

Annual report



2015



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Dear friends,

I very much honor the opportunity to introduce you our work and the results achieved in 2015 through this annual report. There are many of them. For all them I would like to mention a few examples that could illustrate what we mean, when we speak about support for active people and their innovative efforts. Not in many places in Slovakia the students and teachers will find such an inspirational background for diverse and creative education, like what is offered through Living textbook programme, created by Daphne in Banska Stiavnica, the town known not only because of its scenic beauty but also for really rich traditions in education. Newly built base of this project „Terra Permonia“ in the centre of Banska Staivnica is definitely worth of discovering its secrets. The campaign Leave the car at home of association OCI BB, peaked in May by a symbolic contest Bike to work. The campaign got on bikes virtually the whole country; teams of 55 towns and cities drove more than 370 000 km, in other words they made it nine times around the globe, and mainly showed that improving bicycle infrastructure in Slovakia makes areal sense. The best project from our last year's Green belt program, where support volunteers take care of their surroundings, was the “Health

and knowledge walkway” project in Martin. Near the city, at the confluence of the streams a beautiful and instructive recreational area for local residents was built, with many opportunities enviro-education for schools.

Support of these and of course lots of other exceptional projects brings us not only satisfaction, but especially the belief that collaboration on projects that makes Slovakia a better place to live, makes a huge sense.

Peter Medveď,
Director Ekopolis Foundation, March 2016

Our profile



The Ekopolis Foundation has been managing grant programs specializing in civic society democracy and environmental sustainability for 25 years. We support the activities of hundreds of NGOs all over Slovakia in accordance with their actual needs; flexibly and without any unnecessary bureaucracy.

Since 1991 we have supported 3,027 projects from NGOs, municipalities, civic associations and initiatives to the sum of 19,2 Mil. €. 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, Czech republic, Hungary, Poland 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 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.

In 2015 we supported 87 projects with the sum of 1,44 Mil. €.

However, we realise that the true value and contribution of these projects to people and our environment is priceless.



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The Year 2015

January

- Announcement of the 5th year of the grant programme Rest beyond the city

February

- Conference on urban planning in light of adaptation to climate change (within the project supported by the Block Grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme)
- Conference on biodegradable waste (within the project of the NGO Fund through the Active Citizenship and Inclusion programme)
- A new eco-centre has started up in the village Hrubý Šúr (within the project supported by the Block Grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme)
- Slovak mulberry tree competing in the European Tree of the Year poll, the so-called Tree Hunter (hunter of trees) Rob McBride visited the mulberry tree in Senica
- Ekopolis Foundation is involved in the project charity watches 1 : Face Watch

March

- European Tree of the Year 2015 is an oak from Estonia; the Slovak mulberry finished in 8th place
- Announcement of the 13th annual Tree of the Year
- First Garden discourse “How to make our cities more liveable”
- 19 green oases to be created throughout Slovakia within the grant programme Green Belt

- The Rest beyond the city programme supported the revitalisation of 5 more recreational areas
- Ekopolis Foundation attended the International Forum of NGOs in Riga

April

- In Martin a Health and knowledge footpath is to be built (supported from the Green Belt programme)
- Garden discourse “Three presentations on tourism, tourists and professionals and amateurs in tourism”

May

- It was received 63 tree nominations in the Tree of the Year 2015
- Ekopolis Foundation started up a new programme of development of the Roma community in Slovakia
- Garden discourse “Trees in towns: a problem for the people or for the trees?”

June

- Garden discourse on the development of cycling in the city
- Opening ceremony of the St. Vincent de Paul Hostel in Bratislava (within the project supported by • the Block Grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme)

in short

July

- Ekopolis Foundation released the Echopolis bulletin about news, current topics and activities of our foundation
- Voting on the Tree of the Year 2015 was launched at the Pohoda Festival
- The Community Centre for Minorities in the Veľký Krtíš instructs residents how to take care of their housing

August

- In Horša, near Levice, a Spring of refreshment was created (within the Rest beyond the city programme)
- NGO kRaj resumed in the Kokava Malohont region a tradition of beekeeping and created new job opportunities (within the project of the NGO Fund through the Active Citizenship and Inclusion programme)
- Opening of the Tree of the Year 2015 poll at the SIAF Air Show

September

- Thanks to customers of METRO there will be four more green landscaped areas in Slovakia
- Garden discourse on pedestrian zones

October

- Ekopolis Foundation co-organized the 7th annual conference Cycling 2015 in Banská Bystrica
- Ekopolis Foundation organized the 2nd year of the inspiring conference Yes, it works!, this time in Bratislava
- Ekopolis Foundation kicked off the 10th year of the grant programme Green Belt
- Tree of the Year 2015 is a pear tree from Bošáca

November

- In Bratislava, Ekopolis Foundation co-organized an international seminar WATER IN THE CITY
- Ekopolis Foundation organized an international workshop on marketing of cycling routes EuroVelo 13 Iron Curtain Trail
- Ekopolis Foundation kicked off the first annual competition For Water 2016, thanks to which students help communities to find solutions for the efficient water management
- When shopping on Dobromat, you now support Ekopolis Foundation

December

- Volunteers linked Zálesie and Ivanka pri Dunaji with a walkway via Biela Voda (within the Green Belt programme)
- Ekopolis Foundation co-organized an event aimed at networking organizations supported within the Programme of development of the Roma community
- Ekopolis Foundation broadcast films from the documentary series It can be done on Slovak Television
- Echopolis was published prior to Christmas



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Our programmes and projects



GRANT PROGRAMMES

The Swiss – Slovak Cooperation Programme and Active Citizenship and Inclusion were in previous 4 years 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 grants for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Cooperation Programme

The Block Grant for NGOs and Partnership Support of the Swiss-Slovak Co-operation Programme was created from the contribution from the Swiss Confederation and co-financed from the state budget of the Slovak Republic. In one of its two parts, the Block Grant for NGOs, a grant scheme for supporting environmental and social NGOs, we financed altogether 22 projects by the total sum of 2.65 Million €. In the Block Grant for Partnership Support, 18 projects of Swiss and Slovak institutions were supported by the sum of 2.24 Million €. The programme fostered discussion about a number of actual challenges our society faces and participation of organisation at their solution. Important outputs of projects were achieved especially in the area of creation and amendment of public policies, in civil advocacy, implementation of new procedures in practice. The projects contributed to protection of natural heritage and landscape, many people in need were helped. Several buildings were reconstructed, which in turn serve as multipurpose facilities providing various services to people and space for activities. The Block grant is provided by Ekopolis Foundation in

partnership with the Carpathian Foundation and SOCIA - Social Reform Foundation.

Active Citizenship and Inclusion

2015 was the last and most intense period of the program Active citizenship and inclusion. This program was one of the key sources of support for non-governmental organizations active in the areas of participatory democracy, social inequality, poverty and exclusion, support of children and youth, environmental issues and services in the social sphere. In the period 2013-2015 the program supported 70 projects with NGOs in the mentioned areas, while the amount divided among these projects reached 3.07 million €. In addition, the program awarded 13 grants where Slovak organizations exchanged their experience and inspiration with partners from donor countries. We implemented this program as part of the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area 2009- 2014, where the donor countries are Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. Program was in partnership with the Children for Slovakia Foundation and the SOCIA - Social Reform Foundation.

PROGRAMMES WITH THE SUPPORT OF CORPORATE PARTNERS

Thanks to support of our corporate partners we can support the activities of hundreds of civic associations and initiatives, municipalities and schools. Projects contribute to a healthier environment, nicer public spaces and relaxation areas. Thanks to these projects we can support good relationships among the people and cooperation between citizens, organizations and local governments.

Green Belt

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. Thanks to this there are actually 203 green oases in Slovakia this year. In the 9th year of the programme, which was opened by Ekopolis Foundation and SLOVNAFT, S.C., support was obtained for 19 projects to the sum of 56.000 €. A novelty in 2015 was special support for projects aimed at the establishment and operation of community gardens and an overall support for alternative methods of growing plants in towns.

Rest beyond the city

Ekopolis Foundation, together with Heineken Slovakia, announced the 5th Rest beyond the City programme; a grant programme which unites the goal of improving the environment in those towns which are hardest hit by the negative consequences of human activities together with support of local communities in contributing to the protection of our environment. What appeals to us most is the protection of green areas which continue to decline in urban areas. In 2015, five projects received funding totalling 16.000 €. During the five years' implementation of the

Rest beyond the City programme 28 projects have received support totalling 133.000 €.

Trees instead of leaflets

The Ekopolis Foundation realised with Metro Cash & Carry SR, s.r.o. the 4th year of the programme 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. In 2015 it was supported the next four ecology projects to the sum of 4.000 €.

Programme of development of the Roma community

Ekopolis Foundation in partnership with the Carpathian Foundation implemented a new development programme for the Roma community, which is aimed at reducing social exclusion and prejudice against Roma. 5 projects in the Banská Bystrica region received financial support totalling 55,000 €. The programme aims to draw attention to some challenges facing our society, namely the deterioration of the situation of the Roma minority with access to employment, housing, education and health care and an increase in anti-Roma sentiment within mainstream society.

OUR OWN PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

We realized also own projects and activities through which we seek to get to the forefront issues that are closest to us. Topics, that are important for us, focus on the promotion of healthy lifestyles, quality public spaces, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development of mobility. Through these projects and activities we strive to inspire and educate people and communities in Slovakia.

Tree of the Year

The aim of the nationwide contest Tree of the year is to draw attention to the beauty and value of trees and awake people's interest in the environment. 63 trees was nominated in 13th year of Tree of the Year contest. It has collected 12,870 votes through voting tickets, sms, website and social network. The title Tree of the Year 2015 was awarded to a pear pink from Bošáca. Peter Lipa, the well-known Slovak singer, was patron of the contest, making it his fourth time to be honoured. The partners of the 2015 poll were Slovenská sporiteľňa Foundation, Dajama Publishing House, Artforum bookshop, ISA Slovensko (International Society of Arboriculture) and ABIES Gardening. New this year was to award schools that collect the most voting tickets. The top three schools received planting materials from ABIES Garden Centre to a total value of 500 €.

For Water competition

Ekopolis Foundation, with financial support from Nestlé Slovakia, Ltd., launched the inaugural contest For Water. The competition aims to contribute to responsible and efficient use of water through measures friendly to nature. The ambition of the competition is to connect talented young people with those who are looking for inspiration and solutions and want to address specific water problems in their towns and villages. Local government, owners of land and other properties had the opportunity to nominate specific problems or situations that need to be addressed. The results of the competition will take place in April 2016.

Garden discourses

In 2015, we organized five events in the cycle of Garden Discourses. These combined instructional educational events are debates held in the informal setting of a garden and are meant for representatives of NGOs, local government and the corporate sector. The topics are related to public planning in urban areas, pedestrian zones, sustainable mobility, the development of tourism and the protection of trees. The events took place within the Active Citizenship and Inclusion programme which is implemented by the Ekopolis Foundation in cooperation with the Foundation for Children of Slovakia and SOCIA – Social Reform Foundation.

Let's bike

We are dedicated for a long term for a support of cycle NGOs and implementation of own projects in non-motorized transport. Greenways program supported local cycle initiatives, we operate tricycles Trixi Mobil and certificate cycle brand Cyclists Welcome!. We are part of commenting on public policies in the field of cycling and development of projects EuroVelo 13 Iron Curtain Trail. We are dedicated to the development of know-how in the field of mobility plans and install of cycle counting. In 2015 we co-organized the 7th annual conference Cycling 2015 in Banska Bystrica, which is the most important annual event for the exchange of information and coordination of activities in this topic.

Water in the City

The international seminar “Water in the City” took place from 3 - 4 November 2015 in the Mirror Hall of the Primate's Palace in Bratislava. The seminar was designed not only for those people who deal with the issues on a daily basis, but also academics, experts in the relevant fields, town councillors, members of local authority committees, architects and urban planners, water managers, landscapers and students. The event organizer was the Environmental Partnership Association, of which Ekopolis Foundation and the City of Bratislava are members here in Slovakia.

Face Watch

1: Face Watch are charity watches where each colour is associated with a different organization. For each watch sold, 4 € goes to the selected organization. By buying a watch with a blue background you support protection of the environment – thanks to three watches sold Ekopolis Foundation planted one tree in an urban environment.



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