

# ANNUAL REPORT 2016



JRS

Asia Pacific  
accompany • serve • advocate

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**The Jesuit Refugee Service is an International Catholic organization with a mission to accompany, serve, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced people.**

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## **Jesuit Refugee Service Asia-Pacific**

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*Bambang A. Sipayung SJ  
Regional Director, JRS Asia Pacific*

A refugee staff member shared with us during a meeting how she and her community shared candies during led celebrations with Thai people in their neighbourhood. Some people received the candies, some were confused and did not know what to do, and some refused. For the refugees, celebrating led is part of sharing the joy of led in a new place where they now become refugees and also an act of sharing their history, identity, religion, culture, and who they are as refugees.

The reactions of people to the candy sharing reminded me of what Pope Francis said following Easter Sunday in Rome this year. He said "A closed heart, a rational heart, is incapable of astonishment and cannot understand what Christianity is, because Christianity is grace and grace has to be perceived." To understand Easter," he said, "it takes a heart that is able to be surprised by God".

Those who saw people being shared candies by refugees or asylum seekers may be surprised or may analyze the situation with a lot of questions. It was a surprise to learn how they can still share despite the challenges they must face.

The JRS Asia Pacific 2016 Annual Report shares with you the surprises JRS staff in the region found with refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people and other migrants. From Australia with the Arrupe Project, Indonesia with working in Immigration Detention Centers and urban refugees, Myanmar with teacher trainings and education services to keep up hope despite a refreshed conflict in Kachin and Shan States, the Philippines with tired-less efforts of women moving peace forward, Cambodia with continued services for the Montagnards, Singapore with assistance to human trafficking victims, and Thailand with broad ranges of refugees in urban areas and in camps.

## INTRODUCTION

The surprises in this report also bring a reason for celebration, for a gratitude that may open our eyes, hearts and minds to the facts of life within refugees communities. Refugees are not only numbers appearing in statistics but faces and individuals as human beings just like the rest of us who are not a refugee. They are surprises of our failed attempt to create lasting peace, where diversities are acknowledged and celebrated as grace. They are a reminder of a cold rational political calculation translated into inhospitable policies. They are a surprise that we need to take seriously to build on our common lives in this world.

I would like to thank all of you who contribute of opening this surprises from refugees. And may the surprises help us to shape our common future lives in solidarity, justice and love.



The Arrupe Place in Australia

# A U S T R A L I A

## The Arrupe Project: Casework, Emergency Relief and Legal Advice

One of the core areas of the Arrupe Project is the provision of casework, emergency relief, and temporary accommodation to people seeking asylum who are living in the community in Australia. Support is delivered to people who are often in crisis with no other options. We work with people to find more sustainable support and employment, but for many people their visa conditions, health or mental health, or carer responsibilities mean they have no other option other than to rely on very limited charity support.

In 2016, we provided emergency assistance to 575 people, which included assisting 159 people with financial assistance, some of which was delivered in partnership with the Australian Red Cross. Another 53 people, accessed temporary accommodation, including 20 single men provided with accommodation through the Blaiket Shelter and 9 families (15 adults and 18 children) provided with emergency accommodation or

rental assistance through a grant provided by the Sisters of Charity Foundation. All 575 people were provided with either intensive one-to-one casework support or information/referral support. We also assisted 298 people (representing 769 family members) to access our food bank, which serves asylum seekers struggling to make ends meet.

One of the most pressing issues for asylum seekers in the community has been the need to access legal advice to assert their rights. JRS has developed a partnership with RACS (Refugee Advice and Casework Service) to run free bi-weekly legal clinics at the Arrupe Project. 2,931 asylum seekers have accessed specialist legal support through this service and 143 people have been supported to fill out the clerical information needed for the protection visa applications via 47 form filling clinics.

Our main aim has been to support the most vulnerable people who have fallen through the gaps and who live on the margins in the

community, but there is a significant and growing gap in support for people whose refugee claims have been rejected. The most significant gap is the lack of support available to people who are at the post-merits review stage of the asylum process. Government funded support payments, work rights, and access to healthcare often cease at this stage and there are few community support options available. People at this stage can be left in limbo for years, entirely dependent upon charity and/or community support, with rapidly declining mental and physical health while they await an outcome from the courts or a decision from the Minister. The housing, financial assistance, health and mental health, and other support needs of this group are required on a long-term basis and put significant stress on those trying to support them. While there is currently collaboration between agencies in relation to referrals, JRS is working to facilitate a broader sector response/strategy to address the gaps in service to these excluded people.

## The Arrupe Project: Advocacy & Schools/Community Engagement

In addition to the direct work that we do in support of people seeking asylum, we also spend a great deal of time advocating for policy changes and access to services that will better support the people we serve, including in asserting their fundamental human rights. In 2016, JRS Australia was part of a coalition of organisations,

as part of the Health, Housing, Welfare Working Group (part of the Asylum Seeker Interagency), that successfully advocated for people seeking asylum on bridging visas to have increased access to free training and education through the New South Wales state government. People seeking asylum are now eligible for a range of free courses,

including English classes, up to Certificate IV level and a number of universities have also pledged to offer scholarships. In 2016, the JRS Schools and Community Engagement Program also grew significantly, with over 3,900 people participating in forums, workshops, school and parish talks.

## In short, my life story...

To: Whom It May Concern,

My name is Hanan\*, I came to Australia from Syria in 2014 with my two young children. At the time I only came to study, holding an international student visa for three years to study a master's degree, but life has changed so much since then.

When I came to Sydney, I had money in my pocket to help me with my daily living, but the first days in Sydney were very difficult because I was alone with two girls and no family members to help. Every day, I would bring the eldest to school and the youngest to childcare and to go to uni as well.

My husband didn't apply with me to come to Australia, as he had a one year contract for work in the Middle East. It was very difficult for him to leave his job and join me, as they don't give staff passports unless they finished their contract. The next year I applied for him, but he didn't join me in Australia until 2016.

During the first week after his arrival to Sydney, his overseas employer terminated his contract and they didn't allow him to come back to work, first because he is Syrian, and second, because he had a work injury. They didn't allow him to use his money in the bank either because when they

terminate a worker, he will be automatically inactive.

We decided to apply for a protection visa, as we don't have a country to go back to. We can't go back to Syria because of the war and we can't go back to where my husband was working in the Middle East, as they have terminated his visa.

When we applied for the protection visa we didn't need any financial support because we still had some savings. However, the difficult life began and the challenges started as we ended up without money, and became unable to pay our rent and for the kids' school fees.

# CAMBODIA

## JRS Programmes in Cambodia

I knocked on the doors of all the organisations to find help, but meanwhile, we sold everything we had left to pay for school fees and rent. We found support through JRS with some help for daily life and food from the foodbank, but we are still waiting to hear if we will receive support through the Status Resolution Support Service (a Department of Immigration funded service).

Finally, I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude to all these organisations who are trying their best to help. All of you have beautiful souls and personalities. You never let me feel shy when I am asking for help, instead you all feel with me and are trying to help me. I do appreciate all of you without mentioning the names, and say thanks for what you have done for me and for my family till now.

-Hanan\* (name has been changed to protect identity) person seeking asylum from Syria

Cambodia in 2016 has been politically troubled. The rift between the ruling party CPP led by Hun Sen and the opposition party CNRP has resulted in many human rights violations of the opposition and of human rights defenders with the oppositions leader exiled. In the global context a swing away from the USA and toward China to a smaller extent Vietnam is evident. Freedom of assembly is limited. There is no independent judiciary. The census of foreigners has resulted in the deportation of 6,000 foreigners mostly Vietnamese.

The legacy of war, genocide and long term aid deprivation remains. It is visually present in the large number of people injured by weapons of war, and with deminers clearing mines and cluster bombs from the land. Psychologically it is present in the secret trauma of the older generation, in a lack of trust in power wielders, in racist attitudes toward Vietnamese people.

## Project (1): Asylum Seekers and Refugees

The purpose of the project is to accompany, serve and advocate for 210 Montagnard asylum seekers and 100 urban asylum seekers/refugees in Cambodia. 2016 began with very uncertain prospects for 210 Montagnard asylum seekers & refugees who had fled from persecution in Vietnam because of their Degar Christian religion. However the government of Cambodia changed its stance in January 2016 and agreed to process the cases of 199 unregistered asylum seekers. All Montagnards were interviewed by December 2016 and some decisions handed down. The 13 existing refugees departed for Manila in May and will be resettled. Only the registered asylum seekers are informed of the decision. During the year 30 returned to Vietnam and are being monitored by UNHCR. Reports of abuse are heard, the worst being the beating to death of one relative in a prison cell. Some rejected cases fled to Thailand; two died. By the end of 2016, JRS was still caring for 156 asylum seekers.

## Accompaniment

Our welcome centre in Phnom Penh provides a space for first contact for welcoming and friendship for meeting others and for legal and advocacy services. JRS was able to accompany the Montagnards by listening to their stories, encouraging them and providing sport activities, language education, gardening, and music. A highlight was the Refugee Day event for 250 urban and Montagnards refugees. A sports carnival and music festival were held in the Catholic Church Centre, which provided a day of joy in the midst of endless waiting. We also counselled them about possible durable solutions.

## Our social service activities included

Providing rented housing for 207 and linking with landlords to solve problems, distributing food allowance every 10 days and the rice supply, providing resettlement packages for those returning to Vietnam and those going to a third country, providing education for 49 Montagnard children and 120 adults who wanted to learn Khmer and English languages, assisting the sick to get medical attention, providing income generating loan/grants to urban refugees, and assisting urban refugee children with education.

## Our legal activities included

Initial interviews for all families, intensive interviews for people who had very strong cases, submitted appeals for 3 cases after they were rejected and helping resettlement inquiries for Rohingyas, Eritreans and Ethiopians.

## Our advocacy work included

Work with the Cambodian government on their obligations under international law to provide protection for people seeking asylum, reports of visits by Vietnamese police to the flats where the Montagnards were housed, work with journalists, social media work and networking with human rights groups, links with JRS Rome, USA and the Vatican advocated on behalf of the Montagnards advocating for durable solutions for all.

The happy story of the year was the resettlement to USA of an Eritrean mother and 2 baby sons after 3 years waiting in Cambodia. She was reunited with her husband who had been imprisoned in Israel and was granted resettlement in the USA. News of the resettled Rohingyas in Canada was also good as they settled happily in their new jobs. The JRS Phnom Penh team of Srun Sony, Kim Phirum, Seng Cheata, Keith Bunthouen and Denise Coghlan assisted by our lawyers were happy to accompany, serve and uphold the rights of refugees in 2016.

## Project (2): Advocacy Research, Communication, Survivor Assistance

Much of our advocacy work is done on behalf of the most vulnerable in the country. These include people injured by the remnants of wars, people rendered stateless because of their ethnicity or by lack of documentation. Environmental concerns are challenging. We believe credibility for advocacy with government and at international level is greatly enhanced by real accompaniment and hands on experience at the grass roots. We engaged in advocacy for:

## Disarmament

We helped with the monitoring of the land mine and cluster munitions treaty. We were chosen to deliver the opening speech at the UN in Geneva for the meeting of States Parties on Cluster Munitions and emphasized the effect of cluster bombs on refugees in Syria and Yemen.

## Statelessness

The major issue of statelessness in Cambodia is the status of people born here of Vietnamese ethnicity. In the international forum, we raised the issues of Statelessness at the religious peace leaders forum against genocide. The plights of the Rohingya and others in Myanmar was raised and a regional response sought.

## Trafficking

We hosted with Winrock a meeting of 32 trafficked people who prepared their message for the government and then spoke at the public forum with the Head of Trafficking in the Interior Ministry present.

## Land Rights

We provided space where young Cambodian law students could teach villagers about land rights in collaboration with Equitable Cambodia. During the year, we had 24 interviews with different journalists and got front pages in the local papers on 4 occasions.

## Disability Rights

We invited a young survivor to speak at the ICRC workshop to push for progress on government protection and service of people injured by war or disabled in other ways. He brought tears to the eyes of the Generals as he told them that his friend had to carry him up the stairs to his university because of its lack of accessibility.

## Survivor Support

Our Survivor Network Team implemented measures to improve Quality of Life and uphold rights of survivors in remote areas through the building of 14 houses, 27 toilets, 34 wheelchairs, 18 income generation grants, 56 packs of emergency food for most vulnerable, 1,004 peer counselling visits to 1,004 people, and 15 scholarships for children with disabilities.

Thank you very much to all our donors for your generous support of our project in 2016 and we are grateful again that you will support us in 2017.

A group of four men are sitting on large, colorful mats (red, blue, yellow) on a tiled floor, playing acoustic guitars. They are all focused on their instruments. One man in a blue and white striped shirt is looking towards the others. A pair of brown shoes is visible on the floor between the mats.

Three detained refugees practice guitar with  
JRS Project Coordinator Zainuddin and Jesuit  
Scholastic Pieter Dolle in the IDC Manado

# INDONESIA

## Protection concerns rise in the Emerald of the Equator

Indonesia, the ‘world’s largest country comprised solely of islands’ is home to 258 Million people. Between January and December 2016 Indonesia hosted about 16,500 men, women and children seeking international protection via UNHCR Indonesia.

As Indonesia does not grant asylum seekers or refugees right to work many run out of financial savings over time and become dependent on support provided by organisations like JRS. Some even decide to give up their freedom in order to access food, shelter, and health assistance at one of the 13 Immigration Detention Centres (IDC's) throughout the country.

JRS Indonesia’s biggest project is situated in West Java, south of the capital Jakarta, where about 2,500 asylum seekers and refugees live. Here JRS provides education and psychosocial activities to

over 500 people. JRS is the main service provider for the most vulnerable providing access to food, housing and health care as well as needed information and legal advice. JRS acts as key stakeholder in regards to monitoring protection concerns, which it voices to UNHCR and local authorities.

JRS was present most days of the week in two IDCs facilitating activities aimed to support the detainees’ well being as well as to advocate for better protection for asylum seekers and refugees detained in Manado, North Sulawesi and Surabaya, East Java. Enduring often years in detention JRS accompaniment and outdoor activities like picnic, city walks or sport activities are a welcome change to people detained, many suffering under stress and frustration. JRS activities provide a chance for social interaction between detained asylum seekers, refugees with members of the local community, which JRS invites to participate in its activities.

In Yogyakarta, JRS provides information, English classes and computer lessons to refugees released from detention and waiting for resettlement to a third country in one of IOMs community housing projects.

JRS Indonesia’s country office responded to the eviction of more than 7,000 members of the Gafatar (Gerakan Fajar Nusantara/Dawn Movement of the Archipelago) community from their homes in West Kalimantan in January 2016, addressing gaps in the emergency responds to remaining 103 IDPs in transit in Donohudan, Boyolali, Central Java. Gafatar have long generated public suspicion due to their belief system, which combines Islam with Christian and Jewish beliefs, leading to accusations that Gafatar members practice “deviant teachings.”

One local volunteer continued to support coordination efforts between NGOs and local government in the Rohingya responds during the first months of 2016 in Langsa, East Aceh.

## Accompaniment

Though I have kept myself busy, living in detention house is a big challenge for every one of us. Here, we are living like prisoners who even don't know their crime. But in this hard situation having JRS can help us really much. For instance, once I wanted to find some materials for my class, specially reading, and someone told me to talk with JRS staff. It was the first time I wanted to request something from JRS. When I talked to one of JRS staff, I found her like a kind sister and a best friend of mine. She could prepare the material very soon and told me that any kind of help I need for improvement

of my class would be accessible here. To help detainees with Indonesian language, we had an Indonesian language class with kind staff of JRS, and it was really awesome. I learned much about how to teach second language for adults from our sympathetic JRS friends. I understood that they are really friendly and very good in solving the problem of all detainees. Beside all problems inside detention house, having JRS staff was like being with your best friends in a very hard situation.

-Ismail, asylum seeker from Afghanistan

# THE PHILIPPINES

## Women in dialogue for Peace-building and Reconciliation

In 2016 the JRS project in the Philippines brought positive results in different project categories despite security threats in our working areas. These security threats have been considerable and well documented. Major fighting erupted when the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) burned government equipment in Datu Salibu in February. The consequence of that action was the government conducted surgical operations against BIFF, which resulted in an increased number of IDPs. There were additional fighting incidents in March, November and in December 2016 a series of bombings happened in Mindanao. According to the Institute of Peace Analysis of Conflict based in Jakarta, a report identified three other pro-ISIS groups in Mindanao with links to extremists in Southeast Asia.

According to sources in the Philippines, future peace negotiations are intended to be inclusive, which will involve other groups like MNLF and CCP-NPA and that the peace process will continue, not only with MILF but with other groups in Mindanao. On the other hand with the new government all peace talks are yet to be determined. While being aware of these concerns for the future, JRS in 2016 focused successfully on conducting peace and reconciliation sessions. In the first part of the year JRS did this by addressing fears and anxieties of the outcome of a failed BBL through dialogue activities and even discussing the emerging ISIS inspired group.

In the second half of the year, JRS creatively integrated peace information discussions in our other activities. Women IDP's (Internally

Displaced Persons) were more involved and participated in the discussion of their role in building peace within their respective communities, sharing understanding, and their experiences of peace. IDP women also recognized their contribution to peace building by actively living it in their home, participating in community activities for peace and with fervent prayer for peace. Also, JRS was proud of the groups that JRS trained as they actively participated in organized peace activities in their respective communities, such as inter-religious dialogue and dialogue for peace. Their presence and participation served as a model to other women IDPs and allowed for growth in organizing and communicating activities in their respective communities.

## Service

Livelihoods- Despite the security threats, JRS gave agricultural livelihood assistance and training to 100 Extremely Vulnerable Individuals in Maguindanao in addition to leadership and management training with cooperative leaders and members of the community in Lanao del Norte.

Emergency Aid, Relief and Assistance JRS provided potable water supplies in three IDP evacuations areas in Maguindanao in 2016. 500 IDP benefited from clean and potable water to use for drinking, washing, bathing or watering their farms.

The JRS project team appreciated the Regional support & assistance in conducting trainings. The training raised JRS staff awareness and understanding of JRS and Security and Safety during field visits.

## Accompaniment

"We have learned a lot about women rights, IDPs rights and peace building. Although we did not see the larger results of our learning yet, we have been very active in organizing peace-building activities in our community , for example "Sports for Peace."

-Grace Genobaten, Lanao del Norte

# MYANMAR

## Transitioning to Peace

Myanmar, a country of approximately 51.5 million people, is one of the poorest countries in Asia with immense poverty and political discrepancies within the country. For decades the political and security situations in Myanmar have hampered the country's development. However, a National Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) was officially signed on 15 October 2015 by the Myanmar government and eight ethnic armed groups.

The Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Karen National Progress Party (KNPP) did not sign the NCA, which are the areas JRS has been working in. Fortunately, under new leadership from the first civilian-led government in decades a significant positive development was a peace conference called "The 21st Century Panglong Conference" which brought together both the NCA-signatory and non-signatory Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs).

It was a good step for all stakeholders to move forward to achieve national reconciliation and peace. However, the peace process is fragile and being

threatened by on-going political instability with reported conflicts in Rakhine and Kachin. Additionally, there have been reports of fighting in November and December that caused thousands to be displaced as people crossed the border to try and take refuge in China. The hope for these IDP's is dim as the fighting still continues between KIA and the Myanmar Army.

In Kayah, state long-standing conflict has allowed for 34,600 people to be internally displaced and approximately 10,000 refugees still remain in camps in Mae Hong Son, Thailand. In 2016 JRS opened an office in Loikaw to serve the remote areas as those areas have a limited international presence and rely largely on local Church and national NGO actors for humanitarian needs. The first JRS cross-border meeting was held in Loikaw in November 2016 to create better understanding among relevant JRS staff on both sides of the border regarding issues concerning voluntary repatriation of refugees and to identify mutual programmatic and advocacy areas for collaboration.

The second batch of students at their graduation in Myanmar





JRS staff participated in regular Education Sector Working Group meetings to update and to discuss issues related to education in project areas.

## Service

JRS increased the capacity of teaching and education management staff by improving the skills and support to teachers and boarding house staff by conducting trainings. Additionally, JRS gave coaching and supervision activities during regular and summer courses.

- JRS served 5 boarding house staff members and 28 teachers, 193 students in the summer camp, 57 students in Palana School, 42 students in 4 nursery schools in Shadaw township, and 32 Zetaman & ECCD teachers.

JRS improved the learning skills for students by cultivating school and learning facilities and by providing education materials and stipends.

- JRS served 384 students in Kayah and Kachin states and gave 10 teachers a salary stipend. Additionally, JRS assisted 9 and 10 IDP students in Maina Camp and 6 teachers in Shadaw district.

JRS improved access to formal education by expanding opportunities in basic education by assisting a government-accredited primary school in Myitkyina Diocese and managing classes for the matriculation exam.

- JRS served 57 students in Palana school and 172 Boarding House students.

JRS promoted access to basic education for forcibly displaced children by improving basic education efforts and assisted in education planning with partners and stakeholder networks, while conducting sessions on child rights and protection.

- JRS served 2 Diocesan education organizations (DEC/DCE) in Myitkyina and Loikaw and their respective KMSS service based organizations, while building partners with Church-related associations and UNHCR.

JRS improved the quality of project services through increasing personnel and staff skills by conducting trainings and workshops

on child rights, protection, child-centred approaches, and project management.

## Accompaniment

*Cicilia Roi Gyi, first batch teacher training graduate*

"I am a graduate of the first batch of New Generation teacher training course. I served as a teacher in TanPhre School in Academic Year 2015-2016, and now in this Academic Year 2016-2017, I am serving as a teacher at a government-affiliated primary school in Palana. The improvement I see in myself after receiving trainings are more self-confidence, planning lessons well, improving in teaching skills, being more creative, and more interested in teaching.

# SINGAPORE

JRS Singapore aims to raise awareness and support the plight of refugees and human trafficking victims through its various projects. We work closely with JRS Country Offices in the Asia Pacific Region to identify the needs and formulate project plans with our many volunteers.

Answering the call of JRS Asia-Pacific to support the refugee camps in Myitkyina, Myanmar and Mae Hong Son, Thailand in the areas of education, we sent volunteers to provide training to teachers in lesson planning and anti-human trafficking. The mission trips are appreciated too by our volunteers and as Edmund says, "It was meaningful and the trainee teachers were positive about learning. In addition to classroom management, invitational education and other aspects of teacher education. I also taught them "Pass It On" and the Chinese version of "Jesus Loves Me".

Closer to home in Singapore, our volunteers organized accompanied outings for residents of a shelter home for women and children, some of whom are victims of human trafficking. These outings not only provided the necessary break from the shelter home but gave them behind-the-scenes learnings ranging from bread and soya sauce factories to a hotel and hydroponic farm. Showcasing the diverse opportunities and choices which lay ahead of them may hopefully instil hope and motivation for recovery.

To raise awareness of the dire situation of refugees and human trafficking victims, JRS Singapore held outreach programmes in learning institutions and churches to an audience made up of teachers, students and church-goers. On World Refugee Day in June, an exhibition was held at the Church of St Ignatius and the theme was tied to JRS' Global Campaign of Mercy-In-Motion.

Although, we recognize there is much more to do, 2016 has been a blessed and fulfilling year for JRS Singapore.

# THAILAND

## Mourning & Hope in Land of Smiles

### Bangkok- Urban Refugee Program

2016 brought significant shifts in the context for urban asylum seekers and refugees in Bangkok. As Thailand remains a non-signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention and 1967 Protocol, asylum seekers and refugees without valid passports or visas continue to be vulnerable to arrest and detention as illegal immigrants under the Thai Immigration Act, B.E. 2522 (1979).

However, in September 2016, the Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha delivered an encouraging speech at the Obama Leader's Summit on Refugees, organized on the heels of the United Nations Summit on Refugees and Migrants. Despite carefully avoiding the term "refugees", Thailand referred to the forcibly displaced and announced the need to distinguish between "irregular migrants fleeing from poverty and war" and illegal migrants. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

warmly welcomed Thailand's statement, and expressed optimism towards the country's expected move to establish a screening mechanism to distinguish refugees from economic migrants and seek alternatives to detention for children. The timing and materialization of such pronouncements remains to be seen.

On the other hand, the entire population of asylum seekers and refugees reduced slightly from 8,831 in May 2016 to 7,992 in October 2016. The reduction is attributable to the decrease in new arrivals, from approximately 200/month in 2015, to 60/month in 2016. It is also related to voluntary returns by the asylum seekers frustrated by the tough conditions in Bangkok as well as cases of rejection or closure by UNHCR.

Security remained the overriding concern among asylum seekers and refugees, as immigration and police authorities continued to make small and large scale arrests. In particular, the month of October 2016 saw the passing of the Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej, which plunged the country into a period of deep mourning and national grief. Prior to this tragic news, it was reported that Thai security agencies had received intelligence about potential car bomb attacks in Bangkok. As a result, October 2016 was a period of increased security presence around the city. UNHCR warned that asylum seekers and refugees should lay low and avoid any activities that could draw adverse attention. Bail from the IDC had been suspended for several months, resulting in even greater anxiety among urban asylum seekers and refugees regarding the dire consequences of arrest and detention.

## Service

The urban refugee project aimed to improve the ability for refugees to access primary healthcare, housing, food, and other basic needs of vulnerable urban asylum seekers in Bangkok through the provision of these services by conducting casework assistance and offering capacity building activities.

1,023 people went through reception for initial registration or emergency services.  
379 people had regular casework assistance.  
396 people were visited at home or immigration detention centres (IDC).  
554 people were given emergency assistance.

JRS improved the psychosocial well being of urban asylum seekers in Bangkok through increasing mental health awareness by providing individual counseling, psychosocial activities, and trainings on mental health and self-care.

550 people were given mental health and psychosocial support.

436 people were given community and home visits for psychosocial support.

30 people were given two mental health and psychosocial support training courses of 5-8 sessions each conducted with adults and young adults from the urban refugee communities in Bangkok.

## Organizational Support

18 staff members strengthened its advocacy through increasing capacity, communications, and networking with relevant stakeholders.

## Accompaniment

"I am happy, for now, as JRS helped me more than people in my own country, they helped me and enabled me to pay for my daughters schooling!" Iman said.

JRS Staff hold a training session on mental health.



## Mae Sot

In Thailand, residing outside refugee camps, the Arakanese and Karen conflict-displaced persons are not recognized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the Royal Thai Government (RTG). They are unable to access humanitarian support, basic social services and are subject to arrest and deportation as they are not legally able to locally integrate in Mae Sot. Due to the ongoing violence in areas of return, it is likely the population will continue residing and trying to make a living in Thailand. Fortunately, the community-based organizations (CBOs) have been playing a crucial role in filling these gaps for the population out of the camp. JRS realized that improving the community based organization capacities and securing their financial resources would sustain these services in the long run so income-generating activities (IGAs) have been implemented by three selected CBOs every year since 2012, with additional technical support for other related agencies.

Over the years these CBOs have progressively increased their income and have been equipped with skills to carry on implementing services on their own, while adapting to a changing and dynamic context. JRS decided to review the project. JRS assessed the relevance and effectiveness of the project to the needs and concluded that the whole operation in Mae Sot was to be suspended at the end of January 2017.

## Service

JRS increased the sustainable livelihood opportunities for conflict-displaced persons by ensuring 80 people were given vocational trainings and 118 people were directly served at the household level through income-generating activities and CBO's served 547 people through income generating activities.

JRS strengthened the protection of 802 conflict-displaced persons by empowering their knowledge on protection on trafficking, gender based violence, occupational safety, health, Thai laws, first-aid, and hygiene.

## Accompaniment

"I personally want to show my gratitude to JRS for helping me. It was really valuable for my family because this activity helped my family to have a better and sustainable life." Ma Mee, Karen State.

## Mae Hong Son

Thailand continues hosting 99,089 refugees from Myanmar in nine camps along its border. Based on The Border Consortium (TBC) population data of November 2016, there are 10,431 refugees in Ban Mai Nai Soi (Camp 1) and 2,519 refugees in Ban Mae Surin (Camp 2) where JRS works. In Thailand, while no change in refugee policy of the military government has been officially announced, there have been more restrictions on refugee movements, resulting in some related arrests regarding the transporting of materials in and out of the camps, with military presence at checkpoints and monitoring of NGO activities.

While resettlement is still an option for those registered before 2005 the number of refugees from the two camps who resettled in third countries continues to decrease. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), from January to December 2016, there were only 618 refugees from Camp 1 and 144 refugees from Camp 2 that had left for resettlement.

Although UNHCR has not yet promoted voluntary return, repatriation seems more likely when the agency facilitated the first voluntary return of 71 refugees (representing 20 families) from Nupo and Tham Hin, two of the 7 Karen camps on Thailand-Burma/Myanmar border on 25 – 26 October 2016.

Community based organizations working in both camps also conducted “go and see visits” to potential return sites, which was supported by TBC, and this plan was shared with the civil society organizations working inside Kayah state, Myanmar. Some refugees have visited their original villages to check the situation, but they are still concerned about their safety, livelihoods, land rights, land mines, and access to basic social services.

## Service

### Pastoral & Accompaniment

-JRS strengthened the spirituality of the Catholic refugee community through pastoral care and services by providing pastoral visits and sacramental ministry to 2,612 members of the Catholic communities in Camp 1 and Camp 2.

- JRS improved the spiritual and physical well being of 194 vulnerable refugees of Camp 1 and Camp 2 through the provision of basic needs by offering pastoral care, food, and shelter to 75 orphaned and unaccompanied refugee children, 91 vulnerable individuals, and 11 families (28 members) in Camps 1 & 2.

- JRS enhanced the well-being and community spirit amongst refugees in Camp 1 and 2 through accompaniment by providing opportunities for the community to gather and support one another. 2,613 adults and 94 children participated in the Family Friendship Group meetings, 234 families received home visits and 112 families of 298 family members and 72 individuals received referral services.

## Sustainable Education

The Karenne Education Department (KnED) continues to face a high turnover of skilled and experienced education staff due to resettlement, economic reasons, and other personal commitments. Recruiting the replacements also continues to be difficult. Educational staff and students appear to be unsettled, uncommitted, confused, and sometimes de-motivated due to recent development in Burma/Myanmar and the closure of group resettlement to the USA. In order to ensure continuous access to and availability of basic education services, JRS, in close coordination with KnED, has recruited young post-secondary graduates to be teachers in high school and middle school level, with the training and coaching support to them.

-JRS improved the formal educational opportunities of refugees in Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp and Ban Mae Surin Camp through supporting the KnED in its provision of formal education by supporting school operations, building teacher capacity, and improving the curriculum. JRS served 3,940 primary, middle and high school students.

-JRS strengthened the students and parents motivation and capacity to pursue education in Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp and Ban Mae Surin Camp through increasing their knowledge and skills in supporting education by conducting trainings, home visits, and parent education activities. JRS served 2,560 parents.

-JRS improved the capacity of KnED staff in administering education for refugees in Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp and Ban Mae Surin Camp through increasing their leadership and management skills by providing training and capacity development opportunities.

JRS served 226 teachers and 109 KnED management and other support staff.

-JRS promoted the holistic development and equal access to education for refugee children with special needs in Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp and Ban Mae Surin Camp through special education (SE) mainstreaming in formal schools and the community by providing quality SE services and conducting training for SE staff. JRS served 55 school-based students, 18 students with special needs, and 31 special education staff.

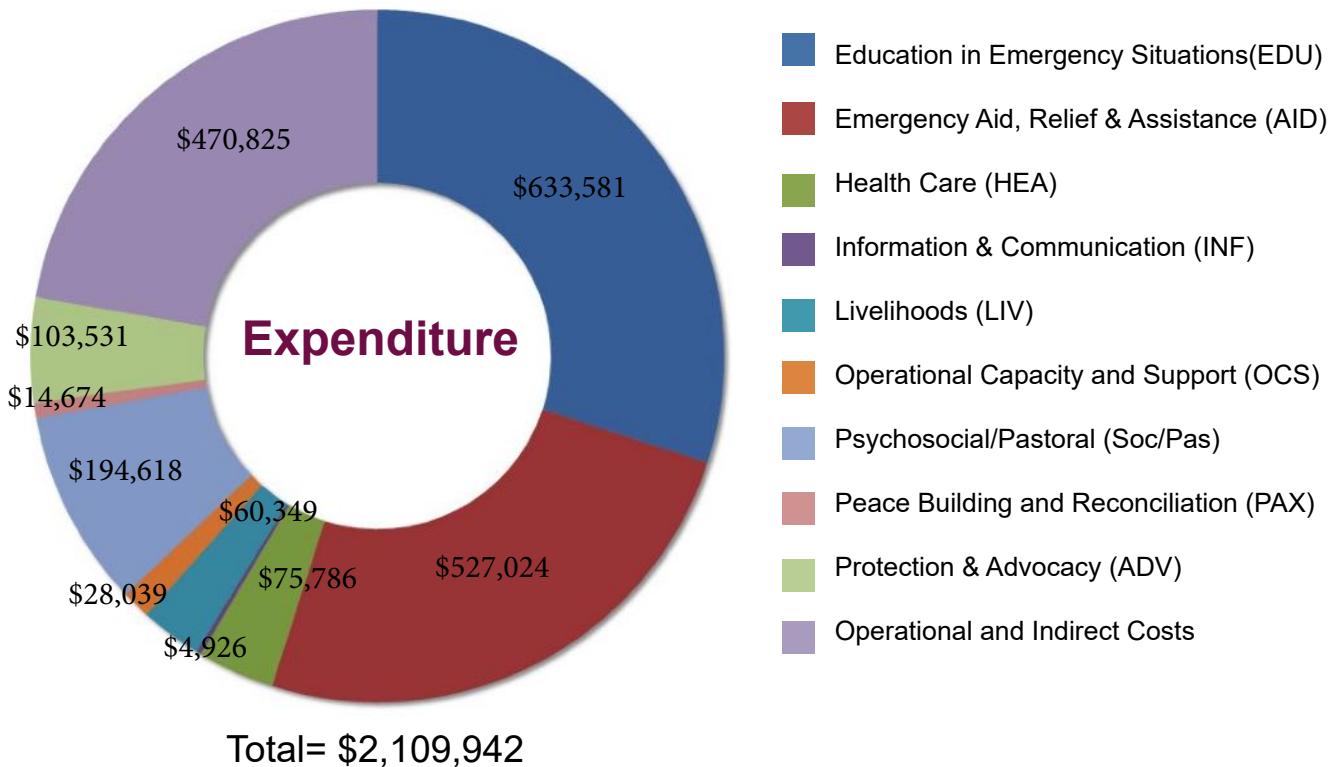
-JRS ensured the overall protection of refugees and promotion of durable solutions for refugees in Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp and Ban Mae Surin Camp by providing services for vulnerable refugees, conducting advocacy, and networking with relevant stakeholders JRS served 10,341 in Ban Mai Nai Soi Camp and Ban Mae Surin Camp.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2016

People Served						
	Education	Livelihoods	Psychosocial/ Pastoral	Emergency	Advocacy/ Protection	Healthcare
Australia	62	48	3500	575	2,931	130
Cambodia	179	74	35	N/A	310	27
Indonesia	50	145	205	103	661	71
The Philippines	N/A	100	N/A	500	100	N/A
Myanmar	384	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Thailand	6,853	745	3,628	554	802	N/A

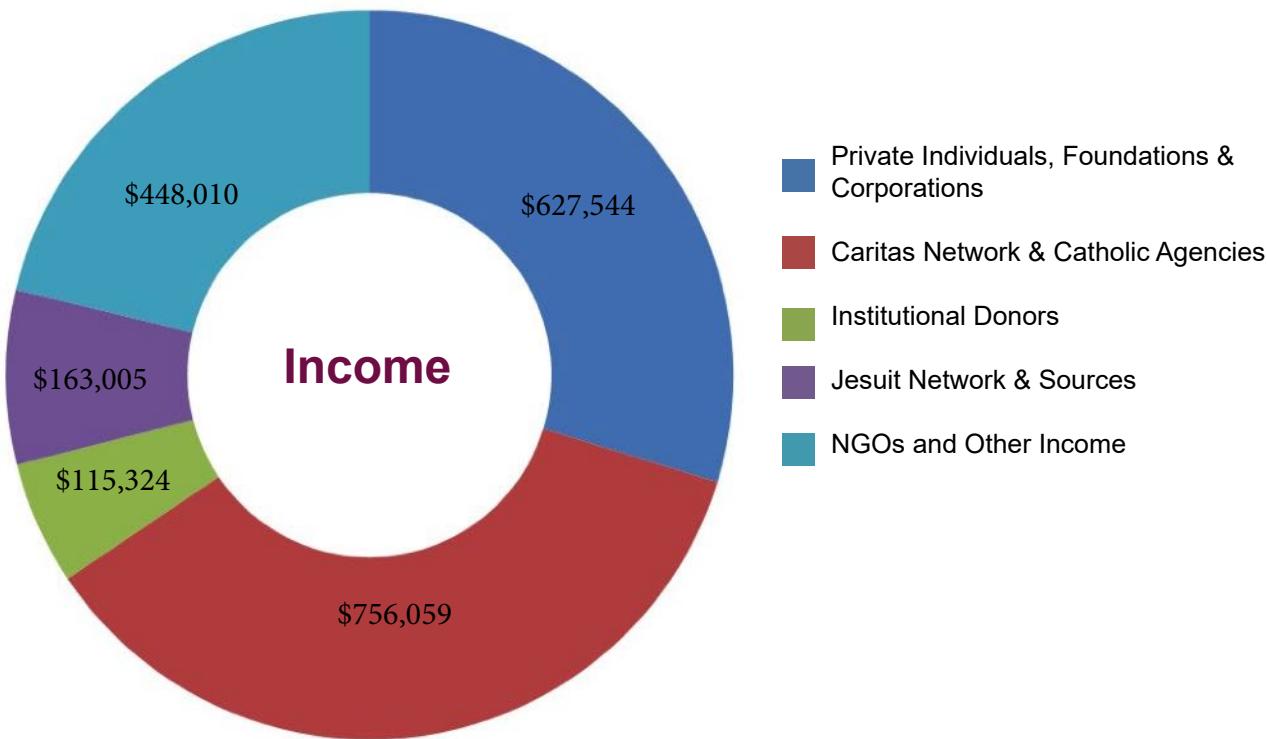
# Financial summary

## ASIA PACIFIC EXPENDITURE BY CATEGORY



# Financial summary

## SOURCES OF ASIA PACIFIC INCOME





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