# Developments of Hungarian non-governmental organizations in the field of social services and child protection

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## ABSTRACT

Civil organisations' services and care operating in the social field are an important part of the social network since they contribute to the social inclusion and increasing life quality of excluded social groups. In the study we deal with how much the innovativeness (on program and specialization level) and system approach are emphasised in the approaches of civil organisations that operate in the field of social and child protection. Firstly, we briefly overview the main characteristics of civil organisations that operate in social field. Then we examine those tenders of civil organisations operating on social and child protection field which tendered between 2008 and 2009 in a concrete Hungarian tender system, in the so-called Norwegian Civil Fund (NCF)

## Keywords

Best and worst practices; civil society; NGOs; innovations; social services; child protection

## Academic Discipline

Sociology

## SUBJECT

Analysis of working process

## TYPE

Research paper

## SOCIAL CAPITAL AND CIVIL SECTOR

The social capital is a kind of trust and mutuality that builds on common ethical standards and permeates the entire civil society (Osváth, 2005). According to Putnam (1995), where the number of civil organisations is big, there the trust is also bigger between the members of the local community. Putnam defines 5 social mechanisms regarding the social capital: 1) eases the solution of collective problems; 2) competitive basis for the community development; 3) broadens our purview in terms of social life; 4) ensures the information that is required for successful goal setting and goal achievement; 5) by public participation, it develops the individuals' life quality and satisfaction. The social capital has influence on effectiveness of physical and human investments (Putnam, 1995).

Banerjee (2007) distinguishes between the so-called bad and good civil society. This means, the good civil society has social capital that connects social groups and created bridges, has rich community life, the confidential net is extended, characterised by openness to the outside, tolerance universality and the ideal of a strong democracy are basic values. Bad civil society has limited confidential network, its social capital has bonding nature, introversion, business orientation, intolerance and turning to the own community are typical.

Organisations that operate in the social and child protection fields belong to the public society type (Sebestény, 2005). These organisations respond to social problems that the state's remit and provide regular services to the preferred target group and in main cases the state or the council, other non-profit organisation or the church realize them. Their activity focuses on education, health care, social field; furthermore, they put emphasis on environment protection as well. They work with several volunteers, but the cooperation with the authorities (state, council) is strong which is often strengthened by contracts.

## THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL SERVICE AND CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNING APPLICANTS FOR NORWEGIAN CIVIL FUND

### About the civil organization working on social field in general

According to the data of KSH (Hungarian Central Statistical Office), 65 000 organisations operated in Hungary in 2010; 23 500 of them were foundation organisations and 41 500 worked as joint non-profit organisations. The foundations are linked to three areas of activity: education (32%), social services (16%) and culture (14%) (KSH, 2011). The joint non-profit organisations are mostly related to leisure, however, the proportion of cultural organisations and sport clubs are the biggest within it. In recent years, the number of tender winners in terms of domestic, EU or other international tenders has been increased. In 2007, 19 000 tender winner non-profit organisations operated in Hungary, which means nearly 86 billion HUF. The capital has significant dominance, the 53,1% of the tender revenue concentrated in the capital in 2007. (Ajkay, 2011) Besides the tender activity, it is also interesting how the civil sector consider their operation to be successful. The research findings of Dobossy et al. (2007) show that the organisations support individuals mostly and within it, the Roma people form a special target group (50%) and one-third of the organisations support the youth. Socially vulnerable, poor or homeless people also often appear among the service recipients. 25% of the organisations operate on settlement level, 21,4% of them have micro-regional scope. The cooperation with local councils is significant (65,9% have connections) and they cooperate with other NGOs (45,7%). Only one-third of the organisations work with economic operators.

### About the research

For the research quantitative and qualitative methods were used to examine those tenders' content, budget, innovation of the projects and main characteristics of the applicant organisation which were submitted in three round between 2008 and 2009 within NGO. The basis of the research was a database that contained 1941 applications files and only 240 of them got support and it means 12% support. We consider it is important to include the rejected tenders because we can learn the so-called bad practice through them, that is, we can visualize what the typical mistakes are and applicant's approaches that cannot be supported. Thereafter we chose 195 tenders (10% of all the tenders) to analyse them more thoroughly with the purpose of searching for answer to these questions: "How much coherent and built on complex program elements are the projects? Who did the organisations wanted to address? What are the long and short-term aims did they want to achieve by the realization? Why did they consider themselves innovative regarding their activity?"

### The main characteristics of the tenders for NGO

We distinguished the following activities in the social cohesion, health and child protection category: 1) methodological innovation, 2) service for special target group, 3) community development, 4) study hall, educational activity and 5) other social and health care programs.

569 tenders were received in this category and 9,3% of them got support. Vast majority of the applying organisations were located in Budapest (36,4%) and in county-towns (32,3%). Most of the tenders applied for educational activity (37,3%), 18,3 % of the applicants intended to carry out activity that has service nature and 18,1% of them wanted to carry out activity that develops the community. The rate of tenders for methodological innovation is 13,4% and 13% is the rate of those civil tenders that applied for other activities or cannot be categorized.

In terms of target group we can say that vast majority of those tenders which wanted to introduce methodological innovation identified children and young people as target group (30,7%). Significant proportion of those organisations

which want to provide services, would like to provide their services for diseased and disabled people (27,9%) and for people belonging special target group. The main target groups of community developers are children and young people (31,7%) or another special target group which usually means a given community (26,7%) and Roma people (20,8%). Educational projects' typical target groups are the children and young people (28,8%) and besides the special target groups (21,9%) the diseased and disabled people are also typical (17,8%).

Table 1. summarizes what subcategories can be distinguished within each category.

**Table 1. Standardization of the tenders**

| Social cohesion, child protection health protection | *introducing new methods* | new methods for the organisation |
| | | new method in the specialization |
| | *services* | mental hygienic service |
| | | medical rehabilitation |
| | | services that aim to increase the chances for employment |
| | | legal aid service |
| | *community development* | community-building services |
| | | group session |
| | *education* | prevention |
| | | life management consultancy |
| | | professional competence development |
| | | stud hall |
| | | complex education programs |
| | *other social programs* | |

A common feature of tenders aiming *methodological innovation* is the most preferred target groups are the children and young people and parents appear too. In this direct and indirect target groups, they often use therapy methods or support such get-together (clubs, programs together) which aims to achieve change in life style and attitude and to compensate disadvantages, although, the applied methods are strongly controversial. The projects are mostly on social level.

The *services in the field of social service and health care* mainly means the organisation and making available rehabilitation and mental hygiene services for the target group, but it can also mean the organisation of service use of services which has limited availability or extremely expensive, for these services the organisation is charged for during the usage. The preferred target group usually consists of people with some kind of disability (hearing impaired) or with serious disease (waiting for organ transplant). The service includes taking responsibility for activities relating therapy, rehabilitation, massage, home care. A common feature is that they try to mobilize volunteers, although, the projects operate on settlement or micro-region level.

Within *community development*, two forms of work can be distinguished basically: 1) continuation of community-building activities, 2) using services during group sessions that aim to provide help (for example, in changing lifestyle or forming views) for the target group through community experience. The community building activities are usually organized around a common space (club, community centre, camp, playhouse, study group) and mainly offer programs for children and young people. These activities have a unique feature, exactly, the integration of educational and social work since the organised sessions – usually over school time – are led by social workers and they also aim to address parents. Beside the so-called study session, the applicants also organise trips, cultural and other leisure activities. One of a variety of it when the talent program is the main aim and its achievement is the creation of a creative community. The other method is rather structured around experiences in a closed group, where the group (the community as the applicants call it) is rather a kind of work and the activity is some kind of new value system, views transmitted by the used services. In includes, for example, therapeutic group session targeting disabled or seriously ill children and organisations joint family session, in which the ill children can integrated easier.

Within *the category of study hall or other educational activity*, we can distinguish the undertaken activities into five subtypes: 1) projects organised around prevention, 2) projects that aim to earn change in life and based on life management and information provision regarding special scope of problems, 3) projects that develop professional competence, 4) study hall, talent program, projects for catching up and 5) complex training projects. The range of study hall type and other educational activities are various and popular with the applicants. Within this the applicants distinguish these activities into two subtypes: projects that aim to form lifestyle and those that aim to have courses for catching up and

compensate disadvantage after school time. Tenders belonging to this have Roma children and young people as priority target group. These tenders are typically on local level except for tenders that aim to develop professional competence.

The range of **other social care and health care** tenders is wide but within it, the tenders aiming to create information point and to create communication materials have the biggest number. Thus, in most of the cases, the aim is creating publications and web pages. In the cases of some tenders, the promotion of a profession appears (e.g. Pathologist) which has the tool of creating and spreading communication materials. Creating film and other media materials are also among the planned information carriers.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, the analysis of the tenders indicates that since there are a few tender topics for the applicants, they sought to submit complex tender that contains several program elements (e.g. service, education capacity development etc). Vast majority of the applicants organize their project around EU goals and build the tender program on different remaining project ideas. These can hardly fit in the needs of the target group. In terms of place and extension of realization, we can say that the tenders usually remained on local level, although, there were several ones on micro-region and county-town level. Small organizations are unable to undertake programs with national extension

Unfortunately, a very few projects build on partnership, the cooperation with professionals and the number of involved volunteers is not significant. The reason for this can be that in almost every case, the applicants beside the realization of the desire activity they wished to moderate their own infrastructural shortcomings and improve their human capacity. The innovation mostly affected the methods of the activity, typically by spreading nationwide some kind of methods that have been known abroad.

Within the examined tender subject, only those organisations could tender successfully which made their goals fit in the goals of the tender system and if they could present them coherently and had knowledge base to professionally realize new ideas and had necessary experience and human resource capacity to carry out projects. Only those organisations could use the potential possibilities of the tender system that could work out wide range of cooperation with their named target group and their partner organisation.

Encouraging professional innovation is important requirement from the tender system and the applying organisation's endeavour, to achieve it, is a rightful expectation. This can greatly contribute to the continuous development of the civil sector in Hungary and to the creation and maintenance of the so-called good civil society.

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Andrea Rácz (Ph.D) Assistant professor at the University of Debrecen, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Hungary. Her main research field is child protection, she published several research articles and books in this field. Main international professional achievement: *Care Work in Europe:* Current understanding and future directions international research project – member of the international research group (EU 7 Research Frame-program (2002-2004), *"Promoting social inclusion for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and immigrants – a duty of justice and care"* international project – Hungarian researcher (European Social Network, 2004-2005), *Young people from a public care background: pathways to education in Europe* – member of the international research group (EU 7 Research Frame-program, 2007-2010).