

Mapping The Response

To The Refugee and Migrant Crisis In The European Baptist Federation (EBF) Region



Lapzárta előtt érkezett a Európai Baptista Szövetség migrációs helyzettel kapcsolatos összefoglaló anyaga és az EBF szófiai közgyűlésén 2015 szeptemberben elfogadott határozat a migránskérdésről, melyeket változtatás nélkül közlünk lapunkban.

Bár angol nyelvűek, mégis reméljük, sokaknak jó támpontokat és kiegészítő információkat fognak adni. (A szerk.)

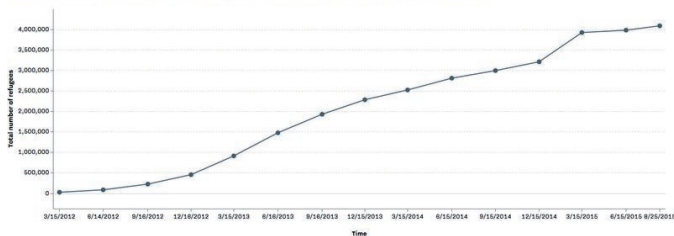
EBF Refugee Crisis Working Group

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Background and Context of the Refugee Crisis

Europe has always been a preferred destination for migrants from North Africa, as well as refugees and migrants from the Near East, and parts of Asia. However, within a year of the start of the Syrian civil war, there has been a steady growing influx of migrants and refugees from Syria. With only a portion of the 3.8 million Syrians who are now refugees reaching Europe, this only reached crisis proportions since July 2015. While many would not technically be classified as refugees as per the criteria used by UNHCR, they are never-theless

Total number of Syrian refugees, March 2012 to August 2015

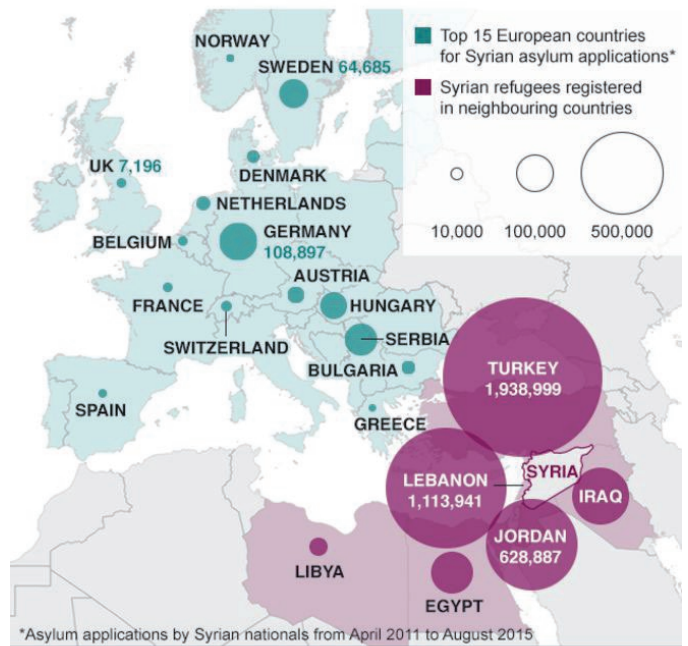


Source: UNHCR

migrants fleeing from a devastated country, where the economy and infrastructure has been destroyed and where the prospects of surviving and earning even the bare minimum is diminishing by the day.

As dramatic the numbers are for Europe, it is important to put the numbers into perspective by understanding how many refugees the neighbouring countries of Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq, who have significant less capacity, are

Syrians in neighbouring countries and Europe



*Asylum applications by Syrian nationals from April 2011 to August 2015

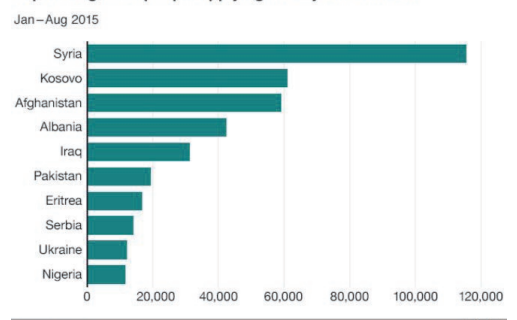
Source: UNHCR



accommodating.

The Syrian refugees and migrants are being joined

Top 10 origins of people applying for asylum in the EU



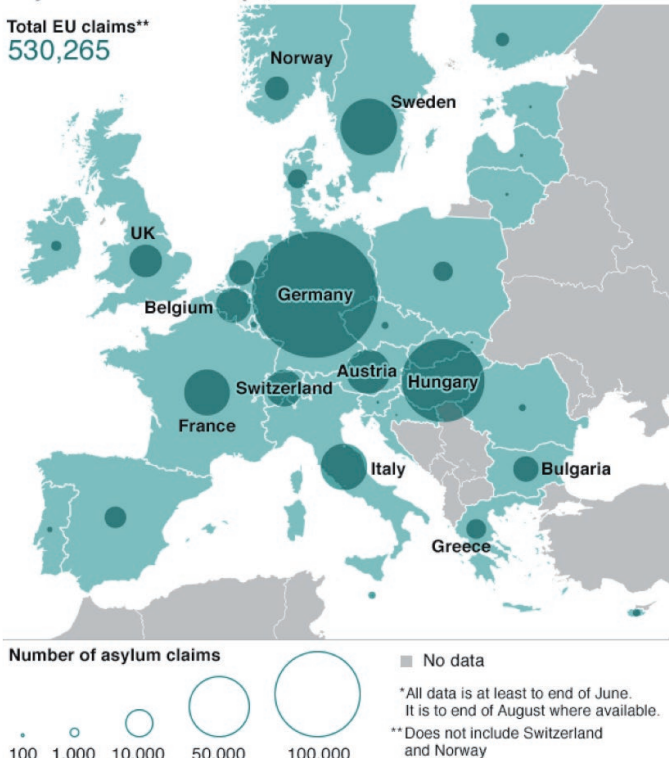
Source: Eurostat



by significant numbers from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Iran (till recently).

Asylum claims in Europe, 2015*

Total EU claims**
530,265



Source: Eurostat



The number of asylum claims by all refugees and migrants in the EU in 2015 till the end of June is over half a million.

The refugees and migrants are following a variety of routes into Europe. Their primary objective is to reach Germany

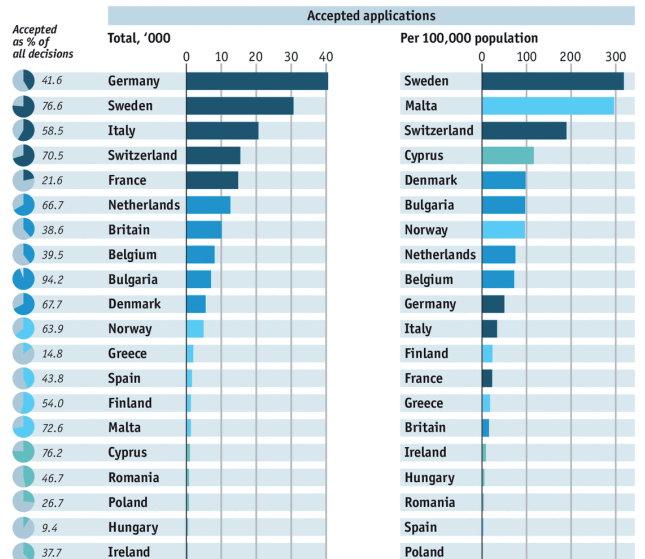


and Sweden, but they are also heading to other destinations-such as the UK, France, Spain and Norway.

There is a perception based on the number of asylum applications approved in 2014, that certain countries such as Sweden and Germany are accommodating the largest numbers. However in 2015 when viewed as the number of asylum application per 100,000 local populations, countries

How much room at the inn?

European decisions on asylum applications *, 2014



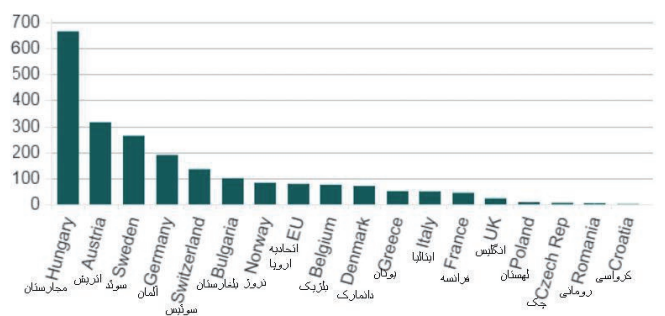
Source: Eurostat

*First-instance decisions only

Economist.com

Asylum applications per 100,000 local population

Jan - Jun 2015



Source: Eurostat

like Hungary and Austria are carrying a significantly higher burden.

There is much discussion within the European Union (EU) about sharing the burden of the migrants and refugees, but there is no agreement yet. The proposed numbers are as follows.

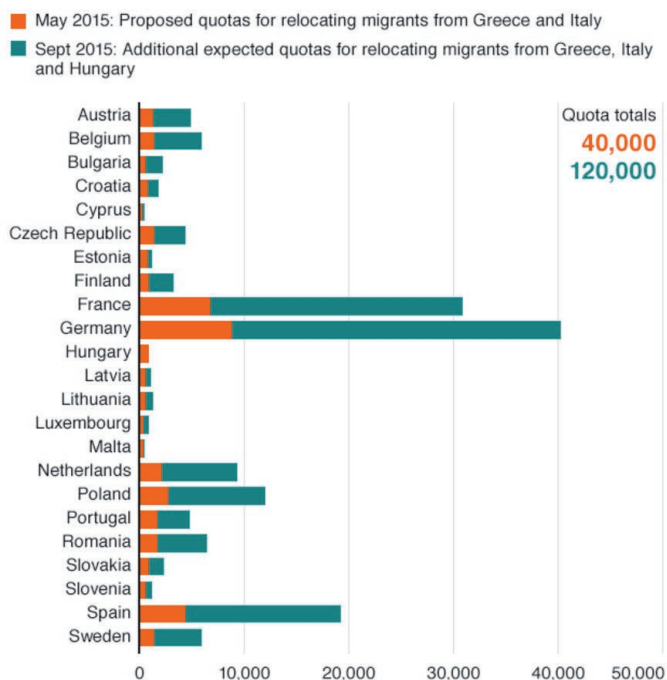
A Szolgatárs a Facebookon:
[facebook.com/szolgatars](https://www.facebook.com/szolgatars)

Responses Of The Member Unions of the EBF Till Date

For detailed reports and stories from the various Unions, please see <http://ebf.org/initiatives>

Country	Assistance being provided	Sources of Funding	Identified Needs
Croatia	Food to refugees at the camp in Opatovac. Volunteers to assist in the camp	In Kind supplies from local churches, Christian organizations, as well as donations from overseas (Portugal and UK) and a Church in Sweden. Virginia Baptists InterAct Sweden BWAid	Prayer Volunteers Funding
Germany	Overseas: Funding for refugee projects in Lebanon and Turkey Germany: Language courses, Playing with children, Sports, Distribution of clothes, Bible study, Intercultural events, Meals, Visits	Local churches Private individuals Some from NGOs	Political advocacy European cooperation
Great Britain	As a Union, they have been doing a lot of advocacy with the Government to increase the number of asylum seekers and the aid that is being provided. Some churches are acting as collection points for supplies and items needed, as well as providing services as needed. They have had a very good response to churches wanting to provide spaces for refugees and migrants.	Local churches	
Hungary (Hungarian Baptist Aid)	Providing - Food packages, hygiene kits, drinking water, sanitation facilities (W.A.S.H), medical assistance, warm clothing, sleeping bags, and blankets. Providing assistance at Budapest Western and Eastern Railway Station, Horgos-Röske Serbian Hungarian border , Opatovic Camp, Croatian-Serbian border , Szentgotthárd Hungarian-Austrian border Barcs	Hungarian Baptist Aid's own resources, Private donations, in-kind donations from Hungarian partner organizations, and international partners: Sweden, Netherlands, USA Funds from international partner organizations: Tearfund, Immanuel Baptist Church, USA, Netherlands	Euros 50,000
Italy	Responding through a coalition of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI) in the following projects - Mediterranean Hope, The Relocation Desk, and the Ecumenical Scholarship program	Local churches	
Iraq (Baptist Church of Baghdad)	Provide food One time distribution: Electric Heaters, Mattresses, and Blankets	Some churches in the US and Australia, GBaid, BWAid	Continuing needs for food, blankets, mattresses, electric heaters, medicines, etc. Need about \$100,000.
Lebanon (LSESD)	Working through local churches in Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, LSESD is providing access to food, health care, water, education and psychosocial support. It is addressing the needs of women and children	Local churches Grants from NGOs, governments, foundations and other institutional donors	Continued funding for access to food, health care and education
Netherlands	Netherlands – some churches work with migrants at the permanent centers in welcoming activities as well as providing clothing, sleeping bags, (stuffed) toys, and welcoming packages. Middle East – funding relief projects with partners in the region	Local churches Individuals	
Serbia (North)	Providing food, water and hygiene items the refugees at the border with Hungary	Funds and donations from local churches	
Serbia (South)	Food, waterproof jackets and mattresses at the refugee camps in Miratovac and Presevo as well as the camps in Sid, near the Croatian border	Come Over and Help BWAid Blythswood Care	Euros 11,800 monthly for three months for food and bread, hygienic material, shoes, and waterproof jackets for 2,000 individuals, 30% of whom are women and children
Sweden (InterAct)	International: Support to Lebanon, Croatia Baptists, Bread of Life, Serbia. Sweden: Assisting 5,000 refugees weekly with asylum assistance, language cafe, material support, food and shelter. Resources to churches that want to help refugees, as well as mapping how churches are already responding and creating a network	Local churches Second hand shops Municipalities	Develop and EBF wide platform for sharing information and tools for language learning, information regarding asylum seeking etc. Also collecting information about ongoing interventions and available resources where they can learn from each other and share what is relevant

Number of migrants EU countries are being asked to take



UK, Ireland and Denmark can choose whether to take part in the quota scheme

Source: European Commission/Reuters

CROATIA

Union: Baptist Union of Croatia

Situation in the Country

A refugee camp was initially established at Opatovac (which is located on the road from Vukovar to Ilok, 12 km from Tovarnik and 17 km from Vukovar) was 48 hours. Since then, there has been a lot more organization and order in working with the refugees.

Number of Refugees and Migrants Being Assisted

The numbers fluctuate. Initially food was provided by the Union to a 1,000 individuals. Since, there have been at least 7,000 in the camp on Opatovac.

Funding Received Till Date

Local churches, Virginia Baptists, InterAct Sweden, A local church in Sweden, Christian organizations, and charities and individuals in the UK and Portugal.

Types of Assistance Being Provided and the Response Till Date

- The Croatian Baptists led by their General Secretary Zeljko Mraz have been involved right from the beginning in co-ordination with the Mayor of Zagreb, Milan Bandic, and other institutions, religious communities and NGO's to direct a joint appeal to the citizens of their country to help.
- The churches in Zagreb organized themselves in the collection and distribution of donations. They were provided with a space of 80m2 (free of charge) by a Syrian gentleman, who has been living and working in Zagreb for many years, where they could collect, pack and distribute help.

- Supplies collected from churches as well as through STEP (IFES Croatia) in addition to purchases. Supplies are now shipped from Zagreb go to Opatovac. They have been invited by the Red Cross and the Assistant Minister of Internal Affairs to provide assistance inside the camp in Opatovac. They are one of the few organizations that are allowed inside the camp. Their partners NGO Remar and Hungarian Baptist Aid assist them. Besides Baptists, these also include volunteers from the Pentecostal church, some citizens from Osijek, and a volunteer from Fokus that came all the way from Split
- They have been receiving supplies from a number of organizations in Croatia and overseas (Portugal, the UK and Sweden and these are stored at the warehouse in Vinkovci and then distributed.
- Frank Bosch with his clown equipment has been entertaining children with songs and games.
- Needs Identified by the Union and Churches:
- Prayer - for the refugees, for the volunteers that are working tirelessly, and also for the police who is handling all of this very efficiently and professionally. So pray for all the people who are involved in this crisis, and also that the Lord puts an end to this great wave, to have peace restored where there's war, so that people don't need to leave their homes.
- For volunteers who are willing to dedicate a week in shifts. The Union will organize housing.
- They are still trying to organize financial help with other Baptist unions in Europe and USA, because they have run out of funds - all financial help is very welcome.

GERMANY

Union: Union of Evangelical Free Churches (Baptists) in Germany

Number of Churches Providing Assistance

40

Number of Refugees and Migrants Being Assisted

At least 1,000 in Germany

Assistance Being Provided Through Other Agencies

Internationally through partners in Lebanon and Turkey. In Germany through many church networks both ecumenical and political.

Type of Assistance That has been Provided Till Date:

Language courses, Playing with children, Sports, Distribution of clothes, Bible study, Intercultural events, Meals, Visits

Funding Accessed till Date

Mainly from churches and private donations and some from NGOs.

Needs Identified by the Churches

Political advocacy and European cooperation

Other Key Activities Till Date

- Resolution by the Annual Assembly (Kassel, May 2015): Welcoming the strangers

- Discussion forum about migration and integration at the Annual Assembly in May 2015
- Representative of Free churches in the church commission dealing with the government institution for migration (BAMF)
- Material and networking concerning “Kirchenasyl” (“sanctuary” offering protection for asylum applicants)
- Enquiry to the churches about their involvement in Sep 2015
- Workshop on refugee help at the “Kreativtag” in Oct 2015
- Forum for refugee help planned for April 2016
- Communication of refugee issues regularly in the German Baptist Union’s newsletters and magazines, on the website.
- Policy for donations: preferably to help the pressing needs in Lebanon, Turkey and Ukraine

Fundraising Till Date

Quite immediately, churches and individuals were responding to the media coverage of the crisis, asking our national administration: “Where can we send our offerings and donations to help refugees?”

Our first response: Financial help is most needed not here in Germany, but especially in Lebanon and Turkey; we can channel it to the refugee help there through German Baptist Aid and European Baptist Aid.

Then we also established an account for refugee projects in our churches (“Gemeinden helfen Flüchtlingen”). Money collected there is distributed to churches that provide information about their project, its budget and the need for external funding.

We receive donations and offerings for both purposes.

Experience with Migrants and Refugees

German Baptist churches have developed a strong sense of involvement in the affairs of their hometowns and regions. Many social projects have been established with the motto from Jeremiah 29:7 (“seek the peace and prosperity of the city”) and in the light of Jesus’ teachings in Matthew 25:31-46. Churches have learnt to be “missional” in the sense that their involvement in the community is part of God’s redemptive mission in our world.!

Another preparation for the refugee challenge has been the growing number of migrant churches associated with our union. For 10 years already we have seen groups of francophone Africans, Vietnamese or Tamil speakers and others become affiliated or member churches in our union. During the last five years we have trained over 20 migrant leaders and 10 of them are ordained pastors already.

Then came the experience that some of the new refugees especially from Iran have come as Christians fleeing the persecution in Iran or have converted to the Christian faith in Germany. Many Baptist churches have accepted these Iranian Christians into membership; many of them were baptized in our churches. So now, we find ourselves not only trying to handle the challenge of migration, but in fact celebrating the new diversity in our churches and union. Our motto for 2015/16 is “Bunte Gemeinde”, meaning: we celebrate diversity and discover Christ in the other, the stranger.

Other Relevant Information

While we see refugee help in Europe to be an urgent issue, we know that the challenges of migration and integration will remain on our agenda for many years to come. And we understand cultural diversity to be a reality and strength of the Christian church since Pentecost and even in heaven (Revelations 7,9)

Some weeks down the line, the media hype about the German welcoming culture has dried out. We are now facing the challenges of receiving, supporting and integrating hundreds of thousands of refugees.

The discussion about the political response to this challenge is getting more diverse and heated. Unfortunately we observe the polarization of positions in this debate and little effort for mutual understanding and searching for solutions together.

We ask ourselves what we can do as churches and as a union to improve the culture of discourse: allowing and inviting people to voice their questions and fears, positions and opposition and so on.

GREAT BRITAIN

Union: Baptist Union of Great Britain

Number of Churches Providing Assistance:

no data

Response Till Date:

- Advocacy - Visit to the migrants’ camp in Calais by two Baptist pastors and some Baptist youth for fact finding. They also took some aid with them. Have since been sharing stories and lobbying charities for support.
- Lynn Green, the General Secretary, along with other ecumenical partners provided a public statement on the situation in Calais.
- Petitioning, in a variety of forums to ask the government to accept more asylum seekers and to increase the support to refugee migrants in the UK.
- Baptist churches have offered 300 spaces to house migrants and refugees.
- A member of a Baptist church heads a charity called Home for Good. Till date 9,000 people (mainly from churches) have responded to foster refugee and migrant children from the Middle East.
- Many churches are acting as collection points for items that can be used by the refugees.

Experience with Migrants and Refugees

A number of churches in the Union have over the years been providing services to asylum seekers such as operating a drop in centre, providing food, clothing, household goods, advice, a shower, a hot meal, and generally a place of welcome and safety.

HUNGARY

Union: Baptist Union of Hungary; Hungarian Baptist Aid.

Churches Involved in Providing Assistance

Kelebia, Tompa, Győr, Szeged, Zákány, Budapest, Verőce, Velenice.

Number of Refugees and Migrants Being Assisted

Between 10,000-12,000 as of October 9, 2015

Assistance Being Provided Through Other Agencies

Providing assistance at Budapest Western and Eastern Railway Station, Horgos-Röszke Serbian Hungarian border, Opatovic Camp - Croatian - Serbian border, Szentgotthárd Hungarian-Austrian border Barcs.

Assistance That has been Provided Till Date

Food packages, hygiene kits, drinking water, sanitation facilities (W.A.S.H), medical assistance, warm clothing, sleeping bags, and blankets.

Funding and Donors

Euros 65,000 as of Oct. 6, 2015. Hungarian Baptist Aid's own resources, private donations, in-kind donations from Hungarian partner organizations, and international partners: Sweden, Netherlands, USA Funds from international partner organizations: Tearfund, Immanuel Baptist Church, USA, Netherlands.

Several BU Churches have provided relief items and volunteers, no financial fundraising was done in the Churches.

Funding Still Needed

Euros 50,000.

Other Needs That Churches and Unions Could Still Address

Professional volunteers for ten-day shifts in Croatia, rental cargo vehicles, non-perishable and culturally acceptable food items (HALAL food), winter sleeping bags (new) Antibacterial hand sanitizer (gel).

Experience with Migrants and Refugees: Extensive global experience in addressing the needs of refugees during crises.

Advocacy and Communications

Communication happens through both the Hungarian media and international media. Below is a list of mediums that this advocacy and communication happens through.

Hungary

- Hungarian Ministry of Human Resources
- Hungarian website of Hungarian Baptist Aid: www.baptistasegely.hu
- Social media networks: <https://www.facebook.com/Szere-tetszolgalat>

International

- Local media in Serbia
- Washington Post: *'...to Eva Varga, a 63-year-old doctor providing volunteer help to the migrants Monday, a refugee crisis is the wrong time to play religious politics'. For me, there are no Christian patients and no non-Christian patients,' said Varga, who has provided medical help in countries around the world for the relief organization Hungarian Baptist Aid. There are only my patients, and I'm obliged to take care of them.'* - The Washington Post
- BBC Radio

- English Facebook site of Hungarian Baptist Aid: <https://www.facebook.com/HungarianBaptistAid>
- English articles from Hungarian Baptist Aid:
 - www.hbaid.org
 - <http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/refugees-children-and-mothers-are-priority>
 - <http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/hungarian-baptist-aid-and-the-baptists-helping-the-refugees>
 - <http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/aid-in-serbia-and-croatia>
 - <http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/bacs-kossuthfalva-hungarian-baptist-aid-continues-to-primarily-help-children-mothers-and-those-injured>
 - <http://www.hbaid.org/hirek/hbaid-news/american-baptist-donations-arrived>

Other Relevant Information

HBAid works together with Serbian Baptist organizations, Croatian Baptist organizations and also with other NGOs, the Red Cross chapters of the respective countries, as well as the relevant Government organizations of the respective countries. Most currently it is the Government of Croatia in order to have access to the Opatovac Refugee Camp.

ITALY

Union: Christian Evangelical Baptist Union of Italy

Response Till Date

The Union is responding through a coalition of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy (FCEI) in the following projects - Mediterranean Hope, The Relocation Desk, and the Ecumenical Scholarship program.

Activities include

Mediterranean Hope: Work is divided into four closely related units: analysis and information flows via the Mediterranean; reception and orientation of migrants and asylum seekers; integration programs; actions aimed at promoting effective migration policies that affect human rights.

The Relocation Desk: Activities at Fiumicino Airport in Rome

The Ecumenical Scholarship Program: Enables refugees to engage in postgraduate studies, vocational training, and Italian language studies. It also provides socio-legal counselling, on-the-job training, internships and vocational courses, career guidance seminars, internship programs in developing countries as a way of stemming the brain-drain effect, conferences and workshops.

IRAQ

Church: Baptist Church of Baghdad. (There is no Baptist Union in Iraq)

Number of Churches Providing Assistance

Only four Evangelical/Protestant churches including on Baptist church, also the Traditional churches) in different ways.

Number of Refugees Being Helped

In cooperation with LSESD in Beirut, assisted 70 families, for nine months and now planning to raise this number to 200 for 6-12 months, in partnering with GBaid, and BWaid.

Type of Assistance Being Provided

Food, blankets, mattresses, electric heaters. Have around 50 Christian families (from Nineveh plain) being assisted monthly, through small packages (Since April 2015). Have 70 Muslim families (Shabak; from Nineveh plain) being assisted monthly (Since January 2015). Also visiting refugees' camps to provide food, each one of these camps had between 20-50 families.

Funding

Have received \$93,080 till date from churches in the US and Australia, GBAid and BWAid. Need about \$100,000 to continue the programs.

Advocacy

The pastor, Rev. Ara Badalian is active in the Iraqi Council for Interreligious Dialogue (ICID), focusing on the conflict between the Majority groups, which has an effect on the situation of the Minorities, specially the Christians.

Experience with Refugees and IDPs

The Baptist Church in Baghdad is collaborating with LSESD in Lebanon and churches in Baghdad in responding to the needs of the IDPs and refugees streaming into Baghdad and building up experience.

LEBANON

Union: Convention of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Lebanon; The Lebanese Society for Educational and Social Development (LSESD)

Number of Churches Providing Assistance

LSESD is implementing its relief program mainly through local churches in Lebanon (at least 21), Syria (at least 6) and Iraq (1).

Number of Refugees and IDPs Being Assisted

7,255 families (43,530 individuals approx.) have access to food every month, 4,560 individuals provided with healthcare, 800 children have access to various kinds of educational programs, 3,160 families provided with blankets, mattresses and NFIs, 200 families have access to clean water.

On-going Response

Access to food, healthcare, education, water and psychosocial support; distribution of blankets and mattresses; milk and diapers for young children, vocational training for children and young adults; training for women; training for churches on gender based violence and child protection.

Source of Funding Till Date

Churches, Baptist Unions, donor governments, foundations, aid agencies, private donors.

Funding Required

Since most of the funding is time bound grants, funding is required to sustain the programs among the refugees and those internally displaced.

NETHERLANDS

Union: Union of Baptist Churches in the Netherlands

Number of Churches Providing Assistance

A few - no exact numbers. There is a general care for all incoming refugees and migrants.

Type of Assistance Being Provided

Netherlands

Once the asylum seekers arrive at a permanent center, is contact with them possible. Many individuals have responded by providing clothing, sleeping bags, (stuffed) toys, and welcoming packages. Some eat and meet activities have been organised as well. Baptist churches are mostly joining these initiatives and not starting them themselves.

Middle East

Have provided funding to projects in the region and are considering new funding.

Experience with Migrants and Refugees

Have some migrant churches in the Union and contacts with new groups have increased over the years. A number of churches provide translation service for migrants, as well as working with asylum seeker centers in activities such as doing activities and eating together, as well as conducting Bible Studies.

There are some good interdenominational organisations that are specialised in different aspects of the work - for example www.gave.nl is an organisation that tries to bring Christians and asylum seekers together. The Protestant Church of the Netherlands has a special representative for migrant-related issues, who is doing a lot in national coordination and political voicing.

Advocacy and Communications

Churches mostly in agreement with what is said by the umbrella organisations (such as the Evangelical Alliance, the Council of Churches). There are close links with these bodies and some members of parliament, like Joel Voordewind from the Christian Union.

Fundraising

Together with quite a lot of Dutch organisations, such as the Evangelical Broadcasting Company, which is coordinating some of the funding. However, most of the organisations working with refugees in Europe that they know are already well supported. So they are considering giving some (more) funds to the Italian project Mediterranean Hope, as well as looking to see if they can support projects in the Middle East.

SERBIA

Union: Union of Baptist Churches in Serbia (Serbia North)

Type of Assistance Already Being Provided

Food, water and personal hygiene items.

Activities Till Date

Individuals in various churches have been helping small groups of migrants for the past three years. With the huge influx, they are trying to provide assistance at the border with

Hungary. The crisis worsened when Hungary closed the border to the refugees.

Union: Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists of Serbia (Serbia South)

Situation in the Country

As reported by the Baptist Union:

The first appeal for help was received from Presevo and from the local government in Vranje. Not long after that, "Love Your Neighbour" (a local NGO) received an appeal for help from Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Welfare. The largest influx of migrants is in Miratovac and Presevo.

Number of Churches Providing Assistance

3

Number of Refugees and Migrants Being Assisted

2,000

Type of Assistance Already Being Provided

Food, waterproof jackets and mattresses

Sources of Funding

International

Come Over and Help, BWAid, Blythswood Care.

Local Churches

In spite of being fairly poor, they have been providing clothes, fruits and volunteers

Activities Till Date

They are concentrating their work mostly on the camps at Miratovac and Presevo and also in the camps in Sid, towards the Croatian border.

Proposed On-Going Activities

Providing food and bread, hygienic material, shoes, and waterproof jackets for 2,000 individuals, 30% of whom are women and children.

Funding Required

Euros 11,800 monthly for three months.

Experience in Assisting Refugees and Migrants

"Love Your Neighbour" is an experienced organisation with long experience in with refugees from Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo. They started their humanitarian work in 1991 and also worked with children in Vranje in southern of Serbia. The work with migrants is just a continuation of their humanitarian work. They are in contact with local governments and also with local churches that wanted to be involved in volunteer help.

SWEDEN

Union: Evangeliska Frikyrkan / InterAct

Number of Local Churches Involved

60 churches

Number of Refugees Being Assisted

About 5,000 weekly

Type of Assistance Being Provided

In the Conflict Zones and Along the Path of the Refugees:

- Support to Lebanon, Croatia Baptists, Bread of Life, Serbia.
 - o In Sweden
- Asylum assistance, language cafe, material support. Food and shelter.
- In Sweden they have provided resources to help churches that want to engage with refugees in their local communities.
- They are also in the process of mapping and creating a network of churches involved in different ways ministering to refugees. So far 60 of their churches have responded telling about many different types of initiatives both of short term character but also ongoing longterm engagements.

Sources of Funding

Local churches and local second-hand shops support International projects. Local projects supported by Churches and Municipalities.

History and Experience in Helping Migrants and Refugees

The last 30 years their churches have been involved in different levels with refugees and migrants. Mainly through opening up churches for activities like language learning, support with asylum process meeting material and spiritual needs. As a union they have a working group supporting churches in their efforts. Produced material to help churches: „Helping the Asylum seeker „, „A multicultural church-insights and lessons learned „, to mention a few. Staff and contact persons that supports churches in these areas.

Advocacy and Communications

They have made several opinion articles in the secular press. The most noted one was signed by 378 pastors. Through ecumenical organisation like Swedish Christian Council they have been active in talking with politicians. They have been involved with advocacy in this issue for 30 years and will continue on different levels.

Needs that EBF can address

- EBFs broad network throughout Europe and the Middle East provides a platform for sharing information and tools to be used in this kind of work. It can involve tools for language learning, information regarding asylum seeking and many other topics.
- Collecting information about ongoing interventions and available resources where they can learn from each other and share what is relevant will be very helpful.

The EBF Council in Sofia, Bulgaria commissioned this report in September 2015. Rupen Das, as part of his role as faculty of IBTSC in providing research and other support to EBF's member Unions, is the primary author of the document, along with other members of the Working Group.