



Mapping migration and describing a crisis

What do you do with over one million non-EU migrants trying to enter the countries of the European Union? Whilst this number is relatively modest (two million migrants entered Turkey during 2015, for example), the scale of the challenge facing the member states of the EU is nevertheless real. The challenge of the numbers has far-right extremists baying for blood whilst the voices of the political left and the moderate centre lack the populist conviction that others are all too happy to peddle.

Consequently, much of the current debate about European migration policy resembles a game of political ping-pong with claim and counter-claim advanced, argued, and entrenched. The debate is not helped by a general lack of reasonably accurate statistics.

In 2008, I co-authored a unique book featuring the statistical and demographic investigation of the phenomenon of migration in Europe (Mapping Migration, Mapping Churches Responses: Europe Study). Our second revised and updated edition, published late 2015, demonstrates that the situation has changed almost unrecognisably. The challenge for any commentator or author writing about refugees, asylum, and migration in Europe is that the most recent data available is normally, at best, about 18 months old. Given that the current migrant challenge facing the EU only gained momentum during 2015, none of the statistical agencies (national and EU-wide) has access to current data. In any case, much of the official data relates to asylum applications (and decisions) and/or 'managed migration', and what

CONTINUED INSIDE

EDITORIAL

The year of the migrant

Did you know that 2015 was the 'European Year for Development'? The goal was to focus on the EU's "external action and Europe's role in the world." Ironically, it seems the world arrived in Europe in 2015. It might have been better titled 'The European Year of the Migrant'.

The figures speak for themselves: 920,000 arriving by sea, and a further 34,000 coming by land. This compares with a total of 214,000 by land and sea in 2014. (figures from International Office of Migration)

This issue of Vista tries to capture something of what happened, with stories from all stages of the journey, from arrival in Europe to transition and destination. Along the way we discover the vital role of the smart phone and stand back to take a wider, European perspective.

Despite this being the longest ever edition of Vista, it is only a very small representation of how Christians across Europe have responded, and are continuing to act on behalf of the migrant.

But we don't just want to look back. The problems and tensions are here to stay. As Christians we can act and pray. Throughout Vista we point you in the direction of resources to use and share. By accessing them you can become better informed and equipped to respond to what is happening where you are.

If you have articles, news, prayer needs or opportunities, why not use the EEA's new facebook page www.facebook.com/EEAHopeforEuropeRefugees/ as well as our blog: europeanmission.redcliffe.org

Jo Appleton

can be observed at the current hotspots in Europe cannot be described as 'managed'.

Reliable and credible statistics informing the current 'refugee crisis' in Europe are simply not available. Estimates exist, of course, and the most accurate suggest that just over one million migrants entered the EU during 2015. The accelerating challenge underlined the European Commission's inability to predict, let alone manage, the highest numbers of non-EU migrants in the history of the EU. In September 2015, the EU began efforts to redistribute 120,000 non-EU migrants from Hungary, Turkey and Italy to other EU countries – just 12-15% of the estimated numbers of migrants entering the EU in 2015. Accurate prediction requires accurate statistical forecasting and there have been few oracles available to the EU.

Until more accurate statistics are available, we are reliant on narratives of migration and of personal encounter by Europeans with migrants and refugees. This is not necessarily or always second best. In the second edition of Mapping Migration, Mapping Churches' Responses, we turn to migrant accounts of experiencing integration, belonging, and community in the churches of Europe. In this edition of VISTA, we have also taken the decision that our research approach to the current migrant situation in Europe is best 'captured' in a series of personal 'snapshots'.

Of course, statistical research and anecdotal research are both involved in describing the same human experiences, the same overwhelming human needs. Whether numbers or sentences are used to describe them, the same rapidly changing currents and trends are apparent. In both instances one wonders whether the churches could do more. Could we, even I, do more? In this respect, the reporting of statistical data can actually increase the feelings of being overwhelmed. None of us is really able to do anything with the reporting by the EU's Vice President in January 2016 that there were still 2-3,000 people arriving per day in Greece. Throughout 2015, deaths of migrants at sea rose from 500 per month to 2,500 per month by August. This latter fact alone prompted the EU to adopt its European Agenda on Migration in May 2015, in which measures were outlined to develop migration strategies focused on relocation, resettlement, counter-smuggling measures, fingerprinting

guidelines, improving the EU's Blue Card entry scheme for skilled migrants, and increasing resources for Triton, the EU's border control measures.

Whilst there are many followers of Jesus serving Him in the debating chambers and committee rooms of Europe, most of VISTA's readers are faced simply with the question of what to do when a refugee asks for the use of a mobile phone to make a call to a relative already living in Europe, or when he asks for an overcoat, a sleeping bag, some food, a bus fare. Is 'Non!' or 'Nein!' really a Christ-like response to such requests?

I first reported findings from the revised and updated edition of Mapping Migration to a gathering of church experts, gathered in Sweden during June 2014. On my return flight to Sydney, via Beijing, I met a diplomat from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. On learning my reason for being in Sweden, he asked with some bemusement why the European churches were interested in migration. I replied simply that, since my work on the 2008 edition, it was clear that the churches of Europe are the most consistently and widely spread collectives of people who generally respond positively to the presence of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

It's also clear, from the many stories of such committed Christian engagement featured in this edition of VISTA, that this is still true. We also discovered it in our research for Mapping Migration. For example, a young Pentecostal male from

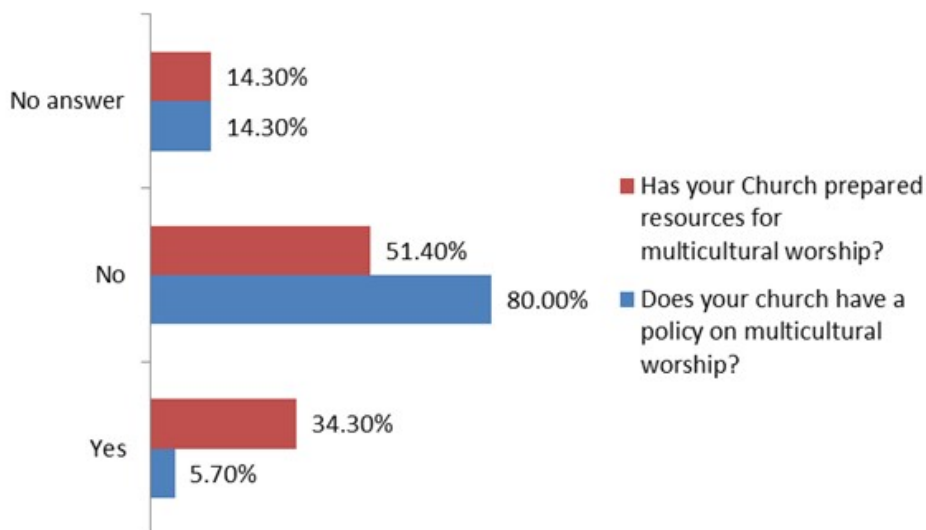


Figure 8: Countries in which church membership includes considerably more than a 5% membership of migrants

Central Africa, living in France, told us 'When I arrived here, I was immediately surrounded, integrated, and encouraged by the pastor as if he knew that I could bring something to the church.'

Almost half of all the churches in our survey for Mapping Migration reported that between 6% and 20% of their membership was made up of migrants (See Figure 8 above). Our research suggests that in a majority of cases, integration into the life of the congregation is unplanned and incidental. We found that the majority of churches in Europe have taken no steps to intentionally adopt policies or develop resources that take the diverse cultural background of attenders into account (See Figure below from Mapping Migration). Of course, this need not necessarily be negative but if it hinders integration, belonging, or of becoming a part of the

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



believing church community, then clearly a higher level of intentionality is called for.

By focussing our research on the integration of migrants into church communities, we have also highlighted a very obvious and frequently overlooked fact; namely that the story of migration is central to the story of the churches of Europe. Quite simply, 'any theological account of the contemporary phenomenon of migration in Europe is not merely somebody else's story.

The story of migration has always been internal to our own church communities and traditions; whether

Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or Pentecostal. The experience of migration has contributed to the shaping of the European Churches of today. It is a constitutive part of the narrative of the Churches in Europe; migration has always been a central aspect of the identity of the churches in Europe. In arriving at a theological analysis of integration, community, and belonging, we must not forget this history; for it is our history.' (Jackson and Passarelli, Mapping Migration, p39).

DARRELL JACKSON is Senior Lecturer at Morling College, Sydney

Resourcing you:

Mapping Migration, Mapping Churches' Responses in Europe can be downloaded as a free pdf from the website of the Churches Commission for Migrants in Europe <http://www.ccme.be/downloads/publications/> or if you'd prefer a print copy, it's available from Amazon sites in Germany, France, the UK, and the USA. Other online retailers are also stocking it.

(Mapping Migration, Mapping Churches' Responses in Europe by Darrell Jackson and Alessia Passarelli, is published by the World Council of Churches. ISBN 978-2-8254-1678-5 and is available from £11.53 or €17.65.

STORIES OF ARRIVAL: LESVOS. GREECE

BOB TILL WITH JO APPLETON

I keep going back to Acts 17:26 when I think about the migrant crisis: 'From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.' We lived in Athens for many years. Paul was on Mars Hill in Athens saying 'at a point in time that God has appointed the boundaries to change'. The current movement of peoples into Europe is unbelievable. Europe will change for generations.

Last year I visited Germany, Hungary and Greece, including spending time on Lesbos, the Greek Island where the majority of the refugees and immigrants are arriving. It is a totally mind blowing experience. The video 'people of nowhere' sums up what is happening. You see thousands coming in the rubber dinghies – probably 4-500 a day. October was the peak, but even now, when it is snowing, boats are still coming,

Depending on the weather, it can be a tough journey. Many times people are sold substandard life jackets and you see arm bands and rubber rings on the children. Each boat should hold 10-12 people, but they are crowded with many times that. You look down and see two ladies in wheelchairs in the middle. There are blind people, those with no legs, who have been shot or bombed. And a lot of children and babies only a few weeks old ... desperate people.

The majority arriving are Syrians, next Iraqis and Afghans but you also see Iranians and even Moroccans who fly

They think once they have landed in Europe, they have arrived, but they have no idea what is in front of them.



Abandoned life jackets at Lesbos lighthouse

from Casablanca to Istanbul. When they arrive, there is a sense of satisfaction and excitement – 'we have made it'. They unwrap their smart phones to use WhatsApp and take selfies of themselves in life jackets, to let people back home know they have arrived.

At the lighthouse where we were working, people crawl up the rocks and walk 5-6 miles to buses to get to the next camp on their journey to the two camps where they can register. There are different camps around the island but two are for registration. One is slightly better for Syrian families and women, and one for everyone else.

We would give them water and an apple at one of the first stage camps and try to

get them on buses to go to the next camp. There are certain things you can and can't do, but nobody is stopping you from walking a mile with people, just hearing their story and telling them we are praying for peace for your country, and for you. As a girl working on the bus said 'All I can do is show them God's love – I can't solve their problems or what they are going to face.' And the nationals have commented on the difference in attitude between the Christians and non-Christians who are helping.

The Greeks are struggling. Some are responding by reaching out, others say 'this is destroying our country and our island.' I talked to a bus driver who has been doing this for months now, maybe 10 or 12 trips a day. Even though he was

making money in the non-tourist season, he was frustrated. He told me 'I don't sleep at night, I've had dead babies on the bus. It is a battle.' There is a lot of fear about what will happen next year, whether tourists will come back.

After their arrival the authorities try to make the process as fast as possible. The refugees are registered and then take a twelve-hour ferryboat to Athens. If you are at the Athens's port of Piraeus, you see 2-3000 get off the boat daily. Many of them are Syrians, they have money and pay 30-50 Euros to get the bus to the border then start the trip to Northern Europe.

Athens goes in cycles: when I was there it had slowed down, but now it has picked up. You see people in parks and on the streets. The Orthodox Church is responding by feeding people. The Greek evangelicals are helping as well – I heard about a group in Thessaloniki who had just fed 3000 people. The Greek government has

opened up two former Olympic stadiums for all the people who can't get through at the border. The UN and Red Cross are also helping, as well as many faith-based organizations providing volunteers.

My observation from going to Germany over the last few years is that the Muslim background immigrants are more interested in talking about religion than the Germans or the Greeks.

God is at work; you have opportunities to share the Gospel that you would not have in the Middle East, but you need sensitivity and understanding where they are coming from. You don't want to take advantage of the fact they are desperate and it is important to listen to them.

Many who become Christians experience difficulties, but there is also fearlessness about them.

But I feel it is a season, and that the openness will not last forever. After a few years of living in Germany it is like a wall goes up and they have a cultural group. Right now, they are landing and wrestling with 'what does this look like'.

They think once they have landed in Europe, they have arrived, but they have no idea what is in front of them. This is not the final stage of their journey – it is just the beginning.

BOB TILL oversees New Initiatives at Greater Europe Mission. He has 35 years experience of mission in Europe, including 16 years in Athens, Greece.

Resourcing you:

The Syrian Circle – A prayer movement for Syrian refugees.

Launched on Dec 1, 2014

<http://thesyriancircle.com>

"People of Nowhere"

a video of Lesvos

<https://vimeo.com/144857118>

STORIES OF TRANSITION: SZEGED, HUNGARY

ANDY CHEESEMAN

These are my ponderings and reflections of the refugee situation which occurred during 2015 in South East Hungary. These are the keywords which for me described the situation which unfolded.

Inconceivable – We were first aware, long before the media, of some people coming to Hungary whilst visiting a friend in Subotica, Serbia. There were a few people walking along the motorway and we did not think much of the situation. They seemed to be a few people and not an indication of the massive influx which was coming.

Overwhelmed/Powerless – The small Evangelical churches in Szeged (< 50 people) have very limited reaction times, and resources were limited. By the time, we could help, the problem had relocated. The local church pastors usually have more than one job not including church work and could not drop everything to help with situation. However, predominantly full-time church workers came cross-country to help.

Frustrated – We and others here felt a bit frustrated. We feel that in the end, we were trying to help but were always playing catch-up. Communication was not only hard within our own national church groups



Migrants near Szeged, Hungary, after crossing the border from Serbia. Photograph: Matt; www.irishtimes.com

but also between different denominations and other involved parties. Social media throughout this has been a blessing and a curse. The wide variety of numerous sources with various information which differed, made the process of helping and being useful harder whilst letting us know acutely what we weren't doing.

Political – Every incident was used for scoring points on a political agenda both at home and abroad.

Generosity – Hungarians, who think that they not very affluent, were very generous and there was a surplus of donated goods

Suspicious – There were some people who were fearful of helping in case the incoming refugees were terrorists.

Tiredness – Every refugee that I saw was tired and hot (it was a brutal 35+ °C summer) yet was well behaved and patient despite understanding very little of what was going on around them.

Forgotten – The situation has passed and everything has returned back to "normal" – There are some political advertisements but the average man on the street is now more worried about terrorism and Islam.

The dust has settled on the immediate problems/need and now we are in the hands of politicians. Looking back with hindsight, it seems that the refugee crisis was the first of its kind. Everyone who was moving was connected via the internet. The refugees were like a flock of migrating birds, able to adjust and quickly correct for local conditions. In the space of 4 days, a thousand strong holding camp had sprung up and closed as people looked for new EU entry points. The big question which people are not even aware of is the longer-term impact of refugees in Szeged and how the church can help.

ANDY CHEESEMAN is Pastor of Szeged Pentecostal Church and International Chaplain to the University of Szeged



Beds made ready in St Columba's Scottish Church ([www.http://www.lifeandwork.org/features/features/view/169-pray-that-they-find-peace](http://www.lifeandwork.org/features/features/view/169-pray-that-they-find-peace))

I first became aware of the current crisis in December of 2014. One day in Advent a new family joined us for worship, possibly the poorest family I had ever seen. The father, mother and four children wore ragged clothes unfit for winter, they were dirty, and even in our international congregation no one could find a common language with them.

A Somali refugee who happened to be a long-standing member of our church had brought them to church this morning.

"I was on the way to church and saw them at the underground station. They were all crying; not just the children--all of them. I told them I was going to church and they should come with me."

Somehow we gathered that they needed shelter for two nights until their ride would come and take them to Sweden. We contacted various mission agencies and human rights groups with whom we sometimes work and finally found a women's shelter with room for them.

"Not our profile," the staff person told me, "but we have space at the moment, and it's Christmas after all.

We can fit a family for 2 nights."

Using the showers seemed to present the family with a learning curve, but we got them settled for the night. The next morning the staff called.

"We finally found a common language. They are from Kosovo, and speak Albanian."

A number of Hungarians must have passed the same family in need, but it was a refugee who, not knowing what else to do, took them to a church.

With this information, I called around again, and none of my colleagues working with refugees were surprised. Without exception, they told me that the Balkan route had become a major point of entry into the EU. I looked up UNHCR statistics and discovered that the number of asylum seekers had increased exponentially in the previous two years. The media was hardly talking about the issue, if at all, but I suspected that would change.

Then one story made headlines when a train full of Kosovars was stopped at the Austrian border. Making matters worse was that cleaning staff made a public show of disinfecting the waiting room at the station, sending an image to the media that refugees leave refuse behind.

Then were the terrorist attacks in Charlie Hebdo headquarters and other areas of Paris. From that city, the Hungarian Prime Minister announced that the EU immigration policy was failing to protect Europe from terrorism, and Hungary would show how to remedy things.

From that point on there was a public relations campaign on the part of the government prejudicing the population against migrants.

In summer as I passed by the railway stations, I saw more and more foreigners sitting around, waiting: waiting for an arranged ride out, waiting for directions on how to report to reception centres, waiting for trains to carry them farther. Through the course of the summer those numbers grew until both Keleti railway station became a de facto refugee camp, as was Nyugati station.

What was the church's previous involvement with migrants?

We are an international, English-speaking congregation of the Reformed Church in Hungary, so in the ten years since that church set up its refugee ministry, we have been a welcoming community not only to international students or employees of multinational companies, but to refugees and asylum-seekers, too. Sometimes this has meant providing space for cultural events, sometimes it has meant an intentional outreach of pastoral care, and on occasion it has even meant financial support.

One of the refugees to become a member of our congregation in the past ten years is the same one who brought the Kosovar family to us. I think it speaks volumes that a number of Hungarians must have passed the same family in need, but it was a refugee who, not knowing what else to do, took them to a church.

How did you respond to the need? What were the challenges/ opportunities?

The refugee ministry of the Hungarian Reformed Church has specialised in integration support service: school integration programs, housing programs, Hungarian as a Second Language courses, and job training. When changes in EU funding and in the strategy shift within the RCH led to an end of those programs, our new partner became the Kalunba Charity Association. In various ways, we have connected with these initiatives. As a congregation alone, we would not have the expertise to reach out effectively and might have even done more harm than good, but by joining with

professionals for the RCH and Kalunba, we are able to engage with meaningful outreach.

When the migration crisis became tangible in Hungary, the urgent need was for a different sort of outreach. What was needed was food and water at the railway stations, as well as legal advice and translation assistance. Some of the refugees with whom we work helped out in these areas. Because of our limited capacity, it was difficult to address that urgent need in addition to the work we were already doing.

Some of us volunteered on occasion at the railway stations, but ours was not a large, coordinated effort in that regard.

But then I received an e-mail from a woman asking if we could help as she had met an infant less than a week old. With our colleagues and the RCH Refugee Mission and the Kalunba Charity Association, we decided to set up an overnight shelter for families

who would otherwise spend the night at the stations. For 4-5 nights we provided shelter to around twenty people each night. We offered warm food, a chance to wash, legal information, and a safe place to sleep. Each morning, the people continued their route to other destinations. Each night, others arrived.

But as the borders to Austria and Germany opened, entry into Hungary became more difficult. The railway stations cleared out, and the need for our shelter vanished.

What is the situation now?

In terms of crisis, the main worries in Hungary now are a legal system that makes it virtually impossible to seek asylum in Hungary. In terms of the refugees who have status here, an environment of xenophobia makes it very difficult for them find jobs and find flats.

One of our aims is to raise these concerns to colleagues within the

Reformed Church in Hungary so that they may join us as advocates for compassion. The media outlets of the RCH have been helpful in this regard.

What has been the aftermath of the summer and has anything changed in the life of the church as a result of what happened?

The work we did in summer and early fall energised our congregation. We have a few new members who came to us because in us they saw a church concerned with social justice. We still offer space to the Kalunba Associate for its language courses, so there is still contact between refugees and other members of the congregation. Everyone wants to see the relationship continue beyond the crisis of the summer.

AARON STEVENS is minister of St. Columba's Scottish Church, Budapest

STORIES OF TRANSITION: 21ST-CENTURY MIGRANT'S ESSENTIALS: FOOD, SHELTER AND....?

DIRK MUELLER

Ra'ed had been listening to TWR's radio programs for 17 years in his hometown of Mosul, Iraq, which was held by terrorist forces. But then conditions deteriorated in Mosul, and Ra'ed witnessed as the militants swept in and killed many. He was told that he, too, would be killed if he didn't leave his house and belongings within a day, so he fled the country with his family.

Radio is a powerful tool to reach out to people groups and share the love of Christ with them, especially in countries that are considered hostile against Christian worldviews. Radio waves don't stop at political or geographical borders. Although searching biblical content on the Internet can be dangerous because of government tracking, listening to Christian radio programs is safe.

But what about refugees? As people like Ra'ed flee from their home countries due to oppression, war or persecution, they no longer have easy access to these radio programs. They are on the move through and to other countries. Is media still valid as a means to reach out to them and speak hope into broken lives?

In our research done this summer, TWR discovered that media is

6



The essential communication tool (Photo: TWR)

asylum seekers and migrants. The goal of this research was to better understand how we can best minister to these people in our role as a Christian media organization.

Visiting refugee camps in places like Greece and Italy, we met with people like Ra'ed as well as selected churches and refugee organizations which minister to them. We were eager to study the life issues of these families, individuals and minors who now carry the stigma of being called "refugees". How can we

introduce Jesus to them (or support fleeing Christians) by using media?

An article published by the New York Times in August 2015 alluded to the 21st -century migrants and their basic needs as human beings. Guess which were the essentials mentioned?

Food: Yes, of course!

Shelter: Yes, obviously!

The third factor can come as a surprise though: Smartphones! Smartphones?

Yes, the title was "A 21st-Century Migrant's Essentials: Food, Shelter, Smartphone". Smartphones are considered essentials. We even heard stories of refugees who would rather go without food for a couple of days than give away their smartphones. What is it that makes the functions of a smartphone an essential tool in a 21st century refugee crisis? Why would a CBC article in September describe the smartphone not as a toy but as a lifeline for Syrian refugees?

Here are some of the most important findings which our studies revealed:

Communication: Probably the most obvious function of a smartphone is to communicate with others. A high percentage of refugees come from cultures with very

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

21ST CENTURY MIGRANT: FOOD, SHELTER AND ...? CONT

strong family and community ties, not like many of us with a more individualistic attitude. Smartphones allow them to keep these ties alive, communicate with family members – the ones at home as well as the ones that are also on their journey as refugees. This is one of the reasons why some refugee organizations not only provide charging stations for phones but also SIM cards or free Wi-Fi.

Pictures: Related to the above, pictures can be taken with the built-in camera. Pictures allow for another way of communication when being sent to family members: “We are still alive!”, “We reached Germany!” etc. Stored pictures have an emotional value as they bring back memories about their homes, relatives and so on.

Navigation/GPS: When you are on the move, you need to have directions. Smartphones have a nice function that we know as GPS, the Global Positioning System, which does not only help us in getting from point A to point B, but also helps refugees to navigate from their home countries to the desired destination in Europe.

Information & News: Refugees depend on news. They need to know which borders are open, which ones are closed. They want to know if the weather conditions are safe to go on a boat that is supposed to take them from Turkey to Greece. Upon arriving at their destination, they will try to understand what is needed to seek asylum. Hence, the smartphone becomes the gate to often vitally important information.

Entertainment: Last but not least, the smartphone can serve as pure entertainment, bridging times of waiting at a closed border, in a refugee camp, etc. Music, games, and other functions help provide temporary distractions.

TWR continues traditional radio ministry into the home countries of refugees, but for the refugees who are coming to Europe, TWR is now getting ready to provide biblical content via an app for smartphones. What does it take to get an app with biblical content that speaks truth into their specific life issues (e.g. trauma, loneliness, disillusionment) and in

their language on refugees’ smartphones? We do this in partnership with other ministries-be it other media partners or Christian refugee organizations. Find further information on TWR’s Refugee & Media Project here: www.twreurope.org/refugees

UNHCR entitled one of their Global Trend Reports “World at War”. The world has never seen so many conflict areas as of today. Numbers of refugees are expected to increase globally. Are we prepared as Christians to partner and minister to them? Media is a powerful kingdom tool in this endeavour.

Pictures allow for another way of communication when being sent to family members: “We are still alive!”

DIRK MÜLLER is TWR’s International Director for the European Region (www.twreurope.org). TWR’s calling is to reach the world for Christ by using media so that lasting fruit is produced. Dirk is passionate to use media to reach out to refugees in Europe and beyond.

SYRIAN ARRIVALS IN GREECE: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

UNHCR

One in five interviewees had been separated from one or more family members in Syrian and did not know their whereabouts

6% were **unaccompanied or separated children**, 5% were victims of torture, 3% had a chronic disease and 3% were single parents

Most intended to apply for **asylum elsewhere in the EU**, primarily Germany (50%) or Sweden (13%).

85% reached Greece at their **first attempted crossing**

Most reported a **high level of education**, with 86% having achieved secondary or university level education

LAST PROFESSIONS OF INTERVIEWED SYRIANS

The weighted list in visual design below indicates the frequency of each reply to the question on last employment of interviewed individuals. The more frequent the reply, the larger the font size.



DOWNLOAD THE REPORT FROM: <https://data.unhcr.org/mediterranean/download.php?id=248>

Reporting on the constantly changing situation at the makeshift refugee camp in the Calais area of northern France, known as the Jungle, is a challenge. Here the Rev Simon Jones, senior minister at Bromley Baptist Church, London, does so but by paying close attention to the very human emotions at the heart of all interactions between refugees and representatives of authority. In this article, adapted from his blog, he reports from the Jungle on the 9th of January.

“Apart from inner anxieties about looking foolish, fear is not a big driver in my life. I became acutely aware of this while listening to a charming and reasonable French official from the Calais prefect's office, accompanied by a senior civil servant from the French Interior Ministry, as he addressed a group of muddy people in the Kabul cafe in the heart of the Jungle.

He was urging his audience to seriously consider seeking asylum in France, leaving the mud and inadequate shelters of the jungle and moving to an assessment centre, with three square meals a day, showers, electricity, their own room and the chance to be given documents that confer the right to live in the fifth republic. What's not to like about this offer?

Yet his audience's eyes betrayed a fear that seemed out of place with his offer. Their questions give voice to those fears, at first gently, expressed as a kind of quizzical skepticism about the offer. This quickly gave way to very specific fears of racism, of being refused and sent back to the country from which they fled, of being denied what they most seek.

It quickly became apparent that this was a classic dialogue of the deaf. The urbane Frenchman was making a genuine offer of help. It was interpreted as a threat to strip the last vestiges of dignity from his audience. It's difficult, though necessary, to understand how fundamentally those fears drive their daily lives.

His audience consisted of men. Many had been in the Jungle for six months or more. All had been driven from their homes and families by fear, the fear of death from indiscriminate bombing and street-to-street fighting, the fear of a knock on the door in the dead of night.

On their journeys from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia or Egypt, fear had kept them awake at night - would they make it across the next border, would they be beaten up in the road, robbed of what little they could carry, would they fall ill, be separated from family and friends, would they drown in the flimsy boats that carry them and their hopes across the angry

Mediterranean, would they be denied help because of their nationality, religion, colour, clothes, language, tone of voice, haunted wariness?

For months fear has kept them alive, driven them on in their quest for somewhere warm and secure, a safe place to sleep, take their eyes off their possessions, and relax their guard. The Jungle provides all of this. For all its chill wind and glutinous mud, for all its primitive sanitation, bad shelter, food and clothes shortages and occasional friction with a neighbour, it

feels safe. Safer than anywhere they've been in the endless months of travelling, safer than the conflict-torn regions they are fleeing and which they used to call home. Now, in short, the Jungle feels like home.

So however urbane the Frenchman, however reasonable his offer, it is met with waves of fear. Underlying all the other fears the residents have faced is the fear that nothing can be trusted any more. The states that they have fled are broken; none of the institutions that ought to have protected them have come to their aid; the markets that gave them the chance of making a living to support them and their families lie shattered, the state that pledged protection for its citizens has fractured. So the man from the prefect's office represents something that none of his audience believes amount to anything other than the fear of being oppressed. Hence his offer falls on deaf ears.

The more so as his government works to complete a new village, *Campement de la Lande*, which will eventually be home to 1500 residents of the Jungle. It's cost the French state 25 million Euro and people will start moving in in a few days. Apparently preference is being given to those whose tents were removed to make way for the building of the new village. The homes, made of converted shipping containers, have heating, electricity, access to running water and clean toilets, and are certainly a step-up from anything currently available in the jungle.

But at what cost? Currently the jungle residents are helped by an army of volunteers from all over Europe who provide everything from hot meals, to food for residents to cook themselves, to clothes and shoes, to entertainment and the opportunity to be creative, learn languages, continue their education. None of that will move to the



The Jungle, Calais

Campement de la Lande. Rather it will be a fenced community accessed by residents only by means of hand-print scanners.

There's precious little trust in evidence and eventually fear will have to be overcome; perhaps that's what a ragbag of volunteers and peace-makers can achieve in the coming weeks. For now, the residents trust themselves and their instinct for survival. Hence the nightly cat-and-mouse with the baffled police that line the camp perimeter and dot the motorways as the residents try to make a run to the perceived safety of the UK.

The French official told his audience that if they wanted to claim in the UK, they might get help to do that in an assessment centre. David Cameron would not want to hear that but then he should have a presence in this camp talking directly to the many residents who have a good claim to asylum within our borders. But, of course, our governments are also driven by fear: fear of public opinion turning against them if they are overly-generous to refugees, fear of losing control of their borders, fear of looking like a soft touch in a tough world. I

've become increasingly convinced over frequent visits to the Jungle that love drives out fear, that as we reach out in friendship and peace to the stranger in our midst, we find ourselves relaxing into unexpectedly warm, deep, and mutually beneficial relationships. It's what Jesus told us to expect and, not surprisingly, I've found it to be true on every visit so far to the Jungle.

REV SIMON JONES is the Senior Minister at Bromley Baptist Church, London, and an associate tutor in New Testament at Spurgeon's College, London.

Before Christmas, Chancellor Merkel seemed to criticise the European nations for not being sufficiently Christian in their response to the human tragedy. To what extent did that strike a chord among German evangelicals?

Germany is so involved in the refugee situation that there is hardly any time to deal in depth (substantially) with the situation in other countries. Overall we would hope that other countries would have a greater readiness to accept refugees. That way EU-countries would show that we jointly cooperate to deal with the emergency. It seems that even the Evangelicals in Europe find themselves in the role of simply observing what is going on in Germany.

But there are also Evangelicals in Europe who support the refugee situation in the Balkans and Greece. They probably need help more than we.

How have opinions changed or developed with the incidents in Cologne and elsewhere over New Year?

At present it is not possible to predict the consequences of the incidents in Cologne. The media made the news coverage difficult by giving varying reports. It is my impression that this led to confusion and a feeling of uncertainty as who to trust. It seems that the media have lost their credibility. But if more incidents like that will happen, the mood will certainly shift.

I hold in high regard the appeal of migrants who have been in Germany for some years, asking that people who come as migrants or refugees to this country should also respect the hospitality shown to them.

The difficulties start when the inappropriate behaviour of individuals leads to condemnation of whole ethnic groups. We can only support the measures called for by politicians that people who have guest status and are evidentially committing criminal offences must leave the country. If this is implemented resolutely it will have a positive impact on the anxieties of our fellow citizens.

How have German mission agencies and evangelical churches responded to the crisis?

Many of the mission agencies and churches evaluated the situation and set new priorities. I am fascinated by the commitment and creativity many show to the refugees locally. Because refugees are being placed all over Germany by quotas defined in advance, churches and mission agencies have opportunities to engage all over the place. The government is quite good at organizing practical aid (clothing donations, etc.) in Germany. Offers are

given for language courses and help with trips to the authorities, etc. Playgroups are offered to children.

Lots of great material as a giveaway has been published to explain culture and faith of the Christians. Christian foundation courses like Al-Massira (similar to the Alpha Course) help Muslims to understand Christian faith in their culture.

What has your faith meant to you as you've tried to process the scale of the human issue facing regional and national authorities as well as the churches and agencies that you relate to most closely?

It seems that the Christian conception of man still prevails and has considerable influence in our country. I got the impression that most people were aware of the human suffering and ready to help immediately.

The German AEM did not have the impression that we would have to start a special call to help. Last year we decided

to publish a mutual statement to encourage people who are active in working with refugees and on the other hand deal with anxieties of Christians.

There is a great willingness to help but it is important to realize the anxieties of

the people that are increasing as more and more refugees arrive. It is a legitimate question to ask how many refugees a country like Germany is able to receive if a certain

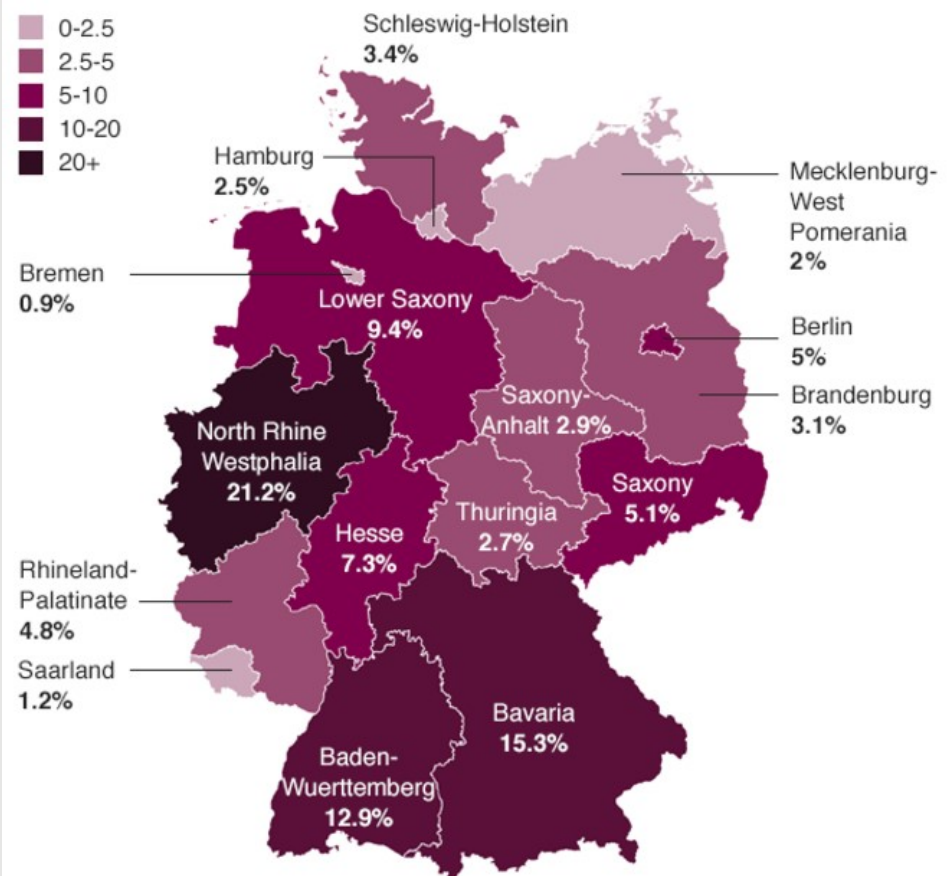
standard for support and integration should be guaranteed. People should not merely be interned in camps.

What do you see as the medium to long-term prospects for the refugees presently in Germany, and for the churches and mission agencies working with them?

It is very difficult to foresee the medium and long-term development. A lot will depend on how the situation in the Middle East will evolve. If the wars come to an end it is possible that people want to return to their home country.

I am fascinated by the commitment and creativity many mission agencies and churches show to the refugees locally

Distribution of Asylum Seekers in Germany



Source: Bamf



If the crisis in the Middle East escalates further most of the refugees will want to stay. I hope that until then we will have integrated them successfully into our country.

There is a time for refugees upon arrival in a country when they are quite open getting to know new things. Once this window of opportunity is closed people might not be interested in inter alia the Christian faith anymore.

What would you want to say to other evangelical leaders across Europe in the light of the experience and response of the churches in Germany?

I believe that we have to prepare ourselves in Europe for more refugees that will come for all kinds of reasons. People in our churches have to be prepared. Especially mission agencies are able to commit themselves with their staff because they can draw from their intercultural experiences. German churches should seek to work increasingly together with migrant



A camp for refugees in Germany

churches or other foreign-language churches. I think the time has come that we should work together more closely. In Germany we will do this under the slogan „Jesus Unites”

WOLFGANG BÜSING is the General Secretary of the Association of Evangelical Missions, Germany and Chairman of the European Evangelical Missions Association.

STORIES OF ARRIVAL: GERMANY

VIMAL VIMALASEKARAN WITH JO APPLETON

You are currently based in Germany, although you grew up in Sri Lanka and were a refugee yourself. Can you share some of your journey so far?

I grew up in Sri Lanka in a multi religious family. Because of the civil war I went to India as a refugee aged 18. All my town was escaping at the time. I became a Christian through the ministry of a pastor in the refugee camp who invited me to a vocational training institute. In the camp I started a prayer meeting, and preached the gospel – a kind of refugee church with a lot of young people began.

After about three and a half years I came back to Sri Lanka. I studied accounting, but wanted to do theological education. God opened a pastoral training scholarship for me in London. Then I ended up going to the Irish Baptist College where I completed Diploma in Missions Studies and then completed my theological studies in Queen's University of Belfast where I also pursued M.Phil. During my time in the UK, I met and married Louise and was assistant pastor in a Northern Irish church. In 1998, we had an outreach in Freiburg where we worked with refugees and it was there I received my call to do refugee ministry. We joined ECM in 1999 and

worked in Freiburg for a number of years. In 2008, I completed my Doctoral Studies in Intercultural Studies. By 2011, numbers of refugees arrivals were so low, so we decided to go to Karlsruhe where the central processing centre is, to connect with refugees being sent out from there. We have been there for four years and the Lord has blessed the ministry.

What is your current focus?

Since we moved here we have worked with the refugees in the processing centre. They are kept there for 6 – 8 weeks and don't have a lot of contact outside the camp. We have a welcome team from four or five churches and go in, talk to them, sit down with them. We are trying to help them in any way – language, legal issues, traumatised people take them to counselling. That is only possible for them if we come near to these people.

We tell them we are Christians and invite them to our churches. Currently we have weekly international evenings in the churches where we teach them some German language, talk a little about the Gospel and sing and explain something of the culture before having a meal together. There are held in different churches each week.

I also connect with the local churches and encourage them to visit people. This is important. I too am a foreigner, but it is nothing like a German visiting the refugees. The government is providing a good deal for the refugees - food, clothing, shelter - everything. But the refugees come from a culture that integrates faith with everyday life and they are expecting more.

The gap we want to fill is the spiritual care, the pastoral nature – coming alongside people and to reassure them we can be their friends we can help them. There is a greater person who can be their supporter who is greater than us humans, namely Jesus Christ. We are not ashamed of that. They also have a desire to know more about Christianity and how Europeans practice their faith.

How does your experience of being a refugee inform what you do?

It enables me to think compassionately and cerebrally because I understand and identify the concerns and feelings I had on the one side, but on the other side I can look at facts and realities that we face every day.

I am careful because my experience is very limited to my Sri Lankan context so I try to balance it out. I have written a

little booklet called 'Jesus, I was a refugee', which is my template in many ways as a Christian because the Lord met me when I was a refugee. So I always go back and say 'what is the significance of God becoming the refuge for the refugee.'

How did the migrant crisis change your ministry?

Currently there are around 5000 migrants in our city at any one time – this has grown from about 1000 before the summer. Germany divides up the migrants according to the population in each province. Our province has received 12.9% of the refugees, so we have received 129000 of the million who arrived in Germany this year.

Since the crisis we have had more support from the churches than ever before. It has helped Christians to open up their churches and their hearts. They are evaluating their faith in this crisis, asking 'what is my stand?' 'how can I be part of it?' and 'how does my faith relate to this issue?'

We provide training and information. Ministries are starting, such as an international café in one of the

churches.

Sustaining it beyond just a crisis response will be more difficult. Refugees who are granted asylum will stay in this province. Should he go into the society in isolation, or with some relationships already established? Christians need to catch the vision of building these relationships and helping with language and culture issues.

Have any fears been expressed about the long term issues?

Yes – there is a huge fear at the moment. At the beginning, the Germans were so excited to invite a lot of people, now the reality has sunk in and now there is a lot of opposition. To them it looks like we are the only country taking refugees. Most Christians I have met so far are very positive open and willing. Their concern is the Muslim question, will it lead to more terrorism?

My theory is that we need to meet in the middle between integration and inclusion – I call it "Interclusion" (I created this word) - as a refugee I need to learn the culture and language, but society also needs to accept me as I am. Protecting my identity is why I left my country. When a migrant gets here we tell them

to change and fit in, but that is exactly what the dictator was saying in their country. Somewhere we have to have a balance, this I call "Interclusion".

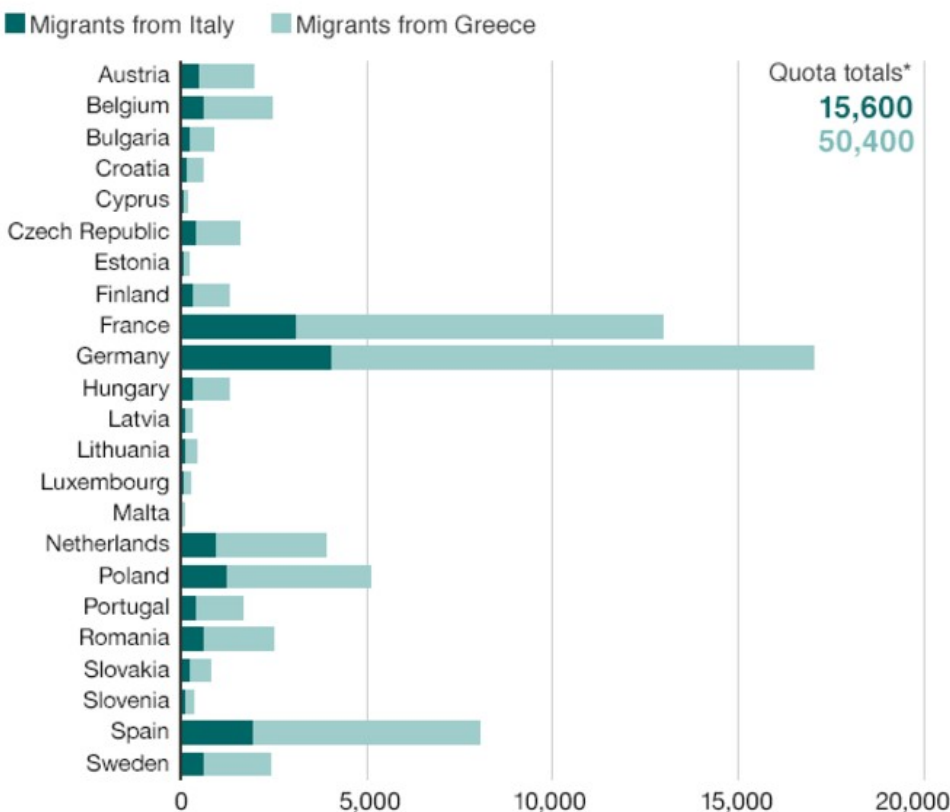
What are your hopes for the future?

I am praying and asking for support for a Christian refugee centre where all people can come to spend some time, cook their food, and we can offer pastoral care for their spiritual needs and vocational training. There is no shame in saying we are caring for those who are in need. In Germany it is difficult to do something overly Christian. A lot of churches would be happy with some kind of social centre, but we would like to say 'we love because we love the Lord and we love the people.'

The longer I work with refugees, the more I am convinced that Christ is more important than any ingenuity that we have created in humanity. I have seen that Christ can heal what humans cannot. He can come in in an amazing way, take away the pain and help them to the place where he is their refuge. That is the conviction I hope I will never give up.

VIMAL VIMALASEKARAN works with European Christian Mission amongst migrants in Karlschue, Germany

Number of migrants EU member states are being asked to take



Note: UK has opted out, Ireland has offered to take 4,000, Denmark will take 1,000. Switzerland and Norway have also agreed to take refugees, numbers yet to be agreed. *Relocation of a further 54,000 migrants still to be decided.

Source: European Commission



Resourcing you

BBC Update Migrant crisis:

Europe 12-20-15

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34131911>

From Career Woman To Refugee

The 1,500 Mile Journey Of One Syrian Mother

<http://www.marieclaire.co.uk/blogs/551258/first-person-refugee-pregnant-aysha-left-syria-for-germany.html>

The migrant crisis over the summer caught many people by surprise. The stories in this edition of Vista are snapshots of how individuals and churches responded, and are continuing to respond, to overwhelming need. They are only a few of hundreds of similar stories happening right across Europe.

As a network of national Evangelical Alliances, the European Evangelical Alliance is attempting to resource and support Christians across the continent who are dealing with the migrant situation.

“First there was the Call to Action, and finding resources to inspire and reassure, such as Bible Studies ‘how to’ tips and our regular prayer

updates” explains Julia Doxat-Purser, Socio-political Representative & Religious Liberty Coordinator of the EEA. *“Many of the national Alliances are doing a fantastic job with resourcing their nations. Others simply don’t have the capacity or staff to do that. But we are working on creative ways to assist them to enable local churches to pray and to act.”*

“While there was shock and concern when the crisis began, in many places Christians are doing magnificent work. It is an amazing opportunity to reach out to the most desperate. The love of Christ is out there in word and deed, and the refugees and many in society are seeing it. Conversely if Christians are concerned about what is happening we don’t want

them to hide it; we have sought to provide resources to help people take their fears to God and think through what it means to help and welcome the stranger among them.”

Beyond the immediate situation, there are also longer term implications. As Julia explains, these are at a political level as well as that of individuals and communities.

“Clearly the numbers of arrivees are not going to stop. There are critical challenges ahead with no clear answers. We don’t want to be naïve about that, and we don’t

if you are a hairdresser, offer to cut people’s hair. If you are taxi driver, help people get to their appointments with the immigration lawyer

want our politicians to be naïve either. But some politicians who were always populist and rather too strong in their nationalism are using the crisis as an opportunity. We are concerned about what that

might develop into, such as xenophobia towards new arrivals, possibly an over-reaction about security which encroaches on religious freedoms or tensions between nations in Europe.

“We want Christians to be praying and thinking very carefully about what politicians are saying – to discern where there is truth, and where truth is distorted or communicated unhelpfully.

“In terms of nationalism, xenophobia, racism and Islamophobia, we believe the church needs to be vigilant and speak up against these things. And we will be better at doing that if we reach out in friendship to these new arrivals so we actually understand them.

“So while we are not all on the route where the refugees are walking through, or near the railway stations where they arrive, at some point, these people are going to be living in your town. Even the smallest church can do something - if you are a hairdresser, offer to cut people’s hair. If you are a taxi driver, help people get to their appointments with the immigration lawyer. Be aware of the mum in the supermarket who is looking lost and befriend them.”

And where is God in all of this?

“Europe has been profoundly shaken,” says Julia, “but it has not taken God by surprise. He is sovereign, he is at work and he is testing us – the continent, and the church. As a continent, many of us are failing. As a church, we are learning as we go along. We have a responsibility to pray, reach out in friendship and speak out. We claim the sovereignty of God and trust in him but we also cannot afford to ignore what is happening in our continent today.”

JULIA DOXAT-PURSER is Socio-political Representative & Religious Liberty Coordinator of the EEA

Resourcing you:

Resources from the EEA:
www.eearefugees.org

Vista

Editorial Team: Darrell Jackson,
Jim Memory and Jo Appleton

europeanmission.redcliffe.org

redcliffecollege

Redcliffe College
Horton Road
Gloucester, GL1 3PT

Telephone: 01452 399939

Please Note: The views expressed in Vista are those of the authors of each article and do not necessarily reflect the position of Redcliffe College.

RESOURCING YOU

Study the Practice of Mission in Europe in July 2016 as part of the MA in Contemporary Missiology Summer School at Redcliffe College, Gloucester, from 4 - 22 July 2016

You will:

- reflect on the practice of Christian mission across Europe, both in its traditional and missional forms
- evaluate your own practice in the context of integral mission in Europe

MA in Contemporary Missiology

Choose from the following streams: General; European Mission; Justice, Advocacy and Reconciliation; Bible and Mission or Scripture Engagement, or choose an individualised focus to reflect directly on your own work and situation through Professional Project and Individual Study modules.

Also available: **MA in Member Care** and **MA in Global Leadership in Intercultural Contexts.**

Find out more at www.redcliffe.ac.uk