

HOPE IS THE PATH

ANNUAL REPORT



EUROPE

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ALBERTO ARES
REGIONAL DIRECTOR
JRS EUROPE

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Our efforts this year have focused on empowering communities and fostering sustainable development through targeted interventions and strategic partnerships each tailored to address critical global challenges including climate change, education, and integration.

Throughout the year, we have achieved significant milestones across all projects. These include the development and implementation of innovative educational materials aimed at raising awareness and understanding of climate change and migration, enhancing infrastructure and providing comprehensive legal and social support for Afghan asylum seekers, and promoting civic engagement and critical thinking among European youth. Our projects have not only addressed immediate needs but have also laid the groundwork for long-term societal benefits.

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine has displaced millions, JRS has been actively responding to this crisis and remains committed to supporting those displaced by the conflict. Through the One Proposal, a unified effort by the Society of Jesus, JRS and its partners we served 44,723 people in 2023 and have aided a total of 100,765 refugees since the conflict began.

Looking ahead, our strategy focuses on scaling up successful initiatives, enhancing collaborative efforts with existing and new partners, and continuously refining our project frameworks to better meet the evolving challenges.

We express our deep gratitude to our partners, benefactors, and dedicated teams who drive our mission. JRS Europe remains committed to making impactful change through education and awareness, fostering inclusive and welcoming societies.

While we celebrate our achievements, we recognize the challenges ahead. We remain optimistic and committed to adapting, innovating, and collaborating for greater impact. Knowing that hope is the path forward.



YEAR AT
A GLANCE

**PEOPLE SERVED
IN EUROPE**

235,029

MISSION

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve and advocate for the rights of refugees and others who are forcibly displaced.

VISION

JRS in Europe works towards a Europe where human rights, protection, hospitality, integration, and reconciliation all have a place to flourish within a larger vision for inclusive and welcoming societies.



Livelihoods

35,478



Mental Health & Psychological Support

21,282



Peacebuilding & Reconciliation

37,191



Education

30,486



Advocacy &
Communication

48,135



Legal Assistance

21,531



Emergency Aid

15,417



Healthcare

10,762



Pastoral Care

14,747



JESUIT RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

In 2023, marking two years since the Russia-Ukraine conflict began, Europe continues to grapple with a severe humanitarian crisis. **Over 6 million people have been displaced**, with countries like Poland, Romania, Hungary, Moldova, and Slovakia bearing the brunt. About 1.8 million individuals are moving back and forth into Ukraine, exposing themselves to risks like human trafficking and bombings. According to IOM and UNHCR, Ukraine hosts 3.7 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), with 14.6 million needing assistance by 2024.

along with the Xavier Network and the Society of Jesus, has been steadfast in supporting Ukrainians throughout this period. **In 2023 alone, JRS supported 44,723 people, including 10,412 through the Integration Fund, totaling 100,765 refugees aided since the conflict's inception.** Initially targeting support for 73,000 people from 2022-2025, JRS has surpassed this milestone, shifting its focus from emergency relief to long-term refugee inclusion in 2023.

A Needs Assessment has highlighted significant barriers to refugee integration, such as lack of access to jobs, health services, and housing, which threaten to force refugees back into conflict zones. JRS operates in Lviv and partners with L'Arche, extending efforts to neighboring countries - Romania, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and Moldova. The One Proposal initiative, which started as emergency humanitarian aid, has evolved into long-term support, encompassing integra-





tion, mental health, psychosocial support, accommodation, and basic needs assistance.

Additionally, JRS launched a second Integration Fund in 2023, allocating over 500,000 euros to support projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, Serbia, North Macedonia, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Ireland. This fund addresses immediate needs and actively facilitates refugee integration into host societies. Amid ongoing

crises, JRS remains a beacon of hope, navigating the complexities of displacement with resilience and compassion.

PROMOTING CRITICAL THINKING AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE

TOGETHER FOR CHANGE

The T4CHANGE project represents a significant initiative led by JRS, aimed at fostering civic engagement among students and promoting critical thinking skills and the integration of migrants. This ambitious project spans across eight European countries, including Belgium, Spain, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Serbia, and Portugal, and involves a strategic partnership with migrant self-led organizations to ensure their empowerment and active participation throughout the project stages.

The core activities of the T4CHANGE project are centered around the adaptation and review of educational materials that raise awareness, tailored to the needs and contexts of different communities. These materials are used in training sessions for both teachers and young migrants, equipping them with the necessary skills to conduct impactful school workshops. These workshops are designed not only to educate but also to foster a sense of solidarity and understanding among students and migrants.

In addition to educational activities, the project facilitates various initiatives where students and young migrants collaborate on volunteering projects and participate in community events. These activities are crucial for building meaningful relationships and integrating migrants into the community, thereby enriching the social fabric with diverse perspectives and experiences.



The project sets ambitious targets to raise awareness among approximately 8500 stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, and community leaders. It aims to implement between 24 to 40 solidarity initiatives which are expected to enhance student engagement significantly. Furthermore, the project focuses on strengthening the capabilities of 160 to 260 teachers, enabling them to effectively facilitate awareness workshops and contribute to the educational goals of the project.

One of the notable outcomes of the T4CHANGE project is the development of a European mapping report of migrant initiatives. This report will provide valuable insights into the various activities and programs across Europe, aiding in the replication of successful initiatives and fostering a network of knowledge and support. Additionally, the project is dedicated to establishing long-lasting partnerships and a robust school network that will continue to support civic engagement and migrant integration beyond the project's duration.

The results and the progress of the T4CHANGE project are set to be discussed at one European and eight national events, ensuring that the learnings and successes are widely shared and celebrated. This dissemination strategy is pivotal in amplifying the impact of the project and inspiring similar initiatives across Europe and beyond.

In summary, the T4CHANGE project is a comprehensive effort to enhance the educational landscape in Europe by promoting inclusivity, critical thinking, and active civic participation. Through its collaborative approach and targeted activities, the project not only addresses immediate educational needs but also contributes to the long-term goal of creating inclusive societies that value and integrate migrants.


U-CHANGE

The U-Change project was designed to empower young individuals and combat discrimination against migrants through education and awareness-raising initiatives. This project was pivotal in addressing the increasing challenges of racism and xenophobia towards migrants in Europe, focusing on fostering critical thinking and promoting democratic values among the youth.

Throughout the project's duration, extensive research was conducted to identify the most effective awareness-raising strategies that could be implemented among students. This research was instrumental in understanding how to engage students actively and develop their critical thinking skills. The project reached an impressive milestone by involving over 10,000 students across various educational settings.

To further amplify the impact, the U-CHANGE project organized multiple multiplier events aimed at empowering educators. These events equipped teachers and civil society organizations with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively foster critical thinking and democratic values among students. The educational materials developed were tailored to enhance the educators' ability to implement the project's objectives effectively.

The dissemination of the project's outputs was another significant aspect of U-CHANGE. The materials and findings were shared widely through national events and robust online platforms, reaching a broad audience and ensuring that the project's impacts were sustained beyond its immediate circle. This wide dissemination helped in reaching an estimated 171,577 stakeholders, significantly expanding the project's reach and influence.



The project reached an estimated 171,577 stakeholders.

Despite the successes, the project faced challenges, primarily the pervasive rise of negative attitudes towards migrants, which posed a substantial barrier to achieving the project's goals. However, by focusing on education and empowerment, U-CHANGE has made considerable strides in combating these societal issues, fostering a more inclusive and understanding environment among Europe's youth.

CHANGE ENVIRONMENT

The Change Environment Project, generously funded by ERASMUS+, has been a cornerstone initiative aimed at integrating the critical issues of climate change and migration into educational frameworks across Europe. **This project has successfully developed and translated a range of pedagogical materials designed to foster awareness and stimulate discussion among young students about the complex relationship between environmental changes and migratory movements.**

From February to June 2022, the project's initial phase involved the establishment of the Methodological Advisory Committee (MAC) which played a pivotal role in shaping the educational content and strategies. This period was crucial for laying the groundwork, including the development of a curriculum proposal that would later guide the creation of comprehensive educational tools.

The subsequent months, from July to December 2022, were marked by vigorous activities in curriculum development, design, and translation. Partners collaborated to produce informative videos and began implementing the newly developed curriculum in selected schools. This phase was critical in transitioning from theoretical framework development to practical application within the classroom setting.

The first half of 2023 continued to see dynamic progress, with the development of evaluations and quizzes tailored for students, extensive mapping of schools, and the coordination with speakers to facilitate enriching activities. These efforts were aimed at deepening the educational impact and ensuring that the materials were not only informative but also engaging for students.

Throughout the project, significant achievements have been noted in the active engagement of schools, teachers, and students. The materials developed have been instrumental in raising awareness about the nuances of climate change and its implications for migration, thereby fostering a more informed and empathetic understanding among students.

However, the project also encountered challenges, particularly in tailoring the pedagogical materials to suit diverse age groups and educational backgrounds. Finding the right balance of information complexity and ensuring the materials' ease of implementation for teachers with varying levels of experience were ongoing concerns that the project team addressed through continuous adaptation and support.

Overall, this project has facilitated a significant step forward in integrating crucial global issues into the educational discourse, preparing a generation of informed citizens ready to tackle the challenges of climate change and migration support and access to the territory and to legal status. JRS Europe's Advocacy Coordinator took the lead in doing preparation work and first draft of strategic goals on the topic of access to the territory and legal status.

DETENTION UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

2023, our focus remained steadfast on our mission to eradicate immigration detention throughout Europe and to shed light on the pressing human rights violations faced by detained migrants. Collaborating with 14 European states, JRS Europe continued its Detention Under the Spotlight project. Regular visits to detention facilities were conducted by approximately 100 individuals, comprising JRS staff and volunteers, across 12 of these states on a weekly basis. During these visits, they provided crucial legal, psycho-social, and pastoral support to over 2000 detained individuals while closely observing the conditions within these facilities.

Central to our advocacy efforts was the collection and analysis of data, facilitated by the development of a common database within the framework of the project.

For the 17th consecutive year, JRS Europe organized the Detention Visitors Support Group training, made possible through the support of Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (SJM), JRS' partner organization in Spain. Themed "Building Trust in Hostile Environments", the training aimed to enhance the capacity of detention visitors, fostering the exchange of best practices and addressing key challenges. Participants received training on employing a psycho-social multicultural approach when working with detained migrants, understanding the legal requirement of consent in data gathering, and engaging in advocacy through effective storytelling.

Throughout 2023, we continued to shed light on problematic detention practices through our series, Detention Under





the Spotlight, focusing on Belgium, North Macedonia, and Spain. These editions highlighted questionable practices concerning legality, proportionality, and other critical aspects.

Furthermore, our commitment to advocacy was underscored by the publication of our report titled “Visiting Migrants in Detention: How it is and how it should be”. This report provided an overview of

visitors’ access to detention centers across 14 European states, amplifying our voice in advocating for humane treatment and transparency within the detention system.

**OUR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS
SUPPORTED OVER 2000 DETAINED
MIGRANTS ACROSS 12 COUNTRIES.**

EMPOWERING FORCED MIGRANTS AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

In 2023, the JRS Europe Hardship Fund, with support from the Linsi Foundation CH and co-financing from JRS USA, operated across 13 European countries to aid vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers. JRS Europe coordinated efforts to alleviate funding shortages in various Country Offices, enabling them to provide crucial support. The project aimed to address both European and national policy issues while offering direct assistance to those seeking refuge in Europe.

Financial support from JRS USA particularly targeted Country Offices in **Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Croatia, Malta, Luxembourg, Portugal, and the United Kingdom**, helping sustain essential aid for migrants and refugees. **Across these countries, funds were used for shelter, food, hygiene items, healthcare, and legal services, addressing the urgent needs of migrants along the Balkan route and in other regions.**

Initiatives in countries like Malta, Portugal, and Belgium focused on supporting vulnerable forced migrants with uncertain legal status and limited access to social assistance.

These efforts included providing administrative support, addressing poverty, and homelessness among asylum seekers, reflecting JRS's commitment to upholding fundamental rights and seeking durable solutions for forced migrants and asylum seekers across Europe.



HELPING REFUGEES FIND NEW BEGINNINGS

In 2023, as highlighted in the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Operation Aid publication, Afghanistan experienced severe humanitarian crises, with millions in urgent need of assistance to survive, and a substantial portion of the population grappling with acute hunger. Meanwhile, in Europe, **Afghans remained one of the largest groups seeking asylum, with over 100,000 asylum applications submitted from January to September 2023**, with France emerging as a primary host country for Afghan refugees.

The Afghan Funds project, initiated by JRS EU, is dedicated to supporting Afghan asylum seekers across Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Macedonia, Portugal, and Serbia. This comprehensive initiative focuses on a range of critical areas including the renovation of safe houses, the provision of human rights protection, support for Afghan families, and the promotion of the integration of Afghan youth into their host societies.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the project's efforts have been centered on renovating the JRS safe house to provide a secure environment for vulnerable unaccompanied minors. This renovation has ensured that the facilities are equipped with essential infrastructure, providing a stable and safe environment for the beneficiaries. Since the commencement of the project, the safe house has served numerous individuals, offering them a haven and necessary resources for their well-being.

In France, the project targets adult Afghan men and occasionally women, who are often outside the coverage of the French reception system.

The initiative focuses on **preventing homelessness among these individuals by providing them with stable housing and access to social support, thereby facilitating their integration process.**

Macedonia's component of the Afghan Funds project addresses the needs of forced migrants and asylum seekers by providing support at the Reception Centre for foreigners in Skopje and other facilities.

The project ensures that these individuals receive the necessary accompaniment and advocacy, focusing on their human rights and integration into the local community.

In Portugal, the project has established an informal support network known as the "Community of Hospitality" to assist newly arrived Afghan families. This network helps families integrate into the community by assisting them with local orientation, employment, and navigating the local bureaucracy, thereby fostering their path to autonomy.

Serbia's efforts are directed towards the socialization and integration of Afghan children and youth, who face significant challenges due to limited housing and integration opportunities. The project provides these individuals with essential support, including accommodation, education, and psychological and

health services, to aid their integration into society. Despite the progress, the project faces significant challenges, primarily due to the varying needs of Afghan asylum seekers and the complex humanitarian crises in Europe. These challenges include legal and bureaucratic hurdles, cultural integration, securing stable housing, and ensuring consistent support across different regions.

Overall, the Afghan Funds project has made substantial strides in enhancing the infrastructure, legal, and social support systems for Afghan asylum seekers in Europe. By addressing their immediate needs and facilitating their integration, the project not only aids in alleviating the hardships faced by these individuals but also contributes to the broader goal of fostering inclusive and resilient communities.

THE STORY OF THE SARDAZAI FAMILY

My family was fortunate to be selected for support from the Extra Mile project, a lifeline during one of our most challenging times. When we lost financial support from the government, the project's assistance with paying half of our rent for three months was crucial. It gave us the stability we desperately needed to adjust to our new reality.

The project's support went beyond just financial aid. They helped us find a daycare for my children, allowing me to focus on something I've longed to do—attend Portuguese classes. With my children cared for and a stable home, I can now dedicate myself to learning the language, opening the door to employment opportunities and a brighter future for my family.





“ It gave us the stability we desperately needed to adjust to our new reality. ”

SARDAZAI FAMILY

OUR ADVOCACY WORK

JRS Advocacy work in 2023 largely revolved around the negotiations on the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum. Throughout the year, JRS Europe's Policy and Advocacy Coordinator took part in at least 12 meetings with policy makers at EU level (MEPs, officials of the European Commissions) to discuss about issue related to the EU Pact on Asylum and Migration and related files.

Such meetings were usually the result of the work of formal or informal coalitions with other NGOs, such through membership of ECRE, the so-called Christian group or a spontaneous group of NGOs aligned on the same goals bringing together, next to JRS, also PICUM, the Red Cross EU Office, Caritas Europa, Save the Children and Euromed Rights. In these exchanges, we strived to put forward legislative amendments and policies to ensure the respect of refugees and asylum seekers' rights. In particular, as JRS we focused on input related to detention and reception conditions, as well as on the importance of effective legal remedies in the asylum procedure and access to legal aid.

The work around the Pact intensified towards the end of the year, when JRS, together with others, pushed for strong NGO reactions against the Pact. A visible result of this was the **press statement** that was eventually picked up by **the Guardian**, in which also JRS is mentioned. We also released as series of statements, alone or jointly with our JRS network or other NGOs:

- 31 October: **JRS Joint Statement: Better no pact than compromising on Human Rights and EU Values**
- 8 December: **EU Migration Pact: Not too late to choose Human Rights**

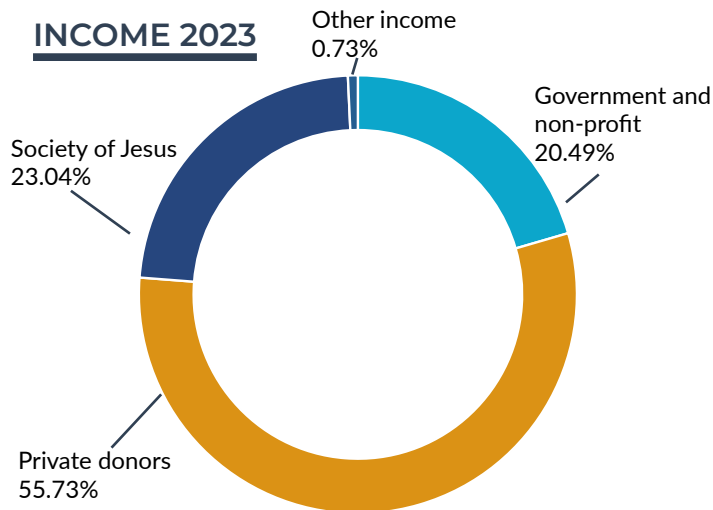
- 18 December: **+50 NGOs Open letter to European Leaders: “Stand up for Human Rights, safety and dignity in the Migration Pact”**
- 20 December: **EU MIGRATION PACT: A historic low for the common EU Asylum System**

JRS Europe also continued with its engagement within the Frontex Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights. We participated in 16 meetings, both in preparation and in direct interaction with the management of the Agency. In 2023 we also involved more directly our JRS network in the work of the consultative forum by having colleagues from JRS Italy and JRS Serbia participating in the on-the-spot missions.

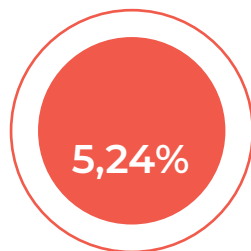
In 2023, we also engaged with some activities of the Consultative Forum on Fundamental Rights of the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA), in particular in relation to the start of the work of the Agency’s Fundamental Rights Officer, the setting up of a monitoring mechanism for asylum systems in EU Member States and a complaint mechanism.

Finally, in 2023 JRS Europe’s Policy and Advocacy Coordinator was also closely involved in the process of developing a JRS Global Advocacy Strategy. The process included two in person meetings, in Lisbon and Nairobi, and monthly online meeting with colleagues from the different regions of JRS in the world. The process resulted in the identification of **3 main priority areas for global advocacy: access to education, access to mental health and psycho-social support and access to the territory and to legal status.** JRS Europe’s Advocacy Coordinator took the lead in doing preparation work and first draft of strategic goals on the topic of access to the territory and legal status.

YEAR IN FIGURES

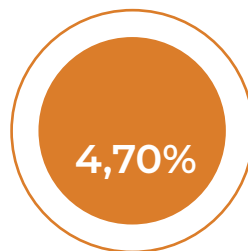
INCOME 2023

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Government and non-profit | 236,103.32 € |
| Private donors | 642,051.29 € |
| Society of Jesus | 265,458.00 € |
| Other income | 8,459.25 € |
| TOTAL | 1,152,071.86 € |

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

Organizational support

54,237.88 €



Advocacy and communications

48,693.83 €

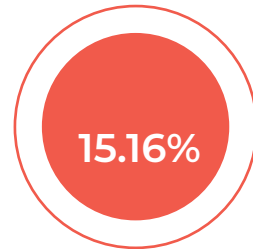


Programmes

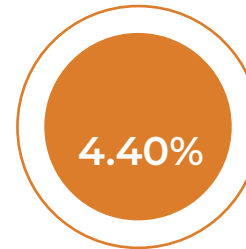
932,472.38 €

INCOME 2023

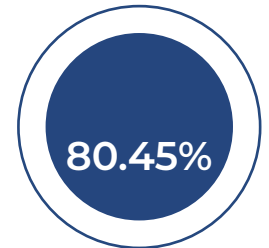
| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Government and non-profit | 13,349,185.13 € |
| Private donors | 11,853,535.20 € |
| Society of Jesus | 5,801,256.55 € |
| Religious | 4,873,295.86 € |
| TOTAL | 35,877,272.74 € |

EXPENDITURE SUMMARY

Organizational support
5,121,001.76 €



Advocacy and communications
1,482,722.79 €



Programmes
27,170,423.22 €

INCOME 2023



THANK YOU

JRS Europe thanks the supporters who made our work possible in 2023. Your contributions helped JRS Europe to accompany people, advocate for their rights, provide needed services and raise awareness on the issues they face as well contribute to building diverse and inclusive societies across Europe. We would like to thank Acceleractions.com, Arise Foundation, CAFOD/DEC, Catholic Mission Australia, CMMB, Communauté Jésuite Opstal, COVIVIO, Erasmus+, EU-AMIF, EPIM, European Solidarity Corps, Fidelity Europe Foundation, Fondation Gratitude, Fundación EO, Gulbenkian Foundation/JRS PT, Irish Province SJ, JCEP, Jesuiten Weltweit, Jesusitas Valladolid, JRS USA, JRS International, Linsi Foundation, LDS Charities, Macao Province SJ, Oak Foundation, Polish Scouts U.S., Porticus, Renovabis, Xavier Network, Zusters van het Heilig Hart, as well as individual & anonymous donors. JRS Europe also thanks all donors supporting the One Proposal project.



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