Abstract
Local products have become extremely popular in Hungary in the last 10 years. Of the parts of the short supply chain, producer markets are the most popular. In addition to markets, shoppers also want to buy a local product online. Shopping communities provide an opportunity for shoppers to buy a lot of local products using the internet. Purchased local product can be picked up by customers once a week. Shopping communities are managed by non-governmental organizations in Hungary.
This study examines the relationship between shopping communities and NGOs. Shopping communities are usually managed by non-profit organisations. For communities to work, partnerships are needed. The study analyses the relationship between shopping communities and a number of organisations: leader groups, church organisations, local NGOs, municipalities, educational institutions. In Hungary, there are more than 40 shopping communities. These communities are the subject of the study.

Keywords: shopping community, short supply chain, non-governmental organizations, partnership

1. Introduction
In the last decade, one of the most important and characteristic products of the Hungarian countryside has become the local product, which has become available to a wide range of social groups as a real movement (Tóth –Kaszás et al 2017).
The emergence of direct sales with the element of trust in mind - and the growing interest of customers - was also followed by legal regulations. The Small Producers Regulation, adopted in 2010, offered a number of new opportunities for those interested in the short supply chain, allowing the short supply chain to be expanded with new elements and new actors.
An examination of the role of intermediaries in facilitating the relationship between producers and consumers in the short supply chain is not usually included in the studies, although their role is essential. The importance of local solutions is shown by the fact that a record number of orders were received in Hungary for certain forms of sales within the short supply chain in an emergency caused by the coronavirus.

Theoretical background

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The beginning of the short supply chain was in the first part of the 20th century, until the emergence of community-supported agriculture – CSA (table 1.).

The roots of community-supported agriculture go back to the 20th century. It was first established in Western Europe, Japan, and North America. It appeared in Central and Eastern Europe in the 2000s. In Hungary, the translation of the name used in the United States and the United Kingdom has become a common name (Réthy – Dezsény, 2013).

The most influential French AMAP economy (Associations pour le maintien d’une Agriculture paysanne), which managed to organize a network at international level in addition to France. AMAP has member organizations in many countries around the world. A farmer or community using the AMAP farming form can be said to be widespread. In the case of an AMAP farm, the farm undertakes to comply with the following principles: small-scale production respecting natural processes; maintaining transparency from the beginning to the end of the food chain; direct relationship between producer and consumer without intermediaries; long-term commitment of consumers to producers (even through contracts), thus ensuring the sharing of production risks.

Table 1. Community-supported agriculture around the world.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>SolidarischeLandwirtschaft</td>
<td>1920s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Teike</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>Community Supported Agriculture – CSA</td>
<td>1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Community Supported Agriculture – CSA</td>
<td>2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>AMAP</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Réthy-Dezsény 2013)

Shopping communities’ definition

The shopping community should be defined as an organization / grouping dedicated to the development of the short supply chain that helps to connect producers and consumers through marketing and communication tools. The shopping community displays the offer and maintains a sales channel (webshop, producer market and store).

„Shopping community for us means a group of people come and cooperate together on the same goals and values and for their own demands and request they purchase food together. Members of the community can share their opinion, take part in the organizations and/or logistic task” (SZATYOR Shopping Community website).
TDMs in the civil sector: the role of Hungarian tourism destination management organisations in the civil sector (Dávid et al 2017). The functioning of the shopping community requires five basic factors: buyers, producer, webshop, tools, products (figure 1).

![Shopping communities system](image)

**Figure 1: Shopping communities system**
Source: Shopping community of Nyíregyháza

The legal framework for the operation of shopping communities is typically provided by some kind of NGO or religious organization. It is important to note that under the Small Growers Act, buyers can place a pre-order. The shopping communities website can be used to place an order. After a successful order, volunteers or employees from the shopping community forward the requested orders to the producers. Producers shall deliver the requested quantity to the place of delivery before the delivery time. The place of delivery must comply with food storage legislation, such as refrigerated storage and hygiene regulations.

Customers can usually pick up the product for 2 or 4 hours on a pre-determined time frame on the delivery day. Payment is made on site so buyers and producers have to trust each other. The lack of takeover was experienced only marginally by shopping communities. The shopping community can take over the product from the producer as a commission, payment is on a one-week schedule.

Interestingly, the authorities Nébih, Nav staff have not yet encountered a system like shopping communities. It seems that over time it will be necessary for the proper functioning of shopping communities to formulate terms and operating rules that can be interpreted by the authorities (following the oral statement of Ildikó Palicz).

Volunteers from the shopping community put together a package ordered by shoppers, volunteer work in the case of shopping communities employs volunteers almost without exception.
Major products available in shopping communities: vegetables (fresh herbs, beans, sprouts, fresh vegetables, seeds, pickles), fruit (dried fruit and fresh fruit), dairy products (yoghurt, cheese), meat (chicken, pork).

Shopping communities in Hungary operate in Budapest and populated rural cities. They work the same way. An important part of the successful operation of shopping communities is continuous contact with customers. Currently, shopping communities can communicate with customers using Facebook. Shopping communities want to get customers to order a local product from the shopping community on a weekly basis.

2. Material and method

Official statistics on shopping communities are not yet collected in Hungary. Obviously, due to the lack of statistical collection, this was also a challenge. Due to lack of information, governmental bodies dealing with rural development and agricultural economy use a database created by an NGO, the Association of Conscious Shoppers. I used this database as a starting point and developed it further. The subject of this study are the shopping communities I have identified in Hungary. I was able to identify 41 shopping communities.

Online content analysis

Shopping communities in Hungarian cities were analysed using online content analysis. I analysed the functioning of the shopping communities based on the existence of factors based on the self-defined definitions of the shopping communities in Hungary. I collected the existence of these factors using online content analysis methods.

Depth interviews

During the research, I conducted structured in-depth interviews with relevant people. I used Babbie's (2013) The Practice of Social Research as a guide for conducting the interviews. When selecting the interviewees, it was important to gain insight into the functioning of the shopping communities in Hungary from multiple perspectives. Interviews were conducted with the founders of shopping communities in Hungary, with those who are currently promoting their existence, with volunteers of shopping communities that are past their prime, with professional organisations that support the functioning of shopping communities, and with public actors who support shopping communities. I was able to interview the founders of each of the shopping communities established in 2020, so that I could compare them.

3. Results

One of the prerequisites for the functioning of shopping communities is the establishment of some kind of organisational framework. Under the small producers' regulation, producers themselves cannot sell other producers' products, so they can rely on themselves. If small producers were to sell their products through retailers, VAT would already be charged on the products and small producers would only be allowed to sell certain products through retailers. All this leads to the conclusion that the organisation of a short supply chain for small producers indirectly supports the introduction of intermediaries to reach customers.
Shopping communities are typically coordinated by some kind of non-profit organisation, as for-profit organisations are in many ways not suitable for this form of awareness-raising activities. For-profit organisations are not suitable for the operation of shopping communities mainly because of the following factors: they have limited involvement in the sale of small producers’ products and the operating mechanisms of shopping communities, such as a high proportion of voluntary work, possible intermittent operation, and discontinuous income, are not favourable for them. None of the shopping communities operating in Hungary are managed by profit-making organisations.

The NGO is a legal entity, so it can provide the necessary organisational framework for its operation. In most cases, a foundation or an association is the framework within which the shopping community operates. If the organisation of the community is a grassroots project, it is advisable to start by setting up the NGO. There are also a number of shopping communities that have been set up as part of an extension of the profile of an existing NGO. One such organisation is the Esztergom Environmental Culture Association, which manages the Kiskosár Shopping Community in Esztergom. The Association was founded in 1994 as an environmental organisation. Today, most people know it through the operation of Kiskosár.

Expanding the profile of a previously existing NGO can also be a short-term objective to use or draw down grant funding. In my opinion, the ekofa.hu shopping community in Eger, established by the Egri Journalists’ Union, far from the short supply chain, has followed a similar path. With the completion of the project, the ekofa.hu in Eger has also ceased to operate. Such and similar ties do not help the long-term spread of the shopping community as a movement. However, the example of Eger is not a national phenomenon. In principle, shopping communities have few opportunities to participate in tenders. Rather than project-based operations, committed but under-resourced organisers are typical of the domestic shopping community. This lack of resources encourages shopping communities to be innovative and to develop a wide network of partners, which is present at all stages of the operation.

The statutory operating conditions of NGOs, which presuppose a democratic, transparent and cooperative system of members, are the most suitable for the implementation of the activities of shopping communities. The majority of shopping communities operating in Hungary are managed by associations. They are also supported by NGOs which are not managed by shopping communities independently. These NGOs carry out activities related to the operation of the shopping communities. The best-known organisation, in my opinion, is the Small Community Programme, created by Andrea Szabadkai, one of the promoters of the Small Producers' Ordinance, and a recognised representative of the local produce as a movement. Also known for its public engagement, the Association for the Protection of the Environment, known for its recommendations on rule of law issues, has also been involved in the campaign to promote shopping communities.

In addition to the NGO framework, shopping communities can also be managed by by LEADER associations and church organisations. LEADER associations are specific non-governmental organisations operating in the European Union. LEADER is an acronym derived from the French acronym Liaisons entre actions pour le développement de l'économie
rurale - Community initiatives for the development of the rural economy. LEADER is a grassroots approach based on endogenous resources, which is nowadays applied in all Member States of the European Union (Póla et al. 2015). It can be said that the LEADER approach is one of the most successful rural development efforts in the European Union, and is considered as such by experts in the field of land and urban development. LEADER is the approach used in the European Union and is one of the most important instruments of rural development policy within the Union. A specific feature of LEADER organisations is the extension of the principle of subsidiarity to the development of rural areas. In Hungary, three shopping communities operate under the LEADER association framework.

Of course, in Hungary, the scope of the shopping communities linked to the operation of LEADER organisations is very limited, as it is a highly bureaucratic, top-down machine. In most countries of the European Union, the LEADER programme and LEADER organisations themselves operate in a less bureaucratic framework (Halamska 2010; Lacquement 2012, Chevalier (2014). LEADER organisations also differ from classical NGOs in their operating mechanisms. These organisations have a professional working structure that can managed by the organisation on a permanent basis. However, in the process of professionalisation, the movement framework disappears and volunteering is absent or minimal. As a consequence, the most successful shopping communities in Hungary are not those managed by by LEADER organisations. However, it is also true that LEADER organisations managed by one of the shopping communities in Hungary with one of the lowest population densities. This is the BörzsönyÍnyenkosár in Szob. Although they show a unique organisational functioning, shopping communities managed by LEADER organisations are also real shopping communities, as they create links between producers and buyers of local products, managed by a webshop, organise a delivery day and involve a limited number of volunteers.

The involvement of church organisations is one of the highlights of rural development efforts. Church involvement can also be seen in the case of shopping communities. The reason for this is the social ambitions of the church, the desire for a more communal approach to small-scale production. Let us not forget that monastic orders have been self-sustaining for almost two millennia. Religious organisations provide a suitable place for several shopping communities to operate. The best known is the Kiskosár Community in Esztergom, where a parish of the town, which is the centre of the Hungarian Roman Catholic Church, is the venue for the handover day.

We also find examples of church organisations not only contributing to, but also managed buying their own shopping community. Under the leadership of the former Bishop of the Diocese of Vaci, Dr. Miklós Beer, several forward-looking initiatives (2004-2019) were implemented in the diocese to promote the market access of local products and the development of the local and social economy.

Miklós Beer founded the Rural Development Office of the Diocese of Vaci in 2014. This is the first rural development office in Hungary managed by a church, whose main activities are
social economic development and attitude formation. The Office also managed by tank farms, training courses, parish gardens, consultancy, livestock and seed collection. One of the most activities of the Rural Development Office of the Diocese of Váci is the organisation of the Bishop's Farmers' Market, which was launched in 2014. This farmers' market is held weekly in front of the Bishop's Palace in the centre of the 1000-year-old diocese of Vác. Building on the success of the farmers' market, in 2016 the Rural Development Office of the Diocese of Vaci established another innovative element of the short supply chain, the shopping community called the Vaci Basket. The Váci Kosár operates a webshop through which it is possible to order local products, with pick-up at the Charity Office maintained by the Diocese of Vác. The operation of the Váci Kosár is similar to the shopping communities managed by the LEADER organisations mentioned above. It can be said that the demand for the creation of the community from above - in this case from the bishop of the diocese - was fortunate enough to meet the needs of the local community. The operation of the Váci Basket highlights an untapped opportunity for shopping communities today. This shopping community is taking advantage of the recognition that the involvement of key local players, or even nationally known public figures, in marketing activities can help to raise the social profile of the cause and thus increase the number of customers. Miklós Beer himself is one such character, who has appeared in the media on numerous occasions and who has been involved in promoting the short supply chain and the Váci Basket.

In 2019, the tasks of the Rural Development Office of the Diocese of Váci were taken over by the Charity Organisation of the Diocese of Váci, which continues to managed by the Vaci Basket Society. This reorganisation also highlights the vulnerability of the top-down community organisation in Váci, as decision-making is not based on democratic relations between members. However, this system is highly efficient, as it operates under more favourable infrastructural conditions compared to typically underfunded NGOs.

In the case of shopping communities, the activity itself is more important than building the image of the organisation that managed bythis. This is shown by the fact that almost 60 percent of shopping communities do not have a known operator. Nor should we hide the fact that in many cases the communities are founded by an enthusiastic local community, who in their initial operation focus on operating in line with the enthusiasm of the organisers rather than the legal environment.
In the case of shopping communities, it would be a significant step forward for further expansion if shopping communities could become a separate activity of REL. This is already the case with the Village Table service. To achieve this, I believe that dozens more shopping communities would need to start operating within the current framework. The operation of shopping communities is supported by several organisations and local actors who do not managed by a shopping community themselves, or only occasionally. Churches, NGOs, educational institutions, public authorities, LEADER associations, local action groups and municipalities all help to managed by a shopping community (Table 1). The most common support for a shopping community is the provision of a delivery site. This is provided by community clubs (AZTA Community Workshop), parishes (Esztergom), municipalities (Örbottyán, Dunakeszi). However, it should be remembered that the delivery venue is only one element of the functioning of the shopping communities. The organisation of this factor is given more importance than it should be by the organisers of the shopping communities. Not enough attention is always paid to the fact that the most important task in the operation of a shopping community is to put together the range of products on offer and, above all to get them to the market, which requires more time than the delivery. It is rare to find a partner working with the shopping communities to manage the ongoing marketing tasks of social media platforms, webshop and website.

Institutions and workplaces can help shopping communities by allowing takeaways for workers. The authors of the Eat With Us publication refer to this as a specific form of shopping community, defined as an "institutional system". Media relations are also important for the effective functioning of shopping communities. For a long time after the emergence of shopping communities, the Szatyor shopping community was also the flag-bearer in terms of media, mainly thanks to the attention it received as the first shopping community in Hungary. In the year 2019-2020, we can talk about a significant step forward in the field of media relations of the shopping communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Settlement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian Catholic Church</td>
<td>Delivery Location</td>
<td>Esztergom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local municipality</td>
<td>Delivery Location</td>
<td>Örbottyán, Dunakeszi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This raises the question of the relationship of shopping communities with educational institutions in Hungary as professional partners in their operations. In the case of short supply chains, higher education institutions may be primarily partners or even creators of the shopping communities. Among the higher education institutions, research institutes specialising in agriculture, economics, geography, sociology, rural, regional or urban development, human ecology could be potential organisers of shopping communities. In the database of shopping communities I have collected, there is not a single community that is exclusively linked to a higher education institution or a related organisation, such as a student council or a student union, for its operation. There was a shopping community in a higher education institution, at the former Szent István University in Gödöllő, which was launched in 2015. The attempt proved to be short-lived, as the organisers offered to introduce the so-called institutional system when organising the shopping community.

The potential of opening farmers' markets at Hungarian universities was modelled by analogy with existing farmers' markets at American universities (Maró et al. 2022). They found that the proportion of "quality" products, including local products, that promote a healthy lifestyle has increased in the consumption patterns of university students over the past decade (Balázsné et al. 2022). The most important motivations for consuming local products among young people aged 18-25 are uniqueness, curiosity and experience. This potential buying audience is not yet exploited by short supply chain operators (Beke et al. 2022).

Employees of higher education institutions are also not considered to be the primary consumers of shopping communities, given the wages experienced in the Hungarian public sector. The role of higher education institutions in relation to the short supply chain is more relevant at the level of knowledge transfer, knowledge of the elements of the short supply chain and how they work. In Keszthely, the oldest agricultural science institution in Hungary, the Georgikon of Keszthely, is home to the Cekker shopping community in the town. One of the major Hungarian workshops on short supply chain management is the Institute of Human Ecology at Eötvös Loránd University. András Takács-Sánta, researcher and head of the institute, started organising a shopping community in his hometown of Csákvár. Local people also came to the Start a Shopping Community training course at Eszterházy Károly University in Gyöngyös, and eventually became the founders and organisers of the shopping community (László Zalatnay 2019).

In addition to positive cooperation, negative experiences were also reported by the organisers of the shopping communities. These phenomena are mainly due to the novelty of the way the shopping communities operate. In many cases, the objectives of the shopping communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Delivery Location</th>
<th>Delivery Location site for the staff of the institution</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Territorial Association</td>
<td>Cross-border relations</td>
<td>Esztergom</td>
<td>own compilation based on data source own collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>„Azta” Community Club</td>
<td>Delivery Location</td>
<td>Budapest</td>
<td>Source: own compilation based on data source own collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piarista Secondary Grammar School</td>
<td>Delivery Location site for the staff of the institution</td>
<td>Vác</td>
<td>Source: own compilation based on data source own collection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
are not clearly defined in terms of short supply chain, attitude formation. This makes them less attractive for the managers of potential partner public institutions to cooperate. Negative experiences have been reported by the organisers of a shopping community that will be launched in Szolnok in 2020, who have been rejected by educational institutions when looking for a delivery site. The rejection, which concerned a shopping community to be launched in a Waldorf school, came from the Szolnok Municipal Property Management Company. In their opinion, the activities of the shopping community were incompatible with the school's legal title, and the start-up shopping community started looking for another location for the transfer of the property (Krisztina Nyolczas 2020). The above-mentioned case of Szolnok also shows that the activities of shopping communities are still not known by the authorities in many places, and there are no appropriate and generally accepted recommendations by the authorities on the operation of this element of the short supply chain. In order to avoid similar problems, it is important for communities to continuously implement and widely publicise awareness-raising activities such as organic production, local economic development, conscious purchasing and other complementary activities such as workshops, training courses, international best practices.

4. Summary
As the Small Farmers Regulation does not allow producers to sell other producers' products, they can rely on themselves. If small producers were to sell their products through retailers, VAT would already be charged on the products and small producers would only be allowed to sell certain products through retailers. All this leads us to conclude that the organisation of a short supply chain for small producers indirectly supports the introduction of intermediaries in order to reach customers. The functioning of the shopping communities necessarily involves the creation of an organisational chain to deliver the small producers' goods to the consumer.

My research has also shown that shopping communities are typically coordinated by a non-profit organisation, as profit-oriented organisations are in many ways not suitable for this form of awareness-raising activities. Profit-oriented organisations are not suitable for the operation of shopping communities mainly because of the following factors: their limited involvement in the sale of small producers' products, and the operating mechanisms of shopping communities, such as a high proportion of voluntary work, possible intermittent operation and discontinuous income, are not favourable to them. None of the shopping communities operating in Hungary are managed by profit-making organisations.

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