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Far from Home

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” –MATTHEW 11:28-30

We have all experienced fatigue; it is a natural human response to physical and mental activity. But have you ever felt weary? Even the word itself carries a sense of heaviness. According to the dictionary, “weary” can be defined as “exhausted in strength, endurance or vigor.”¹ On the contrary, “rest” can be defined as “peace of mind or spirit.”²

This year has caused many of us to be weary and long for rest, even though we live in relative stability. It can take very little change for our lives to feel disrupted. There is perhaps no one better able to speak to the toll that constant disruption can take than refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). Refugees and IDPs are people who have fled their homes from danger. The distinction is that refugees have crossed an international border to seek safety, while IDPs have stayed within their own country seeking safety. An estimated 79.5 million people in the world have been forcibly displaced (around 1% of the world’s population),³ and an estimated 6.6 million of these people are from Syria alone.⁴

Given this level of displacement, the way we deliver disaster relief support is changing. Some disasters can result from a combination of human-made and natural causes, such as food insecurity, conflicts, and epidemics.⁵ These are called “complex humanitarian emergencies,” and are often exacerbated by natural disasters.⁶ Many of these situations extend from years to decades, meaning relief support is not merely an immediate response, and it becomes difficult, if not impossible to begin the phase of rebuilding. Think of how many refugees have spent their entire lives living in refugee camps; these camps, intended to be a temporary response to displacement, have instead become places where children grow up and become adults. Consider the absolute weariness this upheaval brings.

How organizations provide disaster relief is changing, so we must too. This provides us with opportunities, but also requires us to change our thinking and implementation. As CRWRF continues to work in this area, we hope to evaluate our model and make improvements where necessary.



CAMP KITCHEN



REFUGEE CHILDREN



CAMP LIFE



Thank you Konnie

We would like to thank Konnie Peet for her many tireless years of service for CRWRF. Thank you Konnie - your wisdom and experience were invaluable to the board. You have a real heart for our partners and your many hours of dedication to the work of CRWRF is something we will benefit from for years to come. We pray for God's blessing as you find other ways to use your gifts in His kingdom!

History of Syria and Lebanon

In Lebanon, where more than 1 million Syrian refugees reside, there are no formal refugee camps and approximately 70 percent of Syrian refugees live below the poverty line.⁸ Syrian refugees are particularly vulnerable in Lebanon because there are no refugee camps where they can live for free. Moreover, the government of Lebanon has imposed severe restrictions on work, making it difficult for families to cover their basic needs.

The "Milk and Diapers Project"

PARTNERSHIP WITH WORLD RENEW

Since July 2014, CRWRF has worked through Middle East Revive & Thrive (MERATH) in Lebanon. This project is a part of the wider programming of the church, which is engaged in food basket delivery and other programs in their community.

REFERENCES

¹ [https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/weary#:~:text=\(Entry%20of%202022\),soon%20grew%20weary%20of%20waiting](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/weary#:~:text=(Entry%20of%202022),soon%20grew%20weary%20of%20waiting)
² <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rest>
³ <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>
⁴ <https://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

Why is the Milk and Diapers Project needed?

Several factors contribute to the need to assist in providing essentials such as milk and diapers in Lebanon, not the least of which is the ongoing economic crisis. Severe price inflation has resulted in a 164% increase in the cost of necessities for survival from October 2019 to August 2020. This means that families with very young children and limited income are having a hard time procuring essentials such as milk and diapers. The Milk and Diapers project allows refugees to use their limited cash and savings for other key household and medical needs.

But why specifically milk and diapers?

Providing milk enables refugees to meet their critical nutritional requirements, even while the cost of milk skyrockets.

As for diapers, the refugee newcomer kits only provide diapers for newborn babies in the first month. This is not adequate, and

neither are the low-quality and unhygienic alternatives (such as homemade and/or cheap cotton diapers) which the refugees and other vulnerable families in Lebanon would otherwise have to resort to. Disposable diapers are distributed because cloth diapers are impractical, due to water shortages and poor drying conditions. In addition, the project also supplies adult diapers for the elderly and older children and adolescents experiencing incontinence. Diapers also help in situations of bedwetting, which is a common symptom of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) experienced by older children due to their experiences during Syria's civil war.

Since 2014, approximately 14,000 bags of milk and 16,000 bags of diapers have been distributed via the Milk and Diapers Project.

DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

- > Consider donating online today.
- > Pray for those who are weary.