

BUILDING SCHOOL-COMPANY PARTNERSHIPS

DEVELOPING AN ACTION PLAN

OVERVIEW OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The Partnership



„MARIA
MONTESSORI” Center
for Inclusive Education

DOBROGEA Group
Factory
- Milling, bakery,
pastry -

The reason for the partnership

This partnership aims at a mutual exchange of experiences, but also seeks future opportunities. While students of the special school have the chance to work in the factory departments, the company receives extra hands from the students and can even find future employees among them.

Brief explanation of the partnership

The development and learning of practical skills in the field of work

This partnership between “ Maria Montessori” Center for Inclusive Education and Dobrogea Factory pursues an efficient collaboration through which the students

can learn, but also develop their manual, social and theoretical knowledge in the field of work. It can also be a great opportunity for the company, as it can find future employees.

ANALYSIS

Reflect on the following questions and explain.

Question	Answer & Explanation
How do we currently train our students and how do we engage as a school with local businesses (e.g. volunteering scheme, internships programs etc.)	For this partnership, we choose to engage using a volunteering scheme.
How are partnership activities currently linked to the curriculum? Are they 'add ons' or are they an intrinsic part of students' learning? Are they part of certain subjects or available to all students?	A part of the activities are linked to the curriculum, such as Manual Abilities and Socialization – but the actual work in the factory, such as assisting and working at the milling, bakery and pastry process is the add on that makes the difference!
What strengths do we have? What are we known for as a school? (ex: logistics, market knowledge)	As a school, we are known for integrating students with various diagnostics and giving them a chance in the social and work life by creating a favorable environment for progress. Therefore, we have many disciplines we follow in the curriculum, such as Manual Abilities, Communication and Language Skills, Sensory and Psychomotor Education, Socioemotional Skills etc.
What kinds of skill sets do our local employers have, and how could those be applied? (ex: technical skills, management skills, marketing)	Our local employes are known for skills as technical skills, manual abilities skills, socialization and linguistic ones.
What can we provide that will directly benefit our partners? (ex: recognition, networking opportunities)	We can provide recognition, experience exchange, future work opportunities and maybe, even a change of views considering people with difficulties!

How are roles and responsibilities for initiating and managing links to companies currently managed? Are they ad hoc or clear and structured? Are partnerships intrinsic to anyone's job description?	Responsibilities and roles are very well established prior. We are talking about students with various disabilities – therefore, everything has to be organized and clear.
Can educators be involved in partnerships during school hours? Can we enable them to be involved outside school hours? Can involvement in partnerships count as part of continuing professional development?	With the principal`s agreement, in an organized manner, teachers can be involved and participate in this kind of projects outside or during school hours. Considering this, both ways count as part of continuing the professional development.
Can we manage required paperwork, such as handling background checks, getting district approval for projects as needed, and getting permission slips signed?	These documents are taken care of prior the actual project. Of course, considering the good organization in the process, everything is ready on time! Teachers usually work in groups and have the total support from the school.
What resources are we likely to need? Do we need support from the school leadership team? Is any support available from the district/municipality or the local business community, e.g. Chamber of Commerce?	Usually, we need the help of the County School Inspectorate, the school leadership team and even the Chamber of Commerce.
What data do we need so that partnership efforts and achievements are tracked and assessed? What type of record of achievement can employers provide for students? How can we celebrate student achievements?	Considering the special needs our students have, observational data and attendance charts of the work schedule are great tools for keeping track of students` presence and progress during the partnership. Also, students receive volunteering certificates and even diplomas at the end of the project.

RETURN OF INVESTMENT

Challenges

Identify two big challenges that you believe the partnership may be able to address.

Business/community challenges	Education challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the community`s perception about people with disabilities • Creating real inclusion and connection between the community and people with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties in working long hour shifts regarding students with disabilities • Accommodation time for each SEN student in order to create a safe environment

Benefits

Identify three benefits your organization would want to realize from its partnership work.

- Long term partnership between our organization and the company.
- Creating and facilitating a safe workspace for our students for a long term journey – giving them the best chances to succeed in life.
- Building a good and strong image of our school - therefor attracting new students to join us on this educational path

PLANNING & TIMELINE

Develop a plan for implementing the partnership.

Identification of coordinator	Timeline		
<i>Decide who the coordinator will be and describe his/her tasks</i>	<i>Define the timeline of the following activities and describe how they will be organized</i>		
<p>The coordinators of this partnership will be the leading teacher along with the manager of the factory. These two always stay in touch regarding students activities: workshifts, attendance charts, goals achieved, strengths, progress etc.</p>	<i>Before the implementation of the partnership</i>	<i>Implementation of the partnership</i>	<i>Follow up</i>
	<p>Before the implementation of this partnership, there is the stage of selecting the students who are going to participate – they are chosen according to well-established criteria, such as age, diagnosis and their motivation to join the workfield. This stage lasts approximately 3 weeks, including the preparation of the necessary documents for the partnership and volunteering between the Center for Inclusive Education and Dobrogea Factory.</p>	<p>During the implementation of the partnership, after all documents are done, the leading teacher along with the factory manager are organizing the work schedule for students – the days/week and hours they are working, the mentors who are supervising the whole process, assisting the children inside the factory, observing their attendance and progress etc. Also, students need to wear special uniforms inside the factory during working hours. It is very important that the leading teacher stays in touch with the factory manager and mentors, as SEN students need to be supervised, helped and motivated for the inclusion process to succeed.</p>	<p>The project lasts for a whole school module (approximately 6-7 weeks – there are 5 modules per school year). By the end of the project, students will receive their Volunteer Certificate and Diploma for Participation.</p>

EVALUATION & REPORTING OF OUTCOMES

How are you planning to evaluate the partnership effort and keep a record of the outcomes considering the following questions?

Design: Does the initiative's design maximise success?

Implementation: How has the initiative been implemented in practice?

Output: What has the initiative produced or delivered?

Outcomes: What impacts, effects or consequences has the initiative had for students?

- In my opinion, the initiative's design maximizes success – as SEN students have the great opportunity to join the labor market, experiencing activities in each department of the factory and recognize their own strengths and also, for the Company – the possibility created to select future employees based on their work progress and strengths in this field.
- This initiative has been implemented in practice based on common goals and a good collaboration and communication between teachers, school leadership team, the County School Inspectorate and Dobrogea Factory team.
- This initiative delivered a great and efficient experience for SEN students, one that can really help them in their future worklife! Also, it has been a great opportunity for the factory to see these children's potential and devotion, finding in them an extra help in the company and possible future employees.
- Of course, the impact can only be a good one! It increased the motivation and ambition by improving or gaining new skills and also, it improved the social anxiety they suffered from.

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