



**WOMEN'S  
REFUGEE  
COMMISSION**

**RESEARCH.  
RETHINK.  
RESOLVE.**

2013 Annual Report





## OUR VISION

is a world in which refugee and internally displaced women, children and youth are safe, healthy and self-reliant; have their human rights respected and protected; and inform and drive their own solutions and development.

## OUR MISSION

is to improve the lives and protect the rights of women, children and youth displaced by conflict and crisis. We research their needs, identify solutions and advocate for programs and policies to strengthen their resilience and drive change in humanitarian practice.

## HOW WE ACHIEVE CHANGE:

### ***RESEARCH. RETHINK. RESOLVE.***

Our work begins in the community. We listen to displaced people, learn about their essential needs and capacities and identify potential solutions to the challenges they face. The solutions we identify are detailed in our research reports and recommendations. We then advocate for their implementation globally, and develop tools and technical assistance that we provide to agencies and organizations worldwide. Our work ends back in the community as our proposed improvements in policy and programs lead to lasting change on the ground.





## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CO-CHAIRS

***“With your support, we will continue to do whatever it takes to ensure that refugees are safe, healthy and self-reliant.”***

The number of places impacted by conflict or natural disasters in recent years – Syria, Nigeria, Iraq, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Philippines and many more – is astounding. When we consider the number of women, children and youth who are currently displaced – more than 51 million people are uprooted by conflict, the most since World War II, and millions more displaced by natural disasters – the need for our work is very clear.

It is more essential than ever to ensure that forcibly displaced women, children and youth are safe and empowered. That’s why the Women’s Refugee Commission is advocating for programs to prevent gender-based violence, for safe access to cooking fuel and for dignified and safe ways to make a living. It’s why we’re working with local communities so they can prepare for crises, and with the international community to include displaced persons with disabilities in their programs, both as beneficiaries and as decision-makers. We’re looking at ways to empower adolescent girls, one of the most overlooked groups in a crisis, so they can gain the skills and resources they need as they become successful adults. And in the U.S., we’re working on immigration reform, to ensure that the most vulnerable immigrants are protected.

The Women’s Refugee Commission has been driving change through the humanitarian system for 25 years. We continue to be a thought leader on what needs to be done and how to best protect and serve those who need it most – uprooted women, children and youth. In spite of improvements in humanitarian practice, the humanitarian system continues to struggle to adequately protect and deliver services in large-scale and complex emergencies. Short-term approaches that

fail to address the specific needs of population groups, such as women and children, continue to be standard practice, as do responses that fail to consult affected populations and capitalize on their skills and their potential. Coordination, accountability and community-based approaches remain a challenge.

The WRC’s unique model of research-based advocacy has ensured that displaced women, children and youth are better served during new emergencies and protracted situations. In this past year alone, we have made strides in developing advocacy tools and addressing needed changes in humanitarian practice. This report illustrates some of the headway we have made.

You have played an important role in our journey. We’d like to give a heartfelt thank you for your ongoing support. Your partnership has been crucial in the life-altering changes we have brought about. We know from experience that change doesn’t just happen. Only by joining together and making a collective contribution can we hope to improve the lives of displaced women and children everywhere.

With your support, we will continue to do whatever it takes to ensure that all refugees are safe, healthy and self-reliant.



**Sarah Costa**  
Executive Director



**Jocelyn Cunningham**  
Board Co-Chair



**Martha Gallo**  
Board Co-Chair



## OUR PROGRAMS

### PROMOTING MIGRANT RIGHTS AND JUSTICE

Our goal is to protect migrants' human rights and ensure they can access justice and due process.

#### **Our Impact:**

In the United States, when migrant parents are detained or deported, they may lose their parental rights as their children enter the child welfare system or even, in extreme cases, are adopted by another family. In 2013, following recommendations that we provided, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, an agency of the Department of Homeland Security, issued a Parental Interests Directive that protects the rights of parents in detention to make critical decisions about their children's care, including the ability to reunite with their children if the parents are returned to their country of origin. This directive, along with a tool kit we have developed to provide parents with the information they need to exercise their rights, will allow thousands of families to stay together as they integrate into the U.S. or return to their countries of origin.





## OUR PROGRAMS

# PROMOTING SAFER LIVELIHOODS IN EMERGENCIES

We promote effective and safe livelihood strategies for humanitarians to implement in emergencies to save lives while planting seeds for a quicker, more sustainable recovery.

### Our Impact:

We are researching the role of livelihoods in restoring security, independence and normalcy to the lives of displaced persons in the earliest days of an emergency.

Following the devastating typhoon in the Philippines in November 2013, we provided advice to ensure that women got the assistance they needed to reestablish their businesses so they could quickly return to supporting themselves and their families. We accompanied partner organization Global Communities to identify needs, potential risks and capacities of people affected by the typhoon. We conducted a needs and risks assessment and key informant interviews. Based on our findings, a livelihoods program restoring assets for weavers was set up. This will help support almost 800 families.





## OUR PROGRAMS

# ENSURING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

We ensure that refugee women and girls have access to maternal health, family planning and other reproductive health services.

### Our Impact:

When disaster strikes, whether natural or man-made, communities are frequently the first to respond. The immediate consequences—displacement, sexual violence, exploitation, disruptions in health services and the loss of financial security and social support mechanisms—can lead to devastating, long-term health consequences. Community-level emergency preparedness efforts have the potential to improve resiliency, response and recovery, and thereby protect women and girls when disaster strikes.

In 2013, the WRC built the capacity of three disaster-affected communities in the Philippines, in collaboration with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and civil society partners, to prepare for and respond to sexual and reproductive health and gender vulnerabilities in disasters. We developed a community-based training curriculum that can now be used across the country to support community-level action planning.





## OUR PROGRAMS

# PREVENTING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE THROUGH OUR SAFE ACCESS TO FUEL AND ENERGY (SAFE) INITIATIVE

We are leading a global effort to ensure that displaced populations—particularly women and girls—have safe and sustainable access to fuel to cook for their families, heat their shelters and light their homes and communities without fear or risk to their health, well-being and personal security.

### **Our Impact:**

When women and girls go out to collect fuel for household use or to sell, they often risk sexual violence and exploitation. The long hours they spend gathering wood could be better spent on other tasks, such as education or income-generating activities.

The Women's Refugee Commission has been at the forefront of efforts to ensure safe access to fuel and energy (SAFE) in humanitarian crises. In 2013, we worked with international agencies to introduce SAFE projects in eastern Congo, where sexual violence is rife. We conducted SAFE assessments in several camps—looking at people's need for and access to fuel, and the dangers they faced in collecting it—and demonstrated the need for SAFE interventions. We facilitated the distribution of 2,500 fuel-efficient stoves to particularly vulnerable families, which has significantly cut down on the number of times women and girls must leave the relative safety of camps to gather fuel.





## OUR PROGRAMS

# BUILDING THE SELF-ESTEEM AND CAPACITY OF DISPLACED ADOLESCENT GIRLS

We address the critical needs of adolescent girls in crisis settings to ensure that they stay safe and develop the skills they need to protect themselves.

### Our Impact:

Adolescent girls are largely ignored in humanitarian settings, falling through the cracks between programs for children and programs for women. They are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and may miss out on education and skills training. Yet growing evidence shows that investing in girls' economic and social empowerment can reduce their risks of experiencing violence and is an effective pathway to sustainable development.

The Women's Refugee Commission has been working with groups of girls aged 10 to 16 in Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda; after initial research, we set up pilot projects in each country to determine what interventions would best equip the girls with the skills and resources they need to transition safely to adulthood. The projects established "safe spaces" where girls could come together to learn and build confidence, while gaining critical skills for their future ability to earn a living. We are also working with communities to create environments where girls will flourish and be safe.





## OUR PROGRAMS

# EMPOWERING DISPLACED OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH

We work to ensure that displaced youth have opportunities to learn and grow so they can contribute to their communities and support themselves and their own families one day.

### **Our Impact:**

In 2013, WRC spearheaded an initiative to set up an inter-agency advocacy group to bring greater international attention to the needs and capacities of youth and adolescents in emergencies. The Youth and Adolescents in Emergencies Advocacy Group (YAE Group) is made up of 11 leading international humanitarian NGOs that are concerned about the plight of youth and adolescents in humanitarian crises. The objective of the group is to advocate for increased funding and a more holistic, consistent and cross-sectoral response to, and engagement with, youth and adolescents in humanitarian emergencies. We helped organize a preliminary series of youth consultations in preparation for the 2014 UNHCR/NGO Consultations, during which a session was dedicated to discussing youth and adolescents. It was the first time this issue had been on the agenda at this high-level meeting. WRC also co-led a session on youth and adolescents at the 2013 joint annual meeting of the Global Protection Cluster Child Protection Working Group and the Global Education Cluster, through which we managed to reach some key international NGOs working on child protection and education and involve them in the work of the YAE Group.





## OUR PROGRAMS

# PROMOTING THE INCLUSION OF REFUGEES WITH DISABILITIES

We work to ensure access and inclusion of persons with disabilities in all programs and services.

### Our Impact:

People with disabilities are among the most hidden and neglected of all displaced people, excluded from or unable to access most aid programs because of physical and social barriers or because of negative attitudes and biases. The war in Syria has given rise to huge numbers of refugees, many of whom have disabilities resulting from the conflict. In 2013, the Women's Refugee Commission focused on improving access and inclusion for women, children and youth with disabilities in the Syrian refugee crisis. We conducted a field assessment in Lebanon to learn about the situation for Syrian refugees with disabilities, and facilitated workshops for UN refugee agency and other staff to recognize and respond in a holistic way to their protection concerns, including child protection and gender-based violence. Our work there has contributed to greater inclusion of refugees with disabilities in Regional Response Plans for Lebanon, strengthened community outreach activities to identify and reach the most vulnerable persons with disabilities, and promoted greater recognition of the valuable contributions Syrian refugees with disabilities and their care-givers can play as volunteers and community members.





## OUR PROGRAMS

# CAMPAIGNING FOR EQUAL NATIONALITY RIGHTS

Twenty-six countries worldwide continue to discriminate against women in their ability to confer their nationality on their children on an equal basis with men. This gender discrimination in nationality laws can lead to statelessness when fathers are stateless or also unable to confer their nationality on their children. Statelessness resulting from gender discrimination in nationality laws can have serious and far-reaching consequences. Stateless people face many barriers and obstacles: without citizenship or identity documents they may be unable to own or rent property, secure formal employment or access services such as public health care, education and social welfare benefits. Statelessness impacts individuals' ability to marry and couples' decisions to start a family.

### Our Impact:

The Women's Refugee Commission, with the Statelessness Program at Tilburg University, published *Our Motherland, Our Country: Gender Discrimination and Statelessness in the Middle East and North Africa*, the first-of-its-kind report to document gender discrimination in nationality laws. We are coordinating the International Campaign to End Gender Discrimination in Nationality Laws, which aims to eliminate gender discrimination in nationality laws in the 26 countries where they remain on the books.





# WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013

The following is a summary of the financial operations of the Women's Refugee Commission for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2013. This summary is compiled from numbers presented in the 2013 annual financial statement of the International Rescue Committee, Inc. (IRC). Until August 2014, the Women's Refugee Commission was legally part of the IRC, a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. Charitable contributions made to the Women's Refugee Commission are tax deductible. A copy of the audited 2013 financial statements of the IRC, which includes the financial results of the Women's Refugee Commission, is available upon request.

REVENUES	2013	2012
Foundations	2,185,127	3,090,591
Individual Contributions	892,106	1,101,244
United Nations Grants	392,626	261,721
Government Grants	1,372,972	1,070,461
Interest Income	4,362	9,845
Donated Goods and Services*	606,396	470,817
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>5,453,589</b>	<b>6,004,680</b>

EXPENSES	2013	2012
Migrant Rights & Justice Program	809,666	1,040,497
Sexual & Reproductive Health Program	1,354,104	802,718
Safe Access to Fuel & Energy	200,335	243,479
Protection Program—Livelihoods	937,161	674,552
Protection Program—Disabilities	282,507	378,469
Protection Program—Children & Youth	302,758	269,460
Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict **	111,610	1,215,639
Advocacy	179,409	269,452
Communications	193,447	222,125
Fundraising	598,444	660,254
Management and General	702,048	406,020
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>5,671,490</b>	<b>6,184,413</b>

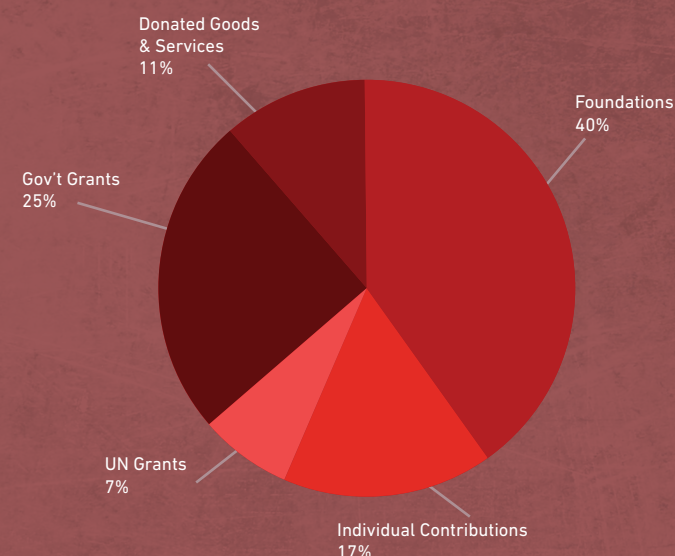
<b>SURPLUS/DEFICIT</b>	<b>(217,901)</b>	<b>(179,734)</b>
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SUMMARY OF FUND BALANCE ANALYSIS	Balance End of FY2013	Balance End of FY2012	Change in Fund Balance
TYPE OF FUND			
Endowment (Founders) Fund	868,603	867,132	1,471
Memorial Funds	148,012	150,283	(2,271)
Unrestricted Funds	398,034	635,714	(237,680)
Temporarily Restricted Funds	532,452	511,873	20,579
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,947,102</b>	<b>2,165,003</b>	<b>(217,901)</b>

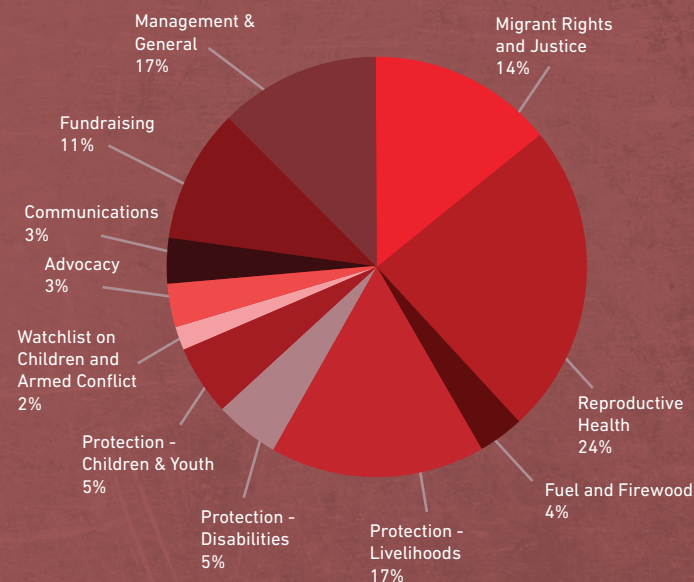
\* Donated goods and services are not included in IRC financial statements.

\*\* Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict transferred out from the WRC in August 2012.

## FY 2013 REVENUE



## FY 2013 EXPENSES



\* Including donated goods and services.



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