*Régió és Oktatás XIII.*

**Editors**
**Julianna Boros–Tamás Kozma–Edina Márkus**


**Community Building**
**and Social Innovation**

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# Community Building
# and Social Innovation

# RÉGIÓ ÉS OKTATÁS XIII.
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# Community Building and Social Innovation

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# PREFACE

The conclusion of the study called "Learning Regions in Hungary" (LeaRn, 2011-2015), was that the different learning types (formal, non-formal, informal) are interrelated with the exception of social learning. Social learning seemed to be determined by hidden motives. It remained almost unaffected by the economic, social or cultural conditions of a given community (Kozma et al.: Learning Regions in Hungary; Region and Education XI. 2015).

In order to uncover the motivations of social learning, we examined it through a series of case studies. These case studies demonstrated that social learning was closely linked to social innovations that were present even in the most deprived communities. Social learning enabled these communities to evolve by motivating stagnant groups to reinvent themselves and move forward. Linking social learning and social innovation, this series of studies, the LearnInnov project (2016-2019), explored the nature of social innovations in modern-day Hungary. The case studies have been presented in several publications and they have been summarized in a book (Márkus&Kozma, Learning Communities and Social Innovations; Region and Education XII, 2019).

The LearnInnov project explored the key role of learning in social innovation. Local communities, with active learning, became the focus of our research. If innovations stem from such communities, strengthening them is vital. But what is a 'community' and how do we define it? If strengthening these communities is crucial, how do we nurture them to enable future innovation? These questions are asked and attempted to be answered by the authors of the present volume.

The volume consists of four parts. In the first part, there are studies exploring social innovation in the school environment. Traditionally, social innovation within the school happens in a rigid organisational framework. However, during the pandemic--especially in the first phase of it from March to May 2019--we saw many examples of how innovative both teachers and students became when faced with unexpected situations. Communities breed innovations. Challenges in communities strengthen them by innovating themselves to overcome new situations. These phenomena are shown by the studies in the first part of the volume.

The authors of the second part illustrate the effect of social learning on community building. 'Community building' is repressed within the traditional framework of school and pedagogy. When freed from administration and bureaucracy, social learning becomes visible. Papers in the second part of the volume discuss how social learning takes place in a community, forming and innovating it as it develops.

Studies in the third part of the volume look at community building within the local culture. This type of community building happens through shared experiences within a social unit. The voluntary activities include, for example, singing in the local orchestra, arts and craft activities or the organisation of craft festivals. All of these are popular occurrences with a long tradition in Hungary. The emergence of social innovation is the most obvious and therefore the easiest to study.

In the last part of the collection, the authors sum up their conclusion. Learning and innovation are interdependent. There are no 'social learning' and 'social innovation' *per se,* they always happen in a community. However, this research only allows us a small glimpse of the interrelationship of learning and innovation in the community. Further studies are required to truly understand the hidden dimensions of the community and the innovations born from it by social learning.

The Editors

# PART I.

# COMMUNITY BUILDING AND THE SCHOOL

**Beáta Andrea Dan - Eszter Karolina Kovács**

# THE LINK BETWEEN EXPERIENTIAL PEDAGOGY AND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## Abstract

This study reviews the literature on community schools and experiential pedagogy as innovative pedagogical movements. First, we characterize community schools and find their place in the field of educational activities, involving parents and local NGOs therefore offering a rich variety of experiential pedagogical activities. Second, we present an exemplary community school form Oradea, Romania, which was founded in an uncertain period of the year 2019, during the first wave of COVID-19 Pandemic. Third, we explore whether the impact of community schools' influence the four C's of 21st Century skills, such as: Critical thinking, Creativity, Collaboration and Communication. Community schools offering an alternative, experiential way of learning is quickly increasing in number all over the world, but there is no evidence whether they are more effective than traditional schools. This study reviews by presenting one of exemplary school form Romania the effectiveness of community schools.

*Acknowledgments*

## Introduction

Education today is facing an unprecedented revolution in which old methods collapse and no new methods have emerged to replace them yet. As the question arise by educators and scholars *"How can we prepare ourselves and our children for a world that is constantly transformed and offers radical uncertainty?" (*Harari, 2018). Nobody knows the answer and this pessimistic view is a constant reality. We have to face a world of Information Technology and Biotechnology, including Artificial Intelligent (AI), which put postmodern society in a vicious future. How can education system deal with all these challenges, what can be done?

The constant social changes affect educational processes as well. The globalized social trends try to integrate ambiguous values, values which don't necessarily serve local communities. What do I mean? For example, our present situation demands global restrictions, excessive hygiene norms and social distancing. Educational policies cannot assess or evaluate the damages/traumas caused by lock-down. How can community involvement enter in this discourse, how can they do something, does not come to the fore. One of the examples for good educational practices is The Grund School from Oradea, Romania. Here the educational processes are built on experiential pedagogy, but next to alternative methods and educational tools the community play a central role. They raise the issue of belonging somewhere. Kids are directly affected by educational processes and their family as well, but in our present-day families have transferred almost every responsibility to the extent of the educational institutions. And we have to admit this became a norm. There are just a few school activities in which pupils' parents and relatives are invited. What kind of communal affiliation are we talking about, in a world where the color of multigenerational coexistence has been completely destroyed? This is one of the basic issues for the schools of the future. Maybe we can get an answer if we try to map and track some local communities.

## Local Communities and Their Role in Education

To the question arises before we can possibly get an answer if we take a closer look to the local communities and their role in education. At the heart of the community schools lies the idea that children's whole social environment accounts for their development. This approach differs from the traditional educational approach, where the school and in particular its academic achievement score is the focus (Heers, Van Klaveren, Groot & Maassen van den Brink, 2011). The traditional educational system in its present form and structure failed to serve community needs such as common values and attitudes. School-based education is no longer able -and don't even want- to provide lifelong ammunition to their participants, it remains in its serving role on the basic level (Kozma, 2016).

If we take a look in the world, we can conclude that every community school is different, but there are many similarities between them. First of all, public schools offer extracurricular activities creating hubs and they used to

bring together many partners and opportunities supporting their students (Pusztai et al, 2020).

If we want to find a definition, we can quote the description of Coalition for Community Schools: *"a place and a set of partnerships, connecting a school, the families of students, and the surrounding community. A community school is distinguished by an integrated focus on academics, youth development, family support, health and social services, and community development*" (Blank, Jacobson, & Melaville, 2012, p. 2). Establishing pedagogical communities around the aims of learning and training as emancipative educational practice is the heart of experiential pedagogy. Experiential pedagogy, in its simplest form means learning from experience or learning by doing. Experiential learning first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking (Lewis & Williams, 2006). One of the most widely used theoretical frameworks about experiential pedagogy is Kolb's model (1984). Interesting that experience itself plays an important role in learning, but this is just one phase in Kolb's model. We can observe that students can enter learning in all stages in the cycle but the most important task is the *meaningfulness* of the educational process. (McLeod, 2017).

Phases of Experiential Learning:
- Concrete Experience – Students actively engage in an experience.
- Reflective Observation – Students reflect on the experience, identifying any connections, inconsistencies, or alignment between the experience and their prior knowledge.
- Conceptual Thinking – Through reflection, students generate new understandings/ideas or modifies their existing conceptualization of an idea/concept in order to draw conclusions and make hypotheses.
- Active Experimentation – Students plans and test their conclusions/hypotheses by applying their knowledge to new experiences (McLeod, 2017).

Experiential learning is well known as an educational method or a type of learning (Kolb, 1984), but why is it so popular, how can a community school use its technique in every day practice? *"Human beings are unique among all living organisms in that their primary adaptive specialization lies not is some particular physical form or skill or fit in an ecological niche, but rather in identification with the process of adaptation itself-the process of learning.*

*We are thus the learning species, and our survival depends on our ability to adapt not only in the reactive sense of fitting into physical and social worlds, but in the proactive sense of creating and shaping those worlds"* (Kolb, 1984, p.1). Here lies the answer, when a community wants to reshape, wants to recreate the world around, gets a proactive sense. That's why experiential pedagogy occupies its place in the learning techniques of community schools. Local communities have a score believe in the ability to change the world by doing, by experimenting new things and methods.
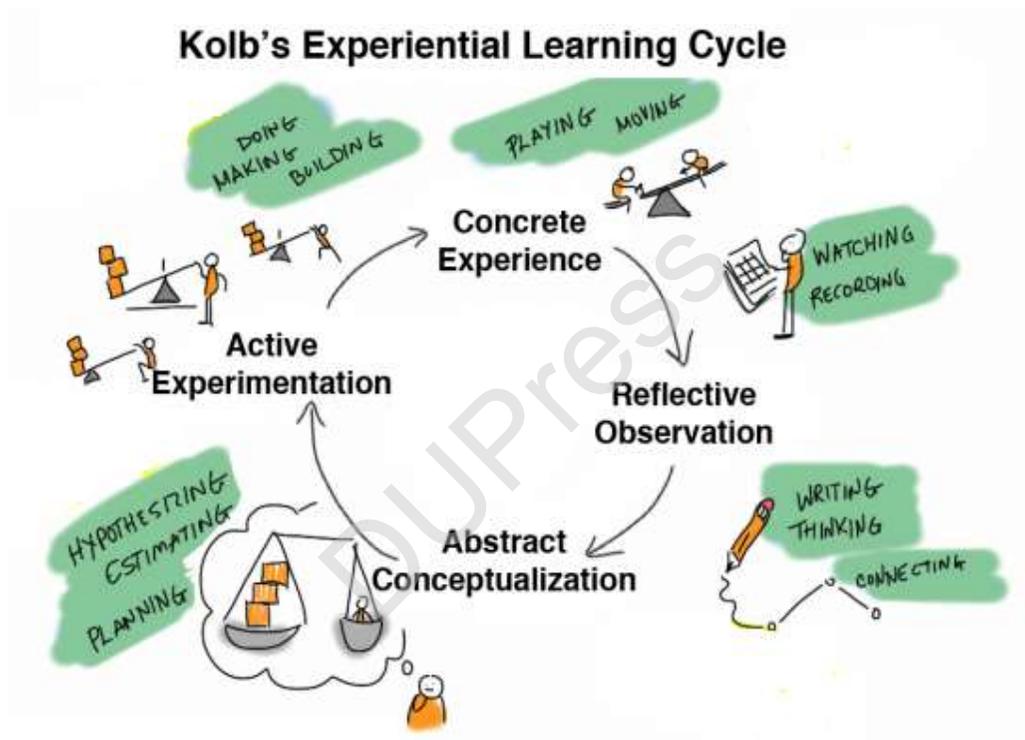


Figure 1. Illustration retrieved from https://brocku.ca/

## The Grund School as Community Movement and Educational Experiment

The current situation affects communities, since the pandemic was announced local communities are faced with new challenges and they have to find some sort of solution. The whole globe is profoundly affected, isolation, social-distancing and economic regression force us to change our psychosocial environment. However, among disadvantages we can still find some exemplary movements, such as The Grund School program in, Oradea,

Romania. Analyzing their activities, we can conclude that "*the ability of a community to learn new problem-solving methods is the 'social fabric' of innovations"* (Kozma, 2019).



Figure 2. Schematic diagram of the Creating Community Schools Using Experiential Pedagogy

To Create Community Schools Using Experiential Pedagogy is an initiative run by Grund NGO, located in Oradea, Romania. It presents how community seeks answers and how can they find solutions being innovative in the field of education. In our present-day reality regarding traditional schooling, we face with three major problem: general shutdown, uncertainty and the challenges of online learning. Local communities have searched for answers and came up with three possible solutions: learning by doing, cooperation and problem-solving methods. In Romania the community schools have a particularly important role in a context in which policy making has been known to be centralized; ad hoc; and, often, detached from schools' resources, needs, and capacities. (Kovács, 2020)

What is Grund School? They define themselves as being a *Playground* protected by a handful of children. Grund is The Base. It is a school where learning is an imperceptible process. Where teachers may not be adults and where students are not necessarily children. A place where experiential education plays a key role. "*A spiritual place where we like to experiment. Where learning is living. A school which constantly asks questions, and searches for answers. Together with the children and their families"* (Founders: Dóra Aczél, John Fenemore, Ildikó Molnár, Orsolya Szőnyi, Volunteers, engines: Ivett Szabó, Emő Kamilla Vajna, Zsófi Szabó, and so many more) Located in Oradea.

The Grund School was founded by parents who try to seek a new way to educate their children, therefore family engagement takes a very important place. The Grund School support the idea of better parenting, effective communication between school and home, they ask for family volunteering, for parents helping with everyday tasks, for parents involved in school decision-making, and community organizing. Community schools often engage parents in a variety of activities focused on their own needs as well as those of their partners. Community schools connect families and the local community based on the belief that building and deepening trust through partnerships plays a key role in education (Oakes, Maier & Daniel, 2017).

If we want a good place for our children, if we want a good school, we have to produce the condition by supporting an experiential learning environment and reestablishing long-standing disconnects between schooling and unschooling institutions.

**The research**

*The purpose of the research*

The purpose of the research is to examine factors affecting local communities since the pandemic was announced, to present an exemplary community school, namely The Grund School, which aim is helping local Hungarian minority community reshaping educational perspectives from the view point of children, parents and partner organizations (NGOs) based on the following criteria:

- The perception of schooling versus unschooling during lockdown, analyzing effectiveness of equal opportunities and services offered by digital/ e-learning services in Romania.
- Identifying factors affecting local communities during lockdown, that have a negative impact on their children skill (The four C's skill) and academic achievement, and looking for possible solutions and answers, trying to give an answer to the arise questions.
- Examining the social interactions of children and their families in this local community school environment, exploring the relationship and interaction between schooling and experiential learning techniques at community level.

- Also, when examining the community school program, we explore the attitudes of their families, their relation to learning, and their influence on community members.
- Examining on what extent is community schools able to enter in the field of education and how this affects in positive or negative way traditional schooling system.

Research questions:

- What is the aim of the Grund School?
- What are the difficulties faced by founders of Grund School regarding the practice of experiential pedagogy in present situation caused by lockdown?
- Do these difficulties influence the educational and training effectiveness and motivation of the members of the community?

## Sample

5 members of Grund School NGOs, details:

 2 founders of Grund School
 3 volunteers

## Methods

The research involves a structured interview scan. The interviewees were selected by snowball method. The Grund School NGO's founders and the Community School leaders (members of the community school committee) were interviewed using ten questions in online form.

## Results

In the structured interview study 5 persons participated, including 3 women and 2 men. Two of them are the founders of the Grund NGO's, and three of them are volunteers. All of the five persons, participated in the interview are parents as well. Three of them are Hungarian minorities in Romania and one man is English from UK, but he works and lives in Hungary and Romania.

 The questions of the interview can be divided into different dimensions. Questions about the personal relationship with Grund School and their attitude to the local community were included in the first round. After that we asked about their future plan regarding Grund School and their experience about experiential pedagogy as well as their difficulties during lockdown. We

also asked them to speak freely about the importance of community schools from their particular viewpoint.

There were two main themes that emerged when the founders and volunteers were asked about the perceived impact of Grund School. The respondents provided unique angle of analysis related to community schools and firsthand accounts about their experiences with the local Hungarian community being in minority and creating a close community school setting.

Research Question 1

What is the aim of the Grund School?

*Theme 1: Safe Place*

When asked how has the Grund School idea created and what is its aim the respondents of Grund ONG's founders responded

Dóra Aczél, 35 years old, mother of three, she is the founder of Grund ONG's, she is an influencer, trainer and volunteer.

One of her personal motivation regarding the idea of Grund school is her elder son, Peter. Peter's high EQ, or emotional intelligence beside with high IQ as well is really challenging in traditional school settings. Therefore, Dóra dreamed of a place for him to go to, where he would go with love in the morning, where he would feel good and where his level of knowledge and emotion would be nurtured. "*Well it wasn't quite a success story, because Peter doesn't really like Grund, but he is happy for his friends and mates who has found a safe place in here.*"

Vajna Emő Kamilla, 46 years old, she is the executive director of Grund School.

She was driving here by personal motivation as well, her 9 years old twins, Hanna and Csongor are struggling in traditional school system as their mother concluded: *"we just trying to survive"*.

She dreamed about a space where education can be different and their kids would be in safe hands.

*Theme 2: School as the Hub of the Local Community*

Another theme that emerged with the volunteers is the notion of the school as the center or hub of the local community. The respondents even coined the term as they answered below:

John Fenemore, was brought up in the UK, but has spent most of his adult life in Hungary and Romania. He has worked as a teacher and translator, but currently he earns his living as a Hungarian lawyer. He teaches

adults and children in his spare time, through Grund School. In Budapest training lawyers is part of his job.

*"Grund School came about through discussions initiated by Dóra Aczél with a number of people who care deeply about education. I loved the idea of creating a space in Oradea/Nagyvárad which would provide child centered learning opportunities and was eager to be involved…*

*I have also been involved in bringing in talented people who I know to be excellent teachers to the programme."*

Andrea and Andras Wagner. Andrea is 43 years old, SEN teacher, she is one of the best specialists in Bihor county, who works with children with severe and multiple disabilities. She has three children quite a grown-up son and two younger daughters. Her husband Andras is an enthusiastic volunteer and executive director of Posticum Cultural Center located in Oradea.

*"Dóra Aczél, the founder of Grund NGO, is an old friend of us. Her enthusiasm, her willingness to do for the local community, for the children, is a driving force for us as well. Grund has attracted a creative, imaginative professional hub."*

*Research Question 2*

What are the difficulties faced by founders of Grund School regarding the practice of experiential pedagogy in present situation caused by lockdown?

*Theme 1: Safe Place*

When asked how has the general shutdown affected their activities at the Grund School they responded:

Dóra: "*Answering these questions I want to highlight community involvement, for me this is the most important component. During this pandemic we face with the fact that educating our children is our families and the local community responsibility. A school should not be maintained by an external system. A system just should give it a frame, but, in my opinion the community's power and the community's work will keep it alive. I think that our society is ready to create a "critical mass" which will bring change in the field of education. We just have to work really hard to manage to keep it alive… and I am very optimistic."*

Emőke: "*We have a lot of work ahead, a lot of challenges, it is really difficult to provide the financial background for everyday necessities, but we know what we want and we will solve every problem… sooner or later."*

*Theme 2: School as the Hub of the Local Community*

John: "*Education has always been important to me. I feel incredibly lucky to have received the educational opportunities that I did. I worked hard to ensure that my own children received the best educational opportunities available.*

*My children have now grown up and it pains me when I see that other children are not receiving the same opportunities. Many schools are preparing children for a life in the twentieth century (not the twenty first). The twentieth century was an era of mass production, mass communication and mass education. Mass production is no longer the driver of our economy – the large factories and offices have been replaced by smaller, more flexible businesses, which people choose because to use because of what makes them different. The skills and disciplines needed to participate effectively in such more personal environments are very different from the skills and disciplines required in mass production: in short our students will need to be able to „stand out" not „fit in". Mass communication through television and newspapers has also been replaced by more targeted sources of information: information (which used to be a precious resource needing specialist skills to access it) has become freely available at the touch of a button and students need more than ever the skills to evaluate the quality of the information they receive and to sift out the information that is relevant and that they can rely on.*

*As a teacher, the process of learning fascinates me and the reward for teaching is seeing in someone's eyes that „lightbulb moment" when they suddenly „get it". That is a profoundly moving experience no matter how often it occurs.*"

András: "*For us, the Grund is the air, the community and the garden work for relaxation. My children regularly participate in Grund programs (afterschool program, camps, family days, afternoons, Community Garden).*"

Andrea: "*On Saturday, 5th of December, I will dunk in the Grund's lake this was an idea for fundraising, namley "Dunk for Grund" campaign. I would like to draw the attention of the local community to the importance of Grund's programs, I would like to open the eyes and purse of to the world for support and maintain the educational activities here, and as a SEN teacher I want to draw attention to the fact that children with disabilities should have a part of communities schools as well.*"

*Research Question 3*

Do these difficulties influence the educational and training effectiveness and motivation of the members of the community?

*Theme 1: Safe Place*

When asked about their future plan being an alternative educational service provider using experiential pedagogy they responded:

Dóra: "*Whether we can take advantage of this situation by making a difference, or just wait until it will be over and simply go back to our old routine, is up to us. But it also depends on Grund. It is Grund School's responsibility to address families, ask how they are and give them the opportunity to move on. The community school model has provided a safe place, a sanctuary for children and their families during this sensible period of lock-down.*"

Emőke: "*Grund School would not exist without the community that supports it. The local community provides material support and knowhow and ideas for what to do. I love the way that Grund School brings people together to work voluntary together on things that are important to them.*"

*Theme 2: School as the Hub of the Local Community*

John one of the founders and enthusiastic supporter of Grund School conveyed the following sentiments throughout his interview as seen below: "*Our experience-based teaching style is characterized by the following aspects: We do not have to group kids by age, some of our programs involve the whole family from grandmothers to young babies, most have children of varying ages participating together. This allows the educational experiences we organize to be a more natural part of our community rather than an artificial world where children are segregated by age. One thing I particularly like about this approach is that it allows mentoring relationships to develop between the participants – mentoring is a natural and very important part of life for both mentor and mentee. Although we have clear learning outcomes for the experiences we create, each child participates in the experience on their own terms as part of their community. They bring their own perspective, curiosity and insight to the group and often bring out things which we wouldn't have appreciated and they can share with the other participants. This makes for a much richer learning experience than a teacher led teaching style. We work as a team –it is much more enjoyable and productive to think and work together and produces better outcomes. Grund School has been very successful at organizing ad hoc activities, camps and workshops, but is still very dependent on the input of the founders. I*

*would like, over time, for Grund School to grow more self-sufficient (environmentally, financially and in terms of building its own community). This means spending time building Grund School's institutional capacity. Grund School would like to develop a full-time micro school to equip children for life in the middle of the twenty first century and is working on gaining accreditation to operate as a full-time school."*

## Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the link between experiential pedagogy and community schools' model. More precisely, the study sought to understand the perceived impact this community school has on founders, on volunteers as parents and as part of local community. Three research questions informed this single qualitative case study. Qualitative research methods were employed and data was triangulated to increase credibility and dependability.

The first research question sought to answer if the founders and the volunteers of Grund School were impacted or saw an impact of experiential pedagogy regarding every-day tecahing and what is the aim of Grund School located in Oradea. Although only two of the founders and three volunteers were interviewed, they provided a powerful amount of information regarding Grund School. So answering to our first question we can conclude that Grund School aim is to develop a full-time micro school to equip children for life in the middle of the twenty first century and the Grund ONG is working on gaining accreditation to operate as a full time school.

Our second question was related to the difficulties faced by founders of Grund School regarding the practice of experiential pedagogy in present situation caused by lockdown. At the conclusion of the respondents answer the Grund School's founders and volunteers stated they can do more than they thought they did in relation to general shutdown of the schools in Romania. They each spoke to the connection to the community and even described Grund School as an initiative movement in the field of education. This community school has been very successful at organizing ad-hoc activities, camps and workshops, but is still very dependent on the input of the founders. Every respondent have a global view over time for Grund School to grow more self-sufficient (environmentally, financially and in terms of building its own community).

The last research question addressed the perceived impact of the Grund School facing difficulties to educational and training effectiveness and motivation caused by lockdown. Grund is not the only a school as the respondents oversee. All of them spoke of their kids struggling in traditional school system. We can conclude that Grund School would not exist without the local community that supports it. The local community provides material support and knowhow and ideas for what to do. All of the respondents love the way that Grund School brings people together to work voluntary together on things that are important to them.

Two main themes emerged from the inductive data analysis collected from the online interview concerning the perceived impact of the experiential pedagogy linked to community schools. Themes included Grund School as the safe place and hub of the community. The interviews revealed an acknowledgement of the school as the center or hub of the community offering a safe place for their members.

## Future Implications of the Research

The topic can be studied from the point of view of founders and volunteers, as well as from the perspective of families and educators of local community which can make the results of interviewing the members of this Hungarian community form Romania in a more subtle way:

- There is a lack of empirical research regarding the community school model in Romania, this study may serve as additional research to the subject.
- The results of this study may assist in providing a framework to duplicate the study in other community schools across Transilvania.
- Educators and other staff members of the Grund School were also not included in this study and may be a stakeholder group that could be utilized in future studies.

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**Zsófia Tószegi - Imre Radnai**

# DIGITAL TOOLS AND COGNITIVE PRESENCE. APPLYING THE COMMUNITY OF INQUIRY MODEL TO EVALUATE A LEARNING COMMUNITY IN TRANSITION

## Abstract

Previous results from international research suggest that online learning methods can function as viable alternatives to university classroom environments, evidenced by analyses of student academic performance (Magagula & Ngwenya, 2004; McPhee & Söderström, 2012) and satisfaction indicators (Palmer, 2012). The focus of our project was to conduct a four-phase survey with international students and instructors in a college preparatory program at the International Studies Center, University of Pécs Medical School (ISC-UPMS), observing them as a *learning community* during the COVID-19 transition when teaching and learning moved to online platforms. The first two phases examined student satisfaction and attitudes towards elective interdisciplinary courses, community building events and service learning opportunities. Results from the first phases confirmed that preparatory programs at ISC successfully combine classroom and digital education tools as well as formal and community learning solutions. Additionally, the programs build bridges between cultures, disciplines and linguistically diverse learners. In the third and fourth phase of our study we used the revised Community of Inquiry (CoI) model (Shea & Bidjerano 2010) to identify key constructs in the education process in order to examine how online space changes the relationship between students and teachers and their relationship to learning. Data collection was conducted using mixed method research: a questionnaire was sent to 156 international students and 25 faculty members, and semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain qualitative data. Comparative data based on the levels of agreement on a five-point Likert scale correlated questions with the following four types of *presence* represented by the CoI model: *social, cognitive, learner and teaching* presence. Results suggest that social presence has a robust role in community learning because it correlates with cognitive aspects related to the education process.

**Introduction**

As members of the LearnInnov research team in Hungary, we approach college preparatory content-based language teaching as members of a learning community that periodically reflects on the teaching activities and learning environment for students and staff alike. Whether learning takes place in a *formal classroom setting* in large or small groups, on digital learning platforms designed to virtually instruct and assess students, or *informally* during optional cultural, social or academic events without a structured curriculum, its value-added aspects are not only the enhancement of knowledge and skills, but also the empowerment of individuals (students and teachers alike) to become critical, reflective thinkers and life-long learners (Harvey, 2002:14). LearnInnov researchers have dedicated a volume to social innovations in developing regions of Hungary that fostered learning communities (Márkus & Kozma eds., 2019). Such grassroots projects which promote community learning are often rhizome for economic innovation in their surrounding region, empowering members of remote villages to connect resources and services with the help of motivated, engaged participants.

The focus of our project was to conduct a longitudinal survey with international students and instructors of a college preparatory program called the International Studies Center, University of Pécs Medical School. Participants were observed as a *learning community* during challenging transitions; when young adult preparatory students socialize to become university citizens of UP; and when the COVID-19 pandemic suddenly interrupts their education process and shifts classroom instruction to online learning platforms that no longer requires physical presence from international students. As educators and researchers who helped facilitate these conflicting transitions, we decided to study this process as one that has made our community more resilient by recognizing newly emerging problems and possibilities (Kozma, 2018:241). Students who participated in the various phases of our pilot study started to self-organize and preferred to rely on each other's resources outside of the formal classroom setting, advocating for more community-initiated learning to instinctively

counterbalance the lack of a face-to-face student-teacher connection in the building. This transition from a classroom-based learning facilitation to an eLearning experience also provided opportunities for tapping into educational technology that already existed at the University of Pécs, but was infrequently used for information sharing and team collaboration (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Moodle). The community also experimented with cloud-based plug-in video conferencing service with screen-sharing capacities (e.g. Zoom). Our research findings related to this learning community undergoing social and cultural challenges are a driving force for innovation. This is by nature open and connects with local and international communities that have academic as well as inter- and transdisciplinary interests rooted in curiosity, linguistic awareness and cognition in a foreign language (Kozma, 2018:239-240). Results from the first phases of our survey suggested that as long as international students were able to stay together as a community in their dormitory, they shared resources and study materials and organized themselves into smaller study groups to support each other with technical resources (e.g. shared Internet connection) and help each other succeed in the academic program and manage the cultural shock in the new environment.

A pilot survey was first launched in the spring of 2019 at the International Studies Center of the University of Pécs Medical School (ISC-UPMS). The first two phases of the survey targeted international preparatory students at the university and examined student satisfaction and attitudes towards interdisciplinary elective course offerings, self-awareness training and community service learning opportunities.

Results from the first phase confirmed that our university preparatory programs successfully combine classroom and digital learning applications and formal and community learning solutions, serving as a bridge between cultures, disciplines and various language proficiency levels. We presented these results at the 19th National Education Conference in Pécs in a presentation titled *Inclusive Pedagogical Practices in University Preparatory Programs of the International Studies Center, University of Pécs Medical School*. According to the attitudes of students, 84% expressed a strong preference for blended-learning methods that paired contact hours with online learning platforms and 80% of respondents were interested in elective interdisciplinary courses in addition to the mandatory preparatory courses.

Considering the above data, we looked for existing models for inquiring into this process to evaluate each phase of our changing learning community,

identified key issues and posed the following questions to frame our research: In what respect does online space change the relationship between students and teachers and their relationship to the educational process? In what ways can online space promote community learning? What are the benefits and limitations of language learning and content-specific pre-college preparatory education on a digital platform? What are the elements that are articulated as definite values missing from the conventional classroom? What are the qualities of online education that we eventually want to incorporate into a post-COVID hybrid educational model?

The third and fourth phases of our study focused on the transition process to digital learning platforms as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which introduced new aspects of learning. Following a community research model, the following new research questions were formed for Spring and Autumn 2020: How has the online environment changed the relationship between students, teachers and the learning process? What are the advantages and limitations of using virtual platforms according to preparatory students and their instructors at the University of Pecs? What elements or qualities of the learning-teaching process do participants miss from the conventional classroom. What are the benefits of online learning that students would like to maintain in our education program for the future?

Data was collected using mixed methods. A Google Form survey was sent to 156 international students and 25 instructors, and randomly selected participants were chosen for semi-structured interviews. Our survey was adopted from a previously validated Community of Inquiry (CoI) survey previously used in the context of foreign language learning at a Taiwanese university (Wu, Hsieh, and Yang, 2017) and it asked for levels of agreement on a Likert-scale. As we did not have representative numbers, we opted not to perform statistical analysis, but instead focused on the qualitative analyses of participants' answers and analyzed correlations between items and the related learner presence, teaching presence, cognitive presence and social presence. The data was based on 60 completed international student surveys, 24 instructor surveys from the English language preparatory programs, and 25 students (most of whom are recipients of the Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship) and 4 instructor surveys from the Hungarian preparatory program. After evaluating the survey data after the first two phases, additional research questions arose for the survey in light of our preliminary results: Which aspect of the teaching-learning process correlates strongest

with student satisfaction? What values and differences are expressed in a fully online teaching-learning process (English language program) as opposed to a flipped classroom (Hungarian preparatory program) during the teaching-learning process?

**Literature review for the third and fourth phases of the study**

Previous results from international research studies suggest that online learning methods can be equivalent quality alternatives to the university classroom environment, evidenced by findings such as the analyses of student academic performance (Magagula and Ngwenya, 2004; McPhee and Söderström, 2012) and satisfaction indicators (Palmer, 2012).

Csapó published a study on research-based teacher training in which he points out that recent developments in education sciences and the rapid changes experienced in the learning environment question the traditional system of teacher training because by the time new theories make it into practice, they become outdated (Csapó 2015). His answer to this problem was an accelerated innovation cycle and research-based education methods "where teachers seeking to improve teaching practice do not produce scientific knowledge just for storage but for direct use in their practice". In the same article he discusses the vital role of a combined project and problem-based education and his research-based teacher training built on constructivist approaches (Piaget's cognitive and Vygotsky social approach), as well as collaborative interaction (Dewey) and self-regulated preparation for life-long learning, which can be found among the principles proposed by the European Union.

Let us revisit the theoretical background and developments of the inquiry-based learning community as a model. Randy Garrison, the author of the *Community of Inquiry Framework* starts by differentiating between the notions of collaboration and cooperation. In the case of the latter, participation and influence on each other's ideas are missing key elements. However, *collaboration* is characterized by open, purposeful communication and cohesion, providing a critical and constructive approach to the content shared by learners.

This leads to the next quality that is the fundamental difference of strong *metacognition,* which is defined as *thinking about thinking*. During this process, as we find in previous examples of dialogic pedagogies, such as

Bohm and Buber (Skidmore-Murakami, 2016), the parties involved can explore their thoughts while also confronting their personal biases (Garrison, 2017: 36). Garrison emphasizes that human evolution has obviously supported cooperation and collaboration even above competition, although competition, which is an expression of self-interest, also appears in both, for example when expressing our differing opinion or considering alternative solutions in a constructive way during discourse. Thus, research-based learning in a learning community is both inclusive and critical. Balancing these two seemingly contradictory but complementary natures can lead to a higher quality academic learning experience.

In the third phase of our research, using the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model we examined the groups relegated to online platforms because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The approach was the original construct of the early pragmatists Peirce and Dewey, which Garrison, Anderson, and Archer extended into a conceptual toolkit at the University of Alberta in 1996 in order to research educational processes supported by computer communication. Garrison's theory is innovative because it analyzes the concept of *presence* and the classification of the learning process in this context, and it places the focus on studying the relationship and interactions between three aspects that reflect on the triangulation in e-learning practices for the 21st century: 1. *associative* - the learning activity; 2. *cognitive* - understanding; and 3. *situational* - social presence). These three aspects were defined by Greeno, Collins and Resnick (Berecz, 2017). Questionnaire data resulting from the UP-ISC learning communities study show that the dynamics of multiple types of "*presence*" interacting - such as *teaching* presence, *learner* presence, *cognitive* presence and *social* presence - will result in an effective learning-teaching process (Shea-Bidjerano, 2010; Murdock-Williams, 2011; Wu, Hsieh, and Yang, 2017).

The next figure shows the revised version of the CoI model with the *learner presence* included, which is in line with the above described theories of Garrison and Csapó, who emphasize the robust role of learners' *self-efficacy*, a capability all self-regulated learners hold to be able to think and behave in ways that systematically orient themselves towards learning goals: "they can manage their time effectively, organize their work, minimize distractions, set goals for themselves, monitor their comprehension, ask for help when necessary, and maintain an effective work environment" (Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning, 2012). Cognitive psychologists

like Bandura (2006) also developed a theory of human functioning that emphasized the role of the cognitive, self-regulatory and self-reflecting agency of learners that is willing to adapt to changes in the learning process, regardless of whether this process is taking place in the classroom, online or in a community setting (Usher, 2012).

## Suggestion for a Revised CoI Model
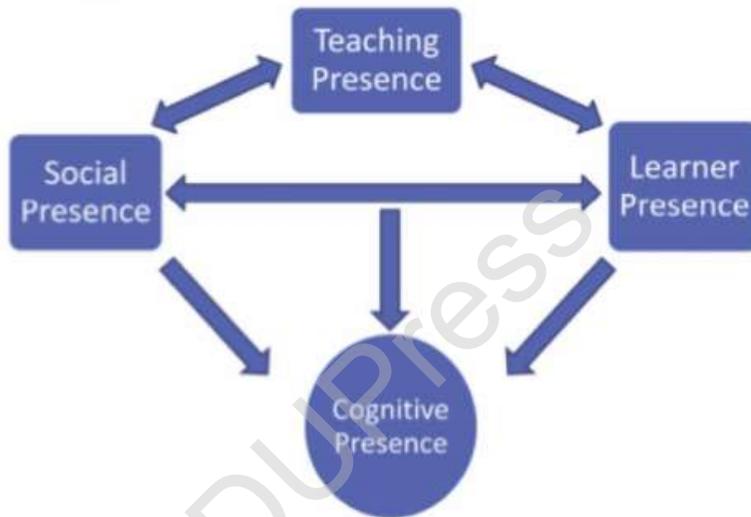
Figure 1. Revised Community of Inquiry model from P. Shea and T. Bidjerano (2010) Computers & Education 55 1721-1731

With the help of our research questionnaire, international young adult students and their instructors evaluated the shift that took place in the learning process as we transitioned to digital learning platforms. Each statement was coded to correspond with one of the above-illustrated categories of teaching presence, learner presence, social presence and cognitive presence. We focused on the changing aspects of the educational environment based on their evaluation and followed up with semi-structured interviews.

The following questions were formulated in the third phase of our research:

1. How has online space changed the educational process and the relationship between students and teachers?

2. What are the advantages and limitations of only using virtual platforms for foreign language and technical language preparatory teachers and students?
3. What elements and qualities do the participants in the teaching-learning community lack from the conventional classroom, and what are the benefits of online education that they would like to include in future educational programs?



How do you evaluate the following aspects of online learning?"

Learner Presence: "I'm sharing my opinion more easily during online lessons."

meta-chart.com

How do you evaluate the following aspects of online learning?



Social Presence: "Online classes still give me a sense of belonging"

How do you evaluate the following aspects of online learning?



Cognitive Presence: " Online class materials helped me understand new concepts."

34

How do you evaluate the following aspects of online learning?

Teaching Presence: "I get focused feedback from my teachers."

meta-chart.com

Figure 2-5. Data charts illustrating four questionnaire items coded to represent the four types of *presence* based on levels of agreement shown on a Likert scale

## Research tools and methods

Data collection was conducted using a mixed method approach: a questionnaire was sent to 156 international students and 25 faculty members affiliated with the ISC's preparatory programs, and partially structured interviews were held with randomly selected students and faculty.

During the April trial period, statements from the 17-question student questionnaire and 20-item faculty questionnaire compiled in Google Forms were provided to a test group of students and faculty, and at our request they evaluated each statement by rating their levels of agreement on a Likert scale. These statements were coded to affiliate with the four constructs from the CoI model (i.e. social presence, learner presence, teaching presence and cognitive presence). Based on their feedback, we validated and refined the questionnaire before sending it to all participants. As an incentive for

participation, we offered an online gift voucher for the participants and yoga gift certificates for the instructors.

We were able to summarize the quantitative results and qualitative data obtained from open survey questions. The questions of the semi-structured interviews were exploratory and process-oriented, and this allowed us a more intimate and phenomenological approach (Kassai, Pintér, & Rácz, 2016).

## Results

The student questionnaire was completed by 18 students (around 20% of our currently active student population), and the instructor questionnaire was completed by 13 lecturers (52% of our instructors). 100% of the responding students attended Zoom classes, 83% attended Microsoft Teams online platforms, and smaller groups used Course Garden (17%) and Edmodo (11%) to access the curriculum. The majority of students expressed preferences to communicate via social media over electronic mail (with What'sApp leading by 33%, and Messenger, Facebook and Skype with 16.7% of the respondents voting for each).

Only a quarter of the instructors reported prior experience with e-learning platforms, and the majority of the other three-quarters of them got acquainted with the online platforms within just a week over spring break. The restructuring of study materials, the organizational networking, and the maintenance of quality education all entailed additional burdens initially, as confirmed by the general university and international teaching experiences during the same instructional period (Sípos et al., 2020). Qualitative interview results also show that it was a demotivating factor for lecturers that there was no additional compensation for the necessary training, preparation, curriculum writing and uploading of professional materials.

The homogeneity of the sample for the phenomenological analysis was secured by the educational context, the duration of the restricted online learning environment resulting from the quarantine, and the role of participants in the educational process. Student respondents participated in the same humanities preparation program, and the interviewed teachers facilitated their courses at the same language proficiency level during the semester. The following distinctive patterns emerged among students: they felt unprepared for the sudden digital switchover, as they lacked proficiency in using the online learning platforms in addition to using the already familiar

smartphone applications. The other important point was the absence of face-to-face interaction, quick personal connections, and meta-communicative and emotional reinforcements that seemed to alter interactions through the medium of a screen because facilitators could not make eye contact with everyone individually. The third recurring element was the intensified experience of subjectivity and the growing role of self-efficacy to properly manage individual learning time. Instructors also emphasized some of the drawbacks of the online educational environment. Educational norms that are easier to replicate in traditional classrooms such as quick checks, physical presence, non-verbal feedback, graphic organizers and whiteboard drawings were missed the most by instructors in the online context.

**Learner motivation**

Regarding the attendance rate during the online phase of education, we found that dropout rates were unusually high, but we identified the following three main reasons for this: a.) The majority of students traveled home as soon as they were forced into long-term quarantine, which resulted in significant time difference between Hungary and their home country; b.) The information communication technology (ICT) tools and the Internet were not always reliable from home, or the low quality of broadband Internet service appeared as a factor beyond our control, while the ICT conditions of the students who stayed in Hungary remained a factor we could control in a dormitory setting; c.) The motivation levels of students varied dramatically. Those who considered university entrance exams a priority managed to bridge challenges in a resilient and flexible way, even at the cost of not going home. These students relied on help from the established international community at the University of Pécs.

To compensate for the learning gaps in the community in terms of physical proximity, new *cognitive tools* were introduced in the online phase and students were explicitly taught about different learning strategies, which proved to be a great solution. Each week, with the help of a podcast, PowerPoint slides and interactive tasks were uploaded to Edmodo. We introduced and practiced new strategies with the students that included incredibly useful practices developed by learning scientists, such as *spaced practice*, *retrieval practice*, *elaboration, interleaving, concrete examples, and dual coding* (Weinstein, Y. & Sumeracki, M., 2018). These online materials

have instructive animations that were popular among students and they helped create connection between words and images, providing students with useful cognitive tools in a virtual online environment and gave them an edge at the entrance exam (Mayer-Anderson,1992).

**Answers to the research questions**

1. In the absence of the personal presence that is easy to emulate in a three-dimensional physical environment, communication feedback during the teaching and learning process can be slowed down by the limitations of communication online. The same limitation, however, can also promote concentration and attention for students when completing learning tasks because in this context it may be easier to block out possible distractions.

2. Communication efficiency does not increase in proportion to the variety and number of channels preferred by students (i.e. Email, Zoom, What's App, WiChat, Edmodo, Course Garden, Google Classroom). It would be more appropriate to use a digital learning platform to provide a single framework for the courses, bringing together all digital communication channels and functional applications (i.e. Microsoft Teams, Canvas, Moodle, etc.).

3. Lack of face-to-face presence was interpreted as an overall disadvantage. The benefits of a flipped classroom for language instruction is the ability to quickly translate what has been said orally into written text, which provides feedback through an immediate parallel communication channel (formal variety, further transformability and sharing options). The blended learning model enables easy access and flexibility through the use of educational technology, while allowing for personalization for learner variability, peer collaboration and enhanced communication in self-structured learning.

**Pedagogical and methodological experiences**

Based on the Google Forms survey the following two pedagogical issues emerge among participants: approximately 70% of the teachers indicated difficulties in following student activity during online events because not all of them used their videos; 92% of the educators at ISC highlighted that the transition to online teaching led to a significant increase in working hours. The sphere of work intruded into private family life, which teachers regarded as frustrating because they would rather manage work and family tasks

separately (*"working time has become permanent, which is not tolerated by the family well"* - 5 respondents).

Many advantages of online platforms from an educational and technological perspective were cited by ISC educators, which included the automation of online testing, the efficiency of test evaluation, and the well-structured quality of the online study materials with their asynchronous availability (*"the student may proceed in her tempo and can revisit the recorded lesson, can download the study materials"* - 8 respondents; *"Edmodo and Redmenta tests provide instant feedback for both teachers and students"* -6 respondents; *"I can provide immediate feedback on Zoom via the chat function"* -4 respondents).

Educators are clearly aware of the skills they developed during the COVID-19 period from a methodological perspective, cognizant of how this growth will aid them in the future as well (*"it motivates continuous development"* - 6 respondents, *"it is great that students arrive the classes prepared"* - 4 respondents, *"I would like to use the flipped classroom technique in the future, to provide writing tasks for individual work and get more time for collaborative work"* - 5 respondents, *"these two months also gave me a little extra edge, namely the attitude and self confidence that online lessons brought; "We REALLY CAN solve everything and operate well on all different platforms; the team is great in cooperation and the positive feedback provides further motivation and self-confidence."* - 3 respondents).

**The efficiency of communication**

Despite the freedom in using various digital solutions and other advances of technology, the time consuming, laborious qualities of online education at the ISC of UP were considered major challenges by educators *("the amount of administration increased, as well as preparation time"* - 16 respondents, *"I have generated immense amount of Ppts for supplement material"* - 3 respondents). The multi-channel electronic communication caused information dumping (*"I received too many emails"* - 9 respondents). Some of the students objected that they did not have enough individual work in their learning and thinking (*"I couldn't reach the max in my performance"* - 2 respondents, *"I do not learn independently"* - 2 respondents; *"I miss assignments and tasks"*- 3 respondents). The quality of classes was also dependent on the internet connection *("the problems with the internet*

*connection/the technological issues made the communication in my classes uneasy indeed"*- 9 respondents; *"It was difficult to follow the teacher when the internet connection was breaking up"* - 5 respondents). Both students and educators formulated their criticism about the amount of time they had to spend in front of their screens (*"it was too much screen time"* - 13 respondents, *"my eyes got hurt"* - 5 respondents).

## Reflections, further directions in research

The lesson learned from the interviews was that the programs providing foreign language classes and classes for other disciplines should "develop online tests and study materials different in their methodologies from the classroom-based approach in order to avoid any surprise caused by a pandemic of similar scale." This is applicable to students enrolled to preparatory courses and willing to take entrance examinations. Having returned to an optimal blended-learning model of education, it is possible to survey what correlations are available between the various aspects of student presence and their learning efficacy. We suggest further measurements in student self-efficacy and self-effort regulation (Pintrich et.al., 1993), providing differences along a 7-point Likert scale arrangement. We set the objective to investigate the correlations and dynamics between certain aspects of *presence* according to the Community of Inquiry (CoI) approach and learning environment.

## Research questions, analytical sample and hypothesis in the fourth stage of the study

In order to complete a comparative study to find similarities, differences, shifts and trends, we conducted our survey with students in the autumn semester of the 2020-2021 academic year based on the key questions from the spring semester of 2019-2020. The Microsoft Forms software was used with students in the English Preparatory Program along with a printed version for students in the Hungarian Preparatory Program at ISC. The survey had a narrow scope with only eight items in order to focus students' attention on qualitative questions demanding brief explanations, as well as questions regarding different aspects of *presence* arranged on a five-point Likert scale. However, the number of students in the program have decreased

in comparison to previous semesters. There were motivated participants, and 24 out of 60 international students completed the survey from the English program. However, only 4 out of 200 students from the Hungarian Program completed the form. Two research questions were posed:

1. What correlations may occur between different aspects of presence and student effectiveness and satisfaction?

2. What values are articulated and differences occur with regards to the exclusively online English program and the Hungarian program utilizing flipped classroom methodology?

Our hypothesis for the first question was that the cognitive aspect of presence is strengthened and more efficient with online education. The hypothesis was based on impressions from the spring semester of 2019-2020, especially from experiences gained and outcomes reached by our colleagues in the Hungarian Preparatory Program. Our hypothesis for the second question was that the flipped classroom practice is an ideal and proper method to blend the advantages of both classroom presence and online forms of education, and therefore it is suitable in the context of preparatory courses.

**Answers, shifts and trends**

Findings based on comparative analyses of answers given by English Preparatory *online* course participants (in Spring and Fall of 2020) yielded data suggesting that instead of the flexibility and other formal aspects of online courses, the advantages of *individual planning and organization* and the *efficiency of cognitive performance* prevailed resulting in student satisfaction. The questions focused on students' overall satisfaction and the challenges they faced during the courses are summarized by the table below:

| *Questions / Requests* | *2020 Spring Semester* | *2020 Autumn Semester* |
|---|---|---|
| *List three aspects that you were satisfied with in the online courses organized by the ISC Medical School of Pécs University:* | 1. The comfort of the home<br><br>2. Saving time<br><br>3. Useful study materials, ppts | 1. Development in language skills<br><br>2. Friendly atmosphere in the study community<br><br>3. Supporting educators |
| *List three typical challenges in online courses:* | 1. Communicative and technical difficulties arising due to online contact.<br>2. Less opportunity for practice.<br><br>3. Diverting and shifting attention, lower efficiency in learning. | 1. Difficulties in communication due to the online learning environment.<br><br>2. Lack of target language skills for some students. |
| *What values are missing in online education that are typically available in traditional face-to-face classrooms?* | 1. The comprehensive personal presence.<br><br>2. The atmosphere. | 1. Increased personal presence.<br><br>2. Learning efficiency and a more concentrated classroom presence. |

Table 1. Feedback from surveys completed by international students at ISC-UPMS in the 2020 spring and autumn semesters

Data from the comparative results based on levels of agreement on a five-point Likert scale correlated questions with social-, cognitive-, learner- and teaching presence and show that students experience a sense of belonging to a community in their online preparatory course. On the other hand, regarding the aspect of cognitive presence, in contrast to the survey outcomes in the Spring semester, they no longer find that completing tasks in the online classes more difficult. Finally, their answers suggest that the more concentrated presence of teachers appear with less intensity compared to

results from the previous semester during the period of transitioning into a virtual learning environment.

| Students' answers to questions about the three major aspects of presence | 2020 Spring Semester | 2020 Autumn Semester |
|---|---|---|
| Social presence:<br><br>Having a sense of belonging to a community in online classes. | Mostly agree | Agree |
| Cognitive presence:<br>It is more difficult to accomplish tasks online. | Strongly agree | Do not agree |
| Teaching presence:<br>Receiving special attention from the educator. | Strongly agree | Agree |

Table 2. Shifts experienced in the answers of international students at ISC-UPMS based on answers in the five-point Likert scale during the spring and autumn semesters of 2020

For the second question of our investigation and hypotheses we were seeking answers focusing on those international students who took part in the Hungarian Preparatory Program arranged according to the flipped classroom methodology, which merged advantages of face-to-face education and online solutions. Our survey also intended to collect answers from students who participated in the English Preparatory Program only available online. We approached the three basic aspects of presence with the respective groups of questions according to the Community of Inquiry method and collected answers utilizing the five-point Likert scale analysis. We are aware that the comparison is not representative because the programs differed in their language and content. The English and the Hungarian Preparatory Programs were very different and the number of samples fluctuated because 24 respondents were available from the English program and only 4 students responded from the Hungarian program. However, in such circumstances we took advantage of the opportunity to conduct a pilot survey based on the spring semester of 2020. The coded responses show that students who participated in the flipped classroom arrangement showed stronger social presence in contrast to those who only participated in the online course. From the group of questions focusing on cognitive presence, we highlighted the item targeting challenges of task completion in online classes in order to

demonstrate the significance of the quality of attendance education with the item measuring teaching presence. Table 3 provides an overview of the major aspects of the inquiry below:

| Answers grouped according to respective aspects of presence | Hungarian Preparatory Program, Autumn Semester 2020 | English Preparatory Program, Spring Semester 2020 |
|---|---|---|
| - Social presence: Having a sense of belonging to a community of online classes. | Mostly agree | Agree |
| - Cognitive presence: It is more difficult to accomplish tasks online. | Mostly agree | Do not agree |
| - Teaching presence: Receiving special attention from the educator. | Strongly agree | Agree |

Table 3. Contrasting responses of international students participating in the Hungarian Preparatory Program (using flipped-classroom course arrangement) and the English Preparatory Program (using only online platforms) organized by ISC-UPMS

The qualitative and quantitative non-representative results are based on values of cognitive and social aspects of presence from the spring and autumn semester surveys of 2020. The data clearly suggests that both students and educators could mutually adjust to online education. While qualitative responses from students in the Hungarian Preparatory Program using the flipped classroom, method illustrate that the factor of social presence is extremely important and it has a strong correlation with the cognitive aspects of learning. In the future, based on the Community of Inquiry approach we would like to devise a survey including a control group for applying a matrix to measure the aspects of presence-, the mental map of the course content, and attitudes about the learning process when post-pandemic times allow digital learning platforms to be merged with face-to-face instructions in a blended learning model.

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**Krisztina Sitku**

# SERVICE LEARNING: UNIVERSITY PRACTICE
# FROM A NEW PERSPECTIVE

## Abstract

*Service learning* (SL) is a major form of university community engagement in the dimension of teaching and learning (Lyons & McIlrath, 2010; McIlrath et al, 2016; Benneworth, 2018; Ćulum Ilić, 2018; Farnell, 2020). It requires commitment and authentic activity from academic staff, students and external organizations to address some local-regional societal challenge in a mutually beneficial collaboration (McIlrath et al, 2016; Benneworth, 2018), and as such, it is a way of community building. In addition, it is a pedagogical tool where the learning outcomes of student activities and their benefits to the external partner are balanced (Furco, 1996), and can be seen as a community learning process that may give rise to local social innovation (McIlrath et al, 2016; Kozma, 2019). How could Hungarian universities introduce this relatively new methodology into their teaching practice? Could they rely on their existing community engagement practice and such traditional experience-based teaching methods as work experience and placement? More importantly, how is it possible to build a community of teachers, external partners and students for its application? As a preliminary research, we have chosen a regional university of applied sciences to explore the possibilities, barriers and limitations of implementation. Our data, collected by the content analysis of relevant institutional documents and semi-structured qualitative interviews with academic staff and students, was compared to a methodological framework we created based on the definition and questionnaire of a European survey of service learning by the *Europe Engage* project (McIlrath et al, 2016), and the quality assurance recommendations of the American *National Youth Leadership Council* (NYLC, 2011). They reveal that the community outreach events are not yet utilized for service learning, even though they offer potential in the dimensions of *Partnership*, *Community Needs*, and *Relevant & Meaningful Service*. The deepening of external partner involvement, the allocation of student assignments to undergraduate courses with clear learning outcomes, the introduction of a variety of reflection techniques and the highlighting of the social issue addressed are areas for improvement. Some of the existing experiential

learning practice is also suitable for service learning in terms of *Link to the Curricula*, *Partnership, Community Needs*, and *Relevant & Meaningful Service*. Yet, students need to be intrinsically motivated, community partners more deeply involved, timing more suitable and external communication more extensive. Finally, building a learning community has several challenges, some of which were suggested to be overcome by an extensive stakeholder information campaign and needs analysis, suitable study organization, a community service course, student mentoring and a community needs-student availability mobile phone application. These solutions could further the service learning process and carry the potential of community collaboration based social-educational innovation.

## Introduction

Higher education institutions are considered major actors in regional innovation ecosystems (Reichert, 2019), especially in terms of their educational contribution to learning regions (Benke, 2013, 2019; Kozma et al, 2015) and capacity for building communities to overcome local societal challenges (Chatterton & Goddard, 2000; Trencher et al., 2014; Goddard, 2018). The rise of local social innovations presuppose that a community faces some challenge that it can only meet by acquiring new knowledge, adapting it to its unique context and acting on it in wide-ranging local-regional collaborations (Kozma, 2019). Expectations from universities today are manifold, including their accountability as contribution to the public good (Hazelkorn & Gibson, 2019), their relevance as fostering the development of their various external communities (Farnell, 2020), and increasing graduate employability, especially towards their localities so as to contribute to their economic competitiveness and social sustainability. These issues constantly urge universities to find new ways and modes for realizing their missions.

Answering community needs in partnership with the community relates to university *community engagement*, the societal stream of the *third mission* (Benneworth, 2018; Maassen et al, 2019; Reichert, 2019), which has come to be understood as 'a process whereby universities engage with community stakeholders to undertake joint activities that can be mutually beneficial even

if each side benefits in a different way' (Benneworth, 2018, 17). These joint activities in the dimension of teaching and learning are commonly realized through the methodology of *service learning* (*community based learning*, *community engaged learning*) (McIlrath et al, 2016; Ćulum, 2018; Farnell, 2020), which embeds experiential learning around relevant local issues deep in university curricula providing much needed real-life context to students' higher educational studies. At the same time, it brings together a range of local-regional actors in various collaborations for the handling of locally relevant issues, which builds not only temporary, task-based learning communities, but may also promote an attitudinal change in the wider local society, motivate them to actively participate in the addressing of said challenges. As a result, service learning may be a source of local innovation and community renewal (Kozma, 2019).

Pedagogically, and adopting the definition of the *Europe Engage Survey*, service learning (SL) can be understood as 'an innovative pedagogical approach that integrates meaningful community service or engagement into the curriculum and offers students academic credit for the learning that derives from active engagement within community and work on a real world problem. Reflection and experiential learning strategies underpin the process and the service is link to the academic discipline' (Europe Engage, 2015, in McIlrath et al, 2016, 5). Furco (1996) emphasises the importance of balancing the learning outcomes of student activities with the benefits realized by the external partner, while both mutually supporting each other. This differentiates service learning from other experiential learning methods, such as work experience, placement or community service (Bodó 2015, 2018, Furco 1996, Markos 2016).

We believe that service learning can be a relevant pedagogical tool for the tackling of various local societal challenges, therefore in our research we were interested in the feasibility of introducing this new methodology in the educational practice of a Hungarian regional university of applied sciences. This would require both organizational and community learning (Kozma, 2019): the adaptation of international best practice to unique national and institutional contexts, its adoption by the university, and the building of local-regional learning communities of SL practice. To achieve this, we have set up a framework of the relevant dimensions and indicators of service learning (Table 1) based on the definition and questionnaire of the *Europe Engage Survey* (McIlrath et al, 2016), as well as the quality assurance

recommendations of the American *National Youth Leadership Council* (NYLC, 2011). We have also built on previous institutional research (Sitku, 2020), which revealed that students' contribution to university outreach events, either as part of their work placement, or as voluntary student union membership, develop their self-management, interpersonal and workplace skills in a complex way, which is in line with research results about students' benefits of service learning (Bodó 2015, 2018, 2019, Celio et al 2011). Yet, these assignments are not provided with learning outcomes, nor are they linked to the relevant courses of their study programmes. Therefore, we presumed that these university community events may be utilized for the introduction of service learning and there may be other examples of student-community collaboration in the existing university teaching and learning practice.

Moreover, a defining condition of the application of service learning is committed partnership and meaningful participation throughout the whole process by academic staff, students and external community partners (NYLC, 2011). These are fundamentally based on the mutual acceptance of a common social aim that is also in alignment with the interests of the individual actors, continuous dialogue, joint decision making and an overall increase of participants' responsibility (Benke, 2013, 2019). Therefore, forming such partnerships, and eventually a learning community that would strengthen its learning region, seems to be a cornerstone of initiating service learning in university practice.

Taken all these together, we have raised three research questions to explore the feasibility of service learning methodology to the institution:

1. Could the existing university community outreach events (i.e its student activities) be utilized for introducing service learning? (Do they meet the requirements of our SL framework?)
2. Are there any other examples of experiential learning in the existing university praxctice to be used for the initiation of service learning? (Do they meet the requirements of the SL framework?)
3. What are the realities of building a community of teachers, students and external community partners for the application of SL?

**Methods**

In our exploratory qualitative research, we have used the case study method to answer our research questions. Our sample included the community outreach events of the university in the 2019 year and the existing experiential teaching and learning practice of the Institute of Social Sciences on its higher-level vocational training programmes, *Business Administration and Management Assistant*, and *Television Production Assistant;* the BSc study programme in *Business Administration and Management*; and that of the BA in *Communication and Media Science*. Data was collected by the content analysis of such primary and secondary sources as official and internal institutional documents (the 2019 cooperation agreement between the university and the municipality, university reports, the relevant curricula), press releases and media content on the university website, previous institutional research (Balázs et al, 2020; Sitku 2019) and students' work placement practical assignments (*Television Production Assistant*, TPA, 2019).

In addition, five semi-structured interviews were recorded in April-May and October 2020: two individual interviews with the PR & marketing director of the Communication Centre and a member of a student TPA team, as well as three focus-group interviews with the heads of the departments of *Economics*, *Management & Business Science* and *Communication & Media Science* (3 persons); the coordinators of the relevant courses (5 persons), and some of the teaching staff (2 persons). After coding our data, we contrasted them with the said methodological framework which had been adapted from the *Europe Engage Survey*: *Section 2: Service-Learning Activities* and the *NYLC*: *K-12 Service–Learning Standards for Quality Practice* (Table 1).

Table 1. Dimensions, description and key indicators of service learning

| DIMENSION | DESCRIPTION | KEY INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|
| Link to Curricula | SL is:<br>• embedded in university curricula<br>• linked to a course<br>• provided with learning outcomes<br>• rewarded with credits | • Yes/No<br>• Name of study programme and course<br>• Specific learning outcomes: yes/no<br>• Number of credits |
| | SL is realized in collaborative, | • Number of partners |

| Partnership | mutually beneficial partnerships with some local-regional community stakeholders. | • Area of collaboration<br>• Aims of collaboration |
|---|---|---|
| Community Needs | The collaboration addresses a real community need, challenge or problem. | • The community need/challenge/problem<br>• Target<br>• Expected result |
| Relevant & Meaningful Service | Active participation by students in meaningful and personally relevant activities with attainable and visible outcomes. | • Personal relevance and motivation<br>• Challenging tasks<br>• Attainable outcomes<br>• Visible results |
| Collaboration | Community partners and students are part of the entire SL process: planning, decision-making, realization, assessment and evaluation. | • Roles, tasks and responsibilities of external partners<br>• Areas of student involvement<br>• Regular communication<br>• Utilization of results for the community |
| Reflection | The continuous application of multiple and challenging reflection methods and activities throughout the SL process to prompt deep thinking, self-analysis and reflection of students' relationship to society. | • Various reflection methods<br>• Reflection before, during, after the SL process<br>• Supervision/students |
| Monitoring Progress | Ongoing assessment of the quality of implementation and progress towards meeting the specific goals. Outcomes are used for the improvement and sustainability of the SL process. | • Yes/No<br>• Form<br>• Frequency<br>• Multiple sources<br>• Utilization for improvement<br>• Communication of evidence of progress |
| Duration & Intensity | Sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and achieve its learning outcomes. | Phases:<br>• Needs assessment<br>• Design & preparation<br>• Action<br>• Reflection<br>• Assessment<br>• Communication<br>Concentrated blocks of time |

| | | (weeks/months) |
| | | Sufficient time |

*Note*. Author's own edition based on McIlrath et al. 2016 and NYLC, 2011

## Results

### *Applicability of existing university community outreach events for service learning*

Overall, our data shows that the existing community outreach events of the university need some targeted improvement to be applicable for service learning. While the present practice is satisfactory in the dimensions of Partnership, Community Needs, Relevant & Meaningful Service, and Duration & Intensity, it should be developed in terms of linkage to university curricula, collaboration with external partners, reflection methods and monitoring.

As for the strengths, the university organizes these events in wide-ranging partnerships with 13 constant and several occasional community partners, although they have indirect contact with students via the Communication Centre, the unit responsible for the events and one of the work placement organizations. The areas of collaboration range from scientific, cultural and environmental knowledge dissemination to sport- and entertainment programs, the promotion of partner organization endeavours (e.g. charitable initiatives), the marketing of their employer brand and recruitment among students, the university's recruitment campaign, fundraising, blood donation and local civic community building. This leads to various forms of collaboration for meeting such community needs as environmental protection (e.g. selective garbage collection, energy efficiency, use of renewable energy sources), electromobility for improved city air conditions, open science (e.g. *Everyone's University*, *Researchers' Night*), cultural programmes (e.g. *DUDIK* music festival), sport events for various citizen groups (e.g. *Carissa Cup*), charitable causes (e.g. various fundraising), English language practice, university access and job opportunities. Relevant and meaningful service is provided by the joint planning and assignment of versatile and challenging work placement tasks by the students and the Communication Centre including the social media marketing communication of the events, the creation of various media content for promotion (e.g. photos, videos, interviews, news coverage, short

films), event organizational tasks, hosting and various presentations to attendees. Finally, the duration and intensity of these annual events, if several are taken together and over the length of the semesters, are suitable for service learning provided that they are embedded in the relevant course syllabi.

However, there are some important areas for improvement in the above mentioned dimensions. Presently, the community outreach activities only involve student contribution in two study programmes and in terms of their final year work placement, rather than regular coursework on the lower years of several programmes. Moreover, although students receive credits for their professional work, only some general learning outcomes are defined to be achieved by the end of the placement. As for collaboration, the Communication Centre is the only community partner directly involved in student assignments. Although these are planned, assigned, executed, monitored and evaluated together with the students, the Centre hardly communicates with the coordinators and teachers of the courses relevant for the tasks. On the other hand, the results of student activities are clearly visible and are immediately utilized, or even form the basis of the events, i.e. their community worth is undeniable. Reflection is also only partially achieved: while the director of the Centre applies some techniques in the weekly supervisions, we have found no evidence of students' self-reflection. Finally, the monitoring of progress does not involve the academic staff: it is an activity among the placement organization and the student, and may take the form of an activity log, final assessment, and student report and/or presentation addressed to the relevant department. Another weakness is that although the Communication Centre uses these for improving their work placement practice, the communication of students' involvement and achievements towards the local-regional community is missing.

*Applicability of other examples of existing experiential learning practice for service learning*

Besides those work placement assignments that students do at the university's Communication Centre for the planning, organization, realization and advertisement of its annual community engagement events, there are some other examples of experiential learning practice that could form the basis of the more thorough methodology of service learning.

Evidence of this on the *Business Administration and Management*, and *Communication and Media Science* undergraduate programmes is scarce among our data: other than the placement practice of the Communication Centre, they only confirm the fact that it is exclusively in the form of work placement that students get the chance of working on an actual practical problem with an external organization. The range of these partners, their needs, students' assignments and their results, i.e. 'meaningful community service' (McIlrath et al, 2016, 5), requires further exploratory research. However, the *Television Production Assistant* higher-level vocational training programme has drawn a variety of local-regional organizations to make use of the university TV-studio, its production facilities and students' professional expertise for their specific needs (Tables 2-3).

Table 2. Outline of experiential learning practice on the TPA programme, 2018-20

| YEAR | OUT-PUTS | COURSES | EXTERNAL PARTNERS | NEEDS | GENRE |
|------|----------|---------|-------------------|-------|-------|
| 2018 2019 2020 | 2 16 5 | Short Film Production, TV Programme Production, Digital Text, Internship | Bartók Theatre (Dújv.) Dentinel Kft. (Zsámbék), Dr. Juhász Dentistry (Dújv). DUE DSE (Dújv.) Dunaföldvári Autóudvar Kft. (Dunaföldvár) Gyöngyösi Sándor organic mushroom owner (Fülöpjakab) Visually handicapped couple (Dújv) Móna Jázmin Letícia (Dújv) Móra Ferenc Elementary School (Dújv.) MRE Újváros Drug ambulance | Promotion, Advertisement, Awareness-raising, Fundraising, Drug prevention | Advertisement Animation Interview Media coverage Poster/graphics Report Film Summary |

*Note.* Author's own edition

Table 3. Examples of student output in experiential learning on the TPA programme, 2018-2020

| YEAR | COURSE | GENRE | TITLE | LINK |
|------|--------|-------|-------|------|
| 2019 | Short Film Production | Advertisement | *Sportegyesület reklámfilm [Sports Association Commercial]* | https://bit.ly/3o9in5b |
| 2020 | Internship | Animation | *Egy szenvedélybeteg élete, Balázs életútja [The life a passionate patient the life of Balázs]* | https://bit.ly/2HMwi1k, https://bit.ly/2HNolJi |
| 2018 | Short Film Production | Interview | *Fiatalok munkaerőpiaci kilátásai [Labor market prospects of young people]* | https://bit.ly/36fEJLY |
| 2018 | Digital Text | Media Coverage | *Fabó Éva Sportuszoda Dunaújváros [Fabó Éva Sport Swimmingpool Dunaújváros]* | https://bit.ly/3lg2U1a |
| 2019 | Short Film Production | Poster/graphics | *Sportegyesület plakátsorozat [Sport Association Poser Series]* | https://bit.ly/3qcbwJM |
| 2019 | TV-Programme Production | Report Film | *Az akarat ereje [The Power of The Will]* | https://bit.ly/3lkodyC |
| 2020 | Internship | Summary | *Lázár Ervin Program a dunaújvárosi Bartók Színházban [Ervin Lázár Program at the Bartók Theatre in Dunaújváros]* | https://bit.ly/39mXbUZ |

*Note*. Author's own edition

Comparing our data to the methodological requirements of service learning in Table 1, we have found that these practices show strengths in four dimensions: *Link to Curricula*, *Partnership*, *Community Needs*, and *Relevant & Meaningful Service*. There are several courses on the programme which already employ experiential learning methods with the local-regional

community as their context (Tables 2-3). Partnerships are formed on the basis of students' areas of interest, their and their teachers' local-regional social network, and, to a lesser extent, the request of the community partner. First contact is mainly initiated by the academic staff and the areas of partners' needs, i.e. the topics of student assignments, range from the life and special needs of residents living with some disability, addiction, or chronic disease to local special education programmes (e.g. dog therapy) and the promotion of various regional SMEs (e.g. dental practice, medicinal mushroom production). The genres of student outputs and the aims of the community partner are presented in Table 2 together with a praiseworthy example of university-student-community collaboration: the animation of an ex-drug addict's life course to be used in the next drug prevention campaign for secondary school students by the *MRE Drogambulancia*, Dunaújváros. Overall, students' choice of the social issue to be covered and the genre of the assignment ensure their motivation, while the community partner's specific needs and aims with the output bring relevance to the task, thus learning outcomes and the service to the community tend towards a balance.

Yet, there is ample room for improvement. In the dimensions of Collaboration, Reflection, Monitoring, and Duration & Intensity, there seems to be inadequate communication and cooperation between the three actors throughout the whole learning process in terms of the regularity of their contact, their involvement in monitoring and reflection, and the joint development of the service learning method. While the community partner provides support at the outset of students' work, it rarely monitors progress, let alone takes part in any reflection activities. Rather, it only provides the university with a final, written evaluation (work placement), or even that is missing (course work). Thus the student gets professional feedback only from their teacher, who, on the other hand, provides some consultation and reflection, and a chance for improving the work before handing it in. This suggests that the collaboration with the community partners is mainly transactional (Bowen et al, 2010) and there was no evidence of the application of versatile reflection techniques either. Moreover, students' outputs are released mainly on their YouTube channel, if at all, and there were only a few examples of their business or educational use by the community partner. In other words, the external communication of the outcomes of the experiential learning experience is scarce. Also, the joint development of the existing practice is rare, driven by the actual needs of the

external partner and is based on informal discussions rather than being a deliberate, regular step in the experiential teaching and learning process.

*The realities of building a community of teachers, students and external partners for SL*

The adaptation of international service learning methodology to an institution's unique context hinges on the quality of its relationship with its stakeholder groups, i.e. those local and regional business, educational, governmental, cultural, civic, etc. organizations, which may be potential partners in the service learning process. How can a new learning community for service learning be formed? What experiences has the sample university unit accumulated over the years in its experiential learning co-operations with external, community partners?

Our interview data shows that the initiation of service learning requires deliberate community building with those stakeholders which are relevant for the study programmes and open to such a partnership. Therefore, an extensive and unprejudiced needs assessment should be conducted to map needs and willingness for service learning collaboration. However, its precondition is to educate potential partners about the concept and existing good practices of service learning so as to be able to make informed decisions about it. As examples, the local chamber of commerce and industry, the municipality, the local hospital, churches and cultural organizations were suggested who may be involved in the teaching of the *Project Management* and *Entrepreneurship* undergraduate courses.

Yet, the Institute of Social Sciences has met with several hindrances and barriers in its previous external collaborations, which offer valuable experience for future community building initiatives. It seems that if not prescribed by law, the community partners are less willing to enter into collaborations with the departments. According to our sources, they 'hardly ever express any specific needs', 'do not show much interest in our study programmes', and 'come only if incentivized by money'. An example is the local *Chamber of Commerce and Industry*, which has not requested *cooperative dual courses* from the Institute yet, neither has it participated in final examination committees lately. Instead, it tends to turn to the university's adult education organization with its training needs.

Furthermore, the co-planning of course content, and the organization and supervision of student placements are thought to be burdensome for the existing external partners, who are often unwilling to receive final year students for internship. Some of its reasons seem to be the additional administrative work, the financial burden and the work organizational challenges that the programme entails. On the other hand, students are also reported to be unsatisfied with the range and professional quality of the delegated internship tasks and responsibilities, while their chief motivation when selecting an organization for placement is the amount of salary they may receive. Some academics even feel that the existing partnerships are built on an imbalance: many community partners look for students' and academics' 'free of charge creative work', while students are difficult to motivate in the absence of monetary incentives.

Our interviewees agreed that behind these all lie an attitude that works against meaningful collaboration and needs to be changed if the Institute decides to try out the service learning method. All sides, including the Institute, the students and the external partners need to adopt a different perspective: the university should 'provide more support for both students and external organizations'; the students should understand the importance of 'giving something back to society' and see the internship period as a chance for 'gaining special professional experience'; and the external partners should be genuinely committed to 'deep, professional collaboration' and 'mutual work'. Needs for university cooperation should be first motivated by the said information campaign, then assessed in a wide range of potential partners; students must be motivated intrinsically, and the Institute should cope with some practical, study organizational barriers (e.g. experiential learning activities 'to be organized when and where the opportunity arises', the availability of credits, lesson-type proportions). There were even concrete ideas for enhancing the chances of collaboration: the introduction of a new, compulsory course of community service whose assignments would be rewarded with credits and later recognized on the relevant professional courses, student mentoring in STEM subjects on the university's access programmes; an app to be designed to bring together motivated students with community needs and partners.

**Discussion/Conclusion**

Based on these research results we can state that the community outreach events of the university are not yet utilized for service learning, however they offer potential for it. They measure up to the conditions of service learning in the dimensions of *Partnership*, *Community Needs*, and *Relevant & Meaningful Service*. It is a well-organized experiential learning practice with professional commitment, full student involvement, in topics relevant to the university and the local-regional community, and with tangible results. However, students only participate in their organization as part of their work placement at the university's *Communication Centre*, or as volunteers of the *Student Union*. To exploit these activities for service learning they should be improved in terms of the depth of external partner involvement; the student assignments should have clear learning outcomes and be linked to the relevant undergraduate courses; their scheduling should be aligned with the that of the courses, and the collaboration should also involve the teacher. As for *Monitoring Progress* and *Reflecion*, a variety of forms and reflection techniques should be offered with the participation of the three actors (e.g. coaching) and the social issue the experiential learning process addresses should have a more central role.

We have also discovered some aspects of the existing experiential learning practice which are suitable for the methodology of service learning, especially on the *TV Production Assistant* undergraduate study programme. To some extent they agree with the requirements of *Link to Curricula*, *Partnership, Community Needs*, and *Relevant & Meaningful Service*, of which an outstanding example was the work placement collaboration for a new drug prevention campaign intended for secondary school children with two student animations (Table 3). This heightened students' awareness of drug abuse and activated their professional expertise while answering a real community need in collaboration with a civic partner.

However, students need to be intrinsically motivated and offered rewards for working with non-profit organizations on their course assignments or work placement. To balance the educational side, the service feature of the experiential learning process should be highlighted, which requires a higher level of community partner involvement at every step along the way. There should be more community partners with active and responsible participation in the learning process, especially in the reflection phase, and continuous

communication among the actors, which confirm Bodó's findings (2015, 2016, 2018). Timing is also an issue both in terms of the annual scheduling of the service learning experience, and ensuring adequate duration. As a solution, larger lesson blocks and the use of the autumn and spring holidays were suggested. Furthermore, the external communication of students' outputs should be extended from the present practice of university website and social media platforms. Their community use is accidental and depends on the intentions (e.g. advertising or awareness-raising) and type of business (for-profit, or non-profit) of the external partner. Finally, reflection on the societal context of the experiential learning process, awareness-raising of local social issues, education for active citizenship, local community building and personal growth (Bodó 2018, Celio et al 2011) are aspects missing from our data and require future research.

Building a learning community for the realization of experiential learning methods has so far shown several challenges which need to be taken in consideration when aiming at the initiation of the service learning methodology as a way of contributing to the solution of local social sustainability goals. Yet, by the introduction of the local-regional university stakeholder groups to the service learning method, which confirms the findings of McIlrath et al. (2016) of the university's side, and a thorough needs assessment the presently relevant community issues and specific needs for university collaboration could be revealed and the existing network of partnerships revitalised and/or reorganized. This could motivate students' choice of topics, the range of professional assignments and serve as a renewed ground for committed and meaningful educational collaboration between external partners and academics (Benke, 2013, 2019).

Besides an attitudinal change, the external framework conditions might need to be changed, which the new learning community has little influence on. What the university could do is applying the institutional suggestions of the Europe Engage survey (McIlrath et al, 2016) and realize the practical tools suggested by the interviewees: suitable study organization, a community service course, student mentoring and a community needs-student availability mobile phone application. These solutions could further the service learning process and carry the potential of community collaboration based social-educational innovation.

This study follows up the thematic paper *Egyetemi harmadik misszió-társadalmi innováció-szolgálati tanulás [University Third Mission-Social-*

*Innovation-Service-Learning]* to be published in the 2020 yearbook of the Hungarian Educational Research Association.

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# PART II.

# COMMUNITY BUILDING
# AND SOCIAL LEARNING

**Magdolna Benke**

**PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AS COMMUNITY BUILDING?**

## Abstract

It is a well-known item in the literature that in disadvantaged areas explicit knowledge "exported" by external experts loses its meaning without local tacit knowledge, so even the most excellent development ideas can fail without mapping and exploiting the local tacit knowledge base (Lengyel 2004). Tacit knowledge is always context-dependent and place-dependent, so the development of disadvantaged areas is inconceivable without meaningful involvement of local people in the planning process. The incorporation of bottom-up initiatives into local plans and the need for social dialogue appeared in the domestic planning methodology during the period of EU accession, but it was also limited due to problems of approach and insufficient preparation of those involved in planning. At the same time, the ultimate driver of development failures was the utilitarian approach, the effects of which were not addressed in the EU planning methodology. Participatory planning (Faragó 2005) supported by the capability approach (Sen 2003) shows a greater sensitivity to disadvantage and provides a space for an iterative local development process based on continuous learning (Bajmócy et al 2017). The research method is literature review. I outline some international and domestic features of participatory planning. I assume that capability approach can help participatory planning working more effectively. Because of its philosophical background I assume too, that capability approach provides stronger support for community building than the utilitarian approach.

*Keywords*

capability approach, participatory (community) planning, tacit knowledge, community building, local innovation

## Theoretical background of the topic

*The relationship between knowledge production and utilization of knowledge*

Similar to the concept of organizational knowledge base, we can talk about the knowledge base of a spatial unit, most of which is tacit, which can be

more difficult and slower to shape and develop. Competitiveness basically depends on these tacit knowledge elements (Lengyel 2004), from which it follows that in regional development it is expedient to pay more attention to the composition of the knowledge base and the possibilities of its formation in the future. The idea that commitment and conviction are needed to turn information into individual knowledge (Lengyel 2004) imposes fundamental tasks on regional developers. If the easily understood explicit knowledge that is "exported" from the outside, loses its meaning without tacit knowledge, then even the best development ideas can be doomed to failure in the absence of mapping and understanding the local tacit knowledge base. Since tacit knowledge is always context-dependent and place-dependent, and can only be fully understood by those who live there in the given local space (Lengyel 2004), the development of disadvantaged areas is completely inconceivable without the meaningful involvement of local people into the planning process. If the germ of development process does not feed on existing internal forces, it becomes unviable as soon as external professionals leave the given place, as soon as temporary external resources come to an end (Benke 2005).

**Dimensions of proximity**

Boschma (2005) draws attention to the five dimensions of proximity, which he defines as cognitive, organizational, social, institutional, and geographical proximity. He claims that without proximity, two companies, two potential partners can not learn from each other. At least one of the above five dimensions must be met for the process of learning from each other to take place. This recognition is, in fact, about a regional approach to 'weak links'. A similar finding is made by Lengyel (2012) when he points out that the further apart two partners are from each other on the social network, the more difficult they are able to learn from each other. This idea, in my view, is of paramount importance in assessing the causes of spatial development failures, as it reinforces the view that local citizens cannot be left out of the planning process.

## Experiences of regional research projects

*Some research outputs on the learning regions*

One of the domestic driving forces of the topic is the research on the effectiveness of territorial development processes (Kozma et al 2015). Numerous studies show that development projects that took place from external development sources, exclusively with the involvement of external experts, remained viable only for an indefinite period of time after the completion of the project, when the development resources were exhausted. In the context of the development of disadvantaged areas, the opinion that mechanical imitation of successful areas is not a solution is becoming more and more accepted among professionals, and it is not coincidence that exogenous, externally controlled territorial policy has not been successful. Instead, there is a need for endogenous development based on local factors and a development policy that guides this, as participatory programs tailored to the needs of local society are more sustainable (Rechnitzer 1998; Horváth 2009).

Nyhan (2007) emphasizes the approach of the learning region concept, which focuses on achieving social and economic objectives in an integrated way. Learning region initiatives in this case involve or presuppose the empowerment of local communities (by involving people from different interest groups in the development processes) in order to improve their living conditions and quality of life, from both an economic and a social point of view.

International experiences in research on the learning regions show that even in regions which are open and receptive to innovation, progress can only be made if there are progressive institutions and individuals in the region who take the lead in introducing new theories, new ideas and support collaboration between all actors in the region (Longworth 2002).

An examination of Hungarian regional development plans suggests that the process of dialogue and "socialization" (involving a wide range of stakeholders in the evaluation of plans) was mostly implemented with the involvement of planning specialists and economic actors, with no wider participation. Although the inclusion and validation of bottom-up aspects and opinions in the planning process was part of the EU expectations, this condition could only be met to a very limited extent by the planning practice (Benke 2020).

The nature of the planning – in order to meet the EU expectations – included socialization, conducting a wide-ranging consultation procedure, but this procedure was an ex-post evaluation for the post-planning period, which allowed for at most ex-post corrections. This assessment should not be confused with the one takes place during the planning process (Pálné 2009). The need for participatory planning (Faragó 2005) which provides space for an interative local development process based on continuous learning, occured, too. The nature of planning as a learning process was emphasized by Kovács (1997) and Rechnitzer (1998). Serious professional debates went on how regions could meet the conditions imposed on them by a government decision.

## Some research outputs on the learning communities

International research (Kearns et al 2010: 4-7) indicates an appreciation of the role of the "place" vis-à-vis the region, and the intention to involve local stakeholders and partnerships more strongly in development processes (Benke 2013). Involving the local community can result in them feeling the change as their own and becoming committed to the learning community. It logically follows from this assessment that projects with the involvement of internal resources, local residents and local financial resources can be more viable and effective.

Ensuring sustainability – as a new, key challenge – requires a new style, a new system of participatory governance and civil participation at all territorial levels, but above all at the local level. This new attitude implies a higher level of commitment, willingness and ability of civil society to participate in decision-making processes for sustainable development. This is first and foremost a matter of education and learning. Learning communities for sustainability also have a strong role to play in shaping the process between local planning and education that is globally conscious but based on the conditions of the place. A new element in this process is the term of "learning stakeholders" (Morgan 2009: 1).

Research examining the role of social capital and the activity of civil society in local development has indicated that the strength of local communities varies greatly in terms of territory (Nyhan 2007). Due to the lived cultural and economic traditions and experiences, even within a micro-

region, there can be significant differences in the formation and activity of local communities.

The importance of bottom-up initiatives in Hungarian territorial development was emphasized by the EU planning methodology – due to the preparation for joining the EU, – thus in principle it was possible that micro-regions in Hungary formulated their future development needs themselves. However, the implementation of this possibility encountered a number of difficulties (Benke 2005), among which, in addition to problems of approach and the lack of sufficient financial resources, we find the lack of training for the new role, namely representing local interests and acquiring the ability to engage in dialogue, as well (Benke 2020). Although the requirement of empowerment is not a new idea since it was already included in the so-called Aarhus Convention (see Boda 2008), and there was an idea about the extension of its scope to broader issues in addition to environment, however, the requirement of empowerment is still a very weak point of the domestic planning process.

Based on the examination of the Hungarian micro-regional development plans, the factors hindering the development of an effective planning process can be summarized as follows: lack of information, lack of financial resources, lack of planning specialists, lack of decision-making competence, problems of attitude, lack of partnership, population migration, lack of a positive vision of the micro-region (Benke 2005).

However, we cannot say that local human resources involved in micro-regional planning could have been prepared to the level that would have been sufficient for making substantial progress in the life of disadvantaged micro-regions, even by longer-term training. The ultimate driving force and maintainer of the problem is, in my opinion, the utilitarian economic approach, which was not addressed by the examined EU planning methodology (Benke 2020). Utilitarianism is one of the basic principles of classical liberal economics. It is an economic ethic trend proclaiming that our decisions are being guided only by one moral norm, the principle of utility. In the spirit of this, we must always choose the option that is best for all concerned. At the same time, the utilitarian approach is insensitive towards social inequalities. Since the model works as a zero-sum game, the fate of the poorest could only be improved at the expense of the richest. In the value approach of the utilitarian economy, the values that could form the basis of the development of disadvantaged areas are being lost. The positive-sum

game that Lundvall had hoped for in 1996 did not happen. While in the past almost only environmentalists have formulated a "systemic critique" of growth-oriented economy, in recent years regional researchers have also voiced their dissatisfaction with non-decreasing differencies in regional level of development (Benke 2020).

## Looking for solution to the problem: participatory planning

*Some theoretical background of participatory planning*

Davidoff, who in his work in 1966 called for a radical change in the planning system so that "instead of a centralized bureaucracy, profit-oriented local groups draw up their own plans with the help of professional designers" is prominent in the development of participatory (community) planning (Dömötör 2008: 28). An important milestone is the launch of the government-sponsored National Community Development Projects (CDP) program in Britain, as well as Arnstein's (1969) study in which he structured key levels of participatory planning based on the degree of involvement (see later). From the 1970s onwards, the approach was further strengthened. The fact that the United Nations undertook the importance of the issue of participation played a major role in this process. The degrees of civil participation are illustrated by Arnstein (1969, quoted by Bodorkós, 2010) (see Figure 1).
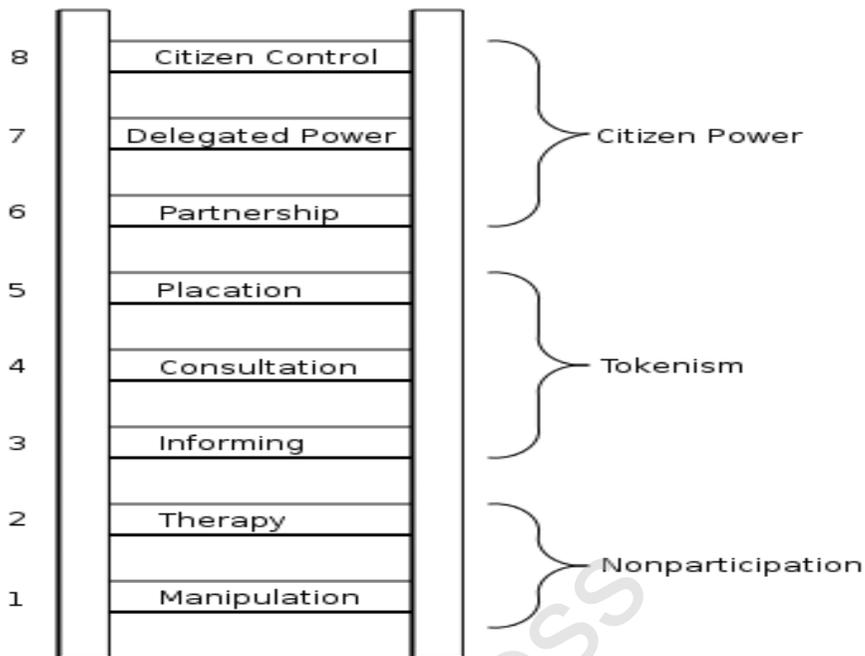
Figure 1. Degrees of civil participation (Arnstein 1969)

According to this, there is not participation at the lowest level (lack of participation), which includes manipulation and therapy. The elements of symbolic participation are information, consultation and reconciliation. Finally, civil power includes partnership, delegated power and civil control. In Arnstein's work above, "the participatory process is about redistributing power: endowing those without power with the ability to influence decisions that affect them. In practice, all this can be realized in very different depths, accordingly, the concept of participation can cover quite different practices" (Bajmóczy et al 2015).

G. Fekete (2013) emphasizes that community-based planning serves both as an effective development tool and as a far-reaching goal that creates significant value for the future of the community and goes well beyond a given development project. This planning method does not necessarily lead to a different or better result than traditional expert planning process. Its novelty and benefits lie in involving the wider professional and civil communities in the planning process. By "socializing" the planning process, the social acceptance of both the completed plan and the resulting

developments are much greater. The basic methods of community planning are as follow: (1) facilitation – helping the process, (2) skills development – enabling actors to work together, (3) community planning techniques, (4) planning process adapted to a "project cycle".

As another author points out (Rényi 2011: 105), the appreciation of direct community participation can be explained by various reasons. Such reasons may be the growing demand in society for the exercise of democratic rights, the will of citizens to hold their democratic rights to account and demand the expansion of their opportunities, and the phenomenon may be part of a wide-ranging process of decentralization and democratization of power in the society. Others stress that strengthening participation is not only an issue from the perspective of democracy, but also from the point of view of the quality of decisions. The quality of decisions can be improved, as energies are released in the field of innovation, creativity, which can lead to better answers to complex problems. Another important aspect is that participation can strengthen the legitimacy and acceptance of decisions, which can also be of direct benefit to politics and public life (Boda 2008).

Sadan (2011) approaches the topic from the side of communities. According to her, community planning is an activity that aims to bring about a social change that creates a new or strengthens an existing community. An essential feature of community plynning is that it "operates in a defined and limited environment and initiates a process that focuses on participation and interactions between the designer and the community or between community members. There are countless different styles of community planning that range from directive to nondirective on an imaginary scale" (Sadan 2011).

Amartya Sen's (2003) theory of capability approach, which I present in Chapter 4 of the study, provides a theoretical background to support the democratic image of participatory planning. However, the benefits and perceptions of social participation were not clear right from the start, only later. This is well illustrated by a poster of a French student: *"I participate, you participate, he participates, we participate, you participate, they profit"* (Arnstein 1969) (see Figure 2). The sub-chapter "domestic experiences" will talk about the differences in the participation opportunities of local actors and how the influence appears under the label of participation.

Figure 2. French student's poster (Arnstein 1969)

*The impact of the new form of goverment, governance on participatory planning*

An expert material (VÁTI 2009) summarizes the most important tasks of Community Planning Cooperation (based on the experience of Western Europe) as follows:

- Organizing forums, discussing the future; Involvement of experts; Promoting social acceptance; Operation of work and advisory groups, brainstorming; Community action planning; Negotiation; Providing publicity; Ensuring a diverse composition, ie involving as wide a range of stakeholders as possible; Involvement in identifying the problem to be solved and also in the decision-making discussion.

Regarding the composition of participants in planning, a recent study (Salamin 2018) points out that since 2002, "governance" as a flexible, cooperative form of government has been intensified in European spatial planning practice. This means that different non-governmental actors, civil and economic actors are involved in the planning process, and in the context of multilevel governance, the coordination of different actors, both vertically and horizontally, is being enhanced. New governance necessarily involves collaborative and communicative planning. The new system needs a planning

support specialist instead of the traditional planner, who plays a facilitating role by supporting collaboration between the actors.

In the recent period, the spatial planning process has been heavily influenced by economic competitiveness considerations, the involvement of economic actors has strengthened, and welfare systems have been "eroded". Private sector investments have become dominant in urban and regional development. Salamin (2018: 117) emphasizes that "social community participation and the involvement of the economic force also lead to certain contradictions", but in his dissertation he does not examine this topic in detail. Salamin examined how the weight of the role of different actors (designer, politician, investor-developer, business, citizen, civilian, etc.) changed in planning, and concluded that the role of traditional actors, planners, and elected decision-makers relatively decreases.

The participation of new types of economic and social actors has increased most in countries with a developed planning culture, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. According to the lessons learned from its survey, the role of investors and private investors has been significantly strengthened, and the role of citizens' and civil society groups has also been significantly strengthened, but to a lesser extent, in spatial planning. A particularly exciting indication for the topic of this volume is that coordination and collaboration between actors, as well as mutual learning from each other, have become significantly more important among the essential features of the planning process (see Salamin 2018 for details).

The transformation of spatial planning has been the subject of a number of criticisms, highlighting most often the neoliberal turn (Ahlqvist & Moisio 2014; Olesen 2013, cited by Salamin 2018), as well as the withering away of spatial and national planning, and the narrowing welfare function of the state. They highlight (e.g. Galland 2012, cited by Salamin 2018) that spatial planning has moved from a socio-spatial and welfare state project to an age of competitiveness-oriented, growth-oriented strategies of neoliberal politics, characterized by soft spaces of "governance" and flexible policies that destabilize formal planning arenas (see for details Salamin 2018).

*Domestic experiences*

The topic appears more in Hungary as "community planning" (Faragó 2005), and is inevitably connected to the problems of the exercise of power,

governance, and the role of local governments (Pálné Kovács I. 2009). As community planning is a form of community learning, it is also related to the problem of community innovation (Márkus & Kozma 2019). In Hungary, the system of regional development tools has been purposefully expanded in the recent period, however, many circumstances adversely affect the implementation of community planning. These include the reduction of resources for community-led local development, the uncertain role of the partnership-based civil conciliation forums achieved in 2004 as a huge achievement, and the decreasing possibility for involving broad public opinion.

The legislation provided, in principle, a wide opportunity to participate in planning, but provided almost no safeguards. It can be observed that the importance of participation shows a decreasing trend in the relevant regulations, moreover, the time available for expressing an opinion is constantly, moreover, radically decreasing, and the number of exceptions is increasing. In 2013, the regulation at the statutory level was replaced by rules at the level of decrees, which referred the definition of partnership rules to the competence of local governments. In this sense, in essence, local governments can decide who they consider to be involved in planning and how they want to be involved in planning. At the same time, a new type of plan was born, the so-called Partnership Consultation Plan (PCP). It means that municipalities first define and adopt partnership rules before starting the planning process (Bajmóczy et al 2015).

Based on the analysis of the development documents of the cities with county status, Bajmóczy and co-authors made the following main remarks about the involvement of "named" stakeholders in planning: in many cases there are special opportunities for the most influential (eg largest employers) (eg regular personal consultations with planners, or with the municipal office). Based on this, it can be said that the named partners (among Arnstein's (1969) degrees of participation) are given the degrees of symbolic participation. Participation is by invitation, the planned planning process envisages partly visible (public) and partly hidden decision-making. For the most influential actors, participation in hidden (and sometimes invisible) forms is explicitly outlined (eg separate consultations with them). Because of the above, according to researchers, in this case, "participation serves to preserve the status quo, to maintain existing conditions, rather than to spread the power exercised over the planning process" (Bajmóczy et al 2015: 22).

In contrast, in terms of citizen participation, both the partnership plans and the development documents themselves consider information to be the main task. In addition, persuasion, and sometimes „education", appears to help residents interpret a given situation correctly. In addition to providing information, the possibility of expressing an opinion also appears regularly, but not in all cases. At the same time, "it is clear that the citizens are not intended to be involved in professional work. The goal of involvement is nowhere to jointly produce the knowledge needed for local development to succeed. The residents in Arnstein's (1969) ladder basically embodies low levels of participation: levels of information, therapy, and manipulation" (Bajmóczy et al 2015: 22). It seems that residents usually have to take their own steps to express their opinions, which can be especially problematic for marginalized social groups. Their position is very weak, moreover, their "empowerment" is not included as a task in the documents. As a result, actors with low advocacy capacity cannot represent and communicate their views in any planning process. Overall, the researchers conclude that "citizen participation fundamentally provides actors in the center of power with the means to implement their development ideas with greater support, wider legitimacy. Public participation in planning does not go hand in hand with the dispersion of power" (Bajmóczy et al 2015: 23).

Planners define the main steps of participatory planning as follows: 1. information gathering; 2. evaluation; 3. visioning: formulating a desired state; 4. setting goals: a concrete, quantifiable future state; 5. action, implementation. This series of steps is very similar to what we learned about the micro-regional plans. The changed roles are indicated by the statement that in participatory planning, "the planner is much more responsible for coordinating different forms of knowledge than for dictating specific solutions" (Sain 2010: 13).

The real difficulty regarding our topic is how to implement the effective involvement of internal resources in development processes, how to reduce the impact of the obstacles and factors that form the barrier. There is a wealth of information focusing on the steps in the process of trying to involve the local population in planning. The research results presented in my study have sensitively shed light on the diverse circumstances that hinder the realization of real broad participation in planning. Legislation alone is not enough to successfully take such a huge step. By creating an opportunity for stakeholder

participation on a number of points (not restricting it), the legislation did not led to the actual opportunity to participate for many groups of society.

The process, also called "socialization" in the domestic planning process, is still in its infancy. The domestic state of participatory planning in reality shows that many groups of society continue to be left out of the planning, there is a lack of cooperation between stakeholders, weak or non-existent advocacy power of NGOs, and the relationship system is vulnerable even when the conditions are right. Strengthening the role of facilitators is a serious task, although it is questionable to what extent their role could counterbalance the sometimes feudal character of planning, which operates with privileges.

Another particularly exciting question is to judge the role of "local heroes," that is, whether often "lonely" local heroes can replace broad social participation in the process of achieving development goals. While we know about undoubtedly a number of successful local projects connected to the prominent role of 'local heroes' (Kozma 2016), I believe we must not forget that these successes came about by chance, and it was most fortunate that there were citizens in the local communities who were able and willing to swing the fate of their local communities. It is unclear and requires further investigation to answer the question of the extent to which the role of "local heroes" helps to strengthen the socialization process. Whether can we consider their example to be followed? In my view, the process of socialization could be rather strengthened if, within the local community, the nucleus that could be the engine of local social innovations emerged not randomly but as a result of a natural development process.

*Why is it difficult to connect development models and participatory planning?*

References in the literature sometimes suggest that these topics are located at different levels in the scientific hierarchy. Experts in the disciplines at the top of the ladder, "gurus", create development models and theories that can serve as a basis for spatial development projects in many cases, as we have seen in the context of the learning region research project (Benke 2015; Kozma et al 2015). However, professionals involved in participatory (community) planning practices are located either at the lower levels of the imaginary ladder or on another ladder. Spatial development models are not workable in

practice without effective local participatory planning, especially in disadvantaged areas, but the above two sides do not cooperate with each other. Both of them does its thing, without substantive cooperation.

**Theory and possible impact of the capability approach**

With regard to local development, starting from the capability approach, Bajmócy draws attention to the limitations of expert knowledge and emphasizes that "the knowledge of the local community and the expert together are necessary for economic development" (Bajmócy 2012: 25).

The capability approach is one of the alternatives to the utilitarian economic philosophy, created by Nobel Prize-winning professor Amartya Sen (2003). "Instead of dealing exclusively with economic processes, the capability approach suggests an in-depth analysis of the relationship between economic and non-economic factors. … In this approach, communities begin the planning process with real visioning, an integral part of which is an open discussion about the skills they value. All these can provide a basis for an iterative local development process based on continuous learning. …. The capability approach (therefore) assigns an active actor rather than a passive recipient to those involved (including primarily local residents)…. Expert and local (lay) knowledge are not substitutes for each other, but complement each other…. The capability approach draws attention to the conditions for the ability to participate truly. …. Another important message is that stakeholders can make a real contribution both to the production of knowledge and to community decision-making…. An essential element of the development process is the elimination of skills gaps, "empowerment"" (Gébert, Bajmócy, Málovics and Pataki 2016: 23-44).

The important messages of the Capability Approach are as follow:
– people are active actors in society who are able to advance their own affairs and who cannot be considered as passive recipients
– "freedom for action" is an incentive-based, innovative organizing principle
– continuous, iterative participation in community decision-making processes is considered crucial
– working out "aspects that are valued by the community for good reason" can be the result of a long-term community learning process
– implementing widespread involvement is an extremely long and difficult learning process, „it can take up to a human's life"

The above messages of the capability approach indirectly point to the importance of community building. It is extremely difficult to judge whether the elaboration of "aspects considered valuable by the community" as a result of a long community learning process presupposes the existence of a strong community or can be interpreted as a process that strengthens, enriches a community that already exists at some level of cohesion. This topic could be part of a future area of research.

*Concluding Thought*: The capability approach is not a magic tool, but because of its philosophical foundations, I assume that it can provide more support for the successful implementation of participatory planning and, indirectly, for building local communities than the utilitarian economic philosophy.

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## THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

### Introduction

Community Based Learning (CBL, Service Learning) is not a single defined method, but an educational context in which what we learn is linked to the issues of the social environment, community, neighbourhood; to this extent, it is a direct continuation of the objectives of the settlement movements. It may refer to volunteer or internship work, field research (especially participatory research), field training. It may be aimed at protecting and developing the natural or cultural heritage or, as in our case, improving the functioning of social institutions.

In Hungary, community-*based* learning means a slightly different approach to the already established areas of learning, community learning and social learning - community-based learning means a well-planned intersection of academic and local communities and internships. However, it is important that there are overlaps and similarities between these forms of learning.

One of the most important tasks of participatory learning is to involve and empower the affected individuals (participants) using different methods. Community-based learning focuses on creating a connection between the participants, with the aim of establishing dialogue in addition to meeting defined academic learning objectives. The purpose of the meetings and the well-prepared practice is to facilitate the cooperation between the participants (university students, pupils, lecturers and members of the given community), the initial step of which is to create the conditions for dialogue. Another goal is to contribute to each other's development by turning to and supporting each other, building on the knowledge in the group, and to interpret the given social problem together.

In our study, we primarily aim to describe the interpretive frameworks related to community-based learning and methodological practices that can serve as examples of the implementation of CBL in higher education.

### Theoretical background of community-based learning

According to Friedmann (1987), social learning is a complex process in which taking action is at the centre. In this case, learning is not equal with the

traditional form of teaching and learning, but refers to a form of community activity in which individuals participate as members of a given community. (Vercseg, 2013; Kozma, 2019, p. 239)

More than a decade ago, Ilona Vercseg stated that during the socialization of a growing generation – i.e. members of communities - in addition to the subject knowledge and formal knowledge provided by the schools, people should get to know their social environment, the community that surrounds the children better. They should be familiar with the social processes that affect the local community. *"Knowledge of the local community is a subject of life, the knowledge of which cannot be fully mastered, but can only be continuously enriched and deepened. (…) For the participants, the essence of community knowledge should be the process of getting to know the continuity that prevails in the given locality - to get to know and think about it, to project it into the future, together with their own role in action. Schools and the community should not only deal with the past and the natural environment, but also with the people living today. Growing generations should get to know and understand the basic determinations and life opportunities - from the practical life, mostly defined by the outside world to local developments driven by internal forces; from unemployment to career opportunities; from local minority and human rights issues to civic obligations, etc."* (Vercseg, 2007, p. 2).

The best-known international examples of university-based learning communities are the School Development Program launched at Yale University in 1986, the Accelerated Schools project at Stanford University from the same year, and the Success for All project in Baltimore in 1987. (Dooly & Vallejo 2007, quoted by Benke 2016) The aim of all three programs is to focus on the social and cultural transformation of schools and their communities through the means of establishing dialogue. "There are two important parts to these programs in terms of implementation: on the one hand, increasing responsibility for individuals and in specific social groups, and on the other hand, the community's decision to transform the school into a learning community" (Benke, 2016, p. 185).

In Hungary, similar initiatives have been implemented in higher education in the last two decades by disseminating experiential learning and reflective learning methods. As part of the learning-teaching process, there is an increasing focus on methods that encourage the solution of social problems by mobilizing the resources of community members; where the

student communities contribute to social solutions in a reflective way, through their actions, in the framework of collaborations and partnerships, in the spirit of mutual assistance.

The closest to community-based learning in terms of its methods is experiential learning based on reflection. In the 1970s, David Kolb and Ron Fry developed this model of teaching methodology. By their definition, *experiential learning is a process in which knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. In Kolb's experiential learning model, this learning process was defined in four steps: 1. concrete experience; 2. reviewing and reflecting on the experience; 3. abstract conceptualisation concluded from the experience; 4. active experimentation* (Kolb & Fry, 1975; Hunya, 2014). *This experiential learning not only seeks to develop skills but also contributes to changing certain behaviour patterns.*

*Experience-based learning as a method is directly related to community-based learning. Within the framework of this teaching-learning process, the participants apply their knowledge and skills through their direct active experience, and with this they also create value. According to Kurt Hahn, certain experiences in themselves result in the development of a wide variety of social skills (e.g., cooperation, tolerance, helpfulness, joint problem-solving, etc.) (Hahn, 1987, Sr. Experiential Learning Foundation, 2019).*

One of the peculiarities of social training is that, in addition to theoretical knowledge, it is necessary to apply practice-oriented methods in education. The development of students' skills and competencies is central to this training system. To this end, it is necessary to introduce practice-oriented methods, where—in addition to the transfer of knowledge—students become part of the knowledge creation process through gaining their own experiences, and find a solution to the given social problem together with the members of the affected communities. Joint reflection, joint action help students and members of the affected social environment to become a strong community, to shape individual goals into community goals.

## Community Based Learning

*"The main goal of community learning and development is to help individuals and communities solve real problems in their lives through community action and community-based learning"* (Vercseg, 2007). *In addition to individual development and experience, community-based learning implements the*

*cooperation, mutual help and reflectivity of the participants at the level of the learning communities, combining the training goals in the academic environment with the interests of the community and thus adds a new approach to the teaching-learning methods indicated above.*

The starting point of the community-based learning approach is that each community has resources that can be useful from an educational point of view - for example, it offers hands-on experiences, new systems of relationships to teachers and students. Everything they acquire in the traditional academic environment comes to life, becomes significant for them personally, and this develops better learning motivations (what is the meaning of learning?), stronger preparedness, skills to apply knowledge. Applicability is a clear expectation of today's higher education systems.

Four main directions have emerged within this basic approach, which are often used in combination:

Establishing a connection with the subject of education
Lessons learned will be applied to experiences in the local community: for example, the theoretical links between employment, income and interregional migration will be examined in a specific locality, or the issue of equal opportunities in education will be reviewed in the evaluation of an after school support program.

Community integration
The work gets done with the involvement of local experts. These experts are invited to give lectures, participate in roundtable discussions, or plan joint research with practitioners, lecturers, and students.

Community participation
In this case, some part of the learning takes place through active participation in the life of the community. It can be internship or volunteer work, research work, and evaluation can be done with the help of a reflective diary. Students can gain first-hand experiences of the material they learn about (e.g., learn about the practical side of social problems).

*Civic actions*
Many consider this to be the most authentic approach, because it not only uses but also actively shapes and enriches community resources. For example, studying a social problem encourages participants to report (record, write) on it to the public, formulate a petition, or organize some kind of

campaign. At this level, they work together with the whole community, the wider public, taking substantive responsibility for their own work - in which case the responsibilities of the teacher will be different (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

Whichever form of community-based learning we choose, it is very important to leave enough time for planning and incorporating reflective phases, because that is the only way the learning experience can become complete. It is important to articulate clear learning objectives: an activity cannot be considered as community-based learning, if it only benefits the community but is far from students' learning goals, or the experience gained does not serve their professional development, training, or better performance of output requirements. Thus, for example, in a research collaboration it is not expedient if the students only do "auxiliary work", i.e. we only "use" them for data collection and data entry. This is unacceptable. However, if they are allowed to learn the tasks from designing the research to writing the research report, then the planning has been done carefully, fairly and with the interests of all parties in mind, and the process is expected to end with appropriate learning outcomes. Community-based learning must meet the criteria formulated by Carnegie (2014, Carlisle St. et al., 2017): *"The process requires a mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources within a given framework of cooperation, in the context of partnership and reciprocity."*

The advantage of a community-based learning approach is that it builds strong and mutually beneficial relationships between the educational institution and the local community (Bucher, 2019). This aspect is key to the development of higher education institutions today: without community support, these institutions will become increasingly weak, but without academic resources, urban and rural communities may suffer from gaps in innovation, creativity, and even up-to-date and accurate, valid knowledge that can be utilized in everyday life.

One common criticism of the approach is that students burdened with practical tasks will perform worse from a theoretical point of view. In addition, we may encounter problems related to the organization of education and even legal obstacles: such as meeting students' legitimate needs for a safe environment or the difficulties of transport in the field (e.g. there is no accommodation or means of transport in the most suitable areas for social

field research and field training that a higher education institution—which is subject to public procurement rules—could use). It is also quite certain that using this method will increase the workload of the instructors, because they have to do the organizing. (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2014) At the same time, this is the teaching method that keeps the instructors' essential practical experience fresh. (Marshall University, 2019) The figure below illustrates the spectrum of experiential teaching-learning. On the left side of the figure are the activities that the university lecturer and student carry out as citizens in their own communities: volunteering, charity, community service are all dictated by the needs of the community. On the right we can see the activities related to education: the practical (field) traineeship, the training, the exercises. These two are linked by community-based learning as described above.

Figure 1. Community-based learning - participants and actvities



Source: Marshall University, 2019, own editing, 2019

Table 1. Community-based learning frameworks

| COMMUNITY - BASED LEARNING AS A METHOD IN THE PROCESS OF EXPERIENCE LEARNING-TEACHING | | |
|---|---|---|
| **COMMUNITY-CENTERED** | **EMPOWERS ALL PARTICIPANTS: COMMUNITY, STUDENTS, TRAININGS** | **STUDENT/PUPIL CENTERED** |
| | It makes it possible for students to use the newly acquired skills and knowledge in a real situation. | |
| The needs of the community are reflected in the way the service is provided by the community | | |
| | The project will result in a measurable change in community health promotion systems. | |
| | The people in charge of the institution are informed in advance and follow the specific learning and experience goals (including the intangible ones) | |
| The activities carried out by the pupils / students are related to local needs, services and have real consequences for the life of the community. | | |
| | In order to examine ourselves, our community and the institutions that shape our future, the needs of the communities and their meeting points must be considered as a basis. | |

Source: Marshall University, 2019, own editing, 2019

A scale of a total of 43 items has been developed to assess community-based learning, with specific themes reflecting the central ideas in Figure 1 and are focusing on the development of some transversal competencies. We may encounter topics such as civic participation, the development of institutional /

community relations, psychological well-being, prosperity in university life, and professional development (Carlisle et al., 2017).

For example:

- *I became more proactive*
- *I realized I could choose from several specializations*
- *I'm going to volunteer*
- *I can analyse social issues much better*
- *I prefer to help and encourage others*
- *I become more purposeful*
- *I became more open to new ideas, etc.*

The responses were organized into three decisive factors: the degree of *civic participation* indicates how much the student feels part of a larger whole, as part of the society, and how willing he or she is to work with others for the common good. The second factor, critical thinking, refers to the student's ability to make well-founded and responsible judgments and decisions on a given issue. The third factor is self-reflectivity, awareness in the processing of experiences (Carlisle et al., 2017). All this means is that this approach develops precisely those areas that we consider to be central issues in social assistance and that are also emphasized in training and output requirements (Marshall University, 2019).

**Practical examples of using the CBL method**

In this subsection, we aim to provide some examples of the applicability of community-based learning in relation to the theory of community-based learning within and outside university education through tried and tested practices. Three exercises are described. The first is the implementation of participatory learning in the framework of the Bike Maffia movement. The second example: a learning practice based on civic actions is associated with a program of a charity concert and cookie fair. Finally, an internship in a school in a disadvantaged locality will be presented with the aim of connecting students with the subject of education during community-based learning. Of course, there are a number of additional options available to faculty and students in applying this method.

*Bike Maffia movement in relation of community participation*

*"Only experience makes knowledge permanent. This is what we call "upbringing" in modern times" (Csányi, 1999, p. 221).* At the same time: *"Learning is not the result of teaching, but the consequence of the learner's activity" (Holt, 1991).*

The Bike Maffia is a social movement based on volunteer helpers; its general objectives include reflecting on modernization processes and dealing with a particular social problem or crisis. For many volunteer participants, the movement in Pécs is a chosen community and a means of expressing solidarity. The Pécs Bike Maffia (PBM) is actually an informal group modelled on the Budapest movement, whose primary goal is to help local families in need with the method of community cooking and donations (mainly benefits in kind). At the same time, it not only helps to meet basic physiological needs on two wheels, but also builds a bridge between groups of different social statuses through the method of community social work. *"Due to its vitality, the Mafia is constantly changing and evolving, yet there is something constant in it: the spirituality shared by those who want to do it. Those who act in the present to bring the values of the past into vogue for future generations"* (Nyers, 2018, p. 22).

Almost all ages are represented among PBM volunteer helpers, serving as excellent examples of both socialization and participatory learning. Continuous base building is essential for the sustainable operation of the movement.

The possible method of involving the younger age group (high school students or university students) is that they can be reached through social media platforms, where people can get up-to-date information about the group's operation, principles, goals and current campaigns. On the other hand, thanks to the openness of educational institutions, the information above also gets transferred in person. In this respect, the persuasion of the volunteers takes place within the classroom framework, and due to the nature of the lesson, the connection to the relevant subject is realized. In an academic setting, several types of courses offer the opportunity to make a connection between theory and practice, be it social work with families, the topic of poverty, skills development or fieldwork.

The opportunity to engage in dialogue and ask questions both online and in-person makes it possible to start a discourse that facilitates commitment. In

addition, it is important to make participants aware of what they can learn through participation and action. Defining learning objectives and reflecting on them becomes necessary from time to time, it is not enough to highlight them at the beginning of the semester and include them in the subject description. In the case of applied social sciences, one of the objectives of the teachers is to train professionals who are able to confidently apply the acquired theoretical knowledge in practice. To do this, it is necessary to find fields that provide experience where students can increase their knowledge and skills by undertaking voluntary work, either in the short or long term.

There have been numerous attempts in recent years to spread and sometimes redefine the culture of volunteering: either in domestic and European Union tender objectives, or by integrating volunteering into public education. Overall, it can be said that the perception of participatory volunteering shows a changing picture in Hungary. In today's Hungarian society, the thoughts of András Lányi, expressed in an interview with him in connection with civic participation, seem to be reflected: *"in a community that has experienced for generations that those who demand participation in the management of common affairs can only get into trouble; because they will be punished, persecuted - it is very difficult to familiarize people with the need to participate"* (Péterfi & Lányi, 2009).

However, in higher education it may be easier to "get used" to the need for participation / volunteering, as in a positive motivation system where young people are aware of the benefits of participation such as gaining practical experience, building contact capital, even gaining a job, etc., there is usually a greater willingness to participate. If they are committed, they participate in the Pécs Bike Maffia movement, then they can develop their skills through experiential, non-formal learning methods. You can do all this in a supportive environment, in a cooperative way, with the help of personalized mentoring. More experienced, often older volunteers not only inform but also support newcomers, ensuring their active involvement in the community.

Participants gain self-knowledge, become more sensitive and open, and can socialize into much more conscious members of society, citizens. They can master coping strategies, encounter social problems and crisis phenomena not only on a theoretical level, but also come into direct contact. They can experience how community organization works in practice, they will be richer with management and marketing knowledge. They may be able

to articulate not only an oppressed social group's, but also their own needs and interests. Their communication skills can develop and a kind of intercultural learning can take place. The students of the movement are also represented by foreign students, from Alaska to many countries in Asia and Europe. Another advantage is that their critical-reflective skills related to social processes develop, their thinking becomes more open and flexible. In practice, they can learn what acceptance, empathy, solidarity, cooperation, attention and understanding are. Participation develops volunteers not only socially but also emotionally and intellectually, contributing to the development of their professional identity. This holistic vision and more mature attitude can be mastered through the spiral of community participation, action, evaluation, and feedback. Any movement, community or group is an excellent field for this type of learning, in which the transfer and empowerment of knowledge takes place in a supportive way along similar goals.

*Preparation and sensitization*

Students first gain a comprehensive knowledge of the local community involved. This learning process usually takes place within a classroom setting. At the same time, student engagement and impression building are key from the very beginning. We examine the Pécs Bike Maffia movement according to Alain Touraine's triple typology, firstly based on its identity and definition, secondly from the perspective of the movement's opponents, and lastly from its vision and social goals (Castells 2006).

It can be said that there is a lucky overlap between the roles as well. On the one hand, as a teacher, it is possible to get to know the deeper layers of the local community, to identify its problems, and thus to discuss the knowledge needs of social professionals. On the other hand, as a founding member of the Pécs Bike Maffia movement, we create the connection between the informal group (PBM) and the students through my personal example and community narratives, as well as the abundance of photos and videos available. Experience and feedback so far show that the need for volunteering, participation and action is already outlined here, regardless of whether or not students receive any form of recognition (grade, credit) in the future.

*Participation in the movement*

After acquiring the necessary knowledge, students can take on a kind of research role, combining the methods of participatory observation and volunteer work, during which they can experience different helping attitudes. The members of the Pécs Bike Maffia movement are mostly middle-class intellectuals, in whom altruism is high or follows some pattern of socialization. The target group - the beneficiaries of the movement - are mainly families living in deep poverty, so not only are those involved go in with different motivations, but they also have different knowledge of both poverty and problem management. In many cases, participation, by either party, is as informal as it is organized. This experience provides flexibility, freedom and access for all to acceptance based on understanding, can break down prejudices and reduce the social divide between the poor and the rich, those with lower and higher education, Roma and non-Roma. Students can get involved in the life of the community from food preparation to delivery, in addition to logistics tasks, they can even enrich it by organizing independent, beneficial actions. Meanwhile, the emphasis is on communication; one can strike up a conversation with the families who come to the site easily, but even just by delivering, one can easily obtain enough information to outline either an environmental study or a sociography. We consider it an important principle that no one in the affected families knows better about the nature and circumstances of the problem, so that no helper participates in the movement to form a value judgment. The key to getting to know and understanding is presence, participation in the life of the community, the determining factor of which is the time factor. The number of positive results is enhanced by the fact that the relationship between students and the Pécs Bike MaFfia was maintained in several cases, regardless of the course.

*Reflection*

At the end of the semester and the given course, students make a personal and professional reflection on their experiences, which is sent to the instructor before they reflect on it in the classroom. This is followed by positive, negative and "aha" experiences, insights, fears and expectations. They can comment on the movement and formulate proposals and development directions. Through their innovative ideas, they not only

contribute to the functioning of the movement, but also build on it. This gives them a sense of 'I have something to do', 'it depends on me', increasing their willingness to engage in social processes as they receive immediate feedback on the consequences of their actions, experiencing a complex interplay of effects and feedback at both the micro and macro levels.

*Charity concert and cookie fair: civic actions in practice*

The charity concert associated with the cookie fair exemplifies the level of student participation at which students can intervene or influence to improve the functioning of social institutions based on community resources. The course in question saw volunteering as an experience-based learning of solidarity, and students were able to learn about its various aspects during the semester. The first step was to develop a common knowledge, as the social perception of the concept - volunteering - is often negative. In the first phase of the creation of common knowledge, students gathered their knowledge and experience in small groups using the word cloud method. This clearly illustrated the heterogeneity of the group in relation to the topic. They then reflected on each articulated knowledge element under the guidance of the instructor. During the semester, various projects could be presented that integrated volunteer work, during which we focused on discussing these initiatives and learned about community issues that can be done locally. This way, students could look behind the curtain and interpret more than just a project: in each case, the implementers and volunteers of the project shared the difficulties or successes that anyone may face when planning or implementing a similar campaign. The criterion of credibility was maximized, as the invited speakers did not come to recruit or campaign, but to pass on their knowledge. Students could ask freely, directly from the participants within or even outside the course. For example, they could talk to a young Turkish doctor serving in the European Voluntary Service who worked in an institution for the disabled in Pécs, or an adult who volunteers at the Children's Clinic in Pécs.

In the next phase, students got closer to the method of community planning. As part of a playful task, they were able to learn that the conceptualization of certain design phases can be a cardinal issue even in the case of a task that seems insignificant and evident to many. They then created their own plan, which in this case was a charity concert linked to a cookie

fair. Building from the bottom up, they organized the event using their own existing knowledge and skills. They worked together as a team, everyone contributed with something. One of them made a poster, and another student, using his own network of contacts, spread the event to all university media. There were those who initiated negotiations with local nightclubs in search of sponsors and venues, some just baked something, and others acted as hosts at the event. In the end, these small parts formed a whole. The event accepted donations from anyone, which was rewarded with a cake or cookie. The message conveyed by the students was clear to everyone: social responsibility and the representation of important public affairs can be fun, and last but not least, it's an optimal way to address the younger generation too. The proceeds were donated to a charity, an organization that deals primarily with experimental education methods for disadvantaged children. A video and countless photos of the event were taken and presented by the students in the last reflective lesson. The course ended with a joint assessment, a summary of experiences. Overall, the process, which covered one semester, successfully achieved the learning goals formulated and set at the beginning of the course. The students had a sense of success, they developed their organizational and cooperation skills. Through the development of their professional competencies, they have become able to deal with certain social problems in an alternative and innovative way. They have become more conscious, confident actors and have also expanded their network of contacts. They became able to explore and utilize their own resources and the resources of their environment, to generate interactions with which they were able to address or involve their fellow humans more widely, and to have them join the side that they represent. Community learning based on civic action can therefore have a myriad of positive benefits for both the individual / student and local communities.

*Community-based learning opportunities and practice in an after school support program*

The practice of community-based teaching-learning requires constant renewal and reflectivity from both teachers and students, as no two communities or social problems have the same solution. Rapidly changing social and economic processes affect disadvantaged individuals and groups, so solutions to specific problems require the design and implementation of

new methods and services. In recent decades, there has been an increasing emphasis on developing the skills of the assistant professionals and the applicability of these skills in practice. Through the community-based learning practice—with the help of an after school support program as the setting and the community organized around it as a network of contacts—university students were able to get to know directly the social problem and those affected by it. At the same time, with their community participation and implemented activities, they were connected to the project of an after school support program in the disadvantaged micro-regions, and they could help the children of the mainly Roma population living in the disadvantaged area and settlement. One of the most important goals of the course was to achieve that students gain their own experience in various problematic situations, and that they become active participants in the work of institutions and organizations reflecting on the given social problem (the current task is to create better opportunities for disadvantaged children, by assisting the program).

The starting point of community-based learning is to get to know the connections of the problems affecting the given community, to establish goals and to develop alternative solutions. The internship planned for the school focused on the following community goals:

- organization of developmental leisure activities for children,
- thereby reducing socio-cultural disadvantages in school-age children
- promoting school success,
- development of different competencies.

The individual and group tasks carried out several times within the framework of the given course ensured multiple things: the optimal integration of practical experiences, the participation of students in professional discussions and the development of their skills.

*Preparation – lessons and teaching-learning methods*

During the preparation for the practical task, the *experience of cooperative methods* in the classroom helped to better understand community and group collaborations (Pusztai et al., 2020). Later in the course, the practice was dominated by an experience-based approach, emphasizing group dynamic processes, the specific characteristics of working in a group, and the importance of community participation. Students were able to experience

how they work in these media, what they add to social dynamics, and how these affect their own performance.

First, the group addressed the needs and difficulties of people living in disadvantaged areas and settlements. The theoretical knowledge related to this was acquired through various tasks. Their first topic was the needs of children; this topic was worked out in the framework of small group work. In the groups, participants looked for the answer to the question: what are the needs of children?

Next, we addressed the factors of school success. We watched Edit Kőszeghy's Breakout point of the school documentary together. The video helped to deepen previous knowledge. Participants discussed the social problems in the film using the dispute method (Hunya, 1998) and then expressed their views on what can be done to reduce a child's sociocultural disadvantages and minimize their school failures.

In order to further expand their knowledge, we covered two more topics in the course (during the lessons, before their practical training. First, students processed various regional documents about institutions and services operating in disadvantaged areas using the cooperative learning method (Arató-Varga, 2008). The aim of this task was to exchange information within the group, to establish collaborations, and then to discuss together the current problems of the community, e.g. difficulties in public transport and lack of jobs. After that, in the framework of various role-plays, we dealt with the social characteristics of the Roma population living in Hungary, the dilemmas of integration or segregation:

*During the task, the municipality applied for the liquidation of a Roma settlement in the village and won the support of the municipality. The Board of Representatives convened a forum to start the implementation of the process. The students clashed their opinions in different roles along the pros and cons of closing the Roma settlement.*

During the assignments, the communicative competence of the students developed. The search for consensus, the way compromises were made, and the role of these compromises were an important part of the lesson.

Participants first learned about the "after school program as a service" through a traditional frontal lecture. We also invited the enrolled children to join the conversation after the lecture; they came to the university together

with the staff. Here, an interactive conversation took place, and they also made a poster together with the students.

At the end of the preparation, the students came up with independent work ideas and plans for the internship, that can be implemented at the school. Based on the students' ideas and decisions, we spent a day in the school, where we met with the residents of the village and talked to the implementers of the program. Then, in the next step, the students implemented the planned activities together with the participants and attendees of the school.

*After school support program: making the connection*

Before we started working together in the support program, we walked around the village for an hour to get to know the venue and the people. During the walk we met several families, we were surrounded by growing curiosity and interest - and the same interest accompanied the afternoon ahead. The students watched the dilapidated, depreciated buildings, houses, and visible signs of poverty with deep shock. The fact that surprised them the most was that there were no businesses operating in this settlement at all. They learned about the moving shops and vendors, but to experience it— that's a completely different case. Now they have had their own experience of the (in)accessibility of services.

Following our walk, several older children who were no longer required to attend school appeared in the venue, and even some parents came to the building with interest. Before the start of the program, there was an introductory conversation with the staff of the support program, where—in addition to personal and professional stories—the students got acquainted with the operational difficulties of the program and the problems of the local community. They were then given the opportunity to ask their own questions. During the conversation, some of the students—mostly those whose strength is verbal communication—asked questions, but most of them preferred to listen to the staff of the organization. This is despite the fact that we discussed several times within the framework of the classroom how important it is to ask questions during these visits and programs, as we can get additional information and knowledge. Yet, experiencing similar situations in the long run can help the *student* be driven not by their inhibitions but by their interest.

After the discussion, the students—together with the staff of the organization—began the planned preparations for the implementation of the program. Following the furnishing of the rooms and placing the equipment, children and adults arriving were invited to proceed with the program plan. The tension, the excitement of the students was almost palpable. All this got more relaxed when the children arrived and totally ceased with the start of the programs. The wide range of activities helped a lot with the relationships (*"Glitter Tattoo Salon", "Chocolate Muffins", "Dance Class"; "What is your job? - activity", "It is easier to learn together!"*).

During the activities, students first got to know the children indirectly: they heard and talked about their everyday lives and vice versa. This was followed by joint activities that structured the relationship and communication of the participants.

The joint work of baking—which also benefited the community—helped to create the foundation of working together. The love of sweets functioned as a common language, which was made especially functional by the openness of the children, complemented by the enthusiasm and motivation of the students.

The dance class is a fixed activity of the support program that fit perfectly into the agenda. The enrolled students were preparing for a performance. They tried to master the dance steps together with the university students, it was common learning in every sense of the word. Not all of the university students attended the dance class, as some of them expressed their fears and concerns about participating in the task. It was an interesting experience: the kids became more confident and the students more shy. It was as if there had been a role change. The need to learn from each other, to have a real partnership, was emphasized in this activity, where students needed to reinterpret the helper-assisted role.

At the beginning, the children of the program did not want to take part in the Activity-like game. Students collected donations beforehand (e.g., pens, exercise books, chocolates, lollipops) that served as prizes to boost motivation (Varga & Ferenc, 2015). The first round of the game was a rough start, the role of gifts became important. Later, when students were asked to provide feedback, we wondered what would have happened if there was no gift and the children had to be encouraged and involved in the game in some other way. How could this issue have been resolved?

The students also studied with the children, helping those involved to complete any homework that had not yet been completed. Several of our students found that—compared to their preconceived notions—joint learning (which was more of a conversation) helped them get to know the children better who they studied with.

*Closing and evaluating the project*

During the next lesson, students were asked about their feedback. Based on their opinion—following the walk in the village—the visible signs of poverty and the openness of the people meant a whole new experience for them. With regard to the development of their abilities, communication and organization skills were emphasized (Markos, 2019). According to them, working in a group and receiving preliminary information about the given settlement and after school services were extremely useful. Students felt that involving children was the most difficult task, this was mentioned as a frustrating factor. In the first 15 minutes, there were more students than children and the possibility of cancelling the event made them doubtful. As time passed however, more and more children arrived and the parents showed more and more interest in the college students too.

During the trip, students were excited and tense, but expressed their concern that they did not know how their planned activity would take place in practice. After starting the sessions, the initial fears disappeared. In the end, most of them found that the activities had been successfully completed. This was mainly felt in tasks where there something specific got done, e.g. the cookie or homework. The role change of the dance class and the reflections given to it by the students were also interesting. One of the major results of the project was that several of the students volunteered to work in the after school support program. A few months after graduating, two of them were offered a job to help with the organization services and programs as a social worker.

**Summary**

The aim of community-based learning is to enable students to apply theories, models and methods related to support activities in communities, and at the same time to develop a sense of responsibility for their own communities. Community-based learning is effective if the planning and preparations are

thorough, and the given experiences are followed by joint reflections and critical analysis. Cooperation in the student community can be established if the students are committed to the set goals, curious, take responsibility, open, creative, become participants and shapers of the process. The teacher's responsibility is to support and encourage students in this teaching-learning process. Participants of the process, the members of the community can experience successes and failures by activating individual and community resources, learning about and examining the communities' and their own personal values, and these contribute to the expansion of their knowledge and the development of their skills. The experiences of teachers and students will form the basis of future communities and learning.

Both the community and the university are clear winners in the learning process. The community receives professional help to solve its problems, and the university becomes a well-integrated part of the communities living in its surroundings, and develops its own network of contacts.

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**Eszter Bucher**

# ENTREPRENEURIAL CIVILIANS - CATALYSTS FOR THE COMMUNITY

## Abstract

This publication focuses on social enterprises as one of the defining areas of community learning. Social enterprises serve a public, social or societal interest, their profits are returned to their core business activities primarily to achieve said interest, and their operation is based on participatory democracy (Tóth 2011, G. Fekete and et al., 2017, Péter 2018, Bucher 2020). These businesses are on the border of the civil and for-profit sectors, so in many cases they can leverage the strengths of the two sectors in innovative ways for the development of the community (Bucher, 2019). They are also able to meet social, community and economic needs because of their characteristics. This publication presents the innovative and multiplier role of social enterprises in community development and self-development through practical examples. Furthermore, the effects of problem sensitivity and systems-based thinking, and the social capital and confidence-building activities of these enterprises will also be presented.

*Keywords*

non-profit organizations, social enterprise, innovation, community learning

## Introduction

In the three decades since the change of regime in Hungary, the non-profit sector has undergone significant growth and development, but it is still seeking its place in Hungarian society. The political, economic and social transformation that took place in the country from the late 1980s paved the way for the unfolding of the civil sphere, as the destruction of past barriers resulted in booming development. In accordance with the possibilities and goals provided by the law, a wide variety of organizations were established, which undertook to perform many functions. In addition to large national foundations, associations and non-profit enterprises, there are non-governmental organizations that manage very little money and fight for the goals of smaller groups.

Since the change of regime, citizens have had the opportunity to become key players in the form of communities in shaping society and their towns and regions. Non-governmental organizations play a connecting and articulating role between the state, the market sector and members of society, in addition, non-governmental organizations have local knowledge and social capital that makes them irreplaceable in the organization and development of local affairs. The aim is cooperation between social stakeholders, which is also supported by the European Union. The principles of decentralization and subsidiarity help to involve non-governmental organizations in solving the problems and needs that have arisen. A significant number of non-profit organizations operate at the municipal level. They represent the interests and goals of the local population, as well as the initiatives coming from the common people, so these communities can be the cooperating partners of the local governments. Researchers of non-profit organizations constantly emphasize the decisive role of grassroots local organizations in local economic development, especially their connecting role between the actors of the state, local government, market and economic sectors; they also have local knowledge and contact capital. The organization of local society and the ability and efficiency of the use of available local resources are of great importance for the development of rural areas (Boros – Gergye 2019). The values of solidarity, relations, mutual assistance and community cooperation play a key role, in the absence of which we can achieve only moderate results even if there is a significant concentration of development resources (Ragadics T-Varga I-Füzesi Zs. 2007). This is also confirmed by Kopp and Skrabski (2008): they claim that the efficiency of a local society and the cooperation, happiness and prosperity of said society are based on communities that have common goals, are able to support, help and feel the problems of said community.

## About the use of the term

Similarly to almost every social phenomena, the nonprofit sector is very diverse, constantly changing, approachable in many ways, and struggling with many problems. A researcher who deals with the non-profit sector cannot avoid determining what conceptual approaches and terms s/he uses, as without this his/her findings become incomprehensible. A non-profit organization is characterized by an independent legal personality, a ban on

profit distribution, operational autonomy, institutionalization, and organizational separation (Kuti 1998). The strongest argument against the definition of nonprofit is that it does not define itself, but defines what we do not mean by "it". The negative definition itself raises a number of questions. The name emphasizes that we are talking about an organization that does not aim to gain profit and (implicitly) states that they cannot be classified in either the economic or the market sector (Bartal 2005). Nowadays the word "civil" took over the meaning of "non-profit", while the definition of "civil society" as such is not defined well through operationalization. It simply overlaps the word "nonprofit". While the term "civil" is being used in more and more areas, there is little talk of the major differences between the two concepts, the separation of which is not an easy task (Kuti 2008).

Civil society organizations in general include unregistered, informal organizations, spontaneous movements and protests set up for specific purposes, and grassroots foundations and associations belonging to non-profit organizations. In addition, there are a number of non-profit organizations that do not fall into the above category at all, as they are service providers, perform redistributive activities, perform state tasks and definitely do not come to our mind when we talk about the "small circles of freedom" (Bibó 1986). Thus, the term civil society is both broader and narrower at the same time than the simultaneously used non-profit sector, which is made up of both civil and non-profit organizations, but does not include informal organizations. Civil organizations are social formations that follow the grassroots structure. The issue is further complicated by the indefiniteness of "civil". According to Éva Kuti (1998), if we examine "civil" in an ordinary sense, we can also label some service-type organizations with this term. These organizations do not serve the public interest in the classical sense, but meet a need that is related to societal challenges that require a community response.

In addition to the professional and scientific definition of the non-profit sector, we may encounter other interpretations. According to its organizational forms, the Central Statistical Office classifies foundations, associations and federations as classic civil organizations. It refers to non-profit business organizations and public foundations (government, municipal) as non-profit enterprises. The third group of non-profit organizations consists

of interest representation groups (public bodies, employers', employees' and professional organizations).

Table 1. Functions and roles of different types of non-profit organizations

| Functions, roles | Private foundation | Public foundation | Association | Public body | Trade associations | Unions | Non-profit business org. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Civil society roles | | | | | | | |
| Social participation | X | | XX | | X | X | X |
| Protest movements | X | | XX | XX | XX | XX | |
| Proactive advocacy | X | | XX | XX | XX | XX | |
| The role of socio-psychology | X | | XX | | X | X | X |
| Economic, service roles | | | | | | | |
| Service innovation | XX | | XX | | | | X |
| Service role | X | X | X | X | X | | XX |
| Fundraising and distribution | XX | | | | | | |
| Allocation of state aid | X | XX | | | | | |

Source: Kuti É. 2008:12 own editing (XX = outstanding participant, X = important participant)

**Social enterprises**

Social enterprise has emerged as a new concept, but it does not have a uniform definition—the definition which combines different approaches comes from the European Commission. By social enterprise we mean a form (G. Fekete et al. OFA publication 2017):
- in which commercial activity, often manifested in a high level of social innovation, serves a public interest, social or societal purpose;

- whose profits are returned to their core activities primarily in order to achieve said social purpose;
- which operates on the basis of participatory democracy.

The definition used by NESsT also points to a broad interpretation of the definition, according to which social enterprise can not only operate in the social field, but also respond to much wider social problems through their activities.

We can distinguish two basic models of social enterprises in Hungary: the American approach and the European approach (G. Fekete et al. OFA publication 2017:61-62).

*American social enterprise model*

According to this model, social enterprise is at the intersection of the business sector and the non-profit sector. This approach is identical to that of the NESsT, which emphasizes that "the principle of social enterprises is the double optimization, which means the coordination and balancing of economic and social goals", and this coherence is realized in a so-called hybrid form (Tóth et al. 2011: 6). In terms of organizational form, the model is very permissive, as it interprets initiatives implemented in very different organizational and legal forms as a social enterprise (eg. cooperative, association, foundation, non-profit business organization, and social enterprises can even be a for-profit organization or a sole proprietorship (Tóth et al. 2011).

*European social enterprise model*

In the European social enterprise model, three dimensions of social enterprise emerge: social, entrepreneurial and governance dimensions. In terms of organizational form, this model is less permissive. Although for-profit business is allowed, due to the specific governance criterion, only social cooperatives can appear alongside non-profit organizations (G. Fekete et al. OFA 2017: 61).

The most typical organizational forms of social enterprises are cooperatives, social cooperatives, foundations, associations, non-profit business organizations and economic enterprises. The most typical organizational forms of social enterprises are cooperatives, social cooperatives, foundations, associations, non-profit companies and companies

(G. Fekete et al . OFA publication 2017: 62-63).

According to G. Fekete (2014), three definitions of social enterprises are typical in Hungary, these are the NESsT, the TÁMOP (Social Renewal Operational Program) manual and the Conscise research program. Based on the definitions, we can distinguish the main common criteria of social enterprises, which are also the keys to success in a form of enterprise that is on the border of the market and the non-profit sector:

- Entrepreneurial activity, especially consciously planned and operated entrepreneurial activity, which carries out market production, trade and service activities.
- Dual - social, business - objective. This type of business aims to have a social impact in addition to financial sustainability. It is also important that the social goal takes precedence over financial sustainability.

In addition, we must not forget that there are non-profit criteria that, if kept in mind, can make social enterprises even more successful.
- Prohibition of profit distribution — included in every definition except the one by NESsT. In this case, it means that the profit is returned for the purpose of achieving the social or societal goal.
- Democratic operation: a voluntary institutional structure with the following values in mind: trust, justice.
- Innovativation: a high level of social innovation.
- Sustainable operation, responsible operation, mutually beneficial cooperation, high quality.

## Exemplary social enterprises in Southern Transdanubia as arenas for community learning

*Olajütő Szociális Szövetkezet – Kisszentmárton*

[Olajütő Social Cooperative – Kisszentmárton]

The organization is a good example that there is an opportunity to break out, create and develop a successful social enterprise with the right entrepreneurial spirit and support, even in a *disadvantaged small town* such as Kisszentmárton in the Ormánság region.

The organization was established in 2009 with the help of the Cooperative 2007 tender announced by the National Employment

Foundation. The cooperative produces "cold-pressed" oils from *local raw materials using local labor*.

The soil and climate of the area are excellent for growing pumpkin seeds. Taking advantage of this, the organization initially bought local pumpkin seeds to produce cold pressed pumpkin seed oil, and then expanding their product range to produce several types of oil (walnut, poppy, grape, flaxseed).

Their products meet all requirements by today's standards: they are of *natural origin*, they do not contain additives or preservatives. They are essential for a healthy life.

The by-product oil cake is an excellent additive for foodstuffs for animals

The oil mill was expanded with additional machines and workplaces with the help of the EU tender VP 3-4.2.1.-15.

The products are available all over the country and are on the product range of such large national food chains as SPAR, Auchan, BIJÓ. In addition, they also have their own website, and their products can be purchased online.

*Kóstolda az első cigány étterem – Pécs*

[Taste the first Gypsy Restaurant - Pécs]

The gypsy restaurant called Kóstolda was opened in 2015 by the Színes Gyöngyök Egyesület (Colorful Beads Association). Initially an apartment restaurant offering authentic gypsy food, Kóstolda opened new gates in the pedestrian malls of Pécs. The relocation from a poorer area of the city to the "main street" also reflects how successful the business has become.

The Színes Gyöngyök Egyesület of Pécs, which was founded in 2004 with the aim of helping Romani women to strengthen their roles in the family and society, now *promotes social integration and the reduction of inequalities through gastronomy*.

Their community cooking programme—operated as a social cooperative—in addition to employing disadvantaged Romani women and helping them to reintegrate into the labor market acts as a *bridge* between Romani and non-Romani citizens. Through their home-cooked meals, they not only help themselves, but also play an important role in breaking down negative stereotypes present in society.

The restaurant is a workplace for those who work there, a great example in the Romani community, and the perfect opportunity to get to know each other through food.

## Kék Madár Alapítvány-Ízlelő Családbarát Étterem-Szekszárd

[Blue Bird Foundation – Tasting Family-friendly Reastaurant - Szekszárd]

The Kék Madár Alapítvány (Blue Bird Foundation), founded in 1997, strives to create job opportunities for disadvantaged groups in the labor market, such as people with disabilities, and family members who drop out of work due to raising children. They do this through training, retraining, counseling, and labor market training.

In order to achieve their goals, the *Ízlelő Családbarát* restaurant was established in 2007 and has been operating successfully to this day. In the restaurant, only *people with disabilities, altered working abilities or learning disabilities are employed*. The foundation's first social enterprise was set up for two purposes: to provide training and employment for people with disabilities, helping their social reintegration, and to improve the foundation's own income and thus make it financially sustainable.

Their quality work has been awarded several times: in 2008 and 2013, NESsT and CITI awarded Ízlelő as the most successful Hungarian social enterprise, and in 2015, Ízlelő won the Quality Award of Magyar Turizmus Zrt. – a first in the history of Tolna county.

They provide preventive and corrective services to members of families raising children. Since 2001, the foundation has maintained a *fraud nursery, a home babysitting service and a playhouse* to *provide day care for children*. In addition, they seek to *encourage the establishment of similar institutions in* the *region*.

## Gold Consulting Szociális Szövetkezet- Kaposvár

[Gold Consulting Social Cooperative - Kaposvár]

The Gold Consulting Szociális Szövetkezet, founded in 2010, provides useful training for the unemployed and those with a disadvantage at the labor market. They create jobs and do so on the principle of environmental awareness. A few years ago, the cooperative opened a craft workshop with workers with altered working abilities. Initially, they created handicrafts in

their shop in downtown Kaposvár. They also made children's toys and home decorations, from which the sewing shop grew, which opened in 2018. In the sewing industry, in addition to well-trained seamstresses, people with altered working abilities are also involved in the production, during which it becomes possible to get to know each other's abilities, overcome disadvantages and distances. In 2017, they won audience awards at the Hozzáadott Helyi Érték (Added Local Value) awards. Through the sewing shop, the cooperative employs people with disabilities and job-seeking seamstresses, helping acceptance and thus proving the possibility of cooperation.

## Völgység Kincse Szövetkezetet–Lengyel

[Valley Treasure Cooperative - Lengyel]

The primary goal of the Völgység Kincse Szövetkezet (Valley Treasury Cooperative) is to provide an opportunity for disadvantaged residents of the West Valley *micro-region to become self-employed* by establishing fruit processing and setting up a juice processing plant. Initially, 7 people became self-employed and they started a promotion program (by preparing and winning a TÁMOP tender) which helps the situation of locals not only by creating jobs, but also by improving the social situation of the local people involved in the program and supporting their community integration. The social cooperative was set up by fruit farmers on an area of 300 hectares. Their goal is not only to produce and sell local products, but also to help the local society, to organize and flourish a socially sensitive, sustainable, environmentally conscious, human resource-developing enterprise. They have an extensive network of contacts with local governments and two businesses with similar profiles. They participate in the School Fruit Program, which is a good opportunity for sales.

## Fructus Tejtermékgyártó Szövetkezet- Magyarhertelend -Helyből Finomat Szövetkezeti Együttműködés

[Fructus Dairy Product Manufacturing Cooperative – Magyarhertelend – From a place Fine Cooperative Cooperation member]

The operation of this cooperative is exemplary, because they realized that in *order to be economically sustainable alone, in order to be able to operate successfully, it must co-operate with* other economic actors. In 2015, the company initiated the establishment of a partnership of local non-profit enterprises. This is how the *Helyből Finomat Szövetkezeti Együttműködés* (*Fine Cooperative Cooperation*) was formed through the cooperation of six towns' (Magyarhertelend, Márok, Magyarbóly, Palkonya Egerág and Orfű) social cooperative. With the support of a tender, the cooperative hired an expert to organize, sell and manage their operations. The success of their alliance lies in their *diversity and cooperation*. Social enterprises producing different product groups complement and reinforce each other well. Their products are available in cooperative stores and they are working to make their products available for purchase in each other's stores.

## *Márokért Kereskedelemi és Élelmiszergyártó Szociális Szövetkezet- Márok*

[Márok Commercial and Food Social Cooperative - Márok]

The social cooperative of Márok is a good example of *successful and efficient cooperation between the municipality and social enterprises*. Since 2011, the municipality has been producing and processing its vegetables and fruits locally under the Startmunka program. Their agricultural production takes place on a total of 8 hectares of land and in 250 m2 of plastic tunnels. The local government of the 450-person dead end village established the Márokért Szociális Szövetkezet (Social Cooperative for Márok) back in 2013 to help disadvantaged residents. The vegetables and fruits produced are processed in their pickling plant operated by the Márokért Szociális Szövetkezet. Currently, 13 types of pickled products, 6 types of jam, 2 types of syrups and 3 types of other products are produced. The municipality grows seedlings locally from seed, cultivates plants, and processes and sells crops through their cooperative. Márokért Szociális Szövetkezet was created to promote local agriculture and to creates jobs and act as an "engine" in boosting the local economy.

The local government is also a member of the cooperative, so an effective cooperation can be achieved to improve local social and economic well-being, create sustainability, improve the employability level of the settlement and the livelihoods and quality of life of disadvantaged people.

**Future opportunities for grassroots communities**

Considering the future possibilities of social enterprises as non-profit organizations, we can state that the halt in the growth of numbers and then the changing legal and economic environment make the non-profit sector more and more innovative. Traditional organizations, that enjoy all the benefits of grassroots initiatives, will continue to play very valuable social tasks: organizing people's daily lives, helping each other give a positive sense of belonging. However, we can find organizations among social organizations that, while retaining their social function, open up to the business sector, start businesses, and provide services. In Central and Eastern Europe, social enterprises consist of new, emerging organizations formed between the market and the state to achieve their social goals through economic activities. Most of these types of organizations are work-integration and service-oriented organizations, or they strengthen local development in disadvantaged areas. In most cases, their establishment is justified by shrinking state programs, in many cases as a product of paradigms of organizational culture and welfare partnership. They mostly started their social enterprise as grassroots initiatives as EU programs or pilot projects of international donors and not as a result of specific state social policy measures (Les és Kolin, 2009:35).

The catalysts for innovation in social enterprises are the following factors, which also legitimize their future role:

- Increase in societal challenges

The main social challenges in Hungary are discrimination and segregation of various social groups (women, disadvantaged, disabled workers, the Romani), the aging of the population and the backwardness of the outskirts, and the inadequacy of the public social system.

- Deterioration of finances in the nonprofit sector

The deterioration of the financial situation of organizations has greatly contributed to the emergence of social enterprises in the non-profit sector. This has led organizations to look for market-based, entrepreneurial revenue opportunities in addition to existing social tasks (G. Fekete-Hubai-Mihál-Kiss, 2017).

- Appearance of new types of social and environmental problems

Emerging social and economic problems have highlighted the need for new types of cooperation for sustainable development. (OFA, 2017).

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**Katalin R. Forray - Aranka Varga**

# FROM POVERTY TO COMMUNITY

**Abstract**

The village under study is an example of how a community can dissolve after decades of hardships, just to be unable to renew itself. Every support received by the village was futile – as there was no community, only a population. It can only be helped by intervention coming from the outside, and this help should not merely focus on poverty, but the rebuilding of the local community. Just like a political transition, this will take decades and lasting, unbreakable commitment.

*Situation report from Tiszabő*

*"We went to Tiszabő and Tiszabura today... Fortunately they are not starving, as they get free lunch from the local government: about a thousand portions each day, for free or for some charge... They cook at the kitchen of Tiszabura, which is located in the Community Center. The local workshop, run by the Charity Service of the Order of Malta and the local government, produces shopping bags for SPAR. Tiszabura wants to live, and the Charity Service resolutely supports them with fantastic programmes. If you feel depressen thanks to politics, it is advised to visit them." (Tamás Kozma, Facebook, August 17, 2020.)*

## Introduction

There are several hundreds of small villages in Hungary which cannot improve their own situation by themselves. Their economic situation can be characterized by extreme poverty; their inhabitants are uneducated and mostly unemployed. Closed-up communities are typical for these villages, with mostly Roma/Gypsy inhabitants. All of this implies isolation – the very effect that keeps these people in desperation. Can they get free of it? Is there a chance for them to form communities, while all other rules of coexistence cease to exist? We tried to find answers in Tiszabő.

Based on several case studies, Kozma (2018) describes a possible way to break the downward spiral. The key to renewal is "community-based innovation". Bradford describes five elements of this (Bradford, 2003:9-11): equal and wide-range participation of local actors in the social innovations; the culture of creativity; sufficient technical and financial resources; accountability; proper assessment tools to measure the effect of the aforementioned innovations.

*"Community-based innovation is also a social learning process, involving the locals, their administration and representatives. The problem-solving abilities of the learning communities (provided by community learning) depend on the innovations – may they be relative (new for the community), or actual, wide-spread, effective ones, which do have the chance to expand. Learning communities join each other as learning regions, providing dynamics for a region's economy, society, politics, and culture." (Kozma et al., 2015).*

If we take a look at the society of Tiszabő from this aspect, we cannot ignore the village's historical background. All that the public can know about Tiszabő based on recent events is how horribly poor and disorganized it is, while its population mostly consists of Gypsies. Our first and foremost discovery about Tiszabő is that is *has* history – quite a peculiar one actually.

## Astounding history

If we would like to take a historical viewpoint, it is important to focus on the unique situation of the Hungarian Great Plain. Dispersed cities, and an economy defined by agriculture provided social stability throughout the ages, yet it is the cause of fragility in the times of modern economy. In his frequently cited study, Beluszky (1988) examines this historical connection, stressing that "on the perimeters of North-Western Europe […] some free agricultural islands remain, which have never been under feudal dependency. While never being a defining element of the feudal model […], they could convert to production more quickly and more efficiently than serfs could". The post-1949 era, adapting to the social and economic requirements and relations of the Soviet Union, forced agriculture and farmers into an extremely disadvantaged situation, making them to flee or to accept poverty.

In order to understand the problems of the examined regions, we must draw attention to one of the cruelties of the Rákosi-regime: forced relocations. People of German origin were relocated from the regions south of the Danube, while former aristocracy and middle-class families were moved to the Great Plain. Wealthier inhabitants from the Great Plain region were also relocated, their premises being used to house those that were moved there. These processes are still not being discussed nowadays, while it is the single most important cause of society's composition in our examined region (Saád, 2004; Széchenyi, 2008).

Tiszabő became one of the final destinations during relocations. Its population is just under 2,000 people. On the list of wealthy peasants (kulaks) 29 local families were listed. Their financial situation was as follows: 20-80 cadasters of land, a cow, a pig, a house or a homestead. Nowadays this is barely more than poverty. 33 families from Budapest were relocated to their houses. A relocated individual describes how the village looked like in 1951:

*"The village was connected to the Fegyvernek railway station with a narrow-track railroad, presumably used for transporting crops in the past. You could take a ship too, if I remember correctly, a there-and-back ride each day to Szolnok – it was some sort of a paddle steamer for market sellers. A ferry was available for crossing, a wooden contraption moving on a wire-cable, which could transport even loaded wagons… The streets and yards were tidy, most of the houses being old "long houses", with the usual furniture. There were some exceptions too, like the tiled-roof house which we got to live in, and which only lacked drinking water and plumbing – besides that it was identical to the village houses built in huge numbers 70 years later… Two rooms accommodated other relocated people, the landlady lived in one, while we had to live in the kitchen…" (Szabó, manuscript, 2020)*

Relocations stopped in 1953, but Tiszabő could never again become the idyllic village it used to be.

An annual meeting (this year for the 13th time!) commemorates the relocations. A book, titled "Weeping the Village" (Horváthné, 2018) also aims to preserve the memory of this community. Nowadays, people affected by relocations are spread out in Hungary and live all over the world, but regularly come back to participate at the event – however, it is being held at the county capital (Szolnok), not in Tiszabő.

## Political transition and extreme poverty

The reasons of the break-away of Eastern Hungary after the political transition were identified by Nemes Nagy (1996, 1998): industrial and agricultural mass production, aimed at the Eastern markets was in a recess, therefore the lowly educated population had to face unemployment. As a reaction to economic hardships, central regions "relocated their crises" to the peripheries, increasing unemployment in those regions. Underdeveloped regional infrastructure withheld the capital in the western regions and Budapest.

Politicians, experts and the public all consider Tiszabő (along with Csenyéte in Northern Hungary) the poorest villages of the country. Pásztor and Pénzes (2012) definite political decisions as the reason for poverty. The 1968 Central Committee decision of the ruling party (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party) put Tiszabő on the list of villages no to be developed, as 67 villagers were considered wealthy peasants (kulaks). As a result, factories were closed, and intensive agricultural production was concluded. Before 1990, geographical location was a minor factor for assessing the risk of poverty. In the times of the political transition, the difference in poverty between Budapest and the villages was two times bigger, which became ten times more in 1998 (Spéder, 2002). Permanently poor people predominantly live in villages and towns, and mainly in the north-eastern region of Hungary. The West of Danube and Budapest has no significant number of permanently poor people. Temporarily poor people also live in the under-developed eastern and northern regions, mainly at the county capitals.

*"In the regions, where self-providing people live, financial differences are minor. Outcasts of society, however, are not being helped by this – as we can see how the Roma and non-Roma people fight each other for the meagre social benefits in disadvantaged villages".* (Spéder, 2002) (Poverty rate of Roma people is seven times bigger, while their permanent poverty rate is ten times bigger than the majority's figures.)

During the 1970s, Roma/Gypsy people were relocated to Tiszabő (from e.g. Kisköre) in masses, not just spontaneously and sporadically. Families unable to integrate into neighbouring villages' communities were moved to Tiszabő. They were relocated from one village to the other, typically to the outskirts.

The main reason was not their Gypsy origin, but their inability to accommodate and integrate. All of this had greatly contributed to non-Roma families moving out in masses, and further waves of Gypsy families vacating those families' place. Thus, Tiszabő became a "Gypsy settlement".

*"In the 60s, local county governments 'sacrificed' the village during the centrally controlled eradication of Gypsy settlements: the Chairman of the Council moved families in, trying to disperse them, expecting their non-Gypsy environment to 're-educate' these families. At the same time, Tiszabő was cut off from its environment: the ferry service on the river Tisza was put to an end, therefore the previously important crossing location became deadlocked. Hungarian [non-Gypsy] inhabitants looked for jobs elsewhere, and the village became a Gypsy settlement.*" (Matkovich, 2012)

It is apparent how two main factors influence the high rate of people living in extreme poverty nowadays. One of these factors is the disadvantaged situation of the village, while the other is the inhabitants belonging to a Gypsy/Roma social group. These two factors became significantly more apparent in the new, modern Hungary (Forray & Kozma, 2012; Forray, 2017). Both factors are in effect in the case of Tiszabő, resulting in a compounding situation for the whole population (Sebestyén, 2016). The life of locals is predominantly defined by the culture of poverty, with only traces of traditional Gypsy culture. The two factors make up an indivisible, discriminative, compound disadvantaged combination, with results shown clearly by an interview in an investigative research (Varga, 2018).

*"Well, yeah. Somebody says it, I say it: I am from Tiszabő. We will get back to you – they say. Then they don't. It is what it is… I have been trying at several places. Miklós, Szolnok, I have been trying to find jobs online. 'We will notify you' – but then they don't… Well, there's nothing you can do. I was born and raised here, I am bound here."* (28-year-old man, Tiszabő – 2017)

*"[With my husband] we had many cases like this: he sent the application form, browsed job ads, and when they heard where we were from, the job was instantly unavailable. If they saw him in person, they instantly told him that they needed locals – however, they said nothing about that on the phone. So it is very difficult."* (28-year-old woman, Tiszabő – 2017)

Rozgonyi & Horváth (2018) demonstrate the geographical and economic disadvantages on the job market through the example of Tiszabő. The most significant difference for unemployed people is their education level, which is further aggravated by living on a periphery, isolated geographically, and plagued by infrastructural disadvantages. Geographical stigmatization also has a great impact on their chances. According to the study, community work in Tiszabő could only project 2.6% of the adult population to the primary job market. As a closing, it also states that:

*"[...] most people in Tiszabő are only motivated to earn enough for day-by-day living. They have no such motivation that might help them to identify and achieve long-term goals. Their main motivation is to provide for their families and fulfil their basic needs. Long-term planning is atypical for them, even for the youth. This is caused by their social environment, which sets the only goal of acquiring food and basic goods. Children learn these norms and goals from their parents. Bigger goals, like buying a car, renovating the house, etc., are virtually impossible to achieve, therefore their motivation is narrowed down to acquiring food, getting firewood for the winter, paying bills and paying back loans."* (Rozgonyi & Horváth, 2018:437)

**Educational initiatives**

Due to the rapidly growing poverty in Tiszabő, along with problems of education (Gyenei, 1989), educational initiatives were started in the second half of the 1980s. These had positive effects on the inhabitants. It is worthy to mention the Freinet Workshop, established by Imrei (1998). The decade-long programme ended due to hostilities with the village Cleadership, and their rejection of support. For some of the participating children and for their teacher (who was the founder and the active participant of activities), the Roma Chance Vocal School (a foundational institution in Szolnok, founded in 1996) offered further prospect. After its first successful years, the school had moved into a new building in the city centre of Szolnok, and (besides specifying its educational foci) was renamed after one of its founders: it became the "Dr. Hegedűs T. András Foundation-School, Secondary School, Evening Primary School, and Dormitory". As the official name shows, the institution had greatly expanded its scope, resulting in the growing number of students. The Szolnok-based Hungarian Roma Council successfully operated

the school for almost a decade. Students from Tiszabő and Tiszabura were accepted, helped them to graduate or learn a profession – and in some cases even helped them to get into higher education institutions. Some of the graduated students had also received university diplomas (Csillei, 1992, 2000; Forray, 1989; Forray & Hegedűs, 2003).

The vocational school, then run by the Integrated Education Foundation, provided shelter, future prospects and job opportunities to many young people. In 2012, the Hungarian Roma Council (HRC) took the school over from the Foundation. According to the HRC, reorganization was necessary because of the potentially increasing funding, along with the reasoning that higher financial support will also increase the quality of education. Miklós Pálfi, Chairman of the Foundation questioned the legality of the school's takeover, as the founders of the school (including him) were not involved in the process. The sudden termination of the school was a result of obscure political battles.

Even though the quality of local primary education has not improved since 2000, it is still a new opportunity for the disadvantaged students of the examined villages that the Arany János Dormitory Programme and its Vocational Programme have both become accessible for them in near cities (Törökszentmiklós and Szolnok). Leaders of the equitable support programmes got frequent applications for their secondary grade programmes from Tiszabő and Tiszabura – thanks to the effective school entry and family support programmes. However, it must also be noted that very few of these students get to graduate or learn a profession. One of the major causes of dropout are early marriages and pregnancies, as school performance problems are also frequent, due to the low quality of primary level education (Fehérvári & Varga, 2018, 2020).

A study, conducted in 1995, 2003, and 2017, vividly shows the educational situation of Tiszabő, exploring the educational progress of the very same individuals, as they have progressed from entering primary school, to secondary school, and also their adulthood (Varga, 2018). In 1995, first-grade students from Tiszabő got into the study based on their extremely disadvantaged family backgrounds: their parents' low level of education (mostly unfinished primary schools) while also being unemployed. The study showed that the linguistic competences of the primarily monolingual, Romungro-speaking first grade students were severely lacking compared to students with better backgrounds. Their competences were also worse than

bilingual Roma/Gypsy students of South-Western Hungary. This serious linguistic disadvantage of the children of Tiszabő meant a severe learning obstacle for them, only to be negated by aimed, complex pedagogical support. Data gathered eight years later showed that the school could no longer compensate for these disadvantages, already apparent at the start of the students' studies. More than half of the students participating in the research did not get to 8ᵗʰ primary grade. Those who were looking forward to entering higher education in 2003, merely wanted to learn a profession (at the mentioned Roma Chance Vocational School of Szolnok), except a single one of them. In 2017, at the third stage of data collection, students were already 27-28 years old. They gave life-path interviews, looking back at their successes and failures during their educational careers. It became apparent that most of them had only finished their primary school studies, and even if they had started their secondary level education, dropped out early on. They still live in Tiszabő, have founded families, "repeating" the miseducation and unemployment of their own parents. Those few who learnt a profession have moved from the village, seeking their fortune somewhere else. The majority stuck in the village confessed that their childhood dreams never came true, and most of them told that (even if for different reasons) lost their motivation during secondary school. The following quotes are from the same person, and reflect a typical situation about the clash of teenage plans and the harsh reality of adulthood.

*"I plan to still live with my family ten years from now, I won't be married yet, but maybe I will have a boyfriend. I plan to work after I finish the secondary school at Kunhegyes – I will work as a clerk. I'm not planning to have kids in ten years, because I will only be 24, and maybe that is too early for me."* (14-year-old girl, Tiszabő – 2003)

*"I did not finish vocational school, because… I had a boyfriend, who did not let me to. Which I regret now… Well, I couldn't go now because of my child. I have a six-year-old daughter and a three-year-old son. They are in kindergarten. I would go to a course for a few months, I like hairdressing and such, I'm cunning enough, so maybe that is the way I should consider… I was thinking that maybe I enlist at the local government, because they have this community work programme. It is the only thing available unfortunately.*

*Mom also works there, as well as my big sister, they work at the municipality."* (28-year-old woman, Tiszabő – 2017)

In 2017, interviewees talked about the reasons of their dropout. They told stories of how the closed-down communities have their own laws, of poverty, of the lacking family models, how the outside world is alien to them, and also how their education was insufficient for secondary schools. They often told about romantic relationships and friendships resulting in leaving the educational system, as well as having children too early. All of these had prevented them to advance in life, to overgrow their parents. Narratives of our interviewees reflected everyday survival strategies, and presented very few, indefinite plans. Their view of their future (at the age of almost 30!) predominantly focused on their children, as we can see:

*"The little girl, she performs really great at school! She almost flunked, but I told her to study, as we also had to finish eight grades back in the days, unfortunately. I'm telling her to correct her grades, because this will not stand. We will have a problem, me and her. So in two weeks she really caught up! She has just showed me today: threes, fours, even fives! [Hungarian education generally has a 5-grade assessment system, where 1 equals a fail, 5 being the best grade] So I told her those were excellent grades. Her average was above four. The little boy got an average of 4.7. Now that's good… So I am really proud of my kids, and I will be proud if they finish school. I wanted to finish it too, but it was so difficult! I had eleven siblings, only my father had a job! I am being honest now. So we are struggling so hard now to get some kind of a job, so we can manage. Manage maybe better than now. If not for ourselves, for the kids at least, you know. Maybe it will get better. Because I will do everything to make it better for them."* (28-year-old man, Tiszabő – 2017)

Altogether, we can see how initiatives appear from time-to-time at struggling places, offering the hope of narrowing the gap, to break the cycle, to stop the downward spiral. These initiatives have been unsuccessful so far, and bogged down sooner or later. If it were not inner challenges, nature puts an end to their stories.

**Everydays at Tiszabő**

The more-or-less organizing community suffered a serious blow because of the River Tisza's flooding in 2000.

*"The final blow was not the termination of the Farmers' Cooperative after the political transition, were not the suspicious recompenses, nor the stolen meat plant – but it was the flood in 2000. It topped at 11 meters, destroying 85 houses, severely damaging 400 others. Those who wanted to move out got incentives to do so."* (Matkovich, 2012)

The flood also had some positive impact:

*"The flood in 2000, damaging a significant number of the houses in the village, gave a chance for many people to move out – as financial support from the State helped them to buy or to build a house in Fegyvernek, Törökszentmiklós or Szolnok. Those who decided to move out later, were in a less favourable situation: houses in the village are impossible to be sold, so those who want some money for their houses must demolish them, and sell the building materials (bricks, roof tiles, beams, windows and doors). If they don't do it, others from the village will happily do that for them in their absence… Most banks do not offer loans for people from Tiszabő."* (Horváth, 2018)

Police news frequently remind us how drugs, prostitution, and extortions have become parts of our everyday lives. It is not surprising how the local government and the primary school cannot tackle these problems or their consequences. We might also not be surprised that the leadership and its supporters do now advocate peaceful coexistence, but rather incarceration and compounding legal punishment.

*"Checking the status of local realties, they found out that many have 7-8 million [Hungarian Forint] debt on them. Therefore, the first step is always negotiation with the local extortionist. His house, its quality always stands out from the others'."* – (Miklós Vecsei in: Weinhardt, 2019)

*"It is also worthy to think about how the elected mayor, who got 75% of the votes, got sentenced two days after the election. It doesn't make sense – but the truth is that villagers are afraid of him, they don't like him. Weak*

*organizations cannot do anything about situations like this, only larger networks can."* (Weinhardt, 2019)

One of the most serious problems of the village (as it might seem a bit less serious compared to personal problems) are stray dogs. Many villages of the region have received financial support from the State to handle the problem. The unresolved situation was addressed by the Charity Service of the Order of Malta recently, but without real success, as it would be the local governments' task to deal with such problems. The municipality reports partial success each year (as they got financial support for the task), yet stray dogs are ever present.

*"It's easy to make a law about compulsory schooling, but what happens in Tiszabő, when 300 schoolchildren must encounter 700 stray dogs on the streets? Do not be surprised that they are late from school."* (Miklós Vecsei in: Weinhardt, 2019)

**The Order of Malta appears**

The school and its controlling authorities (the local government and the national Klebelsberg Centre of Education) could not cope with the previously described problems. Realizing this, the local government decided to transfer the "whole package" to the Charity Service of the Order of Malta – including controlling rights, local financial and social support, childcare and employment rights. The programme is being funded by the European Union's EFOP tender. The programme, titled "From Conception to Employment" supports two villages in the region: Tiszabő and Tiszabura. The latter is in a significantly better situation, while it is still very poor. The most apparent difference is that Tiszabura is the "centre" of the minor region, and the presence of the Charity Service is stronger there. The main focus of the programme is childcare. Reactions to it are mixed, being not necessarily welcoming. The 1391/2016 (VII.26) government decree ("Handling the situation of Tiszabő and Tiszabura") basically delegates the task to the Charity Service. The reasoning is sound:

*"Problems are low educational levels, unemployment, poverty, early parenthood, the lack of family-planning, spreading drug use, alcoholism, prostitution, crime, bad housing, and domestic violence. The number of*

*irregularly growing and chronically ill children is high. GP service is also problematic. The lack of pedagogical support professionals is also a severe problem."* (EFOP-2.1.2-16-2018-00117)

The Charity Service aims to employ "diagnose-based" development strategies, in order to address problems based on local needs, independently from centrally defined regulations. For example, a woodworking workshop could be opened in Tiszabura, which now provides jobs for 9 men, and is already full of customer orders. Locals also work at the local dressmaker's, fulfilling orders for prestigious events and companies (for example manufacturing glass holders for the Wine Festival of Budapest). A pickling plant was also established in Tiszabő, processing locally grown vegetables and fruit. They are looking forward to a partnership with a nation-wide grocery store network.

This year's major success is the cooperation with the Nagy László Secondary School of Kunhegyes, where 13 local students could graduate in 2020. "Road to Graduation", a government programme, has been working together with the Hungarian National Bank, Pénziránytű Foundation, and the Charity Service of the Order of Malta, and has had a successfully running programme for years now. The programme supports students from Tiszabő and Tiszabura, who have finished their primary level studies there, and would like to advance to higher education. In 2020, eight graduated students have received scholarship from this source.

As its name suggest, the educational programme attempts to provide support from inception to employment, therefore focuses not only on childcare, but the education of adults as well.

*"We have been present in the village for four years. Our first step was to transfer the school to ourselves. Our "Presence" programme gives coverage from inception to employment. We have established the "Safe Start Children's House" for young mothers, where they can receive professional support related to childcare, focusing on children of ages 0-3. A children's health advisor has also been working there since June 2019. We distribute pre-birth vitamins, baby-starters, diapers, donated clothes. We support the health advisor in every possible way. Half of Tiszabő's population are minors, there are 200 children under the age of 3."* (Krisztina Tasi in: Molnár-Révész, 2019).

While the Charity Service only took over development tasks two years ago, the government's decision has significant precedents. The first established institution was Margaréta Kindergarten (2012). The primary school of Tiszabő and Tiszabura was transferred to the Charity Service's School Foundation in 2016. The school has about 300 students, and the Charity Service organizes frequent programs for them (Volunteers' Day, team building trainings, poetry competitions, excursions, theatre visits, musical events). The aim of "Safe Start Children's House" is to educate mostly young mothers, as well as to organize programs for children under the age of 3.

There is nothing new about the Charity Service's programme. Such programmes had already been established in Tiszabő and other places too, expecting fast and spectacular results. However, the "intervention" of the Charity Service has two distinct differences from these previous attempts. One is the joint efforts focusing on education, production and services – they do not only reorganize a school or establish a workshop, but they integrate these into village development. The other is that they do not only teach at the school or produce at the workshops, but primarily focus on building a community. For them, this is the most important aspect of intervention.

**Lessons learned**

After many years of hardships, Tiszabő and its purely Roma/Gypsy population has received help from outside: from the Charity Service of the Order of Malta. They are experimenting with building a community, starting in kindergarten, with the youngest inhabitants. These children still need their parents (and because of being traditional Gypsy/Roma families, especially their mothers) to be involved. The efforts mostly focus on children's development (e.g. games played together), for which the active participation of the kindergarten and the primary school is absolutely necessary. The headquarters of the Charity Service is currently located in Tiszabura, where the local government is willing to support any innovation. Only the school of Tiszabő has been transferred to the Charity Service. The two villages (while both are poor and need the support of the Charity Service) are fundamentally different: Tiszabő is ruled by the mob, while Tiszabura is being led by a new, dynamic local government.

Tiszabő is a good example of how a community can dissolve after decades of hardships, just to be unable to renew itself. Every support received

by the village was futile – as there was no community, only a population. Tiszabő can only be helped by intervention coming from the outside, and this help should not merely focus on poverty, but the rebuilding of the local community. Just like a political transition, this will take decades and lasting, unbreakable commitment.

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**Zoltán Mitrovics**

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCE IN REGARD TO RESTORING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS FOR THOSE ABOUT TO LEAVE A PENITENTIARY INSTITUTION

As the retributive nature of the judiciary declined in recent decades, its restorative nature seen a strengthening. (Vígh, 2003) There is an increasing demand from society and local communities for the protection of victims, the restoration of injuries and damage, and the rehabilitation of the perpetrator. Along with the strengthening of the restorative nature of the judiciary, the execution of sentences and initial goals have also changed, and—in addition to the separation of convicts from society—the social reintegration of the perpetrator is becoming increasingly important. We know that social reintegration is the most difficult task for those released from penitentiary institutions, as past crimes and the years in prison become permanent stigmata. Starting afresh, reconnecting to everyday life often seem impossible for the convict and their social environment and community. In order to achieve successful social reintegration, Hungarian penitentiary institutions are providing an increasing number of support opportunities to inmates, including the use of restorative techniques. The aim of the study is to present a restorative technique (CSDCS) applied by Hungarian penitentiary institutions that is used in the case of convicts before release in order to restore community and family ties and to reduce the possibility of recidivism by involving those living in the social environment of the released person. The purpose of this paper is to present the practice of this restorative model and its impact on community members through a case study.

*Keywords*
restorative, penitentiary, community relations, csdcs

## Introduction

The social life of a society's members is governed by norms and rules. These norms and rules help the individual to choose and apply the right form of behaviour in the right situation. However, there are people in every society who do not always meet these given rules, social expectations, i.e.

deviate from the rules that they should follow; they show a so-called deviant behaviour. Deviant behaviour and violation of norms are punished by society in various ways, directly or indirectly, and the definition and implementation of the imposed sanctions are determined by criminal law rules (Giddens, 2008).

Committing a criminal offence within a community always affects the members of said community, regardless of whether the crime is against a member of the community or "outside" the community. The sense of security of community members may be shaken in proportion to the gravity of the crime. To give an example from everyday life, members of a community in a small town will react to a criminal offence by saying the following*: "I never would have thought that something like this could happen here, I keep the doors locked ever since. I never thought they'd do such thing"*, etc. . The crime and its perpetration are therefore capable of undermining cohesion within the community and endangering peaceful social coexistence.

There has been an increasing demand among the members of the perpetrator's micro or macro community to replace the punitive sentencing with restorative methods. The purpose of punishment varied from society to society and from age to age; today, it seems like we have gone from retaliation and bloodshed to emphasizing the importance of prevention and reintegration, and the retributive nature of justice has been supplemented with preventive and restorative features. Pursuant to Section 79 of our current Criminal Code, the objective of punishment shall be, in the interest of the protection of society, to prevent the perpetrator or any other person from committing a criminal offence, so prevention is primarily the goal [Act C of 2012 On the Criminal Code, Section 79].

By changing the purpose of punishment and the characteristics of the judiciary, the execution of punishment has also changed. The goal to achieve prevention is also strongly reflected in the execution of custodial sentences. On the one hand, in accordance with Section 1 (2)a of Act CCXL of 2013 on the execution of sanctions and measures, certain coercive measures and confinement for administrative offences (hereinafter Act on the Execution of Punishments), the order of the execution of sanctions and measures shall be designed in a way that it should promote the social integration and law-abiding behaviour of the convict beyond the enforcement of the penalty realized by the sanctions and measure and of the provisions on prevention. On the other hand, in accordance with Section 83

(1) of the Act on the Execution of Punishments, the purpose of the execution of a custodial sentence is to enforce the legal sanctions specified in the final decision and, as a result of the reintegration activity during the execution of sanction, to facilitate the reintegration of the convicted person into society as a law-abiding member.

As a result of the above changes in punishment goals, preparing the convicts for a successful reintegration is supported by a number of measures and specialists in penitentiary institutions; employing and educating them, providing various programs and using various restorative procedures are all available tools today.

The essence of restorative method is the restorative approach: the purpose of these procedures is to restore the damage caused by the perpetrator and suffered by the individual and the community, to strengthen social cohesion, and to improve the sense of security of community members. In restorative practices, a violation of the rules is perceived as a conflict between the perpetrator and one or more members of the community. The goal is to achieve the settlement of the conflict by restoring harmony and balance instead of using retributive means. (Czibulya, 2015) The aim is to articulate the needs of the affected individuals and communities, for which they also propose solutions. Through this process, they can settle their relationship in the long run and the individual receives support for reintegration into the community. (Fellegi, 2009) I aim to present the Family Group Conference (hereinafter: FGC) in this study, as one of the optional restorative procedures available in Hungarian penitentiary institutions, focusing on the pre-release situation of the individual.

## The specialty of FGC in penitentiary institutions

Penitentiary institutes are total institutions, hierarchical organizations that are governed from outside and above. The lifestyle and leisure time of the inmates in penitentiary institutes are fully regulated. As a result, the process of conducting the FGC is also slightly different than under "normal" conditions.

After release from imprisonment, especially if the imprisonment was for a long time, it is not an easy task to restore family ties and community relations, especially if the perpetrator has caused damage and injuries

in his community and environment. The FGC used in penitentiary institutions provides an opportunity - primarily in the case of pre-release inmates - for family members and members of the community to discuss what reasons might have played a significant role in the perpetration of the crime. Furthermore, in order to reduce the chances of recidivism, it gives a chance to the participants to plan adequate and complex interventions. In addition to the above, the main goal of the activity is to promote the successful social reintegration of the inmate and to mitigate and reduce the long-term effects of received damages, stigmatization, prisonization and deprivation.

Volunteering is of paramount importance in the application of this method. Conference participants take part in the process on a voluntary basis. Participants can be divided into three categories: 1. family members of the inmate, 2. supporters (friend, neighbour, acquaintance, community member), 3. professionals (e.g.: penitentiary, mentor, representative of an educational institution, employer, mayor, etc.).

Family members are of key importance in the case of inmates belonging to the first group, since an inclusionary environment is extremely important for cooperation and social reintegration, meaning to what extent the inmate can be "welcomed back" into the family, who take the role of primary supporter and socialization medium. In addition, the program aims to strengthen the supportive attitude of the family, and lay down the goals that help the social reintegration, so to reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

The role of those in the second group, such as friends, peers, neighbours, is crucial, but before involving them, it is very important to have information about the extent to which their presence or attitude is detrimental or supportive in the individual's social reintegration. The goal is to contribute to the group only with a supportive presence. The primary task of the third group is to help the inmates adhere to social norms and comply with rules with their partly supporting and partly controlling role. The head of the town or the head of the educational institution can help to ensure regular income generation or learning activities and more attention. Collaboration between supporting professionals and institution leaders can help the social reintegration process.

Another significant feature of the FGC used in penitentiary institutions is that the victim is rarely involved in the program, as a result of which no compensation is planned for the victim. In the course of the program, it is possible to prepare for successful social and labour market reintegration,

primarily with the participation of family members and community members, and also to discuss possible family and community conflicts, and achieve community building. (Molitórisz, 2016) It is important to note, however , that the involvement of the victim is not prohibited by any provision, but based on practical experience, it is better to remedy the damages and injuries as soon as possible after their occurrence, so their relevance is significantly lower after several years of imprisonment. on the other hand, the possibilities for inmates to receive reparations are also significantly limited as they serve a custodial sentence. The purpose of FGC is to emphasize the conserving force of the community in the case of the inmate, and to prepare the offender for the subsequent realization of reparations.

**Structure of FGC**

According to Fábiánné (2010), four steps can be distinguished regarding the structure of FGC. The first step is to initiate the case. In practice, almost always the inmate's reintegration officer initiates the FGC, but it can also be done by the psychologist, a probation officer or any other professional dealing with the inmate, even by the inmate himself. The involvement of the facilitator also happens in the initiation period. The facilitator is an independent actor who plays an important role in the process, coordinating the organization of the conference and later acting as its leader.

The second step in the FGC is preparation. In the preparation phase, the task of the facilitator is to mobilize family members and professionals, to prepare them for the conference, in the implementation of which the inmate, the mentor and the reintegration officer are also involved. The preparatory phase is a very lengthy, time-consuming period. At this stage of the FGC, the scope of those to be invited to the conference is determined. Step by step, the facilitator explores the factors that help and hinder successful reintegration, conflicts, life situations, and in order to resolve them, the invited professionals, family members and supporters are identified. At the end of the section, an invitation will be sent to the planned participants. The invitation can be in the form of an official letter or e-mail, which is sent primarily to the invited professionals; in practice, the invitation of family members and supporters is organized via phone calls.

The third step is to conduct the conference itself. The conference is chaired by the facilitator, who is present as a neutral, impartial party. The

conference can be divided into three parts. In the first phase, after the introduction of the participants, the facilitator explains the reason and purpose of convening the FGC, as well as the problems identified during the exploration. Participants can react to the points brought up by the facilitator and even indicate another problem to be solved. Based on the jointly defined list of problems, the experts invited to the conference will present the solution possibilities of the institution or organization they represent, and will inform those present what resources they can provide to solve the given problem. The first stage of the third step concludes by clarifying any questions that may arise. The second phase offers private time for family members, supporters and the inmate. After the clarification requests are closed, both the professionals and the facilitator will leave the conference venue. In private time, it is the task of the participants to develop a common plan for each problem area, which contains an adequate answer to the given problem. An important aspect is that the plan should include concrete, accountable and, where appropriate, quantifiable commitments, indicating responsibilities. The role of the facilitator is also important here, as during this period, if necessary, they must be available and answer the questions that arise during the development of the plan. The third phase is the presentation and approval of the completed plan. The professionals and the facilitator will return to the conference venue, then a member of the family will present the plan. The plan is discussed by those present and, if acceptable to all, is written in writing by the facilitator and then signed by all participants. After signing, each participant will receive a copy of the plan.

The fourth and final phase is to monitor and control the implementation of the plan. In practice, this step of the FGC is the most difficult to implement, as the released inmate has no obligation to provide information in the framework of follow-up, and in most cases his relationship with the penitentiary institution is saturated with negative emotions, so the motivating force for contact is extremely low. Due to this, the probation officer can play a key role in the last stage.

Pursuant to the provisions of Act XXX of 2014 on the amendment of certain acts relating to the duties and competences of the Ministry of Interior of Hungary, as of 9 August 2014, the performance of supervisory duties has been transferred to the penitentiary organization. All this means is that there are currently penitentiary probation officers working in all penitentiary

institutions, whose activities include aftercare. Perhaps one of the most important features of aftercare is that aftercare is not a criminal measure, but rather an opportunity for the released convict to voluntarily seek support to help his or her social reintegration. Aftercare is only possible at the request of the sentenced person, which must be submitted to the probation officer of the penitentiary institution according to his or her address or actual place of residence, or it may be presented orally within one year of release. In the context of aftercare, this may make it possible to follow up a released prisoner who has participated in the FGC.

## FGC in practice: The case of László

### Initiative

László was admitted to our institution for a crime he committed as a juvenile. He and his accomplices abused an elderly man struggling with alcohol problems and living alone. The crime was committed for financial gain. Due to the nature of the crime and the way it was committed, it caused great indignation in the people living in the town. The FGC was initiated in preparation for the release of the inmate, the initiator was the reintegration officer, the facilitator was the psychologist of the penitentiary, who was in constant contact with the inmate during his stay in the penitentiary, helped him with his mental issues and other problems, and also helped to mitigate the effects of prisonization.

### Preparation

In addition to the psychologist of the institute, the reintegration officer and the probation officer were also actively involved in the preparatory activities of the conference. According to the inmate, he feared most that he would not be able to reintegrate into the community. Being a small town, almost everyone was aware of the crime and its perpetrators. During his years in the penitentiary, he realized that he had caused serious harm by committing said crime, and he regretted his deed and trusted that members of the community, those living in the town, could forgive him. Since he committed the crime at a very young age, his high school education was interrupted, however, he came of age in the penitentiary institution, so he was insecure about continuing his studies – he thought about choosing employment, but would like to continue his studies if possible. During the initiative phase, the

facilitator and the probation officer also contacted the inmate's parents, the mayor of the settlement, the family caregiver working in the town, and the head of the former educational institution.

The consultation with the parents took place in person. According to them, their housing and social conditions are modest but orderly. They eagerly anticipate their child's release; they'll support him in every way they can. They plan to redesign their property in order to provide some free, personal space for their child where he can retreat if necessary. Their child showed no troubling behaviour until he started secondary school in another town. Parents could not keep track of where and with whom their child spends their free time. He got into bad company and, in their opinion, this was the most striking reason for the crime. The father had already indicated at this stage that, for this reason, he did not want the inmate to continue his studies, he feared that he would get into bad company again, but at the same time the mother supported her child's intention to acquire a profession.

A preliminary consultation with the director of the institution was also held in person. The director made a positive statement about the reception of the inmate. He said the institution operates a program where adults are given the opportunity to continue their studies, and they'd welcome the inmate there.

The mayor, as an elected leader, represented the community. He said the crime in the town years ago had indeed caused a great deal of outrage, but he believed people were open to abstracting from what had happened in the past and giving the young person an opportunity to reintegrate, while indicating that even a minor crime committed in the community may lead to a permanent loss of confidence.

The Family Support and Child Welfare Service operating in the town was involved in a preventive manner. The Service operates a number of programs in the town, professionals are able to help if any problems arise, and the family previously had a relationship with the Service, so they already have information about the family.

Based on the discussions in the preparatory phase, the list of FGC participants was as follows: inmate, the inmate's parents, reintegration officer, probation officer, psychologist- facilitator, mayor, family caregiver, director of educational institution.

*The conference*

The date of the conference was set in advance so that all those invited could attend. All but one of the invited participants, the school principal, showed up. The principal was unable to attend due to other, unplanned activities, but sent an application form to the inmate and the school's youth protection officer informed us via telephone that the institution's foundation could provide various assistance to students, including free textbooks and meal discount.

The facilitator greeted everyone, then informed those present about the subject and process of the meeting. The participants jointly defined the topics to be discussed, the problems and issues to be solved after the release. As a result of the joint discussion, the family members had to prepare a plan in the following areas: continuing studies, work, creating conditions suitable for the reception of the inmate, determining what to do in case any problems arise, forms of follow-up.

Before the start of the family's private time, the present experts described the activities and concrete offers they undertook in connection with the topics to be discussed. The facilitator informed those present about the support undertaken by the school.

In their private time, the family made the following plan on these topics. After the father's initial refusal to have his child continue his studies, he changed his mind and also found it important that the inmate continues his studies, so it was decided that the inmate would fill in the application form while still at the penitentiary and send it to the school. In connection with this, the mayor undertook to contribute to the cost of attending school and to provide the inmate with a travel pass.

Regarding employment: the father works for local entrepreneurs as part of casual work, they do agricultural activities and there is an opportunity for the inmate to get involved in these works as well. As the inmate's release date can be set for March and school will begin in September, he will be involved in the work with the inmate's father up until September.

The property, in which the family currently lives, is a two-room house: one room is used by the parents, the other room is inhabited by the inmate's sister. The inmate's mother decided to separate the room with wall units, in order to ensure a smoother preparation for the lessons and their privacy.

Regarding the necessary steps in case any problems arise, the family came to the conclusion that the problem shall be signalled in several directions at once. The family caregiver has undertaken to keep in touch with family members and to help with matters within his or her competence in the event of a problem. The mayor has undertaken that the local government will also do its best to deal with any problems that may arise, and if necessary, they will also provide financial support to the family. The probation supervisor undertook to coordinate communication between the various participants and to take appropriate action on matters within his or her competence.

In connection with the follow-up, the inmate undertook to report to the probation officer after his release and to request his involvement in aftercare. He will co-operate with the penitentiary on a regular and continuous basis, and will keep the penitentiary informed of his schooling, leisure activities and the development of his friendly relations. The penitentiary supervisor undertook to keep in touch with FGC participants, initiating case hearings or other interventions if necessary.

*Follow-up*

The whole family was waiting for the inmate's release in front of the penitentiary. He contacted the probation officer the same day and asked to be involved in aftercare. At the same time, he indicated that he filled in the application form for the vocational school in the penitentiary institution with the help of the reintegration officer, which he planned to bring to the school in person. The mother said they had made the agreed rearrangements in their home and he will have his own private corner in the room.

During meetings in the following period, the young man reported working with his father on agricultural work in the surrounding areas. Part of his salary contributes to family expenses, the other part he uses independently. He has sent his application to the school and he's confident that he will be able to start school in the following school year. He doesn't really have friends yet, the old friends with whom he committed the crime are still serving their sentences, he will most certainly not meet them in the near future, and he wants to permanently cut off contact with them. The young man later successfully continued his studies. Family relationships were settled, and the support of professionals was no longer needed. The FGC was

conducted years ago and the young man has not committed another crime ever since.

## Conclusion

The individual remains part of the community even if he/she commits a crime against them; based on the restorative approach, if both parties are open, the community will readmit a member who has violated the common cohabitation rules after the damage has been repaired. One of the most important keys to successful reintegration is the capacity of the community members to be inclusive. In the case of inmates, social reintegration can be difficult even after a shorter (few-month-long) imprisonment (Kovács, 2014). Based on the described practical example, it becomes clear that the FGC provides an opportunity to prepare the social environment of those facing release for the readmission of the inmate.

The possibility of using the FGC and its importance in promoting the success of social reintegration in penitentiary institutions is certainly significant. Many experts claim and research show that the first six months after release is the most critical for a released inmate, as this period influences whether social reintegration will be successful or the individual will be a repeat offender. (Pálvölgyi, 2014) The FGC provides pre-release inmates with the opportunity to have a sufficiently detailed plan for this critical period, explaining what actions need to be taken to avoid recidivism. They can count on support and help from members of their new environment, family members and many professionals to implement the plan.

## Summary

Overall, the use of FGC serves a dual purpose: firstly, facilitating social reintegration and thus contributing to the goal of imprisonment; secondly, cooperation between members of a close family and community can greatly reduce the risk of recidivism for a released inmate. When someone returns to their family from being held as a prisoner, it creates an entirely new situation in their own community, as changes occur during their absence not only in their family but also in the individual who was away from their family. Furthermore, criminal history appears as a kind of stigma in the life of the individual, in his family, the assessment of which can be negative and positive. In some communities, time spent in prison is a disgrace, while in

other communities it is a merit; clarifying these norms and values, clarifying social norms and values is a key task of the FGC process. The community can be open to helping the social reintegration process, but it can also hinder it. (Boros, 2017) The aim of the conference is to prepare the community for "readmission", a situation where change will surely take place in the lives of all concerned and in the social environment. Due to the above, it is very important that in the case of the convict, we start these preparations in the penitentiary institution already. FGC provides an opportunity for the convicted person to resolve post-release insecurities, and also provides an opportunity for the community to prepare for the reception of one of their members, thus helping to reduce the risk of recidivism and strengthen community trust, security and cohesion.

By applying FGC, it is possible to resolve conflict between the family, the community and the perpetrator of the crime, to promote the social reintegration of the individual. The method can work most effectively if it is applied in an appropriate case, and if we involve the affected social environment and community during the thorough preparation phase. The importance of the follow-up phase is not negligible, as it might be crucial to maintain the long-term effects of the achieved results and to identify a possible need for further interventions. If new needs arise either from the community's or the individual's side, it is possible to modify and adjust the set goals within the framework of the follow-up phase, as well as to plan the solution and answer any new issue or question that may arise.

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# PART III.

# COMMUNITY BUILDING AND CULTURE

## Ádám Mike

## THE HISTORY OF THE MEA MUSIC SCHOOL OF DEBRECEN

**Abstract**

In the final years of the 20th century - following the regime change – different institutions of art education began to appear in various points of our country, supported by foundations. However, a few common traits connected all of these schools: the bottom-up initiative and social innovation. In the present research, we would like to investigate the history, the background, and the operation of the Music School founded by Muzsikáló Egészség Alapítvány [Musical Salubrity Foundation] in Debrecen. Moreover, we'd like to discover its impact on the musical life of Debrecen, and the effects it had on the operation of the state-funded Simonffy Emil Zeneiskola [Emil Simonffy Music School, now part of Zoltán Kodály High School Conservatory and Music School]. Our research is based on a qualitative survey, and document analysis. It is necessary to compare records of attendance regarding the Simonffy Music School during the years that precede, and follow the year in which the MEA Music School was founded. Interviews were also included among the methods of research, conducting discussions with the originator and other helpers of this innovation, and with teachers who were present in the very first days of the institution. Our research rewarded us with greater insight and answers concerning the motives behind the foundation of the institution, its motivation, financial issues, the role it occupies in the music life of the city, and additionally, we were able to familiarize ourselves with the operational and developmental mechanism of the School.

*Keywords*
social innovation, foundational music education, MEA Music School, disadvantage-compensation

**Introduction**

Musical training began roughly at the same time as formal education itself. Music is also present in the binary eduactional system of the ancient Greeks:

future religious personnel were taught grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric as part of the *trivium*, and astronomy, arithmetics, geometry, and *musica* as part of the *quadrivium* (Kertész 2015). At the dawn of music education in the modern age, the ability of learning to play a musical instrument was still the privilege of the upper classes. Music education was institutionalized – and thus expanded – only in the 19th century (Hegyi 1996). Numerous schools of music saw the light of day as a result of social initiative during the century, and after the regime change, following a lenghty pause of such activities. In this context we may find correlations between the concepts of social innovation and music education. In order to provide a deeper understanding of these connections, we will briefly examine the concepts of social innovation and communal learning while taking a look at the history of music education in Hungary, and we will also examine the very first days, operation, and effects of the Muzsikáló Egészség Alapítvány [Musical Salubrity Foundation] Music School in Debrecen. During our research, we counducted interviews with Lászlóné Papp, the founder of the institution, with others who contributed to the innovation, and with teachers who were already present in the very first days of the School.

**Social innovation and communal learning**

Innovation basically is an economical phenomenon. Its theoretical foundations were laid by Joseph Alois Schumpeter, stating that innovation is one of the most important driving forces of economy (Polónyi 2018). In our days however, it is often mentioned in a political, or scientific context. But innovation – the realization of a novel thought or idea – receives a brand new interpretation if it is viewed from a sociological perspective (Kozma 2018). An investigation held by the European Commission brought forth the following result: one can distinguish three kinds of social innovations, according to their purpose. First, it may be a new idea that improves communal and social relations. Second, it may be an answer or solution to an existing social issue, then finally, it can be a process, that reforms the operation of a given community by its innovative ideas (Nemes & Varga 2015). According to Young (2011), the spread of social innovation depends on three factors: the topology of the network, the real usefulness of the innovation, and the presence of various obstacles. It is of utmost importance, that we can only call a phenomenon "social innovation" if it is ignited by a

bottom-up initiative, rather than being a consequence of political decision (Forray & Kozma 2020).

We can see then, that social innovation is none other than a communally initiated solution to a given issue. As the given issue grows and spreads, the community learns and gains experience as a whole, which leads to a unified effort towards finding a solution. However in this context, learning is a rather sociological phenomenon, instead of pedadgogical (Kozma 2016). We can state then, that communal learning is not curricular, it is not directed by an institution, but by the community itself (Kozma 2018). According to Esque and colleagues (2013), education is an area of increasing cooperation between the public and private sectors. The creation of schools backed by foundations or enterpreneurships is becoming a common practice all over the world, them being invisibly linked together by the fact that their foundation is a result of bottom-up movements. It is said that this process might have a positive impact on the innovation of education (Esque et al. 2013). Hence it is rather surprising, that literature on this subject to date had only investigated social innovations that emerged amidst environmental crises, political decisions, or possibly, historical events (Kozma 2019), however we firmly believe, that the phenomenon is very much present in the field of education, and music education, respectively.

**Brief history of institutionalized music education in Hungary**

Social events, and the development of education policies in the 18th century aided substantially the betterment of Hungarian music education. The very first music school of the country had opened in 1727, located in Buda, under the leadership of György János Nase (Hegyi 1996; Dombóvári 2010). Another school of music was established at Pécs in 1788, and by 1800 Keszthely had a music school as well, under the initiative of Count György Festetich (1755-1819) (Bálint 2014). The first Hungarian state reform concerning education was published in 1777, named Ratio Educationis, which contained the curricular details of each term, inter alia.

By the end of the 18th century, state-operated schools of music were present in every major city with considerable musical activity (Pozsony [Bratislava], Pest [Budapest], Kolozsvár [Cluj-Napoca], Kassa [Košice]), but their place was taken by national schools by the dawn of the 19th century (Kertész 2015). However, according to Krüchten (1962), besides state-funded

music schools, private and chuch-owned schools of music education contributed greatly as well to the significant advancement taking place in music education. It has to be added, that this progress was helped by the emergence of various music associations in bigger cities. Pestbudai Hangászegyesület [Voice Association of Pestbuda] founded its Nyilvános Énekiskola [Public Singing School] (later the Nemzeti Zenede [National Conservatory]), which became exemplary for all conservatories founded in the latter half of the century, in smaller cities (S. Szabó 2020). Higher education of music was provided by the Zeneakadémia [Music Academy], which was founded by Franz Liszt and Ferenc Erkel in 1874.

After the First World War and the Treaty of Trianon, valuable cultural centres of Hungary were found suddenly on foreign land, causing a significant loss for arts, music, and the development of music education. Count Kuno Klebelsberg stated that the future of Hungary then highly depended on supporting education, science, and cultural life (Kertész 2015) *"A magyar hazát ma elsősorban nem a kard, hanem a kultúra tarthatja meg és teheti naggyá [The Hungarian nation may now be kept and made great not by sword mainly, but through culture]"* (Klebelsberg 1930). This illustrates well the fact that the thought of reforming Hungarian education was present in the 1920s already, but substantive action took place only in the second half of the 1940s. Structural and curricular transformation began as late as in August of 1945. The defining principle of the transformation was the goal of creating a school system that provided equal social and curricular opportunities under state authority and ownership. Other important goals were regulated educational time, a transparent system of supervision, and curricular reforms (Kovai & Neumann 2015). Socialization of educational institutions affected the area of music education as well. Prominent music schools were categorized as conservatories, which meant a higher rank, and a structural transformation began as well in 1952 as part of a reform of music education. The primary goal of the reform was to align music education with the ternary system of public schools (elementary and middle schools, higher education) (P. Stébel 2017). The names of music educational institutions up to that year did not reflect the level of education, the term "music school" was a general name to address all schools of this kind. As a result of the reform, High School Conservatories became the successors of former prominent music schools, while the task of elementary music education was assigned to State Music Schools.

A great part of the aforementioned reform is still in effect, determining the structure of Hungarian music educational institutions. No significant change occurred to the structure of elementary music education. However it is important to underline the fact, that during our research we did not examine music education in public elementary and high schools.

**Music as spiritual nourishment**

In the final years of the 20th century, after the regime change, numerous music schools were started by foundations all over the country. Though mostly being independent from each other, they all had the bottom-up initiative and social innovation in common. We selected one of these institutions, the music school of Muzsikáló Egészség Alapítvány [Musical Salubrity Foundation] located in Debrecen.

Lászlóné Papp (2017) was introduced to the work capability-maintenance method of Dr. Géza Kovács during an extension course in Budapest. *The method was a remedy for my weary body and soul, which encouraged me to include it during my own lessons as a teacher, to maintain the wellbeing of me and my environment. As a result, piano lessons suddenly became more effective, lighthearted, and unconstrained. My pupils left each lesson in a happy and uplifted mood.* In order to introduce the method in Debrecen, Lászlóné Papp wanted to organize a local extension course, which brought forth the need for a foundation, as that was the requirement to participate in a relevant tender. *The extension course was organized and financed by the Pedagogical Institution in Budapest. Despite its widespread succes the support was withdrawn in 1994, by which it appeared that the method could become forgotten altogether. In June 1995 I wanted to organize an extension course in Debrecen, to provide the eastern region with an opportunity to benefit from this marvellous method.* This motivated her to launch the Musical Salubrity Foundation in 1995 in two weeks, with the help of her family, colleagues, and pupils (Papp 2017). *One of my pupils' mother was a judge. She helped to compile the memorandum and articles of association in the intermission of her child's recital.*

In the same year, the idea of starting a music school began to formulate as well, as she found the mere existence of a foundation insufficient to reach her true goal: *the Kovács-method has to be introduced to as many people as possible, and it has to be used by them afterwards, during their own lessons, emphasizing its "people-centered" viewpoint.* Founding another school

proved to be a great necessity, as the Emil Simonffy Music School faced significant oversubscription. In 1995 the school had to reject the application of almost a hundred children. *Children and parents alike were crying on the hallways. I felt very sorry for them. The entrance examination was very strict, and sometimes unfair. I was infuriated by all these, as everyone has the right to participate in artistic education according to Hungarian laWhere can these children fulfill their dreams? Should those, who are past the age of 8, study music by unsupervised private means? The teachers complained of overcrowding. I was waiting for someone to organize an additional music school to no avail.* The final decision was made after the extension course of 1995. *I felt that a few annual extension courses were not enough. It is not enough, if I am the only one in my environment teaching with this approach in mind. It would be good if I could gather those teachers who share the same ideas, and who teach in a similar way. Moreover, I could provide a chance for those who got left out from state-operated music education for some reason.*

The Music School of Musical Salubrity Foundation started its operation with 40 students in 1996, after obtaining the necessary monetary capital, completing the curriculum, and finalizing the admission of students and future teachers. *Intellectual supporters of the novel institution were, among others, composer György Kurtág and his wife, pianist Márta Kurtág, composer Lajos Papp, pianist Dr. Mihály Duffek, and Dr. Zsuzsa Pásztor, the attendant of the Kovács-method.* The relevancy and success of the second music school of the city is proven by the fact that a year later, the institution was granted permission to accept a hundred students, which grew to a number of 200 by the year of 2000. During the opening meeting of the Simonffy Music School in 1996, Mrs. László Papp, who then was a teacher of the scool, announced the new institution (hereinafter called MEA). *Back then I had been teaching there for only a year, thus there was not much attention given towards the new school, and myself. As of today, I can understand their doubt, since I was the only one who foresaw what the MEA could become. Ferenc Fekete, the then-director of the Emil Simonffy Music School provided precious help in creating the regulations of the new school.* Their relationship with the Simonffy Music School is still very good, as they do not consider themselves each other's rivals, since as we have mentioned earlier, the Simonffy Music School was suffering from oversubscription. To prove the point, we conducted a headcount concerning the Simonffy Music

School, focusing on the years that preceded and followed the fouding of MEA. As there was no statistical data available in the Zoltán Kodály High School Conservatory and Music School, the successor of Simonffy Music School, we could retrieve exact numbers by counting each register by hand. In the school year of 1995/1996 there were 1330, in the school year MEA Music School was founded there were 1262, and in the 1997/1998 term there were 1259 students attending the Simonffy Music School. Note that in the school year of 1996/1997 the number of students in the Simonffy Music School has decreased by 68 persons, however it is not necessarily a consequence of the newly founded music school's existence. Such differences between each year's attendance data can be observed nowadays as well, moreover, in the term of 1997/1998 when the attendance of MEA reached a hundred students, there was no significant decrease in that of the Simonffy Music School. We can state therefore that there is no coherence between the establishment of the MEA Music School, and the attendance of Simonffy Music School.

In the beginning, the institution hired visiting lecturers. *Some held lessons besides their full-time jobs in smaller music schools in the countryside, similarly there were also teachers coming from the Simonffy Music School for a few lessons. There were many college students, since they could manage to hold a small number of classes here and there also.* Subject teachers had to participate in musical work capability-maintenance trainings and extension courses, which helped to select those participants who shared the founder's principles of music education. As of today, there are 12 full-time, 12 part-time and 4 visiting lecturers working in the institution.

The institution became a member of the Hungarian Music and Art Schools' Association in 1999. *Ferenc Fekete, the principal of the Simonffy Music School was the local representative of the Music Schools' Association back then. During the meeting of the Admission Committee as the MEA was introduced, it was set as an example for other institutions, underlining the excellent relationship between the two music schools of Debrecen, as we did not consider each other rivals despite working within the same city. Our goals were the same: that more and more people could study music.* The MEA Music School became an Elementary Art School in 2005 after launching the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, and recently, the Department of Dance was created as well. The Department of Music is divided into three subareas: classical and folk music, and jazz in addition.

The Department of Fine and Applied Arts offers courses of Fine Art, Graphics, and Painting. The school does not own a building, they are renting all of the needed facilities and venues. *We definitely have the need for our own building, but our financial situation does not allow us to purchase one, and the City Council does not support the institution with the opportunity of using one of its properties.* Different locations of education have multiplied as the number of courses was broadened, teachers of the institution also began to hold lessons on sites owned by state-funded partner schools at first, and then in church-funded schools as well, thus creating music education more accessible for all (Papp 2017).

Community activity and music-making is a priority for the teachers and students of the MEA Music School. In addition to numerous chamber ensembles, the institution has a permanent choir, guitar ensemble, zither ensemble, and recorder ensemble. Moreover, there are various occasional artistic ensembles and formations, such as: teachers' vocal ensemble, united choir of music theory classes, or a drama group including musicians. Traditional events of the school are the Advent and "Farsang" [Winter Carnival] concerts, that are held in the Baptist Church of Debrecen, and in the Liszt Hall of University of Debrecen's Music Department. The audience consists not only of the relatives of the students, but members of the regular audience of other concerts in Debrecen as well, which means that these concerts have a greater impact than average music school concerts. Besides large-scale events, the everydays of the institution are enriched with student concerts, in-house competitions, meetings, pedagogical and professional events (Papp 2017).

The MEA Music School makes studying music possible for all children who desire to do so. Motivated by this idea, the institution provided music lessons for children with special needs, and for visually impaired, blind, and disabled pupils for 15 years. *Discontinuing these lessons was not our arbitrary decision. The possibility of teaching on-site had suddenly become unsupported by a young, uninterested principal. However, these children can only attend classes on an outside location if they are being supervised.* Primary goals of the MEA Music School are talent management, development and maintenance of the physical and mental wellbeing of music teachers and their students. They also consider the support and music education of disadvantaged but talented children an important mission. The institution represents the pedagogical viewpoint of the Kovács-method,

which does not solely set bare expectations for the teachers, but it also minds the personal assets that are necessary to reach them.

**The Kovács-method**

In the 1950s many students of the Liszt Academy in Budapest were suffering from anxiety issues, and physical pains that were consequences of erred practise. Often these symptoms resulted in the students being unable to work or make music. Zoltán Kodály recommended the sports coach, researcher, and sports professional Dr. Géza Kovács to the management body of the Academy, who was subsequently asked to help and investigate the possible reasons of this unfortunate phenomenon (Pásztor 2009). The lifestyle-program which is nowadays called musical work-capability maintenance or Kovács-method, was completed after a lenghty phase of research and examinations lasting for a total of 12 years. As of today, the method is part of the music departments' curriculum for universities, and it is also included in various medical treatments.

**Summary**

In our case study we examined the history, the background and the operation of the music school that was founded in 1996 by the Muzsikáló Egészség Alapítvány [Musical Salubrity Foundation] (MEA). We also investigated the new music school's impact on the music education of the city, and the operation of the Emil Simonffy Music School. During the process we executed interviews with the participants and the initiator of the innovation, apart from processing available literature on the subject matter. We can declare that the institution and its existence has no effect on the attendance of the other music school in the city. Moreover, we detected that the foundations of musical work-capability maintenance and a Kovács-method-based music education were laid by Lászlóné Papp, and her colleagues. The teachers of the MEA Music School pay close attention to the individual abilities and talents, and also the physical and mental working capacity of their pupils, which is a directly linked to the essence of musical work-capability maintenance. This method which is also a source of joy, the wonderful community, and the ever-present collective music making serve the same goal: *"to develop the love of music, as not everyone will be a great artist*

*perhaps, but without opportunities, talent can get lost amidst the twistings and turnings of life.''*

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**Miklós J. Radócz**

**COMMUNITY BANDS AS SOCIAL INNOVATION**

**Abstract**

The significance of communal music-making has long been known in Hungary as well. However, examination of community bands in such a context has been done only in very rare cases. In our current paper we study the role music making in a community band plays in adult education, for the sake of which we look at the evolution of an amateur adult ensemble and the principles of its functioning today. The basic idea of the band originated from a grassroots friendly initiative, then grew into a popular cultural organization since its short, two-year period re-formation. For better comprehension of the subject matter using in situ case study, the active participants of orchestral work should be given voice. Therefore, the relevance of the research is indicated by the qualitative survey. Our research raises an even more deep-seated issue through the study of the band's operation, namely how is it possible for a local initiative to turn into an innovative undertaking affecting an entire town together with its surroundings. It requires a study of the visions of those initiating the innovation, as well as individual experiences and memories of the participants. Then, summing these up will help us understand both the development and operational processes. This paper of ours goes beyond the importance of the band's functioning. Musical activity provided for the adults gives them an opportunity to get rid of the differences generated by social status, socio-economic background or generational gaps, thus laying down the foundations for the strengthening of social cohesion. Thereby, band work offers not only pastime and hobby opportunities for the members, as its community creating and building nature should also be emphasized.

*Keywords*

wind band, community building, social innovation

**Introduction**

A lot of scientific research has been done concerning the positive effects of listening to music and active musical activities. These researches studied the transfer effects of music. (Bácskai et al., 1972; Kokas, 1972; Barkóczi &

Pléh, 1977; Szűcs, 2019) Despite the fact that it is a relatively novel research area, we have already become acquainted with the characteristics of adult music learning. In our current study, we want to focus on the potential of musical activities from a somewhat different perspective, namely as a kind of social innovation. In order to be able to grasp that, we decided to deal with a comprehensive study of academic literature on social innovation, while touching upon the specificities of modern adult music learning. The subject of our case study is an amateur wind band (hereinafter referred to as "the Band"), made up of adult orchestra members, who are holding musical instruments in their hands for the first time in the last 20-30 years. Thereby, the band is considered unique in its form among the Hungarian community bands. The primary focus of our research is not the band itself, but rather the phenomenon, which makes its interpretation as a social innovation possible. The role of the Band within the local community is analysed through an interview done with its two founders.

**Interpretation of social innovation and community learning**

Interestingly, at the sound of the word „innovation" most people think of a sensational invention in engineering or scientific development, although the interpretation of this notion is moving on a much wider scale nowadays. Being the key notion of economic development, the concept of innovation was originally known as that of an economic nature. The theoretical foundations of the latter were laid down by Joseph Alois Schumpeter, and yet today the concept is being used from different perspectives by a range of fields of science (Keresztes, 2013). What is more, it has even become popular in politics (Nemes & Varga, 2015). According to the Latin origins of the word (*in novare*), an innovation always represents something new, a pursuit of renewal, however, a more direct definition of it depends on the given area. The comprehensive approach of innovation makes its interpretation in a sociological context possible, named as social innovation. Despite the fact, that the term has been around for a long time, it has only been subjected to a more thorough examination beginning from year 2000 (Kozma, 2018). Similarly to innovation and given its relative complexity, social innovation is a subject to a number of different definitions. Based on a survey of the European Commission, there are three types of social innovation according to its purpose:

- Any kind of innovative solution, which aims at improving social and communal relationships, and the effectiveness of various communal groups and organizations can be considered social innovation.

- Social innovations should concentrate on meeting societal needs and finding answers and solutions to the given societal challenges.

- We may think of social innovation as a process, which aims at changing the structure and operation of a certain community through the employment of new ideas and theories, thus offering a solution to the potential social problems (EC, 2013; Nemes & Varga, 2015).

Both Moulaert and MacCallum study the role, purpose and objective of social innovation in their works (Forray & Kozma, 2020:7). According to its sociological interpretation, innovation always indicates a response to some kind of problem, so it is true, that *„there is no social innovation without a problem, to which it serves as an answer"* (Forray & Kozma, 2020:7). It is important to point out, that social innovation, when successful enough, is completed locally, tied to a certain place. This way it prioritizes the significance of community learning, which is also an essential part of innovation. Besides, from a long-term perspective it is vital that innovation should not be a result of a central political decision, its organizing force should come from below instead. When these conditions are met, we can say that social innovation has achieved its purpose by becoming an essential part of a local community (Forray & Kozma, 2020).

Based on the above, it should not be surprising that a huge significance of social innovation is observed in the fields concerned with rural development (Nemes & Varga, 2015). This is because one of its primary objectives is to give rural areas more opportunities, improve the quality of life of their people and boost the standards of public utilities (Szörényiné Kukorelli, 2015). However, all of this would be an unattainable goal without communities, who want to improve, learn and are eager to make a contribution.

Besides, there is no social innovation without learning, or more strictly, without community learning. For most people studying is directly associated with the traditional, formal platform of knowledge acquisition and with doing school again. Community learning should be primarily understood within a social context, therefore by its very definition, we can interpret it as something concentrating on the development of a community made up of

individuals, but not on the individuals themselves (Kozma, 2018). As a matter of fact, such a method could not function, if the members of the community did not belong to a "common" area. Given the results of the sociological researches done so far, it is now clear that the relevant interpretation of social units is subjected to a certain area, namely the place of living. That is why both the "area" (place of living) and "community" can be approached as sociological concepts (Kozma, 2016). It is due to the potential of community learning, which serves as the driving force of all kinds of social innovations, that nowadays we can talk about actual local movements, mostly known and defined by the terms "learning region" and "learning city". The foundation of these movements are the learning communities, that can influence the successfulness of the whole region through their community-based work (Kozma, 2016).

When observing social innovations, it is essential to point out the societal problems a certain innovation or innovative initiative offers solutions for. In this case, we should not necessarily think about an astonishing accomplishment, as the primary mission of these innovations is to strengthen local community networks, and through those, local society (Kozma, 2018). Depending on the local situation, the problems mentioned previously can be of all kinds, however, it is very important that the community can relate to them and be ready to do anything possible to eliminate them. Various environmental challenges or initiatives tackling social inequalities can serve as great examples for this (Kozma, 2020, EC, 2013).

**About adult music learning**

The pursuit of continuous improvement, adult trainings and lifelong learning are starting to lose their significance nowadays. Although one of the major aims of adult learning is to help the students with professional trainings adapted to labour market needs, recreational and hobby courses can also be considered adult education (KSH, 2014). This form of education can be interpreted as a form of "cultural education", which is aimed at helping acquire knowledge through both formal and informal areas of culture. These may include certain "passive" forms of cultural consumption, like visiting all kinds of cultural institutions or attending performing arts events, and other "active" creative acts as well, such as performing music as a member of an amateur artistic band (Juhász and Szabó, 2016).

The examination of adult music learning and musical communities is considered a relatively young trend, but the rather positive community building impact of these has been increasingly investigated in the last few decades (Coffman, 2002). Active musical involvement does not come without putting off other activities, continuous practice and rehearsals, which are even more complicated to carry out combined with family and working life. Despite the challenges, more and more adult people are reaching out to beneficial types of music-making (King, 2009). Examinations done so far have supported the claims, according to which there are three sources of individual motivations towards music-making in adulthood: 1) free time and recreation, 2) love of music and 3) meeting social needs (Coffman, 2002). Nevertheless, it has been proven that childhood experiences play an essential role in lifelong music learning, which means that those who have played music as a child or have developed a positive image of cultural activities due to family background, are more likely to take this opportunity as adults (Coffman, 2002).

**Community music-making, as a social innovation**

Within the frames of the present study, we try to examine social innovation through the operation of an amateur community band. Pairing up musical activity and social innovation might seem unusual at first, however a musical grouping, which is based upon a community, conveys the same values we tend to highlight in terms of social innovation. An amateur music band would not exist without community learning, as all its members share a common goal, namely, to reinvent themselves together, bring joy through music. Considering long-term success, it is also of key importance that there should be a bottom-up approach in organizing the band, because if there is no cohesive force built upon individual acquaintances, the grouping is going to be quite short-lived. Similarly to social innovations, music ensembles are also tied to places, thus, we consider them community-based. In addition, the definition of the social problem proves to be more challenging. Further explanations on it will be provided through the interpretation of narratives.

The Band was founded in 1967, with the participation of only eight children at the time, and soon became quite popular in and around the town. The number of the players within the Band, which followed the pioneer band model, was increasing rapidly, counting more than twenty musicians just one

year after its foundation. Like other pioneer bands of the time, memories related to pioneer camps play a prominent role in the life of the Band as well and are gladly brought up by the current members (Radócz, 2020). There is one thing most of the former members have in common, namely that all of them quit their musical activities at a certain point in their life, typically due to entering a workplace as a young adult. Despite this, later two of them came up with an idea about getting the old team back together. For the sake of our study, we interviewed the two authors, who played a huge role in the re-establishment of the Band, touching upon the emerging difficulties, the present-day operation of the band and its function within the local community.

In fact, these two authors were actively involved in music playing before the re-establishment of the Band took place, so no wonder it was an impulse inspired by music that gave birth to the idea that their childhood fellows should also undergo such an experience again. That is how they agreed to gather the old members for what was originally intended to be a one-time performance, yet following their successful debut a large part of the Band stayed together and has been operating ever since.

Both interviewees have confirmed that despite the great cause this initiative was called to serve, most of the former band members had a hard time agreeing to play an instrument again, as regular practice requires a lot of sacrifices, especially when having a workplace and family. Comments, such as *"I have not played for 20-30 year; we are not cut out for this"* (Interviewee no.1), certainly made things more complicated at the beginning, but right after the first rehearsal any possible doubts were eliminated.

Asked if they have ever thought that the Band will be a success as a long-term project, we received different answers. While one of the interviewees told he clearly did not suspect that the Band will stay together after their concert, the other reported the following: *"One could see the enthusiasm and intense joy all this caused to them right during the first rehearsal* (i.e. to the newly returned band members). *I could see that these people are way too happy for it to be a one-time occasion. We managed to share something with the returnees, that changed the lives of some of them and sort of gave it a new meaning…"* ( Interviewee no. 2).

From the case study perspective, the role of the Band within the community of a certain municipality is central. As mentioned before, local cultural formations are particularly important for towns and smaller towns, as

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those are more likely to suffer from having limited opportunities in terms of the extensive dissemination of culture. In fact, we can say that the subject of our research is a rather fortunate one, as the settlement we have touched upon lives an active cultural life. Moreover, in addition to the Band there is another community band in the town, known and respected both on national and international levels. Even under such conditions, the Band, certainly aimed at a completely different target audience, plays a significant role in the dissemination of culture. This fact is highlighted by the responses of both interviewees: *"There is a vast number of people attending none other concerts, but those organized by the Band."* (Interviewee no.2)

Besides guaranteeing a musical experience, the Band also serves as a good example for the local community. On the one hand, it is worth mentioning that the functioning of the Band *"certainly has a positive impact on the people and public sentiments"* (Interviewee no.2), while on the other it also sets an example for the population, as described in the following lines: *"It gives hope, new chances and opportunities to a lot of people not just in terms of music and music-making, but in general terms of beginning one's life anew. Once you hit 40-50 years, you tend to think of yourself as of someone who has lived his life, the truth is, however, that you can indeed start a new life in any area, not just music."* (Interviewee no.1)

As part of the survey, we also became interested in the extent to which the Band contributes to ironing out social differences. It is considered a universal phenomenon, that a music band consists of individuals coming from distinct socio-economic backgrounds, so we decided to ask our interviewees how is this reflected in the life of the Band. Both stated that the daily life of the Band is not by any means affected by these differences. *"When you come to a rehearsal, all these things disappear… there you are, sitting, playing music, feeling yourself good, not at all concerned with what the person next to you is playing, but the good thing you are doing together. It levels the two strata; they can finally establish a common ground, which otherwise most probably they could not. This is a really great way of bridging such problems."* (Interviewee no.1).

## Conclusions

Based on the above narratives, it becomes clear that the concept of "social challenge" and its very definition can be translated to both smaller local

music band communities and bigger ones. The Band does not merely broaden one's musical intelligence. It offers an experience to its members, which will certainly have a positive impact on their lives.

It makes interaction for people from different social and economic backgrounds possible, when otherwise those would be presumably difficult to arrange. Furthermore, in practice these differences within the band fade completely. However, social innovation can as well be observed on a higher level. Other than conveying value, the Band also sets an example for the older generation, claiming that it is never too late to learn something new and replenish.

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**Alexandra Haffner-Kiss - Tamás Haffner**

**THE ROLE OF WIND ORCHESTRA IN BUILDING COMMUNITY**

## Abstract

This case study examines the outstanding cultural and music education activity in the city of Tét from several perspectives. The case study pays special attention to the wind orchestra consisting of current and former students of the music school. In addition to community learning and social innovation processes, the case study also covers the positive effects of music. It aims at exploring and presenting the local cultural social innovation processes, in the course of which it also examines the city and its cultural life. The case study covers such personalities during the presentation of processes who influenced the cultural and social innovation processes of the city over the past decades.

Following the theoretical review, the case study presents the empirical research. A semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted with the founder of the orchestra during the research. In addition to processing qualitative primary data, an earlier interview with the founder of the orchestra available online was also used to prepare the case study.

The questions of the case study are, how the orchestral community fits into local communities and what kind of positive effects can be observed regarding Generation Z students during orchestral community learning? Music studies, especially orchestral community learning may help Generation Z students with (1) supporting their school integration processes, (2) experiencing success and (3) the fact that several generations are learning together, may also support the development of social skills.

The case study aims at analysing a cultural social innovation process that is based on community activity.

*Keywords*
community learning, individual education, generations, music pedagogy, orchestra

## Introduction

'Conscious community formation in the institution can have a serious impact on students' lives because they understand the importance and advantages of

belonging to a community thereby the community as safety net may also appear in their lives' (Kozma et al., 2015:155).

The sentence quoted above has been a key part of the orchestras that have been operating in the city of Tét for more than 40 years. The case study aims at presenting the impact of the music school and the Tét Youth Wind Orchestra on the local cultural life and the local community, in the course of which it is important to cover the positive effects of music education on current music school students. The case study also aims at analysing the local social innovation as cultural community-forming force.

Children of Generation Z come to school and music school with different values than the previous generations. Children with different values require different pedagogical approach in order to bequeath our musical and national traditions to the next generation, in which music school studies play a prominent role (Haffner-Kiss, 2018).

The case study works with primary and secondary data in terms of methodology. Qualitative data were processed during the empirical research, in the course of which firstly the case study analyses the nearly one hour-long interview from 2012 with the leader of Tét Youth Wind Orchestra, Tibor Steszli and the leader of the music school band, Tamás Steszli, which is available online (secondary data). Following a review of the literature and processing the available interview material, a semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted with Tibor Steszli (primary data) to answer any further questions that have arisen.

The case study seeks answers to the following questions:
- How does the orchestra fit into the life of the local community?
- What motivates the adult generation to continue this form of community learning?
- What kind of positive effects can be observed regarding Generation Z students in the course of orchestral community learning?

## General characteristics of the local area and society

Tét is a small town of 4097 people in Győr-Moson-Sopron county. The town is a rapidly developing city located halfway between the cities of Győr and Pápa. Tét district (in Hungarian: *járás*), in which the town is located, is not considered a disadvantaged area based on the District and Development Indicators.
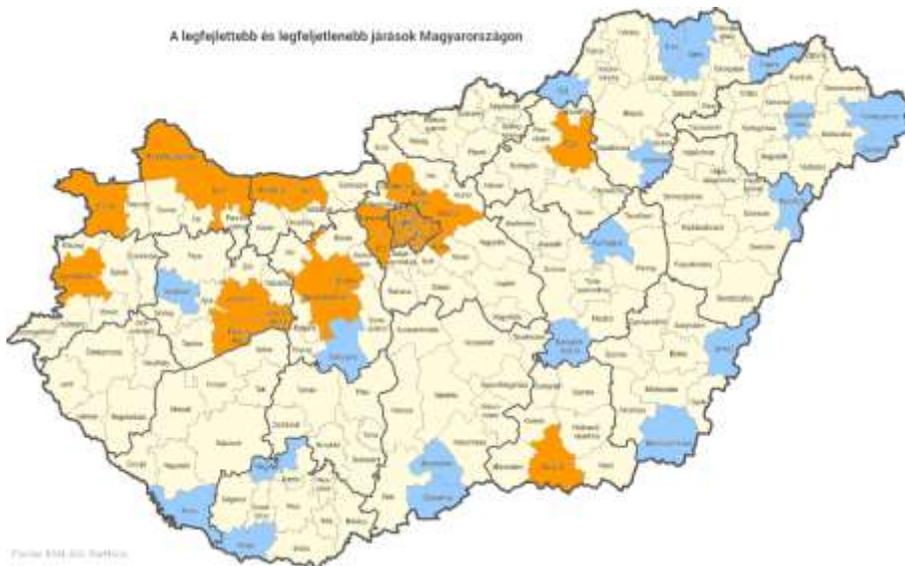
Figure 1. The most developed and the least developed districts in Hungary (2016) (Source: www.portfolio.hu)

The population in terms of educational level developed as follows based on the 2010 census: 29% of the population had primary school education, 27% had a secondary education and only 3-4% had a higher education degree. Based on that, it can be concluded that the population of the town had a lower average level of education at the beginning of the decade compared to the national average, which ratios are shown in the chart.

The settlement development concept and integrated settlement development strategy of Tét highlights the Tét Youth Wind Orchestra and the cultural life of the town as a factor strengthening the identity of the town. We can read the following about the orchestra in the document: 'Their shows are always 'full', they really are the best ambassadors of our city because they have been spreading the city's reputation beyond the borders as well. Even a professional band could be proud of annual 65-70 shows, performances.' Furthermore, it can also be said about the local wind orchestra that they not only perform locally but in many other places in the country and abroad as well.

Based on the above, it can be stated that the community formed by the orchestra participates in the community life formed by the town. In this context, Tibor Steszli, leader of the Tét Youth Wind Orchestra explained in

the interview conducted with him that the orchestra is a key player in the culture of Tét, they are regular participants in national and religious holidays.
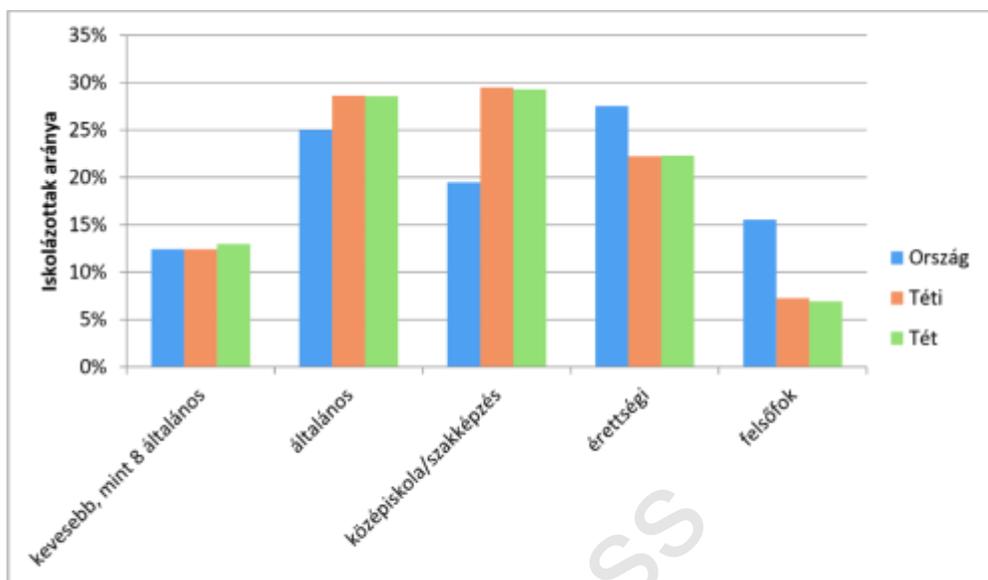


*1.7-10. ábra: A lakosság iskolázottsági aránya*

Figure 2. Education rate of the population
Source: Tét Settlement Development Concept and Integrated Settlement Development Strategy (2014)

The concerts move even those people in the town who previously did not have any ties to classical music. The parents also became acquainted with quality music through the children. The orchestra's repertoire is very wide: in addition to classical music and church music pieces, popular music also plays an important role at the band's annual traditional dance. The number of participants in this event has to be limited these days because year after year, the interest exceeds the capacity of the gym. In addition to the two bands performing at the dance, a third band could also be composed of those dance-participants who were once members of the orchestra. These entertainment events also serve to build the community of the town. The orchestra is very active, practically there is no community event in the town where it would not be present in some form. The two orchestras connects generations in learning, joint performances, sport and entertainment. In the finale of the Christmas show - for more than two decades - the two orchestras, some 100

people, bring tears to the eyes of the audience. They also join each other at the dance to enjoy music together - it is a great experience.

## Presentation of music education in Tét

Many cultural and sport opportunities are available for students in the town of Tét these days but the Wind Orchestra still plays a key role in the cultural life of the town. This cultural community-forming orchestra has been developing in the town for more than 40 years.

Tibor Steszli said during the in-depth interview conducted for the case study that he started teaching children music in 1976 within the framework of a Music Teachers' Working Community and he founded the Pioneer Orchestra at that time as well. At first, due to the limited number of musical instruments it was not possible to provide instruments for graduated music school students for orchestral rehearsals and practice. The initial fleet of 16 instruments has begun to extend steadily over the years, which gave the opportunity for the students who had already graduated from elementary school but wanted to continue to play music to join the orchestra that initially consisted of music school students. The municipal Music School was founded in 1992, then the Tét Youth Wind Orchestra was formed and then the association that operates it. These developments made it possible to increase the type and number of instruments and the number of members of the orchestra. They had the opportunity to maintain two orchestras, the 'Small Orchestra' (Music School Orchestra) and the 'Grand Orchestra' (Youth Wind Orchestra). The former consists of current music school students, while the latter consists of high school students, college students and adults.

Tibor Steszli emphasised during a TV interview in 2012 that both the teachers of the local school and the Municipality supported the establishment of the music school from the very beginning. He also confirmed in the in-depth interview conducted during the case study that their support was ongoing, fortunately everyone found it important to support the cause. The Youth Wind Orchestra operates in the form of an association and its management initially consisted of the parents. However, nowadays former students of the music school, who are now adults and have their own families, lead the Association.

Tibor Steszli is not a local resident. For the first 16 years, he commuted from Győr to Tét to teach while working full-time in Győr as a horn artist of Győr Philharmonic Orchestra. In the beginning, he taught all instruments alone up until 1993 when the current music school was founded. He said regarding the initial period that the idiom 'one swallow doesn't make a summer' was true in this case as well, because neither the music school nor the orchestra could have been established without the supportive attitude of the locals.

It can be said that Tibor Steszli has been making improvements in the town of Tét in the past decades not only in terms of quality and organisational form but in addition to all these, great attention was paid to the education of the youth and retention of people who are in college, university or work and have their own families. The students and the adults can not only expand their musical knowledge when they are members of the orchestra but they also belong to a community.

In connection with these thoughts, the following question was asked during the interview: How do you see it, what motivates the adult generation to continue this form of community learning? According to the leader of the orchestra, this is a very interesting question. Children start their music school studies from several kinds of motivations. Some start learning an instrument of their own volition, in other cases the parents want to develop their children through music and in some cases it is a family tradition. The returning members (mothers, fathers) decide on their own that they like to play music and want music to continue to be part of their lives. He emphasised that it has always been really important for the leadership of the orchestra to maintain a good community because a good community is essential for playing music together joyfully. The performances, concerts, festivals, international relations, football practices for the orchestra, camps, etc. all serve this goal. Consequently, it can be stated that the orchestra has a very familiar atmosphere.

Members of the small orchestra belong to the 10-15 age group, while members of the grand orchestra belong to several generations. It is not uncommon that more than one child from a family is a member of the orchestra or that the children's parents played in the orchestra as well when they were young.

Tibor Steszli said in connection with evolution of the headcount of the orchestra in the past decades that there has not been a decline in membership

since its foundation, thus it can be said that the number of orchestra members has been constantly expanding over the years. Currently, the two orchestras together have nearly 100 members. In the Youth Wind Orchestra, several members are over the age of 35 and there are also 50-year-olds among them. Since members can join the Youth Wind Orchestra after starting their high school studies, thus it can be seen that the age groups of the members span several generations.

Members of the 'grand orchestra' of Tét Youth Wind Orchestra (age 15-50) have specific personality traits of different generations, professional knowledge and life experience. Therefore, belonging to the orchestra provides space not only for formal learning (rehearsals, shows, camps) but through the exchange of information between adults of different generations, members also have the opportunity for a kind of informal learning. Informal learning is a dominant form of adult learning, which based on generation research, deserves more and more attention. (Stéber-Kereszty, 2015)

In the author's opinion, it can be characterised as an outstanding success that the number of orchestra members has increased year by year over the past decade. Tibor Steszli emphasised in this context that we must take our chosen profession seriously otherwise we cannot achieve success. Furthermore, the attitude of the maintaining authority is also very important. To their delight, the leadership of the orchestra met with positive attitude from the side of the school and the current mayor over the past decades. He also considers parental support essential. A very serious collaboration of all three mentioned above was necessary to maintain a successful orchestra and is still necessary for continuous expansion.

The annual 'small orchestra' camp, which is organised in the nearby settlement of Enese, provides an additional opportunity to build community. Interestingly, the children cycle to the camp site under the supervision of their older peers and parents, and the students see it as an adventure. The distance between Tét and Enese is 20 kilometres which they complete by bicycle. The instruments and packages are transported by minibus. They participate in rehearsals every day during the orchestra week where they can learn new musical pieces of interest to them as well. However, there are also opportunities for team building games in addition to rehearsals. The orchestra closes the camp with a performance on the last day of the camp, at the end of which they can play music with the invited 'grand orchestra' members during the evening, which they call 'jam session'. The older ones help the members

of the youth band and stand as an example to their peers in terms of how much they can improve through many years of music learning.

## Positive impacts of community music, community learning through the example of Tét orchestra

Tibor Steszli stated that at the beginning, there were not as many extracurricular activity opportunities for students in Tét as there are today. Thus, there was a great interest in music school studies from students who wanted to engage in quality leisure activities or participate in an extracurricular activity. He saw that the kids had outstanding skills due to their motivation. The only change he sees these days is that generation-specific personality traits have changed and the number of cultural occupational activities in Tét has increased. It is not easy for students to stick with music studies, since here they cannot always enjoy the fruits of their labor immediately or after a little time, sometimes they have to work very hard for it.

The local music school plays a huge role in passing on our classical and folk music traditions and national customs. All of the students enrolling in music school must study the recorder for a year, during which they learn the basics of sheet music reading and get an introduction to solfeggio. In addition to that they begin their studies in a way that by the time they have to choose a main instrument in the second year, they already know several folk songs, most of which they can sing by heart and they can also present several pieces by heart. In addition to knowing the lyrics and melody of folk songs and of course in addition to reading sheet music, the children can sing folk songs with ABC name and via solmisation. The children can choose an instrument after the preparatory year, during which they take into account the children's preferences, their talent needed for the given musical instrument and the youth education of the orchestra thus the choice is made based on the consensus of these three components.

Even after the first year, students can feel that they are part of the 'music community' where they can be part of many community experiences. At the beginning they belong to a small community, to their direct group mates, with whom they can play music several times a week. This provides the opportunity for children to establish appropriate social relations since the same area of interest can be a good basis for building social relationships.

'Regular practice requires self-discipline, perseverance, concentration, regular work, diligence and a sense of responsibility which also helps with school work.' (Kozma et al., 2015:155) Thereby, the children can acquire such skills and abilities that enables them to become active and valued members of a community. The children learn to play music together and get to know the joys and rules of canon and chamber music during music lessons. In this way, they learn how to be good team players because if someone makes a mistake in his/her own subtask, he/she jeopardises everyone's work, thus they have to take responsibility for their own work and also for the work of their peers. Chamber music prepares students for playing in the orchestra. The year-end concert organised at the end of the school year, where the 'small orchestra', the 'grand orchestra' and the freshmen recorder players all perform, is an excellent source of motivation for students. They can introduce themselves here as future orchestra members. The positive feedback, which they can receive from the audience in a concert hall for nearly 250 people as well as from listening to the performance of the orchestra, is also an excellent source of motivation for students. For many students, the most anticipated event of their music studies is the moment of joining the orchestral community. It is a positive and motivating experience when the student can join the orchestral community.

Students become active members of the orchestral community and the local community as well after joining the orchestra. The orchestra takes an active role in participating in local celebrations, national holidays, the school year opening event of the school, the orchestra's annual dance and in events related to folk traditions. Thanks to performances at events, children get to know and learn early on about the diversity and importance of our national traditions, as well as the decent and protocol behaviour required in such events and which is   also required if they belong to the community and this knowledge facilitates integration into society.

The 'Cultural learning in music school', partial research of the volume 'Learning regions in Hungary' prepared by Tamás Kozma and his colleagues covers that both the parents and children stated that they noticed the following changes in their children during their music studies: 'They understand their peers better, they are more tolerant, more cooperative and they make friends more easily' (Kozma et al., 2015:158).

Young people can learn about the general structure and course of social relationships when belonging to the orchestral community. The players of

social relations are always humans, which always characterises the situation, relationship and structure formed between them. It is not unusual that subordinate and superior relationships may also develop between people during the development of these relations, which may become permanent or may pass (Kozma, 2001). The young musicians sit among the members of the orchestra without their instruments during their first orchestral rehearsals in order to get to know the course of orchestral rehearsal first without the pressure of instrumental performance they may put on themselves. They learn about the structure of the orchestra during these occasions. They get to know the internal structure of the orchestra, that for example the conductor has the main leading role within the orchestra but each instrument group has its own leader who assists in the work of that particular instrument group. So, it can be stated that during the first orchestral rehearsal they learn about the internal structure of the orchestra and the system of human relationships. Students (children aged 10-11) learn that the instrument group leader roles are filled by their peers who stand out professionally from their instrument groups and have such personality traits as reliability, responsible behaviour, adequate self-confidence and respect for their peers. Being aware of this, they owe exemplary behaviour to their younger peers. In addition to learning about the structure of the orchestra, which shows a hierarchical structure, it is important to note that each member of the hierarchy is dependent on each other in terms of in what quality they can realise, perform the production (orchestral work). Thus, students can learn about the benefits and importance of teamwork as well as about the joy of joint production (concert experience). It is important to highlight that these young people get familiar with a relationship system that requires them to respect their peers, to be reliable toward each other in terms of their work, while their peers at the top of the hierarchy (instrument group leaders) are also part of the hierarchy in order to realise the final product (Kozma, 2001).

The leader of Tét Youth Wind Orchestra stated that he considered the community-forming role of the orchestra extremely important during his 45 years of work, which he considered even more important than the quality of artistic activity of the orchestra. In his view, one of the most important tasks of the orchestra is to make the members feel that they belong somewhere. Because, if the community works well, it also brings a positive result in the artistic activity of the orchestra.

**Summary**

The case study analysed the outstanding cultural and music education activity in the town of Tét, during which it paid special attention to the Wind Orchestra consisting of current and former students of the music school.

In addition to review of the respective literature, an earlier nearly one-hour long interview with the leaders of the orchestra was also analysed in order to answer the research questions. After analysing the available interview material, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with the leader of Tét Youth Wind Orchestra to answer the questions in detail. In connection with the research questions presented at the beginning of the case study, it has been shown that the orchestra is one of the key players in the community life of the town, which can speak to the local residents in a way that spans generations. The good community formed by the orchestra gives enough motivation for the adult generations to participate in the life of the orchestra, which thereby connects generations in learning, joint performances and leisure activities. This well-functioning community is a great inspiration for the young music students as well, thus not only the experience arising from the obligation of learning music but the community life as well are important positives for Generation Z students.

Based on the literature used and the empirical research, it can be stated that the music school and orchestra examined are based on community activity, which has intertwined with the community formed by the town in the last more than 45 years and it is also an essential part of the cultural and social innovation processes of the town.

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**Tamás Ragadics - Lilla Szabó**

# CULTURAL MISSION IN THE ORMÁNSÁG REGION

## A complex community and art initiative for children living in segregated environment

**Abstract**

Social innovations serve as major problem-based, novel, adaptive and effective series of interventions in communities living in underprivileged regions and settlements. Poverty and ethnic segregation are connected to the dominant presence of underqualified population with a low level of empowerment and self-care. Complex projects motivating and involving local groups and targeting cultural and community integration of deprived strata are essential in these regions.

This paper presents a civil initiative entitled "Ormánság Cultural Mission" focusing on the development of marginalized minor settlements in Baranya County, in the South Transdanubian Region of Hungary. In villages afflicted by Roma segregation motivated actors and volunteers in cooperation with local participants and children perform cultural projects including dramatized topics focusing on the everyday problems and challenges in this area. We present this cultural initiative in the framework of other community projects completed in the Ormánság region on the basis of semi structured expert interviews made with the organizers.

*Keywords*

culture, local community, Ormánság region, social integration, social responsibility

**Introduction**

Problems and conflicts of marginalized rural areas far away from the hubs of economic development are strongly connected to the weakness of local communities and erosion of social structure by negative trends of migration. Factors and actions supporting local communities could improve the quality of life and base the efficiency, sustainability and social embeddedness of external development resources.

In underdeveloped minor settlements of the Ormánság region in South Transdanubia we can find several civil initiatives working for better living conditions for inhabitants and strengthening local communities. One of these new projects is Ormánság Cultural Mission Association, which is formally a legal organisation since March 2020. In the background of the initiative, there is a motivated community involved in fundraising programs in the researched region. The association works in alliance with other organisations, enthusiastic volunteers and local key-members promoting cultural events for deprived children and their families. One of their main goals is community building at the level of helpers and donators and at the level of supported people living in disadvantaged status.

In our case study based on a qualitative research, we present the activity, motivations and goals of Ormánság Cultural Mission Association, especially the relevant role of this organisation in the life of local communities in the underdeveloped area researched.

**Transformation of marginalized rural area**

Deepening rural poverty in East-Central Europe originates from the contradictions and conflicts of post-communist transformation process and from changes in the national and international labour market. In Western societies, rural exodus and functional transformation of rural areas are the outcomes of a longer, organic process. In Eastern states, the population in villages was less mobile due to the socialist shortage-economy. There was a high demand for food and other agricultural products produced by rural post peasants (Kovách 2012).

Drastic transitions after the change of regime strengthen the negative trends of migration in rural areas: lack of local workplaces and relapse of services lead to the outward migration of qualified and motivated younger population. Problems of crisis-regions are connected to the urban-rural relationship, to the weaknesses of development policy, to ethnic dimensions, and to the deficiency in qualification and social capital (Tickmayer 2006). Concentration of poverty is increased by the low price of immovable estates. There is an intensifying marginalization of rural underclass (Ladányi 2012). These trends transform the local communities of rural areas located far away from developed urban regions. Relapse of local workplaces leads to a limited number of active key-members working for the local community.

Economic problems give rise to closeness mentality, to the lack of confidence and a rising appreciation of material values. Dependency and paternalism become more acute; democratic attitudes and self-care competencies weaken (Tóth 2017).

**Ormánság – a crisis area with substantial cultural heritage**

Cultural initiatives presented in this paper are realized in marginalized villages of the South part of Baranya County, which is the historic region of Ormánság (45 minor settlement). As a floodplain of river Drava, this rural province was separated from the other parts of the country in the past that led to the conservation of ancient Hungarian culture based on strong local communities until the end of 19th century (Ragadics 2013), and of the traditional type of river-economy based on the utilisation of flood cycle. Traditional communities were based on local relations, on joint work, on religion and on the network of family relations and cousinship. Close ties were transformed and destroyed by the effects of the one-child system connected to the problematic distribution of landed property, by the limitary status of the region after World War I, and by the negative trends of migration and population change. Segregation processes in post-communist rural areas have deepened the crisis of local communities (Boros 2011).

At present the majority of inhabitants in Ormánság perceive the location of their dwelling space as a trap situation because of the big distance from workplaces, from educational, social and healthcare institutions, from services and from the important spots of the consumer society. Although this region has good facilities for agricultural activity and for horticulture helping living, this opportunity is hardly used by families living in poverty (Pulszter 2018). Relationships, horizontal connections are damaged by long-term unemployment and hopelessness and by the paternalist strategies of local leaders. Traditional communities degraded and disappeared. Interest groups and modern network communities are missing because of the negative processes mentioned above (Bucher 2019; Ragadics 2019, Boros – Gergye 2019). Deprived groups in the Ormánság region need external help activating local resources for developing quality of life. In this paper, we demonstrate an initiative supporting local communities.

**Cultural Mission in Ormánság – The Associaton**

This association active in the field of community development was officially established in 2020, however programmes in the underprivileged region of South Baranya have already been underway before. The very first cultural community event took place in the church of Nagycsány, where the founding members – a married couple – organized a small Christmas concert inviting their friends. This church was previously abandoned, then cleaned up and made suitable for use by the founders of the association. To make their personal network of use, the programme of Advent was held again with a wider range of participants the following year.

*„… and at Christmas we organized a little concert, at the first year we invited only our friends. ... I work in a theatre, so we have a theatrical network, I also take part in numerous kid performances, therefore I know several people who make high quality cultural programmes for kids…"*

The *Ormánság Cultural Mission Association* has set a goal of providing high quality cultural programmes for children – who would not have access to them otherwise – live in underprivileged settlement, working with volunteers. With the help of volunteer actors, actresses and drama teachers, a so called single person „paper theatre" and drama games are provided in the kindergartens and schools of Ormánság.

The *Ormánság Cultural Mission Association* co-operates with the *Framework Creative Network Group* (henceforward: FCNG, the *Csorba Győző County Library's* library bus, the *It is good to live in the Countryside! Foundation,* as well as a number of ambassadors and local actors, financed by tender funding and fundraising. The establishment dates back to personal attachment to the region (Vajszló, Nagycsány), which grew into an association currently consisting of 10 members and 2-3 volunteers within a short time.

At the beginning, the organization was operating informally, aiming not only to organize cultural programmes in the winter season, but also in the summer months, in cooperation with the *It is Good to Live in the Countryside! Foundation.* The venue of these programmes was the so-called Gaudy House in the village of Szaporca – which is also the headquarters of the foundation. Community funded marionette circus performances were organized in the first year, and a kids concert with puppets in the second year.

The range of activities was expanded, which allowed the conditions of the formal organizational framework to be established. The head of the association also attended a community development course, where creating and launching an own project was a prerequisite. As part of this, she visited the Gilvánfa kindergarten:

"(…) *because we knew there were a lot of programmes*, *but nothing would get to kindergarten. And, then we started working there."* (Founder of Ormánság Cultural Mission Association)

In the first year, the association organized drama and handcraft classes for kids in the kindergarten of Gilvánfa, with the help of local kindergarten teachers, parents and also volunteers from Pécs. The sessions took place in the mornings, with half-hour drama and one-hour craft classes. The aim was to create objects that made the children's environment better and more friendly, with the voluntary participation of the parents.

As it was mentioned earlier, the *Ormánság Cultural Mission* not only provides cultural programmes for locals, but also provides help to solve everyday difficulties in other ways. This activity is mainly done by the organization through fundraising. Due to its continuously expanding network, a plenty of financial and food donations have been mediated for years. In addition, legal and pastoral care is provided to inhabitants as another support service, as well.

"*We receive a lot of high quality clothes, shoes for children and women, that we can bring, especially to disadvantaged families in Gilvánfa."* (Founder of Ormánság Cultural Mission Association)

The recent fundraising campaign was an ambassador fundraising campaign involving 6 ambassadors. The association asked every participant for a personal donation. For example, a paper theatrical performance called "*The sword shines brighter than the chain"*, aiming to commemorate the 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the War of Independence. The performance was facilitated by the work of Adrienn Herczeg, an ambassador actress who played in kindergartens and schools of Pécs, generating revenue for organizing further performances in the settlements of Ormánság. This performance was also played by the association together with *FCNG*, which was the first collaboration between the two organizations. An important note

to be made is that the proceeds were used to deliver food donations to 48 families in Gilvánfa, during the lockdown in March, 2020. In addition, residents of Vejti also received donations during this period.

A free training course for teachers in Ormánság, in collaboration with the *New Pedagogical Group* is also a new idea. This organization provides education and training for teachers strengthening democratic attitudes, and aiming to integrate online tools into education. A stable cooperation has also been established with the mayor of Vajszló, and the local library: the settlement helps the work of the association by providing locations for their various programmes.

The association is intent on assuming its social responsibility not only in the cultural and artistic segment, but in most areas of life. Besides the project implemented in the kindergarten of Gilvánfa, the Advent and summer programmes are (also) carried out with a community development goal in mind: the aim is to create meeting opportunities for the inhabitants. The choice of location and programme is deliberate, they hope to motivate and involve audience from Pécs as well.

## Other initiatives and cooperation

Ormánság Culture Mission Association works in tight cooperation with other cultural initiatives working in Ormánság region in South Transdanubia. In the background of joint projects, we can find social responsibility, personal acquaintances and former professional collaboration.

The leader of FCNG got in touch with Ormánság region 15 years ago as a member of Playback Theatre in the framework of a pedagogical project organized in an after school support program in Gilvánfa for 10-14-year-old children. *„The aim of the program was to support further education after primary school, and successful finishing of secondary school for the older pupils with the help of Playback Theatre tools.”* FCNG was established in 2013. They worked with the children during the whole school year, and a one-week summer camp was organized by them in Orfű, Cserkút or Kistótfalu. *„These summer camps served the self-reflexion, connections, and the understanding and expression of feelings and emotions. Improvisation techniques of The Playback Theatre improves personality, communication skills and handling conflicts. We had really good experiences with the children.”*

In 2016 the stage play *"Wouldn't you like to talk about yourself?"* was organized by FCNG in the after school place in Gilvánfa for Roma and handicapped participants. In the same year, the Playback Theatre won a tender focusing on integration of Roma and fragile social groups. In 2017, in another project they aimed to promote cultural accessibility. „… we brought children and adults to theatres, exhibitions, cinemas and concerts. There was an old lady in the team who attended theatre for the first time in her life." FCNG has organized 3 separated stage plays. One of them directed by the leader of Ormánság Cultural Mission was about the Roma holocaust. The new play of FCNG is "Do you still remember?" which focuses on the topic of home, security and homeland with the help of interviewees from the Hungarian German national minority and Roma ethnic minority.

Another contributor of the cultural projects is the library bus of Csorba Győző County Library launched in 2010. The bus could be the scene for paper theatre performance mentioned above. The original function is a mobile library and Internet service in almost 60 minor settlements in Baranya County (15 villages from the Ormánság region). There is a low demand for this service. Only a few people connected to the literature and some others who would like to access some special books. The role of the librarian is more complex: helping with CV writing supporting people in digital administration, improving digital skills etc. There is no other chance for local assistance, although several fields of administration moved to the digital platform. *"Mainly, we can provide literature, but we always say, that a librarian is not only a librarian – there are conversations and our function in mental hygiene is also important. It depends on the personal skills and attitudes of the librarian, too."*

The library bus served as the room of Santa Claus in December 2019 based on the example of Márkus Theatre in Pécs. Another cooperation helped the involvement of the actress Júlia Huzella who performed the *"Fairy Tale from 10"* project an read fairy tales for deprived children and families before the quarantine period. In 2020, the accessibility of inhabitants became problematic because of the Covid19 pandemic. Future cultural programmes should be based on local institutions, kindergartens and schools for a more effective way of motivation and activation of local communities.

**Problems of the region - from the perspective of the helpers**

It is important to provide insight into the difficulties of the region from the perspective of civil actors, who play an important role in helping locally. These external initiatives – in response to real local problems – primarily address socially excluded groups. Civilians gained relevant vocational insights about the daily lives of people and the region, due to the long-term local presence. It is extremely important to know the area and the people who live there – in the respondents' opinion – so that they can choose the way that suits these people best.

*„(…) it is a constant question in me too: do we know enough about who we want to help, and can we really help well enough, and do we really have the ideas they need? It is a constant dilemma, and that is why we try to connect with communities, try to read, try to research…"* (Founder of Ormánsági Kultúrmisszió)

The origin of the problems in the region is traced back to the regime change in Hungary and the accompanying *"great transformation"* according to the head of *FCNG*. The termination of collective farms came along with the loss of job opportunities, and their function of connecting and retaining people ceased to exist. The well-known problems in the literature also listed by the interviewees: the „gypsyization" of villages, the emigration of young people, the difficulties of transport, employment and their connection, the problems of the Hungarian Public Work Scheme, or the poor quality of education, the population's low education level, and the extreme workload of teachers. Moreover, vulnerability, the inability for strategic planning, the predominance of emotionally based decisions and their consequences, and the severe lack of ambition were also highlighted. These issues are not considered as the problems of Roma population but as the problems of poverty.

*"What I see is that, the most important lines of rail transport have disappeared, so transport is very difficult, and it is very hard to get a job locally. This has changed with Public Work Scheme, but with this kind of public work, you have become dependent on who the mayor is, and who you are. And I don't see this as a problem of Romany, but of poverty, for example that they can't plan … they can only survive. Long-term or medium-term*

*strategies are absolutely absent. They are good at how to live from day to day, the way we might not be able to live."* (Leader of FCNG)

The situation of education in the lagging settlements is especially difficult, with problems adding up: inadequate quality of education, teachers run high risk of burning out. The leader of *FCNG* expresses his opinion about the small villages in general. He believes children of the local intellectuals have a way better chance of getting admitted to higher education – also breaking the cycle of disadvantage – than children of other families.

*„ (…) the child of the local intellectuals (…) presumably, they can continue to learn, and research shows that it is not always lexical knowledge that counts, but how the teacher relates to the student: encourages, heartens, seeks and sees the good in them or not. Well, they don't see these in kids here."*

The leader of *Ormánság Cultural Mission Association* also mentions the problem in connection with the common initiative with *New Pedagogical Group*, in which it is so difficult to involve teachers that *"(…) we sweat blood to involve teachers because there is such a shortage of teachers and they are so much overburdened. I say, here is this attitude, which is very difficult to break through… all in all, it is very difficult."*

Lack of motivation, passivity and ambition is also a difficulty, as illustrated by the leader of the *Kultúrmisszió* through a negative experience:

*"(…) For example, the biggest failure for me, as I mentioned before, there was this beautiful church, where we brought a Christmas performance for 3 years in a row, that we also financed. And the pastor to whom the church belonged, he was overly opposed to our activity. (…) he managed to make our work there so impossible that in the 4th year, we rather went to Vajszló and organized a Christmas performance in the local church."*

*"So that… that is what is awfully hard, to motivate local communities to come to events at all and accept what we want to give them."* (Founder of Ormánság Cultural Mission Association)

The leader's opinion of the Csorba Győző Library's library bus programme also supports the latter: *"(…) if you don't go there a hundred times, there will be no results. You have to go there a hundred times and one more. Actually, it's kind of rude that I have to press down on people's throat what is good for them otherwise, because they can't realize it by themselves…"*

The local community and local contact persons play a really important role regarding the success of the services provided by the library bus, and for all cultural programmes as well. In most of the settlements there is a strong lack of interest, according to the experiences.

*"And the mere fact that I show up there and provide modern services means nothing. That is because (…) if there is no normal community, if there is no normal contact person, then providing service is much more difficult."* (Leader of the library bus programme)

The following example also underlines the importance of personal contact. Interest in cultural programmes is low in general, which is affected by the socialization factors according to the library bus driver:

*"(…) But it must also be seen that… I believe that people are drowning in their own problems and do not want to attend cultural events. (…) But that's not the only thing there is… I see that it is also a huge problem there, but at any rates, there are young people, there are not only inactive people, there are elderly people who could live anyway, but they don't… it is difficult… it is more complex."*

Personal invitation is essential, otherwise *"they don't feel entitled to, it's like not being invited to the event, because there was only one poster out there."* So, the success of the initiatives depends on the attitude of the programme organizers and the local contact person.

In addition, he emphasized the politicization and division of the region, as well as the contradictions on several levels. For example, regarding the social level, the inhabitants can be divided into two groups: the one that prioritizes the saving of traditions and declines all other innovations, and those who have no attachment to the region, to the local culture, and are not interested in preserving the traditions. "*Typically village problems*" are also mentioned such as envy and jealousy.

*"(…) Traditions, and nourishing traditions… the ones who are very much opposed to any kind of innovation, so they're a kind of little stuck. And there's the absolutely uninterested group, with the "I don't belong here, so I don't have roots" manner… whether they've settled in or moved in… so they don't have that kind of problems. And sometimes these opposing parties have conflicts."* (Leader of the library bus programme)

## Culture and arts as a tool for community development and social integration

These civil initiatives seek to respond to the problems mentioned above, using their own tools and techniques. Culture-focused initiatives derive from personal motivation primarily, with the provision of assistance to disadvantaged children and families, regarded as a heart of the matter by all interviewees. It all can be traced back to personal experiences, relationships and emotional connections. The *Ormánság Cultural Mission* not only aims to help with providing the means of culture, but also tries to improve the living conditions and quality of life of the locals in other ways.

*"(…) it started out that we were just dealing with cultural programmes, but obviously, if you get closer to these communities, it becomes so hypocritical, if you don't get involved in the other problems you could help with."* (Founder of Ormánság Cultural Mission Association)

Due to the association has recently become official and the pandemic is on, deploying further activities and function is not possible at this time. In spite of this, the organizers' goal is to get in contact with local authorities, social workers and institutions to offer their help.

Behind the mission of the *Ormánság Cultural Mission* the personal experiences of its leader can be found. Growing up in a humble family with many children, she had decisive cultural experiences thanks to her mother, by her words: *"which have made a so deep impression on me that are still a food to my soul to this day (…) that is why I can't be dissuaded from it."*

In her point of view, the current public perception of the importance of culture is fairly negative, and the long-term consequences are also not forward-looking:

*„(…) it is sad that obviously everyone thinks this (culture) is the last most important thing, because to have shoes or have something to eat is more necessary, of course, but in the meantime, my opinion is that it is a bad idea in general, what is prevalent in the country. Our society is in deep need of culture, because it's developing the souls of children and adults, and if we forget that, it will create a very bad generation."* (Founder of Ormánság Cultural Mission)

The issue of local communities is closely related to culture, which also receives lack of attention and importance:

*„As I see, the strongest thing that keeps a child is, if they have a community, and what sticks a family together is, if they have someone to turn to. Actually, this is exactly what is being destroyed overly: the power of small communities, what is the most important thing for survival, I think. Because it really doesn't matter where you live, if you are surrounded by a community, you can live."* (Founder of Ormánság Cultural Mission)

Personal reasons also determine how and what the *Kultúrmisszió* implements in its projects. It is important for the leader to work on meaningful, socially sensitive projects, and this decisive thread is complemented by her childhood experiences:

*„(…) when I am working on or  creating the projects, I think about what was a strong, decisive experience in my childhood that shaped my personality, my opportunities, and my life, and what I want to give my kids now."*

The leader of FCNG also attributes an important role to arts and culture in the lives of both individuals and communities. To help developing abilities and skills related to creativity contributes to process traumas easier. For those who have something to trust in, have positive experiences that make them feel good, it is easier to overcome traumatic situations.

According to his point of view, by means of arts, *„we can give them new aspects and new tools to use. (…) The other part is that I see the importance of branches of art in preserving traditions and strengthening local identity… one's self-confidence can be increased by that. If one can relate to oneself, like „yes, we have values as a small community, either as a larger group or as a geographical region"."*

People are much more colourful and improved thanks to arts and peculiarities. *„(…) it definitely means – at least in that area – that our thinking is greatly varied, that we see not only black and white, but very exciting shades."* Arts and culture in itself are not enough, but they are a very important part of complex developments.

*„So, in my view, it is important for these regions, like Ormánság, to provide the education of useful professions and trainings, to teach competencies that are real, not only something that exists on paper. With which they can really get a job, or create a job there, locally. In addition, education is just as important at any level as the latter, and there must be some kind of solidarity, which is also a product, a goal and an outcome of community building, and it can be complemented with the aspects of culture."* (Leader of FCNG)

It is considered important to develop people in several ways, because "*the more they can be a community of solidarity and live a fuller life, the more they can be satisfied, and then function as a community person.*" (Leader of FCNG) He brings the method of so called scene creation used in schools as an example, that is capable of offering new tools and techniques for the young to express themselves better.

*„(…) that kid we thought was absolutely clumsy, turned out he is damn good at this. Because he goes up to the stage and can talk, play, live by the role. So that suddenly, in connection with a new tool, both the group dynamics and the ranking within the group also change. (…) And when we see what is in others, we can be much more accepting and tolerant."* (Leader of FCNG)

The success of such initiatives is quite difficult to quantify. According to the interviewees, this is a really difficult area, helping work is always an emotional rollercoaster. It requires significant energy investment, but they feel that most of their work is achieving the goals set.

*„(…) you have to put in great amount of emotions and energies, some of which usually comes back, but we also have to face a lot of failures and resistance, and after that it is very-very difficult to pull yourself together and move on. But somehow (…) you simply convince yourself over and over again, that if there was only a little kid in that group, if there was only an adult at the event you reached, it's already worth it."*

*„We do not believe that this will be a turning point for everyone, but what we want to provide is the opportunity, the opportunity for the right to culture."*
(Founder of Ormánság Cultural Mission)

The success of the *Framework Creative Network Group* activity was illustrated by the leader of the civic group with some practical examples: "*for example, we had a student who, as a result of the so called playback sessions (…)"* acquired skills that could be used in a bad situation to maintain his/her student status in the educational institution. In addition, a student from Gilvánfa who gained admission to the Arany János Talent Management Program continued his studies at the Klára Leöwey Grammar School in Pécs, from where he/she went to university, was also highlighted as a positive example.

This specific area of assistance requires from actors a high level of commitment, willingness to help with social problems, and significant persistence. Interviewees also emphasized the importance of having local contact persons and the significance of their attitudes, in order to the intention of help get recognized and accepted by the inhabitants. Implementing an initiative requires a great amount of energy investment, and one of the most difficult tasks is to activate the passive, in most cases uninterested, unmotivated local habitants. For easier involvement, it is necessary to develop a strong personal relationship, gain a good "reputation", and build trust with the target group members. The personal address symbolizes that the initiative is for the locals, in point of fact.

**Conclusion**

In the local societies of the underdeveloped rural areas, there are only a few active motivated key-members, who could serve as proper and accessible examples for children and youth. External help is needed. Impulses coming from outside the local community could only be effective in the long run by activating local resources, otherwise they will be a new tool of survival strategies of the poor conserving the system of vulnerability. A successful intervention should impregnate and transform local community by strengthening its activity and self-care skills according to the principle of subsidiarity. We can interpret the researched initiatives in this context: the actions are answers for local challenges formulated by involving local inhabitants.

Active helpers and organizers are committed to solving the problems of population in underdeveloped marginalized rural area. They build horizontal and vertical networks for the effective work. Helpers' motivations are personal, based on their life history. Our interviewees are forming communities bridging individuals and groups in the cultural sector on the grounds of similar value system, and integrate different social levels involving and motivating members of the supported strata. Innovative cultural programs and initiatives could be a solid basis for community development by transforming values and attitudes for a higher quality of life.

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**Kitti Varga**

# CREATING A COMMUNITY FOR YOUNGSTERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN PÉCS

## Abstract

Even though we, as a society, learned a lot about exclusionary concepts over the last few years, those with intellectual disabilities are still considered to be a "social blind spot" or a taboo subject. I find learning communities and integrated camps to be the best solution for forming the social majority's relationship with and biases towards those with intellectual disabilities or limited physical and sensory function, as personal experiences may help us form a more informed opinion about them. For this reason, I wrote a case study about the integrated art camps organized by Pécs based Fogd a Kezem Alapítvány (Hold My Hand Foundation) and organizations working with them (Faculty of Music and Visual Arts, University of Pécs and the MeseTérKép team), in which I demonstrate and analyse the implemented pedagogical methodologies and supplement them with theoretical reflections.

*Keywords*

integrated education, people with disabilities, camp education, learning communities

## The importance of integrated activities

One of the central questions of my research is how members of the social majority relate to people with intellectual disabilities and those with limited physical or sensory functions, and how their relationships and prejudices can be shaped via education, especially via arts education. Therefore, I present pedagogical methodological considerations related to the integrated art programs of the organizations cooperating with Pécs-based foundation Fogd a Kezem Alapítvány (Hold My Hand Foundation), using the experiences of the participating helpers, teachers and students, as well as their parents, supplemented with theoretical reflections.

Fogd a Kezem Alapítvány has been operating in Pécs since 1991, employing adults with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities. Their goal

is to strengthen the self-advocacy skills of the Youngsters, improve their quality of life through employment, artistic development, recreational opportunities, group and individual exercises, legal and life counselling. In recent years, special emphasis has been placed on the involvement of external organizations, thus increasing the sensitivity of society, the acceptance of people with disabilities, and a more nuanced judgment.

In the course of the case study, after defining the theoretical framework, I present the collaborations intended for different age groups, the motivations and doubts of parents and leaders, and then the preparation phase relevant to the success of the camp. I place emphasis on the goals of the sessions and the possible methods of achieving them in relation to group dynamic processes. I see integrated sessions as a learning community where camp pedagogical methods are linked to social innovation. The targets of community learning are more malleable communities; it aims to overcome conflicts between different social groups, and examines the relationship between new types of communities (Benke 2014, Juhász 2019), and in this case targets people with intellectual disabilities and children and young adults aged 6-24. These communities can respond to the new challenges that have arisen in recent years, according to which there is a growing need for social sensitization from an early age, so the concept of a learning society requires new, more effective solutions to achieve social integration. In line with this, new types of services have emerged (such as the integrated camp I mentioned) that are constantly changing and evolving based on the needs, feedback, and collaboration of the participants. This is how a social dialogue can emerge, stemming from support for solidarity, active participation and dialogue between communities.

The literature background of my research is primarily provided by camp pedagogy, as these programs are stages for peculiar socialization, community development and educational, where people participate in the programs on a voluntary basis in an intensive environment different from the institutional framework, significantly beyond the comfort zone of the participants. Another pillar of my theoretical basis is the already detailed learning communities, including cultural learning (Boros, Gergye & Lakatos, 2019). Researchers in this field examine such local initiatives and focus on such developments, where learning plays a central role but takes place in a non-formal setting (Kozma 2015:144-176).

## Integrated Camps Organized by Fogd a Kezem Alapítvány

The first integrated camp was held in the summer of 2016 in a closed setting for the foundation's staff, and the children of their own and their acquaintances'. This changed in August 2017, when the camp became open to children aged 6-12 in and around Pécs with the involvement of MeseTérKép. Since then, students have been able to participate in similar sessions five more times: in the fall of 2017 in a one-day mini-camp, and then in August 2018, 2019, and 2020 in another full-week, daytime summer adventure. In parallel, in the summer of 2019, the foundation addressed another age group: an art camp was organized for high school students, the participants of which could validate their 50 hours there as compulsory community service. It is already clear from these few series of descriptions that the integrated camps discussed in the first half of the study do not meet the definition of such camp given by Ádám Nagy, according to whom *"camping: multi-day, intensive (1), off-site and experience-based (2), a leisure program service with a latent pedagogical (socialization, personality development) purpose (3). '* (Nagy 2018:15), but an activity that by definition does not qualify as a camp, yet its pedagogical tools follow the logic of a camp (Nagy 2018:6). At the same time, I agree with the statement of authors Gruber - Garabás, according to whom the group dynamics is valid in the case of day care camps, and it does not even depend on the number of days spent there (Gruber - Garabás 2018:78). The reason for this is that *"the camp itself is an exposed situation, an escape from the comfort zone for the individual"* (Gruber - Garabás 2018:71). Although the intensity changes differently in daycare camps, as the reflection on new experiences takes place in a different medium, the individual can still experience different forms of group existence to an increased extent.

## The Importance of Integrated Camps

Even though we, as a society, learned a lot about exclusionary concepts over the last few years, those with intellectual disabilities are still considered to be a "social blind spot" or a taboo subject, which may be due to feelings of helplessness, guilt at the sight of discrimination and segregation, or anxiety, as health, youth and productivity are outstanding values in modern society (Kálmán - Könczei 2002:25). Although it is a wide-ranging social issue. I believe that the real presence of the disabled and the organization of

integrated programs would promote their social and cultural integration by giving a more nuanced picture of people with intellectual disabilities or physical or sensory impairments, thus destroying the false image of the social majority from an early age.

Integrated camps help people to familiarize themselves with different patterns of behaviour and to form new social relationships through experiential pedagogy. After all, *"experiential pedagogical sessions and programs aim to develop the abilities and skills of the individual, to acquire effective forms of behaviour, and their ultimate goal is to help successful social integration through the development of social skills and the strengthening of the socialization process."* (Gruber - Garabás 2018:78). Social representations in people refer to their knowledge: they shape the unknown into known, they show, explain and interpret reality, they help to create concrete and coherent behaviours (Bigazzi 2015). The integrated camp provides an opportunity to build this representation in a secure setting, while also providing a handhold for interaction with the Youngsters. As the camp is accessible to everyone, and in addition to the title, the description also emphasized the presence of the Youngsters, those with disabilities are not stigmatized, as the basic mission of the camp is to accommodate all participants. Thus, intense coexistence and its externally controlled self-regulation create pedagogical opportunities that can only be replaced by very long and laborious educational processes within other frameworks (Nagy 2018: 5). In addition, I believe that in the world of integrated camps, the hidden mechanisms described by Dániel Makkai (Makkai 2018) can be inspected very well – these are outside the framework of organized learning, yet they're about the acquisition and shaping of cultural patterns. These camps provide an opportunity to continuously shape the cultural patterns on the basis of which all people build the totality of culture through new constructions, so as a social medium they can also play a significant role in shaping the social structure. In the words of Éva Gyarmathy, *"the camp is not a place that develops ability, but personality, that immediately and fundamentally distinguishes it from school, its goals, content and methodology."* (Gyarmathy 2018:90).

**Integrated Camp Participants and Their Motivations**

Camps for 6-12 year olds were held in the area of the foundation, but in a space separate from everyday work. A total of 27 children (14 boys and 13 girls) participated in the sessions, each between the ages of 6 and 12, of which 8 children were returning, i.e., attended a minimum of 2 camps. 9 children were relatives of either foundation employees or the Youngsters, while the others encountered a person with intellectual disabilities exclusively within the framework of the foundation. They were joined by 3-4 Youngsters every day, so the number of people in each camp was a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 18.

Thanks to the small number of participants and three camp leaders, everyone received proper attention. This was also much needed to reassure parents, as *"I had serious fears before the first program (a one-day detective camp), I couldn't imagine how mentally challenged adults would behave around children. I was afraid that either an excessive expression of love or a possible outburst of anger, maybe extreme behaviour could be scary for my children."* – said one of the parents about the fear mentioned by many, which also shows the general social image of people with disabilities. At the same time, fear because of segregated education emerged not only among parents, but also among occupants: *"I had serious doubts. On the one hand, in relation to children, because I was very afraid that many of them had not yet met or regularly worked with people with intellectual or physical disabilities, and they would have a hard time dealing with the situation, they would comment on them, mock, pick on, exclude them. On the other hand, I also feared how I would handle any conflicts that might arise, or I'd find it difficult to find or run games and tasks where both children and Youngsters could prevail."* While the mixed composition of participants did require extra attention in the preparations, these are all challenges that arise in all camps (not just in the context of an integrated camp), as *"it is not possible to be fully prepared, there are always doubts about how we can create the right conditions and medium for all participants. Therefore, they require maximum care to avoid the opposite result."* – as summed up by the camp leaders.

When asked why they enrolled their children in an integrated camp, parents gave two answers: some of them consider it important for children to encounter situations and individuals radically different from everyday school life, thus increasing their social and societal sensitivity. Here, several noted

the problem that the use of the word "retard" ("fogyi" or "fogyatékos") as a swear word is common among children. The parents resented this and wanted the word to be filled with content for the children. The other main motivation was the personnel of the camp, as they had already participated in their other sessions and camps. Therefore, if we accept that the camp is basically a step out from one's comfort zone - which in my opinion is even more powerful in the case of integrated camps – then knowing and trusting the personnel is incredibly important.

The art camp for high school students was not organized on the territory of the foundation, but in a village near Pécs (Kistótfalu). 3 boys and 3 girls signed up for the camp, 6 Youngsters and 3 helpers took part in the sessions.

One girl left after the first day in the camp saying *"I feel sorry for the Youngsters. I can only see in them what they could have been, so I find the camp is very stressful spiritually,"* – that shows one of the most common attitudes: compassion. The composition of the camp team was constant besides her. The other two girls already knew the Youngsters, as they visited the foundation's daycare during the year to complete their community service classes. Their motivation was not to finish their compulsory 50 hours, as they were close to its end, but they were interested in different art forms and very much liked the Youngsters. The three boys only knew each other before the camp, they arrived mostly due to parental pressure. Their motivation was primarily to complete the compulsory community service hours. When asked what their fears were at the beginning of the camp, they said that they were afraid they would simply laugh at the Youngsters. However, after a few tense days, learning the humor of the Youngsters, they were already laughing and joking with them.

**The Structure of Integrated Camps**

For primary school students, all camp sessions were designed so that none of the participants were restricted from participating in any programs in the camp. As I have already mentioned, the parents were aware of the presence of the Youngsters, but due to the doubts that arose, the employers kept in touch with them during the camps.

Since the children were present every day during each camp week but the Youngsters changed day by day, they considered it important to work on a different topic each day (carnival, space, myths, oceans) so that anyone

could get involved without needing prior knowledge. Each session of the MeseTérKép starts with a contemporary tale, which is related to the theme of the day, thus creating a common atmosphere. This is followed by drama and creative sessions, all of which are led by an expert but they still encourage free self-expression. In addition, they consider it important to properly prepare the tasks, thanks to which basically everyone can have a sense of success.

Since the personnel of the camp already knew the Youngsters, they could pay more attention to their interests and personal preferences, not just approach them based on their disabilities. The goal of the first day is to create a comfort zone for the attendees, bring them together accordingly, and accept the rules for the whole week, which you repeat at the beginning of each day. During the days, in addition to the individual works, the participants also created a joint work every day, which required either cooperation from individual (building a large spaceship), or random pairs (drawing imaginary sea animals), or strong group work (planning the construction and blueprint of a city or compiling a common story and crime record during an investigation). During the exercises related to drama, movement and sensory tasks, the pairs (superhero training), small groups (astronaut training) and large groups (carnival ball game) were constantly changing, so it was possible to try out different group dynamics. These tasks taught the camp participants to play (and create) together, so the camp supported and accommodated all participants at the same time, while also helping integration. In addition to the sessions, children and the Youngsters also played together in their free time after lunch, so they did not only have the opportunity to have casual fun during the "mandatory cooperation" of the organized programs. As a result, after the initial shyness, *"the children were open to the Youngsters, the common tasks were done smoothly, with pleasure, but at the same time (in a completely natural way) there was a constant incentive for cooperation, characterized not so much by deeper bonds but by peaceful coexistence."* – the camp leaders added.

The high school camp looked quite different due to the change in venue and the shift in the proportions of participants. The leader of the week was Bence Zsin, a painter, a doctoral student, and Felicity Starkey, a special education teacher and dance therapist, and lastly Kitti Varga art educator held the classes.

Participants arrived at the venue together every day on old type trains. Due to the lack of accessibility, some Youngsters had problems getting on the train, so community building started from the very first moment. After that, getting from the railway to the venue also required a longer walk, and then, as the topic of the camp, bigger walks were needed in the forest around the village. The challenge for the Youngsters was travelling these distances, while for students it was to maintain their patience. During these trips, however, I found that they fully adapted to the pace of the Youngsters, motivating them to continue their journey. The tasks here also required different team dynamics: individual (imprinting raw materials found in nature), paired (drawing without vision), small groups (building a bridge from natural materials), and large group sessions. The taboos in everyone were mostly broken by one of the movement therapy sessions. The performance of a learned choreography took place in pairs (1 student or helper and a Youngster stood in pairs), however, the eyes of the students and helpers were blindfolded, so it was entirely up to the Youngsters to avoid an accident. Looking at the performance from the outside, the Youngsters seemed to show an incredible level of concentration to show that they were capable of doing this task well, while the students / helpers obeyed the governing hands with no expectations.

Another important difference between camps of different ages is the relationship between students and the Youngsters. Young attendees are also children in the eyes of the Youngsters, so they participated in all games as an equal party with them. In contrast, high school students were seen as adult "helpers," so their "disabled identity" had emerged in these cases, which sometimes involved exploiting students. In these cases, the Youngsters did not lack the skill to complete the task, but the motivation. Student attendees at the end of the camp said this was the hardest thing for them to deal with: they didn't know when and how to say no. This was greatly aided by the helpers present, who served as role models or made it easier for them to speak to the Youngsters.

Since this was the first time most participants met with people with disabilities, the leaders considered it important that all students know they can also initiate a conversation with the Youngsters, express their fears, uncertainties about either the tasks or the participants. In their study, Gruber and Garabás draw attention to the fact that one of the fundamental differences between day care camp and residential camp is that the intensity changes

differently, the reflection on new experiences takes place in a different medium. If the children go home after a session and spend time in their usual environment, we remove the processing of experiences from the medium of living (Gruber - Garabás 2018:72). It can even be dangerous if the camp attendee is left alone to process the influences that affected him/her, but in these situations an attempt was made to eliminate this. On the one hand, every age group's day was closed with a reflection period, so that both students and Youngsters could reflect on what had happened in the camp environment and tell about their daily (positive and negative) experiences. Interviews with the parents of the children in the 6-12-year-old camp revealed that this conversation continued at home, where they could tell the events and doubts of the day at home, in a familiar environment that was safe for them. With this double chance of reflection - which took place first in a professional and then in a personal setting - I believe that the proper processing of the new experience has been maximized, and any unprocessed, negative effects were minimized.

## Art Brut! – integrated art seminar

In September 2015, the joint work of the foundation and the Faculty of Arts of the University of Pécs started, called Art Brut! - an integrated art seminar under the supervision of Csaba Hegyi, associate professor and painter Bence Zsin, doctoral student. The aim of this optional seminar is connect artists with intellectual disabilities and students of the fine arts courses (the Institute of Fine Arts and the Institute of Media and Applied Arts), striving for experiential and effective integration of art, co-creation and presenting all this to the general public. Basically creation without expectations in a medium that leaves a lasting mark on the personal and professional lives of the participants. It also aims to help the Youngsters in their personal development by taking responsibility and planning their tasks, goals and actions. Thus, it is a two-pronged initiative to reduce stereotypes, prejudices, or even feelings of inferiority (summarizes Varga 2020:4-5). Students taking the course will be joined by 5 Youngsters, who spend 3 hours every two weeks at the university as unofficial guest students. In addition to the courses, a number of events were held jointly within the framework of the seminar.

In the last four years, a total of 54 students have attended, 32 of whom have taken the course at least twice. The main motivation of the Youngsters

is to break away from everyday life for a few hours every two weeks and focus only on creation while getting to know new techniques and people. From the university's part, *"there has been a need and demand to run optional courses that also showcase and implement the broader environment, subcultural phenomena, and ancient sources, historical and personal origins of art. In other words, the goals of the cooperating parties gave us hope that we could try to work together in a practical session."* (Hegyi 2020: 9). Csaba Hegyi also talks about the diversity of student motivation: *"First of all, many applicants suspect through self-knowledge that they will be able to practice original art by searching their innermost, most hidden starting points of their creative intent. In many cases, conversations during work reveal that many students choose this occupation due to family ties. Many people recognize the characteristics of "art brut" in their own creative activity, and there are some who are attracted by the unknown and their curiosity. Some of them leave the course after the first session and some of them take it more than once, even for six consecutive semesters. […] Getting to know "art brut" might suggest a variety of orientations and paths for our students majoring in painting. The reinforcing effect of the theoretical and practical knowledge of "art brut" can be discovered in their practices, diploma work and even future creative activities."* (Hegyi 2020: 9-10).

What does the presence of the others teach on these occasions? Bence Zsin answers this: *"[During the course of working together] we find out that the opportunity to learn from each other is not tied to a professional or social position. […] One of the defining experiences of the course is that the participants from the foundation do not have the inhibitions that in many cases stand in the way of immersing oneself in the work. Throughout the course, we can see the liberated, unexpected creative presence that many of us would need in many cases, and which is a prerequisite for creating sincere and liberated gestures."* (Zsin 2020: 12), this way *"the categories that maintain our separateness disappear."* (same source).

**Aftermath**

In our experience, during integrated camps, children's attitudes towards the Youngsters become more and more natural, they are happy to come back to our camps, but *"it's basically due to the parents who are open to minority society and convey a similar attitude in everyday life"* – according to one of

the leaders of the camp. At the same time, as a result of a personal relationship and shared experience, the initial fear is increasingly pushed into the background. In addition, it brings students closer to *"creating a dialogue that allows participants to move more confidently in the spaces of an art process that might get established later."* (Zsin 2020: 14). I believe that in the long run, such programs and learning communities can be the keys to the creation of an open, inclusive society, where communities make the region a pleasant, liveable place in all respects (physically, economically, culturally and mentally). We hope that we have taken a step forward to eliminate the prejudices, taboos and blind spots that surround people with intellectual disabilities.

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# PART IV.

# COMMUNITY BUILDING AND INNOVATION

**Edina Márkus**

# COMMUNITY LEARNING AND SOCIAL INNOVATION

**Abstract**

The study presents the findings of a qualitative survey analysing initiatives in adult learning and community learning.

Kozma (2019) in his work 'Interpretations of social innovation' delineates four approaches to social innovation: as a process of problem solving; as a process of community learning; as a collusion of the stabilising and progressive forces of the community; as well as a chain of innovations spearheaded by 'local heroes'.

12 cases in adult learning and community learning have been tested for each of the above interpretation of social innovation. We had the following questions in mind: who are the concerned parties of the activities and who do these activities serve? What are the goals and areal scopes of the activities? What conditions are necessary for implementing the activities? What conclusions may be drawn from them to serve others?

The cases have been analysed along certain criteria such as the area the given innovation affects as a development project and the way it contributes to the development of a settlement or part of a settlement; the element of learning from one another and knowledge transfer that appears in it; and if it involves some kind of community-based and collaborative, social innovation.

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## Introduction

The purpose of our study is to present the findings of a qualitative survey analysing initiatives in adult learning and community learning.

An antecedent of the research has been the research entitled Learning regions in Hungary (LeaRn). Based on the findings of the project we have

conducted research in the framework of the programme entitled Community learning and social innovation (LearnInnov).

Under the Community learning and social innovation research project we have examined the role of learning, adult learning and community learning in overcoming disadvantages; the ways a community may break out of disadvantaged situations; how learning can contribute to the development and integration of a settlement or part of a settlement, a region, or to the transformation of a community of whatever size; the forms of learning from one another and knowledge transfer that might appear in the given project; as well as the community-based, collaborative social innovations involved.

In accordance with the approaches delineated by Bradford (2004), Ferguson (2017) and Kozma (2018), we regard social innovation as a new social activity that aims at solving a problem whilst creating new social behaviours and attitudes.

Kozma (2019) in his work 'Interpretations of social innovation' delineates four approaches to social innovation:

Social innovation
- as a process of problem solving;
- as a process of community learning;
- as a collusion of the stabilising and progressive forces of the community;
- as well as a chain of innovations spearheaded by 'local heroes'.

In our qualitative survey analysing initiatives in adult learning and community learning, we tested 12 cases for each of the above emphatic interpretation of social innovation.

We analysed case studies of successful initiatives disclosed through field trips under the complex transnational collaborative project 'Learning Communities and Social Transformation: Research Findings in Eastern and Central Europe', which were completed in accordance with uniform criteria.[1] We strove to review, compare and analyse the successful programmes.

The goal of the research was to investigate community-based, collaborative social innovations, to analyse initiatives that may prove to be

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[1] The criteria for examining the cases are listed in the appendix to the study.

innovations by reacting to a local challenge or problem, perhaps also creating new social behaviours.

When analysing the individual cases, we had the following questions in mind:
What areas does the given innovation affect as a development project? What are the areas involved?

- The formal field, primarily public education, higher education;
- non-formal scenes of learning: different adult education activities, e.g. trainings providing different vocational qualifications or general-purpose training courses, at the workplace, in adult education institutions or cultural institutions;
- cultural learning: in the broad sense, including the fields of arts, music, media, sports;
- community learning: non-governmental organisations and their networks, partnerships (Engler – Márkus 2019, Pusztai et al. 2020).

Further, how does the development project contribute to the development or integration of a settlement, part of a settlement or a region? Does it involve learning from one another and knowledge transfer (learning communities)? Does it involve any kind of community-based, collaborative innovation or social innovation?

Also, who are the concerned parties of the activities and who do these activities serve? What are the goals and areal scopes of the activities? What conditions (human, technological, financial) are necessary for realising the activities? What are their results? How sustainable are they and what conclusions may be drawn from them that may serve others; how adaptable are they?

Using Kvale's (2005) metaphor, when applying such methods, we explore phenomena as travellers: observing, conversing, asking questions, interpreting and based on these generating data, finally shaping a story from the information received.

**A short overview of the cases**

The initiative *Artisan venture* is an example of vocational group counselling, where participants may receive useful information from professionals on further improving their ideas for ventures, and where they can share their experiences and learn from one another (Tamásova and Barnová 2019a: 157). The workshops are organised by Trnava Centre for Mothers and Children in cooperation with the Slovakian Business Agency.

The result of the project is mothers' (as well as others') verifiable interest in artisanship and launching their own ventures. The participants are grateful for the personal method which approaches them as potential or beginner entrepreneurs. The professional instructions and workshops, where the participants may receive useful information and good practices for their own enterprises, improve the quality of the business environment in Slovakia and the situation of start-ups (Tamásova and Barnova 2019a: 160).

The *ENVIROeducation* project primarily, but not exclusively, focuses on young adults' environmental and ecological training. The programme provides an opportunity to change our thinking and improve our ecological consciousness, as well as for participants to learn about ideas connected to climate change and to develop and realise projects that may facilitate local solutions to environmental problems (Tamásova – Barnova 2019b).

The project's objectives also include inspiring participants to come up with individual creative and innovative solutions to problems of their own environments in cooperation with the local communities.

The basic goal of the programme *Training for adulthood, or educating a responsible generation* is to educate more conscious and more responsible young people that find their ways easily in the maze of everyday life. Training for adulthood is a way of non-formal learning which seeks answers to questions only marginally or not at all dealt with in formal education (Tamás 2019). The topics are multiple, from financial management to financial awareness, insurance policies, civil obligations to practical knowledge necessary for establishing an independent living. Based on the practice of the past years an indirect goal of the programme – raising social awareness – is already apparent: several participants have become more open to the everyday problems of environmental protection, charitable activities and taking civil responsibility owing to the thematics of the group discussions.

The project *Training community animators in the Bodrogköz* is based on a training course. The primary goal of the training was to provide the employees of cultural institutions in small settlements with practical knowledge that they can directly utilise in the daily practice of cultural provision for their settlements. Another important objective was to create a network of cultural cooperation among disadvantaged settlements by 'forcing' the employees to engage in continuous cooperation during the training course (Bordás 2019).

The most important achievement of the programme is that communities have been established in the majority of the settlements involved. The tasks completed in the training provided good basis for the participants to be able to continue their work efficiently.

The programme *Processing forest treasures* primarily emphasises the possibility of realising adult learning. The good practice itself presents an opportunity to bring about economic prosperity in local rural communities. The goal is to convince the populace to pick forest fruit and mushrooms in the appropriate way and thus process and sell those with added value. In the wake of the idea a fruit processing plant was realised in 2012 and has been operating under the Green Venture programme through the financial and professional support of Polgár-Társ Foundation and the Romanian-American Foundation. The primary goal is to increase the profitability of traditional agriculture as well as to utilise and sell the resources, the treasures of the forest in a worthy way (Barabási 2019a).

*Collecting and processing medicinal herbs, as a way to integrate disadvantaged youth*

The good practice is connected to Civitas Foundation and the Lókod Youth Association, and the idea itself was born from the fact that recently more and more people have turned to health products. Therefore, there is a greater focus on medicinal herbs, too. The goal of the project was to provide one or two participants from the Székler Land who would contribute their knowledge on medicinal herbs and these would be collated (information on the kinds of herbs used in the given settlement, when and where to pick them, what they use them for in what form, etc.). There were also training courses held non-formally on the topic (Barabási 2019b).

The good practice evidently contributed to the improvement of the settlements and, moreover, to stopping the village (Lókod, Hargita county, Romania) from becoming deserted, and improving its viability. The good practice itself highlights how relocating people of disadvantaged familial backgrounds and social handicaps can provide impetus to a village which is on the verge of becoming depopulated, by which it is not only the people's living conditions that are transformed and the people that find more hope and perspective but also the entire village is rejuvenated (Barabási 2019b: 83).

*Community learning, volunteering for young people*

The goal of Kalamáris Association's project is to develop young people and the professionals, adults and NGOs working with them. In cooperation with the Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county local government 10-15 volunteering young people from 10 villages, altogether approx. 130 people were involved in the programme (Éles 2019).

By creating the project the organisation wished to ensure that the young people have an opportunity to spend their free time in an alternative and valuable way that would also increase their knowledge, even if in a music festival. Motivating young people to grassroots organisation, the project involves them in the volunteering activities of NGOs, providing a perspective of self-actualisation, enterprising and thus settling down locally (Éles 2019).

For the young people participating in community development the main direct benefit was the development of personal competencies. For the settlements, the possibility of change lies in the young people who are slowly becoming a group and a community.

*Preservation of a church and community learning*

This community development and learning practice is tied to the preservation of the Ábránfalva church. Abránfalva is a small village in Hargita county 13 km south of Székelyudvarhely, municipally a part of Kányád. It is an over 500-year-old village. It is not only the congregation that is small in population but the church building was also rather worse for wear. By 2011 the building had become so run-down that people could literally see through the walls. That was the moment when the pastor formulated the idea of finding the best alternative for immediate intervention, or else they would risk losing the crumbling building altogether. That was the time he decided to

call out to not only members of the Ábránfalva congregation but also to those that are connected to the village in any way, who regularly visit it or live there locally (Barabási 2019c).

The pastor managed to motivate all these concerned parties to participate, and they started the renovation work with 10 people. Their perseverance proved exemplary, and instead of diminishing in numbers, more people joined the project. All of them felt that the church building had to stand in order to save the village from extinction (Barabási 2019c).

In the construction sessions all people gave their best (of their theoretical and physical knowledge and know-how). Young and old worked together. The exemplary cooperation showed that it is possible to learn from one another and to disseminate experiential knowledge.

*Launching Freedom Community Centre*

According to the initiators of the programme, Freedom Community Centre provides an opportunity for residents of a Debrecen district, Tégláskert, to join social life. It provides services which might enhance the residents' motivation to establish individual advocacy, and instigate social engagement.

The young people in the project receive help to learn their own skills and strengths, to develop their self-knowledge, improve their self-confidence, as well as to find what they have a talent for, and thus improve their academic achievements or motivation for learning, get back to school, or even reach prominent results there (Szénási 2019).

The professional project leader said, 'The programme improves the population's problem-solving, conflict resolution and collaboration skills. They have common experiences which will be nice to remember years later and which they can use to gain confidence from even in the more difficult years of their lives. This is how a community is shaped' (Szénási 2019: 205).

*Sufni ('Shed') – Creative charity shop and arts shelter* as a programme assists contemporary artists. The members of Underground Cultural and Youth Public Benefit Association strive to support different amateur art collectives and self-organising groups, new and creative initiatives.

The designated purpose of Sufni is to create a community space and operate a charity shop from donations. After the initial goals their scope of activities was further extended, and a community mentoring process was created, during which they support the young people contacting them, having

talks, presentations and workshops. They strive to reach their goals by actions supporting the youth as well as organising different art events (Körtvély 2019).

The *Learning through painting* programme is fundamentally centred upon marrying the joy of creation to community building. Of the activities painting murals is the most significant one, during which members visit several institutions, such as schools and hospitals. They listen to the stories of the people and children living and working there, then include these stories in a great mural. This makes the creation really personal. In addition, they hold right-brain painting courses, too.

Programmes of social responsibility can be measured primarily by what change they effect in the place they are realised. The organisers have experienced long-lasting indifference in the places they turn up in. During the realisation of the project the employees can join in the preparatory work of recreational painting, and thus the institution is rejuvenated through them. In many cases it is not the painting that brings about the change but the work done on the painting itself (Kenéz 2019: 213).

*Learning and community through music: the Dub Székház initiative*

The general goal of Dub Székház events is to prove that the subculture of non-commercial electronic music can provide the basis of entertainment and recreation of high-standard, intellectual and emotional value (Helmeczi 2019:216).

The goal is to share the values of a musical culture and the joy of creation with the younger generation. Their most well-known cultural events are Dub Székház tent at Campus Festival and the KULTer.hu literary tent. The members have learnt the basics of producing music through self-education, but are continually training themselves and each other in this field (Helmeczi 2019: 2015).

Dub Székház contribute to the transformation of communities of various sizes as they have a rather multifarious audience, recruited from different age groups and social layers. The organisation itself was not created specifically to realise social innovation or benefit, but ultimately it has proved capable of motivating the members of different social strata (Helmeczi 2019: 2015).

**Comparison of the cases**

The cases investigated here have appeared in three fields: *non-formal and informal learning* (artisan venture, Enviroeducation, training for adulthood, community animators in the Bodrogköz)*, community learning* (forest treasures, collecting and processing medicinal herbs, community learning for young people, church preservation project) and *culture* (Freedom Community Centre, Sufni, learning through painting, learning and community through music).

Based on Kozma's (2019) *categorisation of social innovation*, some of the cases under review can be regarded as *innovation through problem solving*, such as the Artisan venture, the Processing forest treasures project, Collecting and processing medicinal herbs as a way to integrate disadvantaged youth, Preservation of a church and community learning, as these react to problems of unemployment and occupation emerging from the given locality or a lack in the community (the lack of a church). The members of the community create not simply ventures or rescue operations but together learn things to be able to perform the given activity and transfer their knowledge and experience as well as ensure that their work has long-term results.

Some other projects may be categorised as innovation *as a process of community learning*, such as the Launch of Freedom Community Centre, Sufni – Creative charity shop and arts shelter, Learning through painting, Learning and community through music. Two great directions can be established based on the *target groups* of the cases:

- Some of the cases focus specifically on young people, developing their skills (independence, volunteering), shaping their views and awareness (environmental consciousness) or providing useful pastimes, and attempting to shape a cohesive community from the young people of the given settlement.
- The other greater target group is not based on age, but includes a circle of residents in the settlement who are already employable: the initiative strives to teach activities that may contribute in some way to an income-generating activity or to further improving the existing work.

One major organising force in the group is the location, the common interest, and being together, alongside which creation as an activity also appears as well as a 'byproduct': the activities learned may also generate income.

Looking at *sustainability* in the 12 cases, we may establish that in most cases the local networks and the human factor have utmost importance. In general, in community-based initiatives the human side is decisive in launching, realising and upkeep, too. Yet, in settlements and communities where similar problems arise, it is possible to launch programmes to effect changes and realise actions through learning about the cases, so the above programmes may become model initiatives.

In almost all cases there appear some forms of non-formal, informal learning: the participants either attend a course or non-formal learning sessions together or *learn from one* another during some activity performed jointly.

## Summary

Learning about these cases may be advantageous for several target groups. On the one hand, they can be beneficial and useful for professionals in organisations facilitating adult learning, integration and skills development. Since these programmes may take place in various scenes – workplaces, institutions of adult education, but also cultural institutions (of community culture, community collections and other) and social institutions as well as the networks of such --, so they are useful for professionals and organisations working in such fields. On the other hand, the beneficiaries may include professionals in municipal development and decisions-makers who are involved in the human resources development of their region, who, by studying the cases disclosed in the research, may have an impact on generating and supporting such projects. Thirdly, they may prove useful for participants of trainings on community development and adult learning. Finally, the vases may also contribute to the data of interested academics that are involved in the research of non-formal, informal learning.

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**Tamás Kozma**

## COMMUNITY AND INNOVATION

As a series of interviews, I have had discussions with six entrepreneur ladies. While the interviews were with entrepreneurs, it was not difficult to notice that all of them were about starting innovations. It was likewise easy to identify their entrepreneurship and social innovations themselves. The problem the interviewees faced and had to solve was the same in each case: their own ruined lives. One of them lost her husband, another got divorced, while somebody else went bankrupt with a previously private business. In one way or another, all of them were at "rock bottom". From those depths of desperation did their inspirations come from – a way to escape their misery. The solutions were nothing special though, just simple ideas: one of them started cooking, and opened a public catering service; others began doing handicraft or making ceramics and floor tiles. Initially, all the efforts were the first steps in a long way upwards – they have become flourishing businesses and real innovations.

The common denominator of every entrepreneurship was the presence of a community. It served as a sort of a backup factor for every venture. They were diverse communities: the family itself, three or four helping children if the family was in a disarray. I some cases the parents were supporting the entrepreneur, feeling like owners themselves. The one with a deceased husband had colleagues, friends, or at least customers. These customers did not only do business with the entrepreneur because they liked her products, but they also wanted to help her out. Some form of a community could be found behind every entrepreneurship – without that, renewal and innovation could not have been achieved. Thus, there is no entrepreneurship without a community.

In our previous research, we have covered many aspects of the birth of innovations and their diverse fields (Kozma, 2019; Márkus and Kozma (ed.), 2019). We have described how they are started: a great, devastating threat that endangers those who live together – may it be a flood, an earthquake, or a fire. Works summarizing social innovations usually tell us about natural disasters, which bond people (e.g. Scott-Cato and Hillier, 2010; Rodima-Taylor, 2012). This bond appears as members of the communities involved recognize their own, personal catastrophes in the events. Those who draw

attention to the importance of prevention are also necessary. Then we need those "local heroes" who take lead in a community, urging solutions - may those be traditional methods (which can easily convince the masses), or unorthodox ones (that are harder to accept for the majority). The winning solution will be apparent by this competition of old and new. Finally, another thing is needed after surviving the crisis: the common memory, history experienced together, a frequently told narrative, which (if told frequently enough) will strengthen the bond.

However, we have failed to notice another factor, at least not in its true significance. This is the group of people living together, facing the threat and the challenge. We should have noticed them. Social innovations (may they be new entrepreneurship, new attempts, new ways to escape the catastrophe) always appear when the "local heroes" are backed up by those who need to be saved or protected. These people trust their heroes, and they can be relied upon.

Therefore, we are going to take a look at them. In this work we are covering communities, which provide the background for innovators, contributing to the innovations by relying on them. New attempts become actual social innovations together with these people.

## Narratives

The word "community" has become a fashionable term, we use it through and through. The use of the word often covers the fact that these "common-things" (community transport, community spaces, etc.) are monopolized by certain groups of society, and they are no longer common properties, but obscure forms of private ownership. The frequent use of "community" can be deceiving and misleading, as it can mean just the opposite. Some narratives of what can serve the common's interest:

*"Democracy" manifesting the interests of the community.* At the dawn of the modern era, private ownership meant the escape from the clutches of the (feudal) state. The community possessing private property was standing against the monetizing and colonizing state, creating democracy as a mean of self-defence. Scholars of history often use this narrative, when they consider European colonization a form of spreading democracy worldwide (Watson and Barber, 1990). This narrative tells us that the course of history points towards the gradual perfection of democracy, which is based on the ever-

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evolving markets and competition. History from this viewpoint puts the United States in a leading role (Boorstin, 1958).

*"Deprivatization" serving the community.* Leftist movements have an understanding of the world according to which the community is standing against the overwhelmingly powerful private ownership (the capital). This narrative dates back to the dawn of industrial capitalism. According to it, democracy is just a temporary balance between the feudal state and the minority ownership struggling to get free, which will immediately start to grow once free of its feudal bonds, becoming capitalist itself later on. According to this narrative, privatization does not bring freedom, but the overwhelming power of the capital, from which communities can only get free by socialism. The horrible regimes of the 20th century (Fascism, Nazism and Communism) were all originated from this idea all around Europe and beyond. In the end, the common property had become state property, as the ever-powerful state could gradually gain ownership of private property (by the means of deprivatization and acquisition), hence the state became the only owner with actual power. State ownership was often contrasted with private ownership as if state ownership would simply denote common property – standing for the interests of the community against the greedy, expanding private ownership.

*"Market", the liberator of the community.* After the fall of the European totalitarian regimes (first after the Second World War, then at the end of the Cold War around 1989/1990), we are back again at the dawn of Europe's history. Totalitarian states privatizing in the name of the community are succeeded by international mega-corporations, against which communities are helpless once again, resorting to various violent (revolutionary or terrorist) movements.

**Is there an alternative?**

Is there an alternative? Previously we have described narratives that helped the empire-building East and West (in the name of socialism, or democracy and globalization respectively) to monopolize lesser or bigger communities of society. The search for the alternative (the "third way") has a long history, especially between East and West. Those who were looking for this alternative also considered communities.

According to Kropotkin (1908), the state must be eradicated (anarchism), as it violently suppresses communities living under it. In Central and Eastern Europe, this had resulted in coup attempts and assassinations, leading to the birth of the Russian-Soviet totalitarian regime. In Northern Europe, it primarily manifested as the formation and strengthening of national communities, breaking away from the reigning Church, leading to an inward-looking "religious awakening". Civil rights movements in the United States, as well as popular religious cults at the turn of the 19-20th century also belong to this category.

While in the 19th century Europe "nation" was the universal binder of communities (Asztalos, 1993; 2004), during the first half of the 20th century it was turned over by "the people". The usage of the term "nation" reflected the break-away attempt of groups controlling societies, trying to gain independence from the actual empires. From the early 20th century, the idea of "the people" denoted a community, which was breaking away from the nation as a political entity, becoming its alternative. The fall of colonial empires upvalued the various (regional, family-based, or economic) communities. The different inherent groups provided protection, and formed new political identities, in a religious form in many cases.

Hungary and societies of the Central-Eastern European region experienced this with the withdrawal of Soviet occupation forces. Their state structures, being the extended arms of the Soviet empire, were discredited. Different varieties of the community were spawned, sometimes emerging from the forgotten past. Some initiatives, imagining the future with a weak or non-present state, were also emerging. These initiatives were hoping for self-governing communities. However, joining the European Union brought a new era. Community as a reference has not disappeared but lives on in the form of NGOs.

These processes were described earlier in the case of "newborn universities" (Kozma et al., 2003). As an alternative to previously government-supervised institutions, we see higher education initiatives that oppose governments and look for new sources of financial support throughout Central-Eastern Europe (Kozma et al., 2005). So-called "community colleges" had started to appear, invoking interest towards privatization in higher education, as its "third way". This correlated with the euphoric sense of liberation after the political transition – but did not fit into the "empire" ideology of the relevant offices of the European Union (the

Brussels Commission). Because of the way it had formed and evolved, the EU did not especially have a positive message for minority groups and communities all over Europe. It rather wanted to convince nation-states to join the Union, while coordinating members' administrations.

The "commons" movement (named after the common pastures of English-speaking countries) had arrived in Hungary in the first decade of the 2000s. According to a popular description:

"The commons is a new way to express a very old idea—that some forms of wealth belong to all of us, and that these community resources must be actively protected and managed for the good of all. The commons are the things that we inherit and create jointly, and that will (hopefully) last for generations to come. The commons consists of gifts of nature such as air, oceans and wildlife as well as shared social creations such as libraries, public spaces, scientific research and creative works." (On the Commons, 2020)

We may know the commons-movement from our time. They include sharing economy initiatives (e.g. Airbnb), shared vehicles, or shared kitchens. The greatest idea of community-based thinking is the "basic income" – suggesting that a society (therefore every citizen) must receive a certain basic income, getting free from the clutches of the labour market, so that they may only work for the benefit of society on a voluntary basis.

It seems it is fairly easy to criticize economic activities supported and promoted by the commons-movement, based on sharing economy. Recent analyses show that communities cannot maintain them in their current form, and they are only being kept alive by companies joining them. As soon as private companies join them (for example there is a huge capital involved in Airbnb and Uber), their actors start to behave as capitalists, seeking and finding profit, exploiting and benefiting each other. Therefore, community, as referred to earlier, is expelled from their activities, to give space to the logic of the market once again.

Elinor Ostrom thinks this is not the failure of the commons-movement, rather the misunderstanding of sharing economy (Ostrom, 1990). If sharing economy stays in the hands of the community, not becoming private, it will not only perform well but even better than similar private companies. Ostrom does not refer to the self-consciousness and commitment of a community economy's participants, but to their shared interests. Understanding shared

interest keeps the participants together – and does it even better, than if outside organizations would be supervising and controlling them. Therefore, it is proved that the basic idea of sharing economy is right – but the way it is being carried out is wrong. To validate all of the above: sharing economy has become a narrative - the new legitimacy of the market economy.

Regularly used terms of the market economy (e.g. "market", "enterprise") are the products of the liberal economy of the 18-19th century when community and economy were closer to each other (Boorstin, 1974). They have become symbolical terms, and function rather as ideologies than the interpretation of actual economic processes. According to the commons-movement, the dilemma is solved by "glocalization", which returns local market, local administration, and local education to where they originate from: the local community. Community sharing of cars, flats, and transit can be organized on a community basis, without investors. Just as commons used to function, and how NGOs operate these days.

**Community – what is it?**

So far, we have only used the community as a base of reference – the social-political legitimizing function of "community". But how do people interpret the term "community"?

For social anthropologists, "community" is the basic element of society. They do not even speak about "society", as natural societies they focus on are atomized, fragmented, and do not exist in greater societies. Smaller or bigger groups, living together, are more concrete (Malinowksi, 1944; Mead, 1932). Social anthropologists use "community" as a descriptive term. They attempt to understand today's social relationships and events by it.

Since the 1930s, social anthropologists have been debating about whether natural societies discovered at the dawn of anthropological research represent an inferior stage of social evolution, or whether they cannot be regarded the predecessors of modern societies. According to the latter opinion, "primitive societies" no longer possess the way of life how people lived thousands of years ago, but display an alternative way of progress. If progressive theories are right, then "primitive" communities represent an earlier stage of social evolution. Therefore, many social phenomena and processes of our modern age can be understood more easily (for example the so-called "street corner societies" or today's religiousness - Whyte, 1999; Pusztai, 2020). On the

other hand, if natural societies represent an alternative way of progress, we can study the diverse opportunities of humankind (comparative social anthropology - Leach, 1996).

One of the (representative) branches of educational sociology (Mead and Wolfenstein, 1995; Havighurst and Neugarten, 1962) puts socialization in focus, based on social anthropology. According to this interpretation, socialization covers the whole span and every aspect of the human lifetime. The individual is born into a community, and while learning to adapt to new communities, it discovers its own identity (Mead, 1973). The process is two-way. While the individual becomes a member of smaller or larger communities during life (and learns its roles and tasks), it also becomes able to distinguish itself from the community, gradually becoming an individual.

Socialization is "lifelong learning" (see learning as a "social activity" – Kozma, 2018), but it differs from the narrow description of pedagogy (as a "teaching-learning process" – Báthory, 1985). In pedagogy, teaching only looks like a job done by teachers in school, while learning can only be carried out by children, who are being led by their teachers. In this sense, teaching and learning is bound to an institution.

However, this is only partially true. First, in reality, people learn when they need to – they do not learn on command. Second, we mostly learn without noticing it, as we are doing other things (informal learning). Third, teachers do not only "teach" (whatever that may mean), but they are also learning while they are teaching others – even if they do not notice this. Therefore, teaching and learning is a much wider, and more diverse activity than school education (formal learning). This is because of the dichotomy of group learning and organized learning.

Group learning is the two-way process, in which the roles of teacher and student switch places constantly. Both participants teach the other, while both learn. In group learning, these roles are not permanent yet, therefore each of them benefits the group, covering every other activity of the members. The "curriculum" of group learning is the whole culture of the group (the community), and it is supervised by the moral values (norms and sanctions) of the group (community).

In the case of organized learning, teacher and student roles have already separated and have become permanent. Organized learning is characterized by teachers who teach, and students who learn. The separation of these two roles enables teachers to professionalise, and the former social activity becomes a profession in itself. Information transmitted this way is institutionalized – it becomes the school's curriculum. This is no longer a lifelong, spontaneous social learning, but an organization meant to deliver a functional role (in other words: the school).

"Lifelong learning" is the essence of socialization. Its "curriculum" (learnt by the new member of the community during socialization, consisting of knowledge, behaviour, and values) – is "culture".

In this sense, "culture" differs from the German definition (Weber, 1935; 1951), which connects values to culture, distinguishing between "high" and "low" (e.g. popular) culture. Culture in this sense differs from civilization, which is the result of economic, technical progress (originally: urbanization), rooted in French enlightenment. Culture on the other hand (as Anglo-Saxon social/culture anthropologists use the term), envelops the whole world created by humankind. The culture was created by humankind by cooperation, to bind its communities. People living and working together are able to form a community by the existence of culture (Forray, 2017).

Teaching and learning in and outside of schools clearly correlate with natural communities' milestones of socialization (Havighurst, 1948). The only (yet significant and important) difference is that modern communities and large societies purposefully organize their activity – this is what we call education. The society of the educational institutions and processes becomes the community in which the youth is initiated, in order to learn everything necessary – this is the "culture" of the school. The "agents" of socialization (the family, schools, the workplace, the military, hospitals, political parties, the church, and so on) can all be described as communities. When we become members of these communities, we all enrich them and get enriched by them by acquiring their culture.

The community has a historical dimension as well. As a generation passes, it is transcended by a new generation, passing on everything created by its predecessors. Without socialization, every generation would have to

start all over again. By learning its communities' culture, humankind survives the mortal individuals. From the viewpoint of the educational sociologists, socialization becomes the true understanding of the world – but only if they are able to explain the history of humankind with the communities, their cultures, and the ongoing socialization created by them.

## History, written on the micro-level

As we have described, the community is definitely static in its nature - as if communities would never change, and succeeding generations would only stabilize them. However, communities are vivid formations.

Amitai Etzioni (Etzioni, 1968) described the possible routes of change for communities in a two-dimensional chart. Based on previous social (cultural) anthropological research and Israeli kibbutzim, Etzioni had modelled four possible types of community. The first type includes communities, which are only marginally influenced by stability or change. These communities are all exposed to rapid changes and isolation, depending on the forces affecting them. The second type includes communities, where changes were overwhelmingly effective. If these changes accelerate, then the community loses its original character, and it is transformed. These are the drifting communities. However, some communities lock up in reaction to the environmental effects, as a form of self-defence - this is the third type. Communities like this are sentenced to death in the long run.

There is also a fourth type, in which the powers of change and stability are balanced out. The interaction of these powers enables the community to preserve its original culture, while it is still able to adapt to its changing environment. While stability, locking up and drifting is based on the study of actual events, the "active society" is idealistic. "Progress" comes in waves: after periods of stagnation or drifting (Etzioni-Halevy and Etzioni, 1964; 1973).

What may stabilize the community, and what will help it to adapt to its environment during changes? Etzioni, originally being an organization researcher (Etzioni, 1961; 1975) considered the changing degree of organization the stabilizing force, while he described the challenges of the environment as the force of change. The more organized a community is, the more it can resist the challenges of its environment; the closer it remains to be a group, the more ready it is to face environmental challenges, and the

more able to develop innovative responses. The ideal would be the balance of these two: the increasingly organized community, and the activity of the groups of the community.

The idea and examples of the "active society" came from the experiences of the 1950s and 1960s, considering organization necessary (a prerequisite of order and harmonious coexistence), while it was suspiciously looking at groups, attributing their spontaneous nature to anarchy. These ideas were born when the kibbutz-movement was changing: the former utopistic socialist innovation was adapting to the reality of the global market economy, as a result of generations changing.

In his popular book, Niall Ferguson (Ferguson, 2019) presents a similar analysis of certain moments of history but contrasts hierarchies ("organizations" in his interpretation) with the group (which he calls "network").

According to him, levers of history are not the changes in the economy, but the renewal and transformation of groups (networks) – while the forces endangering stabilization are hierarchies, which seek to slow the progress of the networks. Organizations (the Tower) help to make historical achievements permanent – however, they also obstruct new achievements. Communities (the networks) confront organizations from time to time and try to avoid being controlled by them. This struggle brings change to society. Whichever comes out on top will define the next historical era. In a longer era, as Ferguson describes, the organization won over spontaneous movements. The world seems to be changing these days. The influence of organizations is shifting to networks, which coordinate the spontaneity of communities, taking over the world by IT-supported globalization.

All of this underlines the importance of social innovations. While history is being written from above (seemingly from the top of hierarchies), its true dynamic comes from spontaneous networks. Everything in our introduction mirrors the changing communities on a historical scale. This is not a coincidence. Successful innovations are the levers of social change. Our observations about innovations on the local community's level are in fact microscopic social changes. This is the way we progress, change, transform. Historical changes begin with local (social) innovations – which accumulate to form society-level changes, as they succeed or fail. This is how we all become active participants of history, not just observers or survivors of it. We

cannot be excluded from history, as it is written by the changes in our communities. Social innovation is history, written on the micro-level.

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