



 **Budapest LAB**



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# Social enterprise development in a disadvantaged community –

How can a design-based university  
course contribute the local  
development practices?


Danube Cup 2022 Conference  
“Entrepreneurship/Startup Education for Students”, on  
April 28, 2022 at Corvinus University of Budapest

## Structure of the presentation

- Socio-economic context
- Case study based presentation of a social enterprise development in a disadvantaged Roma community in Hungary
- Focuses on the part in which the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design (MOME) is involved in the process
- Stages through which the process proceeds, as well as the dilemmas that hindered during the implementation.
- It provides an insight into the empowerment processes through university education.

# Research questions

- How can a university course serve as a tool for empowering disadvantaged communities?
- How can it create a partnership and shared learning between university students and low-income families?
- How can students receive hands-on training to promote positive social change?
- How can the involvement of university students strengthen the local development processes?



The whole story  
began at Tomor  
about 15 years  
ago...

**Where?**







Műhold



Economy of scarcity,  
informal economy, moral  
economy

- Understanding and cognition (hermeneutics)
  - Contexts
  - Local perspectives, values
- Community based planning and actions
- Multiple power asymmetries
- Time
- Actual processes tend to fall short of ideal

*Freire 1968, Dillon 2014, Letiecq-Schmalzbauer 2012, Clover 2011, Travers et al. 2013, L'Etang-Theron 2011, Snoeren et al. 2012, Smith et al. 2010, Arieli et al. 2009*



### Izabella (27) - Tibor (29)

- Tomor: 186 inhabitant
- 3 children - Vanessza, Iza and Viktor
- Public Worker - **Unskilled Worker** = 800 Eur/month
- It is hard to survive – they are **trapped in the village and in poverty**
- Tibor has to wake up at 4:30 to be at his workplace at 8:00
- There is no pharmacy, school, bank, healthcare centre, grocery store in the village – the nearest city is **30 km**
  - The public transport (bus) comes 2X per day (at 5:00 and 20:00)
  - There are 2 Usurer taxi drivers in Tomor – **charge: 35 Eur/trip**

WHAT  
HAPPENS  
IF...

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Vanessa became extremely ill (she has a bad fever and coughing heavily) and you missed the morning bus...

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**How many of you would pay for the illegal userer's taxi service 35 EUR?**

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Please raise your hand



## What was our solution

- About 15 years ago, we started implementing project-based programs
  - summer camps for children, after-school programs, dif. community strengthening programs
  - Why children? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Permanent presence?
- Pros: a strong community is formed (about 40-50 families), we have established a social cooperation, we were embedded in local developments
- Cons: funding is unsustainable, project based approach, revenue generation was very low
- about 8-9 years pass that way
- then came a turn to finally make an income for the families and we started planning a social enterprise

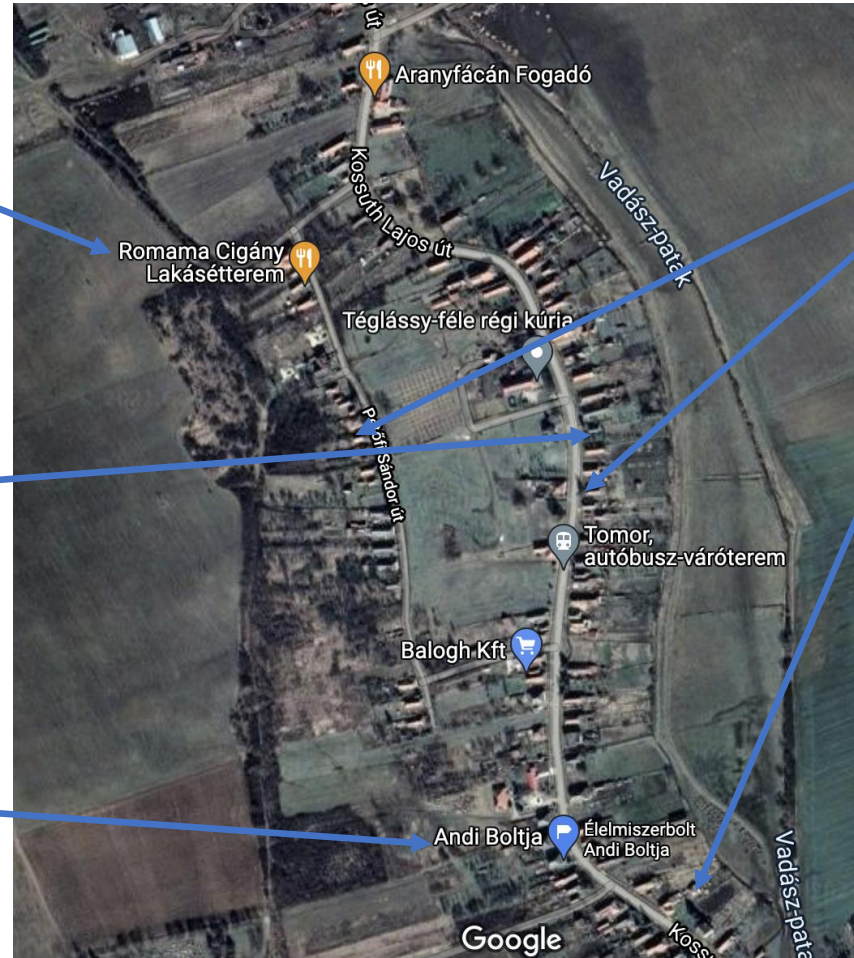




Our first social enterprise was a Roma restaurant and community house



This set off an “avalanche”, and more and more social enterprises emerged



Dorco Band  
Dorco Band Junior









# How did the process worked?

- Countless discussions and brainstorming
- Trust building with offline presence
- Defining a problem with the community
- Planning - goals, tools, resources
  - Active listening, sensible attention
  - Research
  - Sharing
  - Cooperation
  - Validation!
- Action: Plan Implementation
- Celebration



# Collaboration with MOME

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# Course

- Planning the course (teachers of MOME + community members of the village)
  - one-week-long summer camp for local children - training-based education (architecture, graphics, video, photography, and STEAM)
  - Before the camp, the university students participated in an education process (familiarise themselves with the local context and the development processes in the village)
- We started a university course whose curriculum was built on local planning with the local community.
  - The course was open for village residents who had a social enterprise idea or had a ready-made business plan.
  - Students from any major could apply for the course, resulting in a very diverse student community.
  - The aim of the course was that the social entrepreneurs and the students co-design and co-create tasks that aim to develop the entrepreneurs' business from a design perspective.
  - The students and the entrepreneurs worked on tasks and at the end of the semester, the groups presented their results (both the university and the community)
  - Group based work + weekly education + mentoring
  - Training-based education on workshop facilitation, community development, social design, product development, social enterprise development, human-centred design, Roma history, and community planning
  - The students mainly worked with the entrepreneurs online, although twice in the semester, we could organise three-day long education sessions in the village

# Some tools what we used



BMC - Business Model Canvas - <https://canvanizer.com/new/business-model-canvas>



Problems and Objectives, Association, brainstorming – Mindmap – online: <https://www.mindmup.com>



Activities and Tools - FlipChart – online: Miro, <https://miro.com>



Mental mapping <https://mentalmap.org/szofverek/?lang=en>



Card Sorting <https://www.usabilitest.com/card-sorting>



Photo Collage <https://www.photocollage.com>



Gathering Good Practices Google



Persona <https://www.hubspot.com/make-my-persona>



# Findings/main conclusions relevant to entrepreneurship/startup education

- Businesses were enriched with several design and communication elements, just to name a few: logos and full brandings were created, the social media communication and interfaces of the businesses were enhanced, internal and external design elements were created...
- The students learned about economic development implemented in a disadvantaged community, obtained a first-hand experience of the methodology of community-based planning, and learned about the dilemmas of empowerment and development based on local needs.
- The social enterprise development helped the students understand how an entrepreneur thinks and shed a light on how a sustainable and people-centred design could be implemented.
- The course created numerous strong ties between the villagers and the students, which persisted for many years after the course.

# Originality/value

- To the best of our knowledge, this is the first and only course in Hungary so far that actively involved university students in social entrepreneurship development among disadvantaged, vulnerable social groups with tools of community development and social design.
- The process used an entirely self-developed methodology relying on the best-known development tools such as the business model canvas (Osterwalder-Pigneur 2010) or the social design toolkit (Brown-Wyatt 2010; IDEO 2015).

# *Research/teaching methods*

## *limitations/implications*

- The course was embedded in a long process of local social enterprise development. Consequently, the students could connect to the results of this process.
- Hence, it became possible to build the human relationships needed for the process, and the students could use the knowledge (designer, photographer, etc.) that they learned at university.
- Simultaneously, this knowledge also benefited the social entrepreneurs. Thus, a favourable, partnership-based relationship could be established for both parties.
- The course was a great success among the students and the local community as well. Although, unfortunately, we were only able to teach the course for three semesters, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which made it impossible to organise offline training and meetings in the village...

# Impact - measurement?

A lot of failures

Local political activity increased

University students

Surrounding settlements are also interested

Not wage workers, but owners, decision makers



Enjoy the variety of life, let a lot things go  
(roller coaster), just be in a good mood

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# Literature

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