

# TÉLÉCOMS SANS FRONTIÈRES ANNUAL REPORT

# 2023



**TÉLÉCOMS  
SANS FRONTIÈRES**  
Communications for life









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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



“

*Over the past 25  
years,  
TSF has developed a  
dual humanitarian  
and technical  
expertise  
recognised by our  
humanitarian  
partners.*

”

**F**or 25 years, Télécoms Sans Frontières' mission has been to meet the needs of populations affected by humanitarian emergencies using information and communication technologies. The need to communicate and stay informed is essential for everyone in their daily lives. It becomes vital in times of crisis, when trauma leaves individuals and families in vulnerable situations.

The aim is to support each person, each family, with resources that will enable them to regain a perspective on life in the midst of crises.

Over the past 25 years, TSF has developed a dual humanitarian and technical expertise recognized by our allies and humanitarian partners - from which these organisations are also beneficiaries.

Today, our teams are implementing projects in connectivity, access to information, and digital inclusion, with the sole aim of putting the most advanced technical resources at the service of people's lives: Communications for Life.

Jean - François  
CAZENAVE

Jean-François Cazenave, President of TSF



# A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

In 2023, the global humanitarian situation deteriorated as result of violent conflicts affecting civilians, forced displacement, major economic challenges and climate change.

Evolving global issues and changes in our sector of activity invite us to improve our organisation in terms of localising aid and analysing vulnerabilities in an increasingly relevant way.

TSF must continue to develop its unique expertise at the heart of the humanitarian response system, collaborating with those closest to the field and developing sustainable actions that contribute to community resilience.

We believe that communication is a human right and that it is crucial in humanitarian situations, for both individuals and organisations. It is our duty to promote conscious and responsible use of digital tools.

Our commitment to providing telecommunications is an essential part of our core values and extends - as far as possible - beyond borders.

Monique  
Lanne Petit

Monique Lanne-Petit, Director of TSF



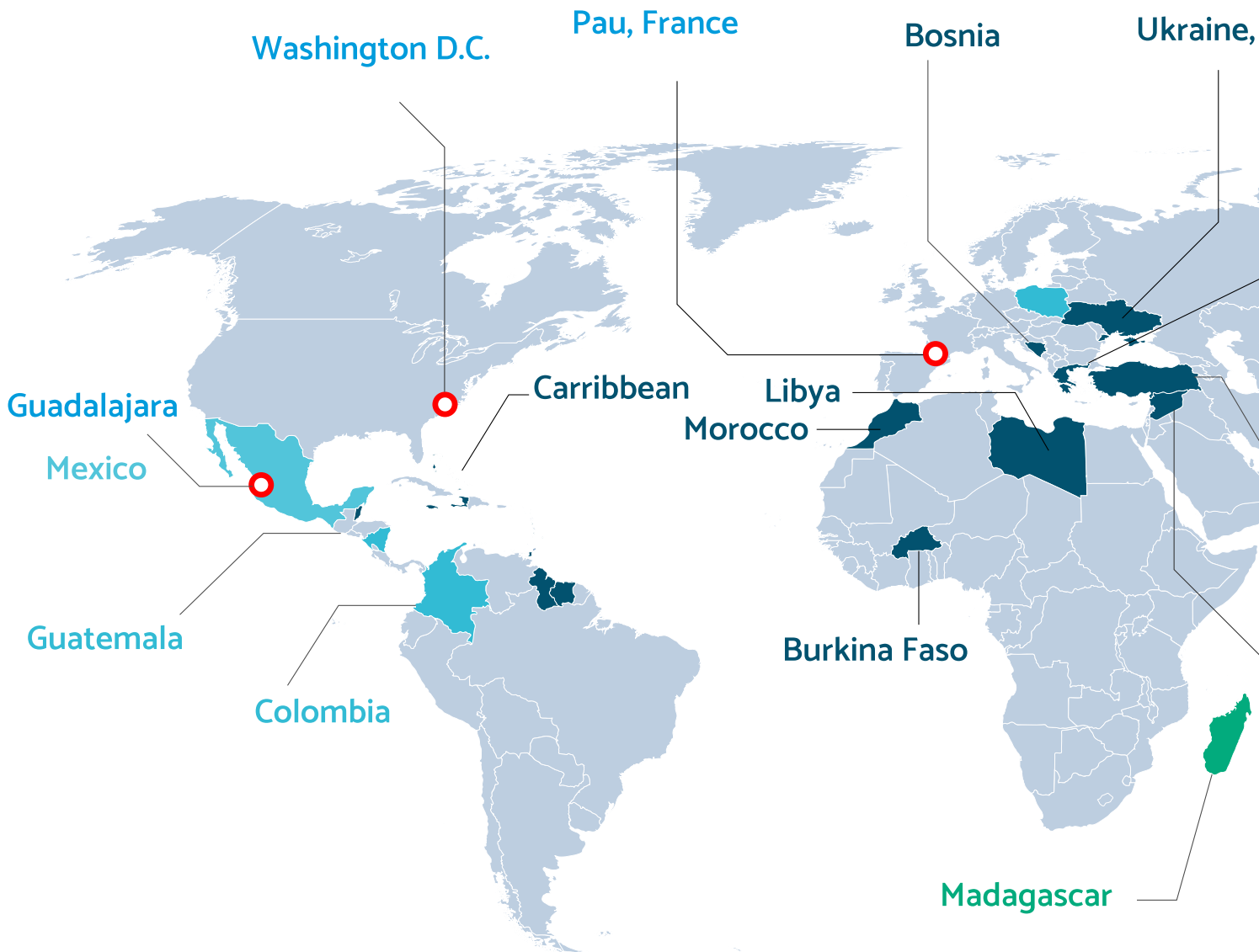
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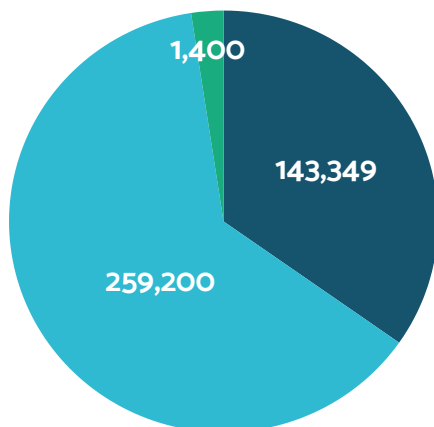
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# 2023 MISSIONS A

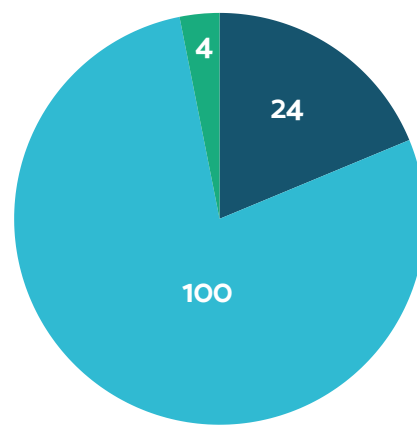


Number of Individuals  
Supported



Connectivity

Number of Organisations  
Supported



Access to Information

Digital Inclusion





# AND HIGHLIGHTS

Poland

Greece

South East Asia

Turkey

Syria

403,949

people supported

128

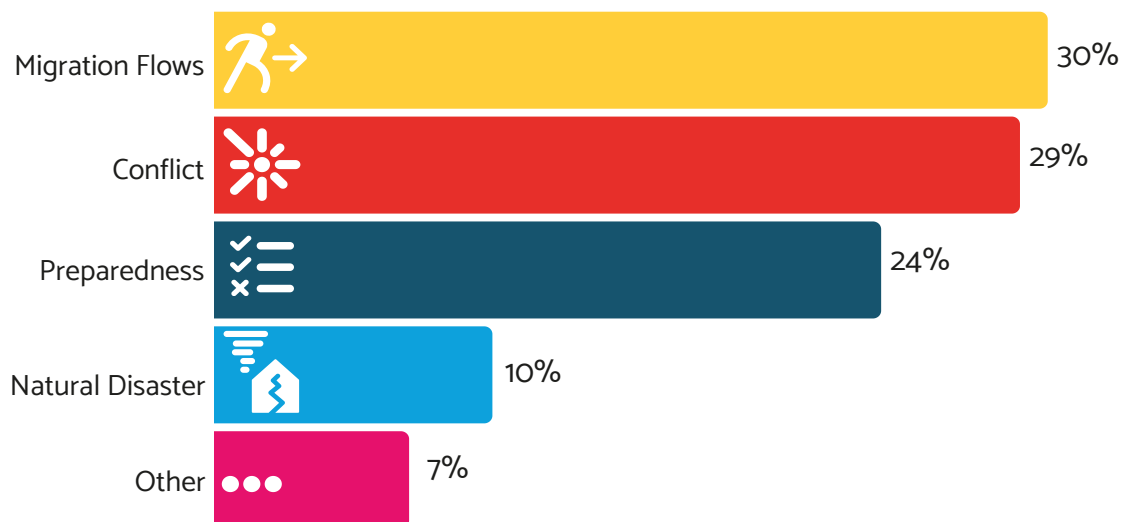
organisations assisted

14

missions

## Context of Intervention

*in % of annual expenses*





A photograph of two men standing outdoors. The man on the left is seen from the back, wearing a white baseball cap and a dark grey polo shirt. He is holding a black mobile phone to his ear. The man on the right is facing him, wearing a red Cruz Roja uniform with reflective stripes and a blue watch. They are standing in front of a building with a Starbucks logo and a sign that says 'ENTRADA'. The background includes trees and a clear sky.

TELECOMS  
SANS  
FRONTIERES

# CONNECTIVITY

Reconnecting people  
through crises





# Emergency Response to the Earthquake in Turkey & Syria, February 2023

On February 6, 2023, a powerful earthquake struck Turkey and Syria, with a magnitude of 7.8 and aftershocks of up to 7.5. Damage and destruction caused by the earthquake and its aftershocks resulted in the death of over 50,000 people.

A TSF team deployed and was present in Turkey the day after the earthquake to coordinate with humanitarian actors and rescue teams on site.

During these first two decisive weeks, TSF installed connectivity equipment in the most-affected areas and supported search and rescue teams, as well as first-aid teams, with emergency communications.

In order to support the affected populations during the reconstruction process, TSF strengthened the connectivity capacity of its partner in Syria, the Union of Organizations for Medical Care and Relief (UOSSM).

In the days following the disaster, this connection was able to support first aid efforts and enabled affected populations to access medical care.

After supporting organisations and populations during the relief phase, TSF worked in collaboration with other international and local NGOs on the reconstruction phase of the disaster.

This mission also enabled TSF to analyze the needs and develop collaborations to protect women affected by the earthquake and at risk of gender-based violence and discrimination.

**10,200**  
people supported

The earthquake emergency adds on an already degraded situation. TSF is still supporting 10 medical centers in Syria in partnership with UOSSM.

**+104,000 people were treated** in the medical facilities connected by TSF in 2023.

Mission supported by



RÉGION  
**Nouvelle-Aquitaine**

**bics**



# Emergency Response to the Earthquake in Morocco & Flooding in Libya, September & October 2023

In response to the 6.8 magnitude earthquake that struck the Atlas Mountains region of Morocco on September 9, TSF deployed to assess humanitarian communication needs. A few days later, following storm Daniels, two dams collapsed in eastern Libya, submerging a large part of the city of Derna. The floods caused extensive human and material damage.

In both countries, TSF carried out an on-site assessment of the situation and the communication needs of the Moroccan and Libyan populations and humanitarian actors.

**In Morocco**, TSF focused on the worst-affected areas, including Marrakech, Tahnaout and villages between Al-



Haouz and Taroudant, where networks were destroyed or out of service, to assess communication needs directly on the ground.

TSF coordinated with local players to gather information on the state of telecommunications networks in the affected areas.

Field assessments showed that telecommunications networks were rapidly functional and relatively stable.

**In Libya**, the TSF deployed to Derna as part of our collaboration with the United Nations' Disaster Assessment and Coordination team. TSF facilitated communications and broadband Internet connectivity for rescue and medical teams from the French Civil Protection, supporting their operations, including the field hospital where 200 affected people were receiving daily treatment.

This mission was carried out under particularly delicate access and security conditions, which did not allow to extend it much longer.

**+130** humanitarian  
staff members connected





# Emergency Response to Hurricane Otis Mexico, October 2023 - March 2024

In October, Hurricane Otis hit Acapulco, Mexico. The hurricane intensified quickly, leaving little time for the people living near Acapulco to prepare for the storm. It hit the Southern coast of Mexico as a category 5 storm, causing extensive damage and severing communication, road and air connections.

Two days after the hurricane hit Acapulco, TSF staff from the Latin America and Caribbean base deployed to support emergency telecommunications as part of its collaboration with the International Red Cross Movement.

To maximise the impact of its intervention in a difficult context in terms of access and security, TSF provided connectivity equipment and training to Mexican Red Cross teams on the use of satellite equipment, which would be sent to the field immediately to facilitate relief operations.

To enable the victims of the hurricane contacting their loved ones, TSF provided telecommunication services to the Mexican Red Cross, including free Internet access and satellite phones. This collaboration illustrates TSF's aim to develop alliances and participate in national or regional response mechanisms.

This response made it possible to support more than 1,300 people who benefitted from the connectivity services.



**956** people  
reconnected

**361** people could hear their  
loved ones' voices



# Connectivity for Displaced Families in Shelters in Ukraine, March 2022 - Ongoing

The war in Ukraine led to the largest civilian displacement in Europe since the Second World War. Millions of people were forced to flee their homes to escape violence, crossing the border with neighbouring countries or becoming displaced within their own country. In 2023, TSF worked with local shelters to meet people's communication needs across Ukraine.

As people were fleeing the conflict and searching for security, the needs for connectivity and information increased. Many people left the country, but millions stayed in Ukraine, becoming Internally Displaced People (IDP) in temporary shelters and centers across the country. As the war evolves, the needs for connectivity evolve too, especially for those sheltering in IDP centers.

Many young people were forced to leave their school, which not only means losing access to education, but also to what school can bring, such as friends, community, and structure. Many young Ukrainians

now study online, making Internet access essential for many families. But in the IDP collective centers, the Internet is not always available.

Many services need to be carried out

online, such as ordering medication, registering for assistance or dealing with administrative formalities.

For many families, one of the only ways to stay afloat financially is to work remotely, which cannot be done without Internet access.

Many use 4G plans, but this can be a financial burden in wartime for those living in shelters.

TSF works with various shelters across the country to identify local needs and provide connectivity in the most efficient way possible.

## How do people use connectivity?

[Get news on the situation in Ukraine](#)

[Talk to family and friends](#)

[Look for important information](#)



# +5,000

IDPs connected

# 225 TB

data exchanged

# 97%

of the people  
at the shelters use the Internet  
provided by TSF

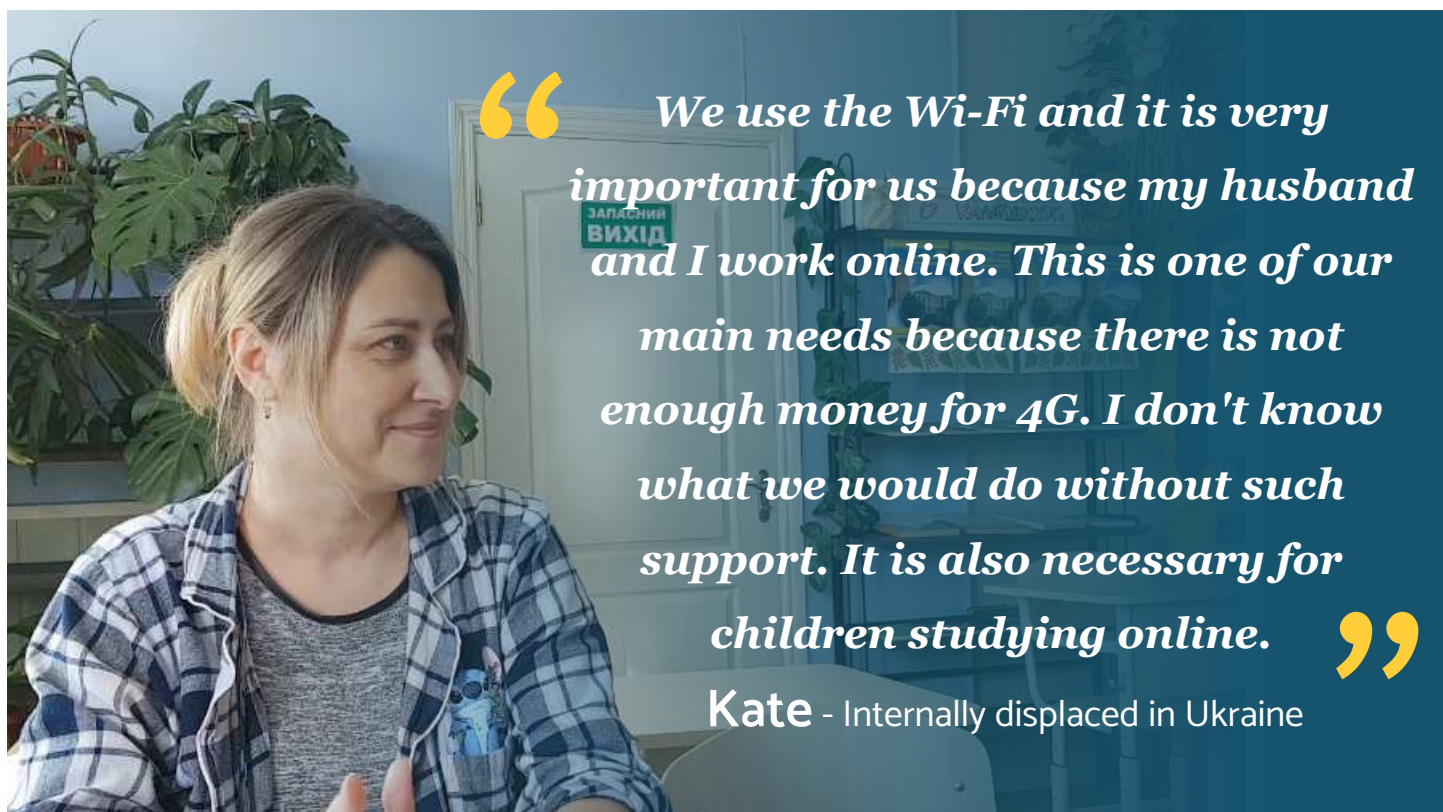


In collaboration with Internet service providers, our team installs connectivity equipment in shelters to distribute free Wi-Fi.

Since the beginning of the crisis, TSF has been supporting the affected population and humanitarian organizations by providing adequate means of communication to NGOs and affected individuals.

This year, TSF's connectivity in Ukraine supported eight collective centres in Vinnitsya, Dnipro, Lviv and Chernivtsi, enabling more than 5,000 people to access the internet freely.

TSF's presence in Ukraine enables us to be proactive in our response to any urgent need that may prevail because of the war.



***“ We use the Wi-Fi and it is very important for us because my husband and I work online. This is one of our main needs because there is not enough money for 4G. I don't know what we would do without such support. It is also necessary for children studying online. ”***

**Kate** - Internally displaced in Ukraine

Mission supported by

**Cellusys<sup>®</sup>**

# HUMANITARIAN R EUROPEAN MIG

## Connectivity for Refugees Camps in Bosnia & Greece, November 2018 - Ongoing

Many forcibly displaced people undergo perilous and arduous journeys in search of safety. Men, women, and children have often endured harsh traveling conditions, violence, and human rights violations during their journey. They are also often unable to contact their loved ones, which can cause worry and distress on both sides.

TSF carries out connectivity missions to meet this need for contact. In the refugee camps of Lesvos in Greece and Lipa in Bosnia, TSF provides Internet access to asylum seekers. The Lipa camp connectivity project is conducted in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration.

Being able to stay in touch and share information with loved ones can bring great psychological relief for migrants and refugees affected by weeks of traumatic travel. They can also keep up to date with elements needed to make informed decisions. A quality connection also facilitates coordination for humanitarian actors in the camps.

TSF is committed to providing connectivity to people until they can access other viable options to meet this need. TSF maintained the only Wi-Fi access in an asylum seekers' camp in Greece for three years, until a local operator was able to fully cover the area.



A new section was added to the Lipa camp this year, specifically for families, and TSF extended the Wi-Fi network to cover this area.



# RESPONSE TO THE MIGRATION CRISIS



## Notification System for Rescued Migrants & Refugees in the Mediterranean

In recent years, the number of people crossing the Mediterranean has drastically increased. Because of the perilous journey and the lack of security measures, thousands of people lose their lives every year by drowning or waiting for rescue teams. NGOs have been conducting search and rescue (SAR) operations in the Mediterranean for many years to save lives.



There is an undeniable need for survivors to inform their families that they are alive, especially after a traumatic experience. To respond to this critical need and provide psychological relief to the survivors, TSF created a humanitarian notification system that allows rescued people to securely notify their families and assure them that they are safe.

TSF's solution is made available on rescue ships of SAR NGOs. It is managed by the onboard staff members and maintained by TSF.

**12,163** users  
in Lipa refugee camp

**8,896** users  
in Lesvos refugee camp

**1,920** emergency  
notifications sent



# Emergency Telecom Capacity Sharing in the Caribbean and South East Asia, October 2021 - October 2023

The South East Asia and Caribbean regions are very prone to natural disasters, which often damage telecommunications infrastructures and increase the need for a coordinated emergency response between all actors.

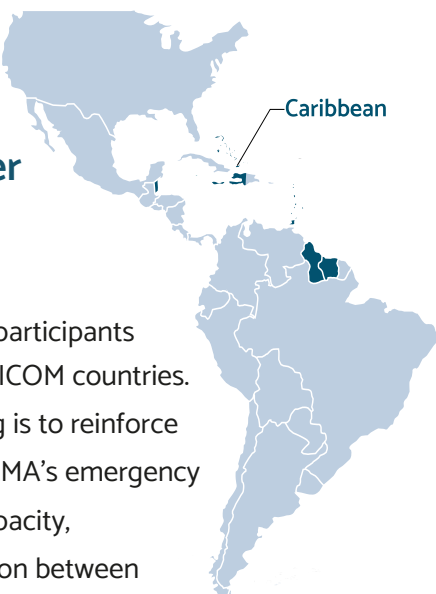
With support from the Internet Society Foundation, TSF carried out a two-year capacity-sharing project to help build regional telecoms resilience in Southeast Asia and the Caribbean. The project was based on a partnership with the regional agencies Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on

Disaster Management (AHA Centre). Training sessions on a selection of suitable equipment have been held. In 2023, we held the first training session in Singapore for participants from the AHA Center. The second took



**2**  
regional partner  
organisations

place in Barbados for participants from CDEMA and CARICOM countries. The aim of the training is to reinforce AHA Centre's and CDEMA's emergency telecoms response capacity, strengthen collaboration between regional partners and accompany them in their response strategy in support of member states.







# 3 QUESTIONS TO...

**DIANE LOPICCOLO**

Project Manager

**1**

## Why a capacity sharing project?

*Both the South East Asia and Caribbean regions are prone to natural disasters which often damage telecommunications infrastructures and alter the need for a coordinated emergency response between all actors.*

*Moreover, regional organisations involved in Disaster Management have expressed a need for self-sufficiency in telecommunications.*

*TSF has many years of experience responding to emergencies in both regions and has implemented the project based on previous interactions with CDEMA and AHA Centre on the field.*

**2**

## What is the project “Enhanced Emergency Telecoms Regional Capacity” about?

*The project aims at diminishing the impact of disasters on affected communities by putting reliable emergency telecoms capacities in the hand of regional response mechanisms in order to facilitate an immediate, efficient and coordinated response to crisis.*

*This is achieved by reinforcing AHA Centre’s and CDEMA’s emergency telecoms response capacity in the South East Asia and Caribbean regions.*

**3**

## How was the project implemented?

*The project was implemented following two steps. The first is providing state-of-the-art satellite equipment configured and appropriate for rapid response use by emergency personnel from regional response mechanisms for autonomous use in the field.*

*The next step is a series of training to understand how to use the equipment and how to react in a situation of emergency and crisis, followed by a SIMEX to apply the acquired knowledge.*

Project supported by:



**Internet Society  
Foundation**

## U RUTA MIGRATORIA, CONSULADOS, TIPS

### CONSULADOS EN TU RUTA



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Miguel Hidalgo  
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Fernando de  
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(333) 126 2023

Internet Modern  
INFINITUMC056

Contraseña:  
uJGuTCDG5E

# ACCESS TO INFORMATION

for migrants & refugees





## Information Diffusion for Displaced Populations in Latin America, October 2017 - Ongoing

In the last 30 years, the number of migrants from Central America has increased by 137%, from 6.82 million to almost 16.2 million. With an increasing number of families and unaccompanied minors fleeing South American countries due to violence, high crime rates and natural disasters, providing information to migrants and refugees is one of the most effective ways of supporting them.

Migrants and refugees often lack access to reliable information, yet it is essential for them to stay safe and learn about their rights.

After a connectivity project, TSF has been providing access to information through connected screens installed in migrant shelters across the region, to support displaced populations, since 2017.

TSF's information diffusion system is installed in 29 migrant centers in Mexico, Guatemala and Colombia, and an additional 64 shelters in partnership with IOM.

What information is most important for people?

Maps and shelters on the way

Refugee regularisation

Self-care, health and safety

“ *I have informed myself about information I didn't know. Perhaps out of shame, people don't ask or get more oriented.* ”

Alison, a 24 years-old migrant woman.

**73%** felt safer after  
accessing the information  
on the screens.

TSF Mexico is part of a regional humanitarian network that works with migrants. It is made up of migrant shelters, international NGOs or UN agencies. TSF's project enables these organizations, to distribute priority information directly to the migrants in vulnerable situations. From the migrants' point of view, it gives them reliable and relevant information in one place, enabling them to make informed decisions about the next stage of their journey.

Depending on age, gender, country of origin and shelter, people look for different and specific information. To best meet people's needs, the team has created and disseminated content aimed at specific groups, like advice on where to find help in the event of gender-based violence, or content adapted for children.



**51%** made important  
decisions thanks to the  
information provided.

## “ *The story of Gloria*

Gloria\* fled Honduras, her home country, after people threatened to rape her daughter and to hurt her family.

“I was afraid to stay in my country, for the life of my daughter and mine and that of my family”. Gloria explains to us in the shelter, looking at posters around her about the rights of displaced people in Mexico. “If we leave our country, it's because of the insecurity,” she adds.

After crossing Honduras and going through a difficult journey with her family, she reached a shelter in the south of Mexico,

near the Guatemalan border.

In this new country, Gloria has many uncertainties and questions about the administrative procedures to follow, where to find support for her family, etc.

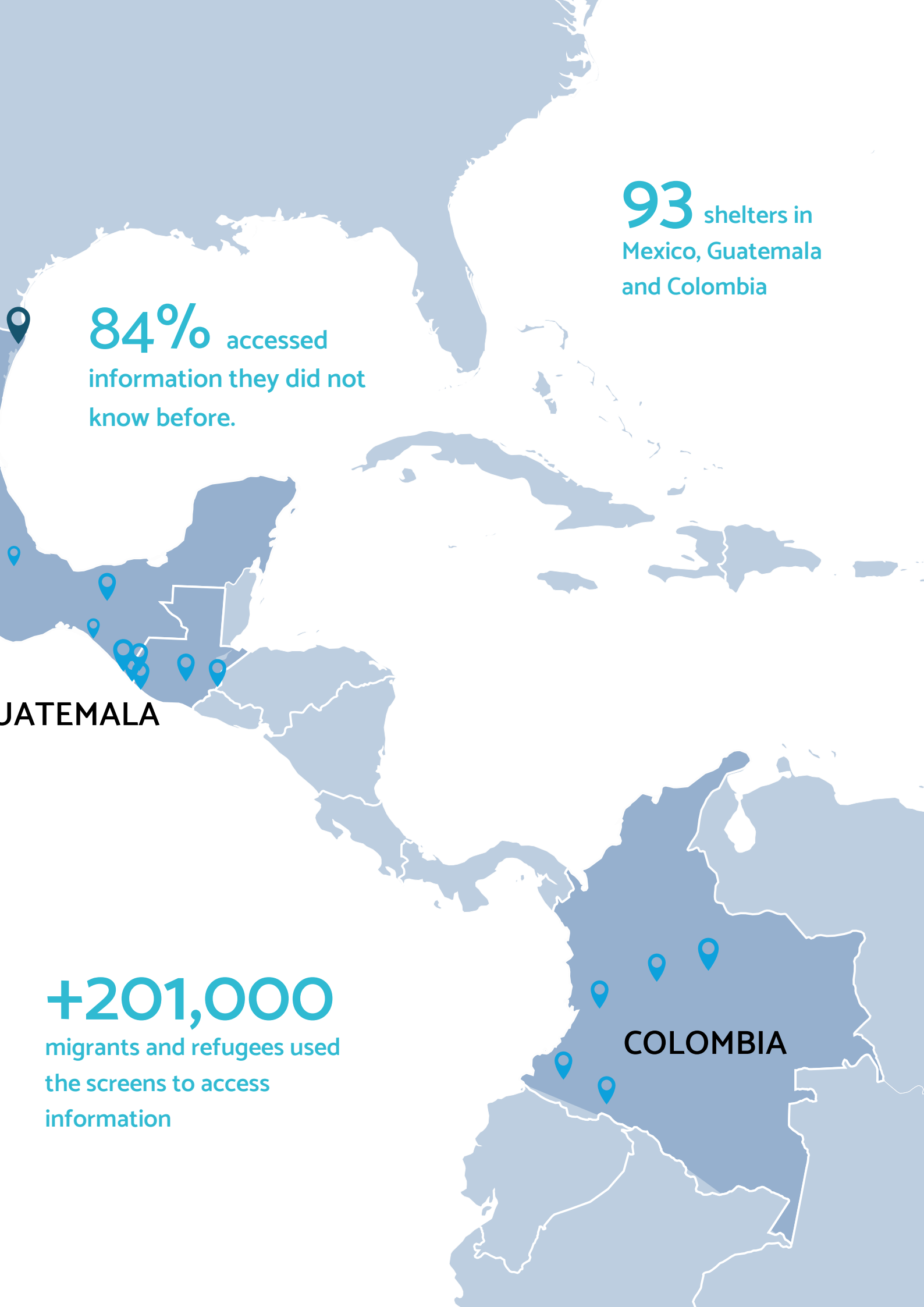
One way to find answers is through the connected screen installed by TSF.

“The screen here has helped me a lot to see the procedure to follow for the [Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid]. It helps us a lot with the rights that we and our children have, both in health, study and work, if we are already in the process of being registered.”

\*name changed.

”





**93** shelters in  
Mexico, Guatemala  
and Colombia

**84%** accessed  
information they did not  
know before.

**GUATEMALA**

**+201,000**  
migrants and refugees used  
the screens to access  
information

**COLOMBIA**



# Information Diffusion for Displaced Populations in Poland, June 2022 - March 2024

The war in Ukraine has forced millions of people to flee the country in search of security and safety. Poland is the second European country with the highest number of recorded Ukrainian refugees, sheltering almost 1 million people. Most of these refugees are women with their children and elderly, with little to no information about their rights, procedures to request asylum and protection, and what options they have.

To meet the need for access to essential information and support forcibly displaced populations, TSF launched the project of Informative Screens for Ukrainian refugees in reception sites set up by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The screens display information on safety, asylum requests, the support provided by institutions, the status of the reception centers and their capacity, and legal and

psychological assistance, with specific attention to women and children since they represent the vast majority of refugees.

Access to such information in an unstable context makes refugees feel safer and relieved and allows them to make informed decisions about their journey, whether to leave or stay in Poland, as well as access valuable resources.

By the end of 2023, eight information screens were operating across Rzeszów, Wrocław, Lublin, and Warsaw, offering guidance and support to +5,000 beneficiaries every month.

In 2023, TSF extended its operations to IDP centers run by Community Organized Relief Effort, Danish Refugee Council and local NGOs, and UNHCR and UNICEF.

## What information is most important for people?

Rights and responsibilities of Ukrainian people living in Poland

Services and assistance available

Transportation in, out and around Poland



# 57,600

Ukrainian refugees  
accessed crucial  
information in 2023

# 8

organisations  
supported in Poland

# 61%

reported a  
psychological relief after  
accessing the information

# 54%

made  
important decisions thanks to  
the information provided

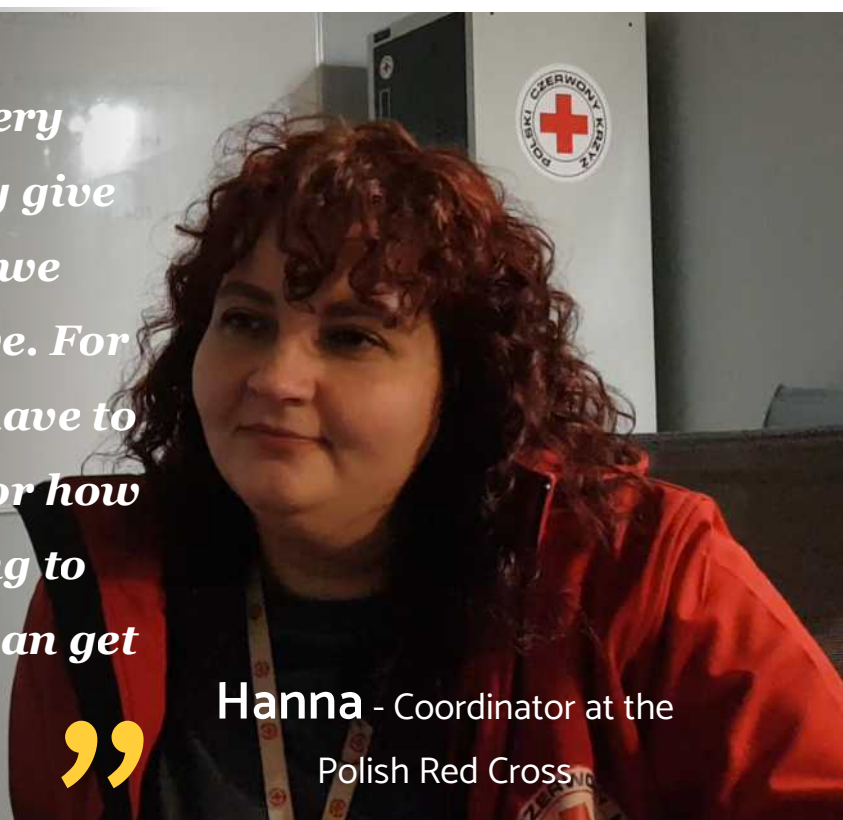


# “

*The screens are very  
helpful because they give  
information that we  
personally don't have. For  
example, when you have to  
go for vaccinations, or how  
to help people going to  
school, or how they can get  
social help...*

# ”

**Hanna** - Coordinator at the  
Polish Red Cross







# **DIGITAL INCLUSION**

for a responsible use of  
technologies





## IT Cup Center of Miarinarivo, Madagascar, February 2012 - Ongoing

To help bridge the digital divide in Madagascar, TSF set up a center for digital inclusion. Its aim is to contribute to the development of the region through the responsible use of digital technology and connectivity while working closely with local stakeholders and organizing activities linked to various sectors: education, health, agriculture, etc.

The IT Cup center is a key player in the city of Miarinarivo, recognised for its expertise in the digital sector. It offers a range of activities, including a cybercafé, computer initiation programs for students, raising awareness of Internet safety, organising extracurricular activities and supporting, technical and creative clubs, organizing mapping workshops and participating in data collection projects.

In 2023, the partnership with the Lycée Général de Miarinarivo was renewed, and a new research support activity was organized to improve students' studies.

The IT Cup team also took part in various events, in particular the Agricultural Forum organized by the ALABRI center, where participants were able to discover resources for vocational guidance and training.

**1,400**  
users in 2023

**600**  
youth participated in  
the activities





# A HEARTFELT THANK

**A**s we reflect on the past year's achievements and strides towards our mission, Télécoms Sans Frontières is filled with gratitude for the unwavering support of our partners. Your generous contributions have been instrumental in driving positive change and responding to crises around the world.

Thanks to your support, we have been able to deploy critical communication in areas affected by disasters, provide vital connectivity to humanitarian responders, and offer digital inclusion programs for 25 years. **Our shared vision and commitments have helped to bridge the digital divide and bring hope to people in crisis.**

If the testimonies and smiles of the people we help are a sign of the relevance of our actions, it is above all the strength and perseverance of these women, men, families, and unfortunately also these children, that edify our faith in humanity and strengthen our determination to carry on with our active solidarity.

Once again, Télécoms Sans Frontières extends our deepest gratitude to each and every one of our partners. Your generosity fuels our efforts and strengthens our resolve to build better future where people are better connected to each other.

With heartfelt appreciation,

**Télécoms Sans Frontières**





# KS TO OUR PARTNERS





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