

Meet the Refugee Highway Partnership Europe Leadership Team

For most of its history the RHP Europe leadership team has consisted of a relatively small core team. However, over 2020-2021 the decision was made to intentionally grow, diversify and strengthen the team with more people able to share the responsibility. We would like to introduce the RHP Europe leadership team.

Tim Elverson - Tim is the director of Life Transitions Development. He lives in Buckingham UK with his wife and two boys. He has previous experience working in psycho-social support in war zones, with refugees and with victims of human trafficking. He has managed a peer-led recovery programme for war related post-traumatic-stress in Libya. He co-founded the Snowdrop Project supporting victims of human trafficking through a holistic social care model in the UK. In 2016, with the increasing numbers of refugees arriving in Europe, Tim created the Life Transitions Journey as a resource for processing the emotions of transition and building psychological resilience. Tim joined the leadership team in 2018, he has been helping to navigate the leadership team through a period of change looking towards becoming a more sustainable and impactful network in the future.



Matt Paschall - Matt is married to Nicole and has 4 children (ages 25 to 15). He serves with United World Mission in Budapest. Having had a focus on ministry to unreached peoples for over 20 years, for the past 7 years, Matt has been establishing partnerships among refugee ministries in the urban centres of Europe. Matt holds his doctorate in Global & Contextual leadership, he is the Coordinator of the HowWillTheyHear Campaign and co-Founder of Quest Academy which is a growing collaboration of organisations and churches mobilizing and training migrant missionaries to share the gospel, provide trauma care and show the love of Christ among the forcibly displaced. Matt has served on the RHP Leadership Team since 2015 helping to organize the annual RHP Roundtables and expanding the network to include more leaders, churches and ministries with a vision & heart to reach and equip refugees for mission.



Whitney Gerdes - Whitney is originally from the U.S., currently serving as the Global Educational Specialist with the

International Association for Refugees (IAFR). She is based out of Vienna, Austria since 2008. She has a bachelor's in Education, an M.A. in Human Services, and is a certified youth trauma specialist working in schools for over 10 years. After attending the European Roundtable in 2016 her focus has been shifting to advocating for and serving alongside refugee children, youth and women. She is currently getting to train, advocate for, and help equip educational initiatives along the refugee highway as well as serving in leadership roles in various other organisations. She is the communications manager for RHP Europe. Her focus is making space for forcibly displaced women and children who are often pushed to the margins.



Taneli Skyttä - Taneli currently works as a Refugee Ministry Specialist in a Finnish mission organisation called FLOM. He is married and has three teenagers. They have served in Central Asia in the 2000s, and more recently in Athens with Persian speaking refugees. Taneli is involved in a number of cross-cultural ministry and leadership training initiatives, thoroughly enjoying equipping first generation believers – and next generation of leaders! His first exposure to RHP was the Roundtable in Sarajevo in 2019. Last fall he joined the RHP Europe Leadership Team, and has the privilege to lead the program planning for this conference, which is very much in line with his personal calling and RHP vision: to bring the diverse community of like-minded people together and utilize the talent, experience & resources in a well-

coordinated and strategic manner to bless the forcibly displaced people.

Peter Oyugi - Peter serves as a mission catalyst and mentor within the Movement of African National Initiatives Network in which he coordinates diaspora ministry in Europe. He has spent time doing outreach among refugees and diaspora peoples in Europe and being a mentor for African refugees and African refugee workers within the Beyond Walls Project of RHP. He has a particular passion to see churches across Europe welcome and integrate



refugees within their church communities for the mutual benefit of all. He is originally from Kenya but has lived in the UK for some time. He is married to Cecilia with two children.



Rosie Button - Rosie is on staff at All Nations Christian College, teaching the MA in Staff Care and Wellbeing. She previously spent 18 years in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Uganda as a missionary with her family. She is married to Dan, with university aged children Abby (21) and Alex (20). Her interest is in training and supporting people involved in mission, including those who work with refugees. She was involved in putting together the online course: Refugee Worker Online Training, with Marion Knell. She takes part in a project in her home town, Gloucester, World Café, which welcomes and shares international meals with refugees. Her role with RHP is in coordinating the Resources area for the roundtables, and she will be helping develop the resourcing aspect of the RHP website.

Rodrigo da Silva - Rodrigo is a Brazilian-born Christian theologian, ordained Baptist minister and global development professional. He brings over 14 years of experience working in churches, mission organisations and non-profit organisations in three continents: South America (Brazil), Africa (Mozambique) and Europe. As managing director, Rodrigo's responsibilities at All4Aid include: leading the organisation, developing its strategic plan, mobilising new workers and volunteers, conducting speaking engagements and raising funds. Rodrigo is married to Annalena, a German social worker and systemic therapist. Together they have two young children, Eloy and Lui. Rodrigo has been part of the RHP leadership team since 2020, helping manage the finances and in establishing a membership model and multiple income streams to sustain and grow the RHP Europe network



Peter Samir - Peter is originally from Egypt, and now living in Bangor, NI. Peter serves with SIM UK in the Arabic ministry for Europe, building bridges between cultures by equipping and empowering the local church, migrants and refugees. He is married to Gillian and has two daughters. Prior to his current role, Peter served for 9 years in Barcelona Spain. He is involved in reaching and training new believers from different backgrounds, and mobilising the local western church to reach out to people on the move in Europe. Peter is a presenter of the Al Massira program. He is also one of the founders of Quest Academy International, which develops leaders to lead outreach, evangelism, and discipleship ministries effectively in multicultural contexts. On the RHP team, he is helping to connect and train Arab and Farsi speaking leaders to the network.

John Harris - John is originally from Australia serving on the iTeams Netherlands leadership team as Field Director. He is married to Kathy and they have two adult sons. He has served in mission since 2001, first in Ukraine as a lecturer at a theological seminary, and then in The Netherlands since 2007. In his role with iTeams NL he oversees teams involved in refugee ministry. He also teaches English to refugees seeking to enter study or work in The Netherlands and teaches biblical and leadership courses to migrant and refugee church leaders. John has been connected with the RHP since 2018 and is involved in maintaining the RHP website. RHP has a vision to become more of a resource hub for refugee/asylum seeker related issues. As we want to grow the resources we make available to our network, John is finding ways to make those resources available on the website to those who are a part of the network.



Billy Drum - Billy is the Director of Member Care Services at La Posada Training and Care (Spain), has served with TMS Global since 2007. Billy and his family served in Latin America for several years before moving to Spain in 2013 where he focuses on care ministries and leadership development for cross-cultural workers. Billy holds an MA in Member Care/Staff Care and Wellbeing, his dissertation focused on the topic of burnout in the global mission community. He is a certified coach and holds advanced certificates in counselling. Billy serves on the RHP team to help develop holistic care for those working with displaced peoples. His desire is to help workers build a community of care and to connect with resources throughout Europe to help them to stay mentally, spiritually, and emotionally healthy on the field so that they can carry out what God has placed on their hearts for those in need.