

**WOMEN'S
REFUGEE
COMMISSION**

Research. Rethink. Resolve.

**2023
YEAR IN REVIEW**



Refugee woman and child, Greece. © quetions123/Shutterstock.com

Cover photo: A woman displaced by climate change, Bangladesh. © Gregorioa/Shutterstock.com



A MESSAGE FROM SARAH COSTA

In 2023, the main drivers of mass displacement—conflict and violence, endemic poverty, failed governance, and the climate crisis—continued to converge, pushing displacement and human suffering to historic highs. Record numbers of people were forced to flee their homes. Most were women and children.

Amid all the chaos, the Women's Refugee Commission continued to keep our focus on women and children, who tend to be forgotten or overlooked during emergencies. We did the critical work we are known for to bridge gaps in services for people who are often underestimated, undervalued, and ignored—and to drive transformative change in refugee protection and humanitarian response.

With all the global challenges, we did not waver in our commitment to combining the power of research and evidence-based advocacy to make the world safer for women, girls, and other marginalized groups, including LGBTQI+ individuals, people with disabilities, and men and boys recovering from sexual violence. The humanitarian sector is, finally, rightly emphasizing the importance of strengthening the agency and leadership of women and girls; for nearly 35 years, the Women's Refugee Commission has asked women and girls which solutions are most important to them to

strengthen their resilience and address structural and systemic inequalities.

Over the past year, we made real strides toward promoting gender equality and inclusion; improving humanitarian and displacement policy and practice; growing and consolidating partnerships with local organizations and networks led by displaced women and youth; and developing new tools to advance rights and social justice for displaced women and girls and other marginalized people everywhere.

I am proud of what we, our partners, our community of supporters, and the remarkably resilient women and youth displaced by conflict and crisis achieved in 2023. I'm excited to share some highlights from our work last year, and some of the progress we made.

Thank you for standing with us and helping us ensure that refugees are safe and healthy and get the support and resources they need to rebuild their lives.

Sarah Costa
Executive Director

ABOUT THE WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION

Our vision is a world where all people displaced by conflict or crisis are welcomed with dignity; are safe, healthy, and self-reliant; have their human rights and agency respected; and get the support and resources they need to drive solutions to rebuild their lives.

Our mission is to improve the lives and protect the rights of women, children, youth, and other people who are often overlooked, undervalued, and underserved in the humanitarian responses to crises and displacement.

The Women's Refugee Commission is a research and advocacy organization. We work in partnership with displaced communities to research their needs, identify solutions, and advocate for gender-transformative and sustained improvement in humanitarian, development, and displacement policy and practice.

Our advocacy is informed by what we learn in our research on the front lines. We advocate with national governments, UN agencies, and international humanitarian aid organizations so they can provide and direct funding, create policies, and implement practices that effectively address the needs of women and girls. We work in coalition with national and local organizations that share our goals; we share information, strategize, and support each other as we work toward a better world for women and girls.

Some core issues we work on:

- Advancing sexual and reproductive rights.
- Creating economic opportunities for displaced women and girls.
- Promoting gender-based violence prevention and response and ending conflict-related sexual violence.
- Supporting refugee women and youth leaders who advocate for change in their communities.

We work on these issues because they are foundational to displaced women and girls' ability to rebuild their lives in safety and peace.

In 2024, we will mark our 35th anniversary. We were founded by women who recognized women's perspectives were nearly absent in humanitarian response—especially the perspectives of refugee women. Thirty-five years on, our commitment to centering our work around the voices of displaced women and girls remains stronger than ever.



Young woman cutting paper fabric for practicing dressmaking in vocational training center in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya. © Adriana Mahdalova/Shutterstock.com

BUILDING A SAFER, HEALTHIER FUTURE FOR REFUGEES AROUND THE WORLD

The Women's Refugee Commission supports women and girls to drive their own solutions to the challenges they face. Over the years, we have reshaped humanitarian aid. Because of our groundbreaking research and advocacy, the unique needs of women and girls, along with youth, LGBTQI+ individuals, people with disabilities, men and boy survivors of sexual violence, and older people are now much more likely to be included in humanitarian response.

Despite progress, critical gaps remain. Refugee women and girls need support, and they need to be trusted. They know best what they need to develop their talents and expertise so they can thrive. The Women's Refugee Commission works to make sure that displaced women and girls, as well as refugee- and women-led organizations, are leading solutions affecting their own well-being.

The Women's Refugee Commission is unwavering in our commitment to protecting sexual and reproductive rights and ensuring that lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services are available from the onset of an emergency through recovery. Family planning is lifesaving and must be a priority health service in humanitarian crises, both in daily life and to provide protection when sexual violence occurs.

MEETING FAMILY PLANNING NEEDS IN PAKISTAN AND SUDAN

The Women's Refugee Commission worked with national family planning associations in Pakistan and Sudan to make family planning services more readily available and accessible for Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Tigrayan refugees from Ethiopia in Sudan. Across the two countries, the project reached 54,901 people with family planning information and provided 28,805 people with sexual and reproductive health services, including 6,371 first-time users of modern family planning methods.

A WOMAN WHO WAS STRUGGLING WITH THE NEGATIVE HEALTH IMPACTS OF BACK-TO-BACK PREGNANCIES LEARNED ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF FAMILY PLANNING AND THE DIFFERENT METHODS AVAILABLE WHEN SHE ATTENDED A PROJECT EVENT IN PAKISTAN. SHE WAS ABLE TO WORK WITH THE PROVIDER TO TRY DIFFERENT METHODS UNTIL SHE FOUND THE ONE THAT WORKED BEST FOR HER AND HER FAMILY.

BUILDING ACCESS TO INCOME AND RESILIENCY IN JORDAN, LEBANON, NIGER, AND UGANDA

Survivors of gender-based violence must have sustainable sources of income. Without it, they lack the control and stability they need to fully recover and rebuild their lives. In 2023, the Women's Refugee Commission and the Danish Refugee Council worked with local organizations in Jordan, Lebanon, Niger, and Uganda to develop plans that integrate economic recovery into programs aimed at preventing and responding to gender-based violence. We collaborated with nearly 100 staff of local organizations in the four countries. As a result of our research, recommendations, and advocacy, local organizations are prioritizing economic support for people who have experienced gender-based violence and are rebuilding their lives. Our previous work in this area shows that with an income, women can pay rent, buy tools to set up a business, or go to a doctor, alleviating some of their stress and uncertainty. Our work with these local organizations has allowed them to design innovative and robust solutions to help women recover from and become more resilient after facing abusive and violent situations.

"SOMETIMES...THERE ARE MEETINGS YOU GO TO AND ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE PUT TOGETHER WITH THOSE INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, THERE ARE ALWAYS THOSE WHO FEEL LIKE THEY'VE BEEN IN THE GAME FOR QUITE [A] LONG TIME. THEY ASSUME [THEY KNOW] EVERYTHING. BUT IN THIS LOCAL ANCHOR GROUP TEAM [A COALITION OF INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL, AND LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS]...I HAVEN'T SEEN THAT ASPECT THERE. SO, WE SEE OURSELVES IN THAT ANCHOR GROUP AS PARTNERS AND WE SEE WE VALUE EACH AND EVERY CONTRIBUTION THAT ONE HAS TO PUT FORWARD BECAUSE...WE ARE LOOKING AT WHAT WE CAN DO DIFFERENTLY."

-PARTICIPANT IN WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION AND DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL WORKSHOP IN UGANDA

*A local leader presents on the need for integrated gender-based violence and economic recovery at a workshop in Jordan.
© WRC/Aditi Bhanja*



ENSURING BOYS AND YOUNG MEN IN UKRAINE FIND HELP TO HEAL

Although most survivors of sexual violence are women and girls, men and boys, including LGBTQI+ people, are also at serious risk during crises.

In Ukraine, from the earliest days of the war, civilians reported incidents of sexual violence against both women and men by Russian soldiers—reports that have since been verified. While the international community began investigating and addressing the needs of women survivors, there was almost no research focused on men and the barriers that male survivors of sexual violence face in accessing services and support.

The Women's Refugee Commission's groundbreaking report, *Service Barriers Faced by Male Survivors in Ukraine*, filled those gaps. Ukrainian humanitarian coordinators relied on our report to advocate for funding for more services to help all survivors of sexual violence in Ukraine including men and boys.



The destruction of homes in Ukraine, including these houses in Chernihiv Oblast that were destroyed by shelling, has caused massive displacement and decimated Ukraine's infrastructure. © DRC Ukraine/Volodymyr Cheppel



Community members discuss gender-based violence at Nyumanzi community center, Uganda © Aliro Solomon Joel

OPENING DOORS TO SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE IN COLOMBIA AND UGANDA

During conflict and crises, survivors of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, are often unable to access lifesaving, time-sensitive care, including emergency contraception and medication to prevent HIV after possible exposure.

The Women's Refugee Commission is developing and sharing tools and strategies to ensure survivors can access sexual and reproductive healthcare, even in very volatile environments. In Uganda and Colombia, the Women's Refugee Commission and our partners are training community health workers in refugee and host communities to raise awareness about gender-based violence and the benefits of seeking care, and to connect survivors with services in their community.

When we asked women in Uganda what had changed most after taking part in the project to raise awareness about gender-based violence in their communities, this is what they said:

"A LOT HAS CHANGED, NOW. THEY USED TO SAY, WHY WOULD THIS WOMAN SAY THIS? NO ONE WANTED TO LISTEN TO A WOMAN. BUT NOW, WOMEN ARE HEARD. IF YOU SUGGEST THINGS THAT NEED TO BE DONE AT HOME TO YOUR HUSBAND, HE LISTENS. BUT BEFORE, THEY WERE INTOLERANT OF WOMEN'S VIEWS."

"[ALL] LEADERS USED TO BE MEN, BUT WHEN THEY CAME AND TALKED, WOMEN HAVE BEEN PICKED INTO LEADERSHIP. I BELIEVE NEXT YEAR WE MIGHT SEE AN EVEN BIGGER NUMBER OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS."

AN INNOVATIVE PROGRAM SUPPORTS ADOLESCENT GIRLS

The Women's Refugee Commission continued to lead innovative approaches to improve the humanitarian response for adolescent girls. Our foundational *I'm Here* approach has been implemented by dozens of organizations in more than 30 crisis-affected communities since 2014.

In 2023, the Women's Refugee Commission received a generous \$1 million grant from the #StartSmall Fund to expand our work with adolescent girls and support continued rollout of the *I'm Here* approach. We also began working with Colombian partner Fundación Tiempo de Juego (the "Play Time" Foundation) to adapt and implement the *I'm Here* approach for programming with Venezuelan adolescents living in Santa Marta, Colombia. As part of this project, we are also partnering with Universidad de Los Andes to conduct the first-ever evaluation of the *I'm Here* approach. The evidence will further support the humanitarian community to better respond to the diverse priorities of displaced adolescent girls.





FIGHTING FOR RIGHTS & JUSTICE

Migrant, stateless, and refugee women and children around the world routinely face legal and human rights violations. From the US border with Mexico, where asylum seekers are refused entry, to countries where women are denied the same nationality rights as men, the Women's Refugee Commission holds governments accountable to their obligation to respect women and children's rights, so they can find safety, access justice, and rebuild their lives.

ADVOCATING FOR FAIR, COMPASSIONATE, AND HUMANE ASYLUM POLICIES IN THE US

HELPING CITIES WELCOME PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

In 2023, one of the biggest news stories was the increase in the number of people seeking asylum at the US-Mexico border. Political instability, violence, poverty, and the agricultural impacts of climate change drove people from all over the world to seek stability and safety in other countries, including the US. By the end of the year, the governor of Texas had sent more than 100,000 people on buses to cities far from Texas; more traveled on their own, seeking to reunite with family and find work as they navigate the asylum system.



WRC conducted a comprehensive review of the needs and challenges in four cities facing an influx of migrants last year: New York City, Chicago, Denver, and Portland, Maine. After meeting with dozens of stakeholders, we published a report that identified best practices for absorbing and welcoming people seeking asylum that we recommended be adopted by cities and states across the country.

ENSURING ALL CHILDREN ARE TREATED LIKE CHILDREN

In 2023, around 120,000 children arrived at the US-Mexico border alone, likely all because of violence, abuse, or poverty in their home countries. The law often treats them as migrants first, children second. Like all children, they need education, a nurturing and supporting home environment, and to be kept safe.

The Women's Refugee Commission led efforts to protect these children. We were at the forefront of high-level advocacy with Congress and the Biden administration to ensure that the government hire child welfare professionals to work with children held in custody at the border.

During the year, we served on a steering committee that was the result of a lawsuit to locate and connect the 5,000 families separated under the previous administration's "zero tolerance" policy. By the end of 2023, 75 percent of the separated children had been reunited with their families; another 5 percent of the children were in the process of rejoining their families.

Our work to protect children also included contributing to a new US government Interagency Task Force to Combat Child Labor Exploitation. We offered key insights relating to the unique needs of children migrating from Central America to the US. We co-led the drafting of a set of "big ideas" to prevent child labor, which include better federal coordination with states where refugee children are resettled and increased access to medical care for unaccompanied children. The Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is responsible for the care of migrant children, began to implement many of these ideas last year.



"THE BIDEN ADMINISTRATION MUST MAKE RIGHT THE PROTECTION SYSTEM THAT FAILED UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN, AND ALL CHILDREN EXPLOITED FOR LABOR. WE NEED ACCOUNTABILITY FROM THE BRANDS THAT PROFIT FROM CHILD LABOR, AND EVERY UNACCOMPANIED CHILD MUST HAVE A LAWYER TO SAFEGUARD THE CHILD'S RIGHTS."

- MARIO BRUZZONE, WRC, QUOTED IN "LAWMAKERS CLAMOR FOR ACTION ON CHILD MIGRANT LABOR AS OUTRAGE GROWS," NEW YORK TIMES, MARCH 3, 2023



Drawings and notes from children seeking asylum at a San Diego shelter. © WRC/Kimiko Hirota



Women's Refugee Commission

@wrcommission

This week @wrcommission joined 5 border shelter providers as they met w/ Biden officials and congressional leaders to share how they welcome people seeking asylum in a safe and humane way. #WelcomeWithDignity w/ @JFSSD @RESCUEorg @mborderhope @BorderServant @RepAOC @RepCasar



SUPPORTING SHELTERS AT THE BORDER

When people seeking asylum at the US-Mexico border are released from government custody, many are welcomed at reception shelters run by nongovernmental organizations. The shelters provide for their basic needs, along with information to understand their immigration proceedings and to reach their final destinations in the US. These shelters are particularly critical for newly arrived families with young children.

In 2023, the Women's Refugee Commission co-led a delegation of migrant shelter directors from southwest border states to meet with key White House and Department of Homeland Security officials and Congressional offices. The visits ensured that decision-makers at the highest levels of the US government heard directly from on-the-ground experts about their needs and recommendations for the Shelter and Services Program. The program, which provides federal funding to organizations welcoming new arrivals, offers an important opportunity to improve, refine, and expand the efficient, humane, and sustainable reception of people seeking protection through careful program design in close consultation with on-the-ground service providers.

Based on our recommendations, communication with stakeholders and the types of services included in the program improved. After the Shelter and Services Program launched, the Women's Refugee Commission led calls for more equitable and transparent distribution of funding, which resulted in more access to service providers and specific restrictions on funding being lifted.

WORKING TOGETHER TO DRIVE CHANGE

The Women's Refugee Commission has (co)founded and hosts several global coalitions working to improve the lives of displaced people around the world.



GLOBAL CAMPAIGN FOR EQUAL NATIONALITY RIGHTS

Many women do not have the right to pass their nationality on to their children and spouses, simply because they are women. The Global Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights, founded and hosted by the Women's Refugee Commission, works with organizations and activists around the world to fight for nationality laws that provide women with the same right as men to pass their nationality on to their children and spouses and to acquire, change, and retain their nationality without discrimination.

In 2023, the Campaign launched a network so mothers and youth from countries across the coalition can share tactics and strategies. By enhancing the capacity and solidarity of persons directly impacted by gender discrimination in nationality laws around the world, the network is strengthening the impact and resilience of national campaigns for equal nationality rights.

DEEPTI GURUNG (THIRD FROM RIGHT IN PHOTO) IS A NEPALI ACTIVIST WHOSE CHILDREN, THOUGH BORN IN NEPAL, WERE STATELESS UNDER NEPAL'S LAWS. AS A YOUNG SINGLE MOTHER, HER CHILDREN WERE UNABLE TO ACQUIRE THEIR FATHER'S NATIONALITY AND DENIED THEIR MOTHER'S NATIONALITY DUE TO GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN THE LAW. DEEPTI HAS BEEN A FIERCE ADVOCATE FOR HER FAMILY AND FOR FAMILIES ACROSS NEPAL. HER COURAGE AND PERSISTENCE TOOK HER CASE FOR HER CHILDREN'S CITIZENSHIP TO THE COUNTRY'S HIGHEST COURT—WHERE SHE WON. NOW, DEEPTI IS A LEADER OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR WOMEN'S NATIONALITY RIGHTS IN NEPAL AND IS HELPING OTHER WOMEN FIGHT FOR THEIR RIGHT TO EQUAL CITIZENSHIP FOR THEIR KIDS.



Women protesting for Nepali women's equal nationality rights



GLOBAL REFUGEE YOUTH NETWORK

The Global Refugee Youth Network (GRYN) is a global youth-led network that supports young refugees to develop their capacity, empower themselves, help each other, and lead initiatives to respond to their communities' needs. It advocates locally, nationally, regionally, and globally for the changes refugee youth feel are important. GRYN is housed at the Women's Refugee Commission as part of the organization's effort to work with young refugees to create and strengthen mechanisms that empower them.

GRYN's Youth Action Fund invests in young refugee leaders who are shaping the future of their communities at the global level. This initiative provides resources, guidance, and encouragement to refugee youth-led organizations, including those that are and those that are not formally registered, empowering them to design, lead, and implement projects that address the specific needs of their communities. Over the past year, GRYN supported nearly 100 refugee youth-led organizations with over \$200,000 in seed funding.

Elementary school students painting a mural to promote awareness about migrants and refugees in Quito, Ecuador. The project, run by the refugee youth-led organization Asociación Civil Lluvia de Arcoíris (ALLDA), was funded by GRYN.



REFUGEE SELF-RELIANCE INITIATIVE

The Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative is a multi-stakeholder initiative co-founded in 2015 by the Women's Refugee Commission and RefugePoint. The Initiative supports refugee innovation, talent, and earning potential so that refugees can rebuild their lives. The Self-Reliance Index developed by the Initiative is the first-ever global tool for measuring the progress of refugee households toward self-reliance. The Self-Reliance Index is now being used by 60 organizations in 30 countries to measure the impact of their economic programs.



Young women participate in a livelihoods program in Uganda. © WRC/Juliet Young



A rally in Washington, DC, organized by the #WelcomeWithDignity Campaign and partners. © WRC/Kimiko Hirota

WELCOME WITH DIGNITY CAMPAIGN



The #WelcomeWithDignity Campaign is a coalition of more than 120 diverse member organizations. It brings together legal and direct service providers, faith-based groups, advocacy organizations, and community groups to transform the way the United States receives and protects people forced to flee their homes to ensure they are treated humanely and fairly. The Women's Refugee Commission is a founding member of and hosts the campaign.

#WelcomeWithDignity Pushes Back against Harsh Asylum Rules

Since it was founded in 2021, the #WelcomeWithDignity Campaign advocated for the end of Title 42, a Trump administration policy that denied people their legal right to apply for asylum. In 2023, the Biden administration announced it would end this policy. However, the administration subsequently proposed a rule that dramatically curtailed access to asylum at the US-Mexico border, and left people stranded in unsafe and harsh conditions in Mexico. The #WelcomeWithDignity Campaign worked with members and movement allies to oppose the proposed asylum rule. The collective effort resulted in an astonishing 32,000+ comments on the proposed rule in 30 days. The administration's failure to consider public comments helped form the basis of Campaign partners' legal challenge to the rule.



Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises

INTER-AGENCY WORKING GROUP ON REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN CRISES (IAWG)

WRC co-founded and hosts the Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises, an international coalition of more than 50 organizations and over 4,000 individuals working to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights in humanitarian settings. The coalition develops guidance and provides technical assistance to frontline service providers, and advocates for adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to comprehensive abortion care, prevention and treatment of gender-based violence, maternal and newborn health, and health services for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.



Maternal and newborn health is a key component of sexual and reproductive health in crises.



A health provider displays reproductive health IEC materials in a mobile health unit in the Mundruzi Resettlement Center in Mozambique. Photo credit: Arturo Sanabria



ADVOCACY IN NEW YORK, GENEVA, AND WASHINGTON

The Women's Refugee Commission's humanitarian advocacy team works in Washington, DC, New York, and Geneva to advance gender equality and inclusion in crisis settings by ensuring the programs, policies, and practices of humanitarian agencies, donor governments, and local partners meet the needs of forcibly displaced women and girls in all their diversity.

In response to new Taliban restrictions announced in December 2022 banning women humanitarian workers and extending education bans to women in universities, we rapidly mobilized to advocate at senior levels in the White House, the State Department, and the US Agency for International Development. This led to senior-level meetings with the State Department and Congressional officials, where we urged them to take decisive action and elevate these issues in their bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. Notably, Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman became particularly engaged in political efforts to hold Taliban officials accountable and reinstate humanitarian operations.

As a result of our advocacy, two new US government policy initiatives include key measures to address gender-based violence in humanitarian contexts, including providing flexible funding to local organizations for gender-based violence response and reinforcing accessibility of comprehensive gender-based violence services to adolescent girls, people with disabilities, and LGBTQI+ survivors.



US Capitol, Washington, DC © Lucky-photographer/Shutterstock

Our advocacy with the United Nations in New York and Geneva promoted and supported the leadership of women who work to prevent conflict and respond to crises in their communities, highlighted the Women’s Refugee Commission’s work on sexual and reproductive health and rights and age, gender, and diversity in various policy spaces, and ensured that the needs of forcibly displaced women, girls, people who are LGBTQI+, and other underserved groups were included in conversations about humanitarian response, where they are often overlooked. In May 2023, we were awarded consultative status by the UN Economic and Social Council, which gives us a seat—and a voice—at many UN bodies. At the Global Refugee Forum in Geneva in December 2023, the world’s largest international gathering on refugees, we were able to showcase our expertise and join the global community of nongovernmental organizations in pledging concrete actions in support of people who are displaced.

United Nations, Geneva © nexus 7/Shutterstock



THE WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION IN THE NEWS

WE WERE FEATURED IN MANY NEWS STORIES IN 2023. HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS.

[Why Are Migrant Children Working Dangerous Jobs in the US?](#) (Al Jazeera's UpFront)

["Biden and the Border,"](#) a segment on Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)

[Fatal Fire, Damning Video Put Harsh Focus on Mexico's Migrant Centers](#) (Washington Post)

[Lawmakers Clamor for Action on Child Migrant Labor as Outrage Grows](#) (New York Times)

["Rethinking Our Asylum System"](#) (New York Times letter to the editor)

["It's Time to Make Child Marriage a Thing of the Past"](#) (Ms. Magazine)

["Analysis: Biden's New Border Plan Undercuts Campaign Vow to Restore Asylum Access"](#) (Reuters)

["Advocates Demand Urgent Action to Support Afghan Women and Girls Following New Restrictions on Women's Rights and Humanitarian Aid"](#) (ReliefWeb)

[Immigration Advocates Deplore House Republicans' Effort to Tie Ukraine Aid to Severe Border Measures](#) (Baptist News Global)

[Service Barriers Faced by Male Survivors of Sexual Violence in Ukraine](#) (Health Reporter)

[Connecting the Dots to Gender Equality and Empowerment](#) (New Security Beat)

[On World Refugee Day, 110 Million People Must Leave Home to Flee Conflict and Persecution](#) (Ms. Magazine op-ed)

Fatal fire, damning video put harsh focus on Mexico's migrant centers

By Marc J. Rothblatt

Updated March 29, 2023 at 9:58 a.m. / Published March 29, 2023 at 7:26 a.m. EDT



A woman looks at a sign in front of a fence at a migrant center in Tijuana, Mexico, on Wednesday, March 29, 2023. (AP Photo/John Manchillo)



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United States

Biden's new border plan undercuts campaign vow to restore asylum access



Illustration by Rebecca Chew/The New York Times; photograph by MasterLu, via Getty Images

To the Editor:

Re [“A Compromise on Immigration Is Possible”](#) (editorial, Oct. 30):

I have seen, firsthand, the devastating effects our current asylum policies have on families seeking safety at the U.S. border. Here’s what the editorial board gets right: The current asylum system is fundamentally broken, and the United States needs to invest resources to ensure that the process is just and treats those fleeing violence and persecution with dignity.

However, the Bipartisan Border Solutions Act — which just 13 of 535 members of Congress have co-sponsored — provides neither realistic nor humane solutions to address today’s migration challenges. The proposal repackages Trump-era policies that would almost certainly increase the number of asylum seekers languishing in squalid conditions at the border.

Evidence shows that most people seeking asylum are committed to working through their immigration cases; they don’t need to be trapped in custody, where they are unlikely to receive legal counsel in the impossibly short time frames presented in this bill.

Instead of building new de facto detention facilities, Congress should fund local governments, legal service providers and humanitarian organizations to better support people seeking asylum.

Kimiko Hirota
Washington

The writer is a policy adviser at the Women’s Refugee Commission.



Biden & The Border: Last Week Tonight with John Oliver (HBO)

The New York Times

Lawmakers Clamor for Action on Child Migrant Labor as Outrage Grows

Members of Congress are pressing for changes to the law and the Biden administration’s approach as federal and state enforcement agencies begin a crackdown on companies that employ underage migrants.

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Young workers exited an overnight cleaning shift in October at a 130 park place in Washington, Miss. — *Kenneth Law for The New York Times*

By Hannah Dreier and Luke Broadwater
March 5, 2021

Ms. WOMEN'S MAGAZINE, A MOVEMENT

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ENVIRONMENT, IMMIGRATION, NATIONAL

On World Refugee Day, 110 Million People Must Leave Home to Flee Conflict and Persecution

WR09023 by SARAH COHEN

To protect the rights of marginalized populations, we must fund local refugee organizations directly.

A group of refugees from Pakistan and Afghanistan protest in front of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in Doha, Qatar, on May 18, 2021. (Photo: Getty Images)



WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION STAFF AT THE PEACE AND JUSTICE MEMORIAL CENTER IN MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA.

Thanks to a generous donor, WRC staff went to Montgomery, Alabama, where we visited the Legacy Museum, the Memorial for Peace and Justice, and the Civil Rights Memorial Center. This tremendously moving experience not only deepened our understanding of the institution of slavery throughout the US and its enduring legacy, but also reinforced our commitment to fight for justice, peace, tolerance, and equal rights for all.



***"AFTER THIS TRIP, I FELT A RENEWED SENSE OF INSPIRATION TO HONOR THE MEMORY OF THE MILLIONS OF LIVES LOST AND TO CARRY ON THE IMPORTANT WORK OF THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS AND MARTYRS WHO FOUGHT TIRELESSLY FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE. THEY HAVE PAVED THE WAY FOR US, BUT IT IS NOW OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CONTINUE THEIR LEGACY."* -WRC STAFF MEMBER**

WORKING WITH PARTNERS AND COALITIONS

The Women's Refugee Commission (co)founded and/or hosts several key partners and belongs to many coalitions. This amplifies our work and increases our impact.

The Coalitions We (Co)founded and/or Host:

Campaign for Equal Nationality Rights
Global Refugee Youth Network
Inter-Agency Working Group on Reproductive Health in Crises
Refugee Self-Reliance Initiative
Welcome With Dignity Campaign

The Coalitions We Belong to:

Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies
Compact on Young People in Humanitarian Action
The Gender-Based Violence Area of Responsibility
Global Health Cluster
InterAction
The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
NGO Commission on the Status of Women Executive Committee
NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security
Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund
The Ukraine Gender-Based Violence Working Group

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Peter Peters
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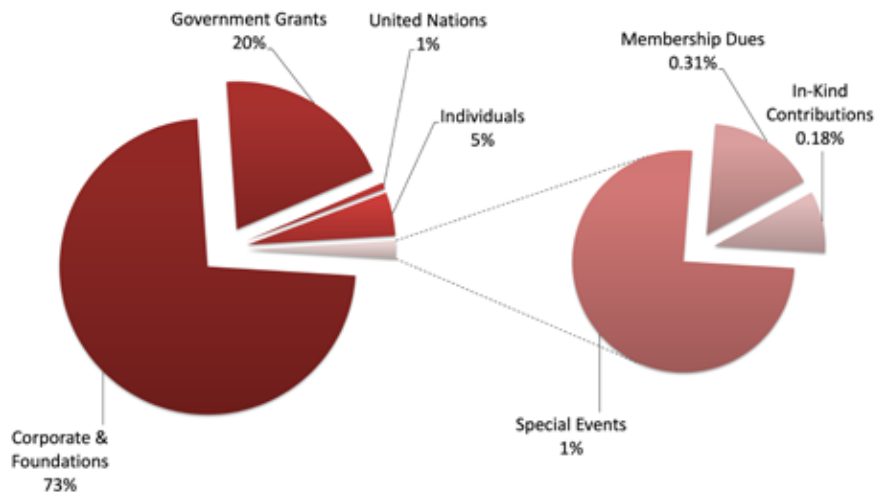
Donald Prible
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FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023

The Women's Refugee Commission is exempt from federal income taxes under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Copies of our audited financial statements for FY 2023 are available on our website.

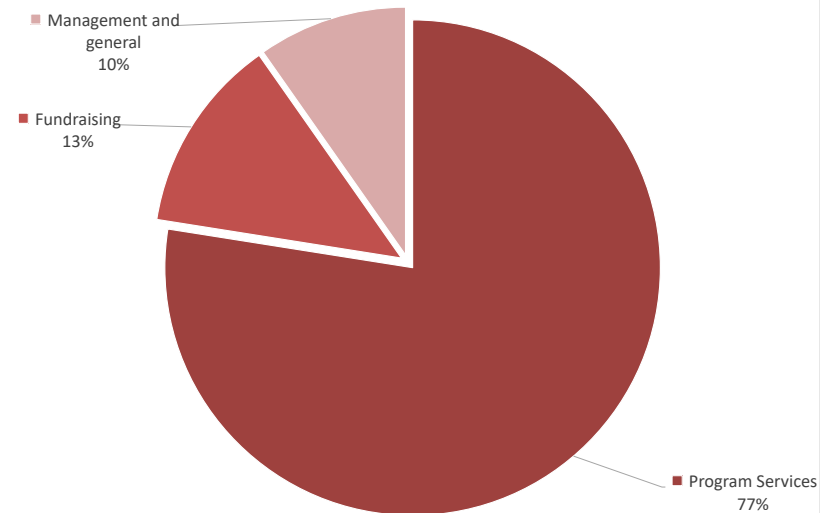
FY 2023 REVENUE

TOTAL REVENUE: \$11.5 million



FY 2023 EXPENSES

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$8.9 million



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(As of September 2023)

IN MEMORIAM, AMBASSADOR C. STEVEN MCGANN (RET)

In May 2023, the Women’s Refugee Commission was devastated by the unexpected death of Board Co-chair Ambassador C. Steven (Steve) McGann. Steve joined WRC’s board of directors in September 2020, and was co-chair from September 2021 to May 2023.

Steve had an unwavering commitment to humanitarian assistance, security, and justice. Over the course of a remarkable career, from the Asia-Pacific to the United States, from Africa to Latin America, Steve changed the lives of countless families and communities.

He was a highly effective leader and champion for justice, equality, and human rights for all. He was an especially effective voice for people living in seemingly forgotten regions of the world, consistently calling attention to their struggles and insisting on support to meet their urgent needs.

We continue to be inspired by his example and miss him immensely.



Steve McGann presenting the Voices of Courage Award to Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, permanent representative of the USA to the United Nations.

CREATE LASTING CHANGE TODAY

For more than 30 years, thanks to the generous support of donors like you, the results of the Women's Refugee Commission's work continue to be transformative and far-reaching for people displaced by conflict and crisis worldwide: They are far more likely to find safe, dignified work and have access to comprehensive services to prevent and respond to sexual violence from the onset of a crisis.

Underserved communities and individuals, particularly women and adolescent girls and those with disabilities, are represented in the programs and policies that affect their lives. And families seeking sanctuary in the US have a fierce and fearless advocate standing for them.

Your tax-deductible donation to the Women's Refugee Commission will be used where it is most needed to support refugees by helping to assure their human rights and protection, their health and economic security, and their freedom to make the decisions and drive the solutions that affect their lives. For every dollar we spend, 90 cents go directly to programs that provide crucial support to refugees. Please visit www.womensrefugeecommission.org/donate to learn about ways to give and create lasting change or scan the QR code below to make a donation.

We are deeply grateful for your steadfast support.





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