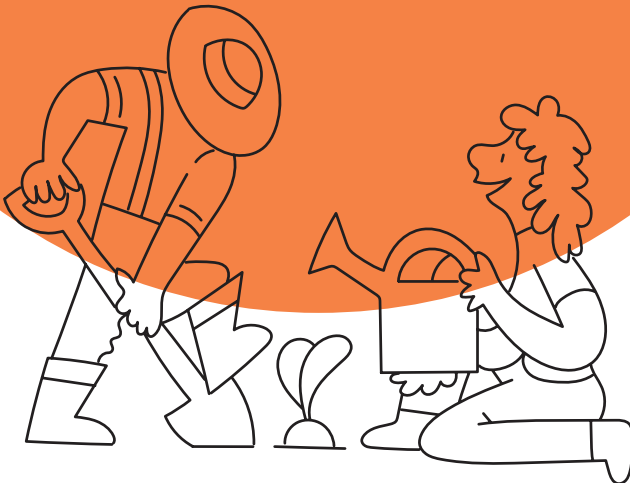


Sand



Neighborly guide

How to not only live in Písek,
but also to live?



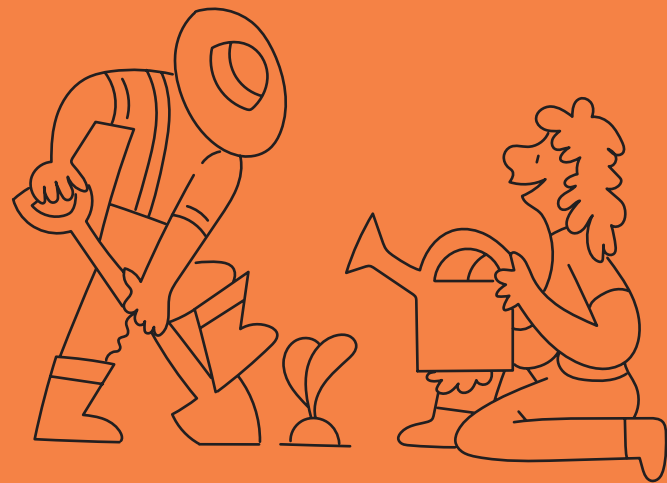
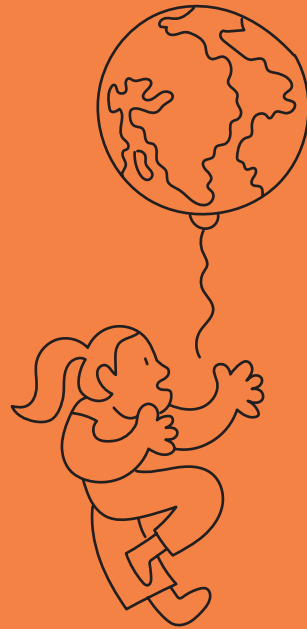
Prepared by Jana Marková
for the Active Sand Association

What will you find in the guide?

local initiatives

→ inspiration

ATtips



A neighborhood is not just a place where we live – it is a space where we live together. When we think about what a real home is, it is not just the walls of our apartment or house, but also the environment outside our doors. Developing the place where we live means caring for the space that surrounds us and making it a home not only for ourselves, but also for our neighbors.

Good neighborly relations are not based on grand gestures – they start with small steps, a smile when greeting, a helping hand at the right time or a simple interest in how others are doing. Where people are willing to listen and cooperate, life is simply better. In such an environment, we do not perceive the neighborhood as a necessity, but as an opportunity – a place where we feel welcome, safe and satisfied.

Each of us can contribute to making our neighborhood a better place to live. Just think: what do I want it to look like here? What relationships do I want to foster? Developing a neighborhood is not just about improving the space around you, but also about building a sense of belonging that turns “the place I live” into a place I truly live.

Places are intersections of history, paths, geographical and urban conditions, and especially our encounters. Whether public, community or private spaces, they are the imaginary framework neighborhood.

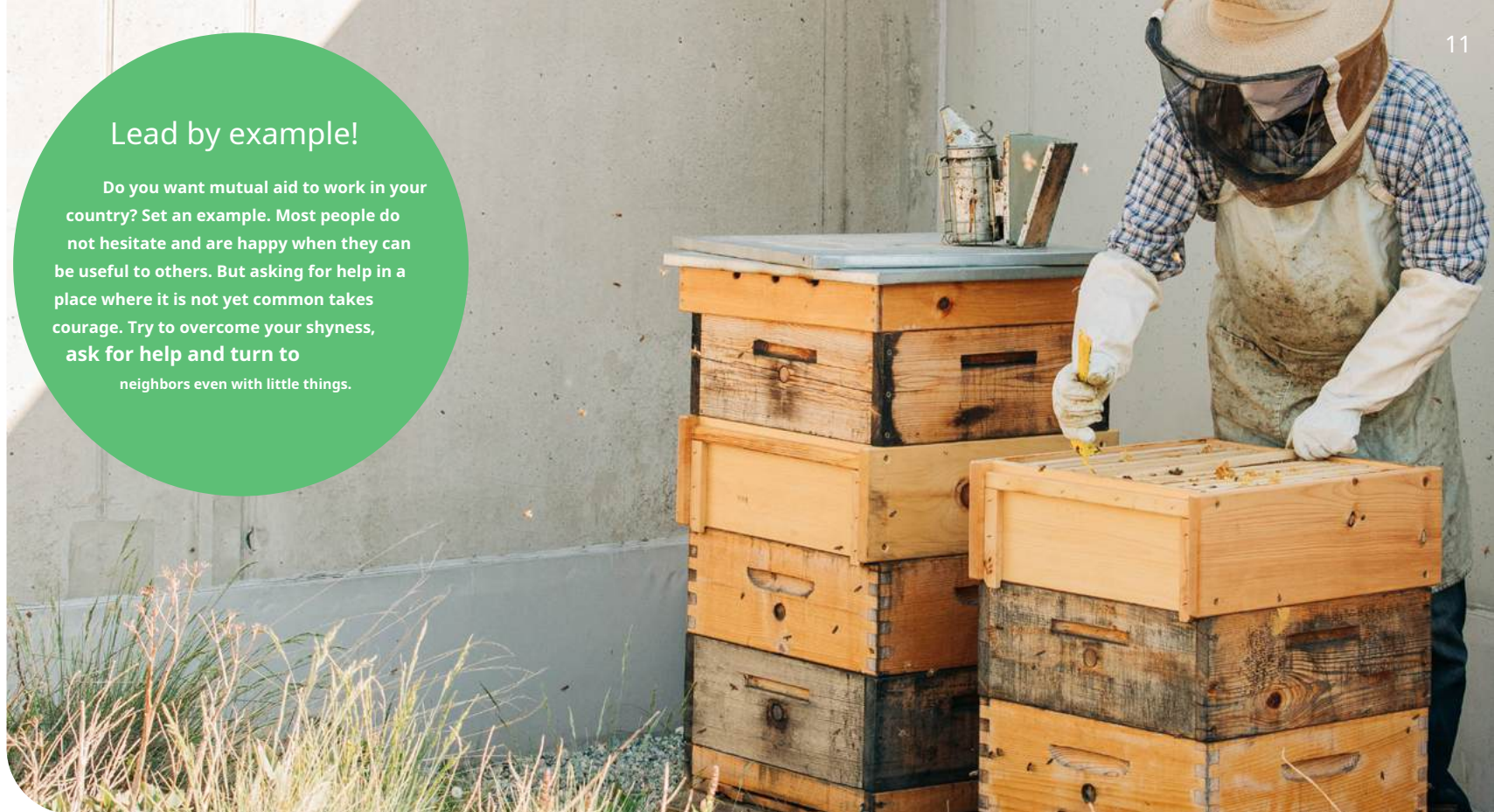
Living houses

Relationships can naturally be developed right where we live. There is nothing easier than being able to turn to friendly neighbors in an apartment building – when you are missing the last ingredients for cooking, when you need to borrow a stepladder or when a package is due to arrive and you are not at home. If people in the house know each other at least a little, they feel safer and less lonely. Targeted communication helps to minimize misunderstandings and conflicts. It is then more likely that residents will take better care of the house and common areas and make better use of their capabilities.

There are probably several people living in your house who are interested in establishing pleasant neighborly relations and occasional help with small things. Try to create an opportunity for those who are waiting for it. Ask about the relationships and history in the house, what pleases whom and what is missing for whom. Organize a short meeting in the hallway, in a nearby cafe or pub. Or create a common communication channel online. Use the bulletin board in the hallway to share information and invitations.

Lead by example!

Do you want mutual aid to work in your country? Set an example. Most people do not hesitate and are happy when they can be useful to others. But asking for help in a place where it is not yet common takes courage. Try to overcome your shyness, ask for help and turn to neighbors even with little things.



TIPS FOR HOME USE

→ Shared cleaning

Cleaning the yard or other common areas together is a non-conflict event that everyone, including children, can easily join in. If you add refreshments, it can be a great get-together.

→ **Bookcase or tool cabinet** Suggest to your neighbors that you place a locker in the hallway of your house as a test. For books, tools or sports equipment that you are willing to share together. If it works, you can leave it there and continue to expand the equipment. The locker can also be locked with a number code.

→ Decoration

Make your neighbors happy and make common spaces cozy with flowers or themed decorations, for example for Christmas.

→ Bed

Start a shared flower bed in front of your house with your neighbors. Digging in the ground and tending to greenery can be a nice shared interest across generations. A smaller flower bed doesn't need as much space, will please the eye of many a passerby, and will make you happy whenever you return home.

→ Garden leftovers

Have you brought a basket of cherries or apples from your cottage or relatives, but you don't have time to eat them all? Place a basket with a message in the hallway and make your neighbors happy. Maybe you'll even create a new tradition.

→ Feast

Food brings people together. Even neighbors. Organize a feast in the hallway of your house or a barbecue in the courtyard. Get inspired by Petra Hajzlerová, who published a nutritious book about her neighborly feasts, Hostina.

In many ways, the process of reviving a house is similar to the transformation of courtyards. You can draw on the experience in the next chapter, Courtyards and Courtyards.

Are you having trouble finding common ground in your cooperative or SVJ? Are the situations in the film The Owners familiar to you? Take advantage of the support of experts and invite an experienced facilitator to your next meeting who can lead a group of people with different opinions to a constructive discussion.

Yards and courtyards

The areas around and inside residential units have great potential, but they often remain fallow. Courtyards and courtyards are one of the answers to the difficulties of urban anonymity and an important part of the city's adaptation to climate change. They allow you to create an environment that is pleasant to look at and invites you to relax in the fresh air. However, a revitalized courtyard brings many other practical uses, enhances the value of the property, increases security and can even cool down in hot months. The goal of the renovation is usually to make everyone feel good in the space and not to exclude anyone. Therefore, a key aspect is to find common needs and interests of its residents.

You can start by studying methodological and inspirational materials. We recommend the Živé vnitrobloky methodology and the website www.vnitrobloky.cz. Their authors from the Bieno association offer an initial free consultation and follow-up services to guide you through the entire process.

Use different types of financing

From self-help modifications to drawing on subsidies and grants. More about grants on page 84.

WHAT CAN CHANGE BRING?

→ **Space for relaxation and meeting** A lively backyard or courtyard is an extension of your living room or balcony. You can easily equip it with seating, deck chairs, a shelter, a grill or a few flower pots. You will instantly create a place where you can meet your neighbors and organize joint events.

→ Property appreciation

By investing in common areas, cultivating them, and moving them in, the entire property and individual apartment units appreciate in value. The market price of apartments increases by up to hundreds of thousands of crowns.

→ **Space for children, parents and seniors** The changes will be appreciated especially by those neighbors whose lives are most tied to their place of residence. Among

These include the elderly, children and parents, or people with long-term or temporary mobility difficulties. Today, these can also include people working from home.

→ Benefit and savings

Yards and courtyards can serve a variety of practical functions. You can find clothes drying racks, bicycle parking, a hose for washing bicycles, tool sheds, bio-waste bins, and much more.

→ **Improving the climate and the environment** Functional modifications in the interior of the blocks make the climate of the built-up area livable even in the summer months. The difference between the temperatures of the street and the partially modified interior of the block is around



GARDEN IN THE INTERIOR BLOCK
SAND ATELIER

10 °C. Moreover, basic adaptation measures are not very expensive, but often require the involvement of residents in their implementation. Examples of functional changes are better rainwater management, tree care, greenery in the yard and on the facades, or composting. More details can be found, for example, in the online guide How to control the climate in the courtyard.

→ Cultivation and production

Even on a small plot of land, you can grow crops that will diversify your diet. Herbs, edible shrubs, and many types of vegetables. **More about greenery in the city in the next chapter.**

Cleaning and restoring neglected elements can often help to start using the system quickly – for example:

For example, flower beds, seating, paving stones, etc. Also, flower pots and small play elements or light furniture tend to be in accordance with the existing space usage regime.

It's okay to be afraid. It takes courage to go before your neighbors with a new initiative. Don't hesitate to seek advice from experts or hire a facilitator. The people you wouldn't expect to be the ones driving change are often the ones you don't want to be around.

www.vnitrobloky.cz
Get inspired by practice. Visit completed yards and courtyards that are similar to yours, and take your neighbors with you.

Public spaces

Public spaces already have a strong neighbourhood aspect embedded in their name, they are places for everyone. Historically, they have always been places of important community events. Whether it was ordinary everyday meetings, trading, exchanging information or meetings that were purposefully organized and important for the community, such as demonstrations, holiday celebrations and major cultural events. Thanks to car traffic, shopping malls and multiplex cinemas on the outskirts of cities, e-shops and other technical conveniences, we have significantly fewer reasons to use public spaces on a daily basis. Yet somehow we naturally feel that living is somehow incomplete without public spaces and that cities lose their beauty, charm and liveability without them.

Cities often try to revitalize public spaces very successfully. But there is of course no need to wait for large, expensive and long-term projects to use public spaces. A small but effective change can be, for example, building a fire pit, a barbecue area, a gazebo, a seating area or a water feature.

How to organize public event space

You can also be inspired by the Kul project. tourist in České Budějovice (Association Budejovice 2028)

www.budejovice2028.eu/files/bodybuilder-manual.pdf

FLOWER BELT AND INSECT HOUSE BY THE OTAVYA RIVER

HOW IS IT A SPACE FOR LIFE?

→ Community planning

The key to the success of participatory or community planning for the renewal of public spaces is to invite the widest possible circle of neighbors to such a process in the most attractive way possible (interviews, questionnaires, walks, planning meetings, etc.). A facilitator can be a useful assistant, guiding the debate towards tangible results.

→ Awakened memories

Even ancient and often forgotten events can bring today's residents closer together. Neighbors work together to restore monuments or the original functions of places, create educational trails, organize walks with eyewitnesses, or collect and exhibit old photographs of their surroundings.

→ Meeting places

If we lack natural places to meet, we can build them together. New benches, fireplaces, gazebos, event facilities, stages or revitalized village squares already adorn hundreds of places across the country. A new public fireplace was recently built near Vohybal in Písek www.mapy.cz/s/mufazuuj.

→ Neighboring animals

We can support biodiversity by building shelters and habitats for wild insects, birds, small mammals and reptiles. It is good to draw on the experience of experts to intervene in the local ecosystem in a truly positive and sensitive way.

→ Community saunas

We can also add functional elements to public spaces. For example, community saunas are becoming very popular. Near rivers, fire tanks or ponds, you can find mobile caravans converted into saunas and their half-naked visitors.



→ Water elements

Water cools, refreshes and invites you to stop. That is why wells, streams, reservoirs, ponds and fountains are cleaned, restored or built. They are an indispensable part of the landscape and can also be a source of the tastiest drinking water.

→ Green

Those who are not lazy can even manage to plant an alley, an orchard, save rare old trees, or otherwise green up the surroundings. **More on page 64.**

We all have the opportunity. to shape public space in our city. How?

We are counting on you.

www.paropisek.cz

We Count on You is the participatory budget of the city of Písek, where every local citizen can submit a proposal that should meet the financial limit of up to 0.5 million CZK including VAT and also the conditions set by the approved rules. The project should be of public benefit, should be on the territory of the city and according to the valid zoning plan, supplemented by a drawing, description and budget. The city will assess the feasibility of the submitted proposals, after which they will be included in the final vote on the website. According to the number of votes, projects will be selected for implementation until the total budget for the given year is exhausted.

Via Foundation Programs

www.nadacevia.cz/nabidka-programu/misto-kde-zijeme

Many examples of successful neighborhood projects that have been financially and methodologically supported by the Via Foundation can be found on the foundation's website.

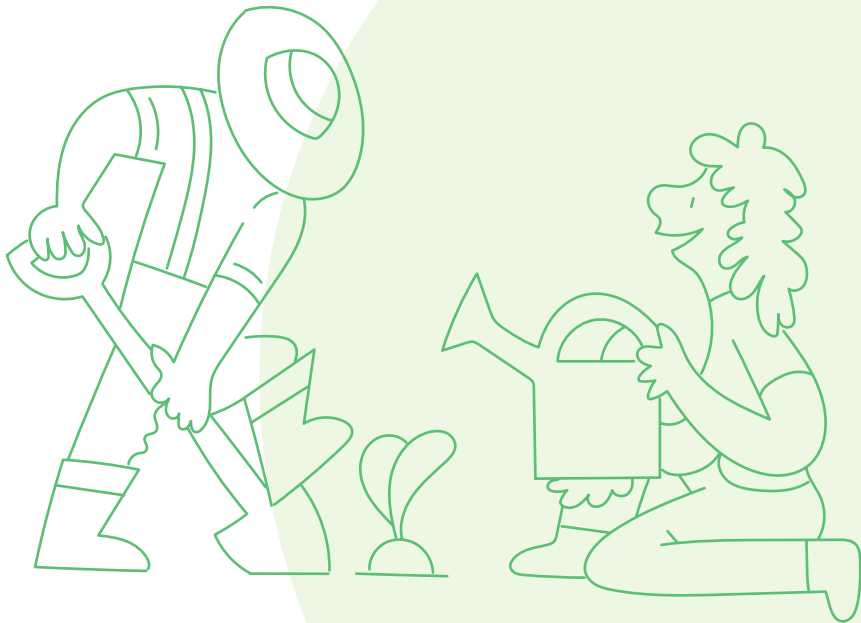
How to organize an
event in a public space?

www.budejovice2028.eu/files/kulturista-manual.pdf

You can also be inspired by the Kul.turista project in České Budějovice (Spolek Budějovice 2028)

How to transform public space?

www.manual.zazimestojinak.cz Not only that, but also look for it in the guide to neighborhood festivals: Experience the City Differently (AutoMat Association).



Community gardens

Community gardens are an ideal opportunity for city dwellers today to reconnect with the natural rhythm of nature and to grow their own food. Working with soil and plants has therapeutic effects, brings concrete, visible results full of authentic flavor, and thus brings a lot of joy. And of course, shared responsibility, and thus building relationships.

Community gardens come in many forms – from a few raised beds in a courtyard to small green parks. Gardens also contribute significantly to improving the climate and quality of life in cities. They have even been shown to reduce crime in the neighborhood. Gardening also plays an important role for single mothers, who deal with possible social isolation through community involvement.

Student Park Project

www.paropisek.cz/projekty

The Student Park project was created from the Participatory Budget of the City of Písek. It is being created in cooperation with students from Písek secondary schools and will serve as a place for educational activities for kindergarten and younger school-age children. The park will be used not only for educational purposes within the framework of environmental education, but also as a meeting place for children and older generations.

Not for cultivation
need for a large area.

A courtyard, balcony or terrace will suffice. You can build a raised bed on a small area and that's it. Even a small

A little bit of greenery can make a big difference
joy, clear your head and go green
a piece of your surroundings.

» Community garden in Hradiště in Písek

The Písek community garden project brings to our city the possibility of producing our own fruit, vegetables and flowers. In the public space on the village square in Hradiště, local citizens across generations can actively participate. Whether in cleaning the land, planting an edible forest or building flower beds.

→ **Community garden in Tábor** Build your own flower bed, sow seeds or plant seedlings, observe their progress, reap successes and cook the most personal dishes from them. In addition, spend time in a unique garden right under the walls of the old town of Tábor, meet friends or new people with the same interests and learn a lot from each other. That is the 1st Tábor community garden at Ctibor's mill. In addition, there is a regular cultural program, events for children, cooking and eating together.

→ Blatná Community Park

The size of the orchard is approximately 40 x 90 m. and newly planted trees grow here alongside the original trees. There is a wetland zone in the middle of the orchard. The orchard provides a pleasant environment for work and creative relaxation for visitors and "volunteer community gardeners", as well as a refuge for birds, small vertebrates, and insects. Educational programs for children are also held here. The orchard is cared for by Kulturní Plantáž Blatná, TS Blatná, and volunteers.

→ How does it work beyond the borders of the Czech garden?

In Hungary and Austria, municipalities mainly provide land or financial support, while in France and Spain, broader support is more common. The international project Ecogardens (ecogardenstraining.com) can provide guidance on how to get your hands dirty in creating a community garden.

The international project Ecogardens (ecogardenstraining.com/cs) can certainly provide you with guidance on how to get your hands dirty in creating a community garden.

How to get involved? The mapko.cz project has long been bringing together enthusiastic gardeners and composters so that everyone can find their dream place. If there is no garden near you and you have enough courage and determination, the book Growing in the City will be a great guide to starting a new garden.

Want to know even more? Explore the website www.kokoza.cz, together with enthusiastic professionals from Kokoza, over 41 community gardens have already been established.

You can get involved in community gardens in ways other than planting. Contribute to the compost with your organic waste, bring shells or other food for the animals, help with joint gardening projects, or attend workshops and other events held there.



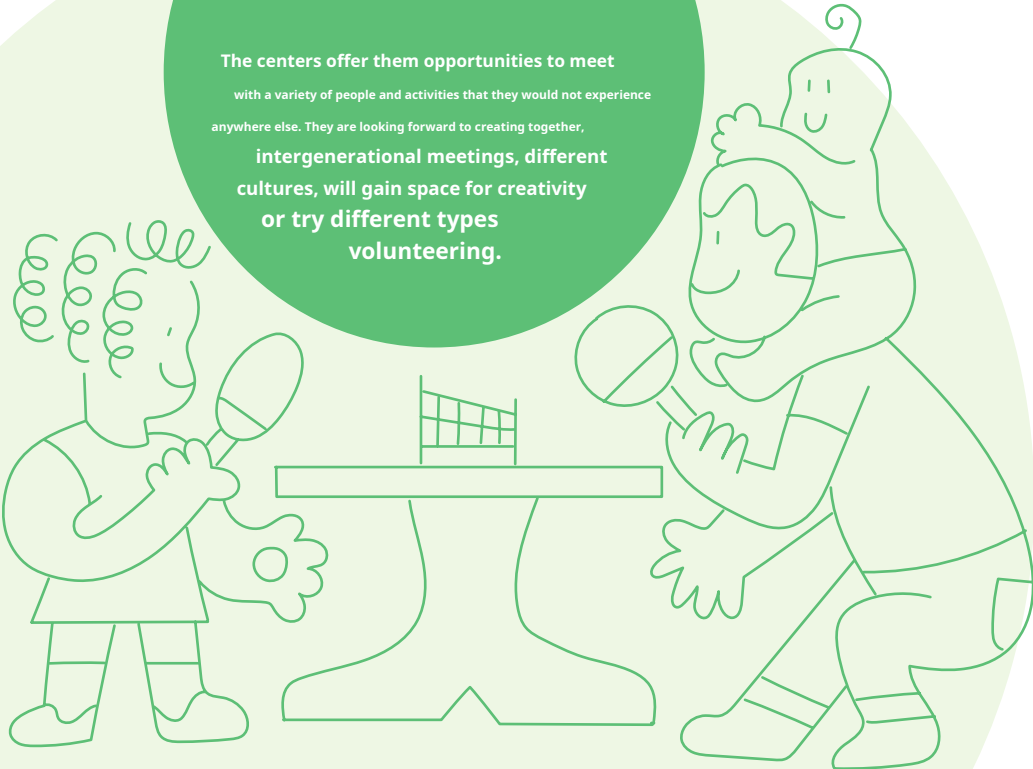
Community centers

A community center is probably the highest ideal of neighborhood and community life. But it is not at all self-evident. Its principle is openness, low-threshold and informality. This does not have to be ruled out with the fact that it is possible to organize various workshops, cultural and educational programs here on a very regular basis. If there is no such center in the municipality, alternatives may be a community school, sports or fire clubhouses, or libraries, cafes or rectories and church centers. Each of these buildings will certainly have its own spatial, temporal and organizational specifics, but it is a principle. We have a place where we can meet, make arrangements and prepare an event or hide in bad weather.



Take
children with you.

The centers offer them opportunities to meet with a variety of people and activities that they would not experience anywhere else. They are looking forward to creating together, intergenerational meetings, different cultures, will gain space for creativity or try different types volunteering.



Offer
to the community,
What do you enjoy?

Do you like to cook or bake? Do you enjoy occasionally organizing events for children or adults? Shared
Is a volunteer work for a good cause a welcome opportunity to exercise? Don't hesitate to contact a community center or active association in the neighborhood and see if your hobbies they can use it meaningfully.



Libraries

Libraries have undergone a significant transformation recently. They are no longer just places to borrow books. They are becoming educational centers, cultural centers, and in many cases, community centers. They organize fair breakfasts, leisure universities, establish community gardens, bring folklore and local traditions to life, and connect people and generations. The Czech Republic has the densest network of libraries in the world – more than 6,000 libraries and their branches. More than 2.3 million people come to libraries every year for culture, more than one million for the offer of lifelong informal education.

→ Community events

Libraries organize a wide range of events – from lectures and workshops to board games or meetings with the local government. The Písek library supports community, intergenerational dialogue and sustainability. In cooperation with the Svět v Písku association, it helps with the integration of foreigners. The Dobrá pomoc program involves volunteers in the production of handicrafts and therapeutic aids for seniors and hospital patients. It offers educational programs for schools, and courses such as shared cooking or digital counseling for the public. The youngest children can participate in the Všechnálek program, older ones can experience Night with Andersen – and even sleep over in the library.

→ Multifunctional space

Libraries open their spaces to the community – they organize neighborhood events, run clubhouses, or offer coworking. The Písek Municipal Library supports freelancers and small entrepreneurs by providing them with a place to work, meet, and create new projects.

→ Good Corner

There is a free clothing swap rack in the non-fiction department. Library visitors can drop off clean, unwanted items here, and anyone can pick them up.

free to take away. During Advent, there is also a swap of Christmas ornaments and decorations.

→ Seedbed

In the non-fiction section you will also find the Seed Bank – a place to share non-hybrid seeds from local growers. You can take the seeds away for free or exchange them for your own. When the harvest comes, don't forget to donate your surplus in a marked bag.

→ Documentary screening

In the Písek library you can also watch freely available documents from the Show Me Too! festival, the largest screening of human rights documentaries in the world. The program can be found on the library's website.

→ Books delivered to your home

Volunteers in some locations carry or deliver books to people for whom the library is physically inaccessible.

→ Reading club

Book clubs are gaining popularity within libraries or completely informal groups. Do you like to share your experiences reading books? Would you like to learn about books that have appealed to someone else? Come and experience the magic of books together at your local library.

Cooperation with libraries can be very useful in reaching out to local people or in organizing events. They are important players in local events. They connect associations, organizations, and local governments, and most importantly, thousands of readers.

How to develop the community dimension of libraries: konceptce.knihovna.cz/ chci-budovat-komunitni-knihovnu or udrzitelna.knihovna.cz.

Urban Písek library

www.knih-pi.cz

Dozens of inspiring community and educational activities

across the entire Czech Republic and all types and sizes of libraries can be found at on the page codokaze.knihovna.cz.



²⁴ "It is not good for a man to be
 "to oneself," the wise scriptures say.
 That's why we seek partners, start
 families, and build long-term
 friendships. Our current culture is
 markedly individualistic, but if we
 don't want to be just
 workers and residents and we desire to live
 a varied and fulfilling life, developing the
 neighborhood is a preventive medicine.

In this part of the guide, we also describe some
 specific life situations – childhood, parenthood,
 senior age or coexistence of people with different
 mother tongues and social bubbles. Our intention
 is not to separate these groups in any way. On the
 contrary, we believe that it is by connecting them
 that truly strong, balanced and enriching
 communities are created. Rather, they are
 opportunities to look at our neighborhood from
 different perspectives and find our neighborly
 role, no matter what stage of our lives we are in.



People

The environment of today's city brings new challenges for children and parents, which are significantly different from those faced by previous generations. How can we still provide children with a lively neighborhood today – a group of close children and adults, space for free movement and play, or contact with nature? And how can we not forget the needs of parents who need enough time for themselves, for partner relationships, and to provide for the material needs of the household? We can look for answers to these questions in old and new forms of neighborhood and community relations. We can be inspired by examples of how parents from other locations are solving the situation.



How and why are you
create a support
a bunch of my friends
and neighbors?

You can read about this in the book **Extended Family of Your Own Choice** by Petr Jasinský.
or in the book **The Secret of Natural Parenting**
by Michaeleen Doucleff.

TIPS

→ **Care rotation in a group of families** A model that you can encounter in many forms. Two or more families regularly take turns in which of them the children spend time together. They agree, for example, on one morning a week. For older children, even on an afternoon with a sleepover. The children are excited about the shared experiences and the parents get precious time for themselves.

→ **Dating picnic**
It is often difficult for children and parents to find like-minded people in the neighborhood. That is why Jana Křížová tried to organize once a week sharing and getting to know each other picnics for mothers with children in a Brno park. The meetings were met with many positive responses and an online group with more than 180 mothers from the area was created around them.

Some of them then started to see each other more intensively. Similar meetings can be organized in libraries or other available spaces. You can find the full story at www.sousedit.cz/pribehy.

→ **Neighborhood clubhouse**
If you already have a gang or at least the beginning of one and want to see each other more intensively, you can rent a common community space or garden. A unique initiative has been created in Jižní Město in Prague, in which 20 families rent an "extra apartment". For about 400 crowns a month, they have a non-residential space with a kitchen and a garden, where they can meet and the children can run wild in the gang.

→ **Adventure playgrounds**
So-called adventure playgrounds or

Kindergardens are the opposite of today's playgrounds, which are bound by regulations, standards and methodological guidelines. They are places where children and young people can move freely, test their limits, take risks, explore and create authentically - to feel alive. The concept has a rich tradition in England and the Netherlands, and the birth of the first such playgrounds in the Czech Republic is currently underway. www.adventureplayground.cz, www.architekturadetem.cz or www.seberizenevzdelavani.cz

→ **Grandma and Grandpa from the Neighborhood** Are you a parent whose grandparents live far away from your children and would you like to have occasional babysitting? Or are you an active senior looking for a meaningful use of your free time or seeing your grandchildren?

You rarely have a group and would like to be useful? You can search for new grandparents or families with children through Facebook groups or flyers in your area and on bulletin boards. Some municipalities and organizations offer such a connecting and dating service.

You can learn how to specifically think about public spaces for children on the website of the Child-Friendly City association. www.childfriendlycity.cz

To find friendly families in your area, you can try various Facebook groups and online forums that bring together parents by location, interest, or approach to childcare and education.

Youth

Teenagers, adolescents, young adults. They are no longer to be cared for like children, but they are not yet those who can and do everything for life. In today's society, a largely neglected age group, whose role is to more or less stand in opposition to what is currently standard. That is why puberty is puberty. However, it seems that young people today often do not have access to those growth opportunities where they would feel valid and engaged. At the same time, there are many opportunities where they can fulfill the deeper meaning of their age, i.e. find their own place in society, help younger people and learn from their elders. A typical example can be the squad leaders in the Scouts, where children are purposefully transformed from those who are led into those who lead. But the opportunities to be creative, caring and active are certainly not limited to just one, albeit well-known and high-quality organization. When young people have the opportunity to get involved, the whole society can draw inspiration from their creativity, passion and openness.



➤ VIA FOUNDATION - VOLUNTEERING

A PLACE FOR YOUTH

→ Meaningful projects

www.nadacevia.cz/dobro-druzi Students from elementary to university, with the support of the Via Foundation, are implementing incredible projects across the country. In the Dobro-druzi mladý program, they organize festivals and benefit events, reconstruct playgrounds, clean up the landscape, build birdhouses, connect seniors with children, and much more.

→ Junák – Czech Scout www.skaut.cz

The international educational movement for youth and children from the age of 6 organizes meetings, expeditions, events and camps. Scouting has a comprehensive effect on the development of the personality of children and young people - through games, experiences, activities and other activities.

→ Tourist sections

www.kct.cz/turistika-mladeze For example, the Czech Tourist Club organizes youth tourist groups. The groups meet in clubhouses, go on weekends, trips, winter and summer camps, and expeditions.

→ Community self-education

When you lack topics that really interest you at school, you have no choice but to seek knowledge elsewhere, or even create it yourself. An example of this is clubs in which young people invite lecturers who they choose and approach themselves. They organize workshops, courses or discussion evenings for themselves and others on topics that are currently burning for them. Such a model can be implemented practically anywhere.



Do you want to start?
own project?

www.nadacevia.cz/dobro-druzi Do you lack financial and organizational support?

In the Via Foundation's Good-Friends program, young people organize festivals and benefit events, reconstructions, clean up the landscape, and build birdhouses, booths, connecting seniors with children and much more.

→ Low-threshold centers for children and youth www.nadeje.cz

The mission of low-threshold youth facilities is to provide – as part of preventing the risks associated with adolescence – free advice, support and assistance in resolving life situations that young people do not know how to deal with and are difficult for them to resolve, and to offer a safe space for spending free time, including meaningful activities, and to reduce the risk of social exclusion. In Písek, such a facility is operated, for example, by the non-profit organization Naděje.

→ Volunteering

Although the minimum age for formal volunteers is 15 years and parental consent is required for those under 18, neighborhood communities offer many opportunities for involvement and voluntary contribution through their own activities, even for younger people. These are great opportunities to learn something, experience unusual situations, and try out various activities and roles. You can offer your volunteer help to local non-profit organizations and associations or to some of the institutions, such as the Písek Municipal Library.

"It takes a village to raise a child," says an African proverb. And that is often lacking today. Even family is not always nearby, so we as parents are left alone with our children most of the time. Yet it is often parents who are at the origin of new neighborhood initiatives and their successful growth. Living in a neighborhood offers irreplaceable opportunities to consciously create such a village, thus spreading the child's need for attention over more caregivers. The difference is that today we can freely choose who will be part of our village.

Depending on the age of the child, these may initially be relationships in maternity and family centers, where childcare is combined with the need for activity, creativity, and sharing. As children grow, the role of parents changes to those who can participate more or less in how their children's education works. They usually entrust their children to schools, and even there, they can contribute significantly to the quality of the environment with their activities - through membership in the school board, activation of the school association, organization of celebrations, cultural events, etc.

MY GRANDPARENTS

→ Childcare centers and children's clubs

Mother and family centers provide community, solidarity and openness to all generations. They offer self-help, mutual listening, exchange of experiences and lay advice, organize events to support parenting, child education, programs for mothers, parents, children, creative, educational, sports, retraining and one-off events. They help parents on maternity and parental leave to maintain their professional orientation and strengthen their self-confidence.

→ Community role of schools

There are many schools that are willing to work with parents, support volunteer activities, guide their students towards active citizenship, help solve local social problems or open their doors to lifelong learning. Schools can offer a number of opportunities for parents in particular to get involved. Ask at yours.

→ Family coworkings

In the Czech Republic, too, there is an increasing number of different forms of coworking combined with a program or playroom for children. Some are commercial, others are non-profit and socially focused, for example to support single parents. But there are also those that are actually run by a group of families themselves and create the space only for their own needs and for their children.

More examples
family
commonwealth

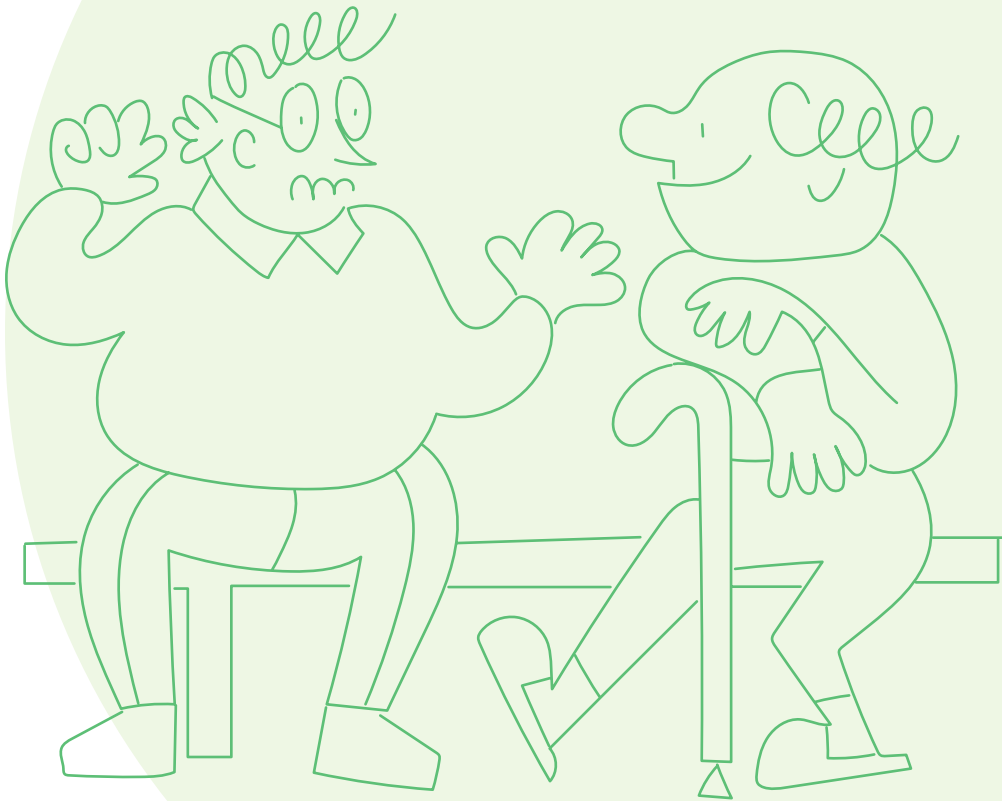
find on the topic
"Children" on page 26.



Seniors

A person grows when they develop. And this is possible at any age. Other exceptionally active neighbors are often seniors. They usually spend more time near their home than others and naturally establish contacts there with neighbors, with shopkeepers, with postmen. This skill is often lacking in younger generations. But there are also many opportunities for seniors to further develop their relationships.

Community and educational centers can offer very inspiring activities that are often adapted to the different fitness levels of visitors (e.g. playing pétanque, singing, language courses, juggling, working with computers or guided walks). They are not oriented towards performance, but towards spending leisure time pleasantly in the company of other people. The range of activities is also expanding with the support of non-profit organizations or the city hall. Senior clubs, universities of the third age and other forms of organized activities are increasingly in demand. And that is a good thing. In the near future, an increasingly higher percentage of the population will be in senior age, and we want everyone to have the opportunity to experience it actively and in a friendly environment.



— COS BRINGS A LIVING NEIGHBORHOOD TO THE ELDERLY —

→ **Community leaders**

Active seniors are often key figures or even the driving forces of neighborhood projects. They often have time, knowledge of the environment, useful local contacts, experience, trust from others or communication skills. And above all, they really live where they live.

→ **Using what you are good at and what you enjoy** Everyone has a skill. Some seniors are great storytellers, skilled at manual labor, or have a wealth of knowledge about

their professional or interest fields. By sharing their skills with others, they can be invaluable to children, families and the entire community.

→ **The joy of being together**

Seniors do not want to be alone. They like to spend time with their peers and children. It is important that these options are satisfied without too much organization, preferably by appropriately arranging public spaces.

→ **Mutual usefulness**

On the other hand, seniors will welcome help,

for example, with more physically demanding activities, help with modern technologies, etc. When a network of neighborhood relationships works, seniors feel safer and supported at home. Thanks to this, they are demonstrably healthier and more self-sufficient.

→ **Meaningfulness**

Even in retirement, one can find a fulfilling activity that has a huge benefit for those around them. It offers the opportunity to share memories, experiences, and a view of life from a different perspective that others, as non-seniors, cannot have.



Inspiration from Japan

The Okinawa Islands are among the "blue zones" with above-average lifespans. One of the local traditions is that everyone has their own "Moai". A group of friends outside the family who meet regularly, share experiences, and help each other in times of need. These networks offer financial and emotional support and give members the assurance that in times of crisis they are never alone.

Language and culture bubbles

There are probably many people with a migrant background living in your neighbourhood too. Some have moved recently, but many have lived here for a long time, often most of their lives. Yet, language and cultural barriers sometimes separate us, which can make it more difficult to get to know each other. However, we can think about this and consciously approach each other, dissolving our social bubbles and often mistaken prejudices. We are all neighbours and residents of our village or city, with the same needs and the same, simple motivation to live well here.

HOW TO DISSOLVE BUBBLES

→ **Multilingual communication** If you are an organizer of neighborhood events or a worker in local organizations, think about neighbors who speak other languages. Try to communicate in multiple languages wherever possible. It is often not difficult, and it sends a clear message to people – you are welcome here. It is also a good idea to take this into account at events, ask questions, or offer a translation. Sometimes it is enough to ask one of the neighbors to interpret for those interested.

→ **Multicultural events** As part of your planned events, you can also invite locals to share recipes, dances, or music from their native cultures. Through multicultural fairs, culinary, art, and dance workshops, or celebrations of colorful national holidays, we can travel the world without leaving our neighborhood.

→ **Everyone can join** People of foreign origin living in the Czech Republic naturally have the right to participate in social events. They can express their opinion on events in the place where they live, they can offer support to others through volunteering, they can establish their own associations, and they can undertake their own community activities.

Neighbors with a migrant background also naturally associate themselves in various groups and organizations, create specific communication channels, organize great events for locals, and share inspiration and cultural wealth from their native landscapes. These communities are important co-creators of our neighborhood, and mutual cooperation can be of great benefit to everyone.

activities, they can be informed and feel themselves members of the given community. The vast majority of opportunities for involvement are open to migrants. However, some important political rights, especially for people who come from countries outside the EU, are still significantly limited.

→ **Active communities of "foreigners"** Not only in large cities and not only recently affected by the war conflict in Ukraine, in some cities groups and organizations initiated by people with a migration background are being formed. They are mainly focused within the community, but they can be an important means and partner in building a good neighborhood. Whether it is the relatively typical involvement of these communities in cultural and gastronomic events, or perhaps cooperation in resolving conflicts. Large cities such as Prague, Brno, etc. have their own network of intercultural workers who can help with the support of groups of foreigners.

The World in Sand This is a voluntary initiative that aims to simplify and make the integration process more enjoyable for those who want it. Svět v Písek is a platform designed for foreigners to meet natives.



Do you want to talk?
Czech (Spanish, Russian,
English, German...),
and you don't have anyone with you?

Do you want to get acquainted with Czech culture, but don't know how?
Are you Czech and do you like to meet foreigners? Contribute
own stone to build a bridge between the people
who were born here and the people who
they got here by various means
and for a variety of reasons.

Neighborhood associations

Neighborhood associations connect people who live in the same municipality or part of it and want to spend time together or diversify life in their surroundings. Their form and size vary and depend on the needs and tastes of the locals. Some have a long tradition, others have only recently been established. We will encounter completely informal groups, but also sophisticated registered associations with a rich history and organizational structure. If it turns out that the group has the stamina, does not rely on just a few people and wants to do activities that require funding, it makes sense to consider establishing an official association with legal personality.

» Active Sand

Facebook: [aktivnipisek](#)
www.aktivnipisek.cz

The Active Písek Association is a group of like-minded people who are working towards the same goal – to improve the quality of not only cultural but also leisure life in Písek with an emphasis on environmentally friendly solutions and planned development of the city. Like every association, group or community, the AP has its basic pillars, which it has long relied on. These include creating a communication “bridge” between residents and the city administration, connecting local associations and communities and organizing cultural and thematic events with regard to our ecological footprint. Let us mention, for example, “Mowing by the Otava River”, “Rafters on the Embankment” or the association’s main platform “Earth Day in Písek”.

The association still operates as an apolitical, non-profit and purely volunteer initiative that actively participates in the development of the city. The members of the association also organize their own meetings, where they open and deepen conversations on topics that are crucial for the city - whether in the areas of culture, ecology or strategic planning. These meetings are open to the public and anyone who is interested in learning more or getting involved in the activities of the association is warmly welcome!



Friends of the Stone Bridge

pisek.vlaskova.com

The association was founded as an association of citizens, united mainly by an interest in the historical symbol of the city of Písek - the stone bridge as an important national cultural monument. Events organized by the Friends of the Stone Bridge Písek Association aim to help build the image of the city of Písek as an interesting place to live.

Bezoví Association
www.bezovi.cz

It is a non-governmental, non-profit organization focused on the development of a social and environmental economy. In accordance with this intention, it is establishing a BEZ.spolkový obchod store in Písek with weighed goods. We can recommend shopping in a packaging-free store for several reasons. It helps reduce the amount of waste, because you take the goods away in reusable packaging or containers. It allows you to buy exactly as much as you really need, which minimizes food and raw material waste. It supports a more sustainable lifestyle and saves natural resources, because it eliminates unnecessary plastic packaging and supports local, often environmentally friendly products.

→ **Start the functioning of the association with your own activity.**

Ask for things to borrow. Invite your neighbors to events you're going to. Ask for help and don't be afraid to ask for little things. This will inspire others to be active too.

→ **Create an event on social media and share the invitation wherever possible.**

It is a good idea to set up a group or social media profile so that you can easily invite and add other interested parties. You can also exchange emails or create a shared table of phone numbers for faster communication. We recommend that you designate a contact person who can be reached by people inside and outside the association.

→ **Arrange with a few people who will go into it with you.**

Reach out to friends and neighbors living in the area. Plan your first public neighborhood meeting together. Choose a suitable location that is close to everyone. Promote the event with printed flyers on the doors and bulletin boards of houses in the street. Include a contact person and how people will recognize you when they arrive. Create an event on social media and share the invitation wherever possible. It has been proven to be effective to set up a group or profile on social media so that it is easy to invite and add other interested parties.



Interest groups

In interest groups, a common location is not the most important topic. They are an opportunity to meet people who share the same interests, passions, hobbies, and interests. The closer to home we pursue our interests, the greater the chance that we will make friends with people from the neighborhood. As every dog owner knows, even sharing a seemingly individual interest can build strong neighborly relationships. Conversations not only about pets often turn into conversations about family, the city, and personal stories.

Involvement in interest groups or associations develops skills in a pleasant and supportive environment. They organize exhibitions, concerts, trips, workshops and trainings. They often devote themselves to nature conservation, cultural heritage or other community activities.

Folklore Ensemble Písečany www.pisecan.cz

The ensemble has been operating in Písek since 1975. The forty-member association of enthusiastic dancers, musicians and singers performs annually at many events in the Czech Republic and abroad. The association is the organizer of the International Folklore Festival in Písek. The ensemble also performs during Advent with the program Písečan vánoční and in the autumn organizes Posvícení s Písečanem.



VEGAN DINNER PISKE
facebook: [veganskevecerepisek](https://www.facebook.com/veganskevecerepisek)

How to start?

To get involved, it's best to look for organizations that address your specific interest, and find out more information about their activities and opportunities to meet. They also often welcome various types of volunteer help or cooperation. Don't hesitate to look for them use local Facebook groups and other communication channels.

→ Sokol Gymnastics Unit

It organizes sports and leisure activities. It runs floorball, aerobics, gymnastics, indoor soccer, volleyball and basketball clubs. It runs fitness and rehabilitation exercise classes. It offers activities for preschool children.

→ Volunteer firefighters

Volunteer fire brigades are often an important association in terms of the social life of the community, similar to Sokol, hunting and folk art groups, local football clubs, etc. Competitions in firefighting skills are now referred to as fire sports.

→ Czech Union of Nature

Conservationists www.csop.cz
Do you want to get involved in nature and landscape conservation in your area? Are you looking for a group of like-minded people? Choose one of over 300 grassroots organizations, contact it, and become a member.

How to find informal hobbies groups?

Not all community activities are public and easy to find. Reach out to groups directly when you meet them on the street. Ask about similar activities on Facebook groups or consult with the locals.



People, places and spaces create the potential for a number of partial, more or less structured and repetitive activities, which give life and character to neighborhoods. These three pillars are in our sights for mapping and revitalizing the community. Together they form the whole on which the neighborhood rests.

Balls

are a traditional way for people to come together and celebrate. Often organised by local clubs or schools, they offer an opportunity to dance, have fun and meet friends and new acquaintances. The atmosphere of balls, full of elegance and joy, allows people to spend a moment forget about everyday worries and enjoy enjoy the company of others. Many take memories of dancing, laughing and maybe and new friendships formed.

Carnival

They take place before the start of Lent and are another important event that brings the community together. With masks, music and dance, they become a celebration of traditions, but also a creative platform for local artists and craftsmen. Participants come together to shared the joy, tasted local specialties and experienced the atmosphere that is typical for these traditional events.

Fairs

Fairs and markets are also ideal places, where people can meet, buy local products and participate in community activities. These events offer not only the opportunity to buy fresh food, art products and handicrafts, but also an opportunity to get to know local producers and artisans. Atmosphere fairs are often very friendly and open, which encourages interaction among visitors.

Activities

Local information flows

For something to happen,
it must be known!

→ **Municipal newsletter**

A very proven tool at the local level is still various types of municipal newsletters, i.e. good old paper that you can grab in your hand. They are published at different intervals and are usually under the direction of the local government. A certain risk of these newsletters can be a certain tendency, which affects the complexity and completeness of what the citizen learns about the municipality.

→ **Web portals of municipalities and cities** Recently, they have undergone significant changes, both graphically and functionally. And it is no exception that they provide space for non-profit organizations that somehow care for the community and the neighborhood. They are starting to be interactive, and therefore inviting people to get involved in community life.

→ **Local bulletin boards**

And the phenomenon of bulletin boards is still not extinct in the Czech Republic. In some places they are empty, in others they can still serve well for those who have something to say.

Application

MUNICIPALITY

www.info.munipolis.cz/samospravy

In the online world, the application provides anyone with very up-to-date information about local events. Use it to send messages not only local governments, but also associations, can groups and other institutions.

WHERE TO FOLLOW MY DAILY DAYS

City website

www.mesto-pisek.cz

Písek city newsletter

www.mesto-pisek.cz/zpravodaj/ds-1025

Písek World

www.piseckysvet.cz

Písek Info Diary

www.piseckyinfodenik.cz

Písek calendar

calendarium.piseckem.cz

Tourist portal of the city of Písek

www.pisek.eu

My Sand application

smart.pisek.eu/muj-pisek

Facebook:

City of Písek

Cultural events in Písek Písek is alive (Písek Info Centre)



PHOTO: JANA RIEBE

Social networks

Local Facebook groups, or other types of social networks, allow people to share information, events, and news about current events in their area. They are a quick tool for organizing social events, solving acute local problems, or for mutual assistance. They help in establishing new relationships and friendships.

Groups are also useful for people who are interested in a specific topic (gardening, events for children, sports, art, etc.) and want to find people with similar interests. Usually, anyone can join and contribute to groups. They allow you to reach a larger number of people in your immediate area. They can be useful for people who have just moved to the neighborhood, but also for those who have lived there for a longer time and would like to explore more options for neighborhood activities. If there is no group that meets your expectations, do not hesitate to create one.

→ Large local groups

Groups called "City of Písek", "Písečáci", "I'm from Písek", "Písek is our city", etc. often bring together a huge number of locals, and thus become a valid communication channel. Local representatives and officials often join the discussions here. The disadvantage of these large groups can be an increase in negative contributions. On the other hand, it is also possible to resolve unexpected situations in them.

→ Swap

Groups for exchanging things. They can also be thematically focused, for example, swaps of children's clothes, equipment and toys are popular.

→ I donate for transportation to Písek and the surrounding area

→ Zerowaste Sand

→ I need/offer help in Písek

Focus on locality.

The next time you're offering or looking for something online, try to use the communication channels that connect people in your immediate vicinity first. Even with one-off interactions, there's a greater chance that neighbors will you will meet again and that from random meeting, a relationship will be formed.

Take advantage online community to establish living relationships.

Take advantage of what social networks and various online useful platforms - for example, the ability to reach out unknown people around, present your ideas, projects, photos, create events and share invitations. You will allow even the shyest neighbors to watch your actions from a distance, gain trust, and get involved when they want to.



Neighborhood events

Nothing attracts and connects a neighborhood as well as a jointly organized and experienced neighborhood event. After all, most municipalities had or have their traditions associated with church holidays, which are now enriched with "new traditions." Pilgrimages, fairs, maypole building, feasts, Christmas caroling, etc., in some places retain their traditional character, in others they adapt a little to the present time. However, they still serve as a natural invitation and an excuse to meet our neighbors. When we get involved, we can get to know local people, as well as associations and organizations better. We can learn more about different cultures, traditions and customs, while sharing our own hobbies and experiences. Neighborhood traditions help maintain cultural heritage and pass it on to future generations.

- **Food unites**
Food is a part of every event and neighborhood. It is a natural bond of relationships. It is a good and informal excuse to be together. It motivates people to show their recipes and share tastes. These events can be large or small. A barbecue, picnic, roasting of sausages or a table with mulled wine often attract a surprising number of neighbors from the area who have been waiting for a similar opportunity to socialize.
- **You can find out about most events through local information streams on page 42.**



Go to events with neighbors from your house!

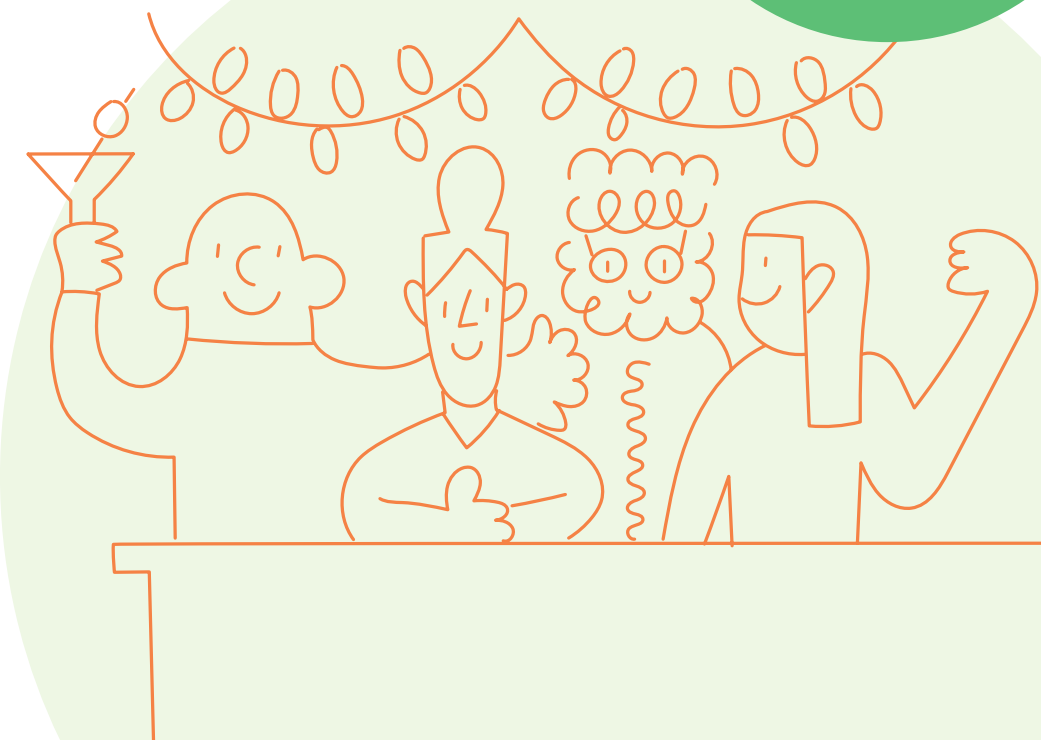
Take advantage of traditional events to get to know each other or to deepen relationships with those closest to you neighbors, then there is a greater chance that the neighbors you will meet again and that from random meeting, a relationship will be formed.

Inspiration, how reshape public space

you can find in the neighborhood guide
festivities Experience the city differently.
manual.zazimestojinak.cz
(AutoMat Association)

Let's clean up the Czech Republic
www.uklidmecesco.cz
Let's Clean Up the Czech Republic is a volunteer clean-up campaign that takes place throughout the Czech Republic (and even in a few places outside of it). Its goal is to clean up illegal landfills and litter. You can add your own clean-up campaign or join others.

Experience the city differently
www.zazimestojinak.cz
The Experience the City Differently festival has been bringing neighbors closer together and enlivening the public space of our cities since 2006. In the Czech Republic, this unique event shows what happens to a street when it belongs only to the people and their imagination. They are the ones behind the program and production of "their" festival. Parked cars will be replaced by concerts, theater, workshops, games for children, or recipes from local residents.



Neighborhood culture

In cultural events in the neighborhood, there is another important thing related to the living neighborhood. In a consumer society, we have become accustomed to the comfortable role of passive recipients - we have an unlimited supply of music, videos and media, which often suppresses our own creativity. At the same time, many people would like to play a theatrical role or sing with a guitar

EXAMPLES OF CULTURE ACTIVITIES

→ Volunteer theater

Theatre has always been and is a certain catharsis of collective experience. And we don't always need large stone theatres for this. In a certain sense, a neighbour in the role of a king is more easily grasped internally than a famous actor. In Písek, the Prácheňská scéna Theatre Association, the Šemík Theatre Association or the Nitka Puppet Association operate.

→ Neighborhood Gallery

www.pradelnazije.cz/ohlednuti A successful example of connecting art with neighborly relations is the UKG – Stolen Gallery project, which brought Český Krumlov to the pages of newspapers and prime time on television. The authors used an unused display case for an announcement and placed a new work of art in it every Sunday and organized an opening. There have been 400 such events with huge attendance, and new UKG galleries are being created all over the country.

→ Concerts, bands, orchestras and choirs
www.sborissimo.cz

The mixed choir Sborissimo has been operating in Písek since 2001 under the excellent leadership of choirmaster Lenka Haramová. Visit their rehearsal, training camp or concert.

→ Literary meeting

Every Czech may not be a writer or poet anymore, but having the opportunity to touch your

by the campfire. All it takes is courage and a little organizational energy to create such opportunities. There are also methodologies and instructions on how to do it. Animation of culture, in technical terms, means reintegrating a cultural element into social relations – that is, reviving what has gradually ceased to function.

The world of stories and poetry has its own voice, and the very popular slam poetry can easily have a very neighborhood character.

→ Dances and balls

Dance, the combination of music, movement and relationship, has always been and can still be a powerful experience. And it doesn't have to be a professional and expensive event. There are still associations that are able to organize such events and breathe local uniqueness and atmosphere into them.

→ Creative workshops

Local elementary art schools, associations, and even creative individuals can provide facilities and tools for art workshops of various kinds. It can be a nice motivation if a common neighborhood creation appears somewhere in the eyes of passersby in the form of a small exhibition or as an artifact of public space.

→ Street art

We love lively streets, their color, if it has hints of painterly art, and even noise, if it shows signs of music, theater or comedy. There may be officially designated places in the village where such activity is welcome. Selected walls as large-scale canvases, unused spaces as stages for local bards.

» Sandbox

www.piskoviste.info

"Sandbox is a street festival for children and their adults. The main idea is to discover, through various themes, the joint work of artists, interest groups, local residents, institutions, visitors and anyone who wants to get involved."



On your own

Don't you feel like performing?

Come support local artists. For a quality musical experience, you can head to Balzám Café during the summer months. Neighborhood music events with a pleasant atmosphere also take place in the house's garden.

At the Elephant. Favorite Theatre Under the Line
organizes musical and theatrical performances
events all year round.

» CONCERT AT BALZÁM CAFÉ

Neighborhood sport

Physical exercise is not only a health-promoting activity. It has long been a way of collective experience of an uplifting nature. In the era of top-level sports that are extremely focused on performance, private sports also tend to be oriented in a similar way. (how much, how far...). Playing football on the local pitch, playing hockey on a frozen pond or playing volleyball with a group is still a valued activity, as is sharing a sauna, using an outdoor, albeit aging, table tennis table, or practicing yoga or tai chi together. Active athletes also naturally stretch and move the public space of the municipality.

Another way of sporting coexistence is through tournaments (table tennis, chess, etc.) or races (running, cycling, etc.). These can even become a tradition that becomes a regular part of community life.

→ **Running groups and races**
You don't even have to run alone. There are various dating sites for runners, amateur groups or group runs with a coach. The Czech Republic is famous for its many memorials, so why not organize a new one, locally? Or join one of the long-standing ones.

→ **Yoga and other exercises in the park** Group dynamics allow some activities to be experienced more intensely. There is a special magic to meeting in a park or at the Exhibition Grounds and relaxing or concentrating together. We can organize such meetings ourselves, invite a lecturer or find someone with experience directly among the neighbors.

→ **Hardening**
www.otuzovani.eu
Hardening has become very popular in recent years. Various clubs and parties of hard-core enthusiasts are being formed. In pairs or in a larger group, contact with icy water is not only more fun, but also safer.

→ **Petanque**
A popular game from the French streets can be an opportunity for a neighborhood meeting of all generations.

Orienteering sports Písek
os-pisek.webnode.cz
Facebook: ospisek

Icebreakers Písek
www.ledoborcipisek.cz

Learn sports
each other

If a sport is attractive to you, but you can't find the right one for it own way, try to find a neighbor - a teacher. Maybe he will be the type of informal coach, which one you need.

CYCLING
PHOTO: JAN HROMÁDKO

Find yourself
online teammates

There are many websites and
social media groups
to find teammates. Search
by sport and location.



Volunteering

It is clear that work, and especially work for others, is not just a means of earning a living. It is a way of being in the world, a way to feel meaningfully part of a community. Volunteering is a fundamental element of neighborhood organizing. Neighborhood or community cooperation is rarely financially rewarded. Nevertheless, volunteering should not be seen as a pure good that therefore functions completely on its own. Volunteering can also be supported in a relatively professional way. This is especially the case with the possibility of education and supervision.

In voluntary work, we are achieving a very fragile thing, which is building trust and ways of appreciation. It is very appropriate if in neighborly cooperation we think about awards, rewards, public presentation of the work done, not overloading the most active, etc.



HOW DO YOU BECOME A FREEMAN?

- **Visit the volunteer center**
pisek.charita.cz
Find the nearest volunteer center. They will know who is currently looking for a helping hand and how you can get involved. The volunteer center in Písek is run by Charita Písek.
- **Choose an organization nearby** Find associations, non-profit organizations, libraries, senior centers, or even schools and kindergartens in your area that you would like to support with your activities. Ask how you could be useful. Offer them what you enjoy doing – and to the extent and time allowance that you can afford.
- **Use online platforms** You can find a wide range of activities at **www.dobrovolnik.cz** and other sites.

- **Reach out to neighbors directly**
There are probably many neighbors living in your house or street, and you can be very helpful to them just on your way home. By shopping when you are sick, picking up the mail, or assisting. Older, frail neighbors in particular will appreciate it very much. They may not take advantage of your offer of neighborly help right away, but believe me, it will make them feel much better in the neighborhood.
- **Don't underestimate your abilities.** You can help your community more than you think! Think about how much time you want to devote to volunteering, what you want to do and what you don't want to do. Volunteering shouldn't exhaust you, think about your strengths, possibilities and limits.



For volunteering
You can go out with confidence.
even on a trip.

Hero Clan organizes weekend
volunteer events to help various non-
profit organizations around the world.
throughout the Czech Republic.
www.heroclan.cz/vikendovky

Local economy

One way to support the place and relationships in which we live is to somewhat detach ourselves from global financial markets. However, the local economy does not necessarily need a local currency; a simple and proven exchange is enough. This can take place at flea markets, SWAPs, etc., already mentioned in another chapter, but also in other, very informal, yet somewhat neighborhood-organized ways (exchanges in kindergartens and schools, childcare centers, local non-profit organizations, etc.).

HOW TO SUPPORT PRESSURE ECONOMICS

→ Local products

Let's buy products with a regional brand. Regional brands guarantee local origin, local labor, respect for local traditions, and wise brands also environmental friendliness. We can give them priority when shopping, and ask in stores.

→ Supporting local businesses The simplest recipe for supporting the local economy is to buy locally – from local producers and service providers and locally owned shops. Even though it may sometimes seem that prices in local shops are not that low, ultimately, with local products we also buy the prosperity of the local economy and a number of non-financial benefits.

→ The art of giving

Gifts have always built mutual trust in communities. People who have been gifted experience a state of gratitude. It is something they did not expect, did not believe in, something that evokes feelings of goodness, hope in them. They experience humility, and if you have more of these people together – those who give and those who receive their gifts, it strengthens their community and everyone lives better.

Interesting tips

Tips for mayors, councilors and citizens can be found in the publication *How to strengthen the local economy*, which is traceable to online and is free to download.

More tips for supporting the local economy can be found under names such as Dispensary tastes, For fruit, Save food, We hunt Bio etc.

→ Exchange trade, barter or swap Swap – exchange trade, also known as barter, is rapidly developing in the Czech Republic. Two partners exchange goods or services based on an agreement without using money. Today we live in a consumer world full of unnecessary waste. But we can help this by trying to agree on an exchange with someone before we go to the store.

→ Let's not pay with money, but with our skills

So-called time (hour) banks work similarly. They exchange time, which is essentially a service, not a commodity. It is not a bank in the true sense of the word, but an administrator-administered system whose members offer and demand services. For example, one hour of hair cutting at the hairdresser is exchanged for one hour of translation services. Of course, such an exchange can also be arranged directly with a neighbor, without mediation.

→ Local currencies or LETS (Local Exchange Trading System)

The idea developed in connection with the crisis of the 1930s, similar to the concept of vouchers. Currently, we can find more than a thousand local currency systems, most of them in Great Britain and Germany, consisting of hundreds and thousands of them



people. In many cases, the initiators were local entrepreneurs who wanted to stop the draining of money from the region by multinational companies. In the Czech Republic, they have experience with the LET system, for example, in Růžďka, in the Varnsdorf region, in Brno or in České Budějovice.

→ Alternative forms of ownership and business (e.g. www.mistoproprirodu.cz) Other tools for localization are alternative forms of ownership, such as community ownership (i.e. ownership in which the entire community is involved, including cooperatives but also municipal ownership) or land associations (associations that take care of a certain ecologically or historically valuable location).

→ Social enterprises www.ceske-socialni-podnikani.cz Alternative forms of business include, for example, social enterprises, i.e. organizations fulfilling a publicly beneficial goal, operating on the concept of the so-called triple benefit - economic, social and environmental, or sheltered workshops, providing work for people with disabilities.

→ Trip tip – Hostětín in the Zlín region hostetin.veronica.cz

Hostětín is an example of an ecologically oriented village, where, thanks to the cooperation of the municipality, the Veronica Ecological Institute and the White Carpathian Traditions Association, a number of environmentally friendly projects have been created, such as a biomass heating plant, photovoltaic power plants, a root wastewater treatment plant, energy-saving public lighting and a passive building for the Veronica Center. Other projects include an organic cider house, a fruit drying house and a natural garden with old fruit varieties. Take a look at these initiatives during a guided excursion and be inspired by ecological and economic solutions for your municipality.

New life for old things

The negative impacts of financial flows and waste of things can be partially reduced thanks to recycling. In short, it means that you do not immediately throw away unnecessary things, but give them a chance to find their next application. The so-called re-use is a responsible ecological behavior, when you extend the life of things that are no longer necessary for you, and thus reduce the amount of waste produced.

In addition to saving money, energy and reducing new production, organizations focused on re-use often also create jobs. It is not only clothes that may get a new chance. Bedding, dishes, books, toys, tools or, for example, small furniture can also find their next use. There are many ways to pass things on. One of the new or renewed traditions of old "flea markets" today is the so-called SWAPS. This involves the mutual exchange of goods, often clothes, shoes, toys, furniture, books, household appliances, tools, etc.

→ **SWAP**

Swap is an English term for exchanging things, and in the reuse world it is most often a community event where clothes, books, household items or children's items are exchanged; flower or other swaps may also occur. However, the principle is the same: what one person doesn't like, they bring to this event and the other person takes it away for free. Swaps tend to be one-off and very popular events that allow you to donate and also receive things.

→ **Flea markets**

www.blesak-roztoky.cz/jak-blesak You can get involved as a vendor or come to shop and chat with your neighbors. The market is designed for selling used "flea" items - unsuitable gifts, ceramics, dishes, decorations, paintings, books, CDs, toys and much, much more. Experienced organizers from Rostoky, for example, can advise you on how to organize a successful flea market.

→ **Garage sale**

www.garagesalecernosice.cz

On the day of the garage sale, take everything that is getting in the way of your home or that you simply no longer need out to your yard, garage or garden, mark your sales location with a sign, open the gate and sell, talk to your neighbors - have fun! Garage sales are an easy way to offer unnecessary things to your neighbors first, and also get to know someone who lives around the corner. Successful organizers from Černošice will advise you on how to do this.

→ **Reuse center**

A place where anyone can bring things they no longer need, but which still have the potential to be used again. Here, the staff will clean them, possibly repair them and offer them for sale. It is possible to buy them here as in a regular store. The items are available at different price levels, usually reflecting the value of the items. The Re-use Center creates a community of people for whom it is natural not to throw things away and who support sustainability with their choice.

» **ReUse centrumKabinet ČB**

www.kabinetcb.cz/

Facebook: kabinetcb

÷ **ReToys**

www.rehracky.online

The ReHračky project gives discarded toys a second chance. In Písek, there is a collection point in the Bez. packaging-free store in Drlíčov.

→ **Reuse point**

A re-use point is a designated place in a collection yard, usually a large container, where items that can still be used are deposited. It is an imaginary last point where you can decide not to throw away items, saving them from landfill. For a symbolic fee

or you can take these sorted items away and reuse them for free.

i **Collection for the tableware rental shop**

www.aktivnipisek.cz

At the Písek collection points, you can find, for example, a Re-use point for unnecessary dishes. This is then sorted, washed and prepared for use by the tableware rental service. Thanks to the rental service, a considerable amount of disposable tableware is saved at local events and festivals.

→ **Furniture Bank**

The furniture bank operates as a social service. Thanks to it, your unwanted furniture and household equipment can be used by people in financial need. This is a service that operates in cooperation with the city or region; through the social department, an individual or family requests specific items.

→ **Bookcases**

www.knihobudka.cz

They function as public free libraries where people can borrow, donate, exchange or borrow books. A map of the bookshelves and more information can be found on the project website. **In Písek you will find a book stall in Palackého Sady and in the summer also at the swimming pool near St. Wenceslas.**

What is swap, upcycling or re-use? And where is the nearest re-use center? You can find out on the website www.reusefederace.cz.

Packaging material is also getting a new life. You can find businesses in the area that are happy to reuse it. Some of them are also listed on the online map mapa.reduca.cz.



Sourdough map
www.pecempecen.cz

The map is for people who make their sourdough available for baking bread. Anyone can join, There are no limits to volunteerism.

Material assistance to neighbors in need

People can find themselves in need for various reasons, such as financial problems, health problems, job loss, life crises or natural disasters. In such situations, even a small donation in the form of food, hygiene items, clothing or small items can help improve the situation and provide people with a sense of support and solidarity. How to help? Donating new or used but still functional items can be a great encouragement. If you are not sure exactly what to offer, a financial contribution can be a useful solution for people in need. Many charities accept financial contributions, and these can be used for various purposes.

» Unnecessary things
www.nepotrebkky.cz
In Písek you can visit the popular store "Nepotřebné věci". After making an appointment, you can donate things that no longer fit you, or as a shopper you can buy second-hand goods at a bargain price. You can find almost everything here, from clothes, books, accessories to household equipment. The store is run by a non-profit organization whose main mission is to help handicapped children.

EXAMPLES WHERE EP HELPS

→ **Donation collections**
If you know of neighbors in need, you can support them by setting up a donation collection on online platforms such as **www.znesnaze21.cz** and **www.donio.cz**. If you want to support a local non-profit organization or association, you can start a fundraiser on the website **www.darujme.cz** or

www.darujspravne.cz.

→ **Food collections**
www.sbirkapotravin.cz
Help by shopping or as a volunteer collector of donations. The food drive is a day of solidarity where everyone can help in the simplest way, by donating non-perishable food and drugstore items. The selected food will be transported to the nearest food bank, where it will be sorted, checked and prepared for the purchasing non-profit organizations. The food reaches the final clients. These are often single mothers, lonely seniors or families in crisis.

→ **Clothing banks**
They operate on a similar principle to food banks. They typically collect and distribute clothing to people in need in collaboration with food banks and non-profit organizations.

→ **Charity shops**
Charity shops are social enterprises. Their main purpose is to sell second-hand or donated goods, which are usually sold at very low prices. All income goes mainly to the organization or shop with purely charitable purposes.

Hanging lunch, coffee or ticket

Some businesses, cafes and restaurants offer the possibility of so-called "hanging up" or pre-paying for lunch or a hot drink for someone who normally cannot afford them. The establishment then serves them people who find themselves in difficult life situations, especially homeless people. Thanks so you have the opportunity to eat lunch in the restaurant like other customers, with dignity and without stigmatization.



Eat locally and responsibly

We eat every day and the way we do it affects not only our health but the entire planet. A huge burden on the environment is the transportation of food.

Neighborhoods, community gardens and local relationships between producers and consumers all shorten the journey of food, thereby reducing CO emissions. It also supports the local economy and farmers, who can grow and sell their products with greater peace of mind and in dignified conditions.

We choose who we support with our purchases, what our landscape will look like, and what conditions our livestock will be raised in. Fresh, seasonal, local food is also usually healthier and tastier than food imported from far away, as it doesn't have to be stored and travel for long periods of time. Shortening the food journey is also a good way to build relationships with neighbors and local farmers.



WING ABBREVIATIONS

→ Farmers markets

Markets are usually held outdoors and sales are governed by market rules announced and posted in advance. The goods sold at farmers' markets come from farmers or food producers who guarantee the origin of the goods sold and are able to prove this origin when selling. This way you support small and medium-sized agricultural growers, breeders, processors and food producers, mainly of Czech and regional origin. At the same time, markets create a space for people to meet and improve the atmosphere of places.

→ Joint orders

www.scuk.cz

Larger orders that you then split with your neighbors. They operate completely informally or use platforms like Scuk.

→ (Community Supported Agriculture (CPA)

www.kpzinfo.cz.

This is a way of producing and consuming food that works reliably abroad and is just beginning to be implemented here. Consumers and farmers become partners: consumers know where their food comes from, and farmers who have regular customers can easily plan their harvest.

→ Federal and cooperative stores **www.bezovi.cz**

(Písek) or www.obziva.cz They provide their members with access to locally produced food. They bring together suppliers (organic farmers, processors and manufacturers) and consumers, creating a direct connection between them without intermediaries. They strive to be as packaging-free as possible and fair to people and the environment.

→ Packaging-free stores

A packaging-free store is different from a traditional one at first glance. Instead of shelves with individual packages, you will find many large containers with various ingredients. You can take any amount from them into your own bags, jars, boxes and other containers. The goal is not to produce waste that you would later throw away at home anyway. You can find a list of stores at **www.bezobaly.cz** or **www.reduca.cz**, including places where you can take used packaging to be reused.

→ Flavor Dispensary

www.vydejnachuti.cz

Výdejna chutí is a unique socially responsible company that, through neighborhood distribution of seasonal food, shows an ecological and solidarity-based approach to food and business. It also has a distribution point in Písek.

→ For fruit

www.naovoce.cz

Na vrchě serves as a community platform for people who want to responsibly use natural resources in the form of wild fruit trees, shrubs, and herbs. The goal is to not only map such places, but also to care for them and establish new ones.

→ **www.lovime.bio**

Interesting facts, news and information from the world of organic farming, organic and local food. Tips on where to look and how to recognize really high-quality food. Use the Najdi Bio map to find the closest organic producers in your area.

→ **www.zachranjidlo.cz**

A project that shows how not to waste food. It provides practical information and recipes for consumers and strives for systemic changes.

Bachelor's Degrees Písek

www.ms-pisek.cz/mestska-trznice Municipal Services Písek, sro, operates the Bakaláře Písek market. The market's operation for the public is determined by the market's operating rules. It involves counter sales, every Monday, Wednesday (farmers' markets), Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

Free Mountains

svobodenhory.cz

A family farm near Vodňany in South Bohemia. They are dedicated to organic cultivation of vegetables, cut flowers and chickens. They use sustainable agricultural practices, care about the health of life in the soil and support biodiversity on the land. They grow dozens of types of vegetables and flowers. They are inspired by foreign micro-scale farms that supply local communities with food and return to agriculture with the involvement of human labor without heavy mechanization. They sell mainly in the form of subscriptions through KPZ.

Packaging-free shop BEZ

www.bezovi.cz

The Bezovi Association offers a wide selection of quality food and other goods without packaging at fair prices that are not burdened by profit margins. Thanks to membership, you can shop even more advantageously and at the same time support local producers and an ecological way of shopping. The store in Písek operates as a community project, where members of the association influence the direction of the store and contribute to its sustainability.

Neighborhood for the climate

Why deal with climate protection and adaptation to climate change that is already underway? We are bombarded with bad news, images of the irreversible deterioration of our planet, and relentless scientific forecasts. We feel helpless, afraid, anxious, sad, and angry. Much is written about the causes of climate change, its impacts, and risks. But there is also increasing talk about what the solutions are and why the future may be better than most of us think.

WHAT CAN WE DO RIGHT NOW?

→ We are switching to clean energy and saving with it

The energy we use in our homes accounts for more than a quarter of our total individual carbon footprint. There are many ways to reduce this footprint. For example: switching to a green tariff for electricity, energy-saving settings for heating and water heating, efficient ventilation in winter, energy-saving shower heads, better windows and seals, insulation of the house, photovoltaics for apartment buildings, etc.

→ We transport carefully

Our movements account for approximately another quarter of the carbon footprint. The choice of means of transport, consideration of the need for one-off and daily trips and, in the case of cars, their more efficient use, play a significant role. Walking, scooters or bicycles not only have the smallest carbon footprint, but also do not pollute the environment, do not create noise or congestion and allow us to move more. Infrastructure is essential for their pleasant use, which needs to be promoted politically.

→ We eat responsibly

Food is the area where many of us can most easily start making our contribution to climate protection. Among the changes that have

We need to reduce our emissions, just as we need to push for societal change. Both of these areas of our actions are important and mutually supportive. We live, heat, light, transport, eat and buy a variety of goods for our daily and long-term needs. You probably know that most of these activities also release greenhouse gases. Each of us bears some share of responsibility.

The biggest impact includes reducing the amount of meat and dairy you eat, not buying (and then throwing away) excess food, avoiding air-freighted food, or drinking tap water instead of bottled water. Buying from local farmers, seasonal vegetables and fruits, growing your own food, or going to packaging-free stores all help.

→ We buy little and only what will last. Too many of our things end up in landfills and waste bins. How to avoid buying unnecessary things is beautifully summarized by the “responsible shopping pyramid”. Use and repair what you already have. Borrow what you need. Trade what you don’t need for what you can use. Repurpose old things into new things. Buy used things. And as a last resort – buy new things.

→ What else can we do for the climate? Let’s restore nature, create wilderness - nature wants to heal itself and will do so if we give it the space to do so. Let’s become climate positive - in addition to reducing emissions, we can also take carbon back from the atmosphere. For example, by planting and protecting forests. Let’s influence others and promote change together - according to surveys, in the Czech Republic

11% of the population is engaged in solving climate issues. Let’s increase that number, let’s talk about it. Let’s vote for climate and demand solutions - our elected representatives and politicians will do more to protect the climate if we clearly and consistently demand it of them.

Climate

there is an opportunity

Some encouragement and more concrete steps we can take can be found at

in the book Climate is an Opportunity

Peter Daniš.

www.klimajeprilezitost.cz



ZEROWASTE SAND FESTIVAL

[Scoupsielmsatv/tepmosy] Lima

Biowaste and composting

From local food and community gardens, it's just a short step to composting. Why compost? Most of us responsibly throw paper, glass and plastic into colored containers. But we often forget about organic waste, which makes up almost half of our trash cans and bins. The average person produces approximately 100 kg of organic waste per year. Unfortunately, this often goes from the black bin to the landfill or incinerator.

At the same time, up to half of the trips of garbage trucks could be saved. Biowaste can be easily turned into biotreasure. All it takes is a magic formula: composting. There are several options for composting in cities. We can compost either directly in our apartments using earthworms, or use community composters and gardens. And there is always the option of using collection containers or collection yards, where municipalities are obliged to collect biowaste.



WHERE SHOULD I GO?

» **Municipal composting plant Písek**
www.ms-pisek.cz/mestska-kompostarna The composting plant processes biowaste generated during the maintenance of public green areas in the city of Písek and its local areas (Smrkovice, Semice, Nový Dvůr) and biowaste produced in the households of citizens of the city of Písek and its local areas. The composting plant also includes a waste collection yard.

→ **Vermicomposter**
Composting with California earthworms, which will happily and tastefully take care of your peels. You can place the vermicomposter indoors - next to the waste bins, in the hallway, in the pantry, on the terrace or even in the basement. Almost everyone can find space for it.

→ **Garden compost**
This should be a natural part of every garden. You can use it for both organic waste from the garden, such as raked leaves, and for organic waste from your kitchen. You will not only save space in the bin and thus money for collection, but above all you will make the soil and your plants happy, which will gain valuable nutrients from the compost. Organic residues, such as peels and cuttings of fruit and vegetables, tea leaves or coffee grounds, will be transformed into black gold through this process.

→ **Biowaste bin**
If you don't have your own compost, then a convenient way to sort your organic waste is to have it collected. In short, start using the brown bin in addition to the blue, yellow and black bins. Clean, separated organic waste is taken to the composting plant.

Do you want in life?
to slow down a bit, to go back
to nature and see
nice results?

Composting is a slow process.
Compost, enjoy the small work
hands and enjoy the growth of your
houseplants, geraniums in a box or
vegetables in a raised bed.

Alimony
information

about composting, but also about how to
you can involve your school, company
or municipality, can be found on the website
www.kokoza.cz or
www.kompostuj.cz.

→ **Community gardens**
You can bring organic waste or even chicken shells to some community gardens.

→ **Bokashi**
This originally Japanese method is based on anaerobic fermentation of organic residues, where instead of earthworms, the main role is played by a mixture of effective microorganisms that trigger the fermentation process. This is not composting in the true sense of the word, but rather the fermentation of biowaste. The advantage is that Bokashi can process both plant and animal organic residues. It is also a very easy, almost maintenance-free method. The website kokoza.cz dedicates an entire Bokashi academy to this Japanese method.

→ **Community compost**
A solution for multiple people who share a common space and a desire to compost. This could be neighbors in a common courtyard or in the vicinity of a place suitable for compost. A composter can also be obtained from the municipality from time to time, as part of the calls for proposals for your house, SVJ or housing cooperative.

Urban and suburban greenery

When we mention composting, we are mentally touching on the natural that appears in the city as a result of our life. But nature in the form of greenery is directly a condition of life. How is it related to the neighborhood and community? Why does greenery belong in the city? Plants have many benefits for the city. They improve air quality, reduce temperatures in the summer months, provide shelter and food for animals, increase the aesthetic value of urban spaces and, last but not least, bring joy and relaxation to local residents. In addition, growing greenery in the city can also support sustainable management and community cooperation.

The Re-Value Project

smart.pisek.eu/projekty/projekty-v-realizaci/re-value.html Thanks to the Smart Písek organizational unit, the city has joined the Horizon Europe challenge with the Re-Value project, which includes nine European cities focused on urban water issues. The goal is to share experiences leading to the development of blue and green infrastructure, improving the microclimate and connecting with water bodies. The name "Re-Value" expresses the rediscovery of the value of water spaces and strengthening the city's relationship with natural water resources.

In Písek, the project integrates the principles of the New European Bauhaus and modern urban planning, with an emphasis on tactical urbanism, which allows for temporary modifications of public space. Residents can participate in the design of future changes. Písek has joined as a replication city, where practices from other cities will be tested.

Re-Value also includes educational activities for local residents, such as Innovation Camps for high school students, which support the younger generation in planning the future of the city. The project emphasizes cooperation between the environmental department and the city architect to ensure effective and sustainable development.

» Soak Up Initiative

www.smart.pisek.eu

Smart Písek, in cooperation with the city of Písek, supports sustainable rainwater management through the VsákníSe initiative, focused on the development of blue-green infrastructure. The aim is to retain rainwater directly on the land, which improves the local microclimate, reduces water runoff into the sewer network and responds to climate challenges such as rising summer temperatures and the risk of torrential rainfall. Interested parties will be able to implement measures such as rain beds or infiltration ditches, which help retain and gradually infiltrate rainwater. Financial support will be allocated in the order of submitted and approved applications until the allocated funds are exhausted. The project is currently being prepared, with the planned launch date in spring 2025.

HOW TO GREEN A CITY?

- **Your first step might be to explore the greenery already growing around you.** Then perhaps planning a new planting. Choose a suitable place for growing and find out the necessary information from books, the internet or, best of all, from experienced growers in the neighborhood.
- **Water management** Rainwater capture, infiltration and reuse are basic options for sustainable water management in your yard and on your roof. With a little effort, you can use the water and return it to the natural cycle.
- **Guerrilla gardening** www.metrofarm.cz/guerrilla-gardening This global trend has found its followers in the Czech Republic as well. In many places, groups of guerrilla gardeners are forming, who are attacking neglected patches under trees and abandoned



large-capacity concrete flower pots, they clean them of garbage and weeds and make something beautiful and unusual out of a hopeless place.

- **Green facades** Verticals are a great opportunity for growing climbing plants in urban environments. They have a significant climate effect, reduce overheating of buildings, noise, capture dust, their leaves protect the plaster and extend the life of the facade. They are therefore a meaningful investment.
- **Trees in the area** Trees are of immense value to the city. They cool the air, filter dust, absorb pollutants, bind CO2, and retain increasingly scarce water in the soil. In order for trees to provide these gifts, they need proper care and suitable conditions from us. Take an interest in the trees around you and give them expert care and plenty of water.

AT
Within seed banks, people exchange small quantities of seeds for free. for personal non-commercial use. www.seminkovny.com

AT
It is possible to receive financial support for green projects in houses and apartment buildings. Tips for some grant programs and other resources can be found in the chapter of the same name.

AT
How to recognize the trees in our streets can help us learn applications lifetreecheck.eu/cs/ TreeCheckApp

- **Green roofs** www.zelenestrechy.info Green roofs in cities not only serve an aesthetic and relaxing function, but also make life more pleasant through many other factors - they insulate, reduce dust, produce oxygen, reduce noise and retain rainwater.
- **Cultivation in indoor areas** It is grown in pots, bags or raised beds even where it is necessary to preserve paved areas. The effort put into the courtyard is quickly visible, sets a good example for others and in most cases improves the neighborhood climate.

Community energy

One of the completely new phenomena of neighborhoods and communities is the shared care of energy savings and resources. Community energy is undoubtedly one of the answers to climate change. It returns responsibility for energy production back to the level of municipalities and regions, thereby reducing the environmental impacts of energy production. In the era of technologically sophisticated energy systems and corporate giants that supply us with energy, this does not seem like a completely equal fight. However, legislation already applies to this new trend, which moves the whole topic a step forward and will bring many changes in the near future, which will hopefully also strengthen neighborhood ties.

SHARED ENERGY COMMUNITIES

→ **www.espisek.cz, www.uken.cz** The city of Písek offers opportunities for energy sharing, but the overloaded distribution network limits the efficient transfer of surpluses between locations. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on local use of generated energy, for example in apartment buildings, and on technologies that maximize self-consumption, such as batteries or electric vehicle charging.

Advantages:Effective sharing within one location, supporting energy self-sufficiency.

Disadvantages:Limited sharing between different locations due to network capacities, high costs for batteries and charging stations.

In Písek, energy sharing has the greatest potential in local projects (apartment buildings, complexes). The city is trying to implement photovoltaic power plant projects, but the efficiency is limited by the capacity of the distribution network. To fully utilize the potential of sharing, it is necessary to modernize the network, which is in the hands of a private company.



JINDŘICHOVICE UNDER THE SPRUCE

Interesting energy solutions

self-sufficiency of municipalities

including examples from abroad, can be found on the website www.veronica.cz/energy_self-sufficiency

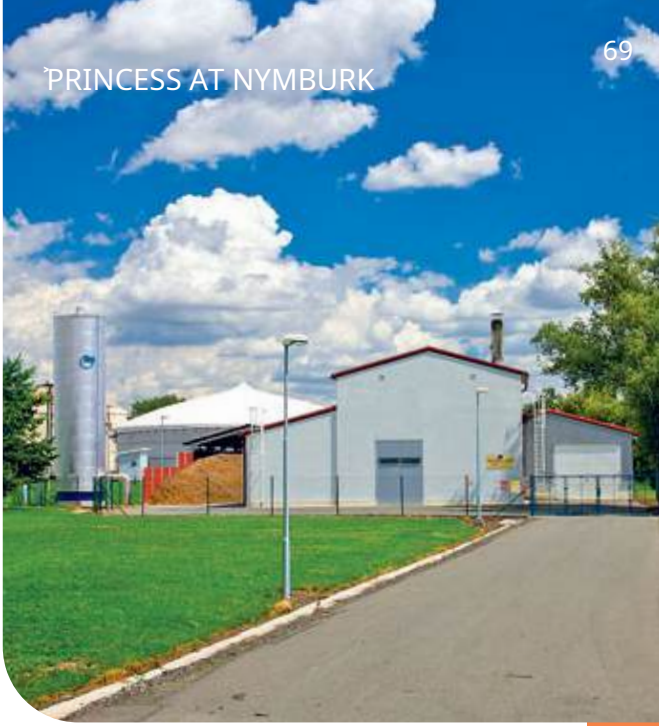
If you are interested in further information, assessing options, or participating in an existing project, please contact the Písek energy administration or UKEN (Union of Community Energy).

→ Apartment buildings

Energy sharing is most advantageous within apartment buildings, where households use surpluses from photovoltaics. Shared batteries increase efficiency.

→ Maximizing consumption

It is important for households and businesses to use as much energy as possible at the point of production so that surpluses do not flow into an overloaded grid. Batteries and electric vehicle charging are ideal ways to use surpluses.



PRINCESS AT NYMBURK

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICES IN THE NUT

→ Jindřichovice pod Smrkem, a windy village that inspires

Jindřichovice has become a pioneer of wind energy in the Czech Republic. Thanks to investments in renewable sources, they have become an example of how green energy can positively impact a community. Today, they not only produce clean energy through wind farms, but also support local ecological projects. Citizens can apply for subsidies for their own ecological initiatives, thereby strengthening their sense of belonging and sustainability. Jindřichovice has become a magnet for those looking for an alternative way of life and shows that energy is above all about people and their desire for a sustainable future.

→ Kněžice u Nymburka, the only fully energy-self-sufficient municipality in the Czech Republic

The “energy heart” of Kněžice consists of a biogas station with a cogeneration unit and an automatic biomass boiler house. They cover practically

all heat consumption in the village, exclusively from renewable sources, and will produce almost twice as much electricity as is consumed in the village. The excess heat from the biogas station is distributed through the district heating system throughout the village and used from spring to autumn for heating hot water and in winter for heating houses.

→ **Güssing, Austria – self-sufficient region** In the late 1980s, they began to develop a strategy for supplying energy from local renewable sources, including heat, electricity and fuel. Energy-saving measures in city buildings were followed by the construction of a biodiesel production plant and a wood chip heating plant for district heating. They also succeeded in a project to gasify wood for electricity generation. The biomass heating plant has been producing heat and electricity since 2001, making the city energy self-sufficient and producing more energy than it consumes annually. The vision is now being extended to 28 municipalities in the district.

Community transport

As already mentioned in the chapter on climate, transport is a key producer of greenhouse gases. And again, we can look at how neighbors and the community themselves can influence this undesirable trend. There are groups and support tools to strengthen zero-emission, i.e. walking and cycling, as a relevant way of moving around cities. Or at least significantly reduce emissions. This could involve cycling to school, collecting children in shared cars or a minibus. It could involve a comprehensive strategy and specific measures by the school to make walking to school safe.

→ Walking through the city

The Pěšky městem association gives pedestrians a voice. It helps to ensure a safe environment for pedestrians and to modify public spaces to attract people to walk or stop. Because a city lives where people walk well. On their website you will find a lot of inspiration from abroad and their projects include, for example, "Walking to School", "Safe Routes to School" or "School Street".

→ School bike rides

Viennese schoolchildren regularly go to school in organized groups with adults. The fixed routes have marked stops where you can join the group. Thanks to this, children learn from an early age how to move around the city more sustainably and the mamataxi phenomenon is eliminated. The idea spread to Vienna from Barcelona, hence the name Bicibus, or bicycle bus, used in Vienna.

→ To work by bike
www.dopracenakole.cz

With the challenge "To work by bike, walk or jog", the AutoMat association has been motivating residents of (not only) cities since 2011 to travel sustainably, thus highlighting the need for safe walking infrastructure.

and cycling. During that time, hundreds of thousands of people across the country have accepted the challenge and thousands of institutions, companies and cities have joined in. Experience that non-motorized travel to and from work is not only environmentally friendly, but also pleasant and beneficial for your physical and mental well-being.

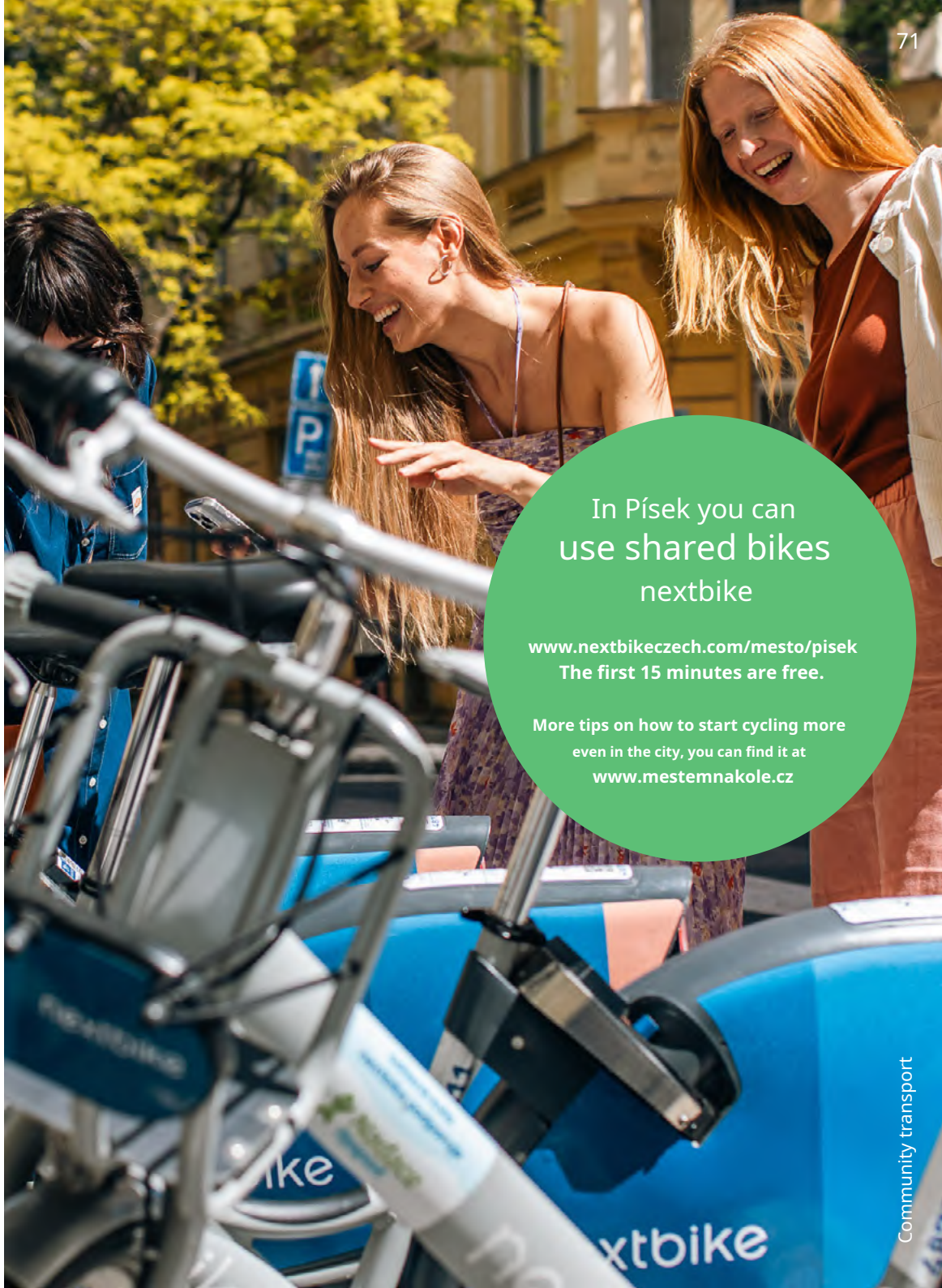
→ **Shared cars, scooters or bikes** There are a growing number of ride-sharing platforms, and they are becoming easier and more accessible to use. Most of them involve a company lending you the equipment, but there are also examples of truly community-based sharing. Neighbors can borrow cargo bikes, vans, tow trucks, etc. from each other, instead of each having to buy their own.

→ Carpooling

Carpooling can be organized between friends, co-workers, neighbors, or people who have a similar travel direction. It is often used for commuting to work, school, events, but also for longer distances, business trips, or trips. The main advantage of carpooling is sharing transportation costs, reducing the number of vehicles on the road, reducing traffic congestion, and significantly improving the ecological footprint. It occurs through a common agreement between people or through specialized online platforms and mobile applications that connect drivers and passengers.

→ Neighborly help

A much-appreciated neighborhood service is offering a shared ride to shop or transport heavier items for our neighbors without a vehicle or with declining physical strength. A willing neighbor with a van is a treasure in every community. To encourage neighborly relations, try letting your neighbors know the next time you are planning a trip, for example to a more distant specialty store.



In Písek you can use shared bikes
nextbike

www.nextbikeczech.com/mesto/pisek
The first 15 minutes are free.

More tips on how to start cycling more even in the city, you can find it at
www.mestemnakole.cz

Self-help and support groups, sharing circles

One of the community tools that is gaining importance and whose principles and elements penetrate into our everyday situations, schools, work teams, interest groups, but also family gatherings. This tool is various types of self-help groups and sharing circles. They help us talk about what is really important. They create a space to stop, listen and understand. Just as we are a diverse society, support groups can also have a very diverse focus: for parents, people with problems in interpersonal relationships, for caregivers and survivors, for socially disadvantaged people, for people with social anxiety, social phobia, etc.

» Focus Sand

www.fokus-pisek.cz

It offers a self-help group for people suffering from anxiety, depression or other psychological problems.

» Home hospice Athelas Písek

www.hospic-pisek.cz

Therapeutic and counseling services for survivors.

→ Counseling center for survivors and the public

www.cestadomu.cz/podpurne-skupiny The non-profit organization Cesta domů offers similar self-help groups for intimate gatherings of people who share the experience of losing a loved one. It creates a space where people can share everything they are going through, exchange experiences, knowledge, and find support and inspiration.

→ Support centers for caregivers

www.dementia.cz/podpurna-centra Carer meetings are intended for all those who care for their loved ones part-time or full-time, who have become dependent on the help of another person due to old age or illness. The purpose is

creating a space for a smaller number of caregivers to gather, who will be able to openly share their experiences, worries, but also joys in their often exhausting, mentally and physically demanding care. The nearest center can be found in Brandýs nad Labem.

→ Patient groups

www.migrena-help.cz/kruhy-sdileni

www.endotalks.cz/podpurne-skupiny A relatively new type of self-help group are patient organizations. They raise awareness about the disease in society and at the same time help patients share the challenges of their illness and take care of themselves.

→ Alcoholics Anonymous

www.anonymousalcoholics.cz There is a long-standing tradition in the world and here of groups helping each other cope with one of the difficult issues of Czech society, which is alcoholism.

→ Male-female circles

Our time is also dealing with how to reset dysfunctional models of coexistence between men and women. That is why advisory circles focused directly on this topic are increasingly being practiced.

→ Restorative circles

Restorative circles are also worth mentioning and exploring, as their practice around the world has shown great success. They are a tool for constructively dealing with conflict. They create a safe space for the victim, the perpetrator, and possibly other people to meet. They can then talk together about the impact the act had on their lives and how to repair the consequences. This method is widely used, for example, to address bullying in schools.

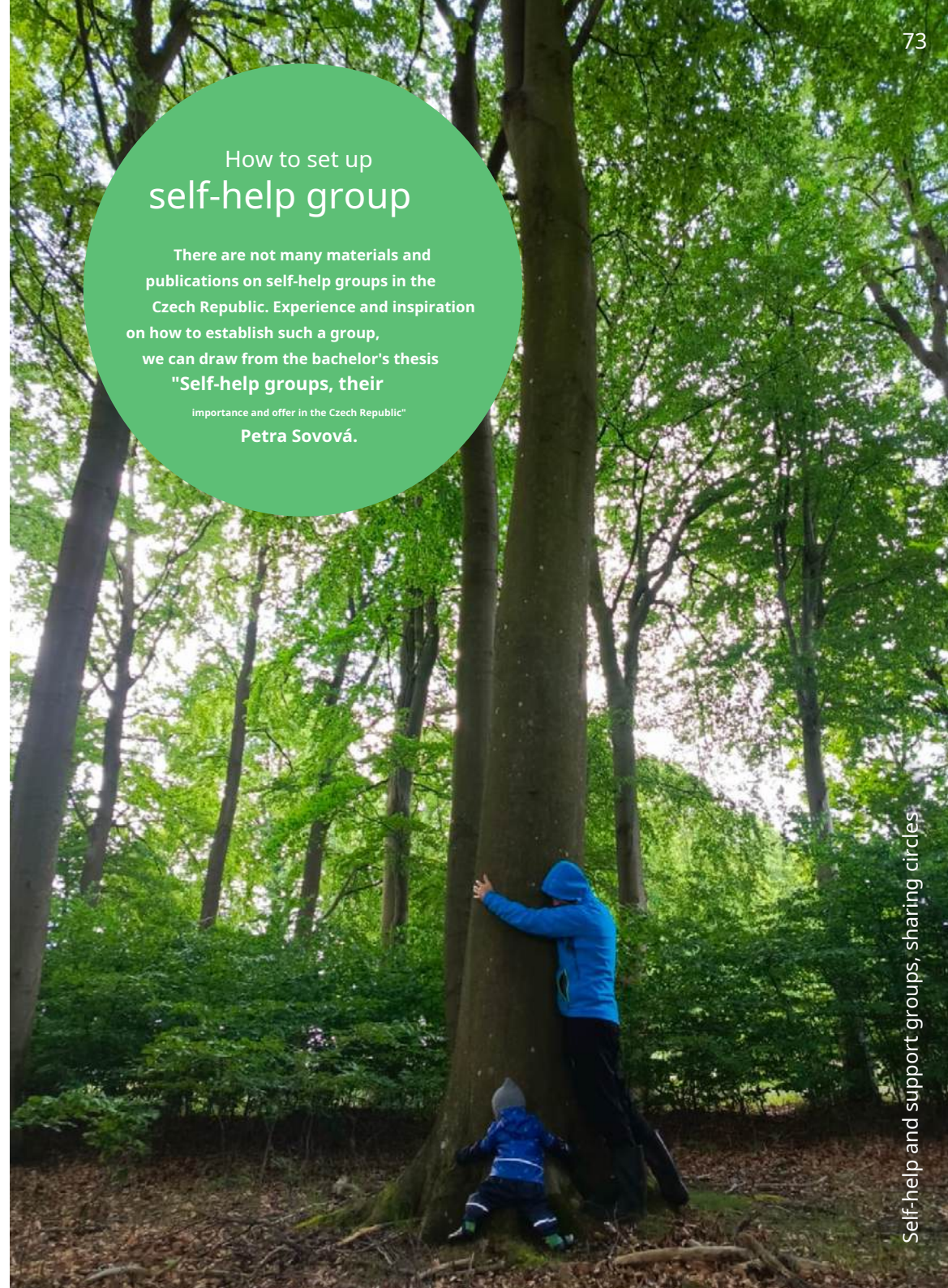
How to set up self-help group

There are not many materials and publications on self-help groups in the Czech Republic. Experience and inspiration on how to establish such a group, we can draw from the bachelor's thesis

"Self-help groups, their

importance and offer in the Czech Republic"

Petra Sovová.



74 Realize your own ideas

8 tips for a vibrant neighborhood

We have gathered inspiration from the experiences of many neighborhood movers. We do not see community building as a linear process, so please do not take the order of these steps as given. You can choose what suits you, or better yet, go your own way.

1. Give space to dreaming and listen to your needs

Give yourself some quiet, pleasant, somewhat unlimited time to think and sense what would truly delight you in your neighborhood, what would help you personally and diversify your daily life. If you already have someone, dream about the future together, tell stories, write, paint. Allow yourself to imagine how things could work in your house, on the street or in the entire neighborhood one day. Find out what you can and want to offer others. Listen to the needs of the places and people around you. If you don't know them yet, ask and observe.

Think about your time capacity. It is important that your plans are feasible. That is why it is good to start with small steps and then encourage yourself with small successes in the next activity. When you know what you want to create and talk about it, it is easier for others to join you.

2. Find your (good) kind and create together

We know from our own experience how important it is not to come up with the initiative alone. That is why we recommend finding at least one person to join you right from the start. You can look for (kind) people among your friends in the area or use online and offline tools to reach out to neighbors you don't know yet.

3. Get to know your neighbors and their interests and needs

Organize a meeting of like-minded people in your neighborhood. Set a goal for the meeting, such as writing down ideas for neighborhood improvements on large pieces of paper, then evaluating them together to determine what is most important to start with. Choose a well-accessible public location where everyone feels comfortable and can participate at their own pace. Street or park events work well. Use various communication channels to reach out to neighbors, such as bulletin boards, flyers, social media, or by phone and email to the event organizer. A personal invitation is best, as it can be an opportunity to strike up a conversation with strangers.

4. Use experience similar neighborhoods projects

Reach out to the leaders of functioning communities. Ask them for advice, ask them for a consultation, share ideas, visit them or invite them to a presentation at your place. And don't forget to invite your neighbors to all the opportunities.

INSPIRATING PROJECTS

Stories and database of supported projects:
www.nadacevia.cz

Transformed courtyards and courtyards:
www.vnitrobloky.cz

Blog and map where you can find out everything about community gardens and composters from Kokoza:
www.mapko.cz, www.kokoza.cz

Library of inspiration from food communities: www.kpzinfo.cz

Supported projects "transform your city":
www.nadacepromeny.cz

How to Share: 300 Tips to Help You Bring Your Community to Life:
www.shareable.net

Stories of Stronger Movers:
www.dokazemevic.cz

Supported community movement projects:
www.nadacepartnerstvi.cz

Blog, books and lectures by Tomáš Hajzler:
www.tomashajzler.com

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Draw on methodologies and best practices for creating community projects. Their experiences are often similar, even if they have different goals.

METHODOLOGY FOR ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY GARDENS

LIVE INTERIOR BLOCK METHODOLOGY

7 STEPS TO A BEAUTIFUL INTERIOR

JOIN THE KPZ – A GUIDE TO ESTABLISHING COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

SOLIDBASE – A GUIDE FOR DEVELOPING LOCAL FOOD COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY CANVAS – TEMPLATES FOR PLANNING COMMUNITY PROJECTS

COMMUNITY BUILDING GUIDE FOR NON-PROFITS – OSF WORKSHOP CYCLE

5. Get advice from experts

Contact people you can talk to or invite to your place and then organize an event or plan a project with. Find experts and trainers on the topics you are currently working on. For example, facilitators, conflict resolution guides, or trainers in nonviolent communication and other community skills.

In the chapter "Who will support you" you will find contacts for organizations that will be happy to support you with their experts.

6. Use what works communication channels or create new ones

Think about how you will communicate with your neighbors. It is a good idea to find out which platforms others are already using and which will suit everyone or at least most people. For example, Facebook and WhatsApp groups, Google Groups or a good old bulletin board in the hallway of your house have proven to be effective. You can use local news feeds and Facebook groups listed in this guide.

7. Reach for proven events

When organizing events, you can use successful formats such as Experience the City Differently or Let's Clean Up the Czech Republic. They are easy to organize, the main organizers will help you with promotion, and these events are familiar and understandable to people.

Many opportunities can also be found in traditions, such as solstice and equinox celebrations, Easter and Christmas gatherings, maypole building, witch burning, Shrove Tuesday, carnival, etc.

There are also opportunities for sitting and grilling by the fire, flying kites, creative workshops, lectures and seminars, or film screenings. Events such as garage sales, flea markets, swap meets, children's days, charity bazaars, restaurant days, competitions and fighting games for children, or sports activities are also welcome.

8. Celebrate often, even small successes

Don't forget to properly celebrate the steps and actions taken. Look back together at what was successful and what was less successful. Appreciate each other for your activity, time and other gifts that you bring to the common goal. Celebration helps to get out of the daily rhythm. We remind ourselves of the meaning – why we engage in neighborhood activities and what they bring to us and others.





Neighborhood mover skills

Community building tools

Getting together

Whether your impetus for neighborhood building is a specific problem, need, dream, or even a vague sense of the potential of a functioning community for your life, the foundation of neighborhood building is undoubtedly communication, relationship building, organizing, and effective leadership. You may have a clear idea of what you want, or you may focus on collaborative discussions about the needs and values of your community. There are a variety of approaches, from authoritarian styles to non-hierarchical organizations.

In the beginning, when you are finding your way to the neighborhood, cooperation is mostly voluntary and commitments are not mandatory. Strong motivation is key to maintaining interest. Over time, you can start to think more about organizing and planning activities for your community.

Participation

Participation means actively engaging in co-decision-making about what kind of neighborhood we build and which path we take. It is closely linked to facilitation and plays a key role in community planning, often with the participation of public administration. Participation involves the involvement of different groups, such as local residents, parents, young people, entrepreneurs, seniors, or even gardeners, with the aim of achieving broad consensus and sustainability. It is a skill that can be learned

Facilitation

When we lead a group towards a common goal, we often use the tools of facilitation, even if we are not aware of it. The facilitator facilitates, organizes and guides the discussion in a certain direction, without having to have all the answers. In some cases, it is appropriate to entrust the facilitation to an impartial expert, but in community projects these skills cannot be avoided. The basis is to think about the goal, time, participants and the nature of the meeting (informative, planning or decision-making). Facilitation also includes the correct conduct of the discussion, balanced involvement of participants and taking minutes.

Creating a shared vision

A shared vision is key to building a vibrant and sustainable neighborhood. It should reflect current needs and long-term goals, be bold, inspiring, and at the same time concrete to bring about real change. It is important that the vision is based on open discussion and is relevant to all members of the community.

A vision doesn't have to be just textual – it can also be expressed visually, such as in the form of notice boards, symbols or creative projects that connect neighbors on an emotional level. In this way, it becomes a shared plan for development that helps determine short-term priorities and long-term directions.

Supporting foundations

communications

Functional communication is the foundation for building a respectful environment, especially in communities where people encounter different opinions and needs. The foundation is respect for others, which is essential for all interpersonal relationships and cooperation. A useful tool is the so-called non-violent communication, which focuses on recognizing and clearly expressing feelings and needs. Empathetic listening then allows for a better understanding of others and contributes to creating an environment where people feel heard and respected.

Communication skills are not automatic, so it is important to actively develop them. These skills are especially valuable for those involved in community life, where they strengthen relationships and encourage mutual cooperation.

Advisory circles

The advisory circle is an ancient communication technique that encourages open exchange of ideas and deepening mutual understanding in groups, such as schools, businesses, or communities. The key principles are honest expression, attentive listening, speaking to the point, and spontaneity. Participants sit in a circle, eliminating hierarchy and giving everyone a chance to speak, often using a “talking subject” to indicate the current speaker.

Caring for a neighbor

within oneself

When we become an initiator or organizer in our neighborhood, we put not only our energy into it, but also our personality. We step out of our comfort zone and face uncertainties - results may come slowly and support may not always be obvious. Sometimes you may also encounter criticism or self-doubt. To avoid burnout, it is crucial to take care of your own feelings and find time for yourself. At the same time, we must respect the different needs of others and not be afraid to ask for help. Let's also remember to celebrate even small successes that keep us motivated and give us the energy to continue.

→ WHERE TO LEARN MORE

ABOUT PARTICIPATION:
www.iprpraha.cz/stranka/72/participace
www.nesehnuti.cz/angazovane-offline
www.planujtrojku.cz/participace

→ WHERE TO LEARN THE BASICS

OF FACILITATION:
www.spo-jmk.cz/webfiles/z_aklady_facilitace_pracovn_i_sesit_pro_.pdf

→ HOW TO CREATE A VISION:
www.participativnimetody.cz/tvorba-vize-komunity.html

→ INSPIRATION FOR THE PRACTICE

OF ADVISORY CIRCLES:
www.munispace.muni.cz/library/catalog/book/2185



It was my pleasure to prepare the
Neighborhood Guide to Písek for you.

I hope it helps create good
neighborhoods, connects and develops
local community life, promotes belonging,
and inspires meaningful activities.

If you have a suggestion to add to the guide, or an idea
that will get the local community moving, please get in
touch! :)

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GARDEN IN THE INTERIOR BLOCK
ATELIER IN THE SAND

We thank all organizations, experts,
associations and active neighbors for their
contributions in the form of texts, photographs,
contacts and experience.

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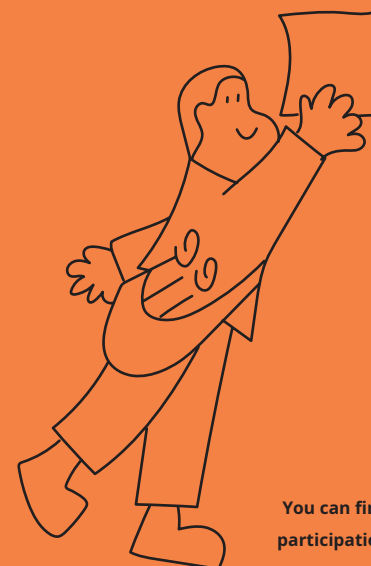
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Neighborhood project guides

In 2023, the Agora 7 Volunteer Center created the first Neighborhood Guide for Prague 7. The feedback convinced the authors that the majority of its content could also be useful in other parts of the country.

This has created a collection of experiences, inspiration and open materials that can now be used by people from any other location. And thus make it easier to create your own guide to your local community. The neighborhood guide you are holding in your hand is one of them.

May it bring you joy.



You can find more about guides and possibilities for participation at www.dcagora7.cz/pruvodce



YOU CAN VIEW THE ONLINE
MAP AND GUIDE HERE:

www.aktivnipisek.cz/pruvodce



Let us try to imagine, very specifically thanks to this publication, that the partial elements of the ability to be neighbors can help us live „a more beautiful world“, which one of the great thinkers of our time, Charles Eisenstein, speaks about. This world will not be invented or prepared by a single enlightened genius. It is becoming increasingly clear that the new story that is being born and waiting to be born is the work of groups, networks and relationships. Good Neighborhood can be one of them.

If you find that something or someone important is missing from the map, do not hesitate to contact us at www.aktivnipisek.cz

We'd love to fine-tune the description and add more active neighbors to our map so our community continues to grow and prosper.



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