

Call for Papers – Special Issue

Volunteering for Refugees:

Between Integration, Humanitarianism, and Political Action

Recent years have seen the emergence of a new actor in refugee policy. Volunteers have played a crucial role in the facilitation of arrival and provision of services to forced migrants in countries of the Global North. While the protection, reception and integration of refugees classically falls into the domain of the nation-state, the recent humanitarian refugee crisis in Europe has brought out significant sections of the population to support the new arrivals. Beyond Europe, volunteers have also played an increasingly important role in helping refugees locally, from supporting them in the resettlement process, to providing legal counselling. This public engagement in support of refugees, while not completely new, is unprecedented in its current scope. Sometimes, engagement has been organised by or in cooperation with more established civil society actors like NGOs and social movements but often it has also sprung up spontaneously. While so-called humanitarian volunteering tourism has gained some academic scrutiny in recent years, volunteering for refugees in the Global North has eluded most analysis thus far. Adding to classic actors like the state and NGOs as well as refugees themselves, volunteering challenges both governance and resilience approaches to refugee integration, protection, and politics. Particularly amidst the failure of traditional institutions, volunteering brings unexplored aspects to refugee policy with civil society's social links, informal practices and grassroots politics, to name just a few.

Volunteers working for refugees are active in a wide variety of tasks and are motivated by a broad spectrum of factors. Images of volunteers distributing donated food and clothes to new arrivals and rescuing refugees on European shores were broadcast around the world. More recently, lawyers have volunteered to support refugees at US airports in response to the immigration ban. Through more mundane tasks like language teaching, assisting with administrative paper work and offering housing, volunteers often provide help that is less publicly visible, but at the very heart of civil society. At the same time, civil society itself undergoes a process of re-evaluation as it opens up to newcomers and at times, becomes more radical. Volunteer assistance to refugees often oscillates between a humanitarian attitude and an approach directed at political change, invoking notions of global connectedness and solidarity by pointing to the responsibility of the Global North. These volunteers include citizens, non-citizens and refugees themselves and cover a broad spectrum of society, from political activists to people motivated by humanitarian reason, to locals focussed on providing integration support. Volunteering for refugees therefore has many points of reference with sometimes contradicting goals.

So far, we know very little about the role that volunteers and civil society play in refugee policy, especially in international comparison. This special issue, which will be submitted to a major migration-related journal, is intended to begin a discussion on the

potential and pitfalls of the volunteering movement in refugee policy. The aim of this collection of works is to conceptualize the different aspects within this new field based on a broad and varied foundation of research. We are therefore seeking empirically based contributions that discuss volunteering for refugees around the world. We welcome qualitative case studies, quantitative studies, and comparative studies which may utilize any theoretical or methodological framework.

The special issue will be the result of a collaborative process. We invite all contributors to take part in a workshop held in Berlin in June, 2017. Travel and accommodation will be covered. Travel to Berlin from outside Europe may only be partially covered; however, we encourage contributors who do not see themselves in a position to cover these costs to apply nonetheless as we will do our best to accommodate their participation.

Please submit proposals of no more than 200 words with names and short biographies of all authors by **February 28th 2017 (deadline)** to okleist@uos.de and serhat.karakayali@hu-berlin.de.

Timeline:

28.2.2017 - Deadline for Proposals

06.3.2017 – Participation confirmation

- Submission of proposal to journal

28.5.2017 – Deadline first draft

mid-June 2017 – Workshop in Berlin

September 2017 – Deadline final draft, submissions to journal

2018 - Publication

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