

# Helping refugees together

**An assignment for three: working with refugees. Bread for the World, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and Diakonie Deutschland work for refugees and migrants under the umbrella of the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development.**



**More and more people are fleeing their home countries to escape from violent conflicts**

Those confronting new challenges have to break new ground. This was the view of the Evangelical Church in Germany and its Diakonie when responding to the demands of a globalised world. In 2012 it founded the registered association “Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V.” (Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development) with its three component agencies Bread for the World, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (Diakonie Emergency Aid) and Diakonie Deutschland.

The first major common challenge to the new Protestant agency in Germany was not long in coming: the unprecedented number of refugees. According to the UNHCR, they totalled just under 60 million in 2014. That is the highest figure that has ever been recorded. In 2013 there were 51.2 million. Over 38 million of them are displaced persons in their own country.

Bread for the World, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and Diakonie Deutschland have always

worked for refugees and migrants. In doing so, they can rely on established structures in the church-related and diaconal refugee services. Under our new umbrella we can now make full use of synergies, because the three agencies have different emphases and complement one another. This will be described in more detail below.

## **Bread for the World**

As the name suggests, migration and development is a central area of activity of the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development. Migration is an important dimension of human development. For it to work, general political conditions for the protection of migrants are necessary. However, increasing poverty, structural inequality, violence, the consequences of climate change, war and civil war are more and more forcing people to leave their home envi-

ronment. Many causes of displacement and poverty-related migration are rooted in failing national development strategies, failing states or continuing violations of human rights. It is not the aim of Bread for the World to prevent migration. Rather, mobility should be recognised as a normal state of affairs. However, the decision to migrate should not be made on the basis of a lack of alternatives.

Hence Bread for the World and its partner organisations advocate for two goals: on the one hand to enable people to choose to remain in their regions of origin. Peace education projects such as in the Eastern Congo make an important contribution to this. On the other hand, Bread for the World contributes to improving the protection, plus the legal and practical situation of migrants in the countries of transit and destination.



**Refugees from Syria and Afghanistan wait in Budapest's Keleti Railway Station to continue their journey to Austria and Germany**



# Work with refugees

## Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development

### Specific features



**Brot**  
für die Welt



**Diakonie**   
**Katastrophenhilfe**



**Diakonie**   
**Deutschland**

### Goals

Bread for the World advocates for a situation in which everyone can assert their right to freedom of movement, or make their own decision to remain in their homeland and not have to flee from human rights violations, war and violence or for other reasons.

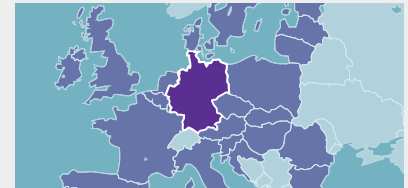
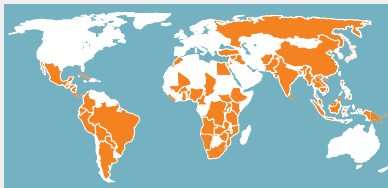
We contribute to improving the legal situation and the living conditions of refugees and migrants in transit and in countries of destination, also through supporting the work of the churches and diaconal organizations in these areas of action (Churches helping Churches).

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (Diakonie Emergency Aid) gives humanitarian assistance worldwide where the need is greatest. At present we operate in 22 countries on behalf of refugees.

We support people who cannot manage their emergency situation with their own resources. We help without regard for religion, skin colour and nationality.

Diakonie Deutschland stands up for refugees having the opportunity to enter the EU legally from transit states, e.g. through a European resettlement programme, visa-free entry from war areas and humanitarian visas. Consideration should be given to the refugees' wish to choose their future country of reception. Furthermore, Diakonie Deutschland advocates for improvements of the legal status and health care of asylum-seekers in Germany. Its position is that good reception standards must be guaranteed at the local and state level, despite the high number of arrivals.

### Countries



### Areas of activity

- Combating hunger, poverty and injustice along with partner organisations worldwide
- working for the rule of law and a rights-based approach in development cooperation
- worldwide legal advice of human rights defenders with local partner organisations
- national and international lobbying and advocacy for a dignified migration and refugee policy
- development-policy education in Germany

- together with partner organisations, humanitarian aid for internally displaced persons and refugees: supplying water, food, hygiene articles and medicine, plus psychosocial support and job creation
- prospects for stable living conditions both for refugees and the local population

- Assistance for refugees in Germany: advice on asylum procedure, social and psychosocial counselling, community accommodation and referral to decentralised housing and to German courses, welcome committees and church sanctuary
- professional advice for refugees with residence permits on housing, family reunification, access to the employment market and participation
- lobbying for legal escape routes, better living conditions and protection for refugees in Germany and, with partner organisations, in Europe



**In view of rising sea levels, and more storms and floods because of climate change, these people in Bangladesh are leaving their homes and seeking refuge in the capital Dhaka**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the right to freedom of movement. Article 13 states: “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.” Development, too, is regarded worldwide as a legitimate goal, whereas the use of development opportunities through migration is often criminalized.

Opportunities to enter the EU legally are now almost non-existent for migrants and refugees. Restricting legal ways of migrating compels those desiring to migrate into illegality and makes them victims of human rights violations. In particular women and children are often subject to violent attacks and exploitation. It is therefore an essential part of our work, also in close cooperation with Diakonie Deutschland,

to engage with migration and refugee policy, both in Germany and at the EU level. Bread for the World considers it important to link up church-related and diaconal actors in the area of migration and development. With Diakonie Deutschland and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe, they all then need to develop joint standpoints on refugee and asylum policy, lobbying and advocacy, legal issues and refugee support.

Accordingly, the dialogue on “Migration, development and human rights” is being intensified and made more systematic with partner organisations of Bread for the World and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. The two sister organisations support e.g. the Serbian Orthodox partner organisation ‘Philanthropy’. Since August 2015, they have provided migrants and refugees with food and hygiene articles in the initial reception centres of Presevo and Zajecar established by the Serbian government. We also support



church organizations in their refugee work via our programme 'Churches helping Churches'.

**[www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de](http://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de)**

## **Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe**

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe supplies refugees worldwide with essential goods and supports them in building a new livelihood. That includes those conflicts forgotten by the general public which have displaced millions of people within countries like Colombia or Pakistan or led them to seek protection abroad. The biggest humanitarian effort is currently taking place in Syria and its neighbouring countries Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq.

The outbreak of war in Syria and the violent advance of the terrorist militia "Islamic State" in Iraq have constantly worsened the situation

of the population in the region. In the last four years, about 15 million people have had to flee and now live under enormously difficult and often threatening conditions.

In spring 2012, a few days after the start of the war in Syria, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe launched its aid programme for people who had been displaced due to the heavy fighting in Syria or were seeking protection in the neighbouring countries Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. According to the UNHCR, about 85 percent of refugees in the states around Syria live outside the official camps. Many countries have used up their reserves. Many refugees were witnesses of violence and are seriously traumatised. They are accommodated in tents, garages or in rented accommodation. It is a special challenge for local aid workers to reach these people with vital aid supplies. It is not only the refugee population that suffers. Over the years, the population of the



**In Jordan Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe provides refugees from Syria with basic necessities**

host countries have felt the impact of the ongoing crisis. The state services are overburdened, the labour and housing market are very competitive. In addition, the conflict is increasingly spreading to the neighbouring countries. No end can be seen to the dramatic situation at present.

Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe thus carries out projects with its local partners that give the population concerned decent support in an acute emergency and create prospects of stable living conditions both for the refugees and the local inhabitants and new opportunities for development. The aid programme has so far reached over 600,000 people – above all, refugee families, who live outside the official camps and communities who receive them. In order to implement the projects, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe has received EUR 25 million in grants from the German Foreign Office. It has provided EUR 5 million in funds itself. If the people flee to Europe, they have to do this under life-threatening conditions by land and sea, mostly in the direction of Greece, Serbia and arriving in northern

EU states. On this route, the refugees mainly need water and sanitary and medical care. Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe and its partners provide for their most basic needs.

**[www.diakonie-katastrophenhilfe.de](http://www.diakonie-katastrophenhilfe.de)**

## **Diakonie Deutschland**

With its organisations and facilities, Diakonie Deutschland has decades of experience with refugee welfare work. Its refugee services primarily consist of advice centres: Diakonie has over 500 programmes across the country for asylum-seekers and people who have exceptional leave to remain on a temporary basis (Duldung). These centres concentrate mainly on giving impartial advice on the asylum procedure and social questions, psychosocial counselling and psychotherapy, as well as social work with refugees in the local communities. With a total of 14 locations, Diakonie Deutschland is in charge of more than half the psychosocial centres for refugees of all German welfare



**Tens of thousands of people have fled from drought and war to Dadaab, the world's biggest refugee camp in Kenya**





**Advice for asylum-seekers regarding their asylum application in the initial reception centre for refugees located within the Protestant deanery in Hesse**

associations. Other areas include the clearing procedure for unaccompanied refugee minors, accommodation facilities for asylum-seekers and accommodation referral offices, not to speak of the community and project activities of specialist migration services. In addition, Diakonie staff coordinate the large number of volunteers. According to the latest estimates, 3000–5000 staff members are concerned with refugee work in church-related and diaconal services and about ten times as many volunteers. In the last few months church funds amounting to millions of euros have been allocated to create additional positions in the field of refugee welfare. Good coordination by staff is needed to make the most of the assistance offered by volunteers.

In addition, along with UNHCR, Caritas and the German Red Cross, Diakonie Deutschland is a institutional organization of the legal

advisor conference (Rechtsberaterkonferenz), an association of 65 lawyers. The legal advisors are specialists in asylum and alien law and advise diaconal and church staff in asylum matters. In addition, Diakonie runs over 400 migration services for people with guaranteed residential status. That way, recognized refugees can obtain assistance in the migration advisory services for adults and young people. In its political advocacy, Diakonie calls for legal pathways for those seeking protection in the EU, consideration of the refugees' wish to chose their future country of reception, plus improvements in the living conditions of refugees, particularly relating to social participation, their housing situation, health care and access to education and the employment market. It calls for quality advice and accompaniment. Diakonie Deutschland opposes the currently discussed tightening up of asylum law, particularly regarding social benefits, claiming these are an impermissible



Volunteers like these enthusiastically practice speaking German with refugees in the Ecumenical Refugee Service in Bad Soden

instrument of migration policy. Political lobbying takes place at the local, regional, federal and European levels. Diakonie is a member of the Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE).

Examples of the refugee work of Diakonie Deutschland can be found at [www.diakonie.de/best-practice-wie-die-diakonie-fluechtlingen-hilft-16432.html](http://www.diakonie.de/best-practice-wie-die-diakonie-fluechtlingen-hilft-16432.html)

## How to donate

### Diakonie Deutschland

*It supports refugees in Germany*

Reference: Fluechtlingshilfe  
Evangelische Bank  
Account 6 000 401  
sortcode 520 604 10  
IBAN: DE66 5206 0410 0006 0004 01  
BIC: GENODEF1EK1

### Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe

*It supports refugee projects abroad*

Reference: Fluechtlingshilfe weltweit  
Evangelische Bank  
Account 502 502  
sortcode 520 604 10  
IBAN: DE68 5206 0410 0000 5025 02  
BIC: GENODEF1EK1

### Brot für die Welt

*It supports peace and development projects worldwide*

Reference: Hilfe weltweit  
Bank für Kirche und Diakonie  
Account: 500 500 500  
sortcode 100 610 06  
IBAN: DE10 1006 1006 0500 5005 00  
BIC: GENODED1KDB

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**Photos** Jörg Böthling (p. 4), Paul Jeffrey (p. 6), Christoph Püschner (pp. 1-3), Bernd Roselieb (p. 4), Andreas Unger (p. 8)

**Editors** Anne Dreyer, Rainer Lang, Maike Lukow, Sebastian Ludwig, Katharina Stamm **Translation** Elaine Griffiths

**Responsible** Thomas Sandner, Andreas Wagner

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