

How can our church decide what to do?

1. First things first

Look at the resources on these pages. Ask God to shape your thinking and heart towards the refugees. Fear and other concerns should not be ignored but can be alleviated through prayerful and informed discussion, training, literature and testimonies of how God is at work among the refugee community.

2. Research/discover what is already happening in the area.

- Don't re-invent the wheel.... Ask the local Evangelical Alliance or other churches for information on who is doing what, where, with whom.
- Ask aid organizations, or agencies like OM or YWAM what they are doing.
- Find out what the authorities are doing.

3. Go and look. Go with those who already have access to where the refugees are, and who are already doing something to see/experience what they are doing, and be on the lookout for **3 things**:

- What are the needs?
- Where do you see your church contributing to what is already happening?
- Is there something that is missing, a niche your church could fill?

4. Assess the gifts and abilities of those in your church that desire to be a part of this ministry, and **match these gifts to the needs/ministries** you noticed in the point above. If church members cook, play football, can cut hair, have a car and could offer lifts, run a children's club, are lawyers, could give basic language lessons, enjoy showing people around... all these things give a hint at where you might want to start.

5. Try to **learn a few greetings and words** in Arabic or Farsi or other languages, perhaps from a refugee friend.

6. Begin going, serving, building trust, and building relationships... Just join in with what is already happening but with eyes wide open to other needs needing to be filled, and to God's guidance in the process. Then recruit church members who can meet those needs.

Here are needs refugees often have:

Legal/advocacy needs

- Registration, staying permits, citizenship
- Family law, rights of families, benefits, legal representation
- Knowing/understanding laws of host country (This comes up all the time!)

Medicinal needs: Many are tired and sick, even traumatized (needing counsel)

Educational needs: Integration isn't possible without education

If we want them to participate in society and join the workforce, refugees will need education

- Local Language
- Customs/mores
- Tips on host country customs & culture (many have used this as a means of introducing the Bible, saying: "just as the Koran has great influence on the thinking

and customs/culture of your country, the Bible has greatly impacted out culture/customs....the Bible will help in your understanding of this your host country.

- Kindergartens: get their children in kindergartens or involved in children's / youth clubs to learn local language + customs/mores, then pass on to parents
- Learn about the public institutions
- Have the opportunity to convert their professional qualification into one that will be accepted in the new country. Or learn a new trade.

d. **Social needs:** Community Building...Help fit into society. There is so much churches can do to befriend and to provide interaction opportunities with locals for families together or for women, men, children, young people and the elderly.

e. **Spiritual needs:**

- Culturally relevant forms of evangelism and discipleship
- Small group "planting"/Church planting
- Training of pastors/leaders among those that stay in country
- Training of those that return home as disciples of Jesus to return as disciples sent by him ...with sustainable subsistence strategies

Perhaps these tasks can be carried out as a movement of several churches (e.g. in a local Evangelical Alliance) and/or in partnership with specialists, Christian ministries and other organisations.

7. Have a few **tools in your pocket** when the inevitable question comes: "why are you doing this, why are you helping as you are?" Know what to say and know that it is clear and simple. Have sensitive literature, ideally in the refugees' language. You may wish to get training, eg from [Sharing Lives](#)

8. **Reflect**, process, pray and plan as you go, serve, build trust and relationships.

9. **Pray!** Pray for the refugees themselves to find hope. Pray also for their successful integration into society and that the host population will welcome them. Pray for protection against all who would want to stir up division, hatred and even violence.