

Benches Express

Bankerl Express

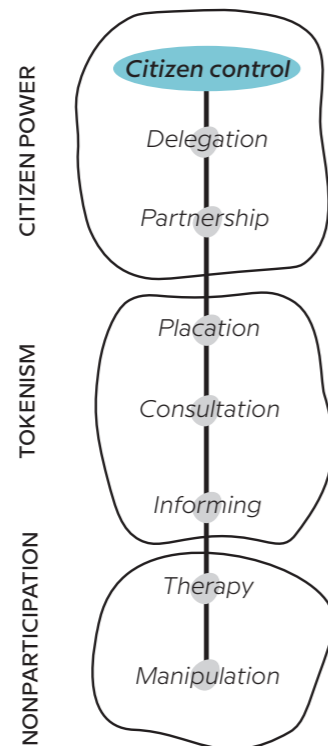


LOCATION
Stanz in the Mürz valley, Austria

TIME PERIOD
Since 2013

THE PROJECT

Benches Express project simply consists of wooden benches and a parasol. These benches give the possibility to people without cars to have a ride from other residents. They just have to stretch out the parasol to show their need to get a ride. Benches are painted with bright yellow and green, to be visible by car drivers and they are located along the main street, where traffic is most frequent.



received funds from the state government.

RESULT

The project is well received by the local community and they see in it a successful social and ecological project that has improved their quality of life. The results even exceed the original expectations. The local population is the main beneficiary, especially because cooperation and **solidarity between citizens has increased**. Indeed, the benches have given the possibility to meet fellow residents. The settlement has become a center of attraction for other communities and hosts some cultural events. The most demonstrative element of this success is the fact that Benches Express have been expanded to the neighboring village. The project was even nominated for the German Design Award.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SPACE

Stanz in the Mürz valley could be defined as remote by its **low population density** but also by the difficulties in accessing daily-life support and its **poor transportation links**. However, most households have cars and do not feel remote. The village has enough public spaces in the center but most of them are unattractive. Places are often used as car parking and affected by traffic noise. The only exception is a large recreation park. To counter this, measures are being planned to make this place more attractive.

the members, Fritz Pichler, later became the mayor of the village.

ROLE OF THE LOCAL COMMUNITY & METHODS USED

The involvement of the inhabitants was decisive for this and other projects. From the citizens' committee, several citizens' working groups were created. In each group there was an external expert who contributed with knowledge. Moreover, the project(s) could not have existed without the interpersonal relations between the citizens but also the personal relationship that the inhabitants have with their village. **In the beginning, there was hardly any institutional and financial support.** However, when Fritz Pichler, a member of the citizen commitment, became mayor, the access to the community's budget was facilitated. Later they even

WHAT MAKES THE SPECIFICITY OF THE PROJECT

The project was **conceived by a citizens initiative**, originally created to prevent the amalgamation of municipalities in Styria. One of



Description benches
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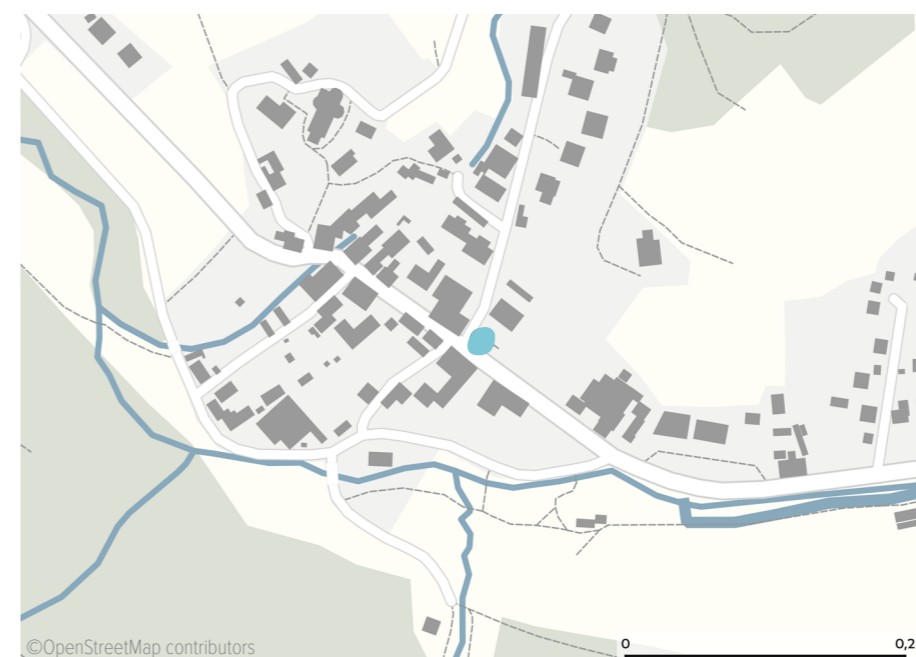
Village of Stanz
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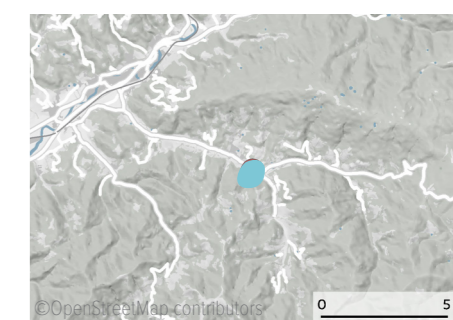
Benches-express
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Street without sidewalk
©FH JOANNEUM – photo by thuemmel-strittmatter



©OpenStreetMap contributors 0 0,2 km



Stanz in the Mürz valley, Styria, Austria

more about this project

