

Youth and senior citizens huddled under the Bridge



Entrepreneurship isn't just about business, it's also about being involved in the environment where the business operates. Creation of communities as well as work with specific social groups should form a fixed part of the activities done by socially responsible companies.

Philanthropy and corporate social responsibility is now associated particularly with large, often multinational companies that usually have developed individual units in this area and have generous budgets at their disposal, too. However, even small and medium-sized companies benefit from direct contact with the community they work with, and contribute to a higher quality of life for particular social groups.

In three years of existence, the Bridge - English Language Centre in Bratislava has become an integral part of the Old Town's life. Its teachers founded the English language theater Bridgin' Drama, which provides accessible language education for senior citizens and is also involved in the organization of various activities for the English teachers' community.

Education through theater
Bridgin' Drama is currently the only theater group performing in the English language in Slovakia. It was founded by teachers from the Bridge Language Centre that were looking for ways to get even closer to language students, while aiming to work with the English language on a different level, in

addition to teaching.

The theater started with staged readings of plays by Elizabethan playwright William Shakespeare and by contemporary author Hilary Fannin in Bratislava's Medical Garden and on Danube Magio Beach. Besides the general public, the readings were particularly designed for students at elementary and secondary school, all of them with free entry .

In 2012, interest in the English theater led to the premiere of the first major production titled "Tajovský Ruulezz!" This piece is a modern version of the Slovak classic play *Ženský zákon* by Jozef Gregor Tajovský.

During the school year, the theater Bridgin' Drama performed the Tajovský piece at elementary and secondary schools, and thus "killed two birds with one stone". Students benefited from an opportunity to practice English as well as to learn something about the work of an author which is included in their school required reading list. The play has now been seen by more than 2,000 students. Moreover, during the summer even foreign tourists in Bratislava had an opportunity to

see the play as it was performed several times at the Zichy Palace within the Bratislava Cultural Summer program.

The theatre group intends to continue presenting every year another modern version of classic Slovak drama pieces.

Support for active senior citizens

Besides being interesting for young people, English is also interesting for the elderly, especially now in the era of globalization and the omnipresent internet. In particular, active senior citizens who are interested in foreign languages want to socialize with people of similar thoughts, interests and feelings.

In addition to socializing, another reason for senior citizens to learn English is for easier access to current information from abroad in their field of interest. Some of the elderly need English to be able to communicate on holidays, some of them have their children with families living abroad and they visit each other regularly.

Last year, free summer conversation lessons were attended by 160 active senior citizens of Bratislava between the ages of 50 and 80 years old. Moreover, thanks to the participation of the municipality of Staré Mesto and consulting-shopping portal Prosenior.eu, senior citizens and their accompanying persons received free admission to a special

performance of "Tajovský Ruulezz!" performed just for them.

Establishing teachers community

Since 2011, the Slovak Association of Language Schools has actively been participating in preparation and organization of international conferences for English language teachers Eltforum, held yearly on the premises of University of Economics in Bratislava. Thanks to the event, hundreds of Slovak teachers had the opportunity to see the world's top professionals in the field of methodology and language education.

Afterwards, English teachers from different language schools initiated the establishment of the Slovak Chamber of English Teachers which aims to create educational opportunities for teachers, mutual exchange of experience, and solutions to common issues.

Its first activities included summer SO(U)L CAMP in Čadca, attended by English language teachers from Slovakia and nine other countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Under supervision by experienced teachers they had an opportunity to improve their teaching skills and exchange their experience.

How to do it

There are various possibilities for community engagement that favors selected target groups. When deciding which CSR project to create or support, companies should basically proceed from their activities and try to find the field where their expertise would match the requirements of a specific target community.



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