

Jesuit Refugee Service Launches Mercy in Motion Campaign

By Christian Fuchs, Angela Wells, and Jacquelyn Pavilon

To expand and strengthen education programs for refugees and the displaced in more than 45 countries around the world, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has initiated the Mercy in Motion campaign. Launched the same day as the Jubilee Year of Mercy initiated by Pope Francis, the \$35 million campaign is both a commitment to the Year of Mercy and to refugees. Each of the U.S. Jesuit provinces have been asked to assist with the campaign to generate awareness and financial support for refugees.

“Nearly 60 million people worldwide have been forced to flee their homes, constantly moving. But for people living in motion, those who cannot take possessions can bring knowledge and change their world,” said Fr. Thomas Smolich, SJ, international director of JRS and former president of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States.

Pope Francis has long urged Catholics to welcome refugees, saying the world is currently suffering from a “globalization of indifference,” ignoring those who cry out for mercy. As a precursor to the Year of Mercy and to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the founding of JRS by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, Pope Francis welcomed refugees, staff, and friends of JRS to

an audience at the Vatican on November 14, 2015, to formally commission and pledge support for the JRS Global Education Initiative.

Mercy in Motion is the first phase of the Global Education Initiative (GEI), a five-year campaign to raise the necessary financial support to improve and expand educational programs for under-served refugees. In 2015, JRS educational projects benefited more than 120,000 people. The goal of the GEI is to increase this number to 220,000 by the year 2020.

Because few refugee camps have trained educators on the ground, JRS will develop a long-term teacher-training program that will include the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills, educational psychology, up-to-date pedagogy, and inclusive education. A special emphasis of this program will be on Ignatian pedagogy

— care of the whole person — and underscore the JRS values of accompaniment, service, and advocacy.

The JRS partnership with Jesuit Commons: Higher Education at the Margins (JC:HEM) offers additional educational opportunities to refugees in camps and urban settings who would otherwise have no opportunity for continued learning.

Through the Global Education Initiative, JRS is working to ensure that many more refugees see a future for their children and grandchildren. ✕

To support the JRS Mercy in Motion campaign, please visit www.jesuitsmidwest.org and click “Support Us,” then “Donate Now,” and designate “Jesuit Refugee Service” in the drop-down menu.

One of several JRS pre-school programs at Kenya’s Kakuma refugee camp. Such classes give refugee children a head start and keep them safe while their families work to meet daily needs. (Christian Fuchs — Jesuit Refugee Service/USA)

