

Common Causes – Common Responsibilities National Media and Infocommunications Authority
H-1015 Budapest, Ostrom u. 23-25.
Contact: Rita Richter-Sásdi, Tel:+361 4577-964

CSR Hungary Award: Submission by the National Media and Infocommunications Authority

The Hungarian National Media and Infocommunications Authority (NMHH) is, as convergent authority, in charge of telecommunications and media in Hungary. The objective in both sectors is identical: to facilitate advancement and market competition, effectively safeguard consumer interests, as well as, accordingly, create opportunities for equal access to infocommunications goods for all Hungarian citizens.

At the same time, the Authority also assigns high priority to shaping conscious consumer behaviour. Minors are a prioritised consumer group since due to their age they are less able to stand up for their rights. A recent study reveals how the word media nowadays primarily triggers associations of the Internet. A crucial societal challenge of our time is to educate children to recognise and avert online threats and at the same time encourage them to explore online for the myriad worthwhile opportunities worth exploring it proffers. It is a common cause and a common societal responsibility to advocate for, to promote a mentality in children both critical of and curious towards online opportunities. Its programme, remit, and professional network render the Authority the agency one of the most suited to promote it. The NMHH has launched and runs numerous initiatives, institutions, and programmes to promote media awareness for children and to inform parents and educators alike. These are potential solutions to this formidable challenge. Cases in point are the founding and running of the Magic Valley Media Literacy Education Centre, sponsoring production of top-notch cartoons aimed specifically at children, or, say, designing an educational package comprising reference books, workbooks, and films in the service of promoting media literacy and made available free of charge to secondary schools in Hungary.

Engendering and fostering responsible thinking in individuals imbues NMHH day-to-day activities. And not confined solely to professional Authority efforts whereby it communicates the importance of responsible consumption of telecommunications and media devices vis-à-vis members of society. In line with the Authority's operation it is a key principle that among its staff, too, it fosters environmentally aware thinking and embracing of sustainability. The NMHH makes the utmost effort to reduce its ecological footprint and to provide to its staff beneficial information regarding an environmentally conscious living. Under our Green Office programme our co-workers engage in selective refuse collection; by installing aerators we have achieved a 40 per cent reduction in our office buildings' water consumption; we have also curtailed our emissions, with our motor vehicle fleet in compliance with EURO5 and EURO4 CO2 emission standards; and we have acquired electric bicycles for intra-city transport. The Green Office section of our intranet we provide our staff with helpful information, encouraging them to adopt a mentality mindful of environmental sustainability.

In Autumn 2014, the Authority leadership rolled out a CSR initiative in collaboration with the SOS Children's Village Hungary Foundation. It did so with a view **to sharing professional knowledge** accumulated over time in the course of day-to-day work, as well as the latest information, with a special target group, **disadvantaged children**. The goal of this initiative: to promote media-awareness among these children and to educate them in media literacy and infocommunications.

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The SOS Children's Village Hungary Foundation is a non-partisan, non-denominational non-profit organisation. The Foundation's objective is to raise children who have lost their home, to support and advocate for at-risk children and their families.

Over a **long-term, three-year collaboration** the Authority's goal is to help children aged 6-18 and young adults aged 18-22 discover, via playful activities, the valuable potential of the media, especially of the Internet, at the same time as educating them about their potential risks. Having lost their birth families, these children, growing up in children's villages, have lower-than-average self-esteem and consequently are at greater risk in the digital space.

The Authority's Communications Directorate is in charge of drafting and implementing the NMHH CSR Programme. Its remit: to oversee professional preparation, to produce requisite tools; to coordinate professional matters and logistics with Foundation officials; to organise on-site programme activities; external and internal communications. The programme enjoys dedicated backing of the Authority's executive leadership.

In preparations for this project, we invited professionals involved in the Authority's child protection efforts as part of their day-to-day work responsibilities and, consequently, wielding the requisite experience and expertise. A fifty-strong Authority volunteer contingent carried out this task. Prior to on-site visits in the countryside, these volunteers meet with Foundation professionals who inform them of their work, local conditions, workshop schedules, their own responsibilities. Volunteers do not require professional training in child protection for these assignments. The wish to help, the intent to be there for and to love children is what counts.

To accomplish programme objectives, that is, to transfer required knowledge in a playful manner calls for novel mentality and methods. Our innovative concept has children forming groups and, accompanied by a volunteer, take part in an **obstacle race at different stations of which playful challenges await them educate them in media and infocommunications literacy**. At each station along the obstacle course they can watch a film suited to their age group, fill in pools, take part in an exciting detective game that raises awareness to the need to protect smartphone data, an online behaviour-modelling situational game, a "fox hunt," in which children can play the role of bully and victim, and to try games that educate them in rules governing communications. After a big shared lunch the programme continues with an exciting quiz, where the teams now compete together. Individual contestants answer questions on media consumption. It is rewarding to come out with the right answer because glory aside three presents of ascending value are also handed out to the winners.

Communication during the programme occurred in diverse directions and ways. There is direct communications with the target group in the course of preparing and implementing the programme. To our volunteers we communicated requisite information via personalised email and face-to-face meetings. NMHH staff received reports cum photographs of these visits via our Authority intranet. And we have informed the public of the same via the nmhh.hu Web site or press releases and media appearances.

The programme's greatest – in a given case including monetary – value is intellectual property. The **educational material** compiled by Authority professional staff, as well as their time, that we

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provide to children embodied in games and quiz questions. The NMHH supports volunteer programme participation by **releasing applicants to volunteer visits during office hours**. They in turn give of their own free time, since they almost always return to Budapest from provincial visits very late at night. To date, 160 children in two Children's Villages (Kecskemét, Kőszeg) have participated in our programme. As well, we have visited two youth homes (Szeged, Sé), where we conversed with some 30 young adults about their media consumption habits.

Engaging in these activities we trust we can support a future generation in creating and enjoying a better quality of life via responsible decisions towards themselves and their environment. In a manner that will likewise be gratifying to the NMHH community.