

User Guide

for Trainers of Second Chance Schools



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An early leaving of school is a problem of all social groups, however, not on the same level. It is not a socially neutral phenomenon. It affects certain social groups more than other. In certain cases, the problem is deeper and arises from insufficient social competences of young people – insufficient motivation in the family, financial problems of the family, race intolerance, bullying, consequently frequent drug or alcohol addiction and there may be a lot of other influences that make students leave the school before graduation. Surveys conducted in Europe show that school dropouts frequently come from low income families and it seems that early dropping out passes down from generation to generation. Many NEETs come from disrupted families and insufficiently integrated immigrant and refugee families. An early dropping out from school is consequently not an isolated phenomenon of failure at school. It relates, similarly to social exclusion, to social, health, family and financial factors. Although the failure at school is only one of the aspects of a more extensive domino effect of social deprivation, an early dropping out from school is frequently the stumbling block, preventing young people from acquiring skills, professional qualifications, sense of duty and responsibility for their behaviour as well as social contacts and environment necessary for them to be part of the society and to be appreciated by the society.

If we speak about NEETs and their training through the Second Chance School, it is necessary to define this term and distinguish it from the general “school” term. School is the most frequent place of education which generally means obtaining information for further use (by pupils or students). While school covers primarily a theoretical preparation (rarely also the practical) of children and young people in groups in a defined period, the “Second Chance School” differs from the traditional school significantly, as it covers practical training (and only minimum of theoretical preparation), which is of individual nature and is not pre-defined in time (it lasts as needed for the practical training of an individual).

The Second Chance School is a form of professional training of NEETs based on an individual approach to programme attendants who obtain practical experience directly in firms as part of an active involvement in activities of the firm under professional guidance of a tutor, without any pre-defined period of training.

The position and role of the tutor in the Second Chance School is specific and different. The tutor fulfils the tasks of both a professional for the preparation and good quality training, however, he/she must be also a good psychologist and understand problems of young people and be able to provide advice and help, if necessary.

The training NEETs at the Second Chance School does not involve theoretical studies, it is mainly oriented to practical skills. We can say that many drop outs did not do so due to the lack of knowledge or disinterest in the specific discipline but mainly for their disinterest in theoretical subjects, when nobody cared for their interest in practical skills. The failure to complete one part of the educational process (theoretical preparation) frequently results in the termination of their studies regardless of their abilities of practical training and actual skills.

A tutor's role

It is necessary to realise that the tutor should be available throughout the working hours. And not only that, the tutor needs to be ready to deal with other problems relating to the person of the Second Chance School attendant. These involve for example personal problems that the young attendant is not able to cope with, and the attendance itself and participation in professional training and the tutor needs to have the possibility to contact the attendant, if he/she does not come to the workplace. This is the case of NEETs, as they lack the sense of responsibility, regularity, and in the first phases of the involvement of attendants in professional training, it is necessary to deal with these issues. Although it seems, after the first days of the involvement of NEETs in the programme, that young people do not have sufficient motivation and that an attempt to train them professionally will be in vain, the experience in the pilot project has shown that it is this phase that is the most significant for the success of NEETs and should not be underestimated. This phase of training, when the tutor deals with issues entirely different from the professional training reflect the overall approach of the Second Chance School attendant to professional training and his/her relation to work, work team and achieved knowledge.

A programme attendant needs to know that he/she is treated in the firm as an equal member of the team and that the firm counts on him/her and his/her absence at the workplace is a problem for the firm. For this reason, it is necessary to pay primary attention to the duty of each day presence at the workplace primarily in the first weeks of the training. If the course attendant overcomes these problems in the initial phase of the training, we do not have to be afraid of the disappointment. The important thing is to guide the programme attendant to obtain necessary professional knowledge that can be used in the firm, if the firm decided to employ him/her after the training, or in another employment. In general, even school graduates need to be trained at a new workplace and even graduates cannot be placed on professional positions without induction training. For Second Chance School attendants, i.e. for young people without completed professional education, it is more important due to their social integration which is usually not necessary in school graduates. However, they both need to gain expertise on a specific position in a firm following the induction training. This even more accentuates the necessity to focus primarily on the phase of social integration and support for the obtaining of so much needed self-confidence of the Second Chance School attendant, primarily in the first weeks after the start of the training.

Tutor's tasks primarily include as follows:

- to be able to communicate with the NEET, understand his/her psychic and social problems and help in dealing with his/her problems;
- to motivate the attendant in the interest in the specific profession in which he/she is trained and provide him/her with professional help and using an appropriate form to evaluate his/her shortcomings and primarily focus on emphasising positive results of work of a Second Chance School attendant;

- to keep records of the attendant's presence and record each improvement, both social behaviour and professional skills;
- to help in overcoming difficulties;
- to evaluate, together with the attendant, previous results of training and propose further steps for the development of new skills on an ongoing basis.

In principle, there are no traditional classes in the Second Chance Schools. Tutors in Second Chance Schools do not teach but they support acquisition of practical skills in the specific profession by various manners and available means. It is expected that the tutor will lead practical training, and if he/she needs to communicate any information to attendants to clarify issues related to the training and adoption of skills, it is done directly at the workplace (in a workshop, by the machine, bench, etc.). Part of these meetings is always reserved for a positive evaluation of tasks and preparation for further tasks.

How should the tutor communicate possible negative evaluation to Second Chance School attendants

Feedback on the performance, enhancing of adequate and suppression of non-adequate performance is one of the necessary conditions of professional training. How the tutor should approach the evaluation of work, providing feedback to Second Chance School attendant which may encourage or discourage him/her?

Please, remember, if we consider certain possibilities of negative evaluation forms, the tutor may:

a) evaluate the work by a critical comment which however should not discourage the attendant from further efforts to complete the task better and negative evaluations must be compensated by positive evaluation of other aspects of the activities (e.g. correct procedure, patience, etc.);

b) any "criticism" must be communicated using a kind form and be rather an instruction how to better complete the task;

c) if there is a significant error of a Second Chance School attendant, these problems must not be discussed in the presence of other employees or Second Chance School attendants.

The tutor does not have the role of a critic, he/she is rather an advisor and assistant in his/her difficult situation not only in the professional training, but also in dealing with some of the personal problems. The tutor who is in

day-to-day contact with him/her and is usually the first person who finds out about personal problems of the course attendant and may help him/her deal with them.

The Second Chance School is based on a practical training without unnecessary formalities and theoretical classes. Even though, it is necessary to evaluate each course attendant. The evaluation is provided by the tutor, together with the course attendant, and with a representative of the Second Chance School, if possible.

Two types of evaluation forms have been prepared for the evaluation, one is universal for all course attendants and is used for an evaluation of social skills, and the second form is intended for the evaluation of professional skills. This form varies by professions (cook, electrician, shop assistant, blacksmith, bricklayer, etc.). Each attendant is evaluated during the training at least three times, when the first evaluation is made within 2 weeks from the joining of the course, second (ongoing) evaluation is made after two months and the third (final) evaluation is made after the programme completion. If the training exceeds 6 months, it is possible to make the ongoing evaluation after 5-6 months and the final evaluation after the programme completion. These forms are archived and prove how the course attendant behaved and how he/she acquired professional skills.

A course attendant who met the conditions of the training according to the evaluation by the tutor, and is sufficiently trained to be able to complete tasks in the firm (under supervision), but with an assumption that he/she will be able to work individually after further training, shall receive a Second Chance School certificate on the professional training course completion in the specific discipline (these may be partial professions).

Summary of Principles for Tutor's Work

The training of young people in the Second Chance School is based on entirely different philosophy. A traditional teacher or educator is replaced in the Second Chance School by a tutor who is the educator, but primarily a colleague who focuses on individual professional training. The tutor focuses on the mastering of the practical aspect of the activity for which the course attendant is trained, does not teach in the form of theoretical classes, and if theory is necessary, he/she explains it directly in the workshop (in operations) by using

a specific example. As a result, the course attendant will better remember all what is necessary to know for his/her activities in respect of theory.

The role of a tutor in the Second Chance School is irreplaceable. The result of the training depends on his/her approach to the attendant. In addition to professional knowledge, the tutor must also be a good psychologist and understand problems of young people in their difficult situation, when neither family, school, or friends were not able to help him/her and he/she opted for this second chance. It is the tutor on whom depends whether this second chance will be used and whether the course attendant acquires sufficient professional skills, and necessary self-confidence for the success on the job market and whether he/she will be able to use the work habits acquired during the training in the Second Chance School in practice.