



Greece Pre-Launch Report for October 6, 2025
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EVANGELICAL FRIENDS MISSION

LUKE 10 TRIPS

GREECE Pre- Launch Planning Report

EFM GREECE PRE-LAUNCH PLANNING REPORT

The EFM Luke 10 Pre-Launch Questions report builds a proposal for next steps and logistics in sending short- and long-term missionaries. You do not need to give an answer to every single question in this template. Just tell EFM what you know and what is applicable. Brevity is encouraged. The questions

below are intended to inspire documented communication which would allow EFM to send workers to the field with peace of mind.

How do we “launch” a field? Workers or missionaries MOVE TO THE FIELD!

There may be info available in the EFM CAN GO Reports that could be copy and pasted and/or adapted.

1. In a brief sentence for each of the five CAN GO criteria, what is the latest update concerning each: Champion/s, Affirmation, Need, Gifting, and Opportunity/Openness.

Champions:

- Kenn Dirrim, Rose Drive Friends Church, CA; Retired from 17.5 years of service in Greece.
- Josiah and Leisa Muhr, Newberg Friends Church, Oregon; Exploring future missionary service. Josiah has previously worked short-term in refugee camps in Greece with Helping Hands, and Greater Europe Mission.
- Several members of Northwest Yearly Meeting
- Several members of Friends Southwest

Affirmation, Need, Gifting, Opportunity/Openness:

- Each of these has been reconfirmed by Kenn and Lisa Dirrim, who have served in Greece. Other mission organizations and leaders are still asking for help.
 - Refugees are still flowing into Greece; from just over 9,000 new refugees in 2021, to more than 62,000 new refugees last year (2024). Many are seeking, asking questions, open to conversations with believers, and coming to Christ.
 - Refugee believers are asking for help in how to reach other refugees; specifically, Afghan and Iranian Christians are asking for training.
 - Opportunities are different from previous years as more refugees are in camps rather than in the cities. Because of the relocation of refugees to the camps, most foreign organizations and many NGO's have left Greece and have reassigned staff to other locations.. The trauma care which has been effective in the past at opening doors for the Gospel is now mostly being concentrated outside of Greece.
 - Currently, other European countries are closing to immigration and are now returning refugees back to Greece. Our contacts in Greece anticipate that as refugees return to Greece this will overwhelm the camp system and may result in refugees returning to the cities. Because of recent Greek political changes, we are not currently able to enter the camps, and the refugees must come to us. We believe that the Greek Authorities will not be able to sustain these camps, and future changes will be inevitable. We want to be prepared for when those governmental changes occur, and our access to refugees is more open.
 - Helping Hands is reassessing how they can be most effective.
 - One ministry is leasing the “Refuge in the Pines” (an abandoned restaurant next to the Malakasa camp). In addition to hosting classes and tea houses run by various Christian groups, at least one church plant has begun to meet there. The leader of the “Refuge” said that we could also plant a church there, especially if we aimed to reach any of the other language groups in that camp.
2. Compelling conviction to launch (to build just a short paragraph on top of the CAN GO summary). What is the compelling picture that is worth giving our lives or the lives of our sons and daughters to? How might these peoples or places look different because we paid the price to take holistic Good News? What words would sharpen our Help Wanted sign for this new field?
 - God is working in the lives of refugees. Workers are asking for training in evangelism and discipleship to create a sustainable evangelical Christian movement.

- Christian refugees who move from Greece into other parts of Europe are starting fellowships wherever they go. The pastors of the Afghan church called “Agape” have moved to other countries in Europe where refugees have been gathering.
- There is a hunger that the refugees have for “something more”. Many have experienced dreams and seen miraculous signs that show that God is working in the lives of the refugees.
- Refugees who have left their homes and families and their Muslim faith need Christian communities/Churches to fulfill the need for family and community. Muslim family ties are strong and important, and the decision to follow Jesus breaks those ties and leaves them isolated and alone. If Christian refugees don’t find a replacement community for the loss of their family, they eventually walk away.
- There is a time limit on reaching refugees as some are only in Greece for a short time. Church planting strategy among refugees who stay in Greece is a challenge that ministries are working toward resolving.

3. Strategy : What informal ideas make the most sense at this time for how this mission field will be launched and developed? How does this impact entry strategy?

Keep in mind that ideas for strategy are informal at this stage, as EFM expects that formal strategies will further develop later after missionaries have immersed in the culture for 2 years and discover new insights for input to EFM. So...strategy step one is to get workers/missionaries on the ground for language and culture learning, regardless of what role those workers would have in long term team. (Even workers who are potential missionaries still exploring a call to this place, or shorter term willing to help us create a presence and gather intel).

- Athens has been a strategic city in the past but since refugees are now mostly located in rural areas it may be best to start in smaller towns nearer camps. With political changes happening frequently this needs to be reevaluated closer to our launch. Starting a ministry near camps (such as on the islands Samos or Lesbos with refugee reception centers) could facilitate disciple-making relationships in other locations in Greece.
- It makes sense to partner with existing ministries, often led by Christian refugees themselves, and work alongside them to develop relationships and to learn the Greek and refugee cultures.
 - We could partner with the organization “Refugee Highway Project”. They are doing humanitarian work, doing trauma care, and planting churches. It would be helpful for us to learn “best practices” from them. Time in learning how to bridge the cultural barriers is time well spent because then one becomes a true friend and the message has credibility.
 - Partnering with current persons doing “job as mission” work can teach us how to open businesses in Greece. It is easiest to establish a business location in Greece from an existing business in the US.
- Offering humanitarian aid as well as Bible studies and discipleship courses may be possible near the refugee camps.
- Trauma ministries and trained counselors are needed.
- Through the Dirrims, we have contacts on the ground now who are willing to help and mentor our new missionaries.
- Where we start and with whom we partner first will depend on the skills and giftings of those we send.

4. Visa: What are the visa requirements and what are our best options? What, if anything, does this mean for strategy or preparation?

- Retired persons who are self-supporting can be on a “financially independent” visa.
- Other missionaries in Greece can enter on “student” visas while they take courses in Greek.
- A self-employed “work or business” visa is possible.
- The laws change often, so we need to explore specifics for whoever we send.

5. Skill Sets: What are the skill sets that stand out as we look for missionary candidates for this field? How might people in your church hear the opportunity and call, including those who never imagined themselves as “missionaries.” How might the call for workers help people discover that their life or work experiences, character and interests fit into the missionary team/s? Young adults? Mid-career? Retired? Long term? One to two years of service?
- A gifting in languages is invaluable as this is a multilingual environment. Other skills can be learned but communication skills and a love for people are essential.
 - There is a need for workers among women and children.
 - There is a need for people who love working with kids. There are many children. Working with the kids is also a good way to reach the parents.
 - There is a need for teaching English or German as a second language.
 - There is a need for humanitarian work; medical, mental health, trauma counseling, job training, etc.
 - There is a need for entrepreneurs who can have mission-through-business opportunities and create jobs. Starting businesses is also a path to permanent visa status.
 - There is a need for both long-term and short-term gifted foundational Bible and Theology teachers. There is a need for teachers of evangelism and discipleship.
 - There is a need for church planting since a church family replaces a biological family for those who are rejected when they convert from Islam to Christianity.
6. Language Learning: First term missionary’s objectives will focus on language and culture learning through immersion. What relationships and connections might be available for language helpers for language learning through immersion? Are there formal language school options that should be considered? How much will these options cost? How does this impact what city or neighborhood they start?
- Those living/working in Greece need a working knowledge of both Greek and at least one of the refugee languages.

For learning Greek:

- There are many routes for learning Greek: University classes, private companies, and even opportunities in Greek Orthodox churches in the USA (Pre-field).
- Possible immersion into existing ministries in Athens or Thessaloniki.
- An EFM-provided language helper to provide language learning strategies.

For learning Farsi, and maybe Arabic, or Dari, or French, or Ukrainian, or Turkish etc.

- Current missionaries working with refugees stress the importance of learning the language of the people to learn their culture.
- Immersion into existing refugee communities and connection with local refugee language helpers is possible.
- With so many languages among refugees, it may be necessary for missionaries to narrow their focus on whom to reach.

7. Location: Where will our missionaries live? What is the region, specific city, or neighborhood?
- For learning language and culture, a start in cities like Athens or Thessaloniki would be preferred. These would allow close work and community with existing contacts established through the Dirrims.
 - Eventually moving to towns or villages near current refugee camps could allow more refugee contact and introduction to camp ministry.
 - We have been encouraged by missionaries in Greece to consider some of the unreached or underserved parts of the country. These would be away from the major cities.

8. Lifestyle: What will the missionary lifestyle look like for their first term of culture and language learning immersion? Will they have a car or use public transportation? Will they live on their own or with someone else?
- Cities such as Athens, have apartments and houses for rent, schools, and public transportation but a car is essential for ministries outside the city. For small towns and access to remote refugee camps a car is essential. Hauling supplies, people, aid, and equipment for tent-type meetings outside camps requires car or van access.
 - Smaller towns near refugee camps will have fewer amenities. It depends on which place. There will be Greek public schools, but private and English-speaking schools are only available in the cities.
 - It is stressed by the Dirrims that single missionary units (families included) should not be sent to Athens alone. The Dirrims advise that missionaries coming to Greece need to be partnered with a team of at least 3 units so that when one unit is gone there is still a remaining team. Those not partnered with teams burn out quickly and leave.
 - The Greek culture is very child and family-friendly, and young children are welcome to even go to work with their parents. Kids are a great way to meet people. When kids become school age there are more demands on a missionary parent's time, which can require choices on how best to spend time.
 - School-age children can:
 - go to Greek school: all in Greek,
 - go to a British school: all in English.
 - British schools are expensive and ideologically liberal.
 - Be home schooled.
 - There are private hospitals that take American health insurance.
9. Spiritual Issues: What are the significant spiritual issues in the area? How does this impact missionary self-care and support in this particular environment (i.e. coping strategies)?
- The Greek culture is highly “over-sexualized” and there is great temptation toward pornography. There is a real sense of spiritual darkness.
 - Refugees coming into Greece are primarily Muslim. Although they are free from their oppressive governments where it is illegal to explore Christianity, there is still family pressure, fear of government persecution for family left behind in Islamic countries, and fear of Christians.
 - Many refugees have experienced trauma, which can exacerbate spiritual issues, which can lead to depression, mistrust, and fear. This can also result in secondary trauma to the missionaries dealing with refugees in trauma, thus requiring diligent self-care. It's hard to hear sad stories over and over and not internalize those traumas.
 - Those ministering among Muslims need training and education in how to reach this group.
 - Missionaries among refugees need prayer support both from home and on the field. It is important that missionaries develop local Christian relationships and a prayer/support community in Greece, both with their own team but also with Christians in the community outside of their ministry team.
10. Missionary Care: What needs considered for missionary care in the first term of language learning and culture bonding. What support is required? What pace and rhythms should be considered in this immersion context? Where will the missionary/s go for respite? Are there needs for on-site short- or long-term missionary support personnel? What support or camaraderie already exists in the area of service? What options are there for children's education (if applicable)?
- For missionaries serving among refugees in Greece:
- Culture acclimation (getting over culture shock) in Greece can take a very long time. Possibly due to various languages and the combination of many refugee cultures that are drastically

different than American cultures. The missionary culture and church traditions are also multiethnic.

- There must be prayer support both locally and from home.
- Missionaries must develop local Christian relationships and a sustained prayer/support community.
- They need coaching from experienced missionaries: Kenn and Lisa Dirrim would be valuable resources and mentors.
- Support for young families: Financial advice, a support system for health benefits, schooling, daycare, etc.
- Current missionaries stress the requirement for regular times of sabbath. Taking days off each week is important. Refugee work is very demanding and draining, and can consume life 24/7.
- Rest and retreat options: Possible locations include the Greek Islands. Other European countries are also close enough for respite.
- Yearly prayer trips from supporters would be wonderful.

EFM provides for each missionary: an EFM Coach, a Missionary Care Team, and a Language Learning Coach.

11. Teams: It is natural to ask “what if” we have one missionary household ready to deploy but we don’t have others identified or ready. There are many ways to define teams and each context/scenario will impact the way EFM would have “peace of mind” short or long term in the process of launching and building/developing healthy thriving teams and mission strategy long term. Please identify what missionary or ex-pat personnel outside of EFM are working (or planning to work) in the area of this new field location who could serve as interim or long term “team” support to EFM worker/s. Briefly explain current status of relationship with these persons.

- Because the Dirrimms lived in Greece for 17.5 years, we have in-country relationships with national Christians and with Christian refugees.
- A partnership/collaboration with existing ministries such as Greek Evangelical churches, a refugee medical ministry, and other ministries is possible.
- Through Dirrimms, we have contacts with a Christian camp outside of Athens asking for help.
 - They are currently looking for a director.
- We are praying for additional team members.

12. Support Budget: What will the major field expenses be during the first term? Housing? Language helper and/or language classes? Transportation? Any insights concerning income levels and lifestyle in the area of service? What else?

- The Dirrimms lived in Athens for 17.5 years. As a couple they rented an apartment and had a car. They lived on about \$4000 per month, which included medical insurance premiums for both of them.
- There is public transportation in cities, but in general, unless you own a car, transportation outside cities is challenging. A car should be in the proposed budget.

13. Possible Missionaries: Who are possible missionary candidates for this field that we should be talking with and preparing? This includes people who don’t have traditional “call” but are willing and able to serve within EFM’s missionary qualifications and within context of type of service.

Career Missionaries:

- Josiah and Leisa Muhr; Northwest Yearly Meeting are exploring options for their future.

Possible Teachers/Trainers for short intensive trainings:

- Kenn Dirrim, Robert Garon, and maybe Jim LeShana.

14. Partnerships and relationships with other organizations, or collaborations with other regions/yearly meetings in the U.S.

- Friends Southwest
- Northwest Yearly Meeting
- Barclay College Missions: They have sent several student study trips to Greece in the past and have inquired about opportunities again for the future.

NOTE: We are not intending to write comprehensive partnership proposals at this point, rather in brief, note key points concerning potential partnerships and what we know at this point.

- Partnerships: Continue to connect in conversation with partner yearly meetings on other continents or partner organizations that have emerged. Name organization and basic summary of why partner with them. As we think about a potential partnership agreement proposal in 2025 (fifth stage), identify summary of what kind of expectations we may have of each other in order to strengthen each other's mission goals? Identify where our expectations and their expectations of the partnership align, and where they differ and need further conversation. What plans have been made or need to be made to develop a proposal (specific dates and places are welcome if applicable).
- Relationships: What contacts, organizations and connections would we identify as informal relationships where we might receive consultation, encouragement or support? As we think about these relationships, what notes would we write in order to clarify to EFM what the nature of the relationship is (what will each party give, receive or experience in this relationship).
- Collaborations: What other regions/yearly meetings in the U.S. have interest in participating with the field's sponsoring region/yearly meeting in the benchmarks for launching and supporting this new mission? Develop clarity for how the regions will work together at this point, and how the collaboration will be assessed and adjusted.

From the Luke 10 Initiative GLOSSARY

Partnerships and Collaborations: Partnership Agreements are to be written by regional field study groups in collaboration with EFM staff to be proposed to the EFM Board for approval (may involve EFM Think Tank). These partnerships may be "works in progress" in this journey.

- **Multinational partnerships** with international sending yearly meetings. These occur when EFM and a missions-sending board in another yearly meeting outside of the U.S. endeavor to both send missionaries to work together to start/oversee a mission field together.
- **Partnerships with organizations** with whom we may collaborate with in launching the mission. These occur when EFM works formally with an organization in order to accomplish the goals of the mission. We wish to have expectations from both parties summarized in writing for clarity. This does not include informal 'relationships' or 'friendships' with other organizations or missionaries who we may consult with or collaborate in a strictly relational capacity.

Inter-regional/yearly meeting collaboration within EFC-NA is encouraged to build capacity in the EFM family of churches. This occurs when one or more regions/yearly meetings within the U.S. create an intentional relationship with the sponsoring yearly meeting of a new field in order to help accomplish benchmarks.

15. What are other insights, questions, concerns, points which need to be noted and remembered?

- Without the Dirrimis in Greece full-time, it is a challenge to maintain partnerships for sending new missionaries. However, relationships already established through the Dirrimis are invaluable and provide a definite advantage for launching this field.