Hello Friends of Refugees!

Thank you for your interest in assisting the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean. Midwife Pilgrim, Inc. is working with volunteers and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) on the ground, coordinating efforts to provide reproductive health services and respond to other emergency medical needs. The crisis situation is fluid and we will do our best to keep you updated on the latest conditions. Please keep checking back with us for updates at our Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/midwifepilgrim/ and at http://www.midwifepilgrim.org.

We need medical volunteers with midwifery skills for a minimum of 2 weeks (preferably longer) to provide reproductive health services and address emergency needs.

On the island of Leros, Greece, we would prefer commitments of a month or longer, to help build relationships with other NGOs and the local hospital.
Midwife Pilgrim
Mediterranean Refugee Crisis, Winter 2015-16:

Thousands of men, women, and children are arriving daily in Greece as refugees fleeing for their lives - the great majority escaping the brutal war in Syria, but refugees are arriving from Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other countries as well. Numerous refugees are women in dire need of reproductive health care. They may be suffering with severe lack of food or clean water, no prenatal care, as well as exposure to the elements. Additionally they are at high risk for sexual violence, and like so many women survivors of war may have experienced rape, abuse, or even torture. Currently they are crowded into refugee camps if they are lucky, or sleeping in the open with only trash bags to try to keep warm and dry as they wait to register for the camps. These women hope to journey forward to rebuild their lives in Europe but many face months with no support or medical care – while trying to care for their own children and families.

Midwife Pilgrim volunteers provide risk screening, treatment when we can, gentle hands, and respite. Currently there are several NGOs on the ground providing general medical care at the camps during limited hours – but there is a lack of competent midwifery care or reproductive health care services. We plan to fill this gap with midwives who can ensure women receive the care they need. We also aim to train health workers there in order to build an ongoing capacity for women’s health care.

This link gives an overview of population fleeing through Greece:
http://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/regional.php

Please read the article below to give you an understanding of the conditions these people face:

and the circumstances that many have fled:

How you can help!

Volunteer
Midwife volunteers will treat acute women’s health problems, provide prenatal care, attend deliveries as needed, assess women for history of sexual violence, and offer treatment or refer to other care. Our job is to help these women go forward on their journey in the best possible health we can offer with limited resources. To apply for a position as a volunteer midwife, visit:
**Fundraise**

Fundraising is crucial for most midwives to be able to participate in this mission. Sites like GoFundMe, Crowdrise, Kickstarter, friends, family, your local houses of worship and civic organizations (Rotary Club) are great places to turn for support. We suggest you do your research first before choosing an online site, to help maximize your return. We are estimating maximum total cost to be approximately $2500 (including airfare, room and board, ground transportation and other expenses) so please plan accordingly.

As a 501(c)3 organization, all donations made directly to Midwife Pilgrim are tax deductible. Please have all funds donated directly to Midwife Pilgrim tagged with your name and we will use them to help offset your expenses. Our fundraising guidelines require that 15% of all funds directed to us go towards general organizational support and capacity-building, as well as future program planning. Please link direct fundraising to: [http://www.midwifepilgrim.org/donate.html](http://www.midwifepilgrim.org/donate.html)

**Things to Consider**

**Licensure**

You will not be licensed in Greece; however, we do expect you to carry a copy of your current license with you at all times. There have been no reports of providers being harassed for volunteering or helping. As long as you stay within your scope of practice you should be fine.

**Support**

We are working to establish relationships with several NGOs on the ground (some sanctioned by the Greek government and some not) to enable you to have access to transportation, translators, physician referrals, and ease of referral to local hospital for high-risk cases. Volunteers on Leros will need to be independent, and able to help continue this project which is being started on the ground by midwives with little support. We are hopeful we will be able to develop a relationship with the NGOs on the ground there as well. You will need to utilize your diplomatic skills when working with others.

We expect your budget will be approximately $1000 per month and may vary depending on your location and preference for housing. This should comfortably cover basic expenses such as simple room and board, public transportation, and local phone service. Please keep this in mind while fundraising. We recommend having at least an additional $1000 per month available as a buffer, above housing costs and other needs for each month of service. Airfare is another item that you should budget for and will vary from location to location.

**Our Expectations**

We want to remind you of the challenges you may face. Please consider factors like personal health, stamina, ability to function with few resources, as well as ability to work in situations where you may have little or no support. The conditions in and outside the camps are bleak,
almost “medieval” as one volunteer described it. The emotional toll will be great; therefore self-care is important and we expect you to contact us if your availability changes at any point in the process of preparing to serve those in crisis.

**When in the field**
You are expected to act professionally, obey all laws and regulations, practice within your skill set and scope of practice, and know your limits professionally and personally. You must take full responsibility for your health, research if any medications you need are available in the country we send you, and bring enough medications for yourself when you go. Pack lightly but make sure you have what you need for your personal health.

We recommend you follow the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) guidelines for prophylaxis and immunizations. We highly recommend visiting your travel clinic to start preparing for possible deployment sooner than later. The current information on Greece can be found at: [http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/clinician/mission_disaster/greece?s_cid=ncezid-dgmg-travel-single-002](http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/clinician/mission_disaster/greece?s_cid=ncezid-dgmg-travel-single-002)

You will be an ambassador of Midwife Pilgrim and our mission to serve with skilled and compassionate care. We expect you to behave in ways that are culturally sensitive, and to leave all judgments at home. This applies cultural differences as well as to treatments (such as Plan B for rape survivors) that women may want, or need, or decline for their own reasons. **We expect you to leave your own personal beliefs at home in this regard.** Pilgrims go purely to serve, not to indoctrinate.

If you are under the umbrella of another organization, their requirements and rules must be met as well.

We understand your specialty is women’s healthcare. However, there will be times when you will be asked to step in and help with other tasks or care for those outside your normal expertise. We trust that you will do what you can to serve the people of this community and do your best to ease the suffering you will witness.

**Record keeping**
You will have access to a Google document in which you will make a daily report of your patients, their condition, and care and treatments you gave. This is important for a number of reasons:

1. To prepare midwives who arrive after you with realistic expectations
2. To help us be more effective as we continue to work in this ever-changing climate
3. To assess our impact and coordinate efforts

**What To Bring**
- Doppler/batteries
- Blood pressure cuff
- stethoscope
- thermometer
- alcohol or bactericidal wipes for cleaning equipment
- urine dip sticks
- suture materials
- headlamp/batteries
- gloves
- a wifi and google docs capable device
- electricity converter
- personal medical kit
- Euros. ATMs are available in the larger towns but may not be easily accessible. The airport in Athens does not always have working ATMS and money exchange can be time consuming and often has more fees than your local bank.
- unlocked phone. Plan to get a local sim card unless you have an International plan. Check with your provider, some plans are prohibitively expensive or have limited access so getting a local sim card is often the best. You will need this to communicate with the various organizations in Greece. Install Whatsapp, Wechat or similar apps. Facetime and Skype are also a good options for staying in touch with people back home since both can be used with wifi.

Airfare
The best rates are found if you fly into Athens and then make separate arrangements to fly to Lesvos or Leros. There is an expensive fee for bringing bags this way, (approx. $100 USD) so the difference between booking separate tickets vs. directly may not be as great. Plan on raising enough funds for all your expenses. Ferries from Athens to Lesvos or Leros is cheaper but takes about 8 hours and is not guaranteed to run. It is best to fly if you can.

Lodging and Food
There are many hotels and guest houses with reasonable rates ($20-$60/night) for volunteers. Leros is less expensive. Below are links with a wealth of information for volunteers. We suggest you start your research now. Depending on where you are placed, housing may or may not be provided so please budget accordingly. You will not be staying in the camps.

Healthcare
There are hospitals on both islands but they are currently overwhelmed and understaffed. It is best to bring your own personal medical kit. There are pharmacies in most areas and with the exception of narcotics you will be able to purchase most anything you need at a reasonable cost. We cannot stress enough the importance of medivac insurance in case of a personal emergency.

Language and Culture
This population is mainly Muslim and Arabic-speaking. While some English is spoken, you will greatly benefit from a translator if you don’t know the language – yet translators may or may not
Learning a few words of Farsi or Arabic will be helpful and respectful. An app for translation will be helpful. Google translator is highly recommended: https://translate.google.com/ There is a free mobile app as well.

Modesty is an important aspect of Muslim culture. Consider wearing a headscarf. While not required, some volunteers have found wearing a hijab or simple head covering helped their rapport with the women they served. Privacy is also very important to Muslim women, especially during exams. Women will feel violated if forced to uncover their body in front of an unrelated male. Female providers and support personnel are highly preferred, except in case of emergency. If a private space is not available for exams, be prepared to assess with your other skills (eg hands, not sight). If you need to ask a male translator to step away during an exam, keep trying to communicate with gestures and signs; much can be expressed without words. In many cases once you have done a physical assessment, women will be willing to have a male translator return for the followup discussion.

**Resources**
Below are links to help you with your organizing and preparation efforts:

http://www.offtrackalliance.com/


https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fhy55KRFvXG3PDj2oUKt9Aqi58spQUH4vebA4S9_shc/edit