



# A YEAR OF **HELPING**



THE ACTIVITIES OF  
THE HUNGARIAN CHARITY  
SERVICE OF THE ORDER OF MALTA

# 2022



February 27, 2022 – sunrise after the first nightshift at the boarder of Beregsurány, at the heated tent of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta

“  
WE CANNOT TAKE PART  
IN THE WAR,  
WE CANNOT STAY  
OUT OF THE RELIEF EFFORTS.

**Mgr. Imre Kozma**  
Founding President  
of the Hungarian  
Charity Service  
of the Order of Malta

# A YEAR OF HELPING



**HUNGARIAN CHARITY SERVICE  
OF THE ORDER OF MALTA**





THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HUNGARIAN CHARITY SERVICE OF THE ORDER OF MALTA

# TO HELP REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

February 24, 2022 – February 24, 2023

**In one year, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta assisted 115,000 refugees, transported 570 tons of aid supplies to Ukraine, and introduced new ways of providing care in mass humanitarian situations.**

Tens of thousands of people, forced to leave their homes because of the war in Ukraine, found their first safe haven at the aid point in Beregsurány, among the staff of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta. During the first refugee wave, which lasted for a month and a half, 1,200 people were arriving in Beregsurány every day; although this number later decreased significantly, after a year the Charity Service is still on call 24/7 at the border, to receive new arrivals.

The Charity Service also operated temporary accommodation in Budapest and in several towns, where those without a final destination in mind could rest for a longer or shorter period. While the Order of Malta took care of them, babies were born, families separated during the flight were reunited, sick people were cared for. At the shelter, they had the opportunity to think about their situation and plan their future.

Families who opted to stay in Hungary were given assistance for their stay and their integration. Tens of thousands received various goods and benefits to make their everyday lives easier, and 170 Ukrainian families were enrolled in a one-year integration program, enabling them to support themselves from their own earnings in the future, and their children to settle into Hungarian kindergartens and schools.

Humanitarian goods for a total value of 570 million Hungarian Forints were transported into Ukraine to benefit the internally displaced who remained in



*Children make friends with Mobile Playground staff in Beregsurány*

Ukraine. More than 7,000 supporters contributed to the assistance programs of the Charity Service. There were days when there was an offer of help every four minutes. The donations typically reached the needy with the help of the Berehove District Charity Service of the Order, but some convoys went directly to more distant areas of Ukraine. The shipments were put together by the Charity Service in response to needs: medical equipment, camp equipment and power gen-

*Warming shelter, medical center, separate room for the sick as well as offices opened up in the containers*



erators were included upon request, while food and hygiene items were delivered continuously.

During the peak period of arrivals, there were 400 volunteers working every day. Over time, the care of refugees became a systematic work process, and volunteers were replaced by full-time workers. Now, after one year, 90 interpreters and social workers are taking care of Ukrainian families, and redeployable containers, vehicles and equipment are stored on standby, ready to be put into action again. During this action, the Charity Service of the Order of Malta introduced some innovations in its methods: for example, the wide use of humanitarian cards. This special bank card enables targeted cash assistance, as it can be used only to purchase a pre-set range of products. Refugees typically use it to buy food, medicine, and clothing.

The main Hungarian charitable associations agreed on a division of labour, according to which the Charity Service of the Order of Malta became responsible for the aid point in Beregsurány, near the border crossing, providing new arrivals with food, hot tea and coffee, first aid, and the information necessary for further travel. Transport was organised for those travelling further, and families staying for a day or two were accommodated in temporary quarters. The electrical network of the buildings had to be significantly expanded to cater for the increased use. At the aid point, the employees of the Charity Service who applied for this task took turns in teams of sixty peo-

ple, 30 during the day and 30 during the night. In a short time, a clear system of care was established; all arrivals were interviewed and registered.

In Budapest, the Charity Service operated a help desk at the Keleti railway station, later moved to the BOK hall, where all the large charitable organizations took turns being on call. In addition to the capital city, help points were also opened in Győr, Miskolc and Debrecen.

Right from the first day of the war, the Charity Service of the Order of Malta considered it a priority to support internal refugees within Ukraine, to avoid another wave of refugees driven by supply difficulties. Under an agreement concluded with the Berehove Charity Service of the Order of Malta, which has been operating for a long time in the Transcarpathia region, the consignments were made primarily to the Berehove warehouse. The Budapest central warehouse of the Hungarian Charity Service was open seven days a week after the outbreak of the war, receiving and forwarding donations continuously from February 24 to April 10. During this period, 179 volunteers helped full-time employees. In March, the warehouse building in Berehove was seized by the army, but by the end of the month the Berehove Charity Service, with support from Hungary, rented a new, larger warehouse, where it is possible to store goods in several buildings totalling 5,500 square meters. The new location is accessible even for tractor-trailers. By the end of the



*Refugee family's children at the temporary accommodation set up in the sports hall in Győr*





year, the Határ út warehouse had dispatched 29 tractor-trailers to help provide for the needs of internally displaced persons within Ukraine. The trucks and vans of the Hungarian Charity Service, loaded with donations, crossed the border 130 times. Most of the shipments, consisting mainly of durable food and hygiene products, smaller camp equipment and practical tools, go to the Berehove Charity Service, but on a few occasions the Hungarian Charity Service took aid directly to the interior of the country, beyond the Carpathians. The shipments were typically put together in accordance with requests received from Ukraine: there was a time when the Charity Service delivered a camp kitchen, and when power outages became frequent, it transported portable power generators, tanks and a mobile fuel filling device that is also suitable for refuelling vehicles at home.



Relief aid transport about to set off to Western-Ukraine, March 24, 2022

The Charity Service of the Order of Malta launched several programs to facilitate the integration of refugees staying in Hungary for a longer period. It concluded one-year support contracts with more than 170 Ukrainian families in the integration program, and provided three months of support to another 2,500 Ukrainian refugees to help them restart their lives. A separate program was also launched to help the placement of unemployed refugees.

Ukrainian-speaking families participating in this EU-funded integration program were selected by the regional organizations of the Hungarian Charity Service; a cooperation agreement was signed with the first family in March 2022, and by the end of December, 880 refugees were participating in the program. The families were placed in rented apartments for a year, children were enrolled in kindergartens and



MMSZ staff on shift at BOK Hall among waiting refugees

schools according to their age, and the parents had to work. By the end of the subsidized period, the families must be able to raise the costs of their stay in Hungary to take care of themselves, so that in the future they no longer live as refugees, but as an average family.

With support from the Hungarian Government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Charity Service was able to expand its staff with 13 full-time employees taking over the operation of the help point in Beregsurány, and 77 new employees - interpreters, family helpers - supporting the families included in the integration program. The organization also bought a truck and forklifts, and expanded its equipment with redeployable containers, large heated

tents and the necessary equipment for creating temporary accommodation.

The registration and transparent use of donations required system-level improvements. The widespread use of the humanitarian card enabled the disbursement of targeted support, with continuous control and minimal administration.

The developments and innovations made necessary by the challenges of caring for the refugees from Ukraine will later open up new opportunities in the daily operations and charitable activities of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta.

Mother and baby are placed at a temporary shelter of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in Budapest

Humanitarian cards enable targeted donation



Refugee family receives information from a co-worker of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta at the Keleti railway station







# THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED IN 2022

## I Emerging Settlements

The delegation of the European Commission visited multiple Emerging Settlements locations on January 20. "We do not teach them how to clean, we clean together; we do not teach them how to cook, we cook together; we do not teach them how to shop properly, we go shopping together. This is the essence of the concept of Presence," said Miklós Vecsei, Prime Ministerial Commissioner and Vice President of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta (MMSZ). Presenting the different elements of the Emerging Settlements program, he also said: "We use only the most advanced technology wherever we can, because the mathematics of emerging is that to catch up with the others, we must move faster than them."

## I Reconstruction

The rebuilding of the elementary school in Topolovac, Croatia, continues. The school was partly destroyed during the earthquake of 2020, and MMSZ undertook to rebuild it.

## I A safe place

Refurbished community spaces, private rooms and bathrooms await the homeless in Veszprem, at the Social Inclusion House of MMSZ. Its modernization was financed from the Széchenyi 2020 program, and the house offers a safe haven for one hundred and twenty persons every night.



## I Emergency management

In 2022, MMSZ introduced a 130-hour emergency management training course. During the training, the participants learnt the necessary fundamental skills needed in an emergency, situational awareness, psychological and physical support. After a successful final test, the participants earn the possibility to join, as volunteers, the Emergency Management Action Group.

## I Home

We continue the re-location of the inhabitants of the Göd home for the mentally and physically disabled, to more family-like, friendly settings. Out of the original two hundred inhabitants of the institute, eighty have already been placed in new homes through the housing programme of MMSZ.

## I Home renovation

As a joint effort, the city of Győr and the regional headquarters of MMSZ created a program to improve the living conditions of the city's senior citizens. Beneficiaries use the program to improve accessibility in their homes. This program has been going on for years now, with the goal of helping senior citizens stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

*Joint training with firefighters during the disaster relief volunteer training course*



*The first solar power plant of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in Tiszabő*

## I Awards

On June 13 in Budapest, and during the next few weeks in the regional headquarters, the Sovereign Order of Malta's Medal of Merit for the War against the Coronavirus was awarded to those employees and volunteers who showed outstanding performance during the pandemic.

## I Docroom

In joint effort, MMSZ and Semmelweis University created a new hybrid medical model which consists of a case-specific combination of personal appointments, online appointments and mobile medical services. The DocRoom medical program supports equitable access to health. Marginalized groups, especially homeless people, are less health-conscious, have less possibility to access the already overburdened Hungarian healthcare system. So, it is of the utmost importance to find ways to digitalise their medical treatment, as required in modern healthcare.

## I Takeover of a home

MMSZ took over the Napsugár retirement home at in Dunaföldvár from the city administration, so that the 92 residents would get upgraded care and services.

## I Day-care

People with disabilities living in the area of Siófok and Balatonföldvár are welcomed in the Charity Service's Siófok day-care centre, which reopened in July 2022

in a new building with more spacious premises. It offers personalized therapy sessions and leisure activities.

## I Solar power plants

MMSZ is building solar power plants in more than forty underprivileged settlements. The sale of the generated energy will enable the Charity Service to support families living in the poorest areas of the country, with significant subsidies planned for 3,500 households during the heating season. The program is supported by funds from EU Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).



*People with disabilities move out of a crowded institution into familial ten-person homes*





## I Leftovers turned into donations

After the closing of the Sziget Festival in Budapest, hundreds of tents, camping chairs, mattresses and sleeping bags were collected by MMSZ's annual volunteer initiative. One hundred and fifty volunteers helped collect the abandoned equipment. Some of the sleeping bags and blankets were sent to Kyiv.

## I School Supplies

During the joint annual back-to-school charity drive of INTERSPAR and MMSZ, shoppers donated over 58 000 items of school supplies.

## I Malteser school year

Over 3300 children started the 2022/23 school year in the educational institutions of the Charity Service. Most of these children come from underprivileged backgrounds, and they receive special care and help to develop their abilities. MMSZ 7 pre-schools, 5 elementary schools, one special needs school and four vocational schools.

## I Ambulance from popular contributions

The Ambulance Service of MMSZ purchased and equipped its new ambulance out of small (200 Forint) donations by 300,000 individuals, and donations from companies and other organisations. It was officially put into use on November 9. The National Ambulance Service of Hungary alerts the MMSZ Ambulance Service 1500 times a year: with an annual usage like this, the ambulance needs to be changed every seven years. The Ambulance Service is fully volunteer based, its work is supported solely by social contributions, solidarity and donations.



## I Pharmaceutical packaging centre

MMSZ is building a new pharmaceutical dosing and packaging centre in Bicske; the program, set up with EU funding, will help ensure the secure, transparent and continuous provision of medicaments to the inhabitants of the most disadvantaged towns and regions of Hungary. The pharmaceutical packing plant is part of a larger healthcare system, in which examinations are done through telemedicine, local health points organise the transfer of patients to further care, and laboratory tests are done within the system.

*New ambulance purchased by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta from small amount donations of tens of thousands of people*



## I Forgotten Children

For the fifth time, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta organized a conference about "forgotten children" - this is the technical term used to describe children living in families affected by addiction. In Hungary, approximately 400 000 children live in families affected by some kind of addiction. The Charity Service called the attention of child protective service workers to the fact that help is available, and those affected don't have to be alone in these situations.

## I Concert in Vienna

The Malteser Symphonic gave an hour-long concert in the Wiener Konzerthaus in Vienna on October 14. The Symphonic composed of fifty children from underprivileged settlements and their teachers, was invited to play at the charity event by Franz Salm-Reifferscheidt, the Sovereign Order of Malta's Ambassador-at-large for Roma People.

## I Ambrosia Award

On the annual Day of Social Workers, MMSZ gave out the Ambrosia Awards for the fifth time. The award is presented to those Malteser workers and volunteers, whose generous and selfless work is a guiding beacon to all members of the Malteser family.

*The fifth full-house conference held in Budapest by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta for children living with addicted parents*

*Concert of the Symphony program in Vienna*







# INTERNATIONAL AID ACTIVITIES

## I Guests from Kenya

A delegation of Kenyan bishops and members of the Kenyan parliament's Christian working group visited the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta – as the only Hungarian organisation – during their tour of Europe. They were interested in MMSZ's migration aid projects, and asked for support for their application in Kenya. MMSZ has been present in Kenya for over ten years, mainly working in metropolitan segregates, where it created public sanitation centres offering clean water and hygienical bathrooms.

## I Irrigation powered by solar plants

Agricultural production has restarted on a model farm irrigated by well systems powered partly with solar panels, with the cooperation of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, in the drought-stricken southern part of Syria. With funding from the Hungary Helps program of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, MMSZ has several rehabilitation programs in the war-torn country. The program, implemented in the Greek Melkite dioceses of Bosra, Houran and Jabal Al-Arab, contributes greatly to the self-sufficiency of the communities living in the poorest conditions. Five irrigation systems, partly powered by solar panels,

were built to supply water to the area. The local partner organizations sowed 66 tons of seeds, and both the autumn harvest and the sale of the produce took place successfully. Also, to help restart animal husbandry, the project built a new barn, able to house hundreds of animals.

## I Appointments

In recognition of the work of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in the Middle East, Lajos Győri-Dani, executive vice-president of MMSZ, and Daniel Solymári, Director of International Operations, were appointed Chief Advisors to the President of Syrian Caritas. Bishop Jean-Abdo Arbach, Greek Catholic Archbishop of Homs and President of Caritas Syria, personally gave them their letters of commission in Damascus.

## I UN

The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and UNHCR signed a collaboration treaty concerning support for Ukrainian refugees. The two organisations signed the treaty on November 15 at the headquarters of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in Budapest.

*Executives of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and UNHCR discuss the international organization's aid to support Ukrainian refugee care*



*Refugees stand in line in front of the aid point of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in BOK Hall, Budapest*





Refugee family is accompanied to the train by a co-worker of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta at the Keleti railway station





**HUNGARIAN CHARITY SERVICE  
OF THE ORDER OF MALTA**