

“Not a Crisis, But an Opportunity”

EFN Best Practices Survey: Survey Results & Interviews

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Introduction:

The EFN Best Practices and Challenges Research was conducted over a span of around 6-7 months in which the purpose was to discover the most pressing issues of those caring for refugees and asylum seekers at risk of human trafficking, and recommendations on how to overcome them.

Methodology:

The research began with the practitioner's voluntary completion of a brief survey through *SurveyMonkey*, and then followed up with an interview over Skype or in person with those who agreed to do so. 21 people responded to the survey and 10 agreed to be interviewed. Those who took part in the research represented people working with refugee/asylum seekers from over 20 countries and a wide range of projects.

Those who agreed to an interview were asked to expand upon the answers provided in the survey, thus providing a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and best practices of their particular ministry. The hope is that these findings will be helpful to other practitioners who are experiencing similar challenges in their own work.

The words “not a crisis, but an opportunity” come from one of the interviewees Gabriel Markus with OM Greece referring to the opportunity we have as Christ followers in Europe to “reach the least of these” as they come in from places they might otherwise have never been reached.

Despite the struggles, trauma, and tragedy that we see our refugee and at-risk brothers and sisters go through, we can be sure God can and will use this to his glory.

Survey Questions:

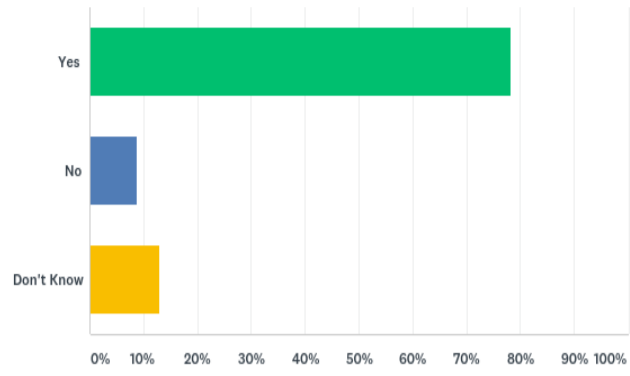
1. Demographics (Who are you?)
2. Do you encounter refugees in danger of / are caught up in human trafficking?
3. Where are the refugees coming from?
4. What type of work does your ministry do?
5. What are the urgent needs that are not being met, or ways that the system or situation is making people more vulnerable? What are you most concerned about?
6. Please share a good example, program or resource you know of that helps prevent exploitation and/or trafficking of refugees
7. In your work, what may have seemed like a good idea, but simply did not work?
8. Do you have any suggestions on how churches can better engage with refugees to prevent/protect/provide support following human trafficking?

Responses:

Q1. See Full Results below

Q2.

Q2 Do you encounter refugees in danger of / are caught up in human trafficking?



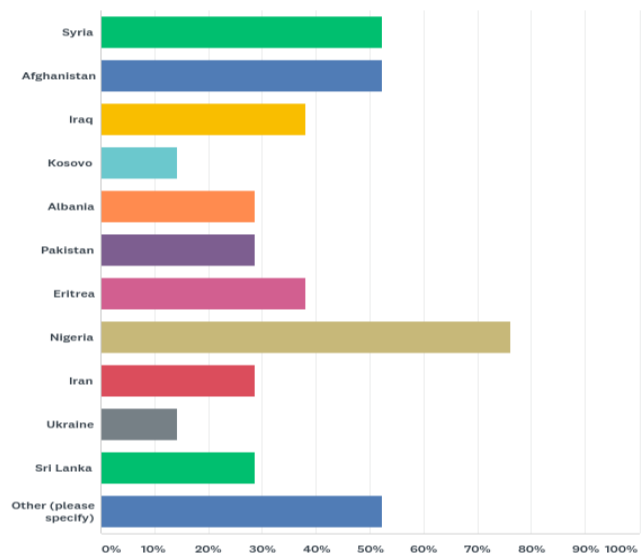
78% said that they did encounter refugees who were in danger/are caught up in human trafficking

9% said they did not

13% said they didn't know.

Q.3.

Q3 Where are the refugees coming from?

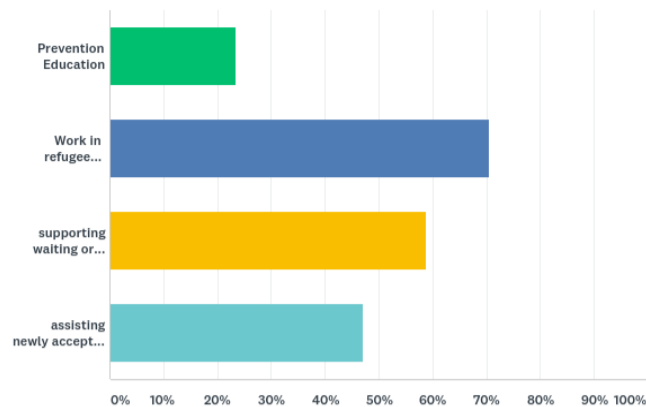


Also from Others:

- Romania
- Poland
- Russia
- Armenia
- Cameroon
- Somalia
- Dominican Republic
- Ethiopia
- Other Western African countries

Q4.

Q4 What type of work does your ministry do?



5. What are the urgent needs that are not being met, or ways that the system or situation is making people more vulnerable? What are you most concerned about?
6. Please share a good example, program or resource you know of that helps prevent exploitation and/or trafficking of refugees
7. In your work, what may have seemed like a good idea, but simply did not work?
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The results of questions 5 to 8 in the survey and the interviews have these have been analysed and put into two main headings Challenges and Recommendations. They are what people have said. We have not “filled in the gaps” but let the results speak for themselves.

Challenges

Physical Needs

- Lack of even basic needs
- Food banks
- Sanitation packs
- Shelter/accommodation
- Healthcare
- Education
- Need for child care and special care for teenagers.
- Too many people in need, not enough resources or people to help

But it isn't just about physical needs...

Emotional Needs

- Refugees experience Low self dignity and trauma
- Feel hopeless in their situation and turn to unhealthy means of dealing with it and can turn to addiction
- Fear of retribution from the pimps
- Sometimes struggle to find things to do when they have so much time on their hands.
- There is a need for Counselling/Art therapy for trauma an important part of people. People need confidential counseling and to be heard.

Spiritual Needs

- It's not just about evangelism – we need to consider other needs as well.
- Some Nigerian women have been juju cursed and need exorcism – even secular authorities agree to receive help for this.

Integration

- There is a need for better assistance with helping people to integrate into their new communities.
- Training opportunities

Legal Needs

- Sexual trafficking is so hidden so it is hard to procure witnesses
- it is difficult to have trafficking victims testify in court against their abusers because they are afraid of retribution.

Financial Needs

- Lack of funding

Recommendations

1. Before you start...figure out how the system works and have a clear purpose so that you can focus on something specific and do it well.
2. Approach your work with refugees and anti-trafficking with care and dignity for the person(s) you are seeking to serve. This work is more than just task-doing, it's also very relational.
3. Look in front of your face: Make the most of opportunities e.g. refugees hanging in the area of the church
4. The church is Family: A caring community is key. The church can provide a role as a family by opening its doors. People can get wise counsel from the church.
5. Networking : Invite local churches into supporting the ministry financially, prayerfully, and with anything else you might need
Seek healthy connections with government & secular workers that can help with things that you are not equipped to handle e.g. the police, lawyers, politicians, doctors etc.
6. Working Together: Europeans work well together but need to open to getting help from the American church – put aside political and religious prejudice for the sake of victims.
7. In it for the Long Term: Patience is key when building relationships and having conversations about Christ. Having a Long term not short term mentality
8. Advocate: Need to advocate with the government(s) to resolve conflict that creates refugees.
9. Be culturally aware: Cultural difference awareness is vital. Try not to be patronizing. Check ideas before you do them because there are cultural differences e.g. cooking pasta seems like a good idea but then no-one eats it!
10. Don't think for the People – Need to Listen to People better. Let people make decisions for themselves.
11. Self Care: Don't take it personally when the people you are serving don't seem to care or want to take advantage of the resources you are providing. Have a safe place to talk and seek out self-care for yourself too so you do not burn out. It's important to really know and understand why you have committed to doing this work.

Where do we go from Here?

Now that we have heard from the practitioners, we now want to hear from refugees and asylum seekers. The next phase of this research is to better understand the needs and challenges of those who are receiving assistance. As we have interviewed the practitioners, we now ask that practitioners take the time to interview the people that they are serving.

Part 2 of this research is to conduct a second research project 'Listening to Children and Adults on the Move' and asking them about their experiences and where they felt safe/unsafe so that we can again help us as faith based organisations and churches to better serve them.

EFN Best Practices Survey: Survey Results & Interviews

Survey Questions

1. Do you encounter refugees in danger of / are caught up in human trafficking?
2. Where are the refugees coming from?
3. What type of work does your ministry do?
4. What are the urgent needs that are not being met, or ways that the system or situation is making people more vulnerable? What are you most concerned about?
5. Please share a good example, program or resource you know of that helps prevent exploitation and/or trafficking of refugees
6. In your work, what may have seemed like a good idea, but simply did not work?
7. Do you have any suggestions on how churches can better engage with refugees to prevent/protect/provide support following human trafficking?

Erika Mosebach-Kornelson: The Justice Project e.V. (Germany)

Survey Results:

Q1: Yes

Q2: Nigeria

Q3: Prevention Education, supporting waiting or failed asylum seekers in the community, assisting newly accepted refugees in the community, housing victims of trafficking

Q4: fast processes, competent workers in the offices

Q5: International Justice Mission, GIPST

Q7: more knowledge, more competence,

Interview:

How long have you been a part of this organization?

The ministry has been around since 2010, first for anti-trafficking and then when the refugees came we (Erika and the ministry team) had to figure out how to handle that and learn the asylum system. I have been with the ministry for 1 year, but before did some volunteer work of similar nature in 2012.

What does this specific ministry look like and the day-to-day work?

We have a safe house with four openings, a day program adopted from SA foundation from Canada. Women are living in the house, some with babies and some without. The day program education teaches practical finance management, creative work, and skill building.

You mentioned that one of the biggest challenges are slow processes and incompetent workers. Is this the government you are talking about?

Yes, the government is slow, we are in a small village so the justice system does not know how to handle it. They must figure out how to handle the issue because there hasn't been any detected trafficking before now.

You mentioned that you look to IJM and GIPST for good practices. What do they do well?

I admire how connected they are and how they work in many different countries. They also train competent workers for prevention.

You did not answer the question of what didn't work, can you think of anything that seemed like it would be a good idea but didn't work well?

The Day program still needs to be reformed to meet the needs of the women. The need to find a job and make money is the most important thing to them. To get a job in Germany takes a long time and learning German is important as well. (Integration course). In other words, the Day Program is a work in progress.

How is your organization encouraging better people for the job, or, how can we who have the knowledge provide this for the church in Europe/christians in this line of work

It is important to network with each other, and to develop a good concept for ministry. Issues often come from passionate people with no knowledge. We need to find professional workers to really help with the needs of the women.

Final Thoughts:

People need education and good research to produce good quality work. It is important for people to know what they are doing, and to not just hire passionate volunteers. Training is important.

Survey Results:

Q1: Yes

Q2: Syria, Eritrea, Nigeria, Dominican Republic

Q3: providing safe houses and long-term recovery programs to sexually exploited/trafficked women and youth

Q4: Personally, I think the needs that are not being met are the ones we cannot see, like the restoration of self-dignity. Most people and organizations working in the field focus primarily on food and clothing. These are indeed basic needs and I think they are being met. However there is an urgent need, for instance, in providing counseling to the refugees who were exposed to trauma. In a smaller scale this is being addressed but not focused on a larger scale.

Q5: The A21 Prevention and Awareness Programme. The A21 campaign has been responding to the refugee crisis in Greece distributing prevention material in camps and hotspots, developing a two-day prevention program that visited most camps in Greece, training and equipping frontline professionals on trafficking identification and providing a Trafficking Resource Line and aftercare for survivors of trafficking.

Q7: The family core has been wounded severely. Many families are broken and I think this is an important area where the church should act and provide support.

Interview:

What does the day to day work look like for you?

We do a recovery program for women from Monday-Friday 9:30am-4pm. We provide psycho-educational classes, art therapy, journal therapy, counseling, and relational sessions. We also provide an academic class, 50 euro allowance, and a budget class. There are 7 women who want to settle in Greece so we also provide language skills class for those who want to stay in the area. We have a safe house as well, currently housing 5 women. This ministry started last April (2016), I (Luciana) joined the ministry around the same time.

In response to your answer about emotional needs not being met: How should Christian workers in Europe be addressing the need for counseling and other emotional needs on a larger scale as you said?

Long-term assistance is needed, the counseling/rehab program that I am involved in can go up to 7 years to help them reach the full capacity of their potential and healing.

You said A21 is a good example of an organization using best practices in response to refugee and anti-trafficking care, would you like to say anything else about them or maybe about your collaboration with them? What have you learned from them and implemented into your own ministry?

We work in partnership with A21. They have a shorter-term approach, but they refer the girls to us for long term care.

You did not answer the question of what didn't work, can you think of anything that seemed like it would be a good idea but didn't work well?

Having a clear purpose is important. Trying to do too many different things at once is never going to work well. Focus on something specific and do it well.

You mentioned that family care should be a focus of the church in Europe with refugees. Do you have any examples from your own work or ideas on how the church can address this well?

Filling in the role as a family community is important. The church can do this simply by opening their doors and hearts to those who show up. The church that I know of here has been doing a good job of doing that with the girls that walk through their doors.

Final Thoughts:

It is important to keep in mind of the cultural differences, to keep a humble mind and heart, not to be patronizing, and to not just try to convert people but to remember to meet their needs as well. Also, keep the perspective that even in the midst of the tragedy that is the refugees' situation, the Lord is using this to reach his people with the Gospel, especially Muslims!

Evert Sulman: Quartermasters (Netherlands)

Survey Results:

Q1: Doesn't Know

Q2: Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Albania, Pakistan, Eritrea, Nigeria, Iran, Sri Lanka

Q3: Work in refugee camps/reception centres, assisting newly accepted refugees in the community, helping communities across the Netherlands

Q4: A penalty for being illegal

Q5: Building a relationship and make people aware

Q6: Think and do for the people

Q7: INLIA

Interview:

How long have you been a part of this ministry and how long has the ministry been around?

4 years

What does the day-to-day work look like?

The focus has shifted from prostitution to refugees recently, but we (Evert & ministry team) work with people who have opened a safe house for trafficking victims. Bulgarian women were mostly being trafficked before refugees came, also Romanian women. I am not sure who within the refugee community is being trafficked but I think it is likely that it is happening. The trafficked women we work with move around a lot from city to city possibly because of pimps, so building relationships have been very hard. Seeking reform in closing street prostitution within our city is something that many are pushing for, even the mayor. Prostitution and brothels are legal, so the sex workers must pay taxes. Pimping is illegal though.

With refugees: we work with "communities" of refugees to help them better settle into life in the Nederland's. An effort called Citizen Initiative, with 45 cities involved, (of people working with refugees) work in collaboration and support with each other's work. This has been going since 2016. It's all about relationship when working with refugees.

What does relationship building and awareness look like for your ministry?

A group of women from different churches reach out every week to meet with the women who are in trafficking, they seek to build relationships with them.

You mentioned that one of the things that did not work was "to do and think for the people". Can you talk more about what this looked like and why it did not work?

Being too task oriented can be a pitfall. Seeking out relationships and getting to know refugees as people instead of "just a project" is key in this work.

Survey Results:

Q1: No

Q3: Legal help restoring identities of trafficked victims

Q4: We need to pressure government to resolve the conflicts create refugees. They are safest at home in a country at peace.

Q7: At the most basic level, education and working with refugees in their immediate community.

Interview:

Where in Europe is your ministry focused? What is your specific role in this ministry and how long have you been a part of it?

Mostly in Greece, Bulgaria, Ukraine. I (Joel) work with A21 to provide lawyers for the girls in need. My focus is legal. I provide legal advice or provide lawyers on the civil side, and have offered to work on criminal side. I started to work with anti-trafficking in the US in 2011.

In response to your answer about the need for there to be pressure on the governments to resolve their conflicts: How can the church in Europe/practitioners be more involved in this?

The European church is a bit passive on this issue. There is a fear of being shut down by the government, but they are starting to find their voice. It is going to take more education for the church on this issue, making them see and understand the problem is crucial. They need to know what to look for so they know what to speak up on.

Do you know of any ministries in Europe that are responding well to the refugee crisis and in relation, sex trafficking?

A21

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

The hardest part of the cases is keeping the girls encouraged as they are going to testify in court. The laws that are being set in place all over the world that hand out steep penalties to traffickers and johns are good in one sense but can be a bit of a Catch-22 in court as no one is going to plead guilty to a 25 year-life sentence in jail. it makes it difficult to really incarcerate people. There almost needs to be a middle ground, a less severe punishment but something that still deals with the situation with justice. The problem with the legal aspect of this work is that it is hard to get a witness or multiple witnesses to testify because there is so much fear of retribution still (for the girls) and this type of crime is mostly well hidden from others so it is difficult to procure more witnesses.

Final Thoughts:

Europeans have an incredible way of working and collaborating with each other. But also, I believe Europeans need to find a way to welcome some help from the American church on this issue, to put aside political and religious prejudices for the sake of those who are victims to this crime. To Americans working in Europe: it's important be humble and sensitive to the culture but don't be ashamed of speaking up because we also have a unique perspective and approach to solving problems. There needs to be collaboration and cooperation from both sides.

Gabriel Markus: OM Greece (Greece)

Survey Results:

used the survey for the interview

Interview:

How long have you been a part of this ministry?

7 years in Greece.

What type of work does your ministry do?

Leading outreaches to the brothels and the streets, building relationships with the women. We help fund or resource other ministries. For refugees we work with 3 different camps providing food, education, and building relationships.

What are the urgent needs that are not being met, or ways that the system or situation is making people more vulnerable? What are you most concerned about?

Reports say that 10% of the refugees are Christians. Less than 1% have been settled. They are unable to get a job because of Muslim employer turning them away. Counseling is needed for the trauma and more needs to be done with integration. The economic crisis in Greece has been ignored for the refugee crisis, so there is a growing resentment for the locals too.

Please share a good example, program or resource you know of that helps prevent exploitation and/or trafficking of refugees:

Having short-term visitors (which is frequent in Greece) may help refugees with the healing process by the volunteers asking their stories, but not always. We provide training and debriefing for these teams to serve well and not exhaust themselves and the people they are trying to serve. Caring for the caregivers is important. We try to find the felt needs of the people, and not the perceived needs.

In your work, what may have seemed like a good idea, but simply did not work?

One example, we were cooking pasta for the refugees but it was found to be thrown out because it wasn't food they were used to, so we changed what we served to something more like what they would eat in their home country. This is just an example of a cultural mistake that needs to be taken into consideration.

Do you have any suggestions on how churches can better engage with refugees to prevent/protect/provide support following human trafficking?

The refugee crisis is not a crisis but an opportunity. I would like to appeal to the church that God has given us this window period to plant the gospel freely in the hearts of people. If we don't reach them, they (Islam) will reach Europe. The challenge for us is to be too comfortable. Organizations need to work in a manner that will be in collaboration with churches.

Survey Results:

Q1: Yes

Q2: Afghanistan, Nigeria

Q3: Work in refugee camps/reception centres, supporting waiting or failed asylum seekers in the community, assisting newly accepted refugees in the community, preaching Gospel, deliverance ministry.

Q8: The government social work program for helping victims of human trafficking has recognized that the Nigerian women have experienced juju curse, which keeps them bound to the prostitution. The secular authorities have agreed that the victims need spiritual help. They have therefore agreed to co-operate with the church. They pay my travel expenses when I go with a Nigerian pastor to pray for deliverance for these ladies.

Interview:

How long have you been a part of the Patmos Foundation in Finland?

3 years

What does day-to-day ministry look like for you?

My ministry is broken up into 3 parts: working with Muslim background believers, visiting churches to train them to reach out to Muslims, and a devotional radio program.

what are some concerns you have about the issues surrounding refugees and trafficking victims on your area?

Women who have escaped prostitution have approached me for spiritual help. Exorcism and spiritual support are things that I provide. It started 7 years ago with a medical doctor asking for a Bible for one of his patients. This is difficult issue for social workers because they must give the spiritual issues a name for government approval: spiritual services. The need is more spiritual than physical, and these needs are not always met by the secular system.

What do you consider a good resource or program that helps stop exploitation of refugees?

Providing a caring community is key. They need confidentiality in counseling and wise counsel from the church.

In your experience with this work, what has worked for you and what has not?

It would seem that many of the "official ways" do not work. Even if the person is a Christian and is seeking asylum, their story is not believed even when backed up by a local pastor. Collecting names and making petitions does not help either. What does work is contacting the media. More public pressure is put on the public sector and they are forced to act. However, this makes the officials more resentful and puts strain on what could be an amicable relationship.

Based off your answer from the survey, would you say that the best way churches can get involved is by collaborating (if possible) with government sources?

It is important but there is a lot of bad attitudes floating around in the public sector. Different kind of police are more lenient or more aggressive. You need to know who and how to approach them. If you can develop good relationships within government then it is a huge advantage.

Final Thoughts:

For those working with refugees, do not do it alone. Working in collaboration with other people is important to share the burden and to share ideas. Networking with those on the official, government side is important as well if you can find those healthy connections.

Survey Results:

Q1: Yes

Q2: Nigeria

Q3: Prevention Education, We also do outreach to meet victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Q4: Lack of basic needs: pads, deodorant, clothes. Lack of activities to be involved in: they don't seem to have anything to do during their time at the camp. It's a slow process. They have too much time in their hands.

Q5: I don't really know. I'm just starting to do prevention work and I do it by meeting with the girls and telling them what options they have.

Q6: The prevention aspect of my work with refugees is new. I am trying to do what I can with the little I have but I haven't had the time to really see results. I just started a month ago by meeting one-on-one with girls. I am trying to speak to someone in her camp and see if we can offer a project where she can work.

Q7: My church offers alphabetization and language help. They also have game nights that offer language learning. I think this could be good in order to engage with them and hear them out. From there, we can provide a place for them to feel safe enough to speak and seek help. For us (our church) it might be easier because we are listed very close to a refugee camp and they all hang out at the park in front of our church and come to Sunday services so we really have daily contact with them. We are planning of offering a weekly meeting with the females at the camp so we can do prevention through a documentary (done by Anne Abok) and by speaking of what happens to others etc. this is an idea but not something that's confirmed yet. It has to be done through the camp and we haven't been able to receive a response.

Interview:

How long have you been a part of Vite Trasformate in Italy?

4 years

What does day-to-day ministry look like for you?

Connect with girls on the street and finding ways to best meet their needs. 4 years ago it was mostly Romanians but now we mostly work with Nigerians. We see less of the Romanian girls now because of the internet, but there are many Nigerian girls on the street. We are in a season on figuring out how to best serve the girls without burning ourselves out or spreading out our resources too thin in the process.

You mention in the survey that you have recently just started prevention work by meeting with the girls and explaining what options they have. How has this been going so far?

We are working on re-focusing our ministry on more long-term solutions such as building a safe house, because at the moment there is too much need for us to handle at once.

Final Thoughts:

Don't take it personally when the people you are serving don't seem to care or want to take advantage of the resources you are providing. Have a safe place to talk and seek out self-care for yourself too so you do not burn out. It's important to really know and understand why you have committed to doing this work.

Brian Evans: Agape Italia (Italy)

Survey Results:

Q1: Yes

Q2: Nigeria and many other African countries - the most at risk are from Africa. However, we work primarily among men from the middle east.

Q3: Work in refugee camps/reception centers, supporting waiting or failed asylum seekers in the community.

Q4: Adequate social support

Q5: I do not know of one

Q7: This is too simplistic, but they need to get connected on a personal level with refugees and try to meet their relational needs.

Interview:

How long have you been a part of Agape Italia?

10 years

What does day-to-day ministry look like for you?

Operate Il Soggiorno, english and italian classes in collaboration with others, and Farsi language bible study. Jenni (Brian's wife) is connected with a refugee center that houses women. It is a slow process because of the difficulty to find opportunities, most of the women are from sub-saharan africa. The men that I (Brian) work with at Il Soggiorno are from the Middle East.

You mention you work mostly with middle-eastern men. Do you believe these men are a very vulnerable people group? Are they thriving or is it a struggle to have their base needs met?

The biggest concern for them are opportunities for integration (language, relationship building, cultural understanding) and being treated with dignity. 2nd is with the harshness of their situation they can get into a hopeless existence which can spiral down into substance abuse, mental illness etc. Third, anger towards and rejection towards the culture they are in which could lead to involvement in crime (drug or sex trafficking).

In your work with refugees, what are some of the initiatives you and your team did that may have seemed like a good plan but did not translate well?

one of the biggest learning points: when we first opened the day center it was left unstructured intentionally to have an "open space" but it was not structured enough. There was a lack of clarity, especially in roles of leadership. Personal tensions arose, fights breaking out etc. we needed to provide sufficient structure, so what we did is we always had someone in place as an authority figure to act as a "welcomer" so there was a sense of respect for authority, hospitality, and community. Since then we haven't had as many issues. The culture of hospitality is super important here. The second is being cautious in having gospel-oriented conversations in group settings. There needs to be trust between the individuals within the group already or else we would run the risk of the conversation not being as productive or even hostile.

Final Thoughts:

1. focus on relationship, care, dignity when working with refugees
2. be open about being a Christian from the beginning
3. be patient with the process of relationship building and religious conversations

Survey Results:

Q1: yes

Q2: Somalia

Q3: Providing a transition home with training opportunities to prepare young women asylum seekers or trafficking survivors to live independently in the community.

Q4: Education as these young women reaching 18 have had little or no formal education. Also funding for dental and optician needs.

Q5: Trauma focused CBT based psychosocial awareness training and SHINE WOMEN personal development course materials.

Interview:

How long have you been a part of Wellspring?

5 years. Before that the work began with "Women in Need" to address the trafficking issues in Cyprus

What does your day-to-day ministry look like?

A transition house opened for women who have left government shelters. Under-age Somali girls began to pour into Cyprus, and we were approached by the social services to help and we took in a couple of girls in the home. Currently we house 7 girls seeking asylum. I oversee the advisory group of Wellspring and offer supervision to the staff and the volunteers

In the survey you mention that the lack of education and funding for healthcare is a concern for the girls you work with. Is this something that your ministry is/is hoping to provide or are there other practitioners in the area that you collaborate with on this? If not, what are ways that your team has been dealing with this need?

Not all of them have undergone trafficking, but they are almost all victims of sexual violence/abuse. I have taken on teaching English lessons weekly. Once girls are registered asylum seekers they get healthcare, but extra healthcare such as dental and eye care is not provided. We have been partnering with different experts in different fields (cooking, health, budgeting etc.). Some counseling and psycho-social lessons are also offered to address the trauma and to prepare them for the world. We are currently trying to figure out how to equip them better with skills and qualifications. The government covers a bit of living expenses but not enough for long-term sustainability. We are in collaboration with Agape for skills classes and Future World (possibly linked to the UN) offered camps that one of the girls took advantage of this summer.

In your experience, what are initiatives or actions that seemed like a good idea to implement in your ministry but ended up not working out?

Activities in the drop-in center, the guests are sporadic in their attendance. We have tried English lessons, sewing lessons, SHINE women etc. but it didn't work because it was impossible to get a group of people to attend regularly. Trying to take women in from a shelter in a different city into our own shelter didn't work out either.

Do you believe the local church has been a vital support in this ministry? If so, how? If not, what do you think the church could be doing better?

Yes, absolutely. The local church that Wellspring is closely connected too receives financial support from them. We also have a reasonable supply of volunteers from the church as well. And there has been much support from other churches in the area as well. The girls in the shelter with Christian backgrounds also find community and relationship in the church here. Most of the Somali girls are Muslim though, so there has been some challenge in that.

Final Thoughts:

Working in a team is important. You can't do the work on your own, you must take advantage of the gifts and skills of others, as well as offering up your own. It is challenging work, and it is important to network with other organizations. And know your limits!

Doret Van Der Straten: Open Doors Ministry (Romania)

Only Interview Done

Interview:

How Long have you been working with Open Doors Ministry?

2 years

What does the day-to-day look like for you?

We run a shelter for the women who are taken out of sex-trafficking and offer them a safe space to stay, find healing, and integrate back into society. Since we can only house so many people at once, we also assist women and families all over Romania by offering support with both care packages and counseling and helping them with whatever they might need.

What is something that seemed like would work, but ended up not working for your ministry?

We only take in adult women, no adolescence because of the responsibilities and legality issues of taking care of minors. We used to take in younger girls, but many of them would run away or not go to school putting them at risk of being trafficked again. So, we focus only on the reception and rehabilitation of adult women.

What does collaboration look like with other ministries?

We focus on rehabilitation, so we often collaborate with other practitioners and secular workers within and outside of Romania for other needs such as legal, child care, financial support etc. However, we have our own legal and psychiatric workers within our own ministry.