

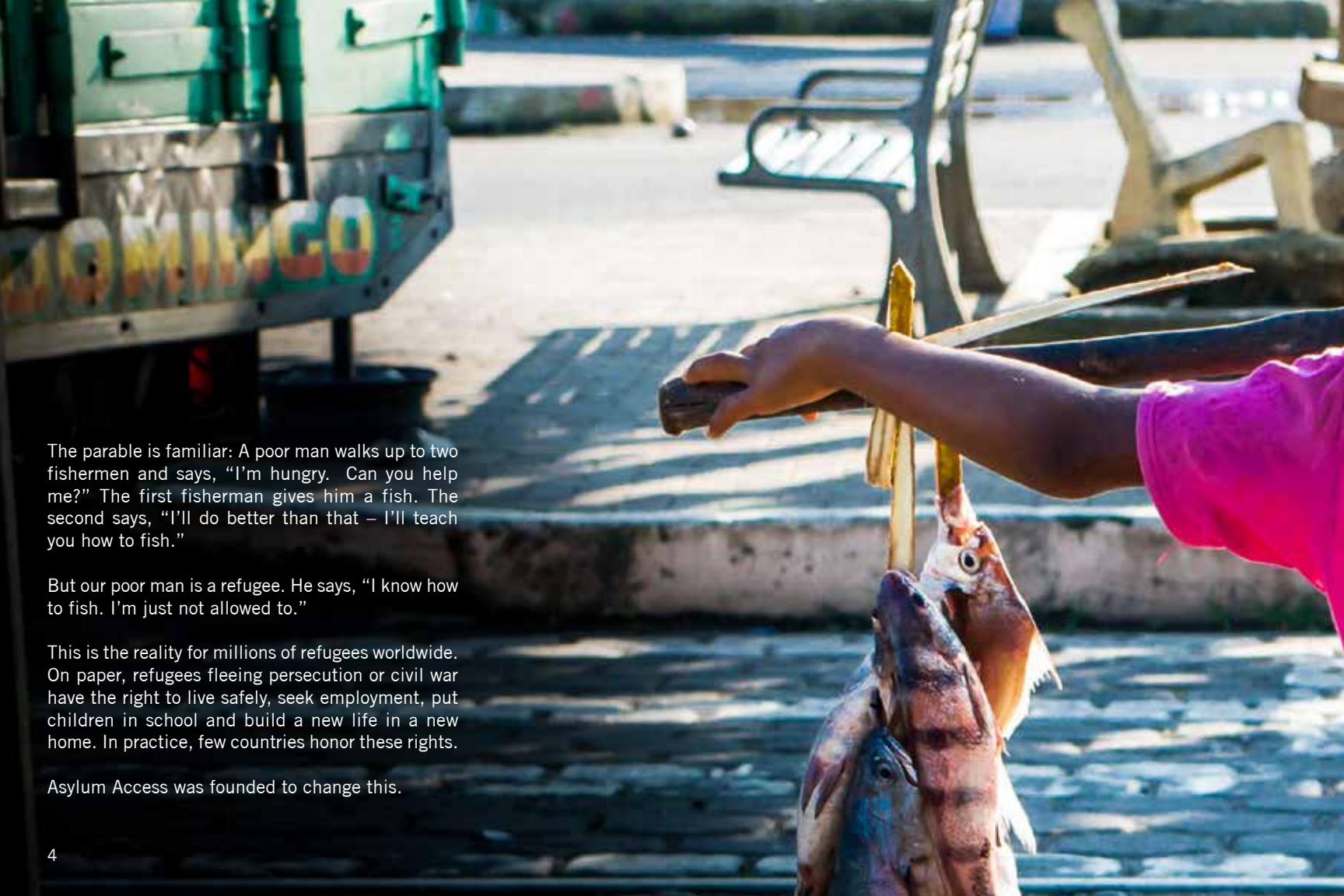






TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Fisherman Parable	4
Our Tools	7
Facts and Figures	8
Our Work: Ecuador	10
Our Work: Thailand	12
Our Work: Tanzania	14
Global Policy Advocacy	16
Refugee Work Rights Campaign	18
Refugee Rights Toolkit	20
Financials	22
Donors	24
Volunteers and Fellows	26
Board of Directors and Staff	27



The parable is familiar: A poor man walks up to two fishermen and says, “I’m hungry. Can you help me?” The first fisherman gives him a fish. The second says, “I’ll do better than that – I’ll teach you how to fish.”

But our poor man is a refugee. He says, “I know how to fish. I’m just not allowed to.”

This is the reality for millions of refugees worldwide. On paper, refugees fleeing persecution or civil war have the right to live safely, seek employment, put children in school and build a new life in a new home. In practice, few countries honor these rights.

Asylum Access was founded to change this.





MAKING REFUGEE RIGHTS A REALITY IN AFRICA, ASIA AND LATIN AMERICA

Asylum Access empowers refugees to rebuild their lives using five tools:

Legal Aid

We help refugees obtain legal status, the first step to accessing all other rights. We also help refugees access safe and lawful employment, obtain owed wages through labor dispute mediation, access healthcare and education, and seek protection from further injustice.

Community Legal Empowerment

To empower refugee communities, we organize Know Your Rights trainings, women's groups, and livelihoods empowerment workshops, and we train refugee leaders to provide basic rights-based assistance to their community.

Policy Advocacy

We advocate for changes in law and policy that improve refugees' access to rights. Working with local governments and UN field offices, we develop and promote solutions to systemic rights violations, with a focus on protection and the right to work.

Strategic Litigation

We establish legal precedents for refugee rights through test cases in local and regional courts. In doing so, we not only impact refugees' lives today, but also reinforce rule of law so future refugees can rely on the protection of a strong legal system.

Global Policy Advocacy and Movement-Building

We advocate with policy decision-makers to include refugee rights as a key component of international refugee assistance, in addition to humanitarian aid. We also engage other refugee rights advocates, universities and thought leaders to build a global refugee rights movement.





16 MILLION

The number of refugees in the world today.

1998

The year two pioneers of the refugee rights movement started providing legal aid to refugees: Refugee Law Project in Uganda and Refugee Consortium of Kenya.

>10,000

The number of refugees reached through direct assistance by Asylum Access advocates in Ecuador, Thailand and Tanzania in the past year alone.

A man with a shaved head and a slight smile stands in front of a blue corrugated metal wall. He is wearing a white polo shirt with a blue crest and a small patch on the left chest, and pink and white plaid shorts. The background is a solid blue wall with horizontal wooden planks and some vertical pipes.

PAKISTAN & IRAN

The top two refugee-hosting countries in 2012, according to the UN refugee agency.
Less than one percent of the world's refugees are resettled in North America, Europe and Australia.

17 YEARS

The average time spent in a refugee camp – a generation
disempowered to rebuild their lives.



ECUADOR

Ecuador has recognized 140,000 mostly Colombian refugees, Latin America's largest refugee population. Despite a relatively healthy refugee policy record, a new presidential decree made it tougher for refugees to access legal status and protection this year. Refugees now have to apply within 15 days of arrival. Many previously recognized refugees also had their legal status taken away.

HIGHLIGHTS

With offices in 5 new locations across the country, we provided direct legal assistance that reached more than 10,000 refugees.

We helped 17 individuals challenge immigration detention violations, winning their freedom in a habeas corpus case and setting a legal precedent.

Building on our successful campaign that led to the inclusion of refugee work rights in the constitution, we worked with employment skills training organizations to provide livelihoods workshops for refugees.

We launched a constitutional challenge in the Ecuadorian Supreme Court to dismantle new legal barriers that make it harder for refugees to seek protection. Our petition was accepted and is now under review.

We began regional advocacy to improve refugee rights across Latin America, co-authoring a report with the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants titled *"Refugee Status Determination in Latin America: Regional Challenges and Opportunities."*

“When the Ecuadorian government wanted to deport me, Asylum Access helped me submit an appeal so that I could remain here with my family.

-- Domingo, a refugee from Colombia



MARY'S STORY

Mary left her home in Bangladesh to study at a Thai university, where she met the love of her life – another woman from her country. As a lesbian couple, Mary and her partner endured sustained harassment from the Bangladeshi community in Bangkok. An attempted break-in and a rash of violent encounters left Mary feeling threatened and vulnerable. Because homosexuality is a criminal offense in Bangladesh, she knew she and her partner would never be able to return home.

Asylum Access helped Mary and her partner navigate the refugee status determination (RSD) process, obtain legal status, and learn about third-country resettlement processes. Within two years, they were resettled in North America, where they are rebuilding a new life away from persecution.





THAILAND

Thailand's best-known refugees are the 140,000 Myanmar people living in refugee camps along the border, but thousands more live in hiding on urban margins, fearful of arrest and deportation. Thailand does not officially recognize refugees' right to protection. Arrest and detention is common. In Bangkok, refugees come from over 20 countries, including China, Somalia, Pakistan, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Syria and many more.

HIGHLIGHTS

We provided direct legal assistance to nearly 200 refugees this year at our office in Bangkok.

We successfully advocated for draft amendments to the Thai Immigration Act, now due for review in parliament. If successful, this would protect refugees from imprisonment in Thailand.

To empower the refugee community, we expanded community outreach and launched refugee women's groups for Iranian and Somali women.

To cut down on erroneous decisions that can expose refugees to deportation and sometimes death, we began working with the UN refugee agency to issue letters explaining why applicants were denied refugee status.

Regionally, we advocated for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to include refugees' right to seek asylum in the new ASEAN Human Rights Declaration. A version of this was successfully adopted in late 2012, serving as a framework for regional cooperation.



TANZANIA

Tanzania hosts over 100,000 refugees, mostly from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Somalia. In a country where most refugees are required to live in camps, urban refugees living in towns and cities are a particularly vulnerable population: often invisible, with few resources and no rights. In early 2013, the government convened the National Eligibility Council responsible for refugee affairs, marking the first time it has met since 2010.

HIGHLIGHTS

We provided direct legal assistance reaching over 1,000 refugees, mostly at our office in Dar es Salaam but also to 18 refugees detained in regional prisons after leaving the camps.

We continued to advocate for an “urban refugee policy” that would allow refugees to live and work in Tanzanian communities instead of camps. This year, the government began discussions to develop this policy.

To better understand where and how refugees are detained, we conducted a survey of 476 individuals in regional prisons. We will publish our findings later this year.

We launched a series of livelihood empowerment workshops in collaboration with Junior Achievement, an entrepreneurship training organization. Refugees learn about the local economy, marketing, microfinance opportunities, business law, and other topics to help them launch small businesses.

As a founding member of the Tanzanian Refugee and Migrants Network (TAREMINET), we are working to improve access to refugee legal aid across the country through referrals and other partnerships.

“ I was living in hiding, I couldn't do anything.
I couldn't even feel safe myself here.
I was not safe, I was not peaceful.
Thanks to Asylum Access,
I have my peasant permit.
I'm now legally residing in Tanzania.
So all these thanks to Asylum Access.
I really appreciate it.
I'm now free.

-- Martha, a refugee from the
Democratic Republic of the Congo







GLOBAL POLICY ADVOCACY

Our global policy advocacy complements national advocacy efforts, bringing refugee perspectives from the ground directly to key global decision-makers in Geneva and Washington, DC. This year, we focused on refugees' right to safe and lawful employment, strategic litigation as a tool for refugee rights empowerment, and the right to legal representation in proceedings that can determine a refugee's fate.

HIGHLIGHTS

We were invited to submit a chapter on the right to legal representation for the UN Refugee Agency's Procedural Standards in RSD processes used in over 50 countries. RSD determines whether refugees are eligible for protection under international law.

In the second year of our Refugee Work Rights campaign, we expanded our advocacy for refugees' right to safe and lawful employment through a survey of barriers to safe livelihood opportunities and a petition for the UN refugee agency to dedicate more resources to refugee livelihoods.

Together with the UN Refugee Agency and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), we presented a side session on strategic litigation at this year's UN High Commissioner for Refugees' Annual Consultations with NGOs in Geneva. Strategic litigation is an emerging tool for refugee rights empowerment. We are fostering dialogue to better understand the factors that contribute to effective strategic litigation, including opportunities to learn about successful cases like the Kenyan High Court's groundbreaking July 26 judgment in favor of refugee rights.

REFUGEE WORK RIGHTS CAMPAIGN

Refugee protection is often limited to humanitarian aid or mere physical security. This provides critical safety from further persecution, but is hardly sufficient to enable refugees to rebuild their lives. The right to safe and lawful employment is protected in the 1951 Refugee Convention, signed by 145 countries. Yet only 37 percent of countries fully meet international standards in protecting refugees' right to work.

For refugees, traumatized by what they have already endured, the ability to work legally can be a pivotal anchor, a chance to rebuild and make empowered choices for themselves and their families.

Self-sufficient refugees provide economic and social contributions to their host communities and countries, fostering the potential to rejuvenate communities, expand markets, import new skills and build global networks. Positive interactions between refugees and host communities can dispel prejudice, enhance understanding and improve relations between refugees and local communities, thereby facilitating integration.

The right to work is fundamental.

www.refugeeworkrights.org





“ Work is a start.
It is a start to changing one's life...
Work gives a person the opportunity to
educate their children, to feed them
and to have a home.

-- Alberto, a Colombian refugee

REFUGEE RIGHTS TOOLKIT

Designed as an office-in-a-box to enable refugee rights advocates to replicate Asylum Access's model anywhere in the world, the Toolkit compiles best practices and lessons learned from seven years of refugee empowerment in Ecuador, Thailand and Tanzania. Our prototype has undergone testing by 21 pilot users this year. Two advanced users have already used the Toolkit to help launch refugee legal aid initiatives in India and Indonesia, and contributed their own lessons to the Toolkit.

This year, we improved our Toolkit approach, adding key components to provide a comprehensive set of resources customized to each Toolkit user's needs:

- One-on-one coaching and mentorship
- Connections to the global network of refugee rights advocates and other resources
- Access to the online Refugee Rights Toolkit.

We are currently developing a full alpha version of the Toolkit, which will feature additional content for working with refugee women and girls, national and international refugee rights law, and other new chapters. To become a user or contribute content, please contact diana.essex@asylumaccess.org.





A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOOLKIT

2013 2012 2011 2010

• Toolkit idea hatched, brainstorming begins

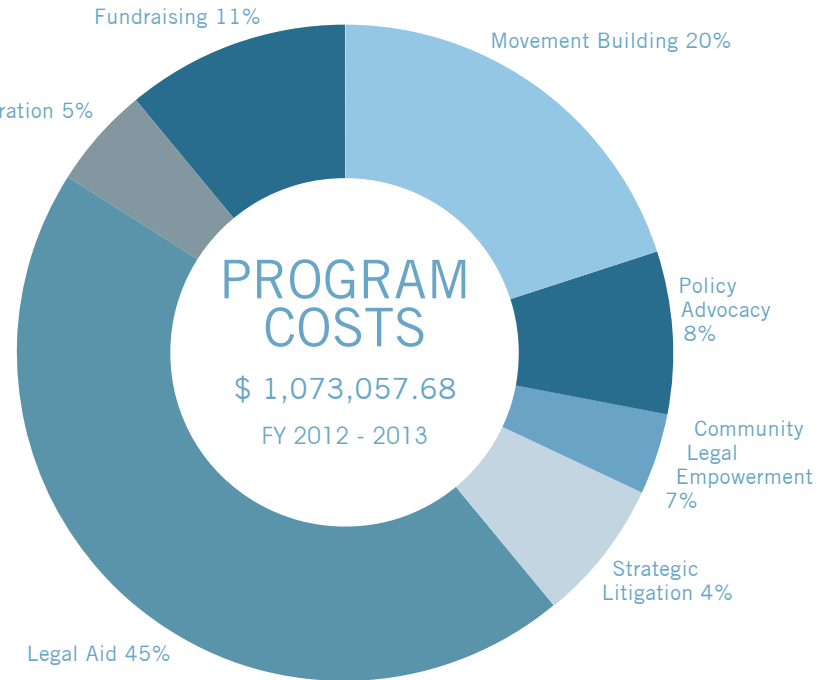
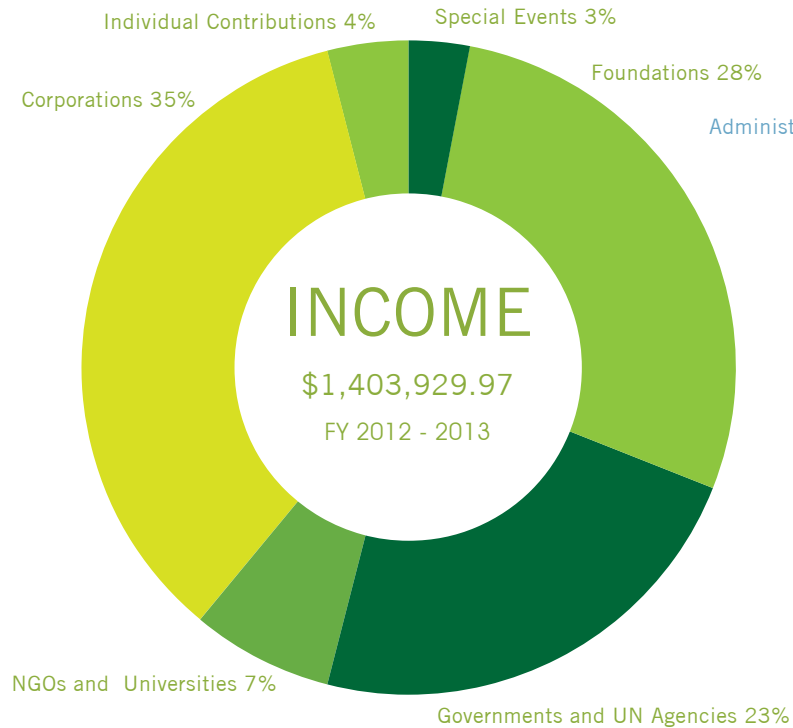
• First draft of core chapters complete, followed by many revisions

• Prototype released, undergoes pilot testing

• Full alpha version under development

FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR 2012 - 2013



SUMMARY OF INCOME & EXPENSE

FISCAL YEAR 2012 - 2013

Income*

Contributed Support	
Individual Contributions	\$59,541.25
Corporations	\$489,056.00
NGO and University Partnerships	\$98,728.76
Government and UN Agencies	\$320,740.26
Foundations	\$387,539.37
Special Events Income	
In-Kind Donations	\$17,881.54
Special Event Revenue	\$26,279.50
Honoraria	\$1,000.00
Gifts in Kind	\$2,799.90
Savings Interest	\$363.39
Total Income	\$1,403,929.97

Expense

Salaries, Benefits and Taxes	\$686,711.65
Contract Services	\$45,301.00
Equipment and Facilities	\$46,542.41
Rent and Utilities	\$60,082.46
Operations	\$84,106.32
Special Event Expenses	\$35,005.87
Travel	\$115,307.97
Total Expenses	\$1,073,057.68

*Includes some multi-year funding agreements.

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