



**PATHS**

**STAZE**

**SHTIGJE**

مسارات

**СТЕЖКИ**



“

**Migranti i izbjeglice nisu pijuni na šahovskoj ploči čovječanstva. Oni su djeca, žene i muškarci koji odlaze ili su prisiljeni napustiti svoje domove iz različitih razloga, koji dijele legitimnu želju za znanjem i boljim životom, ali prije svega da budu više.**

*Papa Franjo*

“

**Migrants and refugees are not pawns on the chessboard of humanity. They are children, women and men who leave, or are forced to leave, their homes for various reasons, sharing a legitimate desire not only to have more, but above all to be more.**

*Pope Francis*

## I Was In A Hurry

Yesterday I lost a country.  
 I was in a hurry,  
 and didn't notice when  
 it fell from me  
 like a broken branch  
 from a forgetful tree.  
 Please, if anyone passes by  
 and stumbles across it,  
 perhaps in a suitcase  
 open to the sky,  
 or engraved on a rock  
 like a gaping wound,  
 or wrapped  
 in the blankets of emigrants,  
 or canceled  
 like a losing lottery ticket,  
 or helplessly forgotten  
 in Purgatory,  
 or rushing forward  
 without a goal  
 like the questions of children,  
 or rising with the smoke of war,  
 or rolling in a helmet  
 on the sand,  
 or stolen in Ali Baba's jar,  
 or disguised in the uniform  
 of a policeman  
 who stirred up the prisoners  
 and fled,  
 or squatting in the mind  
 of a woman  
 who tries to smile,  
 or scattered  
 like the dreams  
 of new immigrants in America.  
 If anyone stumbles across it,  
 return it to me, please.  
 Please return it, sir.  
 Please return it, madam.  
 It is my country...  
 I was in a hurry  
 when I lost it yesterday.

*Dunya Mikhail*

*Translated by  
 Elizabeth Winslow*



## Nisu poput nas

oni nisu poput nas različiti su strani drugačiji žele nas pokoriti nametnuti svoju volju svoj način svoje riječi svoje brojeve one njihove arapske oni nisu poput nas otimaju nam poslove koje mi ne želimo raditi voze bicikle koje mi odbijamo vidjeti oni nisu poput nas osmjehuju se pri susretu pozdravljaju zažele dobar tek u svakom dućanu pekarnici fast foodu čak i u našem najdražem kafiću još će početi raditi i na šalterima oni nisu poput nas zar da nas netko dočekuje s osmijehom umjesto grdi zbog pogrešnog papira mrko gleda zbog dolaska na početku smjene	na kraju smjene usred smjene oni nisu poput nas ne kukaju u pauzi od prigovaranja ne čuvaju pos'o nego rade bez predaha oni nisu poput nas oni ne govore ni engleski a kamoli hrvatski ni izbliza tako loše kao mi oni nisu poput nas ni u čemu nemamo sličnosti oni ne viču na nas u prolazu ne napadaju da se tu ne zadržavamo ne pljačkaju nas dok se noću doma vraćamo s posla sa zadnje dostave oni nisu poput nas nepoznanica su tko zna što im je u glavama kakve su im namjere sigurno imaju svoje nedoumice greške sumnje i strahove što ako su što ako su što ako su ljudi
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*Denis Vidović*

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## VLČ. ANĐELKO KATANEC

### Novom stazom života

Razmišljam o riječi „staze“. U hrvatskom jeziku o stazama se govori u kontekstu sporta, npr. atletska staza kojom se kreću trkači. Također, u cestovnom prometu se površina za hod pješaka naziva pješačka staza. Po jezičnoj definiciji staza nije obična cesta ili put, već puteljak kojega je netko prokrčio svojim hodanjem. Stazu stvara onaj tko prvi prolazi dotad nepostojećim putem i iza sebe ostavlja trag koji mogu slijediti i drugi. Kao dijete sa sela, u djetinjstvu sam uvijek sitnim koracima hodao kroz visoku travu želeći iza sebe ostaviti što prohodniju stazu.

Isus Krist je svojim životom utabao jednu novu stazu života za svoje učenike, a to je, prema riječima poznate duhovne šansone, „cesta mira i ljubavi, koja vodi sve do raja“. Upravo ta spoznaja, da slijedeći Krista nalazim siguran i provjereni put kroz život, nadahnula me je da s 14 godina odem iz obiteljskog doma i započnem formaciju za svećeničku službu. Biti svećenik znači ne samo slijediti već pređene staze već i krčiti nove staze do ljudskih duša. Sam Isus Krist je slao svoje učenike dva po dva da u njegovo ime idu u mjesta kamo je on kanio doći.

JRS u svojoj misiji stvara nove staze u poslanju Crkve, i to napose prema onim putnicima koji i sami najčešće kreću na putovanje krčeći nove staze tamo gdje ih prije nije bilo. Temeljni dokument Crkve o migracijama nosi naziv *Erga migrantes caritas Christi* i daje jasnu uputu da prema seliocima treba ići s Kristovom ljubavlju. To uključuje pastoralnu i socijalnu brigu, poštivanje kulturnog i vjerskog identiteta, izgradnju dijaloga, zajedništva i integracije u novoj sredini. I osobno sam učio od JRS-a kako to činiti prateći i uključujući se u njihov rad na području grada Zagreba. Uz JRS sam naučio da je najvažniji susret oči u oči jer tada migranti nisu samo slučaj za rješavanje već konkretna osoba s kojom zajedno kročimo stazom života.

Pitanje migracija postalo je u našem vremenu izazov stvaranja novih staza i buđenja nove nade u globalnom društvu koje više ne uspijeva ponuditi održivu perspektivu za budućnost. Ustvari,

migracije su kroz čitavu povijest čovječanstva utjecale na oblikovanje ljudskih društava, kultura i civilizacija više nego gotovo bilo koji drugi fenomen. Svaki čovjek ima bliže ili daljnje pretke koji su bili migranti.

Danas su u migranti u najvećem broju ekonomski migranti odnosno strani radnici, no i dalje je jako puno izbjeglica koji su pobjegli iz vlastite zemlje jer im je tamo život ugrožen i traže međunarodnu zaštitu. JRS u tom kontekstu širi svoj rad prema svima koji su zbog migracija postali ranjiva društvena skupina, a tu se ubrajaju i klimatski migranti koji bježe od prirodnih katastrofa, neregularni migranti koji su ušli u zemlju bez potrebnih dokumenata, žrtve krijumčara, studenti i druge osobe koje se teško snalaze u novoj sredini. Slikovito rečeno, to su ljudi koji ne putuju cestama, već stazama, a katkad su i sami izgubljeni.

U tome čitam Božji poziv, i da osobno kao svećenik u pastoralu migranata, i zajednički kroz društveni angažman kao što to čini JRS, tražimo i stvaramo nove staze mira i ljubavi.



## REV. ANĐELKO KATANEC

### Along a New Path of Life

I reflect on the word “paths.” In the Croatian language, paths are often mentioned in the context of sports, such as a running path used by athletes. In road traffic, the surface intended for pedestrians is called a footpath. By definition, however, a path is not just an ordinary road or route, but a trail that someone has cleared through their own movement. A path is created by the one who first walks where there was no way before, leaving behind a trace that others can follow. As a child growing up in the countryside, I would walk through tall grass with small steps, hoping to leave behind a path that others could easily walk.

Through His life, Jesus Christ has traced out a new path of life for His disciples – what a well-known spiritual song describes as “a road of peace and love that leads all the way to heaven.” It was precisely this realization – that by following Christ I find a safe and proven way through life – that inspired me, at the age of fourteen, to leave my family home and begin formation for the priesthood. To be a priest means not only to follow paths already walked, but also to open new paths toward the human heart. Jesus Himself sent His disciples out

two by two to go, in His name, to the places where He Himself intended to come.

Through its mission, JRS creates new paths within the mission of the Church, especially toward those travelers who themselves are often forging new paths where none existed before. The Church’s key document on migration, *Erga migrantes caritas Christi*, gives clear guidance that we are to approach migrants with the love of Christ. This includes pastoral and social care, respect for cultural and religious identity and the building of dialogue, community and integration in a new environment. I personally learned how to do this by accompanying and engaging in the work of JRS in the city of Zagreb. With JRS, I learned that the most important thing is a face-to-face encounter, because in that moment migrants are no longer just “cases” to be solved, but real persons with whom we walk together along the path of life.

In our time, migration has become a challenge of creating new paths and awakening new hope in a global society that often struggles to offer a sustainable vision for the future. In fact, throughout history, migration has shaped human societies, cultures and civilizations more than almost any other phenomenon. Every person has ancestors, near or distant, who were migrants.

Today, most migrants are economic migrants or foreign workers, yet there are still many refugees who have fled their countries because their lives were at risk and who seek international protection. In that context, JRS extends its work to all those who have become vulnerable due to migration – including climate migrants fleeing natural disasters, irregular migrants who have entered a country without the necessary documents, victims of smuggling, students and others who struggle to find their place in a new environment. Figuratively speaking, these are people who do not travel along roads, but along paths – and at times, they themselves are lost.

In all of this, I recognize a call from God – both personally, as a priest engaged in the pastoral care of migrants, and collectively, through social engagement such as that of JRS – to seek and create new paths of peace and love.

## JRS BIH: 30 godina na putu solidarnosti

Ove godine Isusovačka služba za izbjeglice u Bosni i Hercegovini obilježava 30 godina svoga rada – tri desetljeća predanog praćenja, služenja i zagovaranja ljudi u pokretu. Spadamo među starije JRS-ove urede u svijetu. Trenutno ih je 57, i svi oni djeluju sukladno potrebama lokalnog konteksta, ali uvijek kroz blizinu s korisnicima, naglašavajući njihovo neupitno dostojanstvo i nastojeći ih osnažiti kako bi se uspješno integrirali u društvo i samostalno gradili svoju budućnost. Istodobno, JRS-ove aktivnosti uvijek kada je to moguće uključuju i lokalno stanovništvo, napose kroz volontiranje, čime se potiče dijalog i međusobno razumijevanje, te tako doprinosimo izgradnji društva dobrodošlice i kulture susreta. Kroz naše aktivnosti želimo što konkretnije ostvarivati viziju zajednice u kojoj se svaka osoba, bez obzira na podrijetlo i državljanstvo, osjeća prihvaćeno i podržano.

### Kako je sve počelo?

Počeci djelovanja JRS-a u Bosni i Hercegovini usko su povezani s prisustvom isusovaca u sarajevskom

naselju Grbavica, još od 1965. godine. Kao i na drugim mjestima u svijetu, isusovačka prisutnost stvorila je temelje za kasniji humanitarni i socijalni rad, posebno u kriznim vremenima. Kod nas je ta kriza u punom zamahu nastupila ratom u BiH koji je trajao od 1992. do 1995. i rezultirao s preko 100.000 žrtava i 2,2 milijuna raseljenih osoba. JRS je ispočetka pružao pomoć izbjeglicama izvan zemlje, posebno u Hrvatskoj, i to kroz humanitarnu pomoć, povezivanje raseljenih osoba i podršku u obrazovanju. Hrvatski JRS je tako koordinirao programe stipendiranja učenika i studenata iz BiH, kojih je bilo gotovo tisuću, te organizirao obrazovanja za djecu u izbjeglištvu, uključujući i nastavu u improviziranim uvjetima, poput škole u velikom šatoru za oko 800 djece iz Velike Kladuše.

Nakon završetka rata, 1996. je uspostavljen ured na Grbavici u Sarajevu, što predstavlja formalni početak rada JRS-a u Bosni i Hercegovini. U tom razdoblju značajnu ulogu imao je isusovac Marjan Šef (1932.–2015.), jedna od ključnih osoba u organiziranju i razvoju prvih projekata pomoći. Pater Šef, inače član Slovenske provincije Družbe Isusove, bio je

do 2001. poglavar sarajevske isusovačke zajednice i ostao je upamćen po snažnom zalaganju za najranjivije i iskrenom suosjećanju prema svim ljudima pogođenima ratnim stradanjima. Vođenje ureda će kasnije od njega preuzeti p. Stjepan Kušan (1944.–2013.), također poznat po strastvenom zalaganju za potrebite, ali i za dijalog i ekumenizam u vremenima kada je to bilo posebno izazovno.

Aktivnosti JRS-a su u prvim godinama bile usmjerene na obnovu života ljudi i zajednica, te su uključivale obnovu razrušenih kuća u mjestima poput Sarajeva, Borovice, Tramošnice i Bugojna, i to redovito uz podršku međunarodnih volontera. Istodobno su razvijani i programi podrške ranjivim skupinama, uključujući dugogodišnje projekte za žrtve mina, za nabavu medicinskih pomagala i drugih oblika zdravstvene skrbi, kao i psihosocijalnu podršku starijim osobama koje žive same, osobito na području naselja Grbavica. Poseban naglasak bio je na obrazovanju mladih, kroz inicijative poput kompjuterskih škola u Sarajevu i Gromiljaku (Kiseljak), koje su doprinijele njihovom osnaživanju i uključivanju u društvo.

Uz te godine intenzivnog rada mnoge volontere i korisnike i danas vežu i lijepa i sjetna sjećanja. Rođena su brojna lokalna i međunarodna prijateljstva, i mnoge su sudbine ostale obilježene upravo tim poratnim vremenima. Zanimljivo je kako je današnji ravnatelj irskog JRS-a, Eugene Quinn, svoj put u organizaciji započeo upravo volontiranjem na projektu za djecu žrtve mina u Sarajevu. Uz brojne aktivnosti vezane su i brojne anegdote, a p. Kušan je posebno volio prepričavati onu kada je jednog isusovačkog bogoslova koji je radio za JRS u Bosni zaustavila srpska policija te tražila da plati kaznu za prekoračenje brzine. Kada je jedan od policajaca primijetio JRS-ovu naljepnicu na automobilu, zapitao je što ta skraćenica znači, a bogoslov mu je odgovorio: "Isus za Republiku Srpsku!" Kad je to čuo drugi policajac, rekao je: "Pusti ga, rade nam dobro".

Nova faza djelovanja JRS-a započinje 2018. godine, kada se uslijed migrantske krize u BiH javlja



potreba za ponovnim snažnijim angažmanom humanitarnih organizacija. U tom kontekstu, JRS započinje s volonterskim aktivnostima uređenja migrantskih kampova u sjeverozapadnoj Bosni, a kasnije i s raznim projektnim aktivnostima, fokusirajući se na pružanje podrške migrantima kroz prevođenje, zdravstvenu skrb, obrazovne aktivnosti, psihosocijalnu podršku i jačanje socijalne uključenosti.

### Put koji traje

Današnje aktivnosti JRS-a se baziraju na izravnom terenskom radu s ljudima u pokretu, koji obuhvaća prisutnost u prihvatnim i dnevnim centrima. Taj rad uključuje humanitarnu pomoć, psihosocijalnu podršku i zaštitu mentalnog zdravlja, zatim obrazovanje i učenje jezika, te općenitu blizinu s korisnicima, ali i zauzetost u pogledu poticanja društvene uključenosti. JRS aktivno djeluje na području zagovaranja, s ciljem unapređenja politika i praksi koje se odnose na zaštitu prava ljudi u pokretu. Poseban naglasak stavlja se na rad s djecom i mladima, za koje smo otvorili



prihvatni centar u Sarajevu. Nastojimo ostvariti blisku suradnju s lokalnim zajednicama, nadležnim institucijama na lokalnoj i državnoj razini, kao i međunarodnim nevladinim organizacijama, korporacijama, zakladama i institucionalnim donatorima, putem kojih osiguravamo podršku našim programima. Važnu ulogu imaju i vjerske institucije, napose Katolička crkva, koja nam pruža institucionalnu i logističku podršku kroz volontere i župne zajednice koje nas prate i podržavaju.

#### Djelatnici JRS-a u službi nade i dostojanstva za budućnost

Djelatnici JRS-a obilježeni su različitim religijskim i nacionalnim pozadinama, ali ih povezuje zajednička misija služenja ljudima u pokretu. Ta ujedinenost u različitosti, koja nije uobičajena u našem kontekstu, vrlo je važna za naš rad. Njome nastojimo dati primjer svima koje susrećemo, a ujedno biti vjerni religijskoj pozadini koja nas nadahnjuje, prema kojoj Bog želi i stvara različitost kako bi proizvela harmoniju života. Odlikuje nas i harmoničnost

profesija, pa se u timu nalaze socijalni radnici, psiholozi, edukatori, prevoditelji, terenski radnici i volonteri, koji zajedno osiguravaju sveobuhvatnu podršku našim korisnicima. Vrijednosti koje nas pritom pokreću jesu one dostojanstva, solidarnosti, suosjećanja i poštivanja ljudskih prava.

U tom duhu nastavljamo s predanim radom i u budućnosti, učeći iz onoga što smo prošli i nastojeći u BiH provoditi najbolje prakse koje JRS na globalnoj razini ima. Premda je rad s ljudima u pokretu posebno zahtjevan i intenzivan, te zahtjeva konstantne prilagodbe promjenjivom kontekstu, ostajemo vjerni našoj misiji blizine s ljudima u kojima prepoznajemo Boga koji se objavio kao Stranac. Ono što će sigurno obilježiti budućnost u našoj zemlji, kao i u čitavoj Europi, jest potreba za gradnjom mostova između migranata i lokalnog stanovništva, kako bi se stvarali uvjeti za otvorenost, dijalog i solidarnost. Želimo doprinosti stvaranju društva dobrodošlice i dostojanstvenog života za sve, i vjerujemo da smo već na pravom putu.



## JRS BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: 30 Years on the Path of Solidarity

This year, the Jesuit Refugee Service in Bosnia and Herzegovina marks 30 years of its work – three decades of dedicated accompanying, serving and advocating for people on the move. We are among the older JRS offices worldwide. There are currently 57 of them, all operating according to local contexts, yet always grounded in close proximity to beneficiaries, emphasizing their inherent dignity and striving to empower them to integrate successfully into society and build their own futures independently. At the same time, whenever possible, JRS activities also involve the local population, particularly through volunteering, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding, and contributing to the development of a welcoming society and a culture of encounter. Through our work, we aim to concretely realize a vision of a community in which every person, regardless of origin or nationality, feels accepted and supported.

#### How it all began

The beginnings of JRS activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina are closely connected to the presence

of Jesuits in the Sarajevo neighborhood of Grbavica since 1965. As in other parts of the world, Jesuit presence laid the groundwork for later humanitarian and social engagement, especially in times of crisis. In our context, that crisis fully unfolded during the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1992 to 1995, which resulted in over 100,000 victims and 2.2 million displaced persons. Initially, JRS provided support to refugees outside the country, particularly in Croatia, through humanitarian aid, family reunification, and educational support. The Croatian JRS coordinated scholarship programs for nearly a thousand students from Bosnia and Herzegovina and organized education for children in exile, including classes held in improvised conditions, such as a large tent school for around 800 children from Velika Kladuša.

After the war, in 1996, an office was established in Grbavica, Sarajevo, marking the formal beginning of JRS operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. During this period, an important role was played by the Jesuit Marjan Šef (1932–2015), one of the





key figures in organizing and developing the first assistance programs. Fr. Šef, a member of the Slovenian Province of the Society of Jesus, served as superior of the Sarajevo Jesuit community until 2001 and is remembered for his strong commitment to the most vulnerable and his sincere compassion for all those affected by the hardships of war. Leadership of the office was later assumed by Fr. Stjepan Kušan (1944–2013), also known for his passionate dedication to those in need, as well as for promoting dialogue and ecumenism in particularly challenging times.

In its early years, JRS activities focused on rebuilding lives and communities, including the reconstruction of destroyed homes in places such as Sarajevo, Borovica, Tramošnica, and Bugojno, often with the support of international volunteers. At the same time, programs were developed to support vulnerable groups, including long-term projects for landmine victims, the provision of medical equipment and healthcare services, and psychosocial support for elderly individuals living alone, particularly in Grbavica. A special emphasis was placed on youth education through initiatives such as computer schools in Sarajevo and Gromiljak (Kiseljak), which contributed to their empowerment and social inclusion.

Those years of intensive work are still remembered by many volunteers and beneficiaries with

both joy and melancholy. Numerous local and international friendships were formed, and many lives were profoundly shaped by that post-war period. Interestingly, the current director of JRS Ireland, Eugene Quinn, began his journey within the organization by volunteering on a project for children who were victims of landmines in Sarajevo. Many activities are also linked to memorable anecdotes. Fr. Kušan especially liked to recount the story of a Jesuit scholastic working with JRS in Bosnia who was stopped by Serbian police for speeding. When one officer noticed the JRS sticker on the car and asked what it meant, the scholastic replied: "Jesus for Republika Srpska!" Hearing this, another officer said: "Let him go – they are doing good things for us."

#### A path that continues

A new phase of JRS activity began in 2018, when the migrant crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina created a renewed need for strong humanitarian engagement. In this context, JRS started with volunteer activities aimed at improving conditions in migrant camps in northwestern Bosnia, later expanding into various project-based initiatives focused on supporting migrants through translation services, healthcare, educational activities, psychosocial support and strengthening social inclusion.

Today, JRS activities are based on direct fieldwork with people on the move, including presence in reception and day centers. This work involves humanitarian assistance, psychosocial support and mental health protection, education and language learning, as well as close accompaniment of beneficiaries and active efforts to promote social inclusion. JRS is also actively engaged in advocacy to improve policies and practices related to the protection of the rights of people on the move. A particular focus is placed on children and youth, for whom a reception center has been opened in Sarajevo. We strive to maintain close cooperation

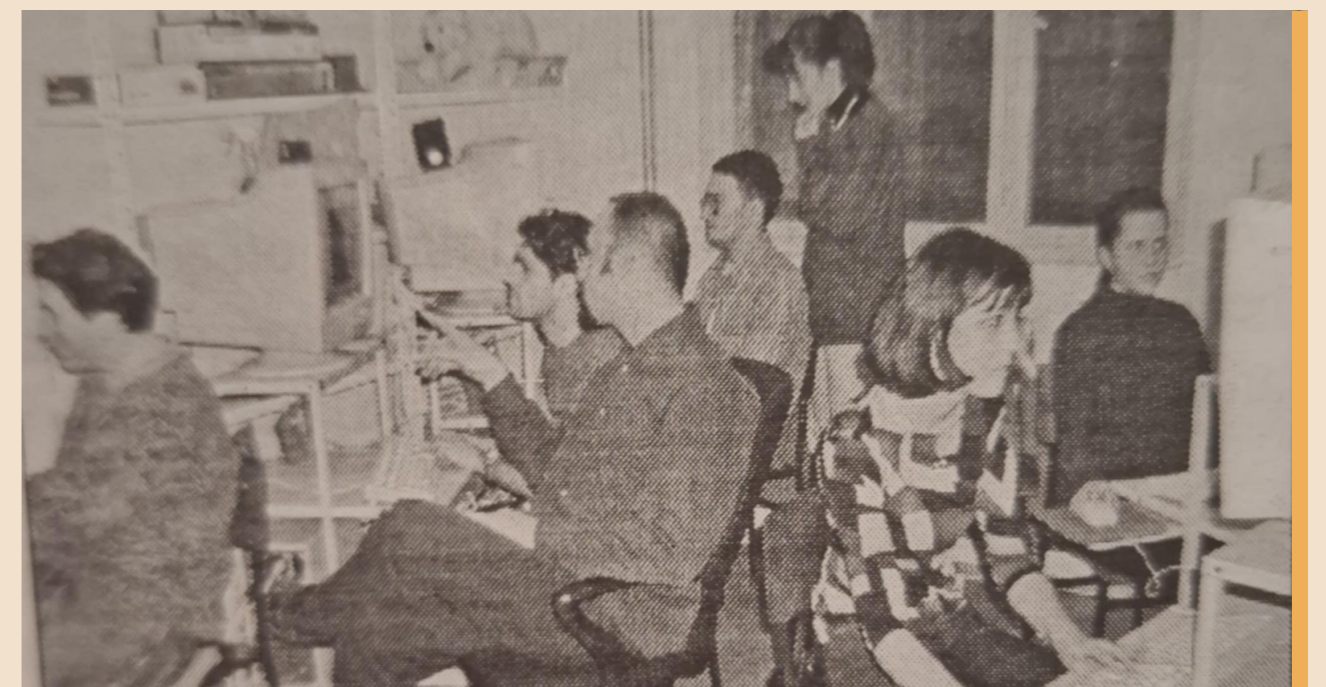
with local communities, relevant institutions at both local and national levels, as well as international NGOs, corporations, foundations, and institutional donors, through which we secure support for our programs. Religious institutions also play an important role, especially the Catholic Church, which provides institutional and logistical support through volunteers and parish communities that accompany and support us.

#### JRS staff in the service of hope and dignity for the future

JRS staff come from diverse religious and national backgrounds, yet are united by a shared mission of serving people on the move. This unity in diversity, which is not common in our context, is essential to our work. Through it, we aim to offer an example to all those we encounter, while remaining faithful to the religious inspiration that guides us – namely, that God wills and creates diversity in order to bring about the harmony of life. Our team is also marked by a harmonious combination of professions,

including social workers, psychologists, educators, translators, field workers, and volunteers, who together provide comprehensive support to our beneficiaries. The values that drive us are dignity, solidarity, compassion, and respect for human rights.

In this spirit, we continue our dedicated work into the future, learning from our past and striving to implement the best practices developed by JRS globally in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although working with people on the move is particularly demanding and requires constant adaptation to a changing environment, we remain faithful to our mission of closeness to people, in whom we recognize God revealed as the Stranger. What will certainly shape the future in our country, as well as across Europe, is the need to build bridges between migrants and local communities in order to create conditions for openness, dialogue and solidarity. We seek to contribute to the creation of a welcoming society and a dignified life for all, and we believe we are already on the right path.



## USKRS – PORUKA NADE I NOVOG POČETKA ZA LJUDE U POKRETU

Uskrs, središnji kršćanski blagdan koji slavi puninu života, nosi snažnu poruku nade, obnove i novog početka. Ta se poruka snažno osjeća u radu JRS-a s migrantima i izbjeglicama, gdje svakodnevni susreti otkrivaju priče gubitka, ali i ustrajnu potragu za sigurnošću, dostojanstvom i novim životom. Rad s našim korisnicima, našom braćom i sestrama, nas uči kako se poruka uskrsnuća prenosi kroz solidarnost, međusobnu podršku i jačanje nade u bolje sutra. Te su vrijednosti sposobne preokrenuti situacije onih koji se nalaze u krajnje teškim i neizvjesnim periodima svoga života.

Blagdani u našem radu imaju posebno značenje jer okupljaju ljude, te time podsjećaju na važnost zajedništva i otvaraju prostor blizini i empatiji. Upravo zato u radu s ljudima u pokretu posvećujemo posebnu pažnju svim blagdanima, a posebno onim najznačajnijim, nastojeći iskoristiti te trenutke koji donose osjećaj pripadnosti i blizine. Tako su i ove godine JRS-ovi timovi u Bosni i Hercegovini obilježili Uskrs kroz niz radionica i susreta, unutar kampova i izvan njih.

U kampu Blažuj naši djelatnici i volonteri su zajedno s korisnicima obilježili jednu od dragih tradicija Uskrsa – ukrašavanja šarenih jaja, te njihovo dijeljenje s najmilijima kao simbol darivanja i uzajamne ljubavi. Na iznenađenje i radost djece svih religija, ove godine pridružio nam se i uskrsni zec, donoseći osmijehe i razdraganost. Zajedno



s partnerskim organizacijama organizirane su radionice na kojima su sudionici stvarali, dijelili tradicije i uživali u palačinkama. Korisnici pak naše kuće za maloljetnike su nakon jutarnje vazmene mise ispred crkve Presvetog Trojstva u Sarajevu dijelili uskrsnje pisanice koja su ranije pripremili s puno truda, ljubavi i kreativnosti, utiskujući u svako od njih dio svoje autentičnosti.

Jednako zajedništvo i solidarnost osjetili su se i u Bihaću, u obiteljskoj zoni kampa Lipa. Uskrsnje

**„Gospodin je živ i ostaje s nama. Kroz pukotine uskrsnuća koje pronalaze put u tamama, on predaje naše srce nadi koja nas podupire: moć smrti nije konačna sudbina našega života.“**

*Papa Lav XIV., Propovijed na Uskrs 2026.*

aktivnosti izmamile su brojne osmijehe, posebno za vrijeme ukrašavanja pisanica, gdje su se dijelili trenuci radosti i timskog rada. Bila je to lijepa prilika za obitelji različitog porijekla da se povežu, zabave i proslave duh zajedništva.

S druge strane, naš Dnevni centar u Bihaću je ugostio učenike iz dviju lokalnih škola. Ove posjete su uvijek važne jer doprinose uključenosti ljudi u pokretu u širu zajednicu, stvarajući prostor susreta, razmjene i međusobnog upoznavanja. Upravo u takvim trenucima zajedništva očituje se i temeljni smisao Uskrsa – prepoznavanje dostojanstva života svakog čovjeka, bez obzira na njegovo porijeklo ili životni put.

Kroz ovakve aktivnosti JRS nastavlja svoju misiju praćenja, služenja i zagovaranja, gradeći mostove razumijevanja, te doprinoseći stvaranju inkluzivnijeg i solidarnijeg društva. Nadamo se da ćemo kroz to odaslati poruku i čitavom našem



društvu: da različitosti ne predstavljaju prepreku, već priliku za učenje, susret i zajedništvo, kao i za dijeljenje bogatstva kulturnih naslijeđa koje svatko sa sobom nosi.



## EASTER – A MESSAGE OF HOPE AND NEW BEGINNINGS FOR PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Easter, the central Christian feast celebrating the fullness of life, carries a powerful message of hope, renewal and new beginnings. This message is strongly reflected in the work of JRS with migrants and refugees, where daily encounters reveal stories of loss, but also a persistent search for safety, dignity and a new life. Working with our beneficiaries – our brothers and sisters – teaches us how the message of the Resurrection is conveyed through solidarity, mutual support and the strengthening of hope for a better tomorrow. These values have the power to transform the situations of those who find themselves in extremely difficult and uncertain periods of their lives.

Feast days hold a special significance in our work, as they bring people together, reminding us of the importance of community and creating space for closeness and empathy. For this reason, we pay particular attention to all celebrations in our work with people on the move, especially the most significant ones, seeking to make the most of these moments that foster a sense of belonging and connection. This year as well, JRS teams in

Bosnia and Herzegovina marked Easter through a series of workshops and gatherings, both within the camps and beyond.

In the Blažuj camp, our staff and volunteers celebrated one of the cherished Easter traditions with the beneficiaries – decorating colorful eggs and sharing them with loved ones as a symbol of giving and mutual love. To the surprise and delight of children of all religions, the Easter Bunny also joined us this year, bringing smiles and joy. Together with partner organizations, workshops were organized where participants created, shared traditions and enjoyed pancakes. Meanwhile, the residents of our house for unaccompanied minors, after the morning Easter Mass at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Sarajevo, distributed Easter eggs they had previously prepared with great effort, love and creativity, imprinting in each one a part of their own authenticity.

The same spirit of community and solidarity was felt in Bihać, in the family zone of the Lipa camp. Easter activities brought many smiles, especially



during the egg-decorating sessions, where moments of joy and teamwork were shared. It was a beautiful opportunity for families from different backgrounds to connect, have fun, and celebrate the spirit of togetherness.

At the same time, our Day Centre in Bihać hosted students from two local schools. These visits are always important, as they contribute to the inclusion of people on the move into the wider community, creating space for encounter, exchange, and mutual understanding. It is precisely in such moments of togetherness that the fundamental meaning of Easter becomes visible – the recognition of the

dignity of every human life, regardless of origin or life journey.

Through these activities, JRS continues its mission of accompaniment, service, and advocacy, building bridges of understanding and contributing to a more inclusive and solidaristic society. We hope that through this we also send a message to our wider society: that differences are not obstacles, but opportunities for learning, encounter, and communion, as well as for sharing the richness of the cultural heritage that each person carries with them.

***“The Lord is alive and remains with us. Through the cracks of resurrection that open up in the darkness, he entrusts our hearts to the hope that sustains us: the power of death is not the final destiny of our lives.”***

*Pope Leo XIV, Homily for Easter Sunday 2026*

## WHEN EMERGENCY BECOMES RESPONSIBILITY

In humanitarian work, some of the most defining moments are not always those that are planned. They are often the moments when uncertainty suddenly enters people's lives, when systems shift unexpectedly, and when what seemed stable becomes fragile overnight. It is in those moments that accompaniment becomes more than a principle, it becomes a responsibility.

In recent months, JRS Kosovo found itself responding to exactly such a moment. A sudden policy-related development affecting accommodation support for persons with international protection created an urgent and deeply worrying situation for some of the refugee families we accompany. For people who have already experienced displacement, insecurity and prolonged uncertainty, the prospect of losing a safe place to stay was not simply a logistical concern. It meant renewed fear, stress and instability at a time when they were trying to rebuild their lives.

For JRS, this was a reminder that integration is never only about legal status or access to services. At its core, integration begins with safety, dignity and the assurance that people will not be left alone when circumstances become difficult.

Among those affected were families with children, individuals already facing significant emotional and economic vulnerability, and people who had only recently begun to feel some sense of stability in Kosovo. The risk of losing accommodation would not only have disrupted their daily lives but could also have undermined their broader integration process affecting school attendance, mental wellbeing, access to health care and trust in institutions.

When it became clear that an urgent response was needed, JRS Kosovo acted immediately. Drawing on its emergency resources, the team mobilized to ensure temporary accommodation support for the most vulnerable refugee families at risk. This support was not only financial, but it was also relational and human. Our staff worked closely with each family, providing reassurance, practical assistance, and regular follow-up during a period marked by anxiety and uncertainty.

As in so many situations of vulnerability, what mattered most was not only the material support itself, but the message behind it: **YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**



This response also reflected the strength of long-term accompaniment. Because JRS has been walking alongside refugee families for years, listening, supporting, and building trust, we were able to understand the urgency of the situation quickly and respond in a way that was both immediate and respectful of people's dignity.

At the same time, this situation has highlighted the importance of responsive institutions and adaptive protection systems. While JRS has stepped in to temporarily support accommodation costs for the most vulnerable refugee families, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has initiated a working group process to review and strengthen the Regulation on the Integration of Foreigners. As an organization closely accompanying refugees and working in regular coordination with institutions, JRS has been part of these discussions, contributing field-based insights to help ensure that the revised framework better responds to the evolving needs of refugees and persons with international protection. This ongoing process is an important step towards more sustainable and adequate support in the future.

This moment reaffirmed something that JRS has always believed, that accompaniment is not only about being present in times of calm, but about standing with people when things become uncertain. It is about offering consistency in moments of instability and ensuring that dignity is protected, even when systems are still adapting.

The recent emergency reminded us that small interventions can make a profound difference. A temporary roof, a conversation at the right moment, a message of reassurance, these are often the things that restore a sense of safety and hope.

In a world where displacement is increasingly prolonged and uncertainty has become part of so many people's daily lives, humanitarian work continues to demand flexibility, courage, and humanity. For JRS Kosovo, this experience has strengthened our conviction that accompaniment remains one of the most powerful forms of solidarity we can offer. Because in the end, integration is not built only through policies and procedures. It is built through trust, protection and the simple but powerful act of standing by people when they need it most.

## HARMONIJA KULTURNE BAŠTINE: susreti koji grade zajedništvo

Kultura je jedna od onih riječi koje često koristimo, a rijetko do kraja promislamo. Ona nije samo skup običaja, pjesama ili recepata, nego način na koji čovjek razumije svijet i sebe u njemu. To je prostor susreta sjećanja i sadašnjosti, osobnog i zajedničkog, onoga što jesmo i čemu težimo. Biti nositelj neke kulture, dakle, prije svega znači biti otvoren razumjeti složenost osobnog naslijeđa kojeg svatko od nas nosi. Upravo zato kultura postaje jedan od ključnih mostova integracije: ondje gdje se ljudi prepoznaju u temeljnim iskustvima, razlike prestaju biti prijatna i postaju mogućnost susreta.

U tom duhu smo započeli s provedbom projekta „Harmonija kulturne baštine“, inicijative koja iz tjedna u tjedan okuplja ljude različitih kultura u ozračju međusobnog upoznavanja i učenja. U vremenu kada se razlike često naglašavaju kao granice, ovi susreti pokazuju da se upravo kroz njih može izgraditi povjerenje i osjećaj pripadnosti. Od samoga početka susreti su obilježeni jednostavnim, ali iskrenom radošću. U njima sudjeluju Hrvati, ali i osobe koje su u Hrvatsku došle iz Sirije, Ukrajine, Nepala, Filipina, Iraka, Kolumbije i Perua. Svaki susret donosi nešto novo: ponekad je to pjesma koju tek učimo, ponekad plesni korak koji traži strpljenje, a ponekad razgovor koji nas iznenadi koliko su iskustva različitih ljudi zapravo bliska.

Glavni naglasak je stavljen na upoznavanje hrvatske kulturne baštine. Sudionici kroz radionice uče tradicijske pjesme i plesove iz različitih krajeva Hrvatske. No ne radi se samo o tome da se nešto nauči „izvesti“, nego da se razumije što se izvodi. Tako se, primjerice, susreću s bečarcem – duhovitim, često zaigranim stihovima koji na prvi pogled djeluju jednostavno, ali u sebi nose čitav svijet ironije, zajedništva i životne mudrosti. Jednako tako, uče i osnovne korake kola, gdje brzo postaje jasno da nije riječ samo o koreografiji, nego o iskustvu zajedništva – držanja za ruke, usklađivanja pokreta i ritma. Neki prvi put kušaju i jednostavne elemente svakodnevice koji su nama gotovo neprimjetni, ali njima zanimljivi: od rituala ispijanja kave koja traje satima, do pokušaja izgovora složenih riječi ili razumijevanja humora koji

se ne prevodi lako. Upravo u tim „malim stvarima“ kultura postaje živa i opipljiva.

Radionice vode stručnjaci uz podršku kulturnog medijatora, stvarajući siguran prostor te mogućnost da se svatko osjeti prihvaćeno – ne kao netko tko „mora naučiti“, nego kao netko tko već ima što donijeti. Susreti nisu jednosmjerni: dok sudionici upoznaju hrvatsku kulturu, istodobno dijele i vlastitu, pa kroz razmjenu iskustava prirodno nastaje međusobno poštovanje. U toj razmjeni nastaje nešto što nije moguće planirati ni propisati – međusobno poštovanje koje proizlazi iz iskustva, a ne iz teorije.

S vremenom su susreti prerasli okvir radionica. Postali su prostor u kojem ljudi sve manje jedni druge doživljavaju kao strance. Smijeh tijekom vježbanja, nesigurni prvi pokušaji pjevanja, podrška pri učenju – sve to polako gradi osjećaj zajedništva koji se ne nameće, nego raste. Uskoro nas očekuje i završni javni nastup koji će biti prilika da sudionici pokažu što su naučili, ali još više da posvjedoče o putu koji su prošli. Kroz pjesmu i ples predstaviti će dio hrvatske tradicije, ali i bogatstvo kultura koje su donijeli sa sobom. Ovaj projekt tako nastavlja rasti kroz male, ali važne korake. Podsjeća nas da pripadnost ne nastaje preko noći, nego kroz susrete, strpljenje i otvorenost. I pokazuje da se upravo kroz kulturu – shvaćenu ne kao ukras, nego kao prostor susreta – može pronaći put prema osjećaju doma, čak i daleko od mjesta iz kojeg smo krenuli.



## HARMONY OF CULTURAL HERITAGE: Encounters that Build Community

Culture is one of those words we often use, yet rarely fully reflect on. It is not merely a collection of customs, songs, or recipes, but a way in which a person understands the world and themselves within it. It is a space where memory and the present meet, where the personal and the shared intersect, where who we are meets what we strive to become. To be a bearer of a culture therefore means, above all, to be open to understanding the complexity of the personal heritage each of us carries. For this reason, culture becomes one of the key bridges of integration: where people recognize one another in fundamental experiences, differences cease to be a threat and become an opportunity for encounter.

In this spirit, we launched the project “Harmony of Cultural Heritage,” an initiative that brings together people from different cultural backgrounds week by week in an atmosphere of learning and encounter. At a time when differences are often emphasized as boundaries, these gatherings show that they can become a space of trust and belonging. They bring together Croatians as well as people who have come to Croatia from Syria, Ukraine, Nepal, the Philippines, Iraq, Colombia and Peru, and from the very beginning have been marked by a simple and genuine joy. Each meeting brings something new – a song, a dance step, or a conversation that reveals how similar human experiences truly are.

The main focus is on getting to know Croatian cultural heritage. Through workshops, participants learn traditional songs and dances, but also to understand what they perform. They encounter bečarac – a humorous, playful form of verse that carries a world of irony, community and life wisdom, as well as kolo, which reveals togetherness through movement and rhythm. They also become familiar with simple elements of everyday life, from long coffee rituals to language and humor that are not easily translated. It is in these “small things” that culture becomes alive and tangible.



The workshops are led by experts, supported by a cultural mediator, creating a safe space where everyone feels accepted – not as someone who “needs to learn”, but as someone who already has something to contribute. These encounters are not one-directional: while participants get to know Croatian culture, they also share their own, and through this exchange, mutual respect naturally emerges – grounded in experience rather than theory.

Over time, these gatherings have grown beyond the framework of workshops and become a space where people increasingly stop seeing one another as strangers. A final public performance will soon offer participants the opportunity to present what they have learned and reflect the journey they have shared. The project continues to grow through small but meaningful steps, reminding us that a sense of belonging is built through encounters, patience, and openness, and that culture can become a path toward feeling at home, even far from where one's journey began.

## BITI TU: iz perspektive socijalne radnice



U radu sa ljudima u pokretu, često se pokaže da podrška nema jedan jasan oblik. Nekada je to informacija, nekada konkretna pomoć, ali nekad i samo prisustvo; biti uz nekoga u trenutku kada mu je to najpotrebnije.

Ne postoji uvek prava rečenica, niti rešenje koje može odmah da promeni situaciju. U takvim trenucima, ono što ostaje jeste spremnost da se sluša, da se napravi prostor za ono što druga osoba nosi sa sobom, bez potrebe da se sve razreši.

Kroz vreme, posebno mesto u mom radu zauzeli su susreti sa decom bez pratnje. Tu podrška dobija drugačiju težinu. Često su bez porodice, u neizvesnosti i oslonjeni na ljude koje tek upoznaju. To su odnosi koji se grade brzo, u specifičnim okolnostima, gde poverenje nastaje iz svakodnevnih, malih interakcija i upravo zato imaju posebnu vrednost.

Ovaj rad se ne završava krajem radnog vremena. Priče ostaju. Teške, ali i one koje podsećaju na lepe stvari: prvi dan škole, nova prijateljstva, zaljubljanja, mali uspesi koji u drugim okolnostima možda ne bi bili приметni. To su trenuci koji pokazuju da, uprkos svemu, život ide dalje i da se u tim procesima polako gradi osećaj stabilnosti i pripadnosti.

U radu sa decom bez pratnje, najteži su rastanci. Odlasci koji dolaze brzo, često bez mnogo vremena za pripremu i bez jasnog osećaja završetka. Sa sobom nose brigu, ali i nadu da će naredni koraci biti sigurniji i lakši. U tim trenucima, „biti tu“ dobija posebno značenje: iako ne možeš da utičeš na tok puta, možeš da budeš deo jednog njegovog dela, i da taj deo ostane kao oslonac koji se pamti.

Postoje i situacije u kojima, uprkos želji, ne možeš da pomogneš onoliko koliko bi želeo. Tada dolaze frustracija i osećaj poraza. Vremenom, postaje jasno da je dovoljno uraditi ono što jeste do tebe, makar i mali korak koji može da ublaži nečiju situaciju.

Možda su upravo ti trenuci i najvažniji: gledati kako deca odrastaju, kako izrastaju u mlade ljude, pronalaze svoj put i grade nešto svoje, uprkos svemu što su prošli.

Na kraju, podrška se možda ne nalazi u velikim rešenjima, već u tome da ostaneš. Da slušaš. Da budeš tu.

*Maja Negrojević, socijalna radnica*

## BEING THERE: A Social Worker's Perspective

In working with people on the move, it often becomes clear that support does not have a single, fixed form. Sometimes it is information, sometimes practical assistance, and sometimes simply presence; being there for someone at the moment they need it most.

There are not always the right words to say, nor solutions that can immediately change a situation. In such moments, what remains is the willingness to listen and to create space for what the other person carries, without the need to resolve everything.

Over time, encounters with unaccompanied children have taken on a special place in my work. In this context, support carries a different weight. They are often without family, in uncertainty, and reliant on people they have only just met. These are relationships that are built quickly, in specific circumstances, where trust emerges from everyday, small interactions, and precisely for that reason they hold particular value.

This work does not end when the working day is over. The stories remain. The difficult ones, but also those that remind us of life's lighter moments: the first day of school, new friendships, falling in love, and small achievements that might otherwise go unnoticed. These are moments that show that, despite everything, life goes on, and that a sense of stability and belonging is slowly being built along the way.

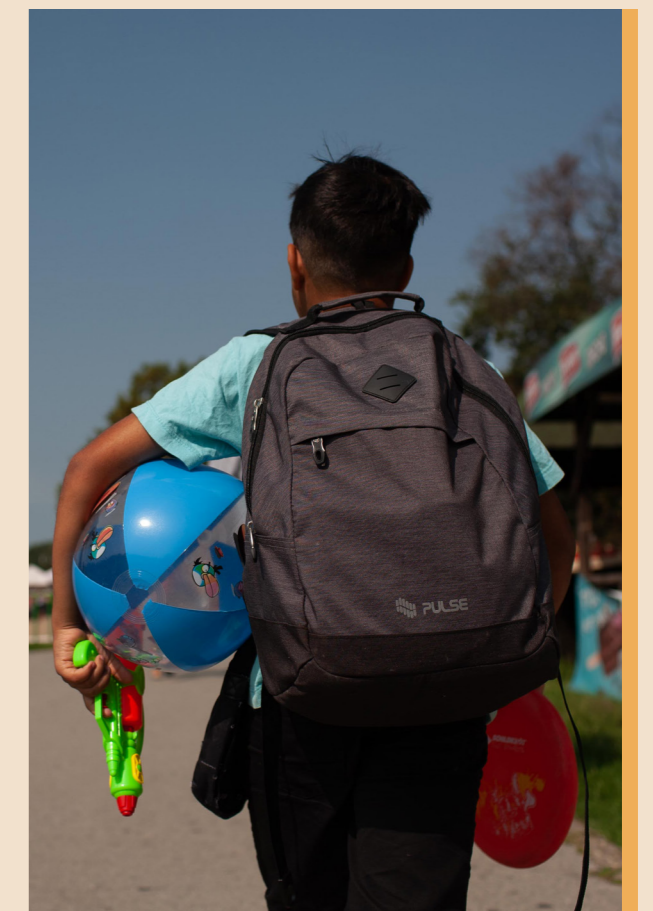
In working with unaccompanied children, the hardest moments are the goodbyes. Departures come quickly, often without much time to prepare and without a clear sense of closure. They carry both concern and hope that the next steps will be safer and easier. In these moments, "being there" takes on a deeper meaning: even if you cannot influence the course of their journey, you can be part of a segment of it, and that part can remain as a remembered point of support.

There are also situations where, despite your willingness, you cannot help as much as you would like. Frustration and a sense of defeat arise. Over time, however, it becomes clear that what matters is doing what is within your reach, even a small step that can ease someone's situation.

Perhaps these are the most important moments: watching children grow, seeing them become young adults, finding their own path and building something of their own, despite everything they have been through.

In the end, support is not always found in big solutions, but in staying. In listening. In being there.

*Maja Negrojević, social worker*

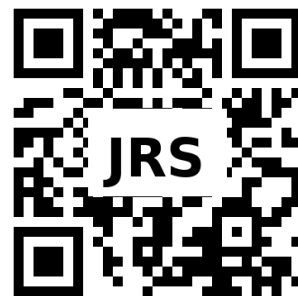




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