

# **ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

## **THE NETHERLANDS**

## **REFUGEE FOUNDATION**



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# FOREWORD

It was a difficult year for people on the run. One disaster followed another crisis: Libya, Congo, Myanmar, Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Afghanistan and more.

We are deeply concerned about the growing needs. The number of conflicts has increased by 40 per cent since 2020. Thus, not only are more and more crisis areas (such as in the Sahel) coming under the control of non-state actors, but we also see warring parties feeling completely free to flout the humanitarian law of war. The number of people on the run has almost doubled in a decade, topping 110 million.

Against this background, the outlook for 2024 is not very hopeful. Indeed, partly due to the lack of political solutions, the prospect of improvement unfortunately seems further away than ever. In the Netherlands, too, we see a tendency towards a short-sighted view of the international refugee issue and a rise in xenophobic sentiments. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation will oppose this in word and deed.

We cannot do our work for vulnerable people on the run without the support of our donors. In 2023, we had the amazing sum of €37 million at our disposal. This enabled us to help many populations in need in countries such as Turkey, Syria, Sudan, Gaza and Libya, providing emergency assistance to 1.3 million people. For that, we are incredibly grateful.

Support from supporters for the work of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation has been strong over the past year. We will continue tirelessly to provide emergency assistance to those who have had to leave everything behind.

On behalf of the Supervisory Board,

Tineke Huizinga, Chair





Refugees in a camp in northern Iraq.  
Photographer: Milene van Arendonk.

## WHO ARE WE

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation was founded on the initiative of two World War II resistance heroes: Cees Brouwer and Gerrit Jan van Heuven Goedhart. After their merits during the war, they continued to work for fellow human beings in need. In the 1950s, Brouwer organized actions to raise money for refugees at bank account number 999. That money was spent partly through UNHCR, the United Nations refugee organization, which Van Heuven Goedhart led as the first High Commissioner for Refugees .

The ad hoc nature of fundraising activities disappeared in 1976 with the establishment of the Refugee Aid Foundation by Cees Brouwer. Through an amendment to the statutes in 1981, the organization's name was changed to the Netherlands Refugee Foundation. Over the years, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation has grown into a respected medium-sized emergency relief organization for refugees and displaced persons. Anno 2023, our work is as relevant as ever: a record 110 million people are fleeing war, violence and oppression.

### Mission

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation provides life-saving assistance to people who are victims of conflict, violence or natural disasters. By extension, we support communities in finding structural solutions so that people can improve their future on their own. Our assistance focuses on refugees, displaced people and returnees. We provide assistance regardless of religion, political views, ethnicity, nationality, gender and sexual orientation.

### Vision

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation achieves its mission by providing emergency assistance to refugees and displaced persons in crises around the world. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation is impartial, independent and provides aid based on its own assessment of human needs and available capacity. In doing so, we pay particular attention to refugees and displaced persons who are difficult to reach or who are given little attention. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation works in partnership with a number of carefully chosen, international and local, implementing organizations. In addition to regular and financial support, we make operational knowledge and expertise available to the partners. In this context, in the coming years we will focus on treating chronic diseases in crisis situations, strengthening local emergency response capacity and improving access to crisis areas.

## Strategy

The world is in a worrying state. Humanitarian crises are becoming more severe, protracted and inaccessible. At the same time, the public and political climate is hardening, and polarization is increasing. Solidarity is under discussion and pressure. This rapidly changing world calls for a strategy in which we can work quickly and flexibly with international and local partners. By joining hands, we are faster on the ground, can help more people and provide better assistance. In the coming years, Refugee Foundation will build its operational capacity and expertise in humanitarian access as well as chronic disease treatment in crisis situations.

## Core values

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation takes the individual human being, and thus the human dimension, as its starting point at all times and ensures that refugees and displaced persons are presented with dignity and respect. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation is headstrong, creative and flexible and responds quickly to the needs in the world; we encourage innovation and are open to special initiatives. We value openness and critical thinking as the foundation of an organization that seeks to constantly learn and improve. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation ensures a safe situation within its aid services and protects aid seekers from all forms of (sexual) exploitation and abuse. A safe working environment is created in which employees feel heard, feel at home and are treated with integrity.

## Partnerships

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation has been working with partner organizations implementing projects in the field since its establishment in 1976. Opting for its own operational capacity requires an equal international partner, which we found in 2019 in the Italian emergency relief organization Intersos. Their desire to further expand medical activities dovetails seamlessly with the Netherlands Refugee Foundation's intention to intensify its response to medical needs.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC), Human Rights Watch and the Mines Advisory Group, with whom the Netherlands Refugee Foundation has worked for many years, will continue to receive funding as implementing partners, as will the Czech People in Need (PIN) with whom more recently entered into a well-run partnership.

In addition to these international partners, Refugee Foundation is increasingly working with local aid organizations.

# TRENDS

In the past year, conflicts and crises have increased by more than a quarter, contributing to an increase in people fleeing. We also see how climate change is fueling conflicts and leading to more displacement. In 2023, we saw deepening divisions that translated into greater political tensions and inability and unwillingness to reach necessary sustainable solutions to new acute and protracted crises.

The number of people forcibly displaced increased to 110 million people by 2023, according to UNHCR's latest figures. Of those 110 million people on the run, 35.3 million (42%) crossed an international border in search of safety (refugees) and 62.5 million (58%) moved to a safer area within their own country's borders. Middle- and low-income countries host 75% of these people, and 69% of those people live in countries adjacent to their countries of origin.

As a result of the ongoing war between Ukraine and Russia, the number of people fleeing Ukraine remains unabated and there are serious concerns about the safety and future of citizens left behind in Ukraine and about security in Europe.

The Israeli army's large-scale violence in Gaza has plunged the entire Palestinian civilian population into a deep humanitarian crisis. The ongoing bombing of densely populated areas and the lack of safe evacuation routes has made the death rate in Gaza the highest of any conflict in the 21st century.

While the wars in Ukraine and Gaza are on all our minds, it is Sudan's civil war that has led to the biggest internal displacement crisis in 2024. In total, more than 7.1 million people have been internally displaced, including 6 million in the past year alone. 1.4 million people have fled to neighboring countries such as Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Elsewhere in the world, civilians are also victims of new or revived war violence, such as in Niger, Myanmar or Armenia, which had to provide shelter to over 100,000 Armenians who fled after Azerbaijan's recapture of the Nagorno-Karabagh enclave. We also saw in February 2023 the devastating effects of the earthquake that rocked over 23 million people in Turkey and north-western Syria.

A total of 363 million people worldwide need emergency assistance, according to the United Nations. However, funding received for emergency assistance in 2023 remained at 38% of what was actually needed. Humanitarian needs in 2023 were highest in eastern Africa (Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia); in addition, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine, Yemen, DR Congo and Myanmar. Of particular concern is the growing food crisis with



over 238 million people in 48 countries in acute food insecurity, 10% more people than last year. The large number of conflicts is the main cause of this crisis.

Not only are there increasing numbers of people who depend on emergency aid, but in many areas it is becoming increasingly difficult to reach these vulnerable people. There are several reasons for this. For example, in the Sahel, we see governments losing control of large parts of the country to armed groups that are not always open to humanitarian aid. Also, all kinds of national and international anti-terrorism laws make it difficult for humanitarian organizations to engage with these groups - after all, a prerequisite for working safely.

Within the European Union, the European migration pact came into being at the end of 2023, with further restrictive measures for people on the run such as the persistent worrying trend of moving asylum procedures to countries on the outskirts of Europe and the increasing reliance on detention. The migration deal between the EU and Tunisia represented an absolute low with which the EU practically rewarded racism against people on the run. It led to an increase in human suffering. By 2023, more than 1,000 pushbacks took place daily in countries on Europe's borders and there was continued criminalization of assistance to people on the run.

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation worked mainly with Intersos, its primary implementing partner, but also with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and new partner People in Need (PIN). The Netherlands Refugee Foundation also continued its cooperation with Human Rights Watch and Mines Advisory Group. This year, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation also continued to focus on working with more local and/or regional partner organizations, organizations that are often closer to the local population, and better able to respond to needs.

In addition to financial support, Refugee Foundation and its medical team made operational knowledge and expertise available to its partners. The Frontline project enabled partner organizations to expand humanitarian access in multiple countries.

## PROGRAMMES

### Results

By 2023, 94 programs enabled the Netherlands Refugee Foundation to help a total of 1,332,992 women, men and children in 33 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and Europe.

This is an increase compared to 2022, explained by the extensive emergency assistance that the Netherlands Refugee Foundation provided to the earthquake victims in Turkey and north-west Syria and the continuation of its programs in Ukraine, both largely made possible from our share from the proceeds of the national Giro555 actions for both crises.

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation continued aid programs in Asia (Afghanistan) and Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, Chad), provided acute emergency relief in major disasters (Cyclone Mocha, Myanmar; Derna floods, Libya) and supported small-scale relief activities for vulnerable people fleeing Europe's borders.

In 2023, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation spent 5% of the funds for relief through the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA). 36% came from the share made available to the Netherlands Refugee Foundation from the national actions of the collaborating relief organizations (Giro555) for Turkey and Syria (25%) and Ukraine (11%). This means that 59% of our aid was spent with our own raised funds.

### Intersos

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation, through Intersos, provided funding for relief programs in chronic crises in 10 countries: Colombia, Venezuela, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Mali, Syria, Iran and DR Congo. Intersos also provided emergency aid following acute disasters, such as the earthquake in north-west Syria (from our share of the national Giro555 campaign), to flood victims in Libya, and to people fleeing conflicts in South Sudan and Niger, among others.

In Afghanistan, thanks in part to a contribution from the DRA, Intersos invested in cash assistance and keeping health services alive in Kandahar and Kabul.

In total, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation spent a quarter of its 2023 funds on 20 Intersos programs.

### Local partner organizations

In 2023, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation made more frequent use of the contextual knowledge and expertise of local partners, both for longer-term and acute emergency assistance, mostly through new partner organizations.

It is mainly through presence in major crises such as the war in Ukraine and the earthquake in Turkey and Syria that the Netherlands Refugee Foundation was able to start cooperation with many new partners. Refugees trying to gain access to the European Union under dire conditions and facing pushback from authorities on the edges of Europe continued to be assisted in 2023, again together with local organizations.

In total, almost half of our funds went to our 49 local partners. With them, we work in 20 countries, including Myanmar, DR Congo, Chad, Central African Republic, Iraq, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ukraine, Turkey, Syria, Poland, Serbia and Curaçao.

Some of these local partners include Rural Agency for Community Development and Assistance in Ethiopia and Kenya, Panzi Foundation and Panzi Hospital in DR Congo, Embrace in Lebanon, Collective Aid in Serbia, ADIL in Chad and Civil Health and Development Network in Myanmar. In Ukraine, Refugee Foundation contributed to small-scale short-term emergency relief activities of 10 local partners, such as Ya Kherson and U-Saved.

### Other international partner organizations

In 2023, Refugee Foundation spent 20% of its funds on relief work through other international partners. IRC implemented 7 projects, including 3 acute relief projects through the Dutch Relief Alliance, including for victims of the floods in Libya and of the civil war in Sudan. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation also enabled IRC to rebuild a clinic destroyed by fire for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and provide assistance to earthquake victims in Herat, Afghanistan.

Refugee Foundation further supported major emergency relief projects of People in Need in Turkey, Syria and Armenia and enabled its new partner Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) to distribute medicine in Gaza in December 2023.

## PROJECT FRONTLINE

After a positive evaluation of the first three years, the Frontline project has laid the groundwork for the second phase, starting in June 2023. The Frontline team made significant progress in improving humanitarian access for vulnerable people to emergency relief. In 2023, cooperation continued with IRC in countries such as Nigeria, Cameroon, Burkina Faso and Mali. Refugee Foundation, in partnership with Intersos, will work in Venezuela, Iran, Syria and DR Congo, and will independently engage with local partners in Somalia and Kenya, who are often underserved. A striking example of Frontline's impact can be seen in Niger, where improved negotiation has made 10 previously inaccessible health centers accessible again to 150,000 people.

Meanwhile, Intersos has started to strengthen their institutional capacity through an ambitious four-year work plan. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation has successfully led the Humanitarian Access Platform, involving knowledge exchange between organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières and Clingendael.

### Medical team and chronic diseases

By 2023, over 7,500 patients in five countries (Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, Cameroon and Curaçao) received improved access to quality care for treatment of chronic diseases, including mental health complaints. More than 17,000 consultations were reported.

Refugee Foundation provided medicines, medical supplies and diagnostic equipment for patients with chronic illnesses. Foundation Refugee's medical team organized follow-up training and coaching for medical staff from local and international partner organizations. The response of patients to their treatment was closely monitored and adjusted with the outcomes being well-controlled diabetes and normalized blood pressure in over 4 out of 5 patients. The project prevented premature deaths and patients functioned better by being both mentally and physically healthier.

### Challenges and future

Due to war violence, the lasting impact of climate change and the negative effects on people's livelihoods and security, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation expects a further increase in the number of people fleeing.

On the one hand, there is little prospect of an end to the wars in Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan. Rather, we fear a further escalation of these and other conflicts, such as in Myanmar, and deepening humanitarian needs in those countries. Because of the large number of conflict hotspots, humanitarian access for vulnerable populations is also worrisome.

## ARTSENHULP

Our Artsenhulp-project enabled the Netherlands Refugee Foundation to spend €2,871,720 in 2023 on transports of medicines and medical equipment/resources for the benefit of various hospitals in Ukraine, more than 10% of total aid.

Refugee Foundation in 2024 will continue its commitment to providing high-quality assistance to many tens of thousands of vulnerable people on the run and make efforts to protect and care for this vulnerable group through intensive advocacy and education. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation will remain operational in 2024 in providing aid in Ukraine as well as in Turkey and Syria through teams in Odessa and Gaziantep, respectively.

### **Learning points**

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation believes that preparation, implementation and reporting around field visits could be improved. Therefore, the procedure, field visits and associated documentation, such as travel requests, terms of reference and reporting, were revised to better integrate specific requirements of the Core Humanitarian Standards and security assessments.

## **ADVOCACY**

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation influences policy in favour of better assistance and protection for refugees and displaced persons. With specific attention to those who are hard to reach or receive little international attention, as well as the treatment of chronic illnesses and mental illnesses in crisis situations.

### **Partners**

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation is represented in several formal and informal Dutch partnerships. We contributed to workshops, courses, discussions and webinars organized by, for example, Kennis Uitwisseling Noodhulp (KUNO), the Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) and the Platform Humanitarian Action (PHA). We also supported Human Rights Watch in advocating for the rights of refugees through the 'Addressing Global Migration Challenges' project. Finally, we increased cooperation with our partner organizations to strengthen advocacy efforts.

### **Challenges**

The legitimacy of multilateral cooperation and the international legal order is increasingly questioned. Fundamental principles rooted in international humanitarian law and the protection of vulnerable populations are increasingly under pressure, putting national interests above global humanitarian obligations. As the international legal order and humanitarian principles lose legitimacy, it becomes increasingly challenging for humanitarian organizations to provide humanitarian aid under the protection of international humanitarian law.

### **Results**

Together with partners, Refugee Foundation worked on advocacy efforts aimed at improving humanitarian situations: in Syria against the impact of sanctions on aid delivery, in Iraq to support Yezidis focused on housing and education, in Ukraine on getting aid implemented locally and in Ethiopia, Somalia, the Sahel and Sudan on humanitarian access in complex contexts. By seeking more media attention and sharing information and advice with policymakers, we made an impact to improve the situation for affected communities.

In November, we paid attention to the Lower House elections through the Kies Partij campaign. We asked voters to factor refugee assistance and protection into their voting behavior.

Within the Border Reached project, we have visited several countries on Europe's borders, including Serbia, Poland, Turkey, Tunisia, Hungary and Italy. With those trips, we drew attention to the situation of people fleeing along European borders - inside



and outside the EU. Through opinion pieces and radio interviews, we also reached audiences outside the Netherlands Refugee Foundation's target group.

**Future**

We expect the refugee debate in the Netherlands and Europe to harden further by 2024. We remain committed to changing this. We want to do this by targeting a wider, diverse audience and exploring how we can use communication to achieve this. We must continue to emphasise the ethical and legal frameworks that underpin humanitarian aid. The need to protect the rights and dignity of people affected by crises remains paramount in this regard.

In 2024, Border Reached will travel to at least Egypt and evaluate the project, after which it will be decided in what form the project will continue.

In 2024, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation will continue to work for people on the run who receive less (media) attention, such as Yazidis in northern Iraq, people in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa fleeing armed conflict and climate change, and people in Afghanistan suffering from poverty, climate disasters and hunger.

Finally, Refugee Foundation will further invest in relationships with policymakers to have relevant debates and decision-making processes put on the agenda, by issuing policy advice and by organising expert meetings on humanitarian issues.

**HIGHLIGHTED PROJECTS**

**BURKINA FASO**

**Theme:**  
medical care,  
nutritional support



**Aid provided:** To reduce maternal and child mortality, we provide obstetric care and malnutrition treatment for children up to 5 years old for displaced people and the local population. Pre- and post-natal care is provided and meetings are organized where health workers learn how to recognize signs that indicate malaria, diarrhea and malnutrition. We do this in Fada, the eastern region of Burkina Faso.



Partner: Intersos & AFESG



Number of people reached: 98,128



Budget: €400,000



Financier: The Netherlands Refugee Foundation



Duration: 1 May 2023 to 31 January 2024

**What is going on?**

In Burkina Faso, 40% of the population lives below the poverty line and 3.5 million people have limited access to health care. Extreme drought is increasing the number of people going hungry. The siege and encirclement of an increasing number of towns by armed groups ensures that the need for food and medical care continues to rise. There is also a lack of access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation. Maternal and infant mortality is high in the country, including in the east.

**Challenges**

The displacement crisis in Burkina Faso is one of the fastest growing in the world. Almost 300 local health centers have closed, severely limiting access to healthcare for many people. Attacks on schools prevent children from receiving an education. Deteriorating economic conditions mean that food insecurity continues to grow.

## LIBYA

### Theme:

medical care, protection, education



**Assistance provided:** Mobile medical teams provide examinations, consultations, treatments and referrals to specialized care. We provide psychosocial support to children and adults and provide medical supplies, equipment and medicines. We maintain seven ambulances and provide health education. Through an Emergency Hotline, we ensure better access to care. Finally, we distribute aid packages containing mattresses, household and sanitary items and blankets.



Partner: International Rescue Committee



Number of people reached: 9,300



Budget: €478,695



Financier: Dutch Relief Alliance



Duration: 17 September 2023 to 16 March 2024

### What is going on?

On 10 September 2023, tropical storm Daniel hit the east coast of Libya with high winds, heavy rainfall and flash floods affecting several locations, including Benghazi, Al Marj, Al Bayda, Al Abyar, Batah, Bayada, Shahat, Soussa and Derna. Derna was worst hit by flooding, because of two dam breaches following heavy rainfall triggered by storm Daniel. A metre-high tidal wave destroyed much of the city. Thousands of people died and more than 45,000 were displaced. And this in a country where 800,000 Libyans already depend on humanitarian aid.

### Challenges

Debris clearance and body recovery are still ongoing. Due to political instability, this is expected to take a long time. Northeast Libya has not yet recovered from the disastrous storm. There is a severe shortage of medical aid, food, water and shelter in the area. People are struggling with stress, gloom and anxiety, increasing pressure on mental health services.

## ARMENIA

### Theme:

protection, shelter



**Aid provided:** Refugees from the Nagorno-Karabagh enclave receive protection and housing in multiple locations in southern Armenia. We arrange for newly arrived refugees to be placed in small-scale shelters, where they use vouchers to decide which repairs or relief items are most needed (beds, mattresses, blankets). We also provide fuel in the form of briquettes and stoves.



Partner: People in Need



Number of people reached: 1,200



Budget: €250,000



Financier: The Netherlands Refugee Foundation



Duration: 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024

### What is going on?

The long-running conflict in the Nagorno-Karabagh enclave flared up again in 2023. Armenia and Azerbaijan have been fighting over this enclave since the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. Following the capture of Nagorno-Karabagh by Azerbaijan in September 2023, Armenian residents have fled across the border to Armenia for fear of violence. A large proportion of these refugees are women, children and the elderly.

### Challenges

The meteoric arrival of refugees from Nagorno-Karabagh made planning and coordination of the reception difficult in the initial phase. The Armenian government opted for small-scale reception of the refugees, mainly with host families, so that large reception centers such as schools and childcare centers could be used for their original purposes.





## SUDAN

### Theme:

medical care, water and sanitation, education



**Aid provided:** We provide medical care, clean drinking water and sanitation in Wad Madani town and the White Nile region. We train health staff, provide education on recognizing symptoms of diseases and the importance of hygiene to prevent disease outbreaks.



Partner: International Rescue Committee



Number of people reached: 13,000



Budget: €481,000



Financier: Dutch Relief Alliance



Duration: 13 June 2023 to 12 February 2024

### What is going on?

Since April 2023, fierce fighting in Sudan's capital has turned the lives of millions upside down, with many Sudanese currently fleeing domestically or crossing borders into neighboring countries. The situation in Sudan is worsening, with the country having the highest number of displaced people in the world. There is renewed talk of ethnic cleansing in the Darfur region.

In addition, Sudan has been struggling with poverty, hunger and violence for more than 30 years. Due to the changing climate, long periods of drought occur, as well as floods.

### Challenges

The war is expected to escalate further in 2024, with dramatic consequences for the population. The number of people dependent on aid is expected to rise to 30 million by 2024. Because of the critical state of the health system, there are fears of widespread disease outbreaks. In late 2023, violence escalated in Wad Madani. As armed groups took over, the town became unsafe. As a result, refugees staying there were forced to move on. We adapted our project accordingly and followed them to the White Nile region.

Shelter center for children in the Korsi refugee camp and around the city of Birao in the Central African Republic. Children receive extra attention or are referred for assistance. Photographer: Kees Ton


## TURKEY AND SYRIA

### Theme:

Shelter, winter aid, cash aid, education, hygiene, medical care, food aid, protection



**Aid provided:** From the proceeds of the national Giro555 campaign, we help earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria. Together with our partners, we provide a wide range of assistance. From distributing relief packages to providing financial support to affected families, and from trauma or medical care to shelter, education, food and drinking water.

 **Partners:** Support To Life, Mavi Kalem, SAMS, International Humanitarian Relief, Leader Women Association, INSAN Charity, HIHFAD, People in Need, Intersos, Child Houses, SEMA, Hurras Network, Equity & Empowerment, Syria Relief and Development, Shafak, Al Sham Humanitarian Foundation

 **Number of people reached:** 104,000

 **Budget:** €3.2 million

 **Financier:** Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties (Giro555)

 **Duration:** 7 February 2023 to 31 December 2023

### What is going on?

A massive earthquake and strong aftershocks struck southeastern Turkey and northwestern Syria on 6 February 2023. Tens of thousands of people were killed; homes, buildings, schools, hospitals and infrastructure are in ruins. There are many Syrians living in southeastern Turkey who previously fled war. They have been sheltered by Turkey for years but have lost everything again because of this earthquake.

### Challenges

The damage is huge in both countries and reconstruction will take many years. In Turkey, the economy has greatly deteriorated and there is still far too little shelter, leaving many people still living in relief camps or with relatives. The biggest challenge for relief efforts in Syria remains displacement and security.

## OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

### Theme:

medical care



**Aid provided:** medical supplies and items for hospitals to treat wounded in Gaza.

 **Partner:** Medical Aid for Palestinians

 **Number of people reached:** 30,000

 **Budget:** €250,000

 **Financier:** The Netherlands Refugee Foundation

 **Duration:** 1 December 2023 to 31 January 2024

### What is going on?

Israeli attacks on Gaza have caused one in 23 people in Gaza to be killed or injured. Moreover, Israel restricts imports of humanitarian aid such as food, water, medical supplies and fuel. Humanitarian aid is allowed in very limited quantities. Before 7 October, 80% of Gaza's population was already dependent on humanitarian aid. Now a humanitarian catastrophe is looming with famine, dehydration and epidemics. According to the UN, 90% of Gaza's 2.3 million residents currently have to regularly survive a day without food.

### Challenges

With the destruction of facilities and infrastructure, the healthcare system is on the verge of collapse, with the risk of an accelerated outbreak of infectious diseases. An end to the violence seems far from imminent, and humanitarian needs will continue long after the attacks have stopped.



# MYANMAR

Theme:  
education



**Assistance provided:** Through information and education, people in Myanmar learn about the risks of landmines and other unexploded ordnance. They also learn how to recognise and avoid the dangers. One way we do this is by mapping unsafe areas.



Partner: Mines Advisory Group



Number of people reached: 11,750



Budget: 200,000 euros



Financier: The Netherlands Refugee Foundation



Duration: 15 November 2023 to 14 September 2024

## What is going on?

With a significant escalation of conflicts, humanitarian conditions in Myanmar have further deteriorated. As many as 19 million Myanmar people depend on aid and the number of displaced people exceeds 2.7 million. Half of the population lives below the poverty line. Myanmar is littered with landmines and other explosives; the legacy of a long-running conflict.

## Challenges

Since the military coup in 2021, the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar has worsened. More and more Myanmar people are affected by food shortages, and the healthcare and education systems are in deep crisis. Due to climate change, the country is increasingly facing natural disasters.

# SERBIA

Theme:  
Food, water and sanitation,  
protection and shelter



**Aid provided:** At seven locations in four towns in northern Serbia, we help refugees with food and drinking water, clothes, shoes, tents and sleeping bags, hygiene items, places to shower and phone chargers.



Partner: Collective Aid



Number of people reached: 7,404



Budget: 49,990 euros



Financier: The Netherlands Refugee Foundation



Duration: 1 May 2023 to 30 April 2024

## What is going on?

Thousands of refugees are stuck in Serbia. As a way station on its way to the EU, the country is experienced in hosting refugees. Due to ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, many refugees continue to arrive. Reception sites are overcrowded, Serbian police use a lot of force, and transit to the rest of Europe is violently blocked by neighboring EU countries.

## Challenges

Serbia is part of the Balkan route, a route largely neglected by the international community, while many refugees still try to reach Europe via this route every year. Due to the decreasing availability of funding, only a small number of aid organizations are still present in the area to respond to the growing needs of refugees in the region.

## UKRAINE

### Thema:

food, winter aid, hygiene



**Aid provided:** Ukrainian basic services such as electricity and heating have been targeted by bombings. As a result, there are many power and heating outages, especially in the cold winter months. Attacks on the energy network cause power and heating cuts. People who do have access to a working heating system can barely afford the high costs. In Kherson, we supply fuel briquettes. We also distribute relief goods such as torches, powerbanks, candles and thermos flasks. In addition, people can count on food and hygiene parcels.



Partner: Save UA



Number of people reached: 2,555 households



Budget: €523,136



Financier: Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties (Giro555)



Duration: 1 October 2023 to 30 April 2024

### What is going on?

The war in Ukraine has caused the biggest refugee crisis in Europe this century. Millions have fled since the war began in February 2022. Nearly 15 million Ukrainians are dependent on humanitarian aid. The humanitarian and economic impact of the war is being felt across the country.

### Challenges

Since the start of the war, the humanitarian situation in Ukraine has continued to deteriorate. The UN has recorded over 27,000 Ukrainian civilian casualties since the start of the war, illustrating the impact of the war. Western support for Ukraine is under pressure, and other crises are attracting the attention of the international community. This also makes military and humanitarian aid more uncertain.

## KENYA

### Thema:

protection, hygiene, cash aid, education, security and humanitarian access



**Aid provided:** To combat cholera outbreaks after floods, we provide hygiene kits, cholera prevention education and train volunteers in recognizing the disease. Families receive mosquito nets and tent canvas. We also provide cash assistance in flood-affected areas. In addition, we support security training for aid workers working in the area where armed groups are present.



Partner: RACIDA



Number of people reached: 4,200



Budget: €250,000



Financier: The Netherlands Refugee Foundation



Duration: 8 June to 7 December 2023

### What is going on?

Kenya is struggling with poverty, political unrest and natural disasters. Persistent drought, the worst in 40 years, affects at least 4.5 million inhabitants, and was followed by severe flooding. Food insecurity and malnutrition are rapidly increasing. The floods are causing widespread outbreaks of diseases, such as cholera. Shelters that the drought-stricken communities of displaced people had just built were mostly destroyed.

### Challenges

The number of Kenyans on the brink of famine is increasing. Forecasts show that heavy rains could continue into spring 2024. Moreover, armed groups are active in the Mandera area, making humanitarian access for RACIDA more difficult.





## COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

The number of conflicts has increased by more than a quarter in the past year. With the increase in humanitarian crises, the number of conflicts and the number of refugees, the importance of solidarity, outreach and support for people on the run is paramount.

We saw an important role for ourselves in this and paid attention to it through information campaigns, events and media visibility.

### 2023: helping in 32 countries

It was a tough year, 2023. One disaster followed another crisis: Libya, Congo, Myanmar, Tunisia, Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, Afghanistan and more. We helped in 32 countries and tried to raise awareness of as many crises as possible. Some of our awareness-raising actions include:

- The Netherlands took massive action for earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria in 2023. The Giro555 counter ended at €10.5 million for the Netherlands Refugee Foundation.
- On 9 May, we launched the campaign website Grens Bereikt! In the reportage series Grens Bereikt, De Nieuws BV follows us along Europe's external borders to highlight refugee situations. In 2023, we addressed the situation for refugees and migrants in Bosnia, Greece, Hungary and Tunisia, among others.
- Nearly 240 million people were hungry in 2022. The report that came out about this was part of the reason for putting 'hunger' back at the center of our summer educational campaign: Extreme hunger plagues the world.
- November was all about the Lower House elections. Through a voting guide, in-depth party scans, crowdfunding and an appeal to politicians, we asked in our Choose Party campaign for compassion to be considered in the voting booth.

Our partner Panzi Foundation provides medical and gynecological assistance to women and girls in rural areas near Bukavu. Photographer: René van Beek



### OWN MEDIA

Our social media channels show how we engage both our supporters and the Dutch public in our work. The content on our channels manages to reach an audience of millions. Our online public interaction also grew significantly.

The website was visited by almost half a million people in 2023. The slight decrease is because we had a big spike in visitors in 2022 because of the war in Ukraine. We also switched to a new website in 2023.

Several times a year, donors receive the 999-Update, our own magazine about our aid projects, campaigns and current issues.

Website	Visitors 2022	Visitors 2023	Growth/decrease
Unique visitors	509.815	381.084	- 25,3 %
Page views	516.316	474.267	- 8,2 %

Platform	January 2023	December 2023	Growth/decrease
Facebook	55.207	55.640	+ 0,7 %
Twitter	8.114	7.918	- 2,5 %
Instagram	17.500	18.800	+ 7,4 %
Linked-In	7.751	9.680	+ 24,8 %
YouTube	675	755	+ 11,8 %
TikTok	-	966	

### Social media followers

At the end of December 2022, we have a total of 76,759 followers on our social media channels. We see the sentiment around our work deteriorating on all our channels. This worries us and will be our focus in the new year.

### Email newsletter

E-mail is an effective and reliable way to keep in touch with our supporters. The number of people receiving news and money requests from us via e-mail continues to grow steadily. By the end of 2023, we had 81,871 subscribers, a growth of 4.3% compared to 2022.

In 2023, we sent 40 emails to 2.4 million people, on topics such as elections, hunger, peace and freedom, the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, and climate change.

### Completely revamped website

Our website is an important tool for communication and fundraising activities. In 2023, we developed a new, user-friendly and future-proof website with a prominent place for video.

A special component was designed and built to integrate social media posts into an online banner to incorporate more timeliness and urgency. Going live was 19 September 2023. At the time of launch, there was the reality of the devastating floods in Libya. The website was updated last minute to reflect these current events.

Together with our partner UsMedia, we will continue to look at what can be improved in the coming period and further develop the platform in small steps.



### NATIONAL MEDIA

The media are an important way for us to draw the attention of the Dutch public to humanitarian crises and our emergency response.

Media coverage shows a decline for Refugee Foundation in 2023, explainable by the media peak in 2022 at the outbreak of war in Ukraine. There were 1,505 articles in 2023, divided between print (16%), internet (65%) and radio and television (19%).



Some highlights

- From 18 to 24 March, our Socutera TV spot about the Night of Refugees was broadcast 15 times on NPO 1, 2 and 3 and viewed over 1.3 million times.
- During the weekend of 17 and 18 June, RTLNieuws, NU.nl, RTL Boulevard, NPO Radio 1 and NOS on radio, television and online will cover the Night of Refugees;
- Daily newspaper Trouw and De Morgen (Belgium) highlight the situation in Sudan with an interview with programme officer Renée van Hoof.
- Jeroen Pauw visited the earthquake zone in Turkey in the documentary Pauw in Turkey, highlighting our work. This broadcast had 475,000 viewers on 11 December;
- Interview with Tineke Ceelen on 20 years of directorship. Published on Saturday 16 December in The Telegraph, with 1,070,000 readers.

2023	Medium type	Media value	Reach
Quarter 1	Print	€ 529.947	14.942.975
	Internet	€ 721.279	580.811.510
	RTV	€ 104.442	39.103.777
Quarter 2	Print	€ 271.600	8.379.644
	Internet	€ 526.980	414.200.550
	RTV	€ 66.528	105.140.734
Quarter 3	Print	€ 546.262	10.936.764
	Internet	€ 304.652	260.543.351
	RTV	€ 72.969	43.567.711
Quarter 4	Print	€ 341.830	5.699.770
	Internet	€ 92.541	80.084.493
	RTV	€ 22.921	20.981.903

SURVEY

WAR REFUGEES YES, ECONOMIC REFUGEES NO

The Dutch have the most sympathy for people fleeing war and natural disasters or seeking asylum in a neighboring country. This is according to our annual support survey, conducted by research firm Motivaction. For war refugees, 91% of people (9 out of 10 Dutch) have understanding. This sentiment is also true for refugees from natural disasters (90%).

For people who come to Europe and the Netherlands mainly for economic motives, 6 in 10 Dutch people have little or no understanding. A majority think they should be sent back to their country of origin (69%).

Dutch much more negative

35% of Dutch people say they have become more negative about refugees in the past six months.

As the situation in Ukraine continues for longer, it seems as if the attitude of the Dutch is falling back to the pre-war image. Problems at home may also play a role in this.

The survey was conducted in May 2023 by Motivaction among 1,100 Dutch people.

EVENTS

Lowlands

From 18-20 August 2023, 60,000 visitors attended Lowlands. We were there again with our Bathroom. On payment of tokens, visitors could use our clean, luxurious toilets and showers. We raised 60,000 euros with this.



Since 2017, you can take a clean and warm shower at Lowlands in De Badkamer by Stichting Vluchteling. This initiative raises awareness about the difficult situation of refugees. Photographer: Olivier van Gaalen

### Charity fee

Organizer Mojo asks media who register to pay 10 euros per person in exchange for access to Lowlands. The money goes to charities the festival works with, namely Amnesty International, Oxfam Novib and the Netherlands Refugee Foundation.

An outcry arose in the media: it would hinder press freedom or free news gathering. Amnesty International and Oxfam Novib refused the proceeds of the charity fee, leaving the entire proceeds of 32,000 euros to benefit the Netherlands Refugee Foundation.

### Week of the Refugee

From 12-18 June 2023, we organized the Week of the Refugee. Throughout the week, we joined forces with the Dutch public on behalf of refugees.

We managed to reach 62 schools and the action platform and this generated 46 actions and 24,000 euros in income through 730 donations.

### Night of Refugees

The 14th edition of the Night of Refugees raised 1.3 million euros. A total of 5,500 people walked along. They left from Nijmegen, Amersfoort, Rotterdam, Tilburg and Haarlem for a walk of 10, 20 or 40 kilometers.

### Points of interest:

- ensure thorough campaign planning at the beginning of the year so that the information campaigns are not snowed under compared to the fundraising campaigns;
- Coordination of Refugee Week could have been tighter, results were somewhat disappointing due to the sometimes confusing communication message;
- Ensure good internal coordination to avoid missing communication opportunities.

### Future

The world is changing faster and faster. Polarization and individualization are trends we cannot avoid. Our answer? Strengthening compassion and the human dimension by, among other things, putting need at the center, as well as the story of the individual refugee. We keep looking for ways to bring this to the attention of different target groups to increase support for people on the run.

Both Dutch and European politicians seem to have little to expect from refugees. Therefore, we will continue our project Border Reached in 2024 and continue to monitor and highlight the situation at Europe's borders.

We would also like to increase our name recognition by (even more) engaging in information campaigns, presence on social channels and in the media. We aim for 3 in 5 Dutch people to know the Netherlands Refugee Foundation by name.



**“WE SHOWED WITH THOUSANDS OF RUNNERS, SPONSORS AND VOLUNTEERS THAT THERE IS ALSO WARMTH AND GREAT GOODWILL TO HELP PEOPLE ON THE RUN”**

Tineke Ceelen, The Netherlands Refugee Foundation

*Participants start at De Koepel in Haarlem for the fourteenth edition of the Night of the Refugee. Photographer: Marco Scheurink*





## FUNDRAISING

No emergency aid without donors. Last year, over 200,000 people supported the work of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation. 199,152 people did so with one or more donations and another ten of thousands walked along during the Night of Refugees or sponsored one of the participants in the sponsored run.

Thanks to them, we were again able to provide emergency assistance to over one million people in 2023. The vast majority of our income comes from private individuals. Only a limited percentage of our income comes from the Dutch government or is fixed in detailed budget lines. This allows the Netherlands Refugee Foundation to help largely independently where we see a need. Because we have unearmarked funds at our disposal, we also do not lose valuable time on time-consuming project applications or fundraising at the moment of greatest need. We can start relief work independently with our own resources, while at the same time seeking more funding. This allowed us to act quickly in countries such as Turkey, Libya and Sudan last year.

The number of donors decreased slightly compared to 2022 (from 203,970 to 199,152), but these people provided more funds in 2023 compared to the previous year: €19.1 million versus €18.3 million.

Besides private donations, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation also receives contributions from the Dutch government, from national Giro555 actions of the Samenwerkende Hulporganisaties (SHO), from the National Postcode Lottery and other companies and non-profit organizations.

In 2023, natural disasters and conflicts followed in rapid succession: the earthquake in Syria and Turkey, the flaring conflict in Sudan, the flooding in Libya and the war in Gaza were a few low points. In contrast, a bright spot was the Dutch public's high willingness to give. The Giro555 action in February for Syria and Turkey raised €128 million, making it the third-largest Giro555 action ever. As one of 11 participating organizations, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation received €10.5 million for emergency aid in north-west Syria and Turkey.

During the rest of the year, refugees could also count on a lot of support from the Netherlands. Tens of thousands of people, schools and companies supported us in June around World Refugee Day by donating, organizing a fundraising action or participating in the most beautiful night of the year: the Night of Refugees. In September, people answered our call to action for the victims of the deadly storm Daniel in Libya through the Emergency Campaign.

With support from Giro555, our partner SaveUA has distributed food packages in the Mykolaiv, Kherson, and Dnipro regions of Ukraine.

Photographer: SaveUA

### Structural donors

The so-called structural donors are responsible for a relatively large part of the income of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation. They are important for the financial stability of the organization and enable us to have the means to respond immediately in case of a new crisis. Thanks to many spontaneous applications, investments in digital channels, telephone recruitment and street and door-to-door canvassing, the number of authorization holders has now grown to over 66,000.

### Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) is a coalition of 14 Dutch aid organizations in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation is a member of this coalition. By working together, the DRA provides rapid emergency assistance to victims of disasters and humanitarian crises around the world. In 2023, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation received almost €3.6 million in grants for various emergency relief projects.



### Dutch Postcode Lottery

As every year, refugees worldwide could once again count on the support of the Dutch Postcode Lottery and its more than 3 million participants by contributing €2.7 million. Since 1996, the Dutch Postcode Lottery has supported the work of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation.

### Learning points

In 2023, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation commissioned research into whether it should approach (international) funds to finance its projects. This study revealed that there is indeed a group of 'forgotten' donors for whom Foundation Refugee could be an interesting partner. Since then, a core group of staff has been formed and is responsible for approaching these potential donors.

## ORGANISATION

To keep the quality of assistance high, good governance and sound supervision are essential. That is why the Netherlands Refugee Foundation has clear rules for implementing partners, strict controls and an active Supervisory Board. Moreover, efforts are made to operate as efficiently as possible so that resources benefit people on the run as much as possible.

The development and focus on a sound integrity policy continued in 2023. For example, there is a code of conduct, which must be followed by all colleagues, and every employee must provide a Certificate of Good Conduct in order to work at the Netherlands Refugee Foundation. There is a whistle-blower policy and arrangements have been made with an external confidential advisor. The Netherlands Refugee Foundation is affiliated to the Inter Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme and for new employees, enquiries are always made with the previous employer.

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation's integrity policy applies to employees, but also to our ambassadors, Supervisory Board members, consultants and to our beneficiaries and partner organizations. If there are complaints regarding employees of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation, the integrity policy provides guidelines. For partners and beneficiaries in the field, access has been improved by opening a separate e-mail box. Any cases are kept in a register. There were no reports in 2023.

In addition, tailor-made training sessions are organized for both the teams and the entire organization, which also give shape to ethical behavior in practice. Reflection on one's own behavior and its possible effects on another is essential in this.

### Ethics working group

The ethical working group was set up in 2020 in response to the public debate surrounding Black Lives Matter and the criticism of NGOs in, among others, an article in OneWorld. The working group consists of colleagues from the various departments and regularly consults colleagues with specific knowledge. In 2023, the working group considered, among other things, the organization's diversity policy and ways to include the opinions of people on the run in the execution of its work.

In 2024, integration of work of the ethics working group into the existing structures (staff representation and team meetings) and/or the possible future works council will be considered. In this way, these important topics will be secured.



# SUPERVISORY BOARD

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation has a Supervisory Board and an Audit Committee. The Supervisory Board supervises the policy of the management of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation and the general course of affairs. In addition, the Supervisory Board gives solicited and unsolicited advice to the management. The regulations of the Supervisory Board can be found on the website.

In 2023, the Supervisory Board consists of five members. The members are appointed in their personal capacity. Members are appointed for four years and this term may be extended once. The members are appointed by the council itself. In doing so, they ensure a balanced composition. This means that the members together have sufficient knowledge and experience of refugee issues, fundraising, media, politics and governance. Their combined competences should be in the areas of governance, finance, legal, accountancy, social and communication. At the end of 2023, Mr Anker (chairman) and Ms Gesthuizen stepped down after their terms expired. Pending the new chairman, Mr. Schenkenberg temporarily assumed the chairmanship.

The new members were appointed in early 2024.

Members of the Supervisory Board do not receive any remuneration, except for reimbursement of any travel or other necessary expenses incurred.

## Audit Committee

The audit committee consists of two members of the Supervisory Board and is charged with overseeing the financial affairs of the foundation. In 2023, the audit committee met twice. Topics discussed included the audit for the year 2022, risk management, director's salary evaluation, budget review 2023, budget 2024 and multi-year estimate 2025-2026. The audit committee's regulations are available on the website.

## Work

The Supervisory Board met four times in 2023.

The 2023 annual report, risk management, the evaluation of the director's salary, the annual plan and the budget for the coming years were discussed. In addition, much time was spent on the integrity policy and the results of the employee satisfaction survey, M. Hamer's report and how the Netherlands Refugee Foundation complies with it in practice. Members of the Supervisory Board also met with staff representatives to have and maintain a good view of the culture and manners within the organization. In addition, work has started on setting up the terms of the director replacement scheme in the event of absence and/or inability to act. This is necessary partly on the basis of the Management and Supervision of Legal Entities Act, which came into force on 1 July 2021.

The Board of Trustees expressed a desire for greater insight into the organization's evaluation policy, among other things, and to be well connected to the planning and development of the new Long-Term Strategic Plan in 2024. Some members participated in the external audit of the Core Humanitarian Standards at the request of the auditors.

# SUPERVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

**Mr H. Anker,**  
*chairman*

*From 24 September 2021 chairman,  
from 5 February 2020 member, resigned  
15 December 2023*

(Ancillary) positions:

- Consultant

**Ms S.M.J.G. Gesthuizen,**  
*vice chairman*

*From 5 February 2020,  
resigned 15 December 2023*

(Ancillary) positions:

- Director of Art & Design  
Arnhem ArtEZ
- Member Advisory Board Social  
Insurance Bank
- Member of the Supervisory Board  
of the Performing Arts Fund
- Owner of sole proprietorship  
The Banana Plant
- Board member Willem Drees  
Lecture Foundation

**Mr E. Schenkenberg  
van Mierop,**

*member and chairman  
Chairman from 15 December 2023,  
member from 21 February 2017,  
appointed until January 2025*

(Ancillary) positions:

- Founding Member and Executive  
Director, HERE-Geneva

**Mr A.L.M. van Rest,**  
*member*

*From 5 February 2020, appointed  
until February 2024*

(Ancillary) positions:

- Consultant and interim manager  
through Van Rest Consultancy
- Board member Cultural Quarter  
Leiden

**Mr A. Buteijn,**  
*member*

*From 12 September 2022, appointed  
until 12 September 2026*

(Ancillary) positions:

- Partner of Dubois & Co Chartered  
Accountants

## NEW MEMBERS SUPERVISORY BOARD

**Mrs J.C. Huizinga-Heringa,**  
chair-woman

From 7 February 2024, appointed  
until February 2028

(Ancillary) positions:

- Member of the Upper House of the States General
- Secretary Daily Board of the Foundation for the Promotion of the Christian Press (newspaper Trouw)
- Member of the State Commission on Demography 2050 (until dissolution of the commission in 2024)

**Ms T.O. Fierens,**  
vice chair-woman

From 7 February 2024, appointed  
until February 2028

(Ancillary) positions:

- SDG Cafe coordinator, Sustainable Development Goals Cafe

**Ms Dr. E.T.W. van Roemburg,**  
member

From 7 February 2024, appointed  
until February 2028

(Ancillary) positions:

- Head of EU office Oxfam International (Brussels/ Belgium)

## BOARD, DIRECTION AND MANAGEMENT

The director of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation - Tineke Ceelen - implements the decisions taken by the Supervisory Board. The director is also the sole board member. The board determines policy, sets financial guidelines and has final responsibility for day-to-day management.

In implementing the policy, the director works with a team of staff, consultants and trainees. The director implements the policy together with the organisation's management team. The management team consists of the director, the head of programmes & policies, the head of internal operations, the head of communications and the head of fundraising. The management team meets on a weekly basis. The management regulations and other applicable regulations, derived from the articles of association, are published on the website.

A hey-day with the members of the Supervisory Board and the management team took place in 2023. Topics covered were the state of the world, the increase in the number of refugees and crisis areas, the role of Foundation Refugee as a more implementing organization, the core values of Foundation Refugee and the importance of remaining

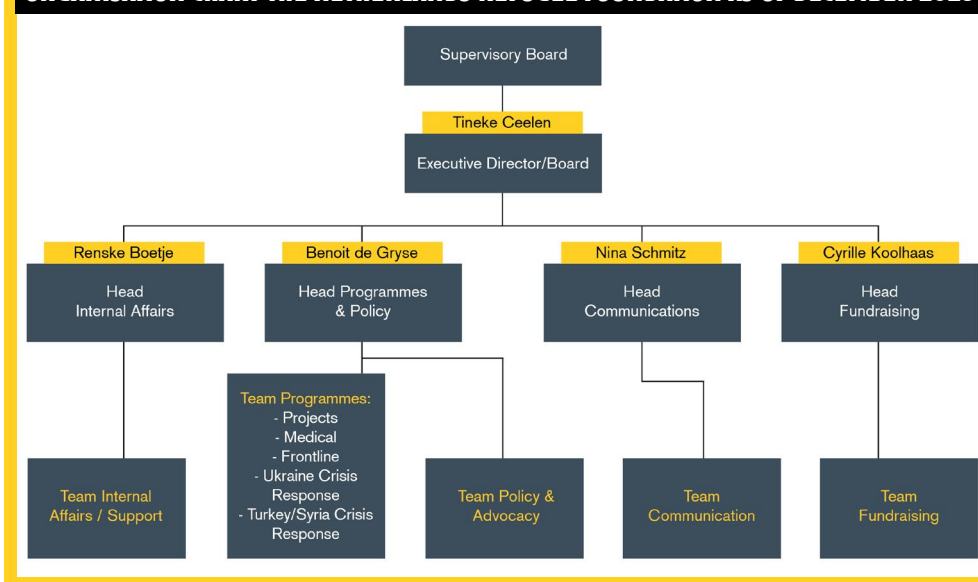
decisive and flexible, and where Foundation Refugee should be in ten years' time. It also reflected on the fact that Foundation Refugee relies largely on the director, the face of the organization to the outside world.

A new Multiannual Strategic Plan to be developed will include and elaborate on the above issues.

### Executive remuneration

The Supervisory Board sets the remuneration policy, the level of executive remuneration and the level of other remuneration components. The policy is updated periodically. In determining the remuneration policy and determining the remuneration, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation follows the Regulation on remuneration of directors of charities, as adopted by Goede Doelen Nederland. This regulation provides a maximum standard for annual income based on severity criteria. In 2023, the director of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation, including taxed and untaxed allowances, earned a gross annual salary of €131.137. This falls within the standard set by Charities Netherlands for this purpose. A detailed explanation can be read in the annual financial report.

## ORGANISATION CHART THE NETHERLANDS REFUGEE FOUNDATION AS OF DECEMBER 2023



## STAFF (AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023)

### Director

Drs. C.A.J.M. Ceelen

### Head of Internal Operations

Ms R.B. Boetje

### Head of programmes and policies

Mr B.G.J. de Gryse

### Head of Communications

Ms N.R. Schmitz

### Head of Fundraising

Mr D.C. Koolhaas

## HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation had a team of 47 staff at the end of 2023, representing 43.7 FTEs. In 2022, this was 40 employees (37.755 FTE). For the salaries of its employees, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation uses the scales belonging to the CAO of the central government.

Consultants were also hired, among others to assist the Programme and Policy team in setting up and supervising the operational team Ukraine and the operational team in Turkey/Syria. Additional expertise was also needed for the set-up and implementation of the new database system for Team Programmes, elaboration of the ISO quality management system, employee coaching, and temporary support for the Night of Refugees.

For the Netherlands Refugee Foundation, retaining and investing in its own people can be equated with working on the future of the organization.

Every year, study budgets are available for employees. By 2023, our employees have been retrained in such areas as developing and managing new marketing techniques and strategies, company emergency response, language training, and safety and ethical leadership training, as well as extensive awareness training on IT security.

The welfare policy developed in 2022 will continue to be used in 2023. It is important to

offer a helping hand in time, so that symptoms are recognized in time. Coaching, by external experts, can be helpful here.

As the Netherlands Refugee Foundation has an increasing number of non-Dutch-speaking employees, an English-speaking confidential counsellor has been recruited in addition to the Dutch-speaking confidential counsellor.

Both persons introduced themselves to the employees.

An employee satisfaction survey was conducted in 2023. The main outcomes:

1. The majority of employees experience a high workload, and, in the process, some struggle with work-life balance.
2. Half of employees find work mentally taxing.
3. There is a need for improved and more frequent internal communication by the MT on the strategy, vision and planning of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation. This is in response to recent changes within the organization and their impact on the organization (recruitment of new staff, team size, division of tasks, etc.).
4. There is a need for regular performance and/or appraisal reviews.

The outcomes were discussed in the management team by staff representatives. A plan of action was agreed between the management team, staff representatives and HR. The third focus point has now been implemented. With regard to the first and second points, the welfare policy and access to coaches in particular is essential, along with the necessary attention of the director and team leaders towards employees. Its existence has been brought to the attention of staff once again.

On the fourth point, the organizational structure and size of the teams should also be looked at. In particular, the project team, with all its associated programs and deployment of employees and consultants in the field, is now too large. In 2024, the structure will be adjusted. It will also look at the way these conversations are now taking place and whether other processes or approaches are possible.

In 2023, there was a renewed focus on a good working atmosphere and regular contact to keep staff engaged. In addition to the usual birthday presents and heath days for teams and the management team, an active staff day was organized in early 2023.

In 2023, absenteeism was 10.1%. In 2022, it was 5.8%. This was partly because several staff members were long-term sick; in addition, absenteeism was high at the end of 2023 due to several flu waves. By now, most of the long-term sick have recovered.

Lectures and sessions are held regularly for staff, in which experiences from the field are shared by both internal and external speakers.

## Volunteer policy

In 2023, work started on reviewing the volunteer policy of the events, especially at the Night of Refugees. The focus was on digitizing, among other things, the volunteer agreements and exploring an online volunteer system where it is possible for volunteers to update their own data and schedule themselves for an event and task. A start was also made on the Volunteer Handbook: a manual containing all the information, processes and formats needed to properly inform and instruct Night of Refugee volunteers.

## Codes and guidelines

Refugee Foundation commits to the following codes and guidelines:

- Code of conduct Refugee Foundation

The code describes the principles and rules of conduct that determine the way we work and guide decisions to be taken in office and field work. It also indicates how to act if the rules of conduct are not complied with. All new employees sign the Code of Conduct upon commencement of employment. In 2020, the Code of Conduct received an update. All employees signed it for approval.

- ISO 9001:2015

We meet the obligations of the ISO 9001:2015 standard for quality management. A recertification audit was carried out in 2023 with positive results. The certification is valid for three years.

- Recognition scheme Charities Netherlands

We adhere to the Recognition Scheme of Goede Doelen Nederland, the successor of the CBF Seal of Approval. With a Recognition, charities show that they have their affairs in order and are transparent about spending and about the results achieved. An annual audit took place in 2023.

- Charitable Institution

We are an Institution for General Benefit (ANBI).

- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief

We subscribe to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and NGOs in humanitarian assistance.

- The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability

We are a member of the CHS Alliance and are committed to integrating the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) into our work to enhance the quality and effectiveness of our aid. The external audit will be completed in 2023. Focus areas for Refugee Foundation are:

- Improve guidance and elaboration of complaints registration system and procedures for partners in the field.
- Improve systematic discussion and follow-up of complaints in the management team and the Supervisory Board.

- International Aid Transparency Initiative

We commit to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) Guidelines for making project information and finances publicly available on the internet.

- Checks in the field

Our project staff travel regularly to check that our projects are carried out as agreed.

- Audits

The auditors check whether expenditure is legitimate and whether rules regarding financial management, the design of internal controls and their implementation comply with legal regulations.

## Incidents

In 2023, no reports were received regarding misconduct at our The Hague office. A few reports of investigations into possible integrity violations were made from the field. These reports are kept up to date by the integrity coordinator. Where necessary, this has also been reported to donors and the CBF.

Incidents can also be reported in the Supervisory Board. There was no need for further action and/or measures from the Netherlands Refugee Foundation.

## Risk management

The Netherlands Refugee Foundation has a risk policy that identifies risks and defines actions to minimise damage. The risks range from reputational damage in the media and the safety of employees in the field, to loss of income due to a decline in the number of donors. The biggest risks are briefly described below.

1. Threats to our fundraising income & financial risks

The current economic situation but also the tone of the political debate and the outcome of the elections will influence our fundraising. The old decision to never depend on government funding for more than 25%, and a healthy diversity in the foundation's income, is therefore also more relevant than ever and deserves reaffirmation.



Ageing in our donor base is still a risk. To counteract a decline in funds, efforts have been made in recent years to develop new recruitment techniques aimed at more structural donations and rejuvenating the constituency.

With an external agency, the plan is to set up a separate working group in 2024 to look into the institutional donor market and develop a plan of action for this. If necessary, external expertise will be hired for this purpose.

Despite an ageing population, we were also successful in 2023, with income from own fundraising 3% higher than in 2022.

In order not to be too dependent on government funding, our aim is for only 25% of our income to come from the government. We also ensure that the share of the National Postcode Lottery is in good balance with the share obtained from the private market.

## 2. Operational risks

Working in war situations and developing countries poses risks of fraud. It is therefore common for suspected fraud to be investigated. If fraud does occur, it is important that our implementing partners respond appropriately, and that the Netherlands Refugee Foundation is informed proactively and in a timely manner. We then inform our back donors and hold them accountable. If this is not done adequately, the downside risks to our reputation are high.

To prevent fraud as much as possible, we work with a fraud protocol. The protocol indicates how to prevent fraud and how to act if there are suspicions of fraudulent actions. It also describes guidelines for investigations. If fraud is proven, formal actions and measures follow. In addition, in Ukraine and Turkey/Syria, we work with financial consultants who carry out internal audits at partners. Last year, the Hague office developed many additional guidelines and methods to continue supporting the increased number of partners.

## Future

Several grant applications have been sent to institutional donors by the end of 2023. The total value of these is about €25 million for a five-year period. The possible approval of one or more applications will affect the structure of the organization and the number of employees.

It is now known that the proposal submitted to Foreign Affairs under Migration and Development and the accompanying ORIA (Organisational Risk and Integrity Assessment) have been approved. The ECHO application has unfortunately been rejected.

The Migration and Development programme requires additional human resources. In this regard, it is important to already start preparing for the introduction of a possible works council.

In addition, the new Multiannual Strategic Plan for the period 2025-2029 will be developed in 2024. Alignment with all sections is essential to make us ready for the future.

With the growth of the organization and the number of employees, we are preparing to establish a Works Council (OR).



Boy in northern Lebanon.  
Photo: Parazar Productions

## FINANCE

Total income raised in 2023: €37,768,613

Origin of income in 2023	2023	2022	Difference 2023-2022
	€	€	%
Income from individuals	19.161.485	18.252.717	105
Income from businesses	228.218	465.351	49
Income from lottery organisations	2.700.000	2.700.000	100
Income from government grants	3.592.322	4.184.671	86
Income from other not-for-profit organisations	12.086.588	16.849.654	72
Total	37.768.613	42.452.393	89

Total expenditure 2023: €38,877,523

Ratio of expenditure	2023		2022	
	€	%	€	%
Aid	31.389.189	81%	27.097.209	80%
Information	2.758.322	7%	2.445.541	7%
Advocacy	1.025.501	3%	640.474	2%
Requirement income	3.170.564	8%	3.066.294	9%
Recruitment and management & administration costs	533.946	1%	517.900	2%
	38.877.523	100%	33.767.418	100%

The spending ratio (total spent on objectives/total income) in 2023 is lower than the 2023 budget, but higher than the 2022 realization. This means we were able to spend proportionally more of the income received on objectives in 2023 than in 2022. The ratio is lower than budget due to not being able to spend all income received in 2023 (mainly SHO Turkey-Syria contribution which will be spent in several years and was not

budgeted). The utilization ratio (total spent for purpose/total expenses) is slightly higher than the 2023 budget and also slightly higher than the 2022 realization. This means that in 2023 we spent proportionally more on the objectives and less on recruitment costs and management and administration costs. The CBF percentage for 2023 is 15.8%, which is about the same as in 2022 (15.7%).

Key figures	2023		2022	Differences in % vs.	
	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted 2023	Actual 2022
Spending ratio (total spent on objective/total income)	93,1	110,0	71,1	-16,8	22,0
Spending ratio (total spent on objective/total expenses)	90,5	88,0	89,4	2,5	1,1
Management and administration/ total expenses	1,4	1,9	1,5	-0,5	-0,2
Recruitment costs/ total expenses	8,2	10,1	9,1	-2,0	-0,9
Own fundraising costs/own fundraising income (CBF ratio)	15,8	20,0	15,7	-4,2	0,0

### Reserves and funds

The Board of the Netherlands Refugee Foundation, by appointing reserves, indicates how the funds at its disposal will be used.

Reserves are divided into:

- An asset financing reserve: this reserve is formed to cover short-term tangible assets;
- A continuity reserve: this reserve is formed to cover short-term risks for staff and campaigns;
- A project reserve: this reserve is formed to cover the provision of assistance;
- An innovation reserve: this reserve is for development of innovative strategies in the field of the objectives. The reserve is formed to cover assistance, lobbying and/or education;
- An earmarked reserve Ukraine: due to the proceeds from the successful own campaign for Ukraine, an earmarked reserve was formed in 2022;
- A designated reserve Doctors Aid : with effect from 1 January 2023, the Netherlands Refugee Foundation took over the activities of the Doctors Aid Foundation. A new earmarked reserve was formed in 2023 for the surplus that the Artsenhulp Foundation had as of 31-12-2022.

Reserve turnover	2023	2022	Difference 2023-2022
	€	€	€
Reserve financing activa	414.515	397.399	17.116
Continuity reserve	7.025.284	7.025.284	-
Project reserve	3.078.373	3.127.463	-49.090
Innovation reserve	600.000	597.118	2.882
Designated reserve Ukraine	1.915.853	2.143.444	-227.591
Appropriated reserve Artsenhulp	62.968	-	62.968
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.096.993</b>	<b>13.290.708</b>	<b>-193.715</b>

When part of the funds have been specifically allocated by third parties, this part is designated as an earmarked fund.

The current earmarked funds are:

- SHO Fund: funds to support the 'Together in Action for Ukraine' and 'Help earthquake victims' action from the Cooperating Relief Organisations. The reason for limitation is determined by third parties;
- KUNO Knowledge Centre Fund: this fund serves to support knowledge-sharing activities on emergency aid. It is a partnership between NGOs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZ).

Development of special purpose funds	2023	2022	Difference 2023-2022
	€	€	€
SHO Fund	6.908.143	7.629.925	-721.782
KUNO Knowledge Centre Fund	-	27.506	-27.506
<b>Total Designated Funds</b>	<b>6.908.143</b>	<b>7.657.431</b>	<b>-749.288</b>

### Solvency

Solvency - the ratio of equity to loan capital or the ratio of equity to total assets - shows the resilience of an organization. How high this solvency should be depends on the nature of the company. The key figures below can be used to gain insight into



the organization’s solvency. An organization is considered financially healthy if the solvency is between 25% and 40%.

Solvency	31-12-2023	31-12-2022
Equity to total assets ratio	77%	77%

**Liquidity**

Liquidity, being the ratio of current assets to current liabilities, shows the extent to which an organization can meet its short-term financial obligations. The key figures below can be used to gain an insight into the organization’s liquidity position. An organization is considered liquid if the current ratio is greater than 1.

Current ratio	31-12-2023	31-12-2022
Receivables, securities and cash) / current liabilities	4,20	4,20



Armenian family from the Nagorno Karabakh enclave is fleeing to the Armenian border town of Goris in September 2023.  
Photographer: René van Beek



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Stichting Vluchteling is door de Belastingdienst erkend als Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling (ANBI). Dit betekent dat Stichting Vluchteling volledig is vrijgesteld van erfbelasting en wij nalatenschappen voor 100% kunnen inzetten.