

A group of people are gathered around a table in a room with red curtains. In the foreground, a woman with glasses and a purple turtleneck is smiling. To her left, a man in a dark sweater is also smiling. They are looking at a large grid chart on the table. The chart has columns and rows, with some cells containing numbers and red markings. There are also some papers and a small red object on the table. In the background, other people are visible, including a man in a dark jacket and a man in a hat. The overall atmosphere is positive and collaborative.

**A Case Study of
Felsőrákos
in the
Háromszék Region
of Transylvania**

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Case studies are also available on the UUPCC website. See

1. <http://www.uupcc.org/plantingseeds>
2. <http://www.uupcc.org/communitydev/Felsorakos/index.htm>

November 2005

About this Version

This copy of *Reducing Conflict, Increasing Development* is circulated as a preliminary version for participants and other interested parties who might wish to make comments or suggestions. It contains the record and conclusions of a participatory needs assessment for the village of Felsőrákos, held from 24-26 November, 2005. A final and printed copy will be made available within the next three months.

December 1, 2005

**Reducing Conflict
Increasing Development
A Case Study of
Felsőrákos in the
Háromszék Region
Transylvania**

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Acknowledgements

Any undertaking as ambitious as creating an action plan for a village of 400 households requires many hands, many heads, and many hearts. The people of Felsőrákos supplied all of these in abundance, perhaps because the community hall was comfortably warm in spite of the cold night air, but more importantly because of their commitment to bring development to their community. Home stays for the visiting assessment team were efficiently arranged, as were the delicious and endless meals. The gracious hospitality was organized by Bence Réka and the Felsőrákos Women's Association.

Village leadership, especially that of Reverend Kotecz József of the Felsőrákos Unitarian church was plentiful and energetically provided. The event was well publicized, people came to the meetings on time, participation was enthusiastic and active. Simultaneously the small group discussions were focused and serious. Most exercises were completed ahead of schedule. Special thanks go to the Mayor of Barót, Nagy István who received us in his office, took the assessment team to lunch, and provided a formal opening for the workshop. Without his endorsement and support the activity would have been far less effective.

The occasion of the assessment also provided a splendid time to train a number of local facilitators in the use of community-based and participatory tools. The team comprised an illustrious group including a university lecturer in linguistics, the manager of a Romanian symphony orchestra, a Unitarian minister, a lawyer, the head of a foundation, two teachers, and a horticultural engineer. With such a distinguished group, leadership in the group sessions was professionally managed. The team included: Istók Judit, Dancs Ágnes, Farkas Emőd, Zoltán Magda, Rev. Székely János, Sztranyiczki Zsófia, Váradí Csongor, Vég Edit, and Veress András.

The Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, representing the Unitarian Universalist Association of North America, was ably led by Executive Director Catherine Cordes who superbly managed program, budget, and logistics. Mark Bohe, a member of the Unitarian Universalist church of Spokane, the North American partner church for Felsőrákos, gave heavily of his time both during the summer, when his wife Louise joined him, and for four weeks in November to prepare for the workshop. Without their dedicated investment of time and commitment to make the workshop succeed, there would be no action plans and no new task forces in Felsőrákos.

Finally it is important to recognize the assistance of the Unitarian Church of Transylvania and the International Fund for Unitarian Universalism.

Richard Ford
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Foreword

For the last fifteen years, Romanians have been on the rebound from almost a century of disruption. Their resilience in coping with coercive political rule, declining employment, and frugal government services is a credit to their strong national character and their clear sense of purpose to improve their political and economic systems.

A team of nine facilitators in community-based planning arrived in the November chill of the Hungarian-speaking village of Felsőrâkos (Racosul de Sus), an hour's drive north of Brassó in the Hâromszék region of Transylvania. Meeting for three hours each of three consecutive evenings, the team conducted a participatory planning process designed to enable the community to speak with one voice about its highest priority needs.

The meetings were well attended. On the first night about 60 people were present, mostly middle age to older men with a few women. The second night more than 65 came, this time with a few young people and many women. On the third evening (a Saturday), the young people evidently decided that Saturday nights were not for planning. Even so, there were more than 45 present, roughly equally distributed between men and women.

The participatory tools used in the three days of exercises and explanations about how to use them can be found in a publication, *Planting Seeds*, that is available for anyone interested. A Hungarian language version (*Magvetés*) is also available. Details to obtain a copy can be found on the inside front cover of this booklet. This case study documents the use of the tools, the record of what happened, the details of the priorities and action plans the community identified, and some conclusions about what was accomplished.

The methodology grows out of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) that was first introduced in Kenya in the 1980s. The approach was first tested in Romania in the village of Árkos, (Covasna County) in 2004. Felsőrâkos was the second pilot community. This case study provides information on how the program is being adapted to fit the needs of North American and Transylvanian goals to use the partner church linkage to bring development programs to entire villages where Transylvanian Unitarian churches are present.

In both Árkos and Felsőrâkos pre-assessment briefings and arrangements were conducted in advance of the three day needs assessments. Arrangements for follow up and to implement the action plans are conducted primarily by local institutions from within the Transylvanian communities, in conjunction with their partner church in North America and other partner organizations in Romania, Europe, and beyond.

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Felsőrákos: Background to the Assessment

Felsőrákos, an ethnic Hungarian village in Transylvania's Háromszék region, Covasna County, includes 400 households or about 2200 people. The village clusters around a centuries-old Unitarian church. Of the people, upwards of 95 percent are ethnic Hungarian or Roma Unitarian. The other five percent are ethnic Hungarian Reformed church members or Catholics.

Felsőrákos was founded in the early 1400s when the first known document mentions Racus-Superioris, the old name for Felsőrákos. At that time it was a Catholic community and the wealthy Jánossy family owned most of the land in a feudal relationship. Later the Dániel family would succeed the Jánossy's land interests. Rakos means "crayfish" and Felsőrákos means "upper crayfish." Felsőrákos' landowners and villagers converted to the Unitarian faith in the 16th century as a result of the teachings of the religious reformer Dávid Ferenc.

The Mayor of Barót heads the local government for Felsőrákos. He oversees a small staff of local government officers in the city of Barót (approximately 6,000 inhabitants) and five surrounding villages, one of which is Felsőrákos. The other four are Miklósvára, Bibarcfalva, Bodos, and Köpec. The total population of Barót and the five villages is just over 10,000 people. Two elected councilors represent Felsőrákos on the Barót Town Council.

The economy of the region is depressed, consisting mainly of small agriculture (subsistence farming) and mining. The area will soon suffer even more because of the pending closure of the last of the region's coal mines. This mine is three kilometers from Felsőrákos and from the early 1990s was the principal employer for the region. Today it employs about 150 miners. The government will close it in 2006. Other area employment comes from small scale timber production with one small sawmill employing ten workers.

Fifteen years ago, shortly after the collapse of the Communist government, the Felsőrákos Unitarian church entered into a productive and close partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane, Washington, USA. The people of Felsőrákos place high value on education, but many of the young people leave the area after obtaining their degrees, largely because of the lack of meaningful employment. In recent years, many have migrated to Hungary.

The region has many mineral springs but unfortunately during the Communist era the mining practices destroyed the water quality of the surface and underground water. Also, the Communist government rerouted the river causing further water quality deterioration. The coal mines are mostly open pit, with a few shaft mines. The large abandoned pits of past mines pose a major environmental problem.

With the onset of the Communist government after World War II, the village's forests became state property, resulting in irresponsible forest management. The government clear cut timber stands in many areas with no significant efforts in reforestation. Very recently the seized lands have been returned to the village and new systems of forest management and reforestation must be addressed. The village has taken initial steps on these issues.

The village has recently undertaken a major effort to develop a clean water system, in conjunction with the Mayor of Barót. The village has begun collecting water quality samples (both chemical and biological) and a volume assessment of a fresh water spring five kilometers outside the village is planned. The village intends to submit a proposal to the European Union for funds to support 80 percent of the costs. The remaining 20 percent will be covered by connection fees, secured loans on the system's assets, and future income.

Felsőrákos also has a problem with poor roads and drainage. To address one portion of this need, village leaders applied for and received a European Union grant to upgrade roads within the village. Construction will begin in March 2006 and will be completed in three months.

Felsőrákos is a spirited community that treasures its long and rich history. The people look to their future with energy and conviction. Yet they are aware that many of the needs such as those discussed in this case study are, to say the least, a daunting challenge.

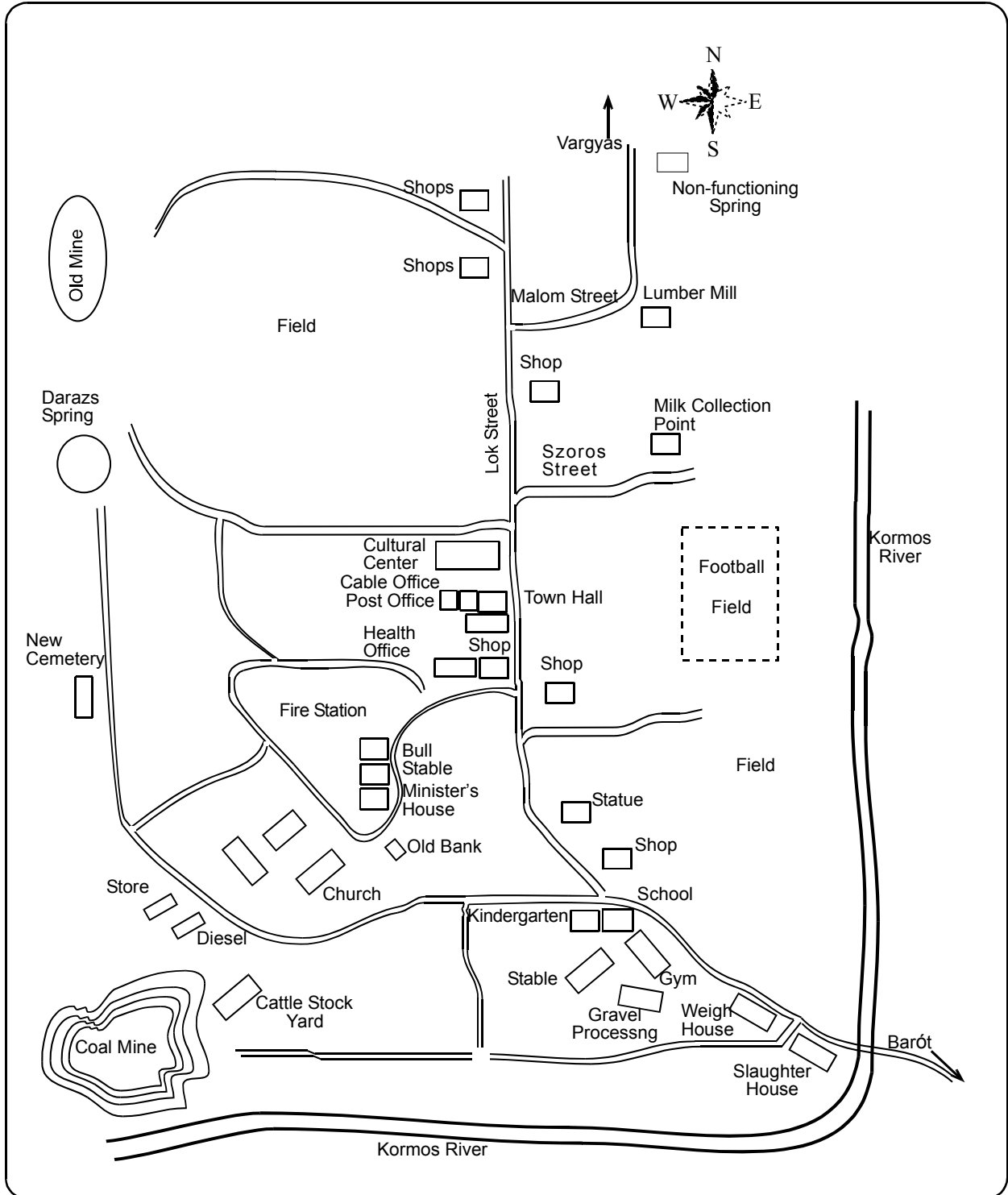
Session One: Data Collection

To open the assessment the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council (UUPCC) team divided the 65 assembled community members into four groups. Two prepared the sketch map (Figure 1) and two produced the two institutional analyses (Figures 2 and 3). The sketch map enabled villagers to begin a conversation about where they had achieved success as well as where needs continued. Success focused mostly on the recent funding for road rehabilitation and the possibilities of winning funding to install a new piped water system. The institutional analyses noted that the Unitarian church was central to the community and that there were at least four clusters of groups that worked together within the context of the church's informal institutional leadership: church-school-women's groups-cultural societies; forestry-farming-livestock; a business cluster; and a cluster of social services such as health, post office, and government services.

The mapping also helped the team to begin listening to the types of problems that kept coming up in the conversations among the map makers. A detailed list appears in Figure 4 and includes the expected issues of health, education, transport, employment, environment (trash collection), and local politics. Team members made notes during these conversations and developed the list that would be used during the second session to clarify the community's priorities on which of these needs were the most significant, in the minds of the village residents.

The institutional analysis provides insight into community life. The task asks villagers to work in small groups to prepare a "map" of its institutions. The larger the circle the more influential the group. Note how Figure 2 shows that the church and school/cultural organizations received large circles while many of the business and livelihood groups were depicted with smaller circles. Figure 3 offers about the same information from the other small working group, namely that church and school were very important and some of the business and government organizations (except for the councilors) were of less influence in the community's daily life.

Figure 1
Sketch Map



The institutional profiles also help the villagers to visualize the role of their local community groups so when it comes time to develop action plans they will have an idea about which village institutions may be called upon to take charge of task forces or help in other ways.

The community responded well to the exercise and felt it was a good opportunity to look inside their own organizations in ways they had not previously thought about.

Figure 2
Institutional Analysis (1)

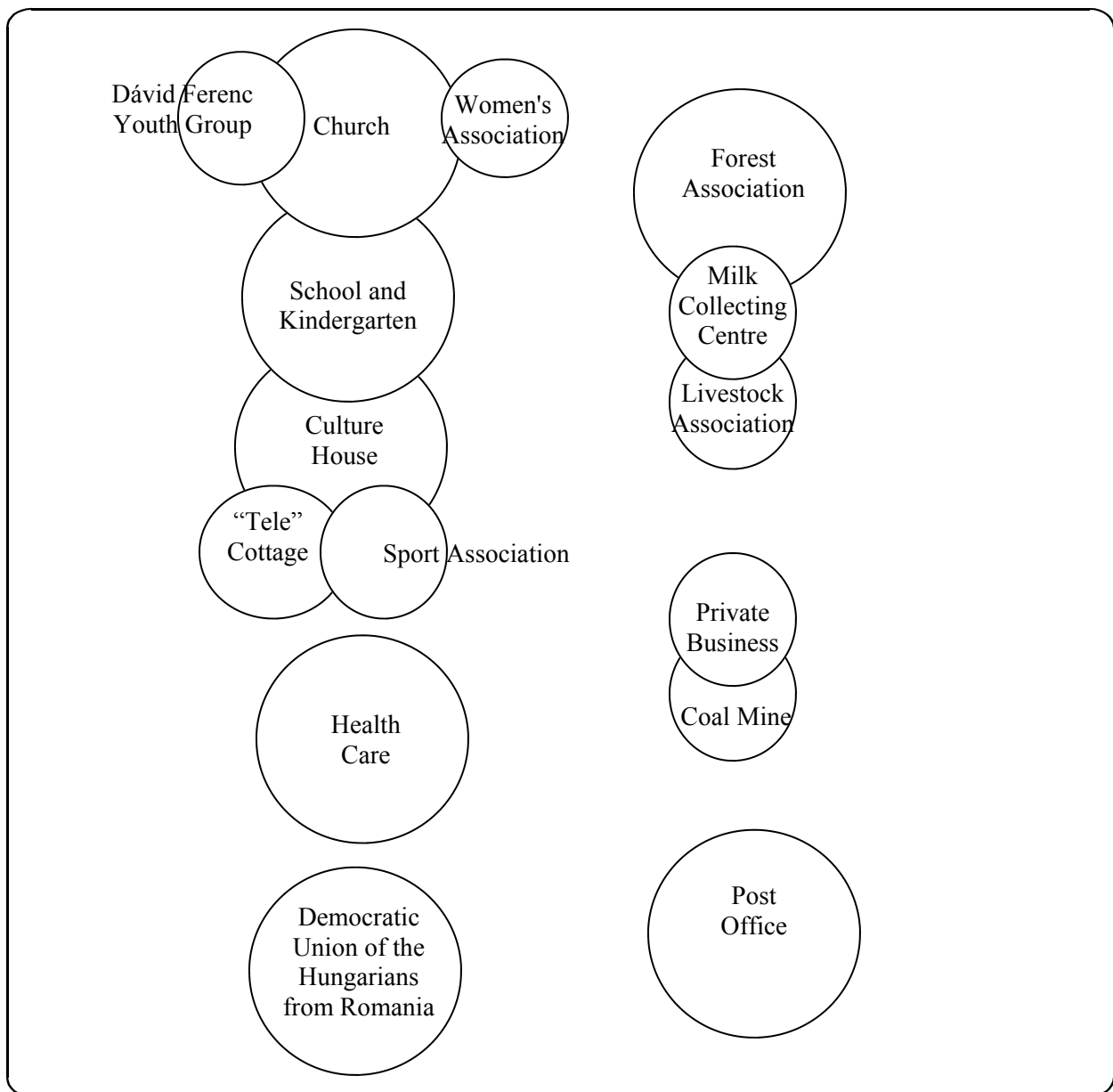
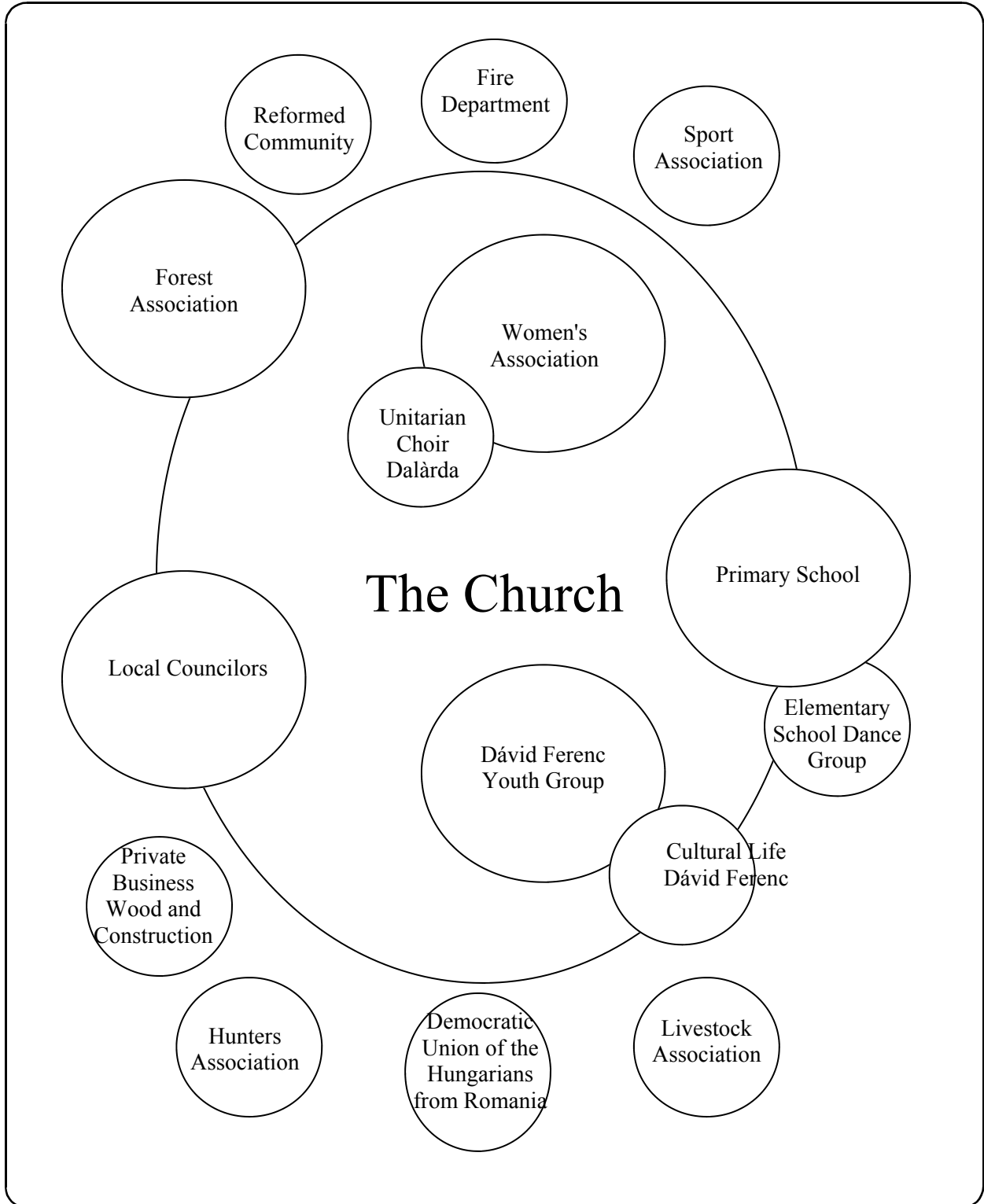


Figure 3
Institutional Analysis (2)



Session Two: Ranking

The map and institutional analysis helped to open a conversation about the nature of the community's needs as well as to suggest that the assessment team had come to "listen" rather than "tell" the community what they needed.

The second night focused almost entirely on ranking. We met again in four groups. Each started with the list of needs (Figure 4) that had been identified during the mapping and institutional analysis on Day 1. While the groups came to different conclusions in their pairwise ranking (Figure 5) we were able to integrate all four of the groups' findings by placing the three highest priority needs from all four groups into a single set of high priority needs (Figure 6).

The technique of pairwise ranking works well, especially for groups such as Felsőrákos where there had been a history of conflict and persistent disagreement. The tool never asks people to vote because voting creates winners and losers and will harden conflicts that already exist in a community. Instead, pairwise ranking proceeds through an entire list, one pair at a time, and enables a community group, no matter how badly in disagreement, to come to conclusions about its first choices. The goal of the exercise is to enable community members to discuss their views about their needs and come to full consensus about which are the highest priorities for the entire community.

A brief commentary on the four groups will be helpful. Each contained between 15 and 18 people including men and women, young and old, farmers and business/professional residents. The funeral parlor and old people's home ranked low for all the groups. One option would be to take the numerical rating for each group and, mathematically, compile the total score and integrate the four groups' ratings by numbers. However, this technique might reach an answer, but it would not provide the entire community's ownership for the final choices. Instead, we put the three highest needs from each group into a new ranking. It came out to six choices (Figure 6) because there was duplication among the four groups' top choices.

Now the hard part began. All of the six needs listed in Figure 6 were important for everyone. It took longer to rank the six final choices than it did to rank the 11 choices in the first round. But the effort was worth the time. While tensions built a bit and while there were some choices (for example, education VS local government) that almost broke the meeting apart, we stayed the course and came to full and total consensus on the final three — connecting roads, job opportunities, and health care. We pointed out that at no point did this decision mean that the other needs would not be addressed. Rather, it suggested that the community was fully in agreement that the top three needs would be addressed before the others. Education, garbage collection, and local government would have their day, but not before there had been community-wide efforts to work toward solving the first three.

Felsőrákos was now ready for the next step — problem analysis and action planning. That would be the work of the next and final evening meeting.

Figure 4 Needs, Listed in Random Order¹

Jobs

- better use of mineral water
- private and family enterprises

Agro-tourism

- fortress of Rika
- renovate music director's house and turn it into a pensione
- village museum

Cultural Life — preservation of traditional customs, folk art, folk dances, folk songs

Health Care

- health care
- more personnel
- establish a pharmacy

School

- improve teaching quality
- renovate the building
- establish a computer lab in the Teleház (Tele Cottage)
- renovate the gym and renting it out

Local Government

- establish own local government authority
- Create better representation (RMDSZ)

Funeral Parlor in the Old Bank House

Old People's Home - establish a nursing home

Garbage Collection

Renovate connecting road to Barót

Associations — revive the sports association, the fire station and fire department, the livestock owners association, and strengthen the foresters association

¹ Note that water and sanitation appeared on the list but are not included here because they are being dealt with in a special project activity.

Figure 5
Pairwise Ranking to Identify Severe Problems: Felsőrákos (Group 2)

Problems	JB	AG	CU	ED	HC	LG	FC	OH	GC	CR	AS	Num.	Rank
Job Opportunities		JB	JB	ED	JB	JB	JB	JB	GC	CR	AS	6	5
Agro-tourism			AG	ED	AG	LG	AG	AG	GC	CR	AS	4	7
Cultural Life				ED	HC	CU	CU	CU	GC	CR	AS	2.5	9
Education					ED	ED	ED	ED	ED	ED	ED	8	3
Health Care						HC	HC	HC	GC	CR	AS	3.5	8
Local Government							LG	LG	GC	CR	LG	5	6
Funeral Chapel								FC	GC	CR	AS	0.5	10
Old People's Home								OH	GC	CR	AS	0.5	10
Garbage Collection									GC	GC	GC	9	1
Connecting Road										CR	CR	9	1
Associations												7	4

Ranked Order: Felsőrákos Group 2									
1. Connecting Road	5. Job opportunities	9. Cultural Life							
1. Garbage Collection	6. Local Government	10. Funeral Chapel							
3. Education	7. Agro-tourism	10. Old People's Hme							
4. Associations	8. Health Care								

Pairwise Ranking as a Tool for Conflict Management*

Figure 5 presents the initial ranking of one of the four small groups. Figure 6 provides the ranking of the entire community group of 65 villagers reviewing the top three needs from each of the four small groups. For each square in the matrix villagers were asked to state which of the two choices was the higher priority need. The small groups worked well (Figure 5) and completed the 11 choice matrix in about an hour.

However for a few choices it was not possible to come to consensus. So we passed over these “hot spots” and came back after all other choices were confirmed. Even coming back did not allow full agreement on nine of the individual preferences (Figure 5). These boxes contain the diagonal lines

and have two codes inserted rather than one. Rather than discuss for an extended time, we simply agreed that there is no consensus on some of these individual choices and moved on. The overall ranking scores are not affected by a few split boxes.

Ranking for the entire community (Figure 6) used the same tool but considered only the high priority needs of each small group. Linking all four groups into a single set of priorities enabled the entire community to participate in decision making. In the closing words of one of the facilitators, “Everyone is Felsórákos is a winner” because all agreed that the findings in Figure 6 reflected the expressed views of the entire village.

* Note: For a full explanation of pairwise ranking, consult either “Planting Seeds” or “Mato Bato,” both of which are available from Clark University, the Unitarian Universalist Partner Church Council, or Transylvania Community Partners. Addresses for all three are located on the inside front cover.

Figure 6
Pairwise Ranking to Identify Severe Problems: Felsórákos (Final)

Problem	ED	LG	JB	GC	CR	HC	Num.	Rank
Education		LG	JB	ED	CR	HC	1	5
Local Government			JB	LG	CR	HC	2	4
Job Opportunities				JB	CR	JB HC	3.5	2
Garbage Collection					CR	HC	0	6
Connecting Road						CR	5	1
Health Care							3.5	2

Ranked Order: Felsorakos: Final

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Connecting Road | 2. Health Care | 5. Education |
| 2. Job Opportunities | 4. Local Government | 6. Garbage Collection |

Session Three: Problem Analysis and Action Planning

The final session turned out to be the most important and by far the most consensual. The integration of the four small group priorities (Session Two) established roads, health care, and job opportunities as Felsőrákos' most important needs. The next step was to determine the causes of these problems and what ideas might the community suggest to solve them. The Problem Analysis charts (Figures 7 - 9), completed for the three highest needs, provided important information in two ways. First it explained why some of the earlier efforts had not solved the problems. Second, it allowed the villagers to suggest ways that they could participate in implementing the solutions.

Local solutions are critical to sustain the community's support of the process. For example, during the discussion of health solutions, one resident commented that for the last fifteen years health care had been a growing problem. Yet they had never held village meetings to discuss the nature of the problems or what kinds of solutions the people could suggest. Even more important, they had never considered how villagers could become part of the provision of services or help to improve the health infrastructure. It was a memorable moment to realize that after three days of meetings (total of nine hours) the people of Felsőrákos were proposing ways to solve some of their chronic needs. While communities cannot solve all of their problems, they can provide advice and resources to contribute to at least some of the solutions.

Note that there are a number of creative suggestions in the final three charts (Figures 10 - 12), the Community Action Plans for each priority need. Three creative suggestions will illustrate ways in which communities have helpful advice.

Gravel for the Roads. A persistent problem for rural communities throughout the world is durable access roads. Felsőrákos offered some advice. Fundamental to constructing a serviceable road is building a firm foundation of gravel to cushion the surface from the weight of heavy trucks. Felsőrákos has a large and almost abandoned coal mine with heavy earth moving and digging equipment. Rather than lament the mine's passing and endure unemployment, several residents suggested that the village look into ways in which some of the equipment might be adapted or moved to a site where gravel can be mined. Something to think about!

Truck Tax. One of the greatest causes of road destruction are large trucks. Why not think about how a tax on the large vehicles could help cover the cost of road repairs? While an individual village probably would not be able to collect a tax, the county might be able to do it, and then share the revenue with individual communities. Something to think about!

Differentiated Health Services. No matter how one calculates costs, health services are expensive. A doctor visits Felsőrákos one afternoon a week to cover all health needs. Why, several villagers suggested, not have a nurse or other health professional complement the services of the doctor and increase access to health services without a major increase in cost? The health task force plans to hold a conversation with the doctor next week. Something to think about!

Figure 7
Problem Analysis: Felsorakos - Jobs

Causes	Previous Coping Strategies	Community Opportunities	Institution
Absence of employers	Starting family and private businesses	Establish local representatives	Local and County Council
No other industry allowed because of the mine	Two attempts to establish local government	More enterprises	Employment Department
Lack of foreign investors		Community connection to investors	
No support for the existing enterprises		Better communication (Internet)	
Bad politics at work places (representation of interests)		Develop and improve partner relationships	
Slow return of forests and farmlands			

Figure 8
Problem Analysis: Felsorakos - Health

Causes	Previous Coping Strategies	Community Opportunities	Institution
Doctor works in many places and comes only once a week to Felsorakos	There was no one to talk to	Apply at local council for a doctor or nurse to come more often to Felsorakos	County Public Health Department
Lack of doctor, nurse, medicine		Have a local pharmacy come to Felsorakos at the same time the doctor comes	Office of the Mayor of Barót
Hospital and local council did not approve new money		Repair the road	

Figure 9
Problem Analysis: Felsorakos - Roads

Causes	Previous Coping Strategies	Community Opportunities	Institution
Out-of-the-way location	\$75,000 for road rebuilding (tender) obtained through a grant	Seek help from the County and the Local Council	County Council
Nobody stood up for the cause in the village	Spreading gravel (a few times)	The mine should help with gravel and machines	County Road Authority
The local government wasn't involved in this case (lack of materials)	Repairing drainage ditches	The County and Local Council should be interested in helping the city of Barót	Local Council
		— SAPARD tender - declare the road a national or county road — two people who hold the responsibility should be in charge (ask the local representatives)	SAPARD
		Road tax - could make budget for the Local Government (lorry traffic tax)	Woodfelling enterprises
		Get in touch with other tender winner villages	Mine
		Consult with person from the USA who has expertise	

Figure 10
Community Action Plan: Jobs

Suggested Activity	Needed Labor, Material, Money	Who will act? Who will follow up?	When	Indicators
Further vocational training	Financial aid	Cattle-owners' Association	Start the process	
	Develop better means of communication	Local Association for the Protection of Common Interests	As soon as possible	
		Foundation (PRO RÁKOS)	As soon as the enterprise starts	
			2006.03.31	

Figure 11
Community Action Plan: Health

Suggested Activity	Needed Labor, Material, Money	Who will act? Who will follow up?	When	Indicators
Prepare for the Women's Association plenary meeting	Materials for the doctor's office (heating, cleaning - the village should pay for these)	Ask the doctor to come to the Women's Associations' plenary session - they should talk to the doctor	They should ask for the doctor in January of 2006	If he comes twice a week it is a success
Talk to a doctor (what's his proposal)		One person is responsible for this	Find out when the doctor is available	If not the doctor, but the nurse can come twice a week it is a half success
Go along with the doctor to a meeting of the County Council				If everything remains the same it is no success
Ask the doctor if he can engage another nurse				
Collect signatures for the cause				

**Figure 12
Community Action Plan: Roads**

Suggested Activity	Needed Labor, Material, Money	Who will act? Who will follow up?	When	Indicators
Seek help from the county and the local council	Voluntary work, follow up	PRO RAKOS committee		
The mine should help with gravel and machines	Provide materials for those who undertake the follow up work	Committee Kádár Attila Székely Blanka Csiki János		
The County and Local Council should be interested in helping the city of Barót	The members of the committee should turn to the competent authority			
— SAPARD tender - declare the road to be a national or county road — two people who hold the responsibility should be in charge (ask the local representatives)	Action plan for obtaining the material base, undertake the possibilities	Committee Kádár Attila Székely Blanka Csiki János	Closing date: 2006.03.01	
Road tax - could make budget for the Local Government (lorry traffic tax)	Committee to supervise after the plan has begun			
Get in touch with other villages who have won tenders	Collect informational materials			
Consult with person from the USA who has expertise				

Summary and Reflections

Reducing Conflict, Increasing Development describes three days of community-based meetings in a centuries-old community in Transylvania. The 20th century has not been kind to its people. Its youth marched off to World Wars I and II and the aftermath brought 40 years of one of the harshest and most brutal of all the Communist regimes. The Communists cut the forests, constructed inefficient and environmentally irresponsible factories, devastated agriculture, weakened the churches, terrorized the people, and built palaces to serve their own misguided egos. The capitalism of the last 15 years has not yet brought the “promised land” of opportunity to Felsőrákos. Unemployment is high, health and other social services low, and transport challenging. It is little surprise that these are the three highest priorities the people identified. A pending vote in 2007 may bring still another change in governance and the national economy if Romania joins the European Union (EU). For the families of Felsőrákos, entry into the EU will create potentials of opportunity. But these opportunities will pass them by unless the people are organized, informed, and working cooperatively through strong community institutions.

This case study describes a way that the people of Felsőrákos may be able to regain some control over their lives and their destinies after the trauma of the 20th century. Four lessons from the assessment stand out as singularly important for the people:

The current Felsőrákos Community Action Plans (CAPs) are only a first step. Felsőrákos now has three task forces in place to focus on their highest priorities. The Women's Association will consider health issues while two special groups will work on the other two. Because they have had success with a previous road rehabilitation grant, they have an experience and information base. A pending water project has also been moving forward though matching funds are yet to be identified. The new CAPs have two potential benefits. The first is the direct result that may come from the work of the task forces. The second is the experience the community gains in strengthening its organizing and management capabilities to deal with its own needs. Both are important. Both will benefit all the people.

For the plans to be successful, partnerships are essential. A village of 400 households cannot function in isolation from its neighboring communities and appropriate government and non-government agencies. Learning how to network with these organizations and developing a track record as a community that can pull its own weight in a partnership capacity is a powerful lesson to learn. Outside agencies like to work with local communities that can deliver. Strong partnerships create win-win relationships. Felsőrákos already has a strong working relationship with the Mayor of Barót as well as a long and productive partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Church in Spokane, Washington. These partnerships will help with the current action plans and, ideally, help the task forces to reach out to additional partners.

For the partnerships to be successful, strong and capable community institutions are vital. The institutional analyses (Figures 2 and 3) suggested that community organizations working with the Felsőrákos Unitarian church were already strong but that village groups working in business, livelihoods, social services, and resource management were less strong. The village may wish to organize leadership and management workshops to become more proficient in managing accounts, understanding credit, making transparent decisions, sharing information, and accessing new information through sources such as the Internet. This effort will be particularly helpful as the task force on job opportunities gets underway. It will also be helpful as the village faces new challenges, such as those posed by the joining the EU.

The action plans can help Felsőrákos to achieve development that accomplishes three things: increased productivity, broadened equitability, and an enhanced natural resource base to sustain future generations. The ultimate goal of community-based planning is to create communities where people want to live. Presently Felsőrákos is experiencing out-migration of its educated youth because there is little or no meaningful employment for them. While turning around a problem as large as out-migration is a long and difficult task, it is not impossible. Active and capable institutions, working with outside partners and focusing on goals that the entire community has identified, are the first step in this task. The challenge is up to the people of Felsőrákos, its institutions, and its leadership. The spirit and energy the community demonstrated during the needs assessment were exemplary. The next step is now up to the community and its partners. The creativity and vision are already present. It is now time to mobilize the community's human resources to accomplish its tasks.