



2017

Annual Report

JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE ASIA PACIFIC

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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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Introduction

The cover picture of our annual report is a young teacher in charge of a community school in Myanmar. Now, she has even been appointed head teacher of the school to teach, manage the schedules and deal with the main government school. She is determined to make the best out of her young age to learn and apply the knowledge to work with a non-governmental organisation someday. And as of now, she sees fit to share her knowledge to children in the community.

In JRS Asia Pacific, we continuously see the same determination and desire to contribute to the welfare of the community regardless of their background. Refugees, asylum seekers and Internally Displaced People fleeing dangerous violent situations are not passive recipients of humanitarian aid, but they are people with a determination to contribute to the society and the community they live in.



Fr Bambang A. Sipayung SJ, Regional Director

Introduction

A young man, whom I met in Myanmar, finally decided to leave the IDP camp with his wife to a new allocated land. This land is coming with a lot of work as he has to start from scratch, but he wants to contribute to the community instead of depending on humanitarian aid.

This report brings you the experiences of the different types of contributions possible to the community. From generosity of resources, to talents and knowledge, different people find a way to share and develop their humanity. These people are refugees, asylum seekers or IDPs, but also JRS staff and volunteers. There are local communities contributing in an interactive social process of sharing new cultures, languages and even food. And finally, there are also those who financially support these communities through JRS to gradually make a more dynamic open community.

Thanks to your contributions, we were able to see from our own eyes openness of communities, knowledge and cultures. This humanity and openness are the virtues that we would like to celebrate and be grateful for.

Let us be more determined than ever to support communities in interacting with each other, offering warm welcomes, extending hands and words and composing policies for mutual encouragement. It is indeed a great challenging moment to live as we come to hard realities of ongoing wars, natural disasters and dividing lines against migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and IDPs. And yet gratitude may be something we need at the moment to keep us contributing to the good cause and to build communities.

JRS in Asia Pacific



AUSTRALIA
CAMBODIA
INDONESIA
MYANMAR
PHILIPPINES
THAILAND
SINGAPORE

Australia

In 2017, people seeking asylum in Australia were still facing numerous challenges in their daily life such as the lack of financial resources to meet basic needs, lack of access to safe and affordable housing, lack of access to legal services and to employment, poor mental and physical health, and social isolation.

JRS Australia roughly served 2900 people seeking asylum this year, with people able to access casework support, financial assistance, temporary accommodation, legal assistance, form filling support, foodbank, English classes, Cooking Together lunches, and other social support activities.

Legal and Financial assistance

In Australia, 2017 was marked by major policy changes creating an anxious environment for the persons waiting to access legal assistance, with some needing emergency assistance as their access to financial payments were suddenly cut.

As a result, a significant number of people turning to charity support as they became excluded from government funded services, regardless of any change of circumstance. The Arrupe Project had to step in and assist them with financial assistance and legal services.



Ms. Angela Gallard, JRS Australia Caseworker, with a client

Therefore, the Arrupe Project worked to ensure that people move on to more financially sustainable support options as soon as they can, and could get legal assistance to lodge their application for protection before the deadline.

The JRS volunteer form filling team has put in many hours in the last few months of 2017 to help people fill out the clerical sections of the form.

Australia

Accommodation support

Access to safe, appropriate and affordable accommodation remains a key issue for people seeking asylum. In 2017, the Blaiket Shelter continued to provide accommodation to single adult males.

The Arrupe Project staff continued to note the need for accommodation options for those who had no access to financial support and no work rights.

Accompaniment and integration

Cooking Together has shifted in the past year and has become an opportunity for people to cook lunch together, but also an opportunity for people to prepare their own cultural dishes.

The Cooking Together lunch could probably be better described as Eat Together, as it's an opportunity for everyone in the Community Centre to share lunch together.

For some, lunch is one of the few social activities in their week as they may be quite isolated or have carer responsibilities, while for others, they come every week as JRS foodbank and lunch may be their only access to food for the week.

Awareness raising

JRS is organising with refugees some talks to schools and community, in order to increase the opportunity for school students to meet with people from a refugee background, hear their stories, and contextualize the work of JRS and the issues of forced displacement.

JRS also organised community information sessions to get to know the work that JRS does with refugees, people seeking asylum and forcibly displaced people, the global refugee situation, the local context for refugee and asylum issues and the support and services that are offered through the Arrupe Project.

Education

JRS is providing English classes to the persons seeking asylum 4 days per week in the new Community Centre space.



Marthe, JRS volunteer, in the Foodbank

Our Mission : Accompaniment

“I will never forget this place. I came here when I had nothing and you didn’t judge me, you asked how you could help. Now I have a good job, house, and a beautiful wife who prays with me. We are both grateful.”

Former asylum seeker, now Australian citizen, from Egypt

ACCOMPANIMENT

Cambodia

JRS Cambodia is located in the Mindol Metta Karuna Centre. There, they help people see the challenges of Cambodia through the eyes of the poor and the lens of interfaith. In 2017, JRS Cambodia, amongst other activities, enabled 567 youth to participate in village exposure programmes, found housing for 182, rented shelter for 156 people, and kept contact with 172 resettled or returned asylum seekers.

20th Anniversary of the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty

The top event of the year was the celebration of the anniversary of the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty and Nobel Peace Prize. Campaigners from 20 countries gathered for a regional conference at Metta Karuna in November 2017. The agenda included advocacy for clearance of mines, victim assistance and universalization of the treaty. People from Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines, Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam were among the participants. The meeting, which was also addressed by H.E Ly Thuch, the government authority for Mine Action, sent a message to the 16th Meeting of States Parties in Vienna.



Tun Channareth, recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997,
and his family

Cambodia

Advocacy

On the advocacy side, in 2017 JRS Cambodia served, accompanied, advocated and protected 156 Montagnard asylum seekers and 105 persons from Myanmar, Syria, Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq, Eritrea, and Sri Lanka.

JRS Cambodia advocated strongly for the cause of the Montagnards alongside UNHCR and to date no one has been forcibly deported in spite of unjust negative decisions on refugee status. When Montagnards were placed in detention, JRS advocated for and secured their release. Moreover, JRS hosted government policy meetings where the voice of the poor was heard.

Education

In 2017, JRS Cambodia provided education to 280 children and youth in catch-up classes, gave access to scholarships to school for 9 children and language courses by urban refugees for Montagnards. Furthermore, JRS is also dedicated in access to education to persons with disabilities and facilitated the access to Vocational Training for 2 students and gave 15 scholarships.



Participants to the 20th Anniversary of the Ottawa Treaty and Nobel Prize in Cambodia in November 2017

The Survivor programme

Two teams visited people with disabilities in various provinces of Cambodia with one team focusing on women with disability. This programme included a peer support component with 486 home visits in 2017. It also organised workshops where people could tell their story and be listened to, but also provided services and items for the extremely vulnerable people such as house, emergency food, wheelchair, monthly visits, and training in disability rights.

People served by JRS Asia Pacific in 2017



168
persons

Livelihoods



16,481
persons

Advocacy / Protection



4,688
persons

Psychosocial / Pastoral



9,936
persons

Education



4,891
persons

Emergency

Indonesia

Immigration Detention Centers

In 2017, Asylum Seekers and Refugees (ASR) in Indonesia continue to have very limited access to their basic rights. In 2017, they were 13,840 persons coming from 51 countries with a majority from Afghanistan (55%), Somalia (11%), Iraq (6%) and Myanmar (6%).

At the end of 2016, President Joko Widodo signed the Presidential Decree recognising for the first time ASR's status to be different from illegal migrant, and acknowledging the need for assistance to support their basic needs. However, the decree still leaves room for procedural interpretation, and does not address the specific context of independently living asylum seekers and refugees in urban settings.

Since 2014, more than 4,000 ASR have reported themselves to immigration authorities, likely because of their inability to support themselves. As a result, most of the 13 Immigration Detention Centres (IDC) in Indonesia ran overcapacity.



Bahasa Indonesia students taking the Mid-Semester test in Cisarua, September 2017

In 2017, 3,299 persons were living in immigration detention facilities representing 24% of the ASR population whom 860 were children. Therefore, JRS Indonesia is working in two detention centres providing different kinds of activities. JRS organised accompaniment visits, cultural and religious celebrations such as Christmas or Break fasting dinners, but also sports and recreational activities such as English classes, sewing classes, cricket or movie screening, and psychosocial activities. Some activities are also tailored specifically for the children in detention.

Indonesia

Besides the activities in the detention centres, JRS in Cisarua assessed the individual needs and distributed basic need assistance for urban ASR, as well as provided medical care and psychosocial support in the form of family outings with sports and recreational activities, health info sessions and fun day activities.

JRS also conducted general info sessions and individual consultations to provide key legal information and relevant knowledge regarding to UNHCR's RSD for asylum seekers. These information sessions also includes family reunification case, RSD acceleration, info on resettlement process regarding to alternative pathways and sponsorship.

Education - LEARN project

As a response to longer waiting period in Indonesia, ASR community in Bogor area focused on access to education for their children. While those centres focused on education for children (age 6-16), JRS Cisarua Learning Centre and JRS Cipayang Learning Centre took the role to provide mainly adult education (above 17 year old), by focusing on communication skills, both in English and Bahasa Indonesia.



Training on Basic Mechanics in September 2017

JRS also supported the rent for JRS Cisarua learning centre where more than 350 ASR come to study English and Bahasa Indonesia.

During the year 2017, JRS Indonesia had to close one of their projects in the Yogyakarta Community Housing which was closed after the transfer of all refugees to Jakarta. They had also to close their project in IDC Pontianak.

Our Mission : Serve

A speech in Bahasa Indonesia, presented by one of the student of Bahasa and English class at JRS Cisarua Learning Centre, on the certificate distribution event :

"Good afternoon to all who gathered in this event. My name is Mohammad Akbar Anwari. I am here to represent my fellow students. Firstly, I would like to convey our gratitude to JRS staff who have helped us to study. I am also thankful to all teachers. We are so happy to be here. There are many useful things we achieved from studying. Thank you for being such a wonderful teacher. A good teacher is like a candle, it lights up the darkness. That's all I can say for now, thank you so much for your attention."

SERVE

Myanmar

Myanmar has been a battleground for decades-long civil war which has been displacing more than 640,000 people within the country and more than 490,000 outside Myanmar.

Although the second Peace Conference was held in August 2017 with the Nationwide-Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)-signatories, clashes continue especially in the north-east regions of the country. 2017 was also marked by the human rights violations faced by the Rohingya in Rakhine State that caused more than 700,000 persons to flee to Bangladesh since August 2017.

In Myanmar, JRS is supporting partners in Kachin state in the north of the country and in Kayah State on the East side. JRS is working together with local partners such as Diocesan Education Commissions and KMSS to contribute in filling some education gaps for internally displaced and vulnerable children. A lot of efforts of JRS in Myanmar are put in the training of JRS partners organizations staff.

In Kachin, it's been 6 years that around 90,000 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are residing in 131 camps.



School Manual at the boarding school in Kachin

As the peace process is very fragile, many areas have been more difficult to access, especially in Non-Government Controlled Area (NGCA), and the livelihood opportunities have also been more limited due to safety and security concerns.

In Kayah State, the long-time civil war has made 34,600 persons internally displaced and about 12,100 refugees still remain in the two camps in Mae Hong Son province of the neighbouring Thailand.

Myanmar

Since 2016, UNHCR is facilitating the voluntary return of refugees from Thailand-Myanmar border. However, many refugees are still concerned about their safety, livelihood, land issues, land mines, and access to basic social services. For example, there is no clear policy on how to enroll refugees returning from the Thai camps into Myanmar education system yet.

There are still many remote areas where children cannot enjoy the right to education. Structural barrier to education remains as students from NGCA cannot easily access to Myanmar government education, as their education gained from NGCA is not recognized officially. In addition to their difficulties in integrating into Myanmar's education, continuation of their study in remote areas has been hindered by protracted armed conflicts leading to forced displacement and/or re-evacuation.

All these reasons led JRS to invest into education means in the country. One of the most effective ways has been the contribution to improve the quality education through teacher training.



Teacher Training class in Kachin, December 2017

Teacher Training

Indeed, the inadequate number of skilled teachers serving in those areas hinders the possibility of access to quality education. JRS is then training the volunteer teachers who commit to serve in schools in IDP camps and conflict-affected areas for two years.

The teacher training program not only provides the volunteer teachers to be equipped with basic skills in teaching but also helps them grow in their self-confidence. The training also integrates other topics related to the context such as peace building and reconciliation, drug issues, and human trafficking.

Myanmar

Accompaniment

JRS accompanies teacher training participants through regular visits, personal conversation, group sharing and celebrating some feast days together. Giving time for one to one conversation helps to know each participant's background, progress and challenges or concerns. After the training, the graduates expressed that they gained more knowledge, skill and confidence in themselves.

JRS also accompanies the IDPs by listening to their concerns and future aspiration through home visits, providing some awareness raising sessions on protection issues through Family Friendship Group meetings, accompanying the IDP students to keep their motivation in their study, and responding to the urgent needs of IDPs (those newly displaced and those in unrecognized camps) in coordination with our partner KMSS.

At the end of 2017, JRS has become more involved in emergency response due to the resumed fighting between Burmese army and Kachin Independence Army which inflicted second or third displacement among those who were already IDPs.



School class in a community school in Kachin

Crossborder activities

JRS team from Mae Hong Son in Thailand and partners from Kayah State in Myanmar are meeting twice a year to create a better understanding among the staff on both sides of the Thai-Myanmar border regarding the issues concerning voluntary repatriation of refugees, and identify programmatic and advocacy areas which will contribute to the continuation of access to quality education for all.

Philippines

In the Philippines, JRS is working on the island of Mindanao, which is the second largest island of the Philippines. Presently, the population of Mindanao can be divided in 3 main groups: the Lumads, which entails 18 ethnically distinct groups of indigenous tribes (8.7%); the Moros, who are Muslim indigenous groups (20%); and the Christian migrant settlers (71%).

Since the 1970s, Mindanao has been in the grip of conflicts. First, between the Government the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Then, with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), a dissident branch of the MNLF which did not accept the Peace agreement signed by the MNLF with the government.

In 2017, terrorism, particularly the Marawi siege, followed by the declaration of martial law, heavily exacerbated the problem of security and displacement which has been ongoing for decades in Mindanao. Series of attacks were done by ISIS-inspired forces against the government forces in the last two quarters of 2017.

The armed confrontation in Marawi has forcibly displaced 98% of the population of the city, as well as residents from nearby municipalities. The government declared an end of Marawi siege on 23 October 2017 after the 5-month full operation.

Given the new turnout of the armed conflict, JRS incorporated emergency assistance to the home-based evacuees in Lanao del Norte into their projects.

Women Advocate for Peace

In 2017, JRS staff worked and collaborated with local partners to identify 20 women of Muslim and Christian faiths from 2 cities as Women Advocates for Peace (WAP). JRS conducted a briefing, an orientation and then a training to understand their role as an advocate for peace in their families and communities.

Because of the Marawi crisis, between May and October 2017, the WAPs activities were suspended due to security concern for both JRS project staff and WAPs.

Philippines

Generally, WAPs have showed their active involvement in promoting peace activities such as Women Peace Dialogue, Sports for Peace, distribution of emergency items to IDPs from Marawi, exchange visits with other peacebuilders in another part of Mindanao and Inter-Religious Dialogue initiatives. The activities performed by the WAPs showed a great sign of openness in familiarizing themselves and others to other beliefs and cultures.

Other inter-religious activities took place between Muslim and Christian communities especially during Eidul-Ftr and Christmas with the support of the local churches, schools and parishes. For example, “Togetherness in Christmas” was organized for 110 Muslim and Christian children. This activity was a good start for children to be involved in peacebuilding activities especially as they are susceptible to terrorist recruitment in this area.

Promoting livelihood opportunities

In 2017, JRS started to promote livelihood opportunities in providing material support and through workshops and coaching. As part of this project, 50 vulnerable persons received farming products or grocery items for their mini stores. This support helped them and their families to have an extra source of income to sustain their daily expenses and particularly kids expenses on education.

JRS also organized 2 coaching sessions for women cooperatives. Women who received technical trainings and coaching have shown increased knowledge and performance in the management of their cooperatives. They became more independent in running their cooperatives and making decisions.

Singapore

Volunteers in Action

JRS Singapore team is composed of volunteers only. Their aim is to raise awareness and support the plight of refugees and human trafficking victims through its various projects. They work closely with JRS Country Offices in the Asia Pacific Region to identify the needs and formulate project plans.

In Singapore, talks and exhibitions about refugees are planned in parishes and institutes of learning. In order to raise awareness of the dire situation of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, JRS Singapore held outreach programmes and exhibitions in churches to an audience made up mainly of church-goers.

To support the projects of JRS Asia Pacific regional Office, JRS Singapore embarked on fundraising on World Refugee Day 2017. These donations supported the Urban Education Project in Bangkok, LEARN Project in Bogor and Pastoral Accompaniment in Mae Hong Son Camps.

With our mission of accompaniment, our volunteers visited the Mae Hong Son Camp to work with trainee teachers on anti-human trafficking lessons.



Outreach at St Ignatius with Prayer Wall for the Rohingyas.

In Singapore, JRS organized several outings for trafficked survivors housed in a shelter to show support and introduce them to other possible vocations upon returning to their home countries.

Jointly with JRS Thailand, former and current teaching professionals from Singapore imparted their skills to teach English to Refugee students in Bangkok via Skype. They helped in creating the curriculum for the students enrolled in the Urban Refugee Project in Bangkok.

Our Mission : Advocate

"It was an opportunity to discuss the reasons why refugees are coming to Thailand. I heard about many of these countries before but I did not know very much. I talked to many refugees today and I would love to participate in more activities like this! "

Thai student participating in a peer-support activity with students from JRS Education program in Bangkok, Thailand

ADVOCATE

Thailand

In Thailand, JRS is working in Bangkok where around 7000 asylum seekers and refugees are living and in two of Mae Hong Son's refugee camps on the Thai-Myanmar border, home to 13,000 people. Even though Thailand hosts around 100,000 refugees as a whole, the country is not a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which means that asylum seekers and refugees (ASR) are not recognized nor protected.

In January 2017, the Thai Cabinet approved the development of a screening mechanism to distinguish refugees with protection needs from undocumented migrants. However, the timeline and implementation process remain unclear. In Bangkok as well as in the camps, refugees struggle with diminished levels of assistance and continue to face the challenges related to their lack of legal status. This situation led to heightened level of distress in the ASR population.

Pastoral care and accompaniment

JRS is dedicated to provide psychosocial support services to those who have experienced trauma or have particular mental health needs. This also includes people who have been rejected for refugee status and survivors of abuse or sexual and gender based violence.

One of the student in JRS sewing vocational training in Bangkok



In the camps, JRS is working with the support of lay persons, catechists, lay associations, and two chaplains to provide pastoral care services, especially to vulnerable refugees in the camps. The refugee community uses its spiritual and sacramental life to cope with life in the camps. JRS is also visiting families at home as part of our accompaniment mission.

JRS also organized Family Friendship group (FFG) meetings in the camps, in order for the refugees to raise their concerns and to receive information about different issues such as resettlement, repatriation, birth registration and certificate, education opportunities and human trafficking.

Thailand

Thanks to these meetings and home visits, JRS staff has been able to refer 78 cases of concern to the relevant agencies.

In Bangkok, JRS provides psychosocial counseling and organizes support groups in addition to community outreach to promote stress management.

Education

In Mae Hong Son Province, where two Karenni refugee camps are situated, JRS works in partnership with the Karenni Education Department (KnED) in the provision and sustenance of quality education to young people in schools.

Other projects provided teacher trainings and scholarships for children to attend Thai schools. Young people, who complete high school in the camps, have limited further education opportunities and scholarship opportunities are very limited.

For example, in 2017, 73 orphan refugee students, from 12 – 20 years old, have been accommodated in the JRS-supported boarding house and were provided with supplementary food.

In Bangkok, the Urban Education project provided educational counseling and assistance to attend language and vocational training to the refugee community.

They also organized peer support activity where students from JRS met with Thai students from schools or Universities. These events were the occasion for Thai students to learn about refugees and their life as a refugee.

Social work

Besides education and psychosocial support, JRS Thailand in Bangkok provides casework support to the extremely vulnerable asylum seekers. It is aimed at helping individuals or families to access resources, assist in meeting basic needs such as housing and food, and cope with life as an asylum seeker in Bangkok. Assistance to access proper medical care is also given when necessary.

Each application for casework service is carefully screened and considered in order to prioritize those most in need. JRS Thailand also responds to the emergency needs of asylum seekers and refugees at risk or in crisis.

Financial Summary

REGIONAL OFFICE - EXPENDITURE 2017



42%

Education



7%

Social Service/
Community Development

1%

Peace building and Reconciliation



18%

Emergency



4%

Advocacy and protection



11%

Operations/Indirect Costs



12%

Psychosocial



2%

Organization Capacity and
Support

1%

Livelihoods



1%

Pastoral

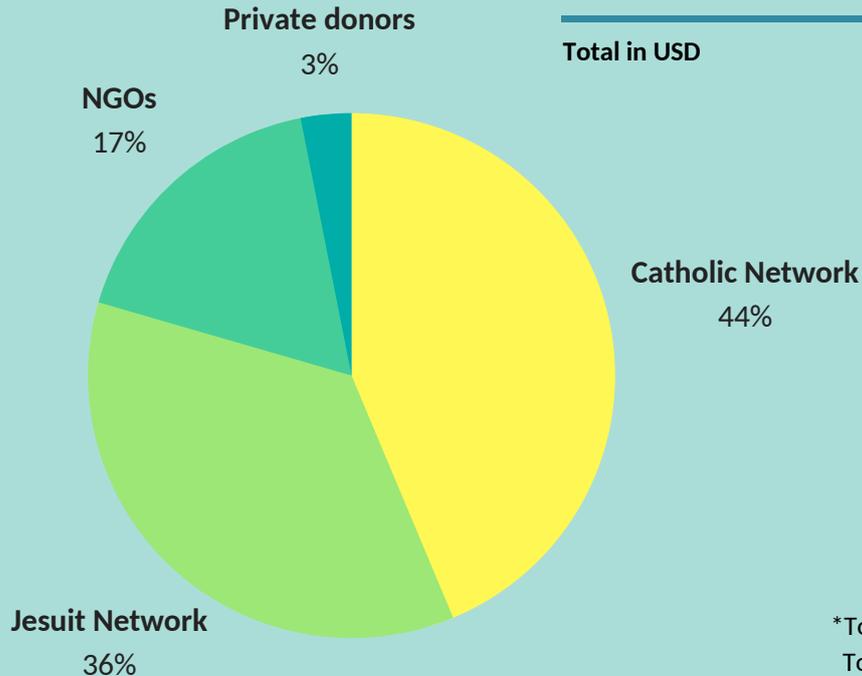
Education	783,425
Emergency	339,917
Psychosocial	217,197
Operations/Indirect Costs	211,002
Social Service/ Community Development	135,439
Advocacy and protection	83,641
Organization Capacity and Support	35,421
Livelihoods	24,398
Peace building and Reconciliation	23,879
Pastoral	22,812
Total in USD	1,877,182

*Totals do not include JRS Australia and Cambodia

Financial Summary

REGIONAL OFFICE - INCOME 2017

Caritas Network/Catholic Agencies/Religious Congregations	998,131
Jesuit Network & Sources	817,564
NGOs and Other Income	396,497
Private Individuals, Foundations & Corporations	71,204
Total in USD	2,283,396



*Totals do not include JRS Australia and Cambodia
Total income reflects 2018-2019 project agreement contracts

