



## Good practices for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

*The sustainable development goals were planned so that science, economy, government, and civil society could work together to provide a good basis for the common actions. The members of the Roundtable of Hungarian Civil Society Organisations for the Sustainable Development Goals and other organisations contribute to the achievement of the goals through their various programs while also cooperating with other sectors. In the following we present some good practices.*

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### *Energy and resource efficiency at corporate level*

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Target at EU level, that energy efficiency improve by 20% by 2020 (primary energy savings are expected to be only 17,6%) and EU has to be more ambitious if it would like to be low carbon dioxide emissive economy by 2050. Development of energy efficiency is far from the expected, reasons could be:

- lack of information from business side on energy efficiency opportunities, investments and achievements
- policy targets and indicators not necessarily encourage the use of the most cost-effective measures
- energy efficiency potential consists of lower savings
- for the companies not easy to get capital for energy efficient investments and projects
- there is a contradiction between the interests of lessor and tenant in the energy efficient investments of the building industry

#### *Proposals:*

- active communication of resource efficiency opportunities, good practices, case studies, information transfer to companies particularly to the SME sector
- incentives of energy, resource efficient investments and measures (lending, interest, process reductions, tender opportunities)
- publication and active communication of good practices and resource efficient measures at the companies
- to better monitoring of environmental efficiency of companies, apply indexes for quantify the environmental impacts of planned and implemented investments, measures and decisions



Good Practices, case study collection for energy efficiency, environmental saving programs and projects:

***„Money back through the window” program***

In 2002, the KÖVET Association launched his „Money back through the window” program, the purpose of which was to prove that the environmental and financial considerations could be hand-in-hand, ie measures initiated from environmental considerations could have a positive economic impact on organizations and vice versa, economic measures may also contribute to environmental protection.

In 2017 we have announced the tender for the twelfth time and awarded (Environmental Savings Award) the participating organizations in the following categories:

- „Washed fruits on the table”: These measures typically needed no investment at all, only rethinking a problem, reorganizing a process, go with immediate savings
- „Low hanging fruits”: In this group we find investment activities with a payback time within 3 years.
- „High hanging fruits”: In this group we find investment activities with a long – more than 3 years – payback time.
- „Carbon-savings special award” – institution category: significant CO2 saving measures of institutions, (local government, educational institution, etc.)
- „Carbon-savings special award” – business category: significant CO2 saving measures of companies
- "Water protection and savings special award”: measures with significant water saving

Up to now a total of 534 measures of 99 organizations were presented in 12 volumes saving a total of about 38 billion forints, 20 million m<sup>3</sup> of water, 882 GWh of electricity and 565 thousand tons of CO<sub>2</sub>. The 12 case study volumes are available from the website.

*KÖVET Association for Sustainable Economies*

[www.ablakonbedobottpenz.hu](http://www.ablakonbedobottpenz.hu)



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*KÖVET Association for Sustainable Economies – CSR MarketPlace*

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**Suggestions**

- It would be necessary to have a state CSR prize or a foundation of recognition that has a rank. There are currently too many competing prizes in this area.
- Good Practices in corporate governance (current and past) should be shared, eg. CSR MarketPlace. It is to be encouraged that others take good practices as examples.
- In the CSR Action Plan the employment objective is in the focus. In addition, other CSR topics should be given greater emphasis, for example environmental protection, participation in local communities, consumer issues. For this, the UN Sustainable Development Goals or existing but less-used ISO26000 standards could be used.
- With this amendment, the CSR Action Plan would be a real guideline for companies to really be in the CSR topic. At present, there is a large difference between companies' CSR practices. The few leading companies are convinced that they can not do more on the subject, done everything possible, while most still do nothing. Beside that, there are dedicated small entrepreneurs who do not speak about CSR but about responsibility.
- There is a need to establish a relationship between the National Sustainability Strategy and the CSR Action Plan and both between the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. At present, there is a serious difficulty in this area because of the fact that they belong to a separate ministry / organization, so there are no necessary concentrations between them, efforts and results are fragmented.

The CSR MarketPlace initiative launched in 2005 by CSR Europe provides an opportunity to share good corporate social responsibility in a dissolved, informal environment. In Hungary, CSR MarketPlace event was held in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2015 organised by KÖVET Association.

For the exhibition, companies could apply with good practices and case studies in CSR. In our opinion, besides the research based on questionnaire surveys, submitted corporate cases can show a more complete picture on the CSR's situation in Hungary, its development and trends. These applications have been used to describe corporate CSR solutions four times using the same methodology. So far, 329 applications have been submitted by companies, most of which are multinational companies, but may include applications of local governments.

Based on the submitted applications, there is a marked improvement in the CSR activity of Hungarian companies. While in 2009 companies presented isolated cases, in 2013 and 2015 the most of the applications were complex programs embedded in strategy. There is a shift in the focus on the topics concerned: in 2009, environmental protection and health and safety at work were the favorite topics (23 out of 10 applications submitted), in 2011 civil-business cooperation (26 cases out of a total of 95) had



preceded the protection of the environment (22 cases), and the involvement of stakeholders (15 cases) as well as corporate volunteering (13 cases) became a new topic. In 2013, civil-society co-operation "won" (33 cases out of a record number of 97 cases) followed by involvement of stakeholders (11 cases). In 2015 the main focus was responsible employment, leading to issues related to work-life balance and other workplace (17 cases), followed by involvement of stakeholders (10 cases).

Good practices can serve as examples for other companies. In the 4 years we have issued catalogs of the cases of the applicant companies and an online database is also available where the cases can be found.

### ***Alternative Entrepreneurs – Business for More***

Case studies have also been made about companies that are more serious about CSR than usual, called "Alternative Entrepreneurs – Business for More" or "truly responsible enterprises" in our terminology. On the one hand, these companies appeared on the CSR MarketPlace each year, as we have also announced a category of Truly Responsible Enterprise (27 such cases were filed in the four tender years). On the other hand, we published a series of articles about the "entrepreneurs for others" in our Magazine "Steps to Sustainability".

*KÖVET Association for Sustainable Economies*

<http://kovet.hu/>

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### ***The environmental education program of the National Society of Conservationists– awareness-raising competition series for 10 to 18-year-old children***

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### ***Background information***

The National Society of Conservationists have been organising competitions for ten years, since 2008, to promote environmental education. The competitions intend to raise 10-18-year-old children's attention to the most influential environmental and social issues that give cause for concern for the society. Usually 100-200 schools are participating in a competition, forming thousands of teams. This means that our message reaches tens of thousands of students directly. We put special emphasis on targeting young people and we genuinely believe that the tasks–presenting topics in their own complexity, but still in a language tailor-made for students–are interesting and amusing at the same time. Therefore, they can raise the participating children's awareness and broaden



*The emblem of the game named Over the Waste Mountain*



their knowledge in a way that affects their behaviour and decisions both now and in the future as well.

### ***Guidelines***

The competitions usually consist of three rounds with a live final at the end. In the first round the competing teams acquire fundamental notions and basic knowledge connected to the actual topic. In the second round they determine problems and possibilities they encounter in their own surroundings. In the third round they work on creative solutions in order to improve the quality of their surroundings. At this phase, participants can also initiate communication programs to advertise their aims. This increases the chance that other students getting involved as well by receiving information from their fellows. The best performing teams participate in the live final, where they compete with one another in person. While working out the professional documents of the competitions, our objective was to prioritize the following factors: innovative way of thinking, interactive approach towards the competing teams and the particularities of young generations. In addition, we aspire to create interconnected challenges and provide interesting and vivid background with colourful graphics to them.

### ***Climate Police—an example***

In order to illustrate the instructions above, now we would like to describe one of our competitions from the previous years which main point was to put emphasis on the dangers of climate change. This game was designed to students above 4th grade of elementary school. During the game, participants in groups of 3 aimed to determine practices they could encounter in their surroundings—in the school or at home—that aggravate the problem of energy consumption. This way, students could experience through real-life situations the importance of environmental protection. By acting as if they were investigative journalists, researchers or communication experts—some of the most popular professions of the present time—they proved their capacity of making more responsible decisions than an adult would have made.

As investigative journalists their mission was to detect the most prominent environmental problems, meanwhile as scientist their task included to try to solve them. As communication experts they transmitted the information they managed to acquire to us, as well as to their fellows. As a result of this, they could involve more and more people by advertising the message of the competition. During the whole project, students could show off their creative way of thinking: the competing teams wrote articles, organised activities and filmed educational materials. Some of them created radio emissions that the school radio broadcast, while other teams managed to involve local television as well. The participants organised environmental conscious fashion show, flea market, but a whole week long environmental program was also successfully accomplished. What is more, they built a cell phone charger station from a bicycle.

The games have already concerned the following topics: climate change, energy consumption (Climate Police-series, Adventures in 'Frogland'), sustainable development goals (The 7.5 Milliard Dollar Question), electronic devices and their effect on the environment (Dig Deep, e-Observer) and waste (Over the Waste Mountain).

*National Society of Conservationists – Friends of the Earth Hungary*



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*A program launched by the National Society of Conservationists to popularize protected areas of high natural value*

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**Background information**

The program which aim is to put protected areas of high natural value in the spotlight lies on the following assumption: how we can expect people who neglect their direct surroundings to safeguard its natural values? Based on this view, we set up a program that not only introduces these values to the local communities but engages its members in their conservation too.

Natural values of Budapest—an example

The 552 square kilometres of the capital city is not simply an area full of urban concerns and values. Budapest is a place where one can equally encounter environmental problems and discover the genuine values of nature. Our program intends to draw attention to Lake Naplás, Merzse-moor as well as to the caves in Róka Hill and also to Nagy-Hárs Hill. We think they are essential to mention in order to encourage more and more children and adults to visit these places and realize the importance of their conservation.

We have organised an exhibition where we display panels designed to provide comprehensive description of the values possessed by the capital city. The panels also give a detailed presentation on some of these values. The exhibition have been put on display at local events and at schools with the aim of raising the visitors' awareness whose number hitherto exceeds ten thousand. We give detailed description on these protected areas in form of printed or electronic publications too. The distribution of brochures written either in English or in Hungarian can bring our message to a broader audience. Their popularity is proven by their constant publication.

The trips we organize for local communities and for schools are considered to be crucial elements of our program. These trips are unique in their own way since they are combined with several activities such as collecting litter. They equally provide a suitable occasion for the accomplishment of certain environmental treatments. Thousands of students and adults have already joined us to range the areas concerned and to help keeping them clean. Besides getting the participants acquainted with urban protected areas, we also aspire to emphasise factors that might mean a threat to these zones. Students and adults encounter these factors through handling the extensive presence of scrub or working on the eradication of unwanted late-ripening sour cherry offspring. As a result, they participate actively in the protection of endangered areas.

In order to enhance our project's impact, we have also launched a series of tour-guiding course. Teachers, civil society activists as well as employees of community centres and institutions are welcomed to apply for them. During the training—that consist of theoretical and practical sessions as well—the participants expand their knowledge on the concerned areas and acquire the foundations of professional tour-guiding. Practical sessions make it possible for the participants to range some of the areas. It helps them develop



their skills in the actual surrounding to become capable of leading trips and educating their hikers at the same time.

### ***National program***

The example above cannot illustrate completely our commitment in protecting natural values. We have already pursued similar activities in the program called Natura 2000, initiated by Órség National Park, which aim was to popularize certain areas and species. In cooperation with other organizations we are striving to carry out tasks that are not just awareness-raising but promote site-management as well. This way, we aspire to contribute to the conservation of our protected values.

*National Society of Conservationists – Friends of the Earth Hungary*

[www.mtvsh.hu](http://www.mtvsh.hu)

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### ***The People's Budget campaign***

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The People's Budget campaign is the only overarching European campaign initiative on the EU budget, which reflects on all aspects of sustainability (social, environmental, economic and governance) and pushes for holistic approaches and key policy messages that mutually reinforce each other. It aims for sustainability proofing the post 2020 EU budget, which can ensure policy coherence and thus the efficient and effective use of EU funds.

It takes an innovative approach to designing and implementing the EU budget, where sustainability provides an overarching framework and trade-offs among sectors and measures are mitigated by integrated strategies. Sustainability proofing could be defined as a structured process of ensuring the effective application of tools to maximise the social, environmental and economic benefits and to avoid or at least minimize harmful impacts of EU spending. It applies to all spending streams under the EU budget, across the whole budgetary cycle and at all levels of governance, and should contribute to a significant progress of the EU towards sustainability assessed against a set of sustainability principles.

The campaign is advanced by the SDG Watch Europe alliance, a cross-sectoral coalition comprising more than 100 members aiming to hold governments to account for the implementation of the SDGs. The campaign is led by organisations representing different sectors and is working together with various coalitions, networks and stakeholders to build on their broad range of expertise and also to support their sector specific asks with its holistic approach.

The partners involved in the campaign think creatively about the next EU budget cycle and how that can help advance a 6th scenario for the future of Europe and address many of the real problems facing the Union. We have developed a set of sustainability principles to ensure the coherence of the future EU budget and to help implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. More than 70 organisations



adopted the position with an Annex including sustainability proofing instruments, and the campaign also made an open call on the European institutions and national governments to integrate sustainability in the legislative process, planning and implementation.

*CEEweb for Biodiversity*

[www.peoplesbudget.eu](http://www.peoplesbudget.eu)

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### *The way municipal trees support sustainability*

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#### **May the forest be with you! project**

The project's aim is to increase the forest cover of certain areas. Trees and forests have a major role in the combat against climate change: their presence is a great help in the process of acclimatization (they provide shadow and improve air quality of urban areas), but they are also capable of diminishing the quantity of carbon-dioxide that is emitted to the atmosphere. Unfortunately, these benefits are often overlooked. Whether we think at local or global level, there are still scarce amount of news circulating about areas planning to make further steps towards the expansion of forest cover; meanwhile one can hear plenty about the felling of trees and tree rows as well as about the deforestation of public parks.

In the project, Climate Alliance – supported by the Environmental Ministry's Green Source program – aspires to compile a practical guide and an assortment of good examples. Its content is based on the following points:

- I. A tree is a real asset–Trees represent ecological, social and material values. An example for the quick and simple calculation of their worth.
- II. Trees in the inventory–Examples for online tree inventories and tree cadastres
- III. Protection of trees–Local possibilities for tree protection: take them as local values of conservation or townscape protection
- IV. Make space for trees–Exploration of areas suitable for tree plantations by the community
- V. Innovative solutions–Introduction of innovative and original solutions
- VI. Cooperation for trees–Presentation of public campaigns and projects
- VII. Proper pruning of trees–Proper pruning and treatment of tree crowns
- VIII. Tree care information–Ways one can protect trees during their examination or while working around them



- IX. Should it be cut out?!—Planning and consultation process of cutting out trees
- X. Tie oneself to a tree!—Prevent trees from being cut down with the power of public cooperation

#### Recommendations based on actions hitherto taken

- Time limits on tree felling—We recommend not to cut down trees during the growing season unless it is inevitable since it menaces public safety and security
- Annual tree inventory of each region –We recommend local governments to establish a balance sheet in which they can record and analyse the amount of tree they cut out or planted during the year.
- Supporting the establishment of up-to-date online regional tree cadastres—There is a growing number of territories all over the world having their own online tree cadastres created, that helps them tracking the amount of trees they possess. Members of the community may add descriptions and pictures to the cadastre’s entities, to the trees. We are convinced that it would be also necessary to include the establishment of up-to-date, online tree cadastres of domestic areas in professional sponsorship programs as an activity eligible to support.
- Natural leaf area index—We recommend natural leaf area index to be included as a new element in regulations on regional development and/or on construction works to determine the natural leaf area’s expected size from which the extent of tree canopy can be concluded too.

*Hungarian Climate Alliance*

[www.eqhajlatvedelmiszovetseg.hu](http://www.eqhajlatvedelmiszovetseg.hu)

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### *Going to the Peripheries*

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#### ***International Development and Humanitarian Aid Projects Implemented by the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta***

#### ***Health, Water and Hygiene Projects in Africa and in the Middle East***

#### **About the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta**

The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta is an independent non-governmental legal entity and one of the largest charity services in Hungary with an operating budget of over 31 million EUR in 2017. The organization is funded through government subsidies, international funding sources and private donors from Hungarian citizens. The Charity Service was founded as the relief organization of the



Sovereign Order of Malta to provide relief to people in need – the sick, the elderly, the disabled, the disadvantaged, the homeless, refugees, pilgrims and the victims of natural disasters and conflicts primarily within Hungary and the Carpathian Basin. The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta has developed social policy strategies and recommendations focusing on important themes that previously have not yet been highlighted on national or international levels.

### Overseas presence



Beyond the aid provided in humanitarian crises during unexpected natural disasters or political conflicts on the national level, the organization has achieved significant results in the area of international development. In Africa as well as in the Middle East it has implemented several permanent infrastructural development programs which provide access to safe drinking water and basic hygiene services.

But why has the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta decided to assume a continuous overseas presence in the field of international humanitarian development? Or we could pose the question more generally – why should we be concerned with Africa, Asia or the Middle East? The answer lies in finding the adequate balance both in ratio and in relation to the acute problems affecting us and other nations of our world. We firmly believe that we can only fulfil our vocation well if we find the correct relation among the urgent needs affecting us and those around us – be it near or far. One must see and realize that the suffering millions of Pakistan or of the Horn of Africa often face crises far more severe than our own which inevitably compels one to compassion and action.

### AFRICA

#### General overview

The Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta in collaboration with its local partners implemented water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects in several East African countries such as Kenya, Uganda and in Tanzania in order to improve the inadequate infrastructure by providing shower and toilet access to vulnerable populations living in economically disadvantaged segregated settlements (frequently referred to as ‘slums’). The total number of our beneficiaries is approximately 500,000 of which 70% are women and children. The project’s short-term goal of creating the WASH sites was realized while the long-term objectives transferred the facility’s management to the local community for sustainability of operations. With both short and long-term project goals achieved the need for assessing the effectiveness still exists, particularly in the area of humanitarian diplomacy.

The HCSOM has set up four water sanitation facilities in Sub-Saharan Africa which provide clean, legal and healthy drinking water and adequate hygiene in the segregated areas, in primary and secondary schools of East African metropolises. The facilities include toilets, showers as well as faucets with running water which provide inhabitants free access to potable water. These sanitation centres (WASH kiosks) provide



the minimum necessary sanitary conditions for the local community. This is particularly important as they are often forced to pay well above the market price for drinking water supplied by cartels. Most families cannot afford the high costs and instead resort to tinkering illegal connections to the urban water supply, which break down frequently, exposing them to unsafe groundwater. As a result of the inadequate sanitation network wastewater flows freely in open ditches through the densely populated, hut-lined streets. The HCSOM also implements WASH programs in partnership with local charities and churches that have been active in programming supplying healthy drinking water in East Africa. The facilities have been realized with the support of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta and it also includes, in addition to the water supply and WASH facilities, a community hall for the use of the local population.

### **Topic importance**

#### ***The inherent challenges of providing WASH programs:***

1. Economically disadvantaged areas rarely dissolve. Often the initial goal of being a temporary facility evolves into long-term challenges that require community infrastructure planning. The benefits of program assessment will provide insight into the transition from short to long-term planning strategies that will translate into specific practices for the WASH humanitarian community at large.
2. WASH facilities in economically disadvantaged areas are vulnerable to corruption. Humanitarian field workers are confronted with local, illegal water vendors and potentially inflated costs of commodities thus they need safeguards that protect the fundamental principles of the humanitarian space. Refining humanitarian policies and guidelines will equip locals with tools that support humanitarian principles of ethics and equal access to WASH resources.
3. Relevant decision makers and opinion leaders must be engaged in ethical WASH program implementation. Documenting best practices is essential to providing long-term assurance that WASH activities will continue to support the so-called humanitarian cluster system and respect the diverse cultural context of nations.

### **Project benefits**

Three key considerations exist that can persuade decision-makers in the humanitarian actions to act responsibly and protect vulnerable populations:

1. Direct benefits of access to WASH include the improvement of personal hygiene, prevention of communicable diseases, and respect for personal dignity – all are fundamental rights that are within the scope of International Humanitarian Law;
2. Local employment opportunities to sustain WASH practices and build local partnerships among community non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international NGOs, and private-sector partners. Investing in these populations provides opportunities to develop community ownership for sustained WASH practices;
3. National governments that engage in the humanitarian diplomacy process, e.g., providing permission for implementing partners to administer services and accepting WASH resources as a means of advocacy to encourage caring for vulnerable populations



## **Summary**

Effective WASH actions rely upon the principles of sound humanitarian policies. Given that humanitarian diplomacy, assistance and international development require long-term relationship building, examining programs that develop and respect the humanitarian space of coordination and collaboration, are often the most successful, e.g., the long-standing models of international organizations. The sometimes gap filler activities of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta could have a lasting impact on exerting influence on decision makers across the world and supporting humanitarian diplomacy so that it may become a responsibility and not just a choice.

## **MIDDLE EAST**

### **General overview**

During the past decade the primary focus of the Charity Service's support has been the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa assuming a continuous presence in several countries critically in need. The Middle East is a key concern and of particular importance to the organization's focus where it is committed to providing humanitarian assistance based primarily on social need without racial, ethnic or religious bias.

Stemming from the Charity Service's distinctive character it gives singular attention to the help and support of the Christians communities and all religious minorities that suffer from the instability and violence within the region as a means of expressing solidarity and compassion towards our brothers who for their faith alone are enduring horrendous acts of violence, discrimination and religious persecution.

The resulting social and political uncertainties create fertile grounds for extremist interpretations of culture, politics and religion where Christians and other minorities often become particularly vulnerable and resort to fleeing the ensuing insecurities. The region's current large-scale displacement, migration and refugee crisis has inundated the countries of the Middle East as well as Europe, creating new challenges for re-weaving the tapestry of social unity. In an effort to try and put an end to the senseless sufferings the international community as well as all able and good-willed persons ought to mobilize and join their forces in order to promote peace and stability in the Middle East, recognizing that while the continued use of heavily armed militant forces may be essential for the time being, it should not be the sole instrument used to conquer the radical groups. Providing equitable humanitarian and development assistance, fostering the building of open and inclusive societies, negotiating ceasefires and most importantly safeguarding those who with the courage of the martyrs have resolved to remain in their beloved homeland are just a few means for peaceful interventions.

### **Topic importance**

1. The Middle East, often referred to as the cradle of Christianity, is of fundamental significance to the Charity Service as it is genuinely committed to preserving – to the extent possible – the rich inheritance of the ancient Christian communities who are now forced to flee the unspeakable violence and terror devastating their homeland.



- a. The first disciples of Christ, the apostles and the blood of the martyrs have left behind a richly cultivated „land flowing with milk and honey” (Exod. 3:17) where Christian communities have been flourishing throughout the centuries but are now in danger of disappearing entirely as a result of the vehement and seemingly unending persecution and religious discrimination in the regions of the Middle East. Consequently, Christians have become a minority in a land that was, some two thousand years ago, the birthplace of Christianity. The Charity Service, an organization with intrinsic Christian values, is genuinely devoted to expressing solidarity and compassion towards its Eastern brethren and sharing if necessary a common fate in order to demonstrate that they’re not forgotten by the West.
  - b. For us westerners the obligation is inestimable – we ought to open our hearts and ears and extend a helping hand towards the Christian communities and all religious and non-religious minorities enduring significant adversities as a result of the rise of religious radicalism in the East. The number of Christians are diminishing at an alarming rate as they’re forced to flee the increasingly hostile environment in order to protect their own lives and that of their loved ones.
2. Those travelling through Hungary via the Balkans migratory routes are identified more often than not as originating from countries of the Middle East.
    - a. The majority of the refugees and migrants travelling through and requesting refugee status in Hungary arrive primarily from 3 countries all of which are in the regions of the Middle East
    - b. The Hungarian Charity Service echoes that aid ought to be provided right where it is most needed, thus rather than removing and replacing the needs and the needy efforts should be directed to bringing the help directly to them.
3. The Middle East represents one of today’s primary conflict zones
    - a. The Arab Spring of 2011 has spread as a seemingly uncontrollable wave of wildfires first through the regions of North Africa and then through the Arab world. It also affected the countries of the Middle East many of which have plunged into turmoil due to the collapse of their already fragile economic and political situations.
    - b. In 2011 at the onset of Syria’s civil war the country was shaken to its foundations and the ensuing effects are still felt today. A major exodus is under way in the entire region with millions throughout the Middle East emigrating. In addition to fleeing discrimination and persecution from extremists, Christians emigrate in search of educational and economic opportunities. As local populations dwindle, communities are also becoming increasingly frail and fragmented, minority groups remaining in isolated pockets becoming all the more vulnerable. Recognizing the special role of the Christian presence in the Middle East in bearing witness to faith and in fostering fraternity, unity, and dialogue. we ought to condemn the atrocities unceasingly and urge the international community to address the needs of minorities “above all by promoting peace through negotiation and diplomacy,...



and stopping as soon as possible the violence...” (Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Christians in the Middle East)

- c. The multi-generational, 50-60 year old Palestinian refugee camps have been dependent on humanitarian aid for several decades. Today’s political and armed conflicts unfairly suppress the daily needs of those who have been living in these conditions for many generations. Continuous support is required so as to allow today’s generation of migrants a better chance for a future, a culture and a native language to call their own. Without intervention, they’re predestined to follow the fate of their predecessors.

### **Summary**

The current Middle East program package aims to support vulnerable local communities facing continuous hardships as well as migrant groups either travelling through or permanently established in the region by improving their quality of life, strengthening their commitment of remaining close to their homeland, building the strength of local communities while also improving their physical and spiritual well-being.