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Building successes



From “Rustic Paris” to Open Hódmezővásárhely *Building a creative-based local strategy*

An URBACT Local Action Plan



**Local Action Plan drafted by the Hódmezővásárhely Local Support Group
in the frame of the URBACT CREATIVE CLUSTERS project**

Hódmezővásárhely City Council, Hungary



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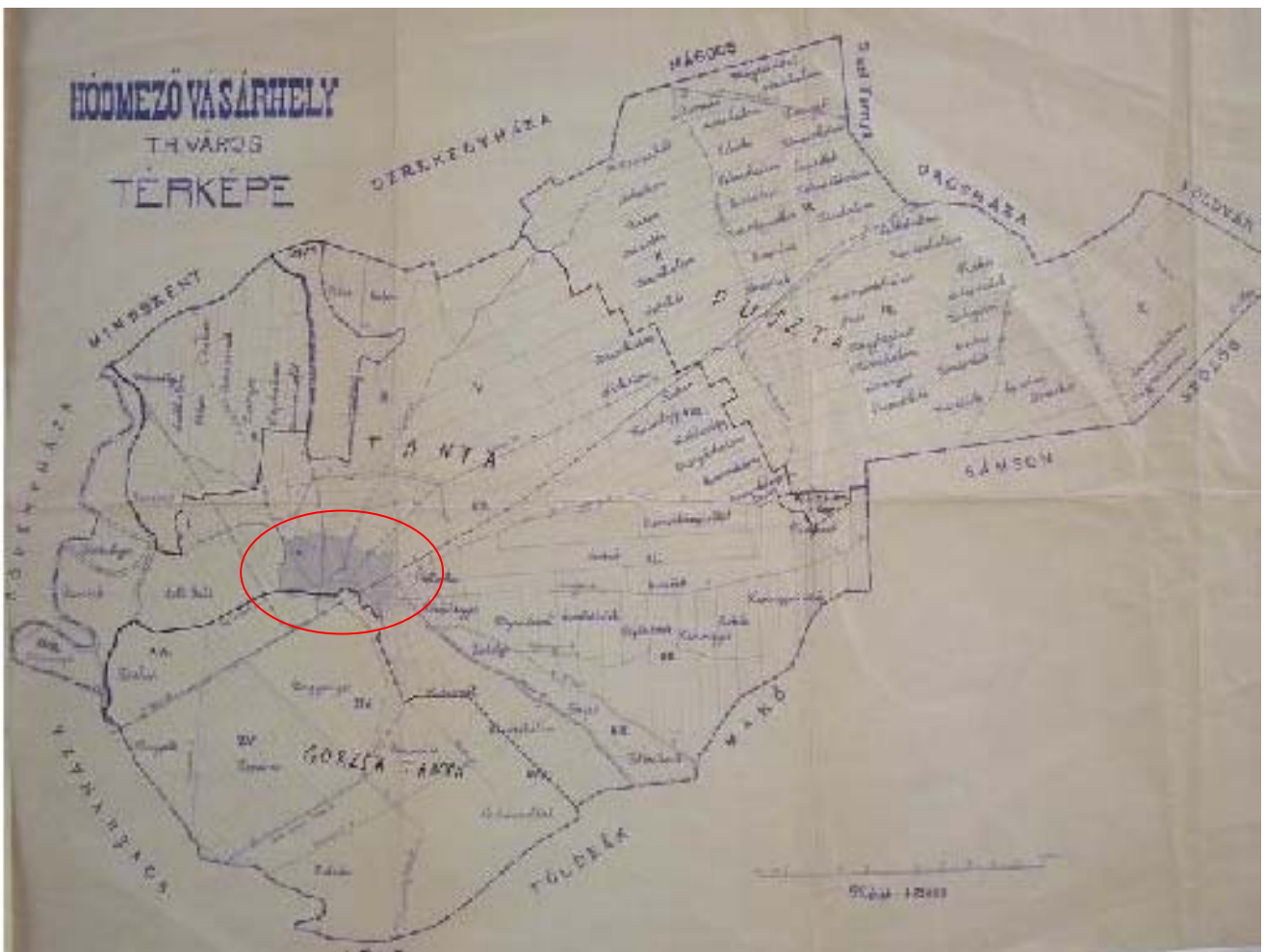
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**Cover image:
Rehabilitation of block houses
idea from the URBACT school contest in Hódmezővásárhely**

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Hódmezővásárhely, Hungary: village or a real city?

The city and its huge administrative, rural surroundings in 1940 – this situation has not changed so far

I. INTRODUCTORY NOTE: LOOKING AT HÓDMEZŐVÁSÁRHELY IN A DIFFERENT WAY.

"There are two possible ways of creativity: on one hand there are the talented people who can dance or sing beautifully for instance. On the other hand, there are the right people who create the environment in which dancers and singers can show their talent"

Quoted from a Portuguese participant, October 2010, URBACT Creative Clusters thematic workshop, Hódmezővásárhely

Hódmezővásárhely is a world sensation! –it was said many times, at many places during the 3 years of CREATIVE CLUSTERS project. The values and traditions of Hódmezővásárhely are colorful and unique especially compared to other, similar cities of the Hungarian Great Plain. Some attempts were already done to communicate this message to a broader publicity in an up-to-date and proper way. Features of the culture of the whole Great

Plain and of the typical part of Hungarian culture are present in Hódmezővásárhely, which rightly deserve to be introduced and disseminated, we can agree on it. However, Hódmezővásárhely is just before some very important, rehabilitation developments of a great volume that have started in the recent past, after a preparation phase of several years. Due to the developments the image of the city will clearly change.



The development and use of single 'surfaces' depends on the demands and creativity of the citizens – a craftsmen's private patio in the city, ready for public use

City development is the task of the city management, who has won significant amount for this purpose and started to realize the plans. During the preparatory meetings of this Action Plan we came to the conclusion that the creative use of the renewable urban spaces is the citizens' task. They can fulfill this task successfully only if the city management encourages them to do so by giving them space literally. The creative, useful and common usage of the renewed urban spaces gives a new quality to the city, which will appear in a totally different way in public opinion from

Paving the way to the future of a creative city: tradition must be re-defined in a modern way



now on. And first of all, the citizens will look upon Hódmezővásárhely in a different way. City rehabilitation depends on plans only regarding the physical environment, the development and use of single 'surfaces' depends on the demands and creativity of the citizens.

It is an important issue since cities or rather cities and agglomeration zones are competing all around the world, so Hódmezővásárhely has to be unique compared to Szeged, be attractive compared to demands of modern times and compared to its the environment.

However, it is not clear at all, what makes a city successful in the competition of cities. The usual criteria for success – such as the number of awards and prizes, approved projects, operating industrial parks, shopping centres, multinational companies, motorway connections etc. – do not include the spirituality of the city, which is an especially important factor in case of Hódmezővásárhely, as this means an additional value besides the others. Without spirituality **the city can lose its uniqueness, its image and identity for ever** as a consequence of all these 'successful' developments. The city also faces the risk of becoming a 'characterless city' instead of a 'successful city' due to not well-prepared development. The emphasis is moved to qualitative improvement of conditions for a complex city development, in which the opinion of the citizens is also an important aspect. A city is a result of complicated processes that sometimes cannot be directly influenced, so the factors determining the natural development of the city have to be discovered and adjusted to the public purposes. Only the proportionate and organic development can serve as a basis of the not so spectacular, but long-term success, balanced urban atmosphere and harmony.

The current Action Plan aims at giving a description on the steps made from the physical city rehabilitation to the change in the image of the city: as its citizens, but also as citizens of Hungary see it now, the image of a livable and creative city that uses its past visible in its cityscape successfully. It is challenging to preserve the spirituality and the traditions of the

city, whilst becoming able to show these features of the city to even more people, according to the demands of our times.

The citizens of Hódmezővásárhely hold the responsibility to present these features, thus they have to adopt the forthcoming city developments as their own. The Local Support Group (LSG) working in the framework of **URBACT CREATIVE CLUSTERS** project has become familiar with good practices from abroad and attempted to support this aim. **In other words, the LSG encourages the citizens to realize it, feel it every day and convey: Hódmezővásárhely is a world sensation!**



Ervin Schleiffer
member of the Hódmezővásárhely local support group

II. SUMMARY OF THE HÓDMEZŐVÁSÁRHELY LOCAL ACTION PLAN

Once upon a time there was a rural city in the Hungarian Great Plain, agricultural centre of the Austro-Habsburg Monarchy. This city was one of the biggest cities at the end of the 19th century in Hungary, a rather powerful city, but strongly agricultural based.

At the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, when Hungarian culture had a fantastic renewal, out of a sudden Hódmezővásárhely also had an intensive, rich intellectual and cultural life. It was so significant that the city was called "**rustic Paris**" at that time. Later, during the decades of the socialism, Hódmezővásárhely became the typical agro-industrial city, a symbol of socialist industry. It is a fact that the values and traditions of Hódmezővásárhely are colorful and unique especially compared to other, similar cities of the Great Plain.

After the change of the regime, everything changed again, but unfortunately not to a proper direction, again. The city had to cope with the well-known post-socialist problems: privatisation and finding new markets, reduction of old-fashioned, not profitable factories, unemployment, etc.

Rich traditions of Hódmezővásárhely (such as ceramics industry more connected to handicrafts and primarily the handicrafts industry of the city) as well as strong communities have become the victim of the change of the regime, but also were affected by the inflow of cheap products from the Far-East. This is a complex process, a spectacular result of which is the closure of one of the cultural symbols of the city, the Majolica factory.

The CREATIVE CLUSTERS URBACT project gave an opportunity to enthusiastic and committed local people to re-think the local development agenda in Hódmezővásárhely by entering a number of creative-based issues concerning the creative industries and the framework conditions to attract and retain creative professionals in the city. In a nutshell: **to reinforce the city as a place where "contemporary" lives**. This learning process was fostered by the lead expert, other partners and local experts in Hungary ULSG members contacted regularly.

As for theoretical background, the concept of **creative ecosystem**, developed by the URBACT network Creative Clusters, was useful for us. The creative ecosystem is an environment of excellence focused on creative-based activities. It comprises people (creative class and entrepreneurs), the economy (creative industries) and place (ranging in scales from creative-oriented facilities to creative districts and the city). It is supported by specific policies, mainly at local level. These small creative spaces (cities) are in global competition with each other.

Our Local Action Plan was strongly influenced by the results of the **ACRE European research project** as well (<http://acre.socsci.uva.nl>). Among these results it is important to emphasize the suggestion of using the 3P model (pathway – place – personnel networks) in Europe instead of the 3T one. The "**personalization**" of the city", strongly linked to community actions, is particularly relevant in the case of Hódmezővásárhely since community building is a key factor in Eastern Europe due to the historical background. Without strong local community, there is no strong, iconic place, and without these places local people cannot identify how to brand and package the local spirit and traditions of Hódmezővásárhely to visitors. This is the goal of the Action Plan.

The Hódmezővásárhely Local Action Plan was discussed in details with Mr István Almási, deputy mayor as well as some elected members of the general assembly. The Local Action Plan will be approved by the general assembly of the city in September, 2011.

III. WHY AN ACTION PLAN FOR HÓDMEZŐVÁSÁRHELY ADDRESSING THE CREATIVE DRIVER?

As a partner Hódmezővásárhely started the implementation phase of the URBACT CREATIVE CLUSTERS project in 2008.

The URBACT network on Creative Clusters in Low-Density Urban Areas is an added value cooperation project with the goal to perform a collective "learning by doing" exercise in the field of urban creative clusters. The fundamental assumption is that **creative issues in local economic development are also a functional pattern outside the context of the main urban hubs and core cities**. Even more, creativity as source of innovation should act as a cross cutting approach to re-think economic and social development in middle size and small towns given the new opportunities related to accessibility, community life, culture and creativity-based business models.

In this framework the concept of "low density urban areas" will match with both: the OCED concept of "intermediate region"; and the remoteness/proximity duality, or accessibility to a main urban hub, rejecting the urban/rural duality.

Hódmezővásárhely joined the partnership of CREATIVE CLUSTERS because the project's main theme perfectly matched the priorities of the city, which are summarised in the Integrated Urban Development Strategy (IUDS) of the city elaborated in 2008.

Along with an extensive **learning itinerary** shared by all the project partners (city of Óbidos [PT], Barnsley [UK], Reggio Emilia [IT], Mizil [RO], Enguera [ES], Viareggio [IT], Jyväskylä [FI] and INTELI [PT] as knowledge provider, the most important activity of Hódmezővásárhely in the framework of CREATIVE CLUSTERS was the elaboration of a Local Action Plan with the strong involvement of a devoted **Local Support Group** (LSG) with the participation of main city stakeholders and local experts.

The main purpose of the LSG is to integrate into the existing plans and strategies of the Municipality the experiences gained through the study visits, thematic workshops and other network events, carried out in the frame of the project. Therefore, the LSG is a possibility for the Municipality, following new trends in local development, in order to create an action plan with the direct involvement of a truly concerned and relevant stakeholder group concerning a specific issue.

The issue of **local creative economy** in Hódmezővásárhely – which is an absolutely new concept in Hungary, at least at smaller sized cities' level – can be summarised as follows.

The ceramics industry of the city went through a successful privatisation after the change of the political system in 1990: the investing companies carried out significant specialisation in the factories with relatively high quality infrastructure, and thus, they managed to stay successful. Meanwhile, the ceramics industry more connected to handicrafts and primarily the handicrafts industry of the city have become the victim of the inflow of cheap products from the Far-East. It is followed by the radical changes of the habits of the consumers which pose a major problem to the artisans employed in traditional handicrafts (not only ceramics), as they have less and less customers and followers. This is a complex process, a spectacular result of which is the closure of one of the cultural symbols of the city, the Majolica factory.

The city has to solve this complex problem in a conscious and integrated way, in cooperation with the actors involved. It has to develop a complex programme which integrates all aspects of the problem, based on the exact study of the needs and resources available. It can mean several things: a new type of economic promotion, for example the creation of a handicrafts cluster, or city development and intervention from the side of tourism, or something totally

different. The city management has to decide which road to follow, taking into account the opinion of the local target groups as much as possible.

As the first step in the elaboration of this long term programme, the city developed its **Integrated Urban Development Strategy** in 2008, and in accordance with its development aims phrased in the document, the city participates in two international partnerships: the CeRamICa INTERREG IVC project (<http://www.ceramicaproject.eu>) implemented with the leadership of the city, and as partner in URBACT CREATIVE CLUSTERS project (<http://urbact.eu/creative-clusters>). The main objective of the city in both projects is to launch its own integrated long term development in order to solve the problems stated above, through learning from the international examples and good practices and with active involvement of the local actors.



Renovation and re-definition of the Majolica factory is one of the key elements regarding creativity in Vásárhely. The other is the efficient involvement of local citizens.

So, the current Action Plan was elaborated on the basis of the IUDS, with the collaboration of the URBACT LSG, summarizing the short term developmental directions connected to creative economy. The main question is how the city can foster its background resources and collective efforts towards the idea of "creative city" in a relatively short time, providing new attributes and features for its residents and visitors.

The goal of the Action Plan is to strengthen the spirit and traditions of Hódmezővásárhely by presenting them to more and more people, in a way which respects the claims of a modern society. To re-think the local development agenda in Hódmezővásárhely by entering a number of creative-based issues concerning the creative industries and the framework conditions to attract and retain creative professionals in the city. In a nutshell: to reinforce the city as a place where "contemporary" lives.

IV. OUR MODEL: FROM CREATIVE INDUSTRIES TO THE CREATIVE PLACE

The meaning of cluster

According to the definition of Michael E. Porter, "a cluster is a group of enterprises and related institutions situated geographically close to each other, cooperating in a certain economic field, which are connected by their similarity and their value of completing each other" (1998, translation from the Hungarian version).

The main idea behind thematic clusters is that cooperative market behavior models provide many potentials still undiscovered and unused. A market-based cultural and creative cluster can provide its members with the following:

- Identifying R&D connections in the cultural and creative branches;
- Support and development of the establishment of innovative enterprises and their integration into clusters;
- Support for the organisation of joint procurements and cultural services;
- Organisation of joint appearance at fairs and exhibitions;
- Organisation of joint sales opportunities;
- Management of joint development, production and services activities;
- Support of joint appearance of products on the market (joint image, website, brand), organisation of media appearances, generation of news;
- Elaboration of PR and commercial material;
- Building partnerships, organisation of national and international partner meetings;
- Administration, support of project reimbursement;
- Resource coordination and elaboration of applications;
- Continuous update and editorship of the Internet page managed by the cluster, management of a joint event calendar;
- Publication of joint newsletters;
- Innovation consultancy (support of innovation processes, inventions, copyright and planning of innovative services)

On 22 April 2010, the only local product cluster of Hungary so far, the Pannon Local Product Cluster (Pannon Helyi Termék Klaszter) was introduced at the open forum organised by the URBACT LSG in the city.

The introduction was of high significance for the statement of the fact that **what Hódmezővásárhely needs is not an industrial size cluster (at the moment at least), but the cooperation and association of the local handicraft artisans, which should be the basis**. However, the recently opened tender opportunity of the region is encouraging the establishment of industrial size clusters.



Cooperation of the handicraft artisans is essential

On the other hand, Hódmezővásárhely could take a leading role in a **cultural industrial cluster** of regional size (harmonisation of regional programmes, organisation of international projects, unified image, integration into education, etc.), thus becoming competitive with the influence of **Szeged** attracting economic power.

Without counting the capital, a similar initiative has been created in **Pécs**, partially connected to the European Capital of Culture project.

It is important to note that in the frame of this project the word „cluster” is understood not only as a legal-administrative concept but also as cluster in a more physical aspect represented in the everyday life of the city (also expressed through the image created about the city). Thus, the word cluster means also a concrete place (street, district or separated buildings if talking about a town) which is owned by creative people, having the support of the city leadership due to the ongoing urban development process (or the lack of it).

Experience shows, that if there is a possibility, these initiatives are becoming „self-propelling”, as the characteristic spots with which visitors will also identify the city.

Based on the study tours organized in the frame of the project (especially on the examples of the Finnish Jyväskylä and Portuguese Óbidos) **it is important that the city management of Hódmezővásárhely understands, that it is unavoidable to create and execute a marketing strategy understandable for everyone.** It is also important to understand, that the city should give place and opportunity for association. On the other hand, it is essential that citizens identify themselves with these places and consider these spots as their own in order to reach a real effect on their creativity. This last is a key message delivered by the city of Barnsley [UK] one of the partners in URBACT Creative Clusters.

If the concept meets the place, the principals of the city management and the will of the citizens to support urban development, the given spot could, with time, become an iconic place for the city.

Creative industries and the city

The American geographer-economist **Richard Florida**, who has received much attention with both positive and negative feedback in the past few years, has founded the theory connecting regional economic development with creativity and the presence of creative work force, bringing examples from the United States of America. His most important statement is that the

value of locality, i.e. the role of the location has increased parallel to globalisation. Through the examples of developing and falling regions and cities of America, Florida highlights the key elements of success in this new era named "creative" by himself. According to him, the road to prosperity is marked by the **3Ts, i.e. talent, technology and tolerance**. In short, talent means the quality of human resources available, technology stands for the economic-technological development level of the given area, and tolerance is the accepting and inspirational social-cultural environment that respects and acknowledges openness, creation and success, and accepts subjective and minority opinions. In our creative era, where creative workforce means the number one resource of the road to success, 3Ts is the key of economic development.

The most important result of Florida's theory is that in a way appropriate for the topic and understandable for the public, he has connected the concepts of talent and technology with tolerance. Although the first two had been discussed for long as hard factors influencing economic development, the dimension of the soft cultural value of tolerance had not received the same attention so far.

Today the adjective *creative* and the notion of *creativity* have positive, "fancy" connotations. The creative person is "the hero of our day". We are living in a world where knowledge, the ability of interpretation, and human creativity are becoming the driving force, the first place determiner of development. Rephrasing the statement, we meet a huge business opportunity. **Cultural industries taking a leading role in creative economy have become part of the economic mainstream of today.**

It is a generally accepted fact that creative economy includes all forms of the expression of creation. However, there is a large difference according to the classification of scientific and inventive fields as belonging here, besides arts and cultural products. In other words, while the narrow definition of creative economic branches focuses only on culture, the wider interpretation regards all creational processes, as the elaboration of any products and services based on new ideas as part of creativity.

Thus, we regard everyone as having a creative occupation, the work of whom is characterised by creational activities, the development of new ideas, inventions, technologies, contents and different solutions. According to the original idea of Florida, the creative class is constituted by the following groups: scientists, engineers, architects, designers, employees of education, arts and entertainment industry, as well as qualified experts working in the fields of finance, law and healthcare.

According to a general definition, creative economy is defined as follows: **"Creative industries are activities based on personal creativity, qualification and skills, which are able to create wealth and jobs through the development and use of intellectual property."**

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES:

1. advertising industry
2. software development and digital game development

CULTURAL INDUSTRIES:

3. publishing activities (books, newspaper, music, etc.)
4. film industry (film, video, TV)
5. broadcast (radio, TV)
6. music, visual and fine arts
7. journalism, news agency
8. commercial museum activities, arts exhibitions
9. commerce of cultural products
10. architecture (interior design, garden design)

11. design industry (industrial, product, textile, fashion, etc.)
12. arts and antique market
13. handicrafts

Cultural industry can be complemented by tourism and free time sports, built heritage protection and public educational institutions.

The creative ecosystem: people, economy, places and policies

The concept of creative ecosystem, developed within the URBACT network on Creative Clusters, was useful for Hódmezővásárhely. The creative ecosystem is an environment of excellence focused on creative-based activities. It comprises people (creative class and entrepreneurs), the economy (creative industries) and place (ranging in scales from creative-oriented facilities to creative districts and the city). It is supported by specific policies, mainly at local level. These small creative spaces (cities) are in global competition with each other.

This Local Action Plan has been strongly influenced by the results of the ACRE European research project as well, <http://acre.socsci.uva.nl>. It was introduced during the URBACT Creative Clusters thematic workshop held in Hódmezővásárhely in October 2010 by Mr Tamás Egedy, fellow of the Geographical Research Institute, Hungarian Academy of Science. Among these results it is important to emphasize the suggestion of using the 3P model (pathway – place – personnel networks) in Europe instead of the 3T one.



“Personalisation” of the city: the famous poet, Ady Endre’s stencil on a wall

The “personalization” of the city”, strongly linked to community actions, is particularly relevant in the case of Hódmezővásárhely since community building is a key factor in Eastern Europe due to the historical background. Without strong local community, there is no strong, iconic place, and without these places local people cannot identify how to brand and package the local spirit and traditions of Hódmezővásárhely to visitors. This is a main goal of the Action Plan.

These theories helped us to adapt Florida’s idea on the creative industry to the local circumstances.

The findings of URBACT Creative Clusters are important because they show how creativity can lead to a sort of leapfrogging in terms of social and economic development in small and midsize towns. This is a key in Hódmezővásárhely since "a new cluster reading of the local economy has to be seen as an exercise to refresh or re-think urban economy in order to build new competitive advantages in existing mature industries using creative drivers", like tradition based design in Hódmezővásárhely.

As for other partners' exercise, the most important good practice we identified is the theory of "**rural modernity**" from Óbidos. This belongs to the theory of creative ecosystem as well, since creativity as driving force also offers an opportunity to re-think rural development, which is often constrained within a narrow triangle made up of ecotourism-agrofood-craftmanship. By introducing the concept of creativity, a new more contemporary idea of "rurality" can emerge in Western countries. Óbidos in Portugal is an excellent benchmark of this approach.

It is also important to underline, that according to the results of a 2009 research project (Rittgasszer I., 2009), despite of the basically rural character of **Hódmezővásárhely and the surroundings**, the area is mentioned as a "**potentially creative**" township (the research project uses 43 indicators linked to the 3T components). This result is obviously influenced by the fact that the neighboring city of Szeged is mentioned as a "super creative" township, but setting aside these facts Hódmezővásárhely (with Szeged) are emerging cities in this area of the country, and this fact should be considered when judging the Action Plan.

what makes a city creative? - based on relevant parts of the study of a. kiss

Rehabilitation plan of the former Majolica Factory



CREATIVITY.- as the main value of a city is composed by the desires, ideas, imagination and deeds of the people living there, a creative city is one that is able to attract and maintain talent and mobilise ideas. This is achievable by the provision of added values for the inhabitants that they cannot receive at other places, and the creation of conditions that encourage people to think, plan and act in a new way in all fields of life. For instance, **providing creative places** (public city spaces and institutions in favour of personal contact building; cafés, avenues, exhibition

rooms, universities) **can trigger community activities**. A creative city is characterised by **strategic thinking**, long term planning and committed city management ready to take risks – but only with full responsibility, able to use tactics and strategies. Creative city management means overcoming normative thinking, by a conscious value choice and its creative implementation.

CITY IMAGE.- the identity of cities is questioned from many aspects today: cities become fragmented regarding structure, image and society, along the lines of different interests. In order to bring together social groups organised by diverse interests, a possible and efficient way is the creation of a complex city image that is easy to communicate, using the specialities (historical, geographic, cultural features) of the city. This can be very difficult as it needs the harmonisation of two different tasks: on the one hand, inhabitants of the city have to be offered a city image they are able to identify with, and on the other hand, an up-to-date city image has to be created that is easy to convey, and able to attract a significant number of

people to the city. These two city-visions: the "livable, humane" and the "well marketed and marketable" images of the city are often conflicting each other (Zs. Szijártó, 2005).

Memorial Point, Hódmezővásárhely

CULTURAL-BASED CITY DEVELOPMENT.- culture as "business" is one of the leading sectors of the post-Fordist economy, and as such, serves as a basis for many renewal processes of cities (T. Lukovich, 2005). **The cultural sector, being strongly dependent on location and feeding on local traditions, is especially suitable for the dynamic use of the inward energies of the city and the generation of an autonomous inside development.**



Money and energy invested in cultural infrastructure and results, in "creative industries" create measurable benefit that can be circulated in the city economy in the form of new workplaces and a renewed urban environment (L. Polyák, 2005). The cultural sector contributes largely to the competitiveness of the city by creating unique products, producing qualified workforce by its demand for synergy, creativity, and innovation, and attracting other developed economic branches. Moreover, a city that manages to focus its development around culture is more likely to be able to approach other problems of the city and the community in a successful way as well. What is even more, today the leading role in the creation of the city image is played by cultural resources. Such cultural resources involve:



- artistic workshops;
- local community cultures;
- cultural heritage;
- local image;
- natural and built environment, including public spaces;
- diversity and quality of free time activities;
- local atmosphere and intellectuality represented by universities and scientific institutions;
- special local products and services.

By the radical changes of the economic sphere determining cities' performance, the traditional relations of culture and economy have to be re-visited. The former radical separation is shifted towards the interdependence of economy and culture.

CULTURAL IMAGE.- culture produces a city experience that is marketable. There is a need for consciously built cultural image in order to make culture a real force in urban development. The multiple cultural institutions and events of a city are not sufficient if they lack the high quality concentrating the diverse but fragmented cultural resources of the city. These significant quality characteristics are inevitable for a cultural image. At the same time, the so called "high culture" cannot cover the experiences offered by popular culture which follow a different logic (Zs. Szijártó, 2005). "High culture" satisfies the needs of a narrow (but very important) layer of society. This group can and has to be extended; however, for the involvement of huge numbers of people (for the strengthening of their local identity), and to

fill the spaces of the city with memories and experiences, the involvement of popular culture is inevitable.

The fresh and colorful nature of the cultural image of a city is highly dependent on the presence of the urban subcultures – regardless of whether they live in the city or stay there for a shorter time, whether they are the students of tertiary or secondary education, whether they are active in the fields of music or fine arts, or the establishment of progressive civil communities. Subcultures represent the most active actors creating and shaping local content and the local atmosphere that serve as the basis of “symbolic economy”.



Creativity is not enough today – we have to be able to package the traditions in a modern, creative way

THE GROWING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.- research conducted in developed West European countries shows that more and more educated and well-informed communities pay an increased attention towards the built environment of their living areas. They expect the location to bear a unique image that summarises the features of spatial location and historical, societal and cultural development. The importance of an aesthetic built environment and its cultural atmosphere becomes equal to that of material wealth. Through defining a unique image and protecting the spatial appearance of its characteristics, an urban location can gain such added value that ensures its natural vitality for a long period. A well-structured and built urban environment raises the living standards of the inhabitants, strengthens local identity, and triggers active social participation through the high quality and attractive communal and cultural spaces. Moreover, even business enterprises prefer cities with a good, livable atmosphere ensured by attractive public spaces, pleasant housing areas and spacious locations for free-time activities.



Well-structured urban environment triggers active social participation through the high quality and attractive communal and cultural spaces

Architectural heritage means an increasingly encouraging challenge for cities, and the emotional motivations of the inhabitants related to their cities can be converted into significant energy resources in the fields of urban development (Z. Erő, 2000). Therefore, conscious urban development has to be based on the structural, architectural and environmental characteristics of the given city.

CULTURAL URBAN REHABILITATION.- there are several strategies that cultural urban development can follow. It can focus on the development of cultural infrastructure, such as the establishment and construction of art museums and collections; the newly built cultural buildings have a symbolic value and are able to gain high media attention. Instead of physical aspects, urban development can be based on cultural programmes and events.

However, there is a complex strategy as well, that highlights cultural based urban rehabilitation. This does not mean merely defining new emphases in the urban space (for the establishment of spectacular but isolated new buildings), but fine-tuned restructuring and changes in the city organism that fill the city with new cultural content (events, spectacles). Thus, emphasis has to be put on such complex public space rehabilitation that creates a network of cultural spaces and buildings that can be experienced during a walk (L. Polyák, 2005). **The redefinition of urban public spaces, filling them with new contents and meanings gives a dynamic nature to the environment that can make the locations typical and favoured by the cultural life of the city.** Such projects promote local identity and social cohesion in a most effective way.



Rehabilitation of a block house – idea from the creative school contest

V. THE CITY BACKGROUND

Spatial positioning

The city, with a population of approximately 50,000 people, lies in South-East Hungary, close to both Serbia and Romania, on the Hungarian Great Plain, and as such it lies in one of the most underdeveloped regions of the country. It is 190 km far from Budapest and only 25 km from the city of Szeged, the main urban node in this South-Eastern region with a population of 165,000 as well as a university city and a development pole.

In general, the attraction of Szeged has such a strong effect on all aspects of life that it has prevented Hódmezővásárhely from using a number of development opportunities, which Szeged could and can make use of.

Hódmezővásárhely, a unique city

Hódmezővásárhely is a typical South-Great-Plain city in geographical terms, the structure of which is still determined by the agricultural past of the city:

- the city centre is organised around the urban node composed by multi-floor buildings and wealthy "urban peasant" houses (the most of which has been damaged by today);
- the former wide village-like housing area has developed into the green urban home type living areas of today;
- outside the closed city, but not separated by city walls, have stood the individual peasant homes and buildings constituting the third building zone, a part of which has developed into the agricultural buildings and centres of today.

In spite of its relatively small population, Hódmezővásárhely has one of the largest territories in the country. Most of the built heritage of the city has been ruined during the events of the 20th century history of the city.

- A large part of the historical heritage buildings are concentrated in the city centre, and most of them are from the 18th and 19th centuries: churches of baroque style, public buildings of classical style (school, city hall, casino, hotel), the existence of which ensures a classical, urban city image.
- Some suburban buildings, agricultural homes are also under protection for their historical value and for the memories of the former agricultural life: the Kopáncs Tanyamúzeum (agricultural museum), the Grain Store, the Windmill, the Wine House, and the Pottery House.



Hódmezővásárhely on an old postcard

The originality of the city does not lie in the romantic old agricultural world and the curious urban structure but the remarkable "Hódmezővásárhely spirit" – a special cultural attitude coming from the mixture of high culture and agricultural values. How can it be defined and

summarised, what it exactly means today, and how is it present in the life of the city is an everyday problem for artists and cultural professionals of the city – as the dilemma of harmonising modernity with the protection of traditional values is increasingly present in whole East-Central-Europe. The implementation of the **Local Action Plan** means basically the structuring and clarification of the above issue, or packaging traditions and heritage in a modern way.

Hódmezővásárhely will become a creative city when it will be able to capture and use the local spirit. For this, the city management has to develop a conscious commitment towards urban marketing. For the leaders of the city, it is obvious that the **creative artistic power** apparent in the built heritage, the atmosphere, the creative artists of the city of the past and present, can serve as a basic resource for the development of the city. But this is definitely not a top-down process. **Branding should be approached as a process aimed at the production of a new vision of the city, a sort of re-thinking of local identity around creative-based narratives.** The work recently carried out by Creative Clusters project partners such as Óbidos [“Óbidos Criativa”], Barnsley [“re-making Barnsley”] or Jyväskylä in Finland [“the human technology city”] are impressive examples of this approach.

The citizens in Hódmezővásárhely have established the reading circles from the first half of the 19th century on, which served as the basic autonomous units of culture and cultivation, resulting in the active intellectual life and cultivation of a wide population. Thus, in the end of the 19th century, the city received the name **“rustic Paris”**.

According to the present general opinion, having a strong “Hódmezővásárhely” identity means a healthy local patriotism and conservative thinking in the original meaning of the word, as well as a kind of closing up towards outsiders and insisting on traditional phenomena. If the city can maintain local patriotism, while promoting openness as one of the basic conditions for the creative economy, the city will be able to develop culture and the local level creative economy into a dynamic booster of economy, using urban marketing tools in a conscious way.

The creative society of Hódmezővásárhely

We can hardly use the notion of Florida’s creative class in the case of Hódmezővásárhely. As most of the cities of Hungary, the population of the city is aging and decreasing in number. The city has problems in **preserving its own young population**: former inhabitants of the city obtaining a degree in another city do not usually return to the city, and immigration is also not typical. However, the city leadership has made serious efforts in order to stop the process, through interventions increasing its maintaining power.

Among others, the city has established the **Vásárhelyi Fiatalokért Közalapítvány** (Public Foundation for the Youth of Hódmezővásárhely), the aim of which is to **support the young people of the city in getting their first apartment**. Other means of attracting the young population to stay in the city are the development of good quality apartments for rent, the **building sites provided for free**, and the **Bakay scholarship** supporting university students who decide to settle in the city.

First and foremost creative people mean **craftsmen** (mainly in the field of ceramics) in Hódmezővásárhely, with strong traditional skills and little success in cooperation with each other. The recent Action Plan therefore deals mainly with actions which are connected to that thematic field. Secondly creative people are **local youth**, since the city shall find the way how to involve them to local traditions, in a modern way. And finally, based on the LSG meetings as well as on open discussions, there are some people in the city, who intend to make something for the city. This Local Action Plan fosters the municipality to implement this strategy based on these people.

Tourism and visitor economy

Development of a creative economy in Hódmezővásárhely should be connected to the development of a visitor economy. Therefore, the current Action Plan elaborates this aspect in

a more detailed way. Hódmezővásárhely has multiple advantages for visitors: built heritage, museums, galleries, folklore and folk art traditions, high quality cultural events, fine arts activities acknowledged in the whole country, natural environment, rivers and lakes, thermal and medical waters. Just like the larger cities of the South-Great-Plain. Despite all this, the city currently lacks spectacles or events of a country-wide attention. However, according to the SWOT analysis of the city tourism, the city has significant opportunities in this area.

Unfortunately, data regarding the touristic demand in the city show that the attractions of the city are not sufficiently strong at the moment. There are **two basic directions** however, which can serve as the boosting power of tourism:

1. **culture** / cultural tourism,
2. and **health** and the related active or **eco-tourism**.

A basic requirement for development is **destination-management: product development and marketing**.

Results of the IUDS show that the **achievements** of Hódmezővásárhely are **significantly lower than that of bigger county centres** (the data of the city are hardly reaching one tenth of the achievements of Szeged), and even Békéscsaba, which is a city of a very similar character (but with a relatively new, well-positioned festival). The geographical proximity of Szeged means a major challenge in the fields of tourism as well. Because of the high quality accommodation facilities and the more complex and well-organised attractions of Szeged, tourists of the area mostly stay in Szeged and visit Hódmezővásárhely for only one day.

The reason for this is **the lack of high quality accommodation and touristic products** of strong attractive power: in fact, there are no special attractions, events known all over the country which would attract many tourists, or make visitors stay for a longer time.

However, on the basis of the IUDS, **the cultural city rehabilitation programme has been launched, the first modern hotel of the city opened in 2010, and the unique Mártély Areal Protection Centre has been renewed** (the area gives home for the riverside plants and animals preserving the romantic profile of the River Tisza that dates back to centuries). The traditional agricultural zone, full with isolated farms (so called "tanyavilág") surrounding the city is also a potential important touristic attraction for foreign visitors (check the map in the cover).

Nevertheless, since Hungary is the first **dental touristic destination** in Europe (high quality, cheap prices), it is important to mention that Hódmezővásárhely is getting to be on the list. This is a brand new phenomenon (English and Irish people on the streets) in the city: the story started around 2010, when a Hungarian dentist moved back from UK, and his clients followed him.

Cultural life and culture related events

Culture / arts / cultivation mean an area of priority in the life of the city, from the city atmosphere through everyday life to the city economy. This can and has to be interpreted as attraction as well: the task of the city – besides modernisation and renewal of cultural institutions – the organisation of **"the city of culture", the "rustic Paris" as touristic product**.

There is a strong need for quantitative as well as qualitative development of accommodation facilities in order to **improve hosting conditions**. If Hódmezővásárhely wishes to occupy a high position in the tourism of the area, the city has to launch significant accommodation and hotel development.

It is also obvious that an appropriate place marketing strategy is inevitable in order to use the values of the local museums for the improvement of local culture and tourism.



There are major primarily **cultural events** organised every year in the city; however, the cultural events organised in Hódmezővásárhely are still only of regional significance – except for the Autumn Exhibition.

- The **Autumn Exhibition of Hódmezővásárhely** is a contemporary fine arts exhibition of national significance, displaying around 250 contemporary works of art. The event receives the attention of the professionals, more than 5000 visitors every year, and professional success. The Exhibition, organised for the 57th time in 2010, is in continuous development: it has opened in the direction of performance art as well in 2008. The exhibition is followed by a series of events which however preserve local / regional importance. With proper marketing, and a conscious and target group oriented programme organisation, the touristic and economic benefits of the event can be gradually increased.
- The so called **symposia** (events gathering artists to create their works for two or more weeks in the city), which are so strongly related to the city image, and the exhibitions following them are still of regional importance. With proper marketing, these events can gain national significance, building on the unique quality of the works created here and the interest in the process of creation itself (the ceramics symposium being supported by raw materials and the provision of technologies by the ceramics and silicate factories of the city). However, it is important to mention, that the results of the symposia are exhibited in Budapest as well.
- The other group of events is connected to **agriculture**, which can be made part of the active/eco-/agro-tourism with appropriate promotion and product development.
- The **Emlékpont** (Remembrance Point) is an important and nationwide well-know, new initiative of the city, offering the opportunity to organize a nationwide event with an adequate marketing-strategy around this theme (the city's history during the communism and socialism).
- The third group is that of the **local events** organised for the inhabitants of the city and its area, the structure of which is to be elaborated by Petőfi Művelődési Ház, the Agora, i.e. the institution aiming at community development and improvement of the local cultural level.

A product with high economic boost potentials for Hódmezővásárhely is **culture**, which can become a unique and nationwide attraction based on the use of the traditions of the city and its area. This means a complex product in Hódmezővásárhely, as its target group includes the acceptors, the admirers of high arts, folk arts, as well as the groups of creators.

The city has to develop the **locations of creation and exhibition**: workshops, the Agora, museums, exhibition spaces indoors and outdoors etc. In order to achieve the above goals, there are two programmes to be implanted with public investment but already involving short term private investments as well: the Tornyai Programme and the Agora Programme.

As it has already been emphasized, the prerequisite for the elaboration of these product types is **destination management**, which involves conscious product development. In order to achieve **high positioning** of the city as an independent destination out of the attraction circle of Szeged, there is a need for very powerful place **marketing** activities. There are several remarkably positive efforts made in this direction (e.g. **participation in National Travel Exhibition, Picasso in Hódmezővásárhely (Picasso's ceramic works, which interested many visitors from the capital as well)**, Exhibition in Budapest with the title "The treasures of Hódmezővásárhely"), however, professional and national level marketing campaigns need to be implemented for a high success of the events. The exhibition named Picasso in Hódmezővásárhely deserves to be highlighted here, as it was an exhibition gaining national attention which brought Hódmezővásárhely into the light in terms of fine arts exhibitions of the country, and which was one of the first exhibitions of cities outside Budapest to be advertised in the capital as well.

Also it is important to mention the idea of the establishment of a cultural industry cluster together with Szeged, due to the above reasons. This question was highlighted during ULSG meetings, and the few existing Hungarian cultural clusters were presented. This is also important from geographical point of view, since the city has to define its cultural programmes in comparison with the close regional centre, Szeged's cultural life. On the other hand, two cities can offer a bigger and more industrial cultural agenda for visitors.

SWOT analysis of tourism

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing regular events acknowledged in the whole country ▪ High quality events and exhibitions ▪ Cultural and arts traditions ▪ Professional, academic background for cultural development ▪ Natural environment for active / agro- / eco-tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low level of product development ▪ Lack of positioning ▪ Weak marketing ▪ Weak destination management ▪ Lack of private capital and private initiations ▪ Low organisation level of touristic services ▪ Cultural institutions with outdated equipment, waiting for renewal
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financing opportunities for development in the 2007-2013 period ▪ Opportunity for concentrating resources by connecting urban rehabilitation, (public) culture and tourism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The increasing touristic attraction of Szeged ▪ Due to a lack of concepts and cooperation, Hódmezővásárhely cannot really earn a nation widely significant position

Culture has played an important role in the **infrastructural and educational development** of the city. The city management wishes to use the **creative artistic power** apparent in the built heritage, the atmosphere, the creative artists of the city of the past and present, as a basic resource for the development of the city.

Cultural heritage

Hódmezővásárhely gained legal administrative rights in 1873. This date meant the start of a powerful cultural development of the city. The most important results of the 1870s and 1880s were the appearance of secular education, municipal educational authority, and the first schools founded by the city. Reading circles have been highly popular in the city. The first of them, called Iparos Olvasó Egylet (Industrial Reading Association) was established in 1886. One of the first activities of the newly founded circles was to subscribe to at least one local, one national newspaper, one agricultural professional magazine, and to found a library, as reading triggered demand for it, creating civilian culture in a place where it had not existed before.

A good example of the rich heritage of Hódmezővásárhely is the building of 'Fekete Sas'



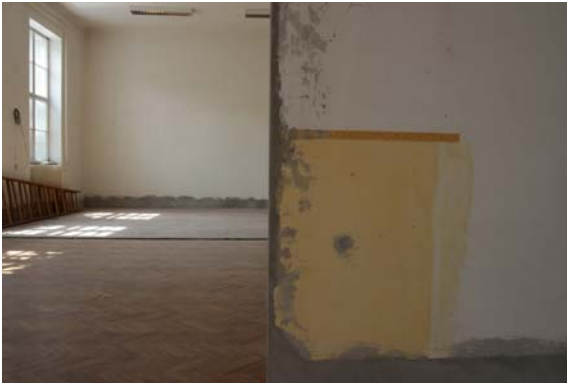
At the turn of the 19th-20th centuries, the city, the "rustic Paris" already had an intensive, rich intellectual and cultural life. The first collective exhibition organised by János Tornyai, a key person in the development and preservation of the fine arts and ceramics tradition of the city, took place in 1908. A new literary magazine was founded in 1910 called "A Jövendő" (The Future), published by the Literary and Arts Society, raising the attention and acknowledgement of such great literary artists as Endre Ady (one of the most powerful poet personalities of the country in the beginning of the 20th century). Besides promoting art painting, János Tornyai was also active in collecting folklore art, and, together with Gyula Rudnay and Béla Endre, he founded the Majolica and Clay Industrial Colony for the artists of Hódmezővásárhely in 1912, in order to save the art of folk pottery. Tornyai initiated an intensive artistic life in the city, which was reborn later in the field of fine arts: from 1953 on, the Autumn Exhibition of Hódmezővásárhely has been opened every year, on the first Sunday in October, in the János Tornyai Museum, displaying the works of the representatives and later followers of the "Hódmezővásárhely school". During the decades, the traditional exhibition has developed into a high ranking fine arts exhibition, acknowledged and known in the fine arts circles of the whole country.

From 1 January 2007 on, the Museum has been operated by the Municipality of the City of Hódmezővásárhely.

The cultural organisation developed remarkable cultural events in the life of the city in 2007. They organised a special exhibition and series of conferences in the VAM Design Centre in Budapest called "**Treasures of Hódmezővásárhely**" (Hódmezővásárhely kincsei), which lasted for one month, and called nationwide attention to the fine arts traditions of the city.

It is inevitable to involve private capital in the intensive fine arts life, and especially the cultural events (such as the Spring Exhibition, Photo Symposium, Mártély Fine Arts School, Ceramic Symposium, Art Painting Symposium, Autumn Exhibition). The regular supporters of

these fine arts exhibitions and symposia besides the municipality are the representatives of the local ceramic industry, among others Villeroy & Boch Zrt, Alföld Porcelaine Factory Zrt, Keram-Pack Zrt, and Imerys Tűzállóanyaggyártó Ltd. Private persons and small enterprises in favour of arts also contribute to the foundation of the prizes of the exhibitions.



The static renewal of culture is needed, but it has to be embedded into the organism of the city and the local society

The classical building of the **Alföldi Galéria** (Great Plain Gallery) hosts the exhibition of the works of great artists such as János Tornyai, József Koszta, Gyula Rudnay, Vilmos Aba-Novák, Adolf Fényes, Ferenc Medgyessy, Menyhért Tóth, and Béla Endre. An interesting experience of the exhibition rooms is the recognition of how differently the same landscape can be interpreted and depicted by the independent artist personalities.

Pottery has played an important role in the life of the city since long. At the beginning of the 20th century, the most potter craftsmen were employed in Hódmezővásárhely, the centre of pottery in the Great Plain. Raw material – clay – of high quality was easy to reach along the borders of the city. The famous ceramics of Hódmezővásárhely are diverse in motifs and colours, separating three different traditions connected to city districts: the green ceramics of Újváros, the yellow-based ceramics of Tabán, and the blue motifs on white background of the artists of Csúcs. Many of the potters still living and working are folk industrial artists. Local potters are pleased to show visitors of their workshops how the famous ceramics of Hódmezővásárhely are made. The **Pottery House of Csúcs** is operating as an exhibition place for industrial arts history.

In the **Tájház** ("House of the Region"), the house of a wealthy peasant built in the 18th century, we can learn about the history of embroidery and ceramics of the city. Hódmezővásárhely was one of the largest pottery centres of the country, employing 240 master craftsmen in the second half of the 19th century. From the 18th century on, a typical style of Hungarian folk carpentry was practised here, creating wood engravings and painted flower motifs. The embroideries of Hódmezővásárhely belonging to the famous Tiszántúl tradition (Tiszántúl is an area in the East part of the country) are also of high cultural significance. In the side building of the Tájház we can see a soldier's room of the 18th century (from the era of the reign of Maria Theresa). The creators of the unique hair embroidery of Hódmezővásárhely can be visited in the open **Embroidery workshop**.

Kopáncsi Tanyamúzeum (Agricultural Museum of Kopáncs) presents the traditional lifestyle. The **Windmill and Miller's House** (Papi-féle szélmalom és molnárház) has been partly renovated with the support of the Authority of Cultural Heritage Protection, hosting more and more events recently.

As a private collection, the **Cellar Museum of Peasant Tools** (Paraszti Eszközök Pincemúzeuma) introduces peasant life.

Emlékpont – Remembrance Point

Emlékpont is a permanent exhibition using the most up-to-date exhibition technologies and the opportunities of museum pedagogy, making historical processes of the past 50 years of Hódmezővásárhely tangible and understandable for everyone. The exhibition serves as a memento as well, warning continuously to learn from the experiences of the past. It was opened on 7 July 2006, and since then, around 40 thousand visitors have shown interest in this special exhibition presenting the history of the city between 1945 and 1990. The institution called "Memory Point – Half Century in Hódmezővásárhely Human Educational Centre" hosted 45 high ranking events in the year 2007, which have obtained a remarkable position in the social life of the city.

Problems of the institutional system

A prerequisite for the intensive, creative atmosphere in cultural life is an appropriate infrastructural background providing space for creativity. The city has to face the challenge posed by the bad, **outdated** quality and conditions of the **cultural institutions**, insufficient for the high quality programmes and exhibition material – with the positive exception of the Remembrance Point, attracting a high number of visitors by its high standard programmes. The technical conditions of the János Tornyai Museum, the Petőfi Cultural Centre and the Great Plain Gallery cannot meet the expectations of our age. Therefore, the renewal and extension of their buildings is inevitable if the city spires to get a significant position as a creative city in Hungary.

Framework conditions: culture within the on-going Integrated Urban Development Strategy in Hódmezővásárhely

The current summary presents those parts of the positive future image of the city described in its basic complex urban development document (the Integrated Urban Development Strategy – IUDS) that are related to culture. Thus, according to the IUDS the city will become a **significant cultural centre of the Great Plain**, and the home of creative artists. Intellectual life and culture are tangible in the city: **public spaces are decorated by artistic works**, the city regains a unique style (including new tile decorations on its buildings). The City Centre is renewed, cultural institutions are up-to-date and open locations for creativity, creation and culture available for the whole community.

The city hosts regular events of national significance attracting and keeping visitors in the city for several days with their programmes. The city becomes one of the most important centres of contemporary fine arts in the country.



Handicraft fair at 'Autumn weeks'

In Hódmezővásárhely, culture is not only the privilege of an elite group, thanks to the **"Everyday Culture"** programme, the modern Agora, the renewed and extended Petőfi Sándor Cultural Centre, the Németh László City Library, as well as the Memory Point Museum and Educational Centre. The cultural events raise the attention of a wide circle: children, students and adults acquire a creative attitude from creative workshops and activities.

The city is a **European centre of ceramic art**, through the establishment of the **ceramic cluster**: the economic community of small and large ceramic enterprises of the city, the college conducting technical education and research connected to arts and silicate industry as well, and ceramic artists and producers.

As a result of a conscious development, the **"city of culture"** product is created, which is completed by other elements of the complex offer of the city connected to its natural characteristics, its services system, and health services involving private actors as well. Regional tourism is organised by a destination-management company. Visitors demanding high quality services can enjoy their stay in nice hotels.

Thanks to the developments detailed in the IUDS, the inhabitants of the city are content and the milieu of "modern Hódmezővásárhely" is changing according to the positive future image.

Hódmezővásárhely, the city of culture, is a creative, open place and workshop of the Hungarian South Great Plain, developing in a flexible way based on partnership programmes. The liveable, attractive city

- through modern public services and digital infrastructure,
- with the help of specific tools at European scale,
- emphasizing culture, the respect for tradition and modernity,

makes its people healthy and responsible, enriching individuals and communities as well.

The aim of the development in Hódmezővásárhely is to promote and achieve a situation according to the positive scenario described above. The future image in the IUDS defines the conditions to be achieved in 15-20 years, with the following main characteristics:

- open and **creative atmosphere** that builds on traditions, with a potential background of the municipality running modern support and supply systems, the citizens of the high education institution of the city, and the autonomous and active civil society interested in public issues;
- equal opportunities / anti-segregation;
- **conscious** construction: carried out in the frame of long term development, based on the dialogue of the city management and the civil society, adapting international experiences;
- **conscious future building**: with the tools of education, health protection, and public culture;
- **cultural function of national significance**, constituted by the institutions operating in a high quality city environment, with renewed organisation and infrastructure, the educated "culture consumer" inhabitants sensitive for arts, and the city made dynamic and lively by creative artists as the Great



Plain centre of fine arts, ceramics, sculpture, and artistic painting;

- **high quality city areas:** renewed City Centre conveying a creative atmosphere, inner city parts with multiple function, living environments free from segregation, a developing agricultural zone;
- economic structure with an enterprise organisation able to sustain the inhabitants and employees of the city and its environment;
- a municipality open for regional cooperation and economic and civil actors establishing **networks**.

For that a number of thematic objectives have been set up, namely:

- Creation of the function of a national/regional cultural and local public cultural centre, based on arts traditions with the emphasis on fine arts: ceramics, sculpture and painting.
- The implementation of the **cultural urban rehabilitation programme of János Tornyai:** to be based on urban rehabilitation sources serving function extension for the period 2007-2013.
- The implementation of **the AGORA programme, reshaping and modernising the system and infrastructure of public culture and education:** fine-tuning of the academic operation of the renewed János Tornyai Museum and Centre for Public Culture, the implementation of the "Everyday Culture" programme, the development of modern public cultural locations and a creative environment.
- **Ceramics programme** – the development of traditional arts and crafts: the establishment of a Central European ceramics centre and cluster in the city with the help of European partners and their experiences. The most important actors of the cluster are: artists, ceramic artists, related small and large enterprises, college, the local Touristic Destination Management organisation.
- The connection of the high educational institution to the atmosphere, cultural and economic life of the city as a priority thematic objective.
- Further **development of events:** the development of fine arts events already of national significance into large cultural events by relating accompanying programmes, touristic services, creative camps etc, ensuring a national marketing campaign.

VI. THE URBACT LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP IN HÓDMEZŐVÁSÁRHELY



In the frame of the URBACT Creative Clusters project, altogether 7 meetings of the enlarged format of a devoted Local Support Group (LSG) have been organized plus a high number of informal workshops by a core group of participants.

During the first three occasions, participants got to know better the theme and determined the main directives of the Action Plan. This work was assisted by background research and seminars. In the frame of the 4th meeting, Hódmezővásárhely organized a so-called "open-forum", where LSG members and other stakeholders could get an insight on one of the main subjects of the Action Plan - creating a cluster in the domain of handicraft. Two good-practices (Pannon Local product Cluster, www.pannonproduct.hu and MadeByYou creative - www.madebyyou.hu) and a relevant tender concept regarding the South Plain Region of Hungary were presented. Presenters could discuss different issues with the participants and LSG members have been interviewed, defining the latest version of the present Action Plan.

After that meeting, ULSG members started to work on the production of this Action Plan. In parallel, a narrower group was created with the involvement of an architect in order to make concrete suggestions on the possible rehabilitation of the Majolikagyár, the former ceramics factory of Majolica (which is here integrated into the Action Plan as a key action). The Local Action Plan was also fed by the results of a Creative School Contest focused on local youngsters.

Working in the framework of the URBACT II Programme has been a decisive opportunity which allowed us to feed **a new vision on the strategy for Hódmezővásárhely's future and to give a new breath to existing local policies.**

Also, the networking activities carried out between 2008 and 2011 also resulted in many findings (and consequent learning) on local practices in line with the creativity issue, which will definitely act as an inspiration for policy-making in the city. We can mention for instance:

- **innovative education** policies as a driving factor for creative local ecosystems in the long term (Reggio Emilia, Óbidos, Jyväskylä and Barnsley);
- the ability to turn the short scale of a municipality into an asset for comprehensive local policies towards the creative economy (Óbidos);
- visibility and communication around local creative-based strategies as crucial success factors, through **smart place branding or re-branding** (in that regard, Óbidos, Jyväskylä and Barnsley make up impressive cases);
- the programming of concrete **support measures for creative professionals** and businesses, with the significant relevance of encouraging networking and relations in the local context (Barnsley);
- the delivery of **a new generation of urban facilities** that meet the needs of the so-called creative class, an challenge where city size does not matter (Óbidos);
- the **concept of rural modernity** in Óbidos;

- a strong commitment to involve citizens and local agents in the design of policies, in line with **a more horizontal conception of policy-making** (a particular feature of Kortrijk, in Belgium, which was one of the cities selected for our key study trips);
- and finally, although the list of “learnt lessons” does not stop here, the value of developing and maintaining a **cultural agenda** which should raise the local ecosystem’s profile.



Award ceremony of the URBACT creative school contest

The permanent composition of the Local Support Group in charge of the preparation of this Local Action Plan was the following:

- Mr János Holman - ICT entrepreneur
- Mrs Sándorné Garai – ceramist (Garai Kerámia Ltd.)
- Mrs Katalin Pápai – ceramist
- Mr József Hofecker – ceramist (Rozetta Ltd.)
- Mr Imre Nagy – director (János Tornyai Museum and Education centre)
- Mrs Margit Szabó - herbalist (Ár-Tér Bt.)
- Mrs Zsuzsanna Pannonhalmi – ceramist (Vince Wartha Art Foundation)
- Mt Ervin Schleiffer - general manager (Immerys Ltd.)
- Mr Sándor Ambrus – ceramist (Downtown's Pottery House)

- Mrs Adrienne Chapon – manager (local social company)
- Mrs Judit Musa - industrial artist
- Mrs Vera Nagy - folk-art historian (János Tornyai Museum and Education centre)
- Mr Zoltán Hegedűs – elected member of the general assembly
- Ms Rita Dezső - international referent (Municipality of Hódmezővásárhely)
- Ms Anikó Varga – project manager (Municipality of Hódmezővásárhely)



The Hódmezővásárhely Local Support Group at work

VI. WORKING LINES AND MEASURES

Given the fact that the present Action Plan contains already winning projects of the city, which are under implementation or are linked to a near future investment, this plan is for short or – medium term, and this period is when everything is decided. Indeed, during this period it is decided whether the citizens are able to personalize the city in line with the notable investments, and whether they are able to create new spaces and new quality for the city.

Before presenting the concrete measures and local initiatives, as a final note we need to say that we agree with the following sentences of the British Council's study "My little town" (based on a TV show involving public opinion) which presented the renovation of the Andrassy avenue, giving us the principles of the Local Action Plan.

"Gaining back the promenade is an act which is identified with that citizen of Hódmezővásárhely who is wishing to be the same she/he was between the two World Wars. This act would like to put into parenthesis the past decades, presenting eternal, well determined values. Thinking this through, we can ask ourselves: What absence the representatives of this community are trying to compensate with this action? And from an architectural point of view, is the choice to reconstruct the period between the two World Wars is still justifiable? (...). This behavior (to fill up the newly created spaces of Hódmezővásárhely with life, in a way that from a modern, outsider point of view it would be still exciting - ed.) is sharply conflicting with the normally expected, traditional way of reconstruction of the main street. Indeed, a double tree line could be planted on the Andrassy Avenue, with nice cobblestones and elegant street furniture, fountains, distracting the attention from the real problem of this main street: where actually the city has been cut into two, beyond recovery. According to us, this split is so strong, that it is better not trying to heal it, but make a virtue out of it."

Hódmezővásárhely's Local Action Plan was elaborated on the basis of the approved Integrated Urban Development Strategy, with the collaboration of the URBACT LSG, **summarizing the short or medium term developmental directions connected to creative economy locally.**

The main question is how the city can foster its background resources and collective efforts towards the idea of "creative city" in a relatively short time, providing new attributes and features for its residents and visitors. In this sense a main goal of the Action Plan is to strengthen the spirit and traditions of Hódmezővásárhely by presenting them to more and more people, in a way which respects the claims of a modern society. To re-think the local development agenda in Hódmezővásárhely by entering a number of creative-based issues concerning the creative industries and the framework conditions to attract and retain creative professionals in the city.

In a nutshell: to reinforce the city as a place where "contemporary" lives. The motto "from *rustic Paris* to open Hódmezővásárhely" is a serious attempt to re-brand our city as a creative place and build an integrated creative-based local strategy.

During URBACT LSG meetings, members defined **7 objectives corresponding to the working lines of the current Action Plan**. These are listed below in priority order, however very few differences were realized in the marks the objectives received from ULSG members:

I. Establishment of a local handicraft cluster

It was quite clear during the ULSG meetings, that the cooperation of the local handicraft artisans is key from the "creativity" point of view, and also that this process should be supported somehow by the municipality, but it has to be a bottom-up process.

II. Community development and actions linked to creative urban development: deeper involvement of local citizens into the local actions

During the preparatory meetings of this Action Plan ULSG members came to the conclusion that the creative use of the renewable urban spaces is the citizens' task. They can fulfill this task successfully only if the city management encourages them to do so by giving them space literally. The creative, useful and common usage of the renewed urban spaces gives a new quality to the city, which will appear in a totally different way in public opinion from now on. And first of all, the citizens will look upon Hódmezővásárhely in a different way. Not to mention that these actions are important due to the historical background of the country.

III. Handicraft and everyday culture in education

Education is a key in building the local creative ecosystem, of course, but at this point, actions aim to raise the level of consumption of local products as well as to provide more and more customers and followers of traditional local handicrafts.

IV. Hódmezővásárhely, the creative city: conscious city marketing and image

Hódmezővásárhely will become a "creative city", when it will be able to capture and use the local spirit. For this, the city management has to develop a conscious commitment towards urban marketing. For the leaders of the city, it is obvious that the creative artistic power apparent in the built heritage, the atmosphere, the creative artists of the city of the past and present, can serve as a basic resource for the development of the city. But this is definitely not a top-down process. Branding should be approached as a process aimed at the production of a new vision of the city, a sort of re-thinking of local identity around creative-based narratives.

V. Improvement of creativity in the organisation of events

Cultural events can be an engine for Hódmezővásárhely as creative city. It is obvious that an appropriate place marketing strategy is inevitable in order to use the values of the local museums for the improvement of local culture and tourism. There are major primarily cultural events organised every year in the city; however, the cultural events organised in Hódmezővásárhely are still only of regional significance. In order to achieve high positioning of the city as an independent destination out of the attraction circle of Szeged, there is a need for very powerful place marketing activities.

VI. Creative public spaces in Hódmezővásárhely

ULSG has learnt from foreign best practices: emphasis has to be put on such complex public space rehabilitation that creates a network of cultural spaces and buildings that can be experienced during a walk. The redefinition of urban public spaces, filling them

with new contents, soul of the city and meanings gives a dynamic nature to the environment that can make the locations typical and favoured by the cultural life of the city. Such projects promote local identity and social cohesion in a most effective way.

VII. Creativity and tourism

Connecting a creative economy to the visitor economy at local level. Development of the creative economy in Hódmezővásárhely is impossible without tourism development. The city has multiple advantages for visitors, but none of them means a unique attraction in comparison with other cities nearby. However, according to the SWOT analysis of the city tourism (see above), the city has significant opportunities in this area.

These main working lines, each of them containing a number of specific measures and projects, are clearly linked to the five working areas the URBACT CREATIVE CLUSTERS project followed during its lifetime, namely:

1. Creative industries within a new cluster reading of the local economy.

This URBACT Creative Clusters' main theme is here covered by objectives I and VII.

2. City strategies for attracting and retaining creative professionals and entrepreneurs.

This URBACT Creative Clusters' main theme is covered by Hódmezővásárhely's Local Action Plan through the objectives/working lines IV and VI.

3. The space of the creative class: new urban working environments.

Working lines I, VI and VII cover issues related to the provision of new creative-based facilities.

4. Events and cultural agendas as catalysts.

This key theme in Creative Clusters is here covered mainly by objectives/working lines II and V.

5. Incubating future talent: creative educational environments at local levels.

This working area will be covered in Hódmezővásárhely mainly by objectives/working lines II and III.

Suggested activities	Expected result	Responsible	Deadline	Type of financing and envisaged budget
I. Establishment of a local handicraft cluster				
I.1. Organisation of the cooperation of local craftsmen in the frame of a co-operative association, community, NGO, etc.	Standardized appearance, common marketing, salesmanship and presence, quality assurance, stronger market positions	One of the local craftsmen – to be identified	September, 2011	If needed: private Establishment of an association: free of charge in Hungary Establishment of social co-operatives: TÁMOP 2.4.3.
I.2. Creation of detailed database of local craftsmen	Standardized appearance, common marketing	Municipality – responsible for artistic issues, museum	1 month after action I.1.	no costs needed, except staff costs
I.3. Creation of a special sub-page on the city's webpage about local products and local craftsmen (information, web shop, etc.)	Standardized appearance	Municipality – responsible for artistic issues, IT service provider, craftsman responsible for the association	2 months after action I.1.	Municipal 50 000 HUF
I.4. Joint brand (brochure, leaflet, etc.)	Standardized appearance, common marketing	Municipality – responsible for artistic issues, craftsman responsible for the association	2 months after action I.1.	Municipal 50 000 HUF
I.5. Establishment of an open workshop, gallery in the city centre (in the workshop of Zoltán Kis)	Strengthening local community consciousness	Municipality, heir of Mr. Zoltán Kis	December, 2012	Private, national and/or EU tenders Új Széchenyi Terv
I.6. Supplying the local Museum shop with products from Hódmezővásárhely	New touristic attraction	Museum, Municipality	As soon as the museum shop will be opened	no costs needed, except staff costs
I.7. Creation of Ceramic cluster on industrial level (involvement of local industries – local needs to be analyzed)	Economic development, creation of new workplaces, new market mechanism are appearing	Municipality as initiator of the dialogue, one of the key companies	-	EU tenders Új Széchenyi Terv, DAOP
I.8. Calling for tenders for local craftsmen	Strengthening the sector of arts and crafts	Municipality	January, 2012	Municipal 500 000 – 1 000 000 HUF per year

Note: Concerning activity I.4 the Municipality takes the role of initiator of dialogues between local craftsmen in order to create their association. In case a professional umbrella organization would be created, the Municipality offers its help: it will create a database, a sub-page on the homepage of the city, and a brochure presenting the craftsmen of Hódmezővásárhely. Concerning activities I.5 and I.7 the Municipality could take the role of the initiator but won't take responsibility for the concrete realization of the activities. Concerning activity I.8., a similar initiative exists in Karcag (city close to Vásárhely).

Suggested activities	Expected result	Responsible	Deadline	Type of financing and envisaged budget
II. Community development and actions linked to creative urban development: deeper involvement of local citizens into the local actions				
II.1. Calling for tenders for local community actions: community tree planting, establishment of a statue memory park in the city center, organisation of voluntary awareness raising actions, open actions, jointly developing creative places in Hódmezővásárhely, etc	Strong, local community is able to participate more deeply in the local life	Municipality as initiator local NGOs	January, 2012	Municipal, National (NCA) 1 million HUF
II.2. Development of a local community profile on Facebook	Strengthening local community identity, increased local connections	Municipality, IT group	October, 2011	no costs needed, except staff costs

Note: Concerning Activity II.1, the Municipality has to take into consideration which communities of which areas could be involved into the future investments, either through the directly linked voluntary programs or through the placement of amateur or professional works (statues, installations, etc.) to public places. The Municipality shall create a call for proposals for possible ideas (e.g. with the title „The Square is ours”), the implementation would be handled by local NGOs, based on the results of call. The local Green Connection could be a starting point for this ends.

Suggested activities	Expected result	Responsible	Deadline	Type of financing and envisaged budget
III. Handicraft and everyday culture in education				
III.1 Creation the frame of competence-based, tradition-oriented education in local high-schools	Strengthening of the local community identity, the tradition of arts and crafts in Hódmezővásárhely gets inherited with a bigger chance	Municipality, Urban development Ltd., János Tornyai MKK	ongoing action	National and/or EU tenders, private Új Széchenyi Terv
III.2. Organisation of special, interactive lessons regarding local handicraft traditions in local schools (interactivity)	Strengthening of the local community identity, the tradition of arts and crafts in Hódmezővásárhely gets inherited with a bigger chance	Municipality, leader of educational group	September, 2011	Municipal no special costs needed, except staff costs
III.3 Awareness raising campaign to promote local products (with the participation of local famous persons)	Strengthening of the local community identity, the tradition of arts and crafts in Hódmezővásárhely gets inherited with a bigger chance	Municipality, local TV of Hódmezővásárhely	December, 2011	Municipal no special costs needed, except organisation and staff costs

III.4. Get to know better the local arts and crafts, in the frame of local elementary school technical classes	Strengthening of the local community identity, the tradition of arts and crafts in Hódmezővásárhely gets inherited with a bigger chance	Municipality, Urban development Ltd., János Tornyai MKK	partly ongoing; September, 2012	Municipal, national and/or EU tenders Új Széchenyi Terv
III.5. Yearly thematic school contests related to creativity	Strengthening of the local identity	Municipality, Schools	January, 2012	Municipal 100 000 HUF/year

Note: Activity one has been partially or totally realized during the creation of this Action Plan: In the frame of the „Culture Every day” program and the starting of the BKF workshop. Activity III.2 and III.4 are also under realization. Concerning educational issues, discussions are open with Szeged. The III.2 activity is partially realized: The László Németh Library holds a GPS based touristy program.

Suggested activities	Expected result	Responsible	Deadline	Type of financing and envisaged budget
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IV. Hódmezővásárhely, the creative city: conscious city marketing and image

IV.1. Appointing one representative (lobbyist) for creative issues at the city council	Strengthening the image of the city and the local identity	Municipality	September, 2012	Municipal 400 000 HUF each month
IV.2. Hódmezővásárhely, the creative city: local program series (local discussions, conferences) in order to raise awareness.	Strengthening the image of the city and the local identity	Municipality	September, 2011	Municipal, national (NCA) 30 000 HUF per event
IV.3. Conscious city marketing: re-shaping the image of the city	Strengthening the image of the city and the local identity	Municipality	Depending on IV.1.	Municipal Production of visual identity: 500 000 HUF
IV.4. More visible participation at national events, fairs, etc.	Strengthening the image of the city and the local identity	Municipality	September, 2011	Municipal Enlarged budget for these actions
IV.5. Strengthening the local product specificity of the local representation frame	Strengthening the image of the city and the local identity	Municipality	September, 2011	no costs needed, except staff costs
IV.6. Preference of local products in the public-meal system (schools, elderly homes etc.)	Strengthening the image of the city and the local identity	Municipality	September, 2011	no costs needed, except staff costs, organisation
IV.7. Employment of Museum educator by the Museum	Strengthening the local identity, and multiplying the number of local programs	Museum	October, 2011	EU funding provided János Tornyai Program (ongoing)
IV.8. Starting of a thematic show (about crafts) on the local TV	Strengthening the local identity	Municipality	January, 2012	no specific costs needed

Note: It is not possible for now to appoint a representative for marketing due to financial restrictions. Nonetheless, the suggestion that the city should found an external expert company in the field of general economic development issues is related to activity IV.1.

Suggested activities	Expected result	Responsible	Deadline	Type of financing and envisaged budget
V. Improvement of creativity in the organisation of events				
V.1. Development of joint event organisation with Budapest (improve the city's visibility in the capital)	Strengthening the image of the city, the local identity and tourism	Municipality, NGO, Museum	Ongoing, but preparing a plan: January, 2012	Municipal, National (NKA) It depends on the type of the event
V.2. Developing local, thematic/cultural touristic packages of one day/two days programmes	Strengthening the image of the city, the local identity and tourism	Municipality, Museum, Local Tourist Agency	January, 2012	no specific costs needed
V.3. Organizing more attractive, new events (Retro 1st of May celebration, old-timer car meeting, Carpathian pottery competition for e.g.) and developing the existing ones	Strengthening the image of the city, the local identity and tourism	Municipality, civil association	January, 2012	Municipal, National or EU tenders It depends on the type of the event
V.4. Establishment of a cultural industry cluster together with Szeged	Strengthening the image of the city, the local identity and tourism	Municipality	January, 2012	Municipal, National or EU tenders Új Széchenyi Terv

Note: Under activity V.1 we equally understand the strengthening of the artistic appearance (despite of the fact that the visibility of Hódmezővásárhely is high in this issue) and the organized, uniform appearance of the craftsmen. Nevertheless, it is possible to develop novelties in the field of arts (for e.g. Art Estate of Hódmezővásárhely, presentation of the Tibor Wiener collection).

Suggested activities	Expected result	Responsible	Deadline	Type of financing and envisaged budget
VI. Creative public spaces in Hódmezővásárhely				
VI.1. Creation of Creative spots in the city, periodic exhibitions of amateur artists in the squares, organization of „The square is our” type of actions (see II.1)	Strengthening of the local identity	Municipality and civil associations	January, 2012	No specific costs needed, except staff costs Related possible funding source: NCA
VI.2 Creating and placing of typical, local ceramic street name-plates, the appearing of ceramics on the streets as decoration	Strengthening of the local identity	Municipality: artistic rapporteur	January, 2012	Municipal 1 million HUF
VI.3 Developing programmes in the Kossuth street music pavilion, involvement of schools	Strengthening of the local identity	Municipality, civil association, schools	September, 2011	No specific costs needed, except staff costs

VI.4 Creative panel rehabilitation (based on school competition)	Strengthening of the local identity	Municipality	December, 2012	National/EU tenders Panel rehabilitation programmes Depending on the scale of the programme
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Note: To amend activity VI.1 it was arisen to align all the beautiful sculptures of the city to one spot (for e.g. between the high school and the wall), in order to increase the number of touristic attractions. It would be problematic to put on public spaces the amateur arts because of legal regulations, but a solution could be the Károlyi House court. The Municipality has to take into consideration which communities of which areas could be involved into the future investments, either through the directly linked voluntary programs or through the placement of amateur or professional products to public places. The Municipality has to create the program (e.g. with the title „The Square is ours”) but the implementation would be handled by an NGO. Concerning activity VI.3 the Municipality has to create possibilities and advertisement. The goal is playfulness and to increase the willingness to perform.

Suggested activities	Expected result	Responsible	Deadline	Type of financing and envisaged budget
VII.Creativity and tourism				
VII.1. Development of the Majolica factory as a new urban facility focused on creative issues	Economic development, creation of workplaces, development of new market procedures and the local identity of Hódmezővásárhely	Municipality	December,2012	Municipal, EU tenders Új Széchenyi Terv 1 700 million HUF
VII.2 Virtual city tour in the city with webcam	Development of tourism	Municipality	December,2012	Municipal, National and/or EU tenders Új Széchenyi Terv 2 000 000 HUF
VII.3. Generating active and complex tourist packages	Development of tourism	Profit oriented organization	January, 2012	Private/KKV No specific costs needed
VII.4. Designing of a mascot for the ceramics of Hódmezővásárhely	Development of tourism	Municipality	January, 2012	Municipal 1 000 000 HUF Private/KKV, National/EU tenders
VII.5. Development of industrial tourism in Hódmezővásárhely	Development of tourism	Profit oriented company	December, 2012	Új Széchenyi Terv
VII.6 Development of thematic routes (for e.g. route along the ceramic workshops)	Development of tourism	Municipality	December, 2012	National and/or EU tenders Új Széchenyi Terv 2 000 000 HUF

Note: A separated plan has been created concerning activity VII.1 Activity VII.2 has been partially realized in the frame of the „Culture Every day”. It is important to take into consideration the results of the running high-school „idea” competition concerning activity 3. Considering activity VII.4 the Municipality should create a call for tender just for collecting ideas.

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