



# WITNESS CHANGE

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**ANNUAL REPORT**

2020/2021

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# Executive Summary

## WITNESS CHANGE

Our society is shaped by stories. But the voices of marginalized people are often excluded, even when the stories are about them. Witness Change uses visual storytelling to support excluded people reclaim their narratives and improve their lives.

Witness Change's projects include:

- *Where Love is Illegal*, LGBTQI+ stories of discriminations and survival;
- *In My World*, stories of the experience of living with mental health, psychosocial and intellectual disabilities;
- *1000 Dreams*, refugee stories authored by refugees.

Central to all Witness Change projects is the amplification of voices of marginalized people.

## 2021

This year was dominated by the 1000 Dreams launch. This project marks a further development of Witness Change's efforts to ensure marginalized groups, in this case, refugees in Europe, have a role in forming the narratives of their lives.

There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the enabling of greater agency over narrative for a group of people whose stories are so often told by others. Multiple large media outlets published the work and a significant following was garnered for the 1000 Dreams social media accounts.

At the time of writing, more than 700 refugee portraits and interviews of refugees by forty storytellers who went through the 1000 Dreams educational and mentoring program had been produced. Storytellers are still producing stories with the support and mentorship of Witness Change. The portraits and interviews continue to be shared on social media and the 1000 Dreams website. It is hoped that the project will continue in 2022.

1000 Dreams is unique in its scope and focus. It raises the bar in terms of what Witness Change can achieve and provides important lessons which will contribute to how Witness Change visualizes its future.

*Note: While this annual report covers the entire Witness Change organization, the bulk of this report is dedicated to the 1000 Dreams - Refugee Storytelling Project, which was the primary focus in 2021. Under the 1000 Dreams Activity Summary, actions taking place as early as November 2019 are included to give full context to the project.*

*Other Witness Change projects, Where Love is Illegal and In My World, continue to be a significant focus of the organization.*

# The Team

The work of Witness Change is delivered by a small team of part-time paid employees and a large number of unpaid volunteers. The strategic direction is formed and overseen by the Board and in consultation with the Advisory Board.

## Delivery Team:

- Robin Hammond
- Aude Barbara
- William Lounsbury

## Key Volunteers:

- Maddy Bazil
- Angela Pritchett
- Veronica Schorr
- Aigul Joldosheva
- Amy Christian
- Barnaby Falck

## Board of Directors:

- Samantha Chiu
- Robin Hammond
- Bram Hanekom
- Leigh Ann Webster

## Advisory Board:

- Michael Barron
- Emina Čerimović
- Kasha Nabagesera
- Pragya Lodha
- Dr. Langton Miriyoga
- Mariah Moore
- Hauwa Ojeifo
- Howard Pulchin

## Our partners include

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Allen & Overy

Babel - Migrants Mental Health

Doctors Without Borders (MSF)

Elton John Aids Foundation (EJAF)

Hootsuite

Human Rights Watch

Humanity & Inclusion (formally Handicap International)

ICRC

INGKA

International Organization for Migration

Médecins Sans Frontières

Open Society Foundations (OSF)

OutRight International

Refocus Media Lab

The Gates Foundation

The Heinrich Böll Foundation

The Refugee Journalism Project

The United Nations

Translation Commons

Trint

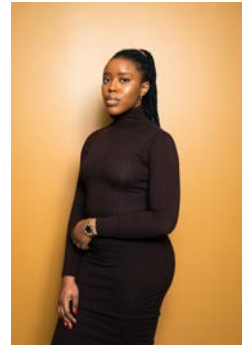
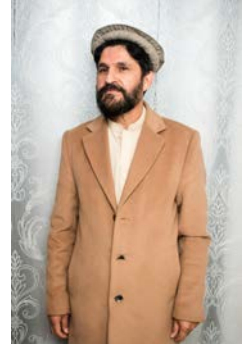
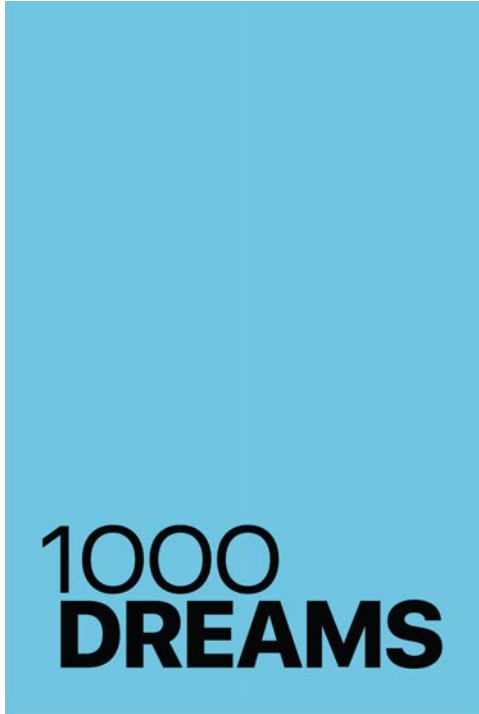
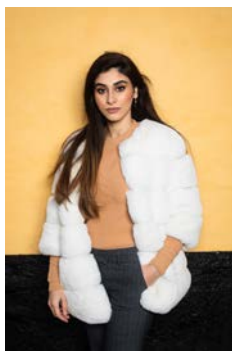
UNICEF

Vans

World Bank

99 Designs







# 1000 Dreams

## Project purpose



1000 Dreams seeks to change prevailing refugee narratives through a storytelling project that tells the stories of 1000 refugees across Europe. 1000 Dreams is entirely authored by storytellers with a refugee background.

### THE IMPACT OF CURRENT NARRATIVES

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Refugees are often depicted as invading hordes threatening European identity and placing unsustainable burdens on social services.

Those more sympathetic to refugees, on the other hand, regularly represent them as helpless and hopeless victims.

These portrayals often focus on the trauma experienced in home countries. Many overlook the deplorable conditions in which refugees live in Europe, and the second class treatment they are subject to in the countries now hosting them – which can cause damaging and long-lasting impacts.

Because of the limits of page space and air time in the media, refugee stories often become stereotypes – one, or a few, stories are meant to represent the many.

These narratives often don't take into account the huge diversity of refugee experiences. These narratives form attitudes that affect policies and practices that, at best, are not as effective as they could be, and at worst, can have severe negative impacts on the lives of refugees.

### 1000 DREAMS CHANGES THE NARRATIVES

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For attitudes, policies and practices to change, the narrative must change.

#### HOW DOES 1000 DREAMS DO THAT?

For the narrative to change, the lives of refugees have to be authentically represented – their voices must be heard. The 1000 interviews, conducted entirely by storytellers with a refugee background, amplify the voices of refugees and open a door to their misunderstood and misrepresented world.

Interviews provide insights into the individual lives of refugees and the emotional impact of current policies and attitudes.

Supporting refugees to document the stories of other refugees allows opportunities for dialogue that isn't influenced by prevailing narratives.



# Activity summary

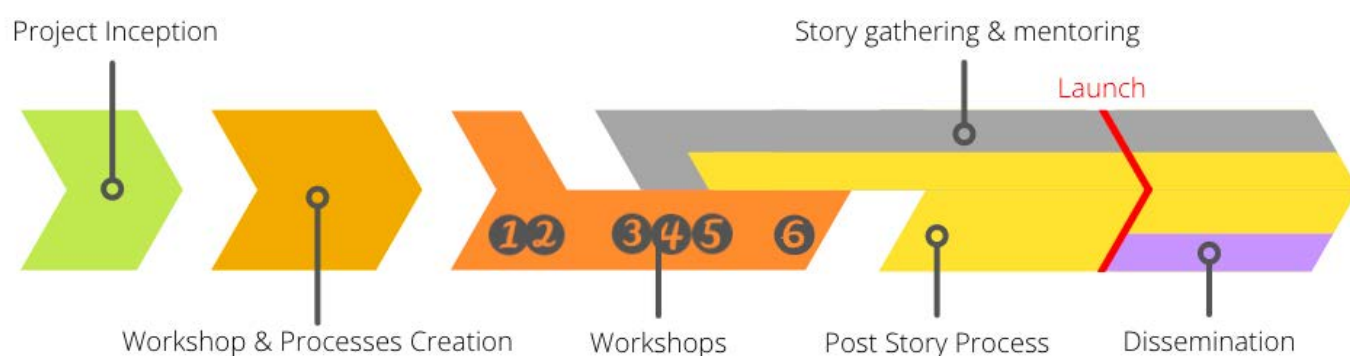
## OVERVIEW

The 1000 Dreams project was launched on World Refugee Day, 20 June 2021. The project is made up of a series of interviews and portraits of people with a refugee background. The interviews are conducted by a team of 40 storytellers with a refugee background trained and equipped by Witness Change. The campaign launched with media publications in the BBC, Guardian & Corriere della Sera and with social media partners such as Unicef, National Geographic and Panos Pictures.

The 40 refugee storytellers who created the portraits and interviews for 1000 Dreams have worked since mid 2020 (with mentorship and support from the Witness Change team) documenting stories. To date, more than 700 stories have been collected.

This process can be seen in a [short video](#) that summarizes the project. It includes interviews with some of the participants. 1000 Dreams was launched with this [trailer](#).

## CREATION



### 2019 - 2020

#### • Project Inception & Funding

Witness Change received financial support from the Open Society Foundations (OSF) in late 2019 for a project that addressed prevailing and damaging narratives around refugees and mental health in Europe.

Project conceptualization began shortly after receiving the OSF grant. Ideas were tested through consultations with mental health and refugee advocates. The first 1000 Dreams concepts were abandoned by Witness Change following the advice of these experts.

Conversations with mental health and refugee experts led to the conclusion that refugee stories are almost exclusively told by people without a refugee experience, and, together, those stories created prevailing narratives of helpless victims, dangerous invaders, or exceptional success stories. When the subject of the mental health of refugees is discussed in mainstream media, it is almost exclusively focused on trauma. While it was agreed that none of these narratives were entirely wrong, they were incomplete and potentially damaging. It was hypothesized that if refugees were allowed to authentically tell their stories themselves, a more nuanced and 'true' story would need to be told - one that would be more easily relatable to Europeans 'hosting' refugees.

The Final Project Design, 1000 Dreams, was fully conceptualized and adopted at the Witness Change Annual General Meeting in November 2019.

- **Workshops: Elevating the capacity of refugees to tell their own stories**

1000 Dreams was created to elevate the capacity of refugees to tell their own stories. A course, designed to teach a team of refugee storytellers photographic and interviewing techniques, was designed with the intention that they would go into their communities and document 1000 stories of other refugees.

Storytellers were trained in one specific flash photography technique. This was important as

- 1) it would create visual consistency across the entire project and;
- 2) it is a useful technique for storytellers who will continue working in visual storytelling.

It was important that the project be sustainable for the participants. All storytellers would be provided with photographic equipment (camera, flash, etc) which they can keep if they finish the project. A stipend was paid to participate in the workshops and to help offset the costs of collecting stories.

Interview questions were written in consultation with mental health experts and people with lived refugee experience. The goal was to create questions that would elicit answers related to the mental health impact of the refugee experience. It was important that these questions not ask about mental health directly (as this leads to further marginalization), but give space for people to answer honestly. The questions were meant as a guide for the refugee storytellers - they were encouraged to adapt the questions to the situation.



- **Covid Delay & Redevelopment**

Originally Witness Change was scheduled to run in-person workshops in Greece, Slovenia and Italy. The Covid-19 pandemic began at the same time the details and partnerships for these workshops were being finalized and the entire workshop plan was forced to be reevaluated. At first, all in-person workshops were canceled and a virtual workshop was discussed. In late spring 2020, as the situation stabilized somewhat, the decision was made to run three in-person workshops where we had strong support from local partners (Athens, Lesbos, London) and two virtual workshops (a third was added later).



## WORKSHOPS

Witness Change designed a five day (three classroom days, and two in the field mentorship days) in-person workshop focused on photography & lighting techniques, interview skills, journalistic ethics and effective storytelling.

A three-day presentation was created by Witness Change staff that illustrates the importance of visual storytelling and that teaches the techniques necessary to produce successful 1000 Dreams project materials.

Photography and file handling manuals were created for students as resources for them to review while learning the photographic techniques. This allowed them to practice and work autonomously.

All students were provided with interview questions, personal releases in multiple languages and were instructed in how to ask the questions and gather permission while also ensuring the subject retained their autonomy and their safety.

### ● Workshop - Athens/Lesbos

Two 1000 Dreams workshops were held in July 2020 in Greece.

The first workshop took place in Athens with eight participants. One participant dropped out of the workshop during the classroom days, another dropped out after finishing. Participants were recommended by partners Babel Day Centre, Refocus Media, and Syrian - Greek Youth Forum.



Athens Workshop



Lesbos Workshop

The second workshop took place on the island of Lesbos with four participants. All four were recommended by Refocus Media. Refocus Media provided a working space and extra support in mentorship after the workshop.

### ● Workshop - London

The third (and final in-person) workshop was held in September 2020 in London. The workshop was held in The Photographers' Gallery with eight participants (one of whom dropped out). Five of the participants were recommended by the Refugee Journalism Project. The other three were found through social media posts.



London Workshop



Online Workshop A



Online Workshop B

### ● Workshop - Online One and Two

The first two online workshops were held in September over Zoom. There was a morning and afternoon session with a total of 16 participants (five dropped out).

Workshop participants had camera equipment purchased for them by Witness Change and delivered before the start of the workshop.

### ● Workshop - Online Three (Gender and Sexual Minorities)

This was the final (at the time of writing) workshop hosted for the 1000 Dreams Project. It was online and ran over Zoom.

In an effort to increase the diversity of participants and create a safe space, the workshop was exclusively for women and non-binary identifying refugees.

Workshop participants had camera equipment purchased for them by Witness Change and delivered before the start of the workshop.

## 2021

In 2021 Witness Change completed the final workshops for 1000 Dreams Storytellers leading to a total of 40 active storytellers participating in the project.

### ● Workshop - Self-led

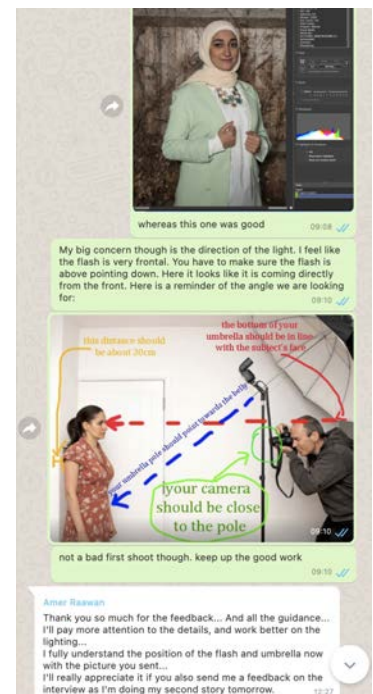
Self-led workshops (January-May 2021) added five storytellers to the project. Storytellers were provided with video recordings of a past workshop, encouraged to watch and complete homework assignments (reviewed by William Lounsbury) before shooting their first test shoot (reviewed by Robin Hammond). Self-led storytellers were supplied with equipment left over from previous workshops and were limited to people who expressed a strong passion to be involved in the project as these unguided workshops required greater commitment than those led personally by Witness Change.

## STORYTELLING AND MENTORING

Mentorship continued for these participants as for the others who'd completed in-person and online workshops.

All 40 refugee storytellers continue to receive one on one mentorship from Robin Hammond and support in collecting stories from the Witness Change staff. Each story submission is reviewed for accuracy (following safeguarding guidelines, personal information collecting, signed release, etc.) and image quality. Robin Hammond reviews all pictures taken, provides feedback, and selects the most impactful image for retouching. Each portrait is professionally retouched, following journalistic standards, to cohere to the look of the project and have maximum impact.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, travel and access were often restricted. Witness Change wrote letters of support allowing for travel within cities under lockdown and access to camps closed due to the pandemic. Additional support has been given through letters of recommendation for jobs and education, advice on creating photographic work, and editing pitch documents.



## POST STORY PROCESS



1000 Dreams storytellers conducted interviews in twenty different languages with different dialects, but in order to be shared with the wider public and global media, they needed to be translated into English.

Once the story is received, it is transcribed and/or translated and then checked for safeguarding issues to ensure the security of everyone who has shared their story. To make the story more accessible, the full interview is summarized into a 1000 character paragraph that is used on social media, traditional publications, and on the 1000 Dreams website (in addition to the full testimony).

To translate all stories, a team of 150 volunteers (and growing) and a partnership with Translation Commons, a translating volunteer-based organization, was built. To be able to transcribe and translate efficiently, Trint, an AI-based transcribing software, was used pro bono to create a transcription, which was then corrected by a person and thereafter translated. To date, 167 stories have been translated/transcribed.

For 1000 Dreams to deliver on the mission of supporting refugees to take back control of their narrative, it was deemed important to have translations be as faithful as possible to the original audio interviews. To make these translations possible, a team of Translation Managers were recruited. Each was asked to manage one or two languages. They manage the translation through the following process:

- Interviews are first transcribed either through Trint (if the language is supported), or manually. If they have been transcribed through Trint, a volunteer will then go through and correct the transcript (the AI software can only give an approximate transcription that saves a lot of time but is not 100% accurate).
- If the interviews are in a language other than English, they will then be translated by a first translator and then checked by a second more senior translator to ensure accuracy.
- All completed transcribed/translated interviews are then checked by the Translation Manager for any mistakes. In most cases, Translation Managers speak the language of the interviewee.
- Throughout the process, if anything is unclear, the Storyteller is contacted to provide support or context.
- The final document is then sent to the editing team.

Interview transcripts are very long and to make the stories accessible and compelling, each transcript is edited to 1000 characters. This length was chosen for ease of sharing across all media.

It was necessary for a large number of volunteer editors to be recruited to take on the significant work of editing hundreds of long interview transcripts.

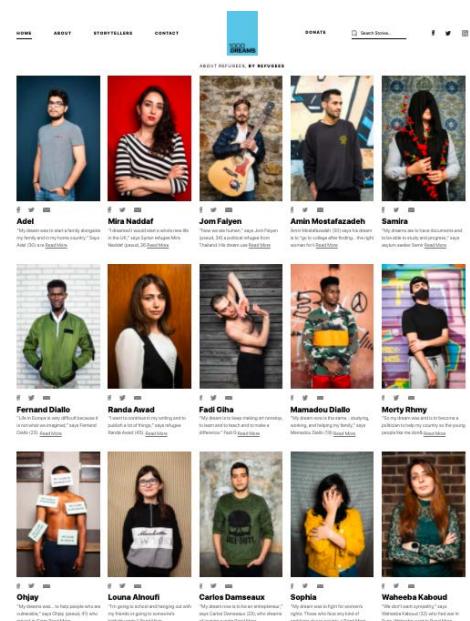
All 1000 character edits are reviewed to ensure the style is in line with the project aims of highlighting dreams, mental health challenges, and mental health strengths alongside crucial context such as nationality, age, name, the reason for becoming a refugee.

## DISSEMINATION

### • Website

Developing the 1000 Dreams website was crucial to the dissemination of the 1000 Dreams stories. [1000Dreamsproject.com](http://1000Dreamsproject.com) showcases the breadth of stories collected and will be a permanent home for all 1000 testimonies. Each story consists of the portrait, a 1000 character summary, and the full transcript of every story.

99 Designs, a web design company sponsored the design and development of the 1000 Dreams website and logo.





## ● Social Media

For 1000 Dreams, social media expert Amy Christian supported Witness Change in developing a strategy to build an audience ahead of and after the launch of the project. New volunteers were enlisted to create videos designed for social media, build a Facebook advertising campaign, and prepare 1000 Dreams stories for sharing on social media.

The project launched on 20 June 2021 with a new Instagram account, [@1000Dreams](#), and a campaign using pre-existing Witness Change social channels. In the first week, through social media 1000 Dreams stories had a proven reach of at least 13 million accounts.

At the time of writing 1000 Dreams has reached an estimated 100 million accounts. This was accomplished through an updated strategy on Witness Change platforms and partnerships with like-minded organizations.

Social advertising done through Facebook and Instagram helped 1000 Dreams build an audience quickly. Volunteers with expertise in Facebook advertising helped Witness Change build a campaign that reached over 400,000 accounts.

## ● Publications

Print and broadcast media has always been a cornerstone of Witness Change's advocacy. With 1000 Dreams, the distribution to a geographically diverse audience within Europe was essential. These are a few of the notable publications since launch (click to see the articles):

- [The Guardian](#) as well as in a separate [Gallery](#) feature (UK Newspaper)
- [BBC](#) (UK Broadcasting)
- [Corriere della Sera](#) (Italy's largest national newspaper)
- [AMNA](#) (Greek News Service )
- [Sydsvenskan](#) (Sweden)
- [XL Semanal](#) (Spain)
- [Stern](#) (Germany)



## ● Exhibitions/Events

In the lead-up to the launch of 1000 Dreams, Robin Hammond along with several of the refugee storytellers participated in virtual speaking events. Events were hosted by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and IMIX for refugee week in the UK, INGKA (the holding group of Ikea) corporate staff, and with Hootsuite's global team.

Robin Hammond and Ali Jehad (1000 Dreams Storyteller) were the focus of a live conversation with INGKA corporate staff. Witness Changed worked with INGKA to build a virtual exhibition for their staff members around the world.

# Project evaluation

The 1000 Dreams project was funded through a 2019 Open Society Foundations grant. The grant funded the collection of stories (costs of workshops, equipment, per diem for storytellers) and partially funded staff members' salaries both during the production phase of the project and the editing and dissemination phase. The design and construction of the website were partially created pro-bono. The transcription, translation, and editing of stories were done by more than 200 volunteers who have donated over 2,000 hours to make 1000 Dreams a reality. The project was originally scheduled to launch in March 2021, but due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, it was delayed to World Refugee Day, 20 June 2021.

## STORIES COLLECTED

### Number of Stories Collected

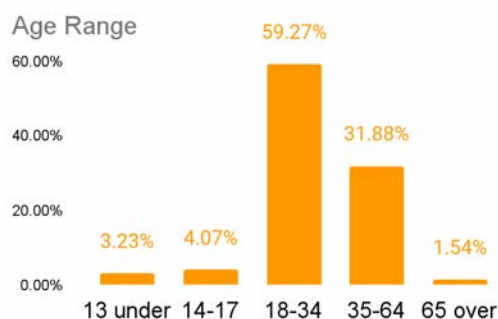
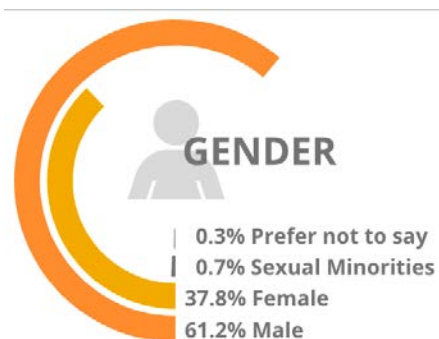
At the end of 2021, the 1000 Dreams storytellers have collected 715 Stories. These stories showcase the diversity of the refugee experience. The people who shared their stories represent a range of lived experiences and backgrounds that make the 1000 Dreams project truly unique.



### Gender

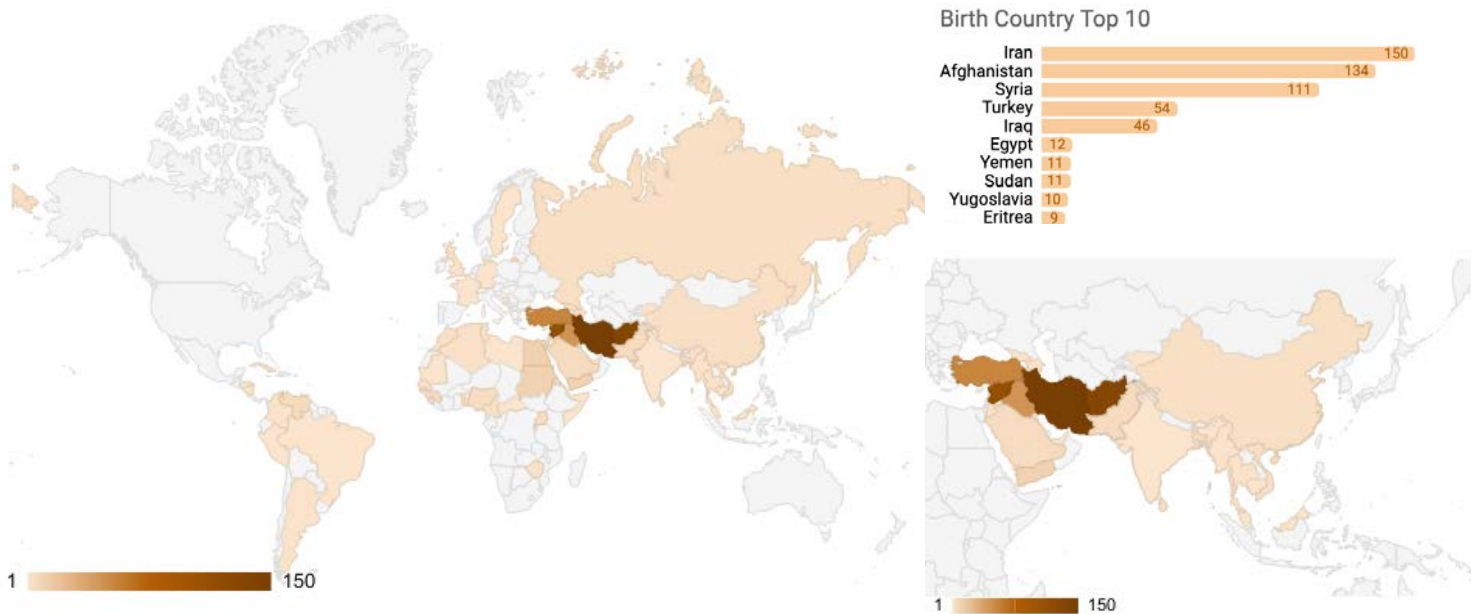
More male (61.2%) than female (37.8%) stories are represented in 1000 Dreams, however, this number is quite similar to the European refugee population which is on average 55% male and 39% female ([UNHCR data](#) - 2016 to date). Additionally, 1000 Dreams includes several stories from refugees who do not identify on the cis-gender binary. Creating a safe space for LGBTQI+ identify refugees to feel represented was important to the project.

Most refugees represented in 1000 Dreams are in the 18-34 age range, followed by 35-64 year-olds. Very few minors and seniors were interviewed. UNHCR data indicated that minors represent 38% of refugees in Europe. This is partly due to the demographic of the Storytellers as well as the difficulty to access and gain consent for minors to be interviewed.



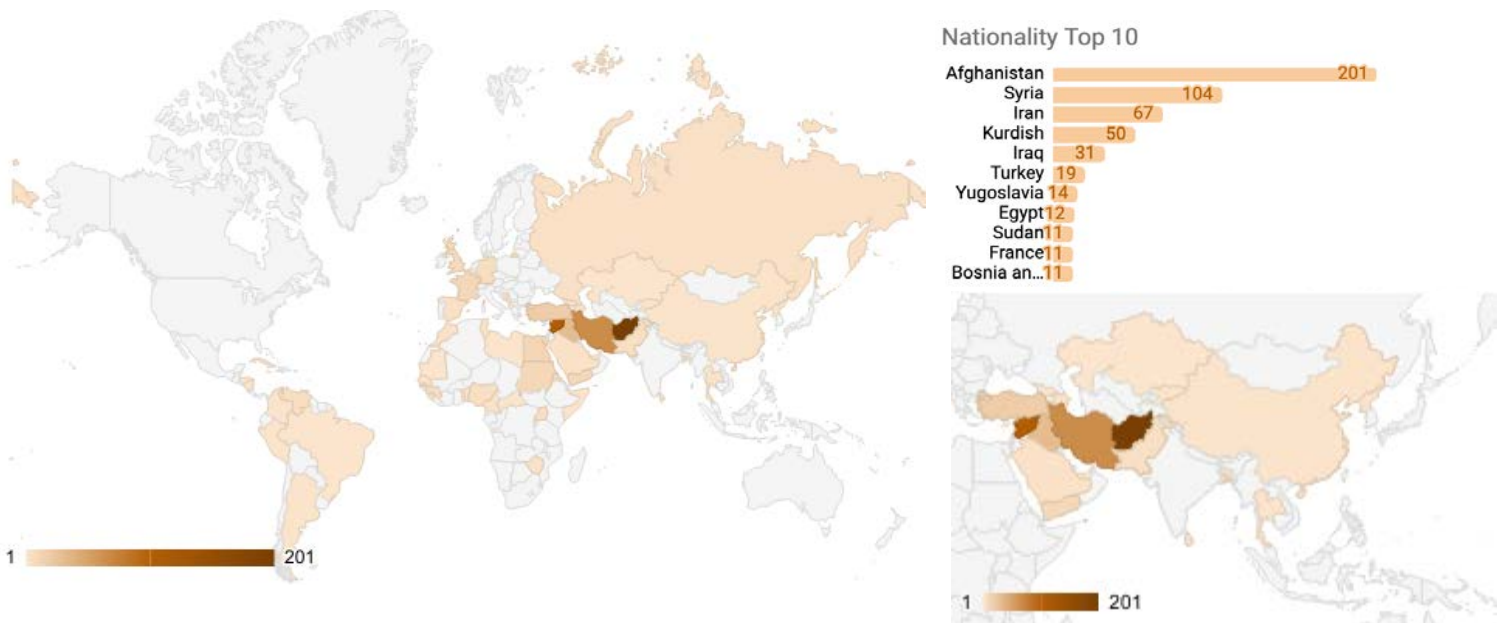
## Birth Country

Stories shared with 1000 Dreams represent 76 countries globally with 55% of refugees born in Iran, Afghanistan, and Syria. This number reflects both the background of 1000 Dreams storytellers as well as the demographics in and entering Europe at this time.



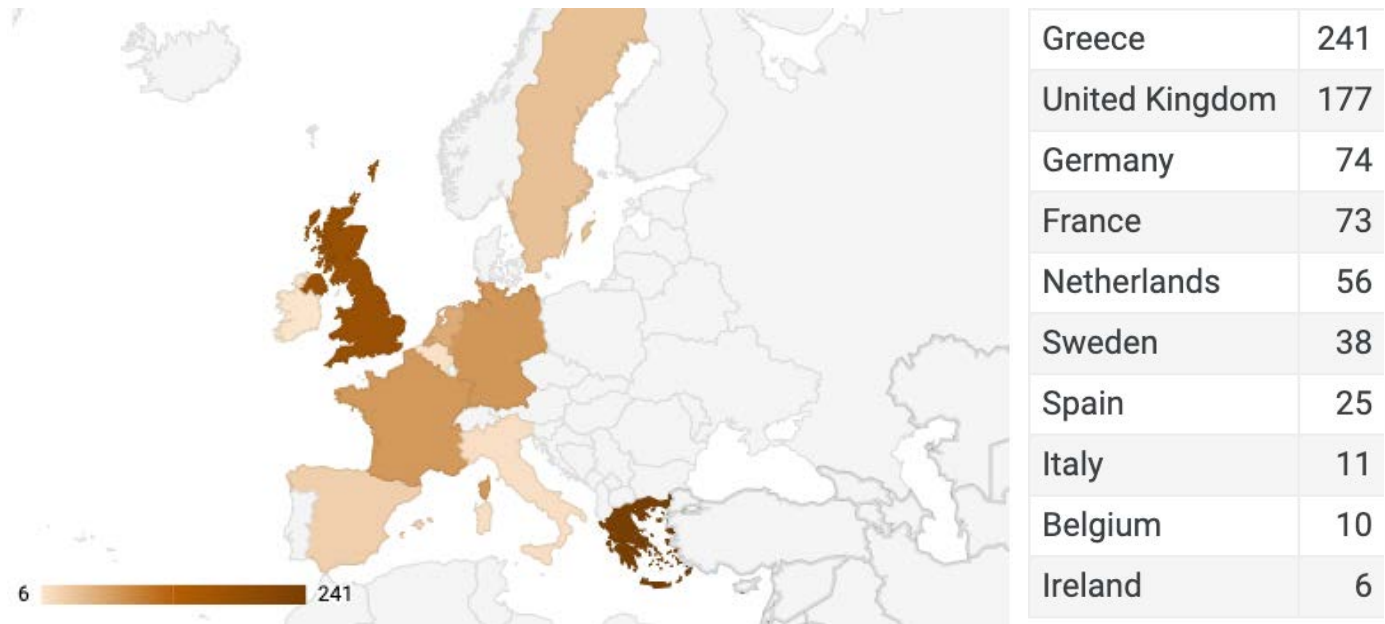
## Nationalities

Witness Change recorded both Birth Country and nationality as in many instances refugees do not identify with the country in which they are born. Many Afghans, for example, are born in Iran, but are not either legally or culturally, Iranian. A similar story is true for people from countries not legally recognized by the United Nations (Kurds and Palestinians for example). Stories shared with the project are from people of 71 nationalities with 52.7% of them Afghan, Syrian, and Iranian.



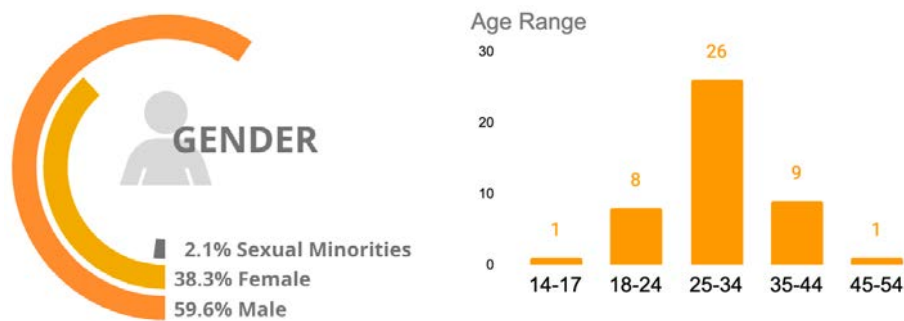
Host Countries

Stories came from the 10 countries where 1000 Dreams storytellers live. In recruiting storytellers, achieving a diverse representation of European countries was important. Greece and the United Kingdom, the two locations with in-person workshops, represent the greatest number of stories.



WORKSHOPS

Through the 1000 Dreams workshops, a team of 40 refugee storytellers was formed to collect stories for the project. A conscious effort was made to gather a group of storytellers from diverse backgrounds, gender identities, skill levels, and current locations.





Host Country	#
United Kingdom	17
Greece	11
Sweden	4
Germany	4
France	3
Netherlands	2
Italy	2
Spain	1
Ireland	1
Belgium	1

Country of Origin ▲	#	Country of Origin	#
Azerbaijan	1	Syria	9
Bangladesh	1	Afghanistan	8
Benin	1	Iraq	5
Cameroon	1	Egypt	5
Ivory Coast	1	Iran	4
Kurdish	1	Turkey	3
North Korea	1	Eritrea	2
Serbia	1	Sudan	1
Sierra Leone	1	Sri Lanka	1

## Overview

While in-person workshops require much greater time and resources, commitment from participants was found to be significantly greater from those who participated in the in-person workshops. This led to more stories collected by those who participated in the London and Greece workshops than those that attended online workshops. In-person workshops also allowed for Witness Change to include participants who had lower camera/computer literacy. This allowed Witness Change to open up workshops to storytellers with little photography experience. The same was true for language comprehension - in-person workshops allowed teachers to adjust the speed of instruction to the needs of those students and use a local translator to ensure instruction was fully understood.

Online workshops allowed for a greater diversity of participants as students were not limited to one geographical area. However, access to virtual spaces is often not available to storytellers who are living in camps or to recent arrivals, which therefore led, in many cases, to the participants coming from higher income and skill levels.

Mixed workshop styles (online and in-person) were not the original intent of the project but proved to be the most effective in fulfilling the mission of 1000 Dreams.

## Workshop Surveys

Witness Change's Research Team evaluated a survey completed by 48 of the 1000 Dreams workshop participants to evaluate the impact of the project. Further detail can be found in the Research and Evaluation section later in this report.

## Storyteller Testimonies

One of the most rewarding aspects of the project was hearing from refugees themselves as to why they thought this project was important and affirming the deep desire to ensure their voices were heard. These are some of the 1000 Dreams Storyteller Testimonies:

*“ Some Europeans think refugees don't have hope and they don't have any strength, any skill. But no, it's not true. They are talented people. They have hope. I think, after making interviews with them, that the only thing [similar] between all of them is that they have hope. ” - Zahra*

*“ We’ve been through a lot of difficult things, but we still miss our families, we still hate this part we went through, but we are still filled with hope, full of energy.... look at me, that is why I’m doing this project. That’s why I’m taking pictures. I’m following my dreams. I’m being a photographer, this is my dream. I’m not hopeless, I’m not a victim. ” - Yousef*

## Attrition Rate

Of the 40 storytellers who completed 1000 Dreams Workshops a total of 10 dropped out of the project before completing their required number of stories. The attrition rate, considering the difficulty of the project, is low. In-person workshops had the lowest rate of dropout, with self-led workshops with the highest.

- 1 of 8 participants from Greece dropped out
- 2 of 7 participants from London dropped out
- 5 of 20 participants from the Virtual workshops dropped out (these numbers do not include an additional 6 people who dropped out mid-workshop)
- 2 of 5 participants from the self-led workshops dropped out

## STORYTELLING AND MENTORING

Through the continued mentorship, all participants submit all photos taken for review. Robin Hammond has acted as a photography mentor advising 1000 Dreams Storytellers on how they might improve the quality of their work and create portraits in line with the style of the project.

A very positive response has been received from participants when asked for feedback.

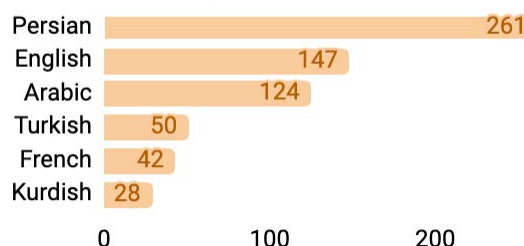
Participants have engaged well with the mentorship aspect of this program and for almost all of them, the quality of their portraits has improved significantly.

## POST STORY PROCESS

### Transcriptions and Translations



### Languages Top 5



All 1000 Dreams stories begin as audio recordings of the interviews conducted by the storytellers. A network of translators and transcribers was created to transform audio recordings into English language texts. With the exception of English, all interviews need to be translated before being sent for editing.

In early 2020, two pro-bono translation organizations were contacted and committed to translating for the entire project. However, both organizations miscalculated their capacity to handle the number of translations and withdrew their support.

In response, Witness Change created an in-house translation team, relying on a mix of volunteers as well as a partnership with Translation Commons, a translating volunteer-based organization. Translation Commons does the first translation which is then checked in-house. They contributed to approximately 9% of translations.

The Witness Change translation team consists of Translation Managers who assign volunteers to different tasks and review their work. Around 150 transcriber/translator volunteers have helped so far. As the tasks are quite long and demanding, a high level of turnover was seen and new volunteers have to be recruited regularly.

A small budget was used on Persian as almost 37% of all interviews were conducted in that language and sourcing Persian language volunteers has proven difficult.

### **Story Edits**

Each story collected by a 1000 Dreams Storyteller is being edited to 1000 characters.

It was necessary for a large number of volunteer editors to be recruited to take on the significant work of editing hundreds of long interview transcripts

549 people applied to edit interviews conducted by 1000 Dreams storytellers. All were asked to carry out a 'test' edit so that Robin Hammond, who acted as lead editor, along with volunteer Maddy Bazil, could select the most appropriate applicants

40 applicants were accepted to be editors. But many of these were withdrawn when their style of writing was found not to match the needs of the project. Each edit is scored by an Edit Reviewer. Initially, Robin Hammond was doing all the reviewing.

After several months of editing, an 'A-Team' of editors was created. These eight to ten editors consistently write strong edits. The number of editors fluctuates as new editors come on board, and older editors remove themselves.

A 'B-Team' of seven editors has also been created. These editors often require support in writing their edits. They are generally only given interviews to work on when an urgent deadline requires more people working on edits.

The number of edits produced varies from week to week. In mid-November 2021 (when this is being written) approximately five interviews are submitted per week for editing. The number is reliant on the capacity of the translation team.

On average it is taking 26 days from receiving a translated interview to an edit being ready for publishing. It was hoped that the interviews would be edited at a much faster pace than has been achieved, but edits can only be done as fast as translated and transcribed interviews are made available.

As the A-Team editors have gained experience and have gained a greater understanding of the style required for 1000 Dreams, the review process has sped up.

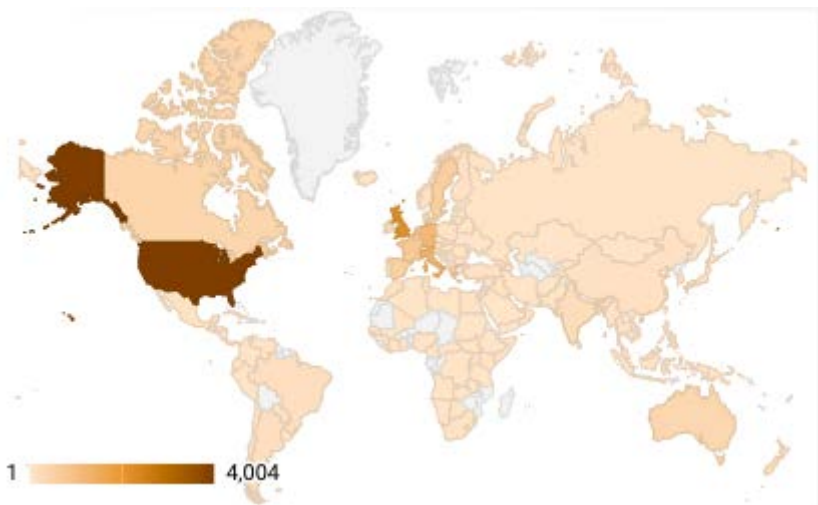
DISSEMINATION

Website

Number of Users since the launch  
12,422

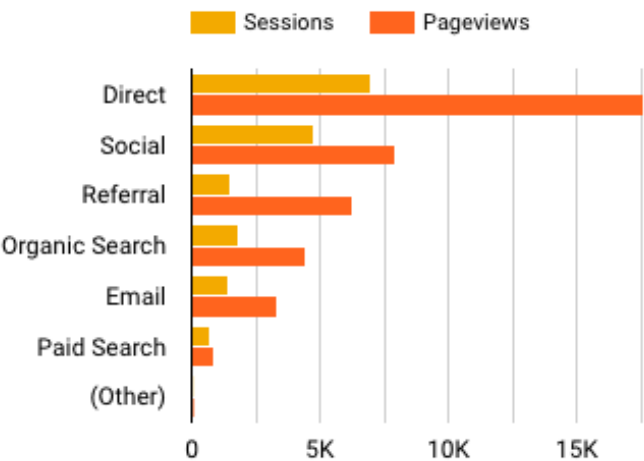
Since its launch, 13,493 users have accessed the site - an average of 2108 users a month.

The majority of website users come from Europe, reflecting where the 1000 Dreams stories have been collected. The second-highest number of visitors are from the Americas.



Continent	Sessions ▾
Europe	9,707
Americas	5,267
Asia	1,295
Oceania	570
Africa	359

The majority of web traffic is from people coming directly to the site (including Instagram). As Instagram is Witness Change’s primary channel, this supports the reach method. The second highest source comes from other Social Media Platforms (Facebook 53%, Twitter 33%).

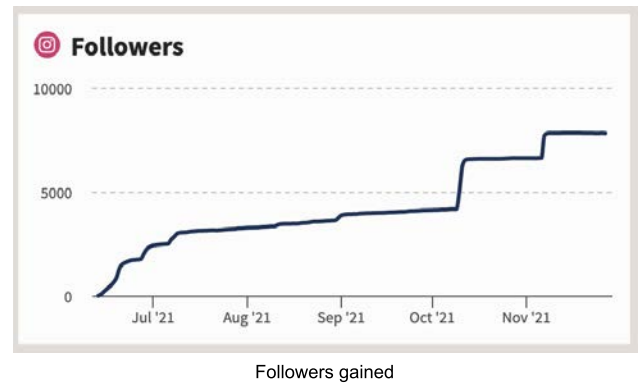




## ● Social Media

A new social media account on Instagram, @1000Dreams, was launched one week before World Refugee Day. In the first month, the account gained 3000 followers.

A Facebook group of 1500 members (at the time of launch) helped build excitement for the project. Live conversations with storytellers and previews of 1000 Dreams pictures and stories were shared to engage followers. Hootsuite supported the project by providing free access to their social media scheduling program.



Across all social media platforms, 1000 Dreams was recorded to have reached at least 50 million people worldwide. The real number of people reached could be as high as 300 million, but it's not possible to verify this higher number. Using reach estimation equations across Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, Witness Change believes 1000 Dreams reached approximately 100 million people globally. This reach was achieved through organic social media posts, sharing of publications, social media partnerships and paid advertising.

1000 Dreams developed a new social media strategy for 1000 Dreams focusing on partnership building, paid advertising and video content. This strategy is regularly being re-evaluated to ensure it has the greatest impact.

## Partnerships

Witness Change created partnerships with aligned organizations and created social media kits to facilitate the easy sharing of 1000 Dreams stories by like-minded groups after the launch of the project. These partnerships have expanded beyond social media leading to articles outside our network. Organizations involved include UNICEF, International Organization for Migration (IOM), IMIX, Scottish Refugee Council and Hootsuite.

## Paid Advertising

Working with social media advertising specialists, a strategy was developed to increase our reach and followers at launch. With the support of Hootsuite, a second advertising campaign was run in October 2021 to reach new audiences.

## Video Content

Volunteer video editors have helped develop social media video content to increase engagement. The greater focus on video content follows social media platforms prioritizing video over still images.

## ● Publications

1000 Dreams was featured in publications representing five European countries and a combined monthly readership of more than 400 million people worldwide.

## ● Exhibitions/events

Events held by various partners (listed above) helped expand the reach of 1000 Dreams and create a deeper connection with our partners.

Live events conducted with IOM and IMIX created a relationship that has continued to other days of action such as World Migrant Day. Additionally, connecting with IOM/IMIX has led to new connections with other groups focused on issues of migration.

A live event with Hootsuite corporate has helped build new relationships within the company, including a connection with the social advertising team and a donation to fund social advertising for 1000 Dreams.

Witness Change worked with INKGA (the parent group for Ikea) to design and release a multi-country exhibition for World Refugee Day. Dutch design firm Kossmanndejong designed the exhibition free of charge. The exhibitions were canceled due to covid restrictions and uncertainties a month before launch. The virtual exhibition and live event were held instead.

## ● Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic created many challenges in the implementation of the project, requiring greater reliance on online production and distribution.

### **Workshops**

Two workshops (in 2020) were held online due to the pandemic. While this was done out of necessity, the result was a more geographically diverse range of storytellers than we could have achieved solely with in-person workshops. The self-led workshops would not have been possible without video recordings of the virtual workshops to share with new storytellers.

### **Story Collecting**

Refugees, in general, had less access to personal protective equipment and medical services creating a more difficult environment for 1000 Dreams storytellers to work in. Many people expressed that they would not want to meet for fear of spreading the virus. Witness Change staff worked with storytellers to support them in staying safe while taking pictures and conducting interviews. In addition to hesitancy among refugee populations, local lockdowns (which nearly every storyteller faced) limited the ability to travel and meet people for the project. Witness Change was able to provide letters justifying travel for storytellers where it was required by authorities.

### **Audience Attention**

As Covid 19 was the daily focus of media globally, breaking through the wall of coverage was difficult, but essential for achieving the mission of the project. Pinning the launch of the project to World Refugee Day and building a network of organizations that amplified these stories helped create the attention which made the launch of 1000 Dreams a success.





# In My World

## Project purpose

Mental health problems will affect one in four of us in our lifetime. The impacts of this are shocking. Mental health problems cause more disease impact than any other illness – more than cardiovascular disease or cancer. The problem impacts the social, economic, and public health of communities across the globe. Yet mental health is not a global priority in action, funding, or policy. Adequate mental health care must be both a moral imperative and a fundamental human right.

Two things stand in the way of tackling mental health challenges:

- **Stigma.** We must address discrimination because it prevents people from seeking the help they need and receiving support in their communities, and it stops mental health from being a global health policy priority.
- **Action.** Members of the global community must act on their commitments. Mental health needs to be a global development priority, as outlined by the World Health Organization, and member states must be compelled to deliver on the Mental Health Action Plan.

In My World is a bold campaign that uses a visual storytelling approach to highlight these challenges. We created this project to give people living with mental health issues the chance to be seen, heard, and valued. We travel to countries around the world, telling stories about the different circumstances and environments that impact people's mental health. By giving everyone a platform to tell their story, we break the silence and challenge the stigma that shrouds mental health.

## Activity summary

1000 Dreams - The exclusive focus of In My World in 2021 was the 1000 Dreams project (see above for a description of this project). In My World has been used to highlight that work and increase its reach.

### SOCIAL MEDIA

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Outside of 1000 Dreams, 29 User Generated Stories (stories that come from the In My World audience) have been shared on In My World social media platforms. One community member has documented a large number of those (photographing and supporting people to write about their experiences with mental health) through their own initiative.

#### 1000 Dreams

As the 1000 Dreams campaign is a spin-off of the In My World campaign, stories from 1000 Dreams continued to be shared on the In My World Instagram account.



## PUBLICATIONS

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### *All We Have Left Is The Chain*

Small print-run publication of Robin Hammond's images from *In My World* was published by Editions Bessard.

## EXHIBITIONS

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*In My World* was exhibited in February 2021 at Xposure photo festival in the United Arab Emirates

## SPONSORSHIP

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### Mental Health Association Ghana

Allen & Overy, a multinational legal firm, provided a donation of \$10,000 to Mental Health Association Ghana (the organization Robin Hammond worked within northern Ghana in 2019). The donation will allow Mental Health Association Ghana to support more Ghanaians living with mental health issues.

# Project evaluation

## SOCIAL MEDIA

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Despite *In My World* receiving a reduced focus due to the 1000 Dreams campaign, the campaign has retained its audience and shared new stories.

## WEBSITE

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The *In My World* website continues to be maintained and updated with new stories submitted by our online followers.

## CONTACT / NETWORK

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Allen & Overy (A&O) donated to support Mental Health Association Ghana (MHAG). Witness Change facilitated this donation by acting as fiscal sponsor, providing documentation for A&O due diligence, and guiding MHAG through the process. There is further potential for MHAG to receive more financial support from A&O. Reporting to A&O on how this donation was spent is scheduled to take place in January 2022.



WHERE LOVE IS ILLEGAL



# Where Love Is Illegal

## Project purpose

70 countries around the world have criminal laws against sexual activity by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or intersex people. That's 70 countries where people who love each other must do so in secret. While the laws of each country vary – from the intent to commit an obscene act, or the right to freedom of expression of sexuality and gender identity – the brutality of punishments are shocking in all of these countries, and include fines, imprisonment, torture, and, in some instances, death.

Sadly, discrimination and hatred are not limited to countries that outlaw love. Worldwide, violence and prejudice against the LGBTQI+ community are rampant, targeting those who simply wish to live openly as themselves.

Media outlets often tell us about laws, crimes, and atrocities – but too often we don't hear from the people themselves, the people who dare to love in places where their love is illegal.

Where Love Is Illegal aims to change that.

The team behind Where Love Is Illegal believes that stories have the ability to connect people, transform opinions, open minds, and change policies. Led by photographer Robin Hammond and his non-profit organization Witness Change, Where Love Is Illegal documents and captures personal testimonies of survival from the LGBTQI+ community around the world.

Those who are photographed through Robin's global storytelling campaign choose how they want to pose, what to wear and how to present themselves. They handwrite their stories and letters to be shared with the world. The project also invites the LGBTQI+ community to share their own stories through a global social media campaign and local anti-stigma campaigns, developed in conjunction with the Witness Change team.

Where Love Is Illegal fights intolerance and pushes for increased acceptance through a social media campaign, international exhibitions, and donations to, and collaboration with, grassroots organizations working where persecution is rampant.

# Activity summary

## STORIES

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Where Love is Illegal continued its mission of sharing community stories by collecting 32 User Generated Content (stories that come from the Where Love Is Illegal audience) stories.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

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Thanks to the breadth of stories collected as part of Where Love Is Illegal over the years, our social media presence remains strong despite fewer stories documented in 2021 than in past years. Partnerships with organizations such as Vans helped increase the project's social presence as well as strong enthusiasm from our online community and those who donated their own stories.

## PARTNERSHIP

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The fashion brand Vans supported the Where Love is Illegal campaign through a donation, and by amplifying Where Love is Illegal in stores and through virtual platforms. Vans initiatives included:

- **Store displays:** Inside Vans EMEA (Europe, Middle East & Africa) stores during pride, information about Where Love Is Illegal was on display [photo]
- **Covent Garden Exhibition:** A selection of six stories were printed and displayed in the flagship, Vans Covent Garden store. Instead of live events, four Instagram Lives were hosted on the Where Love is Illegal Instagram account
- **Instagram Live:** with support (and funding) from Vans, four Instagram Live events were held over four weeks. The live conversations were hosted by Robin Hammond with interviews with LGBTQI+ activists around the world and a small photography workshop.
- **Vans Family:** Vans made an additional donation through their Vans Family platform. Individuals donated 'points' to fund future LGBTQI+ storytellers for 1000 Dreams.
- **Exposure:** PR done by Vans saw their support of Where Love is Illegal mentioned in publications such as: Vogue, USA Today, Elle, NBC News

## PUBLICATIONS

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Publications of Where Love is Illegal remain a way of increasing representation in the media. Witness Change is excited about the coming publication of the Where Love is Illegal book in 2022. :

- New Queer Photography anthology - includes a feature on Where Love is Illegal
- A stand-alone photo book - to be published in 2022



## EXHIBITIONS/EVENTS

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A virtual and physical exhibition with SEAS (Socially Engaged Art Salon) in Brighton, UK took place.

## 1000 DREAMS - WORKSHOP

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A 1000 Dreams workshop was held exclusively for sexual and gender minorities with a refugee background. The workshop was largely promoted through Where Love is Illegal channels.

Vans, through their Vans Family platform, donated to fund an LGBTQI+ refugee workshop (mentioned above)

# Project evaluation

## SOCIAL MEDIA

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Despite Where Love is Illegal receiving a reduced focus due to the 1000 Dreams campaign, the campaign has retained its audience and shared new stories.

The Vans' support of the Where Love is Illegal Instagram Live events allowed the campaign to interact with its audience in a new way. Witness Change staff learned new skills in facilitating a live event through social media. A skill that was used in the 1000 Dreams promotion later in the year.

## WEBSITE

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The Where Love is Illegal website continues to be maintained and updated with new stories.

## CONTACT / NETWORK

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Vans: They were the largest new partner to Where Love is Illegal this year. Their support; financially, online, and in physical locations increased the visibility of the Where Love is Illegal project.

SEAS: A UK-based arts organization that has displayed Where Love is Illegal several times.

## FUNDING

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The donation provided by Vans funded the continuation of the Where Love is Illegal project ensuring the campaign could be maintained in the following year.

# Future of Witness Change

2022 will see a greater intersection between Witness Change projects and some exciting and impactful new initiatives.

It is intended that 1000 Dreams will continue into 2022 with new workshops that will incorporate refugee voices from beyond Europe. Witness Change's commitment to diversity means marginalized groups will be central to this work. Funding has already been acquired to fund the participation of LGBTQI+ refugee storytellers in the next 1000 Dreams workshop. The locations of the next workshops are not yet confirmed and will be decided in early 2022.

Where Love is Illegal will continue to bring LGBTQI+ voices to a global audience. The project has been selected for further funding through the 1000 Dreams project, and a partner organization has expressed strong interest in funding the expansion of the work.

Understanding the mental health impacts of the refugee experience in Europe was a founding principle behind 1000 Dreams. This focus intersects with Witness Change's In My World project - which seeks to share mental health stories. The continuation of 1000 Dreams into 2022 means the continuation of In My World.

Witness Change will continue to support grassroots organizations such as Mental Health Advocacy Ghana. The project's success will be shared in early 2022 in a report to funders. Witness Change continues to look for ways to amplify stories of living with mental health, psychosocial and intellectual disabilities.

For the Research Division, the overall recommendation for 2022 is to continue engagement with pre-existing volunteers and recruit a research intern or fellow. Pre-existing volunteers can expand their social media data science and qualitative natural language processing. Previous interns (2019 and 2020) were highly beneficial to the Research Division and the overall operations of Witness Change. The Theory of Change should also be examined by 1000 Dreams and continued to be used for future projects.

Witness Change is dedicated to working with marginalized groups to make a positive impact on their lives through storytelling. While new initiatives may be adopted at the 2021 Annual General Meeting, the core focus on storytelling and impact will always remain at its core.