

COVID-19

June 2020

Community Foundations in Action

Slovakia - Trust in our communities is priceless



When Lubica Lachká speaks about the last weeks and months of Covid-19 crisis in Slovakia, she seems calm, relieved and a little proud: “The pandemic was taken very seriously very early and the majority of people in Slovakia took the measures severe as well”. As did her team at Nitra Community Foundation and the Association of Community Foundations in Slovakia (ACFS). Lubica is one of the co-founders and current executive director of the Nitra Community Foundation, additionally she is member of the Association of Community Foundations in Slovakia.

“We closed our office in March, worked remotely and continued to realise our grant programs with approved time schedule”. As did her team at Nitra Community Foundation and the ACFS. That means: focusing on “quick” grants, helping to solve immediately the situation with Covid-19, supporting hospitals and senior centers. Soon, Lubica felt that the crisis, in some way, did have a positive impact on the community: “A lot of people wanted to help but didn’t know how”. Some were already members of the regional club of donors, others were totally new. The Community Foundation provided help - especially regarding networks and bringing people together. They created a webform where people could announce their interest in helping, a Newsletter with information about volunteering and started to promote projects via Social Media.

With this concept a lot of support could be realised, like a shopping service for the elderly, the sewing of facemasks or a local food bank at a university cafeteria. “When the pandemic came, it quickly became very clear simply how important our work of the last 20 years has been”, Lubica recalls, “that we already built a big network and trust in our community long before this crisis happened turned out to be priceless”. Also the Association of Community Foundations in Slovakia spent years building partnerships, cooperating with regional governments, hospitals, NGOs, schools. This made it easier for us to act as a coordinator of volunteers and supporters. “We use social capital for help”, Lubica explains. At the same time, the year-long building of trust provided security of

financial resources. Since the relationship to the local governments had been good, they have been willing to support the grant programmes even throughout the crisis.

“We see that donations agreed before the pandemic are not endangered”, Lubica explains. But she expects the main economic consequences of the pandemic by the end of the year and during the following two years. “It will be very much depending on governmental decisions”. To prepare for budget cuts in the future, Nitra Community Foundation will prepare two financial plans for the next year - one optimal and a second, minimal one. “We will try to save finances of this year for the next year. Also, we have a small reserve fund which is not high, but we can use it for overcoming the critical situation”, Lubica explains, “Our financial donations are quite diversified, which is good for us, because if one or two portions will not be available, we still have the others parts. We have to be much more focussed on the community needs and reflect carefully what the community expects from our programmes.”



[Nitra Community Foundation](#) started in 1999, legally as a foundation in 2020 and distributes approximately €198.000 a year. Three freelancers together with more than 15 volunteers work for the foundation. In the Coronavirus crisis they quickly raised additional money for local grants.

Nitra Community Foundation is one of 8 Community Foundations in Slovakia. The Association of Community Foundations in Slovakia works on consolidating the exchange among them. For more information see the Association of Community Foundations in Slovakia [on our website](#).