

Jesuit Refugee Service Changing The World

The Work of JRS in Pictures

Conflicts and crises in places like Somalia, Kosovo, Congo, Burundi, Sudan, and Colombia have, over the last five years, crept occasionally into the consciousness of mainstream America. Horrifying casualty figures have filtered back to the U.S. alongside reports of civilians slaughtered in Burundi, Burmese military attacks against Thai villagers, and ethnic violence in the Darfur region of Sudan.

The media attention usually doesn't last too long. Unfortunately the problems resulting from these clashes do. For every person killed, many others flee the violence or are forcibly removed from their homes. The result is a steadily increasing population of refugees and internally displaced persons.

In 1980, then superior general of the Society of Jesus, Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, saw the problem and responded by creating the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS). Its mission is to accompany, serve, and plead the cause of refugees and forcibly displaced people. In 2003, more than 450,000 people in over 50 countries were direct beneficiaries of JRS services, which include providing pastoral and health care, education, skills training, and income generating activities in refugee camps. JRS also serves as advocates for asylum seekers and those held in detention centers around the world, ensuring that their human rights are always respected.

"Working with JRS means walking side by side with those who have been displaced from their homes because of war and violence, and assisting them as they rebuild their lives," says Fr. Luis Magrina, SJ, international director of JRS. "It means listening to and being with the refugees, and giving them the support they require to overcome the trauma, despair, and suffering that conflict has inflicted upon their lives."

These images show and tell some of the many stories of the JRS services offered by Jesuits and their lay collaborators around the world.

—GEORGE KEARNEY



South Asia



14 years ago, the government of Bhutan expelled over 100,000 of its citizens. Today, the vast majority of these people remain in refugee camps in Nepal, where JRS assists Caritas Nepal in providing formal education. In addition to running schools for 38,000 children, many of whom (like those shown above) were born in the camps, JRS also runs skill-training programs for adults and education programs for children with special needs. JRS representatives are also serving as advocates for the refugees and pushing for bilateral talks between Bhutan and Nepal to address their situation.



SIR LOJAN MENDOZA

Chad



More than a million people have been forced from their homes in Sudan's Darfur region since fighting erupted between native African rebels seeking autonomy within Sudan and aggressive Arab militia forces backed by the Sudanese government. Long-standing tensions between native farmers and nomadic Arab tribesman have fueled the conflict. In a scorched earth campaign directed at rebel forces, the Arab militias have leveled villages, destroyed crops, raped women and girls, and slaughtered civilians. As a result more than a million people, one of whom is pictured above left, have fled their homes for refugee camps. Since June, 2004, JRS has been coordinating with Caritas Chad the delivery of education and community services in three refugee camps like the one shown (above right) on the border of Chad and Sudan.

KEN GAVIN, SJ

Colombia



Civil unrest has plagued Colombia for more than 40 years. In 2003, the Colombian government initiated a more aggressive campaign against guerrilla groups. Large numbers of civilians have been affected by the conflict. There have been frequent murders, disappearances, and abductions. Community leaders and the general population have also been displaced by violence.

In four areas in Colombia, JRS provides general assistance—including education, financial support, human rights advocacy, counseling, and the implementation of business projects (like the farming initiative shown at right)—for the families whose lives have been disrupted by violence, like the one pictured above from San Pablo Bolivar.





Burundi



Since 1993, more than 300,000 people, the majority of them civilians, have been killed in the brutal war between the government and Hutu rebel forces in Burundi. A tentative cease fire was reached in 2002, but hundreds of thousands of people remain displaced by the conflict. Many have left the country. Others, like the children above waiting for JRS-developed nutrition kits, have sought refuge in camps within Burundi. Above left, a woman in JRS's Buterere Center in Bujumbura, Burundi, works at a sewing machine in one of the programs designed by JRS to generate income and skills for the refugees. Now there is hope of people returning home, but the work of developing the country is enormous.

Others, like the children above waiting for JRS-developed nutrition kits, have sought refuge in camps within Burundi. Above left, a woman in JRS's Buterere Center in Bujumbura, Burundi, works at a sewing machine in one of the programs designed by JRS to generate income and skills for the refugees. Now there is hope of people returning home, but the work of developing the country is enormous.



Asia Pacific

This charred mosque hints at the damage created by a conflict between Christians and Muslims that displaced more than half a million people in the Moluccan Islands of Indonesia between 1999 and 2002. Conditions have improved and JRS has already assisted many refugees as they've moved home. Some 50,000 families, however, remain displaced. JRS offers schools for the young refugees who were pulled away from their own schools. They also offer mental health programs, food, and medicine. JRS also engages in critical advocacy projects designed to bring about the one thing most needed by Christians and Muslims: peace.

DON DOLL, SJ



Bosnia & Herzegovina

In 2003, more than 34,000 refugees returned to Bosnia. Unfortunately, they've not returned to a particularly steady political or economic situation. Despite that, most aid agencies have departed the region, leaving under-resourced local organizations to fend for themselves. JRS, on the other hand, remains there, running education programs and elderly home care programs. JRS also assists landmine survivors. In the last 7 years, 1,500 people have been injured in landmine explosions. JRS provides a bevy of services—including medical and rehabilitation assistance, psychological assistance, and legal assistance—to adults and children injured by land mines.



In Malawi, JRS helps run a camp for refugees who have fled conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, and Somalia. The camp provides refuge to thousands of families who cannot return to their own homes because of violence. JRS also provides a host of programs to help prepare refugees for life outside the camps when they're able to go home. Above a young man shapes adobe bricks, bricks that will be used to construct houses for teachers at the camp. Above/right, a group of refugees participates in a carpentry workshop.

Western Africa



For 14 years, civil war raged in Liberia, and displaced thousands of people, the vast majority of whom found their way into the Salala and Monserrado camps, where JRS provides educational services. 13,000 children (some of whom are shown above) are enrolled in their primary and secondary schools in the Salala camps, while 800 study at Monserrado.

If you wish to direct your contribution to the Jesuit Refugee Service, please contact Jeff Smart (800-922-5327) or Mike Murray (800-831-9470) or use the enclosed envelope and mark your contribution for JRS.

JOE HAMPSON, SJ

KEN GAVIN, SJ