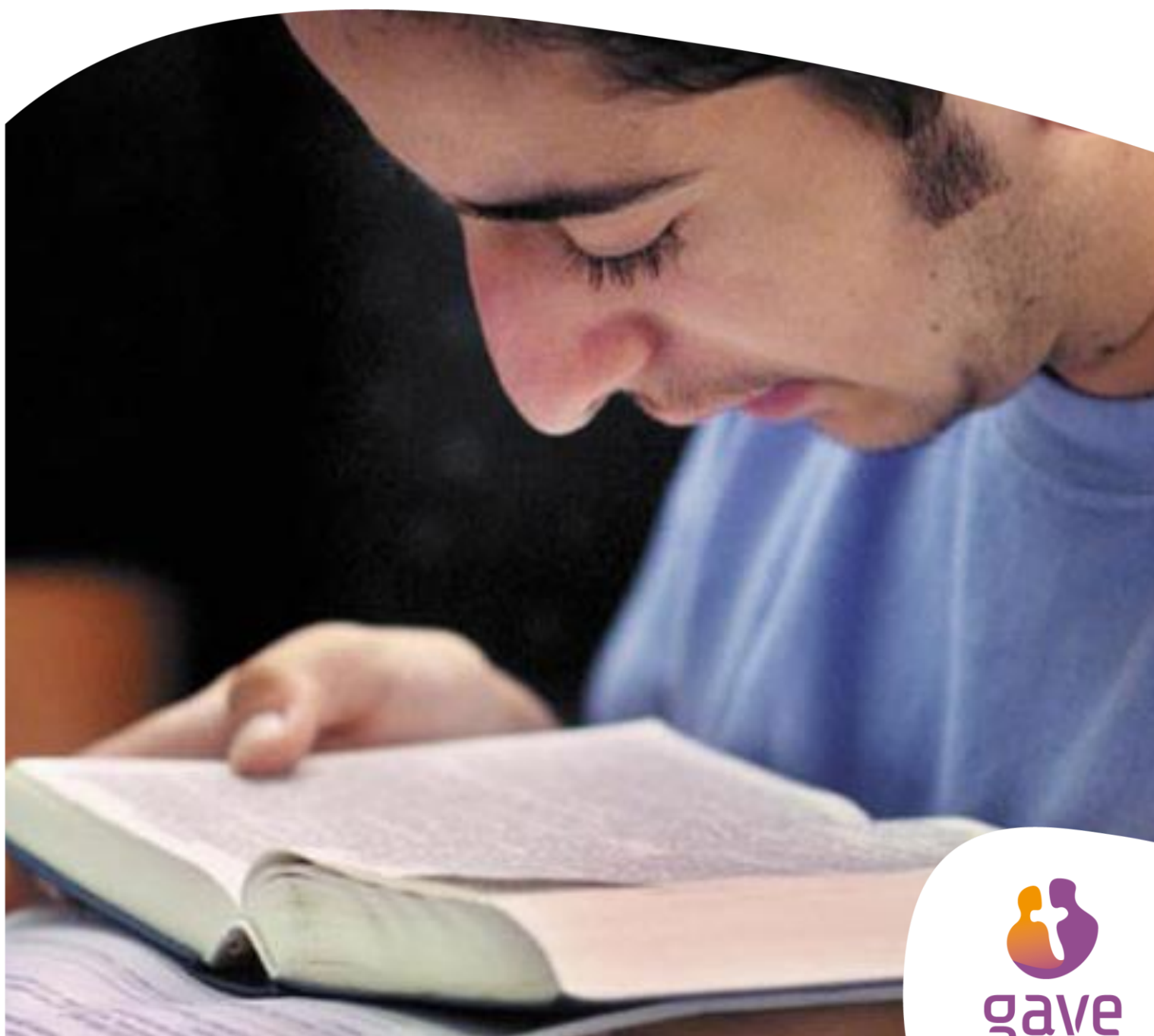


WE ARE RELIGIOUSLY (NOT) NEUTRAL

REPORT OF A SURVEY



WE ARE RELIGIOUSLY (NOT) NEUTRAL

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1 INTRODUCTION

We regularly hear from colleagues and volunteers throughout the country how they experience visiting asylum seekers in an asylum seekers' centre or organising activities for them. These stories not only show how passionate people are about doing something for this vulnerable group, but also reveal how COA deals with Christians who visit the asylum seekers' centre and the needs of converts and Christians living in the asylum seekers' centre. The picture we get is very diverse: at one location, a lot is possible when it comes to, for example, giving a Bible study, putting up posters for the church service or organising activities, but at another location COA is much more strict.

When it comes to religion, COA position is: we are religiously neutral. However, COA has to deal with residents who themselves are not religiously neutral. The way in which COA interprets its own religious neutrality and the consequences of this for, for example, the residents' experience of religion on location, differs per location, as described above. Gave Foundation and COA are discussing how to deal with religion in the asylum seekers' centre. We want to do this partly on the basis of the experiences of Christians who visit the asylum seekers' centres. In order to map out these experiences, we conducted a survey among Christians throughout the Netherlands who visit asylum seekers' centres. By means of this survey, we hope to obtain a better picture of how COA deals with religion in the asylum seekers' centres, how Christians experience COA and what they encounter.

2 RESULTS

The results of the survey are described below. For a complete overview of the survey, we refer you to the appendix of this report. There, you will find the number of completed answers per question and the corresponding percentages. There, you will also find more answers to the open questions.

2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

The survey yielded a response of 80 people in total. Of this group, 7 respondents indicated that they did not visit the asylum seekers' centre or it was not clear whether they visited an asylum seekers' centre (azc). These 7 respondents were therefore excluded from the study. This left a group of 73 respondents.

The information obtained from these 73 respondents related to 30 different asylum seekers' centres¹, including one which had since been closed down. For 26 of these azc's, information was obtained from a small group of respondents, ranging from 1 to 3 respondents per azc. For the four other azc's, information was obtained from a group of 5 to 10 respondents per azc.

Experience (the number of years someone has visited the asylum seekers' centre) varies within the group of respondents. 34 percent indicated that they had visited the asylum seekers' centre for more than six years. This group with the most experience was also the largest group of respondents in the survey. 25 percent of respondents said they had visited the asylum seekers' centre for four to six years, 29 percent said they had visited the asylum seekers' centre for two to four years. Finally, 12 per cent indicated that they had visited the asylum seekers' centre for less than two years.

The activities that respondents organise for asylum seekers at the asylum seekers' centre (or outside) differs. Most respondents categorise their activity as visiting (37 per cent). In addition, 15 per cent indicated that they give Bible studies, 9 per cent came to give pastoral or spiritual care and 7 per cent visited the asylum seekers' centre to organise activities for a children's club. In addition, 32 percent of the respondents said they performed other activities, such as prayer, a girls' club, bicycle making, computer lessons, women's mornings and language lessons.

When asked whether COA is aware of the activities carried out by the respondent, 62 percent indicated that this was the case.

2.2 CONTACT WITH COA EMPLOYEES

When we asked about contact with COA employees, the majority of the respondents said they rarely or never had contact with a COA employee: 42 percent said they rarely had contact, 25 percent said they never had contact with a COA employee. In addition, 27 percent of the

¹ At the time of writing, COA has a total of 73 reception locations.

respondents said they were in regular contact with a COA employee and 6 percent were in frequent contact.

The positions of the COA employees with whom there is contact vary widely. The majority of respondents (29 percent) stated that they had contact with the location manager, followed by 18 percent who had contact with the residential supervisor. In addition, there were 6 different positions of COA employees with whom respondents had contact.

When asked about the nature of the contact, the majority indicated that it was mainly business and functional/practical. Because people visit the asylum seekers' centre, there is contact, and this is mainly focused on more practical and functional matters such as checking in and out, or for a question about an activity. Respondents write about this contact:

- ▶ 'A chat at reception, something practical for a resident'.
- ▶ 'In the past, I organised walking tours. Now for the buddy project; a regular COA employee is my contact person, she can register refugees with me for a buddy contact'.
- ▶ 'It is always a positive contact, we can work together in many areas'.
- ▶ 'A superficial greeting'.

When asked why there was no contact with a COA employee, some stated that they did not meet any COA employees. Respondents said they came to the asylum seekers' centre for a visit and did not need to have contact with a COA employee for that purpose. In some cases negative experiences with COA employees are also the reason for choosing not to have or want contact with COA employees. Respondents write about not having contact with COA employees:

- ▶ 'I never meet them'.
- ▶ 'The occasional times I have had contact with COA, for example when it came to a space or a children's action, I experienced a strong lack of interest, if not hostility'.
- ▶ 'Because I heard from a security guard at the reception that Bible study in AZC is prohibited...'

2.3 CONTACT FROM COA WITH THE CHURCH

We also asked whether the respondents or the church to which they belonged had ever been approached by COA for a Christian asylum seeker who was looking for a church, Bible study group, spiritual care or contact with Christians. 69 percent of the respondents indicated that COA had never done so, 16 percent had been approached and 15 percent did not know. The majority of the group who indicated that COA had never approached a Christian asylum seeker (58 percent) said they did not know, but 34 percent indicated that there had been cases in which COA could or should have done so. The example given was:

- ▶ 'Threatening an asylum seeker who wanted to go to church on Sunday. Help for converts who wanted to send their children to a Christian school'.
- ▶ 'If refugees ask for it and need it, e.g. when they are looking for a church or Bible study group'.

2.4 RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE ASYLUM SEEKERS' CENTRE

We asked about various aspects relating to the theme of religious freedom in the asylum seekers' centre: Bible study in one's own room, receiving a pastoral or spiritual counsellor in one's own room, celebrating Christian holidays in the asylum seekers' centre, celebrating other religious holidays in the asylum seekers' centre, and putting up posters in the asylum seekers' centre announcing religious activities.

- ▶ Bible study: 30 percent of the respondents stated that Bible study in their own room at the asylum seekers' centre was permitted, compared to 22 percent who stated that this was not permitted. 48 percent indicated that they did not know whether it was permitted.
- ▶ Spiritual care/pastoral visits: Of the respondents, 59 per cent stated that receiving a spiritual counsellor or pastoral visit in their own room at the asylum seekers' centre was permitted, compared to 3 per cent who stated that this was not permitted. 38 per cent stated that they did not know whether this was permitted.
- ▶ Christian holidays: Twenty per cent of the respondents indicated that celebrating Christian holidays at the asylum seekers' centre was permitted, compared to 18 per cent who said that this was not allowed. Sixty-two percent said they did not know whether it was permitted.
- ▶ Other religious holidays: Of the respondents, 27 per cent said that celebrating other religious holidays at the asylum seekers' centre was permitted, compared to 11 who said that this was not permitted. 62 percent indicated that they did not know whether this was permitted.
- ▶ Posters: 22 per cent of the respondents said that it was permitted to hang posters announcing religious activities in the asylum seekers' centre, as opposed to 48 per cent who said that this was not permitted. 30 percent said they did not know whether this was permitted.

2.5 OTHER QUESTIONS

In this section of the survey, we gauged the respondents' subjective perception. Here, for example, we asked questions about the openness and connection which respondents experience at COA, how respondents would like to see their collaboration with COA and what tips they would like to give others when it comes to their attitude towards COA:

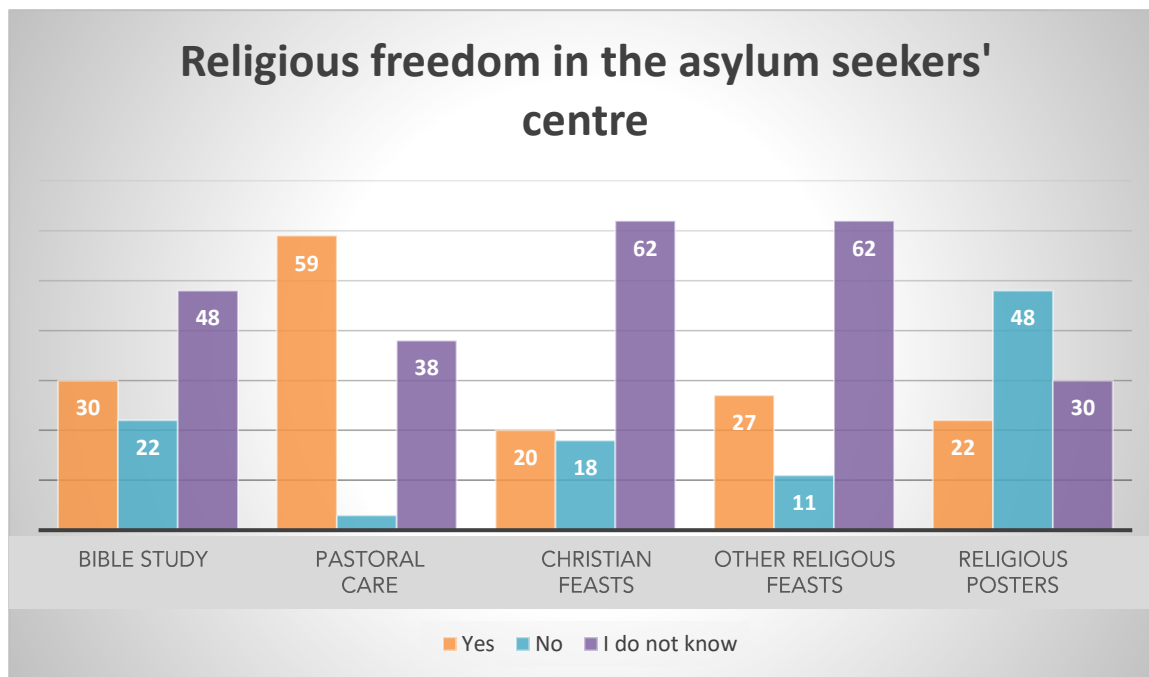
- ▶ Openness at COA: when asked to what extent people experience openness at COA in relation to visiting activities, children's clubs and Bible studies at the asylum seekers' centre, 21 percent of the respondents said they did not experience openness and 48 percent said they experienced a little openness. 29 percent categorised COA's openness as normal, 1 percent experienced a lot of openness and 1 percent experienced a lot of openness.

- ▶ Connection with COA: When asked to what extent they felt connected to COA in terms of contact with churches and Christians in the vicinity of the asylum seekers' centre, 49 per cent of respondents said they did not feel any connection and 26 per cent felt they were somewhat connected. 23 per cent of respondents classed their experience of connection as normal and 2 per cent experienced a great deal of connection.
- ▶ Interests of Christians/converts: We also asked what the respondents thought COA did to safeguard or facilitate the interests of Christians and converts in the asylum seekers' centre. Respondents gave various answers, such as:
 - 'As far as I know, nothing. We are not allowed to use a room. We are not allowed to have more in a room than there are beds in that room'.
 - 'Safety for every resident is very important. This is mainly achieved by limiting all religious expressions as much as possible'.
 - 'Nothing. COA tries to be 'neutral'. Which means that nothing is allowed to express your faith'.
 - 'I think that Christians feel safe in this asylum seekers' centre'.
 - 'Division of rooms. Religion is taken into account'.
- ▶ Cooperation COA: When asked how people would like to see the cooperation with COA, the following was answered, among others:
 - 'I am very happy with the cooperation with COA of the azc'.
 - 'The cooperation is pleasant now that I have a regular contact person. I have met her. We know what we can expect from each other. And she also knows what I stand for. There is mutual respect'.
 - 'I would like to agree/hear what is not allowed and be able to work within those limits'.
 - 'That they think from the resident's point of view and do not impose their (atheist/antichristian) worldview by the power they have to close doors'.
- ▶ Other activities: When asked if there are activities they would like to do but that COA does not allow or that they expect COA not to allow, 16 percent indicated that COA does not allow and 25 percent expected COA not to allow. In total, 41 percent of the respondents want to do more than they are doing now or are allowed to do. 59 percent said they did not want to develop any other activities at the asylum seekers' centre.
- ▶ When we asked why COA does not allow these activities, the following was mentioned, among other things:
 - 'No religious activities are allowed. We are not allowed to share a room with more than one person'.
 - 'Because it has to do with evangelism'.
- ▶ When we asked why people expect COA not to allow these activities, the following was mentioned, among other things:
 - 'Afraid the Muslims will object'.
 - 'Because there seems to be a kind of fear and annoyance towards Christian activities, whereas if there are concerns, loving Christian residents at the asylum seekers' centre are asked for help'.
 - 'They are afraid of disturbances at the asylum seekers' centre'.

- ▶ Tips: When asked what tips respondents would give to others as regards their attitude towards COA, they indicated the following:
 - 'Be open and transparent, interested and honest'.
 - 'Don't say you are a Christian'.
 - 'Try to work around COA'.
 - 'Together with COA, we can be a strong team for safety and order and mental health also in the asylum seekers' centre'.
 - 'Read the visitors' regulations and stick to them. You will see that it goes smoothly. Gradually, you will gain more openness and mutual trust. They also see how positively the visit is appreciated by the residents and sometimes call on you in case of problems.
- ▶ Suggestions/comments: Finally, several respondents provided some suggestions and comments, such as:
 - 'I think it would be good if a spiritual worker (for example a missionary worker from St Gave) were active in the AZC. Something for everyone: Christian/Muslim/Humanist etc. For the Christian part it could be someone who is capable of representing the churches and who has a consultation hour, for example twice a week. In addition to the VWN and the other disciplines'.
 - 'There is always the possibility of inviting asylum seekers to your home or community'.
 - 'COA may be able to help reconnect displaced friends with local Christians'.

3 ANALYSIS

The main purpose of the survey is to obtain a broader picture of the way in which COA deals with religion in the asylum seekers' centre. For this reason, we will start the further analysis of the results with the questions relating to religion in the asylum seekers' centre. The results of the questions in the survey relating to this issue are shown below in a graph.



When we take a closer look at these results, a number of things stand out:

- ▶ Firstly, it is striking that 48% of the respondents indicated that it is not permitted to hang posters announcing religious activities in the asylum seekers' centre. The survey did not reveal the reasons why this would not be permitted in each individual case, but such a high percentage contrasts sharply with the stipulation in the Handreiking Levensbeschouwing (Guidelines on Religious Life) that posters and leaflets with, for example, information about the organisation itself or invitations for services, are permitted at a COA location².
- ▶ The group of respondents (35 in total) who indicated that putting up posters at the asylum seekers' centre was not permitted provided information on a total of 19 asylum seekers' centres. It is striking that in some cases (locations Burgum, Dronten, Luttelgeest) other respondents indicated that hanging up posters was permitted. These different opinions about the same locations cannot be traced back to the difference in experience (how many years one has visited the asylum seekers' centre) or to the difference in position of the COA employee with whom one has contact (in the cases where there is contact with a COA employee).

² COA, Handreiking Levensbeschouwing (Handbook on ideology), June 2018 p5.

- ▶ Secondly, it is striking that for all five questions on religious freedom, a large group (varying from 30 to 62 percent) indicated that they did not know whether what they were asking was permitted or not. This raises questions about the extent to which COA is clear about this or the extent to which respondents study this or want to study it.
- ▶ Thirdly, there is a striking difference between the part that indicates that Bible study in a group in the own room is not allowed (22 percent) and the part that indicates that spiritual care or pastoral care in the own room is not allowed (3 percent). In addition, 59 per cent indicated that spiritual care/pastoral care was allowed, almost twice as many as the 30 per cent who indicated that Bible study in a group was allowed. Not only is the contrast between these two categories striking, it is also striking that, firstly, this specifically concerns the exercise of the right to religious freedom by residents and, secondly, that this right is exercised within the privacy of one's own room. There is, therefore, a great deal of confusion about what is and what is not permitted in one's own room and, in addition, COA apparently regularly imposes restrictions on the exercise of the right to religious freedom within this private sphere, particularly with regard to studying the Bible.
- ▶ Zooming in on the question of whether Bible study in a group is allowed in the own room at the asylum seekers' centre, we see that of the respondents who say they give Bible study in the asylum seekers' centre themselves (17 respondents) about 1/3 indicate that Bible study in their own room at the asylum seekers' centre is allowed, 1/3 don't know and 1/3 say it is not allowed. Within this group it is, as expected, clearer for a larger part of the group what is and what is not allowed (about 33 percent do not know, compared to 48 percent of all respondents), but the part which indicates that it is not allowed (about 33 percent) and the part which indicates that it is allowed (also about 33 percent) is larger within this group than among all respondents.
- ▶ The group of respondents (43 in total) who indicated that they were allowed to receive pastoral care/ spiritual care in their own rooms provided information about 22 different asylum seekers' centres. Looking at the 4 azc's where there were more than 5 respondents per azc, we see that in 1 case (Amersfoort location) 1 respondent stated that it was not permitted to receive pastoral care/ spiritual care in one's own room, while 4 respondents stated that it was permitted. 5 respondents for this location did not know whether this was permitted.
- ▶ Of the group of respondents who indicated that they provided pastoral care/ spiritual care at the asylum seekers' centre (10 respondents in total), 9 indicated that this was permitted, 1 did not know.
- ▶ When it comes to celebrating Christian and other religious holidays, the survey shows that other religious holidays are permitted slightly more often than Christian holidays (27 to 20 percent). Of the 13 respondents who indicated that Christian holidays were not permitted, 2 indicated that other religious holidays were permitted, citing as examples the fact that the Feast of Sugar was celebrated extensively and that Muslims were given more room to pray in public places. In addition, there were 3 respondents who did not know whether the celebration of other religious holidays was permitted, the other 8 respondents indicating that both Christian and other religious holidays were not permitted. Conversely, all respondents who stated that celebrating other religious

holidays was not permitted at the asylum seekers' centre, also stated that celebrating Christian holidays was not permitted at the asylum seekers' centre.

In collecting the information, the question was to what extent the corona pandemic would influence the results and whether this would not give a distorted picture. After all, due to the pandemic, asylum seekers' centres were closed to visitors for a longer period of time. The results do not allow us to determine which answers were affected by the pandemic and which were not. However, some general remarks can be made which underline the value of the survey despite the situation of a pandemic.

- ▶ First of all, the vast majority of the respondents, 88 percent, have an experience (period in which they visited the asylum seekers' centre) that goes back further than the beginning of the pandemic. This group therefore also has experience with COA before the start of the pandemic.
- ▶ In addition, it is important to realise that, however drastic the measures surrounding the pandemic may have been, the fundamental right of religious freedom is at stake in the survey. It is illustrative, for example, that at the time of the lockdown, many churches did adhere to the corona measures, but were not actually bound by them. There was also a call not to host more than two people at home, but this could not be enforced behind the front door because it concerned the private sphere. In the same vein, one can think that even at the time of the pandemic, COA cannot determine what the resident may or may not do in his private sphere, certainly not when it comes to practising religion, whether or not together. In other words, there is no need to filter out any influence of the pandemic from the survey results because the pandemic in itself does not provide any grounds to impose restrictions on the right to religious freedom, and certainly not within the private sphere. These fundamental rights cannot be tampered with just like that.

4 CONCLUSIONS

First of all, it is important to reflect on the main objective of the survey, which was to obtain a broader picture of how COA deals with religion in the asylum seekers' centre. Now that we have obtained information from 73 respondents from 30 different COA centres through this survey, we can state that the main objective has been achieved to a certain extent. A lot of information has been provided which can be used as a basis for the discussion between Gave Foundation and COA on religion and freedom of religion in the asylum seekers' centre.

It should, however, be noted that there is not yet sufficient ground to draw general conclusions about freedom of religion at the asylum seekers' centre in the Netherlands on the basis of this survey. There was simply too little information provided about asylum seekers' centres for this purpose, and many of the asylum seekers' centres about which information was provided concerned only a small group of respondents. In addition, there was a large group of respondents who indicated that they did not know what was and was not permitted in relation to religion at the asylum seekers' centre.

Nevertheless, this survey does reveal a certain trend at asylum seekers' centres. Especially when it comes to Bible studies in a group in one's own room and putting up posters in the asylum seekers' centre, the respondents indicated that COA regularly to often does not allow this. The survey also showed that the way in which COA deals with these matters varies from one location to another and even differs greatly in some cases. In some cases people are happy with COA and experience a certain openness from COA to activities which Christians organise or want to organise. However, in most cases this openness is not or hardly present and one sees many possibilities for improvement in the cooperation with COA.

This leads us to the following conclusion:

- ▶ When it comes to what is and what is not possible in terms of religion in the asylum seekers' centre in their own rooms, there is a great deal of confusion. It is not clear whether this is mainly caused by the provision of information by COA or by a lack of information among the respondents.
- ▶ Bible study in a group in the asylum seeker's own room is regularly not allowed. We conclude that the resident's privacy and right to experience faith together is regularly violated.
- ▶ Hanging up posters in the asylum seekers' centre announcing a religious activity seems to be prohibited in almost half of the cases. This leads us to conclude that COA is not complying with its own guidelines, as set out in the Handreiking Levensbeschouwing (Guidelines on Religious Life).
- ▶ With the exception of a few reports, there is room in the asylum seekers' centres for pastoral and/or spiritual care in their own rooms.
- ▶ In most cases, volunteers experience little or no openness from COA for the activities they do or want to do for asylum seekers. COA also often does not take the initiative to refer Christian residents to a church.

5 APPENDIX: RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Total number of responses: 80

Total number of relevant responses: 73

Of this group of 80 respondents, 7 respondents indicated that they did not visit the asylum seekers' centre or it was not clear whether they visited an asylum seekers' centre. These 7 respondents were therefore removed from the study.

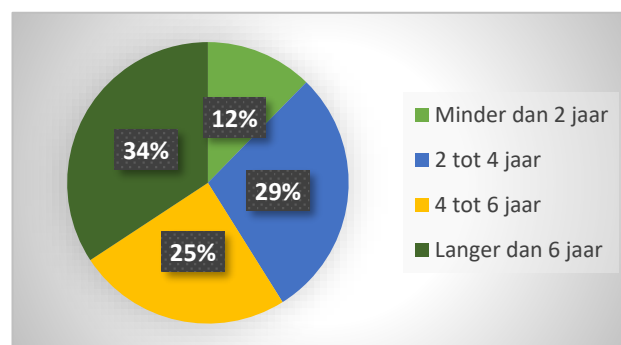
Number of locations for which information is entered: 30

1. Which azc are you visiting?

Alkmaar	1	Almelo	1
Amersfoort	10	Amsterdam	2
Apeldoorn	2	St. Anna Parish	1
Baexem	1	Balk	1
Burgum	8	Den Helder (Nieuweweg)	1
Drachten (Noorderend)	1	Drachten (Ring road)	1
Dronten	8	Emmen	1
Gilze	3	Hardenberg	2
Harderwijk	3	Kampen	1
Katwijk	2	Leersum	3
Luttelegeest	5	Middelburg	1
Nijmegen	1	Rijswijk	3
Schalkhaar	2	Ter Apel	1
Utrecht	3	Zeewolde (closed)	1
Zutphen	2	Zweeloo	1
		None/Other/Unknown	7

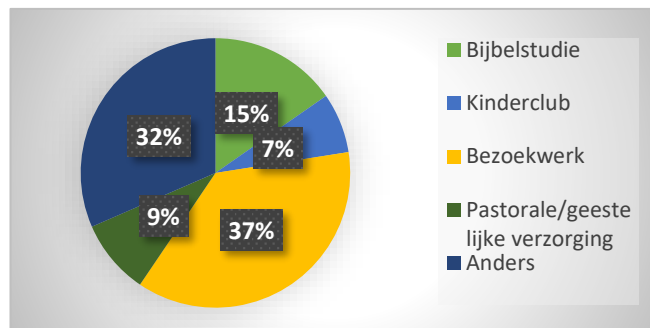
2. How long have you been visiting this asylum seekers' centre?

- ▶ Less than 2 years: 9
- ▶ 2 to 4 years: 21
- ▶ 4 to 6 years: 18
- ▶ Longer than 6 years: 25



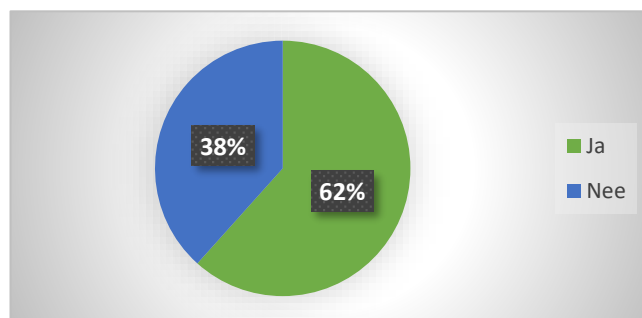
3. What activities do you perform for the occupants at the asylum seekers' centre?

- ▶ Bible study: 17
- ▶ Children's club: 8
- ▶ Visiting hours: 41
- ▶ Pastoral care: 10
- ▶ Other: 35



4. Is COA aware that you carry out these activities at the asylum seekers' centre?

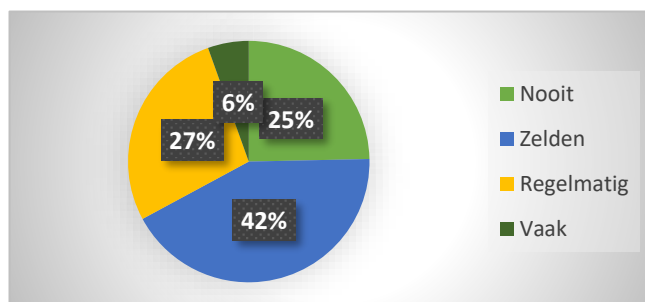
- ▶ Yes: 45
- ▶ No: 28



5. Contact with COA employees

5.1 Do you ever have contact with COA employees

- ▶ Never: 18
- ▶ Rarely: 31
- ▶ Regularly: 20
- ▶ Often: 4



5.2 What is the nature of this contact?

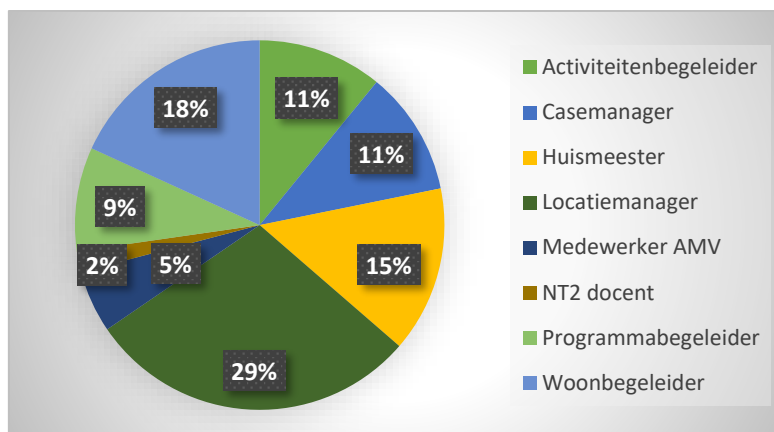
Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 55).

- ▶ 'It is always a positive contact, we can work together in many areas'.
- ▶ 'Telling what we plan to do with the club and agreeing on the possibilities'.
- ▶ 'A superficial greeting'.
- ▶ 'A chat at reception, something practical for a resident'.

- ▶ 'In the past, I organised walking tours. Now for the buddy project; a regular COA employee is my contact person, she can register refugees with me for a buddy contact'.
- ▶ 'Only very little. There is a lot of staff turnover'.
- ▶ 'We have sometimes prepared a pleasant afternoon for the residents together'.
- ▶ 'Mainly with doorman, security concerns logistics'.
- ▶ 'Very businesslike'.
- ▶ 'Consultation about problems that the resident experiences with fellow residents; sometimes contact about Bible study; contact when you come to pick someone up or bring a new resident'.

5.3 What is the function of the COA employee with whom you have contact?

- ▶ Activity leader: 6
- ▶ Case manager: 6
- ▶ Caretaker: 8
- ▶ Location Manager: 16
- ▶ Employee AMV: 3
- ▶ NT2 teacher: 1
- ▶ Programme supervisor: 5
- ▶ Residential supervisor: 10



5.4 If you have no contact with a COA employee, why not?

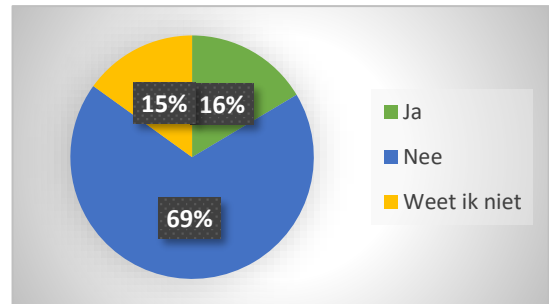
Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 18).

- ▶ 'Because I heard from a security guard at the reception that Bible study in AZC is prohibited...'
- ▶ 'The occasional contact I have had with COA, for example when it came to a space or a children's action, I experienced a strong lack of interest, if not hostility'.
- ▶ 'I never meet them'.
- ▶ 'COA does not seek contact and we do not seek contact with COA'.

6. Contact COA with the church

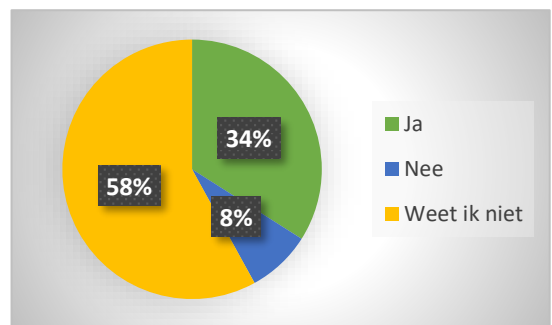
6.1 Have you (or your church) ever been approached by COA about a Christian asylum seeker who was looking for a church/Bible study/spiritual care/contact with Christians?

- ▶ Yes: 12
- ▶ No: 50
- ▶ I do not know: 11



6.2 If not, do you think there are cases where COA could/should have done so?

- ▶ Yes: 17
- ▶ No: 4
- ▶ I do not know: 29



6.3 If COA has not done so but could/should have done so, do you have examples?

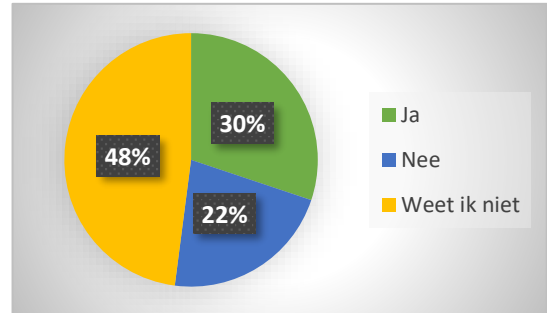
Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 17).

- ▶ 'If refugees ask for it and need it, e.g. when they are looking for a church or Bible study group'.
- ▶ 'Threatening an asylum seeker who wanted to go to church on Sunday. Help for converts who wanted to send their children to a Christian school'.
- ▶ 'Not specifically, in the past they sometimes mentioned people who were in need of contact or had a hard time'.

Religious freedom in the asylum seekers' centre

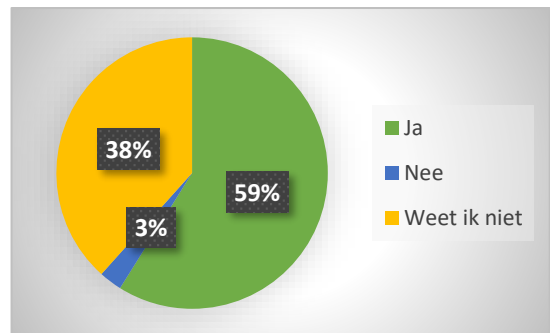
7. Is Bible study in a group allowed in one's own room at the asylum seekers' centre?

- ▶ Yes: 22
- ▶ No: 16
- ▶ I do not know: 35



8. Is it allowed to receive a spiritual counsellor/pastoral visitor in his/her own room?

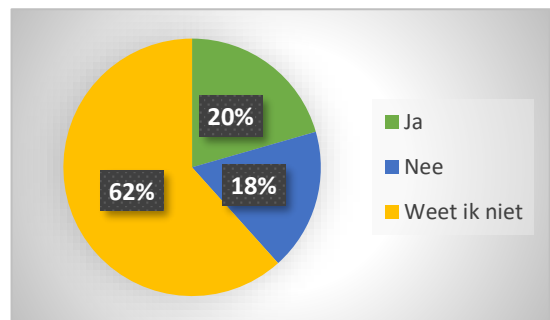
- ▶ Yes: 43
- ▶ No: 2
- ▶ I do not know: 28



9.

9.1 Is it permitted to celebrate Christian holidays at the asylum seekers' centre?

- ▶ Yes: 15
- ▶ No: 13
- ▶ I do not know: 45



9.2 If the celebration of Christian holidays is not permitted, can you briefly explain this?

Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 13).

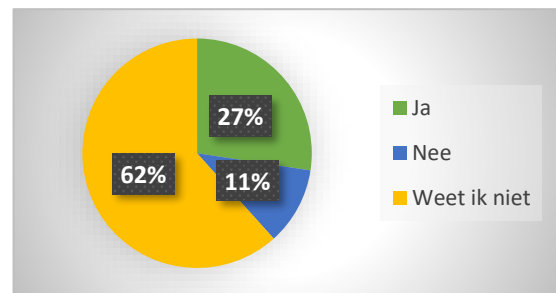
- ▶ 'There is a Christmas tree, but gatherings of a Christian nature are not allowed'.
- ▶ 'It is just not allowed'.
- ▶ 'COA is very clear: religiously neutral. We are not even allowed to hand out toy backpacks anymore by the new LoMa'.
- ▶ 'They want to keep it neutral, no preferences for faith or evangelism'.

- ▶ 'During an activity at the asylum seekers' centre at Christmas, no Christian Christmas music was allowed to be played in the background, because that is religious'.
- ▶ 'COA says that group activities in the asylum seekers' centre must be neutral. I do my Bible studies in a room of a neighbouring church. However, our working group and COA did bake 'oliebollen' on 30 December. That is very nice and edifying...'

10.

10.1 Is it allowed to celebrate other religious holidays at the asylum seekers' centre?

- ▶ Yes: 20
- ▶ No: 8
- ▶ I do not know: 45



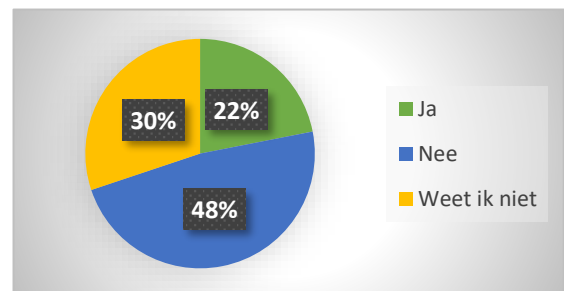
10.2 If this is allowed, could you please explain briefly?

Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 20).

- ▶ 'COA is more accessible to Islam than Christianity'.
- ▶ 'I don't know for sure but never heard any complaints about this from the residents I know'.
- ▶ 'Muslims get more space to pray in public places'.
- ▶ 'Sugar festival/Iftar was widely celebrated, as were LGBTQ activities'.
- ▶ 'These religious holidays are only allowed internally with the residents'.
- ▶ 'I don't know anything else but that people can shape their religion in their own space, outside their own space it is not allowed'.

11. Is it allowed to hang posters announcing religious activities in the asylum seekers' centre?

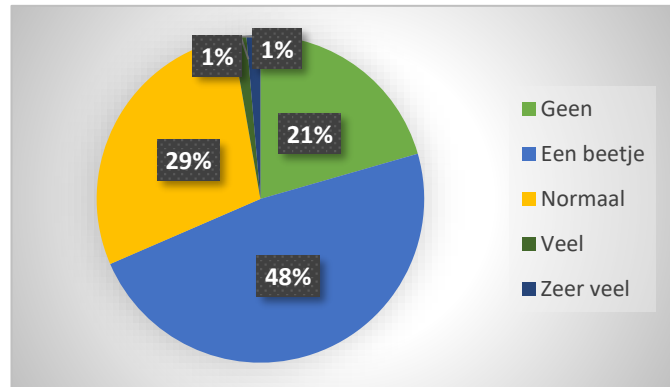
- ▶ Yes: 16
- ▶ No: 35
- ▶ I do not know: 22



Other questions

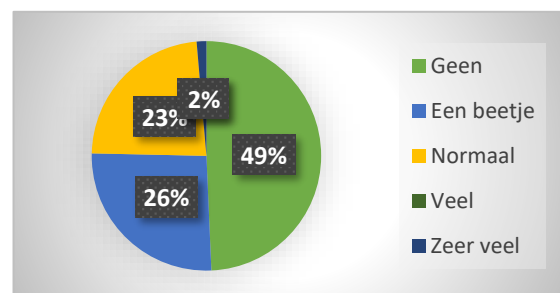
12. To what extent do you experience openness at COA concerning visiting activities/children's clubs/Bible studies at the asylum seekers' centre?

- ▶ None: 15
- ▶ A little: 35
- ▶ Normal: 21
- ▶ Many: 1
- ▶ Very much: 1



13. To what extent do you feel connected to COA in terms of contact with churches / Christians in the vicinity of the asylum seekers' centre?

- ▶ None: 36
- ▶ A little: 19
- ▶ Normal: 17
- ▶ Many: 0
- ▶ Very much: 1



14. In your opinion, what is being done by COA to safeguard or facilitate the interests of Christians and converts in the asylum seekers' centre?

Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 73).

- ▶ 'As far as I know, nothing. We are not allowed to use a room. We are not allowed to have more in a room than there are beds in that room'.
- ▶ 'Safety for every resident is very important. This is mainly achieved by limiting all religious expressions as much as possible'.
- ▶ 'Nothing. COA tries to be 'neutral'. Which means that nothing is allowed to express your faith'.
- ▶ 'COA keeps away from all religion, but guards the person, if he asks for it'.
- ▶ 'Nothing. Six years ago there was more openness and we hung up posters inside, now this is really not allowed any more.

- ▶ 'Refer to the local churches and their volunteers for lessons'.
- ▶ 'Until 2018: hardly any and very dependent on person'.
- ▶ 'I think Christians feel safe in this asylum seekers' centre'.
- ▶ 'Division of rooms. Religion is taken into account'.
- ▶ 'No idea.
- ▶ 'Difficult to assess. Christians and converts or interested people usually do not indicate that they are excluded/pressured'.

15. How would you like to see cooperation with COA in your work?

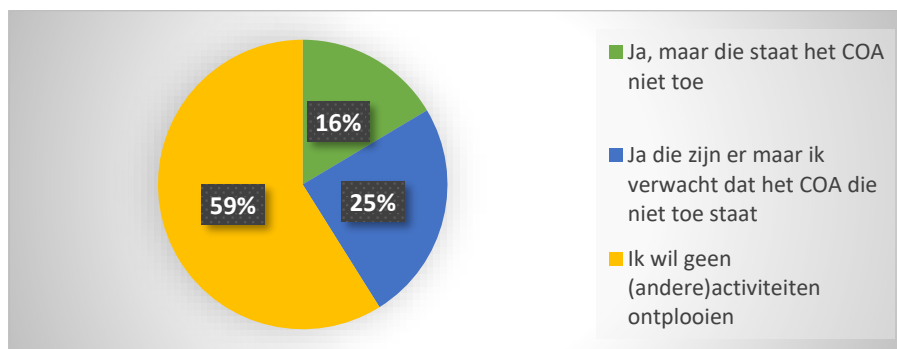
Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 73).

- ▶ 'I am very happy with the cooperation with COA of the azc'.
- ▶ 'Open, clear communication and mutual understanding'.
- ▶ 'That they think from the resident's point of view and do not impose their (atheist/antichristian) world view by the power they have to close doors'.
- ▶ 'The cooperation is pleasant now that I have a regular contact person. I have met her. We know what we can expect from each other. And she also knows what I stand for. There is mutual respect'.
- ▶ 'I would like to agree/hear what is not allowed and be able to work within those limits.
- ▶ 'It's not my job, it's personal contact. :-) There must be more understanding for the experience of faith (of all convictions, for that matter). People often flee because of their beliefs'.
- ▶ 'That they approach me when Christians come into the asylum seekers' centre'.
- ▶ 'Positively looking after the interests of all foreigners'.

16.

16.1 Are there activities you would like to develop but that COA does not allow or that you expect COA not to allow?

- ▶ Yes there are, but COA does not allow them: 12
- ▶ Yes there are but I expect COA will not allow them: 18
- ▶ No there are no (other) activities I would like to develop at the asylum seekers' centre: 43



16.2 If COA does not allow the activities you would like to undertake, why does COA not allow it?

Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 12).

- ▶ 'No religious activities are allowed. We are not allowed to share a room with more than one person'.
- ▶ 'Because it has to do with evangelism'.
- ▶ 'They invoke a religion-neutral position'.
- ▶ 'Because they don't want to hand out invitations in their name because they are a neutral organisation. We don't know where the families live at the moment and they can't/won't cooperate'.

16.3 If you think that COA does not allow the activities you would like to do, why do you think COA does not allow it?

Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 18).

- ▶ 'Afraid the Muslims will object'.
- ▶ 'Because there seems to be a kind of fear and annoyance towards Christian activities, whereas if there are concerns, loving Christian residents at the asylum seekers' centre are asked for help.
- ▶ 'They are afraid of disturbances at the asylum seekers' centre'.
- ▶ 'They declare that they want to be neutral in the religious field. I don't see a room being made available for Bible study in the AZC, although, given the number of Christians or new converts, I think it could meet a need among Christian refugees.
- ▶ 'Because of the Christian background of the activities'.
- ▶ 'COA has a policy that no evangelising is allowed at the camp'.

17. What tips would you give to others when it comes to an attitude towards COA?

Some examples of reactions (total number of reactions: 64).

- ▶ 'Be honestly kind and tell about the spiritual need of the refugee'.
- ▶ 'Be open and transparent, interested and honest'.
- ▶ 'Don't say you are a Christian'.
- ▶ 'Try to work around COA'.
- ▶ 'Together with COA, we can be a strong team for safety and order and mental health also in the asylum seekers' centre'.
- ▶ 'Read the visitors' regulations and stick to them. You will see that it goes smoothly. Gradually, you will gain more openness and mutual trust. They also see how positively the visit is appreciated by the residents and sometimes call on you in case of problems.
- ▶ 'Be honest in what you want and always consult if you want to put up a poster, or do an activity'.

18. Do you have any other suggestions/remarks?

- ▶ 'I think it would be good if a spiritual worker (for example a missionary worker from St Gave) were active in the AZC. Something for everyone: Christian/Muslim/Humanist etc. For the Christian part it could be someone who is capable of representing the churches and who has a consultation hour, for example twice a week. In addition to the VWN and the other disciplines'.
- ▶ 'There seems to be a kind of fear of sharing or doing Christian things in the Azc. They have experienced something negative in that it is about "converting", I heard, and now a lot of what seems religiously Christian is being kept out'.
- ▶ 'COA may be able to help reconnect displaced friends with local Christians'.
- ▶ 'There is always the possibility of inviting asylum seekers to your home or community'.
- ▶ 'I would really like to hear more about how COA takes care of people. Now there are no language lessons for a long time. Too little WiFi to do anything on the Internet by yourself. Why? is the big question from my friend there. And mine too. From Monday onwards, the detainees can receive visitors again. When will they be allowed again? '

COLOFON

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LEGAL SUPPORT Gave

The Gave Foundation desires that the refugees who come to our country are seen and loved. Gave is an interdenominational organisation that makes churches and Christians aware of the biblical calling to welcome refugees. The legal support department advises churches and volunteers on questions in the field of immigration law. The department also offers support to Christians who request asylum because of fear of religious persecution.

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