RAISING KIDS WITH CONSCIENCE

Living the Dream
How one family set up their own smallholding

STRONG KIDS
Help your child develop his strength

‘Being in the forest reduces stress, helps with depression and gives a better quality of life’
THE FOREST BATHER

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS
The golden hour after birth and other secrets

GIVING BACK
Gifts with lasting impact
Empowering refugees

Heaven is a Halfpipe
5 cool skateparks

HOW TO
Make delicious pressies
Carve out time for YOU
Keep teeth healthy

Inside Festive Gift Guide

15 OF THE BEST BOARDGAMES FOR COSY NIGHTS

WIN A BABY BUNDLE WORTH £150
PAGE 55

THEGREENPARENT.CO.UK
A SAFE MOTHERHOOD FOR ALL

Claire Chamberlain meets the grassroots organisation that’s helping to support and empower refugee mothers

Watching the refugee crisis unfold in recent years has been devastating. More than one million people were forced to flee to Europe in 2015 alone, half of whom were Syrians escaping conflict. And of course, while the situation in Europe is closest to home, there are millions more vulnerable lives at risk in refugee camps around the world, including in Bangladesh, following Myanmar’s recent military operation against the Rohingya people.

When witnessing suffering and displacement on such a large scale, it’s easy to feel powerless. But it’s important to remember that we are all able to make a positive difference, however small, and in every atrocity there are those who are helping – reaching out to those who are most vulnerable in the face of humanitarian disasters.

Alongside large charities and NGOs, grassroots organisations are proving invaluable, able to quickly distribute aid and assistance at the heart of emergencies.

Protecting the Most Vulnerable

With its vision of a safe and supported motherhood for all, Nurture Project International (nurtureprojectinternational.org) is one such example of an organisation working to support and empower parents on the front line of the refugee crisis. On a mission to provide technical breastfeeding support, reproductive healthcare and infant nutrition support to vulnerable families living in refugee camps, the US-based organisation was established in 2016, by Brooke Bauer.

“I watched the news in Greece at the end of 2015 and saw all of the calls for formula donations,” remembers Bauer. “As an infant feeding specialist, I knew the dangers of this. I also have a background in international public health and have worked as a lactation consultant for many years, so knew I’d be able to help on the ground. I realised that organising more midwives and lactation consultants to assist in the response would be really helpful. It kind of organically came together and NPI was formally launched in March 2016, in Greece.”

Nurture Project International now runs projects in Iraq and Bangladesh, as well as Greece, and its programmes are proving life-saving for babies and young children. “Breastfeeding support is vital to the health and wellbeing of infants in all environments, but especially in emergencies,” says Bauer. “Refugee camp settings can be dangerous with respect to infection and illness that can lead to malnutrition and death, and breastfeeding provides not only protection against these illnesses, but also provides benefits for both mother and baby, such as the opportunity for bonding, reduced stress levels, and keeping mother and baby close together. Breastfeeding is literally life-saving in emergencies. It is a baby’s food security.”

Feed a Mother to Feed a Baby

NPI is keen to not only provide breastfeeding support, but also to highlight the real life-threatening danger with regard to the blanket distribution of formula milk in emergencies.
Rajaa and her three young daughters, aged four, three and one, are stuck in Sindos camp, Greece. Her husband has already reached Germany.

“Everything outside is very dirty,” Rajaa says. “One of my daughters fell into the stagnant water next to the toilets and I was very scared she would catch something.” Rajaa has no idea if or when she will be allowed to join her husband in Germany. “The most important thing for me is to find a safe place for my daughters now,” Rajaa says.

How you can support refugee mothers

If you would like to contribute to Nurture Project International’s vision of a supported motherhood for all, there are ways you can help...

Donate to their urgent appeals

Visit nurtureprojectinternational.org/donate-now to donate. A gift of just £15 ($20) will provide tea and food for NPI’s educational sessions for one week; £38 ($50) will help with the upkeep of their mobile midwifery bags for one month; while £170 ($225) will provide supplementary food packs for 25 pregnant women for one week.

Volunteer in the field

NPI is currently recruiting in-field volunteers in Greece. For more information and to apply, please visit nurtureprojectinternational.org/in-greece

Become a virtual volunteer

You can also check out NPI’s volunteer pages to become a member of the ‘virtual’ volunteer team – please visit nurtureprojectinternational.org/join-us

Follow

Please follow, like and share NPI’s social media pages, to help spread their vision and mission of a supported motherhood for refugee mothers.