

Second Chance School of Matosinhos

Date of creation

2008

Description

The Second Chance School of Matosinhos in Portugal offers a unique education and training programme. Learners design their own training plan which includes vocational training, artistic training, personal and social development and educational support.

Beneficiaries

Early leavers from education and training

15-25 year olds who left school without obtaining the minimum qualifications to access employment or another education/training programme (often also lacking basic social skills required for social/ occupational integration).

Countries

 Portugal

Education level and sector

Secondary education **Lower secondary education**
Lower secondary general education

6th grade (end of the 2nd cycle of basic education - equivalent to the end of primary education) or 9th grade (end of the 3rd cycle of basic education - equivalent to the end of lower secondary education).

Type of policy/initiative

Compensation

Compensation

Level of implementation / Scope

Local level

Local

Stage of implementation

On-going

Ongoing since 2008

Aims of policy/initiative

Provide students who left school without obtaining the minimum qualifications to access employment or another education/training programme.

Features and types of activities implemented

The Second Chance School of Matosinhos is an independent school run by an NGO, in partnership with the relevant local and national authorities. It is the only second chance school in the country and a member of the European Association of Cities, Institutions and Second Chance Schools (E2C).[1]

The school has a unique education and training programme - students design and develop their training plan for 1 to 2 years, with the support of the school counselling and guidance.

The education and training programme includes vocational training, artistic training, academic education to obtain a 6th or 9th grade certificate[2], personal and social development and educational support and psychosocial intervention.

Vocational training is work-based and usually developed in enterprises.

Personal and social development includes workshops in different areas and cooperation with other institutions. It aims at dealing with any issue afflicting the students (e.g. health and addictions).

Educational support and psychosocial intervention - Support is provided by social educators, psychologists and other staff.

Artistic training, mainly drama, music, dance and visual arts, is provided throughout the year, as part of the regular activities of the school.

[1] <http://www.e2c-europe.org/>

[2] The 6th grade (end of the 2nd cycle of basic education) corresponds to the last year of primary education, and the 9th grade is the last year of basic education (end of the 3rd cycle of basic education) corresponding to the last year of lower secondary.

Resources

The school is mainly funded by local and national authorities:

- The Ministry of Education provides for the teachers, as it does for mainstream schools, while the Matosinhos city council provides for the premises and costs not covered through other programmes;

- The Institute of Employment and Vocational Training, through its local training centres, provides for trainers' and trainees' expenses during the vocational training.

Funding has also been received from the European Social Fund.

Evaluation of the measure

No evaluation has been conducted, however the school was included as a case study in the 2013 'Preventing Early School Leaving in Europe - Lessons Learned from Second Chance Education' study on second chance education. This study focused on success factors and gathered monitoring data provided in the school's annual reports. The methodology included a fact-finding visit and qualitative interviews with students, teachers, management and support staff.

Evidence of effectiveness of the measure

Main results of the school's monitoring data analysis:

- 449 students attended the school and, out of these, 419 attended school certification programmes (6th and 9th grade).
- 106 students stayed one more year in the school, 64 of whom were attending two-year courses.
- The net total number of new students attending the school was 343, and out of these, 313 attended school certification programmes (6th and 9th grade).
- In total, 50 students obtained a 6th year certificate and 73, a 9th year certificate.
- 77 students were involved in the 'System for recognition, validation and certification of competences' and were considered fit to appear in front of a certification jury.
- In total, 200 students (64%) reached their certification goals.
- 16% dropped out or were unable to continue.

Success factors

The following success factors are based on the testimonies of participants in the measure interviewed for the Cedefop study:

1. A friendly open-door organisation, characterised by weak hierarchy and unconditional acceptance: students agree on their learning programme and goals. The second chance school is inclusive, in particular towards students with difficulties, who would be isolated or expelled in the standard school system.
2. A secure place and a communication space: contrary to standard schools, this second chance school aims at developing the students' trust, which also implies handling the information they share with discretion (e.g. not reporting everything to families).
3. A practical and holistic pedagogical approach: methodologies used encourage experience-based knowledge instead of 'classroom knowledge'. The school seeks to motivate students by catering to their interests, and is based on their lives which are considered relevant material for training (e.g. artistic activities are used for re-socialising them and re-establishing human relationships).
4. An intercultural and international dimension: international exchanges are very motivating for students.
5. A motivated and understanding team of professionals showing empathy for the students: teachers and trainers receive support and training to manage their

expectations in terms of outcomes of their educational intervention, and to work with at-risk students.

6. Vocational training and internships for work-based learning: vocational training is practical experience immediately applied to students' lives and internships often open employment possibilities for a brief period of time.

Contact details for further information

Contact name

Luis Mesquita

Contact telephone

351 22 906 45 38

Contact website

<http://www.segundaoportunidade.com/>

Contact email

almesquita [at] gmail.com

Related intervention approaches



Second chance measures



Tailored learning pathways

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