

Together



JRS - UK NEWS
Spring 2013



We ask so they don't have to

Kate Monkhouse, part-time Community Fundraiser, shares her perspective on supporting the work of JRS-UK

Henri Nouwen, the well-known writer on spirituality, spoke of fundraising as a 'ministry'. Perhaps in Jesuit terms, we can conceive it of something of a personal vocation. Perhaps not so much in terms of a career or profession, but in terms of a way of life inspired by generosity. Can I be more generous with my time, my concern, with my resources? He also describes it as "a call to conversion", as we deepen the spiritual relationship between our own needs and resources.

During my time of working with JRS, I have experienced something of this conversion myself. In the past, when I had a well paid job, I was glad to give to projects that I did not have time to pay attention to or care for. But I was also wasteful of my own resources, as I had much less time or compassion to give to people. Now I have less money to give in a personal capacity, but I am learning to offer my energy, with kindness and attention. Working each day with people who have little in the way of material resources is starting to show me what I need, rather than what I want. In turn, this is creating in me a confidence to ask on behalf of others with a bigger heart and in

a more joy-filled way: "look, see, what can we do together?"

Is fundraising "a necessary but unpleasant activity to support spiritual things" or "proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission"? Louise Zanré, JRS-UK's Director, often speaks of the way we work here as trying to model a different kind of society, a counter-cultural dream where we are all part of building a more just world. Fundraisers and donors participate in JRS-UK's dream of making this possible, as well as the volunteers and staff who accompany the refugees.

Giving - This is one of the things that I love about JRS. It is not complicated. We give because each person that comes to us needs help. Not tomorrow, but today, because they are hungry, tired or discouraged. We give because they are fed up of sleeping on the night buses, or because they can no longer cope with the bureaucratic merry-go-round of the asylum-seeking process. We give because we can't bear to see someone's hopes of a

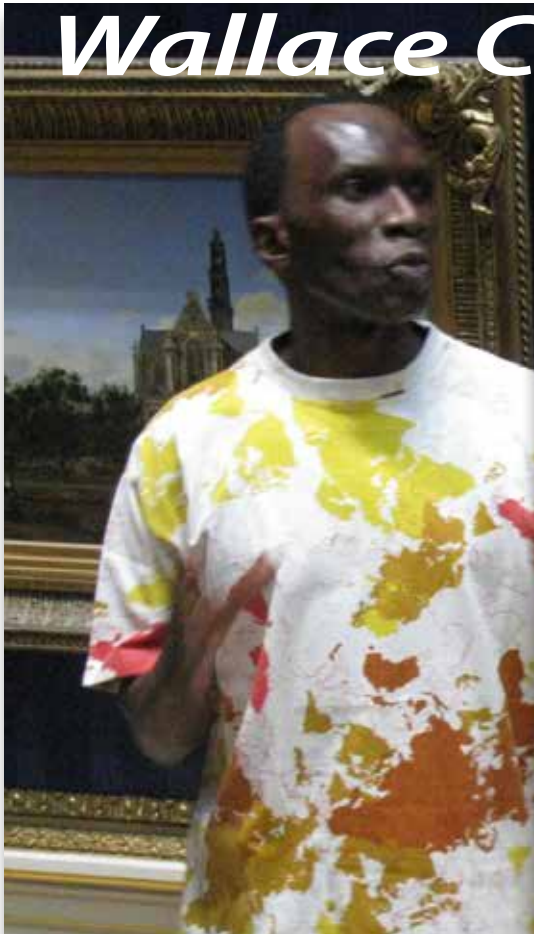
better future crushed by the inhospitality of our own country.

Asking – Refugees themselves are often the most articulate about their needs. Of course, many were skilled communicators as campaigners, politicians or teachers back home, but some have lost their voice through the trauma of leaving home and seeking asylum. But once here, they have a lot of asking to do: "Is it safe here?", "Where can I get help for...?" and "What does this letter mean?" What we can do at JRS is provide a place where they don't have to ask all the time. We can try to anticipate some of what they need... We ask so they don't have to.

This issue of the newsletter is in recognition of those of you who support JRS-UK's mission and we are grateful for all the ways people give their time and energy. And it is also an opportunity for us to encourage others to think of ways in which they can support our mission, through volunteering, fundraising and prayer support. Please find a prayer card enclosed so that if you do not have the money or the time to volunteer you can support us in a different way.

Accompany Serve Advocate

Wallace Collection Museum



Souleyman Sow was one of seven refugees from the JRS-UK Day Centre who trained as a volunteer tour guide at a London Museum

Tell me about the course

JRS provided the flyers, I saw the opportunity to take part. Go for it! You never know where it could end, opportunity does not have a fixed door. It started in Feb 2011, it was almost a nine month course. It was at the museum to get knowledge, as knowledge is the key of the world, if you have knowledge you can go anywhere!

How did you learn?

We started with a lady called Judith who taught about body language, how to kill your nerves... at the beginning it was funny, they showed us how to speak in public. We used to go every Friday to the museum. I chose 5 works of art to speak about: The Laughing Cavalier, the Ink Stand, the Astronomical Clock, the John Pelicone painting and the Lacemaker – this last one was my favourite because it was a very difficult task in the seventeenth century. It took an hour to make one inch of lace.

When did you do your tour?

How was the experience for you? - My tour was on 11 December at 1pm and I had about seventeen people. Sophie from the Wallace Collection came with us. My first one was okay, I was nervous for the beginning, but I breathed deep. There was no way to back out now, so I just started. I explained about the Wallace Collection, we went to different rooms. Afterwards, I was so excited, I had good feedback from Sophie.

What surprised you the most?

The only thing that surprised me on my second tour, someone came back from the first tour and introduced himself. He was from UCL and brought some of his colleagues. And he wanted to make a video.

What has the experience given you?

It was a positive experience, it is a very difficult thing to speak in public, with the nerves, now these things are out of my system.

Without JRS I would not have known these things. Last time, when we were given our certificates, I told them that it was important for us to work as a group and to get the ideas from everyone in the team. I recommended that we continued to meet together at JRS to share our learning and practice.

What happens next?

Now we start another 10 week course every Tuesday to learn about the arms and armouries and then we will do more tours during the Spring.

What would you say to other organisations thinking of doing a similar programme?

My recommendation is to see what JRS is trying to do. If different organisations can work together, they can discuss what they can do to move forward. Someone came from a funding organisation and would like to have other programmes in other museums.

Why are programmes like this important to refugees in the UK?

The reason why is asylum seekers are not allowed to work. If you sit at home, you think about your decision; but if you have this kind of opportunities, it keeps you busy, it makes a contribution to the community, you have a reference and proof that you are a volunteer. Lots of people don't understand these kinds of things.

I want to thank JRS from the manager, the staff and volunteers, without them there would be no "green line" to say "go for it" and I thank the education department, Sophie and her colleagues at the Wallace Collection Museum. I wish them happiness and good health. I advise others who are coming to JRS to "go for it" as well, not just coming to get money and food, it is good to do something for the community as a way to help yourself.

My experience as a volunteer with JRS-UK

Sholastic Roshan Suvakeen SJ shares what he learnt during his stay

First of all I am really grateful to the director, the assistant director and the staff at Wapping Centre for extending a warm welcome to the JRS-London family. Working with JRS as a volunteer for a month, gave me plenty of opportunities and experiences. This mission to accompany, serve and defend the rights of refugees and forcibly displaced people, has certainly given an impetus and focus as a Jesuit who prepares for my future mission. Talking to the refugees and the destitute challenged my sense of responsibility towards them. Even though my voluntary service was for a short span of time, I learned a lot from the lives of the asylum seekers and the destitute.

In spite of all the practical problems, they always come with a broad smile on their face. They are ready to face all exhausting and isolating experiences. They taught me to respect fundamental rights of human beings and lead a happy life even though there is nothing to sustain us. I was extremely touched by the weekly day centre programme. I was able to meet a lot of people of different nationalities with the same problem of seeking the acceptance and approval

of the UK authorities. Listening to them and chatting with them inspired and equipped me to feel with them, even though my material assistance towards them is limited. I could only accompany them in hope for their future and their stay with us. As a

Jesuit scholastic it is my desire to work for the poor and the needy, and certainly this splendid experience in the JRS strengthened my inner motivation for the future mission in my own country. Thanks to you all once again.

Fundraising – what do you do for JRS?

Volunteer: Sister Anne Benyon OSU, fills out forms with refugees



I have never considered myself gifted for fund-raising, but when I was asked to work with destitute asylum seekers in applying for grants to help with subsistence needs, I felt drawn to help. It can be heart-breaking to hear the stories of those applying for grants - perhaps even more heart-breaking when an application is unsuccessful. Compassion is so often the greatest gift I can offer. When successful, grants range from about £50 to £250. There are two main bodies that help the work of JRS in this way. One has greater resources than the other; this one also has perhaps more calls upon their resources. Both charities are very generous and it is wonderful to see the faces of a successful applicant light up when she or he receives a grant. For a while, their life becomes that little bit easier.

Runner: Jonathan Conlin is running the London marathon

In the 17th-century my family fled religious persecution in France, and settled in Ireland. Three centuries later, my parents crossed the Atlantic as economic migrants. Similar stories lie in everyone's past. As a Christian, the Old Testament reminds me not to oppress the stranger, "for you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt." As a human being, geneticists remind me that my DNA is a record of migration. I've seen JRS' work close up, first as a volunteer befriender and now as a volunteer on the chaplaincy team at Immigration Removal Centre at Harmondsworth. These experiences, too, remind me that when I see a refugee, I see my species, my people, my family, my self.



Donor: Marj McDaid and her family made a donation



We contribute to JRS because its work is dedicated to helping that group of people in our society who have lost so much, sometimes everything: home, belongings, country, family, identity and who have to struggle even to have the right to remain here in order to rebuild their lives. Refugees need time and commitment from people to deal with their ongoing, complex problems which is costly to provide and JRS are doing this, so they need our ongoing financial assistance. By our donations, we feel that we are contributing in a tiny way to this work which reminds us that we are all members of the same human family

Toiletry Collector: Lynn Haanen collects items with members of her club

Curves started to support JRS because we saw that there was a good fit: the women of the Curves fitness centre saying that they didn't know what to do with unwanted gifts of soaps, shampoos, perfumes, etc and the appeal by JRS for exactly these items for refugees, especially women who could use the boost to their self esteem from such "luxuries." So we put out a basket and were amazed at the response. We were also pleased that the members of Curves understood where the donation was going and felt good about supporting the work of JRS. Curves as an organisation, both internationally and at the club in Twickenham, supports causes ranging from Breast Cancer Awareness to respite care centres for seriously ill children. Supporting JRS is another way to show solidarity with women who find themselves in a difficult situation.



Keeping In Touch

Patricia, a JRS-UK Detention Volunteer, writes in with some news and Amadou, a detainee, responds.

Patricia says, "Just a short note to let you know that I am home, safe and sound from my pilgrimage to the Holy Lands. It was an extraordinary experience and one that will take me time to digest. One very early morning in Jerusalem we walked the Via Dolorosa and I wanted to tell you that my penfriend, Amadou, the people held with him at Colnbrook and the wider world of refugee camps and interned

people as well as JRS were at the heart of my prayers on this walk. I have had two very nice letters from Amadou, both on cards created by him in his art workshop. I feel this workshop must be very important for the detainees. I have been able to write regularly and am now wondering about Christmas. I realise he is a Muslim but I would like to send him something to mark out the celebration. Every time I write his address, I wonder if it means that he is earmarked for deportation. I have no idea if his case has been heard and obviously I don't ask about such things in our correspondence.

I would like to thank you for creating this opportunity for me to engage with our refugee community. It means a lot to me."

Amadou has told us how helpful he finds the support he receives. He expressed a lot of gratitude for the mobile phone top-up he gets, the detention visits and the pen friend. He still writes to Patricia and said her letters always make him smile and sometimes when he feels down he reads one of her letters to feel better. As always, he spoke about the letters with a smile on his face.

Support our marathon runners and long-distance walker

Jonathan Conlin is running the London marathon
Support him at: www.justgiving.com/JonathanConlin

Gary Bridgeman is running 3 marathons in 5 weeks
Encourage him at: www.justgiving.com/Gary-Bridgeman1

Wiktor Madejczyk will be walking 100km from London to Brighton to raise money for JRS-UK's Detention Outreach Programme

Sponsor him at:
www.justgiving.com/Wiktor-Madejczyk



Give As You Live

We have a fresh way for you to help raise money for JRS-UK at no cost to you. If you shop on-line, you can choose from many everyday brands and a percentage will go to help what we do. www.giveasyoulive.com/howitworks

Refugee Week

17th – 23rd June 2013

Different Pasts, Shared Future
www.refugeeweek.org.uk

Appeal

Thank you to everyone who made a gift for our Lent Appeal to support women's participation in the JRS-UK Spiritual Companionship and Women4Women programme. We were able to raise enough to enable individual women to take part in more than 106 sessions.

Churches Refugee Network Conference May 2013

Also Human: Who gets included in Britain Today?

Saturday 18th May 2013

11.00am to 3.30pm (Registration from 10.30am)

Bloomsbury Baptist Church

235 Shaftesbury Avenue, London WC2H 8EP

£10, £5 unemployed, free for asylum seekers

Political Keynote Speaker:

Sarah Teather MP,

recently Minister of State for Children and Families

Workshops on:

Overcoming Isolation,

Forced Removals

Legal Information,

Top 10 Issues for Refugees

Contact 020 7916 8632 to book

Thanks for taking action to raise awareness about poverty and homelessness and to pray for destitute asylum seekers in January as part of Poverty and Homelessness Action Week 2013.

JRS-UK Summer Party

Saturday 29th June 2013, 12.00pm – 4.30pm

You're welcome! Please come along and join us for food, fun and friendship RSVP to uk@jrs.net or 020 7488 7310

Did you like this newsletter? Spread the word and pass it on to someone who does not know JRS...

Please Make a Donation to our Hardship Fund

What should you do?

If you want to send a donation please send a cheque (payable to Jesuit Refugee Service) fill the information in the box on the right and send it back by post to:

**JRS-UK, The Hurtado Jesuit Centre,
2 Chandler Street, London E1W 2QT**

or make a secure payment on:
www.justgiving.com/jesuitrefugeeservice

If you want more information, please contact us on 020 7488 7310

Registered Charity Number 230165

- Please add me to your mailing list
- Donation enclosed Amount: £ _____
- I am a UK taxpayer and would like to gift aid my donation to JRS (Gift aid increases the value of your donation to us by 25p in every pound)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____