

# Diákparlament (Student Parliament)

## Name of the organisation

Kulturális Életért Közhasznú Egyesület

## Website of the organisation

[www.mustarhaz.hu](http://www.mustarhaz.hu)

## Location of the organisation

Szent István utca 20, 4400 Nyíregyháza, Hungary

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## Good practice aspect(s)/themes of youth work

- Participation of young people in implementing youth activities (planning, preparing, carrying out, etc.)
- Participation of young people in decision making
- Inclusion
- Active citizenship/activism

## Good practice category

Concrete tool

## Good practice aim & purpose

The Nyíregyháza City Student Parliament has been held annually since 2017 on the third Tuesday of February, providing young people with a platform to share their ideas and opinions directly with local decision-makers. Its main goal is to encourage youth to actively participate in shaping city life rather than remaining passive observers. Many of the proposals developed during these events have been incorporated into the city's youth strategy.

The initiative was conceived in 2016 by the Mustárház Youth Information and Counseling Office and the Nyíregyháza Student Mayor's Office. It was designed as a forum where students could discuss topics such as education, leisure, environmental protection and transportation. Over time, the event proves highly successful, as it generated concrete, actionable suggestions.

Initially, discussions were organized into 6-7 sections, but by 2025 this was reduced to three to focus on more relevant and accessible topics. Since 2020, younger students have also been included, broadening participation.

The event consists of plenary sessions, group discussions and final presentations. It strengthens communication between youth and city leaders, ensuring that young voices influence decisions. Overall, the student parliament demonstrated the value of youth engagement and aims to further expand participation in the future.

## Good practice description

The Nyíregyháza City Student Parliament was established following the model of English parliamentary traditions with the clear objective of ensuring that young people's opinions are not only heard but actively integrated into local decision-making processes. A central principle of the initiative

is immediate feedback: students who present ideas and proposals receive direct responses from local decision-makers, allowing them to experience firsthand the impact of active civic participation. The parliament focuses on local issues – those that city leadership can realistically influence and address.

The program is carefully structured into three interconnected phases to ensure effective and meaningful participation. The first phase is a plenary session where participants – ranging from primary school student to university students – gain comprehensive overview of the city's current situation. During this stage experts, municipal representatives and invited speakers present key development plans, challenges and opportunities. This segment not only provides essential background knowledge but also establishes a shared understanding, enabling students to develop informed, realistic and relevant proposals in later stages.

The second phase is the facilitated group work, which forms the core of the student parliament. Participants are divided into smaller groups, each focusing on 4-5 key topics that directly affect young people's lives. These typically include local transportation, environmental protection, education quality, leisure opportunities and cultural development. Each group is guided by trained facilitators who ensure inclusive participation and productive collaboration. Their role is to help students articulate their proposals. This phase emphasizes not only creativity but also clarity, feasibility and relevance to real-world decision-making.

The final phase takes place at the city hall, where group representatives present their proposals to local decision-makers. This stage is particularly important because it provides immediate feedback: officials respond, ask questions and often suggest possible directions for implementation on the spot. This direct interaction is highly motivating for participants as it demonstrates that their ideas are taken seriously and can influence real decisions. After the event, all the proposals are compiled into a professionally structured written document which serves as a foundation for further discussions, planning and potential implementation.

The Nyíregyháza City Student Parliament stands out from similar initiatives in several ways. It involves a broad and diverse group of young people, ensuring that the outcomes reflect a wide range of perspectives and experiences. Additionally, the system of immediate feedback distinguishes it from other programs, as it creates a sense of authenticity and impact that encourages continued engagement. Instead of becoming part of the slow or uncertain process, students' ideas are addressed promptly and directly.

The initiative has already produced tangible results within the city. Discussions initiated through the parliament have contributed to improvements in local transportation, particularly in aligning services with students' needs. Environmental initiatives have also been launched with young people actively participating both as organizers and contributors, strengthening sustainability efforts. Furthermore, in the cultural sphere, young people have increasingly taken on active roles in organizing programs, enhancing community life and engagement.

Overall, the student parliament has significantly strengthened structured dialogue between young people and decision-makers in Nyíregyháza. It empowers youth by showing them that their voices matter while providing city leaders with valuable insights into the needs and perspectives of the younger generation. This collaborative approach not only delivers immediate benefits but also fosters long-term civic responsibility, encouraging the development of a more engaged, informed and active community.

## **Good practice result & concrete effects**

The Nyíregyháza City Student Parliament has a positive impact on multiple levels:

Individual level:

Development of self-confidence and communication skills: Young people have the opportunity to express their opinions, debate their argument with others and speak publicly in front of decision-makers. This significantly increases their self-confidence and rhetorical abilities.

Problem solving and critical thinking: During group work, participants learn to analyze local issues, develop solutions and reach consensus with their peers.

Community level:

Strengthening school communities: Delegated students represent their schools, bringing back the experiences, knowledge and proposals gained at the parliament to their own communities. This strengthens cooperation between schools and encourages more active student self-governments.

Community cohesion and networking: The student parliament fosters connections among young people from different schools across the city and helps strengthen these relationships.

Societal level:

Democratic participation and civic responsibility: Young people gain insight into local decision-making mechanisms, interact directly with city leaders and learn how to represent their interests within a democratic framework.

Impact on local decision-making: Proposals formulated during the student parliament have, in many cases, been incorporated into the local youth strategy's action plan, thereby having a real impact on everyday life in Nyíregyháza.

## **Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work**

Organisation and practice