

## BRIEF PROJECT REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION

On 25-27 May 2023, a meeting of Central European community foundations took place in Brno, Czech Republic. It was attended by 15 representatives from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Austria.

The main topic of the meeting was chosen Out of the spotlight / out of the mainstream focus. Subtitled *focus on the work of community foundations in neglected regions - rural / atypical areas, focus on marginalized issues/groups in communities, focus on neglected/overlooked/undervalued areas/components of the work and functioning of community foundations etc.*

The meeting took place in the form of three 4-5 hour blocks in the Veronica Foundation's facilities, interspersed with site visits and meetings with Veronica Foundation's partner organisations focused on the theme of the meeting.

Thus, during the three days we had the opportunity to cover a total of 7 topics in group discussions:

- Where the role of community foundations begins and ends,
- How to build inclusive communities
- CFs in the context of climate change,
- Energy self-sufficiency of communities
- Folklore and community foundations
- Cooperation with collaborative community organisations
- Opportunities for international cooperation in the Central European area

In addition, participants had the opportunity to visit, listen to presentations and meet with six community projects.

### Detailed program agenda of the meeting:

Thursday 25/5/2023	Freitag 26/5/2023 <i>Nadace Veronica Panská 9, 602 00 Brno</i>	Szombat 27/5/2023 <i>Nadace Veronica Panská 9, 602 00 Brno</i>
<p><b>START</b> ↓</p> <p>Visiting the High School of Art and Design and its innovative</p>	<p>9,00-9,30 recap of the day, summary of Thursday</p> <p>9,30-12,30 joint sessions:</p> <p><b>Topic A</b> Where the role of community foundations begins and ends</p> <p><b>Topic B</b> How to build inclusive communities</p> <p>Break</p> <p><b>Topic C</b> CFs in the context of climate change</p> <p><b>Topic D</b> Energy self-sufficiency of communities</p> <p><b>Hostětín centre presentation</b></p>	<p>9,00-9,30 recap of the day, summary of Friday</p> <p>9,30-13,00 joint sessions:</p> <p><b>Topic E</b> Folklore and community foundations</p> <p><b>Topic F</b> Cooperation with collaborative community organisations</p> <p>Break</p> <p><b>Topic G</b> Opportunities for international cooperation in the Central European area</p> <p>13,00-13,30 Participant's reflection, closing remarks, farewell</p>

<p>clothing course Ecotextile design, showing textile dyeing and tour.</p>	<p>Community foundations and the social economy</p>	
<p><b>14,00-15,00 Buffet lunch – welcome</b> <i>Nadace Veronica Panská 9, 602 00 Brno</i></p>	<p><b>13,00 -14,00 Buffet lunch – welcome</b> <i>Nadace Veronica Panská 9, 602 00 Brno</i></p>	<p><b>13,30 Buffet lunch – welcome</b></p>
<p>15,00-15,20 Welcome, intro, frame of the meeting / agenda, organizational issues</p> <p>15,20-16,00 National movements of CFs – introduction, history</p> <p>16,00-17,00 Participant’s networking - introduction and expectations</p> <p>Break (visit of the flower flea market in the backyard)</p> <p>17,30-18,00 defining topics/priorities form the list - working in small groups cca 30-40 min</p> <p>18,00-18,45 summary – decision over the arrangement of the Friday and Saturday sessions</p>	<p>14,30-17,00 <b>site visits:</b> Veronica foundation shop on Pekarska street Salon Theó – Veronica foundation partners KUMST Brno - innovative open space, Vesnu – community center Otevřená zahrada - community gardening project</p>	<p><b>↑ END</b></p>
<p>19,30 Dinner at Restaurant l’Eau Vive, Petrov 2, Brno - mission restaurant with French and Czech cuisine</p>	<p>19,00 Dinner – Soul bistro, jezuitská 10.</p>	

The meeting created an opportunity to open up discussions on various topics of importance to community foundations across countries, and we find it promising that participants expressed their willingness and desire to continue these discussions together. During the meeting, several mutual invitations were made by the participants to attend events organised by the participating foundations (a meeting of community initiatives in Austria, a conference on folklor in Breclav, a visit to an energy self-sufficient community centre in Hostětín, a site visit of community foundations in Budapest. The specific bilateral visit was arranged by two of the oldest European community foundations (Banska Bystrica /SK/ and Usti /CZ/). At the same time, the participants clearly declared their interest in organizing a meeting in a similar format the following year, this time in Slovakia.

### **Observations and insights of the participants**

The CF2CF meeting was both a personal and professional experience for me. Slovak and Czech community foundations were created around the same time, in a very similar social and cultural atmosphere. That is why it is always very important for us to meet, to see in what direction community foundations in Slovakia and the Czech Republic are developing, what topics they are addressing, what we have learned, what we can apply, what we can advise each other on and learn from each other. The programme in Brno was well constructed, we had enough time for in-depth discussions on current challenges and also for visits to successful and unique projects in Brno. In addition to professional work motivation, inspiration and networking, the meeting brought us personal encouragement and support in what each of us is doing in our communities. At the meeting we jointly stated that we want to intensify our Slovak-Czech cooperation and continue together on the topics we defined as priorities at the meeting. And, of course, the meetings are always open to other "neighbours" as well.

Beata Hirt

The Community foundations meeting in Brno provided our organization Veronica Foundation with a unique opportunity to share our work with colleagues from CZ, SK, Hungary and Austria and I was very happy to be able to introduce them to interesting projects in our community that our foundation collaborates with. Namely we visited our charitable plant market, Veronica charity shop, sustainable designer studio THEÓ, toured Eco-textile design department at High School of Art and Design, Creative centre Kumst, Women's educational cooperative Vesna and Open Garden (Partnership Foundation). I was very pleased to see that the other foundations were inspired by our work and projects and may try to implement some of it in their community. Closer discussions with the participants led to building direct links, especially with Jozzka foundation from BUDAPEST, which found similarities in the community they are serving and that we are serving so being a novice in the field, they want to know more about some of our work to implement similar approaches and projects. I was also glad to get to know more of the work of Ústí Community Foundation, especially regarding the unique panel of humanitarian organizations that operates in their region - we would like to share their experience with our regional government to implement similar solution and to integrate NGOs into the already existing integrated emergency response systems.

*Helena Tovarkova*

I found it particularly exciting how Veronica Foundation combines the preservation and Tomas and Helen packed an incredibly diverse programme into the three days of our Gathering, while still creating plenty of space for sharing with each other. Learning from the Czech and Slovak CF activists from some of the longest running CFs in Europe shows us as a young national support organisation a great example of how different ways you can anchor a community foundation deeply inclusive and run it successfully in times of many crises and changes.

*Silvia Mayrhofer*

The meeting was very useful and inspiring. We had the opportunity to share our experience and look at the roles of CFs from several perspectives. We have had the opportunity to observe how the Veronika Foundation works, what is its role in the community and how it can connect the topic of environmental protection with the community activities. We really have appreciated the presentation of examples of good practice regarding the involvement of students in a textile upcycling (including an upcycling of traditional costumes from the Slovácko region) and the subsequent use of upcycled clothing to represent the region. There is a group of young student-artists in Nitra who are also involved in the textile upcycling, so we would like to make contacts between both groups and help to start a new collaboration.

*Lubica Lachka*

It was a special experience to get to know both the headquarters and partner institution of the Veronica Foundation (textile and design school) and the hotel environment (in the same area as District 8) and to study the possibilities of adapting the Brno methods. I will also tell the members of JózskA about the latter, because our district is home to what is probably the best-known vocational school for textiles in the country, with which we have not yet considered cooperating.

I hope to use the personal contacts I made in the future in joint projects. If anybody is interested in the potential and cooperation in the district (Józsefváros), which is multi-ethnic, overbuilt, gentrifying, with a civil mayor, but at the same time the most backward and with the largest Roma community, please contact us with confidence.

*Zsuzsanna Gutjahr*

The three-day meeting of representatives of Czech, Slovak, Hungarian, and Austrian community foundations in Brno, organized by the Czech Association of Community Foundations with the support of the Brno environmental foundation Veronica, was full of inspiring discussions and interesting site visits of local projects and initiatives. I appreciate the currency and relevance of the topics discussed, be it the Role of Community Foundations in Times of Crisis, Inclusive Communities, Environmental Challenges and Resilience of the communities towards them, or Living Folklore. I believe that the meeting will not only help to increase the exchange of information and deepen the relationships between the collaborating organizations but also to move forward in a more coordinated manner in some of our agendas and areas of operation, as well as to adapt common strategies in the future. I welcome the fact that the partners have expressed a desire for the umbrella organizations and the network as a whole to be more open to new collaborations, and to invite representatives of other organizations and initiatives to future meetings (such as community funds, which are very close to community foundations and support organizations at the core of their work).

*Václav Kovář*

I think it is very important to discuss the behaviour of the community after the crisis - covid, tornado, Ukraine. I think more energy and space should be devoted to this, and not just in community foundations.

Of course I appreciated the discussion on folklore and community. Until recently I would have thought that the topic of folklore resonated only in Moravia. As a result of this meeting, I have decided to organize an informal meeting at our place in Moravia around August on the topic of folklore, which will follow up on the discussion that took place and I will invite all participants to attend.

**Full list of participants**

Name	Surname	Organization	Role	Country
Tomas	Krejci	Czech Association of CF	Chairman	CZ
Helena	Tovarkova	Veronica Foundation	CEO	CZ
Katka	Valesova	Usti CF	CEO	CZ
Alena	Lickova	Usti CF	office manager	CZ
Zlata	Madericova	South Moravian CF	CEO	CZ
Vaclav	Kovar	VIA Foundation	program manager	CZ

Martina	Wagnerova	Vyskov CF	CEO	CZ
Beata	Hirt	Slovak Association of CF	President	SK
Lubica	Lachka	Nitrianska CF	CEO	SK
Eva	Vargova	Nitrianska CF	program manager	SK
Jozef	Jarina	Bardejov CF	CEO	SK
Lubos	Vrbicky	KNZM B.Bystrica	Board member	SK
Silvia	Mayrhofer	Verband für gemeinnütziges Stiften	project manager	A
Jannes	Herman Mostert	The Tree Party	coordinator	HU/NL
Zsuzsanna	Gutjahr	Józsefvárosi CF (JózsKA)	organizer	HU

**Photos from the event:**

Link to the onedrive folder: [photos CF2CF Brno](#)

The report was compiled by  
Tomas Krejci on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

