

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA PROFILE

VISION

A world where forcibly displaced people can obtain protection, opportunity, and participation in sustainable, just, and reconciled communities.

Mission

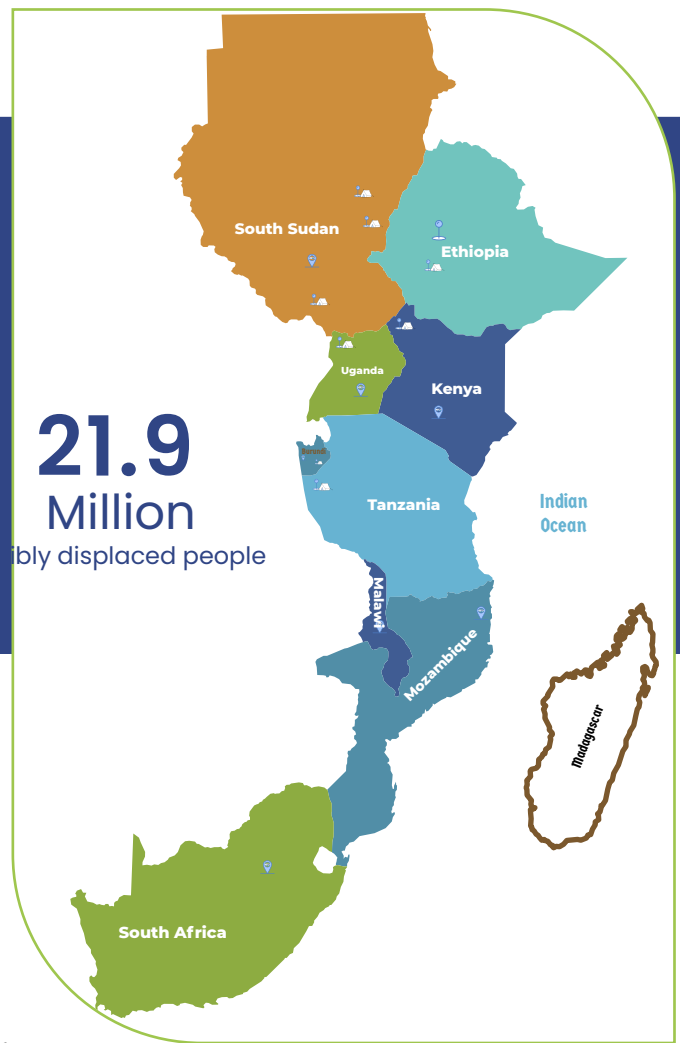
Inspired by the generous love and example of Jesus Christ, the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) as a global apostolate of the Society of Jesus, seeks to accompany, serve and advocate the cause of forcibly displaced people, that they may heal, learn, and determine their own future in community.

OVERVIEW

The Eastern and Southern Africa Region (ESAR) faces a complex and evolving humanitarian landscape shaped by war and conflict, natural disasters leading to displacement, population pressures, and persistent structural vulnerabilities. The Region hosts approximately 21.9 million forcibly displaced people, refugees, asylum seekers, returnees and internally displaced persons, across Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Burundi, Ethiopia, South Africa, Mozambique, and Malawi. Many displaced families live in camps or informal settlements with limited access to essential services, livelihoods, and protection. In addition, rising xenophobia in some parts of South Africa further strains social cohesion and refugee host relations.

Socio-economic pressures continue to define daily life for both refugees and host communities. Recurrent climate shocks, political instability, and economic fragility have weakened public services, limited livelihood opportunities, and deepened inequality. Refugees and local populations face rising food insecurity, disrupted education, limited employment, especially among women and youth, and growing dependence on humanitarian support as funding shortfalls result in ration cuts and reduced protection services. Despite these challenges, interventions such as cash assistance, skills development, and livelihood programs are helping communities strengthen resilience and gradually work toward self-reliance.

Although the Region records an average economic growth rate of 4%, this recovery remains uneven and fragile. Persistent poverty, high inflation, increasing global debt, and escalating climate impacts continue to strain national systems. Large-scale displacement and under-resourced infrastructure further hinder inclusive and sustainable development. These intersecting pressures highlight the need for sustained investment in protection, education, livelihoods, mental health and psychosocial support, and integrated community-based programming to ensure that forcibly displaced people can access opportunities and participate meaningfully in safe, sustainable, and reconciled communities.



ORGANIZATIONAL PRIORITIES

- Sustainability
- JRS mission, people and skills development
- Learning and technology
- Organisational reform and governance



482,368
People Served
in ESAR

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA PROGRAMMATIC PRIORITIES

1 Education

Advance access to quality education of forcibly displaced people by upholding the right to recognition in national education systems, and prioritizing teacher formation and alternative education pathways, especially for girls and other marginalised groups.

2 MHPSS

Improve the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of forcibly displaced people by prioritizing community based and community led initiatives.

3 Reconciliation

Contribute to the transformation of relationships between individuals and groups that have been damaged by violence and conflict at communal, cultural and structural levels, facilitating safe spaces to seek non-violence, justice, and peace.

4 Global Advocacy

Connect JRS local, regional and global advocacy processes that challenge unjust legal frameworks, strive to change public opinion, help to generate sustainable and durable solutions, and empower forcibly displaced people to exercise their human rights.

5 Economic inclusion and livelihoods

Catalyse the economic inclusion of forcibly displaced people by investing in pathways to decent work, adopting a market-systems approach, and expanding equitable access to digital tools, skills, and infrastructure.

Contact:

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ACTIVITIES OFFERED

Scholarships and financial support for vulnerable students with special focus on girls' education

Inclusive Education programmes for children with special needs.

Adult Education including literacy/numeracy classes and Accelerated Learning Programme

Gender Responsive Education programming in Kenya and Uganda

Teacher Training projects and Early Childhood Development Education
Post-Secondary Education (Pathfinder) with Business Skills and ICT training

Vocational Training in tailoring, catering, and other professional skills

Market Linkage through projects like Mikono Shop or Mikono Farm

Counselling services with professional counsellors (individual and group sessions)

Emergency Support with Non-Food Items (clothes, hygiene kits, rent support, medical bills)

Food distribution including dry food and food vouchers

Referrals to other NGOs and resettlement cases

Peace Clubs in schools to promote peace education and conflict resolution

Peace Ambassadors trained to deal with community conflicts

Reconciliation Groups working with community/clan leaders

Religious Services for Christian communities in camps

Pastoral accompaniment for vulnerable communities

Safe Shelters for GBV survivors and their families

Child Protection centres for unaccompanied minors

Child Care units for children with special needs

Advocacy activities and communications efforts

Referrals to other NGOs for vulnerable cases

Testimonial:

"Thanks to JRS support and facilitation of encounters among different leaders, we have been able to solve many potential conflicts by the use of dialogue and discussion. They have made a big impact in the community, and they are the only ones doing this kind of work. We all appreciate a lot what JRS has done for peace and reconciliation in the camps."

- ABDIKADIR AHMED ABID, Somali Clan leader, part of Reconciliation programme in Dollo Ado (Ethiopia)

