

Project 2

Social Market and Soup Kitchen in Maarouneh

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Please allow us to add the following project details to our support application for the construction of a social market and a soup kitchen as additional floors to the Regional Bakery.

In addition to the aspect of Christian solidarity with brothers and sisters in need, help *sur place* – in the beneficiaries' home country – constitutes by far the most reasonable and efficient use of support funds, considering the purchase power per each 1€ spent. In addition, help towards self-help is a sustainable approach taking place on eye level and protecting the dignity of the recipients.

The estimated costs for the construction including the facilities and the photovoltaic system for the roof amount to roughly € 300,000. Any contribution to the costs will be of enormous help for quick project realization, to alleviate the suffering of the people and to create hope and confidence for a return to normal life in the home country.

In order to facilitate the project evaluation, please allow us to present the application details as follows.

1. Applicant

The Vienna-based foundation „Korbgemeinschaft – Hilfe für Syrien“, which focuses its activities on helping people in Syria to enable them to remain in their home country and to rebuild the country. The Protector of the Foundation is Cardinal Christoph Schönborn of the Archdiocese of Vienna.

The foundation is located at Pramergasse 9, 1090 Vienna, Austria,
E-Mail: office@korbgemeinschaft.at, Website (including organizational details and mission statement) in German and English: www.korbgemeinschaft.at/en.

The Foundation's partner organization in Syria is the group "MELCORD" (Melkite Catholic Organization for Relief and Development) based in Damascus, which belongs to the Greek-Melkite Catholic Patriarchate.

2. Basic information

Project title: Establishing a social market and a soup kitchen in Maarouneh
On behalf of: The Greek-Melkite Catholic Patriarchate in Damascus
Country: Syria
Diocese: Damascus
Project location: Maarouneh, a Christian village 20 km northeast of Damascus
Type of project: Emergency Aid (help for survival) combined with Reconstruction Relief and Help towards Self-Help

3. Background problem

Syria has been living in an economic crisis for quite some time now, resulting in a dramatically increasing impoverishment of the broad mass of the population. The underlying reasons of this crisis are obvious: Years of war, economic sanctions, inflation that has been rising for years, unemployment, emigration of skilled workers and business people, the economic crisis in Lebanon, and in addition to all of this the Covid pandemic and arson attacks in the north and west of the country which destroyed the harvest.

The humanitarian situation of the people in Syria is getting ever worse. The people who live in the countryside are the most disadvantaged. They cannot find paid work and are therefore exposed to acute famine.

The proposed project will create up to 80 sound and sustainable jobs (material purchase and sale of goods, administration, storage, delivery, distribution, cleaning, etc.) and can at the same time provide food to poor families, to sick and elderly people who are unable to work. This project will help the local population to survive in their home country.

After so many years of war, there is widespread poverty and the Covid-19 pandemic has caused enormous additional hardships. The poverty and unemployment rates are alarmingly high and there are more and more people who don't know how to feed their families and keep a roof over their heads.

The developments in Lebanon have worsened the situation in Syria while the unjust Western embargo against Syria is still in place and has even been tightened by the US. The devaluation of the Syrian currency has reduced the average monthly salary of a public servant to a converted equivalent of less than \$ 15. Most things

have become unavailable or simply unaffordable, while the black market is further destabilizing prices. Given the lack of jobs and income opportunities, people in the parish of Maarouneh (or elsewhere in Syria) won't be able to get back on their feet without the help of their Christian brothers and sisters abroad.

4. Project objectives and expected results

The objectives of creating a Social Market are to secure the availability of vital food products and of other urgent products of everyday life (sanitary products, detergents, baby products, etc.) at more or less stable and affordable prices and thus to avoid sicknesses and chronic medical problems that normally result from longer-term malnutrition and poor hygiene.

The Soup Kitchen is intended as an additional floor above the social market. Its main function is to ensure that poor people can get a warm soup at a very low price or free of charge.

- The expected short-term results are survival of people in their home country and the avoidance of hunger and sickness.
- The intended medium-term objective is to help people to endure this challenging time in order gain strength for rebuilding the country.
- In the long run, this type of aid also serves as a contribution to peace in the world and to secure the survival of Christianity in Syria and the region.

5. Beneficiaries

Poor and impoverished people, orphans, injured, handicapped and sick people, old people as well as whole families without an income, including domestic refugees from other parts of Syria whose houses and apartments were destroyed during the war. Maarouneh is a Christian community. The project in Maarouneh will also serve – just like the Bakery – the surrounding villages and even some particularly impoverished parishes in Damascus. The project is conceived as an example of Christian charity, compassion and solidarity, but the social market and the soup kitchen will of course support people regardless of their religious denomination.

6. Scope of products to be offered at the social market and type of distribution

The social market is intended to sell food and hygienic articles to poor people at the lowest possible price (i.e. at cost price). The supplies will be secured at wholesale prices and passed on to the poor without a profit margin. Certain basic food products such as sugar, rice and sunflower oil are subsidized by the state. This requires places across the country where fair onward distribution is ensured.

7. Efficient use of funds and strategy of dealing with problems or setbacks

Despite the unstable price situation in Syria, the Applicant can assure that funds obtained from your organization will be used with utmost diligence and efficiency. Thanks to our local coordination team MELCORD (the Melkite Catholic Organization for Relief and Development based in Damascus) we have reliable, knowledgeable and well-connected contacts on site.

The carefully selected members of this local team (all of them offering their input in a deeply Christian and charitable spirit) are also the best guarantee that optimal solutions will be sought for any problems encountered. This efficient way of project coordination and monitoring has already been successfully tested in the bakery construction process.

Should the project costs increase considerably during the period of implementation, the funds received from your organisation used up to that point will not be in vain. The Applicant will in such a case search for additional sponsors to raise the necessary money for completing the project. This may delay, but will not prevent the completion of the project.

The project committee of your organisation may also be interested to know that all members of our Vienna-based Foundation "[Korbgemeinschaft – Hilfe für Syrien](http://www.korbgemeinschaft.at/en)" (www.korbgemeinschaft.at/en) and all members of the local coordination team MELCORD based in Damascus are working free of charge. We can thus assure you that any donation will flow into the project on a 1:1 basis.

8. Project sustainability

Both the social market and the soup kitchen can be used on a long-term basis. When times get better and the situation improves, the market can still be used to alleviate the hardships imposed on socially disadvantaged people and the soup kitchen can be converted into a restaurant and meeting place (perhaps for wedding celebrations and similar social events) managed in a Christian spirit. This will also allow the creation of long-term, meaningful jobs.

9. Accountability and reporting

The Applicant will provide to your organisation a narrative report and a financial breakdown to illustrate expenditures to the full amount of funds received.

In case of co-sponsorship of your organisation with other donors, the Applicant will prepare a breakdown of expenditures for each co-sponsorship amount received.

10. Technical data

- Thanks to the recent construction of a big regional bakery in Maarouneh on a building plot provided by the local Melkite parish of St. John Baptist, the land and the basement building are already at the disposal for the project in question.
- The area for the project measures 850 m².
- The planned height is 3 m per additional floor (i.e. 2 x 3 m).
- The estimated costs for the construction including the facilities and the photovoltaic system are EUR 300,000. A more detailed cost estimate is attached as a separate document.
- The construction period will take approximately 6 months.
- The construction of the roof will be carried out in a way to lend itself to being equipped with a photovoltaic system, providing a sufficient quantity of environmentally friendly, sustainable energy for the bakery, the social market and the kitchen.
- The soup kitchen is planned in a way to allow later conversion into a restaurant and Christian meeting place, when times get better.

11. Acknowledgement

The Applicant will duly acknowledge the support of your organisation (by use of the logo and/or otherwise, as may be specified by you).

We kindly ask you to favourably consider this project, which is desperately needed in order to enable people to remain in their home country and to rebuild it step by step.

God bless you for any contribution you may be able to make.