



30 YEARS STRONG

Long-term collaboration between corporations and NGOs is a powerful driver of societal impact. Citi's 30-year partnership with JA Slovakia demonstrates how sustained CSR investments benefit both communities and companies—shaping future generations, strengthening employee engagement, and creating measurable social and business value.



MARTA SLOVÁKOVÁ
CEO
JA Slovakia

Marta Slováková serves as the CEO of Junior Achievement Slovakia. Throughout her career, she has focused on connecting business with education, advancing corporate social responsibility, and supporting talent development. She brings experience from HR, partnership building, and driving innovation in education. Beyond her professional work, she is actively engaged in volunteering and firmly believes that investing in young people is one of the best investments in the future of Slovakia.



JAN MELICHAR
Citi Country Officer and
Banking Head for Slovakia
Citi

Jan Melichar is Citi Country Officer and Banking Head for Slovakia, as well as Branch Manager for Citibank Europe plc. He leads Citi's growth in the country, manages regulatory relationships, and ensures strong governance. With over 20 years at Citi, Jan has extensive experience in global subsidiaries and FDI, and champions inclusive leadership, talent development, and youth initiatives, including Junior Achievement Slovakia. He holds an MSc from the University of Economics Prague and an MBA from IESSE.



This year, Citi celebrates 30 years in Slovakia. JA Slovakia is celebrating with you – because that's how long your partnership has lasted. How did it all begin?
J. Melichar: When Citi established its presence in Slovakia, we wanted to be more than just a bank – we aimed to become an active part of society. We were glad to extend Citi's global partnership with Junior Achievement to Slovakia, supporting the area where we saw the greatest need: education for young people. JA Slovakia was a natural choice, as their programs combine what we believe in most – entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and skills for the future. Three decades later, we are proud that this has become one of the longest-standing CSR partnerships in Slovakia.

What concrete results has this partnership delivered over the past 30 years?
M. Slováková: Together with Citi, we have educated more than 136,500 students across Slovakia. These are young people who had the chance to gain real-life experience with entrepreneurship, financial decision-making, and teamwork. Over the years, Citi has invested significantly into our educational programs, and dozens of its employees have contributed as volunteers. These are impressive numbers, but even more important are the stories of students who discovered their calling or even started their own companies thanks to this experience.

CSR is often seen as a "cost." What does the Citi example show us about CSR being an investment instead?

J. Melichar: Investing in education pays off on multiple levels. First, we are helping to build a better society and preparing young people for the future of work. At the same time, our employees who volunteer with JA programs often say it's highly motivating – they feel their work has meaning beyond the office. And finally, there's also a reputational benefit: Citi is demonstrating that we are a company committed to long-term, consistent support of the communities where we operate.

What does employee involvement in JA Slovakia programs look like?

M. Slováková: For many students, Citi volunteers are their first real contact with the business world. They serve as mentors, consultants, or judges in competitions and Innovation Camps. Their role is irreplaceable – they bring practical insights, share experiences from finance and business, and inspire students. And at the same time, volunteers themselves gain the opportunity to strengthen their soft skills – communication, leadership, and the ability to motivate young people.

What advice would you give to other companies looking for meaningful CSR partnerships?

J. Melichar: The key is to find a partner with a clear vision and a long-term

strategy. CSR should not be about one-off activities but about systematic support that delivers results over time. Our partnership with JA Slovakia shows that long-term collaboration can create tangible impact – not only for the community but also for the company itself.

How can smaller companies that cannot afford large investments still support education?

M. Slováková: The simplest way is through the 2% tax designation. It's a mechanism that allows even smaller firms to be part of big change. If, alongside large partnerships like the one with Citi, dozens of smaller companies also contribute through their 2%, together we can reach even more schools and students. Education is an area where every euro invested has a multiplied effect – for young people, for businesses, and for society as a whole.

Looking ahead – what would you like students and companies to remember about this partnership 10 years from now?

M. Slováková & J. Melichar: That Citi and JA Slovakia were there at the beginning when they were first discovering the world of business, finance, and work. That thanks to this partnership, they found the courage to believe in themselves and try new things. And that this 30-year example inspired other companies to invest in education – because it is an investment that always pays off.