Civil society organizations and the 2019 local governmental elections

Summary report

Contributors

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Table of Contents

Introduction

This report was prepared in the framework of a joint 2-year long project by Ökotárs-Hungarian Environmental Partnership Foundation, Civil College Foundation, With the Power of Humanity Foundation and the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union which aims at analyzing and evaluating civil society engagement and activity around the local government elections in 2019 in order to later build support and development programs, training, and other tools based on these results.

During the first phase of the project, as a preparatory activity a research composed of two parts: an online quantitative survey and, based on this, a series of qualitative focus group interviews was carried out. The research was made with activists and members of civil society organizations (CSOs) participating in the campaigns from all over Hungary.

In the following we will introduce the results and main conclusions of the two researches.

Online questionnaire results

Methods

The online survey had 37 entries with 3 duplicates and 1 triplicate which means 32 individual respondents. Multiple entries may contain additional information in the open questions, thus, we took them into consideration, whilst always the last entries were considered in case of choice questions. We wanted to hear several members' opinion from one organization / group; consequently, there are 4 organizations with two different entries. All in all, we gathered valuable information from 28 organizations / groups. During the quantitative analysis in some cases, we used the number of items while in others you can see percentage ratio in the charts.

The responses were received between 12 February and 10 April 2020 which means participants had around two months to fill the questionnaire. One-third of the entries arrived after the coronavirus pandemic started in March 2020. Let's see the results in the next part.

Analysis

2. Form of operation of organization / group

The majority of respondents represent associations with 60%. Informal groups are the next with 35% and finally we have 6% for civic societies (non-registered legal entities).

2. Form of operation of organization / group
number of respondents

civic society
association
informal group
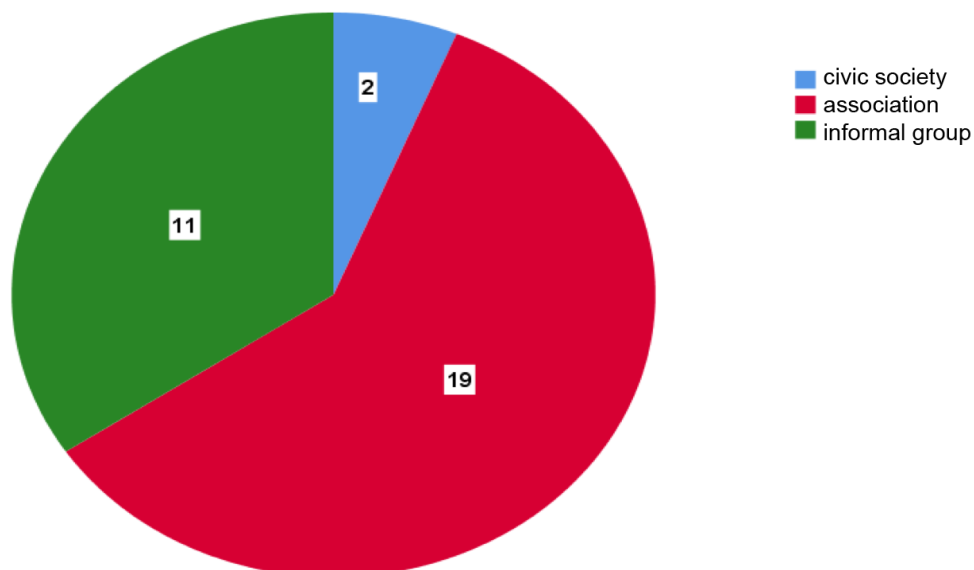
3. As respondent what is your function in your organization / group?

Position and function are distributed among the respondents as follows (number of responses):

chair(wo)man	12
community organizer	3
member of the board	2
representative	2
member	2
leader	2
community leader	2
employee/ program coordinator	1
member of association (otherwise representative)	1
communication-, participatory coordinator	1
organizer	1
member, activist	1
executive board member	1
NA	1

4. What type of settlement does the organization / group operates in?

One quarter of respondents operate in county seat town or in the national capital, while each 37-37% operates in other towns and in villages.

4. What type of settlement does the organization / group operates in?
number of responses

- village
- town
- county seat town or national capital

8

12

12
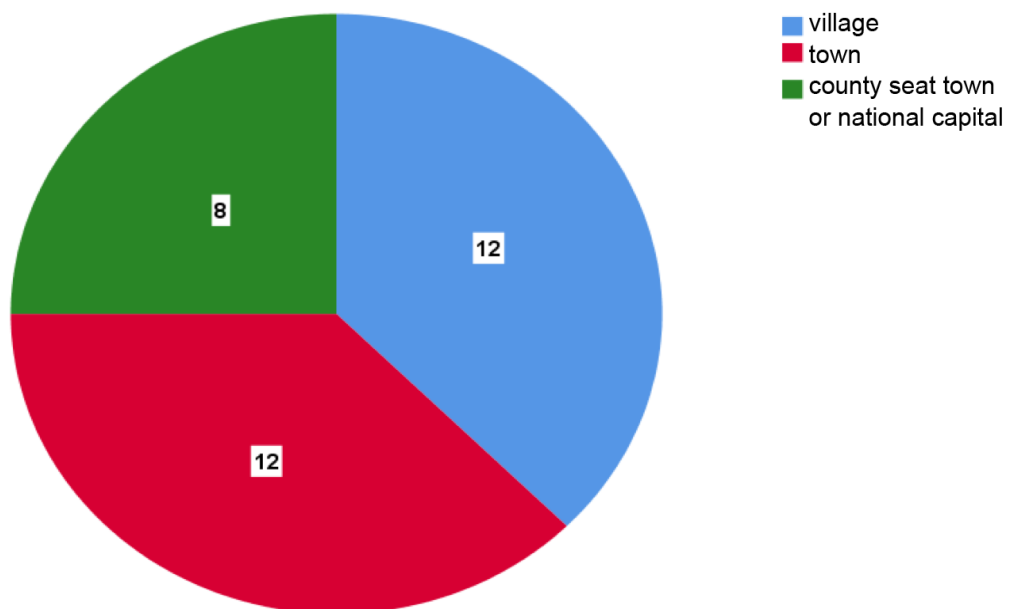
6. How long does the organization / group has operated?

60% of respondents represent an organization / group less than 3 years old, 25% of them have existed between 3-5 years, while only 9% are older than 10 years.

6. How long does the organization / group has operated?
number of responses

Legend:
- between 1-3 years
- more than 10 years
- between 3-5 years
- between 5-10 years
- less than 1 year
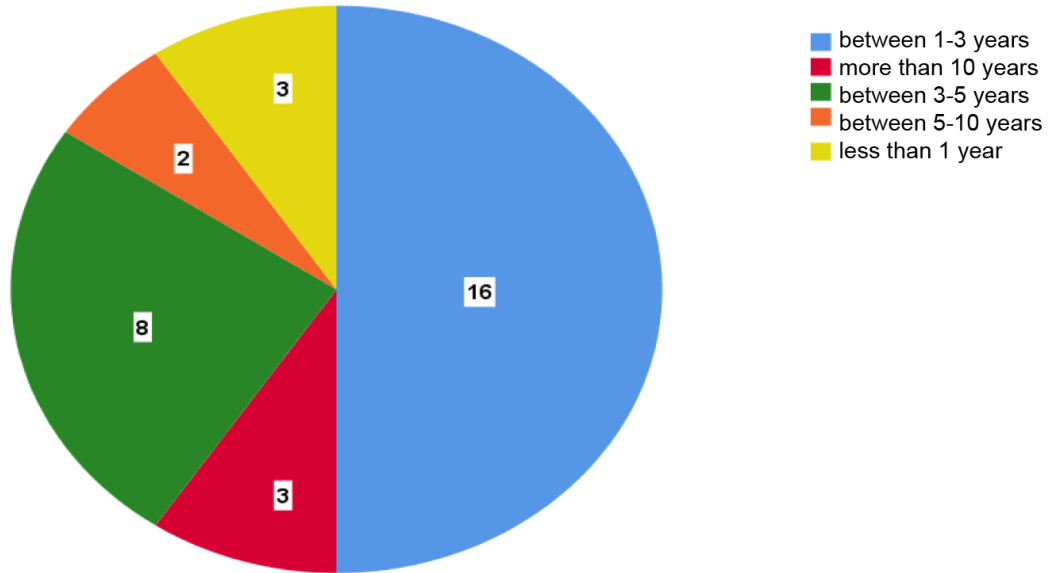
7. What is the size of the organization / group?

In our sample the size of organizations / groups is mainly fewer than 50 members (23 cases) while in 6 cases members' number is between 50 and 100. 6 organizations have a 100-200 size membership and there is 1 with 305 members.

7. What is the size of the organization / group?

Mean = 42,69
Std. Dev. = 59,599
N = 32
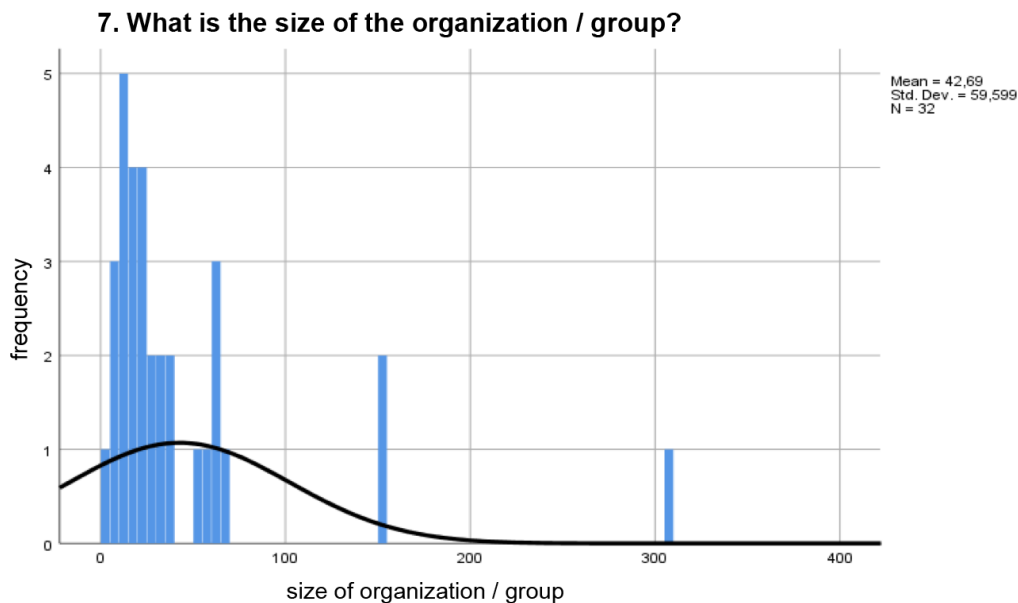
8. Number of active core members

The number of active core members are under 50 in all cases. Most numerous (n=17) are those who have maximum 10 core members, 6 organizations / groups have 11-20 core members, while 9 organizations / groups have 21-35 core members.

8. Number of active core members

Mean = 14,91
Std. Dev. = 10,209
N = 32
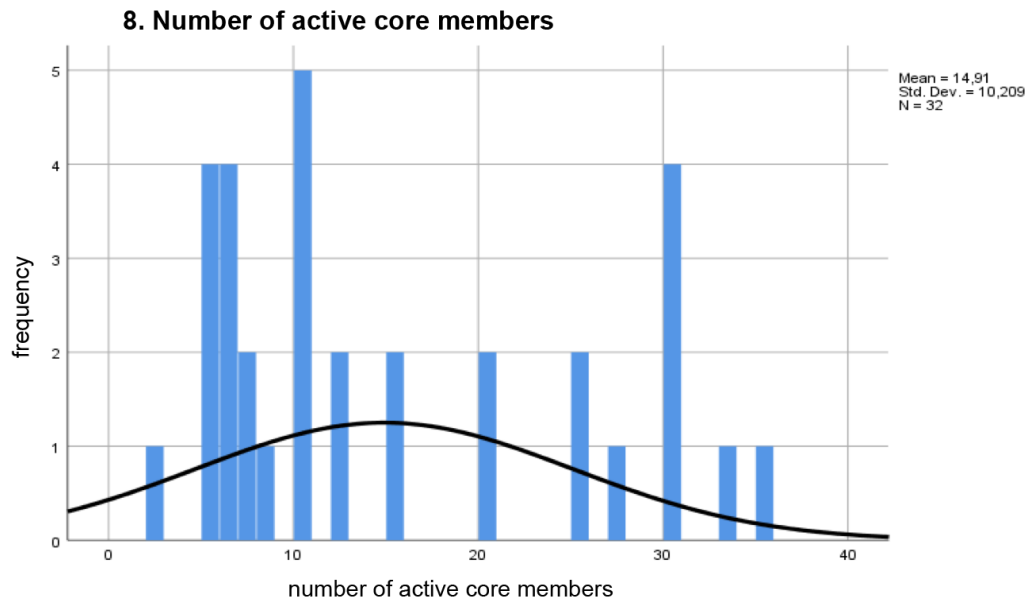
9. Number of occasional activists / volunteers

The number of organizations / groups that have maximum 20 casual activists / volunteers is 16, 8 respondents reported about 21-30 activists, 6 organizations have 31-50 activists and 1 respondent mentioned 100 activists. (One organization didn't answer the question.)

9. Number of occasional activists / volunteers

Mean = 24,94
Std. Dev. = 19,674
N = 31

10. Number of passive sympathizers (including online followers)

Estimating passive **sympathizers shows the highest dispersion because passive followers are the least visible group. 17 respondents estimated maximum 100** passive **sympathizers around their organizations, 9 is the number of estimations between 150 and 500, while there where 5 estimate them to be more than 1000, and 1 respondent had a notion about 7500** passive **sympathizers.**

10. Number of passive sympathizers (including online followers)

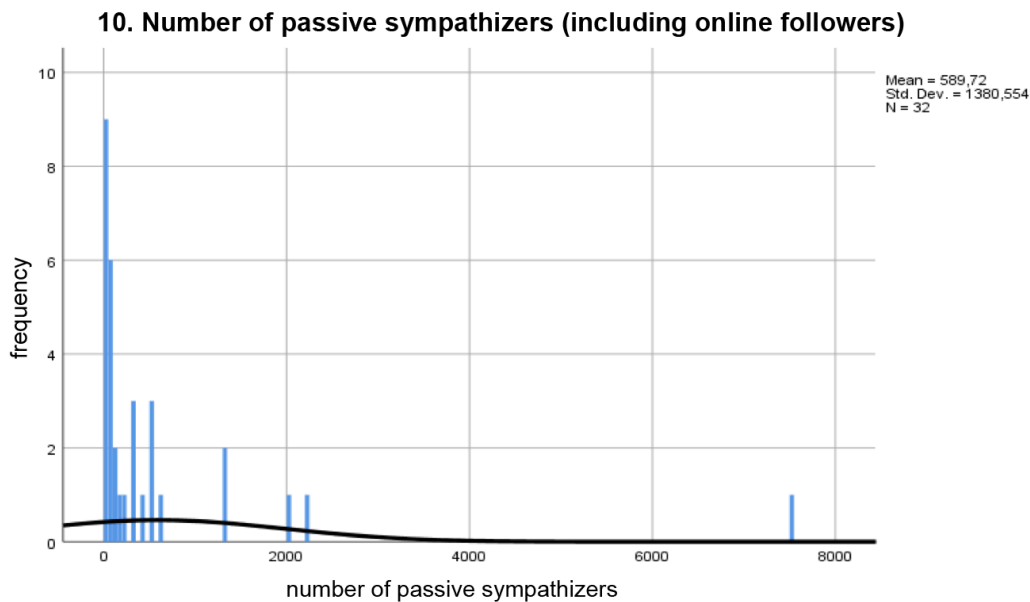**11. What is the structure of the organization / group, how are the tasks / activities distributed among the people connected to the organization / group?**

Decision-making mechanisms in the everyday work of the organizations / groups are fairly democratic. 81% of the respondents reported that members / coworkers decide jointly about sharing tasks, while in other organizations / groups the leadership decides after considering the members' proposals. In one case community-based decision is the common form but occasionally leadership reserves decision-making to itself.

11. What is the structure of the organization / group, how are the tasks / activities distributed among the people connected to the organization / group?
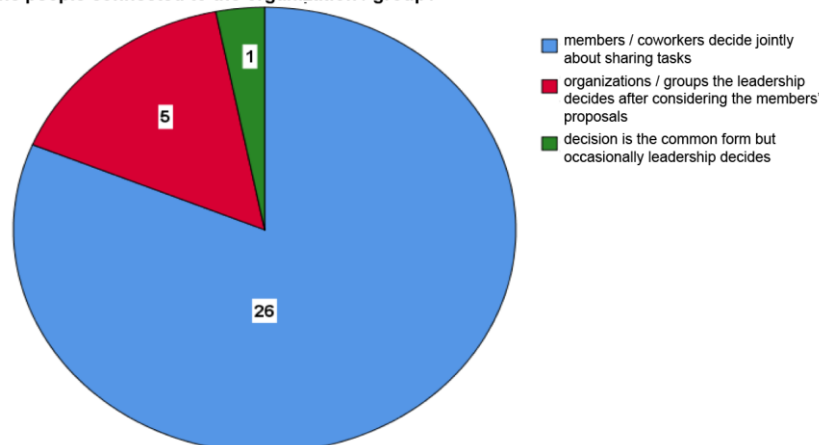
12. What was the objective of the organization / group with its activity related to the municipal elections?

Based on the summary of answers to the open question about activities regarding the municipal elections the following clusters of answers could be outlined:

- nomination of candidates, to delegate representatives to the local government: 7 mentions
- take over local governance: 4
- distribution information to the locals regarding the elections: 3
- facilitation of cooperation among opposition parties: 3
- nomination of mayoral candidate: 2
- mobilization of Roma voters: 2
- generally encourage people to vote: 2
- facilitation of the transparency of local government: 2
- support to civic advocacy: 2.

It is visible that the most popular activities were the nomination of candidates with the eventual goal to delegate representatives to and increase participation in the local government.

13. Did you reach your goals, have you achieved success?

60% of respondents judge their activity regarding the municipal elections as successful and only 2 from the 32 respondents considered it as unsuccessful.

13. Did you reach your goals, have you achieved success?
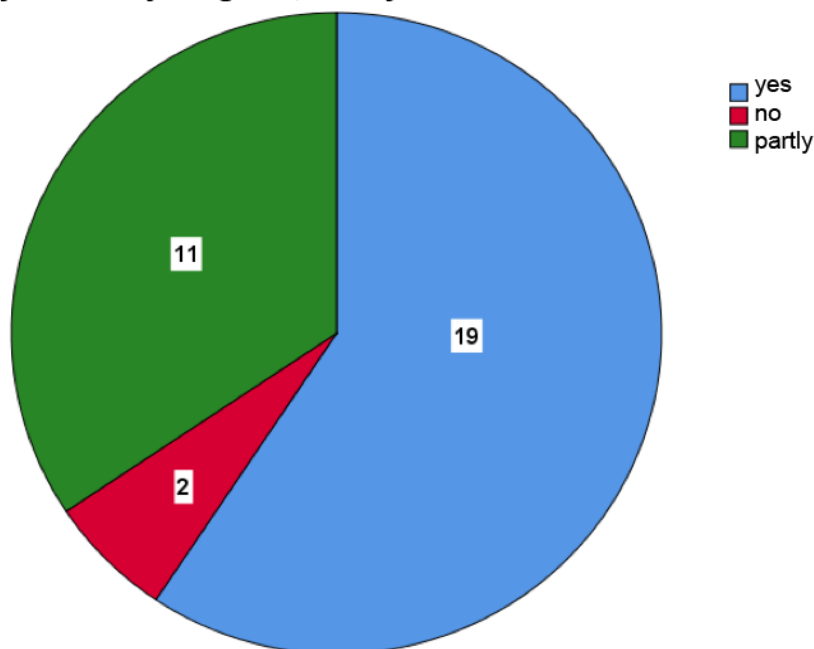
14. What kind of activities did you carry out in order to achieve your goals? How successful were these activities and how satisfied you were with those?

If we take a look to the activities connected to the elections, we can see that campaigns increasing people's willingness to vote were the most popular among respondent organizations with 92%. The least popular activity with 66% was the organization of candidacy workshops for locals. The next activities got 5 points indicating the highest grade of satisfaction:

- election monitoring by participation as members in the work of the enumeration committee
- nomination council and mayoral candidates
- support to independent council and mayoral candidates via collecting signatures, street campaigns, etc.
- organize public forums to map local problems and cases, and channel the results to candidates.

Activities that received the most extreme values on both end of the scale are worth a special mention. *"Supporting independent council and mayor candidates via collecting signatures, street campaigns, etc."* activity was estimated by 8 respondents as unsuccessful while another 9 respondents marked it as successful. Besides this *„Organizing forums and discussions for candidates where they can present their programs to voters and inform themselves about the voters' opinion."* was another notable activity, where successful and unsuccessful estimations occurred in roughly equivalent cases.

The least successful activity was the following: *"Candidate nomination workshops for locals where they can think about and construct their ideal candidate."*
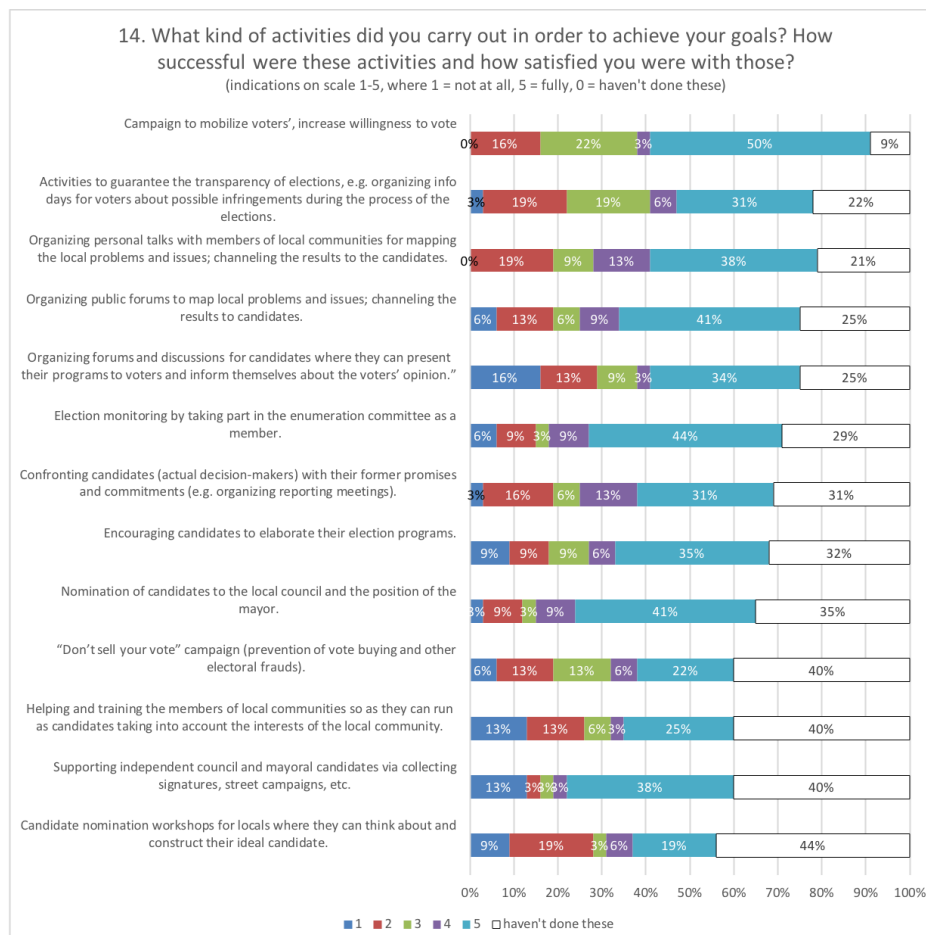

14. What kind of activities did you carry out in order to achieve your goals? How successful were these activities and how satisfied you were with those?
(indications on scale 1-5, where 1 = not at all, 5 = fully, 0 = haven't done these)

15. How much did you spend on the above-mentioned activities?

63% of the quested groups / organizations (20 answers) implemented their activities regarding the elections for next to nothing, i.e. with a budget under 100,000 HUF (~€300). Few respondents are on the other end of financial scale: only one organization had a budget over 20 million HUF (>€60,000) while two others spent between 5 000 000 – 20 000 000 HUF (~€15-60,000).

15. How much did you spend on the above-mentioned activities?
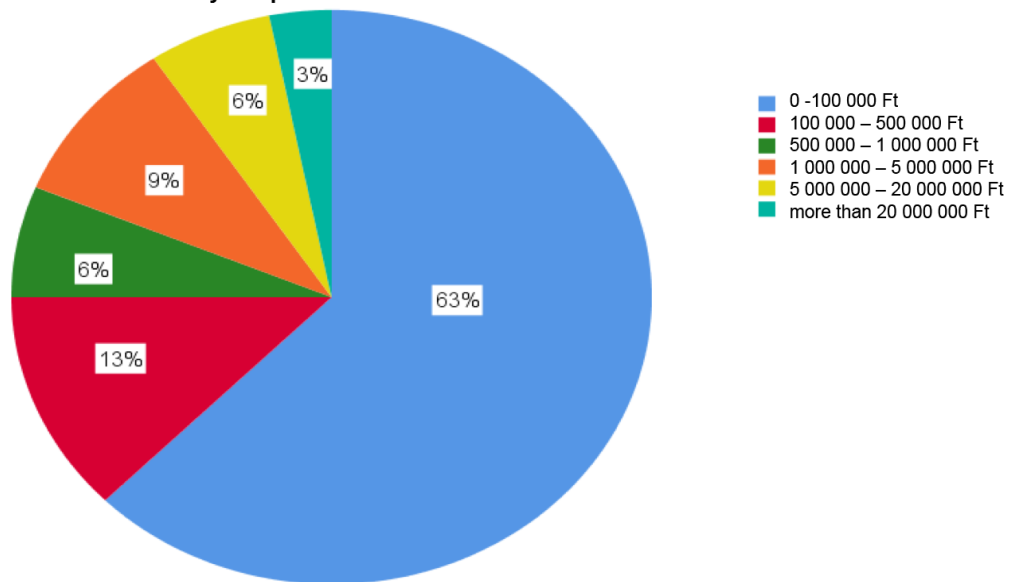
Legend:
- 0 -100 000 Ft
- 100 000 – 500 000 Ft
- 500 000 – 1 000 000 Ft
- 1 000 000 – 5 000 000 Ft
- 5 000 000 – 20 000 000 Ft
- more than 20 000 000 Ft

16. If we look at the activities marked as successful, what was the key to success, what made your activities work? Please indicate the three most important factors.

In order to identify the keys to success we counted the mentions of various success factors. Most respondents emphasized finding locally relevant issues and communicating effectively them to local public.

16. If we look at the activities marked as successful, what was the key to success, what made your activities work? Please indicate the three most important factors.

Factor	Count
We succeeded finding and highlighting important…	14
Continuous online contact-keeping via social media…	13
Personal contact-keeping and meetings with…	12
Involving and activating enough people to our work.	11
Foresight and careful planning.	10
Connections to other (civic) groups, learning from…	10
Broad public communication that reached many.	9
Well-organized activity of active members and…	8
Constructive relations with candidates who ran in…	7

17. If we take less successful activities, what should have been made differently in order to realize them successfully?

Based on answers given about reasons of failure we can say that main causes were the lack of resources, passivity of the local people and a hostile atmosphere.
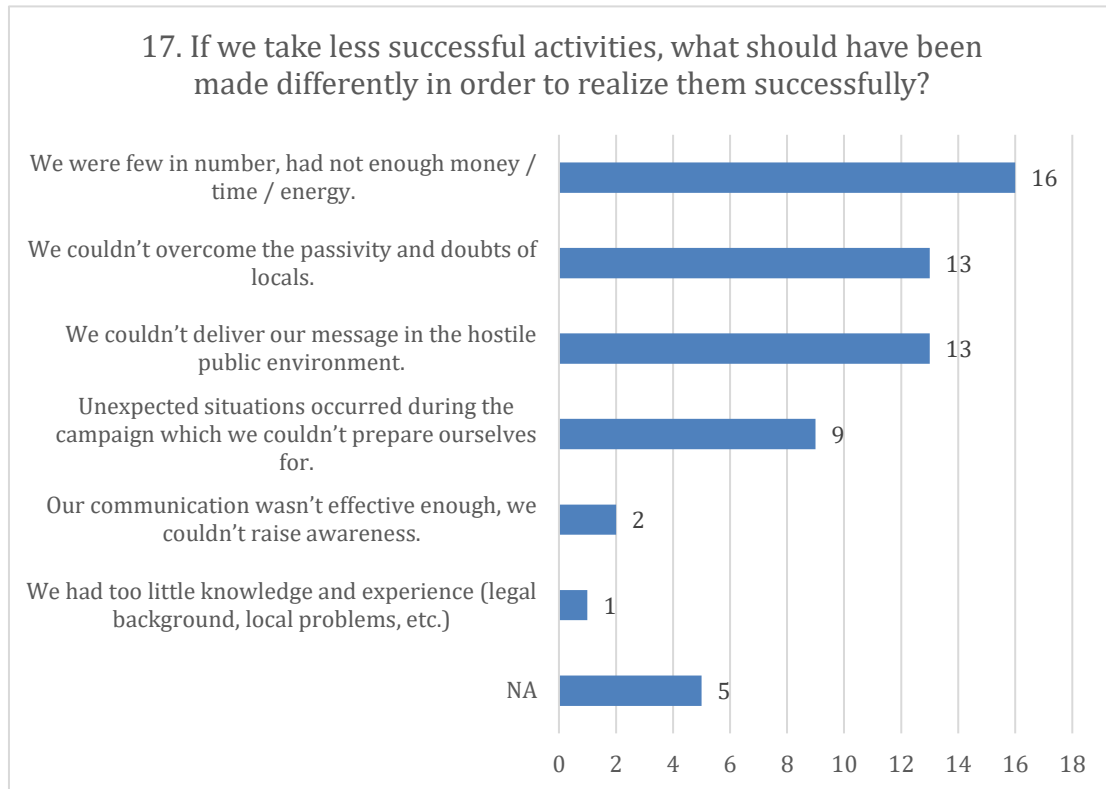
18. Please describe us in a few sentences what exactly should have been done differently.

As a supplement to question 17. respondents had an option to share specific points concerning the successful implementation of their activities. As a result, the same problems and needs arose like in the answers given to the choice question. Some banal problems were also mentioned like ineffective organization and starting the whole process too late. More courageous communication, mobilization of more people, more personal contact with voters were mentioned as desired improvements. The lack of permanent office for the project were also mentioned several times.

19. What kind of resources were missing for your effective action?

Communication skills, financial resources, more time, human resources, legal knowledge, strategic planning skills – these were the most often mentioned resources and skills that respondents missed from the everyday life of the quested groups / organizations.

An interesting question concerning the passivity of voters was brought up by one respondent:

"We would like to know why people don't decide being active? We can see the same faces in all events for many years."

One respondent reflected on the COVID-situation, too*: "Our cooperation with the local government is good, but our organization collected itself together after the campaign very slowly. However, when we finally managed, the coronavirus pandemic came."*

20. From among the following trainings and services which would you use?

The 3 most important trainings / services chosen by respondents partly reflected the results of the former open question, the missing resources. These were: tools of voter mobilization, fundraising, and campaign planning.

21. What kind of activities do you plan for the next 3 years with your group / organization (generally)?

Some trends outlined by the planned activities for the next 3 years were cooperation with the local governments, strengthening local advocacy, protecting the environment and managing the everyday life of the settlement. Two organizations reported about being active in local advocacy on behalf of the Roma minority. Three respondents mentioned spontaneously that they will prepare themselves for the 2022 parliamentary elections. Most answers are progressive and count with development and more intensive activity where networking, building communities and local advocacy are key motifs. Only two respondents reported about terminating their activity or being clueless regarding the future. Two answers were missing.

22. Are you planning activities concerning the 2022 parliamentary elections?

69% of the respondents plans activities in connection to the 2022 parliamentary elections. 19% hesitate while no one answered negatively.

22. Are you planning activities concerning the 2022 parliamentary elections? (number of responses)

4   6

22

■ don't know   ■ yes   ■ other
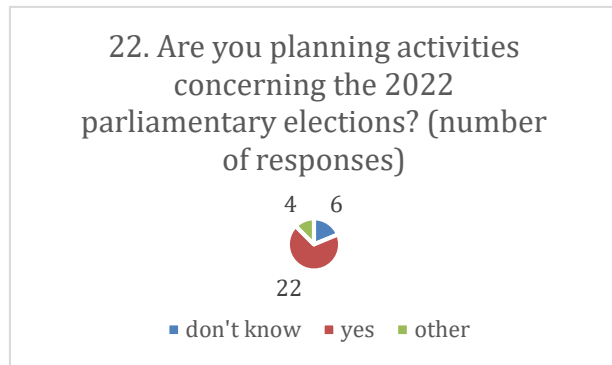
23. If yes, what kind of activities do you plan?

Respondents could choose from several answers. The most mentioned activities related to the activation of local communities, popular control of the elected representatives, and representation of local causes. Election monitoring was also marked as an important activity which can be achieved via membership in the enumeration committees.

23. If yes, what kind of activities do you plan?
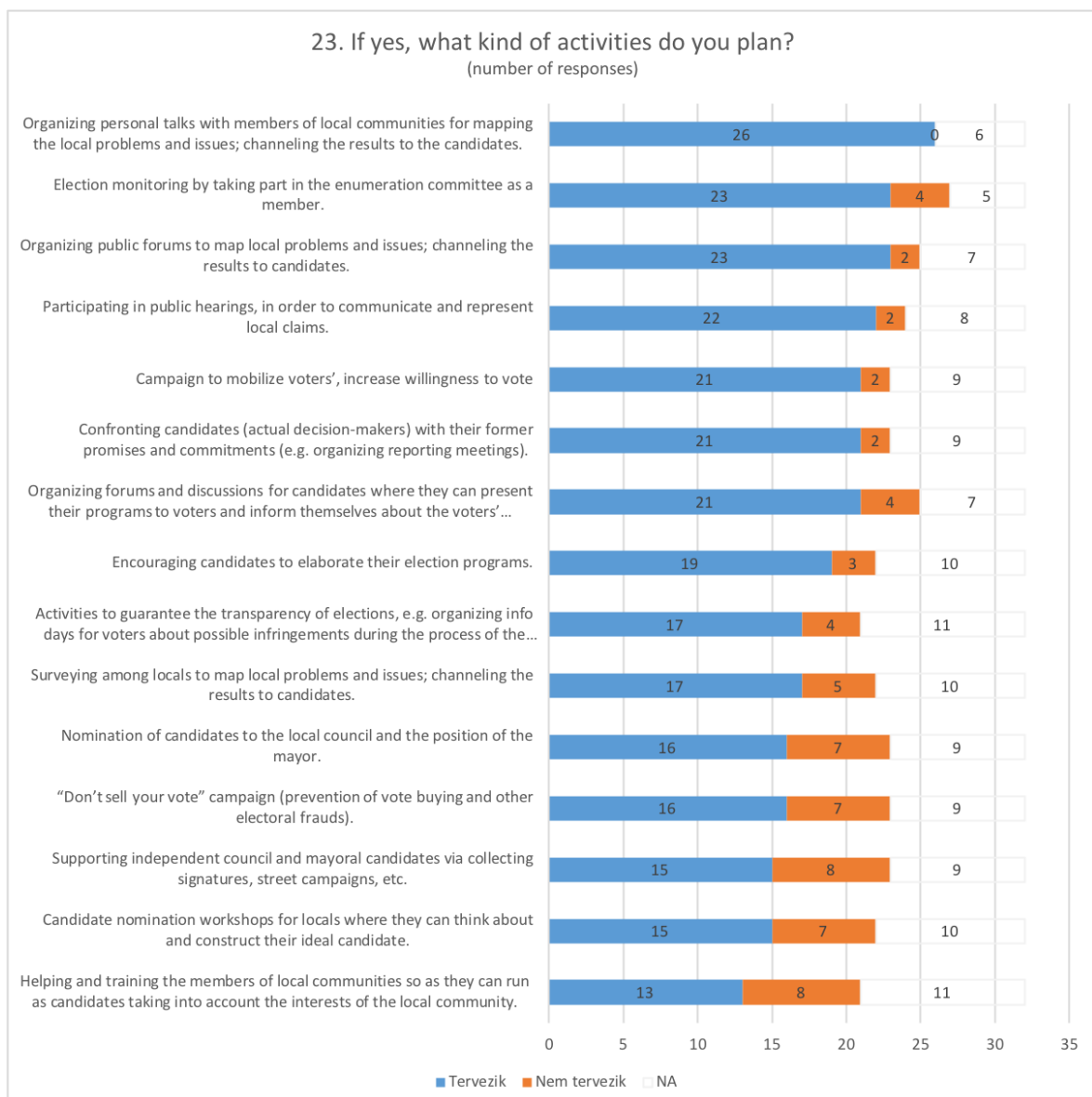(number of responses)

| Activity	Tervezik	Nem tervezik	NA
Organizing personal talks with members of local communities for mapping the local problems and issues; channeling the results to the candidates.	26	0	6
Election monitoring by taking part in the enumeration committee as a member.	23	4	5
Organizing public forums to map local problems and issues; channeling the results to candidates.	23	2	7
Participating in public hearings, in order to communicate and represent local claims.	22	2	8
Campaign to mobilize voters', increase willingness to vote	21	2	9
Confronting candidates (actual decision-makers) with their former promises and commitments (e.g. organizing reporting meetings).	21	2	9
Organizing forums and discussions for candidates where they can present their programs to voters and inform themselves about the voters'…	21	4	7
Encouraging candidates to elaborate their election programs.	19	3	10
Activities to guarantee the transparency of elections, e.g. organizing info days for voters about possible infringements during the process of the…	17	4	11
Surveying among locals to map local problems and issues; channeling the results to candidates.	17	5	10
Nomination of candidates to the local council and the position of the mayor.	16	7	9
"Don't sell your vote" campaign (prevention of vote buying and other electoral frauds).	16	7	9
Supporting independent council and mayoral candidates via collecting signatures, street campaigns, etc.	15	8	9
Candidate nomination workshops for locals where they can think about and construct their ideal candidate.	15	7	10
Helping and training the members of local communities so as they can run as candidates taking into account the interests of the local community.	13	8	11

■ Tervezik   ■ Nem tervezik   □ NA

Nomination of independent representative candidates and related activities were least favored by respondents.

If we compare planned activities for 2020 parliamentary elections with activities implemented during the 2019 municipal elections (Q14.), a correlation can be seen between assessing former activity as successful and willingness for future planning. If someone judged an activity connected to municipal elections as successful, then is more likely to carry out this activity for the of 2020 parliamentary elections, too. The more respondents plan a given activity the stronger this tendency is.

It is also visible that respondents are ready to try new, unknown methods as well. If someone didn't carry out a specific activity, then tends to plan it with more likelihood in the future.

24. Do you plan cooperation with other groups, organizations in the coming times?

Openness to cooperation is relatively high. 25 respondents plan cooperation, 5 hesitate, 1 doesn't know and 1 doesn't plan to cooperate with other groups in its later activities.

24. Do you plan cooperation with other groups, organizations in the coming times?
(number of responses)

■ Probably ■ Yes ■ No ■ Don't know
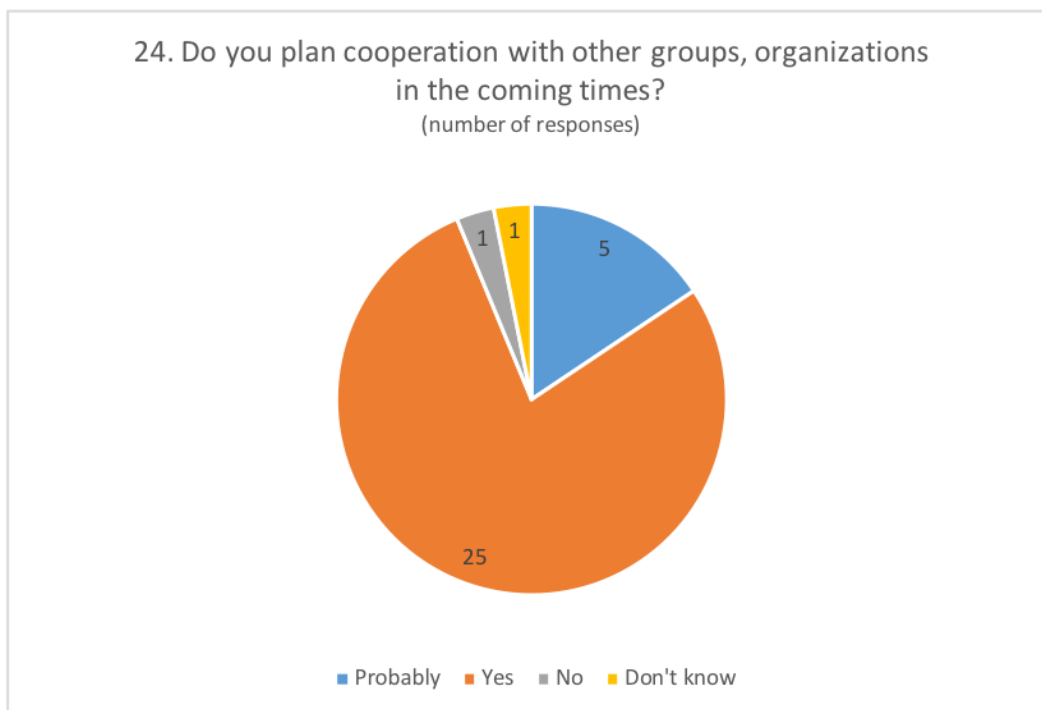
25. If yes, what kind of cooperation do you plan and with whom?

The answers to this open question outline willingness to cooperate mostly with local civic organizations with a similar focus of interest. Common issues and public affairs are key organizing forces, while cooperation with organizations that work on the national level were also mentioned a couple times.

Summary

After the results of processed data, the "typical" respondent of the surveyed population bears the following attributes:

- Functions in the form of an association in a town for not longer than 5 years.
- Its membership is under 50 members, there are fewer than 10 persons in the active core, maximum 30 activists / volunteers work with them, and has 500 sympathizers at most.
- Its members and colleagues take decisions in most cases collectively.
- Assessed its activities around the 2019 municipal elections generally as successful, highlighting voter mobilization, the organization of public forums and face-to-face meetings, participation in enumeration committees' work, membership and nomination of candidates.
- The budget of its activities was under 100,000 HUF (~€300), while highlighting important local issues and direct links to voters as the guarantees of success.
- Tracks back the failure of less effective activities (e.g. nomination workshops for locals) to lack of time / money / energy, locals' passivity and the hostile public environment.
- Would like to take part in trainings that focus on voter mobilization, fundraising and campaign planning.
- Will be certainly active in the next elections with a focus on activating local communities, public control of representatives, representation of local issues and election monitoring.
- Open to other groups and organizations that deal with similar problems.

Annex

1. **Respondents work in or are active in the following counties (number of location in brackets):**
   Bács-Kiskun (1)
   Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén (2)
   Fejér (1)
   Hajdú-Bihar (1)
   Heves (2)
   Nógrád (2)
   Pest (6)
   Somogy (1)
   Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg (4)
   Tolna (2)
   Vas (1)
   Veszprém (1)
   Zala (1)

   Budapest (VIII. ker.)

Focus group research

Background

The second phase of the research consisted of 10 online focus-group interviews held between June 9 and 25 of 2020. Participants were to be members of CSOs and groups from all over Hungary who participated in the 2019 mayoral elections in any way. A single organization could to take part in several different interviews represented by a different member. This allowed for knowledge to be shared in several directions and members holding different positions were able explain in detail a variety of aspects from a single campaign. A total of 34 formal and informal civil organizations took part in the study.

Regarding the composition of the groups, we took into account that the exchange of experience should be useful for participants as well as a means for gathering information. We initially planned on scheduling groups according to the ratio of residents based on the type of municipality, but in practice, this could not always be done, and the groups were composed as follows:
- 3 mixed groups: Budapest and county seat/city with county rights
- 1 group of the greater Budapest agglomeration
- 2 groups of other rural towns
- 3 groups of villages, among them 1 of organizations active related to the Roma ethnicity local governmental elections
- 1 group of participants from different types of municipalities

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the discussions were held online.
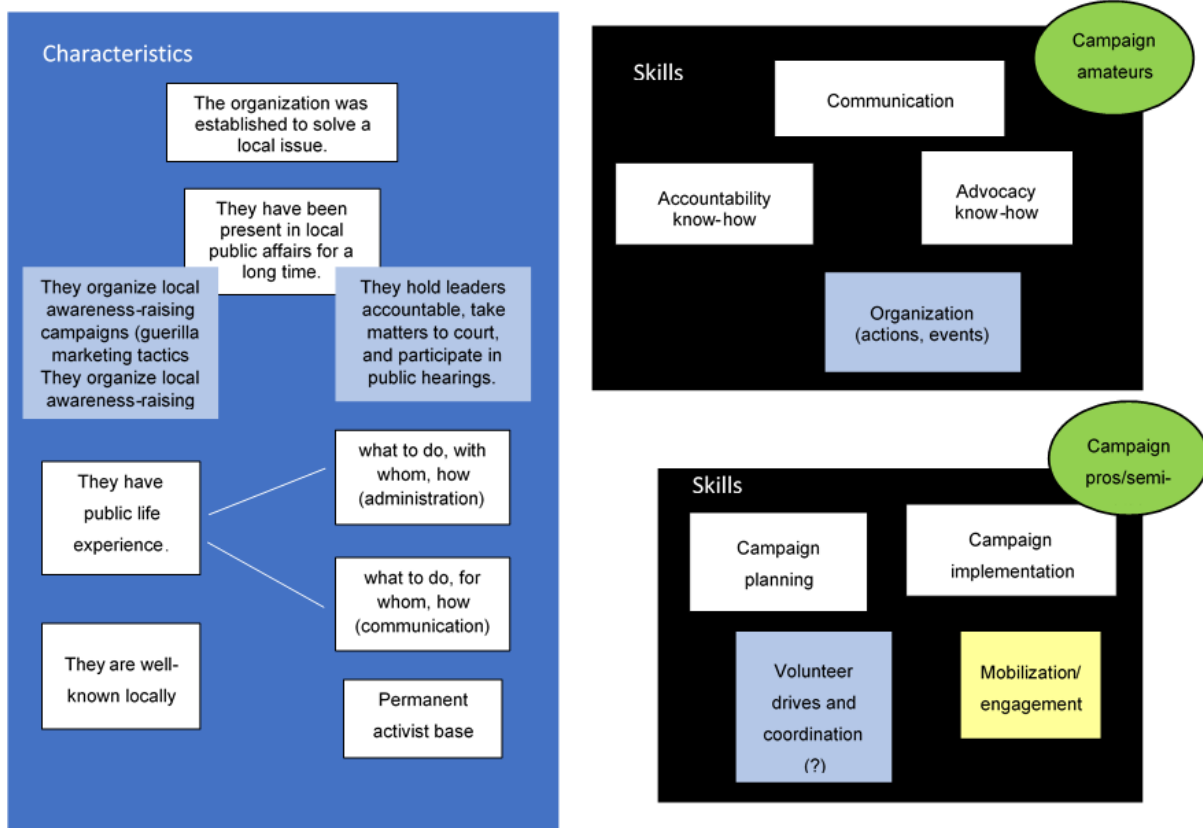
The focus of the research

The research was focused on the practical aspects of mobilization/engagement related to the elections. Through the discussions, we wished to understand the methods and activities chosen by a given group, a given election situation, the local context, how and why decisions were made and how the groups operated during the campaign period. We wanted to find out how participants evaluated the different activities, what their experiences were, and what practical know-how must be taken into account during planning and implementation. The aim of the group discussions was not only the unilateral collection of information, but also to provide an opportunity for the civic organizations to share information amongst themselves.

Results

The main types of civic organizations participating in the conversation
Participant groups could be categorized into user types according to service organization aspects so they may be identifiable toward meeting and answering needs and requirements not yet met or answered as of yet when planning services for the next phase of the project.

Older civil organizations

Characteristics
- The organization was established to solve a local issue.
- They have been present in local public affairs for a long time.
- They organize local awareness-raising campaigns (guerilla marketing tactics) They organize local awareness-raising
- They hold leaders accountable, take matters to court, and participate in public hearings.
- They have public life experience.
  - what to do, with whom, how (administration)
  - what to do, for whom, how (communication)
- They are well-known locally
- Permanent activist base

Skills — Campaign amateurs
- Communication
- Accountability know-how
- Advocacy know-how
- Organization (actions, events)

Skills — Campaign pros/semi-
- Campaign planning
- Campaign implementation
- Volunteer drives and coordination (?)
- Mobilization/engagement

Six of the participating CSOs have a history of over a decade. Typically , these organizations were formed due to some local matter and later went on to pursue further issues, including administration, holding people accountable, highlighting issues and taking matters to court. They have accumulated a wealth of knowledge throughout the years in this area, bringing their causes to fruition with other advocacy and environmental groups (HCLU, Greenpeace). They are better informed on legal regulations, enforcement of rights, and the practicalities of different procedures. They have established cooperative relationships with other civil organizations and municipalities. They also have practical experience with community organization, but they generally do not have training in this area, with the exception of one organization. They carry out these activities based on the experience gained throughout the years.

Thus, they have a significant history in the public sphere, they are well-known locally and often called upon to take action in civil matters, and locals count on them if they need someone to advocate for their interests. However, this does not always translate to votes in the most recent or past local governmental elections.

Experience shows that an effective technique may be to rebrand from the "the nice guy CSOs who take care of everything" to a local political factor worth voting for. This is often hindered internally by the membership, as they do not want to give up their status as a civil organization. However, in many places, voters think in terms of politics rather than civil advocacy and participatory democracy.
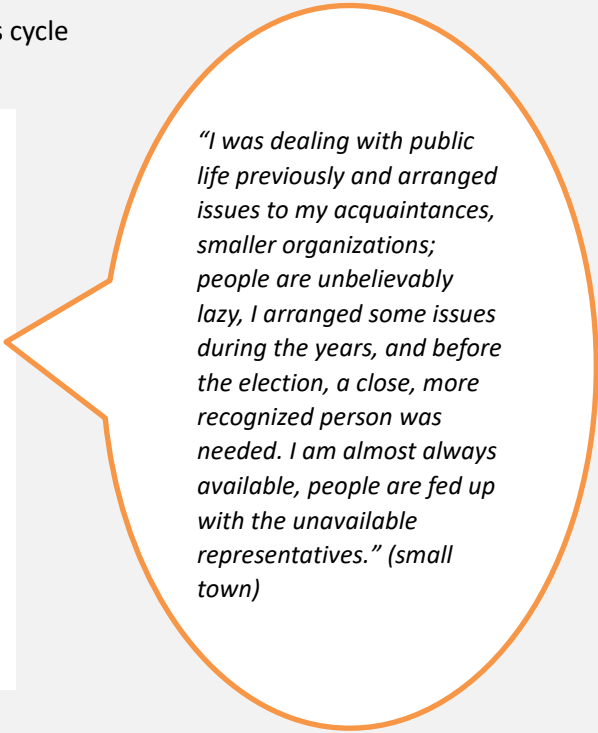
Their background and organisational structure:

- Organized mostly around a big **issue** originally to solve the problems of some kind of local, generally smaller part of an administrative area, those issues were represented decisively from the beginning against the municipality or other authorities, institutions; they went to public hearings, challenged, filed suits
- People gathered for an issue stayed together, started to manage other issues, generally became a formal organization (association)
    - Everyone knows everything, everyone does everything, everyone is included in the decision. The disadvantage is that it is slow, ineffective
- A central, recognized person with 10-12 closely related members
- Another 30-40 people who can be mobilized
- They act in an ever-growing area, found local sub-organizations even in other towns/parts of administrative areas
- The probably had got into the body in a previous cycle

#issue #activists #base #public life practice

Advantages:

- they are known among the locals due to the many years of work, their acceptance is good;
- the **residents trust** that these CSOs can act on their behalf, to represent their interests, since they have solved some difficult issues.
- it is not needed to introduce their names during the campaign;
- they founded at an organizational level, and they are in a matured phase;
- they have history in some common works, the team is assembled;
- developed cooperation and change of experience with other, similar organizations.
#trust #visibility #cooperation

"I was dealing with public life previously and arranged issues to my acquaintances, smaller organizations; people are unbelievably lazy, I arranged some issues during the years, and before the election, a close, more recognized person was needed. I am almost always available, people are fed up with the unavailable representatives." (small town)

Dangers/difficulties:

- if the leader is getting in the local politics, then the organization can get into crisis;
- it is not always successful to translate these advantages to votes, especially, in case of Budapest (from the "cute-CSO-that-gets-everything-done" status they are not necessarily be able to become the decisive local force, it is difficult to convert the CSO's success into "political" success);
- the CSOs that are successful for a long time feel that they are already grown crazy, and this can be dangerous during the next election;
- It is a problem to get the youth be involved, to get new members, the generational change among the members and activists in case of the CSOs that are successful for a long time

"It was growing out from a team doing sport together, we got together, then we organized family day events, this was not on purpose, but we continued, we organized a campaign team, had programs together with the civil group, there wasn't a lot of money for that."

Campaign amateurs:
- in spite of the assembled operation, it should be different in a campaign;
    - they probably not recognize this
- they don't know how to plan or carry out a campaign (but this does not exclude success!);
- it is a problem to mobilize the youth.

Campaign pros/semi-pros:
- old campaign technique - learning new ones (video, podcast, etc.);
- call the new voting generation;
- it is a problem to mobilize the youth.

|	
Deficit, necessity	- technique to convert reputation and popularity to votes; - to prepare for the existence within the municipality, the forthcoming organizational changes; - tactics against the parties; - techniques for negotiation; - development of civil organizations.
Electoral success	- the CSOs should be kept alive if the key people are getting into the body; - the candidate and the organization should stay credible; - seeking for identity, re-defining; - the relationship, cooperation between the candidate and the organization is to be retought;
Agglomeration and specifications to	- big population - more options to recruit; - they successfully integrated the newcomers and old residents (agglomeration); - it is the strongest region of Hungary in terms of economy - they feel less vulnerable, the existential dependency is lower; - intellectuals, white-collars, entrepreneurs; - various expertise needed for civil work and campaign is available within the group or they can access it through their relationships.

Recommendations on training and support required
- how the candidate is treated in the municipal council - share practices, how is handled by those who are already in; as a civil in the political life;
- involve youth;
- campaign planning and implementation, coordination of volunteers, mobilization;
- organization development/mentoring: life cycle of civil organizations;
- community organization methodologies;
- coaching/supervision for the attacks experienced during the campaign.

Young civil organizations
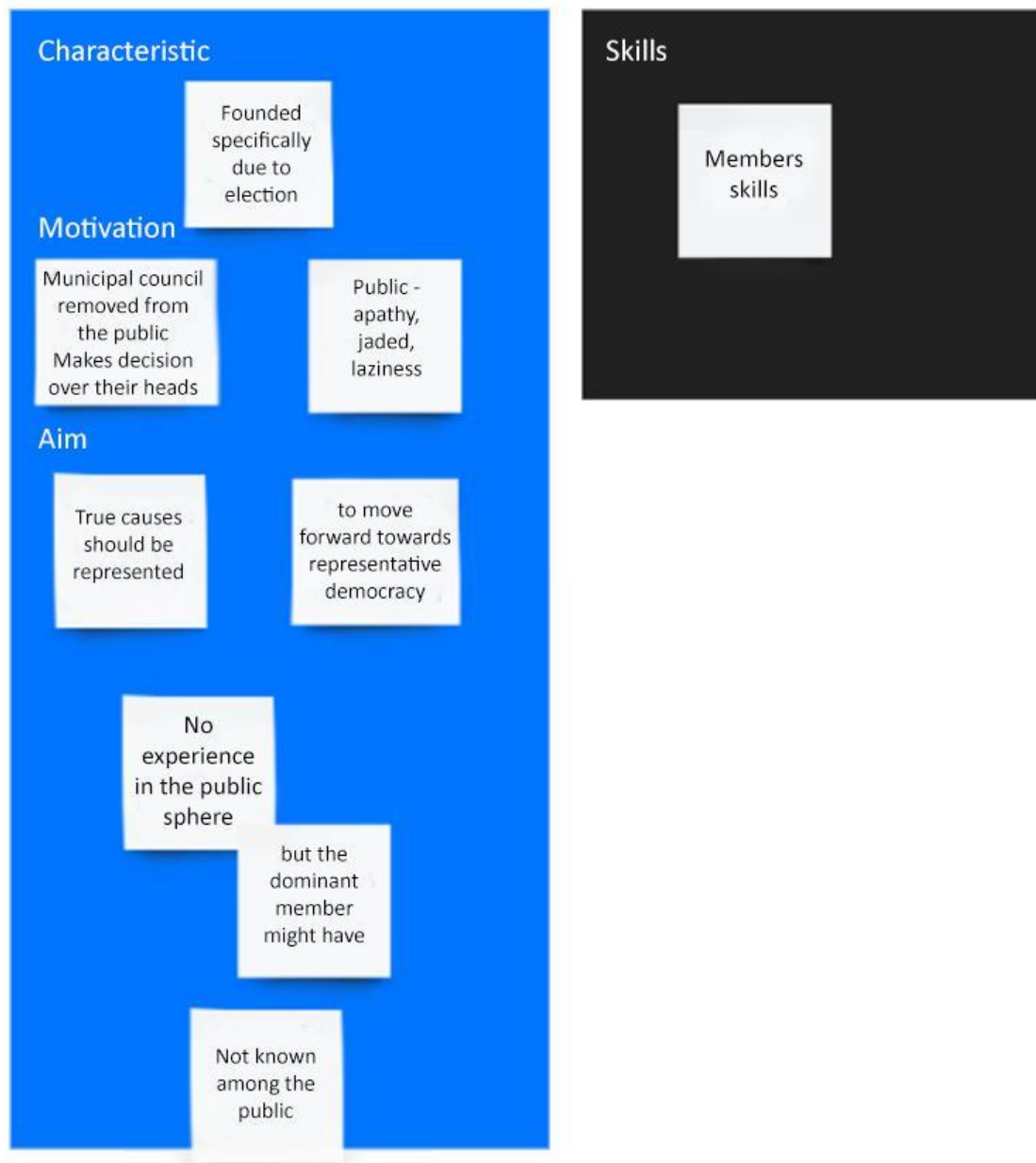
The basic motivation behind their establishment is similar to older civil organizations except they saw a chance to participate in the municipal elections. This does not mean that members of these organizations did not have any civil experience earlier, however they are no more than 2-3 years old and have less experience together. They were considering an independent candidate for the election, because their methods of pursuing interests failed to succeed. If they have been proved to be ineffective in reaching changes from outside, then they have to get inside.

"One needs to be inside to reach any results." "We specified directions where we wanted to take the community, where citizens have more impact on public affairs."

Generally, their programs were based on issues they had experience with.

The success of these organizations highly relied on the experiences of their members as they had little prior campaign experience If there were 1 or 2 among them with such knowledge, they could

undoubtedly succeed. However, there were those who lacked both knowledge and experience: *"We were total amateurs, experience was compensated with diligence."*

Compared to older civil organizations, their other disadvantages were the lack of awareness and the modest network. Young organizations had to work on these while simultaneously building their campaign from scratch.

Their background and organisational structure:

- They were founded on the basis of increasing dissatisfaction rather than a determined issue of great significance:
    - municipality does not work for the residents;
    - residents are not touched, not involved;
    - issues not solved for years;
    - stagnating towns/parts of residential areas, lack of settlement development or inadequate direction;
    - opaque operation;
    - possible scandals in the municipality operation.
- The aim is when they are getting in the municipality they should have a say in local issues, residential representation of interest, move towards transparent operation. Possible move of the local municipality operational practice towards participatory democracy.
- The group doesn't have history in public life, but some of the members might have.
- The central part consists of 10-12 committed, active members.
    - Upon this 30-40 people join for bigger events or during the campaign in case of bigger towns.
- In small towns, only the active central part exists, #dissatisfaction #change #representation

Advantages:
- motivation, desperation;
- committed members;
- advantages are coming from the members' knowledge, skills, experiences;
- clean slate from the residents' perspective.

"Nothing has been developed recently, it has remained a small village. Being civils, we thought to be able to change."
"People feel to be left

"Image building was very important. Our base also says that if we don't have money and we can't show ourselves, then we shouldn't stand for election."

Dangers/difficulties:
- as a team we don't have any practice, network, everything depends on the individual members:
    - skills;
    - relationships.
- not visible among the residents;
- doesn't have a base, it should be built in parallel with the campaign.

Deficit, necessity	- work as a team; - visibility among the residents; - identify the kind of knowledge needed, and also involve the appropriate person.
Campaign	- they don't have knowledge related to campaigns, mostly everything is being worked out during operations. - BUT! A lot depends on the founders' backgrounds. If a team of professional is getting formed, so they have every piece of necessary knowledge, because they participated in i.e. a campaign strategy training, or a member has experience in campaigns/mobillization, it is a huge advantage.
Electoral success	- organizational force, motivation forming the basis of the organization are suddenly falling out from the organization - aims and activities are needed that can be transformed to continuous operation - seeking for identity, re-defining; - the candidate and the organization should stay credible; - the relationship, cooperation between the candidate and the
Agglomeration and specifications to Budapest	- big population - more options to recruit; - integration of newcomers and old residents (agglomeration) is in progress; - it is the strongest region of Hungary in term of economy - they feel less vulnerable, the existential dependency is lower; - intellectuals, white-collars, entrepreneurs; - various expertise needed for civil work and campaign is available within the group or they can access it through their relationships.

Recommendations on training and support required
- development of organizations.
- mobilization;
- volunteer recruitment and coordination;
- fundraising;
- communication;
- community organization methodologies;
- campaign methodologies.

Community organizing civic groups
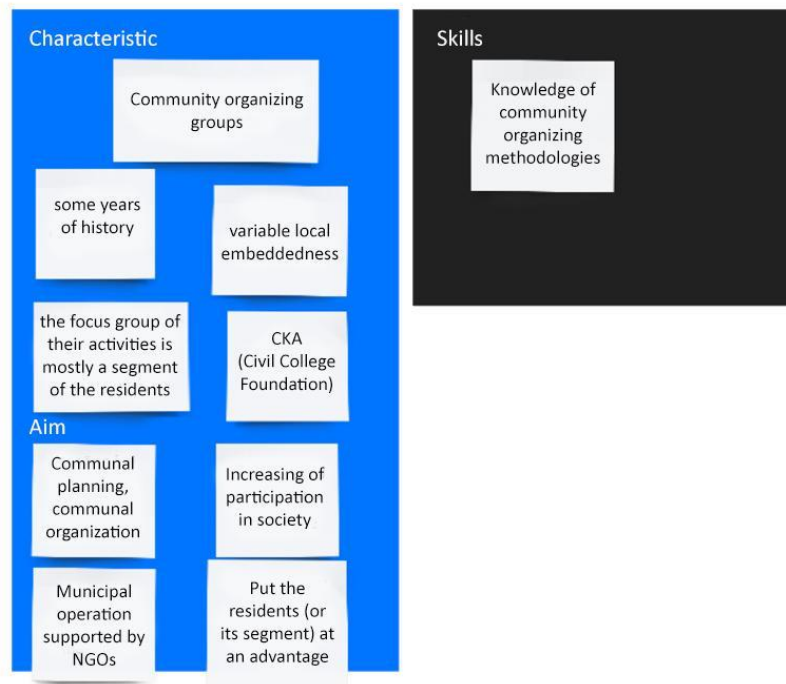
Community organizing civil groups were different from the above-mentioned other civils, however not from organizational point of view. Firstly, they were working with a specific methodology and mentoring support, they might be in need of different education than others. Secondly, they did not have a candidate to get inside, for they were concentrating on raising awareness of public affairs. Their fundamental goal was to raise the sensitivity of the local community through organizing and activating them in order to have more people on the ground and build such a network that may result in participation in an election, but in the far future only, when they had built up their strength.

"We started two years ago. We were interested if there was a need for a different way of discussing questions when it comes to public affairs. Our online investigation showed us that sharing opinions on these matters is not in fashion. Municipal councils were neglecting both disclosure of information and questions. Experiencing the passiveness of people we started the organization in order to get more citizens concerned of wasting public money and elections.

Their background and organisational structure:

- they have been established recently
- their work has been supported (or is still being supported) by CCF and HEPF ("Ökotárs" Foundation) mentoring
- they are generally not electoral organizations
- their campaign activities mainly consist of introducing/evaluating the running candidates and their programmes; helping voters evaluate who can best represent their interests; organizing informational meetings about the electoral system, the importance of voting, and the available choices; motivating people to vote
- probably supporting a candidate running for another organization

Advantages:

- strong methodological knowledge and organizational skills
- they have mentors and external expertise available
- access to professionals (relationships, memberships)

Dangers/difficulties:

- not very well-known by the public
- fear/disinterest from the public
- the methods don't work in each case
- lack of fundraising knowledge

Deficit, necessity

- being organized into a network
- sharing experience and best practice
- increased visibility (but there are also highly successful examples)
- finding the root cause of failure in case of unsuccessful actions/methods

Recommendations on training and support required

- supporting networking
- thematic workshops (fundraising, legal etc.)
- soft-skill trainings for members: non-aggressive communication, negotiation techniques
- as experienced community developers, we could take part in building communities as mentors for more inexperienced organizations

Activities and experiences related to the 2019 municipal elections

Activities in support of active citizenship

By this, we mean programs, which enable habitants to exercise active citizenship, including election-related activities, such as the organization of discussions and informational forums on the electoral system, election stakes, options, mobilization for voting and participation in the design of these programs.

The latest/last one was most frequently included in the activities of the groups involved in the conversation. During the preparation of the campaign, they endeavored to discover cases, which were important for citizens to raise their voice in. Later, these occurrences/cases also appeared in the program of given civic groups.

The electoral possibilities and the introduction about the program of a particular representative (debate, forum) were also often featured topics.

In some places, even the mobilization for voting was mentioned. However, in addition to this, the organizations focused more on the campaigns to support candidates, the survey only included a few organizations, which were active in other areas like education in connection with electoral system, elective rights, duties and opportunities. At the same time, it has become clear that this type of activity would be much more needed. Several highlighted the need for programs for the habitants, which enable them to be active and responsible citizens, who know their rights and duties and last but not least, the electoral system. A significant part of the groups involved in the conversation are not equipped with the knowledge, they felt unable to change this. This kind of awareness is only limited to membership, where their attitudes and knowledge is formed during conversations and actions, but the education of the population is essential. In the countryside this is even a more prominent issue.

Campaign activities

Preparation

The amount of work invested in campaign preparations differ in a wide range. Some of the successful organizations who run a candidate spent more than one and a half year with planning, however there was an example of a candidate who used solely networking without any prior structuring work: "*I didn't check any Know How. I was not overthinking it, just did it no matter what the odds were.*"

Present document is not aiming to reveal what preparations are needed in organizations in different phases or situations. However here is a short summary from the feedback of participants, based on their personal evaluation of what best practice entailed in the preparation.

A few percentages of the organizations started preparations for the election one and a half year ahead elections (in the Summer of 2018) by collecting all its strength: experience from earlier elections and the ability of building a long run strategy for the campaign with the team. This was hardly the common practice among them.

Actually, organized campaign team as it is with clear tasks and responsibilities of their members were very rare indeed. Most of the groups were managing their planning on a smaller scale.

Negotiations and agreements with political parties are important parts of preparations. See details on this in chapter "Challenges, difficulties".

Best practice in preparation

Planning based on strategy

The organization base its activities on strategy and their campaign is in-line with that (ideally not only their campaign strategy, but their entire operating strategy harmonize).

This required knowledge of the strategy-making methodology, professionals with relevant expertise, a general approval of the strategy amidst activists, and commitment on their part to this strategy. These CSOs have some knowledge and experience gained from previous campaigns - even at the party political line, and ideally members have trained themselves on these topics.

Fact-based planning

Knowing the voters is the key to campaign planning. In some places, data on the region's voters were analysed in advance, which played an important role in the planning process.

The importance of fact-based knowledge on voters was also underlined by the fact that several groups reported they had been overconfident: they thought they knew the resident population well but realized that this was not the case, or they had known only a small fragment, and projected this knowledge onto the whole population. This could be the case even in the context of small settlements.

Data collection (telephone polling) was useful not only in the preparatory phase, but also during and after the campaign. At certain places they did make use of it, although it does require substantial financial and human resources. Furthermore, the interpretation and use of the data are not self-evident. It could be worthwhile to develop and provide services in this area, as (with the exception of a few groups) most organizations lack both the knowledge and the funding necessary for data collection. Some sort of common service centre could be a solution here.

Examples of implementation:
- measuring the popularity of a candidate: a nominating organization surveyed people to see how much they knew the candidate, and modified their methods according to the results;
- measuring willingness to participate: on the last day, the campaign was conducted according to the willingness to participate, which had been closely monitored. Volunteers were in stand-by to encourage people to vote.

Participation in the planning

Most organizations involved voters in the planning of the programme in some way. They asked people what they wanted at street forums, public forums, during informal conversations, hearings, actions, through questionnaires. A common problem they faced was that they could not reach all layers of society.

Creating workgroups

In order to facilitate effective operation, workgroups were created to tackle specific topics, e.g. participation workgroup, communication, political work group etc. In certain cases organization

insisted that everyone should have on overview of and be involved in everything, even if it reduces efficiency, and thus, they are not open to such cooperation.

The implementation of the campaign

Experiences regarding certain methods

Canvassing (Door-to-door campaign)
Divisive. Its assessment largely depends on the organization and on the settlement. Knocking played a key role at locations where many people had to be reached, and this could not be covered by spontaneous conversations or attendance at events, purely because of the size or the segmentation of the area, or where neither the candidate nor the organization was well known. In these cases, knocking is basically the only form that ensures the delivery of the message. The fact that it is impossible to gain appearance in local media, further underpins the significance of knocking. Meanwhile it seems that better known, older, rural organizations consider it less significant: *"We did not go from door to door. Rival teams rang the doorbells after sunset, which is impolite."* These organizations preferred other methods, based on personal contact (building stands, participating in events, having spontaneous conversations). *"In my opinion knocking has no point in rural areas, we chose to attend all events instead."*

Difficulties regarding the implementation of canvassing:
Capacity. How much time and energy can be invested in the activity by the candidate? They must be skilled with the know-how of right communication tools to be able to talk to the people, to have discussions, to argue and to deal with rejection or even with hostile reactions. During the preparations they have to make realistic assessment about the time required for the visits, and use this data to prepare the plan (in many places they did not even planned or underestimated the time requirements). They have to be prepared in communication techniques and mentally as well

A canvassing method which proved to be effective:
● The "old one" and the "new one" pair up and do the canvassing together. *"When the volunteers got involved, it turned out that canvassing is especially challenging for civilians because it is out of their comfort zones, so the experienced members meant a great help for them."*
● Mini-seminars about canvassing: *"we set down with 20 people and discussed how they should do canvassing. If they hear for 1,5 hours that it is not that scary after all, we have a better chance of them coming to participate."*

Constant presence with stands
It is one of the most significant methods, highlighted by many, as a fundamental tool of public relations. It enhances visibility, continuous presence, and availability by the experienced civilians. However, it causes difficulties for many activists which they may not necessarily anticipated. Candidates may be deterred or frustrated by this task. Many of them reported that they presumed that *"people can communicate, but they came to the realization that is not true. They do not know how to address or talk to someone. So, it is not a basic skill at all."*

In some cases, organizations, in the spirit of gradual construction, are continuously present with their stands at public spaces and market places, even prior to the campaign period. Apart from increasing visibility it is also a grand opportunity for activists to practice how to reach people and how to have conversations with them. Thus, the candidates can arrive prepared for the campaign period and the organization can raise public awareness at the same time. So the organization does not have to start these from scratch in the course of the campaign. This is primarily true for recently

founded organizations. Building stands however, is equally important for older, well established and better-known organizations as well. *"We stood under the beach umbrella wearing shorts, I did not even change after work. We had our publications with us. We wanted the people to come to our stand and have a conversation."*

Public forums

Public forums have been organized with varying success. Some organizations experienced that while in 2018 there was still a relatively high level of interest, there were very few attending the events in the case of the municipal elections one year later. We have no information regarding the cause of the failure. But as it was a common problem leading to the disappointment of the members of civil society groups and the activists, it would worth it to examine the problem either in a methodological workshop or in an exchange of experiences.

Street forums

They seemed to be more effective than general public forums. At the same time, in this case it is presumed that there is some kind of community organizing activity present in the area – neighbourhood groups, street communities.

City walks

It is a great tool for conversation and availability, a functioning alternative to public forums. It was designed based on the themed city walks. It was successful, but above a certain number of participants conversations are not really possible in this form. However, it enhanced the visibility of the group. It is also a very effective way to attract volunteers and activists.

Guerrilla operations

It is a frequently used method of non-governmental organizations, which is especially useful in the process of brand building. It was implemented by even those, who do not necessarily agree with this tool, but it is such an effective way of raising awareness, that it was worth using it.

Conversation and availability

A candidate should be omnipresent. They should be at the market, at sport events, at harvest festivals, at family days, at the grocery store and should always be available for conversation. *"There is no such thing, that they just do not feel like it and won't stop and have a word"*, *"the mayor (the candidate of the CSO) is always there, because he is invited"*. *The organization itself is also holding events and actions with a low threshold",* so it is easy to make contact and if you have a question, you do not have to ask it in a forum in front of a large audience (which is usually holding back people from giving voice to their opinion). The candidate is also approachable, can be casually addressed." *Within the frame of our actions, civil society groups visited residential areas. We were planting flowers, weeding, picking up trash. A great community came together and conversations started. It is also very important that the representative of that particular area should be present too, so the residents can ask their questions. These conversations mean the real strength of the campaign."*

Replace media appearances

These organizations did not have the opportunity to introduce themselves in the local media, so they tried to make up for it through other channels, such as: they founded local online tv channels, created Facebook groups. The main role of these was to inform the public, to share the news and to provide opportunity for discussion. It is only functioning well, if they can invest enough time in it, if there is someone who is dedicated to its operation. Even so wagetrolls/ government propaganda trolls can still mean a huge challenge to the functioning of the websites.

- Creating a local/organizational newspaper: there are several important target groups, which cannot be effectively reached through online channels, that is why printed press plays a significant role in most places. As it is impossible to gain publicity in local press, wherever they could gather enough resources (financial and human), they launched their own newspaper. It works best if it not only appears during the campaign period, but has already been introduced prior to it, appearing a few times a year. This, however, requires a foreseeable budget, which can only be found in a few places. It is more typical that the publication only appears during the campaign period. *"There are many people here, who rely exclusively on the printed press. And then the newspaper was born, distributed by volunteers. It was elaborated from number zero to the end, and so was the staff behind it."*
- Creating a website for local public life.
- In several places they created websites where they could examine different topics, share events, introduce the candidates. It is only working if it is appealing, which depends on the capacity. The building of the website, the content creation, constant updates and also raising public awareness requires significant resources. Such websites were typically created where they had the required human resources within the organization.

Campaign videos

Only those could implement this method who had significant financial resources at their disposal. It is also highly dependent on the popularity of the Facebook group and the websites, as there is no other platform to share the videos.

Flyers

"Everybody is doing it but nobody really knows how effective it is, or at least no one mentioned any surveys regarding its efficiency. It is working best with personal presence (stands, knocking, conversations) and it functions like a little reminder." If you just put it in the mailbox it can not be guaranteed that it actually reaches the voter and will not be thrown out right away. The distribution of flyers requires planning and the help of activists (who, when, where is working, how long does it take…). In some places the distribution of flyers failed due to lack of planning and disorganization.

Posters

It was only mentioned from a technical point of view - what do you need to know to do it effectively. Volunteers that can be mobilized through a network can really come in handy. Having the required budget carries a great weight too. If no such financial resources are available, they can use the creative knowledge of members/activists (planning) and other resources available within the network (cheap press).

Donations and support

Anonymous donations worked the most effectively. The circle of supporters and the success of fundraising is varying. At some places local entrepreneurs supported the campaign with a larger amount, at other places significant part of the budget came from micro-donations, and it is also typical that there are no external sponsors at all and the candidates invest their own money into the campaign.

Another form of support is to provide infrastructure or equipment for free (room). Connections can enable media appearances.

Examples, good practices:

Placing donation boxes in different parts of the settlement. *"we received enormous amounts of donation. We announced the location of the donation box, and it was a place where even elderly ladies could go in and make their donations, in a convenient distance from their homes. What makes us think though, is that anonymous donations were the most prominent."*

Challenges, difficulties

Staying civilian in a political context - collaboration with political parties

In each municipality, the question of collaboration with political parties arose. Several CSOs decided against it: *"You sell yourself when making political deals. Those representatives who take part in such deals can lose their reputations. We decided not to take part, but soon realized that this also means losing all support in the council."*

Those who decided to take part in political deals gained interesting and share-worthy experience in managing and maintaining their views during negotiations, the pros and cons and a general insight into such collaborations.

On the positive side, these relationships provided a decent budget for the campaign to produce quality content for the candidate (videos, banners, billboards and flyers) as well as hands-on campaign experience.

On the negative side, one CSO supported the opposition candidate and built their campaign around him because they believed he is the one to bring real change. Since the end of the campaign he is unavailable for further cooperation.

The way CSO members dealt with the political setting and how they maintained their values is another interesting aspect and something to learn from for all other CSOs.
Examples:
- To a certain extent, it is worth making deals.
- Even though not the most ideal solution, it is adequate for the time being. For the next election, more candidates should run to earn more seats in municipal councils. "We need to be unavoidable in policial deals. Our goal is to become stronger and have the most power possible in making deals with other politicians."
- Professional campaigns were organized by party campaign specialists (and their assigned budgets). The political aspect of the campaign was always accompanied by non-governmental campaign components.
- The election program was both based on participation and experts.
- The campaign was built around program points that both parties agreed upon.

Strategic action
Several organizations had campaign strategies that were abandoned in the end. The decision was based on different reasons: the strategy was not popular with the members/activists, the activists were unable to stand behind it, there was no campaign manager or the person was not accepted by the members, the strategy proved to be inflexible in handling unexpected situations, there was a lack of knowledge in terms of turning strategy into action, or there was no person fit to manage the process.

Volunteers

Several participants reported a lack of volunteers and activists to be mobilized. The inclusion of the younger generation proved to be a problem even when the organizations could recruit a considerable amount of people.

"We were mostly able to mobilize the older generation, those close to retirement. It was mostly younger pensioners who felt they have nothing to lose if they get associated with the campaign."

Good practices in mobilizing volunteers:
- Choosing the right candidate *"Our mayoral candidate was the person who was able to make the biggest impact"*
- City walks
- Less complex activities that are easy to join (litter picking, flower planting)
- Inclusion during the campaign:
  - All activities provided easy access to enter the campaign. The goal was to gather active sympathizers and possible voters alike.
  - Participants were not only able to join in the implementation of the campaign, but could have an effect on it as well. The fact that their voices were heard and they did not merely perform commands proved to be valuable motivation and inspiration for both new and more experienced activists.
- Volunteer network: proved to be a great asset in areas where the number of active volunteers was scarce. These participants took part in all kinds of activities: putting up posters and stickers, handing out flyers, knocking on voters' doors. The volunteer network works best in the capital, however it would be beneficial to investigate where and how it may also be implemented outside of Budapest.

"We basically connected to already-existing networks. We had a list of activities for the upcoming five days. I posted the ones that needed more people so volunteers could sign up."

For several organizations, managing volunteer work is a struggle. Since volunteers are working for free and on their days-off, most coordinators feel they cannot follow up on the completion of tasks, therefore some of them remain undone such as managing information stalls in public spaces, putting up flyers, knocking on voters' doors and so on.

Volunteer management and coordination good practices:
- During the recruitment process, volunteer candidates are asked about the tasks they would like to do best.
- Responsibility given to coordinate newcomers to more experienced volunteers capable of working independently and in close cooperation with the management team in order to take some pressure off the leaders
  "This is a kind of exchange of experiences and information. We had to figure out who is going to be fit from the new volunteers to coordinate putting up flyers so the person who was doing it can go and do something else. There was mutual trust between the organizers and the volunteers."
- Clearly set and communicated strategy, tasks, responsibilities and deadlines
- Regular staff meetings to boost motivation, share and discuss possible problems, look for solutions, plan implementation and make decisions together.
- Pairing up experienced volunteers with less experienced ones.

Working with experts

During the everyday work of CSOs as well as during the campaign period, it is essential to work with professionals and experts. When financial support is lacking, professional knowledge is not a given in the team or in the broader group of people who can be mobilized.

There were instances when the success of the campaign depended on the work of the professionals (or at least the participants claimed, there is no data to support this). In some other cases, the lack of professional help meant that the organizations struggled to organize and implement certain activities the way they imagined, causing delays and resulting in a general negative outlook for the future, making them less keen on planning and overall frustrated.

Difficulties of small communities

Participants from small towns and communities stressed that their situation is so unique that they cannot relate to the experience of those coming from larger cities. Their practices simply would not work in their cases. One of the participants even attended the School of Public Life (a community-based training program to improve citizenship skills) and claimed that the practices taught there cannot be applied to their community. The need arose to examine the requirements and situation of the towns and cities outside of Budapest and especially smaller communities to learn how to overcome the most important obstacles: the lack of activists, fear, servility, passivity, apathy, aging population, migration, depopulation, the lack of middle class, lack of education in terms of citizenship duties (voting, elections..). The participants were looking for support and good practices from other smaller communities to learn how to overcome these obstacles.

The post-election situation

Several organizations have had to come to terms with their members getting into the local councils. This new situation brought the life of these organizations to a halt, as the most active members now have to attend to their obligations elsewhere. As a result, the relationship between these new representatives and the CSOs need to be redefined.

"I used to be not only the founder but the leader of the organization. I have always been proud of my team, but as a community we suffered great loss and we need to proactively prepare to face the consequences."

These organizational changes are only part of the problem. After a fast-paced campaign period, the members feel abandoned without anything to do and it is hard to keep them motivated to stay in the organization. Six months after the elections the solutions for these problems are still unknown.

Several successful candidates and organizations with members in city councils reported that their official duties and the reality of town management is very different from what they had expected, leaving them struggling between complying with working as an CSO as well as in an official body. The solution might be to serve as a mediator between the two in order to find common ground.

"When facing the reality of what you can do in a local council , optimistic ideas fade away. The ideas of us, civilians need to stay grounded, and this realization was new to me. We need to find balance between the CSOs and the authorities. In many cases communication breaks down because the civil organizations are unable to adequately word

their needs or request something unrealistic. This back-and-forth breeds frustration especially for someone who just got introduced to the system. I desperately try to mediate between the town and the organizations. This is an entirely new role for me and harder than I expected, to be honest."

The situation is equally challenging from CSOs' perspective:
"We need to decide: are we going to be watchdogs or lap dogs? Even though the mayor represents our organization, he is running an office whose means are not always aligning with our values. How can we still stand by our value system?"

There are different examples as to what extent a representative maintains contact with their respective organizations. In most cases, the relationship remains intact by means of visits to meetings, occasional updates about his life as a representative as well as listening to and learning from constructive criticism. Another example of good practice is representatives being active on their Facebook pages: answering comments and providing regular updates about local affairs, personal activities and that of the local government.

Expectation and recommendations related to training and services

Networking
There is a great need for CSOs to network and connect. This does not necessarily mean a formal network, more of an opportunity to facilitate an informal community in which members can connect. This network could serve as a tool to share experiences, knowledge and information in a quick and effective way.

"We could be of support to each other. For example, share how each of us dealt with external attacks."
"Regardless of where we live, we face similar problems. This is why sharing our experiences would be very beneficial. Like an informal network. It seems like on a local level most of us are doing well and we could learn a great deal from each other."

Supporting the building of social communities by means of
- trainings
- sharing good practices
- mentoring
- consulting

Understanding how to build a strong community is especially important for newly-founded CSOs. Organizations with decades of experience have already learnt how to build valuable connections and relationships with social groups and prospective donors. The participating CSOs organize their events to meet the needs of the community they spent years on understanding. There are certain areas where even older organizations see the potential to grow, however, their considerable and valuable experience in the basics justify a different level of education during training sessions.

As for younger organizations, it is apparent that training and support means a lot in terms of their growth as a community.

Certain organizations are excellent in reaching out to the whole community, but for some, it can be a struggle. Several participants reported that while they thought they understood and knew their community, in reality they were only able to reach a certain portion of it and their general knowledge was lacking. "*We thought we were doing better than we were in reality.*" A successful CSO with several local elections won shared their journey on how to break out of this situation:

"We were under the impression that it is enough to know the people and our candidate, but we were wrong. We had to consciously try to get to know more people through various platforms: by being present and proactively reach out to them and make ourselves known. The campaign was the end of this journey. The former mayor was excellent in mobilizing people and we had to find our ways to do so too."

Community organization methodological trainings
The experiences of participants from the community organization network confirms that the above is a good direction, an effective way to make it as widely available as possible, whether through training, mentoring or a combination of the two, although there may be less successful actions.

The good practices of the groups operating successfully during the campaign could also be presented in the form of case studies, but mostly in the form of direct experience sharing and discussion on the events organized during the project.

Many highlighted the community organizing trainings in Kunbábony and the people they met there, as knowledge and a networking system that is really useful in civic work.

Educating voters, enabling them to be active citizens
There is a problem with the electoral system, the lack of knowledge about the stakes of the election, and the indifference that surrounds the election itself. In part, CSOs involved in the conversation feel this is their own responsibility, but not in all cases. There are also examples in the countryside, when residents are more open to such programs or any kind of new information when a locally unknown organization is involved.

There are good practices among community organizers for this, for example in connection with Roma ethnic municipal elections, but in settlements where there are no community developers, this can be a significant problem. Due to the lack of tools, methodology and resources, local CSOs are often unable to -or have not been able to- afford this.

Any initiative or information sharing that can play a role in this can help. In small settlements, this seems to be a major problem.

Trainings and workshops related to ethnic self-governments
The institution of ethnic self-government is somewhat vacant in practice, mostly playing only a cultural role (e.g. running schools). At present, the stakeholders themselves are not fully informed

of what the relevant legislation actually entails, nor are they aware of the various good practices, such as advocacy. Cooperation with the local councils is also a crucial point. Because of this limited role the question arose if the representation of the interests of the Roma people could be realized through Roma local self-governments, or whether it would be more expedient to introduce a representative to the local council. Workshops supported by lawyers and sharing different practices could help with orientation.

Information about the implementation of a campaign

Summary of practical information. In organizations where either the organization or one of the key members already had campaign experience, organizing went more effectively. Learning the practical details and the legal background can take up a lot of time, which can lead to serious delays during the already tense campaign period. There were instances where planned activities were cancelled or some costly campaign elements were not utilized because of these delays.

There is also a need for assistance not only regarding technical implementation but also, for example, candidate nomination. Numerous problems have arisen with the nomination of candidates, which may be partly related to the lack of base building, but also partly to the lack of knowledge and tools. Trainings and methodological materials can help in the process of selecting and preparing candidates.

Organizational development

Communication trainings

Some of these can be useful for all activists who come into face-to-face contact with people, need to address and talk to them. This ability does not come naturally to everyone, so trainings and workshops on performance, contact, assertive and non-violent communication would be needed.

Trainings that strengthen the **debate culture, reasoning strategy and presentation skills** can be utilized specifically for the preparation of the candidates.

"What would be much needed to improve is the way we participate in political debates: we are very inclined to argue with those who cannot be persuaded, with strong emotional involvement. It can be a very important part of team development to handle disputes, to put arguments over emotions - so in general, it would be a very important help in a culture of debate if we were to deal with this consciously."

Coach, supervisor, mediator

The campaign can be exhausting for activists and candidates. Plenty of tension accumulates during work, partly due to negative influences from outside (police action, smear campaigns, Facebook trolls, even physical atrocities, verbal attacks, etc.) partly due to conflicts within the organization. Or simply because of the intense workload during the campaign itself.

There are good practices for how this has been handled within an organization (regular meetings where these could be discussed, techniques shared with each other), but external experts can also help with the process.

Beside activists and volunteers, candidates should be given extra attention. Several participants stressed the need to prepare candidates in advance on what a campaign entails, both physically and mentally, as those with no previous campaign experience will be shocked.

Not only individuals, but groups, organizations should be supported by team coaching skills, or other methods, because often the reason behind a failure is the inability of team members to cooperate, or the fragmentation of the team during the transition to campaign operation.

Volunteer management

As already mentioned in the chapter on difficulties and challenges, in addition to involving volunteers, their motivation and coordination of their activities is a challenge, so most organizations can benefit from relevant trainings or workshops

Training on fundraising methods

One of the most common practices is that the candidates themselves put their own resources into the campaign, possibly with support from the candidate's personal acquaintances. In many places, the issue of fundraising is not addressed at an organizational level, and the relevant know-how is completely missing.

External resources

Specialist pool

Access to professionals is a significant problem - not only during the campaign, but also during other periods of operation. If there is no accessible, available CSO that can help in the given field, it mostly depends on the membership and their network of contacts whether or not the necessary expertise is available for the given task. This makes it very contingent to operate or implement the campaign. On occasions planned, important activities were missed in part or in whole because of this.

Professionals needed for a campaign: lawyer, campaign manager, creative strategy planner, campaign strategy planner, creatives (copywriters, design, graphics, video, etc.), social media manager.

Additional specialists outside the campaign period: lawyer, public procurement consultant, architect, environmental expert.

Sensitization of local governments

Currently, the experience is that CSOs are not understood in the local councils , there is no practice on how to work with them (most of the time there is also a lack of motivation). Thus, groups seeking to cooperate with local governments, either from a completely external position or with the participation of a member of a representative body or committee, most often run into obstacles. The same problem arises with political parties.

"It would be important to sensitize the other side so that whoever gets into power can handle CSOs. To sensitize political parties to what CSOs can be useful for. There is a negative association towards CSOs that is difficult to overcome.

Strengthening CSO voice

The current trend where parties want to use CSOs as political tools, rather than seeing them as cooperating partners is becoming more and more problematic.
A need for a common solution and a common position has emerged.

Information

Knowledge base
A collection of legislation and related interpretations and "procedures" for typical cases that often occur in most municipalities, as well as for the campaign itself.

"There are typical cases that happen almost everywhere, if there were guides how to deal with them, what law applies, relevant authorities, etc., one wouldn't always have to start from scratch."

Introduction and dissemination of international and domestic good practices
The successes of each organization are unknown to the others. It is already a good practice for some CSOs to invite successful organizations from other municipalities that can provide interesting examples of what has been achieved in a case or even in an election. Several highlighted that, especially in the current situation, where people are indifferent and, consequently, increasingly discouraged, one such example can be inspiring. The role of disseminating international good practice is similar, and learning can be an important inspiration.

Providing information about available civic trainings, tenders, other opportunities that can support organizations.

Plans for 2022

Almost every group is thinking about how, through which activities they may partake in the elections of 2022. They were not yet ready or willing to share concrete plans, since the planning, the building of strategies has only just begun. But most of them will definitely partake in the elections in some form.

Nevertheless, plans for primaries are already taking shape. In course of reaching the agreements with the parties necessary for this, they face the same dilemmas they had in 2019. However, they already have experience in negotiating with the parties. They also have experience regarding how the membership of the CSO is affected by these agreements.

The national election is an opportunity to build communities and cooperations exceeding the borders of a given local council. Many are also preparing for this.

However, there were some groups, who, based on the experiences they had in the regional elections of 2019 (especially the people's indifference, and the "dirty campaign" of other candidates) will not be active now. They might try to actively partake in the regional elections of 2024.

Appendix

Issues to be explored in course of the research:

1. **Organizational background and local context:**
   - What external (especially local) and internal factors determined their activities in the analyzed period
   - Which factors were taken into account while setting the goal
   - What background does the organization have - does it have experience in, or history with mobilization for elections, how is it locally embedded,
   - Network of connections, cooperations
   - Organizational structure, way of functioning, decision making
   - Goal

2. **Activities regarding the regional elections of 2019**
   - What activities did the given organization have in regard to the regional elections?
   - Goal of the given activity, procedure of selecting the activity
   - Experiences regarding implementation - evaluation and sharing
   - Necessary competences
   - Experiences and lessons regarding cooperation
   - Financing

3. **Detecting hardships, deficits, necessities**
   - Hardships and obstructions that hindered the realization of their goals - both system wide and smaller, practical problems
   - What abilities/capabilities would be necessary to realize the "ideal" campaign and mobilization?
   - Missing competencies
   - Where do they need support

4. **Plans for the future**
   - Plans for further activities
   - Plans for the national elections of 2022
   - What further knowledge, resources would they need in order to maintain their activities in the future