

Ten years of Prague Street Law: Lessons to learn from our first decade

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1. Being a 10 year old

Prague Street Law programme has been, at least to our knowledge, the longest, still running, Street law programme in the post-soviet area.² In comparison with Street Law programmes in other parts of the world, passing a ten-year post may not appear that impressive.³ For an eastern and continental European legal literacy clinic it, however, represents an important landmark and an opportunity to stop, reflect and reconsider – and celebrate, too. Even though we have not yet perhaps come of age, there might be a younger programme interested in an older sibling's experience, or indeed an older sibling interested in how their younger mate is doing. Our paper offers a brief description of the current programme, followed by a discussion of what we believe are 'good' practices that helped us to build up and sustain the programme. We also identify aspects that are better avoided. Briefly, we also share our current concerns and

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² We encourage any reader who knows about a longer still running Street Law programme in this part of the world, to let us know.

³ Especially if we compare with our Street Law friends from Georgetown in Washington, D.C. See Kamila A. Pinder, *Streer Law: Twenty-Five Years and Counting*. *Journal of Law & Education*, Vol 27, No 2, 1998. In three years Georgetown will be in his 50s!

struggles. We hope that the paper will serve as an inspiration for those who are considering starting or expanding their own Street Law programme.⁴ It is no doubt a tribute to all those who helped us along our path.

2. Brief description of the Prague Street Law programme

We founded our Street Law programme in order to provide legal education to laypersons while also stimulating professional development in our law students.⁵

These two main aims have always been interconnected, representing an important characteristic and strength of legal literacy clinics in general. These related goals might be prioritized differently; we as faculty of law teachers consider the professional development of law students as our principal aim, although both we and many of our law students are attracted to Street Law primarily because it helps non-lawyers to understand basic legal rights and responsibilities.

To be honest, there was no specific plan regarding how Street Law curricular as well as extracurricular activities should develop. From the very beginning in 2009 it was the teacher (at that time just one) looking for Street Law graduates to help him to run

⁴ In the last couple of years, we started receiving questions from our Czech as well as foreign colleagues on our Street Law know-how, especially concerning sustainability and ever-expanding nature of our programme. This paper is an attempt to sincerely and at length answer their inquiries.

⁵ For further information on content and development of the term Street Law see Seán G. Arthurs, Street Law: Creating Tomorrow's Citizens Today. *Lewis & Clark Law Review*. Vol 19, No 4, 2015, pp 943-947. However, the main value of the paper lies in the fact that through quantitative analysis of the effects of participation in a Georgetown Street Law Clinic on high-school students proves actual impact of Street Law. For similar reasons see Seán Arthurs, Melinda Cooperman, Jessica Gallagher, Freda Grealy, John Lunney, Rob Marrs, Richard Roe, From zero to 60: Building belief, capacity and community in Street Law instructors in one weekend. *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education*. Vol 24, No 2, 2017, pp 123-168. For more information on our programme, see Tereza Krupová and Marek Zima, Street Law and Legal Clinics as Civic Projects: Situation in the Czech Republic. *Oñati Socio-Legal Series*, Vol 7, No 8, 2017, pp 1653-1655 and for the description of the programme after its first two years of existence: Michal Urban, How to Discover Students' Talents and Turn Them into Teaching. *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education*. Vol 16, 2011. pp 144-153.

the programme. Assistance has taken the form of preparing basic hand-outs and related lesson plans, preparing a Street Law text book to helping with teaching and,⁶ of course, planning and delivering the sessions themselves. In addition, young lawyers were drawn into teaching and many could stay linked with the law school even after formal graduation. Several of them have gone on to begin Ph.D. studies – a great way to maintain the close connection with the Street Law programme. Some have even gone on to join the faculty as teaching staff. Within years, the Street Law team had grown to a core of five, taking care of the programme. Apart from them, there were more Street Law graduates running individual small Street Law projects, mostly based on cooperation with the programme leader.

A major development happened after the summer of 2015 when the Street Law team agreed to prepare legal workshops for Roma children in Eastern Slovakia.⁷ Two days of intensive work with thirty extraordinarily energetic young Roma, as well as fighting with our own prejudices and understanding of pedagogy,⁸ and several other days of staying at their summer school, observing them singing and dancing and then accompanying them to their concerts served as unplanned, but remarkably powerful

⁶ See See Michal Urban, Street Law aneb jak učit právo na středních školách <<http://streetlaw.eu/soubory/dokumenty/street-law-aneb-jak-ucit-pravo-na-strednich-skolach.pdf>>, accessed 17 January 2019.

⁷ Invitation to join the summer school of the Roma choir came from their manager and main leader thanks to the recommendation from our friends at Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, which cooperates with the choir. The intention was to offer the children at their summer schools more than music.

⁸ For many of us, this summer school was the first true opportunity to meet and start to understand members of the Roma minority. Together with observation of a very rigid educational approach of their leaders, teaching them – against their public image – strict discipline, created countless opportunities for deep discussions about our, their and common values, and allowed us to experience deep emotions (when being confronted with values and the beauty and power of their music). This all no doubt added to the remarkable impact of this event on our programme.

teambuilding event, which had the effect of expanding our ranks. Several team members until then only loosely connected with the team started taking Street Law very seriously and moved into its core. After this summer, the core team expanded to the current around 15 active members and allowed us undertake numerous new projects and reach new groups.⁹

They are run by the Street Law team/community, which we considered an important and kind of special feature of our programme that gives our programme great strength. The Street Law team members are mostly Street Law I graduates (or graduates of others Street Law credit-awarded courses), who are devoted to participating in our programme predominantly on voluntary bases. Over the years, there were about 70 students who joined our team (as opposed to almost 300 who graduated from a Street Law accredited course – see the section 2.1). We will now describe, through various groups we have been working with, the current form of our programme.

2.1. Law school students and high school students

In 2009, Street Law in Prague began with a voluntary weekly seminar at the faculty lasting one semester (4 months roughly) and was called Street Law I. This programme still exists. First, law students are taught to teach, and then they are sent to high schools to actually do some law-related teaching, usually in one class. The area of law they are

⁹ It should be noted that this extracurricular expansion of the programme did not change the nature of the Street Law programme – primarily providing faculty students with the their own legal education and skills development and pedagogical assistance.

expected to teach depends on high school teacher's demand – it varies from constitutional law and human rights to labour or criminal law. This is followed by a group evaluation of the law students' experiences. The students spend around 10 – 12 hours on each part of the programme. Additionally, those who complete this first course are offered further and more intensive teaching experience (Street Law II). Their task – again – is to teach at a high school and the students are asked to teach for at least 40 hours, which is approximately for around half of a the high school year. Both of these courses carry academic credit and form the gate of Prague Street Law programme. Since 2009, 288 law students have 'graduated' from Street Law I and 14 have 'graduated' from Street Law II (which started 6 years ago).

The most recent accredited extension of Street Law in Prague has been the introduction of the Street Law III and the Street Law – A course on consumer literacy. The structure of the latter is similar to Street Law I, but it focuses exclusively on consumer law, which is usually not covered at high schools. Street Law III, by contrast, differs from previous courses. It was established for law faculty students who have already experienced extensive teaching. Its curriculum varies according to the demand from secondary schools: students might be required to teach couple of lessons or organize mock trials (and make use of our experience with more than 120 mock trials we have organized so far) at different high schools, arrange visits to real court hearings or design and try out fresh lessons. After four years of operation, 68 students graduated who attended the Street Law – A course on consumer literacy seminar and 12 students Street Law III.

These four courses are the only credit awarded activities in the Prague Street Law programme. In our accredited courses, we offer high schoolers interactive workshops on topics by their choice, mock trials at our law school's court room and participation in national moot court competition among different high school teams.

Apart from high school students, which were our first audience (and more than 5000 high school students have participated in our sessions so far) we gradually developed closer cooperation with Romany people, senior citizens, prisoners, young people from children's homes, scouts leaders and even with high school teachers. Each group inevitably has its own specific needs and demands. It is, for example, relatively easy to organize Street Law at high schools. Law students receive credits for their teaching¹⁰ and typically teach in pairs, high schools are usually flexible and willing to cooperate with the law faculty, which many have been doing for several years. On the other hand cooperation with some others groups is far less formalized and sometimes heavily dependent on factors beyond the control of the Street Law team (e.g. workshops for prisoners – because of their nature – can be stopped just by a decision of prison staff.). For reasons of brevity we will now attempt to summarize the issues we have found when working with particular groups.

¹⁰ The credits are awarded for active participation on Street Law I seminars at the faculty, at least 10 hours of teaching at a high school and creation of final portfolio (comprised of all used lesson plans, reflections of the lessons etc.).

2.2. Romany people

We work primarily with a Romany children's choir Čhavorenge.¹¹ It consists of approximately 60 children from 8 to 18 years of age from the Czech and Slovak Republics. Čhavorenge has been operating for several years and organizes its own events, which we are now invited to join. For several years, we have participated at their annual summer schools and off-site concerts and organize legal workshops for them in between their singing commitments. The fact that most of these events lasted couple of days represented a great opportunity for integrating legal literacy work. Apart from the benefit of being in a closer contact with the children, participation in summer schools and concerts worked as a deep teambuilding for the Street Law team itself.¹² We have participated in four such events so far.¹³

2.3. Senior citizens

We have, to date, entered into partnerships with numerous local day care centres for elderly people, community centres and libraries, responding, where we have the capacity, to demand. One-off seminars and workshops are offered focusing on the important themes for elderly people (for example inheritance law; consumer protection law; family law; patient's rights; domestic violence; protection of privacy

¹¹ For more information, see International Initiative for Development for Ethnic Art, Project Čhavorenge <<http://www.miret.cz/en/page.aspx?v=pageCollection-13>> accessed 17 January 2019.

¹² See section 3.3.

¹³ For more information see Hana Drašlarová and Michal Urban, Street law for Czech and Slovak young Roma musicians. *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education*, Vol 23, No 3, 2016, pp 148-171.

and neighbour issues). An estimated 700 seniors have participated in these programmes to date.

In 2018 a new course was established in cooperation with The University of the Third Age at Charles University. Traditionally, in this programme, seniors are introduced to the basics of various law areas and topics through lectures of law school staff. Street Law organized a set of mock trials for them, which participants welcomed with extraordinary gratitude and everything suggest that our involvement in the programme will continue.

2.4 Prisoners

Our experience with prisons and prisoners is still relatively limited. So far, the team members have organized two series of seminars for 25 inmates, who were about to be released from prison and enter civilian life again. Based on the demand of the prisoners and in coordination with prison officials, the seminars focus primarily on debt and loss of property.¹⁴

Based on the encouraging feedback received from the inmates and following positive responses from prison officials, we have decided to continue with this programme and have started our third prison 'season'.

¹⁴ One of the biggest issues for former prisoners in the Czech Republic is indebtedness. Prisoners often come out of a prison with high debts, which in fact often means exclusion from certain aspects of civil life due to existing legal provisions. For instance, high debts usually mean high wage assignments for debtor that leaves him only with minimum resources. For such a debtor it is more advantageous to earn his living elsewhere than in a legal job.

2.5. Young people from children's homes

As a follow-up to our work with Čhavorenge choir, we have run two weekend workshops for children from care homes. Two groups of 15 participated: one consisted of younger children (10 to 15), the other of 15 to 18 years-old. These workshops allowed us to put together a programme that might be used for other similar workshops in the future. There are currently two Street Law members preparing new workshops, which will hopefully establish a more conceptual and institutionalized cooperation with various children's homes.

2.6. Scouts leaders

For scouts, their leaders and other young people connected with them, we hold periodic interactive talks. These cover topics that are of interest to young people – for example getting a job, finding a home and claiming state benefits. The cooperation with them actually started because they provided us their clubhouse for some of our meetings and we agreed that instead of paying rent, we would organize several talks for them.

2.7. High school teachers

Street Law students come and go and they usually cover only several school lessons. High school teachers, in contrast, remain in schools for several years or even decades. Hence, another part of what we do is that we offer a special law courses for teachers. We offer 6 different courses. The first focuses on pedagogy of law teaching, the second on civil law and the third on public law. The fourth looks at human rights, the fifth on

moot courts (or mock trials more precisely) and the sixth on utilising of Street Law methods in the classroom. Courses last for 5 hours and take place at the law school in Prague.

In addition, we have an open database of law lessons on our website, which teachers can use as a resource. The law students prepare this material and a lawyer checks the content to make sure it is accurate and appropriate.¹⁵

We also provide another service connecting students and teachers with judges who are willing to welcome them into court. This is of great interest to the teachers and pupils and many judges that understand the importance of public trust in judiciary and for that reason welcome a class in their courtrooms and even find time to talk to the class before and after the trial and answer their questions.

Last but not least it should be mentioned that couple of years ago we started offering our own seminars at Faculty of Education of Charles University to future teachers of civics. We concentrate both on the didactics of law and legal issues that teachers might not be familiar with or find particularly challenging. We believe that these courses give teachers both knowledge and confidence helping them both in future study, classroom preparation and delivery.¹⁶

¹⁵ See Street Law (Prague) < <http://streetlaw.livepreview.cz/lekce>> accessed 17 January 2019.

¹⁶ The high school teachers are as a group Prague Street Law programme is focused on. For reasons why we devote so much of our attention to this group, see subsection 3.6.

3. 'Good practice' and the Prague Street Law programme¹⁷

During the ten years of our Street Law programme, we have identified the following beneficial practices that may prove inspirational for others.

3.1. Easy does it!

Let the new Street Law students start in a relatively easy way. Instead of sending them to teach at more demanding facilities (such as prisons or particularly challenging schools), the first experience of our students tends to come from upper-secondary schools where discipline, behaviour and the teaching context tends to be both predictable and manageable. With many of these schools we have been cooperating for years and know the teachers, in whose classes our young lawyers will be having their first teaching experience. Our law students receive training in both legal theory (through other courses at the faculty) and teaching practice (through Street Law courses) before they enter the school classroom.¹⁸ Moreover, they can make use of help from both the secondary-school teacher and faculty staff and use teaching materials that were put together by teachers or previous students of the Street Law course. Before teaching their first lesson, they need to observe the pupils they will be working with alongside the regular school/class teacher. Usually they discuss their lesson plans before they try them out and have a practice lesson in a safe law school environment

¹⁷ Compare to David McQuoid-Mason, *Street Law as a Clinical Program: The South African Experience with Particular Reference to the University of KwaZulu-Natal*. *Griffith Law Review*. Vol 17, No 1, 2008, pp 31 and following, pp 47-48.

¹⁸ Topics are selected mostly by secondary-school teachers and depend on the schools' curricula. Apart from the Czech constitution and human rights, our students typically teach the basics of civil, criminal, labour and/or family law.

where they receive the feedback from the teachers and their peers. Although we do not want to keep our law students on a lead, certainly not a very short one, we consider teaching practice at a relatively good school as sufficiently demanding and challenging – certainly to start with. While we do want to challenge our students, at the same time we want them to succeed in their teaching practice and a regular class at a relatively good secondary school serves well enough. Of course we also feel responsible for secondary school pupils who will spend ten lessons with our law students. Once they finish this first, normally positive experience, there comes time for more demanding activities with different audiences. Those, who did not enjoy the “safe” teaching, do not feel the need to continue with the more challenging options and are not joining our Street Law community.

3.2. More demanding teaching for interested students.

Once our law students successfully finish their first Street law semester, they can continue with teaching on the next stage of the Street Law programme and become a member of Street Law team. Our offer is open to everybody, but we prioritise those who have proven to be effective teachers and who obviously enjoyed it. For every 20 students enrolled into the Street Law I course each semester, some 3 or 4 decide to try the more demanding teaching options we have available. Either they can start teaching one class for the whole semester or two, or they can test their skills in a more demanding teaching environment – teaching young Roma, senior citizens, school classes arriving at law school for mock trials or groups of Prague prisoners. It does not

matter so much which part of our Street Law programme they join, what matters is that they do a professional job and hopefully stay with and become part of our Street Law community. After they complete the Street Law I programme we offer them the chance to stay with Street Law in the medium and perhaps long term if they wish and challenge themselves on various Street Law projects. From time to time we organize seminars aimed at personal and professional development of team members (e.g. workshops on time-management, presentation skills, or new teaching methods). However time-consuming and difficult it is for those of us who run the programme, we attempt to make our members feel that we care for their development as well as serving public legal education needs.

3.3. Build a Street Law team – a community of students, teachers and graduates of the law school.

As seen above, Prague Street Law programme started as a one-semester course – a small group of 15 law students and one teacher. Within a couple of years, it developed into a programme of four different accredited courses¹⁹ taught by three teachers and with many young lawyers-to-be trained in the Street Law method and ready to teach almost any law-related subject. The programme has expanded beyond the boundaries

¹⁹ They vary according to the length of teaching experience (from 10 lessons up to the whole year of teaching), the type of activities involved (teaching regular lessons, organizing mock trials or coaching secondary school students' mock trial teams) and the intensity of supervision required (more closely-supervised for Street Law beginners and more independent but still monitored work for the more experienced). See section 2.1 for further information.

of faculty courses and consists of many activities that are not accredited courses – because they involve more demanding teaching (e.g. teaching secondary school teachers and Roma children), consist of non-teaching tasks (running our website, presenting Street Law activities at various events etc.), or because they are performed by students and graduates who have already finished Street Law courses offered by the law school.²⁰ Over the years, we managed to build a group of devoted students, teachers and graduates of the law school, who all share a common interest in promoting legal literacy, thus they form a Street Law team. There is now a clear commitment to pro bono work and growing belief in cultivation of non-lawyers' (as well as their own) legal awareness. Around 15 people meet monthly to plan or evaluate Street Law activities. Over the years we learned that regular meetings of the whole team – teachers, lawyers and students – are necessary to keep the community running and thriving. Beyond that, we spend occasional weekends together, even watch movies or go for a concert or beer – i.e. we do what friends or good colleagues typically do. The group consists of the more involved (almost addicted) members as well as those who join us less often, and the team gradually change its composition as new students arrive and others are drawn into legal practice or other working commitments. The core of the team represents a de facto Street Law student union and is able to monitor, develop and sustain the programme. To keep the community in a

²⁰ The list of accredited courses may, of course, expand even further and include some of the above-mentioned teaching activities. However, since they are typically taken mostly only by a handful of students every year and since our students may already gather a substantive amount of credits through Street Law, we are currently not thinking of introducing a new course.

good shape and organize its various activities takes time and effort of the programme leaders and other team members, but we regard this communal responsibility as crucial and a key characteristic of the Prague Street Law programme. A team of friends who study, do Street Law activities and spend their free time together (if there is any for them) proves to be also a very effective way of running the programme. Moreover, it allows the leaders of the programme to observe, supervise and foster further personal and professional development of all participants, which never ceases to be one of the major Street Law goals.

3.4. Let the team members develop their own ideas.

Unlike some perhaps more rigidly and structured Street Law programmes, our Prague offering welcomes students' initiative and, subject to resources, is always willing to consider new projects. After students successfully finish some of the Street Law seminars, they are – in our eyes – prepared for building up their own initiative. They must, of course, serve the general Street Law mission and not undermine our ability to meet other existing commitments, but once a student or more typically a group brings an idea to the table, they have, in practice, a realistic chance to see it come to fruition. If adopted we will include it in the activities run under our name, consult with students and make sure they have the resources and planning skills to put it into action. We will even try to support it financially. It is up to students to do most of the work and enjoy the joy of success afterwards, of course. Some of these projects end well and turn into a more permanent part of our programme (e.g. the High School

Mock Trial Competition, a competition of secondary-school teams coached by law students, and cooperation with a prison), some take place only once or are eventually not realized at all or with limited success.²¹ As far as they do not tarnish the Street Law reputation, we try to accept these projects as we respect our student's capacity for innovation and their energy and commitment. The result is, after all, not always important as long as students are learning in the process and the audience is not hurt in whatever way. Through such innovation and inclusiveness the current Street Law participants become the natural leaders of future Street Law activity.

3.5. No rush to leave the law school.

It may be tempting, especially for older graduates of Street Law programmes, to find reasons for establishing an independent Street Law association, under which all Street Law activities – probably with the exception of accredited courses – would run. After all, being part of a law school may require consultation with faculty management that often slows down the development of individual projects. Moreover, it can be quite confusing that a group providing legal education does not have a legal entity itself. However, unless the law school limits the programme in some unreasonable way it is in our view highly beneficial for the long-term development of Street Law programmes to stay under the law school 'wing'. The name, resources and overall reputation of the law school can automatically open many doors and enhances the

²¹ They may easily become a regular and permanent part of our programme led by one of more experienced students (typically the one who realized it at the very beginning) and supervised by programme leaders and other senior programme members either through common meetings of project leaders, or individual consultations.

programme in the eyes of general as well as legal public, not to mention specifically in relation to secondary schools. Various law school grants manage to cover some of the expenses of running Street Law courses and accredited courses count towards the overall workload of the staff concerned.²² But most importantly: being integrated into the curriculum of the law school and run – at least to some degree – by faculty members or PhD students is the best safeguard for the continuity and sustainability of the programme. As enthusiastic and energetic as students often are, their interests and availability typically change, especially after graduating, which can leave Street Law programmes run for example by a NGOs, student unions or independent associations with an uneasy task of finding new volunteers. Being part of a law school and run as an (or indeed several) accredited course provides a solid base for teaching and supervision through faculty staff and an invaluable source of new students who join the Street Law programme from semester to semester. When thinking in decades rather than months or years, close connection with the law school has proven to be a good option. Therefore, we work hard to ensure that our programme retains its good name not only among the non-lawyers and partners we work with, but also with the students and teachers of our faculty. We regularly inform faculty stakeholders about our activities, experiences and successes both online (on our Facebook page and faculty website) and offline (on an old-fashioned notice board in the law school

²² Prague law school teachers typically run courses that the faculty requires them to teach and then are expected to develop other courses reflecting their interest and expertise as well as doing other academic activity (e.g. writing papers and books). From the beginning teachers could include Street Law courses into their workload. Similarly, PhD students co-teaching Street Law classes can count time spent as part of their study-related faculty activity.

building, during information and orientation days and at various faculty forums and academic events such as round tables and conferences). Additionally, we accept invitations to present our programme in the media (newspaper, journals, radio and television) and make sure that the name of the law school is mentioned in connection with it. All of this, and two recent awards for pro bono and pedagogic work that we received in 2017 helps to gain respect and support from Prague law school and render the whole initiative more sustainable. However, it is fair to add that not every faculty member views Street Law in bright colours. For some, Street Law is just a non-scientific free-time activity that should be extracurricular at best. Needless to say that we are patiently trying to change their minds by continuing with our work and mentioning benefits of Street Law at various occasions.²³

3.6. Street Law for school teachers.

However active our Street Law programme was in its first decade, its overall direct impact on legal literacy of general public inevitably remains relatively small. We have no doubts that it influences several hundreds of people each year, some of them profoundly, but overall legal literacy of the wider public is a huge challenge and there

²³ Apart from either staying as an integrated part of the law school, or having an independent legal entity running all Street Law activities, there is a middle position available: run accredited courses at the law school and all other activities, which we in this text describe as activities done by our Street Law community, by an independent association. As clever as this option seems, since it promises to combine advantages of both models, it opens the danger of departing of the two halves of the programme from each other. Once they will be directed by different people or groups of people, which they soon or later will, they will most probably start seeing things slightly (or more importantly) differently, having other programme priorities, working with programme members differently. All that is not necessarily bad, sometimes it might even bring mutual inspiration and possibly healthy competition, but only on one condition: that the programmes and people running them would remain frequently talking together and discussing all important matters. Once this is lost, and there are many examples from the world of NGOs as well as politics that it may happen rather quickly, problems necessarily arise. This represents one of the strongest reasons why Prague Street Law has not established any independent entity, although some programme members would wish so.

are many in our country who remain ignorant of many matters of a legal nature. Therefore, for many years one of our priorities has been to educate teachers especially at secondary schools both in law and efficient ways of teaching it, including organizing mock trials and teaching them how to run them themselves.²⁴ Their impact as future teachers of law across a range of high schools could be much more profound than that of a small group of law teachers and students. This is often termed 'training of trainers'. While law students teach couple of lessons a year or month at maximum, these teachers spend with their pupils 20 or more lessons every week and might well continue doing so for several decades to come. For years we have therefore offered school teachers seminars and workshops in which to develop their understanding of law and the legal process, equip them with well-tried and tested teaching methods and encourage them to use more interactive teaching, reducing time spent on the 'one-way' lecture. Seminars naturally serve as a platform through which they share their experience, best practices and often their enthusiasm (many of our course teachers are truly great teachers). Apart from sharing our Street Law experience and materials (textbooks and online database of lessons), as learning is a two-way process, we also gain a lot from the teachers, allowing us to further enrich our future courses for teachers and other Street Law activities. Some of the teachers come regularly; some invite law students for teaching practices or travel with their classes to our law school for mock trials in our courtroom. Generally, they are very grateful for our care and

²⁴ See similar idea of "training the trainers" in David McQuoid-Mason, *ibid.* In South Africa Street Law lessons for teachers were demanded by teachers and supported by local greatest teachers union.

come to our sessions very motivated. For the same reasons, for several years we have been running seminars at Charles University Faculty of Education for future lower and upper- secondary school teachers of social sciences. Most of them will be teaching the basics of law and political science, which are compulsory parts of Czech secondary school curriculum.

Law students going through Street Law programmes typically do not change their careers and swap law for teaching in schools. Some of them, however, want to carry on with some teaching alongside their legal careers (and some actually do so). To ease their way into schools, we established in cooperation with Charles University Faculty of Arts a pedagogical course, which provides an official qualification to teach at secondary schools. Without it, some school directors might be reluctant to employ law school graduates and prefer qualified teachers with only basic knowledge of law.

3.7. Successful and sustainable project management.

Ten years of running our programme has taught us many lessons in successful and sustainable project management. As our team of two or three started to expand and gradually reached current figures of around 15 active members and number of other participants of our community, many things needed to change. Sometimes we were able to anticipate the necessary changes, sometimes we needed to experience a project-based crisis or have an open (and sometimes not necessarily pleasant) discussion with team members to find out what is lacking in a programme and how it can be improved.

We now find, after 10 years of implementation that we tend to follow a set pattern of design, review and implementation. Each project or Street Law initiative will have its own coordinator who is responsible for it. It is their task to deal with everyday agenda, longer-term planning and establishing their team from the pool of our Street Law students and graduates. Heads of projects meet once a month to discuss necessary everyday agenda, planning and coordination of projects and long-term goals of the whole Street Law programme. Typically, every two years,²⁵ we meet for a strategic planning meeting and discuss and decide upon our long-term goals. Even though sometimes we “merely” come to the conclusion that our goals remain the same, these meetings play an important role in uniting the team, building a shared vision, enabling us to talk through troubling issues, misunderstandings and different views of running the programme. We now intend to hold such meetings every autumn and every following June to reflect on how much we managed to achieve our goals and priorities. The extended team, consisting of heads of projects and all other Street Law members, meets monthly (with the exception of summer vacation) with the aim of introducing individual projects and their current state of development to Street Law beginners, inviting them to join the project of their choice.

²⁵ Our recent experience makes us believe that in fact a strategic planning should happen on the beginning of every school year and be followed by a reflective meeting towards the end of the school year. Our reluctance to organize these meetings annually originated in the presumption that to add two more meetings to already full Street Law schedule (not to mention other school and work duties our Street Law members have) would be met with disinterest or tendency to arrive to these meetings only from the sense of duty. Contrary to that, our members seem to like these meetings and consider them important parts of building our Street Law programme and community.

Understandably, some students and Street Law graduates are very active and take part at many events, whereas others come to relatively few meetings or stick to just one project. This naturally creates a core of the team, who have a far bigger impact on the programme and are far more socially integrated into the team than those who play a lesser (but still important) role. Everybody can move between these two groups according to their availability and preferences. Apart from the meeting of head of projects, the rest of the meetings and events are open to every Street Law member. To keep everybody informed, we established a Street Law Google calendar available to all Street Law members, where minutes of meetings are circulated and team-building exercises organised.

4. Lessons learnt in Prague that might be best avoided

4.1. Taking in too many students – quantity over quality.

The overall law student interest in signing up for the basic course Street Law I often exceeds our true capacity. In the past we have experienced semesters where there were as many as 30 students enrolled in one seminar. Despite our efforts to break the group into smaller units for many activities, having two teachers and teaching interactively, we realised that such a group size was sub-standard, mainly due to shared impression of 'over-population' of the seminar. Both students and teachers felt that in a group of 30 – and despite all efforts – it is much easier to become a free-rider. Additionally, a smaller group automatically creates a notion of exclusivity, especially at a faculty

where usual number of students in seminars exceeds 30. If there were more students willing to take the course, we have come to the conclusion that it is better to run two parallel seminars, each for 15 students. Typically, we accept 15-20 students every semester and might enrol even two or three students over this limit, since we know from experience that some will drop out from the course. To have 15 motivated law students makes the seminars working at an optimal level and allows the teachers to consult individually with students details of their teaching practice. A greater number presents a range of problems including motivational issues and supervisory problems.

4.2. Not-meeting regularly with the Street Law team.

When projects run smoothly, or so it appears, it is easy to stop meeting with members of the team individually and not talking with them about the programme and especially its shortcoming. Likewise, the urge to organize strategic meetings decreases. In the long run, however, it has always proved to be a wrong decision to cancel these meeting in the “time of peace”. Even though many times strategic meetings “only” approve our current practice and confirm that the programme is running well, they typically also bring interesting insights into the operation of the programme and suggestions for improvements. Many inherent features of the programme have indeed in the past come from dissatisfaction of some team members. The time and energy that might be tempting to put directly into concrete projects may rather be better spent, at least in part, in reflecting on existing activities and dynamics of the team. Having a well-oiled team used to providing instant feedback is in our experience a far greater

asset when taking a broader perspective. Members of the team are, after all, still relatively young men and women who are gathering experience with teaching and teamwork and their own personal development. The role of programme leaders is to support and facilitate this learning, even though team members may not be students anymore and work instead as junior lawyers at various institutions. The fact that the programme supports this continuous education of young lawyers represents a great strength and not a weakness of the programme, even though it might limit the maximum number of events we organize.

To give one concrete example, we have been struggling for years with the question whether to establish an independent legal entity for Street Law and run it outside of the faculty.²⁶ After debating the issue thoroughly we found out that what was one part of our team actually calling for was transparent division of powers and responsibilities in the team. Therefore, we introduced heads of projects and their regular meetings and the issue of independent legal entity and all the emotions arising around it lost its urgency.²⁷

4.3. Underestimate the value of praise.

Most of our team are volunteers, who work for Street Law in their free time. Occasionally, we manage to gain funding for some projects, which allows us to cover

²⁶ For more information on this matter, please see section 3.5. above.

²⁷ It has not, however, died out. It reappears every now and then and requires another discussion considering the pluses and minuses of establishing an independent Street Law entity and looking at what other motivations might lie behind the proposal for more independence from the law school.

project costs, but generally, our activities are run by our beliefs rather than money. People stay with Street Law because they want to help, to try something new, to learn or practice skills or because they want to remain a part of the Street Law community. Disregarding their motivation, they all deserve acknowledgement for the time, energy and sometimes the resources they put into their teaching. The attention and words of programme leaders possess extraordinary power in this context. When praise is not forthcoming, or not as often as a team member would expect, it raises doubt: 'Am I doing my work properly?', 'Is the project I'm working on good enough, as the Street Law leaders do not seem to really appreciate it compared to other projects?', 'Do "they" actually want me in the Street Law team?'. These doubts and the emotions attached to them might easily poison the atmosphere in the team and cause objections to the programme and its management – often of course very distant from the actual problem, i.e. lack of acknowledgement of the value of a particular Street Law project or the merits of individuals' work. Preventing such misunderstandings and perceptions can save many hours of talks, team meetings and agonizing – there is no doubt as the saying goes that 'prevention is better than cure'.

The fact that Prague Street Law works as a community does have – apart from the benefits suggested above – its downsides. A friendly atmosphere in the team creates a notion that everybody's opinion is taken by others as equal and equally appreciated. It might work in some situations (when for example designing a new seminar), but generally are the opinions of programme leaders taken more seriously, sometimes

even oversensitively: even a minor comment on the quality of a project might lead to a disproportionate feeling of praise or criticism by those who work on the project. As if the attention of the programme leaders for the concrete project was more important than the project itself, its quality and benefits it brings to the audience. It was important for us who run the programme to realize that we tend to forget a decade of age difference (and correspondent difference in experience and authority) between us and older Street Law members. The traditionally formal relationship between a teacher and a student still exists, at least to an extent and especially on the part of a student. Our experience tells that it is far easier for a teacher to start taking their formal students as colleagues and peers, or even as friends.

5. What do we currently struggle with?

Apart from the 'good practice' described above and the advice (born out of experience) that we hope others might follow to avoid or better manage problems, there are also issues we are still dealing with and to which we have not yet found a definitive answer.

5.1. We are constantly searching for a better way of organising and conducting our team meetings.

How often should our team meet? On the one hand, we want team members to have enough information about the whole programme and not to focus just on the project they are involved with, on the other hand we do not want to bore them with long or overly-frequent meetings that might deal with things they are not concerned with. Individual projects must be coordinated, which is the main responsibility of

programme leaders, but to what extent should also other Street Law members and especially heads of project know the finer details about other projects? And to which extent are the together meetings only saving the time of the programme leaders, who are getting information easier from them, as they do not need to meet with the project leaders individually, and to which extent do they really help the programme as such? Our current model distinguishes three different types of meeting. First, there are monthly meetings of project heads, where detailed planning as well as long-term decisions are considered and everybody is informed briefly about development in other parts of the programme. Secondly, monthly meetings of the whole Street Law team are held, which are designed to attract newcomers as well as exiting participants. These meetings introduce the individual Street Law project and help the new members to get involved. Thirdly, we have the yearly strategic planning meetings where the direction of the whole programme is debated and planned. The system is still developing, as the programme is expanding, which constantly changes the dynamics of the team and the needs for regular meetings.

5.2. Who should make final decisions?

Should it be the head of the programme, after discussing it with senior and other team members, or should it be the collective or a body delegated with such tasks as the meeting of the head of projects? Should there be different decision-making bodies or people for different types of decision, for example when considering the spending of grant money? In the past, there were e.g. doubts about the extent to which financial

support from Prague Street Law should be spent on a moot court competition organized by another Czech law school.

5.3. Should we establish a separate legal entity or not?

We have discussed this above.

5.4. What are the best ways to integrate newcomers into our Street Law team?

They typically come to their first Street Law meetings after going through Street Law I, but then many of them stop coming, often without telling us why. We introduced an older team member responsible for being in touch with them and making sure they feel comfortable among us. We encourage heads of projects to actively approach newcomers and offer them concrete roles in individual projects. It pays off, but we are far from being satisfied. Colleagues of ours advised us to assign every newcomer a mentor from the established Street Law team allowing more intensive and personalized contact, to become more authoritative at assigning first tasks to newcomers instead of waiting until they make their minds and make sure we meet with those who stop coming to Street Law meetings and find out what they are missing in the programme and what would help them to stay (happily) on the team. They are all great suggestions we will gradually try out.

5.5. Graduates of basic Street Law course come and stay in our team/community in waves

Over the years we have observed that graduates of basic Street Law course come and stay in our team/community in waves, even though we invite approximately 3-6 of students (graduates of Street Law I) every semester. They therefore naturally form generations, layers of the team which joined in around the same time. This brings synergy in the team, motivate other team members and encourage developing closer relationships among team members, but also generates problems: especially when such a generation graduates and starts to withdraw from the programme. How should we bridge the gap it leaves in the programme? What other roles can we offer to experienced members who now have less time for our activities because of their work constraints? Some stay as project heads and concentrate more on coordinating work rather than doing it themselves, some withdraw and come to meetings and events irregularly and sometimes rather unpredictably. We are using their experience for concrete tasks, especially short-term ones.

5.6. How to work effectively with Street Law alumni?

Every year, some fifty law students graduate from our Street Law I programme and around ten of them join our team. We continue to work with those who join our community in the ways described earlier in this paper. However, we have found no way so far to work systematically with the rest of our alumni, even though we know

that many enjoyed Street Law I course and have given positive feedback.²⁸ Should we concentrate our energy on the majority of our alumni, since they might – often already in the roles of (trainee) attorneys, public prosecutors and judges – bring fresh experience, know-how and prestige back to our programme? Street Law might continue inspiring them to do pro bono work at their own institutions or through our programme, which would certainly increase the level of our events for the target audiences.

6. Conclusions

Since the first Street Law came into existence almost half a century ago, Street Law programmes have spread around the globe and are proving to be viable, sustainable and beneficial platforms for increasing legal literacy amongst members of the public as well as developing the knowledge, skills and professional responsibility of law students. Every programme is necessarily a unique mix of audience, teachers, students, projects, priorities and strategies. Approaching the end of the first decade of Prague Street Law, the reflection of our experience and its comparison with other programmes we have visited, heard of or read about,²⁹ brings us to realization of key characteristics of our own programme.

²⁸ See Hana Draslarová, Street Law as a unique learning method: What do students themselves actually find to be its benefits? Answers from the Czech Republic. *International Journal of Public Legal Education*, forth coming, 2019.

²⁹ For example Georgetown Street Law <<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/experiential-learning/clinics/dc-street-law-program/>>, Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal <<https://namati.org/network/organization/centre-for-socio-legal-studies-university-of-kwazulu-natal-south-africa/>>, University of Warsaw <<http://en.uw.edu.pl/tag/faculty-of-law-and-administration/>>, BPP University <<https://www.bpp.com/insights/bpp-streetlaw>>, Palacký University in Olomouc

First of all, we have a large team of Street Law graduates volunteering in their free time and staying with the programme even after finishing accredited Street Law courses – we have referred to them in this text as Street Law team or community. Secondly, the programme is led in a less directive way than many such initiatives, students are encouraged to propose and realize their own projects and have influence on what the whole programme looks like. Thirdly, the first experiences students in our programme gather are from relatively easy environments and only gradually do we allow them to gain experience with more demanding teaching (such as training of trainers groups, the Roma minority and prisoners). Fourthly, we offer our graduates accredited pedagogical courses that carry qualification for teaching at secondary schools and ease their future way into public education in the role of teachers. Finally, we intentionally and for the long-term benefit educate secondary school teachers and students of Prague Faculty of Education in law and interactive ways of teaching it, since we believe that they, as teachers, are key elements of change in the perception in and understanding of law and society. None of these features are, of course, unique. Many other programmes do similar work (and much more!) and certainly work as our inspiration. The above-described characteristics only show the current mix of specific elements of our programme.

How will our programme develop in its second decade? There are of course many variables in the play, but our Street Law dream is as follows: in ten years, Prague Street

<<http://lawforlife.upol.cz/klicove-aktivita-2/program-pravo-pro-kazy-den-street-law/>> and Masaryk University in Brno <<http://udvis.law.muni.cz/streetlaw.html>> all accessed 17 January 2019.

Law will become a semi-professional programme integrating generations of its graduates with Prague law school students of all years. It will be run by a team of staff members, supported by a paid assistant handling most of the administrative work, and it will be offering high quality, entertaining and yet enriching seminars, workshops, mock trials, weekend programmes and summer schools for different groups of members of the public. There will be extended open online database for good teaching materials and number of textbooks published by the Street Law team. The brand Street Law will be opening the doors of Czech schools, the professional as well as general public will know about it and our voice will be heard and taken seriously in discussions around school reform, educating future teachers and legal literacy more generally. And we will of course help with preserving what is Street Law globally famous for: openness to new ideas, not shying away from discussing legal values and constant readiness to cooperate and, if necessary, offer a helping hand to other Street Law programmes.