



L'ARCHE®

**Benediktus
Projekt
ČESKÁ REPUBLIKA**

L'Arche Experience and Solidarity Program at L'Arche Benediktus, Czech Republic

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INFORMATION SHEET

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L'Arche Benediktus

L'Arche Benediktus is a community of people with and without intellectual disabilities. We are a member of L'Arche international. The organization exists since 2000. L'Arche Benediktus was since the beginning a community project inspired by the "community model" of L'Arche. We believe in every person's ability to contribute to society, regardless of any intellectual or physical limitation a person might have. We strive to create a place of life and work where every person can grow, through 1. developing healthy, interdependent relationships based on mutual respect, 2. the continual social and work formation for people with intellectual disabilities and 3. the creation of a stable and safe home environment. Within the Czech legislative framework, we function accordingly to the laws of the Czech Republic. As such we're a professional NGO that provides care for people with intellectual disabilities and for people requiring sheltered workplace environments.

L'Arche Benediktus maintains a professional team of employees on both social services and administration positions. They are the reason, together with volunteers, friends and associates, for the successful long-term realization of the community projects that the organization develops.

L'Arche Benediktus owns a house in Chotebor and an area in the village of Modletin. In Chotebor there are administrative offices, meanwhile in Modletin, there are sheltered housing, workshops and other facilities, such as fruit orchard, vegetable gardens, timber kiln, sewing room, maintenance workroom and accommodations. Modletin is located within the protected landscape area of Zelezne hory.

Objects administered by L'Arche Benediktus in the Modletin area are of a historical importance to the locality: old vicarage (sheltered housing, workshops currently), spa (now workshops and accommodations), and church building. The objects serve as housing and as a place for work opportunities; others are used for religious, cultural and leisure activities.



ACTIVITIES

L'Arche Benediktus currently develops the following projects:

1. **SHELTERED HOUSING**, with the capacity for 6 persons with intellectual disabilities (clients). Our aim is to create a home environment for our clients and employees (assistants) who accompany our clients in their daily chores, such as cooking, house cleaning, personal hygiene, leisure activities, etc. There's also a great emphasis to simply live life, to celebrate together, pray and play together, to go out, to share all the little things that make our lives easier to tackle with.
2. **SHELTERED WORKSHOPS**, for 13 clients, developed in 2 programs:
 - a. **SOCIO-THERAPEUTIC WORKSHOP**, where clients develop progressive working ethics and healthy social habits, through activities such as gardening, property maintenance, weaving, cooking, pottery making, computer and literacy skills training, cultural and social activities attendance, artistic processes fomentation. Among the activities are:
 - **Fruit drying**. Clients work in the process of elaboration and packaging of dried fruits. The method used is tray drying by heated air; fruits are apples, pears, peaches, and tomatoes. Fruits are grown preferably through organic farming and an incentive is put on the capability for own means of production.
 - **Gardening and maintenance workshop**. Clients realize work activities within the area owned and administered by L'Arche Benediktus. Activities include landscaping, wood processing, repair and construction work, property maintenance. These activities include made-to-order working business where clients and assistants also do maintenance and gardening work, for third-party customers.
 - **Woodworking workshop**. Clients elaborate on objects, such as children's toys, from wood.
 - **Music therapy**. L'Arche Benediktus has a musical band – *BeneBend* – that plays its own music and tours regularly (15 concerts in 2019; tours in France and Poland). Membership consists of people with and without disabilities, and all participate in the creative process. In 11-2019, the band published its second album.
 - **Pottery workshop**. Clients work in elaboration of decoration, utensils and other objects made from ceramics.
 - b. **DAY SERVICE CENTRUM**. DSC puts an emphasis on the formation of people with more severe intellectual disability. Clients in DSC are particularly vulnerable and dependent on highly personalized therapeutic work; examples of activities are music therapy, art therapy, activation therapy, etc.
3. **SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT**. L'Arche Benediktus employs 5 persons requiring a sheltered work environment. Some clients of socio-therapeutic workshop acquire

enough working abilities so as to be employed eventually; there are 2 such employees currently. The work includes these activities: property maintenance, gardening, sewing, house cleaning.

4. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES. L'Arche Benediktus tries to reach out to local people and organizations, and organizes:

- a. **The fairground of St. Anne**, which includes traditional handicraft and children workshops. The fairground has been renewed by L'Arche Benediktus in Modletin in 2008, after decades of hiatus.
- b. **Theaters**, such as Passion plays and Advent theater.
- c. **Beneficial concerts.**



Volunteering activities implemented within the project are on 2 levels:

1. Support to professional staff taking care for people with disabilities.

This means personal attention based on a family lifestyle by living in small home with people with intellectual disabilities and includes: personal hygiene, attention, time sharing, cultural activities attendance, leisure-time activities, cooking, house cleaning and others. Volunteers promote close and warm relationships in a friendly and safe environment. They will be asked to monitor the implementation of the individual program and are expected to bring suggestions. They will participate in the development of personal habits and autonomy. They help with the quality of the co-existence and relations in the home: entertaining, stimulation, acceptance of differences, conflict solving and dialogue. Volunteers are considered a part of the house, and as such they participate in the decision-making processes. They also take part in celebrations, feasts and community meetings.

Volunteers might expect to acquire a wide awareness and knowledge about the problems of people with disabilities and the means of care for them.

2. Support to professional staff in the workshops.

Volunteers take an active part in the work people with disabilities do. They accompany people with disabilities in the maintenance work, landscaping, fruit processing, woodworking. They are conducive to creative processes fomenting. They are of help in acquiring new skills or in maintaining them. Volunteers are also invited to suggest new ideas and help in their successful development. Volunteers might be asked to drive company cars and help in their maintenance.

Volunteers are expected to learn new skills related to manual labor such as tool handling, organization of work, cultural events preparation and many others.

L'Arche Benediktus expects young people who are willing to participate in a community way of life. People willing to open up to others and in particular to people with intellectual disabilities. We expect young people interested and motivated to work with people with intellectual disabilities, people who are hard-workers, respectful, communicative, sociable and patient. The knowledge of at least the English language would be preferable. Having some knowledge regarding special education, physical and occupation therapy and taking care of dependent individuals would be an asset, too.

L'Arche Benediktus aims to offer a life-transforming experience for young people. To achieve this, we welcome them to share a bit of life with people with intellectual disabilities, to establish mutual relationships where acceptance, inclusion and responsibilities are shared with people with disabilities. We aim to reveal that each and every person has a unique gift independent of any disability this person might have. We aim to nurture and develop these gifts and to help people with disabilities to become a vital part of human society.