

Voluntary Organizations in Hungary and in Kiskunfélegyháza

In Hungary the voluntary organizations started to develop only after the change of the political system in 1990. The first associations were initiated by people of the same interest who wanted to get together in a society. These societies were very varied and specialized in different fields for example: embroidery, music, singing in choirs, protecting animals and the environment or society of the pensioners who worked at the same workplace.

At that time these organizations worked with very low costs. They asked only for place from the local government. But later on they started to develop more and more and they needed more money as well for different costs like post, telephone, fax, copier and other office costs. The requirement for the leaders of these organizations also increased so they had to work to a higher standard.

As the non-profit law in 1994 was accepted these requirements were increased even more. Reports, invoices, files and accounting had to be made which insured the legality of the activities but it required more professional knowledge as well.

The non-profit law determined the category of public utility and that of the advanced public utility. This also means that the organizations of advanced public utility have to fulfil different government or local government tasks described in a contract. This way they gained various rights for example to give certificates to donors to obtain a tax allowance.

The non-profit law makes it possible for the taxpayers to give 1% of their personal income to a voluntary organization chosen by them. Then this 1% amount is doubled by the government (it is about 14-15 thousand million HUF a year) and then the money is distributed by a national organization the National Civil Fund to the different voluntary organizations by a competition.

The result of the chance of getting this 1% was that lots of voluntary organizations were established to get this money. For example a school made a foundation to ask for the 1% support of the parents' income to cover the costs of the students' summer camps.

In Hungary and also in our town Kiskunfélegyháza there are many voluntary organizations which are specialized in social care such as taking care of disabled and mentally handicapped children and adults.

A very important step in the progress of the voluntary organizations was the fact that in 1992 in Kiskunfélegyháza like in other 23 towns of Hungary the United Way (American) Foundation was established. This foundation was founded not only for a specific purpose but to do various activities. This foundation is a trustworthy organization which deals with collecting donations and distributing them by competition. This foundation provided a lot of help in the work of the other voluntary organizations because that time only it had an appropriate infrastructure. The foundation set a good example by establishing its Youth section which helped a lot in the different voluntary activities but the most important thing is that this way the young people got to know the role, the need and the importance of the voluntary work today.

In Kiskunfélegyháza the United Way Foundation initiated to develop the Association of the Voluntary Organizations. In our town there are 142 registered voluntary organizations- though it is not clear whether all of them do real work or not – 53 of which have joined the Association . The list of these 53 organizations can be found in attachment.

The work of the Association of the Voluntary Organizations is important and useful. They work on behalf of thousands of people. The work of the different organizations is helped by exchanging information, the possibility of taking part in joint events, mutual participation in national and European competitions, the possibility of being in touch with foreign voluntary organizations (e.g. with the club of retired people in Die , France or the connection with the club of the Hungarian Pensioners in Voivodina (Yugoslavia).

The local politics and local government take into consideration the opinion of the civilians. In every committee of the local government there is a civilian representative who can tell his opinion about the different issues. Sometimes it happens that the Association of the Voluntary Organization gets the proposal of a decree and they can express their opinion about it. Last time it happened with the decree about prohibiting smoking.

In the administration of the local government there is a person whose responsibility is to keep contact between the voluntary organizations and the local government.

The local government supports the voluntary organizations, the different sport, cultural and art activities by providing place and money for them. But there are some activities – like the protection of animals, kennels for stray dogs – where more specified support is given.

The voluntary organizations finance their activities in the following ways:

- support from the local government, which is given so that they could work . They can also apply for money from the budget of the different committees of the local government to organize an event or fulfil a specific task.
- support from sponsors, mainly entrepreneurs
- taking part in national or European Union competitions.

They have to render an account of how the support is used.

Among the voluntary organizations there are some special ones like the Club of the Royal Amateur Cooks which promotes the traditions of the Hungarian Gastronomy. They represent their trade, the voluntary organizations of Kiskunfélegyháza in different local, national and international events.

The voluntary organizations play an important part in winning subvention from the European Union, e.g. in the Leader Action group the voluntary organizations have to take part as well as the organizations of economics and local government and they make the decisions together.

To sum up we can say that the voluntary organizations are very useful for society and also for those people who take part in them because they do their work with great enthusiasm. They are also useful for democracy as their opinion is an important factor in the process.

Association of the Voluntary Organizations in Kiskunfélegyháza

1. Association of the Clubs of Retired People
2. Foundation for a Healthy Town
3. Foundation of Christmas Light
4. Foundation of Literature of Kiskunfélegyháza
5. Foundation in support of Entrepreneurs of Kiskunfélegyháza
6. St. Philip Foundation
7. Foundation of the Saint Family Church Kiskunfélegyháza
8. United Way Kiskunfélegyháza Foundation
9. Kiskunfélegyháza Group of the Association of Organic Foods
10. Ottó Hermann National Association of Protecting Animals and Nature
11. Kiskun Association of the Friends of the Nature
12. Association of the Big Families of Kiskunfélegyháza
13. Association of the Physically Handicapped of Kiskunfélegyháza
14. Association of public utility „ Heartbeat for the Health”
15. Explorer Globe-trotting Club of Railwaymen
16. Catholic Youth Office
17. Culture House
18. Association of the House of Learning
19. Board of the Entrepreneurs of Kiskunfélegyháza
20. Society of Stampcollectors no.374
21. Society of Physical Trainers of Kiskunfélegyháza
22. Association for the Youth of Kiskunfélegyháza
23. Foundation of Democracy and Solidarity Kiskunfélegyháza
24. Almamater Society of Petőfi Sándor Kiskunfélegyháza
25. Foundation for the no.11. Primary School of the Handicapped Children
26. Rainbow Youth Camp Association
27. Chain-loop Foundation
28. Association of Leisure time and Popular Sport of Kiskunfélegyháza
29. Foundation of public utility for the better chance of the gypsies
30. "Breathing" Foundation for the Patients of Respiratory organs and for the Cleaner and Healthier Environment
31. Uncle Fidó Foundation of public utility
32. REIKA Foundation
33. Foundation for the soccer of Kiskunfélegyháza
34. Ferenc Móra Culture Association
35. Together for each other Foundation of the Kindergarten of Bankfalu
36. Foundation for the renovation of the Old Church of Kiskunfélegyháza
37. Association of the Collectors of medals and coins
38. Foundation for the Children of Kuckó Creche
39. Association of public utility of the Civil Guard of Kiskunfélegyháza
40. Club of the Pensioners of Red Cross
41. Together for each other Club of Pensioners
42. Fidgeter Kids' Club
43. Green Eye Foundation
44. Catholic Youth Office
45. Association of public utility of Artists of Applied and Fine Arts
46. Association of Farmers of Nagyszőlő Road
47. Foundation for the National Bicycle Paths
48. Association of Farmers of Halesz
49. Club of Royal Amateur Cooks
50. Association of Archers

On the waiting list to be registered:

- Association for the Wonderful Rural tourism on the Great Hungarian Plain
- Association of public utility of Together for a better country