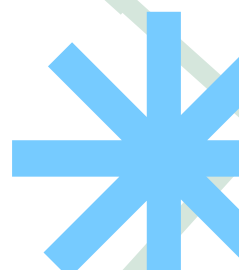


Children and Youth Participation in Józsefváros

Summary of the JóKer project



Funded by
the European Union





Dear Reader!

I am proud to present to you the last two years of the Józsefváros Children and Youth Participation Programme. Although the first phase of the programme - and the EU grant that made it possible - has now come to an end, we will continue with its essential elements, because we need the ideas and input of the children and young people who live here to help us in our work.

We believe that Józsefváros should represent, in every decision it makes and in its behaviour, a sense of belonging, acceptance, respect and support for each other. And also that those who were listened to and respected in their childhood and youth will listen to others when they grow up. In today's difficult world, we need to encourage them to get involved in public affairs and build communities themselves.

The good news is that we don't have to guess what would be good for the young people and children of Józsefváros - they'll tell us themselves if they see that we're curious about them. We all need to keep learning - and those who make decisions in Hungary today need it more than ever. We want to build a Józsefváros where those who make the decisions are constantly learning. This is why, for example, we need this programme, which fits in well with the Child Friendly Józsefváros concept adopted earlier by the municipality and the participatory processes that have been going on for years. There are similar programmes in many places, but Józsefváros is the first place where children and young people's perspectives are integrated into the daily operations of so many institutions to such a depth.


Children and young people in Józsefváros are still welcome to take part in similar events in the future. If you as a professional have a good idea, a suggestion or just want to work with an innovative community of professionals, we welcome you to our professional meetings! If you are a parent and would like to join, make a suggestion or give us your opinion, please contact us using the contact details at the end of this publication.

Kind regards,



András Pikó
Mayor





Summary of the project:

what we did, why, partners

How can we make the parks and playgrounds of Józsefváros better and more exciting?

How are the schools and entertainment facilities here?

What can we do to get advice and ideas from the children and young people who live here, and how can we give them a bigger say in decisions?

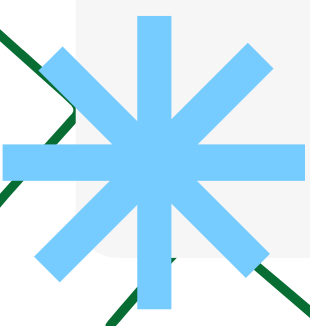
These are some of the questions we asked the Józsefváros Municipality.

In May 2023, we launched a two-year European Union-funded Children and Youth Participation Programme called JóKer - the name and logo were inspired by the children who attended the first meetings. It is a great recognition that the European Union selected 10 applications, including ours, out of a total of 156, which were considered worthy of support.

We are working with partners such as Eurochild, the largest European children's rights and child welfare organisation with around 200 member organisations, one of the oldest Hungarian child protection organisations: the Family, Child, Youth Association, Partners Hungary Foundation and Wesley János College of Pastoral Studies.

Why are we doing it?

Because we believe that the children and young people who live here can help us make Józsefváros a better place. To do this, sometimes you just need to listen to and take seriously the children and young people who live here, visit a school or kindergarten here, or use the parks and public spaces in Józsefváros. This is what we do in the children's rights workshops, in the children and youth council and in the children and youth participatory budgeting programmes. And that's why we train our staff on this issue on an ongoing basis.



Participatory budgeting: short introduction




City Builders! - The Children and Youth Participatory Budgeting

The children and youth Participatory Budgeting is actually the little sibling of the Participatory Budgeting in Józsefváros. The essential elements and the aims are the same as those – to give young people and children the opportunity to express what would make the public spaces and parks of the district better and more liveable for them, what would make an institution comfortable and safe, or what programmes would serve their recreation, entertainment and relaxation. And these needs should be integrated into everyday decision-making.

City Builders! programme, we organised a rich brainstorming forum in four institutions in Józsefváros - two kindergartens and two community centres - followed by screening groups of children and young people and finally a vote. So at every stage, from the development and finalisation of ideas to the voting on the best proposals, young people and children took the lead. And the implementation is the responsibility of the municipality.

City Builders! in the Kindergartens of Józsefváros

In the first, pilot year, the smallest City Builders of Józsefváros started their work in two groups of two kindergartens. In "Katica Kindergarten" the Lady bug (in hungarian: Katica) queen disappeared and a fairy came running to the children for help, In "Csodasziget (Miracle island)" kindergarten the fairy's telescope went wrong. In the following weeks, the children showed the kindergartens to the fairies and together thought about how to make the classrooms, the garden and the courtyard an even better place - the municipality will implement the suggestions that get the most votes with HUF 1 million per group.



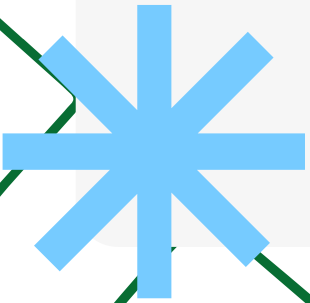
During the sessions, organised by the kindergarten teachers and the Office of Community Participation, the small Builders came up with better and better ideas: animal activities, better football goal and lots of balls, more swings, a bouncy castle, nicer lockers, more colourful toilets, dolls and legos, fairy-tale stickers on the stairs - suggested the Katica kindergarten. At Csodasziget, in addition to magnetic Minecraft cubes and more Legos, their own build-your-own bunker, a police activity, a visit to the zoo, observatory and botanical gardens, and their own aquarium, the children also had ideas for the yard: a flower garden and small water games, a slide and climbing frame were the winning ideas. A sand and water table (with princesses and a table that could be converted into a model) and a children's train (in pink, purple or blue) also received many votes.

City Builders! Kesztyűgyár

Children and young people who regularly come to the community centre were able to vote for 12 million forints. We organised a series of brainstorming workshops, the proposals were evaluated by a jury of children and young people and used to produce a ballot paper with 18 ideas. Based on the votes,

- will regularly organise dog and pet activities, go-karting, adventure parks, concerts and circuses;
- will provide comfortable sofas, refreshed bean bags, projectors, screens and PS or Xbox for relaxing chats and discussions;
- and decorations, accessories, lights and a disco ball for a real disco atmosphere;
- more colour in the courtyard and on all the wall surfaces where you can paint;
- the toilets will be renewed;
- a concert and a meeting with a well-known rapper will be organised;
- the basketball court in Sand Street will be renewed, nets will be put on the goal and next to the football pitch, benches and a hammock will be placed next to the pitch.

And: we'll also organise a real dance and singing competition with mentors.





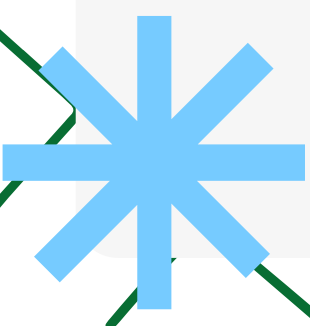
City Builders! FiDo

In FiDo and its surroundings, the brainstorming started with a special photography session: together with a renowned photographer, Gabriella Csoz , young people discovered the most hidden corners of the city, showing where they feel comfortable and where something is missing.

(And they also learned how to take good photos of themselves and others.) These were followed by a rich brainstorming workshop, with some additional activity: a ping-pong training session; a rap workshop, making your own zine; a botany club, an embroidery circle, drama and craft activities and - not to be missed - live radio broadcasts from FiDo's youth-run Rapradio.

A total of 84 young people voted in the poll, of which 74 were valid.

The participating children and young people would like to see the following ideas implemented:

- Weekend programme package
 - Sports programme package
 - Improve FiDo's studio
 - Make FiDo more homely
 - Install lockable charging cabinets, e.g. for mobile phones
 - Birthday package; celebrate the birthdays of FiDo visitors
 - Fatima (former singer of the band Fekete Vonat) to give singing lessons at FiDo.
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Children's and Youth forum

The Children's and Youth Forum will provide a forum for continuous consultation on the plans for Józsefváros.

In the school year 2024/2025, we organised two Children's Forums, in which children and young people from Józsefváros were able to participate through partner institutions. These included kindergartens (Katica member kindergarten, Csodasziget member kindergarten), primary schools (Deák Diák Singing and Music Primary School and Secondary School, Józsefváros Unified Methodological Institute and Primary School (JEGYMI), Losonci Square Elementary School), community centres (Kesztyűgyár Community Centre, FiDo) and NGOs cooperating with the programme, such as Terre des Hommes, the Menedék Association or SOS Children's Villages.

At the Children's Forum, children under 12 years old used games (such as a giant map of the district) to express their opinions about the streets and public spaces: the good things and the things that could be improved. Their problems and suggestions were put on the agenda of the Youth Forum.

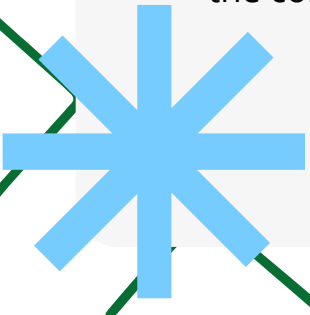
Teachers and facilitators who participated in the Youth Forums organised coaching sessions on the functioning of the municipality and later gave the children continuous feedback on how their ideas were incorporated into the decisions taken in the district.

Youth forum

The Youth Forum met 6 times in the academic year 2024/2025 until mid-April. In addition, we plan to meet 2 more times, for a total of 8 meetings by the end of the academic year. In mid-May, the Forum of 10 young people will meet with district decision-makers. This will be the 8th meeting.

As with the Children's Forum, the Youth Forum participants will be supported by adults. The role of the supporting adults is of particular importance, as they help the young people prepare for each session, provide feedback on how the members experienced each session - this has helped to fine-tune the programme.

Key issues raised by the Forum:

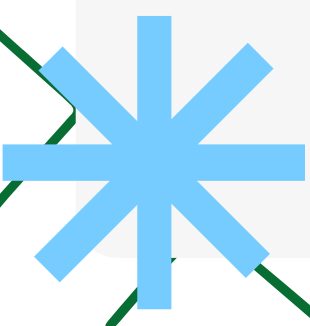
- greener environment
 - feeling safe on the streets
 - the connection of children and teachers
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We Need a Team!

We created the We Need a Team! programme to support programme ideas from children and young people in the district. The idea was that a group of friends from schools or other groups of friends could come up with a joint programme and carry it out together - these were supported by the municipality with a maximum of 199,999 HUF.

The first round of funding of HUF 2 million will be used for a home-made pizza and a mini Italian restaurant in the Vörösmarty High School where anyone can learn to bake a pizza, a zoo competition and adoption, a family day in a kindergarten and a forest exploration tour in another, a joint school trip and picnic, a football tournament, a visit to the Museum of Illusions, a group visit to an airport in a school group. The programme will continue.





Training for professionals and parents

Being child-friendly also means that children can expect respect, attention and the best professional knowledge from all adults they come into contact with in schools, community spaces and elsewhere. Together with two of our recognised partners, CSAGYI and Partners Hungary Foundation, we have launched a training programme for teachers and other professionals based on the latest methodologies. In addition to short theoretical blocks, the training offered the opportunity to try out the methods in a variety of working formats, in pairs, small and large groups. The Connective Parenting programme is also open to parents in the district, for whom a special parent group is being set up.

Workshops:

Conflict resolution with children (30 hours)

The aim of the training is to enable teachers to turn disputes and conflicts between children aged 3-10 into learning opportunities, where understanding different points of view, developing empathy and strengthening community are the goals.

In total, 23 teachers, school psychologists, special needs teachers and development teachers participated in the training.


Restorative exercises (30 hours)

Restorative practices are now widely known in modern pedagogy. Participants will be given tools to prevent and deal with aggression and abuse between children, to strengthen cooperation between teachers and parents, and to strengthen their own teaching and learning communities.

A total of 38 professionals working with children (teachers, heads of institutions, social workers, special needs teachers, school psychologists) took part in the training. Within days of the end of the training, they reported that they were able to lead discussion groups more effectively and to find common solutions.

Family Decision-Maker Group Conference (30 hours)

The aim of the training is to introduce professionals working with children to a conflict resolution and decision-making method in which the family and its immediate environment play a key role.



Connected Upbringing (6×2 hours)

The training focuses on concrete tools to support parents in finding their way in difficult parenting situations. A special group for professionals and parents has been set up, including: what to do with children's anger? What specific tools should we use? How can we help children to develop a healthy self-confidence and overcome their fears? What to do with our own tensions and patterns? A total of 57 parents and professionals have participated in Connected Upbringing programmes and report that they find it much easier to be understanding of their children's difficult feelings and even upset behaviours.

Micro projects with a child participatory approach

In addition to the training, 5 groups in 4 kindergartens have started to implement micro-projects with a child participatory approach. Monthly professional meetings were organised for the teachers who run them.

Children and Youth Participatory Round Tables

During the programme, we organised a total of 6 roundtables on children and youth participation for professionals working with children in Józsefváros. Each time we provided thematic discussions and exchanged experiences. The events were well attended, with a total of 60 professionals participating.

Launch of two pilot seminars

Within the framework of the project, two new courses were introduced at the Wesley János College of Pastoral Studies in the field of social work, which were taken by a total of 37 students in the academic year 2024/2025, thus contributing to the professional preparation of future professionals.

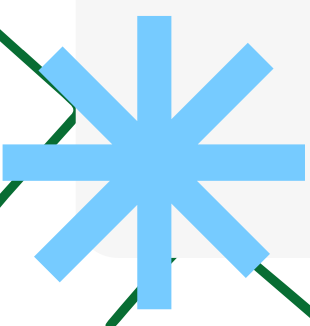
Handbook on children's participation

During the training sessions of the programme series, the need arose for a handbook that not only provides theoretical knowledge on children's rights, with a special focus on participation, but also practical methodological support for the active involvement of children. Thus, the "Handbook on children's participation" was born - linked to the curriculum developed as part of the programme, accredited training. A follow-up project is also being launched with the aim of disseminating the handbook to all professionals and trainees working with children. We will continue to work with universities, colleges and other institutions, through training courses, further training and online webinars, to ensure that children are involved in decisions affecting their own lives.



Other programmes, events, children's rights activities

JóKer has organised a rich programme of activities over the past two years:

- From the numerous brainstorming sessions on the children's participatory budgeting, to the children's and youth forum events.
 - We have played a lot with a giant map designed for these events, which has also been an opportunity to discuss where and what they need to feel more at home. We took the programme to three different schools and to the Danko Courtyard.
 - We held children's rights sessions in the programme's partner schools;
 - In one of the largest public parks in the district, II. János Pál Pápa tér, we met weekly, as long as the weather allowed, to play sports, play board games and talk to the children of Józsefváros. In time, the programme was extended to Mátyás tér.
 - We produced a brochure for children about the work of the municipality, describing, for example, what a mayor does, or who to contact if something breaks on the playground. We have also launched a special sub-page on the municipality's website for children and young people.
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THE JÓKER IN NUMBERS

TRAINING

163 parents and professionals

CHILDREN AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION ROUNDTABLE

60+ professionals

CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION BUDGETING

934 children and young people, for a total of

28 MILLION HUF decided

CHILDREN'S FORUM

2 sessions

160+ children

YOUTH FORUM

10 young people

WE NEED A TEAM!

28 ideas

11 of which were winners

700 children/youth



Plans to continue

After the end of the project, we will continue with project elements that aim to train professionals and ensure children's right to have a say on issues that affect them.

For the 2025/2026 school year, we will maintain the children's and youth forum meetings, continue the "We need a team!" programme and the children's participatory budgeting. Regular children's rights sessions will continue in the institutions open to them in the district.

Contact details, more information:

Website:

<https://jozsefvaros.hu/fiataloknak/>

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Email:

joker@jozsefvaros.hu

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/jokerjozsefvaros

JóKer contact persons in the following institutions:

- FiDo
- Kesztyűgyár
- Dankó udvar
- Deák Diák Ének-zenei Általános Iskola és Gimnázium
- Józsefvárosi Egységes Módszertani Intézet és Általános Iskola (JEGYMI)
- Losonci Téri Általános Iskola
- Terre des Hommes
- SOS Gyermekfalvak
- Menedék Egyesület
- Hintalovon Alapítvány