



world relief 
WESTERN WASHINGTON

Annual Report 2023

A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As we journey through reflections on the past year, my heart overflows with gratitude for each one of you. Countless stories of resilience, hope, and transformation have unfolded within the fabric of our community.

Your response to the refugee crisis, which has reached unprecedented numbers globally, has been nothing short of extraordinary. It's about people like you, coming together with care and compassion in response to our world's profound needs. This commitment remains unwavering as we continue to strive for the vision of seeing every refugee and immigrant welcomed, rooted, and empowered within Western Washington.

This vision is a manifestation of God's mercy, grace, and providence, coupled with the collective efforts of partners like you, local churches, foundations, businesses, volunteers, and our dedicated staff.

Together, we've crafted a space that transcends borders and welcomes new neighbors into the warmth of our community.

Over the last four decades, your extraordinary compassion toward the refugee crisis has been nothing short of inspiring. Within the pages of this report, you'll discover the most recent chapter in a story you have actively co-authored – stories of hope and courage. I hope you find encouragement in this truth: even amidst crisis and upheaval, our community, alongside the church, still has the power to change the world.

In our feature article, you'll get a close-up look at how a mother of five from Rwanda was welcomed, rooted, and empowered in Western Washington over 10 years ago, a testament to your commitment to creating spaces of healing and thriving for our new neighbors.

In 2023, you were integral in changing the lives of [over 1,070 new neighbors from over 26 nationalities](#) that we welcomed to our communities. The Western Washington community has demonstrated resilience and compassion, rewriting stories of hope and success, as illustrated by stories like that of Mawieh and his family, who are thriving in Bellingham.

We stand united against the forces of evil and the greed of power that displace real human beings. Together, we contribute to a narrative that highlights our community's commitment to compassion and inclusivity.

Thank you for being part of a year we defined, at its onset, as a year of hope and expectation.

As you reflect on the abundance of God's goodness in the statistics and narratives within these pages, I invite you to contemplate the profound words found in the Book of Hebrews:

'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it' (Hebrews 13:2, NIV).

May this verse inspire us to continue our shared journey of compassion and care for those in need.

Looking ahead to 2024, excitement fills me to continue this transformative work with all of you.

God's presence is evident in our community, and we stand as a bridge, supporting our new neighbors in reclaiming a sense of life. Let us collectively rise to the occasion and *embody the change we wish to see in the world*, echoing the profound words of Gandhi.

Thank you for being a catalyst for positive change in the lives of refugees and immigrants. Your partnership is a blessing to those we serve.

Thank you!

Serving Together,



Medard Ngueita

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



OUR COMMUNAL STORY

A decade ago, the community rallied together to extend a warm welcome to Jeanne, a single mom of five who had escaped the horrors of the Rwandan genocide. Guided by the heartfelt efforts of the community and World Relief, Jeanne and her family found solace, support, and the promise of a new beginning. Amid challenges, Jeanne's determination shone brightly. Your support provided her family with the safety and stability crucial for embarking on her journey to self-sufficiency. Collaborating closely with our resettlement team, the family was placed in permanent housing and supported Jeanne in seeking employment.



Like most mothers, Jeanne's motivation was clear. "All I wanted was to create a stable and secure future for my children, and this meant ensuring they had the opportunity to a good education," reflected Jeanne. It was not an easy feat, and it meant making sacrifices. "I took three buses to work every day, took care of the children, all while taking the time to learn English," added Jeanne. The community came together to welcome Jeanne, creating an environment where she could thrive and contribute. And they sure did thrive!

Today, Jeanne's family stands as a living testament to the boundless potential that unfolds when communities unite to provide opportunities and support. Lionel, the firstborn, attended the University of Washington and is now a structural engineer. Lambert, a graduate of Washington State University, serves as a Foreign Service Officer for USAID. The twin boys, Ghis and Boris, both attended Northwest University and have excelled as software engineers. Aimee, the youngest, graduated from Highline College and worked for World Relief for the last two years, contributing to the organization that played a pivotal role in their family's journey. Jeanne graduated with a Human Services degree and is currently employed by Mother Africa, where she passionately advocates for the family unit.

"I feel truly blessed to be a part of this amazing community—a community that generously opened its hearts and doors to my family. We've found our home here, and it's an incredible feeling to be part of a community that not only welcomes but empowers others! We are eager to pay forward the kindness we've received," Jeanne shared with excitement and gratitude.

Your generosity and commitment to creating a welcoming community changed not just Jeanne's life but also the lives of her children. We are grateful for you!

WHAT WE DO

SINCE 1979, WE HAVE WORKED ALONGSIDE THE COMMUNITY
TO WELCOME REFUGEES IN WESTERN WASHINGTON.



For the past 45 years, World Relief Western Washington has led the way in resettling refugees in the region, offering crucial support and creating pathways for new beginnings.

In partnership with our community and local churches, we extend a helping hand to those compelled to flee their homes, nurturing a community that champions diversity, resilience, and the transformative power of compassion.

World Relief serves all people, irrespective of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender. Together, we construct bridges to brighter futures for those seeking refuge and an opportunity to rebuild their lives.

WE ENVISION EVERY REFUGEE **WELCOMED, ROOTED, & EMPOWERED.**

OUR PROGRAMS



REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT



IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES



ENGLISH CLASSES



RESILIENCY SERVICES



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



EXTENDED CASE MANAGEMENT



CHILDREN & FAMILY
SERVICES



DETENTION CENTER MINISTRY

WE ARE WORLD RELIEF

Resettlement Stats

Our focus is on helping refugees and other immigrants find a sense of belonging while creating spaces where they can heal, flourish, and thrive in their communities. As a result, all our lives are enriched. Together with our partners, we have positively impacted the lives of more than 1,000 refugees from around the world.

We are privileged to serve and work to see families rebuild and communities transformed, all as a reflection of God's unconditional love. We humbly acknowledge that without the goodness of God and the generosity of donors, we would not be able to do what we do.

1,071

refugees and other immigrants welcomed to Western Washington in 2023

667 → 339

Afghans resettled

were minors/children

102 → 46

Ukrainians resettled

were minors/children

307 49

other refugees resettled

asylees and asylum seekers served

26

 nationalities represented

WESTERN WASHINGTON

Program Stats

- 300** housing units secured for refugee and other immigrant families
- 110** individuals reunited with their families
- 170** children enrolled in Early Learning, After-School Programs, or Home visitations
- 56** new American citizens
- 37** individuals rented paradise parking plots, growing their own food
- 15** women graduated from sewing classes

492 students enrolled in English classes

Each quarter of 2023:

- An average of **56% of students** achieved a full English language level gain
- An average of **91% of students** achieved a level gain in at least one skill area, (reading, writing, listening, or speaking).

"I like the way you teach, it is very clear and dynamic, and the program is very prepared so that the students understand."

-Benita, ESL student from the Dominican Republic



BEYOND HEADLINES

From Kabul to Washington State

Today, over 8 million Afghans find themselves displaced due to conflict, violence, and poverty.

In 2023, your pivotal role in welcoming more than 667 Afghan refugees, including Farhad and Negina, to Western Washington made an incredible impact. Among them were Afghan nationals who had served as translators or interpreters during the U.S. mission in Afghanistan, facing serious threats to their safety after the Taliban takeover of Kabul. Reflecting on their journey, Farhad shares, “We loved our homeland dearly. Life was good before the migration, but events took an unfortunate turn, leading us to embark on the journey of migration and start anew elsewhere.”

Farhad and Negina arrived in Washington in January 2023 after an anxiety-filled 16 months of waiting for news of resettlement to the U.S. Adapting to a new culture and learning a new language can be daunting, but your support played a crucial role.

“When we first entered the U.S., we had no information on anything. World Relief provided significant assistance during our initial period; they even provided us with transportation from the airport to our home! They also offered a crash course on American culture to broaden our knowledge,” shared Negina.

Thanks to your partnership and compassion, the family now has renewed hope for a brighter future. Negina and her family have secured safe and stable housing in Lynnwood, building a supportive community with the help of their neighbors and World Relief. Though it didn’t happen overnight, the family has worked tirelessly to secure their future. Both parents have taken English and job readiness classes with World Relief, and all three children are thriving in school.



Farhad, Negina, and their children

IMPACT IN WHATCOM

Celebrating two years together

Thanks to the unwavering support of our incredible community over the past two years, Whatcom County has evolved into a thriving home for over 157 refugees and more than 405 Ukrainian humanitarian parolees. Your partnership has been the cornerstone of our efforts, welcoming, grounding, and empowering individuals and families from around the globe.

You've supported people like Mawieh and his family, who embarked on a journey from Syria to Bellingham in search of a better life. Reflecting on their past struggles, Mawieh shared, "Our kids did not have good access to education in Syria. Life was hard, and there were many hardships."

In collaboration with friends and partners like you, Mawieh and his family have been embraced by the community. With support from the World Relief team, they secured safe and stable housing and enrolled in English classes at Bellingham Technical College. His young children were enrolled in school, creating a sense of safety, welcome, and belonging. Mawieh, now employed, is determined to secure a bright future for his children, expressing gratitude for the community's support of people who are "forced to start life afresh in a new country." Looking toward the future, Mohammed, the eldest son, shared his aspirations, "My goal is to be a doctor, and I want to achieve it here in the US. We are not scared of the future anymore."

Your generosity has transformed lives, and supported dreams like those of Mawieh and Mohammed. We are grateful to our Whatcom church partners like Christ the King, local businesses like the Little Refinery and The Local Dentist, who continue to raise awareness throughout the community. To our donors, volunteers, and the whole community, thank you for responding to the call and for your continued support.

IN 2023

72 refugees resettled

35 active volunteers

9 churches mobilized to serve new neighbors



Mawieh and his children

NEW HORIZONS

Expanding in Thurston County

IN 2023:

37

refugees resettled

70

active volunteers

14

churches mobilized to
serve new neighbors

Miguel Family



In 2023, the Thurston County community opened their hearts and homes to **37 new neighbors**. The community actively engaged in welcoming refugee families, providing support through temporary housing, grocery shopping assistance, homemade meals, household items, job application assistance, and English language practice. Our heartfelt gratitude to you and the dedicated volunteers who played a crucial role in ensuring that new neighbors felt and feel at home from the very beginning.

In collaboration with various partners, we strengthened our commitment to providing essential resources and employment opportunities to new neighbors, reflecting the community's dedication to supporting sustainable livelihoods. We are truly blessed to have community members and churches that step in to address resettlement gaps for new families like Miguel's, supporting them in accessing community resources, donating vehicles, providing housing, and fostering a welcoming environment.

Currently residing in Tumwater, the Miguel family actively participates in ESL, English as a Second Language, classes at South Puget Sound Community College, enhancing their integration into the local community.

With an estimated **75 new neighbors arriving in Thurston County in 2024**, we invite you to continue partnering with us to bring more transformation to the lives of refugees and other immigrants.

We cannot wait to see how God will use every one of us in this season.

WITH YOUR HELP

You have made a difference



For over 45 years, community members like you have engaged in mutually transformative relationships that make a lasting impact on the lives of refugees and other immigrants. The volunteers and partners who support us are the heartbeat and extended members of our team. We are grateful for your care and support of new neighbors through your dedicated volunteering!

THANK YOU!

1,296

volunteers engaged in 2023

7,100+

volunteers hours provided

Volunteers at the
Paradise Parking Plots at
Hillside Church in Kent

510+

refugees and other immigrants
housed by Host Home volunteers

124

churches mobilized to serve
new neighbors

*"Opening our home's doors to a
family benefited us just as much as
we hope it benefited them".*

-Shelby, Host Home Volunteer

Interested in volunteering?
Scan the QR Code!



BUILDING COMMUNITY

Cultivating relationships with our partners

World Relief collaborates with various community partners to welcome, root, and empower refugees. These partnerships cultivate a diverse community, providing opportunities to learn from different cultures and advocate for refugees and immigrants, ultimately transforming the community.

Employment Partners

In a heartwarming collaboration, Amy Harnage, Compass Group USA's Regional Director, joined hands with our Employment Team, creating pathways to employment for refugees.

During a weekly job readiness class with our Employment team, Amy shared job opportunities at the cafes and markets on the Amazon campuses in Seattle and Bellevue. Alireza, with eight years of barista experience, impressed Amy, who offered him a supervisor position on the spot. Alireza's first day marked a milestone in his U.S. journey. Amy's passion for hiring newcomers echoes the spirit of empowerment. Our partnerships aren't just about jobs, but about building futures.

450+ refugees and other immigrants secured jobs during 2023.

900+ job applications were sent out by current participants

480 new enrollments for our employment program

Amy & Alireza



World Relief Community Learning Kitchen



World Relief Community Learning Kitchen at Hillside Church in Kent

Our World Relief Community Learning Kitchen ceremoniously opened in June, and we are now up and running! Over the summer, a group of our interns taught two separate food classes to kindergarten groups during our Refugee Youth Summer Academy, with 20 students in each session.

Our first full-service event in November was a success, serving lunch to over 150 people. [Our first Culinary Careers Path courses will also start in February 2024.](#) These courses will support teaching refugee and other immigrant students needed skills to embark on their dreams of becoming culinary professionals and entrepreneurs. Thank you for your continued empowerment of new neighbors!

GOING BEYOND

A story of shared transformation

Near the front of our church building in Olympia, WA hangs a large, vibrant map of the world. In addition to its visual geography, each nation of the world is represented with its corresponding flag. It is a recent purchase for our newly acquired building, but it was hung intentionally to highlight our core values of “kingdom imagination” and “generous hospitality.” Over the past year, however, that map has served as a sign and symbol in ways that we could never have dreamed of.

When the Thurston County office of World Relief Western Washington opened in the spring of 2023, we didn't fully know what to expect. But this we did know - it was an answer to our deepest longings and desires. Our leadership core didn't have to agonize in prayer to discern God's will about our participation in the resettlement journey of those that have been forcefully displaced from around the world. Rather, a simple reading of Scripture and our church values was sufficient. There was an alignment that filled us with hope and expectations.



Pastor Paul & his wife at the WRWW Gala in 2023

In a short matter of time, as new neighbors arrived and needs became known, dozens of volunteers emerged to be World Relief host homes and eager members of a Good Neighbor Team. People from our church have offered up hundreds if not thousands of collective hours driving, serving, helping, tutoring, cooking, and Google translating their way through beautiful yet awkward conversations. **The result has been nothing short of revolutionary in a profoundly transformational way. No longer are our church values aspirational - they are far more actionable.**

For our small suburban church, previously lacking in much racial diversity, this past year has made our global map explode in technicolor reality. We have been reminded of God's big, global world. We have been re-centered on the King and His kingdom redeemed from every tongue, tribe, and nation. And as the sounds of multiple languages now fill our homes and meeting spaces, the richness of relationships with those very different from us has stretched us to encounter a God far bigger than before. **In a very real sense, strangers have become family.**

-Pastor Paul, Reality Church

FINANCIALS

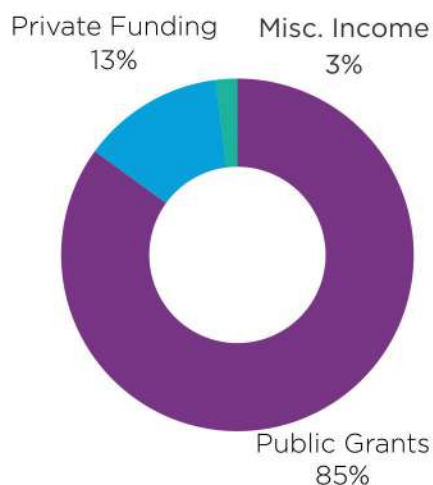
OUR STEWARDSHIP

At World Relief, we are committed to prayerful, efficient, and thoughtful stewardship. When you invest in us, you can trust that your resources are being directed to the right places and that those resources are being used in the most effective ways possible by the expertise of our organization.

REVENUE

\$17.9M

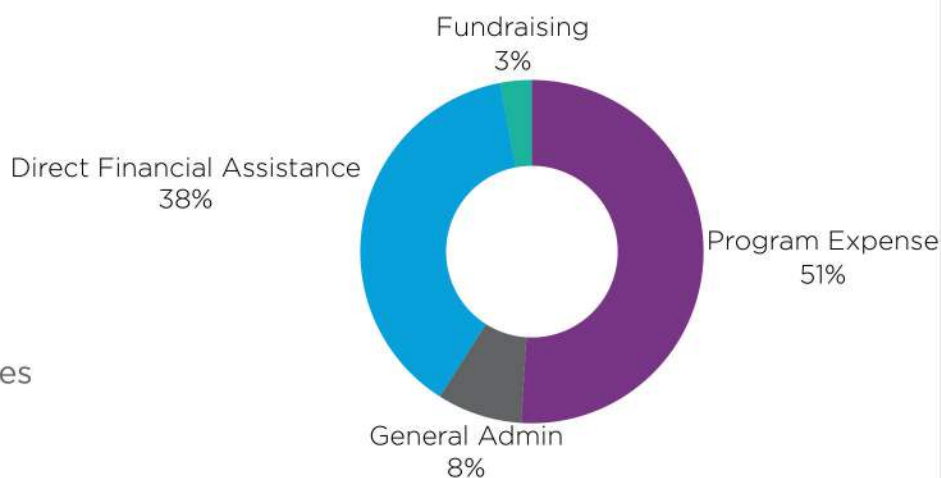
Total Revenue



EXPENSES

\$18.6M

Total Expenses



MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

As we look ahead, we are truly grateful for your partnership, generosity, and commitment to welcoming refugees and immigrants in Western Washington.

So often, when we give, we also receive. We hope that you have also been recipients of building new friendships while having new unique experiences with the newcomers.

This year, we anticipate welcoming over 1500 new neighbors into our community. We invite you to join us again as we welcome, root, and empower refugees, immigrants and asylum seekers into Western Washington. Together, we can continue creating lasting change in our community!

For the lives you touch, the joy you extend, and for the love you share with our new neighbors, Thank you!



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WESTERN WASHINGTON



HELP US
CONTINUE
OUR WORK

SCAN HERE
TO GIVE

WANT TO HEAR
MORE STORIES OF
RESILIENCY?

SCAN HERE
TO WATCH





THANK YOU

for partnering with us in 2023

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