

Strategic Framework for Rural Revitalisation through Intergenerational Community Centres

Proposal for the Three Seas Initiative Countries

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1. Regional Context

Central and Eastern European countries face common structural challenges:

- long-term population centralisation in major cities,
- shortage of affordable urban housing,
- gradual depopulation of rural areas,
- closure of local services,
- population ageing.

A structural paradox has emerged: urban pressure is increasing while rural infrastructure remains underused.

Rural revitalisation must therefore be integrated into broader territorial balance strategies.

2. Core Concept

The model proposes the establishment of intergenerational community centres in depopulating rural villages that are well connected to regional or capital cities.

Target locations:

- villages with long-term demographic decline,
- limited local services,
- connected to railway networks or primary roads,

The objective is managed decentralisation within functional regional systems.

The centre is anchored by a modern senior living facility serving as a multifunctional service hub.

3. Functional Structure

3.1 Social and Healthcare Services

- Barrier-free housing.
- Integrated health and social care.
- Long-term and partial outpatient services.

3.2 Digital Health Infrastructure

- Telemedicine.
- Remote consultations.
- Online health monitoring.
- Shared regional medical data systems.

3.3 Visiting and Mobile Services

Regular visiting professionals include:

- specialist doctors,
- dentists,
- physiotherapists,
- pharmacy services,
- personal services, barber, hairdresser, pedicure, manicure
- cultural and educational programmes.

Services benefit both residents and the wider community.

3.4 Community Infrastructure

- local grocery shop,
- postal and parcel services,
- shared dining hall,
- café or pub,
- childcare facility,
- multipurpose hall.

3.5 Small-Scale Agriculture and Sustainability

- community gardens,
- small animal breeding,
- local product production,
- rainwater use,
- renewable energy systems.

3.6 Intergenerational and Work Dimension

- family weekend and holiday stays,
- coworking spaces,
- school partnerships,
- local employment creation.

4. Site Selection Criteria

- long-term demographic decline,
- available development capacity,
- railway or primary road access,
- within 40 minutes of a regional city,
- basic technical and digital infrastructure.

5. Economic Framework

Funding sources may include:

- EU structural funds,
- rural development programmes,
- social service funds,
- energy efficiency programmes,
- public-private partnerships,
- service-based revenues.

The model is scalable and replicable.

6. Strategic Importance

The model supports:

- rural stabilisation, Cultivating young people’s connection to rural life
- urban housing pressure relief,
- digital healthcare expansion,
- regional resilience, Contributes to local job creation (in terms of new jobs),
- intergenerational cohesion, Reduces living costs for seniors and fosters social connections,
- balanced territorial development. Small-scale agriculture (gardening and small livestock keeping) gives seniors a renewed sense of purpose

7. Conclusion

Intergenerational community centres represent a modern decentralisation strategy aligned with demographic trends, digital transformation, and regional development goals.

They provide a sustainable structural response to rural depopulation and urban pressure while maintaining functional integration between cities and rural areas.













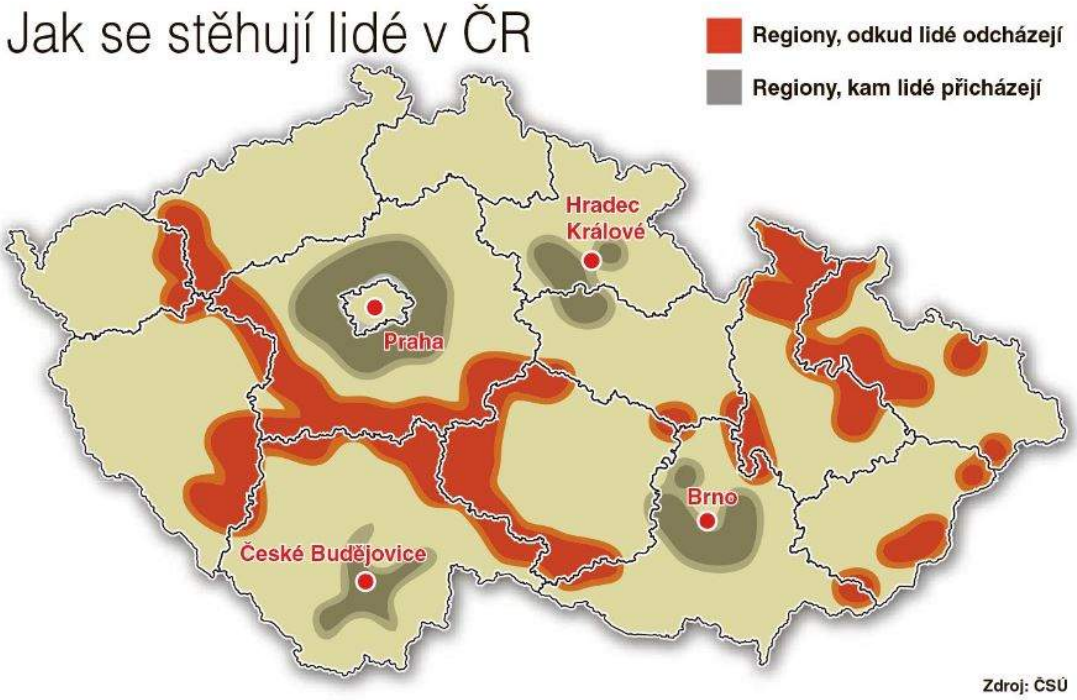











Jak se stěhují lidé v ČR
Regiony, odkud lidé odcházejí
Regiony, kam lidé přicházejí
Hradec Králové
Praha
Brno
České Budějovice
Zdroj: ČSÚ



Financial Framework and Implementation Model

The proposed model is designed to be financially feasible, scalable, and adaptable across different Three Seas Initiative member states. Its implementation does not rely on a single funding source, but rather on a diversified financial architecture combining public, private, and European instruments.

1. Blended Financing Structure

The recommended approach is a combination of:

- **Public capital investment** (initial infrastructure, renovation of unused public buildings, basic service framework)
- **Private or semi-private operators** responsible for long-term management and service provision

This structure reduces operational risk for public authorities while ensuring professional management and efficiency.

2. European Funding Instruments

The model is compatible with existing EU financing frameworks, including:

- **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)**
- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**
- **Interreg cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes**

These instruments can support infrastructure renovation, digital connectivity, telemedicine infrastructure, and community service facilities.

3. Public–Private Partnership (PPP)

Where appropriate, the initiative may be implemented through a structured Public–Private Partnership (PPP) model, particularly in cases involving:

- Long-term facility operation
- Integrated service provision (health, mobility, digital services)
- Energy-efficient renovation and smart infrastructure development

PPP arrangements allow risk-sharing and long-term financial sustainability.

4. National Grant Schemes

Each participating state may utilize existing national subsidy instruments targeting:

- Rural development
- Social services and elderly care
- Brownfield regeneration
- Digital infrastructure expansion
- Affordable housing programs

The model is designed to integrate smoothly into national strategic frameworks.

5. Social Impact and Investment Funds

In addition to public financing, the concept is suitable for:

- Social impact investors
- Ethical and ESG-focused funds
- Long-term institutional investors seeking stable, moderate returns with measurable social impact

This creates opportunities for innovative financing mechanisms, including outcome-based contracts or blended social finance.

Conclusion

The financial structure of the concept is intentionally modular and flexible. By combining public investment, European instruments, private sector participation, and social finance mechanisms, the model ensures long-term sustainability while minimizing fiscal burden on individual municipalities.

This diversified funding strategy allows replication across multiple regions within the Three Seas Initiative, making the concept not only socially desirable, but economically viable and structurally scalable.