

Record number of students enter the '2019 University Volunteer Award' in Portugal

Lisbon, 27 November 2019. The ten finalists of the fourth University Volunteer Award (UVA) Santander Universities have been announced. This year, 100 applications were submitted from 16 districts in the country, a record number of applicants (vs 50 last year). The proposed projects involve 4000 volunteers in diverse social areas impacting 100,000 people.

The selected projects target the districts of Aveiro, Braga, Coimbra, Portalegre, Porto, Setúbal and Vila Real. The submitted projects focused on the following issues: 31.5% on Social inclusion, 17.8% on Healthcare, 11% on Education, 11% on Ageing and 9.6% on Skills development. Some of the projects' recipients include Young people (27%), Children (14%), Elderly people (11%), Families (7%), Immigrants and people with disabilities (4%) and Patients (2%).

Launched in 2016, the UVA Santander Universities rewards charity projects by higher education students. The higher-education institution with the most submissions is presented with the honorary mention "IES + Voluntária".

Considering the award's importance, the financial aid given to the various categories has been reinforced. Each of three winning projects will be given EUR 4000, and the other seven finalists will receive EUR 1000 each.

There is also a UVA Communication award (EUR 1000) for the finalist video with the highest number of votes online. The winner is voted on by the public on UVA's website between today and the 3 December.

Find out more at: pvu.ajudamos.pt and watch the [finalist videos here](#)

The finalists of the 2019 University Volunteer Award Santander Universities are:

1. Project: **Escolas de Superpoderes**

Associated institution: University of Porto

District: Porto

Goal: Social franchising to create "superpower schools" where the actions which are part of the initiative are designed in each community to respond to the identified needs. Volunteer mentors who hold week classes for different talents (cooking, football, kickboxing, rowing, surf, music, drama, meditation, photography, etc.) to children and young people at risk from schools, council housing, juvenile detention facilities or shelters. Later, these young people must identify issues in their communities and develop actions to minimise them.

2. Project: **GBZ - Desenvolvimento e Integração Social**

Associated institution: School of Philosophy and Social Sciences of the Catholic University of Braga

District: Braga

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Goal: To encourage social cohesion between children and young people from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds by carrying out activities throughout the year with groups of young people from different social backgrounds. The work will focus on social difference so that it becomes a source of wealth rather than a reason for exclusion. Personal/Social training of children is provided by a group of 100 volunteers between the ages of 18 and 25 who implement educational, creative and recreational activities throughout the year (visits to families, private tuition, holiday camps, training and creative weekends, etc.).

3. Project: **Já T'Explico**

Associated institution: University of Porto

District: Porto

Goal: To fight academic underachievement in children from difficult socioeconomic backgrounds. To offer academic support and private lessons to students of years 5 to 9 from deprived socioeconomic backgrounds. This includes organising recreational activities and promoting citizen involvement.

4. Project: **ShareToy**

Associated institution: Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers - University of Aveiro

District: Aveiro

Goal: To collect damaged toys to be repaired by students of Electronics, Telecommunications and IT and later donated to organisations involving children. This initiative is divided into three phases: collecting damaged toys although all types of toys are accepted; repairing the toys in four repair sessions at the Electronics, Telecommunications and IT department of the University of Aveiro; and delivering the toys to the associations, thus making children happier with a Christmas present.

5. Project: **U.DREAM**

Associated institution: School of Economics of the University of Porto

District: Porto

Goal: Social non-formal education project aiming to educate for social impact. Using the U.DREAM impact methodology – Me, Me and Others, and Me in the Community. Two-year programme divided into four semesters focusing on developing personal skills and fostering the involvement in the community. At the same time, the programme will implement several social experiments with an impact on different groups and, at the end a social impact project will be developed.

6. Project: **Programa de Voluntariado Intergeracional - QUALidade**

Associated institution: Polytechnic Institute of Porto

District: Porto

Goal: Holiday camp for elderly people at risk of abandonment with activities carried out by young volunteers. Camp with young volunteers hosting activities aimed at elderly people identified by the local government as being at risk of abandonment or isolation. Each volunteer looks after a senior citizen by keeping them company, supporting them and sharing cultural and recreational experiences. The senior citizens restore emotional ties and enjoy a sort of "holiday within our borders".

7. Project: **Olival Ecológico e Solidário**

Associated institution: Polytechnic Institute of Portalegre

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District: Portalegre

Goal: Social support by leveraging the agricultural production at the IES. Leveraging the eight-hectare olive tree grove at the Polytechnic of Portalegre by organising olive harvesting activities with the beneficiaries of various local social associations, promoting their integration and knowledge about the process. The olives will then be transformed into olive oil for donation to the organisations, which help people with disabilities, families, children and young people, and the elderly.

8. Project: **Gerações Unidas**

Associated institution: University of Trás-os Montes e Alto Douro

District: Vila Real

Goal: To fight the isolation of elderly people by visiting them at their homes. This project promotes weekly visits by volunteers to the homes of identified elderly people in Vila Real, who are already helped by a charity. These visits aim to fight loneliness by having the two generations share their experiences. The volunteers are trained by qualified professionals. Workshops will also be held to raise the awareness of the university's students about this issue.

9. Project: **Acordar Coimbra**

Associated institution: School of Economics of the University of Coimbra

District: Coimbra

Goal: To organise a competition for the submission of ideas and/or projects to improve the city of Coimbra at the social, environment and town planning levels. During two to three days of intensive training, development and planning, the ideas come to life, are developed and presented to a jury. The best ideas in each category receive a monetary prize. There is a plan to include a day for open talks where local residents can learn about the third sector.

10. Project: **Comunidade para uma Vida Saudável**

Associated institution: Polytechnic Institute of Setúbal

District: Setúbal

Goal: To fight the social isolation of elderly people living in poor areas, through exercise. To promote and offer free sports activities in poor areas of Setúbal to reinforce the social cohesion of residents (e.g. walks and runs at the of the day, canoeing, etc.). Group activities enable residents to establish interpersonal relationships and promote social cohesion. This project also makes it possible to assess the overall physical and functional condition of elderly residents, to raise their awareness about the importance of exercise and to create opportunities for socialising.

Banco Santander and its commitment to education

Through Santander Universities, Santander in Portugal undertakes to promote the best practices in response to the challenges posed by Portuguese society. The Bank is already a leading promoter of higher education in Portugal, with partnerships with 50 higher education institutions. The Bank invests more than EUR seven million in Corporate Social Responsibility every year.

Banco Santander is the only European bank in the 2018 'Change the World' ranking of businesses that are helping to make the world a better place (Fortune magazine) through its positive impact on the community, among other metrics.

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Its firm commitment to higher education, through [Santander Universities](#), also distinguished Santander as the company that invests the most in education worldwide (Varkey Report / UNESCO / Fortune 500). This is now one of Santander's hallmarks: it has 1,200 partnership agreements in place with universities and institutions in more than 20 countries and has allocated more than EUR 1,700 million to academic initiatives since 2002, and it provided more than 73,000 university scholarships and grants in 2018 alone, with the aim of helping people, businesses and society to prosper.

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