

# European Rural outh

Central European Rural Youth Centre



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The countryside moved to  
the heart of the Hungarian  
capital for a day

„...we have to do a lot!”



Youth  
in Action

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## **Youth in the Countyside Slovenia, 11-13 January 2013**

*“One who respects the past has the future in one’s hand”*

On our way to Slovenia, our journey of a couple of hours ended at a reinvigorated water mill from the distant past at Nova Cerkev. After a couple of minutes, we recognised that we could participate in a much longer and distant journey escorted by the owner who keeps the traditions, Oton Samec. The water mill was built in 1860 by his ancestors, he is the fourth generation which passes on its values. The area was under the protection of the Habsburg Empire. We could had a look at how the sawing mill worked a long time ago that is still in suitable condition to work. Every generation dedicated its life for making the mill working. There is a small stream beside it which rotates the wheels of the mill on the side of the 12-hectare-area. The mill located here had been functioning as a sawing works and today they make flour with it. Its maintenance can be secured in many ways by the owner. He was able to finance renovating costs by applying to LEADER funds. The circula, vertical cutter and the slicer was renovated in the mill. On the other hand, he was able to secure continuous visiting by a programme organised for schoolchildren called How living tree will become furniture by this day. Not only primary school pupils could get to know the structural functioning of the mill through this programme but engineer students can also examine the un-computerised functioning of the mill. They could see the utilisation of water energy, how many cogs the cogwheel has, they were able to calculate the size of the cutting and we could go on with the examples by which they can practically complement their theoretical learning material.

As an extra income, he also does ecological farming he produces local white and yellow corn and he also has a five-hectare forest. His farm is a model farm which shows what can be done beside farming. One of such opportunities is the sawmill to which a typical Slovenian building belongs – with thick, strong walls – able to store grain or hay. This was also built around 1860, today it is not used. Following that, we were able to see an apiary where bee families were having their winter rest. After that, we reached a continuous row of buildings reserved for tourists. Guests make their food themselves, but they can bring raw materials for it from the hen house in the next building and the garden. Approximately ten years ago it was the most visited and only place where visiting guests were able to experience the very special self-sustaining rural way of life.

The owner has been directing the mill since 1955 and he tries to sustain the number of visitors with newer and newer ideas to pass the culture. He hosts 80-100 people per year. He has been operating 3 apartments for 6 years, the other parts of the building for rent have been open for tourists since 1999 who come here from all over the world. Its total capacity is 34 people. Guests can make excursions, fish and get freshly milled flour (available at every day of the year). The row of buildings belongs to the line of European tra-

ditional houses. This is exactly why the renovation was not a short and easy task, the inspectors frequently visit to continuously check their condition. The owner had to wait almost a year for the approval of the plans for strengthening the walls. 25 years ago he participated in a touristic journey and returning full of ideas, he invested a lot of money to create the places of accommodation.

Visiting the inside of the mill, we can walk on fine flour powder among the flour bags. They have standing and lying stones, it depends on the size of the grains which one will be used for milling. There are glasses on one of the walls of the mill with product samples of various flour types. Oton brings these samples to the schools when he is invited to show his farm and its functioning. He has 50 different products, whole-wheat flour, wheat groats, traditional Slovenian wheat, white corn grindings and traditional white flour among them. Package has an own design: a clear brown bag with a logo. The bag is special because it is not torn regardless of the height it is thrown from. He produces different products from the 50 different ones every year that he can sell locally.

Visiting farms like the one of Oton, preserving cultural values is more and more widespread today. There are only few buildings in Slovenia with a history of more than a hundred years, therefore their maintenance is regarded as a highlighted issue. There are only three building in Slovenia that are as old as the one we have seen. Continuous renewal is not only secured by his own ideas. He invites university students (physicists, theologians) who gladly come to him to design the renovation of the building together. After that, they continuously check the building. Oton Samec regards involving youth in keeping traditions to be important to secure in time to make carefully guarded cultural values visible for many years to come by making young people feel this treasure their own with their involvement. All the more because he does not have a family, children and it is a question who will carry on his work, functioning farm, the heritage of the ancestors.

Visitors can see that not a lot of money is needed for someone to live in calm. According to him, Oton can make ends meet from smaller but multi-sourced income.



*„Our visit made here proves that a bridge can be built between keeping tradition and innovation and to find ourselves in both time/era crossing it. A lot of strength and endurance brought the reality born by imagination.“*

At the second day of our study trip, first we visited the **Biotechnological Centre** in Naklo that functions not only as a secondary school but also as a vocational technical school. One of the employees, project coordinators of the institution greeted us and instantly invited us for a walk to show and introduce us the place. We were let to know that it educates 900 secondary school students and 200 young people on vocational training. At the afternoons, approximately 2000 people are at the different presentations, workshops. Using other opportunities for introduction, the school has a place in the garden – located in central city where urban people can do farming and gardening – to show how one can effectively produce in such a small place. The region provides money for the operational costs of the school. The work is done by the students (for free) but the income from it is owned by the school.

We have taken a look at the garden created as a part of a common project with Austria where special plants were planted typical of the region and from which bees can collect pollens. There is a similar project in Hungary, too, bees are also the key for the connection here.

During our walk, we also saw the shop renovated from a traditional Slovenian building where beside BIO products made by their own hands, certified Slovenian products are also sold. Dairy products, yogurts, cheeses, herbs, teas are such products.

We got to know on the activity of the school that it is divided to three parts: horticulture, agriculture and food processing. Formerly, they concentrated only on milk production but today gardening and cultivation are also represented as main educational fields. By horticulture, young ones can also do flower arranging and the products can also be sold in their own shop. Income from this is spent on modernising the school and on its programmes, and arranging flowers is also a part of the exam, studying. Students can also provide for making biodynamic products in a smaller, sealed-off area.

When the building complex was finished, it was the biggest power generator of Slovenia. During the show we could get to know that beside the plants, animals are also parts of the farm: cattle, swine. They said that they have an apple orchard for the bee-hives, too.



There is a separate building for milk and fruit processing. Every building, unit is arranged to let any visitor look into any work process. Thanks to this, we were also able to look at the milking units. There is a total of 15-20 milking cows that are kept with every existing way of doing so. All this is for the students to let them know every one of these. The cattle division is led by one person but students continuously take part in work. There is an educating room at the top level of the cattle division, the sides of which are all made of glass, therefore students can “have a look” at practical tasks during theoretical education, too. Regarding animal keeping, they have donkeys, horses, and famous Lipizzan horses are also part of the stock that were the main horses of the army under Mary Theresa. We could also get to know about them that they are born in black and they become totally white by the time they become adults. Thanks to the horses, the students have the opportunity to ride horses, they also have an own horse school.

The separate sport arena is providing a space for not only gym classes but other sport activities, concerts and balls. When we were there, we were able to witness the building going on at the site, because the new milk processor was being built to replace the old one.



As a good practice, ZA VAS was shown which means “To You” in English. This project was implemented by the help of LEADER and they regard it to be one of their most successful projects. The goal of the programme was to show farming not only in the framework of the school but also in a way as how can the sustaining force of the farm be sustained, how can it be renovated in case of a disaster, about safety or even about what are the ways in case of the death of the farmer to avoid the farm going bust. In the project, not only farmers but university teachers, experts are teaching, too. The project had two parts:

1. First they made the application for funds, they took care to make the proper form of the documents, project planning was done. They dispersed application forms, approximately 500 pieces, thereby providing an opportunity to let anyone apply for the period between January and April.
2. The second part of the project lasted from April to November. The young ones were able to go to the chosen farms and they were able to do the necessary changes, they helped to reinvigorate farming, and at the end they examined whether it is being able to function.

It represented a problem that when people got the flyers, they did not think that they needed any help. Therefore the school approached the network of farmers and it asked for its cooperation

which proved to be successful after that. Students were able to choose between three kinds of places:

- kitchen garden
- cattle farmers in the mountains
- small farms

In the project, 20 students spent 1300 working hours at 7 farms. They managed to reach the goals of the project to almost 100%. The total cost of investment was 26.000 Euros which was financed by LEADER in 60% and by the region and the school in 20% each. During the work, students helped to get the gardens in order. For example they created flower gardens in small crates placed on tables to make cultivating it simpler by avoiding bending.

They are really proud on that for example in one case, the students helped a farmer whose farm they have rebuilt thanks to which he managed to survive. There are cases when many students are working at one place for a shorter period but also when 1-2 students stay at a farm for a longer time. They are also proud on that either way, they create jobs for the graduated students by the project.

When people saw the results, they were more encouraged to apply. In this year – taking the experiences of last year into regard – they will start spreading the application forms already in January to make it possible to start working earlier and to let students help in spring work. Another change is that the project will be extended to a regional level.

In Slovenia, it is an old custom that 1-2-year-old cattle were at the pasture in the mountains. They regard it to be a big achievement that they managed to make this tradition relegated to the background. Formerly it was hard to get the milk and cheese down from the mountain but by managing to “get the cattle down” from there, this problem is solved.

They prepared the continuation of the project which is waiting only for signing the contracts.

Our next place was Škofja Loka where we visited the **centre of one of the most famous apiarist organisation** in the region. We were informed about the organisation that it is now 150 years old and has a total of 120 members. The central building was built in 2005 and it has a very important role in the life of the organisation. It does not only host various events but also teaching children and adults. In the building, apiary products are also sold and tasted.

The problem that apiarist became too old emerged 10 years ago but young ones did not have experience, knowledge in this field therefore supply was not secured. They started professional education and trainings to avoid the disappearance of the trade. This problem was also clear for Slovenia therefore it provided financial assistance for the trainings. Furthermore, the EU also provided and provides funds with which they are able to motivate youth.

They managed to implement three big projects with LEADER:

1. The first project was to create a central place. Beside this, they were able to popularise honey products that have long traditions in the area. They got 12500 Euros of support, the total cost of the project amounted to 15000 Euros.
2. The second project was the training, education of youth and to promote processing products in the region. They managed to buy 15 bee families with hives and with all its accessories, necessities. Participants of the trainings were able to learn about bees, bee families, keeping them and behaviour. Students were also able to take part in practical trainings. The organisation educated primary school pupils as well at many settle-

ments of the region.

3. They also included nursery-aged children in the framework of the third project. Every child got a small parcel where they could cultivate honey plants. There were 25 parcels in total, 50% of them honey plants and 50% herbs. They included in this educational work 500 children who gained theoretical and practical beekeeping knowledge.

We were informed by the apiarist hosting our group that he has 80 bee families in total and he produces four types of products, black locust, chestnut, flower and forest. He “makes” queens for himself, his experience derives from 68 years of apiary activity. As we could learn, the last year was very bad from the perspective of keeping bees. He sells exclusively from home.

## ***The first Young Farmer Club of 2013 concerned specific sectors in Slovakia***

Dunajská Streda provided venue for the first Young Farmer Club of 2013 in 17-18 January. At the first day of the event, participants were able again to listen to the presentations of experts which concerned various sectors, development opportunities.

Jaroslava Kaňuchová Pátková provided an insight into the secrets of effective grape production. She informed everyone that although yearly wine consumption had risen recently in Slovakia, but it is still lagging behind in global wine drinking rankings. She emphasised that the support measures for the sector are positive while legislation and the common market organisation for the wine market of the EU is negative. Calculating with the 30-years-long expected lifespan of vines and that grapes are produced since the third year, the investment yields a return in ten years while this is only six years if funds are used. After that, the profit is nine percent of the investment – highlighted Jaroslava Kaňuchová Pátková. In the case of wine, the time to gain profit is five years (3,7 with support) and from then, profit is twenty percent in Slovakia.



The basic principles of organic vegetable production in practice were presented by Peter Balašov whose main task is to coordinate the movement of organic producers and disseminating information, implementing the existing knowledge in practice, harmonising human needs. He pointed out in his presentation that consumers of ecologic agricultural products mostly demand vegetables. He emphasised that in an ecological agricultural system, vegetables are grown on a minimal area. Peter Balašov also showed the advantages of “selling from the garden” for the farms applying their system: although professionalism requires a great effort

and real manual labour is needed on the fields, but in return, the costs of processing are low and the great market demand offers sufficient amount of money even for small lands. The basis of the method is a circle-shaped field that is cultivated by electro-motorised agricultural mechanic bridges. The machine consists of an 18-metres-long arm, it is moved by an electric motor which is automatic, has a gearbox and chain system, therefore it creates an Archimedes spiral. One end of the bridge is fixed at the middle of the circle in a way that enables it to rotate around the axis in the centre, while the other end is on a wheel on the edge of the circle, therefore it is possible to mount e.g. a digging or sowing machine, plough or even – for manual labour – a seat to work. These can be moved along the bridge therefore any agricultural work can be done in the circle. The system is made ecologically sustainable by that it does not compress the land, it is based on crop rotation and they exclude pesticides. A thousand square metres can be managed by the technique.

Ján Huba, researcher of the Animal Production Research Centre in Nitra (Centra Výskumu Živočišnej Výroby, CVŽV Nitra) introduced a study on profitable cattle husbandry. One of the reasons of the presentation was to answer the question whether beef cattle husbandry is a good choice for a young farmer and to say in which part of Slovakia and in what volume it has the brightest future. The presentation touched upon the minimal model of necessary initial investments: he showed the financial instruments needed and economic calculations. Ján Huba also presented the “Ten amendments of milking cow breeders”. “with the current market prices and performance indicators, the way animals are separated, it is impossible to talk about profit-making animal husbandry without subsidies. In Slovakia in 2012, the subsidy calculated for an animal was 150 Euros, but because according to the provisions of the European Union, area-based payments reached a hundred percent of the EU average level, there is no opportunity to provide such support for the breeders in the following years. Young farmer start-up subsidies have to valid for every young farmer under 40 years, therefore it is a European category” – told Ján Huba. “The Slovak Simmental cattle is the most widespread in Slovakia. Thirty hectares of pasture is needed for keeping twenty cows, 120 hectares for 40-80. The cost of cattle livestock is currently 2,5 Euros per kilogram in Slovakia. But for making profit, it should be sold for 3,5 Euros/kg, therefore it generates loss at current prices. The support opportunities we will be able to negotiate greatly depend on what the young farmer association can present at the table. We regard cooperation to be very important because Slovakia developed the nuts and bolts of beef cattle breeding based on Hungarian and Czech examples” – he said.

David Karkulin, an analyst from Agromagazin told about the factors influencing the pricing of agricultural goods. “There are two very important factors that are moving the markets. One of them is speculative capital, the other is the weather. If we want to indicate this with rates, 1/3 of market changes are because of speculative capital, and the rest is mainly because of weather circumstances, primarily on the side of supply. The use of agricultural support as bioenergy clearly influences the markets, and the policy of central banks is added to that” – said David Karkulin. “One-seventh of the corn is used to produce bioethanol in the USA. Production is expected to fall by 15 percent because of high prices. The production of less bioethanol lowers the price. Smaller reserves increase the price. In 2013, the amount of corn is expected to increase, its price is to become lower” – shared the analyst his expectations. “In 2012, there was no big hike in main trade, investors are expected to re-evaluate their position in 2013.”

At the second day of the event, the first study trip led to Búšľak Oil Ltd. in Dunajský Klátov where organic sunflower oil is produced by

a traditional process, cold press. As a result of this, sunflower pomace is also a final product beside oil which is a great fodder for cattle. The raw material needed for cold press is stored in their own warehouses of approximately 11 thousand tons of capacity. The pressed oil is bottled and a small amount of it is flavoured with basil, garlic, pepper. The products contain omega 6-9 fatty acids and Vitamin E abundantly. “By all means, I think it is more profitable for us if we process the plants we produce. This would be the goal, to sell these products processed. I am thinking in organic farming and I also want to process the products this way. I recently read an article where they wrote that there are more organic producers in Slovakia than in Hungary, but I think the situation is similar” – reckoned the leader of the farm. “There are more pastures and grassland in Slovakia for this goal, but more goods are processed in Hungary. I participated in this programme for the first time and I was also glad that I was able to get to know new colleagues. Small farmers should join forces by all means in this globalised world, and they should act on the common market to sell their products at better prices facing the big market.”

The next stop was the school farm at Búšľak. At this site, five hundred Holstein milking cows are kept. The farm was one of the first ones in Slovakia that started organic farming. Lacking experiences in the country (especially in the fields of animal husbandry, milk production) they elaborated the work process, methods of organic farming themselves.



The last stop was one of the sites of 4 FRUIT, a greenhouse in Horná Potôň. They started agricultural production in 2007. During this brief time, they created a functioning producing firm that by now is mostly growing hydroponic tomatoes, supplying many big chain stores with them. The heat needed for production is gained from geothermal sources getting to the greenhouses via approximately two kilometres of pipelines. The needed funds for the developments were gained by bank loans and EU support. They produce 1,5 million kilograms of tomato on a total of 4,7 hectares.

## ***The Conference of Hungarian Rural Youth of Budapest touched upon every field***

The Conference of Hungarian Rural Youth was organised on 22 February 2013 in Budapest. The event encompassed all the segments of agriculture that farmers could encounter: recent agricultural and rural development issues, support opportunities, agricultural administration, educational and training opportunities and agricultural financing.

Minister of State for Food Chain Control Supervision and Agricultural

Administration of the Ministry of Rural Development György Czerván participated in the event who drafted the recent issues of Hungarian agricultural and rural development in his presentation for the participants. He emphasised that in 2012, agriculture was responsible for 3,8 percent of the Hungarian gross national product, and the whole agribusiness was for approximately 15 percent, while agriculture had a 10 percent share of total Hungarian export – growing to more than double since 2004. In 2012, the Hungarian external trade balance (i.e. the rate of export and import) improved by a third compared to the year before. The Minister of State also presented the support opportunities that young farmers can use, touching upon the new measures in 2013. Of course, György Czerván also spoke about the start-up support of young farmers for which 11 billion forints were available. More than 3300 applications came in for twice the available amount money. They were able to support 906 applications and by the time of the presentation, 90 percent of them were paid. Payment appropriations were made for improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry for 97 percent of the funds available, and 99 percent in the case of improving the environment and the countryside, with the rate of payments above 50 percent. They also want to help farmers with preferential loans such as the Agricultural Working Capital Loan Programme of the Hungarian Development Bank with subsidised interest and a financial framework of 15 billion forints or the freely usable Agricultural Széchenyi Card current account credit. At the end of his presentation, the Minister of State drafted the most important tasks of the government. “Maybe the most important is the land law, the law on land acquisition, the farm regulation and the so-called integration law is related to that. This is a big job that is currently under way” – said György Czerván.



The piece of legislation was introduced by Attila Simon Deputy State Secretary for Legal and Administrative Affairs. He stressed that non-EU citizens or legal entities will be barred from both land ownership and use. He underlined that getting land is geographically conditional – basically related to living in place – for farmers and agricultural producing organisations. Attila Simon specifically detailed the provisions concerning career-starters (at least 16 years old Hungarian or EU citizen with a qualification in agriculture or forestry who does not have already have land inside the European Economic Area) and young farmers. The former ones can gain the ownership of maximally 20 hectares of agricultural land or forest. For that, they have to make a statement that they will register themselves as farmers in six months from the start of the ownership, they will live and work in the settlement according to the place of land ownership and they pledge that they will not use the land for any other use for five years. Career-starter farmers and young farmers enjoy a preference in the case of pre-emption

rights in the group of local neighbours and other locals who are not deemed as neighbours.

Gergely Papp, the researcher at the Research Institute of Agricultural Economics (RIAE) also provided information tailored personally to young farmers who introduced the new system of direct payments. Subsidies can be offered for a maximum of two percent from the national envelope amounting to 25 percent of the average subsidy per hectare, for a maximum of 25 hectares in the first five years of the activity. According to the calculations of RIAE, the subsidy will be 64 Euros/hectare. The number of potential applicants is 9500 people, but 24 percent of them cultivates more than 25 hectares, therefore because of the limit, only 135 thousand hectares can be supported instead of 235 thousand hectares. Gergely Papp told on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy: “There is already a decision on how much money will be for Common Agricultural Policy. In 2014-2020, there will be 500 billion forints more coming to Hungary during the seven years than in the 2007-2013 period. If we take a look a bit closer how much money goes for direct payments and how much is left for rural development we can say that the amount of area-based subsidy will remain approximately the same in the period of 2014-2020. We will pay more or less the same amount for subsidies. The other thing that we have to understand is in what kind of a system these sums will be paid. In this field, serious changes can be expected, basically a new support system. There will be a system formed for support eligibility, the so-called green component will be introduced: the farmer will get 30 percent of the sums only if he or she fulfils certain specific environmental protection provisions. There will be new plus requirements, and what is also very important is that this will start not in 2014 but almost certainly in 2015” – summed up Gergely Papp the changes of CAP.

Dr Miklós Weisz, the co-president of Agricultural and Rural Youth Association, Hungary (AGRYA) also presented extra and special support concerning young farmers when he introduced the planning of the 2014-2020 rural development programme. He stressed that rural development subsidies “are moved under one hat” with the structural funds. To ensure flexibility, axis-based separation would be ceased to exist. Thematic sub-programmes will be possible to be established and the LEADER programme will be multi-funded. Regarding young farmers, he drafted the results of the 2007-2013 measures supporting generation change: for the start-up support of young farmers, more than 3200 applicants won support in three rounds, while for passing the farm, 82 applicants out of 131 in two rounds – while this number should have been 4500 according to the plans (by the time of the presentation, applications for the last, third round had not been judged, but there were only 65 applications 15 days before the end of the application period). In 2014-2020, young farmers will be supported by top-up support in the first pillar while a thematic sub-programme will do so in the second pillar. The sub-programmes – concerned with the peculiar needs of fields that are especially important for the member states – target young farmers among others. It can also be justified for the countries to provision higher support rates for certain – belonging to the sub-programme – actions. Dr Miklós Weisz pointed out in his presentation that AGRYA also participated in planning with a proposal package, it was included in two planning working groups, Focus Group 7 of the European Network for Rural Development and the Hungarian National Rural Network, and it also informs those who are concerned.

István Szabó, the director of the agricultural division of OTP Bank listed the general financing perspectives of agriculture. In general, he said that according to preliminary calculations, the total out-



put value of agriculture was higher by 0.7 percent in 2012 than its 2011 result and the total output of the sector was around 2200 billion forints at current prices. With a volume reduction of 11 percent, the prices increased by 13,2 percent. He pointed out that lending conditions are strict which reduces lending mostly in the market for businesses. The total loan stock of the agricultural sector has been showing a continuously decreasing tendency since 2007. While the total loan stock of agriculture stagnates, it decreases in the case of food industry, and the difference between the two is gradually decreasing. István Szabó also showed the credit options that are available for the farmers from the standard constructions (e.g. Agricultural and Entrepreneurial current account credit, Agricultural Széchenyi Card, pre-financing area-based payments or as a new options, other agricultural direct subsidies) to the unique ones (e.g. Working Capital loan, Exim export pre-financing loan, integratory loan, New Hungary Agricultural Development Loan).

Róbert Sebestyén, the president of the National Land Fund Managing Organisation returned to the issue of arable land. He introduced the goals of the organisation: the responsible management of the arable land assets belonging to the National Land Fund and keeping it in national interest, increasing the amount of arable land that can be included in open applications for lease, extending the role of the organisation in the land market and to prepare for legislative changes the end of the moratorium on selling land. He emphasised that the organisation accustomed to the changed environment: they increased the number of their workers by approximately a half and equipment acquisition, IT improvements as well as legislative changes improved their work. Calls for applications for leasing represent a continuous and expanding task for the organisation, they have more and more lands to lease with which they aim to secure lasting land use, eliminating the constraint of temporary or transitional use. They mainly want to get small and medium farms and natural persons such as young farmers into position. They want to emphasise the high importance of animal husbandry by expanding the obligation of keeping animals for the whole duration of the land lease. In November 2011, mass calls for applications started with uniformed conditions, evaluation system and application process, on average 16-18 hectares were leased. 75 percent of leaseholders are family farmers, individual agricultural entrepreneurs or primary producers, four percent of them are young farmers. He called the attention to that if applicants are young farmers, they should indicate it when they hand in the documents. Róbert Sebestyén also listed the frequent mistakes that can make an application invalid (e.g. late application, disregarding the uniformed requirements for form and content, unidentifiable collateral for the offer, farming plan for more applications).

Representing the National Tax and Customs Administration Mária Lepsényi tried to offer orientation among the tax regulations. Re-

lated to young farmer subsidies, he pointed out that the pre-paid 90 percent is deemed to be income when it is spent, while the remaining ten percent means income when it is transferred because it is paid after and it means related cost.

Zoltán Daoda presented microbiological methods that can help in agricultural production. He justified the importance of the use of these by that 75 billion tons of soil disappears from the face of the Earth and 80 percent of arable lands have already been more or less damaged. Currently soil is destroyed in Europe 17 times faster than it is recovered while this number is "just" ten in America and five in Australia. But a biological-based product family provides natural all-round defence for the soil helping nutrient supply and humification, soil creation and disinfection as well as degrading cellulose. Another product family works by algae because these have strong anti-oxidant and cell nutrition, and they stimulate the growth of plants if they are used properly.

## ***The countryside moved to the heart of the Hungarian capital for a day***



„Village in the City – Food and Heritage” Festival awaited visitors with authentic rural atmosphere in the heart of Budapest, at Vajdahunyad Castle at June 22 2013. The event was realised in cooperation with the Hungarian Agricultural Museum, related to the Night of the Museums.

The main stage had a lot of interesting and spectacular performances. One was able to get a taste of Hungarian and Slovak culture and heritage through dance shows, performances. From Slovakia, the award-winning Dúbrava group (established in 1979) performed two dances and a song, the Mlynček formation of Kolárovo gave a taste of the folklore of Trenčín for the visitors, while the Dunaj group active for more than half a century showed a mix of the folk dance traditions of Slovakian regions from Western Slovakia to the „czardas” of the East, Zemplén. The organisers established contact with the Cultural Institute of the Republic of Slovakia during the preparations for the festival and thanks to them the dance group of a Slovak school in Budapest, the internationally renowned Lipa Folklore Group also had a Slovak traditional show. The Hungarian performers of the traditional show were the runner-ups of the „Tavaszi szél...” (“Spring wind...”) contest of the local government of Zugló who were invited to the event by the Museum.

There was also an agricultural machinery show at the festival where young and old ones were able to get to know the veteran tractors

that were first used in Hungary and Slovakia. At the muster of the old tractors, collectors let children to sit in the machines and even start them. They were also able to try the hand-operated agricultural machines – e.g. the corn grinder and the carrot slicer – that they can only see in museums today. (The owners of the antique machines brought corn and carrot with them, therefore children were able to “taste” these old agricultural activities.)



Beside the veteran machines, three giant state-of-the-art tractors were exhibited, too. The biggest of them continuously circled at the course sealed off by a security cordon where even children could ride it under strict supervision.



For the young ones, a small peasant garden and a petting zoo was established where they could get really close to the farm animals with the help of farmers: sheep, pigs, a calf, goat, duck, goose and chicken. Furthermore, a programme series awaited the children with 10 stops where they were able to test their skills and knowledge with various agricultural-related questions, trying traditionalist handcrafts and folk games. Children who had participated in at least half of the

programmes were rewarded with fresh fruits and vegetables offered by young farmers. Grown-ups were not left out from gifts if they filled the agro-questions at the Young Farmer Tent.

Visitors of the festival were able to taste honey, jams, juices, various home-made cheeses and spices made by the farmers (bread slices with fat were seasoned with them). For something sweet, guests were also able to taste the fine handcrafted products of a gingerbread maker.

The Slovak products got an own wooden house where Slovak young farmers offered a taste of traditional parenica chesse, smoked sausage, potato langosch, Bratislavský rožok with the help of volunteer interpreters. This venue was very popular, but the event in general attracted a lot of visitor, too, being successful among both children and adults.



**„...we have to do a lot!”**

Participating in the Virtual Village Programme and the related research has been a great positive experience and challenge for me both personally and professionally. Countless opportunities lie in such a unique initiative, but what we should not forget for a moment is that the responsibility that we have got with the tasks undertaken. The fate of the results and the credibil-

ity of its message is fundamentally set by whether those who participated in its implementation were solicitous about the cause.

According to the answers of young people actively working in our communities, everthing has resonated the was formulated in us during the course of the programme and helped us to valiadate its goals. Through the interviews, we were able to get to know a really personal, internal side of the communities. To confront that maybe even life stops where there is some kind of a barrier to the establishment of communnality and in contrast to that, to get to know life stories dedicated to the communities was something to draw lessons from for the participants of the study to proceed with the programme.

For me, the training and common work brought a considerable plus beside the tangible results: during the programme, we ourselves were transformed into a community with a common goal, common interests, common values and through these three factors, a special sense of community.

Not only did the study provide us answers but it also raised other important questions. For me, the result is bringing a new beginning to life. It is motivation for the new challenges, with an apostrophe at the end of the thought that we have to do a lot!

## ***NOGs, youth organisations in the countryside – study about the research results***

*„Where there is a community, there is life, too!”*

Nowadays if someone is dedicated to study rural youth communities does have an easy job. The terminology in itself poses a lot of questions. Where is the countryside? Who is regarded as young? What are communities anyway?

The definition of the countryside cannot be defined unambiguously and in a timeless way. The reason for this is that the countryside is constantly changing in time and space, its approach is different in the common, economic, political, sociological terminology, and the different sectors define it differently.

Today – in common language – most people regard every settlement other than his or her own while urban people regard villages as the countryside. This is mainly typical of the terminology of the capital and the main cities. “To go up to Budapest” and “to go down to the countryside” marks a qualitative distinction fixed in terminology, unnoticed and unwittingly. Even the term “countryside” had become positive only by the end of the 20th century, although unfortunately it has not managed to fully lose its pejorative



layers of meaning.

Most of the documentation of the EU leans on two factors: the high proportion of agricultural land use and lower population density. According to this, the population of Europe is urban while its territory is rural. 26% of European population has lived in the countryside or rural area, in approximately 80% of the territory in 2011. Because of the aging and emigration of European, mostly rural communities, the proportion of population can be even lower in the coming decades.

Taking the demographic trends into regard, we can state that keeping youth in place is the key for the future of the countryside, and it is important to have young people choosing the rural way of life.

Youth sociology traditionally regards 15-29 year old people as young, age groups ranging from students of secondary schools to young adult career-starters. When discussing the community issue of youth, first and foremost we have to take two very important tendencies into regard. First we have to place it in the social and demographic processes concerning EU member states that we must know to have the whole picture on the state of youth. Secondly, the processes related to the change of values that influence the social integration and unfortunately shed light on the seriousness of the problem.

In the EU, there are 96 million young people between the age of 15 and 29 representing almost 20% of total population. In Hungary, this proportion is under the EU average, about 18%. According to the studies of Youth in Europe, the proportion of the young age group is getting lower in almost every developed state at an alarming rate, especially in Western Europe.

The collective behaviour of youth as a social group and the quality of their community relationships has been radically changed in the last decade taking their economic, cultural features, demographic processes, the change of the labour market and the effects of social environment into regard. The individual ways of life and the prospects of future are getting more and more individual, especially with a view to the low level of the personal integration of Hungarian youth. They are vegetating with the absence of their sense of community while they are eagerly pursuing the “awards” of the virtual world, measured in likes. This risk is especially high in rural villages where if there is some kind of a barrier, even life may be put on hold.

Communities are the movers of the all-time social order, the venues of practising democracy, the alternatives of active civil life. The community is a mediating unit between the individual and society through which it is possible to be an organic part of the society. Regarding the function of the communities, Rolland L. Warren defined five aspects that can ideally be found in communities from the smallest local ones to big regional groupings: mediating values, promoting economic welfare, strengthening social participation, sustaining social norms and rules and promoting mutual support. The concept of the community has some kind of an added value that is more than the group. The positive emotional relationship grown in the members of the community can move the residents of the village out of their passivity and to lead them to the way of working for the public good. And one of the peculiarities of this way is that while one is acting for the sake of public good, in reality the effect of one's actions return to him- or herself, therefore one is unwittingly absorbed by the force of community, the mover of which is keeping together, belonging to each other. It makes one wonder that today, this path is found only by a few or they cannot see, do not dare to step on it. The process of finding each other that was natural in the past is fading.

The role of locality is very important even if – thanks to IT achieve-

ments – the significance of physical distances is being reduced. The modern industrial society has brought many civilizational tools serving the comfort of one while it has disrupted former human relationships, reduced communities. Communicational revolutions following each other in the second half of the 20th century hugely broadened the prospects of keeping personal contact, enticing with the positive experience of social life. Today, we know, experience that all these opportunities have many harmful effects: the number of contacts is reduced because the communicational forms of the new media are occupying the place of personal relationships and make them shallower. Therefore strengthening local identity and filling it with substance, experience is essential.

This is why there is such a great need for the support of dedicated leading personalities who can hold communities together, who can bring the basic motivations of communities – unable to be organised spontaneously – in the adversarial economic situation of today. There is a great potential and reserve in the communities of the village regarding the supplying strength of the countryside if it is able to initiate for the sake of defining its own ways of development, if the community is conscious, it is able to recognise and realise its own goals with the appropriate knowledge, will and endurance.

In general, literature on this topic has been and is concerned with communities and more specifically, with rural communities, organisations. Luckily we have the sources to learn from. But the novelty of this study is that it is trying to raise awareness on one of the basic problems of studies, research projects on rural civil organisations and communities as well as the shortfall of planning and decision-making. Namely that most of the efforts serving progress are always implemented with an up-bottom direction, via an external factor, offering relatively few opportunities of contribution, commenting to those who feel and experience the debated issues from first hand.

## ***Rural communities - Study 2013***

This study places the civil society of the Hungarian countryside at its centre. Taking the social historic processes detail above into regard, it is doubtless how little communities as the living and constantly changing organisms of society can be neglected. Organisations and communities play a very important role in creating a liveable countryside and they also contribute to young people remaining in place.

During the study, it is an important point of view that the opportunities of communities in villages, small settlements are limited in both human and financial resources. The study wanting to explore the functioning of rural civil communities cannot disregard the social, economic, local political context, because the society of a small settlement can be determined by a well-functioning organisation as a whole.

The peculiarity of the study is that it belongs to the few initiatives that were not conducted by outsider analysts, professionals but members of the target group participated from the first moment in its realisation actively. The dear Reader holds the results of a significant initiative that had been built bottom-up from the idea to its realisation, rippled from the innermost circles of rural communities. **We experience how important role initiatives have that are built bottom-up, from the depth of the community and have inner goals, values, common interest, a “sense of ‘we’” found during the challenges of implementation behind their motivation.**

Most of the research work was done by 30 young rural people.

They themselves are young people who take part actively in the social life of their own village or town. They have recognised that for the sustaining strength of the village, first and foremost strong, effective organisations are needed with local ties, and this matched the concept of AGRYA wanting to get to know and join the forces of rural youth and communities. This ideal constellation can open up wide possibilities for both sides to translate what we have been talking about for a long time into action.

Participants of the Virtual Village Programme took the task after a more than one year long training that they will conduct interviews with the leaders of the communities and representatives of local governments as well as to visit the community members with questionnaires. All this while they have not realised it during their work how complex their knowledge and experience complementing the training has become.

It may not require too much of an effort to prove how rare and valuable undertaking is when an open-minded young person with the proper background knowledge makes the mayor of his or her village talk, or the leader of the community, local religious leaders or anyone else serving the public interest with humble, tireless work. This is a kind of learning opportunity for those who have the motivation needed to be the movers of social life, and merely by talking about it, reinforcement for those who are confronted by challenges day by day. The function of the interview is establishing contact, building trust and mostly to mobilise to take part in the life of the local society, participating by acting. **The point is that in a dialogue of equals both through the questions and the answers, both telling and listening motivates the two sides to think and helps to recognise the problems, newer and newer things to do.** And many times, recognition is near to success on the bumpy road to realisation.

The idea posed many challenges to both the organisers and participants, but having the results in hand, we can firmly state that it worth it. Even if this is contrary to professionalism on a degree. We believe that to uncover such an issue, professionalism is far from being enough. The fate and message of such a study is basically determined if it is done by dedicated people.

The study wants to use the opportunities offered by both qualitative and quantitative research methodology. The reason for that is that it is trying to study the topic from two different but closely related points of view: on one hand, the questionnaire is based on the perspective of the participants; on the other hand, the structured interviews help to survey the opinion of leaders, community organisers by them.

Participants of the Virtual Village Programme organised by Agricultural and Rural Youth Association – AGRYA took part in conducting the research. The 30 participants do the survey in various (35) settlements of 19 counties in Hungary after a methodological training.

The future of liveable countryside, or the results of the questionnaire survey

During the questionnaire survey, 147 young people were asked who are in one way or another members of a rural community, either in a village or a small town. The results of the questionnaire survey do not correspond to the need of representativity, but the results well outline the motivations of youth, the system of relations of their organisations, the opportunities and boundaries of their public activity, their opinion and plans thoughts on their settlement. The target group consisted of rural young people between the age of 15 and 29 who are members of a local community, organisation. The sex ratio of respondents is approximately the same as the national average, in our case, women were represented by 55

per cent while men by 45. According to the type of settlements, 24% of respondents were living in towns, 46% in major municipalities with a population of 2-5000 people, and 30% in municipalities under 2000 people. Mostly the 25-29 years old age group represented itself.

According to qualification, those who have a diploma are significantly over-represented in the sample. While the national average is around 20% in every age group, this proportion is 46% in this study. The reason for that is that young people participating in the programme have a diploma in a high proportion, almost 80%. The distribution of the questionnaire was done via the participants with the snowball-method, therefore most of the respondents they asked, their acquaintances had a similar level of qualification to them.

Most of the respondents are members of communities, organisations based on cultural and folk, religious, sport and hobby activities.

In studying the sustaining strength of the village, it is important how satisfied residents are with the availability of services, institutions of their settlement. 16% was fully satisfied, 48% was rather satisfied. Regarding the availability of institutions, 27% rather, 8% totally agreed with that they feel shortcomings. The picture is more detailed by the bloc of questions that surveyed the existence of specific services and institutions. The bloc contained – beside the options of “there is” and “there is not” – “there is not, but it is needed” as a possible answer to survey the needs more precisely. The most interesting ones out of these are:

#### Satisfaction index

With the settlement's...	Unsatisfied (%)	Neutral (%)	Satisfied (%)
economic situation	40,5	41,5	18
availability of infrastructure	40	27	33
availability of social services	30	35	35
state of culture	42	22	36
state of community	47	28	35

To the question “what kind of changes, improvements are needed at the settlement, the highest proportion of answers was related to the question that community, personal, social relationships. Bigger social, more intensive social life and the need of better relationships between people emerged mostly. Furthermore, the need to keep the settlement tidy and clean was indicated by more than half of the respondents. Although it would be the quickest to reach slightly results in this field with a relatively low use of energy and organising. Beside the fact that many feel this is their personal issue, probably less people would feel their responsibility in actually working.

	%
cleanliness of the settlement and the maintenance of the roads, roads	58
more local programmes, events, concerts, cultural programmes would be needed	50
bigger social, more intensive social life at the settlement	64
house of culture or community needed for social life	15
better conditions for transportation is needed	46
more included people in the day-by-day life of the settlement	43
more active inclusion of youth in decision-making	55
to have better relationships between people	60
other	13

Moreover, the issue of including youth in decision-making emerged unequivocally, because it is important to see and prove that the question is not just a topic always emerging in policies but young people feel the necessity of the creation of opportunities just as the same, and based on their attitude, they would like to grab the opportunity.

Because the vast majority of respondents, 74% feels that they have no or just miniscule opportunity to take part in community issues as a member of the community, to become active shapers of social processes.

As an open question, respondents got a chance to share their opinion about how to make cooperation between local governments and NGOs more effective.

“With a handshake” – says the most brief, but most expressive answer that includes everything the opinion of 150 young people reflects. A handshake requires direct, eye-to eye communication, partnership, ideally the will of both parties to cooperate and mutual respect for each other.

A need to more open and regular communication is expressed in most of the answers in different ways, but we should not forget that communication is always two-sided, it can be initiated by either side. This is exactly the given, but many times disregarded opportunity of which Virtual Village Programme wants to raise awareness, in a way pushing participants to initiate, to experience: communication for common goals must be initiated by one of the parties, and it does not matter from the perspective of the quality of cooperation which side does take the first step. Because it is true that local governments have an official capacity but only experience can give answer to that what are the specific opportunities of local governments and organisations, the limits of their room to manoeuvre, the conditions of their cooperation.

According to the respondents, it is needed to make it conscious in members of local governments, leaders that certain NGOs could be participants of decision-making and shapers of community life, therefore motivating their activity. Youth NGOs must be active participants of the public life of a settlement. They have to have room to represent goals and values regarded by them as important, because supporting the young generation is the best investment.

The motivations behind community participation are typically placed along dual axes. The primary axis is the self-reflexive motivation, through which the positive feelings of the participant are overwhelming, the main motivators are self-expression, the useful spending of free time, internal pressure and urge in a positive sense, the tiny successes and the feeling of belonging somewhere. The other axis is along the want to do something, the “sense of ‘we’”, the positive effects of active social participation on the community. Motivation derives from the conviction that taking individual responsibility creates value for him- or herself, one’s own family, organisation, village community and broader environment. They are not expecting development from someone else, the state or the local government but they believe in the active participation of one. On the long run, this second group of motivations is able to sustain organisations active for the community, it is able to foster the future of communities on a local, regional and national level. All in all, 87% of the respondents felt that as members of the organisation, they have the opportunity to do a useful job.

And, by the end, one of the most important results for the study: a vast majority of young people are planning their future in the countryside by all means. After this the second biggest group, but only 17%, was unable to give an answer. 15% said that it depends on the job opportunities whether they will stay. Only 7% stated firmly that there is no way they would live in the countryside.

## **About communication as an effective tool, or interviews**

Through the 255 interviews conducted, we studied the experiences and realisations of the organisers complementary to the side of the participants. More specifically, we deemed it to be necessary to distinguish two groups in it, therefore the type of the relationship of local governments and NGOs can be uncovered better. By comparing the approach of the side of the leaders of decision-making and NGOs, our goal was to discover common points, to create the possibility to reflect to each other and it was our un concealed intention – regarding certain issues – to find the hotspots and to confront opinions.

For the cooperation, the harmonic, active, cooperation based on compromise of those who are concerned is needed. Many times, the inclusion of a third party sufficiently objective but interested in public affairs is/would be able to mediate in making disputed issues clear, therefore the presence and cooperation of those conducting the interviews created an atmosphere where interviewees had the chance to open up more, to introduce the listener to the depths of his or her activity. On one hand because they were able to talk about substantial, valuable activities in which they are interested in from the perspective of their job and personal motivation, on the other hand because according to the experiences, they rarely have a chance to even communicate about their own remarks, experiences, failures.

## **The movers of the social life of the countryside**

If someone can paint a picture of the activities of rural social life in a really telling way with positive and negative experiences, than they are the leaders of the organisations. The interviews with the 138 organisation leaders make up for 54% of the total interviews. They are those who know how much time and energy does it cost to mobilise the society of the village, they are those who know the anonymous donors benevolently supporting programmes and the sources of condemning critics. They know that how much part of the society of the village they can mobilise with events changing from year to year, and they see the trends, tendencies of community life changing over the years, decades.

We examined the activity of community life in this case in two ways based on the answers. Mostly to describe the social activity, we have created three groups. Based on the interviews, we deemed it to be necessary to add more shades to the “active” and “non-active” picture by introducing another group. This relates to a more loose community participation, and consists of those who are not regularly taking part in the activity of the specific community but visit events, programmes that are open for everyone. Maybe it is not surprising that according to the interviews, this third group is the largest. According to the judgement of the organisation leaders. 42% of the settlements is characterised by a lower will to participate where only a very small part of the residents, the “hard core” takes part time to time in community activities. But the majority only visits the yearly “big events” of the village such as the day of the village, Saint’s Day, events related to holidays, etc. According to 28% of the leaders, social life can be said to be generally active at their settlement, another 26% said that no community movement can be detected, residents are reacting totally pas-

sively to initiatives.

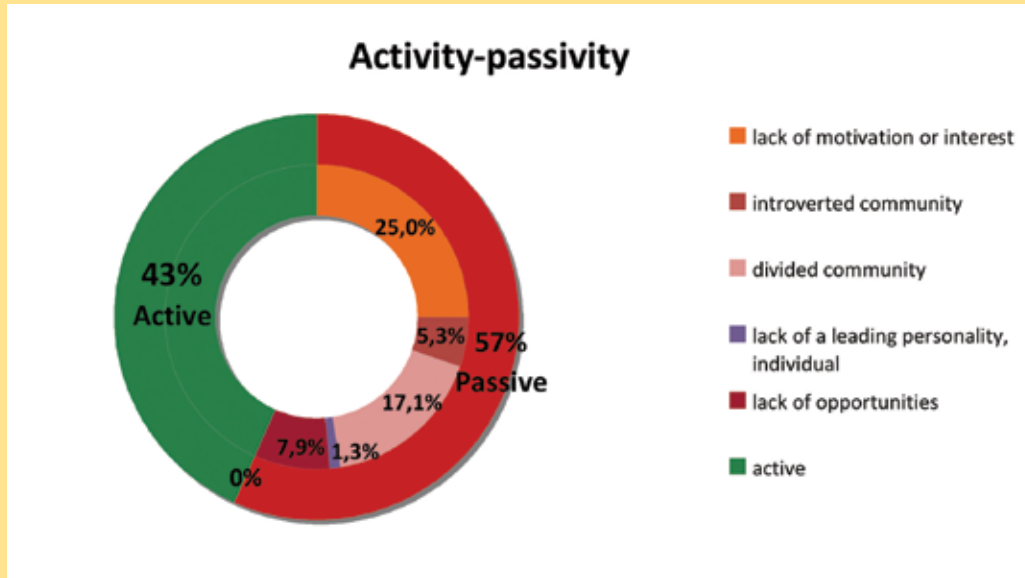
By further examining the question, the “whys” started to emerge. From this perspective, “activity” got another meaning, a community proved to be active even if there was a significant amount participants at the yearly events, therefore 43% were counted as active. Divided social life was typical of 17% of the settlement.

indicated by 1,5%

Based on their activity, groups are mostly organised for building community, and a high proportion of them had spending free time usefully and hobby activity, public security, religious affiliation, keeping traditions or providing social help as a motivation to create

the group. It is especially interesting to see that most of the communities organise just a few occasions per year, therefore there is only a minimal chance for keeping regular, continuous contact between members of the community. Their everyday life is therefore hardly determined by belonging to a community, they do not live as members of the community. But it is a different question whether this tendency reflects the opportunities or the needs.

Respecting motivation, the communities reacted to some kind of a local problem or shortfall with their formation.



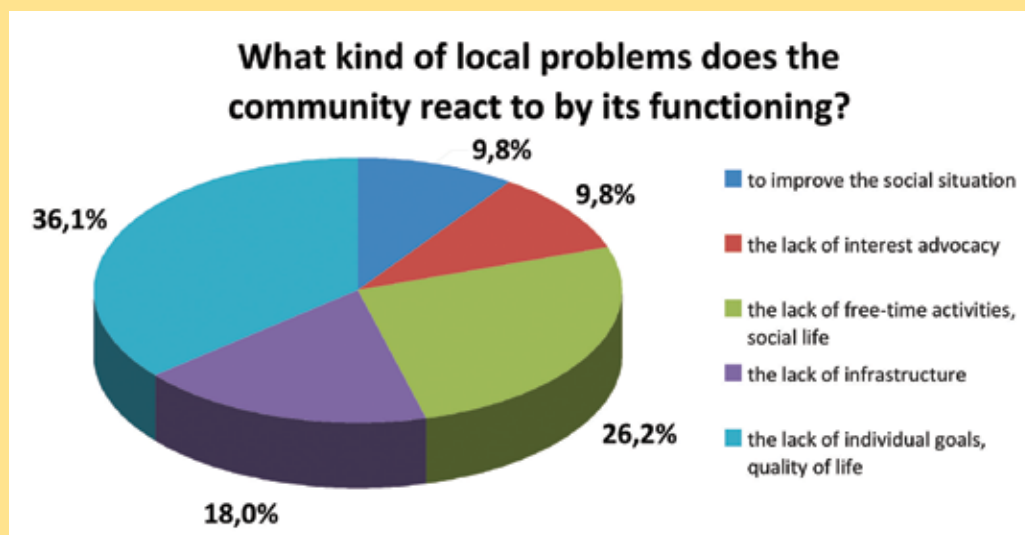
In this case, division by mainly age groups was observable, more specifically almost exclusively the elderly and teenagers organising into groups was the noticeable tendency. Of course, this has a logical social explanation by taking social background in regard. The elderly are those who have the most free time and they are the ones needing to be organised in communities the most as the remedy of seclusion, of being alone. For youth, being in groups is the leisure time activity of institutional, school community life based on age groups. The most disturbing result: while searching for the reasons, the cause of passivity was a total lack of interest and motivations at the almost one-third of the settlements. These inward-looking village societies are in endangered most by depopulation, because sustaining strength is rooted out of the soil of indifference and passivity. Many, even those who are taking part in social activity or decision-making are unaware how much the state and functioning of the civil sector influence the development and sustaining strength of the area. The lack of a leading personality was only

Five categories seem to be forming based on the answers: reflecting on the amelioration of social situation or the quality of life, the lack of interest representation, individual goals or leisure time activities, or the infrastructural problems lie in the background. Uncovering the specific cases belonging to categories may need some further explanation.

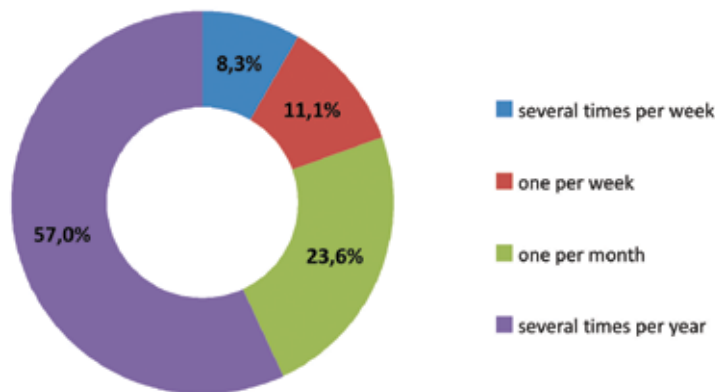
1. The organisations aiming for the amelioration of social situation are usually take the form of voluntary help. There were many examples of helping lonely, sick old people needing care or disadvantaged families and especially children: from collecting clothing and food aid to do housework, to act against poverty or exclusion and they have done many different similar activities. There are many settlements where there is a community working to solve extraordinary situations like damage control after natural disasters.

2. To strengthen the advocacy of interests, mainly profession-specific communities are formed such as winemaker, hunter, farmer or fire-fighter associations. These groups are serving the public good beside advocacy activity, for example damage control because of game or natural disasters. Beside, mediating public issues, problems concerning specific groups of the village is a goal because of the lack of contact with decision-makers.

3. Communities established to the number of freetime activity options are mostly doing cultural – tradition keeping, sport and hobby activities. They typically have an event or programme per year enabling the participation of every resident of the village. (For example the shows of



### How often do you organise get-togethers, programmes?



dance groups, exhibitions, presentations, various whole-day-long programmes)

4. To ameliorate infrastructural shortcomings and to make its quality better, associations aiming to preserve and renew the beauty of the scene of the village, the place of residence, the community spaces are established. Their activity encompasses village beautification, getting rid of garbage, taking care of monuments, cemeteries, temple gardens, renovating playgrounds, etc. In certain cases, we may encounter communities formed especially for this goal, but they are mostly spontaneous actions on some occasions per year organised by an unchanging group.

5. A wide range of motivations is shown at the category of reacting to general social challenges. The motivations characteristic of the group can mostly be found in other categories, too, but they are worth mentioning because there are organisations especially built on solving issues and problems. Their most typical forms are organisations to enhance public safety (vigilantes), to make inadequate lifestyle, bad quality of life better (alcoholics anonymous, health groups), groups to strengthen ethnic equality and sense of identity (Roma local governments, German ethnic groups). The work of these is essential because they are closer to the problems, therefore they can also get closer to the solution. They would be able to make the work of local governments to tackle problems emerging in the community easier.

Independently from the categories, the strongest added value is always created by a “big local issue” that has a mobilising force for the community, that is important for it and because of which

they feel that it is worth to join each other. These “big issues” are fundamentally defining the mechanism of the community. The undoubted strength and advantage of cooperation between local governments and rural NGOs that they can multiply their effectiveness and opportunities by joining forces. Civil groups have the motivating factors with which they can mobilise masses by well-circumscribed goals and initiatives. They also can have special financial and human resources such as donations, voluntary work, solidarity, help. These special factors can be supported by local

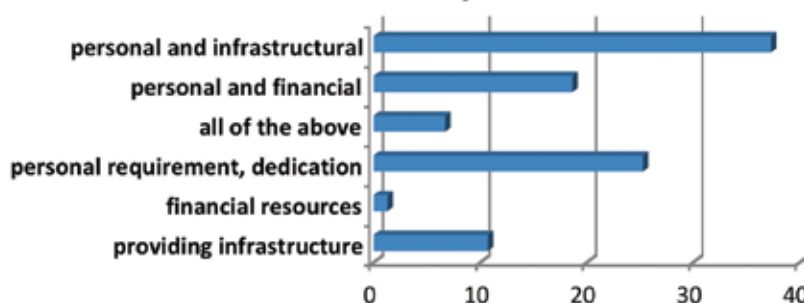
governments with official authority, national financial resources, the inclusion of experts. But for this, the harmonious, active cooperation of related parties is needed based on compromise. From the perspective of the quality of relations, it is really shocking how many organisations are treated as pariahs, rejected. 15% of the organisations do not have any support from the government. Every fourth has to regularly or at least occasionally confront the local government in conflict situations. Of course this does not mean total rejection, but inadequate communication, inability to compromise, personal conflicts can cause serious damages. In some cases, the local government regards a well-working organisation as a rival and it makes the situation of the impossible built on their supposed supremacy.

Contrary to that, approximately 25% enjoys the maximal support of local governments both morally and from a financial and infrastructural perspective. Almost 10% of them get an opportunity to actively participate in the work of the local government, decision-making, either by their suggestion, joint applications or expressing opinion at fora. The barrier of support from local governments is not unwillingness but the support system ties their hands.

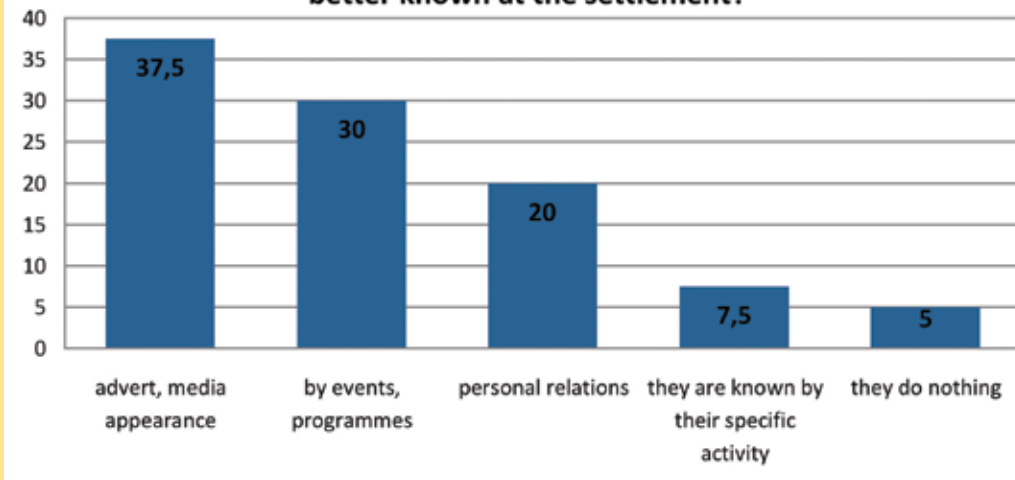
According to community leaders, the most decisive for sustaining the community is the existence of the personal condition. A dedicated, determined, creative and active community leader willing to act can make members of the community move and motivate them. Besides, the room serving as the home of the community was named as an important condition. They see the existence

of financial resources as an opportunity but most of them says that the issue of money cannot make the survival of the community impossible. Despite the hard financial situation of local governments and their ever dwindling resources, their contribution secures the financial base for their survival, and they also receive money from other external supporting sources such as donations, tender applications. Only a few use the relatively obvious choice of membership fees, 15% of the organisations are financing themselves with such

### What are the most important tools and requirements for sustaining the community?



### What kind of tools do you use to make your community better known at the settlement?



The area where NGOs have a manoeuvring room, the direction of their development and the level their cooperation can reach depends greatly on the impact of local governments on the community sphere. Local governments sooner or later have to cooperate in a new form, where providing public services is not their exclusive privilege but they are forced to more effective cooperation in at least an area of public services. This seems to be a drastic change if this is really seen as being forced and not as an opportunity by the "local authority". It is the question of the future that exactly what kind of

incomes.

The society of the village knows and respects the activity of the communities, therefore their functioning absolutely has an echo. They use different tools to extend their visibility. Through the events and programmes, they have the broadest platform to show their activity, but beside that, more than a third of the organisations invest energy in media appearance.

Regarding their relations, activity can be shown in the settlement and the country. Only of a negligible part of the organisations have international relations. (40,3% in the settlement, 36,5% in the country, 2,4% abroad)

To sum it all up, it can be said that although there is still a lot to be done to harmonise the functioning of local governments and the organisations, the leadership of most settlements are – relative to their opportunities – supporting the functioning of the organisations by all means available. For survival, a community room, help in creating the conditions necessary for functioning, providing tools are sufficient conditions, the added value to this is the value-generating strength of the community. Be their financial resources limited, they can sustain initiatives needing encouragement and reinforcement with moral support.

## The ways and resources of the development opportunities of rural communities

tasks will and can be shared, but if this kind mentality becomes the part of planning, both parties can do their jobs according to the designated scopes of authority in the right time, coordinated and prepared.

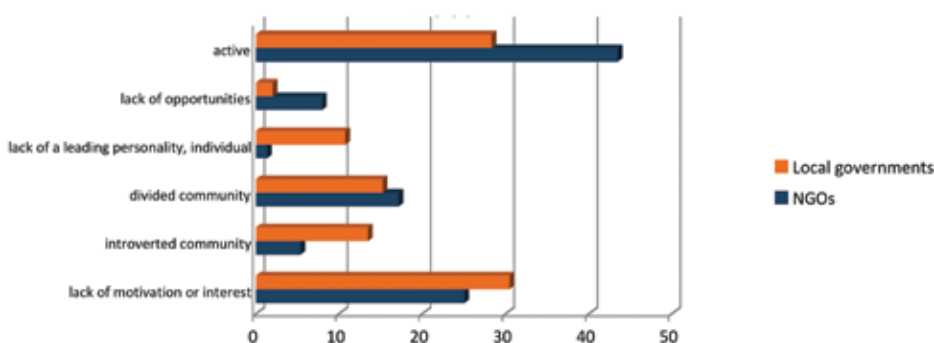
Regarding the activity of the settlements, the 117 representative of local governments who were asked gave completely different answers. Only 26% regarded their community active, while 44% saw a community consumed by indifference and introversion. They regard the lack of motivation to be the biggest problem and they define the community of their settlement not as a whole, living social organism but a dissenting group that has internal conflicts at many times. The lack of a leading personality was mentioned by 10% of the interviewees as a shortcoming as opposed to the opinion of community leaders who regard this to be the least typical shortcoming. Beside that we can assume that community leaders are biased towards themselves in this difference of opinions, we must take the problem into regard that the leadership of the village does not search for and find those dedicated community members who are ready to act and with whom cooperation could be successful.

According to the system of motivations based on the answers given by NGO leaders, it can be said about the activities of the communities that the proportion of those who are acting for social life and to make programmes more colourful is the highest. Half of the organisations were classified as members of this group. According to them 20% of the organisations acted for the improvement of

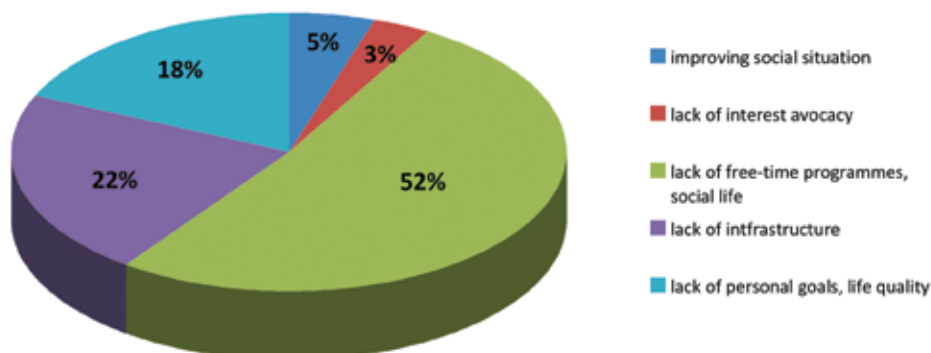
infrastructure and the amelioration of its quality. 18% of the organisations became famous for their efforts to make living standards better in the eyes of the leaders.

The biggest difference between the organisation leaders and the representatives of local governments is based on the amount of support given. Just 3% said that they cannot supply the organisation in any way. Approximately 13% of the local governments said

### The ranking of activity-passivity compared by local governments and NGOs

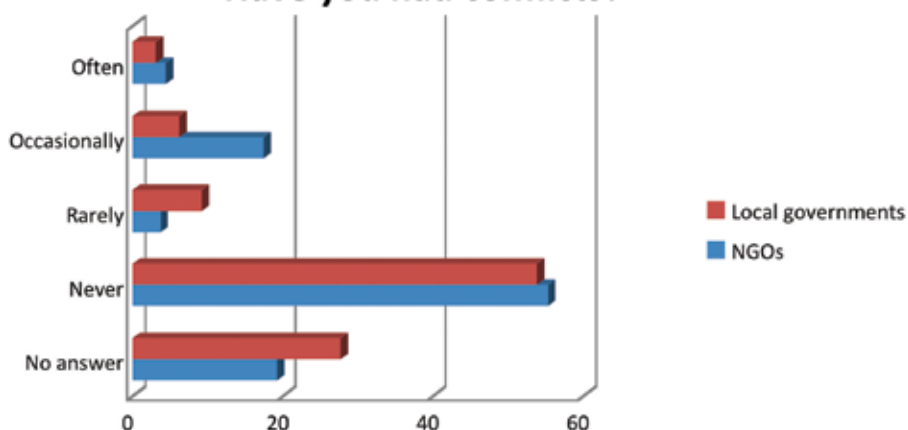


### What kind of local problems does the community react to with its activity?



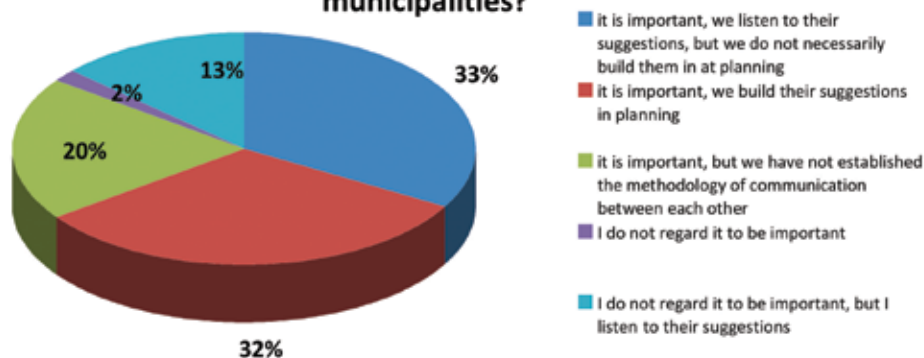
that they had provided support in infrastructure, financing and every tool of inclusion in public affairs. According to almost a third of representatives, they can only provide infrastructure for the work the organisations, another 27% can only adhere to it with financial support. Regarding conflicts, more than half of the representatives of local governments feel that they hardly ever have to struggle with a disputed issue, but the 25% of those trying to deflect the situation is interesting. The local governments are eagerly deflecting taking conflict situations, because in given cases it would paint a bad picture of the wielder of local authority.

### Have you had conflicts?



About inclusion in decision-making, 32% regarded the suggestions of the organisations especially important and use them if they can. Another almost one-third provides occasion to speak up, but not necessarily includes the proposed ideas. 13% does not regard getting the organisations into “position” and therefore to share shaping public affairs, but according to them, they do not handle suggestions in a dismissive way.

### Do you regard it to be important to include the suggestions by the communities in the decision-making of the municipalities?



Regarding the sustaining strength of the village, more than three-quarters of the respondents agree that the organisation influence the scape of the village its public mood and the sustaining strength of the countryside positively. According to 20%, they do not adhere to the sustaining strength of the countryside and to how liveable it is although this had been caused in almost every case that sustaining strength exclusively meant jobs and economic situation for them. The opinion is behind this – that exists in a close circle but that is massively durable – that the liveability of the countryside and the place of residence in general is almost exclusively depending on its economic sustaining ability, the number of jobs and its position in the competition mar-

ket. Based on the experiences, we cannot believe in that economic growth can and will solve the problems of the community, because development lies not in goods but the unused opportunities hidden in society.

If there is something where NGOs are ahead of local governments with one step, especially during the political turmoil of recent times is trust and that they are personal. Confidence in NGOs is generally stronger, although their influence and competence for the solution of certain public tasks is rated lower. By using this, giving ground to the organisations, local governments can get closer to the solution of public problems, to create a unified rural society.

## **Conclusion, suggestions**

The research is one of the tasks of our democracy developing programme that we should not regard as a scientific work despite the methods of the research and the tools of the analysis. Its biggest value and at the same time its most striking shortcoming is that it is about the communal opportunities of rural youth by members of rural youth. From the perspective of the programme, the most decisive results are not values measured by percentages but the process of researching, the experiences gained with it and the attitude change thanks to it that has been acquired by young participants. Beside all this, we underline the importance of establishing contact that has been realised between young, animating people who are willing to act at their place of residence and decision-makers above them during researching. Because we should be more concerned with these active community people, to put their communities in an advantageous position, to facilitate their contact with decision-makers in order to let the youth of the countryside find itself, and to be able to develop, strengthen.

The future of this initiative can be envisaged as a symbolic natural picture, a small piece of rock thrown in a lake. At the moment of submergence, the rock just breaks the surface of the water, but it gets deeper by time from the reflection to the so far unknown depth, while on the surface, the waves of the splash spread in a bigger and bigger radius. According to this analogy, the goal of the study is to find the path on the surface of widely believed social stereotypes and to help to understand more deeply the life, goals, motivations of rural youth. The study should be a milestone of a new kind of approach that is not looking at rural communities from the outside and above, but trying to understand it from the inside, with a bottom-up approach. Our goal is to make this approach known

to let it make waves in a bigger and bigger radius.

The study, the local needs of youth and in contrast with that, the statistics about their emigration are giving voice to a very important cry for help. It can be seen from the results well that hard social circumstances – e.g. unemployment –, disadvantageous infrastructure is being pushed to the background by communication. Communication that does, not only mean everyday dialogue between locals but communication about public issues, too. To the question that what kind of changes, improvements do they regard the most important, 51% of the respondents answered: “the inclusion of the residents, especially youth in the everyday life of the village”. It is of signal value as well as that 53% of young people want to live in the countryside by all means. In contrast to this youth regarding their goals in life planned in bigger Hungarian cities or abroad, or in other words, emigration, the percentages are alarmingly high. Therefore the problem is given, the solution to which is practically at arm’s length: COMMUNICATION.

Communication where goals, problems and their solutions can meet from two directions: those above whom decisions are made and those making these. Mutual discussion from both directions is about the same common interest, because they are all living in the same environment. This is why it is so important that those should get a role in decisions about whom they are about. Communities working at the settlements can help this further, the more because they are those who know the residents of the settlement from closer. Among the community activities examined during the study – beside free-time programmes – reacting to hard social circumstances had the highest proportion. This shows that the same problem is tried to be solved in parallel from two directions at the level of the settlement – by the communities and decision-makers. It is important for local decision-makers to see the existing, already working potential between them and the communities. As a result of the examination, it has been made seen that people have bigger personal dedication, will to act for a better and more liveable environment than to provide a framework for their community work from various financial sources. For them, the place where they can meet and think together, work for each other is more important. One of the keys of the solution is what we have uncovered above, but it is important to have an open door before us where we can knock. This is the first step that is unnoticed but the most decisive. By going through it, a world can be opened before us where we can form the environment together where we are living together. The environment that means with the unsaid calmness of belonging somewhere: “I am home”.

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