

St. Thomas-on-the-Bourne - 30 June 2024

Supporting Refugees: From Charity to Solidarity

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Refugee Support



Refugee Support Europe
Charity number: 1174070

9 Forfield Place, Leamington Spa,
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www.refugeesupporteu.com

Presentation structure

- A counter narrative: Displacement at a global, European and UK context
- What does dignified support for refugees look like?
- Challenges and opportunities
- Informal Q&A session



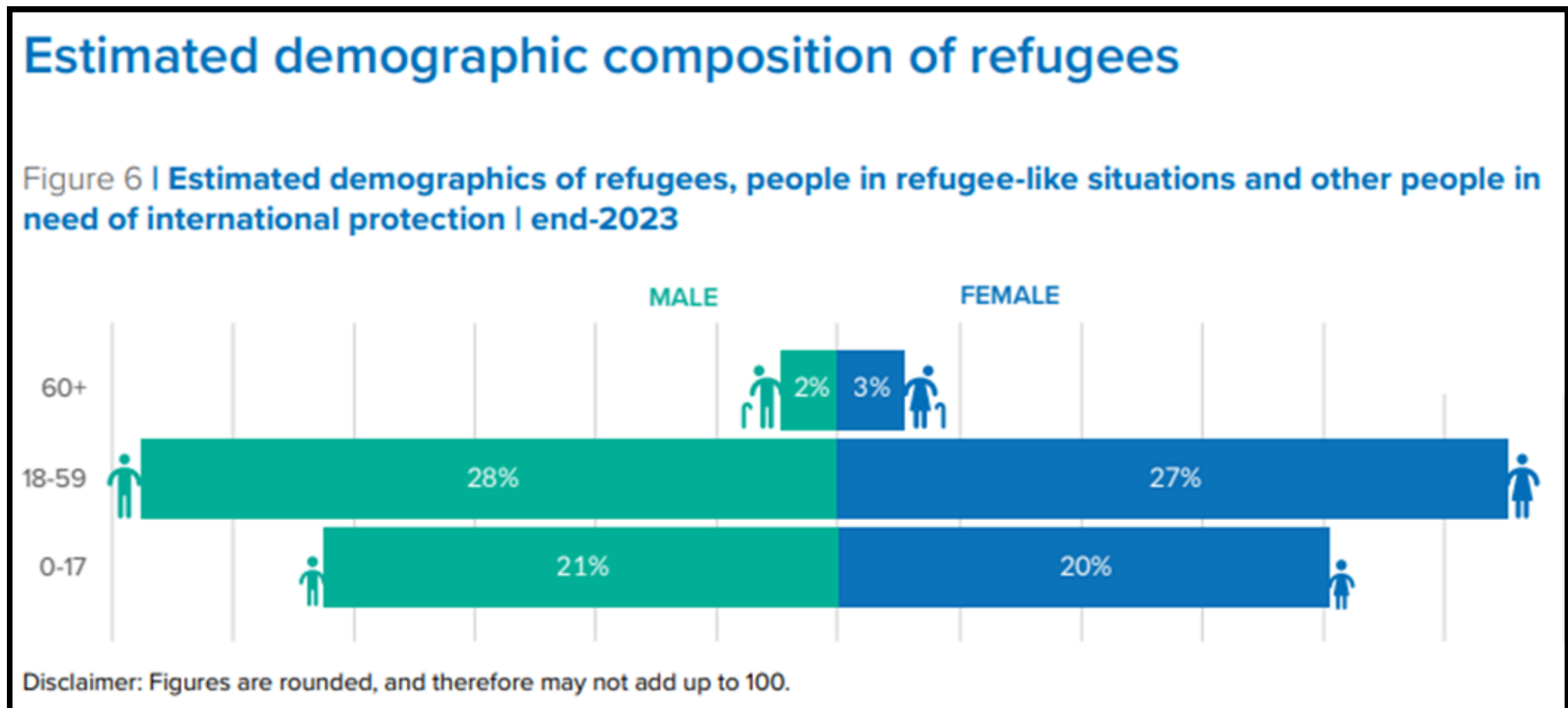
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Displacement worldwide

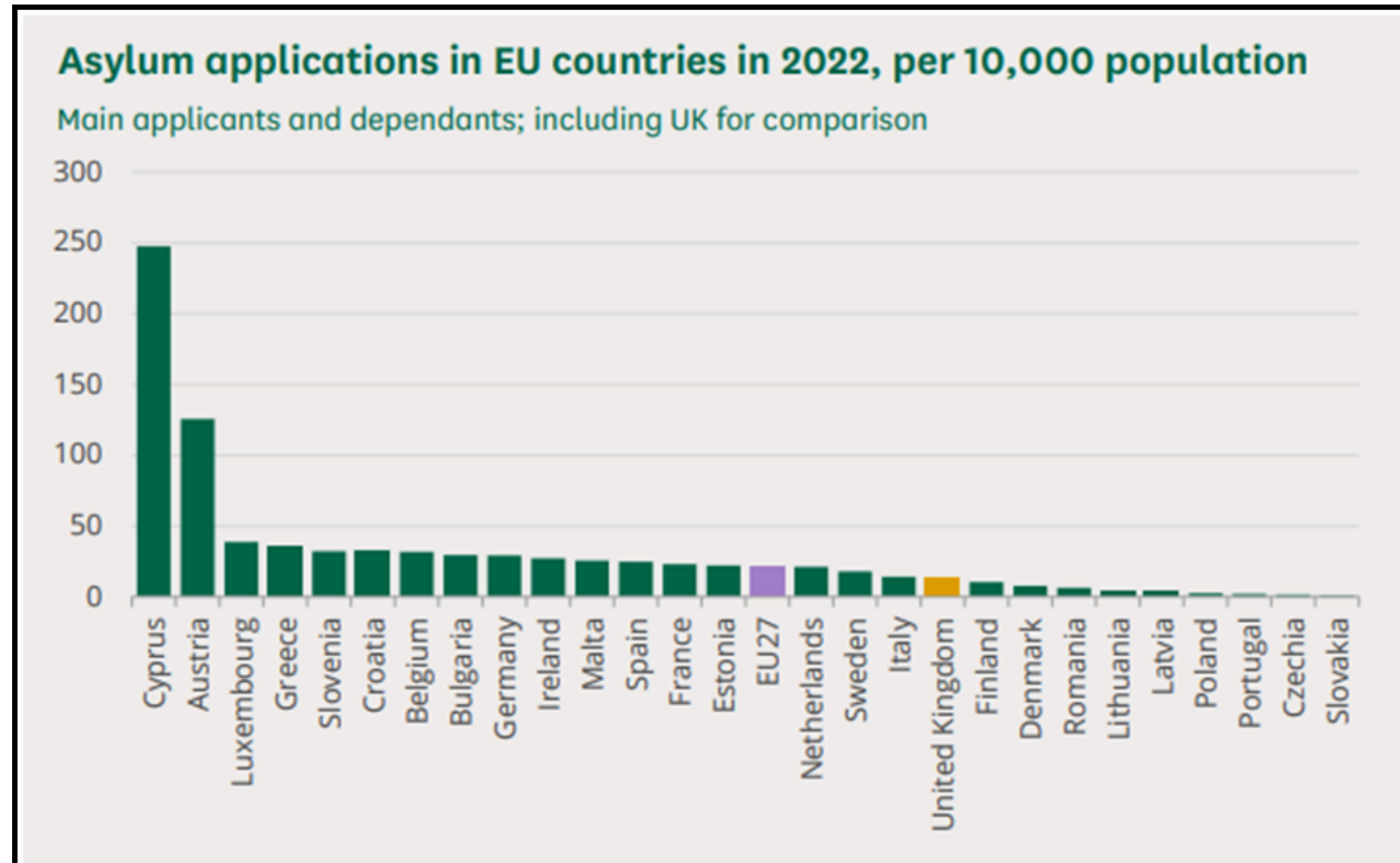
- Terminology and politics: displacement, refugees, international protection, IDPs, asylum, migrants
- 117.3 million displaced, with 43.4 million refugees
- 75% hosted in low- and middle-income countries and 69% hosted in neighbouring countries
- 73 per cent originate from just 5 countries, can you guess which?
- **Did you know?** Children make up 30% of world population but 40% of refugees



UNHCR Global Trends report 2023

Asylum applications in Europe: how do we compare?

- Asylum: not resettlement schemes (e.g. Ukraine)
- 2022: Most applications: Germany (243,800), France (156,500), Spain (117,900), Austria (112,200), and Italy (84,300) = 2/3 of all applications
- Per capita view – “fair share” argument
- Per 10,000 population:
 - Cyprus 248 applications per 10,000
 - EU average 22 applications
 - UK 13 applications



British House of Commons Library

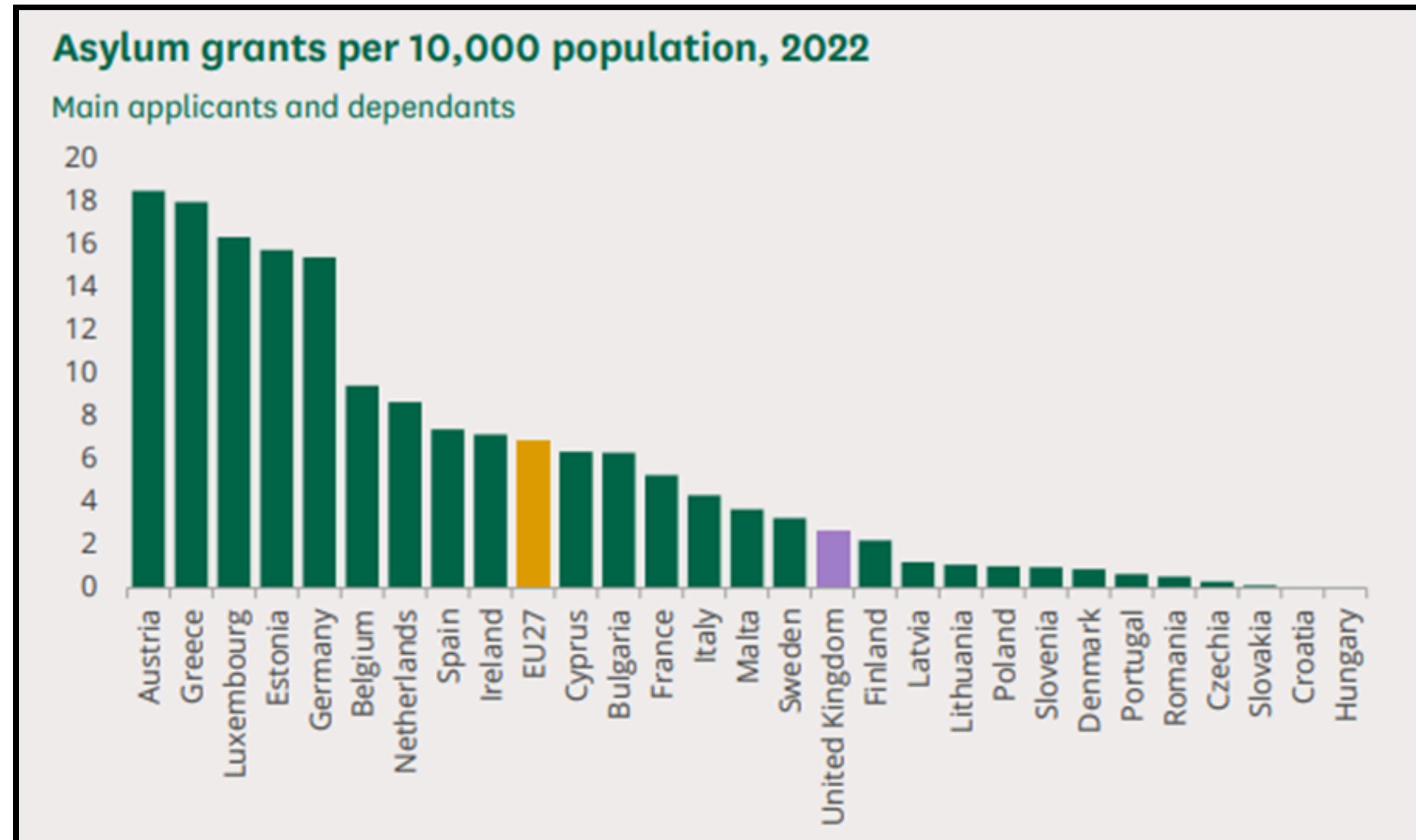
[SN01403.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons/lib/asn01403.pdf)

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Positive decisions in Europe: how do we compare?

- Germany, France and Spain most grants of asylum
- Per 10,000 population:
 - Austria 19 positive decisions
 - EU average 7
 - UK 3

Why does this matter?



British House of Commons Library

[SN01403.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)

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Seeking asylum in the UK

At a glance

- Asylum seekers make up around 10% of overall net migration
- June 2022 - June 2023 - 44,460 crossed in small boats = 3.7% total migration for that year
- The annual number of asylum applications to the UK peaked in 2002 at 84,132
- In 2023, 67,337 applications
- Entitled to between £8.86 - £49.18 p/w
- Not allowed to work
- Average waiting time 1-3 years
- Short notice evictions - homelessness



**LIFT
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BAN**

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What is RSE?

- Registered charity - short-term, dignified support at times of urgent need
- Founded in 2016 in response to European governmental failure
- Always evolving to meet emerging needs
- 3 pillars:
 - Dignity Centres
 - Crisis response
 - Advocating for an alternative
- >152,000 people in Greece, Bangladesh, Mexico, Türkiye, Cyprus, Moldova and the UK



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Solidarity through dignified support

- Spaces of solidarity: an alternative welcome
- Limbo between arrival and settlement
- **How** we give more important than **what**
 - Material goods as a means: dignity, normality, agency
 - Volunteer-powered
 - Localism



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Dignity Centre model

- How are Dignity Centres different?
- “Members”
- Points-based “free shop”
- Bureaucratic support
- Other services and activities
- The importance of choice

A sense of agency, stability and normality has been shown to contribute to long-term resilience and adaptation.



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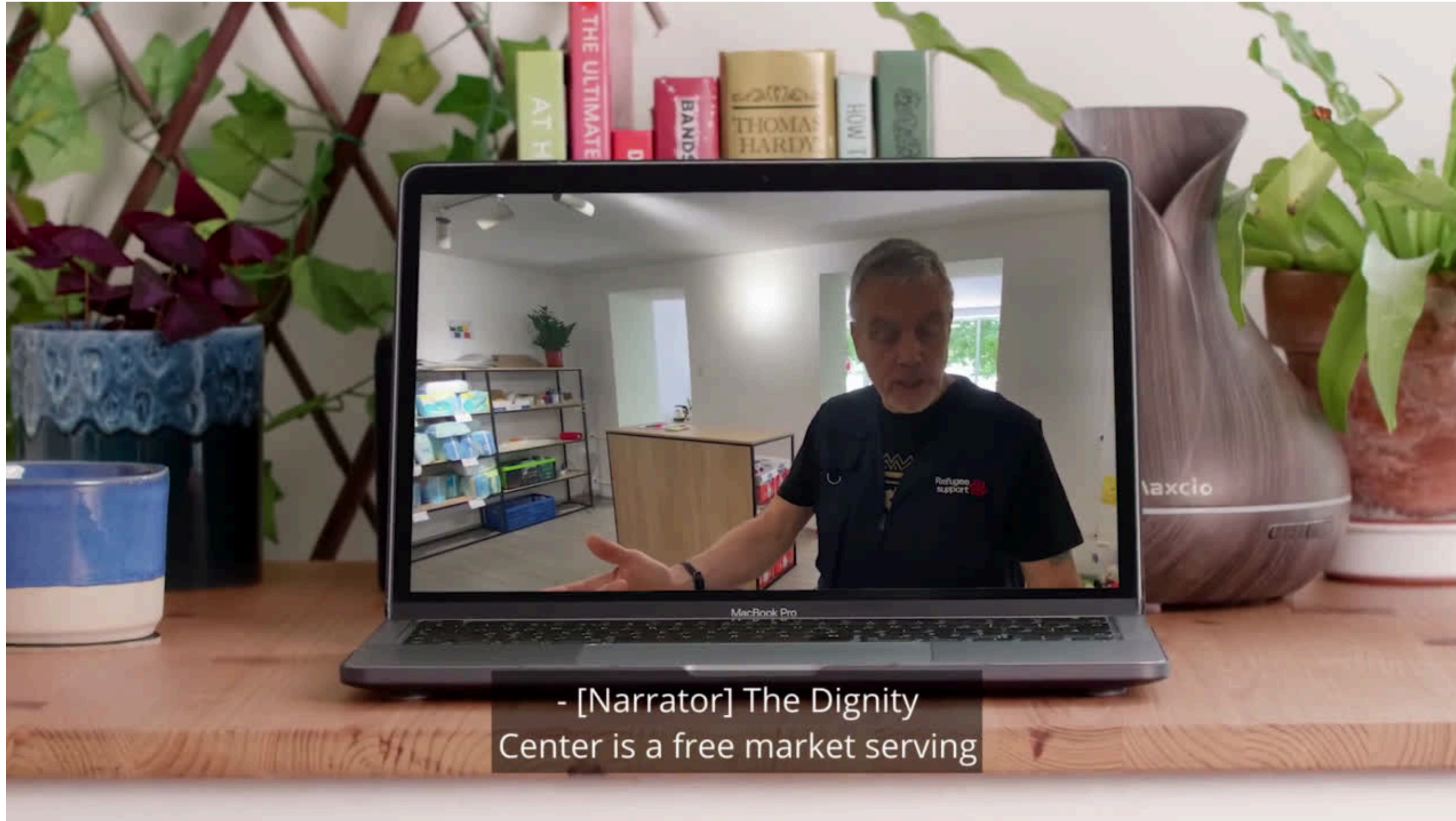
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Dignity Centre: Chisinau, Moldova

2022 - 2024

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- [Narrator] The Dignity
Center is a free market serving



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Nicosia, Cyprus

2019 - present

- Highest asylum claims per capita in Europe
- Members: large families: Syria, Somalia, Afghanistan
- Market: food and hygiene items
- Bureaucratic support
- Barbershop

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Dignity Centre: Nicosia, Cyprus

2019 - present



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Bournemouth, UK

2023 - present

- Increasing need in UK
- Members: single men in hotels and Bibby Stockholm
- Market: clothes and hygiene items
- Bureaucratic support
- Regular activities: English support, music, sewing.

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Bournemouth, UK

2023 - present



Crisis response

- Bangladesh 2017, Mexico 2018
- Moldova March 2022:
 - 2 week set up
 - 1,200 people a week
 - Supporting Moldovans
- Türkiye February 2023:
 - 2 million temporary shelter
 - Local women's co-op
 - 4 weeks:
 - 10,362 people served
 - 2,240 hygiene kits
 - 500 food bags



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Advocating for an alternative

The bigger picture

- Living out our values
- Coalitions and partnerships
 - TWR - Fair begins here
 - Lift the ban
- Volunteers and Ambassadors
- Outreach



**TOGETHER
WITH
REFUGEES**

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What's next and how do I get involved?

Opportunities:

- Consistency in chaos
- Grow (existing) and go (where needed)
- Amplifying voices and pushing for change

Challenges:

- Fundraising
- Hostile environments
- Paralysis of hopelessness + helplessness

CTAs:

- Donate
- Volunteer
- Spread the word



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FA(Difficult)Qs

Sitting with discomfort and learning through dialogue

1. Why do people come to the UK?
2. Why single men?
3. Will you go to Gaza?
4. Will the Rwanda plan work?
5. Do you really think you are helping?



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Thank you!



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