

Cyprus Red Cross

Case Study:

Mobile Migration Team



Cyprus Red Cross Society



Case Study: Mobile Migration Team (MMT)

Operation timeline

July 2023 – December 2024

Location

The Mobile Migration Team (MMT) operated from various locations across Cyprus including the Reception Centre at Pournara, the Accommodation Centres in Kofinou & Limnes, and the Menoyeia Detention centre. The team visited each Centre on a nominated day, as well as offered support to migrants in the community, switching Districts on a rotating basis.

Date established

The Mobile Migration Team was established in the summer of 2023, after a need was identified in 2022.

Target communities

- Migrants and displaced persons

Services provided

- Information
- Non-food items
- Restoring Family Links
- Safe referrals

Context

Cyprus is a destination country for migrants. According to data published by the IOM, the number of recorded arrivals in 2023 saw a marked decrease compared to the previous year, with 11,617 arrivals in 2023 compared to 17,284 in 2022. Whilst the number of asylum applications decreased in 2023, the number of asylum applicants awaiting a decision stood at 26,500 at the end of 2023.

Cyprus receives the highest number of asylum applications compared to the size of the population of around 921,000 people. In 2023, Cyprus received 12,000 asylum applications, amounting to 13,000 applications per million population (or one application for every 78 inhabitants). In contrast, Germany reported many more applications for asylum (circa 334,000); however, given its larger population of 84 million, their rate is lower, at 4,000 applications per million inhabitants (or one application per 252 inhabitants).

The main nationalities of asylum applicants in 2023 were Syrians, Nigerians, and Afghani.

In 2024 Cyprus saw a marked increase in the number of Syrians arriving by sea from Lebanon. According to data from the authorities, more than 2,000 people arrived by sea in the first three months of 2024, compared to 78 in the same period in 2022. This represents a major change as prior to 2024, when the majority of the asylum seekers entered by land by crossing the 'green zone' from the north, into the territory controlled by the Republic of Cyprus.

Migrants arriving in Cyprus are registered and initially accommodated in the Government managed Reception Centre, where they receive full board accommodation. Needs assessments have repeatedly shown that they lack information, certain non-food items, and support to cover the provision and cost of medical prescriptions.

Given the limited capacity of the Accommodation Centres, as those receive only the most vulnerable cases, most of the migrants find themselves living in the community, struggling to access basic services and accommodation if they have no assistance by their respective national community within the country.

Overview of the Mobile Migration Team (MMT)

The Mobile Migration Team (MMT) was established in the summer of 2023, as part of the [Global Route Based Migration Programme \(GRBMP\)](#) following a needs assessment exercise and peer exchange visit with the Hellenic Red Cross. The timeframe for operation of the MMT was set for period of 18 months including the period July 2023 – December 2024.

The team composition is set of two Protection Officers, one Restoring Family Links (RFL) Assistant Officer and one Interpreter. The MMT are trained in protection issues, as well as First Aid, Psychological First Aid (PFA) and Restoring Family Links (RFL).

During the summer of 2023, the team undertook initial training and developed the tools they would need in the field before being deployed (screening forms, reporting forms etc).

The Team operation took place in various locations across Cyprus including the Reception Centre at Pournara, the Accommodation Centre in Kofinou & Limnes, as well as the Menoyeia Detention centre, during weekdays, visiting each centre on a designated day, along with one day a week set aside for working in the community, visiting districts on a rotating basis.

The team have provided migrants with an initial needs assessment to identify their needs in relation to protection, psychosocial support, RFL, support with medical prescriptions and well as any needs they have for material provisions (baby items for example).

They then have worked to address any identified needs through the provision of information, non-food items, support to restore family links, support to cover the cost of medical prescriptions as well as referrals to specialist organizations. The most common needs identified are for information, non-food items and restoring family links.

The Team also provided direct support to migrants in the community and through supporting the network of local branches.

In 2023, the Team conducted a stakeholder mapping exercise to map and engage with external organizations to strengthen referral pathways. This exercise led to contact with over thirty organizations across Cyprus to ensure the Team had the most up to date information on the services provided by each organization, as well as to set up referral pathways.

The team used the information collated during the mapping exercise to develop a leaflet aimed at migrants called 'Where can I seek help?' listing the services provided by a range of organisations along with information on how to access these services. This has been particularly helpful in supporting migrants first arriving in Cyprus at the Reception Centre and those living in the community, to access the services they need.

The team also developed a leaflet aimed at informing about the services offered by the Cyprus Red Cross Society, which is available in English, French and Arabic.



Mobile team at Limnes Accommodation Centre



Mobile Team at Pournara Reception Centre

Voices from the field:

“The information that you give make the life easier”

Migrant from Nigeria accommodated at Pournara Reception Centre

“The information that you gave to me is useful and I hope to be helpful when I will go outside”

Migrant from Somalia accommodated at Pournara Reception Centre

“Since the Migration Mobile Team started, migrants have started to approach the Team. Then I realised how useful the team's role is. Many migrants in the camps approach the Team to express their needs and I am happy to be able to help”

Loukia Koumbari, *Protection Officer, Cyprus Red Cross Society*



