

KRILCA, DRUŽBENO ODGOVORNA DARILA, VKLUČUJEJO SKRB ZA NARAVO

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Povzetek

Prvi slovenski katalog družbeno odgovornih daril Krilca, darila s čarobno močjo, je Umanotera, Slovenska fundacija za trajnostni razvoj, predstavila leta 2007. Krilca predstavljajo inovativen koncept etičnega obdarovanja, ki so ga prvič vpeljali v Veliki Britaniji v dobrodelni organizaciji *The Charities Advisory Trust*. Vsako darilo iz kataloga predstavlja dobro delo ali podporo za izbrani družbeno odgovoren projekt, kot je izobraževanje otrok v Gani, ohranjanje tropskega deževnega gozda v Ekvadorju, razveseljevanje otrok s slovenskimi Rdečimi noski – klovni zdravniki, itd. Krilca ponujajo enostavno možnost družbeno odgovornega obdarovanja, ki prinaša navdihujoče trajnostne rezultate. Tovrstna darila s podporo posameznikom in koristnim projektom predstavljajo majhen korak proti boljšemu svetu.

Ključne besede: *družbena odgovornost, obdarovanje, filantropija, etična in trajnostna darila, varstvo okolja, socialna pravičnost*

KRILCA, SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE GIFTS, INCLUDE CARE FOR NATURE

Abstract

The first Slovenian catalogue of socially responsible gifts Wings, Gifts with Magic Powers (Slovenian: Krilca, darila s čarobno močjo) was presented in 2007 by Umanotera, The Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development. Krilca follow the innovative concept of ethical presents, which was first introduced in U.K. by *The Charities Advisory Trust*. Each gift from the catalogue represents a good work or other support for a specific socially responsible project, such as education of children in Ghana, preservation of tropical rainforest in Ecuador, support for Slovenian red nose clown doctors, etc. Krilca offer a straightforward possibility for ethical gift giving which renders fascinating sustainable results. By helping individuals and supporting beneficial projects, Krilca represent small steps towards a better world.

Key words: *social responsibility, gift giving, philanthropy, ethical and sustainable gifts, environmental protection, social justice*

Introduction

In our days, our lives are bombed with senseless and exaggerated consumerism, which is leading to excessive exploitation of natural resources, waste of energy, environment degradation, climate change, and also degradation of societal values and increasing differences between developed and developing countries. We are today facing an unprecedented challenge – Earth's ecosystems cannot sustain current levels of global economic activity and material consumption (Wackernagel, Rees, 1996). This is due to the growth of population and, even more importantly, to the rise in per capita energy and material consumption which is, thanks to technological development, growing faster than the human population (Wackernagel, Rees, 1996; Plut, 2007). The pressures on geographical environment, landscape and natural resources are dangerously increasing. Although in developed countries the population has been stabilized in recent decades, the consumption of natural resources per capita is still growing rapidly. In developing countries on the other hand, both population and per capita consumption of natural resources are increasing. In the last decades, many poor countries have been adopting the western style of consumerism and consequently increasing anthropogenic pressures on global environment (Plut, 2007).

One of the symptoms of this untamed consumerism is an ever-growing industry of gift-giving. Today, global market of gifts reaches almost one hundred billion dollars per year. Birthday, New Year, Christmas, Valentine's Day, marriage, graduation, birth or Mother's Day – occasions, on which millions of gifts are exchanged every year, are infinite. Each and every one of us has been more than once in the role of a gift giver. And everyone has been faced with the problem of what to give – should the gift be useful, beautiful, something very special... The best gift is certainly a gift that combines all these features, but finding such a gift takes a lot of time and energy. Two additional problems are the facts that in today's fast speed of life we have less and less time for buying gifts, and that people around us have just had enough of material gifts - both as recipients and as donors. And if we, at the same

time, wish to do a good deed with the present and not waste time with shopping, then we often find ourselves in an impasse.

Socially responsible gifts are an excellent solution to many, if not all of the problems that arise when we buy gifts at today's pace of life, avoiding the shopping fever at major holidays, being environment-friendly and surprising our special ones in a truly original and innovative way.

Umanotera, The Slovenian Foundation for Sustainable Development, has presented the first and thus far the only Slovenian catalogue of socially responsible gifts called Wings, Gifts with Magic Powers (Slovenian: Krilca, darila s čarobno močjo).

Environmental protection and social justice

The accelerating resource consumption that has supported the rapid economic growth and the rising material standards of industrialized countries in recent decades has, at the same time, degraded the forests, soil, water, air and biological diversity of the planet. Pressure on both ecological integrity and human social health is mounting (Wackernagel, Rees, 1996). To be able to deal effectively with this problem, more efforts have to be directed towards understanding and managing the interface between ecology and economics, and more effective sustainability initiatives are required, including tools to stimulate a wider public involvement, evaluate strategies and monitor progress (Wackernagel, Rees, 1996).

Humans have a special role to play in this system because we are responsible for understanding our own role in the larger system and managing it for sustainability. This responsibility is not only an ethical and moral issue. It has to do with the fact that saving the environment actually means saving ourselves, including future generations, since we are dependent on healthy ecosystems for survival (Jansson, Hammer, Folke, Costanza, 1994). One of the most important means for achieving a long-term benefit for the economy and for human welfare is investing in the natural capital – the life-supporting environment upon which our economic, socio-political, and cultural systems depend. For the first time in the history of mankind, the development will have to find a balance between man and nature, between the needs of the present and future generations, between the man of present and the man of future. Since the world population and the consequences of climate change will increase, finding a balance between a raise in the quality of life and the protection of geographical environment will be a very difficult and challenging task (Plut, 2007). We need a progress of humankind which will provide moderate material prosperity for all citizens, social justice, but also preserve the environmental security for future generations. Our absolute priority should be formation and implementation of an environmentally sustainable development model, where economic system – perceived only as one component of the larger planetary ecosystem – will operate exclusively within the constraints and capacity of natural systems (Plut, 2007).

One of the primary and most important steps towards such environment is reduction of our carbon footprint in accordance with the carrying capacity of the planet. To develop a way of living that is both rewarding and sustainable within nature, we need to change our values. Gifts Krilca stimulate such thinking. They represent an opportunity to change the world for the better - directly and indirectly.

With a shift to responsible consumerism and gift giving that Krilca gifts represent, we (sub)-consciously develop a more sustainable lifestyle and change our values. That reflects strongly on all segments of our life. Krilca gifts help and encourage us to develop a socially responsible attitude towards nature.

On the other hand, environmental protection and social justice are two main segments that Krilca address directly. Just under half of all gifts deal with the relationship between man and nature. Here are some of the projects in the Krilca catalogue, seeking for the protection of environment:

- By buying half an acre, one acre or five acres of tropical rainforest we can prevent its destruction. Tropical rainforest is a regulator of our climate, preventer of soil erosion, home to millions of people and source of more than 25 % of medicines in the world.
- By symbolically adopting a dolphin, we support intense research work in Slovenian sea and thus make it friendlier to dolphins and other marine mammals.
- With the purchase of the most necessary equipment for the increase of the number of pollinators in Slovenia we can take action and contribute to preserve the traditional Slovenian activity. Approximately one third of the world's harvest of food comes from the plants which are pollinated by animals, the biggest share being contributed by bees. The mass disappearing of bees is therefore becoming an ever bigger problem in the world as well as in Slovenia.
- By buying autochthon sorts of trees and planting them in natural environment we can increase the diversity of forests and fields and consequently help protect ecosystems and typical Slovenian landscape.
- By protecting the area of reproduction and managing the conditions in the habitat of Amazon turtles we can put this animal off the list of endangered species.

Social responsibility by transparent gift giving

As the first and so far only Slovenian catalogue of socially responsible gifts, one of Krilca project's main goals is to encourage social awareness and responsibility.

The principle of Krilca gifts is simple: The catalogue offers a choice of gifts, which are actually donations for concrete charity activities for the benefit of economically underprivileged or socially handicapped people, for the environment, or for endangered animal and plant species. Charity activities are performed by a range of carefully selected partner charity organizations in Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and developing countries in Africa, Asia and South America. By buying a Krilca gift, the giver in fact donates his money for a noble, socially or environmentally responsible cause on behalf of the gift recipient. Gift recipient is presented with a personally dedicated illustrated gift card, informing him of the gift cause and the donator. Umanotera forwards all gift money to partner charity organizations, which are committed to employ it exclusively for the chosen gift purpose. In order to assure transparency of the project, operational and management costs are strictly separated from donations money.

Currently, Krilca catalogue contains 14 gift packages (42 gifts all together) in the price range from 10€ to 350€, that address a variety of important environmental, social and health issues and cover wide geographic areas.

Private philanthropy

Private philanthropy is no more than in its development stages in Slovenia, both in terms of personal and corporate giving. The predominant culture reflects the welfare state that should cover all social needs for the society and foreign aid. However, since independence, there have been promising signs that when addressed properly, presented with a motivating issue and a credible scheme, people and businesses do donate money willingly.

Gifts Krilca bring an innovative and attractive mechanism for people and businesses to donate money in an easy and transparent way. In this project Umanotera is an intermediary that has used its visibility and credibility in developing the scheme for re-granting to final beneficiaries. The actual effect goes far beyond Umanotera. Krilca do have a magic power to turn an investment of relatively modest project costs into multiplied amounts of raised funds for various charity projects and purposes, which in turn enable carefully selected partner organizations to address burning social and environmental problems more effectively. Krilca is a unique project in addressing such a wide spectrum of globally important problems.

Krilca gifts enrich the Slovenian society by promoting social responsibility, protection of environment, solidarity with deprived, and care for endangered fellow-creatures in Slovenia, region of ex-Yugoslavia and in developing countries of Africa, Latin America and Asia. It is an inter-sector and an international scheme for re-granting to final beneficiaries.

Hereby Slovenian public, organizations of all kinds and especially enterprises are offered an alternative to often senseless and exaggerated consumerism, which is leading to excessive exploitation of nature, degradation of societal values and increasing differences between developed and developing countries. By donating gifts from the Krilca catalogue, individuals, organizations and enterprises can withdraw from consumer stereotypes in gift giving and demonstrate their beliefs and values by donating socially responsible gifts. In this manner, organizations and enterprises strengthen their reputation and demonstrate their progressivity with social responsibility, care for the environment, and solidarity with fellow-creatures.

With their engaging image and unobtrusive approach, Krilca seamlessly support the entire Slovenian non-governmental sector by bringing forward a range of problems, which are the subject of concern of individual NGOs. Krilca perform on neutral grounds of gift giving, which at least every so often concerns every individual, organization and enterprise. In this way, their message can reach a much wider audiences compared to – sometimes perceived as aggressive - activist messages of NGOs. Krilca thus spread awareness of significant social and environmental problems and contribute to acknowledgement of the Slovenian non-governmental sector in general. This project also responds to systemic need of non-governmental sector in Slovenia, which is sustainably supporting of innovative and sustainable projects.

Long-term effects

People's practical behaviour towards nature depends on their ecological and environmental awareness and on the values which they recognize in their natural environment (Kirn, 2004). Krilca help raising this awareness and promote the values of social and environmental responsibility on several levels, all with potential long-term effects on global social and environmental sustainability:

- Long-term and sustainable effects of gifts for end beneficiaries

Example: For mere 35€, a donor will provide a primary level pupil in African state of Ghana with school requisites for one year. The gift may enable this child to obtain basic education, which is important on its own. However, it also carries the potential that this child will someday be able to further her or his education. The gift contains a range of possibilities, which are brought about with improved education of people in developing countries, such as higher living standard, improved health situation, political stability, etc.

- Long term effects for gift donors

Krilca have magic powers to bring satisfaction and happiness also to donors. By donating socially responsible gifts, individuals, organizations and enterprises step out from the consumerism stereotypes, which is an impulse for a mindset shift towards solidarity with vulnerable attention to social, environmental and health problems, and kinder attitude towards people and fellow creatures locally and globally. Such shift in the mindset of an individual is the first step towards the sustainability of the society.

- Long term effects for partner charity organizations and Slovenian non-governmental sector

Through Krilca, the society is becoming aware of the diverseness of activities of non-governmental organizations. The non-government sector is gaining recognition. Krilca contribute to the visibility of significant social and environmental problems, which otherwise might have remained overlooked by the society. In this way Krilca act as an important promoter for the entire non-government sector.

- Long term effects for the Slovenian society

Recognition and popularity of Krilca contribute to spreading of their message about social responsibility, preservation of nature, solidarity with the vulnerable and philanthropy in the Slovenian society. Each Krilca gift donation represents a small step of the society towards sustainability and environment-friendly prosperity.

Inspiring outcome

Since November 2007, Krilca gifts made possible a lot of good deeds. In just over two years, 4101 gifts were donated that raised more than 90.000 EUR for partner organizations. The report shows some very positive and inspiring results:

Mighty Paw: This is the way of helping abandoned cats to a new way of life. We have enabled 14 carefree days for 294 homeless cats; 28 tests for feline AIDS and the feline leukaemia virus; and 30 sterilizations/castrations.

ABC in Action: This is the way of helping children of Ghana to finish their school. 382 children obtained a set of obligatory school uniforms, 94 primary level pupils and 15 secondary level pupils obtained school requisites for a for one year.

100% Laughter: This is the way of helping sick, lonely and frightened children to smile. Slovenian clown doctors have made laugh 806 hospital rooms, 139 departments and 25 entire hospitals.

Song of the Dolphin: This is the way we can make our sea friendlier to dolphins. 252 symbolic adoptions for one year, 12 adoptions for two years and 2 adoptions for five years enabled a lot of committed research of Slovenian sea.

Dancing Trees: This is the way by which we can increase the area of protected tropical forests. We have protected tropical rainforest in Ecuador in the size of 74 soccer courts.

Happy Pack: This is the way of helping children without parents to restore hope in happiness. In this period, many small joys flew to war orphans in Bosnia and Herzegovina - 143 visits to the swimming pool, 148 one-year library subscriptions, 119 sports shoes and 44 English or German language lessons.

Light of Hope: This is the way we can enable an effective healthcare for people from remote areas of Tibet. We have provided 70 days of preventive medical examination in the county of Lhorong, 18 doctor's visit to patients, greenhouses for 5 pupils of a boarding school and 11 packs of Tibetan traditional medicine for one patient's treatment.

Delightful Buzz: This is the way we can secure Slovenian bees from disappearing. The number of pollinating bees has increased by purchasing of 118 queen bees, 4 packs of equipment for beekeepers and 11 beehives.

Magic Crowns: This is the way by which we can revive the region in Slovenia. We have bought 1063 seedlings of Slovenian autochthon tree species and planted them in natural environment.

Drops of Life: This is the way by which we can ensure drinking water to Bangladeshi people. We have enabled drinking water to 92 households and 27 schools.

Adventurous Moments: This is the way we can help less privileged children to overcome distress. In Slovenia, we have sent 350 children from disadvantaged backgrounds to a creative day trip, 40 to the museum train, and 40 to a balloon flight.

Flying Amazons: This is the way we can renew the population of one of the oldest living species of reptiles - the Amazon turtle. We have supplied 28 tools for a pit and nursing of 100 eggs, 6 sets of tools for marking and securing the area of reproduction of turtles and one set of tools for marking and 200 markings for turtles.

Singing Grass: This is the way we can help Bosnians to gain back a normal life. We have demined 540 m2 in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Silent Friend: This is a way by which we can make a farewell easier and less painful for the dying and their family. We have provided 13 complementary methods and therapies for the dying and one set of convenient accessories for home Hospic.

With all these figures we can see how gifts Krilca can really help change things for the better and how we can really do a lot with such small gestures.

Final words

In recent years there has been a growing concern over thresholds or tipping points in nature. Our civilisation is in trouble because of trends we ourselves have set in motion (Brown, 2008). But despite the fact that humanity has found itself at a turning point, we must look into the future with optimism and knowledge that we can all make a difference and contribute to what the future will look like and that we have the tools to shape it according to our desires. Brown (2008) concludes that in these challenging times, it depends on all of us whether we can avoid the collapse of civilisation.

Socially responsible gifts Krilca represent a small, but effective step in this direction. They represent a simple and innovative option of changing the world for the better and changing the consistent patterns of living. Krilca are an opportunity to take action in an unselfish way and to recognize social responsibility as a personal or corporate value.

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