

## INITIAL SITUATION:

As an important part of preventive medicine, oral hygiene and oral health are often neglected in humanitarian crises, for several reasons, mainly due to the lack of materials and working conditions. Patients often state that any severe pain "is like a toothache", and bearing in mind the already reduced quality of life of this population, the existing toothache further impairs it, reducing the level of sleep, the quality of nutrition, and finally socialization as the basis of mental health. ***Guided by the fact that every 10th person who resides in the temporary reception centers in Bosnia and Herzegovina has the need for dental services and that toothache is the third most common reason for reporting to doctors who operate in an infirmary within the center the need for dentistry was more than obvious.***

## TASKS AND ACTIONS:

The Danish Refugee Council, with the financial support of the Swiss Embassy in BiH, has decided to take a step toward this dentistry and raise the level of health care for people on the move by establishing a dental practice at the temporary reception center Blažuj and Ušivak, the first of its kind in migrant centers in the region, where pharmacists from the private Dental Centre began to work in August 2021.

One of the main tasks which were DRC facing was ***to establish an infirmary that offers treatment and tooth repair services***, at a level that is, by quality, equivalent to the one local residents can obtain in dental clinics. ***The educational workshops with patients were conducted every Saturday***, to raise dental health awareness but also to answer their questions which some were very practical and focused on dental hygiene while people are on the move without adequate access to clean water or hygiene supplies. The primary focus of the doctors, during the first period of dentistry work, was ***tooth extraction and first aid to rehabilitate patients who have pain***, especially those who have been drinking analgesics and antibiotics for days and months to heal inflammation and reduce pain.

## PROBLEM OCCURRED

Unfortunately, due to a lack of resources, both human and financial, ***dental services were suspended at the beginning of April 2022***. Since then, until today, a ***drastic increase in dental complaints of 40%*** has been recorded compared to the first quarter of 2022, while the number of ***referrals to the Health Centers*** for the aforementioned services ***has increased by over 500%***.

## PROBLEM SOLUTION

Guided by the fact that dental services are much needed and being faithful to our mission to provide all aspects of health care to people on the move, ***DRC has focused on finding the best possible solution.*** Having lost the donor funding due to the end of the project cycle, ***DRC has allocated its own funds*** for dental services and has ***made connections with young dentists who express the desire for volunteering*** work in dentistry in temporary reception centers. The dentistry will work once a week, and in that way ***will take care of up to 20 patients.***

## RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED:

Having dentistry within the temporary reception center and dentists present on a daily basis has ***improved the overall health response*** of people on the move. During the mentioned period of time (August 2021 – April 2022), the dentists have provided over ***1.280 interventions*** for people residing in centers Blažuj and Ušivak, which is around ***140 interventions per month.*** Patients were glad to have access to dental services to ease their problems. Their ***interest has been at a very high level since the first day of the opening,*** and the fact that some patients come to the infirmary ***preventively to talk with dentists*** in search of advice on better oral hygiene is the best proof of successfully provided services.