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# KNOW-HOW FUND ASSISTANCE TO THE ENTERPRISE EDUCATION PROGRAMME, SLOVAKIA

*A flexibly designed educational assistance package provides a valuable and sustainable contribution to the development of an enterprise culture in Slovakia.*

## MAIN FINDINGS

- Successful use of multi-skill consortium to achieve range of benefits
- Sustainability assured by successful transfer of know-how and building of local capacity
- Waiting list of additional schools wishing to become involved
- Quantification and tracking of benefits hampered by inadequate data collection and co-ordination
- Over-dependence on core trainers' goodwill for continued dissemination

## Background

The project supported an Enterprise Education programme to develop enterprise skills through the Slovak education system. A group of recipient organisations was formed to design and pilot the programme, including the Slovak Ministry of Education and Institute of Education. Three vocational secondary schools were selected for their

technical specialisms and geographical location.

A consortium of five UK-based organisations provided the assistance between 1992 and 1995, at a total cost of a little in excess of £300,000.

## The Main Conclusions

The evaluators judged the project highly successful. It achieved and in some cases exceeded its objectives. Its design, delivery and management were professional and appropriate to project needs. It succeeded in changing attitudes, developing new forms of behaviour, raising awareness, transferring concepts and know-how, and building local capacity. The result is a sustainable system

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that should ensure that dissemination continues. Flexibility on the part of the UK contractors and Slovak recipients, and in particular by the Know-How Fund (KHF), contributed greatly to the formation of a cohesive team and to achieving a result customised to recipient needs. Despite some weaknesses in implementation, the project contributed strongly to the development of an enterprise culture in Slovakia's education system. It is doubtful whether the results would have been achieved without the benefit of the project.

Project management was closely controlled, and the monitoring and review systems, along with the flexibility of the targets and

milestones, allowed any divergences to be addressed in a timely manner. Reporting was regular and informative, although the budget and expenditure information systems could have been more transparent.

There were, however, design and exit strategy weaknesses which led to an over-dependence on goodwill for continued dissemination activity. The need to guide and encourage recipients during implementation was underestimated, particularly when it came to establishing education-industry links.

Quantitative assessment of project success was difficult as few numeric targets were defined. No data collection and co-ordination mechanism was put in place; absence of data made it difficult to gain an overall idea of the scale of the activity. The evaluation consequently relied on estimates and extrapolation to quantify output and cost-effectiveness. It is nevertheless clear that the KHF's negotiation of fee rates down from normal commercial rates, and the arrangements agreed to cover local expenses, led to a substantial saving which enabled the budget to cover a higher volume of activity than would otherwise have been possible.

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Two years after the end of the project, the Enterprise Education programme continues to be included in the curriculum, and there is a waiting list of schools wishing to become involved. The pilot schools remain champions of the programme and play a key ambassadorial and managerial role in promoting and disseminating the programme.

The formation of the Foundation for Enterprise Education provides a co-ordinating structure and centralised focus for the programme, a potentially sustainable indigenous structure, and a mechanism to assume some of the tasks and responsibilities of the national institutions should their involvement decline in face of economic pressures.

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## KEY LESSONS LEARNED

- Flexibility on the part of the donor in project identification and design can contribute to better targeting on recipient needs. Speed of response in approving funding can be important in ensuring that critical momentum is maintained.
- Multi-organisation delivery teams introduce a greater variety of know-how and skills but need tight and continuous external management.
- A participatory approach taken to programme design can be critical in establishing a strong sense of local ownership.
- Pupil-centred training methodologies often involve a change in approach which meets with initial resistance. Overcoming this may depend more on personal qualities than on subject knowledge. Economics teachers are not necessarily the best equipped to teach Enterprise Education.
- If School Directors are not teachers (as in Slovakia), special arrangements may be necessary to enable them to appreciate the practical implications of curriculum reform.
- Where market economics are not well understood, trainers may themselves need training in how a market economy and an enterprise environment synergise.
- Enterprise education projects require systematic data collection and co-ordination to keep track of numbers trained and of what happens to students after training.

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**For further information see "Evaluation of Know-How Fund Assistance to the Enterprise Education Programme, Slovakia" (Evaluation Report EV617), obtainable from Evaluation Department, Department for International Development, 94 Victoria Street, London SW1E 5JL, telephone 0171-917-0243. This report will also be accessible via the Internet in due course.**

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**DFID**  
94 Victoria St  
London  
SW1E 5JL  
UK

**DFID**  
Abercrombie House  
Eaglesham Rd  
East Kilbride  
Glasgow G75 8EA  
UK

Switchboard: 0171-917 7000 Fax: 0171-917 0019  
Website: [www.dfid.gov.uk](http://www.dfid.gov.uk)  
email: [enquiry@dfid.gtnet.gov.uk](mailto:enquiry@dfid.gtnet.gov.uk)  
Public enquiry point: 0845 3004100