Kabocanyo

“The spring is beautiful now, and usually I do not have enough time to experience and enjoy this period of the year…”

Hungary, 06 April – 27 April 2020

I am Kabocanyo, a teacher of biology and literature and cultural manager from Hungary. I work as a museum-educator in Pécs city, which is one of the biggest cities in our country, and it is situated in the southern part of Hungary. Now I am at the „home office”, because the schools and the museums closed defensively, in the middle of March.

I live in a small village next to Pécs city, with a part of my family: with my husband and the smallest child, Márton, who is almost 13 years old. His adult sister and brother (age: 23 and 24) live in Budapest, and my parents (age: 71 and 79) also live there.

Our village is a beautiful and calm place, but most of the inhabitants go for work to Pécs daily – normally. But now, many people are in their home office, and spend their days in their houses and gardens, as well.

06. April 2020.

Since the schools had closed, they started to do e-learning projects, and my son studies at home, and spends more time with it, than in the school before □ He makes his music lessons by video-chat with the piano teacher.

We feel ourselves lucky people because we live in a village, close to the forest. We feel relatively safe, in spite of the fact that the first infected man by coronavirus in our county (Baranya) was registered in our neighbouring village. But he is recovered still now, and his families and neighbours spent two weeks in home- quarantine, so

the illness did not spread from there… as we know it from villagers.

I worry about the other part of my family: parents and children who live in the capital city. It was difficult for me to accept at first week at home, that my children probably won't come home for the epidemic-term. My son had just finished the Bsc. at the University of Economics, and my daughter has a part-time job in Budapest. So they were not "locked" to the city, but both of them are fond of Budapest.

At first my daughter wanted to come home but only for some days, because we were planning to travel to Budapest to see them and provide my old parents with food. I asked my daughter to spend more time at home, because I hoped for it and did not want her to go back by train. But in the end, she had talked it over with his brother, and they decided to stay in Budapest. At first I was very angry, because I had a fear for them. But my parents also needed some help in food-supply and so on, so my son had to stay in Budapest. I accepted that it is better for him together with my daughter than being lonely in those times in Budapest (normally they live in different parts of the city, but now the girl moved to the boy, to help each other during the times of restrictions) . But their own reason for staying was this: they thought that they may be already infected by the virus, and they may be virulent…

So on the day of proclamation of the first restriction after closing the schools, they stayed in Budapest, and we took some food-supply for them and my parents. But it is too much for today, I continue later on this week – I will make new entries two times a week…

13. April 2020.

On Good Friday, we went to Budapest, the second time since the schools have closed. We took some food-supply again, for Easter, for my parents and children as well. My small son was afraid of leaving our village, but I explained that I really desire

to see my family from a safe distance, and take some food for them, because my parents are not allowed to go to food-shops. And I really desired to see his sister and brother.

Fortunately, everything was alright with my parents, and we met my children on the shore of Danube river, where we hoped not to be very crowded. (We did not want to go to their rented flat for safety reasons) We arrived at the shore before the children, and saw that next to the riverbed there is a bicycle and jogging road, and it was used by quite a few people. The mayor had just closed Margaret Island for the holy weekend, and we saw the island from the shore, and it was very strange to see it so empty. We found a place which was empty enough and children arrived soon.

They told us their stories of their work-days: my daughter works in a bakery and my son works for a food take away. These are odd jobs, and we asked them to keep the safety regulations properly, because neither of these jobs seemed to us too safe in these times, and the only soothing thing is their age – they are not in the endangered part of the society as we learned.

Meanwhile, here in the south part of the country everything is flourishing, and in Easter-time, it was so calm to sit in the garden for a while, and read a book that I wanted to read years ago, but I did not have time yet. On Sunday afternoons, last week and the week before, we went for a big walk on hiking roads without touristic signs, because we hoped not to meet people there. It was very nice, because in other years my husband almost never takes any time to make an excursion in the spring, he prefers jogging (thinks it useful and time-sparing).

We worried about our small son, because he is isolated from his age-mates (classmates and sportmates). But he can communicate with them and I feel he can take his time cleverly, and a bit similar to me in capability of taking advantage of his temporary loneliness. So I do not worry about him. I miss the intense speaking with my elder children about their future plans – but it is also very difficult in “peace-

times", not only now!

18. April 2020.

Today I heard the first cuckoo, and also the first hopoe, several days ago. The spring is beautiful now, and I usually do not have enough time to experience and enjoy this period of the year... Now it is a bit easier, because of the home office – you have the opportunity to go out the garden and have a break. Also I have more time on weekends, because I do not have programs in the museum, and elsewhere.

Several uncomfortable things happened last week: the Minister of Human Capacities fired two directors of hospitals in Budapest, because they did not arrange enough empty beds for corona diseased patients, and as a result of this drastic action, the employees of those hospitals demonstrated. There was another arrangement from the same Ministry last week: they published a draft of a law on changing the employment status of public servants, just before Easter. It concerns us – employees of museums and bibliotheca. The written conditions in the draft are not favourable, so the trade union and vocational organizations started to protest against the draft.

27. April 2020.

Yesterday I heard the first song of a golden oriole, and also a group of bee-eaters, next to our garden. Last week was the Earth Day, and we took part in a campaign declared by museums, on green objects. Every museum shared these objects on public media, with a message of sustainability. I also made quizzes and wrote an article on the Earth Day topic.

The epidemic is close to being on the summit, but mainly in Budapest – in this part

of the country fortunately it is not increasing so fast. The declining economy would be a bigger problem here, in the Pécs area. The city government was indebted for years, and now we have a new, enthusiastic but maverick city government from autumn of 2019, and they do not have sources for developments – so I guess they would not have enough sources for social supports and also would not have sources for create new workplaces for unemployments, in the end of the crisis.

My parents started to get used to the new conditions – they have a balcony on the sixth floor in their flat in Budapest, and my mother sometimes goes down to the community garden, which is used by only several people in the house, and they can share the time very easily. My son works at the food delivery company in Budapest, and now he is alone, because my daughter travelled to Pécs, to visit her friend, and after her, she will come home for a while (I guess she will spend only some days at home).