

Delivering Aid to Refugees with Compassion

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation
Wednesday, 03 May 2017 11:06



[[Words to Volunteers](#)]

There's always news about the refugees; recently, news reports came out on fleeing refugees attempting to cross the Mediterranean Sea. How many of them have lost their life at sea? Such are the suffering of life. For years, they have been on the run, going through a lot of difficulties. However, in order to survive, they will endure any hardship and risk their life to arrive at a safe place.

The news reminded me of what happened on March 25th in 2003. It was the first time Tzu Chi shipped food and supplies to Jordan. Before the Iraq War, we were already preparing for aid supplies because, based on what we know, Jordan was preparing to take in refugees. Therefore, we had to find out the living condition and climate of Jordan. Ji Hui, our volunteer in Jordan, was very mindful. When he came to Taiwan, he shared with us what refugees would need when they arrive in Jordan. Thus, we began preparing for material goods that would keep refugees warm. That was the year we began procuring blankets for distribution. We chose the blankets with great care, and considered the refugees' needs in great detail.

As for the food, we needed non-perishable items that can be eaten at any time. This meant we must use canned foods. A Tzu Chi volunteer, Mr. Y. S. Chiu, was in the food industry, so we asked him to manufacture foods that were catered to people in the Middle East. As they have dietary restrictions due to their religion, we provided them vegetarian foods. Everything was prepared mindfully, be it food or other aid supplies. Also, Ji Hui, who has been living in Jordan for decades, made purchases and preparations so that once refugees arrived, they would have what they need including medicine. He made all the preparation. That year, we had enough time to make all the preparations. We were indeed able to prepare everything in time and truly helped the refugees.

There were many touching stories from this relief effort. A reporter from TTV, a TV station in Taiwan, went with our volunteers to Jordan. He saw an old man who was cold, and it was a windy day. The old man had plastic bags wrapped around his feet. This reporter immediately took off his socks, which were still warm, and asked the old man to put them on. It was truly a heartwarming scene; what the reporter saw roused compassion in him. The old man was so cold that he could not feel his own feet. When the reporter took off his warm socks, was he not cold himself? Of course he was, but his compassion kept him warm. Story after story on the refugees were reported telling us the suffering of their life. Our volunteers in Jordan overcame many difficulties with their love to help the refugees.



After the surge of refugees from Iraq in 2003, for the past six years, Jordan has been facing a surge of Syrian refugees. On this piece of land, ongoing sorrow unfolds; many stories of blood

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and tears were told.

Lily J. A. Ramian, our volunteer in Jordan, once shared a story with us. A pregnant woman had escaped to the border, and was running for her life. Just as she crossed the border, she collapsed. The doctors rushed to save her, but they found that she showed no sign of life. An emergency C-section was performed, and a baby boy was delivered. The mother of this baby had passed away. What will happen to this baby? Without any parents, he was an orphan.

The doctor who delivered the baby had an idea. He thought of a friend who was married for more than 10 years but was childless. This friend was Lily's son-in-law. Before adopting the baby, they posted information at the refugee camp to see if this baby had any relatives, but no one came to claim the child. So, Lily's son-in-law adopted this child. This was how his life was saved.

In times of unrest, the war has caused a lot of people much suffering. In Jordan, we continue to provide ongoing help to the refugees. Now, we are working to provide assistance in education and medical care. There's a medical case of a little girl; when she was being delivered, a sudden bomb blast startled the doctor. Out of shock, the doctor accidentally broke her leg. Since she was born, her family had been on the run, fleeing the war. Yet, she still had to undergo operations to treat her leg. At such a young age, she already had undergone five or six operations. After Tzu Chi took on her case, we were truly able to help her by providing medical treatments so that she could walk. Now, her leg has improved; she can run now. This is the result of people who aspired to help refugees and give of themselves to help people in suffering.

This is how we make use of our life. There are living bodhisattvas in different countries and of different ethnicities helping people in need. Although our hearts go out to them when we think of the refugees' suffering, we cannot help them all. What we can do, however, is continue to provide assistance in this world. We cannot just sit around idly; we have to take helping people as our spiritual cultivation and engage ourselves more in charitable work. This is what we always strive to do mindfully.

From Morning Volunteer Assembly teachings on March 25, 2017.
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