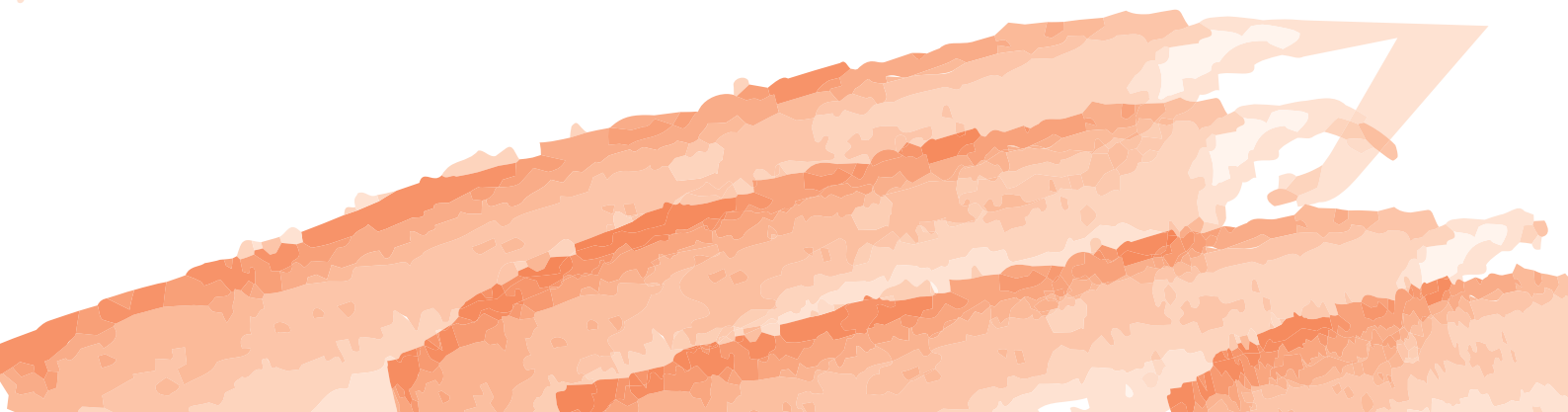


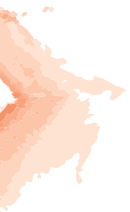
nadácia
ekopolis

Výročná správa

ANNUAL REPORT

2014









Annual report 2014

Good and fair relations are important to us.



Our world of people is created from small worlds – communities, our friends, and our personal micro-worlds. They are linked together, affecting each other, cooperating. There is no other way – no small isolated world can survive on its own. And these worlds either coexist in mutual respect or sometimes they refuse to listen to each other at all. The later mentioned cases seem to have grown in recent years. In Ekopolis we believe that is not good. Cooperation, openness and mutual respect are the unwritten rules and motives which we are concerned with when we support projects, as well as in our own activities. The size of the financial contribution or place where the project takes place does not matter. What matters is whether we contribute to good and fair relations. What matters is whether we help to overcome the indifference and prejudices often based only on the fact that someone looks different, speaks a different language or has a different sexual orientation.

In 2014, Ekopolis supported 159 projects whose traces can be found in all the regions of Slovakia. That year saw the culmination of the support for projects from the NGO Fund in EEA Financial Mechanism and Block Grants for NGOs and support partnerships of the Swiss-Slovak cooperation. Through working with our business partners we managed to support dozens of projects at local level. However, even more than the material results, we care about the relations between people – so that the little things come together to make a better world.

We sincerely appreciate it that through the pages of this Annual Report we can again share with you the information about our activities and our thanks for your trust and cooperation in the past year.

*Peter Medved,
Director Ekopolis Foundation, March 2015*



Our profile

The Ekopolis Foundation has been managing grant programs specializing in civic society democracy and environmental sustainability for 24 years. We support the activities of hundreds of NGOs all over Slovakia in accordance with their actual needs; flexibly and without any unnecessary bureaucracy.

In addition we have also realized our own projects at both national and international level. We are a member of the Environmental Partnership Association together with other foundations in Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania. We are also a member of the European Cyclists Federation, of the European Greenways Association which is oriented to the building, support and promotion of paths for non-motorised transport in Europe, our foundation is also a member of Civilscape – an international network of NGOs from all over Europe in support of the European Landscape Convention. We are a Fair – Trade Partner that supports the ideas of fair business.

Our vision

Our vision is an advanced civic society where the citizens are aware of their responsibility for social development and environmental issues. A society with citizens who are interested in participating in public policy, who have the courage to take a critical stand and who are concerned with ensuring that the development of society and its value will not be to the detriment of future generations.

2 988

Since 1991 we have supported 2,988 projects from NGOs, municipalities, civic associations and initiatives to the sum of 17.74 Mil. €

159

In 2014 we supported 159 projects with the sum of 3,481,818 €. However, we realise that the true value and contribution of these projects to people and our environment is priceless.



The Year 2014 in short



January

- In Levice, an e-Sunflower blossomed – an Intelligent robot is powered on the basis of renewable energy sources. The project was supported from the Living Energy Fund.
- Iceland and Slovakia in one boat – a discussion in Piešťany was organized about Iceland, inclusion and ethical values. The project was supported by Active Citizenship and Inclusion.

February

- 14 projects were supported in the program Nestlé for the water in the landscape.
- European Tree of the Year was a 1000 year old elm tree from Bulgaria. Among the finalists there was also the 2014 Slovak winner – an oak tree from the Zechenter garden in Kremnica.

March

- We increased the quality of the habitation thanks to a new program called Green living.
- 6 recreational spaces from Rest beyond the city grant programme were supported.

April

- We opened 12th year of Tree of the year poll.
- Thanks to the customers of METRO there are another 3 green out plantings in Slovakia.
- A conference about the self-sustainability of rural regions was organized by Sosna, C.A. from the Active Citizenship and Inclusion programme.

- In 2014 there will be another 24 green oases in Slovakia.

May

- Thanks to the Living Energy Fund a solar laboratory was created in the Observatory and Planetarium of Maximilian Hell in Žiar nad Hronom.

June

- Some specialists from abroad gave a lecture about forest ecosystems at the Technical University in Zvolen. The project of Prales, C.A. was supported by the Block grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.

July

- Hiking trails in the surroundings of four Slovak castles will be renewed thanks to the support of Horalky from the Sedita biscuit company in the Living Trails programme.
- Voting for Tree of the Year 2014 was started at the Pohoda festival.
- Via Iuris help to implement the Aarhus Agreement. The project obtained the support from the Block grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.

August

- The arboretum in Kráľová pri Senci was renewed thanks to the Green Belt Grant Programme.

- Thanks to the Bojnický Beautification Association and the support from Nestlé for the water in the landscape programme some fast disappearing wetlands in the centre of Bojnice were rescued.
- Community services with the eyes of Elsa and Ema is the title of a publication comparing social services in Slovakia and Norway. Its edition was supported from the NGO Fund of the EEA Financial Mechanism 2009-2014.

September

- Liberta Center in collaboration with Swiss partner tilia Stiftung für Langzeitpflege presented at the conference the Coordination Dynamic Therapy GIGER MD. The project was supported from the Block grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.
- NGOs from the whole of Europe supported the Hungarian organisation being harassed by the government.
- An eco-classroom near a neglected spring was set up in Poloniny thanks to support from Nestlé for the water in the countryside grant programme.

October

- Yes, it works! We organized an inspiring conference focused on good practices in how to employ and create the approach to the incomes of Roma and people in the poverty.
- The Tree of the Year 2014 is a mulberry tree in Senica.
- The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic organized an international conference titled White Carpathian's Fruit Treasure. The event was part of the project, which was supported from the Block grant for

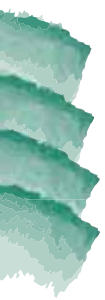
NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.

November

- As a part of the programme Nestlé for the water in the landscape we organized a workshop about Water and Climate Changes in Prievidza.
- We launched the 9th year of the Green Belt grant programme which supports projects oriented on community gardens.
- In the Severný Spiš region a route following mineral springs was created. The project was supported from the Block grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.
- The Slovak singer Peter Lipa gave a talk about the Holocaust in Banská Bystrica. This project from ZADOBE, C.A. was supported from the NGO Fund as a part of the Active Citizenship and Inclusion programme.
- The conference Human Rights in Modern Europe, prepared jointly by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic, Ekopolis Foundation and the Open Society Foundation, was held in Bratislava.

December

- Ekopolis finished the project Iron Curtain Trail.
- A living schoolbook of "story education" can only be found in Banská Štiavnica in Slovakia. It was supported by the Block grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme.



Our programmes and projects

GRANT PROGRAMMES

The Block grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme and Active Citizenship and Inclusion are currently our two largest key programmes. They ensure financial and administrative support for the continuing work and sustainability for tens of NGOs all over Slovakia. By means of these programmes we are able to support important topics and open up the principal questions of nature and countryside protection, as well as in social affairs, support for communities, mediate understanding among people, a dignified life and humanity with a vision of Slovakia as a country responsible for the environment and inhabitants.

Block grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme

A Block grant is made up from a financial contribution of the Swiss Confederation and co-financed from the state budget of the Slovak Republic. A Block Grant comprises two parts: the Block Grant for NGOs and the Block Grant for Partnership Support. The Block Grant for NGOs is strategically aimed to establish a functional grant scheme to support projects of Slovak social and environmental NGOs through so-called Small Projects. The Block Grant for Partnership Support is aimed at supporting partnership projects of Slovak and Swiss institutions through so-called Joint Projects.

2,652,472 € is allocated to finance Small Projects and 2,236,265 € the Joint Projects. The Block grant is provided by Ekopolis Foundation in partnership with the Carpathian Foundation and SOCIA – Social Reform Foundation.

Active Citizenship and Inclusion

The Active Citizenship and Inclusion Programme is a grant scheme for supporting the activities of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) active in enhancing participative democracy, decreasing social inequalities, poverty and exclusion, in supporting children and youth, protecting the environment and providing welfare and basic social services. It is a part of the implementation of the EEA Financial Mechanism, financed by Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland and is being undertaken from January 2013 – December 2015. The financial allocation for the support of NGOs is 2.9 million €, including an allocation of 100,000 € for Bilateral Cooperation Support. The program is being undertaken by Ekopolis Foundation in partnership with the Children of Slovakia Foundation and the SOCIA Foundation.

We appreciate the support of our corporate partners. Thanks to this support we can support the activities of hundreds of civic associations and initiatives, municipalities, and schools with a long-term horizon and without any useless bureaucracy. There are the projects at local level which contribute to a healthier environment, nicer public spaces and relaxation areas, and safer biking and hiking trails. Thanks to these programmes we can support good relationships among the people; people of all age categories are involved in local development.

Green Belt

The objective of the programme is to create, renew or revive ecologically valuable areas and trails in cooperation with NGOs, local communities and schools, kindergartens or free time centres. The programme supports sustainable care of ecologically valuable areas which are used by the public and it supports the concept of nature preservation and sustainability. In the 8th year of the programme, which was opened by Ekopolis Foundation and SLOVNAFT, S.C., support was obtained for 24 projects to the sum of 59,500 €. The priority aim this year was development of part of the Malý Dunaj River as an area for water tourism, cycling and environmental protection in this attractive area. Thanks to this there are actually 180 green oases in Slovakia this year.

Rest beyond the city

Rest beyond the city is the title of the programme opened by Ekopolis Foundation in cooperation with HEINEKEN Slovakia, S.C. Its objective is to support communities living together with the renovation and revival of recreational areas in the background of towns with more than 25,000 inhabitants. The financial support to the sum of 30,000 € was obtained by the 6 best projects. Each project also obtained consultation during planning and realisation of the reconstruction to the sum of 450 €.

Nestlé for the water in the landscape

In 2014, the 2nd year of the Nestlé for the landscape grant programme was launched. The objective of the programme is to increase the participation of local communities in the protection of water elements and sources and to support the management of water in both urban and rural landscapes. The support was obtained by 14 projects to the total amount of 29,000 €. Thanks to the support 4 wetlands and lakes, and 5 springs were renewed, 5 tanks for rainwater were installed, 43 faucets and 24 toilets were changed, 3 brooks cleaned and 10 information campaigns, competitions and educational activities were carried out.

Trees instead of leaflets

The wholesale network Metro Cash & Carry SR, s.r.o. supported the next three ecology projects in 2014 to the sum of 3,600 €. The grants are financed from the project "Trees instead of leaflets". Its objective is to contribute 1 euro for every registered customer who receives the relevant offer by e-mail instead of by printed leaflets.

Public Spaces - Green living

The goal of this Ekopolis Foundation project is to improve the quality of housing through improving the environment. Thematically, the programme is dedicated to practical on-site verification of experiences of good practice (Bratislava) and the subsequent education of other communities on how

to practically create better living conditions and housing, for example, how to improve energy and water management, or increase the attractiveness of public spaces, likewise by planting and taking care of greenery and the like.

In 2014, a model project was supported on in the Dlhé Diely part of Bratislava. The project partner is Prvá stavebná sporiteľňa a.s.

OWN PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

By means of our own activities we strive to highlight those topics which are the closest to us. We believe that the support of healthy biking, walking, and the development of non-motorised transport, nice and safe public spaces, the involvement of socially disadvantaged groups of people in the activities of their village and region are the topics which contribute to health and a good quality of living for all of us. Through these activities we strive to inspire, educate, and promote

Tree of the Year

In March 2014, Ekopolis Foundation announced the 12th Year of the Tree poll. The aim of the nationwide poll to decide which of either the most interesting, rare, beautiful, or otherwise appealing tree is to highlight the importance of trees in our lives and to arouse people's interest in their environment and its protection. 45 trees nominated in 2014. From those, the expert jury chose 12 finalists. The title Tree of the Year 2014 was awarded to a white mulberry from Senica. 11,455 votes were sent in supporting the 12 finalists. The partners of the 2014 poll were Slovenská sporiteľňa, Dajama Publishing House, Artforum bookshop, ISA Slovensko (International Society of Arboriculture) and A.B.I.E.S Gardening. Peter Lipa, the well-known Slovak singer, was patron of 12th year of the poll, making it his third time to be honoured.

FOUNDATION'S FUNDS

Living Energy Fund

The Living Energy Fund is a result of the cooperation of ZSE Energia, the Ekopolis Foundation, and clients of the company who support the development and use of renewable energy sources and express their responsible approach to economical use of electricity. The fund obtained the sources from green electricity sold and distributed by ZSE Energia. There were supported 23 projects.

Living Trails

The objectives of the programme are to support the sensitive renewal of marked hiking trails in Slovakia and enhancement of the recreational and educational functions of the Slovak countryside. Financial support has been directed towards restoration and improvement of hiking trails, educational paths and public spaces used by tourists. In 2014, support to the sum of 7,500 € was designated to the development of hiking trails in the surroundings of four Slovak castles – Spišský hrad, Beskovský hrad, Čachtický hrad and Červený Kláštor. The partner of the programme is SEDITA.

Iron Curtain Trail

A Programme of Sustainable Mobility on the latest EuroVelo route, Iron Curtain Trail, is focused on the development of



a long – distance cycling trail in Slovakia called the Iron Curtain Trail. For nearly a half century Europe was divided between East and West. The border ran from the Barents Sea to the Black Sea and was given the name the Iron Curtain. Today, the long – distance cycle EuroVelo 13 Iron Curtain Trail is more than 10,000 km long and invites all cyclists who have an interest in modern history. The project follows our activities on this trail over the past few years. It has several more or less visible objectives. The more visible objective is to find the way how to increase public transport along this trail to connect the trails in neighbouring countries. Several of the practical outputs are the marking of the whole Slovak part of the trail, the increasing number of certified facilities in the region named „Cyclists, welcome!“ and the creation of the national Internet portal of EuroVelo. The project was supported by the South-East Europe Programme of the European Union and was realized by the end of September 2014.

Greenways

The objective of the programme is the development of cycling as a concept of transport or tourism. The goal is to use bikes to serve citizens and residents for recreational purposes, sport, every day transport to work, school, for shopping, or for travelling around the country. Through the program we support the development of biking trails, but also the increase of awareness and conditions for its development.

Cyclists Welcome!

Tourist facilities and destinations can increase the attractiveness of their services for cyclists when they obtain

the certificate “Cyclists Welcome!“ Since May 2008, this certification has been provided in Slovakia by the Ekopolis Foundation. The objective of the certification is to increase the number of facilities which are cyclist friendly and support cycle tourism in Slovakia. By the end of 2014, the logo of a smiling bicycle is proudly owned and displayed by 91 tourist facilities in Slovakia.

Trixi mobil

The objective of the Trixi mobil project is to promote ecological, non-motorised transport, support the Greenways programme and to contribute to the increasing attractiveness of tourism in Slovakia. This modern ecological tricycle, on which a rider can comfortably take two passengers, was started in Berlin in 1997. Since 2007, the Ekopolis Foundation owns 5 trixi mobils and is the only provider in Slovakia.

You could see them at the 2014 Pohoda Music Festival in Trenčín, during the cycle festivals in Banská Bystrica and Zvolen, and seasonally (April – September) in Martin and Košice.

EPA – Future team

Ekopolis Foundation is, together with foundations in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Romania, a member of Environmental Partnership Association. Participants from each foundation took part in study trips in September 2014. On the basis of the meetings with representatives of the foundations and other important organisations in Germany and France new opportunities for future cooperation were identified.



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