



Pécsi Tanuló Város-Régió Fórum

City Showcase Session – PÉCS (HUNGARY)

I. PÉCS-Profile and its distinctiveness

A relatively small-scale university city (150 thousand inhabitants) where the university with its 6000 employees is the largest employer with weakening economic strength (the South-Western region is the 12th poorest of the European Union), aiming at focussing on culture-led development in an historic multi-ethnic and multi-religious community, a former European Capital of Culture (2010), labelling itself at present “The city of culture”, and making an effort to achieve the title of EUROPEAN GREEN CAPITAL in the future as well.

II. The City has a long-term DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The City has a long-term DEVELOPMENT PLAN for the 2014-2030 period complying with sustainability criteria, and engaged in applying system-wide policies that jointly support the three dimensions of sustainability – environmental, economic and social.

It is recognized that the strategic goals can't be accomplished without an integrated approach that is able to foster a widespread cultural change that involves a complex web of social organizations from various sectors and the community at large.

Various forms of community involvement (consultation through questionnaires, focus groups, participatory planning) in operational planning are experimented in the city.

The principle of multi-stakeholder approach is declared in the document. Resilience, diversity as a source for renewal, growing efficiency of systems, individual and community responsibility, ensuring

access as a means for opportunity-growth were named as the 5 horizontal goals mainstreaming all dimensions of sustainable development.

III. The Pécs Learning City-Learning Region Initiative

The Pécs Learning City-Learning Region Initiative has had its upsides and downsides in its history since 2010 but all the growing member of local actors involved share the belief that the learning city is a network of collaborators acting to create a capable system that reaches a critical mass of social (transformative) learning. The Learning City Forum has been successful in identifying existing cultural learning networks and creating new learning communities for the purpose of discovering and mobilizing local resources. The university's role, especially the contribution of the Institute for Adult and Human Development is rather strong in fostering the development of collaborative action for better knowledge transfer and lifelong learning. The University of Pécs helps collecting and sharing valuable knowledge and practice around learning and, at the same time, it tries to demonstrate how lifelong learning ought to be recognised and considered as important in social and community dimensions and, moreover, in aspects of urban development and local-regional innovations.

The values and basic principles addressing the issues of sustainability, like *the safety of human life, equal rights for access for acquisition and creation of culture, ensuring full participation in the society, protecting the opportunities for development and action for all, the preservation and renewal of cultural heritage, nurturing social cohesion of the communities, intergenerational equity and fairness, recognition of diverse values and identities, ethical responsibility, awareness of long-term sustainability* in all societal dimension are core foundations for the participants of the Learning City Forum.

IV. Policy agendas and Flagship Projects, Learning Communities and Community-based Development Networks

- **NGOs Capacity Development** - the House of Civic Communities was the leading partner in a consortium involving 32 NGOs in the city to make them to conduct a self-reflective analysis and after having identified their weak points to address the deficiencies in a creative way. Empowered, these NGOs have developed new skills that opened new channels for development.

- **Volunteering for Pécs** - the Volunteer Centre has accomplished a very successful recruitment programmes around the slogan “Give 1% of your leisure time”!
- **A-typical and non-formal learning networks** and scenes, diverse needs - several foci have already come to the fore:
 - **The Green Education platform contributing to 'Pécs Eco-City, Mecsek-Dráva Eco-Region' initiative.** The network of NGOs groups, children and youth programmes on environmental topics with the aim of increasing environment-consciousness and sharing good practices;
 - **The aged-focus learning initiatives (Senior Academy and other 60+ community learning groups);**
 - **The Cultural institutions' outreach efforts** and interactive methods-based learning opportunities for students and their families.
- **Heritage sites and their creative use:**
 - **City Development Games for Youth:** An energetic cultural association of architects, art historians and young professionals in the field of urban development created several games for groups of youngsters in order to engage them in getting to know the public spaces and stimulate them as local citizens to think about how they can make living here more attractive. The youth groups are encouraged to generate their small projects to revitalise the spaces and accomplish them within a supportive framework offered by more experienced professionals and resource givers.
 - **The PECSWORK project** aims to develop the suburban areas of the city through fostering community initiatives and mobilizing their resources. These area communities/district centres have been creating platforms to meet and share good practices. Advocacy work has greatly improved and the needs of the district community are better served. Knowledge and skills of the volunteers and key local stakeholders have also been developed and local stakeholder networks for area based inclusion have been established.
 - **Heritage identification processes** through community involvement:

- **Families with children with special needs (i.e. autistic children).**

- **THE INCLUSIVE CITY** - the fight against poverty and social exclusion in Eastern Pécs Area is one of the area- based projects of the city that heavily builds on creating a network of varied players (NGOs, local government services, university experts and students, businesses) to develop the capacity of the local disadvantaged population to represent their interests in participatory planning processes and arrest the many faces of poverty. Earlier urban rehabilitation projects haven't given enough importance to the soft approaches, only hard factors mattered. The human development side is crucial. The "Community Co2aching" method alongside with other facilitating techniques were able to generate "mini-projects" of the resident groups, access to education of various sorts and enhanced employment opportunities were promoted. The growth of social capital has been seen as contributing to both to the welfare of the individuals and to the potential collective action.



Future directions

Creating a Community Foundation, a vehicle for pooling resources from the community for community initiatives.