
Experiences of our volunteers

The Itibo mission

Veronika Matraszek, 3rd Faculty of Medicine CU, student of general medicine



Kenya can be beautiful and harsh at the same time. A group of students from the 3rd Faculty of Medicine and supervising physicians traditionally visit the small village of Itibo, almost 6,000 kilometres from Prague, as part of a humanitarian mission under the auspices of the non-profit organization ADRA to provide assistance to the local hospital. I myself had the opportunity to become a part of this exceptional project during the summer of 2022.

The main purpose of the mission was to provide medical care to the local residents. We encountered all sorts of cases such as “ordinary” high blood pressure, malaria and meningitis, as well as machete injuries or chronic wounds. As I would like to work in gynaecology and obstetrics after completing my studies, I spent most of my time in the maternity ward, where we delivered 18 children during our month-long stay.

This trip was an extremely enriching experience for me, and I can say that it gave me more practical skills than any of the other internships I have had during my studies combined. Learning to work in conditions where one only has limited medication, laboratory tests, and equipment at hand was a challenge, but the reward for all of us was the warm feeling that we had managed to improve, at least to some extent, the lives of people who would otherwise not have access to healthcare.

You can read more about the project [here](#) .

Assistance for oncological patients

Karolína Mikysková, Faculty of Arts CU, student of psychology



I regularly visit the oncology department at Bulovka Hospital, and I always stop in several of the patients' rooms. I usually talk with patients about what they want or need to talk about. As a result, I experienced a lot of nice conversations that didn't necessarily have to go too deep to feel like they had meaning. I've also strengthened my ability to deal with rejection, at least a little bit (thanks mainly to the supervision that Amelie provides to volunteers).

I experienced what it's like to visit people in difficult life situations, not knowing what is happening behind the closed door of the room (I was often more nervous before entering the room than when I was actually in it). I came to an understanding that what we talk about is up to the patient, and my role is to be open to this. This is probably only a small fraction of what awaits me in my future profession, but it's very valuable.

More information about the organization is available [here](#) .

Personal assistance

Jan Konečný, Faculty of Science, PhD student



For several years, I have been assisting a person in a wheelchair get to and from his flat with the help of a stair climber, assisting him in public transport, shopping, and taking care of his parakeets when he is not at home. I also order and collect goods for him from the Internet and communicate with authorities, banks, and institutions in cases where it is possible.

I have learned a different perspective, especially with respect to ordinary life events. I've also learned to respect other people's wishes and put my own behaviour aside, even though it would personally be easier or faster for me to do things differently.

Medici PRO Očkování

Karolína Hájková, Faculty of Social Sciences, PhD student



My volunteer activities involved leading the volunteer association Medici PRO Očkování, which was established before the covid-19 pandemic as a response to the declining vaccination rate in the Czech Republic. I mainly devoted myself to the popularization and media coverage of scientific findings in the field of vaccinations, disproving myths and misinformation in the healthcare sector, or lecturing for schools, physicians, and the media on communicating about vaccinations.

Volunteering gave me self-confidence when lecturing or appearing in the media, and also provided me with a large number of contacts and experience in managing people and organizing events, as well as a trip to the University of Oslo, which was part of winning the Gratias Tibi Award from People in Need, and many other awards and experiences. Last but not least, working for the association Medici PRO Očkování gave me the opportunity to help and answer people's questions about their health and establish new friendships, not only among students from the 2nd Faculty of Medicine who founded the association. Thanks to volunteering, I have acquired many hard skills and soft skills that I use practically on a daily basis, both at work and in other volunteer activities. In addition, communicating about vaccinations became part of my dissertation project.

Energy to physicians

Ondřej Hrubeš, Faculty of Humanities, PhD student



At the beginning of the covid crisis, I devoted myself to the traditional preparation and assembly of energy packages for employees of medical and nursing facilities. It was a great activity, usually done in pairs, during which you clear your head every Tuesday afternoon and chat with nice people. During the most dramatic episodes of the pandemic, it was also a way to treat yourself to some physical activity in addition to helping others. As the epidemiological waves passed, I also managed to figure out, and in recent months devoted myself to, the logistical coordination of shipments to the warehouse.

Above all, this volunteer activity gave me a great sense of meaning and usefulness in a very painful period for many of us. However, what I have taken with me are the friendships that fortunately did not end when the epidemiological situation improved.

As volunteer communities are the subject of my academic research, this helped me stay in touch with the imaginary front line. Of course, it also helped broaden horizons, especially among the younger generation, since most of the volunteers were university students.

You can find more information about the project [here](#) .