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Canada and the Slovak Republic Partners in Transition

Canada 

CANADA and the SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Partners in Transition

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The Doctor Fodor Story

Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause of death in the Slovak Republic (or “Slovakia”), accounting for more than 50 percent of all deaths. Average life expectancy in 1998 was five to ten years less than in neighbouring countries in Western Europe. The high incidence of cardiovascular disease has overburdened the already-stretched health care system in Slovakia, has jeopardized its productivity capacity, and has had an adverse impact on social and economic well-being.



Dr. George Fodor is a Canadian professor of Slovak-Hungarian descent and an internationally recognized specialist in cardiovascular diseases. He kept a close eye on events in his country of birth and it was clear to him that the Slovak health care system needed urgent help. Knowledgeable about the links between nutrition, dietary habits, and cardiovascular disease, Doctor Fodor proposed a project to promote healthy eating as part of a cardiovascular disease-prevention strategy in Slovakia. As a leader in the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of heart disease using patient care, research, and education, Doctor Fodor knew that Canada had an abundance of expertise to share. A meeting was subsequently held with the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Slovak Ambassador to Canada, in January 2000, to secure support and funding for the Cardiovascular Health Project.

By transferring Canadian knowledge and technology related to heart disease prevention and by forging partnerships among Canadian experts and their

Slovak counterparts, the Slovak health care system has been able to put in place some of the most effective techniques to combat cardiovascular disease. The project has benefited the Slovak people by increasing their awareness of the advantages of “heart healthy” nutritional practices and increasing the availability of heart healthy foods, leading ultimately to a healthier population and less demands on the health system. Doctor Fodor, with his personal knowledge of Slovakia and his firm grasp of the language, has played a key role in the success of this project. By organizing student exchanges, learning opportunities, lectures for visiting professors, and international research projects, Doctor Fodor has worked hard to promote the project’s underlying principles, with positive results.

Similar to *Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating*, a Slovak food guide was created as part of the Cardiovascular Health project. Foods have been categorized



Food guide in Slovak

into four sections—breads, fruit and vegetables, milk products, and meats—and recommendations on daily serving requirements and portion sizes are provided. It is expected that this food guide will help Slovaks improve their diets and consume the required nutrients and vitamins needed for healthy living.

DID YOU KNOW?

As part of the Cardiovascular Health project in Slovakia, a website was created which offers valuable information on cardiovascular diseases and preventative measures including nutrition, healthy eating, and active lifestyles. Check it out for yourself!
www.vyzivapresrdce.sk

The Canadian Program of Cooperation

The Cardiovascular Health project was one of 151 projects, worth approximately \$16 million, carried out over the course of Canada's 13-year assistance program in the Slovak Republic. The program encompassed a broad range of projects, building on three main themes: establishing a democracy, setting up a market economy, and forging commercial links with Canada. Working with other international donors, including the European Union (EU), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and the British Know How Fund, Canada has helped Slovakia embrace the Western traditions of democracy and pluralism. Now that Slovakia has made significant progress on these fronts and has joined NATO (in March 2004) and the EU (in May 2004), the Canadian government is taking a look back at its contribution to the transformation process in an effort to evaluate its performance. Did the projects address Slovakia's needs? Were they relevant? Are they sustainable? And, most importantly, were they effective?

The Velvet Revolution

An examination of Slovakia's recent history will help us begin to answer these questions. The six-week period from November 17 to December 29, 1989, is known as the Velvet Revolution, the relatively bloodless overthrow of the Czechoslovak communist regime. On November 17, student demonstrators calling for democratic reforms and an end to the oppressive regime, were beaten back by government riot police, even though the students offered little resistance. The images of peaceful students being beaten by the police only served to crystallize support for the campaign among the general population. Soon there were mass demonstrations in Prague, Bratislava, and elsewhere throughout the country, as Czechoslovak citizens joined the protests en masse. With dissent growing daily and protests increasing in both size and intensity, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia announced that it would surrender its monopoly on political power. Elections held on December 29, 1989, brought the first non-Communist government to Czechoslovakia in over forty years. The Velvet Revolution had achieved its intent.

Amid profound changes in the course of East-West and international relations, there were calls for further changes to the Czech-Slovak Federation, eventually leading to Slovak independence on January 1, 1993. Prospects of far-reaching reforms led to a more positive relationship with the international community and opened up new opportunities for dialogue and cooperation. While initial hopes were high, the extensive changes were not without problems and this led to severe internal problems, not only in Slovakia, but in other Central and Eastern European countries.

In the aftermath of the Velvet Revolution, there were widespread fears over the viability of Slovakia's economy as well as concerns about political uncertainty. The economy was unstable and unable to compete in global markets, the public administration system was inefficient and ineffective, the environment was damaged, and average life expectancy was one

of the shortest in Europe. In addition, the inherited industrial infrastructure was obsolete and uncompetitive and the new currency was unstable and unreliable. Despite an initial period of rapid growth, the country soon experienced staggering deficits, both in terms of democracy-building and also economic development. Unemployment levels reached an all-time high and poverty levels, especially among the minority Roma population, grew rapidly.

Finding A Niche: Canada Steps in to Help

It was against this background that Canada stepped in to help in 1990 by including Slovakia in the Task Force on Central and Eastern Europe (later renamed the Bureau of Assistance for Central and Eastern Europe in 1993). Initially managed by the Department of External Affairs, this program was designed to help the newly independent countries of Central and Eastern Europe embrace democratic principles and build stable market economies. The Canadian

program of assistance was developed with its three principal foreign policy objectives in mind: the promotion of prosperity and employment; the protection of security; and the projection of Canadian values and culture, including democracy and respect for human values.

During the early years of Canada's program, assistance was provided to a broad range of sectors with little strategic direction. Help was needed quickly in virtually all areas of Slovak society and this was reflected in Canadian programming. When the program was transferred to CIDA in 1995, assistance was refocused and redirected to specific areas where Canada could use its expertise to make a real difference. A distinguishing feature of CIDA's programming approach was its willingness to venture into uncharted waters and try new projects outside the traditional assistance-type activities. While these projects did carry more risk, the recipients often reaped higher rewards.

Spotlight: Canadian projects at a glance

Canada-Slovak Dairy Development	Delivered assistance to the Slovak agricultural industry in an effort to develop a sustainable dairy industry.
Women's Entrepreneurship Project	Provided skills training for women living in a high- unemployment region, to help them start their own businesses.
Legal and Judiciary Training Program	Helped the Slovak judiciary in a number of key areas by improving legislation and helping with institution-building.
East-West Enterprise Exchange	Equipped Slovak managers in various industries with much-needed management skills during the early years of the transition.
Vocational Training	Supported the Slovak Ministry of Education in planning and implementing reforms to its vocational training system, to better equip young people to find jobs.
Strategic Information Management Program	Trained key Slovak policy-makers in strategic planning and information policy.
Minority Relations Police Reform Project	Developed a capacity to employ problem resolution techniques, particularly with regard to minority and human rights issues.

Extensive support was provided in public administration reform and institution-building, encompassing the legal system, the judiciary, and various ministries. Specific assistance was also provided in those fields requiring unique technical skills such as civil aviation, banking, and taxation. Education, health, and agriculture were additional key sectors of focus for the Canadian program. All these areas were identified early in the program as Canadian niche areas but they also reflected Slovakia's own needs, as it transitioned to a functioning market-based democracy.

Slovakia: In the Driver's Seat

Throughout the transition period, Slovakia played a key role in its own transformation process. Faced with the daunting task of building a country almost from scratch and faced with an endless list of problems in virtually all sectors of the economy, public service, human rights, education, health care, and agriculture, Slovaks of all ranks and ages embraced the challenge by building a market economy, a pluralistic demo-

cracy, a revived civil society, improved public services, and a rejuvenated environment. Despite many setbacks, the country has courageously and successfully pursued its ultimate objective of joining Euro-Atlantic institutions such as NATO, the EU, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In most instances, the Slovak government spearheaded its own reforms—such as developing a state environment policy, enacting energy policy principles, and drafting a new Public Service Act. International assistance complemented the work of the Slovak government through the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise.

Credit must also be given to the role played by the Slovak Diaspora who, without exceptions, made positive contributions to Canada's assistance program. While the Slovak Diaspora was only involved in a few projects, their knowledge of the language and first-hand appreciation of the culture and local surroundings, clearly had positive results.

The "How To" of NATO Membership



After gaining independence in 1993, Slovakia identified NATO membership as one of its foreign policy objectives. Membership in the Alliance, with its collective defence capability and close political and military cooperation channels, was viewed as being both strategically important and politically progressive. The road to NATO membership, however, is neither short nor easy. Aspiring members must first prove that they are able to assume the full responsibilities and obligations of membership, as well as demonstrate their ability to contribute to Euro-Atlantic security and stability.

How does a country go about joining NATO? The first step, after expressing an interest in joining the Alliance, is to participate in the Membership Action Plan (MAP). This is a program specifically designed to help aspirant countries prepare for all aspects of future membership. The Alliance provides advice and assistance to the aspirants on political, economic, defence, resource, security, and legal matters. In addition, a broad range of activities, specifically tailored to each country's individual needs, are carried out annually based on the objectives, targets, and work schedules set by the countries themselves.

The “How To” of NATO Membership (Cont’d)

Aspirant countries must also actively participate in NATO's Partnership for Peace program (PfP). This program, which focuses on defence-related cooperation, helps each partner country strengthen its ability to interoperate with NATO forces and prepare for peacekeeping, search and rescue, and humanitarian operations that may be carried out under the authority of the UN or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Further objectives of the program include facilitating transparency in the national defence planning and budgeting processes and ensuring democratic control of defence forces. Areas of cooperation are diverse and include airspace management, civil emergency planning, and language training.

As a final prerequisite of NATO membership, aspirant countries must settle any international, ethnic, or external territorial disputes by peaceful means, demonstrate their commitment to human rights and the rule of law, establish democratic control over their armed forces, and promote stability through economic liberty, social justice, and environmental responsibility. While participation in the MAP and PfP does not guarantee membership, it does help aspirant countries meet the political, legal, and military obligations. NATO member countries decide collectively which countries will be offered membership and once the decision is made, accession talks begin followed by the signing and ratification of accession protocols.

Slovakia, along with six other countries, was invited to join NATO in March 2004. As many of CIDA's projects in Slovakia were geared towards democratic and economic reform, the projects undoubtedly helped the country, directly and indirectly, meet many of the requirements of NATO membership.

DID YOU KNOW?

On March 29, 2004, Slovakia and six other countries joined NATO.

Delivering Business and Management Training

Following the collapse of communism in the Slovak Republic, it was evident that new small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) needed to be established in order to curb the high rates of unemployment. Under communism, emphasis had been placed on heavy, energy-intensive, and environmentally unsound industries geared towards exporting to other socialist countries. In order to develop a functioning market economy, Slovak companies needed to radically change their structures and operating frameworks to reorient production to Western European markets and to be competitive in the global market. In addi-

tion, old management styles and outdated operating practices needed to be updated. However, few people had the specialized skills required to make these changes: they needed help in obtaining them.

Canada stepped in to address these needs through a multitude of projects, involving the transfer of knowledge and experience, the strengthening of systems and procedures, and contributions to the legislative environment. For example, there was a training course for Slovak managers at York University equivalent to an MBA crash course; the Strategic Information Management program introduced e-Government in the country and taught information technology (IT) managers how to use information

technology to support government development-related operations; as well, there was a human resources and management training program conducted by the Canadian Bureau for International Education and the University of Economics in Bratislava to help Slovak managers acquire valuable new skills. Assistance within this sector eventually focused more and more on specific groups—such as the Telecommunications Executive Management Institute of Canada (TEMIC) training for telecommunications managers—and focused especially on disadvantaged groups such as the entrepreneurship training for women and community development for the Roma population.

A variety of Slovak partners including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), state institutions, and individual small businesses, helped Canada make a difference in this sector. While the size and scope of assistance was too small to have a broad and significant impact on the Slovak economy, many of the

Helping Women Help Themselves: Entrepreneurship Training

CIDA's Women's Entrepreneurship Project, in cooperation with Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax and Integra's MikroFond (a Slovak non-governmental organization), was very successful in supporting the Slovak Republic's transition towards a market economy by promoting the creation of microenterprises led by women. In addition, the Integra Foundation has been able to expand its microenterprise initiative both nationally and internationally, to other countries in the region, including Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro. Support from other major donors has been secured making project achievements sustainable in the long-term.

Sharing a Lifetime of Experience: CESO Volunteer Advisory Services

The Canadian Executive Service Organization (CESO) is a CIDA partner that provides volunteer advisors to companies, institutions, and private business owners to help them in restructuring and adjusting to a market-driven economy and/ to democratic practices. Many of the advisors are retired persons with over ten years of experience at the senior management level. They share their accumulated expertise in a given area with their partners and transfer skills and knowledge for best business practices. Over the course of CIDA's program in Slovakia, funding was provided for over 200 CESO assignments.

One such assignment helped a Canadian of Slovak origin now living in Zvolen, Slovakia, to extend the shelf-life of the milk for her milk production company, and to manufacture quality ingredients for ice-cream mixes and milkshakes. With the help of her CESO advisor, she is now the proud owner of several milk bars selling ice cream, cakes, and other treats. One outlet is selling over 3,000 servings of ice cream every day!

Another CESO success story involves the help that Mr. Vilim Smiljanic extended in helping a Slovak producer of wood floor coverings to penetrate the North American market. Mr. Smiljanic—a successful manager from Vancouver, British Columbia who expanded his small sawmill to become the third-largest producer of wood paneling and flooring in all of North America—helped his Slovak partner create competitive profiles, and conduct an analysis of distribution channels and supply logistics in support of his export ambitions. Additionally, Mr. Smiljanic helped fine-tune production facilities and operations in order to circumvent potential production problems.

projects had successful outcomes at the individual and institutional levels, spreading the benefit of economic development to various disadvantaged groups.

Reform: A Strategic Priority

The legacy of communism in Slovakia left behind an ineffective and inefficient public sector, an obsolete legal system, and a corrupt and overburdened judiciary. Creativity and individualism in the public service was frowned upon and employee turnover was extremely high, as more and more skilled workers turned to the private sector. Decades of isolation and trade embargoes also left the public service lacking essential equipment such as basic personal computers. The judiciary, which was not built to handle the new commercial law cases (which had not existed under communism and traditional state ownership), had by 1999 a backlog of over 85,000 cases involving business disputes. Additionally, criminal activity was on the rise, encompassing a whole range of new and more sophisticated offences such as trafficking of illegal arms and nuclear products, tax evasion and

other white-collar crime, armed robberies, and car thefts. The Slovak police force was having difficulty coping.

Various projects were developed to address these difficulties, involving the transfer of Canadian knowledge and expertise and the promotion of important characteristics of Canadian society, such as pragmatism, tolerance, and respect for the rule of law. Some projects concentrated on knowledge-sharing, such as the Legal and Judiciary Training program, while others sought to improve the treatment of prisoners in correctional facilities, such as the Addiction and Delinquency program. Specific areas covered by the Canadian projects included juvenile justice, alternative sentencing, legal aid, cultural sensitivity, civil code reforms, witness protection programs, and public service reforms. All in all, about 25 percent of Canadian contributions were devoted to helping with legal, judiciary, and public administration reforms, and showing how concepts like tolerance and openness can be built into a society's legal and judicial systems.

Meeting Modern Challenges: Public Service Reform

In an effort to help Slovakia develop a competent, stable, and dynamic civil workforce able to meet the challenges of a modern democratic government, CIDA with the Public Service Commission of Canada launched the three-year Public Service Reform project in 1997. Aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the public service, this project helped develop a new civil service act, build sound budgetary and financial management standards, introduce human resources principles, and strengthen the Slovak Institute of Public Administration. One of the most successful aspects of this project was the internship program. The internships were designed for middle management officials from various government ministries who traveled to Canada to learn public service management principles, practices, structures, legislation, policies, culture, attitudes, and communication.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some participants in the internship program were later promoted as a result of their Canadian experience!

Making Society Safe: Police Reform



Slovak police officer

During its transition process, the Slovak Republic embarked on a reform effort to modernize and equip its police force to provide police services within a democratic framework. The Slovak Police also had to learn to respond effectively to organized crime and corruption, domestically and across borders. Efforts were often complicated by the Slovak population's mistrust of the police, reminiscent of the communist era. Police were often perceived as brutal organizations with a complete disregard for human rights, existing not to fight crime and to safeguard society, but to further political interests.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Slovak Police Service is comprised of approximately 20,000 police officers.

CIDA, in cooperation with the International Training and Peacekeeping Branch of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), has supported police reform in the Slovak Republic since 1996, focusing on issues such as instructional techniques, intelligence analysis, criminal intelligence, economic crime, and crime prevention. Emphasis was also placed on

creating and maintaining the core values of integrity, professionalism, respect, compassion, honesty, and accountability in the police services. CIDA and the RCMP are confident that their association with the Slovak police will have a positive, mutually beneficial, long-term effect.

What is Community Policing?

Community Policing is an approach to law enforcement that brings the police and local communities together, at the grassroots level, to solve disputes as a team. Problems addressed usually include young offenders, substance abuse, and family violence. Results show that this type of cooperation helps both the police and community members gain a mutual respect for one another, and encourages continued cooperation. In 2002, CIDA contributed \$800,000 to help the Slovak State Police adopt the principles of community policing in three pilot projects in Banská Bystrica, Prešov, and Spišská Nová Ves. The project used the policing model known as CAPRA (Clients, Acquiring and Analyzing Information, Partnership, Response and Assessment), which is also used in communities across Canada.

The process of decentralization, involving the creation of new self-governing regions and the gradual transfer of power to Slovakia's more than 2,900 municipalities, also presented challenges for the government. This shift from a centralized state economy to a decentralized model of governance requires a massive transfer of skills and knowledge from the state to the local level of government. As demonstrated in many

countries around the world, including Canada, strong local governments are the cornerstones of a functioning democracy. This is the level of government that affords the greatest opportunity for citizens to access and participate in the decision-making process, as well as the level that provides a wide range of services that significantly affect the day-to-day lives of the general populace.

Canadian assistance reflected this priority and included one large-scale project, accompanied by a number of smaller ones. These projects were designed specifically to support the smooth transition to a new governance structure by assisting in both the development of a decentralized government framework and by preparing local municipalities for the coming reforms.

Promoting a Healthier Society

The health services system in Slovakia is considered to be one of the most problematic sectors of the economy. Fundamental health care reforms were slow to materialize during the transition process and have only recently begun to be implemented.

Special Training for Mayors

As part of CIDA's Local Governance and Fiscal Decentralization projects, instituted through the Canadian Urban Institute with the assistance of the Slovak National Commission for the Reform of Public Administration, certain Slovak mayors were invited to attend a one-week study tour in Canada to help prepare them for the new responsibilities they would soon be assuming. Visiting mayors attended a number of workshops held in various Canadian municipalities, learning all the ins and outs of what it takes to be a good mayor. Upon their return to Slovakia, the mayors organized their own training sessions to share their newly acquired knowledge with their peers. In addition, management training workshops were held in Slovakia for over 500 mayors from across the country. Some of the topics covered include local democratic decision-making and public participation, budgeting and municipal finance, interaction with other levels of government, and the management of municipal services.

Emphasis has been placed on improving the health of the population by refining public attitudes towards their own health and by increasing their interest, capacity, and participation in prevention and health care delivery. Some of the planned strategies include the privatization of health services, modifications to the status and remuneration of health professionals, implementation of new standards, transformation of the education and training of all health professionals, and a new concept of health protection and promotion based on the World Health Organization's Health For All in the 21st Century strategy.

In an effort to help in this endeavour, Canada stepped in with eight health-related projects, ranging from cardiovascular disease prevention and community-based rehabilitation to the treatment of kidney disease in children. One of the small-scale project success stories is in speech pathology. A conference for young Slovak and Canadian speech pathologists was held, allowing participants to compare methods and share the latest ideas. New treatment methods used for special speech disorders, mainly for handicapped children and for parents of children with developmental language delays, were introduced. A small library was even established, composed of useful resources and learning materials brought by the Canadian participants.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Partnership for Tomorrow Program (PTP), administered by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, is a travel fund mechanism designed to contribute to the democratic and economic reform process in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Since 1999 over 50 people have traveled to or from Slovakia as a result of this project. The PTP made it possible for Dr. Denis Geary of the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, to travel to Slovakia to lecture medical students, nephrologists, and pediatricians on problems related to chronic kidney failure in children, and discuss ways in which medical care for children with renal disease can be improved.

Introducing Community-based Rehabilitation

As in other Central and Eastern Europe countries, the Slovak Republic has taken steps to reform its centrally planned system of health and social care, which, in the past, was primarily institutionally based. Existing resources are no longer sufficient to support the system, making way for alternatives such as the development of a community-based approach to rehabilitation (CBR), in which NGOs, family members, and the community play a central role.

With financial assistance from CIDA, the International Centre for the Advancement of Community Based Rehabilitation (ICACBR) based at Queen's University, began a three-year project to implement the principles of CBR in Slovakia with the assistance of the Slovak Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family. The initiative has provided technical assistance on CBR in clinical, education, and policy development, specifically through the establishment of community-based rehabilitation centres, the development of curricula for future practitioners in this field, and assistance with the ongoing development of policies within the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and the Family that will promote independent living and community integration. The overall goal of this project is to increase the capacity of persons with disabilities to live independently and be equal and participating members in their society.

"Institutions in Bratislava are very progressive, but they are still institutions," explains Lorna Jean Edmonds, director of ICACBR. "It's the location and the nature of these institutions which means children with mental disabilities, for example, are not fully integrated with their community. So, the question is: How do we help an 11-year old girl start Grade 5? How do we help that school accept the girl so she can be with her friends on a daily basis?"

Internationally renowned for its human rights and social justice policies for people with disabilities, Canada has been able to help Slovakia work towards ensuring that its children and adults with mental and physical disabilities have the same opportunities as others and are viewed as equal members of society.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are between 350,000 and 500,000 Roma in the Slovak Republic: they represent 7-10 percent of the population. Most live in poverty in some 500 rural settlements. An important dimension of democratic development is the relationship between a government and the minorities residing on its territory—the principle of non-discrimination is fundamental to a modern democracy. A number of CIDA projects and Canada Fund grants were used to help the Roma population meet their basic and

strategic needs and help Slovakia improve its treatment of ethnic minorities. This included a number of community development activities such as the construction of a community centre, educational programs for young mothers and children, and the introduction of the Boy Scout movement into the Roma community.

DID YOU KNOW?

Slovakia also has a 600,000-strong Hungarian minority community.

Small Projects with Big Results

In addition to a wide range of large projects, the Canadian Embassy in Bratislava administered the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives (CFLI), a program of small projects, usually less than \$10,000. Since 1990, some 120 projects have been supported by the fund, worth approximately \$840,000. The purpose of the Canada Fund is to promote the emergence of a strong, viable, and pluralistic civil society within a market economy by facilitating the active participation of NGOs, local communities, and voluntary groups during the period of social, economic, and political transition. Three main priorities were identified for Slovakia's CFLI: human rights and minority issues, with particular emphasis on Roma issues; advancing the status of women in society and promoting equal opportunities; and encouraging public participation in community development.

DID YOU KNOW?

The CFLI has helped build a child crisis centre in Zilina. Special resources were purchased to help local psychologists in their work with abused children. Additionally, new toys, bicycles, and playground equipment were provided for the children. As a direct result of this grant, teachers and social workers are now better equipped to help abused children.

A Canada Fund grant helped purchase the Slovak version of a popular Canadian children's book, *Hurry Up Franklin*, for a local Roma community centre and library. These story books are tailored for younger audiences and teach important life lessons.



Hurry Up, Franklin

A Canada Fund grant helped organize afterschool programs for disadvantaged Roma children in Kremnica. Children were given the opportunity to engage in woodworking activities, art classes, dance workshops, cooking classes, and sports.



Roma girls learn to cook in Kremnica

Enhancing Agricultural Performance

Between 1990 and 1993, the Slovak Republic suffered a dramatic decrease in agricultural performance, as subsidies were abolished and the gap between farm operating costs and revenue widened. Restructuring of the industry has been a key priority of the Slovak Government since the beginning of the transition process, with the overall aim of coordinating reforms in an organized manner, ensuring that the supply of food and agricultural products to consumers continues uninterrupted, that self-sufficiency in food is maintained, and that new standards and processing technologies meet, or exceed, EU standards. Canada contributed to this process with five agricultural-related projects, totalling approximately \$1.3 million.

Helping Future Generations: Energy and the Environment

Environmental protection became one of the major challenges during the transition process and the Slovakia Ministry of the Environment was faced

Cows on the Move: Holsteins Settle in Slovakia

As part of the Canada-Slovak Dairy Development project, implemented by Donaldson International Livestock Ltd and University of Guelph, Slovakia had used genetic material from Canada to increase the percentage of Holstein dairy cattle in its herds from about 20 percent to 80 percent and to promote the Holstein breed as the basis of the country's future dairy industry. Holstein cows are considered to be the supercows of milk production. Additionally, dairy genetics is being improved through the importation of dairy heifers or calves, embryos for transplanting, and frozen semen for artificial insemination. Canadian farmers are recognized as leaders in the area of dairy livestock development, especially when it comes to improvements in the Holstein breed, and have been providing valuable training and advice to their Slovak counterparts.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are about 650,000 dairy cattle in Slovakia.

Other objectives of the Canada-Slovak Dairy Development project include strengthening the ability of two key Slovak dairy institutions—the State Breeding Institute and the Slovak Holstein Association—to advance the dairy industry, and to increase milk production and quality by improving the management and care of dairy herds. These two dairy institutions are also learning how to restructure and better manage their operations, conduct comprehensive policy planning, establish staff training programs, and manage their finances. These initiatives are designed to help the dairy industry survive in the long-term and to bring the industry more in line with market-based economics and sound management practices.

DID YOU KNOW?

As a result of this project, annual milk production in Slovakia rose from 2,000 kg to 5,400 kg. Now that is a lot of milk!

with the monumental task of addressing past environmental problems and preventing future ones. As part of other reform efforts, industries were being modernized and in order to attract foreign investment and compete in internal markets, environmental norms and international standards had to be followed. In addition, resources needed to be allocated for the maintenance and development of reliable, economical, and ecologically acceptable supplies of energy, including both conventional and non-conventional sources. With high unemployment throughout the country, the Ministry of Economy was anxious to promote the renewal of the industrial sector, which accounts for 50 percent of electrical consumption, by replacing obsolete machinery and equipment and making these industries more energy efficient.

Having faced similar challenges in the past with its own environment, Canada was able to share its expertise and deliver several successful projects in this sector. A consultant and former Canadian deputy environment minister working for the EU identified a need to improve the internal management system of the Slovak Ministry of Environment and help the country complete the environmental requirements for EU membership. A total of 14 CIDA-funded projects were subsequently launched with these goals in mind and focused on such areas as developing new directives in the field of pollution prevention, drafting new environmental standards, and improving management practices in the sector.

Energy Efficiency: The Case of Demand Side Management

What is DSM?

Demand-side management (DSM) is a systematic method, directed at specific markets (industry, services, households), used to manage the amount and timing of energy consumption through savings programs, smart use programs and higher efficiency standards. DSM has several advantages including cheaper energy production, fewer adverse environmental effects, energy savings, and easier distribution methods for energy.

The concept of DSM was developed in Canada and became the subject of a CIDA-funded project in 1993. The initial objective of the project was to help the Slovak Energy Utility Company design and implement its own DSM strategy. Attention was directed at the energy conservation potential of DSM in Slovakia and initiatives concentrated on reducing negative environmental effects, mitigating the impact of subsidy withdrawals, and influencing customers to use energy more efficiently. While future project sustainability is questionable, interest in energy savings has been sparked and customers have been made aware of how to analyze and monitor their energy requirements.

Assessing Results: Relevance, Effectiveness, and Sustainability

Looking back at Canada's 13-year program as a whole, there are clear indications that most initiatives were both relevant and effective. The vast majority of projects addressed Slovakia's needs and priorities as defined by successive governments, in addition to the stated goals and objectives of the Canadian government. Certain initiatives, although consistent with Slovakia's needs, were implemented either too late or too early in the transition process, making them less effective overall. Others had unexpected results—mostly positive, but sometimes negative.

On the down side, the majority of projects tended to fall short in terms of sustainability, making it difficult for Canada to achieve its third program objective of promoting Canadian trade and investment in the region. Constrained in many cases by tremendous geographic distances and high transportation costs, companies simply cannot afford to sustain business linkages abroad. The lack of institutional capacity to maintain results was also a factor limiting

project sustainability, especially during the early years of transition. Similar problems were also experienced with Canada's technical assistance programs in other Central and Eastern Europe countries. Despite these difficulties, many projects had other indirect benefits for Canada related to the securing of democracy and economic prosperity in Slovakia.

Graduation: Working Together for Results

In 1997, CIDA's Central and Eastern Europe Branch approved a plan to graduate individual countries from its assistance program once the transition process had advanced sufficiently and once essential political and economic reforms had been carried out. Once a country successfully graduates, CIDA no longer funds projects in that country. Readiness to join the EU is considered a key indication that a country is ready for graduation.

Slovakia's acceptance into NATO and the EU and membership in the OECD are all clear indications that the country has made significant progress in

the development of democratic principles and a market-based economy. Canada, with the help of Slovak partners and other international donors, has played a small but important role in this process. Slated to graduate from CIDA assistance in 2005, Slovakia is now working on developing a capacity to deliver international assistance itself. CIDA is helping with this effort through its Official Development Assistance for Central Europe (ODACE) program, which will see Canada and Slovakia work together to deliver aid to third-party countries.

Throughout Canada's technical assistance program in Slovakia, excellent bilateral relationships have been formed at various levels: among governments, among institutions, and among individuals. While some of these relationships have not endured since the projects ended, Canada has made a meaningful and lasting impact in many sectors that has helped shape a viable partnership for the future.