

NINE INITIATIVES IN PRAGUE AND THE CENTRAL BOHEMIAN REGION TRANSFORM THEIR CITIES

(14 March 2017) Prague – **Transforming an unsafe intersection in Prague's Borough of Žižkov into a peaceful neighborhood zone, joining forces with children to create a public installation in the Czech capital's Bubeneč District, revitalizing the Rozdělov housing project in Kladno, and restoring the embankment of the river Labe in Kolín – these are four of nine projects selected under the Transform Your City program to receive assistance from the Karel Komárek Proměny Foundation.**

The Foundation launched the **Transform Your City** program last year with the aim of **assisting initiatives** that aim to improve the urban environment, **develop the public space, and facilitate a public debate about topics related to this effort.** In response to the first request for proposals, which was open to **applicants from Prague and the Central Bohemian Region**, the Foundation **has received 41 grant applications.**

"We were pleased by the broad scope of activities and topics proposed in the grant applications. It is encouraging to see that people perceive the varied potential of the public space and want to get involved in its development, mostly in their free time. After all, the diversity of topics is underscored by the nine projects that have been selected," commented the outcome of the process **the Foundation's Director Jitka Přerovská.** Six of the selected projects were submitted by applicants from Prague, the remaining three will be executed in the Central Bohemian Region.

Among other factors, an important role in the selection process was played by the extent of **the public's involvement as well as partnerships between the initiators of transformations and the public administration and specialists in the relevant fields.** *"An open dialogue between the users of public space, its creators, and organizations responsible for its upkeep is of fundamental importance. In this regard, even seemingly minor projects and changes can potentially have far-reaching benefits. Some of the applicants we have decided to assist only want to take the initial steps this year and make small changes, but in the long term, their actions will lead to the transformation of an entire locality, neighborhood, or district. We know from experience that for accomplishing sensible and permanent changes in the public space, enthusiasm is not enough. I therefore trust that our support will help in specific localities and, at the same time, inspire other similar initiatives for broader cooperation,"* added Přerovská.

The Karel Komárek Proměny Foundation will distribute CZK 527,000 among the nine selected projects. The individual initiatives also receive assistance from other sources, where work performed by volunteers accounts for a large part of their activities. Most of the nine selected initiatives have conducted activities focused on the improvement of the urban environment for several years, using a variety of forms. The projects and activities for which the applicants have currently received grants under the Transform Your City program will be executed in the course of this year, mainly in the time between the spring and fall seasons.

An overview of the selected projects is enclosed on the following page. For additional information, visit the Foundation's website: <http://www.nadace-promeny.cz/cz/projekty/promen-sve-mesto.html>

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Photo (Archives of Architects Without Borders, MimochoDEM Gallery, Halda, Open Street, and Start Vršovice) – **Available for download at** http://www.nadace-promeny.cz/cz/novinky/457_podporime-devet-iniciativ-ktere-promeni-sve-mesto.html

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF PROJECTS SELECTED TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE UNDER THE TRANSFORM YOUR CITY PROGRAM IN 2016

(Compiled using texts submitted in applications):

Children and the City, Prague 6 / Applicant: Město přátelské k dětem, z.s. (Children-Friendly City)

An installation created in the public space by schoolchildren from the Bubeneč District and a program of extras will support long-term efforts of the association *Město přátelské dětem (Children-Friendly City)* to plan the development of public areas in a way that takes into account children's activities.

Kladno 4 better living / Applicant: Halda, z.s.

The Kladno-based association *Halda* has initiated a debate about the Rozdělov housing project with a view to soliciting conceptual proposals for the transformation of the locality's problematic areas – empty spaces between high-rise buildings.

Street Corner – Quiet Neighborhood Zone, Prague 3 / Applicant: Žižkovský spolek (*Žižkov Association*)

The inhabitants of the neighborhood delimited by Kubelíkova and Ševčíkova Streets in Prague's Žižkov District pursue a debate about transforming a poorly designed intersection into a quiet zone that will cater to the local population, including a hospital and senior citizens home.

Navigation System in Underpasses at Vltavská, Prague 7 / Applicant: Architects Without Borders

The voluntary platform *Architects Without Borders* aspires to acquaint the public with the fascinating construction design of the Hlávkův Bridge and to promote the use of the underpasses below the bridge through the installation of a new navigation system.

Open Spaces – Summer by the Riverside, Kolín / Applicant: Otevřená ulice, z.s.

The *Otevřená ulice (Open Street)* association, which specializes in revitalizing well and lesser-known public areas in Kolín, wants to bring the attention of local inhabitants to the embankment of the river Labe, the city's underappreciated artery.

Remodeling of the Subway Vestibule at Palackého Square, Prague 2 / Applicant: Galerie MimochoDEM, z.s.

Galerie MimochoDEM (Incidental Gallery) has teamed up with architecture students with the aim of finding ways of using small changes to existing amenities to improve the functionality of the space in the vestibule.

Vršovice Community Garden, Prague 10 / Applicant: Start Vršovice, z.s.

The association *Start Vršovice* has responded to the growing interest in the community garden on Francouzská Street by improving its amenities to allow patrons to develop their activities in the locality.

Skeptical At First, Prague 10 / Applicant: Divadlo X10, z.s.

The Zpočátku jsme byli skeptický (*Skeptical At First*) civic initiative associated with *Divadlo X10 (X10 Theater)* will organize three neighborhood assemblies and conferences under the name *TEDxDesítka* with a view to initiating a public debate about ways of using public space in the borough and creating a local action network.

Live Square in Neratovice / Applicant: Piána na ulici, z.s.

The association *Piána na ulici (Pianos in the Street)* and architects from the project *Nezevli jen tak (Don't Just Stare)* will team up with inhabitants of Neratovice to create an ideal prototype of a city park in the local square in order to pave the way for a permanent transformation of the locality.

Karel Komárek's Proměny Foundation is a private nonprofit organization established in 2006 to support the development of the urban environment in the Czech Republic and to promote broad public awareness of the importance of architecture, landscaping, and quality environment on society. The Foundation disburses grants and provides consulting services and technical support for projects targeting the public space and school gardens. Other activities include the organization of educational activities related to urban development for children and adults. The Proměny Foundation and its projects hold several awards from both specialized institutions and public organizations.

For additional information, visit the Proměny Foundation website: <http://www.nadace-promeny.cz/cz/o-nadaci/poslani.html>