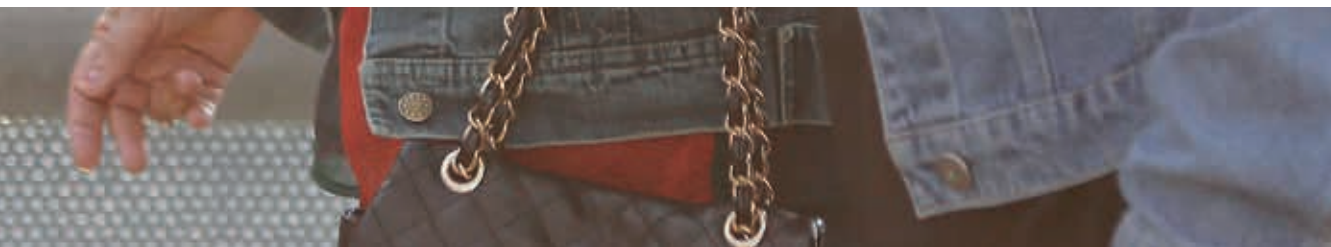




Refugee Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2018



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A CHALLENGING OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

THE GLOBAL REFUGEE SITUATION is far from improved, given that there are more people in the world who have been forced to leave their homes. The challenging situation is reflected in our operations both in Finland and abroad.

Refugee resettlement and applying for asylum are major causes of immigration into Finland, though the number of asylum seekers has decreased compared to 2015-2016 highs. The criteria for granting asylum and other residence permits have been tightened in Finland in recent years, which has affected the number of people receiving asylum and other residence permits. Immigration and the mobility of people affect certain areas of Finland in particular: ethnic minorities are particularly concentrated in the capital region and in a few other large cities. Although over 15% of people in Helsinki are of an immigrant background, a large proportion of smaller towns and municipalities still have relatively small immigrant populations in both absolute and relative terms.

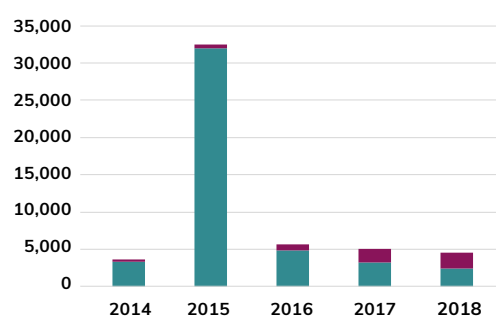
In Uganda, a comprehensive biometric refugee census was carried out, which confirmed the number of refugees in the country at nearly 1.2 million, making Uganda

the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. The dramatic increase in refugee numbers over just a few years has added to the pressure faced by the Ugandan government and the 12 municipalities where 92% of refugees live in settlements. Over 60% of refugees in the country are under 18 years old.

Despite partial political openness, free and equal participation and public debate are still limited in Myanmar. In areas with long-standing conflicts, the peace process is still in progress and some areas are under the control of ethnic armies. Due to the prolongation of conflicts, development in these regions is severely lagging, and educational opportunities have for long been limited.

Of the refugees arriving in Liberia during the Côte d'Ivoire conflict, not all have been able to return to their country of origin and some have remained in the remote border regions of Liberia. Due to the level of education always having been low in Liberia and the internal conflict having further worsened the situation, there is a great need for adult education. Refugees in the region are in a particularly vulnerable position and at risk of being left out of education.

Number of asylum applications 2014–2018

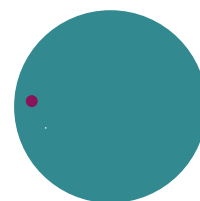


■ New applications
■ Repeat applications

Source: Migri

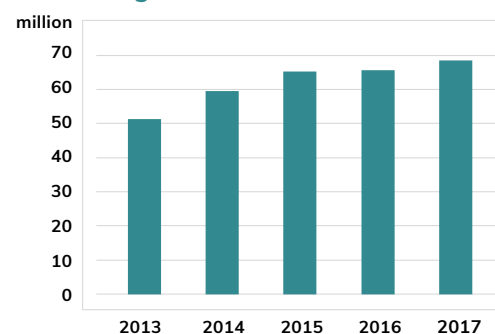
Refugees' host countries

■ 85% developing countries
■ 4.8% EU countries
■ 0.03% Finland



Source: UNHCR

Global refugee situation



Source: UNHCR

FOREWORD BY THE CHAIRPERSON

I HOPED TO BE ABLE TO PREFACE the Finnish Refugee Council's year 2018 with more positive words on recent developments than in previous years. The situation, unfortunately, does not allow it. I must yet again begin last year's review by stating some staggering figures. According to the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR, the number of people displaced due to conflict, persecution or human rights violations had by the end of 2017 grown to a new record of 68.5 million. What we tend to forget is that most of these people stay within their countries of origin. 40 million of those forced to flee their homes were displaced within their home country, whereas 25.4 million were international refugees registered by the UN, and only 3.1 million were asylum seekers.

Fewer and fewer asylum seekers continue to arrive in Finland. In 2018, just over 4,500 asylum applications were made, of which roughly 2,100 were repeat applications. This number of people we must be able to receive and integrate. We must also ensure that Finland is accessible through safe arrival routes. In practice, this means increasing intra-EU transfers and making family reunification easier. In addition, we should guarantee that those who have arrived in Finland are smoothly integrated into society and that the society we have is good for all of us. We at the Finnish Refugee Council have strived to achieve this goal through our day-to-day work, both by supporting individuals and families, and by providing support to social institutions and other organisations.

It is important to remember that only a fraction – a mere 0.03% – of the world's displaced population arrive in Finland, while 85% of displaced people live in developing countries. Therefore, it is vital to not limit our activities to Finland but also work in countries where the refugee situation is more dire. To this end, our operations in Uganda

and Myanmar continue. Meanwhile, our long presence in Liberia came to an end in 2018. The 20 years of operation in Liberia taught us plenty. Immediately in the early stages of operation, activities were carried out by strongly involving the local communities. This was not always easy considering the difficult circumstances, but the involvement ensured that the activities found a form that genuinely benefited the locals. Due to this involvement, the project will continue to live after its formal end date, as its methods have now become rooted into the everyday lives of locals.

We build our activities on the foundation of our experience both in Finland and in our international countries of operation. Our aim is to find ways to strengthen the resilience of refugees and to improve integration processes. Through new forms of funding, we are able to launch new projects to channel these methods into practice.

The new year 2019 will bring along changes and new winds for the Finnish Refugee Council's work. We are launching new projects in Finland and strengthening our international operations by beginning support for Syrian refugees in Turkey.

The year 2018 is a strong foundation for our work - those who have been forced to flee their homes have the opportunity for a new, equal and inclusive beginning.

Marjatta Rasi

Chairperson of the Finnish Refugee



THE FINNISH REFUGEE COUNCIL (FRC) is an international expert organisation founded in 1965, whose main duty is to support refugees and migrants towards new beginnings and to promote their fundamental rights. The Finnish Refugee Council's operations cover the entire arch of displacement, from addressing root causes to supporting integration and possible remigration.

We are a politically and religiously independent non-governmental organisation working for the benefit of refugees and migrants both in Finland and internationally.

MISSION

We support the fulfilment of refugees' and migrants' rights, and their equal participation in society and as members and builders of societies.

VISION

Refugees and migrants are equal, participating members of their societies, and their fundamental rights are realised in a positive atmosphere of attitudes.

VALUES

Fairness

Inclusion and equality

Transparency and responsibility



The Finnish Refugee Council has a partnership agreement with the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR, with a focus on communications cooperation. Cooperation with UNHCR is also carried out within the scope of assistance projects in refugee camps and settlements.



THE YEAR 2018 CONTINUED the journey of intensive development for FRC. The systematic development of the organisation continued by setting strategic annual targets. The annual targets were set in four areas: the needs of the beneficiaries, financial stability, internal processes, and staff development.

In the case of beneficiaries, our goal was to respond to the needs of those vulnerable groups who are often overlooked in existing structures. With the help of new funding, we were able to design projects that respond to such needs.

At the end of 2018, we received funding from the Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB) for domestic projects that support social integration. Through these projects, we will be able to reach stay-at-home parents who are often left outside the formal service system and provide solutions to challenges related to housing and living.

With the support of the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office, we were able to start a new project in Myanmar to prevent sexual violence against women. With these funding opportunities, we can not only develop FRC further as a well-rounded agency, but above

all support vulnerable individuals with an immense need for support.

As for finance and administration, a priority was to find new financing channels for the organisation in order to consolidate its economic and financial standing. During the year, the administrative structure of the organisation was brought to a level that meets the requirements of international financing. This will allow further diversification of our operations in the future.

FRC's internal processes were improved by bringing the international and domestic programmes closer together through identification of common themes in all operations. Work will continue in 2019 to enter these themes into practice. Monitoring and evaluation practices of all activities were also improved to ensure their effectiveness.

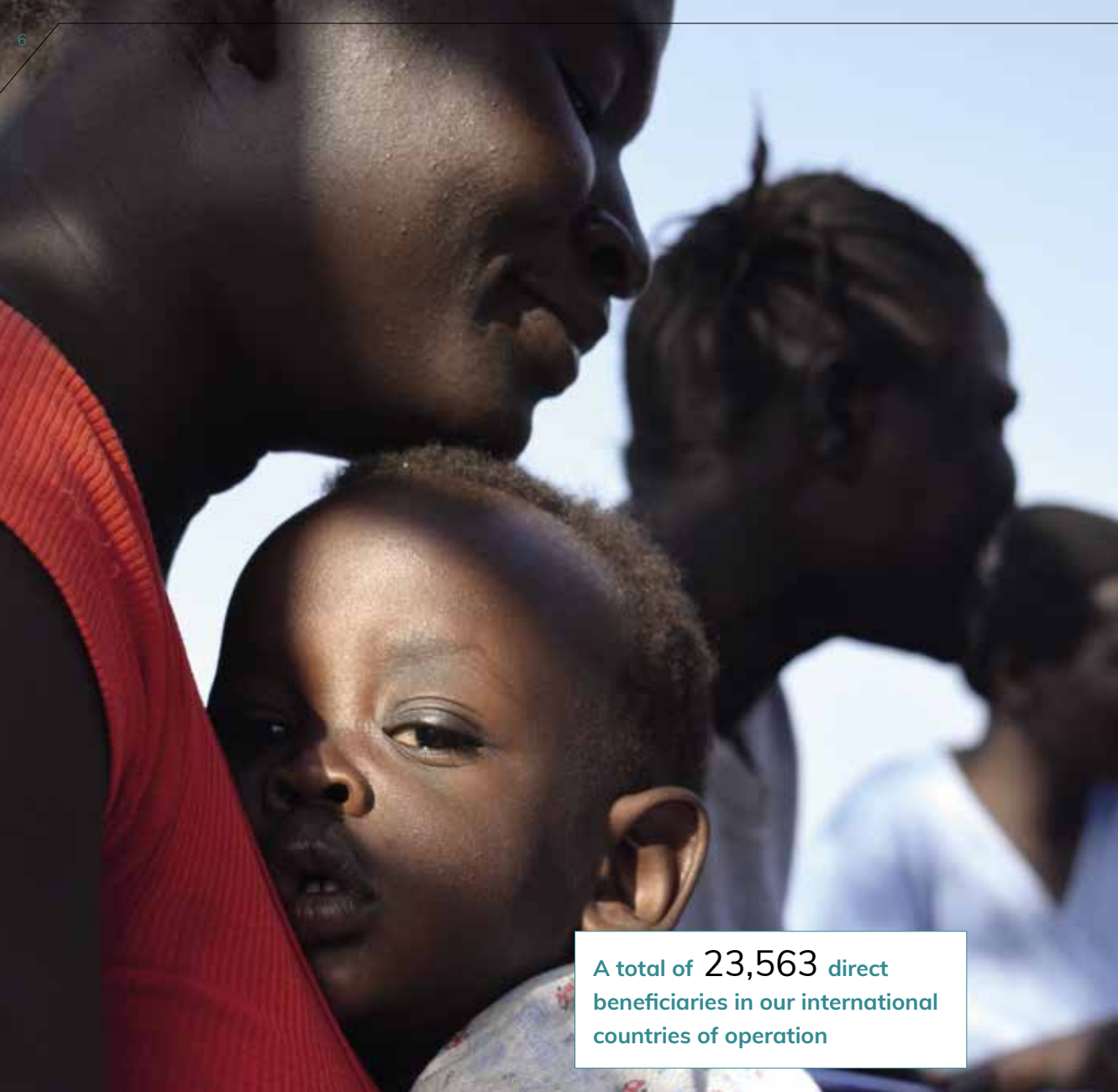
Investing in staff and its well-being was central to the organisation's development activities. An organisational culture that is professional while facilitating collaboration was consciously constructed at all levels of the organisation. This effort was supported, among other things, by the Training Tuesday concept offering training on various topics and reinforcing the staff's expertise.

“The Finnish Refugee Council is an organisation that is self-reforming and in continuous dialogue with its operating environment. When we constantly strive to challenge ourselves with regards to our effectiveness and value added, our work and experience stand on a strong foundation.”

Refugees leave their homes and transition into a state of emergency in their lives due to war, violence, persecution and often traumatic experiences. A new beginning requires enormous resilience as well as receptivity of the whole community. Our committed and professional staff and our work both in Finland and across the world bring effective solutions and support to the challenges which our beneficiaries face every day”.

-Annu Lehtinen, Executive Director of the Finnish Refugee Council





A total of 23,563 direct beneficiaries in our international countries of operation

FRC'S INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

THE YEAR 2018 BEGAN a new programme term which introduced several changes to our operations. The operations continued in Uganda, Myanmar and Liberia, though in Liberia the year was the last year of operation. FRC's country office was closed in March, and operations continued until the end of the year through a local partner organisation.

In its strategic annual targets, the

programme focused on strengthening resilience, life skills and self-sufficiency, and supporting active agency of vulnerable groups. The aim of the programme is to allow people affected by displacement to live in dignity in refugee settlements or fragile post-conflict areas while being active members of their communities.

This objective is promoted through three separate but interlinked programmes.

Inclusive adult education

Education is a key factor in strengthening resilience and self-sufficiency. Activities are targeted especially at refugee women and young people who have had little access to schools or whose education has been interrupted due to conflict. Education was also provided to members of host communities. This improves the resilience of local populations as well as promotes social cohesion in areas hosting significant numbers of refugees.

Supporting livelihoods

Livelihood support is similarly based on education, and the acquired ability to independently improve one's financial situation

and wellbeing. Technical and entrepreneurial training particularly improved young people's prospects and opportunities for employment. The resilience and livelihood of refugees was also improved through supporting the operation of savings and loan groups.

Supporting civil society

Supporting the activities of refugee associations can be a channel for strengthening a community's autonomy and enhancing the capacity of groups to improve communal wellbeing and social cohesion. The programme supported the activities of refugee associations and more informal groups through provision of organisational training.



A total of 1,128 learners in Liberia, of whom 949 were studying financial literacy and basic entrepreneurship

78% of literacy learners in Uganda were women



In Myanmar, more than 1,500 people were educated on the risks of violence and on women's rights





REORGANISATION OF OPERATIONS IN UGANDA

IN 2018, FRC'S OPERATIONS AND FIELD TEAMS were reorganised under three thematic projects, of which adult education is the largest. Other projects, namely the income generation and entrepreneurship training project and the strengthening of the refugee civil society project, were more modest due to limited funding and the latter occurred in 2018 only.

The teams were strengthened through recruiting leaders for each team, and more administrative staff were hired to support project activities. Investments in monitoring and evaluation were similarly made through staff recruitment.

During the year, FRC had operations in eight refugee settlements and in the capital Kampala. A total of 21,282 people directly benefited from the operations in the three projects: 19,835 in adult education, 1,286 in income generation and entrepreneurship training, and 61 in strengthening civil society.

66% of students in basic literacy and 72% of the English basic course passed the final exam at the end of 11 months of study.

Most of the literacy students, 78%, were women. In practice, they are now able to fill in their personal information and sign various forms and documents, buy and sell goods at markets and in shops, count their food rations, and write short texts, among other things. Thanks to these skills, 60% of the graduates are now able to follow schedules and dates. 79% no longer need an interpreter, but they get by in various situations using English.

39% of entrepreneurship and savings training graduates reported that they were able to cope with unexpected expenses, while this figure was only 12% before training. 76% of the members of savings groups were women, and 90% of savings group leaders were women.

"I gave my daughter an overdose of medicine because I misunderstood the prescription, and she nearly died. When I heard about the Finnish Refugee Council's programme, I decided to learn to read and write properly", said a literacy student in Palabek settlement, Lamwo municipality.

PREVENTION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN MYANMAR

VOCATIONAL BASIC EDUCATION provides opportunities for young people. There is a great need for labour in Myanmar, but the quality of vocational training is low and its accessibility poor, especially in the conflict-ridden border regions. FRC participated in the development of vocational short courses at national level through a coordination group operating under Myanmar's Ministry of Education.

Meanwhile, vocational courses on technical skills continued in Loikaw, where a learning module on life skills was developed to complement the technical skill training. The module includes communication and job search skills, among others. 96% of students who participated in vocational short courses graduated from the course, and 61% of graduates found employment in their field of study. Overall, there were 1,008 direct beneficiaries during the year, while an additional 1,812 people partook in events.

An active civil society is one of the pillars of a democratic society. By supporting the capacity of local organisations, FRC strengthened the voice of communities and organisations. In 2018, FRC carried out an assessment of local partner organisations' current capacity and their development

needs, which will serve as a basis for creating a development plan with these organisations in 2019.

One of FRC's partner organisations was the Karenni National Women Organization (KNWO), with whom FRC started a project in 2018 aimed at preventing gender-based violence and supporting its victims. In a country where traditionally a man is a household's primary decisionmaker and provider, gender-based violence is common. At the same time, the weak judicial system, lack of support services, and stigma associated with violence prevent women from reporting the violence they experience.

Through the project, more than 1,500 community members in Kayah state were educated on the risks of violence and on women's rights. A helpline for victims of violence was set up at a women's shelter operated by KNWO, and victims were also provided with legal assistance. The project extended to areas governed by the state as well as those governed by ethnic armed groups and included, for instance, training for healthcare professionals. Training was also attended by 70 members of ethnic armies. Piloting to such an extraordinary target group was a challenge, but the experience proved promising.



A volunteer community worker of the project Dee Dee Phan

FRC IN LIBERIA 1998–2018

AT THE END OF 2018, our 20 years of operations in Liberia came to an end. Despite excellent results, the decision to cease operations in Liberia was made at the end of 2017 due to cuts made to the Finnish government's development cooperation funds. Over the course of 2018, operations were gradually discontinued while supporting our local partner in continuing the project and recording the final results. The FRC office was closed down in March, and the remaining activities continued until the end of the year through the partner organisation.

During 2018, social cohesion between Liberia's refugee and host communities was

improved and the capacity and self-esteem of individuals were strengthened through increased literacy, numeracy and life skills, as well as through basic entrepreneurship skills. The number of direct beneficiaries during the year was 1,273. Other benefits included addressing issues related to health, hygiene and family planning, as well as conflict resolution skills.

Over the course of 20 years, our operations had a total of 39,664 direct beneficiaries. The number of indirect beneficiaries stands at 218,000 and the impact of the project extends over generations. The timeline below offers a more detailed look into our years in Liberia.

As a result of our operations in 20 years

- a national literacy programme was developed and implemented in cooperation with our local partner organisation: more than 33,000 Liberians were trained in the programme through FRC and other agencies
- 1,600 composting toilets were built
- 60,000 kilogrammes of soap was produced for internally displaced people
- 4,750 eco stoves were built
- 100 women's tool banks serving 3,000 women were established
- more than 10 local NGOs were trained and mentored
- seven agricultural model farms were established
- a vocational training centre for underprivileged young people, destroyed in the civil war, was reconstructed



2002–2003 Fighting re-escalates

2005 The disarmament is completed and the first peace-time presidential elections are held.

2005–2007

Over 1,000 young people have received vocational training. In addition, support in the reconstruction process is provided for returnee women.

1999

FRC's operations in Liberia begin. The aim of the intervention is to support the post-civil war remigration.

2014–2015 The Ebola epidemic begins.

2014–2015

62,000 people attend Ebola sensitisation events organised by FRC and local partner NAEAL. The literacy learning programme is translated into French. Training is expanded to cover the country's largest refugee camp.

2014–2017

Adult education is provided for Côte d'Ivoire refugees and for Liberians living in host communities.



2000

2003

2005

2007

2010

2014

2018

1999–2003

Food security and agriculture is supported in order to improve living standards by providing agricultural advice and building eco stoves and wells. Support for a vocational training centre for underprivileged young people in Monrovia.



2003

FRC's project activities are interrupted by the war. Partners' properties are looted and a vocational training centre is destroyed in the battles. FRC's activities withdraw into Monrovia and focus on training other organisations and supporting internally displaced people through partner organisations.

2003–2005

FRC's operations restart after the conflict. Activities focus on supporting the return of internally displaced people and on reconstruction.

2003 The situation settles down upon the arrival of UN forces. One of the largest disarmament operations in UN history is launched in the country.

2007–2010

Reconstruction is supported through adult education, sanitation and garden farming. Former warring parties as well as civilian populations are assisted in reintegrating into society and provided with basic skills such as literacy and numeracy. A national adult literacy programme is developed while training approximately 5,500 adults.



2011–2013

Reconstruction continues. Operations focus more and more on education. The national adult literacy learning programme is launched. The curriculum is developed in cooperation with the Liberian Ministry of Education and other agencies working in the field.

2011 130,000 refugees from Côte d'Ivoire arrive in Liberia



2018

Strengthening financial and life management skills are the core of the project. At the end of the year, FRC's operations in Liberia cease.



2017 after the presidential elections, Liberia sees its first democratic and peaceful transfer of power in over 70 years.



1,034 immigrants and asylum seekers involved in integration-supporting activities organised by FRC volunteers

Guidance and cultural interpretation for families on 511 occasions

1,478 client meetings in the scope of Kurvi activity

174 consultations for associations by Organisation Incubator

17 municipalities supported in first-stage integration activities

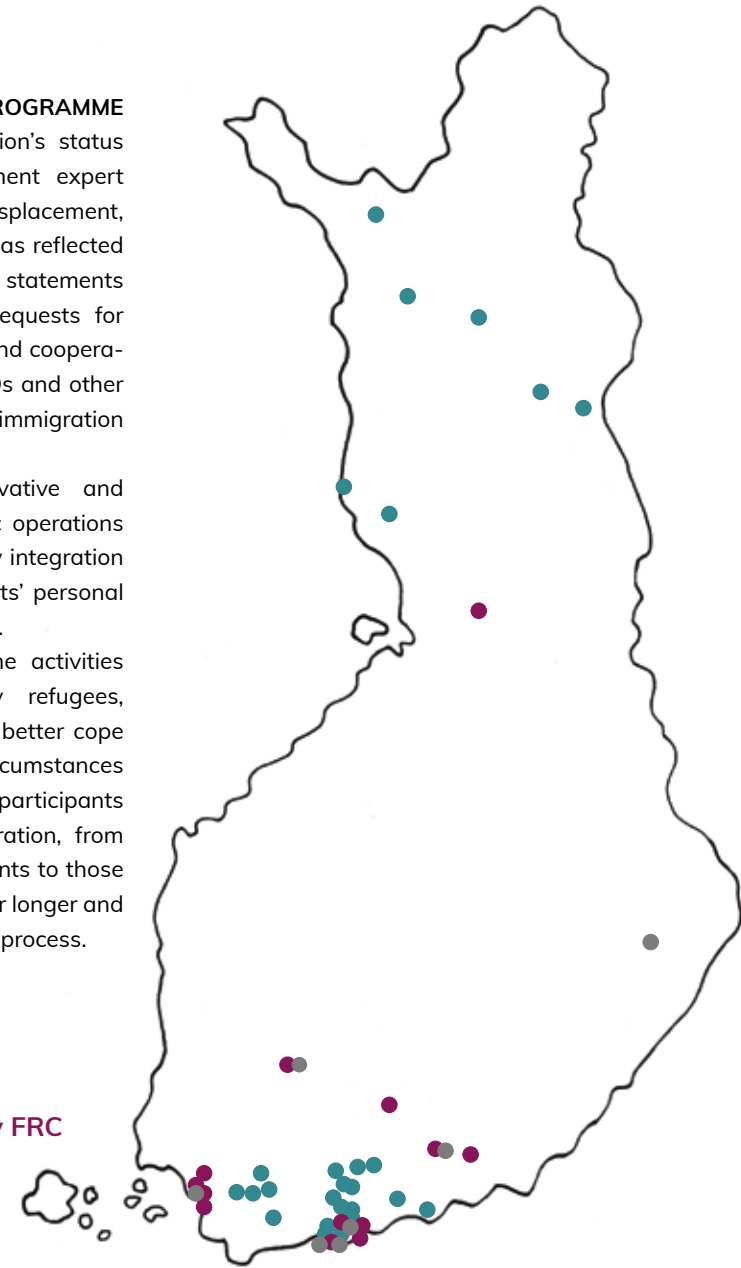
FRC'S OPERATIONS IN FINLAND

IN 2018, FRC'S DOMESTIC PROGRAMME further consolidated the organisation's status as one of Finland's most prominent expert organisations in the fields of displacement, immigration and integration. This was reflected in the number of requests for expert statements from authorities and legislators, requests for expert interviews from the media, and cooperation enquiries from authorities, NGOs and other agencies operating in the fields of immigration and integration.

Thanks to its flexible, innovative and effective approach, FRC's domestic operations complemented formal and statutory integration processes and supported immigrants' personal and individual integration processes.

In line with FRC's strategy, the activities supported immigrants, especially refugees, to find their own resources and to better cope with their new situation and circumstances in Finland. The activities reached participants throughout the spectrum of integration, from recently arrived refugees and migrants to those who have already been in Finland for longer and are further along in their integration process.

- Civic orientation's partner municipalities
- Peer counsellors trained by FRC
- Active FRC volunteers in the area



BUILDING A COMMON COMMUNITY

FRC supports the participation of those who have just arrived in Finland and those who have lived in the country for longer, as well as communities as facilitators of integration. FRC strengthens the bridges between immigrants and different communities, municipalities and the Finnish society by providing support, networks, information and education.

Promoting peer support and learning activities across Finland

FRC's Kasvokkain (Face to Face) function develops integration-supporting peer activities. The Kasvokkain team provides support for launching and developing activities, trains peer counsellors, and coordinates a network of agencies organising various peer activities (VeTo-verkosto).

In 2018, 28 different organisations had their peer counsellors trained by FRC, and knowledge of peer support and learning activities was strengthened in 19 municipalities across Finland. 2018 also saw the piloting of remotely facilitated peer group activities in Pudasjärvi, Pori and Iisalmi via a video connection from Helsinki. Feedback was positive: the participants reported that after the remote group activities their knowledge of Finnish society increased, they were able to function better in their environment and their well-being improved. "After this experience, I feel that I want to know more, improve and move forward. Now I spend more time thinking about what I want to do after learning the Finnish language", said a participant from the Pori group.



Vertaistoimijat.fi: information, support and networking
The VeTo-verkosto network is a nationwide cooperation network for integration-supporting peer activities, which regularly brings together more than 90 agencies active in the field. In 2018, the network's website was completely renovated and redesigned. The new site provides information, support and networking opportunities for peer counsellors, organisations running peer activities, and individuals interested in integration-supporting peer activities. On the website, one can find support materials for activities, information about upcoming events and training courses, and a peer counsellor and expert database, where organisations can search for a peer counsellor for their group.

Civic orientation course as part of first-stage integration services

The Yhteiskuntaorientaatio civic orientation course, developed over the course of FRC's Kotikunta (Hometown) project which ended in 2018, is a 70-hour course aimed at recently arrived immigrants in Finland and provides basic information on residing, living and working in Finland.

The civic orientation instructor's manual, Suomi – Yhteiskuntaorientaation oppikirja, was published in 2018 in Finnish and in Arabic. The textbook may be used nationwide, for example in statutory integration training.

FRC partnered with the Uusimaa Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centre) to advocate for a civic orientation course in immigrants' first language (or another language one is proficient in) to be instilled into the Finnish service system. In the autumn of 2018, the civic orientation course taught in learners' first language was included in the competitive bidding for the public procurement of integration training in the capital region.

The Kotikunta project's closing webinar, where the launch of the civic orientation website yhteiskuntaorientaatio.fi was also announced, gathered 50 interested attendees from all over Finland. In 2019, the Navigaattori (Navigator) project will continue to support integration in cooperation with 10 new municipalities. The project is carried out in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Diakonia University of Applied Sciences.

Civic orientation course taught in learners' first language also benefits individuals who have lived in Finland for longer

Integration services for immigrants are usually provided for the first three years of residency. The civic orientation course in ones' first language can also benefit those who have resided in Finland for longer.

The civic orientation course was organised in spring 2018 in Porvoo as part of Edupol's employability-supporting integration training, and in Espoo in cooperation with the municipality's Immigrant Services.

Participants in the Espoo course were mainly individuals outside the labour force, such as housewives and elderly people. Feedback from the participants and the Espoo Immigrant Services was excellent: "The civic orientation course should certainly be available to all immigrants. It is not just learning Finnish that matters for successful integration. In order to function in a new society, the person must be informed of the principles and values upon which the Finnish society is based on. For example, equality and roles in the family are things that one must first understand before being able to act in their daily life according to these principles", says Jenni Lemerrier, Senior Social Worker at Espoo Immigration Services.



INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT IN CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES

FRC's Kurvi (Curve) function in support of young adults

During the year, Kurvi's counsellors supported young adult immigrants through guidance and individual counselling. The service-oriented guidance was carried out in close cooperation with the City of Helsinki's Ohjaamo and with educational institutions providing basic education for adults. The clients for individual counselling came mainly through social services. In 2018, Kurvi's employees had a total of 1,478 client meetings, of which 953 were guidance meetings and 525 were individual counselling meetings. In addition, FRC's professionals provided guidance over electronic means of communication more than 600 times. There were a total of 57 clients in Kurvi's individual counselling.

Kurvi organised 15 training sessions for authorities, public service system employees and association personnel about the situation of immigrants in the service system. A total of 298 people attended the training events. Kurvi also coordinates a network of authorities working with immigrants, which in 2018 met five times.

The receipt of an operating grant and the consolidation of operations were clearly reflected in the increased number of clients in individual counselling and in guidance

meetings, as well as in the number of training events for professionals.

Cultural interpretation and guidance provide families with tools for daily life

2018 was the first full year of operation for the Linkki (Link) project, and a large part of activities consisted of developing cultural interpretation for kindergarten and school staff and immigrant families. The target group of the project was not only immigrant families with children in kindergarten or school, but also kindergarten and school staff.

The project offered service-oriented guidance and cultural interpretation to immigrant families in 511 occasions. There were a total of 455 client meetings. Some meetings included both cultural interpretation as well as counselling. Cultural interpretation was provided 27 times at kindergartens, 39 times at schools, and 94 times elsewhere in the service system. The Linkki counsellors offered service-oriented guidance 351 times. In addition, Linkki attended parents' evenings at schools on two occasions, where the counsellors acted as cultural interpreters. The project's family group met 11 times and had a total of 161 participants.

A book aimed at public authorities and public service system employees was published in 2018, titled *Tienhaaroja ja umpikujia*. The book contains case examples from the work done among clients, highlighting the challenges that many immigrants face when dealing with the Finnish service system.



AS A FACILITATOR OF MEDIATION AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

FRC has continued work to promote neighbourhood mediation and mutual understanding among Finns and immigrants. In addition to neighbourhood mediation, FRC's Neighbourhood Mediation Centre (Naapuruuosvittelun keskus, NSK) also contributed to the mitigation of interethnic conflicts, for which the Centre received international recognition.

THE BASIC CONCEPT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD reconciliation remains valid: early intervention makes it possible to prevent the escalation of conflicts. During the year, NSK mediated over 100 neighbours' bilateral or community-wide conflicts. The vast majority of individuals involved in mediation felt that the mediation was beneficial, increased responsibility, reduced disputes, and prevented escalation of conflicts.

Over the course of the year, NSK also helped to improve the conflict management skills of people working with housing by training them in the use of a mediation procedure. Training sessions were held in Helsinki, Espoo, Turku, Oulu, Inkoo and Jyväskylä.

NSK also continued to work on defusing of interethnic and inter-demographic conflicts. NSK won the European Crime Prevention Award (ECPA) for their community mediation

work, together with the City of Forssa and the Häme Police Department. The award's international jury found that the Forssa model launched a learning process, which allowed the involved parties to come to understand each other's perspectives and created positive interaction.

In early 2019, NSK becomes part of the Finnish Mediation Forum. The transition offers NSK an even better opportunity to develop and expand its operations nationwide. In recent years, the majority of those involved in the mediation activities have been members of the native population.

Based on the experience of mediation work, a project funded by the Kone Foundation was carried out by FRC in 2018, with the aim of mitigating polarisation and promoting healthy inter-demographic relations through dialogue and mediation. Promotion of inter-demographic relations will continue in FRC with the launch of new projects in 2019.



TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE CIVIL SOCIETY

Promoting refugees' and immigrants' social activeness and participation and supporting multilateral integration are key strategic objectives for FRC. They are pursued through providing support for social participation via associations and through promoting mutual understanding between different demographic groups.

Tools for effective association activities

As in previous years, FRC's Organisation Incubator (Järjestöhautomo) continued to provide consultation and training to ethnic and multicultural associations in the topics of association administration and finance. In 2018, focus was placed on developing online training. The aims were to support associations in fulfilling their legal obligations and to strengthen the problem-solving capacity of associations.

Over the course of the year, a total of 297 associations received support from the Organisation Incubator through 174 consultations and 19 training events or courses. In addition, an external evaluation of Organisation Incubator's activities was conducted, according to which Organisation Incubator is a necessary low-threshold support point for organisational issues and queries.

Meaningful encounters and practical skills

FRC's 200 active volunteers promoted integration and positive attitudes in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, Tampere, Lahti, Joensuu and Turku. With the help of volunteers, immigrants in the middle of their integration process were able to improve their language skills in the Puhutaan! groups, explore their nearby surroundings in the excursion groups, grow their social networks and receive support in daily errands, in starting new hobbies and in their studies.

A total of 1,034 recent immigrants or asylum seekers participated in the activities. Participants involved in activities said they were more confident in conversing in Finnish, learned new things about the Finnish culture and felt welcome in the society.

During the year, we trained 105 new volunteers for integration-supporting

and global education activities. New volunteers also came from areas where FRC previously had no active volunteers. Volunteers' skills and support were invested, among other things, in the development of training and materials. Volunteers stressed that they developed increased empathy and understanding of differences as well as found meaningful work through volunteering.

Increasing understanding and empathy in schools through global education

For global education activities, the year was time of growth. The number of trained volunteer global educators doubled during the year, and in 2018 we had 40 excellent global educators among our volunteers. Our volunteer global educators held a total of 73 workshops attended by 1,722 students in secondary education. According to the teachers, the workshops strengthened students' knowledge of displacement and developed their empathy skills. 92.5% of teachers estimated that students' empathy skills had improved, and 97.5% estimated that the workshop had increased students' knowledge of displacement and refugee issues. Students particularly praised the participatory exercises and factual information provided.

In addition, FRC's global education together with The Guides and Scouts of Finland produced teaching materials for dealing with prejudice and displacement, and FRC participated in the development and implementation of supplementary training for teachers on sustainable development in the scope of the Transformers 2030 project.

In a volunteer's shoes



Miina Huotari has been an FRC volunteer since 2017 and has been active in activities aimed at asylum seekers and as a global education school visitor. Miina has also participated in FRC's events, even in the role of a presenter.

What motivates you to volunteer with FRC?

It was important to me to find an organisation to volunteer with that stands for the same values as I do myself. I believe that raising awareness will increase understanding and that increasing understanding will increase peace and cooperation in the society. Volunteering with FRC has given me much more than I expected. In addition to meeting amazing people, both among volunteers and asylum seekers, I have also been able to explore my values and opinions more deeply.

What has been the most memorable moment in FRC's volunteer activities?

On a school visit to a secondary school, one student loudly announced that they were not interested in the subject. I asked them to listen and participate in the discussion nonetheless. They had clearly acquainted themselves with the topic, although the sources of information were not unbiased and the information was incomplete. We were able to create good conversation and listened to one another. At the end of the lesson, the student said they were happy to have stayed for the workshop. The debate showed that openness is the most important factor in alleviating hostility based on fear and worry.

What do you think FRC's volunteer activities can achieve?

In addition to volunteers gaining important work and specialist experience, positive bridgebuilding is also created with target groups. For example, asylum seekers participating in activities may acquire their first or even only relation to a native Finn outside of statutory or official affairs, which helps in integration and in maintaining life satisfaction.



DIVERSE FUNDRAISING AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Diverse fundraising allows for more

FUNDRAISING IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE to FRC, as it is prerequisite to the reception of certain types of institutional funding. Many funders require a level of self-financing from grant recipients, which is covered by fundraising. This way, each euro donated to FRC in fact finances work worth many times its value.

In 2018, FRC launched new fundraising channels to help make the organisation's work possible. FRC's corporate and business partner network was grown systematically, and a number of different companies joined in to support FRC activities in various ways during the year. Cooperation with companies is an opportunity for both parties: FRC receives support for its activities and companies are given the opportunity to help create a better society for everyone. For FRC, it is important that business partners support and adhere to the values of the organisation, and that common goals are always discussed before commencing cooperation.

This year we also got the chance to collaborate with great artists. Pattern designer **Erja Hirvi** designed the beautiful Same Sky advent calendar for FRC. The calendar gathered Christmas wishes from people with refugee backgrounds from across the world.

Aalto University's talented students **Milja Komulainen** and **Ella Eskola** redesigned the appearance of FRC's Parempi Lahja cards. The cards, available in both print and digital forms, brought a wonderful surprise to many in the form of a donation to FRC's causes.

FRC also organised various events, the most visible of which was the Run4Refugees running event organised in November at the Kamppi shopping centre. Together with our business partners Microsoft and Tieto, FRC tied its figurative shoe laces and encouraged others to join in to run. The open-to-all event saw over 190 kilometres run in support of refugees!

We would like to extend a warm thank you to all our supporters, partners and friends for your invaluable support!



Effective communication clarifies the organisation's brand

DURING 2018, FRC WAS AN ACTIVE COMMUNICATOR both in its own channels and by providing stories and statements to the media. We were featured on both national and local media's papers, websites and programmes. As the voice of the organisation, the mission of the communications and marketing unit is to promote FRC's vision by making the activities and results of the organisation visible and clear.

In addition to direct consultations, advocacy was conducted for instance through statements and press releases. The Am I Racist campaign challenged individuals, through the example of public figures, to examine their own attitudes. 28,000 Finns conducted a "Am I Racist" online quiz to explore their own prejudices towards others. The faces of the campaign were **Elisabeth Rehn, Nasima Razmyar, Iikka Kivi, Tuomas Enbuske** and **Risto E.J. Penttilä**. The campaign sparked widespread debate and discussion, especially in social media, and more than 45,000 participated in the campaign on different social media channels.

On the World Refugee Day, 20th June, we organised an event in cooperation with UNHCR featuring the documentary film Sea of Sorrow - Sea of Hope, produced by UNHCR and Magic Hour Films. The film was followed by a panel discussion focusing on

the global refugee situation and on family reunification.

Public debate was also generated through two panel discussions at SuomiAreena in Pori. A panel organised in cooperation with the IOM and the Finnish Immigration Service's Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking focused on undocumented immigrants, in addition to which an FRC adviser was involved in the labour market organisation STTK's panel on racism and security. Towards the end of the year, FRC created its government policy objectives for distribution to political parties and parliamentary candidates. The most important themes were development cooperation, refugee policy and integration.

In October, we took part in the OP Group's HiiOp! competition, where social challenges were solved with the help of service design. FRC's Empathy Movement concept won the contest, and in December a design sprint was carried out together with the OP Group, the results of which will be seen in practice in 2019.

During 2018, the FRC website was renovated into a more functional, clear and visual entity. In addition, an update of the organisation's visual guidelines was kickstarted. The new, modern and interesting visuals have already been utilised in the appearance of this annual report.

REFUGEES OF THE YEAR AND THE ANNUAL INTEGRATION AWARD

In 2018, FRC once again rewarded outstanding individuals and recognised an exceptional integration-promoting solution, agency or action. With the Refugees of the Year award, we wish to highlight individuals and actions that have helped to shape our society into a more communal, more receptive and better place to live – for everyone.

Refugee Woman of the Year Sirwa Farik

Sirwa Farik, from Vantaa, came to Finland through the refugee resettlement system in 2000. She is originally from Iraq but was forced to flee the country after her husband was murdered and Farik, active in organisations promoting refugees' and women's rights, also came under threat. Farik, 45, currently works in a project of the Iraqi Women's Association that supports the integration of immigrant women, and as a part-time family worker. She has been actively involved in volunteering and, among other things, has facilitated peer support groups for immigrant women.



“Many immigrant women may have lived in Europe a decade, but still live as they did in Iraq where they have no influence over their own lives.”



Refugee Man of the Year Ahmad Hosseini

Refugee Man of the Year Ahmad Hosseini, 19, studies at the Turku Vocational Institute. He came to Finland as an asylum seeker from Afghanistan in the autumn of 2015. Hosseini is active in the We See You network, which pursues fair asylum policy, and has been involved in organising anti-racist action in Turku. Hosseini also encourages other immigrants to work for a better society.

“Do not be here just physically, but also mentally. As much as we have rights in Finland and the society supports us, we also have responsibilities.”



Uganda's Refugee Woman of the Year Tamari Mutesi

The Refugee Woman of the Year was selected for the 7th time in Uganda. In 2018, Congolese Tamari Mutesi was awarded the title of the Refugee Woman of the Year. Mutesi, 28, has been a refugee since 1997. Originally from North Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mutesi fled to Uganda with her family from the DRC ethnic conflicts. After her studies, Mutesi, who has lived in the Kyangwali refugee settlement since her childhood, has actively promoted girls' education and protested violence against women.

In Uganda, the prize is jointly awarded by FRC, UN Refugee Agency UNHCR and Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister (OPM).

Annual Integration Award: Match Made in Startup Refugees

Match Made in Startup Refugees brings together employment-seeking recent immigrants and employers looking for professionals in various fields. With the mobile application, an asylum seeker or refugee can create a skill profile and a CV on the platform that enables Startup Refugees to match them to training and job opportunities offered by a network of 500 employers or provide support for starting a business.

Overall, the Startup Refugees network and the Match Made in Startup Refugees application were seen as excellent examples of an innovative approach to integration which has tangible benefits for many refugees and asylum seekers, by providing them with opportunities for study, employment and entrepreneurship.



EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE ADMINISTRATION

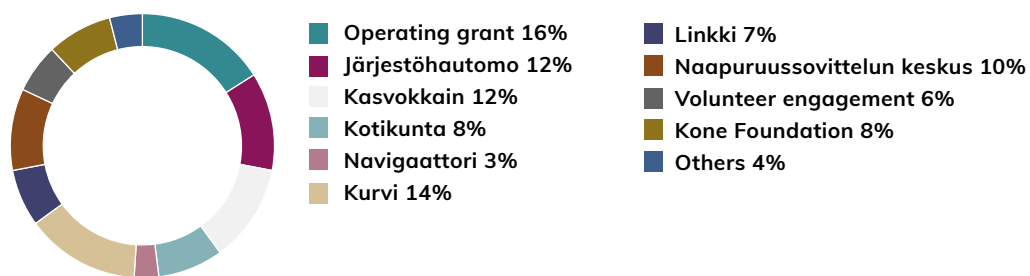
IN 2018, THE TOTAL FUNDING of the Finnish Refugee Council was 3,918,123 €. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs accounted for 43% of total funding, STEA for 37%, donations from individuals and organisations for 8%, Asylum, Immigration and Integration Fund for 5%, Kone Foundation for 4% and other sources of funding for 3%.

Expansion of the financial base and relevant support actions were a key focus in 2018. In addition to applying for funding

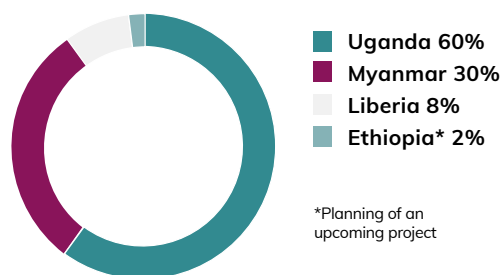
from new sources, work continued to reinforce administrative efficiency, reliability and risk management. ICT system changes and strengthening of the administrative infrastructure will enable expansion of the funding base and increased productivity of activities in the coming years.

FRC's highest decision-making body is the assembly meeting which convened twice in 2018: in Spring Assembly on 24th April and in Autumn Assembly 13th December.

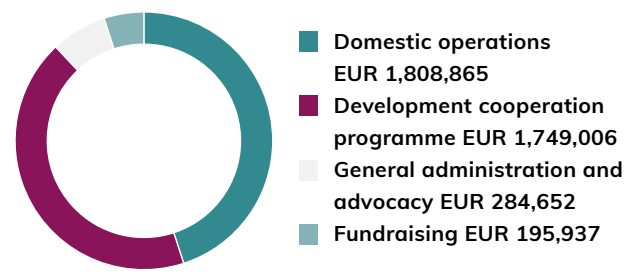
Domestic operations by project



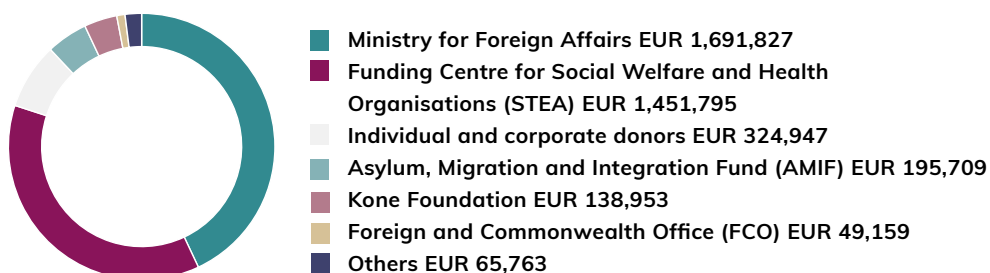
Development cooperation



Expenses by field of operations



Revenue



AT THE END OF THE YEAR, the association's members included 297 private individuals and 20 organisations:

- Aseistakieltäytyjäliitto Ry
- Daisyladies Ry
- Finlands Svenska Marthaförbund
- Kansainvälinen Solidaarisuustyö
- Kansalaisopistojen liitto KOL ry
- Keskustan Opiskelijaliitto
- Kokoomuksen Opiskelijaliitto Tuhatkunta
- Nuorten Kotkien Keskusliitto
- Parasta Lapsille Ry
- Sosialidemokraattiset Naiset
- Sosialidemokraattiset Nuoret Ry
- Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö SAK ry
- Suomen Kansanopistoyhdistys ry
- Suomen Liike- ja Virkanaisten Liitto
- Suomen Mielenterveysseura
- Suomen NNKY Liitto
- Svensk Ungdom
- Svenska Kvinnoförbundet
- Vasemmistonuoret
- Vino Vihreiden Nuorten Ja Opiskelijoiden liitto

Skilled and diverse staff

An organisation's most important asset is its knowledgeable staff. In 2018, FRC's human resources were developed to better meet the organisation's current needs through reorganisation of operations and activities and through organisational changes. The human resources management at the Helsinki Head Office was reorganised and investments in staff wellbeing were increased. An organisational reform was carried out in Uganda, which increased the clarity and efficiency of operations, in particular by reorganising administrative tasks into a more appropriate entity.

FRC is a family-friendly and equal opportunity employer with a very diverse staff in Finland and in other countries of operation. The international country office staff are recruited locally, with the exception of the country directors. At the end of 2018, the total number of FRC staff was 130, with 43 in Finland, 73 in Uganda and 14 in Myanmar. During 2018, there were up to seven people working in Liberia.

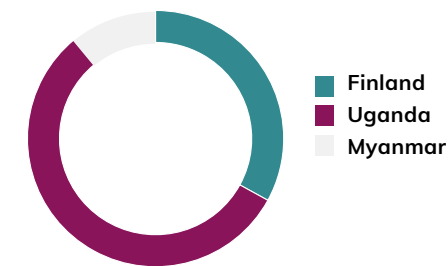
Marjatta Rasi served as the Chairperson of the Executive Board.

The Executive Board members were Anna Erkkilä, Irma Ertman, Sari Koivuniemi, Mikko Laakkonen, Sofia Nevalainen, Eija Pitkänen, Pekka Sauri and Jyrki Sipilä. The deputies were Hülya Kytö and Jenni Vartiainen.

Annu Lehtinen served as Executive Director of FRC.

The organisation was audited by KPMG.

Staff by country at the end of the year





With support from
Finland's development
cooperation



ASYLUM,
MIGRATION AND
INTEGRATION FUND (AMIF)
Supported by The European Union



KONE FOUNDATION



*Kaikille
EVÄÄT
elämään*