

## Tzu Chi in Indonesia Holds Medical Clinic For Afghan Refugees

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation  
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April 8, 2018 was a beautiful day, with white clouds in a blue sky; a breeze brushed through the mountain which made the air even more fresh. It was on that day that Tzu Chi volunteers arrived in Cisarua, Indonesia to provide a free medical clinic for Afghan refugees.

Due to the civil war, many Afghans left their country. With the help of the U.N. Refugee Agency, many of them have settled in Cisarua, Indonesia. Their life in the village is arranged by the Jesuit Refugee Service.

In 2017, the Tzu Chi Indonesia branch and UNHCR agreed to provide medical services to the Afghan refugees. The Jesuit Refugee Service collected a list of names for those who need medical treatment and provided it to the Tzu Chi volunteers so that they could prepare in advance.

“It was thanks to the recommendation of the UNHCR that we are able to hold this free clinic for refugees in Ciarua. With the help of the Jesuit Refugee Service who have provided the data, we can run the clinic smoothly,” said Tzu Chi volunteer doctor Lin Shiu-Lan.

The language barrier was the main challenge for the medical personnel and volunteers of Tzu Chi International Medical Association. Most of the refugees speak only Pashto. Fortunately, there were two young men from the “Home of Arzu” who spoke English, Indonesian and Pashto; they came forward to help. These two young refugees used to live on the street. Tzu Chi volunteers have been caring for them. Now they have a place to stay and a chance to learn job skills. They also are able to attend school.



Tzu Chi is collaborating with the UN Refugee Agency and responding to the medical needs of the refugees. And, with the data provided by the Jesuit Refugee Service, members of the Tzu Chi International Medical Association could treat the patients for their most urgent needs. Ms. Leocadia Prima Puspitasari, a case officer of the Jesuit Refugee Service, said that, with Tzu Chi’s assistance, the refugees received the medical services they needed. Many of them suffer from back pain, neck ache, asthma, degenerative diseases and other conditions.

With eight members of her family, 14-year-old Emily (not her real name), was forced to flee from Afghanistan to Indonesia. “It’s not safe in Afghanistan. Fire breaks out all the time. People’s life is in danger,” she said. Emily came to the free clinic with her mother, who has foot pain and headache. “This event is very helpful for us. We need medical assistance. People can also have a health check- up.”

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“When I grow up, I want to be a doctor to save patients,” she said. “Although I don’t go to school here, in the morning I learn English from the volunteers of the Jesuit Refugee Service. In the afternoon, I ask them to teach me Indonesian.” Emily arrived in Indonesia in 2017 and is not able to attend school.

The free clinic benefited 62 Afghan refugees and 20 Indonesian residents. “We are not only meeting medical needs but are also promoting healthy living habits, in order to reduce the chance of getting preventable diseases,” said Tzu Chi volunteer doctor Lin Shiu-Lan.

(Article by Arimami Suryo A in Indonesia April 8, 2018)