IN THE SERVICE OF COMMUNITIES

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF INTRODUCING
COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES
AND MAKING EXISTING SERVICES
COMMUNITY-BASED

Contents:

INTRODUCTION

The word 'service' makes most of us think of a shop, a post office, a bank or a bus service. To responsible local authorities it means, in addition, public services: healthcare, social, educational and cultural. These services meet the basic needs of people living in the local community and determine their quality of life. Therefore, both the average person and the leaders of the local community and local institutions want more services of the highest quality to be available to local residents. But when there is a shortage of capacity, there are not enough professionals and the existing ones are overworked – then how? There is no instant solution for the problem, but there is one which can make, through investing time and work, services in local communities more efficient and accessible, to the satisfaction of professionals and the general public. Community-based services do not solve structural problems, but in the medium and long term they can still help to overcome capacity shortages and increase access.

In our roles as family members, friends and co-workers, we often get annoyed when we feel we do other people's work. We keep asking ourselves: 'Why does he/she expect me to tidy up / work overtime / always decide instead of he/she? Why is it not natural for everyone to tidy up after themselves, and share tasks and the responsibility of deciding about something?' However, in our role as a citizen, we often take it for granted that we are being served and decisions are made without us. And in our role as a service provider, we often take it for granted that our role as a leader or professional is to serve the needs of the population. Community-based services create an equilibrium: they empower citizens to assume responsibility for, and actively shape, their lives and quality of life.

According to the approach used in this publication, a community-based service is community-based because it is embedded in the local community. This means, on the one hand, that local residents have ownership of the service, as they can participate in its design and operation, bringing in their own resources. On the other hand, it means that it is tailored to local needs and mobilizes local resources. A basic feature and criterion of a community-based service is that the role of client, user, visitor, that is, the person receiving the service (which often involves a sense of being vulnerable) is replaced by a customer role that involves, on the part of the service user, taking responsibility and taking part in the service as a partner. These types of services are not a substitute for professional activity and do not obviate the need for specialist work. At the same time, both professionals and the local community need to learn a new way of connecting.

> The purpose of this publication is to provide intellectual and practical support to those who want to turn the visioned future into present, and to engage the yet-unbelievers as agents of change in order to introduce community-based services.

Theory and practice of introducing community-based services and making existing services community-based – so goes the subheading of this publication, also defining its structure. The definition of, and detailed introduction to, community-based services is preceded by a theoretical section on community and service (and the relationship between them), and is followed by a practical section on the steps needed to start a community-based service. Those who lose confidence seeing the challenges of this exercise can find reinforcement in the arguments and support options described at the end of this publication.

TOGETHER ON THE WAY TO CHANGE

DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE

Community and service are two defining elements of a community-based service. In the following section, we not only elaborate on the subject of community and service, but also illustrate their relationship in a historical context. The second part of this chapter provides a definition of community-based service, with different aspects of the concept explained in detail.

Humans are social beings who have lived in communities all around the world throughout all ages of history. When it was common for people to live their lives in one place, community naturally meant a community of people living in that place.

This community provided the context and framework for people's lives: relationships, connections, togetherness, habits, rules, culture, and this self-sufficient community created the economic conditions for life as well.

It is sufficient to look at the history of one's own local community (assuming one does not live in a 'big city') to find this traditional community existence, even in the not-so-distant past. One can argue whether this was a good thing or not, as there was very limited space for individual life paths or free will. It could also be worth considering what aspects of this would be worth bringing back into our world today. Nevertheless, these local communities undoubtedly provided their members with physical and spiritual security, as life was unambiguous, predictable, and self-explanatory.

Community in a traditional sense provides its members with a unified system of interpreting life, good and bad, desirable and condemned. These core values serve

as the basis of the common knowledge, with stories, tales and teachings handed down from mouth to mouth, from one generation to the next. These core values are reflected in every community event, be it a wedding, a funeral, a harvest, feather-plucking, spinning, shelling corn, and other instances of collaborative work or joint entertainment. Not only traditions, customs, rituals, but also expectations and norms are based on these basic values (i.e. how to live so that you are 'not gossiped about by fellow villagers'). This was not a written rule book taught at school: everyone grew into and acquired, without noticing, a common culture based on common values and norms, as they lived their lives in the community not only when they were with their peers, but also when working or entertaining – that is, existing – alone or in the family.

Community also meant livelihood and survival. People worked together not only to 'enjoy each other's company', but because, for example, the quick processing of a pig required the work of several people. 'Today, I'll help you kill and process your pig, next week you'll come to us.' They also collectively processed hemp, which they used to make clothes. Similarly, they broke up the ice on the river together, to be transported to the 'community fridge', the ice pit – a family would not have

been able to do all that alone. And they collaborated in solidarity not only in these joint activities, but also in difficult life situations – if a mother with a newborn, or a grieving widow, had to be supported, or if a family needed help due to illness or aging.

It is difficult to answer the question whether 'the hen came first or the egg,' that is, whether the community was built on reciprocity due to people's interdependence, or whether we cannot even speak of community without reciprocity and solidarity. It is certain that these

traditional communities managed to create their living conditions: the ground and framework for a full human life and the survival of the community.

The example above was about a traditional rural peasant community, but such communities existed not only in villages, and not only in the distant past. For example, working in 'kaláka' (voluntary co-operative work done on a reciprocal basis) was common during socialism as well, with many houses in the country being built in kaláka.

At a closer look, we can identify the following functions that such a 'traditional' community, which 'secures living conditions', performs[1]:

- socialization, i.e. the transfer of values and the norms, customs, traditions and culture based on them, which makes belonging to the (given) community unambiguous for the members of the community
- economic prosperity: all members of the community find their livelihood within the community, thereby ensuring the unity of the community
- social involvement: the community provides room and creates opportunities for (and expects) community participation in all areas of life, be it collective entertainment, working together, passing on culture, making community members adhere to the community's expectations, or reflecting on and deciding on common issues
- social control: the community maintains its core values and adheres to its norms, thereby ensuring the survival of the community
- Mutual support & solidarity: community members help each other and collaborate on individual and community tasks, managing situations, and solving problems.

Conventional communities thus fulfilled their functions by virtue of their existence and functioning. However, with the gradual transformation of the economic and social order, these communities have become weaker and, in the growing cities, have not fully developed. People had a place to live, but they no longer had a community to retain them.

The availability of a multitude of services is a natural part of modern life. In traditional village communities, too, there were people who provided services either inside the community, or coming from outside, such as teachers, shopkeepers, bartenders, livestock dealers,

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[1] See Ilona Vercseg (2018): *Közösségelmélet* (Community Theory), Hungarian Association for Community Development, Budapest) citing Warren.

or tinkers who travelled from place to place mending pots – but today we are living a whole different life. We are no longer self-sufficient: we do not produce goods ourselves, but obtain our food, clothes and many things that did not even exist before – from fridges to mobile phones – from shops or on the Internet. Shops, web-shops, home delivery companies, restaurants and street food places, hotels and hostels, airlines, taxis and coaches all provide us with services. Another aspect of our changing world is that we are left to ourselves.

➥ Everything that used to be a natural part of the community's life – such as community events, community education and entertainment, caring for members of the community from birth to death – now exists as a service, available as a service, for example as a cultural, educational, health or social service.

Basically, all services are based on one need. Individual and community needs can be met on a market basis where the consumer pays the market price for the service they use, or on a non-market basis where the price of the service is not paid directly by the consumer.

- **Market-based services are typically provided by business entities.**
- **Non-market-based services may be based on the recognition of fundamental human rights (e.g. right to education or physical health) by the State (Fundamental Law). To satisfy the related needs, the state may organize non-market based services (e.g. cultural, educational or health services). State-subsidized services (basic and specialist services) are contained and**

regulated by laws, also determining the system of institutions providing the services.

- **Churches and non-governmental organizations may also provide services on a non-market basis, in partnership with, or independently of, the state.**

A community-based service is community-based not because it is provided on a market or non-market basis, or by a church or NGO.

The following are essential regarding these services:

- **the need or demand that the service meets, including the way those needs have been identified and assessed**
- **the adaptation of the service provider and the service to the users and the service environment**
- **the relationship between the service provider and the service user.**

The community-based character of the service is determined by the above factors.

When comparing traditional communities and modern society, it is often emphasized that modern society has liberated the individual because it has given way to an autonomous and independent human existence. (It is up to the individual to decide whether they want to belong to any community at all.) Community-based service is not an 'anachronistic phenomenon', it is very up-to-date indeed: it brings back into the world the exploration, mobilization and constructive use of community resources in local communities of autonomous people.

Community-based service is a way of meeting needs and demands which is embedded in the local community, that is, locally-based; builds on personal and local community needs and resources; works in partnership with local residents on an equal footing; mobilizes internal resources; and functions in partnership with other services and other actors in the local community.

A PARABLE
ABOUT NEEDS AND
RESOURCES

Once upon a time there lived a woman who was an attentive and good cook, always preparing what her family liked. For this reason, she usually cooked chicken broth with vermicelli for Sunday lunch. If relatives or friends came over for lunch, she also made pasta and matzo balls, and vegetarian soup for vegetarians, so as to please everyone. She became famous for her art, and soon a delegation from the neighboring village came and asked her to cook for them at their church fare. As good as she is, she would definitely be able to make sure – from the little money the village can devote to this end – that nobody stays hungry.

The invitation was an honor, so she couldn't say no. She wondered what to do. You cannot make a single meal for so many people by yourself, and it's not easy to figure out what you can cook from such little money so that people would still like it. So she raised the question to the members of the delegation, who were happy to give her the popular 'Cookbook of Cheap and Popular Church Fair Dishes'. She flipped through the cookbook, but had no idea how an entire village, so many different people, could be pleased with just one kind of food. Her little son could not understand why her mom was so troubled when the solution was so simple: 'Well, ask them!' She then put down the recipe collection, and set off and visited the families of the neighboring village. The elders talked about

preparing a local specialty for village feasts in the old days and shared the recipe with her. It seemed like an impossible enterprise because it took too much preparatory work and the ingredients were obsolete and already counted as specialties, so were expensive and difficult to obtain.

She went from house to house, asking things and talking to people. Many people were excited by the old recipe and agreed to help with the preparation. Others took her to their kitchen garden and showed her that they could deliver those special ingredients. Mothers with newborn infants were worried that the little ones would not like the taste, so they offered to join together and make a lunch for the kids (which, of course, anyone else could have, too) "free of any allergens" so that no one on a special diet would stay hungry. Young people were agitated by the fact that the village was spending money on a church fair lunch when they had been asking for the renovation of the sports ground for such a long time. They figured that in this situation they should bake cakes for the lunch, which then they would sell for a donation to renovate the sports ground.

So it happened that at the church fair everyone ate their favorite food, and because of the ingredients put together, even the little money that was available for the lunch proved to be too much.

'Based on personal needs'

Personal needs mean the diversity of human needs, the human in its entirety, and the importance of each individual.

All people are equally important, and in the above parable people would also like to cater for those who do not like specialties, those who do not eat meat, those who are gluten-sensitive, and those who cannot attend the dinner because of their health.

If many people need to be provided with a service at once, but our capacity is limited, it makes sense to design a system that can effectively meet needs and demands through regulation. From feeding, through having a place to live, to health and safety, these basic needs can be described rather accurately. For this reason, this system can be logically structured, from the necessary personal and material conditions to the identification of activities. In this system, however, 'out of the ordinary' demands and needs will not be met, or only at the cost of extra work involved in constantly re-regulating the system, which leads to mutual dissatisfaction. Professionals often feel helpless and without means, so they partly devote their working hours to finding alternative solutions. They know best that when we get to know the individual life situations and see the problems, **the diversity of needs leaves us with no other option than to provide personalized services based on personal needs.**

With market-based services, the only thing that matters is whether the demand is accompanied by money. Regarding non-market-based services, the price of which is often paid by the state, from time to time we revisit which individual needs are to be regarded as 'legitimate' and which ones are to be 'recognized' as 'basic' needs. Community-based services explore the issue of need from a different perspective: **they consider the human in its entirety.** Local residents take part in a community-based service as people who take responsibility and act for themselves and the community. While the seed of this ability is present in every human being, it requires learning to develop it. (In a well-functioning community, the learning process is 'spontaneous' and takes place during socialization.) Therefore, **a community-based service also recognizes, as a need, the skill that serves as a basis of adulthood taken in this sense (i.e. a person who takes responsibility and acts).**

'Builds on personal resources'

On the other hand, and related to this, the acting individual also appears as a resource in the service – just like the inhabitants of the village in the above parable, who eventually prepare the lunch together with the cook using the ingredients they produce. Because not only money can be a resource, and not just objects or other things at the individual's disposal, the existence of which often entail financial savings. Resources include, for example, all kinds of skills, knowledge, experience, be it a recipe, gardening or cooking skills, or the ability to cooperate. The time a person devotes to an activity is also a resource of the individual, and so is the responsibility involved in their participation in the activity. Relationships are also a resource because relatives, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances are new sources of material resources and beyond: knowledge, ability, experience, time and intention, responsibility – and more. **People often feel worthless because they are unaware of the resources they have. Mobilizing, recognizing and raising awareness of individual resources is an important task of community-based services.**

'Works in partnership, on an equal footing'

The two main players in the service are the service provider (representing an institution) and the local resident using the service. In the relationship between the provider and the user, the professional and the layperson, it seems just obvious that the provider's word weighs more. It is the provider who decides and acts, since it has the knowledge and the institutional authority to do so. This usually results in an unequal situation that both parties consider natural. In a community-based service, the service provider does not 'monopolize' responsibility, decision and action – all of this is shared between the two parties. Just as the professional possesses specialist knowledge, the layperson has the knowledge of their own life and will, and is able, with the right information at hand, to make decisions and act as an autonomous adult.

Of course, this does not happen immediately and spontaneously – a community-based service involves a learning process in which the professional learns about empowerment, and the layperson about 'adulthood', in order to **work as equal partners in the service.** From the aspect of needs this means that the professional recognizes the skill of 'adulthood' as a need of the service user and seeks to meet that need during providing the

service – this is called empowerment. Empowerment can also be seen as a form of investment by the professional, which pays off by sharing responsibilities and leveraging new resources. We will see later that this partnership and empowerment works not only in individual relationships but also in the community: the professional learns not only to involve individuals and give them responsibility, but also to involve the community as a whole. Hence, seeking and applying community solutions becomes a natural part of their professional toolbox.

„'Builds on local community needs'

A well-functioning local community provides community members with the framework and environment in which to live their lives in physical and psychological security. A local community functions well if it fulfills the functions described above (socialization, economic prosperity, social involvement, social control and mutual support). These functions also ensure that the good functioning of the community is maintained in the long run. As we have seen, the reason for the introduction and spread of services is, among other things, the fact that local communities have not been able to perform these functions fully, meaning they have been dysfunc-tional. **Services are thus designed to meet the needs of communities stemming from their dysfunctional nature.**

A community center, for example, fulfills the function of socialization, inasmuch as it provides space and opportunity for community members to meet and spend time together. So does a local school that has a curriculum presenting and processing local history, and local natural and cultural values. Providing a community space, organizing events, organizing the work of learning communities, providing the necessary facilities, providing educational activities – these functions all appear as services.

Economic prosperity means, among other things, local job opportunities, but services such as the provision of housing – for example in the form of social rented housing – vocational training, mentoring, providing information and counseling, also play an important role. Economic prosperity also includes the option to consume, which is also linked to various services.

An important focus of community-based services is strengthening the local community and meeting community needs, but this does not mean that individual needs lose importance in such services. In addition, individual and community needs are not independent of

each other. Meeting community needs – by involving community resources – contributes to meeting individual needs as well.

'Builds on local community resources'

In addition to needs, the community also has numerous resources. Similarly to individual needs, community resources are diverse. Characteristics such as the **natural environment** (geographical location, natural resources and raw materials, climate, water, soil, air and wildlife) or the local **infrastructure** (roads, squares, utilities, buildings from residential buildings through factories to public buildings, public spaces and communications technology – and services) also appear as resources. **Culture** (values, norms, habits, traditions and common knowledge), as the basis and cohesive force of the community, and local identity are also important resources. So are the **members of the local community** themselves, their good health, physical strength, motivation, enterprising spirit, education, knowledge and skills. And so are the **relationships** within the local community between residents; within communities, organizations and institutions and between them; or between these actors and actors outside the local community.

'Works in partnership'

Professionals working (and often living) in the local community are to be highlighted separately: professionals taken in a brought sense – be they part of any sector in any form, and in any professional field – are also important resources for the community. They could be social workers working for a public institution, pastors, the volunteer leader of the local association, etc. who work for members and groups in the local community. Not only are their knowledge and commitment a resource, their contacts also form an important ingredient of a community-based service: **professionals working in the service collaborate with professionals elsewhere.**

'Mobilizes internal resources'

A resource in itself is only an opportunity. It only becomes a 'force', capital, when used consciously – if it is recognized as a value, a resource, and energy is invested in it to make the most of it. The knowledge of old people who know old recipes and practices, the special vegetables of small gardens, someone's cooking skills, the time spent with preparations, the ability to convince, organize and motivate others, become part of the communi-

ty's capital through the common cooking activity at the village fair[2].

In addition to individual resources, community-based services rely on community-based resources. The exploration and mobilization of these resources is also a task of the community-based service, and results in the building of community capital.

'Embedded in the local community'

A community-based service is a service provided in a local community, part of a local community, or possibly in several local communities. Even if it covers several local communities, it still needs to be embedded and available in each of them. **This is because a community-based service is part of the functioning of the local community.** (The local community encompasses all residents and other actors in (a part of) a local community, whether or not they use the service.) The introduction of a community-based service is justified by the needs of the local community stemming from its shortcomings. With its operation, the local community becomes increasingly capable of fulfilling basic community functions.

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[2] See L.J. Beaulieu (2014): *Community Vitality & Sustainability. The Community Capitals Framework* citing C. B. and J.L. Based on Flora.

STEPS TO INTRODUCE A COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICE

In the previous chapter, we have presented the historical context in which the role of local communities is partly taken over by services. By defining the characteristics and criteria of community-based services, we came to the conclusion that community-based services strengthen the local community while the service is being provided. In this chapter we provide a step by step guide to starting a community-based service in a local community. A note in advance: just like the operation of the service, its introduction is also part of a community building / community development process.

The starting point can vary, with there being three different ways for a community-based service to arrive in a local community.

- A (part of a) local community tries to remedy its dysfunctionality as a community by introducing a third party community-based service.
- An existing non-community-based service is transformed.
- The community, or an active core group, initiates a community-based service.

Regardless of where the initiative comes from, in order to create a community-based service not only in words but in reality, the same path must be followed.

The Szatmár Micro-Regional Basic Social Service Center in Nagyecsed carries out family and child welfare activities, including in the largest (western) segregated housing estate in the village of 1,500 inhabitants. A community center has been built on the site, which the institution runs as a settlement house. The settlement house is a community space that provides social and other services such as a laundry, a bathing facility, information and education. It has made it possible for professionals to be present and connected to the local population beyond problem solving. Being present also made local needs and demands more visible to professionals, who were able to respond to them flexibly. For example, at one point it turned out that employers often set writing a successful test as a criterion for employment, but the locals had difficulties writing the test. Therefore, a program was developed to improve their reading, writing and counting skills. Among other things, the mothers of young children attending these training courses needed child care, which was solved by employing suitably qualified women from the housing estate as nurses.

Step 1: The Intention is Born

You can read, talk and think about it, but in order to start the process the intention to **start a community-based service in the local community has to be born.** You need someone who wants it, a spark that either goes out or sets the world around you in flames. The intention

may come from outside (for example, in the form of a statutory requirement) or from within the community. It may come from above (for example, from the mayor), from below from a local resident (who might otherwise be a professional) – or from a professional who runs, or works for, the service providing institution.

Step 2: Engagement of Staff

There is no community-based service without the involvement of the local community, but that requires someone to actually take this step. **Professionals play a key role in implementing (and running) community-based services.** When referring to such services, we often talk about professionals, but it would be more accurate to talk about service providers because the staff of a community-based service (a social worker, for example) may not have the qualifications required for the service activity. What is more, in the case of services that are started and implemented as a community initiative, the manager may not initially be a professional – they become a professional as part of the process. We are talking about professionals, in plural, because it is not enough for the leader to be open and determined if the employees are not. Wherever the intention comes from, there is definitely a **need for a 'core', a group of actors, who will start the process.** Whoever is the initiator should find companions who are similarly committed, open to learning, and ready for action.

➡ Tomor, Lak and Szakácsi are disadvantaged local communities in the Cserehát region of Hungary with a significant Roma population. The community work done here (led by a local Roma youth) has always had children as a focus. In one of their youth programs they developed a method (a kind of tutoring system) that was later used in the Tanoda (Learning Place). In the Tanoda, the curriculum was not taught by teachers. Teachers prepared high school students to deal with senior elementary school students, and, in turn, senior elementary school students taught junior elementary school students. The purpose of the Tanoda was to support learning and, through this, individual prosperity. Roma youth participated not only as students, but also as co-workers and facilitators.

A community-based service is not a 'traditional' service. It requires a kind of paradigm shift, a different perspective, a different attitude from the practitioner, which, as

shown in in the next steps, has to be learnt eventually. For the time being, however, openness is what is important, **openness to change and to make change**. If the intention to introduce a community-based service comes from the outside or from above as an expectation towards the professionals of an institution and they are not open to it, the community-based service cannot be created.

➡ Assisted housing for people with disabilities is part of a government strategy that requires, by law, the replacement of a large number of nursing homes and other institutions and the transition to community-based services. However, if professionals in institutions do not intend to replace their usual routine with a different mode of operation, then the process is interpreted as moving from a large institution to a small institution. In this case, the service provided to people with disabilities is not integrated into their living environment and support of their independent living is not implemented in the local community, which would otherwise be the foundation of a community-based service.

Step 3: The circle of actors prepares for action

Continuous learning is important in all areas of life and is also part of community-based services. However, there is a phase in the process of introducing the service when **the learning of the actors is the main activity:** this preparatory phase precedes stepping in front of the community.

Service activities must be prepared for, but addressing, activating and engaging people is an activity that requires specialist knowledge which can be acquired, and has to be acquired in this case.

The framework of this publication does not allow us to give a detailed account of the theoretical background and possible methods of addressing, mobilizing and engaging people, and of collaborative exploration and community planning. In order to delve deeper into the subject, we have included a collection of literature, training and other recommendations at the end of this publication.

Step 4: Involving the Community – Exploration and Planning

'Well, ask them,' goes the advice in the parable. Who would know more about the joys, values, problems and

needs of the local community than the locals themselves? Talk to them, ask them questions, talk to smaller and larger groups, similar and different people. Obviously, the circle of actors is well aware of the situation in the local community – it is by no accident that they have initiated a community-based service. However, a comprehensive picture of the local community cannot be obtained without including the experiences, feelings, thoughts and opinions of the local people. But interviewing residents is not a 'poll', which is only for information. Interviewing is never just private or one-way communication. We do not keep the information for ourselves, we always make knowledge common. This **shared knowledge, and the conversation and joint reflection starting out from it** (which further broaden common knowledge) eventually become a resource for the community, as well as the cornerstone of the service.

In international and domestic practice, value-based exploration and development[3] is getting increasingly popular. It focuses on values and resources rather than deficiencies and problems. Problems still appear, but they are framed differently. **Getting to know the local community and exploring values and re-sources together serve as a starting point for designing the service.** The exploration is done together with the community, and so is the ensuing planning.

Our basic tenet is that everyone has an important role in joint planning, too. The professional brings their expertise (which the ability to involve stakeholders is increasingly part of), the local community members concerned bring – as experiential experts – their everyday knowledge, and everyone brings their other resources. 'Local resident' is a very colorful category by the way: it covers people living in the same locality with different occupations (and thus different skills), different experiences stemming from different life histories and situations, and partly different contacts and connections. And we cannot stop at individuals, because there are different groups and communities functioning, and institutions providing services, in the local community. There is so much knowledge and resources to build on.

There are various ways to engage local residents, including some that involve online interaction or speaking to the public indirectly through representatives of residents' groups. When introducing community-based services, it is important to have in-person conversations and reach as many people as possible. The whole population cannot participate in the whole process, but

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[3] M. Emery, S. Fey, C. Flora (2006): *Using Community Capitals to Develop Assets for Positive Community Change* (CD Practice: 13)

during exploration and planning it is important that all groups in the local population are represented alongside other actors in the local community. Therefore, it is also important to think about which groups of the population we can identify (e.g. mothers with small children, inhabitants of a given area in the local community, newcomers, young people studying in another local communities, etc.).

Reaching out to residents and working together is much more than simply gathering information: it is about making people become active. The residents who take part in these conversations and the planning process get the experience that others are interested in their opinion, that their word counts, that they are able to shape things. Over time, they become committed to the service: they begin to own it, together with the responsibility of creating and operating the best possible service.

Step 5: Professional and economic design of the service

When describing the introduction of community-based services, we highlighted and described in more detail what makes a service community-based. Thus, at this point we only note that, naturally, planning involves the preparation of operations in accordance with the legal and professional requirements associated with the activity(s) concerned, as well as financial planning.

Step 6: Service

The community-based service is then launched along the planned strategy and action plan. At this point, let us stop for a moment and celebrate all those with whom, and for whom, we have achieved all this. Then, the weekdays should start, during which the operation, the order of activities and the system of co-operation have to be set up. Continuous attention must be paid to ensuring that community-based services remain community-based: reflection on this must be built into the daily operation and planned for. **A community-based service is a process in itself** – as if the target field of a board game had the words 'Go to start field'. Involvement of the local community, achieving the commitment of local residents and employees, and learning are not a one-off preparation but a continuous activity.
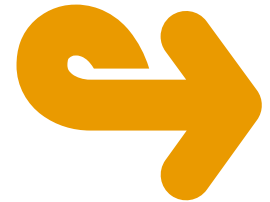
A PROFITABLE INVESTMENT

In light of the previous chapter, it can be clearly stated that the implementation of a community-based service requires, in addition to openness, a great deal of time and effort from the professionals involved. However, it is important to see that even the process of introducing the service mobilizes new resources, and this does not change when the provision of the service is started. There is less 'pressure' on the professionals providing the service because they are not left alone with their tasks. In a sense, the range of service providers expands with local residents (including users of the service) and other actors in the local community, including other service providers. This not only involves the mobilization of new resources, but also a shared responsibility. **All this leads to an increase in capacity.**

With this kind of collaboration and embedded service, a community-based service **can respond more quickly and flexibly to local needs and demands,** which makes it more efficient. This efficiency also increases the satisfaction of service users.

A community-based service is not 'external' in nature and service users are not outsiders anymore. By getting embedded into the local community, **the legitimacy of the service becomes clearer and is increased.**

In the process of introducing a community-based service, local people become part of the information flow and are encouraged/empowered to formulate their thoughts, express their opinions and participate in the planning process as partners – that is, become active. The pattern according to which residents are only present as 'customers' is increasingly being broken, and this affects other areas of their lives as well. It can change their role in the local community, their relationship to other services or the local council. They do not only wait and expect, but act.

In this way, a community-based service affects the entire local community and – indirectly – society, as democracy is operated by **active citizens who take responsibility and act.**

RECOMMENDATION BY THE HUNGARIAN ASSOCIATION FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

You cannot 'order' a community-based service. It is essential that – prospective – employees actively participate in the implementation. However, this requires new knowledge and skills, and this chapter makes recommendations as to how to acquire them.

The Hungarian Association for Community Development (HACD) has been supporting community-based services and community-based transformation of existing services for years. While community-based services may be available both in a large city (a particular neighborhood) or a small village, the association has typically worked in small local communities where local residents have difficulties accessing services. *The Deep Poverty Program 2011-2014 (Community Development for the Social Inclusion of People Living in Deep Poverty – TÁMOP 5.1.3.)* aimed to reduce the increase, reproduction and territorial spread of poverty through social, urban and rural development and community development work. To provide professional support to local projects, the program also funded the operation of a consortium of professionals active in these fields. In the consortium of four organizations, community development/the community approach were represented by the HACD, which supported the establishment of

community-based services in the fight against local poverty using this approach and methodology.

Between 2013 and 2016, the association continued to work in this area in the *Community-Based Service – Community-Based Operation in Small Local Communities* program supported by the EEA Grants in Hungary (NGO Fund) with another target group: in this program local groups and organizations received theoretical and practical support to make their operation, as well as the services they provide, community-based, thus ensuring their sustainability.

Most recently, the 2018-2020 *In the Service of Communities – In Small Villages* project funded by the EFOP (Human Resource Development Operative Program) has provided an opportunity for the association to initiate cooperation and joint reflection with local professionals and decision-makers about making public services community-based, thereby more accessible, in the Gönc district of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County. This has been done through organizing participatory research, workshops and study tours, and presenting national and international best practices of community-based operation.

If you have any questions or dilemmas regarding community-based services, the introduction of a ser-vice, or the redesign of an existing service, we offer **personal consultation** opportunities to discuss them.

The Hungarian Association for Community Development is an educational institution licensed in accordance with the Adult Education Act. Its highly experienced teaching professionals are also practitioners. The HACD can support the introduction of community-based services by **training both professionals and local residents.** For professionals, we recommend our 60-hour Community Mentoring and 24-hour Community Planning training courses, which can be held locally if required.

In addition to training courses, we are happy to support the process by **mentoring professionals** (through regular meetings and contact), which can provide security, reinforcement and personalized assistance to the professional who is just getting the necessary practice.

Executives and staff of existing community-based services are provided **professional supervision opportunities** that allow for reflection, and thus personal development and service development.

Contact us, we will be happy to answer you by email or call you back, whether it is in relation to a simple question or a more complex issue.

Our email address is: egyesulet@kofe.hu

We also recommend our online publications on the subject:

Aranka Molnár – Péter Peták – Ilona Vercseg (2014): *Közösségi lehetőségek a mélyszegénység elleni küzdelemben. Önszerveződés és szakmaközi együttműködés. Módszertani útmutató.* (Community Opportunities in the Fight Against Extreme Poverty. Grassroots Organizing and Interdisciplinary Cooperation. A Methodological Guide). 'Professional Coordination of the *Community Development for the Social Inclusion of People Living in Deep Poverty*' project, Budapest.)

Sándor Bardóczi – Péter Giczey (2010): *Kézikönyv részvételi városmegújításról.* Gyakorlati útmutató (Handbook on Participatory Urban Renewal. A Practical Guide). Urban Renewal Working Group of the Hungarian Association for Community Development, Budapest.)

Éva Hallgató – Ilona Vercseg (2008): *A közösségi munka szerepe a közösségi szolgáltatásokban* (The Role of Community Work in Community Services). Parola, No. 3

Ilona Vercseg (2004): *Közösségfejlesztő leckék kezdőknek és haladóknak. Módszertani füzet.* (Community Development Lessons for Beginners and Above. A Methodological Booklet). Hungarian Association for Community Development, Budapest.

Further recommended literature:

Mátyás Sain – Judit Rab (2018): *Részvételi tervezés a településfejlesztésben és településrendezésben* (Participatory planning in Municipal Development). Budapest: Lechner Knowledge Centre.

Mátyás Sain (2010): *Segédlet a közösségi tervezéshez* (A Guide to Community planning). Regional Development Booklets 1. Hungarian Public Nonprofit Company for Regional Development and Town Planning (VÁTI), Budapest.