



How we empower people experiencing poverty through community development and community organizing tools?

Krisztina Jász

HAPN

Brussels, 28 November 2014



Basic questions:

- **How the network focuses on empowering people experiencing poverty practically?**
- **What participation strategies the network/had/changed considering the impossibility to influence/work with government on change**
- **What are the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches of the Network on community empowerment**
- **How does it happen in practice – participation and management of the network (internal) and external events/awareness raising with people living in poverty**



Empowering people experiencing poverty

- Training: Norwegian Civil Fund; Porticus
- Providing informations: Facebook, newsletter, list of members, website (it is under reconstruction)
- PEP meetings
- Facilitate conversation
- Supervision
- Demonstrations: people directly affected by poverty and social exclusion give speeches



Participation strategies

- Neglecting round tables (National Council of Sustainable Development)
- Strengthening the bottom-up approaches (Workfare Movement for the Future)
- Building up an activist-base
- Building up horizontal partnerships-Human Platform, Civil College Foundation, City is for All, Association of Community Organizers, trade unions...
- Tools of confrontation: proclimations, petitions
- Community organizing

Participation strategies

	Community development	Community organizing
What does the activist do ?	By getting trust, identifying the leader and building a community empowering people to be able to solve their own problems by themselves	By getting trust, identifying the leader and building a community empowering people to be able to put pressure on representatives of power in order to reinforce a proper solution
What do the people do who are directly affected by the problem ?	They appear as members of communities and they create different groups by their extensive involvement and development of skills. They will able to work together by building alliances with representatives of power	They appear as members of communities and they create different groups by their extensive involvement and development of skills. They will able to rearrange the unfair power relations and the resources. The elite is treated as opponents
Who has the problem-solving power ?	The struggle for power takes place between the representatives of power and the community. Their aim is to reach a more equitable agreement	The struggle for power takes place between the representatives of power and the community. The aim of the community is to enforce a decision-making process.



Strengths of HAPN



- Membership in EAPN
- more and more volunteers
- Bigger and bigger social capital (including European level-ECON)
- Strong commitment towards affairs representing by us
- Appreciation of our funder, Zsuzsa Ferge
- Real field experiences
- Skills in the staff and within the leadership as well
- Good cooperative skills
- Good motivation skills



Weaknesses of HAPN



- Lack of proper infrastructure
- Lack of resources
- Communication: internal, external
- Too many cases
- Denigration by outsiders (by the government (NCG) or civil actors with strong connections to the government)
- Intimidation by the government
- More radicalized public opinion towards the people experiencing poverty
- Weak partnerships and cliques by short-term interest in the civil sphere of Hungary
- Unorganized civil sphere
- Disfigured social messages
- Regionally fragmented membership



Management of HAPN



- The structure of the board is based on built-in democratic features and real involvement of people experiencing poverty
- The board has 7 members elected by representatives of the member organizations (4 has to be PEP)
- The board makes strategic decisions
- The staff has to report to them
- Staff meeting is held every week, which are open events
- Both the board and the staff members have the right to introduce ideas concerning funding, networking, campaigning...



Thank you for your attention!



- iroda@hapn.hu
- jakrisz@gmail.com