

University as a broker of partnerships for fostering societal impact

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Masaryk University

- located in Brno, Czech Republic
- second largest Czech university (32 539 thousand students: October 31, 2017)
- more than 21% international students of 100 nationalities
- approx. 5 360 employees (as of December 31, 2017)
- approx. 2 250 pedagogical staff (as of December 31, 2017)
- THE World University Rankings 2018 501-600
- THE BRICS & Emerging Economies Rankings 2017 96
- THE New EU Member States 7
- QS World University Rankings® 2017-2018 551-600

The City of Brno:

- 2nd largest city in the Czech Republic
- population of approx. 400 thousand
- historical capital of Moravia
- 5 public universities
- 1 military academy
- 6 minor private HE institutions
- nearly 70 thousand university students
- IT hub of the CR
- „a little Vienna“



Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul

- Founded in 1919, it proudly bears the name of the first president of former democratic Czechoslovakia – *Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk*.
- As such, it strongly realises its responsibility for protection and cultivation such values as:
 - freedom,
 - respect to the rule of law,
 - responsibility to its students and the whole society,
 - openness, and humanity.



University as a broker of partnership

(Using a case of 2015/2016 refugee crisis in Europe)

Partnerships with:

- student associations and volunteers
- NGOs
- Ministry of Interior
- local authorities



Budapest, 2015

MUNI

Serious humanitarian crisis
Security threat
Solidarity x Fear within the Public
Quite emotional public disputes.



Need for an effective and well defined policy



Map No. 3976 Rev. 13 UNITED NATIONS
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Our policy

- As an institution that has numerous stakeholders including the public, it is never quite easy to find out a proper form of engagement in this kind of events.
- **Building up and facilitating partnerships** seem to be the best solution allowing universities to contribute their most valuable assets: know-how, expertise, volunteers, professional staff, and to keep decisions about priorities in the hands of more informed and/or responsible partners.
- Last but not least, it can also protect some vital interests of the universities such as legal liabilities.
- Besides mobilising our capacities, the great deal of our work consisted of linking together our students and their associations and volunteers from our staff with external partners and systematic support of those collaborations.

Main partners

- **Our students, volunteers**
- **NGO's (Charitas)**
- **Ministry of Interior**
- **Local (municipal) authorities**
- Our students were calling for an intensive involvement into various humanitarian activities. **Humanitarian aid, collecting all kind of goods, immediate response**
- “Charitas” is a large respectable non-for-profit organisation that has got extensive professional experience in organising humanitarian projects. – **A project “Medical assistance for refugees in Greece”(2016)**
- Ministry of Interior – a government body responsible for handling the first wave of illegal migrants and facing unprecedented demand for capacities regarding language support, legal consultancy, community activities, and psychological care. **A combined bottom-up and top down approach for developing a comprehensive offer for temporary strengthening governments capacities. (Translations, legal aid, integration activities, social work etc.)**
- Local authorities working on a strategy of integration **(similar, less formal)**

Selected tools

- Acknowledging humanitarian activities as a reason for short term apology from the class
- Sharing university areas for humanitarian activities
- New stipend scheme – contribution to certain direct costs
- Involvement of student representative bodies and their association
- Utilizing primarily previous academic and professional experiences, competences and experience of many academic departments, teams and experts.

Conclusions

- The University was able to generate remarkable capacities for support and assistance both people in need and the country and its public services.
- We believe this experience has proved the importance of the systematic support of student associations and enhancing individual humanitarian or social impact generating activities both of students and academics by the University.

