



VOLUNTEERING – A MIGHTY INSTRUMENT IN THE SOCIETAL ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

MUNI HELPS





Our founding purpose

March 2020

- **Establishing a volunteer centre at higher education institutions for student engagement and social responsibility.**

MUNI HELPS app



- The app is available on both mobile and web platforms.
- It serves as a unique tool for connecting volunteers and with those requesting help.
- Volunteers can choose any volunteering opportunity they desire and start helping.

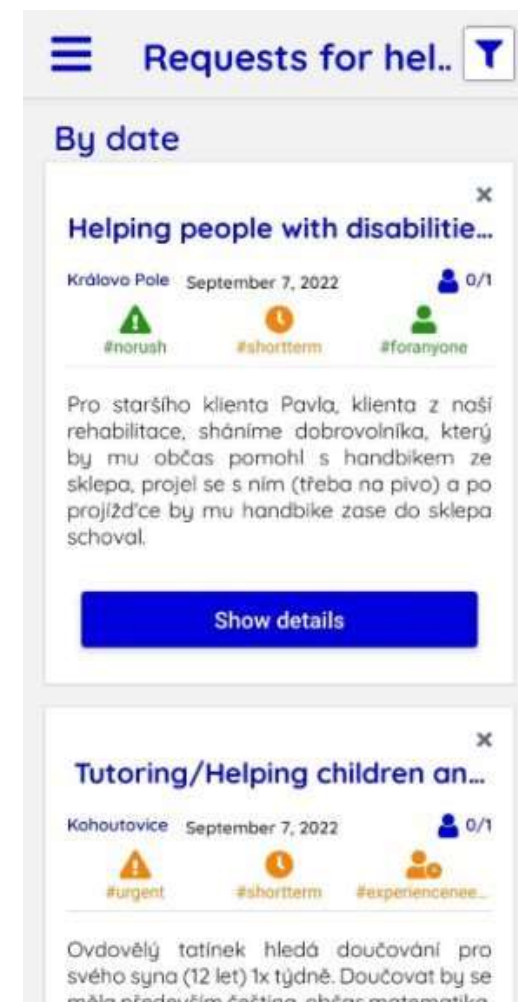
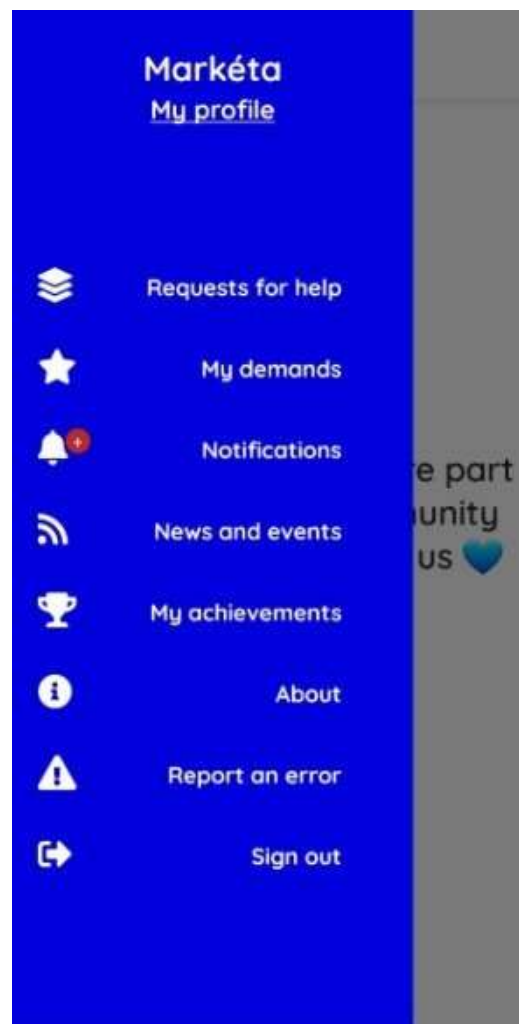
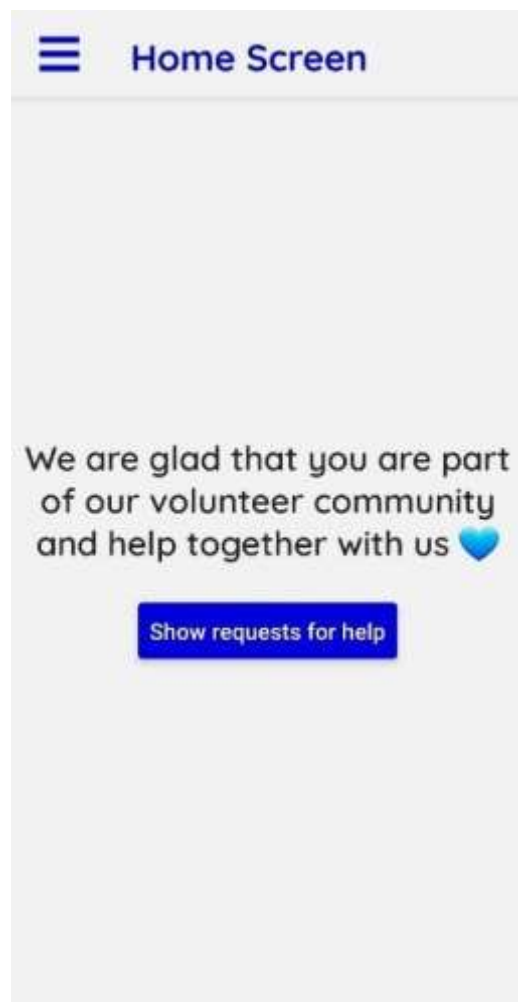
Peter's story



- From an idea to fully functional app
 - Expert volunteering
 - Support of Institute of Computer Science
- Mgr. Petr Knetl - Developer of the MUNI HELPS Application- Awarded the Rector's Prize for Volunteering in 2022



MUNI HELPS app



Crises

- **2020 COVID-19**
- **2021 Tornado in South Moravia**
- **2022 Help for Ukraine**
- **2024 Floods**

COVID-19



Tornado in South Moravia



Help for Ukraine



Floods in 2024



MUNI
POMÁHÁ

MUNI POMÁHÁ . CZ



READY TO HELP

Zaregistruj se jako dobrovolník do aplikace MUNI POMÁHÁ a dej nám vědět, že jsi připravený/á pomoci.





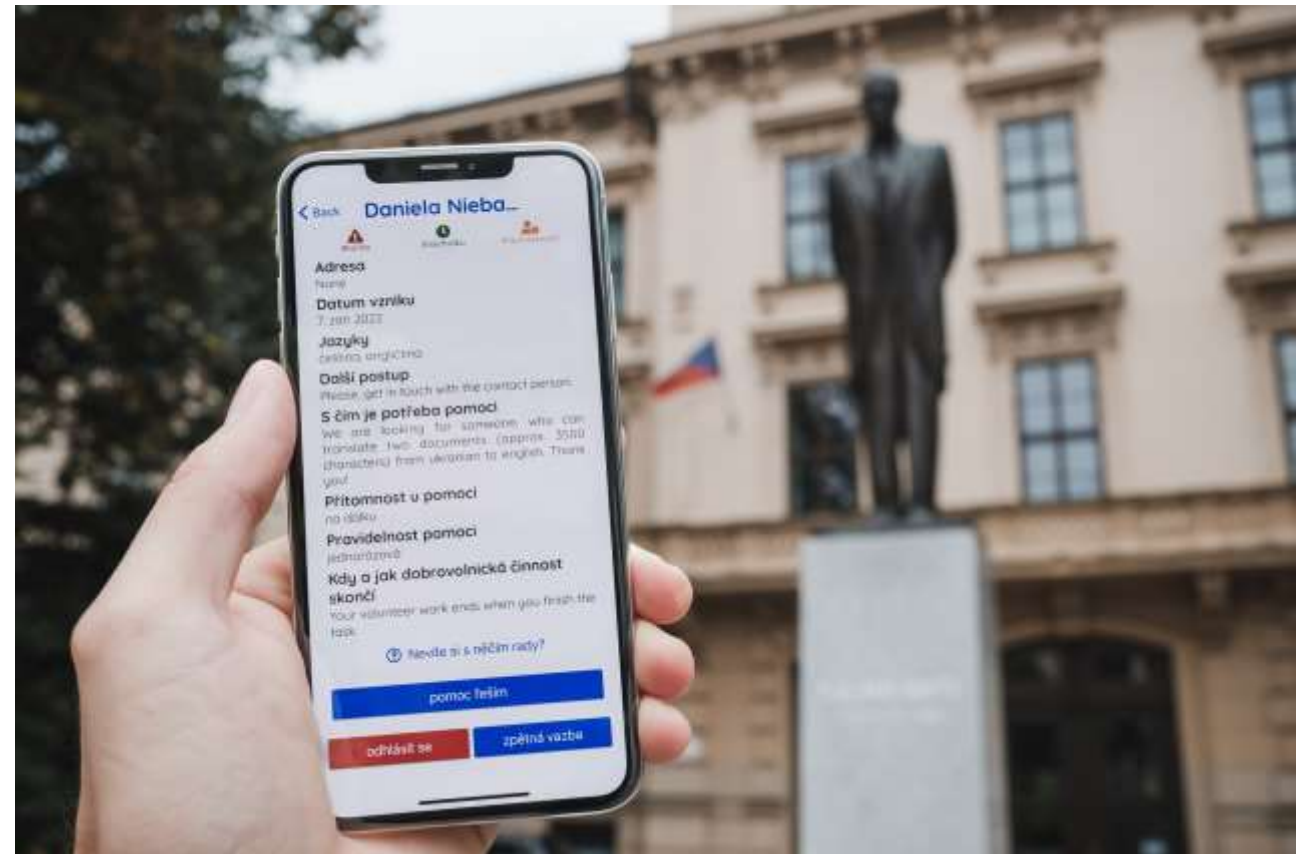
Our main activities

- **Volunteer programs**
- **Events & building a volunteer community**
- **Collaboration with partner non-profit organizations**

Volunteer programs



- Individual tutoring
- Afterschool group tutoring "KLUBÍK"
- Summer school tutoring
- Help incubator
- Student legal counselling



Afterschool group tutoring "KLUBÍK"



- Children in upper primary school (4 groups)
- Weekly tutoring
- Preparation for entrance exams
- 45 children per semester
- Support for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds
- Individual approach



Summer school tutoring



- The first summer school was held in 2021 in response to online education during COVID
- Support for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds
- Children from the 1st grade of elementary school
- Over 50 children, over 40 tutors



Help incubator & Student legal counselling



- Helping with new projects, concepts and ideas
- Providing support under the brand of MUNI HELPS
- Potentially becoming one of the volunteering programs such as **Student legal counselling**

- Students of the Faculty of Law, Masaryk University helping other students (under teachers' supervision) who need legal advice
- **Mgr. Jan Novotný** - main coordinator of the Student legal counselling - Awarded the Rector's Prize for Volunteering in 2022





Our achievements

- European Citizen's Prize (2021)
- Commemorative medals awarded by the regional council for helping in COVID 19 and for providing help in tornado affected areas (both 2021)
- Masaryk University Rector's Award for volunteering (2022)
- Award for Excellence in Internationalization from the European Association for International Education (EAIE, 2022)



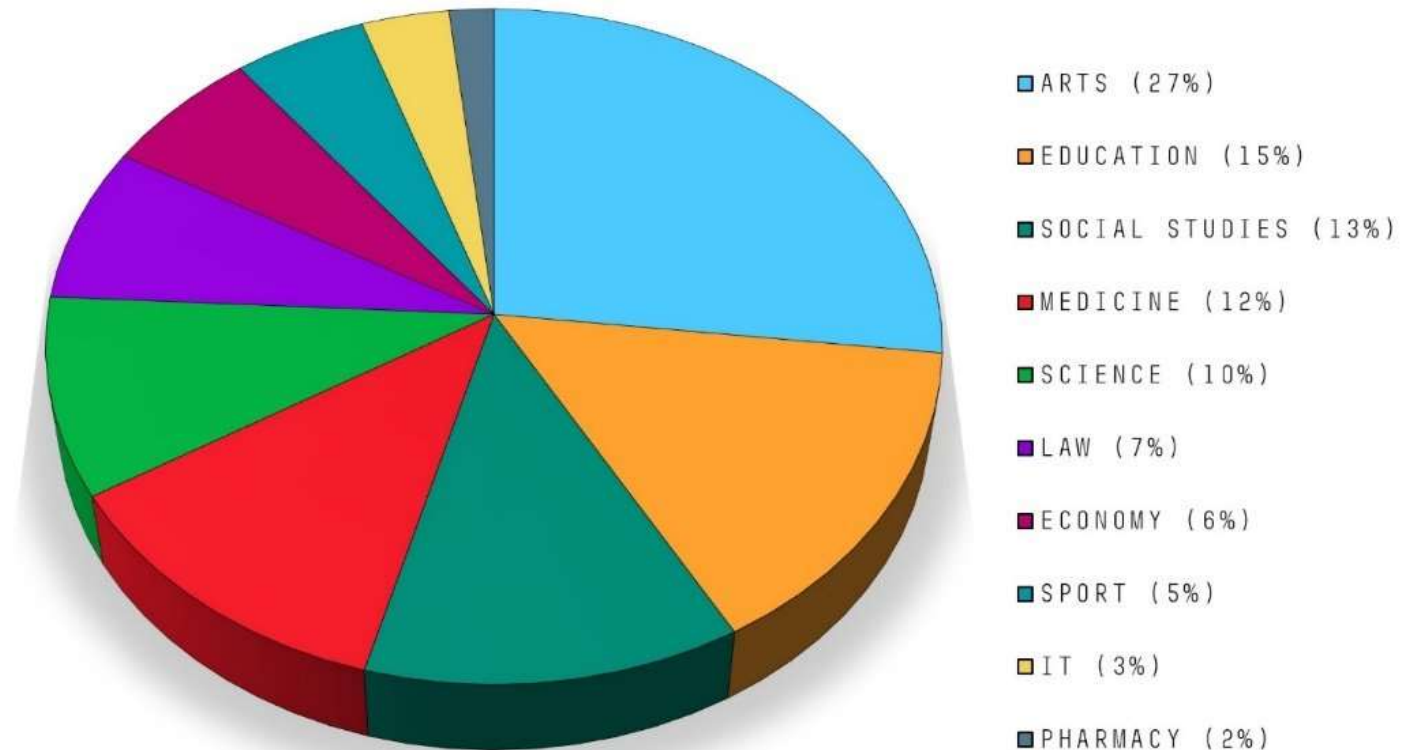
MUNI HELPS in numbers

- **Number of volunteers in total: 5673**
- Number of MUNI students: 4421
- Number of MUNI employees: 772
- Number of MUNI alumni: 480

Representation of each faculty



VOLUNTEERS IN DATABASE BASED ON FACULTY



3rd role of the university and social responsibility



- **Social and civic responsibility within the university**
- **Build a culture of community, solidarity, and compassion**
- **Support Masaryk University's role in positive social impact**



Volunteering as a tool

- As a tool of informal education
- Elective subjects students can get credits for
- Inspiring and motivating

Volunteering as University subject

Which elective subjects can students get credits for?



Faculty of Education

SO502 Doučování dětí ze sociálně znevýhodněného prostředí
Ped_Dobro Dobrovolnictví

Faculty of Arts

DOBRO_ARTS Dobrovolnictví

Faculty of Economics and Administration

XPX_SDOC Studentská dobrovolnická činnost

Faculty of Sport Studies

v2066 Dobrovolnictví ve sportovních aktivitách

Faculty of Social Sciences

PSYb2250 Studentská dobrovolnická praxe





Our vision

- Sustainable development
- Enhancing the sense of belonging to the MUNI community
- Systematic care for our volunteers
- Volunteering as an informal tool of education
- Promoting volunteering as a natural part of student & civic life

Thank you for your attention!

M A S A R Y K

U N I V E R S I T Y

Appendix

- **Research results on benefits and challenges of volunteering for university students**
- Zelenková, I., Dohnalová, Z., & Tichavská, M. (2023, November 30). Přínosy a výzvy dobrovolnictví studentů vysokých škol v kontextu jejich budoucí zaměstnatelnosti (The benefits and challenges of volunteering for university students in the context of their future employability). Dobrovolnictví jako součást studia na VŠ.

Research question:

What are the benefits and challenges of volunteering for university students in the context of their future employability?

Methodology

- Qualitative survey
- **13 Focus Groups** with students and alumni who have different volunteering experiences
- Approx. **100 participants**



Role of volunteering as part of service learning within academic settings



- Enhancing teaching and student engagement
- Academic development
- Building relationships and community development

Challenges in integrating volunteerism and service learning

- Lack of recognition and awareness
- Time and resource constraints
- Logistical and legal barriers
- Disconnect between volunteering activities and curricula
- Need for comprehensive impact evaluation and assessment

Opportunities for development



- Promote and raise awareness about benefits
- Flexible study plans and credit systems
- Establishment of a volunteering coordinator
- Systematic analysis and update of legislation
- Active collaboration with community partners

Benefits and risks for students' personal and professional development



Benefits

- Personal growth
- Enhanced self-awareness
- Increased empathy and compassion

- Professional development
- Skill acquisition
- Networking opportunities
- Enhanced employability

Risks

- Time management challenges

- Potential for mismatched expectations

- Emotional and psychological risks

- Resource constraints

Benefits and risks for community development



Benefits

- Strengthening community ties
- Enhanced collaboration
- Resource mobilization
- Capacity building

- Addressing community needs
- Tangible benefits
- Increased civic engagement

- Mutual learning opportunities
- Knowledge Exchange
- Cultural competence

Risks

- Sustainability issues
- Short-term engagement
- Dependency creation
- Potential for mismatched goals
- Alignment challenges
- Unrealistic expectations
- Impact on community dynamics
- Power imbalances
- Cultural sensitivity
- Resource strain
- Logistical challenges
- Funding and support

Conclusion: Benefits and risks



- Volunteerism and service learning significantly enhance student engagement, personal growth, and professional development.
- Strong positive impact on community development through resource mobilization, capacity building, and addressing local needs.
- Challenges such as sustainability, resource constraints, and cultural sensitivity need careful management.

Recommendations for Future Practice



Volunteering at universities

- Strengthen university-community partnerships through regular dialogue and collaboration.
- Implement comprehensive training programs for students to ensure cultural competence and readiness for community engagement.
- Develop long-term strategies to ensure the sustainability and continuity of community projects beyond student involvement.



Volunteering - a mighty instrument in the societal role of universities



European Solidarity Corps



EU programme since 2018

Goal: support and development of solidarity, response to current needs in society and development of young people's potential

Non-formal education

Activities:

- **Volunteering**
- **Solidarity Projects**

Volunteering



- Lead, Host, Support**
- Young people 18 – 30**
- Up to 12 months abroad**
- National (PWFO) and International volunteers**
- Collaboration on activities provided by the university (PR, event organisation, student clubs)**



Solidarity project

- ❑ **The project is directly led by young people 18-30**
- ❑ **Role of university = Support of young people (umbrella organisation, coach)**
- ❑ **Local initiatives rooted in the needs**
- ❑ **2-12 months**
- ❑ **Various topics: sustainability, inclusion, digitalisation, intergenerational understanding, multiculturalism, gender topics, etc.**



Impact on young people

- Empowerment of young people**
- Strengthening/Obtaining new competences and skills**
- Positive impact on local community, power of change**
- Financial support from the European Union**
- Activation of young people with fewer opportunities**
- Civic engagement and active participation**

Impact on organisations



- ❑ **Enhancement of international and national collaboration**
- ❑ **Funding and Resources**
- ❑ **Strengthening the global competence of students, employees, and volunteers**
- ❑ **Increase Visibility and Reputation in the local community**
- ❑ **Development and opportunities for volunteer centers**