



Baba Residence (‘baba’ - grandma) is an Ideas Factory initiative bringing together urban youth and elderly people from underpopulated villages in Bulgaria. It creates conducive conditions, through design thinking methods and ethnological approaches, in which youth and elderly could establish a truthful exchange of knowledge and care.

This interaction leads also to specific products, services and initiatives, based on traditional knowledge and designed with the needs of the local communities in mind.

Baba Residence is a sanctuary that unites two distinct cultural and generational islands in Bulgaria that are very colorful and different from each other, but share the need to communicate.

Based on our own impressions and the honest feedback we received from locals and supporters of our initiative, we became convinced that it caters to deeply felt and unspoken human needs of people to be part of a network of understanding, sharing and mutual assistance.

For these reasons we need support to realize Baba Residence again in 2017.

Baba Residence - one of our dreams come true!





The 17 participants who took part in the first edition of Baba Residence in 2015 spent one month in the households of people in four villages in the Rhodope mountains: Yugovo, Dzhurkovo, Dryanovo, and Manastir. All of them carrying their own charm and traditions.

The overall mission of all residents is to absorb every bit of the local knowledge related to folklore, traditions and crafts. At a deeper level they are drawn into the invisible structures of the village people's world.

Most of the month spent during Baba Residence the residents live the life of their hosting community – diving in all daily routines and tasks of the villagers: tossing hay, chasing sheep, picking fruits, vegetables and herbs, knitting, cooking, cleaning streets, painting the village church, discovering the surrounding environment and community - looking at the organic ways to integrate into the community life.

The residents are now developing their social entrepreneurial ideas which aim to awaken the cultural and economical potential of the villages.



In 2016 Baba Residence resided in 2 villages in Vratsa region - known as the poorest region in EU. Pavolche and Chelopek welcomed 10 residents who revived the well-known sedyanka (a working-bee; traditional gathering of people for work) and collected historical and personal stories from local people. The residents are now developing their social entrepreneurial ideas which aim to awaken the cultural and economical potential of those villages.

Their ideas can be seen and supported at our Facebook page (Ideas Factory Association).







The image of the Bulgarian baba preserves both the spirits of youth and wisdom within itself. Its richness does not need to be idealized, for it is a sanctuary between two seemingly separated human islands: the urban youth and the elderly from the villages.

Within this space, there is time for precious words, gestures, acceptance rituals, knowledge and crafts. The fabric of time stretches to absorb the commonalities rather than differences.

And all which we would simply label a part of the traditional world is only the occasion for a truthful meeting.

