



ANNUAL REPORT
JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE



2024-2025



Table Of Content

- 03** **Message from the Country Director**
- 04** **Message from the Chairman of the Board**
- 05** **Awareness**
- 06** **Advocacy**
- 07** **Sponsorship**
- 08** **Pastoral Support**
- 09** **Financial report**
- 10** **Our upcoming projects**
- 11** **Acknowledgements**



MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR



In a very uncertain future for forcibly displaced people, the Jesuit Refugee Service of Canada continues to dare to believe in the fullness of life promised by Jesus.

Some will say that daring to believe in this promise is an illusion. Sometimes, we may be tempted to agree with them and sink into cynicism because the forces of darkness seem to be gaining ground. However, every act of solidarity we perform contradicts this observation.

When we pick up a refugee family at the airport, when we accompany a mother to the thrift store, or when we work with high school students to make Christmas a little more joyful for refugees, we pierce through this darkness with the rays of Christ's light.

In the following pages, you will discover rays of light at work within our team and among our volunteers. Beyond supporting the families entrusted to us—ensuring they have basic necessities and appropriate support—we also seek to promote their well-being and fulfillment. To this end, we organize various recreational activities throughout the year in collaboration with our refugee committee, allowing families to relax and bond.

JRS Canada also continues its mission to raise public awareness of the realities experienced by refugees, notably through its simulation exercise *A Journey into Exile*. Thanks to our efforts, we have established contacts with JRS offices in other countries so that we can offer it in other parts of the world.

In addition, we have developed a retreat version to allow people to reflect on the particularly precarious situation of refugees today by drawing parallels with people in the Bible who had to flee their homes and the social teachings of the Church.

Finally, together with our partners, we call on government officials to make changes to policies that violate the rights of forcibly displaced persons.

To all those who support us with their words, prayers, and donations, we thank you. These gestures of solidarity never go unnoticed.



NORBERT PICHÉ

Country Director for the Jesuit Refugee Service Canada



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

First, it is worth recalling the words of the late Pope Francis that every human being possesses intrinsic dignity.

In Christian terms, we are all children of God. Every child of God should be able to live in the abundance of God's kingdom and should therefore be entitled to dignified living conditions, including access to sufficient food, clean water, and a healthy and safe environment.

Unfortunately, many governments around the world are adopting laws that classify some human beings as less worthy than others. These people therefore do not have the same rights as citizens. There are countless examples of mistreatment of migrants as a result of US presidential decrees. However, Quebec and Canada are also creating spaces that undermine the dignity of our brothers and sisters who are forced to leave their countries.

On one hand, the Quebec government wants to restrict access to several services for asylum seekers. On the other hand, the federal government wants to reduce the number of asylum seekers by limiting access to the Refugee Protection Division, an independent tribunal that determines whether a person qualifies as a refugee under the Geneva Convention or as a person in need of protection.

In fact, both governments have reduced the number of refugees they will accept into their jurisdictions in the coming years.

Nevertheless, these governments will not openly say that these people do not deserve protection. They will hide behind unfounded arguments, claiming that there is not enough housing for everyone and that, as a result, the number of new arrivals must be reduced. Rather than acknowledging the repeated failures of social housing policies over decades, the choice has been made to make migrants the scapegoats for a structural crisis.

In this context of policies that dehumanize migrants, the Jesuit Refugee Service reaffirms its commitment to continue to be, along with others, a beacon of hope in the darkness.

I would like to thank all our donors, especially the Jesuits of Canada, without whom we would not be able to accomplish our mission. A big thank you to all our volunteers, including my colleagues on the board of directors, as well as our partners.

I would also like to highlight the commitment of the director, Norbert Piché, and his entire team at the JRS Canada office. Their constant dedication contributes to tangibly improving the living conditions of refugees from all walks of life.



LISSAINT ANTOINE, SJ.
Chairman of the Board



AWARENESS-RAISING



The past year has been one of the busiest and most significant for *A Journey into Exile*.

We presented 35 workshops this year with a total of 834 participants.

Throughout the year, changes in public policy in the United States and Canada required frequent revisions to the content of the exercise.

Discussions during the workshops also became more difficult due to a hardening of attitudes toward refugees. Despite these challenges, the project took on an international dimension.

Collaborations were initiated with nine JRS offices to develop local versions of *A Journey into Exile*. A spiritual retreat version was also developed after a successful pilot project. One of the most promising developments of the year was JRS Canada's ongoing engagement with the federal government, where we presented our exercise on several occasions.

The summer of 2024 was devoted to revising the content and developing the retreat version. In addition, a first hybrid session was offered for Italy, as well as an in-person session in Chicago, where the simulation exercise was presented to Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States.

The fall was marked by numerous meetings and trips. Our Project Manager traveled to Washington, D.C. for the Ignatian Solidarity Network Teach-In, an event that generated considerable interest in the exercise. He then participated in an annual meeting of the JRS global advocacy group in Malta, where several national offices expressed interest in creating local versions of *A Journey into Exile*.

Following this meeting, ongoing discussions took place with interested national offices to develop their versions of the exercise. The official launch of the global project took place in the summer of 2025.

During the winter, additional workshops were offered in Washington, D.C., to students and parishioners.

Finally, the project strengthened its presence in Quebec by hosting sessions in Matane and Montreal, in collaboration with community organizations, colleges, and universities.

The fiscal year ended with a session held in Sorel, in partnership with a local organization working with refugees.



Advocacy



This year, JRS focused its advocacy efforts on two priority areas. The first concerns our participation in the Refugee Family Reunification (RFR) campaign. The second is a continuation of actions aimed at safeguarding the refugee sponsorship program in Quebec.

In terms of family reunification, asylum seekers who have been granted protection in Canada can apply for residency. However, this process can currently take up to four years and could be extended to eight years in light of the new immigration targets set by the federal government. To raise awareness of this issue among Canadians, JRS Canada, in collaboration with the Archdiocese of Montreal, has produced a short video and a media kit for the general public.

The one-year prescribed period program allows resettled refugees to bring family members left behind to Canada. The JRS has sat down with the federal government to work on various issues related to this program.

The group sponsorship program faces significant restrictions imposed by the Quebec government. Last year, access to the program was limited, notably by prohibiting organizations from collecting security deposits. In addition, admission thresholds have been significantly reduced and the submission of new applications remains suspended.

In this context, JRS Canada participated in advocacy efforts led by various umbrella organizations to defend the sustainability of the sponsorship program. The organization also supported its partners in the community whose applications were rejected by the government, despite the acceptance of its own applications submitted in 2022 and 2023.

In addition, our team participated in a multidisciplinary course at the University of Montreal, the work of which served to support our advocacy efforts at various levels. JRS Canada intends to continue this commitment next year, as it remains essential to make the voices of sponsored refugees heard.



Sponsorship



For the Jesuit Refugee Service of Canada, sponsoring refugees is an essential lever for providing lasting support to those who have been forced to flee their home countries due to armed conflict or persecution.

This process not only meets the immediate needs of refugees, but also helps to foster intercultural understanding and promote solidarity within the host society. Moreover, it allows refugees who are already settled to reunite with family members or friends who are also refugees.

However, the Quebec government is imposing a growing number of obstacles to the work of sponsorship organizations, including reducing immigration thresholds and suspending the filing of new applications. Between July 2024 and June 2025, JRS Canada welcomed 15 people from Syria, Eritrea, Burundi, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sudan as part of its sponsorship program.



PASTORAL SUPPORT



"Give them something to eat yourselves," (Mark 6:37–40): this is the invitation that we at the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Canada receive from Jesus. In a time of uncertainty, turmoil, and fragility, Jesus entrusts his disciples with the mission of caring for the crowd. The disciples do not shy away; they act accordingly. It is in this spirit that, throughout the past year, JRS Canada has strived to respond faithfully to the Gospel and to the needs of refugees, despite an increasingly complex reality.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Give them something to eat yourselves," because the crowd was hungry. Today, this call takes on new forms: give them a smile yourselves, because many refugees are thirsty for hope; open the doors to them yourselves, because they need to resettle and reintegrate; meet their needs, because they simply need someone to listen to them and walk with them. In this spirit of accompaniment, resettlement, and integration, from July 2024 to June 2025, we made 25 home visits and met with 84 people. In October 2024, we organized a hike to Mont-Saint-Hilaire followed by apple picking, bringing together 29 participants. On January 25, 2025, a potluck meal was also offered, bringing together 27 participants. Finally, in April, we organized an outing to the sugar shack, which brought together 59 people from among those we support through the sponsorship program.

The words of Fr. Pedro Arrupe, founder of the JRS, resonate deeply with us: "Working with refugees, I realize that if I don't give myself, it would be better not to give anything at all. " (In the Footsteps of Pedro Arrupe, November 2007). This conviction accurately expresses the spirit that has animated our team's work throughout the year, for and with refugees.

May God continue to bless this mission. May He grant us the grace each day to help more, to bring smiles to more faces, to respond to the most urgent needs and, faithful to the call of the Gospel, to feed those who hunger for bread, dignity, a listening ear, and hope.



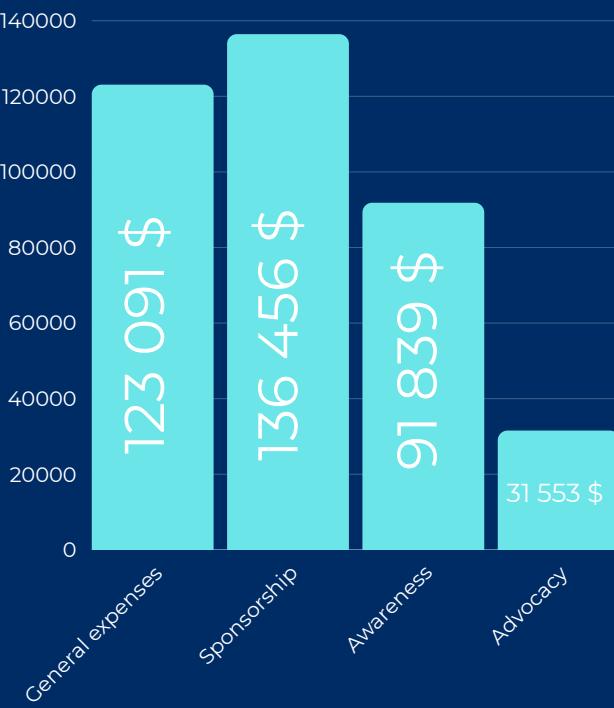
FINANCIAL REPORT



Income

For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the JRS generated \$339,730 in revenue, which is a decrease of \$59,389 from last year. This is mainly due to lower revenues from the Jesuit network and other religious communities.

Once again, we would like to thank all our donors for their trust in us.



Expenses

Expenses were \$53,710 higher than last year. This increase is mainly due to the increased hours required by the communications officer, a salary increase for our employees, and the requirement to meet the needs of more refugees.





At JRS Canada, we have the privilege of working with remarkable people. First and foremost, the refugees we support. We call them “refugees,” but we must remember that they are people just like us. They are friends who have crossed paths with us.

Then there are many people (including several former refugees) who volunteer their time to help refugees adapt to their new lives. So thank you to all our volunteers. JRS Canada would like to highlight the particularly significant contribution of Annie Beland and her students at Loyola High School in Montreal, who once again collected many items for a refugee family in need, as well as Thao Lam and all her associates, who contributed greatly to the success of our first fundraising event.

JRS Canada would also like to thank all our donors, especially the religious communities that continue to support us. A big thank you to JRS-USA, the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, and especially the Jesuit Province of Canada. Without you, we would not be able to support refugees and raise awareness among our fellow citizens.

Finally, no one could have a team as dedicated as the JRS Canada team. They put their heart and soul into making sure that the refugees we serve feel welcome and that non-refugees are made aware of what our brothers and sisters who have been forcibly displaced are going through.

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