



Zsuzsanna
Hojtsy-Keresztény:
EnergyNeighbourhoods
energy master, local
change maker



HUNGARY



HOLISTIC



INDIVIDUAL



PERI-URBAN

Summary

Zsuzsanna participated in GreenDependent's EnergyNeighbourhoods programme as a volunteer "energy master". Her friend, who supported her has experience with another Hungarian NGO's community-based household greening programme called ÖkoKörök (EcoTeams). Based on methods and ideas learnt in these two programmes, a local eco-club was founded in Zsuzsanna's home town, with her as one of the main organisers of the first meeting in 2019. Since then, the informal community has grown into a formal NGO. They aim to develop a community whose members are willing to address the current ecological crisis and are ready to learn about and apply solutions that help create an ecologically sustainable way of life.

Why is it a case of energy citizenship?

As a catalyst, Zsuzsanna is playing an important role in supporting the local community and leading it on a sustainable path. As an energy master, she has taken on the role of coordinator among her close circle of friends, helping them to save energy. As one of the founders of a local NGO, she organises lectures, community forums and other community activities to mobilise the local population around sustainability goals.



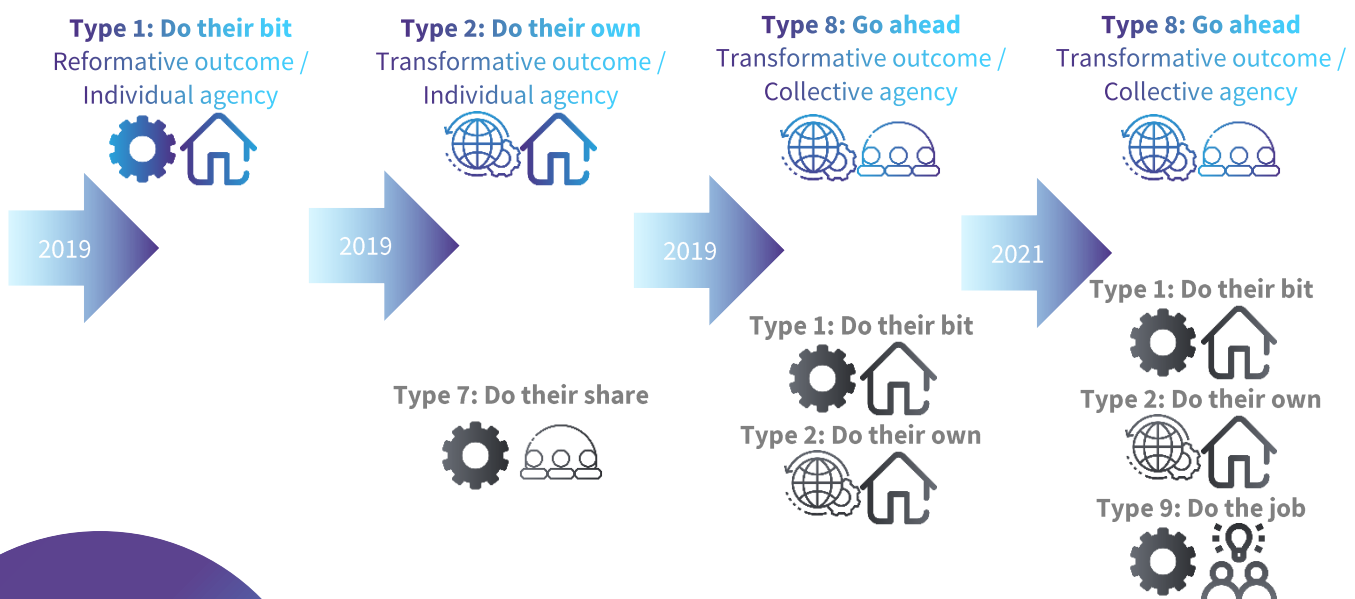
Goals



1. Creating and expanding a local, cohesive, green community among core members, combined with internal organisational development;
2. Promoting green lifestyles and opportunities and reaching as many people as possible who are not part of the core community (programme participants, residents);
3. Creating a shopping community.

The story and the typology

In summary, Zsuzsanna's initiative transformed from an individual to a collective energy citizenship case, with more and more people getting involved in the life of the local community. The initiative has moved from a reformative, household-based energy citizenship type to a transformative, community- and settlement-based one as the range and depth of issues have broadened with the range of participants.



Case history summary

For the summary methodology, click [HERE!](#)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101022492.

Phase 1: Before EnergyNeighbourhoods, 2019

Zsuzsanna's story started with her being an environmentally conscious citizen who decided to make her lifestyle more sustainable. Her motivation was specifically to fight the climate crisis.

In terms of energy citizenship ideal types, in this phase, her work can be classified as a reformative, individual case, focused on the household level, as she started using small steps to change her own household and family lifestyle, but she did not yet

have the knowledge and empowerment to influence others.








	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	4. Do it their way (within organizations)	6. Make their vote count	8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

Main type: Do their bit (in the household)
Reformative outcome / Private in the household agency

Phase 2: EnergyNeighbourhoods' community 2019-2021

In 2019, on social media, Zsuzsanna saw an advertisement for the EnergyNeighbourhoods programme (a household energy-saving competition organised by GreenDependent¹) and applied to become an energy master. Here, she learned about energy saving at home; she became the energy master of a small, mainly local community of families. After a successful first season, she continued participating in the programme with a new group the following season. As an energy master, this can still be seen as an individual type of energy citizenship, but it is more transformative, as she has become a mentor for others (as indicated by the change of main type).

However, as a small community has been created through her team, a collective phase has started, which is reformative in nature (as indicated in the secondary type).

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	4. Do it their way (within organizations)	6. Make their vote count	8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

Main type: Do their own (in the household)
Transformative outcome / Private in the household agency








Secondary type: Do their share
Reformative outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency

¹ See more details at <https://intezet.greendependent.org/en/node/480>

Phase 3: Informal community, 2019-2020

In parallel with the second season of the EnergyNeighbourhoods programme, Zsuzsanna wanted to get more involved in community organising. At the suggestion of a friend, she started a local green community called the Göd Eco-Club, at first informally.

At this stage, the initiative moved in a collective, transformative direction in terms of energy citizenship (as indicated by the change in the main type). As the focus remains on greening and supporting households, the ideal types at the household level remain secondary types (Type 1, Type 2).

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	4. Do it their (within organizations)	6. Make their vote count	8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

Main type: Go ahead

Transformative outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency

Secondary types:

Do their bit (in the household)

Reformative outcome / Private in the household agency

Do their own (in the household)

Transformative outcome / Private in the household agency

Phase 4: Eco-club, 2021-

In 2021, the informal community took the form of a registered association.

Göd Eco-Club is a democratically operating organisation whose members can implement their own ideas according to the principles of sustainability, for which the association provides a framework.

In this context, Zsuzsanna’s role is primarily to bring together, support and coordinate the organisation and the community, and of course, to achieve her own “smaller” goals, e.g. setting up a shopping community.

The eco-club has joined a Hungarian organisation, the Small Communities Programme's eco-community networking initiative called the "New Koma Network". The programme's main aim is to create more such communities in Hungary.

This has also led to the introduction of the ideal type associated with the social movements agency (Do the job) as a secondary type.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	4. Do it their way (within organizations)	6. Make their vote count	8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

Main type: Go ahead

Transformative outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency

Secondary types:

Do their bit (in the household)

Reformative outcome / Private in the household agency

Do their own (in the household)

Transformative outcome / Private in the household agency

Do the job

Reformative outcome / Social movements agency



The aspects of energy citizenship

The official president of the association is Zsuzsanna, but in practice this is only manifested in the fact that she undertakes the necessary administrative tasks. Otherwise, decisions are basically taken democratically. **The association works on the tasks that its members want to and are committed to managing and implementing** – they become the project leaders, the so-called “godparents”, and are assisted by other members who are interested in the topic. The association is currently entirely voluntary.

Citizen power/control
Citizens exert effective control, and their votes have to be taken into account



Zsuzsanna has noticed a decrease in emissions associated with her own lifestyle since she started participating in EnergyNeighbourhoods, e.g., she thinks twice about using a car, and walks or uses public transport instead. **The community also considers it important to communicate externally about the carbon footprint and encourages people to reduce theirs.** “There are always questions about what is a better solution (for making reductions)”.

Carbon limit
Explicit recognition of the carbon limit

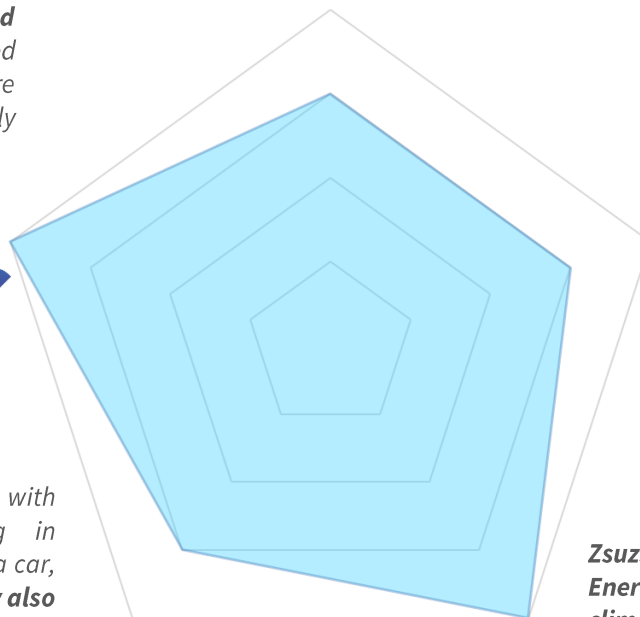


Anyone is welcome to join the events, but the association itself is not primarily engaged in classical democratization activities, like advocacy or lobbying for energy system transformation. It is primarily concerned with promoting a green attitude and a more sustainable lifestyle among its members and those who participate from a greater distance. **The democratising factor is primarily in the education and empowerment of participants.** What also helps with democratisation is the possibility to rent power meters and tree chipper, which greatly increases energy awareness and helps establish independence.



Democratic energy future

Energy democracy is considered as a positive value, but it remains limited to formal energy democracy



Anyone from the local population can join the initiative, but limited to the settlement of Göd, or at least requires some connection to the it. In general, equality issues are not the focus of the case, as operations are concentrated in the municipality of Göd, where energy poverty is not a primary problem, as it is a wealthier, agglomeration close to the capital. However, there have been examples of providing support to less well-off families, e.g., by donating LED light bulbs.



Equity and justice

Equal access is granted, but limited by various criteria

Zsuzsanna's motivation for taking action and joining the EnergyNeighbourhoods programme was specifically to fight the climate crisis. She has continued to maintain the skills and green practices she learnt during her participation in EnergyNeighbourhoods after it ended. The Göd Eco-Club, which she has founded, also shows a clear commitment to environmental sustainability, as it is an eco-community.



Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability is a core issue, and is considered in goal setting



Further information



www.facebook.com/godiokoklub



godiokoklub.hu



godiokoklub@yahoo.com



References

- Website of the Göd Eco-Club: <https://godiokoklub.hu/> (Accessed 09.11.2023)
- Website of the EnergyNeighbourhoods programme: <https://energiakozossegek.hu/> (Accessed 09.11.2023)
- Website of GreenDependent Institute: <https://intezet.greendependent.org/en/node/480> (Accessed 09.11.2023)
- Interviews with two people involved in the case
- Vadovics, E., Szöllőssy A., and Vadovics K. (2023). Introduction and Methodology for the EnergyPROSPECTS Detailed Case Summary Reports. EnergyPROSPECTS (PROactive Strategies and Policies for Energy Citizenship Transformation). Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10075408>



Source of images

GreenDependent©, godiokoklub.hu



Case study authors

Mapping and detailed case research by:

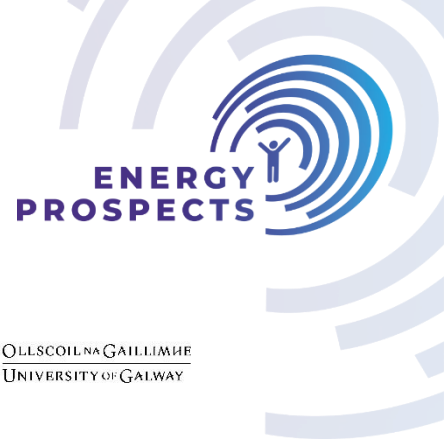
Anita Szöllőssy, GreenDependent Institute

Case study summary prepared by:

Anita Szöllőssy & Edina Vadovics, GreenDependent Institute

Proofreading by Simon Milton / **Reviewed by** case participants





EnergyPROSPECTS partners

University of Galway (GAL)
University Road, H91 TK33, Galway, Ireland



Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB),
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt 50-1050, Bruxelles, Belgium



GreenDependent Institute (GDI),
2100 Gödöllő, Éva u. 4., Hungary



Universiteit Maastricht (UM),
Minderbroedersberg 4-6, 6200 MD, Maastricht, Netherlands



Applied Research and Communications Fund (ARC Fund),
Alexander Zhendov Street 5, 1113, Sofia, Bulgaria



Notre Europe – Institut Jacques Delors (JDI),
18, rue de Londres 75009, Paris, France



University of Latvia (UL),
Raiņa bulvāris 19, LV-1586, Riga, Latvia



Technische Universität Berlin (TUB),
Straße des 17. Juni 135, 10623, Berlin, Germany



Universidade da Coruña (UDC),
Rúa da Maestranza 9, 15001 A Coruña, Spain

