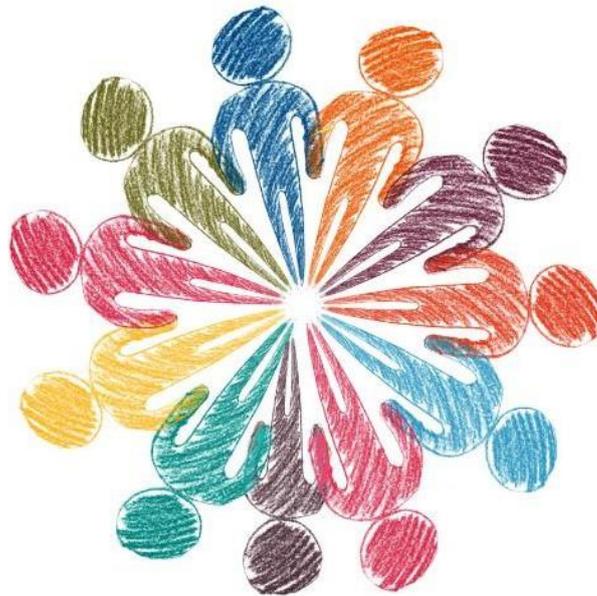**Case study**

**Community solutions in public services - transforming the day care for the elderly in a social institution**

"Let's make older people valuable in Nagyecsed"

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**Introduction**

The Association of Community Developers has been working on ways to improve public services since the early 2010s. The first programme with such a focus was the "Community Cohesion for the Integration of People Living in Extreme Poverty Programme"[1,] , which focused on supporting self-organisation and the development of inter-professional cooperation to improve access to public services in the most disadvantaged sub-regions. The project "Community services - community management in small settlements"[2] , implemented between 2014 and 2016, focused on community-based services offered by NGOs and on strengthening the community character of services. The concept of community-based operation was conceptualised in the project "Development of community-based services and linking them with specialised care in small settlements"[3] , the results of which are built upon in the current programme in several respects, as a key methodological predecessor as an important reference point. It laid down the theoretical foundations and framework for the introduction of community-based services and the transformation of existing services, as well as the main steps needed to start the practical implementation.

In the Erasmus+ project "Open to your communities", in partnership with a Czech and a Polish organisation, we are looking for answers to the question of how public services and public institutions can in practice implement and use community-based solutions, and how local residents and service users can become effective partners and shapers in the operation of local services. The international project partners in the project, coordinated by the Association of Community Developers, are Mental Health Care Development (CMHCD) in Prague, which supports the recovery of people with mental health problems, and the Community Activity Centre (CAL) in Warsaw, which is at the forefront of developing local action.

The national partner of the Association of Community Developers is the Satu Mare Sub-regional Centre for Basic Social Services. Within the framework of the project, we are trying to transform the day care for the elderly in the institution, to make its operation community-based, which experience can later contribute to the planning and implementation of community-based operation of other similar services.

In the professional discourse of community development, first community services were discussed, then community-based services, and from there we arrived at the term we use today: community-based operation and management. We believe that this broad definition is important because it is possible to operate a civil society organisation (because just because something is civil does not mean it is community-based), an institution, a service, a public service, or even a whole municipality, in a community-based way.

A community-based and community-operated "service is a way of meeting needs and wants that is embedded in the local community, i.e. it is local; it builds on personal and local community needs and resources; it works in partnership with local people on an equal footing; it mobilises internal resources; it works in partnership with other services and with other actors in the local community."[4]

By operating on a community basis, public service providers are more likely to be able to deliver services that are better adapted to the real needs and changing demands of local people and communities, by actively involving service users and residents in the development or transformation of their operations.

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[1] https://kofe.hu/wp-content/uploads/Dokumentumok/2014/TAMOP513_kozfejl_modszertani_melyszegeny.pdf
[2] Community service - community operation in small villages. 33 months of the NCTA programme of the Community Developers Association - Parola Journal (kofe.hu)
[3] Featured Programme - Association of Community Developers (kofe.hu)
[4] Zsuzsa Gyenes (2020) Serving communities in small towns, Association of Community Developers, 2020, pp. 17-20, e-tanulmanykotet_final.pdf (kofe.hu)

In our case study, the planning process related to the transformation of the elderly day care of the Satu Mare Small Area Social Basic Service Centre, more precisely the "field work" carried out between April 2022 and February 2023, as well as the main circumstances and aspects determining it, were described and analysed in more detail. The Action Plan is an integral part of this process and sets out the steps to be taken to implement community-based provision, as well as the potential actors involved in the transformation process, their roles and the methods for their involvement.

## 1. The place where the development process is implemented

Before presenting the practical implementation and the activities leading up to the steps towards community-based operation, the so-called fieldwork, it is essential to give a brief overview of the municipality involved in the current pilot programme. This will help to put the transformation process in Nagyecsed into context.

### 1.1. Presentation of the settlement

Nagyecsed is located in one of the most underdeveloped parts of Hungary, in the Northern Great Plain region. In terms of the proportion of people at risk of poverty and social exclusion, the North Great Plain region was the third worst performing region in the country in 2021 (25.4% of the population affected), with a minimal gap after the second worst performing region in Northern Hungary[5] . Its population was 6 227 on 1 January 2023.[6] After a temporary improvement in the early 1990s, Nagyecsed's population is again rapidly declining, and it is particularly worrying that the municipality has lost 5% of its population over the last decade, an average of 50 people per year. The population decline in the municipality is due to a number of factors, including a negative balance between births and deaths and migration. In Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, the ageing index, i.e. the proportion of elderly people (over 65) per population aged under 14, is 112.6% in 2022, which implies a gradual ageing of the county's population.[7]

The economy of the town was dominated by agriculture and agro-industrial employment until the early 1990s. After the change of regime, changes in agriculture led to a significant reduction in employment. After these changes, the local economy was unable to recover. As a result, the more educated young people who were able to work left the area, leaving ageing parents without a natural support system.

In terms of population composition, there are a significant number of Roma residents, accounting for more than 20% of the total population[8] , the majority of whom live in deep poverty in segregated areas.

The municipality provides compulsory social and child protection basic services through institutions run by a Local Government Association. The Satu Mare Sub-regional Territorial Nursery Association operates a 50-seat nursery in Nagyecsedi.  The Satu Mare Sub-regional Centre for Basic Social Services, which is run by the association, provides compulsory basic social services (social catering, home help, signalling home help, day care for the elderly) and family and child welfare services a (In addition, the institution provides social meals and day care for the elderly in Ököritófülpös and Rápolt on its premises in Ököritófülpös.) In addition to the municipal service, three church services (Greek Catholic, Reformed, Baptist) also provide home help. biztosít in the

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[5] Central Statistical Office (2023). Proportion of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion by region and type of settlement (preliminary data). Source: https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/ele/hu/ele0038.html (Retrieved 24.04.2023)

[6] Source : https://nyilvantarto.hu/hu/statisztikak?stat=kozerdeku

[7] Source: https://www.ksh.hu/stadat_files/nep/hu/nep0038.html

[8] Tar F & Dr Hajnal B. (2014). Ethnicities in Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County with special reference to the Roma, Területi Statisztika, 54(5), pp. 500.

municipality. The "Jót s Jól" association in Géberjén also provides day care and support services for people with disabilities and psychiatric patients living in Nagyecsed. The municipality has a kindergarten with three sites, a primary school with two sites and a Reformed secondary school. The Municipal House of Culture and Library provides opportunities for education, entertainment and sport. Nagyecsed has good basic health care (adult general practitioners in 3 districts, dentists and a public health service). There is no local public transport in the municipality, with infrequent interurban services running only on the main street. The long distances within the municipality prevent older people from being self-sufficient (managing their own affairs and using services) and from meeting their cultural, community and other needs.

### 1.2. The Satu Mare Regional Centre for Basic Social Services

A Satu Mare Regional Centre for Basic Social Services  service area of the 3 municipalities visitik, which with a population of 8680 inhabitants. 20 % of the population is over 60 years of age. The proportion of people aged 75 and over living alone is high in the municipalities. 75 years old, who ageuk and healthuk are only partially self-sufficient. They typically suffer from reduced physical fitness, fewer opportunities, loneliness and a sense of ...and a sense of loneliness and isolation. In many cases family members live far awayand are unable to support parents personally, and the increase in retirement age limits the possibility of family care. As a result, service needs change: for example, there is a need to meet the usual evening needs, to help with dinner, administer medication, put the child to bed. Needs that arise during the working day persist and remain unmet at weekends. Low incomes make market-based services unviable in the municipality. In some cases, people cannot even afford to pay for public services.

The purpose of the elderly day care service is to improve the living conditions of elderly people, to create a harmonious lifestyle, to relieve their loneliness and to eliminate the harmful effects of inactivity, and to meet their personal needs. As part of the community development[10] , inactive older people are involved in community life. It is important that older people feel that they are useful citizens of society. The club provides a living space for lonely people who live alone, where they can find friends and compassionate companions again. A wide range of services are provided to service users in the day care setting. In addition to ongoing personal supervision, one-to-one counselling is available. Individual skills and abilities are maintained and developed through regular handicraft activities (tailoring, embroidery, making cross-stitch tablecloths, costume making, crochet, beadwork). In addition to care activities (basic nursing, medication, dispensing), domestic help is also provided.help with household chores. (Washing, ironing, simple mending of clothes, mending of patches, button mending.) Shopping and changing of medicines are also provided on request. They help service users with official formalities, contacts with general practitioners and doctors, and assist with accessing examinations and making appointments. Social interaction is strengthened through community activities such as Bible study, board games, cooking together, and festive occasions (birthdays, carnivals, Women's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, World Day for Older People, Christmas).

The service is available on working days from Monday to Thursday from 8:00 to 16:30 and on Fridays from 8:00 to 14:00. The service is free of charge and admission is by personal appointment. The club has 41 members, with an occupancy rate of 35% last year, down from 60% in 2019 due to the restrictive measures of the COVID 19

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[10] Community development is a statutory service element of day care. Community development is an integrative, encouraging, stimulating, informing, contact-organising activity involving the population of a settlement, municipality or region, which identifies special needs of different target groups, initiates services and implements community cooperation (based on § 2 (lm) of Decree 1/2000 (7.)

epidemic emergency. There was a significant difference in the gender distribution of club members, with 10 out of 41 registered club members being male and 31 female, which is broadly in line with national statistics[11] . 56% of those eligible for the service are over 70 years of age, 6 of whom are over 80 years of age.

By developing community-based services, the institution aims to make day care more efficient. The overall objective of the development is to ensure long-term sustainable access to higher quality social services for the population of the city, by strengthening social responsibility and solidarity *"Making older people a value in Nagyecsed"*.

## 2. From conception to implementation, i.e. what happened in practice

We started working at three levels, with older people using the service, professionals working in the institution and local residents (the "key people" identified by the institution's staff), and later also with professionals from service providers in the municipality. We thought it was important to have separate groups of stakeholders first to reflect on the municipality, the situation of older people and the service, and then to plan together.

Afterwards, we attended a training session held by our Czech partner with representatives of the elderly, staff and local residents, where we learned about co-creation, which "*is the idea that the organisers, implementers and users of a service work together to initiate, plan, organise, implement and evaluate the results*. "[12] The experiences and inspirations gained here have brought new approaches to the work.

*"The Association of Community Developers is constantly working along our values, but we take these values for granted and do not discuss/question them with the community. We do everything community-based, except for this initial step. We bring them in through our personalities and accept them, but we don't create them in a collaborative process. Likewise in social care: we use principles, but we don't co-create them, and in developing them, the social care aspects are given more emphasis and attention than the co-creation."*

*"We have realised how important it is to focus on resources and personal strengths; these need to be developed and exploited to launch new programmes and services."*

*"I used to think it was impossible to get older people out of their comfort zone, but now I think it is, we just need to find the right ways. I've realised that even though I'm retired, I can still be a valuable person and I can still bring something valuable to my community."*

In the process that will be presented, it will become clear that we had to change our ideas and plans. On the one hand, this is due to the fact that we do not have much experience in this kind of work, turning services into community operations, and on the other hand, it shows our flexibility, which is essential in community work, since everything is determined by the field and the needs that arise there.

### 2.1. Joint planning with service users

Full of curiosity and some excitement, we started our first meeting. The staff of the institution had already talked to the elderly about the transformation of the service, from ideas, the planned joint workshops. For the introduction we used the Dixit card, everyone chose a card that was most relevant to their life/actual life situation and used it to say some important things about themselves. We heard some quite personal and sensitive/insightful images, mostly related to ageing/aging. We were struck by how open, honest and trusting they were about themselves.

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[11] Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2023). Social Statistics Yearbook 2021.

[12] The power of co-creation - Creating a new public service based on real local needs and collective preferences - Parola Journal (kofe.hu)

Joint work with the analysis of the service of the service, for which the World Café methodWorld Café method. Nn four tables, we analysed the service along the following questions:

1) What is good about the service? What is the value?

2) What's wrong with it? What's wrong with it?

3) What should be changed? What options are there?

4) How should it be changed? How could they (service users) contribute to this change?

The workshop was also attended by staff from the institution and the day care centre. Their presence helped to create a more intimate and relaxed atmosphere for the discussion and to overcome any communication difficulties (e.g. communication barriers, personality shyness, etc.). On the other hand, there is also a risk in terms of the extent to which older people will be open about the problems and difficulties of the service in the presence of professionals. The latter did not prove to be the case, with the statement *"Everything is fine as it is"* and a number of shortcomings in the service.



*The first professional workshop with older people*

The most important value of the day club is that it is a community where they can find love, togetherness, peace, security, they can count on each other's help in times of need, from the institution to the administration ("everything is arranged for us"), and it is also a place for physical and mental activity, recharging and relaxation.

The difficulty of getting to the institution due to the lack of bus or other local transport services (the institution is located on the outskirts of the settlement) was mentioned as a problem. A shortcoming was that the elderly could not participate in the events organised by the community centre, or only to a limited extent, and were not

informed about the programmes in time. They would need more support for leisure activities and craft activities (e.g. raw materials), infrastructure improvements (open, covered terrace) and the purchase of equipment for everyday activities (kettle, cauldron, sewing machine, etc.). The difficulties and barriers to use identified also emerged on the staff side, based on another study on active ageing in day care[13]

In terms of the need for change, service shortcomings were identified, such as the lack of public transport and transport services, the lack of care services available "out of hours" and at weekends. The need to create a residential facility for the elderly, free on-site mobility rehabilitation services, physiotherapy and the organisation of excursions were also raised. The possibility of organising joint activities and programmes with young people/children in the local community centre, e.g. craft clubs, gastronomy, traditional food. Producers and distributors could be sought to provide the raw materials for craft activities.

In addition to the problems, needs and wants mentioned above, the question *"How should we change?"* also raised the feeling that *"they need a lot of things"* but *"they get nothing from the municipality"* and that *"there is nothing in the municipality except the weekly church"*. There is a need for more in- and out-of-school programmes.

The ideas/needs related to the care of the elderly were put into concrete terms, and we continued to think together to collect the tools needed for leisure activities, craft activities, in-house programmes and outside opportunities and services. Those service gaps that we thought could be solved at the municipal level far beyond the scope of the project or the institution's competences (e.g.: setting up a transport service) were "set aside" during the process of concretising the needs and opportunities that arose.

As a result of the joint reflection, a number of ideas and suggestions emerged to enrich the life of the day club: various educational lectures and learning sessions, regular film clubs, traditional mornings, handicrafts, learning new techniques, quizzes, etc. Not only ideas that could be done within the walls of the institution, but also ideas that would require a joint trip to another municipality, such as entertainment, cultural and leisure events, excursions, exchange visits to service providers in other municipalities, etc.. The National Cultural Fund for Public Cultures The College of the National Fund of the National Fund of the National Fund of the National Fund of the National Fund of the National Economy has just launched a call for proposals to support community-building cultural programmes implemented by organisations carrying out activities in Hungary. The results of the joint reflection and brainstorming provided a good basis for the preparation of the application.

### 2.2. Workshops with institutional staff

In working with professionals, we started from the premise that it is important to map out who is involved in the local community, what their knowledge and skills are in relation to community-based operations/approach. Several of the staff of the family and child welfare service have experience and knowledge of the approach, tools and methods of community-based working through their participation in the settlement's inclusion and development programmes, while the staff of the day club have no such skills. Thus, in the first workshop, we jointly interpreted the characteristics of community-based services and looked at the public services of the municipality in terms of the extent to which these characteristics are present in their operation.

It was also pointed out here that there are missing or under-capacitated social services (e.g. day care for people with disabilities, people with dementia), and that family care is also needed, but does not have the necessary resources. There is the greatest dissatisfaction with primary health care in the municipality, with *"poor relations at individual level, favouritism"*.

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[13] Vajda K. (2022). The possibilities of active ageing in the day care of the elderly in Hungary, Doctoral dissertation, Semmelweis University, Budapest

Connections in the local community can be an important community resource, *"everyone knows everyone in the municipality"*. However, it was also expressed by professionals that *"self-care is difficult to develop, and in general the level of individual advocacy is low".*

Key findings on elderly day care:

- People are not familiar with the service;

- It is a "stigma" to come here;

- Flexible programming should be used to adapt the content of services to individual activities and needs;

- It must also be taken into account that the needs of the "new" retired people will be different (more active age, parents cannot count on them for childcare, etc.)

In terms of building an equal partnership between service providers and service users, it is important to understand and raise awareness of the roles of staff. As a starting point, we have compared the characteristics of the supportive/enhancing working style and approach in service models that focus on the quality of care and those that focus on the quality of life of service users, and their most important differences.[14] In the former, the service user is in a more passive role, the focus is on solving the problem (individual case management), it is corrective in nature, there is a risk of 'over-care', and in many cases there is no opportunity to explore (individual) resources. In the latter, the 'recipient' is in an active, collaborative role, the professional has more scope to explore the wider causal links, it is based on innovative solutions, personal needs and resources, it works in a wider partnership, and support for community/social participation is an essential element.

What is needed from the professionals? It takes courage and a change of attitude to dare to step out of their comfort zone. Time to prepare and to get to know better the traditions and needs of the communities in which they live. What do they need? If they have good examples or even positive experiences of their own, it is much easier to change. Positive reinforcements and feedback from both inside and outside the institution are very important. External development professionals are expected to provide support and ideas on how to reach out to and involve the public, especially in terms of introducing the methods and tools of the community approach and sharing experiences and practical examples.

### 2.3. Reaching the local population

The staff of the institution thought about who are the people in the municipality who are open and committed to the municipality (key people). They were directly invited to the forum for local residents. In addition, the institution social media platforms of the institution to invite and inform about the event. A programme eight people from all over the municipality. The participants said that they were mostly addressed by personal requests, professional and personal interests, and their involvement (they have elderly relatives with dementia). After informing them about the project and the planned service development, we talked to them about how they see the situation of elderly people living in the municipality, what would be needed to "make the elderly an accepted and active member of the community/ municipality" in Nagyecsed? It is a common experience that it is difficult to reach the inhabitants of the municipality, and the COVID epidemic has also reduced people's openness, *"the elderly who were previously active members of the community have aged out".*

As regards elderly care, the development of basic services should be considered, as the establishment of residential care is not very realistic in the municipality. The aim should be to attract and retain as many people

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[14] Methodological Guide to the Replacement Plan of an Institution, 2018, Nonprofit Nonprofit Ltd. for Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, pp.

as possible in day care, as the time needed to access specialised care can be extended by participation in active day care.

It was felt that in order to improve the take-up of the service, it would be useful to directly target potential users of the service, including members of the Roma minority "living across the bridge", and to organise an open day to "promote" the day club. As well as providing information about the development, the aim was to 'map' what resources they 'see' in the community that they could contribute to the running of the service? Volunteering and a fundraising event emerged as more specific suggestions.

### 2.4. Interprofessional workshop with service providers in the municipality

The need for cooperation with (public) services in the municipality was already identified during the preliminary planning phase. On the one hand, it was considered important that professionals from other service organisations should also be familiar with We believe that if the day care for the elderly is run in a community way, it can have an impact and serve as a model for other institutions. On the other hand, their suggestions and experiences can help us to think about the "transformation" of the service. Based partly on their experience of their work and profession and partly on their own personal experiences, the participants felt that, above all, it is necessary to strengthen people's openness and acceptance of each other in order to encourage them to turn to any kind of community or community activity, and to do this, they need to be addressed personally. There should be more and more opportunities for people from different generations to meet, to get to know each other better and to learn how to live together.

### 2.5. After Prague...

The personal and professional knowledge, experiences and inspirations gained during the study trip to Prague led us to continue our fieldwork in Hungary. We had also planned to organise a joint forum of delegates from the "groups" involved in the service transformation at some point in the planning process, where they could get to know each other's opinions, ideas, "identified" problems and needs, and define common goals and activities. With this "smaller" group, we continued our joint planning. Based on the 'model' of the value-based approach to the functioning of the Recovery College in Prague, five principles were identified which the group wanted to follow in their joint work (they could play a decisive role in shaping the way the institution operates in a community way) and which they also adopted as values in the provision of day care for older people.

The principles are:

- Local resources, local knowledge, local specificities
- Love, selflessness
- Respect for each other, empathy
- Working together, joining forces
- Volunteering, willingness to do something on a voluntary basis, voluntary action

The interpretation of the principles was to be followed by the definition of strategies and activities to facilitate their practical implementation, leading to the "transformation" of the service into a community-based operation. However, interpreting the principles proved to be a more complex task than previously thought. While there is no doubt that the principle behind 'Local resources, local knowledge, specificities' has perhaps the most complex interpretative framework and difficult to concretise meaning, we felt 'stuck'. Why?

This time, too, it became clear that the historical traditions of the town, the "still present" traditions and values of the past, are of decisive importance in people's thinking about life in the town. The dilemma is: without a more concrete identification and interpretation of the values of the municipality, can planning go ahead? If not, then

the question is: what role can the present settlement-level values of the past play in the future plans and functioning of the institution?

The participants themselves felt that "we have already said everything, we are talking about the same things", there is a need to think about who else should/should be addressed, because in this circle we could not go further in our thinking.

### 2.6. Lessons learned, and the redesign

This was the moment when not only the local people involved in the process, but also we, the external professionals supporting the process, became unsure. There was a lot of lamenting, a lot of discussion about what could be the cause of the stalemate? In the end, we came back from Prague very motivated to start trying out the new method we had learned. This experience was more powerful than the experience that nothing can be rushed, and that until the elderly people, the people working in the institution, understand the basics of community functioning, of equal partnership, of a common understanding of the values that the service represents in the life of the municipality, it is impossible to move forward.

The older people who use the service and the staff of the institution must plan the vision of a service that works with a "community approach" that is better adapted to their individual needs. Once they have a clearer idea of what they want to achieve, have the objectives and outline the activities, they can then go out into the community. We have redesigned along these lines continuing the workshops with older people and institutional staff separatelyand the municipal level was postponed until the two groups were ready to plan together.

### 2.7. Community, participation, change

Older people's community connections are mostly with their day club, neighbourhood and church communities, with closer ties typically being with immediate family, relatives and possibly neighbours. In a well-functioning community there is reciprocity - back and forth, in this respect the "participants" perceive the community of settlement as not functioning as a community in this respect. We also found good examples from the participants' own lives, the "Snail noodle communityto"in which in the evenings they make pasta together as neighbours.

Regarding their own "participation" (in the life of the municipality), they concluded that an active role of initiative is needed from the residents if they want to make a difference in representing the community and solving the problems of the municipality. First and foremost, "rebuilding relationships" at the municipal level is needed, and it is "up to us" to change this. "we need change, we need to learn new things, we need to do something about ourselves, otherwise we will be stuck."

The participants came to important conclusions about themselves, their attitudes and their roles in the community. More and more people expressed their thoughts and ideas. These conversations and topics have started something, we felt that at this point we have achieved a breakthrough in the a common in our work. This breakthrough did not come easily, however, because we were talking about concepts that we use every day but are not aware of their meaning. However, in order for everyone to understand the changes in the institution, it is necessary to understand the characteristics of community-based working and the key values and principles that go with it. Equal partnership also requires that we have common knowledge, so that we can argue and defend our ideas.

The development process in the institution, the joint discussions themselves have triggered changes in the life of the day club, both staff and seniors have initiated new activities in the service, such as English language teaching, pebble painting, etc. On the other hand, in relation to the changes and trends affecting the social care system, it was said that "it is easier if we go ahead of changes, prepare for them at the institutional and community level", a community-based service can be more flexible to adapt to changing conditions. But how does this translate into the day-to-day running of a day club? The service (also) responds to individual needs, in

addition to meeting local needs, i.e. it identifies the needs of local residents for 'care'. Another characteristic is that it builds on individual resources, for example by showing, displaying and acknowledging the knowledge and experience of older people, e.g. handicrafts submitted to a handicrafts competition, made by older people. In addition, the institution also uses the individual knowledge and experience of its staff as part of its internal resources in the operation of the day club, for example, English language teaching has been started in the day club. Another specific feature of this type of operation is that it establishes an equal partnership between professionals and service users, for example, they jointly select the topics and speakers for the educational lectures to be organised. It is based on the resources of the municipality, in other words on the natural assets (e.g. the Ecsed marsh), the historical past, the cultural heritage, traditions that can be shown, made "valuable" - e.g.: a collection of recipes, a cookery book using the knowledge of older people. Through such initiatives, the institution becomes part of the community.

The 'preparation' of service users (understanding the process of change; encouraging them to participate; empowering them to accept change and adapt consciously) is crucial in such a process.

### 3. Emerging directions, a vision for a community-based service

During the workshops and discussions, it emerged that there is a low level of social participation in the local community. And it is difficult to imagine running community-based services without residents who are open to older people and service issues and who can be mobilised. In order to 'engage' local residents, individual motivations (current and even future and indicative) to use the service(s) and willingness to 'participate' need to be explored. Another important finding was that local residents are not familiar with the day care service, the activities that take place there, or have a poor perception of the service because of its "past" and "stigmatise" those who attend. Thus the institution needs to be 'opened up' to the public. To this end, the institution's communication needs to be strengthened, and a communication plan is being drawn up to improve it. The experience and methods of previous integration development programmes in the municipality could be used to involve the population. There the problems were common and common solutions had to be found, in the case of the old people's club common goals should be found for common action. The cooperation with other maintenance and service providers in the municipality is typically aimed at solving a single crisis situation; planned, conscious cooperation to make more efficient use of resources could help to tackle local social problems more effectively. Local professionals with a community development approach are needed to make the results sustainable.

Based on the problems and needs "identified" during the joint discussions and professional workshops, the following objectives and activities were outlined for the "transformation" of the service.

| Goals | Posted on |
|---|---|
| Increasing the use of institutional services | - Recruitment: interviews with the over-65s in the city, with staff and service users "paired up" <br> - Organisation of an open day in the institution |
| Strengthening the individual and community activity of service users. | - Workshops - Community Design Process <br> - Implement community initiatives and programmes with the broad involvement of the population. <br> - Providing adequate space and opportunities for the development of individual skills and values, e.g. contributing as an experiential expert in the implementation of the professional programme <br> - Showcasing individual values - in the form of an exhibition, presentation <br> - Recognition of community activity - awards |

| To make the institution known and recognised | - Organising an open day for relatives<br>- Improving institutional communication<br>- More effective communication from service users<br>- Exploring and presenting values - recipe collection |
|---|---|
| Bridging the gap between older and younger generations, deepening intergenerational solidarity. | - Organising an open day for the public<br>- Strengthening links with children's institutions - workshop to find links<br>- Passing on existing knowledge, introducing crafts to children (work- shop) |

## 4. Experiences, results

In retrospect, we would now approach such a process differently. Because of the short time available, we started working on all three stages at the same time. The processes did not move at the same pace, the activity and attitude of the staff and the older people using the services were not the same, they often had different dynamics, there were times when the older people soared but not the colleagues, it held the older people back and vice versa, the colleagues became discouraged if they did not find the older people open enough. It is therefore considered more effective to firstly educate professionals about the basics of community working, to motivate them to change, and then to engage service users, as it is important that they become partners in the transformation process. The experience of the study tour shows that sharing good practice (national and international) makes the process tangible, understandable, inspiring and action-oriented.

While the commitment and willingness of the head of the institution to improve services and innovate is a motivating factor, changes in daily routines and operational practices may be met with resistance or difficulties from both staff and service users. When we talk about the need for change in services, it is important to stress that this does not mean that the current service is not working well or that staff are not doing their jobs well, but rather that it means a new approach to running services, organising activities and, through 'shared learning', opportunities for personal and professional development.

*"Despite having positive experiences of engaging communities, there was a stage in the work with communities when staff at the institution showed resistance, not against the process, but because it was not clear and unambiguous about what was happening. So it is important to stop at these points and interpret and talk through the steps so that it does not become a crisis of self-evaluation and so that no colleague thinks that change is against them because they have not done something well. So far, there has not been a crisis of self-evaluation among colleagues, but perhaps not because the new things, the new approaches, the new methods of practice in the catch-up programmes were not part of the job, but were additional tasks. Bringing innovation within the job can cause a mental crisis."*

Institutional staff have a crucial role to play in the introduction of community-based operations, and their commitment and active involvement in the transformation process is essential. Professionals have a role to play in helping service users toto give the service users the space to to take the initiative, to implement their suggestions and ideas, to feel that they have both the opportunity and the responsibility to shape the life and operation of the day club. The importance of developing equal partnership has been emphasised. However, it is easier said than done. We believe that a change of attitude can best be supported by "setting an example", as we ourselves have shaped our "relations" in the professional workshops, meetings, planning sessions, as we have given space for joint thinking, "joint creation", "experience", "lessons learned", so that they can become a "model" to be followed in relations and cooperation outside the institution.

The older people were open and curious about the process, but their interest waned as we progressed in the discussions. On the one hand, it was harder to make the purpose of the process clear and tangible to them, and

to make sense of their own 'role' in it. The participants had not really talked about these kinds of issues before, no one asked them what would be good for them, what they thought about change and change. "Community, participation, change" were the concepts that they came closer to understanding. In the process, more and more people became open and expressed their opinions. The day club is now seen as a well-functioning community, with an awareness of the 'values' of the community and the service that can be represented in the community. Service users are engaged and have taken an active role in partnership with staff to deliver the tasks envisaged in the action plan.

To strengthen the use of institutional services, the elderly of Greater Ecsed, who are outside the scope of the institution's services, should be addressed and involved in the process. Their personal and community needs (their wants, needs, openness and motivation to the service, their resources that can be mobilised) are potential resources for the transformation process. It is also important to take into account the specificities of ageing in that older people in their 60s, 70s and 80s may have different needs and requirements, which is also a factor in the leisure and other activities that are planned or take place in the day club.

Some of the staff, due to the fact that many of them have worked in community development projects in the municipality, which included community development, have experience of how to reach out to and involve the community or group concerned. These experiences and the guidance of the development practitioner can be used as a basis for reaching out to local people.

In order to develop community-based operations, it is also essential to reach out to and involve the residents of the settlement, and to explore and develop opportunities for cooperation with other (public) services operating in the settlement.  Community action *"brings a stronger community, more varied and diverse programmes and resources, and by this I mean primarily not financial resources but personal resources, and it also has a bonding effect".*

*"The municipal community is another big issue. There needs to be a change of attitude in the municipality that these are public issues and not just a matter for the head of the institution or the people who work there. It is everyone's business and responsibility. This is how municipal resources can be channelled into the institution."*

*(Extract from an interview with the head of the institution)*

The shared reflection, the shared discussions, the experiences of the study trip to Prague have triggered changes in the life of the day club, mostly in the new variety of leisure, craft and other activities initiated by the seniors.
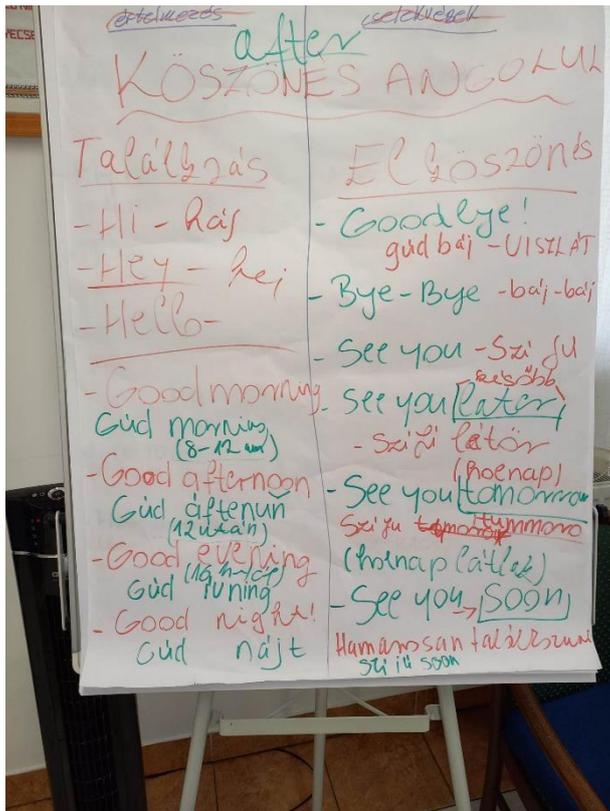
*English language lessons in the day club*

We believe that the transformation of the day care facility has an impact on the local community and, conversely, that the "empowerment" of the local community is an important factor in the development of community-based operations.

With the preparation of the case study and the action plan, one phase of the project has been completed, and in the next period the implementation of the tasks planned for the operation of the service in a community way will be carried out, and further potential actors of the transformation process will be approached and involved.