

30

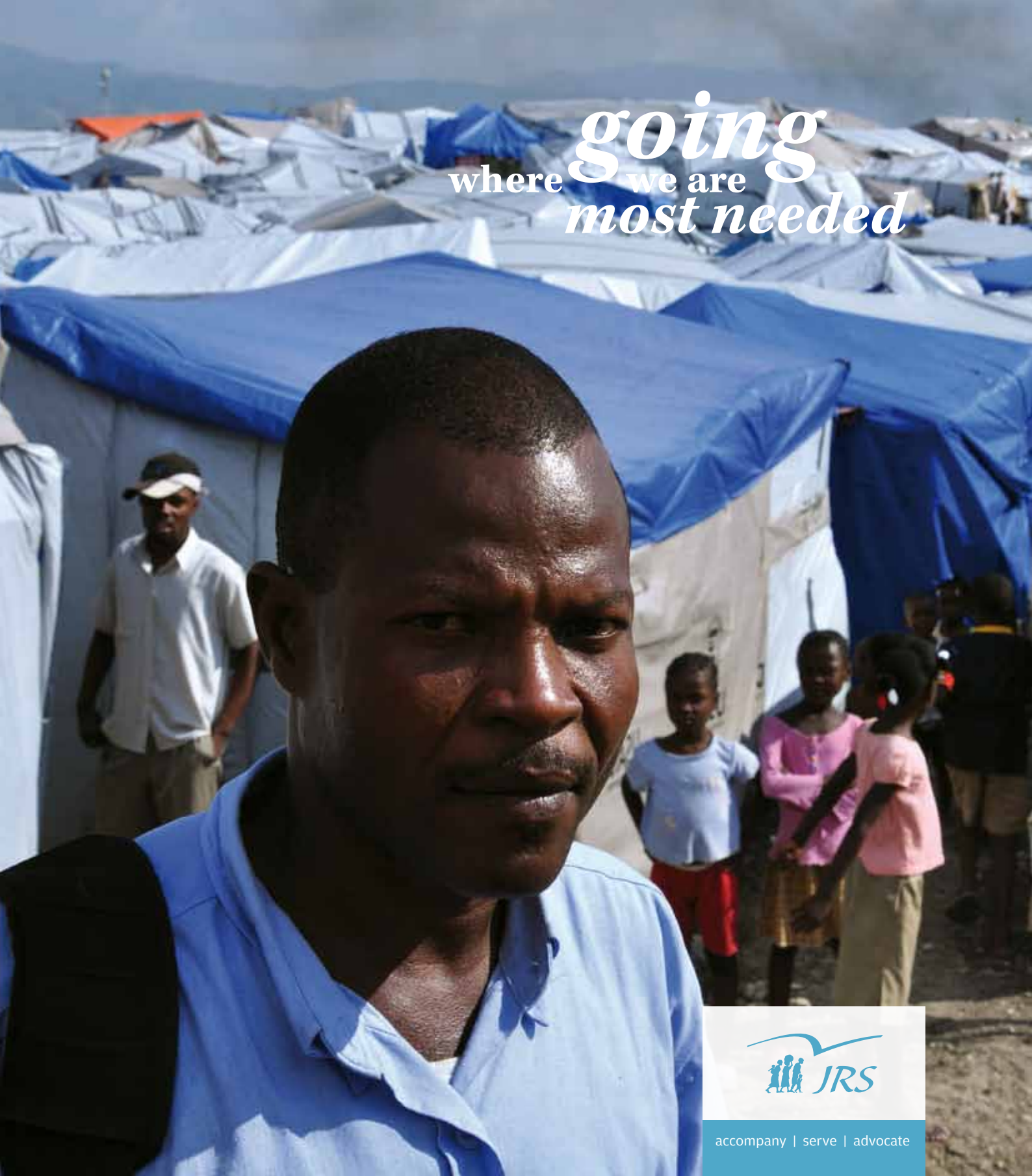
SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY EDITION

servir

JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE

NO. 50

going
where we are
most needed



accompany | serve | advocate

Servir is available free in English, Spanish, French and Italian. It is published three times a year by the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

NOVEMBER 2010



COVER PHOTO

A displaced man in Automecca camp in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, where JRS is present. (JRS International)

PUBLISHER
Peter Balleis SJ

EDITOR
Danielle Vella

DESIGNER
Malcolm Bonello



The Jesuit Refugee Service is an international Catholic organisation established in 1980 by Pedro Arrupe SJ. Its mission is to accompany, serve and defend the cause of forcibly displaced people.

Jesuit Refugee Service
Borgo S. Spirito 4, 00193 Rome, Italy

TEL: +39 06 6897 7386

FAX: +39 06 6897 7380

servir@jrs.net

www.jrs.net



in this issue

Editorial	03
Asia Pacific	
The beginnings of JRS	04
The Society of Jesus and the refugee problem	05
The early years that shaped the future	06
Romania	
Resettlement: learning a new way of life	08
Ukraine	
The realisation of hope	10
Tanzania/Burundi	
JRS: in exile and back home	13
Tamil Nadu	
Lives on hold	15
Haiti	
Starting over	17
Build communities	19
Middle East	
A place to feel at home	20
JRS in Syria wins award	22
Kenya/Malawi	
Higher education at the margins	23
USA	
A concerted effort	25
Angola	
Grassroots advocacy	28
Cambodia	
A reason to celebrate	30
JRS, a source of my consolation	31

Appeal (back cover)

The following are used throughout this issue

DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
IDP/s	Internally displaced person/s
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



Compassion, love, hope

Pedro Arrupe SJ felt “struck and shocked by the plight of thousands of boat people and refugees”. The then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Fr Arrupe founded, out of compassion, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) on 14 November 1980. Today JRS looks back at 30 years of accompaniment, service and advocacy with and for refugees. The plight of millions of forcibly displaced people remains with us however the contexts have changed, posing new challenges for JRS. While JRS remains firmly engaged in refugee camps in remote rural areas, the considerable trend of refugees seeking asylum in urban areas has also prompted JRS to work in cities. Environmental changes and natural disasters are causing massive population displacements and confront JRS with yet another challenge: if, when and how to respond? *Struck and shocked* by the suffering of the people in Haiti made homeless by the earthquake of 12 January 2010, the Jesuits immediately got engaged. JRS is part of the mission in Haiti and Fr General Adolfo Nicolás SJ has encouraged us to help in the process of building communities in the camps, seeking long-term rehabilitation.

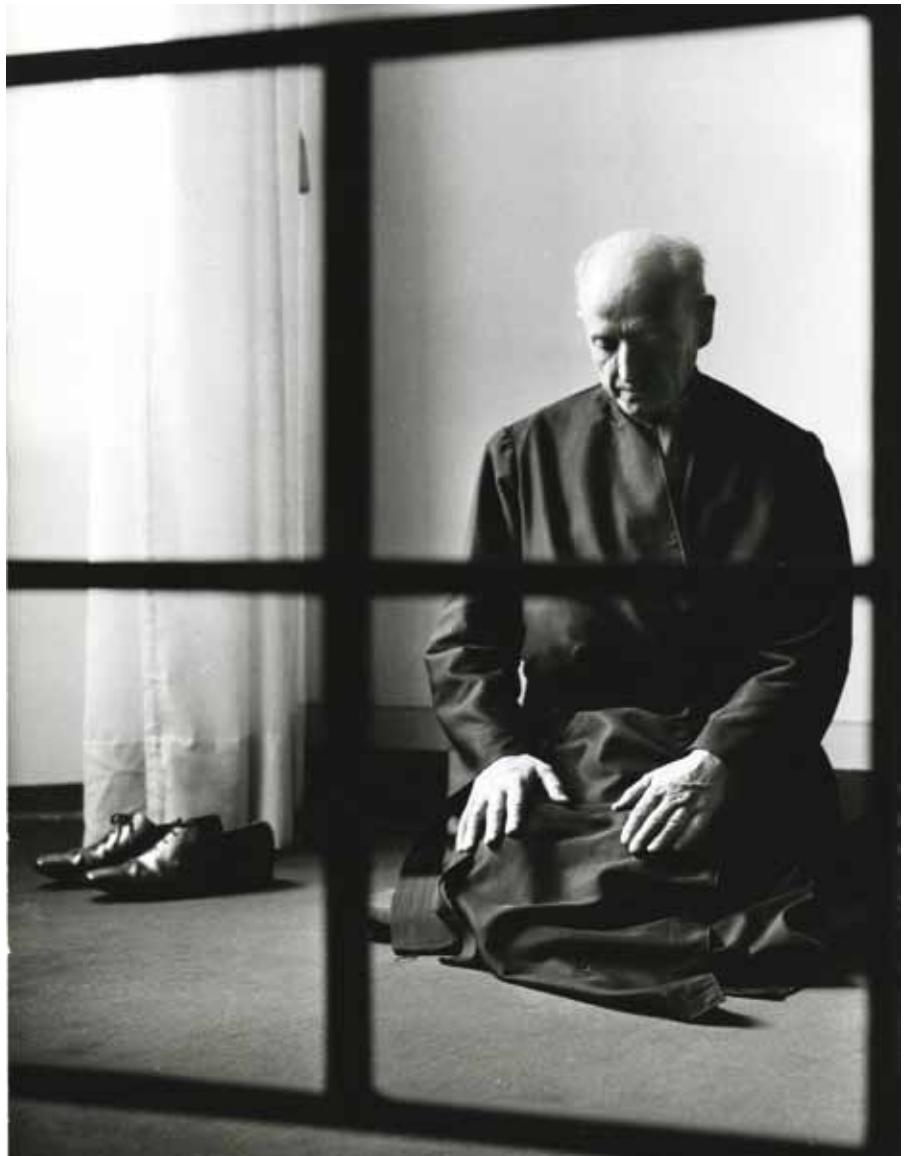
Over these 30 years, JRS has been guided not by a narrow legal definition of what is a refugee, but by a more generous understanding of the term, which embraces related categories of forcibly displaced people in line with Catholic social teaching. JRS is moved to respond when it is *struck and shocked* by the plight of refugees in camps, of IDPs, of asylum seekers and undocumented, vulnerable migrants in detention centres and now ever more in cities. Compassion is the deep motivation of our accompaniment.

While the geographical beginning of JRS was in Asia Pacific, in the 90s the focus shifted to Africa with the crisis of the Great Lakes region. More recently JRS started to work with refugees in the Middle East and Afghanistan, in the region of the world with the highest number of forcibly displaced people. JRS, as a Christian and faith-based organisation, seeks ways of reaching out to people of different faiths, of inviting them to be part of JRS, of accompanying and serving them. We do so through the language of love translated into tangible service.

Education has been the strongest feature of JRS services from the very early days. JRS is now embarking on a project for higher education for refugees in collaboration with Jesuit universities. The deeper forces of the triple mission of JRS are compassion turned into accompaniment, love into concrete service, and hope promoted through education and advocacy for durable solutions, for justice and peace.

Peter Balleis SJ
JRS International Director

📷 Fr Arrupe in Rome, praying in his 'Japanese style'. (Italfonte, Rome)



the beginnings of JRS

The visionary behind JRS

Jesuit Superior General from 1965 to 1983, Pedro Arrupe SJ inspired his Jesuit companions to take on the multiple and radical challenges that were rapidly transforming the modern world. In the late seventies, Fr Arrupe, who had himself lived in Asia, was shocked

by the palpable suffering of the Vietnamese boat people fleeing their homeland. Convinced of both the *dramatically urgent* needs of the refugees and of the potential of the Jesuits to respond, Fr Arrupe set up the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) on 14 November 1980. 🌐

“ I will say one more thing, and please don't forget it. Pray. Pray much. Problems such as these are not solved by human efforts. I am telling you things that I want to emphasise, a message – perhaps my 'swan song' for the Society...

Pedro Arrupe SJ, Final address to Jesuits working with refugees in Thailand, 1981

”

The Society of Jesus and the refugee problem

Excerpts from the letter sent by Pedro Arrupe SJ to all Jesuit Major Superiors, 14 November, 1980

Around Christmas time, last year, struck and shocked by the plight of thousands of boat people and refugees, I felt it my duty to send cable messages to some 20 Major Superiors around the world. Sharing my distress with them, I asked what they in their own countries and the universal Society could do to bring at least some relief to such a tragic situation.

...This situation constitutes a challenge to the Society we cannot ignore if we are to remain faithful to St Ignatius' criteria for our apostolic work... In the Constitutions St Ignatius speaks of the greater universal good, an urgency that is ever growing, the difficulty and complexity of the human problem involved, and

lack of other people to attend to the need. With our ideal of availability and universality, the number of institutions under our care, and the active collaboration of many lay people who work with us, we are particularly well fitted to meet this challenge and provide services that are not being catered for sufficiently by other organisations and groups... Furthermore, the help needed is not only material: in a special way the Society is being called to render a service that is human, pedagogical and spiritual. It is a difficult and complex challenge; the needs are dramatically urgent. I have no hesitation in repeating what I said at our Consultation: *I consider this as a new modern apostolate for the Society as a*

whole, of great importance for today and the future, and of much spiritual benefit also to the Society.

...I have decided to set up within the Curia a service to co-ordinate Jesuit refugee work, which will henceforth be referred to as the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

St Ignatius called us to go anywhere we are most needed for the greater service of God. The spiritual as well as material need of nearly 16 million refugees throughout the world today could scarcely be greater. God is calling us through these helpless people. We should consider the chance of being able to assist them a privilege that will, in turn, bring great blessings to ourselves and our Society. 🌐



📷 Thai-Cambodian border: Pierre Ceyrac SJ stands firmly by a refugee in one of the border camps, where he served from 1980 to 1993. The Jesuit, who won the Legion d'Honneur for his lifelong service to the poor, recalls how before setting off to work with refugees, he turned to Fr Arrupe for confirmation. *Of course, go!* was the immediate reply of the Superior General. (Kuangchi Programme Service)

The early years that shaped the future

The activities of JRS in Asia Pacific were initially dominated by the aftermath of the Indochina wars. JRS quickly established programmes in camps housing Laotian, Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees throughout the region. Mark Raper SJ, Director of JRS Asia Pacific from 1982 to 1990 and International Director from 1990 to 2000, recalls the early years:

Following Fr General Pedro Arrupe's appeal, Jesuit volunteers soon came to serve in the camps. However the organisation of JRS in Asia Pacific built up more slowly and gradually took shape over the next five or ten years.

Immediately following his early cables and November 1980 letter, Jesuits joined agencies and field teams in camps for the Indochinese refugees, especially in Thailand. Spurred on by Fr Ambrose D'Mello, then Provincial of India, and supported by Caritas India, a ten person team including four Jesuits and six lay persons arrived in 1981 for a six-month service in Thailand. All the Jesuits (Frs Pierre Ceyrac, John Bingham, Brs Noel Oliver, Paul Macwan) later returned for further service. Fr Ed Brady came with Catholic Relief Services, Br Bob Maat came with the American Refugee Committee. Most of these Jesuits were present when Fr Arrupe stopped over in Bangkok in early August. On the Feast of the Transfiguration, the anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb, Arrupe addressed the Jesuits in Thailand. Before meeting the Jesuits, he had visited the Archbishop of Bangkok. That night Fr Arrupe left for the flight to Rome, during which he suffered the cerebral stroke that ended his active life. In Bangkok he had described JRS as his 'swansong' for the Society, and

it proved so. Enduring features of JRS were already evident from that talk and those early experiences. It was an encounter that shaped JRS into the future.

First, for key Jesuits in Thailand, the Society's engagement in the controversial question of serving refugees was too risky. They said that in Thai law these are illegal immigrants, so we would be putting our whole presence in Thailand at risk. Moreover the Society is too small and overstretched for such a huge undertaking, they argued. Further, they said foreign Jesuits will make cultural mistakes, again putting the local efforts at risk. Yet Fr Arrupe insisted that much good would come from this service, that risks should be taken, and he firmly requested the Jesuits in Thailand to offer a person from among their number who would have a key role in the corporate engagement of the Society. Fr Arrupe even spelt out the tasks and qualities of the person who should be appointed: "The coordinator has to have an ear for every one of you, and for those who come from regions outside Thailand; for the bishops here, and for everything that is going on. After that he will consult with the superior of the place and settle the policy to be followed. He has to be a very good man, open and prudent and with courage."



A COMMON SIGHT



Thailand: Like the Vietnamese boat people whose plight touched Fr Arrupe, the Hmong refugees in Ban Vinai camp were victims of the Indochina wars and among the first to be reached by JRS. (1987 Jan Cooney/JRS)



📷 “With little means but with great effort, we fought for human dignity” - Thai-Cambodian border: Pierre Ceyrac SJ celebrating Mass in Site Two, the barbed wire-enclosed home of more than 140,000 refugees. Fr Pierre recalls that he and another Jesuit, John Bingham, were the only ones authorised to stay in the camp as priests. (1986 Mark Raper SJ/JRS)

“ I think you should be very happy with your work here. You are doing a wonderful work, though a difficult one. It is an important work...

Pedro Arrupe SJ, Final address to Jesuits working with refugees in Thailand, 1981

Second, both the local and visiting Jesuits wanted JRS to become a separate agency and to operate independently of the local Church agency, which they felt would not be transparent. Following the insistence of Archbishop (later Cardinal) Meechai Kitbunchu, Fr Arrupe indicated that we should work to strengthen the local Church agency, the Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees (COERR). The JRS name had a low profile in Thailand. Cooperation with and strengthening of the local Church, especially of its Caritas agencies, became a standard feature of JRS.

That first team from India had been Jesuits and lay people, indicating a constant collaborative pattern in the formation of JRS teams in Asia Pacific and across the world. In his talk Fr Arrupe spoke of the qualities of our presence: discerning, prayerful, risk taking...

Although in August 1981 I also met Fr Arrupe and he invited me to this service, I was not released by my Province until a year had passed. In September 1982 I began to visit refugee camps and Jesuit workers in Indonesia, Malaysia and of course Thailand. We gathered workers together for a meeting in early 1983. The

reflections and conclusions from this meeting, printed in the first issue of *Diakonia*, became the guiding principles for the work of JRS in Asia Pacific throughout the subsequent decade, and had a big impact on JRS life and structure elsewhere. We continued to meet annually and by 1990 there were over a hundred JRS workers, Jesuits, lay and Religious serving refugees in a dozen countries of Asia Pacific and working in many local agencies. For the early years I travelled constantly with a base in Australia. In May 1985 we established an office in Bangkok with two or three Thai co-workers. 📍



Some of the Kachin refugees who resettled in Romania.

Resettlement: *learning* a new way of life



JRS sponsored a party in a circular tower/restaurant to celebrate the resettlement.

JRS Romania
(photography by Don Doll SJ)

Running away from their homeland, from the systematic violation of their human rights, refugees from Burma often head for Malaysia, hoping for a better life and the chance of a new future. But for many, their journey does not end there. Since Malaysia does not recognize them as refugees, the Burmese face constant insecurity. Without protection and opportunities for a stable life and for educating their children, many refugees

concentrate their hopes on resettlement. This is the story of 38 ethnic Kachin refugees who recently resettled in Romania.

Now a new life with new challenges awaits them in Galati, a town on the Danube River in the southeast of Romania. JRS Romania is one of the NGOs encouraging the integration of the resettled refugees, helping them to cope with the daily difficulties of getting used to a new way of life. JRS provides language classes, computer courses and social counselling, and is also making the refugees aware of their rights, guiding them as they access



☒ Lahpai Bawk Ra, holding his seven-month-old, Lahpai Sweet Seng San Awng, toasts his son and wife, N'hkum Seng Ra.

public services and financial and medical assistance.

Challenges remain, especially related to the refugees' self-sufficiency and adapting to a new culture. But the future

looks bright. With all their children enrolled in schools and kindergartens, three new babies born in Galati and more on the way, the Kachins can at last see their hopes for freedom, safety and

a future for their families coming true. JRS efforts will now focus on finding jobs and housing, together with the authorities, UNHCR and other NGOs, to steer the Kachins towards independence. 📍



☒ Above: Kyaw Ko Thein Lahpai, his wife Seng Ra, with their daughter, Su Myant, age 2, leave the restaurant.

☒ Right: Paul Luk, Ruthz Nu Nu, and Myo Htoi Aung locate their whereabouts on a Romanian map.





University Professor, Lecia Antoniv, teaches Ukrainian language free of charge to adult asylum seekers from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Chechnya. (Marta Dul)

the realisation of *hope*

JRS Ukraine provides accommodation for up to 24 asylum seekers until their status issues are resolved. Located in central Lviv, the JRS centre has a team of two lawyers, two language instructors, and many friends and volunteers. Services include job searches, school and medical registrations. Director David Nazar SJ shares a day in the life at the centre:

Today, Sarah* cried. A long anticipated meeting with UNHCR for the resettlement of her family in another country has been delayed again. She came to Inga, JRS administrator and senior lawyer. Inga could only listen through her own tears and reassure Sarah that one day the meeting will take place. The family waits. Sarah's six-year-old daughter has already left for the school where she is enrolled for the time being. Sarah returns to breast-feed her two-month-old son, to hold him, to hope for him and to wait. She soon comes for her morning chat with the cook, herself a grandmother who lost a son some years ago. After a

reassuring serving of nutritional wisdom, Sarah returns to her son. There her husband, Muhamet, in good cheer, minds the baby. There is reason for his good mood. His torture wounds have healed. He speaks with a calmness that wasn't his two months ago when his young family came to JRS Ukraine. Hunched, nervous and frightened no longer, his words have a strength that restores Sarah. She's herself again. The day will not be so long after all.

Aimal laughs a lot. He loves to play and is not afraid to work, although he is a little lazy. He is proud of his intuitive computer skills. A Jesuit scholastic, Mikhailo,

assists him, though Aimal seems to have advanced beyond Mikhailo: he has figured out the administrator's password. At 14 years of age, Aimal's Ukrainian is excellent, due in part to Lecia, our language instructor. It is the third language he has learned since his family left Afghanistan. Aimal is the official translator for the family. He does not particularly like school, which started this month. He prefers computer games and dreams of a future in computers. The languages he has acquired by force of circumstance will serve him well. He is here with his uncle who was disabled by an accident, his grandmother who is

failing with diabetes, and his able mother who fights the depression of waiting. He is their hope for a normal future. The grandmother's diabetes requires a particular insulin not available in Ukraine so the family awaits resettlement in another country. The insulin costs 80 euros per month, well beyond their means. We have had to hospitalize the 55-year-old grandmother twice when she lost sensation in her feet. Four European Union (EU) countries have refused them. They are now pinning their hopes on Canada.

No one knows why Rona remains so buoyant. After her husband and his brother converted to Christianity in Iran, the brother was found hanged in his apartment—a standard execution practice by fundamentalist radicals. Husband and wife with teenage son and daughter fled, hoping to reach the EU. The Ukrainian Security Service found them while on the trail of black-marketeers. Realizing their innocence, the Security Service brought them to our door from the underground hiding place. This was a breach of protocol but Security knew they would be cared for here. Without a word of English, Ukrainian or Russian, Rona can speak only with her family and the Afghans in the house. Yet, she is irrepressible, always ready to celebrate. Rona is the favourite assistant to the cook but no one knows how they communicate when her turn comes up. You smile spontaneously in her presence.

Everyday Svitlana's giggles and gurgles morph into the words of various languages. Her Christian parents fled Mosul, Iraq, due to two conflicts (one political and one religious) and not a little prejudice. Pregnant on her journey, Svitlana's

mom knew little of childrearing and without her extended family was at grave risk. Their inn was a detention centre where a kind nurse saw them through the pregnancy and birth. The nurse is also called Svitlana, a name that means "light". And when the detention centre asked us to receive the young family, the JRS household raised the baby and trained her young mother. Over a year later, JRS has found work for her husband, and they have given birth to another child. But there is still no decision on their asylum claim. Svitlana is fluent in Kurdish, breezes through Arabic, shows off in Ukrainian, knows a few words of Russian and dabbles in Farsi. In February "Little Light" will be two years old.

“JRS thrives on hope. Its very existence and mandate to accompany people in exile are urgently needed signs of hope for those who are among the most dispossessed in the world.

Former Jesuit Superior General, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ, 2005



☒ Young mums share a moment with their newborns. Born prematurely, one needed special care. Local doctors saw the families through delivery without charge. (Marta Dul)



📷 The children at home – and at summer school – with Jesuit scholastic, Viktor Zhuk. (Marta Dul)

Adam works 12 hours a day. His energy never fails. Ten years ago, with wife, mother-in-law and three children, he left Afghanistan in a crowd of migrants being trafficked for big money. At mid-journey, to avoid attracting attention, the dealers split the group in two and each took a different route. It was some time before Adam and his family realized that they had been split in two as well. Adam's mother-in-law and his oldest son ended up in Germany and gained status. Adam, with wife and two children, ended up in a refugee camp in Tajikistan, from which there was no juridical hope of family reunification. Adam worked long and hard. His energy never

failed. His wife gave birth to their fourth child. After ten years they had enough money to pay the traffickers to get them to their son. He, his wife and the children were apprehended at the Ukrainian border. The detention centre asked us to take them since their claims for status and family reunification were strong. They talk to their son and mother on Skype now. JRS Ukraine and JRS Germany are working towards uniting them in Germany.

Half of the JRS Ukraine community of 24 is Muslim and half Christian. Ukrainians pray before meals. Some Muslims said they were surprised to see that Christians pray this much.

We might pray a little differently during Ramadan, differently again at Easter, but we pray. We remember those who have moved on from our house and those who still wait in hope. When the Jesuits and administrator are all away, the community will not sit down to eat without a prayer. They turn expectantly to the cook. She nods, blesses herself and thanks God for all that gives us hope. Sarah is happy. Aimal plans his future. Rona's table is full of life. Svitlana delights the crowd with yet another new word. And Adam is hurrying home from work – because his energy never fails. 🌱

**Names have been changed.*

JRS: *in exile* and back *home*

Alberto Lana-Linati, JRS Great Lakes Advocacy and Communications Officer, shares the story of Ernest Ntahiraja from Burundi, who was supported by JRS both as a refugee in Tanzania and when he returned home.

Ernest was 10 when Burundi's civil war started. "When I was very young," he recalls, "I left Burundi because of the crisis that followed the assassination of our President, Melchior Ndadaye, in October 1993. After his death, I don't remember anything except gunfire that frightened me." Ernest would lose four sisters and a brother to the conflict.

Nearly half a million Burundians fled to neighbouring countries due to the war that lasted from 1993 to 2006, mostly to Tanzania, which hosted 459,000 Burundian refugees. "We went to Tanzania, where we stayed in a refugee camp in Gitare," continues Ernest. "I was a good student and started my studies in the third year of primary school. Unfortunately, in 1997, when I reached the fourth year, violence broke out in the camp between followers of the CNDD and the FNL, then Burundian rebel groups."

Due to the upheaval, Gitare camp was shut down and Ernest and his family were transferred to Lukole. "It was in Lukole camp that I first met JRS, which had many activities in Tanzania. Personally, JRS paid my fees from the seventh

to the ninth school years, gave me uniforms and, thanks to their pastoral accompaniment, I was baptised."

Then disruption came. "In 2003, young students were forced to leave school to join the rebel movements; aged 19, I had to leave the camp to go for military training in DRC. In 2006, I asked for permission to rejoin my family. This was granted in May 2007."

Ernest was hoping to return home, where peace was becoming a reality. In 2005, the first elections were held in Burundi, with victory going to the current President, Pierre Nkurunziza, a former CNDD rebel. People had been returning to Burundi since 2002, at the rate of 50,000 per year; the number of returnees eventually reached 488,000. The impoverished and vulnerable returnees faced formidable challenges day in, day out. Burundi, characterised by widespread food insecurity and high population density, has a very steep malnutrition rate. This is why JRS decided to set up a new food security project in the east, where most of the returnees settled, along the Tanzanian border.

☒ Returnees usually build such a house when they first arrive back home to Burundi. On a cloth stretched on the floor is manioc, drying to be processed into flour. (Alberto Lana-Linati/JRS)



INFO BOX

In the 90s, the focus of JRS shifted from Asia to Africa, with regions set up in Eastern Africa, the Great Lakes and Southern Africa, to reach out to refugees of myriad civil wars and ethnic violence. The JRS Great Lakes region was set up in the aftermath

of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, starting in Bukavu, eastern DRC, later spreading to Burundi, Rwanda and other parts of DRC. JRS also worked with refugees from the Great Lakes who fled to border camps in Tanzania and elsewhere.

This project is full of hope of attaining durable solutions. Many initiatives have been launched: the training of community veterinary agents and animators; the distribution of livestock, agricultural products and hay fodder; the construction of goat pens; the integration of vulnerable people; and an overall solidarity chain, which means that those who receive a goat or a cow from JRS should hand the first offspring of the animal back to the project.

Integral to all these initiatives is personal accompaniment by the JRS team – directors, vets, agriculturists and animators, who are hard at work among the residents of the hills where the project unfolds. The dedicated staff visit the households and help them to resolve problems that arise, and evaluate the solidarity chain and the hill associations that have been set up.

Ernest returned to Giteranyi in the north-east. “When I went back to my country, JRS gave me

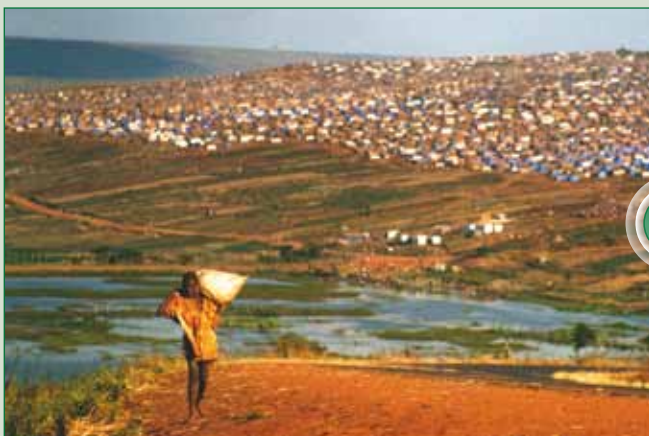


📷 The goats that are an integral part of the JRS food security project. (Alberto Lana-Linati/JRS)

a he-goat in 2008 and two she-goats in 2009. They reproduced and I managed to give two goats to the community solidarity chain. What’s more, I received training in farming to restore the fertility of the soil by creating manure pits; I have learned how to make anti-erosion ditches and how to cultivate fodder crops. I have

become a community veterinary agent thanks to the supervision of the JRS vets and now I can also help my neighbours to rear and look after goats. I have plenty of hope for the future because I feel that I am accompanied by members of JRS, who are always on the ground to follow our development.” ➡

From the camps in Tanzania



📷 Mark Raper SJ/JRS

Back home in Burundi

Returnees in Giharo town celebrate the opening of a JRS food security project.



📷 Don Doll SJ/JRS

Tamil Nadu: *lives on hold*

Alejandro Olayo-Méndez SJ from Oregon Province writes about forgotten Sri Lankan refugees in camps in southern India and about long-running JRS programmes there.

Some 73,000 refugees in 115 refugee camps, facing precarious living conditions, extremely limited basic services, restrictions on their freedom of movement and, above all, time that keeps passing. This is the reality that the Sri Lankan refugees in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu face day after day. Close to 50,000 arrived in 1990, 1996, and 2000, peak times of Sri Lanka's civil war. Some have been waiting more than 20 years for a durable solution that would allow them

either to return to Sri Lanka, or to stay in India; or to resettle in another country. Instead, they face constant uncertainty, their lives on hold. The final bitter phase of the war in Sri Lanka in 2009 dealt a harsh blow to hopes they had of returning home.

JRS Tamil Nadu started accompanying and serving the Sri Lankan refugees back in 1990. This commitment has since taken many forms: receiving new arrivals; helping the refugee community to get organised;

developing a solid complementary educational programme for children and young people. The refugees value education enormously. Over the years, they have repeatedly said that this is how they would like JRS to serve them. Accordingly education has become the backbone of JRS services in Tamil Nadu, opening doors to reach out to the refugees in many other ways, especially the most vulnerable.

JRS has a team of 35 people along with 312 part-time teachers



Waiting to go home: elderly Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu. (JRS International)

in four areas. All refugees, the teachers are one of our greatest assets, working in complementary education centres in the evening and reaching nearly 8,000 students. Then there is the Student's Forum, Children's Parliament and College Students' Association, and a student magazine *Manavar Vidiyal* (Dawn of Students). For young girls who drop out of school, there is a

six-month residential life-skills programme, from which over 800 teenagers have graduated so far.

At community level, JRS accompanies District Coordination Committees in the camps, encouraging community leaders to reflect together about communal problems and to identify responses. JRS team members also visit families. Meeting elderly, sick or disabled refugees, they assess their

needs and arrange for assistance as necessary.

For all this, we remain only too aware of the hard reality of refugee life. Refugees may have access to education but cannot get a formal job; they can get menial jobs here and there but always in the informal sector. Refugees live with limited freedom and scant support, and without other choices open to them. Mala*, who arrived 18 years ago, said: "You learn to live in struggle all your life and give thanks just because you are alive."

But the refugees still hope for a better future. Nila, a teenager in a boarding school, wants to be a computer engineer like her sister. Madikala and Sibila, at the same school, want to be classical dancers, "it is a way to preserve our culture". Kanthimathi wants to be a nurse "to help others". All these girls are supported by JRS.

Selvakumari, a health worker, let pass a rare opportunity for resettlement because "the people here need me and I hope to be back in Sri Lanka one day". Much as the refugees want to return, many do not feel they will be going home anytime soon, even if the island's civil war ended last year. Geetha, a JRS district coordinator, said: "I would love to be in my own country, where I can claim my rights. However, the Sri Lankan government does not seem to care." Nanthini, a 21-year-old refugee, agreed: "Much as we want to go back, the atmosphere is not conducive. It is still too dangerous."

And so the years keep passing and the Sri Lankan refugees keep waiting while their lives, hopes, and dreams remain on hold in camps across Tamil Nadu. 📍

*Names have been changed.



📷 A Sri Lankan refugee girl performs a traditional dance during a celebration in one of the Tamil Nadu camps. (JRS International)



WHAT IS JRS DOING TO HELP THE PEOPLE OF SRI LANKA?

Pedro Arrupe remained General from 1965 until incapacitated by a cerebral stroke in August 1981. During one of my visits to Rome in the eighties, Dieter Scholz, then Director of JRS, brought me to the infirmary of the General Curia to meet Fr Arrupe. Though almost paralysed, it was clear that Fr Arrupe... wanted to ask me a question but could not find the words, so Br Bandera, the infirmarian, brought him paper and pencil. With his left hand, Fr Arrupe shakily drew a map of India, then the droplet shape of the island next to it. By pointing to the island clearly he was asking me, 'What is JRS doing to help the people of Sri Lanka?'... He would be happy to know that JRS South Asia is still responding in a practical way to his question, by accompanying, serving and defending the victims of the long running civil war and also those affected by the recent tsunami.

Fr Mark Raper SJ, Director of JRS Asia Pacific, 1982-1990

starting over



☒ Haiti: Camp for displaced people. (JRS International)

Woody Edson Louidor,
Advocacy Officer for Haiti,
JRS Latin America

“At first we received many tents from non-governmental organisations but nowadays nearly 80% of them are broken and useless,” says André, a committee member of the camp for displaced people in Parc Kolofe camp in Port-au-Prince. “We’re tired of being in tents; after so many months, we want to leave,” he continues angrily.

Andre is not alone in his disappointment. The 12 January earthquake that devastated a good part of Haiti, principally Port-au-Prince and its surroundings, left enormous devastation in its wake, inflicting more suffering on a people already victimised by strong social exclusion, dire poverty and political instability. Official tolls speak of 250,000 killed in the quake and 1.5 million displaced to live in 1,342 makeshift camps.

Those in the camps feel life is basically unbearable: the living conditions of many have remained largely unchanged, with lack of access to food, health services and drinking water. Jocelyne, a mother of three, who lives in the camp of San Luis of Gonzaga in Port-au-Prince, says: “Whenever

it rains, our tent gets full of water. Sometimes we spend the whole night awake in a great puddle.” Jocelyne has no choice but to stay: “If I remain here, it is because I don’t have anywhere else to go. I don’t have relatives in another city. Here I am not doing anything; I cannot send my three children to school because I cannot pay the fees; I don’t even have food for them.”

Present in Haiti since 1999 in Ouanaminthe, on the northern border with the Dominican Republic, JRS moved swiftly to assist the quake survivors. Delivering initial emergency aid, JRS opened an office in Port-au-Prince in March 2010 and strengthened its intervention in seven camps located in three sectors of the capital: Haut-Turgeau, Delmas 33 and AutoMecca, home to 3,916 families.

The residents of these camps face several problems, not least constant threats of eviction from the owners of the land on which the camps are standing. For example, in AutoMecca, 2,200 displaced families installed their tents on the

☒ Displaced women in the Haiti camps face an especially critical situation. (JRS International)



premises of a car sale business.

Food is another problem: most of the residents did not benefit from programmes like *Cash for work* and *Food for work* of international agencies. When the Haitian government decided to halt international food aid in May, the situation worsened. Hunger forced some women and teenagers to prostitute themselves, according to several heads of families in the camps. Monique, a teacher in Automecca, said women and children especially faced a critical situation: “Before the earthquake, the women took care of feeding their families. Now they have lost everything and don’t have the money to restart their activities.”

In this scenario of growing frustration, JRS often intervenes as mediator between the camp residents and others such as humanitarian organisations and land owners. There are coordination committees in each camp and JRS strengthens them through training, accompaniment and logistical support. “We listen to JRS because they listen to us and have been with us from the beginning,” explains Pierre, a member of the camp committee of Parc Colofé. When food aid was cut, JRS advocated with the Haitian authorities, UN agencies and other international organisations and secured food distribution to children, pregnant women and nursing mothers in Automecca, which was particularly badly affected by the food cuts.

JRS works with the coordination committees, which are responsible for the organisation of community initiatives in the camp, to identify and respond to different needs, ranging from health and psychosocial issues to security

and food. Carnold, manager of the safety commission of AutoMecca, said: “JRS offered us help with food, uniforms, logistics and communication so that we could guarantee day and night security in the camp.”

JRS invests its energies in rebuilding communities.

Apart from such direct advocacy and action to find rapid solutions to meet the daily needs of the people, JRS invests its energies in rebuilding the lives of individuals and communities. The most vulnerable such as children, the elderly, those with special needs and pregnant women, get particular attention. Psychosocial and pastoral work plays a significant role. Through group therapy, individual counselling and home visits, JRS staff seek to help the displaced to overcome the trauma of the quake and its aftermath and to reconstruct their lives. Erline, a young woman who took part in a five-day psychotherapy workshop organised by JRS, said: “What touched me most is that now I know where I come from, who I am, and where I’m going.”

Communal activities organised by the committees and JRS are a crucial way of building community. The earthquake left the people homeless, disoriented and mourning human and material losses. The celebration of the Sacraments, of Holy Week services, of Mother’s Day; the holding of a football tournament, give the camp residents the space to forget their

personal problems for a while, to start to rejoice in life again as a community.

Education is another area of activity. JRS has been working with the Jesuit network *Fe y Alegría* to select camps where to build schools for children and to start vocational training, those camps where education services are non-existent or unsatisfactory. Young people ask persistently for vocational training, for example in mechanics and computer science, to be able to earn a living, and JRS and *Fe y Alegría* are working to make their dreams come through.

In the context of multiple urgent needs, the decision of JRS to focus on accompanying camp leaders, individuals and communities, and on supporting education initiatives, is paying off. This path of action has given the people a voice, stronger participation in the running of their lives and the hope of building something lasting. 🌱

📷 Getting on with life in spite of everything: a little girl in one of the Haiti camps. (JRS International)





build communities

One of the camps for displaced people in Haiti. (JRS International)

Some observations by
Fr General Adolfo Nicolás SJ
following his visit to Haiti in April:

The situation in the camps is inhuman and people cannot stay long in such a situation without great damage to their dignity, relationships and hope. The long tradition of depending on the help of others might hinder the population from taking responsibility for its own needs.

JRS should consider these basic factors and plan its service according to what the country and people need most.

Build communities, build something lasting. Housing, one of the most important needs, can become a great opportunity for community building. This has happened in other countries and environments: housing became the opportunity and the school for community action, education and effective work.

This will require great discipline and a common vision on the part of JRS personnel. To help people do the right thing, without depending on someone from outside, who can do it better and faster, needs great

detachment, but it is much more effective in the long run and it builds a new community. It is also great education.

It is necessary to make a good analysis of the real needs of the people. Programmes should respond to these needs with the direct involvement of the local people themselves, without dependence. JRS will have to see how to discover the leaders, how to train and empower them with skills, thought and acceptance by the community.

All this will require planning and careful implementation, which will be monitored, so that the difficulties will not make the teams fall back on more conventional but less liberating and educating methods.

The Jesuits should exercise a pastoral ministry of healing, reconciliation and encouragement through solid spiritual help and living celebrations (liturgical and otherwise). In this ministry, faith should become a source of energy and strength for people to move forward. 🕊

a place to feel at home

The Middle East is the tenth region of JRS. Projects were started in Jordan and Syria in mid-2008, building on the Jesuit presence and efforts to attend to Iraqi urban refugees. Turkey followed in 2009. JRS cooperates with local Christian and Muslim organisations as well as international agencies to serve the refugees.

Agata Kawicka-Ozbayoglu,
JRS Turkey Project Director

People who come to JRS in Ankara say it is a place where they can rest, feel at peace and forget everyday worries. At a venue next to Meryem Ana Catholic Church, refugees and asylum seekers scattered all over the city can meet and get to know each other – not an easy feat to accomplish otherwise.

JRS started up in Turkey in late 2009 as a follow up to the Ankara Refugee Support Group, an informal group of volunteers, mainly foreigners, based at the parish of Meryem Ana. This link is important as our project is staffed by 16 volunteers from different countries. The main goal of bringing JRS into the picture was to create a solid base for the accompaniment of refugees in Ankara.

There are some 18,000 non-European refugees and asylum seekers registered with UNHCR in Turkey, which officially only recognises European refugees. Apart from being a destination country, Turkey is a major crossroads for hundreds of thousands of people hoping to reach Europe or awaiting resettlement in the US, Canada and elsewhere. Many of those we serve come from Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and Somalia.


Having a centre in the city is essential. The craving for companionship among the refugees is clearly visible during our 'open house' times when they come simply to be together: to play chess, watch a movie, chat or decorate a Christmas tree. It is a time when they can share experiences and tips on how to deal with their situation: how to apply to different institutions, access the health system or put their children in school.

JRS organises English and Turkish language classes. There is a big demand for English: an average of 27 students twice a week. We encourage the refugees to learn Turkish too as it is an enormous help and small efforts pay off quickly. Since many asylum seekers in Ankara are newcomers, they usually do not want to hear about learning Turkish because they hope to be resettled swiftly. It is those who have been here for some time who want to learn.

Refugees and asylum seekers do not receive much government aid and most face poor living conditions. We give grocery cards once monthly to registered

☒ Taking practical help to a refugee family.



 Candy, a South African volunteer, minding children in a playroom in the Meryem Ana parish facilities.



refugees and distribute food. Our 'second-hand store' is stocked thanks to generous donations with clothes, household goods and sometimes furniture.


However the needs are far greater than those found in Ankara because the government transfers refugees and asylum seekers to satellite cities. The turnover in our classes is high because of this. These transfers are emotional moments and we

see tears as people come to leave Ankara and the "homely and comfortable" atmosphere they say we have created. After almost a year of operating in Ankara, we are hoping to expand our services to satellite cities, where the real needs are. Our presence there is essential, to accompany asylum seekers, including many vulnerable people who are often not accepted for resettlement. This is when the challenge starts. 📍



CONNECTING WITH OTHERS



 Agata (second from left) with Mohamed's family.

My name is Mohamed. I came to Turkey in March 2009 with my wife Shahla and our three children. I did my interview with UNHCR and was accepted as a refugee. At first I was happy because we had come from

Baghdad where our life was in danger. My family used to be afraid to go out of the house, a military tank drove into our garden. Soon, however, I discovered that many things were difficult in Turkey: language, schooling, no work, no perspective and no community to belong to. One day I was near UNHCR and I heard a man talking about the activities organised by JRS. I was not sure whether to go because of the religious background but decided to try since there was nothing else to do. I received help from JRS: food coupons, clothes and toys. But the big thing for me was

to see other Iraqi families and to start connecting with them. We decided to join English and Turkish classes. It was a turning point. After a long time, the children had the chance to learn something, we could get prepared for our next step – the USA – and we felt like we had a family, a place to come to, where we felt happy and welcome. Eventually we were transferred to Çorum and we missed JRS in Ankara very much. Now we are about to leave Turkey but remain grateful for the experience we had with JRS here.

JRS in Syria wins *award*



At class in St Vartan. (JRS International)

A JRS project in the Syrian city of Aleppo, the Deir St Vartan community centre, has won the 2010 award of the Caritas International – Deckers Foundation. Magda Toutounji, a team member, accepted the award on behalf of JRS from Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga at the end of a Caritas Justice and Poverty summit in Brussels on 14 October. The prize of 75,000 euro is awarded every three years by the Foundation, which was set up when Caritas International (Belgium) received a legacy from Philippe Deckers in memory of his brother, Charles, a Belgian missionary murdered in Algeria in 1994.

The Jesuits founded Deir (Convent) St Vartan a hundred years ago to serve Armenian refugees. In 2008, JRS started to offer informal education and social activities for Iraqi refugees at the centre, welcoming poor Syrians too. There are courses to pass secondary school exams, tuition for those who dropped out of school, English and computer classes. Psychosocial and recreational activities are organised for women, youth and children. The project is staffed by Syrian and Iraqi staff members and volunteers and hundreds of people benefit: Muslims and Christians working, learning and enjoying themselves side by side. 📍



MEET SOME OF THE STAFF AT ST VARTAN



Magda Toutounji,
responsible for outreach activities

In this work, I discovered the greatness and presence of God in each of us. The way the refugees live is a source of wonder for me, an encouragement to put myself at the service of others. The diversity of religious beliefs and of life situations of those who gather at St Vartan reveals a superb image of the richness of both God and humanity, in the solidarity that arises from difficulties, from suffering, from poverty.



Christine Haddad,
administrator

I like being with young people and children and I feel that I have in me something small but beautiful that could serve those around me. Since starting to work for JRS, my way of being and thinking has changed; I have discovered another meaning of life.



Sr Hala Daoud,
works on psychosocial issues

We encourage women to come to St Vartan, drawing them with activities that interest them, and I help them to get back on their feet, especially when they have had traumatic experiences. We do psychosocial group work with the youth, and organise activities to help children express themselves. I am happy to give joy and to live as a Little Sister of Jesus with each person who comes to St Vartan.

higher education at the *margins*



☒ Bol Daniel's interview in the JRS computer room at Kakuma camp.

Mary McFarland,
International Director JC-HEM

Neil Sparnon,
Consultant to the
JC-HEM project

“Most refugees are young people. In abandoning their countries... they also lose the most important opportunity towards full human development: education. The Society's institutions of higher education are in the privileged position of having the resources to make a special contribution in this... If our higher education institutions could join in this effort, the Society would be sharing one of our most precious resources with some of the poorest yet often very gifted people.

Former Superior General
Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ, 1990

“I want to learn so much – all my life I want to learn. When I was young I told my sister and she would put me in a wheel barrel and push me to school.” Bol Daniel from Sudan has been unable to walk since childhood. A few months ago, he went for an all-important interview in Kakuma camp, Kenya, making his way in his hand-driven chair and sporting a rakish red bow-tie. The interview was successful and now Bol Daniel's dream, to learn and eventually to teach others with special needs, is set to come true. The young man has been offered a place on a project that will allow him to follow – by internet – courses offered by several Jesuit universities in the US in order to obtain a Diploma in Applied Liberal Studies.

The initiative that is giving Bol Daniel and other refugees this golden opportunity is entitled *Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins* and is a partnership between JRS and Jesuit Commons (JC-HEM), a network of Jesuit education institutions from around the world. The aim is to

offer tertiary or higher education to refugees, through the internet and on-site with teachers, mentors and tutors.

Two pilot projects involving more than 70 students – at Kakuma camp in Kenya and Dzaleka camp in Malawi – will begin in September 2010. The refugees are eager to grasp the opportunity. Demand for the project in both locations is high – more than 200 initially expressed an interest and nearly 100 have since been interviewed. There is much on which to build and intellectual curiosity is alive and well. “I didn't know what ‘Liberal Studies’ are,” said a young Somali man, “so I looked it up on Google.”

A guiding principle of Jesuit education generally, and of JC-HEM specifically, is that those who receive the benefit of learning have an obligation to use it for the wider benefit of their communities. Amjima was orphaned at the age of 11 and has supported herself in Kakuma camp ever since. Currently teaching blind children at the local school she says: “We all



© A classroom in Our Lady's Girls Secondary School, Kakuma town, where some refugees go, sponsored by JRS. The new partnership project between JC-HEM and JRS will give the young refugees something to aim for. (Angela Hellmuth/JRS)

have disabilities but I can do more to help my community if I can study." This thought was echoed by Geoffry from the Congo: "I want to study to help my people."

The flexibility that learning via the internet offers is particularly useful when working with refugees; many of whom have had their schooling suddenly, and often violently, interrupted and who wish to extend their studies further. Faisal from Somalia, who also lives in Kakuma, said: "The guns were going off so I had to wait to take my final exam. I came here in the hope of education." James from Sudan feels much the same: "My family was killed and I came here and applied for a scholarship in teaching. Having completed this, I now want to join this programme."

To supplement the Diploma in Applied Liberal Studies, JC-

HEM is also offering Community Learning Service Tracks (CLSTs). These certificate courses focus on areas of specific need in the refugee community, such as counselling, health, community leadership. Through the Ignatian pedagogic approach of learning, reflection and action, refugees will access resources via the net, reflect on how these skills might be put to the service of their communities and then deliver concrete improvements. "CLSTs are central to the JC-HEM Project," says the recently appointed International Director of JC-HEM, Mary McFarland. "Not only do they extend its reach – we expect more than 1,200 refugees to participate at the various sites over the next four years – but they will change lives and communities for the better."

Ultimately, this project is a way of taking one of the most prized resources of the Society of Jesus – Ignatian pedagogy – to those whose life is lived on the margins of our world. Bill Husson, Vice-President of Regis University in Denver, Colorado, which is granting the Diploma, said: "By extending our resources and expertise to those farthest away yet most in need, this project is at the heart of the Jesuit approach to education." 📍



INTERNET LINK

Further details on the *Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins* programme can be found at: www.jc-hem.org

a concerted *effort*

Over the years, JRS has established an international advocacy network to present the concerns of refugees and JRS field workers to policymakers at national, regional and international level. JRS has an Advocacy Coordinator in Rome, JRS Representatives in Geneva and Nairobi, and a Director for Policy in Washington, as well as advocacy officers in nearly all the regions and in several country offices too. Mitzi Schroeder, Director for Policy in Washington, describes the advocacy work of JRS USA:

Over the past several years, JRS USA has taken steps to ensure it is fully engaged in all aspects of the JRS mission to accompany, serve and defend the rights of refugees. Nowhere is this more evident than in the expansion and refocusing of its advocacy role. In 2006, JRS USA developed its first strategic plan, which has served as the foundation for a series of annual advocacy plans that have guided us in our activities each year.

In common with other JRS advocacy offices around the world, the advocacy pursued by JRS USA flows from its service and accompaniment programmes. However, because our location in Washington DC allows us access to the US government and to other international institutions in this world capital, JRS USA has a unique opportunity to pursue advocacy that derives not only from its own programmes here in the United States, but also from the work of JRS offices abroad that serve refugees whose welfare is affected by US policies and programmes.

The advocacy of JRS USA thus has a domestic and an international character and targets

a wide range of issues. In order that our work does not become “a mile wide and an inch deep”, we use the advocacy plan development process to select a reasonable number of issues to receive priority in the coming year.

Several criteria are used to choose these priorities. They must be issues in which US government refugee assistance policies or diplomatic efforts can potentially make a difference. They must be issues on which we believe we can obtain the cooperation of JRS regional and national offices working with the refugees concerned. They must also be issues on which JRS has something unique to contribute, either in terms of information on refugees, whose needs are not well understood, or recommendations for specific policy actions – and ideally both! Finally, they must be issues on which we think we have some realistic possibility of obtaining some degree of success.

Many issues chosen are country-specific and relatively short-term in character. Others are more global and require a longer-term engagement. Our goal is to



📷 Learning in Nimule, southern Sudan; JRS USA has advocated for continued funding for IDP education in Sudan. (Angela Hellmuth/JRS)

A camp for displaced people in Haiti. JRS USA has obtained food deliveries for areas identified by its counterpart in Haiti. (JRS International)





☒ Ms Gita Rasaily, head-teacher of a camp school for Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, in 2008 (she has since resettled in Canada). JRS USA advocated for funding for secondary education for Bhutanese refugees. (JRS International)

obtain meaningful change in the conditions affecting refugees that will either directly improve their well-being or enable JRS to serve their needs more effectively.

Domestic issues

JRS USA is involved in two programmes of direct service to refugees in the United States: religious services for asylum seekers and undocumented persons detained by the US federal government, and the Kino Border Initiative (KBI), of which we are a founding partner.

JRS USA has developed a deep commitment to reform US policies that have increasingly in recent years used detention as a means to manage irregular immigration to the United States. We have achieved some success in improving conditions in US federally operated and contract detention facilities by advocating for better enforcement of existing detention guidelines, and for the adoption of new guidelines that

would better safeguard the access of those detained to religious services and other rights. We have also advocated for limitations on the use of detention and for the adoption of alternatives to detention. While advocacy in this area has met with a positive response in principle, more dialogue with the US authorities will be needed before the desired policy changes are achieved.

Our goal is to obtain meaningful change in conditions affecting refugees.

The KBI engages in research and community education on the US side of the border with Mexico, and provides direct assistance to deported people inside Mexico. This programme has provided us with an opportunity to document the treatment of

vulnerable individuals, especially unaccompanied women and children, and the dangers they face during and immediately after the deportation process. We are using this information both to argue for improvements in US deportation practices, and to underline the need for comprehensive immigration reform.

International issues

In contrast to our domestic work, the international advocacy work of JRS USA is more subject to change over time, as it depends to a great extent on requests from other JRS regions for support on specific issues as they arise.

One constant is our commitment to support the work of the JRS Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region, which is based on the close historical and geographic ties affecting migration between South America and the United States. The JRS USA advocacy office has been effective in using information provided

by JRS LAC to obtain increased US funding to meet the needs of Colombian refugees and IDPs in the region – although the maintenance of this support requires constant effort.

A new set of issues has arisen with JRS involvement in response to the earthquake in Haiti. JRS USA has been effective in obtaining food deliveries in areas identified by JRS, and has hosted a visit by senior Jesuit staff to Washington to bring the voice of Haiti directly to policy makers.

Elsewhere, the advocacy work of JRS USA has ranged from obtaining funding for secondary education for Bhutanese refugees, preventing the Sri Lankan government from receiving the benefit of Millennium Challenge funds from the US government until it improves its human rights record, and advocating for continued funding for IDP education in Sudan and for actions to counteract xenophobia in South Africa. Most recently, we have worked with a small group of like-minded organizations to hold a workshop on urban refugee assistance, which highlighted the work of JRS in Cambodia.

How we advocate

JRS USA uses several approaches to advocacy. We have excellent contacts at the White House, the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security, Congressional offices, and the Washington offices of UNHCR, World Food Programme (WFP), and other organizations, with which we meet regularly to present JRS concerns. Often, we pursue advocacy jointly with like-minded organizations. We are active participants in consortia such as InterAction, Refugee Council USA, and Detention Watch Network. When issues are particularly

sensitive, we can work discretely, either by holding off the record conversations with policymakers, or by enlisting the aid of human rights organizations such as Refugees International, Amnesty International, or Human Rights Watch.

Partnership is key

In every instance, our credibility depends on the partnerships we have established with other JRS regions, and the quality of the information and analysis they provide. Oftentimes, we find that US policymakers want to do the right thing, within the constraints under which they labour, but are ignorant of the effect of US actions or inaction “on the ground”. While other organizations too often argue issues in the abstract, JRS USA has built its reputation by providing timely and accurate field information that is often available from no other source. It is this partnership between JRS USA and the JRS international network that makes policymakers receptive to our efforts. Frequently, this is the crucial factor that tips the policy balance in the refugees’ favour. 📌



📌 Colombian refugees supported by JRS Panama. JRS USA uses information provided by JRS Latin America to obtain increased US funding to meet the needs of Colombian refugees and IDPs in the region. (JRS International)

“

To collect information that might lead to new opportunities for assistance to refugees

One of the founding aims of JRS as established by Pedro Arrupe SJ

“

The unwavering defence of the rights of forcibly displaced people is another sign of hope that upholds human dignity.”

Former Jesuit Superior General, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ, 2005

”

”

📷 Refugees from DRC have lived in this settlement in Malanje for some 30 years. (JRS International)



grassroots *advocacy*

Br Paulo Welter SJ,
Director, JRS Angola

An advocacy project run by JRS in four provinces across Angola provides sorely needed legal aid, training and other means of support for refugees, victims of gender-based violence and the authorities dealing with them.

In 2006, UNHCR invited JRS to implement a legal assistance project to respond to the many cases of illegal detention of refugees and asylum seekers. The Legal Aid and Reintegration Centre was established in Luanda and today the project is at work in the provinces of Luanda, Malanje, Luanda Norte and Cabinda. A team of 26, including part-time lawyers, implements the project, serving refugees and asylum seekers coming from countries across Africa, many of whom are undocumented.

Working in partnership with UNHCR, the government, Churches and refugee communities, JRS

invests in training the authorities and refugees through seminars and publications about refugee rights, international and national laws and integration. The lawyers provide legal counselling for asylum seekers, helping them to fill in their asylum applications, dealing with appeals when their claims are rejected and offering legal aid at police stations.

In 2008, the project's scope widened to respond to the risk of sexual-and-gender-based-violence (SGBV) within refugee communities. This involves raising awareness of abuse, not least amongst the women bearing the brunt; accompanying, counselling and supporting them; and resolving cases where possible. There is a prevention element that includes vocational training, to help the women become self-reliant, and support for the most vulnerable.

i INFO BOX

JRS has been present in Angola since 1996, offering a diverse range of services over the years. At first JRS served IDPs, including landmine survivors, who were victims of the country's long-running civil war. When peace came to Angola in 2002, JRS supported returnees. As this work wound up, JRS turned its attention to refugees in Angola with the current project.

Each area of intervention presents unique challenges. The office in Luanda Norte is located in Dundo, a town 12km from the border with DRC and two days car travel from Luanda. In this frontier diamond area, refugees are sometimes treated as illegal immigrants. A team of five undertakes protection and advocacy. Visiting the refugee settlements, the team also provides vocational training, Portuguese language classes and assistance for those in hospital, and distributes zinc sheeting.

In Malanje, a group of refugees from Katanga, DRC, have lived in an old settlement for 30 years in tough conditions. JRS obtained birth certificates for the children and documentation for the older refugees too. And JRS met other

urgent needs, building latrines and ensuring that drinking water was available.

Earlier this year, JRS set up a new office in Cabinda, a small border province separated from the remainder of Angola by DRC. There is a mixed flow of refugees, immigrants and businessmen crossing the border. Refugees and asylum seekers usually live “underground” but the presence of JRS is encouraging them to apply for legal documentation.

Developing swiftly over these last few years, the JRS programme has become a key reference point for both refugees and local authorities. Our efforts help thousands of refugees; in their words, we have allowed them “to grow and to believe in life once again”. 📍



📍 Refugees in Malanje (JRS International)



JRS IS MY FAMILY



I am Mohamed Diaurara from Bouaké in Ivory Coast. I am a refugee, something that I never imagined in my life. While preparing to attend higher education back home, the unexpected happened: the beginning of civil war, due to political matters. I was far from my family and had to move with another family to Mali. At that time Ivory Coast was divided between two groups: the Djulá tribe held the north while the

south was controlled by those owning the political power.

When there was some political stability in the north, I moved from Mali to be with my family. But the rebels of the north started conscripting youth. My father, who loved me a lot and wanted to protect me, suggested that I go to stay with my only aunt, Niagolé Diaurara, in Angola. My family remained in Ivory Coast.

So I left for Angola. I met my aunt Nialgolé who was pregnant. That was a remarkable encounter; we hugged and I shared the stories of my life, my family and the long journey. After six days of joy, my aunt died, while giving birth unaided, along with her newborn child. I was alone, without documents and did not know the local language. I looked for UNHCR

and presented my request for asylum, and they referred me to the Foreign Migration Services.

I have always dreamed of studying law at university. But when I tried to register, my certificates required recognition. That was when I turned to the free legal assistance project of JRS and a lawyer, Dr Luay Zola Pedro, helped me. My joy was great when my certificates were approved. I was selected to join Lusitana University but could not enrol because I was a refugee. Again I turned to JRS and another lawyer, Dr Bernardo João, helped me to enrol. I am currently in the second year of university.

Now I am an orphan. JRS is the family I have and I don't know where my life would be without it. Thanks for everything.

📷 The celebration at the reflection centre in Siem Reap to mark the 1 August entry into force of the Cluster Bomb Treaty.



a reason to celebrate

Denise Coghlan RSM,
Director, JRS Cambodia

“What a happy, happy time,” said Moch, one of the blind cluster bomb survivors who joined the celebration of the 1 August entry into force of the Cluster Bomb Treaty at the Reflection Centre (*Mindol Metta Karuna*) at Siem Reap in Cambodia. Eleven-year-old Toic laughed with delight, scarcely glancing at the place where her leg should have been, and Sam Ouern held my hand and smiled so, so beautifully. He was the survivor who went to Dublin to help negotiate the Cluster Bomb Treaty. Losing both his arms and blinded in 2004 by a cluster bomb dropped in 1970, he was poignant and somewhat fearful back then. Now he is a confident campaigner, sure that right is on his side.

1 August 2010 was celebrated around the world as campaigners called on their compatriots to beat the drum and rejoice that the first disarmament treaty of this century was now international law. The Cluster Bomb Convention forbids the production, use, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions.

It also calls on states to clear areas ruined by cluster bombs, destroy their stockpiles and offer assistance to survivors and affected communities. States not suffering from a cluster bomb problem are expected to help affected countries.

As the survivors drove home, they remembered the cluster bomb dancers in wheelchairs, who sang that united we could build a world of justice and peace. They remembered too the solidarity of 1000 campaigners who came to be with them. And Sam Ouern remembered how he had urged states to get on board and go to Laos to make an effective action plan for land clearance and support for the dignity, rights and quality of life of survivors. Yes, a truly happy time. Moch was right.

Banning the bombs that cluster in our hearts, and opening our hearts to be filled with love that moves us to selfless action for justice and peace, is surely a gift that Arrupe of Hiroshima would want for JRS on its 30th birthday. 🍷



INFO BOX

JRS formally joined the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in 1994. JRS involvement was launched through *Servir* with an appeal from four survivors from Cambodia, including Tun Channareth, who later went on to receive the Nobel Peace prize on behalf of the campaign. Crucial to the success of the campaign, JRS Cambodia changed its focus to landmines and cluster bombs in 2003, a cause espoused by other offices in the JRS Asia Pacific region.

JRS, a source of my consolation

Former Superior General
Peter Hans-Kolvenbach SJ
(1983 – 2008)

After my resignation as General of the Society of Jesus, I want to express once again my gratitude to JRS and its collaborators, refugees, lay people, Religious and Jesuits because this social apostolate of the Society of Jesus has been a source of deep consolation throughout my 24 years as General. The prophecy of Fr Arrupe in the letter he sent to the Provincials establishing JRS in 1980 has been proven right: “assisting refugees will be a privilege and, in turn, will bring great blessings to ourselves and our Society.”

It has been a blessing and a consolation to witness the positive development of this important mission of the universal Society of Jesus. It is a joy to see how JRS is committed to the mission of consoling so many refugees and forcibly displaced people, the poorest of the poor, around the world, especially in camps.

JRS can provide so many different and important services like advocacy, but it is essential that its service is carried out directly with refugees in camps, where their hope is under threat. According to St Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises, a consolation is an increase in faith, hope and love. JRS plants a seed of hope in the aridness of refugee camps where people’s future is so often in jeopardy. This is particularly the case for young refugees in despair

who are unable to gain access to education. Day after day, year after year, they see how their lives become more and more hopeless.

It is especially in these camps that JRS becomes an urgent service of hope for refugees. Hope increases when we help refugees to have faith in themselves and in their future. It increases when love is put in deeds of education and vocational training which transform past and present hatred into life with the wisdom which enables reconciliation and offers them the hope of a different future.

It is because this apostolic work of the Society has been a source of hope and consolation for refugees that it has also been a source of consolation for the Society and for me personally. JRS is a ministry of mutual consolation among refugees and their collaborators, all of us together committed in the service of faith and justice. ☪

It has been a blessing and a consolation to witness the positive development of this important mission of the universal Society of Jesus.

☒ Increasing hope through education: Saeng Boonpoung looks up at her English teacher Sai Pi at Lak Tang school in the town of Piang Luang, Thailand. JRS supports Sai Pi’s English classes every evening in Krung Jor refugee camp. (Don Doll SJ/JRS)





Jesuit Refugee Service
Borgo S. Spirito 4,
00193 Rome, Italy

Tel: +39 06 6897 7386
Fax: +39 06 6897 7380

Return Address
(please send back obsolete address too)

Jesuit Refugee Service Malta,
St Aloysius Sports Complex,
50, Triq ix-Xorrox,
Birkirkara, Malta

www.jrs.net

Service is edited, produced
and printed in Malta

design by **i:thirteen**



“Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine” Ephesians 3:20

Thank you to all who have joined JRS over the years, to our supporters and friends, for being part of 30 years of accompanying, serving and defending the rights of forcibly displaced people worldwide.

Please keep walking with us and with the refugees so that together, we can continue to achieve more than we could ever ask or imagine.

Thank You

I want to support the work of JRS

Please find enclosed a donation of

I would like to direct my gift to

My cheque is attached

Surname: Name:

Address:

City: Post Code:

Country:

Telephone: Fax:

Email:

For bank transfers

Bank:
Banca Popolare di Sondrio,
Circonvallazione Cornelia 295,
00167 Roma, Italia
Ag. 12

Account name:
JRS

Account Number for Euro:
IBAN: IT 86 Y 05696 03212 000003410X05
SWIFT CODE/BIC: POSOIT22

Account Number for US dollars:
IBAN: IT 97 O 05696 03212 VARUS0003410
SWIFT CODE/BIC: POSOIT22