

How You Can Help Prevent Exploitation of Refugees & Migrants

European Freedom Network, Spring 2016

Refugees & migrants are very vulnerable to being exploited. Refugee ministries can help, human trafficking ministries can help, concerned churches can help. If we can collaborate, then the Body of Christ can play a stronger role in prevention and support. Ministries and churches may not have the knowledge or capacity to take on many more activities but we can play a key role in equipping one another. These ideas can help.

FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING MINISTRIES

- You know the signs of trafficking, the dangers, what to do if trouble comes, what to say to prevent someone from being trafficked and what is needed to help someone recover from exploitation. Please reach out to those working with refugees and offer advice and partnership.

FOR REFUGEE MINISTRIES

- You know how to befriend refugees, support them with their trauma, help them with understanding local culture. You feel comfortable in a refugee camp. You may well be seeing signs of human trafficking. Talk to local projects that work on human trafficking or contact EFN for advice. Equip yourselves with the basic info EFN is providing, especially the phone numbers to call in an emergency trafficking situation.

FOR EVERYONE, INCLUDING LOCAL CHURCHES...

Centre / Camp-based Outreach

- Seek access to closed migration centres to befriend refugees or the chance to advertise activities.
- Organise information campaigns on the dangers & warning signs of trafficking situations.
- Provide telephone hotline info so that a refugee knows who to call if in trouble.
- Volunteer to help to identify vulnerable people / victims of trafficking in reception centres, apartments, and camps. Many refugee facilities are understaffed.
- Sponsor special activities and trips (e.g. picnics, amusement parks, hiking or canoe trips) as a way to get to know your new neighbors.

Children

- Focus outreach activities on children! Unaccompanied minors are the most vulnerable to exploitation. It's important that they are seen and known. Demonstrate to camp staff and parents that you can be trusted by creating clear guidelines and policies for security and child protection. Involve your children's ministry in designing fun activities and events which encourage connection. Provide age appropriate warnings about trafficking.

- Foster care – encourage your congregation to serve as foster parents or legal guardians for unaccompanied minors and let the authorities know that you are willing to assist. Refugee children may struggle to settle because of all that they have experienced. If a child is placed with a family, provide back up so that the placement is more likely to be successful.

Church-based Programmes

- “Adopt” a family or two. Explore how your church can wrap around a migrant family to understand and respond to their needs so that exploitation never becomes a reality.
- Offer translation services! Bi-lingual church members can provide materials and/or serve as translators at church events, in camps, or even in court.
- Provide opportunities for healing and connection for refugees of all ages. Qualified members of your congregation may be able to offer language lessons, counseling services, pet, art, music and other therapy programmes, gardening, or other classes – either onsite or as a separate supportive ministry. Have multi-cultural meals or play sports... Use your imagination and think about what you can offer.
- Look at the resources on www.eearefugees.org for many more ideas for what churches can do and also guidance on how to decide.

Lobbying / Legal

Look at the separate EFN document on advocacy which explain:

- The reasons why refugees can be vulnerable to being trafficked and what is needed to stop this
- What to look for and what to do if trafficking appears to be happening
- How to engage in advocacy

Work / Job Creation / Training

- New migrants need jobs. Invite church members who own businesses to hire people you are building relationships with.
 - Refugees have skills! Learn about the talents and strengths of your new friends, and help them decide which of these could be used in finding employment in your community – or even in starting a new business.
 - Other refugees need to complete their education or to translate their professional qualifications into the equivalent for their new home country. Can you help them do this?
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