Collaboration between schools and communities in Hungary

ERIKA SALY - KATALIN NÉDER – ATTILA VARGA – RÉKA KÖNCZEY

HUNGARIAN INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Our purpose was to reveal basic patterns of school community learning in Hungary and identifying feasible and desirable changes.

Hypotheses were:

A. School community learning situations are – at least at a minimum level – known in the school work. Their extent is unknown.
B. Ecoschools may use community learning situations more extensively than non-ecoschools.
C. „Smallscale" ecoschools (village schools and schools with no parallel classes) perform better in school community interactions than big ones, because of their stronger links and higher community importance or because of the lower level of alienation in villages.
D. Before 2010 (when we reformed the Hungarian ecoschool criteria, i.e. included more local and community-related aspects) the school community performance levels were lower than after it.

Methods

First we analysed ecoschool-community learning situations in 2013 through a questionnaire *(see attached)*, then compared important activities to the relevant content of the School Pedagogical Programme (SPP). All schools' SPP are available at a central register. Based on the former years ecoschool title awards, we could establish a dataset. We chose the years 2009 and 2011 for comparison, and used all award criteria that were similar to or compatible with the questionnaire. The dataset includes 154 schools from 2009 and 2013, and 229 schools from 2011. For testing hypothesis C, medium schools and average performance were excluded (i.e. we included only the highest and the lowest school community performance level group and school size group quintiles onward).

Second we checked the SPP and the dataset similarity, to explore whether SPP-s can be used as control data source.

Third we accomplished a Delphi method survey and a parallel document review to draft the state of the art, and reveal strengths and weaknesses of ecoschool practice in school community learning. We got 59 environmental education experts in the Delphi records, analysed 7 EU countries' practice and 11 Hungarian school environmental education handbooks.

And fourth we registered all the community based learning practices of the on-going pedagogical development (see all the photos).

Model of the neighbourhood – Török Flóris School, Budapest


Happy places, happy grounds. (Lágymányos Bárdos School, Budapest, new learning module using happiness sadness maps)


Bird Village learning module – Bárdos School, Dunakeszi

Backgrounds: Nine years after the first Eco-School was named in Hungary, there are almost 700 title holders within the 48 hundred schools. The Eco-School Program managed by the Hungarian Institute of Educational Research and Development builds on the ENSI achievements, and relates to the UN DESD as well. Eco-Schools take sustainability as base value.

ÖKOISKOLA

Acknowledgements

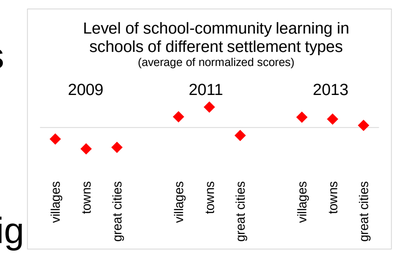
HUNGARIAN INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
„The project TÁMOP-3.1.1-11/1 „Development and coordination of 21. century public education, 2nd phase" has been supported by the European Union, co-financed by the European Social Fund."

Special thanks to Ágnes Halácsy, Krisztina Bognár-Héjja and Éva Vadon-Dobos.

Shepherds' Day, shepherds' life - Kaszap School, Túrkeve

Results

However detailed they are, School Pedagogical Programmes were found to be inadequate concerning our aims. Targeted answers were much more informative than SPP-s, while answers and SPP content of the same school showed little correlation. Within the scope of this short research, we had to **omit Hypothesis B** because of data shortage.



School-community scores of small ecoschools were 12,3; 15,0 and 16,5 in the studied years, and 11,6; 15,7 and 16,0 of the big ones. SD (standard deviation) of these scores in 2013 were higher within small schools than within big ones. Small ecoschools did not perform statistically different level of community learning than big ones (**Hypothesis C rejected**). Big, urban schools having more teachers, more students and much more possibilities showed a continuous advancement in this area.

Four of the ten shortcomings show the weak school-community relationsip and the many realizable potentials at the same time. An actual list of shortcomings and the **innovative success criteria** as well as the development directions of environmental education were laid down as well *(see attached)*.

School practice is very diverse *(see best topics attached)* as the local opportunities and the teachers are. Teachers are grateful for ideas and development directions derived from Delphi experts, and are ready to use the newly developed ecoschool learning modules, of which (**see Hypothesis A**) 41% were based on school-community learning opportunities.

There was a big step in school-community learning after 2010, however it was a short-term effect only. The renewed Ecoschool criteria invigorated school activity (**Hypothesis D accepted**).


Shepherds' Day, shepherds' life - Kaszap School, Túrkeve

Conclusions

Based on the development directions and the shortcomings, we refined the proposals for innovative teachers and schools. **School-community interactions are inevitable for schools' focus on sustainable development**. Now 51% of the newly developed learning modules relate to local community.

A closer focus and an **intense communication on the new local aspects** of the reformed ecoschool criteria are needed – independently of school size or location.

We started to communicate and **resolve the shortcomings** of the Hungarian environmental education. To change these patterns, more efforts are needed - **mainly within teacher education and training**.


Learning traditional building methods of the vicinity, Hild Architecture College, Győr

Instead of SPP-s, we should **continue our questionnaire** based research within non-ecoschools.

Feedbacks welcome to *konczey.reka@ofi.hu*