Community college in Hungary – a proposal for a proper organizational model

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Why this topic?

Community Higher Education Training Center (CHETC) is a new type of institution in Hungarian higher education.

Its success strongly depends on the organizational solutions applied.

The present organizational model does not ensure the success of this new type of HEI.

→ Proposal for a proper, viable organizational model (staying within the frame of the governmental idea)
Preliminary research: topics and methods

Community college, USA:
- origin, development
- mission, role in local development
- governance
- cooperation with local actors

Community colleges in Europe

Multicampus systems, affiliate institutions
- types
- governance, relationship with the main campus
- faculty and staff

Experiences drawn from HEI system reforms in other countries

Primary research: university, municipality, employees, secondary schools involved in a possible CHETC initiative (interviews, questionnaire)

⇒ synthesis
Community college in Hungarian HE

- Strategic document for HE development in 2014: community college, US model
- in regions with no HE provision, aim: keep workforce, local development
- HE act amendment in 2015: CHETC, not independent institutions
- Detailed regulation in 2015 (French model):
  - local government(s) and/or local corporations and/or churches) → nonprofit organization → operates CHETC
  - CHETC ≠ HEI, just a training location of one or more university(ies)
  - staff only for facility management, no local faculty, no local student services
- Beginning of 2016: 4 CHETC were set up + 1 got permission
Is this organizational model good? I do not think so.

1. Some coordinating functions are left out.
2. It does not support fulfilling the mission.
3. It does not guarantee the same learning experience and learning outcome.
4. It does not seem to be fully elaborated concerning governance and management.
1. Some coordinating functions are left out.

Who’s task is:
• surveying and assessing the training needs of the region,
• defining the optimal educational portfolio and following its changing
• choosing the best university
• facilitating the professional cooperation with and between university(ies), employees, secondary schools, local actors
• recruiting local staff and faculty
• coordinating the trainings when several universities are involved
Municipality of Békéscsaba:

„Although the city has higher education since 1996, its operation **has never been the task** of the local government."

We **do not have a close cooperation** with the local college or an insight to its operation.

We **do not have the necessary human resources** (neither in quality nor in quantity) to run a higher education institution.”
Solution:

• A professional body/organization with sufficient capacity and competences in the recipient regions to coordinate the above-mentioned activities at least at county level

• This body should include HE professionals and experts with local knowledge

• This body may be = the operating nonprofit organization, but with much wider responsibility and capacity than facility management
2. This organizational model does not support fulfilling the mission of the CHETC.

Principle of management: When choosing an organizational solution, mission is the starting point.

Great expectations concerning CHETC:
- CHETC becomes a crucial factor in regional development
- CHETS improves the competitive potential of underdeveloped regions
- HE’s service functions strengthen both towards students and local society
- the everyday operation is centered around quality
- CHETC becomes a real intellectual center of its region
(Quoted from HE Act and HE strategic document)

Offsite training locations will not meet these expectations.
Problem: HE courses in themselves do not have a significant effect on regional development

training + research + technology transfer + services + cooperation with local actors (local engagement, stewards of the place) together have an effect

See US community colleges
Solution:

A permanent capacity at the CHETCs responsible for cooperation with local actors, including:

- corporate sector partnership (incl. dual training)
- LLL coordinator (adult education)
- recruitment staff, secondary school partnership
- cultural, sport and professional events open to public, SR programs
- NGO partnership
- alumni coordinator
- EU project coordinator (consortium incl. local actors)
- marketing, communication, PR coordinator
- research coordinator (in cooperation with gestor univ. and local enterprises)
3. This organizational model does not guarantee the same learning experience and learning outcome.

infrastructure + intercity professors + services only in the faraway university → the same diploma ????

Hungarian Accreditation Committee on the draft (Spring, 2015):
• The CHETC concept is a mistake.
• It would lead to „garage universities”.
• The phenomenon of „intercity professors” raises serious doubts concerning the quality of teaching.
• It would lead to the dilution of HE provision.
Solution:

- Local faculty (full-time faculty, part-time and contracted educators from the corporate sector)

  \[\Rightarrow\] alternative career path for faculty (≠ Publish or perish!)

- Local student services, sufficient staff
4. This organizational model does not seem to be fully elaborated concerning governance and management.

Establishing and operating CHETCs is a multi-player game with several local and distant actors

- local government(s), corporation(s), church(es)
- employers
- secondary schools
- gestor university(ies)
- students, faculty, staff

There may be conflicts of interest, authority clash among them

There are no well-thought procedures or bodies to handle it
Solution:

A strategic governing board to
• resolve conflicts of interest and authority clashes
• to formulate a common strategy acceptable to all actors

Members:
• operating nonprofit organization
• reps of other local actors (employees, secondary schools, chamber of commerce, development agencies, NGOs)
• rep of students (with restricted authority)
• management of gestor univ(s)
• head of academic units involved
• campus director of CHETC
Summary

• a new type of HEI: community higher education training center
• institutions for serving local needs are necessary
• but the organizational solution elaborated by the government raises doubts about the viability and efficiency, have some flaws
• based on an extensive research I propose a different organizational model
• my model does not overrule the most important governmental principle: the CHETCs are not independent institutions but affiliates of universities
• yet, in my model the CHETCs are more than just offsite training locations of faraway universities
  - regional coordinating capacity with HE and local experts
  - capacity for local engagement and cooperation
  - local faculty and student services → alternative career path for faculty
  - governing board and campus director
Thank you for your attention!

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