

LIVING COMMUNITIES 2018

For the past 20 years, Via Foundation has been working to increase the number of people acting collaboratively to improve Czech communities and giving to help others. We are an independent Czech foundation and our funding comes from individual donors, companies, foundations and endowment revenues.

Our mission

Our mission is to increase citizen engagement in community affairs and giving in the Czech Republic.

Our vision

Our vision is a society in which people act freely and courageously, accept responsibility for themselves and their community, and where giving is a regular part of life.

Our role

At Via we see our role as helping to strengthen the social resilience of communities.

Via seeks out, connects and supports people who are changing their communities for the better through projects and processes that engage a diverse, broad public. Project leaders include individuals, groups, NGOs, municipalities and community organizations. By working together for the good of the community, participants learn to use local assets, build ties despite cultural and other divides and strengthen their shared sense of identity as a foundation of a stable and free society.



- We help people engage in community life, support them in addressing local issues themselves and help them strengthen their ties to their community.
- We support local giving to help communities become more self-sufficient and continue to develop, even after our support has concluded.
- We help grow trust between neighbors, improve relations and involve people from all walks of life in collaborative efforts.
- We encourage Czech towns and cities to develop places where residents can meet, gather and interact.

Whom we support

- Groups of at least 3 people leading community initiatives
- Volunteer-based non-profit organizations
- Both emerging initiatives and well-established groups seeking to innovate and develop their community work



What will change through Living Communities

In 10 years

Our goal is to support at least 700 projects revitalizing neighborhood communities over the next 10 years. We want to help at least 400 of the supported projects become self-sustaining over the long-term, with project leaders continuing to work in their communities even after our support has concluded.

Each year

Through this program, we strive to support 50 to 60 community projects each year. We will also select 3 particularly promising projects each year and offer them customized support over a subsequent 3-year period.

What we support

We support a diverse array of community efforts, e.g.:

- community workshops, theatre group performances, development of community centers and gardens
- improvement of neglected public spaces and community design/build projects
- restoration of monuments and traditions, mapping of local history and oral histories
- revitalization of streets and town squares, street festivals and neighborhood celebrations
- community discussion meetings, planning and visioning processes
- community revitalization of springs, trails and other landscape elements



How we help

We support community projects in a number of ways – through funding, customized learning and networking – because we have found that combining various forms of assistance increases the impact and longevity of these initiatives. The Living Communities program runs year-round with a rolling application deadline until funds for a given year are depleted.

We provide:

- grants of CZK 30,000 - 80,000 (\$1,375 - \$3,660)
- 10 hours of support from a mentor who has led a similar project in the past
- 10 hours of customized consultations with experienced fundraisers
- support with online fundraising drives and matching of proceeds up to CZK 20,000 (\$915)
- workshops on topics selected by community leaders (e.g. building a project team, community engagement, local fundraising)
- *ViaCafé* meetings in Czech regions that bring together engaged people from the given region and community leaders supported by Via in the past
- funding and customized support to 3 selected projects for another 3 years



Estimated annual budget of the Living Communities program: CZK 6 million (\$275,000)

Two Living Communities projects from 2017

TaTrhy, Liberec

Liberec residents' perception of a centrally-located, seldom-used small park is changing thanks to four young women who have initiated neighborhood market events at the site. Since July 2017, they have organized three market events where people can meet in a fun atmosphere with live music, buy fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers, food from local restaurants and other products made in the region. The group has also held two neighborhood clean up days at the site. The project aims to give neighbors a chance to interact, highlight local culture and revitalize an abandoned site.



A holiday fundraiser for TaTrhy.

Via gave the group a grant of CZK 74,367 (\$3500) + CZK 3,500 (\$160) towards fundraising expenses. See [TaTrhy on Facebook](#) for more information and photos.

Hajnice: The Nažďár civic association collects information about local history

The Nažďár civic association is gathering information about local history to raise awareness about the historic value of the town and give young and old generations a chance to meet as they create a chronicle of the town and the community together. The members of the association visited neighbors, collected historical photos and organized a workshop for children, who drew their visions of the community. The historical photos and pictures were displayed in the Church of St. John the Baptist, which the association is trying to restore. Over 100 people came out for the exhibit opening.

We supported the association with a grant of CZK 26,000 (\$1,200), mentorship and further learning opportunities.

