



Justice &
Peace

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PHOTO COVER

Shelter City global partner meeting, The Hague

In October 2023, Justice & Peace Netherlands convened the Shelter City Global Partner Meeting titled 'From Africa to Europe: Enhancing global collaborations to protect human rights defenders at risk'. The event, held in The Hague, served as a platform for collaboration, reflection, and strategic planning among partners in the Shelter City movement and the broader temporary relocation network.

[Read more](#)



INTRODUCTION

In the face of growing challenges confronting human rights defenders and journalists globally, 2023 proved to be a pivotal year for Justice & Peace and its programmes. Remaining steadfast in our mission to provide sanctuary and empowerment of human rights defenders worldwide, we continued to build safer spaces and amplify the voices of those fighting for justice, peace and equality. Out of increasing numbers of applications our Shelter City initiative was able to welcome 27 human rights defenders, including journalists and artists, providing them with temporary refuge and support in the Netherlands. Internationally, the year witnessed **significant strides in collaboration within the global Shelter City network**, exemplified by the **signing of four key cooperation agreements** with partners in different parts of the world. These partnerships underscore our collective commitment to fortify protection mechanisms for human rights defenders globally. We, furthermore, expanded the scope of our Human rights defenders & Security programme by **launching the Artists' Safe Haven Initiative**, providing a safe and inspiring space and platform for artists at risk to continue to do their work. This initiative exemplifies our commitment to offer tailored support to different groups of human rights defenders.

After launching Samen Hier in 2019 to create safe pathways and havens for refugees, we made significant strides in **scaling up this first community sponsorship initiative in the Netherlands**, operating from 2023 onward in nine municipalities in the Netherlands. By focussing on refugees who arrive within the government's resettlement programme, we **solidified partnerships with many national and local organizations and intensified collaboration**

with governmental agencies. Additionally, we forged connections with European organizations focusing on establishing safe routes for refugees. Samen Hier exemplified the transformative power of community sponsorship, empowering individuals to play an active role in welcoming refugees and contributing to more inclusive communities. Justice & Peace is committed to contributing to further shape a national model of community sponsorship in the years to come and creating a basis for sustainable safe pathways to the Netherlands.

In 2023, we continued the further alignment of the communications and fundraising strategies for the sustainable growth of the organisation. Despite challenges, the organization witnessed a successful year in communication, reaching over 1.2 million people through various events and interactive experiences. Notable highlights included participation in **Coldplay concerts**, the first Artists' Safe Haven exhibition and the **55th anniversary of the organization**, which attracted significant attention and engagement. Strategic collaborations with stakeholders, including universities, municipalities, and educational institutions, were instrumental in expanding outreach, also among a younger audience. With a focus on expanding online reach, we invested in social media strategies for our respective brands. We witnessed significant growth in followers there as well, which we aim to enhance in the coming years. Through strategic communication, collaboration, and innovation, Justice & Peace continues to make meaningful contributions to its cause, inspiring action for a more just

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Henneman'.

Jan Henneman
Chairman of the Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sebastiaan van der Zwaan'.

Sebastiaan van der Zwaan
Executive Director

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS & SECURITY



The overall objective of the Human rights defenders & Security programme is to enable human rights defenders worldwide to protect and promote human rights in a safer and more effective manner, thereby contributing to a safer and more enabling environment for all human rights work. Shelter City is a key part of this programme. Shelter City in the Netherlands is being carried out in a similar way as in previous years, offering temporary relocation, rest and respite and capacity building to human rights defenders for a period of maximum three months. Our goal is for the human rights defenders to return and continue their work in their own country, with new energy, skills and contacts. Against a **backdrop of escalating challenges for human rights defenders and journalists worldwide**, 2023 marked a year in which we experienced a **sustained surge in requests** for assistance from human rights defenders at risk. The Shelter City programme team looks back on hosting 27 human rights defenders, including journalists and artists, to the Netherlands this year. In 2023, we



24

Shelter Cities worldwide

27

Human rights defenders supported in NL

765^K

People reached with events, press & online

+3

Growth of new Shelter Cities

saw the fruits of our continuous efforts to consolidate and expand the international Shelter City network. We signed cooperation agreements with strategic partners worldwide. Undoubtedly, the highlight of 2023 for the Human rights defenders & Security programme, was the **Global Shelter City partner meeting**. With our strategic partners we exchanged best practices and discuss complex issues such as how to address the longer-term needs of human rights defenders at risk.

Multi-annual goal 1: Shelter Cities provide temporary safe and inspiring spaces for human rights defenders where they re-energise, receive tailor-made support, and engage with local allies.

In 2023, we received 1072 applications for the Dutch Shelter City-, Artists' Safe Haven and Journalists' Safe Haven initiatives. We were able to invite 24 human rights defenders (HRDs) (including 6 journalists) and 3 artists at risk. In spring 2023, the Dutch Shelter City programme hosted 10 human rights defenders (HRDs). The group consisted of HRDs from the DRC, Egypt, Palestinian territories, South Sudan, Armenia, Venezuela, South Korea and Nigeria. As we launched **a new pilot: our Artists' Safe Haven Initiative (ASHI)**, for artists at risk, we hosted 3 artists from very diverse backgrounds in The Hague. The programme provides additional opportunities for trainings, artistic collaborations, and a platform for the artists' work. The first guest of the initiative was a filmmaker from Yemen, the second a cartoonist from DRC and the third a multimedia artist from Sri Lanka. As these 3 artists were hosted in The Hague, we constantly tried to weave together our networks and activities to bring the city of The Hague and the HRDs and artists close to each other. These interactions and crossovers, provided a rich experience for the selected HRDs and artists and widened and deepened our connection and partnerships with The Hague's local infrastructure. This commitment is further exemplified by our substantial involvement with educational institutions and other organizations in The Hague, as reported below.

Organizations on their own cannot go very far. There is a need for wide networks, such as the Shelter City movement, to work on human rights.



LODOVICO MARIANI
Un Ponte Per, Shelter City Rome



Minal's art exhibition in The Hague.

Shelter City Netherlands Partner meeting

In March 2023, we organized the bi-annual **Shelter City Netherlands Partner meeting in The Hague**. During this meeting we discussed with our Dutch partners the elaborate selection process for the Shelter City initiative in the Netherlands and brainstormed on ways to enhance the level of support during the temporary relocation period. At the meeting, we were joined by partners, old and new, with many expressing their continued support and enthusiasm. This opportunity provided a space not only for partners to connect with one another, but also to share and learn from each other in order to continue improving the Shelter City initiative in their respective cities. The safety of women human rights defenders is supported and promoted by further enhancing the gender perspective of the temporary relocation programme.

In 2023, suitable candidates were selected for family relocation, but their stay could not be realized for different reasons. As we continue to put emphasis throughout the selection process on potential family relocation cases, we will also reach out to partner organizations to target this specific group. We continue to make sure that the programme is prepared for family relocation that fits within the parameters of the overall relocation programme.

By hosting an openly trans-woman in 2023, we had to focus on gender-specific needs. We had to consider medical needs, gender-affirming care, and security measures that are unique to providing adequate support

to a transgender human rights defender. As a result, we created a protocol that outlines the most salient needs, such as availability of hormone therapy and trans-affirming psychological care. We hope to further build our capacity in developing a diverse spectrum of tailor made strategies and modules.

This way, more human rights defenders have access to temporary relocation in the Netherlands, elsewhere in Europe, or in the region in which they work.



Shelter City guest speaking at a storytelling event of DISC.

Being a guest in Eindhoven was an important event in my life. It helped me move from frustration to positivity and hope. The appreciation, support, attention and inspiring contacts with amazing human rights defenders from different countries restored my self-confidence and enthusiasm. Now, after this break in the Netherlands, I experience my work and life more positively and have renewed energy and hope for my country that I am proud of.



AHMAD (MENA REGION)

Human rights lawyer, Shelter City Eindhoven, Spring 2023

Shelter Cities worldwide



Work topics of 27 guests of Shelter City the Netherlands in 2023



Building more safe spaces in Europe

Looking back to 2023, it's noteworthy that we successfully established **memorandums of understanding with Shelter City partners in Lyon (France), Rome (Italy) and Dundee (Scotland)**. The emphasis on expanding the Shelter City network in Europe, as highlighted in the preceding reporting period, has yielded results.

The Shelter City Global Partner meeting in October was a moment for the city of Rome to join the Shelter City movement through the signing of the memorandum of understanding between Justice & Peace and Un Ponte Per, a local human rights organization. Following this, in December 2023, an official launch was held in Rome. It was attended by partner organizations, local authorities and members

of the City Council of the Municipality VIII of Rome, as well as by the Deputy Head of Mission of the Dutch Embassy in Rome. Having formalized a memorandum of understanding with our Scottish partner, Dundee Human Rights defenders fellowship, we eagerly anticipate progressing to the next phase of our collaboration. The inclusion of Shelter City Scotland, particularly focused on environmental rights defenders, introduces a new and significant thematic dimension to our ongoing collaboration and exchange within the broader Shelter City network.

Building more safe spaces in Africa

During the Shelter City Global Partner meeting in October 2023 "From Africa to Europe: Enhancing global collaborations to protect human rights defenders at risk", a significant milestone was achieved with signing the **memorandum of understanding between DefendDefenders and Justice & Peace**. This agreement formalized areas of collaboration between the movement of Shelter Cities (worldwide) and Ubuntu Hub Cities (Africa). This meeting provided an invaluable opportunity for our African partners to engage in cooperation with the broader temporary relocation network in Europe. Through open dialogue and interactive panel discussions, partners sought to enhance the effectiveness of the Shelter City Initiative in responding to the evolving needs of human rights defenders at risk. We focussed on issues like access to visas, longer-term relocation and building stronger protection mechanisms together for human rights defenders at risk.



Shelter City international partner meeting in The Hague.

Building more safe spaces in Latin America

In the Latin American region, **Shelter City Costa Rica took up a leading role for the network to map, strategize and develop regional relocation initiatives.** In Brazil, they continued collaboration with local human rights organizations, providing advice and transferring knowledge for a pilot project that was implemented at the beginning of 2023. Following the successful execution of the pilot project, we anticipate the relocation programme to be fully operational by 2025.

During this period, Shelter City Costa Rica continued giving support to the construction of a relocation programme in Uruguay. Also in 2023, the assistance and guidance for a Colombian initiative responsible for implementing a pilot programme to locally relocate human rights defenders continued.

Building more safe spaces in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA)

While MENA continues to be largely absent in the field of temporary relocation initiatives, we **made a few connections with civil society from Tunisia** and even met with a mixed delegation from Oman. Also, through the Dutch human rights coalition (Breed Mensenrechten Overleg), we joined a meeting organized by the Dutch Human Rights Ambassador with the Saudi Arabian Human Rights Commission. As we provided general information on our work in support of human rights defenders, all the meetings were an open and genuine exchange on opportunities and possible collaborations.

Shelter City alumni

In order to deepen and maintain connections with and between the former participants in the Shelter City programme, **we launched our first Shelter City Alumni newsletter** on 15th December 2023, with plans of issuing a bi-yearly edition. The aim of this project is to showcase stories of continued human rights work and the impact that Shelter City has on our alumni network. Alumni from different places in the world have been facing various kinds of challenges. In such events, they reach out to Justice & Peace, or we take initiative and actively reach out to our alumni to provide them with advice and resources to address the problems they encounter. Below, we highlight two cases that were of concern in 2023.

Since the start of the war between Israel and Hamas in October 2023, **we have taken an active role in reaching out to our Palestinian Shelter City alumni who are stuck in Gaza.** We managed

to get in touch with all our Shelter City alumni and their families who are not able to leave their homes despite the immediate danger to their lives. In an attempt to support them, we have sent a letter to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, requesting the evacuation of the Palestinian Shelter City alumni and their immediate dependents from Gaza. So far, however, the Dutch Government assists only in the evacuation of civilians with the Dutch nationality. We continue to have conversations with the Ministry to call for the support of our alumni and other human rights defenders.

Amidst increasing hostility towards LGBTQI+ community in Uganda and the discriminatory Anti-Homosexuality Act our Shelter City Netherlands team was contacted regarding an African alumnus who was facing increasing threats due to his human rights work. While he successfully managed to get relocated in the region, the team stayed in close contact with him throughout the process.

Multi-annual goal 2: Human rights defenders ensure the wellbeing and safety of themselves and others and the effectiveness of their work.

For human rights defenders, participating in Shelter City means an opportunity to increase their capacities to address challenging



Shelter City the Netherlands holistic security training.

human rights issues and to learn to remain more resilient despite stress and pressure. In 2023, we organized in The Hague and other Dutch Shelter Cities a total of **24 in-person group training days for the human rights defenders** staying in the Netherlands. Capacity building included knowledge and skills to effectively address human rights issues, such as public awareness raising, campaigns and advocacy, data literacy, human rights mechanisms, transitional justice, communications, networking, and fundraising. Furthermore, topics relevant to strengthening resilience included digital and physical security, self-care, trauma sensitivity and self-defense.



Shelter City the Netherlands holistic security training.

We also focused on building a collective learning experience where human rights defenders, as a group, can also learn from each other's wealth of experiences. This process began with establishing a safe space for sharing challenges and learnings from the past. Staff members and external trainers facilitated the conversation to draw out learning experience from the participants while also addressing learning objectives.

Multi-annual goal 3: Shelter Cities contribute to strengthening recognition, building allies and generating respect for human rights defenders in the Netherlands and abroad.

In 2023, we continued building on the momentum of over a decade of creating safe spaces for human rights defenders at risk. With the support of our partners, this year we were able to

// **Being part of Shelter City was like putting yourself in the fridge after coming off of a hot stove. It helped cool me down after being in an intense environment. Being part of Shelter City allowed me to draw a map for myself and my future. When I came back, I had more energy to do things and continue my work. I knew what I wanted to do to continue working independently.** //



NOOR (MENA REGION)

Journalist, Shelter City The Hague (Journalist Safe Haven initiative), Spring 2023

channel our time and resources towards increasing the number of **outreach engagements to attract greater support for the Shelter City initiative** and to raise awareness for the work of human rights defenders and the need for spaces where they can share their work and engage with allies. With almost 50 interactive experiences recorded, ranging from public and closed events to exhibitions, taking place within the Netherlands, **over 700.000 people have engaged** (connected in one form or another) with Shelter City guests, heard their stories and learned about the human rights situation in their countries. Our efforts reaching educational institutions and general audiences are covered in the Communications chapter.

2023 has also seen an **increase in engagements involving policymakers and stakeholders**. In June, during a closed event organized by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in honour of Pride Month, a Shelter City guest from Nigeria participated in a panel discussion where she informed representatives of Dutch embassies and policymakers on the steps that could be taken to provide greater support for grassroots initiatives in Nigeria and other countries of origin. Furthermore, a panel discussion organized by, among others, the US Embassy in The Hague and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, discussing the challenges of remaining active and effective as a human rights defender in their country of origin was organized. These interactions have contributed immensely to the creation and strengthening of alliances between human rights defenders and allies in the Netherlands and beyond. Overall, increased efforts in outreach engagement have resulted in greater recognition of the Shelter City initiative in the Netherlands and globally, contributing to its sustainability, and an increased level of awareness for the need for safe spaces for human rights defenders at risk.



MIGRATION & HUMAN RIGHTS

With its Migration & Human rights programme, Justice & Peace works towards **improving access to long-term durable protection for refugees**, and facilitating inclusive communities for them where participation and integration is enhanced. It is our long-term goal to develop and **implement the first Dutch community sponsorship model**, Samen Hier, as a nationwide movement of residents and organizations that can share responsibilities with state, regional and local authorities to expand the safe admission and inclusion of refugees in the country. Working in a society facing a housing crisis and increasing polarisation, and noting that adjustments to current policies are necessary, the development of Samen Hier requires flexibility, creativity and resilience. Therefore, Justice & Peace opts for a multi-annual strategy, in which support for community sponsorship is being mobilized by starting with what is already possible, thus showing in practice what community sponsorship for safe pathways for refugees in the Netherlands entails. In 2023, we focussed on community sponsorship for refugees who are arriving within the Dutch governments resettlement programme. In this context, we



concluded a formal partner agreement with the Dutch Council for Refugees (VWN), are working more closely with the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA) and with the Ministry of Justice & Security (Ministry J&S). We are proud to note that Samen Hier is currently **active in nine municipalities**. We supervised and conducted several studies to gain more insight into the impact of our approach and to optimize the different variants of Samen Hier for our target groups. We are increasingly **recognized and asked for our expertise on community sponsorship in the Netherlands at a variety of international, national and local events**. We strengthen our collaboration with organizations in other European countries in exploring supplementary safe pathways for refugees.

Multi-annual goal 1: Samen Hier partners work together to create safe pathways to and safe havens across the Netherlands.

We have built **new partner relations, resulting in a stronger national Samen Hier network**. In addition to The Hague and Rotterdam, where Samen Hier has been implemented for several years, the partner network has expanded to six other municipalities: Emmen, Rijswijk, Zaanstad, Dijk en Waard, Rijssen-Holten and Eijsden-Margraten. In The Hague and Rijswijk, we are implementing Samen Hier ourselves. In both municipalities, we implement Samen Hier to support Ukrainian newcomers. The first groups have attended trainings and have begun their Samen Hier year.

Other municipalities have increasingly shown great interest in the resettlement variant of Samen Hier. **Our partner municipalities, which participate in the Dutch governments resettlement programme, recognize the added value of community sponsorship for a sustainable reception of refugees in their municipality.** This interest in community sponsorship as a way to support the resettlement pathway in the Netherlands, is also acknowledged by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA). With support of Samen Hier manuals and checklists, **we offered training and guidance to municipalities and welfare organizations in Emmen, Zaanstad, Dijk & Waard, Rijssen-Holten and Eijsden-Margraten** to set up a local infrastructure and engage their residents to form Samen Hier groups. Below is an update for each municipality.

Current Samen Hier municipalities

In **Rotterdam**, our local partner Rotterdam Verwelkomt Vluchtelingen has been implementing the resettlement variant of Samen Hier since December 2020. In November 2022, a sponsor group was formed to welcome a couple who had recently been resettled in Rotterdam. What is unique about this particular sponsor group is that it was formed by someone who was resettled in Rotterdam himself and was welcomed by the very first Samen Hier sponsor group in December 2020. Having personally experienced the importance and impact of support from the sponsor group, he was motivated to form a new sponsor group to support others going through the same resettlement process. His motivation and expertise are a valuable learning experience for us and our current and future local partners in further fine-tuning the support needed for resettled refugees. We have published his story in [a blog post](#) on our website.

In **Zaandam**, we are supporting our local partner, Refugee Council Zaandam, in recruiting groups to welcome six resettled families. We have 25 people involved who will work as sponsor groups for these families. In addition, we provided a start training to the resettled families, as well as to the interested members of the sponsor groups to prepare them beforehand. Our cooperation with the Refugee Council Zaandam is part of a broader collaboration with the Dutch Council for Refugees (VWN), which we will further elaborate on later in this report.

In **Rijssen-Holten**, we have started a collaboration with ViaVie Welzijn. We have supported them in recruiting three sponsor groups, and provided the start training for these groups in September. Currently, ViaVie Welzijn is supervising the sponsor groups in welcoming three families who came to the municipality following a government's resettlement mission in Kenya. This is the first time Rijssen-Holten is hosting resettled refugees, and also the first time that the municipality is working with community sponsorship. This collaboration between Justice & Peace and ViaVie

// **I would like to communicate with Dutch neighbours to practise Dutch and gain a group of friends.** //



OLENA FROM UKRAINE

Samen Hier participant
[Read more](#)

Welzijn is **part of a broader pilot with Justice & Peace, the COA and the Thuisgevers**¹. The Thuisgevers have supported this pilot by organizing temporary housing through local communities. The pilot offers us an unique learning opportunity to further develop our programme, as it adds a new sponsorship element, namely that of organizing housing. A first evaluation meeting took place in October, which showed that all parties involved are satisfied with Justice & Peace's support and the quality of the Samen Hier training and materials.

In **Eijsden-Margraten**, the municipality is in the lead of the Samen Hier pilot. In recent months, Justice & Peace has given advice to municipal staff on setting up Samen Hier and helped to organize an information meeting to recruit sponsor groups.

In **Emmen**, and in **Dijk en Waard**, the recruitment of groups will start in 2024. Consultations on the establishment of Samen Hier between local parties are taking place.

¹ De Thuisgevers posted a news item on their website, which you can see via: <https://dethuisgevers.nl/nieuwsitems/de-thuisgevers-coa-justice-and-peace-via-vie-welzijn-en-gemeente-rijssen-holten-werken-samen-voor-goede-start/>



Sponsor groups from Rijssen-Holten attended the start training of Samen Hier organized by Justice & Peace.

In **The Hague, Rijswijk** and **Leidschendam-Voorburg**, Justice & Peace is responsible for implementing Samen Hier, with a special focus on supporting exiled Ukrainian in the municipality. Currently, we have recruited eight groups and three community builders. The first groups have received training and will start their Samen Hier year in 2024. At the same time, **collaborations have been established with the Opora Foundation, VluchtelingenWerk Den Haag, The Hungry Mind Community Centre and student-run organizations Uzvar Collective and ABBA** to support us in recruiting more groups and community builders, and to exchange knowledge about the situation of Ukrainians in the Netherlands. In November 2023 we also organized a **community building event** with the existing groups and newcomers, as well as for a wider audience, to recruit more groups. 50 visitors attended, and two new groups were formed. In March 2024, another community event will be held for existing groups as well as for a wider audience to motivate new groups to join Samen Hier.

// **I got to know more people in The Hague and built real friendships. This is all thanks to Samen Hier.** //



SAMEN HIER PARTICIPANT

Possible new Samen Hier municipalities

In addition to the aforementioned municipalities, Justice & Peace is also in contact with the **Aalten** and **Haarlem** municipalities, which are very interested in Samen Hier to implement community sponsorship for supporting resettled refugees who they will host in their municipalities in 2024. The close relationship we have with the COA has also opened doors to **new collaboration opportunities**, for instance with Nidos. Through an invitation from the COA to talk about Samen Hier at a provincial meeting in Drenthe, we came into contact with a representative from Nidos. Nidos is the national guardianship agency for unaccompanied minors (UAMs) in the Netherlands, and one of their goals is to make sure that UAMs settle well in the local community. In November, we gave a presentation on Samen Hier to a team of Nidos staff, which resulted in an introduction to their local partner in **Amsterdam**, Movement on the Ground, with whom we are discussing a local action plan. With this,

we see opportunities to involve even more people in Samen Hier who are committed to supporting refugees, and in doing so, also contribute to raising awareness about the life-threatening routes unaccompanied minors often had to take to get to the Netherlands.

A learning network

On 25 July, we organized a successful Samen Hier **partner meeting**, where partners from six municipalities met and learned more about supporting resettled newcomers from more experienced organizations in the network as well as a group member from Rotterdam who has supported resettled newcomers through Samen Hier several times. Initially, we wanted to organize more partner meetings to facilitate knowledge sharing. As most partners are less experienced with community sponsorship and/or resettlement, we decided to invest more time in informing partners through (often bi-weekly) **one-on-one meetings and training sessions with partners appropriate to the local context**. In 2024, as partners will gradually get more acquainted with community sponsorship and have gained more experience in guiding sponsor groups, we will start organizing partner meetings again, so that partners can share their experiences and results.

Student pathways

Unfortunately, the collaboration with The Hague Hotel school to set up a student pathway to the Netherlands was discontinued. In December 2023, we were informed by their board about the insufficient capacities in their team to set up a successful project together. However, they did express their willingness to revisit opportunities for cooperation after September 2024. Despite this setback, over the past year Justice & Peace was experiencing a genuine interest also from other universities and colleges for cooperation, but there is currently insufficient knowledge at the institutions to fully commit to this initiative. In 2024, Justice & Peace will continue to inform and motivate educational institutions to set up the student sponsorship variant of Samen Hier. In cooperation with European partners in the Complementary Pathways network (COMET) network, we are currently exploring the possibility of organizing a multi-day symposium in 2024 on educational pathways at the end of May 2024. With this, Justice & Peace aims to further grow the interest of educational institutions in the Netherlands in 2024.

Multi-annual goal 2: More refugees have the opportunity to come to the Netherlands via a safe route.

Cooperation on a national model of community sponsorship

The cooperation with **the Netherlands Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA)** intensified last year and contributed greatly to expanding our partner network. The COA has shown great interest in community sponsorship and supports Justice & Peace by linking us to possible interested municipalities willing to participate in the government's resettlement programme. Over the past months, several discussions with the COA have led to the expression of a shared ambition to integrate community sponsorship into the government's resettlement programme. These talks will continue in 2024, with the aim of drafting a joint plan and funding application.

Justice & Peace is also investing in periodic check-ins with the **Ministry of Justice & Security**. In October, we contributed to the National Resettlement Meeting with a presentation on community sponsorship and Samen Hier. We expect more frequent check-ins with the Ministry in 2024, when more Samen Hier partners have started Samen Hier for resettlement, so that we can share our results and best practices directly with the Ministry. In addition, we are pleased to have good relations with the **embassy of Canada in the Netherlands**, which is actively promoting their community sponsorship agenda in the Netherlands. Over the past year, the embassy has supported Samen Hier by mentioning us in discussions with their Dutch partners.

In terms of shaping a Dutch model of community sponsorship, we aim at cooperation with the **Dutch Council for Refugees (VWN)** to promote and set up community sponsorship in as many places in the Netherlands as possible. As mentioned earlier, Justice & Peace has signed a cooperation agreement with the VWN, for the local pilot in Zaanstad. As part of this cooperation, Justice & Peace offers its expertise and materials to support VWN in developing their community sponsorship model. In return, VWN is involving Justice & Peace in their pilot research at the **Refugee Academy of the Free University**. The Refugee Academy will conduct research in 2024 on the experiences of both newcomers and sponsor groups involved in Samen Hier Zaanstad, as part of a broader study on the added value of community sponsorship in the Netherlands.

// I spoke a lot of Dutch with the group and that was helpful, in addition, they gave tips on difficult topics. //



SAMEN HIER PARTICIPANT

Impact

Most of the participants of the Samen Hier initiative achieved their goals, through the guidance of Samen Hier group members. The biggest added value for the participants was learning the Dutch language faster, and getting to know Dutch people in an informal way. In addition to carrying out our own monitoring activities, we collaborated with a master student from Radboud University. The extent to which participating in Samen Hier as a sponsor group affects their attitudes towards the reception of refugees in the



Samen Hier group member at his home in Rotterdam.

Netherlands was researched. This revealed that almost all people who participated in Samen Hier, already prior to participation, had a positive view on refugee reception. Nevertheless, participation in

Samen Hier had some effect on the participants' attitudes towards refugees; it confirmed or reinforced the feeling that newcomers fit in the Dutch society just fine, **many participants had more in common with the newcomers than they expected beforehand**, and the personal contact strengthened their empathy for and understanding of refugees.

Samen Hier groups also indicated that they received many positive reactions about their participation from their social circle. In some cases, they believed this could energize others to participate in a similar initiative. This supports the hypothesis that the **interactions with refugees can also have an indirect positive ripple effect**. However, there is still too little information available to determine how strong this effect is.

Multi-annual goal 3: Residents of Dutch society want and can offer safe havens to refugees.

We were frequently invited to participate in activities organized by other organizations, such as network meetings organized by the municipality of The Hague on the reception of Ukrainian newcomers in the city, and volunteer events organized by The Hague Humanity Hub. We, for instance, gave a presentation on Samen Hier at **The Hague Peace Fair, the provincial house in Assen, and provided**



Bassam Khabieh (photojournalist) in conversation with Liselot van Zantvoort (former coordinator Samen Hier) during the symposium 'Storytelling that informs policy'.

the Sint Jans lecture in Den Bosch, where aldermen and mayors from Brabant learned more about our Migration & Human rights programme.

During The Hague Justice Week, we participated in an **expert panel during the lecture: 'Storytelling that informs policy'**. In that panel, we told more than 140 people about Samen Hier, the importance of safe routes and the impact of encounters between the newcomers and more settled residents. Visitors told us afterwards that they were inspired by the perspective of concrete action that Samen Hier provided, and how, despite the complex challenges surrounding migration, they realize through Samen Hier that they can contribute to more humane refugee policies through personal action.

Organizing and attending **public events and press and media attention** prove to be effective ways for us to inform and involve a broader audience about Samen Hier, build relationships with (potential) stakeholders, and explore opportunities for collaboration in support of community sponsorship. For example, in 2023 we were approached by a journalist from the Groene Amsterdammer, who would like to follow a Samen Hier group for a longer period of time for an in-depth article on community sponsorship in the Netherlands.

// Our goals were to speak Dutch spontaneously and to integrate further through social contact. Both goals are going well, and the situation is getting better through our participation in Samen Hier. The contact with the families certainly helps.



SAMEN HIER PARTICIPANT



COMMUNICATIONS & FUNDRAISING

Communications and fundraising are crucial for Justice & Peace to reach the goals we have set for the organization and programmes. Communication enables us to **reach the people who we intend to support, and those who can help supporting them.** Through our communications, we show the relevance of making positive change for human rights, inspire people to contribute to change and offer concrete suggestions on how anyone can do this. Fundraising enables us to continue our activities in the best ways possible, having meaningful impact.

In the first half of 2023, there was an internal restructuring of responsibilities among staff, while a number of communications and fundraising interns supported the implementation of our work. Volunteer writers and translators have been also vital for our work, while experts from the De Nieuwe Gevers platform have been supporting us to develop our strategies further.

Multi-annual goal 1: Expand our visibility and reach across the Netherlands and beyond

Strategies & Tools

The **brand strategy**, graphic identity and unified verbal identity of Justice & Peace were developed and updated in 2022; while

they were implemented in early 2023 with the guidance of the communications team. In the first half of 2023, the team focused on **updating the verbal identity of Samen Hier, and the Shelter City communications strategy**, including the development of a new global communications strategy with the core global partners of the international Shelter City network.

Collaborations & interactive experiences (reaching a younger audience)

In 2023, **Justice & Peace and its programmes were visible during 71 events, reaching more than 1.2 million people.** One of the highlights for 2023 was our presence during the 4-day concerts of **Coldplay** (a well-known British rock band) in Amsterdam. Justice & Peace was chosen as one of the two Dutch civil society organizations to be present throughout the concerts to promote their work. Another highlight of 2023 is the **first Artists' Safe Haven exhibition, 'My Point, Your View'** by cartoon artist Yves Kulondwa from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), that took place in various locations in The Hague, and **reached over 14 thousand** people. Beyond visibility, adding fundraising components to the Artists' Safe Haven exhibitions to raise funds for artist's work, proved to be of added value. Another event that allowed for a wide audience to become active is the Samen Hier community event in November, where around 50 people from The Hague came together to get to know the Samen Hier community, meet their newcomer neighbours and learn about the work of Justice & Peace.

When it comes to **collaborations reaching younger audiences**, we participated in two speed dating sessions with the students from The Hague University of Applied Sciences and Leiden University. Furthermore, young journalism students and teachers were reached through the presentation of three journalists at the School for Journalism in Tilburg. Additionally, we continued to strengthen our relations with educational and research institutions, which resulted in **16 lectures and panel discussions** organized in collaboration with Leiden University College, The Hague University of Applied Sciences, Asser Institute, and Alfrink College, and the participation of over 900 students.

Also, we had three Shelter City guests participating in the World Class Lecture, which brings students from various universities to The Hague, held in November at the Library of Den Haag in partnership with the municipality. The panel explored both progress and existing challenges in the human rights landscape, from the Philippines to

Iraq and Mexico. Almost 100 students registered for the lecture, which provided great insight into the work of grassroots human rights movements in different parts of the world.

Press & media

During 2023, we decided to put more efforts into press and media and explore further how our organization is perceived based on the coverage it receives, exploring both invited and uninvited media coverage of the organization and its programmes. It is not always easy to evaluate the impact of press and media coverage, as it depends on many external, complex factors we cannot easily measure. In total, Justice & Peace and/or its programmes have been mentioned in **52 press articles and broadcasts, reaching over 1.4 million people**. Besides local Shelter City and Samen Hier partners providing local press and media coverage for our initiatives, building up and nurturing strategic relationships within local press and media landscapes have proved to be one of the key contributors to coverage. Another success factor for press and (social) media attention are events. With and without our support, our partners in Shelter Cities have also done local press coverage, like [Nijmegen](#), [Eindhoven](#) and [Haarlem](#) for their guests, and Maastricht for their Human Rights Week. This resulted in more local publications via news outlets or municipalities in comparison to 2022, thereby amplifying the effect of Shelter City as a movement beyond Justice & Peace and individual Dutch Shelter Cities, and informing the broader public on the need to support human rights defenders and the cities' dedication to the movement.

Regarding Samen Hier, a new press and media approach involved sharing personal stories and pictures of two Ukrainian participants with local newspapers and RTV channels in and around their neighbourhoods. Additionally, press releases have been sent out to promote the Ukraine Samen Hier variant, which resulted in four local articles and five radio interviews reaching more than 110 thousand people. Building and investing in personal relationships with local journalists in The Hague resulted in a page long interview with a Ukrainian participant published in a local [newspaper](#), with a call to action to join Samen Hier.

Online channels

We started 2023 with the development of online strategies (including platform specific strategies) for the organization and our brands. These **content strategies aimed to ensure alignment of the different channels**, agility to achieve the objectives of specific

periods, and uniformity within the overall communication activities. An example of this is: the Instagram guides of the Justice & Peace and Shelter City brands. The goal was to have social media guides for all brands that tailored to their content strategies that have been and are being developed in the following years.

Data shows that our **Instagram** accounts are performing well, having grown by over 20% in followers since the beginning of 2023 across three brands and **reaching more than 1.2 million people**. Collaborative posts allow us to humanize our content and give a face to the stories and objectives of the change makers that we work with in a more interactive manner, thus encouraging more people to engage with our content and activities. As a result, some of the best posts on the channels have been observed during this specific period. That being said, it is important to note that **constant experimentation and adaption** in format and design has taken place, allowing us to observe the differences in audience engagement and adapt our methods accordingly for maximum impact of our messages.

Also our **Linked-in** presence continues to do well. One of the major factors contributing to this is our self-appointed brand ambassadors (like partners and supporters) who are consistently engaging and sharing our posts, therefore spreading our content even further than our own audiences. This has led our channel to **raise its follower rate by 27% and reach 138 thousand people**, even by not following the same frequency in content posting as Instagram.

When it comes to other online tools, the use of **newsletters** to communicate with our audiences has been demanding from a capacity perspective. At the end of September, we sent out a survey to our audiences inquiring on the existing approach. The survey touched upon credentials (who is it that receives it and what affiliation do they have with Justice & Peace), preference on topics, language (NL or EN or both), and frequency. The input from our audiences helped us re-strategize the use, design and frequency of our newsletters.

Multi-annual goal 2: Influence public perception of human rights and enhance people's perspective for action in the protection and promotion of human rights.



Samen Hier community event in The Hague

Since the two communication goals are interlinked, the above-mentioned results had also an impact on the contribution towards raising awareness about change makers, inspiring and activating people to take action. We continued in this reporting period to further develop and test our storytelling formats and templates. In 2023, **38 stories have been published** in total. All Samen Hier stories have focused on communicating more intensively the impact of the initiative. The Shelter City ones have focused on personal stories of human rights defenders and those who have been supporting them. While the Justice & Peace stories have focused on partner stories, impact, and advocacy on human rights issues. During this reporting period, we have also been experimenting with **blog stories**. These are stories written by participating human rights defenders and journalists themselves, giving them the platform to express their stories in their own way.

Another highlight, in 2023, was our own **16-day online campaign in light of the International day for the Elimination of Violence against Women**, in which we highlighted the human rights work of various women human rights defenders through written stories/blogs and video content. The campaign itself reached 5.4 thousand people in total and had some of the highest engagement seen for 2023. Public reception of the campaign seemed also very positive

and the campaign was able to show diverse experiences of women and clearly called for the protection of women's rights from different intersecting perspectives.

It was an incredible event. It was so helpful to me because I was able to share my experience and lessons learned with the student journalists and how I was able to navigate the risks. It inspired the students. Practising journalism in a country going through dictatorship and armed rebellions needs specific skills and good fixers, it was what I advised them about. Justice & Peace can incorporate this as one of the activities to benefit the students and the guests as well because it can be a two-way learning experience.



PETER (SOUTH SUDAN)
Shelter City Utrecht guest



Yves Kulondwa's cartoon art exhibition 'My Point, Your View' in The Hague.



ORGANISATION & STAFF

In 2023, Justice & Peace continued to have a highly committed staff, including 13,57 fte, 24 interns and 6 volunteers, an active board and a dedicated advisory commission.

Multi-annual goal 1: The people working towards the goals of Justice & Peace are motivated, knowledgeable and professional.

Staff

A few colleagues left Justice & Peace to pursue career opportunities elsewhere. We are very grateful for their contribution to the work of Justice & Peace. We welcomed enthusiastic and knowledgeable new colleagues to our team: a Migration & Human rights programme officer, a Junior Communications officer, and a Coordinator of Programmes.

Justice & Peace continues to provide **internship and volunteering opportunities**. Throughout 2023, 24 interns were active in our organization. In addition, various volunteers dedicated their time, energy and skills to the activities in support of our work. During the team building activity, it was a great opportunity to get to know them better and connect with other staff members. Moreover, our **55-years anniversary** was a moment where all current and former

Justice
& Peace

We work with many.



TO BUILD AND EMPOWER COMMUNITIES OF CHANGE MAKERS. LOCALLY, NATIONALLY AND GLOBALLY.

WE ARE ALL CHANGE MAKERS

staff, interns and volunteers could celebrate the achievements of Justice & Peace together with the current staff, board and advisory board, thanking them for all their contributions and dedication.

Well-being

Well-being of our staff remained an essential topic, as our aim is to make all our staff feel an equal, respected and valued part of the team. We therefore discuss this topic on a regular basis with all our staff. Management also initiated a meeting with all interns to discuss their experiences and learning process and how future interns' experiences could be improved or what things could be changed, which proved to be a very useful discussion, that gave us new ideas for improvement in relation to onboarding, remuneration and how to engage on issues of inclusivity and identity.

Multi-annual goal 2: Justice & Peace is a professional organisation, learning from its experiences.

We carried out an **internal audit** of (some parts of our) quality management system (ISO 9001:2015), in particular, our primary processes (e.g. our initiatives Shelter city and Samen Hier), and supportive processes (e.g. communications, fundraising). We also reflected more extensively on how our **monitoring and evaluation** are set up - both within the above components and beyond. We have found a number of action points for improvement and learning,



Presenting the work of Justice & Peace to 70 high school students at Broodje Vrede & Recht The Hague.

which were discussed and evaluated in the internal audit report. Moreover, the **annual external audit of our quality management system** was carried out in June, which did not identify any shortcomings. Our quality management system has therefore been again approved for another year.

Risk analysis and in control statement by the board

Justice & Peace has made an overview of the risks it faces, their estimated likelihood of occurrence and potential impact. The management team regularly uses and updates this risk analysis to ensure measures are taken to minimize the occurrence and impact of those risks. Bi-annually we make an **analysis on safety of data** of Justice & Peace, specifically of data related to human rights defenders in our programmes. 2023 has been a year in which we have seen several email phishing attempts (scam where attackers deceive people into revealing sensitive information, installing malware or stealing their money), we also see that online harassment

I had the opportunity to see up close how valuable it is that we all play a role in receiving & welcoming newcomers with a refugee background. After all, we are here together.



KIRSTEN DE MIK

Programme Officer Migration & Human rights

and attacks on the human rights defenders we work with makes it important to remain vigilant. For the human rights defenders programme, it was decided to do a new evaluation of the current day-to-day digital security situation of the programme and broader organization and what (if any) measures in this regard need to and can be taken.

Another risk for an organization like Justice & Peace is the retention of staff. Management and the board have discussed the matter regularly during the past year and made decisions to increase the salary for 2024 (**to compensate inflation and rise of living costs**) to make sure that, although non-profit organizations have challenges as a consequence of financial uncertainties, the organization remains competitive with similar NGO's.

Inflation also poses another challenge for Justice & Peace: the **rise of costs**, including rental costs. Specifically, the costs of office premises and the costs of rental costs of temporary housing. This makes it more difficult to find housing for human rights defenders at risk because of higher rent. It is also more difficult for interns and staff to find affordable housing near The Hague. This remains a point of attention, in the evaluation meetings with the owner of the office building, for example.

Remuneration of the Director

The Board has established the remuneration policy and amount for the Executive Director in accordance with the Dutch Charities Association (Goede Doelen Nederland) regulation regarding remuneration for Executive Directors. The regulation determines a maximum for annual income based on a number of criteria, taking into account factors such as size and complexity of the situation, resulting in a so-called 'BSD-score'. The Board, annually, applies the criteria to Justice & Peace, which resulted in a BSD-score of 405. The related maximum annual income is €120,741 (1 FTE/12 months). The actual annual income (as relevant to the Dutch Charities Association Regulation) of the Executive Director of Justice & Peace, Sebastiaan B. van der Zwaan, was €99,887 and stayed within the applicable maximum mentioned above. The annual income, taxable allowances, employer's contribution to pension and other postponed income contributions totalled €111,607 and stayed well below the applicable maximum of €221,400. Further details can be found in the 2023 financial report.

Integrity

In 2023, Justice & Peace received no complaints on integrity-related issues. All new staff, interns and volunteers – in so far as they have access to sensitive information or are in direct contact with our target audiences - submitted a **Certificate of Conduct** (Verklaring omtrent gedrag). Rien van der Velden, vice-chair of the board, continues to be an **integrity contact point** of the board of Justice & Peace.



Attending a stakeholders conference on migration in Lisbon.



Justice & Peace 55-years celebration event.



Justice & Peace 55-years celebration event.



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