

Developing support methodologies for the social integration of children with autism spectrum disorder and their families

HAS-ELTE 'Autism in Education' Research Group (MASZK)

RESEARCH PLAN FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2017/2018

(An accurate translation of the corresponding document in Hungarian,
with minor adjustments in format.)

31 October 2017

I. Background (research activities in the academic year 2016/2017)

MASZK has developed the large sample, representative test protocol and its system-wide background, as previously planned. The purchase of the applicable tools and the ethical approval process has also been finalised. More than 350 families participated in our survey, and willingness to participate in the second phase of the research has been extremely high among parents of children and adults with autism spectrum disorder: 64% of the 235 participants who took part in the survey indicated further willingness to participate in the forthcoming qualitative study.

II. Research plan for the 2017/2018 academic year

Based on the results of the first research year, the proposed research procedures require a more coherent, methodologically better-structured sequence. Although the elements of the research process are not to be changed, their layout (timing) are: the qualitative measurement for year 2-3 and the 'Starbus' intervention project, originally designed to be run parallel, will be conducted in succession, without the samples being separated. This makes the elaboration and implementation of pilot projects possible. Our research group intends to implement the following annual plan:

TIME INTERVAL	RESEARCH ACTIVITIES	PARTICIPATING TEAM MEMBERS
31st October - 31st August 2017.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interpretation of the findings of the first (quantitative) test phase, for the identification of the foci for the qualitative study. 2. The convening of the actively participating colleagues in the second, qualitative phase, finalisation of the tasks and commitments. 3. Detailed and targeted literature research. 4. The elaboration of the draft interview. 5. Submission of the research ethics application for the second research phase. 6. Selecting and contacting the pilot families. 	<p>Head of Research: Miklos Gyori Expert: Bea Ehmann Lead researchers: Krisztina Stefanik, Marta Varga-Molnar Additional researchers, university students: Mrs. Laszlo Janoch, Csilla Bertók, Vivien Németh, Mrs. Tamás Ősz, Endre Horváth, András Ábrahám</p>
1st November – 31st December 2017.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Final design of the interview. 2. Test interviews. 3. Completion of the full team (by region + coordinator). 4. Selecting and contacting the sample families. 	<p>Key teachers in the research: http://maszk.elte.hu/tagok/ Advocacy participants: Hungarian Autistic Society</p>
1st January – 28th February 2018.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Processing and analysis of the test interviews, corrections. 2. Interview preparation training (in Budapest) + conducting test interviews with all the participating interviewers. 3. Finalising the elements of the ‘Starbus’ intervention project, acquisition of equipment. 4. The results of the quantitative research phase: submission of publications in domestic and international journals. 	<p>Setting up of a four-member team for the coordination of key teachers in all Hungarian regions: interviewer teacher, university student, key teacher, research team supervisor.</p> <p>Further research participants in the</p>
1st March – 31st May 2018.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interviews (81 families, national sampling). 2. The development of the professional content of the ‘Starbus’ intervention project. 	<p>Csillagbusz intervention project: Ágota Szekeres, Ágnes Havasi. In the preparation of this project, some of the key teachers,</p>
1st June - 31st August 2018.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data entry (qualitative)(approximately 1 month). 2. Start of the analysis. 3. Preparation of publications. 4. Formation of the ‘Starbus’ intervention project team, selection of the institutions participating, creation of an organizational framework of participation (preparation of experimental research in the third year) 	<p>field colleagues and university students will play a pronounced role.</p>

Our themes of research and goals:

- a) How does the institutional services (education/work, group-specific, individual patterns) affect the quality of life of families raising/supporting a child/adult on the autism spectrum?
- b) Investigation of the autism-related support needs, identification of individual patterns: perceived and objective needs (with an emphasis on public education).

Methods to be used:

- explorative thematic content analysis on spontaneous self-narratives;
- high quality content-analysis along psychological constructs;
- word-frequency-based and concordance analysis.

III. Dissemination and publication plans

Planned conference participations in the second research year:

- The National Educational Science Conference (ONK) 2017
- The National Scientific Assembly of the Hungarian Psychological Society 2018
- The National Professional Conference of the Association of Hungarian Special Needs Teachers 2018
- The International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR) 2018.

With the cooperation of our partners and following our traditions, we are planning various dissemination events for publicising our current research findings.

We intend to extend and deepen our international relations through study visits (The Autism Centre for Education and Research (ACER) at the University of Birmingham), and to publish our findings in national and international journals of education, psychology, health science, special needs education and autism.

IV. The Group's development plan (personal career plans, changes in the composition of the group)

Currently, two persons conducting autism research for their PhD will submit their doctoral theses within the period of 2018-2020 (Havas Ágnes in 2018, and Zsófia Borsos until 2020). In the 2017-2018 academic year, one of the the MA students involved in our research team, Anett Horhi (New National Excellence Programme grantee), will receive professional development and publication opportunities in relation to the qualitative studies and quality of life research. András Ábrahám (also an MA student) will play a bigger role in the preparation of the 'Starbus' intervention project, and, after/in case of successful application, will begin his PhD studies in the fall semester of 2018/2019. Vivien Németh (also an MA student) will play a coordinating role in the qualitative test phase, and is planning her future PhD studies in a MASZK-related topic. Gabriella Tóth (BA student) will participate in the research team in the academic year 2017-2018. Between 2018 and 2020 several further BA and MA theses are to be expected.

Lead researcher Krisztina Stefanik is planning her habilitation based on a MASZK-related theme in 2020 (on the 'Starbus' intervention).

The team of active researchers has been expanded by the recruitment of the above-mentioned novel university student team members.

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