

# The Learning Train

## 1. Please indicate target group and age group

Target group 1: Parents with children in one of five selected schools. The parents experience difficulties in supporting their children at home for school related things .

Target group 2: Last year students in teacher training or social work.

## 2. What were the conditions and different steps necessary for the implementation of the measure?

The Learning Train is implemented in 5 Antwerp schools. They were selected based on the social mix in the school. Other preconditions are:

- Parental involvement has to be an important topic in the school.
- The school has a vision on homework or is engaged to work on a vision with or without the support of The Schoolbridge.
- The teachers are willing to invest in cooperation with The Schoolbridge, the students and the parents. Teachers are invited to do home visits together with the educational welfare worker.
- Parents or the adult who is supporting the child after school (brother or sister, grandparent,...) has to be present after school time.

## 3. Who is involved in decisions about identifying the appropriate type of support, the level and intensity of support?

The teachers detect the families which they think they need support. The care teacher and the educational welfare worker (Schoolbridge) decide which parents can be in the program. Sometimes parents ask themselves to be in the program. At the end it is of course the parent who decides whether to participate or not.

## 4. Who delivers the measure? Which stakeholders/professionals are involved from within and or outside the school? How is cooperation between the stakeholders ensured?

The Schoolbridge implements the Learning Train in 5 Antwerp schools, working together with:

- the higher education lecturer on social work or teacher training (organizing interviews and evaluation)
- the teacher (working on positive relation with parents, home visits)
- the school team (vision on home work, parental involvement is important)
- the student social work / teacher training (initiation courses, working with the parent, intervision, weekly report for The Schoolbridge, ...)

The Schoolbridge coordinates the stakeholders and coaches the students intensively. They support the school in developing a vision on homework or putting the vision into practice.

## 5. Who has overall responsibility for implementation of the measure?

The Schoolbridge in close cooperation with the teacher training / social work training / elementary schools.

## 6. Were there any obstacles in introducing the measure and which ones? How were these obstacles overcome? If not, why not?

Upscaling of the programme with more schools and students is desirable but not possible. The coaching of students is very intense and it is not possible to do more in the present context.

### **7. How is the measure monitored/assessed? By whom?**

- The students in the project are evaluated permanently. They have to report weekly and after each visit of the family. The educational welfare worker gives feedback before the next visit.
- Once a year: evaluation with the 5 schools
- End of the semester: students evaluate their learning process.
- Students were evaluated by educational welfare worker and their lecturer (study credits)
- Involved teachers were interviewed about the cooperation
- We expect results of a poll for ex-students. 'What is the effect of this project/program on your professional competence/ behaviour/attitude?' (end of September '15)
- Formal and informal contacts with parents in the project (home visit / phone / in the school)
- The Schoolbridge has to report to the city of Antwerp.

### **8. What are the results?**

In at least 50% of the families the parental support for school at home is after 3 years still improved. The follow-up from the project by the school is very important. These are vulnerable families and some change of their situation (birth, new job, no job, financial problems, ...) can have serious consequences.

### **9. How is the measure funded?**

The city is financing the NGO Schoolbridge through grants.

### **10. Is the measure still running? Yes**

### **11. Further info**

Since the early 1990-ties Antwerp supported two NGO with a focus on 'parental involvement in education' and 'intercultural mediation'. The organisations worked mainly with parents: how can we reinforce parents with a migration background? How can we help parents in their contacts with schools, ...

In 2003 both organisations restructured and became 'The Schoolbridge'. The new focus of the organisation became parents and school teams. Each program has a parental and a school team angle. Now The Schoolbridge is a NGO that works mainly through city financing (+- 1.100.000 euro).

Besides this, they work together with the Antwerp teachers training institutes. The Schoolbridge coaches students to work effectively with parents, kids and youngsters with a migration background and in different social contexts.

The Schoolbridge is an organisation that believes in innovation. For example: in 2015 it is working on two new projects:

- Choose well for special needs education
- From Chaos to Zen: a program for young people in secondary education to prevent playing truant, behavioural problems, ...

The Schoolbridge shares a mission with the department of education policy of the Antwerp Administration: less pupils that leave school without a certification/diploma that gives access to higher education or work.

**Contact person**

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