

# LEGAL AID FOR REFUGEES



Das Hilfswerk der  
Evangelischen Kirchen  
Schweiz

HEKS  
EPER

„HEKS was founded in 1946 by the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches. Internationally focuses on rural community development, humanitarian aid and church cooperation. In Switzerland champions the right and the integration of refugees and socially disadvantaged people.“  
([www.heks.ch](http://www.heks.ch))



Beratungsstelle für Asylsuchende

**BAS** der Region Basel

The Legal Aid Office is a program offered by HEKS. His aim is to advise and support asylum seekers „in the Basel region in order to ensure a fair asylum procedure“. ([www.heks.ch](http://www.heks.ch))



**Beáta Mentés,**  
Volunteer at BAS since July 2019,  
BLaw, Romania, MA European  
Global Studies at University of Basel

## My tasks:

- ✚ legal advice for refugees;
- ✚ helping refugees to write a letter to Migration Office Basel-Stadt / Basel-Landschaft or to State Secretariat for Migration;
- ✚ writing legal documents: family reunion application, application to move to another canton, application for travel document and return visa, request for hardship cases.
- ✚ researching in legal issues;
- ✚ keeping contact with institutions;

## Event:

- ✚ 18 October 2019: I took part in Bern in the symposium „Victims of human trafficking as asylum seekers: finally safe in Switzerland?“.

## Project Aims

- To recognize the needs of the refugees.
- To offer legal support.

### Needs of the refugees:

- Learning the language of the host country.
- To achieve family reunification.
- To gain basic and higher education.
- To learn a profession.
- To find a job, especially with F-permit.
- To be treated equally in society, especially on labour market.
- To be financially independent.
- Access to medical treatment, especially for traumatized persons.
- To be able to travel without restriction.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Many refugees did not have the possibility to gain education, so we encourage them to go to school and to learn a profession.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



We emphasize the importance of employment in order to achieve financial independence. Having income, makes family reunification easier.

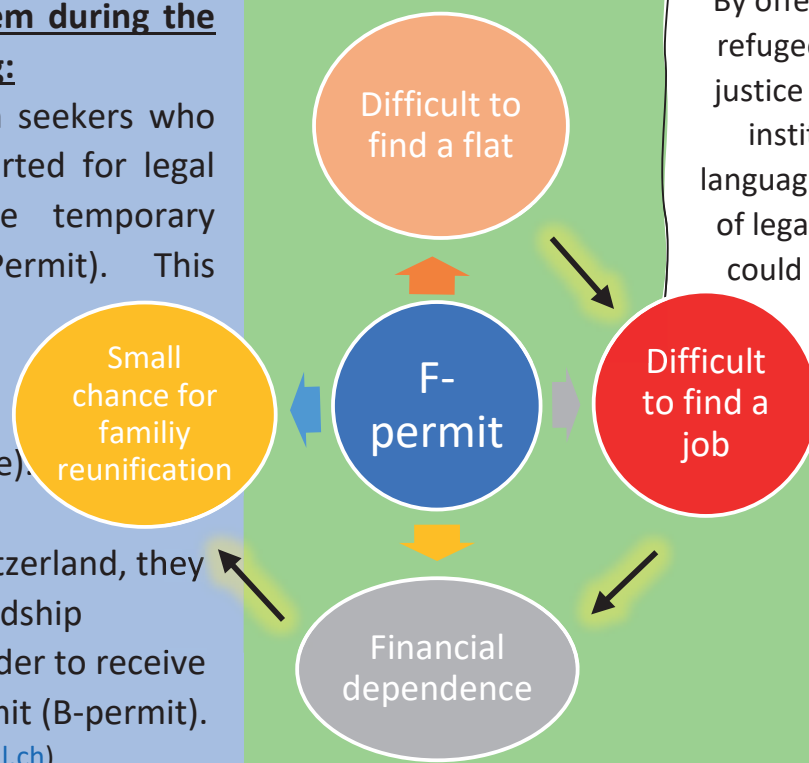
16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



By offering legal aid, the refugees have access to justice and other official institutions. Due to language barriers and lack of legal knowledge they could not submit their requests.

## Frequent problem during the legal counselling:

Rejected asylum seekers who cannot be deported for legal reasons, receive temporary admission (F-Permit). This status can slow the integration process (see graphic alongside). After 5 years of residence in Switzerland, they can submit a hardship application in order to receive a residence permit (B-permit). ([www.refugeecouncil.ch](http://www.refugeecouncil.ch))



## Service Learning Project

Through personal contact to refugees:

- ✚ I got to know their life stories and recognized their actual needs
- ✚ I had to cope with language barrier
- ✚ I had to control my emotions in order to offer proper aid
- ✚ I had to elaborate strategies to find solutions to different problems
- ✚ I have learnt about legal procedures.