



**Finnish Refugee Council**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2019**



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Operating environment

# GLOBAL REFUGEE SITUATION BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT

When the latest statistics on the number of displaced people in the world were released in June, we once again had to state that a record number of people had had to flee their homes. For the first time since World War II, the number of displaced people rose to nearly 80 million in 2019, after 79.5 million people had been forced to leave their homes. Of these people, 26 million were refugees, 45.7 million internally displaced people, and 4.2 million asylum seekers.

68% of refugees registered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) came from just five countries: Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Myanmar. The majority of refugees, 73%, remain in countries neighbouring their own, which was reflected in the statistics on refugee-hosting countries. The countries hosting the greatest number of refugees in 2019 were Turkey, Colombia, Pakistan, Uganda, and Germany. Of these, Uganda has been one of our countries of operation for over 20 years, and in early 2019, we also began operations in Turkey.

Conflicts in Uganda's neighbouring countries continued throughout 2019, and large numbers of refugees arrived in the country during the year. Uganda hosts the fourth largest number of refugees in the world. Most of those who arrived in 2019, 57,000 people, arrived from the Democratic Republic of Congo and about 32,000 fled South Sudan. The existing refugee settlements were filled with newcomers, placing a strain on the capacity of Uganda, which practices exceptionally generous refugee policy.

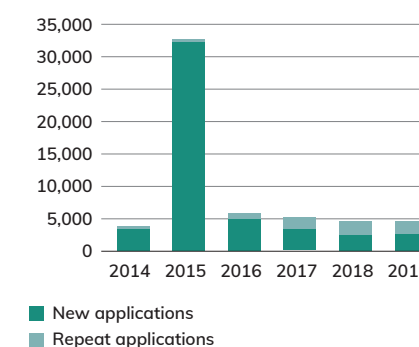
As the country hosting the most refugees in the world, Turkey was home to 3.6 million Syrian refugees in 2019, according to UNHCR. Since 2011, more than 5 million people have fled Syria, seeking refuge in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and other countries. In addition, there are millions displaced within Syria. Most Syrian refugees living in Turkey live in cities instead of refugee camps. Turkey's invasion of Syria in the autumn of 2019 further exacerbated the challenging refugee situation.

Myanmar's democratic development has not progressed as desired, and combat between government forces and ethnic armed

organisations continue in parts of the country. The refugee situation created by the Rakhine conflict in 2017 is yet to be resolved. Kayah state, where FRC operates, is ethnically diverse and among the poorest regions of the country. As a result of decades-long conflict, the state's infrastructure and economy are weak. Most of the population live in rural areas where education and health services are lacking.

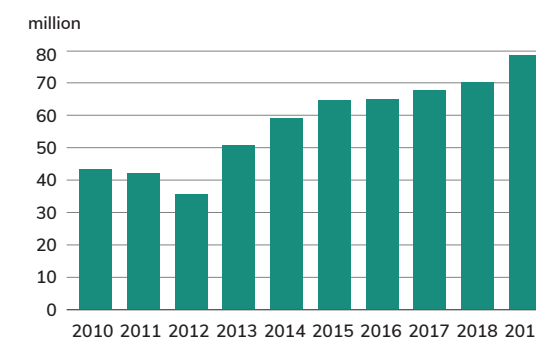
In 2019, more than 71,000 people applied for a residence permit in Finland. Those who are granted international protection represent a relatively small proportion of the people who move to Finland. During 2019, 4,550 asylum applications were submitted, of which only 2,467 were from new asylum seekers. Prior to 2015, when more than 32,000 asylum seekers arrived in Finland, the annual number of new applications was relatively stable at 3,000-4,000. This immigrant group is, however, particularly often discussed in public, and immigration played a prominent role in the media and in public debates over the course of 2019. This was also influenced by the spring parliamentary election and Finland's EU Presidency.

Number of asylum applications submitted in Finland



Source: Finnish Immigration Service

Displaced people in the world



Source: UNHCR



# FINNISH REFUGEE COUNCIL IN 2019

The Finnish Refugee Council (FRC) is Finland's largest expert organisation specialising in the issues of displacement and migration. Each year, we support thousands of people in recovering from conflicts and integrating into new societies. For over 50 years our work has positively impacted lives in Finland, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. We are a politically and religiously independent organisation.



## MISSION

We support the realisation of refugees' and migrants' rights, and their equal participation 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

“

FRC's particular strength that creates added value is the fact that our activities cover a significant part of the refugee journey both in our international and domestic operations. We work with the newly displaced and those who have already settled into a new environment, to aid in their integration and coping. We also support the refugee-hosting communities.

Annu Lehtinen, Executive Director of the Finnish Refugee Council



In 2019, a key goal for our activities was to strengthen our beneficiaries' ability to cope with the changes they face, including displacement itself. In supporting new beginnings, we are increasingly considering vulnerable groups' access to protection, services, and agency in society.

Over the course of the year, we built new solutions and partnerships, one significant example being the LIFT1-funded project to improve livelihoods and employment opportunities of internally displaced people in Myanmar. The project also supported the strategic goal across our programme activities of strengthening the programmes and the effectiveness of our work with other agencies.

During the year, we became the seventh Finnish NGO to receive the ECHO2 Partnership Certificate. As a result, we began laying the groundwork for humanitarian operations. Our humanitarian work focuses on regions where our special expertise is most needed and, thereby, provides greatest value.

The ECHO certificate also reinforced our goal of building strong administration and programmatic agency that bears international comparison.

Internally, we developed our capacity to respond to changes and needs of the operating environment. Risk assessment of our operating environment highlights the changes in the political and social climate, but also the risks brought about by polarisation and growing inequality both in Finland and our other countries of operation. Therefore, during the year, we also identified needs and opportunities for intergroup conflict prevention and support processes.

FRC's domestic and international operations in the overall picture of displacement is a special value that strengthens our expertise. Organisational unity is a great resource for us, which we also strived to support in many different ways during the year, feeling proud of our employees and our work.

The occupational wellbeing survey we commissioned during the year reported about positive developments, dedicated professionals, and a prospering organisation. Monitoring occupational wellbeing and the clarity of our processes are our constant priorities. We also invested resources in supporting staff in supervisory roles and in our management's consistency and purposefulness.

1) Livelihood and Food Security Fund

2) EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations





# FRC'S INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

In 2019, FRC continued its work in Uganda and Myanmar and began a new project in Turkey for Syrian refugees. Our activities focused on strengthening resilience, life skills and self-sufficiency, thus improving the quality of life of refugees and vulnerable people and supporting the realisation of their rights.

At the heart of our work is inclusive adult education: through educating adults, families' financial situation and means of survival were improved. Literacy and language education was provided to refugees in Ugandan refugee settlements and the capital Kampala, as well as in the Turkish town of Kirkhan near the Syrian border.

Supporting livelihoods was another key focus of our international operations. Through the entrepreneurship and vocational training which we provide, those in a vulnerable position received new livelihood opportunities in Myanmar, Uganda and Turkey. In Uganda, we also supported the activities of savings and loan associations. The associations help members cope with everyday financial challenges and enable many to start a small business.

By supporting refugees and ethnic minorities' own associations and groups, we were able to improve their social inclusion and ability to influence decisions affecting them. Through the training of group leaders and activists, we strengthened their capacity to improve the well-being of communities.

FRC's operations in Liberia ended in 2018, and during 2019 we carried out follow-up monitoring with those who had participated in our adult education project in the previous year. The results demonstrated the vital importance of adult education for people's resilience and wellbeing. Knowledge of the English language made it possible for refugees to adapt to the Liberian society. The most important change the participants had noticed in their lives was the improvement of families' finances through numeracy and financial skills.

Participants also appreciated their improved knowledge of health-related matters, which resulted in regular monthly cleaning days in the villages to help prevent malaria, for example. During the year, FRC's operations in the countries included in our international programme benefited about 22,000 people in total.

17,405

people participated in  
adult education



70% of students  
were women

30% youth

5% people with  
disabilities

2,392

people attended training  
which supported employability  
and livelihoods

Civil society was supported  
by strengthening

2,175



individuals' leadership and social skills  
or by providing them with activities to  
prevent sexual violence.





# OPERATIONS WERE EXPANDED TO NEW LOCATIONS IN UGANDA

**F**RC continued its adult education programme for refugees in Uganda and expanded the activities to five new settlements during the year. In other settlements, additional groups were set up to meet the needs of new arrivals. In 2019, we operated in 12 refugee settlements around the country, as well as in the capital Kampala.

During the year, nearly 13,000 people began studying in our one of our three programmes: functional literacy, English language, and entrepreneurship. 70% of the students were women and 30% were youth under the age of 25. The majority of students successfully completed the course and achieved basic reading, writing and numeracy skills in either their native language (71%) or English (69%), which is the official language of Uganda. In addition to these essential skills, other practical skills taught in the courses included setting up a vegetable garden, shared decision making in the family, checking children's school homework, correct weighing of quantities purchased at the market, and using English at the clinic.

The refugees' strong desire to learn played a large part in achieving the great results, but the motivated work of the study group facilitators must also be credited. Facilitators are sought from among the refugees with the help of community leaders and are trained by FRC.



In 2019, almost 500 volunteer facilitators were involved in our education projects.

The livelihoods of refugees were improved not only through literacy and numeracy, but also through providing entrepreneurship training. During the year, the training was attended by nearly 1,500 participants. Of them, 65% began saving during the training and 41% of graduates were involved in income-generating activities by the end of the year. The training improved their ability to cope with sudden and unexpected expenses, since they had diversified their sources of income as well as saved part of their income after establishing savings and loan associations with other refugees.

## Uganda's Refugee Woman of the Year

FRC, together with UNHCR and Uganda's Office of the Prime Minister, annually selects the Refugee Woman of the Year in Uganda.

Solange Mukanlambara, who was chosen as the 2019 Refugee Woman of the Year in Uganda, fled to Uganda in 1994 with her husband to escape the Rwandan genocide. The couple have three children together as well as an adopted child whom they found abandoned on the streets of Kigali as they fled the city. Solange works as a farmer and leads a savings and loan association outside the growing season to earn a living for her family. In addition, Solange has served as the vice president of her community for the past ten years. The position is filled through an annual election, but neighbours say Solange will be elected for as long as she wishes to run for the position. As an advocate for peace, Solange also acts as a mediator in cases of domestic violence and intervenes in gender-based violence in her community.



“

*I would like to teach other refugees how to work together to prevent violence and how to create business to create income. When you have peace, you have everything.*

Solange Mukanlambara



# LIVELIHOODS FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH IN MYANMAR

In Myanmar, FRC continued and expanded its support for the development of vocational training to better meet the needs of the labour market. Curriculum development and teacher training created the basis for better learning outcomes and employment. During the year, cooperation with the Loikaw State Vocational School continued, and cooperation began with a vocational school in Myitkyina, Kachin State. Over the course of the year, the programme offered vocational training opportunities to approximately 150 people under the age of 25. In addition to technical skills such as motorcycle repair and electrical wiring, the training included entrepreneurship and life skills training, which also supported young people in entering working life. 72% of 2019 graduates got a job or started their own business during the same year.

Handicraft training to support women's livelihoods continued, with nearly 100 women attending sewing and food processing courses at different levels. As a result of the training, women's self-esteem, social status, and prospects for financial independence improved notably.

Support for civil society organisations continued through training and mentoring. During the year, special emphasis was placed on women's organisations. Prevention of gender-based violence and support for victims

were at the core of the activities. Women were supported particularly through a helpline, legal advice, and a women's shelter. There was also extensive campaigning to prevent violence, and more than 1,600 people participated in related events during the year.

In our new operating area in Kachin, one of the most egregious violations of women's rights is the rapid spread of forced marriages to men in neighbouring China. Community events were used to raise awareness of the threat to girls through sharing the experiences of young women who had left for China as migrant workers.



# EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY



and 200 children studied Turkish in the courses. To support livelihoods, technical training was also organised at the centre to improve various craft skills. More than 100 people participated in such training. Women who took part in the training also set up a cooperative to support the marketing of their products.

A central goal in FRC's operations is to better take into consideration the needs of people with disabilities and to increase their participation in our activities. Training on disability inclusion was provided to Yuva staff and local authorities to promote the rights of people with disabilities.

At the beginning of 2019, FRC began to provide training and organise recreational activities for Syrian refugees in Kırkhan, Hatay Province, near the Syrian border. As a result of the Syrian civil war, a significant Syrian population has emerged in the region, and today almost 30% of the population of Kırkhan is Syrian. The employment situation in the region is poor and the lack of Turkish language skills among Syrians further complicates their income generation. Activities in Turkey were carried out by FRC's local partner organisation Yuva. Yuva has organised activities at the Kırkhan Community Center – where training supported by FRC also took place – since 2013.

Language training played a key role in the community centre's activities. Courses were organised at different levels of ability for adults and children. In 2019, approximately 350 adults

In order to improve the social climate and promote social cohesion, the community centre sought to involve not only Syrians but also the native Turkish population. Various educational and recreational events were held weekly. Nearly 400 people took part in craft and cooking courses, 41% of whom were Turkish. In addition to these, various themed events were organised, such as events related to environmental protection, and children's parties. The centre had both a women's and a youth committee, both of which were actively involved in planning and organising the events. During the year, a nearly 850 people participated in the centre's activities.

At the end of the year, FRC expanded operations to Istanbul, where Syrian children's education was supported through tutoring on the Turkish language and natural sciences. Close to 600 children took part in this activity.





595

young adults received  
guidance and counselling

## FRC'S ACTIVITIES IN FINLAND

In 2019, FRC's work in Finland focused on three key objectives, in accordance with our new strategy. Through our activities we influenced immigration legislation, societal structures and the functioning of the service system, increased the resilience of individuals in a new country, and supported good relations between population groups in a preventive manner.

FRC's status as one of Finland's leading experts on integration solidified during the year. This was reflected in increased requests for expertise and cooperation on behalf of authorities, civil society organisations and other agencies whose work relates to immigration.

Our activities became more nationwide as we held training events in new locations and organised open webinars and online training. Thus, an ever-growing number of refugees and immigrants were included in our activities. New activities were also launched during the year, such as STEA-funded employability support for people with an immigrant background, as well as a project funded by the Council of Europe Development Bank where housing-related support materials were produced in print and

video forms. Over the course of the year, FRC had a total of 3,949 individual beneficiaries. In addition, we provided extensive support to municipalities, schools, kindergartens, associations, expert organisations, and other agencies involved in integration.

73 families and

34 kindergartens or schools

were given cultural  
interpretation



284

volunteers supported 897  
immigrants and asylum  
seekers and held  
workshops for 760 students

100

people participated in peer  
counsellor training

32

people participated in  
employability coaching,  
about half of whom  
became employed during  
the same year

A total of 255  
associations and  
587 individuals  
attended training  
or were given  
advice in relation  
to civic engagement.

In addition, recordings of  
training events were viewed  
a total of 268 times online.



### FRC's activities in Finland

- Cooperation related to peer activities
- Partner municipalities of civic orientation and municipal training
- Participants in Organization Incubator's activities
- Volunteer activities



# COMMUNITIES FACILITATING INTEGRATION

## Peer Activities

FRC has been involved in peer support activities since 2001, and FRC's Kasvokkain team continue to develop integration-supporting peer activities. We provided support for other agencies in starting and developing their peer activities, trained peer supporters, and coordinated VeTo-verkosto – a nationwide network of agencies organising peer activities. By providing support, networks, information and training, we strengthened the bridges which those with an immigrant background have to different communities, municipalities and the Finnish society.

In 2019, we began new type of cooperation with partners who organise peer activities but do not focus on integration. Based on a needs assessment, we planned and piloted the Kaikkien vertaistoiminta ("Everyone's Peer Activities") training for new partners. Its objective was to support other agencies in designing activities where everyone feels welcome.

In April, VeTo-verkosto organised a peer festival, which brought together almost a hundred people involved in peer activities all over Finland to participate in relevant workshops and to network.



In 2019, FRC trained 100 peer counsellor from 13 different municipalities throughout Finland. Development of remote peer group activities was continued by organising a Dari-language remote group for students at Kalajoki Christian Academy. We launched cooperation with YWCA's Terrible Mothers project with the aim of gathering a diverse peer group of mothers with teenage children.

## Civic orientation is an important part of early-stage integration

Civic Orientation is a 70-hour course aimed at those who have recently moved to Finland. The course provides fundamental information about living and working in Finland in one's own language. FRC has been developing the Civic Orientation course since 2016, and in 2019 the work was continued through advocacy to make the operating model take root, training new Civic Orientation instructors, and developing materials to support the organisation of the course.

The first Civic Orientation instructors completed their training in June 2019 through our Navigaattori project, and Civic Orientation courses taught by the new instructors started in the autumn in Tampere, Espoo and Lohja. The 47-hour training was organised twice during the year, with a total of 12 graduates who speak Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Kurdish, French, English, Amhara, and Tigrinya.

The civic orientation instructor's handbook, The Civic Orientation Textbook Finland, was published in Swedish, English, and Dari, in addition to the existing Finnish, Arabic and Somali versions.

In 2019, a total of 88 municipal employees and decision-makers were reached through training and other events organised by the Finnish Refugee Council, the International Organization for Migration and Diakonia University of Applied Sciences. The training for municipal employees was aimed at supporting the capacity of municipalities to receive refugees through the international resettlement programme. The training focused on resettled refugees' journey to Finland and to their new home municipality. The journey was also featured in a visualisation, which will in the future be sent through the Finnish Red Cross to all municipalities receiving refugees through the resettlement programme.





## INDIVIDUALS EQUIPPED WITH KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO COPE IN A NEW SOCIETY

### Supporting young immigrants' inclusion in the service system and society

The counsellors of FRC's Kurvi operation helped young immigrant adults to navigate the Finnish service system and society. Advice related to public services was provided more than 1,100 times in cooperation with Ohjaamo Helsinki and educational institutions providing basic education for adults. During the year, 45 individuals received personal guidance in which they learn to navigate the Finnish service system with the help of a counsellor. In total, there were nearly 750 in-person appointments with the individuals in question, and more than 900 counselling sessions via electronic means of communication.

We also trained authorities, public service employees and civil society agencies on the status and situation of immigrants in the Finnish service system. During the year, 10 training events and one seminar were organised. In total, approximately 300 professionals participated in these events.

### Cultural interpretation and family counselling

During 2019, cultural interpretation, intended for meetings between immigrant families and kindergarten or school employees, was developed in the FRC's Linkki project. Cultural interpreting is meant to facilitate communication between families and kindergartens or schools in order to increase mutual understanding. Cultural interpretation was provided to 73 families and 34 kindergartens or schools. The service was provided in 146 individual occasions. In addition, the Linkki counsellors provided immigrant families with advice more than 500 times at a family centre in eastern Helsinki and at an advice and meeting point in Puhos.

Through our counselling, immigrant families also found the multi-professional family services of the Itäkatu family centre. They received information and advice related to the kindergarten and school worlds as well as Finnish society. Through cultural interpretation, the interaction and trust between families and kindergarten or school staff were strengthened.

### Improving employability through coaching and mentoring

In 2019, FRC launched support for jobseekers with an immigrant background. People with an immigrant background often face many challenges in finding employment in Finland, and the new FRC project was intended to facilitate immigrants' path to working life.

In the first year of the Sauma project, a training and mentoring programme was developed for immigrants who are unemployed or at risk of unemployment. The training was organised three times and was attended by a total of 32 people. FRC trained volunteers familiar with Finnish working life to support jobseekers through mentoring. A total of 17 mentoring pairs were formed.

In the training, participants learnt how to make a CV and look for open vacancies. They also improved their employability skills. Through the coaching, 15 course participants found a job during 2019.

### Support for the integration of stay-at-home mothers

Stay-at-home mothers are often excluded from formal integration programmes. As a result, their language skills, knowledge of the society, and employment levels remain low. In 2019, with funding from the Council of Europe Development Bank, FRC launched the Building Bridges project to provide tailored support to this group of people.

Support was provided in cooperation with municipalities and immigrant associations. Through the project, advice and support was provided in nearly 300 instances to more than 60 stay-at-home mothers with an immigrant background.

Through individual advice and guidance related to public services, appointment and errand assistance, and other support, the women's knowledge of their rights, obligations and the operation of the Finnish service system increased. 89% of the women who were assisted in the project reported that they had seen a clear improvement in their situation or received support that enabled them to improve their situation on their own.





# NEW SUPPORT MATERIALS FOR HOUSING-RELATED CHALLENGES

FRC continued its work to promote positive relations between immigrants and native Finns by supporting the adaptation of immigrants to new living environments and neighbourhoods.

FRC's *Building Bridges* project, funded by the Council of Europe Development Bank, produced housing-related information materials in eight different languages to support good relations between population groups. The material, produced in Finnish, English, French, Arabic, Somali, Dari, Sorani, and Tigrinya, was distributed to professionals working with immigrants or in the field of housing.

Three different informational leaflets and four videos were produced in the eight languages. The topics of the leaflets were the rules of the housing association, the resident's responsibilities, and identifying and dealing with pests. The videos covered lease agreements, maintenance of common areas in the home, safety and security at home, and rent payment and housing benefits. The topics for the leaflets and videos were selected together with both immigrants and housing operators.

We also cooperated with the Helsinki Region Environmental Services Authority (HSY) in the project by translating HSY's waste recycling leaflet into six languages (French, Arabic, Somali, Dari, Sorani, and Tigrinya). HSY distributed the leaflet to customers in the Helsinki metropolitan area.

Housing-related cultural awareness was increased through information sessions in order to avoid misunderstandings between housing operators and residents.

# BUILDING A DIVERSE CIVIL SOCIETY

## Towards effective civic engagement

FRC's Organization Incubator, which supports multicultural civic engagement and association activities, focused on implementing its well-established training and consulting activities with the aim of strengthening the capacity of multicultural associations. Throughout the year, a total of 255 associations were supported through training and consultation. 2019 was also a year of active development: in the spring, a comprehensive needs assessment was conducted, in which 300 civil society actors were interviewed. The results were used to redesign the Organisation Incubator's website and develop its communications. An online information bank for associations was also created, and development of existing services with a service design-focused approach began.

## Everyday skills and empathy

A major goal of our volunteer activities was to strengthen the knowledge and skills that immigrants to Finland need for the integration and to provide opportunities for empathetic

encounters between different population groups. Almost 300 active volunteers led Finnish language discussion groups, familiarised asylum seekers with their nearby environment through excursions, organised social events, taught lessons on forced displacement, and helped with our events. The activities reached a total of 900 immigrants in the Helsinki metropolitan area, Lahti, Turku and Tampere.

## Global education provides ways to understand our changing world

FRC's volunteer global educators helped teachers and students understand our changing world by organising a total of 33 workshops in upper comprehensive schools and secondary schools. The workshops were attended by 760 students. 95% of teachers said the workshop improved students' knowledge on forced displacement and 90% described the lesson as having helped students cultivate empathy. Students gave special thanks for the functional exercises and factual information. During the year, new teaching materials in Finnish were produced

in cooperation with the UN refugee agency UNHCR and teacher training on sustainable development was supported as part of the Transformer 2030 and Maailma Koulussa projects.



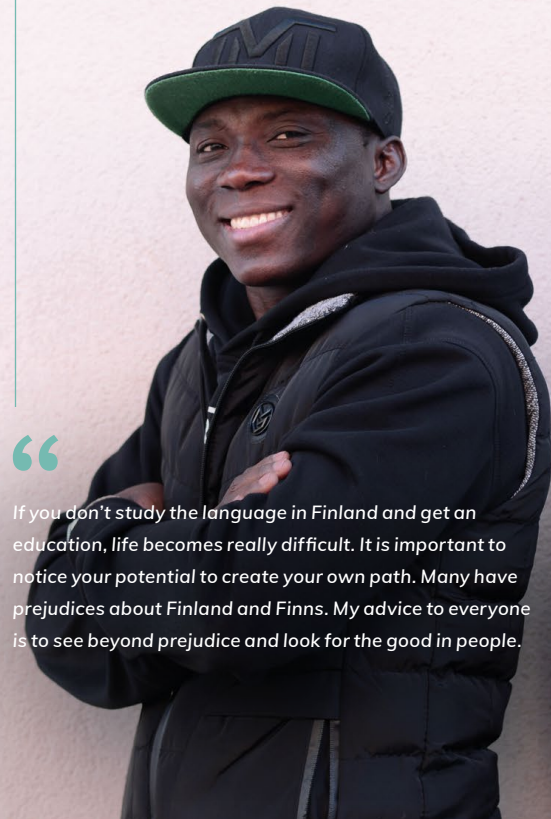


# REFUGEES OF THE YEAR

The Finnish Refugee Council has named the Refugee Woman of the Year since 1998 and the Refugee Man of the Year since 2016. Through

## REFUGEE MAN OF THE YEAR NOURDEEN TOURE

Refugee Man of the Year Nourdeen Toure has a dream: he wants to be the national champion in boxing in Finland. However, the road to become a boxer has not been easy. Nourdeen travelled alone for two years to come to Finland from his home country of Togo. When he arrived in Finland at the age of 20, he was alone. Nourdeen says that his only friends at the beginning were the police and the Immigration Service. However, he began to find real friends through a new hobby, boxing, and Finland started to feel like home. Just eight months after coming to Finland, Nourdeen fought for the first time at the amateur level, and in 2014 he had his first professional boxing match. He is coached by Pekka Mäki, who also trains other top boxers in Finland.



“If you don't study the language in Finland and get an education, life becomes really difficult. It is important to notice your potential to create your own path. Many have prejudices about Finland and Finns. My advice to everyone is to see beyond prejudice and look for the good in people.”

the award, we want to highlight the active role many people with a refugee background take in the society and support them in realising their dreams. Through its choices in 2019, FRC wanted to particularly highlight the role and actions of young refugees. The Refugees of the Year are not just role models for other youth with a refugee background, but to everyone in the Finnish society. Both also act as Empathy Ambassadors for FRC.

## REFUGEE WOMAN OF THE YEAR RAND MOHAMAD DEEB

Rand Mohamad Deeb's family escaped from war-torn Syria in 2014. Three years later, Rand's family arrived in Finland through the refugee resettlement programme. At the age of 18, Rand had achieved a lot in a short time: only five months after arriving in Finland, she entered a Finnish-language upper secondary school from which she graduated in the spring of 2019 with top grades. After moving to Finland, Rand worked incredibly hard to learn the Finnish language, studying it for up to eight hours a day. Rand also finds it important to help others integrate into Finland. On her YouTube channel, she teaches Finnish to other Arabic speakers for whom Finnish is still challenging.



“As the Refugee Woman of the Year, I want to show that learning Finnish and continuing your studies are not impossible. I have found that many immigrants have pessimistic expectations when it comes to learning Finnish. Maybe my story could bring them hope and inspire them.”

# RAISING AWARENESS OF THE GLOBAL REFUGEE SITUATION THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

## Donations enable us to do more

In 2019, FRC continued to develop cooperation with corporations. In a campaign that sparked public debate, the Lidl stores across Finland sold the Minun Suomeksi – My Finland – grocery bag. Lidl donated more than half of the bags' sales proceeds to FRC. The pattern printed on the bag was designed by an Afghan calligrapher named Sayed, who had applied for asylum in Finland. FRC also established partnerships with other companies and organisations.

During the year, we highlighted the dire refugee situations, and our emergency fundraisers once again provided support for hundreds of refugees in Uganda and Turkey. For our holiday campaign, we wanted to bring the focus on refugee women who shine bright regardless of their dreary circumstances: tenaciously rebuilding their lives despite extreme difficulty, and spreading their light in the community by inspiring hope in others.

Effective fundraising is of paramount importance to FRC, as donations help us afford the co-financing which is required to receive various institutional grants. Each euro donated thus makes it possible to provide many times more support to refugees and migrants

A warm thank you to everyone who supported our work!

## Bringing refugee issues into the public debate

FRC's ever-strengthening expert status was particularly reflected in the increased number of enquiries over the course of the year. FRC's partnership, expert interviews or briefing was requested by the media almost 60 times. We were, for instance, featured in the Finnish Broadcasting Company

Yle's kick-off broadcast for the EU Parliament election, and we were consulted in the Finnish government policy negotiations as the only civil society organisation specialised in refugee and migration issues.

We also brought up important displacement-related issues through public panel discussions. The connection between climate change and displacement was addressed at the World Village Festival and at a World Refugee Day event co-hosted by FRC and UNHCR at the National Museum. At the World Village Festival, we also organised a panel discussion on dangerous migration routes and greeted festival guests at our own stand.

In addition to active communications, we influenced the atmosphere of the debate around immigration through, for example, our Empathy Movement launched in the spring.







# TOWARDS A MORE EMPATHETIC WORLD

In 2019, we declared: the time for empathy is now. Empathy Movement is a movement launched by FRC in 2019, through which we bring more empathy into the world and promote the integration and employment of refugees and migrants. We invited all to join the movement: individuals, corporations, decision makers, and communities. Empathy helps us encounter one another as fellow people, thus promoting understanding and warmth in place of hate speech.

Over the course of the year, 12 new Empathy Ambassadors joined the movement, promoting the message of empathy and raising awareness of issues important to FRC. Empathy Ambassadors act as our messengers and champions of caring.

In the spring of 2019, we challenged the candidates running in the EU Parliament election and the Finnish general election to make a pledge for a more empathetic future. More than 150 politicians and civil servants pledged to promote

policies which respect human dignity and to bring more empathy to the national and European parliaments.

At the same time with the Empathy Pledge campaign, we launched an empathy test on the Empathy Movement website, allowing everyone to gain insight on what empathy means as well as to explore their own way of experiencing and expressing empathy.

Several corporations eagerly joined us in building a more empathetic Finland through long-term cooperation projects. In 2019, we started collaboration with OP, Ben & Jerry's, Lidl, Anton & Anton, and AIDA Impact, for example. We developed a new training package that offers companies the opportunity to simultaneously implement their corporate social responsibility by supporting the work of FRC and to cultivate a more empathetic corporate culture. We believe that corporations have a key role to play in building a more empathetic society!



Empathy Ambassador  
Noora Shingler

## #empathymovement

We also wanted to give people the opportunity to let others know that they support a more empathetic society. For this reason, we launched the Empathy Movement product line at the Habitare fair in September 2019. Our stand was the first public prototype to test the brand's message and reception. The stand, themed "everyone deserves a home", and the collection launched at the fair were produced in collaboration with the Finnish homeware company Tikau. At the fair, the message of Empathy Movement crystallised around the theme of home. The stand, featuring a refugee tent installation, and our programme presented home as a human right and explored values related to the home and its links to the global refugee situation. The feedback on our department was positive and many products were sold out during the fair. Our department was also chosen as one of the three finalists for the Stand of the Year at the Mesoaja 2020 gala.



# RISK MANAGEMENT, FORECASTING AND STAFF SUPPORT IN FOCUS

In 2019, supporting the development and implementation of a new, more international financial base was the main focus of administrative development activities. The efficiency, risk management and unity of the organisation were strengthened by increasing cooperation between the head office and country offices and by developing various processes and guidelines.

FRC introduced new mechanisms to prevent and detect misconduct, and developed internal

reporting and forecasting processes in order to better plan operations. Development of information and financial management, which is central to risk management, continued in the form of access rights practices, document management and system reforms in international countries of operation.

In 2019, FRC's total funding was 4,219,222€. Financing from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs accounted for 44% of the funding, STEA for 35%, donations from individuals and institutions for

7%, the Council of Europe Development Bank for 6%, the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund for 4% and others for 4%.

In 2019, FRC placed particular emphasis on the well-being of its employees, human resource development and the strengthening of HR management practices and guidelines. To support staff development, a term review model was created, and the staff manual was updated to meet the current needs of the organisation. Further development of the management system and competence supported the preconditions for expert work both in Finland and internationally.

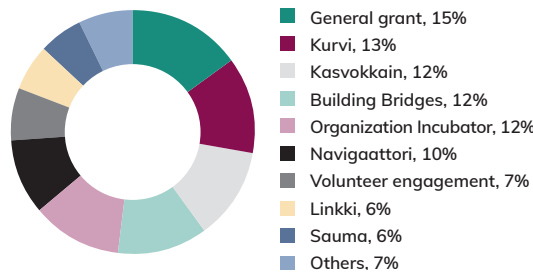
FRC's work is carried out by a diverse and skilled team of professionals. The staff in our international countries of operation are recruited locally, with the exception of country directors.

At the end of 2019, 48 of the 137 FRC employees worked in Finland, 71 in Uganda and 18 in Myanmar. In Turkey, FRC does not have its own staff, but its operations are implemented in cooperation with a local partner organisation, Yuva.

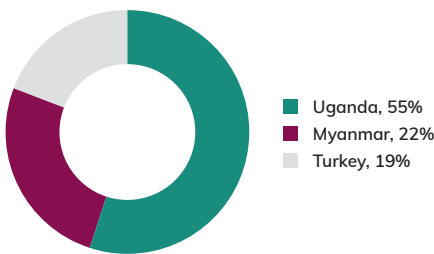
The highest decision-making body of FRC is the Association Meeting, which convened twice in 2019: the Spring Meeting was held on 25 April and the Autumn Meeting on 12 December.

<p><b>Members of the Board:</b></p> <p>Marjatta Rasi (Chairperson)</p> <p>Anna Erkkilä</p> <p>Irma Ertman</p> <p>Sari Koivuniemi</p> <p>Mikko Laakkonen</p> <p>Sofia Nevalainen</p> <p>Eija Pitkänen</p> <p>Pekka Sauri</p> <p>Jyrki Sipilä</p> <p>Hülya Kytö (alternate member)</p> <p>Jenni Vartiainen (alternate member)</p>	<p>Nuorten Kotkien Keskusliitto NKK ry</p> <p>Sosialidemokraattiset Naiset ry</p> <p>Sosialidemokraattiset Nuoret ry</p> <p>Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö SAK ry</p> <p>Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK</p> <p>Suomen Kansanopistoyhdistys ry</p> <p>Business and Professional Women (BPW) Finland ry</p> <p>MIELI Suomen Mielenterveys ry</p> <p>MIELI Mental Health Finland</p> <p>Suomen Nuorten Naisten Kristillisten Yhdistysten (NNKY) Liitto ry</p> <p>YWCA of Finland</p> <p>Svensk Ungdom, Svenska folkpartiets ungdomsorganisation rf</p> <p>Swedish Youth of Finland</p> <p>Svenska Kvinnoförbundet rf The Women's Organisation of the Swedish People's Party in Finland</p> <p>Vasemmistonuoret ry Left Youth</p> <p>Vihreiden nuorten ja opiskelijoiden liitto ry</p> <p>Federation of Green Youth and Students of Finland</p>
<p><b>Member organisations:</b></p> <p>Aseistakieltäytyjäliitto ry</p> <p>Union of Conscientious Objectors</p> <p>DaisyLadies ry</p> <p>Finlands Svenska Marthaförbund r.f.</p> <p>Kansainvälinen Solidaarisuustyö ry</p> <p>International Solidarity Work</p> <p>Kansalaisopistojen liitto KoL ry</p> <p>The Finnish Association of Adult Education Centres</p> <p>Keskustaopiskelijat ry Centre Students Finland</p> <p>Kokoomuksen Opiskelijaliitto Tuhatkunta ry</p> <p>Student Union of National Coalition Party</p>	<p>In addition to the member organisations, the association had 227 individual members.</p> <p>Annu Lehtinen acted as the Executive Director of FRC.</p> <p>The association's auditor was KPMG.</p>

Domestic operations by project



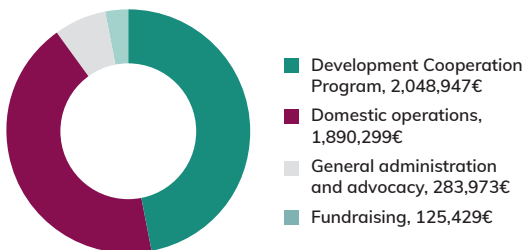
Development cooperation



Income



Expenses by area of operation



Staff by country at the end of the year





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