

Key Findings 2021

YOUTH-RELATED CHALLENGES
AND OPPORTUNITIES
IN HUNGARY



CHANGEMAKERS YOUTH FORUM

THIS REPORT SUMMARISES THE KEY FINDINGS FROM THE GILE FOUNDATION'S CONSULTATION PROCESS, MARKET RESEARCH AND THE CHANGEMAKERS YOUTH FORUM TO DETERMINE THE MAJOR CHALLENGES AFFECTING YOUTH TODAY.

DECEMBER 16, 2021

BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

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Published in 2021 by the GiLE Foundation,
Facilitator of the Changemakers Youth Forum



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Printed in Budapest, Hungary

The GiLE Foundation's mission is to support young people's pursuit of a successful and meaningful life by developing their competencies and through research and advocacy.

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Foreword

Young people should not settle for an ordinary life when they have it in themselves to live an **extra**ordinary one.

However, to stand any chance at pursuing a successful and meaningful life, you first require **access to quality education** from learning environments that are genuinely fit-for-purpose for the 21st century.

At the same time, it is equally important to promote and embed **a lifelong learning mindset** because we are all living in an increasingly complex and ever-changing world. To quote John Dewey:

**" Education is not preparation for life;
education is life itself."**

The Changemakers Youth Forum is a flagship project for the **GiLE Foundation**, and the compilation of this report sheds light on the key findings to date from our collective efforts to determine and then unpack youth-related challenges and opportunities in Hungary.

I appreciate the entire process we undertook to conduct research, perform consultations, and ultimately engage with youth organisations and young people in a meaningful way. Furthermore, entering into strategic partnerships and collaborations with youth organisations also symbolises our determination to establish a **strong coalition with shared interests**.

In closing, our early success has certainly generated a lot of encouragement and excitement about the next steps. Moving forward, I hope that more stakeholders and decision-makers will support our initiatives to empower national and international youth at scale.

— Craig V. Johnson

Chairperson, Changemakers Youth Forum
Founder & Co-Creator, GiLE Foundation

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1. Background

At the beginning of 2021, the GiLE Foundation launched a six-month **consultation process** with several youth organisations in Hungary **to determine the major challenges affecting youth today**. We took into consideration the interests of both Hungarian and international youth who are living in the country. A snapshot market research survey was also conducted among hundreds of young professionals, recent graduates and students at Hungarian universities **to gather their opinions, validate their needs, and determine their personal skills gap**.

We knew from the very start that research provides compelling evidence for the **global skills crisis** and that it clearly indicates that far too many **learning environments are not fit-for-purpose** for the 21st century. It also seemed evident to us that young people are struggling more than ever to navigate through life nowadays.

However, we wanted to be 100% sure that the global research was equally applicable within the context of Hungary and the broader Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region.

Through our consultation process and primary research, we managed to:

- Engage directly with several youth organisations, youth leaders and hundreds of students in Hungary,
- Document the facts and data about youth-related challenges in Hungary,
- Established some of the root causes of youth-related challenges in Hungary,
- Put together a list of clear recommendations and practical solutions to youth-related challenges in Hungary, and
- Publicly engage young leaders in Hungary at The Presidents' Roundtable, in front of an enthusiastic audience of young people and stakeholders, to discuss how to navigate through youth-related challenges and opportunities.



2. The Presidents' Roundtable

It seldom happens that young leaders from impactful youth organisations in Hungary can share a platform – together! This is exactly what happened when we hosted The Presidents' Roundtable when **inspiring young leaders engaged in meaningful and thought-provoking discussions.**



The roundtable discussion focused on youth leadership, how to better support Hungarian and international youth, and how to navigate through youth-related challenges and opportunities.

Each leader elaborated on the specific youth-related challenges that they raised during the GiLE Foundation's **consultation process**. The panellists discussed how various challenges directly impact their youth organisation, their members, and colleagues, as well themselves personally as a young leader. After having unpacked the various challenges, we then engaged on exactly **how stakeholders can get involved** to play a meaningful role to address them, and thus empower and support young people in Hungary.



Roundtable Participants:

Daniel Al-Nuwaihi – President of AIESEC in Hungary

Lilla Bartuszek – Secretary-General of V4SDG

István Kárász – President of the Pact4Youth Association Hungary

Bernadett Pintér – President of the Erasmus Student Network Hungary

Tereza Suk – President of the International Diplomatic Students Association

Pál Weisz – President of the Simonyi Károly Szakkollégium



“

As the Chairperson of the Changemakers Youth Forum, I am proud to say that our strategic intervention is well on its way to empowering a lot of national and international youth living in Hungary and the broader CEE region. We are on track to realise the aims that we set out to achieve in the coming years, and there's a lot of excitement regarding our next steps.

— Craig V. Johnson

”



BE THE CHANGE!

3. Key Findings 2021: Youth-related Challenges & Opportunities in Hungary

We are proud to present the key findings from our (a) consultation process, (b) market research and (c) Changemakers Youth Forum, all of which involved hundreds of students, young professionals, and youth organisations in Hungary.

Categories

Our findings are discussed separately on subsequent pages under the following categories:

**3A.
Youth
Engagement**

**3B.
Youth
Leadership**

**3C.
Skills Development &
Motivational Factors**

**3D.
Career Planning &
Labour Market
Integration**

**3E.
Funding**

**3F.
Public Recognition of
Volunteering Work**

3A. Youth Engagement

Key findings:



Hungary and Central Eastern Europe do not have sufficient platforms or opportunities to connect national and international youth with stakeholders and decision-makers to engage and discuss practical solutions to youth-related challenges.

There seems to be an insufficient level of representation of international students in student organisations at Hungarian universities, which makes it more challenging for international youth to engage with a university's leadership and the national student's union.

Background:

- **Hungary has made tremendous progress** in recent years in opening up and embracing international students and young professionals from all over the globe. There are also several national initiatives and programmes that support them, for example international students, during their stay in Hungary. At the same time, there doesn't seem to be many international-friendly platforms in Hungary, and there is indeed **no upscaled international youth forum in the country** to successfully bring together Hungarian and international youth – that is to say, both European youth and youth from around the world.
- It is important for youth around the world to be able to access a platform to share their ideas, exchange their experiences, and collectively discuss solutions to the problems that they all currently face as young people. This way, they can all contribute to the dialogue, and ensure **youth participation in the decision-making process** to help shape their own future.
- The lack of inclusion of international youth in existing student organisations at Hungarian universities seems to be largely due to the **language barrier**.

3B. Youth Leadership

Key findings:

There are many (aspiring) young leaders and high-potential youth in Hungary who lack the ability, the network, or the financial means to participate in leadership development training and mentorship programmes.

There are many (aspiring) young leaders, including leaders of student organisations, who want to professionalise their organisation and enhance their social impact, but they nonetheless struggle with strategic planning, knowledge management and human resource management.

Background:

- Being a leader of any organisation is generally challenging and demanding. It is no different for leaders of youth organisations or student organisations. **There are a lot of talented young people in Hungary** who are motivated to (a) support young people, (b) improve their organisation, (c) personally develop themselves as leaders, and (d) ultimately make a positive impact in their local community or university. They dedicate a lot of personal time, often for free, and they usually try to manage everything between their studies and perhaps work too. However, many of them **lack a leadership support system and network**.
- Such a situation ultimately serves as a **limitation on the social impact** their youth organisation could otherwise achieve. In many instances, too, young leaders may not be able to unlock their full potential when creating positive changes in their local community or university.
- Many young leaders also want to **professionalise their youth organisation** and the way they do things so that they can be more effective and efficient. Many youth organisations and student organisations have a high turnover of members and volunteers.

Background (continued):

Managing this rotation and ensuring continuity is generally challenging for most of them. This includes managing leadership transitions, especially among student organisations. One of many negative consequences of this is that many members of the incoming leadership somehow end up reinventing the wheel with several aspects of this being due to inadequate handover processes.



The GiLE Foundation successfully piloted its Changemakers Leadership Programme

On the 15th of October 2021, as a precursor to the Changemakers Youth Forum, the GiLE Foundation hosted an invitation-only programme for leaders of student organisations, aspiring changemakers, and young people who have demonstrated leadership potential and noteworthy activity in their local community.

We delivered interactive training sessions on **transformational leadership** and **motivational mapping**, offered **networking opportunities** and hosted a special session with a **keynote and fireside chat with Dr Viktória Horváth**, Ambassador and Political Adviser of Secretary of State - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Our piloted programme was successful, and it further confirmed several challenges related to youth leadership. The GiLE Foundation is now pursuing the development of a more comprehensive and integrated leadership programme for young people.



3C. Skills Development & Motivational Factors

Key findings:


➤➤➤➤➤ The strongest motivating factor among youth in Hungary is personal growth and development (52.3%), followed by success and prestige (13.8%) and then money (11.3%). Source: GiLE Foundation's 2021 survey.

➤➤➤➤➤ Only 21% of youth in Hungary believe their university fully prepares them for work by developing interpersonal skills. Source: GiLE Foundation's 2021 survey.

➤➤➤➤➤ The areas of interpersonal skills that youth in Hungary are most interested in developing are: (1) how to communicate with confidence and clarity, (2) public speaking, (3) negotiation skills, and (4) presentation skills. Source: GiLE Foundation's 2021 survey.

➤➤➤➤➤ Only 17% of youth in Hungary believe their university fully prepares them for life after study when it comes to building or developing their character. Source: GiLE Foundation's 2021 survey.

➤➤➤➤➤ The areas of character building that youth in Hungary are most interested in developing are (1) stress and anxiety management, (2) mindset building, (3) finding their life purpose, (4) learning how to avoid self-sabotage. Source: GiLE Foundation's 2021 survey.




The most preferred type of learning environment among youth in Hungary is a mix of face-to-face and online teaching (45.2%), followed by only face-to-face teaching (35%). Source: GiLE Foundation's 2021 survey.

Background:


- At the beginning of 2021, the GiLE Foundation conducted a **snapshot market research survey** among youth organisations, student organisations, youth leaders, students and recent graduates in Hungary.
- There were **283 respondents** in our survey which was conducted over a period of 2-3 months. There are plans under consideration to roll out larger and more comprehensive surveys in 2022.
- Regarding the demographics of the survey respondents, 36.4% are Hungarian and 63.6% represent international youth. Furthermore, 56.5% were aged 18 to 24, whereas 39.2% were aged 25 to 34.

3D. Career Planning & Labour Market Integration

Key findings:



Young people are struggling to integrate into the Hungarian labour market, partly because there are insufficient job opportunities and a lack of (high quality) internships and traineeships.



The main goals for youth in Hungary, by popular vote, are to get their first job, internship or traineeship (36.7%), to study further (27.2%) and to become an entrepreneur (20.1%). Source: GiLE Foundation's 2021 survey.



Only 17% of youth in Hungary believe their university fully prepares them with career planning. Source: GiLE Foundation's 2021 survey.



The areas of career planning that youth in Hungary are most interested in developing are (1) networking skills, (2) personal branding, (3) career design, and (4) interview skills and techniques. Source: GiLE Foundation's 2021 survey.

Background:

- In Hungary, there is a Youth Guarantee Programme (**Ifjúsági Garancia Programme**) that is aimed at enhancing the integration of young people into the job market. As part of this programme, employers are entitled to a non-refundable subsidy from the State if the company employs an employer under the age of 25 who is registered with the competent government office.
- However, **there are many challenges that make young people's transition into the labour market tough**. For example, (a) most jobs either require the level of experience that young people and students do not have, or they are given to internal colleagues who seemingly have already earned the trust of their employer. Additional reasons are that (b) young workers can, in many cases, be made redundant free of charge following a trial period of 3 months, and (c) many young people are not fully aware of their rights, so employers dismiss them even if it breaches the national labour code, with no consequences.
- At the beginning of 2021, the GiLE Foundation conducted a **snapshot market research** survey among youth organisations, student organisations, youth leaders, students and recent graduates in Hungary.
- There were **283 respondents** in our survey which was conducted over a period of 2-3 months. There are plans under consideration to roll out larger and more comprehensive surveys in 2022.
- Regarding the demographics of the survey respondents, 36.4% are Hungarian and 63.6% represent international youth. Furthermore, 56.5% were aged 18 to 24, whereas 39.2% were aged 25 to 34.

3E. Funding

Key findings:

➤➤➤ **Many NGOs, youth organisations and student organisations in Hungary are unaware of funding opportunities, or they do not have sufficient or consistent funding to sustain themselves and appropriately serve their community at a professional level.**

Background:

- Non-profit organisations generally rely on the goodwill and generosity of others to volunteer their time or otherwise provide donations or grants to cover the costs of their activities. However, not only are the traditional sources of funding becoming increasingly insufficient, **rising costs and the consequences of COVID-19** are also taking a toll on many NGOs in Hungary and around the world.
- When the activities of NGOs and youth organisations cost more than the flow of income, say through grants and donations, then such organisations are generally forced to compromise on the quality of their work. The **education sector, the business community and various other stakeholders all have a vested interest** to have non-profits organisations achieve financial stability.
- There are many NGOs and youth organisations that **lack skills, training or the capacity to write professional grant proposals**. Many such organisations are not even aware of the various funding opportunities that may be available to them.
- We recognise and appreciate those Hungarian universities that award scholarships to students for an extracurricular activity or to the leaders of student organisations. However, we are also aware that **the underlying activities of student organisations are generally not funded**, especially those who are not part of the national students' union.

3F. Public Recognition of Volunteering Work

Key findings:

Non-profit and volunteering work, from NGO's to student organisations to skills-based volunteering via companies, is generally not practised, appreciated or publicly celebrated enough in Hungary and Central and Eastern Europe.

Background:

- There are many passionate young people who pour a lot of time and energy into supporting NGO's, student organisations and young people in their community. Most do so free of charge. However, their involvement in those organisations and their **accumulated learning and development is not always recognised or supported** by the private sector or, at times, even the university itself.
- We recognise and appreciate those Hungarian universities that award scholarships to students for an extracurricular activity or to the leaders of student organisations. However, we are also aware that not all student organisations are treated fairly and equally in this regard. We also recognise that **more could be done to recognise young people's dedication and service to others.**
- More generally, though, there is a strong misconception in Hungary and Central Eastern Europe about what volunteering is (it is not only about walking dogs and painting walls, for example). **Skills-based volunteering is not the norm in Hungary**, and it is not thought of as a valuable means to give back to a community.

4. Conclusion & Acknowledgements

From the global skills crisis to the global climate crisis, **the most significant challenges facing humanity today are systematic in nature.** Our world is complex and interconnected, which renders it impossible to create systems change alone. However, this begs the question: what are the *specific things* in our traditional (education) systems that no longer serve young people well today and which demand change?

As a starting point, we should all be interested in co-creating systems change to ensure that young people can:

_ Receive a **quality education** from learning environments that are indeed **fit-for-purpose for the 21st century,**

_ Be able to design one's life and **shape one's future,** and

_ Have the **ability to pursue a successful and meaningful life.**

The GiLE Foundation's consultation process, primary research and Changemakers Youth Forum was successful and informative in many ways. As a result, we are in a favourable position to collectively respond to youth-related challenges in Hungary with targeted solutions.

At the same time, it is still important to emphasise that **we require meaningful support from stakeholders, including the business community,** to support our initiatives that seek to address youth-related challenges that have been identified.

If we want to shape a better future for all of us, then all stakeholders, including young people, need to come together on a common platform, to design it together.

Let's collaborate and co-create systems change, together!

The GiLE Foundation acknowledges and expresses its **gratitude to all the co-creators and strategic youth partners of the CYF 2021**, and by extension to every organising member and contributor. Thank you for all your offerings. Your time, patience and enthusiasm are highly appreciated. We are also thankful that you shared your views, opinions, and experiences on youth-related challenges.



We would also like to thank those who completed our market research **survey**, those who provided inputs during our **consultation process**, and everyone who attended or otherwise supported the **Changemakers Youth Forum**.



A hand is shown placing a pink sticky note on a white board. The board is already covered with several other sticky notes in various colors including pink, orange, yellow, and purple. The background is slightly blurred, showing a person's arm and hand in the foreground.

The **GiLE Foundation** is always searching for corporate social responsibility partners, sponsors, grant providers, collaborators, and personal development trainers.

If you or your organisation can support our **Changemakers Youth Forum**, in any shape or form, then we encourage you to get in touch with us at:

communications@cyf.hu

