



Midwife as Humanitarian: Health Care Delivery in Austere Environments

Jeanna Deswert SM MSFP

Taya Mohler CPM LM

Laureli Morrow MSN CNM

Cindy Nelly MSN CNM/ARNP



MIDWIFE
PILGRIM

CARE IN CRISIS

Midwife Pilgrim, Inc. is a US based NGO focusing on global reproductive health needs. We are dedicated to responding to global communities in crisis and disaster situations with skilled, compassionate midwifery care.

**Since 2015, Midwife Pilgrim has: sent 30 volunteers on 35 missions
impacting over 10,000 women and their families**

In 2016, our midwives provided care to over 3500 refugee women and children in 4 countries.

More information can be found at www.midwifepilgrim.org

Where We Work

In honor of International Day of the Midwife
3 of our volunteer midwives will share
their experiences partnering with women
and families in refugee settings in
Turkey, Lebanon and Greece

We have also had volunteers in:
**Sierra Leone, Nepal, Kenya, Haiti and
Jordan.**

New projects for 2017 in:
Iraq & Serbia



By the end of this presentation we hope the participants will understand more clearly:

- Living conditions & health care needs of refugee women and their families
- Barriers to care for women in humanitarian setting
- Role of volunteer midwives in this crisis setting
- How you can help; a way forward



Turkey

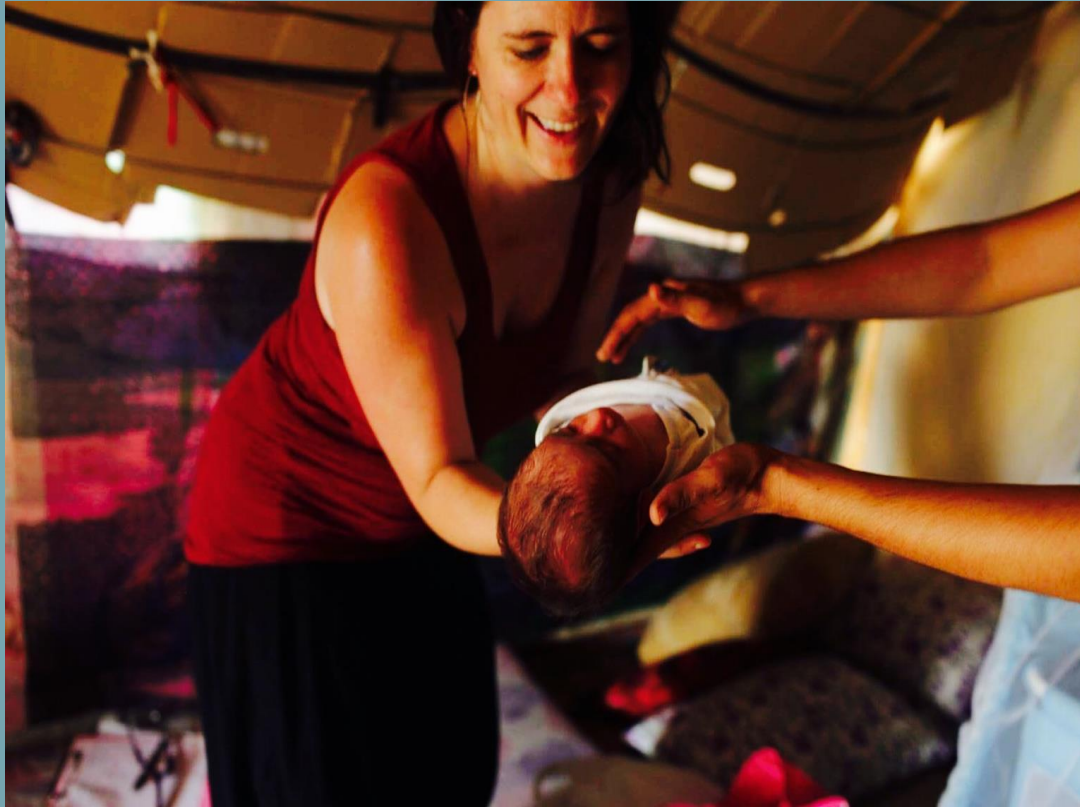
Taya Mohler CPM LM



Living conditions & health care needs of refugee women and their families

- Prenatal and Postpartum Care
- Well Woman Care and Primary Care
- Contraception
- Clean water, basic hygiene and access to resources
- Shelter
- Safety
- Education







MIDWIFE
PILGRIM

CARE IN CRISIS

Realities of Maternal Outreach Care and Barriers:

- Continuity of care
- Lack of access to women's health care due to nature of migrant life and fear of system
- Bridging the gap between health care systems and meeting challenges due to police presence
- Coordination with other NGOs







Ayats Story

Lebanon

Cindy Nelly MSN, CNM/ARNP



Living conditions & health care needs of refugee women and their families







MIDWIFE
PILGRIM

CARE IN CRISIS

Barriers to Care in Lebanon



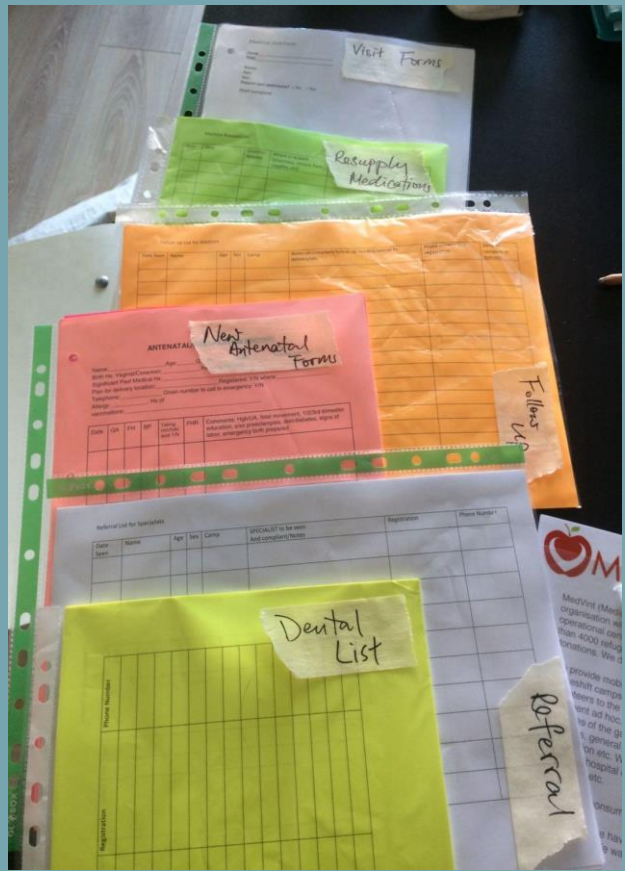
- Diverse cultural, religious and ethnic populations
- Country burden, 1:4 persons is a refugee
- Distance to healthcare facilities and modes of travel
- Lack of essential medicines



The Role of Midwives (CNM/ARNP) in Refugee Setting

- ❖ Training and Education
- ❖ Connection of Services to Need
- ❖ Primary Care of Family
- ❖ Accessing Women and Families Where They Live
- ❖ Antenatal/Postpartum/Contraception Care
- ❖ Surgical First Assist





Doing the work that needs to be done, in the ways and in the places that are right for the situation. Midwives are very good at adaptability, rapid response, and a holistic approach to care of women, families, and communities.

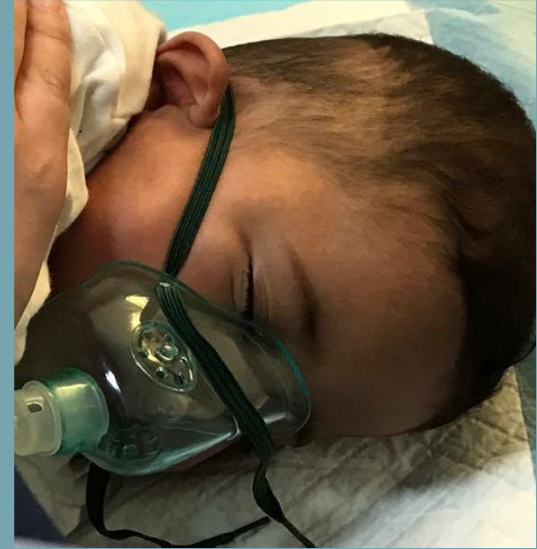
We **MUST** engage; skilled local and displaced persons. This includes health care providers, engineers, teachers, community leaders



Short Term: it is our work to assist in efforts to mobilize the necessary resources for midwifery care in disaster/emergency situations, giving special attention to vulnerable groups.



Long Term: our work includes building bridges between humanitarian and development work. We must focus on training a local workforce and strengthening partnerships.



Greece

Jeanna Deswert, SNM MSFP

Serving women at camps in
Idomeni, Eko, Thessaloniki





**EKO
STATION
CAMP,
GREECE**

"In over my head" was an understatement. On the border of Greece and Macedonia (FYROM) an unofficial refugee camp known as Eko Station Camp emerged as a result of the closing of the border between the two countries that led to Europe through the Balkans.



**MIDWIFE
PILGRIM**

CARE IN CRISIS



BARRIERS TO CARE

- Birthing in the Camp vs Hospital
- Cesarean Sections
- Obstetric Violence
- Follow-Up Care



**MIDWIFE
PILGRIM**

CARE IN CRISIS

MOBILE HEALTHCARE CLINIC

- Establishment
- Goals
- Efficiency
- Well Woman vs.
Prenatal/Postpartum





MATERNAL OUTREACH

- Establishment
- Goals
- Efficiency
- Well Woman vs.
Prenatal/Postpartum



MIDWIFE
PILGRIM

CARE IN CRISIS

CONTRACEPTION

Difficult to Obtain
Lack of Consistency
Long Term Options
Improvising





COMMUNITY

- Sense of Community for the Women
- Women's Tent
- Sharing Space
- Bridging Gaps



MIDWIFE
PILGRIM

CARE IN CRISIS

In summary we found the following:

Identified Needs of Refugee Women & Children

- ❖ Primary & Reproductive Healthcare/Contraception
- ❖ Prenatal & Postpartum Care
- ❖ Education
- ❖ IPV/GBV Prevention & Protection
- ❖ Continuity of Care
- ❖ Mental Health Care

CRITICAL NEEDS

❖ Access to:

- Food
- Clean Water
- Hygiene
- Shelter/Security
- Hope



Barriers To Care

- ❖ Continuity of care and tracking patients
- ❖ Language barriers
- ❖ Cultural differences
- ❖ Practicing safely within our scope as midwives, legality and risk
- ❖ Lack of basic needs and supplies
- ❖ Gap between health care systems NGOs, volunteers and local services
- ❖ Duplicity of NGO services

The Role of the Midwife Providing Care to the Most Vulnerable

The WHO lists maternal, newborn and child health second to mass casualty management, in most urgent need in times of crisis or disaster. It is with this directive in mind that the midwives at Midwife Pilgrim perform their role in disaster/emergency preparedness, harm reduction, and rapid response to disasters/emergencies.

The midwife as humanitarian responder

- Advocates on behalf of women and children affected by disasters/emergencies to ensure equity and equality in access to health services during and directly after a disaster.
- Promotes and disseminates knowledge, information, and training for midwives
- Is aware of associated physical and mental health, socio-economic, and specifically midwifery needs.
- Network with other professional disciplines, governmental and nongovernmental agencies at local, regional, national, and international levels.
- In the short term, assist in efforts to mobilise the necessary resources for midwifery care in disaster/emergency situations, giving special attention to vulnerable groups.
- Work with existing capacities, skills, resources, and organisational structures.
- Partner local and national branches of government, international agencies, and non-governmental organisations.
- Encourage midwives to continue to provide ongoing care and support to women

How you can help and a way forward:

Volunteer your time as a Midwife Pilgrim <http://www.midwifepilgrim.org/volunteer.html>

Donate to ensure women and children receive the care they need
<http://www.midwifepilgrim.org/donate.html>

Educate your community about the situation

Reach out to local Muslim communities

Advocate and be politically active - attend a vigil or action; put pressure on your leaders to lift the muslim ban and to advocate for refugees; insist that reproductive health programs are funded and accessible to all women and families

Support organizations that support reproductive health. You can find the list of NGOs we work with at: <http://www.midwifepilgrim.org/partnerships.html>