



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Jesuit Refugee Service Asia Pacific

JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE ASIA PACIFIC

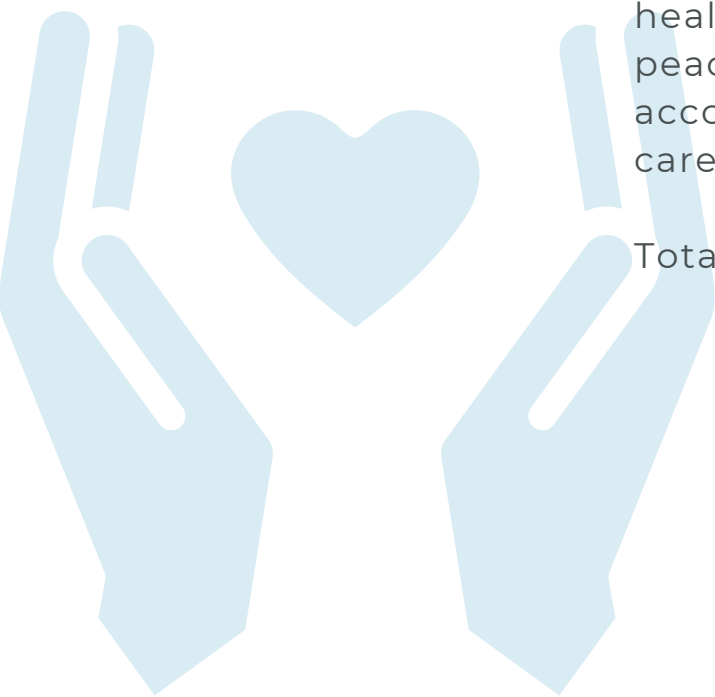
TO ACCOMPANY, SERVE AND
ADVOCATE

“We must accept finite
disappointment,
but never lose infinite hope.”
-Martin Luther King, JR

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In 2022, JRS Asia Pacific, aligned with our missions, served more than 100,000 people. 51% are female, and 49% are male population. Our programs cover advocacy, communication, emergency assistance, education, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), peace and reconciliation, pastoral accompaniment, livelihood programs, health care, and protection.

Total income and total expenditure; 4.9 million



DIRECTOR'S LETTER



MYANMAR: EXPECTATION AND HOPE

It is hard to find the right words to write about the Myanmar unresolved crisis. And so, I borrow the wise words of the poet, Alexander Pope, “Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.” Some of us share this sentiment as the crisis enters its second year on February 1.

The people of Myanmar and the civil disobedient movement arose with high expectations. Spontaneous protests and organized rallies against the violent military takeover sprouted all over the country. In a poignant photo, a human barricade formed the words UN expecting the international community to act. However, violence has escalated all over the country and a political solution appeared unreachable. Not through the UN; not with ASEAN. For many, especially the youth, peaceful protests have become pointless. Expectation has led to desperation as thousands have fled or formed armed resistance, if not killed.

JRS in Asia Pacific directly served more than 100,000 individuals in 2022. More than half are forcibly displaced from Myanmar. It is a number not to be celebrated.

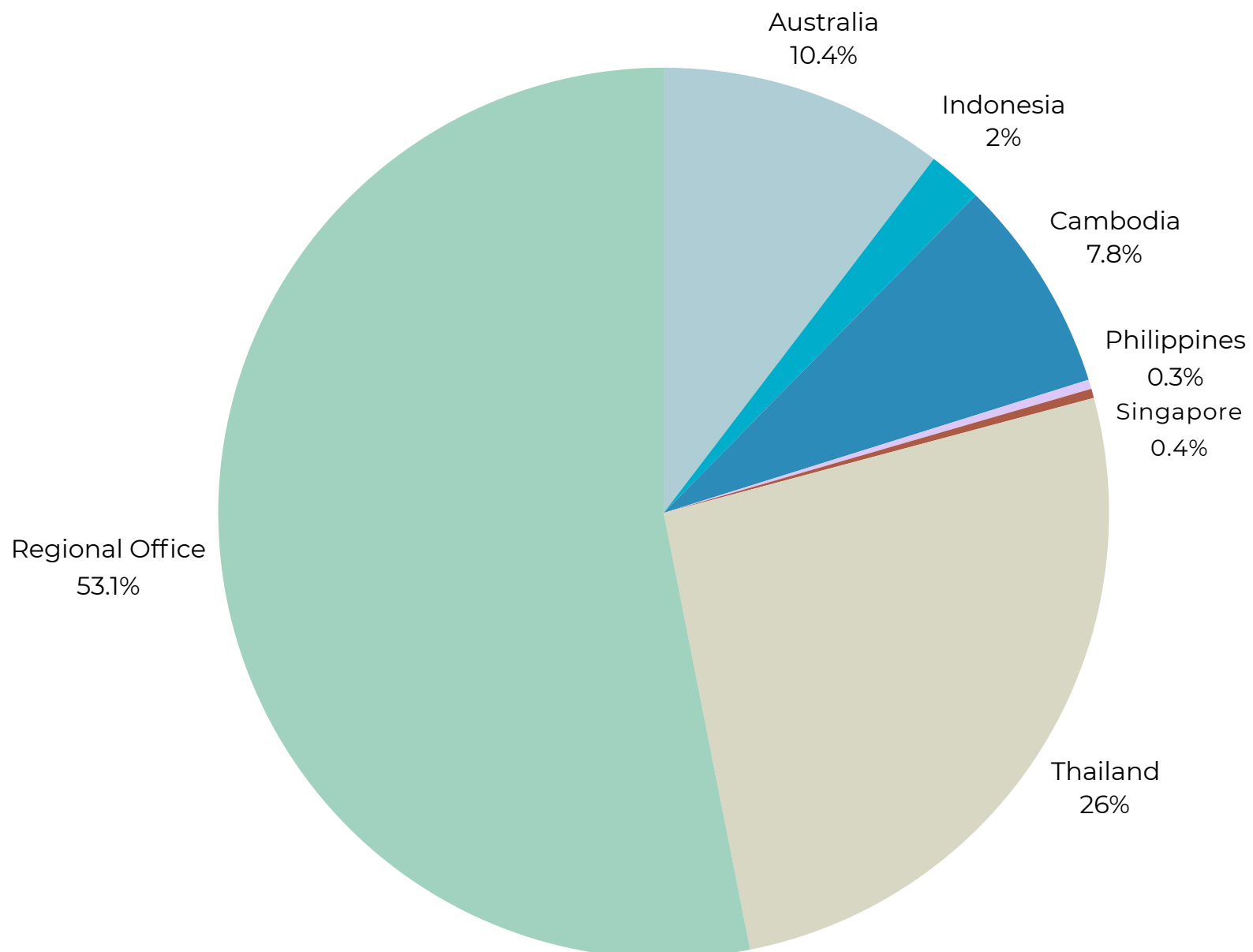
What we have celebrated in this report are the stories of overcoming suffering and rising up with some renewed hope. This hope is mirrored in the journey of *L Phaung Shoo* who sought education while in displacement and now studying Grade 9; and of *Ali* who found a paid internship after completing JRS's English language certification and digital skills courses. The strength of people we worked with has inspired positive change in JRS staff as shared by *Putri* from Indonesia.

I started with a quote advising how to avoid disappointment by not having expectations. I end using another quote from Martin Luther King, JR to describe our experience of expectation and hope in accompanying displaced persons from Myanmar and other countries. "We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope."





PEOPLE SERVED IN ASIA PACIFIC





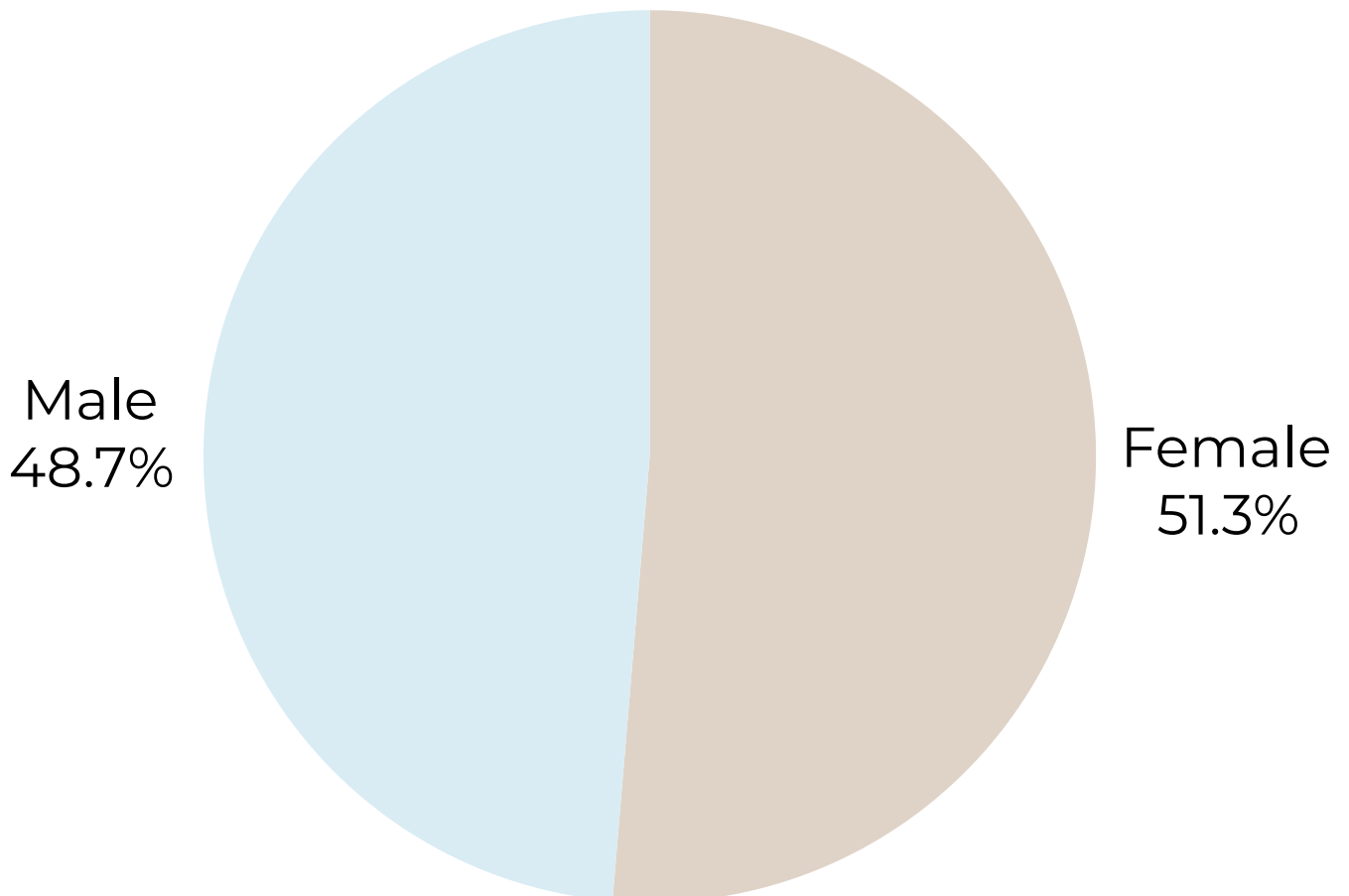
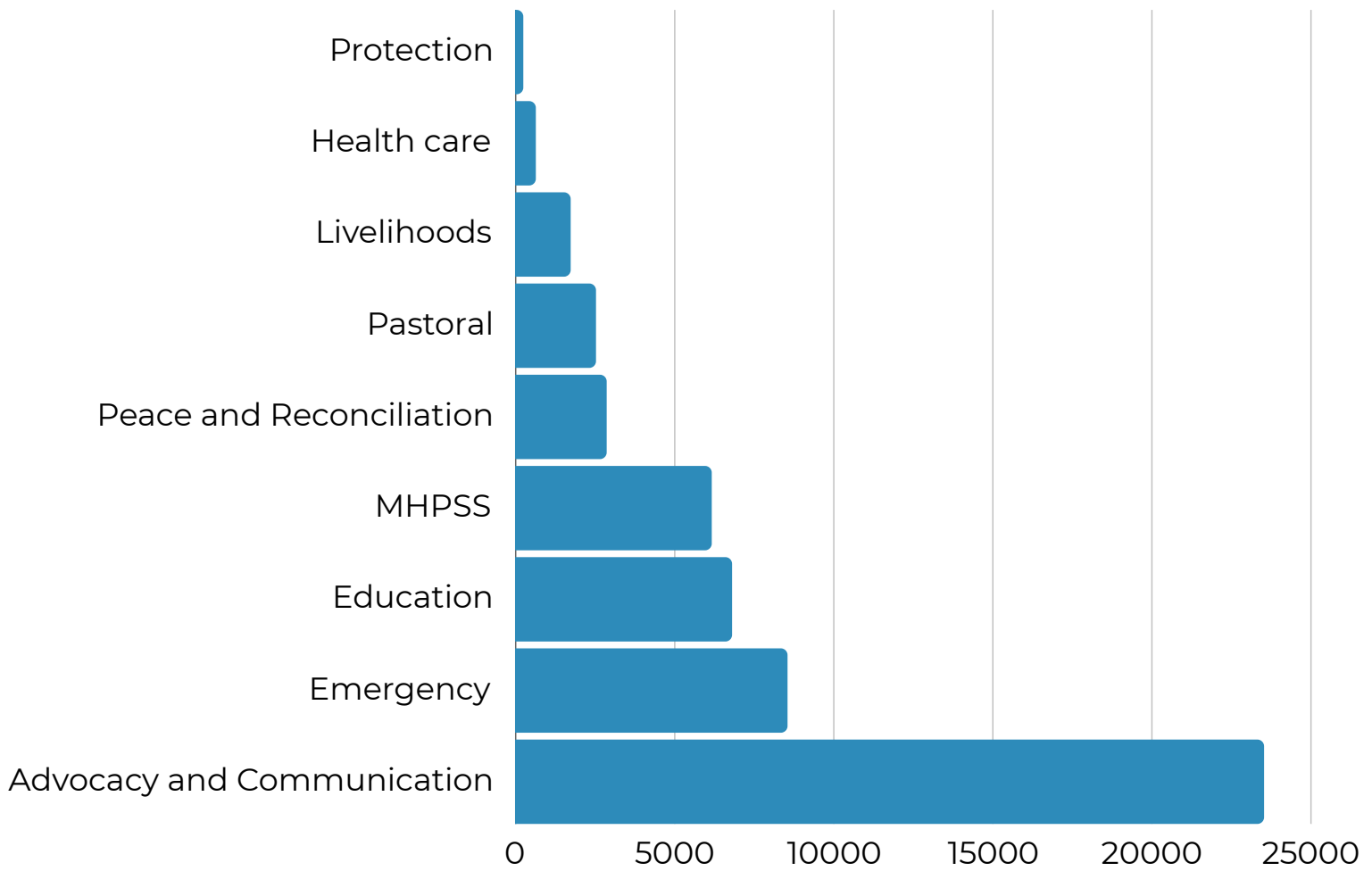
TOTAL PEOPLE SERVED

100,357

YEAR 2022



PEOPLE SERVED PER PROJECT



MY NAME IS L PHAUNG SHOO



My greatest dream is to finish my primary high school education.

In 2020, when everything was normal, I attended a school, finishing Grade 7. Unfortunately, the entire education system was then affected by COVID-19 lockdown measures, and I had to stay home. Subsequently, I could not continue my Grade 8 due to COVID-19 restrictions for the whole year. Later, in 2021, the political crisis further worsened the opportunity to study. Due to continuous fighting in our hometown, I had to run from one place to another, hiding from military raids and arrests. In June 2021, I finally arrived at an IDP camp. In August 2021, a school opened in the camp. I was able to enroll and complete my Grade 8.



Throughout my journey to the camp, I faced so many uncertainties. I had no parent or guardian present with me. I was alone and had to depend on good-hearted people to help me. I was allowed to stay at one boarding house and continue my Grade 8 until I completed the academic year. In January 2022, the Myanmar military bombardment forced me to run with other people to take refuge at the Thailand border for safety. Although the situation improved and people returned to the camp, I was still frightened and felt worried and insecure living in the camp. Basic needs such as food are not enough for everyone. We had to build bomb shelters and prepare for the worst-case scenario. I often long to see my parents.

When I was in the boarding house in Myanmar, the limitation of the education system inside the camp was that the school only accepted students who were studying in a higher academic program. Fortunately, I was referred to another camp as a special case. By God's grace, I was admitted to the school and accepted as a new student at the new boarding house where I am currently living. I realized that the journey to my dream of finishing high school was closer to being real.

Now, I am staying in a boarding house and attending high school in a camp. I am in Grade 9. I am grateful to continue pursuing my studies. Here at the boarding house, I feel safer and do not have to worry about food and a place to stay. I feel warm because I met new friends who are also studying like me, and I feel secure because of the housemistress, priest, and sister. They take excellent care of us.

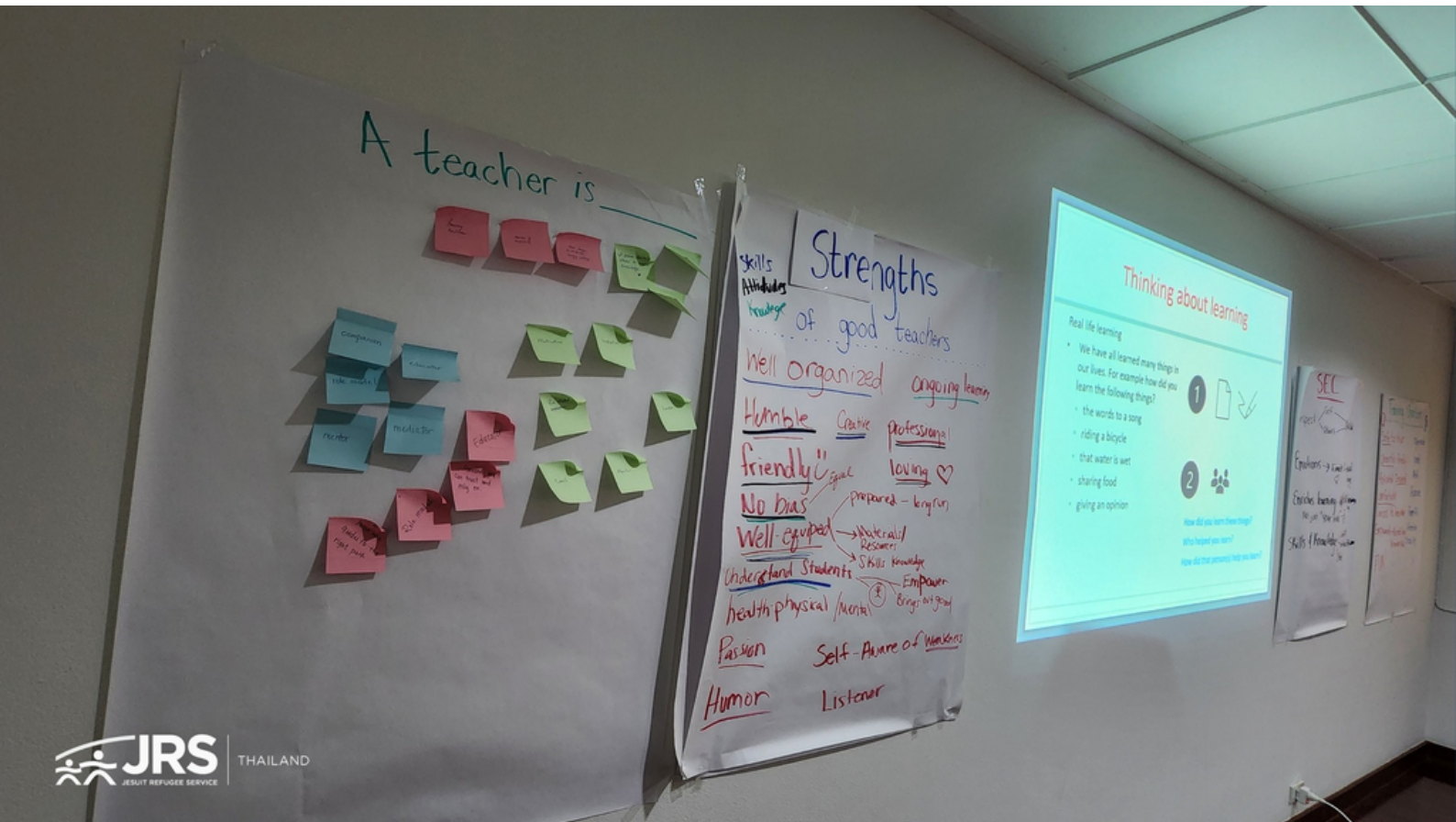
Here, I feel that I am closer to God because we all pray together. I feel that I grow more mature under the guidance of the sisters and priests. I can now feel that I have a temporary home to stay in and a school to attend. My parents would also feel safe and less worried about me because I am now under the good care of the boarding house. I am most grateful for the learning opportunity, and I will pursue my learning as much as I can.

I have a dream that someday I will become a medic or public health staff. With that, I will be able to help my community back at home where there are so many internally displaced people.



MEET ALI

AN ACTIVE YOUNG MAN WITH HOPE AND DREAM FOR THE FUTURE.



I came to Bangkok back in 2009. At that time, I was just an eight-year-old boy. When I arrived here, I had the opportunity to join a program provided by a non-governmental organization (NGO) to study English, science, and mathematics.

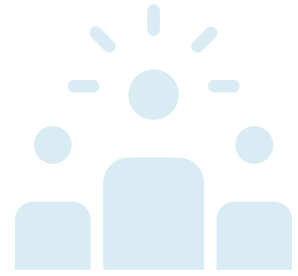
Unfortunately, there were limited criteria for that. The condition to pursue the education program is that a person should have refugee status while I was an asylum seeker.

Eventually, I acquired the Accelerated Christian Education in an international school but needed help to complete the course.

Due to this circumstance, I decided to do the General Education Diploma or GED when I was eighteen. I tried my best, studied very hard, and concentrated, and finally, I completed the GED in 2020.

After that, I was lost because I didn't have any other plan of what to do. The hardship came with the legal constraint. I could not work rightfully in Thailand because I do not have a visa. Alternatively, I was looking for other courses to gain more knowledge and improve myself with the new skill set.

BECOMING A LEADER



My sister told me about the digital marketing course offered by Make the Change (MTC)—the program under a partnership with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Singapore. I was excited and made the application immediately. Thankfully, I was selected. At first, I thought the course would be boring because it is 100% online study.

Surprisingly, I was wrong. The course was very fascinating. I didn't get bored for a minute because the trainers were considerate. I learned about Search Engine Optimization (SEO), digital marketing, and graphic designing throughout the course.

I successfully finished the course and got the opportunity to work as an intern in a company with many wonderful people. They have been very kind to me. I continued working up until today. With this job, I receive a monthly stipend. It helps my family's financial condition a lot.

I organized a basketball sports activity with teenage refugee friends. I aimed to build social relationships and connectedness with young refugees through sport.



THE STORY OF JA PARTICIPANT OF YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

I am a participant in the Youth Empowerment Program. Before joining this program, I was not confident in public speaking. When I spoke in front of many people, my voice was shaking. The big change I see after joining this program are the changes in my confidence level, the improvement of communication skills, and the more leadership role I am motivated to take.

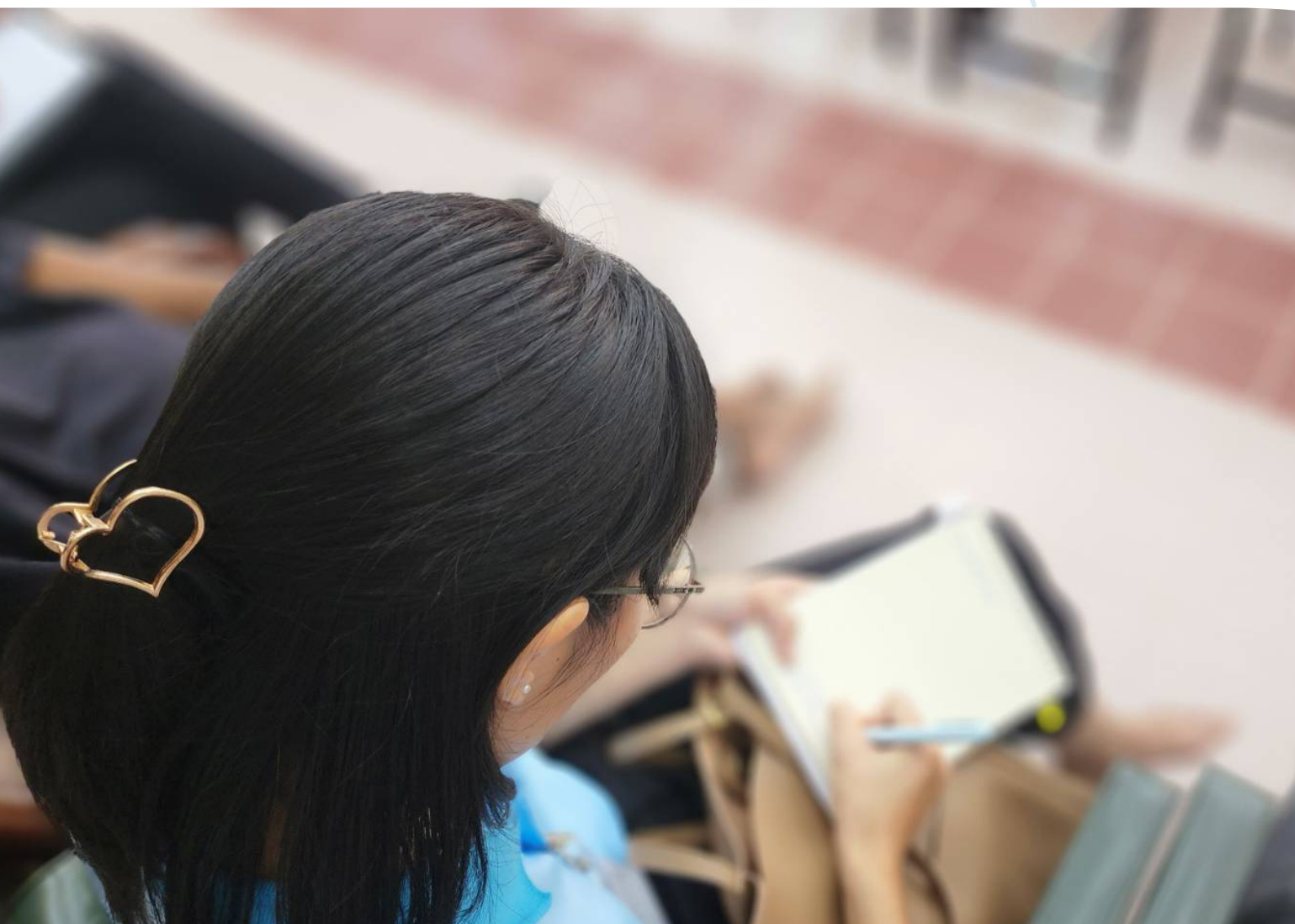
The Youth Empowerment Program makes me realize the value of myself and encourages me to think of how to sustain this attitude. The learning I gain is not only just for me, but it creates an impact on the people surrounding me too. My listening skill is very much improved. I am now understanding the difference between “just listening” and “deep listening”. With that, I learn to listen to people with my head, heart, and feet. This is how I become more understanding towards others.



“I am very certain that the knowledge I learn from this program will continuously be helpful to my life.”

The learning was expanded to the topic of stress coping and financial management. Right away, I became better at self-management. With the ability to assess my strengths and weaknesses, I can reflect that to my career plan.

I am very certain that the knowledge I learn from this program will continuously be helpful to my life.



MY NAME IS AJENG ANGGRAENI PUTRI

I began my journey with Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Indonesia in July 2020. The journey is not so long, but it's remarkable.



The beginning

In July 2020, I began my journey as a Health Assistance Officer based in Bogor, Jawa Barat. To be honest, I was so anxious and afraid in this position. What am I afraid of and anxious about? First, I am new in refugee issues, and second, I do not have any background in medicine. Although I am not quite new to working with NGOs, I still feel anxious and afraid. I do believe that we always find blessings in disguise everywhere. In my very first journey working with refugees in Indonesia, I learned many things. I learned about medical terms. Well, it's overwhelming. Being a Health Assistance Officer was a huge responsibility. It's about people's lives or even life-death. When I got a message or health request, I just could not ignore it. The first thing I did was read the letter from the doctor. Many times, I could not read the doctor's handwriting. So, I asked another acquaintance doctor to read the letter. After that, I did some research on the illness. Next, I would ask about the current condition of the person who got sick or ill. And last, if JRS could provide the support, we would accompany them to have a doctor's visit. This whole thing was a new experience for me. I thank my colleagues who helped me adapt and supported me.

Resilience

In 2022, JRS Indonesia changed its approach to serve the refugee community in Indonesia. Its change also influenced the team rotation, especially in the project area. I got to experience a new thing again: a new role as a Community Empowerment Officer. "What does community empowerment mean?" was my first question when I got this chance. I began another small research and learned what community empowerment is about. In short, it allows me to see another perspective on providing service to the refugee by collaborating with the refugee community.

2020 – 2021 was like a roller coaster for me. In contrast, 2022 brought more positive energy to me. At the beginning of the approach change, I felt pessimistic. However, it turned out I learned about strength by working closely with the refugee community in Bogor. I shifted my perspective on seeing the refugee vulnerability. I did not mean to put aside the vulnerability of the refugee, but in a sense, I also found their strength and capabilities to respond to their own limitation. "Each of us is just like a glass of water. It's not always fully empty or fully full. It can be only half of it. We bring something within ourselves, and we can fill each other like a glass of water." This saying becomes my weapon when engaged with the refugee community in Bogor. I believe that refugee also has skill and capability that can help them to decide something on their own.

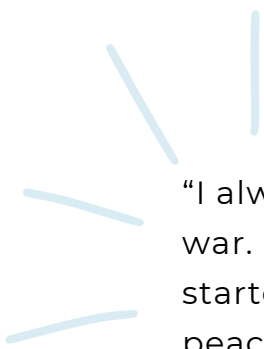


To preserve love

Working closely with the refugee community means that JRS and the refugee walk side by side: respect, trust, and openness to each other, and that is how I define the JRS accompaniment. We learn to share ideas, inputs, and responsibilities to find or even create an opportunity. JRS and refugees cannot do it alone. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ said, "We are all collaborators in creation." Each of us can give contributions to each other.

Having experience with JRS Indonesia and the refugee community in Bogor gives me opportunities to learn something I am not familiar with. At the same time, I learned how to have good communication: how to respond to messages in a good way – non-violence communication. It's not merely how to communicate but also how to listen.

During these years, I learned how to listen. Listening is a powerful skill. By listening, I better understand the refugee lives in Indonesia, the challenges they face, and all their limitations. By listening, I better understood their ideas and plans during their transit in Indonesia. By listening, I feel their strength and hope: their determination and dedication to serve the refugee community here. I'm grateful to know and work with the refugee community in Indonesia. It's truly a blessing. They teach me to be patient: that there is hope in the midst of despair, that we chase after happiness in the midst of sorrow, that we live our lives and fight with all strength.



"I always imagine the future of peace is a world full of tolerance and no war. Imagining that idea then, I realised I couldn't do it by myself. It started with ourselves. The things that I can contribute to a future of peace are to keep being kind regardless of the people's background and listen more. Trust me, listening will open many windows in front of you."

2022 HIGHLIGHT JRS AP REGIONAL MEETING

Last week of October 2022, JRS staff working in the Asia Pacific Region came together to celebrate our accomplishments and share lessons learned from the work of many countries.

To have an opportunity for staff across the region to come and sit together is very crucial, especially after the long period of the pandemic. Therefore, this is the time that our region members working hard to mutually design our future strategic planning.

We have successfully developed the regional plan for our service. With this, every one of us commits to providing the best service to the people we serve.



Thank you to our supporters

JRS Asia Pacific would like to thank you for supporting us in promoting the rights and dignity of displaced persons.

