



**Aidai Salmorbekova**

**Doctoral School of Education**

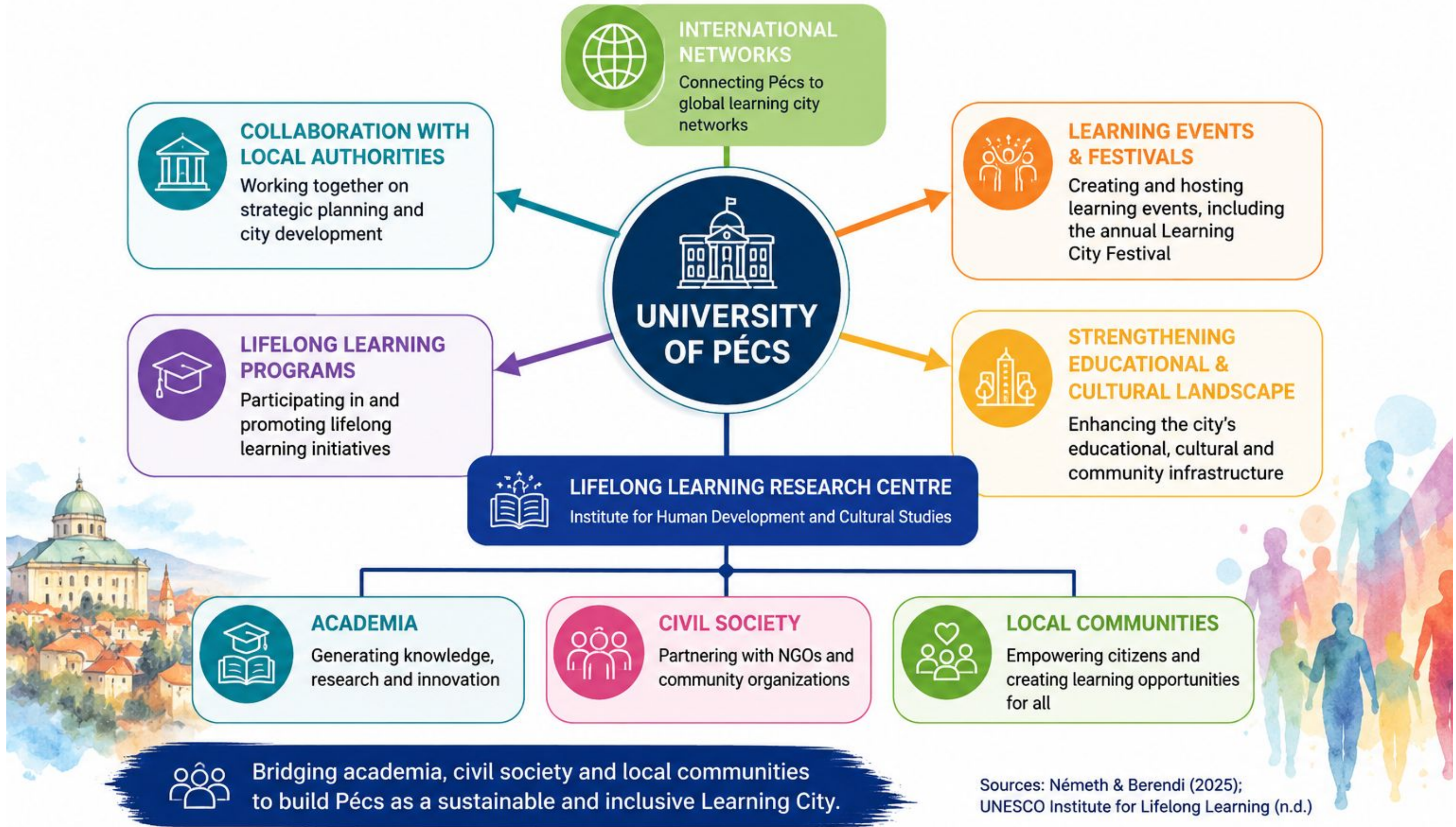
**University of Pécs**

**22nd National and International Lifelong  
Learning Conference, June 5, 2026**

**Bridging Academia and Community Through  
Arts-Based Adult Education: The University of  
Pécs as a Research and Partnership Hub**

# The University of Pécs as a Learning City Partner

*Working together for a more educated, inclusive and vibrant city*



# A CASE STUDY



**PROJECT:**

**SOCIAL AESTHETICS  
IN ADULT DANCE  
PEDAGOGY**

# SAP Social Project Overview:

Supported by the Lifelong Learning Research (LLL) Center, Institute of Human and Cultural studies of the University of Pecs, Hungary



## Social Aesthetics in Adult Dance Pedagogy – Project Overview

This project is part of the PhD research of Aidai Salmorbekova (PhD candidate, Doctoral School of Education and Society, University of Pecs, Hungary), which investigates the impact of Dance Pedagogy on Social Aesthetic Perception (SAP) in adult learners. Here, SAP refers to the ability to notice, interpret, and appreciate expressive, relational, and embodied qualities in social interaction. It includes sensitivity to nonverbal cues (movement, rhythm, posture, gesture) and the capacity to co-create meaning with others through shared action.

### 1. Theoretical Framework

Adult education focuses on learning as a continuous, transformative process, particularly for individuals adapting to life changes, overcoming personal challenges, or seeking social inclusion where self-correction often represents the initial step. Meanwhile, dance education for adults is not only a physical activity. It is a form of cultural participation, a social learning space, a medium of non-verbal communication, and a shared aesthetic experience. In this context, dance as adult education is not therapy, but a pedagogical, community-based, and agency-oriented methodological framework.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hlfacGpj6YRM4EvLBdtNHMxZc7JrcJo-16l4cdRqIf0/edit?usp=sharing>

# Background:

## What is Social Aesthetics?



**Study of how aesthetic experiences are shaped by social contexts, relationships, and everyday life. It emphasizes that aesthetics is not just about isolated artworks or individual taste, but about how people collectively create, perceive, and live with aesthetic values in society (Berleant, 2023).**

# RESEARCH COMPONENT



**Two investigations support the project:**

**Adult Learners' experiences in social dance.**

**Exploratory study with 45 participants in Hungary (Salmorbekova, 2026)**

**Social Aesthetic Perception Scale in the International domain (ongoing PhD study)**

# SURVEY

<b>Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>Agreement</b>
Improved understanding and responsiveness in class	<b>71%</b>
Comfortable communicating and collaborating	<b>69%</b>
Increased social confidence through partnering	<b>78%</b>
Stronger sense of belonging	<b>82%</b>
Openness to learning from diverse people	<b>82%</b>
Dance supports personal and social transformation	<b>84%</b>

# **SOCIAL AESTHETIC PERCEPTION SCALE**

- **N = 782 PARTICIPANTS: NOVEMBER, 2025-ONGOING**
- **SAMPLE: SELF-SELECTED, NON-REPRESENTATIVE, AND INTERNATIONAL**
- **VARIABLES: PROFESSIONALS AND NON-PROFESSIONALS**
- **DEMOGRAPHICS: DANCE EXPERIENCE OF 3 MONTHS - 60+ YEARS**

Social Aesthetic Perception Scale



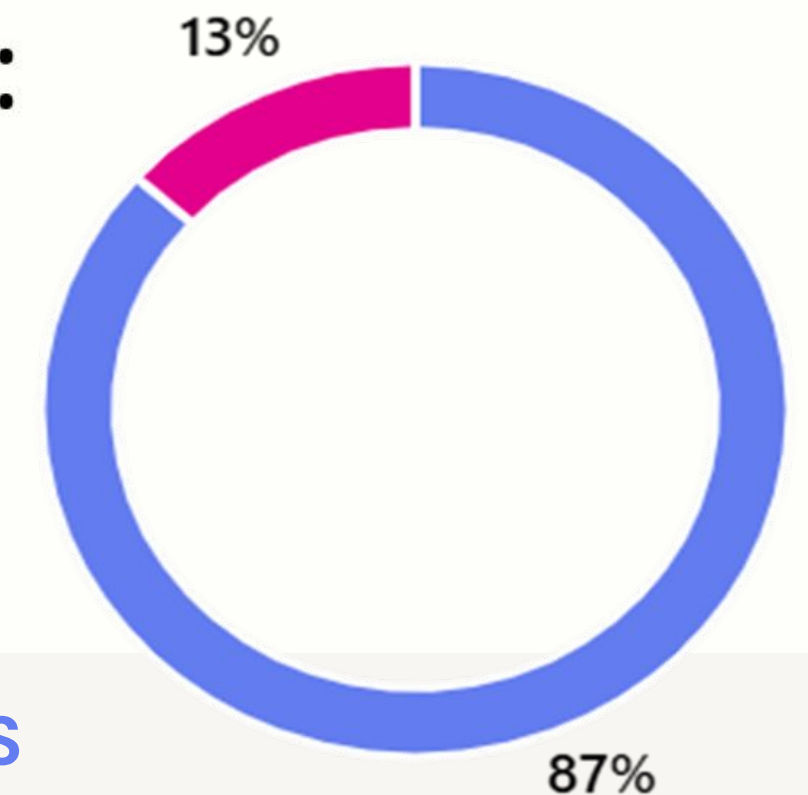
# RESULTS

## Likert scale

Subscale	Mean level
Embodied perception	High
Relational perception	Very high
Collective perception	Slightly lower but high

Adult dancers first experience increased value of:

1. Relationships
2. Community
3. Their own body



NON-PROFESSIONAL DANCERS

PROFESSIONAL DANCERS

# **WHAT IS THIS PROJECT?**

**This project is a community-based, non-formal adult learning initiative that uses inclusive social dance pedagogy to cultivate social aesthetic perception among adult learners.**

## **It integrates:**

- Dance pedagogy**
- Social aesthetics**
- Adult education**
- Community education**

# Target group

- **Adult learners with no professional dance education**
- **Adults experiencing social isolation**
- **Single parents**
- **Low-income adults**
- **Young adults in transition**
- **Older adults**
- **Different cultural backgrounds**

**Principle: Mixed social groups to avoid stigmatization**

# Pedagogical positioning

## **Pedagogy not therapy:**

**transformation without pathologizing participants.**

- **Educational & community-based**
- **Non-clinical, non-diagnostic**
- **Focus on learning & participation**
- **Facilitated by trained educators**
- **Agency, dignity, and empowerment over vulnerability**



**Project goal**



### 1 DECISION-MAKING SKILLS

through spontaneous movement and improvisation.

### 2 PROBLEM-SOLVING ABILITIES

by navigating spatial awareness and coordinated movement challenges.



3

### RESILIENCE, SELF-CORRECTION, AND SELF-EFFICACY

through successfully meeting movement tasks in a supportive context.



4

### NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

including awareness of body language, spatial relations, and rhythmic cues.



## SOCIAL DANCE STRENGTHENS KEY LIFE SKILLS

5

### EMPATHY AND COOPERATIVE BEHAVIOR

through partner work and collective movement tasks.



6

### CONFIDENCE AND ADAPTABILITY IN SOCIAL SETTINGS

supported by structured, low-pressure opportunities for interaction.



Social dance provides a supportive environment where movement becomes a pathway to **personal growth, social connection, and lifelong learning.**





over 90 participants

- since March, 2026
- age range: 20-60
- international
- venue: Civic House in Pecs

# CLASS WORK

# **Institutional value**

- **Accessible high-impact social intervention**
- **Aligns with adult education, culture, inclusion, and wellbeing agendas**

# **prospectives:** **UNIVERSITY**

**A guarantor of quality and sustainability through:**

- **LLL Research Center (PTE) on arts-based community education & ALE/Social Aesthetics in dance education for adults**
- **Pedagogical design and instructor training**
- **Student involvement and community engagement**
- **Evaluation, dissemination, and long-term development**

# Discussion: Universities as Bridges for Social Innovation

Connecting Research, Practice and Community for Transformative Adult Learning



This session invites you to reflect and discuss how universities can facilitate **durable partnerships with non-academic actors** and foster innovation in adult learning through socially engaged methods.



**SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION**  
How can universities foster innovative adult learning while building long-term partnerships with communities, NGOs, and local stakeholders?



Facilitate lifelong learning for all



Foster inclusive and equitable communities



Drive social innovation and change



Universities are not only producers of knowledge— they can also be catalysts for community learning, collaboration, and social innovation.

**THANK YOU**

**SALMORBEEKOVA.AIDAI@PTE.HU**

# References

**Berleant, A. (2023). The social aesthetics of human environments: Critical themes. Bloomsbury Publishing.  
<https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350349353>**

**Salmorbekova, A (2026). Social dance as non-formal adult learning: A scoping study from Hungary. Tánc és Nevelés, Dance and Education, 7 (1), 137–155.  
<https://doi.org/10.46819/TN.7.1.137-155>**