



TALENT GARDEN: BLOOMING LOCAL TALENT

NOT AN AVERAGE INTERNSHIP

Forget coffee runs and endless photocopying. Talent Garden is a year-long traineeship program designed for university students in their third or fourth year. It is a collaboration between four leading companies in Slovakia: ING Hubs Slovakia, Heineken, Arval, and Union poisťovňa. The mission is clear: Grow talent locally and keep it thriving.

Students rotate across these companies, working on real projects in three tracks:

- People & Marketing
- Data, Analytics & Innovation
- IT & Technology

And here is the best part: Their ideas and hard work did not remain theoretical. They moved beyond classroom concepts and became practical solutions that are now embedded in everyday processes, shaping the way the company operates and influencing future initiatives.

WHY TALENT GARDEN EXISTS

Slovakia has been losing talent for years. More than 350,000 young people have left in search of better opportunities abroad. Talent Garden flips the script by offering international-level experience right here at home. Students gain practical skills, learn to navigate different corporate cultures, and see their ideas come to life.

As Sandra Balažiková from ING Hubs Slovakia, one of the program coordinators, explains: *"We want students to create and make impact on real business processes. Several of them were instrumental to cross boarder strategic initiatives."*

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REAL PROJECTS, REAL IMPACT

This is not theory, it is action. In its first editions, Talent Garden has already delivered tangible results. One student team at ING developed a communication pattern library now used in multiple campaigns. Another created a project tracking tool that helps teams stay aligned across initiatives. These are not side projects, they are solutions making a real difference. Students also worked on data dashboards, marketing concepts, and IT automation scripts that improved workflows. Their creativity sparked new

ideas and inspired teams across the company. Some of these tools are now being scaled to other departments, proving that fresh perspectives can transform how we work.

And it is not just about tasks. Talent Garden is about networking, learning, and sharing experiences. Students attend workshops, join brainstorming sessions, and even kicked off the program at the Dutch Ambassador's residence. They meet leaders, exchange ideas, and build connections that last beyond the internship.

The program is paid and flexible, allowing students to balance studies with professional growth. And yes, there is fun too: team-building events, creative challenges, and plenty of opportunities to shine.

ONGOING AND GROWING

Talent Garden is not a one-time initiative: it is an ongoing project that keeps evolving. The first and second editions attracted hundreds of applications, but only 20 students could join. Those selected have already left their mark, and many have expressed interest in continuing their careers in Slovakia. That is a clear sign that Talent Garden is working. The program is now preparing for its next chapter. More companies are joining, new tracks are being added, and the ambition is bigger than ever: to make Talent Garden the go-to program for students eager to shape the future and drive change in Slovakia.

What happens when you give ambitious students real challenges instead of hypothetical case studies? You get Talent Garden, a unique program that turns Slovakia's brightest minds into creators, innovators, and problem-solvers.



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and a way to grow talent that matters. When you nurture creativity, amazing things happen. And in this garden, the seeds of tomorrow are already sprouting.

But the benefits go far beyond student growth. For companies, joining Talent Garden means access to fresh perspectives, innovative solutions, and a pipeline of skilled professionals who understand your business from day one. It is a chance to co-create with the next generation, strengthen your employer brand, and contribute to Slovakia's competitiveness.

BE PART OF THE BLOOM

Talent Garden is more than an internship. It is a launchpad for ideas, a hub for innovation, and a community that believes in the power of young minds. Here, students do not just learn: they create, collaborate, and leave a lasting mark. For students, it is a chance to turn bold ideas into real impact. For companies, it is an investment in the future

If you are a company looking to make an impact and shape future talent, now is the time to get involved. Write to talentgarden@netherlandschamber.sk and explore how you can become part of upcoming editions. Let's cultivate a space where bold ideas bloom and businesses thrive together.