

CORVINUS SCIENCE SHOP



Concerned SDG(s): 4, 10, 11, 13, 17
HEI name: Corvinus University of Budapest
Type of HEI: Public university



CHALLENGE



Unsolved social problems in the local community - There may be several problems in the local community that affect social, environmental or economic issues at the individual or community level. In the case of a big city, special problems may arise: greenhouse gas emission, challenges regarding water and transportation infrastructure, housing and feeding growing populations.



Incomplete business knowledge of non-profit organizations - Very often, non-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations or social enterprises that are involved in solving the problems of the local community, who do not always have the business or management skills necessary for their operation.

Performing the third mission of the university - Universities are not only responsible for education (first mission) and producing new knowledge (research as second mission), but it is challenging for them how to engage with societal needs by linking the university with its own socio-economic context.

Involvement of socially sensitive students - Younger generations are often more sensitive to social problems as a result of SD education, but they do not know how to participate individually in their solution. Furthermore, there is a growing need for students with strong sense of social responsibility and wider perspective on reality, who are capable of putting across societal needs and

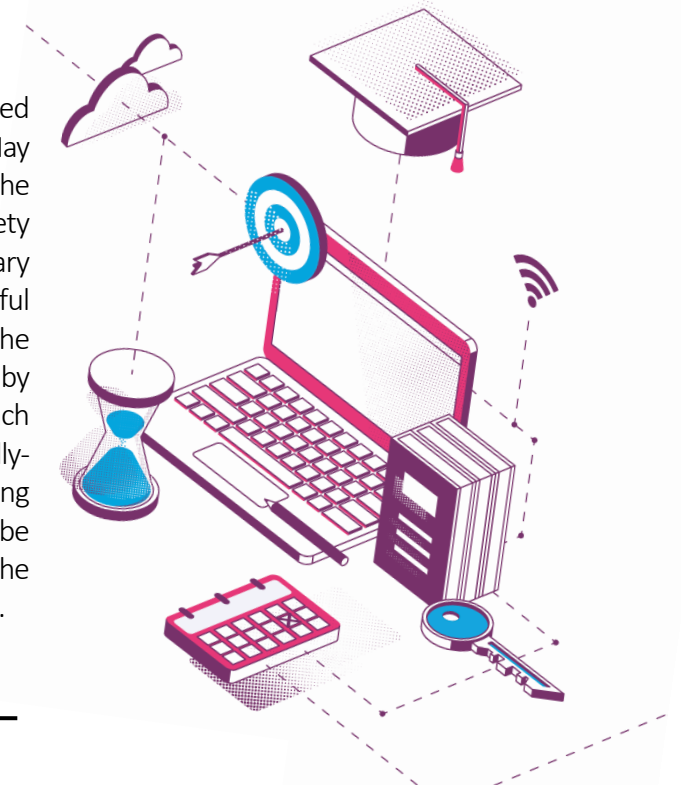
values in business decisions.

Corvinus Science Shop (CSS), established at Corvinus Business School in May 2017³⁴. CSS's aim was strengthening the ties between educators and civil society actors and providing the necessary resources to allow for their meaningful collaboration. It is not only fosters the School's third mission efforts but by doing so, through diverse outreach activities, exposes students to socially-oriented, non-profit ways of thinking and shows them how that can be interwoven and balanced with the business-oriented, for-profit approach.

³⁴<http://cbs.uni-corvinus.hu/index.php?id=66853>

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PRACTICE

Corvinus Science Shop collects community needs and formulates them into educational projects or research questions on the Faculty. While educational projects invoke problem-based and project-based learning, service learning and community-based teaching practices, research questions are associated with participatory and action-orientated approaches and putting values and methods of Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) into practice.

Questions and needs of civil society organisations and social entrepreneurs typically translate into course projects (team work) or so called “student scientific paper” and thesis work (individual work). Topics are formulated together and followed by a process of problem-solving and learning where student(s) with their supervisors, course tutors and the community partner co-create and develop the answer. This provides a genuinely authentic real-life case and learning for the students.

The birth of Corvinus Science Shop enables CBS to interact with a much larger number of community partners, higher diversity of topics as well as many more students and faculty members. In the first year of its operation, the science shop fertilized 24 courses in four programmes of the School, with projects both in the Bachelor and the Master studies. Embedding Corvinus Science Shop and thus community-based learning and service learning into the culture and organisation of CBS is one of the flagship programmes of the next strategic period. Key actions for further development is the launch of an open database of research questions accessible for key stakeholders: students, faculty members and CSOs alike, and the organisation of face-to-face matchmaking events such as thesis fairs and faculty workshops.





PRACTICE



The organisational impetus to set up Corvinus Science Shop, the unit of two full time employees that facilitates community partnership in teaching and research, was to strengthen the third mission of the School to become an open and inclusive institution that puts its knowledge and know-how in use for the benefit of society. This approach resonates with a large number of faculty members who in turn require support to make science shop projects happen. Such supporting activities so far included:

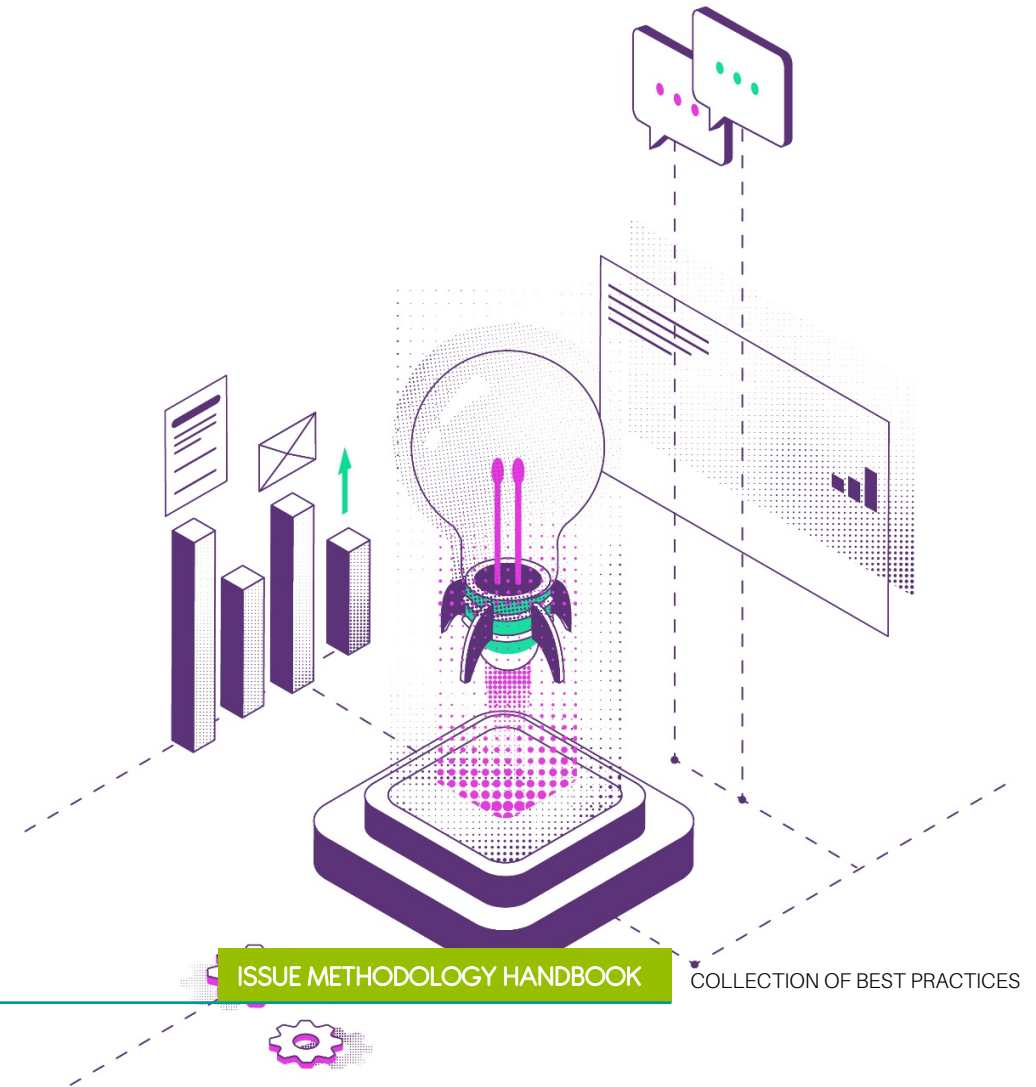
- project-generating and matchmaking workshops with community partners (five workshops on Research Weeks with 20-25 participants and one larger event with 74 participants in the past two years)
- related best teaching and evaluating practices in service learning, community-based teaching, responsible research and innovation and the co-creation of knowledge with and for society
- access to the international community of likeminded educators and researchers as well as EU Horizon 2020 projects on the related subjects,
- practical daily support related to every aspect of the organisation of partnerships that educators generally have limited capacity for. This typically involves site visits arrangements, management of conflicts or communication breakdowns, continuous liaison with community partners, monitoring work on partnership/project progress, evaluation support, etc.



PRACTICE

Obstacles

- ✓ Involvement of students, community partners or university teachers in projects may be difficult due to lack of interest or lack of information. Students may be forced to engage in projects by making the participation a condition for completing a course.
- ✓ Lack of financial resources, such as costly market research, may be an obstacle to a successful project.
- ✓ When the project is completed, the non-profit company may not be able to continue to operate successfully because it has not acquired the necessary knowledge.
- ✓ Projects focusing on solving social problems and cooperation with NGOs do not always teach university students to tackle the challenges of running a business enterprise.



BENEFITS



When working with community partners in Corvinus Science Shop, students interact with a segment of society that has a different yet valid mindset, logic, priorities than they are accustomed to. Projects as real-life cases help the development of coping strategies and solution orientation in inconsistent work environment. While business cases feature well-established goals, like-minded people in a familiar business environment, science shop project actors are more likely to be inconsistent, sometimes shifting focus as their understanding develops through the collaboration. Students have to accustom to the situation that neither does the “customer” speak the common business language nor they prefer traditional business values.

Such projects thus sensitize and prepare students to social and sustainability challenges that are largely outside of their social circles and status, giving examples of active citizenship and responsible decision-making, how to work with a purpose and make positive impact with it. This aim of the School meets the demand of the students: they vocalize their wish of generating social impact.

Experiences so far show that students draw extra motivation knowing that their work matters – community partners will implement the project results. It also gives them a sense of importance and accomplishment that they contribute to a good cause, for the benefit of the community. In the first year of Corvinus Sciences Shop 90 students participated in the 24 different projects.

Knowledge and perspectives of students, lecturers and organisations complement each other and the collaboration creates space for mutual learning that enriches all parties, strengthens sectoral partnerships and nurtures the notion of equality of knowledges. Corvinus Science Shop acts as a bridge to reconcile needs and facilitates the work in general to get the most out of the collaborative effort.





BENEFITS



Faculty educators embrace science shop because of its ethos as well as for the practical benefits: it saves their time looking for good quality course projects, which are real-life, social impact generating cases that in turn increase the motivation and engagement of students in the course. The teaching practices invoked by science shop projects such as service learning, problem and project-based learning, community-based teaching are proven methodologies to have an outstanding positive impact on the quality of education.

While the unit is an open door for civil society partners to interact with the Faculty, it is at the same time an open door for the colleagues towards a global community of educators, researchers, practitioners and leaders

advocating for science with and for society. These platforms include the more Europe-oriented Horizon 2020 projects such as EnRRICH and Inspires consortiums as well as the Living Knowledge community and the GRLI, the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative, which is a joint project of AACSB, EFMD and UN's Global Impact. Corvinus Science Shop is embedded in these networks and platforms, and thus brings fresh ideas, concepts, knowledge and innovations in to the School.

As the unit to facilitate outreach activities, Corvinus Science Shop further expanded the School's broad network base, adding diversity to its partner portfolio. CBS has gained over 20 new connections among civil society organisations and social businesses in 2017 and

perhaps even more importantly, it added depth and quality to some of the existing partnerships. Undoubtedly most essential of all those is the Ferencváros Community Foundation (FCF), with which the School has managed to take the collaboration to a next level, plans are set to sign a strategic partnership agreement later this year. FCF's key role was first highlighted in the 2016 BSIS process as part of CBS' mission to increase its local relevance, embeddedness and impact. Through Corvinus Science Shop the number of common successful activities increased and staff takes an active role in participating trust-building and community-benefit initiatives such as fundraisers and a neighbourhood festival.