

# VOLUNTEERING FOR EVERYONE

*Sharing Ideas from Erasmus+ Project „Helping Hand – Soothing Voice”*

*Czechia – pages 1-4  
Lithuania – pages 5-6  
Poland – pages 7-10*



A volunteer from Hong Kong teaches  
Polish youth Mandarin calligraphy



Brzozow's school children's  
Volunteering promotional poster



A group of tensingers from  
Ten Sing Vrchlabí





# Volunteering in the Czech Republic

*In the project “Helping Hand, Soothing Voice” participated four groups from three different countries – Poland, Lithuania and the Czech Republic. As these countries have different cultures, we can observe and compare the volunteering activity in each of them. At first we will talk about volunteering in the Czech Republic.*

The volunteering activity in the Czech Republic is very high and is openly supported by the government. There is widespread volunteer help for seniors and people in difficult financial situation, young people take care of the visual side of their cities by cleaning the streets, planting trees and flowers or repairing buildings, and big support comes to people with handicaps as well. As in other states, volunteers can be individuals as well as groups of people. They can have specific focus as well as do several volunteering activities. But the reason of their activity stays the same – make others and themselves pleased and put the energy into something meaningful.

In the last year, in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic, we could witness a high volunteering activity in the Czech Republic and other countries all around the world. There were many individuals making lacking face masks, bringing food and other necessities to seniors or helping in hospitals (mostly students and doctors on maternity leave). This fact shows us that there are many Czechs willing to help others if needed.



fotoarchiv Diakonie ČCE



# Volunteering organizations in the Czech Republic

*In 2017 there were more than 140 000 nonprofit organizations in the Czech Republic and the number still increases. Naturally we can't present you all of them. We chose three nonprofit organizations to which we have a personal relationship and which may be interesting and a little bit different than those you know.*

## YMCA CR

The YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) is the oldest, the biggest and with 58 million members it is the most widespread youth organization in the world.

It was founded in 1844 in London and it quickly became worldwide. In the Czech Republic the YMCA has around 4000 members. It offers various activities, such as sports clubs, art courses, scout units, low-threshold and music activities, summer camps and many others.

Even though it's standing on Christian bases, the YMCA is open to all people, regardless of their religion, ethnicity, social situation or gender.

The main goal the YMCA tries to reach is to lead people to harmonious development of their spirit, body and soul. These three principals are also shown on

the logo, where each of them represents one side of the triangle.

## Ten Sing

Ten Sing is a music activity for young people (from the age of 12 to 19) and it is part of the YMCA. Its main content is represented by singing in a choir, playing in a band, dancing and playing the theatre.

In the CR there are 7 Ten Sing groups which practice and meet all year round plus there is one Ten Sing group that meets once a year on a summer camp. Each group has its own concerts throughout the year, but there are also some events, p. ex. the Ten Sing Festival, Know How or Gospel Night,

where all of the "tensingers" meet, play games and perform separately or together.

Ten Sing is based on volunteering as all the leaders are volunteers. The idea of Ten Sing is to provide teenagers place for self-realization, create a safe place, where they can find themselves, make friends, try new things and grow up in democratic values. Thanks to the project Helping Hand, Soothing Voice we became even more motivated and excited about the volunteering.



Czech Ten Sing festival Ke kořenům 2017



## KLUB ČESKÝCH TURISTŮ

Czech tourists club is an association of active tourist and tourism fans. It was founded in 1888 by a group of Czech patriots and from the beginning the Club was very active.



The list of KČT activity is very extensive. Not only

they organize sport events either for children, either for elderly, but they also keep the hiking trails save and clear. That includes marking of hiking trails all around the Czech Republic. KČT's main goal is to make tourism more attractive to people, therefore they try to make various events (mostly trips



and excursions) throughout the year.

Needless to say that the KČT is very close to nature. The Club actively participates in nature protection and shows care for cultural monuments.

## HUDEBNÍ MLÁDEŽ

Hudební mládež (Musical Youth) associates young people interested in art, especially in music. *"The goal of the HM is not only to acquaint the participants of their events with art from the point of view of a spectator, but also to actively create it."* Same as Ten Sing, it's focused mainly on art and self-development, but it's not a religious activity.

There are two big summer events, where young people to the age of 29 can develop music skills as well as skill in painting, literature, filmmaking and acting skills and many more.

Through art focused events, like festivals, workshops, seminars and summer camps, the HM gives young people the opportunity to meet peers of similar interests.

Hudební Mládež is part of the international federation Jeunesses Musicales International, which brings together 63 organizations from around the world.



fotoarchiv Hudební mládež – PRKNA 2019



# Volunteering is not just about giving, it's also about receiving.

*Volunteering is seen by many as a “one direction” activity – a decision to help others, give our free time to others. However, it has a very positive impact on the volunteers as well. Not only they meet new people and improve their communication skills, but also they learn how to be organized. Not to mention practical and hobby workshops which enable deeper personal development.*



Tomáš Kopecký, Ten Sing Tyjáš

*„As a volunteer I give a bit of my time to something I find meaningful. In the beginning I was doing it simply for that. But it turned out I ended up with more. For starters you learn how to do new things. Me personally it has taught how to get organized, how to work in a team and how to bear responsibility. You also not only get to meet so many great people, you also get to know them. For me that was always such a pleasant experience and I've found a lot of friends this way. So of course you do have to put some of your time in but you also get a lot in return. And lastly ever since I was doing it, it has always felt like putting an effort into the right thing.“*

*“I was introduced to KČT when I was in elementary school. I was going on trips that were organized by KČT every year. In middle school I joined the hiking club and I really enjoyed all the trips. I was doing a lot of chores so I could go on trip every weekend. Later I started thinking about wanting to mark hiking trails – this way I could also do something for the others. After college I had the chance to take a free place of a “marker” in Vrchlabí. I went on a course without any doubts. And that's it, I became a “marker”. It's a great thing. It makes you go into the nature, meet kind people who appreciate my work that helps them not to get lost. I often go marking with my friends or my children and we enjoy our time in the nature. It's true that a single kilometer might take more time than an hour, I'm carrying paints, brushes, saw, garden sheers and wire brush after all....but it's worth it.”*



Jitka Loudová

*If you're interested in any of mentioned organization, you can visit their websites to learn more about them and eventually contact them.*



[www.ymca.cz](http://www.ymca.cz)

**Ten Sing**

[www.tensing.cz](http://www.tensing.cz)



[www.kct.cz](http://www.kct.cz)



[www.hudebnimladez.cz](http://www.hudebnimladez.cz)



# Volunteering in Lithuania

*There are a lot of Non-governmental organizations in Lithuania, which helps poor people, works with children, helps the Environment and much more. One of those organizations is VŠĮ IUVENIS ANIMUS.*

Recently our group of participants from VŠĮ IUVENIS ANIMUS have had a chance to take part in an interesting project in Poland called „**Helping Hand- Soothing Voice**”.

In Poland they have actively shared ideas about volunteering in our three partner countries. With Czech and Polish partners we have prepared and organized an educational program for kids in the local community center next to Brzozów.



VŠĮ „Iuvenis animus” organization was founded with the intension to develop the conditions and opportunities of non-formal education by youth exchange projects and volunteering possibilities of youngsters in Elektrenai municipality and Vilnius district. The organization seeks to develop the skills of the stakeholders in organization, to exchange good experience of non-formal learning to encourage youth activities. While implementing the international projects the organization seeks to enrich the region by new initiatives and traditions. The organization guarantees educational and cultural activities, takes

care of non-formal learning. One of the most important aim of the organization is to develop the youth actions and initiatives in local community, to get new experiences by taking part in various international and national projects.

The director of the organization is Giedrė Užkurėnaitė, she has experience with young people as a career consultant in the secondary schools since October 2012. The group leader is a focal point for coordinating the activities of the project at schools, supervising the implementation of them as well as organizing events at schools and in the cultural center of the living place. One of the most important





things of the youth worker is a holistic approach to every person's attitude.

Laura Liachovič is the other shareholder who has a lot of experience with non-formal education in youth work, working with ill, mental disabled people, coordinating projects and is responsible for Lithuanian volunteers and is tutor of international volunteers.

## “Jurbarkas Gyvas” association

*Working with VŠĮ „Iuvenis animus” some of the members of this association had an honor to participate in the project “Helping Hand, Soothing Voice” and share their volunteering experience as active members of the small city volunteer’s association, located in Lithuania.*

This association was created by two active women, psychology degree holding Laura Molčankinaitė and kind-hearted Aušrinė Meškauskienė in the summer of 2019. That summer was definitely life changing for it’s members.



This idea was born after the summer project for children “Vasara be kompiuterio”. A group of young people decided to help in it and did not want to separate. That is why they never did and “Jurbarkas Gyvas” non-formal youth group was created. Now it is like a family, which is always ready to help in city events, projects, festivals, and other activities. Two years after this family

is stronger than ever and is not planning to stop growing, helping, and spreading positivity.

Festival, the festival of the beginning of the school year "Hello, September...", the celebration of the opening of the sports season, the theater festival and other events organized in Jurbarkas.

Our target group is young people between the age of 14 and 18. It is very useful for people of this age to engage in volunteering, as it can influence future career choices, help to acquire certain values that will come in handy in the later stages of life, gain invaluable experience, discover themselves, and find new active friends.





# Volunteering in Poland

*In the Podkarpatia region of Poland, one of the most active family-run organizations that help children and supports the activities of young people is the **STANISŁAWA BIENCZAK CHILDREN'S AID FOUNDATION**.*

The foundation was established by Andrzej and Bożena Bieńczak about 20 years ago. By people who saw the needs of the local community and wanted to support those in need in a Christian spirit. With the help of dir. Mrs Dorota and Mrs Dominika have been organizing many attractive regular programs and events for children and youth every year for many years. Just to name a few of them; the volunteer club, the Shadow Theatre section, the TenSing music section, the Film and reportage section, the culinary and healthy food section, the ecological section and the Beyond the Horizon volunteer and inter-cultural section. We invite all interested parties to join us as we offer participation and activities for children and youth from Brzozów and Podkarpacie region as well as we are open to accepting volunteers from abroad for the summer season. The last initiative is directed towards open-minded youth from abroad. After the Erasmus Plus Project "Helping Hand - Soothing Voice" we are starting with new ideas, motivation and energy to opening a new chapter of our initiatives.



| Bożena and Andrzej Bieńczak





## Foundation's Youth Council

The advisory body and the young driving force behind the activities is the Foundation's Youth Council. The council was established in 2017 as part of the project entitled Active youth, as a path to an active society, co-financed by the Civic Initiatives Fund. The MRF is made up of volunteer leaders who are active in the local environment and they get involved in various charity events. They organize workshops for the Foundation's younger pupils, using non-formal education methods.

## Active Youth

After our summer Erasmus project **"Helping Hand - Soothing Voice"** with our Czech and Lithuanian partners we are even more determined, full of energy and ready to help youth and children. In Brzozów region they mostly need

help because of their health or financial situation, low self-esteem, difficult contact with others or access to various forms of leisure activities. As volunteers, we are active in the local community, we take part in various charity events

at schools and in the Stanisława Bieńczak Children's Aid Foundation. By participating in workshops organised by the Foundation, we have met many children who need help and contact with others. Some of them come from pathological families and they are at risk of social exclusion. We have noticed that children are particularly keen to take part in various workshops and trips, although this is now a bit more obstructed by the pandemic.



*"Nauczyłem się wiele nowego o wolontariacie, jak pracować w drużynie, dobrej komunikacji."*

*"Nauczyłem się lepszej komunikacji, pracy w grupie a także nowych ciekawych energizerów."*

*"I didn't know that volunteering can be so much fun, and will give me the sense of belonging."*



# Ten Sing Poland



The international **Ten Sing** programme originated from the Christian YMCA organisation in Norway. The centre of the Ten Sing programme in Poland is located in Brzozów, at the Stanisława Bieńczak Children's Aid Foundation.



*Here you can read some commentaries from the participants of the project "Helping – Hand, Soothing Voice".*

*"I learned how to be a clay leader, how make presentations. I reduce my fear of speaking in front of audience and especially in English.*

*Erasmus+ is one of the best thing to be yourself."*

*" Dzięki udziałowi w wymianie otrzymałam dużo energii, odwagi i idei jak dalej działać jako wolontariuszka. Ponadto dowiedziałam się dużo nowych rzeczy o innych krajach."*

*"I learned about other cultures, improved my communication and English*

*"I learned a lot about communications. I know now about similarities and differences between our cultures. I learned many new game and activities. And finally how to be an open person and how to help each other."*



**We are waiting for you, give us a call or  
just come over!**

***Zapraszamy***

***FUNDACJA POMOCY DZIECIOM***

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# Erasmus+

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