

WATSU FOR HEALTH, Z.S.
AQUARROOTS INSTITUTE CZECHIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Association since 2013



WATSU FOR HEALTH
AQUATHERAPY

MISSION AND ACTIVITIES

- provision of professional services aimed at supporting physical and mental health, in particular through internationally recognised and certified aquatic therapy methods
- education and training of individuals under the auspices of the Worldwide Aquatic Bodywork Association (WABA) educational programme
- support of participants in the WABA educational programme through mentoring, consultation, supervision, facilitation of practical training, and community networking
- organisation of complementary self-development courses, seminars, lectures, conferences, workshops, residential programmes, and thematic projects
- active support of individuals with physical disabilities and their families, including caregivers
- involvement in research activities on the positive effects of the provided methods and dissemination of awareness among both professional and general public, particularly in rehabilitation, physiotherapy, psychology, and related fields
- cooperation with external professionals through the provision of additional expert services supporting the purpose of the association
- practical cooperation with other entities at national and international level (rehabilitation centres, spa facilities, wellness centres, patient organisations, associations, foundations, etc.)
- translation, publication, and distribution of thematic publications and informational materials
- in line with its main activities, the association organises publicly announced fundraising campaigns with transparent accounts and continuously seeks grants and donations to support its core mission

GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY

In 2025, our community continued to grow – welcoming a total of nine new members. Professional membership was joined by Jakub Polák, Olga Mamai, Kateřina Štiborová, Jitka Froňková, Lukáš Havelka, and Helena Brhelová. Associate membership was further strengthened by Markéta Sklenářová and Martina Podhaiská.

As of 2025, the association brings together 40 members in total, including 29 professional, 5 associate, and 6 honorary members. We have been observing a steady growth in membership over the long term, with a noticeable acceleration in recent years.

Watsu for Health is naturally evolving into an open platform that, alongside education, nurtures a living community built on cooperation, sharing, and mutual support. A key role in this development is played by our focus on working with people with disabilities and caregivers, as well as systematic outreach in the field of aquatic bodywork. This combination of professional expertise, experience, and human connection continues to create an environment that attracts new members and partners over time.





PARTNERSHIPS AND COOPERATION

Alongside donor support, a network of partnerships has been continuously developing, playing a key role in the functioning of the association. These relationships are built on mutual support, shared values, and often also practical assistance in ensuring access to Watsu therapy – for example through the provision of spaces or facilities for therapeutic work.

In 2025, we were significantly and repeatedly supported in this area by the South Bohemian Region, particularly within specific activities focused on service provision.

An important part of our partnerships also includes patient and professional organisations supporting people with various chronic conditions and health limitations. We cooperate with organisations working with individuals affected by neurological, oncological, and musculoskeletal conditions, as well as their caregivers. This cooperation enables more targeted access to Watsu therapy for those who can benefit from it most, and strengthens its role as a supportive and complementary form of care.

Key partner organisations and collaborators in 2025 included:

- FN Bulovka
- Centrum psychosomatické medicíny
- CKP Dobřichovice – Centrum komplexní péče
- Wellness Dobřichovice – Restaurace a Hotel Panská zahrada
- Wellness Konstantinovy lázně
- Wellness obec Želeč
- Plavecké centrum Oceán Pardubice
- Vodní sporty Jihlava
- Dětský klub Fontána Brno
- WATSU® Slovensko
- Unie ROSKA – ROSKA České Budějovice, z.p.s.
- Mia Rose, z.s.
- End Duchenne, z.s.
- Lemniskáta, o.p.s. – Chráněná dílna
- BejKRoll – sportovní freestyle oblečení pro každého, kdo má rád výzvy

PUBLIC FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS

A key part of the association's activities is the long-term development of partnerships and the growth of donor and community support, which enables us to expand access to Watsu therapy for those who would otherwise not be able to afford it.

In 2025, we continued with two publicly announced fundraising campaigns managed through transparent accounts. Both campaigns are rooted in real life stories and experiences, and they continuously connect individual needs with the support of a wider community.

The "Honzík Fund" is linked to a personal story that stood at the very origin of the association. The funds are used to support care, therapeutic interventions, and the necessary conditions for life with a severe disability.



The "Watsu Helps" project is focused on supporting people with physical disabilities, seniors, and caregivers. Thanks to donations received, we are able to organise therapeutic water sessions, community Watsu days, and make water-based therapy accessible to those who need it most.

Support within this project is provided in the form of a direct financial contribution towards individual therapy. Each participant from the target group who joins the programme can receive a subsidy of CZK 700 per session, making each therapy session more affordable by this amount. The aim is to enable more regular attendance and thereby enhance the long-term therapeutic effect.

At the same time, this approach seeks to reduce the financial barrier that is often significant for many clients, taking into account their demanding life situations, long-term health conditions, and limited income.

Both fundraising campaigns were supported throughout 2025 by individual donors, long-term contributors, and members of the wider community.

Transparent accounts and the public disclosure of both campaigns enable oversight of financial flows and serve as an important tool for openness, trust, and responsible management of donations.

AQUAROOTS INSTITUTE CZECHIA & SLOVAKIA

Our long-standing educational programme is aligned with international standards and delivered in cooperation with certified WABA instructors and assistants. In 2025, its quality and continuity were further strengthened despite changing national conditions in recent years.

A key milestone in international cooperation came in 2023, when Slovak member Ondřej Holotňák founded Watsu Slovakia and became actively involved in education, creating a shared space for development between the Czech Republic and Slovakia. This cooperation gradually deepened in the following years.

In 2024 and 2025, the collaboration expanded significantly, with several courses delivered in Slovakia in cooperation with Watsu for Health. Based on trust, respect, and a shared vision, WABA granted Training Institute status (TI) to both countries, approved on 24 August 2025. This led to the establishment of two interconnected institutes: AquaRoots Institute Czechia & AquaRoots Institute Slovakia.

The name AquaRoots reflects long-term experience, shared values, and the “roots” from which this educational platform grows, as well as the deeper human and professional connection between both countries.

The founders of the platform are Dita Linhartová and Ondřej Holotňák. Dita serves as lead instructor for Watsu 2 and mentor for the Czech Republic, while Monica Marcangeli (WABA Board) holds the mentoring role for Slovakia.

The core team includes Renáta Tejnská and Jana Nikodýmová (Czech Republic), and Ondřej Holotňák and Patrícia Bačová (Slovakia). Renáta is preparing to begin teaching Watsu Basic, while other members are entering instructor training in the following period.

**THE YEAR 2025 BROUGHT A SIGNIFICANT
DEEPENING OF CZECH-SLOVAK COOPERATION
IN EDUCATION. A TOTAL OF TEN COURSES
WERE DELIVERED WITHIN THE JOINT
ORGANISATION – SIX IN SLOVAKIA AND FOUR
IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC.**



In the same week in March, Šárka Laura Tůmová and Dita Linhartová were invited to take part in the podcast Vyléčitelní, hosted by a moderator who is also a member of the ROSKA organisation. This resulted in an open and enriching conversation, during which both guests shared deeper insights into the impact of work in the aquatic environment on both psychological and physical well-being, as well as reflections on the training process of Watsu® therapists. The discussion highlighted how complex this educational pathway is – and how essential such depth is if a therapist is to guide others with sensitivity and responsibility.

The fact that this conversation took place during World Watsu Week was seen as a symbolic confirmation that our work is part of a broader international movement connecting aquatic therapists across countries.



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INTRODUCTION

The activities of the association in 2025 naturally unfolded across several interconnected areas – from building partnerships and developing donor support, to expanding our educational platform and providing direct care to clients and the community, both on land and in the water. These areas gently intertwine, forming a living whole grounded in cooperation, trust, and long-term development.

During this year, both the professional and human dimensions of our community deepened. Collaboration with institutions and patient organizations continued to grow, and step by step we were able to make therapeutic care accessible to a wider range of people with physical disabilities, chronic conditions, as well as their caregivers.

At the same time, 2025 became a year of natural growth and connection within the community. New members joined, bringing fresh energy that gradually found its way into shared activities, projects, and educational and therapeutic processes. In this way, an even stronger network of relationships emerged – one that reflects the essence of our work: sharing, trust, and a path we walk together.



FEWER LARGE STAGES, MORE REAL ENCOUNTERS

The year 2025 was, in terms of public presentation, a quieter period, yet one that reflects deeper and more focused work. Unlike the previous year, when we participated in larger congresses and conferences, this year we concentrated more on smaller, more intimate meetings and targeted events.

Our presentations were primarily directed toward specific groups, especially neurological and orthopedic patients, as well as individuals living with chronic pain. This focus reflects our ongoing commitment not to limit aquatic therapy to the field of wellbeing alone, but to increasingly integrate it into clinical contexts and therapeutic practice.

We continue to offer a new approach for improving physical, psychological, and social well-being. The aim was therefore not to address a broad professional or general audience, but rather to create space for sharing experience and providing direct support to those who, in our view, benefit most from aquatic therapy.

One such moment was the presentation by Dita Linhartová at an internal event of the ROSKA organisation in České Budějovice. The meeting took place within the *naMars* project, which symbolically opens up themes of living with multiple sclerosis – a life in conditions that can feel “like being on another planet.” The project creates a safe space for sharing experiences, strengthening psychological resilience, and exploring ways to improve the quality of everyday life for people diagnosed with MS.

For our association, this event carried an additional dimension. Its timing coincided symbolically with the international initiative of the Worldwide Aquatic Bodywork Association, known as World Watsu Week – a week-long global event during which Watsu practitioners around the world open the doors to aquatic therapy, share experiences, and offer lectures and other outreach activities. Our participation in an event under the auspices of ROSKA thus naturally connected local support for the patient community with the broader international initiative.



MaRS 2025
týden pohybu pro RS
24. - 29. března

14. ročník pohybové osvětové kampaně na podporu rehabilitace a fyzioterapie lidí s roztroušenou sklerózou

Přijďte si zacvičit a podpořte léčbu roztroušené sklerózy – týden plný pohybu napříč celou republikou, více:
www.maratonmars.cz
<https://www.facebook.com/roskacb/events>

PROGRAM PŘEDNÁŠEK:
Konopí jako lék - WalkAide - Zdravá výživa - Watsu - Život s RS - Rugby Č. Budějovice - Benefity sportu - Zdravé spaní

KONTAKT: Ilona Lonsminová, tel: 728 162 956

VSTUPNÉ: DOBROVOLNÉ

Podpořit můžete také dobrovolným příspěvkem na účet veřejné sbírky 242164841/0300, nebo pomocí QR kódu

KDY:
28. 3. 2025 - 15:00 - 20:00 hod.

KDE:
SZŠ a VOŠZ, Husova 3, Č. Budějovice

PROGRAM CVIČENÍ:
Feldenkraisova metoda - Cvičení s vlastní vahou těla - Barre Days - Pilates Clinic - Jóga

Po celou dobu akce - praktické ukázky první pomoci a dentální hygieny. Je možné si vyzkoušet EMS trénink se studiem Body Express.

Výdělek z dobrovolného vstupného pospouje na pořízení rehabilitačního stroje IMOOVE a zajištění provozu rehabilitačního centra Rosky České Budějovice.

Impuls
národní fond

Tento projekt je spolufinancován z rozpočtu Statutárního města České Budějovice a Jihočeského kraje. Záštitu nad akcí převzal doc. Ing. Lucie Kozlová Ph.D., doc. Dr. Ing. Dagmar Škodová Purnová a MUDr. Pavel Bělehrádek Ph.D., MPA



WHERE WATSU® PROVIDES LONG-TERM SUPPORT

In 2025, the Para Swimming Cup Prague was not held for the first time in several years. This event had previously become a heartfelt tradition for our association at Štuka (Prague 8). Although we did not take part this year, we deeply value all previous editions and would like to thank the organizers from Czech Para Swimming, all participants, and our volunteer therapists.

A new and meaningful tradition has emerged through our collaboration with Monoski Zlín and our member Petra Menclová, who regularly provides Watsu® therapy to clients and supporters of Monoski. Monoski is a sports and rehabilitation initiative focused on people with limited mobility, offering participants the joy of skiing on a monoski as well as complementary activities.

This collaboration brings clients not only physical support through movement but also the opportunity to experience a therapeutic water environment and use it as a new way of sensing and reconnecting with their bodies. It has quickly become a valued part of the Monoski program and significantly contributes to our mission of supporting people with disabilities.



Clients were able to receive Watsu® therapy thanks to the long-term collaboration between the Monoski Zlín and Prima Život associations, which regularly organize residential programs for people with physical disabilities.

These stays naturally combine active movement in the form of monoski skiing with relaxation in water, Watsu® therapy, and additional supportive activities. This creates a unique rhythm between activity and rest, offering a balanced form of physical and mental regeneration.

However, it is not only about sport and therapy. Equally important is the space for sharing, laughter, joy, and the formation of new friendships. This combination creates a safe and inspiring environment where participants can regain strength, trust, and renewed motivation for everyday life.

In 2025, we carried out the fifth edition of the project “WATSU® Helps Caregivers, People with Disabilities and Seniors”, supported by the South Bohemian Region under the grant programme “Support for Services Not Defined in Act No. 108/2006 Coll., on Social Services”, with funding of CZK 65,000.

Thanks to this support, we were able to provide WATSU® and other forms of aquatic therapy free of charge to those who need it most.

Between May and December 2025, we delivered a total of 39 individual aquatic therapy sessions, and an additional 32 sessions took place during a one-day group event held on 23 November.



Once again, we were reminded that caregivers are often overlooked. It was therefore deeply meaningful to welcome a relatively large number of people who are frequently providing 24-hour care for their children with disabilities, carrying an immense psychological burden and facing ongoing exhaustion. Among the caregivers, we were also able to support employees from Rolnička Tábor, Home Care České Budějovice, and DiaPodi Care Soběslav.

Working with several kind elderly participants – grandmothers and grandfathers – was a true joy. Offering them the experience of free and effortless movement, in contrast to the physical limitations they face in daily life, remains one of the most valuable and rewarding aspects of our work.



The whole programme was designed so that participants could experience calm, care, and support. After the therapy sessions, they were able to relax further in the whirlpool or sauna, share a warm drink, or browse short publications about aquatic therapy.

For us as a team, it was another gathering that brought deep meaning and also strengthened our connection. Voices of joy, gratitude, and shared presence were expressed throughout the day – and immediately afterwards, we exchanged voice messages confirming that everyone who was there felt they belonged and experienced genuine joy in the moment.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the project coordinator Šárka Laura Tůmová, as well as to the volunteers Daniela Kubů, Petra Menclová, Jana Boroňová, Oldřiška Modlingerová, Anička Pospíšilová, Dita Linhartová, and Jitka Froňková. Our gratitude also goes to the mayor of the municipality, Ladislav Stejskal, and to the staff of Wellness Želeč.



PLACES OF PRACTICE AND THEIR CHANGES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

We continue to maintain stable cooperation with wellness centres in Dobřichovice and Konstantinovy Lázně, where we operate on a regular quarterly basis and where a growing community of returning clients is forming. We would like to thank Šárka Laura Tůmová and Michaela Krejčová for their dedication and energy in organising and promoting these events.

WATSU® is also part of the services at Bulovka University Hospital, where it is provided within the outpatient physiotherapy department. This cooperation represents an important link between the method and the clinical environment, and a meaningful direction for its further development.

In 2025, we also experienced several operational changes. We continued to work at the Centre of Psychosomatic Medicine in Prague, Valnovka Wellness Hotel, Svět plavání in Jesenice, Kněžínek Wellness Hotel in České Budějovice, as well as in Brno and Zlín.

During the year, venues in Brno and South Bohemia changed, but both were successfully replaced. Brno therapists now cooperate with the Fontána Children's Centre, while South Bohemian activities moved to the village of Želeč.

We said goodbye to the Kněžínek Wellness Hotel, a place that offered both therapeutic and educational space in a natural environment. Due to long-term technical and financial sustainability issues, we relocated to Želeč, where a new modern wellness facility with a pool, sauna, whirlpool, and lifting equipment now provides excellent conditions for WATSU® therapy, especially for clients with physical disabilities, though it is less suitable for theoretical training.

In Pardubice, activities continue at the Oceán Centre, where therapeutic sessions are expanding and trust with clients is growing. This location is gradually becoming not only a therapy site but also a potential space for shorter or summer training courses.

At the end of the year, we also began discussions about expanding to the Rejnok swimming facility in Hostivice, opening new opportunities for newly certified practitioners and students. We thank Oldřiška Modlingerová for this connection.

WATSU® THERAPY AT BULOVKA UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL



At Bulovka University Hospital, WATSU® therapy is offered as part of the clinical rehabilitation department. Within its hydrotherapy section, the pool is heated daily to the required temperature of 34°C, allowing patients to book sessions and experience the therapy.

The clinic is exceptional not only for providing this service to patients based on medical recommendation and prescription, but also because, thanks to employee benefit programs (FKSP), WATSU® is accessible to hospital staff as well.

Head of the department MUDr. Bc. Petra Sládková, Ph.D., and MUDr. Marie Tichá first encountered WATSU® in the spa town of Piešťany during a physiotherapy conference in 2024. From January 2025, they introduced regular WATSU® therapy sessions in collaboration with a member of Watsu for Health, physiotherapist PhDr. Patrícia Bačová. Under her supervision, regular practical sessions are also held, supporting diploma theses and other academic work of students from the 1st and 3rd Faculties of Medicine of Charles University in Prague.

In addition to PhDr. Patrícia Bačová, Mgr. Michaela Schramlová and, over the long term, Mgr. Renáta Tejnská play an important role as key links connecting WATSU® therapy with the above-mentioned faculties.

We believe that, in the future, the remarkable effects of warm water combined with targeted therapeutic movement can be further supported and validated through clinical research. All three professionals from our association are interested in actively contributing to such initiatives. In this context, continued and expanded financial support will be essential for the development of research activities related to WATSU®.

