



# Refugee Medical Volunteer Programme

Providing medical care for  
refugees in Greece

[www.i4life.ie](http://www.i4life.ie)

**I4Life Charity Registration Number: 19298**

## Message from our CEO, Maura Moran

Dear Volunteer

Welcome to i4Life and thank you for taking the time to get to know us and our new volunteer programme delivering medical care to refugees and displaced persons in Greece.

Immunisation 4 Life or I4Life, started as a group of volunteer health professionals who came together in 2009 to organise immunisation programmes and child health clinics for under 5s in the poorer countries of the world and to provide support to existing charities in emergency situations. As founding member, I reached out to like minded professionals and together we established nutrition and immunisation clinics in Zambia, with enormous success and it's this experience we want to provide to refugees and displaced persons in Greece.

I4Life do not see volunteering as a 'journey' or 'voluntourism' or an 'experience' to make us feel better about ourselves, but as a heartfelt selfless need to ensure people have the quality of life they rightfully deserve. These feelings are shared by the entire i4Life team, from administration, fundraisers, medical professionals to our Board of Directors and all of our volunteers, supporters and donors. It's this compassion for the care of others that drives us all.

Volunteering with i4Life means that you will be supported throughout the entire volunteer cycle, before, during and afterwards. We view debriefing equally as important as the placement itself as it gives you the opportunity to discuss every aspect of your volunteer experience, your suggestions, your observations and your feelings. I4Life are here for you too as without you, we would not be able to continue to help the most vulnerable.

We feel it's our responsibility to ensure everyone has access to proper medical care and attention, not just because we are medical professionals, but because we respect the rights and dignity of human beings.

As you are reading this brochure, I know that you are aware of the escalating refugee crises and the thousands of people from Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan, fleeing for their lives, seeking asylum in Europe.

There is no doubt that working in refugee camps will be tough and will test your emotions. Your ability to use these emotions to drive your work, will ensure you give the very best of your capabilities and expertise to provide relief to those who need it most. We can't solve the crises, but we can make small differences to help those in need of medical care and attention, letting them know that there are people who care about them, purely because they are human beings.

If you feel that you can give your time and skills to help refugees, we would like to hear from you, and we can work together to do what's right.

Maura



## About i4Life

Immunisation 4 Life or I4Life, is an Irish child health specialist registered charity, made up of volunteer health professionals who came together in 2009 to organise immunisation programmes and child health clinics for under fives Africa and to provide support to existing charities in emergency situations.



i4Life Nutrition Clinic, Zambia, 2019

Our development programmes in Zambia have a particular focus on education, immunisation, nutrition and Human Rights. We are committed to working with partners who share our ethos of respect, the protection and promotion human rights standards and principles for all children.

I4Life have a robust Child Safeguarding policy in place, as do our partners. All volunteers must commit to adhering to the policy and procedures and the Garda/police vetting process is mandatory to secure a placement with us.

Volunteering with i4Life means that you will be supported throughout the entire volunteer cycle, before, during and afterwards. We view debriefing equally as important as the placement itself as it gives you the opportunity to discuss every aspect of your volunteer experience, your suggestions and how you can continue to support i4Life

### I4Life in Greece

We are fully aware that the current refugee crises is a global tragedy and there are thousands of men, women and children in desperate need of medical care from the basics to life saving interventions. I4Life could not stand idly by and not put our expertise to good use. In 2019, we made the decision to act and team members visited several refugee camps in the Athens and Thessaloniki, seeing first hand, the medical needs of refugees of all ages, the living conditions in camps, squats, forests and abandoned houses.

The volume of refugees arriving on a daily basis means all NGOs are in dire need of volunteers to address the needs of documented and non-documented refugees. We got to know those operating in the islands and we have partnered with a reputable registered NGO organisation in Thessaloniki who have been operating in the area for several years and as such, have extensive experience of the situation and health needs of new and long-term refugees.

The people you treat may have had horrendous experiences before they made the decision to flee to safety, but also on their journey. You will hear about these experiences and their lives also, their country, their families and the good times too. This is what will inspire you on a daily basis.



I4Lifes role is to recruit and deploy volunteers from all medical expertise, whether working, studying or retired, from across the medical profession, to meet the needs of our partners.

Volunteer Nurse in Athens, 2018

## The Medical Volunteers Programme

Our partners have been providing urgent basic need medical care to refugees and displaced people since 2016 in several camps in Greece. Now that the organisation is an officially registered charity (one of only 13 organisations) in Greece, more volunteers are needed to continue to provide these vital services, especially as the numbers of refugees is in on the rise again.

Volunteers on this programme will be working in either Athens or Thessaloniki. The team treats 1,200 patients per month, across 13 social centre and camp locations, 6 days per week in Thessaloniki and approximately 1,600 per month are treated in two locations in Athens.

### An example of services currently offered are:

- Primary healthcare
- Primary minor surgery
- Chronic wound management
- Case management
- Health education and promotional presentations
- Referral to more advanced medical services
- Emergency response to squats and house calls to patients



Volunteer Doctor in Thessaloniki, 2019

*“Volunteering in these amazing teams has made me realise the huge scale of the refugee crisis and has helped me appreciate how helpless many of these displaced people are and how much help they still need.”*

*Xander, Volunteer doctor, Athens*

## UNHCR Mediterranean Situation Report

December 2019

**19,048 DEAD OR MISSING SINCE 2014**

**73,377 ARRIVALS IN GREECE 2019**

**160,000 HAVE FLED SYRIA SINCE OCTOBER 2019**

# The Volunteer Programme - FAQ

## Who can apply to volunteer?

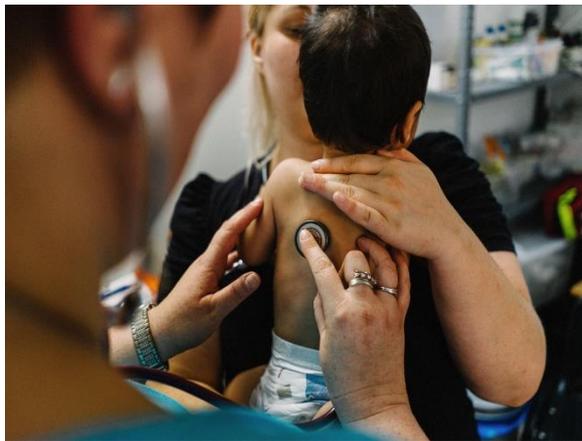
All registered medical professionals, both practicing and retired eg doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, gynaecologists, paediatricians, nutritionists, midwives and more. Final year medical students and Graduates may also apply.

## Do I need to speak Arabic?

No, but if you can, that's great. You **must** be fluent in English.

## Is there a cost to volunteer?

Yes, as this programme is not funded, all volunteers must contribute €600 to your placement, which you may fundraise for or cover yourself. This covers all administration in Ireland and Greece, two days pre-departure training, accommodation, donation to the host organisation, donation to i4Life and debriefing.



## What about flights and insurance?

You must cover these costs yourself. It means you the freedom to source options that suit you best as you will have time to search various airlines and insurance providers.

## How long are the placements?

Short placements start from two weeks, depending on what's needed by our partners. You can volunteer for longer placements, subject to agreement with our partners.

## What will I be doing?

You will be assigned to a team and your duties will be determined by your team leader in accordance to their needs at the time. You will receive a general outline of your role approximately one week before you depart.

## When can I go?

i4Life operate both set dates and placements to suit your own commitments, which means you can travel any time of the year.

## What is the procedure to volunteer with i4Life?

Send your CV and application to [info@i4life.ie](mailto:info@i4life.ie). Following an interview, reference check and vetting, you will attend two days pre-departure training. Following completion of your placement, you will attend for debriefing. See page 7 for more information.

## The Refugee Crises

*“The simple truth is that refugees would not risk their lives on a journey so dangerous if they could thrive where they are.”*

Melissa Fleming, UNHCR

We have all seen the tragic photographs of three year old Aylan Kurdi washed up on the shores of Bodrum in 2015, only because his family were trying to get to Kos, fleeing war in Syria and wanted to live a safe life in Europe. The photograph of Baby Aylan sparked international outcry, even though there had been countless other deaths since the crises began early 2015.

The Syrian refugee crises is the largest of our time, with almost seven million refugees and another six million displaced since the start of the war in March 2011.

At it's peak in 2015, thousands were arriving in Greece every day and 1.5 million refugees had sought asylum. It has decreased, but due to increased military operations near the Turkish border since October 2019, over 160,000 people have fled Syria - 70,000 of those are children.

So far in 2019, 44,000 have crossed from Turkey to Greece in the past few months. Women and children account for 56% of arrivals and the majority of children are under 12 years old. Two out of every 10 children are unaccompanied minors.

In July 2019, the Greek government cut access to public healthcare for newly arrived asylum seekers, leaving the majority of people relying on help from NGOs. It also means that children are not able to get vaccinated (a requirement for them to be able to enrol in school). (The New Humanitarian, 2019). Additionally, children born in Greece to refugees are not entitled to free medical care if their parents have not secured formal status.

Due to massive overcrowding, asylum seekers and refugees have been transferred to other islands such as Thessaloniki, but they are often forced to seek shelter in makeshift camps, dilapidated houses and in the forests. NGOs travel to these camps and shelters to deliver medical care, delivering food and providing other vital services. Resources and personnel are vastly beyond capacity and massively under staffed.

It's envisaged that the numbers of people seeking asylum and making the dangerous journey to other countries is going to increase again, perhaps not to the extent of the numbers in 2015.

One thing for certain, is that it's a crisis that is going to continue for several more years.

**UNHCR Mediterranean Situation Report December 2019**

**19,048 DEAD OR MISSING SINCE 2014**

**73,377 ARRIVALS IN GREECE 2019**

**160,000 HAVE FLED SYRIA SINCE OCTOBER 2019**

## Volunteer Recruitment Process

I4Life's role is to recruit and deploy volunteers from all medical expertise, whether working, studying or retired, from across the medical profession, to meet the clinical needs of our partners.

I4Life have a stringent recruitment process in place regardless of your qualifications or experience. This ensures fair and transparent due process for each applicant.

We work closely with our partners in Greece in assessing suitability of the applicant to meet their needs and requirements.

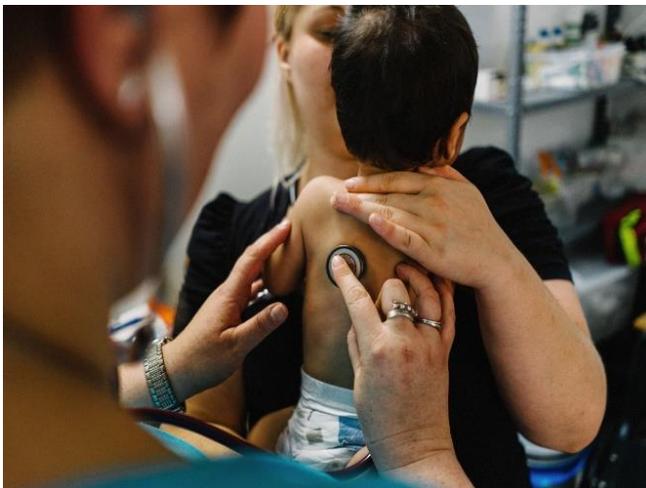
I4Life are an equal opportunities organisation and we welcome applications from everyone regardless of gender, sexuality, faith, ethnicity or race, disability, marital status or age.

Volunteers must submit their CV and complete our application form to start the process and then attend for interview.

If successful, you will then be required to complete our pre-departure training, which is mandatory.

Volunteers must sign up to and commit to adhering to our Child Safe-guarding and Vulnerable Adult policy.

Volunteers pay a non-refundable deposit of €100 and complete their fundraising at least three weeks before departure.



Volunteer paediatrician in Athens, 2019

**To register your interest in volunteering with i4Life please email [info@i4life.ie](mailto:info@i4life.ie) and we will send you an application form.**



I4Life are signatories of the Comhlámh Code of Good Practice as a Volunteer Sending Organisation



Immunisation 4 Life is a registered charity in Ireland:

Registration number 19298

**[www.i4life.ie](http://www.i4life.ie)**