



Reading Stories Belongs to Everyone: UniCredit Bank Launches a Joint Initiative to Overcome Reading Difficulties

PRESS RELEASE

Budapest, September 8, 2025 – **With the support of UniCredit Bank, the University of Pécs will create individual reading profiles for 100 primary school children in order to identify reading difficulties at an early stage. As part of the program launching on the International Literacy Day, fifth-grade students from Baranya County will also receive personalized development plans. The large-scale initiative is accompanied by the Bank's children's book donation campaign. The program ambassadors are writers György Dragomán and Krisztián Nyáry, as well as educator Renáta Hadházi.**

"Reading was even harder. I could see the letters individually, but somehow they would never come together into words. It was very difficult, a real grizzly hunt. For a long time, I thought reading was just as difficult for everyone else as it was for me, and I struggled with all the strength I had," writes György Dragomán about his school years. As one of the ambassadors of UniCredit Bank's campaign, he knows firsthand what it is like when reading is not an enjoyable experience but a struggle.

Reading difficulty is a much deeper issue than school grades or the amount of practice a child gets. The underlying causes are often measurable neurological factors related to brain function, such as impaired eye-movement coordination, difficulties in attentional processing, or challenges in developing the phonological system required for decoding words. Moreover, these challenges are frequently accompanied by anxiety resulting from repeated school failures or by poorly established reading techniques.

If not recognized in time, the gap caused by the problem only widens: affected children have to invest increasing amounts of energy into decoding texts, leaving less and less capacity for understanding them. At the same time, self-confidence decreases, motivation fades, and the risk of school dropout increases. In adulthood, these disadvantages often reappear not only in learning but also in employment opportunities, social participation, and financial well-being.

No Two Children Read the Same Way

At the University of Pécs, the Reading Fluency and Reading Comprehension Research Group led by János Steklács has been working for years to better understand the causes of reading difficulties and to ensure that these challenges can be identified in affected children as early as possible.

In the program launching on September 8, which covers the entire process from assessment to individual development, UniCredit Bank's support will enable the identification of reading difficulties among fifth-grade students. The assessment process includes a cognitive load test, a comprehensive reading test, and an eye-tracking examination. During the eye-movement assessment, children read in front of a calibrated camera, which records with millisecond precision how long they focus on individual words. This makes it possible to determine exactly what hinders the reading process. Such examinations are expensive and difficult to access. **Through the campaign, 100 primary school children from the Ormánság region will receive personalized development plans.**

UniCredit Bank Launches a Children's Book Collection Campaign

"Reading difficulties never remain confined to Hungarian language classes. A child who struggles with reading will eventually find it difficult to understand word problems in mathematics or process textbook material in history. Not because they are not interested in the Reform Era or fractions, but because every subject begins with the same closed door: text" says literary historian and writer Krisztián Nyáry.

Alongside the campaign, UniCredit Bank is also launching a book donation initiative. From September 8 and throughout the following month, children's books can be donated at the Bank's 52 branches and headquarters locations. The collected books will be delivered to several settlements in Baranya County by the mobile library service of the Győző Csorba Library of Pécs.

"We believe that equal opportunities are not important only in finance," says Csilla Dudás, CSR Programs Expert at UniCredit Bank. "Those who cannot navigate the written world will find financial independence to be little more than an empty promise. That is why we decided to support a program that does not merely address symptoms but seeks the underlying causes, while offering personalized assistance to 100 children living in disadvantaged regions."

The Hungarian campaign supports "Re-Power Your Future," the joint educational program of the UniCredit Foundation and Junior Achievement Europe. The initiative aims to unlock the potential of future generations while actively promoting equal educational opportunities and reducing school dropout rates. By 2026, the program has already supported the development of more than 31,000 Hungarian students across over 350 schools in Hungary.