

ORGANIZE AND GET ORGANIZED



Civil College Foundation – Community Organizing – www.cka.hu 

**COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS ANALYZE
THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZING PROCESS AND THEIR ISSUES WON**

**An Introduction to the Civil College Foundation's
2015/2016 Community Organizing Program**

Contents

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1. Introduction




 With our one-year community organizing program, implemented with the support of the Open Society Institute for Europe (OSIFE), continuing successfully this year, we would like to establish a new civic culture. In this civic culture the sign and the guarantee of the success is building new organizations, having a high number of members, the capability for mobilizing people and issues won. In our report, we present the outcomes of this work. In the next chapter, the community organizers working with the Civil College Foundation (CCF) present their successful campaigns and issues won, followed by a more detailed account of the methodology of community organizing, in large part also through personal accounts. The successes achieved on the field of community organizing proved that community organizers play an important role in the Hungarian civil sphere, and they are indispensable for more and more organizations to undertake the objective of enforcing community interests.

2. Issues Won

WE DID IT

Service frequency increased and running time reduced on the Mátészalka-Nyíregyháza bus line

MÁTÉSZALKALEAKS

Nincs közvetlen busz és vonatjárat 16 óra: 35 perc után a megye második legnagyobb városába. Minimum 65 km-es kitérő. Minimum háromszoros menetdíj. Ez a 21.századhoz méltó közlekedés?

A menetrend megrendelője szabotcsbizonyára tévedett! Orvosolja a hibáját Dr. Seszták Miklós miniszter!

Mátészalkaleaks
www.mateszalkaleaks.blog.hu

Picture 1: Internet meme.
Source: Mateszalkaleaks.blog.hu

“Our informal group called Mátészalkaleaks was primarily created to strengthen the local public sphere in Mátészalka. Our goal was to increase social activity in order to create a core group of citizens who have an opinion about public matters and do not accept the humbug of politicians without any sort of criticism.”

Levente Lintényi, community organizer

Mátészalka has extremely poor public transport links: trains are slow - it takes them 108 minutes to cover the 58 kms distance between Mátészalka and Nyíregyháza - and bus and train connections are scarce. On Saturdays, people can only get home from the county seat with a major detour, which costs three times as much time and money. The carriages are dirty and the

Hungarian Railway company has overcharged passengers. The over 300 one-on-ones we made with local residents helped us decide where exactly to address this large set of problems and we ended up concentrating on Saturday night transport services. There exists a direct bus service between Mátészalka and Nyíregyháza – except for Saturday nights. If one wanted to get home to Mátészalka after 4:30 pm, one could only do so with a major detour, and only by train. It was a major inconvenience for university students, for example and those who visited their relatives in the Nyíregyháza hospital. The train makes a detour via Záhony or Debrecen so people going to Mátészalka had to travel two or three times as much as normally. Furthermore the trip cost three times as much too, because while a direct bus or train ride would have cost HUF 840 with the detour the ticket cost more than HUF 2500.

The issue was finally resolved on March 21st 2016, when due to the pressure from civil society, the Minister of National Development **approved a direct bus service between Nyíregyháza and Mátészalka for Saturday nights, while also reducing intervals between buses by introducing 8 new services.** They also accepted our suggestion to have the buses approach Nyíregyháza **on the highway.** This issue won has affected the life of about 250,000 people, including patients at the Jósza András County Hospital and the students of the University of Nyíregyháza.

This is How We Organized



We used publicity in a conscious manner: we created the [Mátészalkaleaks blog](#), a source of unpleasant and difficult to access information on Mátészalka.

We conducted 300 successful one-on-ones with Mátészalka residents in order to learn what issues they deemed important. What they brought up most often was the issue of poor train and bus connections between Nyíregyháza and Mátészalka. They thought that the trains were slow – it takes over 100 minutes for them to cover the 58 kms distance – and the number of buses insufficient. They also raised the question why the buses did not use the highway, as in that case it would take them much less time to get to Nyíregyháza.

We focused on the issue of public transport on Saturday night. **We spoke at a public hearing and [summarized for the local body of representatives what we learned during the one-on-ones.](#)** We pointed out how difficult it was to travel to Mátészalka and Nyíregyháza on Saturday

afternoons and we asked the mayor and the local elected members to intervene in order to find a solution to the problem as soon as possible.

The national media also became interested. Levente Lintényi, the editor of Mátészalkaleaks, and Tünde Nedávnyi, community leader, [explained](#) Hír TV (News TV) what a torture it is these days to travel between Nyíregyháza and Mátészalka by bus or train. They said they would like the National Development Minister, Miklós Seszták who has ties with the County of Szabolcs, to find a remedy to the public transport related problems of the people Mátészalka and the surrounding area. They also said that in case their request was not met, a demonstration would be organized in the spring.

In the report Péter Hanusi, the mayor of the town, [said](#) the following:

“If we are talking about a couple of young people only who want to party, I’m not sure that it’s worth launching a new bus service because that would entail an investment of several million forints, and it might not be a good investment to spend millions of public money on a thing like that.”

This statement fired up the members of the group and most inhabitants of the town so much that we and they started writing [letters](#) to the authorities in large numbers. In the letters we indicated that it was not only “young people wanting to party” who laid claim to Saturday night services and to reducing intervals between buses on weekdays, as the Jósza András County Hospital and university are also situated in Nyíregyháza.

We filed several freedom of Information requests with the bus and train companies. The requested data revealed that Mátészalka was the only town in Hungary which was in such an oppressed situation in terms of Saturday night transport; in the comparison to other county seats and their second most populous cities, it finished in last place. Nationwide, between most county seats and the second most populous cities in their districts, public transport is provided even late at night. In the data we did not come across any other transport routes that involved changing trains/buses, major detours, or a threefold fare increase for those wanting to travel on Saturdays. We also requested data on the capacity utilization of train services between county seats and their second most populous cities, and it turned out that the Mátészalka-Nyíregyháza line did not have the worst parameters in this regard.

Using the public data obtained we created [memes](#) to stir social discontent to some extent. Most of these memes earned hundreds of thousands of views, and the one in which we personally asked the National Development Minister, Miklós Seszták (as a person who has ties in the County of Szabolcs) to put an end to the unfavorable conditions, reached the Minister himself as well. He then requested that we send him a detailed description of the specific problem via e-mail.

In January 2016 the issue entered another phase. As a result of the civic pressure, the mayor of Mátészalka, together with the North Hungarian Transport Agency Ltd., initiated the reduction of intervals between bus services between Mátészalka and Nyíregyháza by introducing new rotations on late Friday afternoons as well as on Saturdays and Sundays in the early morning, late afternoon, and evening periods. Prior to that, informal consultations were conducted with the Ministry of National Development and the public service provider to see if the request can be met. In February 2016 the North Hungarian Transport Agency Ltd. performed a passenger count. Following the evaluation of data, **on March 21 they received the permit of the Transport Service Department of the Ministry of National Development for launching a new rotation on Saturday night and reducing intervals between services, and also for the new route involving the highway.**

WE DID IT

Public transport became cheaper after the Hungarian Railway Company (MÁV-Start Zrt.) reviewed its faulty ticketing method for the Mátészalka-Debrecen route



Picture 2: The Hungarian Railway Company (MÁV) charged passengers incorrectly.
Source: Mateszalkaleaks.blog.hu

In January 2016 a new issue got on the group’s radar. During the networking conversations it was raised that something could be wrong with the railway company’s ticketing system because the company alternately charged HUF 1400 or HUF 1490 for the same train service going exactly the same route between Mátészalka and Debrecen. We immediately started researching to find out what accounts for the difference. We learnt that the Mátészalka-Nyírbátor line had been transferred to regional management, with the ministry in charge of establishing a

reduced tariff for the route. However, the Debrecen-Mátészalka route continued to be managed nationally. This change has caused confusion within the railway company since, after the change, no one informed cashiers whether they should issue one or two tickets for the Mátészalka-Debrecen route. So what often happened was that one cashier would issue two tickets - one for the Mátészalka-Nyírbátor (regional) route and a second one for the Nyírbátor-Debrecen (national) route - while another cashier would issue a single ticket for the Mátészalka-Debrecen route. In the first case the two tickets together cost HUF 1400, while in the second case, HUF 1490. As a result of our work, **the issuance of the HUF 1400 tickets became the norm.**

This is How We Organized



[We wrote a letter](#) to MÁV-Start, requesting their position on the matter. Meanwhile, we turned to the **public**, and our members started creating [Internet memes](#). As a further means of exerting pressure, we started sending out letters en masse. Based on the feedback from our members, **we managed to send over one hundred letters to the railway company.**

Our exerting of pressure was effective, as we received the following letter from the railway company:

“Dear Ákos Levente Lintényi,

Thank you for your email in reply to which we would inform you about of the following:

In line with the decision of the National Ministry of Development, on low-traffic lines regional discount tariffs have been introduced as part of our business policy. Our ticketing policy states that different tariff sections should be determined one by one and then compared to the price set on the basis of the national tariff. The issuer of the ticket decides together with the Passenger which tariff calculation is to be used when issuing the ticket. Typically, if the passenger does not otherwise require, the lower price is applied by our staff.”

MÁV-START Railway Passenger Transport Company

Based on data from the railway company, which we obtained through a **freedom of information request**, the number of revenue passengers per year on the Debrecen-Mátészalka line is 660,000. According to our calculations, **our action saved passengers an estimated HUF 30 million annually.**

WE DID IT

Under the label of urban planning, the local government was going to evict families, but it provides replacement housing now.

THE CITY IS FOR ALL (AVM), PÉCS



Picture 3: AVM Pécs in action. Source: AVM Pécs

“In addition to the criminalization homeless people, we outlined two major local problems: the unfavorable housing conditions stemming from the city’s inadequate stock of social housing, and the deficiencies of the local homeless service system. We tried to divide the three main tasks into working groups, but since there were only the eight of us, we just could not. So we included a fourth important task, recruitment.”

Gyula Balog, community organizer

In December 10, 2015, the General Assembly of Pécs voted in favor of the Imre Schlauch Urban Replanning Program, without providing the public with even the most basic information about the project. The only information available was that dozens of local government-owned tenement buildings in the city center would be demolished and the plots would be sold. The local government apparently had no idea what to do with those who lived in the buildings or how to provide replacement housing. Through 3 months of exerting pressure starting in February, we achieved that **the families affected by the first phase of the scheme (most of whom were threatened with eviction) would be provided replacement housing.**

This is How We Organized



AVM began operations in Budapest in 2009. However, due to the nationwide housing crisis, it is not only in the capital where protecting the interests of tenants is necessary. Therefore, in 2015 they started expanding their activities to include the city of Pécs. When the local branch started, conducting a **listening process** was crucial as it was conducive to recruiting and getting to know prospective members and made keeping them easier too. We tried to recruit homeless people on Kossuth Square and through the homeless care system and we also made contact with potential young allies at the 8th Green Summer University held in Budapest. **Following that, an initial training was held.** Since October we have been working regularly on a weekly basis.

On December 18, 2015 the group held its first action, the **Night of Solidarity**. Not starting with a “tough” action was a conscious decision on our side. The event, which involved street presence, discussions and eating together, was meant as a practice run for the new activists in the group, allowing them to learn about organizing actions. Another important goal was to meet with and involve those affected. From the almost 100 people interested, 38 gave us their contact details after a longer conversation. Two of them already showed up at the next meeting, and others joined later.

In December 2015 and January 2016 we filed several **freedom of information requests** in relation to the tenement housing stock, so as to lay the foundations of the activities of the group through obtaining that information. Although the city presumably possesses the files in question they wanted to charge the fees of two employees in return for the data. In this context we

contested the city’s practice in relation to freedom of information requests - which is contrary to the law in several respects in our opinion - at the Government Office and the National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information. **We requested the help of representatives** for acquiring the data so as to avoid getting it too late. In this regard, **an interpellation was made at the municipal General Assembly Meeting** with the mayor promising to review the issue of the public nature of data of public interest.

In December 2015 the details of the Imre Schlauch Urban Replanning Program were disclosed at the municipal General Assembly, and it turned out that the city was planning to demolish run-down tenement buildings. However, not even after that did they make basic information about the plans available. **Our freedom of information request** about the questions this information raised (where would buildings be demolished, how many residents would be affected, were there any uncontracted residents living in the tenements, would replacement housing provided to all, what would be the fate of funds resulting from the investment) was left unanswered, so the **members of our group found the affected residents using information from newspaper articles.** Thus we located the area affected by the first phase of the program.

The 11 families living on Zsolnay Vilmos road also learned about the plans through the press. Furthermore, the resolutions declaring them to be illegal tenement dwellers, and the summons to eviction lawsuits, gave them clues as to the likely developments. Only two of the 11 families had a valid contract which is not at all unusual in segregated areas (over a thousand families living in tenement flats are in similarly vulnerable situation throughout the city). The group eventually decided to organize **a three-day awareness raising action** on the busy Zsolnay Road, hoping to gather information, **organize residents** and **draw public attention** to their situation. **We also formulated claims** such as: the program should be made public and information be provided; the tenants should be provided replacement housing; and the revenue from selling the building plots should be reinvested into the development of the local tenement housing stock. We hung an increasing number of banners on the walls of the buildings as we involved more and more residents during the one-on-ones. They were seen by thousands of people over the three days.

Through our **action** we achieved that, in addition to the local press, the news program of the TV channel *RTL Klub* also reported on the downsides of the Schlauch Program. The city administration was quick to explain it all: they sent a letter to tenants and this time they appeared to be open to negotiations. Hence in March **we tried to obtain a position statement** from the Municipal Development Commission, the body whose decision they kept referring to when supporting the program prior to the General Assembly. In their case **we found serious procedural shortcomings, which we indicated to the town clerk and also reported to the public.** In reality the Schlauch Program was approved by the General Assembly without the committee supporting

it being familiar with any of the details, so the assembly could not discuss it effectively either. We pumped deputy mayor János Girán for details during one of the **negotiations** but he did not share any particulars apart from commonplaces—so **we researched further** and **attended different committee meetings** in order to learn about the background of the case.

With the help of the information collected on the site and the Internet, our group members came across many clues pointing to the intertwining of local political and economic interests. There were instances of real estate speculation and other concrete, but non-public, investment plans. With the information at hand, we managed to prevent a further payment being made to the demolition company, and **forced the city to approve a two-year action plan regarding the first phase of the Schlauch Program**. Even though the action plan did not provide a much more clear description of the actual plans, the group explicitly objected to the **disputed parts related to the accommodation of tenants**, and **managed to have the city amend them**. In this way **the accommodation of tenants in replacement housing** appeared not only in the form of verbal promises, or official letters sent to residents, but as an expectation also laid down in the action plan approved by the General Assembly. Due to the number of events happening in rapid succession this change was announced by János Girán at the General Assembly of April 21, 2016, as an oral amendment following which the body approved it. At that point, we could already be sure that our three months of hard work finally paid off, so we celebrated. That said, the group decided to remain committed to following the fate of the program and the local residents and to protecting the interests of tenants who are in a similarly vulnerable situation.

WE DID IT

People on workfare are paid their salaries in cash, and they are no longer burdened by having to pay for a bank account

WORKFARE MOVEMENT FOR THE FUTURE (KMJ)



Picture 4: KMJ in action. Source: KMJ

“At every workplace there are people who think that they may get in a better position if they provide their bosses with incriminating information about their colleagues. I fail to see what sort of advantages this can bring for people on workfare – possibly that the brigade foreman will be more lenient with them and they can be more casual about their job but no one will be paid more. When I talk to someone we must pay attention not only to not having the foreman around but also to which colleague is currently working beside the person. Just like in socialism: people are being intimidated, there is a system of informers and from the Ministry of Interior to the people on workfare, the whole system is based on intimidation.”

Mónika Bálint, community organizer

According to Sections 157-159 of the Labour Code, employers must ensure cash payment of salaries in the case that they have a cashiers' office. In many places, however, employers expected even people on workfare to open a bank account. If your salary is HUF 51.600, then even a small deduction counts, and in some cases banking deductions can reach up to HUF 2-3000 per month, which for them equals the cost of two days' worth of food. Our goal was to have the Minister of Interior review whether employers comply with the law, and to have as many people on workfare assert their right to a cash payment as possible in case they wished to do so. The law states that the employee should not be subject to any additional costs in connection with the payment of salaries. The campaign achieved results in the Debrecen area and in Budapest's Józsefváros quarter.

This is How We Organized



We used the power of publicity. On our Facebook page, blog and newsletter [we called upon](#) people on workfare to exercise their right to a cash payment.

We **handed over** an [open letter](#) to the Ministry of Interior, addressed to Minister of Interior Sándor Pintér, in which we described the problem in detail. **We published a video recording and blog post** on the event. In addition we also **sent a written notice to the notaries** of Districts 8 and 9 in Budapest calling upon them to terminate the illegal payment system experienced in their districts.

The Ministry of Interior responded to our letter quickly and acknowledged the right to a cash payment. They promised **they would send a notice** to all government agencies and through them to employers, and request them to respect this right.

Following that in December **we received a letter from a person on workfare living in a village near Debrecen** saying that, inspired by us **he had requested a cash payment which he got**, and his colleagues followed suit.

Prior to the conclusion of new employment contracts for public workfare programs, we again drew employees' attention to this right, and we distributed flyers in Districts 8 and 9. **In District 8 the employer prepared a separate special declaration form on which people could request a cash payment during the contracting period** which the majority of them did.

As a follow-up, during recruitment and contact building in the countryside we try to find out whether there are still employers who fail to comply with the rule. **We have not heard of any such instances since March 2016.**

WE DID IT

We removed a violent foreman of a brigade

Public workfare is an obvious means to intimidate the poor and hold vulnerable workers in check which is a hindrance to any joint action against the public workfare system. Two organizations; the Kaposvár Roma Civil Rights Association (KRPE) and a new organization, the Union of People on Workfare in the County of Somogy, sought our help in the following matter:

One of the shift leaders working in the village treated workfare workers aggressively and he even repeatedly [assaulted](#) some workers, mostly Roma women. In the summer of 2015 one of the victims reported him to the police but despite the ongoing legal procedure he was not removed from his position. The local leadership refused to do so citing the presumption of innocence. The intimidating, aggressive behavior of the shift leader did not change and there was a lot of conflict. There were workers who chose to go on sick leave to avoid clashes. Together we held a forum which resulted in the mayor dismissing the violent shift leader.

This is How We Organized



In the winter of 2015 local core groups of people on workfare turned to us for help. The novelty in both cases was that, in contrast with typical legal aid requests, this time a larger group of local workfare workers suffered insults and they were willing to act against it together. They invited us to help them organize and conduct a public event ([forum](#)).

The **forum in Kaposvár** was held, attended by 30-40 of the 120 people affected. The shift leader in question did not show up but the deputy mayor did, and he collected the complaints.

We also **summarized the complaints in a letter** sent to the mayor, the deputy mayor and the employer. **On the Monday following the Friday forum the shift leader was sent on leave and an inquiry was initiated.**

The organization in Kaposvár grew stronger, and the leader of KRPE was commissioned by the deputy mayor to gather complaints from people on workfare once a week and submit them to the local government. We are going to involve the organization in our campaigns.

WE DID IT

The political elite in power retreated from erecting the statue of anti-semite Bálint Hóman

LIVING MEMORIAL



Picture 5: The Hóman-installation. Source: 444.hu

“A result can be the launching of a powerful protest campaign against erecting a “Turul” statue in Szentendre or against other intimidating phenomenon. Our now conscious members, organizing in groups, can successfully represent the interests of their communities in the local and national public sphere.”

Balázs Horváth-Kertész, community organizer

In the summer of 2015 the local government of Székesfehérvár announced that in cooperation with a local foundation they would erect a statue of Bálint Hóman, former MP of Székesfehérvár who participated in the preparation of anti-Jewish laws. The supporters of the statue cited Hóman's contribution as a historian and his work done for the city.

Had the Bálint Hóman statue been erected in Szekesfehervar, it would have opened the way to publicly celebrating all public figures who like Hóman have been excluded from public life because of their role in spreading racism and anti-Semitism. Through mobilizing a large number of activists a multiple-stage campaign realized on the site and other CSOs joining and supporting the campaign, we managed to draw the attention of the Hungarian and international media to the local decision-makers. As a result of the increasing diplomatic pressure, the project - which was to be implemented by a foundation with financial support from the local government - was reviewed by the Office of the Prime Minister and ultimately did not materialize.

With a two-week-long continuous presence and a focused media action we achieved a success. Surpassing our preliminary expectations [our installation titled "The Hóman Shadow"](#) was all over the international media (BBC, Reuters, Yahoo Press, Washington Post, The Guardian, etc.). Since the erection of the statue was regarded a personal matter by the Prime Minister, the **international diplomatic pressure** would not have been enough to do away with it, had not the issue been elevated within the Hungarian public sphere, and had not **a local civil society organization stood behind it, demonstrating the public outrage.**

The March of Life and MAZSIHISZ also joined the wave of protests, and then, following a [speech](#) by US President Barack Obama on the International Holocaust Memorial Day, **the Prime Minister finally withdrew his support.** In this way, the foundation was left without a support and, despite all its prior insistence **in December, it retreated for good.**

This is How We Organized



In November 2015 we held a coalition strategy meeting and **campaign planning workshop** in Budapest attended by participants from Székesfehérvár. The ensuing 2-week pressure campaign was coordinated by Andrea Homoki and Eszter Édler.

We started off with a campaign week: we set up a **street stand** and organized games to involve people. Local activists were prepared at a **workshop** which unfolded into a **media campaign**.

On November 29, with local artists **we created an installation** with which we occupied Bartók Béla Square, the planned location of the Hóman statue. Then, we sent our first **(video)** message to the media about the setting up of the installation.

In search of allies **we built contacts** with an opposition representative in the local elected body as well as the members of parties that were active around the issue. We have contacted several organizations, for example the Human Platform, the Federation of Hungarian Jewish Communities (MAZSIHISZ) and the Hungarian Society of Writers, Critics and Literary Translators.

We held a **demonstration, torchlight procession and public forum** attended by over 100 participants.

WE DID IT

Clubs, restaurants and institutions in Szeged demonstrated their acceptance of LGBT people in public

SZEGED LGBT COMMUNITY GROUP



Picture 6: A member of the Szeged LGBT Community Group gives a speech. Source: Szeged LGBT Community Group

"We have achieved that a group of LGBTIQ people in Szeged dare and are willing to take part in actions and processes to assert their interests against systemic oppression. The organization has grown significantly in the past year: it has more dedicated members, supporters and allies. The group's self-image, self-definition and set of objectives have been greatly improved. Members increasingly see the strength of the Hungarian LGBTIQ movement in community actions and campaigns."

Anna Kiss, community organizer

For the first time in Szeged's history we organized the week of action entitled [Rainbow Week](#) from April 4-10, 2016. During the week, nine Szeged shops and community spaces [put the sticker](#) on their door indicating a safe space in an effort to act together against discrimination of LGBTIQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer and intersex) people. This pronounced espousal of their cause was needed because LGBTIQ people are discriminated against and abused in public places to an increasing extent. Speakers at the action week's opening event included Iván Jávorszky, CEO of the Szeged City Television and the company running the Downtown Cinema and the IH Event Center. Following the Rainbow Week a number of accommodation and food service businesses from around the country approached the group for stickers indicating that they would like to join the campaign.

This is How We Organized



We had learnt about several cases from Szeged when someone's **rights were infringed upon** through discrimination or physical abuse because of their sexual orientation. A clearly indetntifiable part of these cases occurred on the premises of food service businesses.

In one such case, a 25-year-old boy and his same-sex pair were not treated equally in a Szeged restaurant. On Valentine's Day they, unlike the other pairs of lovers at the establishment, were served their food cold and restaurant staff refused go to their table despite the couple clearly trying to call them over. After they ate their dinner they had to wait 60 minutes for the bill.

In another case, a 22-year-old gay man suffered abuse because of his sexual orientation at a Szeged night club. In a designated smoking area two men made inquiries as to whether he was gay then they thrust him to the ground, pressed his head against the concrete calling him "little faggot" and threatening him with putting out a cigarette in his eye.

Starting in the summer of 2015, we have conducted 107 contact-building conversations as a result of which our membership grew by 275 percent. Hence, we were therefore able to appear in public with some **spectacular actions** like the ["Down with the masks" parade](#), and various other [events](#).

When we decided in the spring to do our "Safe Zone" campaign, we **contacted** Szeged restaurants, cafés, and cultural institutions via e-mail, telephone, or in person and we asked

them to join. Those who had joined sent a message to the public that in their businesses lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex people were also welcome.

The opening speech of the week of action was delivered at an opening event on April 4, 2016, by Iván Jávorszky, CEO of the Szeged City Television and the company running the Downtown Cinema and the Event Center. Following the speech he and the manager of the cinema together put a „Safe Zone” sticker on the main entrance of the cinema. In his speech Iván Jávorszky pointed out that, in a country where the majority of the people would not welcome „the Piresians”, much remains to be done. He noted that the Downtown Cinema and Youth Centre were glad to join the initiative and that the doors of the Szeged Event and Media Center are open to everyone regardless of their sexual orientation, racial or ethnic origin, religion or faith, disability or age. **Two members of the organization also spoke at the opening press conference and one of them shared the above personal story about being discriminated against by a restaurant.**

During the Rainbow Week **9 municipal companies, CSOs, food service facilities and cultural institutions** - namely the Downtown Cinema, Club Rocco, Grand Café & Cinema, Green Fusion Restaurant, Hét Café, IH Event Center, Kapocs Extra Restaurant, and Szín-Ház Apartman - **put the sticker marking a safe zone on their doors.**

On April 15, the Szeged members of the newly formed Conservative Students Association (KHSZ) **covered the stickers** with their own ones. The manager of one of the food service businesses scraped the conservatives’ sticker off and **put a large rainbow flag in the window** (and he **talked about this in the media** too). The regional leader of KHSZ **retreated** and, talking to the press, he only allowed his initials to be published (citing “potential attacks”).

Subsequently, on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia **we met with the officials in charge of the local government’s Local Equal Opportunities Program (HEP).** Our goal is to **have the interests of LGBTQI people appear in the upcoming program** and to have our organization take part in the consultation process. **The officials were supportive of the following recommendations from us:** have LGBTQI people included in the local Equal Opportunities Program; maintain contact with the LGBTQI community; sensitizing programs for local governmental employees; and LGBTQI-themed programs (lectures, roundtable discussions, and film screenings) at local cultural events and festivals.

WE DID IT

The number of trash bins increased in Józsefváros – there is less litter on the streets

AURÓRA



Picture 7: The Népszínház Carnival. Source: Auróra Community Center.

“From 8 to 8’. This is the name under which local residents formed their Market Hall Quarter community. Their goal is to improve the living conditions of local residents and represent their interests; to embrace local issues with the involvement of people living here; and ultimately, to organize the local community and support it in having a say in local affairs.” **Lívía Ásmány, community organizer**

Compared to other downtown districts, in the Market Hall Quarter the presence of litter and dog feces is apparent which has greatly contributed to negative perceptions of this part of the city. The members of the group raised the question about how this relates to the number and density of trash bins so we started to assess them. As it turned out, the busiest parts of the neighborhood are the most polluted ones: most prominently Népszínház and Bérkocsis Streets and the sections connecting them; in addition Nagy Fuváros Street and the part of Víg Street that runs behind the Market hall are also extremely dirty. The group toured the area to quantify the number of existing and missing trash bins and we created a map of their distribution in the area bounded by Népszínház, Nagy Fuváros, József, and Víg Streets. Then we reported on the situation on jarokelo.hu, and in a few days' time the new trash bins were installed.

This is How We Organized



A key aspect of community organizing is **reaching people**. The way to do this varies from community to community. The Market Hall Quarter is a neighborhood with old apartment buildings and with few community spaces, so for us to be able to reach the people living there we had to visit them in their flats. We developed a specific method of **door knocking** and thus reached 500 people in the Quarter (see next section for a detailed description of the process). After a long **listening process** we reached a major milestone in the life of the group. In the preceding period our work was mostly focused on training and motivating the volunteers in the group who were engaged in recruitment so that door knocking and interviewing could proceed at an appropriate pace. From February on, however, this was replaced by facilitating residents' meetings, joint strategy building, the prioritization of emerging issues and working together with local residents. In February 2016, regular group meetings dealing with local issues were launched with the stable participation of 15 local residents.

In March 2016, we started quantifying the number of trash bins, as well as containers for dog feces, which is also a great problem in the district. To **assess the conditions**, we created a map of the distribution of bins in the area bounded by Népszínház, Nagy Fuváros, József, and Víg Streets. Besides installing trash bins the group also launched a **poster campaign**. Unfortunately in most cases the posters were ripped off. The experience of the group is that much fewer bins

are installed than required by law and many of the existing ones are damaged or hardly emptied. That was the point when we started a strategic cooperation with jarokelo.hu and with their help we first **filed a complaint about the missing trash bins and then another one in relation to green bins**. Two days later **a single trash bin was installed** on the corner of Bérkocsis and Auróra Streets. Following that, we filed another complaint through jarokelo.hu and with the help of atlatszso.hu we filed a freedom of information request with the Metropolitan Public Domain Maintenance Nonprofit Private Company Limited by Shares (FKF). During the following week **2 additional trash bins and 3 dog feces bins** were installed.

Following that **we filed** a more comprehensive [freedom of information request](#) with FKF and the Municipal Management Center of Józsefváros in which we requested information on the costs and frequency of street cleaning broken down by district, the annual changes in this context, the number of trash bins installed in public squares, the frequency of emptying them, and their annual maintenance costs. In addition, we asked about the number, maintenance costs, utilization, and current condition of public toilets located in the district.

Parallel to this effort we started circulating [our online questionnaire for local residents](#). It was filled out by over 500 residents in the Market Hall Quarter who returned 15 pages of freely formulated answers about public sanitation problems in the area. Using the answers as a basis, we started contacting the authority in charge (Péter Ács, Head of the Urban Management Directorate of the Municipal Management Center of Józsefváros). We prepared a press kit from the answers and sent it to a media list with 70 recipients.

In late April the group was actively involved in organizing the **Népszínház Carnival**, Auróra's neighborhood festival. We invited people to the festival through Facebook, blog posts and newsletters. At the festival we invited local residents for a discussion with food and a good atmosphere. Among other things, participants had a chance to complete the questionnaire offline and we gave out stickers, leaflets and flyers. We had two important goals with the event: to **involve** local residents and discover new issues; and to have people **sign a petition in which we demanded the deployment of a street cleaner truck owned by the district**. Then, in the framework of a creative campaign, the group produced postcards addressed to decision-makers in District 8. The postcards showcase the usual – dirty – sight of streets in District 8 as well as quotations from the answers given to the aforementioned questionnaire.

WE DID IT

We were promised that the city's elected body would settle the status of local residents in the Árpá Street segregated housing area

ACTION RESEARCHERS FOR SUSTAINABILITY



Picture 8: Forum in Szeged on the International Romani Day. Source: szegedma.hu

"In the framework of our community organizing work, we have been looking for issues and problems that affect the communities of the Cserepes Row and Kiskundorozsma segregated housing areas in Szeged. Issues that have a significant impact on how the community thrives and along which - due to their importance - the inhabitants of segregated housing areas can be mobilized and organized into communities. In a situation where we find problems, we also look for possible solutions together with community members, taking steps to resolve them together by substantially strengthening their ability to assert their interests."

Action Researchers for Sustainability

There are two segregated housing areas in Szeged: Kiskundorozsma and Cserepes Row. Szeged is a really livable city and therefore it is an additional outrage that the municipal leadership has not been able to solve the question of housing for a couple of hundred people living in segregated areas. In 2008 the local elected body promised in the local anti-segregation plan the gradual demolition of buildings on Cserepes Row. However, since that time only one family has had a chance to move out, even though it was supposed to be that the inhabitants of about 2 or 3 buildings would be moved out annually. The annual HUF 10 million anti-segregation budget was almost never used up, with the remaining money always returning to the city at the end of the year. At the same time, the anti-segregation forum, which is supposed to supervise the elimination of segregation, has not been convened in years. After a long pause, the first such event was held on November 26, 2015, and a subsequent forum, organized on April 26, 2016, was definitely a result of our community organizing activities. The latter forum was already attended by more participants than just the head of the Roma minority government: we had worked together as a team with the people living in the segregated areas to realize the event. At the forum Márton Joób, Chairman of the Municipal Employment, Social Affairs and Sports Committee, promised us that he would stand behind our cause and said he was willing to propose to the elected body of the city an amendment to the related local regulation in order to settle the status of the Roma in Árpá Street.

This is How We Organized



We built up the core of the organization through one-on-ones and personal presence. Over the course of a year this core group took active part in the work and in organizing our actions and events (albeit with varying intensity). Our members István Szentistványi (Local Elected Member) and Mihály Nagy (Roma Minority Government) regularly attended the meetings of the Social Affair Committee of the Municipality of Szeged. On one occasion **they spoke** at a meeting investigating the review of the body's service provision concept in the area of social affairs and child protection which was also attended by a number of our members as guests. A day later they held a [press conference](#) on the matter and then Mihály Nagy attended the anti-segregation forum at the end of November.

In January 2016 **we wrote a letter to the municipality** in order to initiate a larger-scale anti-segregation forum and that is when the fight for organizing the forum began.

Following this we held an [expert/lay forum](#) titled “Let’s talk about housing poverty in Szeged” to which we invited a number of local CSOs dealing with housing issues. At the event we presented the short films made in Árpa Street, which we had edited with the help of professional filmmakers.

Meanwhile we caused a stir in connection with the local property manager (IKV Zrt.). Starting in the summer of 2015, about 50 conversations were conducted with local residents on Cserepes Row in relation to their housing issues. The conversations quickly showed that a high proportion of respondents had complaints about the property manager due to instances of overcharging for water consumption or the non-transparent nature of investment projects. In addition several people noted that IKV had a responsibility in relation to the maintenance of municipal property and they also complained about services that were not being provided or were being charged for even when provided in a faulty manner. Many people have indicated that at IKV proprietorship was unclear and administration was extremely slow. Together with those residents of the segregated housing area on Cserepes Row who have a share in the ownership of the buildings they live in, we filed a [freedom of information request](#) for the annual reports and books of resolutions related to the affected tenement blocks in order to avoid further abuses of similar kind. Furthermore we requested data on the social housing stock of the city of Szeged. Finally we **provided assistance to residents in individual cases** as well.

In April 2016, at an event organized on the International Day of the Roma, Roma people from Kiskundorozsma **signed a [petition](#) demanding the regular convening of the anti-segregation forum**. They emphasized their poor housing situation and that, due to their unsettled housing status they miss out on social benefits as well. We made 30 copies of the proclamation and **during the General Assembly in April we put a copy on the desk of each elected member**.

These steps the local government could no longer ignore. **The anti-segregation forum was convened on April 26, 2016**. It was held in the Kiskundorozsma segregated community attended by tenants from 17 apartments. On behalf of the municipality 5 elected members, Márton Joób (Democratic Coalition; Chairman of the Municipal Employment, Social Affairs and Sports Committee), Veszeleinka Novkov (Head of the Social Affairs Bureau), the Director of the Dorozsmai Community Center, and the Director of the Orczy István Primary School in Kiskundorozsma attended the event. Joób promised in front of the cameras that he would stand behind our cause and he said he was willing to propose to the elected body of the city, an amendment to the related local regulation in order to settle the status of the Roma in Árpa Street. In this context the inhabitants of municipal properties can again be registered as tenants given they pay a fair and affordable rent. When this has happened, the legalization of water and electricity and other investments can be started in the area.

“Over the five years I’ve spent in this position, this was the first time when someone approached the Roma in a positive way.” Mihály Nagy, President of the National Roma Minority Self-Government (RNÖ)

WE DID IT

The Mayor of Debrecen revised his earlier decision, and there are now stolpersteine (‘stumbling blocks’) in the city reminding passers-by of the victims of Holocaust

DIVERSE LOT (SOSO) AND CIVIC COLORS (CCS)



Picture 9: Newly installed stolpersteine in Debrecen. Source: SoSo

“In response to the refugee situation in 2015, at first the SoSo group decided to create an event in the organization and implementation of which they would involve the residents of the refugee camp

in Debrecen. The Multi-Culti Day was realized with support from a number of civil society allies and nearly all asylum seekers living in the refugee camp in Debrecen (80 people altogether) attended. The total number of participants in the program, complete with allies, supporters, volunteers, and local residents, was around 150-170.” **Tímea Éva Kovacs, community organizer**

Diverse Lot (Sokan Sokfélék – SoSo) is formed of people – and their allies – who belong to disadvantaged and/or minority groups, while Civic Colors (Cívics Colors – CCS) has members who belong to the LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, etc.) community. The SoSo group joined an initiative which aimed at placing three **stolpersteine** in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. In addition to the Mayor, the Jewish Community of Debrecen also initially rejected the request. Nevertheless, the united front of the Institute of German Language and Literature of the University of Debrecen, the German Cultural Forum, and several citizens and civil society groups – paired with all the media publicity and in-person negotiations – finally persuaded them. Between August 11-12, 2016, a total of 28 stolpersteine were installed on ten city streets in Debrecen, on the sidewalks running in front of the buildings the martyrs lived in.

This is How We Organized



Starting in autumn 2015, two groups - Diverse Lot (SoSo) and Civic Colors (CCS) – were formed of refugees and migrants in Debrecen, professional allies, people belonging to the LGBT+ community, Roma, people living in poverty and housing poverty, abused persons and workfare workers. After their formation cooperation emerged between the two groups with members occasionally attending each other’s meetings and deciding to take part in each other’s activities.

SoSo **got involved in organizing a series of meetings** targeting the installation of stolpersteine in Debrecen streets in memory of Holocaust victims. The project was inspired by German lecturer Jana Walter who wanted to improve the city’s memory in relation to the Holocaust. Besides the Institute of German Language and Literature of the University of Debrecen and the German Cultural Forum, which financed the project, the Department of Communication and Media Studies at the University of Debrecen, MAZSIHISZ president Gunter Demnig, and two Debrecen high schools were also part of the initiative.

Zsuzsa Iványi, a member of the SoSo **paid a visit to dr. László Papp, the mayor of Debrecen** who was not in favor of the initiative. The Jewish Community of Debrecen was not supportive of the issue of stolpersteine either: “The municipal government thought that by erecting a memorial wall in the yard of the synagogue, they had fulfilled their obligations in this regard and that the new memorial places would only give further ground for racist actions. The Jewish Community of Debrecen did not support the idea either because in their opinion the blocks (tens of thousands of which can be found on streets around Europe) could harm the physical integrity of passers-by.” (444.hu)

The members of both SoSo and CCS joined in to make the initiative a success. The president of MAZSIHISZ sent a letter to the mayor - and the head of the Jewish community - asking them to review their decision, which the mayor finally did.

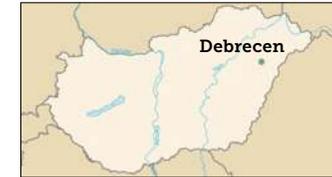
In March 2016 two of our group members attended in-person meetings with said decision-makers. **Due to the pressure of the united front of several groups, the related media publicity, and the in-person negotiations Papp finally gave permission** for the stolpersteine.

WE DID IT

As the Dean and the Rector of the University of Debrecen made a roundtable discussion on the topic of LGBT+ impossible, we are filing a complaint with the Equal Treatment Authority.

In the Debrecen LGBTQI community very few people have come out. With this mind, in February 2016 we started to organize a roundtable discussion on the topic in cooperation with Civic Colors and the Hungarian LGBT Alliance. The planned venue of the event was the University of Debrecen because we wanted to “borrow” legitimacy and greater visibility from the institution. SoSo members also took part in the activities to reach and recruit people paying visits to heads of departments and institutes around the university. The event was made totally impossible by an attack from the Dean and the Rector of the university so we were unable to hold it. In protest against the discrimination we are filing a complaint against the discriminatory practice of the university with the Equal Treatment Authority and the Hungarian LGBT Alliance is supporting the effort.

This is How We Organized



Our group contacted university departments and we started organizing the **roundtable**. The discussion was planned for 4 pm, April 21, 2016.

After one of the teachers who supported the event asked for the permission of the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities for sending out an invitation to the event to the students and having it published on the Faculty’s website, the dean indicated during a *phone conversation* that it would be unfortunate to hold the event in its present form. The leadership of the faculty strongly objected against the event and the dean declared that they did not want the event to happen in the main building or anywhere on the campus, and that the reservation of the room should be cancelled. The dean summoned the teachers who supported the roundtable discussion and warned them that next time they should act in line with their responsibilities laid down in the labor code.

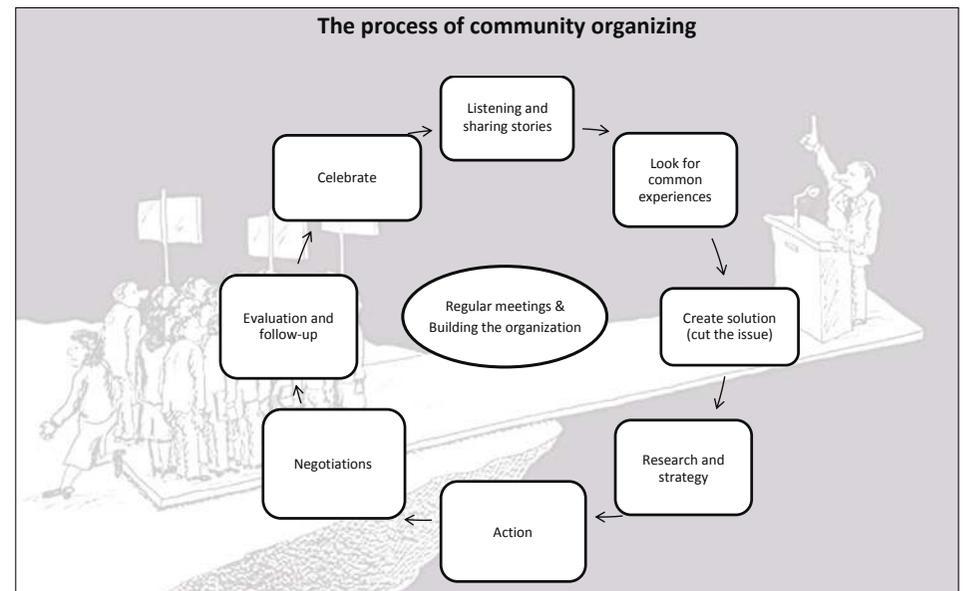
In this way we had to find a new venue one day before the event, and we did find one: the Water Tower in the Nagyerdő (Great Forest) but later it turned out that it belongs to the campus area too. Water Tower staff indicated over the phone that “regarding events that deviate from the social norms” they are obliged to request the approval of the university which they have done but received a negative reply. It also turned out that someone even called (before the staff of the Water Tower let the organizers know about their decision) the editorial office of one of the online news portals which had published an article about the event – and later published the modified venue too. This person told them that the Water Tower was not approved as a venue and that the article should be removed accordingly. Due to the intimidation and the change of location the event was finally cancelled the events were continuously documented. With support from the Hungarian LGBT Alliance we are now turning to the **Equal Treatment Authority**.

3. How the Community Organizing Process is Built Up



 We tend to think that power is inherently evil and that possessing it we become corrupt and evil too. But, as the above examples show, *power* is not inherently evil or benevolent but a kind of force that can be used in a good way or a bad way. In community organizing this power is mainly constituted by well-organized communities of people who can act jointly - that is, protect their interests - in relation to issues where there is a need to enforce cooperation from local decision makers. Power is, thus, the ability to act, which everyone is entitled to.¹

When a service or a form of support is not available we can organize its provision ourselves (we can open a school, organize food distribution, start a community radio, etc.) or through community cooperation and providing the resources needed, we can solve the problem ourselves (if there are no green spaces we can create a community garden; if there are no residential homes for those in need we can establish one, etc.). In Hungary, a large percentage of non-governmental organizations function following this logic: they perform tasks the state fails to perform, or outsources, and in most cases they do so from dwindling resources.



Picture 10: The process of community organizing. Source: CCF

¹ Sebály, Bernadett, Vojtonovszki, Bálint (Ed.): *A hatalom társadalma vagy a társadalom hatalma? A közösségszervezés alapjai (The Society of Power or the Power of Society? The Basics of Community Organizing)*. Budapest, Napvilág Kiadó, 2016.

But what happens when, to achieve our objectives, we need the cooperation of local decision makers who are not willing to do anything for us? Or what can we do when achieving those goals would require a more efficient use of local or national budgets, and the provision of new resources? What happens if we get a negative response from a decision maker, but we are not willing to give up? It will be necessary to effectively apply pressure and show that we represent an issue that is important for many.

In Hungary a very small proportion of CSOs fulfill this advocacy function, and even fewer do so in a form that devotes enough time and resources to membership involvement, training, and mobilization. So in this respect community organizing is an important opportunity for mobilizing civil society in Hungary where citizen involvement is at a low level.

Community organizing is, in a nutshell, the process of systematically developing contacts with people in the community, identifying issues, mobilizing people around the issues identified, and building a long-lasting a democratic organization whereby winning is at least as important as the process of building. In this context, community does not primarily stand for a supportive company of people that is based on personal contacts, but a community of interest in which people become players in (local) public life while enforcing their interests on. Community organizers are professionals who assist in the birth, or support the existence of, such groups. As the examples presented in the first chapter revealed, this is a cyclical, organic process (see Picture 10.)

One-on-ones help organizations take on issues that reflect the needs of the community, so that advocacy can be done as teamwork. Through listening to 100-200 people, a community organizer can establish a core group of initiators and a circle of members and sympathizers, and come across issues that affect - and are considered important - by many people in the community. Hence the one-on-one is an important tool for building a base, and it is therefore an ongoing task. From what we learn in the one-on-ones we can prioritize issues and the organization can decide which ones to begin with. An important criterion is to choose an issue that suits the organization in terms of capacities and can be settled within a reasonable amount of time so that the members have a chance to experience success and be motivated for further organizing actions. We collect background materials which are helpful when it comes to planning. We carry out a power analysis and check who the decision-maker in charge of the given issue is (who has the power to give us what we want) as well as who our allies and opponents are. We plan a campaign, and after setting our goals we design our actions, that is, the steps in the campaign through which we can increase the stakes (i.e. put more pressure on decision makers) if necessary. The ultimate goal is, of course, to sit down at the negotiating table and reach an agreement. The actions are evaluated as a group and we never forget about celebrating our victories!



Picture 11.: Resource Center. Source: CCF

Building a democratic organization is at least as important as victory itself. Hence we continuously provide opportunities for people to join our work so that an increasing number of people can learn what practicing democracy is all about. To do this we create a framework for democratic operation and support the development and engagement of the most active members of the group whom we call “community leaders”. Community organizing provides a wide spectrum of political participation opportunities from local issues to national ones and one of the priorities is to have locally active groups connect to national level issues.

4. The Way the Community Organizers See It. Firsthand Accounts of the Community Organizing Process



The community organizers working with us were asked what was new about this role for them and what they found to be particularly useful about the method. The following interviews give account of the community organizing process through examples.

What does your role as a community organizer mean to you?



Mónika Bálint, Workfare Movement for the Future: in my previous work experience it was always part of my tasks to highlight social problems and with my colleagues to shed light on what possible tools could be applied to eliminate these problems. We have organized civil society festivals, local newspapers, exchange markets, residents' cooperation schemes, and self-help circles, and we have applied a lot of tools with which we can transfer knowledge. For me the novelty of community organizing work is that we do not stop at the presentation of problems – we do not expect that decision makers will recognize and understand what we want to change. We need to explore precisely what steps it could take to win the issue and what we and others can do about it. We anticipate technical and political decisions and we get so close to decision-makers that one has the feeling that it's you who is handing them the pen to validate a decision which will improve the life situation of many people. Hungary's democratic traditions are very weak. People never had enough faith and knowledge to know how to assert their common interests in the decision-making processes of their country or local communities. Now, even if often feels you are swimming against the current, there does seem to exist a tool for communities to begin to learn the essence and power of organizing themselves.



Levente Lintényi, Mátészalkaleaks: The role of the community organizer is not new for me as I am an active trade union and workers' council member which is also all about community organizing. I love this job, although I would prefer to call it a hobby. It makes me feel good when we achieve success with my participation and the collaboration of stakeholders. The past 16 months have proved that the community organizing method is successful around Mátészalka, and in my opinion it can be successful around Hungary too; but to do that we have to find really hardworking community organizers and we need to join our forces.



Anna Kiss, Szeged LGBT Community Group: To me the community organizer role means that I can play an active role in bringing about beneficial social change and in experiencing power as a community. In Hungary it is particularly important to be able to separate ourselves from the disapproving overtones coming from the direction of those in power, and to understand that power is but our ability to enforce our interests, which is something that not only privileged groups in society can do. The majority of CSOs operating in Hungary provide some kind of services (often taking over some of

the obligations of the state or local governments) or fulfill advocacy functions – which can also be interpreted as a kind of service if we take the relationship between CSOs and those advocated for. The novelty of community organizing – also known as community advocacy – lies in that it does not look at the affected communities as clients: community organizing empowers those affected to enforce their interests in an effective and democratic way. This is very much needed in a country where the weakness of civil society, compared globally, is well illustrated by the low number of workplace strikes for exerting pressure. Essentially, we are afraid of power, that is, of asserting our interests together with others. For minority groups experiencing oppression (e.g. LGBTQI people) there is no other way: system-level changes can only be achieved by increasing the power of those affected.



Tímea Éva Kovács, Diverse Lot and Civic Colors: To me the community organizer role primarily means that I am serving the group as a whole. In a certain sense the group is my employer. It is important for me to closely follow the life of the group as it evolves as well as the situation and development of individual members. I often feel a need to balance the process: if they surge ahead I brake and if they stop I speed up. I have a chance to get to know a lot of fantastic people through this work and I am sincerely grateful for their confidence and work. I believe that through our joint efforts we are capable of generating change. As a social worker and a social politician I have paid special attention to interpreting phenomena on the system level. However, as an organizer, providing individual level assistance is not among my tasks. For me, turning this professional requirement into practice has caused tensions, especially in environments where individual-level assistance was not available or effective enough for some reason.

Some people have an aversion to one-on-ones because they find it difficult to cross the boundary and talk to other people, even strangers, in order to make contact with them. How did you feel about doing one-on-ones?

Anna Kiss: I find the one-on-one an especially useful tool because this is the only way we can get a realistic picture about the problems and motivations of people at a disadvantage. In-person discussions built on trust are the foundation of any human relationship and as CSOs it is particularly important to make personal contact with as many people as possible in order to identify and find solutions to problems. Another important aspect is that the one-on-ones greatly facilitate asserting the interests of minority groups in a democratic way: the more affected people with whom we conduct one-on-ones, the more opinions we hear and the more democratic the advocacy process can become. In the Szeged LGBT Community Group we performed one-on-ones together with members of the group, which multiplied the effectiveness of the process; the membership of the group quadrupled in a year's time.

Levente Lintényi: One-on-ones are particularly useful for us because they help us learn about the problems of local residents. At the same time we also collect contacts in order to eventually mobilize the people reached and involve them in our future actions. We set up a smaller team of three to conduct the contact building conversations. That core group have been trained to conduct the most profound and fruitful discussions possible.

The goal of one-on-ones is building membership, but you use other recruiting techniques too.

Mónika Bálint: In order for us to keep in close touch with people on workfare working in different areas we have to be able to address them. And to have our group get stronger and capable of settling more and more issues we have to involve them in our activities. Our recruitment methods serve these two purposes. We have tested a variety of recruitment methods during the program and recruitment is currently happening on many levels. We have reached approx. 120 people directly in a year's time through getting their e-mail address or phone number or both. Among them were people with whom we only had a chance to talk for about 5-10 minutes. In addition to job fairs and the places where they work we organized public forums with the involvement of civil society partners, and these events gave us an opportunity to talk to local people on workfare for a longer time. We also tried to reach people through one-on-ones on the street and setting up street stands. With these methods we were mostly able to recruit sympathizers only yet we had a chance to gather information on what people other than workfare workers think about this employment scheme. These settings typically allow 5-10 minutes conversations only. We were able to conduct longer, 30-35-minute networking conversations through contacting people for a second time using the phone numbers previously obtained. In these cases we get a chance to talk in more detail about people's working conditions, job search experiences and goals in life. Furthermore we also have a better opportunity to convince them – through shedding light on their interests – to get to know our group and eventually join in. Most of those on workfare live in insecurity and fear so the recruitment is not very effective with only a few people assuming an active role in the organization. However almost everyone is glad to talk about the difficulties they encounter in their everyday lives and work. Building on this the group can work further towards having their experiences reach the general public as well as decision-makers.



Zita Szabó, Auróra Community Center: Auróra's external community organizing working group began contacting local residents using the classic "door-knocking" method. Due to our lack of experience initially we had difficulties getting beyond people's doorsteps and encountered a lot of rejection. Another difficulty was that Auróra was our only point of reference and its online appearance did not

make it clear for local residents what sort of issues the community organizing working group actually represented. Through constant experimentation with the door-knocking technique we managed to create our own system that really worked. A few months later we had another go at door-knocking using these new solutions. First of all, it was necessary to have a credible reference surface for local residents so the first step was creating the “We’ve already had a car crash in Bérkocsis Street” Facebook page, followed by the creation of the official “From Eight to Eight” Facebook page. In this way, while door-knocking again, we already had a Facebook page with content to serve as a point of reference for the group’s work. The essence of the new method was campaign-like door-knocking, so instead of having two people going around each building we had 6-8 people doing so at a time, usually in pairs involving both sexes. The method is based on the recognition that people are much more willing to open their doors if their neighbor has already done so, allowing us to establish a relationship of trust. We also handed out leaflets to them with our contact details, including our Facebook page. We have reached about 500 people through door-knocking.

To be able to plan a campaign, you often need systematic mapping. Do you have an example for that?

Action Researchers for Sustainability: In our case, getting to know the community within the framework of the organizing work was of key importance. Conducting the networking conversations was the first pillar of this process: we got to know people and their lives and not least their most important problems, through the people themselves. With that done it was not a difficult task to generate from the individual issues, group-level issues that affect all members of the community because in most cases the difficulties spoken of affected the same areas of life. By January 2016 we had clarified the issues around which we wanted to achieve results together with the community. Based on our experience at local government sessions, individual-level problems and tragedies tend to be ignored and the district’s decision makers are unmoved by the fate of families ending up on the street, or becoming indebted, or their children being ousted from the school system. They are only willing to take steps if the problems affect the masses and they deem the particular disadvantaged group to be worthwhile of their action. Whenever we submitted an issue to them, the process required numerical facts, such as: How many families are affected by the problem? What is the age distribution of the affected families and how many children do they have? What are the costs in a financial sense? For this reason, our second important task was to perform structured and issue-based data collection in both segregated living areas. Due to their nature, the segregated housing areas are geographically well-definable, but the circumstances regarding the housing are much more complicated. During the organizing work we mapped from building to building how many people lived in the given property, who had what status (private owners, tenants, illegal home/area occupants), and what community issues affected them. This gained even more

significance when it came to recommendations at the anti-segregation forum because we knew that in order for us to be even regarded as a negotiating partner at the event our requests must be backed by numbers. The one-on-ones with members of the community, the group meetings, and the “field visits” were all important elements of realizing the event.

How difficult was it to switch to thinking in terms of issues to be solved and campaign processes instead of raising awareness and naming problems?

Anna Kiss: among Hungarian LGBTQI organizations we rarely see examples of community advocacy initiatives that put a strong emphasis on involving stakeholders. The main reason for that is that LGBTQI people often do not publicly identify as such, and due to the lack of “coming out”, they often fall victim to discrimination. In this situation a logical strategy is for Hungarian LGBTQI organizations to put emphasis on community development, awareness-raising and sensitization. In our experience, in Szeged – compared to other rural towns – the rate of people who have come out is quite high. This is also underscored by the fact that we have been informed about a good number of discrimination cases from those affected. In the case of LGBTQI people, a favorable rate of people having come out is a basic condition for successful community advocacy. In this sense, Szeged provides a good ground for action. Compared to other Western European countries however, Szeged is actually not in such a favorable situation, and therefore as the only LGBTQI-organization in the South of the Great Plain we cannot stop with our awareness-raising activities. It is important to see that awareness-raising and information transfer greatly facilitates, even “lubricates”, community advocacy. The mastering of the method of community organizing has enabled the Szeged LGBT Community Group to start thinking – taking advantage of the favorable rate of people who have come out – not only in terms of awareness-raising but also of campaigns and issues to be solved. The dissemination of such an attitude is of course a (not at all easy) task for community organizers and community leaders. It’s not easy, because we as civil society are not accustomed to – and don’t have a tradition of – making decision-makers find solutions to specific problems.

At the core of community organizing is – besides the cases won – building organizations. How have you coped with setting up a democratic framework and creating a schedule for meetings?

How do you keep motivation alive?



Ágnes Molnár, Opera Public Cultural Association - Native Group: Setting up a democratic framework during group meetings was not an overtly difficult task but maintaining it was. The reason for that is that participants had not experienced a similar operating principle in practice before, either in institutional settings or in their private life or at their workplace. The other

reason is that the means used to sustain the framework significantly slowed down the initial processes which made people impatient and unmotivated. To achieve real progress we found it necessary to organize regular meetings almost from the beginning of the process. We formulated rules defining differences and overlaps between the core membership and the regular membership as well as the relationship between working groups and the large Native group. The rules laid down basically served as reference points during the ensuing joint work.

Mónika Bálint: An important condition of an organization's functioning is for its organizers and leaders to see what the membership can stand behind, what knowledge, motivation and skills they have, and so what kind of campaigns they are capable of realizing. However, in our life, sustaining and taking care of human relationships is also part of being able to work in the long run. In addition to identifying and winning cases we need to look for instruments that allow us to give answers to the living conditions of our members as they often lack in such basic necessities as food or housing. We involve helpers and volunteers in the work targeting the overcoming of such personal hardships, as our members can only stay active if the basic conditions for survival are met. We prepare for our campaigns and daily operation through internal training courses which are regular elements of Tuesday group meetings. We also organize longer trainings on separate occasions and twice a year we hold strategic planning weekends where participants can master organizational tasks. We regularly hold in-house training sessions in the areas of moderation, organizational structure, campaign planning, media appearances/statements and recruitment in which we now involve our more experienced leaders as trainers. The training of new members can already be partly transferred to the leaders. We support those undertaking specific tasks in acquiring the skills and experience needed for performing those tasks at special one-on-one or small group sessions.

Éva Tímea Kovács: Following their formation, our groups typically met once a week. Regular meetings facilitate management, provide group members with a predictable framework and last but not least, bring members closer to each other. The supportive and democratic atmosphere at our meetings ensures that all participants can have a sense of ownership of the processes and get actively involved.



Balázs Horváth-Kertész, Living Memorial, Szentendre: I work in Szentendre building a base there. I have contacted over 100 people and made a further of 20 comprehensive one-on-ones through which we managed to identify local leaders, as well as sensitive areas and groups around town. Following the one-on-ones we set up an information desk that operated continuously for a week in order for us to be able to contact local residents. We also organized a public forum on the "Turul" statue which they were about to erect. The over 80 people attending had a chance to listen to 3 local governmental representatives, the leaders of the public foundation

initiating the erection of the statue, and art experts. Meanwhile Magyar Narancs (Hungarian Orange) revealed the political/power relations behind the Turul case in a 4-page article. In November we organized a public forum to amplify the voices of those protesting against the dismissal of the head of the local community/cultural center on political grounds. We organized open workshops and the and Urban Development Working Group developed the concept of the Living Agora: "We started working on a new civil society platform for consciously thinking and active Szentendre residents to get to know each other and get involved in finding solutions to local problems through community organizing." In cooperation with other community initiatives in April we organized street demonstrations connected to the resistance movement of teachers. In early May we launched a series of events serving as a base for the Szentendre civil society platform to which we invited renowned experts from the civil sphere who held lectures and workshops in connection with local issues. The public events were linked with strategic group planning sessions. We managed to establish the Living Agora platform which has successfully worked towards vitalizing civil society in Szentendre.

On what basis do you decide, after the one-on-ones, which issues you want to deal with?

Ágnes Molnár: We invested a lot of time into investigating local problems that affect the majority of group members, such as youth policy or the issue of the youth center. We also put great emphasis on having a vision, a common goal, in relation to the city of Debrecen, a system of values to guide us in deciding which issues to deal with. Laying down the rules and creating our portfolio was actually a kind of search for identity too, with the young people defining themselves and their role in the city as well as their common values and interests. This sort of reinforcement soon drove us towards actual issues and specific activities. Within a relatively short period of time processes gained momentum and we started working on the "Our field" campaign. Although at first glance the campaign does not provide answers to any easily definable social injustice, the lack of an extreme sports field was brought up constantly during the one-on-ones and private conversations we had in the city even by people who were not really affected. The continued harassment of people doing sports by the city's Public Safety Office and local residents and the growing distrust towards local decision-makers because of the empty promises caused frustration in the local alternative youth community who had to face grievances that went beyond being stigmatized. Therefore local people became interested in the issue very quickly and it generated cooperation among people who were in some way affected by it, be they businesses, CSOs, or private individuals.

Lintényi Levente: Regarding issues to be solved, we have been thinking in terms of specific, structured campaigns. Even when starting to pressure decision-makers to solve a given issue,

we clearly define what the next step will be in case the target person does this or that. We take every option into account and we are an unpleasant and merciless opponent. As one of our sympathizers put it: “You are like a spider”, meaning that we weave around the victim as long as we do not succeed.

The key to long-term operation is financial sustainability, therefore, fundraising is an integral part of the work of community organizers. Do you have any good examples?

Mónika Bálint: In addition to organizing and winning campaigns around specific issues our fundraising events regularly give the group a positive experience and a sense of achievement. These events also have a team-building purpose: people can try themselves performing simpler tasks and can also show themselves in public. We have cooked on several occasions in Szimpla’s “Common Pot” Program. Our event titled “See us - Let them see us”, held in Gólya in April 2016 was a great success. In cooperation with the members of the Situation Workshop, we organized a discussion about the experiences of people on workfare in rural areas. At this event, people had a chance to talk to our members as “living books” test a desktop version of our Public Workfare Obstacle Course and bid for one of our “modded” safety vests. We raised HUF 74,600, and

what the group also experienced as a success was that they managed to work as a team in a coordinated way and were able to run the event.

Levente Lintényi: We rarely deal with fundraising as our community organizing project luckily does not really require any financial resources. Within the framework of an internal training course a few of our members have been trained to raise financial and other resources. In our region it is more typical for people to provide material donations or even discounted or free services to support our efforts. Those who wish to support us usually contact us on Facebook. In my opinion to do really good and smashing things you either do not need money, or only such a small amount that can be covered by the group’s members.

Anna Kiss: For sustainable community advocacy it is essential to involve various resources (money, people, knowledge, contacts) on a regular basis. The Szeged LGBT Community Group secures part of the necessary financial resources to perform its activities from membership fees: members agreeing to pay a membership fee support the group’s operation with HUF 400 per month. Thanks to community organizing the number of paying members has doubled in a year’s time which has greatly contributed to our financial independence and to a growing commitment from members towards the organization.

5. About the Methodology of the Professional Support Provided



Funded by the Open Society Initiative for Europe (OSIFE), in June 2015 a year-long community organizing program started under the professional leadership of the Civil College Foundation (CCF). Within the framework of the program, communities and organizers from towns with over 10,000 inhabitants could apply for professional training/mentoring and a grant to cover the salary of a local community organizer as well as campaigning costs for a period of 12 months. Grants have been provided to formal and informal groups (being registered was not among the criteria) in order to strengthen the advocacy and base building functions of civil society that allow for keeping central and local institutions in check and for strengthening communities.

The program's call for proposals targeted the strengthening of social organization and the enforcement of the interests of local communities. We wanted applications that provide answers to the challenges of local social and economic processes and actively follow and monitor the work of local institutions guaranteeing civic control. Those programs received funding which strengthen the local public sphere and enforce local community interests in a visible way involving the local community and providing it with noticeable results. They touched on the functioning of local (e.g. health and educational) institutions, the utilization of local taxes, and the integrity of public procurement procedures, and create opportunities for effective individual and group participation in decision-making, thus making the operation of local decision makers and institutions more transparent and accountable.

We invited applications from CSOs and informal self-organizing groups which already had experience and results in the area of strengthening social organization. Candidates were asked to present the local issue or problem domain for which they sought to find solutions including their ideas as to how they could act effectively to address those problems.

The selection was performed in two steps, and those getting through the first round had a chance to attend basic training in community organizing provided by CCF. Following that, they developed their proposals for the next stage of the application procedure with the help of their community organizing mentors. Finally the grantees were selected.

In addition to the six main criteria, around 30 sub-criteria were used when evaluating the proposals. The six main criteria were:

- The outcomes of the applicant's operation so far
- Suitability of the applicant organization/group
- Project plan submitted by the applicant, their vision for the future
- Multiplier effect
- Professional experience and suitability of the potential community organizer
- The applicant is an organization/group in Eastern Hungary

The following considerations played a primary role in determining the final results: the results of the first and second rounds of applications; the personality and relevant experience/professional history of the given community organizer; and the rationale, odds, directions and elaboration of the given local community organizing program.

The following organizations participated in the one-year program: Action Researchers for Sustainability (AKUT) (Szeged), Auróra Community Centre (Budapest), the City is for All (Pécs), Dialogue Association (Miskolc), Living Memorial (Szentendre), Our Town Comes First (Bátonyterenye), Tree of Life Support Service (Debrecen), Workfare Movement for the Future (Budapest), Mátészalkaleaks (Mátészalka), Opera Public Cultural Association (Debrecen), Rehab Critical Mass (Budapest), Szeged LGBT Community Group (Szeged).

The Grant Program

Within the framework of the grants given (a maximum of HUF 5 million), OSIFE provided the head (community organizer) of each community organizing program selected with the necessary training costs and their personnel costs based on the Hungarian average salary (approx. HUF 3 million) for a one-year period. OSIFE also covered the material expenses necessary for the community organizing process (approx. HUF 2 million).

Training Courses

During the program, CCF provided the following training courses, primarily in its training center in Kunbáony, in residential settings.

Community Organizing Basic Training

The residential training was 40 hours long. It was held in the preliminary phase of the program which took place between the two rounds of applications prior to the launch of the one-year program. It was aimed at preparing participants for performing local community organizing tasks. A community organizer is a person who is willing to take responsibility for a community (one they are not necessarily a member of), and in the longer run to facilitate cooperation and action in the local population and contribute to the building of democratic groups and organizations. The main training themes were as follows:

- The theory of community organizing
- The methods of community organizing
- Campaign strategy and organization building
- Applying community organizing principles to the work of each organization supported



Picture 12: Community Leader Training. Source: CCF

Community Leader Training

A 24-hour training course that was organized twice with the aim to prepare participants delegated by local groups and community organizers to act as community leaders. Community leaders are people who, as active members of the local community, are able to facilitate the organizing and actions of that local community. It is important that each organization should have more than one leader who mutually support each other's work. Like community organizers, community leaders are willing to take responsibility for the community in the long run, helping local people join their forces and act together, and contributing to building democratic groups and organizations. Yet, unlike many community organizers, they are a member of the community. The main training themes were as follows:

- The basics of community organizing
- Democratic campaigning and organization building strategies
- Applying sustainability and community organizing principles to the work of participants' organizations.

Advanced Training

Built into project meetings or organized as separate events, we held one-day (6-hour-long) advanced training courses to expand and enhance the knowledge of community organizers. Thanks to our Legislative Fellows program, twice during the project we held these occasions with the involvement



Picture 13: Training the Trainers. Source: CCF

of our US colleagues: Dave Beckwith on organization building, building a group of community leaders and base building; and Amber Smock, Kristen Gaspar, Jaquie Algee, Ronnie Harris and Branden Snyder on base building and recruitment, campaign planning and organization, and coalition-building. On these occasions we also offered the opportunity to consult in small groups.

"I could utilize very well what I heard at the advanced training. Without getting to know Dave Beckwith's methods and approach I wouldn't have been able to coordinate such a complex action so well. Thanks to the campaigning strategies taken over from the Kunbábony trainings we managed to control the media from the beginning, seeing our messages again as quotes and headlines."

Balázs Horváth-Kertész

Training the Trainers

We invited those community organizers to attend who already had some experience – possibly in training too – but above all were committed to community organizing and spreading it. Our goal with the 16-hour Training the Trainers course was to prepare participants for independently

implementing an 8-hour basic community organizer training program, and to provide them with all the study aids and methodological and presentation-related tools they might need to do so.

The program was focused on facilitating the teaching of the most basic community organizing themes, such as:

- What is community organizing? Different approaches to solving social problems
- Steps in community organizing
- Problem - Issue
- Networking Conversations
- Organization building and recruitment techniques
- Strategic and Campaign Planning

Five of the program's grantees have attended the training program.

Methodology of the Consultations

Our consultation services essentially form the core of support provided to the community organizers. Regular one-on-one meetings help us build strong ties with them and develop a deeper understanding of processes, and they are also useful for planning and evaluation. In addition to the weekly and bi-weekly meetings, the community organizers prepare monthly plans and weekly reports in relation to their practical work. The consultations between the three community organizing mentors (Péter Giczey, Péter Peták and Bernadett Sebály) and the community organizers usually took place on a bi-weekly basis – one of them in person (often in the given community organizers own operating environment) and another one using some kind of online platform (mostly Skype).

During the consultations we reviewed and discussed the current state of organization building and campaigning; the one-on-ones; the communications aspects of the community organizing process; and the questions related to training and supporting community leaders. We also touched upon community organizer's personal relations (e.g. with the members of the organization) and possible directions in their professional development. We analyzed their difficulties and successes, recommended professional literature, and agreed on next steps and activities for the coming period.

Methodology of the Program Meetings

In addition to an opening and closing event, the organizers met on two occasions with the aim of monitoring the progress of the local processes, discussing and analyzing professional issues, sharing each other's knowledge in a supportive way, building networks, and planning joint actions. The 3-day meetings were held with the leadership of the community organizing

mentors in the Kunbáony Training Center of CCF, in residential settings. Furthermore OSIFE and CCF leadership were also available to clarify technical and financial issues. The events of the preceding period were discussed and the upcoming tasks determined through on-on-one, small group and plenary discussions and also using the Bálint and Open Space methods.

Additional opportunities for professional growth

- Organizing Wednesday
- Community Conference
- Summer Universities
- American exchange trips
- International networking
- Online Resource Center



In addition to the basic level professional support provided in frames of the program as described above, many other forms of assistance were available for participants.

Starting in 2011, a monthly event which was first called [Community Organizing Study Circle](#), then Community Organizing Workshop, and most recently **Organizer Wednesday**, has provided



Picture 14: Community Leader Training. Source: CCF



Picture 15: Advanced Training. Source: CCF

those interested in community organizing and those working on the field with an opportunity to exchange experiences and learn together. Since 2016, we have organized these events in cooperation with four organizations (Auróra, Living Memorial, Hungarian Anti-Poverty Network, and Rainbow Mission Foundation).

At the **Community Conference** held every November, community organizing topics are regularly on the agenda too.

In the summer period, those interested had a chance to attend two **Summer Universities**. The Citizens Participation University ([CPU](#)) is an English-language event with international participants. [The Summer University of Community Development Professionals](#) offers domestic professionals with an opportunity to deepen their knowledge of community approaches, including community organizing in a more casual format.

Funded by the US Department of State, and in cooperation with the Great Lakes Consortium, the [Legislative Fellows Program](#) provides selected participants with the opportunity to go on a six week study tour in the US. During the program participants get a comprehensive picture of how American democracy works and are introduced to the practice, actors, themes and methods of community-based organizing work happening on different levels and at different levels of scale, with special focus on advocacy-type community work related to minorities. In the further stages of the program US mentors came to Hungary (and three other European countries) and were

put in contact with hundreds of domestic initiatives. Five OSIFE grantees have also managed to join the program and, as mentioned above, the American community organizing mentors have provided professional training and consultation to our community organizers at least twice a year (holding discussions, workshops, training sessions and lectures throughout the country) supporting their work.

In addition to the above, CCF's other projects and overall professional work have also enhanced the program's effectiveness. We managed to support several community organizers in getting involved with **international networking and training** projects through European Union

projects, helping organizers and local leaders attend professional networking events and training courses. At the same time we do our best to provide opportunities for ongoing consultation for new initiators and the newly interested as well.

The online community platform cka.hu also facilitates more effective communication and team work. Furthermore, the [Community Organizing Resource Centre](#) recently launched on the site provides an increasingly diverse pool of domestic study aids for community organizers (articles, methods, case studies, films, etc.) to provide organizers an opportunity to prepare on their own.

6. Conclusions and Future Plans



A key element of our community organizing building process is to develop a national program and movement instead of sporadic initiatives and short-term projects. We also aim to build a basic framework for community organizing with newly emerging national examples and models and with many people taking the initiative. To this end, in the initial phase but also later on it is of crucial importance to reach a wide range of people with educational, coaching and training programs that facilitate the launch of new local or “issue-based” community organizing projects. Besides supporting these initiatives with comprehensive training activities and in a methodological guidance we should continue to place a strong emphasis on the processing, documentation and communication of experiences as this both gives evidence for, and further strengthens the development of, the movement. New (local, organizational, network, coalition) structures in community organizing have started to form and it is probably not an exaggeration to say that their development is the key of future of community organizing in Hungary. Hence, it is not surprising that that we have encountered the most dilemmas in exactly this area.

An important result of the work done by CCF and its partners in the past six years is the fact that we have already managed to achieve significant results regarding the above-mentioned issues and consolidate our nationwide building process. Due to the large number of contacts made, domestic initiatives were born. The first examples, case studies, national training courses, consultations, a resource center, and international networking followed. All this has demonstrated in several ways that with a new kind of approach and attitude, and bottom-up systematic building, even the most disadvantaged groups can:

- address a wider range of people along their interests,
- identify steps to be taken (issues),
- develop strategies and tactics to do so
- launch campaigns and exert pressure
- win cases, that is, achieve tangible, visible, clear and quantifiable results
- and use all this to build their own organizations.

That said the domestic community organizing movement is still young, and its evolution and strengthening are held back not only by cultural and historical aspects, but also by domestic public and social conditions. On a “home court” made so difficult in many ways, larger-scale and multi-level building continues to be necessary in order to increase the range in which community organizing can be spread. In doing so, support must be provided for:

- launching and carrying on with grassroots (local or issue-based) community organizing practices
- developing a community, network, and network nodes of professional community organizers in (e.g. regional community organizing centers or “hubs”), and their targeting of national-level issues

- reinforcing the alliance/coalition that embraces community organizing and community organizing issues on the strategic, national and international levels
- and sustaining the work of actors facilitating these processes through providing methods, training, mentoring, organizing contacts, network development, etc.

Among the priorities for the future, sustainability has a prominent place, with an emphasis on learning and teaching diversified fundraising as well as strengthening it in practice. Fundraising must penetrate the practice of local organizations and groups and the involvement of community organizers and leading professionals in fundraising efforts must strengthen just as the strategic financing models of national professional organizations and national and international coalitions.

The fact that we have managed to sustain the processes started on all these levels, having very different opportunities and resources in different settings, is due to a range of things: the rightness of the moment perhaps, the number of positive alignments, the strengthening of domestic and international partnerships, but primarily the amount of work invested and the increasingly spectacular fruits it has born. We are working to reach, in the course of our development, an epoch of becoming strong and independent, with community organizing becoming an important factor around Hungary.

We would like to thank all our partners for their cooperation and support, including the [Central and Eastern European Citizens Network \(CEEEN\)](#), the [Great Lakes Consortium for International Training and Development](#), the [Open Society Initiative for Europe \(OSIFE\)](#), the [Environmental](#)

[Partnership Foundation](#), the member organizations of the domestic Community Organizing Coalition and of course all our Hungarian and foreign community organizer colleagues and their organizations.

A short video summarizing the results of the first year is available to watch [here](#):



List of Organizations Contributing to This Publication



Civil College Foundation (CCF)

The Civil College Foundation works for an open and just society, as well as strong communities.

<http://www.cka.hu/>



Action Researchers for Sustainability (AKUT)

We are a group of researchers who aim to build bridges between the academic sector and local communities, with special regard to the most disadvantaged groups in society.

<http://www.akutegyesulet.hu/>



Auróra Community Centre - External Community Organizing Working Group

We work together with our community for a better District 8 and a more livable Market Hall District supporting a group of citizens in Józsefváros who are willing to act.

<https://www.facebook.com/auroraunofficial/>



The City is for All Pécs (AVM Pécs)

Our group was formed with the participation of homeless people and their allies who are willing to act for a just social and economic system based on equality and as part of that objective appropriate housing that is available to all.

<https://www.facebook.com/AVMPecs/about/>



Civic Colors (CCS)

The Civic Colors group is formed of LGBT+ people in Debrecen. We fight for equal rights for LGBT+ people so that they can live a full life in Hungary.



Living Memorial Szentendre (EE)

Our group initiated discussions in the town to help discuss the unspoken matters of the present and past in order to build trust among the people of Szentendre.

<https://www.facebook.com/elevenemlekmuszentendren/>



Mátészalkaleaks

Our group was created primarily to strengthen the local public sphere in the town of Mátészalka, and to establish a core group in the community that has an opinion about public affairs.

<http://mateszalkaleaks.blog.hu/>



Opera Public Cultural Association

Our task is to spread democratic ways of operation and map local issues in Debrecen. We have assisted the launch of the Debrecen Bike Mafia and Native groups.

https://www.facebook.com/operaegyesulet/info?tab=page_info



Szeged LGBT Community Group

We are a community organization that promotes the assertion of the interests of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people. Our main goal is to create an inclusive atmosphere Szeged in which all LGBTQI persons can live without fear and come out with their identities.

<http://szegedlmbt.hu/>



Workfare Movement for the Future (KMJ)

The goal of our non-partisan group of unemployed people and people on workfare is to improve the living conditions of workers in the workfare program, enforce their workers' and human rights and achieve the introduction of a more just public employment policy in Hungary.

<http://kozmunksmozgalom.blog.hu/>