



Activity Report 2020



Hungary Helps Agency

HUNGARY HELPS



FOREWORD



When we reflect upon the issue of humanitarian assistance, the key factors to making a lasting impact are responsibility, solidarity, and professional commitment. We need to stand up for each other in times of distress and disaster, and we need to do it in a timely and efficient manner.

The Hungary Helps Program, established in 2017, is based on these principles. We provide assistance in crisis zones affected by violence, and man-induced or natural disaster. We stand in solidarity with those who suffer and offer tangible help with the involvement of local organisations.

Up to this point, the Hungary Helps Program has reached approximately half a million people. Despite the setback caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, more than 50 projects have been launched in 2020. The causes we support vary from immediate humanitarian response or reconstruction projects to strengthening local communities.

At the Hungary Helps Program, we believe that help should be prompt, direct, and local. Prompt, because we respond to crises situations in a timely manner. Direct, because we are convinced that the assistance we provide should reach suffering communities through the shortest possible route. And local, because we hold that no one knows better where help is needed the most than the representatives of local organisations.

As Martin Luther King Jr. asserted: *“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: what are you doing for others?”*. The Hungary Helps Program, representing a country of merely 10 million people, is doing all it can to reduce the magnitude of today’s humanitarian crises. We believe that every penny, drop of water, or brick in the wall counts when it comes to protecting and supporting human lives and dignity.

Tristan Azbej, PhD.

*State Secretary
for the Aid of Persecuted Christians
and for the Hungary Helps Program*



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HUNGARY HELPS

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ACTORS OF THE HUNGARY HELPS PROGRAM





Guiding Principles and Actors of the Hungary Helps Program

The Hungary Helps Program is an initiative of the Hungarian government to implement humanitarian assistance as well as reconstruction and stabilization activities in crisis areas and developing countries. The fundamental principles of the Program are: (1) identifying the causes and nature of humanitarian crises, (2) providing direct and local assistance and (3) supporting affected communities to remain in their homelands. Through the Program, Hungary also contributes to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations Framework for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030).

Established in 2019, the Hungary Helps Agency is a non-profit organisation responsible for implementing the Program's objectives. Its core mission is to ensure that assistance reaches communities suffering from persecution and humanitarian disaster rapidly, directly, and efficiently. The main tasks of the Agency are as follows:

- project management: disbursement of subsidies, follow-up on transactions, financial and technical coordination, monitoring, reporting;
- cooperation with other humanitarian organisations, participation in bilateral and multilateral humanitarian aid projects, especially in V4 and EU context;
- managing private donations.

Projects are designed according to the needs of local communities. It is an important aspect of the Program to involve local organisations in the realisation phase since they know best where help is needed the most. The projects aim at ensuring long-term social stability and sustainability, bearing in mind the links between sustainable development, humanitarian action, and peacebuilding.

The provided assistance is prompt, direct, and local. The guiding principle of the Hungary Helps Program is to rely on the expertise of local organisations as they are familiar with the circumstances, mentality, and culture on the spot. These organisations have remarkable skills with respect to community-building since they have decades-long experience in Sub-Saharan Africa and centuries-long traditions in the Middle East.

This report presents an overview of the Program's activities in 2020. Projects vary from supporting the reconstruction of schools, hospitals, or infrastructure to providing emergency humanitarian assistance. However, the goal is always the same: to deliver help from the Hungarian people to communities in crisis in an efficient and timely manner.



2020 – A Challenging Year

2020 was a challenging year regarding the operations of the Hungary Helps Agency. The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating impact on the whole year and put obstacles in our way.



*Péter Kovács-Pifka
Director General of the
Hungary Helps Agency*

The humanitarian crises have become more protracted and complex issues, where emergency aid actions are only the first element of the integrated humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus. As a complex and holistic approach, HDP nexus has the potential to achieve a full impact in advancing the Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs), whilst reducing risks and vulnerabilities, on the long term. We designed our projects for reconstruction, health, education, and emergency response according to community-based initiatives. We strongly believe that increasing the resilience of communities is a key factor of recovery. Thus, providing direct assistance for vulnerable communities is the important priority of Hungary Helps Program's actions in Sub-Saharan Africa and in the Middle East.

Working on our goals, Hungary Helps Program closely cooperates with Faith-

Based Organizations (FBOs) both in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. Alongside ethnic diversity, religion is one of the most important identity-shaping factors in these regions, as most African and Middle Eastern people belong to one of the main religious denominations or to local beliefs. Peace, security, and strong institutional structures are therefore inconceivable if people are deprived from living both the personal and communal identity through religion. We strongly believe that FBOs have the potential to make a direct and especially local impact. The deep access of FBOs is an important link in connecting complex environments. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that apparently religious conflicts are often rooted in a deeper competition for diminishing resources, which undermine institutional and social stability. A problem which can only be solved if religious diversity is treated as a valuable element of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

Sub-Saharan Africa – in focus

Africa is changing dramatically, posing challenges and opportunities at the same time. In 2020, 17 African countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of their independence. Despite the enormous increases these countries made in terms of economy, human capacity, and value chains, the continent faces major challenges in



many places: parts of Sub-Saharan Africa continue to struggle with violent extremism, climate and demographic crises, and cycles of poverty and corruption, while ethnic, religious, and resource conflicts overshadow the objectives of effective governance and the delivery of the most basic services.

Forms of instability were further increased by the spread of Covid-19 which led to destabilization of entire regions. In this situation, humanitarian action is undoubtedly essential to addressing immediate crises: in 2020 the Hungary Helps Agency started to implement 17 new projects in 8 countries of Africa, especially in the Sub-Saharan region, providing assistance to a total amount of 1.5 million €.

In line with SDGs, Hungary Helps 2020 African projects focused on eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, providing clean water supplies, sanitation, decent employment, and quality education, as well as protecting environmental systems.

Key targets of the Hungary Helps Program are peaceful and inclusive societies (SDG16), elimination of poverty (SDG1), zero hunger (SDG2), good health and well-being (SDG3), quality education (SDG4), decent employment (SGD8), reduction of inequalities (SDG10) and sustainable communities (SDG11) – these are amongst the most important goals in Sub-Saharan Africa. Besides these, our activities in Africa are



closely aligned with the goals of African Union Agenda 2063 for healthy and well-nourished citizens (Goal 3), modern agriculture (Goal 5), universal principles of human rights (Goal 11), peace, security, and stability (Goal 13 and 14), as well as engaged and empowered youth and children (Goal 18).

To ensure our effective operation, our Program closely cooperates with faith-based organizations (FBOs) as we strongly believe that in fragile areas of Nigeria, Ethiopia, or the DRC this perspective can be a game changer.

Middle East – in focus

The Middle East is ravaged by socio-political and even military conflicts. Parts of the region continue to struggle with violent extremism, including religious extremism, climate and demographic crises, and cycles of poverty and corruption, while just as in the Sub-Saharan region, ethnic, religious, and resource conflicts overshadow the objectives of effective governance and the delivery of the most basic services.

The spread of COVID-19 further exacerbated all the problems of the region. In this



situation, humanitarian action is undoubtedly essential to address immediate crises: in 2020, the Hungary Helps Agency started to implement 20 new projects in 6 countries in the Middle East, providing assistance to a total amount of 12.1 million €.

In line with SDGs, the Middle Eastern projects of the Hungary Helps Agency focused on quality education and sustainable cities in 2020.



Key targets of the Hungary Helps Program are zero hunger (SDG2), good health and well-being (SDG3), quality education (SDG4), decent employment (SDG8), reduction of inequalities (SDG10), and sustainable communities (SDG11) – these are amongst the most important goals in the Middle East.

In a region like the Middle East where cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity is present, it is vitally important to work closely with local faith-based organizations (FBOs) in order to reach those most vulnerable and thereby, accomplish our goals. In areas of Syria and Iraq, among the Levantine people, this perspective can help bring about a number of new, positive changes.

Challenges we responded to in 2020

Just as in other parts of the world and every area of life, the spread of Covid-19 pandemic became an unavoidable factor in Sub Saharan Africa and in the Middle East, too. The pandemic is affecting African countries differently, given varied strength and vulnerabilities. While the immediate health impact is still evolving with relatively low numbers of cases, the indirect consequences beyond health are already bringing a heavy toll.

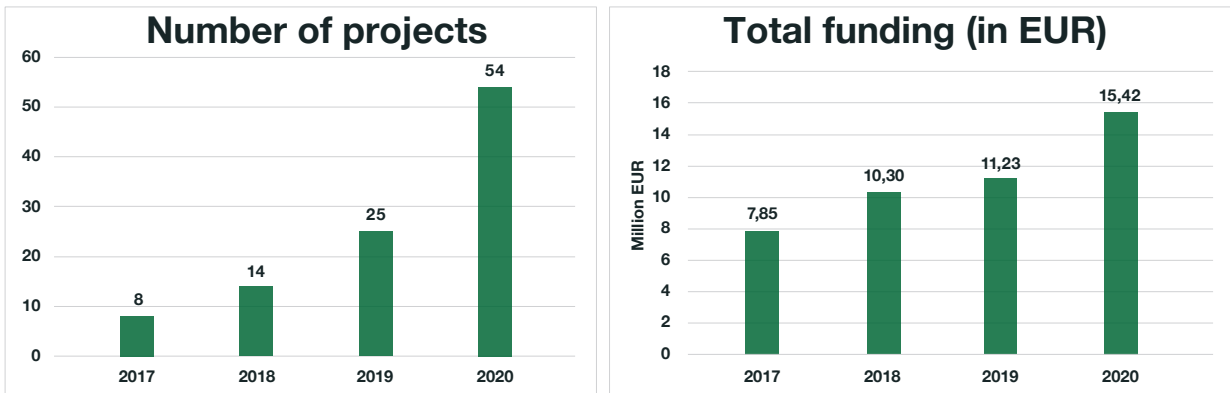
Negative effects were amplified by the restrictions and lockdowns put in place: loss of income and livelihood deepened food insecurity and debt crises, difficulties in applying medical supplies overloaded the capacities of the healthcare system. Restrictions and lockdowns led to school dropouts which, in the case of younger generations, increased the risk of child marriage, radicalization, and illegal migration.

The following overview summarizes how we responded to these challenges in 2020.

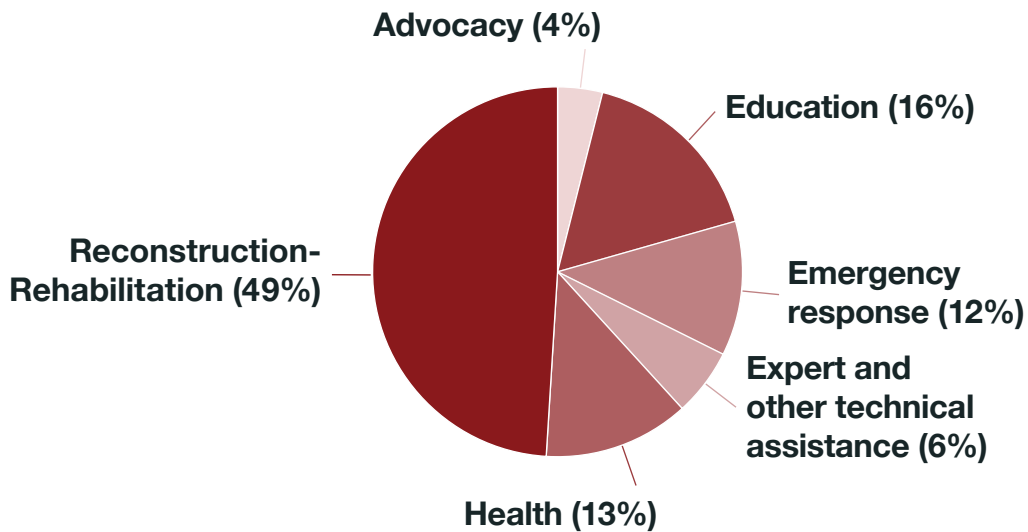


Hungary Helps Program in terms of numbers*

Number of projects and funding per year



Funding per different sectors (2017-2020)



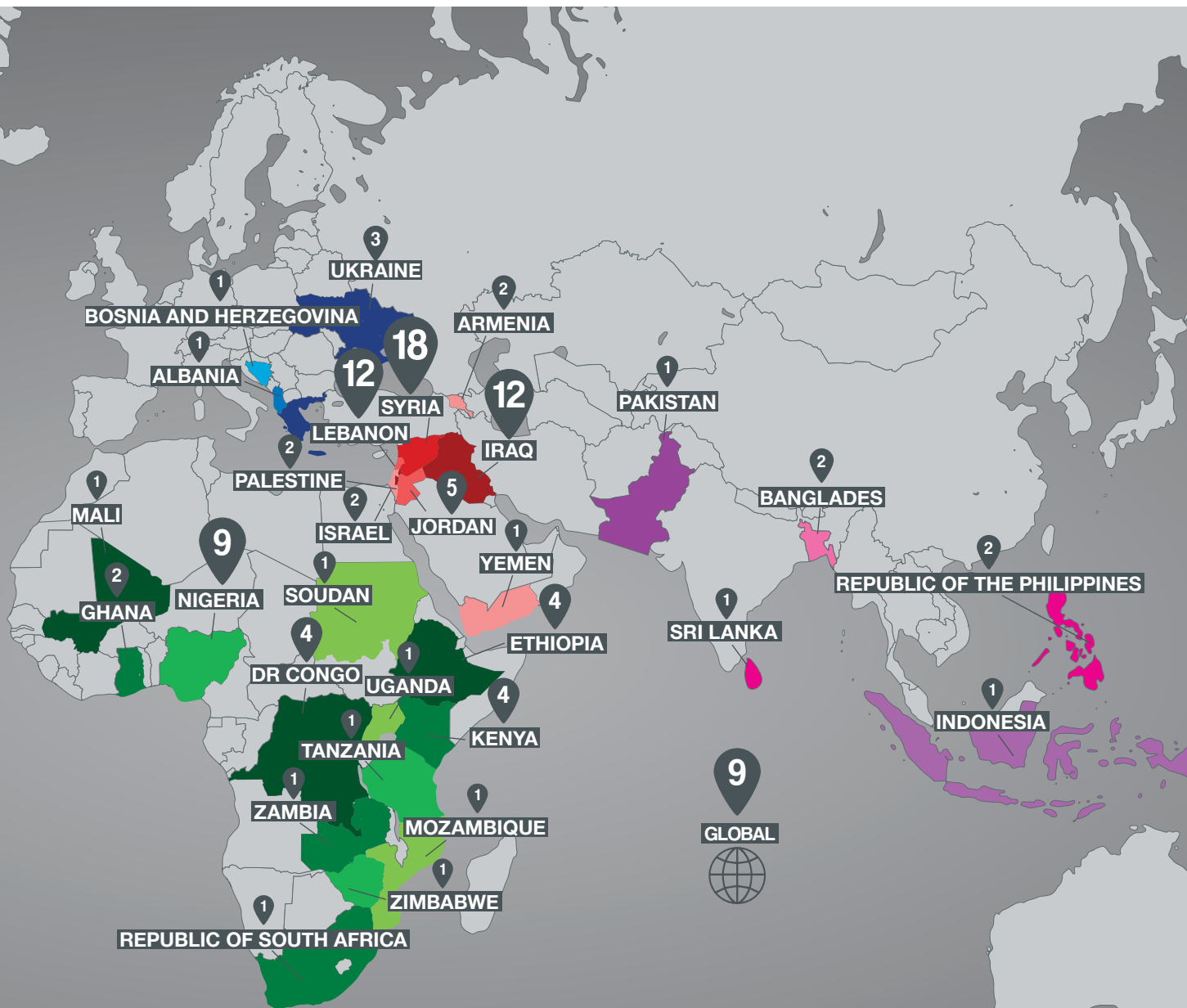
(2017-2020)

Total amount of grants: 45 million EUR
Total number of projects: 102

*Status in 23/12/2020



Ongoing projects in 2020





HUNGARY HELPS

OUR ACTIVITIES – OVERVIEW OF OPERATIONS IN 2020





Education as a Tool for New Opportunities and Social Equality

Investing in education and youth is a prerequisite for building a sustainable future globally and it is especially true for developing countries of Sub-Saharan Africa and regions of the Middle East affected by wars and protracted conflicts. The exploding youth population of Africa and the high proportion of youth population of the Middle East requires first and foremost the support of quality education and youth participation advancement of vocational skills training to increase mobility and access to markets and rights.

In 2020, the Hungary Helps Program started to support the construction and modernization of schools, workshops for vocational training, and counselling centres in Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, and Nigeria, and in the Middle East in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. These projects are focusing on empowering women, teaching displaced children, and upgrading education both in overcrowded slums and isolated rural communities. Covid-19 created a special challenge as it caused loss of income and school dropouts, factors which have significantly increased the risk of child marriage, radicalization, and illegal migration.

Ethiopia

Supporting education in partnership with local FBOs

National Youth Formation and Counselling Centre in Addis Ababa In partnership with the Ethiopian Catholic Church, the Hungary Helps Program supports the construction of a National Youth Formation and Counselling Centre in Addis Ababa. The Centre provides safe accommodation, social activities, psychological assistance, and counselling, along with educational and career guidance to 50 disadvantaged young women. These women often have a migration background and became returnees after they went through traumatic events while working illegally abroad. The professional experts of the Centre help them to reintegrate, build new relationships, find a decent job, or launch their own entrepreneurship, enabling the young women to have a new and decent life start.

Renovations of old rural schools in Oromia, where different religions and ethnic groups live together

Together with Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, in 2020 the Hungary Helps Program started to renovate several old rural schools located in the remote but densely populated countryside of Oromia. Through this project, kindergartens, plus primary and secondary schools will be renovated.



Such buildings have been operating as schools for around seven decades, and their condition has deteriorated significantly during that time. Refurbishing, modernizing, and extending the capacity of these buildings has become vitally important to the rapidly expanding local communities, as they have no other access to educational services. The project also facilitates the peaceful coexistence of different religions and ethnic groups with peace councils. As part of this activity, awareness programmes, workshops, and conferences will be organized, with psychosocial assistance to traumatized people and IDPs.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

College Othniel School in Kinshasa

Together with Foundation for Africa, the Hungary Helps Program funds the capacity building of College Othniel School in Kinshasa. The “College for Life” project aims at helping the development of vocational training activities in a district where 54,000 people are suffering from poverty. In the workshops, professional trainers will provide courses in sewing, IT, agriculture, carpentry, and the electrician and optician professions. These skills enable the poorest young people to secure decent living conditions, escape from poverty cycle and remain in their local communities and homeland.

Kenya and Tanzania

Skills-training in focus

Building an extension of the St. Joseph the Worker Parish School in the Kangemi district of Nairobi, Kenya.

Through the support of the Hungary Helps Program additional classrooms for skills training were built to develop a workshop. About 20,000 persons belong to St. Joseph Catholic Parish where rapidly increasing numbers of students are enrolling in the St. Joseph Parish School. This project is crucial to address the unemployment crisis of young people with marketable professions.

With this large capacity building the school will operate as a modern centre for skills-training, improving the learning prospects of the youth of Kangemi, and increasing their chances of breaking free from the poverty cycle.

Betshaida Youth Sewing and Clothing Project, Eastern-Tanzania

At the foothills of Kilimanjaro, in Moshi, Eastern-Tanzania, girls and young women are often disadvantaged in their communities. After the primary school years – without any relevant profession or qualification – marriage and child-birth is the only option for a high number of them. Economically, Moshi is a centre in trade, tourism, and agriculture. Sewing is one of the highly demanded services provided in this area, which could help these women to find sustainable self-sufficiency in the long-term.



The aim of the project is to help 45 young women to use their talents and skills in a sustainable way to cut down on dependency and poverty. The project, supported by Hungary Helps, aims at constructing a new building that will serve as an education room and a workshop, at the same time. After the construction work is complete, groups of 15 young girls and women will receive a 3 month-long education and training. The sewing groups, of different ethnic groups, religions, and ages, come from families living nearby. They all live in the region surrounding Moshi on the slopes of Kilimanjaro Mountain. At the end of the training phase, these women will be able to measure fabrics and use a sewing machine, produce bags, skirts, trousers, or wallets in different sizes and styles. Thanks to their acquired skills, 45 women will learn a profession. These women can find decent work and a reliable income. After the completion of the project, the sewing centre will remain open as a free workshop, enabling participants to return and work on their own productions, such as school uniforms, and bags, which are highly sought after by tourists.

Nigeria

Construction of a new high school with a girls' college in Sokoto – a possible new centre for education and new opportunities for quality education locally

Christian minority communities in Sokoto, Northern Nigeria are the subject of discrimination by the majority of the society. In order

to help the community remain in their homeland, the Hungary Helps Program is supporting the development of the educational and health infrastructure of the Diocese of Sokoto. The project aims to provide education and health care in order to increase the security of the local community, and through this, reducing significantly migration from the region. The project includes the construction of a new clinic and a new high school with a girls' college in Sokoto. The new institution would go a long way to strengthening the local community, as parents would be able to provide their children with quality education locally, rather than at distant schools. Child marriages will also be prevented by the establishment of girls' colleges, which would provide a safe environment for learning and would promote the bonding of the next generations by forming strong bonds of friendship, giving them a better chance of successfully coping with the exclusion of the major society.

Syria

Supporting education in partnership with a local FBO

In partnership with the Syriac Orthodox Patriarchate, the Hungary Helps Program supports the establishment of a new school in the Bab Sharqi area of Damascus. Once built, 900 children will receive quality education in an area where hundreds of thousands of Syrians migrated to internally for safety. The Armenian



Apostolic Diocese of Damascus decided to rebuild the Issakian cultural centre in Damascus and the Saint Mesrop Church in Homs to help the remaining flock regarding careers, thereby discouraging them from emigrating to the West.

Lebanon

Supporting education with other means

Besides the creation of new educational institutions in the Middle East, in cooperation with the Syriac Orthodox diocese of Zahlé, the Hungary Helps Program funded the salaries of the teachers of Saint George school in Zahlé, providing education to as many refugee-background children as the number of local children. Many schools closed in Zahlé, the centre of the Beqaa Valley in East Lebanon, but Saint George survived and continued to provide education online.

Iraqi Kurdistan

School – as a new opportunity both for children and teachers

In the Ankawa district of Erbil, the Hungary Helps Program supports the construction of Meltho School.

The population of Erbil grew significantly due to the IDPs who finally decided to settle in the centre of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region. Once finished the school will provide quality education to around 1200 children and provide career opportunities to skilled teachers who fled the Niniveh Plains.

The Holy Land: Israel, Palestine, Jordan

Providing quality education

In Jordan and Palestine thousands of families lost their income due to the restrictions introduced following the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. As a consequence of this, both the daily livelihood and the participation in education of many have been jeopardised. Therefore, the Hungary Helps Program started to support the tuition fees of students studying at local schools.

With the Custody of the Holy Land, the Hungary Helps Program is building a new school in Kafr Kanna, Israel. This will provide quality education for underprivileged children from the area.



Healthcare and Well-being

In developing countries and in crisis zones, large numbers of the population do not even have access to adequate or basic health care. Lack of food, clean water, and in certain areas, exposure to cold weather has already left hundreds of thousands of people in poor health, making them even more vulnerable to diseases. Taking into account these health and hygiene conditions, the Hungary Helps Program is also committed to improving the healthcare institutions and services in its target countries and regions.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Expansion of Centre Ophthalmologique St. Raphael in Mbuji Mayi with a surgical centre

Blindness exacts an enormous financial and social cost on developing countries. In the heart of the Democratic Republic of the Congo the lives of those who have lost sight are amongst the most miserable. Without specialised ophthalmic care, people with eye diseases, or blindness are helplessly marginalised, becoming victims of the deepest poverty. Cataracts and river blindness caused by parasites are the most common eye disease in the Congo. Without proper care, this – otherwise treatable – eye disease usually leads to blindness. Hungarian missionary Richard Hardi has been treating eye diseases in DRC for decades. In the Centre Ophthalmologique St. Raphael of Mbuji Mayi,

thousands of people receive eye care every year. The clinic is also serves as a base for medical missions to the far and remote areas of the country. With no roads, access to remote villages is only possible with special off-road vehicles. During these medical missions, hundreds of people from far away wait in the villages on the days of examination and surgical interventions. The expansion of the clinic with a surgical centre is one of the most important and valuable projects of the Hungary Helps Program in Africa. Besides the building expansion of the centre, the Hungary Helps Program funded the installation of a solar panel system in 2020, providing stable and reliable energy for the clinic in a country where energy supplies are often unreliable in most areas.

South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal

Providing help and medical treatment to the outermost rural towns by supporting Blessed Gerard's Care Centre, a member organisation of the Sovereign Order of Malta

As a partner of the Hungary Helps Program, the Blessed Gerard Brotherhood is a South-African charity organization with around 2,500 members, providing free assistance to people in need in the region of KwaZulu-Natal. The lack of an educational and medical infrastructure is the main reason for poverty in the region. Blessed



Gerard's Care Centre provides thorough, holistic medical care, HIV/AIDS treatment, hospice programmes and child-care projects. The Hungary Helps Program supports the Centre's developments and the purchase of special medical care which helps reach even the outermost rural towns with HIV/AIDS counselling and treatments. As part of the projects, blood pressure machines and other essential medical equipment and medicines have been secured.

Kenya

Construction of a rural healthcare centre in the remote town of Biliqo-Bulesa – providing opportunities for all age groups to have access to general healthcare facilities

In partnership with the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), the Hungary Helps Program funds the construction of a rural health centre, complete with a maternity care unit, laboratory facility, and a permanent staff accommodation block in Biliqo-Bulesa, a remote town in the dryland of Northern Kenya. As this part of the country is far from governmental developments, medical infrastructure is underdeveloped and hardly accessible. The aim of this project was the construction of staff accommodation, a laboratory, septic tanks, and the equipping of a maternity block.

Maternal care and services are limited in this region. Many women have no access to essential care in the pre- and perinatal

phases of pregnancy, and that poses a huge threat both to mother and new-borns. Equipping the maternity block with modern equipment will improve this situation significantly. With the assistance of the Hungary Helps Program, Biliqo-Bulesa community was able to increase the capacity of the facility, providing medical care to 5,000 – 10,000 people annually from Biliqo-Bulesa and its surroundings. The new blocks are equipped with modern medical equipment, a pharmaceutical store, and a safe water supply. All of is overviewed by a permanent staff, which guarantees reliable, affordable, and quality health care. Among the expected outcomes are the reduction of the mortality rate among infants and mothers, the reduction of disease outbreaks, and the increased number of people receiving services from the facility.

Hungary Helps and NRT have aligned priorities to support communities where problems arise, creating long-term and sustainable solutions, with a special focus on deradicalization and the peaceful coexistence of communities having different religions. NRT is covering over 42,000 square kilometers and reaching over 320,000 people belonging to 18 different ethnic groups, and is a deep-rooted organization for community resilience-building. It will be achieved by supporting and empowering communities to develop locally led governance structures, run peace and security programmes, take the lead in natural resource management and protection, and manage sustainable businesses linked to conservation, NRT supports a wide range



of training and it works as an independent third party in partnerships with national government, investors, and other development partners. NRT was established as a shared resource to develop community conservancies, which are best positioned to enhance people's lives, build peace, and conserve the natural environment.

Nigeria

New ambulance vehicle for St. Charles Borromeo Hospital, Onitsha

The Hungary Helps Program supported the St. Charles Borromeo Hospital located in Onitsha, Anambra State, Nigeria with the sum of approximately 16,000 € to purchase an ambulance vehicle to aid the congested emergency care system.

Onitsha community is made up of approximately 7.4 million people, where the Christian community maintains 12 hospitals, but with very limited resources, and with a lack of many essential medicines, medical equipment, and ambulances. Due to these conditions, patients cannot get to a hospital quickly and, once there, they do not receive adequate care. The ambulance vehicle is a highly valuable asset, through which the hospital can provide more efficient services.

Besides the purchase of the new ambulance vehicle, during the COVID-19 pandemic the St. Charles Borromeo Hospital was also supported with another donation used to

purchase basic hygiene equipment in a bid to combat the epidemic.

The basic hygiene equipment (v. sanitary equipment) purchased with the donation helped to slow the spread of the epidemic by improving hygiene conditions at home and in the hospital. As the health infrastructure in Nigeria was not prepared for the outbreak, prevention was the only way to reduce the number of deaths, through improved personal and public hygiene (e.g. hand disinfection).





Reconstruction-Rehabilitation

Post-conflict reconstruction is a major topic in war-torn cities in the Middle East. Wars and prolonged conflicts damage and often destroy, not only the local communities and population, but also the residential areas and built heritage, causing insecurity and uncertainty. Therefore, reconstruction of residential and cultural heritage buildings is at the forefront of interest of the Hungary Helps Program. Reconstruction supports the reinforcement of identity, and the empowering of local communities, and it is also the prerequisite of the preservation of cultural heritage.

Lebanon

Reconstruction of residential and cultural heritage buildings

In 2020 the Hungary Helps Program provided emergency aid to help Beirutis render their houses habitable after the explosion of Beirut Port and its surroundings in the eastern part of the city and its agglomeration.

In partnership with Lebanese Caritas, and with the help of hundreds of civilian volunteers, residential buildings and houses of nearly 650 families were renovated. Thanks to early and rapid reaction, these families were able to return to their homes shortly after the explosion.

In partnership with the Department of Archaeology of Pázmány Péter Catholic University and the Lebanese USEK, 30 medieval and Ottoman-era churches are going to be renovated. This project is not only for the preservation for cultural heritage, but it also contributes to religious tourism in remote areas of Lebanon and gives strong incentive to members of the diaspora to return to Lebanon more frequently.

Syria

Preservation and reinforcement of the basement of Krak des Chevaliers, World Heritage Site

Also, in partnership with the Department of Archaeology of Pázmány Péter Catholic University, the Hungary Helps Program supports the maintenance, preservation, and reinforcement of the basement of Krak des Chevaliers, the largest Crusader castle in the World. It has been part of the World Heritage Sites since 2006. Krak des Chevaliers was partially damaged from shelling, and recaptured by Syrian government forces in 2014. This project supports not only the preservation of built cultural heritage, but will also contribute to the rise of tourism revenues of West Syrian rural areas.



Emergency Aid

In areas of hunger and poverty, the Hungary Helps Program provides both emergency aid relief after wars and natural disasters and sustainable agricultural projects to make the sector more attractive, increase its sustainability, and enable it to produce local food instead of receiving imports. Such projects exist in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Mauritania. Through a repatriation programme in Kenya, starting this year, a number of families will be given the opportunity to leave the slums and start a new rural life. The aim is to end hunger by creating jobs and ultimately to ensure that people can thrive in their own homeland.



Food security in crisis zones in the Middle East and Africa has become critical in 2020 due to the restrictive measures introduced in the wake of pandemic COVID-19 and the deepening economic recession. Densely populated urban regions and minority groups already

exposed to social discrimination are particularly hard hit. Under the Hungary Helps Program, six beneficiaries in Syria, Lebanon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria received support to help people in need. Families have been forced to flee their homes to escape the armed conflict and are often excluded from international aid programmes that target Syrian humanitarian needs. According to a UNICEF report, the number of people in the Democratic Republic of Congo who have been weakened by inadequate nutritional intake and are therefore at risk of health problems, has skyrocketed by millions. In order to alleviate the food crisis, beneficiaries received donations which were used to compile and distribute food packages that best and most quickly met local food needs.



In 2020 the Hungary Helps Program funded

1. Food kits for 528 returnee families in the northern part of the Damascus Governorate, Syria.
2. Basic food packages for families in poverty in rural areas of Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, and Lattaqia, Syria.
3. Food packages for more than 200 underprivileged families in need for more than 6 months in Damascus, in cooperation with the local FBO partner.
4. Food packages for more than 650 families affected by the Port Explosion of Beirut, in conjunction with the professional aid of Caritas Lebanon. This project covered the monthly needs of the families, and also had a strong direct effect on discouraging people from migrating abroad.
5. Food donations for 288 households in Nigeria in local government areas in Southern Kaduna – Zangon Kataf, Kachia, and Kajuru, Nigeria.
6. A donation for 150 families in the Democratic Republic of Congo calculated with an average of 16 persons/family.





Scholarship Program for Christian Young People

The Scholarship Program for Christian Young People (hereinafter: Scholarship Program) was founded in 2017 by the Government of Hungary in the spirit of its solidarity towards Christian minorities.

The Scholarship Program for Christian Young People is managed by the State Secretariat for the Aid of Persecuted Christians and for the Hungary Helps Program. The Hungary Helps Agency has been in charge of coordinating the Scholarship Programme since August 2020.

The core mission of the Scholarship Program is to provide opportunities to pursue studies in higher education in Hungary for Christian youth living in crisis regions, who are exposed to religious persecution, threats or restrictions on the free exercise of religion in their home country, in order to contribute to their social recognition after returning to

their home countries. After completing their studies, the scholarship holders can become catalysts for the development of their countries and contribute to building capacities and strengthening resilience at local level upon return to their homelands, using the knowledge acquired in Hungary.

The Scholarship Programme is based on the cooperation between the State Secretariat for the Aid of Persecuted Christians and for the Hungary Helps Program and local churches in crisis regions. In 2020, almost 200 students were studying at 14 Hungarian universities within the framework of the Scholarship Program for Christian Young People from the following countries: the Lebanese Republic, the Republic of Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Republic of Kenya, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.





Students who have been successfully admitted to the Scholarship Program have the opportunity to study at Hungarian universities, pursuing bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degrees.

The scholarship holders can take part in a wide range of educational programmes taught in English, such as medical and health sciences, engineering, architecture, social science, economics, agriculture, arts and humanities, and information technology. Among these, the most popular courses are engineering,

health sciences, and architecture. The Scholarship Program offers approximately 300 courses, covering all higher education fields, with all degree levels being offered.

During their stay in Hungary, students also receive pastoral care with the aim of helping them preserve their religious identities.

In academic year 2019/2020, a total of 24 people graduated and obtained a degree within the framework of the Scholarship Program.

Voices from the ground

Tala Barri, Syria, Budapest University of Technology and Economics

"I think my specialization in the construction management department is a very good way to help my community and country to control new projects. The rehabilitation of my country is going to happen in the near future, and I hope that I will have a chance to develop the work mentality there. I believe that I can make an impact on it, helping to instil a more organized and professional attitude to work."

Nawar Sheer, Iraq, Pázmány Péter Catholic University

"We are in deep gratitude to you because you did not forget your brothers when no one paid attention to us. You contributed a lot to our future. We will mention you always in our prayers. May God bless you always!"

Areen Nassar, Syria, University of Debrecen

"The Hungary Helps Program will help me to reconstruct my war-damaged country, Syria. And I think that it is not only a grant but it's a duty to convey all this gained knowledge to other people when I go back home."

Coretor Kanyungulu, Kenya, Szent István University

"My aim is the application of the molecular biology tools in plant breeding and animal breeding. Tissue culture and invitro breeding is my passion and I am optimistic that I will apply it in Kenya soon."

Randi Sulaiman, Iraq, Uni- versity of Debrecen

"Holding this scholarship gives me big responsibility towards my persecuted community and how I can support them in the future. Moreover, being a holder of SCYP motivates young people from my community to take the initiation and apply to study to have more skilled people for a better future on a personal and general level."

Meroze Daud, Pakistan, Eszterházy Károly University

"I wasn't expecting that I would go so far in this field of study as this course was new for me. After graduation from this university, I will be able to run my own academy. By arranging workshops, I will be able to encourage my community and by introducing new methodologies I will help them to deal with their difficulties and they will be persuaded to study more."



Events Hosted by the Hungary Helps Agency

Humanitarian-development nexus and the role of Faith-Based Organisations

Online Roundtable discussion hosted by the Hungary Helps Agency 26 November 2020

In recent years, numerous protracted humanitarian hot spots have emerged where humanitarian needs are growing. In protracted crisis zones like Syria and Northern Iraq sustainable, long-term solutions are essential for stabilization. Solely humanitarian assistance cannot sufficiently contribute to this, therefore the involvement of development is required at an early stage.

The nexus approach requires the involvement of local civil society in resilience building. In the Middle East and in Africa churches and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) play a far-reaching role in society. They act as mediators in conflicts, fulfil social services, provide humanitarian assistance, and contribute to human development.

The aim of the roundtable discussion was to explore how the EU and our partner countries could benefit from engagement with local

FBOs and to see what the barriers to this cooperation are.

At the introduction of the round table discussion, we presented the roles and work of FBOs in protracted crisis zones through the projects supported by the Hungary Helps Program.

The invited guests for the roundtable discussion were:

Tristan Azbej, State Secretary for the Aid of Persecuted Christians and for the Hungary Helps Program

MEP György Hölvényi, Coordinator for EPP Group in the Committee on Development, Standing Rapporteur of the EU Trust Funds, Co-Chair of the EPP Interreligious Dialogue Working Group

Michael Köhler, Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operations

Claudia Miller, Trust Fund Manager for EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis

Jean-Marc Dewerpe, Trust Fund Manager for the Sahel/Lake Region of the EUTF Africa



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