

Your Land

Final Narrative Report
July 1, 1999 – December 31, 2002

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Your Land** (YL) Program was launched in July 1999 after USAID awarded \$2,000,000 through **Cooperative Agreement No. 193-0032-A-00-9100-00** to Ekopolis Foundation and increased these funds in September 2001 by 100,000 USD based on **Modification No. 03 193-A-00-99-00100-00**.

The total **USAID award** to this program was **2,100,000 USD** matching with the obligatory **cost sharing amount of \$636,424** for period ended by December 31,2002 which represents 27% of the total funding. Your Land met its objective and obligation to match the USAID funding with at least 25%. This target has been achieved.

Total funding of the program in the period July 1999 to December 2002 reached **2,736,424 USD**.

The Your Land Program, designed and implemented by the partnership of Ekopolis Foundation in Banska Bystrica and ETP Slovakia in Bratislava and Kosice, have been providing grants and technical assistance in support of NGOs' work in strategic areas that are critical to strengthening participative democracy in Slovakia. The program reflected the need to further decentralize authority in Slovakia by supporting local institutions and activities, to improve the ability of citizens to actively contribute to governmental decision-making processes and to support a pluralistic society that provides equal opportunities for all groups to participate in public affairs. The overall strategic objective of the YL Program - **to strengthen the participation of citizens in public affaires** - was achieved through five main grant making sub-programs (Advocacy, Community, Women-Minorities-Tolerance and Rural and a Special Opportunities).

The **program provided** in its life **969 grants** in the total amount of **\$ 2,411,730**.

From September 1999 until December 2002 Your Land had following outputs

	Overall	Advocacy	Community	Women	Rural	Special
Number grants	969	109	128	84	569	79
No. of requests	3,102	255	309	318	2,067	153
\$ awarded	2,411,730	637,599	817,358	317,985	307,738	365,826
\$ requested	8,722,000	1,949,673	2,223,955	1,958,156	1,420,290	1,169,888

Besides grants, Your Land served as a provider of technical assistance to grantees and also a one of the leaders in the nonprofit sector in Slovakia through facilitating, networking and innovators role in the civil society and the indigenous grantmaking context.

The Your Land program has implemented activities that were bound to meet one high level Intermediate Result (IR) i.e. Increased ability of citizens to participate. Associated with the IR has been three indicators.

Main indicator - proportion of population engaged in NGO activity – has been showing **gradual increase during the years of the program implementation from 15% at the beginning of 2000 to 19% at the end of the year 2002**, and the trend is obviously growing (see the graph in the section 3. Impact), though compared to the original goal, USAID target of 25% had not been met.

Also other indicators that describe the effectiveness and impacts of the YL program in terms of number of NGOs, quality of their work, and their sustainability (measured through increase in membership, capacity to generate local funding, building the financial reserves, building partnerships between NGOs and local or regional public authorities and businesses, capability to achieve systemic changes in the society) suggest that the program strategy and the way it was delivered was properly designed and positively contributed to the development of the civil society in the country.

II. POLITICAL CONTEXT

Political life during the implementation period of the Your Land program was characterized by continuing internal conflict within the ruling coalition. Most of the time necessary for realization of important fundamental reforms (reform of the public administration and decentralization, health care, pension reforms) was wasted for unproductive quarrels and mutual scandalizing among the governing parties, which has apparently strengthened position of populist parties.

Continuing disputes among institutions and among political parties negatively influenced the timing and shape of most important reform of public administration that started late and in deformed format. After long controversies related to issues of self-governing regions the parliament has approved a law creating 8 regions instead of 12 as originally proposed by the government.

Despite the official rhetoric high level of corruption and non-transparency corruption remained an obvious challenge and it included financing of political parties and corruption of political elites. Among the most visible and publicly discussed affairs with NGO involvement there were government's decision about extremely costly highway construction that ignored more cost effective alternatives, "Euro-tunnels" scandal leading to broad publicity in the EU media and changes at high political positions. Lack of transparency and high level including practices of political parties were repeatedly pointed out in reports and in other official communication by the both EU and US administrations.

Another important trends in the social context were deepening of cultural and economical gaps between majority population and Roma minority. The situation of Roma (especially in Eastern part of the country) mirrors to certain extends the economical situation of the majority population though vulnerability of Roma minority leads there to seriously complicated humanitarian status. Moreover, even after several years of recognition of this situation there is no effective strategy to address this problem in place, though there were at least some attempts on the institutional level.

In the second half of the 2002 there were three main events important for Slovak Republic: national parliamentary and communal election, summit of NATO in Prague and summit of European Union in Copenhagen.

National parliamentary elections in September 2002 (20–21) were won by Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), which gained 36 chairs in the parliament, second was Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU) with 28 mandates and third place have belonged to highly favored party SMER (25 mandates).

In addition other four parties entered to new parliament: Hungarian Coalition Party (SMK - 20 mandates), Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) and Alliance of the New Citizen (ANO) - both 15 mandates and Slovak communists (KSS – 11 mandates). On the other hand very unsuccessful were former parliamentary parties PSNS, SNS and SDL as well as the newly established wings SDA (split off from SDL) and HZD (split off from HZDS).

Since the winner of election – HZDS and its leader V. Meciar was not able to form new government, the president of Slovak Republic delegated the previous Prime Minister and

leader of SDKU Mikulas Dzurinda to form its. Thanks to program vicinity of four rightist parties the formation of new government was an relatively easy and fast process. In newly established government SDKU have occupied six cabinet seats, SMK four, KDH and ANO three cabinet seats. The old-new Prime Minister is hereafter M. Dzurinda.

The outcomes of national parliamentary election, quick forming of new government and its unambiguous orientation toward democratic groups NATO and EU found the positive response on both summits – in Prague and Copenhagen. The Slovak Republic together with another six countries received the invitation to NATO at the summit of alliance in November 2002 and at the summit of EU in Copenhagen European countries attained the agreement regarding to completion of accession negotiations with ten candidates countries. Next members that will be invited to join current member countries of Union are: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia.

Communal election in Slovak Republic (6. – 7. December) noted the lowest voter's participation since the communist time (49,51 %).

In the second half of last year the Slovakia marked highest rating in its ten years history, when Moody's agency have awarded the grade A3 to country. That assigned the Slovakia into a category of above-average authentic debtors. The forming of pro-reform government, invitation of Slovakia into NATO and EU have led toward consecutively strengthening of Slovak currency, which in November reached the last year top and continues to grow in new year. As a consequence of strong crown, the National Bank of Slovakia was obliged to reduce interest rates about 1,5 %, although the economical development did not indicate that.

The unemployment slightly decreased, mainly thanks to rapid creation of new jobs by private enterprises. Its clear fall is limited and will be for the future by dismissing in public sector. Situation should be changed after the entrance to EU in connection with increasing of foreign direct investments. Despite of progress in sector of economy is unemployment rate in Slovakia highest from ten candidates' countries, though has the country one of the cheapest labor forces in this region.

With consideration to achieved success in last year, still remains in Slovakia large number so far unsolved problems. The European Union named these problems very clearly and directly – Roma discrimination, corruption, correct timing of reforms, administrative capacity for preparation of projects with potential for effective use of financial assistance from European structural and cohesion funds. The crucial will be starting reforms in judicial, school, health system and social sphere as well.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NGO SECTOR

Development in 2002

In the last year there were two main themes that significantly influenced the development within the non-for-profit sector. The first one was effect of the new law that in 2002 for the first time enabled 1% assignation of the income tax of employees and self-employed persons. According available data about 4000 organizations were registered to benefit of this regulation and about 1/3 of total potential amount was actually given to non-profits. In figures this amount represents more than 100 mln. Slovak crowns (2.5 mln. USD). However as expected, only marginal part of total amount was given to support watch-dog and advocacy organizations. Most of the amount was assigned to charities that provide health, social and educational services.

The second significant theme that has had impact on context within NGO sector was participation of civil society organizations in the pre-election campaign. Though the NGO community in general welcomed results of elections, media and public often critically commented the participation of NGOs on "get out to vote" and voters' educational activities. Also within the NGO sector the intensive discussion about sense and effectiveness of such campaign took place. The most questioning among other aspects was total size of finances devoted to these projects and sometimes even transparency of awarding funds to pre-election activities. Most controversial reactions evoked the campaign Urobme to! (Let's do it!) realized by at-hoc created women NGO association. Many women organization that has been working on this issue for several years considered the campaign contra-productive and harmful for the women movement. But also other campaigns with very visible in media and billboards caused that public perceives the NGOs as rich institutions that can afford to pay for expensive PR activities. Estimates of total size of funds awarded to pre-election project counts to about 100 mln. crowns.

During second half of the 2002 the intensity of discussion among various NGO platforms increased. Main issue in this discussion is the question of representation of the non-for-profit sector and role of the Gremium of the 3rd Sector. It seems that the time, when the need for positioning the NGO movement as one consistent unit that stands on the side of pro-democratic forces opposing the authoritarian regime, is over. Many NGOs tends to declare dissatisfaction even with the use of term "Third Sector" that does not reflect the diversity of opinions and activities of various non-for-profit organizations.

Also for new government it started to be very comfortable, though not reflecting the reality, to look at the "third sector" as one political entity with its own interests and (foreign) financial sources. However, according to many NGO leaders, in democratic society the public administration should be able to understand the diversity of NGO interests and opinions and the communication with civic organizations should not be limited to "one contact NGO secretariat" that was in past represented by Gremium of the 3rd sector.

Several informal platforms (Socioforum, Ekoforum), registered umbrella organizations (Council of Youth Slovakia, Donors Forum) as well as Gremium of the 3rd sector and its regional structures entered in this discussion to define new model of the cooperation,

representation toward public administration and identification of new common issues for the NGOs.

These issues most importantly include the establishment and role of new Governmental Council for NGOs that proved to be very inefficient during past election period and failed to advocate for NGOs' interests.

Another important issue common to all NGOs will be the definition of principles of publicly-beneficial activities in respect to use of 1% tax assignation of the companies that will be possible since next year. Impact of this law will be, that probably many companies will set up their "daughter" foundations, whom they will assign their 1% to. In general this trend does not need lead to necessarily negative results, but it is important that the purposes what this finances will be used for, are clearly defined.

Overall Civil Society Context 1999-2002

Legal and fiscal framework for civil society has slightly improved in 1999 -2002 period. In specific:

- New Foundations Law which was adopted by end of 2001 is perceived controversially among nonprofits due to its administrative burdens limiting potentials of foundations operations¹
- 1% tax assignation – major success, following Hungary's example, currently being contemplated to be abolished as a part of the new tax reform plan announced in 2003².
- basic fix-up of distorted law on nonprofit organizations offering public benefit services
- some improvement in taxation of income generated from services by nonprofits (increasing the non-taxed income from 100 000 Sk to 300.000 Sk, however leaving the income generation activities of nonprofits defined in a Tax Code which has very in unclear interpretation
- Tax deductions for corporations and individuals have not changed at all.³

Perception of non profits has remained controversial, especially their advocacy role. Usefulness perceived mostly in caring and social areas⁴.

General public has many uncertainties and questions regarding the basic functioning of the democracy and democratic institution including NGOs. Surprisingly to daily practice, the public contains relatively high levels of trust to NGOs, but also the highest level of uncertain attitude that shows lack of knowledge about this sector⁵.

¹ Changenet.sk – NGO internet daily provided coverage of this debate (www.changenet.sk)

² www.rozhodni.sk provides information on results of the 1% mechanism in 2002.

³ See Official Gazette, Income Tax Law, 1999, 2000, 2001

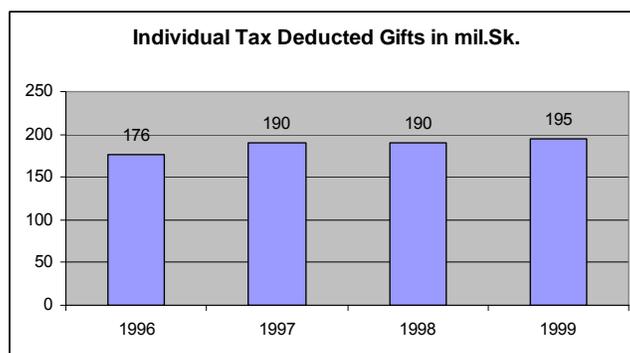
⁴ See Focus Agency annual representative surveys on Citizen participation, 1999, 2000, 2001

⁵ 23% of Slovaks do not know whether they trust or distrust NGOs that is the highest number (with trade unions) to all others while NGOs ranked fourth after church, president and self-government as most trusted institutions leaving the police, courts, government and parliament far behind. The high percentage of uncertainty represents a challenge for the NGO sector to "get out from the shell" (Focus, March 2001, Public Participation and Local Government. Representative survey.)

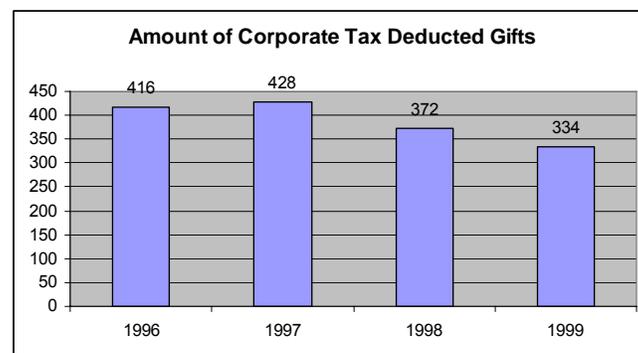
The overdeveloped “political” (advocacy) role of the Slovak NGO sector which is so well known in the CEE and in the West, has also a drawback: low visibility of social services NGOs (while doing a good work) and lack of understanding of NGOs among the public and in the media that oscillates in extreme poles. As if there would be two NGO sectors – one that is political and one that is charitable and humanitarian but politically benign. It is a challenge to show to public and media the utility and benefits of having an internally diverse NGO sector that requires balanced policies and offers back various benefits.

A specific challenge represents the perception of the NGO sector among politicians and elites that will shape the public life in the upcoming decade. On this front, NGOs will have to be proactive in opening a policy debate on the role of NGOs in modern Slovakia and building its “political” constituency.

Individual philanthropy is estimated⁶ to rise (individual giving schemes emerged and are developed further, increasing the amount of funds collected – Hodina detom, Liga proti Rakovine, Dobra Novina, etc.). Payroll deductions becoming a known technique used by different programs and corporations. SMS, phone call, cash-machine payments have been made possible. Further potential exists in identifying other, new innovative ways of simplifying payment procedure.



Corporate philanthropy is also on the rise, however, still with overly emphasis on the corporate PR and sponsoring approach, leaving the philanthropy or citizenship dimensions not so bold. Foreign or multinational companies are leaders in Slovak corporate citizenship arena – Citi Bank, US. Steel, Orange or Slovenska Sporitelna⁷. YL has supported *community foundations* in their work with corporate donors in their communities.



Advocacy role⁸ of non profit organizations remained very visible during 1999-2002 in Slovakia. There have been following campaigns or issues that were put up through initiative of civic non profit sector through its networks and activists organized in different platforms:

- Reform of public administration – „Let’s Save the Reform“ (*Your Land provided dozen grants to activities before and during discussions on the reform*)

⁶ No specific data exist on the total population.

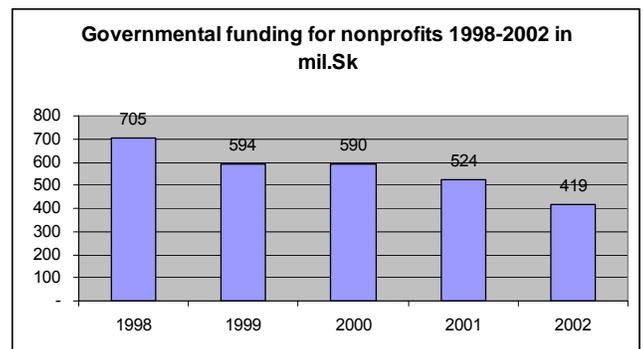
⁷ Working Group on Corporate Philanthropy, Donors Forum, 2003

⁸ Coverage of these campaigns can be found at www.changenet.sk

- Freedom of Information Act - „What is not Secret is Open for Public“ (*Your Land provided several key grants in the process of the campaign and also afterwards in monitoring of its implementation*)
- Foundations Law – „10 Principles of a Good Foundation Law“ (*Your Land team was actively engaged in discussions on the law*)
- 1 % Law „Decide!“ (*YL provided a grant to support the campaign and information for NGOs on registration*)
- Using revenues of privatization for endowing foundations (*YL team was actively involved in pushing this issue on public and in the non profit sector, facilitating meeting and leading the process in the Donors Forum*)
- „Initiative for a Good Ombudsman“ grant
- Regional Elections (*YL as the only donor provided pilot grants to activities of NGOs on mobilizing voters to go to vote*)
- National Elections – „Nie je nam to jedno“ and „Volba 2002“. (*YL was one of the core members of planning and donor coordination, provided 35. grants in two special grant competitions*)
- *Local Elections (as the only donor, YL provided two grants for awareness raising campaign on local elections)*

Cooperation with Government remained very ambiguous in the 1999-2002. Partly because of high expectations that were put on it after 1998 elections, partly because there have been little political will in the government to make some more significant improvements of the position of the nonprofitsector.

The Council of Government for NGOs has been established in 1998/1999. It served as a passive mechanism for communication with government, having no specific contributions to improving the position of nonprofit organizations vis-a-vis the government. Its role is being discussed. For the next period seems promising the process of its renewal.



There has been little change in ways how government provides support for NGOs – in some areas the most visible distortions of Meciar era (Culture, minorities) have been removed, however, no new vision or strategy has been implemented, especially in existing grant schemes of ministries. Lack of transparency, low flexibility and high administrative burden remains attached to these funds. The amount of

funding for nonprofits from the government continued to decline⁹. In that trend, the support to activities promoting civil society, human rights, civil rights and any watchdog activities and the like have not enjoyed or qualified for any support from government.

The idea using some revenues of privatization to capitalize endowments of foundations in Slovakia has not been taken on by the political elites. Instead of this, the 1% tax assignment has been broadened to corporations with its results still remained to be seen. Concerns are about maintaining the public benefit character of this effort as opposed to private or corporate benefit due to unclear transparency and definition of public benefit activities.

A vast new area of interaction between the authorities, civil society actors and businesses is and will be required by implementation of the "partnership" principle of the European Union, especially in the broad field of the regional development and social cohesion. In order to meet this requirement of the EU, **Slovak government has opened some of its structures to the NGOs participation**. The other ones, like Government's Council on Regional Development, however remained closed and NGOs have to fight for access to them, for transparency and access to information. Despite occasional successes, the government remained closed to the nominations of NGOs to critically important structures like the Committee for the Special Preparatory Program and the National Steering and Monitoring Committee. Participation of NGO nominees in these structures would be critically important for keeping the whole planning, decision-making and monitoring process transparent and accountable. EU-related activities of NGOs also solidified their leading position in the field of making important information open and accessible to all regions in Slovakia.

NGOs continued to be critical player in bringing transparency to the **EU accession process**, especially related to EU pre-accession plans and funds. Preparation of the National Plan for Regional Development, the fundamental document for informing the flow of EU funds to Slovakia, got to the point at which participatively created Regional Operational Plans had to be synthesized with Sectoral Operational Plans (SOP) created by governmental ministries without public participation. NGOs were particularly active in efforts to influence transport infrastructure plans proposed by Ministry of Transportation in the relevant SOP. NGOs criticism led to large financial changes in plans, but not to accepting the main NGO's demand - independent cost-benefit analysis of the transportation infrastructure plans. Other important documents under preparation with NGO participation were Concept of Territorial Development of Slovakia and National Strategy for Sustainable Development. The importance of this topic to the NGO sector in Slovakia is that these funds and processes will represent in the next decade a strategic resources for many locally based NGOs

Donors Context 1999-2002

Your Land operated in the context of other donors' activities and programs. Key donors that were relevant and related to the YL activities and goals were:

⁹ See „State sources of funding NGOs in Slovakia 1998-2002“ by Marianna Dluha and Kamil Kouril, SAIA 2002

- *Open Society Fund* (Roma Program, Women Program, Community Program, Open Program, Elections Related Grants)
- *Civil Society Development Foundation* (Phare Access, Development of Civil Society, National Minorities Program)
- *Freedom House Slovakia* (Elections Related Grants)
- *Embassies* (Elections, community)
- [C.S.Mott](#) Foundations (Community Philanthropy)
- *Trust for Civil Society for CEE* (Advocacy, Community)
- *UNDP* (Roma)
- *Government* – 1% (2002), Grants from Ministries

Overall the funding of these donors have been taken into account in designing and adjusting YL programs. In some cases, strategic focus of some of Programs was closely observing priorities and plans of other donors in deciding how to focus our programs. For example, the fact that OSF and CSDF have had a large minority programs, made YL Minorities/Tolerance/Women program to focus on issues related to majority-minority relationships rather than on inviting and supporting Roma projects on major scale.

In the context of above donors, YL role was to fill the funding space for grass/root activist NGOs operating in regions in promotion of public participation and local change in social, environmental, democratic governance, community development and other areas.

IV. PROGRAM STRATEGY

The Your Land Program has been designed in early 1999 as a response to the RFA issued by USAID reflecting the political and NGO context of that period.

There were following strategic decisions made at its conception:

1. Focus on increasing citizen participation
2. Smaller Grants up to \$10,000, only exceptionally larger.
3. Regional Sensitivity/Coverage supported by management team based in Bratislava (West), Banska Bystrica (Central) and Kosice (East)
4. Program structure addressing important issues that Ekopolis/ETP could best affect through their position in the society and competence:
 - (a) advocacy (strong voices, keep citizens involved in public affairs making on national, regional levels on issues)
 - (b) community (local voices, decentralization, stimulating citizens in community participation)
 - (c) rural (local voices, decentralization, creating opportunities for local leaders in rural areas)
 - (d) minorities (many voices, pluralism, addressing issues to increase tolerance and sensitivity of society to minorities)
 - (e) unspecified grant pool (allowing for flexible addressing needs as they arise)
5. Orientation on grass-root civic activities, non-bureaucratic approach

These strategic decisions were made as an attempt to best meet the goal of the IGMO program i.e.: To sustain and possibly increase participation of citizens in public affairs making.

Modifications of Strategic Approach

After more than a year of operation (mid 2000) the Management team identified need for modification of its programs. The change consisted of balancing the emphasis among following strategic objectives:

- increasing the participation of citizens in NGOs and
- increasing the sustainability of the civic third sector
- increasing the influence of citizens on public policy – to support systemic changes in the society

The program has been designed primarily for the component of participation. However, the context in 2000 opened also issues of sustainability of civic sector and need for achieving systemic changes in the society.

Changes that were suggested and implemented:

- Advocacy program emphasized in its description and criteria that it supports activities influencing „achieving a systemic change“. Emphasis was put on support of watchdog activities.
- Community Program would internally divide into two subprograms: Community Philanthropy and Community Development. The CP subprogram has concentrated on community foundations and their rooting in communities following the need to influence local environment to generate domestic resources for civic activities. The CD subprogram has concentrated on showing examples of partnerships between community based NGOs, local governments and businesses as one of the sustainability models of civic activities while keeping its participation dimension..
- Women-Minorities-Tolerance program narrowed its focus on three issues: Women self-help groups, Domestic Violence and Tolerance of majority population to minorities (ethnic, social, gender, etc.)

The program approach and strategy can be displayed visually in following way:

Strategic Goal	Program	Approaches
To increase participation of citizens on NGOs and policy making	Community Development Advocacy Women-Minorities-Tolerance	NGOs SubGrants of up to \$10,000, max. \$20,000 over 2 years Special Grant Competitions Meetings with grantees
	Rural Leaders	Active citizens, NGOs Villages up to 1,500 inhabitants Grants up to \$750
To increase sustainability of the civic NGO sector	Community Philanthropy Special Opportunity	SubGrants of up to \$10,000, max. \$20,000 over 2 years Special Grant Competitions
To affect systemic change in various areas of transition through civic groups (access to information, social reform, environment, etc.)	Advocacy Special Opportunity	SubGrants of up to \$10,000, max. \$20,000 over 2 years Special Grant Competitions

V. PROGRAM RESULTS

1. Outputs

During the period July 1, 1999-December 31,2002 the **Your Land Program** received 3.102 applications to its programs requesting more than 8,7 ml. USD and **awarded 969 grants in amount of 2,4 ml USD**. The average size of the grants was 5,000 USD, within Rural Small Grant program 500 USD.

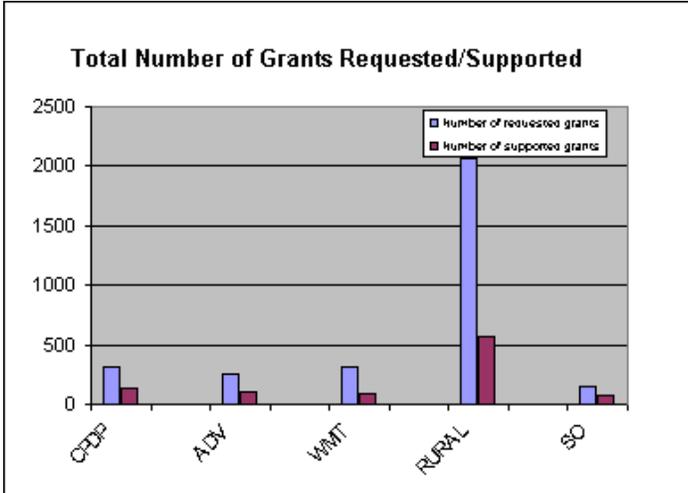
Survey of awarded grants within Your Land programs:

Regranting	USAID Fund		Other Sources	
	Amount in USD	Number of Grants	Amount in USD	Number of Grants
<i>Advocacy Program</i>	\$408,157	75	\$230,671	34
<i>Rural Program</i>	\$201,990	380	\$97,164	190
<i>Community Philantropy and Development Program</i>	\$512,889	107	\$294,841	21
<i>Women –Minorities and Tolerance</i>	\$261,297	62	\$51,035	22
<i>Special Opportunities Fund</i>	\$351,431	78	\$2,253	0
Total Grants	\$1,735,764	702	\$675,965	267

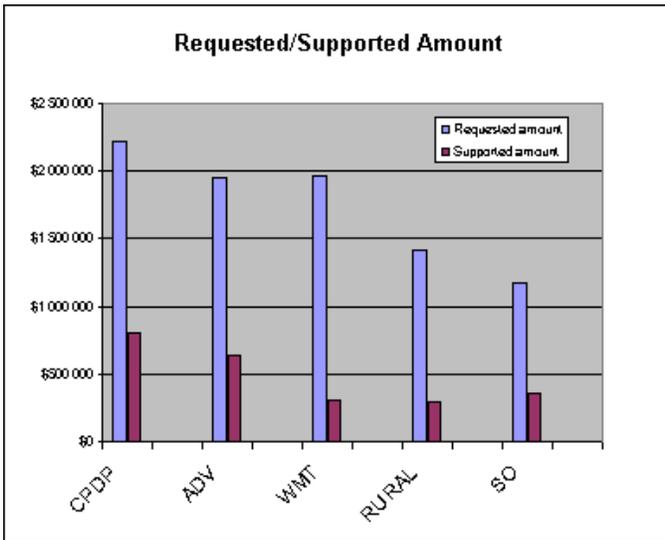
For more details see attachements:

1. List of Awarded and Liquidated grants within each subprogram
2. Statistics about the Grants (regional distribution, site visits, consulatations, etc.)

Statistical information on awarded grants in charters and charters and tables

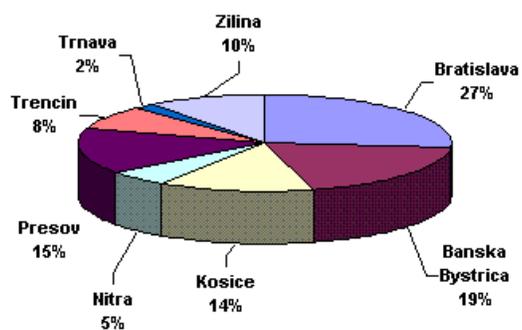


TOTAL number of Grants YL Program 1999-2002		
	Requested	Supported
CPDP	309	128
ADV	255	109
WMT	318	84
RURAL	2067	569
SO	153	79
TOTAL	3 102	969



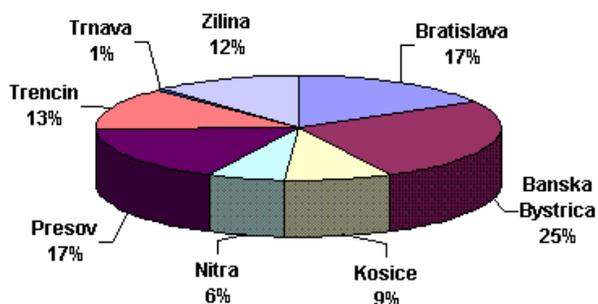
TOTAL amount of Grants YL Program 1999-2002		
	Requested	Supported
CPDP	\$2 223 955	\$807 731
ADV	\$1 949 673	\$638 829
WMT	\$1 958 156	\$312 332
RURAL	\$1 420 290	\$299 154
SO	\$1 169 888	\$353 684
TOTAL	\$8 721 961	\$2 411 730

Your Land Program by Regions



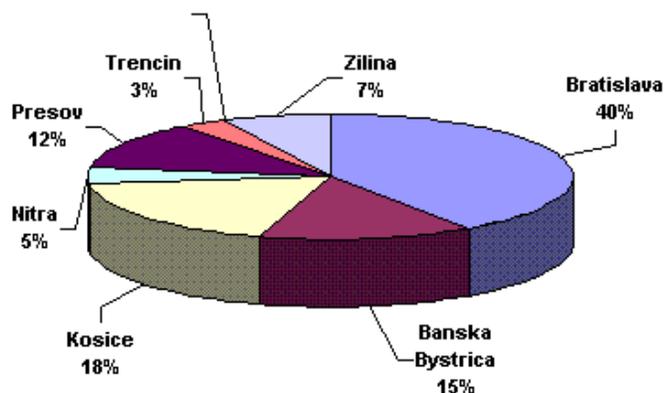
Region	Approved Amount	Number
Bratislava	\$652 979	111
Banska Bystrica	\$468 293	230
Kosice	\$332 427	160
Nitra	\$129 707	83
Presov	\$371 550	177
Trencin	\$190 089	64
Trnava	\$50 728	20
Zilina	\$250 741	124
TOTAL	\$2 446 514	969

Community Development and Philantropy Program by Regions



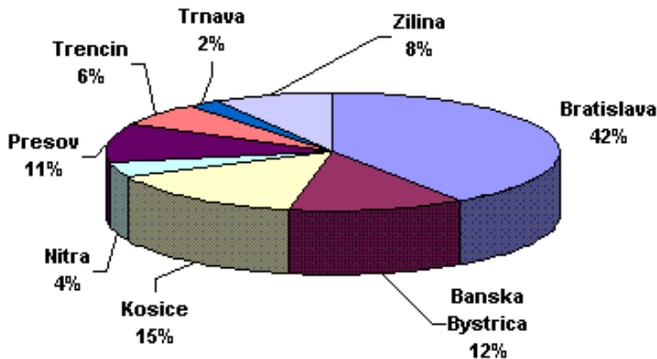
Region	Approved Amount	Number
Bratislava	\$135 736	16
Banska Bystrica	\$211 021	45
Kosice	\$69 938	13
Nitra	\$50 847	7
Presov	\$143 352	18
Trencin	\$105 874	13
Trnava	\$5 785	3
Zilina	\$94 813	14
TOTAL	\$817 367	129

Adovacy Program by Regions



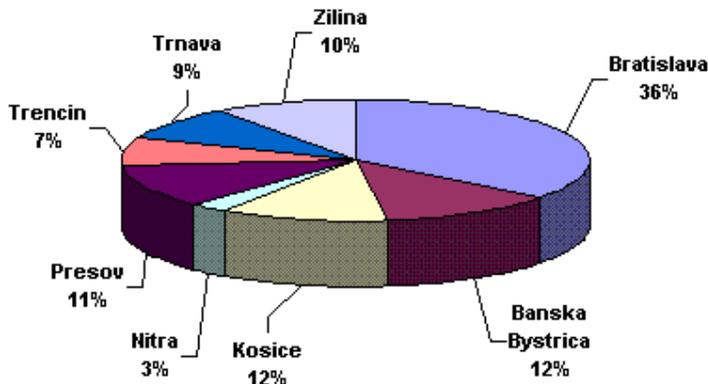
Region	Approved Amount	Number
Bratislava	\$256 021	43
Banska Bystrica	\$93 206	17
Kosice	\$115 820	14
Nitra	\$28 926	8
Presov	\$77 508	11
Trencin	\$19 312	3
Trnava	\$0	1
Zilina	\$46 806	11
TOTAL	\$637 599	108

Women Minorities and tolerance Program by Regions



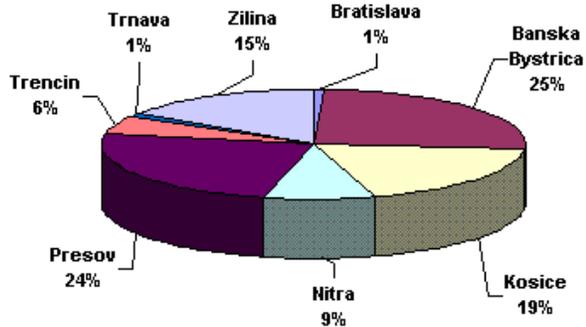
Region	Approved Amount	Number
Bratislava	\$129 349	29
Banska Bystrica	\$39 338	11
Kosice	\$46 845	9
Nitra	\$12 873	6
Presov	\$34 534	7
Trencin	\$20 277	9
Trnava	\$7 801	4
Zilina	\$26 967	9
TOTAL	\$317 985	84

Special Opportunities Fund by Regions



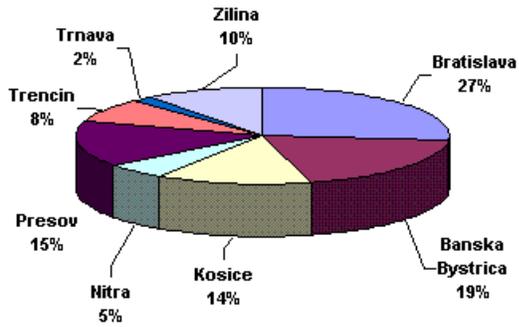
Region	Approved Amount	Number
Bratislava	\$129 646	19
Banska Bystrica	\$45 568	15
Kosice	\$42 150	11
Nitra	\$9 982	4
Presov	\$41 876	10
Trencin	\$27 370	6
Trnava	\$33 929	6
Zilina	\$35 303	8
TOTAL	\$365 826	79

Rural Program by Regions



Region	Approved Amount	Number
Bratislava	\$2 226	4
Banska Bystrica	\$79 159	142
Kosice	\$57 675	113
Nitra	\$27 079	58
Presov	\$74 279	131
Trencin	\$17 255	33
Trnava	\$3 213	6
Zilina	\$46 852	82
TOTAL	\$307 738	569

Your Land Program by Regions



Region	Approved Amount	Number
Bratislava	\$652 979	111
Banska Bystrica	\$468 293	230
Kosice	\$332 427	160
Nitra	\$129 707	83
Presov	\$371 550	177
Trencin	\$190 089	64
Trnava	\$50 728	20
Zilina	\$250 741	124
TOTAL	\$2 446 514	969

2. Outcomes

Advocacy Subprogram

The advocacy program has supported broad scale of initiatives covering different issues. Common features of all of them were empowering citizens and enforcing positive changes in society. In the table below a liberal division of all awarded grants by topics can be seen:

Category	Number of grants	Amount per category (Skk)	Amount per category (42 Skk/USD)
Civil society/ Public participation	33	8 889 320	211 650
Environment	31	7 711 826	183 615
Social reforms	16	4 057 469	96 606
Training, education, awareness raising	13	3 476 660	82 778
Roma issues	5	992 700	23 636
Women	5	1 738 590	41 395

As it is obvious from the table, the most significant category is formed by projects focused on enhancing **civil society and increasing public participation**. This category covers projects that opened public discussion on hot issues and activated citizens through gatherings, petitions, newsletter etc. were assigned. According the survey “almost two thirds of enquired advocacy organizations stated that their activities changed the approach of the state administration toward certain problem”¹⁰.

As the example of successful project can be “Where your money goes?” accomplished by **POF** mentioned. The organization organized series of discussions which attracted attention of the public and media (some of them were broadcasted by local TV), published bulletin called Voice of POF which later became a supplement of advertisement leaflets which saved costs and made it available to every household. The organization has assisted other organizations in surrounding cities and villages as well. At national level the most important step ahead toward strengthening civil society is represented by Access to information act. Alliance of organizations (**Za dobry dobry zakon o pristupe k informaciam association**) which participated in its formulation and coordinated a campaign was supported in 1999; later, projects of **Obcan a demokracia** aimed at raising awareness of the public about the law and deep monitoring its implementation were approved. Their trainings and survey was very positively evaluated by different organizations and individuals.

¹⁰ Focus, Survey of NGOs, December 2002

The next large group of projects, labeled as **environmental**, consists of advocacy projects enforcing systemic changes in conservation of the environment. Preferences were given to projects that emphasize citizen participation and transparency in problematic areas as waste, pollution, water dam constructions or cycle routes, as well as changes in national legislation.

Example of project which led from local initiative to systemic change at national level is project called „Citizens of Upper Abov micro-region advocate their right for healthy environment“ realized by **Zdruzenie obci mikroregionu Hornad**. Association of villages located in industrial area gathered together data about pollution, communicated them to citizens and created pressure toward most important polluters and state administration. Their activities resulted in stricter limits of pollution and the approved regulations reached EU limits.

To the successful and very useful projects belongs also „Ekoforum - a network of environmental NGOs“ carried out by **ZO SZOPK Sírius** which improved coordination of their individual activities and campaigns as well as exchange of information between NGOs and state administrations. Environmental NGOs supported within the advocacy program belong to the NGOs frequently participating in forming the Slovak legislation (e.g. Nature protection act, Law on waste, state policy on raw materials, etc.).

Among advocacy projects in **social** area can be found initiatives aimed at the minority rights preservation or advocacy of disabled people needs and their integration into the society.

As one of the successful initiatives at the local level can be **Sportinvalid** organization mentioned. It initiated coalition of 8 NGOs working with and for disabled people in Kosice. The coalition formed a special Committee that entered negotiations with different institutions (e.g. post-offices, drug-stores,..) and commented projects of reconstructions and new buildings. Existing status of barriers in the city was mapped and a plan of removing barriers in the area of the city was developed.

Similarly as in environmental category, development of a platform which coordinated and strengthened individual activities of NGOs at the national level was supported also in this group of projects, e.g. in case of transformation of services from the state level to the community level and amendment of Law on social help. (**Inkluzia association**, Initiative for decentralization of social services).

A special group of social advocacy project is a group focused at **women** - their status in the society, maternity and violence. During the last year, thanks to achievement of changes in legislation and a campaign, long lasting activities of **Pro Familia**, **Pomoc obetiam nasilia** and other supported victim support organizations were propagated and public discussion on violence perpetrated against women and children was opened.

Effort of **training, education and awareness raising** was main focus of the next project group. Themes were various - economics, social entrepreneurship, alternatives in school system, adoption and foster parents, and many others. As the successful can be “New trends” project accomplished by **Asociacia supervizorov a socialnych poradcov** mentioned, which supervised seven NGOs providing social services in different regions of Slovakia. The association provided consultancies and trainings, helped them to develop professionally and assisted in negotiations with state administration and donors.

The last small group of supported projects was dealing with problems of **Roma** minority. In this category excellent projects as well as projects that brought a lot of difficulties can

by found. To the successful ones definitely belongs “Increasing of Roma Participation in Public Affairs” realized by **Clovek a buducnost**. This association educated a group of 10 young Roma activists on state and local administration, non-profit sector and other actual topics, prepared them for running for positions in the local parliaments and helped them to established own NGOs working with Romas.

Only small number of supported project can be evaluated as totally insufficient. Most of the *inappropriate implementations* were caused by key coordinator’s leaving or his/her insufficient exertion in the planned activities. “Public campaign for ombudsman” by **Slovak Helsinki Committee** (SHC) was the one which ended up with failure. Its coordinator spent most of the grant, did not communicate with the program manager and later left the SHC. New coordinator was not able to finish the project satisfyingly.

The other most common reason for project failure were external conditions, mostly changes legislation did not realized in expected time. As an example can be “Anti-corruption program for Turiec region” realized by **Empatia** mentioned. Elaborated “Anticorruption charter” was distributed to local parliaments of 3 cities in the region; their approval and further discussion in the media on the issue were negatively influenced by the Anticorruption law being not approved by the state parliament.

Community Subprograms

Note on Approach to Community based NGOs

During the implementation of the community programs, Your Land team more precisely defined what was the focus and the target audience of the program. In this view, there are three basic types of community-based civic organizations in Slovakia:

1. Community foundations and like organizations (funds) that use as their main tool their ability to generate resources for others, most typically through grants.

2. NGOs active in the specific community that are focused on improvement of the community as such and provide for important community processes. Such as public discussions, public meetings with officials, local polls and informing people about issues of public interest etc. They do not have their thematic focus (environment, health etc.). Object of their mission is the community as a whole.

3. NGOs that develop their thematic mission in the community-gender, youth, environment, etc.

The target audience of the Community Philanthropy Program was the group No. 1. The target audience of the Community Development Program was the group No.2.

Category	Number of grants	Amount per category (Skk)	Amount per category (42 Skk/USD)
Community Development Projects	79	17 544 246	
Community Philanthropy (Community Foundations)	50	19 268 134	

Community Development Subprogram

The goal of the subprogram was defined as “to support community initiatives which target particular improvement in the community’s institutional, physical or mental environment and promote the active participation of local citizens”.

Category	Number of grants	Amount per category (Skk)	Amount per category (42 Skk/USD)
Community Activism for Quality of Life	19	4 217 010	
Small Grants Schemes in Communities	11	2 957 700	
Local Partnerships	15	4 217 010	
Community Watchdog Activities	8	2 145 600	
Institutional Strengthening of Community Based Organizations	26	3 684 164	

There were seven regular grant rounds held since 1999 until the end of 2002. There was one special grant competition on institutional strengthening. During the whole duration of the program it was possible to request for so called voucher grants that allowed for education and training of people active in community organizations.

In the program period was supported **79** proposals with the amount of **17.544.246,-Sk** from all regions of Slovakia. Most of supported activities were taking place in regions of Banská Bystrica, Prešov regions. Least were from Trnava and Nitra regions.

Overall, this program has stimulated civil society and its interactions with local partners in their communities:

- Most of our grants in the Community Development improved the quality of life of communities in which they were given.
- Another major outcome of grants in this program was that they provided for a space for citizens to participate and get or ask information from local government and/or allowed for increased participation of community citizens in local decisions-making.
- In some cases our grants stimulated activity which has been taken on and followed on by other community stakeholders.

The program was supporting grass-root activism in community level. It aimed to allow for renewal of community identity and work for the benefit of the community in a different way than the socialist period promoted and in contrast to the trends of individualization of current period. The decreased quality of life of people in urban and rural communities is a factor not supporting such activism. The role of the program having this mind was to

support those activities that will strengthen the participatory, democratic public processes in communities and involve more people in these processes.

1. Program supported **community activities for improved quality of life**. These projects implemented by active citizens were using self-help as one of the tools. Repaired public spaces, children playgrounds, social or cultural events gathering people, provision of civic counselling, children and youth activities in free time or their education, other activities for handicapped groups of people in communities.

Typical example of this kind of grant is the „*Ten thousand trees for Liptov*“ project of Civic association Tatry. They approached students of elementary and high schools in Liptovský Mikuláš. After series of lectures and meetings explaining basic principles of biodiversity the association worked with local government and state government on project of tree-planting of public and government own land to create biodiverse corridors. The project culminated with two day voluntary work in which 560 volunteers participated and planted 13.785 small trees in 40 different sites. The organization itself was strengthened by new volunteers and members.

2. Another major group of activities supported by the program were community **small grants schemes**. Small grant schemes represent one of the tools that in some cases works very well in stimulating microinitiatives with strong public participation component. While realizing that filling up the grant pool is neither simple nor guaranteed for future, it has had a value in gathering active citizens around various issues not in their implementation (fixing wells or organizing program for elderly). The main value of these small grants programs was in that they launched processes in communities in which citizens were asked to think about how to distribute these funds, they stimulated interest of people about criteria and the overall process of decisionmaking on public funds, understanding better the strategies for development of a community and the needs of citizens. Last but not least there was usually a high added value in kind or time contribution of local people to the final results.

Civil Society of Hrušov implemented a project „*Civic Challenge 2000*“. The group has organized public meetings in which citizens identified key problems of the village and identified how should be the funds distributed. Project teams were established that planned their actions and discussed how to evaluate its effect. On a public meeting project teams presented their actions plans and jointly discussed and agreed what would be supported and what not. The funding for these projects totalled 321.594 Sk. In their implementation took part 751 volunteers that worked 11 679 hours and financial value of the results achieved by that was calculated as 1 345 210 Sk.

3. Another type of activities supported were **partnerships of citizens, local authorities and community leaders** that included citizens in their activities. Results of these activities were for example participative plans of communities, local plans of development in case of small villages, microregional development plans, inputs into operational plans in relationship to EU integration, etc. As a side effect of these grants were established associations of key leaders in community, coalitions of local NGOs that assumed important positions in relationship to local government, or specific joint projects were prepared (house of social services, civic counselling center, communal waste management plans). As one of typical tools were used public meetings with local officials and citizens.

EQ klub organized project "Open Self-Government". The project was implemented before adoption of FOIA and the ambition of EQ Klub was to help Kremnica City to set up a system of informing citizens about activities of self-government. Two public hearings were organized, questionnaire survey was held. Survey and hearings produced input on what type of information is needed and asked for by citizens and how to provide them is most effective. Based on that the City could implement its information policy. Later on when the FOIA was adopted, the City already had been prepared to implement it without problems as opposed to some other cities which were trying to limit FOIA influence. Results of this project serve as model for education of local governments on how to improve their information systems.

4. **Community watchdog and advocacy activities** was another major type of that were supported by Your Land. Activists and NGO leaders were making pressure on public authorities in cases when there were significant differences of views of citizens on how some community problems were addressed. These ranged from a view of citizens on new urban development in Bratislava or Lucenec downtowns that were radically changing the cultural or historical character of these sites, to raising voice of citizens on consequences of building of new supermarket malls, to removal of dangerous unfinished building site of supermarket in a neighborhood in Zilina to implementation of cooperative river management action plan in Hornad river valley, to sustainable forest management practices in Eastern Carpathians or to the issue of participation and representation in self government of one of the city parts of Pezinok city.

Civic association Za zdravú patrónku has implemented project of „Batislava Aloud – Discussion Fora in Astoria Theatre“. The informal association of Bratislava based environmental NGOs was bringing to stage most urgent and striking problems of compromising city needs with nature protection (building highways through the city in a close vicinity to residential area, construction activities in historical site „Napoleon hill“, cutting of forests in the City Forest Park, etc.). In these issues meetings mapped opinion of concerned public, local authorities and their representatives and experts. These meetings served as a forum of exchange of positions on these issues and allow for public to exert pressure on elected representatives to deliver. Many of the issues presented on stage have actually been changed, or modified so that they more reflect concerns of the public.

5. The last group of supported projects were grants providing for **institutional development of community organizations**. Despite the overall orientation of Your Land on participation, it was found important to support these groups with opportunities for networking, learning from others, improving their technical and information infrastructure, learning and making strategies, implementing their marketing plans or activities improving their perception among community stakeholders.

Community Philanthropy Subprogram

The goal was “to support NGO activities which promote and cultivate philanthropic culture in Slovakia so as to increase the level of volunteerism, *charitable giving*, socially responsible consciousness and awareness, and practice of philanthropy”.

Category	Number of grants	Amount per category (Skk)	Amount per category (42 Skk/USD)
General Purpose Grants (programs, marketing, philanthropy promotion, operational costs)	35	11 064 100	263 431
Institutional Development Grants	12	1 899 563	45 228
Voucher grants (travel, education)	9	304 471	7 249
Endowment Challenge Grants	6	6 000 000	142 857

The program has operated until 2001 as a joint program with Community Development. Since 2001 it operated as a separate subprogram with its own Expert Committee.

This program was a part of a longer effort of the Consortium of Ekopolis-ETP in promotion of community philanthropy. (see Feasibility Study on Development of Community Philanthropy in Slovakia, Mesík-Strečanský, 1998).

The target group of organizations receiving support from the program can be defined as Community Philanthropy Organizations, in most cases having a form of community foundation. These were:

- Žilina Community Fund
- Association for the Development for Southern Zemplin
- Trenčín Foundation
- Revia Foundation, Pezinok
- Fundament Rimavska Sobota
- Nitra Community Fund
- Healthy City CF Banska Bystrica-Zvolen
- CF Velky Šariš
- CF Prešov
- CF Bratislava
- Fund for the Liptov Region Development
- VOKA Banska Bystrica
- Partnership for Development of Spis Region
- CF Blue Torysa, Sabinov

General purpose grants covered various activities including promotion of philanthropy in communities through various events, marketing of CF and the concept of philanthropic giving, preparing PR materials, covering administrative and operational costs of CF, planning, etc. In some cases funds were used for running their programs.

Institutional Development grants were focused on their internal organizational development – training, receiving consultations, improving their technical and information management infrastructure.

Voucher grants allowed their Board members and staff to travel abroad to learn from experiences of others and bring back home that experience and apply. Ranging from attendance at CF conferences in USA and Europe to paying consulting fee or an internal consultant.

Endowment Challenge Grants program was paid from the matching funds of Mott Foundation and its goal was to stimulate the local fund development activities of these institutions as this was perceived by us as unsatisfactory in terms of long term sustainability. Simply, the goal was to stimulate action in building local relationships with a goal to support the CF. Results of this programs were encouraging as despite initial scepticism there were 6 CFs that met the target of 1 million Sk (\$25,000) raised from local sources.

The major outcome of this program can be described as increased financial independence of community foundations and like organizations when comparing data from 1998 and 2002 on these organizations. However, direct attribution of this program to the changes described below is not possible because there were other factors influencing on these results such as existence of other programs (Open Society Fund) and local factors influencing behavior of individual organizations.

However, the presence of the YL program, its ability to provide financial assistance paired with strong technical assistance provided to applicants and grantees **contributed significantly** to the fact that the “field” of CF has grown in last three-four years significantly, as the table above shows

The table below shows the change in some basic facts on CFs in Slovakia¹¹:

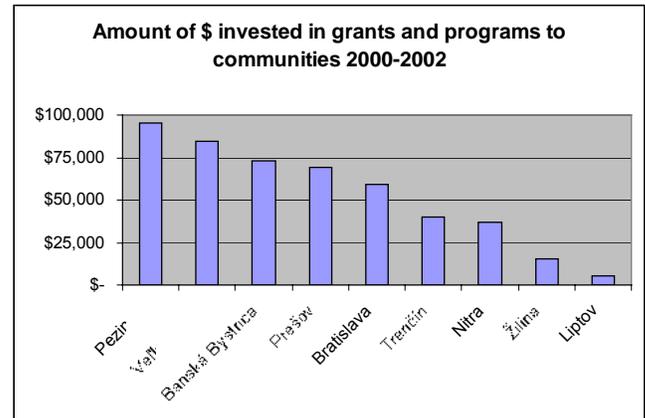
	1998	2003	% increase
# of CFs	4	10	250%
# of emerging CFs	3	5	60%
population covered	500.000	1.300.000	163%
average amount of locally raised income (Presov, Trencin, Banska Bystrica, Pezinok}	Sk 612.000	Sk 952,000	55%

By end of 2002 there were 15 Community Foundations and CF-like organizations with annual expenditures ranging from \$10-80K. Only one CF has an endowment larger than \$400. The rest have own assets of \$10-20K.

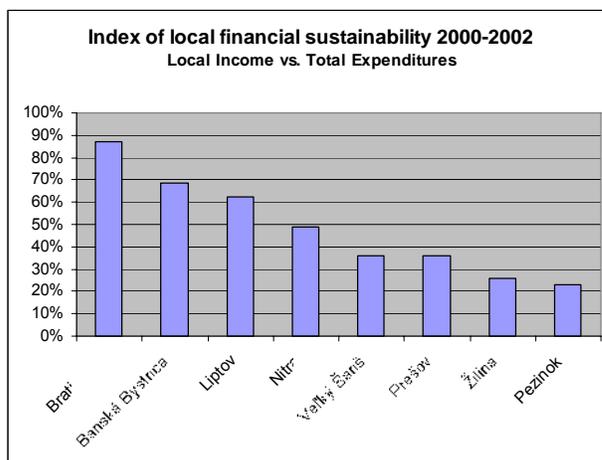
CFs have a strong grant-making component with small, micro grants up to \$300. Each have some operational activities, in some cases prevailing. There is dependancy on external funding. In terms of governance they are quite developed for Slovak NGO context, however, the boards and their role still needs more development.

¹¹ Mesík-Strečanský eds: Community Philanthropy Feasibility Study - Slovakia, 1998

Internally, the CFs are now more capable in approaching local donors, more able to define their programs and develop a new type of activity – donor services. They are more legitimate in their communities, their perceptions among fellow community citizens have improved (based on their assessment) and local institutions accept them (this can be observed by their ability to gather support for organizing various events or programs or statements of partnership with local governments).



In terms of **sustainability** of CFs and CF like organizations, this varies. Some are more sustainable than the others. One of the measure of sustainability of these institutions can be a share of locally generated income on the total expenditures. The three year average 2000-2002 based on data collected from annual reports for the whole group of CFs included in the survey (9) is 51%.



The dependency on external funding will however still continue, but not so heavily as in early phases of their development.

The amount of funding they generated and returned back to their communities in absolute figures almost matches the overall contribution of the YL Community Philanthropy Program. This itself is a remarkable sign.

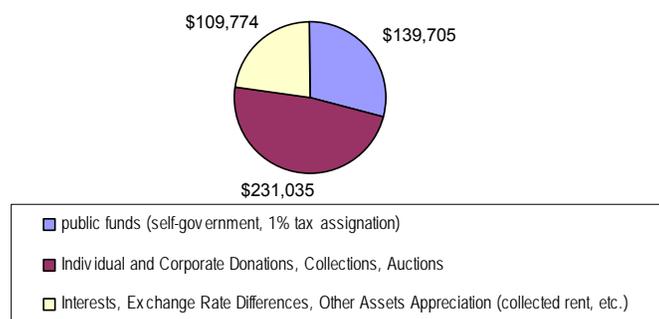
The total amount generated from indigenous sources in the CF field in

Slovakia in the period 2000-2002 thus reaches \$480,000.

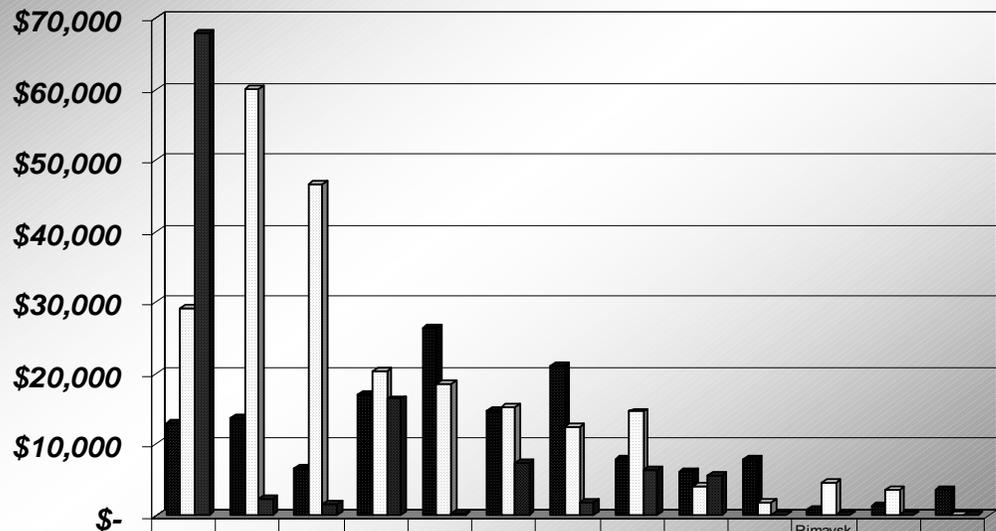
The data for this analysis were collected through individual interviews with CFs and did not rely on annual reports, as such breakdown of income sources can not be usually identified from annual report as such.

To put this amount into comparable perspective, the Ekopolis/ETP Consortium with the funding from Mott, USAID and Trust for Civil Society provided to CFs the total support of **\$450,000** in that period. If we add to this figure funding from the Open Society Fund (\$100,000 in the period of 2000-2002) and the Civil Society Development Foundation (data to be collected), which are the other important contributors to the budgets of CFs in Slovakia, we get to the number close to **\$600,000** invested into the field of CFs from external civil society funding.

\$ Amount generated by 13 CFs from local sources during 2000 - 2002



\$ generated by individual CFs from local sources 2000-2002



	Banská Bystrica	Bratislava	Trenčín	Pezinok	Prešov	Veľký Šariš	Nitra	Liptov	Torysa	Poprad	Rimavská Sobota	Trebišov	Žilina
■ public funds (self-government, 1% tax assignment)	\$13,072	\$13,791	\$6,506	\$16,914	\$26,448	\$14,818	\$21,056	\$7,760	\$6,023	\$7,818	\$788	\$1,222	\$3,488
□ Individual and Corporate Donations, Collections, Auctions	\$29,162	\$60,093	\$46,619	\$20,218	\$18,502	\$15,311	\$12,361	\$14,600	\$4,186	\$1,890	\$4,595	\$3,497	\$-
■ Interests, Exchange Rate Differences, Other Assets Appreciation (collected rent, etc.)	\$68,070	\$2,372	\$1,588	\$16,372	\$278	\$7,293	\$1,853	\$6,320	\$5,628	\$-	\$-	\$-	\$-

There are also significant individual differences among CFs. The next chart shows how has been the indigenous income distributed among the CFs that were a part of the study.

From this analysis the most successful in terms of raising funds from private sources has been the Bratislava CF which raised \$60,000 in gifts from individuals and corporations.

In terms of endowment revenue and developing own assets, Banská Bystrica/Zvolen CF has been the most successful, thanks to its large endowment.

On the other hand, the most balanced income has Revia CF.

The challenges that lie ahead to these institutions are:

- ability to secure funding for operational costs from local sources
- increased role of Boards, governance
- becoming operations of economy of scale i.e. expanding their operations to allow for reasonable economic base to support them over medium term
- ability to influence legal and fiscal framework to the benefit of local philanthropy
- ability to work with the EU programs without losing their identity/mission.
- further rooting of the concept of philanthropy in local culture.

Women – Minorities – Tolerance Subprogram

Creation of the subprogram Women – Minorities – Tolerance was based on our conviction that participation of women in public affairs and the change of majority attitudes toward minorities are significant aspects for democratic society development.

In the field of „women status improvement“ two types of projects were supported:

1. Projects that contribute to zero tolerance of gender-related violence
2. Self-support groups of women.

In the field „minorities – tolerance,“ the program focused on supporting projects with the purpose to change majority attitudes toward minorities, and relationships between them mainly at the community level.

As for the major outcomes of this program can be considered following:

1. Emerging of new groups and organizations with potential to work in the field of elimination violence against women.

In 1999, only two organizations provided counseling to women--victims of violence according to international standards. These two NGOs represented organizations with high potential to serve as models of intervention center and advocacy organization for women issues for other Slovak NGOs but they were under-developed from the institutional point of view. The vision of the program was to create multi-disciplinary teams of experts in different communities across Slovakia able to provide support to women--victims of violence. In addition, the ambition of the program was to create a network of supporting or intervention centers across Slovakia; this aspect has reflected in the strategy of providing support to emerging organizations.

During three years, we have supported creation of 20 crisis centers, as well as multi-disciplinary teams for women--victims of violence across the entire Slovakia. We supported 21 projects. We focused on organizations that fulfil these criteria: (1.) organization had a clearly specified interest to serve to victims of violence in long-term horizon in its mission, (2.) one of the goals of organization was systemic changes implementation in this field, (3.) organization accepted standards of work with victims of violence stated by EU, (4.) organization either accepted to operate under supervision or to cooperate with more experienced NGO in this field, (5.) it was open to cooperate with other organizations.

First informal network of NGOs active in promotion of zero tolerance of violence has been established. About 50 women work in the associations participating in the network. In the course of the program, supported organizations provided counseling to 680 women--victims of violence.

Four projects were unsuccessful; they performed these common characteristics: grantees more or less refused to cooperate with other organizations, mainly with more experienced organizations, they did not create a scope for training of their team, and

they did not meet criteria of gender-sensitive approach at their work. One organization decided to change its goals in spite of positive outcomes of their project.

2. The number of institutionally strengthen NGOs active in the field of elimination against women in long-term horizon has raised.

At the beginning of the year 2000, the Focus Agency compiled a report that revealed that women organizations are at least institutionally developed from among all NGOs of third sector. The program continually supported and institutionally strengthen organizations that play a key role in achieving systemic changes in the field. In addition, ten women organizations were supported in a special call for grant proposals focused exclusively on institutional development. At the present, seven women organizations has reached a higher phase of institutional development.

3. Emerging of new women groups and women organizations with a goal to solve community problems.

The program flexibly responded to the idea of mother's centers development. It provided an initial grant to a pilot project focused on providing technical assistance to women leaders with an intention to start a mother's center in their community. The outcome is: 20 new mother's centers operate across Slovakia. The Your Land program provided grants to 12 centers from among them. The mother's center represent an ideal scope for women engagement in civic affairs. We suppose that women actively working for mother's center will continue in community organizing also after the end of their maternity leave. About 280 women, mothers at maternity leave, actively participate in community and women activities.

4. Emerging of new coalitions that advocate women, social and ethnic minorities interests.

Supported organizations had a sincere effort to communicate and implement activities in cooperation with other organizations active in the similar problems-solving. This attitude created conditions for natural partnerships and networks among organizations. At the present, the following networks operate: (1.) the Union of Mother's Centers has been created--an umbrella of mother's centers, (2.) informal network of organizations active in the field of elimination violence against women implements several types of activities (3.) as for minorities, many different ad hoc platforms with common purpose have been created.

5. The circle of experts and activists active has broadened.

Due to institutional strengthening and open social atmosphere, organizations actively work to broaden their membership basis, to broaden a group of supporters and volunteers. In organizations providing counseling to women--victims of violence, the volunteer basis creates about 125 women. About 320 women actively or passively participates in activities of mother's centers.

6. Systemic changes in the status of women with an emphasize on elimination of violence against women.

The first national campaign against violence combat on women →fifth women← was supported from the Women – Minorities – Tolerance program. Seven women NGOs cooperated at this multi-media campaign. The campaign contributed to (1.) breaking this taboo issue, (2.) opening public discussion, (3.) promotion the scope of violence against women, (4.) designation of the phenomenon of violence against women as a gender-related problem, (5.) implementation of the first representative opinion pool about violence against women. 3 121 people expressed support to the campaign through the phone, 5 672 people expressed support to the campaign through the web site www.piatazena.sk; 2,5 million people were recipients of the campaign. The campaign created social atmosphere necessary for passing inevitable legislative changes. Due to prepared proposals by women advocacy organizations and strengthen negotiation position of women non-governmental organizations toward the governmental institutions significant measures in the benefit of victims have been achieved. Since January 2003, a new Law about domestic violence, and six amendments of legislative norms--Law about the police force, Criminal law, Criminal code, Law about offences, Civil judicial code, and Civil law became applicable. These laws are approximated with the EU legislation.

7. Acceptation and respect of diversity, mainly from the side of young people.

According to the public opinion pool from the year 2001, eight from ten people expressed negative attitude toward Romany minority. Therefore, the program supported projects against racism. Since 2001, one of the supported NGOs organizes antiracist campaign every year. Its goal is to promote the problem of racism in our society and to spread the message of tolerance and fellowship among people. 900 secondary schools, 200 local government offices, 300 nonprofit organizations, 50 Romany organizations, 300 activists participated in the campaign in the last years.

8. The change of attitudes of majority toward minorities at the community level.

The purpose of minority and tolerance program was to change majority attitudes toward minorities. 22 projects were supported from the program. Supported projects covered these activities: (1.) contact and cooperation creation between members of majority and minorities at the community level, and (2.) activities addressing broad public and different target audiences with long-term and frequentative character.

Rural Small Grant Program „Citizens to village“

Position of the Program among other rural development oriented programs

The Ekopolis-ETP Rural program has been an exceptional grant-making product to stimulate voluntary activism and to introduce the role of the non-profit sector in the remote areas of the countryside where the public awareness about this role was so far just limited. Thanks to support of USAID the program was extended also to regions of Eastern Slovakia where it during its two and a half played an irreplaceable educational role. The program was the only grant making mechanism clearly designed for small villages and rural regions and was much quicker and flexible than e.g. state run Program for Revitalization of Villages”.

Among the other programs aimed to rural development, program Citizens to Village was very highly ranked in the research by the Rural Parliament (autumn 2002).

Grant rounds

There were six regular and one special round of program „Citizens to village“ realized within this Your Land sub-program. During whole period this program kept the same time frame of announced grant rounds every year – two deadlines were scheduled on spring and fall.

The spring and fall rounds used to have their own natural characteristic features - in summer rounds prevailed the outer activities (restorations and revitalizations of public spaces, children playgrounds, sport places, revitalizations of springs, streams and rivers etc.), in winter rounds prevailed the community activities, computer and Internet themes, cultural heritage, crafts.

Application criteria

Within the definition of criteria we took into consideration following facts: program is designed for beginners, with the main intention to help to small handicapped villages, the maximum amount was low (up to 750 USD) – this amount required the minimal experiences of applicants, but still this sum of money enabled the applicants to realize their activities in rural conditions. Other reasons why the program was determined to villages with up to 1500 were our limitations in terms of total amount available for regranteeing as well as our human capacity (program had two regional coordinators in Banska Bystrica and Kosice – and high number of grants required enormous amount of consultations as well as necessary administration)

Applicants

The program has been open practically to any legal entity active in the village (even to unregistered individuals, if they proved to be able to organize their communities), except for for-profit organizations/businesses. Nevertheless, those were small local businesses who were quite often significantly contributing to the realizations of individual projects – either through in-kind support either financially.

Often discussed issue was eligibility of **municipal offices** to apply for a grant since the important aspect of the program was not to simply extend public budgets. Moreover, the projects presented by the local municipalities form the one of the biggest category of applicants. In this respect, mainly because the ambition of this program was to address mainly the citizens of small villages, the program has kept this criteria liberal, reflecting the fact that mainly in those small villages are capability of human potential limited and the mayors are often the only natural leaders able to introduce progressive ideas and the exclusion of representatives of municipalities from program might be mistake.

The leader of activities in village Haniska nearby Presov since their start was the ambitious mayor. While the mayor had wanted to do something for youth in village (in order that they did not waste the time in local pub), he established the civic association in village. The youth was given the devastated and unutilized rooms at the local administration office and began to reconstruct that. After the reconstruction the rooms were arranged for the needs of cultural and sport purposes. The establishment of another civic organization have followed this success and currently there are eight civic associations active in the vilage. Besides the sportmen and youth their own organizations have also the retired people, goat breeders, enviromentalists etc. Their own activities are funded by grants as well as by finances from other local activities (for example salvage of separated waste). This solution can also lead toward the motivation of citizens to separate the waste material as well as toward their civic participation. This was absolutely evident in process of comment the plan of construction of highway (EIA), when the local people were well oriented and have forced the change in tracing of road.

Second group of applicants can be characterized as a **non-profit organizations** work in rural areas (organizations of retired people and youth organizations, sporting clubs, voluntary fire brigades etc.)

Thanks to initiative of a couple local citizens has been in the Rudno nad Hronom (560 inhabitants) the Club of folk crafts established . Their main aim was the preservation of cultural tradition and resurection of traditional folk crafts. The local municipality for the needs of club have provided the building of former school, where after the reconstruction the local people can meet each other at regular meetings (workshops). The participants at these workshops are people from all age categories and the education process is performed by the craftsmen from village as well as by the people from surrounding area. The learned techniques are recorded (photographic pictures, video) and stored in their own archive and demonstration are used as a educational material at the other workshops. Activities are presented in local broadcasting, regional press and as a posters in villages in neighbourhood. The CD for interestors from abroad was presented as well. They have first own experiences with sale of their products that goal is to help to preserve the crafts and teach the young people to make them for sale. Their activities include: work with wood, painting, weaving, tinkering. Thanks to this project the successful collaboration with local entrepreneurs was established and also people from neighbour villages become to be interested in.

Other significant group of applicants consists of people – **individuals** that have been able to motivate and concentrate large groups of volunteers. Thanks to ability of these individualities, there was no problem to involve the substantial part of local community into realization of project.

There is a typical Roma settlement in village Litava. There live young unemployed woman (mother of children), that wanted to fight against the adversity. So at the beginning she together with her sister had tried to involve the part of Roma women into the project of rational nutrition and raising of culture of alimentation. They obtained a finances from the small grant and started to organize regular meetings of women. They invited also professional cook, which explained them the rules of rational nutrition and showed them a practice. The women had possibilities immediately put to proof those recipes. At the present time the women also cultivate the vegetables on salads (never known before).

Beside this they have started the course of needlework for young women. Further progress was to break the enemy attitude of local municipality so at the present the Roma people have no problem with the rent of public rooms serving for cultural events even for non-Roma citizens (major popullation). So this is very positive discovering, because the relations between those groups of people were very strained in the past.

Also the behavior of men in Roma settlement is beginning slightly to change. The project influenced the other Roma communities in neighbour villages and this fact is highly awarded.

Smaller group (but not by its meaning) consist of applicants that were (are) connected with **elementary school**. This was a new and significant experience, the explanation can be found likely in traditional authority of teacher in village and their ability to gain the supporters (parents) through their children.

Special grant round

After the first regular rounds of rural program on the basis of recommendations of the management of program there were discussions between the members of the advisory board and the management of program on the theme of special grant round with concentration on intervillages collaboration (collaboration between villages). Experiences from the past rounds (very interesting projects could not be supported because they did not fulfill the technical criterions of program – especially limited number of inhabitants) led toward the announcement of this special round as well. The typical example of so project is cycle route or educational trail which are often situated in the village territory of more villages and therefore their realization is necessary to evaluate complexly. Another reason of those experiment was the fact the some of the applicants supported in the past (thanks that previous financial support) gained an experiences and have become a leaders within their microregion. So they have been more open and could start to realize sophisticated projects, that is why the financial limit was raised up to 2.000 USD (per project). The presumptions were fulfilled, because almost all applicants had own experience with previous rounds of rural program as well as the level of presented project was higher (sometimes professional).

Seven villages in Prievidza boroughs (region) have common dumping ground. For a needs of its operation they established the civic association. If the dumping ground would be overfull and shut down, they would have to transport the waste almost 30 kilometres farther and of course for the higher costs. Therefore they have a great interest to prolong the longevity of dumping ground. So they make an active promotion in every of involved villages, regularly transport separated waste, make a compost. They can use the communication centre with the equipment (PC, scanner, copy machine), they print the brochures, leaflets and presented them (door by door), inform the citizens about the theme of waste management, organize lectures focused on those topics.

Results

In the relation toward the national level, there was a visible singularity of program on our rural scene (broad spectrum of the recipients of grants, geographical distribution, quantity of funds used on regranting). As already noted above, there was a strong positive evaluation of program from the Rural parliament. The strongest tools of program were marked its simplicity, transparency, helpfulness and was more operative. The positively was evaluated the fact the program was managed from two regional centres – Banska Bystrica and Kosice, what meant its bigger accessibility.

Through the four-year of existing of the program we obtained some negatives experiences as well. Mostly it was the mistakes on the side of applicants, which resulted

from their inexperience. Most often mistake seem to be the uncorrect determination of time schedule (harmonogram), uncorrect estimation of budget and dimensions of work. Real unreliability (responsibility) or bad intention was noted rarely. Between the most successful applicants have belonged school organizations, civic organizations and associations and some projects of mayors. Our experience shows that into the risk group we can assign the sporting clubs mainly as well as some projects of mayors.

Our experiences with the realization of program during almost its four year history definitely confirm its substantiation (but it can not be measured only by the „material“ results). Between the most significant outcomes of program certainly belong the strenghtening of human capital in rural areas of Slovakia. By means of small projects the people have learned to name their problems, to plane, to collaborate, to assess their own power, to identify and utilize own sources, to prepare the projects. They found the courage to take over the responsibility. Thanks to program a lot of our successful granties have gained valuable experiences so they have helped within the process of improvement of work of local municipalities.

For ourself, the managers and staff of Ekopolis Foundation the rural program opened a new door (chances, possibilities) and provided to us new (other) vision on our society. Our ambition is to continue within this program and make a point of obtaining a funds from the home (national, regional, local) sources.

Special Opportunities Subprogram

Special Opportunities Program (SOP) was the facility of the Your Land which allowed for support of ideas or projects that:

- a) **did not fall into any of the other subprograms** (Community, Women-Minorities-Tolerance, Advocacy, Rural) and the same time
- b) were meeting criteria of **feasibility and proposal quality** (same for all programs – sustainability of project, presence of measurable indicators, knowledge and skills in place to perform the proposed project well, demonstrated experience) and at the same time
- c) **fitted into the overall mission** of the Your Land, i.e.:
 - * to strengthen the sustainability of the third sector,
 - * to increase public participation and
 - * to have an immediate or potential systemic impact of the society.and
- d) had a **strong model value** for the NGO community and open alternative avenues how to better influence the participation, sustainability of the third sector and systemic changes affecting them and
- e) hade potentially **strong impact on the public** or on important stakeholders

In the life of the subprogram **91 grants totalling \$512 711** were awarded in following categories:

Category	Number of grants	Amount per category (Skk)	Amount per category (42 Skk/USD)
Mobilizing Grants before Parliamentary Elections 2002	33	6 301 040	150 025
Mobilizing Grants for Communal Elections 2002	2	1 098 000	26 143
Mobilizing Voters before 1 st . regional elections	15	3 848 000	91 619
Increasing Public Support for the "Good Reform of Public Administration"	10	2 253 000	53 643
Increasing Transparency in Managing Public Funds at the Local Level	4	1 250 800	29 781
Increasing Public Support for the "Good Reform of Public Administration"	10	2 253 000	53 642
Other (strengthening non profit sector, innovative and timely activities, strong model value)	17	4 530 056	107 858

The program was designed as an instrument that should allow Your Land not to miss innovative and creative proposals that through their innovation or special design represent an important opportunity for the donor. SOP was intended to provide subgrants in both ways:

1) as a response to proposals arriving to the Your Land at any time (approximately 30% of the budget). Part of this funding would be allocated to the **accelerated grants**. This would be the **reactive** component of the SOP

2) as a response to announcement of more specific thematic grant competitions (small RFAs) on particular issues that the Your Land management and USAID CTO agree upon and announce to general public (approximately 70% of the budget). This has been the **proactive** component of the SOP.

Comparing the actual results of this program with intended the program delivered exactly what it was meant for:

- It provided timely support for activities around issues that emerged and were topical in short period of time (Reform of public administration, Regional elections, grant to largest Roma newspaper before Popular Census to increase Roma self-identification, or publishing a book on Afghanistan in Slovak in time when the Afghanistan has become focused by public)
- It proactively addressed issues that became crucial for the development of the civil society in Slovakia (special grant competitions on mobilizing and informing voters before Parliamentary Elections 2002)

- It covered a need that no one else covered (Communal Elections 2002)
- It reached out to issues where more activity was and still is needed (Transparency in managing public funds)
- It provided support to unique projects with model value (Integra on microlending for Roma women or publishing a unique textbook on NonProfit Sector by PDCS, supported voluntary hospice care in Nitra)
- It provided support for infrastructural activities that strengthen the non profit sector (regional information campaign on 1% tax assignation, Minority NGO center in Kosice, Research on needs in NGO-corporate relations)

The special calls for proposals (special grant competitions) were used as the main tool in this program. Grants provided through these special competitions defined after close consultations process with AID CTO and based on sensitive evaluation of the local situation represented 79% of the total budget which is what was planned at the beginning and is considered as meeting one of the purposes of the program.

Each of the thematic special grant competitions have had its own, for that particular purpose created Advisory Grant Committee that was reviewing grant proposals based on merit. Board of Directors of Ekopolis was finally approving these grants.

Mobilizing Grants before Parliamentary Election

The program original budget has been added-on with \$100,000 that were used for grants to mobilize higher turnout of informed voters in Parliamentary Elections. In total **\$150,000 were awarded in 33** between January and July 2002 for better increasing informed citizens participation in elections.

In total Most of these pre-election grants' implementation period started in July and stretched until September, when the pre-election campaign will culminated. The monitoring of these grants is now the priority of the Your Land staff.

Efforts were made in the decision-making process to consider the regional "white spots" – areas where no or few activities were either known or funded. Also emphasis was put on regional intermediary organizations that may connect the national activities with the more local and grass roots ones.

The role of the program in connection to parliamentary elections has not been only in grant-making but also in the background activities donor and NGO coordination before elections. The cooperation on the election-related grantmaking continued through the Your Land active participation among donors, either on bilateral level or through the Donors Forum. Boris Strecansky actively facilitated meetings that were trying to fine-tune relationship among the key national campaign leaders, thus helping to the process of profiling the NGO campaign.

Your Land organized in January 2002 a meeting on evaluating the experience of NGO activity before mobilizing voters before 1st Regional Self/-Government Elections in

December 2001. This has virtually opened the discussion among broader group of NGOs on how to approach the upcoming Parliamentary Elections.

Similarly Your Land organized in April in Bratislava a meeting of awarded sub grantees of the first “election” special grant round in order to facilitate cross-fertilization of ideas and allow for sharing of information on activities in the capital with planned events outside of the capital. Similar meetings followed, organized by other partner donors such Freedom House or the Donors forum. It should be noted in this context that Your Land launched the election related grantmaking in Slovakia as effectively **first** donor that allocated funds for these activities.

This piloting role helped, in our view, to start the discussion among the NGOs and donors on the role of NGOs in the 2002 Election year and moved ahead the process. The leadership was then naturally moved to Freedom house that has a much broader and larger profile for this theme as Your Land.

Your Land continued in this facilitating role also after Elections when it has organized with Donors Forum a meeting on evaluating the results of the NGO involvement in pre-election activities.

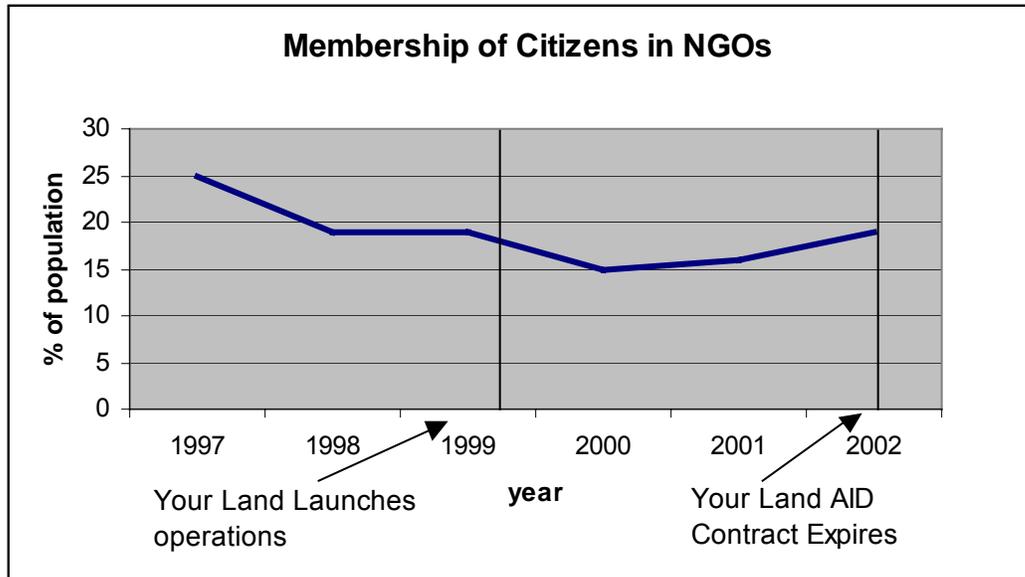
3. Impact

IR # 1 - Increased Participation

The Your Land program has implemented activities that were bound to meet one high level Intermediate Result (IR) i.e. Increased ability of citizens to participate. Associated with the IR has been three indicators:

1. the proportion of population engaged in NGO activity. USAID Slovakia determined that for the life of the proposed activity a suitable life-of-activity target shall be a return to the 25% citizen participation level in indigenous Slovak NGOs. Data collected on this indicator come from a representative survey.
2. the percentage change on number of NGOs with registered membership of over 100 members in a randomly selected sample of 69 advocacy, community and women NGOs and measured before and after. Data for this indicator were gathered through a survey conducted by Focus Agency on a sample of 100 randomly selected NGOs of which 69 were the same before and after. The validity of this sample is limited to the sample.
3. the percentage change of number of community based NGOs that claim more than 100 citizens being actively participating in their activities in last year. Data for this indicator were gathered through a survey conducted by Focus Agency on a sample of 43 randomly selected community based NGOs of which majority were the same before and after. The validity of this sample is limited to the sample.

The indicator # 1 has been measured in representative surveys delivered by the Focus polling agency in data series covering each year. The results of these polls are in the graph below:



Membership of citizens in NGO's (in %)

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2003
A member of a voluntary organization, civic association or club	25	19	19	15	16	19

Source: FOCUS, February 1997, February 1998, February 1999, January 2000 and March 2001, Focus January 2003

Most of the members of voluntary organizations, associations, clubs and civil associations may be found among¹²:

- women (21% of women declared that they are members of a voluntary organization, club or association)
- elder respondents in the age 55-59 years (24%) and 60 years and more (23%)
- university educated people (23%) and among people having full secondary education (school leaving exam – Matura 23%),
- respondents that work as executive expert workers (25%), creative workers (25%), entrepreneurs and self-employed (26%), retired (23%) and students (25%)
- respondents in towns of 2-5 thousand inhabitants (23%)
- respondents living in Trnava region:

¹² Mentioned are only statistically significant values.

While accepting a certain statistical error¹³ in measuring of this indicator it can be determined that the the level of participation of adult population on NGO membership has **slightly increased** compared to previous years 2000-2001.

As compared to the original USAID target, the indicator has not met the target of 25%, nevertheless, that declining trend has been stopped and may continue in future. If we would take into account the statistical error +/- 2% on the size of the sample, the difference between 1997 levels (27-23%) and 2003 (17-21%) may be as much as 10% (27% in 1997 vs. 17% in 2003 – very conservative data manipulation) or as little as 2% (23% in 1997 vs. 21% in 2003 – very optimistic data manipulation) .

There might be various interpretations of these results.

First, the attribution of change in this indicator to activities of Your Land Program can hardly be made without any further examination. However, a contribution of activities of Your Land to the change on this indicator is possible and very likely. The share of this contribution on other factors that have contributed to change in this indicator is however an open question which is hardly answered with the data available.

Intuitively, one of the factors could have been the range of activities going on in public space before elections. There have been many mobilizing campaigns that could have left a trace in membership levels.

Nevertheless, it can be hoped that the positive change on this indicator can be a marker of a trend to continue. Your Land program does not end with the ending of the USAID Cooperative Agreement and will continue to operate its key programs: advocacy, community philanthropy, rural leaders, women. However a major factor in sustaining this trend will be availability of independent funding aimed at strengthening participation.

The **second indicator** measuring the percentage change on number of NGOs with registered membership exceeding 100 members in a randomly selected sample of 69 advocacy, community and women NGOs received following data:

N=69 (2000) N = 69 (2002)	2000	2002	% change
Percentage of NGOs that claim to have more than 100 registered members	13% (9 out of 69)	16% (11 out of 69)	3%

The data on this indicator show a slight increase and this is a disappointing trend. The membership building has not yet become a priority for many of community or advocacy organizations. The success would be if the percentage would increase by 10 or 20%. Only slight increase is a sign that can be interpreted so that NGOs have not yet taken the membership building seriously.

¹³ After factoring in the possible statistical error the declared level of NGO membership among adult population of Slovakia ranges in interval of 17%-21%.

The **third indicator** describes the percentage change of number of community based NGOs that claim more than 100 citizens being actively participating in their activities in last year.

N = 47 (2000) N = 43 (2002)	2000	2002	% change
Percentage of NGOs that claim to have more than 100 citizens actively participating in their activities in last year	48% (23 out of 47)	40% (17 out of 43)	-8%

IR # 2 – Increased Locally Generated Funding

Another important intermediate result (IR) that has been tracked as a part of the program is the **increased percent of locally generated external funding support.**

There are two indicators that have been tracked and measured during the life of the Your Land program on this IR:

- (1) **Amount of Sk generated from local sources** (public, 1%, gifts from individuals, corporations, revenues for services and own asset management) by 4 community foundations (Banska Bystrica, Trenčín, Pezinok, Prešov)

	1998	2002	% change
average amount Sk of locally raised income in four community foundations (Presov, Trencin, Banska Bystrica, Pezinok}	Sk 612.000	Sk 952,000	55%

The source of data on this indicator has been annual reports published by these organizations in 1998/1999 and their annual financial reports for 2002 collected personally through email and personal communication (annual reports for 2002) have not been yet published.

The sample of these organizations is not representative for the whole NGO field, however suggests that local community based organizations outside of capital have found a way how to more effectively tap local resources

All of the organizations in this sample have received multiple grants from Your Land in 1999-2002 which also may be a factor that needs to be taken into account.

(2) Second indicator on this IR is the **percentage of community NGOs that receive funding from local sources** (individuals, corporations, local government, self-financing)

Sample 47 community NGOs 2000¹⁴

Sample 43 community NGOs 2002¹⁵

Number of Community NGOs receiving funding from local sources

N=47 (2000) N=43 (2002)	2000	2002	% change
local entrepreneurs	55%	58%	3%
local individuals	64%	58%	-6%
local government	57%	65%	8%
self-financing activities	42%	72%	30%

The sample has been identified in a random choice out of 100 community based NGOs. Addresses were provided by the YL staff. The samples had 60% overlap between 2000 and 2002.

The change on the indicator shows that there is some slight increase in receiving funding from local entrepreneurs and local government, significant increase in self-financing activities and slight drop in receiving funding from local individuals.

IR # 3 – Increased Sustainability of Non Profit Organizations

Third important intermediate result (IR) that has been associated to the activities of the the program is the **increased sustainability of non profit organizations**.

There were three indicators that have been tracked and measured during the life of the Your Land program on this IR:

1. **Percentage change in number of NGOs that have a financial reserve higher than 100 thousand Sk.** The sample consists of randomly selected advocacy, community and women NGOs measured before and after. Data for this indicator were gathered through a survey conducted by Focus Agency on a sample of 100 randomly selected NGOs of which 69 were the same before and after. The validity of this sample is limited to the sample. The data gathering was conducted through a mailing questionnaire and follow-up telephone survey conducted by Focus agency.

¹⁴ Baseline survey of NGOs conducted by Focus agency in December 2000 commissioned by Consortium of Ekopolis/ETP

¹⁵ Post-survey of NGOs conducted by Focus agency in December 2002 commissioned by Consortium of Ekopolis/ETP.

N=69 (2000) N=69 (2002)	2000	2002	% change
Percentage and Number of NGOs that have financial reserves higher than 100 thousand Sk.	11% (8 out of 69)	20% (14 out of 69)	9%

2. **Existence of documents proving partnerships between NGOs and local governments among community based NGOs.** The sample consists of randomly selected community based NGOs (N=47 in 2000 and N=43 in 2002) which partly overlapped. The data gathering was conducted through a mailing questionnaire and follow-up telephone survey conducted by Focus agency.

N=47 (2000) N=43 (2002)	2000	2002	% change
Existence of written documents about cooperation between NGO and local government	36% (17 out of 47)	47% (20 out of 43)	11%
Existence of written documents on cooperation with other organizations in their community	23% (11 out of 47)	30% (13 out of 43)	7%

The data suggest that there is a trend among community based NGOs to develop partnerships with local governments but also with other organizations in their communities. The data (not shown here) further confirm that existence of partnership documents provides for financial and other material benefits for these organizations. (82% of those that have had cooperation agreement signed with local government in 2000 have received financial benefits from it. This percentage has increased in 2002 to 100%. The same applies to cooperation with other institutions.

IR # 4 – System change in the society

The last intermediate result that has been associated to the activities of YL has been the **level of achieving systemic changes in the society**. This IR has been measured mostly by subjective assessment of Advisory Committee and program manager using qualitative indicator which are described in paragraphs relevant to each program in part

Outcomes However, one quantifiable indicator has been tracked through baseline survey:

Number of Advocacy NGOs that claim that their activities have resulted in changed a position of local authorities to the issue

No. of advocacy NGOs claiming their results have:

N=38 (2000) N=30 (2002)	2000	2002	% change
Been accepted by public authorities and changed regulationsf	39% (15 out of 38)	53% (16 out of 30)	14%
Led to establishing of partnership of local government, state administration and NGOs	29% (11 out of 38)	43% (13 out of 30)	14%
Changed a position of self-government towards an issue	26% (10 out of 38)	26% (8 out of 30)	0%

Data suggest some positive trend in advocacy NGOs achieving a change in their assessment of situation.

Your Land and Ekopolis/ETP Role in NGO Sector and Philanthropy Promotion

Below is a sample of activities that were initiated or catalyzed by Your Land and members of its team in last five years to demonstrate the connection of Your Land to the NGO sector issue and ability to respond to emerging challenges in constructive way as “engaged” intermediary.

Community Foundations. Juraj Mesík played a major part in bringing the concept of community foundations to Slovakia, through initiating the Community Foundation Banska Bystrica. Later on the community foundation movement received attention through the Community Philanthropy Development Initiative, a coalition of donors and NGOs in promotion of the concept, that was facilitated by ETP and PDCS. Boris Strečanský edited a Feasibility Study on Community Foundations Development

FOIA. The campaign for a “Competent Freedom of Information Act” that was launched by a coalition of advocacy NGOs in late 1999 and peaked in May 2000 by adopting the law has been supported by a strategic grant from the Your Land that facilitated production of TV spots that were broadcasted in prime time of public TV. The grant was made in a timely manner and as one of the first grants to this initiative. Most of the support from the donor community for the campaign came after the adoption of the law for its dissemination and implementation.

Using Revenues of Privatization for Capitalization of Foundation Endowments. This theme, which may partly influence the financial sustainability of the Slovak third

sector, has been launched after the initiative of Juraj Mesik and further elaborated by Boris Strečanský and Helena Woleková in the Fall 2000. Currently, Boris Strečanský facilitates an intra-sectoral discussion on the proposal and leads the working group that lobbies for adoption of the concept in the government.

Foundation Law. The Foundation law has been drafted for three years already. Boris Strečanský as representative of Your Land has written numerous position papers and commentaries of various versions of the law and held many consultations with its drafters to ensure that the view of smaller foundations will be considered and that ability of foundations to manage their assets properly will not be overly restricted.

Decentralization. The NGO campaign for reform of public administration and decentralization has emerged in the Spring 2001 when first signs of governmental unwillingness to decide on the reform appeared. ETP and Ekopolis have participated and co-planned events of the Anti-Crisis Committee. Marcel Zajac has been the contact point for the petition of NGOs in which over 400 NGOs from Slovakia signed for the support of the Reform.

Regional Development. The regional disparities and clientelism attached to various regional development projects is closely monitored by Juraj Mesik, who stirred a public debate in the last year about the routing of highways and revealed serious deficiencies in government development decisions. Even if the highway projects have not changed, the debate brought the issue of regional development to the attention of the media and public.

NGO Infrastructure Development. Ekopolis was instrumental in growth of regional umbrella organisations – Regional Gremia for the Third Sector. The first RG3S was elected in Banska Bystrica region in 1996 and the idea spread since then to most of the regions. Since 1999, some of the RG3Ss are important partners and social actors on issues such as National Plan for Regional Development related to the EU.

Transparency at the local level. While Your Land grant programs were open to receive applications on these topics, not many NGOs were covering this issue. As the issue became a social priority, Your Land decided to enter into this topic proactively and used its Special Opportunities program to launch a Special Grant Competition on Increasing Transparency in Managing Public Funds at the Local and Regional Level.

Corporate Philanthropy. The cultivation of corporate philanthropy is a long-term priority in the development of philanthropy in Slovakia. In 1999 ETP Slovakia has pioneered a joint program with the largest mobile phone operator in Slovakia Globtel GSM (currently Orange), and administered an open regional grant program worth \$200 thousand that was aimed to support various activities of citizens improving the quality of life in their region. Over 25 grants were made and Globtel decided to cooperate with ETP on similar programs in 2001. After running the program, other corporate donors such as Jacobs Suchard launched similar programs. Over \$250,000 were distributed in grants by Orange in close assistance from Center for Philanthropy-ETP in a period of 1999-2002.

VI. PROCESS

Consortium of Ekopolis Foundation and Center for Philanthropy - ETP

ETP and Ekopolis operated in a Consortium through a Memorandum of Cooperation signed in July 1999 and continued until now. The Memorandum describes the rights and duties of each partner. The legal partner and the financially responsible partners to USAID has been the Ekopolis Foundation. Technically, ETP Slovakia was invoicing Ekopolis Foundation for the work of its staff that participated on the management of the program and for the expenses incurred in the program work. The invoices were accompanied by the detailed financial documentation to justify the expenses.

The key management decisions were taken through a consensus of the Your Land team, and the day-to-day operation was organized through program managers who were responsible for their program area. Towards third parties Your Land acted as one program (institution). There were regular bi-annual review meetings and annual retreats of the Consortium partners and the Your Land team that had both, operational and strategic planning function. Until now the operation of the Consortium has worked smoothly without any problems that would have affect program performance.

In September 2002 the ETP Slovakia has divided into two entities: One with focus on promotion and cultivation of philanthropy and civil society based in Bratislava with the name Center for Philanthropy-ETP and the "old" ETP Slovakia with its program focus on regional sustainable development, Roma minority and environmental management training. The Center for Philanthropy has continued in implementation of the Your Land program until now.

The Consortium of Ekopolis/ETP has been succesfull in winning the RFA from theTrust for Civil Society in CEE which provided \$2 mil. over 2002-2005 to strengthen the financial and institutional sustainability of the non profit sector and improve the legal and fiscal framework.

Program announcements

Program publicity was critically important for achieving the program's strategic objective to make it accessible and to receive a large pool of quality applications. Equally important objective for the program was to keep its permanent visibility for its transparency and for public awareness.

Main ways for advertising the program among its target groups and broad public were **Press Releases and Conferences** at the occasion of deadlines (beforehand as well as after) to inform public about both goals and conditions of the Your Land programs and about the actual numbers of received applications and supported grants. In the occasion of half-time period a special press release was sent out to inform public about the awarded projects and results of the program.

Important tool to get the message out to regions were **Regional presentations** conducted in a sufficient time before due deadlines including couple of special grant competitions. Most intensive announcement campaign was of course realized right after the launching of the program. There have been three major presentation waves during the life of the program in 1999-2002 covering whole Slovakia. Typically, presentations were held in major cities such as Kosice, Presov, Poprad, Zilina, Nitra, Banska Bystrica and Trencin.

Continually up-dated web site www.tvojazem.sk served as the most often used tool for those who were interested in getting all the details about all of the Your Land subprograms including deadlines, their technical description, criteria for evaluation and formulars for grant proposals. For those without an access to the Internet comprehensive brochures were regularly prepared and distributed on regional presentations or send by regular mail upon the requests.

Grantmaking Procedures and Decision Making

For each defined program area except rural grants there were two types of grants available.

Standard Grants with a maximum of 20,000 USD and usually ranging in size of award between 2,000 and 10,000 USD had been awarded within regular or special grant rounds. The approval of the each grant required recommendation of Program Advisory Committee, and approval CTO and Ekopolis' Board of Trustees. Typically support of one-year projects though support was available with few exceptional two-year programs.

Fast Grant with a maximum of 2,000 USD required an approval of majority of the Program Advisory Board members and CTO. Money transfers were done immediately after CTO's approval. Consequently these grants were reported and formally approved at the closest meeting of the Board of Trustees. The same mechanism was used to approve the voucher grants offered by the Community philanthropy and development sub-program.

Deadlines for submission of applications occurred in advance within a one-year plan. For the special grant round then they were published approximately four to six weeks before the deadline.

The approval process had typically taken about four weeks till the decision of Board of Trustees Meeting and money transfers were usually realized by six weeks after the deadlines.

Based on the overall strategic goals of the program, each subprogram had developed its own selection criteria, which will be followed and evaluated by both the staff and Program Advisory Committees. They consisted of five to seven experts active in respective fields living in various geographical parts of Slovakia.

Transparency including clear and strict conflict of interest policy has been an important part of Ekopolis/ ETP's grantmaking practice and applied to any decision-making forums.

There was also adopted a Grant Approval Policy that specified the governance and decisionmaking process about grants.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation has been built in to the application and reporting process of Your Land program and its subprograms.

As part of the application process each project proposal was expected to introduce an explanation of how the project relates to the grant program strategy, including clear and measurable goals and timelines. This information was directly relevant to later monitoring and evaluation and as qualitative feature of the proposals this was taken into consideration in the selection of awarded grants.

Ongoing monitoring of each project was done primarily through progress reports and site visits by program coordinator.

A final report, including a final financial report, was required for each supported grant and included a comparison of the anticipated and actual achievements.

Quantifiable objectives were used where appropriate. Even more critical though more difficult to measure were qualitative objectives. Judgments on results of all projects supported within individual subprograms as well as their overall impact was regularly discussed with the Advisory committees and staff meetings and consequently reported to the Ekopolis' Board of Trustees and donors of the program.

External Evaluation of Subprograms. At the closure of the program each subprogram was evaluated by an independent evaluator to provide an in-depth evaluation of projects, identify the impact of the programs on the supported NGOs and their target groups and also identify areas of improvement for their further continuation. External evaluations of individual subprograms are attached to this report.

There was conducted a **baseline study** in each of the three areas (women, advocacy and community) describing the status of these NGOs in 2000 and in 2002. The study results allow to compare some indicators on some intermediate results on a sample that can be determined as representative for the target audience of Your Land program. Results of these surveys shall not be extrapolated fully to other NGOs but they suggest some trends and developments in their institutional and programmatic development. This study focused on measurable results and impacts of the program on its strategic goal to increase the public participation as well as on NGOs as direct beneficiaries. Main conclusions of these evaluations are presented at the separate place in this report.

Final evaluation measure was the tracking of the key indicator on the main IR through **representative survey**. This surveys have been conducted annually through funding from AID.

Unique Aspects of Your Land Grant-making

Risk taking. The “engaged donor approach” is itself quite risky as we have to watch very carefully not to cross the imaginary line between the role of the donor and that of the NGO activist. While we believe that our constituency consists to a large extent of advocacy NGOs, we are also involved in discussions and networks with them. Your Land has also proactively issued calls for proposals that haven’t brought any results – for example the so called “Zupny Tender,” through which we expected to initiate activities for establishing regional grant-making institutions in Southern Slovakia and Eastern Slovakia. Despite the failure (poor quality applications), we made an effort and learned from it.

Flexibility. While NGOs had the opportunity to obtain support from various donors for activities improving their cooperation with local government, Your Land took a proactive approach and quickly launched a special grant competition at the time of the campaign for the reform of public administration. Your Land was the only donor in the country to initiate a special grant competition for NGOs to be able to peak their advocacy and awareness raising capacity at the time when the government and parliament would be discussing the reform (i.e. before the summer). 10 grants were made in an extremely short period (from announcement to award only 1 month), which generated over 25 applications.

Regional Approach and Sensitivity. Your Land, through its three offices in Bratislava, Banská Bystrica and Košice, tries to be available to regional NGOs as much as possible. Our program managers travel frequently and organize presentations of the program in other regional centers. In addition, Your Land, recognizing the lack of development of NGO activity in Eastern Slovakia, invested its resources in stimulating this activity and plans to do that in future.

Proactivity. Your Land issues special calls for proposals on topics that are either underrepresented or not sufficiently addressed by the NGO community (e.g. on topics such as the above mentioned Transparency in Management of Public Funds at the Local Level or Building Grant-making Capacities in Regions of Zemplín and Gemer/Malohont).

Innovation in Governance. Your Land announced in late 1999 its Conflict of Interest Policy that resulted in rejecting several, good quality proposals. While these situations were very difficult, they helped to strengthen the integrity of the program and avoid tendencies to cronyism and “submarine disease,” which is often excused by argument that “there are no other good people or proposals”. Your Land believes that a local grantmaking body should be prudent in these aspects as it shows the example to the whole nonprofit community. In a situation where standards of integrity are deeply discredited in the whole society, the nonprofit sector and its donors should be demonstrating themselves how it can be done. Your Land is aware, that that there are many obstacles in achieving this ideal.

Donor synergy. Your Land has cooperated with other donors in areas, where a higher level of cooperation could be achieved. For example Your Land worked with Open Society Fund in assisting community foundations in Slovakia where the roles of OSF and YL were clearly defined and complemented each other. Furthermore, in the Women program YL coordinated its activities with OSF and the Canada Fund and vice versa. It is

an active member of the Donors' Forum (leading working group on Capitalization of Endowments).

Technical Assistance to Grantees

Competent and flexible technical assistance provided to beneficiaries of the Your Land program was vitally important to insure high quality projects and to continue to develop the organizational capacity of NGOs working in the program areas.

Staff of the program used its considerable amount of experience in providing a variety of technical assistance activities to Slovak NGOs.

Most often the concrete forms of technical assistance to our grantees were provided through:

1. Direct consultations with applicants and grantees regarding their proposals and projects. Usually the most intensive period of consultations occurred two-one weeks before deadlines of grant rounds. These were taking place face to face in offices in Bratislava, Banska Bystrica and Kosice, via phone or by site visits.
2. Organizing of meetings and workshops to bring together groups, on a formal or informal basis, to promote information sharing and collaboration (f.e. YL organized series of meetings with Dorothy Reynolds, senior expert on Community Foundations in Summer 2001 on issues of independence, fund development and board involvement, similarly meetings of community organizations were organized by YL in Poprad, Kosice, Bratislava and Banska Bystrica to discuss issues of community development, providing grantees with special information –for example women NGOs outside of Bratislava received from YL packages with recent key publications published on gender issues, organizing of women NGOs, organization and facilitation of meetings of NGOs before parliamentary elections etc.)
3. Encouraging the grantees to attend targeted training programs for NGOs in relevant areas – e.g. organizational development

A special kind of technical assistance was developed during the program implementation under the Community philanthropy and development sub-program. So called “voucher grants” the activists of community-based organizations might benefit of small size grants (typically \$1000) that enabled them to get support for self-defined needs in their own institutional development.

The experience of the program showed that the amount of technical assistance required for a grantee was not directly dependent on the amount of money given to that grantee. Indeed, often grantees who receive very small grants. A special kind of technical assistance was than provided to rural organization within the Citizens to the village sub-program – requiring even more straight ward and simple-kind way of communication.

Objectives of technical assistance were complementary to grant-making and the most critical among them included:

- Increase of efficiency of grantees in project design and implementation and in addressing challenges
- Identification and support specific strategies and trends which contribute to grantee efficiency and sustainability
- Increase of grantee's capacity to involve broad public in their work and to increase public participation in the agenda setting and decision-making process,
- Fostering cooperation within the third sector, link grantees with common interests across society and across national borders

Governance and management

Staff involved in the YL and its sub-programs

Consortium Ekopolis and ETP and its staff have many years of grantmaking and leadership experience in the third sector. Following distinctive abilities were used to deliver the program:

- * Extensive regional coverage with offices in Banska Bystrica, Kosice and Bratislava
- * Outreach into both urban and rural communities and outside of the national capital
- * A strong network with local, regional, national and international organizations
- * A wealth of experience providing training, consultations and leadership to the NGO community and consultations for international organizations

The program was administered jointly by Ekopolis and ETP, while the legal responsibility was on the Ekopolis Foundation - its Executive director Juraj Mesik (since July 2002 Peter Medved) and its Board of Directors. Boris Strecansky, director of the ETP and the Board member of the Ekopolis, served with him as co-director of the program.

In July 2002 Juraj Mesik resigned from the position of the director. This has happened after his decision to run as a candidate in the Parliamentary elections later in 2002. After this decision Juraj, though he has run as an independent candidate, he has interrupted also affiliations with some other NGO activities involved in non-partisan pre-election programs.

After resignation of Juraj Mesik from position of the director, former manager of the Advocacy program Peter Medved took over this responsibility.

For the Advocacy program, new program manager - Katarina Boskova was hired.

Another change in the staff during the program period was on the position of Women-Minorities-Tolerance program, where former program assistant Zuzana Thullnerova replaced Martina Tvrdonova, after she left to her maternity leave in January 2001.

Financial manager and managers of other programs remained the same during the whole program:

Livia Haringova - Financial manager

Marcel David Zajac – Community Philanthropy and Development Program

Milan Hronec and Miroslav Pollak – Rural Program

To ensure fluent and effective communication flow the management used following tools:

- Regular meetings among all three offices - e.g. regular meetings of program and regional coordinators
- Internal electronic conferences for all stakeholders of the program
- Close contact of program coordinators with their advisory committees
- The management has been using a grant-tracking database system currently used that is tailored to the needs of the grant-making process.

Board of Directors of Ekopolis Foundation

Board of Directors is the highest governing body in the Ekopolis Foundation. It had the final authority over approval of grants. Over the last three years following people served in the Board of the Ekopolis Foundation:

Laura Dittel, Director for Slovakia Carpathian Foundation, Kosice (1994 – 2001)
 Andrej Steiner, program manager, UNDP, Bratislava - Košice (1999- 2001)
 Michal Kravcik, Chairman, NGO People and Water, Kosice (1995 – 2000)
 Mirka Čierna, Daphne Foundation, Bratislava in 1999) (1999-2001)
 Miroslav Kunderata, Director, EPCE-Czech Republic, Brno (1997-2000)
 Viktor Niznansky, Consultant, MESA 10 / Union of Town and Villages, Bratislava (1995-1999)
 Dusan Ondrusek, Director, Partners for Democratic Change - Slovakia, Bratislava (1991-2001)
 Boris Strecansky, Executive Director, ETP-Slovakia, Bratislava (since 1997)
 Alexander Vagner, Consultant and City Council Member, Zvolen (1995 - 2001)
 Pavol Zilincik, Public Interest Lawyer, Center for Env.Public Advocacy, Ponicka Huta 1996 -2001)
 Norbert Brázda, Changenet, Bratislava (2001 -)
 Andreas Beckmann, WWF-Europe, Wien (since September 2002)
 Eva Čobejová-Beerová, DominoFórum, Bratislava (since 2000)
 Juraj Mesík, World Bank, Washington (since December 2002)

List of members of the Advisory Committees of Grant Programs of Your Land in 1999-2002.

Advisory Committees reviewed grant proposals based on merit and made recommendations for support which were then approved or disapproved by the Board of Directors.

Advocacy

Slavomir Krupa – expert on social issues, Bratislava
 Vladimír Pirošík – lawyer, Bratislava
 Zuzana Mistríková – media expert, Bratislava
 Jana Kviečinská – governmental officer, Bratislava
 Pavol Žilinčík – public advocacy attorney, Ponicka Huta
 Norbert Brázda – Director of Changenet – NGO internet daily, Bratislava
 Eva Sopková – women activist, Humenné
 Anna Koptová – Roma leader, Košice
 Eva Mydlikova – expert on social issues, Bratislava

Community Development

Karolína Miková – PDCS consultant, Bratislava
Daniel Brezina – civic activist, SKOI, Rimavska Sobota
Branislav Orgoník – consultant, Dutch consulting company VVMZ, Trenčín
Lajos Tuba – local government employee, Šamorín

Community Philanthropy

Eva Reiselová – journalist, Trend, Bratislava
Vlado Michal – owner of Artforum, private entrepreneur, Bratislava
Rudolf Bauer – Parliament deputy, former mayor of Kosice
Brano Orgonik – VVMZ a.s., Trenčín

Women – Minorities – Tolerance

Attila Szép, political scientist, Bratislava
Petra Lukšíková – expert on Roma minority, Bratislava
Dušan Ondrušek – PDCS, Bratislava
Silvester Sawicky – Gay NGO leader, Bratislava
Klára Giertlová, social NGO leader, Banská Bystrica
Eva Čobejová-Beerová, journalist, Bratislava
Katarína Križanová, physician, Bratislava
Martina Tvrdonova, Bratislava
Olga Pietruchova, women activist, Bratislava

Special Opportunities – Parliamentary Election Related Grants

Marián Gabriel – director, Civic Eye Association, Bratislava
Dorota Vlachova – Dutch Embassy, Bratislava
Jan Surotchak – Director, Freedom House, Slovakia
Robert Vlašič – Director, Pontis Foundation
Jana Kadlecova – Representative, Sasakawa Peace Foundation

Special Opportunities – Reform of Public Administration and Regional Elections

Miro Pollák – program manager, ETP Slovakia, Košice
Viktor Nižňanský – Governmental Plenipotentiary for Reform of Public Administration
Peter Novotný – project manager, Civic Eye Association, Bratislava
Robert Vlašič – Director, Pontis Foundation
Jana Kadlecova – Representative, Sasakawa Peace Foundation
Juraj Mesík – Director, Ekopolis Foundation

Special Opportunities – Transparency in Managing Public Funds

Mario Virčík – Office of Government of Slovak Republic
Katarína Tomanová – consultant, Banska Bystrica
Richard Rybníček – Director, IVO, Bratislava
Norbert Brázda – Director, Changenet

VII. ATTACHEMENTS – SUMMARIES OF INDEPENDENT EVALUATIONS

ADVOCACY PROGRAM – Summary of Evaluation

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Introduction

This external evaluation of the Your Land/Advocacy Program was done during September/October 2002. Total of 10 grantees were visited and interviewed during this period from all regions of Slovakia. Usually, there was more than one person from an organization present during the interviews. Also manager from NPOA (Civil Society Development Foundation) as representative of other important foundation supporting advocacy projects in Slovakia was consulted. In addition to these organizations and institutions, director of EPCE SK and former manager of the program Peter Medved was interviewed, as well as Vlado Pirošik from Environmental Lobbying Facility and Norbert Brázda from Changenet were interviewed as persons familiar with public rights and advocacy needs in Slovakia and as members of the Advisory Board of the Program in the past. Mr. Brázda is also on the Board of Directors of Nadácia Ekopolis.

The main purpose of this evaluation is to:

1. Identify the impact of the Program on the supported NGOs and their target groups.
2. Identify areas of improvement for the further continuation of the Program.

The main emphasis of this evaluation is to look at qualitative results of the Program.

Role of the Program in the Slovak Society

The Your Land/Advocacy Program started in 1999 and soon has become the most important funding mechanism for both local and national public initiatives in the field of advocacy in Slovakia. This term ADVOCACY should be understood in a broader sense covering issues related to influencing national legislation process on public right to know or very local action aimed at empowering citizens and giving them financial but also moral support for activities they would like to achieve.

The program had two major goals: to support those grassroots citizen groups that are able to achieve qualitative changes in a society and are not afraid of entering conflicts, and to support newly emerged civic groups that would achieve a change. The first goal was mostly achieved (see some examples below). Although the second objective did not become a key target of the program, there were many cases, when newly emerged organizations/leaders were identified and given the opportunity to realize their projects (Environmental Lobbying Facility, Miniregion 21 in Hanusovce, Turcany Biking Group JUS, Communication House in Kosice, etc.).

The program started after elections in 1998 when new government of Mikulas Dzurinda went into power, and populist party of Vladimir Meciar that had shown its anti NGO and anti civil society thinking in the past, lost and went into opposition. Despite this fact, the Program seems to have a major importance for existing and newly emerged NGOs, and

in reviving public confidence in its own rights and power. Although a bit late concerning the political development in Slovakia, the Program has been very important for development of advocacy groups in a democratic society. Or even more importantly, the Program helped the local public initiatives to accomplish their own ideas and projects regardless political representation or support of national, regional or local governments. I see this as one of the major accomplishments of the Program having in mind that societies in Central and Eastern Europe has been used to wait for decisions from their governments or other central institutions. The Program has very well added to previous activities of EPCE SK in this regards another new value that has broaden the EPCE's constituency and scope of the support.

In addition to the Your Land/Advocacy Program, NPOA has been another major donor of advocacy and similar public empowering projects in Slovakia. Its program on Development of Civil Society has been the main program of NPOA and was used by NGOs active in advocacy since 1993. This program was closed in 2002 and there is no continuation nor the follow up planned for it. It is possible to say, that these two foundations have played a critical role for supporting NGOs working on advocacy issues. No other foundations in Slovakia have supported advocacy related projects in 1998-2002. Given the fact, that submitting a proposal to NPOA is a difficult process very much influenced by European Commission's byurocracy, it is not accessible for many small NGOs. The same development has been observed in the neighboring Czech Republic where NROS (similar foundation established by European Commission as NPOA) made its rules for submitting a proposal very difficult for smaller NGOs. Therefore, EPCE SK with the Your Land/Advocacy Program and simple and easy grant giving mechanism has played a critical role in supporting advocacy groups as well as citizens' initiatives on the entire territory of Slovakia.

The Program has been also critical to development and monitoring the implementation of the Access to Information Act and informing about this new Act (2000) the NGO community and journalists in Slovakia. It helped significantly to establish strong network of home violence and victim support organizations (Pro familia, SLONAD, PON), and helped to a professional growth of NGOs working in environmental field (VLK, SOVS, STUŽ) or significantly supported various environmental local initiatives (SOS Zahorie, Turciany Biking Group JUS, Village Association of Hornad, Slatinka, EQ Klub, Za matku Zem, etc.). In addition, the program was important from local democracy point of view when supported several locally essential activities (Kysuky kulturny kruh, SAIA Zilina, Nezavisle občianske zdruzenie v Kapusanoach - za zdrave zivotne prostredie, OVA, POF). To certain extent, it helped several socially oriented NGOs to improve their services (Detsky klub pre telesne postihnute deti a mladez v Kosiciach, Zdruzenie pre pomoc mentalne postihnuym ludom, Inkuzia, Hospicova starostlivost - diecezna charita v Nitre, Navrat Association, Umenie pomoci Association).

Importance of the Program for local NGOs and their target groups

Although it is not typical for this Program, even small amount of money can make a big difference in a community and help local citizens to gain self-confidence. This has been clearly demonstrated by Kysuce Cultural Club in Stara Bystrica that with support of less than \$300 (the smallest grant in the Program) stabilized local cultural events, started to publish local newsletter, and team of skilled people was put together. As a result of the grant, more citizens come to meetings of the village's council and are more interested in decision making in their village. This project demonstrates the need for the non-

byrocratic procedures and friendly approach to grant seekers. There is no other grant maker in Slovakia at the moment that would be so accessible as EPCE SK.

Most of the interviewed grantees stated that the money from the Program came in a hard period of development of their organization and helped them to become either more professional or to stabilize their organization. Some NGOs have gained respect in their town from local government politicians (Clovek a buducnost) others were able to higher lawyers and influence national legislation (Pro Familia), government bylaws (VIPA) or regional state authorities' financial policies (Pomoc obetiam nasilia). In the field of Victims Support, the grant helped to develop a national NGO with regional offices (Pomoc obetiam nasilia) that became an active member of the European Forum for Victim Services. Activities of the foundation Obcan a demokracia on monitoring the new Act on Access to Information helped significantly to increase awareness about the new Law among state employees, journalists and NGOs. Several precedent decisions of the court and government offices have set up the best practice in providing information for the future.

The program has been essential as a source of salaries and honoraria for people participating on funded projects since other financial sources available in Slovakia usually do not fund such budget lines. This issue seems to be quite a hot topic when talking about sustainability of NGOs and not only in Slovakia but elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe.

Some criticism of the program came from several NGOs that were not supported, stressing that Nadácia Ekopolis supports mostly those NGOs with whom it has already experience from the past and is a bit reluctant to support other NGOs. To some extent this was supported by a member of the program's Advisory Board who stated that sometimes the board had difficulty in decision making and distinguishing between a specific proposal received and an organization's renown. But this is a classical dilemma that all grantmakers have to face. To run a program on institutional support might be a solution to this issue. In all means, it is recommended to stick to criteria of a given program and to evaluate only proposals received no matter who submitted it. From my 8 year experience in grantmaking and assisting various advisory boards this seems to be always a big challenge.

Process of project evaluation has been probably the best one in Slovakia. Special board for Your Land/Advocacy Program that discussed all projects in details was quite unique. For example foundation NOS that administered DemNet program in 1996-1998 used external experts that had done a written evaluation of proposals and no discussion and comparison of proposal was therefore possible. Open Society Fund, on the other hand, has one grant committee for all programs of OSF in Trust for Democracy and thus understanding of advocacy field in Slovakia is limited.

Support to NGO Beficium from Prievidza working on issues related to retired citizens can be an example of support to a group that at the end did not achieve the objectives of the grant received. There was couple of examples like this (for example Slovak Helsinki Committee). All of them represented grants to non-environmental NGOs, e.g. to sectors that Slovak EPCE had no or little experience before the US AID program started. These not successful grants were given during the first year of the program, before EPCE staff got familiar with the situation and players in non-environmental fields.

Importance of the Program to Nadacia Ekopolis

The Program was important for the development of Nadacia Ekopolis (Slovak EPCE) itself. It formed the foundation and changed its focus from just environmental issues to civil and community issues. The Your Land/Advocacy program has been the most important program among foundation's programs and projects in 1999-2002. The Board of Directors has given a close attention to its performance and discussed its focus and accomplishments of supported projects quite broadly.

Experience with US AID funding has been the most difficult one in history of Slovak EPCE. Preparation of project summaries for US AID in English was unusual in EPCE practice, and changes made to decisions of EPCE Board of Directors (happened once) was a bit surprising. On the other hand EPCE appreciates very much the US AID willingness to listen to its suggestions and requirements. The level of bureaucracy has been reasonable when taking into account the fact that it is a government agency accountable to the public. US AID might be a good example in this matter for various EU funds.

Three employees of Nadácia Ekopolis served in advisory boards of NPOA programs (community projects, support of philanthropy, anti-corruption program). This proves that EPCE SK is viewed as an experienced foundation with knowledgeable and experienced staff.

Conclusions and recommendations for continuation of the Program ***Need for an accessible and broadly focused program***

When I asked people from supported NGOs what should be changed on the Program, there was quite an unified answer: "Nothing, we are satisfied with it as it is". Some people even stated that they understand when their requested budget was shortened or when they were rejected for the first time. People highly ranked the fast approach of EPCE SK, its willingness to consult the projects, and personal visits of foundation's representatives. There has been strong recommendation for continuation of the program from all the people interviewed.

Two experienced NGOs highly ranked the fact, that the Program has not been narrowly focused and that they can write to a proposal those activities they really want to do and for what reasons. Experience with other donors is such that they have to use rhetoric different to what they actually want to do in order to fulfill criteria of a donor.

It is important to notice the limited number of funds available for advocacy projects in Slovakia. As mentioned earlier, only NPOA and EPCE SK have supported such activities in the last years. And if healthy communities and strong citizens are the goal of the key grantmakers in Slovakia, it is important to continue with not hidden support of advocacy projects. It is obvious though, that under new political environment after elections in 2002, support to partnership building projects in communities will be at least as important as advocacy.

It is difficult to raise money for advocacy projects either from the government or the business sector. These two sectors are usually the ones against which the citizens

defend their rights. Foundations are the most appropriate donors and supporters of such activities. And foundations are those that have stressed and stated continuously from 1990 the importance of a healthy civil society. Who else should pay more attention to the rights of citizens regardless the specific case? In any case, an active citizen group is an important asset of a civil society. It does not matter whether it deals with crime victims, environmental degradation, participation in local decision making or combating racism.

With relatively large sums of money coming from the EU for various support of NGOs' activities and enormous administrative burden to NGOs submitting proposals to EU funds (ACCESS, PHARE CBC, NPOA programs, etc.), NGOs need to devote more time and resources on proposal development and reporting. This makes the work of NGOs more bureaucratic and forces the NGOs to put more emphasis on formal work rather than on achieving change in a society. For this reason, it seems important to continue with such an unbyrocratic and applicant friendly program as the Your Land/Advocacy Program. EU resources are important for more developed and larger NGOs but are not suitable for grassroots activities that are on local level a key for civil society development and empowering citizens.

It is advisable to consider giving grants for longer periods (2-3 years) for more experienced NGOs to enhance their sustainability and lower their burden from proposal and report writing. Obviously this should be thought through in relation to the Central European Trust programs administered by consortium ETP and Nadácia Ekopolis. Nevertheless, small grants for local and newly established NGOs will always play an important role, no matter whether such NGOs will sustain for many years or whether they will be active just during a given period of working on a specific issue. Even such "short life" NGOs or citizens' initiatives have their value in promoting public involvement and participation in decision making.

Since 2003, Nadacia Ekopolis will become one the most significant donors of civic advocacy activities in Slovakia (Your Land Program and Central European Trust for a Civil Society). On the other hand, it is very important that Nadacia Ekopolis will start looking at other opportunities for fundraising for the years after 2004! In the light of an advocacy program, it seems necessary to look for least restricted money to be able to continue in granting such projects. From the experience of foundations in Poland and the Czech Republic, it is much easier to raise funds for specific projects such as energy conservation, soft tourism or nature conservation than for advocacy issues. One possibility would be to use money from the interests of the foundation's current endowment primarily for advocacy projects, second might be to push for establishment of a national foundation fund that would collect money from the government privatization as was the case in the Czech Republic. Although such efforts were not materialized in Slovakia under the previous government, the hope for such a fund still exists. Nadacia Ekopolis would be the most likely one of the beneficiaries of such a fund.

It is a pity that EPCE Slovakia has not utilized the results of the Your Land/Advocacy Program for its broader publicity. Achievements of the grantees in this program are in many cases remarkable in the European context and would be definitely inspiring for other grantmakers as well as NGOs in Central and Eastern Europe. At least presentation on EPCE Internet pages would be very useful. Summarizing the program in cooperation with a journalist (understanding the context, preferably from Europe) would be advisable also for US AID that could use Your Land/Advocacy Program as a model for other regions in the World.

Publicizing the Program in Slovakia would increase a good name for EPCE Slovakia and would introduce it more as a foundation supporting democracy projects rather than just environmental ones as the general opinion still stands now.

Community Philanthropy Program Evaluation Summary

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BACKGROUND TO THE EVALUATION

This report has been written in the period of October – December 2002 by Christine Forrester and Alena Huptychova. It is based on a field research conducted between 12 – 23rd October in 6 selected communities with community foundations. The data were collected through individual or group interviews and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with the CF staff and Board members, their grantees, local and national donors and other community stakeholders. Comments to this report were provided by the staff of ETP/Ekopolis.

The Mott Foundation had recommended that evaluation should be included for the Programme and provided funding for this purpose. Terms of Reference were drawn up by ETP/Ekopolis and a more detailed framework was drawn up by the consultant. The evaluation team was Christine Forrester and Alena Huptychova.

The **Purpose** of the Evaluation was:

- To identify the impact of the programme on the participating communities and on the participating NGOs
- To identify areas of improvement for the further continuation of the programme.

The main emphasis was to look at **qualitative** results of the programme.

Key questions were identified in the framework for the evaluation:

(f)Programme Strategy

- What was the programme strategy and how it has been implemented?
- Was the strategy appropriate and effective in a given context?
- Has the strategy contributed to a changed context in Slovakia for community foundations?

(g)Programme Development

- Programme implementation (What was done well, what activities should have been done in a different way and why? What were expected/unexpected outcomes?)
- Programme goals (Planned vs. actual, results vs. spending, etc.)

- Programme announcement and outreach (Clarity, access, etc.)
- Effectiveness of technical assistance provision (What difference did technical assistance make to the programme participants?)
- Effectiveness of grant-making (What types of grants? What is the view of the grant recipients – what did the grants enable them to achieve?)
- Programme governance (Decision-making, advisory boards, etc. – how did they develop during the course of the programme?)

(h) Programme Impact

What have the programme outcomes been and the programme impact on:

- communities which have received funding from the programme
- organisations that have been supported from the programme
- programme implementers – i.e. the Consortium of Ekopolis Foundation and ETP Slovakia

(i) Future plans of programme beneficiaries and of programme implementers

- Programme sustainability; sustainability potential of the programme beneficiaries

(j) Perceptions of programme among the beneficiaries and other donors

Within these broad areas for evaluation, some **additional areas** were identified which were explored with the foundations. These included:

- How far there are standards which can and should be applied to developing community foundations in Slovakia
- The vision and strategic thinking and direction of both individual foundations and the community foundation movement in Slovakia as a whole

Six Foundations were selected for specific focus. These were:

- Banska Bystrica (the first community foundation in Slovakia and also the most advanced)
- Bratislava (a relatively new foundation, but advancing rapidly)
- Nitra (a relatively new foundation, at a medium stage of development)
- Pezinok (a foundation that has been through major change)
- Presov (a longer established foundation, at a medium stage of development)
- Zilina (an emerging foundation)

The foundations were chosen to explore the different ways in which the programme had impacted on foundations in different types of areas and at different stages of development. There are currently 14 community foundation and community foundation-like organisations across Slovakia.

Visits were made to each of the six foundations and interviews conducted at two levels. Christine Forrester met staff, Board members, representative donors and other key stakeholders; Alena Huptychova interviewed a wide range of community based organisations who had been the beneficiaries of grants from the community foundations. A Round Table was also facilitated with representatives from a wide range of foundations to look at the strategic questions about community philanthropy development in Slovakia. Interviews were also carried out with ETP/Ekopolis staff and personnel connected with OSF.

In relation to the evaluation, monitoring was carried out throughout the programme by ETP/Ekopolis and regular reports were submitted to the Mott Foundation. The evaluation therefore did not seek to cover the same ground as the regular monitoring and this evaluation report will not seek to duplicate the monitoring reports. Extensive background documentation was provided to the evaluation team, which enabled the context for the evaluation to be established. This documentation enabled the questions for the evaluation to be identified. The interview questionnaires which were used in the evaluation have not been included in this report, as they are lengthy and were used as guides rather than as specific questionnaires.

There were many ways in which the report could have been structured. A detailed report on each foundation could have formed the main part of the report, but this would not necessarily have focussed on the key questions which the evaluation seeks to address. This final report therefore cumulates the information from the interviews and analyses it in relation to the questions. The extensive responses given by the foundations and by the community beneficiaries are available in a full version of the findings, which is available from the ETP/Ekopolis offices in Bratislava.

Conclusions

Overall the evaluation found significant developments in community foundations in Slovakia, which can be clearly attributed to the Community Philanthropy Programme. Particular successes have been the One Million Crown Challenge which has significantly raised the understanding of foundations that they can develop strategies to meet this type of target. In so doing, they have started to broaden their range of local donors and to see how local fund development needs to be undertaken to substitute for any dependency on foreign donors. General capacity building has taken place, both through grants available for this purpose, including core costs and through the training programmes undertaken through OSF. Funding for re-granting has also been important, as the link between grants and demonstrating how funding community level projects makes a difference in a locality contributes to building an understanding at the local level as to what community foundations can achieve.

There are a number of areas where further work needs to be undertaken and these have been discussed in the report and will be noted in the recommendations. Although, therefore, further developmental work is needed, a good foundation has been laid for community foundations to play a significant role in the development of the non-profit sector and of civil society in Slovakia, as well as, and most importantly, in rooting the concept of philanthropy broadly in all sectors of Slovak society. The 1998 Report on developing Community Philanthropy¹⁶ clearly marked out a path for development and its conclusions and direction have been shown to be sound. The key points that were made in this report about the conditions that needed to be developed in Slovakia are still valid, and as economic development continues and accession to the European Union provides wider opportunities, the community foundations are becoming well-placed to capitalise on growing prosperity to ensure that social and community needs are met. Community foundations are making a significant contribution to civil society development, in the ways in which they develop partnerships with communities, with individual and corporate donors and with local government. The links between

¹⁶ Study on Feasibility of Developing Community Philanthropy in Slovakia, op.cit.

community philanthropy and broader civil society development are very apparent in Slovakia.

Recommendations

1. Further work needs to be undertaken at a national level on the **legal and fiscal frameworks**. In particular, further changes to encourage corporate philanthropy are identified as being needed, but were not specifically discussed during the evaluation. Links with the Gremia should be used to discuss what further legal and fiscal reform would benefit public benefit NGOs as well as enable community foundations to develop more effectively.
2. The development of further work on **networking** between the community foundations and community foundation-like organisations needs to be undertaken. This networking should be separate from training. There is an identified need for the **national network or organisation** of community foundations, which could identify standards and set out the key criteria which need to be fulfilled for an organisation to be able to describe itself as a community foundation. It is suggested that the UK model, the Community Foundation Network, could be explored further, in recognising both full members and associates (those organisations moving towards compliance with the core standards). The ways in which such a network could be established need further discussion, as there are some critical issues about resources to support such a network. The foundations themselves need to be assisted in formulating their views – should it be informal, should it have any staff of its own, what kind of representative structure would be needed to ensure that the views of the foundations are properly represented? It is recognised that at this stage, such a network could not be fully “bottom up” as foundations do not have the resources nor, especially, the time to undertake the detailed development work that would be needed if the network is to be formalised in any way. However, it needs to be stressed that the community foundations themselves must play a full role in this type of development and must be encouraged to develop their own voice and views and not depend solely on an external initiative to enable this network to develop. A **partnership** between the foundations and a relevant body, such as ETP/Ekopolis Consortium could therefore be one way in which this work could be progressed. It is recognised that given the Consortium’s role as a primary external funder of community foundations, any possible role conflicts would need to be fully explored.
3. There is a need for **the vision and future overall strategy** for community foundations in Slovakia to be more fully owned by the community foundations themselves. The development of a network (see above) would assist in enabling this to occur. At present, foundations see the vision as sitting with the funders, and a shift needs to occur before community foundations can fully develop their position in Slovakia as key agents of philanthropy.
4. In relation to the point made about where the vision lies, and the development of a network, through this means **a clear definition of what a community foundation is within the Slovak context** can be developed as the core standard. There is a view that community foundations must link grant-making and fund development, and that there may be a more proactive project development role for foundations in Slovakia . However, as noted above in section 5, there needs to be a distinction

drawn between activities which are core to community foundations (fund development, donor services and grant-making) and those which they may support (such as local projects of a more community development type). There was a very clear feeling across the majority of foundations that there needs to be a “Slovak model”, which may differ from the “pure” US model, as it needs to take account of local circumstances. The key question is what predominates in community foundation core activities and how balances are achieved. Additionally, locality issues may mean that foundations display different characteristics across Slovakia, in recognition of their responsiveness to local needs and conditions. **Setting a core standard, which should include community foundations building endowment, offering donor services and providing grants, will allow for local divergence within a national framework.**

5. **A national campaign on philanthropy** could be valuable, provided clear goals are set for such a campaign. It is suggested that any national campaign would primarily focus on the concept of philanthropy in general, leaving the **community philanthropy** link to the local community foundations. Therefore a national campaign should only be developed with the full support and commitment of the local community foundations and any such initiative must enable them to develop local campaigns in line with any a national campaign. Funding support would therefore be needed for local campaigns which could run concurrently with a national campaign.

6. **Further support for community foundation development** is essential if the ground work which has been achieved is to be built on. No foundation is yet at a sustainable level, and any programmes should recognise the need for a realistic timescale, probably up to 5 years. Programme support needs to include: core funding (particularly for new and smaller foundations); re-granting monies (which could have a requirement that such funding is matched from local sources, both local government and other donors); a further challenge fund (which could have different levels, to give smaller foundations an opportunity to meet the challenge); technical assistance support, for marketing, PR and also for further training and development. Core costs are a major challenge as all foundations noted that in current conditions in Slovakia, donors are unwilling to support core costs. Charges for donor services are also difficult to apply. If foundations are to continue to develop professionally, they need trained core staff who are able to fund develop as well as grants administrate. Community foundations need to be encouraged to develop written three to five year strategies, in which Board members are fully involved in both the development and implementation of these strategies.

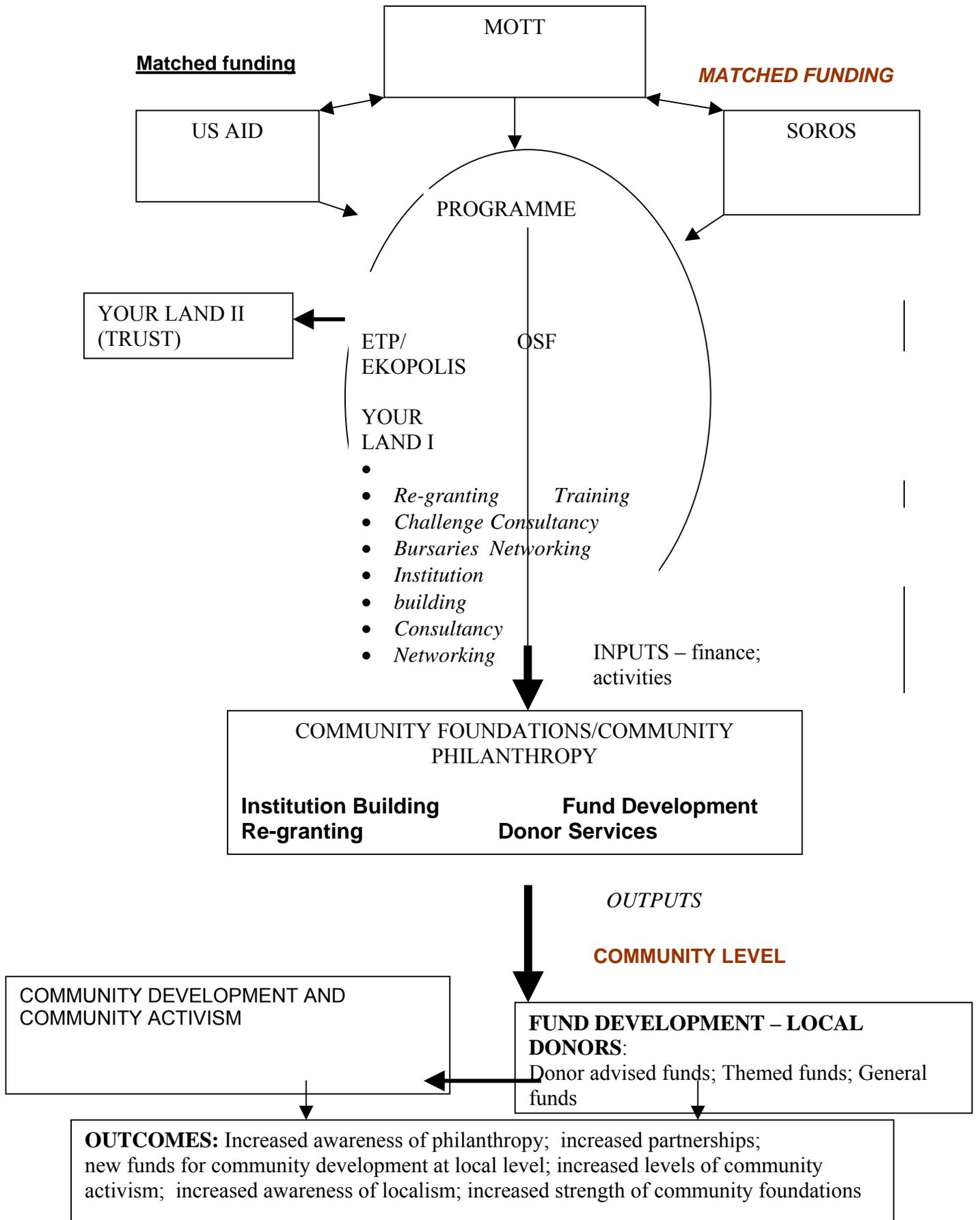
7. **Further training** needs to focus on specific technical issues which relate to community foundation development, rather than on more general community development issues. This needs to include issues such as investment as well as fund development strategies. Specific training programmes need to be developed for Board members; however recognising the time constraints on Board members, new ways of delivering Board support, through distance learning and internet need to be considered. An opportunity for Board members from different foundations to meet (perhaps annually) needs to be considered, as this would help in developing consciousness on the part of Board members that they are part of a network, as well as enabling “training” on Board roles, particularly in relation to fund

development to be undertaken. Board development is a key area, as Boards are the “champions” of community philanthropy in a locality.

8. There is an issue about the **availability of trainers** who have expertise in both training and in community foundation development. A specific programme needs to be developed which would allow trainers to develop these skills. This may need trainers to be given opportunities for travel to work with community foundations and their trainers in other countries.
9. Community foundations need to start exploring how they are positioned in relation to **accession to the European Union**. Support is needed for networking with community foundations elsewhere in Europe, with opportunities for study and working visits as well as conferences etc. This issue needs to be taken further with relevant international bodies, such as the European Foundation Centre.
10. The parts of the evaluation which were concerned with the community level grant recipients identified a number of key issues which need further discussion in the context of what is the role of a community foundation in Slovakia. As well as the grants, all community interviewees noted the **“value added” role of community foundations** in assisting in the development of professionalism in community based organisations, by providing support in formulating projects, filling in forms etc. Providing this kind of technical assistance is an important part of effective grant-making. There was a strong view that in the absence of other types of local level NGO support organisations, community foundations could play this role. Suggestions included NGO “incubator” and office space, as a base for meetings, with community foundations playing a role in networking at the local level by bringing their grant recipients together. Assistance with accounts and with publicity would also be welcomed. It was suggested that community foundations could be encouraged to provide these latter services with the support in kind of donors. However, as noted elsewhere in this report, this may not be appropriate core activity for community foundations, but could be work that they facilitate, by providing support for this type of development being undertaken by other organisations in the community. Encouraging donations in kind which could be passed on to local NGOs could be seen as part of their donor development function, but specifically developing NGO resource centre functions could significantly distract community foundations from their core activities as community foundations.
11. A number of points were made about the types of **grants** that community foundations can offer and these should be considered by individual foundations. These points included: larger grants, areas of coverage, and developing priorities. The development of grants programmes will depend on foundations building up their core work in relation to endowment development and donor services.
12. At all levels, community grant recipients, donors and other stakeholders, the transparency of community foundations was recognised and appreciated. All community foundations should develop **written strategies**, with the involvement of their Board members, which should be widely available in their local communities. Community foundations should be encouraged to undertake regular **needs analysis** in their communities to assist with both priorities for grants programmes and also to convey to donors the ways in which they can most effectively support the improvement of the quality of life for local citizens.

13. Further work is needed on the **spread of community foundations** across Slovakia. There is a risk that increasing numbers of foundations in an unstrategic way will reduce the likelihood of future sustainability of foundations. Whilst the locality issue is of critical importance, realistic areas of operation need to be encouraged and some mergers of foundations may need to be considered, particularly in the Presov area. Where existing foundations would wish to extend their range of operation to a neighbouring area, provided this is logical in terms of local links and connections, it should be actively encouraged, possibly with specific resource support (as in Pezinok to Trnava, and Zilina to Martin). The model adopted by Banska Bystrica which ensures local representation on Boards and separate grants commissions is recommended in these circumstances, to ensure the local connection.

14. Overall, the evaluation found an effective programme, which has contributed significantly to the development of community philanthropy in Slovakia through the growth of community foundations. Further discussion is needed on a range of issues, which will assist in strengthening these developments and building towards the future and long term sustainability both of community foundations themselves, and through them of the non-profit sector and civil society in Slovakia.



Women – Minorities – Tolerance Program Evaluation Summary

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Consortium of the Center of Philanthropy - ETP and the Ekopolis Foundation is the contractor of this evaluation. This evaluation report primarily serves to the contractor.

Collection, analysis, and interpretation of data were being held during the last months of the year 2002. The final report was compiled in January 2003.

The purpose of this evaluation was:

- to identify achieved systemic changes concerning the status of women in Slovakia during the years 1999-2002
- to identify potential for improving of planned programs focused on women's status enhancement
- to identify an impact of supported projects in the area tolerance; the change of the majority attitudes toward minorities

This study is supposed to provide conclusions to these evaluation questions:

- Were the original goals stated in the program proposal achieved?
- How did the program contribute to systemic changes leading to women's status improvement?
- What aspects of program strategy are appropriate to retain or modify in case of similar future program strategies creation?
- What procedures have proved as appropriate or inappropriate in the grant-making process?
- How was the program implementation in practice?
- What unexpected outcomes followed from the program implementation?
- Was this program necessary or useless?

Evaluation team:

External evaluator Jana Oleárníková led the evaluation team; she intensively cooperated with the representatives of the consortium Zuzana Thullnerová and Boris Strečanský--internal members of the team.

The structure of the final part evaluation report

1. Program strategy and its evaluation
2. Program position in the social context
3. The grant-making and decision-making process
4. Elimination of violence against women
5. Self-support groups of women
6. Minorities and tolerance

Methodology

This evaluation is based on applying qualitative approaches, mainly on constant comparative method.

Data collection

The evaluation of the WMT program is based on data gained during non-standardized, formal, and informal interviews as well as on data gained from the printed and electronic documents.

Interviews

The external evaluator applied method of non-standardized personal interviews. Respondents were informed and assured that the source of concrete information will not be publicized.

The respondents were chosen according to the following criteria:

- 1 type of the organization and its purpose:
 - 1.1 grantees supported from the WMT program
 - 1.2 program coordinators, Advisory Board members, and other people connected to program
 - 1.3 coordinators of other grant programs supporting women initiatives
 - 1.4 women personalities of third sector
- 2 regional aspect: we try to interview NGOs from all regions across Slovakia, rural and urban organizations.
- 3 thematic aspect:
 - 3.1 Elimination of violence against women:
 - 3.2 Mother's centers:
 - 3.3 Minorities and tolerance:
- 4 the phase of organization development: we choose those organizations that are perceived as either model or new in the particular thematic area from among supported NGOs.

Documents

Evaluation data were collected from several types of documents:

- documents of the WMT subprogram: official and internal documents referring to strategy and goals creation, program implementation, Your Land program annual reports,
- supported project proposals,
- information materials about women programs of other donors.

Program Description

The subprogram Women – Minorities – Tolerance (WMT) was one of four subprograms of the Your Land program (YL) during the years 1999 – 2002. The YL program was financed from international sources and administered by the consortium of the Ekopolis Foundation and the Center for Philanthropy - ETP. The main donor of the program was American Agency for International Development and other public and private donors during the years 1999 – 2002.

The goal of the WMT subprogram was to encourage under-represented groups in society to actively participate in plural democratic society formation and to implement activities leading to positive change of their status in society

Inputs:

- 1 Program inputs
 - Original strategy
 - Changes in the strategy reflecting the context and needs

- 2 Personal inputs
 - Program coordinators: Martina Tvrdoňová, Zuzana Thullnerová
 - Advisory Board: Eva Čobejová-Beerová, Klára Gierťlová, Katarína Križanová, Petra Lukšíková, Dušan Ondrušek, Silvester Savický, Attila Szép

Program Strategy

Original strategy (1999 – 2000)

- support of NGOs active in the field of women's status improvement in public and business sector
- support of NGOs which motivate members of social and ethnic minorities to actively participate in civil society development and to raise acceptance and respect toward diversity in Slovakia

New strategy (2000 – 2002)

- support of projects that in a systemic way contribute to zero tolerance of gender-related violence
- support of self-support groups of women
- support of projects aimed to change majority attitudes toward minorities and relationships between them, mainly at the community level

Activities

- positive discrimination of prioritized topics:
 - elimination of violence against women
 - self-support groups of women
- institutional strengthening and development of NGOs
- support of emerging organizations
- pro-active approach in dynamics environment formation

Program strategy, its implementation and impacts

Main conclusions

During the course of the program, the program strategy was significantly changed. The original, relatively broad strategy was replaced by strategy with clear priorities. The program focused on the target audience of women NGOs and projects in the fields: 1. elimination of violence against women, and 2. development of self-support groups of women.

The decision to narrow the strategy has shown as well-founded. The need to address selected issue of violence existed in society; it has reflected in emerging of many new organizations that began to actively work in the field of violence elimination combat on women. In addition, in that time a good theoretical basis presented by Interest Association of Women Aspect existed, as well as two organizations (Pro Familia, Fenestra) with a high potential to serve as models. Compliance of Austrian activists to share their experience represented an undoubted advantage. Organizations devoted to violence elimination felt a lack of conceptual support from donors' side. The topic has been perceived as controversial and its human-rights dimension also impeded (and continually impedes) the access to either public or private sources.

The program flexibly responded to the idea of mother's centers development. Mother's centers were mainly perceived as centers for children from the side of foundation's donors. A real threat existed that an original idea of mother's center will disappear. Support of mother's centers across Slovakia enabled new mother's centers creation to overcome hard starting period.

The following approaches were applied in the strategy implementation:

- (1) positive discrimination of prioritized topics,
- (2) institutional strengthening and development of NGOs,
- (3) support of emerging organizations, and
- (4) pro-active approach in dynamics environment formation.

- (1) Positive discrimination of topics provided to organizations some level of financial certainty to the coming future, and represented a certain form of moral support and satisfaction (the work of organizations in the area of violence elimination is often doubted). In addition, this decision carried the advantage and opportunity to become deeply involved in the topic. Both coordinators took the advantage from it; The role of coordinators was perceived as key in the strategy creation and strategy implementation process.
- (2) Organizations were free in the financial sources usage; the emphasize was set upon autonomous decision-making of organizations. No limits existed in covering running costs and the process of approval necessary budget modifications was flexible. Therefore, most of the organizations applied to cover running costs from the program. Provided grants enabled them to strengthen their organization and provided them a scope to push systemic changes forward. In case the donor has an intention to achieve systemic changes toward zero tolerance of gender- related violence, so far gained experiences and outcomes reveal that providing of institutional support is more efficient than ad hoc activities support (by the way, the sources for ad hoc activities are more accessible in the Slovak reality). In general, we may conclude that

systemic changes efforts in the field of women's status improvement meet with significant obstacles.

- (3) Providing support to emerging organizations (mainly mother's centers) that could not prove outcomes of their activities triggered new women organizations development. Provided support also enabled these organizations to develop, promote their activities, and gain trust and respect from the side of local community: local business and public administration. The program decreased the chance of failed decision through setting up the grant limit up to 60 000 Sk, mediating of contacts with more experienced organizations, and verifying the cooperation.
- (4) Pro-active approach of coordinators has reflected in the level of involvement in the issue, the environment, and understanding of the foundation as an agent of social changes. The opportunity to actively contribute to dynamics environment formation was fully applied. This approach enable to keep and improve the quality of women initiatives activities and to contribute to their sustainability. Pro-active approach of coordinators was based on searching for activists and new organizations with potential to work in the field in long-term horizon, on promoting of feminist approaches, on initiating of different forms of cooperation among organizations, and on specifying clear criteria for grant applicants. The program outcomes are following: (a) 20 intervention and/ or crisis centers and more than 20 mother's centers exist across Slovakia, (b) feminist approaches--recommended by NGOs working with victims of violence in US, Canada, and EU--became more widespread, (c) the original purpose of mother's centers as women self-support centers was not suppressed but developed, and (d) new forms of formal and informal networking have developed. Setting of more detailed criteria has shown as ineffective. It led to adapting of projects and probably also to elimination of new ideas.

The strategy of grant-making in the field of minorities and tolerance was relatively broad: the program preferred projects with the goals to change attitudes of majority toward minorities, to create relations among members of minorities and majority mainly at the community level. The program focused on providing small grants to small community projects, except several exceptions. However, the program did not find this issue as a priority and did not have ambitions to achieve systemic changes in this field.

Main recommendations:

- To continue in the strategy of positive discrimination one or two topics;
- To continue in selected topics supporting, to pursue whether organizations search for all accessible sources in society, and to verify an access to these sources;
- To consider whether it is inevitable to stimulate establishing of new organizations at the current situation; priority topics are well-known in the public, therefore it is not necessary to promote it among potential activists;
- To enable organizations to their cover running costs; however the project have to contain purposeful activities implementation;
- To create favorable conditions for systemic changes implementation mainly through institutional strengthening of NGOs;
- To continue in feminist approaches promotion;
- To keep and raise the quality of pro-active inputs (for instance through more detailed explanation of goals and the purpose of the program at the web site);

- To more generally formulate criteria for project proposals in order to eliminate adapting of the proposals and to open the program to new ideas and approaches.

Women – Minorities – Tolerance subprogram

Main conclusions

In the course of the years 1999 – 2002, foreign donors played a key role in providing financial sources to women nonprofit organizations in Slovakia. Except consortium of the Center for Philanthropy - ETP and the Ekopolis Foundation, only two other donors supported women organizations as a priority issue (Open Society Foundation and Canada Fund). The WMT subprogram distributed 8.150.399,- Sk in a form of grants; no other donor provided higher amount.

Supported women organizations perceived the WMT subprogram as a key program. They referred to its uniqueness in the following statements:

- First foundation that started to systematically support women issues; due to its clear strategy it helped to generate higher interest in women issues from the side of other donors.
- Support of emerging organizations. Due to this decision, the program has built solid background in the prioritized topics.
- Institutional support and providing of sources to cover running costs of organizations. Other donors have many kinds of limits in their rules (for instance covering of running costs is minimal or neither).
- Sincere endeavor of coordinators to gain a deep understanding of the topic. Grantees very positively evaluated the fact that coordinators accepted their opinions.
- Close contact with supported organizations, prompt and non-bureaucratic communication, frequent visits, and open approach of coordinators have created conditions for partnership relations.

Other donors perceived the subprogram WMT as a key partner. They relied on information provided from coordinators, and respected them. Narrowed strategy of the WMT subprogram provided to other donors „a scope for manoeuvring.“ With regard to coming leaving of foreign donors from Slovakia, a strong need for more intensive cooperation among donors exists with a goal to prepare NGOs for „hard times“.

Respondents also expressed their opinions about the contribution of foreign donors to third sector development in Slovakia. They assumed that foreign donors significantly influenced the quality of the nonprofit sector and the speed of its development. They consider the cases of grants misusing as rare. They recommend to donors to cooperate and share information in order to eliminate this phenomenon.

Respondents perceive the coming leaving of foreign donors from Slovakia unambiguously. Some of them assume that ineffective organizations will finish their activities and professional organizations will survive. Most of the respondents were skeptical. It seems that advocacy organizations focused on achieving systemic changes will face more problems than others. Due

to their advocacy activities, they can get in conflicts with the public administration; the state and EU will provide them minimal support. Organizations that substitute the role of the state can also expect serious problems. Up to now, the state did not express an interest to undertake responsibility for financing services for victims of violence. In addition, existing limited sources are contingent on serious interventions in the autonomy of the NGO. Self-support groups of women find the sponsorship from the side of private or corporate donors as a main source of financing.

Main recommendations:

To strengthen the position of WMT program as well as of the consortium of Ekopolis Foundation and the Center for Philanthropy – ETP among other donors through applying of gender-mainstreaming principals within the organization:

- to continue in endeavors to keep adequate representation of women and men in the Board of Directors of consortium and in Advisory Boards of particular programs;
- to actively push supporting of women activities from other subprograms forward;
- to work out procedures that will motivate NGOs applying for a grant from other subprograms to re-assess their gender policy.
- Through effective communication and cooperation with other donors (mainly with Donor's Forum members) to search for tools that will create conditions for "survival" of women organizations in the future:
 - to continue and broaden the cooperation with other donors, to share and exchange information, to map nourishing women movement and current needs; this cooperation could contribute to creation of the common women organizations development strategy;
 - to open the topic of providing support to women organizations to other donors (domestic and foreign) that did not support women organizations up to now

External Evaluation of the Rural Small Grant Program – Citizens to village

Summary

Authors

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Methodology

External evaluation took place in the period of November 2002 - January 2003. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify the impacts of the program on program beneficiaries and their communities and to draw recommendations for improvements for both future program strategy and management. In addition, based on the results of this evaluation, a special brochure was developed for educational as well as fundraising purposes. The results of the evaluation were discussed at the meeting of program managers and a several members of the Program Advisory Board.

During evaluation, electronic and personal interviews were made with all members of the Program Advisory Committee, program managers and selected grantees. The selection was designed in order to provide both balanced regional view and also to represent the broad variety of types of approved projects. Another evaluation method included personal visits in 23 sites around the country. Each visit was prepared on a basis of consultation and documentation provided by the program manager. Eight brief case studies from the following sites were written to document the most relevant aspects of the program and are included in the final brochure in the national language: Nevoľné (Ziar nad Hronom district), Spissky Hrhov (Levoca district), Haniska (Presov district), Povazske Podhradie (Povazska Bystrica district), Zalobín and Jasenovce (Vranov nad Toplou district), Holumnica (Kezmarok district), and Zabokreky (Martin district).

Conclusions

In general, the evaluation showed significant positive impacts of the program on small rural communities despite a very limited amount of funds were provided through grants.¹⁷ For decades, national policies have marginalized rural communities, leaving them without sufficient resources that are necessary to develop a good-quality local social capital. Often the program represents the only accessible funding opportunity for civic initiatives in these communities at the moment.

A main goal of the program is to increase public participation in public affairs and to support active citizens in public-oriented activities. In a number of places, the program succeeded to provide a start-up money to spark new local activities and to provoke people to use their own knowledge, skills, resources, and traditions (often unused until now) for benefit of their communities. On one hand, successful outputs of small grants have resulted in awaking of the interest of the surrounding communities to follow similar activities (e.g. to built cheap but nice constructions of bus stops or to reconstruct local children playgrounds), on the other hand they motivated its authors in development of follow-up, more challenging initiatives (such as educational activities, provision of internet services for local citizens, etc.).¹⁸ The program managers reported much higher quality of the projects by those applicants who implemented previous projects. There is, however, not a clear system of monitoring of the follow-up processes by the program managers at the moment.

In several places, the program assisted municipalities and leading local citizens to increase potential of local development through creation of new jobs that build on local natural resources and traditions. Evaluators also noticed several projects that successfully integrated marginalized

¹⁷ The program has been focused on communities with less that 1,500 inhabitants. Total number of approved grants in a period of 2000-2002 was 483. Most of the grants sized from US\$ 450-580.

¹⁸ Evaluators, however, noticed also low level of information of grantees in several places. For example, few grantees did not know about very similar projects in their region that were funded by the same program.

social groups into profitable economic activities. If continued, these projects may have a big relevance in challenging a high level resignation of Slovak rural population concerning active search for income-generating activities. At the same time, the program may become a real alternative to policies of subsidizing of large foreign corporation that completely by-pass rural areas and marginalized social groups.

In most of the assessed cases, the evaluation documented a relatively high value added to the grants by the beneficiaries especially in the form of voluntary work of citizens and in-kind contributions but also in the form of co-financing by local municipalities. Current capacities of the program management, however, do not allow more comprehensive monitoring of this aspect.

Almost all grantees highly appreciated a flexibility of the management, clear and simple guidelines, good communication and assistance of the program managers.

Recommendations

The overall purpose of the program should be maintained. However, the program should be **more clearly linked to other programs** and projects with the similar purpose (community/rural development, civic activism, etc.).

It is recommended to limit the eligibility criteria for communities from **1,500 to 1,000** inhabitants.

The results have proven **the need for keeping the program open for „beginners“** - emerging potential rural „social entrepreneurs“ who still have not had a chance to test their abilities to run a project of public benefit. To do this effectively, program managers should develop criteria for monitoring of progress and needs of projects of „beginners“.

At the same time, **a special attention should be paid to more experienced applicants**. A more demanding selection criteria for this category of applicants should be prepared.

A clear **system of information and skill sharing** among grantees, applicants and potential applicants is highly recommended in order to prevent repeating mistakes (e.g. organizational failures) and to upgrade the quality of expected outputs. Such a system may include trainings, regional workshops, excursions and site visits, public presentations by successful grantees, etc.

Individual citizens and civic initiatives (either formally registered or informal) are the major target groups of the program. Therefore, the the number of municipalities receiving grants from the program should be limited while at the same time a condition of **certain type of municipal involvement** (financial or in-kind) in the submitted projects is recommended, at least for the follow-up projects. Eligibility of mayors should not be completely restricted, however, there must be clear guidelines for their participation in the program.

A comprehensive system of monitoring the outputs of the projects should be developed including qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure the effects on the local communities and broader region. A special attention should be paid on effects of the projects on creation of new jobs, stabilization of the existing jobs, strengthening local partnerships and regional development. In order to make this happen, special capacities should be allocated for this purpose.

Fundraising is an important element of the program development. In order to build a national base of funders, much more **public relation and media work** should become a part of the program. Until now, there is a number of excellent projects in many regions that deserve attention of media, funders as well as decision-makers and public. Better understanding of the importance of local rural civic initiatives may not only be beneficial for them but can also attract

funds for the program and increase its potential to grow in terms of scope and quality. The decision to make an information brochure for potential funders is a good start.

A cooperation with other microfinancing institutions is recommended. Of course, each institution has its own strategy, target groups and also fundraising niche, however, coordinated approach may result in creation of their stronger position towards public authorities responsible for regional/rural development. Cooperation among microfinancing institutions may also result in developing joint proposals for future EU structural funds focused on human resources development, rural development, employment, etc.

In terms of **administration**, the program should continue to have clear and stable deadlines for submissions. The broad advisory board that include people with NGO background from wide range of professions and regions should be kept.