

*Together
for Refugees*



GUIDE

for volunteer projects concerning the politically
persecuted and war refugees

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A joint initiative of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany;
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Together for Refugees

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STATEMENT OF THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN GERMANY ON THE PRESENT REFUGEE SITUATION

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In agreement with the Geneva Convention views on Refugees, the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church in Germany supports the protection of the politically persecuted and war refugees. This support includes their right to medical care, education and social benefits. The local churches tend to the active care of asylum seekers, while the Adventist Welfare Services (AWW) and ADRA-Germany tend to the personal and technical aspects.

In accordance with the SDA's worldwide mission statement, the SDA Church in Germany perceives their Christian responsibility "to be there, available for people most affected by poverty, distress, despair and sickness". This statement is valid for all people, without consideration to ethnic origin, gender, religion, philosophy, handicap, age or sexual identity.

In the Gospels, God became man. This divine solidarity encourages all believing Christians to be of assistance, without exception, to all those who need help. For this reason, SDAs are formally opposed to all forms of prejudice.

The SDA Church in Germany will use and strengthen the existing structures of AWW and ADRA to give ongoing help to the politically persecuted and war refugees. The Church accepts this social challenge and gets involved actively in the regions and communities that need help.

All the local SDA churches are invited:

- to cooperate with public authorities, volunteer initiatives and registered societies at federal and community levels (cities and districts).
- to get informed about the potentials of volunteer activities within the organized assistance for refugees and get practically involved.
- to approach and welcome those in need without reservation and fear of contact.
- to seek "the welfare of the city," in cooperation with partner organizations as well as with other Christian churches and institutions.

- to offer facilities for language courses, meetings, children groups and leisure programs.
- to promote the integration of refugees and migrants.
- to have intercessory prayer for refugees, migrants and those in need.

We express our heartfelt thanks to those who are already involved in volunteer activities for and with refugees. Faith in the soon-coming Christ and the hope for a New Earth prompt Christians to share their prosperity and quality of life with those who are in need.

Ostfildern, September 22, 2015



Johannes Naether
(North German Conference)



Rainer Wanitschek
(South German Conference)



INTRODUCTION

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Hundreds of thousands of politically persecuted and war refugees are currently seeking safety and a new home in Northern Europe. With this continuous flow of refugees, we are expecting that in the years to come millions of people will enter Germany and apply for the right of residence. Within prevailing legal parameters, the State and political actors are responsible to integrate those who are in search of protection into the existing social system by granting them the corresponding social benefits. Furthermore, civil society and churches in particular are requested to render a tangible contribution to the people who seek protection in our country, people who are in need but who are also capable of work.

The Federal Government makes a distinction between the politically persecuted and war refugees concerning their right to residence in Germany. It is the Federal Office for Immigration and Refugees (www.bamf.de) which assumes responsibility.

According to Article 16a.1 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, the politically persecuted have the right to asylum. After examination and authorization, a permanent resident permit will generally be granted to the asylum seekers, eventually leading to naturalization.

In harmony with § 3 and § 4 of the Law on Asylum Rights, the recognized war refugees, or the so-called “quota refugees”, generally enjoy temporary protection or subsidiary protection, i. e. a restricted right to residence as long as war is raging in their country and their return cannot be justified. Special regulations for the reception of quota refugees are possible (such as, for instance, the war refugees from Syria).

Many of the asylum seekers in our country have health problems (physical and psychological) and are traumatized by their war experience. These types of problems need professional intervention, which volunteers cannot supply; nonetheless, they can support professionals by lending a listening ear, by empathizing and sympathizing. A problem shared is a problem halved.

According to most recent statistics, about 8% of the asylum seekers have no formal education, 13% have tertiary education, 55% have some high school and 24% have a primary or elementary education. Many have professional qualifications and may be integrated in the work force as soon as they are proficient in the German language.

Whatever the religious persuasion of the war refugees from the Near and Middle East (Sunnites, Shiites, Kurds, Alevites, Yazidis, Christians, etc.), they have been brought up in a Muslim religious, social and political environment. Furthermore, they fled from a religiously motivated war. Without doubt, the refugees will bring with them to Germany their religious persuasions and reli-

gious conflicts and will continue to be confronted with an array of old problems from their country of origin. Most likely their religion will provide some backing to live self-determined and with dignity in a foreign country whose majority population is often prejudiced and not always understanding. For this reason, it is extremely important to prepare the refugees for a greater understanding of democratic politics and secular society and to emphasize that the legal system of the Federal Republic of Germany is based on the principle of separation of State and religion. Freedom of religion and conscience rests upon the principle that religion remains a private affair.



“VOLUNTEERS CAN SUPPORT THE REFUGEES BY LENDING A LISTENING EAR, BY EMPATHIZING AND SYMPATHIZING. A PROBLEM SHARED IS A PROBLEM HALVED.”

PRINCIPLES OF “TOGETHER FOR REFUGEES”

“Together for Refugees” is an initiative of the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church, Adventist Welfare Services (AWW), ADRA-Germany and Friedensau Adventist University (FAU), undertaken together for the integration of the politically persecuted and war refugees.

After speaking about the commandment “Love your neighbor as yourself”, Jesus was asked: “Who is my neighbor?” Jesus answered by telling them about the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.27–37). Loving your neighbor is valid for whoever needs help or support, irrespective of religion, ethnical origin, or language. From a biblical perspective, the politically persecuted and war refugees can be considered to be our neighbors that need or love and care. We may serve them out of a sense of duty or by a motive of conscientiousness; however, it will be our personal interests, our voluntary involvement and our capacity to empathize with their needs as our neighbors that will qualify our services.

Serving others should always be directed to their needs and should not be restricted to our own surplus of provisions and resources. Therefore, the needs should be ascertained before proceeding to meaningful assistance and intervention. These needs may be asserted by scientific data collection like questionnaires and interviews, but they may also be enquired through personal conversations.

“HELPFULNESS SHOULD ALWAYS BE FOCUSED ON THE NEEDS OF OTHERS AND MUST NOT BE RESTRICTED TO THE SURPLUS OF OUR OWN PROVISIONS AND RESOURCES.”



STRUCTURE OF “TOGETHER FOR REFUGEES”

The Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany has established a program at the federal, regional and church levels and delegated its responsibilities to institutions such as ADRA, Adventist Welfare Services (AWW) and Friedensau Adventist University (FAU), which are to professionally support volunteer groups in the local churches.

“Together for Refugees” uses the existing structures of volunteer groups and aide groups as follows:

At the federal level:

Coordination of the “Together for Refugees” initiative at the federal level is accomplished through a steering group and includes a representative from each of the following entities: ADRA-Germany, Adventist Welfare Services (AWW); the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) Church; and Friedensau Adventist University (FAU).

At the regional level (Union level):

Each of the seven local unions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Germany provides a “Delegate for the Politically Persecuted and War Refugees”, who will work as a coordinator and contact person for the volunteer groups and aide groups.

At the community level (churches and aide groups):

“Together for Refugees” works within the cities and districts, generally with volunteers in various initiatives and projects for the refugees. These initiatives and projects are undertaken whenever appropriate in cooperation with other organizations and partners that are involved in the refugee assistance network. These volunteer groups are represented by their respective leader or a delegate.

THE PARTICIPATORY APPROACH IN VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

10 Participation means “to have a part” or “to take part”. In other words, participation refers to an active involvement of all people concerned, including refugees, who should have their share in the responsibilities of project planning and management. Sometimes human beings have needs that cannot be satisfied without the help of others. However, the refugees also have interests, capabilities and a great potential for self-help.

As far as possible, war refugees should be instructed to help themselves. The structure of services must not operate “from top to bottom”. Regarding those in need, we should definitely avoid by the structure of services to develop passive receiver mentalities.

Refugees have skills that should help them to find a niche in the host country, enable them to work together for common tasks in society and even offer services to their neighbors. Those in need of help should eventually be able to help themselves and even become a help to others. This will preserve and enhance their dignity and self-respect and will lead to a successful integration. This implies that

the voluntary actors should be open to also learn from the refugees.

Integration can succeed only with mutual respect, appreciation and a shared partnership. There should be an unrestrained “give and take” that may open up to surprises. Engaged and successfully integrated refugees and the ones that are granted asylum have the knowledge of the language and culture of their countries of origin and would be a great asset when involved in the volunteer activities and projects.



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Together for Refugees

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS

What can volunteers and aide groups in the churches concretely do for the politically persecuted and war refugees?

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As already mentioned, volunteers and project activities should be oriented toward the identified needs of the recipients, taking into consideration the existing possibilities and capabilities of our churches. Active integration implies the promotion of self-help potentials of refugees. Their basic needs should be met by themselves and/or with possible resources made available.

1. The service structure of the State takes care for the basic needs of the refugees like lodging, food and minimal financial means. Civil society and volunteers can supplement this by special donations and other supporting measures trying to provide a better quality of life. Clothing, kitchen utensils, electronic appliances, bicycles and other utensils could be particularly provided as needed. If possible, a collection center may be set up in a church to receive donations of clothing and household and personal effects to be distributed to targeted persons according to needs.
2. Besides distribution of basic materials, it is extremely important to interact with the politically persecuted and war refugees, to seek conversation with them and to build good interpersonal relationships. These people are sufficiently supplied with the materials they need most of the time, but have hardly any contact with the majority of society. Beyond the functional necessities, traumatized persons also need human empathy and special care for their afflictions, sorrows, needs and interests. We can make sure that good opportunities for meetings and interpersonal relationships be organized (if they do not take place on their own accord), for instance, through evenings dedicated to listening to the stories of refugees in churches, or cooking together and sharing meals. Generally, we have to be culturally sensitive particularly to gender issues and how close or distanced our encounters should take place. Gender issues include the respective dominant or submissive position of men and women in their families and societies. Women are generally trusted more as speaking partners for women than men.

3. Social integration into everyday life is filled with all sorts of obstacles that can be overcome by professionals and civil society actors but also by neighborly help according to existing knowledge and capabilities. This includes, for example, assisting in dealing with authorities, enrollment in kindergarten (that is not officially organized as in primary schools), enrollment in schools, recognition of school and professional degrees, search for employment and everyday tasks like opening a bank account, doctor's visits, etc.
4. To encourage enduring relationships and mutual responsibility, sponsorship for or between families may be organized. Thus, the refugees may have a more permanent preferred and trusted partner. Sponsorship should take into account the knowledge of the language, age and interests. It may also be organized for a single person, for instance for a child of school age, whose progress we may want to be responsible for. Within a sponsorship program, craft enterprises may also resume responsibility for the training of young refugees.
5. Children in school-going age have additional needs for mentoring and support to be enabled to eventually follow classroom activities on their own. Private lessons and coaching can be offered by adults. Classroom assisting lessons may also be organized with peers with equal educational levels. In order to build healthy relationships and friendships, we should not forget to periodically invite children to birthday celebrations, parties, or to friendly evenings and games, thus giving them some pleasant memories.
6. The State and civil society offer lessons in the German language. We could support these initiatives by offering additional language courses (why not by mutually learning another language ourselves like Arabic).
7. Beyond their fundamental needs, the politically persecuted and war refugees also have individual needs, interests and capabilities, which need special interventions, services or care. Volunteers can supply contacts or provide professional competencies, especially concerning women or individuals suffering from a mental or physical handicap. They may also assist in an extraordinary occupational interest, in offering refresher courses or in-service-training or provide religious orientation and so forth.



Small white tag with text and a barcode, attached to the stuffed animal.

Together for Refugees

8. If an interest on behalf of the refugees exists, learning German can be supplemented by lessons in local and national history and by group visits to castles, public parks and churches. For people who have grown up in a totally different political system, an introduction to parliamentary democracy and constitutional legality could be helpful to understand Western politics and society. This includes the development of a positive attitude towards the police and law and order. The police offers at times presentations and workshops to refugees informing them of their rights and duties also with regard to proper reactions when exposed to xenophobia.
9. Culture in general, including art, literature and music have proven to be excellent means of integration. Project ideas may include painting, reading and singing together in church choirs. Children may be motivated by learning and playing a musical instrument that has been proven to have a therapeutic effect. Intercultural events, on particular occasions such as Christmas, may be organized, while keeping cultural sensitivity in mind.
10. Sports and leisure activities are also helpful for social integration and for the experience of community belongingness. It is well-known that soccer is a particular favorite amongst young men. To play in a team of soccer clubs is not only a pleasure, but also an honor. A variety of sports and leisure activities can be offered that may relieve the mind from daily troubles like the membership in a fitness club. Many children and even adult cannot swim, therefore, organizing swimming lessons seems to be a good idea. We have to remember that girls and women are culturally sensitive to these activities and have to be picked up accordingly.
11. Refugees may be supplied with most of the material things they need but because of protracted work permits or an unfruitful job search, they are left to idleness. As a remedy, apart from formally organized work opportunities, alternative occupational activities may be created and offered such as voluntary work in charitable or public institutions, in gardening projects or in agriculture, industrial arts, neighborhood assistance etc.

12. Most refugees possess a well-functioning mobile phone, which has served them well during their plight. They are also well versed in the use of social media, which is excellent for communication, networking and integration.
13. After the initial lodging at reception camps, registered refugees with a stay or residence permit have to be accommodated in public or private homes. In this case, the rent will be paid by the State. The regional delegate for the politically persecuted and war refugees can help with the choice of suitable tenants and the administrative steps with the authorities.
14. Next to the involvement of volunteers, facilities can be made available at local churches as assets to be used. In cooperation with other partners these facilities may be made available for refugee language courses, informal meetings and children groups. In this case, an agreement should be drawn up with the administrators of the facilities, namely the South German Building Association (Real Estate Administration).



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Together for Refugees

VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECTS

“Together for Refugees” rests fundamentally upon an involvement in projects. A project is always oriented to the needs of the refugees and not to our own needs. It means to look and listen carefully, to be empathic, to collect information and to create contacts with the existing network and initiatives in the city.

- What can be achieved and what not?
- Who would cooperate, to what extent and for how long?
- How can the refugees be integrated, keeping in mind their interests and capabilities?
- What are the risks and what we must be aware of?

Then, the possibilities and resources available to us should be realistically evaluated with the help of following questions:



“HELP FOR THE REFUGEES IS NOT PRIMARILY A PROJECT OF FEELINGS, BUT OF A DELIBERATE WILL TO HELP AND GUIDE SO THAT THEY MAY ARRIVE AND PROGRESS IN OUR COUNTRY.”

FINANCIAL PROJECT PROMOTION

“Together for Refugees” financially supports projects which are clearly defined in their contents and time frame, designed and managed for and with refugees (other social projects are not eligible).

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The projects are launched exclusively at a community level by volunteers and aide groups. They must conform to the proposed project format of “Together for Refugees”.

A financial support may extent to 100% of project costs and up to a maximum of € 5,000. The financial aspects will be managed exclusively through the local church or aide group’s bank account of the Adventist Welfare Services, but not through private bank accounts.

The purpose of this financial support is to sponsor activities, services, events, cultural and communal activities etc. that supplement refugees but is not meant to be used for monetary gifts or material items (such as clothing, technical appliances, kitchen utensils, etc.). Personal costs (salaries or honoraria) are also excluded from this financial support.

Funds for projects should be applied for with the Delegate for the Politically Persecuted and War Refugees at the regional level (local conferences). See page 19-20.

The financial resources should be used and entered into the bookkeeping, in agreement with the project requirements. You will find directions on this topic on the website of the Adventist Welfare Services (see the instructions on page 19-20).

For each project a report has to be prepared. The report is required as evidence of correct and proper use of financial resources for project activities. You can find directions on how to prepare the report on the website.

“Do good and talk about it” is a principle in social work that is also valid in helping refugees. By talking about your project activities, you may even motivate others to plan and implement a project. This is why we intend to document our projects and, where appropriate, make them known to the public.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Each project needs sufficient time for preparation. This is why it is wise to prepare a written description of the project. A project proposal should describe the needs of the beneficiaries, define the project aims and goals and determine the activities, working approaches and the measures necessary to achieve these aims and goals. In addition, an estimate of the necessary and applied financial means should be included, organized by a cost plan that includes a description of one's own resources.

“Together for Refugees” provides an application form along with an action guide to describe and organize project activities. This application form should be filled out by volunteers and aide groups and sent to the Delegate for the Politically Persecuted and War Refugees at the regional level (local union).

After receiving and examining the project application, the delegate may eventually contact the person or group in charge of the application for further clarification and may subsequently recommend the proposal to ADRA for funding. After the application has been examined and accepted by ADRA, an agreement shall be made between the applicant and ADRA and the applied financial me-

ans shall be made available.

“Together for Refugees” provides a form with explanations and directions to be filled for a final project report. For the sake of transparency and documentation, all details of the application including the project report, financial matters and accounting as well as the complete project execution shall eventually be posted on the website of the Adventist Welfare Services (AWW).

TO RECAPITULATE:
A well balanced participation of the target group already during the planning phase is an essential feature of a well-planned project and a prerequisite for a successful completion of a project.

MATERIAL AIDS

Material aids, address lists, application forms, project financial management and much more are available to download on the AWW website. An access to the internal area can be set up as follows:

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- Request by email User ID and password from the delegates for the politically persecuted and war refugees.
- On the website **www.aww.info** click on “Login / Logout” (top right)
- Insert User ID and password.
- Documents are available in the „Refugee Aid“ folder.

SUPPORT

Upon request, volunteers and aide groups can obtain content-related support for their registered project. Friedensau Adventist University offers workshops on specific issues dealing with and offering service to the politically persecuted and war refugees as well as consultancy on planning, management and financing of projects and programs.

Project activities and aide groups in churches should be linked to each other through the official representatives for the politically persecuted and war refugees at the regional level (union level) to allow for a lively exchange of experiences and learning processes. It also makes sense to network and cooperate with other civil society organizations like with the three main German umbrella associations: Diakonie, Caritas and Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband as well as other independent non-profit and charitable organizations and their activities.

CONTACTS

The Representative for the politically persecuted and war refugees can be contacted through the following departments:

Baden-Württemberg (BWV)	0711 16290-0
Bayern (BYV)	089 153419-0
Berlin, Land Brandenburg, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Thüringen (BMV)	030 857901-0
Hessen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland (MRV)	06151 9182210
Niedersachsen, Bremen (NiB)	0511 3539777-70
Nordrhein-Westfalen (NRV)	0202 769307-0
Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Hansa)	040 414682-0

Steering Group „Together for Refugees“:

Lothar Scheel	0511 97177-300
Jochen Streit	0711 44819-11

DONATIONS ACCOUNT

Please direct donations to the Alliance „Gemeinsam für Flüchtlinge“ solely on this account, stating the intended use:

Bank für Sozialwirtschaft
IBAN: DE87 660 205 00000 770 4000
BIC: BFSWDE33KRL
Intended Use: **Help for refugees**

Together for Refugees

On the initiative of



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Freikirche der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten in Deutschland