

The interest in volunteering grows

A company that wants to do business in a long-term horizon should not only pursue economic activities but also consider the social and environmental impact of its business. It's believed that companies aiming to exist for more than a year or two should set up measurable objectives for corporate responsibility.

Being a responsible corporate citizen requires giving something back to the communities in which we operate. In cooperation with Nitra Community Foundation, HEINEKEN Slovensko has developed the community grant program "TU SME DOMA" (Here we are at home) in the town of Hurbanovo where its brewery and maltery are located. The objective of the program is to support various community projects and thus primarily develop and enhance the quality of life in Hurbanovo and secondarily activate local volunteerism. Individual citizens, civic associations, schools, sports clubs and other organizations can apply for a grant by submitting a project that does not generate profit but will be profitable for the broader Hurbanovo community. The projects within "TU SME DOMA" may for instance contribute to the development of community life, support cultural activities with an emphasis on regional traditions, educational activities that go beyond formal education in kindergartens and schools, programs for disadvantaged groups, restoration of public spaces and programs aimed at protecting and promoting health. The maximum grant that can be obtained on one project is 3,300 euros.

Here we are at home

The pilot year of the grant program "TU SME DOMA" was announced in late 2008 and early 2009. Since then, active citizens of Hurbanovo have accomplished an

enormous amount of work, which is in fact seen on every corner of their hometown. The program encourages people to identify what they lack in Hurbanovo and what they would like to improve and develop in their local community. The added value of the submitted projects is based on the fact that the applicants also voluntarily participate in its realization using their knowledge and experience. Within five years of its existence, 57 community projects worth nearly 150,000 euros were supported via the grant program. Some 1,000 volunteers who worked more than 1,600 hours participated in the projects.

Community Day

The fifth anniversary of the program "TU SME DOMA" was launched this February with a press conference. This year the evaluation committee received 30 grant applications out of which it supported the best 12 community projects. The information of who receives a financial contribution for their project was announced, however unconventionally, at a public event named Community Day. The Community Day was jointly organized in cooperation

with Nitra Community Foundation, the Hurbanovo Municipality and HEINEKEN Slovensko. The entire program of the event was arranged by organizations that received grants in the former years of "TU SME DOMA" program. More than 100 families enjoyed the interactive activities like traffic education, horseback riding, a western show, a potter's wheel and face painting. The local Leisure Center, the Art School, and the cultural organization Csemadok prepared a cultural program for the visitors.

Lubica Lachká, the Executive Director of the Nitra Community Foundation, said that the Community Day gathered in one place all the active people who are doing something for their city and by now have done a great deal of good work. Most of them have not been acknowledged enough for their volunteering activities, which require hard work. It is truly impressive that these people still have the desire and the enthusiasm to voluntarily help the community in which they live. It was their positive energy which made the event unforgettable for all involved.



Many more projects to come

Over the past five years, the grant program "TU SME DOMA" has proved to be an effective tool that encouraged local people of Hurbanovo to actively contribute to the development of their hometown. Hurbanovo's citizens became more active and interested in volunteering for the benefit of their hometown. This is evident by the growing number of submitted projects, the quality of which is from year to year higher. After five years the cooperation among the citizens, as well as between the citizens and the local government, has improved. The appreciation of the voluntary work has increased, both in the older and younger generations. People have become more responsible; they are paying greater attention to their work which resulted in fewer cases of public space devastation. Moreover, the program has managed to positively influence existing relations between the citizens, the municipality and the major employer in the region. In addition to stimulating the local community, this program provides a good example of cooperation among all three sectors – government, non-governmental organizations and private companies. The "TU SME DOMA" grant program is a nice example of how such cooperation can be useful for ordinary citizens.



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