



VIA FOUNDATION COMMUNITY FORUM

The Community Forum is an informal conference designed for people working in communities in the Czech Republic and throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The idea emerged because the community leaders with whom we work repeatedly expressed the need to meet, inspire and support one another in their community work and development of democracy and civil society in the Czech Republic and the entire CEE region. The Community Forum developed through Via Foundation's ViabilityNet 2.0 program, which supported community agents of change in the CEE region through educational programming and grants.

2016 Community Forum

The first annual Community Forum, held at the Prague Impact HUB in May 2016, brought together over 100 people, including community leaders and NGO staff from the Czech Republic and abroad. The event focused on functioning communities. We were interested in learning what we could do to help communities better use their local resources, facilitate connections between residents and grow people's sense of well-being in their given communities.

Participants engaged in presentations, practical workshops, open space discussions and site visits to community initiatives in Prague. Speakers included urban planner Elena Madison of the NYC-based organization Project for Public Spaces and Alina Porumb, program director of the Romanian foundation ARC.

2017 Community Forum: Breaking Out of Bubbles

Each of us lives in our own bubble of opinions, attitudes and habits. When we fail to see beyond our own bubble, we run the risk of becoming isolated and not understanding other people – and this can lead to divisions in local communities, as we often see in the CEE region. Based on our analysis of needs and challenges in the communities with which we work, we are focusing our 2017 Community Forum on the issue of polarized communities.

Aiming to explore ways to initiate dialogue between polarized groups within communities, the event will bring together people working on various levels in local communities in the Czech Republic and other European countries with the overall goal of enabling them to glean inspiration from different countries, share their best practices and approaches and support one another's efforts. Over three days, *Community Forum: Breaking Out of Bubbles* will offer key note speakers, a set of workshops, open space discussions, site visits and networking activities.

Date: April 27-29, 2017

Place: DOX Center for Contemporary Art, Prague

Keynote Speakers: Richard Smith, SAR, Stewart SARKOZY-BANOCZY, USA

Language: English

Expected # of participants: 120

Partners: C.S. Mott Foundation, DOX Center for Contemporary Art

The videot teaser from last year's Community Forum may be viewed [HERE](#).