GROWING CIVIC COMMUNITIES 2017-2020

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN RESULTS OF THE THREE SUPPORT CYCLES
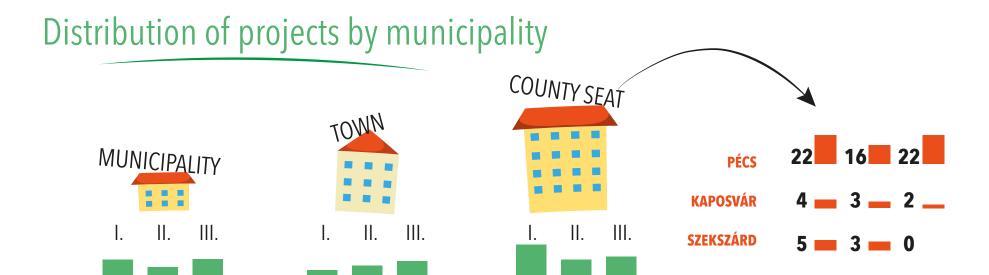
ERŐSÖDŐ CIVIL KÖZÖSSÉGEK

In fall 2017 Power of Humanity Foundation launched the Growing Civic Communities (ECK) Program in the Southern Transdanubian region, funded by the Open Society Foundations, as part of the Regional Community Centres program. Within the framework of the program, non-governmental and informal organizations could apply for projects amounting to 100 million HUF per year for three years with projects implemented in Baranya, Somogy, and Tolna counties. The main goal of our program was to make NGOs in the region more autonomous, predictable and visible. Our starting point is a fragmented society in which many people may feel that they cannot influence their situation and consequently, they are not trying. We see the solution in strengthening civil communities, so ECK applicants could apply for community support for problems identified by local communities. The support program ended in February 2021, after three cycles rich in lessons learned and successes.

ALL APPLICATIONS

ACCEPTED APPLICATIONS

111

59

I. CYCLE

144

60

II. CYCLE

209

64

III. CYCLE

SOMOGY

11
I.

12
II.

10
III.

TOLNA

12
I.

10
II.

13
III.

BARANYA

36
I.

34
II.

32
III.

Territorial distribution
of projects

There was a lot of interest in the program: the number of applications received increased year by year, the number of winners was usually around 60-61, depending on the support requested. Any kind of activity could be supported if the organization created a program to increase its social embeddedness, strengthen its communication, focus more on building a circle of donors, and place more emphasis on advocacy. According to their territorial distribution, most of the winning applications came from Baranya, which traditionally has a higher application activity. Half of the projects were implemented in this county, while in Somogy and Tolna counties, 10-13 programs were supported annually.
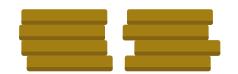
Distribution of projects by municipality

MUNICIPALITY

I.	II.	III.
22	16	22

TOWN

I.	II.	III.
6	9	11

COUNTY SEAT

I.	II.	III.
31	22	24

PÉCS	22	16	22
KAPOSVÁR	4	3	2
SZEKSZÁRD	5	3	0

Projects by organization types

FORMAL

I.	II.	III.
43	48	45

INFORMAL

I.	II.	III.
16	12	19

Most of the projects were implemented in county capitals, mainly in Pécs, but smaller cities and smaller municipalities were also involved. Regarding the registration of the applicant organizations, it can be said that both registered organizations and informal groups applied.
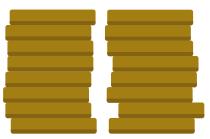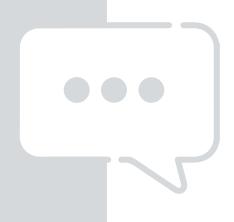
STARTER tenders

MAXIMUM
500 000
FORINT

3-6 months

AMPLIFIER tenders

MINIMUM
1 000 000
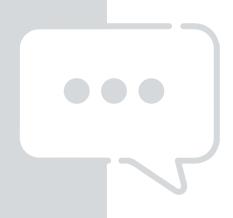MAXIMUM
3 000 000
FORINT

6-12 months

We created two tender categories according to the size and activity of the organizations, consequently, we could fund smaller groups and projects, but also more complex programs. The Starter category, which was available on fewer terms and could be applied for by informal groups as well, supported activities lasting a minimum of three and a maximum of six months, up to a maximum of 500,000 HUF. There were usually fewer applications coming here during the cycles, but more groups have moved on from here to the Amplifier category. In the case of the Amplifier category, a larger amount of tender could be applied for with higher expectations. The length of the projects was set at a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve months, with a minimum of 1 million and a maximum of 3 million HUF.

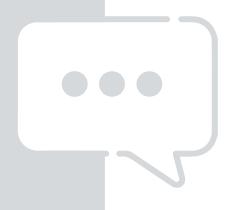**COMMUNICATION**

BASEBUILDING

FUNDRAISING

Our goal is to make the NGOs in the region more autonomous, more predictable and more visible, which requires the development of three important areas: communication, base building, and fundraising. Communication can be divided into two parts: external and internal communication. The former refers to the presence of a given organization in front of a wider audience, mostly in the media, the latter means the exchange of information between members and the direct addressing of one's own community. Base building means involving members, supporters and volunteers, increasing their activity, and building relationships with other organizations and groups. Fundraising covers the tracing and use of various tender and non-tender revenues. We emphasized the importance of these three areas in our civic meetings, in the design of our training, and we asked more about them in the application forms and reports.

Workshops
promotional events

Siófok

Balatonboglár

Tamási

SOMOGY

TOLNA

Kaposvár

Dombóvár

Szekszárd

Bonyhád

Csurgó

Nagyatád

BARANYA

Szigetvár

Pécs
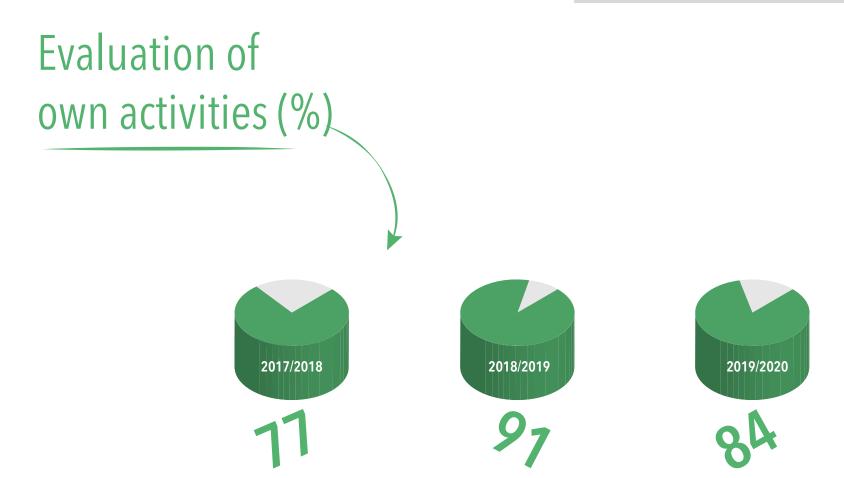
Barcs

Mohács

Sellye

Siklós

15
venues

In order to promote the program and to have an even territorial distribution, we held promotional events at fifteen locations over the three years in order to reach as many organizations as possible in person. In our experience, applications were submitted from the places where we went.
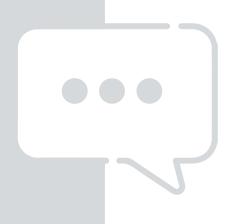
Trainings

# # #
# # #
7 topics

200
PARTICIPANTS

26
training

Training was also provided on the main areas of development mentioned above - communication, fundraising and base building. We held trainings on seven topics (such as conscious use of social media), which were attended by roughly two hundred people over the three years. A total of 26 training sessions took place, in each case we asked for detailed feedback before planning the next sessions so that we could further develop and tailor our training according to needs.

Evaluation of own activities (%)

2017/2018

77

2018/2019

91

2019/2020

84

of applicants think of their own activity
as important and believe that others do the same.

It is important to know the "self-image" of organizations because it can greatly influence the effectiveness or motivation with which they carry out their activities. This kind of self-esteem, or self-confidence, is also important because, indirectly, it has an effect on the extent to which an organization can mobilize supportive forces for its mission in its own environment. It can be said that the majority of applicants considered their own activities important in all three years, and this attitude proved to be the most positive in the second year.

Degree of public activity (%)

2017/2018

2018/2019

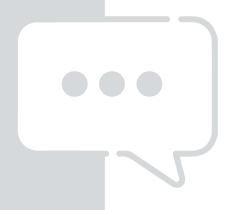**2019/2020**

60

66

62

of applicants reported that the degree
of public activity of those who are connected
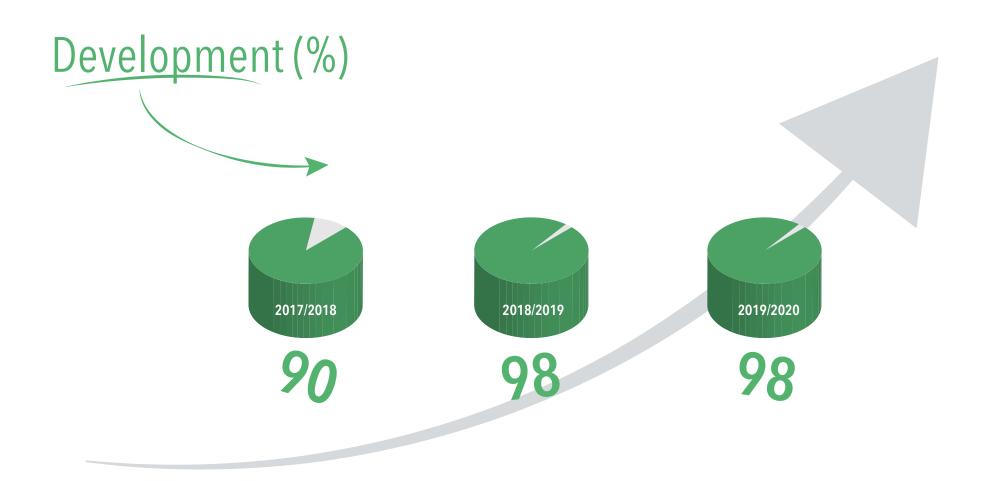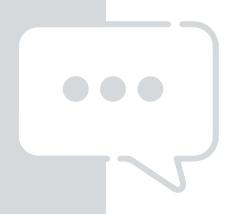to the oragnization has increased.

Another important goal was to assess and influence the public responsibility of the members of the organization, and of the narrower and wider circle of those associated with them. From the second cycle onwards, we emphasized in the call for proposals the importance of this for the programs, as we considered it essential to strengthen NGOs. It can be said that more than half of the applicants considered that activity had increased in each of the three years. This increase became most visible in the second year.

Effectiveness (%)
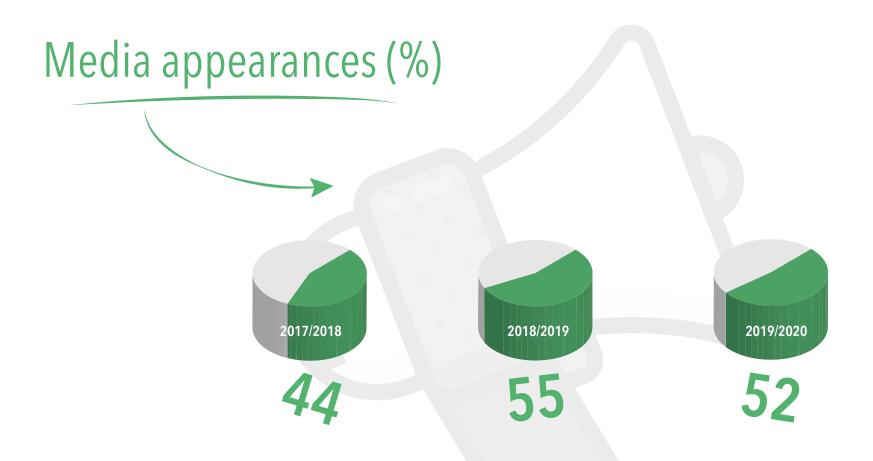
2017/2018

2018/2019

2019/2020

86

88

76

Most of the projects were clearly evaluated by the applicants as successful, which means, achieving the set goals, organizing the planned programs, or adapting to the circumstances. The success of the third year was marked by the viral situation, but the reports also showed that most of the programs were implemented despite the difficult circumstances.

Development (%)

2017/2018
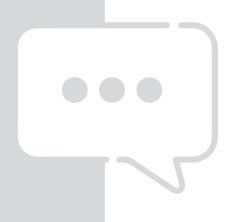
90

2018/2019

98

2019/2020

98

We were also interested in whether applicants perceived progress within their group or organization as an impact of the program. In each cycle, a significant majority were those who felt that the project period had a developmental effect on them. Other questions regarding this topic also revealed that this development took place in several areas. Applicants provided feedback on the progress in the three priority fields each year.

Media appearances (%)

2017/2018

2018/2019

2019/2020

44

55

52

of applicants reported that the
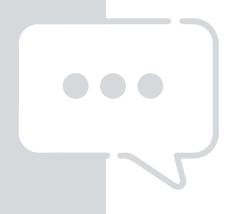organization's appearance in local
media has increased.

One way to improve the external communication of organizations may be to become more apparent in the local or wider media. In order to achieve our goal of increasing civic visibility, we considered it important to emphasize the establishment of a relationship with the representatives of the local media, moreover a continuous and consistent outward communication. Based on the results, this has unfortunately not been fully achieved, further improvements are needed in this area, but we can still report interest from the media.

188 ARTICLES

1000 PHOTOS
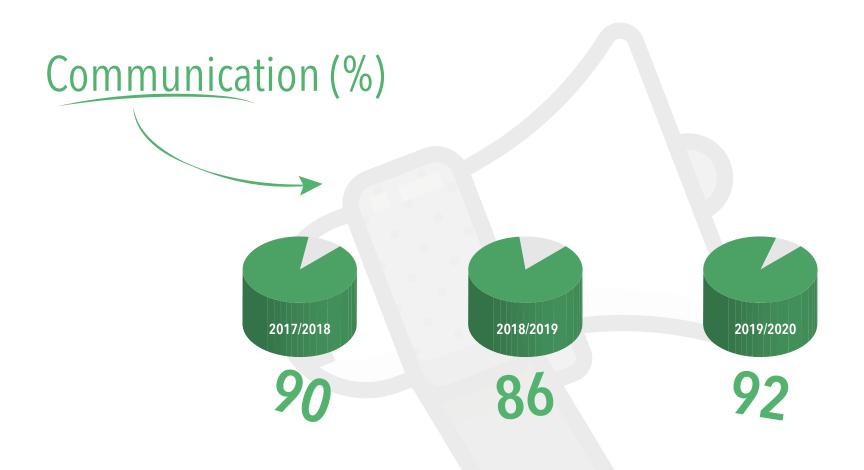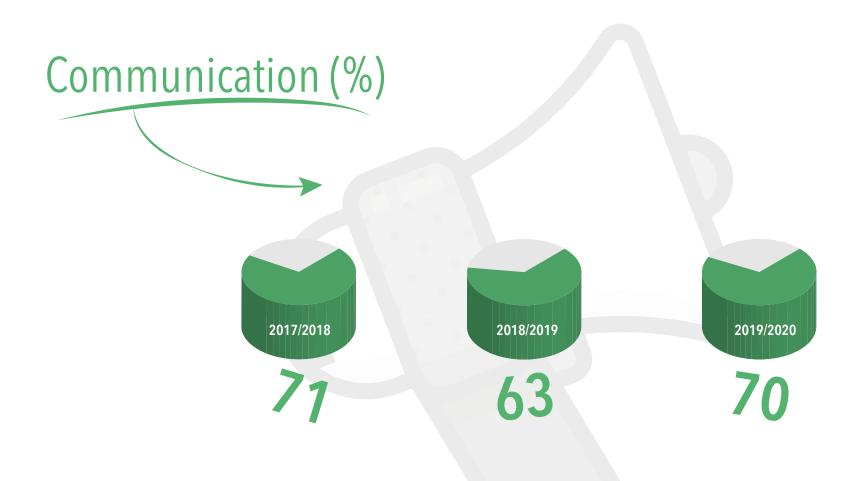
803000 CLICKS

11 SHORT FILMS

The previous result is nuanced by the fact that in the three funding cycles we published more than one hundred and eighty articles on ECK projects, supplemented by photo reports and short films that reached a significant number of interested parties. We can therefore say that the visibility of civic activity has become more prominent than before, partly due to the impact of the Strengthening Civic Communities program.

Communication (%)
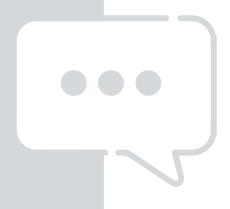
2017/2018

2018/2019

2019/2020

90

86

92

of applicants reported that
the organization has taken a step forward
in reaching out to local and wider communities.

The change in the perception of reaching out to local and wider communities also belongs to the field of communication. A successful address can be the basis for a subsequent successful involvement or request for support, so this is also extremely important for the survival and development of the organization. A significant proportion of applicants in all three years considered that they had made progress in this, with the number falling below 90% in the second year alone.

Communication (%)

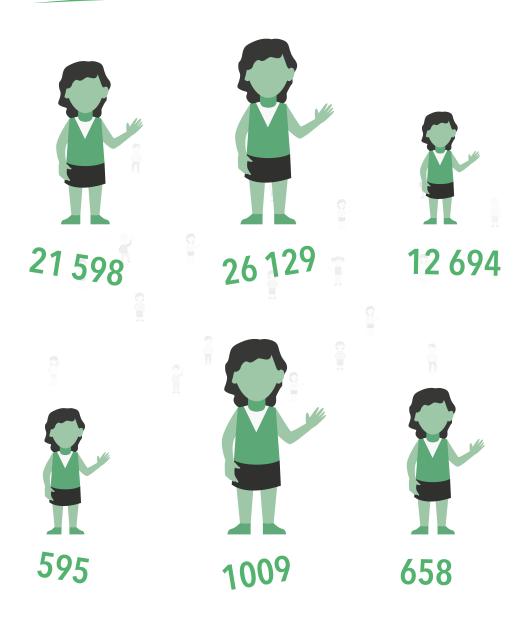2017/2018

2018/2019

2019/2020

71

63

70

of applicants reported that
the organization sees their use of communication
channels as more active and conscious.

Perceived development of an organization's communication can be seen through the active and conscious use of both external and internal channels. In all three cycles, the majority of applicants considered that they had made progress in this area, but in each case they also expressed the need for further development.
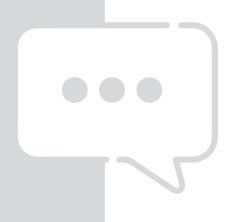
Involvement/Base building (person)

21 598

26 129

12 694

595

1009

658

Number of event attendances
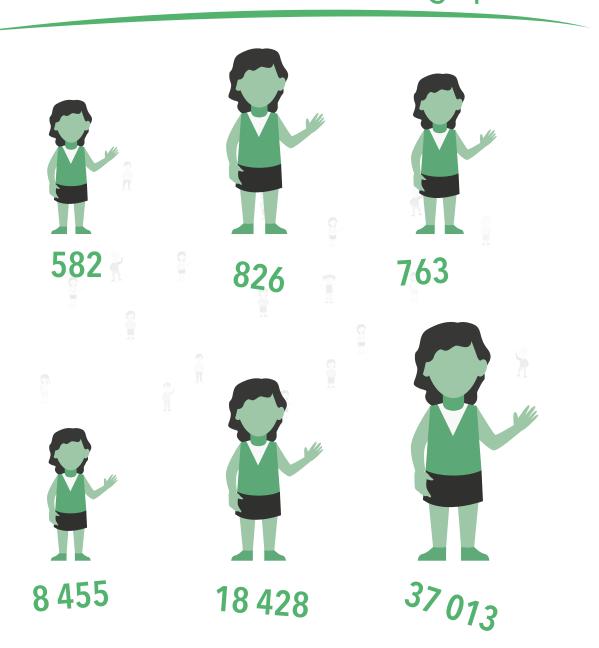
60 142

Number of event organisers

2 352

We asked not only scale data but also figures as indicators of civil visibility and the prominence of activities. One such indicator could be the number of program visits to events organized by applicants, which totaled more than 60,000 people in the three cycles. More than 2,300 people took an active part in organizing and running the events. These figures show that there was a great deal of interest in the programs organized by the applicants, the organization of which also activated many people.
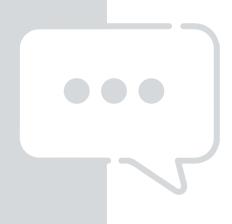
Involvement/Base building (person)

582

826

763

8 455

18 428
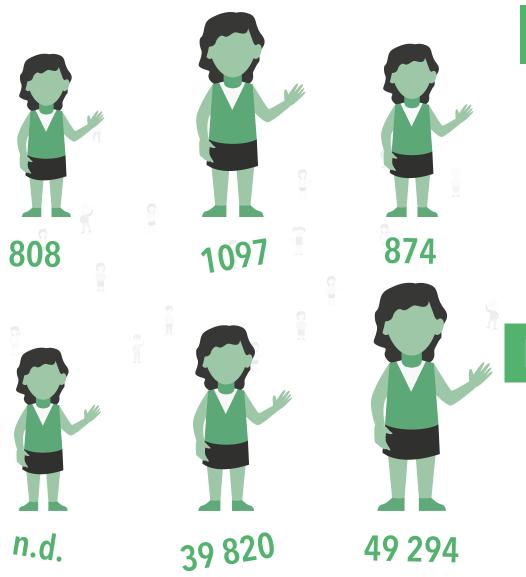
37 013

Number of inner circle

2 171

Number of wider supporter's group

63 896

The number of the most active members, namely the inner circle of groups and organizations, exceeded 2,000 in the three cycles. The largest increase can be observed between the first and second year, and then for the third year, probably due to the epidemic, this number decreased. The total number of supporters, i.e. those who like and follow the work of the applicants but do not take an active part in it, can be estimated at almost 64,000. Significant growth can be observed as the program progressed, with the number of supporters almost doubling year on year.
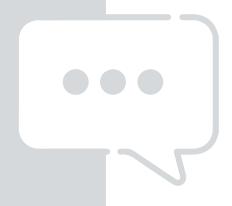
Involvement/Base building (person)

808

1097

874

n.d.

39 820

49 294

Number of regular volunteers

2 779

Number of Facebook supporters

89 114

The number of regular volunteers exceeded 2,700 people during the three cycles. The initial increase turned to a decrease for the third cycle as well, as was already observed for other data. Unfortunatelywe do not have data on the number of Facebook supporters from the first cycle, but in the other two years it reached a total of 89,000 and clearly increased to the third year.

Involvement/Base building (%)

76 2017/2018

86 2018/2019

89 2019/2020

of applicants find it important on the one hand, to involve new people, on the other, to succesfully activate members.

86 2017/2018

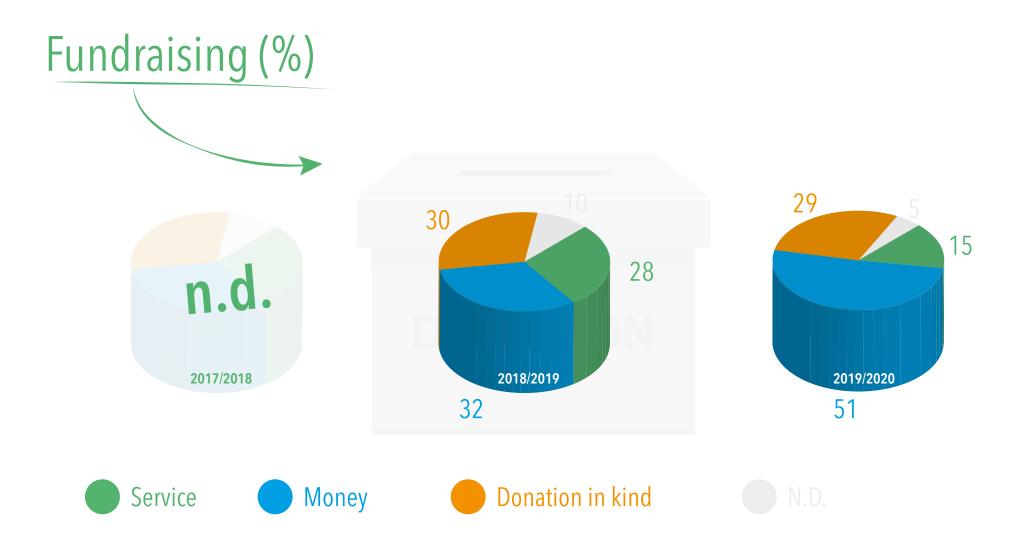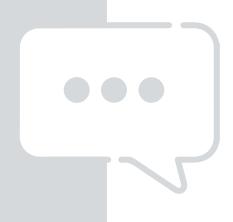**81** 2018/2019

78 2019/2020

of applicants formed new contacts successfully during the project period, which strengthen their work in the long run.

One of the most important aspects of the survival and operation of organizations is to ensure a permanent number of members, or to increase it by recruiting new ones, and also to activate the members and volunteers. In the first statement, we asked about the perceived importance of this, so we could get an idea of the attitude of the applicants towards this issue. We can say that the number of those who considered it important to reach out and activate people increased in the three years: almost 90% of the applicants have thought so in the last two years. The second statement asks about the other component of base building: building relationships with other organizations, and networking. There is a declining trend in the responses of the applicants, from an initial 86% to 78% in the third year, but it can still be said that the vast majority was successfully networked during the project period.

Fundraising (%)

n.d.

2017/2018

30
10
28
32
2018/2019

29
5
15
51
2019/2020

● Service   ● Money   ● Donation in kind   ● N.D.

Activities aiming at collecting resources outside of grants

An important step in achieving financial, and thus general, independence is to increase revenue from non-tender sources. In our question on this, we were able to separate the following activities. By service, we meant that the applicants received income in return for the activity they performed. To monetary offers belonged cash donations, but also items received at a discounted price, tickets and 1% PIT. Donations in kind were offerings that did not focus on money, but on objects or investment of time and energy. Unfortunately, we do not have data on the first cycle, in the second year the mention of sources was more or less balanced, while in the third year, probably due to the epidemic situation, monetary donations became the most prominent.

Finances (%)

of applicants think that their work is valuable and others do the same and support them financially.
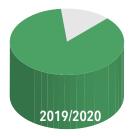
2017/2018 78

2018/2019 78

2019/2020 79

of applicants think that forward steps were made in the sustainability of organizations.
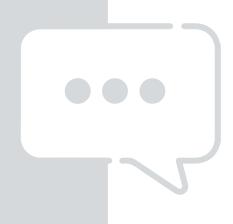
2017/2018 60
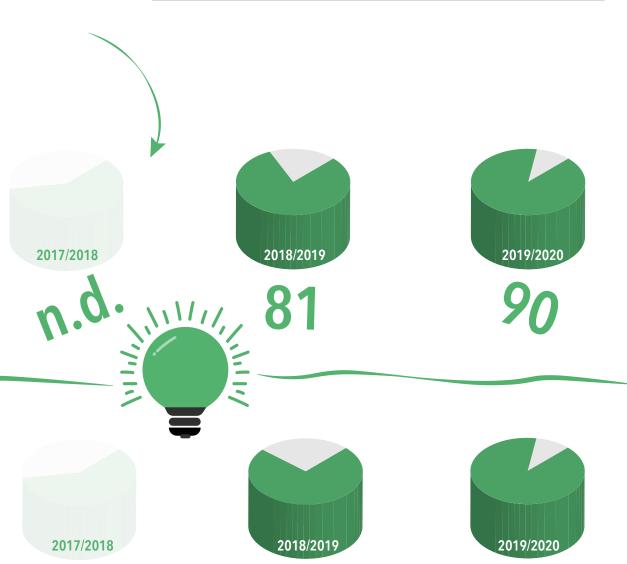
2018/2019 82

2019/2020 86

The first statement is an attitude question that involves evaluation of applicants' organizational performance from the perspective of themselves and others. The answer to this question may affect how much effort an organization makes to become financially independent. In all three cycles, almost 80% of applicants considered their work to be valuable and therefore worthy of financial support. The second statement assessed the potential impact of the ECK program on the sustainability of the organization, which is one way to achieve organizational independence. This has been growing year by year: in the first year, only 60% of applicants, then in the second 82%, and finally, in the third 86% thought that progress had been made.

The functioning of the organization (%)

of applicants think that their organization works more conscious and planned than at the start of the project.

2017/2018

n.d.

2018/2019

81

2019/2020

90

of applicants think there are solid roles and responsibilities in the organization.

2017/2018

n.d.

2018/2019

74

2019/2020

90

The first statement in the figure focuses on the perceived functioning of the organization: in our opinion, the indicators of its maturity can be awareness and planning. Unfortunately, we do not have data on the first year, but based on the second two cycles, more than 80% and 90% of applicants considered their organization to be more planned and aware due to the impact of the program. Equally important information about how an organization operates is whether it has established roles and responsibilities. As with the first statement, unfortunately, there are no data for the first cycle, but for the third cycle, the number of organizations with a change in this area increased from 74% to 90%.

Overall, the program has had a positive impact on organizations: they have strengthened in areas we consider important. In the first year, most of our energy was used to run the support program, so we involved external experts for training on the three main development areas. In the second round, on the other hand, we developed and held training based on the needs of the applicants, the positive effect of which was manifested not only in the feedback but also at the level of our data. In the third year, we can highlight the successful overcoming of the difficulties caused by the coronavirus epidemic and the adaptation to the situation with online training and programs as the most important milestones. All in all, we believe that over the three years we have been able to ensure the successful and efficient operation of our support system based on the feedback. All this perhaps shows that the ECK has become one of the most important support programs in the South Transdanubia region.

EMBERSÉG
EREJÉVEL

ERŐSÖDŐ CIVIL KÖZÖSSÉGEK

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