

Short summary on the activity of the Johannita Segítő Szolgálat since last AGM

Our local chapter organizations are the most important parts of our activity, so we were happy to re-animate our division in Transylvania, Miercurea Ciuc (Csíkszereda) because this is one of the farthest area with Hungarian minority. We organized several humanitarian aid transports and also they will come to our Terény camp in August.

Also humanitarian aid was transferred to „Csangó-land” an area very close to Moldva.

We have got 9 mannequines from JUHA which helped us to organize more first aid trainings, and we could also give two to the Charity Organization of the Hungarian Reformed Church.

Due to Covid-19

And since the epidemic has not yet passed, there was also tasks in the field of screening. In cooperation with St. Francis Hospital, we carried out free COVID antigen screenings in several places, for example, more than 300 people in 2 days at the Polus Center (Budapest), as well as over 1,000 people in the 2nd district for several days, but Szokolya (village on the North) also received the test – and testers.

At the beginning of January, our Organization was shaken by the unexpected death of a dear, former volunteer friend. We organized fundraising for his widow and two kids. They are in the middle of the construction works of their home, so now a lot of help need them. Till now we can ensure the missing salary of our friend monthly and also we could collect money to fund the works.

And from end of February everything changed...

2 days after the war has started, our transport had deployed. Not just on the Hungarian side of the border, but we transported the goods to the Ukranien side as well.

The first days, weeks were very challenging as the ruiles were changing day by day, hours by hours.

Later this became better organized from both side of the border.

The Hungarian Government Immediately supported the 6 biggest charity organizations (Malthese, Caritas, Red Cross, Charity Organization of the Reformed Churh, Ecumenical Charity and the Baptist Charity) by 500 million HUF per each (about 1,3 million Euros) so that they set up shelters and infrastructure for the refugees at the border. (Beregsurány, Lónya, Záhony, Tiszabecs, ...)

These charities have resources (manpower and financial as well) so very soon the situation at the border crossing became well organized.

A bit later also in Budapest, the refugees were moved to a central home from the railway stations. This place was ready to help them with all kind of services: medical, legal, mental, etc. Civil organizations were supported by governmental officers, so the refugees could get all required documents for their status, ...

Also the Hungarian people had a great effort to help. Enormous quantity of goods were transported to the border. Very soon the biggest challenge was to find any warehouse capacity. That area of Hungary is a famous apple growing area, now all the stores for the friuts became temporary warehouses.

Only the transport capacity was the weakest link. The cause is that most of the donors had ideas, where they want to send the donations. (Remember: there are over 100 thousand Hungarian living in the Ukraine)

Soon the rules were set up, and it says: vehicles up to 3,5 tons can cross the border and they can take the goods where they want, but over 3,5 tons all goods go to a central warehouse. So lot of big trucks cross the border and go to the central warehouses, but even more was needed for the „small transports”.

Now based on these antecedents, you may better understand our targets. As I mentioned, the direct contact, first contact with the refugees is made by the „big” organizations. But these big organizations have no chance to follow up the refugees. Also there are a lot of people, who just crossed the border and they have relatives, friends living in Hungary, and they looked for them. And the first days, weeks, they could manage in this way. But later they had to find accomodation, and this was the area where we could enter to the chain.

With the international – financial and material - help we could deliver very fast goods, that they needed for the daily life. The guest beds, mattresses, bedclothes were a great help. Food and hygienic things were also more than welcome. This was a great example of the co-operation in JOIN family, we have got so much support from the members and everything very fast organized, taking into consideration the needs and the possibilities. I felt great to be member of this family!

And as I mentioned, the transport capacity to Ukraine is very limited, so our microbus and small truck turned 2-3 times a day on the border. We transported not only our „own” stuff, but also we shipped the donations of the other organizations for their ask. We have several volunteers, who spend 2-3 days termines at the border, so we do not have to come back every day to Budapest, and even with this simplification our vehicles run about 14.000 km during this 2,5 months. Over the humanitarian transports we brought 15 peolpe to the famous Pető Institute in Budapest: youngs with physical (and some cases mental as well) disabilities and their parents could continue their treatment for the better movements. (There is a filiale in Beregsas, but they had to stop the courses there) As Pető Institue is a daily care institute and was not well equipped for managing 15 people for 3 weeks, we helped the accomodation with washing machines, refrigetartors, etc... And this first group was followed by the second one.

We organized collections: in a Hungarian shop chain people could donate food, and also we announced collecting money on our web page and facebook page and we organized „volunteer run for the peace”.

Some figures (sometimes only estimations at the moment):

- 2 vehicles completed approx. 14.000 km
- 10 volunteers spent approx 40 man-days at the border
- over 30 times we crossed the border with our vehicules
- 50 tons of goods were transported to Ukraine – directly to people in need.
- 150 guest beds to Ukraine, 50 in Hungary
- 20 hospital beds to Mukacevo Hospital, 4 to Vári Disabled home

- Jogging suites and hygienic bags for 150 young, those, who should stay in colleges in Hungary and could not supported from home (Ukraine) any longer
- Washing machines, refrigerators, ironing desks, iron machines, microwave ovens, ... to institutes, where refugees are managed (Érd, Papos, Mátészalka, Csenger, Veresegyház, ...)
- Medical stuff: band-aids, sterilizers, special band-aids, 5 pallets of medicines to the hospital of Uzsgorod...
- Bicycles so that the refugees can go to work
- 10 sets of walkie-talkies to the Reformed Church charity organization for the better communication
- ... and lot more, for ex: Johanniter Unfall Hilfe jackets, as they reported, there is a high confidence, respect among the border guards of the Johanniters, and if they saw someone in the car in Johanniter uniform, they let them proceed to the front of the queue – which is a great advantage and time win. (This is why we asked for the German language uniforms, it is better, if it is not in Hungarian...)

Some photos:

Hungary – Papos, where 30 refugees arrived the second day of the war.



Goods delivered into the Warehouse in Debrecen – the first 2 camion from Switzerland, Germany and Austria:



Csenger: 50 youngs in a college:



Going to Mukacevo with the hospital beds:



Érd – arrival of the washing machines:



And finally a lot of photos on the transportation through the border:





Uzsgorod Hospital:



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