

VIA FOUNDATION VIABILITYNET 3.0

Network of Partner Organizations in Central and Eastern Europe

The CEE partner organization network is a new regional grouping of seven civil society support organizations in six CEE countries: Via Foundation from the Czech Republic, Szkola liderow from Poland, Nadacia Pontis from Slovakia, TRAG Foundation from Serbia, Hungarian Association for Community Development (HACD) of Hungary and ARC (Asociatia pentru Relatii Comunitare) and Fundatia Pact from Romania. The network is not a closed body; on the contrary, it is open to and interested in adding other partner organizations which share the network's interests.

The overall aim of the CEE partner organization network is to strengthen local communities in the Central and Eastern Europe region. To this end, the partner organizations seek to learn from each other and with each other in order to make their support of local communities more effective and to be able to respond more readily to the evolving political and social situation in the region.

The network's priority areas of interest include:

1. **Initiating dialogue in polarized communities in the CEE region.** Why is our society so divided today? How can we help people with very different points of view accept/talk to others? We, the partner organizations, seek to better understand the current and widespread increase in polarization in communities; learning about approaches to initiate dialogue in these communities; listening and then understanding people in regions and/or the periphery (Roma, voters of extremist parties, etc.) and searching for solutions to overcome these communities' problems.
2. **(Re)gaining trust (as NGOs).** What position and trust does the NGO sector have in our countries today? We, the partner organizations, seek to explore how we can change the way NGOs in the CEE region are perceived and trusted.
3. **Sharing and promoting common values.** We, the partner organizations, share a desire to promote community-building values including mutual trust, cooperation, respect for others and openness to balance the focus on individual needs and interests.

Focusing on these priority areas, we hope to:

- identify and describe common needs, pressing issues and challenges faced by communities and best practices in addressing them; compare national contexts
- share common challenges faced by partner organizations in supporting communities and approaches and best practices in addressing them
- explore the concept of resilient local communities and what significance it may have for the network
- promote community development issues on the CEE level, particularly dialogue in polarized communities, as well as other issues of shared interest
- apply shared knowledge in local communities, share trends, innovative ideas, programs, etc.

By addressing these issues as one voice in the region, we believe we can stand taller together, make ourselves heard and be more effective in making a difference.

During the network's start up phase from September 2017 through September 2019, the network will be managed by Via Foundation as part of its ViabilityNet 3.0 program with funding from the C.S. Mott Foundation.

By signing this Declaration, we as an organization agree with the points herein, commit to actively engaging in the meetings/work of the network, to introduce the agreed priority issues to my organization and to work on ensuring the sustainability of the network.