

# PARTNERING FOR LANDSCAPE DEMOCRACY

An Intensive Study Program in Miskolc to renew the school  
environment of the Dr. Ámbédkar School, 2021



HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY OF  
AGRICULTURE AND LIFE SCIENCES



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Aratu Amitrai Uttur – Francesco Lipparini – Andrea Conti – Thomas Oles

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Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Gödöllő, 2022

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This material has been developed under the Erasmus + LED2LEAP partnership. Partner institutions: Nürtingen-Geislingen University, Nürtingen (Germany), Hungarian University of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Garden Art, Budapest (Hungary), kulturAktív, NGO, Budapest (Hungary), University of Bologna, Department of Architecture (Italy), ETABETA, NGO, Bologna (Italy) and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala (Sweden).

The LED2LEAP Project is partially funded by the ERASMUS+ European Union grant program, under grant no.2019-1-NL01-KA203-060497. Neither the European Commission nor the project's national funding agency is responsible for the content or liable for any losses or damages incurred that are the result of the use of these resources.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

## Published by:

Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences  
H- 2100 Gödöllő, Páter Károly utca 1.  
Tel.: +36-28/522-000  
<https://www.uni-mate.hu>.

Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Gyuricza Csaba PhD, rektor

ISBN 978-963-269-985-1 (pdf)

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# Introduction

This report documents and reflects on the experience of the LED2LEAP project in contributing to democratic landscape transformations as an intervention for the LADDER living lab in Miskolc, Hungary. The intensive study programme builds on our prior experience with establishing a joint blended learning programme for landscape democracy as part of the *Landscape Education for Democracy* ([www.led-project.org](http://www.led-project.org)) Erasmus +.

In this booklet, we share the experiences gathered in preparing and organising an intensive programme with a landscape democratic approach and the results and impacts it generated on a community living lab.

# 01 LED2LEAP - the Project

## Strategic Partnership Project (ERASMUS+)

LED2LEAP stands for *Landscape Education for Democracy: Towards Learning, Empowerment, Agency, and Partnership*. Our programme is an endeavour to integrate democratic principles into the education of young professionals in disciplines that collaborate on landscape focused projects. The goal was to the opportunity for this transformative approach to spread to all levels of society, resulting in more resilient, sustainable and equitable communities and landscapes. LED2LEAP aims to bring a new way of thinking and acting into relevant university curricula in order to prepare the future generation of landscape architects, planners, architects and designers for their role as democratic leaders for sustainability. There is an urgent need for transformative competence at all levels of society, especially since the challenges communities are facing are growing across Europe and worldwide. Powerful driving forces such as globalization, climate change, digitalization, demographic ageing, migration, individualization, biodiversity loss, and unequal resource distribution are not resolvable within the framework of election periods and sector-specific policies.

## Relevance of Landscape Democracy

The landscape belongs to everyone. All should have equal access to it and a voice in how it is used, valued and maintained. However, spatial planning education rarely includes considerations of democratic processes, participatory planning, community design and landscape stewardship. Furthermore, it does not fully prepare young practitioners to become leaders in promoting democratic landscape change and work effectively in partnership with communities. For this it is essential to promote an education that prepares them by raising their awareness of social disparities and racial and economic disparities, and empowering them to take a more active role in shaping democratic change and confront pressing issues of landscape democracy, right to the landscape and participation.

## The role of Living Labs in the project

The LED2LEAP Living Labs' main function is to develop the discussion within academia and the landscape and planning professions around the need for landscape democracy-building policies and processes related to landscape change. Linking expert and local knowledge is not only helpful to inform better decisions but also ensure policies which are both grounded in state of art knowledge and communities' realities, rather than abstraction. The partnership between academia and civil society is also integral to the *Participatory Action Research (PAR)* nature of the project. This framework allows knowledge to be co-created rather than simply transferred from 'experts' to communities in a top-down fashion.

The Living Labs are part of a community learning model that brings the groups of actors in a community together, to form/inform their landscape. In Living Labs, students and partners from the community

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explore, apply and test the methods and tools taught in the online seminar portion of our programme. Each partner university has created its Living Lab and a timeline for lab meetings. The Living Labs involve active community engagement in the lab and in the landscape, codesign sessions in which university students work with and for the community, integrating stakeholders; knowledge and ambitions at key points in the design process, to increase the functionality and sustainability of the design; and community feedback for gaining insightful critique from stakeholders, to understand the effectiveness of the design prototypes and proposals.

## Conceptual framework

### **Landscape** (Bruns, 2019)

For landscape practice, the most relevant landscape policy document in Europe is the *European Landscape Convention (ELC)*. It provides an important contribution to the implementation of the Council of Europe's objectives to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. For the LED2LEAP project the ELC serves as a link between theory and practice; it defines landscape as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" (Council of Europe, 2000). When it comes to landscape-based practises, the key is to tap into perceptions that are framed by culture, thus making the landscape a cultural phenomenon.

Perception concerns (a) sensual responses to people's surroundings and (b) the way that people attach meaning and value to these surroundings. Both are culturally specific; both are intricately linked to education and democracy. Education is defined, in the ELC, as one of the main pillars of landscape protection, management, designing and planning (Council of Europe 2014).

### **Landscape, Design Education and Democracy** (Fetzer & Ruggeri, 2019)

Landscape, landscape education and democracy are relevant not only when considered in isolation but, particularly in their practical application, also by drawing strength from the many links that exist between the three. Through the practice of participation, designers and planners may be able to act as agents of democratic, and bottom-up consensus and decision-making about landscape (fig. 1).

There are three kinds of relationships between knowledge-building and designing/planning. The first category is knowledge-building on design that includes learning about design outputs and outcomes (e.g. the long-term effects that a design intervention has in a particular area). The second category is knowledge-building for designing/ planning that includes learning how to support design processes (e.g. providing evidence supporting design decisions). The third category is knowledge-building through designing/planning that includes all activities where designing/planning are purposefully used as a learning and research method. In all three categories, landscape serves as a kind of lens that puts the focus on democracy and on the social context from where landscapes are perceived.

Emphasising the concept of democracy in processes of landscape designing/ planning, designers take the roles of listeners, of coordinators who bring different people and subjects together, of actors and professionals who serve communities and society at large.

Designing processes are thus inclusive from the start; everybody has access and may get involved at all times. At the intersection of Landscape and Democracy, people are at the centre. For example, local communities are to be considered not only as principal protagonists of landscape analysis but also as the principal agents of transforming and managing landscapes.

The design process should be shaped in relation to its specific community, both in the phase of collection of narratives and memories regarding the specific site and in the one of the fundamental attunement among these data and perceptions in order to choose a common action of convergence and intervention.

It is then time to reflect on the meaning of these processes in relation to dwelling and territorial belonging. Reshaping the landscape already begins with the overlapping of tales and memories at the start of the process. This early attunement already implies a community reshaping that the following common work intensifies.

Working together changing the aspect of the landscape can be read also as a foundation liturgy, origin for a “thickening” of dwelling, invading the kingdom of feelings and spirituality and not only the one of physical perceptions. A particular attention to places perceived as centres is then required, looking for places which are bound to feelings of familiarity, of one’s ‘home’ either present life or in memories. Particular attention will then be given to symbols, since landscape can be symbolized, but also can be a symbol in itself, or even can include different symbols, as it is particularly evident for cities. These symbols can be quite univocal, such as the bust of *Dr. Ámbédkar*, but also more general, such as a landmark for a defined community space.

### **Landscape, Community and Participation (Salman, 2019)**

*Participant Action Research (PAR)* suggests a new epistemology in research about the interface of people and place, which is grounded in the understanding that residents should be integral partners in research that can promote democratic change. This gives researchers and academic a new role to play, from neutral experts to engaged partners and collaborators in tangible and deliberate actions aimed at ensuring the right to landscape, i.e. the notion that open space, in the context of the sustainable city of today, should be understood as a common good, accessible, and supportive of the need and ambition of all people in society.

PAR also suggests that landscape transformation is a systemic, wicked act that requires us to constantly monitor our progress and learning. The approach emphasizes ‘reflection in action’, which requires all of those involved ways to assess their progress toward a goal, and a continuous dialogue. This unique new role designers and planners are asked to perform requires a shift in education toward a constructivist approach where learning is defined as a communal effort, a ‘community of learners’ where the transfer or knowledge and refinement of professional skills result out of the university students’ direct engagement with reality.

This is important not only for the communities, but also for ourselves. By entering the public arena, university students and their partners further refine their collaborative, democratic skills, and redefine their role as professionals and as citizens. As Paulo Freire wrote in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* that “education either functions as an instrument [to] bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” Through partnerships between

academics and civil society for democratic change, it is possible to envision transformative processes of change that build on the ambitions and values of experts and communities alike (Schneidewind et al. 2016).

## **The role of living labs and intensive programmes in the project**

LED2LEAP follows the methodical paradigm of a pedagogical and PAR-cycle, so the learning activities will be implemented during the process, and thus, evaluation and revision of the activities are closely interrelated. The project develops a 'Community Learning Model' that focuses on identifying relevant methods for working with the communities.

The *Intensive Student Programmes (ISP)* aim to test the methodology by the participants in partnership with local communities. The international university students acquire deeper insight in the process, methods and tools suitable for engaging community members, in the case of Miskolc, the younger generations. They reflect on the methodology and formulate recommendations for transfer possibilities. The participants present the ideas and strategies for transformation to get feedback from the community. The whole process ends with a celebration with the (youth) community to leave a longer standing memory of the event and to enhance the impact.

Intensive Student Programs provide an opportunity for international students to engage in the life of a local Living Lab through a 10-day planning program. During their time together, university students get to know the local communities, work together to practice and learn about democratic landscape architecture. In this publication we focus on the intensive program organised in the Living Lab in Hungary, so that the Reader can get an insight into the life of the *Dr. Ámbédkar School in Miskolc* and thus the processes, methods and tools suitable for involving the younger generations.

## **The project consortium**

LED2LEAP is a partnership between four European landscape architecture faculties, two local NGOs and the LE:NOTRE Institute which coordinates the project. Partners are Nürtingen-Geislingen University, Nürtingen (Germany), the Hungarian University of Agriculture & Life Sciences, Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Garden Art, Budapest (Hungary), KulturAktiv, NGO, Budapest (Hungary), the University of Bologna, Department of Architecture (Italy), ETABETA, NGO, Bologna (Italy) and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala (Sweden).

## 02 Living Lab in Hungary

### Overview of the LADDER Living Lab

The Hungarian LADDER Living Lab - '*Laboratórium Diákokkal a DEMokratikus környezetért*', aka Laboratory with Students for Democratic Environment - is an exploratory collaboration between the *Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Garden Art of the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences* and the *kultúrAktív Association*. The university's landscape planning and design expertise and the association's competencies in the built environmental education of young people led to a Living Lab aimed at democratically transforming the school environments. We form partnerships with various Hungarian schools, and in cooperation with the school community, we develop landscape architecture solutions tailored to school life: we map the school environment, analyze and evaluate the condition together, and jointly develop and implement ideas to improve the state of the school environment.

At LADDER Living Lab, we partner up with primary and secondary school communities with diverse social, financial, and geographical backgrounds. However, we focus on the engagement and empowerment of children and young people; we also involve teachers, staff, and parents in our collaboration. We also address external stakeholders: neighbours, local actors, and the municipality. Essential drivers of cooperation are the local and international landscape architecture students who participate in Living Lab activities through an elective course at the university with a theoretical focus on landscape democracy and participatory planning and a practical field in the school environment. In this collaboration, many work together with different knowledge and abilities to plan the future of the schoolyard, its surroundings and improve the overall quality of the school experience.

The LADDER Living Lab aims to popularize democratic school environment design and connect academia with school communities through children and youth-centred community design processes in which built environment educators, the school community. The landscape architecture profession can collaborate for the common good. As a Living Lab, we continuously reflect and improve the process and the working environment. We need to use innovative participatory methods suitable for the different stakeholders' needs. With a combination of research and innovation, we use user-centred, interactive, playful techniques to engage the community, especially the young people who are the most affected group while still having the least voice in the decision-making process. The LADDER project's goal is to change the way we deal with the school environments in Hungary, especially how we engage the youth in shaping these environments.

### Collaboration with the Dr. Ámbédkar School in Miskolc

#### Introducing the Dr. Ámbédkar School

The Dr. Ámbédkar School was established in 2007 in Sajókaza to create opportunities for further education in communities where the proportion of graduates does not reach 1%. secondary school students from the age of 15 can get into Dr. Ámbédkar School. The vast majority of them are falling behind in school, and their relationship with the school has deteriorated. From the segregated schools

of the peripheral areas of Borsod county, there is no sufficient, proper education due to disciplinary problems and incoming students lack the fundamental, basic knowledge. The segregated schools do not provide the hope of social mobility, consequently, without hope, the motivation is also lost. Both the teachers and the secondary school students have to understand the difficulty of this kind of shift.

The school is supported by many organisations like the Jai Bhim Community, the Open Society Foundations, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, the Badur Foundation, and the National Roma Self-government. In 2016, the school was relocated from Sajókaza to Miskolc and in 2018 the Martin Luther King Dormitory opened its gates. Today the dormitory closely assists the work of the school. The public education contract of the Dr. Ámbédkar School expired on August 31, 2020. The Ministry of Human Resources not only did not renew the contract after that but also reduced the operational support of the non-state institutions in general. Since that the school has to operate in a critical financial state and fight to survive.



Figure 1. The view of the school building. Photo by Anita Reith

### **Buddhist origins**

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the name giver of the school was an Indian jurist, economist, politician, and social reformer, who inspired the Dalit Buddhist movement and campaigned against social discrimination towards the untouchables (Dalits). One of his biggest achievements was campaigning and negotiating for India's independence, advocating political rights and social freedom for Dalits, and contributing significantly to the establishment of the state of India with the creation of India's Constitution. In 1956, he converted to Buddhism, initiating mass conversions of Dalits. Now the Dr. Ámbédkar School is following his mentality and spirituality by helping the most vulnerable ones in Hungary.

### **The Dr. Ámbédkar Method**

Dr. Ámbédkar School has a strong pedagogical program that is called the Dr. Ámbédkar Method. The ultimate long-term goal is to achieve integral education and empower secondary school students and make them understand that *"I am the one who is responsible for my fate and I can do the most for myself"*. The aim is to make them aware of the surrounding society and be active participants in it. The educational program is helping the school students to understand that *"education is the ultimate relief from vulnerability and subsidy"* and also that *"happiness does not depend on any certificate, happiness, and joy can be found in the poorest areas, too"*.

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The Dr. Ámbédkar School prefers project-based methodology instead of lecturing. The secondary school students here work and create independently or as a member of a group. Instead of textbooks, online sources and press are favored. The tendency of learning languages is adjusted to an audiovisual direction. The Dr. Ámbédkar Method means that teachers learn the style and language of their students. Immediate confirmation and reward are important. Secondary school students record everything on a spatial and temporal timeline in the classroom. The curriculum does not follow a chronological order but with the help of mapped sketches, they can keep track of their knowledge. Besides the fundamental subjects, human rights, ethical discrimination, and gender equality is also a topic as these are urgent problems within the community. Each classroom uses U-shaped chair rows to achieve no exclusion. By this the students can see each other, no hiding is possible, and there is also equality between the teacher and students because there is no rostrum. Digital technology as well as sports and active learning play an important role in the school's curriculum.

The Buddhist didactics are also part of the Method. However, it is a great challenge to integrate the 2500 years old Buddhist wisdom into a school curriculum in Hungary, the emphasis is on the students' own experience. They start learning History by getting to know their families, Geography by mapping their streets. Literature is studied first by singing hit songs, or by self-expression. Mathematics is learned by measuring their environment, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology are learned by educating the secondary school students of their milieu, weather, and their bodies. They sing, measure, cook and chat in English. The curriculum is not based on textbooks or school books, rather on the students' needs. They learn from their own experience rather than from lectures. Hence the thematic and the reading material is shaped by remarkable dates, seasonal projects, actual topics, and the internal need of students. This way it is not linear rather spiral and that is a very Buddhist way of thinking. (Derdák & Orsós, 2015)

### **The School community**

The Dr. Ámbédkar School is a secondary school which means that students are starting grade 9 here and they study until they graduate after grade 12. This means that the majority of the students are in the age of 15-19, but because some of the youths have already left school for some time some - because of pregnancy, work, or other reasons - students can be older. In the past 13 years, 113 adults have completed their education here and 114 people have taken their graduating exam in a given subject.

At Dr Ámbédkar School teachers and mentors themselves are from run-down neighbourhoods, blighted areas, however, they managed to get into higher education, universities. This is what they aspire to help as they see themselves in the students. Here they can listen to the students, help them, talk to them with respect. They do not create a harsh environment and do not punish the students.

There are several so-called "landladies" working in the school who are doorkeepers, do cleaning, and operate the kitchen. However, they do important maintenance work in and around the school, they also play a significant role in the supervision of the students. They bring the "role model of the mothers or grandmother" to the school that also contributes to the homelike atmosphere.



*Figure 2. Opening ceremony for the year 2021/22 at the schoolyard of the Dr. Ámbédkar School.*

*Photo by Anita Reith*

### **Geographical context and social issues**

The City of Miskolc is located in the North-West region of Hungary, 180 kilometres away from Budapest. It is the county capital of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén and the regional centre of Northern Hungary. It is the 4th most populated city in Hungary with almost 160 thousand people living there. It is the 2nd largest by the size of built-up areas after Budapest with a total area of 236.66 km<sup>2</sup>. The city lies at the meeting point of different geographical regions – east from the Bükk mountains, in the valley of the river Sajó and the streams Hejő and Szinva. The ground level slopes gradually; the difference between the highest and lowest area is about 800 m. The lowest areas are the riverbanks, while Avas hill in the centre of Miskolc and the Lower and Central Bükk on the outskirts of the city are the high points. The natural landscape is very diverse in terms of the soil, the flora and the fauna as well. One of the most famous tourist destination of the country is Lillafüred that is a small town next to Miskolc. The cultural history is very rich: the area has been inhabited since ancient times. Miskolc is famous for its medieval castle in Diósgyőr district. During the Socialist era, industrialization gave the largest boost to the local economy. The factories and industrial facilities are mostly closed and abandoned today but they still are part of the local landscape. It is a big challenge of the city to rehabilitate and reuse these brown field areas. (Council of Miskolc, 2021)

Eleven identified segregation blocks can be found in Miskolc. These areas have very complex social and spatial problems. Based on a recent research, during the last 30 years the Roma population has doubled in Hungary (Pénzes et. Al., 2018). This is a significant growth especially if we look at the fact that the North-West region always had highest roma population in Hungary. Therefore the integration

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of the Roma people is crucial aim in Miskolc and is a fundamental social issue that needs to be taken into consideration when initiating a collaboration here.

### **Challenges of the school environment**

The Dr. Ámbédkar School and the Martin Luther King Dormitory are located in the Western part of Miskolc city, in Újdiósgyőr district, along the main East-West transportation axis of the city. The distance between the school and the dormitory is 2.3 kilometers which is 30 minutes by walk and 5 stops by tram. As the two institutions work closely together it is highly important to have a strong connection between them not only mentally but spatially as well.

There are four main local landscape challenges related to the school we can list: (1) *Not designed for the use*, (2) *Not integrated into the surroundings*, (3) *Underused outdoor spaces*, and (4) *No identity to the places*.

The school building previously has been used partially as a social housing and also as an educational space. Now the existing school area is still struggling with the challenges of not fitting into the building well. The Martin Luther King Dormitory has similar issues as it was also used before as a private home and a family business - a sewing factory.

Both the school and the dormitory are struggling with building connections with the immediate neighbours. The Dr. Ámbédkar School is located next to a Greek community area.

*Figure 3. One of the challenges was to connect the school (one classroom here in the picture) to the dormitory, Photo by Anita Reith*

*Photo 3. The university students being instructed on participatory methods*

### **Establishing the LADDER partnership with the school**

The Dr. Ámbédkar School in Miskolc has joined the LADDER Living Lab in 2020. The active collaboration between the school and the Living Lab started in the beginning of December 2020.

The first coordination meeting with the school leaders happened online because of the pandemic. In this meeting representatives from the Dr. Ámbédkar School, the Martin Luther King Dormitory, the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences and the kultúrAktív Association, introduced themselves and laid down the objective of the possible collaboration. The core group has agreed to begin the next spring semester by mapping out the school and dormitory environment to prepare for a 10-day international Intensive Study Program for the summer and to support the ongoing dormitory redevelopment by engaging young people's perspectives and needs.

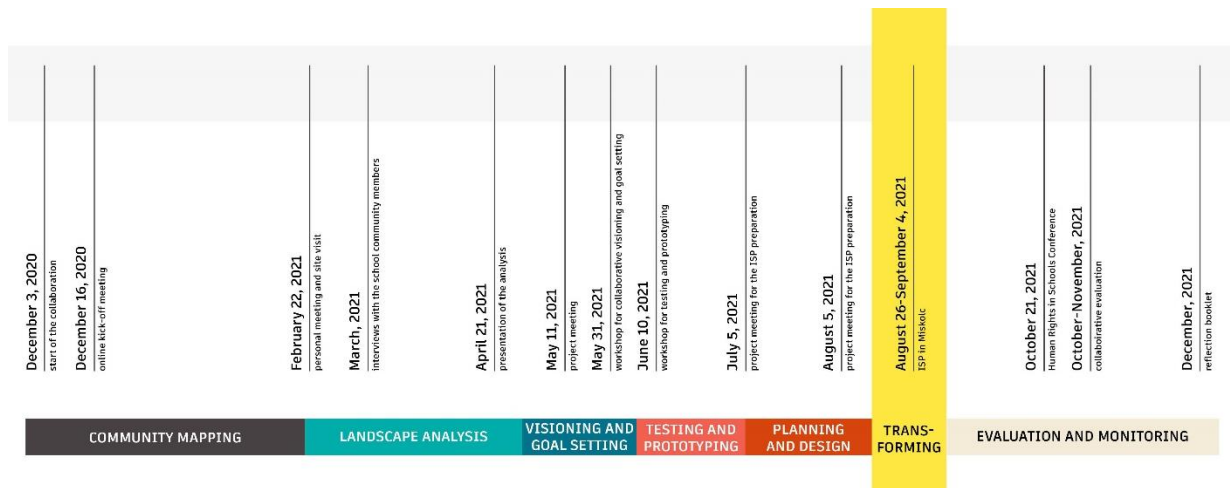


Figure 3. Timeline of the collaboration process with the Dr. Ámbédkar School. Graphics by Anita Reith

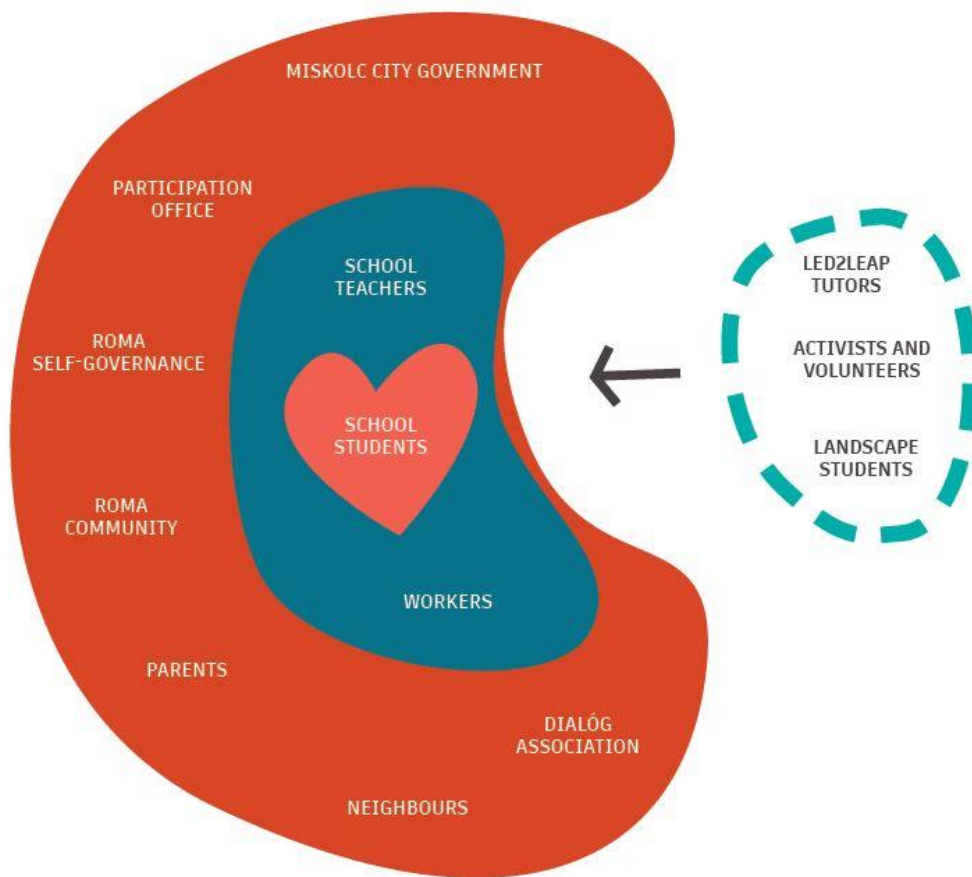


Figure 4. Participants of the collaboration with the Dr. Ámbédkar School. Graphics by Anita Reith

## Activities during the online course

In February 2021, the spring semester began at the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences. In preparation for the online course, the living lab coordinators from the university and the

association visited the school in Miskolc to gather materials to study. During the site visit, photos and videos were taken that provided an opportunity for landscape architecture university students participating in distance learning from home to take a virtual tour of and around Dr. Ámbédkar School, the Martin Luther King Dormitory. In the following months of the online course, students conducted analyses based on virtual walks, interviews with teachers and staff, and short videos made by local secondary school students. In these short videos, they described their favourite and less popular places at school or college or in Miskolc. Using all these different remote inputs, university students created a stakeholder map, a power map, a conflict map, and a list of opportunities in the area, which were presented on April 21 to the online course to their fellow university students and school leaders who provided feedback on what they heard.

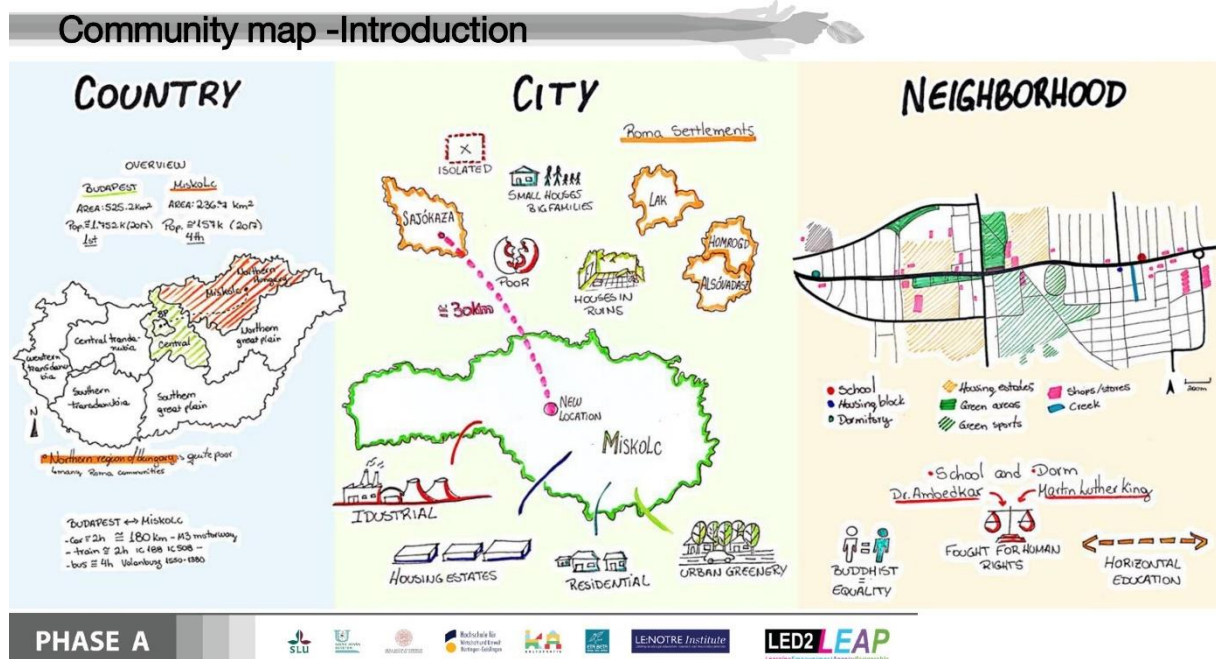


Figure 5. Presentation slide from the landscape architect student on the understanding of the special context of the Dr. Ámbédkar School. Graphics by LED2LEAP students

### On-site activities

After reaching this milestone, another coordination meeting took place in May 2021 between the coordinators of the living laboratory and the leaders of the school. At this meeting, the team evaluated the work they have done so far and outlined future plans: the international Intensive Student Program in the summer in Miskolc, and how the participatory planning experience gained in involving young people in the living laboratory could be used in the dormitory garden’s transformation that has just begun. The meeting was important to see how such a larger and international event can be integrated into the life of the school and the process of transforming the school environment. In addition, we learned about the leader’s priorities and current challenges in transforming the school environment. As the school recently moved to a new location, the following changes were timely:

1. The placement of a statue of the school’s Buddhist name giver, Dr. Ámbédkar, in or around the school.

2. Re-modeling, renovation and painting of the school's former residential buildings for educational purposes.
3. Expansion of places in the new dormitory of the school, as well as renewal of the garden of the dormitory, expansion of its functions.

### **Collaborative visioning and goal setting workshop**

The next step was to extend and verify these goals with the wider school community. The aim of the first workshop was to create a collective vision and to specify goals together with the secondary school students, which guides the transformation of the dormitory and the school yard. In this workshop more than 20 secondary school students, teachers and university students participated. The workshop leaders chose the method of the *Nominal Group Technique* to facilitate the event.

The workshop participants chose the theme of 'Active Schoolyard' as a vision, which was then associated with specific goals. The collective vision symbolizes the state that the school community wants to create in its own environment. After choosing a common vision, all participants were asked to write two individual goals that they would like to see achieved. With a voting the participants selected the following goals:

1. Create an "edible" garden!
2. Have as many outdoor sports and games as possible in the yard!
3. Give priority to group sports in the yard!
4. The yard should accommodate as many school programs and events as possible.

For these goals, participants brainstormed about what the goals meant.



*Figure 6. School community is writing individual goals about the renewal of the school and the dormitory environment. Photo by Lili Csuka*

## Prototyping and testing together

In the second workshop, participants formulated the first yard-making ideas based on the vision, we made low fidelity prototypes of the ideas and tested them. The aim was to relate the previously mentioned proposed activities to the real space. Workshop participants had to imagine these functions and activities and find the best place for them. They had to create a human sculpture and take pictures with Polaroid instant cameras. The aim of this exercise was to create prototypes and test out the first ideas. While testing, meaningful conversations happened about design details, materials, directions, and scales of the future objects. From the outcomes of this exercise an exhibition was created for the broader school community.



*Figure 7. Dr. Ámbédkar students are prototyping and testing the idea of having an outdoor kitchen in the dormitory's garden. Photo by Lili Csuka*

## Preparation of the Intensive Study Program

After the on-site workshops, the school year ended. Until the summer break, in the collaboration with the Dr. Ámbédkar School we analysed the landscape, mapped the local community, identified the local challenges, set a collaborative vision and prioritised the goals with the school community. We even started to design and created prototypes for the new functions proposed by the community. In the summer break, the planning and design phase had to be continued with the school community. The LADDER team and the school representatives were working closely together on the preparation of the ISP for which we decided to move forward with the planning and to start to implement some ideas. Beside the co-ordinational meetings, the LADDER team started to contact local organisations and NGOs. In August, right before the LED2LEAP ISP, the renovation in the dormitory's garden was started by the *Davis Project* that is an international project aiming *Youth Empowerment through Sport*

funded by the *International House of Chicago*. The Davis project leaders were working closely with the LADDER project leader to make sure the two projects are supporting and underlining each other.

Before the ISP, the LED2LEAP organizing team knew that the 10 days we would spend with the school community would be a very intense and short time. Therefore, in one of the ISP preparatory meetings the LED2LEAP tutors discussed what impact we would like to achieve with the ISP. We have divided our impact into three areas: impact on the local community, impact on the landscape architect university students, and impact on the relationship between the school environment and the school community.

**Wishes about the impacts on the local community:**

*"We want to be catalysts for more events"*

*"We want the meeting of the school community and international students to be a good experience"*

*"We want to leave behind the development ideas or ambitions for the future in the school community"*

*"We want to give the school community a guide, a handbook that they can use to solve their future problems"*

*"We want to strengthen local connections in the school community"*

*"We want a sense of unity in the school community by recognizing diversity"*

*"We want students to form relationships and gain long-term relationships"*

*"We want students to have good memories"*

**Wishes about the impacts on the landscape architect university students:**

*"We want students to form relationships and gain long-term relationships"*

*"We want students to have good memories"*

*"We want students to have an example of how they can make an impact"*

*"We want students to feel that they can make a difference"*

*"We want students to learn to work with communities"*

*"We want students to learn to process the negative experiences gained during engagement because there is no such thing as no perfect engagement"*

*"We want to give students a hands-on ground for developing solutions"*

*"We want students to practice time-based problem solving (cookware)"*

**Wishes about the impacts on the relationship between the school environment and the school community:**

*"Taking possession of school and college space and creating a sense of ownership"*

*"Strengthening attachment to the site"*

*"Make school and college more accessible"*

*"Facilitate functioning as a meeting place or some kind of connection point"*

*"Create symbols or icons that stay in place after the IP and remind you of IP events"*





Figure 8. Detail of the original MURAL platform where the goals and wishes were formed. Graphics by Anna Szilágyi-Nagy

## 03 General introduction of the Intensive Study Program (ISP)

### Participants of the ISP

In the Intensive Study Program, we can separate the participants based on their role and locality. From the LED2LEAP project group, we would like to introduce separately the Hungarian organiser team, the visiting staff who have been on-site, the online tutoring staff who connected remotely to the ISP, and also the landscape architect students who came to the program. Among the local participants, we would like to introduce the hosts (the school and dorm community) and the guests (the local NGOs, organizations, and municipality).



*Figure 9. The participants in presence of the Miskolc IP. Photo published on Padlet*

## **LADDER Living Lab coordinators and program organisers**

Dr. Albert Fekete

Head of Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Garden Art at the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, a partner in the LED2LEAP project. As a leader of this project at the university, he is responsible for the administrative, legal and financial aspects of the program. He also helped to organise publicity for the project and also for the ISP

*Eszter Jákli*

Assistant teacher and project manager at the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, coordinator of the LADDER Living Lab. She is responsible for the administration and dissemination tasks in the Living Lab, and main contact with the university student. She was responsible for the administrative side of the Intensive Study Program organising the accommodations, travels, food, and other essentials.

*Anita Reith*

Doctoral student at the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, coordinator of the LADDER Living Lab. She was the primer contact with the Dr. Ámbédkar School and the Martin Luther King Dormitory from the very beginning of the collaboration. She was the leading facilitator of the on-site workshops. She was responsible for putting together the main structure of the ISP. She was the leader during the ISP and also conducted the reflections and evaluation process with the local participants after the ISP.

*Anna Szilágyi-Nagy*

President of the kultúrAktív Egyesület, coordinator of the LADDER Living Lab, a partner in the LED2LEAP project. She took part in the coordination meetings preparing the Intensive Student Program, in the design and implementation of the schedule of the Intensive Student Program. Anna considered it important that the Intensive Student Program not only serves the professional development of university students but also the development of the local community.

*Regina Mihály*

Member of the kultúrAktív Association, coordinator of the LADDER Living Lab. She was helping with establishing local contacts and organising site visits and local tours at the stakeholder organisations. She was responsible for keeping in touch with the local NGOs and organisations in Miskolc. She also helped with workshop leading and preparational tasks during the ISP in Miskolc.

*Lili Csuka*

Member of the kultúrAktív Association. She helped to conduct the on-site workshops in May and June. During the summer she was also helping with the organisation in the background (translating, preparing summary materials) to make sure that everything went smoothly during the ISP.

## **LED2LEAP Visiting Staff**

*Jeroen de Vries*

Director Researcher at LE:NOTRE Institute and project leader of the LED2LEAP. He was responsible for the administrative and legal side of the Intensive Program. During the IP he helped the team to reflect and focus on the missions. After the IP he led the evaluation and wrap-up tasks.

*Arati Amitraj Uttur*

Beside the tutoring activities, her knowledge about edible gardens and pedagogical methods was a great asset to the team. She held lectures and conducted campus tours of the school with the school teachers where they discussed the opportunities hiding in the building and in the garden. She also led the building activity in the garden.

*Francesco Lipparini*

Engineer and Collaborator of the Architecture Department at the University of Bologna. Besides tutoring one team, he helped the team with the documentation and setting up and monitoring the interactive Padlet platform for team collaboration during the Intensive Program.

## **LED2LEAP Online Tutoring Staff**

*Deni Ruggeri*

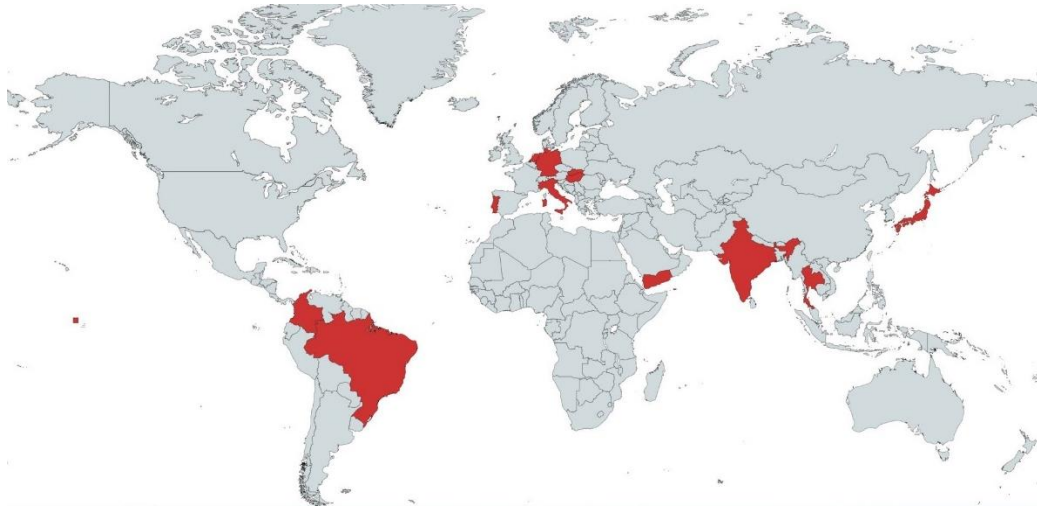
Staff member at LE:NOTRE Institute and project leader of the LED2LEAP. Gave feedback in an online session to the strategies and interventions that were proposed by the university student teams.

*Andrea Conti*

Ph.D. candidate at SLU Alnarp in Sweden, a partner in the LED2LEAP project. Gave feedback in an online session to the strategies and interventions that were proposed by the university student teams.

## **Landscape architecture students**

In the ISP we had 12 international landscape architectural students. Although only students from the four partner universities (Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Nürtingen-Geislingen, University of Bologna and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences) could join to participate the ISP, it is important to highlight that if we look at the original background of the students it was a very diverse group coming from many, even non-European countries. This cultural diversity added a great value to the program. Having six participants who are originally from India was also an excellent setting because of the Indian roots of the school. Finding similarities in different cultural contexts was a crucial task for all the participants in order to understand the local situation and the mindset of the school.



*Figure 10. Landscape architecture students were coming from many countries to participate in the Miskolc ISP. Graphics by Anita Reith*

### **Local host of the ISP**

The host of the ISP was the Dr. Ámbédkar School and the Martin Luther King Dormitory. The LED2LEAP team could use their facilities freely, most of the activities were organised in the school building and in the schoolyard. The director of the school, Tibor Derdák was our primer guide during the ISP. He was the key resource of information who introduced to us all the necessary aspects of the school and the dorm operation. Besides him, the founder of the school, János Orsós and the whole faculty and also the other employees supported us with all the needed help during the ISP. From the dormitory side Nóra Tyeklár, the director of the dorm along with her employees provided all the support that was needed during the ISP.

As the ISP started already in August, we only met the local students on the 1st of September, when the school officially started. Around 60 students started the new year in the Dr. Ámbédkar School and almost 20 students moved into the Martin Luther King Dormitory. Students were coming from Miskolc or from the surrounding villages mostly, but some of them were coming from Slovakia to study here.

### **Guests of the ISP**

The Miskolc City Municipality and the Mayor's Office of the City of Miskolc were represented in the ISP by Andrea Klára Varga, the deputy mayor of the city. Besides her a relationship has been built with the Participation Office of Miskolc City. Kamilla Kovács, civil participation rapporteur and Natália Czifrusz, the chief gardener of the city helped us a lot to understand the local context from the social and landscape point of view.

Áron János Csere represented the Dialogue for Communities Public Benefit Association who are working closely together with the Participation Office of Miskolc City. They help the municipality to establish and develop communication with the residents.

Roma Nationality Self-Government was also participating in the ISP to help to understand the current situation of the Roma community in Miskolc and in Hungary. Ernő Lakatos, the president of the organisation, Gábor Váradi and Attila Lakatos, the members of the organisation guided us during the ISP. Erna Gulyásné Nagy as a local teacher and a professional translator, member of the local Roma community helped us to have a smooth communication in English as well.

We also have to mention Roy Kimmey, a Ph.D. student at the Chicago University and also the mentor of the Davis Project. He has arrived to Miskolc to lead the renovation work at the dormitory that was supported by the Davis Project. He has been there during the ISP and supporting us with his physical and mental work.

## **Competences and learning goals of the Intensive Study Program (ISP)**

The learning outcomes of the LED2LEAP blended learning activities are related to the concepts of landscape democracy, the abilities to interact with stakeholders, applying suitable methods for participatory action research and applying these concepts to landscape planning and design.

Whereas the online seminar focuses on the theoretical and conceptual aspects, the Intensive Study Program provides a superb context for the university students to deepen their understanding and practice in real life how they interact, using their competencies, with the community. Each of the four university teams received a mission: (1) Learning; to learn about the community through its environment; (2) Empowerment: to change the power structure to become more democratic; (3) Agency; to make the school community care for their environment; and (4) Partnership: to improve the relationship of the school with the neighbours.

From the learning outcomes of the seminar the following are most relevant for the ISP. Students are sensitive to the different attitudes towards open space and also the disparities in access to landscape that exist among different ethnic or socioeconomic groups in many cities. They learned to understand how terms are perceived by stakeholders. They were able to critically evaluate and identify concrete situations in which democratic processes are missing from landscape decision making processes, and propose possible solutions. They deepened their understanding of the principles for landscape democracy and reflected more on their own values as a planner ('expert'). They could select the most adequate methods and tools to be applied in specific challenges requiring participatory processes and understood the importance of matching techniques to the community.

During the ISP they learned to select the methods and tools that were feasible to apply in practice.

By their experience the university students are more knowledgeable of how to discuss landscape democracy principles by using a vocabulary that is understood both by practitioners and the community and choosing interventions that contribute to a strategy for sustainable landscape development that is attuned to the community.

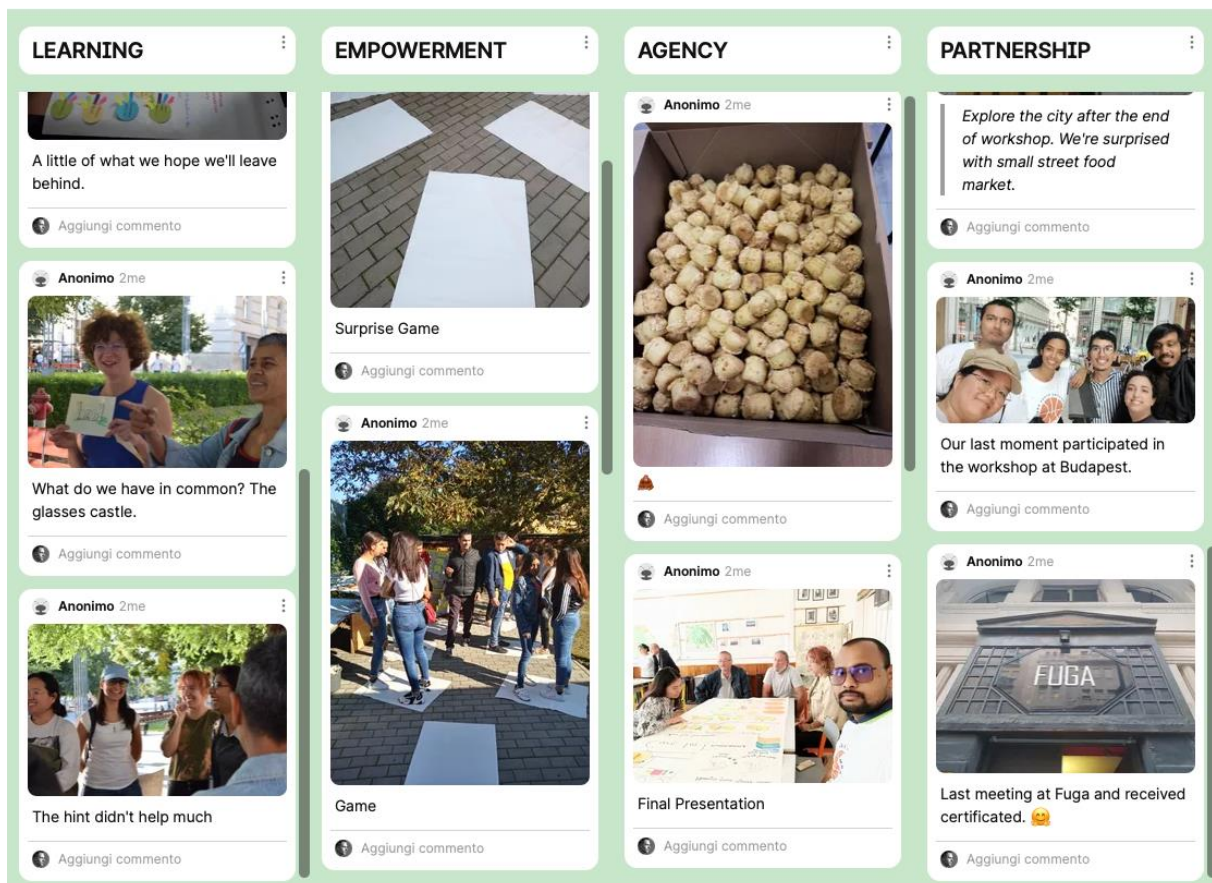


Figure 11. Screenshot of the Padlet LED2LEAP platform where the university students placed every day their images and main impressions of that day. Photos published on Padlet

## Main activities of the ISP

During the Intensive Study Program in Miskolc the following type of activities were included in the schedule:

- learning sessions (lectures, interactive sessions, movie & discussion, visiting stakeholders)
- team building activities (common lunch, garden party, playtime, celebration)
- group work for the LED2LEAP student groups
- tutoring sessions to reflect on the group work and the proposals
- community engagement sessions (presentations, voting sessions, walk tours, games, collective learning, etc.)

However, the originally proposed schedule went through daily some adjustments and spontaneous improvisation to accommodate inadvertent events and changes, the principles remained the same. Changes occurred because of the weather, the availability of stakeholders, on-site issues, incorporation of on-site opportunities based on knowledge sharing or discoveries. Below we present the final schedule as it was finally conducted.

Date	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
26.08 Day 01	Arrival of participants and tutors to the MATE Campus in Budapest. Occupying the accommodation.		Screening of the film <i>Angry Buddha</i> at the MATE Campus followed by a round-table discussion with guests (local professors, local practitioners, urban planners and landscape architects, and Roma NGO members).
27.08 Day 02	Travel to Miskolc	<p>Formal introduction to the Dr. Ámbédkar School by Tibor Derdák, the director of the school.</p> <p>Common lunch.</p> <p>Meeting with the representatives of the Miskolc City Municipality and the Mayor's Office of the City of Miskolc for introduction to the local landscape and social context. Overview of the current developments in Miskolc and the future plans.</p>	<p>Introducing the LEAP mission, forming groups.</p> <p>Brainstorming about engagement strategies.</p> <p>Occupying the accommodation.</p>
28.08 Day 03	<p>Introduction and discussion with Tibor Derdák about the history, the current operation and management, the educational program, the inner community and the outer relationships of the school and the dormitory.</p> <p>Presentation by Anita Reith to introduce the collaboration with the school before the ISP. Introducing the role of the ISP in the process and the possible outcomes.</p>	<p>Common lunch.</p> <p>Walking tour in Miskolc focusing on the surroundings of the school. Visiting the Martin Luther King dormitory.</p> <p>Meeting with the Roma Nationality Self-Government who explained more about the local Roma community and the social and cultural context in Miskolc.</p> <p>Visit the Roma Holocaust memorial statue behind the Miskolc Gallery.</p>	Teamwork for the LEAP groups.



<p>29.08 Day 04</p>	<p>Introduction to youth engagement and gaming tools by Anna Szilagyi-Nagy. Role-play exercise to envision the first day of school through a student's perspective. Introducing and trying out some methods that have been developed by Anna and Anita in the Safecity project. LEAP teams create human installations to express the meaning of each team's mission.</p>	<p><b>Common lunch.</b> Teams explore the school campus and surroundings and place notes/wish list of the changes they would like to see in the school on behalf of their role-play personas.</p>	<p><b>Common dinner.</b> Teams reflect on the engagement strategies from 27.08, adding personal values and interventions to leave behind after the newly experienced perspective from the role-play. All teams present their planned interventions internally to the LED2LEAP group, addressing their respective team mission.</p>
<p>30.08 Day 05</p>	<p>Teamwork to create poster presentations to explain team mission, goals and proposed interventions divided into "short-term"; "medium-term" and "long-term". Explaining the expected impacts.</p>	<p><b>Common lunch.</b> Teams present the posters to the school faculty. Faculty give their verbal feedback and discuss pressing issues. Faculty leave feedback by using stickers: 'favourable interventions'; 'un-favourable or problematic interventions' and 'interventions where they would like to participate'.</p>	<p><b>Common dinner.</b> Teams take forward the afternoon interaction and work towards their final presentation on 03.09.</p>
<p>31.08 Day 06</p>	<p>LED2LEAP goes hands-on: The teams clean up the school yard and execute some interventions in order to create an identity for the building and premises as a welcome gesture to the students of Dr. Ámbédkar School who would attend their first day of school the following day.</p>	<p><b>Common lunch.</b> Preparing welcome packages for the students and games for the 1st day of the school.</p>	<p><b>Common dinner.</b></p>

<p>01.09 Day 07</p>	<p>Students of Dr. Ámbédkar School arrived on their 1st day and got a welcome package from the LED2LEAP team. Official opening ceremony led by the faculty. LED2LEAP team gave a brief introduction. Social bingo to get to break the ice and get to know each other. School ceremony outside with speeches and inspirational poems from Janos Orsos, Tibor Derdak, the Faculty members, and existing students for the new students. Interactive parallel sessions with school community where we create together a world map. LED2LEAP team facilitates an exercise to create a 'Dream School Tree' where all the students share their wishes and thoughts.</p>	<p>Common lunch. Presentation to the school faculty on Learning environment and Interdisciplinary Learning by Arati Uttur. Presentation followed by a walking tour of the entire school building and outdoor areas with the faculty, discussing ideal use for all spaces and re-imagining spaces to utilise full potential. Post-it notes or placards with unanimous ideas stuck onto walls, doors, windows, schoolyard and all such spaces which needed change – to stand as a daily reminder of the discussion. LEAP teams work to prepare for the next day.</p>	
<p>02.09 Day 08</p>	<p>All students and teachers of the Dr. Ámbédkar School participates in a community building exercise to implement 'short-term interventions': window pots, raised bed, furniture renovation and building an art sculpture. LEAP teams are facilitating the activities that promote learning by doing, self-empowerment, becoming change agents and building partnerships. All chosen interventions were designed to be low-effort while creating high impact, to motivate the school community.</p>	<p>Common lunch. LED2LEAP team moves to the dormitory to clean up the garden and to help with painting the garage building. Discussion and campus walk with school administration to improve the Martin Luther King Dormitory and re-think the living spaces to improve outdoor connectivity and reduce redundant spaces.</p>	<p>Common dinner. Celebration around the campfire and reflection within the LED2LEAP team.</p>
<p>03.09 Day 09</p>	<p>LEAP teams facilitate parallel exercises for the school student where they explain</p>	<p>Travel to Budapest.</p>	<p>Certificates are given to the LED2LEAP participants.</p>

	<p>their missions in a playful and interactive game.</p> <p>Closing ceremony with the whole school community. Thank you packages are given to the local hosts and guests of the ISP.</p> <p>LEAP teams present their weekly work explaining team mission, goals and proposed interventions divided into “short-term”; “medium-term” and “long-term”. Explaining the expected impacts. School representatives, the faculty, and representatives of the municipality are invited to these presentations. Feedbacks are given for the proposed ideas.</p> <p>Teams leave behind their posters and work for the reference of the school.</p>	<p>Walking tour in Budapest with interactive games developed by kultúrAktív Association.</p>	<p>All participants are invited to the 10th birthday of the kultúrAktív Association.</p>
<p>04.09 Day 10</p>	<p>End of Intensive Study Program. Participants depart.</p>		



Figure 12. Getting an informal lecture from the director of the Dr. Ámbédkar School in the main hall.  
Photo by Anita Reith

## Working process and deliverables

Students had to work in teams. Teams were focusing on the LEAP mission - Learning, Empowerment, Agency, and Partnership. First, they had to unfold the meaning of the mission and the interpretation of it in the current context. They had to understand the local context and the landscape challenges through the lens of their mission. Groups were working in order to propose interventions in three different timeframes:

- short-term: the so-called 'lowest hanging fruit' with low input needed and high impact expected. These interventions can be realized during the ISP.
- medium-term: these interventions cannot be realized during the ISP because more time, money, coordination, or other resources are needed. These proposals can be connected to the short-term interventions - a developed or permanent version for them.
- long-term: maybe years of work is needed to implement these interventions. They can also be connected to short or medium-term proposals.

During the ISP the LEAP teams had to document each day in a common platform called PADLET. Teams had to reflect on the day and highlight the moments that were important to their mission on that day. They had to take pictures of those moments and upload them with comments. These PADLET pages are subjective reflections by the university students which illustrates their learning and working process in the ISP.

Below the PADLET pages are available for each day with their QR codes:



By the end of the ISP every group had to prepare not only a poster presentation of their findings and proposals but also a digital documentation of it. These materials are given in the section called LEAP Challenges.

## Community Engagement Activities

The living labs of the LED2LEAP Erasmus+ Program are focusing on engaging and working with the local community. In the Intensive Study Program, landing international students in a local context is a particular challenge, as they have to process and learn a lot of information in a short period of time. Therefore, in addition to the good identifiable issues of the democratic challenge, it is also important to have time for the local community to get to know the international landscape architect students when designing a good ISP. We provided an opportunity to get to know different local actors in different forums.

These engagement activities provided the knowledge about the community, how it functions and operates, and it was the basic material for the university students to work out their LEAP-Challenges which is the topic of the next chapter.

## **Activities with the school community**

### **Engagement of the youth**

Involving young people in planning requires a special, age-appropriate methodology. In the case of the Dr. Ámbédkar School, we worked with a special methodology that was mostly focusing on active and loud drama pedagogical exercises. Doing creative exercises around a table were less successful with these students not only because of their age range but also because of their cultural background. Teachers' experiences and the workshop days prior to the Intensive Study Program were very important in finding the right voice with the kids coming in during the ISP.

As the school year started only on the 1st of September, the LED2LEAP team had only three days to interact with the local youth. By watching the Angry Buddha movie and inviting a former student of the Dr. Ámbédkar School to share her story, by reviewing the boards of the previous years with Tibor Derdák who gave a detailed explanation for each student presented on the board, by hearing stories from the Roma community members helped the international group to understand the social and cultural background of the local youth. Finding the right methods was especially important because of the language barrier between the international students and the local youth.

The 3 mornings we spent with the youth of the school had 3 different themes. On the 1st of September the engagement activities were focusing on getting to know each other and making sure the kids feel comfortable being with us. We used Social Bingo ('find a person for whom it is true that...') for ice-breaking. This exercise helped a lot to release anxiety because of the language difference between the participants. Then the LED2LEAP team introduced themselves with a mapping exercise ('explain the country you originally come from'). As a closing exercise for the day the school students had to draw a tree and write individual thoughts and wishes about 'Your Dream School'. Everyone shared these and we put them on post-its and stuck them on the tree. The next day, these posters were put in the windows so people walking next to the school building could see their work. Besides the formal activities, the LED2LEAP team gave the school students upon arrival a small welcome package (chocolate and pen) and also invited the school community for a common lunch.

On the second day we worked with the youth in teams. Three selected interventions (window pots, raised bed, renovating furniture and making an art sculpture) were prepared to be realized with the school community. Students were divided into 3 groups just like the teachers. Each group worked an hour on one intervention then the groups changed location. They had to work together and follow the instructions of the LED2LEAP team facilitators. We made sure that all the students are engaged in the activities - cutting, painting, building, planting, watering, etc.

On Friday, the goal was to celebrate the result of the building exercise and to properly close the program and say goodbye to the youth. In the morning the LEAP teams held interactive activities to explain their missions in a fun way. After the games, the university students told the story of the week (what has happened and why and what can happen in the future) to the youth using their language. As a final moment with them, we thanked everyone for the work and celebrated the time spent together with some food.



*Figure 13. Roma student holding hands with a university student from India during the interactive exercise of the Empowerment group. Photo by Gábor Hanula*

### **Engagement of the teachers and the school staff**

During the ISP we had the chance to engage the whole faculty of the school. With the leadership we made sure that our activities are fitting into the curriculum. The 3 days that we spent with the youth were designed and implemented with the teachers. The LED2LEAP team discussed the activities with the faculty and built in the feedback into the program. Formal and informal, smaller and bigger meetings were held in order to build strong connections with the teachers and the staff. The common lunches were good opportunities for informal conversations and trust-building. It was important to make sure that the teachers are supporting our engagement activities because their personal good relationship with the students could elevate the experience and the success of the activity.

In the beginning of the ISP, the LED2LEAP team got a deep overview of the educational program, the teaching and learning methods used, the philosophy of the school, and how the school is operating on a daily basis. Without understanding these aspects we would have stayed as outsiders in the process. They came with us to the supermarket to buy all the necessary tools and materials for the building exercise, they came with us to the external meetings with the municipality or the Roma Nationality Self-Government. They were our guides in Miskolc, introducing the neighbourhood from their perspective. These occasions were also good for them to connect with other people, to meet with other organizations, to build external relationships that can support the school operation and management in the future.

We also held presentations to the faculty and the school staff about new topics like Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, Learning Environment and Interdisciplinary Learning, and School Gardens. These presentations were held by the LED2LEAP tutors.

An important activity with the teachers and staff was when Arati held walking tours in the school and the dorm. This was an improvised activity that has been raised after the presentations but turned out to be a very successful one. A small group of teachers walked with us the entire school building and outdoor areas discussing ideal use for all spaces and re-imagining spaces to utilise full potential. Post-it notes or placards with unanimous ideas were stuck onto walls, doors, windows, schoolyard and all such spaces which needed a change. Where to open up the classroom and create a visual connection in the hallway, how to rearrange the functions to save space but keep the handicapped section and changing room, where to put the chemical storage and garden tools, have a library in the hallway instead of a sitting room, where to put the bean bag lounge that could be used for group activities. How to create a teacher's room and not just a place for work, but also a place for communal tea and contact with parents. It became clear that everyone had different ideas, but during a walk together we were able to note down these aspects and adjust them in the space until a good proposal was made. The notes are still hanging in the school to stand as a daily reminder of the discussion.

Another important engagement activity with the school teachers and staff was when the LEAP teams presented their planned interventions to ask for feedback. Faculty and administration not only gave verbal feedback but also marked the posters with stickers to express their attitudes towards the ideas: 'favourable interventions'; 'un-favourable or problematic interventions' and 'interventions where they would like to participate'.

Teachers were also engaged in the building exercise on the 2nd of September. On the last day, the whole faculty with the staff received certificates for supporting the program with their skills and knowledge. We thanked them for the collaboration and we expressed how much we value their work. Some of the teachers were also present in the final presentation of the university students.



*Figure 14. Discussion and group work in one of the rooms of the Dr. Ámbédkar School. Photo by Anita Reith*

## Activities with the local guests

### Engaging the municipality

On the day when we arrived to Miskolc we had the chance to meet with the representatives of the Miskolc City Municipality and the Mayor's Office of the City of Miskolc. The deputy mayor and the chief gardener held a presentation about the local context and the landscape challenges. Representatives from the Participation Office of Miskolc City and the Dialogue for Communities Public Benefit Association helped the LED2LEAP team to understand the democratic context, the social and cultural issues that they are facing today and how the local community works. Valuable discussion occurred about the current developments in Miskolc and the future plans of the city.

These actors were invited to the final presentation and discussion where the university students presented their findings and proposals inside and around the school. We each actor a certificate for their support and participation.



*Figure 15. The participants attending a meeting in Miskolc City Hall. Photo by Anita Reith*

### Engaging the Roma community

On the meeting with the Roma Nationality Self-Government members illustrated the current situation of the Roma community by telling personal stories. We talked about politics, legal circumstances, cultural values, their connection with the school, and also about how they imagine a good public space and a good city where there is no discrimination and exclusion. We also visited together with the first Roma Holocaust Sculpture in the city that has been recently established.



We invited the leaders of the community for the final presentation of the university students but unfortunately, they could not attend. We also gave them certificates for their support and participation.



*Figure 16. Visiting the first Roma Holocaust statue in Miskolc together with the representatives of the Roma Nationality Self-Government. Photo by Anita Reith*

### **Joining the local events**

The ISP LED2LEAP team was interested to engage the local community in an informal way as well. There was a festival of Open Cells running during the ISP and the team visited the event to get insights about the local life, food, and habits. Some local cell owners even invited the team for a special tour and wine tasting.



*Figure 17. University students joining the Open Cell Festival. Photo by LED2LEAP students*

## **Report on the LEAP-Challenges**

Each of the four university teams received a mission: (1) Learning; to learn about the community through its environment; (2) Empowerment: to change the power structure to become more democratic; (3) Agency; to make the school community care for their environment; and (4) Partnership: to improve the relationship of the school with the neighbours.

## LEAP-Challenge 1: Learning

University students: Nayan Jee (HfWU, Nürtingen), Tayana Passos Rosa (Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences)

Tutors: Arati Uttur (HfWU, Nürtingen), Szilágyi-Nagy Anna (kultúrAktív Egyesület)

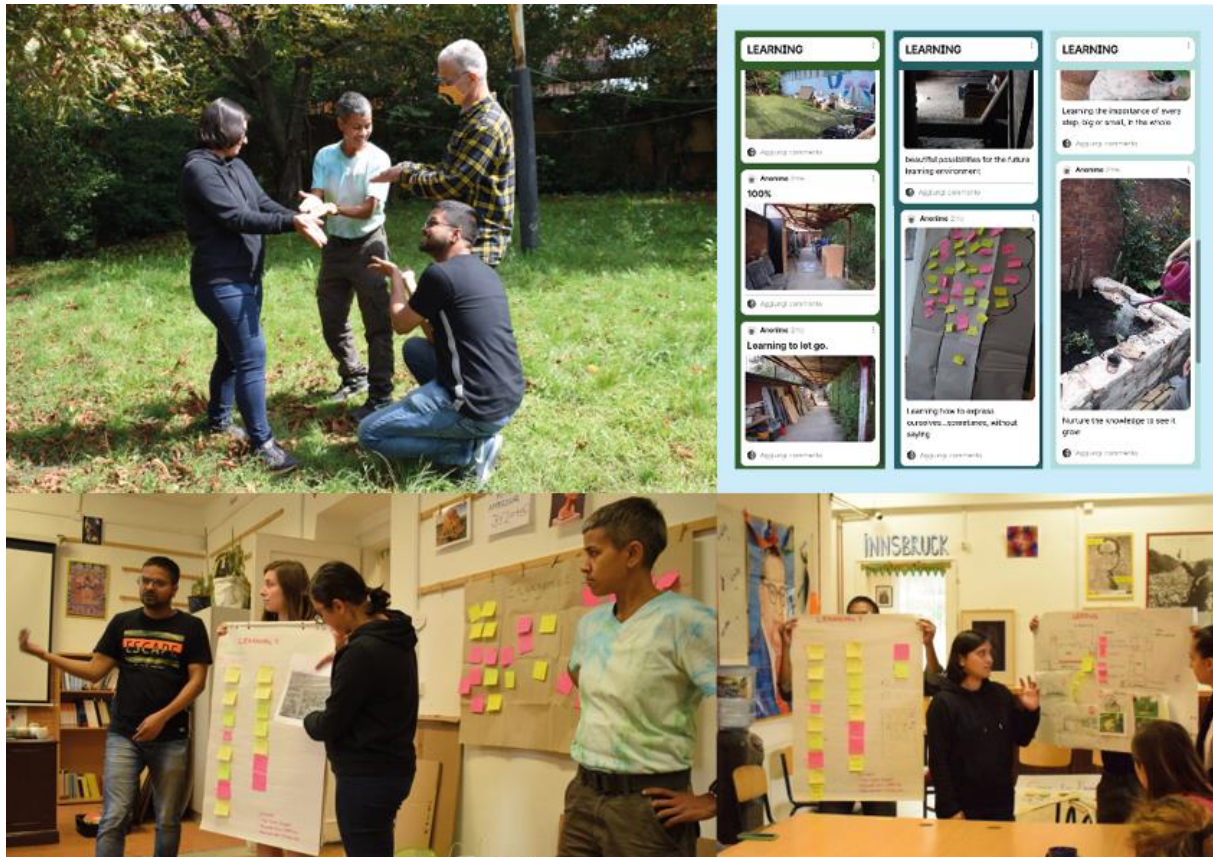


Figure 18. Collage of pictures from Learning team. Photos by Anita Reith and Padlet

### Work process

At the beginning of the Intensive Study Program, still in Budapest, the documentary “Angry Buddha” (2006) by Stefan Ludwig and Peter Drössler introduced us to the Roma community. The film gives a good insight into the culture, landscape, and challenges of the Roma communities living in smaller settlements, mainly north to Miskolc. The film also introduces the Dr. Ámbédkar School, with its mission of guiding the Roma youth to break the cycle of informal work and poverty through education, their values, and their challenges.

The following days took place in the city of Miskolc. The university students and tutors were introduced to the school environment, participated in a meeting in the municipality with the vice mayor and the head gardener of the city. This meeting provided a deeper insight in the history of



*Figure 19. Presenting and discussing the strategy and interventions. Photo published on Padlet*

Miskolc, its townscape, its cultural and touristic values and the latest participatory planning effort that was implemented in the last year. An introductory presentation was held at the school with the vice-president explaining the school's origin, the Buddhist beliefs and methodology, and the mission of the school. This clarified the challenges the school is facing, which range from the lack of governmental funding, the segregation of the spaces used by the Roma community, the engagement of the secondary school students, the unsuitability of the current school building and environment.

During a meeting with the Roma self-government in Miskolc we could observe, once again, the lack of governmental support the Roma community receives, and that segregation is a strong reality in the community. This is reflected in a lack of the representativity of this community in the city's landscape. Only one landmark was proudly introduced: the Roma Holocaust Memorial Statue. This small step for representation of the community in the public spaces, is a big victory for the self-government.

Throughout the learning and introductory part of the workshop, several learning sessions and reflective activities were organised by the tutors and guests to give more insightful guidelines on how to deal with the challenges the team would choose to work on.

After we were introduced to the locations, the environment, the community, and the townscape, our team thought about our involvement with the community and reflected on what we would like to leave behind from this experience. We started to develop strategies and consider interventions.

As a transformative experience, the plans for the workshop, main goals and tasks were adapted based on learning of the previous sessions. Therefore, some of the original tasks were modified. Our team had the liberty to think about interventions inside the Dr. Ambedkar School and the Martin Luther King Dormitory. Many ideas were explored, while each university student group focused on its secret mission. Since we had Learning as a mission, the focus was interventions with a strong learning impact. The following days of the workshop were based on the further development of strategies and interventions that could be fully realised. Some of them were only by the team but most of them with the participation of the school community within the workshop period. Others were presented to the community to engage them into realizing in the future, to create change in the long term.

### **Goal & Vision**

The main goal is to promote learning through the school community's interaction with their surrounding landscape. The learning would also result from participatory actions. It aims to create a sense of belonging, respect for the landscape and motivate prolonged self-maintenance by the school community. Therefore, the challenges faced by the city, Roma and mainly the school community also show the necessity of defining a set of goals, that even if these are not realised within the workshop period, should inspire the community for future realisation. Our vision is to promote a reduction of segregation of the Roma and School community by the local community, to reinforce and create respect for the Roma community. Making their culture more visible for the city community; identifying the School and Dormitory environments as education establishments, and helping give these locations the Roma and Buddhist identity through improving their structure. These changes should also lead to more acceptance by the city community.

### **Intervention in the landscape realised during the workshop period**

The selected interventions to be realised in the course of the workshop were chosen based on their visual impact, simplicity, suitability for collaborative learning, and the expected time for implementation. The interventions proposed and realized by the learning group are:

1. Cleaning and preparation of the main garden and dormitory garden, organising, upcycling, or removing the accumulated material stored and compost deposits. Reorganising the use of the space to have a more welcoming, safe and useful space and structure for the secondary school students.
2. Application of window planters on the façade of the school building facing Andrassy Gyula u. containing herbs and other plants with cooking interest to be shared with the local community and maintained by the school community. The aim is to teach the secondary school students about plant maintenance, about the positive aspects of the aesthetics, which creates a sense of belonging to the building, helping building identity, increasing safety, unifying the different surfaces of the façade, and also creating a feeling of respect and goodwill between the school and the locals.
3. The construction of planting beds, with simple materials and techniques together with the secondary school students in a way that they can replicate and maintain this structure in the future. Such elements serve great educational purposes since they can be useful from teaching science to the development of soft skills such as cooperation and debating.

These interventions are envisioned as the fundamental bricks to promote continuous change in the school environment and, in the long term, the relationship between the school community and the local community.

## **Proposed interventions for the continuing process**

Other interventions are left registered for the school community to continue promoting positive changes:

1. Unifying the main and the back gardens through removing an unnecessary wall. This would optimize the space and could also lead in the future to a pathway open to the local community outside the school hours. This measure would reinforce the improvement in the relationship between the school and the locals and emphasize the goodwill culture of the school community.
2. Fixing the collapsed fence with a see-through climber wall. This should lead to a relationship improvement as well, but would also lead to better aesthetics, a safer environment, and the educational advantages aforementioned.
3. Proposals for better use of available spaces inside the school. Such as the cellar and attic, and a better layout for the rooms. Some of the ideas proposed are, leisure areas in the unused attic and cellar space, creating a library in one storage room near the entrance facing the back garden, creating a gardening tools room in a boiler room with connection to the main garden, creating a winter/dry garden in the corridor connecting two buildings with the provisory ceiling solution, among other proposals.

## **Evaluation and Reflection**

One of the main reflections, especially because the group was always analysing the experience through the learning lenses, is that whenever there is an exchange, everyone learns. The program started with the idea that the learning would be limited to learning about the local landscape, the communities, and to apply the concepts learned in class. But the reality is very different, the learning process extended to learn how to respect different cultures, how to be empathetic, that everyone is susceptible to bias. We learned, among many other things, that compared to the theoretical knowledge that works perfectly in the books, the knowledge of others which is accumulated through experience, is equally valuable.

After finishing the main tasks and presenting the future ideas for the staff, the main feeling felt was that the time spent was, although intense, very short. The main expectation is that this period would be enough to inspire the school community to understand the intended fundamental stones should be followed by future actions. Although it is understood that financial challenges are being faced by the school, this mutual learning period spent together, those physical changes and all the ideas, planning, and material shared have the potential to make a positive change.

At the very beginning of the workshop, one of the main thoughts shared among the group was how do you promote change while respecting and including the focus community when we have such different backgrounds and cultures. Of course, it refers mainly to the Roma community, but it also includes the very diverse group of secondary school students and tutors itself. The results are very interesting. The ideas shared during the whole process and the necessities expressed by the Roma community are very sound. Therefore, despite the differences in culture and background, it is possible to assume that we all want the same: access to health, the possibility of self-development, to belong, to be heard, and to be respected.

## LEAP-Challenge 2: Empowerment

University Students: Noorjahan Begum (HfWU, Nürtingen), Rehan Wasi (HfWU, Nürtingen), Sara Santos (HfWU, Nürtingen), Yasif Alavi (HfWU, Nürtingen)

Tutor: Jeroen de Vries - LE:NOTRE Institute



Figure 20. Collage of pictures from Empowerment team. Photos by Anita Reith and Padlet

### Work process

The IP starts with a most welcoming evening with all the tutors, organizers, and some alumni of the secondary school. The interesting and most influential part of the briefing was watching the movie “Angry Buddha”. The next day starts with the visiting of school and a long discussion with one senior teacher of the school which was a most informative session for the working teams. The session included meeting with the city council, all the teachers and the Roma self-government. These meetings greatly supported the understanding of the community and the school environment. The group of university students was divided into four teams: Learning, Empowerment, Agency, and Partnership. After studying the community and school environment, our team initially defined the goal and the vision of the project based on our Empowerment mission. The preliminary proposal developed by our team was presented to the school teachers to understand their priorities and to engage them into the process. After these general evaluations, our team worked with the secondary school students, teachers and implemented the short-term proposals according to set priorities. In the end, we presented our complete proposals for future developments.



*Figure 21. Testing the open wall concept in the schoolyard. Photo by Anita Reith*

### **Goals and vision**

The school garden landscape and the dormitory landscape have multiple potentials to enhance its richness. Every team has innovative ideas to work on these two landscape sites. Our team 'empowerment' focused mainly on the democracy of the landscape. The prime goal is '*Change the power structure to be more democratic.*' The team defined some voices of the community and the main field of powers from the perspective of empowerment. The power gaps of the community relate mainly to finance, co-operation, equality, identity, education, and integration. The school landscape can facilitate the school children and can serve the community with the contribution and cooperation of different stakeholders. The vision was to enrich the green infrastructure of the school compound and fill the gaps in the field of power. The main vision was to strengthen the character and to develop the green infrastructure for enhancing the 'Identity' and 'Integration' of the school and the community around it.

### **Intervention Proposals**

Our team developed short-term and long-term proposals for interventions to fulfil the vision of 'Identity' and 'Integration'. For the short-term, it consisted of cleaning the school premises and adding some signage. These intervention proposals were mainly connected with the identity of the Dr. Ámbédkar school. A long-term proposal included connecting the school environment with the neighbouring community. There is a park next to the school that is surrounded by fences. We proposed the removal of this fence and to develop a common space where the community and the secondary school students can meet and interact with each other.



### **Role of the proposal and intervention in the continuing process**

All these proposed interventions can help to break the invisible barriers and balance the power structures. The short-term and long-term proposal connects the stakeholder groups of Dr. Ámbédkar school, city council, Roma community self-government body, different sponsors, NGOs, neighbourhoods, secondary school students, and teachers. The long-term proposal requires connecting with the city authority, to involve the wider community.

### **Evaluation and Reflection**

This intensive program as an initiator was successfully integrated into the development process of the school environment. The team metaphorically concluded on the importance of the positive (+) and negative (-) connections to spark a new light. With all these gaps and problems, the development is still possible with the involvement and willingness of the local authorities and the community.

## LEAP-Challenge 3: Agency

University Students: Kitti Varga (MATE, Budapest), Simanta Dash (HfWU, Nürtingen), Yuga Tanaka (HfWU, Nürtingen)

Tutor: Francesco Lipparini - University of Bologna



Figure 22. Collage of pictures from Agency team. Photos by Anita Reith and Padlet

### Work Process

Before we went into the local context area, we were informed of our workplace, the Dr. Ámbédkar School, by watching a documentary together with all the teachers, tutors and university students. We discussed our first impressions and thoughts after watching that documentary to solidify our understanding. Then we went to our focus area. There we set out to visit the Miskolc Municipal Council to meet with the authorities to get more information on the city and their visions and plans. To get a broader perception of the local context, we set out on a field excursion, visiting the surroundings of the school area. In a meeting with the local Roma Self-Government, we learned about the Roma community. We interviewed the school representatives, teachers, and secondary school students. After analysis of all the gathered information, an envisioned concept was developed. Based on a vision, we prepared our concepts, strategy, and planning process.



*Figure 23. Renovating the Dr. Ámbédkar school garden with the students. Photo by Anita Reith*

### **Goal & vision**

After knowing about our focus area's landscape and missing elements, we set our goal to make the school community more responsible and careful for their environment.

Based on our goal, we expected the following results: (1) Developing more community action, (2) Integrating the garden into the school curriculum, (3) building a sense of ownership.

### **Proposal for intervention in the Landscape**

To make our ideas workable, we divided our proposed invention into two categories on the basis of required time for implementation: short time (which is temporary) and long-time (permanent). In this short intervention, we tried to introduce our ideas on a small scale in front of school representatives, teachers, secondary school students, and council authorities. If they accepted these prototypes, then they could implement these on a large scale and make them permanent.

### **Role of the proposal & intervention in the continuing process**

Our short-time proposals were to clean the school periphery and define a space to start a vegetable garden, which can be a part of their curriculum for a long time. The school building has no identifiable sign as a school, so we proposed some short-time interventions to make the school more visible by putting up decorative flags, human-shaped welcome posters, and street decorations and window exhibitions with students' work. Those interventions make the school more visible to the neighbours and give the school students a sense of ownership of the place. This will help them to be more responsible for the school environment and the surrounding landscape.

*Partnering for Landscape Democracy*

*An Intensive Study Program in Miskolc to renew the school environment of the Dr. Ámbédkar School, 2021*

## **Evaluation & Reflection**

We planned to implement our interventions in two steps. First, we developed our concepts and ideas, then presented them to and discussed them with the school staff. We integrated their concerns and collected their feedback on feasibility, possible contributions for participation. We eliminated proposals that would not work for a short time. In the next step, with school teachers and students, we started to build those in-school perimeters to show them how to make them and the benefits of those interventions. The main difficulty was acquiring the materials on a very low budget, but we successfully did that. In this process, most of the short-time interventions were selected to be implemented: cleaning the schoolyard, putting decorative flags, installing human figure posters, and putting together a window exhibition with school students' work.

## LEAP-Challenge 4: Partnership

Students: Bew Kemolshanok (HfWU, Nürtingen), Christian Barrera (HfWU, Nürtingen), Arbil Al-Kubati (HfWU, Nürtingen)

Tutor: Anita Reith - Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Figure 24. Collage of pictures from Partnership team. Photo by Anita Reith and Padlet

### Work process

Before addressing the communities and creating the strategies, we started by questioning ourselves: How to create (enhance) a partnership network for the school? After that, we focused on the way the school could create a network of partners. We organised this network in 3 scales with the next aims:

- Neighbourhood scale: Integrate the school into the existing community.
- Local scale: Develop the connections for interaction to be more visible to other communities.
- Regional scale: Promote the social level cohesion with other schools and universities around Miskolc and Budapest

### Goals and vision

Our motto is: *'We bond, improve, work together to enhance the partnership network and reach the goal for a better future'*. And the main aim is to: *'Create a social network in order to improve and implement more cultural links'*.

## **Intervention Proposals**

Considering available areas in the school courtyard, we found various opportunities to develop and improve the space. However, the current state was quite messy and disordered. In this intensive program we focused on short-term intervention relating to 'Neighbourhood level.' Our partnership group presented several ideas into which we tried to include the user group as much as possible.

1. Organising a school market. This is based on an opening in the school fence that was caused by a tree that fell on it during a storm. The fence can be transformed into a stall to sell handicrafts or products from students, teachers, or even families and friends. Since that couldn't happen during this workshop, we considered it as a long-term intervention for the future. This action can encourage students to interact with neighbours around the school and people outside the Roman community.
2. Creating an outdoor classroom area for group discussion. For this, it is necessary to transform the smoking area into a learning space. A positive effect is that breathing fresh air can help the student relax and concentrate more on studying instead of sitting in the room all day.
3. From the interview, we found that the school students love art. We proposed making an art sculpture to express themselves, emotion, and identity by painting each piece of wood/cardboards.
4. Pointing the way to the school by putting up signs and crossroad art. For this, we included the sustainability aspect by using the abandoned or unused materials in the schoolyard. At the same time vacant space could be transformed into a vegetable garden using old buckets or building raised beds.

From these ideas, two could be implemented in this workshop period: an art sculpture and an outdoor classroom.

## **Role of the proposal and intervention in the continuing process**

For future development, we proposed a long-term plan for each idea.

1. School market. Installing the stall at the school wall with a small window to contact people outside. After that, the market can be expanded to the park outside the school. It could be a flea market or a market that sells crafts and homemade products of students or local people in the community.
2. Art performance area. We can use numerous unused bricks to build a platform and seating area for students to perform, such as dancing, show-cased music, small concert, etc. Also, this can be a multifunctional area. It can also be an outdoor classroom. This area can strengthen the bonds between students and teachers and potential users like neighbours and students from other schools.
3. Outdoor classroom. Upgrading and restoring the shelter and transforming it into a bright space with a seating area. For the long-term plan of partnerships. The students from another school can engage with the students to form new partnerships by exchanging knowledge, activities, etc.
4. Agriculture area. The idea was to develop from buckets to moveable raised beds that can keep and store in winter. At first, students and teachers can initiate the project, and later, parents, friends, and even neighbours can join. The vegetables can be given to neighbours and volunteers or used for school lunch.

## **Evaluation and Reflection**

At the brainstorming stage and presentation, our group had many ideas that could be implemented during the workshop. However, due to restrictions and permission needed from the municipality, we were not able to implement the idea of putting signage at the tram station and at the crossroad. When we started to work on the prototypes, the implementation took more time than we planned and we could not fully complete it together with the school students. For example, the wooden art sculpture requires more time to dry, and could only be constructed afterwards. We had to do it by ourselves, which is not in line with the original intention to strengthen the bond of secondary school students and teachers and welcome new partnerships(us) to work together.

# Main landscape actions performed during the ISP

## Cleaning the schoolyard

Cleaning up the entire schoolyard was not planned a priori; it was a necessity that the LED2LEAP team decided to act upon after a few days spent there. Much trash and unused materials had piled up in the schoolyard over the years, thus the removal and organisation of the space was a preliminary step to any future use. During the clean-up, we found valuable material that could be used in the building process afterwards. It not only saved money but also taught the community about reuse and resources conservation.

The intended effects of the intervention were:

1. **To instil the habit of maintenance of the schoolyard:** As most Roma students come from families that live below the poverty line, they sometimes do not possess the knowledge and awareness about the negative impacts of poorly maintained property on the immediate surrounding, such as their neighbourhood. An unclean schoolyard filled with random piles of various materials does not make a good impression on the neighbouring community. For the school to be able to establish good connections with its neighbours, the school campus should have a welcoming and pleasant atmosphere
2. **To identify and organise useful material and learn to throw away what cannot be used.** The Roma culture of reusing material is quite an effective way to manage waste. Some materials in the pile are re-usable but some have no use and value for the school. Structured organisation of collected material should be inculcated to ensure that hoarding of unwanted material does not happen again.



Figure 25. Student workforce. Photo by Anita Reith





*Figure 26-27. The state of the schoolyard before the clean-up process. Photo by Arati Uttur*



*Figure 28-29. After the clean-up. Building materials were orderly stacked after identifying what can be retained and what was to be discarded. Photo by Arati Uttur*

## **Window pots**

This intervention took the least effort and had the highest impact: to place planter boxes on all the windows of the facade facing the main street.

The intended effects intervention aimed to make:

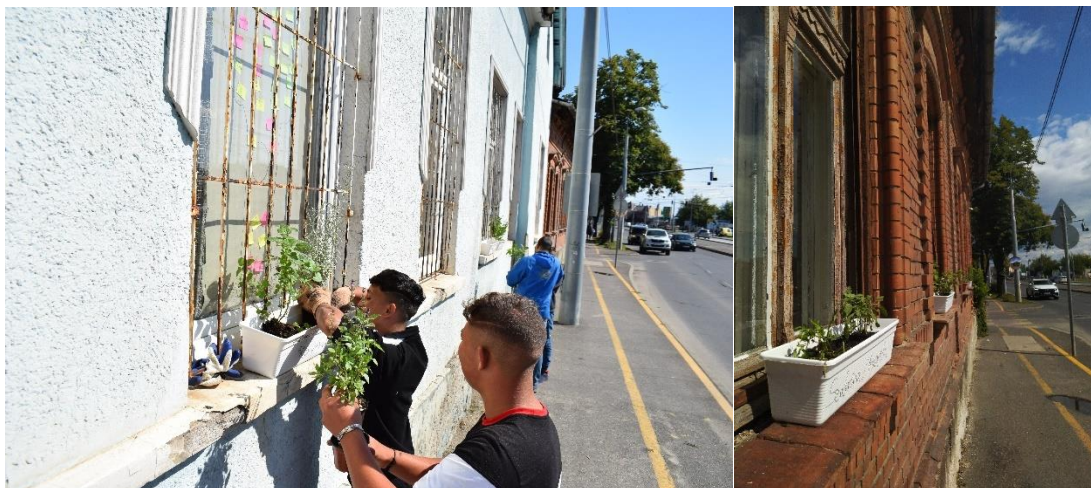
1. **Initiate dialogue with the outside world:** the planters would have herbs which were available for passers-by to pick and use, to be replaced by the school regularly if there was any sign of vandalism to show the inherent peaceful and giving attitude of the Roma people. The school building is not known to many who live in the locality. Some don't even know that the school exists.

The planters would be a cheap alternative to heavy façade treatment that could happen at a later date when the school has sufficient funds.

2. **Give the students a sense of belonging and ownership** by maintaining the physical image of the school building. The students would be responsible to install and maintain the planter boxes. In the making process, they would learn about the common herbs and their uses. The maintenance process, which is longer lasting, gives the students a reason to establish their identity, maintain the unspoken public dialogue and make themselves noticed to start with.



*Figure 30-31. Before the intervention: the school façade facing the main street. The name on the building still belongs to another school that occupied the building many years before. Photo by Arati Uttur*



*Figure 32-33. Dr. Ámbédkar students planting the pots on the windows. Students wrote their names on the pots that they prepared and installed. Photo by Anita Reith*

It was observed the next day that people traveling in the tram that runs on the main street were talking to each other and asking, "What's that building?" People walking on the street stopped and looked at the plants and came around the corner to see where the entrance of the building was, and tried to find the name of the building.



*Figure 34. Picture taken in October, 2021. Plants were replaced with geraniums as the school now develops its own thoughts about the identity it wants to represent. Photo by Anita Reith*

## **Raised planter bed**

The third short-term proposal was to build a raised bed for planting vegetables.

The intended effects of the intervention were:

- 1. To instil the habit of gardening and active maintenance of the schoolyard as a good practice:** As most Roma students come from families that live below the poverty line, they sometimes do not have the culture of keeping their surroundings clean. Likewise, having a garden is a matter of luxury for many and they feel that it is out of their reach to have something like an edible garden. The students of Dr. Ambedkar School would learn to use the existing material present in the schoolyard to build the raised bed. They would also learn some basic procedures in filling the raised beds for healthy plant growth and would be given a choice of plants they would like to grow for the coming fall season.
- 2. To provide a sense of ownership:** Growing food on their own and being able to watch the plant growth on a daily basis would be a start for the students to feel at home. The discussion with some teachers on ideas of using the edible garden for interdisciplinary learning was well received and establishing the garden would be a good start to support the long-term goal of including the garden in the learning process.
- 3. To provide hands-on and outdoor learning opportunities:** Although the Dr. Ambedkar School has very good teaching practices in place and they do incorporate interdisciplinary learning in class, they have very few opportunities for regular hands-on and outdoor learning. The art class and some excursions throughout the school year do break the more academic-oriented goal of the

school to bring the students to a good level in secondary education so that they can prosper at the university level as well. The act of growing vegetables in the school allows students to explore these hands-on skills and initiate their curiosity in other hands-on learning opportunities that can be introduced in the longer term. The garden has sufficient sheltered spaces that can easily be converted into outdoor classrooms. This was already on the wish-list of the school after the LADDER workshops in the summer and it was just a matter of execution.

4. **To foster healthy eating:** As the Dr. Ambedkar School is a secondary school and starts from the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the students are already in their teens when they come here to learn. Some are older adults, in their late twenties or early thirties, who did not have the opportunity to study earlier in their lives. At such age, some of the students are unaware of many basic healthy practices, one of them being eating habits. Establishing an edible garden would be the first step on a long road of reversing their present lifestyle into a healthier one.

5. **To act as the first block in building a community garden culture:** to further address the “LEAP” missions, and in the short-term, mid-term and long-term intervention strategy of the “Learning” group, the edible gardens is step-one in a long-term plan of opening the schoolyard to become a community hub.



*Figure 35. Dr. Ámbédkar students are preparing the brick for building the raised bed. Photo by Anita Reith*



*Figure 36. Picture taken in October, 2021. Beans are growing, strawberry is ready to be eaten. Photo by Anita Reith*

## **Collaborative community culture**

This proposal was opportunistic: to grow creepers and hang the Buddhist and Roma flags on wires between posts to replace the boundary wall that had fallen down during a recent storm.

The intended effects of the intervention were:

- 1. To maintain a visual connection of the schoolyard and continue the dialogue with the outside world:** The high fence that earlier blocked any view of the school from the outside and anyone on the street or in the neighbourhood always thought this building lay unoccupied. The fence reflected the reserved and suppressed condition of the Roma community. In order to create a dialogue, a visual connection plays a large role. A lot can be communicated without words. We proposed, in addition to opening created due to the fallen wall, that the rest of this fence also be opened up for better visual connection. The Greek neighbourhood could then “learn” what goes on in the school. The school on the other hand, can take this opportunity to make themselves seen and greet the people outside with friendly gestures on visual contact. The first visual contact for the outsider would be the school garden through the open fence.

This idea was shared by the other groups as well, with similar approaches and reasoning that also supports “Empowerment”, “Agency” and “Partnership”, showing that this intervention carried a lot of intended effects.

**2. To establish an identity for the school and the Roma community:** The school wished earlier to erect a statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the public park right opposite to the school entrance, which was not permitted by the municipality. [14v1] This is a good opportunity for the school to make itself known first, as a school building with a name and identity. Allowing creepers to grow at a higher level, along with Buddhist and Roma flags is a peaceful yet powerful way to make a welcoming statement while establishing a visual connection with one's own identity. This paves the way for future verbal dialogue with people as well.



*Figure 37. Cardboard figure showing the way to the school entrance on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the school of the year 2021/22. Photo by Anita Reith*



*Figure 38-39. Students building an art sculpture with unused material found in the garden. Photo by Anita Reith*

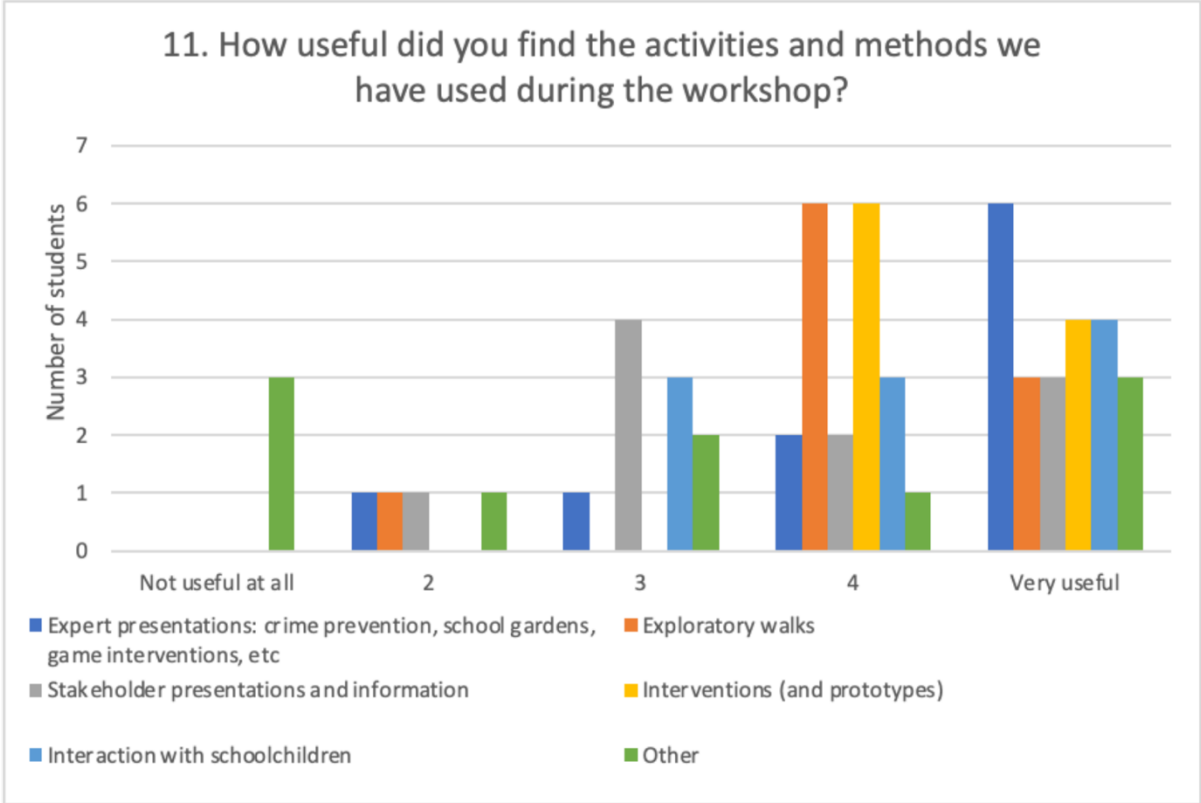
# 04 Evaluation and Follow-up

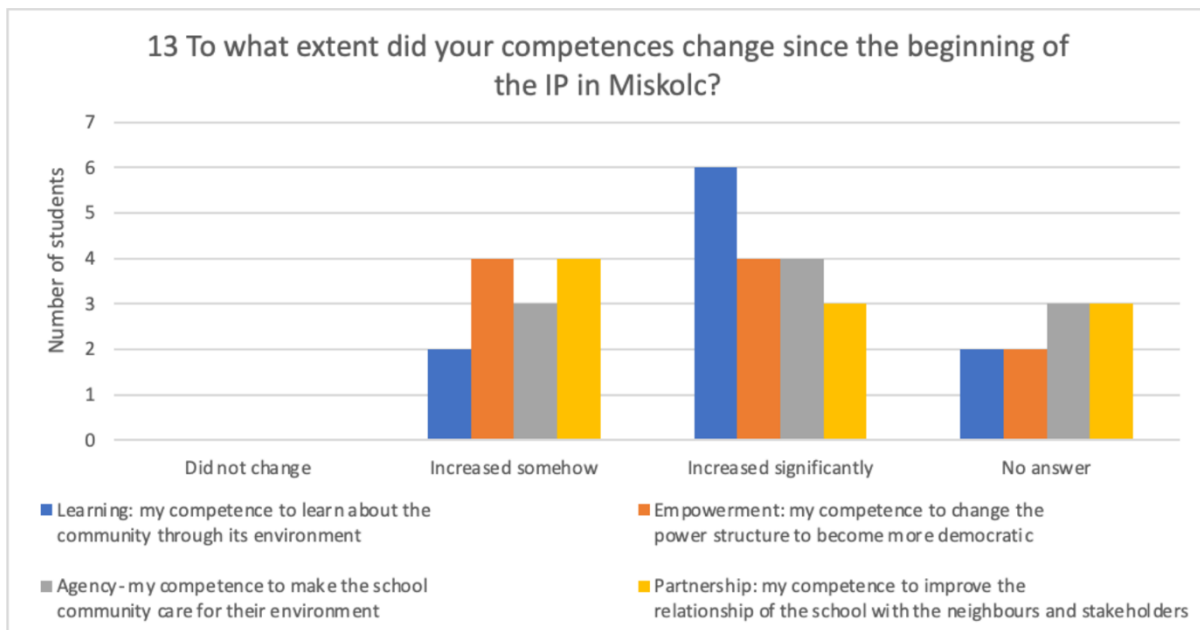
## Feedbacks from the LED2LEAP participants

Creating a survey was necessary to highlight participants' views on the Intensive Study Program systematically. The organisers created two different surveys, one for the staff tutors and one for the students, to gather feedback on the organisation of the ISP and any future improvements. All the participant staff replied to this survey. The second asked students about their experiences, particularly the skills and competencies they learned and their relative understanding of their operating context. 10 out of 12 participant students replied to the questions.

The results of the student survey suggest overall satisfaction with the ISP. Participants' initial expectations seemed to be met by the ISP regarding personal experience and the activities. Figure 1 (PN) generally shows students' level of satisfaction; Figure 2 shows students' perception of their increased competencies after completing the ISP.

As for the staff survey, which consisted of open-ended questions, analysis aimed to identify problems encountered during the ISP and gather suggestions for future workshops. Figures 3 and 4 (PN) highlight some of these comments. Evaluation of survey results also revealed flaws in the survey design itself. Some questions were wordy and hard to understand for non-native English speakers, others leading or biased. For this reason, we omitted some survey questions from the analysis. Work is now underway to rectify these design problems in future versions of the staff survey.





### What did not work during the IP?

We could have talked a little bit more about what we leave behind - how to maintain and use the new spaces and structure.

Also it will be very important in the future to meet and develop a good relationship with the Greek community in the immediate neighbourhood.

I think that some days were too intense: a few more moments of free time would have allowed to take a break from concentration and resume planning and working with more energy.

The online reviews with the teachers of the LED2LEAP course did not work very well: beyond the organization problems I don't think they were strictly necessary moments for the IP.

As listed above,

- Communication challenges due to language
- Lack of involvement with all stakeholders
- Very low contact and communication with the LED lectures online for feedback and guidance

I think the online consultations didn't work. Making this connection with the non present teachers need to be prepared more so they come and it won't disturb the IP flow. The mid term presentation would make sense that way.

I think we could practice a bit more the coordination among the staff but it was nice that we thought to schedule discussion moments where we could talk about the process, what works, what doesn't.

We could somehow make the IP booklet prep more efficient if we dedicated people to take notes of a day or something like this.

**SUMMARY:**

- **discussion about how to maintain what we did in the future**
- **meeting with the rest of the community**
- **lack of involvement of all stakeholders**
- **communication challenges due to language**
- **online review with the non-present teachers was not useful in that way.**



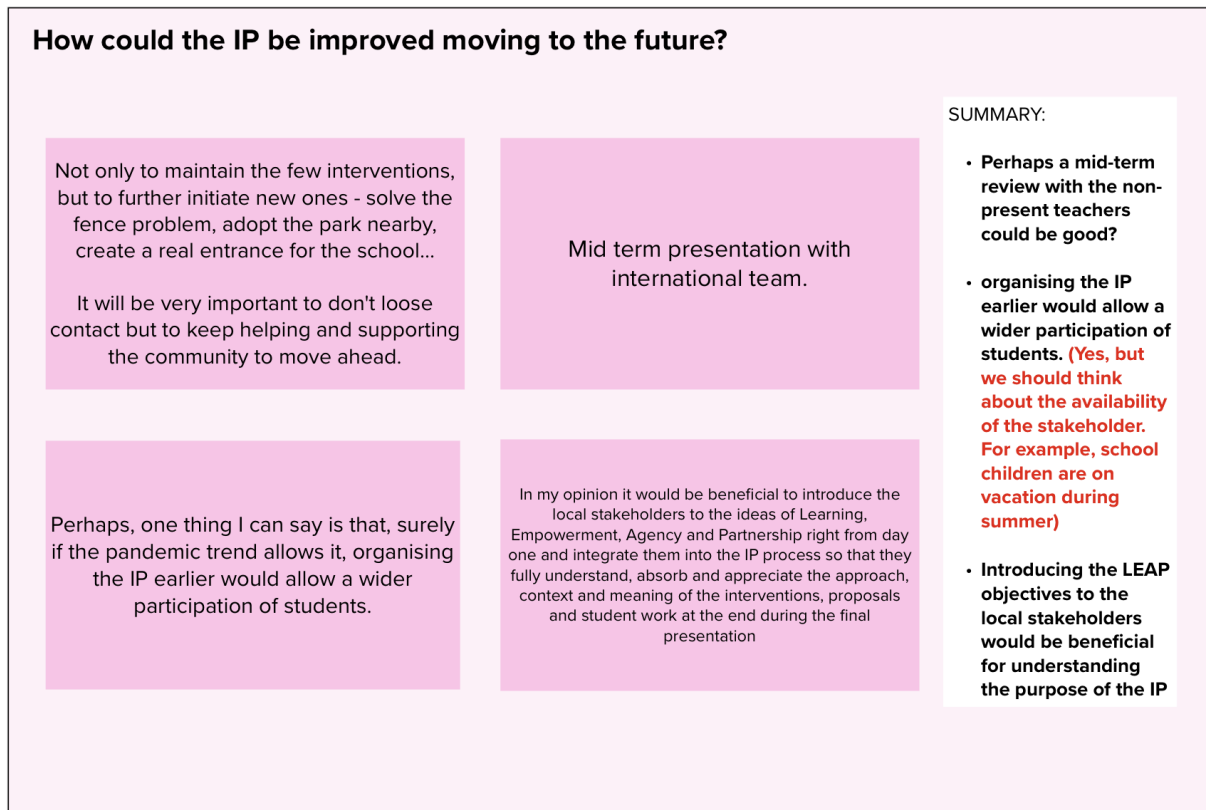


Figure 40-43. Questions and results from the questionnaire. Graphics by Andrea Conti

Beside the questionnaires, we also asked the student to write about their experience and personally reflect on the ISP. The general personal experience was very positive, students are using words to describe: 'beautiful', 'unforgettable', 'nice real-life', 'extremely grateful', 'amazing and productive'. However, most of the participant students mentioned that the program was extremely intense and 'we had no time to get everything done', they all felt like they gained significant knowledge and the ISP was productive for the local community as well. Here are some quotes from the students to highlights some positive and critical feedback as well:

*'The first movie night was a magical magnet to connects all individual dots into one centre of compassion about the community.'*

*'(...) learning about the Roma community I was constantly tracing the parallel between them and thinking that it seems that across the whole globe we have communities facing such challenges.'*

*'Although not everything could follow the plan, all the pieces of the jigsaw came together to maximize the learning of the team and to give us the power to promote change.'*

*'(...) what I think we were lacking is that the timing of students was quite abrupt.'*

*'Even though we did physical interventions in the school with the food garden planter boxes at the window and the sculptor, I feel our impact was more nonphysical and I believe it would stay longer.'*

*'The one thing missing is feedback from students and government stakeholders. I had the chance to discuss with school teachers but unfortunately, I could not find how students felt about our short interventions.'*

*'Now I obtained tools to create strategies that can be implemented in any community.'*

*'The learnings yielded during and after the IP has enriched my understanding of society, civilizations, and humanity.'*

*'Even if we had no time to get everything done, I'd like to believe they felt heard and listened to. I think we made great progress in such a short time and I trust that the people who care for this place will take our plans and advice to heart.'*

## **Areas of impact and their evaluation**

In this section we will make the ISP evaluation by reflecting on the three types of impacts that the team defined prior to the ISP. In the following, we present the impact and results of the Intensive Study Program through these areas reflecting on the wishes presented before in the *Preparation of the Intensive Study Program* section. The impacts on one hand were stated based on the LED2LEAP teams' observations, and on the other hand based on the evaluation (questionnaires and interviews) carried out with the participants after the ISP.

### **Impact on the local community**

The first impact area of the Intensive Study Program was the impact on the school community, its students and teachers.

As the LED2LEAP team identified before the wishes for the impact on the local community, with this 10-days ISP, we wanted the LED2LEAP team to act as a kind of catalyst in the life of the community, giving impetus and our own strength to work together to improve the quality of the school environment through a good atmosphere.

This need has grown stronger in us as we become more familiar with school life and the lives of students and teachers. The ISP was permeated by the question of the survival of the school. What can we do in a community that may no longer exist in three months because the material conditions are not there? What can a designer do in a situation like this? Does it matter if we beautify the garden and create better learning conditions for these three months? We have done what we had to do: we experienced through shaping the environment that we do have the power to promote positive change.

The LED2LEAP team cleaned up and beautified the schoolyard in one afternoon with only their hands. This was a tipping point for the school community - especially for the leaders and teachers - because it demonstrated that IT CAN BE DONE. We removed garbage, collected trash, selected reusable items, mowed the grass, maintained shrubs, created a composting area in the garden, rearranged the area under the roof so it could be used for socializing or playing ping-pong. We even picked out the green space in front of the school entrance. By the afternoon some teachers and the maintenance staff joined us to complete everything. They ordered a container and transported the garbage by the next morning. While the LED2LEAP team initiated the process, their, catalytic effect was indeed felt by school staff and community.

*'One afternoon, we achieved a spectacular change that completely changed the dynamics of IP. I felt that at this moment, everyone took our presence seriously, that we are here to help and to be really better. Not only are we talking about getting better one day, but we're really doing it for it.'* - Szilágyi-Nagy Anna, president of kultúrAktív Association

The coexistence with the school community was positive thanks to moments of informal activities like the common lunch the LED2LEAP team organized every day. Faculty, staff, and the school students were also invited to join. One of the highlights of the ISP was the Social Bingo, which the students still remembered a month after the ISP. But of course, the most memorable activity was the building day that the students very much liked based on their own and also on the teachers' feedback. Students mentioned that they liked that *'finally they could do something that was useful'* and that they would do it again anytime. Our observation was also that almost all the students like the building activity not only because of the handy work, but also because of the atmosphere (background music, dancing during breaks, making connections with international students, practising English while using apps).

In addition to a good atmosphere and energy, we wanted to give practical help to make the school environment more beautiful, better, more liveable and, as the children dreamed of during the preparatory workshops, active. To do this, we wanted to provide a tangible, easy-to-follow guide that the school can use even after we leave. We conducted walking tours with the school staff to talk about the wishes and opportunities in the space and how to use it better. The real support was the strategies that the university students presented at the closing event. Alongside the LEAP challenges: learning, empowerment, agency, partnership, the environmental programs were all designed to enable the school to make changes in the short term (right away from low-budget with quick impact) and also in the long term (how to move forward and develop further the environment to reach bigger changes).

*'And the school was enriched with a liveable schoolyard that can be sustained by the school community.'* - the Municipality of Miskolc City

Another wish was before the ISP to strengthen the school's relationships, including both within and outside the school community. For example, with the Social Bingo game, we could not only provide an opportunity for bonding between the international and the local students but the students could also learn new things about their teacher through the game (who is Buddhist, who can drive, who has a brother, etc.). The collective building activity was also a great opportunity for the school community to bond as they were working together for the same goal. It was a special setup where the teachers were 'less teacher' and in addition to their coordinating role, they carried and peeled the bricks, polished and painted the wood panels, and planted the plants for the windows. In the farewell program, they danced and played together with all of us. During the common lunches, consultations, walk tours, the colleagues got to know each other in a new line-up, where the usual leader-subordinate role, the active-passive roles were mixed up.

*'We are at the Dr. Ámbédkar School in Miskolc, a school created specifically for young people who do not have access to secondary education under normal circumstances. The vast majority of our children come from very poor environments, from segregated parts of the city, where there is little to do with life other than being born, going to a gypsy kindergarten, going to a gypsy school and staying in public works. This is how generations grow up. And yet one of the main missions of our school is to try to show the world to the reality that is available to others. And with people coming from all over the world here and spending time with our kids,*

*that's one of the biggest added value of this program.* ' - János Orsós, founder of Dr. Ámbédkar School

*'Breakout opportunities were realizable for students'* - János Orsós, founder of Dr. Ámbédkar School

*'It [the external relationships] didn't change specifically from this program, but it was actually part of the change. (...) It strengthens our position with the local government.'* - Tibor Derdák, the director of the Dr. Ámbédkar School

*'We are very short of our financial strength (...), but that is never the main problem. The outside world always imagines that poverty is a material problem. No, in fact it is primarily a human resource problem.'* - Tibor Derdák, the director of the Dr. Ámbédkar School

We tried to make an impact on the external relationships of the school community by involving and visiting different actors in the city. We visited the Municipality, the Mayor's Office, the Dialogue Association, and the Roma Nationality Self-Government. Through these visits, on the one hand we were exploring the social, political, geographical, etc. context of the school, on the other hand it provided an opportunity for the different actors to get to know each other. The management of the school has always been with us at these meetings. But not only did the school visit the external actors, but we also invited them to the school year opening and closing event at the school. Where the school is given a different role as a host again and the city actor came to visit as a guest. The representative of the Dialogue Association even travelled with us to Budapest to join the kulturAktív birthday event and to try out the Urbanity Game that can be used in participatory planning.

*'What's a big problem in the city is the presence of disadvantaged children and families, which I think is higher than the national average. So, there are 11 unidentified segregates in Miskolc. It carries a lot of similar, very many problems, a lot of complex and complex problems. Children are always central to such processes, because in order to eradicate this poverty, it is absolutely necessary for them to be able to break out of it. And there, training and education are of great importance, and Ambedkar has very special effective ways of dealing with children from such circumstances.'* - Kamilla Kovács, spokesperson for civil participation, Mayor's Office of the City of Miskolc

*'It [the external relationships] didn't change specifically from this program, but it was actually part of the change. (...) It strengthens our position with the local government.'* - Tibor Derdák, the director of the Dr. Ámbédkar School

*'We got to know new professionals and methods. It was inspiring. I hope we will be able to work together in the future community spatial planning processes in Miskolc.'* - Municipality of Miskolc City

It was also important for us to increase the self-confidence of the school community and show that they themselves can make a difference if they act together. An important element of this was not only the collaborative gardening, but also the process we went through with the school, from the first contact, to defining collectively the goals, and to practising the community planning methodologies used during the ISP.

*'It is good if there is any method in Miskolc that helps these participatory processes: how to bring about change by involving people, how to think together with people from any field, here [I mean] people from architecture or any other [professional] field, how they can think together with people so that something real change can really come out of it. Both in the short and long term.'* - Áron János Csere, Dialogue for Communities Public Benefit Association

The best illustration of our impact in the community is the fact that the founder of the school asked us to come back every year as part of the school's pedagogy program.

*'I would really like this one week to be repeated, because in fact, the weight of the whole thing is given if it becomes a predictable thing. And I really wish there was a similar program for years to come. That then it is really such a continuum and not such a one-time thing. That's what I want: them to come back here.'* - János Orsós, founder of Dr. Ámbédkar School



*Figure 44. Photo taken on the last day of the ISP with the whole school community. Photo by Anita Reith*

### **Impact on the landscape architect university students**

Our second area of impact was on the international university students. We wanted students to take part in an Intensive Study Program where they gain long-term relationships with their fellow students and the local community. A good example of this was when the local youth and also the teachers asked how to keep in touch with foreign students. They connected to each other on Facebook and Instagram.

*Partnering for Landscape Democracy*

*An Intensive Study Program in Miskolc to renew the school environment of the Dr. Ámbédkar School, 2021*

We wanted to give the participants a good memory. We experienced and saw these moments when they were chatting with each other, getting to know each other's' language and culture, the smiles when we were celebrating, and the laughs when we were dancing together.

*"I learned a lot. I met a lot of people that I really enjoyed hanging around. A lot of like-minded people, but people also with different mindsets. And it's good to know and learn how to make everyone work together and make a common good."* -

Tayana Passos Rosa, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

We wanted the university students to see and experience how they can make a difference through their work and how they can help communities to have a better quality of life. During the closing remarks, several said that the ISP was one of their most significant experiences in the post-pandemic period, reassessing their impact on their own community at many levels.

*'What really captured me was that it piqued my passion for landscape architecture a little again so that I could see how much it really affects the lives of so-called commoners, what their environment is like. And how I do this as a designer can influence how someone else lives and grows up. And that little bit, very abstract and absurd, but whether you will graduate or not. That little bit, so, yes, again, I fell in love with this profession that way.'* - Kitti Varga, Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

During the Intensive Study Program, we wanted to provide an opportunity for students to truly meet local communities and experience both beautiful and difficult moments of involvement and learn to respond and cope with difficulties that arise. One of the biggest benefits of the ISP was that landscape architecture students were able to work with a real community and meet a variety of actors.

*'In participatory planning, one can learn about the differences at the societal level and, depending on this, how diverse the needs are for the quality of the environment in terms of environmental planning.'* – Dr. Albert Fekete, Head of Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning and Garden Art at the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

It was a huge challenge during the week to meet the ever-changing circumstances and the group dynamics, but during the week university students could experience how they can support communities with their profession. Time-based problem-solving is challenging especially because we had to identify the steps we could take immediately and, on the spot, as well as to develop long-term ideas that would allow the school community to engage and move forward with the long-term development of the school environment.



*Figure 45. Participant students posing with the certificate on the last day of the ISP. Photo by Anita Reith*

### **Impact on the relationship between the school environment and the school community**

As the third area of impacts of the ISP, we wanted to focus on developing the relationship between the school environment and the school community. We envisioned an Intensive Study Program where the school community would take possession of the new and old buildings and develop a sense of ownership and attachment to the sites. This process has already begun before the ISP during the on-site workshops. Participants could articulate what their needs are and how they would like to use the schoolyard and dorm yard. During the ISP we continued working on developing the sense of ownership and responsibility for caring for their own environment.

In the case of teachers, the walk tours played an important role. We walked around the school building, schoolyard and dormitory yard with several teachers and staff. During the tour, everyone could tell how they use a space and what their needs are. Many times, it turned out that different people used the same space in a very different way.

*'[There were many things] that we could understand now. We didn't even understand our own interests and needs.'* - Tibor Derdák, the director of the Dr. Ámbédkar School

In the case of the school students the collective building activity was a key element for this aspect. It is a very nice example that they wrote their names on the window pots. This was the students' idea; it was never an intent of the LED2LEAP team. During the garden cleaning, Buddhist signs painted by former students on the wall of the school became visible again. This was a great 'aha-moment' for the school community as well.

*'Students experienced how we can reuse those materials that we thought were rubbish in the schoolyard. There is, for example, the statue that the young people did together, we wanted to throw them out. (...) And this kind of knowledge becomes tangible.'* - János Orsós, founder of Dr. Ámbédkar School

*'[The students] saw that with some knowledge - because knowledge was also needed -and with our own hands we could make the yard much more livable.'* - János Orsós, founder of Dr. Ámbédkar School

Building together was important not only because the children learned to put a wall. It was also important that they have gained practical knowledge on how to work together, how to help each other, how to organise a process, how to think in strategy and then implement it. Maintenance, construction, and plant care could be integrated into the school's pedagogy program, which fits well with Waldorf's educational traditions of the school. As the teachers said in the evaluative conversation, the whole ISP conveyed a vision that thinks in a forward-looking context that fits in very well with the school's approach, and fills a gap in today's education system. The objects created in the garden can be used for biology class, maths, geography and many other subjects.

We wanted the school and dormitory to be more accessible to children and better integrated into the surroundings. We wanted to support the school to become a hub in the urban context where life is flourishing, where different people can meet. As we prepared for the 1st of September, we came up with a lot of small ideas that could help to create a safer and more comfortable environment for the youth. To highlight the presence of the school, the entrance was emphasized by adding flags on the facade, taking out the weed in the green space in front of the school, and we also put out a cardboard figure who goes to the school. These interventions were important for the school student's comfort but it also gave a good message to the car drivers to slow down or to the neighbours that *'we live here and we take care of our environment'*. Putting out window pots and planting spice plants into them gave the same message.

*'The other benefit of this week while you've been here is that you did a lot of things in the yard and in the school building and the students took part in it and so it doesn't happen that it bends over, it throws away, it's not there, but they take care of it because it was their job and in fact, anytime you come the schoolyard looks pretty and clean since the program.'* - János Orsós, founder of Dr. Ámbédkar School

*'The fact that the building is attractive and gives the impression of care even in this battered state, so it's clear that flowers have a role to play, for example.'* - Tibor Derdák, the director of the Dr. Ámbédkar School

*'I stood in the middle of the yard with a garbage bag and only those could go to class who dropped at least six cigarette butts in the garbage bag. (...) I didn't have to say a single word again afterwards, now everyone knows [that you shouldn't throw butts in the yard]. This is a great achievement for us!'* - János Orsós, founder of Dr. Ámbédkar School

Building better connection with the Miskolc community and the immediate neighbours is something that could not be achieved during the ISP. However, most of the long-term suggestions are focusing on this issue. The idea of the market responded on the one hand to the theme of an edible school yard set by the children and on the other hand the fallen fence inspired the students to open up the school more towards the surroundings. A new door can also provide an opportunity for donation that the school can either receive or give out to the community. Involving the public green space in front of



the school as a community meeting point could provide space for school activities, such as outdoor classes, or just gathering and socialising. It could be an integration platform where Roma and non-Roma people can freely meet. This idea could fit very well into the municipality's approach of 'Adopt a public space' if the school takes ownership of this area.

*'The idea of crime prevention through environmental design was a very interesting topic to me, and I shared this with the Chief Gardener of the City. It has lightened a new perspective of the crime prevention.'* - Kamilla Kovács, spokesperson for civil participation, Mayor's Office of the City of Miskolc

A public open space around the school could be a great space for fulfilling the wishes what we heard from the Roma community members:

*"I want to have coffee once without being Roma. Because when I sit in a cafe, the space around me changes. I will suddenly become a Roma."*

*"If a Roma above a certain number occupies a space, non-Roma leave. There is such an invisible ratio between Roma and non-Roma."*

*"I wish one day a non-Roma would invite me over for coffee. And we'd sit down at a table like a person-to-person."*

*"I have good experiences of spaces used jointly and in friendship by Roma and non-Roma. Sport is the best community space."*

We also wanted to keep something on site that reminds the school community of our collaboration so that they can remember what we have experienced and the time we have spent together. When the LED2LEAP organisational team visited the school a month later to do collaborative evaluation with the community it was great to see that all the interventions not only stayed but have been developed and maintained.



*Figure 46. Photo taken in October, 2021. The grass is groomed, leaves are swept, the sculpture is standing in the centre of the garden. Photo by Anita Reith*

## Next steps

Since the end of the ISP the Hungarian LADDER team had been in contact with the school representatives. The Hungarian team led a collective evaluation process with several interviews to reflect on the ISP and the interventions that have been implemented during that time. From the school community students, teachers, and staff have been interviewed. An opportunity was also provided for the local government to reflect on the process as well. A personal visit was made in October when the LADDER team was invited to a local conference. On this occasion, it was great to see the progress and how the physical interventions in the school garden and in the dormitory's garden have changed. However, some things needed to be changed - for example, new plants had to be planted, the sculpture moved to another location, etc. - nothing was abandoned. On the contrary, it was visible that the school community is taking more care of their environment since the LED2LEAP team intervened.

The local conference we have been invited to was also very interesting because the director of Dr. Ámbédkar School was talking about *Human rights in Schools*. This conference was organised in the Municipality Hall of Miskolc and as the school representatives said: *'a great step which was partially thanks to the ISP'*. It was the very first time that this topic became an open discussion topic within the walls of the Municipality. Also a great achievement is that the City of Miskolc has established a *Student Government* that is from 2022 operating in collaboration with the adult representative. However, these phenomenons did not originate from the same direction or from the LED2LEAP program, they resonate very well with each other and there is a great potential for finding synergies and supporting each other to grow.

The Hungarian LADDER Living Lab would like to continue working with the Dr. Ámbédkar School to make sure that the impact of the actions taken during the intensive is lasting. The LADDER team will seriously consider the findings of the reflection that is concluded here in this booklet. Three important directions arise where there is still a lot of work that could be done:

- educating more the school community about how to use and maintain the interventions that have been implemented together
- preparing the funds for some long-term suggestions
- helping to establish more connections with the neighbours of the school

The Hungarian LADDER team believes that this is just the beginning of the way. The collaboration - and the Intensive Study Program - with the Dr. Ámbédkar School is a great experience of how landscape architecture can influence democratic processes. Many mistakes are already behind us and many more to come. But this is the way of learning and developing. The LADDER team is looking forward to making more mistakes - and hopefully some success as well - with the Dr. Ámbédkar School in order to promote the importance and practice of democracy in shaping the school environments.

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## Websites

LED2LEAP wiki: <http://www.led-project.org>

Dr. Ámbédkar School's website: <http://www.ambedkar.eu/>

# Special thanks and acknowledgments

We would like to thank all those who participated in the collaboration process with the Dr. Ámbédkar School.

First of all, we would like to thank the management of the Dr. Ámbékar School and the Martin Luther King College: Tibor Derdák, János Orsós, Imre Roland and Nóra Tyeklár, who took part in the preparation and also the implementation of the Intensive Study Program. We would like to express our gratitude to the school's educators and staff who supported the work of the LED2LEAP team in many ways. Thank you to Roy Kimmey, and Sarath Pillai, the Davis Project Coordinators, for helping with all their resource the transformation of the dormitory's garden. We would especially thank the Dr. Ámbédkar students for being active and open to the LED2LEAP team all along the collaboration.

We would also like to thank the landscape architect students coming from the Nürtingen-Geislingen University, the University of Bologna and the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Thank you for their dedicated, creative, sometimes even physical work and for being exemplary ambassadors for democratic landscape architecture.

Thank you for the amazing guests of the first night of the ISP for watching the 'Angry Buddha' movie with us and for generating a memorable discussion afterwards. Thank you to Dr. István Valánszki, professor at the Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences; to Dániel Rádai, urban planner and Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of the 8<sup>th</sup> District of Budapest; to Flóra Madácsi, project manager at Rév8 Organization; to Cili Varga, project manager at Mindspace; to Sára Szilágyi, a sociologist; to Amália Beri, a former student of the Dr. Ámbédkar School and today university student studying social work; and to Bettina Pocsai, social psychologist and the member of the UCCU Roma Informative Education Foundation.

We would like to thank Ms. Andrea Klára Varga, Deputy Mayor of the Miskolc Community, and the staff of the Chief Architect, especially to Natália Czifrusz, the Chief Gardener, for being always helpful during the process and giving useful information on the local context. We would like to thank Kamilla Kovács, the colleague of the Civil Participation Office, for presenting the operation, development plans and main challenges of the office. Thank you to Áron János Csere, a member of the Dialogue for Communities Public Benefit Association, for illuminating the legitimacy of the proposals from a civilian perspective and for helping university students to get to know the Miskolc community with their super local tips.

We would like to thank Ernő Lakatos, Gábor Váradi and Attila Lakatos for representing the Roma Nationality Self-Governance of Miskolc, welcoming us and sharing with us the past, present, and the wished future dreams of the Roma community. Special thanks to Erna Gulyás, who, as a professional translator, helped the foreign participants to become fully involved in the conversation.

We would also like to thank Dr. András Halbritter, who, as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation for School Gardens in Hungary, provided useful knowledge about the potential of school gardens during the workshop week.

We would also like to thank the partners of the LED2LEAP project - the University of Bologna, the Nürtingen-Geislingen University, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and the LE: NOTRE Institute - for their contribution to the preparation and implementation of the international workshop week. We would like to especially thank the colleagues of the Hungarian University of

Agriculture and Life Sciences: Dr. Albert Fekete, the head of the Institute of Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning, and Garden Art; Gábor Hanula, who created a promotional video of the ISP, and to Boglárka Tóth and Rita Várszegi for supporting the background administration at the university.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of LADDER Living Lab: Anita Reith, Anna Anna Szilágyi-Nagy, Eszter Jákli, Regina Mihály, Lili Csuka for the implementation of community engagement.



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

The LED2LEAP Project is partially funded by the ERASMUS+ European Union grant program, under grant no.2019-1-NL01-KA203-060497. Neither the European Commission nor the project's national funding agency is responsible for the content or liable for any losses or damages incurred that are the result of the use of these resources.