



Telex internship program for young reporters in Hungary - report for Helsingin Sanomat Foundation

Final report

1. Executive summary

According to the World Press Freedom Index, a comparative international indicator developed by Reporters Without Borders, which evaluates the freedom of the press on an annual basis, Hungary - after 15 years of continuous decline - is now ranked 92nd, compared to 2006, when it was ranked 10th.

Free press in Hungary is in a bad shape, the number of independent outlets keeping a check on power has been in a sharp decline for the past ten years as more and more newspapers, radios, and televisions have owners who are well-connected to parties and politicians.

Telex is not like that. Telex is an independent, Hungarian online news daily serving general interest and respecting such principles as relevance, fairness, credibility, and accuracy. Telex is Hungary's largest, community-funded news source, was launched on 2 October 2020, operates 24-7 with a 70-strong newsroom, publishing around 80 articles per day, reaching around 5-600.000 readers per day. In our paid internship program we were looking for trainees who are keen to learn from us and carry our values forward.

More than 500 people responded to our call for applications and we hired ten talented young trainees for Telex's paid internships at the end of a three-round selection process. There are seven journalists, one illustrator - social media editor and two photographers among them.

And because Telex believes it's important to deliver stories from all over the country to its readers, 2 of the 10 interns are living outside of Budapest.

The programme started in December, 2021 and run until September, 2022 - each trainee was mentored by an experienced, senior Telex journalist who helped them develop in a close-knit team. In addition to the personal, supportive mentoring, our trainees were also participating in weekly group courses delivered by Telex editors and journalists.



Photo: The interns with program leader, Veronika Munk and Flóra Dóra Csatári and Csongor Körömi junior mentors.

The trainee programme was run by Telex’s non-profit organisation, Ne Hallgassunk Nonprofit Ltd., owned by Veronika Munk founding Editor-in-Chief, current Head of Content Development, Szabolcs Dull Editor-in-Chief, and Márton Kárpáti, Telex’s CEO.

After the closing, 9 out of the 10 journalists are still working for Telex as an employee or a freelancer.

2. Project timeline, 2021-2022

September 30th, 2021	Announcement the recruiting of the internship program
October, 21st, 2021	Deadline of the first round

October 22nd-28th, 2021	Evaluation process of the first round of applications
29th October, 2021	Contacting applicants from the first round
7th November, 2021	Deadline of the second round
8th-12th, November, 2021	Evaluation process of the second round of applications
13th November, 2021	Contacting applicants from the second round
16th-19th, November, 2021	Third round, personal interviews
1st December, 2021	Program start
1st December - 1st April	Weekly group training + personal mentoring + newsroom, field work
April - August, 2022	Newsroom, field work, reporting + personal mentoring
30th September, 2022	Program end

3. Recruitment process

First, [an article was published on Telex.hu](#) with the following announcement:

“We are looking for young colleagues who believe in fair, critical, curious journalism who will be enthusiastic and committed trainees at Telex.

The program kicks off this year and lasts for nine months - each trainee will be mentored by an experienced Telex journalist who will help you develop closely. In addition to personal, supportive mentoring, our interns will participate in weekly journalism courses, and receive scholarships except for the first three months of the program.

We are looking for young people who (really) envision their future as journalists or photo journalists, who can imagine themselves working at Telex after the program, who are accurate, reliable, have good writing skills, communicate well, are flexible, who are able to read / translate in at least one but more than one language in addition to Hungarian.

We are looking for trainees for these positions:

- journalist,
- photographer - photo editor,
- social media content editor.

We are looking for several young people for the position of trainee journalist who are attracted by one of the following topics:

- Hungarian politics, public interest issues
- foreign stories / foreign policy,
- economy,
- lifestyle / culture / literature / music,
- rural correspondent in large cities outside of Budapest.

Telex considers it important to be able to deliver stories to its readers from across the country. As we cannot cover all areas with our Budapest editorial office, we are looking for cooperation with rural journalists and we would like to gradually build a national network of correspondents (we already have correspondents in Győr and Szeged).

Thus, although our internship takes place in the capital, we are also looking for trainees who would like to correspond with Telex in Pécs, Debrecen, Nyíregyháza or Miskolc.

The most ideal thing for us is if the person lives in or around these cities, knows the local conditions well and undertakes to do the internship program with us in Budapest for 9 months, during which time we will also provide him / her with housing, then move back to his / her own city and he continues to work for us as a correspondent.”

Advertisement of the announcement

- Telex.hu
- Telex Facebook
- Telex Instagram
- Telex Tiktok
- Telex LinkedIn
- Telex weekly newsletter
- Direct recruiting email to all media and communication, economy, politology, photography, graphics faculties at every Hungarian universities

- Posts to relevant Facebook groups
- Facebook advertisement

4. Selection process

Trainees were selected using a three-round selection method. For each of the three different trainee positions (journalist, photographer, social media editor/graphic designer), they had to complete different tasks corresponding to the area of application.

In the first round, the tasks included news writing, interview outlines, portrait photography, presenting a photographer's portfolio, social media campaign designing, summarising current and newsworthy topics in their neighbourhood.

In the second round, applicants were also given journalistic professional tasks, but much more complex and time-consuming assignments than in the first round.

Examples:

- The journalistic candidates had to write a lengthy article about an assigned topic and also had to conduct interviews.
- Photography candidates had to take a series of photographs in the Halloween theme (which was during the application period).
- The social media, graphic design candidate had to produce an Instagram story from existing Telex reports and create redistribution marketing plans for Telex articles for social media.

In the third round, applicants were interviewed in an unstructured face-to-face interview. The 20-30 minute interview focused on their motivation, future plans and previous work experience.

During the selection process, all candidates were scored and assessed jointly by the programme leader and mentors. The candidates who progressed to each round were decided jointly by the program leader and the mentors. The face-to-face interview was attended by the mentors, the project leader and a junior mentor, who all scored the candidates.

5. Newsroom work, field work, reporting: progress in program objectives

Our short term goals and objectives were:

- Training free journalists for a free press: We want to train critical journalists in a market where there are no journalism courses besides highly theoretical university classes and no courses at all on photojournalism or image editing, even though there is a clear demand for these.
- Developing independent local press outside of Budapest: Countryside journalism is in an especially tough situation. There are only a handful of independent outlets left. However, our training program can help us create a network of local correspondents (in larger cities outside of Budapest).
- Organizational developments: young colleagues are taking an ever-growing share of the site's organizational workload.

In the first quarter of the programme, we achieved our short term targets to the maximum.

By the end of the final program period, our ten selected interns were fully integrated in the editorial work, for example working on the Hungarian election campaign coverage and also on the ongoing news coverage of the Russian-Ukrainian war. But we also had an intern who wrote a lengthy longform article on teachers leaving the economically troubled Hungarian state education system.

All ten trainees are useful and important contributors to the editorial team, helping us to provide our readers with much more fact-based, quality content. So they could already widely contribute to independent journalism and a diverse media landscape in Hungary.

- Number of articles, videos, photo reports where interns contributed in the program until 15th September, 2022: 2242 pieces
- Contact hours of workshops: 24x90 mins

6. Workshops

	Title
	Introduction: the structure of the newsroom, Telex story. The introduction of the sales and developer team
	Hungarian media situation: reliable

	newspapers, source management, fact-checking
	news writing part 1: the newsroom and its operation - the basics
	news writing part 1: the newsroom and its operation - the basics
	news writing part 2
	news writing part 3
	news writing part 4: title, lead, caption
	fakenews, factchecking techniques: apps, sites, practical ideas
	journalistic fieldwork 1
	journalistic fieldwork 2
	photo editing - the basics
	taking photo with your mobile in field - the basics
	database research
	spelling: the most common mistakes
	media law 1: interviewer's rights, journalist's rights
	media law 2: interviewer's rights, journalist's rights
	data visuals: Infogram, datawraper
	video studies 1: iMovie, cuts on the mobile, small videos in field
	video studies 2: iMovie, cuts on the mobile, small videos in field
	data-driven

	newspaper publishing
	Advanced photo editing 1.
	Advanced photo editing 2.
	Interview basics 1.
	Interview basics 2.

7. Financial report

Budget: 28000 EUR

- **110 EUR / month / mentor**
- **290 EUR / month for the interns with a 24-hour workload / week**
- **400 EUR / month for the interns with a 32-hour workload / week**
- **500 EUR / month for accommodation costs of interns living outside Budapest**