

JRS celebrates 40 Years of Accompanying Refugees

In celebration of its milestone 40th anniversary, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Asia Pacific, together with Jesuit Communications Foundation (JesCom), will be launching a commemorative online exhibition dedicated to its history of outstanding service and solidarity, as well as eye-opening personal stories of refugees.

Entitled “**40 Years of Accompanying Refugees**”, JRS’s landmark project marks a special partnership with the Society of Jesus Philippine Province’s media arm, which openly contributed its expertise in website design and artistic direction.

“Certainly, JRS admires the work of JesCom through its various media in delivering the message of compassion, hospitality, and justice- all values shared by our institutions, for those often forgotten in society, not the least, those forced to flee their homes,” praised Regional Director Louie Bacomo of the unique engagement.

Featuring a detailed timeline of events, visitors of the exhibition can retrace JRS’s humble beginnings, dating back to the late Fr. Pedro Arrupe SJ’s call to over 50 Jesuit provinces to respond to the plight of Vietnam war refugees and coordinate a global humanitarian response.

Meanwhile, the online exhibit “**My Home: Displacement, Diaspora, and Desire**”, highlights the poems, drawings, and other treasured belongings from refugees, that hold them close to home and transform their sense of identity and belonging. Moreover, the said exhibit allows viewers to witness the refugees’ journeys from their place of origin, towards resettlement, through their own lens.

"The exhibit suggests that having a place to call home should not be a privilege, but a sense of home has been perceived differently by people on the move, people who were forced to flee their home. JRS would like to invite viewers to walk along their journey and listen to their stories. We hope that the exhibit could at least echo important messages and raise awareness of refugee rights issues in the region," said Duangtida Saisuk, Regional Communication and Advocacy Officer.

“We hope that viewers realize that stories of refugees are human stories, our stories. These are not stories out there; the stories are in play in each of us, in our society, in how we respect our differences and assist others who are suffering and experiencing difficulties,” described Bacomo of the exhibit’s important message for audiences.

Driven by their “love of God and compassion for humanity”- the same values that inspired Fr. Arrupe 40 years ago- Bacomo believes that this core spirit will keep JRS relevant and effective in the coming years, amidst ever-changing and challenging times.

Remembering the generous individuals who have wholeheartedly shared in JRS’s work of accompanying, serving, and advocating on behalf of countless refugees, the Regional Director expressed his thanksgiving and enthusiasm for their mission’s continued success.

“We reflect and appreciate the challenges, joy, and solidarity they have imbued in the mission and institutional character that continue to inspire all of us,” he affirmed.

“We are sincerely grateful to our supporters and friends who believe in the work we do and share our mission. The mission continues, the mission is shared. We need your support.”

*Visit the **40 Years of Accompanying Refugees** commemorative online exhibition at irsicap40years.org/*

About Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) is an international Catholic organisation with a mission to accompany, serve, and advocate on behalf of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons, that they may heal, learn, and determine their own future. JRS programmes are currently found in 57 countries, serving refugees and other forcibly displaced persons in conflict zones and detention centres, on remote borders and in busy cities. We run pastoral care and psychosocial support programmes in detention centres and refugee camps, and provide humanitarian relief in emergency displacement situations. Education and livelihoods programmes provide skill development and opportunities for integration into host communities. We never cease to advocate for the rights of refugees, and to articulate the obligation to protect the most vulnerable among us.

*Visit the **JRS Asia Pacific official website** <https://apr.jrs.net/en/jesuit-refugee-service/> for more information on its mission and programs*

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