



HAMVAS BÉLA  
PEST MEGYEI  
KÖNYVTÁR

Fulfilling the mission of the  
library by developing

The case of a Hungarian  
county library

Hamvas Béla Pest County Library

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4th China-CEEC Curators' Forum of Libraries Union,  
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# Introduction – Our City and Our Library

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*A practice-oriented presentation on the partnerships of a Hungarian county library.*

## **Location: Szentendre**

- A small town twenty kilometres north to Budapest.
- Inhabited by approximately thirty thousand people.

## **The Library:**

- A town library that functions also as a county library serving Pest county.
- **Pest county:** the biggest and the most densely populated area outside Budapest (> 1 million inhabitants).
- Operates with around forty professionals.

# The Challenge: Growing Demands vs. Stagnant Resources

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**Positive Trend:** a growing number of users in recent years: *loans – registered readers – visitors of library programs – remote users.*

**Key Statistic:** between 2020 and 2025, the number of registered users has grown by **50%**.

## The Financial Reality:

- The constantly growing demand is not accompanied by increasing financial support.
- Budgetary cuts and low salaries are prevalent.
- Consequence: struggling with investing in new technology, launching new projects, and widening service capacities.



# Our Strategy: Inner Resources & Partnerships

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**Strategic Focus:** if we are not able to obtain external sources of financing, we have to exploit more effectively the existing capacities.

## **Two Key Areas to Exploit:**

- The skills and competencies of our staff members.
- The possibilities hidden in partnerships.

## **Goal is to find new ways of collaboration with partners from all sectors:**

- professional library partners
- cultural or social care institutions
- civil organisations
- the business sector



# Partnership Examples (1): Cultural Institutions

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**Partners:** museums, libraries, galleries, and community houses.

**Practical Example:**

- Jointly organised city festivals:
  - *Weekend of Open Churches*
  - *Szentendre Day and Night Festival*

**Principle: Together we are stronger and more resilient.**

**Benefits:** using each other's resources (infrastructure, technical facilities, competencies). Strengthening trust and providing knowledge on each other's capacities.



# The Key to Success: Mutual Interests

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**The key to success in all partnerships:** to find the mutual interests of the partners.

**What the library can provide:**

- premises
- technical tools
- professional skills and experience
- communication or contact to our wide audience



**Our greatest asset:** the almost five thousand registered users means a huge exploitable capacity.

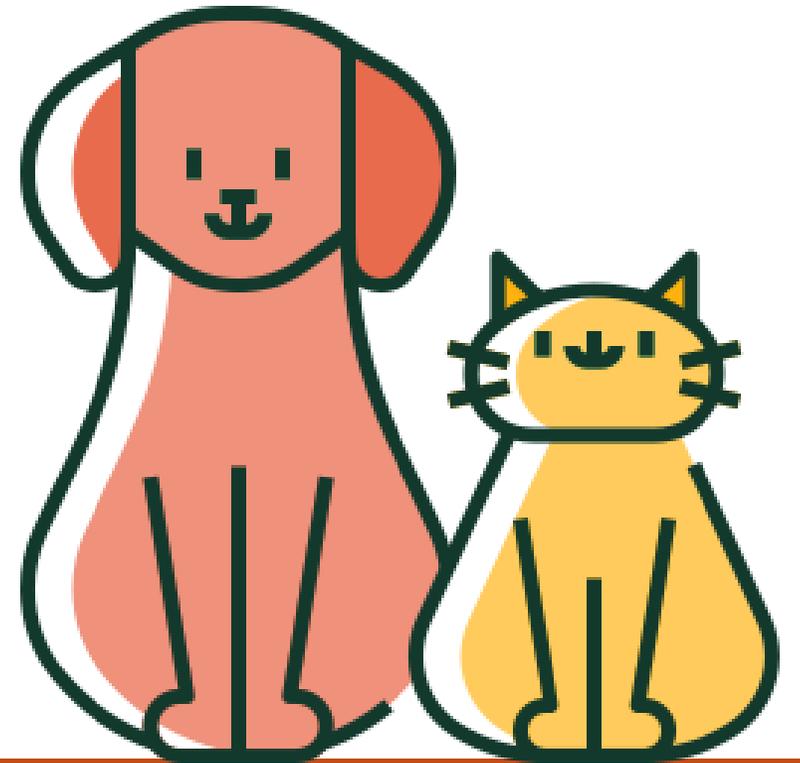
## Partnership Examples (2): Civil Organisations

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**Partner:** the foundation for ownerless animals (stray dogs and cats).

### **The Cooperation:**

- **The library's offer:** once a year, an "amnesty" for library fines on a certain week.
- **The request for users:** buy some pet food to donate instead of paying the fine.
- **In return, the foundation provides:** free programs where children can learn about responsible pet ownership and caress cute dogs in the library.



## Partnership Examples (3): Public Service Institutions

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**Partner:** The Health Development Office of Szentendre.

**Shared Mission:** providing information on a healthy lifestyle and preventing widespread diseases.

**The Cooperation:** a jointly developed series of programs on health issues.

- **The Office provided:** the professionals.
- **The Library provided:** the venue and technical facilities.
- **Together:** they recruited an audience from both the library users and the office's regular participants.



# Partnership Examples (4): The Business Sector

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**The most difficult challenge:** to launch partnerships with the business sector.

**Case Study: SzeBeton**, the concrete factory of Szentendre.

- **The Occasion:** the company's 100th anniversary in 2022 (founded in 1922).

**Mutual Interest:**

- **Company's goal:** to celebrate its anniversary.
- **Library's goal:** to conduct a research project on the factory's significance in the town's local history.

**The Result:**

- **The company financed:** the research, a book, an exhibition, and a documentary film.
- **The library contributed:** to a worthy celebration, while the company ensured financial sources for a project that served the whole city.

# Partnership Examples (5): The Book Industry

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**Partners:** publishing houses, booksellers, and other players of the book industry.

**The Exchange:**

**The library helps in:** the popularization of their products.

**In return, they may provide:**

- free programs
- free documents
- collaboration with their contracted authors



# Conclusion: The Power of Collaboration

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- The examples show innovative ways of collaboration with various, sometimes not typical, stakeholders.
- The library as a **community space** and an **information provider** holds great unexploited capacities.
- In a turbulent, underfinanced environment, finding the ways of exchanging our resources is a must.
- **Ultimate Goal:** to fulfil our mission and better serve our communities by finding all possible links to all kinds of partners.



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Thank You for your kind attention.

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We hope that our examples may stimulate more cooperative actions with various partners.

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