

**Professional cooperation,
disadvantage compensation in schools,
professional well-being:
the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study**

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher; it is also prohibited to distribute in any binding, cover, or layout other than that that of the original publication.

Pécs, 2020

Edited by Éva Perpék

Lector: Vilma Papp

Editor-in-Chief: Lajosné Pálinkás

ISBN 978-615-81677-0-3

Content

RESEARCH FINAL REPORT ÉVA PERPÉK – ÁGNES GYŐRI – MÁRTA KISS – GÁBOR SZÁSZVAI-PAPP – ZOLTÁN VASTAGH	4
OPINIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE, FREQUENCY AND EFFICIENCY OF PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION ÉVA PERPÉK – GÁBOR SZÁSZVAI-PAPP	51
INTERPROFESSIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION: PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS ÉVA PERPÉK – GÁBOR SZÁSZVAI-PAPP	66
REASONS FOR DISADVANTAGES IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS MÁRTA KISS – ZOLTÁN VASTAGH	81
MEANS FOR COMPENSATING EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGES ACCORDING TO THE INTERPRETATION OF SOCIAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS MÁRTA KISS – ZOLTÁN VASTAGH	97
OPINIONS OF SOCIAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS ON PROFESSIONAL WORKING CONDITIONS ÁGNES GYŐRI	114
EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STRAIN OF SOCIAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS ÁGNES GYŐRI	129

RESEARCH FINAL REPORT

*ÉVA PERPÉK – ÁGNES GYŐRI – MÁRTA KISS – GÁBOR SZÁSZVAI-PAPP
– ZOLTÁN VASTAGH*

Introduction

This final publication reports on the results of research carried out under the EFOP project 5.2.2-17 “Transnational Cooperation”. The aim of the research is to find out the opinion of professionals providing social and educational (professional) services in three areas: school disadvantage compensation, professional cooperation and professional working conditions. Among the target groups concerned, not of the three topics have been researched extensively, thus their study can be considered of paramount importance. The research is of exploratory nature and based on a survey. Data collection took place in Hungary in Baranya County and in Croatia in Osijek-Baranja County (Osječko-baranjska županija), mainly among social and special education professionals. The restricted database of the Hungarian survey conducted in 2019 contains the data of 261 professionals, while the Croatian survey of 2020 contains the data of 100 respondents.

In the first part of the volume, we report on the main results of the research. Within this, we present the broader context of the survey, outlining some features of the Hungarian and Croatian social care systems. After that, we present the details of the survey and the characteristics of the interviewed professionals in three major topics - professional cooperation, school disadvantages and their compensation, and the conditions of professional work.

In the second part of the volume, each topic of the survey is explained in detail and in more depth. In the first two studies, we present the views of professionals on collaboration and their experience in this field. The first analysis focuses on the importance, frequency and effectiveness of cooperation - for each level of the hierarchy within the profession and regarding some external professional actors. The second analysis examines the experience gained during the cooperation with other professions, examining the professionals' perceptions of the nature and circumstances of the cooperation, the medium where it took place, and the facilitating and inhibiting factors.

The next two analyses focus on school disadvantages. On the one hand, we explore the typical reasons for the development of school disadvantages, based on the opinion of professionals providing social and educational services. On the other hand, we explore the means whereby, according to the perception of the professionals, the developed disadvantages can be managed and compensated. The third topic discussed in the volume covers the conditions of professional work. One analysis on the topic provides an idea of the emotional-physical-mental strain of professionals. The other study examines the interactions of factors making professional work more difficult by examining different aspects of working conditions.

The analyses - mainly due to the higher number of items - focus primarily on the Hungarian data, however, where only methodologically possible, the Hungarian results are reported in comparison with the Croatian data. The results and conclusions presented are valid for the respondents, and they can be generalized to a limited extent to the basic population. The analytical studies present the results in a unified structure – a thematic introduction, analysis, summary and recommendations. At the end of the studies, the policy-relevant recommendations formulated based on the Hungarian results can be applied in Hungary.

I. Research in a broader context

The primary target group of our research is social professionals, thus when presenting the broader context of the research, we focus on the Croatian and Hungarian social care systems. As far as social expenditure is concerned, the share of public social protection expenditure is practically the same in the two countries: it was 14.3% of GDP in Croatia and 14.0% of GDP in Hungary in 2017. With these ratios, Croatia ranks 18th and Hungary 19th in the third quarter among the 28 EU Member States in terms of social spending as a share of GDP. By comparison, Finland, France, Denmark, Italy, Austria and Sweden have the highest proportion of social spending in the European Union, accounting for more than a fifth of the country's GDP. The fourth-quarter countries, where less than 13% of GDP is social spending include Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Latvia, Romania, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Cyprus. (EUROSTAT 2019)

I.1 Some elements of the Croatian welfare system

The welfare system in Croatia, like in Hungary, is fundamentally based on financial support, social services and institutional care. Some of the basic institutions of Croatian social services (Welfare Act NN 157/13) are **social welfare centers** (centri socialne skrbi), **social care institutions** (ustanove socialne skrbi) and **special care centers** (centar za posebno skrbnistvo).

Social welfare centers are one of the most important actors in the Croatian social system. Beneficiaries can access social services through the local centers. Social welfare centers provide extensive and complex services. The services provided are summarized using the example of the Osijek Social Welfare Center (Centar za Socijalnu Skrb Osijek) included in the survey. The activities of the Osijek Social Welfare Center include¹:

1. providing information and needs assessment,
2. counselling and assistance for individuals and families,
3. home help,
4. psychosocial support,
5. early intervention/development,
6. assisting in education and promoting integration - for people with disabilities,
7. day care - in the framework of social care homes, community service center or other service provider,

¹ <https://czss-osijek.hr/socijalne-usluge/>

8. residential care, including
 - a. temporary stay or stay of temporary nature
 - i. temporary home for those in crisis (children, adults, victims, homeless),
 - ii. temporary home for the disabled,
 - iii. temporary home for children,
 - iv. other placements not listed above
 - b. or with permanent/long - term residence, and
9. providing organized housing²

In Osijek-Baranja County, there are social welfare centers in 5 other settlements - Beli Manastir, Đakovo, Donji Miholjac, Našice, Valpovo, but social services are also available in other settlements. In addition, other social institutions operate in the county include the so-called family center branch office, several social care institutions (ustanove socialne skribi, foster homes for children and young people, community service centers, old people's homes) and a special care center (centar za posebno skribnistvo).³ Some of the services are concentrated in Osijek.

1.2 Social care and services in Hungary

In Hungary, the two pillars of social care and services are benefits in cash and in kind, as well as social services providing personal care. The state provides social services in the framework of primary services, specialist care and development sessions.⁴ In this chapter, we focus on **primary social services**. They include:

1. child welfare and child protection services,
2. day care for
 - a. the disabled,
 - b. the homeless,
 - c. the elderly,
 - d. the addicts,
 - e. psychiatric patients,
3. help in home care,
4. social catering,
5. street social work,

² The range of activities offered by some social centers include some additional service elements, such as e.g. family mediation in the case of the Zagreb Social Welfare Center. (<https://www.czss-zagreb.hr/socijalne-usluge>).

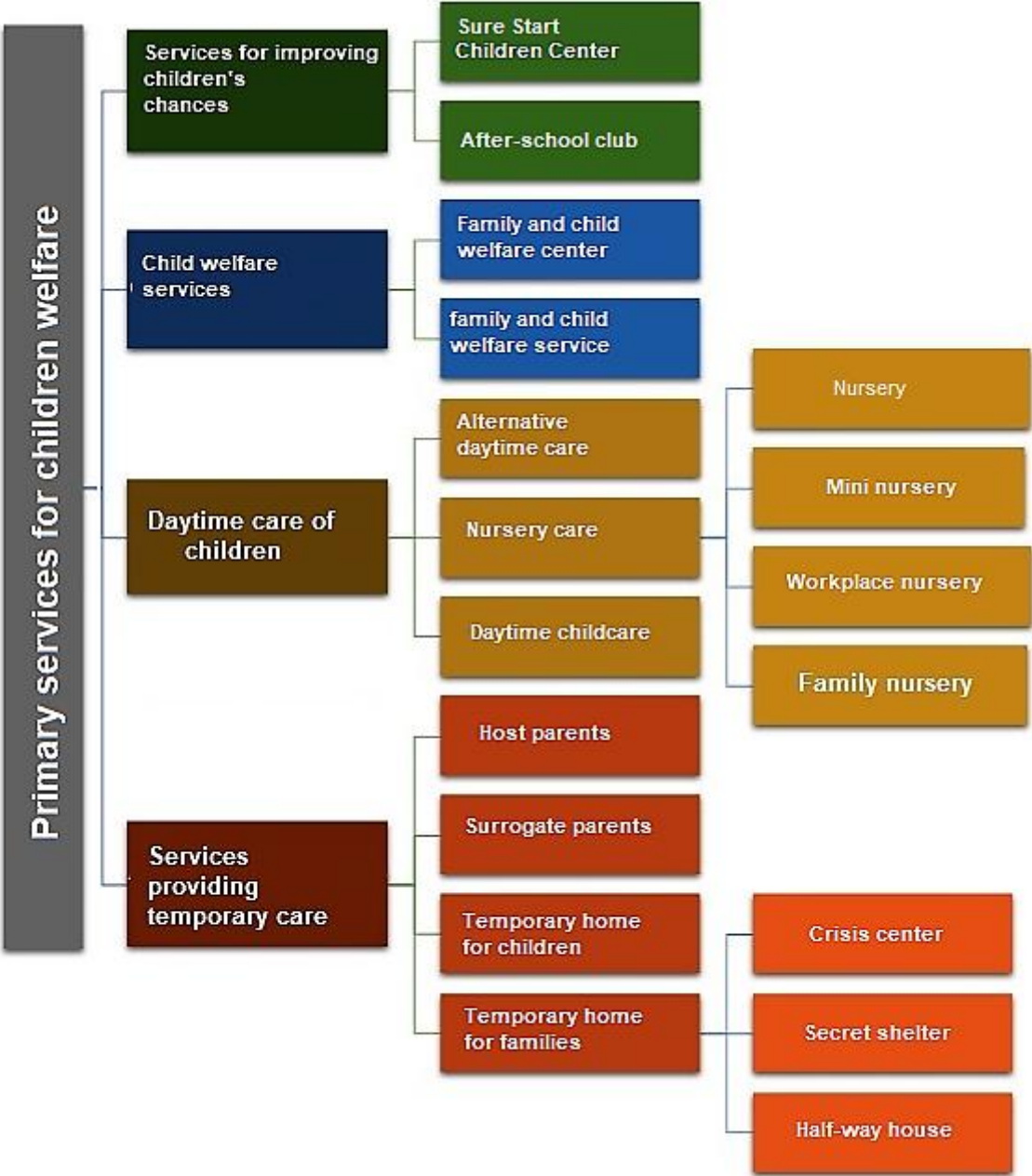
³ Based on information from the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (<https://mdomsp.gov.hr/adresar-ustanova/1673>).

⁴ Act III. of 1993 on Social Administration and Social Benefits.

6. the support service
 - a. passenger transport,
 - b. personal assistance,
7. community care for
 - a. psychiatric patients,
 - b. addicts, as well as
8. farm and village caretaker service.

Primary social services are complemented by services provided within the confines of **specialist care**. One of the groups of specialized services providing personal care is institutional care (care for the disabled, the homeless, the elderly, psychiatric patients, homes for addicts). The next service is institutional care providing temporary accommodation (night shelters, care homes for the disabled, temporary accommodations for the homeless, care homes for the elderly, temporary homes for psychiatric patients and addicts). Among the specialist services, a separate group is represented by residential home care (for psychiatric patients, addicts, rehabilitation homes for the disabled, nursing homes for the disabled), rehabilitation institutional care (for psychiatric patients, addicts, disabled people, and the homeless), and supported housing (for psychiatric patients, addicts and the disabled).

Figure 1 Primary child welfare services in Hungary



Source: tamogatoweb.hu. Accessed: 2020.08.12.

In Hungary, nearly a third (30%) of the registered approximately 15,000 social services are child welfare and child protection services. (Social Sector Portal 2019) Child protection and child welfare services are grouped around four major areas: these include the child welfare services provided by family and child welfare centers and services, which are one of the target groups of our research; day care for children, services providing temporary care, and services aiming to enhance one's chances (Figure 1).

II. The survey in Hungary and Croatia

II.1 Target group and data collection

The data collection in **Hungary** covered Pécs and some district centers in Baranya County, and its target group consisted of professionals from family and child welfare centers and services, the child protection center and professional service, and the educational professional service.⁵ The survey was conducted in three large institutions based in Pécs.

There are a total of 27 family and child welfare services in the county⁶. Of these, 10 services - in the district centers - also function as family and child welfare centers. The first group of the population included the staff of the *Lajos Esztergár Family and Child Welfare Service and Center*, maintained by the Pécs Multi-Purpose Agglomeration Association. The service and center include, among others, case managers, social caregivers, family carers, psychologists, social workers, family mentors, community coordinators, alerting coordinators/counsellors, community coordinators, legal counsellors, debt management counsellors.

The other group of respondents included the employees of the *Baranya County Child Protection Center and the Regional Child Protection Professional Service* maintained by the General Directorate of Social and Child Protection. The center and professional services include child protection guardians, administrators, coordinators, assistants; educators, child-minders, psychologists, special education teachers.

The third institution involved in the survey is the *Baranya County Pedagogical Professional Service* (maintained by the Pécs Educational District Center) whose staff include special education teachers (in different fields, e.g. speech therapy, psycho-pedagogy, learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities), physiotherapists, psychologists, speech therapists, teachers for children with special education needs, social educators, special education assistants, talent-management coordinators, etc.

⁵ In the volume, for the sake of simplicity, we refer to the respondents as “social and special education professionals” in general and in summary.

⁶ Based on the tabular data set by the CSO (www.ksh.hu) for 2019, compiled on individual request.

In the research, we aimed to fully reach the relevant target groups, especially social professionals.⁷ The survey was conducted in person and online in March-April 2019. The questionnaire reached the entire population directly or indirectly. As a result of the survey, the database was compiled in May 2019. The distribution of the Hungarian population and sample, as well as the access rates are included in the following summary:

Table 1 Distribution of the Hungarian population and sample

Workplace	Population		Sample		Reach rate*
	No. of items	Distribution	No. of items	Distribution	
Family and child welfare service and center	272 persons*	43.7%	96 persons	36.8%	35.3%
Child protection center and professional service	200 persons estimated	32.2%	105 persons	40.2%	52.5%
Pedagogical professional service	150 persons*	24.1%	60 persons	23.0%	40.0%
Total/Average	622 persons	100.0%	261 persons	100.0%	42.6%

* Based on the tabular data set by the CSO (www.ksh.hu) for 2019, compiled on individual request.

40.2% (105 people) of the Hungarian professionals included in the sample work for a child protection center or professional service, 36.8% (96 people) work for a family and child welfare center or service, and 23% (60 people) work for a pedagogical professional service. (Table 1). The vast majority of respondents (75.1%, 196 people) work in Pécs, one tenth (26 people) in Szigetvár, 3.8 percent (10 people) in Pécsvárad, the rest in Szentlőrinc, Sásd (7-7 people), Komló, Sellye and Bogád (5-5 people).

In accordance with the same principles and goals as in Hungary, 100 professionals were interviewed in Osijek-Baranya County during the data collection in **Croatia**. The interview and database

⁷ As a brief summary, during data collection the helpers involved were given the following instructions on how to select the interviewee. Employees of *family and child welfare centers and services and child protection professionals* will be fully interviewed. In the case of *pedagogical professional services*, we use a kind of stratified sampling according to special fields. In the case of non-Pécs pedagogical professional services, as a general rule, at least one person will be included in the sample in each position available at the given professional service, selected on the basis of availability. If more than one person is willing to answer within a position, each of them can be interviewed, as long as it is ensured that all positions are represented in the sample. The goal is to interview at least half of the staff working in specific professional service. At the pedagogical professional service of Pécs: the goal is to reach at least half of the professionals in all fields. A supplementary rule is that: if the complete survey is not carried out among the social professionals in a certain district center, then the complete survey may be carried out at the pedagogical services as well. In order the spatial proportions of the sample not to be distorted in relation to the population, it must be made sure that the desired number of questionnaires completed is not to be achieved only by involving the entire staff of the Pécs center.

compilation was completed in July 2020. Adapting to the peculiarities of the Croatian care system, the primary target group of the survey included the professionals of the *social welfare centers (centri socialne skrbi)* in Osijek-Baranya County. The study covered three of the six centers in *Osijek, Valpovo* and *Beli Manastir*. The locations of the survey also included *Belišće*, where social services are provided under the coordination of the Valpovo Social Welfare Center.⁸ Respondents working in the social welfare centers involved in the survey include child welfare and child protection, support, community, home-help, street-social-work, etc. professionals.

As far as the sample and place of work are concerned, one fifth of respondents in Croatia work in schools (19.0%) or kindergartens (21%). 8% work elsewhere (in a civil society, municipality, nursery, as a psychologist or a mentor.) The rest of the respondents mainly perform child-protection tasks, so this group of professionals is overrepresented in the sample. Due to the differences between the Croatian and Hungarian education and social caresystems, international comparisons in effect between work and professional fields are not possible in the course of the analyses.

II.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in the survey consisted of four main blocks of questions. The first block of questions - at the beginning and end of the questionnaire - collected information about the respondent himself / herself and his / her job (job, position, professional experience, career change, target group). Socio-demographic data related to the respondent's gender, age, nature of place of birth and current residence, marital status, number of children, education, qualifications, and financial situation.

The second block of questions was organized around school disadvantages and their perceptions. In this, we asked what the reasons for the development of educational disadvantages were in the respondent's perception, and how, by what methods and means these disadvantages can be managed and reduced. We collected information about the disadvantage-reducing activities carried out at work, the work of the respondent in disadvantage-reducing institutions outside the school, and the opinion of the respondents on the possible normative support of these institutions.

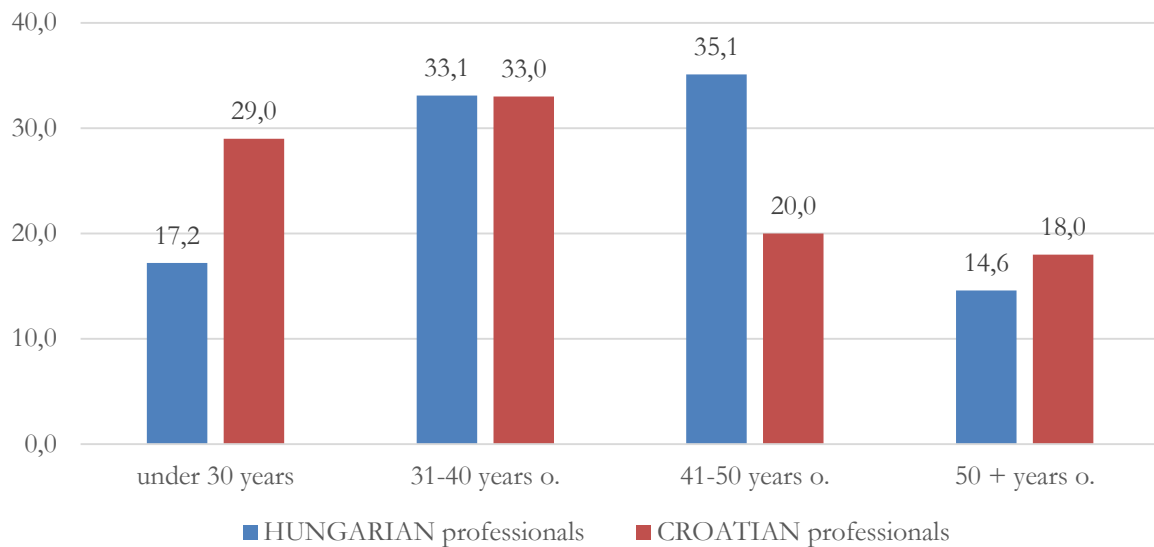
⁸ Based on information from the Ministry of Demography, Family, Youth and Social Policy (<https://mdomsp.gov.hr/adresar-ustanova/1673>).

The third topic of the questionnaire was intra-professional and interprofessional cooperation, namely between their actors, the importance, frequency and efficiency of the relationship. We also explored the experience gained during the collaboration, some of its characteristics, facilitating and hindering factors both at individual and group levels. In the fourth block of questions, we looked at the attitudes and experiences of professionals about their work and workplace from several perspectives. Finally, we asked about the respondent's professional plans and visions, possible career intentions, earlier participation in professional trainings, and future plans in this respect.

III. Characteristics of the professionals interviewed

The number of items in the Hungarian sample formed based on a personal and online survey is 261, and that of the Croatian sample is 100. Before exploring the deeper correlations, it is worth presenting some of the basic characteristics of the professionals included in the sample in the light of the background variables relevant to the analyses. According to our preliminary expectations, the majority of the interviewed professionals are women: in the Hungarian sample it is 84.7% (221 persons), in the Croatian sample 69% (67 persons). Thus, among the Croatian professionals involved, the presence of men is stronger than the case of the Hungarian sample. A total of 40 men were included in the Hungarian sample, which is 15.3% of the respondents.

Figure 2 Distribution of professionals by age (% , $N_{\text{HUNGARIAN}} = 261$, $N_{\text{CROATIAN}} = 100$)



The age of the Hungarian professionals interviewed ranges between 22 and 66 years, while the age-range of Croatian professionals is between 22 and 59 years. The average age of the Hungarian sample was 40 years, and that of the Croatian sample was 38 years. 17.2% of the respondents in Hungary (41 people) are at the beginning of their careers or are in the first stage of their careers - we mean those aged 30 or under (Figure 2). Those aged 31-40 (33.1%, 79 people) represent similar proportion to those aged 41-50 (35.1%, 83 people) and make up a third of the sample. Employees aged 51-66 are represented in 14.6%, with 35 people. It is worth mentioning that the proportion of professionals belonging to the youngest age group is well above 10 percentage points among Croatian professionals. This may even be due to the fact that the professions involved in the study

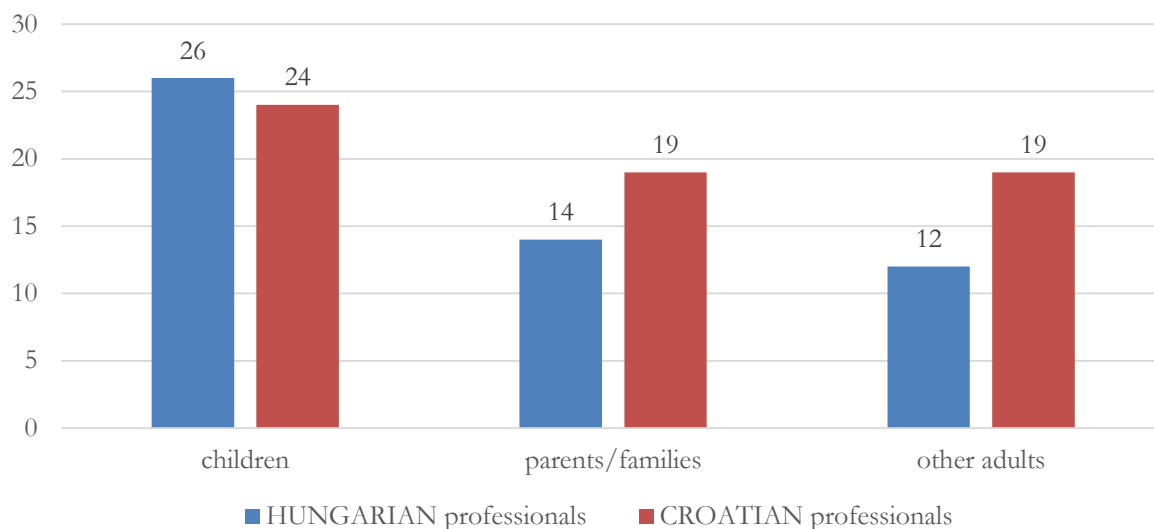
may offer more attractive, promising opportunities for young people in Croatia⁹. At the same time, those aged 41-50 are 15 percentage points less represented than in case of the Hungarian sample.

Most of the Hungarian respondents have a college or BA degree (39.1%), but many also have a university or MA degree (34.1%). Approximately one tenth (9.1%) of those in the Hungarian sample have a high school or vocational high school diploma; and more than a tenth (11.4%) have with post-graduate higher or non-higher education qualifications. In comparison, the proportion of respondents with a higher education is 91.1%, and the proportion of those with a high school diploma (3.3%) or higher vocational training (4.4%) is lower among Croatian respondents.

Most of the Hungarian professionals involved in the survey - understandably - have acquired their professional qualifications in the social field; they make up 39.1% of the sample. More than a quarter (26.1%) of the Hungarian respondents have educational qualification, and a fifth (19.9%) have a degree in humanities. Approximately one tenth (11.5%) of the professionals interviewed have a degree in social and behavioural sciences (e.g. psychology, sociology) and almost the same proportion of them have other (10.3%) higher educational backgrounds (also). 3.4-3.4% of the respondents have health and legal/economic qualifications. Among the Croatian professionals surveyed, those with a teacher/educational degree predominate (49%). Nearly a quarter (23%) graduated in social and behavioural sciences and 17% in social sciences. It is clear from the data that Croatian and Hungarian professionals have different educational and training backgrounds. Differences in this area may be due to structural factors.

⁹ The explanation of age-related relationships was not the subject of the present research, so here we only suggested one of the possible reasons.

Figure 3 Number of clients receiving care by the professionals interviewed by target groups
(persons, $N_{\text{HUNGARIAN}} = 261$, $N_{\text{CROATIAN}} = 100$)



The questionnaire also included a question on how many clients receiving care currently belong to the target group of the work of the professionals interviewed. Treating the target groups as separate categories based on the Hungarian answers and filtering out the outlier data, it can be established that the target group of a professional includes on average 24 children, 19 parents/family and 19 other adults/elderly¹⁰ (Figure 3). The data show a significant variance, so the number of clients provided care by the professionals concerned varies greatly. It should be noted that respondents are characterized by a significant lack of information regarding both the number of their clients and their classification according to their disadvantage. The Croatian data do not differ significantly from this; in their case there are slightly more clients, on average 26 children, but the averages of the other categories are lower (average: 14 parents / family and 12 other adults, elderly).

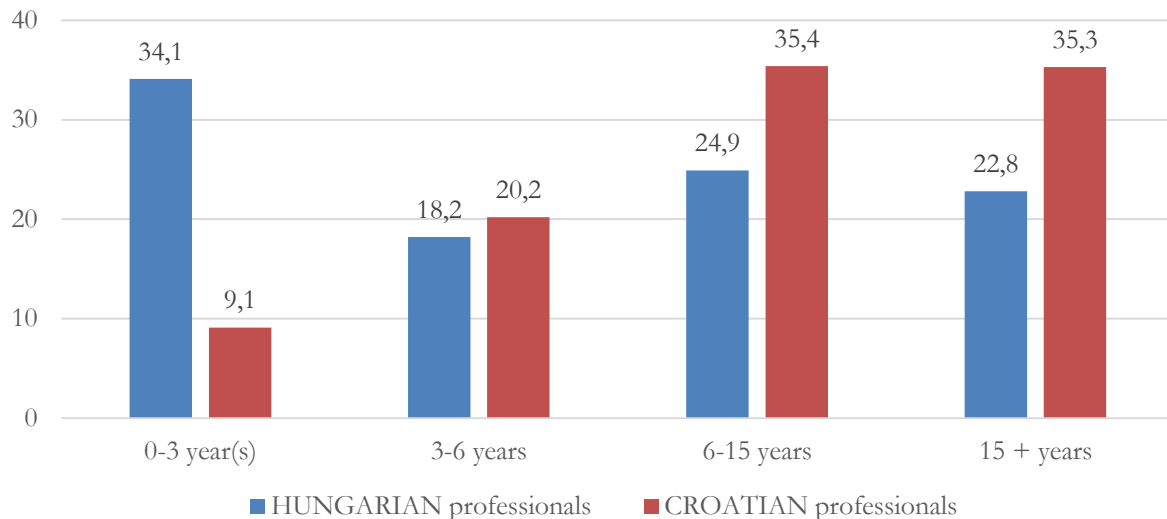
It is noteworthy that almost one-fifth (19.2%) of Hungarian professionals have been working in their current position for less than a year¹¹; and half of the respondents (51.4%) have only up to 3 years of experience in their current position. The proportion of those working in their position for

¹⁰ It should be noted here that the workload of social professionals in Baranya County is very high compared to the national average: while an average professional provides cares for 118 children, families and/or adults on the average per year, professionals providing social and educational services in Baranya take care of 176 people (source: calculated on the basis of the tabular data sets compiled by the CSO (source: calculated based on of the tabular data sets compiled by the CSO (www.ksh.hu) for 2019 compiled for individual request).

¹¹ If the above indicators are reviewed in Hungary only among those over 30 years of age (198 people), it can be seen that age does not significantly affect how long a person has been working in a certain position, or how many years of experience he or she has in total in his/her field. Moreover, the data show that, on average, there are more people over the age of 30 who have been working in their current jobs for less than a year than in the full sample. From the latter data, it cannot be automatically concluded that the change of professional field has taken place recently and at a relatively older age, as the reason for the newly filled position can include appointments, transfers or promotions.

3-6 years is 23, and the proportion of those working for 6-15 years is 15.3%. One tenth of the respondents (10.3%) had not changed their job for more than 15 years. The data of the Croatian respondents show a completely different picture: more than half of them (53%) belong to the group of considerable experience with at least 10 years of professional experience including the 28% who reported 15 years of professional experience.

Figure 4 In total, how many years of experience do you have in your field?
($N_{\text{HUNGARIAN}} = 261$, $N_{\text{CROATIAN}} = 100$)



The social and special education professionals interviewed have been working in their current position for an average of 6 years and have an average of 9 years of experience in their field as a whole. The much higher means of Croatian respondents (11 and 14 years, respectively) show more serious career paths as well. The differences are illustrated in Figure 4, too.

The majority of the respondents in Hungary (59.0%) are characterized by the fact that they worked in other segments of the labour market in addition to their current field of expertise. Employees can enjoy both the advantages and disadvantages of a change of profession and/or career in the course of their work. The advantage is that they may have a different vision and approach from the one considered usual in their current field of expertise, problem detection, treatment and resolution mechanisms, external professional relationships, and so on. At the same time, it can be seen as a kind of disadvantage that as a result of the change of profession, they did not acquire as much knowledge, experience and relationships within the profession as if they had worked in a single field during their entire professional career.

Taking the prevailing circumstances in Hungary into account, it is a well-known fact that there is a shortage of professionals in both the social and special education professions. This is especially true for the most disadvantaged areas. The low labour supply, for example, can be compensated

by double employment, which is why we included the question of whether the respondent has another job. 17.6% of Hungarian professionals (46 people) answered yes to this question. Among Croatian respondents, this proportion is much higher (30%).

IV. Opinions on professional relations and cooperation

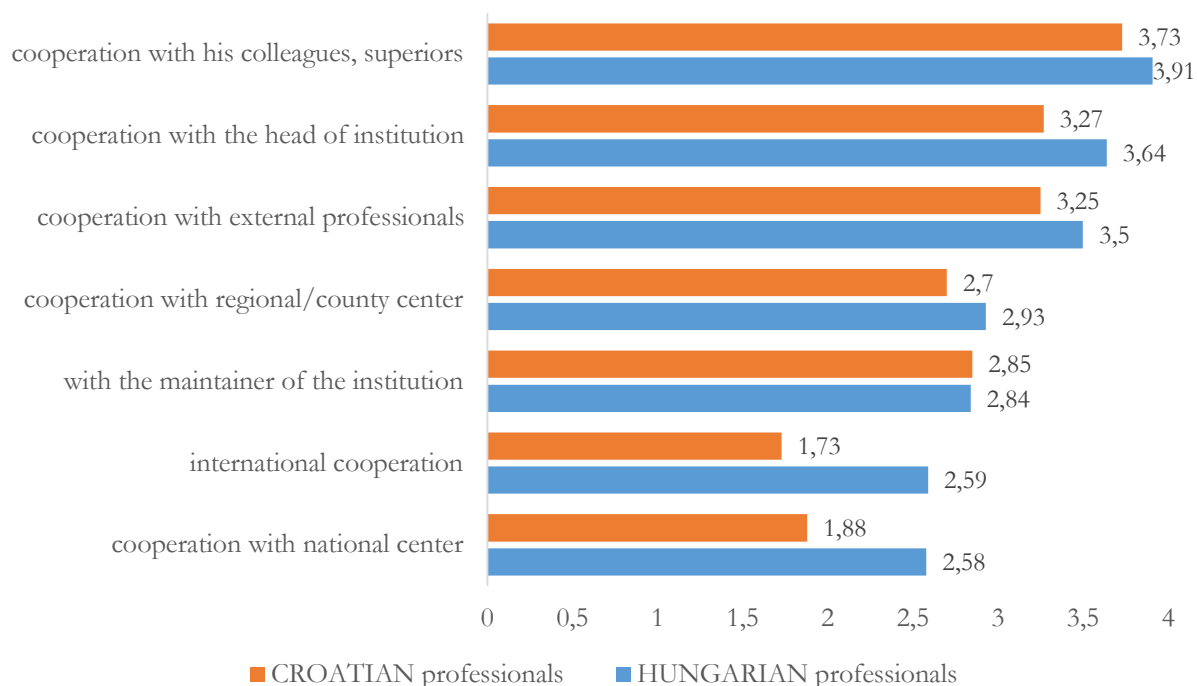
In the course of the research, we examined how professionals think about professional collaborations and what experience they gained in this field. We were asked how important, frequent, and effective it was to work with certain groups within and outside their profession. We also included questions about the conditions, characteristics, facilitating and hindering factors of the cooperation. In the final report, we present the basic directions of the opinions of the professionals in a general way, according to the average values and according to the individual response categories.¹²

IV.1 Importance and frequency of cooperation

The importance of cooperation was rated by the respondents from 1 to 4 per professional group. Taking the mean values into account, it can be established in general that the Hungarian and Croatian professionals interviewed consider professional cooperation **important** (Figure 5). Unsurprisingly, the greatest support is given to cooperation with direct colleagues and superiors within the organization: the Hungarian mean is 3.91 and the Croatian mean is 3.73.

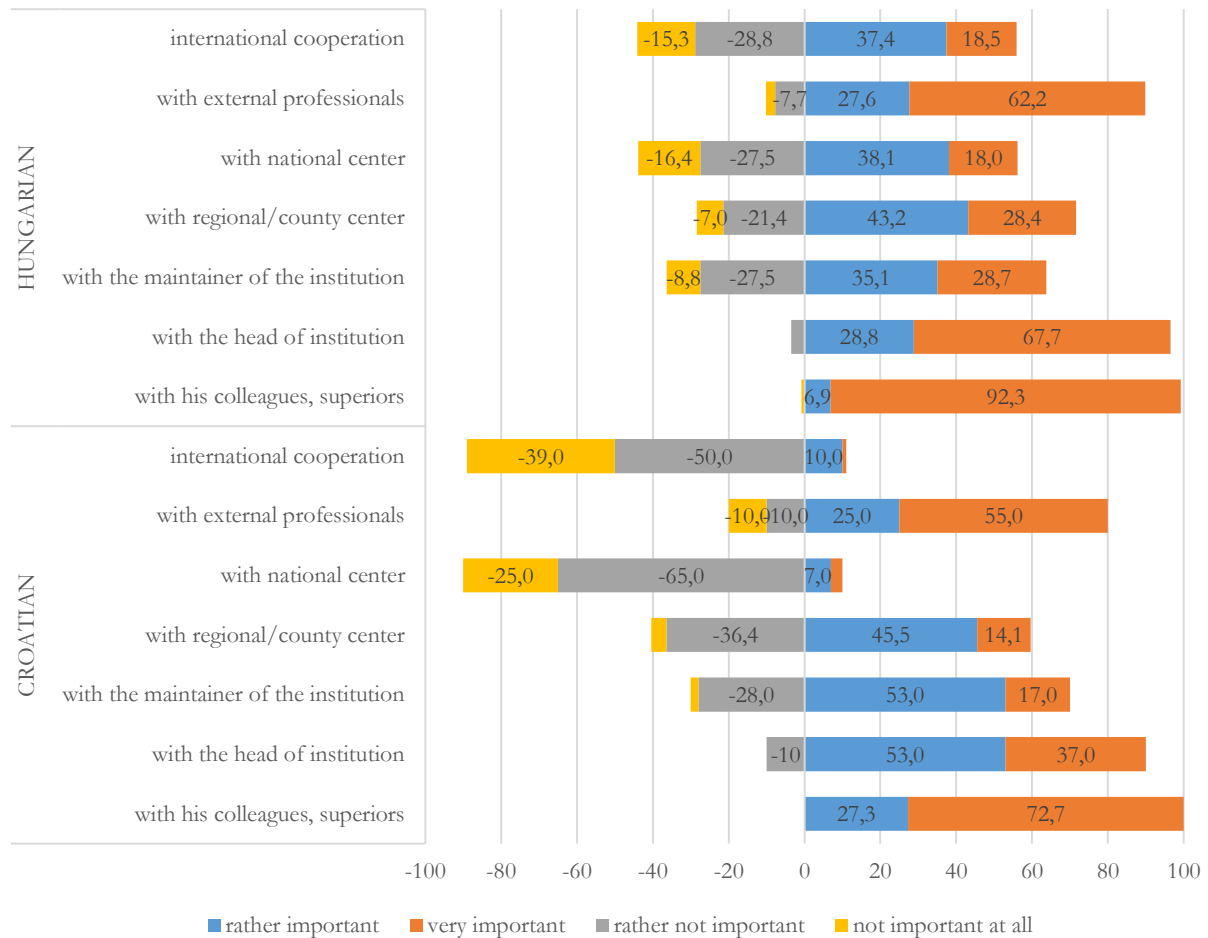
¹² The answers are analysed in a more nuanced approach and in more detail by two studies in the volume (Perpék, Szászvai-Papp 2020a, 2020b).

Figure 5 How important are the following professional relationships and collaborations in your work? (means, 1 = not at all important, 4 = very important, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



In the order of preference, the head of the institution is in second place (the Hungarian mean is 3.64, the Croatian is 3.27). In accordance with the standards of the literature, experts also consider it desirable to cooperate with representatives of other professions (the Hungarian mean is 3.5, the Croatian mean is 3.25). Professionals attribute slightly less importance to the cooperation with the higher levels and institutional centers of their profession. Collaboration with the national center and support for international relations are approx. at the same level and is the lowest of the institutions and actors listed. In this respect, the Hungarian answers tend to be more favourable (mean: 2.58 and 2.59), while the Croatian answers tend to be in the negative, “not important” range (mean: 1.73 and 1.88).

Figure 6 In your work, how important do you consider the following professional contacts and collaborations to be? (%), N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



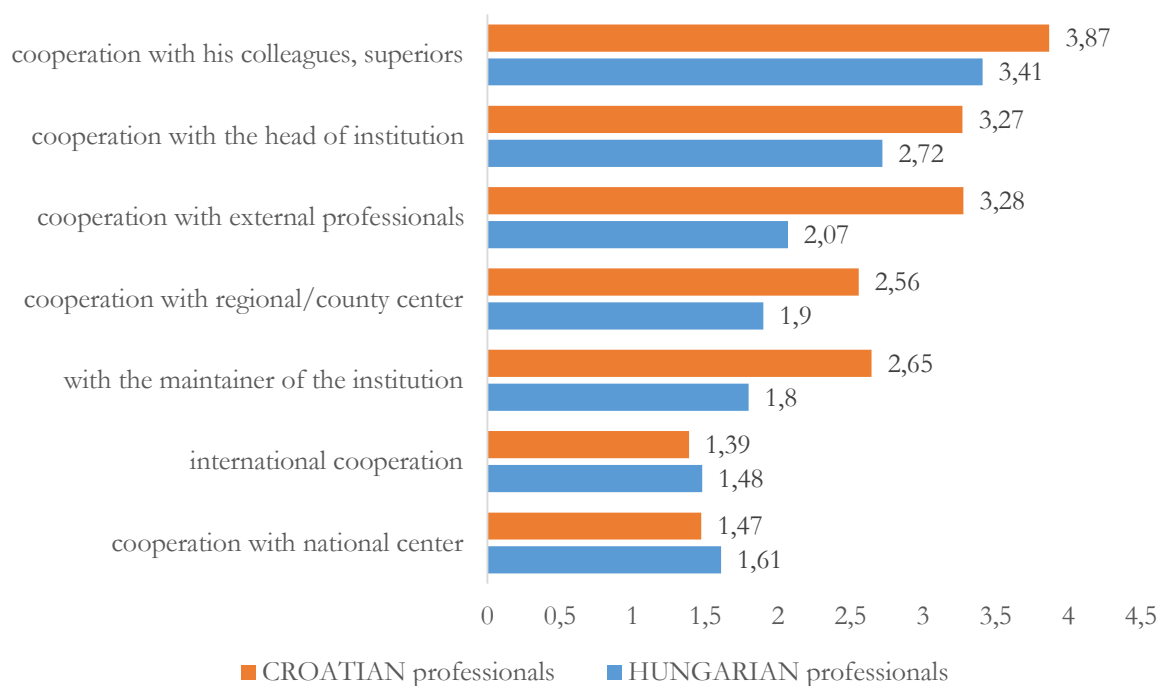
Based on the four-point scale, more than 90% of Hungarian respondents consider contact with direct colleagues and supervisors to be very important (Figure 6). The same proportion is significantly lower for heads of institutions (67.7%) and “rather important” is 28.8%. There is a similar set of proportions for the representatives of other professions (62.2 and 27.6% respectively). The opinion of Croatian professionals is similar to that of Hungarians, but regarding the importance of direct co-workers, in addition to “very important” (72.7%), a higher proportion of “rather important” answers were received (27.3%). In the case of heads of institutions, “rather important” responses clearly dominate, representing a rate of 53%.

Based on the results, it can be concluded for the professionals of both countries that in addition to the proximity in the professional hierarchy, the proximity to the representatives of other professions is also of paramount importance for the cooperation. Regarding levels far from the respondents, opinions are no longer so uniform. As far as the Hungarian respondents are concerned, the combined proportion of those who consider the cooperation with the national

center or international cooperation to be less important or not important at all is 44%, and the remaining 56% can mean support based on principle rather than practical experience. In the case of Croatian professionals, the combined rate of responses in the negative range is much higher, i.e. 90%.

In addition to the importance of professional cooperation, we also asked how **frequent** professional cooperation was with the actors listed above¹³ (Figure 7). Based on the mean of the Hungarian and Croatian answers to the question, the results meet the preliminary expectations, because as the circle of professional actors expands, as the professional distances from each position increase, the frequency and closeness of the relationship decreases. Taking all four response categories into account, the conclusions drawn regarding the importance of cooperation are partly confirmed by the frequency responses.

Figure 7 How common are the following professional contacts and collaborations in the course of your work? (means, 1 = very rare, 4 = very common, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)

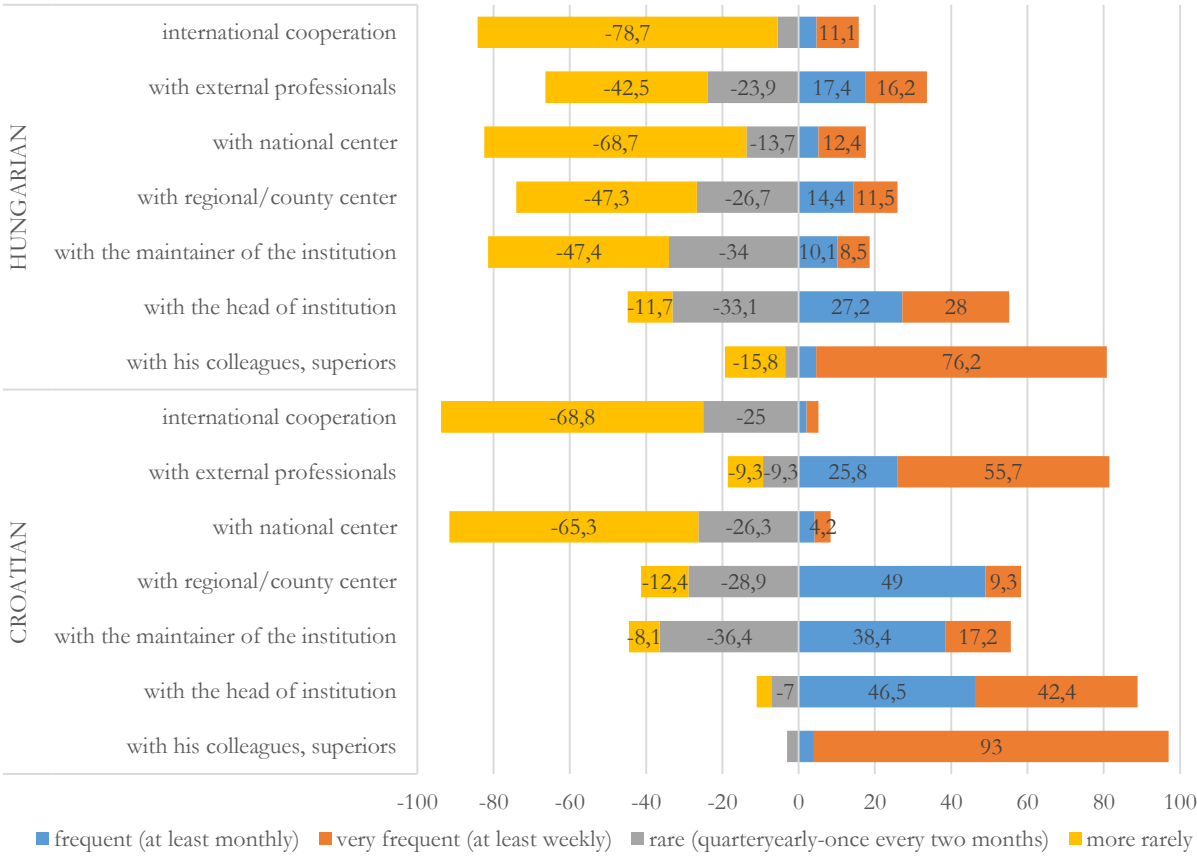


The embeddedness of Hungarian and Croatian professionals in the professional milieu differs. In Hungary, the close (frequent and very common) relationship with direct co-workers and supervisors characterizes the respondents in a large proportion (80%) (Figure 8). Viewing this piece

¹³ The question was the following: “How often are you involved in professional cooperation with the following actors in the course of your work? By cooperation we mean professional consultations, (case) discussions, alerting or other meetings.”

of data from another point of view: one-fifth of the respondents cooperate with their colleagues or superior once every two months or less. And two-thirds meet the representatives of other professions or take part in professional consultations only once every two months or less. For district / county centers, this ratio is even higher at three-quarters. From the data received, it can be concluded that a non-negligible proportion of respondents do their work alone, isolated from internal and external relationships.

Figure 8 How common are the following professional contacts and collaborations during your work? (% , N_{HUNGARIAN}=233-260, N_{CROATIAN}=95-100)



Unlike Hungarians, Croatian professionals typically do their work embedded in social relationships. 93 out of 100 meet their direct colleagues, their superiors, at least once a week. Compared to their Hungarian colleagues, meetings with the head of the institution are also more frequent, 42 out of 100 meet him at least weekly, and another 46 meet him at least monthly. Contacts with representatives of other professions are also close and frequent, with 54% reporting at least weekly and a further 25% meet with stakeholders at least monthly.

If the answers about the importance and frequency of the cooperation are placed juxtaposition, it is evident that the Hungarian professionals consider it necessary to cooperate more closely than

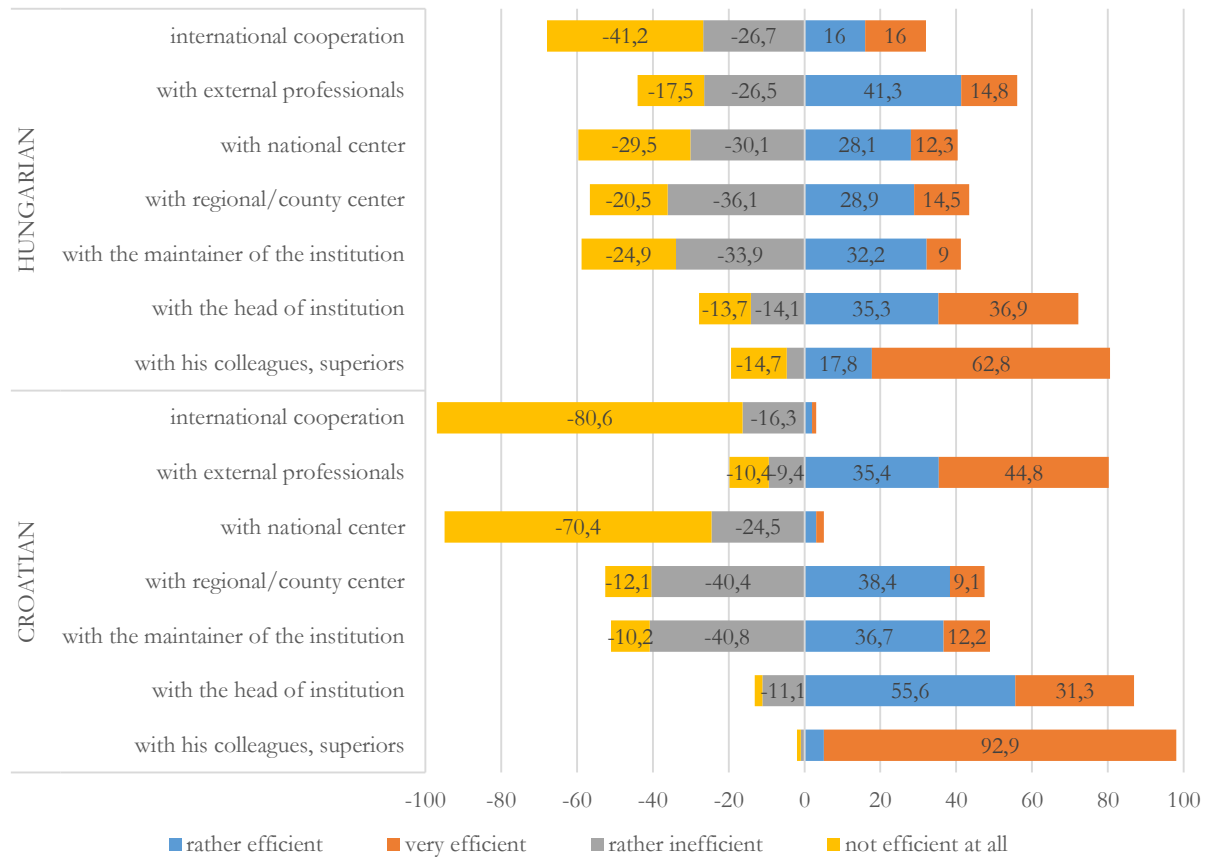
they have experienced. This is true for all the professionals listed, but especially for those in other professions. There is no such significant difference seen for Croatian professionals. (For more information, see Perpék, Szászvai-Papp 2020a)

IV.2 Efficiency of cooperation

Assessing the efficiency of collaboration shows similar response patterns to that of for frequency. It is evident from the Hungarian data that professional cooperation with direct co-workers and the superior, as well as with the head of the institution, is considered efficient (in the former case the proportion of “rather efficient” and “very efficient” answers is 80% and in the latter case 72%). Of the other segments, this is only approached by the opinion on cooperation with representatives of other professions (56%). In the other cases, opinions typically fall into the negative range. At the same time, it should be noted that, in the Hungarian sample, the proportion of those giving valid answers regarding cooperation with distant areas in terms of proximity and hierarchy level decreases significantly with the increase of the distance (Figure 9).

Figure 9 Perception of the efficiency of cooperation

(%, N_{HUNGARIAN}=131-258, N_{CROATIAN}=96-99)



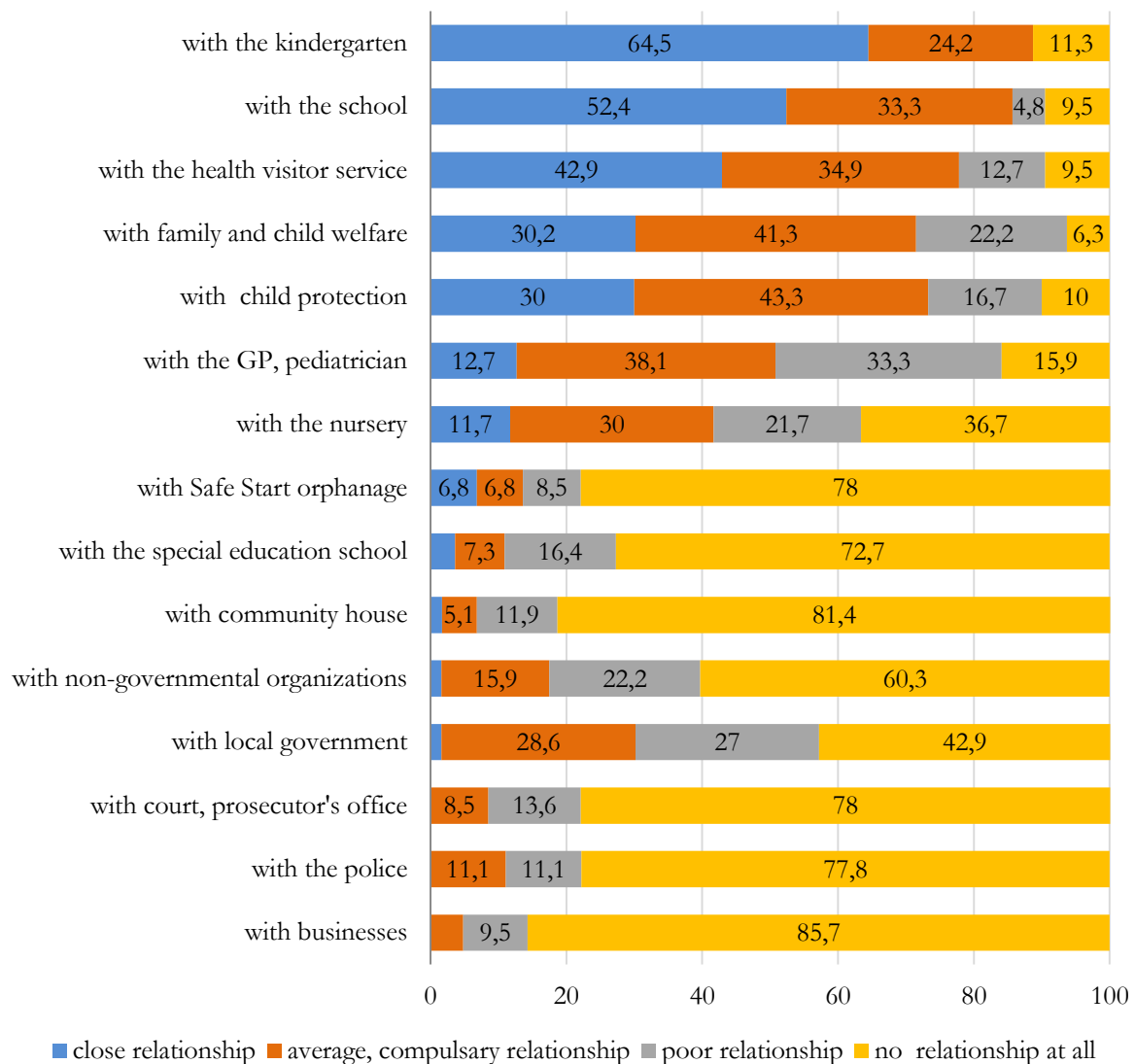
Croatian professionals' attitude to the professional environment around them is similar to that of their Hungarian counterparts, but they are even more remarkably positive about it. Professional consultations and meetings with direct co-workers were almost without exception described as "very effective". The same opinion regarding the head of the institution is only 31.3%, but together with the "rather effective" answers it is also clearly in the positive range (86.9%). The assessment of the effectiveness of consultations with representatives of other professions lags behind the former just a little bit, as a total of 80.2% of them considered them to be at least effective. An interesting difference is that the Croatian respondents, unlike the Hungarians, did not leave any of the answer options blank, i.e. they even rated the relations with the actors distant from them, classifying them as unproductive, similarly to their Hungarian colleagues.

IV.3 Cooperation with external -professional actors

In order to make interprofessional collaboration measurable, the professionals involved were asked to characterize their relationships with some institutions (Figure 10). This question can be related to the answers given to the item “domestic cooperation with representatives of other professions” in the series of questions on the frequency of cooperation, in fact it is the exploration of them.

The relationship with the bodies and institutions listed can, of course, only be assessed in detail from a specific point of view, depending on the respondent's place of work. Thus, the answers are presented in terms of the three professional groups - family and child welfare, child protection, pedagogical professional service. It should be noted at the outset that in the case of the answer categories to the question, only order is the organizing principle, the individual categories cannot be compared in a quantitative sense, and the closeness of professional relations is not specified in detail. It is also an important addition that different areas of work are bound by different procedures and regulations, and professional relationships and collaborations can be freely chosen only partially. This makes the comparison of the results by occupational groups limited.

Figure 10 How do you consider your professional relations with the following external - professional actors? Respondents: employees of the pedagogical professional service (% , N_{HUNGARIAN}=60)



Most close relationships were reported by family and child welfare center/service staff with the listed institutions. In their opinion, they cooperate the most with child protection: 59.3% reported close relations with them. They are also characterized by strong cooperation with the health visitor service (53.2%) and a significant but slightly weaker relationship with the schools (46.8%). In comparison, based on our data, the pedagogical professional service is considered to be a moderately embedded field. Obviously, they co-operate most intensively with public educational institutions, with special regard to kindergartens. The relationship between the pedagogical professional service and the kindergartens is the strongest in terms of the institutions listed in the questionnaire. More than half of those working in the pedagogical professional service indicated a close connection with the schools, and 42.9% also indicated a close connection with the health

visitor service. It should be noted, however, that overall, there was a relatively serious lack of cooperation with all external professional actors.

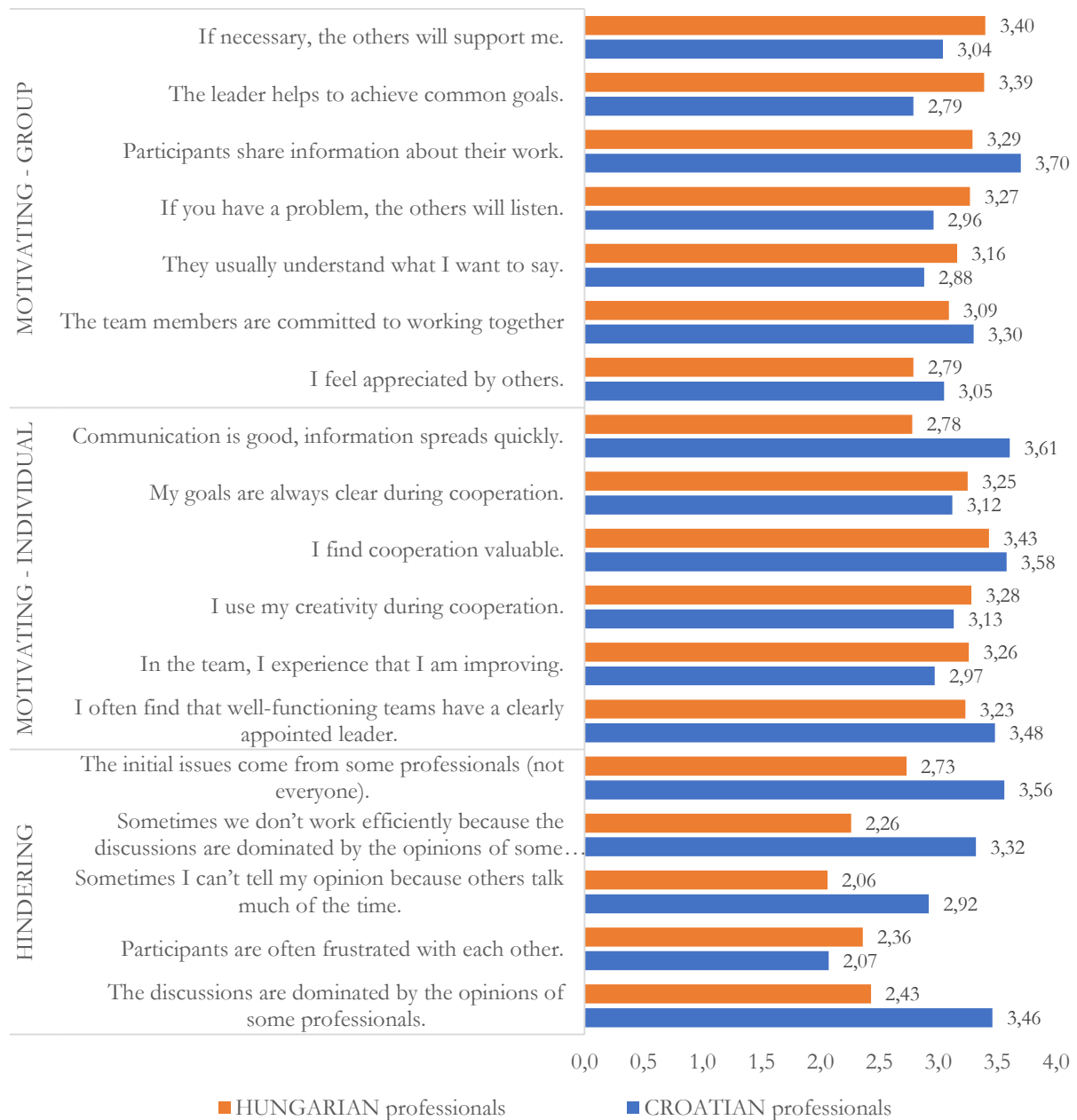
The greatest lack of contact and the least close contact were measured among the staff of the child protection center and professional service. This result is interesting in light of the fact that when all responses are considered regardless of workplace, most close relationships are directed toward child protection. There can be several explanations for this (e.g. different perceptions of professionals about the closeness of the relationship, different content of the relationships, selection effect, etc.). In the course of subsequent research, it is worth further developing the measurement and the measuring instrument based on these experiences.

In the research, we also aimed to survey the conditions, support, facilitating and hindering factors of external professional collaborations. To this end, respondents rated a total of 27 statements on a scale of 1 to 4 in two sets of questions based on international research history.

The 18 statements of the first block of questions are illustrated broken down into the factors hindering and facilitating cooperation between the professions, within the latter highlighting the individual-group aspect (Figure 11). It is clear that Croatian professionals have (also) gained more critical and/or negative experiences of interprofessional collaborations: they perceive most of the statements emphasizing obstacles to collaboration to be largely true. In the case of the facilitation, the difference between the opinions of Hungarian and Croatian experts is less remarkable (bearing in mind the fact that the Hungarian values are somewhat higher for most of the statements): based on the average values, the response “rather typical” is decisive. A significant difference is that Croatian professionals value the benefits of cooperation related to the flow of information higher than their Hungarian counterparts, who, in turn, feel that the element of social support to be typical.

Figure 11 Factors facilitating and hindering external professional cooperation

(means, 1 = not at all, 4 = very typical, N_{HUNGARIAN}=225-250, N_{CROATIAN}=99-100)



With the second set of 9 statements, we also surveyed the motivational factors of interprofessional cooperation, which are external to the respondent. Within this, on the one hand, we asked questions related to the normative support of the workplace and the needs and expectations expressed from the clients, and on the other hand, to judge the perception of the obstacles to interprofessional cooperation.¹⁴ Two additional questions relate to work-related knowledge and responsibilities, partly from the perspective of other professionals and partly from their own

¹⁴ For the specific statements, see Perpék, Szászvai-Papp (2020b).

perspective. The data show that there is a strong expectation for interprofessional co-operation by the workplaces and it is supported in both countries. Interestingly, based on the responses, such an expectation is less perceptible from the side of clients/recipients of care. Professionals in both countries face similar obstacles to interprofessional cooperation. Obstacles to co-operation are felt more strongly by Croatian respondents based on mean values, especially in terms of lack of time, excessive workload and lack of trust.

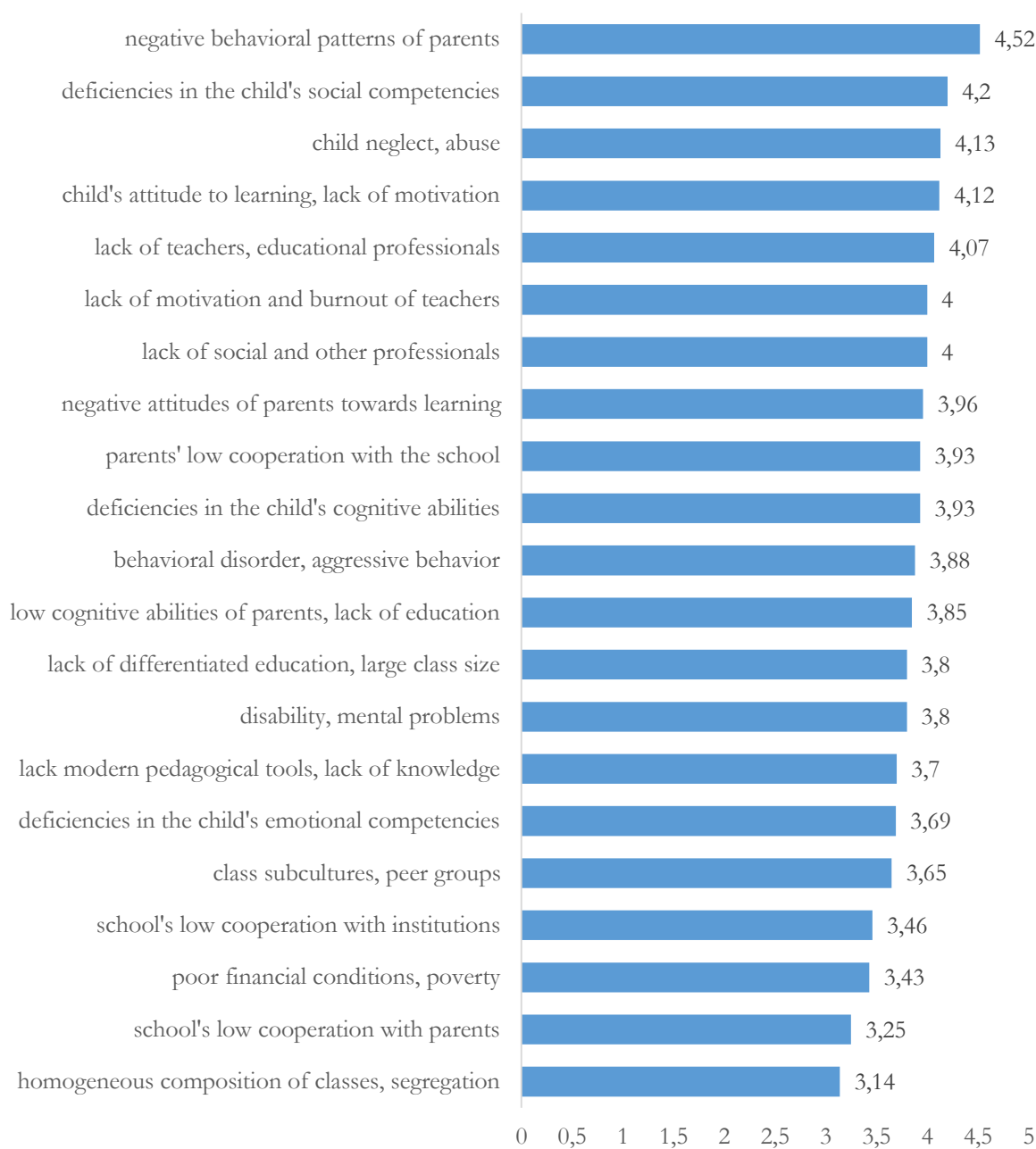
V. Causes and means of compensating for disadvantages in the field of education

In our analyses of disadvantages in the field of education, we focused on two major topics. Some of the questions were related to the causes of the disadvantages, and the second group of questions were related to the means of compensation, and we asked the respondents to rank the listed reasons according to their importance and the means according to their efficiency. We were also interested in the extent to which respondents are involved in work in out-of-school compensation institutions and how they assess the quality of relationships. Where possible, we also analysed through comparing the Hungarian and Croatian responses.

V.1 Causes of disadvantages

According to the majority of Hungarian professionals, the starting point of educational disadvantage should be sought among family factors, in the behavioural patterns of parents (Figure 12). In addition, the child's attitude, motivation, and lack of social competencies are seen as the main problem. The role of child neglect and abuse was given values, but the lack of teachers, social and special education professionals, and the low motivation and burnout of teachers are also important. In contrast, for example, the lack of differentiated education and the large number of classes, the shortcomings of teachers' methodological tools, or the subcultural effects within the classroom/school were not considered to be very important. These results differ in several respects from the findings in the literature whereby the selective school system, and consequently teacher selection, methodological deficiencies, and subcultural influences, play a major role in children's school success and progress. Surprisingly, poverty was also ranked among the last ones in the Hungarian sample, while Croatian professionals ranked it first.

Figure 12 Assessing the reasons leading to the development of disadvantages in the field of education based on the opinion of Hungarian professionals (means up to 1-5, N = 261)



Croatian professionals rate the child's attitude toward learning and low motivation as similarly important, however, they also consider deficiencies in children's emotional competencies, as well as behavioural disorders and aggressive behaviour, to be of paramount importance (Figure 13). There are also big differences in the system-level characteristics of education and the quality of education; in the Croatian sample the perception of these factors was much more favourable than in the Hungarian one.

Figure 13 Assessing the reasons leading to the development of disadvantages in the field of education based on the opinion of Croatian professionals (means up to 1-5, N = 100)



When interpreting the importance of the reasons, we also analysed the **Hungarian** data based on where the respondents work. Although there are differences between the groups of professionals, overall, the responses show a surprisingly high degree of consistency. In each group, the negative behavioural patterns and educational principles of the parents come first, and then the deficiencies of the child's social competencies, neglect and abuse of the child, the child's low learning motivation, and the lack of teachers and educators are mentioned in varying order. (Table 2)

Table 2 Reasons marked as important or very important by Hungarian groups of professionals (above 4 average points)

	family and child welfare center or service	child protection center or professional service	pedagogical professional service
negative behavioural patterns, child-raising principles of parents	√	√	√
deficiencies in the child's social competencies	√	√	√
child neglect, abuse	√	√	√
the child's attitude to learning, lack of motivation	√	√	x
lack of social, special education and other professionals	x	√	√
lack of teachers, educational professionals	x	√	√
lack of motivation and burnout of teachers	√	x	√
lack of differentiated education, large class size	x	x	√
low willingness of parents to cooperate with the school, teachers	x	x	√
low cognitive abilities of parents, lack of education	x	√	x
negative attitudes of parents to learning	√	x	x

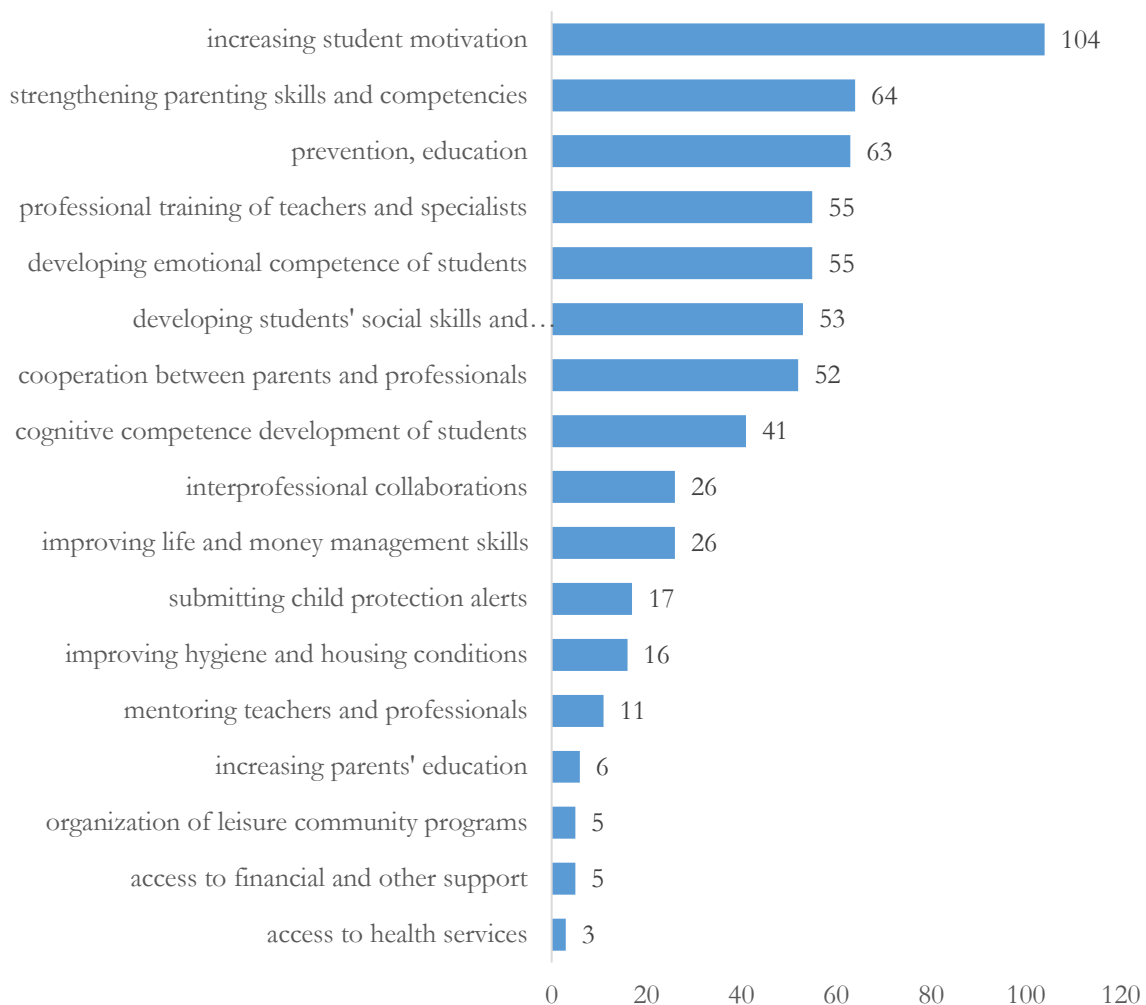
Despite the significant similarities, it can be emphasized that the staff of the pedagogical professional service criticise of the education system and the cooperation between the education system and the family more harshly, while the staff of the family and child welfare center and services and child protection professionals highlighted problems related to socialisation. Obviously, these differences also stem from the different roles of professionals and the different nature of the problems they deal with.

If the factors listed are analysed further, it becomes evident from the absolute means that there are three factors that professionals consider to be very important for the development of educational disadvantages, regardless of the employer or field of activity. These are “negative behavioural patterns of parents, principles of raising-up a child”, “deficiencies in the child’s social competencies”, and “child neglect, abuse”. In addition, there are four reasons that at least two groups of professionals considered to be very important: “child’s attitude to learning, lack of motivation”, “lack of social, developmental and other professionals”, “lack of teachers, educators” and “lack of motivation of teachers”. It can be seen a strong criticism is voiced here regarding the lack of professionals and their motivation.

V.2 Ranking of the means of compensation

During the analysis of the means of educational disadvantage compensation, we found that most of the **Hungarian** professionals emphasize student motivation, then parental competencies, prevention and information. This is followed by the training of professionals and teachers, as well as the development of students' emotional and social competencies. Thus, while the negative behaviour of parents stands out among the factors playing a role in the development of disadvantages, the leading means of intervention are not the motivating tool for the parents, but for the children, although the increase of parental competencies come as close second. An examination of the means of intervention confirms that the majority of professionals do not consider tools to increase the cultural capital of the family, such as raising the educational level of parents, to be a really effective tool (Figure 14).

Figure 14 Please select the three activities below that you think can best improve children's school success and rank them! (total number of mentions based on the first three places, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261)

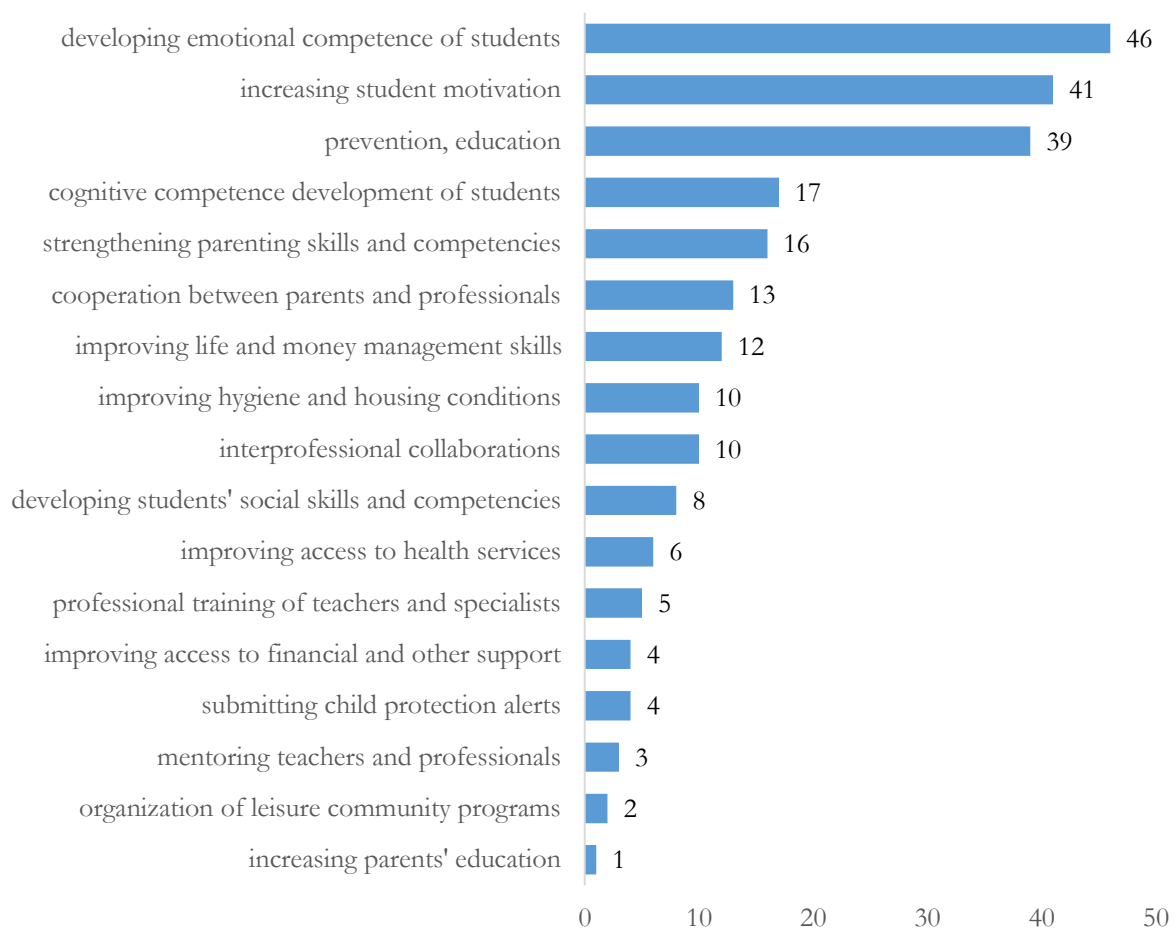


The most frequently performed disadvantage compensation by **Hungarian** professionals is the provision of child protection¹⁵ alerts and the increase of student motivation, which are included in the responsibilities of more than two thirds of the respondents. In addition, more than half of them take part in organizing cooperation between parents and professionals, as well as interprofessional cooperation, in prevention and awareness-raising activities, in activities to strengthen parental skills and competences, and in activities aimed at developing students' emotional competencies.

¹⁵ Those activities are listed here that are typically performed by social professionals and that can be directly or indirectly linked to disadvantage compensation. Although the submission of child protection alerts was also on the list, and this came out as the most common activity, experts ranked it quite low in the order of importance of compensation measures.

When judging the efficiency of the means for compensating disadvantages, the **Croatian** professionals mentioned in the first three places the development of students' emotional competence, increasing their motivation and the means of prevention and information in the largest number (Figure 15). Of the tools presented above, they use the highest proportion of increasing student motivation, delivering child protection alerts, and developing students' emotional, social, and cognitive competencies (many more respondents mentioned these than Hungarian professionals interviewed as a whole). Participation in organizing interprofessional cooperation and cooperation with parents is more common among Hungarian professionals.

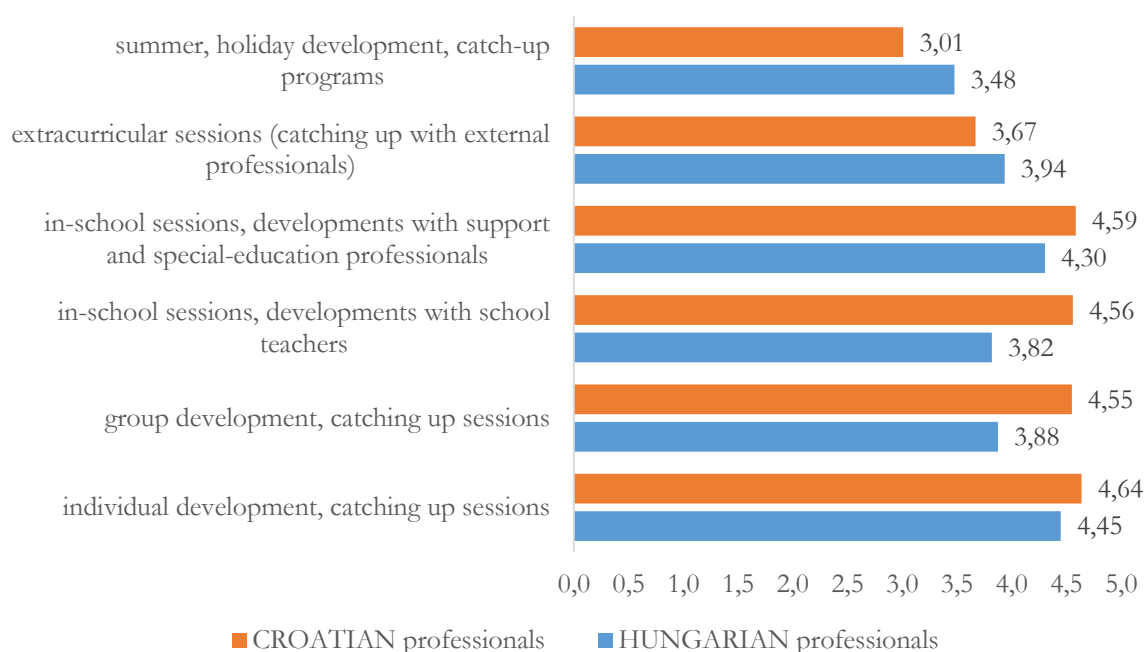
Figure 15 Please select the three activities below that you think can best improve children's school success and rank them! (total number of mentions based on the first three places, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



V.3 Forms and institutions of compensation

Of the disadvantage compensation methods, the **Hungarian** professionals consider individual development to be the most effective, while the one formed from group sessions is less positive (Figure 16). In-school sessions are judged better when done by special education professionals, however, teachers' activities in this direction have been rated as much less effective. This is also preceded by catching up with external professionals outside the school. The lowest score was given to the summer, holiday developments.

Figure 16 How efficient do you consider the following methods to be in compensating for educational disadvantage? (Scale 1-5, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



Among **Croatian** professionals, in-school disadvantage compensation sessions are rated more favourably than out-of-school developments, and individual development was also rated better than group development. They don't find the summer, holiday catch-up really effective either.

Of the various educational institutions, as well as extracurricular institutions established specifically for the purpose of compensating disadvantage, kindergartens and after-school clubs were given the highest rates in the **Hungarian** sample, while the school is only in the third place, but none of the listed institutions received a good rating. Interestingly, the respondents did not value their own workplace in this field either, with the exception of the staff of the educational service.

Contrary to Hungarian data, **Croatian experts** rate the school as the best in terms of disadvantage compensation, while extracurricular institutions follow only after school. It is also instructive that

in the Croatian sample (mostly) it was the school that received only a “good” rating, while out-of-school institutions only received a “medium” rating. This suggests that, according to the experts interviewed, Croatian schools are more successful in compensating for family disadvantages than Hungarian schools.

VI. Opinions on the conditions and difficulties of professional work

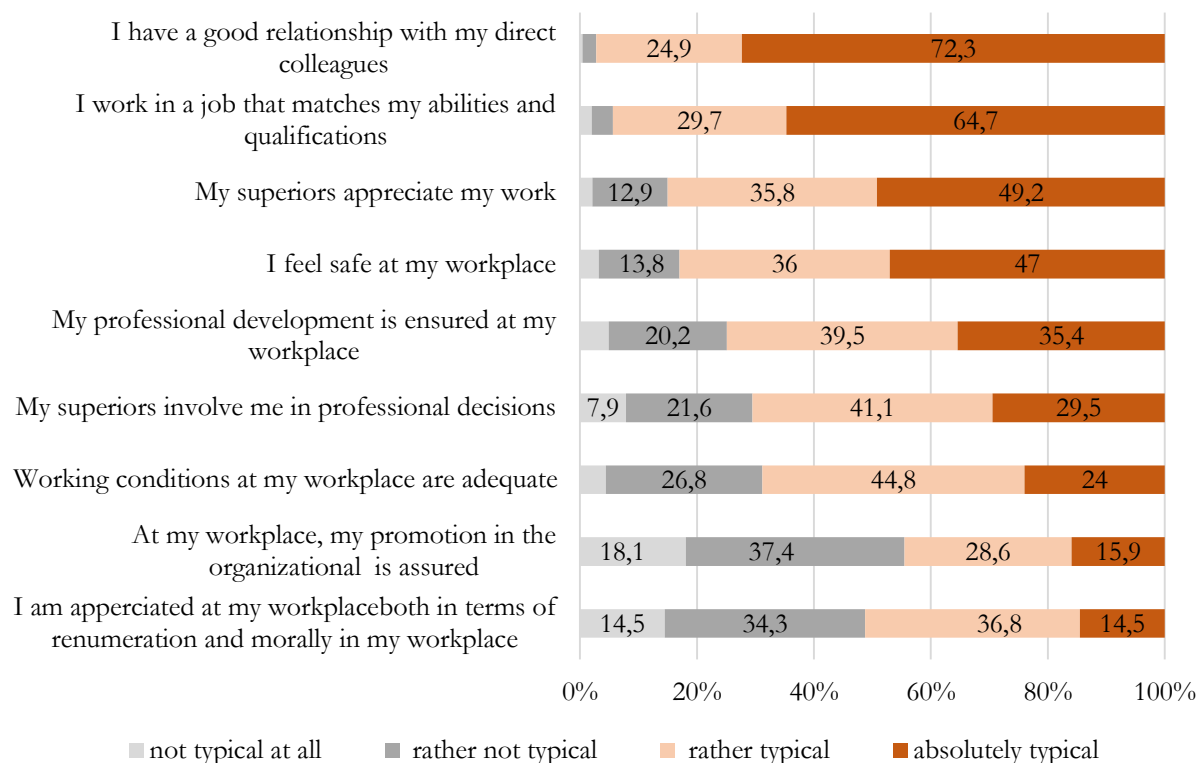
The next part of our research revealed on the one hand how satisfied the interviewed Hungarian and Croatian professionals are with the “resources” available at their workplace, i.e. the working conditions that can facilitate their professional well-being, on the other hand the factors complicating professional work and we also examined the emotional-physical-mental strain of professionals. In the final report, we present the opinions of the experts through the dimensions reviewed by means of descriptive statistics.¹⁶

VI.1 Conditions of professional work

In the section of the questionnaire exploring job characteristics, respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with a specific factor on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 - not at all; 4 - completely). Our results reflect that the assessment of the indicators at the beginning and end of the job and organizational satisfaction ranking is very similar among Hungarian and Croatian professionals (Figures 17 and 18). Both Hungarian and Croatian professionals are the most satisfied with their collegial relationships and job responsibilities, while they are the least satisfied with the opportunities for professional advancement (i.e. promotion within the organization) and their remuneration and moral esteem. Satisfaction with the physical and infrastructural conditions of work also topped the list in the ranking of Croatian professionals, while the latter is lower in the ranking of their Hungarian counterparts.

¹⁶ The topics examined are analysed in detail in two studies of the volume (Győri 2020a, 2020b).

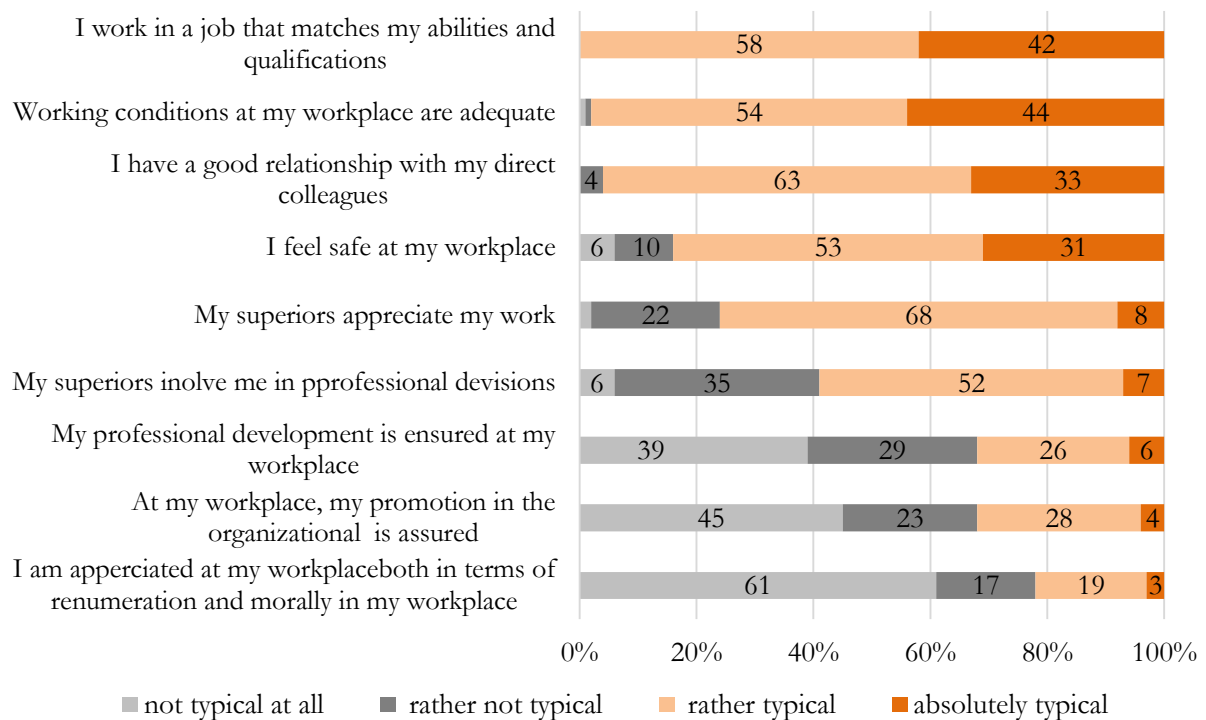
Figure 17 Ranking of satisfaction attitudes towards certain elements of working conditions among Hungarian professionals (% , N=261)



An additive index, “job satisfaction” indicator was created from the job satisfaction variables examined, (cf. Győri 2020a), the mean of which was 3.06 (standard deviation: 0.568) in the Hungarian sample and 3.11 (standard deviation: 0.496) in the Croatian sample. This reflects the fact that Croatian colleagues are somewhat more satisfied with their professional working conditions than Hungarian professionals.

As far as the Hungarian results are concerned, job satisfaction is closely related to the work area): the staff of the pedagogical professional service is the most satisfied with their workplace (mean: 3.23), and the professionals working in the field of family and child welfare are the least (mean: 2.82)

Figure 18 Ranking of satisfaction attitudes towards certain elements of working conditions among Croatian professionals (% , N = 100)

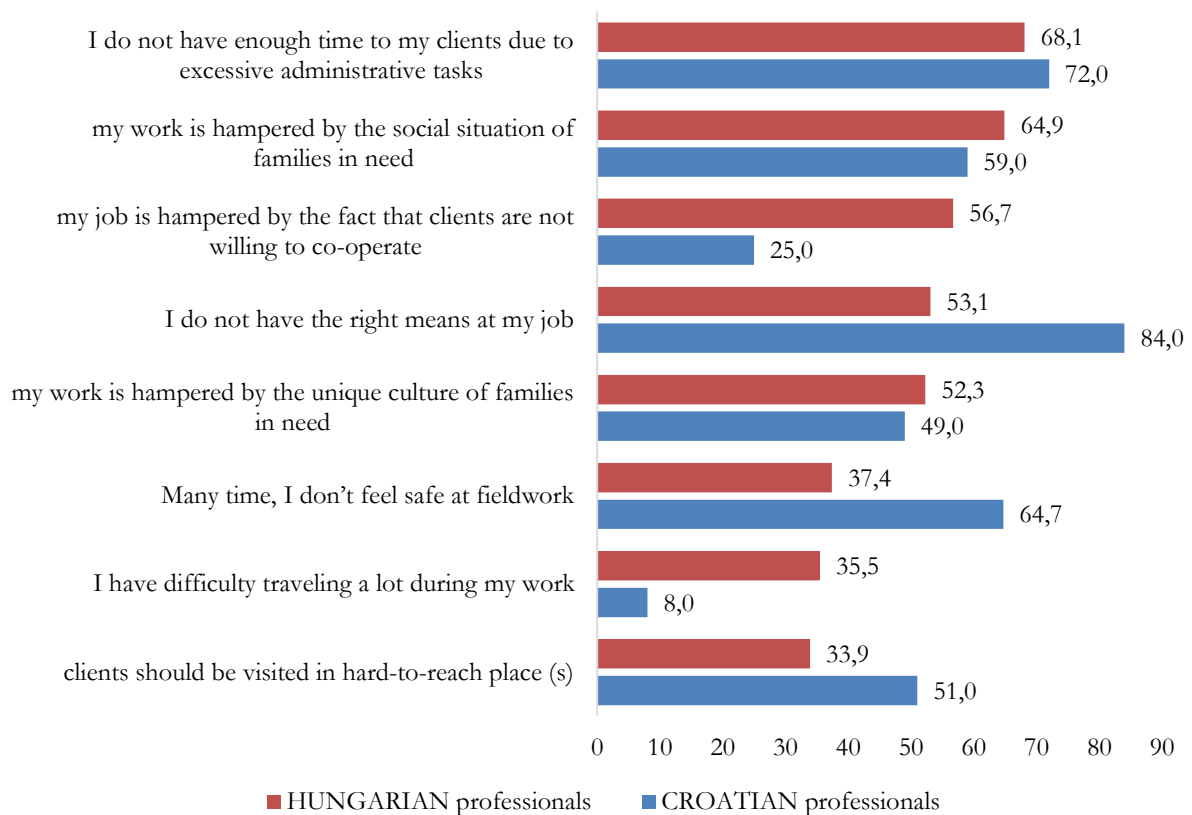


VI.2 Difficulties with professional work

In addition to satisfaction attitudes related to workplace factors, the difficulties of professional work were also examined. In the relevant part of the questionnaire, respondents were able to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 the extent to which a specific factor complicates their work. Figure 19 illustrates the most common difficulties (common and very common response categories combined) in the two samples.

According to the Hungarian respondents, professional work is mostly hampered by too many administrations, but the lack of cooperation and social situation of the clients is also a common problem. As far as the means whereby professionals can help clients, they consider them moderate. It is a remarkable result that cultural differences between professionals and families in need also appear among the difficulties. The other problem is related to visiting families receiving care: the lack of a sense of security during fieldwork, the many journeys involved in work and the need to visit clients in places that are often difficult to reach.

Figure 19 The most common difficulties related to professional work among Hungarian and Croatian professionals (% , N_{HUNGARIAN}=245, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



In the order of the factors set up by Croatian professionals, which most often make professional work more difficult, the lack of available resources is in the first place, followed by too much paperwork (which the domestic experts indicated in the first place). It is also a common problem for them that clients do not cooperate and that they often do not feel safe during fieldwork. At the same time, the social situation and different cultures of the families receiving care are not perceived as difficult as their Hungarian counterparts. The issue they perceive as the least problematic is a lot of trips related to their profession, which is very similar to what is experienced in Hungary.

VI.3 Emotional, physical and mental strain

“Dissatisfaction” with working and organizational conditions, as well as stress following work difficulties, can often lead to emotional, physical and mental strain and the development of burnout syndrome. As professionals work intensively and focus on people’s problems, social workers are at high risk for burnout, so we considered it important to map their burnout involvement and the factors influencing it.

To measure burnout, the questionnaire included a block of questions with a few statements exploring three dimensions of burnout, as defined in the literature: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization (impersonal treatment), and reduced personal accomplishment (loss of personal efficiency).

Table 3 shows how the involvement of social and development professionals evolves through each dimension of burnout. Based on our results, emotional exhaustion is the most common among both Hungarian and Croatian professionals: the mean score of emotional symptoms is the highest in both samples. Emotional exhaustion is followed by a decrease in personal performance and impersonal treatment (depersonalization) among Hungarian professionals, while Croatian professionals perceive the least decrease in personal efficiency and emergence of impersonal attitudes and behaviour towards clients a somewhat more frequently than their Hungarian colleagues.

Table 3 Development of some dimensions of burnout among Hungarian and Croatian professionals (means, 1 = not typical at all, 4 = very typical, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)

Dimensions of burnout	Hungarian professionals	Croatian professionals
Emotional exhaustion	3,13	3,79
Depersonalization	2,71	2,91
Professional inefficacy	2,77	2,57

In our research, we also sought to answer the question of whether burnout symptoms affect professionals working in different social work areas to different degrees. Our results indicate significant differences (Table 4): emotional exhaustion and depersonalization affect those working in the field of child protection the most (means: 3.3 and 3.05), while the decrease in personal efficiency received the highest mean value among the staff of the pedagogical professional service (mean: 2.7).

Table 4 Development of some dimensions of burnout by field of work among Hungarian professionals (means, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261)

Dimensions of burnout	Family and child welfare	Child protection	Educational professional service
Emotional exhaustion	3,0	3,3	3,0
Depersonalization	2,7	3,0	2,3
Professional inefficacy	2,0	2,1	2,7

A further aim of our research was to examine which elements of work and organizational factors are most strongly associated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and professional inefficacy.

Our results show¹⁷ that inadequate physical working conditions result in higher emotional exhaustion and less personal performance. It can also be established that social professionals who feel the lack of recognition from their superiors and lack of participation in professional decisions will have a lesser sense of personal efficiency and may behave indifferently with clients. We have also shown that inadequate work organization factors (such as promotion within the organization, lack of professional development, and lack of remuneration/moral esteem) result in professional inefficacy and a decrease in personal sense of efficiency. Another important result is that the problem of job matching is related to the emergence of emotional exhaustion and impersonal treatment: thus, professionals performing job tasks not matching their abilities will be more emotionally exhausted and impersonal treatment may emerge among them.

In summary, it can be highlighted that among the symptoms of burnout, emotional exhaustion is mainly influenced by external (physical, infrastructural) working conditions, and the matching between skills and job tasks also has a somewhat smaller but significant effect. The emergence of impersonal attitudes and behaviours is most strongly enhanced by job responsibilities not matching abilities, as well as a lack of support from a supervisor. Reduced personal accomplishment is mostly influenced by problems related to work organization factors, and inadequate working conditions and the lack of support and feedback from supervisors also have a significant effect. Based on our

¹⁷ For the modelling and methodological background on the impact of workplace factors, see analytical study *Érzelmi, fizikai és mentális megterhelés a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek körében* (Emotional, Physical, and Mental Strain of Social and Special Education Professionals) of the volume (Győri 2020b).

results, workplace embeddedness (collegiality, workplace stability) is not substantially related to any of the symptoms of burnout.

References

Győri Á. (2020a). A szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek vélekedése a szakmai munka körülményeiről (The opinion of social and special education professionals about the conditions of professional work). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, school disadvantage compensation, professional well-being: Results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study) Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Győri Á. (2020b). Érzelmi, fizikai és mentális megterhelés a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek körében (Emotional, physical and mental strain among social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, school disadvantage compensation, professional well-being: Results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020a). Az oktatás területén megnyilvánuló hátrányok okai a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek szemszögéből (The causes of disadvantages in the field of education from the point of view of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, school disadvantage compensation, professional well-being: Results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020b). Az oktatási hátrányok kompenzációjának eszközei a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek olvasatában (Means of compensating for educational disadvantages according to social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, school disadvantage compensation, professional well-being: Results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020a). Vélemények a szociális területet érintő szakmai együttműködés fontosságáról, gyakoriságáról és hatékonyságáról (Opinions on the importance, frequency and effectiveness of professional cooperation in the social field). In: Perpék É. (ed.).

Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, school disadvantage compensation, professional well-being: Results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020b). Szakmák közötti kapcsolatok és együttműködés: a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek percepciói (Interprofessional relations and cooperation: perceptions of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei. (Professional cooperation, school disadvantage compensation, professional well-being: Results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

**OPINIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE, FREQUENCY AND
EFFICIENCY OF PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION**

ÉVA PERPÉK – GÁBOR SZÁSZVAI-PAPP

Introduction

The aim of the study is to present how the Hungarian and Croatian professionals involved in the research relate to interprofessional cooperation. In the analysis, we focus on three aspects of collaboration (importance, frequency, efficiency). The study examines them partly in relation to the different levels and actors of the organizations concerned (direct colleagues and supervisor, head of institution, maintainer of the institution, district/county centre, national centre), and partly with regard to other professionals and international relations.

There are several levels and dimensions of professional cooperation. They include interpersonal, interdisciplinary, inter-service interprofessional cooperation. (Whittington 2003, Budai, Puli 2015) Although intraprofessional and interprofessional collaboration is sometimes surrounded by conflicts and criticism (Widmark et al. 2011, Barrett et al. 2005), both practitioners and research have shown that they are particularly important for professions dealing with vulnerable target groups – i.e. children, the elderly, and the marginalized. (Charles, Alexander 2014, Budai 2009, etc.) In recent years, several laws, regulations and measures in Hungary have been aimed at facilitating the cooperation of professionals working for the benefit of children and their families, and even in a sense enforcing them; with or without providing financial, infrastructural, asset and human resources to establish the cooperation. Despite the environment scarce of resources and suffering from other issues, a complex, interdisciplinary and interprofessional approach to the development and management of children's disadvantages is spreading among professionals in both the social and educational sectors. The topic – with a few exceptions (see e.g. Budai, Puli 2015) – has not been explored through scientific research yet. Thus, our research has little antecedent in this sense.

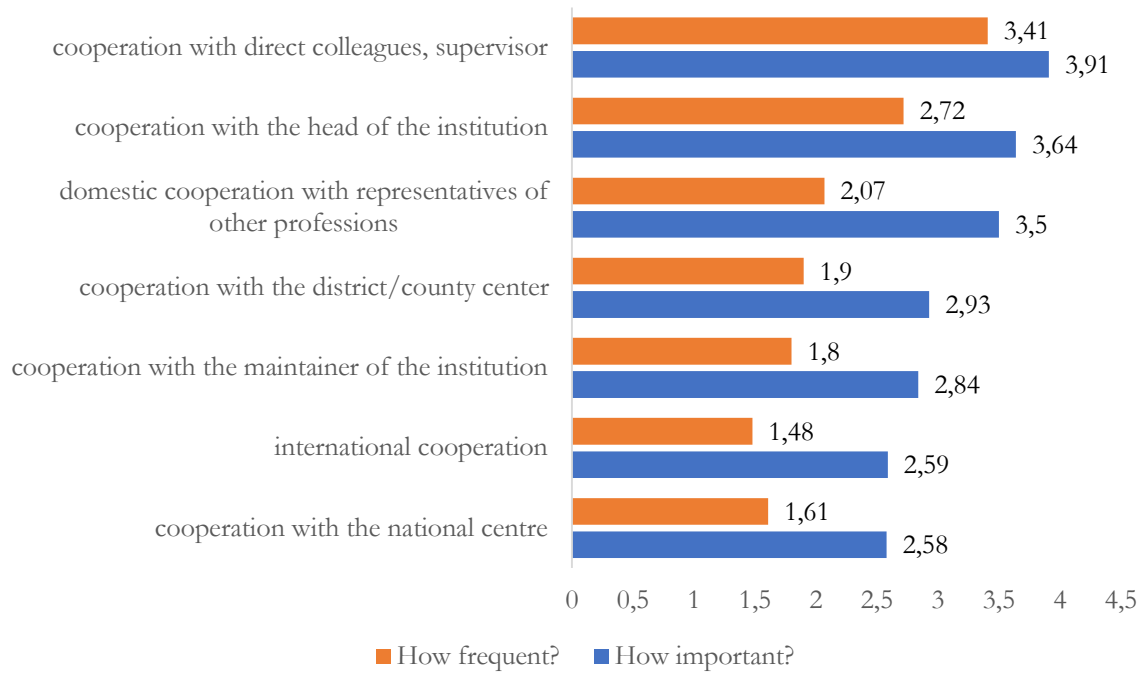
The data the analysis come from an exploratory survey of Hungarian and Croatian professionals. The main target group of the research is the professionals who are directly or indirectly involved in compensating and reducing the educational and other disadvantages of children and their families. The Hungarian data collection took place in Baranya county in 2019 (N=261), while the Croatian data collection took place in Osijek-Baranya county in 2020 (N=100) (for more details, see Perpék et al. 2020). In addition to reviewing professional collaborations, the survey also covered the topics of school disadvantage compensation (Kiss, Vastagh 2020a, 2020b) and professional well-being (Gyóri 2020a, 2020b).

I. Assessing the importance and frequency of cooperation

With regard to the three aspects of interprofessional and intraprofessional cooperation (importance, frequency, efficiency), it should be noted at the outset that the frequency of cooperation differs from the other two aspects in that, despite its seemingly subjective nature, it is more objective, while importance and efficiency depend purely on the subjective judgment of the respondent. This objective-subjective duality cannot be ignored in the evaluation of the results either, as the **frequency** of cooperation does not necessarily depend on the individual perception of the respondent. This is because the respondents are usually professionals at lower levels of the organizational hierarchy concerned, so in their case initiating cooperation towards the same or close levels of the organizational structure (employees, immediate superior, head of institution, representatives of other professions at the same level) could be a real alternative. In contrast, the initiation of national leadership-level and international relations may be more characteristic of higher levels of the hierarchy.

In the case of the **importance** of cooperation, due to the subjective nature, it can be assumed that the “would consider important” element in the responses (expressed as a realistic or unrealistic desire for the future) may be present as well, besides the real, empirical experiences. The **efficiency** of cooperation, on the other hand, may be capable of capturing an opinion expressed purely based on an individual's experience.

Figure 1 In the course of your work, how important/frequent are the following professional contacts and collaborations? (means, 1=not important/common at all, 4=very important/common, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261)

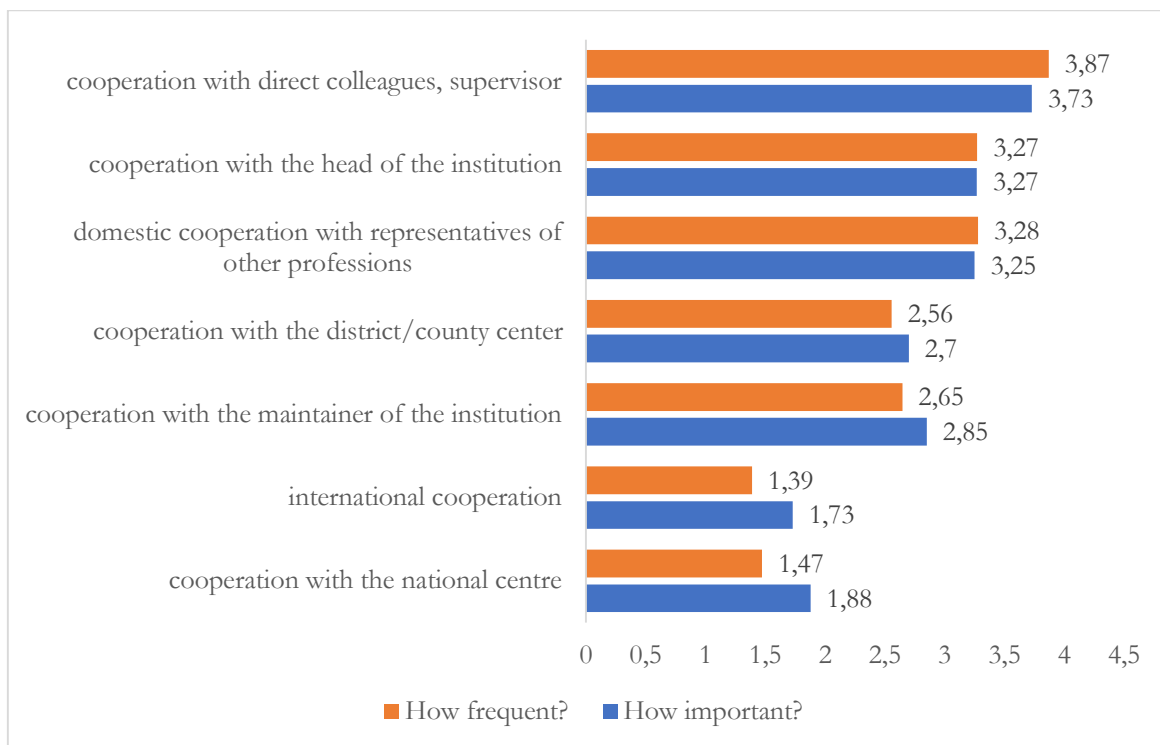


Given the above limitations, we examined how the importance and frequency dimensions relate to each other. The mean values¹⁸ of the **Hungarian** answers ranging from 1 to 4 show that the frequency of professional cooperation realized during the work, without exception, for all professional actors lags behind the level considered desirable by the professionals interviewed (Figure 1). The level of co-operation (in this case: frequency) is the furthest in the field of inter-professional co-operation in Hungary from the level considered important, which is “expected” by professionals. This is followed by international cooperation. There are significant gaps with higher levels of professionalism in the hierarchy (maintainer, district/county centre, national centre, head of institution - in descending order of difference). There is less of a gap in working with direct colleagues and a supervisor, but the difference is also present here. The separation of Hungarian opinions on the importance and frequency of cooperation is supported by the results of both the confirmatory principal component analysis and the cross-tabulation analysis based on indices and pairwise comparisons.

¹⁸ For comparability reasons, responses regarding frequency were transcoded in the opposite direction to the original.

In comparison, this difference is not noticeable among **Croatian** professionals. According to the principal component analysis, the opinion of Croatian experts is significantly more polarized, in contrast to the Hungarian data; the importance-frequency pattern does not emerge among them. In another approach: while the need for cooperation of Croatian professionals seems to be met, there is a significant shortage seen by Hungarian professionals in this field. This is also supported by the examination of the mean values (Figure 2).

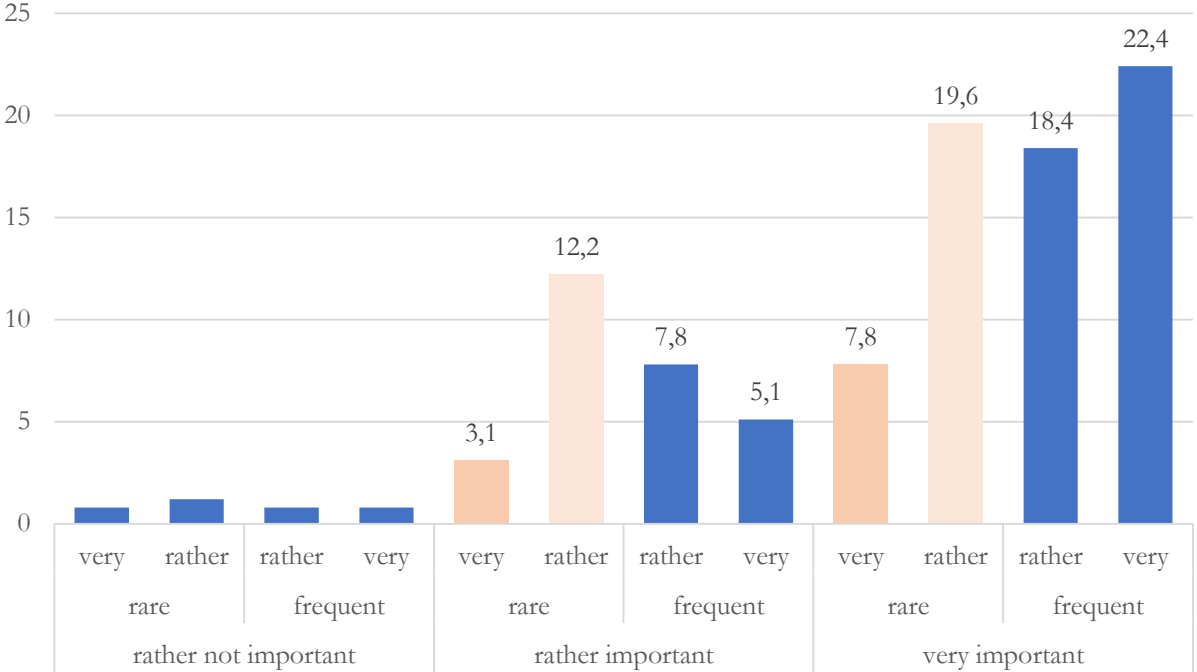
Figure 2 In the course of your work, how important / frequent are the following professional contacts and collaborations? (means, 1=not important at all / common, 4=very important / common, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



Thus, the **Hungarian data** indicate a lack of correlation between the assessment of the importance of cooperation and its practical implementation, and in a sense discrepancy. It is worth examining this phenomenon in more detail. To do this, respondents were categorized based on their responses into the two questions according to whether they perceive a difference in importance and frequency (taking into account its level), and if so, to what extent and respect. The results indicate that almost three-quarters of the respondents consider cooperation with their immediate colleagues and supervisors to be very important and have a particularly close relationship with them. At this level, the discrepancy between importance and frequency is found in much lower proportion, and even then almost exclusively, the emphasis on importance is coupled with rare or very rare actual cooperation.

Regarding the other actors of the cooperation under review, the Hungarian data are much more polarized. Within a large group of those who attach great importance to co-operation with the head of the institution, there are reports of similar proportions (around 20%) of rare, frequent and very frequent meetings (Figure 3). Moving up along the professional hierarchy, belief in the importance of collaboration diminishes, which can also be traced back to less frequent encounters.¹⁹

Figure 3 Perception of the importance and frequency of cooperation with the head of the institution among Hungarian professionals (% , N=255)



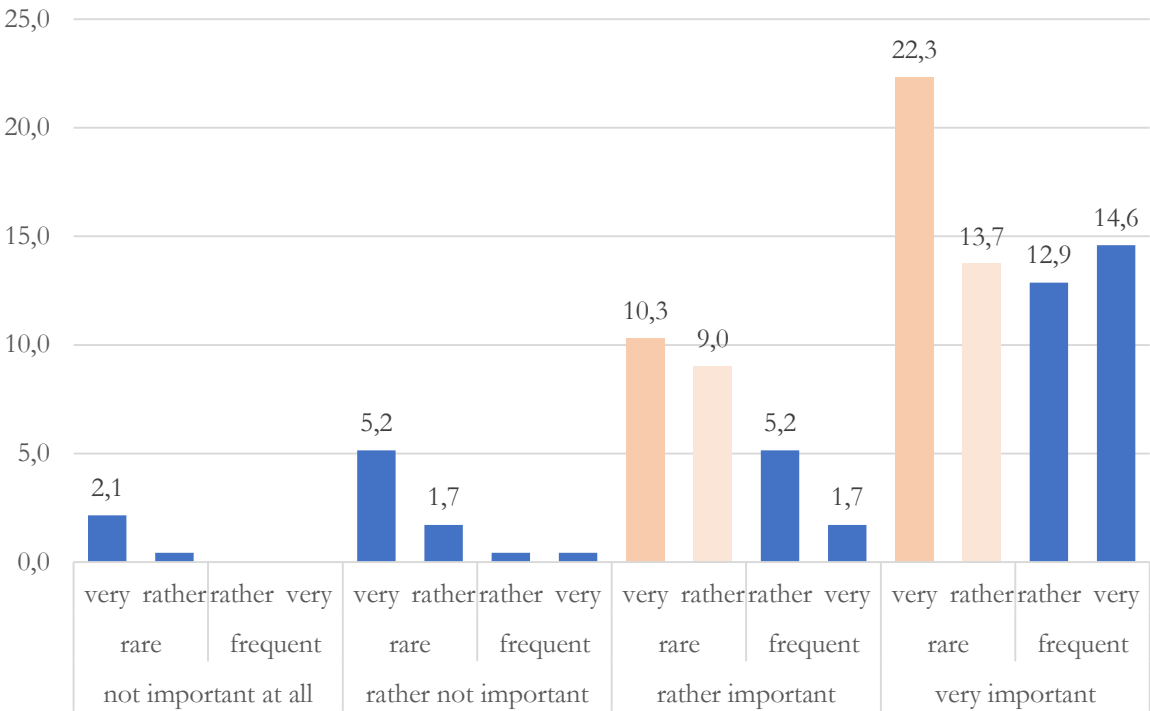
The co-operation with the maintainer of the institution, the district/county centre, the national centre, as well as its international aspect, can be external area to the individual, beyond its own decision-making competencies, i.e. sometimes as an abstract field for Hungarian professionals. In this case, they are based on job-related/top-down relationships. This may manifest in lower - but still relatively high - proportions of those who consider relations to be at least important (60% for the institution maintainer and the district/county centre, around 45% for the national centre and international cooperation), which in most cases characterized by rarity or lack of relationships. Thus, many professionals deem these practically unattainable professional relationships important. As for those at a higher level than the individual, there are those, even if not in significant proportion, who consider such relationships to be not or less important. This is typically associated

¹⁹ Clarifying the direction of the correlation goes beyond the scope of the present study.

with a lack of contacts, only a small proportion of the respondents report more frequent collaborative experiences than that.

As already indicated with regard to the mean values, the cooperation with the representatives of other professions rather belongs to the desired than to the realized (common) category (Figure 4). Two thirds of Hungarian professionals consider relations outside the profession to be especially important, but at the same time the majority of them are those who rarely or very rarely meet those involved.

Figure 4 Perception of the importance and frequency of cooperation with other professions by Hungarian professionals. (% , N=233)



In general, it is true that **Croatian** professionals typically attach less importance to intraprofessional cooperation than their Hungarian colleagues. The only exception to this is the relationship with direct staff and the supervisor, which is also considered very important by the vast majority of Croatian respondents. In their case, however, an isolated group (reporting rare or very rare cooperation) cannot be identified at all in terms of professional meetings. It already appears in terms of cooperation with the heads of institutions (10%), and moving towards higher levels within the organization, the proportion of those who consider cooperation with these actors to be less or not important at all is clearly increasing. By comparison, the proportion of those who express such an opinion is 30% regarding the institution maintainer, 38.5% with regard to the district/county centre, and 86% concerning the national centre. The Croatian data also show a correlation between

the rarity and importance of contacts with these agents: the rarer such professional experience is, the less important the cooperation with the professionals concerned is regarded. This relationship is particularly remarkable in terms of national centres and international relations.

Cooperation with representatives of other professions regarding their direct colleagues is perceived positively by Croatian professionals, as well as by Hungarians. A large proportion of them consider professional consultations, discussions or other meetings to be important, moreover, very important, which are typically held on a weekly or monthly basis based on the responses. A smaller isolated group can also be identified among Croatian professionals who do not consider these collaborations important and rarely or never participate in them.

II. Opinions on the efficiency of cooperation

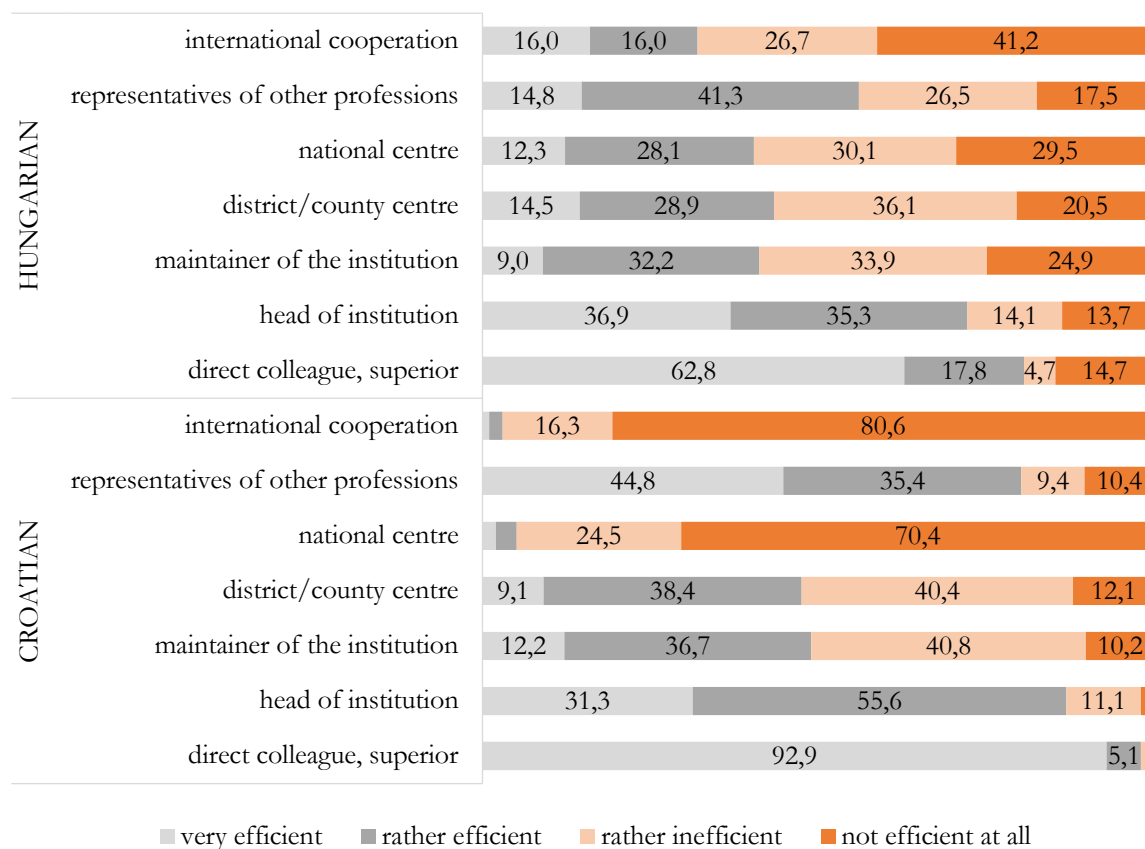
The professionals interviewed also evaluated or else could evaluate the efficiency of cooperation.²⁰ In terms of efficiency, the **Hungarian** data also show that the perception of efficiency differs in case of the levels near the organization from those further away. In the former case (direct colleagues, supervisor, head of the institution) the positive opinions are in the vast majority (70-80 per cent), while in the case of higher levels it reaches approximately half of the above (Figure 5). At the same time, it is higher for representatives of other professions and the figure is between the two extremes (56.1%).

In relation to **Hungary**, the answers were examined in the comparison according to the place of work of the professionals interviewed (family and child welfare centre and service, child protection centre and professional service, pedagogical professional service). In terms of assessing efficiency, the individual professional groups show certain differences in Hungary. In the case of direct employees and supervisors, the employees of the pedagogical professional service consider the cooperation to be efficient in a higher proportion (90%) than in the case of the other two professional groups (where this indicator is around 80%). There are significant differences between opinions on the efficiency of cooperation with heads of institutions. The staff of the pedagogical professional service, similarly to their direct colleagues, consider the cooperation almost without exception to be efficient (and within this, overwhelmingly deem to be very efficient). The opinion of those working in child protection centres and services differs significantly: among them this indicator is only 64%.

²⁰ In the case of efficiency, the answers had to be given for each professional actor based on “where relevant” clause. In principle, only those answered the question who felt competent in assessing the efficiency of working with a specific group.

Figure 5 Perception of the efficiency of cooperation

(%, N_{HUNGARIAN}=131-258, N_{CROATIAN}=96-99)



Regarding the efficiency of institution maintainers and district/county centres, the proportion of positive respondents is much lower and at a similar level in all professional groups (varies between 40-50%). The assessment of the national centre is even more unfavourable, mostly among the staff of the pedagogical professional service (only one third of them considered the cooperation to be at least efficient). The efficiency of co-operation with representatives of other professions is perceived similarly by the representatives of the three groups of professions, and in addition, the proportion of positive opinions among the staff of the child protection centre and specialist service is somewhat lower (52%) than in the other two groups of professions (around 60%). The worst perception is of international cooperation – presumably influenced by the lack of real experience in this field, as indicated by the high proportion of “I don't know” responses. Only one in four staff members of the family and child welfare centre and service, as well as the pedagogical service, had a positive view of the efficiency of such co-operation. The ratio between the staff of the child protection centre and the specialist service is two to five.

The **Croatian** professionals perceive the efficiency of the cooperation with the individual professional actors similarly to the Hungarians, but even more sharply. One of extremes is the collaboration with immediate colleagues (and supervisors), the head of the institution, and representatives of other professions, as 98%, 87%, and 80% of the respondents, respectively, rated their professional relationships with them as at least efficient (Figure 5). The other extreme is cooperation with the national centre and internationally: with almost uniform (95-97%) rejection. About half of the respondents perceive co-operation with the maintainer of the institution and the district/county centre to be efficient, while the other half deem them inefficient.

Summary and recommendations

In the study, we explored how social professionals and special education professionals relate to intra- and inter-professional collaboration in their work; how important they consider them and what experience has been gained regarding their frequency and efficiency. Both the Hungarian and Croatian data show that professionals consider horizontal collaborations (i.e. with colleagues, superiors, representatives of other professions) to be significantly more important, more often experienced and more useful than vertical relationships. In other words, professionals attribute less importance to cooperation with the higher levels and institutional centres of their profession. This pattern is particularly characteristic of Croatian professionals. Hungarian and Croatian professionals differ significantly in terms of embeddedness in the professional milieu. Unlike Hungarians, Croatian professionals typically perform their work embedded in social relationships. During work, a non-negligible proportion of Hungarian professionals (about one-fifth) work with their immediate colleagues and supervisors once every two months or even less frequently.

The **Hungarian** data show that the frequency of professional cooperation realized during their work, without exception, falls short of the level considered desirable and important by the professionals interviewed. This is true for both in-work and out-of-workplace agents. The level of co-operation in terms interprofessional collaboration in Hungary is the farthest from what is expected. Two-thirds of the professionals reviewed consider extraprofessional relationships to be particularly important, while the majority of them infrequently or very rarely meet with stakeholders. In comparison, the **Croatian** data do not show significant differences between the dimensions of importance and frequency of cooperation. To put it in another way: while the need for cooperation of Croatian professionals seems to be met, there is a significant shortage in Hungary in this respect, according to the professionals interviewed.

In terms of efficiency, the **Hungarian** data also show that the perception of efficiency differs in case of the levels near the organization to those further away. In the case of the near-levels, positive opinions are in the vast majority, while in the case of the more distant levels, regardless of the frequency and importance, the assessment of efficiency is more negative. The **Croatian** professionals perceive the efficiency of the cooperation with the individual professional actors similarly to the Hungarians, but even more sharply. One of extremes is the collaboration with immediate colleagues (and supervisors), the head of the institution, and representatives of other professions with a near-unanimous positive opinion. The other extreme is cooperation with the national centre and internationally, with almost unanimous rejection.

In terms of assessing efficiency, the individual professional groups in **Hungary** show certain differences. In the case of direct employees and supervisors, the employees of the pedagogical professional service consider the cooperation to be more effective than in the case of the other two professional groups. There are significant differences between opinions on the efficiency of cooperation with heads of institutions. The staff of the pedagogical professional service almost without exception considers the cooperation to be effective. The opinion of those working in child protection centres or specialist services differs most from this. In comparison, the staff of the pedagogical service commented more negatively on the efficiency of the cooperation with the national centre than on the other two professional groups.

Based on our Hungarian research results, we believe that it would be expedient to reduce the “isolation” of the workplace, which affects one-fifth of the respondents, even in the case of positions that at first glance do not directly require regular contact. This can be manifested in the coordination of activities related to different jobs, in mutual information, in the negotiation between employees. In order to maintain and, if necessary, improve the communication within the organization, it is expedient to frequently organize various forums (workshops, case discussions, consultations, etc.) meeting the needs. According to some research findings, social professionals feel that case conferences, case consultations, interprofessional conferences, professional discussions and the sharing of expertise and experience are deemed to be the most effective means of facilitating cooperation. (Budai, Puli 2015) These methods would be worthwhile emphasizing in the course of professional work performed for the benefit of the recipients of care.

In addition, it may be justified to reduce the distances between the different levels of the hierarchy (district, county, national centre) and to strengthen mutual communication. This can also lay the foundations for professional cooperation in the vertical direction. Hungarian respondents perceived significant shortcomings in the frequency and efficiency of interprofessional cooperation. In response, interprofessional cooperation should be strengthened (for more details see Perpék, Szászvai-Papp 2020).

References

- Barrett, G., Sellman, D., Thomas, J. (2005). *Interprofessional working in health and social care: Professional perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Budai I. (2009). Az interprofesszionális együttműködés és a szociális munka. (Interprofessional cooperation and social work.) *Esély* 2009 (5):83-114.
- Budai I., Puli E. (2015). Együttműködés a szociális szolgáltatásokban. (Cooperation in social services.) *Esély* 2015(1):32-64.
- Charles, G., C Alexander, C. (2014). An Introduction to Interprofessional Concepts in Social and Health Care Settings. *Relational Child & Youth Care Practice* 27(3):51-55.
- Győri Á. (2020a). A szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek vélekedése a szakmai munka körülményeiről (Opinions of social and special education professionals on professional working conditions). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.
- Győri Á. (2020b). Érzelmi, fizikai és mentális megterhelés a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek körében (Emotional, physical and mental strain of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.
- Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020a). Az oktatás területén megnyilvánuló hátrányok okai a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek szemszögéből (Reasons for disadvantages in the field of education from the perspective of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the result of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020b). Az oktatási hátrányok kompenzációjának eszközei a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek olvasatában (Means for compensating educational disadvantages according to the interpretation of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Győri Á., Kiss M., Szászvai-Papp G., Vastagh Z. (2020). Kutatási zárójelentés (Final research report). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020). Szakmák közötti kapcsolatok és együttműködés: a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek percepciói (Interprofessional relations and cooperation: perceptions of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Whittington, C. (2003). Model of Collaboration. In: Weinstein, J., Whittington, C., Leiba, T. Collaboration in Social Work Practice. London– Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 39–62.

Widmark, C., Sandahl, C., Piuva, K., Bergman, D. (2011). Barriers to collaboration between health care, social services and schools. *International Journal of Integrated Care* 11:e124. doi: 10.5334/ijic.653

**INTERPROFESSIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION:
PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROFESSIONALS**

ÉVA PERPÉK – GÁBOR SZÁSZVAI-PAPP

Introduction

The study examines the views of Hungarian and Croatian professionals working in the social and educational sectors and their experiences of inter-professional relations and cooperation. Based on the Hungarian data, the analysis covers the relations with the individual groups of external experts and other actors. In the study, non-professional institutions include mainly public education institutions, personal care providers, healthcare providers and other relevant actors. The analysis also covers the factors that facilitate and hinder interprofessional cooperation.

The relevance of the research is due to the fact that the necessity and importance of professional cooperation in the interests of clients in recent years is an increasingly common topic of international, as well as Hungarian professional discourses in the social sector (as well). This is true both for *intra-* and *inter*professional relations, the flow of information and the exchange of experience. (Widmark et al. 2011, Barrett et al. 2005, Charles, Alexander 2014, Budai 2009) At the international level, the study of health-focused interprofessional collaborations is a highly researched topic, and more and more research is being conducted on collaborations in the social field. (Willumsen 2006, Barr 2010, Ödegård, Strype 2009) However, the number of research based on solid empirical foundations is still small. In the Hungarian context, the field of scientifically extensive empirical research of interprofessional collaborations is still an uncharted area.

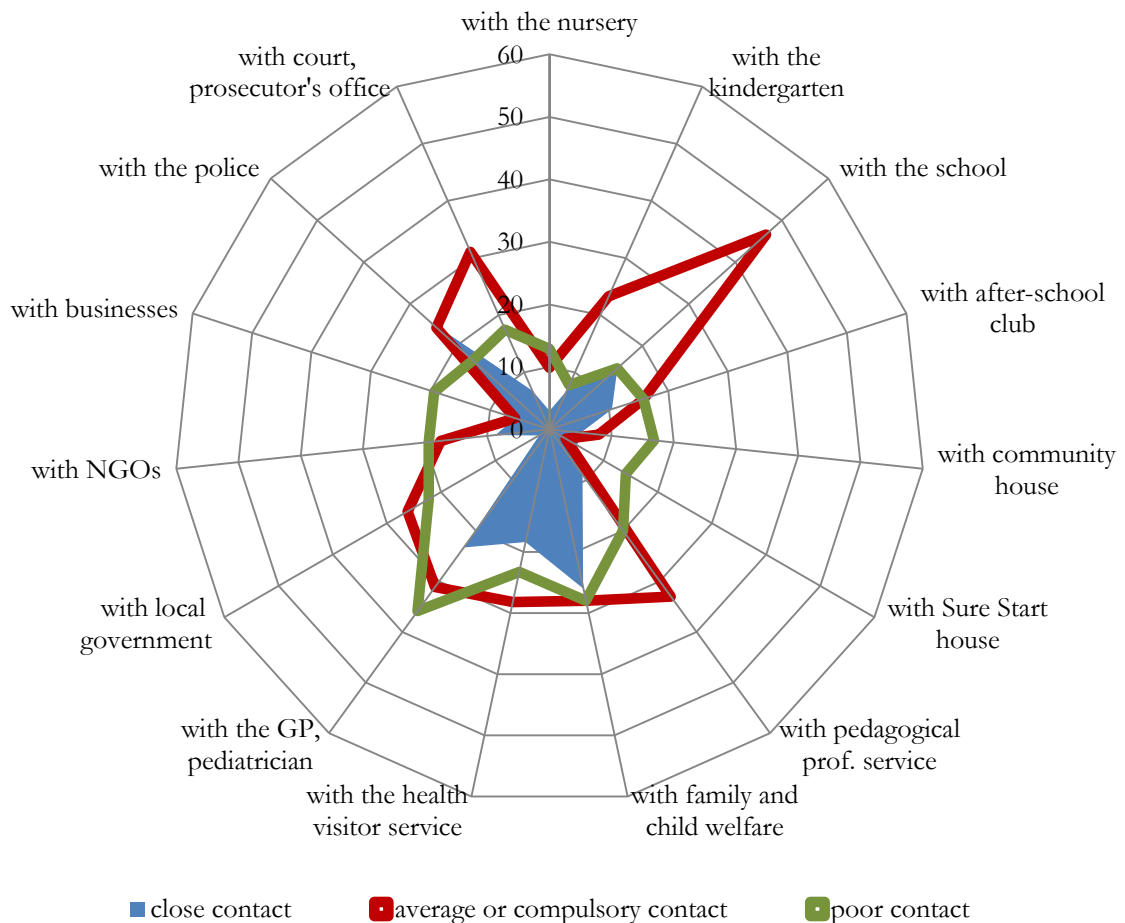
Based on previous theoretical considerations (Charles, Alexander 2014), the research underlying the present study uses a practical approach to professional collaboration and examines both its intra- and interprofessional aspects. The empirical basis of the study is a survey of professionals working in the social and educational sectors (for more details, see Perpék et al. 2020). The exploratory survey conducted in 2019 and 2020 examined a sample of 261 Hungarian and 100 Croatian respondents on three main topics - school disadvantage compensation (Kiss, Vastagh 2020a, 2020b), professional cooperation, professional well-being (Győri 2020a, 2020b).

The Hungarian study in Baranya County was conducted by the staff of the family and child welfare centre and service, the child protection centre and professional service, and the pedagogical professional service, while the Croatian study in Osijek-Baranya County was conducted by the welfare social centre, schools and kindergartens. The analysis covers the correlations of the Hungarian results in detail, and, wherever if possible, in comparison with the relevant Croatian data.

I. Extraprofessional relations of Hungarian professionals

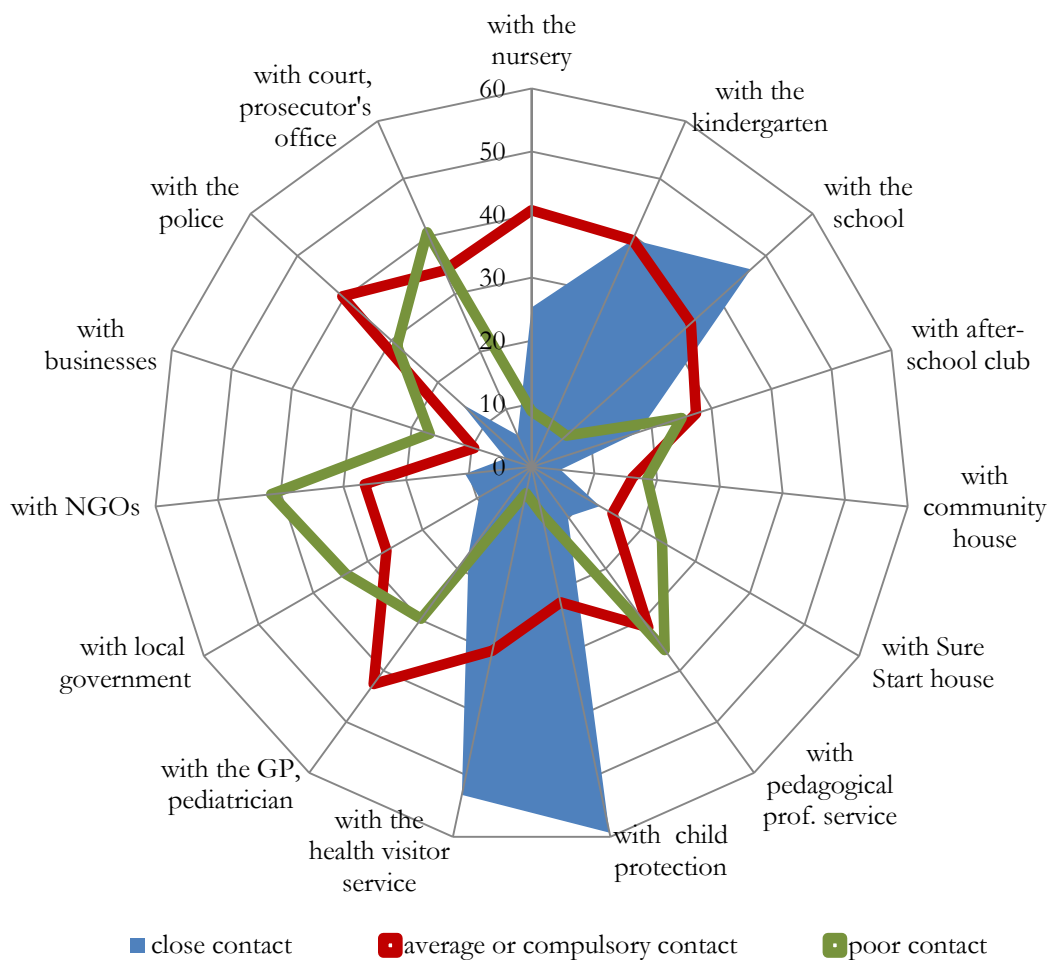
In order to learn about professional relationships and collaboration, the professionals involved were asked to characterize their relationships with some actors outside their profession. Due to the differences between the Hungarian and Croatian social care systems, this analysis is performed exclusively with Hungarian data. The results are examined according to three professional groups - family and child welfare centre and service, child protection centre and pedagogical professional service. An important addition to the analysis of the respondents' interprofessional relations is that in many cases these relations are determined or at least influenced by the characteristics of their jobs and the rules related to them, as well as official “chains of command”.

Figure 1 Extraprofessional relations of the staff of the child protection centre and the professional service without lack of contacts (% , N_{HUNGARIAN} = 105)



Of the three groups of professionals under review, child protection appears to be the most isolated in terms of actors outside the listed professions. This is because they marked it in the smallest proportion, while they included the largest proportion who marked the presence of lack of relationships, and their relationship system shows a different pattern (Figure 1). Due to the nature of their work, they have the closest relationship with the police and the family and child welfare centre, while only about a quarter of those surveyed child protection professionals are characterised by close links. Roughly similarly, but to a lesser extent, they maintain close contact with paediatricians (23.3%) which is followed by nurses (18.4%) and school (14.6%) in the ranking.

Figure 2 Extraprofessional relationships of the staff of the family and child welfare centre and service without lack of contact (%) (N_{HUNGARIAN} = 96)



In absolute terms, the staff of the Family and Child Welfare Centre has the most close contacts (Figure 2). According to them, their key partners are child protection institutions – the proportion of their close relations with this field is 59.3% –, the health-visitor service (53.2%), the school (46.8%) and the kindergartens (39.4%). Obviously, the staff of the pedagogical professional service

have the closest relations primarily with educational institutions, and, in addition, with the nurse service.

II. Aspects of interprofessional cooperation

II.1 How to measure cooperation

In order to get to gain insight into interprofessional cooperation, we also asked about the content of the cooperation, the opinions and perceptions concerning it. Specifically, the terms and conditions of interprofessional cooperation and the support and expectations of interprofessional cooperation in the workplace and among the clients of professionals. Using international research experience (Orchard et al. 2012, Strype et al. 2014), the questionnaire contained a total of 27 statements in two blocks of questions, which respondents had to evaluate as *not typical*, *rather not typical*, *rather typical*, and *very typical*.

In the 18 items of the first block of questions, mostly positive statements facilitating cooperation are formulated regarding the effectiveness and usefulness, effects, course and management of interprofessional cooperation (Table 1). The questions on the one hand included statements about external actors and “others” participating in interprofessional cooperation, and on the other hand, the individual, i.e. the respondent. Assuming that cooperation has more than just harmonious and conflict-free aspects, it was inevitable to include some factors that hinder interprofessional cooperation at the group level.

Statements examining the content and nature of cooperation can also be classified according to other theoretical dimensions. According to this, the first group of statements concerns the positive atmosphere of cooperation and its impact on the respondent. Another theoretical group of statements focuses on the outcome of the collaboration and its usefulness/benefits. Another theoretical factor is the monopolization of negative opinions about discussions, typically the “domination” of communication. Some statements relate to the management of the group.

A part of the second block of questions refers to the motivational factors of interprofessional cooperation, which are considered to be external to the respondent (Table 2). Within this, the theoretical dimensions related to the expectation are on the one hand, formulated by the normative support of the workplace, on the other hand, by the clients/target group. Another subdivision of statements measures perceptions of the hindering factors to interprofessional collaboration. Two additional questions concern work-related knowledge and responsibilities, partly from the perspective of other professionals and partly from the respondents' own perspective.

II.2. Results: Factors facilitating and hindering cooperation

Regarding the first group of statements about interprofessional cooperation, according to the meanvalues of the answers, **Hungarian** professionals feel that the factors facilitating cooperation prevail in interprofessional collaboration both at the individual and group level. In terms of support and expectations, respondents reported that interprofessional co-operation is essentially supported in their workplace, and to some extent, but to a lesser extent, is also expressed as an expectation from clients. One of the preconditions of cooperation is the mutual knowledge of the nature, purpose and means of the work of professionals working in other spheres. The professionals interviewed, in light of the arithmetic means of the responses, consider that they are somewhat more familiar with the profession of others than others with theirs. The most serious obstacle to co-operation with other professions is the lack of time/excessive workload for them, followed, in terms of significance, by the lack of information, lack of money or incomplete infrastructure, and lack of trust. However, the mean values of the responses do not show a significant difference between the individual categories.

A more mixed picture emerges from the **Croatian** responses. In addition to the advantages, certain shortcomings and negative experience in terms of the perception, conditions and support of joint professional work emerge with almost similar weight.

In the case of the 18 statements of the first block of questions, the principal component analysis performed with varimax rotation on the Hungarian sample provides a four-component answer. The value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) is remarkably high: 0.869, and the factors explain 58.8% of the total variance.²¹ The interpretation of the 4 components is partly aligned with the theoretical grouping of the statements. It is interesting that the first dimension of professional cooperation can be linked to a kind of negative attitude, **social failure**: this is where the items indicating the dominance of certain individuals (which the individual experiences as an obstacle to efficiency on the one hand and as something the person concerned perceives as pushing him/her into the background) and also the statement that interprets frustration as a feature of teamwork (Table 1). This factor encompasses certain obstacles to cooperation.

Table 1 Perceptions of cooperation in the Hungarian sample 1

²¹ The analysis on Croatian data arranges the responses into 5 factors with an appropriate KMO value of 0.754. Due to the low number of cases, their interpretation is problematic.

Rotated component matrix

To what extent are the following statements typical of interprofessional cooperation?

Component

	1	2	3	4
Sometimes we don't work efficiently because the sessions are dominated by the opinions of some professionals.	0,843	-0,174	-0,14	-0,128
Sometimes I can't tell my opinion because others talk too much.	0,75	-0,151	-0,116	-0,003
The discussions are dominated by the opinions of some experts.	0,704	-0,159	-0,154	-0,122
Participants are often frustrated with each other.	0,644	-0,152	-0,127	-0,128
The starting points come from some professionals (not everyone).	0,585	-0,055	0,067	0,402
If necessary, the others will support me.	-0,103	0,776	0,381	0,055
If I have a problem, the others will listen to me.	-0,249	0,738	0,087	0,219
Participants share information about their work.	-0,073	0,708	0,349	0,099
Group members are committed to collaboration	-0,181	0,668	0,186	0,069
They usually understand what I mean.	-0,36	0,564	0,181	0,463
I use my creativity during cooperation.	-0,038	0,178	0,798	0,007
I find cooperation valuable.	-0,094	0,297	0,763	0,061
In the team, I experience that I am improving.	-0,074	0,344	0,717	0,099
My goals are always clear during cooperation.	-0,2	0,034	0,644	0,388
Communication is great, information spreads quickly.	-0,186	0,144	0,487	0,234
I feel that the others appreciate me.	-0,136	0,136	0,176	0,673
The leader helps to achieve common goals.	-0,31	0,365	-0,026	0,592
I often find that well-functioning teams have a clearly appointed leader.	0,255	0,055	0,205	0,487

The second group of statements can be identified as a kind of **social support** dimension, which, in addition to listening to and supporting the respondent, focuses on the group's commitment to cooperation and information sharing. The third component summarizes the positive effects of the group on the individual. Related to this are statements about development, experiencing creativity, and the value of working together, so we named this factor **self-emphasis**. Finally, the fourth component is basically related to the leadership, the **management of the group**. All three dimensions bring together experiences and opinions that facilitate interprofessional cooperation²².

Based on the principal component analysis performed on the items of the second block of questions, the statements in the thinking of Hungarian experts - with a medium (0.609) KMO value - are clearly grouped into three groups (Table 2). One of these groups of statements is the perceptions of factors **hindering** cooperation that includes lack of information, money, infrastructure, and trust (interestingly, lack of time and excessive workload are not related to this

²² Communication is great, information spreads quickly. They usually understand what I mean. They cannot be clearly and exclusively related to a single component, so they are not taken into consideration in the remainder of the analysis.

factor). A separate factor is constituted by the perceptions related other professionals and their own **responsibility**. Furthermore, “**expectation**” as a motivational factor can be clearly identified based on the responses. It is an interesting additional information that none of the principal component analyses conducted separately for the three Hungarian occupational groups outlined a clear structure in the responses.

Table 2 Perceptions of cooperation in the Hungarian sample 2

To what extent are the following statements typical of interprofessional cooperation in your work?	Component		
	1	2	3
Lack of information hinders interprofessional cooperation.	0.781	-0.291	0.091
Lack of trust hinders interprofessional cooperation.	0.750	0.178	-0.157
Lack of money or poor infrastructure hinders interprofessional cooperation.	0.743	-0.064	0.092
Other professionals understand what I deal with, what my scope of responsibility is.	0.061	0.768	-0.007
I understand exactly what other professionals are dealing with, what their scope of responsibility is.	-0.033	0.674	0.149
Lack of time/excessive workload hinders interprofessional cooperation.	0.478	-0.559	0.188
In my workplace, they support (e.g. administratively) collaboration with other professionals.	-0.151	0.546	0.372
My bosses expect me to cooperate with representatives of other professions.	-0.105	0.126	0.802
My clients/providers expect me to cooperate with other professions.	0.196	0.033	0.704

The opinion of Croatian experts clearly revolves around two mutually exclusive factors (KMO value: 0.749): the factors **hindering** cooperation together form one of them, while **workplace and professional support** the other.

The principal component analysis performed on a total of 27 statements of the two blocks of questions presented above examining the conditions of cooperation also identified the most important types of opinions. **Social support** and **self-emphasis** emerge as facilitators of cooperation, while **social failure** and **objective hindering factors** are perceived as obstacles. From these four strongest factors, four indices were formed based on the 27 statements.

Respondents think unanimously about the factors behind the indices in many respects, as neither the demographic background variables nor the variables related to work and work experience or the perception and frequency of interprofessional cooperation differed in the opinion of each

group. The results of the variance analysis showed a significant correlation only in the case of the index of social failure, which is a barrier to interprofessional cooperation. According to this, child protection professionals working in relative isolation already experience the highest rates of social failure in interprofessional cooperation, while the staff of the pedagogical professional service experience it the least. Indices hindering interprofessional cooperation show considerable correlation with an additional dimension: workplace stressors.

Summary and recommendations

The study examined the views of professionals working in the social and educational spheres on interprofessional collaborations, as well as their experience in this field, from several aspects. The Hungarian and Croatian research results support that the proximity with the representatives of other professions is of paramount importance in professional collaborations.

According to our results, **Hungarian** professionals feel that the factors facilitating cooperation predominate in interprofessional collaboration at both individual and group levels. Hungarian experts also reported that co-operation between professions is basically supported in their workplace, and to some extent, but to a lesser extent, this is also expressed as an expectation by clients. One of the preconditions of cooperation is the mutual awareness of the nature, purpose and means of the work of professionals working in other spheres. According to the opinion of the professionals interviewed, they are somewhat more familiar with the profession of others than others with theirs. The most serious obstacles to interprofessional cooperation are, respectively, lack of time/excessive workload, lack of information, lack of money or lack of infrastructure, as well as lack of trust. At the same time, no significant differences are seen between the individual items and types of obstacles. A more mixed picture emerges from the **Croatian** answers than the Hungarian ones. In addition to the advantages, certain shortcomings and negative experiences in terms of the perception, circumstances and support of joint professional work emerged with almost similar weight.

As far as the conditions, methods and support of interprofessional cooperation are concerned, the opinions of Hungarian respondents can be sorted into four groups. The dimensions of social support and self-emphasis emerge as facilitators of cooperation, while social failure and objective, external barriers appear as obstacles.

Based on our research results in Hungary, we suggest the following recommendations to be considered regarding Hungarian conditions. The Hungarian professionals involved in the research highlighted the need of more intensive interprofessional cooperation than the one prevails at present (Perpék, Szászvai-Papp 2020). It is especially true for professions and groups of professions in general, but in the social and special education fields, that it is expedient to eliminate its isolation in terms of accessibility for other professions. There are several ways to do this, one of which is to optimize the operation of the child protection signalling system required by law. A further set of options is the arrangement of defined monthly joint consultation, workshops; setting up and operating thematic, case or consultation groups, teams; implementation of joint, integrated

trainings, organization of joint field and institutional visits, getting to know the co-professions as thoroughly as possible, finding common points and opportunities to complement and coordinate each other's work, discovering and exploiting synergies. The detailed forms of cooperation facilitate efficient flow of information and the development and deepening of trust in the actors outside the workplace. In these groups of mixed field of expertise, new impulses and insights can emerge, which enables the recognition and solution of complex problems. As a result, the quality and efficiency of work can be improved and the lack of information and trust referred to above can be reduced.

These forms of cooperation do not necessarily have a direct financial impact as the costs involved will be manifested in time and energy, preparation, coordination and organization processes. Previous research has pointed out that the responsibility of managers are of prime importance in the organization of cooperation, as well as the clear definition and, if possible, division of the responsibilities involved.

Intra-professional and inter-professional cooperation can be facilitated by spatial proximity. Ensuring this in many cases requires a financial investment. Well-thought-out design of work spaces can help both smooth flow of information and quality work both within and between workplaces. This should be done in such a way that employees have the opportunity to work in a team, with their colleagues, but if necessary, to work separately, independently, or with one or more clients or colleagues. It is equally important to create smaller and larger community spaces where a group of employees or the entire professional staff can come together. Interprofessional cooperation would be greatly facilitated by the establishment and operation of integrated service centres located close to each other or even in the same building. This could host all professional groups involved in education and other fields for compensation of disadvantages. It is equally important to establish and operate regular offline and - especially based on pandemic lessons - online communication channels between different the fields of expertise.

References

- Barr, H. (2010). Understanding Interprofessional collaboration in Health and Social Care. *Journal of Interprofessional Care* 24(4):470-472.
- Barrett, G., Sellman, D., Thomas, J. (2005). *Interprofessional collaboration in health and social care: Professional perspectives*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Budai I. (2009). Az interprofesszionális együtt működés és a szociális munka (Interprofessional collaboration and social work). *Esély* 2009.5:83-114.
- Charles, G., C Alexander, C. (2014). An Introduction to Interprofessional Concepts in Social and Health Care Settings. *Relational Child & Youth Care Practice* 27(3):51-55.
- Győri Á. (2020a). A szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek vélekedése a szakmai munka körülményeiről (Opinions of social and special education professionals on professional working conditions). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.
- Győri Á. (2020b). Érzelmi, fizikai és mentális megterhelés a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek körében (Emotional, physical and mental strain of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.
- Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020a). Az oktatás területén megnyilvánuló hátrányok okai a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek szemszögéből (Reasons for disadvantages in the field of education from the perspective of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020b). Az oktatási hátrányok kompenzációjának eszközei a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek olvasatában (Means for compensating educational disadvantages according to the interpretation of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Ödegård A, Strype J. (2009). Perceptions of interprofessional collaboration within child mental health care in Norway. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*. 23(3):286–96.

Orchard, C. A., King, G. A., Khalili, H., Bezzina, M. B. (2012). Assessment of interprofessional team collaboration scale (AITCS): Development and testing of the instrument. *Journal of Continuing Education in the Health Professions*, 32(1):58-67.

Perpék É., Győri Á., Kiss M., Szászvai-Papp G., Vastagh Z. (2020). Kutatási zárójelentés (Final research report). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020). Vélemények a szociális területet érintő szakmai együttműködés fontosságáról, gyakoriságáról és hatékonyságáról. (Opinions on the importance, frequency and efficiency of professional cooperation). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Strype, J., Gundhus, H. I., Egge, M., Ødegård, A.(2014). Perceptions of Interprofessional Collaboration. *Professions and Professionalism*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.7577/pp.806>

Widmark, C., Sandahl, C., Piuva, K., Bergman, D. (2011). Barriers to collaboration between health care, social services and schools. *International Journal of Integrated Care* 11:e124. doi: 10.5334/ijic.653

Willumsen, E. (2006). Leadership in interprofessional collaboration - the case of childcare in Norway. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*. 20(4):403–13..

**REASONS FOR DISADVANTAGES IN THE FIELD
OF EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

MÁRTA KISS – ZOLTÁN VASTAGH

Introduction

The aim of the present study is to examine the main reasons behind the various disadvantages in the field of education from the point of view of social professionals working in the field of disadvantage compensation. The reason for this approach is that social professionals are not usually asked on this topic, even though they are also actively involved in disadvantage compensation.

Our analysis also aimed to compare the opinions of social professionals with the previously measured results among educators, the significance of which, according to our hypothesis, which is supported more and more research works, is that the cooperation of professionals working in disadvantage compensation is essential in the process of catching up the target group. In our opinion, getting to know and reconciling different opinions on the causes of disadvantages (as well as other issues) can contribute to effective cooperation. If there is a kind of understanding, possibly a consensus, this will provide a basis for selecting the appropriate means of intervention and also for their coordinated application.

The research program also aimed to compare domestic results with data from a neighbouring country. Thus, the questionnaire was conducted in two stages: in 2019 including 261 social professionals in Baranya County, Hungary, and in 2020 in the Osijek-Baranya County in Croatia, involving 100 professionals from the welfare social centre and schools and kindergartens. Although, for methodological reasons, the international comparison was only feasible in certain contexts, it produced some interesting results that may be worth examining in more detail in the future.

I. Perception of problems: identification of factors influencing educational disadvantages

In order to make sure that all respondents have the same concept about educational disadvantages, the following wording was included in the questionnaire²³: “*We consider educational disadvantage poor school results and progress, lack of necessary competencies, lack of motivation, behavioural problems, excessive unjustified absences, failing at the end of the schoolyear, and dropout.*” According to our theoretical starting point, the factors influencing the development and persistence of disadvantages in the field of education and school progress can be basically divided into three groups: living conditions of parents and family, children, and the school and education system as a whole (Table 1). These categories can be matched to different two-level international models (for more details, see Kiss, Vastagh 2020a).

Table 1 Factors influencing educational disadvantage

<i>Factor groups / factors</i>	<i>Factors / items in the questionnaire</i>
Factors related to schools and teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of teachers and educational professionals • Low willingness of the school to cooperate with other institutions (e.g. child protection, child welfare, pedagogical service) • lack of motivation and burnout of teachers • lack of social professionals, special education teachers and other professionals • homogeneous composition of classes, segregation • lack of modern pedagogical methods, lack of knowledge • low willingness of the school to cooperate with parents • lack of differentiated education, large class size • Deficiencies in the child's cognitive abilities • disability, mental problems
Factors related to children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deficiencies in the child's social competencies (school integration, poor relationship with teachers, students) • deficiencies in the child's emotional competencies • the child's attitude to learning, lack of motivation • behavioural disorder, aggressive behaviour (rambling, etc.)

²³ The questionnaire included several question blocks. For a detailed description of the research and the sample, as well as the processing of the other topics, see the volume (Győri 2020a, 2020b, Perpék et al. 2020, Perpék, Szászvai-Papp 2020a, 2020b, Kiss, Vastagh 2020b).

Factors related to parents and family

- bad influence of school/class subcultures, peer groups
- negative behavioural patterns and educational principles of parents
- low level of cognitive abilities of parents, lack of education
- poor financial conditions, poverty (including housing)
- neglect and abuse of the child
- negative attitudes of parents towards learning
- low willingness of parents to cooperate with the school and teachers

We were interested to see how the opinions of previously researched professionals (teachers) working in the field of education differed from the views of the representatives of the social profession. To this end, we developed the factors based on the questions of the questionnaire surveyed by Institute for Educational Research and Development (OFI) (2013-2014) among teachers (Széll 2015, Szemerszki 2015, 2016), which we supplemented with additional questions considered relevant based on the relevant literature. We sought to compile factors that ask about causes rather than consequences (although the two are often not easy to be distinguished).

II. Statistical correlation analysis in the Hungarian sample

A significant part of the Hungarian professionals interviewed deal with educational disadvantage compensation: 80% of the staff of the pedagogical professional services, 65% of the staff of the family and child welfare centre/service, and 48% of the staff of the child protection center / professional service. The responses of a multitude of three professional groups were examined in several ways. Using multidimensional scaling and factor analysis, we analysed whether the problem perception of social professionals really peak around the three dimensions presented in the previous chapter. A total of 21 questions²⁴ were used to check the theoretical factors. To explore the underlying latent structure, we first approached it using the method of multidimensional scaling,²⁵ and then, in order to clarify our first impressions, we also examined the correlations between the responses using factor analysis. We completed calculations ranging from 3 to 9 factors were performed (Table 2).²⁶ The results showed that in case of 2-5 latent factors, less than 60% of the total variance of the 21 variables is explained by the resulting factors, while for 6-9 factor numbers, they exceed the acceptable proportion.

The content analysis of the factors also supports the fact that the social professionals and special education teachers interviewed actually think in several dimensions compared to the preliminarily assumed three groups of factors. Although the three-factor solution also confirms our preliminary assumptions, the six- or eight-factor solutions appear to be both theoretically and statistically convincing.²⁷ They differ in terms of separating or keeping together the two components of the factors 'school and education' and 'poverty and cultural capital' respectively.

²⁴ We included three "pseudo-questions" designed only to stretch the "internal rating scale" of respondents, which were omitted from the analysis..

²⁵ ALSCALE procedure based on Euclidean distances. Based on the results, the responses can be mapped in an acceptable way in two-dimensional space (S-stress=0.19), but in statistical terms, three- or four-dimensional mapping (S-stress <0.1) would lead to really good results.

²⁶ Factor analysis was performed by principal component analysis with varimax (orthogonal) rotation. Based on the KMO and the Bartlett tests, the data set proved to be really suitable for the analysis.

²⁷ In the case of the four- and five-factor models, the variables for children and their parents are mixed in one factor, which seem to be separated both theoretically and on the basis of the results of the other factor analyses. And the nine-factor version was rejected because an independent factor appears there, the content-theoretical interpretation of which is not clear.

Table 2 Structure of factors leading to educational disadvantage in case of different number of factors

Theoretical factors	2 factors	3 factors	4 factors	5 factors	6 factors	7 factors	8 factors	9 factors
factors related to school and teachers	school and institution system	school& education	school& education	school& education	school& education	school system	school system	school system
Factors related to children		child - deviance - abilities	child - abilities	child - abilities	child - abilities	child - abilities	child - abilities	child - abilities
Factors related to parents	family & child	parents - deviance - deprivation	children & parents - deviance	children & parents - deviance	attitudes of parents	attitudes of parents	attitudes of parents	attitudes of parents
			poverty	poverty	poverty & insufficient cultural capital	poverty & insufficient cultural capital	insufficient cultural capital	insufficient cultural capital
							poverty	poverty

The factors developed were compared according to the workplaces of the specialists with one-way analysis of variance. In the course of this, neither the three-factor nor the eight-factor solution showed significant differences according to employers. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that the opinions of the staff of the educational service are a bit stronger about the problems related to the education system and the cooperation between the education system and the family, while the family and child welfare centre and service staff and child protection professionals consider problems related to family culture and socialisation the most important. However, it should be noted that significant differences can be detected between the problem maps of individual professionals (Kiss, Vastagh 2020a), but these do not appear to be determined by the workplace.

III. Perception of problems regarding the causes of disadvantages in the light of the Hungarian and Croatian results

In our questionnaire, the respondents had to evaluate how each factor influences the development of disadvantages with school grades (Figure 1). Overall, based on the opinion of experts, the position - otherwise supported by the literature - is outlined that the focal point of the problem is to be found in the family background (see also e.g. Woessmann 2004, Róbert 2004, Kertesi, Kézdi, 2012, OECD 2018). Based on the answer options provided, the experts rated the influence of parents' behavioural patterns the highest, as well as the children's attitude towards learning, motivations and the effects of lack of social competencies²⁸ (The first three items did not change significantly even when asked to choose the five most important factors.) Comparing the opinions of social professionals and special education teachers with those of educators, we found that they also identified the attitudes of parents and children as the most important influencing factors. (Széll 2015).

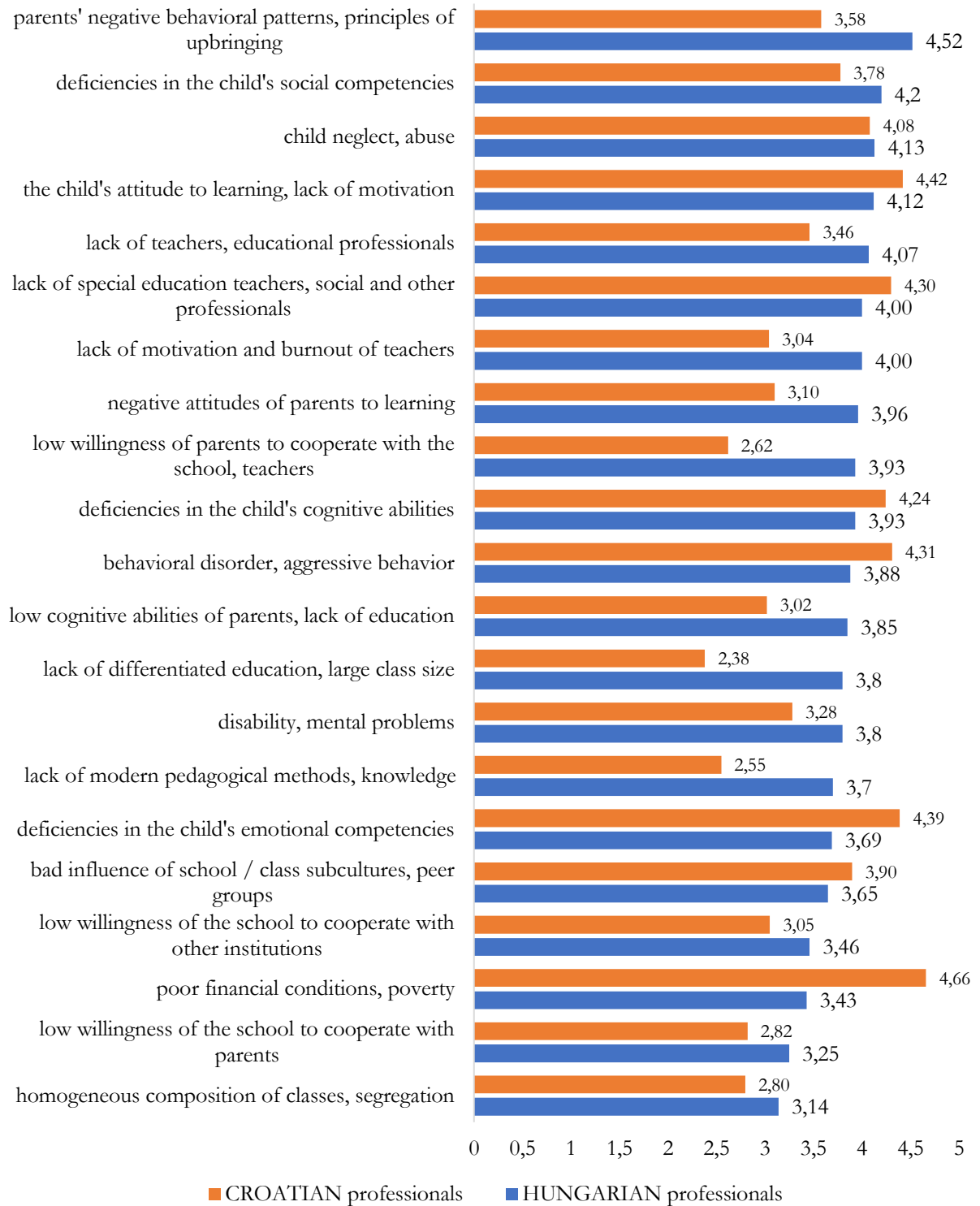
In our sample, the role of child neglect and abuse is also highly rated by experts, which is presumably related to various alcohol and drug problems. Here, the field of activity of the professionals we interviewed is certainly very decisive, since, due to their job, they primarily encounter “problematic” parents.

Reviewing the questions regarding schools and the educators, we found that the perception of the majority is relatively positive. This means that – similar to surveys conducted among teachers (e.g. Széll 2015, Fejes 2018) – the majority of social professionals and special education teachers do not “blame” the school, teachers, educators or pedagogical methods for the development of disadvantages. This result is particularly interesting in light of the relevant literature which attributes a major role to the selectivity of the education system in aggravating the disadvantages (see e.g. Fejes, Szűcs 2018). One possible explanation for the apparent contradiction is that we did not ask about factors aggravating and sustaining the problems, only about how their development. Besides, there is the possibility, although it is needs checking, that, like educators, there is a kind of “code of honour” amongst social professionals, whereby they pass on the blame to external factors.

²⁸ On the decisive importance of motivation and affective factors in the field of academic performance, see, among others: Creemers et al., (2010), Józsa, Fejes (2012), Fejes (2015), Szemerszki (2015).

At the same time, it is an interesting issue that the significance of the role of the “poor financial conditions, poverty” factor in the Hungarian sample seems to be very low (it ranks 19th out of only 21), and the parents' low level of education and competencies is also found quite at the bottom of the ranking.

Figure 1 To what extent do the following factors contribute to the development of the disadvantages perceived in the field of education? (means 1=not at all, 5=completely, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



Based on the data from **Croatia**, there are really remarkable differences compared to the Hungarian sample regarding the reasons for the development of educational disadvantages (Figure 1). The biggest and most important difference seems to be related to the “poor financial conditions, poverty” factor. While Croatian experts ranked it in the first place – based on the means of rankings – in the Hungarian sample the same factor is found at the end of the ranking, i.e. in the 19th place. Thus, there is a fundamental difference in the attitudes towards the development of disadvantages between the experts of the two countries: while the Hungarian experts primarily blame the negative behavioural patterns and educational principles of the parents, the Croatian experts put the blame on a material factor: living conditions.

Regarding the factor “child's attitude to learning, lack of motivation”, the opinion of the experts was similar: this item was second in the Croatian ranking and fourth in the Hungarian sample. At the same time, there is a significant difference regarding the factor “deficiencies in the child's emotional competencies”, which Croatian experts ranked third based on the average of evaluations, ranking only 16th in the Hungarian sample. There is also a big difference in terms of “behavioural disorder, aggressive behaviour”, which according to the Croatian data is the fourth in the ranking, while Hungarian respondents put it only to the 11th place.

There is also a significant difference between the values measured in the two countries in terms of the structural characteristics of education and the quality of education. The “lack of differentiated education, large number of students in classes”, the “lack of modern educational methods, knowledge” and the “lack of motivation and burnout of teachers” as well as the “lack of teachers and education professionals” were given a much more favourable ranking than the Hungarian results. Within the confines of the present research, we do not have the opportunity to explore the reasons for the differences between the perceptions of Hungarian and Croatian professionals, but the differences between the level of public spending on education and school performance in international surveys can offer obvious explanations.

There was also a significant difference between parents' perceptions in favour of Croatian values: the respondents blame “parents' negative attitudes to learning” and “parents' low cognitive abilities, lack of education” and “parents' low willingness to cooperate with school and teachers” to a lesser extent for the development of disadvantages than the Hungarian professionals.

Summary and recommendations

Our research examines the reasons for the development of educational disadvantages from the point of view of Hungarian and Croatian professionals who carry out disadvantage compensation activities directly or indirectly on behalf of family support, child protection and pedagogical services. The data from Croatia provide a useful benchmark for the evaluation of the functioning and assessment of the Hungarian institutional system, as it is a neighbouring country with more or less similar economic development and social problems. However, we do not have enough information to make policy recommendations based on Croatian data, thus we formulate them only for Hungary.

When mapping the problems, we found that Hungarian professionals primarily blame parental patterns and behaviours, as well as the child's attitude to learning and deficiencies in social competencies for the development of academic disadvantages.

At the same time, data from Croatia indicate very remarkable differences regarding the causes of educational disadvantage. The biggest and most important difference seems to be related to the “poor financial conditions, poverty” factor. While Croatian experts ranked it in the first place, in the Hungarian sample this statement appears at the end of the ranking. That is, while the Hungarian experts are primarily blame the family background, including the behavioural patterns of the parents, the Croatian experts blame the family's financial background and living conditions. There is also a significant difference in terms of the results measured in the two countries in terms of the structural characteristics of education and the quality of education. These factors were given a much more favourable rating by Croatian professionals than their Hungarian counterparts.

Both in the international and domestic literature, there is a clear correlation between school performance and family background factors, which can typically be related to the family's material and cultural capital (e.g. parents' education and status, number of books, computer, cultural activities, holidays, etc.). In addition, also according to the relevant literature, parents' expectations of the child (social capital) and their attitude to learning also play a major role in the children's school performance. Nevertheless, the Hungarian professional interviewed rated the role of the “poor financial conditions, poverty” factor as very low (only in the 19th place), and the parents' low level of education and competencies is only found at the lower end of the middle section. However, professionals considered the negative attitude of parents to learning to be a serious problem, in line with the literature. Based on these, we recommend professionals to be provided

with as much time and capacity as possible to strengthen student motivation, parental competencies, and social competencies.

We found that the opinions of professionals do not differ significantly depending on the field in they professionals working in, or the target group they focusing on or whether they carry out a disadvantage compensation activity or not. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the opinions of the staff of the pedagogical service are a bit stronger about the problems related to the education system and the cooperation between the education system and the family, while in the opinion of family and child welfare and child protection professionals, issues related to family culture and socialisation are the most important. Obviously, these differences also stem from the different roles of professionals and the different nature of the problems they deal with. Based on these, we recommend that there should be an opportunity for interprofessional - even intersectoral - consultation and a forum on the topic among the professionals working together in disadvantage compensation. If the reasons leading to the disadvantages are discussed and some consensus is reached on this issue, it will be easier to find the way of compensation, and everyone would become aware of the intervention possibilities of the other professional group.

The assessment of the role of the school and teachers in the process of the development of disadvantages is relatively positive, i.e. Hungarian social professionals and special education teachers blame the school, teachers or pedagogical methods to a lesser extent in this regard. At the same time, of the reasons for the development of the disadvantages, the professional training of the teachers is attributed small, while the level of their motivation and the lack of teachers are attributed relatively big influence. The most fundamental problem to be solved would be to increase the number of teachers and reduce the shortage of teachers. In addition, as the experts we interviewed believe that teachers' motivation and burnout are important issues, we recommend greater emphasis to be placed on maintaining and increasing their motivation, in addition to training teachers on the possibilities and methods of compensation for disadvantage. Finally, the perception and interpretation of problems by professionals would require further research, as this could help to lay the foundations for professional in-service training that could support social professionals to be able to use adequate methods to solve the problems concerned effectively.

References

Creemers, B. P. M., Kyriakides, L., Sammons, P. (2010). The state of the art of Educational Effectiveness Research: challenges for research methodology. In: Creemers, B. P. M., Kyriakides, L., Sammons, P. (2010) (eds.). *Methodological Advances in Educational Effectiveness Research*, New York, Ruthledge.

Fejes J. B. (2018). A deszegregációval kapcsolatos vélemények befolyásolási lehetőségei a pedagógusok körében. (Possibilities of influencing opinions about desegregation among educators) In: Fejes J. B., Szűcs N. (ed.): *Én vétkem. Helyzetkép az oktatási szegregációról.* (My fault – Report on educational segregation.) Szeged: Motivációs Oktatási Egyesület, 111-129.

Fejes J. B., Szűcs N. (ed.) (2018). *Én vétkem. Helyzetkép az oktatási szegregációról.* (My fault – Report on educational segregation) Szeged, Motivációs Oktatási Egyesület, <https://mek.oszk.hu/18200/18263/18263.pdf> (downloaded: 2020.10.05.)

Győri Á. (2020a). A szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek vélekedése a szakmai munka körülményeiről (Opinions of social and special education professionals on professional working conditions). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei* (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Győri Á. (2020b). Érzelmi, fizikai és mentális megterhelés a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek körében (Emotional, physical and mental strain of social professionals and special education teachers). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei* (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Hanushek, E. A., Woessmann, L. (2011). The Economics of International Differences in Educational Achievement. In: Hanushek, E. A., Woessmann, L. (ed.). *Handbooks in Economics*, Vol. 3, The Netherlands: North-Holland, 89-200.

Hanushek, E. A., Woessmann, L. (2014). Institutional Structures of the Education System and Student Achievement: A Review of Cross-country Economic Research, In: Strietholt, R., Bos, W.,

Gustafsson, J. E., Rosen, M. (eds.). Educational Policy Evaluation through International Comparative Assessments, Munster – New York, Waxmann, 145-175.

Józsa K., Fejes J. B. (2012). A tanulás affektív tényezői. (Affective factors of learning) In Csapó B. (ed.). Mérlegen a magyar iskola (Hungarian schools are reviewed). Budapest, Nemzeti Tankönyvkiadó, 367–406.

Kertesi G., Kézdi G. (2012). A roma és nem roma tanulók teszteredményei közti különbségekről és e különbségek okairól (On the differences between the test results of Romani and non-Romani students and the reasons for these differences). *Közgazdasági Szemle*, LIX, 798–853.

Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020a). Az iskolai teljesítményt és előmenetelt hátrányosan befolyásoló tényezők megítélése a szociális szakemberek nézőpontjából (Assessing the factors adversely affecting school performance and progress from the point of view of social professionals), *Társadalomtudományi Szemle (socio.hu)*, 2020(1):45-73, <https://doi.org/10.18030/socio.hu.2020.1.45> (downloaded: 2020.10.05.)

Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020b). Az oktatási hátrányok kompenzációjának eszközei a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek olvasatában (Means for compensating educational disadvantages according to the interpretation of social professionals and special education teachers). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

OECD (2018). *Equity in Education: Breaking Down Barriers to Social Mobility*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264073234-en> (downloaded: 2020.10.05)

Perpék É., Győri Á., Kiss M., Szászvai-Papp G., Vastagh Z. (2020). Kutatási zárójelentés (Final research report). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020a). Vélemények a szociális területet érintő szakmai együttműködés fontosságáról, gyakoriságáról és hatékonyságáról. (Opinions on the importance, frequency and efficiency of professional cooperation). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés,

iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020b). Szakmák közötti kapcsolatok és együttműködés: a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek percepciói (Interprofessional relations and cooperation: perceptions of social professionals and special education teachers). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Róbert P. (2004). Iskolai teljesítmény és társadalmi háttér nemzetközi összehasonlításban (School performance and social background in international comparison). In: Kolosi T., Tóth I. Gy., Vukovich Gy. (eds.). Társadalmi Riport 2004 (Social Report 2004). Társas, Budapest, 193–205.

Rumberger, R. W., Lim, S. A. (2008). Why Students Drop Out of School: A Review of 25 Years of Research, California Dropout Research Project, Santa Barbara
<https://www.issuelab.org/resources/11658/11658.pdf> (downloaded: 2020.10.05.)

Szemerszki M. (2015). A tanulói eredményesség dimenziói és háttértényezői (Dimensions and Background Factors of Student Effectiveness), In: Szemerszki M. (ed.). Eredményesség az oktatásban – Dimenziók és megközelítések (Effectiveness in Education - Dimensions and Approaches). Budapest, Oktatókutató és Fejlesztő Intézet,
http://ofi.hu/sites/default/files/attachments/1505765_eredmenyesseg_az_oktatasban_beliv.pdf (downloaded: 2020.10.05.)

Szemerszki M. (ed.). (2016). Hátrányos helyzet és iskolai eredményesség. Az általános iskolák hátránykompenzáló lehetőségei (Disadvantage and school performance. Compensatory opportunities for primary schools.). Budapest, Oktatókutató és Fejlesztő Intézet.

Szell K. (2013). Factors Determining Student Achievement. Hungarian Educational Research Journal, 3(3):55–6.

Székely K. (2015). Iskolai eredményesség és tanári attitűdök (School performance and teacher attitudes). In: Szemerszki M. (ed.). Eredményesség az oktatásban (Effectiveness in education). Budapest, Oktatókutató és Fejlesztő Intézet.

Woessmann, L. (2004). How Equal are Educational Opportunities? Family Background and Student Achievement in Europe and the United States (September 2004). IZA Discussion Paper No. 1284. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=586784>

**MEANS FOR COMPENSATING EDUCATIONAL
DISADVANTAGES ACCORDING TO THE
INTERPRETATION OF SOCIAL AND SPECIAL
EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

MÁRTA KISS - ZOLTÁN VASTAGH

Introduction

In our study, we examine the indirect and direct means of compensating for disadvantages in the field of education (school failure, drop-outs, lack of further education, etc.) from the point of view of social and special education professionals. Based on a survey of 261 people in Baranya County, covering three professional groups, a significant part of the staff of pedagogical professional services, family and child welfare centers or services, as well as the staff of the child protection center and professional service carry out such activities. According to our hypothesis, the cooperation and coordinated action of teachers, special education and social professionals is essential for the success of compensating for disadvantages, therefore we consider it important to explore the opinions and activities of the latter target groups in this field. Relating to our previous paper analysing the causes of disadvantage (Kiss, Vastagh 2020a), the present study aims to examine compensatory means.

We summarize opinions on the effectiveness of the means and then compare them with the factors formed from the causes of disadvantages in education. We do this in order to draw practical conclusions based on the correspondence between the causes of the disadvantages and the means used to compensate for them. We also examine the participation of professionals in disadvantage compensation activities, and we also explore their opinions on the compensatory role of educational institutions. Where possible, we also compare the answers of Hungarian professionals with the data collected from the 100-person Croatian sample of professionals.

I. Judging the means and institutions that help schools succeed in a Hungarian-Croatian comparison

1.1 Perception of the means for compensating disadvantages

Similarly to the reasons for the development of educational disadvantages, the respondents also ranked the possible means²⁹ for solving the problems. Based on our results, according to **Hungarian** professionals, “increasing student motivation” is the most effective compensation tool, followed by increasing parental skills and competencies, followed by prevention and education (Figure 1). The training of professionals and teachers and the development of students' emotional and social competences are then included in the same number of cases, which far exceeded the number of mentions of students' cognitive competence development.

In the case of compensatory measures, the factors that increase the cultural and material capital of the parents - and thus that of the child - are “falling” back. This is surprising given that the literature considers factors influencing family background important (see, e.g., Woessmann 2004, Róbert 2004, Kertesi, Kézdi 2012, OECD 2018); such e.g. the educational level of the parents or the financial situation of the family. The means connected to them - e.g. raising the level of education of parents; cash and other benefits for reducing poverty; providing cultural, leisure programs – the professionals involved did not list amongst the most important factors.

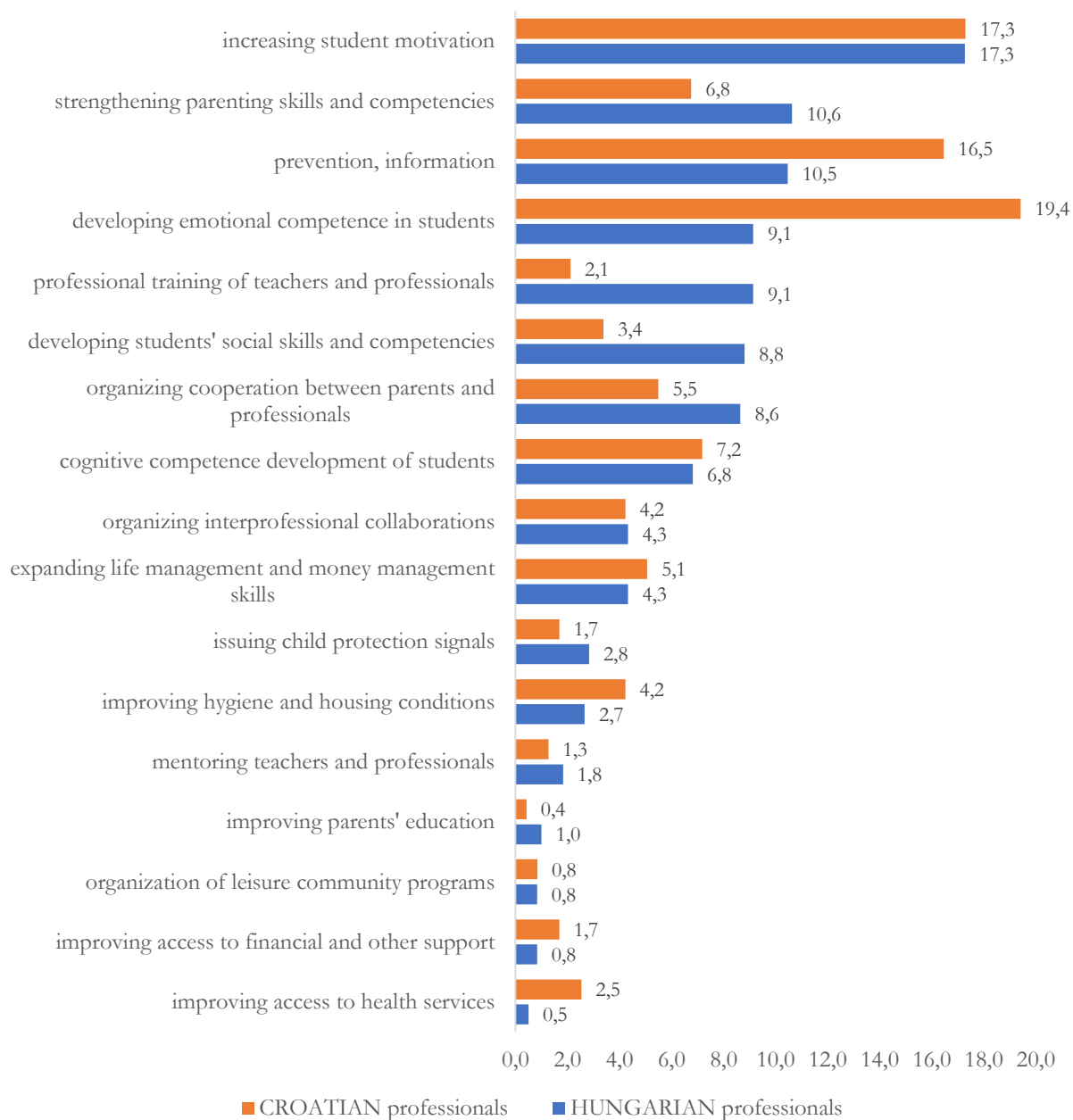
The juxtaposition of problems and means shows some differences with regard to mentioning first in the rank, but overall, the responses show relative consistency. While the majority of Hungarian professionals see the main reason for the development of disadvantages in parental behaviour and patterns, the motivation of students was mentioned in the first place and the development of parental skills and competences in the second place. The third place is taken by the tools for prevention and information, which were primarily aimed at children, but may also be relevant to parents. While the reasons for the development of disadvantages the training and means of the professionals were ranked somewhere at the back of the least, in terms of interventions it was ranked to the considerable fourth place. This may mean that professionals associate the

²⁹ The list of means to increase school success was compiled based on the history of the topic in literature and previous fieldwork experience.

development of the problem primarily with the family background and underestimate the role of the school and teachers in this respect³⁰, with regard to disadvantage compensation, in addition to motivating students and increasing parental competencies, trained professionals attribute an important role to educators in this respect.

³⁰ Based on our previous analysis (Kiss, Vastagh 2020b), the majority of social and special education professionals - similarly to the surveys conducted among educators (Széll 2015, Fejes 2018) - do not “blame” school-related factors, e.g. educational methods for the development of disadvantages either.

Figure 1 The role of each means in disadvantage compensation (% , number of mentions in the proportion of all mentions, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



In contrast to the Hungarian respondents, most of the **Croatian** professionals mentioned the “developing students’ cognitive competencies” as a means of compensation for disadvantages, which in their case is in line with the order of the problems. At the same time, “low motivation of learners” is slightly behind in the ranking of problems (in sixth place), while increasing motivation is in second place in the list of compensatory tools. In addition, Croatian professionals consider prevention and information to be at least as important (based on the first and second mentions), which overall had a very similar number of mentions as the previous tool. In addition to the above,

“developing students’ cognitive competencies” as well as “strengthening parental skills and competencies” are also seen as important means. (Figure 1)

Regarding the first five means, there was quite a lot of "coherence" between Hungarian and Croatian professionals. Four of the five items overlap, and only “development of students’ cognitive skills” was lower in the Hungarian rankings (but it should be added that it has a high number of mentions). At the same time, the assessment of the item “professional training and competence development of teachers and specialists” in the prominent place on the Hungarian list is quite behind the Croatian mentions. This can have two reasons: either they think that developing and training teachers is not an effective way to overcome disadvantages, or they do not think that solutions to problems to be found here.

Based on Croatian data, the factors “poverty and poor living conditions” are among the leading causes of disadvantage. At the same time, in the ranking of means, the indirect and direct factors for this are in the middle and in the second half of the rankings, respectively. “Improving life and money management skills” and “improving hygiene and housing conditions” are in the middle of the ranking, while “improving access to financial and other benefits” is somewhere at the end (but still much higher than in the Hungarian sample).

Poverty (and the child’s unfavourable family background) is known to be strongly correlated with parents’ low educational situation. Interestingly, both Hungarian and Croatian professionals ranked the increase in parents' education in the list of compensatory measures, as well as, less surprisingly, more indirect means of accumulating social capital (e.g. leisure programs), too.

1.2 The role of disadvantage compensation and the perception of educational institutions

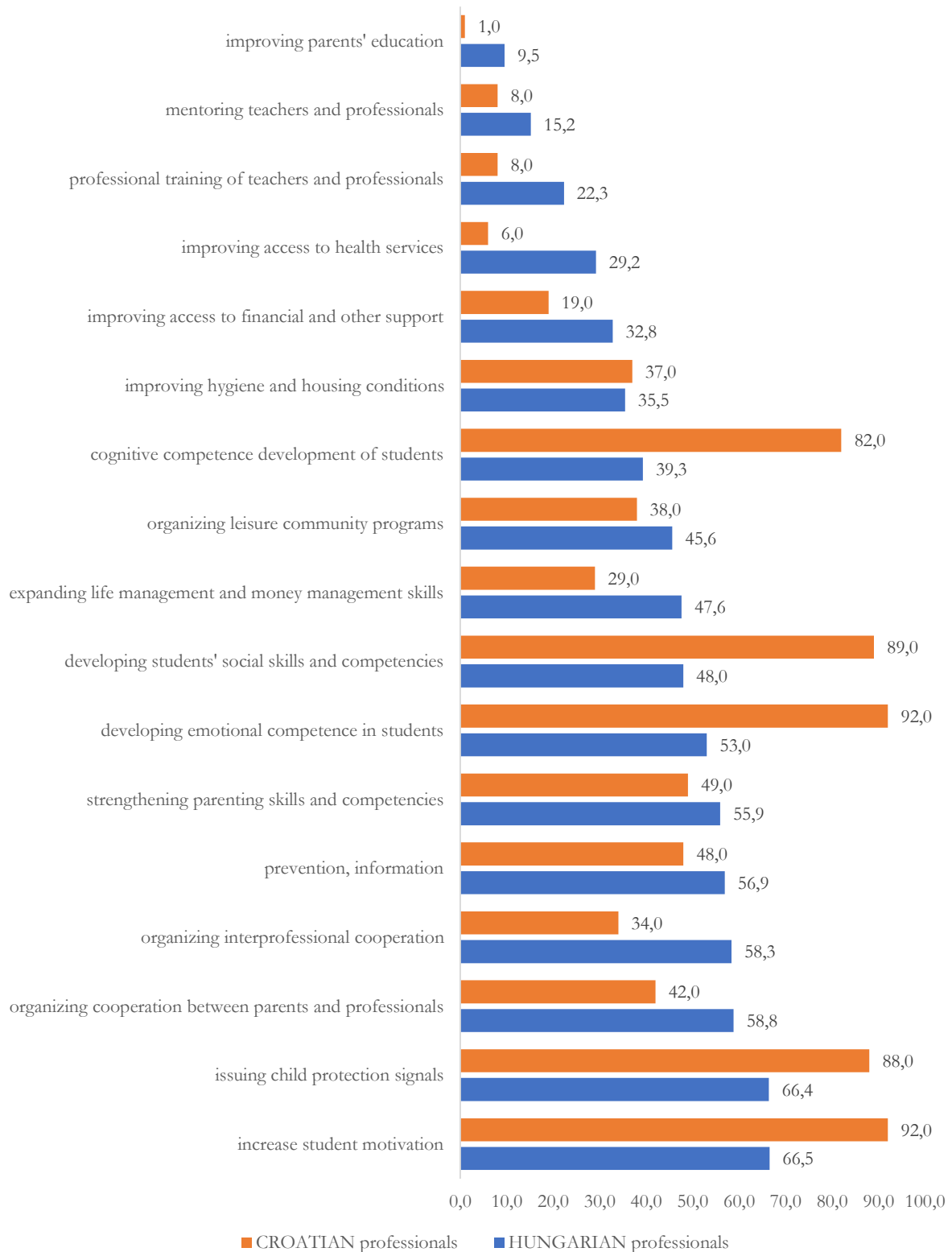
Disability compensation tools were also reviewed based on the responsibilities of the professionals by asking which tools respondents regularly use in the course of their work. We found that, in contrast to the more even distribution in Hungary, five activities among Croatian professionals show a high value, i.e. almost all respondents are involved in them.

The results show that two thirds of **Hungarian** professionals consider it their responsibility to submit child protection signals and increase student motivation. More than half of the group undertakes to organize interprofessional cooperation and cooperation between parents and

professionals, to prevent and educate, to strengthen parental skills and competencies, and to develop students' cognitive competencies. However, among the factors contributing to the development of disadvantages, the development of social competence, which was considered very important, was felt by only half of the professionals to belong in their scope of responsibilities.

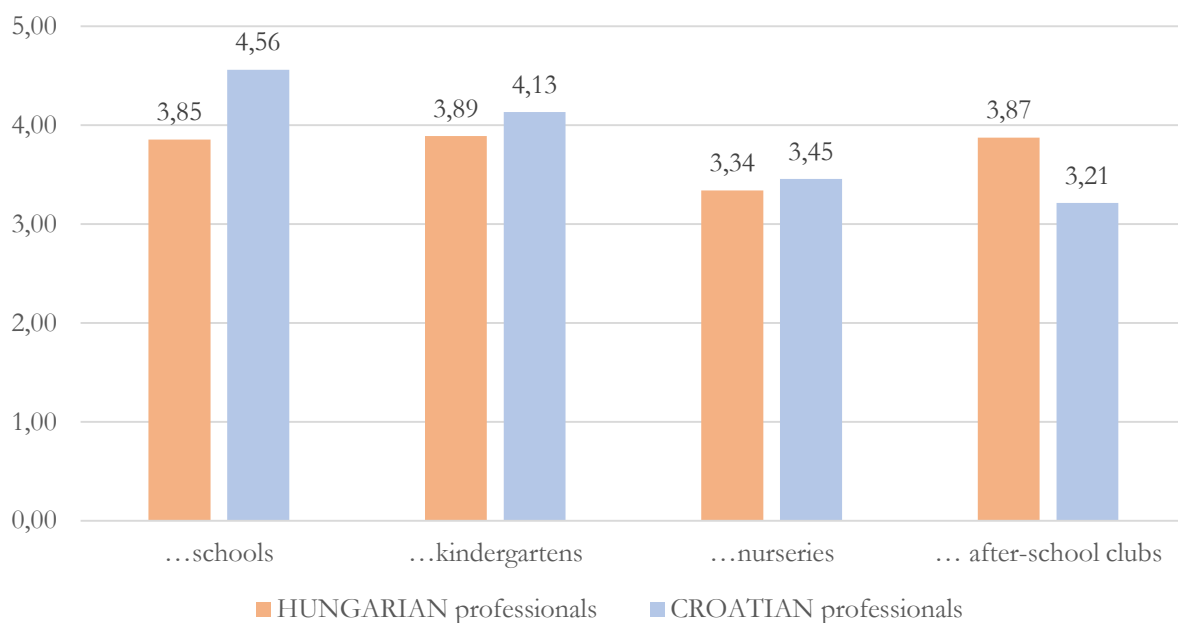
The results measured among **Croatian** professionals show that the participation rate is around 90% in activities to increase student motivation, deliver child protection signals, and develop students' emotional, social, and cognitive competencies. In the case of the latter three tasks, the difference between the Hungarian and Croatian data is particularly large, as only 50-70% of the Hungarian respondents participate in them. On the other hand, the organization of various collaborations - between professionals and with parents - is carried out in a higher proportion by Hungarian professionals. In addition, "improving access to health care" and "expanding life management and money management skills" are considered by many more professional in the Hungarian sample to be a part of their job than in the case of their Croatian counterparts. (Figure 2) The differences refer to several things: on the one hand, the different composition of the Hungarian and Croatian professionals interviewed, and on the other hand, the different features and tasks of their respective social system. At the same time, there are common factors: both target groups show an active participation of over 50% in delivering child protection signals, increasing student motivation and developing emotional, cognitive competence.

Figure 2 Disadvantage compensation methods included in the scope of responsibilities of Hungarian and Croatian professionals (%) ($N_{\text{HUNGARIAN}}=261$, $N_{\text{CROATIAN}}=100$)



Of the items listed in the questionnaire, the present study focuses on the educational institutions present in both countries. When evaluating the role of disadvantage compensation, the **Hungarian** professionals indicated the kindergarten first then the after-school clubs in the first place. School, which should classically compensate for the disadvantages brought through the family background, is in third place and did not even achieve a “good” rating. (However, it must be added here that there is very little difference between the averages for the assessment of institutions.) In the **Croatian** sample, the school received a particularly good rating, and the evaluation of the kindergarten is also higher than that of by Hungarian professionals. Overall, it can be concluded that the role of educational institutions in compensating for disadvantage is clearly perceived more positively among Croatian professionals compared to their Hungarian colleagues.

Figure 3 To what extent do you think the institutions listed below are able/suitable to help catch up and reduce educational disadvantages? (mean values, 1=not at all, 5=completely, N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



II. Correlations between the causes for developing educational disadvantage and the means to facilitate school success

After listing the means of disadvantage compensation tools facilitating school success, we also intended to investigate if they were related to the reasons identified by the professionals (see Kiss, Vastagh 2020a). In order to explore the relationship, we corresponded the specific groups of factors leading to educational disadvantages to the groups of factors indicated in the international literature (Rumberger, Lim 2008: 93-95, 96-98), whereby we managed to empirically identify eight factors³¹ in the **Hungarian** sample by means of factor analysis (cf. Kiss, Vastagh 2020b). They included factors related to:

1. professionals working in the school and institutional cooperation;
2. children's behaviour, attitudes and motivation;
3. parental attitudes and behaviour patterns;
4. shortcomings in the teaching methodology;
5. the abilities and competencies of children;
6. school segregation;
7. material poverty;
8. and low levels of cultural capital.

The relationships between means influencing school success and causes were examined using cross-tabulation analysis. To this end, we converted the eight continuously distributed high-measurement factors into eight three-category low-measurement variables that express “less important,” “moderately important,” and “important” ratings. Of the results, only the significant ($\chi^2 \leq 0,05$) and logically well-interpreted relationships relevant to our topic are described.

³¹ Factor analysis was performed by varimax rotation. Based on the KMO and Bartlett tests, the database was suitable for analysis.

II.1 Correlations with school, teachers and teaching methods

The first factor includes *factors related to the lack and motivation of professionals working in the school, as well as institutional cooperation.*³² It is not really surprising that there was a significant relationship between the components of this factor and the professional training and competence development of teachers and professionals (Cramer $V=0.232$). This means that the professionals interviewed, who blame the lack of teachers and specialists, burnout and the lack of school cooperation for the development of educational disadvantages, were more likely to rank the tool of professional training and competence development of teachers and professionals among the most effective ones.

It is less clear whether the strengthening of parental skills and competencies also has a significant correlation with this group of factors. Here, too, a similar but slightly weaker relationship (Cramer $V=0.189$) can be observed than in the case of teacher training. According to our hypothesis, the correlation can be interpreted in terms of the cooperation of teachers and parents and the compensation of each other's shortcomings (or lack thereof), but its verification would require further research.

In addition, the improvement of children's social competencies also shows a significant correlation with the factor indicating school factors (Cramer $V=0.211$). This tool is also considered to be most effective for school success by those who see the role of both educators and the school as important.

Factors compressed by the fourth factor, which we have summarized as “*teaching-methodological deficiencies,*” can also be related to the school, more specifically the methods used by teachers. This shows a significant relationship in relation to the role of students’ emotional competencies in school success (Cramer $V=0.251$). However, an interesting pattern can be seen in this regard: those who attribute medium importance to educational methodological deficiencies ranked the development of emotional, cognitive competencies among the most important tools (11.0%), as opposed to both those who attribute low importance to this factor, who ranked development of emotional competencies among the most important means in a rather large proportion (34.4% and 30.4%, respectively).

³² For another analysis by other aspect of professional cooperation, see Perpék, Szászvai-Papp (2020a, 2020b).

The relationship of this factor with the assessment of the means of prevention and education (e.g. drop-out, early childbirth, career choice) is also significant (Cramer $V=0.179$).

Overall, very cautious conclusions can be drawn about the school-related factors (lack of quantitative and qualitative presence of teachers and shortcomings of the methods they use) and the effectiveness of the tools that can be used, which require further investigation. There seems to be a strong link between the problem of the lack and qualitative presence of teachers and other professionals involved in education (e.g. burnout³³) and the need for a tool for training and competence development. In addition, the analyses show that regarding the assessment of professionals there is a link between the lack of educational professionals and the methods they use and the development of students' social and emotional competences, as well as prevention activities.

II.2 Correlations of factors related to children's behaviour and qualities

The perception of the effectiveness of the “motivation of children” tool has a significant correlation with the factor related to *children's behaviour, attitudes, and motivation* (Cramer $V=0.204$). It means, that those who believe that problems with children's behaviour, attitudes, and motivation have a high chance of developing school disadvantage are more likely to think that motivating children could effectively improve their school success.

The factor related to *children's abilities and competencies* - again, not surprisingly - shows a significant correlation (Cramer $V=0.209$) with the assessment of the role of developing students' cognitive competence in school success. In this case those respondents consider this tool to be most effective (30.8%) who attribute great importance to children's abilities in the development of disadvantages. Thus, the correlations are fundamentally consistent with children's motivation and cognitive competence development.

³³ See also Győri (2020a, 2020b).

II. Summary and recommendations

In conclusion, it can be established that while **Hungarian** professionals primarily link the reasons for the disadvantages to the family background and underestimate the role of the school and teachers, they consider the competence development of teachers to be of paramount importance in the field of disadvantage compensation. Based on the responses, **Croatian** professionals would primarily focus on competency development and education for students, while **Hungarian** respondents would focus on motivating students and developing parental competencies and pedagogical methods for teachers. Tools to increase family cultural capital, such as improving parents' education or providing recreational programs was rated low by respondents in both samples. It is possible that the dominance of an approach whereby the most easily accessible methods with a faster effect - e.g. competency development means for children - are preferred by professionals as opposed to longer-term, more uncertain tools such as improving parental education. However, this hypothesis needs to be tested by further research distinguishing between short- and long-term effects.

We examined the proportion of professionals involved in each disadvantage compensatory activity. According to the results, two thirds of **Hungarian** professionals consider it their responsibility to submit child protection signals and increase student motivation. In addition, more than half of the group surveyed undertakes to organize interprofessional cooperation as well as cooperation between parents and professionals, prevention and education, strengthening parenting skills and competencies, and developing students' emotional competencies. Approximately 90% of **Croatian** professionals are involved in increasing student motivation, delivering child protection signals, and developing students' emotional, social, and cognitive competencies. At the same time, the other activities are performed in a much smaller proportion than the Hungarian professionals.

After that, we compared the factors formed from the reasons leading to the development of disadvantages with the possible means of disadvantage compensation in the **Hungarian** sample. Based on these, the most remarkable correlations emerged regarding the operation of schools. Respondents thus link some operational characteristics of schools (e.g. teacher shortages) and shortcomings in educational methods to the need for social and emotional competence development as well as a means of prevention and education, which they consider effective in compensating disadvantages. Further research would be needed to explore the correlations more precisely, but some level of criticism of the school system in these areas can be assumed. This is also supported by the fact that in assessing the role of institutions in compensating disadvantages,

Hungarian schools ranked only in third place behind kindergartens and schools. In the **Croatian** sample, schools were rated much higher, i.e. they were ranked first in the ranking of institutions suitable for disadvantage compensation.

Based on these, we believe that special training and competence development need more attention and more efforts ought to be made to develop teachers and special education professionals in order to apply the approach and pedagogical methods suitable for disadvantage compensation more widely and effectively in the school. Furthermore, according to the professionals, it is worth emphasizing the development of students' social and emotional competencies, as well as preventive and informative activities. These can facilitate school integration, meeting expectations, more sense of achievement, and thereby improve school success and reduce dropouts.

The correlations with children's motivation and cognitive competence development³⁴ are fundamentally consistent, confirming the importance of these problems need for and the means associated with them (i.e., children's motivation and cognitive development).

As social and special education professionals play an active role in motivating students, increasing parenting skills and children's emotional competencies, as well as in prevention activities, professional consultation with teachers and educational professionals would be justified for coordinated action, which would ultimately make these tools more effective.

³⁴ See also Perpék et al. (2020).

References

Fejes J. B. (2018). A deszegregációval kapcsolatos vélemények befolyásolási lehetőségei a pedagógusok körében (Possibilities of influencing opinions about desegregation among educators). In: Fejes J. B., Szűcs N. (ed.). *Én vétkem. Helyzetkép az oktatási szegregációról.* (My fault. A report on segregation in education.) Szeged: Motivációs Oktatási Egyesület, 111-129.

Győri Á. (2020a). A szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek vélekedése a szakmai munka körülményeiről (Opinions of social and special education professionals on professional working conditions). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei* (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Győri Á. (2020b). Érzelmi, fizikai és mentális megterhelés a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek körében (Emotional, physical and mental strain of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei* (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Kertesi G., Kézdi G. (2012). A roma és nem roma tanulók teszteredményei közti különbségekről és e különbségek okairól. (On the differences between the test scores of Roma and non-Roma students and the reasons for these differences.) *Közgazdasági Szemle*, LIX:798–853.

Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020a). Az oktatás területén megnyilvánuló hátrányok okai a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek szemszögéből (Reasons for disadvantages in the field of education from the perspective of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei* (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020b). Az iskolai teljesítményt és előmenetelt hátrányosan befolyásoló tényezők megítélése a szociális szakemberek nézőpontjából (Assessing the factors adversely

affecting school performance and progress from the point of view of social professionals), *Társadalomtudományi Szemle (socio.hu)*, 2020(1): 45-73., <https://doi.org/10.18030/socio.hu.2020.1.45> (downloaded: 05/10/2020)

OECD (2018). *Equity in Education: Breaking Down Barriers to Social Mobility*, PISA, OECD Publishing, Paris. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264073234-en> (downloaded: 05/10/2020)

Perpék É., Győri Á., Kiss M., Szászvai-Papp G., Vastagh Z. (2020). *Kutatási zárójelentés (Final research report)*. In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020a). *Vélemények a szociális területet érintő szakmai együttműködés fontosságáról, gyakoriságáról és hatékonyságáról. (Opinions on the importance, frequency and efficiency of professional cooperation)*. In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020b). *Szaktárkák közötti kapcsolatok és együttműködés: a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek percepciói (Interprofessional relations and cooperation: perceptions of social and special education professionals)*. In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Róbert P. (2004). *Iskolai teljesítmény és társadalmi háttér nemzetközi összehasonlításban. (School performance and social background in international comparison.)* In: Kolosi T., Tóth I. Gy., Vukovich Gy. (ed.). *Társadalmi Riport 2004. (Social Report 2004)* Társi, Budapest, 193–205.

Szell K. (2015). *Iskolai eredményesség és tanári attitűdök. (School performance and teacher attitudes.)* In: Szemerszki M. (ed.). *Eredményesség az oktatásban. (Efficiency in education)*

Rumberger, R. W., Lim, S. A. (2008). Why Students Drop Out of School: A Review of 25 Years of Research, California Dropout Research Project, Santa Barbara

<https://www.issuelab.org/resources/11658/11658.pdf> (downloaded: 05/10/2020)

Woessmann, L. (2004). How Equal are Educational Opportunities? Family Background and Student Achievement in Europe and the United States (September 2004). IZA Discussion Paper No. 1284. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=586784>

**OPINIONS OF SOCIAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROFESSIONALS ON PROFESSIONAL WORKING
CONDITIONS**

ÁGNES GYÓRI

Introduction

Based on the results of the questionnaire surveys conducted among Hungarian and Croatian social professionals, the present study explores how those working in child protection and family and child welfare care feel about the effectiveness of their work, the difficulties and certain aspects of their working conditions.

The fact that the social work profession is in crisis is becoming an increasingly important issue not only in domestic but also in international discourse (Asquith et al. 2005, Bugarszki 2014, Kozma 2020, Rácz 2014). A decade and a half ago, a U.S. Report on the difficulties of the social worker profession pointed out that increasing administrative burdens, excessive “paperwork,” high client numbers, and problems with clients in difficult life situations are a major source of conflict in social care worldwide. (Centre for Workforce Studies 2006). In addition, often changing and/or unclear legislation deteriorate the crisis situation in the social profession (Bransford 2005). These circumstances obviously play a role in the career leave of those working in the social field: international and domestic research experiences indicate high fluctuations and a significant shortage of professionals (Mor Barak et al. 2001, Kopasz 2017, Rácz 2015). High fluctuations in the human services sector have a number of negative consequences, including deteriorating the quality of the care system, increasing client distrust, and causing anxiety in old and new employees who have taken up vacant positions (De Croon et al. 2004, Geurts et al. 1998).

Within research related to those working in the human services sector, an area often explored is work stress and its moderating factors. Numerous studies point out that stress among the individual and work/working conditions play a key role in predictors of stress (Maslach et al. 1982, 2001). Several studies show that job satisfaction is a significant protective factor for people-based professions, which are particularly vulnerable to stress at work (Lee et al. 2013, Shanafelt et al. 2014).

Based on the above, the important question of what the “professional well-being” of professionals working in the social field today is like as well as how satisfied they are with their work and certain elements of their working conditions arise. Despite the fact that satisfaction with working conditions in connection with the stress burden of those working in the human service sector – primarily in the healthcare sector – has been widely researched (Bakker et al., 2004, Burbeck et al., 2002, Hegedűs et al. 2004), to our knowledge, neither a questionnaire nor data collection survey has been carried out in Croatia or Hungary to date to examine social and other professionals

working in the field of disadvantage compensation. In this respect, our research is gap-filling and at the same time exploratory.

Our study is based on the data of questionnaire surveys conducted in 2019 among Hungarian (Baranya county) and in 2020 in Croatian (Osijek-Baranya county) social professionals under the project called “*Transnational cooperation*”. The number of items in the Baranya sample is 261, while in the cross-border sample it is 100 (for details, see Perpék et al. 2020).

The study first presents the opinions of the social and special education professionals surveyed about their work, professional achievements, and difficulties, and then it reviews their job satisfaction. During the analysis of the individual problem areas, we also look for correlations and correlates, i.e. we also examine what conditions and factors play a role in the development of the individual “professional well-being indicators”. Finally, we summarize the results obtained and the policy recommendations we can draw from them. In addition to these topics, the survey also examines school disadvantage compensation (Kiss, Vastagh 2020a, 2020b) and professional relationships (Perpék, Szászvai-Papp 2020a, 2020b). The low number of items in the Croatian sample only allows for cautious conclusions, but - taking into account the limitations – they offer a good benchmark for comparison with the Hungarian results.

I. Difficulties and correlates of professional work

First, we investigate how social and special education professionals view the effectiveness of their professional work, what problems they face most in their work, and what the underlying reasons of these factors are. Descriptive statistics were prepared for all the variables we examined, the correlations were revealed by means of one-way analysis of variance (accepting a significance level of $p < 0.1$).

Respondents were able to express their opinions on the statements made in the questionnaire on a four-point scale in relation to the problem areas examined. Based on the results, the majority of the **Hungarian** social and special education professionals surveyed generally consider their work to be successful (the proportion of those who tend to agree and strongly agree with the statement is 81.7%), and only one-fifth (18.3%) do not consider it effective. Regarding the efficiency of professional work, the general opinion of the respondents - but especially those working in the child protection centre and professional service - is that they can typically only achieve temporary results; they cannot help families and clients in need in the long run. Judging the effectiveness of one's own work is, of course, related to the feedback from the clients receiving cares: those who receive positive feedback from their clients consider their professional work more effective.

According to the Hungarian respondents, the biggest difficulty related to professional work is too much paperwork, because it results in not having enough time for clients (Figure 1). The next biggest problem is the social situation of families in need, as well as the refusal of clients to cooperate. The tools that professionals can use to help clients are moderately available. It is also quite evident that cultural differences between social workers and families in need also emerge among the difficulties, although, specialists are in principle considered to be "prepared" to deal with this issue. The other group of problems, which is also a training issue, is related to visiting families receiving care: lack of a sense of security in the field work, a lot of travel involved while performing their jobs and the need to visit clients at places often hard to reach.

Figure 1: Assessment of difficulties related to professional work among professionals (%)
 (N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)

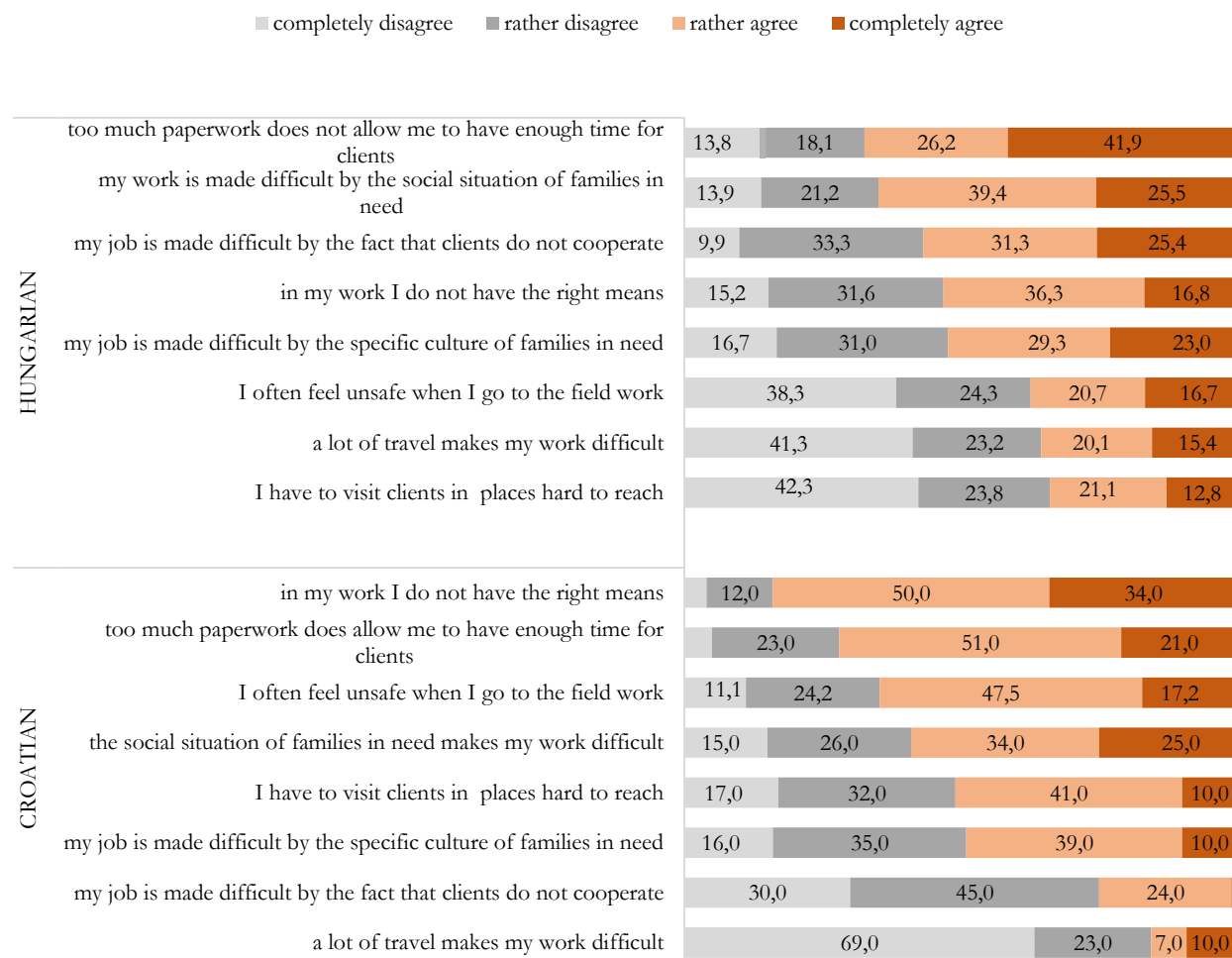


Table 1 Correlation of the effectiveness of professional work with various aspects of work and other factors among Hungarian professionals, (% , N=261)

	My work is usually successful (on a scale of 1 to 4) (Mean: 3.03; Median: 3.00)				<i>Level of Significance</i>
	Mean	Median	Number of items	Standard deviation	
Field					
Family and child welfare center	2.82	3.00	85	0.693	Sig=0,001; Eta=0,231; Eta square=0,053
Child protection center and professional service	3.07	3.00	97	0.753	
Pedagogical professional service, other	3.23	3.00	69	0.573	
Professional experience					
Up to 5 years	2.99	3.00	118	0.745	Sig=0.055; Eta=0.207; Eta square =0.043
6-15 years	3.07	3.00	75	0.664	
16-30 years	3.11	3.00	47	0.667	
At least 30 years	2.91	3.00	11	0.701	
Education					
He has a degree	2.93	3.00	140	0.726	Sig=0.006; Eta=0.179; Eta square=0.032
He has more than one degree	3.20	3.00	91	0.648	

An examination of the correlates of professional effectiveness (Table 1) shows that the social work field itself, the experience gained in the field and the wide-ranging knowledge are important among Hungarian professionals in terms of work effectiveness. Those working in the pedagogical professional service consider that their work the most effective, while among the professionals of the family and child protection centre, the proportion of those who generally consider their work to be successful is lower (the opinion of those working in the child protection centre expresses the sample average). Based on the groups created according to work experience by the number of years spent in work, those who have been working in the field for a few (at least 6) years consider their work to be effective, but the correlation is not linear, as the sense of effective work decreases after several decades (at least 30 years) of professional experience. Professional skills measured by the number of qualifications also show some, although not very significant, correlation with the efficiency of professional work: those who are more qualified – i.e. those with more than one qualification – consider their work to be effective. We note here that there were no statistically significant differences for the other explanatory variables examined, such as the target group of daily work and disadvantage and catching up as a mandatory task.

When evaluating professional efficiency, the opinion of **Croatian** professionals is almost the same as that of Hungarian professionals: the majority of them consider their work to be effective (76.8%

rather agree or completely agree with the statement), and only a quarter (23.2%) do not think so. Most of them, slightly less than half of the respondents, perceive that they can typically only show temporary results, but in the long run they cannot help families in need. These data also confirm the close correlation between the effectiveness of one's own professional work and the feedback from those who receive care: professionals who receive positive feedback from their clients typically find their professional work more effective.

Data from Croatia also reveal that overall job satisfaction varies significantly in the different professional fields as well as depending on the time spent in the field and the job. Our results reflect the fact that above-average satisfaction is mainly characteristic of Croatian social and special education professionals who has a considerable professional experience.

Regarding the ranking of the difficulties related to the work of the professionals interviewed in Croatia, a similar picture emerges as in Hungary (see Figure 1). The biggest difficulty for Croatian respondents is the lack of available resources, followed by too many administrations in second place (which was marked in the first place by Hungarian professionals). Furthermore, similar to the results in Hungary, it poses a serious difficulty for them that clients will not cooperate and that they do not feel safe when they go to provide service out of the office. At the same time, the social situation and different cultures of the families under care are not perceived as such a difficulty in their work as by the Hungarian professionals. The least number of work-related travel make their work difficult, which is very similar to that experienced in Baranya, Hungary.

Overall, the opinions of social and special education professionals working in the two countries show a number of similarities in the assessment of their professional achievements and difficulties, while the factors determining the effectiveness of their work are also very similar. However, an important difference must be emphasized by all means: for Croatian professionals, the social situation and specific culture of families in need do not pose as much difficulty in their work as it appears in the problem ranking of Hungarian professionals. It can be assumed that the geographical-regional differences of the work and the typical settlement structure would explain this, but the details of this were not addressed in the research.

II. Satisfaction with work and working conditions and its correlates

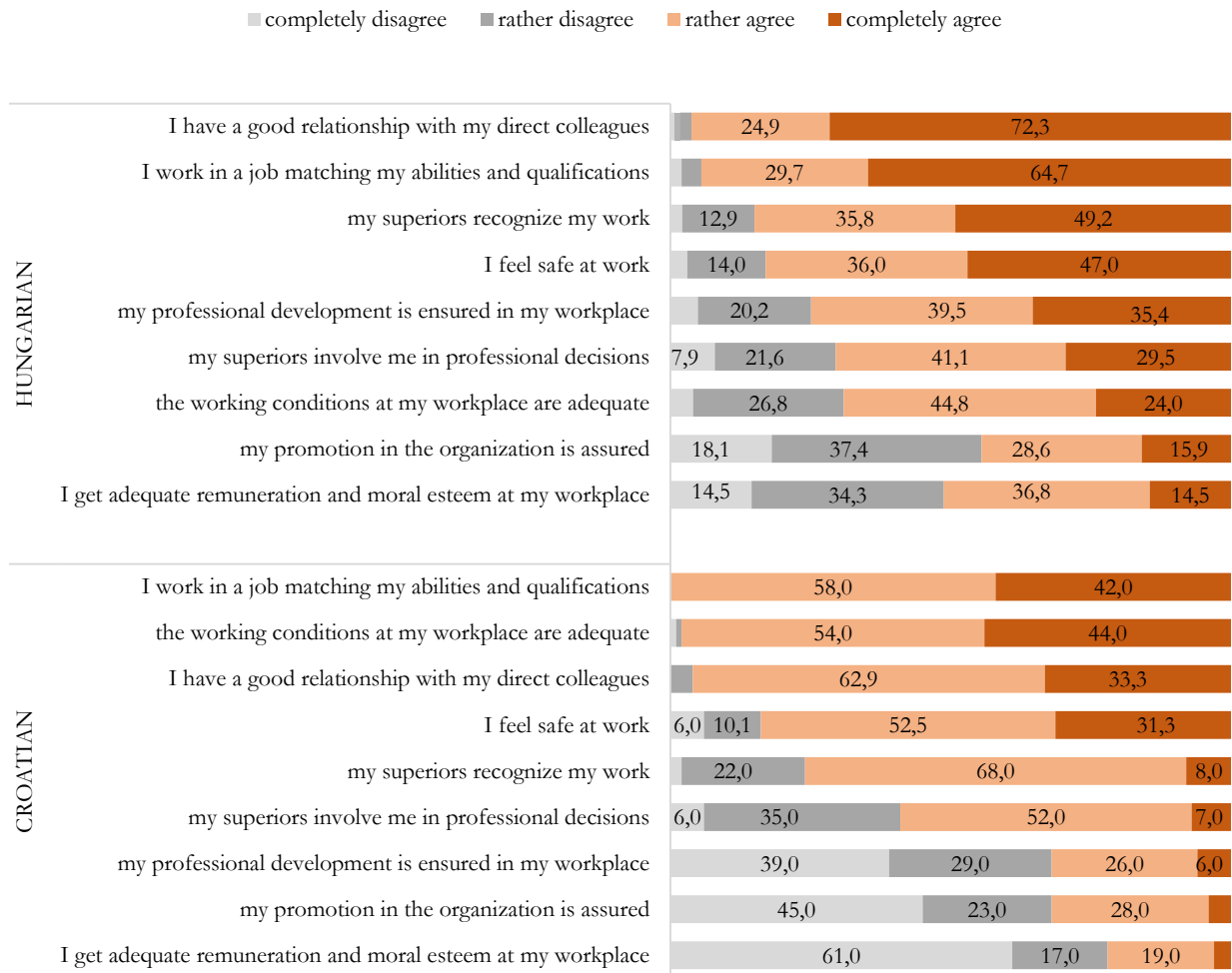
In the following, we examine the satisfaction of the social and special education professionals interviewed with their work and certain elements of their working conditions, and then the factors determining the individual satisfaction attitudes. Similar to the previous chapter, we first present the ranking of satisfaction with organizational factors in a descriptive manner, and then use one-way analysis of variance to compare different groups.

The survey of job and working conditions was conducted in the present research by shortening and reformulating the questions of the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ) (1967) conducted earlier by Weiss et al.³⁵ Of the MSQ versions, we used the abridged version of the 20-item version, i.e. a 9-item scale. Respondents could their indicate agreement or disagreement with each statement on a 4-point scale, i.e., the response options ranged from “not at all typical” to “absolutely typical”. Although the questionnaire was not validated separately, its internal reliability is excellent (Cronbach’s alpha value: 0.864).

Examining various aspects of organizational factors (Figure 2), **Hungarian** social and special education professionals are satisfied with their relationships with direct colleagues the most (1) (72.3% are fully satisfied, a further 24.9% are rather satisfied), (2) is followed by satisfaction with the job corresponding to their qualification (64.7% are fully satisfied, a further 29.7% are rather satisfied) and (3) recognition by the supervisor (49% absolutely, another 35.9% rather typical). The ranking of the listed satisfaction indicators include (4) the sense of security created by the workplace, (5) the provision of professional development, and (6) the involvement in professional decisions by supervisors (usually 47-30% of the sample are fully satisfied with these conditions). Respondents are least satisfied with (7) working conditions, (8) the possibility of organizational promotion in the workplace, and (9) their remuneration/moral esteem (usually only a quarter to one-sixth of respondents are fully satisfied with these conditions).

¹ In international research, two forms of the MSQ questionnaire have become widespread: the shorter 20-item version and the longer 100-item version. Both versions examine twenty job-specific factors, and in the longer version, each factor has five sub-questions. The MSQ questionnaire aims to measure the following dimensions of satisfaction: utilization of abilities, performance, activity, development opportunity, authority, corporate policies, compensation, employees, creativity, independence, moral values, recognition, responsibility, job security, benefits, social status, treatment of employees by the leader(s), professional competence of the manager(s), diversity, working conditions and overall satisfaction.

Figure 2 Satisfaction with some elements of working conditions among professionals (%)
 (N_{HUNGARIAN}=261, N_{CROATIAN}=100)



The mean of the so-called “job satisfaction” variable created from the combination of the nine satisfaction scales reviewed is 3.06 (standard deviation: 0.568 minimum value: 1 and maximum value: 4), which reflects the fact that Hungarian professionals are generally satisfied with their work. We note that the mean of the responses to the global job satisfaction question (mean: 3.18; standard deviation: 0.69) is very similar to the mean of the job satisfaction index developed afterwards.

It is clear from the results that Hungarian professionals responded most positively about human factors: they were most satisfied with the relationships with their colleagues (direct workmate and superior relationships) and their job responsibilities. At the same time, they are least satisfied with their career opportunities within the organization and their remuneration and moral esteem.

Overall job satisfaction varies depending on the type of job/work area and time spent at work. Based on the group averages, it can be concluded that the job satisfaction of the specialists of the pedagogical professional service and those who have been working in the field for more than a

decade (but less than 30 years) is above the average. Based on a detailed examination of the individual satisfaction attitudes, the employees of the pedagogical professional service show higher average satisfaction values in all the dimensions examined, except for the perception of the working conditions; in this respect the most satisfied group of professionals are the employees of the child protection centre and the professional service.

The ranking of job satisfaction indicators in Croatia (see Figure 2) reveals that professionals are most satisfied with (1) working in a job that matches their qualifications (100% of respondents are completely or rather satisfied with it). This is followed by (2) working under appropriate working conditions (98% fully or rather satisfied) and (3) having a good relationship with direct colleagues (95.9% fully or more satisfied). A very similar proportion follows (4) the sense of security created by the workplace (83.8% of them are completely or rather satisfied) and (5) the recognition by their superior (76% of them is completely or rather satisfied), and (6) the involvement in professional decisions by superiors (for 59% of them is absolutely or rather typical). On the other hand, they are least satisfied with (7) the provision of professional development, (8) the promotion opportunities within the organization, and finally (9) their remuneration/moral esteem (usually only one-third to one-quarter of respondents are satisfied with the latter).

Compared to the Hungarian results, there is a high similarity between the satisfaction indicators at the beginning and the end of the ranking in the two samples. Hungarian professionals are also most satisfied with the relationship with their direct co-workers and superiors, but while satisfaction with working conditions is also at the top of the list in the ranking of Croatian professionals, the latter is found much lower in the Hungarian ranking. The perceptions of both Hungarian and Croatian professionals about career opportunities within the organization, as well as their remuneration and moral esteem, are also very similar: these circumstances are at the very end of the rankings in both samples.

Summary and recommendations

Our study examined the views of Hungarian and Croatian social and special education professionals regarding their work, their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their work and workplace. During the analysis of the individual professional well-being indicators, we also tried to map the possible underlying factors. When summarizing the results, we focus primarily on the results in Hungary, while referring to the similarities and differences emerging from the data of the Hungarian and Croatian surveys. Our policy recommendations only apply to Hungary.

The majority of social and development professionals consider their work to be effective, however, their opinion is that they can typically achieve only temporary results and cannot help families and clients in need in the long run. The biggest difficulty related to the efficiency of professional work was pointed out by Hungarian professionals include too much paperwork, which means that they do not have enough time left to deal with their clients. Administrative burdens – among the groups of professionals under review - characterize a particularly high proportion of those working in the family and child welfare centre. The next group of problems is related to the mentality and culture of the recipients of care, and the difficulty factors rated highly among those working in the field of child protection: the social situation of the clients/needy and the lack of cooperation skills. Lower-than-average difficulties are associated with visiting clients, such as burdensome commuting or visiting clients in places hard to reach. A very similar picture emerges from the data recorded among Croatian professionals, with the difference that Croatian professionals do not perceive the specific social situation and culture of the families under care as difficult in their work as the Hungarian professionals interviewed.

Based on all this, it is evident that the most justified improvements should include the reduction of professional difficulties related to travel, fieldwork and administration. Special attention should be paid to “formal” professionals dealing with school disadvantages, who have reported the most problems with administration and resources, thus for them the most needed solution-oriented intervention are to be found in these areas. Improving the social and cultural situation and living conditions of the recipients of care is a task related to the work of the specialists reviewed, and although it is a circumstance that makes the effectiveness of professional work more difficult, it is a peculiarity of their special field.

When examining job satisfaction, we found that both Hungarian and Croatian professionals were generally satisfied with their jobs (the mean score of the “satisfaction index” in the Hungarian

survey was 3.06, while in the Croatian survey it was 3.11), although some differences can be detected depending on the professional groups and the time spent in the field. At the same time, it can be concluded that the respondents are the least satisfied with the working conditions, the promotion opportunities in the organizational as well as their remuneration and/or moral esteem.

Increasing job satisfaction is recommended both in the field of family support and child protection, and in the case of professional educational services. There are several ways to do this: raising wages, improving working conditions, strengthening training, creating an attractive career models for teachers and social professionals with a predictable career path and promotion opportunities. Ensuring stable, predictable rules, legislative requirements, a system of expectations and evaluations, and a range of work and activities that meet competencies and are as personalized as possible are also important factors in professional well-being.

References

- Asquith, S., Clark, C. and Waterhouse, L. (2005). *The Role of the Social Worker in the 21st Century – A Literature Review*. Vol. 25., Edinburgh: Scottish Executive Education Department.
- Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., Verbeke, W. (2004). Using the job demands resources model to predict burnout and performance. *Human Resources Management*, 43 (1):83–104.
- Burbeck, R., Coomber, S., Robinson, M., Todd, C. (2002): Occupational stress in consultants in accident and emergency medicine: a national survey of levels of stress at work. *Emergency Medicine Journal*, 19(3):234–238.
- Bransford, C.L. (2005). Conceptions of authority within contemporary social work practice in managed mental health care organizations. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 75(3):409–42.
- Bugarszki Zs. (2014). A magyarországi szociális munka válsága. *Esély*, (3):64–73.
- Centre for Workforce Studies, NASW. (2006). *Licensed Social Workers in the U.S., 2004*. <http://workforce.socialworkers.org/studies/intro.pdf>
- De Croon, E. M. , Sluiter, J. K. , Blonk, R. W. B. , Broersen, J. P. J. and Frings-Dresen, M. H. W. (2004). Stressful work, psychological job strain, and turnover: A two-year prospective cohort study of truck driver. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89(3):442–454.
- Geurts, S., Schaufeli, W., De Jonge, J. (1998). Burnout and intention to leave among mental health-care professionals: A social psychological approach. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 17(3):341–362.
- Hegedűs, K., Mészáros, E., Riskó, Á. (2004). A súlyos betegekkel foglalkozó egészségügyi dolgozók testi és lelki állapota (Physical and mental condition of health care workers dealing with patients of serious conditions). *Lege Artis Medicinae*, 14 (11):786–793.
- Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020a). Az oktatás területén megnyilvánuló hátrányok okai a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek szemszögéből (Reasons for disadvantages in the field of education from the perspective of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei* (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools,

professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020b). Az oktatási hátrányok kompenzációjának eszközei a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek olvasatában (Means for compensating educational disadvantages according to the interpretation of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Kopasz M. (2017). A családsegítő és gyermekjóléti szolgáltatás integrációjának és az ellátórendszer kétszintűvé történő átalakításának tapasztalatai. Tárki Kutatási Jelentés (Experiences of the integration of family support and child welfare services and the transformation of the care system into two levels. Tárki Research Report). Budapest, Tárki Társadalomkutatási Intézet Zrt. Letöltés: https://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2017/kitekint/20170425_csaladsegito.pdf

Kozma J. (2020). A szociális munkások munkahelyi biztonságáról, a kockázatokról és a szakma identitáskríziséről (On the safety of workers at work, the risks and the identity crisis of the profession). Párbeszéd: Szociális Munka folyóirat, 7(1):1–25.

Lee, R. T., Seo, B., Hladkyj, S., Lovell, B. L., Schwartzmann, L. (2013). Correlates of physician burnout across regions and specialties: a meta-analysis. *Human Resources Health*, 11:48.

Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E. (1981). The measurement of experienced burnout. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 2 (2):99–113.

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52: 397–422.

Mor Barak, M.E., Nissly, J.A., Levin, A. (2001). Antecedents to retention and turnover among child welfare, social work, and other human service employees: What can we learn from past research? A review and meta-analysis. *Social Service Review*, 75(4):625–662.

Perpék É., Győri Á., Kiss M., Szászvai-Papp G., Vastagh Z. (2020). Kutatási zárójelentés (Final research report). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation,

disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020a). Vélemények a szociális területet érintő szakmai együttműködés fontosságáról, gyakoriságáról és hatékonyságáról. (Opinions on the importance, frequency and efficiency of professional cooperation). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020b). Szakmák közötti kapcsolatok és együttműködés: a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek percepciói (Interprofessional relations and cooperation: perceptions of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Rácz Andrea (2014). Jó szülő-e az állam? – fejlesztési igények a gyermekvédelmi szakellátás professzionalizációjáért (Is the state a good parent? - development needs for the professionalisation of specialist childcare). In Rácz Andrea (ed.). Jó szülő-e az állam? A corporate parenting terminus gyakorlatban való megjelenése (Is the state a good parent? Appearance of the term corporate parenting in practice). Budapest, Rubeus Egyesület, 215–245.

Rácz Andrea (ed.). (2015). Gyermekjóléti szolgáltatások feladatellátásának értékelő elemzése. Műhelytanulmány (Evaluative analysis of the performance of child welfare services. A workshop study). Budapest: Rubeus Egyesület. <http://rubeus.hu/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/a-gyermekjoleti-szolgaltatok-feladatellatasanak-ertekelo-elemzese-orszagos-szinten.pdf>

Shanafelt, T. D., Gradishar, W. J., Kosty, M., et al. (2014). Burnout and career satisfaction among US oncologists. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 32 (7):678–686.

Weiss, D.J., Dawis, R. V., England, G. W., Lofquist, L. H. (1967). Manual for the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. Vol. 22, Minnesota Studies in Vocational Rehabilitation, Mineapolis: University of Minnesota.

**EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL STRAIN
OF SOCIAL AND SPECIAL EDUCATION PROFESSIONALS**

ÁGNES GYŐRI

Introduction

Our study is striving to give an overview of the emotional-physical-mental strain of Hungarian and Croatian social professionals. In addition, we aimed to present the relationships between workload indicators and satisfaction with certain aspects of working conditions.

The relevant literature unanimously draws attention to the fact that helping professionals dealing with people are exposed to excessive emotional, physical, and mental stress. Intensive, people-centred work can cause severe emotional strain: social workers working with vulnerable, disadvantaged target groups and families often become “vulnerable” themselves (Cohen, Collens 2013, Skovholt et al. 2001, Wilson 2016). Emotional - and other workplace - strain carries the risk of burn-out when otherwise motivated individuals are overwhelmed by the high amount of problems they encounter on a daily basis (Lambie 2006). Burnout syndrome is described in the literature as a state of “emotional and mental exhaustion following chronic emotional strains, stresses” that can occur in the physical, mental, and emotional realms, and can manifest itself in somatic, behavioural, emotional, and mental symptoms (Fekete 1991:17). Cherniss (1980) presents the process of burnout as three consecutive stages in his model: the perception of stress, stress leads to physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion; stress results in changes in attitudes and traits, cynicism towards clients, withdrawal and emotional separation.

Research examining the relationship between work requiring emotional stress and burnout shows the same result in all countries: emotional work alone can “predict” all components of burnout (Bozionelos, Kiamou 2008, Martínez-Iñigo et al. 2007, Zapf et al. 2001). It has also been shown that social workers working in the field are most at risk in this respect: they are more likely to feel physically and mentally exhausted in their personal and professional lives compared to other groups of social workers (Thompson et al. 1996).

Of the predictors of burnout, the literature highlights the specifics of work (environment) and social environment in addition to individual characteristics (such as predisposing factors at the level of personality traits). The research by Maslach et al. (1982, 2001) involving health care workers has consistently confirmed that work environment factors play a more decisive role in explaining the development of burnout than personal traits. Many authors highlight the crucial role of job satisfaction. A meta-analysis by Lee et al. (2013) revealed that emotional exhaustion, appearing first in the burnout process, is most influenced by satisfaction with aspects of work such as autonomy, access to decision-making, workload, and weekly working hours. Other authors point out the lack

of promotion opportunities, inadequate financial appreciation (low income), and problems with collaboration with other institutions and/or in-house departments as decisive factors in the burnout process (Shanafelt et al. 2014).

In the light of the above empirical antecedents, our study examines not only the burnout indicators of social workers but also the possible factors behind them. To the best of our knowledge, no quantitative survey aimed at a detailed review of the emotional-physical-mental burden of social and other professionals performing disadvantageous work has so far been conducted either in Hungary or Croatia, and our study aims to fill this gap.

Our exploratory study is based on the data of questionnaires conducted in 2019 in Hungary (Baranya County) and in 2020 in Croatia (Osijek-Baranya County), mainly among social workers, under the project called “Transnational Cooperation”. The number of respondents in the Hungarian sample is 261, while the number of respondents in the Croatian sample is 100³⁶.

³⁶ For a description of the sample and research, as well as further analyses, see Kiss, Vastagh (2020a, 2020b), Győri (2020), Perpék et al. (2020), Perpék, Szászvai-Papp (2020a, 2020b).

I. Measurement of emotional, physical and mental strain

Exhaustion and burnout are often associated with difficulties at work and “dissatisfaction” with work and the work environment. Exploring the emotional, physical, and mental strain, i.e., the risk of burnout, is particularly important in occupations that are characterized by intense, people-centred work. The use of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is the most common method of measuring burnout in international and domestic research practice. MBI explores three components of burnout: the segments of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. **Emotional exhaustion** is an intrapersonal dimension of burnout that can be described as emotional and physical fatigue. **Depersonalization** is an interpersonal aspect of burnout and the term describes a state characterized by indifference and insensitivity. And **professional inefficacy** is a self-esteem-related dimension of burnout characterized by low productivity and a reduced sense of competence. The three dimensions may be present independently of each other, i.e., they mark separate aspects of burnout, therefore the scales used to measure them cannot be combined (Maslach et al. 2001).

In the present study, we were able to measure these three dimensions of burnout by using a short question of three statements.³⁷ Respondents were able to rate on a four-point Likert scale how often they perceive each feeling regarding their work.

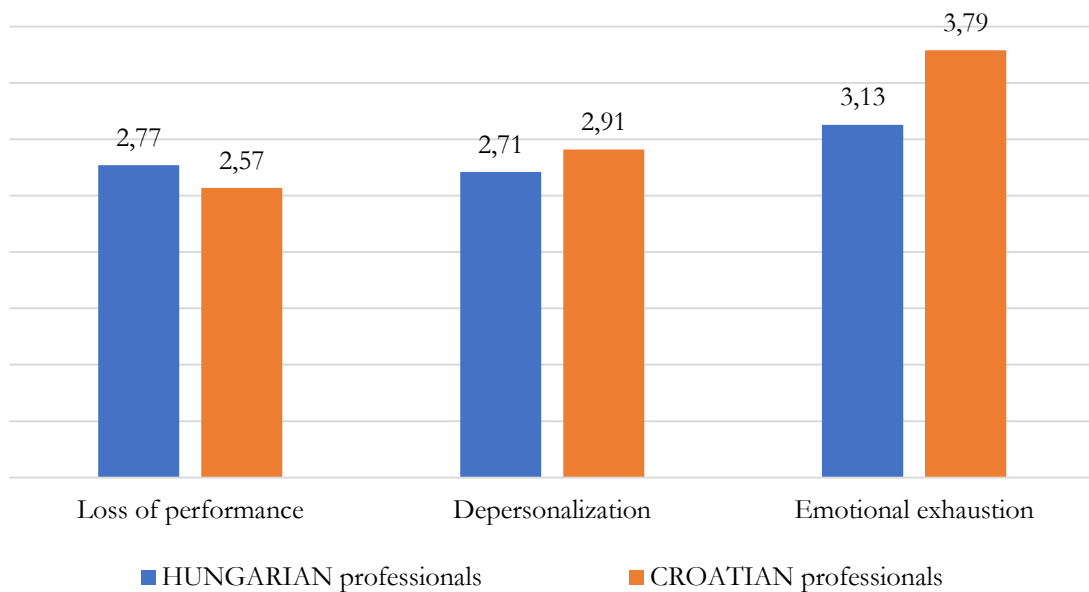
³⁷ The statements included in the questionnaire are, in order: "I am exhausted by the end of the working day." "My work makes me emotionally tougher." "My work energises me." Responses to the latter statement have been transcoded for ease of interpretation to reflect performance loss as intended.

II. Burnout dimensions

As far as the emotional exhaustion is concerned, both Hungarian and Croatian respondents have the highest average score (Hungarian sample mean: 3.13; Croatian: 3.79) (Figure 1). Among Hungarian professionals, emotional exhaustion is followed by reduced personal accomplishment with a mean of 2.77, followed by depersonalization with a very similar average score (mean: 2.71). In the case of Croatian professionals, emotional exhaustion is followed by depersonalization (mean: 2.91) and then professional inefficacy (mean: 2.57). These results reflect that the professionals involved in the study are rather affected or absolutely affected by all three dimensions of burnout.

Regarding the relationship between the three exhaustion and burnout indicators, it can be said that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization correlate more strongly (correlation index value 0.392) reduced personal accomplishment with the emotional exhaustion indicator (0.316) and depersonalization (0.316), respectively. All this means that the correlation between indicators is weaker-than-average, i.e., involvement in different dimensions of burnout is not closely related (if so, it is more likely to be associated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization). All this is supported by the data of the Croatian survey.

Figure 1 Means of each dimension of burnout among Hungarian and Croatian professionals (means, 1 = not typical at all, 4 = absolutely typical, $N_{\text{HUNGARIAN}}=261$, $N_{\text{CROATIAN}}=100$)

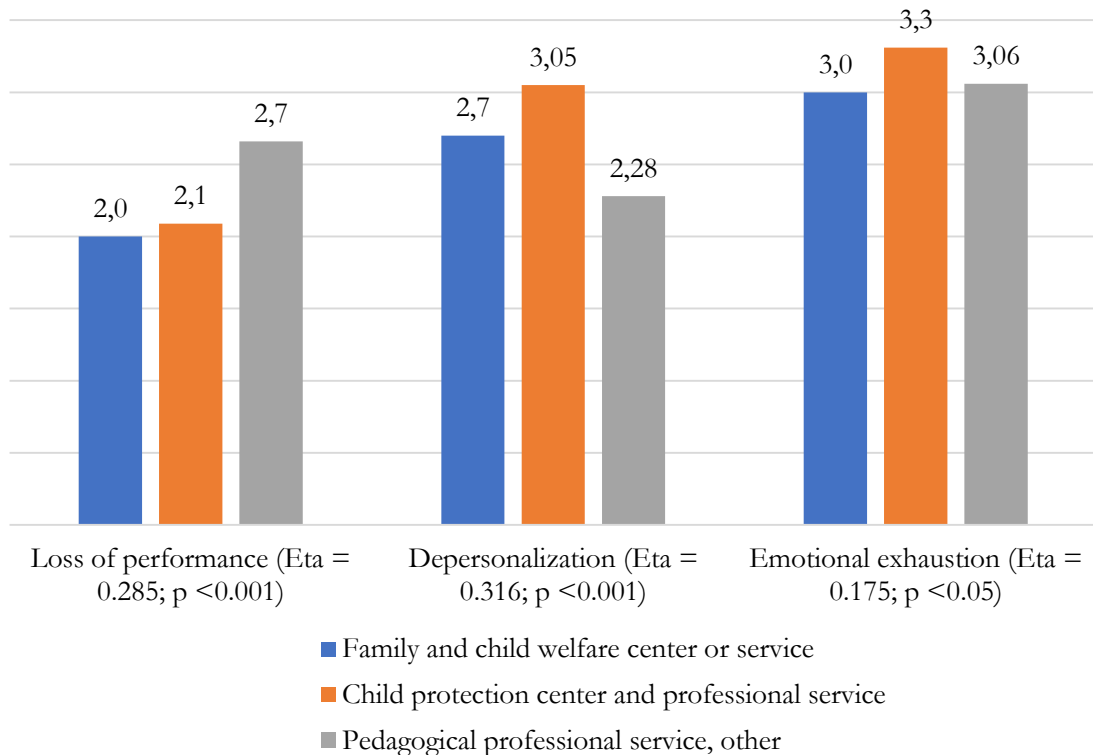


III. Correlations of each burnout dimension

In the following, we examined how the most significant aspects and other factors affecting working conditions are related to burnout, more specifically to its individual dimensions. The analysis was performed by one-way analysis of.

Regarding the individual burnout indicators, we find significant differences among Hungarian professionals according to the field the involved professional were working in (Figure 2). Emotional exhaustion received the highest average score among the professionals of the child protection center and the professional service. Among professionals working in family and child welfare centers and services, emotional exhaustion is followed by the phenomenon of depersonalization as the most common indicator of burnout, followed by loss of performance. It can also be observed that those working in the pedagogical professional service, unlike other professional groups, are characterized by a somewhat greater loss of performance than depersonalization.

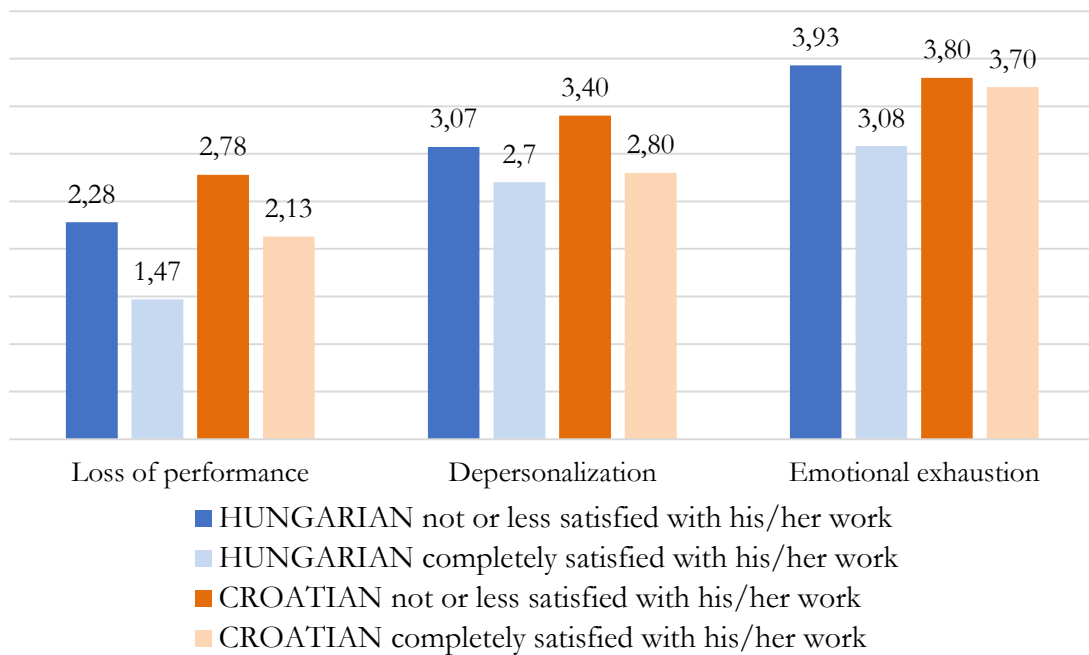
Figure 2 Means of each dimension of burnout among Hungarian professionals by the field they are involved (N=245)



In addition to the nature of the workplace, age and time spent in the field are also decisive for various aspects of burnout, while the issue of who social professionals deal with during their daily work or whether they are responsible for compensating for educational disadvantage does not show a significant correlation with none of the burnout dimensions. Of the age groups under review, the younger ones (under 35 years) experience depersonalization the most. In addition to younger people, the decline in personal performance is also characteristic of the older age group (over 55 years of age), while it is less common among middle-aged people. It is also clear that although emotional energy loss was the most common burnout index in all age groups, it received the highest average among the oldest age group (note that age differences were not found to be statistically significant only in terms of emotional exhaustion). An examination of the comparison by work experience in the field reflects the fact that the perception of all three dimensions of burnout increases along with the increase of time spent in the field concerned.

According to our hypothesis based on the relevant literature, correlations of different components of burnout with workplace satisfaction are also different. Our results based on a one-way analysis of variance confirm this: there is a strong correlation between the dimensions of overall job satisfaction, “professional well-being” and burnout (Figure 3). The results of both the Hungarian and Croatian surveys reflect the fact that among those who are less or not at all satisfied with their professional work, both emotional exhaustion, loss of performance, and depersonalization have significantly higher mean scores compared to those who are completely satisfied with their work. That is, if one is less satisfied with his or her work, a higher loss of power, emotional energy loss, and more depersonalization is expected.

Figure 3 Means of each dimension of burnout among Hungarian and Croatian professionals based on their job satisfaction ($N_{\text{HUNGARIAN}}=243$, $N_{\text{CROATIAN}}=100$)



We also examined how working conditions are related to the three dimensions of burnout. To explore this, we examined multivariate explanatory models that allow one to establish correlations regardless of gender, age, marital status, and number of children. The study of the effect of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with certain elements of the work environment on the aspects of burnout was performed only on the Hungarian database due to the low number of Croatian cases.

To do this, we first reversed the values of the work environment and organizational satisfaction scales examined in the questionnaire (for details, see Gyóri 2020), so that the high values of the indicators should express a negative attitude regarding the conditions, i.e. “dissatisfaction”, and then explored it using a statistical data compression procedure to see what underlying structure lies behind attitudes towards working conditions. Factor analysis identified five clearly distinguished dissatisfaction factors (principal factor method, varimax rotation). The value of the Kaiser – Mayer – Olkin criterion is 0.875 (Sig: 0.000). The dissatisfaction factor with the five working conditions retains 83.2 per cent of the information mass of the original measured variables, which means that the loss of information is reassuringly low (Table 1).

Table 1 The result of the factor analysis of the variables measuring the difficulties related to professional work among Hungarian professionals (factor loadings)

Rotated factor matrix	factor 1	factor 2	factor 3	factor 4	factor 5
In my workplace, my organizational advancement is assured.	0,862	0,241	0,122	0,124	0,075
I am appreciated both financially and morally at work.	0,743	0,199	0,156	0,142	0,182
My professional development is ensured at my workplace.	0,643	0,396	0,200	0,075	0,292
My superiors involve me in professional decisions.	0,239	0,817	0,109	0,20	0,050
My superiors appreciate my work.	0,190	0,794	0,237	0,191	0,229
I have a good relationship with my direct colleagues.	0,075	0,063	0,910	-0,010	0,155
I feel safe at work.	0,277	0,242	0,729	0,142	0,076
The working conditions at my workplace are adequate.	0,241	0,115	0,054	0,939	0,084
I work in a job that matches my abilities and qualifications.	0,225	0,181	0,187	0,097	0,920

The *first dissatisfaction factor* includes attitudes towards organizational progress, material and/or moral appreciation, and the opportunity for professional development, and is therefore referred to as the “**remuneration and development factor**”. Among the indicators belonging to the *second factor* is the dissatisfaction with the involvement of the supervisor in professional decisions and the recognition of the supervisor, so we named it the “**managerial appreciation factor**” according to the nature of the items. Attitudes towards collegial relationships and workplace stability appear in *the third*, “**workplace embeddedness factor**”. *The fourth* group of statements was included in the “**working conditions**” factor, while *the fifth*, “**fitting work**” factor, shows dissatisfaction with the nature of the work.

Using linear regression analysis, we examined the impact of these dimensions of work environment and organizational dissatisfaction on the aspects of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and professional inefficacy (Table 2). The dependent variables of the regression models were thus the dimensions of burnout, while the dissatisfaction factors were included as independent variables. The strength and direction of the relationship between the variables are indicated by the regression coefficient.

Table 2 Controlled effect of dissatisfaction factors related to working conditions on different aspects of burnout (N_{HUNGARIAN} = 261)

Linear regression	Burnout dimensions		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Standardized β -coefficients	Emotional exhaustion	Depersonalisation	Professional inefficacy
Dimensions of dissatisfaction with working conditions			
Remuneration, development	0,029	0,008	0,292***
Managerial Appreciation	0,100	0,173**	0,149*
Workplace embeddedness	-0,016	0,023	0,082
Working conditions	0,239**	-0,003	0,222**
Fitting work	0,173**	0,180**	0,093
Control variables	Yes	Yes	Yes
Significance	0,009	0,000	0,000
Corrected* R ²	0,12	0,10	0,21

Explanation: *** $p < 0,001$; ** $p < 0,01$; * $p < 0,05$

Remark: Not all variables are included in the table. We controlled it for the following variables: gender, age, marital status (whether married), and number of children.

The results show that, excluding the effect of all other variables involved, dissatisfaction with working conditions predicts emotional exhaustion ($\beta = 0.239$) and professional inefficacy ($\beta = 0.222$). That is, professionals working in inappropriate working conditions will be more emotionally exhausted and their personal effectiveness will decrease. Dissatisfaction with superiors' support and recognition has a positive effect on depersonalization ($\beta = 0.173$) and professional inefficacy ($\beta = 0.149$): the personal performance of social professionals who feel the lack of recognition and involvement in professional decisions by their superiors will be lower and they will feel exhausted and indifferent during work. Dissatisfaction with remuneration, professional and organizational progress proves to be significant in the case of a single burnout indicator, professional inefficacy ($\beta = 0.292$): it has a positive effect on the decrease in personal accomplishment. Finally, considering the effect of dissatisfaction related to the nature of work (a job that does not correspond to qualifications and abilities), it is evident that it has a significant correlation with emotional exhaustion ($\beta = 0.173$) and depersonalization ($\beta = 0.180$) and increases their incidence.

Summary and recommendations

Our exploratory study sought to map the development of emotional-physical-mental strain and burnout of Hungarian and Croatian social and special education professionals. In the course of our research, we were primarily interested in how satisfaction with work and certain aspects of working conditions is related to certain segments of burnout. When summarizing the results, we mainly focus on the results from Hungary, while referring to the similarities and differences emerging from the data of the Hungarian and Croatian surveys. Our policy recommendations only apply to Hungary.

Exhaustion and burnout indicators are often related to workload and conflicts. In our research, we found that the intrapersonal dimension of burnout, emotional exhaustion, is the most common among Hungarian social professionals: 36% of respondents are completely characterized by emotional exhaustion (if more typical and absolutely typical responses together are added up, then it is 80% of stakeholders). This is followed by the dimension of reduced personal accomplishment, where the proportion who achieves the highest score (4 points on a scale of 1 to 4) is 25%. In the depersonalization dimension of burnout, the proportion of those most affected is around 24%.

Emotional exhaustion is the most common among Croatian professionals as well, but loss of performance is less common among Hungarian professionals. The results of both surveys reflect that social and special education professionals are more or less involved in all three components of burnout.

In the Hungarian sample, we also found that all three dimensions of burnout were significantly more likely to show higher values in the group of those working in the field of child protection and among more experienced professionals working in the field for a long time. We also proved that job and workplace satisfaction, or else dissatisfaction predicts all three dimensions of burnout, i.e., the latter results in higher performance loss, emotional energy loss, and more depersonalization.

Our multivariate regression analysis results reflect that emotional exhaustion is primarily influenced by dissatisfaction with working conditions and a job unfitting a person's professional qualification plays a smaller - but also significant - role. The feeling of depersonalization is also increased to the greatest extent by dissatisfaction with the nature of the job (a job that does not correspond to professional qualifications and abilities) and the lack of appreciation and support from the supervisor. The professional inefficacy is mostly affected by problems related to adequate remuneration, professional development and organizational progress, as well as dissatisfactory

working conditions and the lack of support and appreciation by supervisors. Attitudes regarding workplace embedding are not significantly related to any of the burnout indicators.

In the light of the results, in our opinion, in order to reduce burnout, especially the emotional strain on professionals and alleviate stress symptoms, burnout prevention and intervention are of key importance, which should include setting up feedback forums, sharing responsibilities, regular professional counselling, mentoring, and supervision. It has been proven that professionals are affected by burnout, as has the fact that it significantly impacts the effectiveness of professional work. The research also drew attention to the importance of adequate remuneration, good employee relations, managerial feedback and recognition, professional development opportunities, training, and the creation of appropriate jobs. Organizations should pay special attention to these factors in the context of human resource management.

In the context of our study, we also highlight some limitations. Due to the cross-sectional nature of the research, it revealed probable explanations during the examination of the correlations, however, no causal correlations can be identified based on our results, as it would require further research based on longitudinal data. Furthermore, in none of the cases did we work with a probability sample, therefore our findings cannot be generalized for the basic population, i.e. for those working in the Hungarian and Croatian social fields, they are rather of indicative character and set the direction of further research.

References

- Bozionelos, N., Kiamou, K. (2008). Emotion work in the Hellenic frontline services environment: How it relates to emotional exhaustion and work attitudes. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, (19):1108–1130.
- Cherniss, C (1980). *Professional burnout in human service organizations*. New York, Praeger Publishers.
- Cohen, K., Collens, P. (2013). The impact of trauma work on trauma workers: A metasynthesis on vicarious trauma and vicarious posttraumatic growth. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 5(6):570–280.
- Fekete S. (1991). Segítő foglalkozások kockázatai. Helfer szindróma és burnout jelenség. (Risks of helping professions. Helfer syndrome and burnout phenomenon) *Psychiatria Hungarica*, (1):17–29.
- Győri Á. (2020). A szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek vélekedése a szakmai munka körülményeiről (Opinions of social and special education professionals on professional working conditions). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei* (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.
- Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020a). Az oktatás területén megnyilvánuló hátrányok okai a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek szemszögéből (Reasons for disadvantages in the field of education from the perspective of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei* (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.
- Kiss M., Vastagh Z. (2020b). Az oktatási hátrányok kompenzációjának eszközei a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek olvasatában (Means for compensating educational disadvantages according to the interpretation of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító*

vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Lambie, G. W. (2006). Burnout Prevention: A Humanistic Perspective and Structured Group Supervision Activity, *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education and Development*, Spring, Volume 45:32–44.

Lee, R. T., Seo, B., Hladkyj, S., Lovell, B. L., Schwartzmann, L. (2013). Correlates of physician burnout across regions and specialties: a meta-analysis. *Human Resources Health*, 11(48).

Martínez-Iñigo, D., Totterdell, P., Alcover, C.M., & Holman, D. (2007). Emotional labour and emotional exhaustion: Interpersonal and intrapersonal mechanisms. *Work & Stress*, (21):30–47.

Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E. (1982). Burnout in Health Professions. A Social Psychological Analysis. In: Sanders, G. S., Suls, J. (eds.). *Social Psychology of Health and Illness*. NJ Erlbaum, Hillsdale. 227-247.

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job Burnout. *Annual Review Psychology*, 52:397–422.

Perpék É., Győri Á., Kiss M., Szászvai-Papp G., Vastagh Z. (2020). Kutatási zárójelentés (Final research report). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020a). Vélemények a szociális területet érintő szakmai együttműködés fontosságáról, gyakoriságáról és hatékonyságáról. (Opinions on the importance, frequency and efficiency of professional cooperation). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study)*. Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Perpék É., Szászvai-Papp G. (2020b). Szakmák közötti kapcsolatok és együttműködés: a szociális és fejlesztő szakemberek percepciói (Interprofessional relations and cooperation: perceptions of social and special education professionals). In: Perpék É. (ed.). *Szakmai együttműködés, iskolai*

hátránykompenzáció, szakmai jóllét: Egy magyar-horvát összehasonlító vizsgálat eredményei (Professional cooperation, disadvantage compensation in schools, professional well-being: the results of a Hungarian-Croatian comparative study). Pécs, Abaliget Község Önkormányzata, Abaligeti Nőegylet.

Shanafelt, T. D., Gradishar, W. J., Kosty, M., et al. (2014). Burnout and career satisfaction among US oncologists. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*, 32 (7): 678–686.

Skovholt, T. M., Grier, T. M., Hanson, M. R. (2001). Career Counseling for Longevity: Self-Care and Burnout Prevention Strategies for Counselor Resilience, *Journal of Career Development*, 27 (3): 167–176.

Thompson, N., Stradling, S., Murphy, M., O'Neill, P. (1996). Stress and organizational culture. *British Journal of Social Work*, 26:647–665

Wilson, F. (2016). Identifying, Preventing, and Addressing Job Burnout and Vicarious Burnout for Social Work Professionals. *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work*, 13 (5): 479–483.

Zapf, D., Seifert, C., Schmutte, B., Mertini, H., Holz, M. (2001). Emotion work and job stressors and their effects on burnout. *Psychology & Health*, 16:527–545.

Contributors

Ágnes Győri

Research fellow, Centre for Social Sciences Institute for Sociology

Márta Kiss

Research fellow, Centre for Social Sciences Child Opportunities Research Group

Research fellow, Corvinus University of Budapest CIAS

Éva Perpék

Research fellow, Centre for Social Sciences Child Opportunities Research Group

Gábor Szászvai-Papp

Statistician, head of department, PO

Zoltán Vastagh

Junior research fellow, Centre for Social Sciences Child Opportunities Research Group

Lecturer, Eötvös Lóránd University Faculty of Social Sciences