

Solve your problems by helping others

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As a family owned company, established in 1952, LVD operates five production facilities around the world and is active in over 46 countries, making it a global player on the sheet metalworking market. The Slovak operation started in 1996 as a joint venture with an existing manufacturing facility in Tornaľa, LVD S2.

LVD took over 100% ownership and developed a stable press brake manufacturing entity. Focusing on permanent development, and aware of the advantages of the Slovak operation, the owners decided to strengthen the operations and built a new, greenfield operation, LVD S3, a.s., next to the existing site. This decision created new 250 positions, in addition to the existing 80 employees. The majority of jobs are highly-skilled technical ones - mechanical assemblers, electricians and especially CNC operators.

Tornaľa is in the middle of a triangle, comprising the three towns with the highest unemployment rate in Slovakia, over 35% when the company arrived. The population of Tornaľa is around 7,400, and has dropped by 25% in the last ten years. It is a town to which it is very difficult to attract skilled employees.

The only possibility to meet the staffing needs was to fight for talent, to attract every available person on the market - to attract people to come back. We had to focus on the future and due to the quality of the education required, we selected SOŠ J.Szakkay in Košice, which had experience with CNC machines, for partnership.

The start was difficult, as at that time there were only 2-4 students from the Gemer region, interested in studying in Košice, which is over 100 km away. We implemented a new scholarship system and in 2012 attracted the first six outstanding students for study at this school. Since then,

we have continued each year with 2-6 students. Due to the intensive support, SOŠ was able to increase interest in studying from Gemer up to 12-16 students each year. The practical experience at LVD helped us to prepare them better for work. The students have proven to be very good at their studies and after graduating, they are obliged to work for a min. three years at LVD.



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There is a benefit for all participants – the school receives support with obtaining new students and spreading goodwill in the region, and technical support for education. The employer gained a source of technically-skilled graduates and the students have the option to study at one of the best technical schools and obtain job security immediately after finishing their studies.

In addition, LVD had long been seeking a technical training

center for CNC operators. We did not find one, so in June 2015, a Belgian professor with over 30 years of experience helped us establish our own internal technical training center at the plant. This center allowed us to train pre-selected unskilled personnel in 4-6 months as independently working CNC operators. We have trained many young graduates of secondary schools, without any technical skills or knowledge. The success rate of the training center is over 75%. We are currently considering using VR, so we can get on-line and avoid buying expensive training machines.

We are often asked about the dual system of education. In its current form, it is not interesting for us and we use our own system. One reason for this is that we want to train students for our company, not for the market in general. That is the role of the standard education system.

Ing. Eva Matejová, director of SOŠ J.Szakkay in Košice stated regarding the cooperation: "Together we've created a program of scholarship support. These were the first steps of our dual system of education. We are very glad that our students have proven the theory successfully in practice. They are in direct contact with a real production company, where they found their first job afterwards. We also got the feedback on the necessary improvement of the education system, advice for the priorities we should focus on and access to the technical know-how of a leading international company."

Daniel, a CNC operator at LVD S3, a.s., and part of the first group supported by LVD to study at SOŠ J. Szakkay in Košice: "LVD is the biggest international employer in Tornaľa and everyone would like to get a job there. My parents were not able to send me to study in Košice, but we liked the fact that I can study with the support of LVD and at the same time have 100% job certainty after I graduate. I was not the best student of theory, but the practical training during the four years' study helped me to understand the subjects much better. Starting a real job as a CNC operator was much easier after getting training at the internal LVD CNC Training Centre. As a young guy when I started, they had time for me, even when I failed, produced something wrong, or damaged the parts or even the machine. Three years later I am working with a big new portal milling machine and enjoy having such a job in my home town."

We have supported the school by buying programmable LEGO robots. With these, the students won a national contest and participated in the WORLD ROBOT OLYMPICS in Hungary in November of last year. Out of more than 3,000 participants from more than 70 countries, they placed 74th. And now we have started up a new project which teaches manual skills to children at elementary schools.

Not only LVD will need them in the future - smart, logically thinking experts, with the ability to use their common sense. The first job for the majority of them could well be a job that doesn't yet exist and only if the education system adapts to future needs can future graduates succeed.