

CATHOLIC SOCIAL INNOVATION HELPING REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS DURING WORST HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN HISTORY

New FADICA study showcases Catholic Social Innovation in action across the globe

Washington, DC (April 10, 2018): The largest humanitarian crisis on record is underway today – more people are displaced now than at any time in our history, with nearly 20 people displaced *every minute*. And while there is no permanent resolution on the horizon, Catholic social innovators around the globe have created viable, compassionate, and entrepreneurial solutions to help displaced men, women, and children.

[Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities](#) (FADICA), the leading Catholic philanthropic network in the United States, has just completed a [global study](#) examining the innovative Catholic response to this crisis – a crisis that has forcibly displaced 65-million people worldwide, including 22.5 million refugees.

“The global refugee crisis is extensive and complex – it’s not going to be solved imminently,” says Alexia Kelley, President and CEO of FADICA. “But the projects spotlighted in our study represent effective and sustainable solutions that Catholic social innovators and organizations are leading globally.”

The report comes as Pope Francis continues to advocate for refugees and migrants.

The study was completed in partnership with [Boston College's Center for Social Innovation](#) and identified 64 uniquely Catholic, innovative, high-impact ministries that are helping refugees and migrants around the world. The study was inspired by the recognition that Catholic priests, sisters, and lay people are among leading social innovators, yet their faith-based innovation is not well known. Among the ways Catholic social innovation is at work:

- *Stone House* – Catholic nuns who converted their own home into a shelter in Pennsylvania
- *Common Earth Gardens* – a nonprofit enterprise of Catholic Charities teaching farming skills to refugees resettled in Kentucky
- *Supporting Refugee Children with Disabilities* – a Lebanese-based partnership of Catholic Relief Services helping Syrian and Iraqi refugee children with disabilities
- *Good Shepherd Sisters* – job training programs preventing migration by successfully securing Bolivian women jobs in their home country
- *No Strings Partnership* – a puppet company and nonprofit partnering to help displaced children in the Middle East deal with trauma after fleeing war and violence

The report also outlines 12 funding principles and practices for effectively supporting Catholic social innovation in the refugee crisis. For example, with emerging social enterprises, the report recommends openness to utilizing for-profit dollars as well as philanthropic grants to help

confront the crisis. In addition, the report recommends a commitment to partnership with grantees, as well as to subsidiarity, through support for solutions from those closest to the challenge.

“Philanthropists and nonprofits seeking impactful and innovative solutions in refugee work specifically and Catholic humanitarian work generally will find exciting models in FADICA’s report,” says Dr. Maria Robinson, Board Chair of FADICA and member of the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities. “As philanthropists, we must seek ways to most effectively help refugees and migrants, and this report gives us tools that will be helpful to any investor.”

Many of the projects featured in the FADICA report respond to Pope Francis’ call to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate displaced families, men, women, and children. These models of economic self-sufficiency and innovation are responding to and supporting the needs of refugees and migrants across continents.

“Social innovation doesn’t always have to mean doing something new. It might be a new response to social problems that have traditionally been difficult to solve, or – as we found repeatedly in our study – social innovation can be the repurposing of existing resources to solve a new problem.” says Professor Tiziana Dearing, co-director of Boston College’s Center for Social Innovation and the research lead. She adds that Catholic social innovation is “faith in action,” combining an ancient faith and centuries-old Catholic social tradition with modern innovations and agile entrepreneurialism.

“The projects highlighted in our report exemplify exactly what our faith and the Holy Father have called on us to do: to practice holiness ‘in a practical way for our own time, with all its risks, challenges and opportunities,’” says Alexia Kelley. “This is what Catholic innovators do, and in some instances, have done for centuries.”

Catholic sisters, priests, and lay people have launched and led networks of Catholic schools, hospitals, and social enterprises to help communities flourish and serve people on the margins, Kelley notes. “Catholic innovators have identified unaddressed needs or injustices, developed approaches to address them effectively and sustainably, and often creatively disrupted the conditions that led to a challenge in the first place.”

For additional information, a copy of the report, or to speak with FADICA’s Alexia Kelley or some of the programs highlighted, please contact: Loretta Dees, ldees@fadica.org