



With a budget of around 17 pence per head – 20 cents – the Brussels community kitchen works hard to pack as much nutrition as possible into each meal it cooks for refugees while getting maximum value for money.

The now independent not-for-profit organisation, working from the kitchens of the pro-Cathedral of Holy Trinity Church, Brussels, in the Diocese in Europe, provides the majority of hot meals – 85% – for a humanitarian hub in the city.

Project Director Gayl Russell, a Holy Trinity congregation member and one of the founders of the community kitchen, says the meals are mostly vegetarian, with the menu typically bean curries, stews and lentils, along with cous cous, pasta and rice.



“It is simple stuff, but the sort of thing we can prepare in big pots in our kitchen and the portion it out in our hall,” she said.

“In Brussels there is a huge number of refugees, they are living on the streets, in hostels, squats and asylum centres, and so there is a huge need for food. As our kitchen has got bigger and more organised, we have been asked to do more and more.”

The church premises have been used to prepare meals for refugees since 2019 after she realised that its generous sized kitchens were needed for this work.

The project started ‘small’, she says, with 200 meals a week, but grew massively under the Covid lockdowns, providing food to people on the streets. It is now making 5,000 meals a week and has a small staff including cooks and an operations manager.

An army of volunteers, working from the church hall, helps get the food packaged and transported to the humanitarian centre.

The community kitchen is funded from donations – including from the Church of England’s Diocese in Europe, the USPG, the Episcopal Church in Europe Refugee Grant Programme and private business. It is feeding refugees and asylum seekers from conflict and crisis-hit countries across the world.

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