

# WORKING WITH DISADVANTAGED FEMALE COMMUNITIES THROUGH DESIGN TOOLS

Doctoral dissertation  
Budapest, August 2023

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# Theses

1. Women living in extreme poverty experience gender inequality on a deeper level than others in Hungary. In relevant literature this is described as ‘the feminization of poverty’ and the phenomenon specifically affects underprivileged women as a group.
2. In the case of women from disadvantaged backgrounds, life prospects can be improved by self-discovery and development. Agency and empowerment are valuable tools that enable this improvement.
3. Current educational settings of poverty-ridden and segregated youth groups in Hungary are not properly equipped to empower students and provide them with positive role models. Development of creative competences has the capacity to strengthen the identity and psyche of struggling youth.
4. Empowerment and agency are two key components of the psychological development of disadvantaged girls, and are further supported by decision-making as another important aspect of improving the prospects of the target group.
5. When addressing disadvantaged, young female groups, social design approaches should focus on the agency and empowerment of the participants. To do that, it is important to create both safe boundaries for participants with difficult life experiences, and enough room for self-expression and adequate reflection.
6. In urban settings, maker communities (which are focusing on empowering citizens with the knowledge and infrastructure for making and repairing their own things) can provide a supportive environment for disadvantaged girls to develop tools to build agency and empowerment. Creating space within the movement, literally and figuratively, can significantly improve disadvantaged girl communities’ prospects through the use of creative tools.
7. Based on the premise that social design’s role in the development of communities is not to be responsible but responsive, it is important to address young, disadvantaged female groups with an approach that is rooted in participatory design methods. This approach is sensitive, attentive, and requires participants to concentrate, focus, make small decisions, and tap into the physicality of space, objects, and their bodies.