

# Youth Work: the ‘Eger Way’

08/01/2020 - Actions in EGL



Today, we visit Eger, Hungary and talk to **Gulyás Barnabás** and **Huszthy Boglárka** about how quality local youth work is implemented locally. In June 2019, Barnabás and Boglárka took part in the 3rd EGL Event in Brussels and presented their local good practices on developing Eger’s Youth Action Plan, #TEger project and shared some successful ways of promoting quality youth participation locally. Here is what more they shared with us.

**Q: Tell us more about your joint work? Which organizations/institutions you both represent and why is it important to approach your work in collaboration?**

**A: Barnabas:** I started to work with local municipalities to develop and improve their practices related to youth work 5 years ago. That is how we are continuing the collaboration with the Municipality of Eger. I am always more closer to the Northern settlements as I was born and raised in Northern Hungary, so for me it was a really obvious choice to start working jointly together with the

participants from Eger. My main motivation was also to prove that youth work and participation of young people with a right intention and readiness can reach really important results. As a representative of the Federation of Children's and Youth Municipal Councils, I am certain that for us it is important to have great examples of local youth work in Hungary. It is our common interest with any municipality to have a sustainable and professionally adequate system of youth work at local level. These examples could be then taken on and adapted by other Hungarian cities and villages. In the #TEger project we facilitated different learning processes of young people, teachers and decision makers in order to empower the local communities to take the lead in initiating changes in their realities.

**A: Bogi:** I am a Youth Officer at the Municipality of Eger. I work with young people, youth organizations and also with organizations who work with young people. We have different goals (included in the Local Youth Strategy and in the Local Youth Action Plan). In my job, I try to do my best to collaborate with the participants to reach these goals. For the past two years I have had the chance to work with professionals of the Federation of Children's and Youth Municipal Councils. Due to this successful collaboration, we have managed to improve our practices related to youth work, the quality of our work as well as the quality of the involvement of young people. Of course we know that we still have much to do and develop but we are on the right path.

I think it's really important to work in collaboration and partnership because we are all colorful - our personalities, competences, knowledge and our needs are diverse. Joint work, joint thinking, sharing and learning from each other is necessary to bring out these diverse personalities and qualities to ensure and exemplify for young people that they are useful and indispensable members of our communities and society at large.

We are all different and unique members of our society, our community and together we are able to accomplish bigger things. In a society with meaningful youth participation, everyone has the opportunity to participate and thanks to this - that society can improve at all levels, across all dimensions (socially, economically, etc). In a society like this, the young people are the real value.

I also think that since, in Hungary currently we don't have the national law on youth, we really need to create and implement in collaboration documents, like the EGL Charter because gives us concrete guidelines on how to establish and maintain quality in local youth work. Thanks to our collaboration with the Federation of Children's and Youth Municipal Councils, to our Austrian partners and our National Agencies, since the 3rd EGL event, we have participated in a study visit in Austria, so we can note that the networking brought some great results as well.

**Q: What is something about your joint work that you would like to highlight? What are some things that make your work and impact unique?**

**A: Bogi:** With the members of Eger Student Council, and with youth workers of the IFI PONT Youth Information and Counseling Center, we have realized the #TEger project in collaboration with the Federation of Children's and Youth Municipal Councils (with Barnabás). The project duration was from February to July 2019. Its aim was to give young people the opportunity to interact with decision-makers on issues of concern to young people. The main participants of the project were the Youth Councils in 16 high schools, patron teachers from the schools, different advocacy organizations and local decision makers.

After a **conference and training during 16 dialogue-day**, an effective dialogue between young people and decision makers at local level has been established. The participants could express their **needs and also their opinion on the local youth strategy**, and could take part in the **elaboration of the Action Plan** that contained the activities that guarantee the aims of the Strategy.

Also, in the project's framework, we managed to organize **Eger's first Youth Forum**. The Youth Councils had a key role in representing their fellows and now our decision makers have closer contact with young people. The result of this cooperation was for young people to learn how they can participate in local decision making processes and to learn how to express their opinions. At the same time, decision makers discovered young people's world, their creativity, their responsible way of thinking and they better understood and experienced what involvement of young people in decision making signifies.

**Q: What are the biggest accomplishments and challenges so far?**

**A: Bogi:** One of the biggest accomplishments of my work was the realization of the #TEger project - to see all the steps taken from experiencing challenges and difficulties to finding solutions, achieving results as well as seeing its benefits and impact. Personally for me, one of the biggest challenges was in day-to-day time management, to be able to give the necessary time for all steps of our work (for preparation, realization and evaluation). Also developing and learning as we go, as every situation is different and needs different way of approach and solution. Another challenge and something I really tried to do consciously was to **give the opportunity to as many young people as possible to meaningfully engage and participate in the process**.

**Q: How is your approach shaping the implementation of local youth policy and integration and inclusion of young people?**

**A: Bogi:** The implementation has to happen with the involvement of all participants of the Local Youth Policy. I think Eger's Student Council promotes and is an example of **social integration and inclusion of young people**. The Council has 60 members from different high schools in Eger, their membership is on a volunteer-basis and their motivation is quite different. **The aim is to advocate and also organize youth friendly events for their peers**. As they are all diverse, they face all the challenges and advantages of this phenomenon (this really is a minor snapshot of our society) - there are also **young people with fewer opportunities, young people who experience various levels of difficulties**. They learn acceptance, how to work and think together, how to pay attention to each other, how to reach our goals together, how to solve problems together and so on.

After and during the #TEger project, all the young people who participated (members of the Student Council and other students) **expressed that they feel like a real member of that society**. After that, they had another view on the city and their participation was empowering. They felt heard and seen. I'm really grateful to all participants and professionals with whom we made this project successful and possible. I also think after this success, we have an obligation and responsibility to keep going and further develop these processes and successful practices.

For more information on the project and youth work in Eger, please check out the following:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2394473347311040>

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=331604680851534>

[http://www.tveger.hu/2019/03/11/teger-diakok-es-donteshozok-talalkoztak/?fbclid=IwAR3xVJwdrQ\\_9fpYGXle99AAV\\_ipIGxijwrv61rBohsSZWB8WJfEkMgCQI7Q](http://www.tveger.hu/2019/03/11/teger-diakok-es-donteshozok-talalkoztak/?fbclid=IwAR3xVJwdrQ_9fpYGXle99AAV_ipIGxijwrv61rBohsSZWB8WJfEkMgCQI7Q)

**Would you like to know more about Bogi and Barnabás? Read their short introduction as part of the 'Faces of EGL' series!**