

**Centre for Gender & Science  
of the Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences  
presents**

# **MENTORING PROGRAM FOR EARLY CAREER RESEARCHERS**

**On the following posters we introduce the participants  
in the fourth year of the program.**

## **What does the mentoring program consist of**

An early career researcher (mentee) teams up with a more experienced researcher/s (mentor/s) who then share their experience with the mentee. The mentors present their career in academia and ways of research and pedagogical work, give advice on starting a career in academia or other sectors where mentee could use skills gained during study and help to solve the many questions that the mentee is faced with. The mentors also introduce their mentees to other members of the academic and research community, help them with career networking, provide workplace references or discuss academic news. The content of the program depends entirely on the mentor and mentee's decision. This gives the mentees an opportunity to concentrate on their subject of interest.

Apart from the cooperation with the mentors, the mentees also attend courses focusing on professional and personal growth (e.g. time management, presentation and communication skills or basic project management courses). In these meetings, the mentees also cooperate with each other, gain more contacts in their field of research and offer each other support in the beginnings of their career.

**Mentoring offers  
a unique opportunity to gain  
information and advice that is  
useful for the development of  
research career.**

## **The fourth year of the program**

In the fourth year of the program in 2019, 137 mentees (95 women and 42 men) and 18 mentors (11 women and 7 men) participated in the mentoring program. Four mentors worked from abroad. There were 107 PhD students and 30 postdocs among the mentees. The mentees study and work in all fields (social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, technical sciences).

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**Institute of Sociology**  
Czech Academy of Sciences



gender & science

A portrait of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a dark blue and white horizontally striped long-sleeved shirt. She is looking slightly to the left with a gentle smile. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an indoor setting with large windows and some architectural elements.

## Mgr. Iva Kubíková, Ph.D.

### **Mgr. Iva Kubíková, Ph.D.**

Research associate

Institute of the Molecular Genetics of the Czech Academy of Sciences

I have returned to academia after a few years spent in the private sector of bio-technological corporations. It is a completely different world that I only knew as a student. The mentoring program seemed like a good opportunity to understand how academic institutions work and what's tricky about the academic career. Thanks to the program I decided to contact the mentor who I admired and whose opinion I wanted to get. Chatting with my colleagues at conferences is quite different from confiding in someone with my flaws and troubles with building my career. The official outline of the program was very helpful in this respect. The whole mentoring program is effectively focused on learning skills that many early researchers struggle with. I was quite surprised how helpful the workshops and discussions with my mentor were for my career.



A portrait of a man with long, wavy brown hair and a beard, wearing glasses and a dark jacket. He is looking slightly to the side with a gentle smile. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an outdoor setting with other people.

# Mgr. Michal Puchovský

## **Mgr. Michal Puchovský**

PhD student

Department for the Study of Religions, Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University

I have signed up for the mentoring program mostly out of curiosity. I am only at the beginning of my career and I'm looking for ways to increase my chances of future employment in the field that I find fulfilling. In my PhD circles, there is relatively big skepticism and depression regarding a career in academia. I thought that my starting position is difficult. Thanks to meeting other PhD students and early career researchers I realized that it's not entirely true. It's also about me and my state of mind. I am also very grateful for the contact with my mentor.



## Mgr. Marie Láníková

### **Mgr. Marie Láníková**

PhD student

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University

The mentoring program gave me a unique opportunity to work with an exceptional lady, who is my great inspiration: Alena Wagnerová. This co-operation came at the right time because I started to lose my motivation and I looked for a way in which I could continue my research. My mentor provided me with new contacts and possibilities to move my research forward. Her interest in my research topic and also her very practical approach "pushed" me forward and also prompted my motivation and thinking. At the same time, her kindness means a lot to me not only on a professional but also on personal level.



A portrait of Dr. Alena Wagnerová, an elderly woman with short, wavy brown hair and blue eyes. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. She is wearing a dark blue jacket over a dark blue turtleneck sweater and a patterned scarf with blue, red, and white designs. The background is dark and out of focus.

## Dr. Alena Wagnerová

**Dr. Alena Wagnerová**

Author, publicist, historian

More or less I think that the transgeneration cooperation is always useful for both parties. That's why I accepted my role as a mentor for PhD student Marie Láníková. I was a little hesitant at first because I am a freelance author and publicist and therefore, I have no function in the academic or public sector so I couldn't be helpful to her in this respect. However, I am an experienced oral historian and that became important in Maria's dissertation because she will also do interviews with now rather elderly women and their work in the Czechoslovakian Union of Women during its entire existence. Maria and I get along very well and we plan on conducting the first and the second interview together.





## doc. Martin Cajthaml, Ph.D. Mgr. Jan Josl, Ph.D.

### **doc. Martin Cajthaml, Ph.D.**

Head of the Department of Philosophy and Patrology  
Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology, Palacký University Olomouc

I consider this mentoring program to be very successful because it can be truly beneficial for the mentees without putting any additional administrative load on the mentors. Without these distractions it is possible to focus on the core of things: passing on your - professional and personal - experiences as an academic in the middle of your career growth to the PhD student. You can also try to convey not only what is important regarding a career in academia but also why one would want to pursue it in the first place. Hopefully I at least partially succeeded with Jan Josl. I wish him good luck on his difficult journey.

### **Mgr. Jan Josl, Ph.D.**

Lecturer  
University of Jan Amos Komenský

The catalyst for finishing my dissertation was the birth of my daughter. Unfortunately, family life and finishing my PhD made me so busy that I forgot to plan what to do next. Suddenly I realized that I was stuck and had no idea what step I should take next. I had a lot of questions. Do I like what a typical academic career in my field looks like? Is it possible to combine it with family life? Have I had enough after years of studies? What are actually my options? And is it even worth it? Where should I ask for help? That's why the mentoring program looked exactly like something I needed. I managed to contact a mentor who not only understood my field but also had experience from many evaluation committees. Thanks to his advice I was able to get a clearer idea about how the whole system works, what the things I should focus on are if I decide to continue with this path and how to use it to motivate myself for future academic work.





# Mgr. Alžběta Kadlecová Mgr. Kateřina Cidlinská

## Mgr. Alžběta Kadlecová

PhD student

Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Charles University

The idea of connecting young scientists from various fields and helping them to achieve their goals was something that appealed to me immediately at the introductory workshop. That is the reason why I decided not to search for my mentor inside academia but I chose to contact Káča Cidlinská instead. I wanted to learn more about organizing the mentoring program. We decided that I'd try leading my own group for other mentees.

Over the year, the group was named the "Young scientists' discussion and sharing group". We discussed several different topics which concern us, from the relationship between PhD students and their supervisors, to the evaluation system in academia, to mental health. I believe that the discussions were helpful to several participants as it gave them the much needed perspective. For me it is another piece in the puzzle of experience that may help me choose my future direction.

## Mgr. Kateřina Cidlinská

Mentoring program coordinator, PhD student

Centre for Gender & Science, Institute of Sociology  
of the Czech Academy of Sciences

When Alžběta asked me to be her mentor, it came as a bit of shock. I've been coordinating the mentoring program for five years, but I've never played the role of mentor before. I was worried whether I had something to offer. In the end, I'm really glad we went for it together. It allowed me to step out from my daily routine, look at my coordinator's work from a different perspective and realize what I had learned through building and running this program – about working with people but also about myself – and that is no minor matter. Therefore, I thank Alžběta for this opportunity!





## Zoya Ghanem, MSc. Ing. Vojtěch Nováček, Ph.D.

### **Zoya Ghanem, MSc.**

PhD student  
Czech Technical University in Prague

My participation in the mentoring program was a very inspiring experience, it gave me the chance to get various helpful answers for my questions and to share my fears as well my experience with other mentees, which allowed me to see the academic life from different perspectives. The workshops that the program offered helped me improve my soft skills very much. My mentor Dr. Vojtech Nováček was and still is helping me a lot to find my way in the research I am working on and to build my career. He inspired me by the way he managed to work in the industrial field and kept in touch with academic and research field and this is all that I was looking for. The whole program is an experience that I will never forget thanks to all the participants and organizers.

### **Ing. Vojtěch Nováček, Ph.D.**

Institute of Physics of the Czech Academy of Sciences

I am glad that I was able to work with Zoya. It's not so long ago when I was in her position of a PhD student and I was grateful for any information from industrial practice. Her situation is however much more difficult since she is from a distant foreign country – Syria. That's why she has my great admiration for how she handles her student and private life. The mentoring was enriching for me as well because I had a chance to learn about the culture of Arabic countries.



A portrait of a woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling gently. She is wearing a dark teal cardigan over a red top and a pearl necklace. Her arms are crossed. The background is a blurred green foliage.

## Mgr. Barbora Čapinská

### Mgr. Barbora Čapinská

PhD student

Institute of political studies, Faculty of social sciences, Charles University

I got the invitation to participate in the mentoring program via email and it was a promise of finishing my PhD. I was going through a difficult period and it felt like this program could help me clear up what I wanted to achieve and if I really want to stay in academia. Even though finding a mentor wasn't my primary goal, soon I met an amazing professor and political scientist Karel B. Muller from the University of Economics and my intuition told me to approach him. He supports me both professionally and personally. Our meetings are always full of encouragement and inspiration thanks to his experience.

Another great benefit for me are the workshops offered by the program, which provide me with interesting knowledge, skills, tips and contacts and allow me to meet young scientists from various fields and parts of the Czech Republic. It's incredibly interesting to learn not only what topics others are focused on but also in what conditions they work and what their struggles are. No matter how much the PhD is mostly about the struggle with oneself, I am still convinced that I will be able to finish my project. I can recommend the mentoring program to anyone who is unsure or needs some motivation.