

# Observatory Case update

## Starà Tržnica, Bratislava, Slovakia

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# Starà Tržnica

**Starà Tržnica** is the historical Old Market Hall in the center of Bratislava since 1910. Throughout its over 100 years long history, the building served many purposes; it functioned as a market, hosted a television warehouse, a studio, and a variety of cultural productions. Later, and for many years, the building stood empty and unused. Since 2013, the civic association **The Aliancia Stará Tržnica** (Old Market Hall Alliance) leased the building from Bratislava's Municipality for a symbolic price of one euro per year, with the obligation of investing 10,000 euros per month in the building's renovation. The Stará Tržnica was revitalized and turned into a marketplace, an avenue for cultural events, and it also accommodates many social and non-commercial activities. <https://staratrznica.sk/en/home>

In March 2020, Stará Tržnica was completely shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic and served the city as a storage facility, provided a space to make basic packages for the homeless and elderly, and produced face shields distributed to the hospitals around the area. Stará Tržnica's essence was always "people meeting each other in person" but with the pandemic, this became problematic which resulted in the suspension of many social and cultural activities for more than a year and a half. Throughout the lockdown, Stará Tržnica supported their food vendors in delivering food packages to the residents, until the market could open again in May 2020. This service supported the small vendors tremendously, as the market was their only source of income. With the second lockdown, the Old Market Hall consulted with the health authorities and managed to keep the market open while following health and safety regulations. The community support continued in the form of pandemic proof Christmas markets and events. Those adapted services created opportunities for many vendors, artists and designers, who were challenged by the pandemic.

During these difficult times, the Old Market Hall lost a considerable amount of money and has been living from the savings from previous years, as well as contributions from their partners. They started thinking of alternative ways to generate revenue, applying for grants, and planning for future activities. Although COVID-19 was a hard time for the market hall, more people than ever started visiting the market on Saturdays and the community has changed as the market attracted a new audience.