

STEPS FOR CATCHING UP



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Gold reserves in the ground

CHILDREN IN FOCUS

1000 days for a fuller life

SYMPHONY

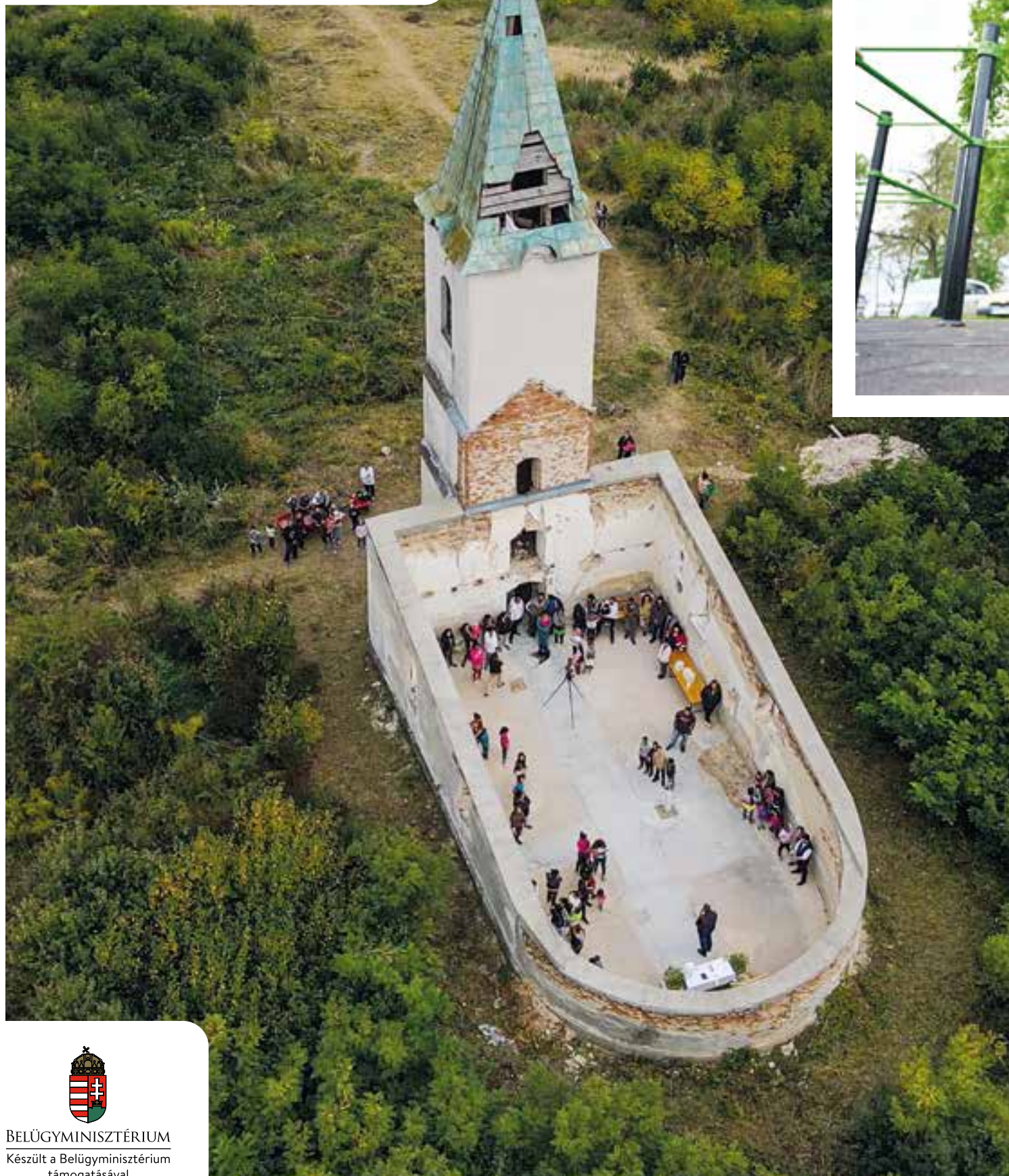
A common voice, a common success

SPORT

On level playing fields



EMERGING SETTLEMENTS



COVER PHOTO BY ÁRPÁD CSABA MAJORS





Presence in the poorest settlements

The Hungarian government has launched an unprecedented programme to help the poorest settlements catch up. The 300 villages selected on the basis of poverty indicators are home to 310,000 people. All the statistical indicators show the accumulation of disadvantage in these villages: the proportion of houses without amenities is five times the national average and the proportion of people without completed primary school is three times the national average, while three times more children are born in these settlements than elsewhere.

The Emerging Settlements (FETE) programme was launched in 2019, and by 2022, it has been implemented in 118 villages with 20 implementing organisations and will reach all the villages concerned in 2024.

A complex development on a similar scale is unprecedented in Hungary; for the first time, the settlements lagging behind are assisted through local, social diagnosis-based interventions instead of receiving assistance in centrally-organised manner. This model combines the flexibility and agility of the civil sector with the weight and authority of government involvement. The method is based on the Presence programme of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, which has already proven its effectiveness in several locations. The programme's priority areas of intervention include social work and community building, primary health care and screening, early childhood support for the first 1000 days of life, community-oriented pedagogy, work socialisation, social housing, and community use of renewable energy. Our publication gives you an insight into the day-to-day work of the Emerging Settlements programme.

...we go there to prevent poverty from being passed on to future generations; we are primarily concerned with children. When society looks at young children living in the deepest poverty, it not only accepts but even expects some kind of help (...) That is why children are at the heart of our programmes. They are born here, in these communities, and from the moment they arrive they represent hope.

MIKLÓS VECSEI

Prime Minister's Commissioner

Emerging Settlements programme

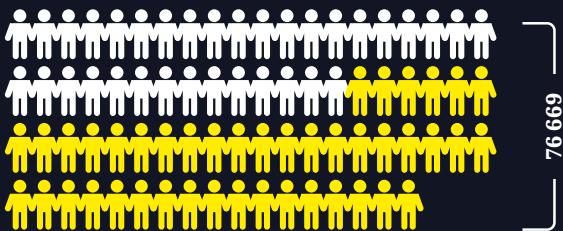
GROWTH

Since the 2019 launch of the Emerging Settlements programme, the number of involved villages has been growing year by year, with more and more Presence Points opening across the country to offer help for a better, more dignified life.

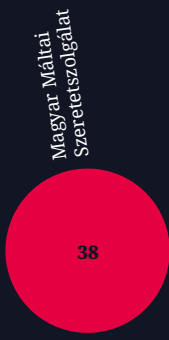
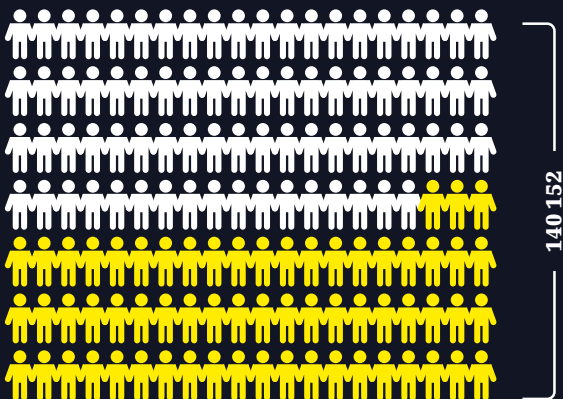
2019 34 177 persons



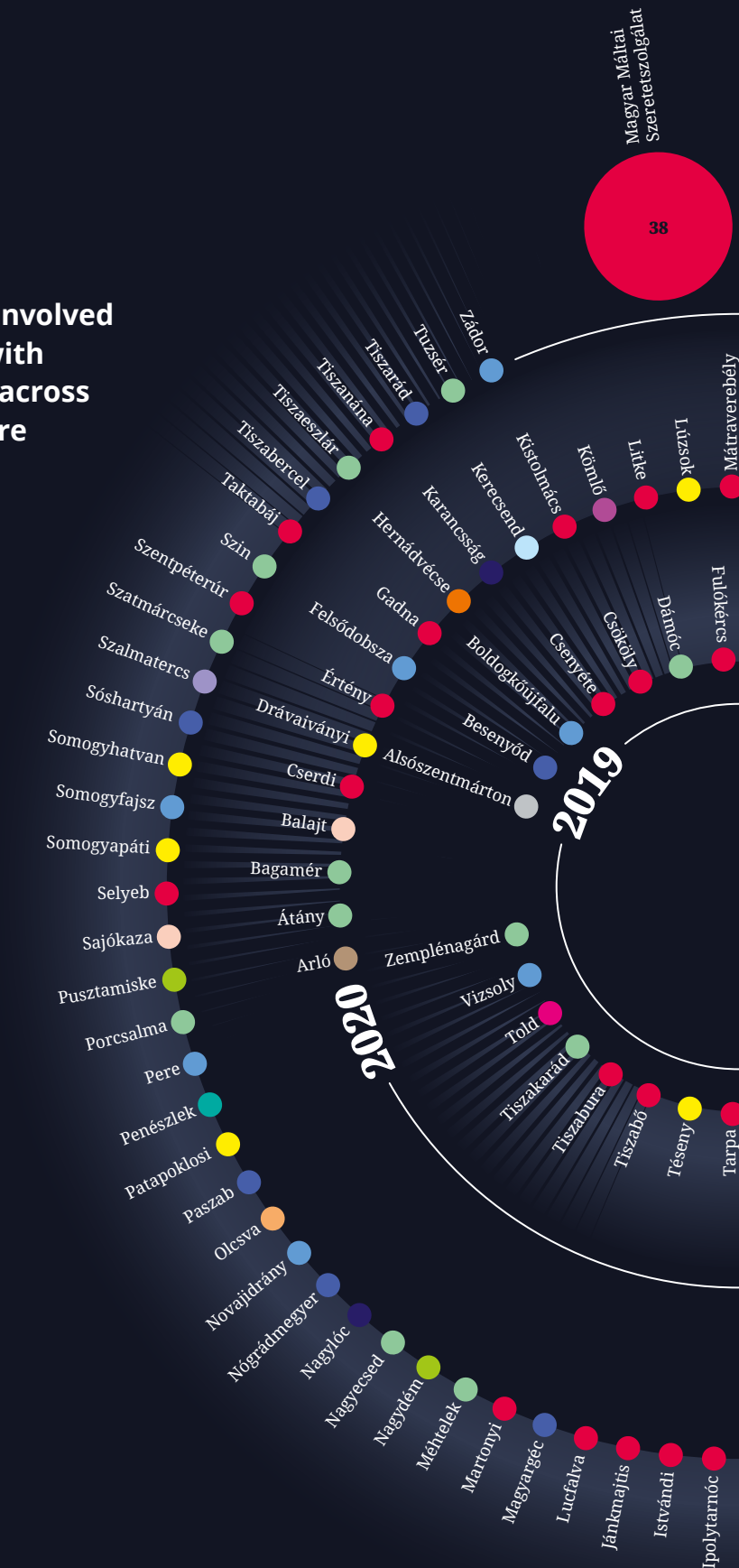
2020 +42 492 persons

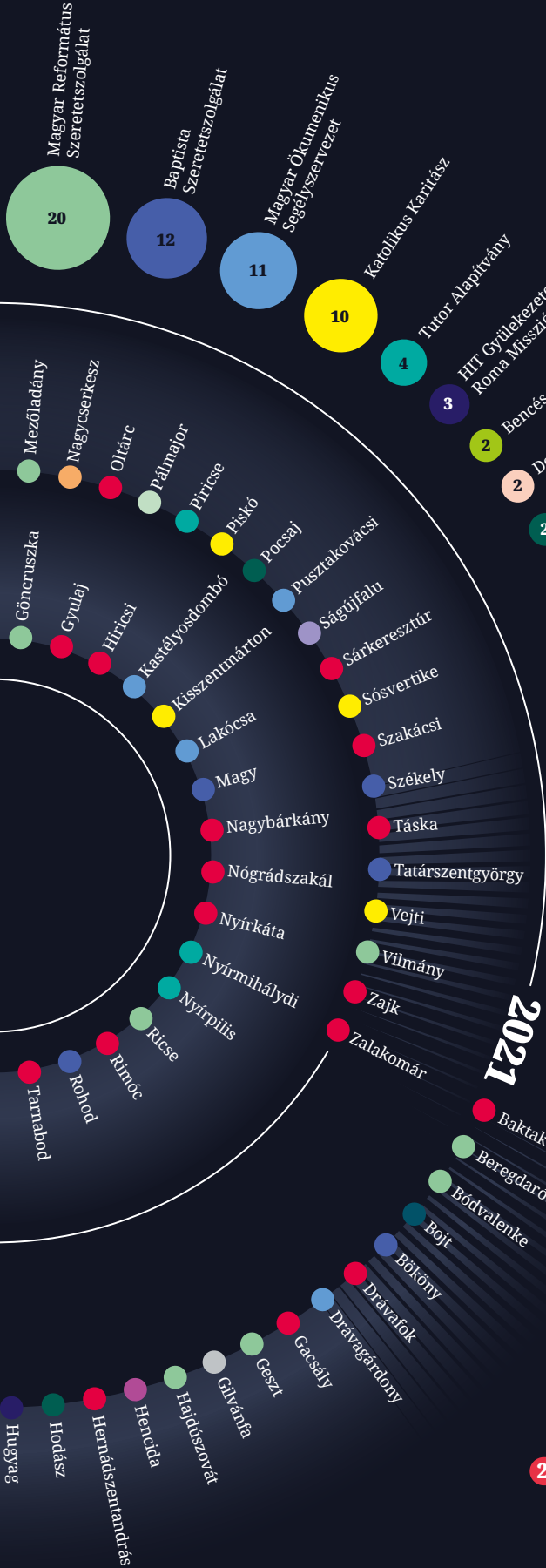
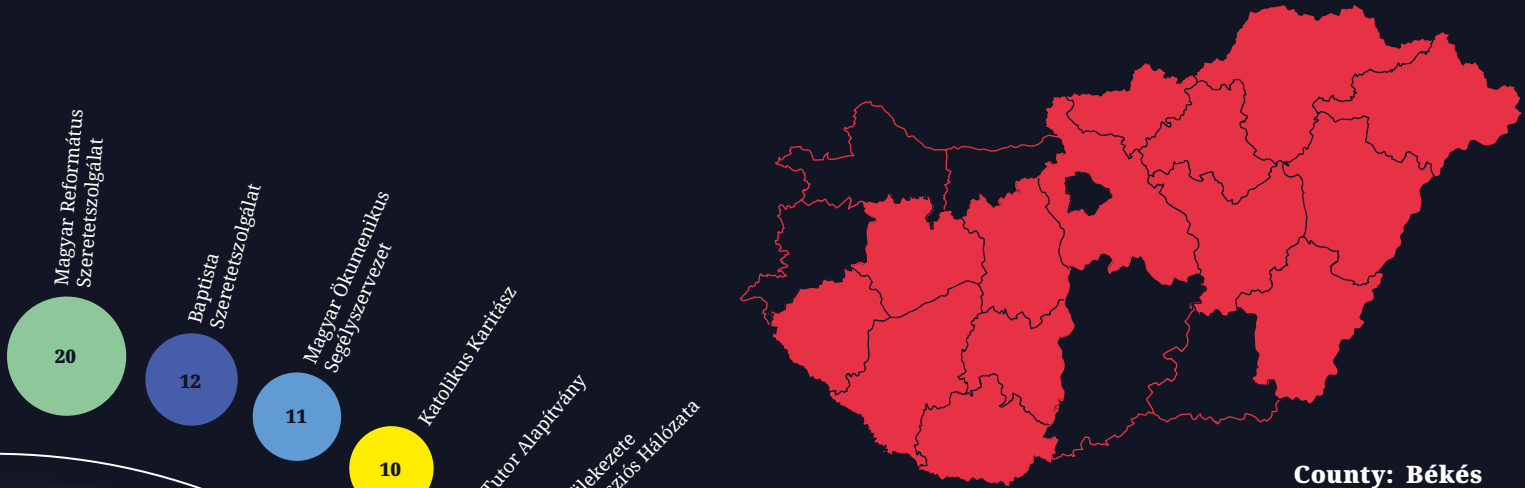


2021 + 63 483 persons



Magyar Máltai Szeretetszolgálat





2021

County: Békés

1

Fejér

1

Pest

1

Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok

2

Tolna

2

Veszprém

2

Heves

5

Zala

5

Hajdú-Bihar

6

Somogy

9

Nógrád

15

Baranya

16

Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén

26

Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg

27 settlements

Magyar Református Szeretetszolgálat

Baptista Szeretetszolgálat

Magyar Ökumenikus Segélyszervezet

Katolikus Karitás

Tutor Alapítvány

HIT Gyülekezete

Roma Missziós Hálózata

Bencés rend

Don Bosco Szalézi Társasága

Görög Katolikus Egyház Hajdúdorogi Főegyházmegye

Magyar Pünkösdi Egyház Országos Cigánymisszió

Oltalom Szeretetszolgálat

Szent Ferenc Szegényei Alapítvány

Szent Márton Caritas Alapítvány

ADRA Adventista Szeretetszolgálat

Cigánymissziós és Koordinációs Iroda

Kaposfői Szent Erzsébet Alapítvány

Igazgyöngy Alapítvány

Jézus Társasága Magyarországi Rendtartománya

Világítani Fogok Egyesület

Mezőladány

Nagycserkesz

Oltárc

Pálmajor

Piricse

Piskó

Pocsaj

Pusztakovácsi

Ságújfalu

Sárkeresztúr

Sósvertike

Szakácsi

Székely

Táska

Tatárszentgyörgy

Veji

Vilmány

Zajk

Zalakomár

Göncruszka

Gyulaj

Hiricsi

Kastélyosdombó

Kisszentmárton

Lakócsa

Lakócsa

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Tarnabod

Rohod

Rimóc

Ricse

Nyírmihálydi

Nyírpilis

Nyírkáta

Nógrádszakál

Nagybárcskány

Magy

Magy

Magy

Magy

Magy

Magy

Magy

Magy

Magy

Magy

Hugyag

Hodász

Hernádszentmiklós

Hencida

Hajdúszovát

Gitrádfa

Geszt

Gacsály

Drávaszabolcs

Drávaszabolcs

Drávaszabolcs

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Help is on the way

The health status of people living in disadvantaged settlements is below the national average, while their access to basic care is hindered by distances, costs and poor transport, making mobility-based healthcare not the additional but rather the only medical service available.



In a third of Hungary's most disadvantaged villages, there is no permanent GP service, and one-fifth of them have a permanent vacancy, which means that regular medical care for the residents can only be provided by mobile solutions. Recognising this, the Hungarian

Charity Service of the Order of Malta launched a telemedicine service in autumn 2021, which brings the basic health care that has been missing for many years to the locations of the Emerging Settlements programme. The main element of this innovative telemedicine

Mobility, independent operation, modern equipment



service is the Mobile Health Centre, a state-of-the-art general practitioner's surgery in a van arranged with all the necessary medical equipment, a qualified assistant and a doctor connected online. Through a live internet connection, the doctor, who is not physically present, can talk to the patient in real-time, follow up the nurse's work, assess the results of tests carried out on-site, discuss the treatment required and write e-prescriptions. The mobile unit is suitable for both traditional and telemedicine medical care, screening and laboratory tests, and, in response to current challenges, for coronavirus testing and the administration of Covid vaccinations.

If a doctor's surgery is available in the settlement, the assistants can quickly set it up with the portable equipment package. The telemedicine service uses the MiniHIS system of the Electronic Health Service Space (EESZT), a fully-fledged Hungarian GP system, so that patients can immediately receive an outpatient form at the end of their appointment, a referral to a specialist practice, if necessary, and the completed medical documentation is immediately available on the EESZT interface.



WOW!

Thanks to its own generator, the mobile unit can provide full service anywhere, anytime, without outside support.

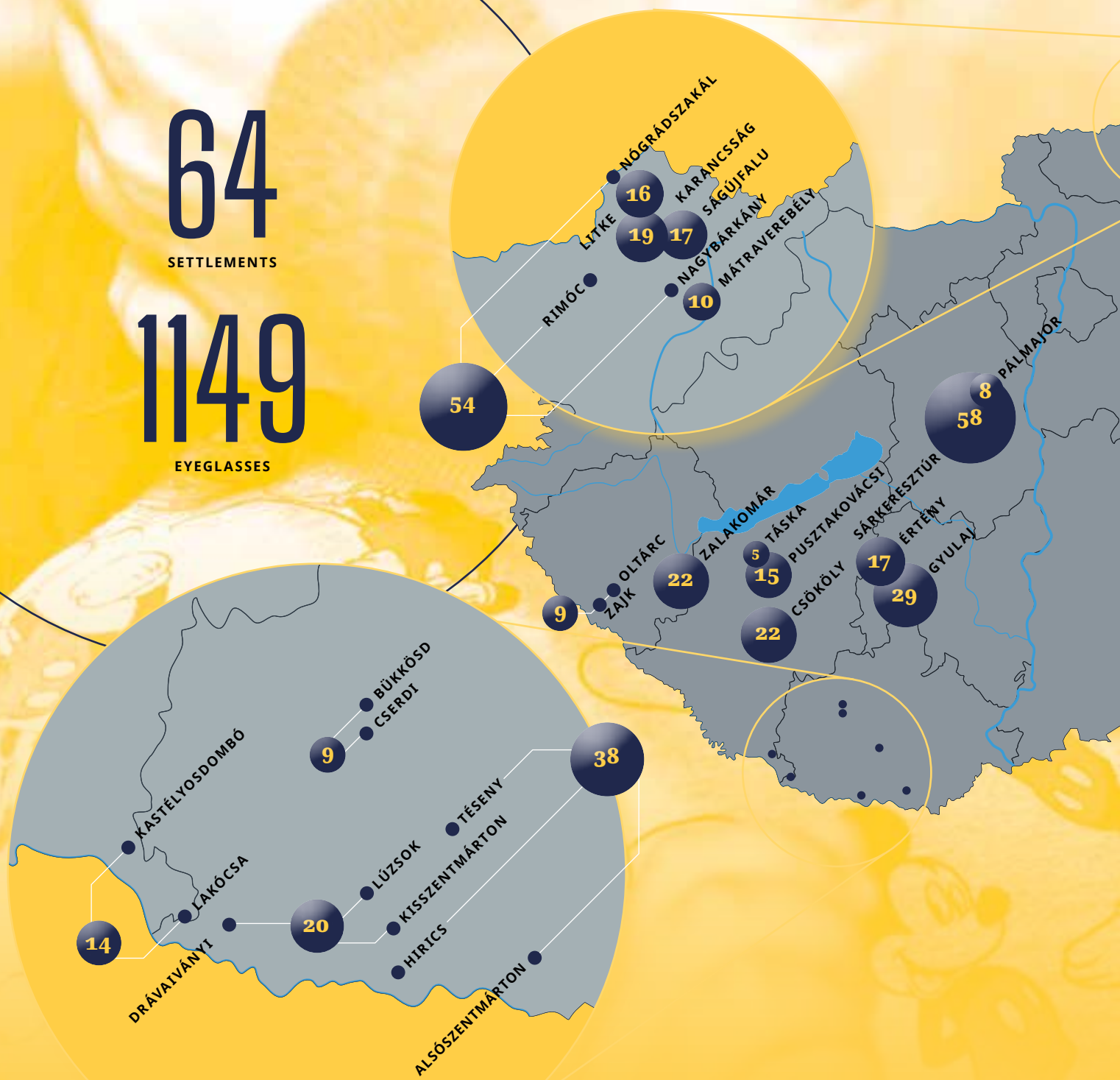


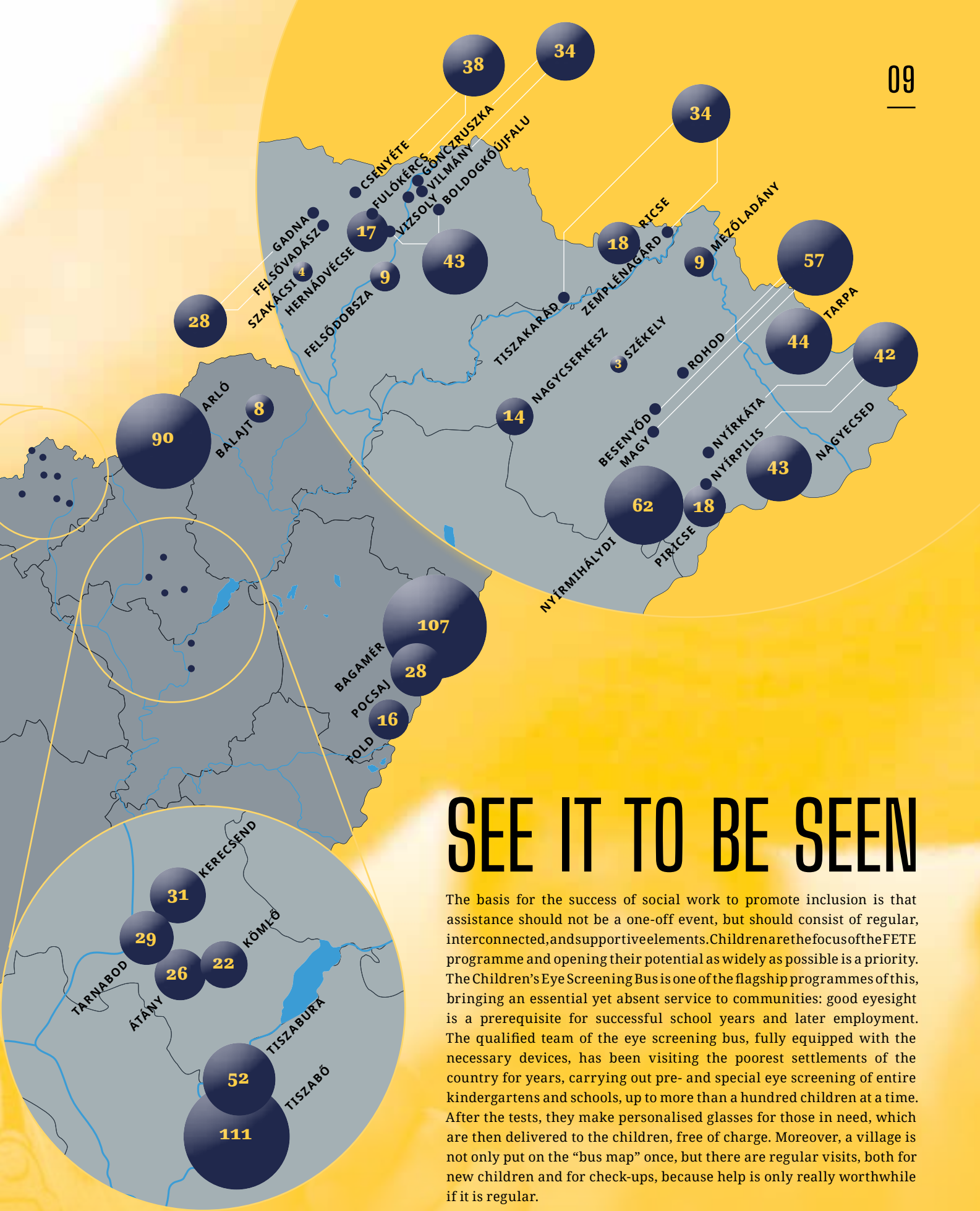
64

SETTLEMENTS

1149

EYEGASSES





SEE IT TO BE SEEN

The basis for the success of social work to promote inclusion is that assistance should not be a one-off event, but should consist of regular, interconnected, and supportive elements. Children are the focus of the FETE programme and opening their potential as widely as possible is a priority. The Children's Eye Screening Bus is one of the flagship programmes of this, bringing an essential yet absent service to communities: good eyesight is a prerequisite for successful school years and later employment. The qualified team of the eye screening bus, fully equipped with the necessary devices, has been visiting the poorest settlements of the country for years, carrying out pre- and special eye screening of entire kindergartens and schools, up to more than a hundred children at a time. After the tests, they make personalised glasses for those in need, which are then delivered to the children, free of charge. Moreover, a village is not only put on the "bus map" once, but there are regular visits, both for new children and for check-ups, because help is only really worthwhile if it is regular.

1000 DAYS FOR A FULLER LIFE

*Playing together,
learning together*



Never lose sight of a child – this is the mission of the Children in Focus (HRDOP 1.4.5-20-2020-00001) project, which is part of the Emerging Settlements programme now operating in 117 settlements. The EU-funded programme for the inclusion of the youngest children engages 20 church and non-governmental organisations providing complex social work to ensure that children under three living in the most disadvantaged settlements have everything they need for balanced development, especially during the most important period of their development, the first 1000 days of their lives.

The first 1000 days of every young child's life are crucially important, as the neurological maturation that takes place during this period is a key determinant of later school performance. The Children in Focus project helps families through locally-accessible, regular and intensive social work, family mentoring, strengthening parenting skills, providing access to childcare and hygiene facilities, and

supporting optimal physical development. The family mentors work closely with the local Presence Points, professionals and early childhood services, in direct and regular contact with families. The programme staff are present in the lives of families from as early as during pregnancy and know each child personally, so they are able to prevent situations that could lead to a crisis.

Families can also get a lot of tangible help from the programme: newborns receive a baby kit, mothers a maternity kit, big brothers and sisters toys, and childcare equipment is available at the Presence Points.

The Children in Focus programme is a multi-faceted programme that can also help to make homes safer for families with young children, prevent housing hazards, provide a heated room, and improve hygiene conditions. It also provides assistance in debt management, drug prevention, victim support, but also includes children's eye screening, mobile playgrounds, support for physical activity, crisis intervention, social sensitisation, and, in order to promote better integration, it also focuses on professionals in contact with families, providing advice, methodological recommendations, training and tools.



WOW!

Since the start of the programme, family mentors have been in contact with

4341

children under three and

1215

pregnant mothers





With a permanent presence on the ground, the Emerging Settlements programme provides comprehensive assistance from conception to employment. Decades of gaps and lagging behind cannot be repaired quickly, but it is clear that with proper training and mentoring, people in difficult circumstances can find value-creating work, and that self-reliance is increasingly replacing dependency.

Helping families who have been out of employment for generations to find work, giving unemployed people a source of income, self-esteem and a predictable future – this is the ultimate goal of social assistance. The cultivation of gardens in small villages plays a significant part in this process, but the foundations need to be „dug deep”, as active gardening and farming ceased generations

ago, the land behind houses is being beaten up by weeds, and there are no tools or know-how to get things going again. The aim of the programme is to turn the land into productive land wherever possible and to exploit the potential of unused land in the settlements. The work in the model gardens near the Presence Point is visible, its success is tangible and motivating to everyone. Garden centre



50 000
packets (3000 kg)
of seed
distributed
in spring 2022

3310
families

79
settlements

700
mentored families

34
community gardens

63
hectares
of cultivated land

200
people in the public
work scheme

professionals bring kitchen gardening within reach, introducing the local residents to a wide range of medicinal and herbaceous plants while providing advice and tools for cultivating their own land. The vegetables produced through collective work are normally consumed by the community, but they often meet market needs in terms of both quality and quantity, opening up new ways of making a living.

Glia Ltd., located in Tarnabod, has been partnering with the Charity Service of the Order of Malta since 2012 to develop the disadvanta-

ged settlement, and over the years they have jointly built a site suitable for industrial and agricultural activities. As a result of continuous experimentation and innovation, this year they are already employing twenty people in the 10-hectare horticulture. Innovation plays an important role in agriculture, as climate change, rising energy prices and the revaluation of resources for food production require new solutions to make production more predictable and plannable, at the same time innovative farms also provide people with marketable knowledge that can be put to good use on the labour market.



WIND AND RAIN

The long-term programme for catching-up settlements covers the everyday life of people living in disadvantaged settlements as broadly as possible, with the main focus on increasing opportunities for children, which includes improving their living conditions and creating safe housing.

Contrary to its name, the Roof Commando's team of skilled carpenters work not just on the roof and chimney, but on the whole house. The first and foremost task is to always ensure the physical safety of the house and to prevent any risk to life. The aim of the works is to improve the condition of the properties, to make them resistant to the winter cold, to create and promote minimum housing conditions.

The Roof Commando's to-do list is divided into two major parts: immediate and scheduled intervention. In „peacetime”, the latter takes precedence: on the basis of the indications of family mentors and social workers, the experts survey the houses, on the basis of which the elimination of life-threatening conditions is given priority, while comfort improvements are carried out on a scheduled basis after accurate assessment. However, a sudden crisis situation overrides everything, and resources are concentrated on repairing damages as quickly as possible: after last year's hailstorms in Sellye and Kadarkút, 40 houses required immediate intervention, and emergency action was to be taken after this year's windstorm that affected 26 families in six villages (Értény, Litke, Kömlő, Átány, Tiszabó, Tiszabura).

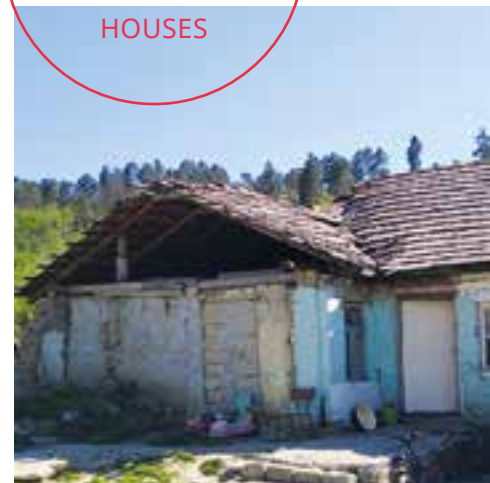
In all of Roof Commando's scheduled interventions, FETE's basic rule applies: the person asking for help must also contribute to improving their circumstances and taking a step forward. Therefore, the work is always done by the residents themselves, but of course, they always receive support, technical advice, tools and help with purchases and logistics.



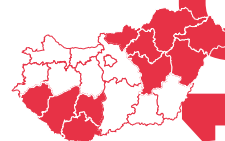
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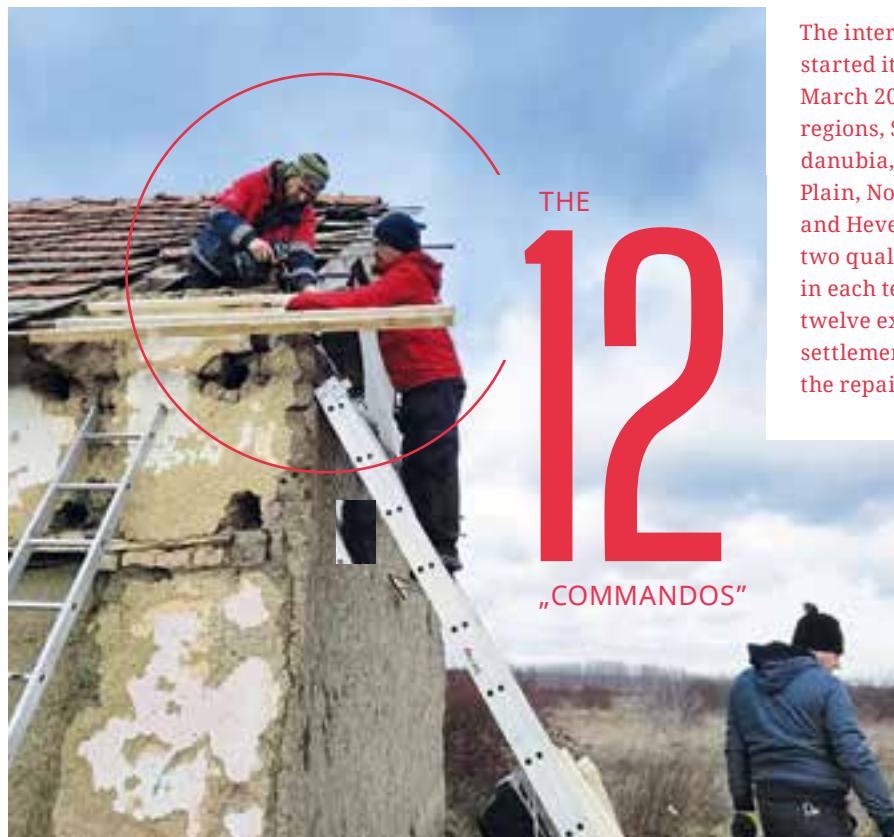
HOUSES



COUNTIES



In addition to dealing with unexpected damages and crisis situations, the to do list also includes planned actions: the Roof Commando's staff aims to coordinate and successfully intervene in 320 properties by the end of 2022.



The intervention team started its operation in March 2021 in four regions, South Transdanubia, North Great Plain, North Hungary, and Heves-Nógrád – with two qualified carpenters in each team, but now twelve experts visit the settlements and help with the repair work.

6



WAREHOUSES

With an increase in the number of members, the Roof Commando has expanded its area of operation, now helping in ten counties – Baranya, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Hajdú-Bihar, Heves, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok, Nógrád, Somogy, Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg, Tolna, Zala.

In many cases, an intervention cannot wait weeks, days, or even hours after a storm or wind damage, so fast logistics and procurement are essential. In the regions concerned, six warehouses are currently in operation in four settlements storing the necessary construction materials (roof battens, beams, boards, OSB boards, planks, screws, carpentry staples, concrete adhesives, PUR foam, silicone adhesives, barge boards, chimney flashings, guttering) and tools for scheduled and crisis situations.

In the catching-up settlements, sport is not about competition but about community, fun and learning. It is an important element of social work, where coaches are active participants in community life, a safe haven for children for whom sport is a source of pure joy, while preparing them for the challenges they will face in their lives.

The essence of sport is not the number of goals or the number of victories, but what the game itself brings: joy and exhilaration. In the catching-up settlements, the aim is not to train professional, competitive players, but to involve as many children as possible from the villages, so that they can grow through shared experiences and quality time together that they would be unlikely to have without sport or music. The joy of



WOW!

*"Why do you play football?
- Because this one hour
is my greatest source of
happiness!"*



grounds



CHANGING CLASSES

Is it possible to go from a village of 300 to a sports class in a secondary school in a large city? Yes! Vanessa Lakatos got her chance and then scored. The football player from Fulókércs was voted the best female player in the Golden Cup, a 16-team football tournament for the most skilful disadvantaged youngsters. She has been preparing for her “shot” for years, and her perseverance has paid off: from September she will pursue her studies at a secondary school in Miskolc, where she can continue to build her career on the football pitch.



playing, of being the centre of attention, of training in a loving environment, is a joy in itself because it allows a young person in difficulty to be what he or she should be every day: a child.

The tasks and challenges of sports develop and strengthen many skills that are necessary for all other areas of life. A child who learns to work in teams, take responsibility for his or her own actions and understand, follow and accept rules will be able to use these skills in dormitories, secondary school or the workplace.

Sport teaches them that one can't succeed without effort, because the team will reject anyone not doing their best, so in school and later as adults, it will be self-evident to them that they have to work for better grades, a paycheck, and for any other goals. Sport removes social boundaries and builds community. While playing the game, the skin color of teammates and opponents or the type of shoes they wear

or where they live is of no consequence. It doesn't matter how many brothers and sisters they share a bed with, what they use for heating, or whether they have a bathroom. All that matters is that we're everyone is working together as a team towards the same goal. Anyone who plays sport knows that you can't get everything right the first time, but you can make mistakes and learn from them and keep trying. Even the most disadvantaged schoolchildren now tend to finish primary school, but many drop out of the school system in the first year of secondary education. Not necessarily because of a lack of knowledge or will, but because of the new challenges and failures they face, which can be successfully combated by being ,better equipped'. Sport prepares them for these very challenges by teaching them that they should keep trying, even if it means ten or a hundred times – but there is only one thing they must not do: give up.

FIVE- REGION GAMES



120 disadvantaged children from twenty-seven catching-up settlements were happy to take home the news: I went on holiday! In the Olympic-inspired sports camp, there was plenty of free time in addition to competitions, so the participants could experience – most of them for the first time in their lives – what a real holiday is like: hours of splashing around in Lake Balaton; ping-pong and foosball tournaments with many participants that lasted until the evening; ice cream that quickly started to drip from the heat; an evening garden cinema; new friendships; joyful music; carefree fun.





The Budapest Transport Centre (BKK) donated 2000 MOL Bubi rental bicycles to the villages participating in the Emerging Settlements programme. The first series of MOL Bubi bicycles were used for seven years for community cycling in Budapest, and after the replacement of the first generation of bicycles – after some repair and changes – they will help disadvantaged people in their everyday life.

Durable, safe and fully compliant with traffic safety rules, these bicycles are a huge improvement in the lives of local people, as many families do not have bicycles at all, and even if they do, they are normally almost unusable, typically without lights, with worn wheels and unreliable brakes. The bicycles, fixed in the Charity Service's workshop in Tiszaroff by our colleagues with changed working capacity, make commuting to work and daily errands much easier and expand the range of school programmes and opportunities they can participate in.

The world is round!

In remote, disadvantaged villages, transport is a major problem, especially when leaving the village. With infrequent bus services, which run only once a day, it is extremely difficult to manage official business, to go to work or school, to access medical care or go shopping. Thanks to an unprecedented, multi-stakeholder effort, many people's lives will now be a whole lot easier.



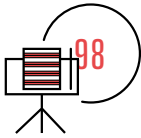
WOW!

Bicycles delivered to the settlements on the basis of pre-assessed demand will be available for free rental, thus widening the range of users.





The success of the Common Voice is enhanced by the fact that the performers did not normally play together as a group, but came from several villages to the rehearsals and then to the concert in Budapest – Tarnabod, Tarnazsadány, Erk, Tiszabura, Nyírmihálydi, Pocsaj, Nyírkáta, Monor, Göncruszka, Encs, Hidasnémeti, Vilmány, Gönc, Hernádvécsé, Garadna.



A total of ninety-eight pupils of the Symphony programme took to the stage for three Budapest Music Academy performances, with many of the talented musicians invited to all three.



At the concerts, the children played the violin, cello, guitar, tambourine, cimbalom, double bass and cajon, and their repertoire was further enriched by solo singing and dancing.



There is no success without effort – and the young musicians are well aware of this, as they prepared for the performance with daily practice, an average of 70 private music lessons and ten rehearsals.



During the concerts they performed nine pieces, which were specially orchestrated for the occasion by Ernő Báder, Károly Nyári, Tamás Vörös and Rezső Ott.



Common voice, common success

The delicate play of a string, a cimbalom struck or a trumpet blown at just the right time, a note captured with precision – small tasks in isolation, but a huge success when united. Thanks to all these small steps, the Symphony pupils have come a long way, and the children from the catching-up settlements have already had the opportunity to perform on the main stage of the Budapest Music Academy several times at the invitation of the Danubia Orchestra Óbuda.



WOW!

Community music education is provided by the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service in

41

villages of the Emerging Settlements programme, with

39

music teachers working with an average of nearly

600

children per week.



Each time, the Symphony pupils' performance was greeted with applause, and the unceasing applause was not out of politeness, but the audience's appreciation of artistic quality, talent, diligence and will. This applause was not a gift, but something the children had earned, something they had achieved for themselves.

The Symphony music education method brings together the fields of pedagogy, music education, and social and community work while helping children to integrate, form social relationships and encourage perseverance. For children in catching-up settlements, playing music together means much more than just an after-school lesson. For many, it is a refuge from everyday difficulties, for others, it is a way of overcoming their disadvantages or a steppingstone to a better life. Musical activities

develop children's intellectual, emotional and social skills, reduce school drop-outs and help them to progress in their studies.

The leader of the internationally renowned Danubia Orchestra Óbuda, conductor Máté Hámori, has long been a committed supporter of the cause. His orchestra has performed with young musicians from disadvantaged backgrounds on several occasions, and during the Common Voice project, which was launched in cooperation with the Symphony programme they gave three sold-out concerts in Budapest. *"Music is one of the main forces that create community. As an orchestra leader, I feel a responsibility not only for our community but for all those who can be reached through music, for those whom we can do good and help with our music."*

My house, my castle

Owning your own property is very important to Hungarians; everyone aspires to own a house or apartment, regardless of their social status – and this is no different in the catching-up settlements.

In deprived villages, many houses are in poor - often life-threatening - condition, with unclear ownership, with tenancy agreements jotted on a scrap paper, illegal access to public utilities or with fines for non-payment, or often with no utilities at all. Families are trying to make ends meet in buildings unfit for decent housing, and breaking out of this situation, „taking a step forward” is difficult even for those with work and will to do so. The basic condition of the complex Family Mortgage Support programme, introduced by the Hungarian government, is in line with the principles of the Emerging Settlements programme, i.e. the applicant must also have to do his bit for the support (be in registered, long-term employment, have no criminal record and a no-tax-debt certificate), and, related to this, the aim is to also improve the living conditions of children.

One of the basic principles of the Emerging Settlements programme is that it does not aim to improve the situation of those in need by providing money, but by creating opportunities, setting an example and helping them to become increasingly self-reliant after the initial joint step(s), so that they can move forward with their lives and maintain the progress they have made. And owning a property is a great achievement, providing security, pride and purpose, encouraging work and perseverance.

The team that assists in accessing home-building subsidies relies on the staff of the Presence Points in the settlements to contact families that are or can be eligible for the Family Mortgage Support and guides them through the often-bureaucratic procedure to the point where, with expert assistance, they can live in their own renovated houses providing dignified living conditions - where they can leave from in the mornings to further build their lives.



“The family calls me an angel come down to earth. I’m sure I will keep in touch with them after the renovation because it’s not just a defining point for them but also for me.” The family of four had already failed several times in their application for the Family Mortgage Support scheme, but with the help of experts, they finally managed to get through the process and move out of a house that was in a terrible state, almost in danger of collapsing, and buy their own home. What’s more, the contractor who carried out the renovation has been providing the father with work ever since. → **Hernádvécse**



“Our lives have changed, we would not have had this opportunity otherwise, we are grateful to the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta for making this possible, we still can’t believe it! The children practically don’t want to leave the house...” A family with two young children in Heves County has to cope not only with poverty but also with the serious illness of one of the boys. The employment of the father, a bricklayer who has worked in the construction industry for years, has qualified them for the support, so now they not only live in a house they own but also in a renovated one. → **Kömlő**



*“The parents, who are expecting their fifth child, have been told clearly by the visiting district nurse that the baby will not be allowed to return from the hospital to a house in poor condition. They were eligible for the Family Mortgage Support (for purchase and renovation) because of the father’s employment as a labourer, so after a quick administrative process and work they could leave for the hospital to have the baby destined for their new house.” → **Ecseg***

50

SETTLEMENTS



358

MILLION HUF
DISBURSED

MILLION HUF
APPROVED



*“The parents have three children, two of whom are mentally disabled. They lived in a house without running water, heated by an outdated stove, and rain and snow fell through the gaps in the roof... As a result of a successful Family Mortgage Support transaction, the family bought the house and a complete renovation has started.” → **Arló***





The bright side of life

In Hungary's poorest settlements, the winter season is particularly critical, as heating costs place an extra financial burden on families. The most widespread wood-burning stoves are inefficient and harmful to health, and gas or electric heating is not a real alternative due to the lack of access to electricity and the cost. The Social Solar Power Project, launched in Tiszabő two years ago, offers a viable solution to the problem, and the model could be used to help an additional fifty disadvantaged communities in the coming years with EU funding.





The long-term objective of the Emerging Settlements programme places a strong emphasis on the first three years of children's lives. A basic aim is to ensure that every home with young children has at least one healthy and safely-heated room. However, many houses in the country's poorest villages do not meet these criteria, the poor-quality stoves generate heat inefficiently from wood – or whatever happens to be on the fire on a long winter night. Smoke often leaks back into the room due to leaky, ill-fitting pipes. Young children living in such environments are more likely to suffer from asthma and other respiratory diseases and are at a much higher risk of developing cancer. The poor state or even lack of insulation and doors and windows means that even a minimum level of comfort can only be achieved with much higher-than-average energy input.

Recognising these problems, the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta launched a pilot project in Tiszabő in 2020, in the framework of which a social solar power plant built on the outskirts of the village has provided clean, safe electric heating for seventy families and nearly 300 children. The idea behind the innovative support system is that the money generated from the sale of the energy produced by the solar power plant is used to pay for a pay-as-you-go meter for local families selected through an application process so that the electric heating panel installed in the room can heat the room efficiently, safely and in an environmentally friendly way. The money paid to the meters does not cover the entire heating needs of the households, but it makes a significant contribution

to the costs. Moreover, this new model not only helps with heating but creates additional benefits by teaching people to plan and save, and also, as the solar park is located in or near their village, the residents feel ownership of the investment.

Additional solar power plants will be installed in some of the villages included in the Emerging Settlements programme as part of the EU-funded Recovery and Resilience Plan (in the project titled „Community Renewable Energy Production and Use”, ID: RRF-3.4.1-22). In the 2022-2025 cycle, solar farms will be built in around fifty settlements, providing a long-term, predictable and stable solution to electricity needs, with the revenue from the sale of the energy generated going back to families and elderly people in need through pay-as-you-go electricity meters, similar to the Tiszabő model.

Conscious consumption – A STEP FORWARD

The poorest families tend to be unaware of their consumption costs, which is why raising consumer awareness (not only related to energy efficiency) is an important aspect of the solar energy project. A pay-as-you-go meter is a perfect basis for this, as it allows families to see their energy consumption and balance in real-time, preventing high bills due to over-consumption and the resulting potential fines and debt traps.

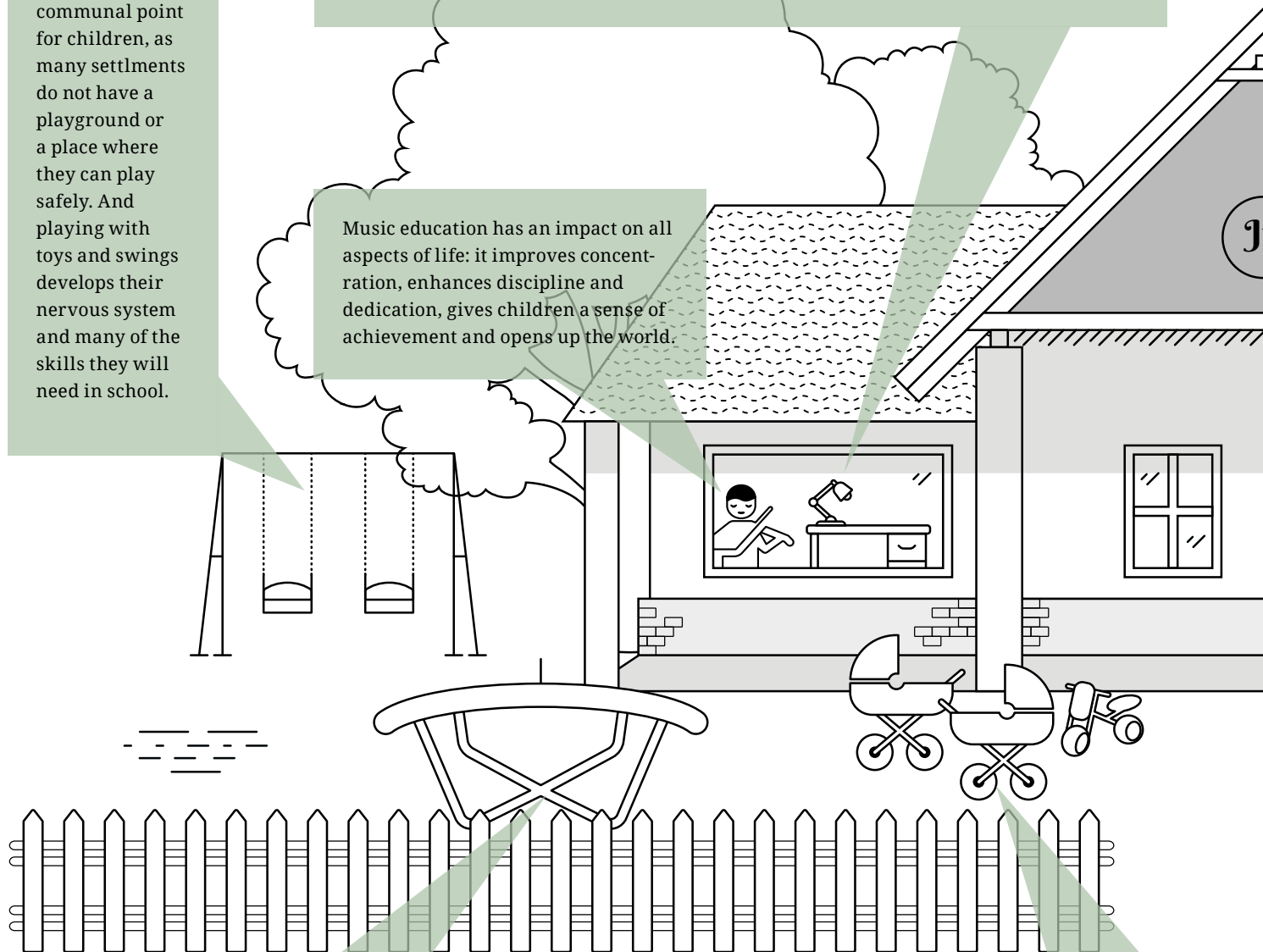


In every village, the center and the starting point of everyday work is the Presence Point, occupied and run by the implementing organisation. A house with an open door for everyone, where people can just walk in with any question, request or „just because“.

The playground in the courtyard is also a communal point for children, as many settlements do not have a playground or a place where they can play safely. And playing with toys and swings develops their nervous system and many of the skills they will need in school.

Home conditions are often not conducive to quiet study, and parental support is also missing. Providing activities that support learning at school gives children a real chance to get better grades and also contributes to the fight against social exclusion.

Music education has an impact on all aspects of life: it improves concentration, enhances discipline and dedication, gives children a sense of achievement and opens up the world.



For children living in these communities, sport is more than just a hobby: it provides a regular activity, educates and prepares them for the challenges they face in school and at work, as well as building community and offering opportunities to travel, meet new people and experience a wider, more colourful world.

If there is a pram in front of a Presence Point, something has already started. If there are several prams there, it's a really good sign. The programmes provided to young children are of paramount importance, as the first three years of life are the foundation on which to build.

The house with a thousand faces

Help is also needed in legal and administrative matters, in difficult-to-understand official letters, in administrative procedures or even when applying for a job interview. All sorts of problems can be brought to the administrator's table.

Cooking and baking together is not only a great community activity, but it also sets an example, passing on knowledge and experience, and strengthening family and friendships. Not to mention, the taste of homemade food is so much better (especially the crispy bits left around the edges of the pan)...

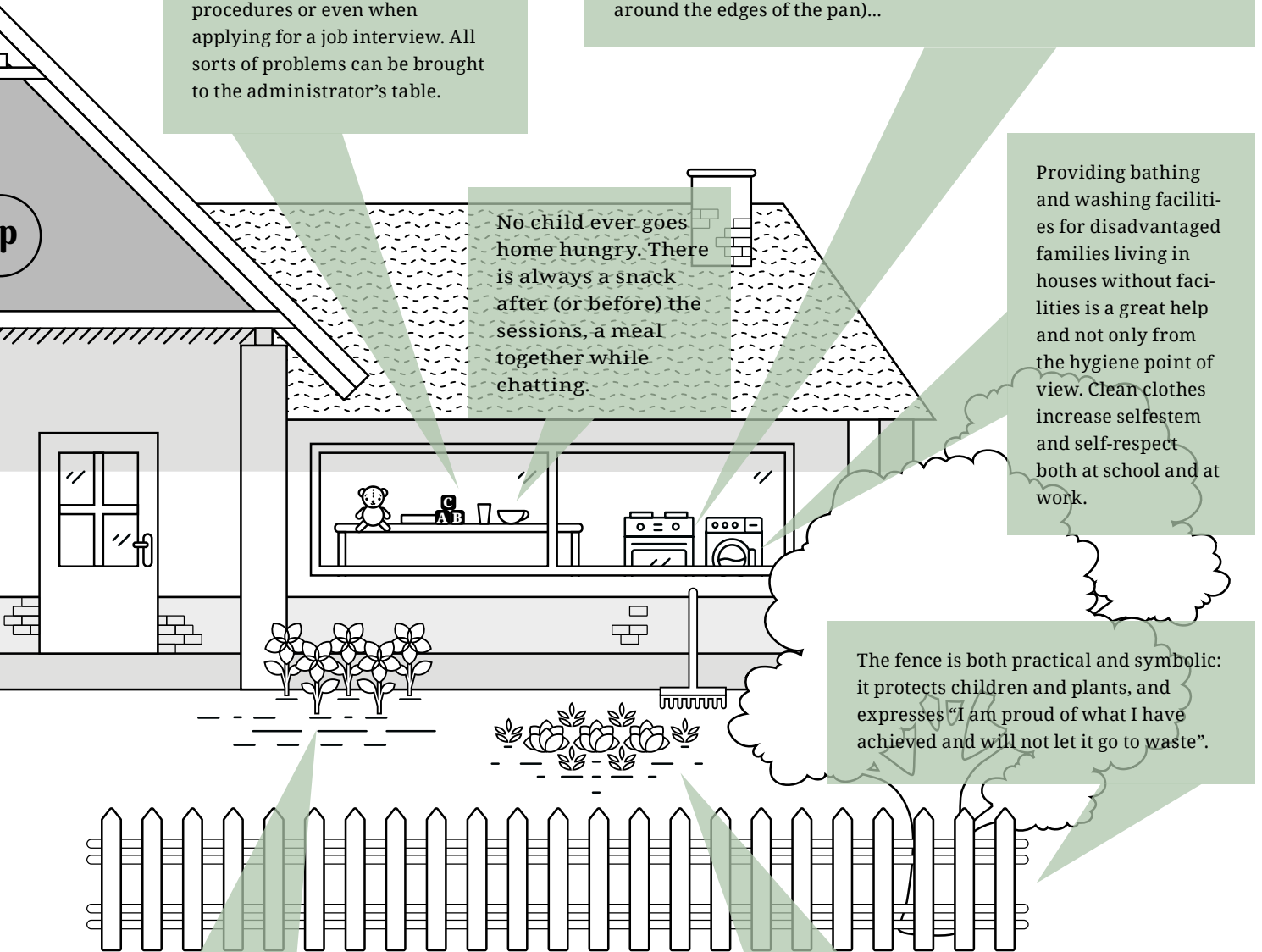
No child ever goes home hungry. There is always a snack after (or before) the sessions, a meal together while chatting.

Providing bathing and washing facilities for disadvantaged families living in houses without facilities is a great help and not only from the hygiene point of view. Clean clothes increase self-esteem and self-respect both at school and at work.

The fence is both practical and symbolic: it protects children and plants, and expresses "I am proud of what I have achieved and will not let it go to waste".

A flower garden is not "standard fare" in the front gardens of houses in disadvantaged communities, in contrast, flowers have a symbolic meaning: if someone has the strength and drive to plant something just for its beauty, they have already taken a step (or two) forward.

The Presence Point vegetable garden is a model for children and adults alike. It shows that tangible and useful things can be achieved in small spaces. One of the mottos of the FETE programme is that every square metre should be cultivated, and the small gardens outside the windows are the perfect starting point for this.





Island for children



A minibus full of exciting toys, magical things and two all-available, all-capable and all-understanding play facilitators - this is the Mobile Playground that not only makes those around it smile but also breaks down barriers, opens closed hearts, detects physical and mental wounds and leaves an imprint on the community.



BEING A CHILD AGAIN

The Charity Service's Mobile Playground staff are constantly present at the aid point set up near the Ukrainian border. With the help of volunteers, they try to bring a little peace, joy, laughter and attention to the lives of the children who are staying here, tormented by war, fear and the long journey, so that for at least a few hours or days they can be the children they were before the war.

They come and play – but it's much more than you might first think. There are no playgrounds or sports fields in disadvantaged villages, and the former football pitches from the old days no longer exist. And with no community space, children have nowhere and no one to learn how to play from, missing out on many of the impacts and experiences that are essential to a fuller life – and that's where the Moving Playground team can help.

Playing together builds trusting relationships with children and parents, reveals the relationships within the community, helps to uncover deep-rooted problems, and the experience made during play can greatly contribute to the diagnosis. Play sessions are an excellent opportunity to develop cooperation with institutions linked to the settlements and can thus indirectly help to solve

WOW!

From the autumn of 2021, six play buses have been operating in the catching-up settlements: in addition to the founding Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, Caritas Hungary and the Hungarian Interchurch Aid „bring happiness to the homes” in Transdanubia, while the Hungarian Baptist Aid and the Reformed Church Aid “bring happiness to the homes” in the eastern part of the country.

the struggles of local children.

During the sessions, the staff of the Mobile Playground teach games to the children, the professionals caring for them and the parents that they can play independently, using local facilities, as well as developmental games that are key to helping disadvantaged children socialise. They mainly bring games that do not require special financial investments (such as pretending the schoolyard is a great ocean, a hula hoop is drifting ice, using a wooden spoon as an all-seeing magic wand, making a Stargate out of some rope

or an orchestra from clapping children), which allow the games to stay with the children and families long after the ‚bus people’ have gone.

Appointment. After the formation of the new government, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán appointed **Miklós Vecsei** as the Prime Minister's Commissioner responsible for the implementation of the diagnosis-based inclusion strategy. The programme to help 300 of the most deprived settlements to catch up was launched in 2019, based on the methodology of the Presence programme of the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta, and is currently being implemented by 20 civil and church organisations. Miklós Vecsei, as the Prime Minister's Commissioner, has been in charge of the activity since May 2019.



Vegetables on the table.

At the Hungarian Reformed Church Aid's Presence Point in Vilmány, micro-greens are cultivated, so successfully that they are now also used in the Göncruszka congregation's restaurant (Tej-jel-mézzel folyó) which is also part of the Fete programme. Microgreens - a big idea and an even bigger success.

→ **Vilmány**

522

CV writing, job search, preparation for job interviews, full support – this is offered by labour market mentors in disadvantaged settlements. The two-party contract is a combination of a complex assistance scheme on the

one hand and serious commitment and determination on the other. The mentors have already signed 522 contracts, 140 of them have already „hit the target”, and for the rest, the search for suitable jobs and training is still ongoing.



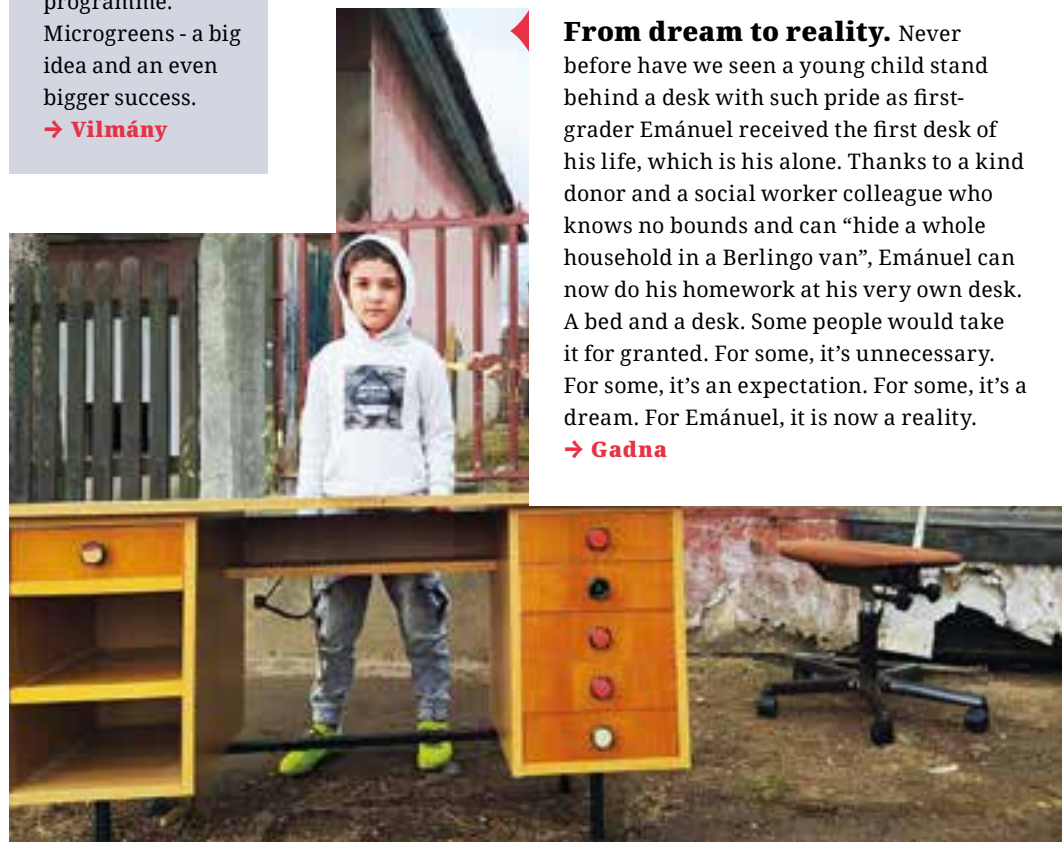
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A large-scale tree planting programme was launched in **Alsószentmárton**, led by St. Martin's Caritas Foundation, with sixty-two families receiving bundles of twenty acacia saplings. The aim is that the saplings, planted on their own plot, will grow to the size of firewood in a few years, thus ensuring the families' energy supply long-term.



From dream to reality. Never before have we seen a young child stand behind a desk with such pride as first-grader Emánuel received the first desk of his life, which is his alone. Thanks to a kind donor and a social worker colleague who knows no bounds and can “hide a whole household in a Berlingo van”, Emánuel can now do his homework at his very own desk. A bed and a desk. Some people would take it for granted. For some, it's unnecessary. For some, it's an expectation. For some, it's a dream. For Emánuel, it is now a reality.

→ **Gadna**



Forest school. To step out of the familiar environment, to get to know the world around us, to be open to new things – the mission of the Fulókércs Farmhouse is to introduce the youngest generations to the traditional rural way of life, and the new beekeeper's outfit was unveiled by local children.

→ **Fulókércs**



Show us what you can do!

Fifty-five students from fourteen settlements competed in the national final of the talent contest organised by the School Foundation of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service. "We have tried to provide a forum where children from disadvantaged villages can also experience success, where they can present themselves and show what they are good at," said Miklós Thaisz, head of the Foundation, explaining the basic idea behind the competition. The talent contest was open to entries in two age groups (grades 5-6 and grades 7-8) in the categories of recitation, traditional dance and visual arts (the motto: "Let there be peace among us always"). Congratulations to everyone who took part in the competitions!

In 59 settlements across ten counties, over 600 stoves for heating and cooking were handed over to those in need by the staff of the Children in Focus project before the cold weather set in, thus helping disadvantaged families with young children. The stoves were accompanied by suitable pipes and smoke detectors to ensure the safety of the house and its occupants.



School bus.

No child in Arló should miss school because their parents can't take them: every morning at 7am the Arló school bus departs, allowing children to travel safely to school. → **Arló**



Sports Day. Nógrád county sports day was held with teams from sixteen settlements coming to the sports field in Szécsény, all with one goal: to take home the mightiest trophy. However, there could only be one "football champion", and in the end, it was the footballers from Karancsság who took first place, ahead of the boys from Ipolytarnóc and Szécsény. But everyone else felt like a real winner because those who were not playing were cheering, chatting, socialising or even draining their excess energy (if there was any left) in the bouncy castle of the mobile playground, or maybe playing music, singing or just enjoying the company of the others. And the special prize winners of the day were definitely the girls of the two girls' teams, Lucfalva and Nagybárkány. → **Szécsény**

