

# Changing the Slovak education system from the inside

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**“The quality of university graduates entering the professional market in Slovakia has been an ongoing topic of discussion for years across all sectors,” we wrote almost eight years ago in *Connection* magazine while attempting to recap the first successful pilot of AmCham’s Train the Trainer (TTT) series of workshops. Unfortunately, this topic is more than relevant even in 2019. We feel that university and high school graduates are still not living up to their potential and companies are investing millions of euros into retraining fresh graduates entering the labor market and up-skilling the current employees.**

Train the Trainer is an annual series of interactive workshops specially designed for teachers and professors to bring an innovative approach and methods into the education process at institutions all over Slovakia. AmCham continues to be active in transferring the know-how of the business community into the academic sector and this year we are already launching the 9th season of the program. The main purpose remains unchanged — to provide lecturers with know-how and “skills-of-the-future” trainings which can upgrade the teaching process. The series also aims to help establish useful connections with relevant AmCham member companies.

After dedicating the first four years (2011-2014) to topics such as Human Resources,

Marketing, Finance, Accounting or IT, as of 2015 we decided to focus the program agenda on tailor-made trainings on soft skills. Based on feedback from employers, these are the competencies fresh graduates lack the most when entering the labor market. The program usually consists of five to eight interactive workshops, run on a weekly basis, mostly provided by AmCham member companies associated in the Business Service Center Forum (BSCF). In 2015, when we spiced-up the agenda with soft skills, participants had to be divided into two groups of 20 teachers due to the unexpectedly high interest and the workshops ran in parallel. This enabled all the participants to attend each workshop at the respective company premises which generously offered to run

each workshop twice in order to accommodate for the high demand.

After eight full years, more than 300 alumni, and the recent program expansion to Košice, feedback from successful TTT participants shows us regularly that “hunger” for career development and up-skilling is very real among Slovak teachers. All in all, most of them are very grateful for the opportunity to participate in such a project and appreciate that “someone finally does something for their advancement”. Similarly to our September/October 2011 Train the Trainer pilot coverage, lecturers tend to repeat themselves in confirming that “it is not important what we teach, but rather how we teach it.” Following the highly successful kick-off in 2015, soft skills topics

have been dominating the TTT agenda: Teacher-student relationship, How to make classes more interactive, Presentation skills, How to captivate your audience, Verbal & non-verbal communication, Feedback, Time management, Social intelligence, Negotiating & influencing, Continuous improvement & Project management are just some samples off the menu. We are often asked why we run the program. The answer is quite natural – even though it is not among AmCham’s core activities, we believe helping teachers and lecturers become a part of the change they want to see in the Slovak education system simply is the right thing to do.



**TRAIN THE TRAINER**

Join us on March 13, 2019,  
for the launch of the 9th  
edition of the TTT series as  
we expand our portfolio of  
soft skills trainings also to  
high school teachers and  
directors.

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