



JRS

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Creating spaces



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Learning in a safe space in a site for internally displaced people in Bangui, Central African Republic. (Peter Balleis SJ/JRS)

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Editorial

'Home' is more than four walls. It is a space where we feel safe, a space we can call our own that we share with family and friends, a space where we grew up that is dear and sacred to us. Most importantly, it is a place where we belong.

Refugees have lost this special space. They have lost their security, their family, friends and belongings. Many have seen their homes bombed, burned down and destroyed, or taken over by enemies.

Unfortunately hostility towards people in search of asylum and a new home is on the rise. All around the world, they are blocked by 'walls' that keep getting higher. The asylum space is shrinking. And yet countless individuals and families persevere in making ever more desperate attempts to seek protection, embarking on unimaginably dangerous journeys across land and sea.

JRS tries to counter this hostility by creating spaces where refugees can belong. We encourage host communities to welcome them. Our schools are a safe space where young refugees can learn and play. At least for a few hours every day,

they can be like any other child, having fun, friends and dreams. In community centres, refugees from diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds meet and are enriched by one another. In their shared spaces, refugees sometimes succeed where politics fail – they bridge fault lines, overcome differences and stereotypes. Out of broken communities, something new emerges.

JRS teams also visit families in tents, in containers, in poor and cramped housing in urban areas and wherever else they might live. As humble as their home might be, we take off our shoes when entering, because this is a holy space where refugees share their hopes and griefs, shed their tears and pray.

From the depths of my heart, I would like to thank all JRS teams, our donors and partner organisations for your continuous and generous support that enables us to create safe, shared and sacred spaces with refugees.

Peter Balleis SJ
International Director





© Northern Iraq: A container converted into a library for children to learn and play in Erbil.



Creating spaces

One way of looking at the work of JRS is that we create spaces where refugees and other forcibly displaced people are welcomed, where they can find protection and support, and where they can belong. In these spaces, refugees come together to share, to work, to learn, to create, to pray... and gradually to reclaim something of what they have lost in their terrible experiences of violence and displacement.

"See – I am making all things new."

Rev. 21:5



📍 **Syria:** The field kitchen in Aleppo provides up to 8,000 meals a day for displaced people who have no way of preparing their own cooked food.

Resilient spaces

Spaces that JRS teams persevere in creating in precarious places.

SPACE TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

The war in **Syria** escalated still further in 2014, with the grim tolls of death and displacement mounting at an unchecked pace. The humanitarian crisis in this martyred country swelled to unimaginable proportions and at least 7,600,000 people were internally displaced by the end of the year. As increased numbers of Syrians were driven from their homes to seek safety, JRS intensified its emergency response in the first half of the year, especially in Aleppo and Damascus and surrounding areas. In June, Pax Christi awarded JRS Syria their Peace Award for work between Muslim and Christian communities. By year's end, emergency aid in Homs was scaled down, but educational and psychosocial activities increased to reach more children and families. JRS emergency work across Syria focused on food support and distribution of essential items such as mattresses, blankets, hygiene kits and clothes.

We have three children: Raghad, our daughter, is 10 years old and our twin sons, Hamza and Amr, are six. Before our living conditions were good, my wife was employed, and my daughter was in a private school. When everything started, we fled first to a village and then to Sabri district in Homs, where we rented a house. I went back to see our home in Khalidiya. It had been gutted. We lost everything. Nowadays, my wife and I earn barely enough to survive. Luckily our daughter is still in school. As for the twins, Amr loves computer games and Hamza likes

watching TV, especially the Cartoon Network channel. We managed to enroll them in a kindergarten but the administration asked us to take Hamza out because he was disruptive in class and unable to focus. The same thing happened in another kindergarten. Hamza also lost his appetite. We sought help and were referred to the JRS Al Moukhales centre. Here we receive educational and psychosocial support in dealing with Hamza, as well as counselling sessions as a family. My main hope is that my son can recover and return to school with his friends.

HASSAN Homs, Syria

08 SPACE TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

Chronic warfare between the army and rebel and militia groups plagued the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). As always, civilians were caught in the crossfire and suffered severe human rights abuses. An estimated 2,857,400 people were internally displaced in DRC by early 2015. Despite the constant insecurity in the east, JRS teams in Masisi, Mweso and Goma persisted in visiting some of the scattered sites where the displaced people lived in miserable conditions. They went to see especially vulnerable people, like the elderly and sick, and helped them to meet their basic needs. Meanwhile JRS pressed ahead with formal education programs, training teachers, building and equipping schools, and helping students in need. Women gathered for literacy and livelihood activities. An interesting development in 2014 was the start of recreational activities for young men and women in some sites in Mweso. There were many compelling reasons for this, not least to counter the real risk of recruitment in rebel groups. And, in an area marked by ethnic tensions, traditional dance and sports gave youth from different groups the opportunity to come together and to learn to appreciate one another.




📍 DRC: Sr Regina Missanga of JRS at a site for displaced people in Masisi.

'JRS, c'est l'homme!' (JRS is like the head of the family!) Seventy-five-year-old Sifa is in her fourth year in Buhimba camp, where she lives with her two little grandchildren. Just as it is a great struggle for most of the displaced people in Buhimba to stay alive and to keep their families alive too, it is very tough for Sifa to take care of herself and the children. She works as a carrier – a very hard and an unstable job. She almost starts to cry when she talks about the many times she falls under the heavy weight of her burden. Sometimes people help her to get up, sometimes not. The money she earns is not enough to send her grandchildren to school. JRS means a lot to her because she receives food and got her hut fixed with a canvas sheet that keeps the rain out. And the JRS team visits her regularly. She says: 'Being accompanied gives me courage.'

FELIX POLTEN SJ Mweso, JRS DRC



 **DRC:** JRS teams in the east reach out to the most vulnerable people displaced by the region's chronic armed conflict.

10 SPACE TO LEARN


On 2 June, JRS **Afghanistan** director Alexis Prem Kumar SJ was kidnapped when he went to visit a school in Sohadat, a remote township 35km from the city of Herat. JRS runs the school for the children of refugee families returning from Iran and for those of neighbouring villages. Soon after Prem's abduction, JRS suspended all its projects in Afghanistan. Shortly afterwards, however, the projects were resumed because of our

profound commitment to the education of Afghan children. The teachers and children began their days praying in class for the "kind Indian aid worker" whom they missed terribly. The JRS team in Afghanistan worked tirelessly for Prem's release, corresponding daily with crisis management team members in Rome and Delhi. We were overjoyed when Prem was released on 22 February 2015, thanks to the intervention of the Indian government.

In Maban County, **South Sudan**, civil conflict forced JRS to evacuate twice in 2014 along with other humanitarian agencies. After the JRS team returned for the second time in September, more members joined to contribute to fledgling programs of teacher training, English classes, pastoral and psychosocial activities. JRS worked with both refugee and host communities, starting in the refugee camps and then expanding its outreach. Refugees from Sudan numbered more than two-thirds of Maban's local population of recent returnees, who faced their own pressing problems. The local government was scarcely able to provide even the most basic services. Education was in an especially dire state and the JRS intervention helped to fill a huge gap.



India: Prem (second from left) is reunited with his family after being freed from captivity in early 2015.


A woman wearing a vibrant blue headscarf with colorful stripes is seated in a classroom, raising her right hand. She is looking towards the front of the room. In the background, a man in a white shirt stands near a whiteboard, and other students are visible, some also raising their hands. The setting appears to be an outdoor or semi-outdoor classroom with large pillars.

I say thanks and pray God will help us and be with us. I walk three hours to get here [for teacher training] but it's because I have a lack of knowledge and a desire to learn. Thank you JRS, let more women come to school like me. I want to tell them I support them so they can come and be like me. If you are not educated then in the future you get nothing. Last year our parents didn't like girls in school but here we are today.

ELIZABETH Maban, South Sudan

12 SPACE TO LEARN

In **Central African Republic** (CAR), JRS set up temporary safe learning spaces in two sites in Bangui for people displaced by sectarian conflict that started in 2013. Throughout 2014, tit-for-tat violence persisted between the mainly Muslim Seleka rebels and the anti-Balaka, a bunch of local armed groups that emerged to fight them. Thousands of civilians were killed and, at year's end, over 800,000 were still displaced in CAR and neighbouring countries. Undeterred by the fragile security, JRS opened a kindergarten and primary school in a site for the displaced, located in Bangui's Major Seminary, and the same at another site in Boy Rabe Monastery. More than 50 teachers were selected and received orientation covering emergency education, child protection and other topics. The JRS team visited families, going door to door to encourage them to send their children to school, and held community meetings. The older children had classes in a range of subjects including French, maths and peace education. The ultimate aim was to ease the children back into formal schooling but this proved impossible by the end of the year due to insecurity, teachers' strikes and other problems.

 **CAR:** Seeking shelter in the grounds of the Major Seminary in Bangui.



In 2014, JRS expanded programs in Mindanao, the heartland of the Muslim minority in the **Philippines**, despite the insecurity that plagued the region as it edged towards a fragile peace. The government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) moved forward with a peace process that sought to end decades of armed conflict in Mindanao, a process that some other armed groups tried to sabotage. Although hindered by the recurring violence, JRS managed to run projects in three areas: the provinces of Maguindanao and Lanao del Norte and

Zamboanga city. JRS had two chief aims. One was to help displaced people who were returning home – mostly women – to earn a sustainable living. The other was to strengthen the peace process by enabling communities to understand it and to make their voices heard. Moro and non-Moro women were invited to come together to learn about and discuss the peace agreement. Throughout, JRS worked hard to create relationships with and win the trust of the people and their local leaders, who allowed our team to be present and to work in their critical settings.



Philippines: A meeting organised by JRS in Lanao del Norte.

I am 25 and have been a victim of war many times already. When I was in primary, we left our home and hid in the forest. When I was in high school, there was war again, which was the most unforgettable. Again we ran into the forest. Food was scarce and the only way to get some was to climb the coconut tree. When my father climbed the tree, he fell down, because his body was weak with hunger. He died that day. After the war, we found out that our crops had been harvested and our house was burnt. We started from the beginning. Now I am married and I don't want my kids to experience what I did. For me, the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro is the just way to make our lives normal and to achieve lasting peace in Mindanao. At the moment, I am happy because our way of living is normal and very simple. I want to thank JRS for advocating for the peace process and trying to help us understand it more. JRS is the only NGO courageous enough to come consistently to our place.

MUSLIMA Lanao del Norte, Philippines



Shared spaces

Spaces where people from diverse backgrounds live, learn and work together.

SPACE TO ACCOMPANY

JRS **France** continued to create opportunities for French people to welcome refugees and asylum seekers. Through the JRS Welcome Network, 105 families and 21 religious communities offered a temporary home to asylum seekers who did not get accommodation from the government. To complement this successful program, JRS launched *Welcome-jeunes* (Welcome-Youth), giving young French people the opportunity to extend hospitality even if they didn't yet have accommodation to share. The new initiative allowed refugees to shed their 'beneficiary'

status and simply to be themselves in a space that brought them together with their French peers. There were evenings based on the theme 'Tell me about your country', summer camps, cultural outings and creative workshops. JRS also offered French classes, legal aid and some vocational training. Building on its experience, JRS advocated successfully, together with other organisations, for changes to a bill of law that looked to renew the asylum system. JRS focused its efforts on the right to work and to get vocational training.

Last year, we decided to participate in the Welcome Project and a young woman seeking asylum came to stay with us. The encounter was full of joy: we talked, she cooked food from her country, played with the children. A real sense of ease set in. Our five-year-old son asked her: 'Where do you live?' And she simply replied: 'Here, in your home, for the moment.' We also discovered the worry of not knowing what tomorrow will bring (a great discovery for us civil servants), the anguish of not having a roof over one's head for the summer, of waiting for the interview with the office for refugees...

Chad: Sudanese refugees concentrate in class in Mile camp near Guéréda. JRS has run camp schools in eastern Chad for refugees from Darfur for years.

16 SPACE TO LEARN


By year's end, [Lebanon](#) hosted around 1.1 million Syrian refugees. Given the protracted situation, the insecurity and the scarcity of resources, tensions ran high in some places. JRS expanded its services, opening a community centre in the Bourj-Hammoud neighbourhood of Beirut that welcomed Syrian refugees and Lebanese. The centre ran the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) in the morning, remedial lessons and psychosocial activities in the afternoon. At a JRS-run food store, refugee families used vouchers to 'purchase' supplies. In this way, the centre was a shared space not only for children, but also for women who knew they could go to a place where they would find a warm welcome and a cup of tea or coffee.

JRS also offered the ALP in centres in the Bekaa Valley and Jbeil. The curriculum was devised in coordination with teachers and principals of local Jesuit schools to help Syrian children to integrate into Lebanese schools – an aim that proved difficult to implement in reality.



📷 [Lebanon](#): Proud parents capture the moment during the graduation of ALP students in Jbeil.

In different parts of [Afghanistan](#), JRS pressed ahead with education programs for returnees and internally displaced people, despite the kidnapping of country director Prem (see page 10). The teams nurtured the capacity and confidence of young people, many of whom later joined JRS' efforts to reach and teach others. A preferential option for the education of girls, vulnerable and marginalised groups made itself felt. Nowhere was this more evident than in the remote and impoverished Daikundi province inhabited mostly by the Hazara minority. JRS worked with the local authorities to support their schools by offering extra tuition and training. Teachers prepared by JRS were brought in from Kabul to conduct classes in English and science; an English Access program covering advanced language skills, leadership and personality development; tuition for the university entrance exam; and teacher training. The programs truly brought people together. The community persuaded local clergy to lend classroom space and warmly welcomed the team, hosting and cooking for the teachers. For their part, the teachers from Kabul held an event to thank the parents for their hospitality and the students for their hard work.

 **Afghanistan:** Young men from Daikundi studying in Bamyān.

The trust that JRS earned in Daikundi allowed 40 students, including 25 girls, to embark on a 25-hour journey by road to go to the city of Bamyān to pursue a certificate course in English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This was possible because, towards the end of 2014, Bamyān became one of the latest sites to offer online higher education courses, thanks to a partnership between JRS and Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins (JC:HEM). Bamyān was the second JC:HEM site to start in Afghanistan, following Herat.

The teachers who went to Daikundi left their families in Kabul for three months, indicating their strong dedication to the development of remote communities and forgotten people of Afghanistan. They worked hard and sincerely, establishing a close relationship with the community, and the local government and elders awarded them appreciation letters.

DAWLAT BAKHTIARI JRS Afghanistan



18 SPACE TO LEARN

In other places too, long-standing education programs of JRS paved the way for the certificate and diploma courses offered by JC:HEM, which combines online resources from universities around the globe with onsite tuition. In eastern Chad, JRS implements a large education project for Sudanese refugees: pre-schools and primary schools in eight out of 12 refugee camps and secondary schools in five. In late 2014, preparations started for the first JC:HEM course in Chad, specifically EFL in Djabal camp in Goz Beida. The need was pressing: most of

the refugees have been in this camp since the outbreak of war in Darfur in 2003. There is only one university scholarship available per camp per year in Chad. The response was encouraging: more than 200 candidates registered and 42 were selected. A commitment to community service was a key requirement. The participation of a minimum of 30% women and 10% Chadians was ensured through meetings with the JRS-run Women's Club and local educational representatives.

During my course I got motivation to do community work, particularly peaceful co-existence, responding to one of the community needs. I visit schools and meet with students and give them advice on peace. Because I believe in peace I have to devote my time to it. I hope to be a peace activist to work with men and women around the world who believe in peace like me... I'd like to say 'don't give up, keep on'. It's very important to have a humanitarian impact in eastern Chad because we have a lot of people whose education was interrupted.

ADAM ARBAB AHMED Djabal camp, Chad



Chad: One of the students selected to do the JC:HEM course in Djabal camp.

JC:HEM went from strength to strength in pioneer sites Dzaleka camp in [Malawi](#) and Kakuma camp in [Kenya](#). Forty-three students from diverse refugee communities in these two camps graduated from the three-year liberal arts diploma, accredited by Regis University in Denver in the US, and the fourth cohorts started. More than 300 graduated from certificate courses. In Kakuma, some students came from the Turkana host community.

And in Amman, the pool of applicants for both diploma and certificate courses swelled to include hundreds from the myriad of refugee communities in [Jordan](#) - Sudanese, Somali, Syrian, Iraqi, Palestinian - as well as some Jordanians.

The JC:HEM courses offered a concrete and welcome opportunity to refugees confined to camp. The refugees have frequently said as much. One young student following an EFL course in a camp on the Mae Hong Son border between [Thailand](#) and Myanmar said: "The course is really good and very important for refugee residents, due to having no opportunity to go and study outside the camp."



Finding the JC:HEM program in Kakuma is like discovering snow in the desert. It was so amazing, I still can't believe it. From the first day of classes in 2011, I didn't know if I would finish, but thank God I'm done, I've made it. Now I am very respected in my community too because of my education. They say, 'she's from the university, it's in Colorado in the US!' They used to call me alumni before I was even done. I think I inspired them a lot.

I finished secondary school in the French system. I have improved my writing and speaking English during three years studying in an English program. I have gained knowledge in using the computer, dealing with different cultures, on how I can hand solutions to problems that may occur in the community. This program has changed the picture of my life. I have learnt about compassion and it has been an important tool to change my life behaviour. After graduation, I wish to help the community, to teach them skills on how to run a successful business. Many people don't know what they can do. I will be the one to organise them, to show them what they can do. And I will also help to provide leadership in showing people what may be done to live in peace. All that I do will be linked to the statement 'don't do to others what you do not expect them to do to you.'

HICUMBURUNDI HERMENEGILDE
Dzaleka camp, Malawi



© Zimbabwe: The welding group at Tongogara.

SPACE TO WORK

Around 8,000 refugees live in the isolated Tongogara camp in southeast [Zimbabwe](#). In 2014, 320 benefited from vocational training offered by JRS. Graduates learned business and computer skills and developed proposals for a start-up grant or loan. The refugees made the most of the opportunity: there were 16 livelihood groups in trades as diverse as welding and dressmaking. Groups set up in 2013 received further training, like a group of Rwandans, Congolese and Burundians called 'One Family' who ran a small restaurant. "I'll never forget what one lady said – 'JRS has put a seed in dry land and it is producing fruit,'" said project coordinator Tendai Makoni.

Personally the training has helped me to get some possibilities to support my family. I am respected by the group of welders, my wife is proud of me and all the community can now call me expert, chairperson... I am thinking far ahead. If possibilities can be offered, we want to make workshops that will be well known here in Zimbabwe. Before the training, welding was like a vague thing. Now I understand all the tricks about welding and how to work in the group.

MUMENA ANZURUNI
Tongogara camp, Zimbabwe


For several years JRS has been running a border project for forced migrants coming to [South Africa](#) from Zimbabwe. The project in Makhado, Limpopo province, began as an emergency response to the immediate needs of the masses coming into South Africa. As the movement slowed, the project evolved from handing out food and blankets to promoting local integration of the migrants. In 2014, 10 members of the

local community and 13 migrants pooled their resources to set up a poultry farm. JRS selected and supported the migrants. Working together, the group generated enough capital to invest in premises, animals and equipment. Amid xenophobic tendencies in South Africa, the project stood as a beacon of how people from different nationalities can and do work together successfully.



In the poultry farm, we managed to produce six batches of broiler chickens that we sold to villagers and small-business people. Due to commitment and determination, we managed to produce chickens that were of a reasonable quality and could compete in the market. I managed to earn income, I took some of my children to school and I could manage my family from the profits we made. I thank JRS for giving me such an opportunity to become a self-reliant individual who is able to run a sustainable business.

DENNIS SIMAYO Makhado, South Africa

 **DRC:** Displaced women made the colourful bags sported by these students in Goma. In this way, the women's livelihood activity benefited another JRS project, which enables displaced and vulnerable students to go to school by paying their fees and giving them a school kit.



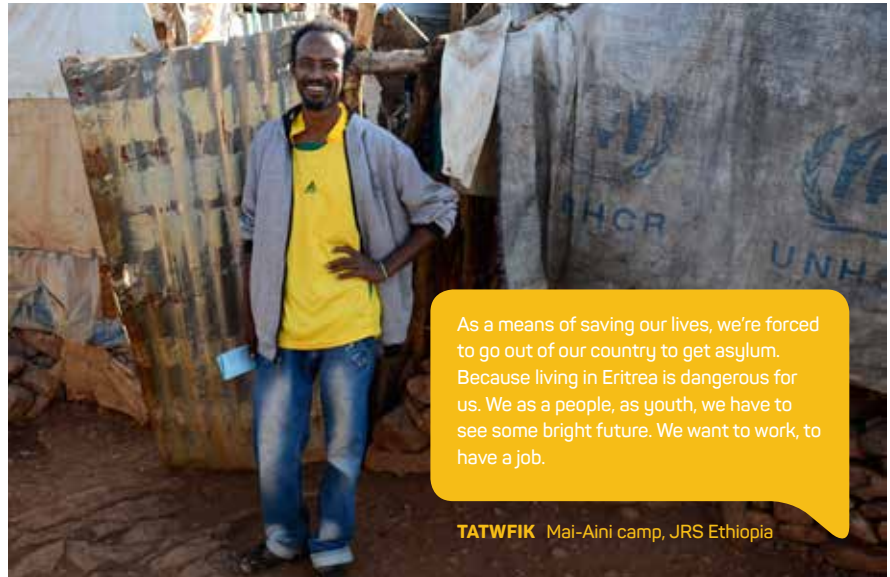
📍 **Ethiopia:** JRS creates safe spaces for young refugees in Mai-Aini camp whose poor prospects make them vulnerable to being smuggled, trafficked or kidnapped.

Safe spaces

Spaces where the vulnerable and marginalised are protected and feel safe.

SPACE TO BE CREATIVE

2014 marked the sixth year of JRS presence in Mai-Aini camp for Eritrean refugees in **Ethiopia**. The camp hosts a population of around 18,000 refugees who left their country to escape severe human rights violations including forced and prolonged military conscription. Most are aged between 15 and 25. Given their meagre future prospects and the harsh conditions of the camp, many view Ethiopia as a transit country and are vulnerable to the lures of traffickers, smugglers and kidnappers who promise them heaven abroad and take them to hell instead. In 2014, JRS continued to bring the young refugees together in safe spaces to exert their energies positively and creatively through drama, music and sports. JRS ran a library too. Psychosocial support helped the refugees deal with anxiety and other mental health problems that accompanied their tough reality.



As a means of saving our lives, we're forced to go out of our country to get asylum. Because living in Eritrea is dangerous for us. We as a people, as youth, we have to see some bright future. We want to work, to have a job.

TATWFIK Mai-Aini camp, JRS Ethiopia

24 SPACE TO BE CREATIVE

The internal armed conflict in **Colombia** dragged on, generating the world's second largest population of internally displaced people. The largely Afro-Colombian port of Buenaventura on the Pacific coast experienced the highest rate of forced displacement in the country due to the violence of criminal bands formed after the flawed demobilization of the paramilitaries. Buenaventura's schools and streets were dangerous places for children and teenagers because they faced an enormous risk of recruitment by the bands. Working with parents, community leaders and teachers, JRS developed attractive alternatives to recruitment that focused on art, music, dance and vocational training. On the advocacy side, JRS worked to strengthen child protection policies, developing two research projects that highlighted the need to intensify education and protection.



Jorge (above in red) lives in Buenaventura and is forcibly displaced. When he was 12 years old, he had to fish and sell what he found under the bridge of El Piñal to feed his family. Some days there was no fish so there was nothing to eat at home. Later on, when he was 17, he worked as a builder. Now he is 23 and studies psychology. He has had to make many efforts to achieve his dreams. In the morning and part of the afternoon, he works as a clerk in a hotel. Jorge is also a youth leader who tries to raise awareness on the need to protect

children and teenagers from joining armed groups. He belongs to the *Platform for Youth Action* that JRS partnered with from 2012 to 2014. He has received threats and had to leave his neighbourhood for some months. But he persists. Jorge has been asked to join armed groups but he always refuses. He would never deceive Blanca, his mother. He says: 'The education I received at home was very important. My mother was always there. She told me I had to study and always accompanied me to school.'

SPACE TO LEARN

In the camps for Bhutanese refugees in [Nepal](#), JRS ran a Disability Program that offered a range of services through a community-based approach. There was a heavy emphasis on inclusive education in the camp schools, also run by JRS, and training in vocational skills. For those who attended neither school nor training, occupational therapy was available at the disability centres, of which there was one in each camp. One priority of these activities was to create safe spaces for disabled refugees to come together. Most of the Bhutanese refugees had resettled abroad by the end of 2014. However, the more people left, the higher the percentage of refugees with disabilities left behind in the remaining camp population.

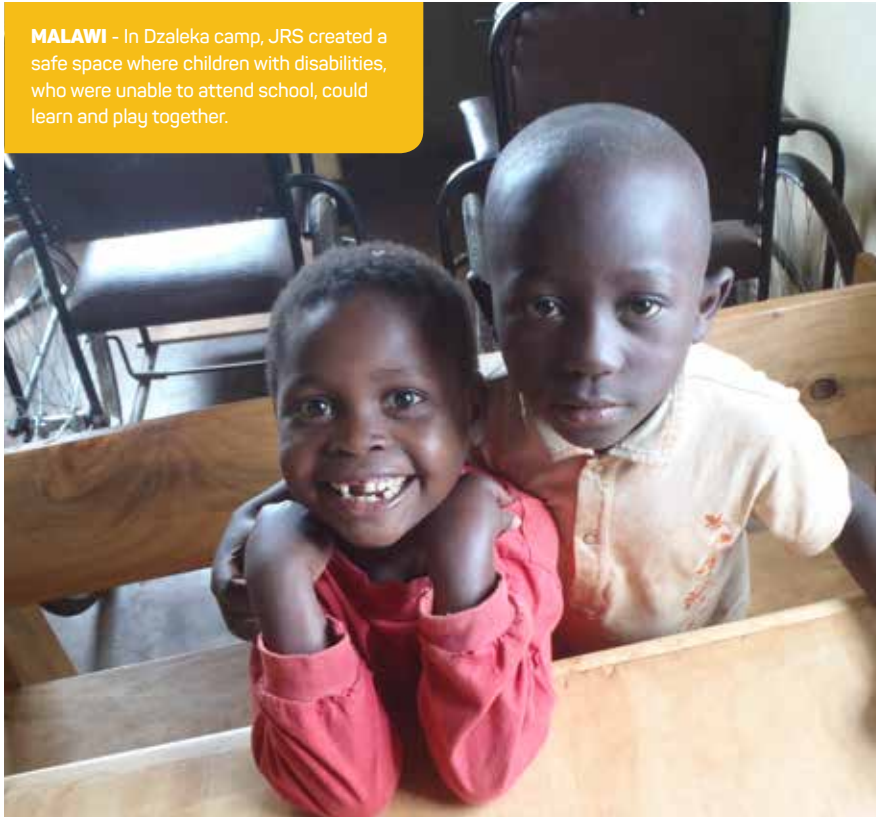
 **Nepal:** A devoted service for disabled Bhutanese refugees.

In the daytime we try to engage as many disabled refugees as possible in our program activities, so that they can be in a safe space together. The underlying aim is protection from possible abuse, which they are vulnerable to.

RAVI SHARMA CHAPAGAIN JRS Nepal



MALAWI - In Dzaleka camp, JRS created a safe space where children with disabilities, who were unable to attend school, could learn and play together.



In Afghan society, people with disabilities often face rejection and poverty. True to its brief to prioritise vulnerable groups, JRS helped to build the capacity of the Kabul School for the Visually Impaired – the only one of its kind in **Afghanistan**. The school was reopened in 2004 and faces many challenges including a lack of trained teachers and essential equipment. The JRS connection started in 2013 with English classes and, in January 2014, JRS sent two young teachers, Said Ashraf and Humayoun Aziz, for a 40-day course at St Xavier's College in Mumbai. Both men made the most of this opportunity at the Xavier Resource Center for the Visually Challenged that focused on English and computers. While in India, they visited three renowned institutions for the blind together with the principal of the Kabul school.

We were eager to use this training well and learn lots of things so that we could try to introduce changes for the good of our students. One thing we really appreciated was the computer lab, where we could do everything we enjoyed, like listen to music, study our lessons, and many more things.

HUMAYOUN AZIZ Kabul, Afghanistan

Iraq all but collapsed in 2014 as security forces battled the Islamic State (ISIS). Human rights deteriorated: the security forces and multiple armed groups abused and attacked civilians deliberately or indiscriminately. ISIS took large swathes of territory and committed widespread atrocities. It is estimated that some two million people were internally displaced throughout the year. Many Iraqis fled to the autonomous region of Kurdistan, among them members of ethnic and religious minorities, who were targeted by ISIS. By October 2014, JRS had started a project in Erbil, the regional capital of Kurdistan, with a team whose members were nearly all displaced. Working alongside the local Church, JRS started with family visits, and then began to gather women and girls into groups where they produced handicrafts and shared what they were going through. Remedial classes were organised for schoolchildren as well as courses for youth and adults in Kurdish, English and computers.



📍 **Northern Iraq:** Yazidis who have sought refuge in the ruins of an abandoned farm in Feshkhabour, a village directly on the Iraqi-Syrian border.

In Amman and the northern city of Irbid in **Jordan**, JRS continued to run life-skills groups for vulnerable women that started in 2013. Participants ranged from young mothers to elderly women who live alone. They met daily for three hours: the first hour was devoted to learning a subject of their choice, like English, Arabic or computers; the second was for group discussion, and the third for handicrafts. The women found the groups to be a special space where they felt safe and at home. They supported one another and discussed the challenges they faced, among them marital discord and the struggles to raise their families in exile.

It was during home visits that our team found women who were isolated and in difficulties and invited them to the JRS centre. The team asked the women what sort of activities they wanted and the life-skills groups were born. JRS Jordan has always placed a heavy emphasis on visiting refugee families. 2014 was no exception. The team spent hours in the tents and rooms the refugees now called home, listening and listening to their traumatic stories of flight, and then assessing what kind of response to give. As in other places, a challenge was the shortfall in funds compared to the urgent demands posed by large numbers of urban refugees.

When we go to a house, we ask 'what are you cooking?' Not 'what is your UNHCR number?' Sometimes I say that papers are our 'enemy' at JRS. Of course we need and collect information but first we build a bridge, a relationship. When you go to visit families who have suffered so much, you are powerless, you are unable to give them anything except yourself: your soul, your ears, your eyes. The least thing you can do is to be with them, to walk with them on that tough road.

TAMEEM AL-TALABANI JRS Jordan



Jordan: Syrian Loae Mously (right), who runs the JRS projects in Irbid, visits a refugee in his tent.



JORDAN - Our long-running informal education services in Amman were restructured in 2014 to cater to the most vulnerable refugees, who needed not only to learn but also to be in a place where they could gather safely without fearing discrimination.



📍 **Malta:** A vigil for migrants who died in the Mediterranean Sea as they tried to reach Europe.

Sacred spaces

Spaces where refugees can pray, grieve and heal together.

SPACE TO PRAY

In **Australia**, JRS partnered with the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of Charity to offer pastoral care to asylum seekers in immigration detention centres on the Australian mainland and on Christmas Island. Staff and volunteers met some of the detainees' basic practical needs, took them on excursions when permitted, conducted weekly religious services, ensured that their psychosocial needs were met and were available should asylum seekers simply need to talk. This care exemplified JRS' ethos of accompaniment: a reminder and a witness to asylum seekers that they have not been forgotten, despite being held behind electric fences, often in remote parts of Australia.

Once a group of people came up and said 'Sister, we've been waiting for you.' They were all very upset and asked me if I would go and talk to them in their compound. When I arrived, there must have been 50-60 men, all very distressed because a lot of their friends had been repatriated. They said, 'Sister, can you please do something?' This is where my frustration is, because there's nothing I can do. So I just sit with them, I just feel their pain, as they cry. And they'll say, 'Can we pray?' and I pray with them as best I can. I don't know what religion they are – it doesn't matter, we just pray together.

Four boats have gone down in the time I've been there. It affects them greatly. I went to see some survivors but they didn't want to mix with all the other people. They weren't really coping although they were having good counselling. I thought, 'How can I help them?' They'd tell me their stories and I said, 'Have you ever thought to draw your story or to paint it?' And they said, 'We haven't any pencils or paper.' I was allowed to bring in pencil and paper and what they drew was really shocking. And the guilt – the survivors were carrying a lot of guilt. The drawings, I think, helped them.

DOROTHY BAYLISS RSC Christmas Island, JRS Australia

32 SPACE TO PRAY

JRS USA continued its long-running chaplaincy program for 'non-citizens' detained by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in three federal detention centres. Trained chaplains coordinated religious services and teachings as well as spiritual support sessions in different languages, catering to people from diverse faith backgrounds. The chaplains ministered to the detainees, helping them to deal with their emotional and spiritual agony

as they struggled to cope with the despair and uncertainty of detention. They were separated from their families; many had lost hard-won economic stability and awaited legal decisions that could change their lives. After spending their whole lives in the US, it was very frightening for them to face the possibility of being deported to a country where they had few if any cultural or family connections, limited language skills, and little sense of home.



Many of the detainees at the Florence Federal Detention Center in Arizona are from the southern states of Mexico or from Central America. They were gathered for a Mass coordinated by Sr Lynn Alvin OP, the JRS USA chaplain. Working for JRS USA I had always found it difficult to describe the chaplaincy services that we provide. When friends would ask, 'What do you mean, you provide religious services at immigration detention centres? Just to Catholics or to everyone?' I would answer 'To detainees of all faiths and religions,' without much further explanation. But in that room, during that Mass and in that moment, the importance of our chaplaincy service programs became crystal clear. At the centre, Sr Lynn has created a space where detainees, many who are still teenagers and facing painful hardships, find solace. She has created a dignified space where detainees of all religious backgrounds are treated as people and not alien numbers – as they are classified and referred to by DHS.

BRENDA GARCIA JRS USA

📍 USA: Mass for detainees in El Paso, Texas.



In the northern and eastern provinces of **Sri Lanka**, JRS conducted teacher-training workshops, as part of education services offered from pre-school to tertiary level to students recovering from the island's now-ended civil war. Apart from being an opportunity to come

together to learn, the workshops gave the teachers a rare space to share their grief about the terrible violence and abuses they suffered during the war, especially the last phase of the fighting in 2009 when so many were trapped in the 'no-fire' zone and perished.

I cried and we all cried, years since the end of the war. In the teacher-training workshop, we cried for everything that had taken place during and after the war. We cannot cry at home as the children are around; we cannot cry in our workplace because there are others around; we cannot cry in our community as there are informants around; we cannot cry in church during a service. But today we cried collectively for the time we took our children to commit suicide, when we did not have food and they begged for life; we cried for when we could not breastfeed our babies because we did not have milk; we cried for the time we were stripped naked in front of our children and walked past checkpoints where soldiers commented on our physique; we cried for when we were harassed by the soldiers in the camps just for being alive; we cried because we did not bury the dead bodies of our dear and near ones and they were left to be eaten by the birds and dogs; and we cried for leaving the injured to die.

TEACHER MANNAR, SRI LANKA

📍 **Sri Lanka:** The north and east were devastated by a long civil war.

As a nurse volunteering with JRS, I gathered Afghan women in Sohadat, Herat, to show them how to do first aid. It went well but what disturbed me a bit was that I was *here*, giving training, and they were *there*. And there was the language barrier too. Since most of the women came with children, who made it impossible for them to practise the new skills, I started making dolls from toilet paper rolls. Of course everyone wanted one. So the mothers started making dolls. Then I got some fleece so they could make teddy bears... Suddenly one started to sing while she was sewing. I shall never forget her voice. She sang quietly and beautifully and then broke down. There

were so many tears that everyone cried. Something had broken inside... when she could talk, she said this was a lullaby she sang to her grandchild who had died in a road accident a few weeks earlier. This was the trigger – and then she got overwhelmed by the whole story of having been a refugee, returning and still living in misery. As I wondered how to end the session, I sat next to her and started to sing a Swiss lullaby. The women all looked at me and we started to cry again – with joy this time. The songs established a connection – a moment when we were all human beings knowing what it means to lose a loved one, grieving together, and then feeling happy again.

SILVIA KAEPELI JRS AFGHANISTAN



📍 **Afghanistan:** In the remote returnee township of Sohadat outside the city of Herat.

Many Colombians fleeing violence in their home country headed for the border states of Aoure, Táchira and Zulia in **Venezuela**. Here JRS accompanied Colombian women and their families, enabling them to better defend their rights, to earn a living and to rebuild their lives. The intervention of JRS focused on training in human rights on the one hand and vocational skills on the other. Another crucial element was giving the women the space to share their stories as they desperately sought answers to painful questions like: *Will we return home one day? Why did we have to run if we did nothing wrong? Why did they want to harm us? Where is daddy?*

The programs were designed for both Colombian and Venezuelan women. As the women learned together, ties of companionship and trust grew and later, in other settings organised by JRS, the refugee women felt they could openly share their life stories and the reasons why they had to leave their country. As they listened to the story that lay behind the face of each one, the local women responded with respect and understanding and pushed for the integration of their refugee friends in the community. All the women came together to support JRS campaigns on special days like International Women's Day and World Refugee Day.

We listen to the women's stories – many are tragic, others full of fear – but we also hear their hopes of coming out fighting. Our support aims to reveal the confidence of the women, their self-respect, their qualities. In this way, they may be able to reconcile themselves to their stories.

CARLA CASANOVA JRS VENEZUELA

📌 **Latin America:** *Stand up for refugees* is the essence of a campaign launched by JRS and other Jesuit organisations early in 2014 to encourage a culture of hospitality. Spearheaded by the Jesuit Conference of Latin America, the campaign promoted the value, dignity and rights of the forcibly displaced and highlighted the abuse they suffer in countries of origin, transit and destination.





Expanding spaces

Trying to reverse the trend of rapidly shrinking asylum spaces.

SPACE TO SEEK PROTECTION

JRS consistently urged European governments to prioritise the protection of people over the protection of borders as migrants arrived in their tens of thousands to seek asylum. More than 3,200 asylum seekers died in the Mediterranean Sea in their bid to reach **Europe** in 2014. The number would have been far higher were it not for Mare Nostrum, Italy's committed search-and-rescue mission that saved 156,362 migrants. JRS joined other humanitarian and human rights agencies in expressing dismay when Mare Nostrum was replaced by the far more limited European Union operation Triton, and predicted an increase in deaths of migrants at sea.

Apart from calling for a well-resourced and widespread rescue operation, JRS strongly advocated for more safe and legal pathways for migrants to reach Europe.

JRS also drew attention to the serious human rights abuses suffered by migrants in Libya – usually the last country they transit through before crossing the central Mediterranean to reach Europe. In January, JRS **Malta** issued a report called *Beyond Imagination* that featured the voices of Eritrean and Somali asylum seekers who passed through Libya and were interviewed after they arrived in Malta.

When I heard the Maltese government was planning to return some people to Libya, I got a shock, I panicked, I thought it was me they wanted to take back. Dying would be better. Life for us in Libya is beyond imagination... I can never forget. It changes my mood when I remember. It really pains me, it is not good for a man to cry but I cannot express it otherwise, it really pains me deeply.

ABUUBAKAR MALTA

📍 **Malta:** One of the island's detention centres that epitomises the shrinking spaces for asylum seekers around the globe. States displayed a marked reluctance to rescue migrants in peril at sea and to welcome those who managed to reach their borders.

38 SPACE TO SEEK PROTECTION

In another report that explored the reality behind the headlines, JRS highlighted the fate of asylum seekers in Sicily, the Italian island that ended up being the destination of many who were saved at sea. *Rescued: what next?* was launched in Brussels in October and drew on interviews with asylum seekers and refugees struggling to survive in the city of Catania and CARA di Mineo, a massive reception centre that warehoused around 4,000 people. The report acknowledged Italy's efforts to cope but revealed a worrying picture of reception systems stretched beyond their limits,

frustrating delays in the asylum procedure and services that fell far short of demand. Even registered refugees ended up sleeping on the streets for weeks or months.

Migration from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras rose steadily in the spring and summer. JRS USA was particularly concerned about the increased number of unaccompanied children, asylum seekers and women travelling with very young children. Seeking refuge from a tide of violence against youth back home, the asylum seekers made the perilous thousand-

mile trip north in the desperate hope of finding security and building new lives. Working in partnership with the US Jesuit Conference and other faith-based and secular organisations, JRS urged the United States to compassionately review the protection claims of desperate people who arrived at its border and to address the factors driving this migration in a caring, reasonable and sustainable manner. JRS and its advocacy partners urged the US to link aid and policies for Central America to concrete steps to reduce violence and to strengthen human rights and the rule of law.



📍 Sicily: A frequent sight around Catania's train station.

SPACE TO SEEK PROTECTION

JRS has witnessed the scapegoating of refugees in **Kenya** as they have been unfairly blamed for terrorist attacks. In 2014, Kenya issued a forced encampment policy requiring all refugees to reside in one of the country's two overcrowded camps. Operation Usalama Watch followed, in which refugees living in Nairobi were either sent to the camps, arbitrarily detained or expelled from Kenya. Refugees remaining in the city continued to face arbitrary detention, extortion and harassment by police. JRS participated in the

Urban Refugee Protection Network, a coalition of NGOs under the leadership of UNHCR advocating for refugee rights, and responded to the needs of individual urban refugees. Our teams distributed food and other essential items in six parishes of the Archdiocese of Nairobi, located in low-income areas. They offered pastoral care as well as medical and financial aid in cases of need. Refugees trying to earn a living were supported as were students who needed help with tuition fees.

I've been here since 1991 and it was peaceful until 2014. I think the Kenyan government needs to find the bad people and not collectively say 'Somalis are bad'. They are telling us 'you people are al-Shabaab, go back to your country!' I've lived peacefully with the locals so this is totally shocking to me. The first time I ever experienced peace was when I came here. But now my children are living in fear because every time a police knocks they know they will be arrested. Actually they do not fear arrest but they fear the beatings that come before that. Al-Shabaab wants to foster differences between Christians and Muslims. Remember: in Somalia al-Shabaab targets each and every one of us. We are Muslim and they still kill us.



📍 Kenya: Unfairly targeted... a refugee family in Nairobi.

40 PEOPLE SERVED BY JRS

	Education	Livelihoods	Psychosocial/ pastoral	Emergency	Advocacy/ protection	Healthcare	Total
EASTERN AFRICA							
Ethiopia	7,381	1,043	1,908	1,062	533	632	12,559
Kenya	664	688	5,987	2,399	946	369	11,053
South Sudan	2,882		1,000			30	3,912
Sudan	7,845	584			511		8,940
Uganda	400	240		2,767	568	403	4,378
GRANDS LACS							
Burundi	156	156	156				468
Congo (DRC)	9,571	1,200	3,574	15,446	45	160	29,996
SOUTHERN AFRICA							
Angola	150	172	1,286	28	2,345	31	4,012
Malawi	6,303	632	1,583				8,518
South Africa	2,836	780	254	6,154	7,103	1,195	18,322
Zimbabwe	363	383	565			5	1,316
WEST AFRICA							
CAR	2,410						2,410
Chad	35,081						35,081
ASIA PACIFIC							
Australia			3,319	74			3,393
Indonesia	36		255	158	358		807

	Education	Livelihoods	Psychosocial/ pastoral	Emergency	Advocacy/ protection	Healthcare	Total
Philippines		438		2,742	2,066		5,246
Thailand	7,977	312	5,692	2,862	20,253	5,336	42,432
Cambodia	427	61	3,540	181	6,477		10,686
Myanmar	389				7		396
SOUTH ASIA							
Afghanistan	7,867						7,867
India	10,486	704	2,057	216	898	463	14,824
Sri Lanka	6,216	500	4,098				10,814
Nepal	9,403		1,776		20		11,199
MIDDLE EAST							
Jordan	2,452	372	8,430	100			11,354
Lebanon	1,045		890	650			2,585
Syria	6,585		6,585	369,750		13,590	396,510
Turkey	350		600	2,220	1,440		4,610
Iraq			7,316				7,316
LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN							
Colombia	2,450	666	913	2,851	1,318		8,198
Ecuador	5,169		886	50	2,208	30	8,343
Panama	189	70	211	319	280		1,069
Venezuela	1,195	52	706	189	900	45	3,087

42 PEOPLE SERVED BY JRS

	Education	Livelihoods	Psychosocial/ pastoral	Emergency	Advocacy/ protection	Healthcare	Total
NORTH AMERICA							
USA			21,636				21,636
EUROPE							
Belgium			768				768
France			82				82
Germany			1,000		908		1,908
Ireland	1,090		1,205		55		2,350
Italy	1,287	520	566	17,300	248	2,475	22,396
Malta		600	400	40	840	241	2,121
Portugal		138	2,596		1,403	365	4,502
Romania	770	250		20	1,300	130	2,470
Slovenia	200		360		350		910
Croatia	180	1	240	25		86	532
Macedonia	261		742	1,355		810	3,168
Kosovo	43		51	26		19	139
Sweden			30		95		125
UK			3,935	630			4,565

GRAND TOTAL

142,109

10,562

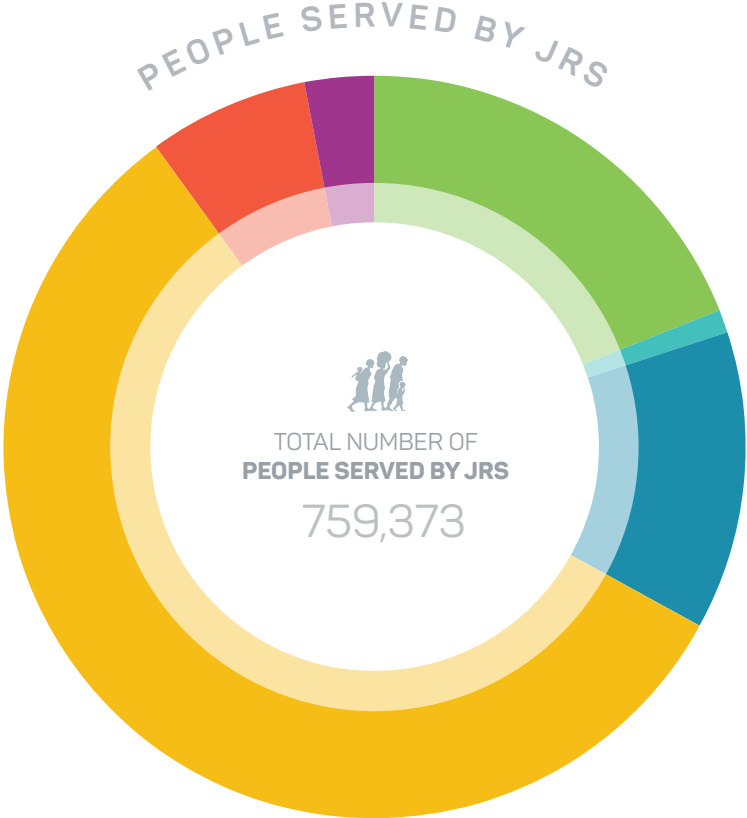
97,198

429,614

53,475

26,415

759,373



19% **EDUCATION**
142,109

1% **LIVELIHOODS**
10,562

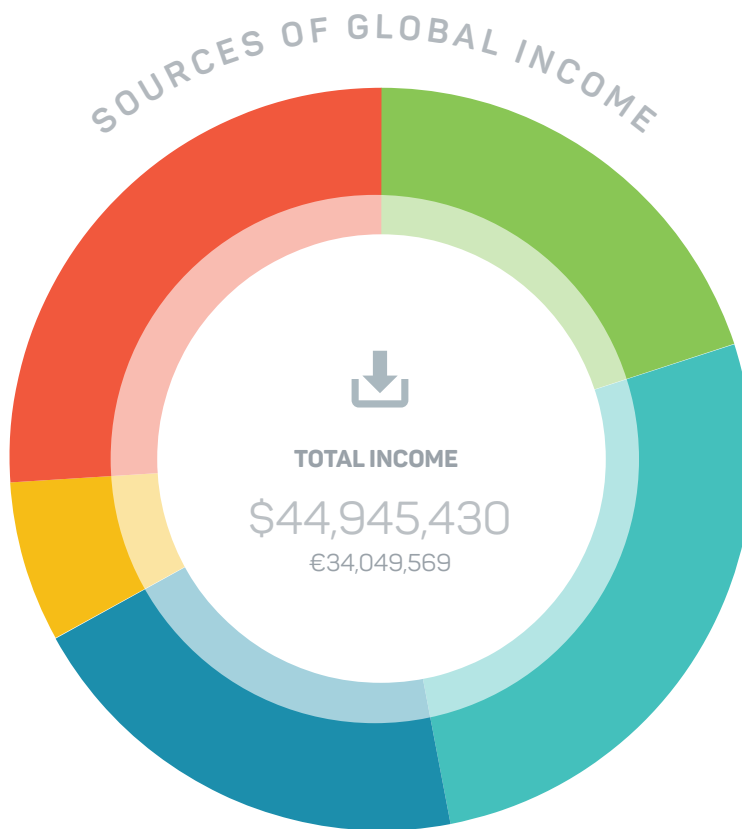
13% **PSYCHOSOCIAL/
PASTORAL**
97,198

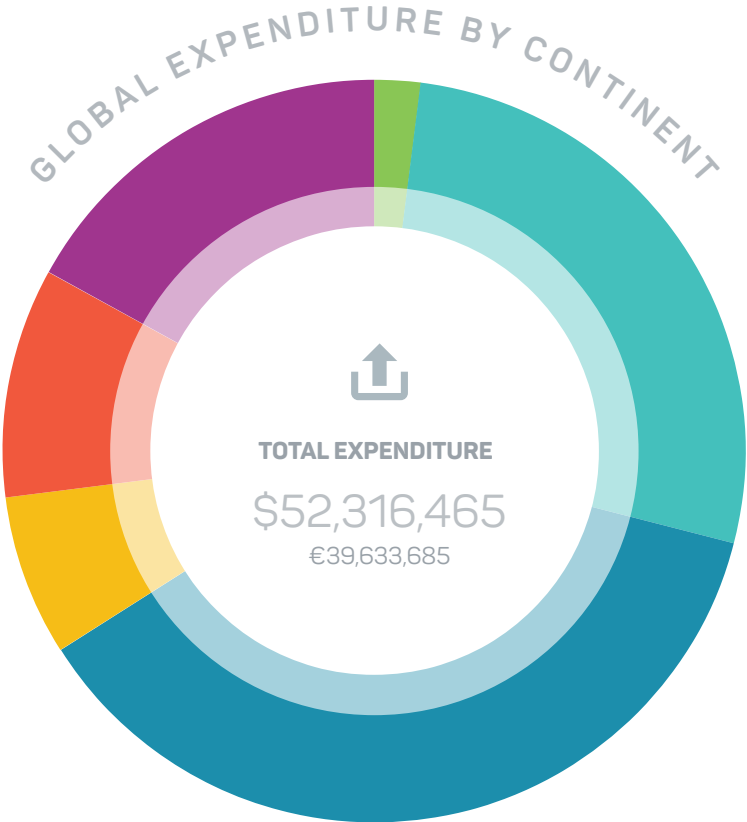
57% **EMERGENCY**
429,614

7% **ADVOCACY/
PROTECTION**
53,475

3% **HEALTHCARE**
26,415

CARITAS NETWORK & CATHOLIC AGENCIES \$9,204,735	20%
INSTITUTIONAL DONORS \$12,337,586	27%
JESUIT NETWORK & SOURCES \$9,090,360	20%
NGOS AND OTHER INCOME \$2,790,201	7%
PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, FOUNDATIONS & CORPORATIONS \$11,522,550	26%





2% **INTERNATIONAL OFFICE**
\$1,305,977

27% **AFRICA**
\$14,104,564

37% **MIDDLE EAST**
\$19,158,812

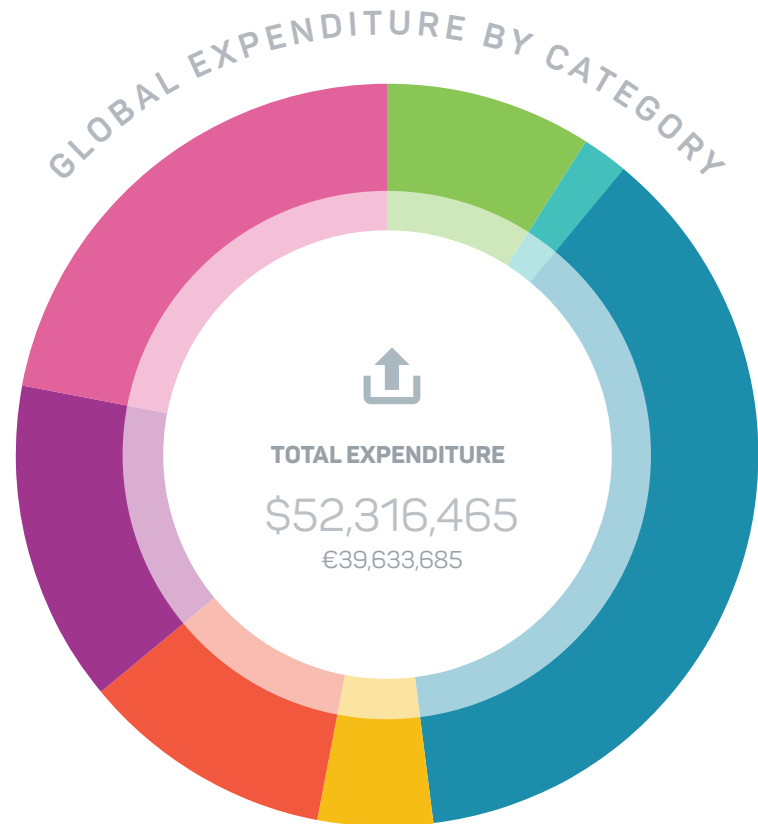
7% **ASIA**
\$3,743,125

10% **AMERICAS**
\$5,006,656

17% **EUROPE**
\$8,997,330

46 GLOBAL EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY

ADVOCACY/ PROTECTION \$4,963,286	9%
HEALTH CARE \$1,017,084	2%
EMERGENCY \$19,481,181	37%
LIVELIHOODS \$2,599,727	5%
INDIRECT COSTS \$5,614,885	11%
PSYCHOSOCIAL \$7,127,665	14%
EDUCATION \$11,512,637	22%



IN 2014, JRS SPENT
AN AVERAGE OF **\$68.5**
PER REFUGEE



\$61 DIRECT
COSTS



\$7.5 INDIRECT
COSTS



 Ethiopia: Mai-Aini camp.

To all our donors and friends,
thank you for creating spaces
with us and the refugees we serve.

jrs.net

The mission of the Jesuit Refugee Service is to **accompany, serve** and **advocate** for the rights of refugees and other forcibly displaced people.

 **RESILIENT**
SPACES

 **SAFE**
SPACES

 **SHARED**
SPACES

 **SACRED**
SPACES

 **EXPANDING**
SPACES