

Strengthening Evangelical Church and Diaconia

Context

The Czech Republic is Europe's most secular country. The national census shows that only one in every seven people is a member of a religious community. This aloofness from the church is also being felt by the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB), with which HEKS/EPER has maintained ties and implemented projects for decades. Yet the ECCB, with its 80,000 members in 250 congregations, provides valuable services to Czech society. Hundreds of volunteers work for the benefit of children and young people or organize camps for otherwise-abled children. At the same time, Diaconia ECCB offers professional care for the elderly and the otherwise-abled in over a dozen institutions in the country.

Objectives, priorities, activities

If the ECCB is to continue as an active church in the Czech Republic, it will need to look at ways of retaining its membership. It is no less important for Diaconia ECCB to continue to develop its services. HEKS/EPER has therefore set itself the following objectives:

- Children and youth work: In addition to attractive camps and events, Diaconia ECCB also organizes camps for the otherwise-abled and families with children who are otherwise-abled, thus making an important contribution to society.
- Church development: An active church life requires suitable premises.
- Combatting worker exploitation and human trafficking: With HEKS/EPER support, Diaconia developed a project for Romanian and Bulgarian migrant workers who are victims of exploitation and human trafficking. After a good start, this project is being scaled up.
- Volunteers working on behalf of disadvantaged people: The ECCB also wishes to do its diaconal work at community level. Volunteers are being trained for service to the disadvantaged.





Target groups

- Children and young people within and outside the church
- Volunteers for children and youth work
- Church parishes
- Migrant workers from Romania and Bulgaria
- Disadvantaged people

Partnerships, networks, alliances, memberships

In the Czech Republic HEKS/EPER works exclusively with the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren and Diaconia ECCB. One crucially important component of programme work is the transfer of knowledge between Switzerland and the Czech Republic. This is done through partnerships between church parishes, group trips or the sharing of know-how.

HEKS/EPER on the ground

The HEKS/EPER Desk Officer for Church Cooperation pays regular visits to the Czech Republic.

Topics and working approach

HEKS/EPER has had a close, decades-long relationship with the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren. One important component of this cooperation is the sharing of knowledge and experiences between the Czech Republic and Switzerland.

Country:

Czech Republic

Programme costs 2018:

CHF 256 000.–

HEKS/EPER No.: 394.700

Responsibility:

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