



BEST PRACTISE AND LEADERSHIP PEER REVIEW PROGRAM IN HUNGARY

In 2008 due to the initiative and then active and permanent support of Council of Europe Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform TÖOSZ (Hungarian National Association of Local Governments) decided to start implementation of Best Practise Program and Leadership Benchmark and the Peer Review Program in Hungary.

In Steering Committee of Best Practise Program we involved (and we are involving even now) all of the relevant organisations, who would have an interest to cooperate. In the first year we had a donor Dexia Hungary Ltd., and after they closed down their activity in the country because of the economic crisis, we applied for funds to Budapest Open Society Institute. Local Government And Public Service Reform Initiative of Open Society Institute supported the implementation of Best Practise Program and OSI Roma Initiative supported a pilot (2 Peer Reviews in 2010) within Peer Review Program.

In Best Practise Program we succeed implementation two application periods, and the third we will close in 2011. We announced the call for application always the year before the selection and the award ceremony. That is why we have the final event in 2011 although this belongs to Program 2010.

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION IN 2010 in more detailed

Best Practise Program: The Steering Committee (built up from Partners' representatives: Hungarian Municipality Association, Association of Hungarian Villages, National Development Agency, Ministry of Interior) conducted and evaluated the process with help of the Selection Panel, who are by Steering Committee delegated experts. They made a call for proposal for the Local Governments in three themes (roma integration, development projects with cooperation between communities and renewable energy projects). We announced a competition, and we received 21 applications, from them there were 18 approved by formal aspects. There was a very difficult time for Local Governments when our deadline was actual. Many deadlines were at the same time for development projects, but we didn't have any other option (once we changed the deadline). Other reason was, that in the first year we had a better selected topics (strengthening local identity) for application. Renewable energy is a topic what is not relevant for each municipality.

We disseminated the program through different channels: first of all Önkormányzat newsletter, online newsletters, conferences, workshops connecting with local governments in the given period. After receiving the best practices from LGs, the Steering Committee had a meeting about the schedule of the program. They delegated experts in Selection Panel. Selection Panel prepared a short list from them, after reading and evaluating the applications. Experts visit the projects at place and Steering Committee decided at the final conference about the “winners”, who receive the prizes, one million HUF (about 3600 euro) in each themes, and the other prizes. Before closing conference, the representatives of LGs, who participated at final competition, received a one-day training about presentation method. At the final conference, which took place on 12th of May in Budapest, each municipality applied for best practice status had 15 minutes for introducing their good practice for the 150 LGs representatives who participated at this event. The main activity is now the dissemination of the knowledge and to train the representatives of Local Governments how could they demonstrate their efforts and performances on the best way for the local public and for the other Local Governments to multiply their know-how.

SC decided about the new call for applications (roma integration, strengthening local identity and local government communication) and we published it in a prospectus included the summaries of short listed LGs projects. This publication contains the results and the summaries of the results from before project period. Local governments can use the best practices and receive information about possibility applying best practice status.

The main target was to collect and introduce best practises regarding to roma integration in wide range between Local Governments. The strengthening prejudices are even more difficult challenges for local governments in local societies. Our program makes permanently opportunity for those municipalities who are proud some results in strengthening integration and toleration in local societies.

We made a survey about the most preferable topics for the next period between LGs, and roma integration topic is more acceptable than before.

The Steering Committee had a meeting on 1th of February and they decided all the deadlines: delegation of experts to Selection Panel, evaluating the applications, deadline for decision about short list, visiting at the venue the relevant LGs projects, deadline for organising the training about presentation, and the date of final, closing conference and ceremony. We transferred the prizes, which are compulsory to use regarding to the winning projects, ie. roma integration. We established contracts with them about dissemination their best practise among the other local governments. Next steps will be the dissemination training and the local events.

One of the problem was the low interests from the Local Governments. This is a challenge to change the attitudes and the views, and it is possible only with small steps. During the year of election on the national and the local level it is much more difficult. We used our network on the county level to mobilise the municipalities who has some initiatives regarding to strengthening local community integration. We have sent many online newsletter with our call for application. We published in Önkormányzat more times the program and its results for making it better known. We involved the program in our strategy survey.

There was a successful final conference with competition between LGs Best Practices and a closing ceremony. We had about 150 participants from Local Government, who had a possibility to hear about good results regarding to roma integration, successful Leader projects and renewable energy methods. The conference had a positive and effective message to the local governments and to the Hungarian society: there are some positive examples from local

communities, who are responsible for each other, who try to develop the disadvantaged groups of local people. There are new activities in local governments which aimed to support sustainable development, and there is power for development in small local communities too.

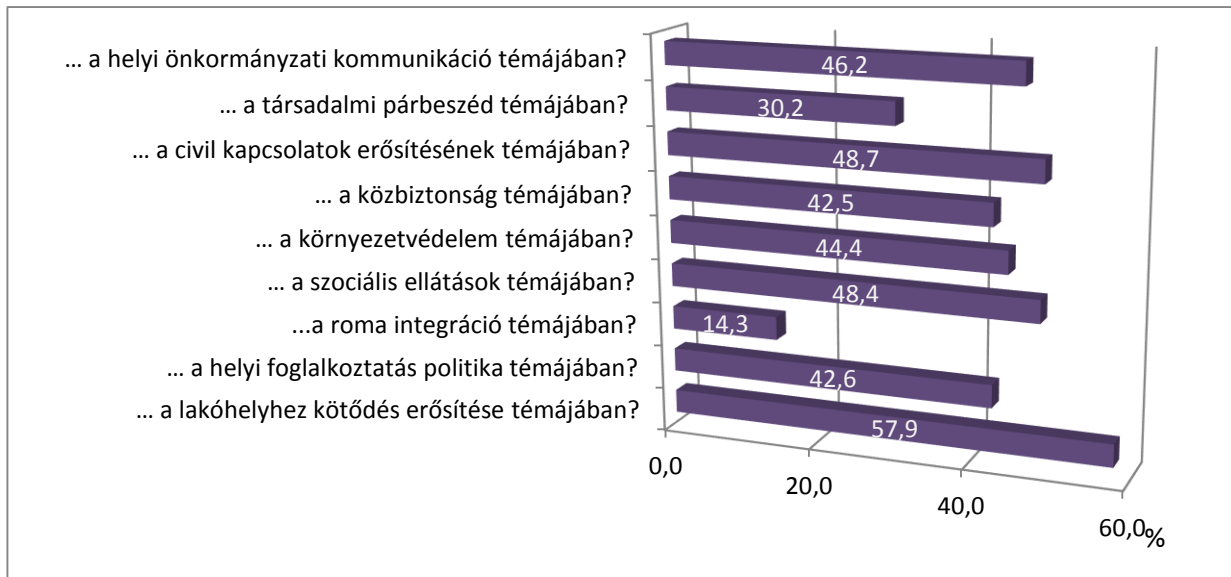
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We received information from the representatives of Local Governments by informal discussion. The participants of the final event were satisfied because of the direct information from Local Governments. The most important was the gathering practical and useful facts and datas about successfully implemented local governmental projects.

Before creating new call for application for 2010 we made a survey in the frame of revising TÖOSZ strategy between our members.

More than a half of the members of TÖOSZ know about the Best Practices Program, however from the other questions we experienced that transfer the knowledge is an important issue for the Mayors. The approval rate of the question is 4,2 point which is the border of strong approval. The result is even stronger, because of the fact that all of the Mayors answered this question. The most important factor for the Mayors when they decide about application (do they make an application or not), is the long of the time frame (80%), than the general attention what could be achieved with the program (56%) and the prizes, money (48%). We made a diagram about the popularity of the topics for the next application period.

IN WHICH THEMES WOULD THEY APPLY IN THE NEXT PROJECT PERIOD?



From the top: local government communication, social dialog, strengthening civil relationships, public security, environment protection, social care, roma integration, local employment policy, strengthening the local identity

We changed the communication of our program because of the received feedback. There was a misunderstanding: our program has no aim to evaluate all the activities regarding to the relevant topics, it is much more about the volunteerism. The final aim is to disseminate the best LGs practices, and it could be implement only with active involvement of the guest municipality. At

the end we would like to let function a network of LGs who want to learn from each other, and who are committed for continuous development themselves.

IMPLMENETED ACTIVITIES

Meeting of Steering Committee (SC) with 13 participants for 1 day

Date: 1/2/2010

Subject matter of meeting: agree on schedule of the project

Target group: member of SC

Description/Aim/Outcomes, etc.:

Decisions were made about deadlines: delegation of experts, working of experts, date of decision about short list, deadline for local visits of short listed projects.

Experts meeting with 10 participants for 1 day

Date: 18/2/2010

Subject matter of meeting: making proposal for SC for short list

Target group: member of expert group (members are delegated by SC members)

Description/Aim/Outcomes, etc.: the experts discussed the descriptions of projects sent by LGs and made a proposal for SC about short list from best practices

Local visits of short listed LG projects

Date: 11/3/2010 – 31/03/2010

Subject matter of visits: to see the facts and the results of the Best Practices

Target group: experts participated with the project manager int he local visits; they met with the leaders and the stakeholders of the relevant LGs action including the target groups of the projects: the local inhabitans

Description/Aim/Outcomes, etc.: there were several additonal information provided by the project owners about the real impacts of the relevant projects: about the sustanibility, cost-effeciency, opinions of target groups, results in the local society...etc.

Workshop for the short listed projects owners, with 18 participants for 1 day

Date: 29/04/2010

Subject matter of workshop: training about presentations

Target group: the applicants (LGs) for Best Practices awards

Description/Aim/Outcomes, etc.: the one-day traning was about the rules and advices from the leading expert for the representatives of LGs, who applied for Best Practice status. How can they summarise in 15 minutes at the final ceremony for the other LGs representatives the results of their activities regarding the roma integration int he local society.

Closing conference with 150 participants for 1 day

Date: 12/05/2010

Subject matter of conference: Final decision of Best Practises, closing ceremony with giving the prizes

Target group: Local Governments representatives, public servants and experts from local level

Regarding to the decision of Steering Committee, Mohács and Budapest XIII. district have won 500 thousand HUF in each. Mohács implemented a whole strategy for integration the roma and not roma students in their elementary schools. They made a structural change against the segregation. Budapest XIII. district made a very good cooperation with the minority local government, and they established a supplementary school and daily care center for children,

who need help in school because of their social situation. Uszka received an extra prize 100 thousand HUF, because of the cooperation of local government and minority local government for development of the small and very poor village.

On 3th of October there were held local elections in Hungary. This fact influenced our program at this stage: we announced the new call for application in May 2010. The deadline for sending us the local governmental best practices is 15th of January 2011. Because these, we can start now to encourage the leaders of Local Governments to make applications in our program. However we didn't make great marketing campaign in the period of this program, we worked permanently to discover good practices from local governments on the relevant activity area, like roma integration. We represent the program at different events: like the European Committee conference on roma integration in September 2010.

The strengthening prejudices are even more difficult challenges for local governments in local societies. Our program makes permanently opportunity for those municipalities who are proud some results in strengthening integration and toleration in local societies.

There was a successful conference in September organized by European Committee. The conference had a positive and effective message to the local governments, to the European Union and to the Hungarian society: there are some positive examples from local communities, who are responsible for each other, who try to develop the disadvantageous groups of local people.

On 18th of November 2010 our leading expert, Dr. Katalin Pallai made a training for the leaders and experts of winning municipalities. The main aim of this activity is the dissemination of the knowledge and to train the representatives of Local Governments how could they demonstrate their efforts and performances on the best way for the local public and for the other Local Governments to multiply their know-how. We attached to this report the professional content of this training. We invited all the short-listed local governments and seven of them participated. We agreed with them on the dates of local events about Best Practises. Some of them are even now under organisation, because not all the period of the year are suitable for showing the local governments relevant activities. The local events will be on the following dates and venues: 22th of February 2011 in Budapest XIII. district, 25th of February 2011 in Mohács, 1th of March 2011 in Hernád and 6th of April 2011 in Csorvás.

On 25th of November 2010 we had a conference in Budapest with high level representation of Center of Expertise with the aim to introduce our program to the newly elected local governments representatives. We had altogether 100 participants and they evaluated the events very effective and useful. The conference was financed by the Council of Europe and the TÖÖSZ.

We planned to have in 2010 the local events with the aim of dissemination of Best Practices. Because of the local election in October 2010 there are many events targeted the local governments. Because of these circumstances we will organise the local events with the municipalities in 2011.

There was a successful conference with about 100 participants. The conference had a positive and effective message to the local governments and to the Hungarian society: there are some positive examples from local communities, who are responsible for each other, who try to develop the disadvantageous groups of local people.

Dissemination training with 13 participants for 1 day

Date: 18/11/2010

Subject matter of meeting: how can be organized a local dissemination day within the Best Practise Program

Target group: short-listed municipalities

Description/Aim/Outcomes, etc.:

DISSEMINATION LOCAL EVENTS IN 2011

Decisions were made about dates of the events: 22th of February 2011 in Budapest XIII. district, 25th of February 2011 in Mohács, 1th of March 2011 in Hernád and 6th of April 2011 in Csorvás, 13-14th of May Velence (winner best practise in 2008 period in strengthening local identity).