

Annual Report

for the year 2008

Meta o.s. – Association for the Opportunities of Young Migrants

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Introduction

Dear friends and associates,

You hold in your hand the annual report of the citizen's association META for the year 2008. As with previous years, this one also seemed exceptional and ground-breaking! Perhaps we can best characterize 2008 with the word "expansion": we expanded our target group (or, to be more specific, the age range of our target group), we expanded our activities (and opening hours!), and last but not least, we also expanded our personnel.

In April, we began offering social counselling to foreigners under the age of 16. Thanks to the addition of this "new clientele," our social workers intensified their interaction with elementary schools and also began offering counselling to teachers involved with the education of foreign students. From here it was only a small step towards one of the expansions mentioned above: we began to become involved in the educational training of teachers and the creation of methodological teaching aids and tools for working with foreign students. We even strayed a bit into the realm of multicultural education. You can read more about all of this in the annual report that you now hold in your hand. I hope that it is pleasurable reading and that it maintains your interest all the way to the end! In closing, I would like to thank all of those who provided aid and support to us and our clients over the past year.

On behalf of the whole META team,
Zuzana Vodňanská

Who are we?

META o.s. - Association for the Opportunities of Young Migrants was founded in 2004 with the aim of providing support to young migrants living in the Czech Republic. The Association serves young migrants aged 6-39 without regard to residency status.

Since 2006, META's primary activity has been the operation of the **Counselling and Information Centre for Young Migrants** (Poradenské a informační centrum pro mladé migranty – PIC), where social workers offer guidance and counselling to clients, who are making decisions about furthering their studies or careers or who are resolving issues related to their specific social and legal situations. As part of our social counselling service, our clients are also able to work one on one with volunteers towards achieving certain fixed goals. In most cases, this takes the form of tutoring and preparation for various kinds of exams. In addition to social counselling and the related activities offered through our volunteer programme, we also offer courses in the Czech language taught by experienced instructors and courses to prepare clients for school entrance exams. In the Counselling and Information Centre clients also have access to a reading room with a library and computers with internet connection.

META's mission is to support the personal development of young migrants, particularly in the area of education, which we consider to be a primary condition for successful integration into society. Through our activity, we hope to contribute towards a conflict-free and mutually beneficial coexistence between foreigners and the society at large.

With our **social counselling and educational activities**, we aim to assist our clients in the following:

- developing skills that will help them navigate the Czech educational system
- integrating into the Czech educational system
- successfully completing their studies, by providing continuous support during the time of education
- obtaining work that corresponds to their level of education (including education acquired in the client's home country)
- acquiring further education and training that will increase their career chances

We aim to actively contribute to **establishing and improving the conditions of education and work in the Czech Republic in order to ensure equal opportunities for foreigners**

- by mapping out opportunities and monitoring problems encountered by foreigners in the Czech education system and, subsequently, in the workforce
- by increasing awareness among professionals and the general public about the issues associated with migration and the education of foreigners.
- by developing expert, conceptual, and methodological strategies, both on our own and in cooperation with other specialists, towards dealing with these issues both in the Czech Republic and abroad
- through the systematic training of our organization's employees with the goal of improving services

Our Services

Social Counselling

Specialized social counselling was one of META's primary activities in 2008. The centre's social workers provide social counselling in the areas of education and career planning and, together with META's other employees, organized tutoring and other educational activities for the association's clients. In 2008 we lowered the age limit for receiving our services. We now accept clients between the ages of 6 and 39 from all nationalities regardless of residency status. Our social workers operate according to the quality standards of the social services and in line with META's internal guidelines.

In 2008 the number of clients taking advantage of our social counselling over an extended period increased by 77. As of December 31, 2008 we had a total of 119 contracts for social counselling. Our clients come from 29 different countries (arranged according to number of clients in descending order): the Ukraine (32 clients), Russia (19), Kazakhstan (9), Belarus (8), Kyrgyzstan (7), Afghanistan (5), Mongolia (4), Nigeria (4), Moldova (3), Thailand (3), Uzbekistan (3), Democratic Republic of Congo (3), Sudan (2), Israel (2), Georgia (2), China (2), Azerbaijan (2), Armenia (2), Somalia (1), Ivory Coast (1), Myanmar (1), Cuba (1), Guinea Bissau (1), Egypt (1), and one client, who has already acquired Czech citizenship.

The most common matters addressed by our social workers are:

- providing information about the Czech education system and the admissions requirements of various kinds of learning institutions
- providing information about the legislative framework for education in the Czech Republic (e.g. the existence of mandatory school attendance)
- facilitating communication between clients and their parents and schools, as well as with other relevant institutions or organizations if necessary
- helping with educational issues – organizing tutoring with our volunteers, offering language courses and other educational activities, etc.
- choosing a suitable elementary school (in cases when the local school is full, making it necessary to seek out another school that is able to accept the student for the academic year)
- choosing suitable secondary schools (i.e. high schools), vocational schools, or universities and helping with preparations for entrance exams. Young foreigners often have trouble orienting themselves within the Czech educational system and therefore come to us with problems that they would naturally be able to solve quite easily in their "own environment"
- helping to gain official recognition for educational certificates and degrees acquired in the client's home country – this involves obtaining equivalency approval for documents attesting to the completion of various educational levels (elementary school, high school, university, etc.)
- financial support – drawing on the project funds for the Counselling and Information Centre for Young Migrants, we were able to subsidize retraining courses and partial (secondary school) tuition for several of our clients
- establishing contact with recreational centres
- establishing contact with other services

In addition to providing **long-term social counselling**, this year our social workers also offered **one-time consultations**. For the most part, this took the form of personal consultation in our office, but some clients also received consultation via telephone or

email. On average, about 70 clients per month took advantage of one-time consultation. In most cases, their inquiries were related to their studies (across the whole range of schools) and to the processes involved in obtaining equivalency recognition for foreign educational certification and the legalization of degrees achieved abroad (called **nostrifikace** in Czech). Other frequently addressed issues were language courses, retraining courses, and tutoring.

One of our most frequently used services is advising on the procedure for obtaining official recognition for education completed abroad, i.e. nostrifikace. This involves obtaining a document certifying that a previously attained educational degree is the same or equivalent to the analogous level of education in the Czech Republic. As a rule, such a document is required if an individual wishes to continue their education or training here in the Czech Republic. For example, if an individual is interested in entering a secondary school or high school, they must provide certification that they have already accomplished an educational level equivalent to that of a Czech elementary school. The same applies for other degrees of education (e.g. secondary schools and universities).

In this area, our clients most often required specific information about what is required to obtain the proper document for the recognition of their previous education. Their needs ranged from finding about what evidence they need to provide, how and where to have the documents translated into Czech, how to fill out the request form, and contacting the appropriate authorities, whether they be in the departments of education of the respective regional governments or at the chancellor's offices of individual universities.

It is worth pointing out here, the difference between the legalization of a degree from a secondary school versus a university. Often, the departments of education of the various individual regional governments, which are responsible for administering the official recognition of secondary school education, require the applicant to pass equivalency exams. These are similar in scope to the standard school leaving exams in any given subject. Only after passing these exams does the applicant receive the so-called recognition addendum, which serves as a legal certification of the degree. The exams are administered at selected secondary schools (or gymnasia, the Czech equivalent of high schools). For a foreigner, this process can be anything but a simple and straightforward matter. Last year, we helped a number of clients prepare for these exams. The general requirement is one or two exams; however, one of our clients was required to take no fewer than seven such exams. We are happy to announce that he and the rest of our clients all successfully passed their exams, thus having their secondary school educations officially recognized. Often, assistance in preparing for these exams was provided by our volunteers, to whom we have dedicated an entire section later in this report.

University graduates had it somewhat easier, since they are generally not required to take exams. They only need to fill out an application and present a notarized copy of their diploma, translated into Czech. Yet, even this procedure can present significant difficulties to people who have not lived in the Czech Republic for very long, leading them to seek out advice.

Work with foreign children aged 6-16

In April 2008 we expanded our activities to include providing support to clients aged 6-16 and together with this move, also increased our cooperation with elementary schools.

It was not long after instituting the change that we had people who were interested in these services. Our first client was eleven-year-old Daniel from the Ivory Coast, who moved here to be with his father, who has already been living in the Czech Republic a relatively long time. Daniel began attending the fifth grade without any knowledge of Czech. We established a cooperative relationship with his class teacher and arranged for a volunteer to provide him with Czech lessons twice a week.

Czech language tutoring is by far the greatest area of interest both for clients and for teachers. The large number of applicants made it necessary to start distinguishing between two groups of clients: those whose inability to speak Czech significantly hinders them from participating in the learning process or integrating into the class environment; and those who simply require tutoring in various specific areas, not because they cannot speak Czech, but because they are not able to fully master the material as well as most Czech children.

During the summer holidays, the most common request was for help in selecting a suitable school for newly arrived foreign children. Such children come to join their parents in the Czech Republic after completing the school year in their home countries. In the summer of 2008 we helped enrol three clients into elementary school and one client into secondary school (at the School of International and Public Relations – SMVV). In August, we organized an intensive course in Czech for twelve clients, who had recently arrived in the country.

Our social counselling covers a very broad range of issues and we receive a wide variety of requests from our clients, as well as from schools and other institutions. Towards the end of the academic year, a pedagogical-psychological counselling bureau contacted us regarding a certain Chinese girl. She had already been attending a Czech school for two years, yet still failed to communicate successfully in Czech. She failed most of her classes, her mother did not respond to notices from the school, and, due to overcapacity, the school was unable to relegate her to a lower class, where she belonged. We acquired an interpreter, with whose assistance we were able to arrange for a meeting with the mother at the school. Since the girl was unable to meet the school's standards, they exercised their right to deny her enrolment. Now it was up to the mother to find another school. This would be rather difficult given that she did not speak Czech, maintained a very high workload, and did not possess sufficient knowledge about the Czech school system. Therefore, our association sought out a school that was appropriate for the girl's level. She was accepted without any problems and thanks to the school's warm approach, she has been doing very well there.

Educational activities

Czech language courses

In the past year, we significantly intensified the offering of courses in Czech as a second language. Just as in 2007, all of our educational activities were free of charge. The only requirement was a refundable deposit. All together, we succeeded in realizing 11 courses in **Czech as a foreign language** at various levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced), of varying intensity, with varied content, and for various types of students (adults, children, university students, and those preparing to enter the workforce). At the same time, this year we also offered foreigners the possibility to attend **English language courses**. We successfully realized 4 courses, which were taught by volunteers from our association. Our volunteers were also active as instructors of other subjects,

such as **preparatory courses in mathematics** at both the **secondary school** and **university** levels. In the fall, we organized two **Czech language courses with supplementary lessons on personal and labour law issues**. Due to the nature of the course, it was available only to students with advanced knowledge of Czech. One aspect of the course focussed on grammar and writing style, while the other focussed on specific terminology related to employment and the job market.

The goal of these courses was to make it easier for the adult migrant participants to enter the workplace. The idea for this course stemmed from our own first-hand experience, which had demonstrated to us that the repeated attendance of Czech language courses, although supplying a basic knowledge of the language, did not provide adult migrants with any further skills or expertise that might benefit them in their search for a job. Therefore, we saw it as necessary to realize these two activities as mutually complementary and to design a language course, whose content also focuses on practical career matters. A fundamental aim of the **lessons on personal and labour law issues** is to introduce the participants to the Czech marketplace to and to reinforce their skills (by means of practical exercises) so that they are consequently able to find employment that suits them. They were given information on the legislation and rules regulating the employment of foreigners, the risks and disadvantages of illegal employment, and details about specific employers and branches of employment.

All together, more than 160 foreigners participated in our educational activities during the year 2008.

Volunteer support

As already mentioned in the section about educational activities, these courses are taught to a great extent by volunteers of the META association. META's entire volunteer programme (which has been accredited by the Czech Republic's Department of Home Affairs since 2007) is an indispensable complement to our social counselling.

In 2008 volunteers provided assistance to META by working one on one with clients and providing tutoring in various subjects. In most cases, they provided **tutoring in Czech**, which is, logically, the most difficult subject for most migrants. Throughout the course of the year, a total of 32 clients attended 20 different tutoring modules on the Czech language, which generally met on a weekly basis. The content of the tutoring modules was varied, including conversation, grammar, and preparation for various types of exams (equivalency exams, qualification exams, entrance exams for secondary school or university, etc.) The next two most popular subjects for tutoring were **mathematics** and **English**, which were taught both individually and in groups. In addition to tutoring, our volunteers also became directly involved with the operation of the association in a number of ways, for example by interpreting during interventional meetings arranged by our social workers. They also compiled relevant information that became the foundation for a database of educational and retraining opportunities as well as for a database on the compatibility of educational systems. In addition, they collected information concerning the "good practices" of organizations similar to ours from around the EU.

The volunteers also organized a discussion session on the topic of migration and study in a foreign country, which was attended by 13 people, both foreigners and Czech students.

There was on-going recruitment of volunteers throughout the whole year 2008. In May and November, we organized introductory training sessions for those interested in working as volunteers. The attendees were introduced to the history of the association and its activities. More importantly they were acquainted with the content and scope of our social counselling with regard to the specific needs of our target group, as well as with the issues related to migration in the Czech Republic, relevant legislation, and basic information about META's volunteer programme and volunteering in general. Other volunteers were trained on an on-going basis.

In 2008, META had a total of 32 long-term volunteers working with it.

Internships and vocational training at META

In addition to Czech students of secondary schools, vocational colleges, and universities, who are fulfilling their internship requirements at META, this year we also began accepting foreign vocational trainees in connection with the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The primary occupation for most of these trainees is work on our database that documents the compatibility of educational systems. This involves searching and processing information about the educational systems in our clients' home countries. Depending on their language abilities, the trainees can also become involved in some of the association's other activities, for example by tutoring our clients in English.

Support for schools

Already in the fall of 2007, we became involved with the project "Otevřená škola: Interkulturní vzdělávání pro sociální spravedlnost" sponsored by the Multikulturní centrum Praha (Multicultural Center Prague – MKC). The project included a series of seminars for teachers intended to educate them in the area of multicultural education and provide them with practical training to help them better cope with multicultural situations in the school setting. We designed a course with the fitting title "Migrace II – praxe" (Migration II – practical experience), but in order to provide better orientation for potential attendees, we subsequently changed the name to "Cizinci na českých školách" (Foreigners in Czech schools). The course aimed to communicate our experiences working with migrants and to establish a setting for the exchange of ideas about various ways to solve potential problematic or conflict situations, while also taking into consideration the socio-cultural, linguistic, and other particularities of foreign students and how they are perceived by their fellow students and by the teachers themselves. Through the seminars, the teachers were also provided with practical information about the provisions in place in EU countries for members of minority groups, an overview of the legislative framework relating to the education of foreigners in the Czech Republic, and contact information for NGOs involved with these issues. During the course of the "Otevřená škola" project, we realized the above mentioned course twice in the spring of 2008. In both cases, we were accompanied by representatives from the ranks of young migrants (from the Ukraine and Vietnam) who had gone through the Czech educational system beginning already in elementary school. They described to the teachers the concrete problems they encountered when they began attending Czech schools and also outlined which things helped them integrate into the system and which things hindered this process.

This course was our first step into an area of activities that we became more intensely involved with in the second half of 2008: support for educators, who work with foreign children. This move was closely linked with the expansion of our target group to include

foreign children under the age of 16, which dramatically increased our interaction and cooperation with teachers and educational advisors in schools attended by foreigners.

Their work in this respect is not easy. The state does not provide any basic methodological system or financial support (e.g. free courses in Czech are guaranteed by law, but only to students from EU countries). Thus, educators often have to come up with their own initiatives, for which are generally not funded. This is a particular problem in those elementary schools, where foreign students begin attending (as stipulated by the law) immediately after arriving in the Czech Republic, yet without any degree of language preparation, which naturally makes it difficult to even determine the appropriate class level for the student.

Another activity associated with our support for educators is the project "Travels with Carly." Through this project, we provided teachers of the last year of pre-school and the first year of elementary school with a translation of educational materials addressing the refugee and migrant experience (more in the "Projects" section below).

Conceptual initiatives, publishing, and other specialized activities

In addition to providing counselling, META has striven since the very beginnings of its existence to map and analyze data relevant to the education of foreigners and related issues. We always worked from the presumption that our day to day practice must be founded on theory if the services we provide are to have any meaning. At the same time, we continually gathered information about the educational needs of our clients and the obstacles that they encounter.

We would occasionally share our findings with colleagues from other organizations when we would have meetings with them. For a long time, though, we had contemplated about how to conceptually utilize our findings beyond the realm of direct counselling. Our chance finally arrived in the summer of 2008, when we received a positive response to our proposal for the formation of a working group within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT), which is engaged with such issues. It turned out that the idea for the creation of a multidisciplinary working group of this kind was already being explored by the Ministry's Skupina pro sociální programy ve školství (section for social programmes in education) and that this initiative has the support of Minister Ondřej Liška.

The main idea of this working group (whose full name is Pracovní skupina pro multikulturalitu a vzdělávání cizinců [Working Group for Multiculturalism and the Education of Foreigners]) is for the members to exchange experiences and information related to this field, to identify problematic situations, and to suggest possible changes and improvements. It is made up of specialists from the Ministry of Education, representatives from NGOs that work with foreigners, educators, representatives from Czech School Inspection (ČŠI), and a number of other specialists involved with the above-mentioned issues. At the initial meeting, the activities of individual participants and their organizations were introduced, the basic issues that need to be addressed were identified, and, last but not least, the formal existence of the group was acknowledged. In subsequent meetings, the working group already began debating issues such as the integration of foreigners into the Czech education system, the placement of such issues within a conceptual framework of inclusive education, and the goals of subsidy programmes, among others. We believe that the further meetings of this working group

in 2009 will contribute to eliminating many of the obstacles that hinder the integration of foreign children into the Czech education system.

In the spring of 2008, we dedicated a portion of our strategic planning towards developing ideas for the creation of new support mechanisms for educators, who are dealing with problems related to the integration of foreign students into the school community and the Czech education system itself. Very often, they are forced to act entirely on their own intuition, without access to quality materials that would make this process much easier for them. Therefore, we decided to become active in the creation of support mechanisms with the inception of our Counselling and Information Centre for the Education of Young Migrants project. This project was launched in September and one of its key activities is the maintenance of a working group made up of educators, social workers, experts on the issues of migration and intercultural education, specialists on teaching Czech as a foreign language, specialized pedagogues, psychologists, and sociologists, and, last but not least, representatives from our target group. In the fall, there were two meetings with pedagogues in the form of a so-called "focus group," in which we examined various strategies that can aid teachers in their work with foreigners. Such meetings will occur throughout the year 2009 and the information gained from them will be further analyzed to eventually form the basis for the creation of an educational programme for educators complete with printed methodological manuals and practical aids.

We also attempt to raise awareness for the education of foreigners by taking part in various activities organized by cooperating organizations.

September 26, 2008 – Lukáš Radostný took part in a panel discussion on the topic "How can young people contribute to intercultural dialogue" as part of the Day of Intercultural Dialogue (organized by the organization AFS Intercultural Programs).

October 2, 2009 – Zuzana Vodňanská took part in a panel discussion on the topic "School" at the "Dialogue of Cultures" festival (organized by the Multicultural Center Prague).

November 25, 2008 – Zuzana Vodňanská took part in the "Slovo 21" conference about the integration of foreigners, where she presented the activities of the META association.

December 10, 2008 – Lukáš Radostný organized a workshop on working with foreign children for a conference organized by Ministry of Education (MŠMT) for employees of children's and youth centres.

December 12, 2008 – at the conference "Další vzdělávání v prostředí migrujícího trhu práce" organized by the Jan Amos Komenský University Prague, Petra Kozílková presented META and its projects with emphasis on our project "Support for foreigners entering the job market through Czech language courses, lessons on personal and labour law issues, and social counselling" (Podpora cizinců při vstupu na trh práce prostřednictvím kurzu ČJ, personálně-právního minima a odborného sociálního poradenství). Her presentation is included in the published proceedings of the conference.

Publications

HOSTIS, Lukáš Radostný, *Cizinci u přijímacích zkoušek – šach v druhém tahu* (Foreigners and entrance exams – check in two moves)

Ukrajinská gazeta, interview with Zuzana Vodňanská about the Counselling and Information Centre for Young Migrants (Poradenské a informační centrum pro mladé migranty)

Migraceonline, Lukáš Radostný, *Meta mezi učiteli* (META among teachers) - commentary on our collaboration with the "Otevřená škola" project.

Library, reading room, and internet

Throughout the whole year, our clients and volunteers have free access to computers with internet connection and may borrow books, magazines, dictionaries and other study materials from our library. Usage of these services increased dramatically in 2008, making it necessary to establish clear guidelines regarding the times, duration, and purpose of use.

Projects

Counselling and Information Centre for Young Migrants (Poradenské a informační centrum pro mladé migranty - PIC)

Realized: September 1, 2006-August 31, 2008

Financial support provided by the European Social Fund, the state budget of the Czech Republic, and the Prague city budget.

Contact person: Zuzana Vodňanská

This was the association's first and most important project, which led to the creation of our "Counselling and Information Centre for Young Migrants." Until the end of September 2008, qualified social workers provided social counselling with a focus on educational, training, and employment opportunities in the Czech Republic with regard for the specific needs of our target group. After September, the Czech language courses continued to function (more on this in the section on educational activities) as did the individual support provided by volunteers.

Support for foreigners entering the job market through Czech language courses, lessons on personal and labour law issues, and social counselling (Podpora cizinců při vstupu na trh práce prostřednictvím kurzu ČJ, personálně-právního minima a odborného sociálního poradenství)

Realization: April-December 2008

Funded by an endowment from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MPSV) (department for the integration of foreigners)

Contact person: Zuzana Vodňanská

This project had two parts: **social counselling** and an **educational programme**. The goal of the educational programme, called "**Czech language courses with supplementary lessons on personal and labour law issues**," was to facilitate the entrance of its adult migrant participants onto the job market. We saw these two activities (Czech language course and lessons on personal and labour law issues) as mutually complementary and conceived the language courses with a focus on employment and the job market.

Additionally, we organized a morning **Czech language course for so-called "false beginners."** This course was a subsequent addition to the project and was created because we had foreigners signing up for the advanced Czech language course, who had been living in the Czech Republic for more than a year (which was a condition for participation in the project stipulated by the Ministry), but whose Czech was not at the

advanced level, and in some cases was not even at the beginners' level. For the most part, this group was comprised of foreigners, who were not from a Slavic-speaking environment, whose status did not place them into one of the prescribed groups that are guaranteed free instruction in the Czech language, and whose current work responsibilities did not allow them to attend afternoon or evening courses (when most of our language courses take place).

Social counselling with a focus on entering the job market was offered from April onwards. This counselling was conceived as an extension of the services provided through the project Counselling and Information Centre for Young Migrants. Social workers helped clients in their efforts to find a job.

Social counselling for young migrants in the area of education (Sociální poradenství mladým migrantům v oblasti vzdělávání)

Realization: April 2008-December 2008

Funded by an endowment from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MPSV) (department of social services) and by the city of Prague (MHMP)

Contact person: Hana Marková

This endowment allowed us to expand our existing target group (ages 16-39) to include foreign children aged 6-16. Our social workers provided guidance in selecting schools and joining various school educational programmes. They also facilitated communication between clients (and, in some cases, their parents) and schools and other relevant organizations or institutions, and helped with the process to have educational certificates recognized and degrees legalized (nostrifikace). Foreign students can also take advantage of support from our volunteers (tutoring in various subjects, preparation for entrance exams, etc.) and participate in preparatory educational activities (such as language courses).

These services were met with great interest primarily from young foreigners (and their parents). In addition to individual foreigners, we were also approached by elementary schools, generally in instances when a teacher was dealing with issues related to the education of foreign students in his or her classroom.

Support for the education and personal development of young migrants (Podpora vzdělávání a osobnostního rozvoje mladých migrantů)

Realization: January 1, 2008 – December 31, 2008

Funded by an endowment from the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic (Ministerstvo vnitra) (volunteer services department)

Contact person: Petra Kozílková

The goal of this project was to expand our network of volunteers. These volunteers maintain regular contact with the association's clients and help them deal with problems related to their social and legal standing, unfamiliarity with the Czech environment, the education system, or the difficulty of obtaining proper information. The association's volunteers are engaged in a wide variety of activities aimed predominantly at supporting the education and personal development of young migrants living in the Czech Republic. They assist with planning a future career; help orient migrants to Czech socio-cultural conditions; and provide on-going guidance for foreigners attending elementary school, secondary school, higher level learning institutions, or universities.

During 2008, we organized five training sessions for volunteers, in which participants were given detailed information about the activities of our association, the code of conduct and fundamentals of volunteer work, and the basic principles of working with clients. The second half of the training session focused on issues related to migration, legislation, the education system in the Czech Republic, and the specific needs of META's clients.

Travels with Carly (Putování s Carly)

Realization: September 1, 2008-December 31, 2008

Supported by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT) and the UN Refugee Agency (Úřad vysokého komisaře pro uprchlíky při OSN) (UNHCR)

Contact person: Petra Hlavničková

"Travels with Carly" is an educational project designed for teachers and children in the first to third grades of elementary school and the last three years of primary school. The project was developed with the cooperation of the Prague office of the UN Refugee Agency. "Carly" is an animated film that tells the story of a young girl, who is forced to flee her home under tragic circumstances and goes through a thorny path to happiness. She is rejected everywhere she goes, because she is "foreign and different than the others." It is a short and simple, yet poignant story with a happy ending that acquaints children with the refugee experience. It was written by German author Annegert Fuchshuber, winner of the Deutscher Jugendliteraturpreis award in 1984. The illustrations in the film provide a perfect complement to the story; they are rich in form and colour without too much exaggeration or abstraction. This story became the launching point for the creation of a collection of pedagogical materials in English aimed at the multicultural education of children between the ages of 5 and 8. The prepared methodology outlines ways to engage with the refugee experience, offers suggestions for dealing with the issues of tolerance, emotions, and basic human need, and even touches on aspects of moral education.

Envisioned as just the first stage of a longer-term undertaking, our project provided for the translation of the film text and the methodological handbook into Czech. At the same time, a Czech DVD version of the film was produced. The voice over was provided free of charge by well-known Czech actor Petr Nárožný, to whom we would once again like to express our tremendous gratitude.

The methodological handbook was fashioned according to the exact same graphic design as the English version. The publication and subsequent distribution of these materials to schools provide direct support to the cross-disciplinary theme of multicultural education as outlined in the national curriculum guidelines for the first grade of elementary school and the last years of pre-school.

Subsequently, we would also like to organize a workshop for teachers to provide further support in approaching this challenging topic. The workshop would focus primarily on the possibilities for utilizing the "Carly" project for work with children and touch also on other issues related to migration and the integration of foreign students into Czech schools.

Tutoring in the Czech language for foreign children in Prague 11 (Doučování češtiny pro děti cizince na Praze 11)

Realization: August 8, 2007-December 12, 2008

Supported by the T-Mobil Fund through the VIA Foundation (Nadace VIA)

Contact person: Petra Kozílková

By organizing tutoring modules led by volunteer teachers, the goal of this project was to improve the language competence of foreign children attending elementary schools in Prague's 11th district, to help them master their school material, and to facilitate their integration into Czech society.

The project began already in September 2007, when volunteers were recruited and trained. Also at that time, we opened communication with schools in Prague 11, contacted children and their parents with information about the opportunity for tutoring, enrolled students in the tutoring modules, and provided an informational meeting for interested parents. The children were divided into two groups according to their grade level in school and then we worked out a tutoring schedule together with the children and their parents. The tutoring sessions were realized from December 2007 to June 2008 at the elementary school at Květnového vítězství street 57 in Chodov (in Prague 4), which offered us the use of its classrooms. At the same time, we strove to attract more foreign children in need of tutoring aid by distributing fliers and contacting schools. Consequently, a number of new students joined the courses already in progress.

Most participants in the tutoring sessions were children from China, Vietnam, Poland, and countries of the former Soviet Union.

The teachers were advised on pedagogical methods by leading experts on a monthly basis and in May, we organized a workshop on teaching Czech as a foreign language led by external specialists. One of the project's main results was the creation of a methodology for tutoring foreign children in the Czech language designed by Kateřina Šormová, the project's methodological supervisor.

The project was originally intended to end in June, however, our sponsor granted us permission to extend it until the end of the year. From the volunteers teachers involved with the project, we selected the two who had previously proven themselves most competent and who were the most qualified to lead the courses. We contacted the families of children, who had previously participated in the project, and also got back in touch with schools (in Prague 11), which during the previous period had no foreign students (or had students, who were not initially interested in the project). This time, the sessions took place in the META offices. There were two groups of students that each met once a week. The project finished at the end of December, but one of the courses will continue on a voluntary basis into 2009.

Summer intensive preparatory course in the Czech language for foreign children (Letní intenzivní přípravný kurz češtiny pro děti cizince)

Realized: August 2008

Supported by the Educa foundation (nadace Educa)

Contact person: Petra Hlavničková

The intensive preparatory course in the Czech language for foreign children took place from August 1st to 29th. Its goal was to prepare the children to enter the Czech school system. The course was attended by 12 children between the ages of 10 and 16 originally from the following countries: the Ukraine, Russia, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, Yemen, Thailand, and China.

The course met three times a week. Since the students would be starting school in less than a month (and that most of them had only recently arrived in the Czech Republic for the very first time), the lessons focused mainly on basic vocabulary related to the school environment and sought to provide a foundation that would help orient the children in everyday topics and situations such as family, getting around Prague, shopping, telling time, etc. Emphasis was placed on group work and the active participation of the students in the lessons. At the end of the course, there was a closing ceremony, which the students enlivened by giving presentations about their home countries. Each student also contributed something typical for their home country to the celebration. Thus, we had the opportunity to eat wonderful Thai food, peruse postcards from Madagascar and Yemen, marvel at authentic African male dress, and sample Ukrainian sweets.

Counselling and Information Centre for the Education of Young Migrants (Poradenské a informační centrum pro vzdělávání mladých migrantů [PIC2])

Realized: September 1, 2008-February 28, 2011

The project is supported under the auspices of the first priority challenge of the Operační programme Praha – Adaptabilita (OPPA) and thereby receives funding from the European Social Fund, the state budget of the Czech Republic, and the Prague city budget

Contact person: Zuzana Vodňanská

The goal of this project is to facilitate the integration of young foreigners into the Czech education system through counselling and other services (volunteer support, courses in Czech, and other educational activities). Another component of the project is the creation of a working group of specialists on the education of migrants that will work towards the creation of a methodological programme for working with migrants in Czech schools.

Another goal of the project is to generate an electronic database outlining the compatibility of the Czech education systems with the systems in some of our clients' home countries. The project is designed for young foreigners, who are already involved with the Czech education system or who plan to begin attending school here. This includes students of elementary school, secondary school, vocational schools, and universities, as well as young foreigners, who only proceeded as far as elementary school in their home countries and aim to continue their studies in the Czech Republic.

Social Events in 2008

During 2008, as in previous years, we strove to expand and strengthen our relationships with cooperating organizations and institutions. We did this not only by interacting on matters of business and during official events, but also through informal meetings. And this year, we even achieved this with the help of marinated cheese.

New Year's party in Mlejn in Kampa

On January 16, we celebrated the beginning of 2008 in the café Mlejn with friends and colleagues from organizations and institutions working in the area of migration. Everyone

arrived fully recovered from their many Christmastime parties and celebrations, so that we could dutifully dedicate ourselves to strengthening our contacts and collaborations.

REFUPARTY, spring 2008

The traditional annual meeting of people and organizations working for the integration of foreigners, Refuparty, took place on Wednesday, April 23, 2008 in the cinema café OKO. The party was attended by about 40 people from a number of collaborating not-for-profit organizations (Berkat, CIC, MKC, PPI, PPU, and Poradna pro občanství, občanská a lidská práva) as well as by some representatives of Prague's 14th district. One part of the evening consisted of casting nominations for "Osina roku" (Biggest Pain of the Year) recognizing the worst development affecting the integration of foreigners during 2007, a contest organized by the Centrum pro integraci cizinců (Centre for Integration of Foreigners).

META won first prize in the contest "Velká sýrová nakládačka II" (Great marinated cheese bash II)

On May 13, 2008 on Prague's Kampa island a competition took place for the best marinated hermelín (a Czech cheese similar to Camembert). The contest was divided into two categories: the most delicious hermelín and the most beautiful hermelín. META entered three pieces into the competition and named them as a family: Herr, Frau and Fräulein Metalín. The winner of the competition for best tasting cheese was Herr Metalín (marinated with plums, garlic, and rosemary). Second prize was taken by Fräulein Metalín (marinated with sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, and basil), who also took third place in the category of most beautiful. All of the jury members expressed their admiration for the spicy Frau Metalín (marinated with curry, pineapple, and hazel nuts), but she turned out to be too exotic for the final prizes. The magazine "Apetit" published an article on the competition complete with a recipe for the winning cheese and brief mention about the META association.

Celebration for the second birthday of the Counselling and the Information Centre

On September 1, 2008 META celebrated the second birthday of its Counselling and Information Centre for Young Migrants. Visitors and well-wishers had the opportunity to view an exhibition of photography by Jan Tilinger and Ondřej Cundr documenting the construction of the Sun School in the Indian part of the Himalayas. Nourishment was provided in the form of specialties from the Fossil Mexican restaurant and traditional META-dishes lovingly prepared by members of the association. Quality musical accompaniment was supplied by the gentlemen from OTK and Prague City Rockers DJs.

Exhibition of international testimonials

META launched its unique exhibition of international testimonials already in 2007. It was open for public viewing at the beginning of 2008 in the Mlejn café on Prague's Kampa island and then in April in the lobby of the Czech headquarters of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) on Náměstí Kinských in Prague 5.

The exhibition displayed documents issued by various educational systems from around the world. The collection of certificates, diplomas, and various other educational paperwork contained examples from 20 different countries (the Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Singapore, India, Nepal, Mexico, Palestine, Cuba, Uruguay, the USA, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Bosnia-Herzegovina). Most of the documents were lovingly donated by our

clients, friends, and relatives, but the association's employees provided some materials as well. In some cases, the original documents were exhibited, but in cases where the owners understandably did want to risk having their materials damaged or lost, we displayed only copies. At the request of their owners, we also obscured the names, dates of birth, and even photographs on some documents. In addition to diplomas from elementary and secondary schools, various awards and certificates for extra-curricular activities, and university degrees, the exhibition also included two informational panels about "nostrifikace," i.e. official Czech equivalency recognition for educational certificates and degrees acquired in foreign countries. The panels described the process for obtaining this recognition for a secondary school diploma (from Kazakhstan) and a college degree (from Georgia).

Official Networking

META at the One World film festival

On March 11th and 12th the META association participated in the NGO forum, in which 30 not-for-profit NGOs from the Czech Republic presented themselves. The forum was held in the Marble Hall (Mramorový sál) of the Lucerna palace as part of the International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival One World 2008.

European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

On May 9, 2008, the ambassadors of the European Commission organized a series of concerts from 15:00 to 22:00 featuring Czech and international bands on the Old Town Square in Prague. The main themes of this event were the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and the Czech and Slovenian chairmanship of the EU. META took part in the presentation of NPO-NGOs that was included in this event.

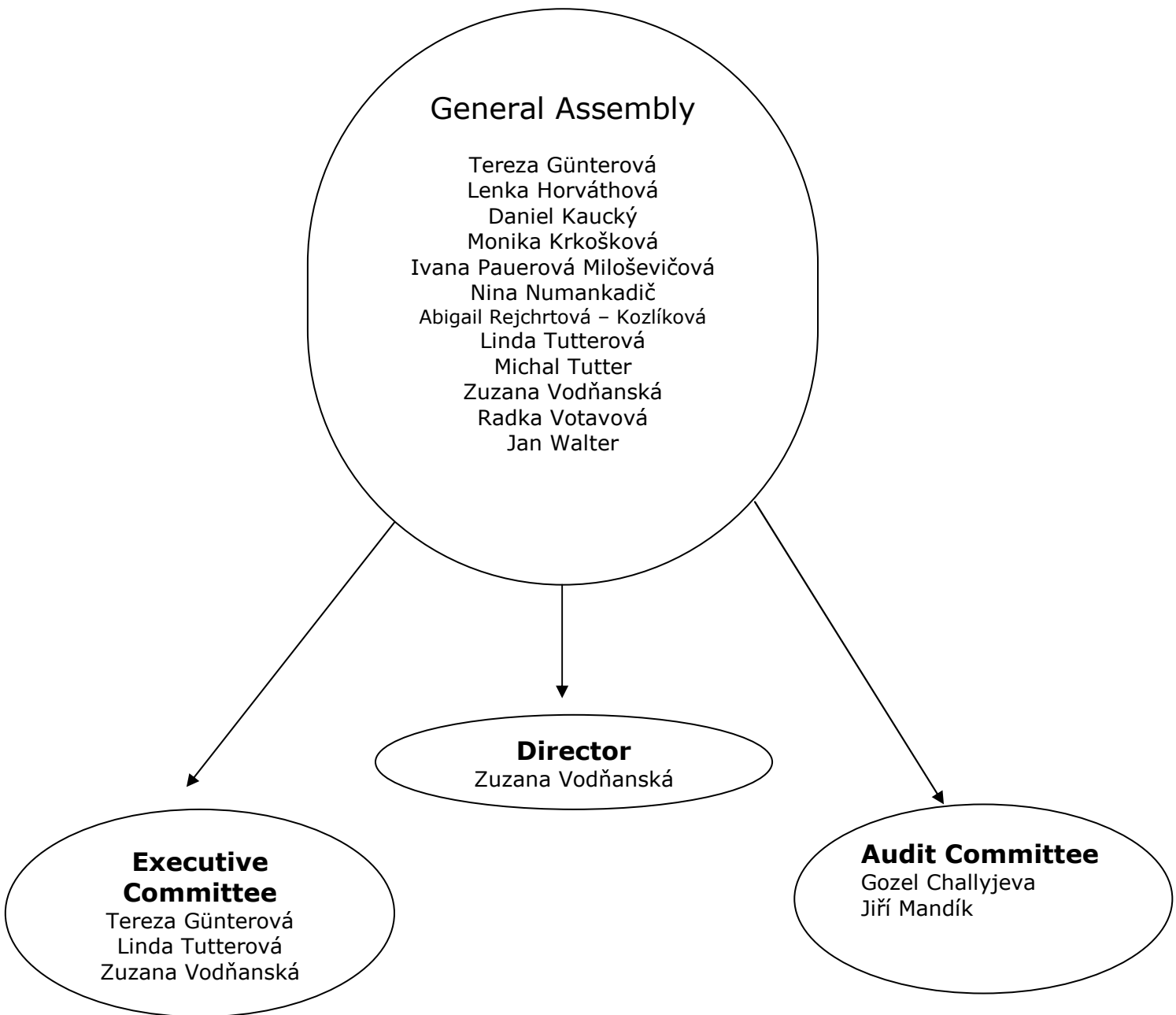
META at the NGO Market (Veletrh neziskových organizací)

The Ninth Annual NGO Market (Veletrh neziskových organizací) was held on June 10, 2008, at the New York University in Prague and the Polish Institute on Malé náměstí in the centre of Prague. The annual market is a one-day event that provides a platform for NGOs to meet and to present themselves to the public. META was one of about ninety NGOs to take part in this event organized by the Forum 2000 Foundation.

META at the RefuFest 2008

On June 20th and 21st the third annual RefuFest event, organized by the civic association Berkat, took place on Prague's Náměstí Míru. RefuFest provides the opportunity for the Czech public to interact with refugees, asylum seekers, and already integrated foreigners (and vice versa). META was one of a number of organizations that provide assistance to immigrants to promote itself at the event.

The structure of META o.s.



Employees, associates, and volunteers of META o.s.

Zuzana Vodňanská	association director, project leader
Radka Votavová	project coordinator, professional staff member
Lukáš Radostný	professional staff member
Hana Marková	social worker, fund raiser
Petra Hlavničková	professional staff member
Petra Kozílková	coordinator of volunteers and educational activities
Soňa Velínská	assistant, public relations
Linda Tutterová	on maternity leave as of January, 2008 external associate – counsellor, administrator
Tereza Güntherová	on maternity leave external associate – consultant for the social department
Romana Lafatová	accounting and personnel services

Other associates

Romana Lafatová, provides accounting and personnel services for META

Jiřina Koláčná, Czech language instructor

Markéta Kopková, methodologist and Czech language instructor

Edita Kotorová, Czech language instructor

Monika Krkošková, instructor of the course on personal and labour law issues

Štěpánka Laňová, Czech language instructor

Nikola Repin, collaborator on presenting META at public educational events for specialists

Tomáš Rohr, IT

Kateřina Sobotková, Czech language instructor

Kateřina Šormová, methodologist for volunteers, Czech language instructor

Ivana Štěpánová, Czech language instructor

Zuzana Švíbková, Czech language instructor

Nguyen Thu Ha, collaborator on presenting META at public educational events for specialists

Linda Tutterová, instructor of the course on personal and labour law issues

Přemysl Vinš, Czech language instructor

Volunteers

Volunteers are an important part of our team, who are responsible for a number of the association's supplemental activities. We greatly appreciate their work and hereby express our deepest gratitude!

Kristýna Antošová, database of educational and retraining opportunities

Zuzana Bürgerová, English language instruction

Markéta Cudlínová, tutoring in Czech

Marie Čapková, English language instruction

Linda Černochová, tutoring in physics

Markéta Dlouhá, tutoring in Czech

Eliška Ďuríková, tutoring in Czech

Viola Hoznauerová, organization of discussion groups

Hanna Ihnatsenia, tutoring in mathematics

Ivana Kmentová, tutoring in Czech

Anna Kortshak, organization of photography workshops

Pavla Jenková, tutoring in Czech

Jiřina Koláčná, tutoring in Czech

Tereza Kozáková, English language instruction

Markéta Krajníková, Czech language and mathematics instruction

Renáta Lomnická, tutoring in Czech

Barbora Mlejnková, tutoring in Czech

Nela Mohoritová, tutoring in Czech

Kateřina Molová, tutoring in Czech

Corina Muntean, English language instruction

Eva Petrová, tutoring in Czech

Tomáš Rohr, tutoring in mathematics

Andrii Sazonov, organization of discussion groups

Irena Svobodová, tutoring in Czech

Jitka Šimsová, tutoring in mathematics

Leona Šlajchrtová, tutoring in Czech

Tereza Tauchenová, tutoring in Czech

Ivo Tokár, tutoring in French

Munkhtuya Tseveenbayar, interpreter

Bohdana Vantomme, English language instruction, preparation for equivalency exams

Přemysl Vinš, tutoring in Czech

Michaela Voldánová, tutoring in Czech

Jana Vozábová, tutoring in mathematics

Finances

Financial report for 2008

BALANCE SHEET, in simplified version, through December 31, 2008 (in Czech crowns – Kč)

ASSETS

Fixed assets	0
Short-term receivables – operating payments	400 000
Short-term financial assets – bank accounts, cash in hand, securities	2 318 000
TOTAL ASSETS	2 718 000

LIABILITIES

Equity	64 000
Operating profit/loss	19 000
Short term payables – wages, recruitment, taxes	236 000
Accrued expenses	4 000
Deferred revenue	2 395 000
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2 718 000

PROFIT AND LOSS ACCOUNT in simplified versions, through December 31, 2008
(in Czech crowns – Kč)

Revenues	
grants – state subsidies and endowments (MPSV, HMP, MV, MŠMT, Nadace VIA)	3 612 000
donations – legal persons	0
donations – natural persons	55 000
earned interest	4 000
Other revenue	101 000
Total	3 772 000

Expenses	
Personnel costs (wages, other costs)	2 738 000
Payments for services (rent, utilities, telephone charges, postage, repairs)	831 000
Public relations expenses	7 000
Repairs and Maintenance	0
Purchase of low-value tangible assets	0
Consumption of Materials	177 000
Other expenses (financial contributions)	0
Total	3 753 000

Operating Profit/Loss	19 000
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The complete version of our statement of accounts is available in the META office at Rumunská 29, Praha 2 (the Czech version only).

Thanks

At this point, we would like to express our thanks to everyone who contributed to the operation of META during 2008. We not only thank those, who provided financial and material donations, but also those who dedicated their time, energy, expert knowledge and talent. Your contributions are greatly appreciated!

Financial support and donations provided by:

European Social Fund

The City of Prague

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí)

Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (Ministerstvo školství, mládeže a tělovýchovy)

Ministry of the Interior (Ministerstvo vnitra)

The VIA Foundation (Nadace Via) (endowment through the T-Mobile Fund)

Educa Foundation (Nadace Educa)

The Prague office of the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)



Expert advising, help, services, and material support provided by:

Eliška a Zuzana Votavovy, Michal Tutter, Fossil bar, o.s. Skutečnost, UNHCR, Jan Walter, Dagmar Doubravová, Matouš Mědílek, DJ Konča, Jan Tilinger, Ondřej Cundr.

Special thanks also go out to Štěpánka Blahovcová for the graphic design of the Czech version of the annual report and Kevin Johnson for the translation of the English version.