**CZECH REPUBLIC COUNTRY REPORT**

**1) Short introduction about volunteering in your country**

Volunteering in the Czech Republic went through major changes over the past 100 years. Substantial development of volunteerism and civic activism occurred after 1918: Czechoslovak independence. Unfortunately, this beautiful period was followed by a period of decline: first with German occupation during the World War II and second after 1948 with the rise of socialism. During the totalitarian regime the tradition of voluntary work was violently interrupted and all different kinds of independent organization activities were purposefully and systematically reduced or subordinated under the political leadership. Many people were forced to take part in “voluntary” projects and soon started to dislike and resent this form of forced “voluntary” activity. This situation slowly began to change after the Velvet Revolution in November 1989. In the 2002 the Act on the Voluntary Service which provides rules for the accreditation was adopted; throughout the Czech Republic were founded new volunteer centres whose mission was to promote and develop volunteering in society; there was an increase in number of new non-profit organizations that began to perceive the volunteers not only as a supplement to their services but as the main source of help.

Since that time volunteering has an ongoing development to which many research studies[[1]](#footnote-1) pay an attention.

Study on **Volunteering in the European Union - Country report Czech Republic** focuses on general information about volunteering in the Czech Republic, institutional framework, economic dimension of volunteering, cultural, social and environmental dimensions, volunteering in the context of education and training. To illustrate different perspectives we show 2 out of many examples:

Age of volunteers: Research shows that most volunteers are less than 34 years old (up to 75%). In two case studies the age group 16-24 turned out to be the most populous one, in one case study it was the age group 25-34. The age group 45-54 represents by far the smallest group (one interviewee estimated as little as 2%).

Gender of volunteers: Research shows that more women than men are involved in volunteering in the Czech Republic (39% of women compared to 29% of men responded that they ever volunteered).

Study “**Patterns and values of volunteering in the Czech Republic on the rise of 21.century**” is focused on examining the situation of volunteering from different perspectives. To illustrate different monitored perspectives we show 3 out of many here:

Length of volunteering for one organization: Research shows that 25% of volunteers are active in the same organization less than 1 year; 16% of volunteers are active in the same organization for a period of 2-3 years; 15% of volunteers are active in the same organization for a period of 4-5 years; 17% of volunteers are active in the same organization for a period of 6-10 years; 29% of volunteers are active in the same organization for more than 10 years.

Regularity of volunteering: Research shows that 4% of volunteers are volunteering daily; 33% of volunteers are volunteering weekly; 37% of volunteers are volunteering monthly; 17% of volunteers are volunteering 4 times per year; 9% of volunteers are volunteering 1-2 times per year.

Comparison of ways how to get volunteers: Research shows that 47% of volunteers who decided for volunteering learned about this possibility from their relatives and friends; 12% of volunteers learned about it from their colleagues at work and 38% of volunteers began volunteering within the organization where they were members. Only 9% of volunteers decided to volunteer due to advertisements in the internet, magazine or newspapers.

Study “**Three faces of community volunteering: non-formal helping each other, organized work and virtual activism**” is focused on examining the situation of non-formal volunteering from different perspectives. We illustrate 3 out of many different monitored perspectives here:

Comparison of representation formal/informal/virtual volunteer activities: Research shows that on average 38% of volunteering activities are informal; 62% of volunteering activities are formal or virtual.

Informal volunteer activity according to gender: Research shows that 34% of men are volunteering informally; 66% of men are volunteering formally or virtually; 42% of women are volunteering informally; 58% of women are volunteering formally or virtually.

Informal volunteer activity according to level of education: Research shows that 30% of volunteers with primary education are informal volunteers; 70% of volunteers with primary education are formal volunteers; 34% of volunteers with apprenticeship certificate are informal volunteers; 66% of volunteers with apprenticeship certificate are formal volunteers; 43% of volunteers with secondary education are informal volunteers; 57% of volunteers with secondary education are formal volunteers; 41% of volunteers with higher education are informal volunteers; 59% of volunteers with higher education are formal volunteers.

**2) National overview of existing mentoring practices**

The Union of mentors[[2]](#footnote-2) is an organization that has an overview about functional mentoring programs in the Czech Republic. This organization runs a catalogue with a list of mentoring programs that are provided in the Czech Republic. This catalogue can be a useful guide for planning or selection of an appropriate mentoring program. One that is looking for an information can easy find which areas is the program focused on, where is the service provided and how extensive or qualified it is.

Here is the list of mentoring programs that are part of the Union of mentors with a short description of their services:

Centre for Integration of Foreigners, o.s. – “Volunteer as a guide to asylum seekers and foreigners permanently residing in the Czech Republic”

The program works as a complement to social work and counselling CIF and is aimed to help through specific client-immigrant relationship to explore the area of a new home. The program works on a volunteer basis of cooperation with one foreigner or his whole family. Volunteer helps the client to identify new environment, its customs and rules; he works as a contact person between the newcomers and their new neighbours.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.cicpraha.org/>

Colourful children´s world - Program “Buddy”

This mentoring program is focused on a long-term relationship between child who needs help and the “buddy”. Buddy helps specific children in specific situations to find themselves, to realize their potential and thus enhance confidence in their abilities; find the motivation to learn, improve school results; stabilize the situation in the family, prevent social exclusion and demonstrate the creative possibilities of spending free time.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.barevnysvetdeti.cz/cz/>

HESTIA – “3G - Three generations”

The main objective of this mentoring program is to create a positive long-term relationship between a volunteer and a family; and to support intergenerational coexistence, solidarity and cohesion between the generations. The program works on the principle of friendly relationship between the volunteer (50+), the child and his family.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.hest.cz/cs-CZ/>

HESTIA – “COMPASS”

This program helps children, youth and families in difficult life situations. It uses methods of support, appreciation and respect to the qualities of involved clients. It is a social activation service for families with children aged 6-15. In this program two trained adult volunteers meet with group of six children from socio-culturally disadvantaged backgrounds and together they play games, organize trips, sport-events or other activities focused on the adoption of social skills.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.hest.cz/cs-CZ/>

HESTIA – “Five P”

Five P is one of the mentoring volunteering programs which is based on the "one to one" principle. Once a week one adult volunteer is dedicated to one child who needs his help. It creates a friendly long-term relationship which is a huge benefit for both children and volunteers in the areas of personal development and interpersonal relationships.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.hest.cz/cs-CZ/>

LATA – “Two are better than one”

This mentoring program is focused on building a long-term relationship between a trained volunteer and a young person aged 13-26 years. Volunteer provides child/young person peer support through which he helps him to cope with severe or life-threatening situations and strengthens his independence.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.lata.cz/>

Mentoring assistance Svitavy

The main objective of this project is to strengthen the motivation for education and learning for students of primary schools with learning disabilities, problematical behaviour or for underprivileged children. There are 36 secondary school students and 10 professionals and volunteers from non-profit organizations working with this children.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.pestalozzi.cz/>

National Contact Centre – “Women and Science”

This program is designed for third grade students in secondary schools who are interested in studying technical high schools and would like to see how it goes in such schools to make a clearer idea of ​​what kind of different disciplines might be offered to them. With their mentor´s (university students) help they gain important information. These students show them everything during the second half of the school year.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.zenyaveda.cz/>

Technical University of Liberec – “The Open University”

This program offers to selected high school students mentors from university. With these mentors they can look at the academic environment, attend some lectures and seminars or cooperate with them on their work in laboratories or on projects.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.tul.cz/>

The civic association Slovo 21 – Pass it on"

This program offers assistance to gypsy students that are overcoming difficulties in studying at primary and secondary schools and prepares students for the transition from elementary to secondary/high schools; and secondary/high school students for the transition to colleges/universities. Students that are preparing for college have the opportunity to get to know the academic environment through a mentor – gypsy student from this college. He shows his younger peer how it goes on campus and explains him that there is nothing to worry about.

More information about the program you can find here: <http://www.slovo21.cz/>

1. GHK: Study on Volunteering in the European Union - Country report Czech republic, 2010

<http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/national_report_cz_en.pdf>

FRIČ, Pavol – POSPÍŠILOVÁ, Tereza at al.: Vzorce a hodnoty dobrovolnictví v české společnosti na začátku 21. století [Patterns and values of volunteering in Czech Republic on the rise of 21. century], Agnes, Hestia 2010.

FRIČ, Pavol – VÁVRA, Martin: Tři tváře komunitního dobrovolnictví: neformální pomoc, organizovaná práce a virtuální aktivismus. [Three faces of community volunteering: non-formal helping each other, organized work and virtual activism], Agnes, Hestia 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. More information about this orgnization you can find here: <http://www.uniementoru.cz/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)