

Community Capacity Building in Fiafalva

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with

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INTRODUCTION

“Gathering together – this is just the beginning. Staying together – progress. Working together – success.”

The UUPCC’s Community Capacity Building team started its assessment in Transylvanian Unitarian villages six years ago. The reports on these assessments (in Árkos, Felsőrákos, Bencéd, Torockószentgyörgy and Abásfalva) can be found at the UUPCC website (<http://www.uupcc.org/ccb.html>). Each workshop gave a new dimension to the existing tools and methods and identified new facilitators.

Fiatfalva is a unique community: the Unitarians and the Reformed (Calvinists) are using the same church. The collaboration between the two denominations is exemplary. The use of the same building by both churches was not commanded by the two bishops or regulated by church councils – the congregants decided to do it. This move required consistent rules of co-existence. These written or unwritten laws have been going on for centuries. Fiatfalva is also the first community that has a substantial Roma population.

The people who took part in the meetings were of different denominations, not only Unitarians, and every segment of the population was represented. This is at the base of the community capacity building process: the community itself should determine its own needs and issues and try to come up with solutions using their own resources.



Background Information

The community planning workshop in Fiatfalva took place in October 2009.

Fiatfalva is but one remove from Székelykeresztúr, as the locals like to say. It is situated one km from the Nagyküküllő River. Once you could get to Alsóboldogfalva or Segesvár

from the northwest border of the village, but today this route is gone: the flooding of 2006 washed the bridges away. One of the bridges is passable on foot, but life-threatening by car or cart.

The History of the Village

The name of the village is found in documents dating back to the 15th century: the first attestation is in a document from 1460, in the name of *Fiatfalvi Illés* (Elias de Fyathfalwa); in another document from 1466 we find the mentioning of the Geréb landowning family from Fiatfalva. Fiatfalva used to be part of Udvarhelyszék territorial unit (within it, part of the Keresztúr szék), and to the Hungarian Autonomous Region of Maros within a bigger unit. Now Fiatfalva is under the jurisdiction of the township of Székelykeresztúr.



Derzsi Domokos, a native of Fiatfalva, published the monograph of the village in 2001, as part of a publication series sponsored by the ODFIE (Ferenc David Youth Association).

There are 256 houses in the village, 230 of those are in built-up areas. The village has forest land, common grazing land and arable land as well. The so-called *Kárahegy* is the settlement of the Roma population. The old and the middle-aged still remember the floods of 1970 and 1975, when the Nagyküküllő flowed 250 meters from the inner area of the village. These floods destroyed two bridges; only one of them has been rebuilt, at the south end of Keresztúr, which leads to Fiatfalva or Sósút, once a well-known salt spa. However, it has deteriorated significantly and now can only be used as a footbridge.

The church in the center of the village was built on the ruins of a Roman Catholic Church. After the Reformation it became Unitarian. The Ugron Castle was built on the manor house of the Geréb family, which later became the property of the Wesselényis, for a while, then of the Mikó family. The castle, rebuilt in the late Baroque, came into the possession of the Calvinist Ugron family from Abránfalva in 1866. The idea to use a common church for the two denominations (Calvinists and Unitarians) arose in the 17th century and became a reality in 1726. The mutual possession of a church by two different denominations is a rarity in the world.

A number of community buildings (like the Cultural House) are owned by both churches. Both denominations had once parochial schools with the cantor as the teacher. There used

to be a strong public school in the village, but in recent decades the parents withdrew their children and sent them to Keresztúr. Now there is only elementary education available and all children enrolled are Roma. A large number of Roma were employed to work in the local collective farm during the communist regime; they gradually settled in Fiatfalva with their families. Some of them integrated into village life; others, the ones living in Kárahegy (about 300) live in their own enclave. The total population is about 1,000.

The Sunday church services are divided equally between the Calvinists and the Unitarians: the first church service starts at 10 am, and the second follows at 11:30. One week the Unitarian church service starts first, the other week it is the Calvinists that have the building first. The church has two bells, two communion tables, two organs and one pulpit. There are two church entrances, one is used strictly by the Reformed minister, the other one by the Unitarian minister. The first service on New Year's Day is for the Unitarians, but on Good Friday it is the Reformed that use the building first. Easter celebrations start with the Unitarian church services, but the Reformed have the lead at Pentecost and Christmas Day celebrations. During special denominational celebrations, the denomination in question has the use of the building first. Joint (ecumenical) church services are provided on the Day of the Dead (November 1st), and in December (farewell to the old year and ringing in the New Year).

In the old days, sitting in the pews was not random: congregants paid dues or fees to earn the privilege of sitting in the first row, for instance (which was paid in gold). The descendants inherited this privilege – families had to "redeem:" to pay for a specific pew (especially during the building of a church – when the members of the congregation had to contribute). Thus, the pews became the possessions of families. An amusing aside: when new families settled in the village, they didn't know about the sitting order, and might have sat in a pew belonging to somebody else. This sometimes caused annoyance or discomfort!

Fiatfalva has been under the jurisdiction of Keresztúr since the 1950s. To this day, it has no administrative offices; people go into town with all their problems. This may have been beneficial initially, but today a lot of villagers work in Keresztúr, their friends and schoolmates are also there. Some people come home late from their workplace in town and have no contact or relationship with the village community. Moreover, Fiatfalva is in a unique situation: it is no longer a village but not yet a town. The image is certainly of a village, but it doesn't follow its centuries-old traditions. You can't even find Fiatfalva in the phone books! Legally it is a settlement attached to the town, but it has a separate postal code. The IDs, passports, and the official registry all record Keresztúr – and not Fiatfalva. The local Unitarian minister does not count this lucky.

The Roma Issue

The following are found in the monography of the village: between 1935–1940 there were 22 Gypsy families in Fiafalva (82 people). Out of these, 2 Unitarian families (9 persons), and 20 Reformed (73 people). Kárahegy had only 5 families (2 Unitarian and 3 Reformed). They were employed in the sodding business, agriculture and well-digging. There were no musicians. The most common names: Ötvös, Bódi, Majlát, Boldizsár and Bebi. The rapid increase in their numbers was due to natural growth, the closeness of the village to the town, and the job opportunities in the collective farm.

According to Domokos Derzsi, in 1992 Kárahegy had 49 families in 28 houses (287 people). After 1989 a lot of the workers living in government-operated flats or social lodgings in Székelykeresztúr were moved out, and most of them settled in Kárahegy.

Before 1989, the active workforce of the Roma community took part-time or full-time employment at the collective farms, state farms, construction sites, state vegetable-producing units, and state manufacturing units. Most of these job opportunities have disappeared by now.

Except for four Reformed and two Catholic families, most of the Roma population is Unitarian. A small number of Roma take part in everyday congregational life; the majority calls upon christenings and funeral services, or confirmations and blessings from the church but otherwise do not take part in church life or church activities.

The integration of the Roma population into community life is problematic. A fair number of Roma children go to kindergarten – the local council pays for their food. Schoolchildren receive social allowances (including lunch from the food kitchen).

Background to the Community Planning Exercise

Fiafalva is under the jurisdiction of Keresztúr. Denominationally, it is mixed. This, unfortunately, gives rise to a number of conflicts. Before the community planning exercise, the Unitarian minister, Alpár Bartha, had sent invitations to all members of the community. However, it was mostly the Unitarians that showed up for the meetings. Nonetheless, the villagers present worked together marvelously! This is also reflected in the effective use of the church by both denominations, in the mixed composition of the local football team, in the shared vice-presidency of the local association...and we can go on enumerating examples of effective co-habitation of Unitarians and Calvinists.

The other problem concerns the Roma. There are numerous issues with their social integration and “aggressive behavior” (as the locals put it). Unfortunately, they did not participate in the community meetings.

The purpose of the meetings was to bring the community together and encourage them to work together irrespective of their denomination, gender, political views, or ethnicity. Only by thinking together, working together, formulating their problems and ways in

which they can solve them together while mobilizing the opportunities and resources in the community can a community move ahead.



The community capacity building workshop was organized by Alpár Bartha, local Unitarian minister, and the local government, in collaboration with the UUPCC and the River Road UU Church of Bethesda, MD, the partner church of Fiattfalva. River Road UU Church provided the stipend for the facilitators and the additional expenses incurred. The Unitarian Church of Fiattfalva provided the accommodation, meals, etc. for one representative of the River Road Church.

The local government was represented by a council member, the vice-mayor and the mayor. It is very welcome news that the aforementioned people embrace thinking together and working together with the community.

The motto of the meetings can be summed up in: *“Gathering together – this is just the beginning. Staying together – progress. Working together – success.”* This was also put on the 120 invitations that were distributed.

Unfortunately, the majority present at the community meetings were men. We listened to the needs of the participants (about 25-30) and held the workshop on two consecutive days, instead of the normal three. On the third day we met with the local aldermen and some of the more active participants. Fall harvesting was in full swing and we could have lost a lot of our participants had we insisted on having the third meeting on the third day.

The facilitators of the workshop were: Krisztina Páll, teacher, local development agent; Izabella Péter, MA student in tourism and local development; and Enikő Takács, a member of the local community. To actively involve someone from the community, we asked minister Alpár Bartha to propose a person with whom we could work; someone

who is young and flexible, who can become an active mobilizer, even the local development agent for the entire community. This same person could get involved with different community development programs, take part in the implementation of the community action plans, and the devising of new action plans. The minister proposed Enikő Takács and we were not disappointed in her talent, helpfulness, and enthusiasm to get involved.

The “order of march” for the three days of community planning process:

DAY 1: introduction; presentation of materials and tools, the role of UUPCC, the example of Bencéd; community sketch map in two groups; institutional analysis, unranked needs; pairwise ranking to prioritize needs.

DAY 2: analysis of the top two priorities (village council; new toilet in the Cultural House); action plans for the top two priorities; Civitas Foundation employed Mónika Pakot’s presentation of local development projects sponsored by Project Harvest Hope; final words.

DAY 3: meeting with the village aldermen, the mayor, the ministers, local council members, active participants in the community planning exercise, teachers. We photocopied the report of the workshop, and handed it out and discussed it together at the meeting. Then we asked those present to distribute it among the villagers as well. Krisztina Páll showed and gave out copies of forms and petitions asking for contributions and donations (to be used to raise money for the new toilet). She volunteered to help in any subsequent steps taken by the community.



VILLAGE SKETCH MAPS



The active, very enthusiastic participation of the villagers in this exercise was exemplary. Everyone participated, spoke up, everyone listened to the other. The maps reflected everyone's views.

Many problems and unsolved issues came up during the sketch maps. The Roma problem was among the most iterated. The Gypsy enclave is in Kárahegy – their integration into the local society is difficult. The school is a problem because only Roma children go to it; other locals send their children off to schools in Keresztúr.

Participants indicated pubs, bars, shops on the maps – they live off that too. Some didn't like to put pubs and bars on the maps, because there is a lot of drinking going on – and that's not good.

The sketch maps revealed that the community is very rich and that it has an enormous touristic potential: the Sóskút salt spa nearby (1-2 km), the Ugron castle, the Küküllő River, unique mud volcanoes. The Ugron Castle is in a desolate state, but being now in private hands, it will be renovated, perhaps to become a pensione).

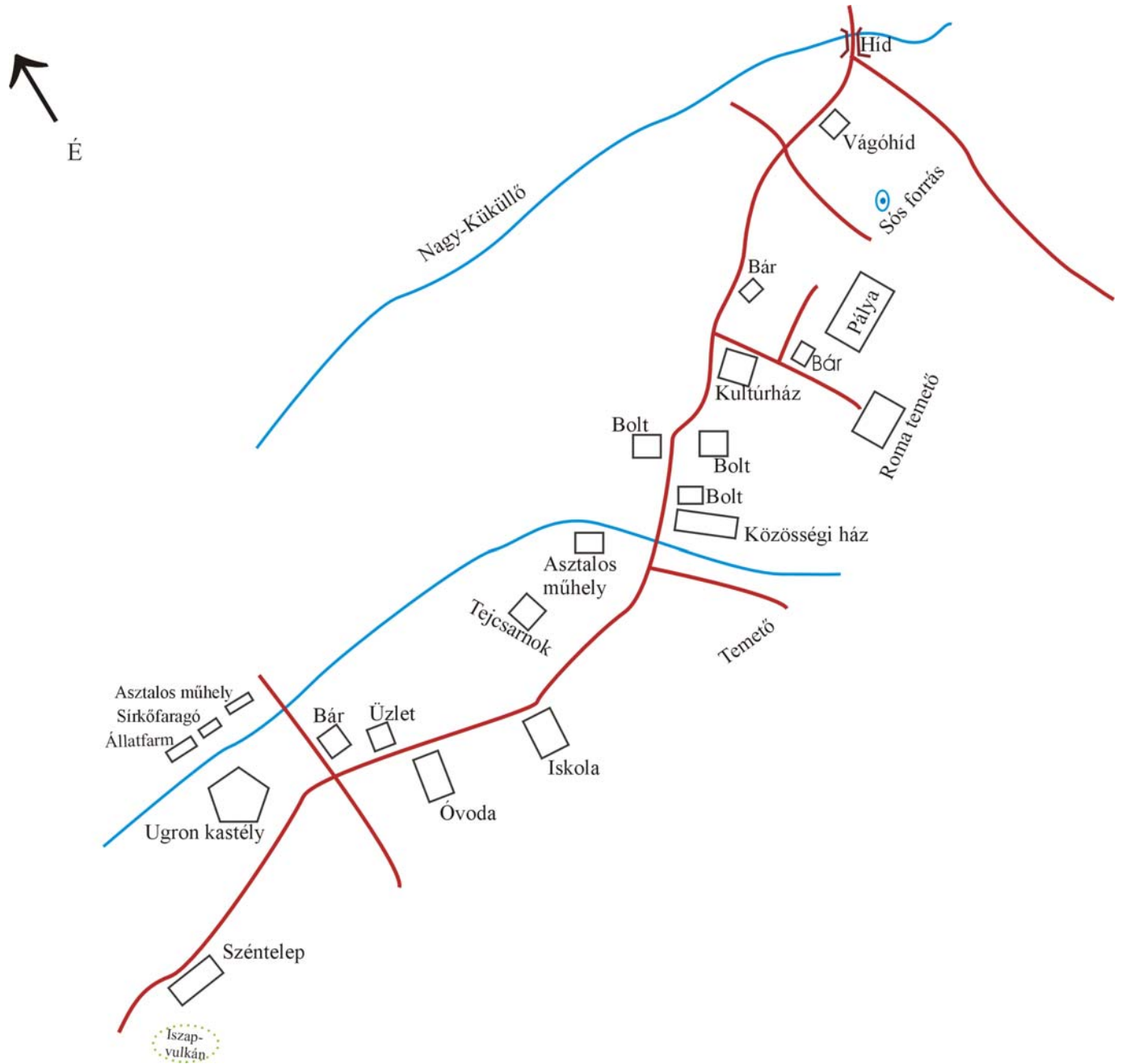
The other problem identified was the state of the bridges connecting the village with Újszékely and Boldogfalva. The floods washed away the bridges and the locals must detour to get to these places by car. One of these bridges can be used as a footbridge. When it came to marking the streets, there was some confusion between their old and new names. Some participants indicated the last name of a person who lived on that street.

An interesting proposal came up during discussions. There is salt water in the village that was once used by the old slaughterhouse. Since the slaughterhouse is no longer there, someone proposed the exploitation of the salt water facility – maybe by setting up a sanatorium.

Below you will find the maps done by the participants in two small groups.



Sketch Map 2 – Fiafalva



INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS

The local Cultural House is the site for various community events, balls, celebrations and weddings. There is also a “community house” in the village which is not fully utilized since it cannot operate in the winter. It was built with German and Swiss help by renovating the old bull stable of the village. The building has floor heating and houses three well-equipped doctor’s offices: 2 consulting rooms and a dentist’s office. It also has a family planning center initiated with Swiss support in 2007. The *Fiatfalva Socio-Cultural Association* was set up to operate the building in the 90s, with help from abroad to pay for maintenance. However, after Romania joined the EU in 2007, this help ceased and the association took charge of the operation. Soon it was unable to keep up the operating expenses and amassed debts that the Mayor’s Office had to pay. It is worrisome that the building will remain underutilized, to the detriment of the community life as a whole.



The current economic-political situation (the economic crisis and the village’s political attachment to Keresztúr) will not allow the village to have its own local doctor. We can even go as far as to say that Fiatfalva has become a “street” of Keresztúr! A general practitioner can be allotted depending on the number of people in a settlement. However, the local villagers show up in official records as inhabitants of Keresztúr. Apparently the Keresztúr doctor’s office has opening hours for Fiatfalva posted on its door, but the doctor never comes. The community has to follow up on this.



The good thing is that the church assembly rooms are under construction and will soon be finished.

All these attest to the fact that Fiatfalva has indeed a great thirst for community life and cooperation.

There has been some heated discussion concerning the local school. The school as an institution is without question very important to all, but the particular situation of the Fiatfalva School makes it less important in the villagers’ eyes. The Hungarian children

(more than a hundred) all attend school in Keresztúr, only Roma children are enrolled in the local school. However, the idea came up to try to do something to keep the Hungarian children in the local school. The inadequate school faculty is a part of the problem too. One of the participants noted that “we need to be friends with the Roma,” notwithstanding the majority’s position that “there is nothing we can do because of the Roma: they destroy everything.”

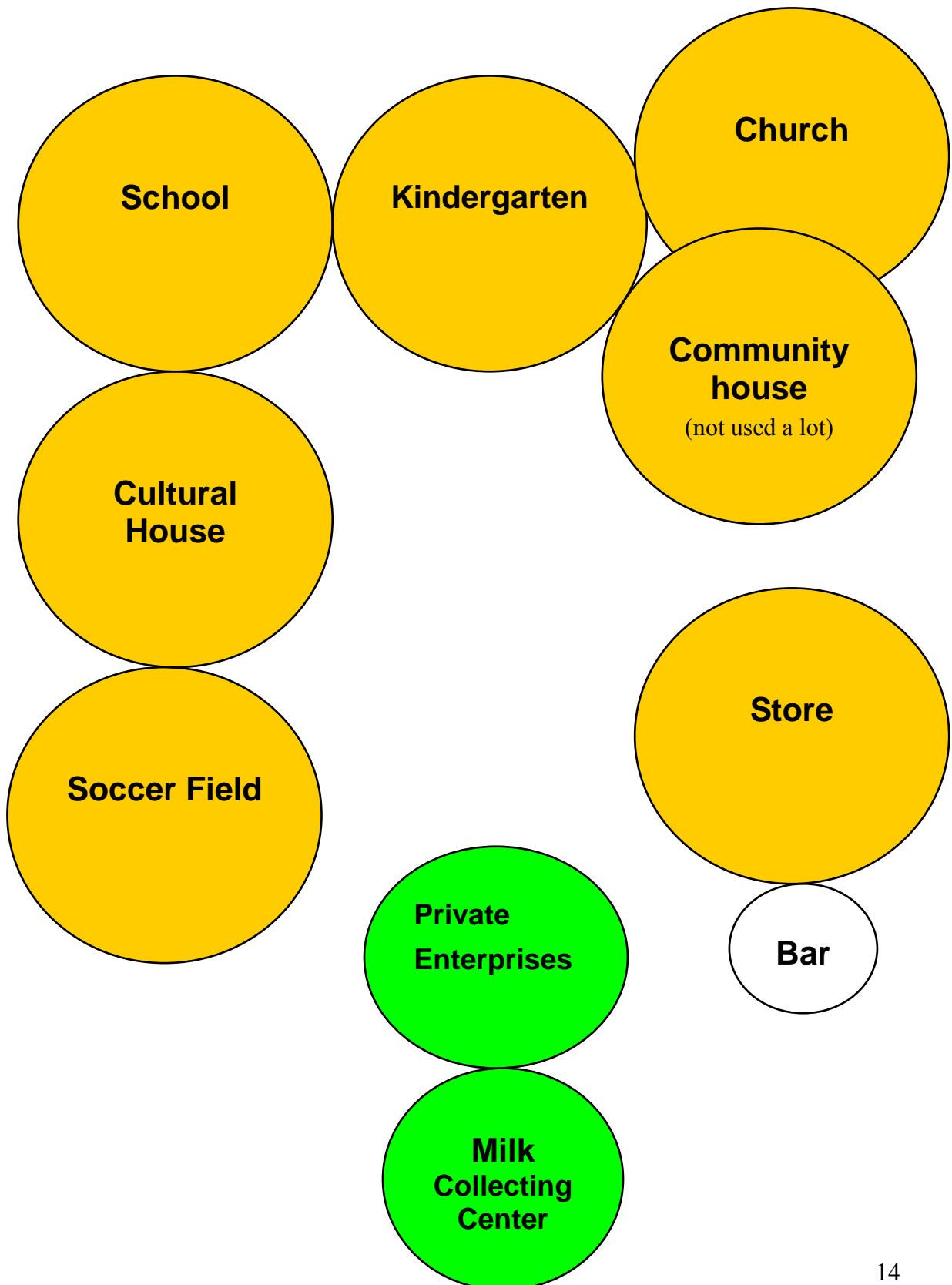
Business and jobs are very important to all. However, agricultural production is minimal. People work in Keresztúr. Private enterprises came up in the discussion – they can provide potential job opportunities.

The local bar is “very important” to some, others think it has a negative influence.



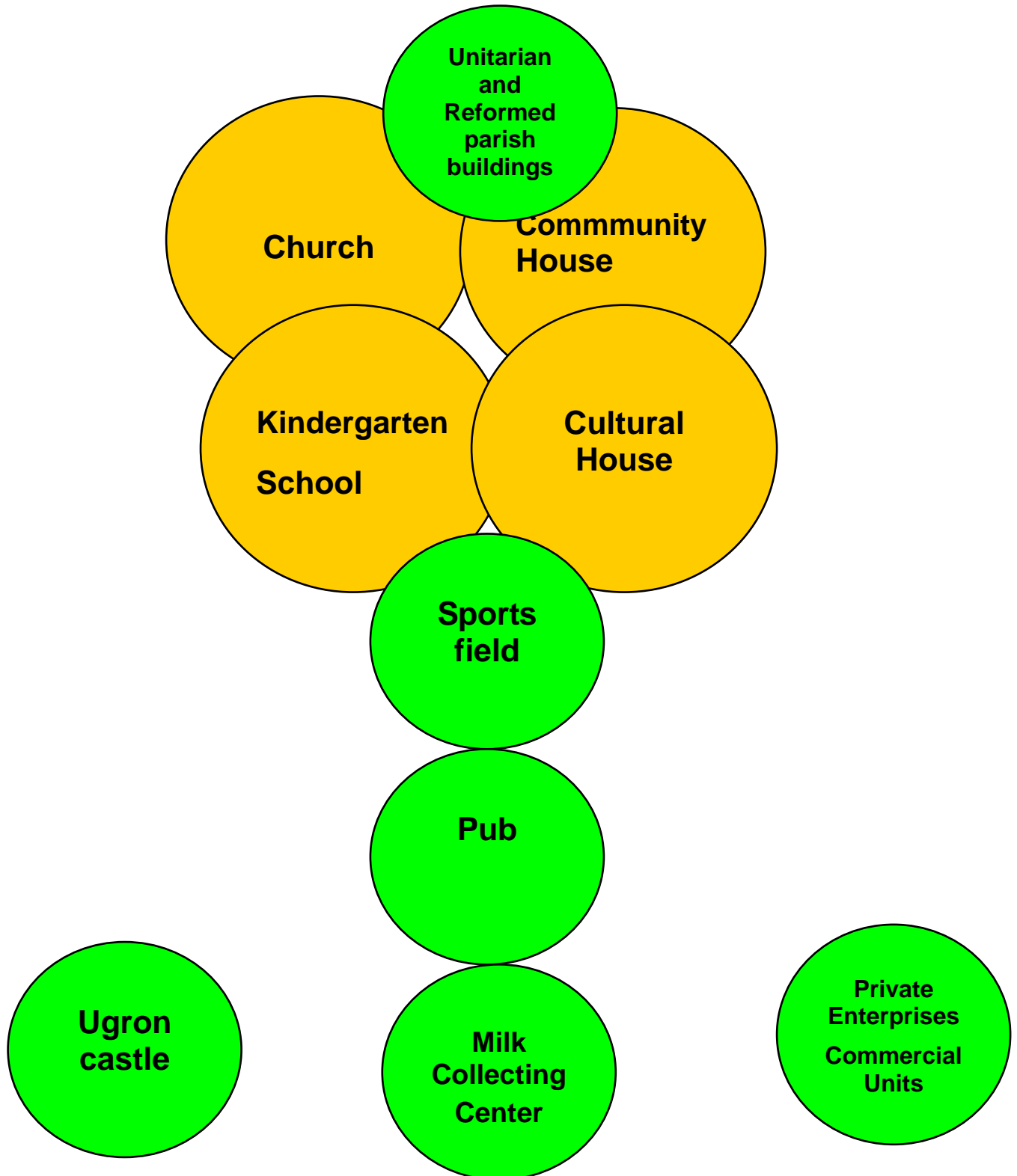
INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS (1)

Fiatfalva



INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS (2)

Fiathfalva



UNRANKED NEEDS

The sketch map and the institutional analysis have provided the means for the participants to talk about the needs and problems in the community. We took the needs and problems identified by the community and put them in a list, in a random order. This list would be the basis of the next exercise, pairwise ranking.

The following is the list of the needs/problems identified in the community. It is proportionate with the number of inhabitants (1000):



- Sewage in the streets
- Funeral home
- Doctor's office
- Revival of cultural life
- Sports
- Modern toilet in the Cultural House
- School bus, regular bus services
- School
- The elderly
- Finishing the assembly room
- Playground
- Village crest
- Tourism
- Roma
- Separate road for the village herd
- Stock-raising
- Road to the cemetery, cemetery regulation (by-laws)
- Fence in front of church
- Village council

PAIRWISE RANKING

The atmosphere became tense and conflicts arose at the beginning of the exercise. The local teacher noted that one should not “point fingers at others,” and one should not “look at why a given problem has not been solved,” but “try to find solutions to the existing needs and problems.”

The discussion lingered on the issue of non-asphalted roads and the lack of drainage. The vice-mayor present at the meeting assured the villagers that this problem will be sorted out soon. The participants passed over the importance of drainage as something requiring outside help. The Roma problem was brushed aside too: “it won’t change anyway,” was the attitude of the majority present.

The funeral home is important, but more important is a modern toilet in the Cultural House and the creation of a village council.





Pairwise Ranking Fiatfalva

	SS	FH	DO	CL	Sp	WC	Bus	Sch	Eld	AR	Pg	Crest	Tour	Rom	Herd	SR	Cem	Fence	VC	Total	Rank
Sewage in streets		FH	OR	CL	Sp	WC	Bus	Sch	Eld	AR	Pg	Crest	Tour	Rom	Herd	SR	Cem	TK	VC	0	18
Funeral Home			FH	FH	FH	FH	FH	FH	FH	FH	Pg	FH	FH	FH	FH	FH	FH	FH	VC	16	2
Doctor's Office				OR	OR	WC	OR	OR	OR	AR	Pg	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	OR	VC	13	4
Cultural Life					CL	WC	CL	CL	CL	AR	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL	CL/Cm	CL	VC	12,5	5
Sports						WC	Bus/Sp	Sp	Eld	AR	Pg	Crest	Sp	Sp	Sp	Sp	Sp	Sp	VC	8,5	10
Modern toilet in CH							WC	WC	WC	WC	WC	WC	WC	WC	WC	WC	WC	WC	VC	16	2
Bus Service								Bus	Eld	AR	Pg	Crest	Bus	Bus	Bus	Bus	Cem	Tk	VC	6,5	12
School									Eld	AR	Pg	Crest	Tour	Sch	Sch	Sch	Cem	TK	VC	4	14
Elderly										AR	Pg/Eld	Eld	Eld	Eld	Eld	Eld	Eld	ld	VC	11,5	6
Assembly Rooms											AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	VC	15	3
Playground												Pg	Pg/Tur	Pg	Pg	Pg	Cem	Tk	VC	11	7
Village Crest													Crest	Crest	Crest	Crest	Cem	TK	VC	8	11
Tourism														Tour	Tour	Tour	Cem	TK	VC	5,5	13
Roma															Herd	AT	Cem	TK	VC	1	17
Road for Herd																Herd	Cem	TK	VC	3	15
Stock Raising																	Cem	TK	VC	2	16
Cemetery																		Cem	VC	10,5	8
Church Fence																			VC	9	9
Village Council																				18	1

Ranked Order

- 1. Village council**
- 2. New toilet in CH**
- 2. Funeral home**
- 3. Finishing of assembly rooms**
- 4. Doctor's office**

- 5. Cultural life**
- 6. The elderly**
- 7. Playground**
- 8. Cemetery road and regulation**
- 9. Fence in front of church**

- 10. Sports**
- 11. Village crest**
- 12. Bus service**
- 13. Tourism**
- 14. School**

- 15. Road for village herd**
- 16. Stock raising**
- 17. Roma**
- 18. Sewage in streets**

PROBLEM ANALYSIS

We did analyses of the top two needs, and then proceeded to the creation of action plans for each. The formation of a village council practically solves or facilitates all the other needs in the list.

Village Council

The village council is seen as an executive body that can legally represent the village. The current situation pushes Fiatfalva inhabitants into making this a priority: the village has no separate local government. There has been a village council for some time now, but not as a legal entity. Young, flexible and open persons are needed as well as more experienced members. A good opportunity is to revive the existing (but dormant) association.

Problem Analysis (1):Village Council

Causes	Previous Coping Strategies	Opportunities	Institution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Money • Lack of volunteers • Administrative/legal impediments, reduced medical jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-cultural association • Room available • In operation for six years, last year's meeting of the association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • room available • willingness of youth and adults • a big role in carrying out community plans (sports, cultural life) • support given to council 	Socio-Cultural Association of Fiatfalva

New Toilet in the Cultural House

This need came in second. The old toilet is unacceptable yet is very much needed for weddings and balls. The kitchen in the building was renovated with the support of the local council and with the help of local volunteers. Since the workshop 4,000 RON has been raised for this project.

Problem Analysis (2): Modern Toilet in the Cultural House

Causes	Previous Coping Strategies	Opportunities	Institution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sewage brought in - renovation of kitchen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sewage - 4000 RON already in the kitty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reformed and Unitarian Churches



ACTION PLANNING

Village Council

The revival of the existing association requires financial resources. The building is there (the community house). A lot of ideas came up. The first step is to commit the local government to supply the operating expenses of the building that will house the non-profit association. In return, the association will actively engage in reviving the cultural and social life of the village, cultivate traditions and explore possible pecuniary resources. They will also engage in organizing forums to introduce and familiarize the initiative.

Community Action Plan: Village Council

Suggested Activity	Needs (labor, material, money)	Who will act? Who will follow up?	When?	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruiting members <p>1. meeting with aldermen</p> <p>2. nominating people in charge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Petitions to the local council (petition of support for utilities, different activities, future plans) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handing in the petition <p>Future plans:</p> <p>1. Financial resources (entrepreneurs, membership fee, fundraising ball, grants, support from partner church and sister village, designation of 2% income tax to the foundation)</p>	<p>Place, pamphlets, paper, printer, copier</p> <p>Paper</p> <p>paper, printer, TV, human resources</p>	<p>Takács Enikő</p> <p>Participants at the meeting will sign, the designated secretary will write it up</p> <p>Bádeu Dalma</p> <p>Takács Enikő</p>	<p>Discussion with village leaders (until October 30th)</p> <p>Meeting on November 5th</p> <p>November 5th</p> <p>Nov 6th</p> <p>Oct30th</p> <p>through Nov. and continuing</p> <p>Offering the 2% tax - February 2010</p>	<p>discussion</p> <p>meeting</p> <p>1 petition in two copies: one for the community and one for the council</p> <p>1 petition</p> <p>fundraising ball</p> <p>X number of donors/entrepreneurs</p> <p>X number of forms for the tax</p>

2. Popularization of activities in the community	Cultural house Posters, paper, copier	Community forum Moderator: Takács Enikő (she will mobilize the villagers, inform them of the forum) Bartha Márta, Péter Annabella (editing) Badeu Dalma (copying) Pál Ferenc (posting the notice)	Nov. 29th	Approx. 35 participants
3. Reviving the cultural life (brass band, plays, Christmas celebration, fostering traditions, village crest, programs for the elderly, youth group, sports)	Human resources, Wind instruments, venue for rehearsals	Bartha Alpár (wind instrumentalist) Szilveszter Csilla Péter Anabella (drama club) Barabás Zoltán, Ifj. Fazakas János, Derzsi Gyula, Burszán Levente (sports)	From November Dec. 26th continuous	8-12 members of brass band One play performed yearly for youth and middle-aged 1 soccer team

Community Action Plan: New Toilet in the Cultural House

Suggested Activity	Needs (labor, material, money)	Who will act? Who will follow up?	When?	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicize the idea at the community forum and at the meeting of the foundation 	Forms for sponsorship, paper, printer, copier, venue	Takács Enikő	Nov 6th (board meeting of the foundation), Nov 29th (community forum)	2 meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Donations (entrepreneurs, sponsors) 	Forms for sponsorship, paper, printer, copier	Takács Enikő	Oct 30th to Nov 5th and continuing to the beginning of the volunteer labor	X number of forms completed (i.e. X number of donors)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offering of donations (10 RON/person) 	Receipt of payment Takács Enikő will collect the money	Donors: Bartha Alpár Varró János Derzsi Domokos Hatos István Szombatfalvi Ákos Bădeu Dalma Pál Ferenc Péter Anabella Gagyí Attila Gyarmati Dénes Gagyí Dénes Takács Enikő Köblös Domokos Gagyí Dénes	October 24th - 2nd evening of the community planning meetings!	14 donors so far, the number is growing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk to the local government for advice and support 	car and fuel	Bartha Alpár	Oct-Nov	feasibility plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting to seek volunteer help 	Paper, printer, copier for posters Human resources, venue	Takács Enikő	March 16-23	Approx. 30 participants at meeting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer labor undertaken 	Tools	Bartha Alpár (4 days) + those who put in 10 RON (see the names above)	March 23rd	Approx. 20
	Tractor and trailer	Szombatfalvi Ákos	March 23rd	1 tractor with trailer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masonry and plumbing 	experts	Köblös Domokos	March 23rd	4-5 experts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carpentry 	tools	Pál Ferenc	March 23rd	doors, wood equipment

SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

The participants in the community planning exercise proved that they could work together and have the will and energy to solve their problems. Unfortunately, participation was homogeneous, not distributed equally among the segments of the population: mainly Unitarian men participated.

The village is close to the town, already the bedrock community of Keresztúr. This is why it is not a dying community. The Roma population is steadily growing, partly due to their centuries-long tradition of starting a family at an early age.

Fiatfalva had a lot of privileges in the old regime: electricity, gas and water were brought in; a 3 million RON investment to put new asphalt on the main street was carried out; the water system was rehabilitated, the sewage system was renovated (there are two streets left that lack public utilities); there is digital phone cable in place. The infrastructure is the same as Keresztúr's, so land prices are very high.

The village has always had representation in the local government (the local council in Keresztúr). The village has a good, positive mentality.



At the end of the meeting Mónika Pakot, staff person at Civitas foundation presented their ongoing work in Unitarian villages in partnership with Project Harvest Hope. The community is interested in getting involved with their next program starting in 2010.

We close the report with the words of Alpár Bartha, the Unitarian minister in Fiatfalva, reproduced from the monograph of the village:

Fiatfalva is a simple, yet remarkable community. Its strength to live and know how to live is paired with unparalleled wisdom. Three years is little time to plunge deeply into the centuries-old traditions of a community, but is enough to feel in your pores the message of past ages stored in the genes of a present-day inhabitant.

Fiatfalva was inhabited by peoples before and after the Migration of the Nations. Its history is like many other villages, with its quiet joys and stormy periods. Its image and mentality of today were shaped by the independent spirit of the free Székelys, the presence of the lords

of the Ugron castle, the humbleness of the working people, as well as the close proximity of Székelykeresztúr.

In this symbiosis, in the south-western corner of Szeklerland, on the banks of Nagyküüllő, a villageful of people experienced something unique. Amidst the variety of Christian faiths, two branches of the Reformation found spiritual peace in a single church building. Reformed and Unitarians alike profess faith today, in the same church building; a faith seeking a God wonderful in Its elements, but perfect and universal only in Its unity.

Fiatfalva, also known as „the street of Székelykeresztúr,” is confronted today with fate-sealing questions: the need to catch up with the modern age yet preserve its unique, traditional values. I believe that Fiatfalva’s wisdom will perpetuate its faith of life forged by past centuries, and that it will be passed on to the next generation as a life-preserving force. This is what I wish for every inhabitant of Fiatfalva.

Works consulted:

The monograph of Fiatfalva, published by ODFIE, 2001.

Blanka Barabás’s article on Fiatfalva, *Udvarhely News*, 2008-06-20

Wikipedia

Appendix:

Presentation of Mónika Pakot, staff person at the Civitas Foundation