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Dear Friends,

The Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, likes to quote the artist André Heller who, during his widely acclaimed address to mark the 80th anniversary of the Nazi occupation of Austria, noted that the universal language of mankind is compassion, or at least should be. We're sure you'd agree that giving practical expression to compassion is a decisive step in the direction of living Christian charity. Especially when the reason for it lies in our desire to respond in some small way to the love of God for us and imitate the love of Christ.

As you can read in this annual report, in 2017 hundreds of thousands of benefactors around the world once again gave practical expression to this spirit of compassion and love, following the example of Jesus himself. This has enabled us, through over 5,300 projects, to reinforce further the bridge that links you and us to our suffering brothers and sisters in material and spiritual need.

For this generosity and for your accompanying prayers we, as the trustees of your loving offerings, pass on our sincere and heartfelt thanks to you.



Thomas Heine-Geldern,
International
Executive President



Neville Kyrke-Smith,
National Director

Thomas Heine-Geldern *Neville Kyrke-Smith*

Where your help went from ACN internationally:



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The figures below relate to projects funded by all 23 of ACN's national offices in 2017.



• 1,212 construction projects

You helped to build chapels, churches, cathedrals, convents, presbyteries and seminaries, many in regions devastated by natural disasters. One third of these projects were for churches.

• 1,504,105 Mass Offerings

You helped one priest in every 10 with your offerings (40,383 priests in total), especially in Africa (15,440) and Asia (10,748). Every 21 seconds Mass was celebrated somewhere in the world for the intentions of our benefactors.

• 13,643 seminarians helped by you in 2017

This was the most we've helped in the last 20 years. You supported one in every nine seminarians around the world (in 2016 it was one in 11). Most of them were in Africa (5,486), Latin America (2,919) and Asia (2,101).

• 12,801 religious Sisters supported in their training and/or apostolate

That equates to one Sister in every 52 (in 2016 it was 1 in 62). In most cases it was a matter of basic or ongoing formation.

• 424 cars – 257 motorcycles – 429 bicycles – 4 trucks – 3 buses – 3 boats

Most of the cars were for Africa and Eastern Europe; most of the bicycles for Africa and Latin America.



In 2017 you funded a total of 5,357 projects

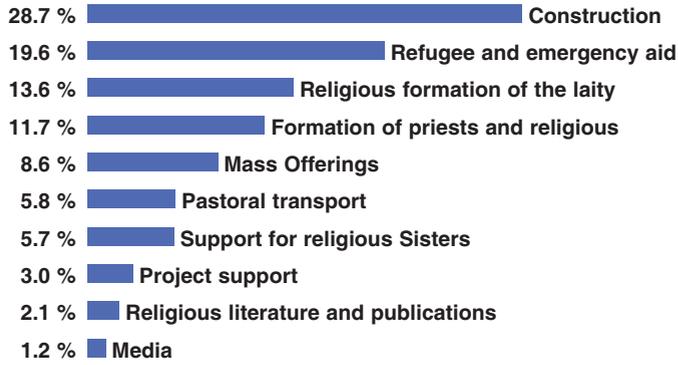
That was 54 projects more than the previous year. Yet sadly, despite this, one quarter of all project requests received (1,933 projects precisely) had to be rejected.

Since 2011, the year of the so-called "Arab Spring", ACN has sent around €75 million (£65 million) to the crisis regions of the Middle East – €17.3 million (£15 million) of this in 2017 alone. This aid is likely to have to continue again at the same level this year.

As in previous years, the largest proportion of our funding was for building projects. It accounted for 32.8 percent of the total, followed by refugee and other emergency aid, and by support for religious formation. We also supported 37,797 catechists and lay pastoral helpers.



ACN (UK) figures

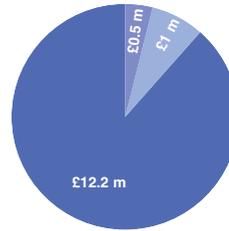


These figures relate to aid projects funded by the UK office of ACN in 2017.



ACN staff, overseas guests and parliamentarians at the launch of ACN's 2017 Persecuted and Forgotten? report in the Houses of Parliament.

ACN (UK) Detailed use of funds

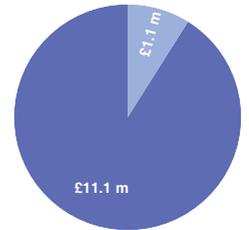


- 88.5 % Mission-related expenditure
- 3.9 % Support/Administration
- 7.6 % Fundraising/Information

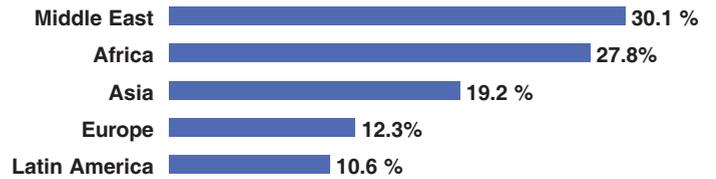
These figures reflect the money paid out by the UK office of ACN in support of its project partners' work in 149 countries around the world. These figures have been extracted from the financial statements audited by Kingston Smith. The full financial statements for Aid to the Church in Need (UK) are available on the Charity Commission website.

Mission-related expenditure

- 80.6 % Aid payments (see bar chart below for regional breakdown)
- 7.9 % Evangelisation, Communication and Advocacy



Aid allocated per region



Thanks to our generous benefactors, the UK office of ACN was able to allocate a total of £12.2 million – 88.5 percent of our annual budget – for mission-related expenditure, specifically project work and evangelisation, communication and advocacy. Needless to say, we cannot achieve this without administrative and fundraising expenses, but we strive to use these as efficiently as possible so that we can pass on the greatest possible proportion to our Christian brothers and sisters in need.

“Go into all the world” (Mk 16:15)

In 2017 the largest single slice of ACN's international aid went to the Middle East – Iraq and Syria. This surely needs little explanation – rebuilding the Christian towns and villages in Iraq, helping the Church respond to the civil war in Syria, where over half a million have been killed, by providing emergency aid for the refugees (over half the population). Thanks to the generosity of our benefactors, our “Marshall Plan” for the Nineveh Plains was able to provide €7.14 million, so that by Spring 2018 almost half of the Christians who fled in 2014 had returned home. Altogether, our aid to Iraq came to around €9.3 million, including the rebuilding programme, support for religious Sisters, Mass offerings, and emergency aid for internal refugees and others in dire need. For Syria the figure was €5.8 million. Internationally Iraq received the most aid, followed by India (with €5.86 million), Syria, Ukraine (€4.7 million), Brazil (€3.88 million) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (€3.42 million).

Analysing our aid region by region, we see that the need is greatest where the Church witnesses to Christ in a hostile environment. As in the Middle East, she survives in those places thanks to the support of the universal Church. And she is growing in places such as in Africa and India. In India between 500 and 1,000 priests are ordained each year, and the number of seminarians is also rising: at the moment there are over 15,000. But Africa is the continent where the Church is growing fastest. This is where much of the aid goes and where most of the requests come from. In Eastern Europe, Ukraine remains the main priority country. As for Latin America, while it remains the “most Catholic continent”, it particularly needs catechetical resources on account of the rapid growth of the sects.



Nowhere is there a greater wealth of vocations than in Africa, and nowhere are there more seminarians than on this continent. Africa's priests depend on your Mass offerings and your financial support. On behalf of all of them, Father Aimé Mobwete, from the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) says a big “Thank you!”