere human relationships (teacher-student, student-student and teacher-teacher relationships) and individual care in their everyday lives. We interpret the aims formulated by the students (i.e. finishing high-school, taking the final exams, structured and properly arranged way of life, social relationships, developing a healthy and normal life) as our common aims, and we look for those solutions that provide the most aid for them in order to reach their aims. This atmosphere is formulated by the students and helper-tutors jointly in our everyday life. Its most important component is being together daily at the school: a shared life at the lessons and during the break; spending free-time together; free and spontaneous discussions; cultural and creative activities; excursions, sport, etc.



Being together naturally every day may be the most effective help for the students, since this way they can more easily forget their problems. While being together with their teachers and fellow-students they change without noticing it, they become more open and more active, they achieve smaller and bigger successes and their relationships develop. They are provided a life sphere and a chance, they may find the activities where they can be successful and where they can develop their talents. They can formulate their own human and material environment. They are faced with the problems of others, they can experience that they are not alone with their problems and they can profit from helping each other. They can watch and even experience the possibility to have an active, happy, healthy, "normal" way of life. Another important element of this supporting, safe atmosphere is that students and helping-tutors jointly formulate the rules in the Tanoda, so that all expectations, requirements and consequences are accepted and clear for everybody. These transparent conditions make it possible that during those joint activities, students

receive a correct feedback about themselves which improves the development of a real self-respect and self-image.

Activities fillind the days

For most of the students, Tanoda is not only a school, but, as long as they attend this school, is also the main scene of their life. Many students would and do spend their whole day here. We attempt to give the possibility of a whole-day regular activity, which gives the opportunity to formulate meaningful daily challenges, clear short- and long-time goals and a realistic future image for the students.

As for our opinion, in the life of a teen-ager or young adult school and learning should not be the only important activities, although they themselves name final exam as the most significant aim. It is especially like this in the case of floundering, lost, sometimes deviant students of the Tanoda fighting with multiple problems. It is necessary to provide a model, possibility and also partners to spend their sparetime meaningfully and a chance, medium and ground to solve their problems. For this reason we attempt to fill the week-days of the Tanoda with sport, artistic, cultural and other sparetime activities, with often spontaneous discussions besides lessons and joint or individual studying. We organise or let to be organised programmes according to the needs of the students; we inspire them to initiate programs. There are no assigned, stiff roles, the students can be initiators and controllers of similar activities. This way we all can experience that everybody is good at something, we all can learn from each other. A young person who, for example, is not the best in studying can show his or her talent and experience the feeling of giving something special to the other students and the teachers. This is true for the lessons, of course. Basically we depend on the interests and the existing knowledge and abilities of the students. We attempt to formulate the subject matter, atmosphere, mood, the methods of learning and teaching in a way that the students consider it useful and interesting, that they find success in learning, and that they feel that this gives an assistance for them to reach their aim: the final exam. This means that it is worth coming to school because of learning, useful and interesting activities, social activities and the whole community.



The helping pair

The helping pair system ensures personal care and attention to the students. They choose their helping pair from among the teachers at the beginning of each year. The most important and essential function of the pair is to support, to follow the life of the student. Every-day relationship is very important, the helping pair has to know the life-style, life situation, schedule and current problems of the student. The pair must know the student in the present and also in the perspective of the years spent in the Tanoda, must see the personality, problems and problem-changes of the young person. It is important to be able to reach and find the helping pair at the school, so the student can find him or her with any problems anytime. The pair means a safe "pillar" and help for the student in problem solving. He or she helps to formulate the true self-esteem and self-image of the young person.

This helping pair system is based on mutual trust, and it is operated by personal affection, acceptance and respect of the other person, and frankness.

The helping pair has a twofold role:

On the one hand, the pair arranges school- and administrative matters related to the student: prepares and continuously follows the individual learning schedule of the student (paying attention to the learning schedule and drafting the same, preparing current timetable, the exam schedule, and managing grades).

With regard to all questions the student asks for help, the pair tries to find a solution jointly and gives an assistance in the accomplishment. Among these problems there are life management difficulties, mental, family or health problems, social, lodging or employment troubles, etc.

Personal discussion is a very important field of the helping pair system. This is a regular discussion between the student and the helping pair, the frequency of which (daily, weekly or even less) depends on the needs, life situation and other conditions of the students. Besides questions about the organisation of study, the topic of these discussions may also be anything the student is interested in or faced with. At these personal discussions the presence of the student at the school, his or her learning program, learning problems, social relationships, mental state, and the related life management, social and other problems are discussed, to which they try to find the solutions together. It is very important that the students themselves find and formulate the possible problem solving methods, life strategies, since they are the only ones who can solve their own problems. The task of the pair is to give an aid in formulating the particular daily steps and tasks, and give support by trust, patience, encouragement and continuous feedback in realising these solutions. Discussions return to these topics from time to time, and they jointly analyse the changes and formulate the possible next steps.



A very important element of this helping task is that the helping pair is not left alone. He or she is supported by the crew, which consists of all colleagues who accept to be a helping pair.

Working as a staff

The operation of the Tanoda and the helping activities are done by the helper-teachers organised to a staff. Teachers' tasks and helpers' work are not separated, every time when the employees of the Tanoda are together with the students is an essential part of the helping work. Teaching itself is also defined as helping work. The most important area of the helping work is being together daily, the school-life where in a natural setting, individual attention and care is realised spontaneously. This is the best way to get to know each other, since the students and their helpers meet and cooperate in many different situations (teaching-learning, personal discussions with the helping pair, chatting in the breaks, spontaneous group- or personal discussions, drinking coffee, tea, free-time activities, sports, excursions, etc.) This symbiosis is real, the employees and the students are not even separated with regard to space, the office (the „staff room”) is the place for social life as well, everybody is free to enter. All of us, students and helper-teachers are all parts of each other's life in the school. This symbiosis gives a possibility for the helpers to represent their attitude to life most authentically, to show a pattern with regard to human relationships, show how communication operates, how to live different life

situations, how to undertake and express emotions and feelings and how to treat and solve daily problems and conflicts. It is important that the crew forms an inspiring helping medium for the students where besides formulating the aims, activities, learning, creative work, clear communication, a wish to change, making efforts to solve the problems and stepping forward are all extremely valuable. The crew mediates these values towards the students and gives an assistance to support their realisation in all different ways. At the



weekly meetings, the crew, besides the professional management of the school, the organisation of its daily life (organisation of study, organisation of spare-time, administration with regard to education, etc.), performs the professional control of the helping work. At the weekly crew meeting we discuss the current problems, status, situation of each student. Information exchange between the crew and the helping pair ensures the safe atmosphere and individual care for the young person and the support of the whole crew on the one hand, and the protection of the student on the other hand. All information and problems given and heard at the crew meeting are confidential, of course. Since the students are or have been taught, or at least known by all the teachers, everybody tells their experiences, feelings, thoughts and problem-solving ideas about each student. These discussions give serious help and support to all persons involved:

- from the aspect of the students it ensures that everybody knows their situation and problems, and that their teachers think and care about them together;
- for the helping pairs it gives a wider knowledge, and the collective thinking and action ensures great support in their helping work and the protection of their person (extreme involvement, partiality, burning out, getting tired too early, etc.)
- it gives broader information to the other helpers with regard to individual students, which makes their teaching-, lesson- and helping work much easier.

The staff has a supervising role as well with the professional control of the helping work. In the work of the crew, confidence, respect and acceptance are all determining among the members. Everybody is equal in the crew, every viewpoint, opinion and emotion is equally important. Communication within the crew and between the crew members give an extremely strong pattern for the students, and for this reason, we make every effort not to defeat but to convince each other during our arguments and debates.

Special learning program and methods for each

Individually formulated learning program and methods ensure the individual progress pace for the students to be realised, and help them to finish high-school and to take the final exams. Young people who find Tanoda arrive with repeated school failures, learning problems. They do not have self confidence, they are anxious about all different kinds of learning situations. If they get a question or an exercise, they often go blank and give up thinking very quickly. Although their wish to take the final exam is very strong, because they think their life would change and they would have a wider range of possibilities, they consider themselves unable and incapable of meeting the requirements of a school. They actually have serious learning problems, the reasons of which are not to be found in the weakness of their understanding but in their personal problems.

Components of the individual learning program: **individual-centered teaching, individual progress space, agreement system, exam system, course method** and the **final exam** adjusted to the progress pace.

Teaching that has the individual in focus

We have a twofold task: on the one hand we need to ease anxiety of the students and we have to help them to find success in learning, and on the other hand we have to develop their learning abilities. In the first few months after they join our school we try to find the reason for their learning disability, and with the help of individual development if necessary, but primarily by integrating them into a group we try to improve their learning abilities, giving an assistance in finding learning success and strengthening their self-confidence. Our work is characterised by individual-centred attitude and wide methodic varieties. We intend to find the "key" for each student, searching for those methods, approaches and curriculum which may mean a solution for their problem and which provides success.

The students and the problems behind their learning disabilities are all very different, there is no solution that would work for everybody or that would apply for everybody, so it is not routine but creativity and flexibility together that characterises our work. We try to build the elements of the learning method into each lesson. The aim of these are that the students can acquire and develop their ability to find the essence of a text, to learn the techniques of taking notes and making drafts, to improve their text comprehension, to make them able to learn, recall and recite a text after understanding it or to solve exercises related to the text. These are not done in the framework of a lesson, but all materials of any subject are treated by using these methods. Our most important aim is that our students obtain autonomous learning methods and the ability to find pleasure in learning. Our opinion is that in this changing world of the 21st century, only open individuals, who are capable of learning during their whole life, can succeed.

Rhythm of progress

Previous learning failures are often caused by the fact that students are stressed by the high number of students in a class and by those long and complicated explanations of the teacher. They constantly worry about daily and many times unpredictable and unexpected questioning. In the Tanoda students work in student groups of 10 to 15 where the teacher pays attention to and has patience for everybody all the time. Lessons are not characterised by frontal teaching methods but by discussions and differentiated-, group or sometimes cooperative learning methods. If it is necessary, we provide individual consultations and learning rooms for our students. We make our students work by giving them exercises constantly, this way inspiring them to think, to ask questions, to be creative and to reveal themselves – but this is not a kind of questioning but a form or method of learning. It is important not to let them become passive, to make them learn to use their abilities, talents and knowledge and to help them express themselves. The low number of students in a group makes them more free to express themselves and to become more open in front of each other. This is a great field for the development of communication- and discussion methods, and for getting to know and accept each other. Providing individual progress space promotes school achievement success and stronger self confidence. The essence of this is that there are no classes or first-year second-year students but all students learn in the group that is the most suitable for them with regard to all subjects. They can be at, learn or take exams in a different level in each subject. This way it is possible that they can make more progress in subjects they can learn more easily. When they receive the final mark in any subject, they can take a pre-final exam on this – but only on this – subject. They can

find more time to complete the subjects that are more difficult for them, and they only have to take the final exam on those subjects when they are properly prepared. Since all students have easier, favourite subjects, they can get success from these more easily.

Agreements

When a student is accepted at the school, we prepare – together with the student – a personal learning programme, and we put it down in a basic agreement. In this agreement we plan the final exam subjects, the expected date of the final exam or exams and the learning schedule. We revise, re-interpret this agreement in each term, and modify or update it if necessary. This updating is nothing else but the preparation of the timetable of the student in each term. This is also done together with the student, taking individual timing, interests, time and other aspects into consideration. This is recorded in a personal agreement. These agreements can be modified, of course. At the end of each term, we revise the agreement together. From this we can understand what could and what could not be achieved from the initial aims. We evaluate it and try to find the reasons for the failures before discussing the next possible steps. This agreement system makes the aims, undertaken responsibilities, achievements and developments clear and easy to follow by the student, the helping pair and the other teachers. It ensures that the students are always seen in the light of themselves, their undertaken responsibilities and their changes. This is the most important for the students, since this way they hold a mirror for themselves. It is clear that their success is their own success, and they are the only ones who are responsible for their own failures. The joint analysis of the above always focuses on how to proceed, success appears as encouragement and it is possible to learn from the failures.

Exams

School years are divided into trimesters, trimesters into workshop periods and exam periods. During the workshop period we become absorbed in the subjects and we work on the syllabus together, and during the exam period the students give an account of their knowledge similarly to the final exams. On the one hand the exam system makes the students free from being anxious about daily questioning, and on the other hand it gives them a routine before the final exams.



Courses

The syllabus itself is connected to the requirements of the final exams with regard to content, but we intend to treat it in a flexible way. This is supported by the course method and by thematic syllabus organisation. The essence of this is that high-school syllabus itself is not taught in an order, arrangement, or year that is specified by the frame syllabus by all means, but in a course method developed by us. This fits the interests of the students and the changing world. This way syllabus is handled more flexibly. Besides the syllabus of the final exams, our aim is to give a kind of practical knowledge to the students that can even be used in their everyday lives.

Final exam

We organise final exams twice a year (in spring and in autumn) with an independent examination committee. It is easy to fit divided, pre-exams to this twice-per-year method. This independent examination committee means that the students are not examined by their teachers and helping-tutors who prepared them during the year and who are not only their teachers but also their helpers, but by other teachers invited from other schools by the Tanoda. This is the first time when students are faced with how much they themselves changed and how much their abilities and knowledge developed during the years they spent in the Tanoda. This is the first time they try themselves in front of strangers. This independent final exam committee ensures impartial attitude and raise the value of the final exam of the students. Even appearing and performing at the exam are the first steps of their independent life, the proofs of their real maturity.

The students' special problems that must be treated

The reasons behind the mental and psychic condition of the students attending Tanoda are all very different. We react to these basically with the helping methods characteristic of the Tanoda, as detailed above. In treating special individual problems, some elements of the helping pedagogy could have more role or weight, and within the helping method of the Tanoda, individual, sometimes special methods must be used that require extra preparation.

The long row of possible problems is really varied: in many cases depression and other psychic problems and disorders; the students often live in an incomplete family or the family background is uncertain, many times they have to support themselves; being in state care often result in life management difficulties; to support and raise their own child could be a problem; sometimes the case is that one of the learning abilities is missing; many young persons are at the different levels of a deviant career; many of them used alcohol or other drugs habitually; there can be a great gap between their real, biological or mental age; we meet physically handicapped persons, and there are some students who fight with language problems.

Problems that are depressing the psyché

Behind the depression and psychic problems of young people many times we find loneliness, boredom and the lack of success and loving relationships. For them, the most important help in the Tanoda is supporting school environment, intelligent and meaningful daily activities where students can forget their problems with the help of different activities, where they can find success and this way their self confidence becomes stronger. They find relationships among people who are in the same age, and they are confronted not only with their own but also with others' problems as well. For them a helping pair means an adult relationship based on mutual trust, who gives an aid in formulating problems and helps solving them with patience and confidence.

Unstable family background

Many young people have no safe family background, some of them even have to support themselves financially during high-school. The most important is personal care, attention and love for them. Many of them do not take advantage of the possibilities of the social net. Social guidance and administration can be an

extremely important aid. Flexible learning organisation and individual progress pace makes it possible for them to work besides coming to school and studying.

Problems that stand as obstacles in life management

Children who are brought up by the state are especially characterised by the lack of love and caring, by unreal self-esteem, by the lack of a future image and by life management difficulties. The development of an autonomous life is an important problem for them. They often use drugs and alcohol and escape to substituton activities. For them, the whole atmosphere of the Tanoda, its helping method and contemporaneous group can be a great aid in formulating a new and normal life. In this case, the helping pair has a key role, who may provide a loving relationship and personal care besides giving support in developing practical life strategies.

Own child

There are some students in our school who raise their own child. Many times even they themselves have not grown up to be an adult, they are struggling with self-identification problems and with finding their own place. Most of the times they have no choice but to raise and support their child without assistance. For them, the support of the helping relationship and extremely flexible schedule, individual progressing pace, differentiated learning organisation method and individual consultations could be of great help. Besides solving everyday problems, social and child-raising assistance could help in their case.

Learning disabilities

Many times there are learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia hiding behind the learning problems of the students attending our school. After exploring the problem, we direct them to a professional. From the aspect of taking the final exam, obtaining the necessary documents could be a solution. Besides, the most important is to provide individual development, differentiated learning organisation, to strengthen their self confidence, and to search for and find activities that ensure success to the young person.

Deviancy as a career

Often we find the loneliness of young people behind this, the lack of adult relationships, boredom, and the lack of meaningful activities, aims and future image. They often escape to superficial contemporary relationships and into the attraction of extreme sub-cultural groups. They easily get involved in deviant behaviours and career. For them, Tanoda as a medium is the most important help where they can experience and learn the ways of formulating normal life and how to spend their free-time meaningfully, and they find a real contemporary community there. The helping pair means an adult relationship based on mutual trust, who helps in formulating their self-knowledge and in finding their own place, meaningful



aims and real future image.

Physically handicapped persons

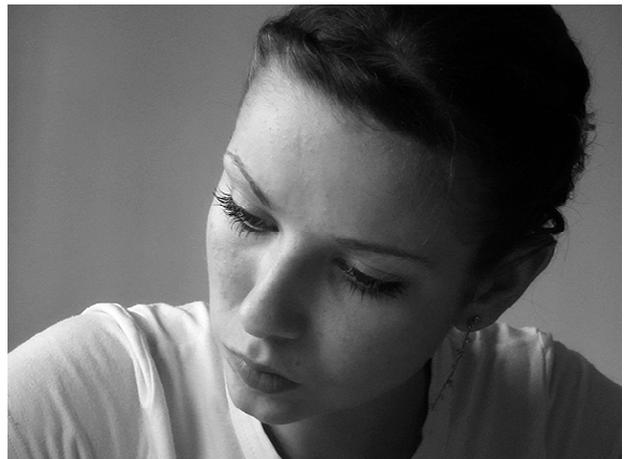
Physically handicapped young persons often fight with segregation problems and their psychological consequences. They do not have a realistic self- and future image, their self-estimation is not correct. Often they do not accept themselves, accepting their disability with difficulties. They do not have self confidence and they neither trust the world. They often choose the easier way, utilizing the pity of the people. Their self esteem is formulated by the loving, assisting atmosphere of the Tanoda and the honest, fair feedbacks of the other students and the helpers, giving assistance in finding their aims, talents and place in life. Constant activities are very important for them since this is the only way they can find real success.

Language problems

Among our students there are some who spent their childhood or a longer period of their childhood in a different country. They fight with serious language problems, especially if they had even spent their elementary school years in a foreign country. Foreign students who speak some Hungarian and live in Hungary have similar problems. This problem has many levels. Most of the times understanding texts, spelling, creative writing and expressing themselves are serious difficulties. The most important problem is thinking in a foreign language. In teaching them, a very important thing is to teach them Hungarian as a foreign language. Differentiated learning arrangement and individual progress pace could be a serious help for them.

Drug use

Some of our students find our school after using drugs, alcohol or medicines regularly and ask for our aid in keeping their soberness and in getting their high-school diploma. They are mostly characterised by an empty, lonely condition; they have no aims or self confidence, their life is without values, and it is difficult to start again. It is essential for them to put an end to their old relationships, way of life and life space and to find brand-new aims and activities. Tanoda can mean a new inspiring medium, a home that may support them in starting their new lives. With their helping pairs the most important aid is self identification, looking for the possibilities of moving forward, finding new aims, activities and a new idea of the future, and working on the daily routine and schedule. Recovering and learning is a long process for them, made in tiny steps, for which they receive support and encouragement.



Special education program for addicts in Megálló House

We have a special education and care program for the addicts applying. They have twofold aim: they wish to stop drug use and learn the abstinent life – and they want to learn, to gain enough knowledge for the final exam.

Our firm conviction that drug use – as all kinds of deviancies – is only a symptom of many problems lying in the background. We must turn our attention to these background problems of addiction, we must make them conscious in our students and provide help in solving them. At the same time with this we must offer such possibilities of education and other activities that are considered as acceptable and realizable for this youth. We focus on the human being, the whole personality, and not on the drugs. We are to understand the individual and to support him/her on the way of changes. Therefore our education program developed specially for addicts is the part of the rehabilitation process. Among the methods and activities applied in rehabilitation there are also the lessons. The number of the lessons are growing parallel with the process of recovery.

Learning in itself is not enough for changing the life guidance of drug users. Even when the intention to learn in present, the active drug use makes it impossible. Learning doesn't give an impulse strong enough, since it is an activity that one must do mostly alone. The lonely thinking, when one tries to get rid of drugs, drives the thoughts rather towards the drugs, since in the first period there is no topic that can drive them elsewhere for a longer time.



Moreover, in many cases the school becomes – not inevitably consciously - purely an alibi for the the family, the surroundings and later also for the individual. It becomes a kind of self-justification: „I go to school, there are no problems at all” – can lie the drug user for him/herself. Of course, there are also better cases, when the learning and the possibility of dealing with real problems lead to certain results: to the motivation for treatment, abstinence.

The system of helping pairs without teamwork is not effective in care of addicts. This intensive and deep connection between two persons results rather the maintenance of drug use, and not the development. From the point of view of the addict it is an „easy” field, where he/she find him/herself at home: there is somebody whose task is to provide help, and this person can be easily manipulated. In manipulation the addicts are very good since they practice it a lot. They like to complain, to look for faults in circumstances, to evoke mercy towards themselves. Without a controll from outside, because of the deep emocional bound, the helper can be manipulated, affected and moreover: guided. The helping pair means for the addict, that in this system he/she has to communicate only with one teacher, and throug this person he/she can arrange everything: he/she can keep him/herself closed without being motivated for delvelopment, since he/she can operate such forces of the personality that have been developed before: he/she is getting closer and closer to the person that wants to help an communicates his/her „terrible fate”. So the system itself, that is the helping pair relation as a method is not inspiring for the drug user. For him/her it is more important and effective if he/she has to speak in a group, to

maintain the contact with the whole community. The activities made in community can derive the attention from the drugs, and it have such conflicts that can serve as a basis of the help during the process of recovery. The personality, during the process of recovery needs real interpersonal conflicts, problems occurring in relations etc. that can't be found in helping pair system based mainly on conversations.



Our experiences show that students finishing Tanoda leave the school being definitely „mature” compared to their initial state. Our final exam is equal to the standards of an average Hungarian high school final exam with regard to factual knowledge, but as for life-knowledge and self-knowledge, it is much better. Its significance is extremely high for our students, handing out the final exam certificates is the greatest celebration of the school.

HOW TO APPLY:

Who are we waiting for:

young people between 16 and 35, who

- have already attended one or more high schools but could not finish it for any reason;
- would like to take a final exam.
- would like to recover from their addiction

Application method:

- the applying young person should turn to us
- on the phone (36-1-266-3378) on week-days between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m, or in case being an addict on the phone (36-1-303 6574) or personally in the Megálló house Drop-in Center (Budapest, VIII. Szigony str. 37.) on week-days between 9 a.m. and 21 p.m.;
- anybody answering the phone gives a date for the first discussion;
- anyone dropped in can get info and/or advice concerning the school;
- at this first discussion the application itself takes place.

The first discussion:

- One of the employees of the Tanoda talks to the applicant
- the topic of the discussion is the course of life of the applicant; all high-school attempts and experience; the reasons for dropping out; family circumstances; plans;
- our employee introduces the Tanoda and the operation of the school;
- the applicant fills in a questionnaire which contains some personal data,



previous schools and reasons for dropping out;

- at the end of the discussion an agreement is made whether the student applies for the entrance exam of the Tanoda or he/she finds another school (in which we try to give an aid);

in the case of addiction: the applicant can attend the rehabilitation program immediately, and he/she can get into the education program later on;

Entrance exam discussion:

- we have the entrance exams every year in June and the additional entrance exams at the beginning of September; for addicts in every 3. month; we invite the applicants with whom we have an agreement by mail for the exam;
- the topic of the discussion – similarly to the first discussion – is the course of life of the applicant, all high-school attempts and experience; the reasons for dropping out; family circumstances; plans;
- the teachers of the Tanoda are present at the discussion (7 or 8 persons);
- after the discussion the applicants write a CV based on specific questions;
- there are no questions at the entrance exams that are related to specific subjects.

The process of the entrance exam:

- after we listen to the applicants we consider who are the ones for whom Tanoda would mean real help and the last chance based on their life situation, needs and previous school attempts;
- we can admit the same number of students who took the final exam or dropped out; from the 120-150 students who apply to our school we usually admit 40 - 50 in a year.

We consider as results the facts listed below:

- Abandonment of the school is minimal;
- Students like their school very much, they consider it to be their home, they bring both their problems and joys here to share them with the staff;
- The atmosphere of the school is open and relaxed;
- The teacher-student relationship is sincere and cooperative;
- The every day school attendance brought a basic change in the life of our students;
- Knowledge has become valuable among them;
- They can describe their personal aims and perspectives of life for their future;
- They are in a more developed mental state than before they came to the Tanoda;
- They can explore their possibilities by themselves;
- Almost everybody can receive the standard secondary school certification;
- We also follow students' life career after leaving the Tanoda;
- The Tanoda is an intellectual and practical workshop.

We have gained a great deal of experience of the treatment of deviant students in a big city like Budapest. This method can be learnt and adopted in other cities and countries as well. We organise special courses for people who want to participate in the help of deviant teenagers at their own institute.

Although we like this work, our school and the students very much, we think that the real solution may not be to establish institutions similar to the Tanoda.

Belvárosi Tanoda Foundation

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We believe that the most important task is to prevent the start of the deviant career in the traditional schools by the teachers, helpers, in the families by the parents and in everyday relationships by all people.

Finally, we think the most important thing and what these youngsters need most is love. So you can apply several methods, but if you cannot give them love you will not be effective.

