



A CIVIL STRATEGY: SPRINGBOARD TOWARDS AN ADULT EDUCATION STRATEGY?

THE CASE OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF PÉCS (HUNGARY)



Every municipality, whatever its size, can define its priorities and development directions, and the paths and strategies needed to achieve them. In Pécs, a medium-sized city with a population of 140 000, the municipality has in recent years adopted several important strategic documents, such as the Social Services Planning Strategy, the Housing Strategy, the Integrated Urban Development Strategy, the Local Equal Opportunities Programme, the Strategies for Older People and Youth and the Civil Strategy.

The Civil Strategy examines the links between the city's community NGOs and the municipality at different levels and proposes ways to improve them and introduce innovative solutions (e.g. community budgeting). **A further step could be the strategic planning of a range of lifelong learning opportunities.**

THE PROCESS OF PREPARING THE STRATEGY

The city had seen a dynamic development of the civil sector in the decades following the regime change in the 1990s. Local civil society actors were among the first in the country to recognise the need for cooperation and joint advocacy through setting up a city-wide round table.

The preparation of a new civil strategy started at the beginning of 2020 and it involved the civil organisations in several circles. The City of Pécs entrusted the Educators' Centre Association with the coordination of the process.

THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE NEW CIVIL STRATEGY



For the situation analysis the most recent data from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office was used, as well as the SWOT analysis. The General Assembly of the Municipality of Pécs adopted the Civil Strategy on 14 December 2021. Official link to the strategy: <https://gov.pecs.hu/download/koncepcio/civil.pdf>

In order to strengthen cooperation with the civil sector, the city will set up a position of a Civil Counsellor who will coordinate the relations between the Municipality and the civil organisations of Pécs: development and implementation of the Civil Strategy and the Operational Programme. In the performance of its duties, the Civil Counsellor answers to the Deputy Mayor responsible for the area and to the Mayor.



COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CITY OF PÉCS AND THE NGOS

The City of Pécs formulates the following principles and professional foundations in connection with the cooperation with civil society organisations in Pécs:

1. The City of Pécs - in the performance of its mandatory and voluntary tasks - aims at and has an elementary interest in partnering with civil society organisations - and thus strives to develop and increase its efficiency. To this end

- creates and develops a framework for partnership, taking steps to widen public participation (by introducing participatory - community - budgeting);
- relies on the involvement of civil society organisations as service providers (outsourcing of mandatory and voluntary tasks to civil society organisations - e.g. public cultural tasks – under a public cultural agreement, or social tasks - under supply contracts), following existing and operational good practice, in the effective performance of its community and public service tasks, in all areas where this effectiveness can be demonstrated or established, and
- supports the development of a service provider approach in cooperation with service provider NGOs in Pécs. Proactively supports the development of the service provider approach, knowledge, abilities and skills of the civil sector, and the expansion of the range of tasks - exchange of development programmes and models, introduction of service standards, development of social economy type services (e.g. generation of social enterprises - needs assessment by neighbourhood/developing a service development approach/organising training, using the community planning according to the methods used in the Peer Gynt Project);
- supports and assists formal or non-formal initiatives and communities of small organisational size, which are the basis of democracy and self-organisation - by preserving the diversity of the civil sector, strengthening community cohesion, generating and encouraging the implementation of creative community programmes;
- extends the possibilities of publicity towards civil society organisations (on the PécsMa website, the www.pecs.hu and other city media, city campaigns - such as "Pécs Open" - generating civic engagement);
- establishes a transparent and predictable rental system for the rental of municipal property owned by NGOs and for municipal property available for rental.

2. It is in the interest of the City of Pécs to increase the amount of development (EU and other) funds coming to the city, and to operate them in efficient, long-term and sustainable manner. To ensure the efficient generation and use of resources, the aim is to keep

- cooperation between the civil sector and local government for mutual benefit;
- joint planning of development tasks,
- building partnerships, joint resource mobilisation and implementation;
- providing (if necessary) own resources for NGOs with high professional standards but lacking resources, by creating a so-called own resources/self-resources fund;
- planning for the long-term operation of developments in a service-oriented way, involving all sectors.

3. The City of Pécs, in order to perform its community and public service tasks and to flexibly handle crisis tasks, has a mobilizable volunteer base trained for special sub-tasks, coordinated by the Pécs Community Building and Volunteer Centre of the Educators' Centre Association and other NGOs (Hungarian Maltese Charity Service, Catholic Charity, Hungarian Red Cross, etc.). The Centre also supports and helps the development and operation of volunteering in the city.

4. The Civil Concept is defined in accordance with the existing strategic documents of the City of Pécs, taking into account the objectives of each strategy.