Diocesan Justice and Peace Refugee Project report for AGM covering 1/01/24 to 31/12/24

Project core activities

- The project has supported nearly 1000 clients with food, toiletries, clothing, gift card, English classes, and milk and nappies particularly for children.

Food Supply

- Thanks to all project supporters. Our food mostly comes from parishes and local supermarkets, including Sainsbury's Gosforth, Lidl Walker, and Aldi Kingston Park, Westerhope, and Fawdon. I would like also to thank the SVP for huge food support
- During this year, we have also received huge amount of food items from St Mary Catholic School in Longbenton and from Emmaus Youth Village

Connection and Networking

- The project has developed relationships with various service providers in Tyneside areas to support our clients with additional opportunities, including case working support, housing, accessing school, healthcare, accredited, bikes, accredited English class, and employability advice for those who recently had leave to remain.
- We were able to make dozens of referrals and signposting to various service providers including, WERS, NERS, Action, Foundation, Northeast Law Centre, local authorities, Recycke bike, police service and others.
- Our project has also developed connections with Good Things foundation which supplied us with free sim cards for our clients

Outreach

- St John of Beverly in Haydon Bridge has organised a day our for 38 mothers and children of our project clients. Huge thanks to all volunteers who prepared food and organised a variety of activities during the day including indoor and outdoor activities for children.

Refugee Week

- Three stories of our clients were shared during the refugee week celebration at St Mary's Cathedral, aiming at providing insight into the life of women asylum seekers in the UK.
- The project in collaboration with the SVP, organise refugee week at the centre. Our clients were asked to write an expression about home on a fabric and a jar which was later shown in Museums by the SVP member of staff.

Successes

- Various clients who have faced destitution and poverty, living in limbo and significantly relying on our project, have expressed their gratitude to the vital support they received from the project. They eventually were able to reach some form of leave to remain. So, I share their acknowledgement.

Volunteers

- Our volunteers are the foundation of the project. During 2024, we had 45 active and dedicated volunteers who covered all project activities.

Challenges

- Despite the riots that took places in several cities across the country in early August, we were able to keep our centre open despite its significant impact on our clients. Thanks to Northumbria police who closely supported our work.

Azad Hasan, Project Coordinator, 4 February 2025.