



Practicing Hospitality: Practical Ways to Support Displaced People in Your Community

Remembering the **call of Jesus in Matthew 25** to meet Christ in the stranger and the person in need – ‘for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’



Photo credit: Teanna Sunberg



In light of increasing numbers of displaced people* due to conflict, natural disasters and lack of access to basic human rights, this toolkit has been created to help churches think through appropriate church-based responses. It includes practical ideas for both low-investment and medium/high-investment responses as well as some guiding principles for churches to consider when engaging with this issue.

There are many terms and definitions used to describe this crisis – what we want to emphasize is that this is about **people**. *This document uses the term ‘**displaced people**’ which is inclusive of refugees, asylum seekers, Internally Displaced People (IDPs), Stateless people and forced migrants. For legal purposes in most countries, it is important for these to be differentiated. In terms of churches responding to people in need, it may not be necessary to differentiate the category of displacement that an individual or family fall into. The ultimate criteria for churches to consider are the current vulnerability individuals or families are facing, irrespective of their reasons for leaving their country of origin. This is about **people**.

To learn more about technical definitions – see United Nations Refugee Agency www.unhcr.org

Please do not be overwhelmed by the details in this toolkit – no church needs to do everything; these are simply ideas to consider. For churches that are new to this issue, start small and focus on quality. If you can only make a difference for one person or one family, it is worth the investment.

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Low-Investment Responses

Mapping of services

It is very important to get an overview of the situation in your area and find out what are the key services available for displaced people. Carry out a “mapping” exercise of services available to displaced people in your area.

- Agencies/organizations supporting displaced people
 - Is there a refugee council or asylum seeker organization that you can receive advice from?
 - Who are they? Where are they located? What services do they provide? What times/days are they open?
 - Are there organizations providing legal advice to displaced people?
- Church activities (Nazarene and other) supporting displaced people
 - What churches in your area are currently responding? Where are they located? What services do they provide? What times/days are they open?
- Government services/support systems for displaced people
 - Does the government provide services to displaced people? If so, what kind of services? Do they receive housing? Rent allowance? Living stipends? Where are these offices located and how do new people arriving in your country register and apply for support/asylum?
 - Familiarize yourself with the legal framework your country has for dealing with refugees/asylum seekers. This information may be available online or at the nearest social welfare or city council office.
- Other initiatives
 - Refugee/Asylum seeker communities are very innovative and resilient and often have their own networks and coping mechanisms for dealing with long-term displacement. It is important not to undermine the refugee/asylum seeker community's ability to support each other. **DO NOT DO THINGS THAT THEY ARE ALREADY DOING FOR THEMSELVES.**

IDEA: Print information sheets/cards including some of the vital information from above to hand out to displaced people (places they can go for assistance/services, maps, phone numbers etc.) Consider doing this in multiple languages. See example at end of document.

Allow this mapping exercise to guide your church's choice of response – try not to duplicate what other people are doing, but direct people to existing services! Your church's response should complement existing services or be based on any gaps that you identify and believe your

	church is well placed to fill.
Language Classes	<p>Offer free/low-cost language classes for displaced people. This could even be as simple as 1-2 mornings/afternoons per week.</p> <p><i>Physical Resources:</i> Classes could be held in Sunday School rooms, church buildings or other facilities your church has links to, such as, local schools, community halls etc.</p> <p><i>Human Resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize volunteers from within in the church to teach or even facilitate basic conversation if no one has teaching experience • Approach local schools asking teachers to offer volunteer hours <p><i>Potential Costs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If necessary, purchase some language curriculum and workbooks, or simple phrase books (or create your own) • Stationery
Safe spaces	<p>Offer free safe spaces for displaced people to come during daytime hours. As above, this could even be 1-2 mornings/afternoons per week that is well publicized.</p> <p><i>Physical Resources:</i> church buildings or other facilities your church has links to, such as community halls/centers.</p> <p><i>Human Resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize volunteers from within in the church to facilitate the space. Have lots of extra volunteers in case of large numbers <p><i>Potential Activities:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Games/activities for children • Simple tea/coffee times or lunches for families • Space for parents to relax, talk and receive support • Day care for children <p><i>Potential Costs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tea/coffee/snacks and meals • Games/equipment for children’s activities • Comfortable rooms for families to feel relaxed and safe <p>Child Protection: Consider child protection issues carefully and abide by church/government-mandated standards. Do</p>

	not invite unknown adults without children at same time and location as children's groups.
Referrals to Medical and other Health Professionals	<p>Compile a list of doctors, community health workers and counselors in your area who are taking referrals. As you come across individuals and families with urgent medical and/or psychological needs be prepared to connect them with service providers.</p> <p>IDEA: Create sheets/card with essential contact information for health service providers in your area.</p> <p>Consider helping people find adequate translation options.</p>
City orientations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer orientations to help people understand the city/town where they're now living. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transport orientations (how to use buses, trains etc.) ○ Maps (including key services) ○ Places to shopping for food, clothes etc. ○ Places to rent rooms, flats, homes ○ Directions clinics/medical centers ○ Schools for children <p><i>Physical Resources:</i> Potential use of church or members' vehicles to provide orientations</p> <p><i>Human Resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize volunteers who understand the city to give orientations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Always have at least two adult volunteers provide accompaniment together – female volunteers with displaced women and male with displaced men ○ You most likely will need to find someone who can offer translation for orientations
Accompaniment and being an Advocate	<p>Accompany individuals and families as they go about difficult tasks such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filling out forms and applications (medical, social welfare, asylum/refugee registration etc.) • Accompanying people to Government offices and organizations where they are applying for support • Accompanying people as they negotiate rental agreements with landlords • Accompany families/individuals to medical facilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer Translation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offering/finding translation assistance for any of the above <p><i>Human Resources:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilize volunteers willing to be accompaniers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Always have at least two adult volunteers provide accompaniment together – female volunteers with displaced women and male with displaced men <p><i>Potential Costs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport in and around the city
<p>Advocacy (Amplify their Voices)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write to members of parliament, city council etc. about the church’s care and concern for displaced people in your country/area • Connect with other church networks to have a stronger voice (Evangelical Alliance, Churches Together etc.)
<p>Awareness Raising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread the word about issues displaced people are facing in your country/specific city • Host an awareness event on the issue in your church and consider inviting someone from a local refugee or asylum seeker council to come and speak to your congregation and local community • Consider talking about displacement and appropriate church responses in your house groups or weekly Bible studies. Consider the biblical and theological considerations for caring for the oppressed and the marginalized – and welcoming the stranger.

Medium-High Investment Responses

Shelter	<p>Only to be taken on as part of a considered, long-term strategic investment by the church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renting facilities for displaced people to stay temporarily • Opening the church building itself for displaced people to sleep. In some cities, churches collaborate with each other and open their church 1-2 nights per week, ensuring that shelter is available every night of the week in one of the churches. These often include an evening meal and breakfast. • Work alongside agencies that offer shelter such as the Boaz Trust in the UK - http://boaztrust.org.uk/about/accommodation/ • Opening church people’s homes for displaced people to stay (low financial cost but higher investment in terms of time and energy) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Opening homes to people may contain risks and should be done with proper consideration. If in doubt, seek advice from people experienced in this level of care for displaced and vulnerable people. <p><i>Potential Costs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent • Beds, mattresses, bedding, towels • Support for church families who are housing displaced people <p><i>* Ensure that men and women’s sleeping spaces are separated and offer safety and privacy.</i></p>
Food Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize relief packages of food or other basic necessities to distribute to families in need. • Start a feeding program at your church <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It’s important to do food distribution only when absolutely essential and families are unable to source food themselves ○ NOTE: Food relief can create dependency, is expensive and involves lots of logistical planning; it is not to be undertaken without consideration of these factors

Considering Partnering!

If your church does not have physical, financial and human resources to do some of the above activities, there is always room to partner with other agencies/organizations and churches. Types of partnerships include:

- **Volunteering:** Contact other agencies/organizations/churches and offer volunteer hours
- **Fund Raising:** hold fund raising events for needs you are aware of. If you wish to give to other Nazarene response efforts through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, see the link on page 9 (next page)

Guiding Principles for Working With Displaced People

Working with/for displaced people is complex:

- Wherever possible, involve people from the refugee/asylum seeker community in identifying needs, planning your church's response and evaluating the effectiveness of your activities. The participation of displaced people in the planning, implementing and evaluation of your work will not only enhance the quality of your response but it empowers them. All displaced people have the ability to take action and this should be encouraged. Displaced people should not only be recipients of assistance and services but also be active in the transformation of their own circumstances.
- The needs of displaced people are always overwhelming and the church's resources and influence are limited. Do what you can – every contribution helps. Do not feel guilty when you say, '*This is all we are able to provide.*' We will always face limitations.
- If the assistance you are offering is only temporary, make sure to communicate the time-frame of this assistance clearly. It is important to manage people's expectations carefully and not to raise unrealistic hopes.
- Start **small**. There is a temptation to "go big" when the needs are overwhelming. When starting out, begin small and focus on quality. Allow the size of the response to grow in relation to the church's ability to deliver the project with high quality.
- Prioritize the safety of women and children – be aware of people who prey on other's vulnerability.
- If working with children, ensure you have the same high child protection standards used for other church activities and that these are compliant with your country's expectations for Child Protection/Safeguarding. If you need resources to help ensure safety for children: www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk
- Be sensitive when working with people from other faith groups. Do not make attendance of faith-based activities essential in order for people to receive support.

- As a church, do what you can to “lower the fear” of refugees. Be a church that encourages inclusivity, love, and acceptance.
 - Recognize the extreme trauma of displaced people’s journey to your area and the violence they have fled and been exposed to over many years. This can have particular effects, including:
 - Heightened nerves, short patience
 - Alert and aggressive to threats or perceived threats
 - Low appetite
 - Lack of sleep and nightmares
 - Tearful, hopeless, depressed, quiet
- ➔ Always be ready to refer people to specialists and/or seek advice. Compile a list of counselors/therapists to have on hand.
- Gender Sensitivity: Many displaced people arriving in Europe will come from more conservative cultures in relation to gender roles. Segregating men and women’s activities is wise. Avoid physical contact with people of the opposite sex and do not be alone with people of the opposite sex.

Give Financially to Support Other Nazarene Responses

Support Nazarene churches as they respond to displaced people issues globally. To give to the Global Refugee and Immigrant Fund, click here:

<https://give.nazarene.org/donate/f/125347>

Any Questions?

If you have more questions or would like to discuss working with displaced people, do not hesitate to contact Eurasia NCM Coordinator:

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Useful Links

General Displaced People Resources:

boaztrust.org.uk - The Boaz Trust

welcomingthe stranger.com - World Relief “Welcoming the Stranger”

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk - UK Refugee Council Website

www.unhcr.org - UN Refugee Agency

www.fmreview.org - Forced Migration Review – articles on issues affecting displaced people

“Disasters and the Local Church” – Handbook by Tearfund (free)

http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/themes/disasters/disasters_and_the_local_church

Child Protection/Safeguarding:

www.keepingchildrensafe.org.uk - Free Resources for Child Protection/Safeguarding

Example Information Sheet

<p>Essential Information</p> <p>Local Refugee Council Address: XXXX Phone: XXXX Opening Hours: XXXX</p> <p>Emergency Shelter Address: XXXX Phone: XXXX Opening Hours: XXXX</p> <p>Nearby Clinic Address: XXXX Phone: XXXX Opening Hours: XXXX</p> <p>Hospital for Emergencies Address: XXXX Phone: XXXX Opening Hours: XXXX</p> <p>Food Kitchen/Distribution Center Address: XXXX Phone: XXXX</p>	<p>Weekly Activities at Church of the Nazarene</p> <p>Address: XXXX Phone: XXXX</p> <p>Basic Language Classes Monday and Tuesday 2pm-4pm in main church building.</p> <p>Free Coffee/Tea Morning with children's activities and games (families only) in the main church building</p> <p>Sunday Worship Services: 10.30am in the Church</p>	<p>Welcome</p>  <p>Church of the Nazarene</p> <p>XXXX</p>
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