National pilot project: new models for environmental education

The Hungarian Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Office and the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development of the University of Pécs have signed a new grant contract. Within the framework of the cooperation, the Office will provide HUF 20 million in support for university projects aimed at developing energy awareness, sustainability and environmental education, announced Péter János Horváth, President of the Hungarian Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Office. We asked Professor Gábor Szécsi, Dean of the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development of the University of Pécs, about the details.

"We launched the project two years ago, and it has already yielded significant results," said Professor Gábor Szécsi, Dean of the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development of the University of Pécs. "The project basically consists of two major elements, a theoretical/research and a practical/educational line. In the former, we are combining different disciplines to develop a new methodology for environmental education, focusing on lower teacher education, incorporating play-based and other reform pedagogical models.

We will try to make the results of this research as widely available as possible, for example in the form of publications aimed at practising teachers.

The practical side is essentially aimed at renewing environmental education. The models will be tested, applied and piloted both in teacher training and in pedagogical practice. To this end, a talent management program has been set up in cooperation with the Hungarian Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Office: on the one hand, we organize annual talent workshops for secondary school pupils and students, who themselves successfully develop topics by contributing to the project with interesting observations and findings, and on the other hand, a mentoring program has been launched, which generates ongoing cooperation between teachers, students and secondary school pupils."

The project has now reached the stage where additional partners, from both higher education and public education institutions, are being involved. "We are launching pilot programmes whereby our partners can highlight the soundness of a model or what needs to be rethought and changed in the original concept," adds Professor Szécsi, and then underlines:

"In both mathematics and environmental education, we are integrating game-based programs into education - for example, we are developing board games that are attractive to children and make the learning process more interesting and effective.