



## TEN STEPS OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

Friendly guide for users

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Community planning as a tool  
for social economy enhancement



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# Contents

## **I. Introduction**

1. What is community planning
2. What are the values of community planning
3. What are the principles of community planning
4. Why plan
5. Community planning from the perspective of the Czech Republic's legislation
6. Where did community planning start
7. Community planning participants
8. Involvement of job centres in community planning
9. What is the difference between a community plan and a commercial plan

## **II. Individual steps of community planning**

- Step 1 Preparation of the environment – how to start with the community planning process
- Step 2 Establishment of the organizational and managing structures of the community planning process
- Step 3 Regional information system for social services
- Step 4 User needs analysis and mapping
- Step 5 Production of a draft community plan for the consultation process
- Step 6 Consultation process of the community plan
- Step 7 Production of the final version of the community plan
- Step 8 Community plan implementation
- Step 9 Community plan evaluation
- Step 10 Contractual and other relations in the community planning process

# I. Introduction

Dear colleagues and users of social services, what you have in your hands is a methodological document that will inform you in ten steps of the community planning process applied during the development of social economy in the Czech Republic. This document was produced under the project „Community planning as a tool for the enhancement of social cohesion and the support for social inclusion and prevention against social exclusion of socially disadvantaged people on the labour market“ implemented under the Equal initiative of the European Union. If you are interested in more detailed information, use the more comprehensive methodological document: TEN STEPS OF THE COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS - Involvement in community work in the field of community planning and social economy development for people at risk of social exclusion.

## 1. What is community planning

Community planning is a method used for the planning of the development of services in a specific area for specific groups of disadvantaged people at a specific time. Users, service providers and commissioners participate in community planning. Process management is thus dependent on their cooperation and ability to reach agreement. The method is innovative by integrating a managerial approach from the commercial sector with psychological, sociological and psychotherapeutic approaches applied in social services and it works only if both approaches are interconnected.

Community planning is a modern managerial method applied in social economy in the Czech Republic. By a timely planning of adequate programmes, projects and social services, and by the cooperation of commissioners, employers, providers and users, we can, by this method, prevent the social exclusion of disadvantaged people on the labour market and in society. It allows us to develop social economy on the basis of knowledge of local needs.

From the management perspective, community planning is a process of creating and maintaining an environment where individuals work together in groups and achieve selected goals efficiently. Community planning is based on the general function of planning as defined by the management theory. It has both the same function and nature. In general, the nature of planning focuses on the future. It sets what should be achieved and how. It basically includes planning functions and management activities aimed at the formulation of future goals and suitable means for their achievement. The outcome of the planning function is a plan, i.e. a written document specifying the actions an organization has to take in order to develop the community.

## 2. What are the values of community planning

Values in the community planning process can be perceived as comprehensive concepts determining and expressing the importance of various objects, activities, and possibilities for us, for the orientation of our activities and the activities as such. Values in the entire planning process affect our focus, choice of goals and means as well as methods. Community planning participants express them in their positions and approaches they take towards various issues. Values cannot only be perceived as „what we want“ but rather as a „concept of the desired state or situation“. Values in community planning are formed by the community itself throughout the entire process. It is recommendable to think about the values and formulate them as early as in step 1, when preparing the environment for the community plan.

These can include e.g.:

- To enable people to live in their homes, with care and support, there where they choose to. To ensure availability of a service and the possibility to choose.
- To increase service provision so as to meet new, previously unaddressed, requirements and needs of people.

- To achieve a shift in balance from institutional towards community care.
- To improve the quality of provided services.
- **To ensure integration of all social services and programmes, including healthcare, regardless of the founding authority of the service.**

### **3. What are the principles of community planning**

Community planning principles are very close to the principles of good governance that can be applied to community planning. They usually include the following:

- accountability
- transparency
- representation
- equality
- rule of law
- capability and competence
- ability to respond to people's needs

### **4. Why plan?**

The social economy system in the Czech Republic and Europe is currently ready for fundamental transformation actions. All the stakeholders (i.e. founding authorities, providers and users of social services) are aware of the serious problems related to the current system of social services lacking transparency, particularly in view of the unfavourable demographical forecasts of the Czech Republic and the European Union due to the ageing of the population. Achievement of a higher efficiency of social economy is an imperative task for the further periods of our lives. Higher efficiency of the entire system would especially require the possibility of individual solutions to unfavourable social situations of people that can be resolved by social and community plans of services. Plans responding to real local and regional needs are the right way to use public budgets and human resources efficiently in specific regions and countries as well as the whole of Europe.

### **5. Community planning from the perspective of the Czech Republic's legislation**

The Act on Social Services, issued in 2006 in the Czech Republic, introduced the obligation for regions and option for municipalities to draft mid-term plans of the development of social services, and formulated the principal methodological basis for cooperation in a triad consisting of commissioners, providers and users of social services. The triad is the management principle of the community planning process.

Regions draft plans of the development of social services obligatorily as a basis for the calculation of the required subsidy from the national budget that they then, on behalf of the state, distribute among the providers of social services.

Municipalities are not obliged to plan the development of social services but it is highly recommendable as their plans can serve as an objective basis for the regional development plans and the subsequent distribution of subsidies in line with their real needs.

Community planning of the development of social services in municipalities can, but does not have to, be related to the general planning of the socio-economic development. Municipalities can formulate socio-economic development programmes (strategic plans) in accordance with the general legislation applicable to local public administration. It depends on the municipal authority's decision whether such a programme will include a chapter on social issues and what it will be like.

## 6. Where did community planning start

We started acquiring experience with community planning in the Czech Republic and Ústí nad Labem in 1996 in England. We went on study trips and organized „roaming“ bus trips to England, the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. We translated plans and trained experts, politicians, users as well as ourselves, community managers. It was a dynamic period full of new visions and hopes for fundamental transformation actions in the network of social services in the Czech Republic. At that time, planning was implemented primarily in the field of mental health in England, due to the transformation of psychiatric care of Great Britain into community care. Our beginnings, too, were in the field of care for long-term mentally ill clients and gradually we extended planning also to other target groups in the region.

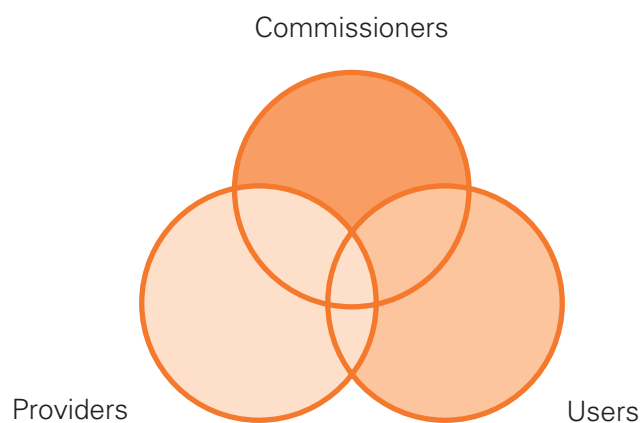
Today, plans in England have a wider scope and social impact. This was also confirmed by the analysis that we conducted within Equal project No. 0076. In Great Britain, community plans are integrated in strategic plans of towns and municipalities today and the issues of disadvantaged people have thus become part of the general plans of the development of towns and municipalities. As a result, issues related to housing, transport, employment, education etc. are addressed as a holistic process integrating also disadvantaged people with their specific needs.

## 7. Community planning participants

Community planning is implemented in triads consisting of commissioners, providers and users of social services. It is recommendable to involve the highest possible number of participants from these three groups in the processes.

From the management perspective, community planning is implemented at three mutually interlinked levels in which the community planning participants from the triad operate:

- political level – this is where commissioners of plans operate
- expert level – this is where service providers and other experts operate
- user level – this is where service users and the public operate



## 8. Involvement of job centres in community planning

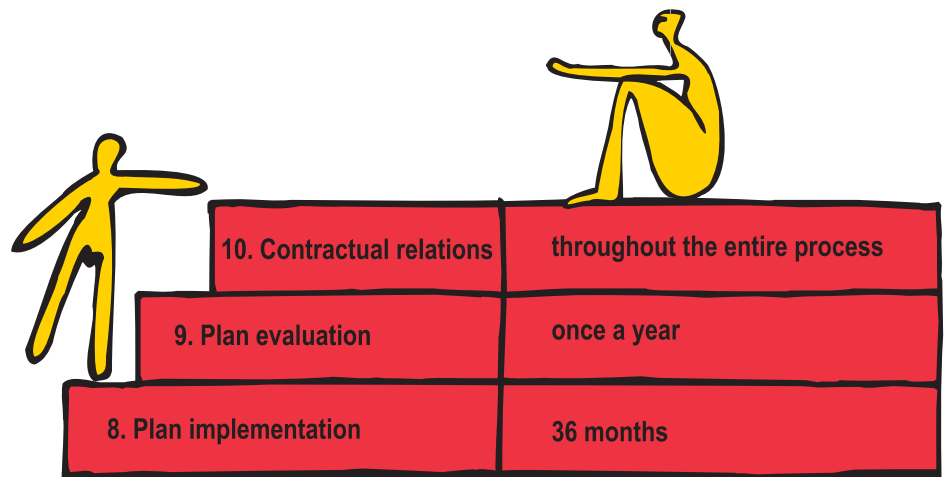
Involvement of job centres is an innovative approach in community planning. Involving job centres extends the regional network of cooperating social partners for addressing the issues of a population group facing social exclusion from the labour market. At the same time, it increases the quality of the Active employment policy of the job centres and motivates employers for long-term cooperation. They can then more easily create new job opportunities by appropriate forms of employment of disadvantaged people on the labour market. By the involvement of employers, their activities are directed more efficiently during the creation of job opportunities for socially disadvantaged population groups. The synergy effect of work of all the groups within the triad is used.

## **9. What is the difference between a community plan and a commercial plan**

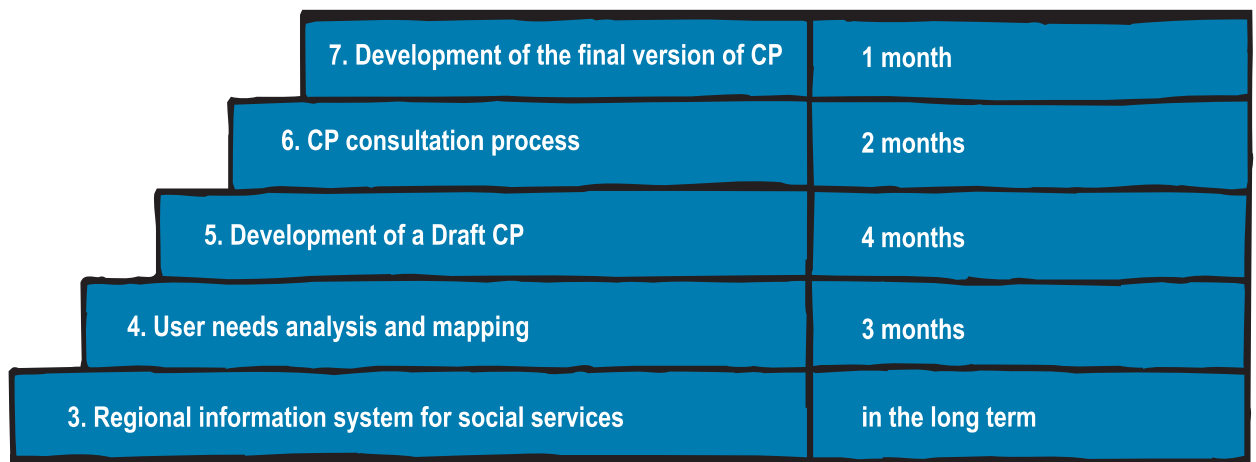
A community plan is developed during a process of communication and cooperation among a wide range of people living in the specific community and area the plan applies to. The people involved in the planning represent various professions and statuses. Managers try to get politicians, officials, service providers, users, job centres and employers involved in the process, i.e. to develop a plan in a creative lively environment that would allow for a reflection of the user needs and opinions of the community in the plan, and then to respond to them by an offer of social and community services while linking all this to human, intellectual, financial and material resources. The planning process is therefore as valuable as the resulting written document. A community plan is not formulated from a desk but through work with a wide community in mutual communication, cooperation and interconnection of various social levels of the community's life and it is formulated from bottom up.

It is obvious that a community plan is, compared to a plan of a commercial company, more difficult to formulate as it does not plan the development of one company manufacturing cars or developing new information technologies but plans the development of services in a specific area for a specific group at a specific time. Process management is thus dependent on the consensus and cooperation of many stakeholders, not only the management of one company.

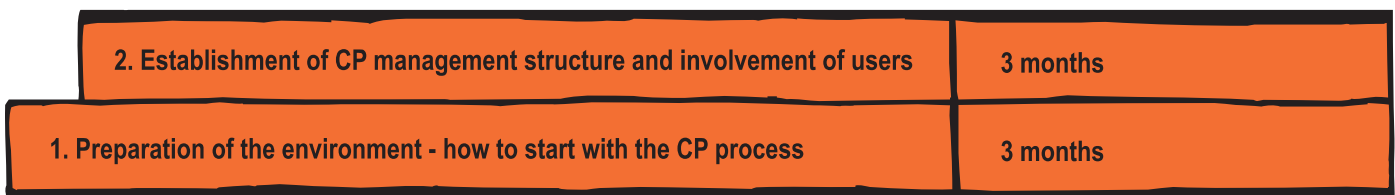
# TEN STEPS OF COMMUNITY PLANNING



## Plan implementation



## Plan development



## Preparatory phase of the planning process



## PREPARATORY PHASE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

### Step 1

## Preparation of the environment – how to start with the community planning process

- Set up an initiation team
- Elicit demand in the place of planning
- Discuss the assignment in political circles
- Prepare the principles and values you want to apply to the planning and have them approved
- Prepare the environment for the involvement of users
- Prepare the expert environment for the involvement of providers
- Prepare the environment for the work of management teams
- Prepare the environment for the establishment of CP organizational and management structures
- Prepare the funds for the development of the plan
- Formulate the basic scope of the Community Plan – planning period, area, target groups, participants, time of the plan development etc.
- Formulate the implementation plan (funding scheme) for the Community Plan development
- Arrange training of CP participants
- Arrange supervision, expert consultations and methodological guidance for CP development

**Ideal duration of the activities – 3 months**



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## PREPARATORY PHASE OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

### Step 2

## Establishment of the management and organizational structures of the community planning process

- Involve the triad in the planning process:
  - Involve commissioners
  - Involve providers
  - Involve users
- If they are motivated, involve job centres
- If they are motivated, involve selected employers
- Establish management and organizational structures:
  - Establish an Agreement Group
  - Establish a Management Team for planning
  - Establish a Team for Work with Information
  - Establish a Community Planning Team - select the developer of the plan (external, internal)
  - Establish coordination groups for individual target groups (senior citizens, children and youth etc.)
- Arrange training for the teams (min. 80 hours)
- Arrange training for the planning participants
- Arrange the approval of the management and organizational structures by the Municipal Council
- Arrange and prepare the first meeting of the management and organizational teams and groups

**Ideal duration of the activities - 3 months**



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

### Step 3 Regional information system for social services

- Map the current offer of social services - it will serve as a basis for the information system
- Produce, process and analyze questionnaires for providers
- Start developing the Regional Information System
- Set up an information project - information system for the planning process
- Divide the work on the information project in individual stages:
  - Analysis
  - Development
  - Testing
  - Pilot run
  - Regular run
- Select a contractor for the information project
- Implement the information project

**Ideal duration of the activities – in the long term, minimum 14 months**



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## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

### Step 4 User needs analysis and mapping

- Decide on a set of methods and procedures for the needs mapping and work with information in the community planning process such as:
  - Arrange an analysis of statistical data
  - Commission a quantitative sociological research
  - Commission a qualitative sociological research
  - Compile a Service Catalogue that will present the current offer of social and community services
  - Conduct questionnaire surveys among providers: once or repeatedly
  - Involve users and self-help organizations/groups in the questionnaire surveys
  - Make qualified estimates of providers
  - Conduct a SWOT analysis in individual target groups of the plan
  - Match needs and services
  - Draw up a service map - map the local social network in a structured way
  - Involve the public in the mapping of potential needs in the region
- Gradually get interconnected with the Regional Information System

**Ideal duration of the activities – 3 months**



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## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

### Step 5

## Development of a Draft Community Plan for the consultation process

- Develop a Draft Community Plan for the consultation process
- Develop a timeline for the work in the coordination groups (prepare an agenda for 8–10 meetings for each group)
- Conduct SWOT analyses in all target groups
- Draw up a structure for the Draft Community Plan
- Set the objectives of the plan for each target group
- Formulate the measures for each objective for each target group
- Set the priorities of the plan
- Formulate the economic aspects of the plan
- Identify indicators for each measure
- Develop a Draft Community Plan for each target group and submit it for the consultation process

**Ideal duration of the activities – 4 months**



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## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

### Step 6

## Consultation process of the Community Plan

- Take actions to prepare and implement the consultation process
- Prepare the organizational background - set up a team for the consultation process
- Develop a timeline for the consultation process
- Set up distribution and information points
- Ensure political support and the approval of the consultation process by the Municipal Council
- Categorize the comments
- Produce the necessary documents for the consultation process – commenting form, book of comments etc.
- Arrange consultations via the internet
- Start the consultation process, e.g. by organizing a conference
- Involve commissioners in the consultation process
- Involve the professional public in the consultation process
- Involve the general public in the consultation process
- Involve users in the consultation process
- Involve employers in the consultation process
- Develop a system for the processing of comments
- Decide on which comments to incorporate
- End the consultation process

**Ideal duration of the activities – 2 months**



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## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

### Step 7

## Development of the final version of the Community Plan

- Incorporate the comments in the Community Plan
- Develop the final version of the Community Plan with the following structure:
  - Chapter 1. Introduction to community plan development**
    - Context of the plan development at the local and regional levels, relation to applicable legislation
    - Purpose of the development of the Community Plan
    - Values and principles of the Community Plan (attitude towards clients, direction of the transformation and service development etc.)
    - List of people who participated in the development of the Community Plan
    - Other information that needs to be mentioned in the context of the local conditions
  - Chapter 2. Information needed for planning**
    - Sources of information that we used during the plan development
    - Basic data on the characteristics of the area and structure of the population the document was compiled for
    - Aggregate information on the conducted analyses that needs to be particularly highlighted
  - Chapter 3. Resources needed for planning**
    - Information on the amount and sources of funds in social services in the period in question
    - Resources needed for the implementation of the Community Plan
  - Chapter 4. Planning framework and consultation process**
    - Information on the Community Plan development process (methodology, organizational structure, timeline etc.)
    - Information on the consultation process (how it was organized, number of comments, method of their recording and processing)
  - Chapter 5. Development of services and programmes for individual target groups**
    - Description of each target group and their needs
    - Overview of providers in the specific area and basic information on their activities
    - List of members of all working groups
    - SWOT analyses of target groups, specific goals and measures for each target group
    - Overarching objectives that are common for all the target groups of the Plan
  - Chapter 6. Final chapter**
    - Important contacts
    - Other important information
- Have the Plan approved by the committees, Council and Board of Representatives
- Make graphic changes and produce the Plan in electronic and printed forms
- Distribute the Plan to the target groups

**Ideal duration of the activities – 1 month**



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## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

### Step 8 Implementation of the Community Plan

- Implement the Community Plan in practice
- Develop annual implementation plans
- Prioritize the goals and measures and allot them to the annual plans
- Use the set-up organizational structure for the implementation of the Plan
- Arrange multi-source funding of the Plan
- Prepare schemes for external funding
- Find resources and arrange subsidy management with the use of funds of the European Union for individual measures of the Plan
- Apply project management during the Plan's implementation

**Ideal duration of the activities – 36 months**



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# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

## Step 9 Evaluation of the Community Plan

- Evaluate and monitor the development of the Community Plan:
  - Evaluate the processes during the development of the Community Plan
  - Formulate evaluation questions
  - Identify suitable data collection techniques
  - Collect data
  - Analyze and interpret data
  - Provide information on evaluation outputs to relevant target groups
- Evaluate the implementation of the Community Plan (annual evaluation of the implementation of the Plan):
  - Formulate evaluation questions
  - Identify suitable data collection techniques
  - Collect data
  - Analyze and interpret data
  - Provide information on evaluation outputs to relevant target groups
- Evaluate the objectives of the Community Plan:
  - Formulate evaluation questions
  - Identify suitable data collection techniques
  - Collect data
  - Analyze and interpret data
  - Provide information on evaluation outputs to relevant target groups
- Arrange an economic evaluation of the community planning process:
  - Cost analysis
  - Cost-Benefit analysis

**Ideal duration of the activities – once a year**



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## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

### Step 10

## Contractual and other relations in the community planning process

- Ensure understanding of community planning at the level of general inputs:
  - Community planning of social care from the perspective of the Czech Republic's legislation
  - Legal background of community planning of the development of social services
  - Community planning at the municipal level
  - Community planning at the regional level
  - Relation between mid-term planning of social service development in municipalities and regions
- Ensure understanding of community planning participants in the field of social care:
  - Definition of community planning participants
  - Definition of a commissioner
  - Definition of a provider
  - Definition of a user
  - Participation of providers and users in the triad
  - Other stakeholders participating in the community planning process
- Ensure understanding of the legal status and acts of community planning participants:
  - Legal personality
  - Legal acts
  - Legal responsibility
- Ensure understanding of the process of the establishment, changes and termination of legal and similar relations during the community planning process:
  - In the process of environment preparation**
    - At the beginning of the community planning process and during the establishment of the initiation team
    - During the securing of political will
    - During the planning in the area of several municipalities
    - During the strengthening of the user and expert environment of the providers
    - During the creation of the conditions of the political environment
  - In the process of Community Plan development**
    - During the establishment of the organizational structures for community planning
    - During the establishment of the steering team
    - During the establishment of the management teams for the principal activities
    - During the establishment of the coordination teams for the target groups of social care

### Ideal duration of the activities - throughout the entire planning process

Apply the procedures described in step 10 and the understanding of legal relations throughout the entire planning process. Consult the appendix to Guideline No. 10.





The simple and clear symbolism of the community planning logo shows the principal and essential element without which the process could not work, which is:

### COMMUNICATION

The profiles of heads and their facial expressions clearly represent the communication process although it is a passive picture. The expressions clearly express another essential element of successful negotiations:

### POSITIVE EMOTIONS

By the choice of colours we want to point out the variety and diversity that are accepted and tolerated, the fact that there are people of different colours and opinions:

### FREE THINKING

Three heads are talking to one: the white head of a user is talking to the yellow head of a provider, behind the provider there is a commissioner and employer; three strong ones are helping a weaker one:

### HELP TO THOSE IN NEED

The message of the logo is underlined by the specification of all the four groups; the logo is used only in this form, with the web address that explicitly informs of its purpose:

[www.komunitniplanovani.com](http://www.komunitniplanovani.com)



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