

HUNGARY

The Open Society Foundations have been working in Hungary since 1984, when our founder George Soros set up the Hungarian Soros Foundation. At that time, Hungary was still under Communist one-party rule, but the new foundation was able to fund scholarships for Hungarians to travel and study abroad, and to provide funding for libraries and academic research.

As government controls eased in 1989, and as Hungarians prepared for freely contested elections in May 1990, the foundation began funding newly independent civic organizations and media groups.

After the end of Communism, the funding expanded to include support for educational and health care reform, as well as help for Hungarians who were struggling with the economic challenges of the new market economy.

In 2018, in response to legal restrictions imposed by the government, we shifted our regional headquarters from Budapest to Berlin. Open Society continues to support Hungarian partners working on issues that include fighting corruption and combating discrimination.

HUNGARY: 2021 EXPENDITURES

Total Expenditures for
Hungary in 2021:

\$8.9M

Total Expenditures for Europe and Central Asia in 2021:

\$209.4M

Total Global Expenditures in 2021:

\$1.5B

9 FACTS ABOUT OPEN SOCIETY IN HUNGARY

- 1** Between 1985 and 1995, the Hungarian Soros Foundation spent over \$4.4 million supplying more than 1,000 photocopiers to libraries, hospitals, and other institutions to promote the free exchange of ideas and information, despite state controls.
- 2** From 1991 to 1996, as many families struggled economically during the transition from Communism to capitalism/a market system, the foundation spent over \$5 million providing free breakfasts for tens of thousands of elementary school children.
- 3** In the 1990s, as part of a broad effort to support the modernization of health care treatment, the foundation backed a large-scale program to introduce ultrasound scanners into hospitals across Hungary.
- 4** Between 1997 and 2004, the foundation formed a partnership with the Hungarian Charity Service of the Order of Malta to respond to a surge in the incidence of tuberculosis amid the growing homeless population by screening over 40,000 people.
- 5** More than 3,200 Hungarians have studied abroad with the support of funding from the Open Society Foundations—including the current prime minister, Viktor Orbán. The Open Society Foundations have provided support to more than 2,100 Hungarians to attend Central European University, a higher education institution founded by George Soros.
- 6** In 2010, the Open Society Foundations provided \$1 million in emergency funding after extensive contamination of the Danube and other waterways caused by red sludge released in a severe chemical spillage.
- 7** After the 2008 global financial crisis, the Open Society Foundations provided over \$8.6 million in emergency funds to over 150 local groups in Hungary that were helping people deal with economic hardship .
- 8** Since 2016, the Hungarian government has run a series of public hate campaigns targeting our founder George Soros. Throughout, the Open Society Foundations have maintained our funding in Hungary, which is underpinned by our commitment to justice and human rights.
- 9** In 2017, in response to growing economic inequalities in Hungary, we began to fund local civic initiatives in the Northern Great Plains and Southern Transdanubian regions, which are among the 20 poorest regions in the European Union.