



NiCE



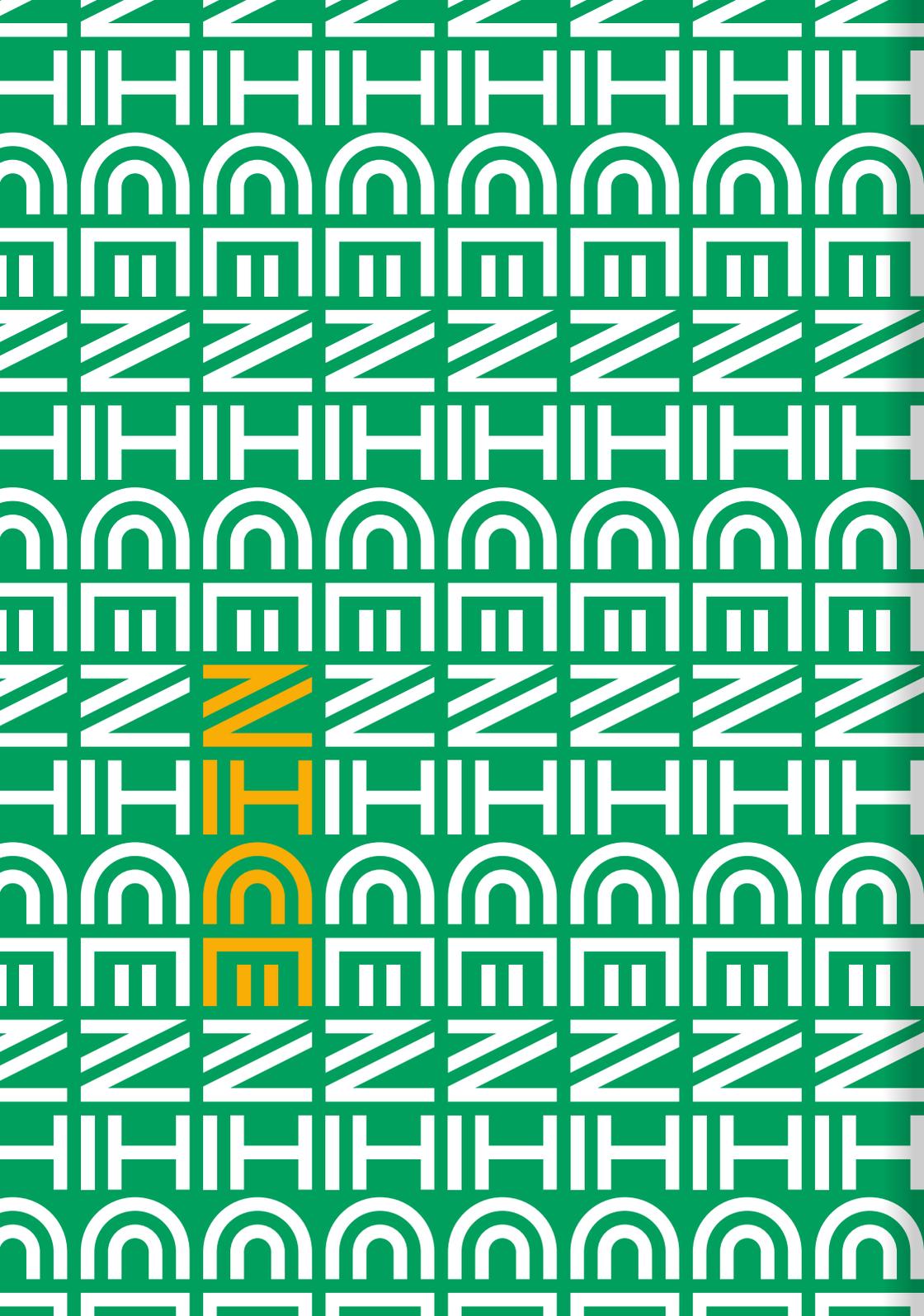
RE-USE CENTRE KOŠICE:

When second life of items also makes social sense



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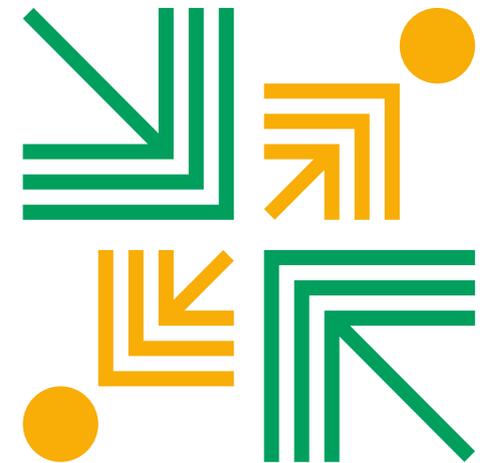
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PEREX

The first Re-use Centre of its kind was created in Košice – a place where help, sustainability, and community come together under one roof. The pilot activity showed that reusing things can have a strong social impact.

During several months of operation, it connected dozens of donors, non-profit organizations and people in need. The project brought a new understanding of how urban spaces can serve solidarity and how the circular economy can be more human.



Picture 1, 2: Re-use centre at Kováčska 18, Košice, October 2024, Source: CIKE

THE PILOT IDEA



The Re-use centre Košice pilot project started in 2024 as part of the international project **NiCE – From Niche to Centre**, which explores how circular economy principles can be integrated into everyday city life. The centre is located in the heart of Košice, on Kováčska Street 18, in a previously unused municipal space.

The goal was to test how a Re-use centre could work as a social service – not as a typical second-hand shop, but as a place where functional items from donors go directly to people who need them.

Several stakeholders took part in the pilot activity, including ETP Slovensko, MyMamy, Arcidiecézna charita, IBM, T-Systems, and others.

Picture 3: Re-use centre at Kováčska 18, Košice, October 2024, Source: CIKE



How it started



The space where the Re-use centre was created was a previously unused municipal building. Its transformation into a community space was both an ecological and symbolic act – reusing a space for a new social purpose.

Before the opening, a series of living labs – participatory workshops – took place, bringing together experts and local residents to explore what kind of re-use model would make the most sense for Košice.

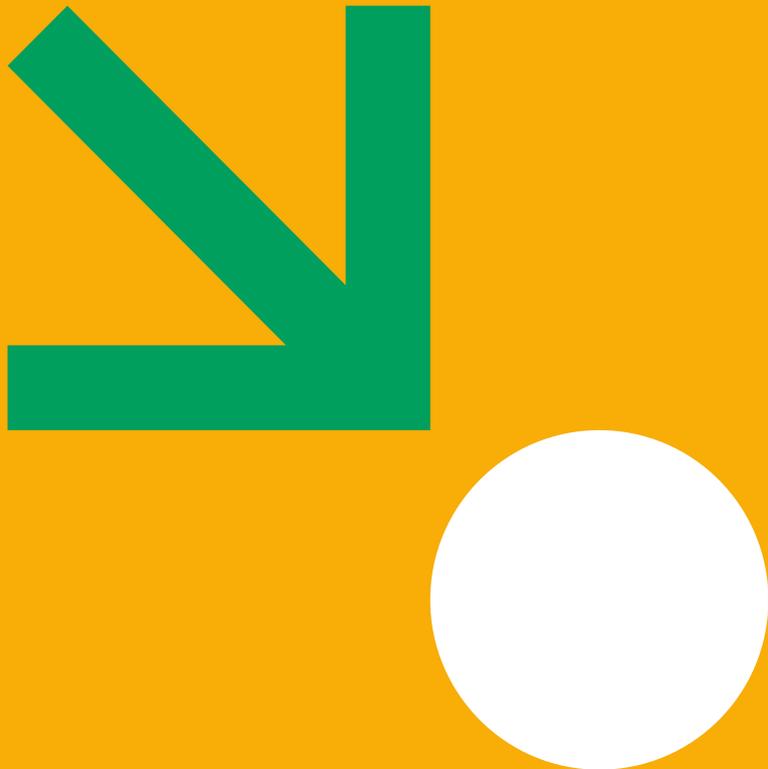
The conclusion was clear: in the local context, a socially focused model that helps vulnerable groups has much greater value than an environmental model focused only on reducing waste volume.

Picture 4, 5: Interior of Re-use centre before the revitalisation, August 2024, Source: CIKE

Before...



Implementation PHASE



 The Re-use centre was open from October 2024 to April 2025, operating three days a week. Its main activity was the collection and redistribution of functional items – clothing, kitchenware, toys, blankets, small electronics and furniture. 

The collections were organized in cooperation with partner NGOs, who clearly defined the needs of their clients. This made the help both targeted and dignified. Some of the most successful collections included:

- a winter clothing and blanket collection for homeless people, in cooperation with ETP Slovensko,
- a collection of baby and children’s equipment for mothers in need, in partnership with MyMamy and Arcidiecézna charita,
- a humanitarian collection of orthopedic aids and medical supplies, organized with the Ukrainian Centre Spletenia,
- and participation in the national initiative “How Much Love Fits in a Shoebox”, which brought 300 gift boxes for seniors.



In addition, the centre developed spontaneous collaborations, such as with **Oáza – Hope for a New Life**, to whom it donated extra men’s clothing received outside of planned collections.

Besides collecting and redistributing donated items, the Re-use centre also became a space for education, inspiration and sharing.

During the pilot phase, we organized 12 free public workshops on topics such as sustainability, circular economy, minimalism, handcraft upcycling and the psychology of consumption.

The workshops attracted people of all ages. Participants learned how to repair, create and rethink the value of everyday objects, while slowing down their consumption habits.

The pilot also tested cooperation with IT companies IBM and T-Systems on the idea of developing a digital platform to connect donors and recipients online in the future.

The centre also opened its doors to community events, such as Mini Book Swap, where people exchanged books in a friendly atmosphere and participation in the Earth Day 2025 event, where we hosted an information booth on circular economy and the value of giving things a second life.

These activities helped expand the centre’s reach, attract new visitors and strengthen its role as a community and educational hub in the city centre.

Pictures 6 - (1-3): Targeted collections of second-hand items for clients of non-profit organizations working with vulnerable groups, December 2024 – April 2025, Source: CIKE

Pictures 7 - (4-6): Workshops for the public organized at the Re-use Center, October 2024 – April 2025, Source: CIKE

Outcomes and learnings



During six months of operation, the Re-use centre welcomed dozens of donors and recipients, organized more than ten thematic collections and created new networks of cooperation between the city, NGOs, companies and the local community.

Picture 8: Delivery of material assistance to 3 organizations such as: Crisis Center for Mothers with Children, December 2024, Source: CIKE



The most important outcome was the confirmation that a socially focused model of a Re-use centre has great value in Košice. Besides providing material help, it also brought wider social benefits:

- it reduced the burden on social services and charity organizations,
- strengthened community connections,
- and helped reduce the stigma around second-hand items by turning donation into a meaningful act of solidarity, not just charity.

The educational activities and workshops showed that the Re-use centre can be more than a place to exchange things – it can be a space for changing mindsets. Participants left with new skills, insights and motivation to live more sustainably.

Picture 9: Mini book swap at the reuse center, March 2025, Source: CIKE

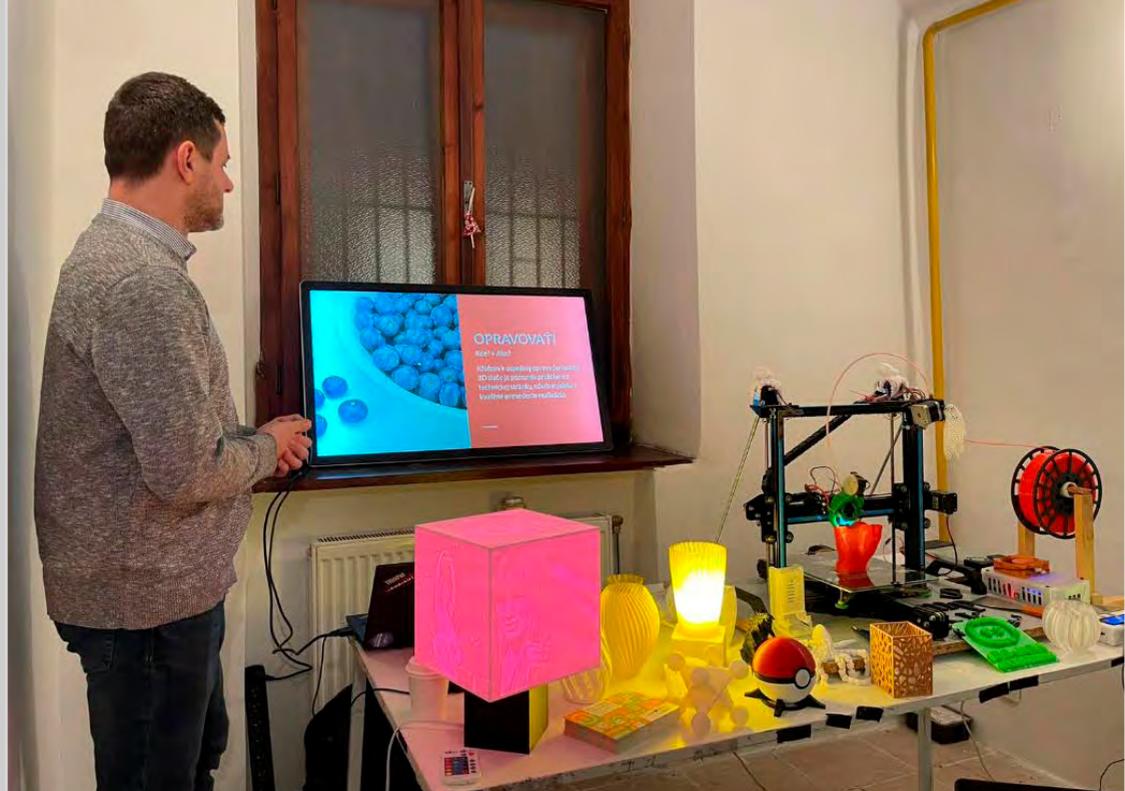
Picture 10: Lecture on waste management!, January 2025, Source: CIKE



The workshops strengthened community ties and created an open, informal learning space.

At the same time, small community events such as the Mini Book Swap and participation in Earth Day proved to be powerful ways to raise awareness about circular economy and encourage public involvement.

The project demonstrated that even small actions can have a big impact when they are done with respect, purpose and a human touch.



Picture 11: Collection for the Ukrainian center Spletinia - December 2024, Source: CIKE
 Picture 12,13: Workshops for the public organized at the Re-use Center, October 2024 – April 2025, Source: CIKE

Further Information



NiCE Project Websites

CIKE: <https://www.cike.sk/en/project/nice/>

Interreg: <https://www.interreg-central.eu/projects/nice/>

Knowledge Platform <https://circularlifestyle.eu/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/reusecentrumkosice>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/re.use.kosice?igsh=MWlmZmx0Mmx2M3E=>

Pilot video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9CrzMV9Y2SU>



The first Re-use Centre in Košice



Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE



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NiCE





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