

IRISH LEAGUE OF CREDIT UNIONS FOUNDATION REFUGEE CRISIS



Final Report & Budget 09.12.15

FIRST EMERGENCY AID TO UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Duration: September – December 2015

Location: HUB – Central Station Milan

Objective: Supplying unaccompanied refugee minors and families with children in transit with first aid kits, linguistic cultural mediation and legal/social assistance.

Staff: 1 linguistic/cultural mediator (Tigrinya speaking)

BACKGROUND

The first influx of refugees arrived in Milan Central Station in August 2013. In 2014 over 49,031 people were in flux. In the last 20 months 64,000 people reached Milan in need of immediate emergency aid. The current daily average varied between 200 and 400 people. The HUB in Milan Central Station has looked after over 30,000 unaccompanied minors since its inception.

With the generous support of The Irish League of Credit Unions Foundation (ILCUF), Plan International and local partner, Terre des Hommes, have worked specifically with children and unaccompanied minors on arrival. Most of these unaccompanied minors are from Syria and Eritrea, but there are also children from Afghanistan, and Ethiopia. The majority are arriving from Libya where they faced the loss of parents and guardians, along with physical and psychological violence, discrimination and economic blackmail.

The majority of unaccompanied minors do not want to stop in Italy, nor ask for asylum here, but are headed for Sweden, Germany, Norway and Denmark. The HUB at Milan Central Station was the first port of call for these unaccompanied minors, and with ILCUF funding, provided Emergency Hygiene kits, and legal support in local dialect.

OVERALL SERVICES PROVIDED

- | Food, water and sanitary items
- | First medical aid
- | Internet and phone
- | Safe space for children and babies to play
- | Support of a mediator to share problems and requests
- | Legal assistance in local dialect
- | Shelter and bedding
- | Shower and hygiene facilities

IMPLEMENTATION

With thanks to ILCUF, between September and December 2015 Plan International Ireland distributed **over 1,600 Emergency Hygiene Kits** to both unaccompanied refugee minors and families. The overall wider project objective to supply 5,000 refugees with First Emergency Hygiene Kits was over exceeded. Due to product donation from local businesses, kits became cheaper to package, (€13.80 instead of €15) and with the excess funding, Plan International Ireland was able to support the funding of a cultural mediator.



Contents:

- Toothpaste
- Toothbrush
- Soap and Shampoo
- Wet wipes
- Tissues
- Antiseptic Cream
- Deodorant
- Phrasal Book
- Sanitary Napkin
- Small toy

Due to the underspend on Emergency Hygiene Kits, a linguistic and cultural mediator (Tigrinya speaking) could be present three days a week to facilitate the communication between refugees and the authorities and doctors. Since September, over 200 refugees were supported by the mediator who worked specifically with children, who had suffered trauma on their journeys. The role of the cultural/linguistic mediator for unaccompanied minors and families is outlined below:

- | Welcoming and Orienteering
- | Reassurance in their own language/dialect
- | Distribution of Phrase book (in Italian/English/French/Arabic/Tigrinya)
- | Answering questions about the country of arrival
- | Discussion around the journey undertaken
- | Discussion around future risks related to their journey
- | Establishing an empathetic relationship with unaccompanied minors
- | Discussion of emotional and traumatic experiences of unaccompanied minors
- | Legal assistance where necessary
- | Safe place to play for young children and infants

THANK YOU

On November 23rd the Municipality of Milan held a press conference to thank Plan International Ireland, for its support to the HUB and its beneficiaries.

"In helping and welcoming refugees in Milan, there was a display of solidarity with participation from the beginning, when the first families children were starting to crowd the mezzanine of the Central Station. With the help of all, institutions, organisations, private social, voluntary citizens, we were able to open a space which functions as the first reception for refugees. With thanks to everyone for showing that what seems impossible to achieve at the beginning, you get with the participation of everybody." Commissioner for Social Affairs, Pierfrancesco Majorino, and Commissioner for Social Cohesion, Marco Granelli.

MOHAMMED'S STORY

When Mohammed arrived in Milan on 30th October 2015, he declared he was accompanied by his uncle and was not in need of help beyond his Emergency Hygiene Kit. After few days Mohammed was hospitalised and he called the Plan mediator. He was afraid, because he didn't understand the reason he had to stay in hospital. Mohammed was only 12 years old. The mediator reassured him and explained what was happening. During the discussion, he discovered that Mohammed was an unaccompanied minor, and was not in fact travelling with his uncle, but was too frightened to tell the authorities in case he was sent back. His aim was to go to the Netherlands where his brother lived. The Plan mediator explained to Mohammed that they would help him to travel there safely for family reunification, after he was discharged from hospital. Mohammed is now safely with his brother in the Netherlands.



Mohammed is just one of the thousands of unaccompanied minors who passed through Milan Central Station. Arriving sick, debilitated and scared, they were met with kindness and given the basic necessities in the form of Emergency Hygiene Kits to restore health and dignity. Huge thanks to the ILCUF for their financial input to make this possible.

ILCU PROJECT BUDGET

Emergency Hygiene Kits	1,600 Emergency Kits	€22,079
Cultural Mediator:	September - December	€2,025
Monitoring and Evaluation:	September - December	€1,200
Total:		€25,304
ILCUF Support		€25,200
Balance covered by Plan International Ireland		€104