

New AmCham project:
„AmCham Foreign Language Learning Initiative”

Problem: Particularly from a labor market perspective, Hungarians still do not speak foreign languages in sufficient numbers or at high enough skill levels.

Importance: Hungary’s economy will be more competitive if more people speak foreign languages, particularly English but also German, French and other European and global languages. This affects its attractiveness as a location for a shared service center, production site or logistics hub, but also its importance to the country’s image at many levels of the economy, such as taxi drivers, restaurant staff, and others in any part of the tourism sector (museums, parks, etc), not to mention the diplomatic level (to be highlighted as Hungary has taken over the EU presidency in January).

From the individual’s perspective, the value and benefit of knowing a foreign language (meaning real competence, not a paper certificate) is almost incalculable, not only as regards future job and career prospects, but also other interests and endeavors, such as sports, arts, culture, travel, and any cross-border relationships. It simply opens up new vistas.

AmCham’s goal: To create synergies, to make the most impact from the resources available. This may include:

- Coordinating efforts of member companies and other stakeholders
- Sharing best practices
- Mobilizing resources in various parts of the educational and labor system
- Filling in any “gaps” in the system
- Motivating learners by raising awareness of the benefits (and possibly the threat of the alternative – if they don’t learn)

The message:

- “It’s worth learning languages, and...
- You *can* do it!”

Specific target group: students ages 16-21. This could be considered a critical stage, where young people can make a decision to take a language seriously and begin to cultivate a real capability and familiarity with it. Perhaps we could say they should treat the language as a partner, not an obstacle.