

A summary

of the **C**entral and **E**astern **E**uropean **C**itizens **N**etworks's workshop:

Citizen's Participation Week in connection with Information Technologies



2007 may 15-16, Tallin, Estonia

a report by Varga Máté and Madarász Csaba

The workshop and its results

21 person from 13 countries were participating in the workshop before the conference. The workshops were divideid into two parts. The first one was dealing with the Citizens Participation Week evaluation, and the second one was dealing with the Information Technologies topic.

In the next pages, we would like to give you a general review of the training, and as well, to provide some information about the CPW (you can find both calls at the end of this document). We will use e-mail to facilitate the process to the next step. Keep on watching your mailboxes!

@to all

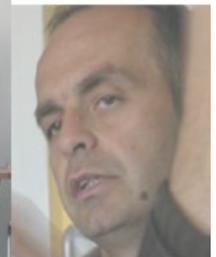
THE EVALUATION OF CITIZENS PARTICIPATION WEEK

(a summary by Varga Máté)

At the first part of the CEECN's training in Tallinn we focused on the framework and the implementation of the Citizens Participation Week. After two years from getting started with that issue, it seems that we all have some theory and practice in our minds, but also seems, that we are still struggling with the basic questions, like why, what, and how?

To move forward and try to define a kind of new framework of the implementation, the training's main objective was to get a common understanding, and to clarify:

- the obstacles and difficulties of organizing the CPW
- our visions and expectations related to the issue
- the concrete possibilities to promote the common implementation.



1. Obstacles and difficulties of organizing the CPW

We asked everybody to write about the general problems with citizen's participation in the CEE region (1), and the local (organizational) problems about CPW implementation (2).

We used the flipcharts to collect the different opinions, than we asked everybody to rank the importance of the problems. Here you can see the most important problems and obstacles.

(1) General problems with citizen's participation in the CEE region

- **Low interest** in PB issues - (Public Administration(PA) and citizens)
- Growing **disbelief** (trust)
- Lack of **knowledge** how to change
- **Culture** of participation
- They don't realize, that this is for them
- Don't have the capacity formal implementation of inclusion (PA)
- Negative perception of ngos
- Lack of government readiness
- Lack of cooperation between ngos
- Lack of willingness of democracy
- Too many issues - makes them splitted (citizens and ngos)
- People lost heir confidence in change
- Lack of trust in their own power
- PA consider as a threat
- Political Crisis - tooks the attention of the media
- The differences between rural and urban areas
- Too many players in the field of CP
- Servant behaviour
- Lack of information - what is CPW?
- Lack of consciousness

(2) Local (organizational) problems about CPW implementation

- Lack of capacity, tools and resources of the org
- Low priority for CP
- The difficulty to link the local action with the international level
- Lack of capacity - general
- Limited thinking - what to do?
- More common and concrete programs
- The lack of national networks/competition among CP actors
- The CPW is too much action oriented
- Too complicated logo, design
- More common and concrete programs
- The difficulty to link the local action with the international level
- Low interest of international media
- Find good common symbolic activities

2. Visions and future expectations

We used the Future Workshop Method and asked the participants to create groups and imagine the CPW in 2010. We did not have to think about money, we have had unlimited monetary resources, capacity and links. The task was to visualize the feelings on the flipcharts by drawing and pictures from magazines.

Possibilities

We all had to think about our offers for the CPW, what we can bring, what we are able to do, what is worth to do. Than we created groups again, and ask the groups to discuss the individual offers and try to find those, which can be done by everybody in the group during the CPW, so try to find an agreement on common activities. We also asked what they would need from the Network as a

supporter of country activities. We got the following results:

- 34 points- Common issue action: concern about the situation in Russia, Belorussia democratic reversals
- 6 points- Survey in all countries and analysis
- 21 points- Common video conference/bridge
- 16 points- Event with international actors (World Bank, UNDP, MOTT, OSI)
- 16 points- Symbolic action in all countries - same thing same day (letting birds to fly, balloons, fires etc.)
- 14 points- Day of music, concert in all countries
- 11 points- Marathon - green day, citizen's day
- 8 points- Petition over the net
- 2 points- Public debate on common issues
- 2 points- Articles in newspapers for local PA on the state issues
- 2 points- Day of books to read
- 3 points- Roundtable - regional video conf and media coverage
- 3 points- Fire gatherings + discussion on CP
- 2 points- Incorporate cp activities
- 1 points- Send round something to all countries act together on common issues

There was a strong conversation about the first one, as one or two participants gave almost all of their points for that issue, so this can make some confusion. From the other hand we agreed that this approach needs more strategic discussion, which probably won't influence the CPW 2007.

Requirements from the network

- Technology support
- Tabulation analysis of surveys
- Clarify Campaign and coordinate action
- Promotion of CPW - press, international level
- Simplify the logo, poster

Results, subjective recommendations, questions

You could already see the results of the Tallinn Workshop, which shows that in general we have the following possibilities to act together during the CPW 2007:

- 26 points- **Survey** in all countries and analysis
- 21 points- Common **video conference**/bridge
- 16 points- **Event with international actors** (World Bank, UNDP, MOTT, OSI)
- 16 points- **Symbolic action in all countries** - same thing same day (letting birds to fly, balloons, fires etc.)
- 14 points- **Day of music**, concert in all countries
- 11 points- **Marathon** - green day, citizen's day

1. Firstly we would like to ask all member countries to find a person who will be **the responsible** for national CPW in your countries. Somebody, who really has the competence and the strength to implement a programme like that. This group of representatives can serve after as the **Main Organizing Committee of the CPW**.
2. As the survey issue was presented and suggested from the Hungarian side, we agreed that we send again the survey material for all of you, what now you can find under our last topic. **We**

kindly ask everybody to check this material and sign if you are still interested in surveying in your own country during the CPW.

3. It seems that all of us agreed that we want something like a **symbolic action** for the CPW opening. We also had some concrete ideas, like: letting birds to fly, balloons, fires.
4. We ask those who had the ideas of **Marathon, Day of music, Event with international actors** to write more about their suggestions under these topics to let everybody to have a more clear picture about them.
5. We did not have the time in Tallinn to speak about the **technical framework** of the CPW. Last year we used a common call for ngos to join the CPW in the different countries. We also used a common press material to influence the media. We agreed also about some deadlines. We would propose the following ones for this year:
 - distribution of the **national calls** - end of June
 - send **national plans** - end of July
 - influence media by common **media coverage**, and other net distribution - continues from July
6. We also have to decide the **logo issue**, it seems that everybody agreed to simplify the logos would be helpful.
7. **What exactly you would need from the CEECN** to increase the success of the CPW? If we have a chance for funding some activities or technical support, what would you need?

THE TOPIC OF: INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

(a summary by Madarász Csaba)



In the workshop's second part we have been dealt with IT issues, from a user and organizational perspective. Personally, I have had a short, but extensive time with the participants of the workshop. It became obvious, that there is a big diversity exist related to the participants (organizations) ICT (Information Communication Technology) skills and usage. This was only measured by a non-formal way, during conversations and the workshop's questions, but it has showed me the picture.

What can be said is that all organization are conscious related to their web presence and internet usage (although, there is a huge difference related to the countries e-readiness and the role internet is playing in the organization's life).

The workshop's success and failure

The technology workshop's main target was to introduce what is hot in the technology field, by highlighting topics, that are marked as successful tools and services related to on-line community, non-profit trends.

During the half day workshop, we have touched applications related (or in the future possible relations) to the CPW and its organization and communication. We got familiar with the notion of RSS, Mapping and Tagging, and also become a bit more conscious about the on-line trends and possibilities of communication in a network basis.

Related to the main task, the workshop succeeded, but only a part of the planned services and tools were introduced. According to the time schedule, getting into the depth of using new tools and become conscious of their possibilities and values are failed. Not only failed because of the lack of information about the participants, but also because of the limited time we could spent on this issue.

(Personally I feel really sorry, that we could not get in to the detailed possibilities and applications for a better CPW management and presence, but the lack of this task made me motivated to move forward. In the next week, presentations and an e-learning course will be released in this topic.)

Results, subjective recommendations, questions by Madarász Csaba

As a little bit of outsider from the formal borders of community development, I would like to share a kind of vision, perspective, that has become a dominating pattern of my mind, since I have become more conscious about CPW and the Network member's activities.

It is growing out from the experiences we have had together, and all the formal and non-formal information, that I have received from all of you.

First of all, I have to clarify, what does the CPW mean to me, as a member of the network.

- The only region-wide public event-practice of the networks's target aims.
- A huge possibility to help each other, to impress, inform and express issues, that are important for the different communities involved in community development and participation issues (not only for the network members).
- A vast opportunity to cross-connect actors, to get and show thematic images of many areas of participation on a country/regional basis.
- Represents a trans-national cooperation possibility of the network members
- A personal challenge, to become motivated to share ideas and visions, and to take responsibility and practice real participation.
- A beautiful bunch of organizational challenges. To dedicate human resource, courage, responsibility to many tasks, and to work together in different countries.
- A good opportunity to practice leadership in this field.
- A very good opportunity to practice solidarity. Some of us are really in a bad position. What would you do, if one of your friend would be in their situation?

The CPW needs to be also **improved by IT!**

That was one of the main results of the workshop.

How could have been other?

How could be using IT for CPW one of our best and valuable practice?

If we look at the numbers of the participants of the countries in CPW, it is not an event (hopefully yet), that represents the effective cooperation and well organized efforts of the network members.

It is one of the biggest challenges of CPW organizing committee, to find the way to motivate, make move the members!

It is a challenge of leadership. (I can not be sure, what will happen after the end of Mott's grant, but I assume, that one of the best possibilities is to run up CPW to a higher level.)

Recommended areas of improvement (in general)

Resource motivation

Not only the members, but the network should dedicate resources to the CPW. The members should dedicate resources to the CPW planning process as well.

Support challenges

The evaluated CPW needs to have a stable background and support for organizations. E-mail is good, but not for this topic. The network has to adopt the use of new technologies to the CPW process and be a forerunner of effective technology use in the region.

Communication challenges

Participatory culture is wide and diverse. It has a lot of roots in many social areas. We need to map them, and use this map to create programs, to form partnerships to realize the events and activities.

We need to improve the international and local media coverage.

We need to make the youth to feel comfortable at our programs.

Summarizing this topic: we need to setup standards for events, and the whole events. (environmental friendliness, communication, non-violence etc.)

Using IT for CPW

Just a short summary, related to the most important tasks from the CPW and IT

We need to have a collaboration environment, that supports the organizing of the CPW, in every country.

We need to have a good website, that shows at least:

- the events in country basis
- the events in different areas
- the events on a map
- the partners and collaborators
- the survey(s) and its result
- the leadership in citizenship education by the use of new media (edutainment)
- a leadership, community blog of the organizers

APPENDIX

The 6th International Training of CEE Citizens Network Tallinn, Estonia May 15 - 16, 2007

Citizen's Participation Week in connection with Information Technologies

We kindly invite the CEECN's members to a two days workshop, containing well-known training methods to improve the effectiveness of our important initiative (CPW), and our ways of thinking about Information Technologies.

The workshop will be divided into two parts:

1. CPW – the past, the present, and the future – utopias and real standards
2. Old challenges, new technologies – changing technology landscape for better communication

1. After two years of organising the Citizen's Participation Week we know much more about our real potentials, possibilities, weaknesses and risks related to that issue in the different CEE countries.

It seems, that we all consider the CPW as an important task for the CEECN, and we are open to find the ways for better and more concerted implementation.

What we need is time, for better understanding, for constructive discussion, for various ideas and especially for basic agreements.

We feel, that our task is, to provide the necessary coordination of your thoughts during the time we are together, and try to transform our visions into real plans.

The methodology of the workshop will let us:

- to open our minds and to express our utopias,
- to show the very realistic characteristics,
- to find a basic framework, what we all feel acceptable

At the end of the day we will create a guideline, a list of standards for organising the Citizen's Participation Week

2. The getting the potential of new media for community organization

Keywords: tagging, mapping, bloggin', wiki, rss, broadcasting, social networking and collaboration, exercises

The new media has reshaped our world in many ways. We are faced with a complex challenge: we need to get more attention to the important topics, and we need to know, how to do it. The new media landscape of communication is not only stoned by paid services and software, but also flowered with free and open source tools.

In this new world, communication effectiveness is one of the main challenge for everybody.

It is one of the key factors of community participation – general in life and in organizations as well.

To be good presenters of our organization, mission, personality, aims or even wishes, we have to expand our consciousness to the mediatized world, and know, what is useful for us and where to look for it.

During the second part of our training we will participate in a discovery exercise of finding **what is hot in the new media**, and we will make some interesting mind expanding exercises.

As a participant of our workshop, you will be **inspired, called and leaded to action.**

Whether you are using new communication technologies for your organization or not, you will become familiar with possible solutions for real life communication problems.

We are looking forward to meet you in Tallinn

Csaba Madarasz and Mate Varga

What is citizens participation week?



Will you take part in Citizen Participation Week?

The member countries and member organizations of the Central and Eastern European Citizens Network invites everyone who considers the development of a community-based society important and is able and willing to do something for the cause, to act as an organizer or participant in the events of the Citizen Participation Week.

Who is the Network?

The CEE Citizens Network is a social development initiative involving 17 countries. Its main objectives are to:

- Increase awareness of the general public throughout CEE on the potential and impact of citizen initiatives.
- Increase skills and capacities of citizens to more effectively participate in local and national development.
- Promote citizen participation throughout the CEE region.



To pursue the above goals, at its conference in Belgrade (12-15 May 2005) the CEE Citizens Network decided to initiate a series of simultaneous actions in the 17 member countries called Citizen Participation Week.

What is Citizen Participation Week?

The CPW is a week long campaign, a collective and emphasized manifestation of the Central-Eastern European networks of citizen initiatives in order to have the issue of citizen participation presented in European media, politics and civil society in a more powerful way. It consists of a series of events that call attention of the broader social environment, in a loud and perceivable way, to the importance of participative democracy. The events are meant to raise attention, putting the increase of public welfare, local community and citizen action in the limelight, while also giving evidence that all this is really able to be put into practice. The programme of Citizen Participation Week covers local, regional and nationwide actions, volunteer and civic meetings, media events, public gatherings, etc.

Form of Implementation

International and national organizing committees have been formed to coordinate the events. Their tasks are as follows:

1. to create extensive publicity for Citizen Participation Week,

2. to involve civil organizations and institutions of the member countries into planning and implementing their programmes,
3. to call the attention of the media to the event,
4. to address and encourage politicians to take responsibility for the cause, and participate in CPW's events.

The concrete activities of Participation Week are decided by the national organizing committees and the organizations joining the campaign. The national committees will submit a call in their own countries by June, in which they invite the citizens, organizations and institutions of the particular member country to join the event. The programme will be developed together with the joining organizations, and shall be introduced in July 2006.

After making the plans, support materials will be created for the media to be circulated extensively on the local, national and European level.

The calls, press-matter and the logos and labels of the Citizen Participation Week can be accessed on the home pages of the CEE Citizens Network (www.ceecn.net) and of the particular organizers.

ORGANIZATIONS TAKING INITIATIVE

Albania	Urban Research Institute. www.uri.org.al
Armenia	MILLENNIUM Association for Education and Research. www.millennium.am
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Centers for Civic Initiatives. www.ccibh.org
Bulgaria	C.E.G.A. Creating Effective Grassroots Alternatives. www.cega.bg
Croatia	Center for Civil Initiatives. www.cci.hr MAP Consulting, Inc. www.map.hr Organization for Civil Initiatives. www.ogi.hr
Czech Republic	Center for Community Organizing. www.cpkp.cz Agora Central Europe. www.agora-ce.cz
Estonia	The Estonian NGO Roundtable. www.ngonet.ee , www.jti.ee , www.emy.ee
Georgia	International Association „Civitas Georgica“. www.civitas.ge
Hungary	Hungarian Association for Community Development. www.kka.hu
Poland	Foundation in Support of Local Democracy. www.frdl.org.pl NGOs Support Centre in Bialystok. www.podlaskie.ngo.pl
Republic of Belarus	Center of Social Innovations Education Center „POST“. www.csi.by.com
Romania	Romanian Association for Community Development. www.ardc.ro Pro Democracy Association Brasov Branch. www.apd.ro Community Foundation Sibiu. www.epce.ro Asociatia CRONO. www.crono.home.ro
Russia	Citizen Foundation. http://nfst.mccinet.ru
Serbia	Civic Initiatives. www.gradjanske.org
Slovakia	Center for Community Organizing. www.cko.sk VOKA – Rural Organization for Community Activities. www.voka.sk Citizens Action. www.ova.sk
Slovenia	Center for Information Service, Co-operation and Development of NGOs -CNVOS. www.cnvos.si
Ukraine	People’s Voice Project. www.icps.kiev.ua Regional Development Agency. www.ard.dn.ua Association of Economic Development of Ivano-Frankivsk. www.aedif.if.ua

How to Join

Citizen Participation Week is open to be joined by anyone who feels that the development of the human initiation, action and participation, and the strengthening of democracy and civil society are rather important issues. We would also welcome anyone who is ready to organize programmes connected to citizen participation, or organizations that are ready to link Citizen Participation Week to their existing programmes or running initiatives.

Everyone else can contribute to the success of the programme if they visit the events of CPW, that is, if you take part in Participation Week.

It’s worth taking part because:

1. Local issues can be given national publicity, and national issues international publicity

2. We can show that participative democracy is not a Utopia, but a task, a shared issue of a significant group of society
 3. Although the ideas related to participative democracy are increasingly popular, genuine initiatives are confronted with an increasing number of obstacles
 4. These obstacles cannot be overcome by isolated initiatives...
- ...and if we don't take part in the Citizen Participation Week, who will.....?!?

With any queries or suggestions, please contact the coordinator of Citizen Participation Week, Máté Varga at: matev@kka.hu (HACD - Hungary), or get in touch with the national organizers.

DO TAKE PART..... It Depends On Us!!!

National Survey during the Citizens Participation Week

Those who find the idea interesting can carry out a simple, diagnostic-type of **survey** into the level of local citizen participation, in connection with local social capital. Many organisations will organise promotional events around the survey. The programmes are designed to raise awareness, with the focus on the enhancement of public good and local community and civic action; they emphasise the importance of citizen, community and social participation, and demonstrate good practice, for example local, county and national campaigns, professional and civil meetings, media events, public meetings, etc.,.

We will provide a questionnaire for the survey, with the necessary background information. The survey can be started from 1st September, and the last day for the survey is 29th. The completed questionnaires are to be sent by 30th to the address of the Community Development Association (1011 Budapest, Corvin tér 8.).

Background information for the Survey Questionnaire

The questions below were selected from the questionnaire of the British Citizenship Survey, 2001, which was the first survey into the conditions of social capital on a nationally representative sample. Influenced by this, we carried out similar random surveys in Hungary and Central & Eastern Europe, the results of which can be seen on the web page of the Community Development Association and in issue 2004/3 of the publication *Parola*.

During the Citizens Participation Week we will limit ourselves to carrying out similar, random surveys, in which we randomly question people in order to try and get a picture of the quality and frequency of civic participation in certain local areas. We then establish the same for the "people of the whole country". This survey will not be completely justified in the sociological sense, as the result received in this way will not meet scientific criteria. However, they will provide us with a snapshot of current conditions and an impression of these issues. The combined results can call the decision-makers' attention to the importance of commissioning a local and nationwide survey into the same issues on a representative sample. Our experience shows that the assessment of social capital provides a suitable base for policymakers to include in their agenda the need for investment to increase social participation!

Dear Citizen,

Would you please answer the following questions; we are also asking several hundred of your fellow citizens in different parts of the country to fill in this questionnaire. We are doing this in the framework of the events of the Citizens Participation Week.

1. How much do you trust
 - A. the Police?
 - B. the Courts?
 - C. civil society, non-profit organisations?
 - D. politicians?
 - E. the Parliament?
 - F. the local council?
 1. A lot
 2. A fair amount
 3. Not very much
 4. Not at all
 5. I can't answer this.
2. Do you think you can influence the decisions that affect your local area?
(Please mark your answer with an X)

