

## CLICK WITH SCHOOL

In non-profit organization META, o.p.s. we have been focusing on the integration of foreigners to the education system and on the labor market since 2004. Experience has shown that young migrants are one of the most vulnerable groups in the Czech Republic regarding access to education. Upon their arrival, they have completed primary education from their countries of origin. Thus, in the Czech Republic they do not have the opportunity to learn Czech on the daily basis of education at elementary schools and therefore to prepare sufficiently for studies at secondary schools. The solution of this situation is to arrange a private paid course of Czech language, which can only be afforded by those who have decent financial background. For those who cannot afford this option, it is almost impossible to manage the education in Czech at secondary school level, if they are at first even accepted to the education or then, successfully finish it. Therefore, [META, o.p.s.](#) in cooperation with the [Center for Integration of Foreigners](#) provides a complex support system of preparation for studies at secondary school level and its successful completion. The support system consists of 1-year preparatory course, social counseling, and volunteer support in a form of tutoring and organizing leisure time activities and development of an Internet application for practicing Czech language.

### The preparation for studies

Young migrants find themselves in complicated situation on arrival in a new country. They have to cope with the loss of their original home, family and friends. They enter a new socio-cultural environment and, apart from the orientation in the new country, they need to address education and their future professional career. The fundamental barrier in the inclusion to the education and society in general, is **the lack of Czech language**. Through the 1-year preparatory course, they have a unique opportunity to prepare for studies at secondary schools at minimal costs. The course is aimed to those aged 14 to 18 who have certain knowledge of particular subjects from the school from the countries of their origin, except of Czech realities. The course gives them the time and space for developing communication in Czech language, learning grammar and vocabulary at level B1-2. Secondary, it helps develop skills of collaboration, discussion, problem solving and information retrieval. Through the introduced themes course participants learn about life and culture in the Czech Republic that at the same time helps them to their inclusion to the society.

The course consists of 912 lesson hours and 228 Czech lesson hours in one school year.

Participants learn Czech language through relevant subjects of the second level of Czech elementary schools. The course combines academic language learning with eight subjects (Mathematics, Literature, Geography, History, Civics, Natural Science, Biology, Chemistry). The ninth subject is Czech as a second language.

In the school year 2016/2017 two pilot-classes were opened with a total of 30 students. The composition of classes was very diverse; the students were from Ukraine, Venezuela, China, Mexico, Cuba, Moldavia, Mongolia, Vietnam, Cameroon, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. The course was successfully completed by 27 students, 26 of them were admitted to studies at Czech secondary schools, and one student was forced to return to his country of origin for family reasons. Due to this fact, the success rate of admission to secondary schools was 100% (counted from those participants who completed the course). Students were admitted to various fields of studies: hospitality and tourism, trade and other services (10 graduates), health care (5), technical studies (5), business and economics (4), art studies (1). 68% of the pilot course graduates currently study at study programs with final state exam at the end of the study (These study programs are more demanding than others without the final state exam).

During summer 2017, the course was refined on the basis of students and lecturers evaluation and feed-back. The evaluation and modification of developed teaching materials were run continuously under the supervision of methodologists and external experts. In October 2017 another year-course was opened with 24 new students enrolled in 2 classes.

### **Further support through social counseling, volunteers and Internet application**

Through counseling young migrants and their parents learn about Czech education system and the labor market. Together with the social worker they create an individual plan which includes, besides needs and interests, foremost the objectives of cooperation, possible obstacles and paths leading to fulfillment of these objectives. The course participants can also benefit from the support of volunteers in a form of an individual tutoring, English lessons (in-group) or events organized within the lessons or after, in students' free time. The part of the complex support system is also development of an Internet application, there has been a working group established for these purposes. The final version of the application is currently testing to meet the needs of the users. The developed application will serve students to test and deepen their knowledge of Czech language and other subjects acquired during the one preparatory course.

### **Sustainability and availability of the support system**

Apart from supporting specific young migrants, from the start of the project there has been the focus on the long-term sustainability of the course. The long-term goal of the support system from very beginning was to have the support system implemented in Czech education system in the future.

However, this goal seems unrealistic at this time, as there is little recognition at the level of policy makers about the necessity of this form of support for young migrants. Negotiations have been conducted at various levels (Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Municipality of Prague, city districts offices) with the attempt to persuade relevant representatives of state administration and municipality government. The greatest success in this area is that the support of young migrants by language preparation for the successful entrance of secondary education and support during their studies was stated as one of the priorities of the updated concept of integration of foreigners in the territory of Prague municipality.

The CLICK WITH SCHOOL project is funded by the Velux Foundations and is free of charge for participants. Our overall goal is also to eliminate the risks associated with the social exclusion of young migrants and to prevent a total lack of Czech language knowledge, insufficient education, unemployment and frustration in general. Successful graduates can, among other, motivate other young people.