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1 CHAPTER: HISTORICAL INFORMATION

1.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN FLANDERS/BELGIUM

By Gerhard Hautekeur¹, Belgium

Belgium has a form of regional government which divides administration into two parts - the Flemish part and the Walloon part. There are many different methods of community development used in the Flemish part of Belgium - these are explored under the two broad headings of community work and community buildings. Community work means: Bringing people together in groups and organisations to deal with concrete pressures in their living and life contexts, their neighbourhood, community or region lies at the heart of community work. The immediate reason for such initiatives is not so much individual difficulties and needs, but rather issues of a collective nature: dissatisfaction, demands, expectations or aims shared by a number of people.

Community work focuses on social or society-related problems and the way in which they manifest themselves in concrete terms in the local community. It faces problems and challenges in various fields, for example, the quality of accommodation and living conditions, the opportunities for unskilled workers in the labour market, the social integration of those groups of people living on the margins of society, the presence and the accessibility of adequate facilities, etc. From the bottom up, and in consultation and co-operation with the people who are the victims of a given situation, community building seeks to find appropriate responses and solutions. It calls upon the authorities, public bodies and individual organisations to develop a new policy or to adapt an existing one.

In this way community work creates channels for people to participate in the life of society. It offers individuals the opportunity to enter into public life and to exercise a degree of influence on the decisions affecting them. In society such opportunities are not fairly shared out. Not all individuals and groups enjoy the same opportunities and the same power. Groups with the power and the means have a better chance of presenting their vision of the situation.

Community workers often provide support for groups of people who are poorly educated, who do not have the support of strong organisations, and have no direct access to the centres of power.

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1. The future task of community building

Developments and differences within society all influence the local community. Often, at this level, all the implications become visible. And to a certain extent it is at this level that a response must be found. Of course we cannot reform the whole world on the basis of the small scale approach. Certain developments - individualisation, for example - are difficult to halt once they become entrenched in the deeper strata of society, and even more so once they take root at the local level. What must be done is to look for responses, preferably in a fashion which will offer people fresh opportunities. At the local level the necessary expertise, as well as the means to steer macro-developments and relationships are often missing. Whatever is decided upon or implemented at the higher level must, however, be translated in concrete fashion in terms of the local situation. When creative initiatives on a limited scale are copied they dynamic society and can be an inspiration and driving force for policy.

Thus society is also created at the local level and here the work of community building can contribute. How should it conceive its role in the coming years? What roles can it fulfil within society?

Shaping participation, building local community involves many role players. Government, various associations and interest groups, agencies and facilities - all working together in interlocking activities and each one dependent on the other. They all try to steer developments within society in one particular direction - or none. Community building represents a link in this collective action. It works on the middle ground within society, in other words, in that area granted to citizens within a democratic society in order to become organised and to fight for their own interests. Community workers develop channels for social participation. They speak to people in their role as residents of a neighbourhood, village or local area, as a client or a user of certain facilities, as the citizens of a given borough or city. They create new groups, or provide support to existing organisations, in order to work together to respond to collective needs and, where necessary, to put pressure on government policy and that of other agencies. Through innumerable channels people are involved in the formulation of society-related problems and the promotion of society's interests. Associations, action groups, trade unions, political parties and social movements in general play a prominent role. A number of local administrations and services offer their members or clients an opportunity to participate. What role does a professional service such as that of community building play in all this?

2. Target groups

To a large extent, community building agencies target their work on underprivileged groups, people who have been dealt with unfairly in terms of education, income, and/or work, housing, health and welfare and the like. As a rule, underprivileged groups are isolated; they have no direct voice in interest groups and social movements. Nor can they, on the basis of their own efforts, formulate their due claim to the sources of social assistance. Community building makes major efforts to reach them and, on a small scale, to organise them in terms of their needs and their particular interests. Community building could be described as a channel for unrecognised, overlooked or inadequately protected interests.

Nevertheless, community building also seeks to serve the better-off within the population. The struggle against social exclusion and in favour of social integration and emancipation can not be fought out in isolation. All strata within the population must be prepared to accept their responsibilities. In a climate of growing individualisation and fragmentation of interests it is important that we call for participation in the debate within society on issues of common interest. Broad swathes of the population must be involved in the construction of the life of society, on issues of town and country planning and urbanisation, mobility and traffic regulation, a sound infrastructure and facilities which respond to all kinds of needs, people's participation in policy making and so forth. A concern for common interests can, moreover, prevent processes of social exclusion from spreading.

Of course, as we have already stressed, this cannot be the task and the responsibility of community work alone. The latter can make a contribution. Based on its open and pluralist position, community work sees itself as an appropriate partner to bring about interaction and coalitions, to bring sectoral interests into contact with each other, and to organise co-responsibility for concrete objectives.

3. Contemporary roles

The most important roles of community building can be summarized in terms of a few concepts: collective consciousness-building and the promotion of collective interests on the one hand; renewal of society on the other.

The first role means that people must be encouraged to become involved in those social problems which directly affect them. Community work offers support in identifying the problems and the challenges, in giving them a name and in clarifying the social background. It brings people together in organisations to promote collective interests and to contribute opinions and claims with regard to appropriate measures in policy making. By creating new channels of participation, or by enabling existing ones to function better, community work contributes to the democratisation of the (local) community. Policy-making bodies gain firsthand information, and benefit from the experience of those directly involved.

By this renewing role we mean that community work often serves as an open space where, new solutions can be developed for social problems in co-operation with the people involved.

Community building is a laboratory which constructs new social networks or facilities, before the latter go on to lead an independent life or are integrated into existing services or into social policy. The experimental role of community work is not new, but in recent years it has come into its own, given that the European, federal and Flemish authorities are turning to local action in order to seek, from the base up, solutions to the pressing questions of the day. Thus they recognise the apparent need for community structure in the most literal sense of the world.

4. Maintaining independence

Given that community work benefits from official programmes and funding, but at the same time continues working at the grass-roots of society, it inevitably belongs to the state and to the street. The Social Impulse Fund and urban renewal, the reform of social housing policy and the administrative renewal which have given greater responsibility to local decision-makers, mean that projects for community structuring have an even closer relationship with policy-making processes, in which the government, public authorities and private initiatives all must co-operate.

In principle, community work can enjoy greater room for action with local competent, responsible agencies. In its day-to-day activities it must ensure that it retains its independence, to prevent it from becoming merely the executor who provides a helping hand to the official agencies. Good community work calls for independence and a wide field of action. Its point of reference cannot be the government nor the facility-providers or their agencies, rather it must be the target groups and their concrete needs. It is from this position that it must continue to observe the policy processes in a critical fashion. This is also part of its role.

5. Telling real stories

Do the roles set out above have any relation to a value-related objective? What is the final application? In the past, community building tended to package its society-based aims in riveting slogans: for example 'grass-roots democratisation of society' and 'emancipation for disadvantaged sectors'. In the meantime, its approach has become more modest. It has become more pragmatic, more orientated towards achieving real and concrete, albeit more limited, results. At a time when scepticism with regard to abstract hyperbole is rife, this fits in with wider perspectives.

Looked at closely, it is not community work's role to draw up an exhaustive and coherent description of the ideal society. Others can do this better. Community workers are much better

at describing concrete cases. Their expertise lies in bringing people together, in giving the impetus to small actions towards change, in testing innovative solutions on the small scale. But this is not enough: action must go hand-in-hand with reflection on daily practice, on the most important issues facing society: housing, unemployment and jobs, the multicultural society, local and regional developments, to mention only a few. Reflection on practice, screening and investigation of different actions and projects inevitably leads to a critical reflection on their ends. Thus community work can describe significant stories and situations. In this fashion, the sector can find a way out of the dilemma which exists between professional services and social movements. Community-work organisations are professional services which, precisely because of their standpoints, founded on their experiences in actions and projects at the grass roots level, can help create movements. It is precisely on the basis of concrete options that we can judge the approach to the fault lines within the community. Moreover, everything which we have just said reflects a number of values and goals which are still considered of great importance for all the organisations involved in community structure: the efforts towards a more democratic community, and one in which all sectors of society can participate, the combating and the prevention of social exclusion, the creation of frameworks of social integration, and the promotion of social and political participation.

6. Some of the important issues

Community building plays a role in the processes of collective awareness-raising and the promotion of given interests' it also plays an experimental role. In order to give a more concrete picture of the concerns and the significance of this sector we now offer a description of the issues and the programmes which are central to the functioning of community building institutions. Here and there we shall point to developments in the way they work and in their future direction.

7. Housing and housing conditions

The quality of housing and housing conditions has always been one of the most important concerns of community work. Thus in the 1970s the sector bemoaned the deterioration of the working class areas in urban centres and the surrounding 19th century areas. Often actions were launched to counter the poorly-planned policies of improvement schemes and the resulting social displacement. In the 1970s, community building played a prime role in the organisation of community group involvement in the framework of urban renewal work. In order to promote the interests of tenants, tenants' union and co-operatives were established. In a number of cities and boroughs efforts were made to introduce appropriate measures to combat speculation (e.g. taxes on run-down and unoccupied accommodation), basic norms for furnished rooms and a greater role for tenants in the policies of social housing organisations. In recent years community building has been closely involved in efforts to open up the housing market for people those on low incomes and for socially vulnerable groups in general. It has sought to involve such groups in renovation projects, the development of appropriate forms of housing, and in joint-management of housing facilities. Often a housing project goes hand-in-hand - in the framework of job renewal schemes - with the provision of training and work experience for unskilled unemployed people (the link with the issue of job-creation). In various places community work has been at the origins of housing agencies, social leasing agencies and tenants associations. Together with other welfare agencies it is a member of the Vlaams Overleg Bewonersbelangen (The Flemish consultative Agency for Tenants Interests). At the provincial, the city and the local community level it plays a role in the consultative bodies in which government, housing societies and welfare work discuss local or supra-local housing policy.

8. Unemployment and job creation

For many years now, long-term unemployment has been one of the greatest social problems. It is principally unskilled workers, including a large number of women and migrants, who have difficulty in finding a job, to a certain extent because a large pool of better-trained people are now carrying out jobs which normally would have been filled by the unskilled.

From the beginning of the 1980s community building has been actively involved in this issue. Action is developing constantly in this field: from initial action on behalf of the unemployed, via specific training and work experience projects for the unskilled, to paid employment in social work and social economy projects. The sector keeps a close eye on policy with regard to the long-term unemployed. Various initiatives in the area of training and employment in the social sector are grouped together at the regional and Flemish level. Practical experience and research results are constantly passed on to policy-makers. Thanks to the efforts of community work, the social sector has earned a role in the policy commissions of the sub-regional employment committees and in the Flemish government.

Permanent exclusion from the work process is one of the major causes of social exclusion, the 'new social issue'. Community work will continue to look for new ways of offering unskilled workers meaningful forms of employment. Other facets which require to be developed include: social economy projects, neighbourhood services and other projects to promote the local economy and to respond to social needs which are not being met. These are all initiatives which, certainly in the early stages, cannot be self-financing. They cannot survive without some form of government support. We would recommend looking for formulas within the framework of an active labour market policy to transform unemployment benefit into employment subsidies for projects to promote the local economy and the like. Unless this happens, the social security system for unemployed people who no longer have any hope of regular employment will inevitably develop from a system of temporary support into a system of permanent income support.

9. Services

In a modern society, reliable and accessible services are essential in many sectors. Much of the effort of community work is directed to the welfare problems of specific target groups such as the underprivileged, migrants, political refugees, asylum seekers and the elderly.

These projects have a three-fold aim. The first concern is to ensure that the facilities and the approach provided by existing services are geared to the specific needs of the target group. The aim of a number of projects is, in an experimental fashion, to create new facilities for needs which are going unanswered. For example a small-scale community centre offering a wide range of activities which will can provide the underprivileged with a stepping stone towards socio-cultural life and the official welfare system. Elsewhere, and working with the support of volunteers, centres for the elderly are set up.

Secondly, in providing such facilities, every possible effort is made to develop an approach which calls upon the clients' own capacities and abilities and offers them a voice in the running. This includes, among other things, providing information with regard to rights and responsibilities, the provision of impetus-giving services and the establishment of users- and residents councils in service centres and homes for the elderly.

Thirdly, in many places community work is the pace-setter, and sometimes even the on-going co-ordinator with regard to consultation and co-operation with other welfare organisations. Thus projects result in local consultative bodies on the issue of poverty, a community-based welfare council or structured forms of consultation between social work and the local authorities. All of this will become even more important in the framework of a more decentralised welfare policy.

10. Quality of life

In research reports and policy statements with regard to combating poverty and urban renewal new vogue words like 'integral approach' and 'inclusive policy' are popping up. They point to the need to examine, understand and tackle the problems in a coherent fashion.

Already in the 1960s, theories with regard to community building highlighted the concept of the 'comprehensive approach' In economically backward areas community workers sought to promote socio-cultural life, and worked to create better facilities and the like. They sought to supplement the boosts being given to the infra-structure and to the economy. For example, the concept of a 'rural-area policy' was developed in the hills of the West Flanders: rural areas require a specific policy adapted to their particular scale and population density.

A traditional concept is making a come-back. The same is also true when it is realised that neighbourhood and local development can only be successful if the local population, the associations and the local authorities all put their shoulders to the wheel. Self-motivation and participation are key words in community development.

What we have said above with regard to the issues of housing and living conditions, unemployment and job creation and (welfare) facilities, may give the impression that contemporary community work is issue-orientated and, unlike in the past, no longer seeks to create coherence between the various initiatives. Nothing is less true. Projects with regard to accommodation, employment and welfare usually form part of wider programmes aimed at the global quality of life in an urban neighbourhood or a rural village or area. As we have emphasised, community workers provide the impetus for, or are actively involved in, local development associations, local consultative bodies and regional platforms.

Within the local community social problems in all their aspects are those which are most visible. At that level people can be mobilised to do something about the situation. But all too often the necessary levers are missing, for example, competence and funding to bring about change. New perspectives are opened up once concepts such as local development, sector-orientated action, and administrative decentralisation find a role in policy-making within the Flemish community. Community building programmes can be integrated into policy renewal.

11. Other issues

The work of community building is also active in fields other than those mentioned above. Community-building projects help in launching socio-cultural facilities for migrants, or organising encounters between local people and migrants in order to improve understanding between the two groups. Moreover, migrants form one of the target groups of one of the approaches described above under the rubric housing, work, services and quality of life. In recent years more attention is again being given to the inequalities of opportunity in education and, in co-operation with other role-players, programmes are being developed to improve the educational opportunities for children from underprivileged backgrounds or from migrant families (this includes guidance with homework, after-school care, play activities, parents groups and parental participation, intercultural education, information for teaching staff and school authorities with regard to the specific cultures and customs of ethnic minorities, etc). This is certainly a major challenge. A great many scientific research projects have demonstrated that socio-cultural barriers can represent a serious handicap when it comes to children's schooling. Ground lost in primary school has a negative effect on later studies. Shortcomings in education and training again represent obstacles in gaining access to the labour market.

Issues such as environmental planning and mobility should also be mentioned. Public authorities call on community building organisations to organise and guide people's participation in local or sub-regional structural plans. Community building and the Flemish public transport authority 'De Lijn' are together involved in developing a public transport system which will meet the needs of rural areas with low population density.

12. The community work organisations

The community work sector consists of professional bodies. At present there are eight recognised Regional Institutes for Community Work or RISOs: one per province and one each in the major cities of Antwerp, Gent and Brussels. They bring together neighbourhood groups in the cities, large and small, and in the boroughs, as well as initiatives on the sub-regional level. A number of local bodies are, in legal terms, independent of their recognised regional institute for their area, but, in practice, work very closely with it. There is a national support institute at the national level: VIBOSO or the Flemish Institute for the Promotion and Support of Community building.

1.2 COMMUNITY WORK EDUCATION IN BULGARIA

SHORT HISTORY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN BULGARIA

By Christomir Zafirov, Bulgaria

In Bulgaria social work education has not such a long history, despite that first school /Social High School/ was opened in 1932 in Sofia. The same year it was recognized from Ministry of Education as a high school. Any way, before socialist time /before 1944/ the social work has been done mainly from religious organizations, women's associations and some charity work, supported from our formers king's family and was not so clear and centralized. Also social activities have been done from the officials from social security system and employment policy. Very nice experience in social work and some kind of community work and building are the so called "CHITALISHTE" phenomena - traditional expression of community organization in Bulgaria who have played a major role in education and the preservation of the national cultural heritage. You may read more in the file Best Practice / Projects. Another nice experience is so called "SEDENKI" – some kind of neighborhoods community – neighbors meeting. They appeared absolutely spontaneously and these meeting were done at the end of the week and every weekend different family was host. The above two phenomena were developed and played major role in the time of Turkish depression /before 1878/.

In general in communist time - 1944-1989 social work was mainly oriented to finding shelter for homeless people and taking meals to the lonely old people. Some care was done for people with disabilities, not enough, but some activities were demonstrated. For example there was special small state enterprises, in which people with different kind of disabilities worked in appropriate special way in the week time and they were included also in some social life in the weekends, mainly cultural, excursions, and other activities. Also there was some kind of "Culture Houses". They were often used to spread communist ideology, but beside that they played positive role for building some community and giving people possibilities to communicate in equal way and to develop some skills, attitudes and so on.

In the 50-thies for the first time appears the profession social worker, who has been actually officers from the Ministry of Health and Social Care. Also in this period are formed social departments as bodies from local authorities. In the 70-thies the system of social cares is attached to the Ministry of Labor and Social Cares and after that again to the Ministry of Health – it is happened two times. Till 90-thies actually in Bulgaria there are not any requirements to the special education in the field of Social Care. This way we may said that till 1990 in our country we have not appropriate University speciality in the field. From the people with University diploma are accepted mainly specialists in the field of pedagogy, psychology, philosophy, sociology, economics and insurance. Even in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy there are more specialists with no University diplomas in the exact field.

After 1990 in the transition to the market economy there was a big demand to change the social policy. Firstly appeared many documents – low, acts, rules, regulations - in 1993, 1995, 1997, 1998. In 1990 was founded National Center for Social Support, which had regional branches. In 1991 was founded special fund "Vocational Training and Unemployment". In 1997 was founded National Employment Service, which included 9 regional branches and 280 Labor Offices in the country. In 1996 was founded special fund Rehabilitation and Social Integration for people with disabilities. In 1997 was founded National Council for Vocational Qualification, National Office for Social Cares with regional offices etc.

All these actions placed in the front area the need for special University education for the people who worked in this field. This need was forced also from concrete programs – national and EU, working in some regions and having specific target groups.

After 1989 in the community development the first main actors appear. These were just founded non governmental organizations - NGO. They were actually the first organizations

promoting the civil society and community building. Their work was not so well organized and systematic, because of dealing with different program funding and initiatives mainly European and US.

In the very beginning of 1990 mainly in the just founded private Universities in Sofia, Bourgas and Varna was introduced university education in Social Work, in the first time as a post graduate training for people, working in the field and having degree in Social sciences. But the initiative for opening such an education came not from the Government, but mainly from Academic staffs in the Universities, even not from the demand of the market and not from the social institutions, as a result this education was mainly theoretically based and very "academic" curriculum was developed.

In the state's Universities the idea for education in the field came a little bit late. They used their big experience in the social sciences, pedagogy, and special education. They implemented it in the Faculties of Education. So, it is possible to say, that in the middle of 1990 it was more or less chaos in the education in the social field. Gradually the curriculum was improved and some experience was gained.

In 1996 is recognized officially the University specialty "Social Activities" /it was long debate to choose Social Work or Social Activities/. Very soon other specialty was also recognized officially – it was "Social Pedagogy".

Today almost all Bulgarian Universities propose Bachelor and Master degree in Social Pedagogy and / or Social Activities.

But even now as a problem we may state again more theoretically oriented approach in education. Actually this is problem for all Bulgarian educational system. Also the problem we see is the old fashionable teaching and learning. Many universities do not use modern and effective teaching-learning methodology and approaches. It should be used more innovative approaches as problem based learning, project based learning, interactive methodologies and tools, heuristic approach, constructivist approach... etc.

Social work is directed mainly to minority groups /mainly Gipsy population/, poor people, children without parents care, criminal people, people with mental problems, dependent people and handicapped people.

Now social activities is oriented to marginal communities with priority – children in risk, minorities, especially gypsies, unemployed people, handicapped and children, who leave institutions /in which they have lived long time/ and they have not any social competencies. In Bulgaria there is a special "Ministry of Labor and Social Affaires". They do mainly routine activities and financial support to handicapped people, unemployed people and children without parents care and to social poor people.

Mainly more quality work is doing by NGO. Unfortunately they act more or less almost only in the cities regions. In the about 8 000 000 Bulgaria - these are about 28 cities. In the last two years mainly in Sofia - the capital, are opening the centers for social help and support of the children and their families. There is a big need to develop social cares in small towns and villages, where the social work should orient not only to the individual, but also to the whole social environment. There is a big need to work with groups and community.

In the social fields as it was mentioned the main actors are NGO`s, which apply and win many projects, but this is not regular basis and has periodical effect.

It should to develop more systematic approach, with a long period and perspective and sustainable effect.

Government Priorities in the field of social cares

- ✚ Changing the philosophy of the social cares implementing – redirecting to the most critical groups: handicapped people, lonely people and children and adult in risk
- ✚ Transition to the alternative forms of social services, offered in community, in accordance to the concrete needs of the municipality
- ✚ Breaking the State monopole and the developing of the common State requirements for presenting of the social services
- ✚ Including partners in the process of social services – municipalities, NGO, business organizations in orders to improve the social integration and quality of life

Education

Until 1989 the university system in Bulgaria, like so much else, was closely controlled, and universities were part of the state apparatus and were subject to detailed control and regulation from the centre. One of the first acts of the Government that followed the 1989 changes was to introduce an Autonomy Act which removed most of the controls under which universities worked previously, without putting much in their place. Since then the succeeding legislation has changed the balance between control and freedom, and the university system has been subject to a degree of instability in this respect. That is understandable, as the disadvantages of the different approaches were experienced, but what is badly needed now is a period of stability which enables universities to exercise the maximum degree of self rule and to identify their own futures, in a way which is compatible with the interests of the state.

Until recently, the position on programs and curriculum was less clear, since the state required that all programs offered be approved by being registered in a State Register. It also required that universities adhere to centrally prescribed controls over things like the number of contact hours and the content of the program. Such detailed control ran the risk of inhibiting innovation and responsiveness to changes in the market and student demand. Since 2002 that has changed, and universities are free to start their own programs, and they are not bound by any State Requirements concerning the content of the curriculum or the pedagogical approach, except in a small number of 'regulated professions'

Bulgaria was among the first 29 countries that signed the Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education on June 19, 1999. As outlined in the Declaration, the activities foreseen will have a substantial effect on the higher education system in each country. The changes of the social environment and the demands of the market economy require much more flexible system of higher education studies and of methods for obtaining qualifications and degrees.

The Bulgarian approach in meeting the Bologna process trends could be characterized by legal initiatives oriented towards improvement of the national legal framework in compliance with the principles of the Bologna declaration, as well as with setting up of new priorities for higher education development, including measures for their practical implementation. The on-going reforms in the sector are also deeply influenced by the process of country's preparation for accession to the European Union. Since 1998 Bulgaria is in a process of active approximation of the national educational legislation with the *acquis communautaire*.

The main concern is to ensure the adaptability of the education system towards new challenges, as well as to guarantee sustainable system development in compliance with the objectives of the European Higher Education Area and capable to provide valuable and competitive knowledge and skills. Following the examples given below, the legal base concerning higher education in Bulgaria has been subsequently updated in compliance with the Bologna Declaration principles as an integral part of the Bologna process. The changes made in the basic legal documents have significant impact on the overall qualifications structure and content, the education quality enhancement, the recognition process etc.

Actually the major legal documents regulating the national qualifications framework for higher education are The Higher Education Act (SG 60 – 2 July 1999, and subsequent amendments) and The Register of the higher education fields of studies and the professional areas (SG 64/02.07.2002). The 1995 Higher Education Act brought considerable changes in the structure of the higher education in Bulgaria by introducing the degrees system. The subsequent amendments to that Act, related to the structure of higher education qualifications, are mainly oriented towards improving the opportunities for equal access to further studies, as well as towards increasing system effectiveness and internal mobility. For example, Art.42, par.3 provides to the holders of Bachelor's degree the opportunity to apply for doctoral studies. Its Par.5 provides to the holders of the "Specialist in..." qualification the possibility to continue their studies at Bachelor's level. One should also mention that the amendments to the Higher Education Act define a broader profile-oriented basic training of the Bachelor's programs, and an in-depth fundamental content of the Master's ones.

Actually introducing the ECTS system begins in 2002 in Bulgarian Universities. In 2004 they also introduce and DS – Diploma Supplement. So practically these two elements started working for 2004/2005 academic year.

To its credit, Bulgaria has been an early adopter of the Bologna three-phase Bachelors/Masters/Doctorate structure, having previously had a two-stage structure with the Masters studied over five years followed by a Doctorate over three. However, as in other countries that have changed to the new structure, in many ways, initially at any rate, the change was more apparent than real, and it remains the case that the Bachelors qualification is not regarded widely as a qualification that new undergraduates aim at, nor is it generally regarded as a valuable higher education qualification in its own right.

In one respect, Bulgaria stands aside from most other countries implementing the Bologna structure: it has a four-year Bachelors and one-year Masters, whereas the Bologna process allows 3+1 and 3+2 as well as 4+1, and the great majority of European countries have opted for the 3+2 model. If, as is intended, the Bachelors qualification provides a viable and accepted entry point into working life, then the resources that a 3-year Bachelors qualification releases for use elsewhere in the higher education system are substantial. It may be too late, but this is something that Bulgaria may well wish to reconsider. There seems no good reason why it should stand apart from the rest of Europe in insisting on four years as a Bachelors qualification rather than three: and this is very expensive, at a time when Bulgaria should perhaps be using its resources better.

In Bulgaria the institutional education in the Social Care field is in the Universities. Actually there is recognition by the governmental educational documents for 2 Programs in the field for Bachelor and Master Degrees: "Social Pedagogy" and "Social Work". The education is concentrated mainly in the Faculties of Education with small exceptions. In some universities Social Work is inside Medical Faculty. Also Medical University in Sofia proposes Social Work education. In some Universities they propose education in both Programs.

In the following Table you may see which Universities in Bulgaria propose such an education:

Social Pedagogy	Social Work
Trakia University Burgas University Sofia University Varna University Turnovo University Shumen University Blagoevgrad University Plovdiv University Russe University	Gabrovo University Sofia University Stara Zagora University Varna University Shumen University Plovdiv University Turnovo University Medical University

Many other organizations propose also training in the field, but usually it is done as a result from different projects – national and international and usually it is not accredited as a whole. Such organizations are mainly NGO, Ministry of labor and social policy, and some others.

Social workers education:

Community Development – integrated in curriculum

In **Trakia University** Social Pedagogy is in the Faculty of Education. Social Work is in the Medical Faculty. In Social Pedagogy there are integrated in the following courses: "Interaction in Local Community" – it is free-choice module /4 ECTS/, "Social Work with Families" /3 ECTS/, "Social Consulting" /3 ECTS/, "Social Work with People in Risk" /4 ECTS/.

Sofia University

Bachelor Degree program – "Social Work" – course "Social Work in Community" /4 ECTS/, "Social Work with Unemployed" /4 ECTS/, "Social Work with Children in Risk" /4 ECTS/, "Social Work with People with Disability" /4 ECTS/, "Social Work with Deviant Behavior" /4 ECTS/. 8 semesters, 2895 hours.

Turnovo University

Bachelor Degree "Social Work" program – in curriculum – courses: "Social work with elderly people" /4 ECTS/, "Social work with minority group" /4 ECTS/, "Social work with dependants" /4 ECTS/, "Social work with families" /4 ECTS/. "Social care", "Management and organization of NGO`s" /3 ECTS/.

Bachelor Degree "Social Pedagogy" program – in curriculum – courses "Social Work in the Institutions for Social care", "Social Work with Children in Risk", "Social Law and Social Care" and others are pedagogically oriented.

The only exception Community Development – Module

Sofia University

Master Degree program - 2 semesters – "Social work in local community" – for students who acquired Bachelor Degree in "Social Work" Program. Courses – "Local Community Structures for Social Work", "Social Work and NGO`s", "Social Work in Ethnical Minority Communities", "Social Work with Unemployed People", "Social Work with families", "Social Work with Children", "Management of the Social Work in Local Communities".

Master Degree program - 3 semesters – “Social work in local community” – for students who acquired Bachelor Degree other /different from “Social Work/ Programs. Courses - – “Local Community Structures for Social Work”, “Social Work and NGO`s”, “Resources for Social Work”, “Social Work in Ethnical Minority Communities”, “Social Work with Unemployed People”, “Social Work with families”, “Social Work with Children”, “Management of the Social Work in Local Communities”, “Prevention in the Social Work”.

Master Degree program - 2 semesters – “Management of the Institutions for Social Work”. The stress is to the management issues.

Master Degree program - 2 semesters – “Social Work with Children”.

Social work field:

Trakia and other Universities.

Field practice – about 375 academic hours in different institutions, mainly institutions for elderly people, homeless children, minority, children in risk, Center for community support, the prison, pedagogical services for children in risk, Day center for children with mental problems, Care centers for children without parents care, schools, kindergartens.

There are 2 supervisors – university one, this is a lectures in some subject which is responsible for students practice. Usually this one is more responsible for the organization of the practice and collaborates with the institution’s one. / Institution’s supervisor is responsible for field practice.

Turnovo University - Bachelors Degree “Social Pedagogy” – 250 academic hours field practice in different institutions, mainly kindergartens and schools.

Bachelors Degree “Social Work” – 240 academic hours field practice in different social institutions.

Sofia University – Bachelors Degree “Social Work” – 330 academic hours field practice in different institutions by choice.

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1.3 HISTORY OF GERMAN COMMUNITY WORK

By Roland Brake, Germany

German community work developed from the tradition of settlement in Great Britain and America. Dennison pioneered community work in the East London slums. After him, Samuel and Henrietta Barnett founded Toynbee Hall and Oxford House. They intended to promote the "Three R's" for the inhabitants of the slums: reading, writing and arithmetic. Also, Jane Addams from Chicago had the idea of helping marginalised groups like the poor, the disabled, the immigrants and the homeless. The motivation for work in the community was at first humanity and religion. Secondary to this was the concept of charity to improve the precarious social conditions of the working class. The founders of community work came to the conclusion that social disadvantage can only be dealt with properly when social policy and educational policy come together. The aims of community work were:

1. Facilitate self-help (as an early form of empowerment)
2. Teamwork and organisation of victims of discrimination
3. To promote education
4. To combat poverty, unemployment and homelessness

The principles of community work were:

-  No charity (too much charity leads to dependence)
-  No Paternalism (empowerment)
-  No class distinction

In the last century neighbourhood centres developed in German cities. The names we can associate with this development are Walter Classens, Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze and Hertha Kraus. There were many community work-related activities and community work-related organisations (between the First World War and 1922) were established. Aims and reasons of German community work were:

1. Orientation in accommodation (local connections)
2. Creation of community centres
3. Looking for the reasons of mental and economic calamities
4. Adoption of the American and British settlement ideas

In Germany community work was abandoned due to fascism. In the 30's the Nazis closed all neighbourhood centres and later all the centres in occupied areas. During the Second World War community work operated only as financial aid. The social workers from Germany emigrated.

After the Second World War there was a resurgence of community work. English and American representatives, also Hertha Kraus, set up neighbourhood centres. These centres were built to relieve the distress of war and support the process of democracy in Germany. In 1951 Hertha Kraus published constituent matters of community work. Among other things she said that professionals have to work in unison with lay volunteers. In 1955 community work was given a big boost by Herbert Lattke.

Since then community work has become more and more a fundamental method of social work. After that, two international conferences (Munich, Rio de Janeiro) about community work promoted the development of German community work. In the 60's and 70's community work was at its prime. The 1960s and 1970s saw many activities: publications, scientific papers, foundations and professional education of community work. There was a growth in German neighbourhood centres also in the outskirts of towns, they gave professional education in community work, social workers came together to form different groups about Community Work, Community Organisation and Community Development. The classical tasks lay in old building areas or residential areas in need of rehabilitation. The social workers wanted to

upgrade the social situation of the residents and create room for children and adolescents. They tried to combat the missing infrastructure and the high prices of rental properties. At the same time they also wanted to prevent anonymity. These problems were common for all inhabitants of huge settlements. So it was clear that the people had to join together to put an end to the deplorable state of affairs. The rationale of community work at this time was that citizens must be mobilised to represent their own interests and needs.

In 1970 there was a big student rebellion in Germany. The students wanted to change society. Social problems and their causes were at the forefront. Earlier reforms were repealed and community work projects were taken back. The economic crisis added to the problems and the left wing radicals were banned. This mixture of societal and social problems terminated the boom of community work.

From the 90`s onwards there has been a new orientation of community work. The social space moved to the forefront again. The principles and methods of community work came into being again but under different names: Empowerment, local agenda, quarter management, township work and a strong attention to economic issues.

In Germany we differentiate between 5 theoretical lines of community work.

1. The welfare community work (the institutions make decisions without the clients, another name is community care)
2. Integration community work (all participants of a community try to find a solution together)
3. Aggressive community work (Coming together of underdogs against the state)
4. Catalytic community work (building of networks through mediating and activating social workers)
5. Integration community work in consideration of every day life (that means the building of community networks with the help of all participants, taking into account institutions and administrative bodies)

In the actual discussion community work is integrated in different fields of social work. Social work can only work professionally if the social workers see community work as a method which incorporates other methods (casework and group work).

The foundation is the improvement of lifestyle in social spaces in the interest of clients.

Admittedly a systematic monograph of the basics and actual developments of community work does not exist.

The lifestyle improvements have to be created in every day life in the residential quarter and with the communal policy, administration and economy. The social workers must combine every day life, the institutions and the administration. This means the building of community networks with the help of all participants taking into account institutions and administrative bodies.

The standards of service in community work are primarily cooperation with all groups in a community. The precept is fundamentally social space oriented. Secondly we have to look at the motivation of people with the focus on their needs. In the foreground are the apparently little themes in every day life.

Thirdly self help must be encouraged. Community work encourages people to handle their problems themselves. Fourth: Existing resources must be used. Beginning with personal resources up to material and infrastructural resources people must work together to cope in life. Fifth and sixth: community work encourages and mends material, infrastructural and immaterial factors. Seventh: community work works in the following areas: living, health, work, recreation, community development, education and culture. And finally social workers are managing the cooperation between institution and social network.

Effective community work requires professionalism of Social workers. They have to defer to institutions. They have to look for similarities. Community work is an advocate of fair disputes and they have to look at relationships as well as financial needs. They must balance their own

problems and clients' problems. A psychological, temporal and an emotional continuity and stability is important. Clients and cooperating networks must be able to live independently of professionals. They must have knowledge of their own limits and of their own needs.

The problems could be:

- ✚ Orientation exclusively at the legal level,
- ✚ One-sided role as a problem solver and helper,
- ✚ Reactive attitudes to clients and
- ✚ Dominance of bureaucratic administration.

1.4 COMMUNITY BUILDING IN LITHUANIA

Summary made by V. Gevorgienienė, V. Jakutienė, Lithuania

Main concepts of community development

Community is a more or less solid unit of people, living in the same territory, their interactions, institutions and cultural as well as behavior traditions. (Bendruomenės plėtra, 2004, p. 6).

Rural community is a group of people, who live in a certain place, have certain common institutions (school, church, etc.) and are united by common experience and mutual reliance. In a functional aspect, a rural community is a certain process of social interaction which extends and deepens mutual dependence of community members. (Kaimo bendruomenių plėtra, 2004, p.26).

Community care - social services provided for people in a certain living area. It implies self-support groups, informal care. The concept is associated with participation of more people, flexibility of support, etc.

Community development - a movement (activity, action), enabling people to improve their life quality. Community development – communal (based on needs and interests of a community) and inclusive (based on active participation of community members) processes. (Bendruomenės plėtra, p.9). This concept is closely related with the concept of „community potential“: on the one hand, the community development is not possible without the certain community potential, on the other hand, in the process of community development its' potential increases as well. The aim of the community development is to change (develop) those phenomenons, processes, interactions, economical as well as work possibilities, environment conditions, which are important for the life quality of people. Community development is continuous community building, in which the process is not less important than the results. Without reference to the work extent the community development will become effective when:

- ✚ it will be initiated and supported by community people
- ✚ well planned
- ✚ long-term
- ✚ beneficial to the community
- ✚ not bias and encouraging the participation of people
- ✚ based on the good practice experiences
- ✚ holistic and tuned with the wider context of a county, region, state, world.

The main result of community development is the growth of life quality. (Bendruomenės plėtra, 2004, p. 8-11).

Socioeconomic situation of Lithuania

one-third of 3.5 million inhabitants lives in rural areas

around 21 proc. of all population work in agriculture

in 1999 m. approx. 10 proc. GDP.

Export of agricultural products in 1999 gave 13 proc. of income (Juska et al., 2005)

History of community building in Lithuania

During the late 1990s a rural community movement emerged in post-socialist Lithuania. It was a result of socioeconomic changes, which took place after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The process of privatization increased the social stratification as well as contraposition of people living in rural areas. The growth of poverty, alcoholism, pessimism, etc. manifested themselves as consequences of political and economical changes. In order to fight the deterioration of the life of rural population, the Lithuanian government attempted to stimulate rural economic development and grass-roots activism. The rural population itself was exhausted from conflicts and tensions. As Vosyliūtė states (Kaimo bendruomenių plėtra, 2004, p. 57), after the destruction of „kolchoz“ and individualization of farms the mutual social supervision and social control weakened, and despite the negative implications of this process, this could create self-reliance and self-control, that is, the need for inner regulation of behavior. Such changes shape

attractive social environment for creative and enterprising people, stimulate their initiative. On the other hand, the atmosphere of weak social relationships does not encourage enthusiasm, provide few possibilities to demonstrate devotion or empathy. As one respondent stated: „observing a rural community one may think that we are not able to live independently, to fight for ourselves; only some are able to do that. To date everybody just complains – „oh, it was better „under“ russians, - everyone had a job...“. As much as they did not care for themselves in the past, they continue such existence from inertia.“ However, along with these moods, the respect to such qualities and behaviors of people which reflect cultural ideas and values of a current period, is developing as well. For instance: „otherwise people move on; I respect those who are active and do not touch bottom in the face of a failure“ (ibid.)

According to Juska, Poviliunas, etc. (2005), the rise of rural movement can be interpreted as one of the responses to the post-socialist crisis in agriculture as well as a strategy in dealing with growing economic, political and social marginalization of the rural population in Lithuania. In the last 4-5 years close to 500 such organizations were registered in the country. The goal was the mobilization of local communities in dealing with their social, cultural, political and economic problems.

However there is indirect evidence, that some of these groups exist mostly on the paper in order to receive funding.

Other motives of community development are as follows:

- ✚ a possibility to create traditions, feasts of a rural community, that is – to develop rural culture;
- ✚ a possibility to strengthen trust among community members and belief in the future of self and community; a possibility to decide for themselves on social, economic, cultural, humanitarian problems of rural community through coordinated means and cooperative resources;
- ✚ a possibility to make a public impact on the local and national authorities „bottom up“, through participation in political decisions of municipalities, counties and national authorities on rural development. (Kaimo bendruomenių plėtra, 2004, p. 43).

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1.5 COMMUNITY WORK – ROMANIA

By Szabó Béla, Ph.D. and Veress Enikő, Romania

After the changes appeared in December 1989 the old social order existed in Romania was looking after new paths and directions. The key of the solution were the models implemented in the developed western countries. Briefly these are based on the capitalism and market economy. One research focusing on the eastern-european post-socialist village-society has shown that the countries in this part of Europe are trying to resolve the apparently similar tasks of changing the political regime, the economy and the whole society in different ways. The differences have their origins in the proportions of western and eastern elements (Csite & Kovach, 1993). The above mentioned transformation has different gear-levels in rural and urban sites. Of course, the urban regions are more developed than the rural areas, so they have a better point of start. One can observe that the rural areas have lower development rate, they are poorer than urban areas.

In Romania the researches of villages has at least a century-long history. It has started somewhere at the beginning of the XX. century through the '40s. The researchers maid mainly two types of analyses. The representatives of the first group emphasized the importance of the descriptive researches while the second group's general objective was to actively make changes in the field after making an accurate map of the villages. In the background of the researches often there was some kind of ideology. The most important researches were made by the monographical school from Bucharest and by the intellectuals from Cluj Napoca, who's target was mainly the countryside of Transylvania.

The researches were important – and on this all of them agreed – because the gap between the villages and the cities had increased in time. The scholars were looking for explanations of the discrepancies and for the factors which were responsible for the poorness of the villages. Confronting the works from the country with those made abroad we can conclude that actually the movement has started in the western countries, and in their situation this has ended with a real rural development (social transformation, new buildings such as schools, cultural centers, hospitals etc.). In contrast, for the scholars from Romania the main aim was to find solutions how to bring closer the villages to the cities, and how to grow real leaders. The researchers form Transylvania admit that in the process of the development it is important to base on the local resources. The importance of the findings are actual in nowadays also.

The most impressive effect on the village-researches was made by Dimitrie Gusti. The monographical school from Bucharest is linked with his name and had a real success, determining the shape of the following analyses. Gusti has analyzed the villages as social units. His work consist 500 village-monography. His main objective was to come to know the villages, and in his last period of research he focused on the issues concerning the society. His latest researches are often called action-researches. He was the one who implemented the monographical studies, which gained a wide range of followers. The method of sociological monography developed by Gusti was recognized also on theoretical level. In his opinion the phenomena need to be analyzed in context, as their manifestation are not isolated from each other. Following this concept he concluded that the geographical surrounding and the society unit (as we mentioned above, this is the village in Gusti's way of thinking) are connected and both of them have influence on each other.

Another important centre of the village-researches was the University from Cluj – their target was the Transylvanian countryside. The most important name from this school is Balázs Ferenc. He did not stop the research only by describing the particularities of a certain village. He tried to make it better, to change the existing life-form. In the economical analyses he emphasized the importance of the individualization, the collaboration between the manufacturers and the identification of those possibilities through the grower-production can be increased. Balázs

Ferenc implemented his suggestions in practice, being the first to contribute and to lead the villages through a developmental process. All that he made and organized in the villages can be considered as community development, because he merged with success the individual and community farming and management. Of course his activity was not only targeting the local economy, but also the raise of knowledge and information level. He organized schools and had numerous presentations.

For the post communist Romania the word *development* became a fundamental concept in almost every public discussion. In this context appeared discussions concerning the local community development, community development – this right in fact was a re-earned right after a long period of time when the majority of the decisions regarding the development were made at central level and the feelings of belonging and responsibility were destroyed. After more than a decade of practicing democracy we can surprisingly observe that policies implemented in this sector in most of the cases didn't reach their target at the local level. Generally it is the case of communities from rural areas, without a clearly defined and general conception of the development.

Another aspect of the Romanian administrative life (and also the community development) after the '90s consists in broadening the project managements, and making it one of the main principle in the everyday life for the public administration and for the involved actors in the local development processes.

Applying in practice the principles which represents the base of the project managements it is quite difficult with the existing human resources available in public administration in Romania. Although, in the last few years many universities created new specializations concerning public administration with qualified stuff and with competing curricula's, the motivation of the public functionaries is low. This can be explained by their material situation (salaries in the public administration in general are low), by the legislation concerning the corruption (the public functionaries don't have the right to have extra income even being involved in projects with extra-budget funds) or even by the implication of the politics in the administrative activity.

This situation must be merged also with the weak development of other agents of development existed at the community level in the rural areas. As the Rural Euro Barometer (2003) shows (realized by the Gallup Organization requested by the Foundation for Open Society) only 7% of the rural area population has somebody from the family who is an associate in a private business or entrepreneurship. The same source indicates that at the level of the rural communities there is no other forms of organization than the local administration, who is involved in solving the communities problems. 73% of the interviewed persons underline this fact.

In a couple of bibliographical sources it is mentioned that in rural areas from Romania the main actor for the development or initiatives is the local administration. This fact underlines the viewpoint which emphasize the importance of the human resource in the public administration as the main vector for the development. The Rural Euro Barometer indicates that 55% of those questioned identifies the public functionaries as the most important persons with initiatives at local community level.

Community-development: case-study in Mera, (county of Cluj)

It is often said that in the post-industrial society (or some such cliché) all has become so mobile that community has become irrelevant. Toennies's theory of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* as being the most cited model for describing modernization denies the outpacing of the concept of community in the modern societies. Even if his theory has lots of strengths, one cannot doubt that there are still elements in today's society which can be defined as belonging to the traditional community.

Starting even from the sixties there have been serious debates around the definition of the community and the placement of this concept among the topics of sociological research. As Ruth Glass has named it, community was to be "the poor sociologist's substitute for the novel" (Glass, 1966). Very probably because of the high degree of the subjectivity it involves, and the impossibility of a clear and consistent definition, community and community development were all along the second half of the 20th century subjects of serious conflicts.

So we must emphasize that community is considered by some scholars as a concept which is not functional in the research of the local society, and which should not and cannot be the objects of study for social scientists. Even though they questioned the actuality of definitional consistency, some of these scholars have produced community studies, using community not as objects of survey but as a method.

We have to mention that along the time both the American and European sociologists have used the concept of community in their field-researches and have been made attempts (must mention the classical effort of George A. Hillery in 1955 of inspecting ninety-four definitions of community). As in the seventies Colin Bell and Howard Newby have pointed out the only common things in all these definition were the elements of 'networking' and 'locality'.

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1.6 THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY WORK IN SPAIN

By Prof. Dr. Jesús Hernández Aristu and Leyre Braco Pasamar, Spain

Conceptual development

In this article we try to lay down the basic notions related to the Community Social Work in Spain. Therefore, we will carry out a study of the historical community work development, and we will analyse the concepts on which the present community work interventions are based. In order to explore the historical evolution of the Community Social Work in Spain, we ought to begin by underlining that the Spanish authors devote to the subject agreed that the Community Work has its origin in the United States of America in the early twenties. Moix (1991), for example, set out that the current community organization began to grow as a profession thanks to, the charity organization movements firstly, and after, thanks to the Community Cases and to the Community Councils. The first analysis and studies of the community organization and of the community development, also in the United States of America, were of course relevant. As Friedlander expounded the community organization: "Don't relieve the citizens, individuals or groups, from their responsibilities. Moreover, the community organization try to exchange ideas and experiences, try to clarify the social responsibilities, not only for the individuals, but also for the community and for the governmental authorities" (1989: 206).

In Spain until 1960 the Social Community Work was just a theoretical subject by the collection of the concepts that were studied out of the country. In this sense, the publications of the United Nations about the notion of the community development are very relevant. This concept, community development, as Báñez Tello (1998) explains appeared out of the Social Work field. Nevertheless, if we consider that *the Social Work Science is a space much larger than just the practice of one profession* (Hernández Aristu, 2004: 20), we can assert that the concepts related to community development and to community organization do belong to the Social Work, even if, in their early stages, other professionals elaborated them.

Anyhow, in 1956 the United Nations defined the community development this way: "The term community development has been incorporated to the international language use to appoint those processes on which the efforts of the population join the efforts of the government in order to improve the economical, social and cultural conditions of the community; and in this line, to contribute to the national progress." (Ander-Egg, 1992:89) Even if in this definition the cultural and social improvements are added, in the practice field, the majority of the international programs known as community development were settled in the economical matters. In Spain, to talk about Community Social Work means to mix up different concepts and it is not clear the significance of: community development, community organization, community care, community work and community intervention.

The expression community organization or organization of the community has been used to designate a method, but also a goal of the Community Social Work. Onto this terminological confusion, Moix (1991: 372) gathered three different senses for the expression. The first one defines community organization as the analysis of the manner of organization. So to say, it refers to the type of ordination, articulation and rules of the community.

The second definition relates community organization to the Social Work Science. Community organization is, in this sense, a field of knowledge, both theory and practice. As a result of this definition, community organization and Community Social Work express the same idea. The third designation considers the community organization as a method of social intervention with communities, comparable to the methods used in casework, group work or work with families.

According to Marchioni, community organization "is applied to the situations concerning economical progress" and community development "is related to the interior country areas that are underdeveloped and, moreover it is related to the countries of the Third World or developing countries". (1999: 10-11) For Ander-Egg, (Trigueros, 1991: 8) "community

organization is equivalent to community development". According to Zamanillo (1991: 45), community organization is related to three main ideas: the ordered change of the social relations, the intervention of a specialist and the communitarian participation (reintroducing Rupp). We can continue citing more authors without unifying the concepts. Consequently, we can affirm that there is no clear conceptual structure around Community Social Work in Spain, and that the only common element to every definition is the community.

Definitions and diffusion of the Community Work

The term community, in the Community Work context, is made up of four elements: the territory, the inhabitants, the needs that those inhabitants notice and the resources that the community has.

Marchioni add the importance of considering the inhabitants not only as the citizens, but also as the public bodies and the technical staff that is working on it (different professionals and scientists). The same author contributes also with two meanings of the concept community: the first one understands it as receiver of community projects; and the second meaning recognize the community as a leading role of the process that is taking place.

In the sixties in Spain, the theory concerned principally the community development and in this sense, according to Malagón y Sarasola (2006: 32), the ideologists of Franco's Regime began to worry about the creation of developing plans focused mainly in the rural areas. They received the name of "Economical and social develop plans". Those plans could have become a subject of Community Work, but due to the political situation at that period and to the poor maturity of the Social Work² field, at that time there was not really Community Work.

At that period, the Spanish National State had an assistance idea of the social services. In that sense, every community work proposal trying to include an active participation of the citizens should have been considered as insurrectionist to Franco's Regime. However, the use of those concepts is significant because it represents the birth of a new awareness towards Community Work and towards Social Work. The Social Department of Caritas Spain did begin working on Community Work on the practice field. Those experiences were very hesitant.

In August 1961 took place the first meeting of Social Work professionals on Community Work in Barcelona. The meeting was managed by the Italian experts C. Pagani and A. Giambruno (Malagón y Sarasola, 2006: 32). This seminar revealed the existence of a big confusion related to Community Work concepts and the interpretation differences.

The social workers that participated in the seminar felt suspicious of the Community Work, due to the conceptual confusion in one hand, and in the other hand, they considered that the Spanish society of the epoch did not make possible the use of participative methods. The participation was understood as a basic premise. And in addition, the development plans prepared by the State did not count on the social workers.

The impulse comes from abroad

In spite of those circumstances that seem to be harmful for the building up of the community work, two facts happened in the sixties in Spain that encouraged the community work. The first one was the publication in 1964 of the report *The social progress through the community development* by the United Nations. This report emphasizes the participation of the community in the process of its own development. We bring up the following points because as we will see later they are relevant for today's theoretical framework:

1. The improvement initiatives must improve the fundamental community needs: the firsts projects should be the result of the express desire of the community.
2. The improvement of the community can be achieved by initiatives including different areas, although the complete community development require comprehensive actions

² The Social Work was considered as a scientific discipline and recognized and declared as knowledge area in 1990 (Hernández Aristu, 2004: 21).

3. A change in the attitude of the population (from passive to active citizens) is as important as the material achievements. Principally in the early stages of the development process.
4. The community development has as main aim a larger and better citizen participation in the local issues, and it comes in useful for the reorganizing of the local government. It can be the intervening period for the creation of more successfully management of the community government
5. An objective for the whole process is the training, the incentive and the identification of the local leadership
6. A larger women and youth participation in the community process reinforces the development programs and makes them more long lasting and surer.
7. In order to achieve full efficiency, the projects coming out of the community should find the support of the government
8. Every starting project involves the training and contracting of technical staff, the mobilization of the resources, as well as research reports and the collection of practice experiences
9. The resources of the non governmental organizations and the resources of the citizen organizations must be used in the development programs
10. The socioeconomic progress in the local area needs a reflect in the whole region, and in the nation

The second circumstance that reinforced the community work in the sixties was the arrival of Marco Marchioni an Italian specialist in community work. As he explains in the book *La utopía posible* -the possible utopia- (1994: 15) he was participating in a community work project in Abruzzo when he met Alfonso Carlos Comín. Alfonso convinced the Bishop of Malaga, the cardinal Herrera Oria to begin a similar performance in Spain. In September 1965, began the "Community development project of Vélez-Málaga", the first community work project in Spain, under the Bishops protection (the only possibility at that time) and with the collaboration of Marchioni. Moreover, in 1969 was published *Comunidad y desarrollo* -Community and development-, the first publication in Spain about the subject, signed by Marchioni. After Franco's death -1975- began the intervening period to the democracy in Spain, and the whole State structure is reorganized. In 1977 the Political Reform Law established the Ministry of Culture, where the Community Development General Office was set up. This department had as main objective to manage the new sociocultural centres. In those days of the transition to democracy the Social Services were more important than the Community Work.

Democracy and Community Work

The Spanish Constitution was approved the 6th December 1978. On this text we find two relevant laws for the Community Work. One is the law 23-1³ that proclaims the right of the citizens to participate in public issues. So it says: "The citizens have the right to participate in public issues, directly or by representatives' free chosen in universal suffrage." In this law, the interesting nuance for the Community Work is that the participation can be directly exercised. In this sense, the citizen participation can be the working way in the public institutions, above all in the City Councils, the public body that stands closer to the citizens. The citizen participation presumes the guarantee of the information right and meeting, association and political freedom.

The other relevant law points out order the public bodies to do as easier as possible the citizen participation. It is the law 9-2⁴: "It is the responsibility for the public bodies to promote the needed conditions in order to guarantee the freedom and the equal rights of individuals and groups; to remove the obstacles that impede them to become involved in political issues and to facilitate the participation of every citizen in politics, economics, cultural and social matters."

³ http://www.congreso.es/funciones/constitucion/titulo_1_cap_2_sec1.htm, 10/12/06

⁴ http://www.congreso.es/funciones/constitucion/cons_t_preliminar.htm, 10/12/06

Even if this law referees to public bodies in general, is in the local government –City Council- where the participative politics can be easier set up. From the eighties and according to the Spanish autonomous government system, the Social Services –including the community work- depend on the autonomous region. It is worth mentioning that the law 57/2003⁵ for the modernization and the improvement of the local government has modified the administrative participation regulations. According to this law the local government must create an official regulation in order to make the citizen participation possible.

In this sense, we can affirm that in the early years of the XXI Century the citizen participation and the empowerment have been the most used methods of Community Work. According to Báñez Tello, the most usual way of understanding the Community Work is to consider it as a part of the Social Work and it is the conception that we also share. In spite of that idea, we should not forget that Community Work is not an exclusive working area of the Social Work Science and of the professional social workers. In fact, there are different Social Science experts working on Community Work, such as political scientist, anthropologist, sociologists or economists.

In Spanish, Community Work, Community Social Work and Community Intervention are synonyms and at the moment Community Work is considered as discipline and as professional activity. In Spain this professional activity can be practiced in general or in specific. So to say, a social worker attending case and group work can also include the community work into their plans, or a professional, not necessarily owning a Social Work Diploma, can dedicate its work exclusively to community work.

The double meaning of Community work, as theory and practice is due to the origins of the discipline. At the beginning it was the gather of practical experiences –such as the attempts of the charity organization, the “Settlement Movements” or the community development programs- to the theoretical synthesis –such as the understanding of Community work as a method, the reconceptualize movement in Latin-American or the application of the Systemic Theory the Social Work-.

In Spain, the theories that were more relevant for the community work, according to Pérez Cosín (2006), are those from Rupp, Ross and Pelegrí. Let’s have a briefly overview: Rupp (1972) considers three main ideas in the Community organization: the ordered change of the social relationships, the necessity of an expert and the participation of the community. Ross (1967) points out to different matters of the community organization: the social plans and the intervention on the community. Pelegrí (1990) proposes the intervention on the community, for the community and with the community.

Pelegris idea is similar to the idea that Marchioni defends. The community work should be on the community, for the community and with the community. So to say, the community must take part on the process. The community for Marchioni includes four structural elements, as we mentioned before: territory, population, needs and resources. But we must remember that the population is not just the inhabitants, but also the public bodies and the technical staff. It is this aspect precisely, the interwoven of the communities with their authorities –counting on the public bodies diversity and those public bodies in relationship with the community- where we find a key fact for the democratic societies related to Community Work. The town councils, and other public bodies, are legitimised through the majority decision vote to govern, to rule, to intervene, to organise the social services, to impulse the economic, social and cultural development of the communities formed by the whole citizenship. Public bodies should, in the democratic regime, distribute the community resources, that were collected by the taxes, both direct and indirect; in a fairly way in favor of the citizens. Is this democratic order of equal and just distribution the root of two obligations. In one hand, we find the obligation for the public

⁵ Law 57/2003, from 16th December, for the modernization of the local government.

bodies to attend the population, particularly the needy people; and in the other hand, we find the obligation for the public bodies to be the instrument of changes regarding to economic, social, mentality and cultural reforms of the human group that lives in the territory. Those people are the object and the subject of those changes, and that is the original meaning of the Community Work as the UN defined it on 1964.

The European Union seems to include this participatory tradition in the document "European Governance: A White Paper": "Participation. The quality, relevance and effectiveness of EU policies depend on ensuring wide participation throughout the policy chain – from conception to implementation. Improved participation is likely creating more confidence in the end result and in the Institutions which deliver policies. Participation crucially depends on central governments following an inclusive approach when developing and implementing EU policies." (2001: 10) And also the EU demands for such development programmes as LEADER and URBAN, the citizen participation and the empowerment as a requirement. As an example, this quote from the document "Sustainable Urban Development in the European Union: A Framework For Action 6" (25): "As indicated above, good urban governance and local empowerment are crucial factors for increasing the quality of life in towns and cities and for managing them in more sustainable ways. Urban governance can be improved by better vertical integration of activities of different levels of government and better horizontal integration within and between various organisations at the local level and involvement of stakeholders and citizens in urban policies. The issue is how institutions and structures can develop shared strategic goals and meet new demands for collective action. "

We can presume that the Community work in the sense of Community Development includes on it a democratic principle, more over than the real state, regional or local governance. In the case of totalitarian regimes, the Community work, turns into a learning and training exercise of the democracy. In the democratic societies, where the principles are the principles of a representative democracy, Community Work in the sense that we defend here, related to empowerment; turns into a complementary element for the representative democratic principle. And at the same time, it is its opposite. So to say, the Community Work through empowerment is at once a complement and an opposition to the representative democracy. In consequence, the democracy acquires a very interesting dynamism, and thanks to it, everybody can gain but at the same time it is a source of conflicts that needs in praxis, flexibility, limits and overall, negotiation and communication abilities and a consensus regulation.

In this framework we present the Citizen Participation in Pamplona in the Urban project 2000-2006, on which we participated as counselling and accompaniment team for the process, and that led the Prof. Hernández Aristu to define a pedagogy of the citizen participation (2005). The task as mediation, accompaniment and communication management give an idea of the possibilities and limits of the Citizen participation un public issues.

⁶ A copy of the document can be consulted on the web page:
http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/official/communic/pdf/caud/caud_en.pdf

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2 CHAPTER: WHAT IS COMMUNITY WORK – HOW DOES IT WORK?

2.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CREATES DIGITAL NETWORKS FOR DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

By Gerhard Hautekeur, Belgium

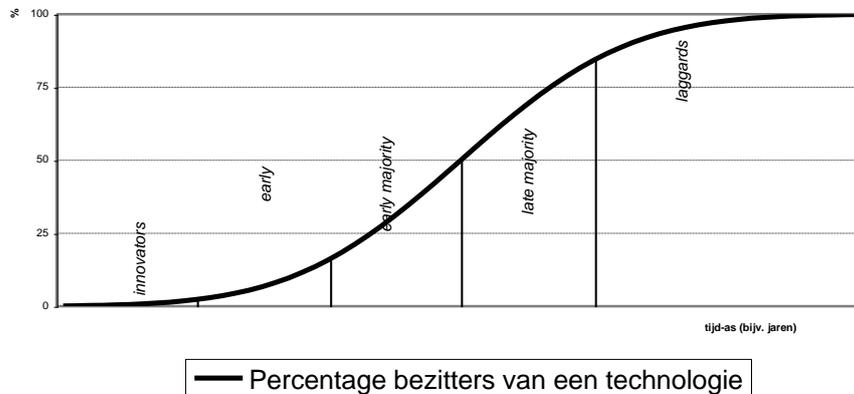
The new information and communication technology (ICT) plays an ever-increasing role and has direct impact on most areas of our lives: pc-banking is cheaper than transactions at the bank, travellers no longer have to queue up at the railway station since they can purchase a train ticket through the Internet, the Flemish employment counselling office provides courses on the Internet for unemployed people, public authorities develop electronic services. Those applications assume that all people have access to the Internet and possess the necessary skills to make use of these electronic services. The information society offers new opportunities, but a new divide is imminent between those who are on the electronic highway and those who must stick to secondary roads. This is particularly true for the target groups of community development (CD), such as the long-term unemployed and poorly-educated, vulnerable residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and others who are socially excluded.

CD, however, does not frequently make use of ICT tools, such as neighbourhood websites, digital newspapers, chat rooms or email lists. Before VIBOSO (the Flemish institute for community development) decides to promote ICT within participation projects, first, we want to find out whether there is a connection between social exclusion and digital divide. Second, we analyse which role CD can play in bridging the digital divide and what added value ICT can offer in participation projects. Third, we make some recommendations for CD. Within the scope of this paper we do not look at the preconditions which VIBOSO and the RISOs (Regional institutes for community development) should fulfil in order to develop successful ICT-initiatives. Nor do we discuss the ICT opportunities to network with CD workers.

I. DIGITAL DIVIDE AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

The definition of digital divide is shaped by developments in ICT. An analysis of the digital divide takes into account the situation at a particular moment and there is a danger that recommendations are too absolute. Dekkers also realised this when researching the relationship between poverty and ICT. He points out that there is a correlation between social exclusion and the non-use of certain ICT products.

Based on research by Vranken at Antwerp University, he describes poverty as the result of social exclusion in different areas of our lives, such as employment, housing, culture and education. One of those areas concerns ICT. With regard to the diffusion of ICT products Dekkers points out that poor households are lagging behind and possess less advanced ICT-products. From his analysis it is obvious that this is mainly due to their poor socio-economic integration. Explaining the process of ICT-diffusion Dekkers makes use of Rogers' reference scheme which ideally follows an S-pattern in the spreading of successful technological products. The S-pattern indicates a rather slow start in the diffusion, a mid phase with acceleration and a slow down when the market is almost saturated, as is shown in the diagram below.



(Percentage owners of new technology in *ICT EN SAMENLEVING 2003* – Jaarboek ICT 2003, p. 37)

Following the terminology of Rogers, poor households are, compared to others, laggards in the diffusion of ICT-products. Individuals or groups who are objectively most in need of new technology are in general the last ones to apply those innovations. The 'innovators' and 'early adapters' go earlier on-line, access ICT more frequently and are more skilled in the use of pc and the Internet. Units in a system who adopt the innovation first generally do not need the benefits of it. This is, according to Rogers, the so-called innovation needs paradox. As a consequence of this paradox in ICT the socio-economic gap is widening. This explains why the divide between the highly and poorly educated, the surfers and 'drowners' steadily increases.

Among ICT products for households Dekkers distinguishes two groups: the first group includes colour TV and video, whereas the second group comprises mobile phones, pc and access to the Internet. According to Dekkers, the first group consists of essential goods which are widespread and cannot be regarded as luxuries. To the second group belong products which are not so common and are not considered as basic needs. Dekkers based his analysis on research findings from 1998. He admits that at that time some ICT products were still new and for many people unusual. In the meantime, his distinction between essential goods and luxury products is outdated. It is significant that, in a recent divorce agreement a father was granted the right to chat with his children. He is allowed to communicate (msn) every two days on the Internet while his children are in custody with the mother. In this way he wants to prevent alienation from his children. Goubin and Mestiaen indicated that mobile telephone (including sms) is a trendy medium amongst new ICT products. In Belgium, by the end of 1999, only 31 percent of the population possessed a mobile telephone, by the end of 2002 already 78,6 percent and by the end of 2003 the degree of penetration rose to 83,8 percent. Political parties in Belgium acknowledge this development. By analogy with the social tariff for fixed telephones the Flemish Christian Democratic Party (CD&V) and the Flemish Socialists (SP.A) also favour a cheaper rate for handicapped and other target groups using mobile telephones. The Socialist Member of Parliament Lalieux advocates broadband, high-speed, always-on Internet access as a universal service. Politicians clearly state that mobile telephones and the Internet are key life requirements.

This development is even more pronounced in the recent years, as is illustrated in the annual reports 2002 and 2003 from the Belgian institute for postal services and telecommunications (BIPT). With regard to the households' subscriptions to the Internet, the annual report shows that, in 2002, Belgium was slightly above the European average: 40,9 percent of the Belgian households had accessed the Internet, whereas the European average was at 40,4 percent.

According to the BIPT-report 2003 the Internet connections increased, in 2003, by 9 percent (or 128.000 connections). This means that, approximately, 44,5 percent of the households had access to the Internet.

Also the 2003 report of the Flemish Regional Indicators (VRIND) indicates that in Flanders, the number of households with access to the internet increased substantially, between October 2000 and November 2002. However, VRIND also points to the digital divide: gender, age and education still determine whether people have access to the Internet at home. Men have more access than women, but in Flanders the digital divide between men and women has generally decreased. On the other hand, the digital divide between the age group 55-plus and the rest of the population is increasing. Between 2000 and 2002, the percentage of the 55-plus age groups with access to the Internet had increased more slowly compared to other age groups. Early school leavers who gave up education before the age of 16, acquire internet less frequently than others. For this group, between 2000 and 2002, there was only a relative small increase, from 17 percent to 20 percent, whereas the percentage of others who were connected to the Internet increased more substantially.

The profile of the Belgian Internet user has undoubtedly changed in recent years. That people in Belgium are generally catching up cannot conceal that there is still a gap between the 'surfers' and the so-called 'drowning persons'. However, in Dutch ICT yearbooks, which are a reference point regarding ICT developments in the Netherlands, several authors argue that the possession of pc and the access to Internet are not the bottleneck to the digital society but to a far bigger extent the skills to make use of ICT. One of the Dutch researchers, de Haan, believes that disparities in the possession of pc and access to the Internet will gradually disappear, which is now almost true for colour television and (mobile) telephone. The ICT context in the Netherlands is different from that in Belgium; the Netherlands belong worldwide to the frontrunners with regard to ICT-diffusion, in November 2002, already 55 percent of the Dutch households, and 64 percent of Dutch citizens had access to the Internet.

Jan Steyaert emphasises that, in 2004, the digital divide looks much more different than a couple of years ago. The societal divide is, in his opinion, far less related to the access to ICT, but is much more linked to the way it is used. He refers to Bonfadelli who pointed out that people with higher education use the Internet more for informational purposes, whereas poorly-educated people use Internet significantly more for entertainment.

"To provide all people with pc and Internet is rather simple, e.g. in Eindhoven or in Arnhem private pc projects are set up for households who depend for their income on social allowances. To make sure that people make more (frequent) use of ICT is a bit more difficult. But, it is extremely difficult to ensure that citizens use the new media in such a way that it creates an added value for them and society, rather than using it as an additional channel for amusement." (Steyaert, 2004, p.127)

To the extent that we are more acquainted with ICT, Jan Steyaert suggests that we should pay more attention to the eventual added value of ICT in social interventions. ICT is in itself not a magic means for citizens with weak social networks. Based on research results from Kraut, Jan Steyaert points out that the use of Internet leads to the extension of social networks. However, those who have only a restricted social network do not manage to increase it in a substantial way through the new media. On the other hand, those who have established strong social networks will succeed in strengthening them through ICT. This is the so-called 'rich get richer model'. Vanden Boomen suggests that cities and neighbourhoods do not, in the first place, need ICT, but local institutional opportunities for social contact, consisting, amongst others, of play grounds and cafés. Digital infrastructure can have its place in that physical social infrastructure. Moreover, according to Brouwer and Oudshoorn, recent research has shown that social networks play an important role in the acquisition of new technology. It is, therefore,

desirable to pay more attention to the information and communication *networks* (ICM), rather than to focus solely on the information and communication *technology* (ICT).

In short, poor households are lagging behind in the diffusion of ICT. Differences in possession of pc, and to a larger extent of mobile telephones, have decreased. However, with regard to Internet access, the higher educated are further ahead of poorly- educated people and low income groups. Although access to ICT is still a problem for certain groups, the real disparities are related to the way ICT is used. Moreover, social networks play a key role in appropriating new ICT products and bridging the digital divide.

Based on the above analysis we distinguish four dimensions of digital divide:

1. access to ICT
2. skills to make use of ICT
3. belonging to social networks
4. making better use of ICT

II. BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The question of which role CD can play in bridging the digital divide then arises. First, we focus on some general principles; then, we look more specifically at the role of CD and neighbourhood work in relation to the four dimensions of digital divide. This is based on literature, four field visits, reports on concrete cases and a meeting with CD workers in June 2004.

2.1. General principles

In combating the digital divide CD is only one amongst many players in the field, such as the government, the private sector and non-governmental organisations. The Flemish government is a front runner in developing interactive Digital Television (iDTV) involving the largest providers of glass fibre cables (Telenet, Interkabel) and the three main broadcasting companies in Flanders. With iDTV many interactive applications might be possible such as sms, chat and email. IDTV is considered as an alternative for those people who have no access to the Internet yet. According to Jo Steyaert the government has probably a new instrument that can help to bridge the digital divide.

We share Oudshoorn's vision concerning the role of the various actors. According to the researcher intermediary organisations play a predominant role. She bases her findings on a European research report SIGIS, which stands for Strategies of Inclusion: Gender and the Information Society.

"In order to come to a point where everyone, without any barriers, can decide as to whether he can make use of the Internet and how to use it, not only an active government policy is needed, but also the involvement and creativity of intermediary bodies and the private sector itself, whereby the government can act as facilitator." (Oudshoorn, 2004, p.115)

The author stresses that for a successful societal anchoring of ICT much more is needed than marketing of new technology. She gives priority to the following two key concepts: inclusion and domestication. Inclusion means that users adopt ICT in such a way that they no longer feel excluded. Domestication implies that users have built up sufficient self-confidence that they also enjoy new technologies.

2.2. Role of CD

Considering the general principles, in the following section we focus on the specific role of the RISOs and VIBOSO regarding the above mentioned four dimensions of the digital divide.

2.2.1. Create access to ICT and enhance skills

CD gives priority to deprived communities. The community centre, where people meet, is often an anchor place for many CD projects. A neighbourhood approach also seems appropriate in order to reduce the barriers to ICT. Keeping in mind the accessibility, familiar locations in the neighbourhood are appropriate, such as the Internet café in Aalst, the youth centre Akira in Turnhout, and a computer atelier in Kureghem (Brussels). In those locations, residents can use computers, Internet and printers for free or they only pay a symbolic contribution. A box of tools is also part of the neighbourhood service which enables citizens to build their own (neighbourhood) website. Those who are interested can just walk in during the opening hours. In this neighbourhood centre they can follow initiation courses. A coach is always present who can technically assist visitors who are using computers, the Internet or building their own website.

While seeking to bridge the digital divide there are also mental barriers. In establishing an easily accessible, neighbourhood oriented service the following aspects are important:

- ✚ A bottom-up approach, which is based on the needs and suggestions of participants;
- ✚ The pace of learning needs to be flexible to accommodate different levels of confidence and skill;
- ✚ The creation of a friendly learning environment. It does not only have to do with technical knowledge of computers, but also a stimulating environment where users can be creative, gain self-confidence and develop their social skills;
- ✚ The opportunity to share information and give each other advice and encouragement.

Participants can gain digital and other skills through neighbourhood-oriented ICT projects. Moreover, some job seekers who are appointed as coach in a neighbourhood centre obtain work experience, as in KureghemNET, Buurtweb Aalst and Digidak Turnhout. They are responsible for logistic support and basic technical coaching.

2.2.2. Strengthen social networks

Whether people are members of social networks or not is another crucial factor in bridging the digital divide. This explains why CD stresses the creation of physical meeting places.

Intermediary organisations such as CD, neighbourhood work, adult education and socio cultural organisations can actively lead people to these locations in the neighbourhood. RISO Oost-Vlaanderen, which set up the Internet café in Aalst together with the neighbourhood work Acro, contracted other organisations in the neighbourhood. As a result an integration centre provides courses to allochtone women, a school CD project coaches pupils during home-work classes and other organisations provide ICT training for young people seeking employment. All of them make use of the ICT infrastructure in the Internet café. Digidak Turnhout follows a similar approach. It co-operates with partner organisations, such as a youth club or service centre for elderly people. It provides ICT infrastructure and coaching. For many participants these functional training courses are their very first introduction into the world of ICT.

Considering the high mental barriers to ICT, the Regional community development centre (RISO) Antwerp calls upon individuals who can act as go-between. Poor people made it clear that it is almost impossible for them to buy a computer. As a consequence, their children do not have the opportunity to use ICT at home. The project 'A unique pair' enables people with different social backgrounds to come into contact with one another. The starting point is that both individuals should gain from the exchange. This approach showed its positive results in a

project promoting cultural participation for people living in poverty. For that project RISO also made use of the so-called go-betweens to overcome barriers to cultural participation.

2.2.3. Create added value with ICT

How can ICT be used differently in creating added value for the so-called laggards and the society? Jan Steyaert calls this the biggest challenge in combating the digital divide. The question is to what extent ICT is an adequate instrument to create networks among citizens enabling them to influence the quality of life in their neighbourhood. Van de Steenhoven and Kruiter underpin three forces in ICT, namely: transparency, made-to-measure work, and networking. These are also relevant characteristics for CD. Transparency means that CD can be used to make (government) information more accessible. Made-to-measure work implies that ICT creates the opportunity of involving individuals (and groups) of citizens e.g. when a plan is drawn for future social housing. ICT becomes in this fashion an instrument for a more demand-oriented design of services. Almost all Regional community development centres in Flanders and Brussels are familiar with the method Planning for Real, whereby citizens and other partners develop together a maquette (model) for the refurbishment of a street, park or neighbourhood. A virtual design offers a new, more flexible instrument.

The third force of ICT, according to Van de Steenhoven and Kruiter, consists in creating a network as a means to link people with one another. This characteristic offers most opportunities for CD. Residents create new networks through ICT which enables them to impact future developments in their neighbourhood. Apart from websites, other ICT tools are digital newspapers, email lists, chat sessions and digital pictures. Within the project work of the RISOs there are increasing opportunities of online interaction about topics which concern their neighbourhood. As Scotts and Craig, rightly, state many deprived communities are not necessarily defined by living in a specific area but by common interests and concerns such as improvement of service provisions. Communities can be geographically dispersed and have difficulty in organising, for example members of minorities.

“In these circumstances, information technology is increasingly turned to as a tool to facilitate organisation, often across substantial physical distances.” (Scotts and Craig, p. 1)

In Flanders, hardly any research has been conducted about the impact of ICT on the community. The 3-year study on how the Internet affects the neighbourhood community Netville, a Canadian suburb near Toronto, is particularly inspiring for CD. Of the 109 homes that comprise Netville, 64 homes were connected to the Internet, whereas the other part (45 homes) were not equipped with Internet infrastructure. The researchers Hampton and Wellman have demonstrated that collective actions on neighbourhood level were made easier using the Internet. This was obvious in a collective neighbourhood action against the housing developer.

ICT seemed very useful in reducing the barriers to collective action. The email network was one of the first and easiest ICT instruments for the residents. Those who had access to the Internet made use of email to discuss shortcomings in the houses, call for meetings in residents' homes, define a common strategy and send their representatives to town planning meetings in the city hall. For the housing developer, who had built many new sites, the complaints and protests by the delivery of the homes were an ever returning phenomenon. But according to the developer, the residents who organised the action could, at the utmost, mobilise 20 percent of the owners. In Netville, however, more than half of the neighbourhood was involved. He also admitted that he was surprised by the unprecedented and unexpected speed of reaction. The protest not only occurred online, through email, but also through neighbourhood meetings at local schools and community centres. Residents who started the action usually had access to the Internet, but they were joined by non-wired residents of the neighbourhood.

The researchers stress that online social ties are not a distinct social system, that would be separate from existing social networks. On the contrary, the Internet is one amongst many

communication tools whose use is intertwined. In the spectrum of communication tools, the Internet offers specific opportunities to enhance contacts between residents. Hampton and Wellman mention the advantage of the Internet over previous forms of communication in

“its ability to facilitate neighbourhood based interactions, specifically the asynchronous broadcast ability of email.” (Hampton & Wellman, 2003, p. 25)

The experiment in Netville shows that low cost Internet infrastructure is beneficial to collective contacts and action. The researchers argue that a critical mass of Internet users must be present to observe the neighbourhood effects of Internet use. Moreover, they advocate systems of broadband, high speed, always-on Internet access.

In short, ICT provides opportunities to establish new contacts and strengthen existing social networks. It can add a dimension to the participative involvement enabling residents to influence the quality of life of their community. In relation to neighbourhood processes Erembeemt, Kuiper and Mulder have mapped the function of the Internet in the scheme below.

Process in the neighbourhood	Functions of internet	Web applications
To be informed, to know each other	Inform	Website, portaal, magazine,
To meet	Communicate	Mail, forum, chat room,
To share and to take action	Organize	Agenda, market

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The overall movement of households who are catching up in Flanders and Belgium cannot conceal the fact that access to ICT remains a bottleneck for socially excluded groups. A neighbourhood oriented approach is still an appropriate instrument to bridge the digital divide of disadvantaged communities. The focus thereby is on enhanced access to ICT, needed skills and social networks. The development of an easy accessible neighbourhood service is, in our opinion, not a key task of CD. Neither is it an exclusive task for CD. On the contrary, CD should establish partnerships with adult education, socio-cultural organisations, local authorities and private partners in the neighbourhood.

We consider the foremost task of CD as that of creating digital networks where ICT can offer an added value for citizens of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. However, CD should prevent that ICT becomes the privilege of higher educated residents since citizens with the best digital skills usually reap the most digital dividends.

In that regard Beckers summarizes some recommendations to make ICT more accessible to a larger public:

- ✚ Support different online forms of communication, such as email, email lists and chat rooms;
- ✚ Choose deliberately the level of the community (street, square, neighbourhood, ...) At which ICT is targeted;
- ✚ ICT is always a tool, remain realistic and make the goal of ict very clear;
- ✚ Skills are crucial in using the Internet and vulnerable groups may need extra support.

The continuity of most experiments is jeopardized , as was made clear during the VIBOSO meeting with CD workers in June 2004. A setback is often due to a under-resourcing: a shortage of finances and a lack of time to learn new skills. Experiments have far bigger chances of success if residents’ organisations are stimulated and supported. For this purpose, Mulder wants to involve the so-called ‘animateurs’: who should possess technical skills to advise residents and at the same time have the competence to find out what really motivates and

interests people. CD workers suggested during the meeting that CD workers who want to reap the benefits of ICT should have that profile. An alternative is that community workers form a tandem with someone who has the technical skills. But even then, they should be aware of what is available on the market and avoid becoming blindly trapped in commercial interests.

Since ICT is still a fallow field for CD, we recommend that VIBOSO organises some inspiring study trips to innovative ICT projects. VIBOSO should also encourage the exchange of knowledge and experiences through publications and email networks. Together with organisations which have the technical competences to run ICT programmes VIBOSO and the RISOs should set up some pilot projects. A preliminary condition is that CD itself possesses the necessary ICT infrastructure and skills in order to make better use of ICT. A whole organisation approach is needed. Colleagues should be motivated to learn and see the clear benefit of ICT. Sustainability is a key factor whereby support and tailored on-site training are important. In this context there is a need for an agency that can provide support to the CD sector (and other sectors). Support agencies can better join forces to bring expertise together in order to avoid that each of them reinvents the digital wheel.

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APPENDIX

Neighbourhood web in Aalst

The 'Virtuele drempel' (Virtual threshold) project is a community development project launched by the RISO East Flanders. This low-level computer programme was set up in January 2003 in a disadvantaged neighbourhood 'Rechteroever in Aalst. It is commonly known as the 'neighbourhood web site' since it refers to the place in the neighbourhood where people come to practise, to learn and to experiment. In principle, the project is open to all those living in the area, but more specific attention is paid to certain target groups such as children, the poorly educated and non-nationals with little ready access to information technology. The three main aims are:

- ✚ Reducing the digital gap by making ICT more accessible;
- ✚ To increase employment opportunities for groups at risk by teaching them ICT skills, by offering work experience via paid work or volunteer work;
- ✚ To promote social cohesion by encouraging contacts between various groups of residents.
- ✚ There are open workshops where volunteers are present to help those who drop in.
- ✚ In addition, there are specific workshops geared to given target groups.
- ✚ For more information: www.riso-oost-vlaanderen.be

Digid@k in Turnhout

Digidak is a project set up by the Strategic Plan in the Kempen together with the city of Turnhout. In seven locations in the city a low-level teaching sphere has been created to enable everyone to become acquainted with ICT. The initiatives work within existing organisations such as a youth centre for young people, a service centre run by the Public Centre for Social Services (OCMW) and a Provincial Centre for the Integration of Minority Groups. The offer is two-fold: on the one hand, free access and, on the other the basic courses for which participants must enrol. Initiation into ICT is seen as an initiation into further education which can upgrade the individual's social and economic position. Digidak is also shaped as a work experience project. In each digidak project, those seeking employment, and following a short training programme, have the opportunity to gain a year's work experience in accompanying visitors.

For further information: www.digidak.be

KureghemNET in Brussels

KureghemNET is a digital project which has been developed as a neighbourhood service in a disadvantaged area. The project is based on the following three pillars:

- ✚ Provision of services by offering local people access to IT and increasing their IT skills. Kureghem offers individually-tailored teaching.
- ✚ Education and employment possibilities for, above all, young unemployed people from the area, who are responsible for the reception and guidance of visitors. KureghemNET employs five people on a regular contract basis, and five people in an interim project.
- ✚ Neighbourhood involvement and social cohesion: the project works with other organisations in the area (e.g. basic education, RISO Brussels and youth organisations) to up-grade social life.
- ✚ For more information: www.kureghemnet.org

'Een paar apart' in Antwerp

RISO Antwerp and 'Recht-Op' an association in which the poor can make themselves heard, draw their inspiration from "Een paar apart", a successful project with regard to cultural involvement. The organisation is such that someone from a disadvantaged group forms teams up with someone from a non-disadvantaged group in order to promote social integration. At the same time, people from different social backgrounds are brought into contact in order to ease access to ICT. The aim is to learn from one another and to feel at home in the world of computers, printers, digital cameras and the internet. The project is integrated into the objectives of the RISO Antwerp to encourage the participation of the disadvantages in those areas of society where they feel they are marginalised.

Further information: www.riso-antwerpen.be

GLOSSORY

VIBOSO, het Vlaams instituut voor de bevordering en ondersteuning van samenlevingsopbouw in Vlaanderen en Brussel – the Flemish institute for the support and promotion of community development in Flanders and Brussels.

RISO, Regionale instituten voor samenlevingsopbouw, (Regional institutes for community development), established in the five provinces and the three major cities Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels.

REGIONILIZATION: following regionalization, the national parliament in Belgium is no longer responsible for social welfare in Flanders; responsibility has devolved to the Flemish parliament.

VRIND (Vlaamse Regionale Indicatoren) – Flemish Regional Indicators

iDTV, interactive Digital Television

SIGIS, Strategies of Inclusion: Gender and the Information Society

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2.2 SPACE IN THE KINDERGARTEN AS AN INTERCULTURAL PHENOMENON

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ABSTRACT

The space in which they live creates an indelible mark on the personality development of children. Children have the need to actively interact with the world around them in a sensor-motor and verbal manner and this includes the people, objects, nature and art. They have the need to be in an interestingly organised social and object-spatial medium, which could evoke emotional and intellectual associations, satisfy their natural needs, and provoke their curiosity, communicability, individuality, and creativity.

The ideas for the organisation of the space around the children are valid not only for the kindergarten, but also for the school environment. In this paper the author has studied the specific features of the space in the kindergarten where there are children of different ethnic backgrounds.

Key words: space, social skills, respect of culture

INTRODUCTION

The components of the environment in the kindergarten bring about the intensive social-emotional, intellectual, aesthetic and physical development of the children. This is the reason why the latest achievements in the fields of psychology, pedagogy, medicine, ergonomics and architecture have to be integrated with a view to building up of an optimum environment for children (1 - 5).

METHODS

A variety of methods has been used in the study and they include: observation, discussion with the children, questionnaires with parents and teachers, experiment and sociometry.

The modern understanding about the environment in a kindergarten is that it is not an elementary physical category; it is not only a living medium, in which children spend some time. It is a culturally determined pedagogical complex, in which the children and their teachers live and work. In the social, psychological, pedagogical and physical sense the environment in the kindergarten is a place for active life, play, studying and working. Therefore, whether the lives of the children, the teachers and the parents would be good or bad, calm or tense, interesting or dull, would, to a great extent, depend on the structuring of the environment. It is often deemed that the environment in the kindergarten is a static, architectural concrete space whose function is mainly to allow for comfortable living conditions. In reality the space and its interior are not a one-sided design pattern but a pedagogical composition in which and with which the child interacts.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The environment in the kindergarten and in the primary school has some important functions.

Firstly, it is a personality development and socialising function. The organisation of the environment for the children in the kindergarten room / classroom can either make the social interaction with people and objects easier, or more difficult. It is important that the environment allows for communication and cooperation among people of different age, different gender, different ethnic descent, child-child, child-group and child-adult as a condition for emotional comfort.

There is a reasonable interrelation among the objects in the environment, between the natural and the social media help, the personality of the child in the orientation and in the maintenance of internal balance in the constantly changing patterns of life. The more intensive the contacts among the children and with adults become, the quicker is the development of their procedural thinking - the quicker they will analyse, build up algorithms, will look for modes and alternative variants for solution of problems and will develop divergent thinking.

The children will gradually develop a sensitivity for things in life through their experience in the environment; they will develop an understanding of some social-moral mechanisms and normative categories, rights, obligations and an understanding of the differences among people with which the basis for civic society education are founded.

Secondly is the psychological aspect. Here the favourable arrangement of kindergarten environment stimulates the positive activity of all psychological phenomena comprising sensations, perceptions, mental pictures, thinking and imagination. The environment allows for the development of the personality identification. Adequate ideas about himself/herself and others as personalities are formed with their own manifestation, gender, ethnicity and status. Positive attitudes, moods and mutual experiences are evoked in the sense of being able and willing to play and work together.

Thirdly is the communicability aspect. It is not possible for the child to have the wholesome experience of his/her childhood without the communication with peers and adults. That is why it is important that conducive environment be provided to stimulate and facilitate the interpersonal contacts and activate the expressive and the verbal communication. An environment with fewer or no barriers will provide unique opportunity for a lively dialogue among the children, with adults and with elements of the objects medium. Any environment that isolates people from one another is a condition for their closing up, separation and contraposition. It is necessary that the environment be organised in such a way that it fosters the development of quick communicative reflexes, a lively interest in others, and a better understanding of the world around.

Fourthly is the cognitive component. The environment in the kindergarten integrates different aspects of the knowledge about the world around and is a source of information about the people, the things and the phenomena. If the environment is structured in such a way that it provokes, the curiosity of the children and thirst for new knowledge, then it becomes a generator of ideas and maintains a high level of emotional and intellectual activity. The plausible relationships among objects in the environment help the child to venture into the zone of the abstract thinking, to unveil the mystery of cognition and to discover new cultures. It is widely accepted that two important aspects of the mental activity depend far too much on the organisation of space in the following way: the capability to perceive and process information. Gradually, space becomes a stimulating context for the typically cognitive and investigative behavior (Cornelius and Kessler, 1995).

The fifth aspect is creativity. -The futurists among the researchers believe that the century after the year 2000 will be the century of modern technology, information and spirituality. That is why the originality of thinking will be appreciated very much, as well as new ideas for problem solving; a new understanding of previous problem situations, and accepting difference as a natural manifestation of variability in the world, in imagination and in creativity will come to awareness.

Creativity as a basic human ability is directly linked with sensations and cognition. The children need to make full use of their senses through multifarious activities and contacts with objects, materials, events and people to be able to build up an understanding about the world. This active interrelation turns into a basis for cognition which, in its part, nourishes imagination. According to the comments of Cornelius and Kessler creativity is one of the ways in which people interact with their environment.

The next is sport and movement. Movement is crucially important for every child. Satisfying this need will be contingent upon its integration into the organisation of the environment of the kindergarten room with its layout and objects. It is obvious that the availability of a zone of sports halls and a gym will solve the problem. In such cases some part of the interior is organised as a special place for sports activities, without jeopardising the general atmosphere. This is effectively achieved by careful harmonisation of these physical activities with other competing needs of the child.

Next is the aesthetics. The environment in the kindergarten could affect the development of aesthetic thoughts and tastes in children. As a culturally pedagogic complex it has aesthetic information and exerts direct influence on the children and adults. The rational organisation of

space, the rhythm, the contrast, the proportions and the original space solutions develops a special culture of perceptions and forms a taste for the aesthetic and a striving and desire in children to make the world around them a more beautiful place.

Utilitarian: beauty is not a self-oriented aesthetic category. It acquires meaning when it carries spiritual completion and when it is connected with the world of the rational practicality. The colorful varied formulation of the environment has got not only aesthetic but also a definite utilitarian function. A rational solution of the environmental organisation means that the objects, the volumes and the sizes are interrelated according to the laws of utility and beauty. This develops a taste in children and constitutes their experience. The taste is subject to multiple intensive influences -traditions, cultures, trends of fashion, gender and age, individual features and everyday life needs. It is obvious that there is a tendency towards mean values between the aesthetic and the pragmatic, which does not allow the imposing of extreme priorities. However, the evolution of taste is connected with accumulation of experience, which is transferred to new situations and new environments. It is important that the children acquire concrete experience to organise their own space, and they develop skills to reorganise trite space arrangements. The harmony between new and old, mono- and poly-functional, traditional and modern, familiar and unfamiliar, develops original and at the same time pragmatic thinking.

The multi-functionality of the environment in the kindergarten is a favourable prerequisite in the strategy of the teacher because it helps the latter build positive relationships among the children, notwithstanding their ethnicity, gender, or social status; it allows the teacher to make the daily lives of these children more interesting and their games more exciting.

The organisation of the environment in the kindergarten depends also on the conditions in the town or village where the kindergarten is located. These conditions include factors that border on the demographic, ethnic, ethnographic, geographic, historical, social and economic. When creating the kindergarten environment all the factors of place, time, people, ideas and resources are taken into consideration.

In addition to the above, it should behave on one to keep track of some of the following universal requirements that are closely linked to the organisation of space and which usually bring about emotional, social and intellectual comfort.

1. Richness of content, density, and functionality.

This is achieved through saturation but without overcharging the environment with very many different materials in the zones (nooks), corners and centres meant for performing different activities. They are arranged in accordance with the external and internal logic of the activities and their variations. Their specific features (instruments, mode of working, integration, volume, etc) require closeness or distance from one another. Sometimes the problem behavior of the children could be due to unfavorable modeling of the environment, or inappropriateness of neighboring zones, which usually introduces suspense and makes communication and cooperation pretty difficult.

The specific character of the activity -quiet or noisy, clean or "dirty" (according to Plackrose), drawing, modeling, and others -overly depends on the availability of the bathroom. There are special requirements of the nook with respect to nature, especially if it contains certain plants and animals.

Sometimes slide or film projection is used as teaching aid. This situation is facilitated by sufficient sitting arrangement and the necessary dark ambience. Such an environment is achieved through very light furniture, allowing for mobility and any necessary improvisations.

An important content in the organisation of the environment is the ethnic situation of the kindergarten group. An eye catching organisation of a corner with some objects of the life and culture of the Gypsy population will provide comfort for children from this population and will stimulate the emotional and intellectual interest of the rest of the children.

In addition, the density of furniture could be formed by the vertical zones in the kindergarten room - the walls. Integrated into the thematic composition with the special corners, they are a convenient

and appropriate place for marking important dates - birthdays, name days, historical events, and holidays; they are also useful for hanging calendars, maps and children's drawings. The walls become the focus of attention for the children with the arrangement of numbers, letters, phrases, or support signals (pictures). Their format depends on whether they have been arranged at the level of the children's eyes or higher than that.

The posters with multi-colored code orientate the little children in time and space; they remind the children about events, finished activities, started activities, or forthcoming activities. It is possible to provide knowledge and to provoke the curiosity of the children through posters, theme corners and collages like, "My Body", "The Tree of Seasons", "Who is Who?", "The Wonders of the World", etc.

Finally, it is noteworthy to state that the content, the density, and the functionality are in direct dependence on the age characteristics of the group and on the level of development of the children.

2. Openness and potential for integration

The openness and the potential for integration of the environment stimulate the natural contacts and cooperation among the children working as a team (in small groups). Prerequisites for stimulating the children's interest in different activities are created, close or distant from each other in nature.

The boundaries among the different corners are necessary because they help to underline the specifics of the corresponding activity; they stress the individuality, concentration and the full living through the preoccupation with an activity. At the same time, however, the children should not have a feeling of being closed up or isolated. This effect is achieved by low-level furniture, easy-to-overcome barriers, stylised panels, transparent curtains, etc. This is a way to preserve integration in an activity, or social plan, while communication among the children and with the teacher is being facilitated.

3. Dynamics and variability

Preschool age is sensitive, exigent, searching and questioning. That is why there is no perfect environment. Even the most interestingly modeled environment cannot keep the attention of the children alert for a long time. The children get bored, if it is not altered or enriched still the more.

There are static and dynamic elements co-existing in every kindergarten room. The non-stop movability of the environment makes orientation difficult, and will affect the feeling for ease in a known environment. The static environment, on the other hand, will make the children tired, annoyed, and will not appeal to their fantasy. That is why it is necessary within certain moderation to introduce new elements. The seasonal-thematic principle allows for different variations. The knowledge of the children about the yearly cycles, about the specific nature of every season, about the place and role of man, about his connection with nature, about the calendar of holidays, etc, is being widened.

The variability has to be sought not only in the direction of general organisation, but also in the corners themselves through enriching them with new materials and instruments which will be oriented to new topics and ideas. Interesting associations are developed in children as a result of the integration between automated toys and traditional ones made from different materials, between the fixed and the mobile mechanisms and between the modern sets and the traditional natural means. The aim is to develop not only a taste for the modern and the contemporary in the children, but also to keep their interest and feeling for nature. The observations show that when the environment helps the children to integrate with nature, art and the other people, this challenges their intelligence, their social and intellectual sensitivity and their will for their own discoveries.

4. Safety

Safety is among the most important requirements for the organisation of the environment in kindergarten rooms. The aim at greater originality and variability should not endanger the health and life of the children. Besides keeping the safety rules in technological facilities, the

environment has to be with optimum visibility and accessibility, It should facilitate the potential for the teacher to know at every moment where the children are, what they are doing and who they are with. Furniture location should not impede cleaning, disinfection and hygiene in general.

Besides the physical aspect of the environment, it has to be safe in a psychological aspect as well. It should not be overwhelming, depressing or overloading; it should not make the thinking of the children ' homogeneous, or create monotonous mood. For the 3-7 year-old children, it is necessary that they live in an environment that is stimulating, developmental, and positive in attitudes.

5. Intimacy and credulity

The environment has to be with homely cosines, warmth, calmness and smaller sizes. The harmonious coexistence of colors, the few contrasts and the rational division of the interior will tune the children to credulity in their environment. The opportunity for the children to alter, discuss, and organise themselves is part of the process and a result of the individual development. When the adults are organising their environment they have to keep in mind the children's need to share their intimate experiences, and that is why it should be favorable for intimacy of communication; it should support the children's self-confidence through provoking their curiosity, trust, questions and answers and a feeling for success.

6. Aesthetics

The environment in kindergarten rooms forms aesthetic taste and an attitude to the world when there is harmony between form and content, balance between thoughts and feelings and between intellect and imagination. This involves abandoning the aim for absolute perfection and completeness, staying with the not fully spoken and the sketchy. This is an opportunity to leave space for completion, addition, new ideas and untraditional solutions.

Lounges and corridors are an organic part of the space in the kindergarten; they are part of the whole. They are formed and decorated in the same way as the kindergarten rooms, according to their role. Lounges and corridors are appropriate for giving information to the parents, with themes like the following: "*I celebrate ...*", "*I already know...*", "*The most interesting for me is...*", "*I need ...*", "*I think that*

The environment in the kindergarten includes the kindergarten yard. For the wholesome development of the children there have to be open spaces, swimming pool, sheds, places for withdrawal (like caves, nests, etc.), etc. A basic requirement is that the whole organisation of the environment and the connections among the separate rooms and zones create an atmosphere of communication and self-confidence in the children.

The kindergarten teachers should stimulate the positive attitude of the children to their environment towards making them love it, feel it supportive and wanted. And their involvement in its design and organisation will bring about this.

Besides the teachers and the children, it is feasible to involve the families of the children in the organisation of the environment. The presence of people with different experience, age, profession, knowledge and preparation allows for exchange of ideas, finding balance between fantasy and pragmatics and between the traditional and the unconventional.

Finally, the pedagogic approach to the design of the environment will provide enriching experience for everyone, including teachers and parents who are interested in making the lives of the children richer, more interesting and exciting.



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2.3 PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE: A NEGLECTED CHAPTER IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNITY WORK

By Wolfgang Hinte, Germany⁷

The term "community work" (CW) is losing its influence to an increasing extent in the practical field of social work; however, its theoretical foundations and principles are increasingly gaining in significance, especially in the area of the general social services of the local authorities (see Hinte 1991 concerning this). On the one hand this has purely strategic, formal reasons, but it also signifies a transformed way of looking at things compared to the "Community work working principle" that was developed in the 1980s (Boulet amongst others 1980). The reasons stated below for a change in the label may illustrate this a little.

1. With the exception of a few larger model projects community work was almost exclusively carried out in projects (with the exception of the established institutions) that were generally of a rather short duration in the 1970s. In this process valuable findings were made regarding the activation of the citizens, the organization of the interests of the persons affected, the participation processes in the field of community work and many more things besides. However a package of methods to disseminate the community work working principles in institutions is still lacking to the present day. Community work practitioners and theorists have not concerned themselves enough with the transfer of their skills into institutional social work. Community work almost always adopted a non-institutional approach or even an approach that was openly hostile towards institutions and did not have a tradition of singing from the same hymn sheet as the institutions on the one hand and of realising progress principles in the field of institutional legislative work on the other.
2. This is one of the reasons why the comprehensive welfare state apparatus was not used or not used enough by the community work sector. Resources in the area of social work are now in the hands of the local authorities and the voluntary organizations are only involved in exceptional cases in model projects that are generally of a temporary duration), and the fears on the part of a lot of community workers have of cooperating with an established or even conservative institution or even to work there as well as the rigidity and immobility that they might be faced by in some cases when cooperating with colleagues in other institutions ensured an innovative community work approach was only practiced at a few sections within the institutions.
3. The methodical tools used by the community work sector have also hardly increased in size in the past few years. Activating questioning, assemblies, demonstrations, writing letters, clever actions etc.: These all represent important tools, which were also developed in the field of community work. However, times change and a demonstration is nothing special any more, and the housing associations have now got used to dealing with the cheeky letters sent by the residents. Instead they should now be concerning themselves more with the local authority budget plans, with models of joint participation in terms of the involvement of tenants, with models for the reorganisation of social services or with creative links between work activating people on the one hand and the fulfilment of compulsory tasks in the area of social and youth welfare associations on the other.
4. Community work is now still frequently viewed as the "3rd method" by the employers - then pulled out of a hat if they have money left over or individual support and group work does not have any effect. Community work is thus viewed as an addition to existing services. Appointing community workers is an obvious luxury – at least that is the view of a lot of institutions.

⁷ Wolfgang Hinte: Professionelle Kompetenz – ein vernachlässigtes Kapitel. In: Grundlagen und Standards der Gemeinwesenarbeit. Hrsg. v. Wolfgang Hinte u.a., Münster 2001, S. 130 - 138.

5. Community work is still associated with communists with beards, loud revolutionaries and priests who cause unrest in the minds of a lot of department heads and managing directors. A rational debate is frequently made more difficult by such prejudices that are based on past experience, which you cannot get out of their heads with major information campaigns at congresses or paper documents.

In terms of the latter points in particular we have gained the experience at the Essen-based "Institut für Stadtteilbezogene Soziale Arbeit und Beratung" (Institute for neighbourhood related social work and counselling) that the use of the label of "neighbourhood related social work" and the linked recycling of old contents as well as extending conceptional fundamentals can make a contribution towards ensuring,

- ✚ That a social area-oriented working approach is paid increasing attention by local authorities and voluntary institutions
- ✚ That findings regarding the options of realizing the linked working principles in institutions can be gained to an increasing extent in this way (see issab 1989; hinte 1981 with regard to this)
- ✚ That the fundamentals for comprehensive counselling and vocational training work are developed in institutions to realise this working approach.

However, it is now becoming more clear that professionals who have been working in the field of classic regular work (and mainly in the area of individual contacts) have developed skills, which are indeed viable for this context, but are rather a hindrance when it comes to the realization of innovative working principles in the sense of "socio-ecological" thinking (Wendt 1990). I have already described this in detail in another work (Hinte 1990). This includes the following elements in particular:

- ✚ Orientation by legal rulings
- ✚ The unilaterally stipulated role as a helper and problem solver
- ✚ A reactive approach when dealing with "cases"
- ✚ The dominance of bureaucratic rules

Even those people who within the framework of their classic individual contacts had a go at applying group pedagogic procedures experienced difficulties in the field of social area oriented work. This is because group pedagogy is also pedagogy, and social area orientation expressly does not want to transform any people, but instead to transform social areas. Waiving goal-oriented transformation of behavioural dispositions (with noble goals such as self-determination, emancipation, self-reliance etc.) causes problems for a lot of professional helpers; their professional ethos seems to be fundamentally called into question if they cannot assume the role of the pedagogue. In the course of their work they fundamentally treat the group members in such a way as if they were part of the section of humanity that is in need of therapy. In this case they treat the people as if they were more stupid than they actually are and consider themselves to be more intelligent than they really are.

Problematic phenomena which immediately rear their ugly heads in the field of social area oriented work include:

- ✚ Assumption of too much responsibility to ensure the success of a group activity ("It is my fault if the group dies." - "They are my clients, I have to look after them!")
- ✚ Planning-oriented approach: programme orientation and a rigid fixation upon sequences that had been reflected upon in advance may provide the person responsible with a sense of professional security but do not enable the group to define the situation much. Neighbourhood work is based on situation-linked negotiation and limits acts of planning solely to endeavours to produce supportive external conditions.
- ✚ The attitude of the person who sees through everything: the wise view of the professionals as well as their attempts to make people believe they are competent in all life situations has the effect in the field of neighbourhood work of manoeuvring the

- people into the role of the passively grateful or simply ensures that they no longer turn up.
- ✚ A big façade and very little authenticity: in search of the right methods professionals quickly lose touch with themselves and their feelings in the current situation and are too greatly concerned with looking for the "right forms of intervention" instead of behaving authentically in accordance with the demands of the situation and their own emotions.
 - ✚ Not enough acceptance of foreign lifeworlds: The differentness of a foreign lifeworld becomes all the more clear (and thus also more threatening) the greater the number of representatives of this lifeworld is sitting opposite me. Whilst I can keep the threat to me under control due to the differentness of people in individual contact situations it becomes apparent in group situations in particular that professionals do not really accept the form of expression and way of life of people from other subcultures but immediately devalue it as "deficient" or "worth transforming".
 - ✚ The urge to feel important: the professional who is often insignificant in his department at least wants to feel important when he is with his clients. However, those people who feel the need to put themselves to the fore will have difficulty allowing a group to make a decision for themselves about their way forward.

In the field of social area oriented activities the professional does indeed have a voice but it is not the determining voice. This reduction of one's own importance and the linked willingness not to interfere seems to go against the grain for the professional socialising orientation of a lot of professionals. The searching look for a competence model that has potentially been developed in the field of community work only comes across a gaping void here.

This is because there is also no critical appraisal of one's own professionalism in the field of community work. The field of community work has refrained from engaging in a debate about its competences for years. It therefore has difficulty precisely naming alternative points of view which colleagues who are willing to change can orient themselves by. This is linked amongst other things to the fact that the actual competence of the practitioners constituted a taboo subject that was masked over by a lot of mutual backslapping in the wild 1970s. People who claimed they were doing community work and working on behalf of the affected persons were accepted within the in-group of skilled people without really being questioned about their skills. It was thus enough to assume the progressive guise of "community work" in order to defuse any questions regarding the quality of one's own work. The academic qualifications' debate as part of the process in which social work became more scientific also contributed to a situation whereby professionals did not develop further or only developed in a unilateral manner. At that time people propagated the view that professionals mainly had to demonstrate analytical skills so they could then act – based on scientific findings - in a competent and reflective manner. In this case the fact that the individual limitations and capabilities, fears and needs, preferences and feelings of the professionals also played a key part in the development of professional competence was often overlooked (see Springer 1987 regarding this). And this area cannot simply be transformed by means of a cognitive increase in knowledge. Thus the very specific professional straight line approaches also developed within the field of community work, which generally related to those people who did the work: they were indeed based on a rational and theoretical approach but were not functional in terms of the quality of the work and the principles that were espoused everywhere. I would like to mention some of these approaches, principles and guiding principles, which then as now permeated the field of community work and that were not particularly helpful for instance when reflecting on the transfer of community principles below:

- ✚ The attitude that institutions only principally exercised control and should therefore always be combated is not very helpful when trying to establish new approaches in terms of the working practice in these very same institutions. This black and white polarity ("here are the good principles, there are the evil structures") is merely an

outdated relic of social work theories of change and departure (see Litges 1991 regarding this). Institutional structures have at least a dual character, and they therefore hold out the prospects of both opportunities and also limitations and risks. And the task of keeping these apart and to make use of them for oneself and the persons affected is a skill of precisely those practitioners who are involved in the sensitive field of work, which is positioned at the intersection of a lifeworld in neighbourhoods, a local authority political context, institutional bureaucratic specifications and partiality that is exercised subjectively.

- ✚ The undifferentiated reference to a "radically taking of the side" of the persons affected easily leads to the professionals being overtaxed or to them even being faced by a real psychological test. The homeless want the Turks to disappear and the Turks would like to stay: whose side do I take in this situation. All of the parties are affected, they are also all underprivileged, so have all got a right for me to take their side. Or alternatively: some old people want to sleep at midday and the children are making a racket. They are both marginal groups: whose side do I take? In this case it is important to be a judge of a fair argument between different groups and indeed not to take somebody's side prematurely. On the other hand you must be careful to ensure that you do not suffer from a mental breakdown at some point when subjected to the stress of radically taking someone's side. There is namely a risk that you expend so much energy representing the interests of others that you do not pay enough attention to yourself. This is also linked to the constantly increasing backdrop of demands which hover above the professional in the field of social work. I warn people against developing demands from plausible theories, which ultimately only lead to a situation in which the professionals break down due to the load they are subjected to.
- ✚ A lot of community workers carry out their functions so badly in terms of the methods they apply that they consequently come across boundaries, which they define in a spirit of resignation (and incorrectly) as situations in which arbitrary hierarchical sanctions must be carried out. Such "boundaries" are often generated by the community workers themselves. A lot of actions would not have been harmed if the professionals had not been present. The hierarchical sanction is frequently brought about by the presence or commitment of social workers in a field in which they are firstly not responsible in professional terms (by being commissioned to do so) and secondly - in terms of the success of the action – they did not need to be present there at all. It can by all means be strategically intelligent and correct in terms of the content if neighbourhood residents are left alone at a demonstration against the cost cutting policies introduced by the local authorities. "Nailing one's colours to the mast" does not always have to be the best policy, it can also stem from a need to be recognized and a demanding attitude due to the worker's own individual biography, which lead to distorted interpretations of the situation and to the authorities arriving on the scene unnecessarily quickly. And at this point the social worker makes the narrow boundaries of the institution responsible for his/her stupidity in order to salvage the last crumbs of self esteem.
- ✚ A lot of boundaries are constructed in the minds of the social workers themselves. Fear of the authorities, misjudgements in relation to the omnipotence of the administrative machinery, definitions of concepts of the enemy that are too hasty and perceptual distortions that are nourished by theories frequently have the effect of creating the structures, which are subsequently criticized. Seeing through these mechanisms and clearly separating them from intersubjectively comprehensible, externally imposed and actually limiting structural circumstances that really must be tackled is an important skill in the field of neighbourhood related social work.
- ✚ Professionals must make a distinction between the extent to which they are affected themselves and the extent that their clients are affected. Exaggerated claims to "solidarity" that are often also stimulated by their university training easily lead to a situation whereby the individual activities of the persons affected are restricted. A lot of

professionals seem unwilling to stay in the background and divert their attention to the extent that they are affected themselves. They are affected themselves for instance, in the event of job cuts, if their conditions of work deteriorate, if there are institutional sanctions etc. If professionals want to articulate their concerns in public they can do this in these sectors, but the everyday lives and the indignation of the residents of a neighbourhood are primarily their concern. The respective lifeworlds do, of course, overlap to an extent but it is important to bear in mind that professionals, for instance, are generally not poor, do not live in the neighbourhood in which they work, have a place in a nursery school for their children and can solve the problem of poor traffic links with their car. Their personal problems are different to those of the persons affected and they must act in a different role there than the role they have in their professional field.

- ✚ Professionals in the field of neighbourhood-related social work must have a certain degree of psychological, time-based and emotional continuity and stability. Their motivation for their professional work must be sufficient to ensure long-term contacts and their personal life context must be relatively stable so that the residents are not misused in (private and professional) everyday life to compensate for a lack of tender loving care indirectly via the contact with the persons affected. Professionals must obtain emotional love and care in their private lives; this does not rule out the possibility that something might also happen in their working lives but should not be the key motivation for their work. Social workers whose sense of wellbeing is dependent upon the affection of their respective groups of residents will not be able to deal with respective interactive reality in a differentiated manner but will base every form of intervention on the premise of "Do they like me or not?" People in search of deep personal relationships in contact with their clients blur the professional situation and lead the people into believing they are something that they are not.
- ✚ Self-help networks and resident activities should not be dependent upon the energy and drive of the professionals. This is because the kind of opinions that are expressed in the following extract from a letter of an initiative member to a social worker can then result: "... but you also attempted to force us into organising ourselves. You gave us a new sense of drive and it was fun working with you. But I believe it was your sense of drive not ours. Much later I noticed that I simply did a lot of things to please you. It did not have anything to do with me then..... it worked because you wanted it to work." (Sozialmagazin, 10/78, page 41)
- ✚ Professionals must know their own personal boundaries. Work in a neighbourhood places a lot of demands on them and drains them accordingly. The outlook is even bleaker when the excessive psychological demands are underlain with theories, which state that the establishment of a new society is dependent upon me in particular. Frequently a sense of burning initial zest leads a lot of professionals to rush into a neighbourhood whilst investing a lot of time and psychological effort and that they exhaust themselves there (naturally in the interests of the persons affected) to such an extent that they are subsequently fall flat on their faces in physical, psychological and often also in intellectual terms and moan about the fact that nothing can be changed and the traps of the system. The exodus of a lot of colleagues into social movements, therapeutic further education courses or an upright private life speaks volumes in this context.
- ✚ This leads to another point of view of professional competence. "We have noticed that when pedagogic statements are made the focus is almost always upon the disruptive young people, but not upon the disturbed employees." (Krauslach amongst others 1979, page 38). What has been said here about aggressive young people and the professionals who are responsible for them also applies to our colleagues in the field of community work. Stomach ulcers, problems getting to sleep, heart flutters are often the final symptoms of a body that has been overworked, which mean the workers have to pay more attention to themselves. The pedagogic view of the employees which is

directed at the deficits of the affected persons fails to recognise their own deficits all too easily, oversees the connections between their own neediness and the needs of their clients and prematurely removes the professionals from the complex overall process as subjects who are learning and changing. The interaction with their own personality, their own biography, their own contradictions, but also their own strengths and creative sides must rank amongst the fundamental arsenal of competences that professionals possess.

Colleagues, who now want to start doing this kind of work in institutions can learn from the (un)professional rigid structures described here, which have been evident in the field of community work for a long time. However, it is important to state that you cannot acquire these skills overnight, that you need to go through a long learning process and cannot be acquired in an uncomplicated, straight-line manner. It is therefore also worth recommending that you do not start making radical and extensive changes but carefully start in tightly structured areas, try out new methods and try and experiment with yourself, that you experiment in a protected area and do not have high demands placed upon yourself right from the start (either by yourself or your superiors). Of course this does not mean that you should lose sight of the principles and approaches of resident-oriented work: However, they may only be understood as guidelines which show me in which direction I could go. I must decide myself whether I can fulfil this task as a person with my capabilities or whether I have the possibilities of developing myself accordingly. People who overtax themselves and take on too much will then lose everyone's trust. However, those people who do not do anything to develop themselves and to increase their options easily fall into a light sleep in professional terms against the backdrop of the comforting protection offered by the State, the church or other parents.

2.4 THE GUIDING STANDARDS OF COMMUNITY WORK

By Maria Lüttringhaus, Germany⁸

Programmatic foundations

Social work concerns the reduction, prevention or removal of social problems. Community work concerns the improvement of living conditions in social areas for the benefit of the people living there. The integration of the three classic areas of social work: work with individuals, group work and community work form part of the fundamental programme of community work.

The structuring of lifeworlds with the persons affected requires on the one hand the anchorage of community work within the neighbourhood – on the spot, where the everyday lives of the people take place – and on the other hand work at other system levels (politics, administration, the economy etc.). Due to the clear perspective-based orientation of community work of working to ensure improved living conditions in the social area (social area and lifeworld orientation) and the results-oriented community work that also involves the procurement of resources at the other levels² (institution orientation), the community workers carry out systematic management work at the interfaces of the social systems that are increasingly drifting apart - in particular between the areas of the lifeworld and bureaucracy. In this area community workers act as moderating mediators who establish links between the specialist world of the institutions and the reality of the neighbourhood. Community workers search for alliance partners at all levels, also in the fields of administration and in the economy sector.

People who want to empower others to increase their opportunities must act within their lifeworld. Consequently social workers may not stipulate goals in a didactic and pedagogic manner with findings from their own lifeworld, but must instead develop goals to ensure the people's opportunities increased by mediating, clarifying and organising things - based on the situation from the *point of view of the persons affected*, their experiences and their competences. Community work professionals thus encounter the recipients of social work as self-determined people at a subject-subject level. The people are not downgraded to (non-autonomous) objects of pedagogic actions, but are treated with respect as experts of their lifeworld.

The methodical concepts of community work are employed in a situation related and process-oriented manner whilst taking account of the specific initial situation respectively and not in a standardised linear manner.

Community workers work in a preventive manner *before* people reach the stage at which they require professional help by means of the timely strengthening of the resources of individual people, relations or material and infrastructural conditions. Community workers thus work in a proactive manner (not in a reactive manner) and by solving problems (not administering problems).

⁸ Maria Lüttringhaus: Zusammenfassender Überblick: Leitstandards der Gemeinwesenarbeit. In: Grundlagen und Standards der Gemeinwesenarbeit. Hrsg. v. Wolfgang Hinte u.a., Münster 2001, S. 263 – 267.

The guiding standards of community work

This fundamental programmatic approach is put into operation by means of the following guiding standards that are binding for community work:

- ✚ *Cross target group action:* the community work activities are based on one need arranged around one issue, which generally does not just affect one target group, but instead frequently affects a lot of different people from one district. In this case issues repeatedly arise, which just affect one population group. There will also occasionally be activities, in which "only" one certain group will organise itself in a target-group specific manner. However, the community work outlook and approach fundamentally relate to the social area.
- ✚ *Orientation towards the needs and issues of the people:* It is a question of searching for the motivation of the people and promoting this, rather than motivating them extrinsically. Community work does not just intervene in those areas where a problem is "externally" defined as such but also principally embraces all the issues, which are considered to be important by the people in the social area. Instead of - as is so often the case - attempting to motivate the people to achieve the goals of the professionals, community workers endeavour to search for the people's motivation for change. They also take the (apparently small) issues and everyday needs in particular seriously and address them.
- ✚ *Promotion of self-organisation and people's powers to help themselves:* community work encourages people to tackle their issues themselves. The residents are activated and supported to ensure they can sort out their issues themselves. The creation of a (neighbourhood) public by means of public discussions is an important field with respect to these community work tasks of supporting people to organise themselves. Community workers support the processes instead of directing them. In this case they support the protagonists in line with the motto of "we will do the rest." Thus community workers do not act on behalf of the people but act *with* them wherever and whenever it is possible. In this way they enable the residents to gain new experiences of applying their own competences and learning experiences. This self-determined, active structuring of their own living conditions is viewed as a factor in this process that makes an essential contribution towards living healthily.
- ✚ *Use of the existing resources:* On the one hand the existing potential of the neighbourhood will be used, activated and promoted, starting with the personal resources of individual people ranging to social resources through relationships between several people and extending to material and infrastructural resources (strengths, abilities, ideas, spaces, funds, identification points, relationships etc.). In addition community work also ensures that resources can be used, which are present within the institutions and are frequently stipulated by laws. It links them with the resources that are present in the lifeworld or that need to be developed there.
- ✚ *Improvement of the material situation and the infrastructural conditions:* The community work activities make a contribution towards an active form of city (neighbourhood) development. Based on the needs of the social area they aim to create new resources by means of the extension of the economic and building structures: an adequate amount of living space, jobs, traffic calming measures, playgrounds, spaces, healthy food, junk, second hand clothing etc.). Community work therefore intervenes in local political processes in order to transport information about needs from the neighbourhood to the corresponding bodies, to win over cooperation partners, and also to implement ideas on a project-related basis.
- ✚ *Improvement of the non-material factors:* community supports the development of social and cultural life, of the "invisible community" (Houses): the social climate, area identity, civil commitment, the cultural milieu, everyday contacts, the neighbourhood, participation, self confidence, social confidence and confidence in the system, an understanding of democracy, education, an awareness of power, acceptance of other

lifestyles etc. Community work provides personnel resources to provide counselling and training, to listen to people, and direct discussion etc.

- ✚ *Cross-sector action:* Community work relates to the fields of accommodation, health, work, leisure time, urban development, education and culture. Cross-sector cooperation is sought and promoted in order to improve living conditions in the social area. Community work thus departs from the narrow "social" sector and views itself as an authority, which does not just deal with the consequences of poor social development. Community workers feel committed to an offensive, integrated form of social communal policy, which consciously takes account of synergistic effects. Community work is thus an integral component part of a communal politics strategy, which refers to social areas in a cross-sector manner.
- ✚ *Networking and cooperation:* community workers create and strengthen the regional social networks of the residents (by means of a number of resident activities) and of the professionals (e.g. by means of employee circles, neighbourhood conferences, roundtables etc.). Networking is not a goal in this case, but a means in order to develop cooperative arrangements with other solutions: this should not just involve a lot of talking but there should also be "a specific end product". Community work does not primarily strive when activating the residents to win over "permanent activists" but instead to develop a network of residents which can be mobilised on the most important occasions. This goal is supported by the provision of an infrastructure, which facilitates low level, informal everyday social contacts and promotes the development and extension of social networks and support systems in the district.

Outlook

These guiding standards make it clear that in a period when social division is increasing, in which the justice gap is continuing to grow and thrive and social links are becoming more and more fragile, community work must promote dialogues and negotiation processes in order to preserve or create a basis whereby people can live together. Conventional concepts of normality are out of the question if we are to adopt a consistent community work approach. There is no "right way" to live in a community. Community work helps to ensure that as many groups of the population as possible can live in the way they chose to without fighting each other or discriminating against each other, but rather - in the ideal case - support each other and work together to improve living conditions. Community work can communicate its message in very different milieus, can record people's needs, understand and interpret and also manage the corresponding negotiation processes. In this process community work carries out translation work between the numerous groups of the population, it mediates and presents and makes a contribution towards the acceptance of people's differentness and ensures that foreignness is not swept away.

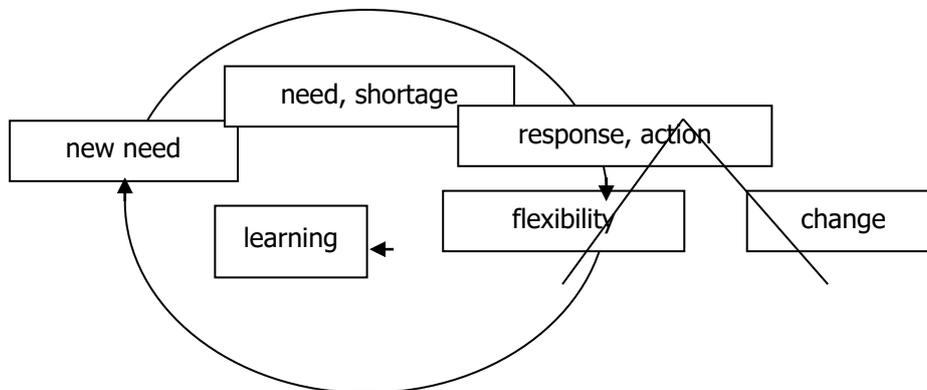
The areas that are now particularly relevant for the field of community work are the issues of social urban development, education, the local economy, health, culture and especially the participation opportunities. In this case participation is not downgraded to the status of a one-off event. The promotion of participation is understood as being a continuous process in order to fundamentally democratise the local authority political structuring procedures. Community work actively works to ensure that adequate forms of participation are repeatedly developed in order to make it possible for the people who are disadvantaged in particular to obtain low level access to these participation processes.

2.5 THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF COMMUNITY WORK

By Nóra Harkai, Hungary

As far as its social role is concerned, community work acts in two separate directions. On the one hand, it helps marginalized social groups to adapt and adjust to society, and to satisfy their various needs; on the other hand, it is committed to reforms and change. It initiates social changes at the level of the institutional structure, at that of legislative activity, and at the level of people's attitudes and their relationships with one another. The catalyst for this reform-oriented activity is the active response to some need or shortage. This active response (community action) is that which is capable, in the presence of liberty (rights and opportunities) to create the fine fabric of society: civil society. The steps taken in the direction of change, however, in turn generate new needs. This process can thus be interpreted as a cycle that loops back in on itself, in which learning⁹ and understanding play an important role and become the criterion of qualitative change and improvement.

Figure 1: The process of change initiated by community work



In community work, the process of the work itself is emphasized alongside the satisfaction of the need, the achievement of a particular goal. For it is through the mutual discovery and elaboration of problems, the construction of a strategy and through communal action that understanding comes about: the members of the group understand themselves, their situation, and are able to share their ideas and suggestions and to make communal decisions. In the course of this process they learn to accept each other despite their differences, they experience solidarity, learn to act in unison and to fight for change. In the course of this, their circumstances change, and they themselves change, too. **In the course of action intended to bring about change, a very important thing occurs: the reproduction of social capital.** Relationships are formed, trust between people grows, activities which offer mutual help are set in motion, and civic participation is strengthened.

⁹ The acquisition of new knowledge, skills, modes of thinking and attitudes.

In Europe the concept of “the quality of society” has become widespread in recent years. The quality of a European society cannot be captured purely in terms of its level of economic development, as it is also determined by the extent to which its citizens participate in the life of the community. The key concepts related to this are the foundation stones of community work:

- ✚ Trust (in one another and in institutions)
- ✚ Social cohesion (social togetherness, which includes solidarity at various levels: between generations – those who are active and those in retirement – between those in cities and those in the countryside, between rich and poor)
- ✚ Social institutions that are integrative and not exclusionary (which serve the cause of security and social cohesion)
- ✚ Empowerment (the guaranteeing of liberty, which provides an opportunity for communities / people to be themselves, freely to act and make decisions).

In these areas community work should or will play an important role in the future. Ilona Vercseg, the advocate and pioneer of community development in Hungary, summarized this as follows:

“Community work has increasingly become an activity serving social integration, which is capable in an effective fashion of increasing society’s ability to initiate and act, of helping the processes of transformation and reformation of the system of social institutions, of bringing the various actors in society together, and of building partnership relations at a regional and society-wide level, and of boosting society’s democratic self-organization. [...] Its preventive nature is provided by its ability to increase the retentive power of communities and to strengthen the solidarity between people and make this the norm.” [Vercseg, 2000, p.14]

In the following I try to address the functions which community work serves in the interest of social belonging and active citizenship being achieved at a European level. The identity and legitimacy of a profession also require the social need for it to be proven, i.e. for it to be shown that it offers some kind of answers to social phenomena, needs and problems. For this reason, to understand the social functions of community work, it is necessary to outline the social phenomena and problems which provide its *raison d’être*.

The development of civil society and the strengthening of its fabric **New paradigm**

In the last decade the notion of the welfare state has fallen into crisis in the developed world. The (social, political) consensus¹⁰ regarding the welfare state gradually began to deteriorate, and in the last few years has collapsed completely. The reasons for the crisis of the welfare state are to be found in its inconsistencies, which a change in global circumstances, “stagflation” and structural transformation has all brought to the surface. [Szamuely, 1985] Claus Offe has described the essence of the crisis as lying in the success of antithetical tendencies threatening the structure of the social system.

Although sociological surveys clearly display widespread support for the activity of the welfare state in providing social security, at the same time dissatisfaction and disappointment in the effectiveness of the welfare state has also emerged. Shortage phenomena have become persistent (e.g. in the sphere of health provision), because limitations to resources have set a limit on the satisfaction of the “unrestrained” appearance of growing needs. According to many, the welfare state induces “irrational consumption” by removing the “demand constraint” in the utilization of social services, thereby exerting an exhaustive effect on the state budget. Reform activity intended to establish social justice and equality has been subject to the criticism that secondary redistribution does not prevent the reproduction of poverty, rather it preserves

¹⁰ This consensus was constructed upon the modern liberal belief that “society can be corrected, its level of integration reinforced, that suffering can be decreased, and that all this can be achieved without any serious incursion upon rights”. [Ferge, 1997/a; p.1.]

the situation of the social classes in need of state aid. Another criticism of the welfare state is that vertical redistribution is often replaced by horizontal redistribution, which redistributes not only to the needy but also in the direction of those in relative prosperity. This contradiction is the result of the bureaucratic nature of state redistribution: while the original goal of the welfare state was the emancipation and social equality of citizens, precisely the opposite is observable in the establishment of welfare dependency that induces a lowering of people's maturity. Another factor cited as a criticism of the welfare state is its counterproductive influence on economic growth. The criticism refers to the contradiction that, while economic growth is precisely the key condition for the successful operation of the welfare state, welfare redistribution takes resources away from the economy, restricting the level of capital accumulation and hindering economic progress. In point of fact, all of these criticisms are imbued with a philosophy that embodies neoliberal values.

The notion of the welfare state, which tries to unify the values of freedom, equality and solidarity despite their internal contradictions, has fallen victim to a new paradigm¹¹ – the postmodern paradigm. In this paradigm, the most important value is freedom, which strives to remove all obstacles to the achievement of personal ambitions. It regards equality and solidarity as an "undesirable" element threatening economic growth, as it sees the universal access to the provision of services on the basis of citizenship as too expensive. The state, in its changed role, tries to retreat, and to rid itself of its functions that define positive rights, whether in terms of legislation, implementation, ownership, service provision or finance. [Ferge, 1997/a]

Loïc Wacquant paints a dark picture of the state's new role, namely that the caring welfare state is increasingly being replaced by the "punitive state". The author describes the manifestations of the neoliberal revolution starting in the United States and taking hold in Europe, which criminalizes poverty, regards the victims of the system as criminals, and which wishes to employ the police and the institutions of law enforcement against them. (As a result, the number of those held in prison has risen significantly, despite the level of criminality not increasing to the same degree.) [Wacquant, 2001]

Meanwhile, one of the most important political goals set in developed democracies has become the gradual transition "from government to governing". Governing is taken to mean the creation of an institutionalized system of dialogue pursued with civil society, which is realized through political decentralization. This has three levels: devolution (the transfer of functions to the regional level), deconcentration (the sharing of decision-making between regional centres) and delegation (the transfer of responsibility from the governmental level to the third sector). It was recognized that **the involvement and activation of civil society and its increased structural density were significant both for the efficiency of the system of political institutions as a whole and for the progress of the economy.** [Ágh, 1999] Accession to the European Union has presented the need for this in Hungary, too. The strengthening of the fabric of civil society – which is realized by the establishment of the various types of community – thus becomes a key issue, for it is only a strengthened civil society that is able to represent the need for the sharing of power and to assist an increase in social control. In addition to the presentation of this political dimension, communities are also responsible for restoring the feeling of security that has been shaken as a result of the change in the state's role, and to approach this from two directions: through the security offered by community relationships, and through the security provided by social policy tools that are "extorted" by means of pressure exerted on the ruling élite. An important function of the communities, then, is the strengthening of the civic sphere and acting as arbiter in power-sharing.

¹¹ To use Zsuzsa Ferge's term.

Civil society and community work

In March 2004 an international conference was held in Budapest with the participation of 33 countries, the focus of which was the advancement of European civil society with the tools of community development. One important achievement of this event was the elaboration of the so-called 'Budapest Declaration', the result of international cooperation and communal thinking, the goal of which was to collect together the positions of European community developers for the benefit of the European Union and national governments. This declaration has since become an important lobbying document in almost all countries, helps organization at an international level and the inclusion of new allies. The document states that "Community development is a way of strengthening civil society by prioritising the actions of communities and their perspectives in the development of social, economic and environmental policy. It seeks the empowerment of local communities [...]". (Parola 2004/1). The conference calls upon the bodies of the European Union and national governments to commit themselves to a society that is "inclusive, diverse, environmentally sustainable and socially just", and, by creating the right institutional, legal and financial conditions, to the structures, principles and mechanisms needed to establish social dialogue between the Union, its member states and their civil societies. The closing declaration of the 2005 EAPN summit¹² presents a similar statement, drawing the attention of the member states of the European Union to increasing inequalities, the worsening position of less fortunate communities, the political responsibilities these circumstances demand, and the review of political priorities.

These documents represent an important step in the struggle at a European level against social exclusion. The question is how well Hungary can keep step in the realization of the objectives of European community work. For the possibilities of community work are always determined by the cultural, political, social and economic circumstances of the country in question. "Culture is the arena of intervention activity, and pervades everything in the way it determines the potential subject, method and content of this activity," says Erika Varsányi [2004, p.14]. **The effectiveness of community work is determined to a great degree by the social milieu – political culture, democratic attitude, values, norms, system of power relations – in which this activity takes place.**

At the time of the regime change many hoped that the establishment of democratic institutions would create the opportunity for the macro-level framework to be filled with democratic content at the local level. "In practice, bitter experience shows that the process works in exactly the opposite direction: the rejuvenation of cultural representations as individual and collective myths, of forms of behaviour believed to have been dead and buried, and of conceit and privilege, erodes the institutional structures created precisely in the hope of making a break from these." [Varsányi, 2004]

Why are public participation and social control withering away in Hungary? This is a question and problem which arises again and again in the course of completing community work. The situation that has arisen is the result of the tacit agreement between those in power and civic players; the local ruling class is not willing to impose restrictions on itself, while the civic sphere is not able to exert the force or influence needed to carve out a larger slice of the moulding of the life of society. The legal framework exists for civic bodies to achieve greater influence in local matters, but there is no established practice of this. Elected bodies and their apparatuses are not equipped to conduct a "dialogue" with the members of the community. A further obstacle to the operation of local democracy is the party-politicization of public life. Local party interests can be felt at play behind community initiatives, interest representation and the articulation of opinions. They are not able to judge and understand civic behaviour, and so consider it a threat. It is a common experience of community workers that a local authority will commission them to assist in the activation of local residents, but when this occurs, and the

¹² European Anti Poverty Network.

members of the community express their interests, local politicians regard this as a “rebellion”. “People want something, and this can only be a critique of the way we work.” [Péterfi, 2004/2, p.6] The professional work completed for the benefit of the community is threatened by this attitude of attack and defence. Public – i.e. political – figures are very sensitive, do not like the reaction of the community, and see no need for social curbs to be imposed on them. Most local authority press organs present the “self-sacrificing” work of the authority’s leaders. The fact that the level of fear amongst local residents is rising rather than falling is a sign of a democratic deficit. Community developers have said that they encounter more resistance in the course of their work now than they did in the 80s and 90s: “[...] there is a growing gap between our democratic initiatives and the capacity for receptiveness of a non-democratic society”. [Vercseg, 2004/1, p.6] The reason for this is that community work brings people face-to-face with possibilities to achieve freedom, while not hiding the risk factors of community activity. Financial vulnerability and the fear of uncertainty blurs the public good to be “won” from enjoying liberty, and so people instead retreat to the “shell” of their private and family life.

Research into the social consequences of the regime change¹³ has shown that people were disappointed by the transition they had so much desired. The upset to the security of life, the retreat of the responsibilities of the state together with growing inequalities dimmed the euphoria generated by the sense of freedom. Although people value freedom highly, the value attributed to security increases when the satisfaction of basic needs is under threat. “People are freer when they have security.” [Ferge, 2000, p.431]

Material and moral values cannot be compared, and are not mutually equivalent at the level of society, either. A consequence of increasing inequality and the weakening of security is a lack of trust in the future and a turning away from active political participation.

Community work in Hungary finds itself in a strange, paradoxical situation: **it must contribute to the development of civil society and the broadening of democracy in such a way that the milieu required for its operation – a strong civil society, local democracy, active citizenry – is missing or at best fragmentary.** (Rather like hatching an egg without a chicken.) Community workers and community developers often encounter the impossibility of this state of affairs in the course of their work in the field. Yet there is no other path for community work than to “work under its own auspices” and generate change through its persistent struggle. Ilona Vercseg has listed the social conditions which guarantee the framework for working on the development of community and society:

- ✚ a stable social environment (established roles, functions, dependable and transparent relations and social security)
- ✚ support for democracy (its social worth and acceptance)
- ✚ intellectual infrastructure (free adult education, subsidized voluntary work, development of local intellectual resources, support for social movements, possibility of utilizing professionals, etc.)
- ✚ professional network.

“[...] for without a supportive society responsibility for the public good cannot be bred even locally.” [Vercseg, 2004/1, p.6]

¹³ SOCO survey in 1995, led by Zsuzsa Ferge and Endre Sík.

Creating a public

The act of organizing a local public plays an important role in the practice of community work. In a world lacking the values capable of guiding people, and as a result of which we can become manipulated in a created world, there is a crucial need for the space of the power-free communication we attribute to Habermas. A need for social and community arenas where communication is used for us to understand ourselves, one another, and the correct form of action, that is, arenas where discourse takes place. **The intention of community work is to create community forms which guarantee a framework for debate and increase the creativity and scope of the individual.** Thus there is a need for a social and community sphere which is home to communal thinking and dialogue, and also to learning, where we understand our susceptibility to influence and lessen our vulnerability.

The role of community work – in establishing a space for discourse – is emphasized by the individualization of society. In neo-liberal and post-modern ideology – which regards society as a unit consisting of individuals – the emphasis is transferred from communal to individual responsibility, which results in the individualization of society. This is fully in line with economic rationality, which strives to develop consumer culture. The individual, separated from his or her communities, and whose socio-cultural identity – in the absence of community and cultural roots – is under threat, can more easily become a consumer to be manipulated. Players in the market follow their own needs when they strive to sell as many goods as possible to lonely, anxious individuals who, through losing their traditional values, can more easily fall into the trap of seeking their self-esteem in a world of consumer objects. It is this tendency that we observe in increasingly empty and materialized social relationships.

According to Hankiss (1998), we are experiencing an age of civilisation crisis caused by the loss of traditional values. For while traditional culture was able to provide answers to the deepest personal questions that occupied people, about the meaning of life and the nature of their goals, this new civilization does not transmit the key values and rules of coexistence needed to help people judge the boundaries between right and wrong (good and bad) by transmitting key values and rules of coexistence. The new political and ideological trends do not deal with the “ultimate questions” of human life, and virtual civilization (consumer civilization) has come into existence as a reaction to this, the symbolic system and message of which rush to the aid of the individual by creating new myths. (With washing powders we not only clean our clothes, we clean ourselves; whitening toothpaste puts an end to our self-esteem problems; our empty lives are filled up by an ice cream, etc.) Hankiss sees it as a responsibility of the various communities in the life of a society to find new answers to the great questions of human existence, thereby to help people in establishing their real roles and objectives. It is not only the free-market economy that “does well” out of the individualization of society, but also the world of politics. The individual left out of the discourse pursued in communities is easily influenced by a given political party and convinced of the truth of reality as it presents it. In an age like this, where the world people live in is made up of intermediated and transmitted experiences, there is a much greater chance of manipulation than in a transparent world that can be experienced directly. An important part is played in this by the spread of what Riesman (1961) describes as the “other-directed individual”, who does not determine the correct way to behave using a compass set by his or her family or social group, but instead adjusts to information received from outside in a conformist fashion.

The influence of the outside world is to be found in the way in which people consider something good or acceptable depending on how it is judged by those who matter. Individuals do not experience this as a restriction of their personal freedom, for they reach their desired action without thinking, developing an opinion, or taking any real decision. According to Breton (2000), the central strategy of manipulation is that those who would like to convince others of something need only to restrict the freedom of the individual as much as possible from debating all that they would like to convince them of, in order to pre-empt any possible opposition they

might have to it. Advertising attains a special place in the toolbox of persuasion: over and above informing and influencing people, “advertising forms people’s consciousness; it carries inside itself the apologia of mass culture and consumer society.” [Breton, 2000, p.58]

It is a strange paradox that while freedom is one of the most heralded values of post-modern ideology, the life and consciousness of individuals left without communities – groups who provide a frame of reference – is restricted and controlled to an increasing degree, i.e. it is precisely the values of freedom, independence and autonomy which become infringed.

Creating culture

Community work as an activity is rooted in the social reality which that culture creates. Community work is in large part determined and influenced by the culture surrounding it, but the community activity has its influence on culture, too. Ruth Benedict [1959] describes the relationship between community and culture in the following way: “[...] communities cannot be separated from the society in which they exist, nor from the individuals they are made up of. They are interdependent. The whole thing is pervaded by the culture which connects people together, and without which the individual is not capable even of crossing the threshold of utilizing their abilities.” (p. ???)

Cultural representations, as the adhesive of social liaisons, and as intellectual manifestations, determine the environment through interpersonal relationships. [Varsányi, 2004]

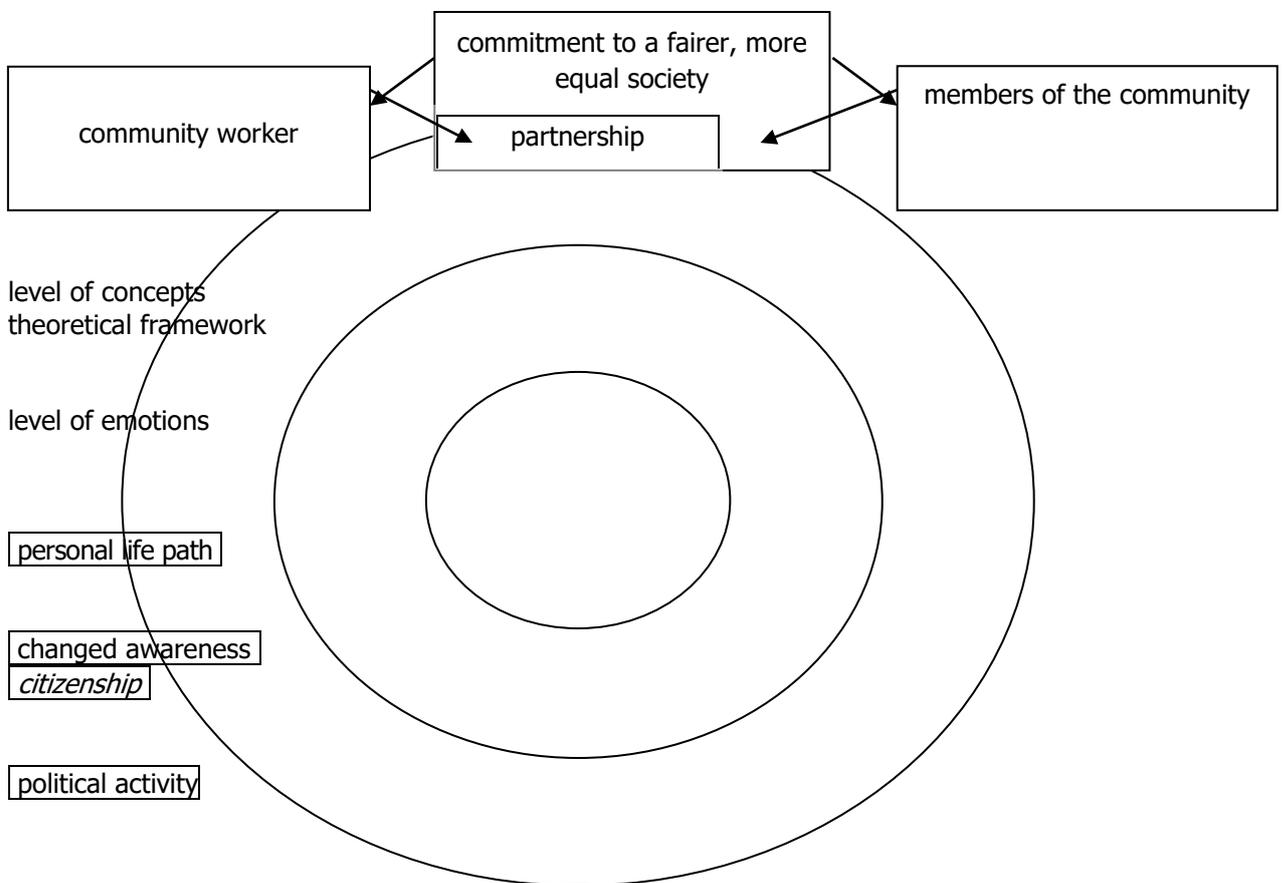
There are two mechanisms at work in the process of cultural development: the innovative-revolutionist element (which strives to renew the system) and the (value-creating) element which defends traditions and values. The latter is needed for members of society to be able in the long-term to protect the elements of knowledge required for the expression of their identity. [Hoppál, 2002]

Community work seeks to improve, maintain and renew traditions and local culture. This not only means that it is respectful of the particularities and traditions of the local culture, but also that **it actively contributes to helping the members of the community to find and appreciate the traditional elements of community life** (e.g. community folk customs). **In parallel with this, community work is also devoted to encouraging members of the local community to welcome new cultural representations.** It generates change in interpersonal space; it strives to build dialogue; it supports the creation of partnerships between organizations, and contributes to the development of a culture of debate.

Community work – as a value-oriented profession – strives to attain a paradigm shift, and the establishment of community values and attitude; that is, it undertakes a kind of socializational activity. Its task is not an easy one. At the local level it often encounters values and attitudes at odds with the profession’s basic tenets. The burgeoning bureaucratic apparatus, relationships of superiority or subservience (which local politics maintains via the system of conditions for financing) and widely-accepted inequalities present a world which is more feudal than civic or democratic. In turn, this blocks or at least impedes the spread of community work rather than assisting it. Varsányi Erika [2004] portrays this milieu surrounding community work “as seen from below”, from the perspective of the non-profit service provider. She analyzes the cultural environment – primarily the political culture – in which criticism is equivalent to vexation, in which communication between local authority bodies and professionals is hindered, because local representatives do not consider community workers as partners, rather as a “private club” where the employees of non-governmental organizations “can indulge their benevolent and intellectual whims”. The ruling class’ different use of language also impedes dialogue, as it communicates an alien, inaccessible world both to professionals and to the client/citizen. The change of regime has also, by necessity, been a change of culture: the culture based on autocratic traditions has to be replaced by participatory democracy. In the areas of value mediation and culture creation, too, community work is also revolutionary in style in the period

of transition – the period when the profession is established. It has, after all, to build its own cultural milieu that makes its operation possible. This revolutionary style has its difficulties, but it also has a certain beauty, for, by creating new cultural representations, it is able to transform and broaden the social reality that encompasses the community. The community worker generates change by “empowering” the members of the community. The following figure presents the process and arenas of this change. The changes occurring at any given level also influence the other levels. The change is not simply a unidirectional process, as it is not only feelings and mental boundaries that determine the mode and direction of action, but the activity itself can bring about changes at the level of the emotions (e.g. a strengthening of trust) and at the level of thinking, too.

Figure 1: The arenas of *empowerment*



Change at any level has an effect on the other levels.

- ✚ The way I feel as a citizen: “feeling good”.
- ✚ My thoughts about what it means to be a citizen: information, awareness of rights/opportunities, knowledge, skills, democratic values.
- ✚ My actions as a citizen (level of activity and participation): level of partnership and cooperation, level of community initiative.

In the process of *empowerment*, the critical interpretation of reality and the resulting community activity creates the opportunity for change; the result of this is the knowledge reached by the community in its analysis and interpretation of communal experiences. As professionals in the tradition of “social learning” state:

“knowledge is born from experience and vindicated in practice”. [Campfens, 1997, p.33] It is action which stands at the centre of this learning process: needs are manifested, and result in community action. In the course of the community activity its members gain new experiences, which necessitate the acquisition of new knowledge, skill and abilities. This is how education becomes an important element of community work, which is particularly essential in an era of cultural change.¹⁴

According to Kurt Lewin [1975] – with whose name “action research” is associated – real learning involves us transforming our connection with the world. In order for there to be a change in the attitude and behaviour of the members of the community and the way they approach problems, and for them to begin to use new problem-solving methods, there is a need for the members themselves to experience what it is like to be an “active subject” and to have a communal effect on their environment. This is how they became players and students at the same time.

Community work shakes up the “natural mindset” that things cannot be changed anyway. Yet there are generally a few members of all local communities who are not satisfied with the existing situation/state of affairs. It is this dissatisfaction which activates the members and sets change in motion, which (also) results in new knowledge. The role of the community worker in this process is to proceed in the direction chosen in an effective manner. This is why he or she contributes to the mapping of the alternative directions of action, in the wording of communal objectives, and in the building and deepening of personal and organizational connections.

Strengthening social integration, trust and solidarity

A number of writings have emerged in the last ten years about the way in which the key factor in the crisis in Hungarian society is the turbulent relationship between individual and society. Since the regime change the conditions for broad classes of society have worsened, and poverty had increased dramatically. Increasingly visible manifestations of poverty (e.g. homelessness, child beggars) have not evoked any particular response (disgust) on the part of members of society. Public opinion has found acceptable the government position passed on by the media: poverty is a function of the new market society. The lack of any expression of solidarity has only succeeded in further deepening the gap between citizens, and that between certain social groups and society “as a whole”. This is what led to society breaking in two. In the absence of universal services – available to citizens as citizens – it was the struggle for dwindling resources which became universal. Hungarian social work, too, has little choice but primarily to consist of caring for the poor, which, by the very nature of helping problems on a one-by-one basis, is more likely to isolate and segregate, and is not favourable to the spread of the community and civic initiatives which can eliminate the causes of poverty. In the course of the struggle for survival it is often those affected, precisely those sharing the same fate, who confront one another. It is clear from day-to-day experience that society is seeing an increase in prejudice, xenophobia, dislike of the poor, discrimination against the Roma community, and intolerance. Social integration is damaged at a number of levels. It is not a sustainable political tactic to exclude certain social groups in the interests of establishing unity in the majority part of society, for a number of reasons. Exclusion infringes a person’s constitutional rights – their human dignity – and, as such, cannot be tolerated as an element of a democratic social system, as it is precisely this that underdermines the very foundations of that system. The concept of citizenship is damaged unless everyone can feel themselves to be an accepted member of society who can freely enjoy their civic, political and social rights.

¹⁴ In Hungary, the boarding training centre of the Civic College Foundation conducts training for non-governmental organizations and community members.

Social integration is compromised by the spread of a lack of trust: we do not trust one another, the poor do not trust the rich, the rich do not trust the poor (cf. élite residential parks equipped with security guards), citizens do not trust the authorities, and the authorities do not trust citizens. All of this is unfavourable to the strengthening of social cohesion. [Ferge, 2000] The question arises of whether a society in which lack of trust¹⁵ rules the social space is capable of progress and prosperity. Community and social norms are impaired if we cannot trust others to keep to them. This in turn weakens social solidarity, which leads to disintegration and operational difficulties in society itself.

Zsuzsa Ferge divides the phenomena threatening integration into two groups:

✚ at macro level

- ✚ increasing inequality
- ✚ segmented labour force, health system, school system, system of homes, etc.
- ✚ the democratic deficit, the decline of political legitimacy
- ✚ the hidden distortions in legislation and implementation
- ✚ intolerance (xenophobia, racism)

✚ at micro level

- ✚ competition between individuals
- ✚ the weakening of solidarity
- ✚ the fragility of family connections
- ✚ the spread of aggression and criminality
- ✚ weakening of norms and a crisis of values

The threat of disintegration also justifies the need to strengthen “community consciousness”¹⁶. This comprises a number of things: the appearance of solidarity at an individual, community and macro-social level (e.g. health insurance, pensions), putting a stop to increasing inequalities, a response to exclusion, and the creation of community spaces which give people an opportunity to participate in the life of society, in public (communal) life.

Community work makes a significant contribution to the strengthening of social integration and solidarity. One of its key goals is social involvement: including members of society in community activity who of their own accord would not show initiative or would not demand cooperation because of their exclusion, their unfavourable situation and/or lack of confidence. **Community work thus takes the initiative. It addresses social groups which are unable to represent their own interests, and puts them in touch with the resources of stronger social groups and the assets of the formal system of institutions.** With this approach it does not segregate (or conjure away) problems (e.g. poverty), but integrates them into a broader community domain, which makes it possible for the members of the wider community to address problems, which thereby become a task to be faced by all. Coming to understand the situations of others decreases intolerance, and enables movement between the various subcultures. Understanding and communal activity can bring about solidarity with the impoverished underclass, a broadened manifestation of the “consciousness of us”, which instinctively reaches out to the impoverished and excluded to group together and unite that which belongs together. **Communities are arenas for the realization of solidarity.** It is in communities that the threads which create social integration are entwined. According to Rorty [1994], it is better to think of solidarity as something we create or establish rather than as something we recognize (in the Kantian sense of a characteristic of human consciousness). Communities can therefore be the workshops (furnaces) of solidarity, in which we come to understand our communal vulnerability, to recognize that we are similar to one another, and

¹⁵ According to Mária Kopp, the most general indicator of the lack of trust in Hungary is the so-called adversarial disposition, namely that we can trust no one. Sadly this is very characteristic of Hungarian society today. The mindset of “the success of the community is also my success” is missing. [Kopp, 2001]

¹⁶ The knowledge that I belong to a broader community (society) and that my individual life cannot be completely independent of the life of the community as a whole.

thereby to broaden the “consciousness of us” to as wide a group as possible. Solidarity thus established creates the possibility for the involvement of broad groups in social participation. While individualism has become a central value of modern societies, accompanied by the retreat of holism as society progresses, the latter nevertheless manages to appear again and again. The relationship between the two can be grasped not just as a mutually exclusive one; we can also understand individualism as maintaining the values of freedom, equality of opportunity, mobility, etc., but in certain situations accepting its subordinate nature relative to holism. In my opinion, the use of the holistic principle can in certain instances help to avoid the danger of disintegration, because it can even make society capable of making sacrifices in order to preserve social unity, thanks to its recognition that the individual interest and the community interest cannot ultimately be completely separated.

The concept of “modern communityness” attempts to unify the seemingly contradictory endeavours of individual freedom and community togetherness. In point of fact it holds that it is precisely in a social reality lived in a community that the fulfilment of individual freedom can be realized. The “communal experience” (Mérej, 1989) and the web of relations weaved by community relationships forms an environment for individuals in which they can discover the knowledge, skill and resources concealed within themselves. Individuals are given the opportunity to test their ideas, their vision and worldview broaden, and their personal effectiveness – as a result of the inspiring, encouraging effect of the community – grows.

On the basis of the above, it is my belief that in the future the role of communities will increase, because it is only a strengthened civil society that is able, by means of creating a public, to assist the growth of social control and reinforce the solidarity between social groups. There is no democratic society without civil society, there is no civil society without civilized values (trust, solidarity, communal action), and civilized values cannot be formed without communities. In the processes that strengthen civil society there is a great need for community work to turn into a profession, for there to be professionals capable of treating social problems at the community level and helping address certain social problems by finding community answers.

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2.6 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

By Ilona Vercseg, Hungary¹⁷

A desirable development project: services helping community enterprises

Community development in Hungary puts the emphasis on the abilities of local communities to organise themselves and co-operate in a democratic way. Our main goal is to help create self-managing local communities which are able to identify their needs, recognise their common interests and which, in addition to representing these interests, are also able to actively reinforce them.

Accordingly, community development is essentially both a social reform scheme and a new helping profession which assists people in their active social participation in all areas of life. From the point of view of the present issue we could say that community development has the potential to be one of the spiritual infrastructures of creating local jobs in Hungary and in the Central-Eastern European region.

1. The concept of community-based economic development

It means to us that we should look around in our own local communities in order to perceive local knowledge and experience, and to create local employment opportunities on their basis. To us, this concept also means that the new jobs should reduce the number of unemployed people while restoring their self-confidence and belief in that their work and knowledge are worth something, since they can be marketed and may be useful for the community too. Another sense this concept makes to us is that it is desirable to have local answers to the question of reducing local needs. In other words: the members of the community who have created new jobs should serve not only their own interests, but those of the community too. Last but not least, to us, community development workers, community based economic development means that, everywhere where this is possible, local people should put the emphasis on finding community, and not individual, solutions to improve their situation. These considerations have led us to having **community enterprises** playing a central role in our way of thinking in the area of economic development.

The people who need community enterprises most are those who lack ready and immediate answers to new challenges as well as the experiences of self-organisation and asserting themselves. Community enterprising may be a solution for those who are unwilling to accept their being unemployed and are willing to work, but who do not know what would be worth doing. These people are still not familiar with their new opportunities, and they do not know how to start their orientation. This is very group of people who, nine years after the change of regime, are still expecting community development workers, local authorities, or indeed anyone, to create jobs and opportunities while they would contribute their labour force only. As we know, today this does not really work. In spite of all difficulties, we have to make an effort to enable them to help themselves. Hence, community development primarily helps those make a living who are at a disadvantage and are unable to overcome it without help. Disadvantages may be of various types, and (unfortunately quite often) they come together. However, the mainly experimental projects we have organised so far in the area of local economic development justify that it is possible to produce results on these levels too. This does not mean that the first thing we think of is enterprising - it is incredible to see how small steps lead to undertaking a greater task in the future.

In case disadvantaged people are to carry out their ideas, they need co-ordinated assistance. Community development is an important element of this assistance, because it provides help in the following areas: establishing contacts between local people and their institutions, making communication regular, revealing local resources, and identifying needs. It also builds

¹⁷ September 1998, Budapest Ilona Vercseg dr. General Secretary Hungarian Association for Community Development.

confidence, encourages independent action, and it helps local communities provide for their needs in the areas of information, training, and contacts. Nevertheless, this process may continue successfully only if the legal and financial support systems of a given enterprise are organised as well as professional help and continuous supervision. Naturally, all of these must be accessible locally.

2. The shaping of the relation between community development and local economic development. The profit-oriented and non-profit forms of community enterprises

Our association recognised the necessity of supporting community based economic development around the year of 1992, soon after the change of regime took place in Hungary. Not being economists, businessmen, or professional entrepreneurs, we were not too happy about this recognition. Yet, we took it as a challenge which we ought to solve somehow. This happened so because community development always sets out from solving problems which local people recognise and formulate as being a problem. Since unemployment appeared officially in 1990, the members of each local community we initiated discussions with have considered it as being the most important circle of problems to solve: there are no job opportunities, people are not willing to enterprise, and even if they would be, they would not know how to start; there is no expertise, and nor is there capital - in other words nearly everything needed for a restart is missing.

It is therefore natural for us to have begun to orient ourselves and get to know our chances. Although we can only proceed slowly, we feel that time is on our side, and that the conditions of establishing community enterprises are being called into existence continuously, even though this process is not as quick as we would like it to be.

We are aware that locally based economic development concerns all the three major sectors of society, yet during our orientation we defined our own competence as being the assistance of establishing community enterprises in both the non-profit and profit-oriented areas.

The **non-profit** area of community enterprises consists of the enterprising and employment activities of **associations** and **foundations**. The activities of non-governmental organisations are self-directed, are organised in order to reduce local needs, and are capable of integrating intellectual and financial support which the actors of the profit-oriented sector may not receive because they work for profit

As a result, it can be said that non-profit organisations are capable of serving the interests of both their neighbourhoods and their members. Non-profit community enterprises come into existence usually when:

- ✚ An association is willing to expand its financial basis used for carrying out its objectives, or when
- ✚ An association intends to provide job opportunities for the unemployed people living in its environment, or when
- ✚ The members of an association decide to start enterprising, thus creating their own jobs. At the same time they agree that the profits of the enterprise are to be used for carrying out the objectives of the association.

The **profit-oriented** area of community enterprises comprises **co-operatives**. In this form of enterprising individual expertise may be improved, the significance of the lack of individual capital and the pressure of risk effected on the individual decrease; credibility, on the other hand, increases, while responsibility is shared. However, it is necessary for people to be able to use the advantages of co-operatives. What this depends on is the extent to which the members of an economic community are capable of co-operating with each other. The crisis of confidence, which is so characteristic of all the countries of the Central-Eastern European region, has a negative effect on co-operatives, and even on co-operation itself. The development of co-operatives almost never therefore starts with organising the enterprise itself, but it commences with a community development process which makes the people sensitive and open towards solving their own problems. The process also provides them with the opportunity to obtain the skills and mutual confidence needed for meeting success. Self-organising grassroots co-operatives may only be established by people who want to change their situation, have goals, and are willing to invest and take the risk either spiritually or financially. For those lacking in these the solution is founding a social co-operative. However, the legal conditions of establishing social co-operatives have not been created in Hungary yet.

On the basis of matters discussed above it can be said that community enterprises and the co-operative form are alternative solutions for:

1. People excluded from the primary job market, the potential unemployed (for example those on maternity benefit), people with disabilities, and young people starting their career. (and also for)
2. Associations and foundations having problems with their operation so that they may strengthen their organisation and, through their activities, may promote their embeddings into their environment.

We have already mentioned that neither community development, nor local self-organising action is enough for successful local economic development. In order to achieve it a community needs to possess the co-ordinated support of the public, regional, local, governmental, and private sectors while the legal, financial (credit and funding), professional, and training needs of enterprises are all provided for. The accessibility of professional services helping enterprises is very important today in Central-Eastern Europe where masses of people who used to be employees without property are now becoming entrepreneurs.

I do not consider the introduction and criticism of existing support systems as being my task. My task here is to introduce and describe the funding that really appears on the local levels. Later on I will also introduce a development opportunity which community development considers in the area of local economic development.

3. Existing funding systems supporting local economic development

a. The following organisations provide support for citizens on the **local level** in Hungary:

✚ job centres

The duty of the Nation-wide Network of Job Centres is to

- ✚ register and support the unemployed,
- ✚ improve their chances of finding new employment through organising vocational training courses,
- ✚ exchange labour and provide employers with advantages in order to create new jobs and employ as many people as possible.

However, the largest nation-wide Network established for handling unemployment is facing serious difficulties just as similar networks in Europe are. The gravest two of these problems are as follows: the network does not seem to be able to do anything for those who have not worked for a long time and are in a marginalised situation, and it cannot increase the number of employed people effectively enough either. From the point of view of community development this system is unable to improve the situation of those having limited opportunities because its services are not tailed for individuals, are not based on communities,

are short-term, do not deal with professional supervision (as for example the Incubator House does), and do not concern unregistered and long-term unemployed people who are excluded from all benefits and are in a marginalised situation. There are people who decide to break the contact with the centre as they feel that it cannot help them. By today it has become clear that one cannot expect much from benefits and the support of employers. It is a necessary to revive the economy, encourage enterprises, develop the mental and physical infrastructures of individual and community enterprises, and support the non-profit sphere, because these all create new jobs.

Foundation for Developing Enterprises

The offices for developing enterprises were established in 1993 and received funding from PHARE. Their task is to help small and medium enterprises with advice, training, and beginners' loans ('Micro', 'Start' loans, etc.). A nation-wide network of offices has been established which provides services of high quality. From the point of view of community development the problem with the operation of these offices is that they do not really have time enough to deal with the people, and they cannot help them make it to the market either. While community workers reach people at their homes, these offices expect interested people to come to them. This is because they intend their services for those who are committed to start an enterprise, and it is not their duty to manage potential entrepreneurs. Another problem is that after, for example, a training course helping people to enterprise they leave the participants alone, even though helping them further would be very important in this region where the culture of enterprising is just about to take shape. In spite of our critical observations, naturally we do not say that we should expect the Foundation for Developing Enterprises to perform this work. We only wanted to note that the services helping new enterprises have shortcomings and need further development.

Local authorities

Our experiences have justified that although local authorities consider the development of local economy as one of their priorities; their activities in this area are mostly confined to obtaining exterior development opportunities (e.g. attracting investment) instead of making use of local resources. It will take much encouragement, information, training, and local partnership-building before the actors of the local level will jointly establish valid local economic policies to which local authorities could greatly contribute through offering, for example, local tax allowances, new services, and co-operation with the non-profit sphere. At the same time, in the background of several non-profit labour arrangements one can find local governments already, so it can be said that co-operation with non-profit organisations is now commencing in an increasing number of communities.

Savings-banks

Local savings-banks constitute a part of country banks. Their practice of operation, however, does not promote the development of local economy to a sufficient extent. The most important problem with their operation is that although they work in the co-operative form, these co-operatives are owned by their management, and not by their members. This means that savings-banks provide their members with loans under the same terms they do with outsiders. Furthermore, they offer loans under the same terms commercial banks do. It is also to be noted that getting loans is very difficult, because banks want to reduce the risk they take to a minimum, which means too great risks for those who lack opportunities to launch their enterprise other than raising a loan. Nearly all the conditions of establishing self-organising credit unions are still missing: there are not enough property owners with a superfluity of capital, and, according to the laws presently in use, the minimum capital for founding credit unions is 50 million Forints, which counts as an extraordinarily large sum under the present circumstances in Hungary.

To conclude, these are the major forms of support which appear on the local level, and which are locally available for people who are willing to improve their situation. There is one circle of potential supporters we have not treated yet, namely the existing system of training organisations which still does not mediate the up-to-date knowledge needed for reviving economy in disadvantaged areas. Naturally, there are up-to-date opportunities to study, but poor people are unable to pay for them.

b. Nation-wide grant programmes

At this point I would start dealing with the work of foundations promoting employment which constitute a part of **nation-wide grant programmes**. I will describe the work of *the National Employment Fund* in details. There are other national foundations which deal with creating jobs. Among these there are two foundations which bear special importance: namely, the *Welfare Service Foundation*, which is active in the sphere of social welfare, and the *Foundation for Non-profit Enterprises in the Welfare Sphere*. The *Soros Foundation*, *Autonomy Foundation* also supports local non-profit employment projects regularly.

The greatest dilemma in supporting the employment of those without a job is who to support? If the employers are supported, then the interests of gaining profit are served. Civil organisations are unique in that they are not profit-oriented, because they perform activities of public utility. The National Employment Fund, which was founded in 1992, has therefore supported the job creating programmes of non-profit organisations besides supporting the employment of unemployed people. The supporting of non-profit organisations forms only one fifth of the activities of the National Employment Fund. The rest concerns economic organisations and local governments.

According to the data provided by Mária Frey, by the end of 1995 the National Employment Fund had granted financial support to the projects of 172 non-profit organisations, most of which were foundations. The total amount of founding equalled 700 million Hungarian Forints. Although the National Employment Fund had expected the applicants to employ people without a job, 62 per cent of winning projects offered services needed on the job market, that is, training, mediation, and advising. This also points to the shortage of effective services, and their need for development.

Naturally, we could spend much time analysing the extent to which these programs are effective in creating new jobs, and in overcoming regional differences, or in other words: in eliminating disadvantage. What we consider to be worth emphasising at this point is the pleasing fact that the ability of non-profit organisations to create jobs has now been recognised by Hungarian funding organs. Also, we are confident that these types of support will develop further, especially with the birth of the new Public Utility Act of 1997 which provides civil organisations working for a broader community with new licenses and advantages.

To us, community development workers, the funding given to non-profit economic development projects is valuable also in the sense that nearly all sponsors integrate services in their grants which serve the successful realisation of projects: that is, they provide training for those carrying out the projects, they give advice and monitor, they organise forums for people so that they can swap experiences, etc.

As a result, it can be said that the supporting of non-profit organisations promoting local employment has started almost parallel to the development the non-profit sphere. We consider this fact as a result, even though we are aware that these initiatives are still partial, and that their strength is to be found in their value as examples, and not in their being used by masses of people. In fact, it will take a number of help programmes before they will be applied in large numbers.

Funding by foreign organisations

The significance of foreign donors and grant programmes lies in the fact that they have resulted in a breakthrough of new attitude. The criteria-systems of grant programmes, and the grants themselves have continuously urged our society to re-organise itself according to a new logic. This reorganisation now seems to have been started to be realised during a difficult learning process. The philosophy and responsibility of foreign funding organs are gradually being taken over by the Hungarian ones, and their role, therefore, continues to bear significance. A proverb says that 'No one is a prophet in their own country', and many of us feels that we have been there: we often cannot arrange desirable development projects with our decision-makers which foreign grant programmes can provide funding for in a period of time which seems to be incredibly short to us. The cause of community development, for instance, has been matured for two decades in Hungary. Its civil organisations have produced significant results independently, using the opportunities provided by the new age. Still, it has not become a profession which is adapted widely, and which has paid employees. We suspect that it will be the European integration and the funding-system of EU projects that will eventually effect this change.

Similarly important would be the introduction of a new form of funding in the area of assisting the establishment of community enterprises.

A desirable development project: services helping community enterprises

We have said that in order to establish community enterprises people primarily need clear-sightedness, courage, self-confidence, and confidence towards each other, because in case these are together the rest can be obtained through training, building partnerships, and information. Since these are the things people lack most, we would consider the establishment of both a nation-wide network of community workers and another nation-wide network helping community enterprises a significant move.

The **Service Assisting Community Enterprises** would consist of professionals who possess all the important pieces of knowledge needed for community enterprises. They are familiar with legal possibilities and regulations, the sources of available funding, and they know how to prepare business plans or how to found and manage associations, foundations, and co-operatives. They are also familiar with the good examples and initiatives which can serve as models both from the Hungarian and the foreign practices, and they know the methods of developing community enterprises as well.

The main points of the operation of this team are as follows:

- ✚ They provide communities with their expertise for almost free, and even the maximum they receive is symbolic. They cover their working costs from different sources themselves, and they do not ask the members of the co-operatives to develop for financial contribution to their work during a period of 5 years;
- ✚ The economic, financial, legal, agrarian, etc., professionals are people with a view of communality who study the main methods of community development themselves, and who offer their services not as a replacement for the potential entrepreneurs, but instead they teach them how to perform them. In the same way community development workers also learn the most important pieces of knowledge around enterprises, finances, etc., so that they may become capable of leading the process well and of asking the help of professionals when time has come for it indeed.
- ✚ The organisation would operate as a community enterprise itself, and so its members would have a chance to experience the difficulties of founding and developing an organisation;
- ✚ This organisation would also function as an information centre and meeting place which is accessible by those linked to it at all times;
- ✚ It would organise contacts with, for example, foundations, financial institutions, etc., and it would possess a financial basis itself which could be put at the disposal of those launching community development projects under the necessary terms.

The community workers of a given region would closely co-operate with its service assisting community enterprises, and they could even constitute one organisational unit.

The elaboration of the *network of community workers* is important because they are the people in the front line who go to the homes of local people, recognise local needs, and launch community development processes.

An example

The first Hungarian Service Assisting Community Enterprises started its operation in the Felső-Kiskunság region (which is situated 70 kms from Budapest to the South) in 1998 under the leadership of Zsuzsa Mészáros. The project enjoys joint funding from the HACD, the local job centre, the British Embassy, and mainly from the National Employment Fund. With the launching of the service the recruitment of local community workers was started in the circle of the unemployed. Potential community workers have been trained in the Civil College, the training centre of the HACD, which is situated in one of the region's group of farm-steads. The first period of training has been finished already, while the second one will begin this month. After training the most suitable people will be contracted by the HACD for a period of one year. The objective of this is to achieve that people start their own community enterprise through which they will become capable of providing for their own jobs.

The Service Assisting Community Enterprises has been launched by our association through organising a community development process which has been going on for one and a half years. The process has concerned those living in the vicinity of the College most, but it has influenced other villages in the small-region too. During the process local needs and the need for training have been formulated. After this 16 unemployed people took part in a training course of 2x5 days which targeted the development of community enterprises. The course was sponsored by the local job centre and the PHARE programme. Although the training did not end with the establishment of a co-operative, confidence was built among the 16 participants who also recognised the necessity of helping each other. These people decided to help each other through working together, lending things to each other, and giving land to their fellows for free cultivation. For the time being, they decided to operate in the framework of a local association.

Each participant of the training course has taken a step forward: one of them has renovated his farm in order to prepare for tourism; another has lent his male rabbit to a third person who had a female one, and who could thus start breeding rabbits; while a fourth person has started growing tobacco with the help of a fifth one, and he made it to the market. The association has taken part in the small-garden programme of the Autonomy Foundation, and thus 30 families have received good-quality seeds. Also, the only agricultural expert of the neighbourhood has attended the course himself, and he has been consciously working as a community worker since, providing families with advice on a voluntary basis. The participants have met in the Civil College every month since the end of the course, and they have discussed their current problems.

Although the example is pleasing, it is quite fragile at the same time. The Service is performed by only one community worker, and it does not have the chance to operate in the way defined above, because it is unable to pay for professionals and provide potential entrepreneurs with a sum to start with. The finding of local community workers in a region facing many disadvantages is not an easy task either. Although the results achieved so far are partial, they still show that progress can be made even on this extremely difficult terrain. However, co-ordinated, regular, and long-term assistance is still missing.



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2.7 Building Civil Society through Community Development

By Ilona Vercseg, Hungary¹⁸

International Conference, Budapest, 25-28 March 2004 Central and Eastern Europe in the Limelight

Dear conference participants, dear colleagues,

It is a great honour and responsibility for me to have the opportunity to share my thoughts and experience with you at this significant conference. I have been involved in community development since 1980 and during this period international work has always played a significant role in my activity. Though I have probably been chosen to speak here about our common Central and Eastern European experience it is in fact this area where I have the most modest experience, as we started to reorganise our contacts in the region only four years ago. In my paper I will try to avoid generalities, and instead will focus on a small portion of our joint work in the region and describe the experience we gained through carrying out our comparative research.

My presentation will consist of 4 parts.

The first part will focus on the conceptual level. It will describe civil society as the ideal and goal of community development, highlighting two important aspects of our approach.

The second part is an introduction to the situation in Hungary and to a certain extent, the Central and Eastern European region. It outlines some of the findings we had so far in measuring social capital. Where do we stand in terms of trust, co-operation and participation in our countries? We have taken the liberty of comparing our random local research with the data of the British nationwide representative survey. The findings highlight the tasks ahead, which takes me on to the third part of my paper.

This **third part** raises some of the issues in terms of the main tasks of community development in the Central and Eastern European region, and will raise questions for civil society, community development as a profession, as well as for decision-makers and sponsors, questions such as: following the practice of the previous political system that consumed social capital is there any new accumulation going on? What tasks do professionals and society have in this area?

The **fourth part** is about community development workers: are they philanthropic intellectuals who have a „sense of mission“ and want to „raise up their people“? This role has well known traditions in Central and Eastern Europe. Or are they specialised professionals for whom the emotional attachment to community has a less decisive role and they apply a „rationalised“ approach when they „animate“, „facilitate“ the local communities or target groups through „technical assistance“ towards the achievement of their targets?

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1. Civil society as the ideal and goal of community development

In the centre of civil society there is the citizen. The citizen, according to Dahrendorf, "needs both attachment and possibility of choice to fully achieve his life possibilities" (1997). This approach is close to us because it incorporates the importance of security provided by the community and also the individual's freedom, that is, the unity of community and civil society. If either is missing, that provides the grounds for the legitimisation of community development. At the centre of another approach, we find, instead of the individual, civil society itself as a community result. Miszlivetz said in 1999: "Civil society is ... a public zone, a sphere of solidarity, where various interests are articulated and confront each other, where conflicts take place between individuals, groups and organisations ... Civil society is a relation of all these, a kind of reflexivity, not a collection of organisations. It is the mutual interaction that is important, that is what generates a force field in which... civil society comes to being." Citizens take part in managing their lives while participating in society's interactions and institutional processes. As members of their community, they have a role in developing the social rules of their immediate surroundings. They are also willing to subordinate themselves to these community rules and possess the skills and knowledge required to carry through their intentions. A citizen "makes democracy". According to Aristotle, democracy, first of all, needs free people.

Civil society and the citizen is the ideal for those seeking a better society, „a moral goal the achievement of which we need to struggle for" - says Miszlivetz. This struggle, however, is not justified only at historical turning points, such as the transformation in Central and Eastern Europe to the free, democratic, open society. For a variety of reasons, both the old and new democracies need to continuously fight for a strong civil society, whether the task is the establishment of democratic institutions or the handling of the crisis symptoms of the welfare state.

2. The strength of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe. Comparative research into the social capital of the region

In an attempt to measure certain characteristics of civil society, the Hungarian Association for Community Development and its Central and Eastern European partner organisations found a suitable framework in the research focusing on measuring social capital. As a basis for comparison, we chose the findings of the 2001 British "Citizenship Survey". We have extended our survey to 1300 citizens altogether, involving 7 countries and 11 local communities: three Bulgarian, three Ukrainian, two Hungarian, one Romanian, one Russian and one Slovak, and we compared the results with the data of the British representative sample. Our findings so far are as follows:

In terms of **trust** it appears to us that our region is undergoing a crisis of trust. Though trust between people and their neighbours is similarly high everywhere – despite big differences from country to country –, trust between citizens and their institutions is significantly smaller in the communities we surveyed than in the British national sample.

- ✚ 40 % of those surveyed in the British sample believed that most people can be trusted in their neighbourhood, but this figure was 8-52 % in the surveyed local samples.
- ✚ 80 % in the British sample trust the police, in our region only 17-49 % do
- ✚ 72 % trust the courts, in our region only 16-36 % do
- ✚ 22 % of the British sample trust politicians, in our region only 0-14 % do
- ✚ 36 % of the British sample trust Parliament compared to 4-29 % in our region.
- ✚ The picture is more encouraging in the case of local council, where our data were around 23-54 %, compared to 50 % in the British survey.

The situation is far better in the field of **co-operation** and caring between neighbours. Compared to the British 83 % - in the same surveyed sample - 51-79 % of people in the region take good care or some sort of care of one another.

From the point of view of community development, however, we found particularly valuable the answers given to the questions on the conditions of voluntary activities. These clearly highlight the need people would have for professionals who would take initiatives, mediate and provide support, who would help people with their communication with each other and with their institutions, provide information, help to find those who are in need of support, and would provide professional information for those who are willing to give voluntary help.

In the field of **social participation** the differences show more variety. In the activity of *groups, clubs and organisations* the last 12 months have seen similar or even higher statistics compared to the British survey in religious and church activities, child and youth programmes, but in the field of sports, health and social groups, the elderly, environmental, human rights, hobby and amateur groups and participation in local community or neighbourhood groups and citizen's groups the difference is 4-15 %.

When we examine the Central and Eastern European regional data on their own, the highest level of activity can be found in groups, clubs and organisations.

The situation, however, is different when it comes to the **participation in civic affairs**, an area of special importance to community development. People surveyed in our random research generally seem more passive in this field than the Brits – with the only exception being participation in public meetings or rallies, which is 19-29 % in our region, while only 18 % in the British survey. These positive data can probably be attributed to the community development processes carried out in our surveyed locations. And here are some other aspects of the survey: during the last 12 months the number of those citizens in the region who turned to local and parliamentary representatives or officials was roughly half of the number in Britain - 26-57 % as against 82 %, far fewer people submitted petitions (0-8 % as against 58%). In our region 20-49 % of the people surveyed felt that they can have some influence over decisions related to their residential area, as against 43 % in the British survey.

Though the surveyed communities show a significant level of activity, it can be concluded that these are mainly religious, leisure, sports, cultural and social activities, and far less directed at the **common good** (though social participation can certainly have – and often does have - public implications). In some ways there is nothing peculiar about this, as during „socialism“ it was exactly the public activity that was severely restricted, while the cultural and leisure type of activities were supported by the state through an institutionalised network of adult education professionals and cultural houses in each town and village. We could go into lengthy descriptions of our dissatisfaction, criticism, and reform attempts during those times, but the fact remains that this kind of activity became, to some degree, part of our culture. Public activity, however, did not, and the increasingly severe effects of this are experienced daily by the community development workers in Hungary. Frequently there is a gap between the sense of citizenship of the community development workers, their democratic initiative to encourage civil participation and between the reception ability of society that is going through a slow democratisation process, and this gap, in some aspects is widening even further. Democratic initiatives put in the limelight, almost demonstrate, the various risk factors of community action for the cautious, financially unstable, distrustful citizen, which can sometimes generate fear and even a kind of passive resistance. We feel that even now there is only a rather limited reception for democratic initiatives. The reasons for this are complex, but I would point out that neither the educational system, nor adult education or our daily practice provide adequate preparation and do not enable citizens for democratic participation as required by European standards.

3. Main tasks of community development in the Central and Eastern European region

As I highlighted in the first part of my lecture, in terms of civil society, the primary task of community development is to support people to become free. In terms of social capital, the

task of community development is the conversion of the inherited ways of community life to active citizenship. We strongly believe that this is not just a professional-methodological question, but a more general task in the solution of which community development can play its part. The degree of its involvement, however, is highly dependent on the status of the profession in the individual countries.

One of the questions for the present and the future is to what degree our transforming societies are willing to make sacrifices in order to regenerate the damaged community tissues of society, to develop skills and functions which have not been able to enfold, to strengthen civil participation - or, to put it in a different way, to renew the social capital in the region and secure its extended reproduction in a more up-to-date way.

The answer that can be given to this question also has implications as to how realistic the attempts are to democratise our societies. If there isn't a strong civil society, who will fight for participation in the preparation of decisions, decision-making and the control of the execution of decisions? Who will make democracy a daily practice? How can the conditions of professional support for community development be created? The most important of all these are:

- ✚ an incentive-funding system which is based on local needs, and instead of short-term funding only it also supports development initiatives that can be achieved in the medium or longer term,
- ✚ it is also important to have free adult education, accessible for all,
- ✚ it is also indispensable to train and work with professionals who can provide specialist support with these processes.

We would need a *multitude* of local development initiatives which are worth following— instead of the current 10-20 cases per country per year - and as part of a social learning process we would need professional analysis and assessment of individual solutions, and a search for new areas of professional intervention.

We all know that community development and community work is directed both at adaptation and change. It seems to me now that we have to work harder for change.

4. Community development workers: „philanthropists or specialised professionals“?

As I indicated in my introduction, in the final part of my lecture I am going to talk about community development workers, and here please allow me to focus mainly on the experience I had in our country. As I get older and look back on my own and my colleagues' work in Hungary, I can see that in spite of our aim to become specialised professionals, our activity, to some degree, has always had elements of philanthropy and a movement. The lack – to a greater or lesser degree - of a sense of citizenship, of civil courage and of strong civil society inevitably causes a shift into that direction. At the same time, this is one of the reasons why the impact of community development on social, political, economic decisions has remained limited. Modern, long term solutions that really involve a wide circle of stakeholders have mainly appeared in Hungary as exceptions or experiments, not as a general practice that would be supported by those in positions of power.

Civil awareness, citizenship, professionally supported civil initiatives, movements or organisations have often been able to operate only as a kind of „model experiment“, not as a general practice, therefore, even up till now, have rarely developed into new, professionally matured solutions which then could be rolled out and supported by society's decision-making processes on a more professional and qualitative basis. Our social history has had long periods when we lacked wide scale civil autonomy and grass-roots organisation which, in their focal points, could generate social movements, civil activity and, at the same time, create a professional basis for shaping society. We could also put it in this way: in this aspect the development of the profession in Hungary and in Central and Eastern Europe in general was more the result of the initiatives supported by intellectual reformers than the result of wide scale institutionalisation of society's operational and regulatory actions.

Our young colleagues in some ways are in a different situation now in Hungary and perhaps also in the region. Partly as a result of co-operation with Western partner organisations, they tend to follow the more modern and democratic roles of „technical assistance“. However, I believe that the long term acceptance and integration of this role will not be easy, even with significant external professional help. This is partly caused by the so often mentioned „democratic deficit“ in the region, but also by the fact that this type of helping role has not been embedded in our culture, even if the deficiencies which it addresses are clearly present. A further factor to be considered is that the maintenance of this role, given its nature, depends on funding and resources. The question is often raised whether these are available in the required form and amount in the given countries and periods. We believe that if we want these to be available and if we want to provide momentum for growth with a high social and community content, investments into social capital and community development are indispensable.

2.8 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL RENEWAL IN HUNGARY

Annual Conference and AGM, Federation for Community Development Learning

2 February 2005, The Britannia Adelphi Hotel Liverpool

By Ilona Vercseg, Hungary

Dear conference participants, dear colleagues!

I must admit I undertook an unachievable task when I accepted Janice Marks's invitation to become a presenter at this conference and promised to give a 20-minute presentation on the topic of community development and civil renewal. Due to the short time available, even an adequate outline of this topic seems like a hopeless endeavour and even then I haven't taken into account your likely wish to hear about some additional topics: perhaps more about the Central-European region, perhaps about Hungary and the community development work carried out there!

But let us try the impossible and - in true community development fashion – just do it! I shall talk about our regional activity during the workshop, but I will try to touch upon the other topics to some degree in this presentation.

I shall divide my paper into four parts:

1. Community development: a no-man's-land or an interdisciplinary profession?
2. Community development in Hungary – we are small, but, because of this, relatively free!
3. Why is civil renewal in the focus of community development in Hungary?
4. The importance of empowerment and civic education/training

1. Community development: no-man's-land or an interdisciplinary profession?

Community development in Hungary has developed from a profession the name of which is impossible to translate into English. The closest equivalent would be public education (its progressive trends would be now translated as community education). This profession was meant to take the place of people's own initiatives and was centred round the cultural houses during the decades of the Soviet type of dictatorship, with decreasing political content and ever increasing cultural, leisure, amateur art and adult education content. In other parts of the world, to my knowledge, mainly in England then in America and in several other countries, attempts were started to provide professional support in the settlement houses and the newly built housing estates to ease the effects of modernisation, urbanisation and the problems of slums emerging as a result of these processes.

Later on this new professional field became the tool to ease poverty, and as European societies were becoming more and more multicultural, they also needed increasing amounts of community intervention. Nowadays, social planning, the communication and co-operation between organisations require professional community support, while, at the same time, civil organisations apply more and more community tools to increase their influence in society.

Public education, social work and social policy, socio-cultural animation, regional development and social planning – these are the main specialist areas where community development is required. In our country there have been heated debates: is community development an independent profession and if so, what is its relationship to other professions? There are strong arguments for its independence, but also for its being taken over by or included in other professions. I have seen many examples of how, within the framework of social work, even community development and community work can be narrowed down to a service providing activity instead of resulting in endogenous development and changes. Similarly, we can see how it is evolving to become a tool in the regional development profession. The ruling trend in development focuses on infrastructural development and not social development, and the principle of involving stakeholders is only a formality. The other day a colleague burst out:

“Does regional development need the local people at all?” If community development becomes subordinate to any other profession there is a risk that it might lose its interdisciplinary character and independence, and those in power will use it as the means to achieve their own goals.

One of the things I learnt from Paul Henderson is that community development is a contributory type of profession: on its own it is incapable of solving social problems. However, through its specific tools and by complementing the tools of other professions, it can contribute to solving problems.

The general view is that professions with a low social prestige – and as far as I know community development everywhere is one of these – tend to struggle for their legitimisation, and for recognition as an independent discipline as well as an important and supported profession. But if the essence of community development is precisely in its interdisciplinary and contributory nature, we arrive at the two main reasons why, in my view, gaining legitimisation is particularly difficult in a world of increasing specialisation. But it is precisely this aspect of community development that provides the freedom that makes this profession particularly attractive to us all and this is why, in spite of all difficulties, we persevere with it.

2. Community Development in Hungary – we are small, but – because of this – relatively free!

In Hungary only very few professionals make a living from community development. In their case we cannot talk about a professional group, but, rather, about specialists who belong to different professions. For them community, civil society, participation and democracy are very important, and in shaping the role of their professions they seek community based solutions – in culture houses, youth centres, leisure and community centres, information centres, schools, family support centres and also in civil organisations involved in legal and interest representation, nature and environment protection and recently in development projects.

We have strived for a long time to create a strong professional group in our country, too. It is only the last few years when we started to believe that it might not be a bad thing if this could not be created. As we found out more about community development organisations our experience has shown that, if we want to simplify the picture, they have three ways of securing their survival:

- ✚ The „*lobbyists*” aim to become well known and to receive more and more state support and bigger orders. Their aim is to be known, liked and used by the politicians. They receive their orders mainly from the national and local government bodies, and they are highly dependent on these sources. These organisations, we believe, show a steady performance and carry out their development activity to high professional standards, but it seems to us that that in their case loyalty towards those who provide the orders is essentially stronger than loyalty towards the members of the community.
- ✚ *Project-oriented organisations*. The huge collection of organisations not receiving regular state support has both non-profit and for-profit organisations. Their aim is to design, compete for and manage huge projects, thus ensuring the continuous operation and maintaining the growth of their organisations. The compulsory loyalty towards those who place the orders is not as rough or direct as in the case of the „*lobbyists*”, but they face another great danger: they have to subordinate their goals to the priorities of the organisations which fund the projects. To put it simply, they „sell themselves”.
- ✚ The third group is the “*manoeuvres*”, and this is where we think we belong. In our view, this group is characterised by flexible organisations with a small number of employees, who are not able or willing to become big and influential organisations, but painstakingly focus on maintaining high professional standards. They make their choice

as to whose funding they take and their main value of survival is independence and their loyalty towards the members of the community. (These organisations don't have an easy life: last year, for example, we were insolvent for three months).

- ✚ We believe we have a double task. On the one hand, we need to develop the theoretical framework and the practical tools of the profession. On the other hand we need to spread these as widely as possible in the country to help community work grow into community movement. We try to ensure that civil organisations and the members of local community groups are provided with basic training, and professionals receive professional education and further training where both groups have access to methods that help their work and, more importantly, to the community development approach that we call social reform concept.

3. Why is Civil Renewal in the focus of community development in Hungary?

In Hungary the focus of community development is on the development of civil society, for a variety of reasons:

- ✚ According to our sociologist member, Attila Gergely, the change of the political system also means a change of cultures. The transition from one type of culture to another has meant for us the building of participative democracy – as opposed to the former culture based on autocratic traditions.
- ✚ Civil society for us is an embodiment of the modern sense of community. In the centre of civil society there is the citizen. The citizen, according to Dahrendorf, “needs both attachment and possibility of choice to fully achieve his life possibilities” (1997). This approach is close to us because it incorporates the importance of security provided by the community and also the individual's freedom, that is, the unity of community and civil society. If either is missing, that provides the grounds for the legitimisation of community development.
- ✚ The citizens' activity can extend to all areas of life. Citizens do not think in terms of professions or in terms of pursuing their own individual professional interests. Rather, they take local problems as a starting point and look for community based solutions, incorporating in these processes knowledge from various professions. The main point is to give free rein to critical thinking, community initiatives, showing alternatives and co-operation based problem solution.
- ✚ Community work is not a process exclusively generated by professionals. The self-help at micro-, mid and macro levels and the struggle for social progress over the centuries can rightly be regarded as community work – as I learnt from your colleagues, Alison Gilchrist and John Grayson. Therefore we believe that community work can be both a movement-based and professional activity, but in a viable society it is obvious that the movement type of activity should become the more dominant one.
- ✚ Community development to us means development led by the community, where the key role is played by the citizens, and not by the professionals. We are not afraid of finding ourselves swept into a marginal position as a result of this view. Our experience shows that there are new needs generated for community development support all the time and this is what makes the profession varied and exciting. In order to become a key factor in the community development processes, however, citizens also need to become able to manage the process and this is where community development professionals have a key role to play.

4. The importance of empowerment and civic education/training

In order to ensure the key role of the citizen in the process of development through the community we need to be very serious about empowerment and training – a fact I probably do not need to emphasise to you and the Federation for Community Development Learning, the organiser of this conference.

We all know that *participation in the actual process of community development also means going through a learning process* where needs and skills manifest themselves. The new experience gained through community action leads to the creation of new skills and all of these result in the generation of new needs: the process permanently continues to generate itself.

It is, however, necessary to stop occasionally during this process and focus more on certain issues, in other words, to introduce organised training programmes. This is the type of activity that is carried out by the Civil College Foundation founded by our association. Its residential training centre has three functions, those of:

- ✚ Local folk high school
- ✚ National civil training centre
- ✚ Practice field for professional community development training

The first two functions refer to the training of local people active in community development processes, whether they live around the college or somewhere else in the country. In most cases, we organise 24-hour, one weekend residential training courses for them where they share and work on their experiences through various methods of participation while becoming aware of the "whys", community objectives and acquiring the techniques of civil action.

The third function of the training centre is to provide a practice field for students who study community development in one of the 30 institutions of higher education nationwide.

The highest level of training that I personally know of is the *national education system* used in the Scandinavian countries where members of organised movements and organisations can brush up or extend their knowledge in anything from a self-organised study circles to 6-week or longer residential, yearly repeated folk high school training courses.

These are attractive examples, but, apart from the Scandinavian one, they are only a drop in the ocean. In my view, our countries are still a long way away from doing enough to make the culture of democracy a widespread practice and to encourage civil awareness as well as professionally informed civil participation. That is why I consider conferences important where participants issue a joint declaration to promote a more widespread acceptance of these values. The community development conference held in Budapest in 2004 was one of these conferences and I would like to call your attention to its closing declaration, the Budapest Declaration, and share with you my own experience, namely, that this declaration is suitable for raising wide scale social interest in community development.

2.9 RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

By Kaimo bendruomenių plėtra. Ats. red. Atkočiūnienė V. Kolektyvinė monografija. 2004, Lithuania

Understanding rural community

According to Prof. Romualdas Grigas, promotion of the communal character of a village is an urgent task securing: firstly, the provision of mutual help for the solution of individual and common problems; secondly, the continuity of culture because it is only the interaction-embedded people who are inclined to “consume” the norms of cultural behaviour or even their historical heritage; thirdly, the support of social order and the resistance to negative phenomena; and fourthly, the innate human interaction accountable for the acquisition of experience and culture.

Community means:

- ✚ Form of human collective interaction (Lietuviškoji tarybinė enciklopedija, “Mokslas”, 1977);
- ✚ Way of living or collective body resting on production or other relations (Dabartinės lietuvių kalbos žodynas, „Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla”, 1993);
- ✚ Interaction, or complex multiple human contacts determined by the common operation needs. They cover the sharing of information, the working out of a common interactive strategy, and the awareness and understanding of another human being (Psichologijos žodynas, “Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidykla”, 1993);
- ✚ Group of people brought together on the basis of domicile or common interests;
- ✚ People brought together on a territorial basis by common public needs and interests (LR Law on Local Self-government, 2001);
- ✚ Group of rural residents following common economic, social and humanitarian goals, and seeking to implement them by co-ordinated self-governed means, and relying – in some cases – on co-operated resources.

From the point of view of public law, rural community means a self-governed entity formed for the purpose of managing local issues. Community has enjoyed the status of a legal entity since the days of the Roman law.

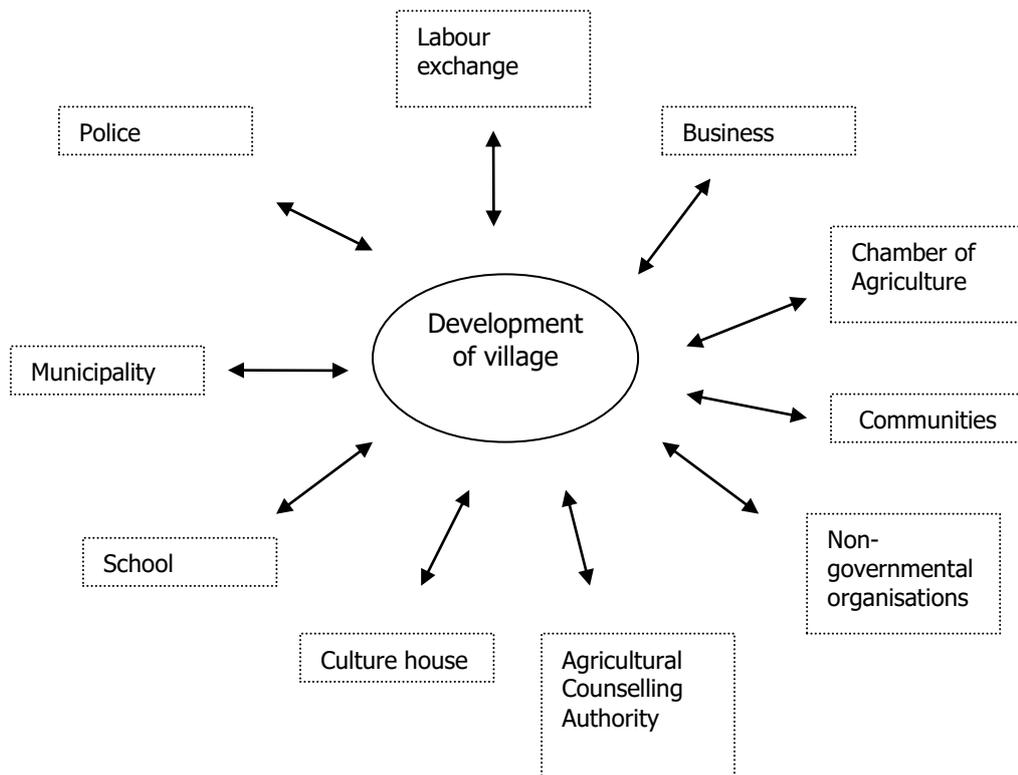
In sociology, rural community is regarded as a group of people inhabiting a definite locality, and having definite common institutions (school, church, etc.). Rural community is tied together by common experience of its members and their interdependence. To a degree, rural community enjoys formal self-government; however it belongs to a wider social formation (nation, county, and state). Rural community represents a structure securing non-compulsory getting together of village people or utilisation of their organised power (and civic maturity) for the solution of individual and common interests. As such, rural community indicates the degree of civic society’s maturity.

From the functional point of view, rural community means a definite process of social interaction able to widen and deepen the interdependence of community members.

The role of rural community centre may be played by:

- ✚ A public organisation. People inhabiting the particular rural locality (a rural district administration area or one of its parts, a settlement or several villages) and also local owners or holders of forest areas who do not actually live there, including their family members – provided they are united by common public needs or interests – all these people may take part in the activities promoted by the above-named public organisation;
- ✚ An independent non-governmental village self-governed institution pursuing its activities in conformity with the prescriptions of RL law and relevant statutes.

Rural community is a major village developing agent (see fig. 1)
1 fig. Village developing agents



Rural development ought to be based on the active and participant character of a local community. Sometimes people discuss whether it is necessary or not to create a community. However a closer look at the problem suggests the following: one need not bother about creating or not creating a community because community exists all by itself. Community means people inhabiting a definite territory. Rural community needs to create only its representation institution. There are several ways of creating a village community:

- + "Downward" initiative.
- + "Upward" initiative.
- + Merger of the "downward" and "upward" initiatives.
- + Community involves all people inhabiting the relevant region. These inhabitants form the basis for the maintenance of steady village development because:
 - + they know villagers' needs and problems faced by local people best of all;
 - + they handle the greater part of resources, such as land, buildings, and local products on which the development depends;
 - + they handle the chief sources of development, such as local knowledge, skills, traditions, and energy;
 - + their representation is a vital issue (if they do not back the initiative it surely fails).

Moreover, the more vigorous and active the community, the more able is it to attract people to settle in the particular district and keep the actual residents from leaving it. Creation and development of communities is a novel phenomenon in Middle and East Europe. A new community as an organisation is formed gradually. The formation entails utilisation of substantial human resources: it is necessary to form the goals and tasks of the future organisation, to define the principles and model of future operation, to attract people, to remove the emerging obstacles, and to sacrifice one's leisure time, etc. Indeed, the emerging community is a public property. It is to be fostered if one expects it to become a modern community. Here are the premises for the self-creation of modern communities (Poviliūnas, 2003):

1. People's or groups' attitude towards community entailing the following elements of preliminary moral understanding:
 -  moral assessment;
 -  conscience;
 -  voluntary participation;
 -  responsibility;
 -  social relation;
 -  self-esteem.
2. Actual state of social community.
3. Communication condition (direct, indirect) and its volume determined by:
 -  communication chances;
 -  opportunities for interaction (e.g. co-operation and communication);
 -  chances of understanding.
4. Special properties of moral unity demonstrated by social groups.
5. Special properties of social activity demonstrated by social groups:
 -  orientation;
 -  publicity;
 -  community;
 -  positive attitude;
 -  openness.

Only a part of village communities may or will ever experience their becoming a modern community. However, there is no need to worry: for most communities the on-going process of self-creation may be an important ideal of their existence.

Development of rural communities

Especially characteristic of the agrarian epoch, rural community was composed of independent farms that had retained only some functions of collective production, namely:

1. cultivation of virgin land;
2. irrigation;
3. mutual aid;
4. solidarity in the relations with another community or authorities.

The understanding of rural community and of its role differed from stage to stage in the development of civilisation, and from nation to nation.

In Ancient East, Greece, and Roman Empire, village community helped to form the caste-based or ancient (*polis*-based) community. In the Middle Ages, village community facilitated the formation of class-based society in Europe. In Early Middle Ages, village communities were large-sized. Their collective property covered long-fallow land, meadows, pastures, and forests. The individual property of a village community member included arable land, cattle, and buildings. His/her free labour together with relative liabilities to the state prevailed. The above-named combination of the two types of property consolidated the village community making it

very durable, which secured its long-standing existence. However, with the development of feudal system, a village community member turned from a landowner into just a landholder. Village communities fragmented to become village administration units. In the 2nd half of the 19th c., West European village community almost vanished. However it still exists in Asia, Latin and Central America. In Ancient Russia, village community had its distinct name, that is *verv'* (8th – 12th c.c.). In Russia it was called *mir* (13th – early 20th c.c.) or *pogost* (11th-18th c.c.). In Russia, especially important collective functions and extensive self-government rights were vested in the village community. It was the village community that regulated the utilisation of land or the village doyen election. What is more, it organised mutual assistance campaigns, or poll-tax collection, or execution of recruitment operations, or tried civil and criminal cases, usually minor ones. As a result of Stolypin's reform (early 20th c.) the village community lost most of its power. Finally, it was liquidated in the period of Soviet agricultural collectivisation. However, its traditions and relevant teamwork experience facilitated, in a way, the formation of collective farms.

In France, rural community (*commune*) was recognised as a legal entity before the Great French Revolution. Starting with the 16th c. it had gradually emerged out of a village parish. Its major task was to manage common property. In Germany, village community (*Gemeinschaft*) was formed out of personal associations united for the joint management of local economy issues. Rural community manages local affairs through relevant bodies elected by community members. Village community has its own territories and inhabitants. It has its own statutory law, however, earlier it exercised justice.

In England community is not an administrative or economic entity. It is a social estate opposite to aristocracy (*Communality, Commoners, and Commons*). Commoners are the members of the House of Commons at the Parliament. They represent the total community of England. In Switzerland, the cantonal law governs village community. Belonging to a community creates the basis for acquiring a cantonal and Swiss citizenship. The Swiss or civic community stands in opposition to a political community, a legal entity enjoying a relevant self-government right.

In the period of emergence of feudal Lithuania, rural community was called *laukas*. Consequently, its members were called *laukininkai*. The community extended over a definite area of land, together with villages on it. It also had its community court functioning on the customary law basis. In the 14th c., the form and the name of community changed. Out of one or several *laukas* a new GDL administrative unit called *valsčius* (small rural district) was formed. These units kept together labour teams made up of members of several families. However in the 16th c. the Valakas Reform disintegrated them. Village community existed in Lithuania until the division of villages into individual farms. Only several elements (gatherings, obligations, such as road repair) survived the reform. Village community was destroyed for good in the period of Soviet rule. Following the restitution of Independent Lithuania and the initiation of the agrarian reform, landowners or their issue scattered in the country or in towns were offered a chance to develop and form their village community taking into account current situation. In this respect, countrymen's movements created on the grounds of ethnographic regions (Žemaitians, Dzūkians, Znavykians, or Sėlians, etc.) or village women's societies seem to be especially important undertakings.

Rural community existence cycle

Each community includes a wide variety of inhabitants: the newcomers and the aborigines, the rich and the poor, the old and the young, the active and the passive ones. These community members represent a multitude of opinions and needs.

Each community is a unique body. So, the chief purpose of community work is to reveal the unique qualities, and, building on them, to develop the community. Development means an irreversible, purposeful and regular change of material and ideal objects. The presence of the

above-named three qualities of the process allows us to contend that community develops. If the process is irreversible, i.e. it repeats itself, this means that a particular community just acts, and nothing more. If the changes are sporadic or spontaneous, this means that the process is not regular, which implies that experience is not accumulated, consequently, essential changes should be absolutely excluded. In the course of time a developing community changes essentially, and we have before us a qualitatively new organisation.

It is impossible to imagine the development of a rural community as a separate phenomenon. This development forms a part of general social development characterised by the following specific features:

- ✚ it means development oriented towards a villager;
- ✚ it means a process initiated within a community; and
- ✚ actions are initiated "upwards" from the bottom, that is community, yet they are connected with the decisions taken "on the top", that is on a national level.

Community development means common operations carried out by community members united on the basis of common territory, territorial resources, and interests. These operations are aimed towards the satisfaction of common goals set by the community, a body able to determine and prioritise its needs, to set itself definite tasks and subsequently implement them on the grounds of initiatives of mutual assistance, involvement and participation. Community development may be also defined as a result, more specifically, as an ability of a community (formed on a territorial or functional basis) to mobilise its social, human or other capital for the prediction of a definite process and its possible changes which enables the community to react accordingly to the internal and external changes. Long-term development results secure larger income, quality wellbeing, reduced vulnerability, increased safety, more adequate use of natural resources, higher standard of living, and better chances for the coming generations.

In Northern Ireland, community development is defined as a process involving community operations, community services, community work, and other community efforts – all these elements related from the point of view of geography and encountered problems – giving special attention to the socially-disadvantaged, impoverished and powerless part of society. Among its other values there is also the involvement into a multitude of activities, the giving of rights, and the self-assistance. Basically collective, this activity means a process helping to realise both the individual and the group potential within a community.

Community performance is based on:

- ✚ inhabitants' needs;
- ✚ community members' abilities.

In case rural community operations are based on the needs of inhabitants, people are grouped by needs that is they are "labelled" which means that gradually they turn into consumers through "fostering" their problems and needs to receive help eventually. Performance determined by community members' abilities is more interesting and attractive. To secure it one only needs to "audit" one's village – and see that each villager has definite skills and that each person is outstanding in one or other area. Community may be called strong if it recognises the above-named abilities and skills, and secures their successful implementation.

At a workshop for rural community initiators several important laws of successful community development were discussed. According to R. Baliulevičienė and N. Utenkova, rural community counsellors, it was not easy to arrange them in the order of importance. However one thing was certain: all of them were important, and all of them were interconnected.

1. Confidence

The first rung of the ladder – standing on it we often take up various works and initiatives because the tempo of life urges us to do it. Nobody knows how to win confidence. One just has to learn to act in a team.

2. Steady development – step by step.

One wishes to see results immediately, and one desires to achieve much and at once. However here the following simple rule is to be observed: move step by step, climb rung by rung.

3. People's involvement/participation.

If a community is successful, this means that it is able to involve the biggest possible number of members into the community development. People may get involved if the involvement concerns the quality of their life. Indeed, people's participation may differ in terms of intensity. A village leader often faces the following dilemma: on the one hand, he would like to recruit, over the shortest possible period, the biggest possible number of local people; on the other hand, this endeavour is a lasting one, and people are not always willing too much to get involved – they are rather inclined to wait and observe the on-going actions for a while from a distance, and to make up their minds later. They just observe from the side, discuss the operations carried out by a group of activists with their neighbours waiting when they will be re-invited to participate or join a particular event.

It must be borne in mind that starting with an issue of interest would be worthwhile. For example, some people get involved into interest groups, some – into common leisure activities, and some wish to organise events, such as a health day or a village holiday, or take up environmental initiatives – they, for example, participate in a bee. Surely, one ought to consider the resources possessed by the community. Some events demand time and money.

4. Motivation – discussing realistic issues plainly.

Experience gained by community promoters and counsellors indicates that a villager is a practical person. This is especially true about males. For this reason, such events as seminars may soon become undesirable in the village unless the advantage of a particular seminar is stressed or the ways of practical utilisation of acquired knowledge are shown. Females are more willing to attend "theoretical" gatherings because their feminine nature enables them to implement novel ideas more successfully. In short, what we need is the ability to speak about realistic issues in a clear and plain way. Flexibility – that is the name of the game.

5. Leader's role.

The importance of a leader, active and dedicated to the idea, has been stressed by many communities. Leader can interest people and bring them together for common activity. It often happens that village people seem to be inclined to act for the benefit of their village. However they do not take up any steps unless a leader appears. To quote the residents of a definite village, "People are surely willing to act but somebody among them must wish (to seek) more than that". The style of leadership is another important issue. If the leader tries his best to work for the benefit of his community, he may end up in "a burnout" – other people may misunderstand him. But if the leader works together with the community – the tempo of progress may be slower at first, so the leader will have to think harder or slow down his own pace – here we may eventually achieve better quality.

6. Assessment and utilisation of existing resources.

It would be advisable to audit the village community, or, in other words, to "unearth" buried resources. Many economies carry out the policy of support or service provision. That is nice, however on the other hand, people are labelled – as disabled, pregnant teenagers, etc. This means that we forget that the labelled ones also possess numerous abilities and skills. People become consumers, they get used to taking. In addition to human resources there are many other resources. Too accustomed to them, local

- people fail to notice that they are values *per se*. Local knowledge is a major value. However people often undervalue it. Many professionals would “get lost” in the rural environment. Similarly, local experience and knowledge is vital for community development, specifically, for the taking of decisions relating to village development.
7. Own initiatives – people must feel that they are the owners of ideas and initiatives. Sharing ideas is a nice and useful experience. Outsiders, that is non-community members may be useful as “the suppliers” of new ideas. Outsiders are better able to notice values possessed by the community. Moreover, they may impart on local people experience accumulated by other communities. However sometimes a long period of time has to pass until the community becomes the owner of the idea.
 8. Partnership, co-operation, network
While a successful community emerges on the initiative of its members, the villagers, that is following the “upwards from the bottom” principle, it cannot remain close, or, to put it otherwise, to function only within its own village. A successful community widens the network of its like-minders and useful contacts, trying not to fight them but to maintain friendly co-operative relations with them. Success of the endeavour often depends on how the community’s idea is seen by institutions existing in the “immediate neighbourhood” of the community, namely by rural district authority, municipality, or school. Another important issue is the development of community networks.
 9. Learning
Permanent learning and openness to novelties are vital conditions for the successful community operation. The practice of rural locality development usually involves the application of “learning through action” technique. Training of village community counsellors or teachers is one among many driving forces employed in this area.
 10. Strategic planning
Planning ought to be realistic. What is more, it should be based on the actual situation within a community. However planning must entail a relevant vision and, on the other hand, awareness of the community not as a separate unit but as an element of the rural district, the region, the national state or, eventually, the world.
 11. Transparency and openness
Meetings ought to be open to the community, namely to every resident of a given village. Active communities, especially the ones that enjoy financial support, encounter definite problems or conflicts. It sometimes happens that community activists forget or do not have enough skill or time to give a clear account of works carried out within the community. On the other hand, it may happen that community members fail to attend the meetings, which makes them rely on hearsay or fanned facts. One must be aware how the principle of a damaged telephone works. What we recommend is patience. Good will and patience will help to settle all problems.
 12. Need for assessment
Somebody said: “We do a lot, only we do not know how to enjoy or demonstrate our achievements”.

13. Exceptionality and value of a rural locality

Locality ought to be important and significant to its resident or user, be it a human or a community. Small details or links with the past may be vital: these issues provide a definite degree of importance to the locality. If aliens, that are non-community members, try to determine its importance or if they use a too large scale to measure it, the sense may be lost. Being exceptional means not only having a beautiful or special landscape. Rather, it implies possessing features that make a particular village original compared to another one – it means movement: life histories and changes. On the other hand, the invisible issues, such as symbols, dialects, names, recipes, legends, and life histories are also important. If people are not aware of their belonging to a particular place, how are they going to create the culture-cultivating residents' wish to care about their home?

Reasons for systemic change may differ greatly. However the basic reason is the pre-programmed cycle of existence. In the course of its development the community changes essentially. Eventually we see before us a qualitatively new structure.

The following six basic community development stages may be distinguished (see Fig. 12):

- a) understanding a community and its wider context;
- b) activating a community;
- c) forming a group;
- d) consolidating abilities and skills;
- e) analysing needs; and
- f) community networks.

Operations carried out at a particular stage have their own particular characteristics, difficulties, and achievements. It is vitally important to involve community promoters and community or village development counsellors into the on-going process of locality development.

Understanding a community and its wider context

It often happens that in the first stages of community development the degree of involvement is determined by external factors encouraging local residents' participation in relevant activities. Here we ought to consider the external factors, such as community promoters or counsellors. To make the community envisage the development of its locality as its "own" affair, it is necessary to organise extensive consultations on the community level, and to see that community members get more involved in it. Counselling and involvement may be organised through the existing networks involving local institutions. These networks may help to gain access to people, then to involved and encourage them to contribute to the creation of relevant strategy, and, finally, to its implementation.

Community promoters play an important role in the consulting of local communities and the creation of a local strategy. They usually help to bring villagers together, to take up the exploration and investigation of local needs. Everyday work performed by community promoters secures the involvement of village people into the process of strategic planning. Promoters' efforts help them understand their needs more realistically, and to achieve agreement on priority areas.

Activating a community

Community development may be beneficial to those who experience need and social divide. However these people lack resources necessary to initiate the development. As such, they are often not inclined to participate. Individuals who lack funds to sustain themselves think that the issues of everyday survival are more important to them.

Encouragement of community activation is priority number one. Social involvement means that community leaders, promoters, and village development counsellors ought to respond more

sensitively and be ready to help the groups – the ones that are often neglected or sometimes isolated – to get actively involved in community operations and the structural changes experienced by rural localities. Such a view may often be at odds with the interests of other people or their prejudices. Usually, groups exhibiting the greatest direct interests lack self-confidence or faith to undertake participation. Local or community development means empowering and mutual assistance. Community promoters may act as development catalyst working in the localities suffering from poverty and social division. Introduction of human resources represented by a community promoter or counsellor may be an obvious measure able to produce an immediate result. Later this primary support ought to be supplemented by project execution funds.

Sheila Fairon, a Baltic States Village Community Partnership Programme counsellor and expert, has distinguished several important stages and actions relating to people's involvement in the communities' development:

- ✚ people may be encouraged in numerous ways to get involved and take up actions for the improvement of their life quality;
- ✚ it is important to explain that their participation is vital and useful at every stage;
- ✚ explain to them the meaning of participation in operations. If there are people who think that you are asking them to help you to carry out hard and unpleasant tasks, their motivation to involve will be lower. Indeed, the people may not forgive you your asking to involve, and later they will never agree to participate.
- ✚ create a chance to participate in a variety of ways – people who have a lot of spare time are able to participate on a permanent basis, however some individuals – only if you ask them to.
- ✚ it would be good to make sure whether you asked a particular individual personally to participate. Sometimes people respond more willingly to a personal invitation rather than to a general information notice.
- ✚ consider what do the views held by another person mean to you. Some people may be better prepared to accept.
- ✚ try to inform people about future events telling how they may benefit from participation. Maybe you can give examples describing successful activities carried out by other communities or localities?

Community counsellors (Baliulevičienė, Utenkova, 2002) argue that prior to the community activation campaign the community leader ought to consider the following issues:

- ✚ be aware of the uniqueness of a particular community or village;
- ✚ bear in mind community's characteristics (such as conservatism, mutual help, etc.);
- ✚ discover the source of village's power;
- ✚ be aware of differences existing within a village;
- ✚ be ready to work both on an individual and a group level because we may not find any groups in many villages; on the other hand, groups often are based on a strong personality.

Forming a group

The "core" of community development means co-operation involving many people who jointly represent their community and act on its behalf. Activation usually purposes to form a group having a common developmental goal. Community members will mostly desire to get involved in operations designed to improve their own situation, or the situation of their family members, friends, or neighbours. Group may be defined as a nucleus of efforts directed towards development. The nucleus, in its turn, forms a mechanism for the distribution of resources within a community. The mechanism starts when funds designed for the development are allocated to the community, not to the individuals seeking personal advantage.

One should be aware of the existence of the following "rule". It contends that over the initial stage of development a new group is to be created. Community may include a group interested

in the consolidation of its role, the widening of the circle of its interests, and the willingness to care about quantitative and qualitative changes. Such a group might apply a rather integrated method of community development.

As for efficient implementation of basic actions designed to achieve the goal, the group may have to take up, if needed the function of management. In this case it would be necessary to give sufficient attention to the efficient group performance, especially to the consolidation of team management skills.

To make the group effective as a community development agent, it must be able to perform the function of a community leader and community representative. This requirement makes the situation even more awkward because the group may exist a short period of time or its members may change perpetually. A community group may decide to exist until it completes the task it has been called up to accomplish. Other groups may have a wider and more integrated long-term view on the locality's development; such groups may exist for a longer period of time helping to co-ordinate development related actions.

In any case, the basic challenge is to provide adequate back up to a group. This secures the group's ability to strengthen its community development skills so that group members may perform their roles in a shorter or longer time, and may enjoy the implemented community development projects or their continuous influence on village development.

Baltic States Village Community Partnership Development Programme was executed in conformity with the following participation encouraging principles:

- ✚ Involvement: obligation to involve socially isolated people through positive actions.
- ✚ Equality: obligation to treat all people on equal basis;
- ✚ Accessibility: does everything done in the process of development reach socially isolated people? Will people have a chance to get acquainted with what is being done? How will they learn about it? Are meetings organised at convenient dates and in convenient places so that people may attend them without difficulty? Will they understand the language used at the meeting? Will those involved in the activities really find support if they need it?
- ✚ Partnership: was everyone involved? For example, governmental institutions, representatives of local authorities, agencies, other community members who assumed the responsibility to join the partnership and seek to attract people?
- ✚ Transparency: was everything done in a transparent and open way?
- ✚ Accountability: has anybody tried to secure that people supporting the involvement of socially isolated individuals have a chance to demonstrate that their obligations expressed in words are in harmony with their actions?
- ✚ Authorisation: did people share power? Ought it to be shared? People would never participate in decision taking if powers were still concentrated in the hands of several individuals.

Consolidating skills

If the local group had to guarantee efficient management and representation on the community level, group members would possibly need assistance - should they encounter difficulties relating to management or teamwork.

In EU member states, people responsible for the formation and implementation of village policy allocate substantial funds for the improvement of skills of groups functioning in rural districts (see Fig. 130). Village development organisations contribute actively to the working out of lists of skills providing basic abilities and skills necessary to a community group seeking to implement community projects for the solution of local problems.

It is important to focus on the circumstance that the list of skills (see Table 2) gives an exhaustive description of a number of skills that may be needed by a community group had it

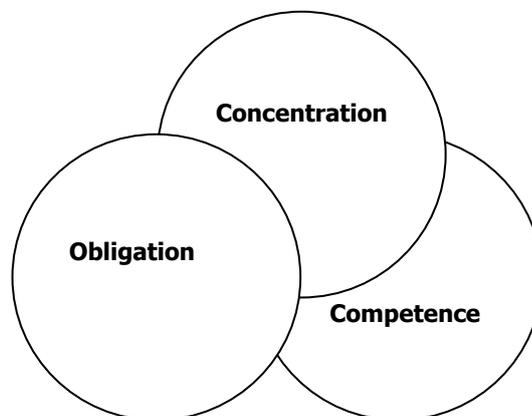
to act as a community representative or a successful project manager. However it is likely that not all abilities and skills described will fit each definite case.

The greater part of abilities and skills provided in the first part of the list were very useful to community promoters seeking to implement the Baltic States Village Community Partnership Programme in Lithuania. Following the working out and the implementation of these projects, abilities and skills given in the middle of the list came into the focus of attention. Passages on competence included in the list of skills worked out by the Northern Ireland Department of Agriculture and Village Development (Table 2) provide what a competent community group is to be able to do should it have to work efficiently in definite localities or areas. The leader of a good group gets the group acquainted with the booklet containing lists of competence areas needed for effective group work. Significantly, the leader does not insist that all areas of abilities or competence are immediately necessary to a group. However time may come when the group will need some abilities or skills or their combination – all this depends on the working schedule.

Group work means an instance of good practice.

Judging by the submitted list of abilities and skills, it is possible to argue that community promoters or community counsellors are required to have a number of multiple skills, mainly, the ability and inclination towards work with people. Work done by community promoters at target districts under the Baltic States Village Community Partnership Programme allowed us to specify the following basic characteristics of efficient work with a group.

2 Fig. Basic characteristics of efficient work



A good initiator:

- ✚ Greets everyone who joins the group, encouraging free and unrestricted behaviour
- ✚ Allows the group to agree on "the basic working regulations" to be observed during discussions
- ✚ Explains items on the group's agenda or the purpose of meeting
- ✚ Discusses with the group the meeting's agenda, purpose, and goals
- ✚ Secures a spacious, convenient room able to accommodate each attending person
- ✚ Creates a friendly environment, procuring necessary means and materials
- ✚ Sees to it that not a single group member feels isolated, ignored or "under pressure"
- ✚ Encourages group members to speak openly and share their experience, ideas, and opinions
- ✚ Encourages members to ask questions in group

- + Sees to it that not a single group member dominates discussions – each person gets a chance to speak before other participants get the right to speak for the second time
- + Is willing to know the opinion of reticent members of the group
- + Manages conflict, emotional, and controversial situations
- + Does not allow any digression in the discussion
- + Manages the group time
- + Does not press his own or other people’s agenda on the group
- + Manages the group in a flexible way
- + Encourages the group to recognise the difficulties
- + Encourages the group to mark or celebrate the achievements
- + Helps the group to plan its future activities
- + Helps the group to work out concrete actions
- + Encourages the group to assume responsibility for the implementation of plans
- + Announces the completion of group event (to make everyone feel the end of one stage and the beginning of another)
- + Towards the end of a group event summarises the chances and goals
- + Together with the group assesses each event and feedback involving group members (veiksmingos partnerystés grupēs, 2003).

E. Analysis of needs

To define community’s priorities and to work out community residential locality development strategies one has to accomplish the following major task - to explore the community needs. On the grounds of good development instances provided by the Baltic States Village Community Partnership Programme questions are given. These questions may be topical for the performance of any task relating to the analysis of needs.

Prior to the carrying out of investigation into the village community needs it is vital to work out a relevant research methodology. It ought to secure the participation of socially isolated people and the answers the following questions:

- + Who will be responsible for the analysis of needs?
- + What is the envisaged volume of the analysis?
- + How is it going to be carried out? What are the most suitable research methods?
- + What questions are to be asked or what factors will affect the selection of questions?
- + How will you elicit the greatest possible number of opinions from people?
- + Possibly, some people are less available than others are?
- + Who will gather and analyse information?
- + By whom and how will the information be supplied?
- + How will you present the findings to the community?
- + How are you going to use the information obtained?

F. Community network

Community infrastructure creation means another chance of working out a back up basis allowing separate groups to support different types of education, training, and development. Advantages arising out of the creation of community or other groups' network ought to be evaluated. Community networks mean the networks that create social relations among communities. The networks emerge gradually by establishing direct relations among communities inclined towards seeking common goals. A virtual network may be created by means of electronic communication. Community networks represent an interactive information system that fosters co-operation among communities, governmental bodies, private sector, and non-governmental organisations.

Provided efficient social capital exists, human networks and communities are linked together by common values and behavioural norms which means the emergence of conditions for co-operation (Milton Keynes, 2003).

Creating a network entails creating a communication mechanism. The mechanism means a chance of being heard by those who form the policy or take decisions. Any single group cannot secure such a chance. A traditional community network is composed of:

1. People, or the chief component of the network. If people use the network passively for their daily needs, the network loses its value. Network unites people, and this is the only reason for creating a network.
2. Contents, that is data and information created by network users. Contents may differ in terms of their type and form. Information sent by e-mail is one of the most simple examples of the contents. Information contained at Internet sites is another instance.
3. Services – they enable the usage of contents. E-mail service or server place lease, etc. are the instances of services.
4. Infrastructure or the total equipment helping to distribute the contents among people. Although it is a mistake to call it network, people often do it.

Community networks help community members, businesspeople, local authorities, and other organisations to improve the quality of co-operation, to facilitate information exchange, and to secure relevant access which helps people share their successful or unsuccessful experience.

Rural community networks

If a rural community seeks to improve the standard of living, to work out development plans, or to generate ideas it feels a need to share the ideas with other like-minded people which implies getting acquainted with novel thoughts. There are many reasons why village communities unite to form associations on the municipal, county, or national level, or just to create non-formal interaction or co-operation networks.

Community network means a network that emerges gradually through direct relations established by communities in the hope to seek common goals. A network may be created by electronic means (virtual networks) or directly (social relations among communities).

Table 1: List of abilities – Leader of a good group

(Department for Agricultural and Rural Development (2000). Leader of a good group)

AREA OF ABILITIES	TOTAL COMBINATION OF ABILITIES
Initiating an efficient community group.	Understanding community. Being aware of how a community group ought to be created.
Consolidating group's efficiency and productivity.	Discussing the causes and the procedure of group formation, and seeking general agreement. Defining, co-ordinating and registering a role and responsibility. General agreement on the procedure of conducting meetings. Efficient conducting of meetings. Group's ability to manage conflicts efficiently. Group's ability to develop its own potential.
Consolidating personal competence of members belonging to an efficiently working group.	Personal management. Interaction, determination, confidence. Organising and decision taking abilities.
Maintaining community involvement and support.	Managing time. Involving community. Providing support. Departmental / constitutional adjustments Organising open meetings. Ability to conduct efficiently open meetings.
Planning activities.	Group's ability to understand community goals. Group is clearly aware of its future vision and values. Group defines its goals, priorities and tasks clearly. Group's ability to perform economic assessment of initiated projects. Group's ability to work out business plans. Group's ability to work out operational (working) plans. Awareness of external sources of support. Supervision and assessment.

AREA OF ABILITIES	TOTAL COMBINATION OF ABILITIES
Creating and maintaining positive relations with external agencies and supporting sources.	Ability to assess the demand for resources. Ability to establish relations with external institutions. Ability to negotiate efficiently. Ability to satisfy agency requirements.
Managing financial resources.	Budget creation. Financial control. Financial analysis. Self-maintenance.
Managing projects in project groups.	Project planning. Project managing. Drawing up project statements. Problem solving.
Becoming an employer.	Hiring and selecting employees. Negotiating the terms of agreement. Training of employees. Managing employees. Disciplinary measures and dismissal.
Encouraging growth	Project assessing. Planning growth. Reinvesting in community.

With the growth and strengthening of social capital the degree of community's involvement increases. Similarly, its effectiveness and voluntary character becomes an established norm. Besides, non-formal networks emerge, and the norms of trust and interaction get consolidated. Such networks may be of three types:

1. **The uniting type.** This type may exist both within and without the community.
2. **The coupling type.** This type is the weakest from the emotional point of view, however it is the strongest in terms of external influence.
3. **The binding type.** Within this type we can find people who know each other very well from the emotional and the physical point of view. For example, a network existing under a "milk station".

They may perform the following functions:

1. the binding network: relation is maintained with people who are "like you"; the net is characterised by "strong relations";
2. the uniting network: relation is maintained with people who are not "like you"; the net is characterised by "weak relations";
3. the coupling network: relations with powerful people are created; way of finding influential sources.

Each type has its strengths and weaknesses. So, it is necessary to seek their balance by utilising their strengths and avoiding their weaknesses. If networks are envisaged, its promoters ought to determine what type of network they currently represent, and to what type (of combination of types) they would like to belong in 5-10 years. Having settled this issue, they ought to set the goals and specify the desired properties of their organisation, and eventually envisage relevant means necessary to achieve them.

In parallel to the description of functions, one ought to consider the following issue: what organisational structure communities wish to give to their network? Or, more specifically, what mechanism of operation will be chosen? The choice is vital because it determines the freedom of action and the roles of the manager and the members.

Network-based mechanisms of operation may vary from organisation to organisation, however here we wish to present three models. Differences among these models are very great, so we shall give them the following names: the line, the circle, and the grid (see Fig. 15).

The line-type network is the least effective one. Information moves along one line, so if one person or organisation within the link decides that the information is not worth forwarding, all other recipients located further along the line will get no news. Here, the control of the total volume of information and initiatives belongs to the network leaders' competence. The network leader becomes the filter and the stopper of information. In such networks, persons or groups placed further on are regarded as entities who are incapable to think or act independently or who lack initiative. This type of community networks better suits an army situation where the commander and his soldiers carry out orders unconditionally. It can hardly answer the needs of a social network. Line-type organisation structure has its strengths: here we have a strong leader, who, if he is a well-wishing, careful and competent person, may send regularly an information impulse to other groups. Be it even so, this strictly hierarchical network represents the type of the lowest effectiveness.

In the circle-type organisation network the impulse also comes from the centre however, once information gets inside the circle, it may move in every direction. This type is characteristic of organisations whose leaders trust the members and are ready to utilise their potential, that is leaders are open to novelties and they are not afraid of members' initiative. Still, here we see again a clearly hierarchical structure of the line-type network. However this structure is less strict.

The grid-type organisation structure secures the freest diffusion of information. In an organisation practising this particular structure, leaders are on the same level as other organisation members. Only, being leaders, they perform additional relevant functions. While this type seems to be simple, it requires great efforts to make the organisation function effectively. It is in this particular type that the importance of social capital manifests itself most clearly: here agreement, benevolence, and harmony are absolutely necessary. In organisations of this type, "pressure from above" demanding that tasks or obligations be carrying out is very slight or even absent. Here nobody doubts members' consciousness, honesty, and loyalty. The purpose of organisations of such type is not to promote one particular person – the leader – but to hear and satisfy the needs of all members. The head of such organisation is attentive to opinions expressed by his staff members. He is open to suggestions. He notices and used network members' potential powers for the development of his organisation. In the network of this structural type, the basic strength is the free and independent movement of information and the diffusion of experience. However, here one ought to be attentive: the organisation may experience definite threats, such as general "stagnation", or the absence of a uniform vision, or goals, or inability to follow them.

Organisational structures of community networks

To secure the emergence of community networks one must have adequate conditions and benefit awareness. Table 3 specifies the stimuli that form conditions for the emergence of community networks.

There are numerous Lithuanian communities who having consolidated their forces entered a new stage of their life cycle demanding more extensive involvement in activities and more powerful influence. Such communities get interested in the chances of co-operation and funding, or participation in village community training seminars and conferences. These events enable them to establish new relations with community representatives from other villages or districts. Communities join regional associations or unions. In this way a successful institution, the Lithuanian Village Communities' Association, was formed.

Insufficient is the number of public institutions engaged in the gathering of information on existing or emerging communities; or in the effective distribution of information on the chances of project submission among communities; or of co-operation or exchange. Where village communities are more advanced, local municipalities accumulate information on them. However, this information reflects at best only the facts contained in communities' by-laws. Municipalities are not too interested in the information able to provide maximum advantage to village communities should such information be present in the database.

The instance of Northern Ireland Village Communities' Network shows that village community networks may offer promising results.

Northern Ireland Village Community Network (VCN) is a volunteer organisation. Created by local community organisations, it purposes to express in a more clear way village communities' opinion about problems relating to poverty, other drawbacks, and community development (Fig. 16). VCN is a registered charity institution financed from the Agricultural Department fund as well as from resources coming from charity, membership fees, and project earnings.

Table 2 Support and incentives for community network creation

(Community Network. <http://www.acapcb.ns.ca./whatiscdn.htm/>)

SUPPORT	INCENTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Training leaders ✚ Information on possible financing sources ✚ Information on existing networks and groups (database) ✚ Premises, transportation, office work organising means ✚ Co-funding community projects from network budget ✚ Professional counselling ✚ Forming authorities' and businesses' favourable attitude ✚ Local initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Common interests ✚ Desire to express oneself ✚ Instances ✚ Desire to share experience ✚ "Healthy" envy ✚ Common problem ✚ Bigger chances of getting / giving information and being heard ✚ Interaction among leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Common problem ✚ Initiative individual ✚ Common goals ✚ Demand for wider / weighty representation ✚ It is necessary to have more communities ✚ Diffusion of internal and external information ✚ Trust and tolerance ✚ Favourable legislative basis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Knowledge and information ✚ Material support ✚ Back-up by local and central authorities ✚ Network of institutions able to provide support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Common targets ✚ Common interests shared by separate communities (internal) ✚ Harmonisation of needs ✚ Problems still unsettled within a community (especially the ones relating to authorities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Good experience diffusion ✚ Informing society ✚ Methodological support ✚ Support provided by authorities

Founded in 1991, VCN has over 450 members. A volunteer committee elected every two years and consisting of two community representatives, and farmers, and representatives of environment protection organisations, district council, and volunteer village institutions manages VCN. Membership and committee seeks to reflect a wide geographical, religious, and gender variety.

Rural community network vision is the vision of a Northern Ireland village community - active, concentrated, subordinate, continuous, and contributing to the prosperous, equal in rights, peaceful, and stabile society.

The mission of rural community network is to consolidate representation of and support to village communities, especially the ones that have suffered the greatest losses in the process of their development.

Here are the strategic goals pursued by the rural community network:

1. to create conditions for the activities (expression) of village communities;
2. to support community development and co-operation with other village communities;
3. to work in order to secure social involvement and peace within village communities;
4. to back up creation of continuously developing village communities.

VCN membership is simple. The most effective way of network participation is to become a network member by filling out a relevant form and returning it to the Network.

Here are the benefits offered by VCN membership:

1. general-type notices, information and support to members;
2. annual conference and mutual counselling giving members a chance of exploring common areas of interests;
3. annual meeting of members;
4. access to internet and library containing village information sources;
5. benefits relating to VCN conference and meeting place.

VCN members receive the following: a membership package, monthly information, invitations to events organised by the Network, and annual Network news publications.

As an independent and volunteer organisation of Northern Ireland VCN carries out a unique role. It enables the volunteer sector of village communities to act as an equal and well-informed partner. The rural development programme envisages VCN as a volunteer sector. VCN supplements operations carried out by the Village Development Council (VDC). VDC focusing mainly on economic actions, VCN is chiefly interested in social subjects. Function on different levels these those organisations have divided between them the areas of operation and functions very clearly. Both of them successfully create and use social capital, and achieve mutually advantageous goals.

VCN is also connected directly with other areas of governmental policy, such as education, health, and accommodation – provided these issues concern village communities.

Northern Ireland Rural Community Network is an organisation working on a national level. It co-operates with twelve regional rural community networks supporting their operations. Such type of interaction helps to “couple” social capital possessed by local groups with the governmental social capital, and to “pool” diverse social capitals for the facilitation of maintenance of relations among communities. Moreover, it supports a stronger “binding” capital on a local level which means consolidation of communities into larger definite community units from the point of view of geography or common interests.

VCN contributes to the multifunctional agreement on the implementation of the following 7 strategic principles vital to the creation of successful communities:

1. Co-operation and partnership based on trust, respect, equality and empowering;
2. Basic need. Participation and decision ownership is to be connected with the basic need.
3. Quality. We are to create and back up success in relevant policy and its implementation.
4. Justice. Absolute recognition is to be given to the problems of social involvement, racism, sectarianism, etc.
5. General back up granted to the relevant vision;
6. Empowering. Strengthening of abilities for the creation of a more trustful environment within communities.
7. Steady development. Long-term thinking is necessary. Requirements for assessment and basic funding are to serve as its sources.

In Northern Ireland VCN backs up Rural Support Networks (VSN) on a sub-regional basis. Each VST in separate geographical localities participates actively in the backing up, development, and co-operation of local groups.

VSN infrastructure is a very important factor for the enriching of the existing group diversity in village communities, and for the empowering of village residents so that they may change their locality more actively.

Today, rural communities are quite numerous in Lithuania. Some of them have formed unions. They try to make many of the above-named steps relying on their own abilities and skills. They are pioneers in this area, so, their courage and firmness has earned them highest esteem and appraisal. They also recognise that they need external assistance from people who possess necessary theoretical knowledge and practical experience in the area of village community development. Unfortunately, such assistance can be hardly found in Lithuania. Thus, village development processes lack dynamism – only a fraction of community members has a chance of participating in training sessions, workshops, or conference. Other initiative villages have to elaborate their skills basing on the “try and fault” principle. Well-organised community unions would be able to help solve this and many other problems, however nobody knows how to create them and how they are to represent (if they can do it) and / or back up village leaders. We tried to find answers these questions through this research.

Lithuanian rural community development tendencies

The European Union rural development policy and its relations with agricultural policy opens a chance of seeing and specifying rural development tendencies and chances in Lithuania.

Research revealed the following motives for rural community creation in Lithuania:

- ✚ a chance to receive financial support from international EU or national rural development funds (only registered village municipal institutions are entitled to it);
- ✚ a chance to create (restore) rural community traditions, festivals, etc. which means rural culture development;
- ✚ a chance to strengthen trust among community members, and belief in one’s own and also community’s future;
- ✚ a chance to solve independently social, economic, cultural, and humanitarian problems relying on co-ordinated measures and co-operated resources;
- ✚ a chance to make public influence on local or national authorities “upwards from the bottom” by participating in the decision taking relating to the village development policy on a municipal, county, or national level.

The following two types of rural communities prevail in Lithuania:

1. Communities in training.
 - ✚ They are aware of their goals, so they act in a constructive way.
 - ✚ They quickly drop discussing insufficient funding and take up issues that are vital to the community development, such as human resources, social issues, etc.
2. Communities in doubt (or the sleeping ones)
 - ✚ These are not too quick to start real work.
 - ✚ They think that it is money that may really help them improve things. Consequently, doing away with scepticism is a hard task faced by them.
 - ✚ They regard initiative as a kind of play. However they are reluctant to drop it – it seems that they are afraid to lose some subsidies.
 - ✚ Their representatives are afraid to assume responsibility, especially if it is related to the administration of funds - should such funding ever be received by them for the financing of community projects. What they demand is money from the budget, and concrete suggestions.
 - ✚ They are isolated from the processes going on around them.

- ✚ At their municipalities, business information and counselling services are weakly developed.
- ✚ Sleeping communities regard municipal activities as just another kind of play unable to introduce essential changes.

General development problems encountered by Lithuanian villages are specified below (see Table 3):

Lithuanian rural community development problems

Socio-economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ unemployment, hidden unemployment; ✚ small income received by families; ✚ poverty and social division; ✚ limited chances of leisure; ✚ insufficient number of leaders.
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ underdeveloped community information and counselling system; ✚ satisfactory condition of social and physical infrastructure; ✚ slow process of physical capital modernisation.
Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ inadequate acquaintance with legislative acts providing chances of solving community problems; ✚ slow process of community formalisation (registration); ✚ inadequate administrative and project making skills.
Psychological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ inability to assess oneself positively; ✚ insufficient awareness of one's obligations and rights; ✚ lack of trust in oneself and others; ✚ reserve and passiveness.

Lithuanian rural communities usually develop the following activities:

- ✚ Organising rural community festivals;
- ✚ Organising bees;
- ✚ Organising charity and support to community members;
- ✚ Working out and implementing community development strategies;
- ✚ Working out and implementing rural infrastructure projects;
- ✚ Informing and counselling community members.

To sum up, we may distinguish the following factors accountable for the successful development of a village community:

- ✚ Management: leader, external and internal resources, and labour division;
- ✚ Versatility: community is to have the widest possible range of people in terms of education, social situation, beliefs, value understanding (the "mirror" principle when everybody agrees with everything and when people are united by very common interests ought to be avoided);
- ✚ Transparency and openness: accept everyone who is willing to enter the community;

- ✚ Counselling: training, seminars, interaction (opinion polls, information-giving publications, various events);
- ✚ Planning: working out a community development model;
- ✚ Motivation: benevolent, sincere work, desire to act and keep up trust in the chosen area of action;
- ✚ Analysis (research): not to close up but to search for ways of explaining what is going on;
- ✚ Creativity: application of new technologies, especially the information or the communication ones, effective usage of local resources at every stage of community existence.
- ✚ Result is a vital factor in community development. However, even more important is the way of its achievement. It is possible to argue that successful communities are the ones that are able to recruit the greatest possible number of active participants. Here the following rule is to be observed: one must work not on the community's behalf but with the community. This means steady application of the "upwards from the bottom" principle of village development. The principle provides involvement of all community members in the relevant project, and forming target groups already at the initial stages of project implementation. So, following the principle of participation in community operations is the chief factor accounting for the successful development of any community. The main community development agents are community members. It is they who know best what the village needs, and who can take the best decisions.

2.10 RURAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

By A. Poviliūnas, Lithuania¹⁹

Further, you will find a brief outline of methodology applied by us for working with the Alanta and Balninkai communities, Molėtai District, and with the Baltoji Vokė, Butrimonys, Dieveniškės, and Poškonys communities, Šalčininkai District. Each of these communities participated in five one-day-long seminars. Besides, minimum three consultations per community were provided. Intensive interaction through electronic means was sustained.

Additionally, communities took part in a conference titled *Village community development: experience and perspectives*. The conference was held at the Academy of Science. It was organised by the Civic Initiatives Centre acting jointly with the Agricultural and Forest Study Unit under the Lithuanian Academy of Science, Vilnius University Social Studies Centre, Lithuanian Agricultural University Economy and Management Department, and Agricultural Economy Institute. Overall, the training cycle, including relevant home tasks, lasted approximately seven months.

I would like to draw your attention to the following circumstance: the greater the progress, the smaller is the volume of teaching and also of training material provided. In sum, the more community representatives get involved in the work, the more we, trainers, find ourselves turning into consulting partners.

ACTIVITY PLANNING STAGES

How do we live?	Step one. Starting the process. Step two. Local community research. Step three. SWOT analysis.
What would we like to achieve?	Step four. Forming a vision. Step five. Rating goals by priorities.
How can we implement our goals?	Step six. Splitting goals by tasks. Step seven. Planning the ways of implementation.

Step one. Starting the process

The purpose of several opening meetings was to create teams. Generally, small town communities do not develop clear-cut interest groups. Thus, the method of partner groups composed of representatives of different interest groups (business, administration, and public organisations) had to be abandoned. We simply needed to create a group of people distinguished for personal initiative. Such individuals are usually available at any place. Groups under our study emerged in a number of different ways. However our chief concern was not to allow them contain exclusively the members of one particular non-formal team – this could push away other potential participants. Over a fortnight, with the help of non-formal leaders such as a doyen or a priest, we managed to build up groups composed of 7 - 17 members. Importantly, we had discussed the project with district mayors, and this measure actually speeded up the group formation process.

Our next step was to involve the group into purposeful activity. During our first seminar we explained the goals and objectives of the project. Then, little by little, we began to discuss relevant terms and subjects – the generative ones, to quote P. Freire. To expose a larger number of multiple problems encountered by local communities, we, among other things, applied a method of drawing pictures. Making pictures jointly on large sheets of design paper is a good way of expressing, grouping and co-ordinating group members' ideas, more pointedly, members' visions of their little towns. As one might expect, this type of drawing may pinpoint

¹⁹ From the book: *Kaimo atskirties profiliai*. Vilnius: UAB "Kronta", 2003.

problems faced by town residents. Representatives of local communities willingly participated in this activity. They made pictures of towns or villages they currently inhabited or wished to live in future. These pictures captured operations performed by small town institutions. What is more, they recorded the local style of living. In sum, the pictures revealed very distinctly what particular role the institutions played and how residents valued these institutions. Drawing pictures facilitated a discussion. The discussion helped not only to identify problems but also to pour out annoyance. In short, the discussion offered a chance to make another step in the direction of a more detailed investigation into a local community.

Methodological material. Generative terms and subjects

Exclusion

What does the popular phrase "social exclusion" mean? Who is excluded from what, and why? In what way is this term related to the term of poverty? Does social exclusion cover the people who do not partake of goods created by society? Or maybe social exclusion first of all means that some separate individuals or groups find themselves located beyond the social bonds, or, to put it otherwise, become redundant, or maybe only feel themselves redundant? What kind of people is regarded redundant, and why? What role do social benefits play?

Social exclusion may be explained simply: people are excluded from the following three points of view:

- ✚ *Economic exclusion.* Viewed from this angle, exclusion is experienced in the first place by jobless people, particularly the ones who have been off the labour market for a longer period of time. Having no chances to involve in labour market, they, consequently, do not have a source of steady income.
- ✚ *Social exclusion.* Having lost their jobs people simultaneously lose their social status. Many societies regard a job as a value. Thus, work often determines how society values the worker, and also how the worker values himself/herself. A jobless person soon loses the sense of his/her own value and dignity. Time passing away, he/she finds it more and more difficult to re-enter the labour market. When one loses one's ties with the value attitudes prevailing in the society, one gets more easily engaged in illicit activities or involved in the life of religious sects.
- ✚ *Political exclusion.* This type of exclusion face those individuals who due to some reason, such as ethnicity, gender, etc. are denied full access to the political life. Such excluded people do not have a chance to put into effect their human rights.

The profile of exclusion, that is the ratio characterising different aspects of exclusion is determined by a number of factors. Among them, the most important ones are the traditions and culture cherished by a particular society, and also the efficiency of operation of educational, health or social care system.

We ought to mention another increasingly common type of exclusion. I mean the barring out of social groups from their participation in social progress. Having no chances to take part in activities leading to social progress, these particular groups eventually experience exclusion - economic or social.

Poverty

Poverty appears when income is insufficient to provide a chance to satisfy one's basic personal needs. Not only that, poverty prevents one from getting decent social services, such as adequate education or good health care. Poverty is very closely connected with the situation in a labour market. Poverty emerges due to unemployment or insufficient remuneration for one's work.

However, it is important to notice that poverty not always accounts for social exclusion. For example, a consolidated and friendly community may eliminate the threat of poverty-triggered exclusion. And vice versa – social or political exclusion may invite poverty.

Poverty is relative. The notion of poverty differs greatly from country to country. Currently, more "poverty conscious" civilised countries fix the minimal level of income. So, people who fail to reach this level are regarded as the ones living below the poverty limit.

Local community

We belong to a number of different social groups, such as family, friends, school, colleagues at work, etc. Local community is one of such social groups. Local community finds its basis in a definite locality. This particular place may be defined from the geographical point of view.

However, the locality is to be sufficiently small to enable the development of definite interrelations among its inhabitants. Besides, the inhabitants ought to identify themselves with the particular local community: "I live in Dieveniškės" or "I live in Butrimonys" or "I live in Balninkai". This means that people do not simply inhabit a definite small town but also belong to a particular community. We have in mind a tangible community within which relevant members are bound by definite bonds. Community members not only see each other but they also interact in a number of different everyday situations – at church or in a beer-house, shop or marketplace, or at a funeral or wedding party. Community means a place where, compared to other places, we feel safer and, what is more, - accepted. Owing to a relatively small volume of community, its members are often united by a common history. For example, in many communities the greater part of people had lost their jobs due to collective farms disintegration.

What features characterise a community?

- 1.
- 2.

...

Other subjects and terms discussed were as follows: "Why do people drink alcohol?" or "Is an asocial family asocial?" or "What is culture?" or "How do you imagine self-government?"

Step two. Local community research

Theoretical principles of the participant observation method demand that the community itself, more specifically, the working group composed of relevant community representatives should be the chief initiator, organiser and performer of research. To secure the collection of secondary information and the running of elementary research, one must provide assistance to the working group. Discussion of issues, such as information necessary to start the improvement of the general situation within the community, helped to specify collectable data and to formulate questions to be given to one's neighbours. The list of indicators worked out by colleague B.Gruževskis was a non-obligatory research instrument. Seminar participants studied the list modifying it where necessary at their discretion. Modifications were introduced basing on relevant community situation, and also on the chances of participants to act in the researcher capacity.

The study of the list of indicators, another document showing the generative potentiality, also served as a means of training. Inquiry into the list allowed community representatives to analyse the community situation in a more purposeful and detailed way. The study of indicators, the analysis of questions constituting the questionnaire survey form, and the

generalisation of data contained in tables contributed to the development of critical consciousness in the project participants.

Research was another important work to be carried out. Community representatives specified and formulated important questions. Having processed these questions from the point of view of the principles of sociological inquiry, we made them more precise. Then we multiplied the questionnaire form on a photocopier, and the members of the initiative group distributed the copies among residents. To carry out the selection of possible respondents, communities mostly used the Kisho table. However, the residents of Balninkai visited every person inhabiting their small town. Later it turned out that their approach was worthwhile. Every community member learned about the on going project personally. This circumstance reduced the volume of gossip, increasing the number of supporters.

Research lasted from several weeks to a couple of months. When the questionnaire data was registered and the findings were presented in the form of relevant generalising tables we were ready to continue our work.

Methodological material on information collection and surveying

It is vitally important to have information on social groups and services directly connected with the strategic planning. Such data help to identify problems accountable for the working out of a strategic plan.

Given that strategic planning is closely related to social exclusion, then it is evident that information may be collected, among other things, to find out the volume of progress made in the area of solving social exclusion problems.

Primary research

This type of research includes the collection of new information by special techniques (survey, questionnaire, observation, etc.). Usually, primary research is an expensive undertaking. High-level expert knowledge is needed to accomplish it.

Secondary research

This type of research means analysing information collected. Compared to the primary research, secondary research is cheaper.

Generally, information collection is a two-step procedure. Analysis of available data completed, or, in other words, the secondary research over, particular areas to be researched with the help of primary research procedure are identified.

Types of information

- ✚ Social demographic data;
- ✚ national census data;
- ✚ information supplied by social service authorities (social care units, labour exchanges, etc.);
- ✚ national surveys (e.g. Labour Force Survey of 1997).

Information about social service authorities and resources.

Working out a strategic plan implies collecting information both on the network of institutions that will be affected by strategic planning and also on the funding of the strategic planning implementation.

Assessment of needs. Featured largely by its qualitative character, this particular information needs to be collected by expert people.

Social and demographic indicators ⁶

Poverty and social exclusion experienced by people or groups is determined by a number of factors. However it must be noted that under our circumstances the most vital factor is employment because work is the chief source of income here.

Inquiry into the problems of poverty and social exclusion implies assessment of the character of employment in a definite territory, and also of the labour market situation. This means that the chief object of our inquiry is local administration authority. Thus, further we shall discuss the indicators that ought to be taken into account when assessing problems relating to poverty and social exclusion or envisaging effective measures for the reduction of relevant negative effects on a local community.

On the level of local administration authorities, one may easily notice an extremely poor statistical basis of economic activity. So, definite indicators may be derived from the data relating to definite inhabited localities (such as a village or a small town).

For the collection of information on unemployment or labour market situation it would be worthwhile to get in touch with a territorial labour exchange.

Data on activities carried out by enterprises or workplaces occupied by employees in budget institutions are available at municipalities and local SODRA units. Such information may be supplied through the mediation of municipal administration workers.

Indicators characterising employment

General indicators

- ✚ The number of residents (GS)
- ✚ The number of women (GS_M)
- ✚ The number of men (GS_V)
- ✚ The number of pensioners (GS_P)
- ✚ The number of children (0-15 years) (GS₀₋₁₅):
- ✚ Including: 0-6 years (GS₀₋₆₀)
- ✚ 7-15 years (GS₇₋₁₅)
- ✚ The number of youth (16-24 years) (GS₁₆₋₂₄):
- ✚ Including 16-18 years (GS₁₆₋₁₈);

Assessment of economically non-active population

To find out the number of economically non-active members in a local community, one must determine:

- ✚ The number of people serving in the army (KP)
- ✚ The number of prisoners (N)
- ✚ The number of students (above 16 years) (M₁₆)
- ✚ The number of higher school students (M_S)
- ✚ The number of disabled (I).
- ✚ The number of economically non-active population (ENG)
- ✚ $ENG = KP + N + M_{16} + M_S + I$

Unemployment assessment

- ✚ The number of unemployed (B):
- ✚ The ones registered at a labour exchange (B_R)
- ✚ The ones non-registered at a labour exchange (B_P)
- ✚ If possible, information on long-term unemployed (over 12 months), registered youth (16-24 years), and people involved in labour market policy programmes, etc. should be elicited from a territorial labour exchange.

Employment assessment

- ✚ The number of people of employable ages (DAG) that is population from 16 to retirement age.
- ✚ The number of employed (U) (excluding farmers):
- ✚ The number of people working at budget institutions (U_V)
- ✚ The number of people working in a private sector (U_P) (not only people officially working at private enterprises but also individuals engaged in individual activities or dealing in used spare motorcar parts, etc. are to be numbered)
- ✚ The number of farmers (\check{Z}):
- ✚ The number of retirement age farmers (\check{Z}_P)
- ✚ The number of farmers who pay social insurance contributions (\check{Z}_S).
- ✚ If possible, the area of land possessed by farmers ought to be specified: how many farmers possess less than 3 ha of land, and how many of them own 15 and over ha of land.

Assessment of social problems

Poverty and social exclusion usually find their expression in social problems. Inquiry into social problems emerging in a locality governed by a local administration authority (or in a settlement) ought to highlight the following points:

- ✚ demographic (determination of birth rate and death rate, discussion of the structure of population by age, and migration patterns, assessment of health care level);
- ✚ standard of living (income received, income structure – what income is received from economic activity, or from social benefits, etc.);
- ✚ education (availability of education (truancy, school dropouts), education quality, etc.);
- ✚ professional training (professional guidance and counselling, vocational training (all levels), employment of young higher school graduates), availability of professional training;
- ✚ spare time (interest clubs, ways of spending one's spare time, children's after school activities, satisfactory/non-satisfactory activities offered by a culture house, etc.);
- ✚ social services (the range and available social services, social services offered to disabled, how are these services organised? are there any absolutely lonely people within the community?, etc.).

Questionnaire survey ⁷

Before starting any activity within a community it is worthwhile to identify the problems to be solved. Understandably, the specified problems ought to be examined very closely because this procedure is indispensable for the working out of ways for problem elimination. What is more, exploration of problems helps community members realise how vitally the community needs this examination.

To understand the existing situation better one needs all available information. Data may come from various sources, such as library / archives and local administration authority, or police station, or culture house, or all other organisations such as labour exchanges, or even telephone directories, etc. Surveying local people is another good way of collecting information. So, a very convenient instrument for data collecting may be the questionnaire.

This specific means for collecting desired information is composed structurally of a written set of questions. These questions must be related logically to the basic tasks of research. Before starting to work out a questionnaire it is vital to determine which problems demand additional information. This specification allows obtaining more precise and more exhaustive data. At the same time, this procedure secures full application of all available sources of information.

Principally, a questionnaire may be divided into three parts. Given that you intend to elicit personal opinion from respondents, it follows that first of all you are to introduce yourself briefly – characterise in 2-3 sentences the researchers and the on-going survey. The second and the third part of the questionnaire are composed of questions.

All questions constituting a questionnaire form may be divided into the following two parts:

- ✚ **Questions on personal life, activities, and relevant products.** These questions are referred to as demographic ones. Replies to these questions provide objective data on a particular individual: gender, age, education, marital status, profession, etc. If questions have been formulated in a precise and clear way, respondents give equally precise and clear answers. However one should not expect such nice results if one's respondents have doubts about the anonymous character of the survey.
- ✚ **Questions on values, opinions and motives.** It is not easy to get answers to these questions. Responses usually fail to be very precise and sincere. The greatest number of unanswered questions comes from this particular part of the questionnaire. To find out the truth researchers use a number of "technical means". For example, instead of asking directly "why?" they formulate several questions. Replies to them allow finding out why the respondent has developed this opinion.

Questions must be formulated simply. This helps respondents understand them correctly without much effort. Questions must refer only to issues that are relevant to the research.

How to make questions – both answerable and inviting the respondent to speak? From the point of view of form questions may be divided into two groups – the open-end and the close-end ones. A close-end question is the one supplemented by a set of pre-formed possible answer alternatives (from 2 to 8 options). A respondent may select one of them. For example: "Do you share the opinion that our settlement is not a safe place to live in?"

- ✚ definitely agree;
- ✚ agree;
- ✚ neither agree nor disagree;
- ✚ disagree;
- ✚ definitely disagree;
- ✚ undecided/no answer"

Asked to answer this type of question, a respondent has to choose one among above options. Another example: "How do you spend your spare time?"

- ✚ farming / carrying out household chores;
- ✚ reading papers or books;
- ✚ being with the family and children;
- ✚ interacting with neighbours or friends;
- ✚ practising hobbies (knitting, angling, etc.);
- ✚ watching TV;
- ✚ going to a café or bar;
- ✚ other;
- ✚ don't know/no answer".

When answering this type of question, respondent may choose several options. However it is important to secure that the number of possible replies should cover less than a half of the total number of options.

When formulating close-end questions it is vital to offer all possible answer options. However this condition is not always satisfied.

The second example may reveal one particular weakness characterising close-end questions. It sometimes happens that respondents confronted with a question do not know what to say. This

implies that by offering somebody a range of answer options and asking to select one or several among them we force the answers on the respondent. The so-called half-open questions where the last option is formulated in this way: "other (please, specify)" may save the situation.

This means that the respondent, having considered the problem for a while, may produce his/her own answer or supplement any of the offered options.

An open-end question means a question not followed by pre-formulated answer options.

For example: "What would you specify as the biggest problem of our community?"

People may answer this type of question in a number of ways. Responses may vary so greatly that it may be impossible to distinguish the several most commonly repeating ones. On the other hand, responses may highlight urgent problems. Unnoticed previously, they could have escaped our attention. This means that they might be missing on a list of options to a close-end question.

A questionnaire is to provide a combination of close-end and open-end questions although the number of close-end ones is usually greater. Basically, they prevail due to the following reason – examination of close-end questions is more simple, easy and cheap.

Selection

To collect answers to the questions constituting a questionnaire we must decide how and what number of respondents we are to survey. People often believe that the greater the number of respondents covered by a survey, the better is the information elicited from them. This is true only to some extent. Surely, one may survey all and every community member. However this will be a time and money consuming undertaking. According to scientists (sociologists, economists, mathematicians, etc.) precise data can be obtained from a limited number of respondents. Thus, it is essential to secure adequate selection of respondents. Relevant procedure implies calculating the number of males and females to be involved in the survey, their age, the level of their education, etc. basing on the overall number of community members. There are several reliable selection techniques. They enable us to perform representative surveys, or, in other words, the ones able to reflect the real situation.

It is equally important to decide how replies to questions will be gathered. Clearly, questionnaire forms may be distributed among selected respondents. However part of these forms "will not come back". Besides, part of these forms may be filled out by somebody else (being short of time, the respondent may ask his/her neighbour to fill out the form, or the form may be filled out jointly with the neighbour). Understandably, one may visit selected respondents, question them, and record their answers. If we survey a small community where people know each other, respondents may not dare to be open. On the other hand, responses may vary according to the person who asks questions (doyen, librarian or student from a local secondary school). Having taken into account local features and interaction traditions, one may select the most suitable survey technique.

Findings provided by the analysis of questionnaire forms will be a useful contribution to the bank of data collected by other means. They will help to carry out other works done for the benefit of relevant communities.

Some recommendations

What concerns collection of primary information, we recommend including several questions aimed to find out how respondents assess changes that will possibly affect their lives. It would not be worthwhile to have this information collected exclusively by experts. Representatives of institutions whose future may be affected by the planned changes ought to help work out questionnaires and select indicators. When gathering information it is necessary to find out how similar problems are solved in other places where strategic planning is employed. Processing of the collected information must be followed by a report. The report should be unambiguous. Relevant information must be presented in the way excluding misinterpretation. The report ought to be submitted for information to the representatives of institutions connected with strategic planning and to local politicians and municipality representatives. In short, - to people who make decisions. This may facilitate the implementation of the strategic plan.

Step three. SWOT analysis

Research work completed, a seminar envisaging further steps was held. First of all, community representatives involved in the research offered their detailed reports. Then, with the help of SWOT analysis the results were generalised. So, having answered the question *How do we live?* people got themselves ready to answer the question *What would we like to achieve?* Notably, in the course of examination of survey tables community representatives realised the following: people demanded a more open style of living compared to the one actually lead by them.

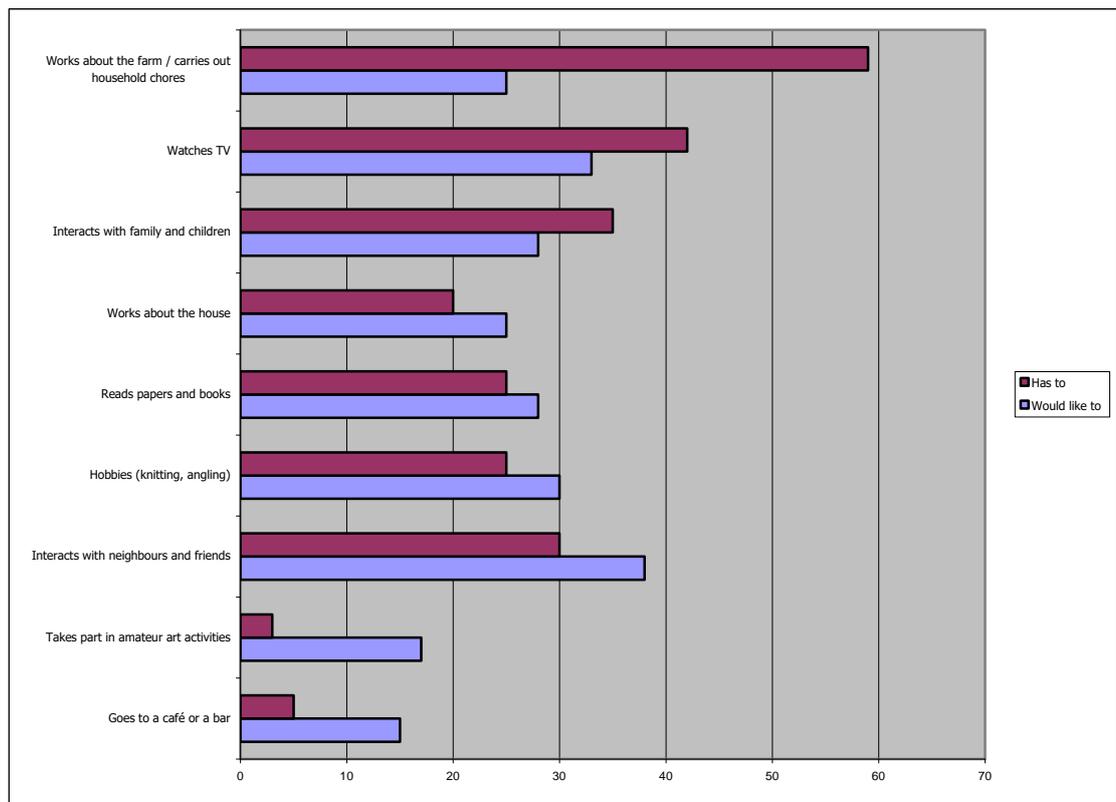
Bar diagram (Fig. 1) clearly indicates that the residents of Balninkai spend their spare time in a way that differs greatly from a desired one. By the way, researchers of other communities also obtained very similar data. Interaction with neighbours, going to a café, participation in amateur arts events might be viewed as the indicator of engagement in public life. Watching TV or working about the house – as the indicator of engagement in private life. Although not reliable statistically, this particular table was a great discovery. It showed that community development not always implied large investment. For the beginning, the opportunities of public life improvement ought to be used up.

Methodological material on SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a loan word. However it has been more and more common in the working out of a strategic plan or in the strategic plan analysis. SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. So, SWOT analysis means the analysis of **current** (1) merits and (2) shortcomings, and **future** (3) opportunities and (4) threats encountered by a social structure (for example, a local community, a business organisation, a bureaucratic institution, etc.).

Goes to a café or a bar	Has to
Takes part in amateur art activities	Would like to
Interacts with neighbours and friends	
Hobbies (knitting, angling)	
Reads papers and books	
Works about the house	
Interacts with family and children	
Watches TV	
Works about the farm / carries out household chores	

Fig. 1. How the residents of Balninkai spend their spare time, and how they would like to.



SWOT analysis is the last step leading to the overall situation assessment when the research of a social structure is to be generalised, or, to put it otherwise, when (a) the characteristics of social and demographic situation, and (b) the specific features of institution network are already clear, and when (c) the analysis of needs is over. On the other hand, SWOT analysis is the first step towards the working out of a plan for the development of social structure. SWOT analysis facilitates the emergence of more realistic visions and the crystallisation of definite objectives – the point of departure in strategic planning.

If the social structure in question happens to be a local community – relevant SWOT analysis will generalise such issues as the demographic data relating to local community members, the network of social institutions providing a range of services to the community, and the needs of local residents. Local community's SWOT analysis is a means of assessing the local community's internal and external situation.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

SWOT analysis scheme

Representatives of the Alanta community performed the following SWOT analysis.

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. Nice landscape.	1. Small number of available working places.
2. Good geographic situation.	2. Big number of old people.
3. Famous from the historical point of view, it has long-standing cultural traditions.	3. Big number of drunkards.
4. Fine dances.	4. Insufficient interaction among people.
5. Homogeneous from the ethnic point of view.	5. Different organisations fail to interact.
6. Many different organisations.	6. Small number of places for youth to gather.
7. Various educational institutions.	7. Folk artists are depressed because nobody supports them.
8. Multiple amateur art activities.	8. Police station is missing.
9. Distinguished leaders of numerous amateur art collectives.	9. An odontologist's room is missing.
10. Secondary school available.	10. Kindergarten is missing.
11. Well-equipped care home for elderly available.	11. Public bath is missing.
12. Outpatient unit available.	12. People do not have an opportunity to satisfy their cultural needs.
13. Pre-school education group at school.	13. Social service centre (shoemaker, hairdresser, laundry, and dressmaker services) is missing.
14. Drug store available.	14. Public library is missing. A school library cannot satisfy the needs of older readers.
15. Many intellectuals.	15. Cultural interaction centre is missing.
16. Good communication.	16. Naujasodis attracts cultural resources. So, Alanta residents who might engage in cultural work are attracted by better working conditions at Naujasodis.
17. Two museums.	17. Naujasodis flourishes at the expense of Alanta.
18. St. Jacob's Church Festival attracts former school graduates and former Alanta residents.	18. The number of information booklets on Alanta is insufficient.
19. Children's club available.	19. Camping grounds are missing near the lakes.
20. Deep-rooted traditions of beautifying environment.	20. Information on resting-places is inadequate.
	21. Young people are not involved in church activities.
	22. Sports organiser is missing.

Opportunities	Threats
1. Consolidation.	1. Splitting up.
2. Development of folk art tradition.	2. Distrust.
3. Development of artistic cultural activities.	3. Split up community.
4. Development of tourism and ecological agriculture.	4. Lack of money.
5. Consolidation of governmental and non-governmental organisations.	5. Absence of unity and solidarity.
6. Each community member is aware of his/her importance.	6. Personal ambitions.
7. Intellectual resources.	7. Indifference and alienation.
8. Chance to earn money during the church festival.	8. Decreasing number of inhabitants.
9. Maximum involvement into Alanta community activities.	9. Harmful habits.
10. Involvement of lake owners.	10. Dissolution of the Alanta Agricultural Company.
11. Creating an educational centre for adults at school.	11. Owners may not allow the community to use the lakes.
	12. Increasing environment pollution.
	13. People are indifferent to activities the Education Centre activities.
	14. Residents of the Alanta Town are getting older.
	15. Secondary school may be closed up.

An example of SWOT analysis.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	PG strategy. Utilisation of strengths for the implementation of opportunities.	TG strategy. Elimination of weaknesses by using the opportunities.
Threats	PP strategy. Utilisation of strengths for the avoiding of potential threats.	TP strategy. Elimination of weaknesses coupled with the minding the existing threats.

Matrix of SWOT strategies.

Recommendations relating to SWOT analysis

When inquiring into strengths and weaknesses within the framework of SWOT analysis you must bear in mind first of all your own community or organisation.

When assessing the opportunities and threats you must pay more attention to external factors.

When inquiring into strengths and weaknesses you must analyse the social, economic and cultural aspects of your community.

Sometimes strengths may turn into weaknesses and vice versa. On the other hand, threats may open new opportunities.

You must bear in mind that you focus on poverty and social exclusion. So, you must consider in greater detail what measures may reduce poverty or at least social exclusion in you community.

When running SWOT analysis always take into account the results of your research of local community.

Step four. Forming a vision

On the grounds of a detailed community analysis the creation of a strategic plan was started. A plan usually starts with a distinct and unambiguous vision.

Vision means a most generalised goal pursued by the group. Formulated in one or two sentences, it shows the most general ways of its implementation.

An example of a vision

In 2005 the problems of long-standing unemployment and poverty will be successfully solved in our district. This will be done by carrying out the programmes for education provided to individuals and communities suffering from multiple chronic need. These programmes purpose to increase the rate of employment and the number of working places, and to improve the quality of life.

Vision:

- + consolidates a group of people who will work together;
- + determines an integrated activity direction;
- + describes the character of activity.
- + Vision making enables group members who will subsequently work together to:
- + come to an agreement relating to common goals;
- + assess their further performance basing on clear priorities;
- + find a compromise if a conflict emerges;
- + determine the priorities.

How to produce a vision

- + Each group member is given 15-20 minutes to summarise in one or two sentences the chief goal, and to indicate the most general ways of its implementation.
- + Then, groups consisting of 2-4 persons agree what general vision they are going to put forward.
- + Further, the entire group gets engaged in this work, and eventually all members come to an agreement. An "editorial board" composed of people representing each group may be a reasonable solution. The board may co-ordinate all opinions; besides, it may suggest a summary vision for general discussion.

What visions did the representatives of participating communities work out? Here they are:

Alanta

Group A	Active community, more working places available. Cultural and social life will be improved. Village tourism will develop.
Group B	Problems caused by long-standing idleness are solved successfully. Community will have its centre able to satisfy the cultural and social needs of community members.
Common vision	Problems caused by long-standing idleness are solved successfully. Community will satisfy its cultural and social needs.

Balninkai

Group A	<p>Agricultural tourism centre of Balninkai</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ consolidates its workers; ✚ youth will be the organiser of activities; ✚ amateur arts: children's and adults' circles; ✚ folk artists will become active again.
Group B	<p>Under the auspices of the church the community of youth and adults gets consolidated: members engage in recollections, circles and travels are organised (interaction among institutions). The problem of occupation is solved: people get involved in the creation of projects, this helps to obtain funds for the implementation of various programmes.</p>
Common vision	<p>In five years the problem of occupation will be partly solved: a community centre will be created; it will consolidate the working people, involve youth into organising activities, various clubs will be formed, Catholic organisations will be created, agricultural tourism will be encouraged. All this will be achieved through the education of people, and also owing to the involvement of community members and businessmen, former residents of Balninkai, into the working out and the implementation of projects.</p>

Common vision produced by the representatives of Poškonys community

We envisage to improve, at least partly, the quality of life and to reduce the effects of social exclusion over the nearest three years.

We shall seek this goal by means of education and practical implementation programmes aimed at the development of village tourism, ecological agriculture, and other types of activity.

Step five. Rating goals by priorities

Basing on performed research, SWOT analysis and the vision, groups consisting of community representatives formulated strategic goals. Implementation of these goals could secure the achievement of desired aim. The number of such formulated goals usually totalled 7 –12. So, the group had to decide which of them were the most important ones. A special rated table helped to carry out this task. Each group member filled out the table form. Then, elementary arithmetic calculations showed which goals were the most important ones.

Other tables indicate the results of work done by the communities of Alanta and Poškonys. One more table is given in the Balninkai community profile provided in the Appendix.

Methodological material used for the rating of goals when working in a group

Table facilitating the rating of goals by priority on the basis of established criteria. Each goal is to be rated on a 1-10-point scale.

Criteria	Goals
Does it answer the vision?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 ...
Is it possible to implement it under current circumstances?	
Does it answer the available knowledge and skills?	
Does it answer the value attitudes?	
Can it produce any effect?	
Does it answer the budget capacity?	
Is it measurable?	
In total:	
Rating	

Goal	Priority
To establish a community centre in Alanta.	7
To activate the community of Alanta through education.	6
To identify and encourage leaders.	1
To inform the community of Alanta about various initiatives.	4
To develop business and create new working places.	9
To consolidate the community of Alanta.	3
To give Alanta residents a chance to form interest groups.	5
To beautify the Town of Alanta.	2
To make the Town of Alanta safer.	8

Goals of the Alanta community

Goal	Priority
To organise the tidying up of environment and the forming up of recreation zones.	5
To create a community sports club at school.	4
To organise community education and information events.	7
To look for the ways of activating local people and encouraging own business. For this purpose - to establish a community information centre.	6
To register a non-governmental organisation at the Poškonys community.	2
To use the non-governmental organisation's strength for the creation and implementation of projects.	3
To develop the business of weaving.	1

Goals of the Poškonys community.

Step six. Splitting goals by tasks

Rating goals by their importance is followed by the planning and objectification of goal implementation. That was not an easy task. It turned out that some actions help to achieve several goals.

Methodological material used for the splitting of goals by tasks

Example of a table containing tasks, stages of their implementation, and indicators.

Purpose: to familiarise higher school students with labour market situation and job acquisition perspectives in the locality.

Task	Implementation criterion	Implementation stage	To be implemented by
1. To provide methodological training to labour exchange and municipality workers so that they may instruct students, alongside with teachers, on the chances of employment.	2 labour exchange and 2 municipality workers will receive training on the application of teaching methods and will work out relevant training programmes.	Candidate nomination – January 2001. Training in the area of methods – February 2001. Working out the training programme – March 2001.	March 2001.
2. To gear up a class / lesson schedule.	Schedule is worked up, and arrangements for the acquisition of premises are made.		
3. To notify students and class masters / mistresses.			
...			

Here tasks mean definite statements specifying the ways of implementing goals. However, the group concerned with relevant tasks is to be designated. Besides, stages of implementing relevant tasks are to be strictly determined from the point of view of time. Finally, the date by which the task is to be completed must be given.

The tasks must be:

- S Specific
- M Measurable
- A Achievable
- R Realistic
- T Time-bound

Step seven. Planning the way of implementation

The following implemented projects of the Balninkai community centre are an excellent example showing that village community development projects may be really diverse.

Balninkai community centre projects

1. "Social and demographic problems encountered by the Balninkai community: possible solutions"
Sponsor: Baltic-American Partnership Programme.
2. "Youth Day at Balninkai"
Conference and festival intended for young people living in Balninkai, Girsteitiškis, and Želva.
Sponsor: State Council for Youth Affairs.
3. "Let's be together"
Pre-school education groups intended for children.
Sponsor: Education Change Fund.
4. "Let's go together"
Forming a civic society.
Sponsor: Baltic-American Partnership Programme.
5. "Under the native skies"
Professional artists work with youth groups.
Sponsors: Open Lithuania Fund, "The Acting Art" Programme of the Netherlands.
6. "Find yourself"
Youth works under the guidance of V. Vaitkevičienė, a professional artist (ceramics).

Sponsor: State Council for Youth Affairs.

7. "Development of human resources through the encouragement of philanthropy"
"There is not a single person in the world incapable of giving any help to his/her neighbour".

Sponsors: Molėtai Municipality, Baltic-American Partnership Programme.

8. "Self-government of citizens – a fresh step towards the community development"
Consolidation and activation of the Balninkai Town community.

Sponsor: Baltic-American Partnership Programme.

9. "The rate of depression cases at Molėtai District Balninkai Residential Area: causes and effects on social, cultural, and economic relations with the community"

Sponsor: Open Lithuania Fund.

You may get more detailed information on the activities carried out by Balninkai Community Centre at <http://balninkai.w3.lt>.

BASIC FACTORS ACCOUNTING FOR SUCCESS

Good leaders and effective management

Groups containing members distinguished for exceptional qualities of a leader were the lucky ones. Leadership implies huge energy and dedication to the organisation engaged in the development of one's village. Moreover, it demands diplomatic qualities, such as tact, patience, ability to reach a compromise, to settle conflicts, and to harmonise a wide variety of different opinions and views. Good leaders are silent about their personal achievements. On the other hand, they are open, impartial, and reliable. What is more, they are able to take optimal decisions and create a good team. Leaders must be good analysts and strategists. They must know how to interact with people. This helps to initiate good relations with potential volunteers and other people interest in the development of a particular locality. All these qualities are necessary in order to form an efficient organisation able to initiate and co-ordinate village development. Leaders must be organisers who inspire trust in people. In sum, leaders are the ones who can help their community to accumulate its social capital.

Good board of directors

Organisations able to create a board of directors – talented, dedicated and involved in the co-ordination of village development - were the successful ones. Good boards managed to form sub-committees able to work independently and efficiently. It does not matter much whether community development centres are fully staffed or understaffed – it is the efficient and well-made board of directors that secures successful development of a relevant community.

Recognition of the importance of planning

Planning is the chief integral condition for successful performance. This has been evident since the very emergence of village development organisations. Groups coping with numerous village development problems successfully view the importance of planning and research as the basis for successful planning. Planning provides everyone involved in the activities with a clear direction for action. Successful village development organisations can think strategically and plan their operations. Detailed planning of one's operations is founded on a premise that village community development does not provide any ready recipes. Evidently, every village community is to find its own way. Speaking of village development we may soon notice that the old proverb warning against futile attempts at inventing a bicycle is out of place in this particular case. Each village community must invent its own bicycle. The invented product may be similar to the ones invented by other communities, yet it is absolutely necessary to have "the bicycle" invented directly by its future users.

Ability to take a critical view at one's own activity

Experience shows the following: groups who permanently assess their performance are more successful. Assessment results are integrated into the plans under preparation. This accounts for increased progress in the operations pursued by the organisation. Successful organisations can learn from their mistakes. They examine their failures very closely.

Effective groups of partners

Following the principles of partnership is an important condition for success. The greater number of partners, the better are chances for success. Involvement of partners differing in terms of their interests opens a chance to find solutions reflecting a big number of different aspects.

Quick success

Groups are often motivated for continued performance by tangible success. Success facilitates gaining prestige in the eyes of local community. Quick success gives strength. Besides, it opens opportunities for more complex and ambitious projects.

More stable financial sources

Success experienced by community development organisations depends on the chances of finding more stable financing sources. Groups who managed to take up and pursue profitable activities became less dependent or even absolutely independent from external funding. A chance to earn money gives an opportunity to concentrate more on the problems encountered by local community.

Ability to obtain funding (project literacy)

Ability to use funding for the implementation of community goals is an important issue. However, organisations able to integrate support coming from various sources into their planned operations are more successful compared to the ones able to obtain funding at any cost.

Ability to learn from others and determination to introduce novelties

Successful organisations are open ones. They actively seek useful know-how applicable to their own community. These organisations are not afraid to introduce novelties into their work and structure. However successful organisations are well aware of the following principle: the level of knowledge about local conditions determines project's success. What is more, successful organisations know that experience coming from other sources should not be adopted uncritically.

Workers' qualification

Clearly, this condition is absolutely vital for the successful functioning of any organisation.

Ability to elaborate the organisation

Organisations able to change and adapt to the changing conditions were among the successful ones. Even highly developed organisations were able to preserve their identity and ties with local people.

Wish to learn and develop skills

Members of successful organisations were permanently involved in the study of subjects important from the point of view of village development and organisation operation.

3 CHAPTER: THEORY – BASIC CONCEPTUAL ORIENTATIONS

3.1 POSITIVE APPROACH TO THE DIFFERENT IN INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

By Prof. Dr. Stefka Dinchyiska, Trakia University, Faculty of Education, Stara Zagora, Bulgaria

Key concepts in the paper are: positive approach, individuals, communities, different. Under positive approach should be understood building up of realized positive adjustment, thinking, attitude and behaviour to the differences due to race, ethnos, sex, age, sexual orientation, people with disorders etc.

Individual is everyone as a part of the society, as a single representative of the human race and the social group, bearer of its characteristic symptoms and social functions (L. Desev, 1999)

The concept "community" has a more complex semantic content and is considered as a relatively big group of people, big in relation to quantity formation, formation of people, natural for people environment in which they satisfy their needs of belonging, recognition, safety, realization and bearing the peculiarities of these people (M. Hadzhyiski, 1999). Community is formed by different signs:

- ✚ depending on the way of its origin – spontaneous and organized
- ✚ according to power – stable and unstable (quickly disintegrating)
- ✚ according to duration – transient and of long duration
- ✚ according to territory – local and global
- ✚ according to the ethnos – majority and minority
- ✚ according to material, economic, social, race and health status
- ✚ according to sex, age and sexual orientation
- ✚ according to professional affiliation, hobby and etc.

In the context of the social pedagogy and social work the stress is put mainly on the communities, built on the ethnic basis, special needs (disabled people) and poor social strata of the society.

The different is a social-psychological phenomenon, logically connected and reflecting the specific peculiarities of separate people and communities, which make them minority differing from the majority.

The contemporary social world is a complex and dynamic diversity in which live people and communities with different social, economic, cultural, race, ethnic, religious, professional, educational, age, sexual and health status. Very often the different is perceived destructively, provoking negative energy and forming negative stereotypes and biases. Of special importance for the people working in the social sphere is to perceive and understand the different, their positive adjustment and skills for adequate communication and interaction. The proclaimed formula for tolerance is not enough. Tolerance sets restricted option, line "from-to" between people and communities. The stability of the society integrity is connected with the surmounting of the traditional distrust and suspiciousness to the different. It is perspective when the different is confirmed as a constructive social phenomenon not as a confrontation. This thesis is in the basis of the positive approach.

A possibility to form a positive approach to the different in the students of the specialties Social pedagogy and Social activities gives the subject "Anti-bias education". Together with the knowledge this subject forms skills and positive adjustment for interaction with the different in individuals and communities. It provokes personal and professional cognitive, emotional and

behavioral changes. Therefore, the actuality of the problem is provoked by the imperatives of the contemporary social reality:

1. The necessity of reorganization of adjustments and correlations to the values and standards of the EU for establishing of incorporating and fair society.
2. Tendency of stepping out from the closed social space and establishing of interaction between people and communities with different culture and mentality.
3. Ensuring quality training of the students as social workers for their future realization which includes communication with people with differences in sex, age, ethnos, religion, health status, anthropometric data etc.
4. Awareness and definition of their role as pedagogues – part of the processes of interaction with children from the minority groups of the society.

The results of the investigation carried out among 160 students of specialties Special pedagogy and Social activities, regular and extra-mural education at the Trakia University proves that subject Anti-bias education is a necessary one. The investigation was done through a questionnaire consisting of two main parts – theoretical and practical one, in which is reflected their personal experience as well as that of their close friends and relatives. The information from the two parts supplements each other and increases the reliability of the results. Regardless of that the empirical data is examined very carefully without drawing any final conclusions and assumptions.

The obtained results give a very interesting socially-emotional stratification in which it is very difficult to make any categorical conclusions.

Great part of the investigated groups (87%) stress on the fact that they do not have any biases about race (this is so, because according to them, in this respect our country is homogenous).

Unstable and contradicting is their opinion on the Roma ethnos, 75% declare that they do not have any biases toward Roma people, but 90% think that they are lazy, thievish, do not care about the education of their children.

They are very positive toward people with disorders. All investigated students are on the opinion that these people should have an equal chance, but restrict the areas of their realization.

They are very cautious and put a distance to the people with different sexual orientation. It is accepted that everyone has the right of personal choice, but at same time with non-committing phrases of politeness it is suggested that they would not like to have such people in their circle of friends and colleagues. The prevailing opinion is that many people of art raise their popularity/ rating by making public their homosexuality.

A field of high voltage was the opinions about the age: students of regular education think that elderly people are very conservative, take the working places of the young ones and make them jobless, extra-mural student stress that the elderly people are vulnerable in their profession, with strongly decreased possibilities for new offers, pushed out by the young people who are initiative and flexible.

The results of the second part of the investigation show that 95% of the students have personal experience on situations in which they have observed unfair attitude toward people because they are different:

-  toward the Roma people (as neglect) – 45% of the investigated;
-  toward the elderly people (pensioners) under the form of social and economic humiliation - 25%;

- ✚ toward the homosexuals as mockery – 30%.
- ✚ The careful analysis of the empirical data allows us to make the following conclusions:
- ✚ there is lack of information about existing stereotypes and biases against the different in individuals and communities;
- ✚ put a distance from the problems of the existing biases and discrimination practices, which are accepted as “phenomena” which does not concern us and our society;
- ✚ it is necessary that people, working with children and adults to prepare themselves for communication and interaction with the different through the Anti-bias education, which means not assimilation and tolerance, but respect and positive attitude.
- ✚ Theoretical basis of the suggested education subject are built on the conceptions of recognized authors in the area of “anti-bias education and work with individuals and communities”.

This program is applied in qualification courses of children, primary and secondary school teachers, as well in trainings of parents of children of different ethnos. The results of these trainings show that they are necessary and that they provoke adjustment and desire for change and co-operation for building of one socially fair society.

At Trakia University the subject Anti-bias education has the statute of eligible subject. It is structured in three parts: lecture course, seminar exercises and practical activities with 30 credits. Element of the education is the execution of independent works: case, thesis, texts, papers, projects. The defended independent works carry additional credits to the students.

The education supposes a process of change related to the professional and personal transformation in the conditions of creative atmosphere and helping environment. The aims of the program are:

- ✚ Perfecting the students’ personal experience in the area of values, opinions and feelings, provoked by experienced injustice on cognitive and emotional level;
- ✚ Awareness of the problem on personal and professional level, developing of skills for elaboration of strategies for change and interaction with communities.
- ✚ The program content comprises two main accents: developing of critical understanding and formation of engaged behavior and adjustment for creating of a fair and incorporating society.

A program of studies
For education of students on the subject
Anti-bias education

Lecture course

1. Essence, characteristics and parameters of Anti-bias education
2. Glossary of the main terms
3. Areas of action
4. Nature of man
5. Constructive listening
6. Dialogue as a process
7. Institutions and biases
8. Inner depression and external oppression
9. Personal space
10. Interaction with individuals and communities
11. Directions for building an union
12. Characteristics of the ally
13. Strategies for making allies

Seminar exercises

1. Anti-bias education – actuality and significance
2. Anti-bias and stereotypes – structural components
3. Functions of biases and stereotypes
4. Functions of the personal space
5. Technology of the constructive listening
6. Characteristics of the dialogue
7. Cross-cultural sensitivity
8. Stages in building of allies
9. Strategies of building of allies

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3.2 LIFEWORLD OR THE COMMUNITY? PROPOSALS FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE THEORY DEBATE IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNITY WORK.

By Dieter Oelschlägel, Germany²⁰

Regarding a trend within the field of social sciences

It has been possible to recognise a trend towards a "Alltagswende" (Turn to the everyday) in the field of social sciences since the mid 1970s. In this process the terms of "Everyday life" and "lifeworld" are often used synonymously. This trend has its roots in the academic everyday world of this age. We recall: In addition to developments in the field of home affairs (job bans) the ramifications of the "oil crisis" also caused the reform movements in the social sector to come to a standstill and thus also caused a sense of disquiet to arise with regard to the "great theories" behind the reform ideas. Of course the strengthening of the new movements (the women's movement, the ecology movement, and the peace movement) play an important part in this process because they shifted the action options of the individual to the fore to an increasing extent. "Ultimately the ramifications of the general crisis of capitalism, which extended to all the social sectors and have an influence that impacts to a major extent upon individual everyday life, influences the conditions of reproduction at all levels, which force us to address the everyday lives of the people..." (Wietzke, page 391).

Some aspects of this turn to the everyday and the life world in the social sciences are listed below:

- ✚ History 'from below'
- ✚ Research of everyday life events
- ✚ Investigation of actual action and work processes instead of programmatic determination of targets, especially in the field of social work
- ✚ Emphasis of individual experiences *vis-à-vis* social structures (biographical concepts in the fields of research and education work) (compare Luther).

They attach great hopes to the following notions:

- ✚ People should be integrated within the field of social practice and research as subjects and no longer as objects
- ✚ It should become clear that social conditions do not exclusively determine the social environment but it is rather the case that conditions are produced, reproduced and transformed
- ✚ In this way the question poses itself regarding "mediation between subject processes (e.g. the constitution of the understanding of everyday life) and 'objective' (and structuring) conditions (Levy, page 93).

Basically we can track two lines of development of this debate, which differ in terms of the evaluation of everyday life and the lifeworld as an object of criticism. It is the social individual sphere, in which those conflicts are dealt with, which are due to the yawning gaps, the contradictions of objective and subjective conditions of action (compare Prodoehl).

Concepts that are more phenomenological in nature view everyday life as an instance of criticism. They refer to the criticism of everyday life and the lifeworld of the academic world. Their categories are not derived from any science but determined in the structures of the lifeworld. In this process the social reality continues to be restricted to the internal perspectives of the individuals which means that "the theory is uncritically subject to the (non-transparent)

²⁰ Dieter Oelschlägel: Lebenswelt oder Gemeinwesen? Anstöße zur Weiterentwicklung der Theorie-Diskussion in der Gemeinwesenarbeit. In: Grundlagen und Standards der Gemeinwesenarbeit. Hrsg. v. Wolfgang Hinte u. a., Münster 2001, S. 38 - 43.

conditions of everyday life" (Luther page 445). Alheit formulates his criticism even more starkly when he expresses his suspicion that the concept of everyday life was now replacing the concept of society (Alheit, page 11 and following pages).

The debate concerning the lifeworld was then essentially influenced by Jürgen Habermas. He did not juxtapose the two perspectives ('external' criticism of everyday life - internal view of society), but linked them with one another in a cooperative manner. The lifeworld represents the horizon within which people act; however it is "restricted and transformed by the structural transition of society as a whole" (Habermas, Volume 2, page 182 and following pages). The lifeworld is not identical to society. The internal view of things makes people blind. It is thus dependent upon the way the person acting interpret things. He can transform the lifeworld by means of this. Habermas thus applies the "concept of a transformation of the lifeworld transmitted by means of learning processes" (Luther, 450).

Deficits of the lifeworld are due to the system. Habermas summarises them by using the term "the colonialisation of the lifeworld".

Put very simply the colonialisation of the lifeworld means on the one hand the penetration of experts who assume the professional processing of cultural traditions and knowledge from the everyday world (cultural impoverishment), and on the other hand the control of life worlds by money and law and thus the penetration of economic and administrative rationality into areas, which are dependent upon lifeworld communication.

In this case both further expounding upon and also criticising these thought processes would go too far. Instead I want to link some notions of critical psychology with the concept of the lifeworld because I feel this offers a promising perspective to further pursue a theory debate in the field of community work.

Lifeworld as an area of opportunity

The main performance of the lifeworld concept comprises the fact that the manner in which the structuring of everyday existence - and community work also has something to do with this – of the people takes place can be researched, transformed and structured. However, it cannot be brought to bear "if the modality of the 'structuring of everyday existence' is embedded within the social conditions..." (Wenzke, page 393).

The lifeworld is the location where the individual or the group acts. It is the area of the daily actions of the people. It is thus the point of intersection of the individual and society.

Understanding the lifeworld means deciphering the communication process between society and the individual. This communication process can be very generally represented as follows: the people produce the social conditions and thus their life conditions and are subject to them to the same extent. Only: the social (economic, social, political, cultural...) conditions are no longer viewed as the mere determination of the lifeworld of the people, but instead as a *possibility*. A lifeworld is an area of opportunity in which the individual always has action alternatives. People in the same situation have alternative action options. The lifeworld always represents a *relationship of possibilities and hindrances* of human action.

We can express this idea once again in Klaus Holzkamp's words: "Every individual masters his existence in the lifeworld that is accessible from his/her point of view and upon which he/she has an immediate focus, whereby the microstructures of social semantic relations that "face" the subject in such a way initially suggest the presence of certain foundations of actions" (Holzkamp, page 29). However, it also concerns their extension and the crossing of them due to the fact that the immediate lifeworld is itself a dependent substructure of overall society conditions. It basically means people have the alternative of coming to terms with, or tackling, the lifeworld.

These considerations are important in terms of the community worker's view of the lifeworld: they must investigate which options it makes available for the people - these shall be extended or recreated - and which conditions they contain - these shall be repressed or removed. The greater the number of options of political, cultural and social action the lifeworld offers the greater the number action alternatives are that are made available for the people. In this case it must be stressed that the action alternatives themselves can go in two different directions: they can increase the people's ability to learn about the lifeworld. And they can mean that people accommodate themselves within this lifeworld. However, this would mean dispensing with other options.

We have thus found, in my opinion, an analysis level for social work actions, relating to the "persons affected" but also relating to the social worker or the social research specialists the subsequent elaboration of which can become fruitful for community work (e.g. neighbourhood analysis). However, this is not sufficient if it investigates the lifeworld or its social conditionality. The lifeworld is essentially influenced by:

- ✚ The logic of the capitalist economy: Exchange, competition, commodity thinking extending to the relationships
- ✚ The control strategies of the state (money, law, planning – e.g. rents, income support contributions, youth help programmes). Community work also forms part of the arsenal of state or communal control policy and in this capacity interferes with lifeworlds
- ✚ Ideologies, explanations of the "persons affected", the areas of potential of everyday knowledge, which are in themselves contradictory (e.g. the experiences from "above" and "below"; performance ideologies, xenophobia).

The knowledge of this relativity and its systematic analysis can guard against romantic evaluations, which are easily linked with the notions of the "milieu", the "neighbourhood".

And if the society as a class society bears the characteristics of (class) contradiction then we also experience this contradictoriness - in various forms - in the lifeworld. Lifeworlds are never free of contradictions. They are neither areas that have been completely capitalised nor are they pure nests of resistance. The historical analysis of them will uncover both elements of capitalist destruction and the colonisation of living quarters, the environment and social relations and also resistant forms of life that have a sense of solidarity.

The state control policy has particularly gained in influence in terms of the way it structures life worlds in the past few decades. Habermas also wants to express this idea by means of his colonisation theory. It reveals itself by means of the bureaucratisation and juridification of everyday spheres of life (the raising of children, health care). State institutions assume everyday functions. The people are defined as clients and consumers by means of the law and money. Experts assume the interpretation and solution of conflicts in the lifeworld. We must investigate to what extent community work has such colonisation tendencies as a form of intervention of state, free or alternative responsible bodies. However, reference must also be made to the socio-political ambivalence of this subject area. Support for people to master their lifeworld (money, services) can be withdrawn under the guise of removing bureaucracy and empowerment.

The classic methods of social research and social work do not extend to the lifeworlds of the "persons affected". They divide them up and deal with the parts. In this way they become instruments of colonisation (e.g. questionnaires or concepts of individualising assistance). They remove the persons affected from their lifeworld. How often do social workers who have been trained with respect to a certain method work around a problem for so long until it fits in exactly with the kind of method that they master? This means that the classic methods must be embedded in comprehensive lifeworld concepts and I rank community work amongst these.

References to a community work discussion

I am fully aware that I have only scratched the surface of the concept of the "lifeworld" and a lot of systematic work is still required. I nevertheless hope that I have been able to clearly demonstrate that this offers a potential starting point for community work and its further development.

Maybe we can dispense with the concept of "community work", which is steeped in ideology and keeps returning like a boomerang, in a more convincing manner in this way than by replacing it by "neighbourhood orientation". It is maybe possible to fill the working principle of community work with content if the lifeworld concept can stimulate the goal discussion of community work prior to the stage of methodical pragmatic action (e.g. integration of the methods and target groups, activation of the persons affected).

Here are a few concluding notices with respect to this: If you understand the lifeworld as an area of opportunity then all the objectives that are derived statistically and in a normative manner become questionable. Goals must be based on the specific subjects, their experiences and skills. Then abstract goals (organising oneself....) will no longer be formulated but instead questions are asked "about the life circumstances that are objectively present and the possibilities of influencing and changing things that are subjectively present" (Braun, page 23). However, this kind of questioning means analysis and not the reading of something into the lifeworld.

In our projects we have always investigated the situation of the persons affected, the situation in neighbourhoods, and the subjective mental states and the reasons for the actions of persons affected are neglected often enough as a precondition for a target determined for the community work. The synthesis of the external and the internal view of things within the lifeworld concept as it should be understood here is indicative of this deficit in the formulation of goals.

The lifeworld concept also makes it possible to address the constellation of contradictions under which people live and act in the target determined. This means to guard against any one dimensional approach in terms of the goals.

There are still bound to be a lot of questions that have not been answered now; a lot of readers will bewail the absence of a specific case example. This must be the task of other articles and hopefully a more far reaching debate.

3.3 COMMUNITY: IDEAL AND REALITY

By Dr. Ilona Vercseg, Hungary

(The beginnings of Hungarian community development date back to the early 1980s. While the first ten years were characterized by experimentation with new methods and action techniques, since the political changeover attention has been paid to the propagation of methods, specialist training, network development and laying the theoretical and ethical basis of the profession. This paper is an excerpt from the author's longer study of the same title. Instead of the well-known interpretations of community theory, which are part of the longer analysis, it focuses on the community concept of the so-called socialist society and its criticism, and on the social function of communities as seen by one of the founders of community development in Hungary.)

INTRODUCTION

The word "community" has a bad ring nowadays. Similarly to so many concepts, it is disfavoured, for its meaning and application have been detached from each other, making the term become an ideological, obsolete, somewhat pompous and false entry in the dictionary of a fading world. But is this really the case? After all, the word "community" has been retained to express much-desired human relations and we embark upon the analysis of the term with an eye on community development, a profession that is built upon this term as its basic concept and which formulates "community" as a shortage, as something desirable that does not exist, whose birth could even be promoted.

While Hungarian professional literature of the recent past, i.e. of the "socialist era" approached the topic almost exclusively from the angle of social psychology and group theory and talked about "the community of people", western sociology uses the term for denoting also locality. Once created, the concept absorbed various shades and hues of meaning over the course of centuries. I am afraid the Hungarian interpretation lacks this historical dimension; it has too much group theory inclination, or it was narrowed down by past policy, thus lacking in the richness of thinking that a single collective concept has integrated over the years.

Analysis is necessary also to expand the meaning of the word. Historical analysis may have a bearing on future scope of interpretation and action by incorporating "locality", a dimension of community theory less familiar in this country. Locality does not play a part in a centralized society, hence it has no interpretation. Efforts towards democracy including a new administrative structure and new opportunities for social and professional action (for instance, community work) raise the importance of clarification.

(Next, the study provides a historical analysis of the concept of community. It describes the change of the community ideal from community of the Greek polis to the alienated communities of modern societies based on the division of labour. It examines various aspects of the "wholesome person" as opposed to the sliced-up personality and the "liberated individual" as well as the experiments that aimed at a new interpretation of community in the modern world. Then it observes:)

The attractive syntheses which try to extract the values of the community from historical patterns and implant them into modern life - in other words, those which try to coordinate individuality with the community ideal, are in very close connection with a major historical experiment of the past which attempted to subordinate people's lifelong activity and thinking, indeed the entire operation of societies to an objective depicted as desirable. The failure of this objective has done great harm to the belief in the community ideal. In these countries "community" became a synonym for "socialist" as opposed to "individualistic" or "bourgeois" (that is, non-socialist or oppositional) behaviour. Everything that fell in line with the official

objectives of society was socialist and all that deviated from it was bourgeois. This practice set out to eliminate communal traditions and limited new efforts at community development while putting full-fledged self-expression and freedom on its banner. Removal of property, and with it, of self-determination slowly smothered the ability of self-organization; and "the succession of 'ideological retraining and guidance campaigns' compulsorily demonstrating sham optimism with the false practice and slogans of a 'community-based' society left the population with a downright negative community experience. As a result, people gradually withdrew from the various levels of community and took refuge in privacy, the only sphere of life where there was a scope for autonomous decision" (HANKISS) - or at least for the illusion thereof, as the power caught us even there. It is by no accident that community life (which, limited as it was, fortunately still functioned in Hungary in accordance with the specificities of various age groups), was taken up by young people primarily. Elemér Hankiss's researches in the early 1980s pointed out that Hungarian society was more individualistic and lacked community more than, for example, the American.

As we will see, the high-level interpretation of the Hungarian Marxist community theory went awry in practice, and from the late 70s and early 80s, it was more proper among intellectuals to talk about the group rather than about the ideologically tinted, unclear and washed-out community. The reason for this change was a new drive to seek clear-cut concepts, which had a narrower scope but which showed a clear reference. Group is a concept free of ideology. Indeed, it had to "suffer" for this, as community vs. group was described as a human formation with added quality. Marxist group theory, however, was unable to make the most of this excess quality, i.e. the dimension of common activity within a group, for this is the very aspect that had been limited and fully subordinated to the official political intent.

In the centralized and hierarchic social structure, widespread concepts of Western urban sociology, such as locality, local communities or their smaller units, neighbourhoods were not mentioned for a long time. Studies in theoretical and empirical sociology in the early 1980s, researching local society and local power, as well as the first experiments in community development encompassing the entire local society were novel in that they discovered locality with its complexity, its authority-related, economic, intellectual, emotional, historic identity and community or with the absence thereof. It was discovered that a non-structured, non-cohesive (local) society that is falling apart without grassroots is defenseless against power and is kept dependent in the extreme.

However, it is only in a democratic society that efforts in the field of theory and limited experimental practice coupled with the expansion of the scope of civil action have a bearing on the functioning of society as a whole.

Obviously, old and crumbling structures are not immediately replaced by new ones. The vacuum unveils the possibility of emerging communities in the society tuning into a market economy and competition. Nor is it possible to tell exactly what can be attributed to the former practices of mass societies, to human development and human nature. Self-interest naturally demands more scope than the pseudo-community ideal, whose institutional manifestation, for better or for worse, suggested the idea of community at least for a while. In contrast, the present lack of institutions is frightening even if the new community ideal prepares for active participation in the development of society and offers new types of economic, political, cultural and leisure community involvement as opposed to the former frames, which only catered for cultural and leisure activities. Quickly the suspicion crops up: is it not utopistic to dream about a community ideal that germinates in the soil of a market economy? To project the idea of democracy as a panacea for all ills bringing about full-fledged social cooperation?

(The following part of the study offers a critical analysis of community narrowed down to the social psychological term used in recent past.)

Community = quality group?

The reader is probably familiar with Lewin's and Merton's value-free group theory whereby community is often a synonym for group. Ágnes HELLER, one of the best Hungarian Marxist philosophers rejects the value-free notion. She considers community to be a quality group. "The group is the lowest, most rudimentary and primitive stage of social integrations... community is a higher-level integration." (op. cit. p. 59)

"During the declining phase of traditional societies, a choice appeared whereby man, without failing, could leave a traditional community and choose a new one. The idea of man ceasing to exist as a community individual from birth and can live through life without ever belonging to a community also stems from this period. (ibid. p.65)

"We find ourselves in a group accidentally whereas we choose the community we belong to consciously... In case, individuality and the group are in a substantial and permanent correlation... it is no longer a group but a community." (ibid. p. 56)

The basis of a conscious choice is "a relatively homogeneous system of values" which the individual cannot infringe. (ibid. p. 63)

Mária MÁRKUS and András HEGEDŰS follow Marx's thinking whereby "the abolition of private ownership of productive means aims at not only doing away with the exploitation of man by (another) man but also liberating the individual from the rule of things and social powers and conditions that appear as powers related to alien objects amidst of which man can develop into an authentic individual, i.e. into a personality.

These lines of thinking connect ideas often detached from one another, such as community and individual or collectively and individuality... Naturally, not all kinds of small groups fill the real community function in the sense described above, for they very often are accidental (rather than emerging in the wake of the participants' deliberate choice, and the people in them are "exchangeable", i.e. they appear as carriers of certain functions only). More importantly, they reinforce particularity by their very essence." (op. cit. p. 1925)

On this basis, the authors define the following types of social groups: collectivizing, dehumanizing, quasi and compensatory community, and the most important one, humanizing community, "which, in conformity with the above, helps the personality of its members to evolve primarily by surpassing the individual's particularity through/and progressing towards the evolvment of the essence of the human being. For us, this type of group is ... the community form that is in conformity with the new way of life." (ibid. p. 1926) This type of community that should emerge in the socialist society, the community of the third degree, as Iván VITÁNYI calls it, in which "the individual is united with the community by retaining their autonomy". (op. cit. p. 526)

IDEAL TYPICAL COMMUNITY - SOCIALIST SOCIETY?

"Community = socially approved democratically led group which is organized in consideration of constructive values" (CSEPELI)

Dezső KALOCSAI: "The quality, solidity and perspectives of a community are determined primarily by the extent to which it is capable of offering, not only for today, but also for tomorrow, efficient and mobilizing moral and political values and ideals for activities that are in accordance with the individual's social expectations. Moreover, it should be capable of not only offering but also maintaining and operating these values and ideals." (op. cit. p.220)

The function of these communities is as follows: "... The community becomes an end, not only a means for the individual. A means and end which are manifested by the need to overcome loneliness, the need to socialize, to help others and thereby to become useful, the need to care

for others, and the joy and sorrow and the urge to act and the emotional enrichment that caring involves." (s.a. p. 221)

"By now it has become obvious that the establishment and development of the community ideal will be the work of an entire historical era. Just as individualistic attitudes and behaviour were shaped and nurtured by private ownership and economic and political conditions over the centuries; their eradication cannot be a matter of a few years' propaganda and moral teaching. At the same time, their tenacious survival does not stem from the "external" human nature but in the contradictions of economic and social development", writes Dezső Kalocsai in 1981. (ibid. p. 209)

This thinking takes roots in the idea of collectivism.

COLLECTIVISM, MAKARENKO'S COMMUNITY

MAKARENKO: "The collective is a group of people united by common aims subjected to social aims." (p. 106 quoted by A.V. Petrovsky, op. cit.) Every Soviet researcher starts out from Makarenko. On the other hand, a very strong criticism of his theory of subordination has also emerged. The "collective community... while serving progressive purposes, does not allow the development of its members into personalities because they are fully subordinate to the interests of the community. Historically, the most varied types of primitive communities belong here. But this is the prevailing form when the transformation in the spirit of collectivism takes place where the process of individualization emerging as one of the functions of civil society has not yet reached a larger scale." (Márkus-Hegedûs, op. cit. p. 1926)

PATAKI: "The general ideal of collectivism grew out of the practice and experience of proletarian solidarity and became a leading element, the rich feature of proletarian morale of the declaration of values of the labour movement stepping into the limelight of world history. In this respect it always showed two faces in practice. On the one hand, it fulfilled a normative version by controlling the general direction and trends of the individual's social behaviour in their relationships with other people and communities (family, neighbourhood, stratum, class, nation, etc.). On the other hand, it is a measure of "what is achieved in life and to what extent" (Lenin); in other words, where do social solidarity and collectivism stand in reality and what is the relationship between normative "need" and real "have". (Op. cit. pp. 74-75)

As we know, collectivism opposed individual interests with society's interests. "During the initial years of socialism, a peculiar myth of collectivism emerged, which ... was revealed in terms of the views about organizations at the workplace. It suggested that the individual as well as individual interests and development should be subjected to interests "or a higher order" (social, departmental, company, etc. interests), highly abstract for the individual. Thus, the so-called "collectivizing function of organizations at the workplace was emphasized... This promoted the ideal of collectivity to prevail in such a way that not only did it not approve of the creation of the individuum but expressly pushed it into the background by claiming it to be contrary to collective interests. The result was the monolithic idea of the socialist person and the model that emerged was adopted by European countries with relatively little modification." (Márkus-Hegedûs p. 1927)

"In the case of a real conflict of interests, should these interests be economic, political, organizational or other, the 'overweight momentum' is always the more comprehensive and universal interest. This is the point where the real difficulty starts, when the collective principle is being implemented in practice." (Pataki op. cit. p. 79)

Efforts to find the peculiar dimension of the socialist community can be traded in Soviet small group research.

COMMUNITY AND SOCIALLY VALUABLE ACTIVITY

In his criticism from the angle of group theory and group theory of Western social psychology, A. V. PETROVSKY writes as follows: "According to the interactionists, a small group is the 'group of individuals, who are connected to one another for a certain time; a community of interactive people connected by (personal) link or links and each member of the group is aware of all the others". This and similar definitions are characterized by an exaggerated psychological approach to the specific features of the group, taking them out of their wider social context, whereas it is the social context that lends the group its status of reality (unless, of course, it is an artificial group created in a laboratory). In addition, the specifically psychological definition is confined to denote the superficial relationships within the group, which is an obvious simplification. Such an interpretation of the small group can by no means serve as an adequate social psychological concept of the collective." (op. cit. p. 109). These Western researchers "... neglected the content of group activity and worked for the most part, with insignificant material." (ibid. p. 112)

Soviet researchers approach from the side of society and emphasize the social purposefulness of collectives. "Experimental procedures... are unfortunately characterized by the interpretation of collectives deprived of their peculiar quality." (ibid. p. 114)

Solution: "The problem of interaction within the group should be connected to the society which affects the personality through group communication." (p. 115) "In communities which unite people in some socially useful activity the real alternative of adaptation is not negativism (non-conformism, resistance, independence, etc.); it is the peculiar not apparent but real quality of belonging to a community, which, at the same time, is the self-determination of the personality within the group (collectivist self-determination). (ibid.)

"In real communities the individuals gain their freedom in and by their association." (Marx-Engels, op. cit. p. 63)

Makarenko's primary collective: "A primary collective is one whose members are in permanent contact at a friendly, professional, ideological and lifestyle-related level." (Makarenko's Selected Works, in Russian, quoted by Petrovsky, op. cit. p. 120)

"In the collective social psychological phenomena are revealed which differ from those that occur in the random and diffuse groups and accidental associations of people." (ibid.)

In another context, Petrovsky interprets the primary collective as a community which is the implementation and propagation of socialist values. "In the collective, the determining elements are interrelationships which communicate goals, tasks and values of the common activity; in other words, those which have a real content." (Petrovsky, op. cit. p. 121) "In this respect, the collective is a group in which interpersonal relationship is relayed by the socially valuable content of joint activity, which is, at the same time, important for the individual." (ibid.)

We know that the dimension of "value-added" could not be grasped, at least not at a level justified by practice; for the possibility of action that is falls in line with social goals and is at the same time useful and valuable, limits the scope of movement of those voluntarily in pursuit of community. If they joined ranks, it brought no, or hardly any, result or benefit, and thus the importance of community work was degraded. This community did not call for creativity; on the contrary, it required obedience and integration and did not stand to criticism and resistance on the part of those who were trying the limits. Nor did it undertake conflicts or dialogue, and could thus give rise to no consensus. This form of community essentially confined people to leisure-social-cultural cooperation, the realization of goals set by the elite instead of full-fledged participation. Of course, these were always some who digressed from this forced track and attempted to realize their independent community ideals. Although the elite always tried to curb these efforts, every period gave rise to exemplary achievements which undermined the single-mindedness and operating mechanism of power. Although these efforts should not be underrated, we are all aware of the tremendous creative energy that was, and continuous to be wasted. Today, when the self-organization in society marks the track leading out of the crisis,

we experience time and again the inability to act, to cooperate, to work together as a community. This is why our profession: community development is so much needed in Hungary today; to promote the community ideal, self-organization and self-guidance.

Community and locality

In the introduction we mentioned locality as a new dimension of cardinal importance in the Hungarian social development. Besides a number of other social functions, people can experience political involvement and participation within the locality framework. (The longer study analyses the notion of "community" as a synonym for "locality"; of Gemeinde rooting in locality - cf. "neighbourhood". It reminds of the Greek polis, where community meant a group of people belonging together as well as these people being bound to the same place or locality; the same connotation as land for the feudal man, or city for the man of labour division. Then the study continues:)

According to the American sociologist Roland C. WARREN (1957), if community really exists, it is identical with its geographical location which extends physical and psychological safety as a home and has to fulfil the following 5 functions:

1. Socialization, through which the community implants certain values into its members;
2. Economic accomplishment: the community ensures livelihood for its members;
3. Social participation fulfilling the general need for socialization;
4. Social control, which demands that members should observe the values of the community;
5. Mutual support: a process through which the members carry out the tasks that are too big or too urgent to be handled by an individual alone.

According to Warren, these are the five functions that prevail, formally or informally, in a multitude of forms from clustered farms to major cities. Whatever the local characteristics, these functions are always present in all human groups that sociologists call communities. (see. Human Behavior, p. 176)

R. L. Warren's approach to the community is functional. It is applicable in modern urban life which does not have a nostalgic yearning for the lost rural ethos but lays emphasis upon the solidity of its place and role: "Can the increasingly specialized parts be kept in co-ordination? Can the increasingly specialized interest groups work together for community goals? ... Conventional community theory is set up to emphasize the horizontal axis, the factor of locality, the factor of common interests, common life and common associations and common institutions based upon locality." (quoted by Plant, op. cit. p. 42)

Regarding the problem of professional groups, Good states that professions, albeit functional groups, may still be called communities because they fulfil the most important community criteria (common identity, shared values, common interests, language, etc.).

If we accept that any experiment is desirable for regaining the sense of solidarity and interaction, characteristic features of rural society that failed amidst the world's migrating peoples and complex institutions, if the word *community* has any meaning at all, then functional interest groups have to be taken into consideration.

Community and local institutions

K. Davis emphasizes locality: "The community is the smallest regional group that encompasses all aspects of human life." (quoted by GERGELY: A települési... p. 23) He also draws attention to the arguments of Martindale, who "having defined the institution as set solutions for community problems, describes the community as follows: 'The community is a comprehensive system of institutions which provides the basis for a whole way of life.'

He considers that the principles of community formation are movement towards stability, the internal consistency of institutional systems and completeness. About completeness, he writes,

'The adaptation of institutions to institutions takes as long as a system emerges which is complete enough to meet the usual community and individual requirements. In short, this adaptation progresses towards settlement through the establishment of a fulsome way of life.' (ibid)

What does belonging to a community mean?

According to Raymond Williams, the hierarchy of status may have several meanings. For the individual, it may mean being a subject of the community, or servant, rather than being a member of, the community. ("Membership" in the context of the modern individual community ideal includes the momentum of participation, authority and power; thus, the understanding of the functional community is of decisive importance in the modern world, as it means the conscious recognition of articulated interests in the collectivity. (quoted by Plant, op. cit. pp. 48-49)

This leads us to the question of democracy.

The social role of communities

If Warren took a functional approach of communities, he is our predecessor, for this is the main consideration during our work shaping the society. Freed from the pressures that limit communities' scope of movement and liberty, rid of the constraints whereby the community has to meet and implement certain values, we can say that the community is indeed a notion that carries value; for us, this quality is the joint action of people with a freely defined content for their fulfillment, self-realization and improvement of their situation, which is, in an indirect way, for the good of the public.

In this sense we have to clarify the social role of communities in today's Hungary.

Communities are the basic institutions of civil society and democracy. The system of democratic institutions is not equal to a multi-party system, local governments, the respect for human rights, the possibility to practice the right of participation, representation and choice, etc. In a democratic society people realize their intent, skills and activity through a gamut of communities: cultural, charity, health and environment protection, self-help but even political, economic and financial groups. They express their opinion and contribute to eradicating social shortages and promote public good. A democratic society is structured both formally and informally.

Communities are the practice fields of democracy. Instead of the simplified and routine practice of restricted situations they put people in new and direct communication. Community practice is an opportunity to speak up, to participate, to listen; it teaches to argue and tolerate others - of course if the groups is motivated by a case that is important for everybody.

Communities are the alternatives of power. In case of a structured local society, there is an alternative, as indeed we experienced it at the local elections. Leaders often see this as the "danger" of community work. However, democracy does not mean holding on to positions eternally. The main cause of isolation and lack of community is the strength and rigidity of artificially created dependence: the confiscation of property, abuse of the law, centralization and merging of economic and political power, industrialization and urbanization, the annihilation or, in the absence of real aims, the loss of meaning of informal community life, etc.

Communities at the same time fill a gap. Constant change is a hallmark of the functioning of society rather than an accident, as many feel nowadays. Instead of our former "stillwater" society, we perceive a society with a continuously increasing speed of operation in which the knowledge needed for adaptation proves to be insufficient or inapplicable and therefore needs constant change. Similarly, institutions constantly change, and they function satisfactorily if they

move, from bottom up, quickly and flexibly to attenuate or eliminate constantly appearing shortages even if they cannot handle them at the very moment and place of their emergence. Because we lived so long with tasks being solved by state institutions, it is unusual in Hungary to see private organizations undertaking public functions and officially receiving state funding for it. Still, this is the way of the future, and to some extent, of the present.

If the community fills a gap instead of being merely refreshing futility, the salt of life of the warp of solidarity (and that in itself is a great deal!), its maintenance and promotion is not a favour or luxury granted by the power but an "investment". Self-organizing communities tackle a series of social problems quickly and free of charge which the official power cannot solve; or if it can, the solution is inadequate, expensive and untimely. Communities continuously reduce social shortages and develop society, making their own and one another's life healthier and more meaningful.

This line of thinking may seem to suggest it; we do not believe that the community is the solution for all social problems if it has a well-established network webbing society. Basic social activities are organized formally and are subjected to fundamental economic, financial, environmental, etc. considerations. Society as a whole, on the other hand, is not the sum total of an adequate number of professions, formal institutions and formal organizations of appropriate quality and efficiency, all of which are set up to eliminate the element of accidentalness innate in human beings. Fortunately accidentalness, new approaches and events, the manifestations of what we call human resources (still?) have a part to play, albeit sometimes with difficulty, in the life of societies. Society is a living and constantly changing system in which new need emerge and old ones phase out. As a result, the institutions established to cater for these needs also have to change. In this process, the role of self-organizing communities is immense: they are the first to discover shortages and attempt to remedy them, and it is their good solutions that are institutionalized so that the whole process can start anew, with them, or with other actors.

Freely established self-organized community action needs (would need) encouragement and professional assistance in all so-called mass societies, and particularly in emerging democracies. However, the discussion of the narrower professional issue would require a new endeavour.

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3.4 COMMUNITY WORK AS A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

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According to the classical division, social work is based on three methods. Practice in western countries with long-time history of professional education overcame such division in the 1970s and it used the term method integration to express the intention to subordinate the concrete levels of intervention into perspectives of activity. The triangle of case, group and community work indicates the levels of intervention and methods of certain levels are to be used according to such figuration. The new approach depicted the institutional network and professional practice inspired by the Seebohm Report. It also expressed new basic principles whose main attention was to interpret the various fields of social work as one continuum. Despite the diversity of fields, the profession cannot be divided into three methods. Overcoming division can be shown by the concepts of decision competence and communication. Integrated practice can be established on a wide theoretical base that offers a unified approach and a comprehensive method. The level of decision refers to the need of defining an interventional level, while communication requires the unifying of professional language. A broad term abolishes the opposition (confrontation) of community work and casework. Importance of flexibility between institutions is emphasised through communication. Community work in present Hungarian practice is a separated field that carries out projects mostly in localities.

When studying the relation between social work and cultural field, I became more and more interested in the process of a certain activity gaining its figuration.

The term figuration developed by the Sociologist N. Elias who studied dynamic of European culture, covers those communal/social situations when the participants are connected to each other through a kind of activity. Such connection can be cooperation, mutual reinforcement or even hostility. In the development of civilisation the main role is played by the growing and spreading mutual dependence of people's and their groups. These regulations express, first of all, that the active participant takes the other into consideration and therefore the active one controls its own instinctive and impetuous forces.

Among the three methods, community work is the most comprehensive: its specific feature is the overlap of cultural field and figuration which outlines the widest frame of intervention. Both the intervention's goal and its process of action lack all aspects of power; its main point is to exchange power with cooperation.

The ambition of C.W. is to create such a figuration together with the participants which empower them to make distance from the political-cultural power. The people could learn change the position of client who get benefits from the State to the position of citizen with self-esteem. However this learning process is kept under control by interest coalitions, resistance and fear. In this context C.W. could be an approach of case- and group work also and as such is suitable to influence the relationships among citizens and to modify the way of political communication.

The Definition of Helping

The concept of helping seems to be very simple: an activity for reducing the hard situation and for supporting to solve people's problem. The social work realises this activity on a professional background. The professional education started in Hungary 18 years ago and in this period builds up a network of institutions, programmes of professional differentiation, specialization and development. The dominance of case work in both the curriculum and the practice led to an interpretation of Social Work which means: there are professionals employed by institutions and opposite of them are the clients as victims. Although the system approach is axiom of any training programmes the barriers of system end at the family. Social sciences are integrated into curriculum but for young people are psychology and therapeutical techniques more

attractive and effective. The figuration of learning process gives a predisposition for the practice: the participants create an asymmetrical relation where the positions are clear defined. This definition depends on the lecturer, on the values and behaviour of professionals and on the way of functioning of the concrete institution. Consequently a wider base of family and child care could change the figuration from asymmetrical to a co-operative one. The wide base is given by the approach of C.W. that can be characterised by a special feature, namely the dimension of time. The process of development is oriented on the future that means the practice of this direction does not offer rapid success. However both the soc. worker and the clients would like see the effectiveness of their efforts.

The indifference according C.W. in the professional education concludes to the fact that this activity is represented and developed not by social workers but by a group of professionals with cultural-organiser certification. Those are who organise local and international projects and the guild of experts, training-programmes. And those are who never use the word "helping" or as self-definition the "helper" but more the concepts of "responsibility" and "participation". In my interpretation the different approaches of both the Community Workers and the Social Workers based on different self-definitions of professional roles. The S.W. are employed and/or financed by the State, are involved into the institutional hierarchy while C.W's ambition is to be independent. It means that soc.w. presents itself and mediates by himself an asymmetrical relationship.

As I see with C.W. approach could be fulfilled the purpose of S.W. if were faced the professionals with their social positions.

New point of view for the practice

The main aim of any training programmes is to build up the professional identity of the students. However the identity is not a knowledge but a process of experiences gained through the style, values, ethos of education, including the learning-field practice. In the focus of training is the "client" and the different problem-situations that have to be solve with skills. This frame eliminates the figurations that the soc.worker should be involved into in his practice, as employed by an institution, as member of a team, as citizen of a locality and of a political-cultural context in a country.

As commun.worker, lecturer of social work, practiced in the field of Family Care, organising and leading a Child Care Service in rural area I have got multiple aspects of the process how a personality becomes to be a soc.worker. At the start point in the practice it seems to be attractive making projects, negotiating and initiating activities. This kind of the professional practice requires a critical attitude, force of personality to tolerate the conflicts and frustrations. After a short period students gave up: to be involved into the administration of the State is safer than to confront with representatives of the State. The Family and Child Services, the Seniors Homes, the different NGOs for supporting handicapped, psychiatric patient or alcoholic people are the most extended fields of Soc.W. The experts who work on these fields have got different experiences how to manage an organisation and do prefer to avoid confrontations.

In a new way of study the practice teachers should be conscious on their own positions as citizens. It means: the teaching of caring clients should imply critical and creative activity. There are very talented colleagues in the practice who initiate new ways of caring but

-  they are not teacher or
-  they are not aware of the impact of theoretical knowledge or
-  they limit their practice to care despite redefining it as development.

As head of a Family and Child Care Service with definitive Comm.W. identity and sociological research experiences I have prepared a Com.W. practice learning programme for students. The project should be realised in 5 days in the period of summer holiday. The field was a very small village which was one of the activity fields of the Service.

The students visited each houses with a short questionnaire to ask people: how do they feel themselves as members of a local community, how are the relationships among residents,

between residents and local municipality, what kind of social-cultural occasions are available for them. The summary of answers showed that there are not any organised programmes although there is a need to do something together. The Mayor informed us before that the community is splitted in fronts because of deep conflicts between families. He showed us proudly the place of a club used by young people. There were equipments for sport and music, some toys. The idea of students was to organise a week-end programme together with people: one group of students managed a programme for children, the other one with young boys who visit regularly the club. There were some elderly people who were ready to present their own photos for a small exhibition. On the photos you could see traditional cultural events that were held some years (or decades?) ago in the village. The event started with report on the short survey and students gave the disk the Mayor.

All participants: the children, young and elderly residents, parents and visitors, students and practice-teacher enjoyed to play together, to talk on the life and needs in the village. At the end all residents asked for repetition of this kind of programmes.

I was convinced that a regular meeting with local people in the frame of any programme could inspire confidence in the Family Care Service and on this way people would more co-operate with professionals to solve personal problems.

And from other side community programmes contribute to the cohesion of neighbourhood which could empower individuals. I found contact to a teacher who was in that time unemployed and was ready to lead a family programme with playing, handwork, etc. I mediated her demand for a minimal honorary to the Mayor and he promised to negotiate this topic with representatives of Municipality. No answer for months. Then I called him to ask, reply was: no money for this kind of programmes.

3.5 THE PHILOSOPHY OF DIALOGUE AS ETHIC-ECOLOGICAL FOUNDATION IN ASSISTANCE CAREERS.

By Prof. Dr. Jesús Hernández Aristu, Spain²¹

„No man is an island, complete in himself: every man is a part of the continent, a part of earth... the death of any man lessens me because I am bound to humanity; and therefore never have me ask: for whom do the bells toll; the toll for you” John Donne, in: E. Hemingway: For whom the bells toll. (1940)

Introduction

Invited by the University of Peace and other European Organizations to participate at the International Peace Conference celebrated in Strasbourg in autumn of 1986 on occasion of the International Year of Peace that same year, I had the opportunity to offer some reflections on the philosophy of dialogue as philosophical foundation for peace education. Already on that occasion I presented a philosophical orientation that represents more than a theoretical background and offers a solid foundation to develop attitudes and actions with unusual firmness in the search of peace between countries and social groups. It could signify an efficient and durable alternative to violence, to arms and social upheaval through a dialogic understanding of man, thus assist in terms of personal reconciliation with oneself, with the physical and ecologic environment as well as, even with the universe. The (rather theoretical) presentation was followed by some examples of social movements, civic and religious organizations that have converted dialogue into their most efficient medium and instrument in social conflicts in Brazil and some other areas of armed struggle in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Among the reports of peacemaking actions presented at that time the report by Mrs. Hildegard Goss-Mayr, representative of the International Federation for Reconciliation with headquarters in Vienna, Austria was noteworthy. Some days later at closing day she wrote a letter to me, I cite: „Your presentation in Strasbourg has given me great joy..... I could verify that your and my interpretation of man as such, of unity and peace participate in the same current and share similar roots. For thirty years I have been working on the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel who has become the philosopher for me. I also perceive proximity with the position of Buber. We try to direct our live and our work for peace from this perspective”.

The confirmation of this person, representative of an international organization whose member have directly participated with success in peacemaking activities in armed and social conflicts in different continents meant a lot to me, for it offered great support and smoothed certain criticism by some members of the congress who considered my position „easy to say, but difficult to do”, thus devaluating its content. Several years have passed since that international meeting and after a long dedication to the studies of concepts such as identity, socialization, process of acquisition of the adult I, all of psycho-social orientation, communication and interaction of rather psychological and systemic character (Hernández 1991), the investigation of occupational educational process and adult education (1990-1996) and research of youth issues, employment and formation socialization, and after long years of intervention in areas of social work, social education, psychotherapy and supervision and other consulting methods, I return to the study of those philosophical currents that have greatly influenced my educational activities in adult and youth education, training for social workers and social educators (Hernández 1977, 1991). But today I broaden my first viewpoints and center more on the importance of dialogue in education and dialogic relations in educational practice. I would like to reformulate this dialogic concept of man/woman in order to offer a vision which supposes a base of ethical character and moral orientation for the activities of assistance professionals. My personal experience in the field of psychotherapy during my years of formation, together with my contacts and experiences with Zen, Japanese Rinzai orientation with the master Suzuki

²¹ Published in: Kisnerman, N. (comp..) (2001) ETICA, ¿Un discurso o una práctica social? Paidós. Buenos Aires pp. 63-105 (ETHICS, A discourse or social practice?).

(1979) and later with oriental-occidental masters such as Johnston (Ireland), Lassalle and Jäger (Germany), the (fleeting) experience of other states of consciousness through meditation (silence exercises) and dreams, in combination with the lecture of the works of authors such as Alan W. Watts, Graf von Dürckheim, the German mystagogue and creator of initiation therapy, C.A.G. Jung whom I got to know through Franz-Xavier Jans-Scheidegger, psychotherapist and professor at the Jung Institute (Junginstitut) in Zurich (Switzerland), writings by Jakobi a.o., and F. Capra, E. Fromm, Roger and Freire, just to cite some of the best known authors are responsible for my returning to the philosophy of dialogue with a wider and global (not just rational) understanding.

The purpose of this work is to demonstrate the philosophy of dialogue as a principle of anthropology that forms the foundation for principles of action to offer guidance and a certain ethical certainty to assistance professionals in intervention areas for individuals, groups or collectives, also applicable to communities. We attempt to present this principle as global, holistic and, as previously stated ecologic principle since it include the relationship and dialogue of the individual with him/herself, with others and the outside physical and social world and the universe as such, presenting this triple relational reality as a unity of two poles in tension. Thus I attempt to establish a bridge between my point of view; words expressed with more or less accuracy in these lines and initiate a dialogue whose echo might possibly imbue spirit (Geist, ruha) into the always fragile words that sustain our social action, social intervention.

And just as Kahlil Gibran (1976) says: „It needs two to discover truth: one who says it, and one you understands it.“ (p. 17) perhaps this „co-dependence“ (Varela a.o. 1992) might be of the same essence as the dialogic principle I try to present here. Let us see, if I get to comprehend better and help others to a better understanding as well of what philosophers of the standing such as Gabriel Marcel and Martin Buber have to say about what I call here a Philosophy of Dialogue and, at the same time revise my own anti-dialogic attitudes, situations and actions in my personal, family, professional and civic life. The purpose of this work does not reside so much in implanting a new ideology on a market where the ones that have been on sale are already agonizing (End of Ideologies, Bell 1966), but rather to evoke in the reader an echo that vibrates, connects and joins with other vibrating beings in a symphony where each con-dissonant instrument forms not just one **part** of the whole but above all else **participates** and thus discovers the dialogic network that connects all humans and becomes manifest in a tangible way in the experience of (wanting) to help those who are in need.

Reason and intuition: two sources of knowledge in tension²²

To understand the authors of the philosophy of dialogue it is necessary to part from one of the sources of knowledge, though firmly rooted in western tradition has not received as much attention as the other, nor has it been equally considered, even though it has been part of western philosophy since Aristotle up to your times. The first is called **intuition**, the second **reason**. Though in honor of truth, both sources of knowledge do not exclude each other and, contrary to Capra's view (1991) they are not complementary but rather represent two poles in tension or, if one prefers, two dialogic poles in living unity, the human being in search for truth or, less pretentious perhaps, attempting to approximate truth.

This assumed position (dialogic) refers to tension and not opposition, exclusion or complementation of both sources of knowledge does not mean that this is necessarily the only way, because **tension** can be severed and defiled in favor of one of the poles, mostly and particularly since Descartes up to our days almost exclusively, in favor of the source of reason. This preference and pre-validation of the rational element over intuition has led not only to the disenchantment of the world, dispossessing it of gods and demons or to the relocation of the

²² Nuestro filósofo Don Xavier Zubiri publica una obra con el sugerente título „La inteligencia sentiente“. indicando ya de esa manera la duplicidad del conocimiento en su unidad. Alianza. Madrid 1991.

(totemic) center, the dismembering of the „unity of meaning of religious-metaphysical Cosmo visions“ (Beriaian 1990), but furthermore and as consequential effect has led to the domination over nature, the subordination of the world. Compared to the medieval man who understood relationship with nature as something reciprocal, the self-understanding of modern man (existential man) acknowledges the ability to control and dominate nature, to use it for his own purposes.“ Thus resumes the historian of science Berman (1987) the change of paradigm in philosophy and science, in production systems, commerce and economy since the seventeenth century (p. 49-67).

Human consciousness is nothing but the relationship between subject and object. Thinking without an object would not be thought, concludes Kant, and Hegel on his part accentuates that subject and object condition each other mutually, man is a synthesis of absolute reason, God and the cosmos (see: Bochenski 1985, p.52ff). Nevertheless this rational perspective does not matter that much, as long as man and consciousness participate in the absolute reason, or perfect idea (Hegel) or if, on the contrary, man is nothing but a product of the evolution of matter, a creation of matter (Marx); yet all emphasize in the end the bi-polarization of external, material world – subject, idea, spirit, reason. Consciousness becomes **consciousness about** something, about the material world, of an object or of itself (Husserl). Consequently, due to consciousness of something, man does not relate only with the outside world, but limits and delimits it in respect to himself (Habermas 1976, p. 344), and thus man experiences himself as different, higher and separate from the object. Intentionality (in-tendere), the orientation of consciousness toward the object or toward oneself (reflectivity) characterizes this. Converted into the measure of all things man subdues everything, analyzes, exploits, severs, divides all, etc. adopting an attitude of dominion. And the relationship of the subject with the object is one of denomination – dominated. „Observable body means at the same time bodies that can be manipulated, used“ (Habermas 1982, p.321). The world becomes an object at the service of man.

Rationalism has invaded all spheres of knowledge and, doubtlessly furthered great advances in science, technology, medicine and, of course, in economy and politics. Precisely the advances in rational knowledge of the reality as object of all these fields of human endeavor have allowed man to step on the surface of the moon, have shortened distances between peoples and nations through communication and transportation means. Communication media allows us to know almost instantaneously what goes on in any part of the geography, sometimes even in the cosmos or the universe.

In addition the application of the rational principle to science, to investigation, production and economy, etc. has improved our living conditions, has increased the quota of well-being, diversified options. In short, the principle of rationality and rationalization of all scientific, production, social and communication processes coincide with what has been called modernization. Yet the increase of options as part of modern social systems has not reached everybody, rather while increasing possibilities for some, those have decreased for others, creating i.e. a duplication of society in industrialized societies (Hernandez, 1994). Likewise the process of accumulating wealth of some nations (in the north) has led to impoverishment of the nations in the other hemisphere (of the south).

In the scientific realm the partition-partialization of knowledge has led to a specialization of quasi idiots -, where the researcher almost never looks beyond the field of specialization, with rather negative consequences for patients converted into numbers in hospitals (he/she of room X, or the „appendicitis“ among medical and sanitary personnel to identify the sick), abandoning in their vision of disease the unity and singularity of the individual. Moreover the so-called „interdisciplinary“ of science does not suppose great advances since the sum of the parts never result in „the whole“.

The combination of Empirism with Rationalism inaugurated by Galileo and further developed by Kepler and Newton helps us to understand how to do something, „not what to do, or if it is

convenient" (p. 51), sentenced Berman (1987) characterizing the new scientific era. Science has separated from ethics. The scientist questions the feasibility of something, not its convenience. Science presents itself as neutral. Nuclear fusion is a scientific data; the fact that it can be used for generating electricity or to destroy cities is an issue that eludes the scientist. This split between know-how and ethical dimension has produced a dissociation of scientific and economic progress, to cite just two important areas of human ethical behavior. Once disengaged from its commitment with humanity, science becomes a monster that does not stop in front of anything or anybody. Knowledge becomes an end in itself. This dissociation of **science** from its ethical character, in other words depriving it of its characteristics of **con-science** (happy formulation by Guardini) has even led to the creation of the atom bomb, to the development of technologies destined to perfect the capacity of dominion of some (men) over others, threatening with destruction and annihilation of live, sometimes even carried out. In this sense the Gulf war against Iraq, **desert storm** is paradigmatic and symbolic; in as much it **decertifies** and **torments** international relations, even human con-science in itself. The recent war of the Balkans demonstrates the mortal efficiency for the enemy with no loss of human life on the other side.

Human progress in science in general and in technology in particular is put to the service of production and unlimited consumption of goods of all kinds, including cultural in some countries (those of the northern hemisphere), resulting not only in the exploitation of (limited) material resources and devastation of raw material to dangerous limits, but also incapacitating any possibility to arrive at a formulation of solidarity between countries. „Nature exploited" as stated by Weiszaecker (1989, p.7) creating a certain type of man or humanity of insolidarity. This insolidarity becomes apparent not only in the relationship with other countries (of the southern hemisphere), but in relationship of generations as well. We are consuming and wasting without limit what future generations need for their survival.

The mentality that everything can be manipulated, anything is possible referring to nature is turned into a principle of social and personal relations, resulting in the "cosification" not only of the world but even of society itself and the human race.

The attempt by Jürgen Habermas, the sociologist of the critical School of Frankfurt to change relations of dominion of man over nature into dialogic relations (Habermas 1968) and social relations, colonized by a grammar of systemic communication directed exclusively toward success by turning them into relations based on veracity, authenticity and normative standards rooted in „the world of life", represents the peak of human rationality (1987, vol I and II), in as much communication or dialogic relations are not based on economic, commercial or power interests but on recognized inter-subjective rationality. These relations, linguistically connected or linguistically worded flow out of what Wellmer (1986) has called „an ethics of discourse", which in the end serves its own purpose, in the best of cases a „circle", a positives version of inter-subjective rationality, fostering understanding and (democratic) participation fomenting thus an „emancipated" society. But liberated-emancipated from what? Without doubt liberation from incrustations, petrifications, from relations of dominion of some individuals over others, of some nations or collectives over others, of traditions and life-styles identical for all. In other words more freedom, therefore offering a wider range of choices, more possibilities to be oneself and sets in this way the base for a new sociology called process of individualization: Individualization, says Beck (1993) on one hand means the disappearance of forms of life of the industrial society and its substitution by new forms. These forms presume that the individual creates his/her own biography. Setting the scenery of the personal biography and assembling the different parts of the puzzle, yet without recurring to basic securities and stabilities previously provided unquestionably by the socio-moral environment that has lasted throughout industrialized modernity and today rather seems to be a model in extinction..." (p. 79). Man/woman liberated from all ties give rise to the individual without bonds, owner of oneself but equally at the mercy of oneself.

What has been called emancipative pedagogy (see: Hernandez 1990, ps. 117ff) in Germany and other central European countries, bases its formulations on these foundations. Without getting into detail of the value of a sociology based on communicative action like the one defended by Habermas, its connection with the concept of rationality becomes unilateral in a literal-lateral sense of the word for it leaves out, aside, and we can therefore say that rationality, and with it freedom as liberation-from has never in itself produced **connectedness**, nor does rational knowledge of unjust situations necessarily lead to actions to overcome them. The barrier between nations of the north and those of the south, the rich and the poor becomes therefore increasingly insurmountable, the Balkan wars or the war in Iraq is not avoidable „only“ because of possible reasons. To know more does not (necessarily) lead us to be better. Broadening of conscience is not necessarily conducive to a world of more justice. How well has this already expressed an author Rathenau back in 1922, when he said: „Science is able to determine facts, discover interconnections, prove laws. The main error of social theory of our times is to expect impulses of will from science or ideals for the future. What we believe, what we hope for, what makes us live and accept sacrifices will never be (the result of) an act of will. Heart (Ahnung) and feeling, illumination and intuition carry us to the reign of those forces that decide about the meaning of our lives“ (p. 15). It is true that the citation of this author confronts us with „counter positioning“ of knowledge (that of reason), science against intuitive knowledge. Before getting into detail about this „counter-position“ that we will interpret in a dialogic sense, let us answer the question: „What is intuition? What kind of knowledge is intuitive knowledge?“

Intuitive knowledge

Speaking about intuition as a concept is actually a contradiction, because by doing so we convert it into an object, an object of conscience, an object of reason. The expression **intuition** as source of knowledge has to be understood rather metaphorical, represents a symbol rather than a concept. But perhaps we do well in considering language itself as one of the most abstract of metaphors. Perhaps such leveling of the conceptualization of the word **intuition** might help us get closer to a better understanding. In any case, we can describe intuition, knowing that our words can only be understood with its full meaning by those readers who perhaps have an „experience“ or enlightening premonition of intuition. Its knowledge is direct, not mediated nor can it be manipulated, it is total and global, it is neither partial nor compartmentalized, it is unitarian, knower and knowing are not distinguished. Neither is it an object of consciousness, though it might be conscious knowledge even when it disappears as soon as we become aware of the experience. Intuition is the reign of art, of poetry, of music, of mystics. It is simultaneity of the given and received, or perhaps both actions vanish or better even their differences are overcome. It is not possible to argue, neither to reason nor to communicate, it can only be evoked. It is possible to speak about it but not of it. Just as it is possible to tell a dream and speak about it but the narrative is not the dream itself. Intuition is not empirical, though it is based on experience, it is not experimental. It cannot be produced, deduced, concluded, not even be manipulated or hindered. You can pre-dispose yourself not dispose of it. In short, intuition is grace, a gift. Hoch says (1970) intuition means: „The way to know globally and totally is a characteristic of the spiritual nature of man/woman“ (Herder paed. Lexikon 1970, vol 1, p.50) and its most original form of expression is art, since artistic work is „an expression of the intuition of the artist, wrapped in words, sounds, shapes and color as expression of becoming aware (Gewahrwerden) without mediation, without any addendum of reflexive consciousness“ (Lurker 1990, p. 72).

Frequently both ways of knowledge have been put against each other, considering them to be irreconcilable. In history of philosophy and in theories of knowledge the balance has been inclined in favor of one or the other, omitting one. Thus reason is dominated by rationalism, by intellectualism, while on the contrary romanticism, religion of mystic orientation, Lebensphilosophie = philosophy of life decides on siding with intuition.

It was Mario Bunge who in our Spanish speaking context has most strongly contested intuition as source of knowledge. The following paragraph conveys an idea of his almost militant position against intuition: „The intuitions of Dilthey, Bergson, Husserl, Scheler and other neo-romantics – so closely related to Pythagoras’ ‘participation’ and hermetic ‘sympathy’ – have not even led us to fruitful errors. They have not offered us more than an old and frustrated pretense to limit the extend of experience and reason; they have not enabled us to attain a more profound understanding of history or of life, nor of any property or essential law or any kind of object...” In effect, Mr. Bunge expects from intuitive knowledge the same cognitive effects as those produced by reason, knowledge of objects. Yet, he forgets altogether that reality is more and distinct from observable objects and that experience, source of information for reason and its discourse (discorre in Latin means „run from one side to another”, see dict. Spes 1968) can transport us, if we let us lead to the other side where reality is not an object, not a phenomena but the other face, the hidden side of reality. What could Bunge say about the words of the Hungarian Bertalan Pethö (1987) speaking about the Lake Balaton: „Together with the traces of landscape appears that face of nature that hides from dominion, from being used and from the confidence of man” (p. 28). And therefore, as the same author writes adequately: „To what becomes manifest through the traces of nature we only get closer through our own pathos” (p. 38). Graf Dürckheim (1978) reminds us that „the truth in question is not of the type of truth that is based on apparently rational arguments, but the type that can be externalized, better perhaps, can be witnessed its foundations rest on experience” (95-96). In short, each reality and reality itself have their own sources of knowledge.

The problem resides in the fact that both sources of knowledge are given in one and the same reality itself, in man/woman. Confronted with the impossibility to convey unity to both sources of knowledge in one (Unitarian?) person arises the tendency to exclude one of them, elevating one of them unto the altars of knowledge. Precisely because of this, modern authors like Capra strive to integrate both sources of knowledge by transforming them into complementary, an effort that deserves recognition. Yet this does not overcome the dichotomy between intuitive and rational knowledge. The dichotomy appears at the same moment the existing tension between both sources is severed, because in this tension between the two ways of knowledge man can get closer, approximates knowledge, the (double) reality. Always approximation. In that Bunge is right when he says: „Nobody, save those philosophically immature or ingenuous believes in the possibility of a total and immediate apprehension of truth... sciences have no ultimate foundation, but offer support and modify each other, changing constantly their points of view... ps. 41 and 42). In respect to intuitive knowledge, as writes Paul of Tarsus our knowledge is partial and confused „like in a mirror” (1 Cor 13,12).

We therefore consider one source and the other as two poles in tension and their comprehension can only be paradox and neither totally rational nor exclusively intuitive. As soon as the tension disappears in favor of one or the other, the mistakes and excesses of each of the forms multiply giving rise to intellectualism or extreme rationalism or, on the contrary to ingenuousness or, worse even, dogmatic illuminism that, to speak with Bunge is turned in the end into irrational authoritarianism. (p. 39).

Because of this Capra (1991) refers to the two fundamental poles in Chinese philosophy, ying and yang that could be related to our western principle of reason (yang) and intuition (ying), masculine principle (reason) and feminine principle (intuition), concluding that „the natural order is a dynamic balance between ying and yang” (p. 185). In a previous work (1986) this author says: „what is good is neither ying nor yang, but the dynamic equilibrium between both. Unbalance would be bad and pernicious (p. 33). If, as states Naranjo (1993) „we could think civilization in terms of alternation between epochs where reason dominated, and epochs where preferably emotion and intuition were valued” (p. 161), we think that today we are attaining a synthesis of both or, to use the same expression of the author, reaching a meta-synthesis

„encompassing analytical reason and synthetic activity of intuition” (p. 161 and, as Marcel already announced in 1963 (see: Marcel 1967, p. 143): „I do not doubt for an instant that what has to be broken is this type of screen in order to get closer to secret regions where science and wisdom converge”.

Naranjo goes even further and announces in the study of modern physics an approximation to the intuitive knowledge of the old mystics. Whatever this double principle, reason and intuition become in our study the first bi-nomial in tension where human conditions appears as dia-logic. But this same dialogicity becomes manifest in human condition in relation to itself, as well as in relation with others, with nature and the absolute „Other”. This ‘Grundbefindlichkeit’ or original human condition is essentially dialogic.

It is true, that by stating this we introduce an element some might consider religious, something therefore that escapes reason, something that dissolves in an ocean of the inscrutable and is therefore non-scientific. Perhaps we should be reminded of the sharp words of my friend and colleague, Heinz Kersting²³ who comments in one of his manuscripts about the similarity of scientists and believers, in as much both search for truth, yet their differences lie in the fact that the former „know that they believe”, while the first ones „believe to know” ... I dare add that both have in common their consideration of experience as foundation for knowledge. The scientist (rational) converts experience into observation, something rational, tangible to be enumerated and manipulated, while the mystic dives into experience in order to get deeper into it. As states Marcel when referring to his philosophy of experience, it is not that philosophy mounts a scaffolding on the pillars of a concrete situation, therefore something additional, but it has to do in first place with „dig and scrutinize” (Marcel 1963, p. 20) (see Hernández 1991, ps. 29 ff). The scientist converts perception and experience into observation and extracts knowledge, norms, rules, more or less universal mechanisms, the mystic evokes, deepens, emerges, is imbued, expressions that rather shroud than unveil the reality they pretend to get to know and to communicate.

Perhaps the state of imperfection of subjects in search, of limited beings allows both of us to maintain an attitude of openness in a sense to consider all possible, and not just what „fits” in our heads in a given moment.

Authors like Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Mounier, Fromm, Levinas, to name just some of the closest to our position open senses and minds to capture the objective reality and at the same time introduce us into a reality which presence eludes the senses of perception but which opens up another instance characterized by immediate access. For that reasons these authors acquire a prophetic character, not as much in the sense to predict the future but in the sense of pre-living, going ahead toward that future perhaps common for all. We do not attempt to make a philosophy of mystics, nor a mystic of philosophy, but what does appear clearly in the authors of the philosophy of dialogue is that reason and intuition appear as being integrated to such a degree that it acquires model character for others, as states Marcel (1963).

„The more technological development is stimulated and extended, reaching dominions that until recently seemed necessarily excluded, the more this core void opens up that initially I have tried to fill with a type of magic foment, I believe I called it on a certain occasion. The fact, that in some parts of the world some readers have received with pleasure what I consider to be nothing more than a message, a cordial stimulation that rather frequently emanates from suffering and frustration, I consider a grace that has been bestowed on me by powers that

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would seem presumptuous to name. It would be absurd and conceited to conjecture about the future of this endeavor. Can't we just admit that we ignore completely how future man will be like who very soon will have to bear his own sufferings and find his way in a world that is shaping in front of our very eyes? It seems to me that we have to confess our ignorance about this point, which is the same as to admit that we should not confuse our desires with reality. We are not even able to know if some of our work that moves us profoundly today won't be more than dead letters for our descendants in just a quarter of a century. But this ignorance gives rise to an obligation we cannot elude with impunity: To remain faithful to what is essential in us instead of trying to anticipate a future we know nothing about" (Gallagher, K. 1968, p. 19-20).

The text reveals the serene impotence of those who live a reality they cannot dispose of and can only be offered, knowing that this offer can be rejected. Yet the commitment does not derive from calculating probabilities of acceptance of their philosophy but from being aware that, just like themselves this reality can only be unveiled to others and this evidence escapes efficiency.

Precisely these authors among others have left us a legacy of their philosophy from a „position of lived-through avant-garde" and its characteristic and original exponent the concept of man as dialogic being, whereby this dialog city of man/woman is not only the most genuine manifestation of this being-in the world, but also a regulating principle for the relationship with oneself, with the exterior world, with other men/women and nature itself and even in front of God. In other words, the dialogic or relational state-being is what constitutes being „responsible". `To be` and `should be` are not differentiated, just like I – you are not different because both include each other in a unity beyond differences.

Buber (1990), the most genuine of the philosophers of dialogue tells us: „The question of what man consists of cannot be answered by considerations of the existence alone or „oneself" as such, but by considering the essential connectedness of the human person with every being and its relationship with all being". If we try to capture man outside of this essential connectedness with all other existence then we will have him like a degenerated animal as happened to Nietzsche, a person whose existence is lived between nausea, boredom, despair or as a diminished spiritual being, as happens also with Heidegger. Only if we try to comprehend the human person in all situations, all possibilities of any kind of relationship with all that is not the person, only then can we capture what man is. Man has to be understood as a being capable of a **triple vital relationship** (bold is mine) graded toward the essential" (pag. 112-113).

Already in this text appears the duplicity-dialog city of man as state of being, but at the same time emerges within the tension of two poles, between spirit and matter, while introducing us at the same time in the holistic universality as a style for thought and action. Man is not a monad lost in sky but an irreducible unity of being in the world, with others, with the whole universe. And this fundamental dialog city is constituent of man/women is in synthesis, a principle not only of an ecology of mind (Bateson 1991), but a principle of dialogic-integral human ecology that supports the most radical ethical principles not only, as I dare say but particularly for assistance professions, for those who are professionally dedicated to help others in their attempt to find and realize their own lives and overcome obstacles of all kind that seem to block their way. I speak here about professions such as psychiatrists, psychotherapists, medical doctors, social workers and educators, lawyers and law people, development agents and in a certain sense even politicians. The quintessence of these professions is reduced to a relationship with the client, group or community. It is in a relationship where the defining characteristic of those professions becomes irreducibly concrete. Professional ethics is based on the quality of client relationship. But the ethical-ecological principle we defend here encompasses more than a simple relationship between people. Its principle is holistic because it includes all relational facets of the person, more even, it converts the relationship into a

characteristic of its own right of the human being: man/women are relational beings and relationship always supposes two poles. Varela (1992) in his study „Bodily presence“, assumes the concept of co-dependency of one of the branches of Zen Buddhism, adopting the interpretation of some of the most outstanding philosophers Nagarjuna „the first diaphanous thinker of human race“, considered as such by Buddhism concludes: „...nothing can be found that has an ultimate or independent existence. Or, to use the language of Buddhism, everything is `void´ of independent existence, because it originated in co-dependency“ (p. 259).

The concept of dialogue: The double origin-foundation of man

Before getting into the philosophy of dialogue the etymologic meaning of the concept of dialogue itself should be remembered. It comes from Greek: dia-logos and means (dia = through, divide something into two. Logos = word, or the concept of „Dia-logos“ refers to the fact of existing in two words, or being divided, being traversed by two words. Define man as dialogic being implies finding himself caught between two realities that offer two ways of perception, two ways of positioning oneself. Assuming the concept of „being traversed“ and divided into two logos (two words) man/woman are defined as (divided) beings in „two words“, man/woman is already a dialogic being. Not just etymology refers to the duality of the word, but renowned international authors of the second half of the twentieth century have defined man as dia-logic being based on the double word, double principle.

Karlfried Graf Dürckheim (philosopher of religions, psychotherapist, German mystagogue 1896-1988) in one of his main works (1991, ps. 11-36)) adverts precisely about this „fundamentality“ of the human being, his double origin, we could also speak about „his double constitutionality“. An origin-constitution that transcends the material, sensorial and situates us so to speak, outside of the world and finds its expression in the spiritual dimension symbolized in terms like the above, heaven, spirit, etc, while the other origin refers to the purely material, bodily dimension, man´s condition of „being in the world“. This duplicity of origin or its fundamentality finds its appropriate symbolic expression in the erect condition man/woman. Man/woman step on earth (with their feet) in order to rise up, erect themselves above it, anchored in their search and directed-oriented upwards toward heaven. This double origin-movement-directionality forms the foundation of the original polarity that includes in itself the possibility of unity like two poles of a bow united by and through the tensor, forming one single tool capable to throw the dart. But it also includes the possibility of dispersion-desegregation even severance, converting it into a fragmented being of not just two souls like Goethe´s Faust, but uncountable souls as expressed in Hesse´s Steppenwolf (1981,5, p.66-67). This existential fragmentation can reach unknown dimension as, in fact is happening now a days. Once the unity of those founding origins is severed we are left with what we are observing today as phenomena at our turn of century, a continuous increase of emotional diseases in industrialized and post-industrialized societies and others of biological-bodily character. Neurosis, schizophrenia and increasingly depression on one hand, cancer, AIDS and other modern diseases on the other not to mention the explosion of alcohol and drug abuse, destined to camouflage the underlying pain – split that derives from negating this double foundation of reality of man/woman. These phenomena observed in our societies could very well be symptomatic of a more basic problem, of the dissociating fission of the two founding words constituent to human reality. The present search for magicians, saviors and gurus (fathers) in the spiritual realm is a kind of escape from naked materialism in our societies, just like the boom of healers and alternative natural medicine in a quasi symbiotic union with (mother) nature that is only underscoring the distrust and disenchantment of the population in front of the so called scientific (rational) answers on one hand, and institutionalized religion on the other but all of them perhaps, as affirmed by Johanson (1985), including the last ones have in common „their blindness of the double origin of bodily-spiritual origin of man/woman“ (p. 103).

Once severed the unity in tension of the two poles and origins of man/woman, the person is converted into a „material” being together with other material beings under the (blind) law of nature. Negation of earthly roots convert man/woman into a type of phantasmagoric-spiritual being estranged from the world, un-realized, ultimately running away from oneself and becoming a stranger to oneself.

This bipolar tension between the material and spiritual origin of man/woman is their original state, is a given existential human assumption, yet not imposed, not definite nor ineludible. The unified polarity needs internal dia-logue to maintain itself, requires a „between” as Buber would say, a space that allows „entering”, that gives a glimpse of the original unity and re-establishes it, or a perception, not with the senses in form of results but as a given re-established unity of body and spirit. This interior dialogue, ever more internal is already and precisely the overcoming of those other internal, obsessive and neurotic monologues, soliloquies we know from people who always repeat the same story in a vicious circle or like tied to a big wheel. The internal dialogue re-establishes the „unity of the I” and, together with the unity of the I, with the world (Buber, in Sloterdijk, 1993, p. 54), in unison with the multiplicity of voices. Each unison or experience of unity is a point of arrival and at the same time becomes the point of departure for renewed and more profound dialogue within the very being of a person. Dialogue as vehicle toward the unity of oneself thus becomes dialectic, is a singular way to delve into oneself, into the mystery that anchors, paradoxically phrased, man/woman.

For the experienced man/woman in this kind of dialogue (with oneself) it matters little if it happens in the sound of silence (Johnson) or the silence of noises and sounds, in one or another situation; the person who experiences this unity is centered on oneself. „The soul that rests in this experience (Erlebnis)”, says Buber, relies on itself, has itself, and experiences itself. This does not mean that the experience of unity derives from giving oneself entirely to something in the world, or because of complete concentration on an object of the world, but rather because of getting deeper within oneself, being immersed in ones own foundations. Seed and shell (Kern und Schale), light and pupil glass and drink at the same time” (o.c. p. 55). This is the experience of unity.

To be and to have: a binomial in search of unity

This dialogic human condition forms the foundation of two distinct ways in tension of being-in-the-world and represents in turn, two basic orientations of human existence directed towards Being and/or Having. To be and to have, here are two fundamental poles, the two alternatives whose disjunction/co-implication (Ortiz-Osés, 1988, p. 85) decides about human destiny. It comes to no surprise that several authors have dedicated their reflections to clarify this basic human reality in philosophy (Buber and Marcel), in education (P. Freire and Rogers), in psychology (Fromm), in theology (Rahner) and others. The question is not irrelevant because, to speak with Marcel: „everything can be reduced to a difference between what one has and what one is” (1968, p. 166). It is true that this polarization should not be understood as irreconcilable, as a disjunction because referring to the body, to emotions and other interpersonal phenomena it is difficult to trace the dividing line, due to the grading of one pole toward the other, not an automatic grading though, because the centrifugal force toward desegregation, the „having” excluding the „being” can easily gain weight, just as the centripetal force toward the „being”, disjoining the having side. „One cannot be without having”, reminds us Freire (1970, 98), just as it is not possible to only direct ones attention and action to the having, to possession. But precisely in this tension of being and having like two poles conditioning each other, human existence is being decided and receives its own specific dynamics. As exposed in a previous work (Hernández 1990) „This way the phenomena of having, the subject finds itself dragged toward a tension zone between two antagonistic forces; on one hand of ascending forces up to the highest degree of perfection to a point where I do not distinguish anymore between having or simply being, as happens i.e. with feelings, or on the other hand dragged by the force of the possessed object that tends to enslave me”

(p.36). Marcel expresses it: „Here we encounter the nucleus of experience but at the same time of in-intelligibility. Well, it is necessary to state that such tension, such mutual, fatal dependency includes the risk that our lives could at any moment be turned into an incomprehensible and unbearable slavery. (Marcel/Behler, 1968, p.1 76).

To be means to be-with

This dialog city as original state-status of man/woman establishes the foundation of a double relationship with oneself, and unity as well as its severing, dissociation represent a real possibility for the same dialog city existing between people. This dia-logicity likewise finds two forms of being with others, two ways of relating with people. Not in a disjunctive sense or any other form but, as we have been emphasizing in this essay, as two poles always present in our double relationship with people. Every person can consider the other as external and foreign, and we do it constantly, as „the other“, object of observation, of looking upon. The other is turned into an object of the subject, the observing I. In this way the observing ‘I’ confronts the others ‘you’ who then can be counted, enumerated, classified, can be divided and differentiated into races, classes or social groups, can even be converted into an object of care, of affection or of help. In other words, there exists a way to be with the other person where one is the object for the other. This subject–object relationship of people has often been criticized by different authors when speaking about aid professions. Nobody can convert anybody into an object. Expressed in this way the affirmation contradicts the fact that we are doing this evidently with other people since we relate daily with others as if they were strangers to us, different from ourselves, objects, distinct and foreign-external. Of course, this view independent of the other, of the other pole that sustains human existence would be broken, cut off and could lead to those typical mistakes and excesses when „converting“ others into an object for ourselves. Power of some over others would denote the most naked form of this relationship, manipulation as style for relationship. In other words, to consider the other as object entails the danger we have pointed out previously if this vision is unilateral, is severed and becomes independent from the other pole of relation. As stated by Buber (1993, p. 20), „the other one put in front of me takes body“. Together with this bodily dimension it is necessary to consider the person in relation with the other (person) as a relationship placed beyond or even closer, above or below, – of subject – object relations - , words that actually hinder more than they clarify even when speaking about the way how people relate with each other. We should bear in mind, or better even become aware that „his body emerges from a flux of a non-spatial and in-temporal actuality to the shore of existence“ (p. 20). As we have been stating in this article together with the bodily dimension, I dare say objective, there exists another one that emerges from this „flux“ of which we partake unknowingly, these bodily presentations have - are subjects, people, and imply that man/woman is not a mere atom, a monad, erring aimlessly throughout the universe, but unites human beings, connects them with bonds that, inadequately expressed convert the „other“ into a part of oneself. Actually the expression „other“ is not just inadequate but should be reserved to express the primary relationship between people. Not only is the other, in general terms the community, the other significant a part of myself, of my identity as has been certified by sociologists of symbolic interactionism (Mead-Habermas) (see Hernandez 1991, chap. 2) but, to speak with Buber, the ‘I’ constitutes itself in the ‘you’. This expression ‘You’ is a basic word only valid when spoken in relationship between people. Gabriel Marcel has coined the happy term “esse est co-esse”, „I am in as much as we are“. The tension between the two poles arises from the tendency to convert the ‘you’ into a thing, an object when speaking about him. Therefore Marcel recommends to remember „continuously that the ‘I’ as much as the ‘you’ only exist in the creative communion that sustains them“ (Gallagher 1968. p.143).

From this dialogic perspective the duplicity in relations man/woman – Man/woman, connection (bonding) and freedom do not create a binomial of exclusion, but form the two poles where human freedom and the difference of people are realized, consummated and elevated. The connectedness, this knowing about the bond among people, becoming aware of this reality does not tie us down like a necessity or some kind of dominion, what rather becomes void of meaning here is to consider one and the other independent from each other, rather consider them two poles in tension with its highest expression which is love, „this third“ that arises between people and transforms relations, so that they are no longer relationships of subject and object, nor part of a global common, but each an individuality, myself an individual and non-transferable person; but this is only possible to the same degree as the connectedness with others.

In this sense the bells always toll for me-you. This tension is beyond doubt one of the most original ones, and love and with it the whole range of love is the most genuine expression of the separate union of those two poles in relationship, even if it sounds redundant. In this „loving relationship“, as I wrote once, concepts of giving and receiving are overcome, giving is rather receiving, receiving is giving. The most human expression of this reality is the relationship of lovers when it is not possible anymore to distinguish between the one who gives and the one who receives: giving and receiving are simultaneous and reciprocal for both realities join in loving embrace. A Chinese saying expresses it as follows: if you give continuously you will always have“ (1942, p. 79).

Man and world in dialogic relationship

„We live inscrutably included in the flowing universal reciprocity“: This words by Buber (1993, p. 21) not only serve to close these considerations about the relationship man-man, but equally open up another dialogic reality, since people, man/woman are part of a double relationship with the external surrounding world. In fact, the authors of the philosophy of dialogue have scrutinized the nature of the relationship of man with nature that not only surrounds us and would represent the first pole of a binomial relationship, but man is inexorably united with it. In this union of different characteristics as the first when the surrounding world was an object of observation, calculation, analysis, converting it into an object of consciousness, man relates with the outside world as stated by Marcel (1968), „it is as if between the things (external) and the I exists a communication from inside“ (p.176). This dia-logic difference forms a relationship between the subject and the object, the objective, external world appears mostly in Marcel's reflections in the fact that **I am** at the same time as **I have a body**. But we can discover the same double relationship in the expression „I have a house or I am at home“, the first „I have a house“ shows the relationship of subject – object, the second the house, the home forms part of myself. I am in my house (chez moi), the French expression ´chez moi´ identifies not just the house but the house that is part of yourself. It is difficult to explain as recognizes Marcel himself, but whoever does have the experience will notice the difference in quality between the first and second expression. This same and double relationship appears in the world as a whole and converts it in a certain way an extension-intention of man´s own body – house. The word ecology, a term to express the state of being enveloped in an environment, comes from the Greek oikos and means house. In fact, we could say in a certain way the world, the universe is „our home“ and that we are connected with it in a very special way. Naturally the universe is the object of our research, observation and discovery but this is just one part, one face of our relationship. The other, more intimate, more direct and in a certain way more internal: Buber expresses this double relationship in his meditation about „a tree in front of me“ (1993, p.13.).

I could consider this tree, object of my consciousness like a painting, movement or style, like something in front of me, it could be substituted by any object of the world and by the material world itself. I can establish a relationship of subject and object with it no matter how closely those two subject –object poles might be united and it would always be a relationship of separation, there is a distance, a difference, individuality. But together with it and without

denying it, there exists another relationship hard to explain because words lose meaning. One does not have to forget about the first relationship, „all that belongs to the tree is there“, says Buber, but the first one is somewhat transcended. „But it can happen that I by union of will and grace (note the polarization want=will and receive=grace, note by author of the article) by taking into consideration the tree I might be led to enter into a relationship with it, and the tree might cease to be an ‘it’. The power of its exclusiveness has captured me“ (p. 13).

Relationship is, affirms Buber, also reciprocity with the world we consider exterior. In a certain way we can say that the external world, nature belongs to our ‘I’, just as much as I belong to her. From this perspective Buber exclaims that not only „do we live inscrutably included in the flow of universal reciprocity“, but also: „How greatly are we instructed by children, by animals!“, and to speak with Buber we might add: and by the external world that surrounds us as means and at the same time as a reality we are connected to in reciprocity as our oikos as Marcel would say, as an extension of our bodily dimension, not just in the sense of fatherland, a home, but as expressed by the basque – universal artist Chillida (1997) of great openness „because what is there beyond, the horizon is the homeland of all men“ (p. 27). Only from this perspective of direct, immediate union with all things, with nature, with the exterior world can Chillida’s words be understood when he spoke about the house he built as headquarters of his foundation „Chillida space“ as it came to be known, : „Yes,... an old house of the XVIII century, a homebase to dialogue with it. I asked it if it wanted to have three stories as before. And the house answered ‘by no means!’

„Don’t tell me“, the reporter insisted that plants, stones also need the breath of people in order to last. To what Chillida answered as if it would be self-evident: „Yes, of course, I speak with the stones. I ask them, what do you want me to do to you? I do not touch them from the outside, I only work with the inside“ (p. 28).

From these dialogic statements the duplicity of relationship as defining man/woman, relationship, relationship with oneself and the exterior, with the world of plants and of things, with the universe itself is not excluded, as we have repeatedly said, but they join within the person in a dialectic unity of the material and spiritual being at the same time.

Listening is the virtue of dialogue

The attitude or perhaps the most outstanding virtue for any profession of assistance derives from an ethic principle of dialogue, from **listening**. Listening to the diverse voices that affect social action and come not only from clients, not only voice their needs but also their desires, their possibilities and decisions, their tendencies and inhibitions, their fears and inclinations, listen to the voices of external circumstances and of the social, physical and cultural environment, listen above all to the echo all this produces and reproduces in the aid professional and assemble it in a unit overcoming apparent or real contradictions, searching for that unifying element that makes action possible, facilitates change and progress in a favorable way for the client and in con-sonance with the environment. Listening is an art that does not stop short at the tone of words but, as indicates Carl Rogers 1987) allows to penetrate the sounds of the universe „beyond the immediate message of a person, no matter what it conveys, resides the universal“ (p. 8). No wonder that authors of the psychotherapeutic field like Behrendt (1991) of whom has been said, that „nobody like him in this century has penetrated into the mystery of listening“ has come to oppose the „cogito ergo sum“, „I think, therefore I am“ of Descartes with the principle „I listen, therefore I am“. Listening allows us to enter the sphere of being. To listen is not just hearing words and sounds for this author but above all, get into the words. Listening is not only a reception-perception of external sounds through hearing (that too) but the author proposes to „listen with the whole body“, with each of our cells. Perhaps this holistic concept could be noticeable, yet we know that Buddhist temples employ gongs, bells and other sound instruments of wood, leather, clay or crystal, not just to call the attention or as a signal to start or end rites, activities, resting periods but above all as sounds and silences which transport the listener. It has to do with getting into the vibration produced in our body through our skin (not just hearing), the place of contact of „two

exteriorities" (world-universe and person) as called by H.Kückelhaus²⁴ remembering saint Thomas who states that: „the skin is the sense of the senses" (p. 77) to join unity, to connect in order to feel²⁵ the connection with all sounds. The music of the sounds, tones, rhythm are not only interruptions of silence. Silence and sound, here we have the space where symphonic melody in-tune with the universe (from Greek *sin*=with) itself is written and described, the space where man and woman can unite, tune into the unequal sounds sometimes out of tune with people and their circumstances (dancing in the dark).

Knowing how to listen is an ability and is part of what we could call „key ability" for any aid professional and can be learned, exercised and trained. And this exercise, training is likewise a good preparation to enter into the other dimension of sound that transports us into the sphere of being (see: Hernández/López 1998 ps. 197ff).

The most genuine ethical expression of dialogue is co-responsibility.

Concluding these considerations and from the perspective of professional ethics, the most genuine expression of an ethical position of the aid professional is **response. Respond and correspond** are expressions that indicate the relationship between two poles, one who speaks and one who re-ponds. In con-sonance with what has already been exposed throughout the text we can state that client and professional are in dialogic relationship. This binomial speech - response has loquacious character (loquor = speak). Word, logos even better both words, the one spoken by the client, the other by the assistance professional looking for a solution – dissolution of the problem, of the difficulty, in search of growth. The (two) words appear in their dialogic duplicity as instrument and as evocation, as nexus between speakers and yet, at the same time differentiation.

The ethical principle from the dialogic perspective of the world puts us in front of responsibility as base for action or inter-vention of the professional. This responsibility, having the same etymological root as the word respond is a calling that arises once confronted with the concrete situation of the client, of the physical and social environment, of things and, of course of people. Our response does not derive only from a catalogue of obligations but arises also out of the specific aspect, from the tone of each situation that arises of the reciprocity implicit in any situation. Once I heard the architect Moneo say, one has to listen to the sound of the place before starting to build.

Therefore the response can never be unilateral because it includes the voice of the other as other and and like you and in turn receives the word-response of the professional in his double dimension as instrument of intervention and as evocation of the 'you' that includes the 'I' of the client. From this perspective this dialogic space, word and response – response and word, this original dialogic nature the encounter configures the response: the meeting is in terms of assistance the most genuine expression of any intervention activity of the professional with the client. The meeting compared to the simple „intervention" bears that character of reciprocity where both are affected by the situation. In the encounter the notion of the giver and the receiver (of help) is lost since both gain. Bollnow (1968) has studied the concept of encounter in philosophy and in pedagogy and reached the conclusion that the encounter admits several acceptations, since it assumes certain tensions because the term 'encounter' includes the concept of „counter", which nevertheless is not exclusive but tends toward unity. I dare define it as dialogic – dialectic since unity is guaranteed as long as people in the encounter get involved with each other, not in terms of transference – counter-transference, (concepts of

²⁴ Kückelhaus, destacado discípulo de Einstein, a quien resolvió un problema matemático a sus 18 años, que el propio maestro no podía resolver, destacó en su vida, murió con cerca de 90 años a mediados de la década de los 80, por sus obras como arquitecto, terapeuta, filósofo, y místico. En una conferencia-coloquio que tuve la suerte de conocerle. En el encuentro nos relató la experiencia de haber curado a un niño que se había quedado sin palabra, a la muerte de sus padres en un accidente con las vibraciones de un gong oriental. Al entrar el niño en las vibraciones del gong explotó - deshizo el nudo interior que le impedía al niño hablar.

²⁵ Sentir se dice en castellano también para escuchar y oír. „He sentido pasos en la escalera de mi casa" Este „sentir" da unas características muy especiales al escuchar. Denota especial atención a ruidos y sonidos que pueden ser muy significativos. Un ladrón ha entrado en casa. Alguien ha vendido inesperadamente etc.

psychoanalysis)²⁶ but in sharing a common space, a „between both“, a „co-presence“ according to Marcel (1963, p.17-18) where both are affected by a situation, called to co-suffer, co-transcend it. In the same line we could also speak of com-passion, this „trace of God“ how Reyes Mate (1990, p. 105) called it, of patience, of humility, attitudes that even though presume an act of will are never only its product but at the same time are bestowed upon a person, never given as something definite but a possibility opposed by others like abandonment, resignation, scorn and self-sufficiency or simply non-understanding.

In an era when the world situation has never been that closely interwoven as today, when never before ecological crisis, wars and natural disasters have been lived that closely together with universalizing tendencies in economy, in the military and political area, in communications, converting the world into a „global village“ there can emerge a new universal and universalistic consciousness of a unique and netted-in humanity, where destiny, just in case, is not only individual but also common, where freedom and connectedness are not presented only as irreconcilable concepts, where charity with the neighbor and solidarity are not superimposed ideological elements (superstructure = see: Überbau, Marx), but simply manifestations of a reality in tension whose discovery not invention demands a common response, a co-response.

Co-responsibility carries the stamp of action, in the realm of professions of assistance as well as in politics. In response - co-response the word reaches its fullness, since it not only evoked but becomes a principle for action, for transformation, change within a social and ecologic context, equally speaking, equally contra-dicting, in search of unity, in danger of break up, of split, exclusion, fracture. Perhaps this unity is nothing else but what has been called love in literature, in holy books, in philosophy, in educational science, in therapy and in social work, „intimate participation“ to use Buber´s words (1990, p. 138), and in this sense Louis Massignon (1999) is right when he concludes in his book „The Science of Compassion“: „The human word is not a more or less musicalized individual noise for the sake of intonation, nor is it only a means for good understanding, for reconciliation between people; it is a sharp personal calling destined to make us go beyond ourselves, our country, our clan, to go beyond all in love“ (p. 103). This going beyond is not just something added, nor is it only an act of will but it is given in itself, just like recoiling.

The distinction between ethics and morality, in Ricoeur´s (1996) opinion historically one of „irreducible opposition“ (p. 176), loses this irreducible character when treated from the perspective of dialogue as we have been defending throughout the article, converting it into two poles in tension responding respectively to ´being´ and ´should be´. The first emanates from the intimate relationship between two people and their physical and social environment, emanates so to speak from inside. The other pole corresponds to the should be, therefore to obligations from outside, as habits, order or norm, external to the situation and subject in relation. This polarization can lead to rupture by siding with one pole or the other, but they can be unified by paying attention to both and responding harmoniously, harmony that is not absolute but partial, harmony that is possible at the moment, with people in their specific situations.

From this perspective the bells of love and hatred, of pain and joy, of triumph and defeat, of poverty, misery and wealth, of fear and liberty, of being and should be always toll for you and for me, whoever it may be, it will always be for us.

²⁶ Al concepto de Implicación y sus diversos significados en las relaciones de ayuda he dedicado un capítulo en el libro Supervisión; Calidad de los servicios. Una oportunidad para los profesionales de ayuda. (Hernández 1999, pags. 121-135).

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3.6 SOCIAL WORK IN POSTMODERNISM: A CHALLENGE OF COUNSELING AND SUPPORT STRUCTURE

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Abstract

In postmodernism, as some sociologists have been calling our time for quite some time, social work has to redefine itself. Social work must be centered on the needs and worries of people: loss or orientation, ambivalence, existential problems, question about purpose of life, loneliness, insecurity, loss of identity are becoming widespread in all population strata. Social work achieves thereby social relevance and general validity and assumes additional new tasks assigned by today's reality and attempts to respond to them with counseling and accompaniment of life. New methods of communicative procedure seem to be adequate for those new tasks.

Keywords

Postmodernism, ambivalent orientation, identity, counseling, communication, social work.

Diversity and complexity of social work

The German professor Heiko Kleve (2002) of the college Alice Simon in Berlin has, I believe correctly situated social work (SW) within the category of postmodernism in terms of its history and as science and practice as well. The reason is obvious: social work has always dealt with disrupted connections in systems of society, had to tackle a diversity of social problems, which sometimes depend on the subject, others on society or on both, in order to accompany the diversity of constantly increasing social problems and the resulting intervention fields²⁹.

Diversity and complexity even contradiction mark theory and practice of SW, its reflection and interpretation, and an unequivocal, uniform concept in theory and a concept of the profession of SW is almost impossible. This diversity is also found in classical methods of SW, through which social workers try to help individuals, groups, communities and collectives. Example for this is the inflation of forms and techniques of intervention-counseling-therapy (Nagel/Seifert 1979).

Mary Richmond has pointed out in her writings that social work is „the art to do the very different things for different people, in order to achieve improvement for them and for society at the same time“ (quote in Las Heras/Cortajarena 1979: 172). In this citation appears already an aspect that characterizes social work, the attitude of „and and“ or „as much.... as“ as compared to the disjunction of the „either....or“. Therefore: as much for the individual as for society, different for each person.... as if this were so simple....! This characterizes social work as postmodern profession.

A wide range of answers tries to respond to the question what social work is, and the answers given are still formulations we find in the history of this profession. From assistance to adaptation of the individual to society, all the way to revolutionary attitudes for radical social change. All fits within the concept of social work. This has led to a general definition that social work is what social workers do. One should not be surprised about the constant reflection about the (new) identity of social work in literature and not being able to come up with a definitive answer. In both aspects lies the reason for postmodern traits in SW since its very beginning.

² Wilhelm Klüsche counted already 35 interventionfields in Germany in 1994. In 1990 Llovet/Usieto counted more than 20 intervention fields in social work in Spain. The number of fields gets bigger and bigger.

So what is this post-modernistic character trait SW has adopted since its very beginning? The concept of postmodernism is used in specialized literature since the sixties to designate a society that shakes the very foundations of industrialized societies and, at the same time attempts to overcome it. In other words a society that is no longer referred to those foundations industrial society invokes, postmodernism claims new foundations. Even if many authors reject this concept of postmodernism, nobody questions the facts this concept pretends to describe. These facts are nothing else but the great transformations, the changes we observe in society. Zygmunt Bauman (1995:30) placed them in opposition to industrialized society. The industrialized society is a society marked by order, and actions, unequivocal clarity, delimitation and control, while postmodernism is characterized by chaos, disorder, diversity. „Order and ambivalence are equally products of the modern practice“. Therefore Kleve (ibid.) reaches the conclusion: „Just as practice, neither does the theory of SW satisfy any of the modern postulates for clear identity, unequivocal and clear delimitation. On the contrary, practice and theory of social work are both laden with diversity and contradiction which can blow up identity, in short: ambivalence“ (p.3). Social work is the science and profession of 'and...and', of 'as much... as'. For social workers an enticing, exceptional and challenging task many have to learn and which is implicitly presupposed. This is the advantage of SW, but also its responsibility.

Stop with permanence, all gets into the flow.

In fact, since the mid-eighties, in some countries earlier, changes in industrialized societies are observed which represent a type of revolution, a silent revolution, as Beck once said. (1997, S.12) This revolution has toppled the foundations of our society to such extent that we no longer find solid ground. All points to a peculiarity that our society is „constant change“ which has made everything flow, *panta rei*, as Heraclites already stated more than 2 thousand years ago. Sociological interpretation theory today makes us aware of the risks, of the structures that have become independent from the subjects who have called them into life.

Our world, once divided into states and closed societies is becoming an open, limitless (one? world) today, a global village, at least for goods and markets though not for (all) people. An ambivalent world that increases options and possibilities for some people but on the other hand poverty, social inequalities, dependencies.

These changes depend on technological communication means which show us and make us experience different times and different social stages simultaneously, so that often the spectator does not even have time to understand and question the diverse and contradicting news and worlds, much less to integrate them. On the labor market occurs something similar: industry has quite often simply thrown out workers from their jobs through technologization of production and services, so that we detect, as Beck observed a „brasilianization“, where a few high qualified and well paid specialists occupy safe jobs, while others in increasing numbers are replaceable. But perhaps even more decisive for social work is the phenomena of de-traditionalization of social norms, values and behavior. The ideals of the illustration and emancipation, such as life skills and freedom have often become reality, but other principles and achievements like solidarity, class belonging, social responsibility and social connections have gone lost or at least have weakened. This has as never before given rise to new social problems, which affect large proportion of the population, if not everybody.

People have to find their way in the labyrinth of society without the support of tradition and their own „*Lebenswelt*“, the world of their lives, because everybody has to decide for him/ or herself how to live, what do in life, which values to accept as guidelines. A wide range of options surely, but a lot of work, of individual decisions, of coexisting life forms, a situation that again provokes chaos, break-up of connections and togetherness, deconstructs them and makes them permeable. All this can have an alienating effect on people. Even if only in form of a short summary I would like to point out deficiencies and social needs SW is supposed to respond to: loss of identity and consequently loss of orientation and isolation.

Loss of identity and orientation and isolation are becoming widespread.

The identity of a person is tied to two questions which are hard to separate from each other, but can be dealt with separately. The question who am I? And the question who do others say I am? Own image and external, foreign image belong together. But both presuppose community. There cannot be any identity only as self-reference nor only through community reference without otherness, alterity, without the other, without a „you“ and the community of those who constitute the physical, psychological and social environment. That the 'I' is formed through a 'you', is an old sociological (Mead) and social-anthropological truth (Buber 1979), but the 'you', man and society are bearers and transmitters of language, which again contains society, interpretation and significance and resulting actions. This does not mean that everybody is turned into a copy of the other. The 'I' and the 'others' stay connected, maintain a balance between them as same and yet different. Everybody can recognize him/herself as member of a certain community of language, as part of a common 'we'. Own image as answer to the question „who am I?“ and outside image as response to the question „what do others say who am I?“ for a long time went together, two faces of the same coin. Even when authors like Habermas recognized identity as the challenge of a lifetime and once acquired identity displays a consistency which makes one recognizable as the same person for the rest of the life.

But in 'liquid modernity', as Bauman identifies our time, identity has changed many times. Large part of what constitutes identity is being questioned. For example states as elements of reference for a big national identification-society has often become questionable. Aspects of its sovereignty are ceded to other, larger political entities and the individual can hardly identify with them because they are too large and too remote.

Also social roles as bearer of identity on the level of '*Lebenswelt*', own life-world have been questioned. To be man or woman is no longer tied to fixed ideas, father and/or mother can take different shape. There is no model, patron, example that serves as orientation to be a man or a woman. Professions are being eliminated as fast as new ones created. Jobs can be changed, just as putting on or off a new dress. „Stability almost resembles paralysis“ (Sennet 2000, p.115). Identity depends much less on others, but on ones own decisions, evaluations, goals and ideas.

This may, of course give the individual diversity and freedom, but also „fragmentation and atomization“ (Werder 1991) and consequently loss of orientation and loneliness for many people.

The often cited Bauman (2005) writes in one of his last works about identity: „...those '*Verortungen*' 'local identity-giving roots' identity was previously tied to (job, family, neighborhood) are not accessible any more (and if, they the are barely trustworthy), nor are they able to satisfy the thirst for togetherness or mitigate fear of being left alone and abandoned“. (p. 71) Previously known uniform worlds are breaking apart: many people lose their way and the gap between '*Lebenswelten*', 'life worlds', mentalities, generations, individuals and communities widens more and more. Not only collective identities are in crisis, but individual ones as well. The result are perturbed masses who search for a certain degree of security in standard behavior, certain faiths, life styles and criteria, which function as „wardrobe communities“ (Baumann, *ibid.* p.72) and transmit the individual a fleeting sense of belonging, at least for a short time:

Plurality, diversity, flexibility and multi-optionality got together with (ambivalence), fear of loss, lack of commitment of '*Lebenswelten*' 'life worlds' and the incessant need to decide for oneself. What one possesses can be lost, what one is, can change, what has been decided does not have to be fulfilled... life is strenuous and stressful, the sense of insecurity and uncertainty expands. Bonds and sharing are more important than ever, yet at the same time they are dreaded. They are perceived as threats for freedom and limitation of ones own chances. Future and life itself become a term-limited project, fear of isolation is the other face of not wanting to bond with others. This prototype of the new, postmodern situation is a man Enrico, called Rico

by Sennet. This young man, father of two children, manager of a company believes in the virtues of past times which are opposed to the new values he also accepts, even though he and his family are victims of both of them. This man longs for old values he was brought up with, but rejects them for his children because they have become a stumbling block for the present time. A man full of contradictions, who believes in everything and nothing, nothing solid, nothing final, nothing permanent, the flexible man, who inside turns into a sick, offended and arrogant being.

Counseling and accompaniment on local levels, main task for SW in postmodernism.

We do not want to transmit a negative image of our time, this is not at all our intention, but we like to discover what really matters today for SW. Not as excluding proposition, but rather like an open proposal, an opening toward new situations and challenges. Again we are dealing here with the already mentioned attitude of 'and....and'. Social justice, equality of opportunities, social integration, human rights are still principles of our time and objective of social work. But similar to the beginnings of the industrialization when social work supplied answers for multiple problems in times of deep social change, also today new circumstances of life cause fear, insecurity and uncertainty in most people, even in whole population groups and characterize SW today. In a well established social state after the second world war, social work only represented the last part in a chain of a larger system and as such had to take of those deficiencies and social needs of individuals and groups which have could not been dealt with otherwise, for example in schooling, health care, labor market, family. But today the challenges for SW lie often in counseling and accompaniment of people, who are lost in a de-traditionalized and contradictory society. These tasks are rather possible on a local level, local means communal, or suburban level, community or village, in some places (little countries, autonomies, on regional level).

Counseling addresses diagnostic levels, needs, worries and social situations of the client, individually or in groups and tries to understand the situation from a subjective perspective, discover personal, possibly collective resources and mobilize latent capacity to take action. Counseling tries to discover and establish connections between local situations and resources and, if possible, mobilize them (resources of a local community). I do not think, that the challenge consists in finding new ways for ideological defining of old concepts of communion and community in order to produce „an idealized symbolic community“ (as Sennet describes 2000: 33), but rather in the sense of an individualized society which places preference on individual, or group-related ways and thus strengthens the individual person. Neither does the challenge consist in isolating people, but rather goes in line with the formulation of the sociologist Ulrich Beck (Munich, 1997): „Whoever wants to live alone has to live socially“. But this requires accompaniment structures in communities where people can turn-to in need, where they can establish relationships and meet others who think like them, where they can plan and carry out projects and activities with other affected by the same situation. Another possibility for this type of social work would be the incorporation of social workers in social institutions and organizations, even in companies: to be there for people immersed their multiple problems, for example divorce processes, (problematic) working relations with colleagues, working relations between leaders and members, in times of existential crisis and when purpose and sense of life are being questioned. We will not provoke a sense of community among people, habitants of communities, members of institutions and social organizations because of a common creed or faith, or feelings of solidarity in the sense of traditional class struggle, unless perhaps because of shared risk and threats. Perhaps even based on a universal four-dimensional³⁰ awareness, as for quite some time certain authors (Lassalle, Johnson, Capra, Naranjo, K.Wilber a.o.) have been predicting as new threshold for mankind. But not even in this case are social workers able to determine either goal or way,

³⁰In 1983 Lassalle first mentioned the fourth dimension of human consciousness. Wilber (1991) speaks about transpersonal consciousness. (p.264).

unless perhaps just for themselves, because they belong to the same type of people as all the other members of society and are affected by similar problems. I am convinced, that the best condition for helping others is having been through all the ups and downs oneself and having matured on the way. This means then, that he/she is able to accompany people of our time, when he or she is has gone the way a bit further than the client, as achieved a bit more maturity. I recognize here one of the important internal „homework“ for social work. Clients can help a lot because they confront us with naked facts and problems we cannot escape and do not have a definite answer for them. The equation „the more isolated people are, the more they need togetherness“ or „the more social institution, school, family, labor market, previously medium of individual identity fail, the higher the need and urgency for the affected people to establish social relations“. (Olza 2002: 183), can only have results when, at the same time the decision derives from the affected person. In other words, the task of social work does not consist in telling the client what to do (in line with normative actions... „one should...“), but stay by their side in their search and for a solution or for endurance, strengthen and encourage them. The social worker basically becomes an indicator, a sign post, offers company on the way. But these new tasks require new personal and professional qualifications and abilities, which we have described for quite some time as communicative competence. (1991, 1999, 2001).

Searching for new ways in SW: Think, feel and act communicatively

No matter under which perspective one looks at the situation of contemporanean person, a rather social perspective of poverty, injustice, marginalization and exclusion of always increasing groups and countries, or a more personal, existential, identity perspective, always the same question arises, not only *what* is to be done, but *how* social work should respond to new problems and possibly anticipate them. I believe that in both problem constellations in any case they are interactive relations, new challenges and tasks arise, some of them belong to a rather more personal realm. Personal here does not refer to the problems of the individual citizen, but to socially relevant problems which affect people in their existential problems and personal-social realms, their tasks, feelings, intuitions which arise in interaction with the environment and themselves as we have explained in our reflections. Thus social intervention can have, as previously stated counseling character in a particular way. This activity relies on language and is by nature communicative. (conf. Hernandez 1991 and 2002). As shown by authors of symbolic interactionism, society needs language as vehicle for its own reproduction.

But as these authors recognize likewise, language has also its own individual dimension. Both aspects are predominant, if the counselor wants to understand somebody, because the speaking client reflects issues of social content, and at the same time gives them a personal individual significance and his/her interpretation and meaning of the world, of events and his/her relationship to social, physical and psychological environment, and reveals even his/her inner motions, needs, nostalgias etc., in short his/her inner world. Understanding implies participation in the interpretations and significations of the language used by the client. This not only presupposes the same syntactic language, but also requires the social worker to participate in symbolic interpretations and significance of the language.

Not at all a simple procedure, but rather highly complicated, which on one hand obliges the assistant to pay attention to the personal interpretations of the client, but at the same time he/she has to understand the interpretations they provoke in him/herself. Psychoanalytical tradition of social work tells us, that the stories and the client as person can evoke memories and feelings in the subconscious of the counselor, but in this conference we are not so much concerned with avoiding phenomena of transference and counter-transference in the relationship, (without denying it), but we are more concerned with finding common ground, discover the contingencies which enable the assistant to be affected, to perceive his/her own feelings. This specific work of the social worker aims to discover him/herself and learn from it, grow and mature and thus offer the best condition to help anybody. Once in a dialogic situation

with a social worker she told us how impotent she felt about a school that had just kicked out a child. When she, the social worker talked about it with the supervisor, she started to cry, much like the mother of that child who broke out in tears when she told the social worker about her problems. In this differentiated but equally common feeling of impotence lies a great chance for the counselor in her relationship to the client, a chance that can help her grow and the client as well. Much like the initial condition of Gestalt, the assistant learns in contact with the client to be true to him/herself. In this interaction between client and client-counselor arises the *in-between*, (conf. Hernandez 2004) of interactive nature, but also of fine substance of psychic nature, eventually spiritual nature which from a dialogic perspective may lead to a real encounter between client and counselor, where both, the client as well as the counselor experience renewal, encouragement, support and self-determination. We have described this mutual process between client and the professional, between man/woman and his/her environment, with others and with him/herself (Hernandez 2001) as of dialogic nature and it includes cognitive levels and communicative thinking. Nothing comes from nothing, which also holds true about the (individual) person.

As Freire (1972, p. 75) has discovered many years ago, to think means to think-with, to recognize is a recognize-with „there is no `I think´, but a `we think´”, which again does not mean „coincidence”, but reciprocity, simultaneity but also differentiation, otherness. Exactly the same applies to feelings and actions. This is only possible, or precisely because of language. The significance or interpretations people transmit about their experiences is of utmost importance for any counseling. What is required here is the capacity to listen to the other (client) and listen to oneself, but also to listen to what happens in the client and what his/her stories „do” to the counselor.

We are dealing here with the process of understanding the client without mixing it with what belongs to oneself, but not as if two different entities meet who have nothing in common, or a „mere” helper-client-relation, but rather a relationship where both are affected differently by (same or similar) problems and therefore are able to differentiate, but also eventually to put what is mutual into the foreground. This way social work gains a dimension which goes through and exceeds the social worker.

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4 CHAPTER: BEST PRACTICE

4.1 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK IN BELGIUM

By Gerhard Hautekeur, Belgium³¹

Following regionalisation, the national parliament in Belgium is no longer responsible for culture, education and welfare in Flanders, only the Flemish parliament has such responsibility. VIBOSO is a non-governmental organisation which, with the help of subsidies from the Flemish government, promotes and supports community work in Flanders and in Brussels. In other words, our organisation is not active in Wallonia.

The same structure for community development does not exist in Wallonia. There are certainly interesting and innovative initiatives with regards to residents' involvement and multicultural projects in the French speaking part Wallonia. One striking trend in the French-speaking part of the country is that public authorities have taken the initiative to combat poverty, whereas in the Flanders the private welfare sector and other non-governmental organisations have made a much greater contribution.

I shall sketch out some major developments in practice and, on the basis thereof, try to describe a number of trends in practice. My very first experience in journalism came at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s as editor of the brand new review "Tijdschrift Samenlevingsopbouw" (community development). The early pioneers had launched any number of initiatives under the heading of community development work. Their approach was typified by blazing enthusiasm. The society-related involvement of the social and community workers left their mark on everything. In the areas in which they were active, they identified with the local residents. Their socio-critical points of view led them to be seen, by the government and the local authorities, as opponents, and vice versa. Nevertheless, in the 1980s many community development workers were in at the beginnings of local consultative platforms which, in consultation with various partners in the rural areas, worked together to find appropriate services in rural areas and in the deprived neighbourhoods in the city.

In the pioneer phase all sorts of initiatives flourished: the Flemish government made room for all sorts of initiatives in the area of community development work, category-based community work and territorial-based community work.

The social approach was central. At that time, little was said with regard to a methodical or strategic approach, never mind personnel management. The latter was unheard of. Some staff went unpaid for months by the bodies which employed them. Many community workers were, in fact, their own employers. A great many social workers and community workers worked for years in a situation of insecurity and with temporary contracts, which were constantly renewed.

In 1982 the Flemish authorities providing the subsidies **brought about a basic change in the face of community development.** (A new decree/law with regard to community development work was finalised in 1992).

Since 1983 the Flemish government does no longer provide subsidies to the 50- 60 small associations of community development but decided to provide subsidies for one institute for the support of community development work in the Flanders and in Brussels (VIBOSO), and eight regional institutes for community development work (RISOs): RISOs have been set up in the three major cities, Antwerp, Ghent and Brussels and, in addition, in the five Flemish

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provinces. The RISOs are the employers of the community development workers in their cities or provinces.

The first change is the bigger scale of the organisation and the second change is the importance of **the planning**. In order to obtain subsidies, VIBOSO and the RISOs have to provide the Flemish government with a five- to six-year budget/plan. This covered the major options and priorities for the coming years. Moreover, each year, an annual report has to be presented for approval to the Ministry for Social Affairs.

Thirdly the community development work has to be result-oriented. The Flemish government which provides the subsidies decided that it would no longer provide subsidies for basic services such as neighbourhood work, but that the RISOs get a budget to initiate and support short-term projects – for two to four years – to help the deprived. From the RISOs, community development workers were sent into areas with social problems. The community development work was aimed at the whole area, but the participation methods aimed primarily at mobilising and involving the least vocal residents.

The principal issues of community development work are: local quality of life, housing and environmental well-being, welfare and services, work and education, the integration of newcomers and community life of different communities in the area. Community development work is developed at the level of the neighbourhood, the whole community and the wider society (a region).

In total we are dealing with some 120 community development work projects in Flanders and in Brussels, directed by 135 professional community development workers. These community development workers are supported by the 8 coordinators of the RISOs and their various administrative personnel. For the Flanders and Brussels, with a total of 7 million inhabitants, the community development work sector is indeed small, some would say “peanuts”.

In addition to this, however, the RISOs are investigating other sources of finance, for example, the Social Impulse Fund set up by the Flemish government, European sources, contracts with provinces or projects promoted by local authorities. As a result, the total personnel of the whole community development sector rises to some 300 workers

Present community development work is typified by :

- ✚ Growing professionalism: community development workers pay great attention to the methodical and planned approach to residents’ participation.
- ✚ The sector (and here principally VIBOSO) makes a major contribution to the training of community development workers, research, documentation and the publication of its own review on local policy and community development work.
- ✚ Community development work also often lies at the basis of the building up of networks bringing together partners focusing on a given problem.
- ✚ Many community development workers work closely or even at the behest of local authorities, for example, in the framework of the Social Impulse Fund, 60 of the 308 Flemish local authorities called on the help of the community development network in planning their policy for combating poverty. Not only as advisers but as leading figures in the consultations between all the local partners as “animators” to activate the local residents. In this, community development work creates a bridge between residents and the authorities.
- ✚ Thanks to this new professional approach on the part of the community development workers and, at the same time, the changed attitude of the authorities themselves, the mutual prejudices have become a thing of the past.
- ✚ Thanks to the pooling of community development workers in the Regional Institutes for Community Development (RISOs), employees in the sector have greater security;

- ✚ There is a contrast between the older generation of staff members, many of whom have been employed for 15 to 20 years, and the great turnover among younger community development workers.
- ✚ The Flemish government provides subsidies, but it leaves enough room for autonomy on the part of the local community development initiatives.

Some major challenges

The issue of the multicultural society is a major one, and is related to the ability of different societies and cultures to live together in one neighbourhood: how does one deal with diversity, what are the repercussions on the content and the methodological approach on staff management.

The Flemish government wishes to play a more steering and managerial role: they are pressing for greater cooperation between community development work and the integration sector, which is seeking to integrate ethnic-cultural minorities into the community in a more participatory fashion. Very often both are equally active in the same neighbourhood. Consultation is growing from the grass-roots up, and our hope is that we can determine the contours of the growing cooperation, rather than being confronted with a ready-made merger.

Community development work came under the authority of the Flemish Minister for Welfare. This Minister increasingly stresses the role of community development work in combating poverty, whereas community development work itself has no wish to limit itself to combating poverty but rather wished to be a pioneer in improving the process of participation and networking with regard to the environment in a given neighbourhood or an area.

One hot issue at present is the decentralisation of authority. We are up to our necks in the debate with regard to the decisive issues with regard to the different levels of decision making. What is at issue is which management level is best suited to carry out certain tasks within the framework of the principle of subsidiarity.

Within the present majority in the Flemish government there is a trend to hand over an increasing number of tasks and powers to the local authorities. In this scenario the local authorities would, in the long term, become responsible for community development work, youth work and integration work.

Community development workers fear that, as a result, the greater autonomy of community development work would be threatened. And what would happen with regard to support for the second and third line? What then would be the role of a Regional Institute for Community Development Work and a Flemish Institute for Community Development Work?

In the framework of the basic debate we hear ever more clearly a call for the primacy of policy and the question of what the government itself should do, and what can be turned over or left to the private sector and its partners. Even the community development work at present subsidised by the Flemish government is in danger of falling into this field of tension between the public and the private sector. A number of politicians nevertheless stress that the local authorities must cease doing so many things themselves, but should rather become directors, who bring together the relevant partners to make strategic choices.

The Flemish government, is establishing a great number of requirements in the framework of a quality decree which, to a growing extent, will measure and evaluate the results of community development work. At present the whole sector is working on a quality-control manual.

The present "purple" coalition of red, green and liberal members of the Flemish and the national government, stresses (largely due to the pressure of the liberal partner) the relationship with the individual citizen. Key terms are client-friendliness with regard to the individual citizen and effective management. The so-called civil society (trade unions, socio-cultural associations, advisory committees) is increasingly neglected. In itself, client-friendliness is positive, but at present little attention is paid to the other dimension, namely the citizen as "the citizen" – whom the authorities address as a resident of a given neighbourhood or a local community – and to working in the interests of the group or collective interest.

Nevertheless, the role of community development work is undoubtedly recognised in the organisation and participation of the disadvantaged social groups and neighbourhoods in society. The expectations are sometimes even exaggerated. It is said that community development work has failed to stop the advance of extreme rightist groups.

There is, nevertheless, a growing call for a professional and methodical approach towards the full participation of all residents, not only in deprived areas but in all – even suburban or well-to-do – areas of a city. In short, there is still a future for community development work and workers in the Flanders and in Brussels.

4.2 COMMUNITY CARE PROJECT BEST PRACTICE – SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

www.chitalishte.bg, Bulgaria

Two Phases Project – “CHITALISHTE” – Community Center

First Phase

“Promotion of Community Participation and Development in Bulgaria”

What is “Chitalishte”? – Traditional cultural and educational centers, community Centers
The Chitalishte is a unique institution with a special place in the history of the Bulgarian society. The first Chitalishta appeared in the 1850s as “reading houses” but their role gradually evolved and they assumed additional responsibilities, with education and charity being the most important ones. The Chitalishta developed as independent entities bearing all the characteristic features of volunteer civil associations, promoting the establishment of a new form of social contract without precedent in earlier Bulgarian history. The Chitalishta were the first secular community centers that offered equal participation and universal access to services on a democratic basis and without discrimination. They have become one of the most respected and enduring institutions as they played a critical role in the processes of national consolidation and modernisation.

With the initiation of reforms in the beginning of the 1990s, the Chitalishta faced the challenge to adapt their activities to the new socio-economic conditions and the rapidly changing values and needs of the Bulgarian society. The state subsidy to the Chitalishta has dramatically decreased and most of them have downsized their staff and limited the scope of their activities. The Chitalishta are registered as non-profit organizations, as provided for in the Law on the Public Chitalishte, adopted in 1996.

The Chitalishte presents at least three specific institutional features - sustainability, legitimacy and flexibility that - combined with its historical experience - provide it with the required prerequisites for responding to the current needs of the Bulgarian society. The existing network of approximately 3,600 Chitalishta throughout the country constitutes a national wealth and an important comparative advantage for Bulgaria. Thanks to their unrivalled social prestige and geographic proliferation, the Chitalishta have a tremendous potential to contribute to the satisfaction of certain cultural and educational needs, **and to promote community participation.**

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Start date: May 1997

End date: March 2001

Executing agency: Ministry of Culture

Implementing agent(s): *Chitalishte* and Library Department - Ministry of Culture

Project site: 41 Chitalishte in different Bulgarian towns/villages

Funding: \$140,170 - UNDP National TRAC \$120,000 - UNDP Regional TRAC \$ 5,000 -

Government of Canada \$ 253,969 - Government of the Netherlands

Total: \$ 519,139

Brief description:

The *Chitalishte* is a traditional expression of community organization in Bulgaria and has played a major role in education and the preservation of the national cultural heritage. Given its unrivalled social prestige and geographical proliferation, the *Chitalishte* can play an important role in the emergence of a vibrant civil society, in organising and channeling the consensus needed for the implementation of reforms and promoting solidarity and social cohesion. The project aims to broaden the role and expand the activities of the *Chitalishte*, thus encouraging the empowerment of civil society and promoting active participation at the local level. It will also build the capacities of the selected *Chitalishte* to ensure their survival and

sustainability by engaging in income generating activities and by attracting other sources of finance. The outcomes of this pilot project will demonstrate what type of interventions lend themselves most readily to an expansion of the role of *Chitalishte* in Bulgaria and will determine the scope and configuration of a possible extension of the project to all of the country's *Chitalishte*.

Objectives:

Development objective: Promote *sustainable human development* in Bulgaria by expanding the role and modernising the structures of Bulgarian civil society, acting through the *Chitalishte*.

Results:

- ✚ 42 *Chitalishte* were trained and 22 pilot *Chitalishte* received funds for the implementation of innovative sub-projects.
- ✚ 11 training sessions were carried out with the support of 12 national and 2 international trainers and over 100 *Chitalishte* staff were trained;
- ✚ 23 *Chitalishte* representatives participated in the National Conference of NGOs, held in October 1998.
- ✚ 7 *Chitalishte* representatives visited the Czech Republic on a study tour in April 2000.
- ✚ 92 *Chitalishte* representatives participated into the National Seminar "*The Future of the Chitalishta in Bulgaria*", held on 24 October 2000.
- ✚ A total of 22 innovative sub-projects were implemented in two waves in the period 1998-2000.
- ✚ The 22 pilot sub-projects received support from over 1,640 volunteers, created 51 permanent jobs and 619 temporary jobs, and provided vocational training to 2,355 people.
- ✚ A 30' documentary film "*The Chitalishte - Festivity and Hope*" was produced and broadcast on 24 May 2000 on Channel 1 of Bulgarian National Television;
- ✚ A book "*The Chitalishte in Bulgaria - Past, Present and Future*" was published in 2,000 copies in Bulgarian and 500 copies in English.
- ✚ A National Conference "*The Future of the Chitalishta in Bulgaria*" was held on 24 October 2000 with the participation of the President of the Republic, the Minister of Culture, the Ambassador of the Netherlands, the Resident Representative of UNDP, *Chitalishte* representatives, Mayors, NGOs and international donors.
- ✚ A specialized educational-informational radio programme on the *Chitalishta* was developed and broadcast on "Horizont" programme of the Bulgarian National Radio in the period November-December 2000.
- ✚ A programme document for the expansion of the project on a national scale is being developed.

Second Phase

"Community Development and Participation Through the Chitalishte Network" 2001 - 2004

("Chitalishte") is a project of the [Ministry of Culture of Bulgaria](#) and the [United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\)](#), with the support of the [MATRA Programme of the Netherlands government](#) and the [United States Agency for International Development \(USAID\)](#). The goal of the project is to strengthen the community role of the Chitalishte as traditional cultural and educational centers and offer working models for their modernization and participation in local community development.

The project covers a period of 3 years and has a budget of **USD 2 475 000**, with cost sharing inputs as follows: USAID - USD 1 000 000, MATRA Programme - USD 975 000, and UNDP - USD 500 000.

The National Coordination Office in Sofia and six Regional Centres in Blagoevgrad, Vidin, Kurdjali, Pleven, Sliven and Shumen support the practical implementation of the project. Central and local governments and partnership with non-governmental organisations and local business are an important source of support in the process of achieving the project's aims.

The project is a natural continuation of the pilot project "Community Participation and Development in Bulgaria" (1997-2000), in which [41 Chitalishte](#) participated, and of the models and practices it employed.

300 Chitalishte have been selected as permanent partners of the project and they are entitled to participate in all the activities and competitions organised under it. Another 600 Chitalishte have access to a narrower range of activities.

The "Chitalishte Project" promotes the institutional strengthening of the Chitalishte by means of a [National Capacity Building Programme](#). See below.

The funding of [Demonstration Projects](#) is intended to encourage innovative activities of the Chitalishte participating in the network.

[25 Internet Centers](#) in the Chitalishte provide Internet access to remote and underdeveloped regions, and promote the IT skills of the Chitalishte staff and the local communities.

The [Chitalishte Portal Site](#) provides full and accessible information about the Chitalishte network

The [Possoka Chitalishte Newsletter](#) prints stories about the progress of the project activities.

National Capacity Building Programme

The National Training Programme is a major part of the project's strategy for institutional development of the Chitalishte. The Programme offers a systematic module of training and advice tailored to the needs and development prospects of the Chitalishte. Taking part in the programme are representatives of 300 Chitalishte, which are the project's permanent partners, and the Chitalishte from the pilot stage.

Aims

-  Promote a new management style in the Chitalishte based on an enhanced legal, financial, organisational and social competence.
-  Promote the advisory capacity of the Chitalishte which can be offered as a service to the Chitalishte network and the local community.
-  Promote partnership between the Chitalishte, the other non-governmental organisations and local governments and support equitably the institutional development of all the partners.

- ✚ Develop training programmes, materials and information products by, and for, the Chitalishte.
- ✚ Create an environment conducive to the Chitalishte's participation as an experience exchanging and educational product sharing community.

Structure

- ✚ Modular training to convey knowledge and develop skills in key areas of Chitalishte activities.
- ✚ Specialised workshops and advice on matters related to the project's implementation and new activities.
- ✚ Training of Trainers addressed to the Chitalishte in the pilot stage. At the end of their training the participants will be able to conduct on their own training workshops for Chitalishte not included in the programme.
- ✚ A Peer Training Programme "Chitalishte Train Chitalishte" based on requests by Chitalishte and their needs. The trainers in this programme will be Chitalishte representatives.

Modules

- ✚ Project Development and Management
- ✚ Financial Management
- ✚ Institutional Development and Sustainability
- ✚ Legislation and Legal Framework of the Chitalishte
- ✚ Social Policy
- ✚ Community Development
- ✚ Public Relations
- ✚ Information Technologies
- ✚ Adult Learning

4.3 MUNICIPALITIES AND CITIZENS ON THE HUNGARIAN COMMON

Case Study, dedicated for Péter Somlai
By Erika Varsányi, Hungary

„It is not that we have our homes on the land of our country, nor that our daily concerns bring us physically together, but it is mainly our spiritual bondedness that holds us together into a community.”
Hugo von Hoffmannstahl

Genre definition for an Introduction

I call my paper a case study, as the facts and events described in it belong to a certain place, service and a definable social circle. The case study can only be held for more than a simple report if the events introduced are embedded into a wider social background, and with other similar writings give the „full” picture, or support the whole picture verified by other methods. This is what I was striving for: the civil society as the sum of social actions can also be described by quantitative methods and compared with political-ideological programmes. However, for this paper I have chosen another path of authenticity: the summary of experience.

- ✚ Its style can be defined as an essay, a genre between the descriptive scientific report and literature, which also spares some space for subjectivity. In this in-betweenness the reality of the facts mingles with the personal reflections of the author. Although the reported events can represent only a fragment of the struggle which I and the human service foundation initiated by me had to go through during our forced encounters with the local and the national politics, nevertheless, they are utterly true. Their description is marked by the individual experience, in some instances the personal viewpoint not void of anger. This is not allowed according to the standards of a scientific paper which must be free of value-judgement, still, rational values do not essentially belong to the Hungarian reality nowadays. Therefore, representing the experiences growing out of this reality inevitably implies angry reflections against irrationality.
- ✚ A paper to be published is at the same time a message: should the author give account of either personal or contemporary phenomena, manifestations, societal and/or human conditions are encapsulated and communicated to some audience. The news might be accepted in a more perceptive way if the author is represented in it as an active participant of the events, conflicts and failures.
- ✚ The thesis of my paper is that whereas before the transformation of the system the civil grassroots initiatives represented the civil society as opposed to the power of the state, after the changes they merely became a tool of propaganda for the central and local political power. In spite of having the necessary legal frameworks, the civil organisations actually exist outside the decision making processes that influence the shaping of the society, and try to realize the democratic chances while bonded to the governmental organs.

Years ago when the civil society launched their programme, the leading pattern was that of the western democracies. The self-renewing ability of these societies is also embedded in their ability to break out from the different waves of crises through the mobilization of the human associations.

In this paper through the elaboration of my experiences I make an attempt to give an answer to the question: being aware of the developments of the blind alleys of the Hungarian society what could give a chance for the creation of a civil society that could unite the citizens in actions based on truly conscious and rational debates. The chances for the realisation of these actions in the future are anyway made possible through the relationship with the government on the one hand, and the possibility of a “spiritual community” on the other.

The experience

As a sociologist, I started to work on setting up a foundation in 1997 with the aim to provide human services in a rural region based on a professional programme. Some kilometres from Pécs (south Hungary) there used to be no family help-centres nor any other services for assistance or consulting. After establishing the organisation and as a consequence of the legal regulations the nearby villages and towns started to turn to our foundation and commission us with different family support and child welfare related tasks.

The catchment area consisting of 15 different settlements equally included towns or villages making good use of their advantages for tourism, or having central roles, or - having lost all their importance - sunk to the periphery. Depending on the local conditions the local autonomy declared by the local government act could both provide good opportunities for a vivid local community life – or have an adverse effect and result in just the contrary. Based on the social composition, the selection chances for the election of the local government officials and representatives were rather limited: the intellectuals had long left the villages by then, and the persons, often with a low level of education, who got the positions were not chosen by their competencies, but according to certain skills, however, not always including necessary virtues – and as a result the decision making role became at the same time the resource of power.

Nevertheless, in some more favourably positioned villages where on the basis of the legal autonomy there is an framework for own finances through the notary and there are basic institutions, the local governments have not proved to be organisations being able to think in advance and with due responsibility.

The improvement of the quality of life of the local community usually presumes an approach and a political practice, where the only foundation can be an open local policy making and cooperation with the professionals. The short term, interest-based thinking and the fixation of the old behavioural patterns result in dominance instead of cooperation, supported partly by a strong web of interests and partly by the unlimitedness granted by the local government act.

Based on these experiences, the concept of the development of small regions gave me hope to implement larger scale social programmes instead of social provisions running out of funding and based on the distribution of niggardly benefits and hair-splitting bargaining with the local governments.

However, the goal to mobilize the small regions by the creation of the so-called multi-purpose collaboration schemes failed and gave rise to interests that owing to their very nature disregarded social responsibility and the obligatory aspects of integrating the strata falling behind and becoming marginalized and failed to improve the quality of life in some small villages.

Just to highlight one momentum: the controversies around putting an end to the independence of the small schools make it evident that a process based exclusively on economic rationality may tear open wounds caused by living in an inferior situation for decades.

And this is only one, not even fully broken down element of a process that may be held doubtful regarding its relevance for everyday practice. Lacking profound analysis of the situation I would not go into the details of the impacts of the elimination of the local post offices and train lines on the local residents and their feelings of being marginalized. For details of the related effects see the paper of Iván Szélényi and János Ladányi.³²

- ✚ Similarly to them, I also maintain: in the formation of the multi-purposed small regions one can detect centralisation efforts aiming at the centralisation of power and resources in a way that the very foundations of democracy – i.e. the resources of societal control – get blocked. The central association's members are mayors who automatically accept

³² J. Ladányi and I. Szélényi. The social price of the new district boundaries. *Kritika*, January, 2005.

subordination resulting from their individual and political socialisation; the distribution of the resources is made at the level of association, where the hierarchical setup is again an inbuilt element of the organisation. There is only one further step to make to see clearly: if the chairperson of the association uses this position exclusively for having a first-hand access to the resources, the participating mayors will be the last to summon him/her for giving an account on the use of the funds. Moreover, even if the neglect of the professional aspects is evident, everybody will be interested in the distribution in a certain way. Therefore not only is the elimination of all kinds of control easy, but the participants – making themselves independent from their elected bodies and from the inhabitants of their locality – will make decisions dictated by the money-motivated allegiance.

- ✚ The notion of development that has been enlarged to a mythic size but has become void of any content by today does not imply any democratic procedure, does not demand the process of coming to an agreement of equal parties, therefore the distribution of the resources follows the same pattern as public life has been deformed by the political class. While there is no end to the lamentation about the missing resources for the local governments there are no limits to their prestige investments, however, this provides a basis for reference why the looming danger of closing down the kindergarden, the decay of other institutions serving the public interest or the total neglect of community developments is envisaged. The long term tender applications aiming at improving the quality of life did not even include the opportunity for the local governments to cooperate, there was not even an attempt made to extend the decision making circle or at least the forum for making proposals although the competition criteria were directly aimed at these goals. The creation of the local governments involved the possibility for local autonomy. *But is it really only the lack of financial resources that is missing* when one can see the apathy of the locals in some places, or the lack of interest in public life and the discredit towards the authorities? Does the incessantly missed more substantial funding bring about more responsibility, or do the people interested become parts of the planning and development if there is more money? Does the common practice give evidence that the decisions about development resources are being made according to the professional criteria and based on the agreement of the societal interests?

What kind of guarantees can an economic rationality based area development policy have against representatives – bound to represent others – who continue treating the area as their own fidei-commissum?

The action research programme initiative of the foundation, providing for 12 or 15 areas at different times, was welcomed by a mayor only in a little, but no local professionals were included in the elaboration of any development plan or conception.

The argument for a rational distribution of the resources immediately fades when one can closely see its mechanism at work: among the services rated as “multi-purpose”, it is the association, namely its chairperson that makes the ranking, as a result of which the administrative apparatus of the association will get much more funding than allocated for the family help centres or the child welfare services. Then this ‘apparatus’ with its personnel and material costs can be accounted for “area development” expenditures in administration and acknowledged as “success”. And now, from its very roots one can follow its purpose: it does not serve but dictates, does not provide resources but makes self-authoritative decisions and in this process the agreement of the interests and points of views in the form of a discussion does not even occur.

Obviously this picture drawn about the small area associations cannot include the element of mayors crying out for the better quality of human services, as they are adjusting themselves to the given financial or power circumstances and conditions, but downwards they demand a

behaviour of servitude. The professional pursuits had been unwanted duties for them even before and as they became a matter of content they have been suppressed by word of power. Now, with growing confidence and reassured, these people can assist in a game where once the contribution is called "multi-purpose" it means that more money is allocated, but less effort has to be invested into the solution of social tensions, unresolved human problems and the public welfare.

*"...Centralisation and decentralisation – at least in political life – are never mere technical details where loading and tolerance can be easily defined. This always belongs to the sphere of political dynamics, where the possible consequences can only be surmised(...)" The funds handed over to the local communities will always increase the power of some people having a more or less regular contact with the other areas. Although it is always uncertain how these people will use their power, human experience feeds the suspicion that part of this power will be used for their own purposes. And these purposes will be absolutely contrary to the purposes of others.*³³

And this is mostly valid for small regions falling behind, facing a hopeless situation and unable to represent their own interests.

All the above must be given special consideration, especially as the author is driven by the conviction that liberal democracy should be the basis for considering the consequences of centralisation and decentralisation.

Orientations for analysis

Three concepts need to be clarified for the introduction of the orientations for analysis: area – perspective – language, which are connected by the world of living.

The area in my understanding is the locality or settlement where we live, where we are surrounded and imbedded with our direct connections, the place where we would like to break out from or where we feel we belong to. The actions of the everyday life take place in a certain area, and whether the important decisions influencing our lives are made in this place or far from it, defines the positive or negative content of our sense of belonging to the area. This experience is historically conditioned: the representation of ruling relationships in spatial distance; the power used to be somewhere else in a distant place, the people got into contact only with its intermediary. The dependencies surrounded the human relationships with an invisible network woven of law and service obligations and this has pushed the rural areas to the impoverished periphery. Nowadays the local society can be hidden in the husk of autonomy, together with the defencelessness of the disadvantaged strata where employment programmes, service development and housing schemes can be neglected in an autonomous way.

For the people living in a certain region the world of life is the field for continuous contacts disregarding whether they moved in or were born in the place, this region is accepted by them for the framework for their lives.

Physical closeness created by neighbourhood is a possibility but can be a barrier at the same time: daily contacts can provide opportunities both for contacts or for reclusion. Which of these two will be part of the human experience is determined by the perspective. The perspective as experience: smaller or bigger communities experience the movement in space and time in a similar way to what an individual goes through in life, where do we start out from and where are we heading for, what can we see on the horizon? The introvert movement of the local communities is closely related to their spatial and economic closeness and these confinements challenge for common actions only in case of suitable political and special socio-psychological conditions. The governing and service unit covering a bigger unit of areas – let us call the latter small regions – will create distance between the everyday world of life and the decisions

³³ R.A. Dahl. The dilemmas of a pluralistic democracy. Budapest: Osiris ,1996.

relating to it; the perspective hidden in it could only counterbalance the distancing of decisions from the world of life of the regions if it could boost the possibility for control through the societal conditions.

Small regions can be interpreted as a way of development only if it creates real perspectives by expanding the spiritual horizon for the creation of communities. However, my personal experiences in the real environment support the view that a new (or rather restored) level of governing is being - or has been - created. The centre has a simple but already developing bureaucracy with the allocation-sharing president at the top. There is low probability that in case of disfunctionality this apparatus, created by law and resting on extending state allocations, could be broken down. In the interest of local autonomy the state has given nearly unlimited power to the local governments, for the correction of this the system of small regions have been introduced, bringing in all the uncontrollability that the local governments have been practicing in the past 15 years under the name of democratic practice of self-government.

It is well known that the decentralisation concept and its practice of the regional development of the 70s not only drove the small villages into an economically impossible situation, but also turned them into small societal pockets. The disastrous effects of this practice have accumulated and turned into a real social issue nowadays. The local governments of the small villages and towns are unable to manage the situation resulting from the lack of institutions and services, chances for employment and the resulting livelihood issues, plus the housing problems deriving from all the aforementioned difficulties. The limited capacities cannot be reduced to the insufficient funding or resources. The settlements that traditionally had a central position and therefore achieved the rank of a town try to convert this achievement into a social position and keep it alive: they transform the formal-administrative relationship and the interpersonal relations of the settlements into hierarchical relationships. Driven by single-minded prestige and power motivation the district notary (responsible for the finances of several settlements) does not serve the clients but gives directions, he/she might get absolutely disinterested in the fate of the small villages or even withhold information from them.

The justification for the institutions of smaller towns relies on their use by the inhabitants of the nearby settlements, however, when deciding about the service contributions the conditions are dictated by the town. While the schools, health provisions, social institutions get their normative share or quota by statistical figures and therefore are based on the existence of local inhabitants, they are of no interest to the town representatives, neither as individuals nor as a social group.

One of the most evident examples for this phenomenon is the operation of the school, where a great number of children commute from the nearby villages. One or two small settlements keep on fighting to maintain the operation of their local elementary school - even at the price of combined classes where two or more forms learn together – but the students of the higher grades traditionally have to commute to the town school.

Sociological evidence of the social selection role of schools becomes evident here: because of public transport the extra curricular programmes can be attended only by the children living in the city and at a much higher standard than the children in the country; after the lessons the teachers can only tutor the local children to ensure better positions for them; at representational opportunities – addressing the students with self-confidence – it is again the circle present where the parents represent the developing settlement – for the local leaders.

In the field of child protection cases often emerge where the family background of the child got into the focus only after several years of attendance at school. There is also the nearly automatic practice that in the framework of preparation for career orientation the poorer and less able children are sent to the vocational training classes of the local secondary school, whereas those belonging to the interest sphere of the town typically continue their studies in

the secondary schools of the regional centre thus improving the statistics of their former town school.

An even better illustration for the social dimensions of regionalism is the former croft, lying about 2 km from the city. With a population of a very small village the farm got a new owner with state ownership according to the usual formula. The mews remained, the castle or manor house demolished and was turned into an office or a youth camp, whichever pattern was followed, the fate of the inhabitants remained after several generations the fate of servants. There is one aspect according to which they also belong to the citizens of the small city- namely they also pay communal taxes – but as they have no representative of their own and they do not fall into the sphere of interests of the town authorities it took several decades for them to be granted “courtesies” such as coach lines made available for them, in some cases even with a sheltered bus-stop was provided by the mayor! The employment opportunity is the slaughterhouse of the former state farm advanced into a company ltd., the pollution caused by its waste has to be endured by the local community together with the conditions of the outpatient surgery, installed in one of the workshop offices. There is no community space either for the children or for the adults; therefore the local government in the city can settle down for a long term on their behalf: no kind of any civil organisation will trouble their “autonomy” from the society of the farm!

The state comedy called “The development of civil society”

One of the basic issues of contemporary political philosophy is how to ensure the balance between state and civil society under the conditions of representational democracy. P. Maren highlights the importance of both:

The self-declaration of our freedom has two momentums: the momentum of civil society and that of the state. We are all parts of the civil society and are all represented in the state by the state. The civil society and the state are the two poles of the same mechanism and are both inevitably necessary for its functioning (...) The liberals say that in society everybody must have free exercise of their rights to life, freedom and looking for happiness. Their counterparts say that only the strong and truly representative state has enough power to protect the members of civil society from the new forms of alienation imposed on them by the powers of society, first of all by the “power of money”.³

The self-restriction of the state is inevitable for this balance to be ever brought about and for the citizens to experience the double participation in reality.

The short period before the change of the political system was earmarked by really free and fervent initiatives: the representatives of different professions became amateur community developers, they communicated the experience of freedom to those who in hidden-away settlements, ghettos could not at all or only faintly feel and follow the political events and processes.

The different organisations brought together people and groups belonging to different socio-cultural formations. However, within a short time proven methods of nuzzling against the state’s shoulder began to spread and work within the parties and the so-called civil organisations, the manoeuvres for getting into power dominated once again. Disregarding the parties, the civil organisations also got unmasked. The way led to the local governments or to positions with even higher remuneration. The civil support is mainly documented by the government bodies as a mere pile of data that can be used by the ruling governments and their serving apparatus for turning down the applications when the limited funding is allocated and distributed to a limited inner circle.

³ P. Manent. Political philosophy for adults. Budapest: Osiris, 2003, p 53.

The declarative and spectacular events of the alternating government cycles refer to a diminishing circle: umbrella organisations calling themselves national and Hungarian representatives of foreign organisations monopolise civility, while local organisations take over compulsory state obligations and drown into the irresponsible insolence of local governments and different levels of government apparatus.

The umbrella organisations calling themselves first among the equals collect the small organisations with the only aim to legitimize themselves without providing any substantial service or representing their interests. Their events are addressed outwards, to their international or state relations, their one-way communication is adjusted to the state dominance. Contrary to a number of negative examples I also experienced the outstanding buzz of community organization in stimulating and developing organisations from as early as the mid 70s.

The development of civil society is the panel of political rhetoric, or more precisely the product of Euro-language. The mechanism of the guaranteed funding resource called NCA (acronym for National Civil Fund) was ricocheted – against all the careful preconceptions – by the state control: I only have indirect information about the functioning of the boards and trusts but the fact itself that the screening of the civilian sphere could be outstripped by the inconsistent and formal criteria of the state treasury has made it clear that the state will not give over the power.

Not even the most democratic organisational setup can ensure impartiality and the total exclusion of predilection, but the humiliating process one could witness during the competition undermines one's best of will. A repetitive statement of political rhetoric is the diminishing state. The different social groups (physically disabled, autistic patients, cancer patients etc.) have established their own civil organisations, similarly to the professionals with the aim to have better chances for representing their interests, for creativity which is principally inherent in a stronger independency. Does the civil society not become strong by being supported in these efforts by the state? The picture becomes more varied by the fact that the social, child, family and legal protection tasks that should be implemented by the government by law according to the equal chances programme have been taken over by a great number of civil organisations who have been trying hard to carry out these tasks in the past 15 years. However, the flexibility and critical spirit of these organisations had to face not only the indifference of the local authorities, but also the shadow organisation set up by the state administration meanwhile, the apparatus living on state funding and having no special responsibilities other than the general label of "chances". Should not we all be residents in the house of chances?

About the freedom of contracting

Is it at all possible to speak of development if the original meaning of the word introduced by the Roman law that has become generally accepted and applied in the past 200 years is not familiar: it is an agreement based on the equal rights and obligations of the contracting parties that creates the balance between services and return services (quid pro quo) by way of compromise? Professional negotiations can only follow from the due regard of agreements, i.e. about what the development of services and networks means.

- ✚ The haphazardness of the legal regulations and the contradictions between the individual regulations provide a playground where interpretations can depend on the eventual political and power situations. The cynical practice following from this situation erodes the main integrative power of society: the law.
- ✚ In our district of social provisions a settlement, with a population of only 800 persons in these days – where according to the reports of the middle-aged and older generation there used to be a flourishing community life until the mid 90s –, has not only become the show area for social injustice, but the actions of the local authorities imply

everything what the world anomy may describe: fear and aggression, ethnic tensions, deviant behaviour, distress and escape.

Immediately before concluding an agreement with our Foundation there was a financial audit in the village: the death of the mayor (a woman) and the departure of the notary were closely linked with the management of the village. The biggest problem of the newly elected mayor was the presence of gipsies in the village. As the representative body of the settlement – mainly consisting of local entrepreneurs – were hermetically separated from the gipsy population , they did not communicate either with the professionals (=the foundation) or with the local people: As a result a such a growing vacuum has surrounded the mayor that he had to resign as he could no longer bear the tensions.

The new mayor, a businessman himself, vehemently announced new programmes and in its framework also pledged to cooperate with the foundation. Nevertheless, the development resources identified by our professionals could have been utilized only through a cooperation brought about by open communication. However, it has soon become evident, that although on the basis of the concluded agreement the village received the statutory support, but in spite of the concentrated efforts of the foundation, the allocated amount was not transferred to the account of the organisation.

Neither the State Treasury, nor the Prosecutor’s Office or the Ministry of Justice dealt with our appeal as they claimed it was unjustified, the only remaining chance for rehabilitation was applying to the Court, but that would have been too costly for the organisation. As after several unsuccessful negotiations and talks I withdrew from the contract on behalf of the Foundation, the village was left off without any proper human services for a long time. The Administrative Office accepted the report made by the notary of the local authority and accepted by the supervisory board, therefore the professional situation was approved as in good working order.

Disregarding a number of other elements of the story I just wanted to illustrate that the governmental institutions – from the local authorities up to the national administrative bodies – close their ranks in an “intimacy protected by power” and stepping over the basic norms of the civil contract they serve only one aim: their own survival.

"(...) I wonder whether the social contract being questioned itself is not the newest form of social conflict. By this I do not mean the finer branches reaching into the details of citizenship rights within the social contract, although these are important as well. I mean the basic sections of the social contract, the ones that define the law and order. (...)A society that seems to accept the long-lasting existence of a group having no interest in the society at all is putting itself to risk.(...) the majority class does not trust in its position any longer. It draws limits that noone can surpass, while it falters as it comes to the point that its own rules should be observed.⁴

Civil effort

An important precondition for the strengthening of the civil word is to ensure the sustainability of the organisations. The declarations of the different political courses have been praising the importance of civil society and the amount of support given for this purpose. Their last step was starting the process of the organisational setup for the adequate representation of civil society.

However, this does not seem to strengthen civility. In the different forums there are repeated refrains of complaints, listings of grievances often with temper but always in the background of a determined willingness to a civil existence.

⁴ R. Dahrendorf: The modern social conflict. Budapest: Gondolat, 1994.

The role of government policy is clearly visible from the benefit preferences. While sector neutrality is declared, the different church and state-church organisations are clearly given preferences against the civil organisations. The doubled support given to the churches shifts the tasks transferred by the state to different organisations onto the field of political games. The doubled support favours ideology-transfer instead of professionalism.

While I hold the control of civil organisations both from legal and financial aspect inevitable, the doubts arise around the realisation of the principles of a restricted state and subsidiarity: which state organisation is given the right of control by law, what are the considerations of the organisation, are the professional considerations supposed to be regarded, how does the state civil servant approach a basically different civil practice? To be more exact: in the sphere of child protection the guardian's office integrated into the public administration at county level avails the right of control over the professional area. It can be understood – however, not accepted – that the civil servants in their application of law do not express any doubt or criticism about the legal regulations applied by them, but their uniform application of the aspects during the control of the civil and state organisations – working in extremely different conditions and financial situation – again proves the primacy of the state. Moreover, this link is made stronger in the – not so rare – cases when professional efforts directly concerning human lives are hindered by the resistance of the local apparatus – mainly notaries or guardian's offices – as the county public administration favours their officials against the professionals in all cases.

The relationship between the local organisations and the local governments is an essential aspect of democracy: this is where it becomes evident if the establishment of the institutions of the legal state provides enough condition for the citizens to be able to exist with responsibility as citizens and to realize the importance of this as representatives. However, this relationship has been bleeding from several wounds from the very start: the legal regulations provide an area of movement for the representative bodies to serve the interests of the locals, the use of which depends on the intelligence and individual moral instinct of the representatives and mayors. The contents of the decisions, their priorities and interests, the decision making process, the communication style with the local residents show a deficit of democracy that is growing parallel with the declaration of local autonomy. Theoretically the law should be the tool to enforce the limits to autonomy. The continuously occurring anomalies of financing derive, however, from the incoherent legal regulations. While one regulation gives obligatory tasks to the local governments, another defines the necessary resources as allocations for free use and a third does not contain any punitive sanctions for the – nowadays not so infrequent – case when the local government uses this funding freely, i.e. not for the stipulated task which the money had been allocated for. "Free use" is a literally meant opportunity for the bodies.

Besides the anomalies of financing the devaluation of the political role and importance of the civil world is characteristic for the practice of a number of local governments to avoid broad generalisations.. Other than their representation at a number of events they do not count on the participation of the local civil organisations in the exchange of information – not to mention the decision making processes – in comparison to the power games within the bodies any articulations of interest outside them become insignificant for the members. During the past 14 years amateur, mostly unskilled people got into smaller or bigger power positions, and exactly this missing expertise makes them take distance from the community, from which through the parties or on account of the limited choices they could get into a position of decision.

The third level is the internal organisation of the civil world: one of the most radical requirements of the EU development concept is the creation of regional divisions. The region may create the management framework for levelling off the territorial economic inequalities. The stimulation for the cooperation to be established in this unit and the organisational background of the professional development was the aim of creating the resource centres.

Based on my personal “in situ” experiences in the past years the picture has evolved in me that also this organisation managed to be saturated with the clerk attitude of the state machinery – while per definitionem its vocation should be the stimulation for civility. The programmes announced under the trademark of partnership and cooperation are driven with the movements of a cyclist and the qualification of an “intellectual centre” is marked by the expansion of the “central” status. The quantitative figures of the well managed events cover the lack of self-reflection as the service function is performed by the lack of criticism, which also informs the norms for cooperation.

Possessing all this experience and answering the question what civility means, I would think that – out of the limitless definitions for a civil society – the one that has become the least viable is the control of power. In the last decade the growing number of civil organisations both on local and national level identified their own roles in extremely different ways: some of them really fulfil the diversity of roles they had been founded for, while others use them in order to access power. Nevertheless the plural and representative democracy based on the existence of parties can only fulfil its actual role if the associations formed upon the initiatives of the citizens can limit the state by taking over more and more tasks; if they assert their interests not by following suit of power or currying its favour but on the contrary, if they guard their independence by a critical approach. As the political courses replacing each-other annexed and subdued the originally free civil ambitions, the citizens lost their interests in the public affairs. As a result the opportunities for community work have become much more limited by now than they were in the early 90s and the least responsible for this are the people who have become indifferent, distrustful and deprived of their self-respect.

The guardians of traditions, or the stolen temptation of autonomy

The conception of autonomy had special value in the illegally printed literature of the 80s. Konrád writes about the temptation – as a synonym for freedom – surrounding those wanting to break out of the confinement of state control. That decade meant opening up new territories against power: in the economy, culture, local communities, and finally also in the field of political life organisational forms were established which had been aimed at by the autonomy-efforts of different social groups.

"The values of autonomy are universal. Either they apply everywhere or nowhere at all. If it is a bad thing in a country to enforce confession from a convict, then it must be bad everywhere. The requirements of autonomy are the same as the rights and dignity of the individual person. The goal that does not serve the benefit of the individual person, that aims at something higher - over their horizon - it is in the interest of the person who set that goal. Anything that contradicts the elementary, linguistic unity of humanity – the individual – who I am, too – with its interests or desires, is in my eyes deceit, violence, evil, may the deceitful and the violent call themselves whatever they want to."⁵

The association law and the creation of parties made it clear: people may be united on the basis of the most varied interests, causes and ambitions; joining these associations gives real opportunity to realize citizen participation and experience community.

In 1989-90 parties, associations and foundations with the most diverse aims were established in a euphoric fever. The parliament and within it the parties as the first ranking institutions of the political system started to dominate the public life stronger and stronger and transformed other areas of the political arena according to their image. In this way legal regulations were established that – imbued with the sophisticated feeling of liberation - interpreted each social institution as rehabilitation for the injuries suffered in the previous historic era. The operation of the local governments that took the place of the former councils and were established in each

⁵ Gy. Konrád. The temptation of autonomy. Paris: Hungarian Workshop, Paris, 1988.

small settlement, the restoration of private property with compensation, the uninhibited expansion of the churches in nearly all areas of social life happened under the term "autonomy".

Looking at the past 15 years from the end result, one can see that without the legal tools of efficient control the frameworks of autonomy have decayed and the term has become the final argument to be turned against and used against any other social value or interest. A position in a civil organisation has become the springboard towards a political position besides the parties and a lot of organisations have successfully played their role with this explicit aim, while the essence of civility has eroded in these processes.

Similarly, the legally guaranteed autonomy of the local governments follows the screenplay dictated by the politicians and has been deformed into the battle of interests among individuals and groups, but has become the driving force of joint social actions of the local society only in exceptional cases. The lack of resources referred to as the main barrier for implementing autonomy, might only be a façade behind which dilettantism and indifference for local issues may flourish. Unskilled representative bodies without any feeling of responsibility gathered behind the shield of autonomy have brought settlements to decay. The consequences of these practices are the most dramatic in the social field: they deny providing services belonging to the obligatory primary care, freely use budgets allocated for certain purposes without being penalized. Instead of trying to find solutions for unemployment in the better case they acknowledge with pity that there are families where the third generation is being born into a helpless, marginalized life, or in the worse case – which is more frequent – their dropping behind is used as a personal feature for the qualification and isolation of these people.

In spite of the declarations highlighting the importance of the civil organisations the state approach to them – compared to the state and church organisations – is still discriminative, which can be detected both in the control and financing practices. Therefore the dependency from the state organisations is still apparent, and therefore the importance of the relationship to power and loyalty is still kept alive. Meanwhile it is unclear which organisations of the civil sphere have what kind of values from the aspect of social integration. Do the common interest and common hobby based associations deserve the same support in order to enrich the lives of their participants as the ones that were created to solve a social problem, to mitigate the suffering of others or to take over the state tasks?

Should the same criteria be applied to a minority folk-dance group and the foundation for the improvement of the quality of life of the hearing impaired? In the dimension of autonomy each and all organisation represents the freedom for association, however, considering their moral content, one could not classify the communities organised for enriching personal life and as a legal entity suitable for representing interests into the same category as those where the activities of the members and participants surpass personal interests. This activity might be professional, lay or protecting interests – their common core is that they do not aim at meeting the needs of the members.

Professional activities spontaneously shape the relationship between a person and their environment or interpersonal relationships. In my view today community work stands out as the professional activity whereby the interpersonal relationships can be stimulated to change through autonomy.

In what kind of an organisation with what kind of human skills and endeavours can this work be implemented?

The essays of social analysis reporting about the lack of communities behind the veneer of ideological lies had an important political message in the years between 1980-1990. The lack or

creating communities by common experiences, interests and activities made the days grey, with this background there were no chances for individual endeavours, ambitions, for an honest way of success.

The most important task of the political changes was to establish institutions representing the legal and political guarantees of a democratic operation of the state. As the transformation was brought about according to the bargaining of a narrow circle of the intelligentsia, the groups not allied to any parties were left out of the process. Meanwhile the parties also kept straining their members until the most determined remained who partly managed to preserve their original beliefs and partly – hey were the majority – realized the exceptional financial chances involved in this career.

Behind the primacy of the institutions and behind the public life demoralizing these institutions the primary subject of the rights – the individual person – has become insignificant. Not only social inequalities can deprive the person from their experience of individual freedom and the security going along with it, but also the legal insecurity behind the declared legal state. In a democracy padded around with institutions the individual person shivers with defencelessness and unprotectedness. The person is defenceless against the lack of public security and the representation of interests, the rules of the market, but most of all against legal insecurity. Under the logo of democracy the most classical democratic principles and demands have eroded: the independence of the power branches has become questionable by the operations of the courts and the public prosecutor's office, the equality in the eyes of the law is ground into nothing by the everyday political practices.

From among the institutions given rights and brought about to embody citizen participation the local governments seemed to be the suitable framework during the time of political transformation for the comprehensive practice of participation for the whole society. However, the autonomy being the guarantee for this was defined as a right without limits, which killed the chance for individual autonomy. The freedom of choice as a single act is partly an advance of trust, and partly – considering the hundreds of small settlements (with no suitable applicants) – it is rather restricted. This restrictedness is given by law; opportunities with no limits, that can extend from passivity to petty monarch attitude towards a population weak in its endeavours and socialized to be dependent.

*"If the people living in democratic countries had no rights or would not have any intention to unite for certain political goals, their independence would be threatened by hardship, nevertheless they could be able to protect their riches and knowledge for a long time, but if they would not make use of the art of association in common life, civilisation itself would be imperilled. A people where the individuals would lose the possibility to perform big things by themselves and at the same time would not be able to acquire the capacity of common effort, would soon fall back into barbarism. (...) The morality and culture of a democratic people would be seriously endangered, together with its trade and industry, if the government would take over the role or associations in every field. The emotions and ideas can only be renewed, the heart can only be only heated, the human character is only developing if the people mutually influence each-other."*⁶

The spiritual crumbs of action

Civility is meaningful in the dynamics of the relationship between state and society: dialogue and partnership should be the key words in an environment where not even the elementary forms of coordinated human and institutional relationships work, where expressing an opinion can only mean approval, critics means being a nuisance; even in the profession aiming at the

⁶ A. de Tocqueville: Democracy in America. Budapest: Gondolat, 1983 p 405.

assertion of the equality of human relationships decisions are made which totally neglect or even humiliate the representatives of the profession.

Our endeavours to see our world and environment as a unity, to contemplate about them on a theoretical basis assumes an elementary level of systematization, i.e. academic knowledge. One of its requirements is a descriptive, objective approach. This statement includes several professional dilemmas which I will try to enfold by the different conceptions.

- ✚ The dilemma of unity: the unity-wholeness approach needs interdisciplinarity. However, this does not simply mean picking up details from different disciplines, but always demands making a choice from the different points of views and trends. The choice is a position taken up by the depth of analysis, its philosophic line, and practical usefulness. Therefore it implies value aspects: this gives protection against eclectic scattering and provides a coherence for the approach.

The way how our everyday knowledge is built up can be explored phenomenologically by the analysis of human interactions. Social reality is represented by the process in which each human situation means a collective relationship, and in which the participants agree on the references of the conceptions and in this way provide a unique framework of interpretation for communication. The exchange of notions accepted as valid creates a reality in which the participants can move with confidence.

What can be seen as valid in the Hungarian reality today, namely what can be regarded as the communication framework for security? Whenever we are using concepts like publicity, jurisdiction, law and order, political responsibility – can we at the same time chose our partner for the dialogue, someone who understands what we are talking about?

- ✚ The dilemma of the descriptive approach: according to the classic definition of Max Weber the primary criterion for scholarship is being freed from values. In reality we are already acting by values when we chose the topic for our research, and mark the priorities by significance. Sociological description works with general conceptions which – taken from everyday knowledge or ideologically implied - we use without questioning them. The division between the individual AND the society was taken for such a sociological axiom. Where are the borders between the two? The notion of society in the general usage is an abstraction condensing the mass of individuals and institutions and their relationships, whereas the conception of the individual always denotes a certain person. Through this separation the reality continuously created by the human interactions is lost, while the resulting contrast formulates a political and ethical question: how is the responsibility divided between the individual and the institutions?

The common use of conceptions applies a static picture for the dynamics which is embodied through the communication among the people in institutions or through informal relationships in society. By going beyond the artificial separation we provide theoretical support for the political ambition that on behalf of the citizens and individuals no institution can identify itself with society.

*"Society, which we in thoughts so often confront with 'the individual' consists of individuals alone, and one of them is exactly us. However, the majority of our linguistic and mental instruments take everything as an 'object' beyond the individual, moreover, as if they were still objects. Notions like 'family' or 'school' obviously refer to a tissue made by human beings. (...) The materialised quality of our usual linguistic instruments, and accordingly our mental operations, relating to the groups of interdependent people where perhaps we ourselves also belong to – manifests itself precisely and not last in the conception of society and in the way as we think about it."*⁷

⁷ N. Elias. The essence of sociology. Napvilág, 1999.

- ✚ The dilemma of objectivity: we exist in a culture, meaning that we shape our world of life through linguistic communication, style of contact, goals of actions and the procedures to achieve these goals into cultural patterns. The systems of relationships that are consequently in permanent change will become imprints in the course of socialization. The examined "society" or its segments do not represent an objective reality that can be analyzed outside ourselves, but it is a system of relations and our attitude towards it is a scientific procedure based on certain values and methods.

Be it the characteristics of a family, a town, a subculture, or the exercise of power that is the subject of scientific knowledge, in all circumstances there is a certain cultural ground from which we approach it.

One possible solution for resolving this dilemma is interventional action in the form of socio-communal work. The artificial separation of the individual from society is surpassed and merged by human ecology, the shaping of the institutional and communal environment gives dynamics to the notion of responsibility. By eliminating the ideological split (under the code-name of society, the state power against the individual) it becomes clearer that each individual may have the justified feeling: "society is me!" But how much is this identification true for the state as well – depending also on culture – is a matter of power. Consequently, the analytical presence to be developed into action research is not objective, not descriptive, but interdisciplinary in a non-eclectic way: it makes the inevitability of an estimating approach clear. As a possible way of intellectual behaviour it transforms the responsibility that can be formulated in the unity of the individual and society into targeted action.

The essence of action research and community work is to integrate science into a social reality that can be grasped in human relationships. The extension of the horizon of the world of life by shaping the different forms of knowledge into an everyday, common knowledge that can be transferred as a unity by integrating the different areas of science.

The presence of the researcher is a claimed intervention with the programme of interpreting knowledge, namely an agreement based on understanding.

The culture-dependence of exercising power is demonstrated by the past 15 years: the ideological duality of the individual and society survives in the dichotomy of local governments and society, politics and society.

We communicate on different levels of language: what I am using now is the scientific-abstract system of notions of sociology. This is not the language of everyday discourse, however, it is inevitable to represent the spiritual perspectives from which a community can take its shape. In everyday work this language provides the safe background for orientation and interpretation. Without it we would get lost in the mental world of Hungarian reality that has lost its values. The language of political rhetoric is not meant for every communication either, however, it constantly uses conceptions that may create the impression that they are in contact with common life. As a matter of fact it is a tribal language, which is only able to grasp the individual and collective ambitions with demarcation lines between them. The lingua of the local authorities best preserves the cultural continuity: the ancient class relationships have not been broken either by the decades of socialism or the so called democratic opportunities for the local governments in the past 15 years. The elections every four years either kept the same circle in the local power positions or resulted in some changes, the communication pattern survived and made social distancing survive as well. The inbreeding is manifested in the language-code of conspiracy: this is how the body and the apparatus become "we" if communicated outwards, which makes their separation from the outside world clear. In Hungarian society, socialized for the conditions of dependency and authority and therefore best able to orientate and move along these lines, the local authority survives as the representative of impersonal power that differentiates itself not only from the locals living outside its sphere of interests, but also from the civil world that embodies the personal aspect. The latter resists its right of disposition, on

the other hand local governments do not have a language code that could approach the initiatives of the citizens appearing as a form of freedom.

Referring to the detailed analysis of bureaucracy also by Max Weber I would just like to highlight the class affinity and servitude driven behaviour towards the ruling upper levels of the management apparatus. In Hungarian social history the protected ruling position of the clerks has been added to it, and these behavioural patterns under the disguise of other state roles have survived over several decades. Today one can find their virulent representatives in the notary offices, town local authorities, in the ministries and in the apparatus of other state institutions.

*"Once bureaucracy has been completely established , it belongs to the social formations which are the most difficult to shatter. Bureaucratization is a specific tool in transforming 'community actions' into rationally organized 'social actions'.(...) As soon as somewhere the bureaucratization of management has been fully implemented a practically indestructible form of power relationships has been created."*⁸

The basic pattern of these behavioural forms is that for the bureaucrat the unequal relationship between the office and the citizens is evidence and this allows for the off-handish, haughty manner, the use of an instructive language and the mere paperwork without any content.

The dysfunctional operation of the state becomes obvious in the use of language: while the classic feature of bureaucracy is its written style, the general practice today is swapping the requirements. From the side of the bureaucracy oral statements become more and more frequent and these have no consequences at all, their impersonality is not only cheeky, but as the clerks in these administrative position keep changing it also means having no responsibility.

If someone refers to a statement the usual answer is: "Who told you this? Not me, for sure!" On the other hand from the citizens, civil organisations substantially more written documentation is required for proving their existence and activities. The importance of the competitions is mainly stressed by the weight of the piles of documentation that the organisations are made to write and fill in with redundant texts – which is a rather costly activity – not to mention the evergreen topic of the essays in the papers about leaving letters and phone calls unanswered, this has become commonplace.

By the way: during its 20 years of operation the foundation – having played a key role in the development of open society – confidently supported the different programmes and claimed responsibility for the eventual errors as well. In my experience the foundation inspired citizenship initiatives in a wider circle than the big, sonorous projects of the state apparatus. Meanwhile a special style of tendering processes has evolved consisting of several factors: the eurolanguage, working with key words and giving the actual terms for the financial basis of a project which then have to be enfolded in different sections. Through the Hungarian mediation this grows wilder, as for those announcing the competition the most important aim is not the real support of the competitors, but first and foremost the self-justification of the management apparatus. Giving the appearance of high requirements and professionalism by overcomplicating things and using redundancies these tenders are less and less able to support the most natural human endeavours and the solutions for the most pressing social problems. Their evaluation criteria, control mechanisms follow the patterns of spatial distances: both the real social needs and the opportunities for meeting them are dictated by principles which are untrue to life and at the same time pre-construe the practice of rejection: a call for tender is

⁸ M. Weber. The Sociology of domination. In: Gazdaság és Társadalom. Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Kiadó, 1967, p287

meant to be successful by the number of competitors and not by the actual support allocated for them.

At the meeting point of political and tendering language mounts the conception of DEVELOPMENT covering everything. Who means what by this development, remains still unclear.

In order to make this the real experience of society, meaning human relationships, the cultural side of development (behaviour, socializing style, moral firmness) should get the primacy before the material development of the object world.

All this is interwoven with the everyday, vernacular language, which translates development into the sensible reality of Money, as according to its everyday common experience in the hidden system of political rhetoric, development equals distribution.

And, of course, there is the common language of the pubs, which is nowadays used not only there but in the areas of public life as well: the language of hatred, shallow policies, taking the upper hand, being arrogant and condemning others.

Language, as we all know, is not simply a medium of social contact, but also the means of shaping human relationships. The rational technical language, the clear conceptions used in a debate per se raise doubts about the validity of the picture made by the representative of local power about themselves. Since the early 1990 there had been a number of opportunities and even experiments were made by the intellectuals to go back and settle down in little villages and to give some impetus to the spiritual life in the nearby towns. The teachers of little settlements – as the sole motors of village community life – however, gave up their ambitions, broken down by the narrow-minded control of the local authorities and officials. The few mayors of the little settlements that had higher level education are also giving in as their own bodies and apparatus know only one method in the battle of interests – that of annihilation.

And this is how after seven years of work the activities were seized by the foundation whose credo was to act where there is the biggest need and to preserve the intelligence attitude in the rural areas as well which – among others – is represented by the ability to formulate an independent opinion.

- ✚ Although the majority of the country representatives – including the mayors – declare their independence – in reality this is the disguise for the manoeuvre to always adjust themselves to the power relationships in due time. All their activities are practical, they are not even able to overview ideological fields, and even less able to place and see the information, phenomena, or even the facts effecting their own lives into a historical context. At the same time through regulations and events they occasionally get into contact with the power-management apparatus of the nation and think that – having become part of the political class – they can echo the phrases heard somewhere but not even understood.

The self-justifying fuss can immediately be revealed, however, it can be generously overlooked as long as it does not pollute the spiritual air of the environment. But does a mayor deserve tolerance, who in his office, in the presence of the local residents makes the most vulgar anti-Semitic remarks? And – although obviously his bottomless ignorance cannot be in proportion with his self-assurance, nobody, besides the only intellectual – hurt in his personality – would ever call him to account and ask: what does an elected political position mean and what kind of language use is involved with it?

This latter experience encapsulates the observations that made me write this paper: the country (and of course the non-rural areas) with its local government and small-region associations is the soil for cultural plainness identified by Ady with the word quoted in the title (=Hungarian common).

What has all this got to do with social work? To integrate means to adjust, to link, to equalize. The integrated social work means that during the daily work in the background of plain values we try to make it clear: Development should primarily mean the development of life perspectives. To integrate may also mean that the system of scientific notions should be linked with the everyday reality, and this most directly relates to the use of language: we use rational conceptions because this is the only way to argue, and this is contrary to the class and servant language, the dictatum, the language of sermonizing and questioning. Only rational notions can be applied for an open discussion of interests and their agreement, upon which a broader horizon could be formed.

Human services create human relationships, can lift out the individuals from social isolation and communities from regional isolation. Social work strives for exploring human resources that would eternally remain hidden in individual loneliness and community isolation.

To integrate does not mean to unify, i.e. social work is aimed at approaching the viewpoints of the different professional areas, because it sees everyday life in a unity, in which area development and management of the settlements cannot be divided from employment, the security given by employment from housing, the self-respect rendered by social prestige from the level of education, the responsibility and style of the local governments, public authorities and institutions, first of all the schools from the civilisation of human relationships. And all the above is dependent on the milieu where the most intimate world of the people, the family life, takes place.

Social work is the vocation for change, and it can only fulfil this aim if it not only perceives the problems, but with the help of academic thinking tries to find the links between the seemingly disconnected phenomena that are far from each-other, and at the same time intervenes into the destructive practice of area-perspective-language use doing harm to society nowadays. Bourdieu analysis the impact of the state on the social sciences based thinking, and o supports his case with the curse-rhetoric of Thomas Bernhard:

"(...) let us take seriously what Th. Bernhard says: we will only have a chance to think about the state that perceives itself through those who try thinking about it (like Hegel or Durkheim) if we question all premises and pre-constructions defining the reality to be analyzed by us and the way of thinking of the analysts."⁹

"If we see people, always state people, state servants, or rather, not natural people, but state people who have thoroughly become unnatural, as state servants, who serve the state with all their lives, and in this way the unnatural. If we see people, only unnatural state people seized by state dumbness. If we see people, the person merely at the mercy of the state, serving the state, who has fallen victim to his state. (...) Day by day as we get up we feel nausea because of our state and if we go out in our streets, the state people nauseate us, who fill our state. (...)"¹⁰

DA CAPO AL FINE

⁹ P. Bourdieu: The practical way of thinking. Budapest: Napvilág Kiadó, 2002.

¹⁰ Th. Bernhard: Ancient Masters. Budapest: Palatinus, 1998.

4.4 A COMMUNITY CRÈCHE PROJECT SINCE 1996

(On Developing alternative services for families with children aged 0-3)

By Géza Gosztanyi, Hungary

In this paper we shall describe the steps of the 'Community survey' method that was introduced by two community developers, Tamás Varga and Ilona Vercseg. Since the method had been applied successfully in more than hundred localities in rural environments we wanted to test it in urban environment as well, so we used it in city 'X' for the first time in 1996. After having experienced its applicability in a city as well, it has been successfully used in several other Hungarian cities too.

(I.) Beginning the process

It is quite unique in Hungary, that free lance experts are invited to carry out community social work activity according to international protocols. Field practice with educative purposes or invitations by the local governments or the authorities of the so called 'small regions' or even unpaid voluntary work are much more typical situations. In the action plan of this 'Community crèche' project the idea of drawing inhabitants into the programme and employing community workers to implement this task came up by the foreign experts of the local government's twin-city.

We just would like to remind you that the newly introduced social policy of Hungary after the political transformation of the region in 1989 was based on local government responsibilities instead of the previous state and factory-based model. Factory-based social welfare services (like the nurseries involved in this project in city 'X') were step by step given to the hands of the local governments and these new service providers have received normative state support for five more years after the political transformation. The country-wide elimination of the normative state support of the nurseries caused an unexpected problem for the local authorities in 1995. However this situation seemed to be a progressive step from the point of view of the Hungarian social policy, the local governments intensively opposed it, because they lost their previously existing state resources. This was the period when hundreds of local government nurseries were closed due to the lack of financing. City 'X' was a unique one, because instead of closing the already local institutions the leaders of the city invited UK and Hungarian experts to find a coping mechanism to manage this unexpected situation.

So the local answer to this centralized restriction was not the closure of the nurseries, but the launching of a pilot project. The project's main objective was to elaborate new possibilities of complementing and/or (!) substituting local services by non-profit or for-profit services by meeting local needs and demands more adequately than before. The idea was to assess local needs and to activate local inhabitants at the same time. Professional help was required to complete the community survey that formulated the following questions:

- ✚ What kinds of personal social services do families with children aged 0 to 3 need?
- ✚ What is the extent of the solvent demand for these potential services?
- ✚ Who will cover the expenses of the introduction of these services?
- ✚ What is the role of the local authorities in this decentralization process?
- ✚ Is it possible to involve parents in the provision of the new services? etc.

The key guidelines of the first year were (a) 'decentralization of local authorities' services' and for the second (b) 'creating jobs for women'. Considering the complexity of the sectors of economy involved in this program they could have been regarded as (c) 'networking'. For us though, the challenge arose from the (d) 'interdisciplinary' quality of the task. Let's see an example for all of these!

(a) Within the framework of the program we organized several parents' meetings, where parents had the opportunity to formulate observations and expectations. During these meetings after the typical phase of 'ventilation of the frustrations' many of them complained about the local playgrounds being desolated and in poor conditions. A parent referred to a personal

incident when her child insisted to enter and play in the crèche's nice garden in any way because the toys and facilities there were more attractive than outside in the desolated public playgrounds. Recognition of the difference between the shabby and unimaginative public playgrounds and the clear, well-kept courts and high standard gardens (but closed for the public!) acted as a wake-up call. "*Let us open the crèche's garden for the public!*" turned up the idea immediately and two weeks later the parents were ready to install a fence in the garden that separated an area for public use. This initiative was followed by several ideas concerning new services. These ideas mostly followed the pattern of "*I can not do it alone - but together it's fun*" such as:

- ✚ time-bank (= mutual help system),
- ✚ family holiday (= alternative use of the unexploited local government recreation facilities),
- ✚ adult playroom,
- ✚ mothers and toddlers groups,
- ✚ playground cleaning and maintaining (= the placing of small signs with the name of the cleaning volunteers had a fantastic preventive effect against any further littering),
- ✚ building an adventure playground with joint efforts of the inhabitants. That is how the non-profit sector (namely the parents' association) complemented the local authorities' services.

(b) The discussion on creating local jobs for women produced the idea of:

- ✚ a family day-care,
- ✚ a toy-bus,
- ✚ in-house child-care,
- ✚ a community café and
- ✚ an information service.

(c) An important finding of the program was the obvious lack of professional communication between social workers, district nurses and crèche caretakers. A real inter-professional networking took place when together with these experts we *explored the neighbourhood* and carried out the *community survey*. They all took their share in the joint activity.

(d) An outstanding example of the interdisciplinary approach was presented in the form of a new type of service initiated by two local crèches. The idea was to experiment with '*in-house child care*' as a service provided by 4 crèche caretakers for a rather low fee. Child welfare experts would undoubtedly hesitate to call this dramatic change in the crèche caretakers' activity as a *change of profession* per se, but the outcome of this experiment was rather surprising: the crèche caretakers became thoroughly frustrated. Each crèche group is run by two nurses in Hungary; the afternoon nap provides them the chance to relax and to a 'juicy bit of daily gossip'. This 'mutual mental hygienic service' can adequately compensate their low salaries. As an opposite of the group-care in pairs 'within the safe walls' of the crèches, the in-house child-caretakers worked totally alone and eventually started to suffer from loneliness that was an even worse feeling for them than the so-called 'maternity leave neurosis' of young mothers. As it is known the latter might be improved by intensive home-chores, while this type of child care service excluded all such kinds of home activities of the caretakers. The previously efficient nurses lost their confidences, and due to the lack of professional social worker skills they were not able to cope with the torrent of family problems they had to face 'outside of the crèches'. Their explanation for these unexpected draw-backs was the following: "we were trained to provide child-care and not adult-care". The problem-solving process introduced in their case-conferences acted as a first step towards the inter-professional cooperation.

(II.) The steps of the community survey

In our work we applied some concepts and methods from the practice of settlement-sociology, settlement-planning, ethnology, statistics, anthropology, pedagogy, social-psychology, communication science, adult education, law and economics. Our priority however did not lie in the quality of these methods, but in the *activation* of the target group and in the sustainability of the very slowly and reluctantly appearing community initiatives. The final goal of the interviewers in other fellow professions seems to be the starting point at us, namely: to initiate community action.

- ✚ Community interviews are not meant to “reveal facts and opinions above all, because our priority is not to open up, evaluate and categorize them; neither to serve self-recognition or the need for attention; and not even to bring to light the characteristics of some craftsmanship, custom or tradition; their goal is not to furnish developers with information, nor to identify community problems or to help communication in general. The function of our interviews is to encourage *involvement* and *active participation* within the community and the local society.”^{34*}

The process ran along the following steps, described in Zastrow³⁵.

A.) Exploring the premises

Together with the child-care experts we explored all the areas (surrounded by highways, railways, parks) that we labelled as ‘neighbourhoods’ from then on. This exploration shed new light on the already well-known area and its inhabitants, because until then the caretakers had to focus on the professional efficiency of their activity within the safety walls of their institutions only. The recognition of the parents’ needs was a management responsibility in the past. The possibility of parents’ involvement had not even occurred before.

B.) Training to increase group cohesiveness

This special training’s objective was to reconcile the various approaches of all the experts participating in the program.

C.) Interviewing

During the family visits we pursued initiative needs assessment discussions. Many of these families were suggested by the crèche caretakers as possible members of a future community group to be shaped. We asked them to participate in the joint effort of the local tenants so as to promote visible changes in the local society and its environment.

Our questions meant to reveal possibilities of a coordinated action:

- ✚ How would you describe your settlement?
- ✚ What does it mean for you to be citizen of this town?
- ✚ What is good/bad in life here?
- ✚ What would you like to change?
- ✚ Would you take an active part in finding solutions to these problems? How?
- ✚ Who else would you consider to be competent enough to be involved in the work?
- ✚ Would you be happy to attend a public discussion where all of our interviewed partners could be present?

These interviews in other words did not focus on life history, family histories, and traditions but on *local atmosphere and disposition*. A very important element of these interviews was to emphasize that the methods and the content of any future community action should be planned

³⁴ In this paper we indicated the quotations taken from Ilona Vercseg’s „Community development” manuscript with an *. In part (II.) the review of the ‘Community crèche’ project was mostly based on the thoughts and observations of the above mentioned study, using them to properly present our community development activity accomplished in city ‘X’ together with Ilona Vercseg, Ferenc Péterfi and Katalin Makk.

³⁵ Zastrow: A szociális munka közösségi gyakorlata In: Közösségi szociális munka, Szerk: Gosztonyi Géza, Semmelweis Kiadó, Budapest, 1994, 226-231. old.

and accomplished by the local tenants together, and although experts will accompany the process and they will also contribute to it, the personal participation of the actually interviewed person will be invaluable in the process.

- ✚ "We might meet outstanding individuals during these processes who represent the norms and values of a community or who have extraordinary mind and knowledge. They could and should be asked to be interviewed ones or several times while their oral history, their skills and local traditions would be documented. These documents would not serve as a study on local history, but they would highlight the local society's spiritual value and, being reinforced by the local publicity this knowledge would return to where it rightfully belonged, to the local community (in the form of poems, articles in the local newspaper or in a year-book; presentation in classes or at local public celebrations, etc.) These interviews will thus be enjoyable sources of *community identity*."*

It is not unusual that the last question of his type of interview would be a 'snowball' question: "Whom else should we visit according to your view?"

The personal visits proved to be abundantly worth while, because those young mothers who suffered from maternity leave neurosis formed play-groups immediately where they spent only one day at first, then several and finally all working days, in one of the rooms that were offered to them generously by the crèches. An interesting fact worth mentioning, that it was the child-care nurses who had difficulties accepting the parents' independent activities in the play-rooms. As soon as the mothers realized that they will not be looked after there, they immediately brought toys, plants and cardboard boxes to furnish these rooms. Caring and intervening efforts of the experts however, always dampened the parents' enthusiasm.

D.) Public discussions

We invited all of our interview partners to a series of open discussions where those individual problems that had been defined during the family visits were discussed extensively in a group situation. These individual problems were assembled in a *problem list*, the items of which later appeared in the 'Community Questionnaire':

- ✚ "During open discussions:
- ✚ they realized that their problems were similar,
- ✚ they saw their problems in a different light,
- ✚ they felt not being alone that made them feel secure,
- ✚ being in a community helped to solve problems,
- ✚ community responsibility and public involvement became possible."*

In the course of discussions the problematic issues were focused gradually until the participants determined and agreed with the most important problems for everyone. These issues became the topics in the 'Community Survey' questionnaire:

- (I.) I am an inhabitant of town 'X'!
- (II.) I am a parent!
- (III.) I am a neighbour!
- (IV.) Here are my personal data I would like to share with others!

The idea of asking participants on every occasion to bring relatives and friends for the next session proved worthwhile, because it helped to maintain momentum.

E.) Model-questionnaire

Model-questionnaire might be used for area-assessment in a settlement with a large population or when we presumably will not be able to make the necessary number of interviews of a desired quality. A model-questionnaire consists of comprehensive open questions and is meant to expose the town's ordinary problems on a widest possible scale. One way to use this questionnaire would be to mail it or with the help of some local tenants to deliver it personally to some of the opinion-leader (key figures) in town, with the following questions:

"Do you have anything to say about local: health / social / cultural services? ... About employment? ... Environment? ... Housing? ... The elderly / the young? ... Recreational facilities? ... Local authorities? ... Voluntary, social activities? ... Social life? ... etc. Would you take part in a community survey carried out to reveal attitude and opinion of the whole town?"*

In this pilot project we skipped this step because the program's objective was to improve just the quality of child-care services and not the development of the whole city. The comprehensive questions we mentioned at the interviews were structured as open questions into the community survey questionnaire as well.

F.) Community survey questionnaire

Topics of the questionnaire were selected by the inhabitants themselves. Phrasing the *questions* remained the task of the helpers that were censured, corrected, accepted or rejected by the local people. The difficulty of this process was the list of participants that changed constantly, in every session, so each discussion had to be started with a summary of the work that had been completed before.

"It is our experience that people often try to hide their insecurities behind the excuse of not having enough time to take part in local activities. They do not believe - and how could they or would they without positive precedents - that they can take control over their own life. It takes time to gain hope and self-confidence, to feel responsible for what happens so this process must not be rushed."*

Questionnaires are tools of social action and we had a hard time to decide whether we should ask people *to fill it anonymously, or ask them to put their name on it or maybe we should offer it as a double option*. At the end we attached a supplementary sheet with the opportunity to mark and select - with name and address - all future events they wish to be informed about. The 'anonymity dilemma' became understood by all when the questionnaires were first distributed and received again. People demanding for their rights for anonymity and others voting for free deliverance ran into the difficulty, foreseen by us, that questionnaires without names will not create adequate database, inquiries on voluntary offers, needs and interests will have to start all over again.

The questionnaire was finalized after *mock-surveys* that revealed errors and deficiencies. The most obvious difference between community survey and the usual survey techniques occurs in this-phase. Our goal was to have as many questionnaires filled as possible, to have them handed out and collect them by the participants *personally* - if they do not encounter obstacles. Having the questionnaires personally delivered help people to make acquaintance with their neighbours. Surprisingly though, an unexpectedly low number of inhabitants of 'X' volunteered to visit their neighbours claiming that they had no right to disturb others. They explained their attitude by the town's isolating influence that left its mark on their social behaviour. Compared to its easy reception in the country, urban inhabitants were not impressed by the following method:

"In case of a problem, question or need for consultation, neighbours are free to go and see each other within the given period (3-7 days)."

Questionnaires will be more successfully collected if we take the time to go back and offer help to fill it and to remind people that boxes have been set for anonym forms. In this case the rate of returned questionnaires was 40 % (500 was distributed and 200 returned) to the greatest satisfaction of all participants.

G.) Evaluating the community survey

Processing and evaluation of the questionnaires was announced to take place in an open session - where new faces and new surprises awaited us. This is the point where the community social worker has to acknowledge the fact that community survey is a long and slow process requiring patience and sometimes needs to be started all over again. It is:

"a series of initiatives where multi-factor starts and check-stops precede one another. The question is whether the work is interesting and exciting enough (what is the team like) do they make progress, do they think it's important, are they able to handle the tasks, are there new-comers, does the initiating core (nucleus) have the ability to involve the new-comers, do they get publicity, are there results and achievements, in other words do they have buoyancy? This sustainability of the process needs local publicity all the way long."*

Local publicity is a key element of this process. The *pouvoir* of local authorities, forums, the local paper and television in the flow of public information is invaluable. Misinformation on the other hand is also a possibility and it can harm the program. We have to make the most of local publicity and maintain interest by using every available local initiative - as fragile as they would be in this phase. Let's not forget though, that strengthening these initiatives is the very task of the community social worker.

Computer processing of questionnaires is a very pleasant work even for those who are not familiar with the method. Data input and one-dimensional tables take time and effort, but it isn't difficult. (The more challenging two-dimensional tables and statistically relevant correlations are hardly needed here.) Interpreting data, drawing conclusions and phrasing proposals are more difficult though. Results of the survey were published and delivered to every participant of the program (local citizens, politicians, field workers, media, etc.). The *publication* contained the following chapters:

1. History of the program (preliminaries, the process, evaluation)
2. Local relevance of the community survey questionnaire
3. Evaluation and analysis of the questionnaires
4. Proposals for the local government's general assembly (= action plan)

Discussion of the document by the General Assembly started off a regular partnership between local government and local citizens.

H.) Becoming an NGO

Regular cleaning and building a fence around a play-ground was the first joint action of the participating parents. They soon realized however that if they wanted to achieve anything *they need to establish an organization*.

Effective community social work should be able to play an active part in initiating numerous non-profit organizations. A local society can be energized by several kinds of actions:

- + preparing exhibitions on local history and other subjects;
- + planning renovation and restoration;
- + preserving local traditions and other events;
- + starting inquiries on local economical development or environmental and any other issues;
- + organizing excursions,
- + twinning cities;
- + educating people concerning tourism,
- + computer use,
- + creation jobs;
- + raising funds;
- + launching a new local paper by the local citizens;
- + starting negotiations with policy-makers on local public issues like public transport, shops and stores, or about running the local school;

- ✚ special and weighty local issues can be solved like this, e.g. refilling of a lake, or building a park along the river bank;
- ✚ establishing voluntary help services, social care networks, information centres, job-clubs, databases, foundation for an institution or for the whole township;
- ✚ organizing self-help groups, advocacy associations;
- ✚ regulating means of support and cooperation, etc. etc. "*"

It is appropriate to close this paper with the words of the prominent Hungarian experts of community development, citing their summaries on helping of local societies:

"1. Community survey is also a *learning process* in which the participants take on responsibilities of their settlement and its public issues, and recognize the importance of civic organizations, the extent of their field of action and their *roles*. This is very hard work. We often hear representatives and mayors claim that 'the tables have turned' and now it is time to act. We have witnessed a more cynical approach as well: "Sure, let's hear what people have to say, it makes no difference anyway". Those who are already into their second election cycle carry bad experiences and negative feelings: "They are complaining now (the citizens), but when something should be done they vanish into thin air." Only experience will tell us about the specific opportunities of NGOs and those of local governments, and how the two can complement each other. Although it is true that local governments have jurisdiction, they can invite experts to collaborate and have their own budget, NGOs can operate on their own terms as well: they are free to take initiatives, they can sidestep official hierarchies, they have a free hand in choosing their partners, they can require grants, voluntary work, favours, solidarity, and last but not least they have their own financial sources that are meant to complement local government support. NGOs have proven their worth in many towns already, they proved that civil action is possible, it's necessary and important. But in spite of all these achievements local government attitudes have not been changed dramatically. It seems for us that several decades of experience, insight and achievement are necessary for civil activism to be granted civil rights and practice them in the locality as well.

2. This community process seemed to boost the willingness of inhabitants to take on *responsibilities* for their town. Prior to the program we detected *certain need for dependency and reluctance* to undertake responsibility. (Hungarian settlements proved to be very different in this respect as well. We also realized that there is no coherence between school qualifications and attitude towards responsibility and independence. The answer to this question is a lot more difficult.) During a community process people gain confidence and encouragement from each other that helps them to 'grow up' to take responsibilities ... This work is able to evoke *inspiring atmosphere* in any settlement ... It is like throwing a pebble into water that creates dilating rings on the surface....

It is remarkable that *in every case when our initiative failed or craned we found power conflicts in the background*. Local governments too often regard local association as rival enemies against them and use their official "power" to represses the NGO initiatives, or let them take off but constantly undermine their activity thus making NGO progress impossible.

We might summarize this paper by concluding that in each successful process a *GREAT LOCAL CAUSE* 'appeared' or 'was invented', that has thrown inhabitants into a fever. It was something they came up with and were willing to work for, something they wanted and liked. Such actions are always successful; "moments" like these in the life of a settlement intensify the community feeling and are always remembered. The more subtle activities, elimination of more weighty problems - such as unemployment - are a lot less spectacular. Although it is not exactly impossible with community development methods, it needs considerable investments and a professional infrastructure - workplaces - that do not exist today. Development of this issue is still in a vulnerable phase, it is still defenseless against human stupidity and vanity, the useless

rivalry between settlement authorities and NGOs. And even when these conflicts are not present, people and towns with different attitude are still not used to do this type of work on a regular basis, and do not have enough time to contribute. A typical misconception of those who stay away that regardless of their absence work will be done by those who are present. They don't grasp to what extent the outcome depends on their participation. Our hopes for a successful process therefore should be based on long-term expectations and results."*

4.5 COMMUNITY CENTRE IN BALNINKAI VILLAGE – THE EXAMPLE OF A SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY BUILDING PROJECT

Summary made by V. Gevorgianienė, V. Jakutienė, Lithuania

General information:

County: Molėtai, Eastern Lithuania.

GDP per capita – 20 % less than the national average. County's population in 2001 – 25,248; of these 71 % lived in villages.

Unemployment rate: 12 %.

Most significant economic activity: dairy farming. Poor soil quality restricts other forms of farming. The farms in Molėtai tend to be small by the national standards – on average 13.2 hectares per farm compared to the national average of 17.2 hectares.

Population of Balninkai: 469

(Statistikos Departamentas)

The symbol of Balninkai community centre.

Wheel - the Symbol of the Community Organization

The Wheel symbolizes communal ties among all Balninkai inhabitants. Spokes of the wheel represent the institutions of our township: governmental office, Church, middle school, art gallery, post office, store, and ambulatory office. Only by working together, by being inclusive and open to the voices of everyone, we can create a prosperous Balninkai community enabling us to lead meaningful lives. Let's keep the wheel on turning.

(Source: <http://www.balninkai.com/static.php?strid=1094&>)



Juska et al. (2005) distinguished 3 stages of Balninkai community building: 1) initiating phase, 2) Voluntary communal association, 3) transformation of voluntary association into non-for-profit organization. The content of each stage is described below.

1. Community building in Balninkai started from the initiative of 4 individuals: the Mayor of the County, a semi-retired teacher of the Balninkai school, the Dean of the Balninkai Catholic parish and a rural sociologist. The mayor, who was interested in promoting civic activism, recruited the rural sociologist to help in grass-roots organizing in the county's villages. However, the attempts of the group could not be successful without the involvement of other members of the village, and there was a challenge to raise interest and trust in people, which was discredited by Soviet regime due to the practice of „shepherding” into new organizations. The Dean of the parish used all opportunities to disseminate information and to encourage people to participate in planning the community organization. During the meeting seventeen individuals, ten of them with higher education, responded to a call to consider the establishment of a community centre. The group of activists consisted of 13 women and 4 men, average age 50 (2 of them were social workers). Based on a thorough conceptualization of existing rural problems (among them - poverty, alcoholism, rural community, prospects of rural development, social and rural exclusion, etc.) activists generated a survey, which became a tool for interviewing the members of each household. The activists visited households themselves and hereby increased motivation of the villagers to join the community group. The direct contact convinced villagers that organizers are genuinely interested in their opinions and suggestions. As Juska et al. (2005) indicate, these discussions resulted in the agenda of the proposed organization which was shaped by „bottom-up” interactions, thus providing legitimacy for the community group.

The data of the interviews revealed that the villagers wished more participation in public life (cultural activities, communication with neighbors and friends, engagement in hobbies, etc.) that was currently available. Such results suggested that the community group could be created to improve the quality of life in the village without significant financial investment.

2. A time for a founding conference of community centre was chosen along with the St. George Church festival celebration in Balninkai. This was a traditional event, which was well attended by residents of the village and the surrounding area. On 19th April 2001 during the holly Mass, the Dean of the parish performed the symbolic act of blessing the creation of the new organization as well as the spring flower seeds to be planted by the new born community group to beautify the village and its surroundings. Thus beautification of the village was chosen as the first communal project, and this action corresponded to the suggestions expressed during the interviews. Organizers were pleasantly surprised that more people came than were anticipated. The villagers not only cleaned the main street and planted flowers, but also arranged the shore of the lake for the communal gatherings.

Along with first communal activities the first grants were awarded to the community centre by the Baltic-American Foundation and the Lithuanian Council of the Youth Affairs. These and other grants which were received by Balninkai Centre since that time made it possible for the majority of villagers to involve into preferred activities (ex., basket weaving course for elderly women, a workshop on rising depression awareness, 2 collaborative art projects involving professional artists working with the village youth; courses on Internet use and rural business development).



fig. 1. Balninkai view

The county government also supported the community centre by laying the new pavement on the main street of the village and helping to transfer a former kolkhoz administrative building to the community centre. Through the joint efforts of the villagers, community centre and the county authorities a small hotel was built on a Balninkai lake shore and ecotourism business in the village has been established. From the beginning the financial records of all activities supported and implemented by the centre have been transparent: copies of all financial records were clearly exhibited in the community meeting hall for the review.

In the process of community building the internet site has been created. The leader of Balninkai Centre serves as a consultant to new rural organizations.

From the internet site of Balinkai (<http://www.balninkai.com/static.php?strid=1626&>)

Balninkai advantages:

- + Conveniently situated 75 kilometers from Vilnius, 30 km from Ukmerge; 30 km from Anyskciai;
- + Clean and scenic surroundings
- + Sandy beach, shallow clean lake (excellent place for family vacations and vacations/rehabilitation for disabled);
- + Revival of traditional crafts: weaving and knitting
- + Access to Internet
- + Art gallery housing graphics and glass works exhibitions

Balninkai problems:

- + Underutilized for purposes of tourism scenic surroundings of the township
- + Lack of active individuals who can initiate and implement community projects
- + Underdeveloped small business sector
- + Lack of cooperation within the community

We are looking for partners who are:

- + interested in and would like to cooperate in activities promoting ethno-cultural heritage and traditions of Eastern Lithuania;
- + interested and able to facilitate rural small business development (ecological farming, rural tourism)
- + are interested in creatively engaging teenagers and young adults.

3. Despite the significant achievements of the Balninkai Center, in the later communications with the community activists, Juska et al. noted signs of exhaustion, apprehension and pessimism. Such change in attitudes was closely related to the fact that rural community did not succeed to achieve the main aim – to eliminate the employment. It was realized that this issue largely depended on national and regional socio - economic conditions and policies over which the activists had little if any control.

In attempting to transform their centre into a not-for-profit organization, activists realized that running the community centre as a not-for-profit organization required qualitatively different skills than those that were needed during the initiation phase. The „folk” management style which was effective in the beginning, in the subsequent stage was not sufficient to compete in the social services market and run a not-for-profit organization. Besides, service delivery, provided by a non-for-profit organization required professionalization and bureaucratization of the Balninkai community centre, and this entails the decline in importance of bottom-up and increase in top-bottom interactions within the organization.

Despite the problems, encountered in the process of community building, Balninkai remains a good example of rural grass-roots activism.

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4.6 COMMUNITY WORK PRACTICE FIELD – ANALYSIS OF THE URBAN PROJECT: OLD TOWN-ROCHAPEA

By Prof. Dr. Jesús Hernández Aristu and Leyre Braco Pasamar, Spain

Introduction to the project

This URBAN Project was promoted by Pamplona's City Council for the six-year period 2001-2006 and it was approved and cofinanced by the European Union. The working areas concerning this project were the historical centre of the town and a newer quarter of the city known as Rochapea. Both parts of the city have been related along the years and through their history, but they are also physically separated by the city walls and the river (Arga), which surrounds the old town.

The first step of the project was the carrying out of a detailed analysis, taking account the following aspects: demography, socio-economic situation, work market, social services, housing state and environmental situation. The results of this analysis pointed out that the city council should get involved in the social and in the economical revitalization of both areas, in order to increase their importance for the whole city structure. The approach was supposed to be transferable and sustainable according to a comprehensible planning.

This project included seven focus of attention, sub-projects, and it was necessary the involvement of the civil services, the public bodies, the financial institutions, resident and trade associations and the non-governmental organizations from both areas. It was a requirement from the European Union.

Political situation

First of all, we want to put the political situation across, not only in Spain, but also in Navarre, in order to emphasize the challenges of this project.

In Spain the citizen movements were very useful in the transition period – from Franco's Regime to the establishment of the democratic government-. Those citizen movements were the supporting background for the political parties. But once those parties tried to include the citizens associations in politics, the citizens began to feel distrustful towards politicians and they kept away from politics.

That is the way in which the suspicious feeling has grown in Spain among politicians and population, in both directions. This phenomenon appears as well in Navarre, the region where this project takes place, but with concrete characters.

In Navarre the citizen movements are also very important, mainly in the formation and distribution of new spaces. For example, in Tudela –the second biggest town in Navarre- it was the pressure of those civic organizations what have stopped the construction of a nuclear power station. And also, in Pamplona La Fundación Bartolomé de Carranza – Bartolomé de Carranza Foundation - developed in the early eighties some educative programmes for the youth people of the suburbs.

Therefore, we can affirm that in a sense there has been some cooperation between the public bodies and the civic organizations in Navarre. Those cooperation were also strained relations sometimes, due principally to three factors:

- ✚ The first one is related to the differences between the aims of a political party and the aims of a citizen association. Political parties offer general purposes in order to obtain votes, while citizen associations take care of closer people needs.
- ✚ The second one is the radical left ideology, in the Marxist-Leninist tradition looking for the independence, called abertzal, which sometimes set into the citizen organizations using them for their political claims. Due to the tendency to generalize, all the citizen

organizations with a demanding attitude are supposed to be radicals. This fact induces the distrust, not only among the politicians, but also among the population in general terms.

- ✚ The third factor concerns the status of Navarre as a historically autonomous region. The current government of Navarre takes its decisions independently of the Spanish government in some matters and at the same time, the city councils of Navarre work their own way. This separation has at the same time two consequences, people can take part in political issues easier because they feel that their participation comes in useful, but public institutions mistrust each other. That means, each institution looks for their own goals, so the cooperation is in a sense is more difficult.

URBAN Project: initial phase

- ✚ Before the start of the project, Pamplona's City Council made a SWOT analysis to make clear and easier to understand the essential needs of the city areas included in the project. Lets have a quick look on the analysis:
- ✚ the strengths were the existence of a rich natural, cultural and historical patrimony; an active fabric of civic and trade associations, a big interest on the collaboration with Public institutions and an important presence of business and commerce.
- ✚ The weaknesses were the deficient in public transports, communications and in accessibility; the poor Social Services and also the lack of civic and sportive centres; a big level of women's unemployment; a low-achieving use of energies and the existence of damaged public spaces.
- ✚ The opportunities were the availability to begin working with citizen participation methods, the revitalization of commercial activities and the creation of new public spaces.
- ✚ The more dangerous threats were the old age of the population, the increasing of social exclusion, the risk of depopulation and the rise of the criminality.

As a result of study, the City Council chose seven matters of intervention. Those matters were going to be discussed with the citizen organizations and individuals by means of citizen participation.

Methodology and framework: citizen participation

The City Council faced then the question: how to manage the citizen participation? Because of the interest for the City Council to include participation methods, they requested the involvement of a research team of the Public University of Navarre, INSONA Team from the Social Work Department. INSONA is the acronym for Investigaciones Sociales Navarra what means Social Research of Navarre, a research group directed by Prof. Dr. Jesús Hernández Aristu.

For that reason the City Council and the Public University of Navarre signed up a collaboration agreement for the "Technical assistance for the communication processes and procedures among public bodies and citizens exemplified in the URBAN Project Historical Centre – Rochapea"

This technical assistance was based in the "pedagogy of the citizen participation"³⁶. The INSONA Team was supposed to ensure and to facilitate the communication procedures among: Public bodies, technical staff involved in the URBAN Project, citizens (individuals), citizen organizations and trade associations.

³⁶ According to J. HERNÁNDEZ ARISTU in Social Work In The Post-Modernity

The functions of INSONA were to make the exchange of informations easier, to ensure that the meetings were profitable and that the ideas, the proposals and the observations come out and to prepare the working documents for the technical staff and the City Council.

When the roles of one part of the participants (Public bodies and INSONA Team) and the methodology were clear, and when the subjects of discussion were prepared, next step was to establish who was going to participate from the population.

In order to include everybody who was ready to participate, the City Council published an advertisement in the local newspapers. This advertisement contained the information related to the three first meetings and the explanation of how to enrol in the URBAN Project.

The list of registered people was an important instrument because it was going to give an idea of the number of the organizations and the number of individuals that were in favour of the participation, and the approximately number would show the possibilities to organise it.

The meetings were named URBAN Forums. Those Forums were divided in two or more meetings. The first aim was the presentation of the information to the participants, that means to show which are the objectives of the meeting, which are the objectives of the sub-project and what can be decided by the citizens contributions. INSONA Team was in charge of get the technical and didactics preparation ready before the meetings. Also, INSONA used the adequate information methods to make sure that the information was understandable for everyone and they collected the proposals by means of negotiation and consensus, and the report of the meeting was presented to the "change team".

The participants transfer then the relevant information to their organizations, they discuss what do they think about it and which are the proposals or the critics that they want to appear in the next meeting.

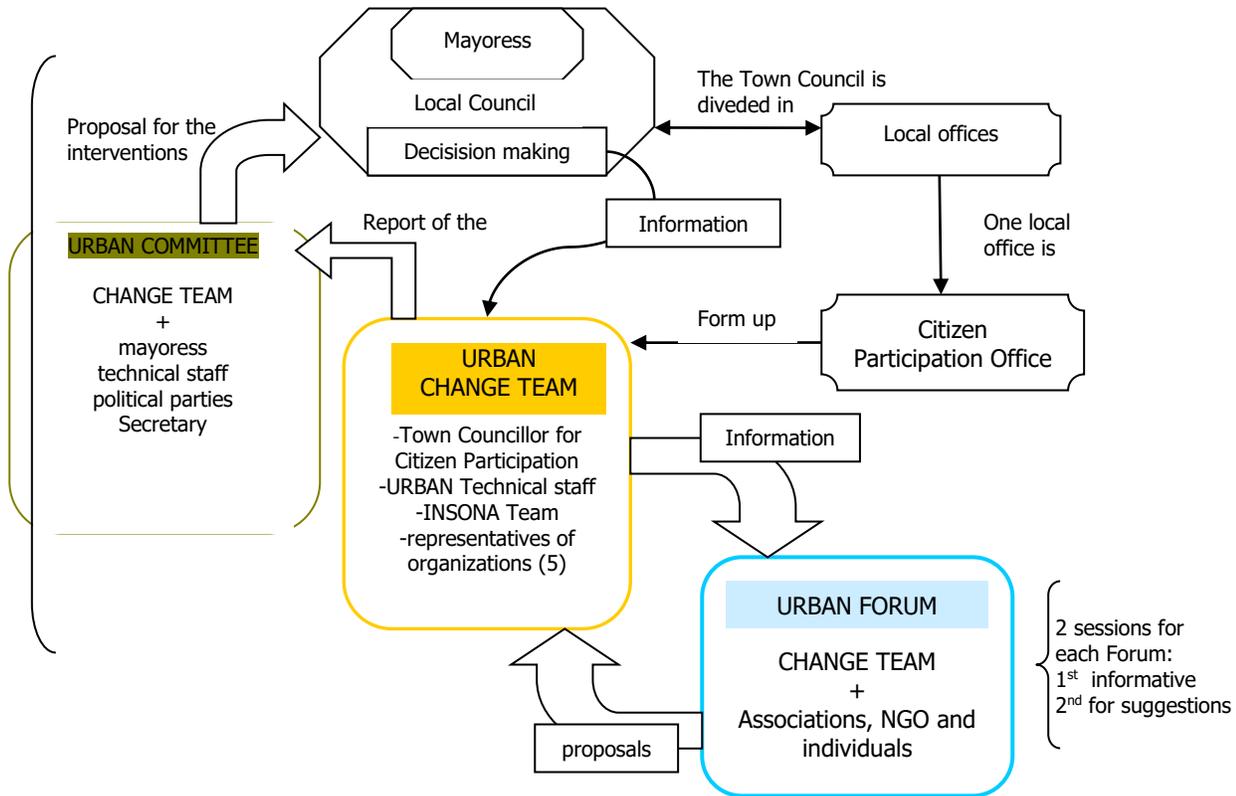
Around fifteen days later the second meeting takes place. In this second meeting, the citizens contribute with proposals for the sub-project that are included, by the INSONA Team too, in the report.

The information transfer by giving to the different groups the reports, is a task of the "change-team". The "change-team" named Comisión Gestora, was formed by the Town-Councillor of Citizen Participation, technical coordinators of the URBAN Project, representatives of five civic organizations and Jesús Hernández Arístu as the representative of the INSONA Team. This "change-team" had the responsibility of the methodology, and they prepare together with the INSONA Team the meetings and they collect the proposals that come out on the URBAN Forum. The final report which includes the citizen proposals that were discussed on the Forum must be transferred to the URBAN Committee (Mesa URBAN). The Committee was composed by the Mayoress, the members of the "change-team", specific technical staff (depending on the matter of discussion), representatives of the political parties and the Town Councils secretary. The functions of the Committee are to count on the sub-project and its proposals and to present it to the Municipal Council that have the decision-making power, so that they will approve the sub-project, they will reject it or they will amend it.

Those are the structures that made possible the citizen participation in this URBAN Project: the Forum URBAN, the change-team called Comisión Gestora, the Mesa URBAN (URBAN table) and INSONA.

Lets have a look of the relationships and the information's transfer system among those structures in a diagram:

Figure: Structure of the Citizen Participation



As we can see in the picture, the centre of the information transfer is the "change team" because they are connected to the population and to the politicians.

The main problem to organize the information transfer system is the way to arrange the different states of knowing about a particular fact. The importance of the communication transfer system is the connection of the different levels of knowledge, technical knowledge and general knowledge. The principle which make easier the understanding of the concerned parts (knowledge) shall be that everyone knows something useful. People can feel the needs while the technical employees can carry them out.

The decision making belong to the Town Council but they are supposed to count on the proposals that had stem from the citizen participation, therefore the Town Council shall make possible the creation of participation structures as a political aspiration. However it is meaningful that the mayoress was the president of the URBAN Committee, and that fact helped the whole URBAN Project to be more noteworthy, not only inside the Town Hall but also in the local media.

Activities and results

The general objectives of the URBAN Project were to improve the environment, the work market, the social provision, the public transport and also to make possible a better management of the town government.

Those objectives were detailed initially in ten sub-projects. But during the course of the process the contribution of the citizens added three more sub-projects. This fact can be considered as an achievement not only for the citizens but also for the politicians, because it shows that the confidence between them was increasing.

Those are the relevant data from the quantitative point of view: eight URBAN Forums took place, that means sixteen meetings with the people and the "change team". By the way, INSONA prepared sixteen reports and several mail deliveries. The URBAN Project counted on 263 participations. The results of the URBAN Forums were 270 proposals and three new matters of intervention.

The "change team" and the INSONA Team had thirteen meetings in order to prepare documentation and procedures. The group hold regular meetings during the project. The URBAN Committee, as well, met three times.

The qualitative point of view give another perspective, the evolving perspective. The initial point was a quiet large mistrust among the persons who took part of the project, through the time, the cooperation was being built. The working group – including every structure - developed cohesion and each one faced their own responsibility trusting the others. The participants also emphasized that they had learnt a lot of relationships and negotiation procedures.

This improvement on the relationships made possible the surmounting of the obstacles that threatened the URBAN Project.

To sum up, lets have an overview of the quantitative aspects in a figure:

PRESENCES	
Presentation of the URBAN Project to the people	51
Individuals in the URBAN Forums	197
Citizen in representation of organizations	200
Political parties in the Forums, "Change team" and URBAN Committee	65
Technical staff in the Forums and in the Committee	240
TOTAL	861

MEETINGS	
Change Team	26
URBAN Forums	24
URBAN Committee	7
INSONA Team and Technical staff	20
TOTAL	77

REPORTS	
Annual (by INSONA)	2
URBAN Forums (by INSONA)	24
URBAN Committee minutes	7
Change Team minutes (by INSONA)	26
Technical minutes	19
TOTAL	78

PROPOSALS	
Accepted	226
Partially accepted	24
Accepted but worked out with other areas	5
Steered to other areas	57
Rejected but with an alternative	14
Rejected (non-viable)	9
Given to Town Council for valorisation	24
Out of the project	16
TOTAL	78



4.7 CITY OF SOLNA - THE OFFICE OF CARE SERVICES FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED - OPEN DAY CENTRE SERVICES IN SOLNA – A DESCRIPTION 2007

By Judit Horvath-Lindberg; Head of Elder Care Service, Sweden

Background

The living conditions of old people have attracted attention, either positive or negative, for a long period of time both in Sweden and throughout western world.

The demographic picture is similar in all of Europe. The population is getting older and the number of elderly people aged over 85 is growing and growing. This also applies to Sweden, and not least the City of Solna, where some 20 per cent of the population, or more than 11 000 people, are over 65 years old. (The retirement age in Sweden is 65 years for both men and women; however, many people take early retirement long before that).

Research on elderly people in Sweden focuses mainly on "misery research", "old people with problems, old people as problems and how to solve them" (1.) chiefly in the health care sector and mainly in a medical perspective. (2.) Media coverage of the elderly population's life is in line with this description.

But life is not just about health care and social care. We know that "active leisure extends the good life and can lead to personal development at high ages" (3.). We also know that "the feeling of a context" (4.), i.e. the feeling that life is manageable and understandable and the sense of being needed by other people, makes life meaningful.

A meaningful life is an important factor in the life of the individual that makes it possible to significantly delay the need for public support and services.

People born in the 1940s have already started retiring and this generation is going to be much more active, demanding and financially strong than previous generations of pensioners.

The political will

In 1988 the Government adopted a national action plan for elderly policy. The plan points out that:

- + "health promotion measures make elderly people more able to carry on living an independent life with a good quality of life...."
- + daily support for preventive measures is contained in the Health and Medical Services Act (HMA) (Section 2 b) and the Social Services Act (SSA). (Section 5) (5.).

In spite of the Government's action plan and the fact that we know that "it is to a great extent possible to influence elderly people's health and well-being through preventive work, the prime emphasis has been on action for children, young people and people of working age. Municipal action for the elderly mainly consists of health and social care. Staff in both municipalities and county councils stress that health promotion work for the elderly risks being given lower priority than health and social care. Acute health care needs have to be met when they arise, while the effects of health promotion work only become apparent in the long run." (6.)

Most municipalities have closed their open day centre services, as they did not consider that they could afford them.

The City of Solna is among the rare exceptions, where the political, centre-right majority has stressed the importance of developing existing open day centre services in their policy statement for both the previous and the current terms of office, and where they intend to start a new centre in the coming term of office in an area which does not have a day centre at present.

Theoretical background

In 2005 a pilot project was carried out to examine the health economic benefit of activities in our open day centres. Staff at all the centres interviewed and assessed fifty randomly selected visitors (out of some 1 300 visitors annually) and their need of help and support, in the event that our centres did not exist, compared to their current need. It has emerged that several of them would need home help/increased home help, assessed dementia services and special housing. The increased needs of these fifty people finance some 75 per cent of the annual budget of the open day centre service. (7.)

"...many studies have shown that a high level of activity among elderly people is associated with lower mortality as well as less disabilities. Individuals who are socially active and active in day-to-day activities live significantly longer than inactive individuals, independent of other risk factors" (8.).

At the same time as we are going to live longer than previous generations, we can see that one-person households and the number of people living without any network to speak of around them, particularly after retirement, are increasing, especially in the major cities in Sweden, as there was great social and geographical mobility in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. This applies mainly to women, as women in Sweden live longer than men.

Sixty per cent of Solna's elderly population lives in one-person households.

Physical and mental loneliness, a lack of meaningful activities and of meaning in life can give psychological symptoms such as anxiety, unrest, sleeplessness and depression. Many elderly people who do not have energy, awareness or their former social skills are searching for the answer to a life situation in the health services and municipal social services in various ways.

In the 1990s the social workers/social welfare officers at the north-west geriatric clinics in Stockholm noticed that many women living alone often seek medical care for diffuse psychosomatic problems and pain. In many cases their interpretation was that the problems were not of a medical nature, but could be related to the women's life situation. At the suggestion of the social welfare officers in the Geriatric Clinics, Äldre Medicinskt Centrum (*the Centre for Geriatric Medicine*) started a project in 1998. The project has been targeted on women over 65, resident in the City of Solna and in Sundbyberg; both municipalities with an elderly population of around 20 per cent. The assumption was that the life situation of many women could be improved and medical attention decreased by various types of preventive and health promotion work. During the two years of the project, 57 women have been linked to it, 4 of whom were under 65.

The starting point for the service – after assessment and support conversations, individually or in groups – was to increase the individual's possibilities of leaving isolation, of being seen as a person and an individual, of being able to see the possibilities available and of having the opportunity to obtain support to move forward.

The project manager had the aim of mapping the individual's entire life situation, of creating security and providing support for the individual by building networks and setting up new contacts. In the first place the negative life circle that several of the registered women were living in had to be broken. Another approach was to provide support, to find voluntary organisations and other

associations that could offer a suitable service. Unfortunately the voluntary/non profit sector with a social profile is very underdeveloped in Sweden, so this possibility was rarely available. The project started a group conversation group, a book group, arranged an Open House, assisted in contacts with the stroke association, the Red Cross, etc. Support and continuous information about society's resources were provided.

The conclusions of the project (9.) include the observation that many of these women lived in involuntary emotional and social loneliness "emotional isolation...a kind of utter loneliness, which included hypersensitivity and restless anxiety, whereas social isolation included feelings of meaninglessness, a certain amount of aimlessness and boredom..." (10.). Many of them lived in constant frustration, as they could not keep up with the rapid structural changes in society, they felt that it was impossible to get information about society's resources, their frustration led to a lack of confidence in society's representatives and to "... anxiety, restlessness and aggressiveness..(which are) reactions common to experienced loneliness, and might cause disturbances in people's sense of orientation" (11.).

Services

Based on this experience and the experience of the English EPICS model (Elderly People Integrated Care Systems) (12.) a new project was drawn up and started in Solna in 2000, "InfoCentret Ankaret" (*Ankaret Info Centre*), whose purpose was to

- ✚ create security for the elderly population through knowledge, networks and accessibility
- ✚ give attention to, and in some cases meet, service and health care needs that had arisen in cooperation with the people concerned
- ✚ coordinate the resources of professional and voluntary services
- ✚ make use of the knowledge and competence of the elderly (13.)

The service, which has been started in premises where there have been, for example, a cafeteria, therapy, day services with training courses and friend services for many years, has been integrated into the previous services, but the direction and the programme were extended and developed. A social welfare officer/social worker was employed to provide various forms of advice and support, not least for people caring for a relative or loved one in their home. The role of the staff includes providing information about everything that may be important and of current interest for elderly people or their relatives. Lectures and seminars about topics including dementia were started for both visitors and the general public. Over and above the oral and written information, computers were installed so that the general public could look for information themselves and surf the Internet.

"if the elderly are considered to lack social skills, their surroundings tend to treat them as socially incompetent. In time this leads to the elderly losing their social abilities. If, on the other hand, they are allowed to keep their sense of having these skills they maintain this ability. Social isolation and feelings of loneliness often accompany the feeling of decreasing social abilities." (14.)

Today there are open day centres (which are called "community centres/neighbourhood centres" in the English literature) in almost all neighbourhoods in the City of Solna. Five centres are targeted on the elderly (Ankaret, Bollen, Gunnarbo, Hallen (twice a week), Turkosen and Östervägen), while one centre, Sockerbiten in Ritorp, which started in 2006, is for all age groups. There is also a café for relatives and loved ones in Östervägen's centre to support loved ones and relatives.

In addition to a social welfare officer/social worker, a hearing and sight consultant, an ombudsman for the elderly, a nurse with the task of supporting relatives and other professionals are affiliated to the centres and they visit each centre regularly.

The centres have developed from therapy services into services that impart happiness “develop, inform and broaden horizons, free up impulses (creative, physical and educating), thus enabling people to realise their inner possibilities. But most important of all is the fact that leisure creates life quality for everyone” (15.)

Most visitors get to the centres by themselves, while others come with the assistance of the transportation services or friend services. Many of the centres, mainly the ones focusing on the elderly, receive visitors with various disabilities and dementia.

All centres are open to all elderly people in Solna, but visitors often come from the neighbouring housing area.

The visitors are not just recipients of programmes and support. The visitors themselves participate as leaders of study circles, members of user councils, friend service visitors and also participate, actively to some extent, in the design and work of the centres. The various centres have a total of at least 150-200 voluntary staff, who work in many different ways and devote different amounts of time to their tasks. Their combined efforts correspond to at least 9–10 full time positions.

The centre’s social worker has had more than 300 personal visits to the service in various matters, from counselling and support conversations to more complicated family matters together with officials from the financial support division, hospital social welfare officers/social workers, etc. Support can also be provided by telephone. The social welfare officer/social worker has recurring and continuous contact with all the open day centres and has some cooperation with elderly housing, assessment officers, health centres, etc. When an individual is unable to come to Ankaret, for some reason, the social welfare officer makes a home visit.

Many people come to see the social welfare officer by themselves for support conversations. This may be because of grief, illness, loneliness, etc. Sometimes it can be hard to see that there are possibilities other than the ones you see at the moment.

The fact that the social welfare officer position is linked to the open day centre and does not have any public authority responsibility is an advantage. It is easier to contact the social welfare officer at a centre where you know that the centre is outside of the organisation of the social services and other public authorities. However, the social welfare officer can be a communicating link to these organisations.

Another social support service focuses on loved ones/relatives who:

- ✚ care for a person in their home
- ✚ have the some other form of need for support.

A nurse with broad experience of elderly care (not exclusively medical) and another person, who has a degree in social work and broad experience of managing home help services, etc, are responsible for this service. In addition we have access to our social welfare officer and a nurse with special knowledge of dementia, stroke and other frequent conditions in old age.

Support and the communication of knowledge to relatives/loved ones who are worried, who cannot see what options are available, who cannot see that their own resources are dwindling, but who do not want to accept any help are some ways of being able to support this group. Today the service has some 1 300 visitors every year. These visitors make some 28 000 visits every year.

There are 8.5 full-time equivalent positions budgeted for eight centres (Turkosen has both a cafeteria and a day service). The service head, staff working for all the centres (like the social welfare officer) and central service functions correspond to 4 full-time positions. Moreover, in 2006 two people (corresponding to one full-time position together) with specialist competence in computing and, for example, support to relatives were linked to the centres. Staff corresponding to some 4 positions per year (2-5 people) and a consulting dementia nurse are financed temporarily (in part) through the Swedish Employment Service, the Swedish Social Insurance Service, Division for the Education of the Immigrants and the City's Labour Market Division.

The staff have broad and varied skills. Their level of training and background experience are dependent on whether they have been employed in the centres and in municipal services for many years or whether they were recruited to the centres in recent years. The centres include the following skills: occupational therapy assistant, occupational therapist, psychologist, artist, art historian, social work graduate, social worker, nurse, nursing assistant, IT system analyst, cook, self-employed business operator. The following language skills are represented in the staff group: Finnish, Persian, Serbian, Croatian, Hungarian, Amharic, English, French (limited), Sign language.

The future

And the future.....as mentioned previously: the people born in the 1940s are coming and there will be more and more older elderly... Their desires and needs will be partly the same, partly different. If the head of the Day Centres Services could have a wish, she would want more social workers to come to the centres. Social workers working in a broader way, in project form, with targeted measures and much more in cooperation with structures other than those permitted by the present organisation. Social workers working on influencing public opinion, against "ageism" since the "... fact that the body ages inexorably with time easily leads to preconceived notions about the abilities of the elderly in various respects and what is called "ageism", i.e. various forms of norms and behaviours, where age as such determines the outcome. The view taken about the value of the elderly is obviously at the bottom of these attitudes to the elderly and aging.....Through these changes – not least as regards values – the elderly can also feel more and more alienated." (16.) That research is not solely conducted in the medical field, but that "research about the elderly has to be supplemented with social sciences and behavioural sciences education" (17.)

What more could be wished for? That the segregation between the meetings of the elderly and young people is eliminated (age-group segregation is not as complete in any other county as in Sweden). That politicians do not just safeguard the ecological, physical environment ("It is the physical environment everyone safeguards. We are more interested in saving the cod in Baltic Sea than building a good environment where different generations can meet as individuals") (18.), but also relations between people, where "me and you" can meet as individuals and not and not just as categorised designations. That non-profit organisations and voluntary services take over some of the services now handled by municipal and private providers ... and last, but not least, that the attitude towards social, voluntary work changes to a positive attitude, which has until now been characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon countries and of Holland, but not of Sweden. Not because this saves money and is cheaper for the politicians, but because a country where people help one another out is a softer country, where "pensioners are (not) scared of "dangerous youths" and young people do (not) dislike all the "old raisins". (19.)

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City of SOLNA – Office of social services Department of employment and skills

4.8 The Solna Model – A joint effort to solve unemployment problems in the community

By Roberts Nelson, Sweden, January 2007

I have been affiliated with the Solna Model since that fateful day – Tuesday the 11 of September 2001. The Solna Model is a joint project between two communal departments, the social services and the communal employment department. Their mutual aim is to help long term unemployed people living in Solna make the transition back to the ordinary field of employment.

The project itself began in the early 90's when unemployment was at its height in Sweden. The participants are referred to the program either by the social welfare office or by the local employment office. Many of the participants have been unemployed for at least two to five years. One person who now is profitably at work had been unemployed for 23 years. In this context it should be mentioned that social welfare in Solna is subject to certain conditions. If one is referred to the Solna Model and refuses to participate his social welfare is terminated. On the other hand to give recipients of social welfare an added incentive they receive about 50 Euro per month as a supplement to the welfare. Deductions are even made for absence without a valid reason.

Once of twice a month groups of people that have been referred to the program are gathered for a mutual introduction where the consultants present the aims of the program and the different tools that are at the project's disposal. After the group introduction the participants are given the opportunity of an individual interview and discussion with one of the consultants in order to penetrate the participant's existing situation, goals and expectations.

The project has several different tools at its disposal. The majority of the participants are assigned to a "work-seeking" group. Here they are given the opportunity to seek employment with the help of the Internet. Each participant has a PC to work with. The consultants are available to give the participants guidelines and support. A very important tool in applying for employment is the participant's CV. Each participant is asked to write a personal letter of introduction to proposed employers. The consultants give helpful advice and suggestions about the construction of the CV.

I have previously mentioned that many of the participants have been out of work for a very long period of time. Their references are very often not "up to date" and in order to be able to obtain adequate references our consultants can arrange for trainee placement with some branch of the community services in Solna, for example childcare or care of the elderly. Our consultants have a comprehensive overview of the ordinary employment market in the greater Stockholm area and can assist in obtaining trainee placement there.

Participants can be referred to the project directly by social services. Many of these participants have been unemployed for decades and have either/or substance abuse problems or mental problems. "In-house" training is often a tool used to help these individuals on their way to the labour market. The Solna Model operates a café that offers participants the opportunity of learning about service, elementary preparation of food, baking etc.

The Solna Model is also affiliated with a joint project between the community and the federal employment office. The project offers the opportunity of working in a semi-sheltered environment. The project works within the community of Solna helps with renovating the community's apartments and localities. Park work is even offered and one of the latest projects

is the removal of scribbling on public buildings which is often done with spray paint. Since the spring of 2006 the project operates a laundry for washing of clothes, bed wears etc for the elderly. The participants are first offered a trainee placement within the project. If the placement materialises to everyone's satisfaction the participant will be offer employment. For these employees the city of Solna pays 30% of the wages while the federal government pays the remaining 70%.

Many of the long time unemployed have never come in contact with a PC. Since the ability to use a PC is often a basic requirement of employment we offer computer classes. The participants are offered the opportunity of taking the international computer licence (OECD). The examination fees involved with this are paid for by funds from the project.

Often a basic requirement for employment is an operating licence for motor vehicles. The project has an interactive computer program to facilitate this. A driver's licence is considered a "help to self help" and economic contributions can be made to the individuals by funds from the project.

Many of the long term unemployed have a foreign background and have difficulties in expressing themselves both in speaking and writing Swedish. Courses in Swedish are available free of charge. The Solna model has an interactive computer program for individual studies in Swedish.

The project even offers the opportunity for those with mental illnesses to participate in different types of voluntary projects. These individuals usually have some type of sickness compensation. The ultimate goal however is to help them with the transition to the ordinary labour market. There is a co-operative effort for the making and selling of arts and crafts and the co-operation even runs a café. Computer classes are offered for this group as well.

My role is working with administration. I work "behind the lines" to see that things work smoothly and that we receive the correct economic contributions from the state. In the beginning of February 2007 I will begin working as the chief supervisor of our newly opened rehabilitation centre, Väsentorp. The rehabilitation centre has both sheltered workers and the mentally afflicted as target groups. During my career with the Solna Model I have had the opportunity of being the supervisor for seven students from the school of social work and public administration in Stockholm. The majority of students have been under my supervision for an academic semester. I have, needless to say, had continuous co-operation with the school. During the years that I worked as a social worker I was the supervisor for approximately ten students. The supervision of students has given me great insight in existing co-operation between the school and a place of employment or to express it in another way – the co-operation between the world of education and reality.