

Montessori Adolescent Project Inspirations



Erasmus Grant Project
Case Study

What is MAPI about?

- The story of **MAPI** (abbreviation for **M**ontessori **A**dolescent **P**roject **I**nspirations) project is a story in which I explain how we built the adolescent program at our school. It is a story about:
 - ◆ How it all started,
 - ◆ How we got the money,
 - ◆ What activities we carried out as part of the project and who were the people involved,
 - ◆ What were all the things that we learned along the way,
 - ◆ How was the AMI International Montessori Congress part of the story,
 - ◆ How our thinking evolved and what we achieved thanks to the grant,
 - ◆ Where we are today.
- May this story be **an inspiration and an encouragement** for your own journey to adolescent programs and successful grants. **You can do this too!**

Where did the project idea come from?

Montessori školy Andílek started as **a family centre** for parents with young children, who were on a parental leave, and as time passed and we gained more experience and confidence, our school continually evolved into:

- an Infant Montessori Community for children 1,5 - 3 years of age,
- a Montessori Casa for children 3 - 6 years of age,
- and a Montessori Elementary School for children 6 -12.

Our school building



Our 1,5-3 Infant Community



Our 3-6 Casa



Our 6-12 Elementary Program



The next natural step, but..

The next natural step was to open a program for our 12-15 year olds.

We were very sad when our children had to leave our school at the age of 12 to another elementary school or a high school.

We wanted to go onto the next stage - a program for adolescents - **but we did not have:**

- Information how to do it,
- The right environment,
- Trained guides nor the funding.

Looking for a solution..

At that time we were already a part of an international network of Association Montessori International, the AMI, and so we decided that we would ask for help our experienced Montessori colleagues.

We found out that there is a strong base of adolescents programs in the US, but that in Europe there were only a few and people did not know much about them nor, if they were adolescent workers, about each other.

At the AMI Annual General Meeting in April 2014 we found out that the topic of **adolescent education resonated throughout the European Montessori community** and that there is a big potential to connect around it. At this AGM we discussed the topic with several Montessori professionals and we tried to find out potential schools and organisations we can learn from.

Guided by my motto..



If you don't know
what to do,
DO WHAT YOU KNOW!

..we decided to write an Erasmus grant application which would connect us with other European organizations running adolescent programs, so that we can learn from them.

We needed to get knowledge and information from the more experienced.

We wrote the grant application and we won the money!

Looking for the right partners..

Between April and October 2014 we contacted **5 organisations from 4 European countries** with the offer to collaborate on this projects. They were all in different stages of dealing with adolescent education.

We addressed **AMI** as the umbrella organisation that spreads of the information and knowledge to the global Montessori community and which closely collaborated with **NAMTA founded by David Kahn**, who had a long time experience with adolescent trainings and run several adolescent programmes already.

We addressed **Montessoriskolan Lära for Livet, Swedish school of Jenny Marie Höglund** which at that time was the longest functioning adolescent programme in Europe.

We connected with **Montessori Initiative Wieden from Austria** which was about to start an adolescent program and in the same situation was The Montessori Place from the UK.

The last partner was **Maria Montessori Institute London**, an organisation that we believed would bring its long time experience with establishing schools in the UK.

Our school **Montessori školy Andílek** was the coordinator of the project and the one who prepared the application

The main project idea..

We were all part of already existing international network which has gained lots of experience and knowledge in the past.

There just **did not exist tools and ways for sharing** of this experience and knowledge, and therefore learning from each other, did not work properly.

The project was aimed to create these tools and allow us **to connect, share, learn and grow together**. Through sharing we wanted to design methodology, develop and help to **start Montessori adolescent programs in the EU**.

We set for ourselves these project goals:

- Share and exchange knowhow, experience, case studies and ideas about Montessori adolescent education across the AMI Montessori network,
- Identify the needs of individual countries leading to networking and opportunities for cooperation,
- Establish a digital international networking platform,
- Visit each other,
- Train specialists to work with adolescent children.



The process of writing the grant proposal..

3 people from our organisation worked on the project proposal for about **4 months**, Mirka, Zuzka and Reňa.

A lot of the work was **communication with our future project partners**: mission, vision, values, objectives and goals to be achieved during the project implementation.

Then it contained **preparation for project management** – discussion about all tools, staff, good procedures to run the project smoothly. We had to agree on that in advance before we knew if we would get the money.

The main part of the writing work was to formulate **how our project would be special and innovative**.

And of course we had **to create the timeline** of the project, to **formulate all the activities and its purpose** and last but not least to **describe the impact of the project** and the dissemination not only among the Montessori community but primarily outside the Montessori bubble.

Evaluation to be remembered..

This is a print screen of the evaluation we got!



We were so happy!

And we had no idea how much impact this project will have on our future!

PŘÍLOHA č. 1:

Project is focused on sharing and exchange of know-how, experience, case studies, and ideas in Montessori non-formal adolescent education across the Association Montessori International Membership Network. The proposal proves that a solid analysis, drawing on existing knowledge, know-how, and practice, has been carried out to identify needs of the target group and organizations.

The proposal shows that all phases of the project have been properly designed in order for the project to realize its objectives. The work programme is clearly defined and realistic. The project contains a clear and well-planned timetable. The clarity, completeness, and quality of the work programme include appropriate phases for preparation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and dissemination. The financial budget reflects defined activities. There is a discrepancy regarding the International meeting chapter. According to the work programme, 6 international meetings should take place with 3 people from each organization, but the applicant claims 7 meetings for the Czech partner and only 2 meetings for partners from the United Kingdom etc. This part of the budget needs to be explained more precisely.

The proposal shows that the participating organizations have established and will run a cohesive consortium with an active involvement of all partners and with common goals to be achieved.

The proposed evaluation methods will provide the possibility to effectively assess whether and to which extent the project brings the intended outcomes. The impact of the project on the involved participants and organizations is likely to occur during and remain after the lifetime of the project. The project is likely to have a substantial positive impact on the participating organizations and on their staff and learners.

Transnational Project Meetings

6 Transnational Project Meetings.

Each meeting included discussion between partners, work on methodology, spreading information about the project and meeting with other experts to develop the project.

4 online meetings in between the in-person meetings.



2 meetings in Prague

Montessori školy Andílek - September 2015: Jenny Hoglund, David Kahn, Paul Pilai, Lynne Lawrence, Luise Livingston, Christiane Salvenmoser, Zuzka Kašparová



1 meetings in Austria

Montessori Initiative Wieden - March 2016: Saša Lapter, Lynne Lawrence



1 meeting in Sweden

Montessori Center for Study and Work Sättila – July 2016



1 meeting in Sweden

Montessori Center for Study and Work Sättila – July 2016



1 meeting in England

The Montessori Place – December 2016



1 meeting in England

The Montessori Place – December 2016



1 meeting in England

The Montessori Place – December 2016



1 meeting in Netherlands, at AMI



Caption

Spreading the word events (dissemination)

Roundtable for specialist for adolescent education **at the AMI Annual General Meeting in Amsterdam 2017.**

All partnering countries were present because they all cooperated on creation of the project outputs. This was the main time of sharing, learning from each other, exchanging what we have created during the time of the project, with community of educators from more than 30 countries of the world, mainly EU.

The presentation was held by more members of the project team not only by the project coordinator and the main part was a presentation of 4 adolescents from partner organisations – Lära for Liver school and The Montessori Place school.

Spreading the word events (dissemination)

At the **International Montessori Congress in Prague in 2017** we held a seminar on adolescent education and introduced the outputs of the project. There was be around **2 000 participants** present who learned about output of the project.

Before the Congress there was a pre-event – **the first TEDx ED event held in the Czech Republic**, where lot of congress participants held their speeches. Very special was a presentation from two adolescents from a project partner organisation Lära for Livet school.

Also Kathy Minardi spoke and Dr.Steve Hughes.

Sharing with the Montessori community

AMI Annual General Meeting



International Montessori Congress



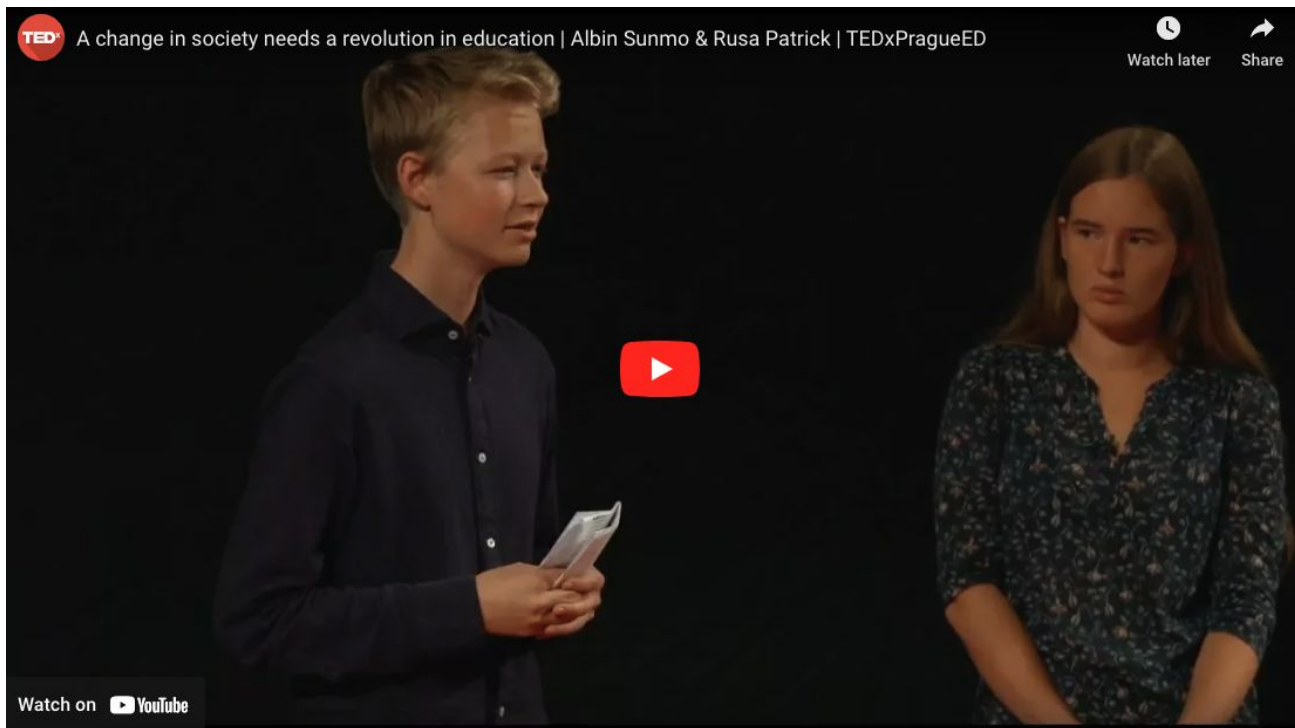
Sharing with the Montessori community

International Montessori Congress in Prague in 2017



We need a revolution in education

<https://www.tedxprague.cz/video/pro-zmenu-spolecnosti-potrebujeme-revoluci-ve-vzdelavani>



The 21st century staff community

<https://www.tedxprague.cz/video/skolni-kolektiv-21-stoleti-prizpusobivy-oddany-a-s-polupracujici>



What school could be, but most never is

[https://www.tedxprague.cz/video/cim-by-skola-mohla-byt-mela-byt-ale-skoro-nikdy-
neni](https://www.tedxprague.cz/video/cim-by-skola-mohla-byt-mela-byt-ale-skoro-nikdy-
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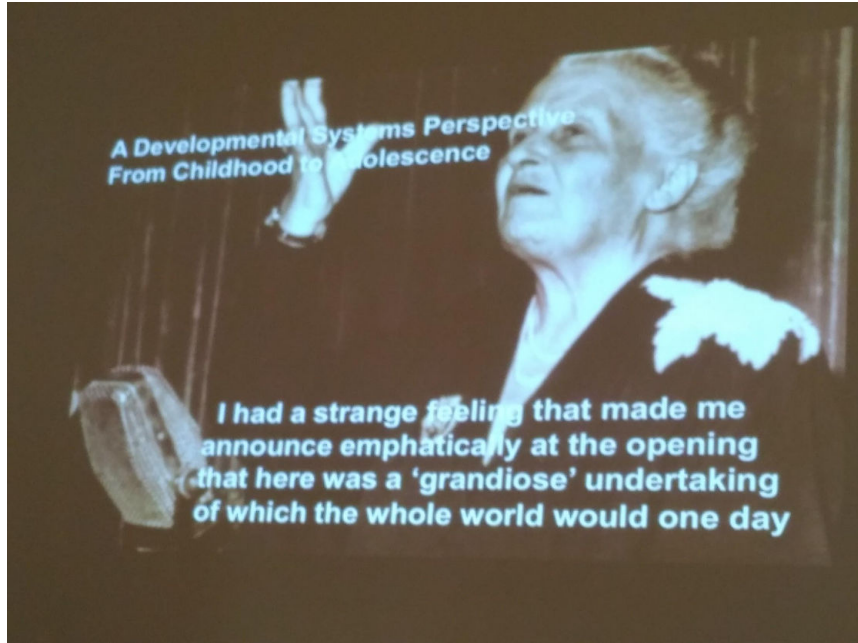
Training to work with adolescents

14 participants from the project partner organisations participated at the AMI Adolescent Orientation Training program with Jenny Hoglund.

The training was not arranged only for the participants of the projects but for other youth workers from the whole Europe. We wanted to enable participants of the partners to take part in this training and thus to spread the idea of the project among more people from the Montessori public.

But the main aim was to use the grants money for as much people as possible to train the Montessori adolescent practitioners that were then able to establish adolescent programs in their schools. **And now we know that most of the participants that were supported by the project really established their own adolescent programme and use their expertise and experience in their work with adolescents.**

Adolescent training in Sweden



Adolescent training in Sweden



Inventory of adolescent programs

The inventory of Montessori adolescent programs in the European Union countries is an interactive resource for anyone interested youth education regardless from which surrounding they come from. Throughout Europe already exist schools and organisations that run or preparing the program for adolescent students. We know about raising adolescent communities, existing farm or suburban schools but until now there was no overall database of what already exist, and what is being planned.

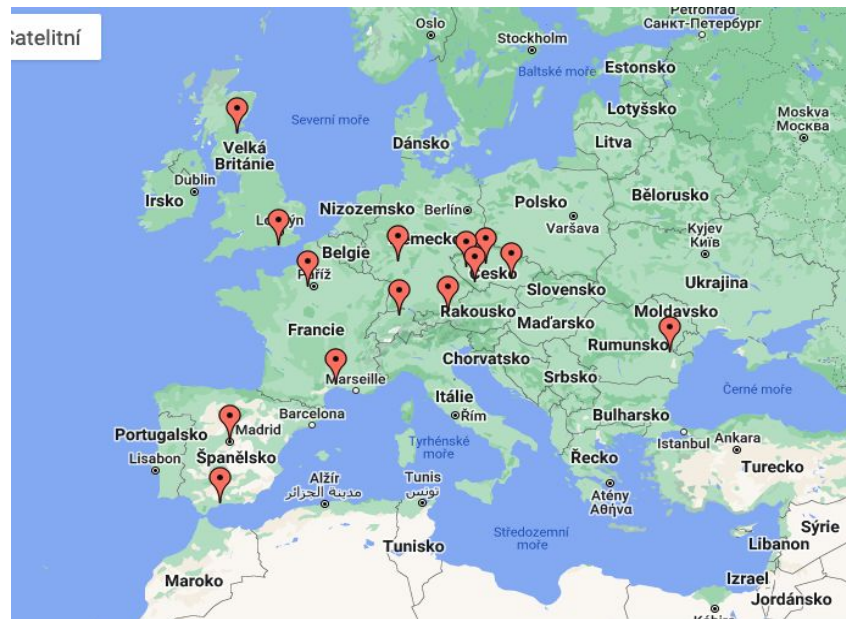
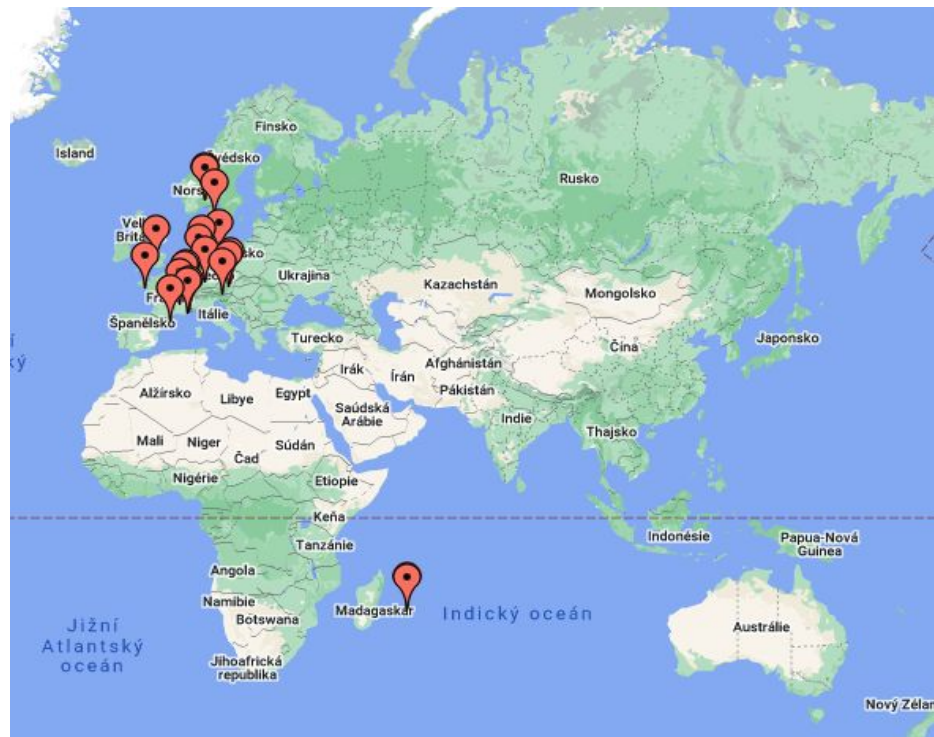
We collected and processed the answers from more than 35 organisations.

You can see the results in the maps of already established and planned adolescent communities.

The Inventory serves as categorised summary of programmes, activities, examples and ideas that already exist and are working and of those who are only rising.

[Established programs](#). [Planned programs](#). [Non-EU programs](#).

Inventory (as of 2017!)



Methodology for work with adolescents

We wanted to base this methodology on the specific needs of youth aged 12 - 18, as well as on the knowledge that already exists.

We also wanted to benefit from the experience of the adolescent work which is well established in the US. We invited **lecturers from other countries, where the adolescents programs are already running**, take advice from them and share ideas with them.

The overall **methodology can serve teachers, lecturers and activity facilitators that include in their work Montessori educational principles**, but also the legal representatives of educational institutions, to gain knowledge about what are the key points, difficulties and problems in the process of establishing the adolescent program based on or inspired with the Montessori principles.

Link is here <https://montessoriadolescent.net/texts/>

Methodology for work with adolescents

English



Česky



Deutsch



The project budget: 287 500 Eur

The budget of the project covered the following:

Project management – monthly costs of project coordinator and all partners

Transnational project meetings – travel costs for project partners

Dissemination events – entrance fees for participants

Training – travel, accommodation, meals, fees for 14 participants

Creation of the outputs – wage for people who worked on the project

Exceptional costs – translations, creation of the website, graphics, printing, editing

The costs on professional patron expert - visits of David Kahn from the US to most of the project meetings. In the project application we had to explain and defend why we need to have costs for an expert from the US / non European country.

The project lasted 3 years.

Pluses and minuses

The biggest benefit of the project were the in person deep dive meetings and the work we were able to do together in real time. Added to creating the methodology together in our meetings, the informal talks and laughs were irreplaceable.

Each partner hosted one of the meetings and it was a real pleasure and honour that the whole group was hosted in the property of each school and in Austria, UK and Sweden. We were in close contact with the adolescent students as well.

It was always great to see each school and the adolescent prepared environment. It was always pleasure to talk to the students of the school, to have common dinners and friendly talks.

Pluses and minuses

Thanks to the project , **14 participants could take part in the AMI Montessori Orientation in Adolescent Studies** in 2016 in Sätilla Sweden.

At the time being it was the most complex Montessori training for the age group 12 – 18.

It was given by Marie Höglund, David Kahn and Patricia Pantano.

Thanks to the money from the project 14 people from 5 different countries took part in this difficult and expensive training.

Thanks to this activity 14 Montessori educators got the chance to broaden their knowledge of Montessori education. Adolescent studies were not common in that time and that the participation of so many people **strongly contributed to the creation of new Montessori adolescents programs throughout Europe.**

Pluses and minuses

In Czech Republic **4 schools participated in this training** - Mozaika, Perlička, Motýlek Zlín and Montessori školy Andílek.

In this project we established a long lasting collaboration among our 4 schools.

Czech participants of the training had an obligation to share their knowledge with the project coordinator and we stayed in touch ever since.

Our school established the adolescent program in 2019, two years after the project finished and the knowledge and experience of our colleagues helped us to overcome many obstacles and cleared many of our questions.

This encouraged a different member of our team to take part in the next Orientation to Adolescent Studies few years later and thus **helped our school to get the needed knowledge to establish our own adolescent program and to continue in our Montessori journey.**

Photos from the training



Pluses and minuses

Not all went well during the 2 years of the project.

The project was a 3 year collaboration of 6 organisations, most of them totally unexperienced of any project work.

Even though the relationships among all the partners were good and friendly, **the project communication and administration was sometimes challenging.**

The most challenging work was to get project outputs from our partners of administrative nature needed for the grant provider.

Lesson learned – the less partners involved in the project, the easier the administration. Maximum doable amount seems to be 5. There always has to be thorough preparation before the project activities start to ensure good communication and the most fluent process of the project.

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Target groups

The primary target group of the project were Montessori educators working with adolescent students.

Secondary target group were adults working with 12-18 years of age young people aged in a non direct way and both from Montessori and non-Montessori background.

Tertiary target group were specialists, educators and organisations interested in adolescent education within the AMI worldwide network, as well teachers, lecturers, activity facilitators, parents and other people working in this area.

Impact of the project

The project aimed on the adolescent education experts, to help them to understand and experience the life of the adolescent: their studies, their practical work, their community life, their growing need for independence, and their need to work side-by-side with adults.

Through time working on the tasks of the projects, participants of the project studied about and discussed and explored the adolescent need for independence and an awareness of human interdependence, both of which become concretely realised and internalised in Montessori adolescent communities.

Impact of the project

With the help of the project intellectual outputs - the methodology - the partner countries and participating organisations were **able to establish a solid Montessori adolescent program in their country.**

This aim was realised not only in organisations that participated in the project. **The know-how how to establish adolescent programs was spread successfully and used by other organisations in Europe** too.

Instrumental for spreading the methodology was **the project presentation at the AMI Annual General meeting in April 2017.** More than 300 participants of the event heard the story of the project, the story of our common work and the aims we wanted to reach. We introduced a new way of possible collaboration between Montessori organisations, the possibility of using EU grants to help Montessori community to grow and to share.

The greatest impact had the presentation of adolescents from partner organisations. The audience was captured by the way the young people spoke and presented honestly their school and shared their experience, good things but also difficulties they go through in their studies. Their presentation was one of the strongest moments of the project

The International Montessori Congress

In July 2017 the project had its **planned project peak at the AMI International Montessori Congress.**

Together with the team of partners we held the seminar on **How to establish an adolescent program** and how to support the growth of adolescent programs in the EU.

Teachers from all over the world participated.

During the congress we made connections with many people interested in the topic and many collaborations were established, many contacts exchanged.

May of these interactions and collaborations are active until today.

Impact of the project

Our school gained a lot from this project. **It enabled us to start our own adolescent program.**

We had a chance to meet with people who were in various stages in adolescent education.

We had the chance to debate with David Kahn and Jenny Höglund and others who had a great deal of experience with running schools, as well as with passionate teachers who were in the beginning of their efforts.

We could learn from experts, learn from their mistakes and gain from their successes.

With this background we could be bold enough to start our own adolescent program.

Connections we made and good relationships that we established, remained solid and honest after the project ended and we benefit from it until today.

Our adolescent program

Farm house and land of 70 000 m² purchased in August 2021



Our adolescent program

Montessori Institute took a large bank loan to buy the farm.



The school is renting from MIP.

Our adolescent program

Visit us!



You can also learn from this project!

Website, methodology:

<https://montessoriadolescent.net/>

FB Group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1515294345449117>

**12-18 Orientation Course with
Jenny Hoglund:**

<https://amiprague.cz/certificate-courses/#1218>



Thank you!

A huge thank you for prep work for this presentation goes to **Zuzana Kašparová**, who was the amazing MAPI project manager, the heart and the mind of the work. She is the person on the very left in this photo.

Zuzka also stood at the roots of building our adolescent program, **for which we will forever be thankful**, because it was big work!

