



JÁSZBERÉNYI VÁROSI  
Könyvtár

APPLICATION FOR  
THE LIBRARY QUALITY AWARD

2022

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## Introduction

The Jászkerület Kulturális és Művészeti Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft. – Városi Könyvtár, Jászberény (hereinafter referred to as Jászberény City Library) plays a pivotal role in the life of the city of Jászberény as a cultural institution and as a community space.

As the city library of the central municipality of the region of Jászság, our library plays a vital role in the lives of the 18 towns and villages in the region. In our rapidly changing world, we value preserving the regional identity and heritage of the Jászság.

The community recognises our library for its many positive contributions. In addition to our core activities as a library, we have achieved significant results and recognition at the national level by offering several high-quality programs outside of traditional library services.

The non-profit organisation (Jászkerület Kulturális és Művészeti Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft.), which integrates the city's cultural institutions, has been undergoing a long-term process of streamlining; for example, organising events less aligned with the library's strategic plan (such as several lectures a year on various topics) have been transferred to the Cultural Management department. At the same time, we were searching for ways to offer services that fit the library's profile and to reach the broadest possible audience.

In our practice, we observed a renaissance of one of the oldest literary genres, the fairy tale. As part of the streamlining process, our library has made a commitment to promoting fairy tales and storytelling. Stories bring joy to everyone, from young children to the elderly.

In our application for the Library Quality Award, we present two innovative initiatives to foster the preservation of traditional fairy tales and storytelling traditions in modern times.

Péter Kovács  
Library Director



## Culture Corner

It all started in early 2015, with the idea which jump-started the project presented here. We set out to write a story about a group of Bookworm Gnomes who live in the Jászberény City Library.

First, the gnomes' fictional world needed to be filled out with detail. Where do they live? How do they spend their days? How many gnomes are there? How long should the story be? Our library staff sought advice from local kindergarten teachers, who shared their deep knowledge about the world of fairy tales. The Bookworm Gnomes were endowed with human personalities, with each gnome associated with a colour and a field of expertise. The key to their colourful world is reading. If we don't read enough, the colours disappear from their habitat, the little gnomes fade, and their world turns grey. Thus, their story makes the importance of reading, storytelling, and listening to stories tangible to the children.

Let us now meet the Bookworm Gnomes.

**Handy** (dark blue gnome) - capable in the field of science and technology: he repairs, tinkers, and invents things

**Forget-me-not** (light blue gnome) - the wise elder often betrayed by his lapses of memory

**Saffron** (yellow gnome) - a caring elderly lady who takes care of the tidiness of the gnome house and cooks delicious meals

**Lillah** (purple gnome) - a sweet and pampered girl who spends hours in front of her mirror

**Mossy** (green gnome) - a lively, playful young girl, always ready for mischief

**Pixie** (orange gnome) - a scatterbrained, lively little gnome, inventor of jokes and pranks

**Itty** (red gnome) - the smallest one among the gnomes, who frequently finds himself in the middle of an adventure and loves listening to stories above all else

The first book about the Bookworm Gnomes was published in December 2015 and was warmly received by the library's visitors. Encouraging feedback was not far behind as readers were excited to know more about the project. Were there sequels in the works? Will the gnomes make live appearances? Will the project be further developed? Will the gnomes venture outside the library?

In 2016, the soft fabric gnome figures, standing 25-30 cm tall, were created. We introduced them to the audience during Advent; then, they moved into a wooden cabin on the main square of Jászberény. Visitors can peek through the windows of the gnomes' cabin from different sides, watching them enjoy a cosy Christmas scene. New windows were opened every weekend, with pieces of a magnetic puzzle hidden in the windows. By Christmas, young children were delighted to watch the puzzle pieces find their correct spots on the magnetic board.

The Jászberény City Library is operated by the Jászkerület Kulturális és Művészeti Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft, a non-profit organisation that stages many of the cultural events and celebrations in Jászberény. The cooperation allowed the library to appear at city events and promote reading. The ZagyvaParty Festival and Jászság Pálinka Tasting featured a ‘Pub Library,’ a pop-up library where culture-thirsty guests explored literary puzzles related to alcohol and gastronomy and could win beer coasters printed with literary quotes. The library tent enticed festival-goers with reading corners, second-hand book sales, and late-fee waivers.

The Pub Library's popularity and the Bookworm Gnomes' success prompted an effort to create new ways for the public to encounter the library outside the library walls. Thus, an idea was born: to create a small island of cultural activities at large public events where children, parents, and grandparents can settle down to play, create, read, and relax.

### **Culture Corner: objectives, expectations, and results**

At its core, the Culture Corner aims to promote the love of reading at public events and festivals and to showcase the library’s services in a way that everyone can find something interesting and fun, regardless of age. It provides parents of young children with a quiet space to take a break, allows children to step out of the bustling festival to play and get creative, and gives everyone a small island of culture in the sea of festival entertainment.

The first pop-up library appeared at the ZagyvaParty Festival in Jászberény in June 2016.

The 6x3-metre tent of the Culture Corner featured a play space for young children, a ball pit, a mini slide, and a variety of other toys, blocks, toy cars, and puzzles, made comfortable by artificial turf. Older children could display their creativity on seven large chalkboard walls, 90x150 cm each. These walls serve multiple purposes. The Bookworm Gnomes invite visitors to the Culture Corner on their outward-facing sides. They provide drawing surfaces, creating a safe, enclosed area for children.

At every major city event, all visitors, young and old, are welcomed with various activities (crafting, colouring, activity sheets, literary quizzes, themed puzzles for adults, a magazine reading area, and second-hand book sales).

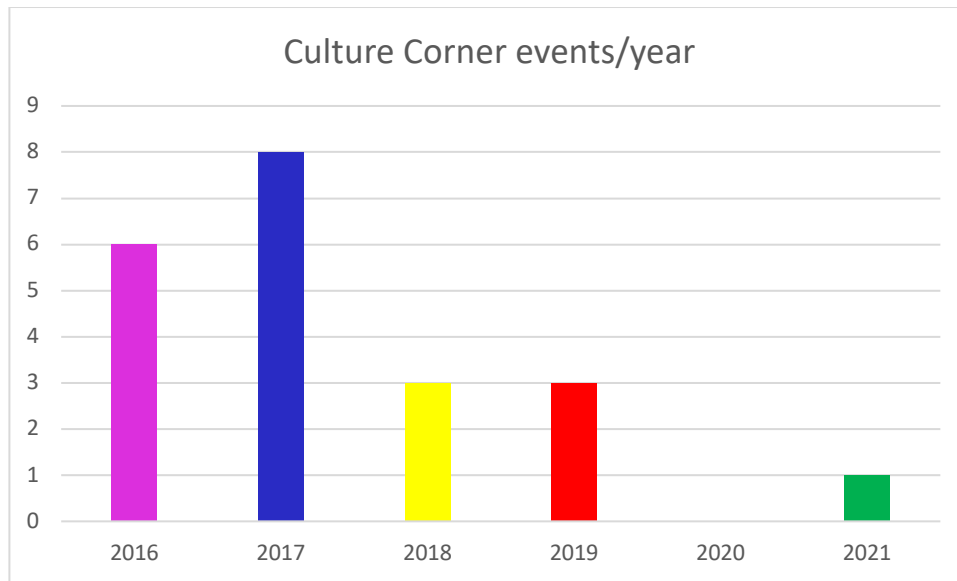
On child-sized tables around the tent, children can enjoy a selection of themed creative activities that target improving fine motor skills (e.g., colouring, glueing, paper figures). Adults can enjoy second-hand book sales, magazine reading areas, literary puzzles, and satisfaction surveys.

In summary, we identified a segment in the city's cultural life where the Culture Corner fills a need and introduced a new library service.

### **Feedback from visitors and partners**

We have tracked and monitored the Culture Corner's usage rates and visitor satisfaction since the launch. We have also made several appearances outside the library each year, such as City

Day (April 3), May Day, Children's Day, ZagyvaParty Festival, State Foundation Day (August 20), Car-Free Day, Jász Expo, and Advent.



Unfortunately, from 2020 to 2021, we had very few opportunities for outside appearances due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Besides collecting oral feedback, we measured outcomes using the following questionnaire.

#### VISITOR SATISFACTION SURVEY

Event	Location	Time

On a scale of 1-5, how do you rate our event on the following criteria?

1-No opinion; 2-Not satisfied at all; 3-Less satisfied; 4-Mostly satisfied; 5-Completely satisfied

Event organisation: \_\_\_\_

Event conditions (lighting, sound, air conditioning): \_\_\_\_

General impressions of the event atmosphere: \_\_\_\_

The performer's skill level: \_\_\_\_

The quality of the performance: \_\_\_\_

The organisers' helpfulness: \_\_\_\_

The organisers' professionalism and accessibility: \_\_\_\_

☞Positives:

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.....  
 .....  
 ☞Negatives:  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

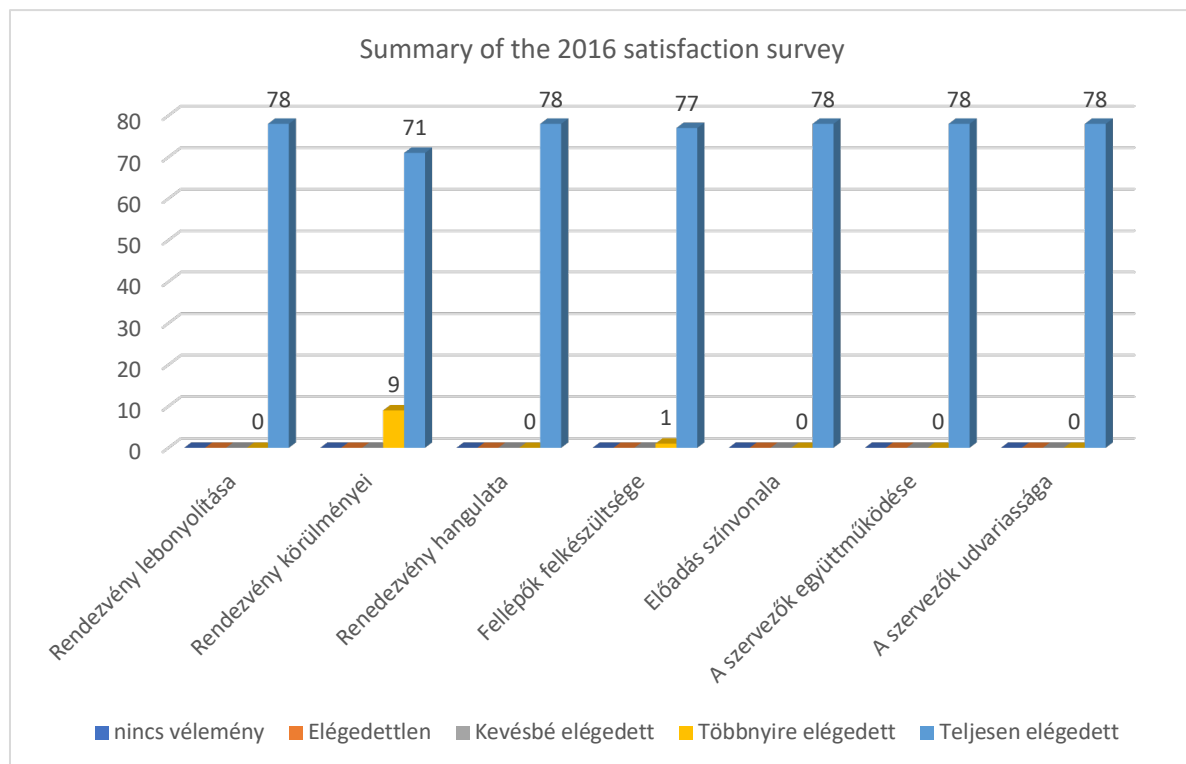
Your gender: \_\_\_ Your age: \_\_\_ Are you a member of our library? \_\_\_

## Summaries

**2016**

The gender of the respondents		Library member?	
Male	18	yes	46
Female	70	no	42
Total:	88		88

The summary of all responses to the survey questions in 2016:

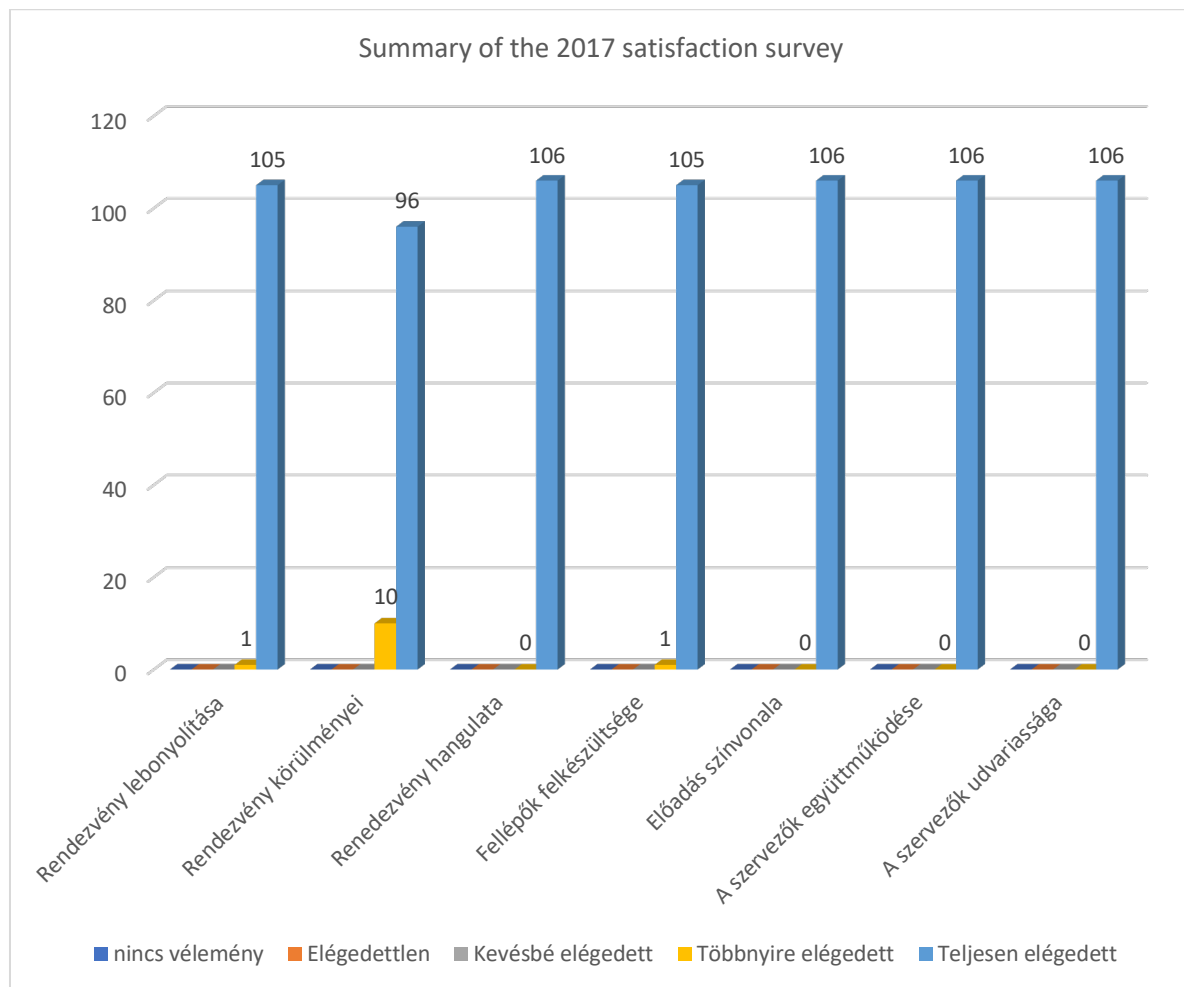


**2017**

The gender of the respondents		Library member?	
Male	28	yes	53
Female	78	no	53
Total:	106		106



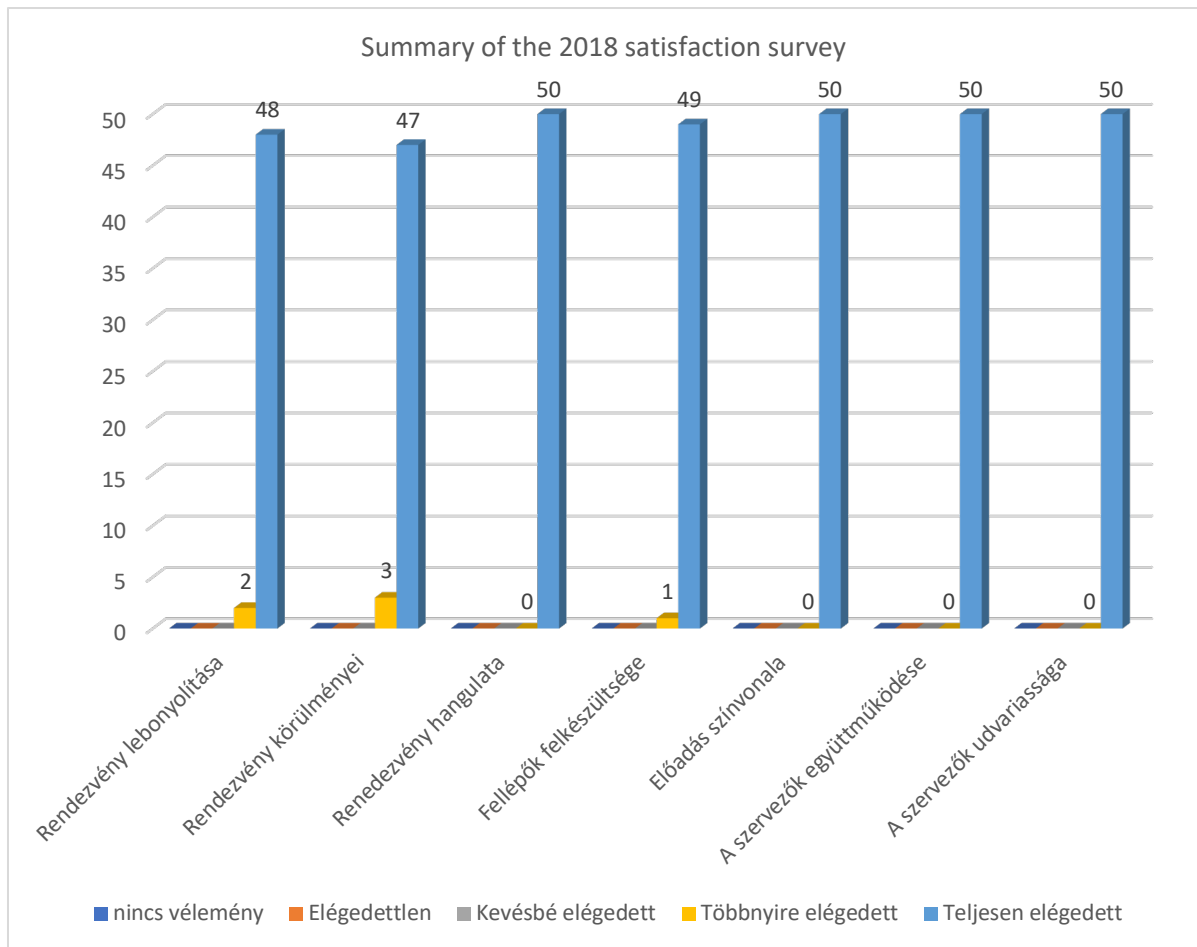
The summary of all responses to the survey questions in 2017:



### 2018

The gender of the respondents		Library member?	
Male	11	yes	27
Female	39	no	23
Total:	50		50

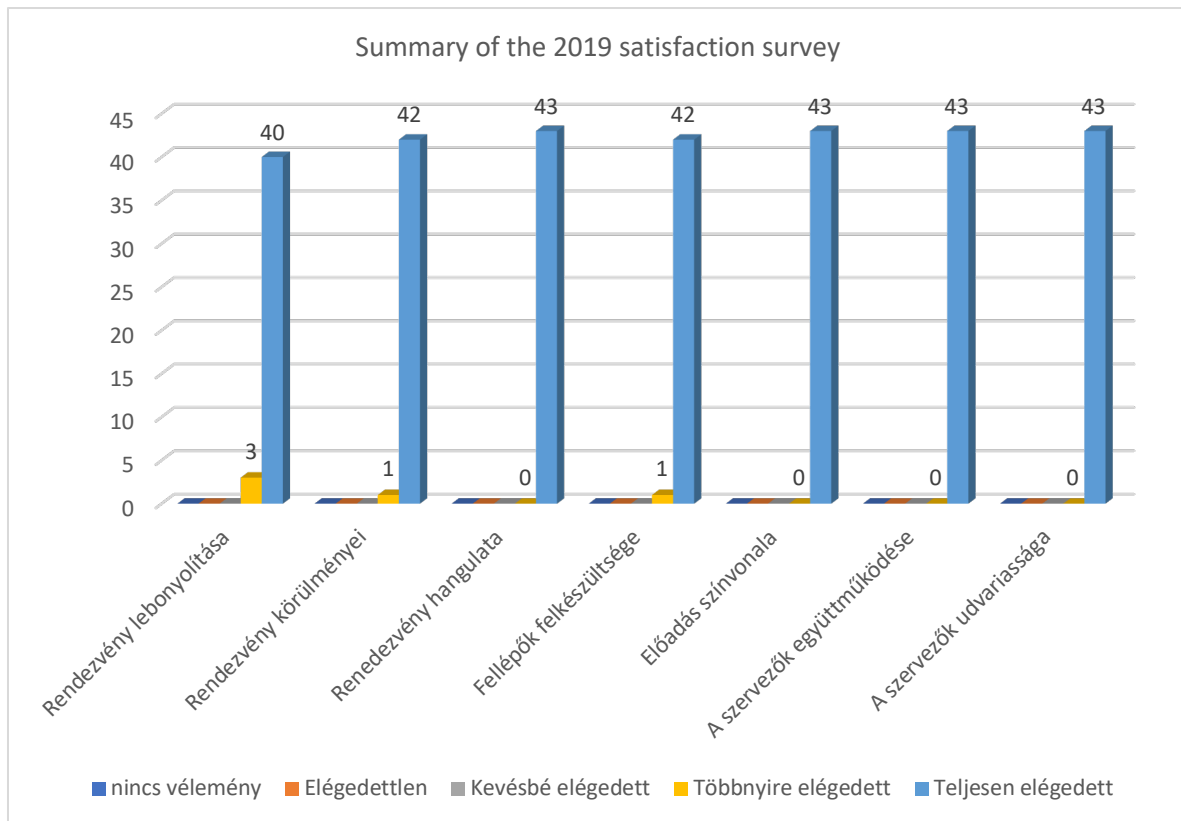
The summary of all responses to the survey questions in 2018:



### 2019

The gender of the respondents		Library member?	
Male	6	yes	19
Female	37	no	24
Total	43		43

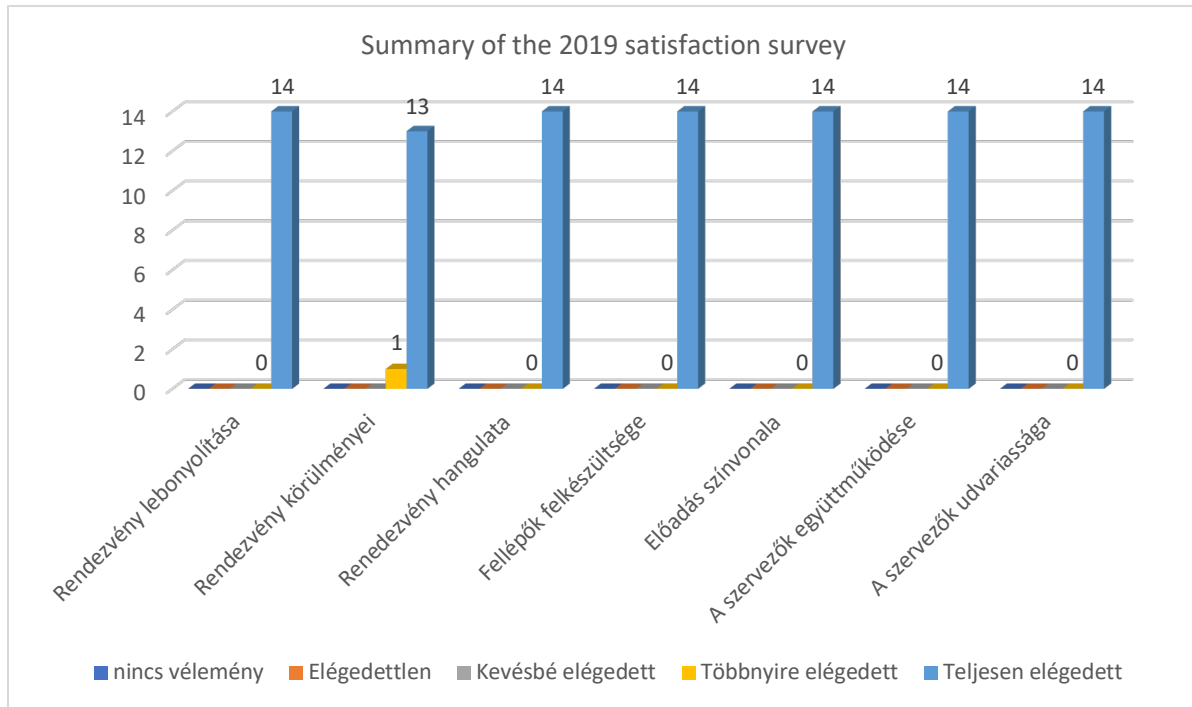
The summary of all responses to the survey questions in 2019:



### 2021

The gender of the respondents		Library member?	
Male	2	Yes	10
Female	12	No	4
Total	14		14

The summary of all responses to the survey questions in 2021:



### The Culture Corner initiative in light of the library's general strategy

The Jászberény City Library's quality management system has completed two strategic plans to date: one for the period 2016-2020 and a second one for the period of 2021-2023

The general objectives of both strategic plans include:

- effort to maintain current achievements and successes;
- maintaining the Library's key role in the city's cultural life;
- transmission of knowledge, information, and culture;
- offering services and programs to all ages, providing equal opportunities for underprivileged populations;
- strengthening local identity by providing cultural and community spaces and implementing programs that help community-building and development;
- ongoing improvement and updating of our services
- increasing our library's social recognition and improving the perceptions of the librarian profession by strengthening our external communication strategy and implementing a concerted marketing effort to promote our diverse activities.

Our innovative Culture Corner initiative serves each of these overarching strategic goals. Every year, we create an action plan to specify how these overarching strategic goals will be implemented, and the Culture Corner initiative is a permanent item in these annual plans. The Culture Corner contributes significantly to reaching our strategic goals through its multiple appearances throughout the year.

## Culture Corner in the context of the larger organisation

It was the employees of the Jászberény City Library who envisioned the creation and implementation of the Culture Corner initiative. Since this innovation is our ‘brainchild’, it was not difficult to integrate it into the library’s existing organisational functions. To ensure successful implementation, a few factors related to the organization of the library had to be considered:

- The primary target audience of the Culture Corner is children, but not only children's librarians are involved in its operation.
- Since the Culture Corner pop-ups take place outside the library building and mostly on holidays or weekends, rescheduling the library staff’s working hours is necessary before each event. We thank our staff members for their flexibility, which allowed the organisational and operational processes to be seamlessly updated and the Culture Corner programme to operate without any disruptions to the library's core services.

Launching our new initiatives, the Bookworm Gnomes and Culture Corner, contributed positively to streamlining our services. This process was crowned with the opening of the Jászság Folk Tale Point, presented here as our second important initiative. Events that did not fit into the library’s profile were removed from the line-up of programs and services, freeing up significant financial and human resources, and we centred our programming around the fairy tale theme.

## The Culture Corner’s impact on the library as a whole

Transitioning to the fairy-tale theme involved the entire library to some extent, but it profoundly influenced the children's library’s operations.

The figures and colours of the Bookworm Gnomes appeared in the decorations of the children's library section of the Jászberény City Library, painted with donated paint from the company PPG TRILAK Kft. The Culture Corner programme has allowed our institution to reach a much wider target audience. A unique new feature has emerged at the city’s cultural events. The city’s residents and other visitors came to love, eventually expect and purposefully seek out our pop-up libraries.

Although we cannot measure whether the Culture Corner has motivated visitors to sign up to be library members, we believe that the program has been very successful and positively influenced the public image of the Jászberény City Library and its efforts to promote reading. The programme allows us to meet with readers outside the usual library environment several times a year and form a richer network of connections with them.

## Using the PDCA cycle during planning and operation

As seen above, creating the Culture Corner has been an ongoing process of planning, implementation, rethinking, and assessment.

The idea of writing a fairy tale was followed by thorough planning and colourful, high-quality execution. After collecting outside feedback and some internal brainstorming about the reception of the story titled ‘Something is Lurking in Itty’, the idea of the Culture Corner initiative started taking place, continuously refined and revised based on audience suggestions. Examples of feedback and suggestions:

- the pop-up could make appearances not only at festivals but also at national holidays;
- the activity sheets and colouring pages should vary and reflect the theme of the event;
- the selection of toys in the tent should be carefully curated;
- other services (e.g. second-hand book sales) could be added.

Our operational processes and equipment needs have also been subject to repeated cycles of testing and refining, such as:

- when the Culture Corner is open after dark at festivals, careful planning for suitable lighting for the tent has proved indispensable;
- we needed to create a plan and an equipment list for easier and faster portability (setting up and furnishing the tent, transporting equipment from the library to the location and back).

The program constantly evolves, following the changing needs of the Culture Corner's users. This prompts cycles of redesign and implementation, as well as periodic assessments of its effectiveness.

### Sustainability of the Culture Corner

The program has been operating since 2016. Based on financial considerations, the required materials and equipment can be divided into two groups: costly but durable pieces of equipment that define the programme’s external appearance, such as tents, artificial turf, tables, chairs, etc.; and consumable supplies and frequently replaced items, such as toys, glue, pencils, etc.

The programme’s seven-year history of continuous operation illustrates its financial sustainability. Some materials were purchased as part of long-term planning, while others are part of expected operating costs in a library. Donated children's toys and support from businesses in our community contribute greatly to the programme’s financial sustainability.

The Jászberény City Library provides personnel, thus ensuring the programme’s stability and sustainability.

We believe that public interest is the best measure of sustainability. Audiences have shown sustained high levels of interest in our innovative initiative since the programme’s launch in 2016. Public interest is the cornerstone of sustainability. We will continue operating the programme as long as there is public demand. The minimum programme budget required for operations is funded by donations, grants, and the library’s budget.





## The Jászság Folk Tale Point

At the time of the launch of the Culture Corner, the Jászberény City Library's first updated initiative, we also noted the need to liven up the sterile white walls of the children's library and the activity room. One of our community partners, local business PPG TRILAK Kft, generously donated paint to 'enchant' the children's spaces with motifs from folk tales and fairy tale characters. We are grateful for our colleague, Petra Verseginé Újhelyi, who contributed her artistic talent and skills and created the cheerful murals in the children's spaces.

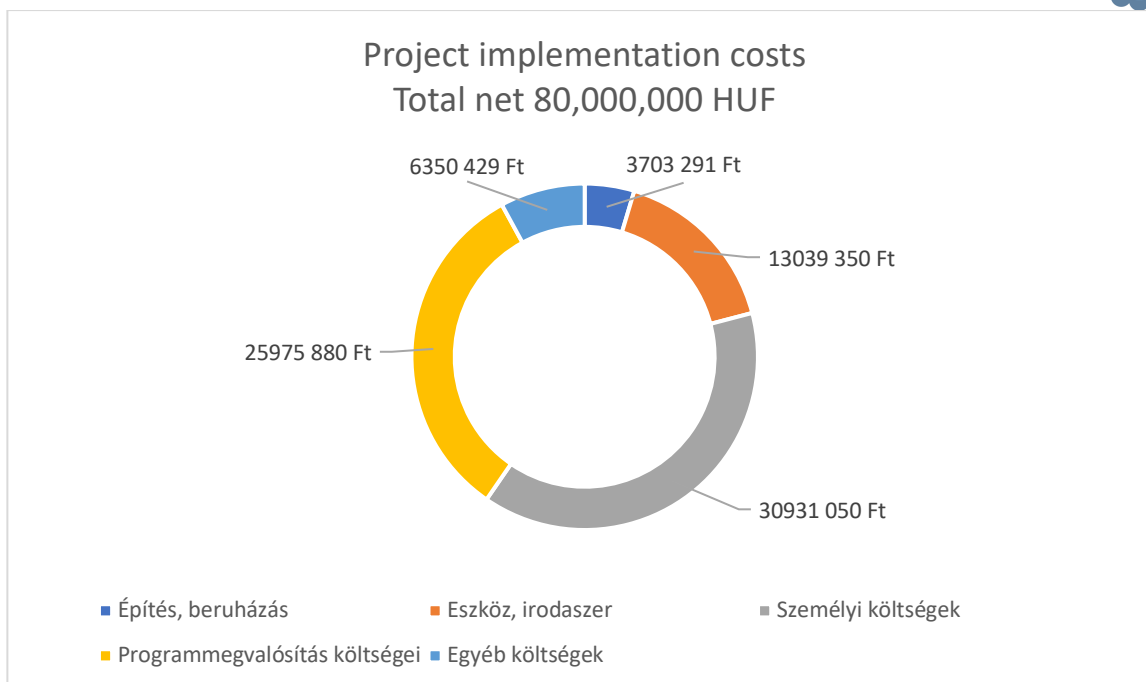
In 2017, the grant for EFOP-3.3.4-17 was announced to support programmes that encourage the use of folk tales in developing native-language competencies in informal and non-formal learning settings, supported by the European Union. The project was recommended to Jászkerület Nonprofit Kft., the library's operator, by the Hungarian Heritage House (Hagyományok Háza). Our staff has been fostering fruitful professional connections with the Hungarian Heritage House for many years. Since the grant was very selective, we had to carefully consider what factors can help Jászberény win.

After carefully interpreting the grant's goals and programme feasibility, we compiled a programme outline and recognised that the grant's goals align with the Culture Corner's mission as a library of fairy tales. It became clear that the best site for such a project in Jászberény was in the City Library's building.

We received notification of our application's approval at the end of 2017 when it turned out that among the 14 Folk Tale Points nationwide, the only one located in a children's library will be in Jászberény! After the announcement, several organizations expressed support for our decision to create this innovative space in a library environment. The Hungarian Heritage House, local schools, and collaborating partners involved in the project supported the idea of implementing this project in a library environment already dedicated to children's development, as the location will ensure the project's long-term success.

We started bringing the idea into the real world as soon as we were notified of the decision on January 1, 2018, lending our own financial resources to the project. Our staff members who joined the 3-year project started memorising fairy tales, learning the ins and outs of staffing the Folk Tale Point, and designing the dedicated space. We received the grant's Letter of Support in April 2018, and following a period of intense work, the Jászság Folk Tale Point opened in June 2018 and has been welcoming our young visitors ever since.





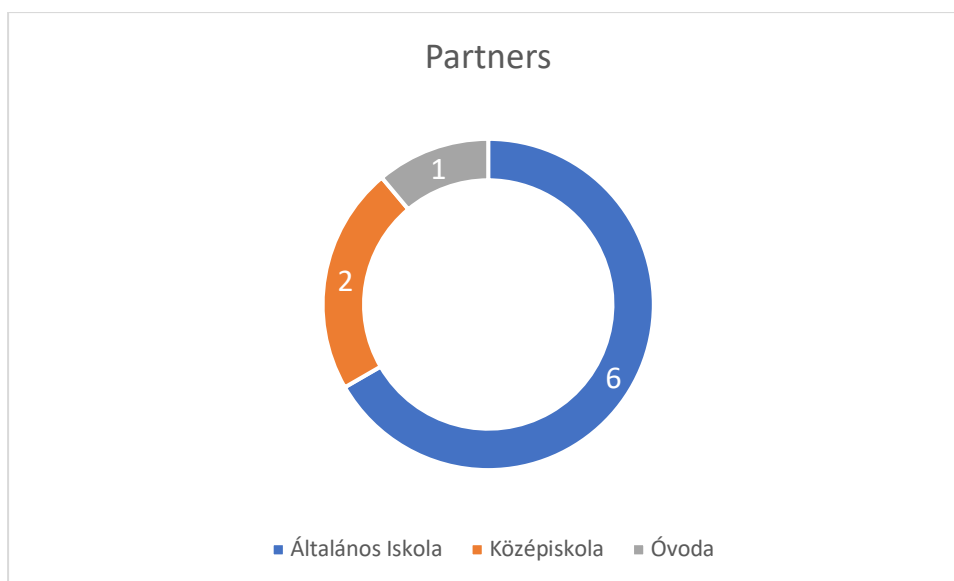
*What makes a Folk Tale Point innovative if it's not unique in the country?*

There are several reasons why the Jászság Folk Tale Point is considered an innovation. First, it is the only Folk Tale Point in the country in the context of a library. Second, in this exceptional environment, visitors can also blend the experience of immersing themselves in the world of folk tales with learning about the cultural traditions and natural history of the region of Jászság. Finally, operating a Folk Tale Point has transformed certain elements of the mission and services of Jászberény City Library.

### **Jászság Folk Tale Point: objectives, expectations, and results**

We set several objectives when we created the Jászság Folk Tale Point, assessed our progress at several points as recommended by the PDCA cycle, and analysed our results to ensure continuous improvement of the project's effectiveness and sustainability.

- The conditions for the grant provided a guideline for our innovation goals from the start by specifying certain quantitative and formal requirements to be taken into account when planning and implementing programmes.
- We set out to execute our Professional Plan based on both the grant's conditions and our own ideas.
- We aim to integrate the Jászság Folk Tale Point into the overall operation of the library.



### Program events in numbers

Program number	Type of training	2018	2019	2020
<b>1.</b>	<b>Lectures</b>	1 series/ 5 lectures	1 series/ 5 lectures	1 series/ 5 lectures
1/	1. Folk Tales of the Alföld Plains	1 lecture	1 lecture	1 lecture
1/	2. Folk Tales of Transdanubia	1 lecture	1 lecture	1 lecture
1/	3. Folk Tales of Upper Hungary	1 lecture	1 lecture	1 lecture
1/	4. Transylvanian Folk Tales	1 lecture	1 lecture	1 lecture
1/	Folk Tales from the South	1 lecture	1 lecture	1 lecture
	<b>Club meetings</b>			
2	Tales of Dragons	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
3	Tales of Fairies	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
4	Tales of Giants	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
5	Tales of Gnomes and Dwarves	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
6	Tales of Horses	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
7	Tales of Peasant Girls and Boys	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
8	Tales of Kings and Royal Children	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year

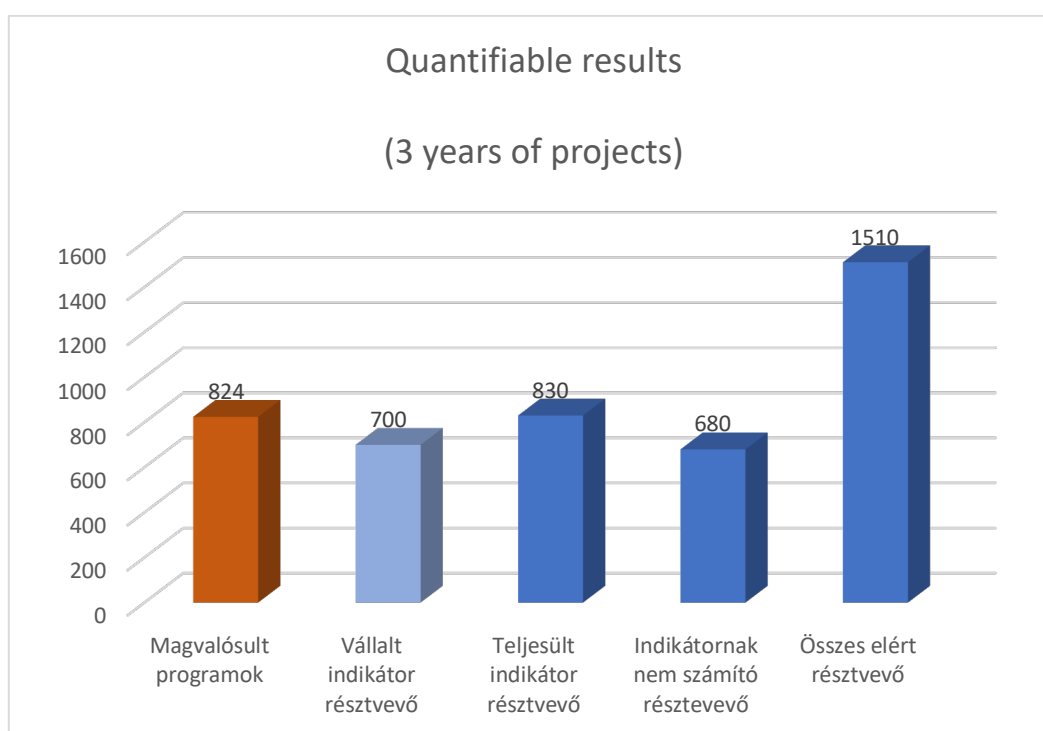


9	Riddles and funny stories	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
10	Stories about Farm Animals	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
11	Stories about Wild Animals	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
12	Tales of Witches	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
13	Stories for Advent	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year	52 meetings/year
	<b>Art and Creativity Clubs</b>			
14	Storytellers	36 meetings	36 meetings	36 meetings
15	Puppeteer Talent Development	36 meetings	36 meetings	36 meetings
16	<b>Competency Development Camp</b>			
	Seven-Mile Camp	1 session		
	I'm going to see the world... storytelling camp for adventurers		1 session	
	Camp Faraway Lands			1 session
	<b>Live Storytelling</b>			
17	Whispering Elders	52 meetings	52 meetings	52 meetings
18	Stories for Women About Men and for Men About Women	52 meetings	52 meetings	52 meetings
19	<b>Introducing Prevalent Practices Nationwide</b>			
	Opening conference	1 session		
	Closing conference			1 session
	<b>Folk Tales of Ethnic Minorities in Hungary</b>			
20	Dikhec manus	Dikhec manus 1.	Dikhec manus 2.	Dikhec manus 3.
	<b>Other programs</b>			
21	Storytelling Competition	1 session	1 session	1 session
22	Fairy Tale Illustration Competition	1 session	1 session	1 session
23	Fairy tale Road	ongoing	ongoing	ongoing
24	'Magical Words' - Native Language Day	1 session	1 session	1 session



25	Story of the Month	10 + 2 sessions	10 + 2 sessions	10 + 2 sessions
	<b>Professional Development</b>			
26	Using Stories - for Teachers in the Jászság region	by topic	by topic	by topic

Due to the specific characteristics of European Union grant applications (e.g., use of attendance sheets), the project's statistical outcomes can be easily quantified; therefore, no separate survey was conducted.



Some of the project outcomes are not easily quantifiable:

- Throughout the duration of the project, the Hungarian Heritage House organised three regional storytelling competitions at the Jászság Folk Tale Point, which reflects high levels of recognition of our work from a national-level partner, even compared to other Folk Tale Points.
- In 2020, the Jászberény City Library won the Travelling Owl Award of the Children's Library Section of the Association of Hungarian Librarians, a decision in which the creation and successful operation of the Jászság Folk Tale Point played a significant role.
- Visiting the Jászság Folk Tale Point lifts the spirits of children, adults, and the elderly.



## Feedback from visitors and partners

Between 2018 and 2020, many visitors had opportunities to visit the Folk Tale Point at certain events that were not considered indicators but were part of the project, such as the Story of the Month live storytelling events or the Culture Corner pop-ups at festivals described above.

It is important to note that full reopening after the COVID-19 pandemic did not happen until around September 2021, so the surveys conducted during this period have not yielded a fully representative set of data for analysis.

The programme's positive, long-term effects are reflected by its popularity among the city's and the region's kindergartens and schools even after the project has ended. Folk Tale Point hosts two school groups daily, but demand is even higher, necessitating a waitlist.

Our stakeholder partner organisations (the library's owner, the Jászberény City Hall, our project partner, the Hungarian Heritage House, and various cooperating educational institutions) all expect the Jászság Folk Tale Point to maintain the same level of activities as it did during the project.

The success of the Jászság Folk Tale Point is also reflected in the level of interest it attracts even internationally; many have visited to learn about its activities, equipment, operations, and decor from places as diverse as Portugal, Italy, Germany, Slovenia, and the United States.

## The Jászság Folk Tale Point in light of the library's general strategy

In 2018, the Jászberény City Library was awarded the title of Qualified Library. Our first Strategic Plan was created for 2016-2020, and the project is connected to this period on multiple levels.

- The 'Opportunities' section of the SWOT analysis already included the following:
  - o developing new services
  - o seeking out new funding sources
- Our overarching strategic goals include
  - o 'contributing to improving the quality of life and increased competitiveness of the region through our activities that disseminate knowledge, information, and culture, as well as through promoting reading'
- Our ongoing strategic goals include:
  - o designing and maintaining a building that meets the functional requirements of a library and creating new community spaces
  - o providing ongoing training for employees, internal training
  - o promoting reading
  - o improving infrastructure

We believe that the new space meets all of these goals.



In our Strategic Plan for 2021-2023, the Jászág Folk Tale Point has already been listed as an achievement to be maintained. Improving communication and other infrastructure is also listed among the general and ongoing goals.

Every year, a detailed Action Plan is prepared to facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

In the 2019 Action Plan, specific guidelines for further developing the Jászág Folk Tale Point were established, such as creating a virtual reality feature and establishing a designated fairy tale library.

### **The Jászág Folk Tale Point in the context of the organisation's functions**

The Children's Department of the Jászberény City Library has always included storytelling workshops in its programming, using not only folk tales passed down through oral tradition but also literary fairy tales written by an identifiable author. The process of centring the library's services around fairy tales started around the time of the creation of the Culture Corner project.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of workshops per month</b>	<b>Number of workshops per year</b>	<b>Number of participating children</b>	<b>Average number of participants/workshop</b>
1.	2013	8	103	2357	23
2.	2014	7	104	2300	23
3.	2015	12	135	3129	22
4.	2016	12	134	3174	24
5.	2017*	23	34	1600	47

\*(The data from 2017 included only the first three months of the year, after which we pivoted to develop the Folk Tale Point.)

After creating the Jászág Folk Tale Point, the Children's Library Department has focused on folk tales and live storytelling, foregrounding related programs such as heritage preservation and folk traditions.

The Children's Library's permanent staff took pivotal roles in the project, so the Jászág Folk Tale Point was able to continue its programmes after the project had ended while also providing a memorable environment for other programmes.

The programmes established through the project, such as live storytelling at Jászberény's public events (e.g. festivals) outside the library, continue in collaboration with the Culture Corner program.



All in all, the Jászság Folk Tale Point has become an integral part of both the library's services and the life of Jászberény.

### **The impact of Jászság Folk Tale Point on the library as a whole**

The Jászság Folk Tale Point is partly the result of a carefully planned process and partly an outcome of fortuitous synergy between the planned innovations and the call for grant proposals. Of course, the project's size (both in financial and professional terms) significantly affected every area of the library's operations as it was brought to life.

The grant conditions themselves and the decision to create its dedicated space in a library had tangible effects: spaces had to be remodelled, and new furniture and equipment needed to be purchased, which resulted in a dramatically new feel for the environment.

Our staff members also felt the effects of the change. Children's Library staff members reported feeling part of an exciting new phase and were energised by the opportunity to learn something new. However, while staff members were being trained in the new processes and new procedures were being established (e.g. maximum number of incoming groups per day, length of workshops, etc., were finalised), the project required significant human resources, as the library services had to continue alongside the new workshops.

All library employees accepted and supported this process, and in a short time, we established staffing and subbing protocols to ensure smooth operations.

In addition to the project's internal impact, it is worth noting the project's impact on our network of relationships outside the library. During the planning, construction, and operation of the Folk Tale Point, we established close long-term relationships with commercial partners who participated in the remodelling, with outside consultants (management of the Jászság Eagle Centre), municipal representatives regardless of party affiliation, and former and current mayors of the city.

Even more significant is the external feedback we have been receiving from professional communities, librarians, heritage preservationists, and the community of storytellers; they love and appreciate the Jászság Folk Tale Point and the dedication of its staff.

However, it is the Folk Tale Point's effect on library visitors - children, adults, and the elderly - which stands out. They quickly embraced the new environment and programmes and gave us positive feedback and encouragement, and as a result, our circulation increased. This was not merely the result of the large number of lectures. Many of our visitors come not for the traditional services (such as borrowing books), but because they see the library as a community space. Some come specifically to visit the Folk Tale Point or to participate in events there.

The project has had significant effect on the library's future. The time-limited project supported by the European Union has ended, but the space we created, the processes we established, and



the knowledge we acquired will be present in the library for years, perhaps even decades. It will influence future projects, development of infrastructure and of staff, as well as library and city programmes.

### **Using the PDCA cycle during planning and operation**

The arc of modernising our line-up of programmes demonstrates the use of the PDCA cycle, starting with the writing of the Bookworm Gnomes stories, continuing with creating the Culture Corner, and culminating in the creation and operation of the Jászság Folk Tale Point. Both external and internal feedback were pivotal in this process of innovation.

Let us zoom in on the use of the PDCA cycle in this project.

The project's precedents include the Culture Corner, described above, which kicked off the development process. Although the call for grant applications and compliance with its conditions cannot necessarily be counted as part of the PDCA cycle, it meant more than that in our case.

The project's net total cost, 80,000,000 HUF, opened up great opportunities for the space's design. We invited partners from various fields to discuss our idea to create not just a Folk Tale Point but a truly multifunctional and immersive space.

Just like the structure of many fairy tales, the space is divided into three parts, and the PDCA cycle helped us develop its concept.

- Interior of a peasant house: based on the recommendation of the Jász Museum staff, we have created furniture and furnishings that include traditional Jász motifs (e.g., green embroidery).
- Meadow: in collaboration with the Jászság Eagle Centre, we asked our contractor to create a space that accommodates other teaching activities in addition to storytelling. The most important of these is teaching the geography and natural history related to the meadows; to serve this goal, we painted a mural of the Protected Landscape Area of Tápió-Hajta in Jászság region. The figures on the magnetic wall depict the area's wildlife.
- Castle: this section of the Folk Tale Point is dedicated to activities and play. The background serves as a set for dramatic play. The traditional motifs of region appear in the costumes, an idea contributed by our contractor.
- Information Technology: the false windows in the castle area were each designed to include a monitor. When the windows are 'opened', a video backdrop of a courtyard, a battle scene, or a royal feast is played.

The equipment is multifunctional; for example, musical instruments are available to complement storytelling (e.g. rain, noise, storm), as well as for music instruction. In addition





to the puppets used for the fairy tales, we commissioned toy birds made of wool felt that depict the actual bird species of the Protected Landscape Area of Tápió-Hajta.

### **Sustainability of the Jászság Folk Tale Point**

Although the Jászság Folk Tale Point was supported by a European Union project, it was also a planned upgrade included in the library's development plans even before the grant's announcement. We are fortunate to have been able to enhance our plans with the grant's support.

The designated project timeline fell between 2018 and 2020, however, the Jászság Folk Tale Point continues to operate to this day, with similar or even better utilisation.

We believe that in the case of a project like this, sustainability is multifaceted.

- Location: our decision to bring the project inside the building of the Jászberény City Library proved to be a pillar of its long-term sustainability, as it eliminates the need for separate funding for the maintenance of another building or room.

- Personnel needs: no outside hires were needed as the staff of the children's library assumed the duties of operating the Folk Tale Point. Our staff members' enthusiasm for the project was indispensable, and it made significant cost savings possible by eliminating the need to hire additional staff for the Folk Tale Point.

- Funding: the above factors ensure the sustainability of the Jászság Folk Tale Point, as the items requiring the greatest financial resources (personnel costs and utility expenses) are covered for the long term. The building's safe operation is provided. Operating costs include replacing worn-out equipment, acquiring new educational toys, and making necessary repairs. Of course, we do not only rely on our own resources for funding, but we continue to seek out opportunities through donations and grants.

We see a few additional factors necessary for the continuity of the Folk Tale Point, such as generating and maintaining interest from the visitors and commitment from our colleagues to its operation.

In addition, we consider continued improvements, meeting new demands, and seeking out and taking advantage of new opportunities central to sustainability, all while keeping our core values in sight. In other words, we pursue innovation in innovation.

### **Innovation in innovation**

In the case of Jászság Folk Tale Point, which was developed through cycles of feedback, we achieved innovation within an innovation. This new project is called the Invisible Space and is linked to the Meadow area described earlier. Made possible by a successful grant application



of our library's foundation, a mobile application was created to allow users to explore the wildlife native to the Protected Landscape Area of Tápió-Hajta in the Jászság region through augmented reality on their mobile phones.

Another opportunity for development was creating a '(folk) tale library' within the Jászberény City Library. Planning meetings with the new director of the Hungarian Heritage House began in 2022. The project's goals include providing well-researched and high-quality services and materials for storytelling and heritage preservation.

## Summary

The innovative quality of the Jászság Folk Tale Point lies in the fact that no other library in the country is home to a Folk Tale Point. This new project has prompted us to rethink and streamline our service offerings; it also provides an opportunity to preserve the historical tradition of oral storytelling. The Jászberény City Library's Jászság Folk Tale Point supports these goals by providing a suitable environment and an extensive knowledge base.

## Organisational self-assessment

To ensure quality management, we completed our 3rd organisational self-assessment. Our first self-assessment took place in 2016 with the help of an external expert. The second one was conducted in 2018 in support of our successful application for the Qualified Library title. We planned to apply for the Library Quality Award in 2021, so we conducted an organizational self-assessment again with the help of our librarian staff members. In the end, the COVID-19 pandemic, among other factors, forced us to postpone the application until 2022. We did not repeat the entire assessment process again that year, but the Quality Management Council asked the previous year's respondents to review and, if needed, modify their responses. When comparing the 2018 and the current self-assessment, we focused on possible areas of improvement for the organisation. The head of the Quality Management Council presented the summary and analysis of the data at a staff meeting.

11 of our colleagues took part in the self-assessment in 2021/2022 (in 2018, 10 people participated). Since the evaluation form only included spaces for 8, we added another tab to the spreadsheet, entered each evaluator's responses, calculated and rounded averages, and transferred the resulting consensus scores to the original evaluation form.

Out of the maximum available 1000 points, we reached 720 in 2018 and 733 in 2022 (both rounded to whole numbers).

## Capacities

**1. Leadership.** The rubric 'Management's relationships with the supervising institution and other community partners' shows significant improvement from the previous evaluation, from



68% to 80%. This can be explained by the fact that on January 1, 2022, the City Hall of Jászberény, owner of Jászkerület Nonprofit Kft., appointed Péter Kovács, the library's director at the time, as the head of the Kft.

Kovács's ideas, professional networks, relationships with partner institutions and community partners, and professional goals have brought about a positive change in management.

Areas of improvement: Increase the effectiveness and processes of internal communication; implement a well-planned and systematic development of external communication with outside partners.

**2. Strategy.** We saw a decline in the assessment of strategic goals. The reason for this is that our strategic plan expired at the end of 2020, and during the COVID-19 pandemic we saw it safer to only plan up to 2023. It proved to be the right decision. Starting in 2022, we have longer had to close our gates for months at a time.

It is curious that the score for 'Pursuing innovation in development' has also decreased (from 69% to 64%), yet we are now submitting our application for the Library Quality Award. The global pandemic has had a significant impact on our self-assessments, and unfortunately, the pandemic period did not easily lend itself to new improvements. Our innovative new programmes were on hold in the first half of the year, but we achieved significant attendance numbers and positive reception after reopening.

Our team is open to new innovations and every year we strive to incorporate new elements, projects, and processes into our services.

Areas of improvement: Regularly survey the needs and satisfaction of stakeholders and incorporate the results in the organisation's development strategy.

Strive for a more organised collection and documentation of feedback on changes and improvements.

**3. Staff.** Our weakest area proved to be staffing, with a score of only 63%. We saw no improvement in this area compared to the 2018 situation.

The human resource development plan was not implemented, since the library is not independently managed. We are in great need of expanding our technical staff, and we are concerned about replacing retiring librarians. We do not have fully developed plans for managing human resources or for the measurement and recognition of the staff's accomplishments.

Staff training and professional development are supported by the library's the management, but the organisation does not have an overarching, well-developed strategy in this area.

Areas of improvement: Survey skill levels and professional competencies of employees, identify individual shortcomings, compare them with the needs of the organisation, and develop a training plan based on the results.

Improve internal knowledge sharing and expand digital competencies to ensure smooth logistical and technical operations for public events.

We are lacking a strategy for evaluating, motivating, and recognising employees.

Seek out opportunities and resources to help with filling non-librarian positions (IT, information desk, technician).



**4. Cooperation, partners, resources.** We identified modest improvements in terms of cooperation, partners, and resources from the previous assessment. The new management has only been leading the organisation for a short period of time, but the improvements are already noticeable.

We have a significant number of partnership agreements. We collaborate with partner organisations in various areas, such as extracurricular instruction, professional training, joint public events, grant applications, projects, civic initiatives, etc.

Over the past several years, we have been making upgrades to the library building and developing our infrastructure, making full use of grant opportunities and our parent organisation's resources, as well as the support of sponsors. The renovation of the library's roof is in progress at the moment.

Areas of improvement: We routinely survey participant satisfaction at our public events, however, a more comprehensive satisfaction survey among our regular visitors is needed.

Involve our partners more closely in formulating our strategic objectives.

Measure the needs and satisfaction of our partners, not just our visitors.

Remove the public computer station from the Quiet Zone and create a café-like atmosphere in the Gallery.

**5. Processes.** We are seeing stagnant assessments of our processes, in part caused by the closures necessitated by the pandemic.

Our processes are adequately documented. Our process library contains 23 key, 13 managerial and 7 support processes, complete with process flowcharts, service requirements, failure impact analysis and assigned process owners.

Areas of improvement: The measurements related to individual processes are missing.

Use multiple survey methods to assess the needs of various user groups.

## Results

The evaluation of results yielded higher scores than the evaluation of capacities. In recent years, our library has received several forms of recognition, news of which have reached not only our current visitors but also potential ones (Qualified Library title, Travelling Owl Award, Family-friendly Service Provider, organising national conferences).

### 6. Customer service-related results

Both self-assessments show that our strongest area is customer service (83%).

The perception of our library among our visitors is positive, and it increasingly functions as a community space. Young people enjoy the library and visit us in significant numbers.

Areas of improvement:

Regularly update our users about the library's activities and survey results (e.g. infographics).

### 7. Staff-related results



Our colleagues are highly recognised and appreciated by the residents of the city and our visitors. Our external partners know us for our reliability, credibility, flexibility, high professional standards, good team spirit, and conscientious work ethic.

The library's good atmosphere is defined by collegiality, joint problem-solving, and being a family-friendly workplace. Our employees are involved in the operation and decision-making processes of the organization as much as possible.

Areas of improvement:

At the organisational level, the library staff is affected by the lack of a career model and well-developed system of motivation, recognition, and promotions. We do not have reliable metrics related to individual behaviour, participation, and performance of staff members.

### **8. Results related to institutional social responsibility**

Our library and our staff participate in programmes related to social responsibility (recycling drives, supporting animal shelters, supporting underprivileged groups) both as organisers and participants.

We organise thematic library visits and workshops for the elderly and disabled people 8-10 times a year.

Areas of improvement:

Replace the formulaic, stereotypical image of libraries and librarians in the public mind with an updated, customer-centric picture.

Develop and implement measures to reduce the ecological footprint of the library and promote environmental consciousness.

### **9. Key results**

The management and all of our employees are committed to reaching of our key strategic objectives, and we serve this goal with well-organized, reliably high-quality work.

With the help of successful grant applications, we continuously improve our infrastructure, services, and work environment.

Each year, we participate in a number of national-level programmes, and run our own suite of individual projects and event series.

Areas of improvement:

Strengthen international professional networks, e.g. cooperation with libraries in sister cities

Conduct more frequent benchmarking analyses of our services