

WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL WE MAKE?

Groups of active residents in Czech towns and villages comprise the foundation of a stable, free society. We seek to support them in solving local problems and improving their communities through engagement of diverse groups of residents, thus strengthening residents' relationships to each other and to their environment. We believe that a community where more people are engaged is more resilient to deal with crises that may arise and defend democracy if necessary.

- We help people engage in community affairs and support them in solving local issues themselves.
- We support community philanthropy and motivate grant recipients to work towards self-sufficiency and sustainability of community efforts even after grant funding has expired.
- We help grow trust between residents, relationships and involve people from all walks of life in community efforts.
- We support Czech towns and villages in providing places for residents to gather and interact as communities.

One of the programs that helps us fulfill these aims is:

THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH WE LIVE



This program is for people who want to engage residents, companies and institutions in the planning, design and construction of a public space, whether it be a park, town square, or village commons. Working together to plan and transform a site leads people to discuss options, seek compromises and agree on priorities and solutions, even where opinions differ. That builds relationships within the community and residents' belief that they can be instruments of change themselves instead of relying on others to make decisions for them.

WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF OUR SUPPORT?

- 8 organizations receive grants of CZK 300,000 (\$13,800)
- local project teams form and lead 8 improvement projects under the guidance of community engagement consultants provided by Via Foundation
- local project teams learn new skills in community engagement, fundraising and community build events through three dedicated workshops
- local project teams hold a series of community planning meetings under our consultants' guidance and agree on design priorities
- landscape architects design site plans for each of the 8 public spaces
- local residents in the 8 communities construct the public space improvements
- local project teams gain skills useful for further community projects and involvement in community affairs
- local project teams share their learning and experience with the next round of grant recipients

COMMUNITIES SELECTED FOR SUPPORT IN 2017-19

Town of Světlá Hora – Suchá Rudná neighborhood

Bruntál District

This town is located in the former Sudetenland, a region that was German speaking until after World War II. Most of this population was then deported. The region still faces issues stemming from a lack of traditions, a sense of rootlessness and absence of solidarity. Most of the residents came to the region after WWII and have no local ancestors or bonds to the local area. This project aims to build a place for the community to gather and is viewed as an opportunity to overcome the shadows of the past by building residents' bond to the site and town.

Village of Olšovec

Přerov District

The Olšovec village commons lack a suitable covered area where residents could hold community events, school gatherings, workshops and celebrations. Revitalization of a section of the village commons aims to bring residents of different social milieu and generations together and break through citizens' apathy towards community affairs.

Municipality of Josefov

Sokolov District

This small community has no post office, store, school, sports field or other gathering place. Through this project, the local team seeks to create a new community focal point and – above all – to grow trust between long-time and newer residents, connect people of different generations and engage the long-term unemployed, local associations, children and young people.

Municipality of Bašť

Praha – East District

This municipality is located near the capital city of Prague. Extensive recent development and the influx of new residents have greatly impacted relationships between residents. Implementation of a community project is intended to bridge differences and meld residents into a diverse yet cohesive community of engaged citizens who want to contribute to the quality of life and take part in municipal decision-making about the future of their town.

Town of Rabí – Municipality of Čepice

Klatovy District

This small community gradually lost its school, cultural hall and pub and, in the process, all possible community gathering places. The Čepice project team hopes to develop a space that will accommodate sports and cultural activities, and to engage their fellow residents in the project. The planning process should uncover what residents truly need and want from the site and give all residents an opportunity to contribute with their heads and their hands.

Olomouc – Řepčín District

Olomouc District

Residents of two neighboring districts in Olomouc – Řepčín and Hejčín – used to hold community events together. Gradual development has minimized the sites available for such gatherings in recent years, however, and thus residents seek to develop a small park into a place where they can come together for community cultural events. The idea is to involve diverse groups of citizens in order to overcome differences and encourage greater civic engagement.

Hajnice – neighborhood of Horní Žďár

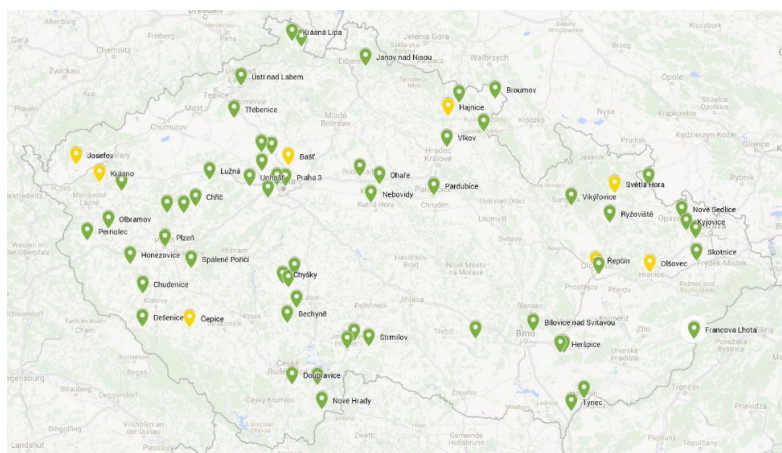
Trutnov District

Residents of Horní Žďár want to channel enthusiasm and respect for local history into the creation of a park for multiple generations. They envision a place where people can sit and relax, enjoy cultural events and engage in sports. The project should also preserve and renovate the fire fighting reservoir into a swimming area. Most importantly, the project should create linkages between long-time and new residents and find commonalities.

Town of Krásno

Sokolov District

The atmosphere in this town in western Bohemia is affected by a recent conflict between two groups with opposing political views. The project aim is to move beyond these differences by giving residents a chance to work together on a purely community, non-political effort. The group hopes to build a park on the site of a former cemetery that will serve residents of all generations as a gathering place.



Map of supported communities in the program The Community in Which We Live since 2001. The yellow markers indicate current projects.