

Nyíregyháza's twin city partnerships with youth involvement

Name of the organisation

Kulturális Életért Közhasznú Egyesület

Website of the organisation

[Kulturális Életért Közhasznú Egyesület](#)

Location of the organisation

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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

Good practice category

Concrete tool

Good practice aim & purpose

Nyíregyháza, located in eastern Hungary, is not only rich in cultural heritage but also active in international cooperation, particularly through its sister city partnerships. These relationships promote not only economic and cultural exchange but also strong youth collaboration. Central to these efforts are the Mustárház Youth Center and the Nyíregyháza Student Mayor's Office, which organize and coordinate international youth programs. The city maintains especially close youth partnerships with Satu Mare, Rzeszów, Iserlohn, and Veľké Kapušany. Through exchange programs, joint projects, and cultural events, young people can learn about different cultures, improve language skills, and build international friendships. Additional partnerships were strengthened during a 2021 meeting with cities such as Gorlice, Bielsko-Biała, Prešov, Berehove, and St. Pölten, expanding regional cooperation in Central Europe. These programs include festivals, sports events, conferences, and community initiatives, emphasizing cultural exchange, mobility, and collaboration. They not only strengthen connections between cities but also support young people's personal development by broadening their perspectives and encouraging openness and tolerance. Overall, Nyíregyháza's youth-focused sister city partnerships serve as a strong example of how international cooperation can enhance community development, foster active citizenship, and prepare young people to contribute to a more connected and collaborative future.

Good practice description

Nyíregyháza's sister city youth collaborations rely heavily on non-formal learning methods to support young people's personal development, strengthen international relationships, and encourage active civic engagement. These approaches move beyond traditional classroom education by emphasizing

practical experience, interaction, and active participation. The Mustárház Youth Center and the Nyíregyháza Student Mayor's Office play a key role in organizing and coordinating these initiatives, ensuring that young people are not only participants but active contributors.

Non-formal learning is particularly effective in youth work because it allows participants to learn at their own pace and according to their interests and motivations. One of the most important tools used is interactive workshops and training sessions, where young people develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and project management. These sessions often include role-playing, group work, simulations, and case studies, enabling participants to apply theoretical knowledge in practical, real-life situations.

Cultural exchange programs are another central element of the cooperation. They provide young people with opportunities to travel, experience different cultures, and build lasting international friendships. Through shared activities such as workshops, excursions, cultural events, and informal discussions, participants gain a deeper understanding of other countries and perspectives. This process helps foster tolerance, empathy, and openness, which are essential values in today's interconnected world.

Community service projects also play a significant role in these collaborations. In these initiatives, young people actively contribute to society by working on issues such as environmental protection, education, and social inclusion. By being involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects, they develop a strong sense of responsibility, ownership, and civic awareness, while also gaining practical experience in teamwork and leadership.

In addition, sports and arts programs offer valuable opportunities for creative expression and physical activity. These activities help develop teamwork, creativity, confidence, and a sense of belonging, further strengthening community ties and social cohesion among participants from different backgrounds.

The increasing use of digital tools and online platforms also enhances these programs. Virtual exchanges, online trainings, and continuous communication allow participants to stay connected, collaborate across borders, and maintain relationships beyond physical meetings, making the cooperation more sustainable and inclusive.

These non-formal methods are supported by key learning processes. Experiential learning allows young people to gain direct, hands-on experience, strengthening their practical skills and confidence. Reflection and self-assessment help them better understand their experiences and track their personal development over time.

Collaborative learning encourages teamwork and the appreciation of diverse perspectives, while project-based learning enables participants to design and implement their own initiatives, fostering creativity, independence, and responsibility.

Overall, Nyíregyháza's approach demonstrates how non-formal education can effectively support both individual growth and community development. These programs not only enhance young people's skills and international awareness but also contribute to building a more engaged, responsible, and open-minded generation, capable of shaping the future of their communities.

Good practice result & concrete effects

Nyíregyháza has developed innovative twin city youth collaborations that go beyond traditional, top-down initiatives, often emerging from grassroots ideas and the needs expressed by young people. A key example is the Twin City Youth Coordination Council, created with Rzeszów and Satu Mare, which provides a platform for international dialogue, joint problem-solving, collaborative project development. Through regular meetings, participants identify shared challenges and opportunities, exchange experiences, formulate concrete proposals that can be implemented locally or internationally. These initiatives have strengthened the connection between youth and decision-makers, as municipal officials now actively participate in consultations alongside young people, increasing the likelihood that proposed ideas are realized. Nyíregyháza has launched joint planning processes with twin cities such as Baia Mare and Veľké Kapušany, while ongoing collaborations with Satu Mare and Rzeszów provide a strong foundation for future projects. One tangible result is the creation of a bottom-up community budget, enabling local communities—including informal youth groups—to bring their ideas to life. This approach enhances participation, develops project management skills, fosters a sense of responsibility. These collaborations enrich Nyíregyháza's international partnerships and empower young people, promoting a more engaged, cooperative, and internationally aware generation while strengthening the city's role in cross-border youth cooperation.

Good practice chapter of the European Charter on Local Youth Work

Organisation and practice