

# Manufactory of Notre Dame

South-Mátra region, Hungary



School Sisters of Notre Dame  
Hungarian Province

We are an international congregation of women religious. The Hungarian Province ministers in three countries (Hungary,

Romania, Serbia) with 63 sisters, 35 associates and nearly 600 coworkers in various institutions.

## South-Mátra Mission

Right now we have four sisters doing charitable work in three villages of the South-Mátra (Markaz, Halmajugra, Vécs), involving volunteer work from locals, students of our institutions, friends and supporters, and in collaboration with local civil organizations. The ministry is multilateral, includes a great variety of activities, each responding to a specific need of the residents of the villages:

### Markaz:

the „Röptető” (‘Aviary’) community center hosts summer day camps for Roma children of the neighboring villages. Other cultural events involve



local citizens and the whole Hungarian Province, sisters and coworkers alike (summer art workshops, concerts, vocational trainings).

In our center set up in **Halmajugra**

local children from the age 5 to 13 get after-school coaching, special education, religious education. This year we have a sister living and working there full-time, she also does pastoral care for the Roma families of the village.

„As members of an international congregation, we recognize our obligation and opportunities to develop a world vision and a sense of global responsibility. Our internationality challenges us to witness to unity in a divided world; to discover unsuspected ways of sharing what we have, especially with the poor and marginalized; and to search for new channels of service in the universal church.”  
(You are Sent, the constitution of the School Sisters of Notre Dame)



### Vécs...

is a village with a population of 622 in the foothills of the East-Mátra, next to the township of Gyöngyös. 14,4% of the population belongs to the Roma ethnic group. In the village there is no school or other social institution. The percentage of the permanently unoccupied among the population is 33,3% (data from 2013). The 37 % of the adult population have only attended primary school. Éva Bárdosné Kocsis, volunteer of the South-Mátra Public Benefit Organization has been working with the local children regularly since 2006, our volunteers joined this work 4 years ago.

### In Véc

we also organize cultural events, literature workshops and summer day camps for the children regularly. In 2014 we started sewing classes for local women and youth, on sewing machines donated by the Province SSND, this initiative evolved into the

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M. Paulina Árpási, teacher of sewing and tailoring has been visiting the village for 4 years, on the initiative and invitation of Dolina Forrás Nonprofit Kft., a nonprofit organization supporting social employment in the region. She started to teach sewing for local women, then on the mechanical sewing machines donated by the sisters. By the end of the first year, with the support of the Hilton Fund for Sisters we managed to purchase a serger, in the second year, with help from civil society organizations and funds we bought two industrial sewing machines. The manufacturing of household textiles began. In 2016 we started to use recycled fabrics and make various personal articles out of them. Four of our young enrolled in professional sewing training. The quality of our products was gradually improving, we started to receive requests and were able to sell our products, first on an occasional basis. This year, upon making handbags for an international congregational program,



## Education and opportunities for the poor

we faced the need of creating an own brand and in a short while we came up with the name and logo: **Manufactory of Notre Dame**. This year we got some media presence on national television, which resulted the attention of a new supporter who donated the appliances of their old workshop. We



started other courses in 2017 (cooking classes, self-awareness training for women), the majority of the participants are women we were able to approach through the Manufactory.

### Manufactory of Notre Dame: stages of development

