



PRESENTATION OF THE
**INTEGRATION HOUSE
PEDRO ARRUIPE**

September 2019

Integration House



Introduction

Starting our mission in Serbia in 2016 we explored needs and opportunities to find the best possible way to help those who need it. Working on the field, communicating with other civil society organizations and with government institutions we identified a gap in the protection of unaccompanied minors which is why we established Pedro Arrupe Integration House back in May 2017. Since then, we provided accommodation to more than 70 children, who were identified as victims of sexual violence, exploitation, smuggling and potential victims of human trafficking or they were just too young to be alone anywhere.

Supported by our donors, in cooperation with Serbian authorities, our experience was being presented as an example of good practice to all actors involved in refugee protection in Serbia in the fields of integration, protection and promotion of human rights of children. This gives us a good position to advocate for the rights of children in other fields such as education, community-based services and better legal protection.

Telling a story about our work is always hard; sometimes we think we are too critical of ourselves and sometimes that we give ourselves too much credit. So, it is best when you get inputs from someone who has been for a short time part of our team, and perception he gets tell us a lot.

JRS believes that our journey with refugees is the most important way for us to express our solidarity with them and our concern for their wellbeing. In a world where refugees are more than ever in need of welcome, protection, and justice, and yet are increasingly rejected, demonised, and

denied their fundamental human rights, JRS offers accompaniment to refugees as a sign of hope and a way towards healing. In even the most desperate of situations, we remain with refugees to assure them that the world has not forgotten them, and that they are not alone.

"Pedro Arrupe"

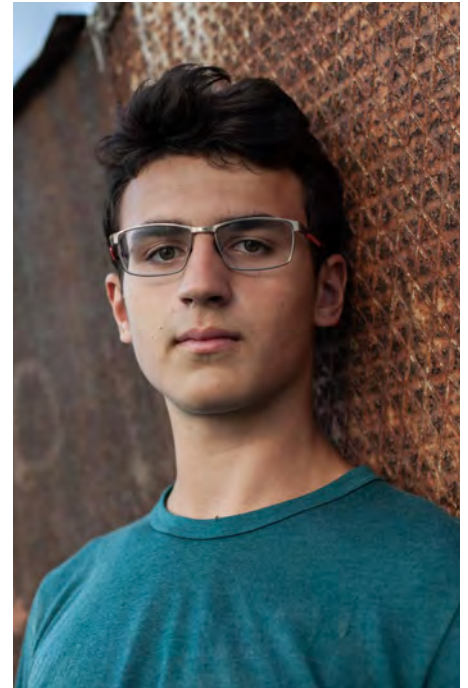
This year we had a pleasure to host one young volunteer from the US. His family migrated a long time ago from Hungary. They were visiting relatives and he decided, mostly because of the different stories he heard, to apply for volunteering in JRS.

From the start, we were impressed that one sixteen-year-old young man wants to take such a task, but at the end we were happy that we hosted such wonderful person and allow him to learn from firsthand about his peers, their hard life and to become our voice in the world.

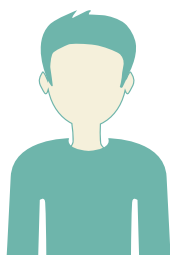
When we asked him about his impressions, after the experience, he said:

"What impresses me the most about JRS House is the family like environment created by the boys and the staff. Being sixteen and far away from home, I found myself spending as much time as I could at the house. Every day I would arrive in the morning, often well before breakfast, and stay late into the night. For me JRS house was a home away from home and I know without doubt, that in that I am not alone. Volunteering at JRS taught me about the good people involved in the refugee crisis: both the individuals the word refugee often masks and the people willing to help them. I had an unforgettable experience at JRS."

Also, next to his story you will find quotes from our beneficiaries.



Laszlo Koval
Volunteer



M.H. (9) Iran

"I would miss the staff, because they are all good to me. They helped me with my homework, they took me to the doctor when I was ill, they enrolled me in the football club. When I go from here my heart will be broken. I remember when we were singing together, when they helped me buy my phone. I would miss our jokes, Maja's food, my friends... But when I go I will come back to Serbia to visit you!"

OUR WORK IN SERBIA

Since March 2016, when the JRS office in Serbia was reopened, we provided support for more than

8.000

refugees.

The support has been delivered in different ways: foods, clothes, medicament, baby supplies, translations, legal support, etc.

The House



The story you are going to read was written by our volunteer *Laszlo Koval* and how he saw our work.



by Laszlo Koval

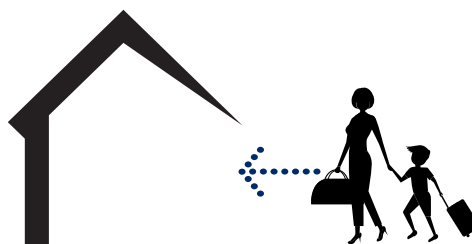
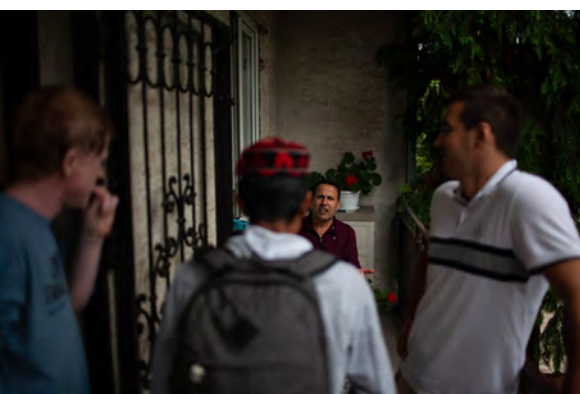


Integration House “Pedro Arrupe” is a shelter designed to accommodate vulnerable unaccompanied children who have been separated from their families. The goal of the House is integration into a new society. To do this, the House provides not only food, shelter, clothing and basic medical necessities, but gives its beneficiaries the opportunities of education and fun. With eight employees and two interns, the House has given shelter to 70 boys since its establishment in 2017.



Arrival

To come to the House, Center for Social Welfare refers children to JRS staff who interview the children to see if the House would benefit them. The House accommodates the most vulnerable children: victims of physical, psychological and sexual violence, children at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, different forms of exploitation and smuggling. When accommodated the children are given new clothes, shoes and hygiene necessities and told about the House rules.

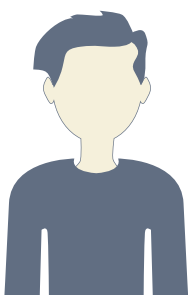


At the heart of our service to refugees is our commitment to journey with them throughout their experience of displacement. JRS's many projects – education centres, food security, livelihood training, reconciliation, and so on – may require practical planning, political negotiations, and financial sustainability, but our mission always remains rooted in a love for refugees that is profoundly bound to God's unfailing love for us. Our service to refugees is an expression of our desire to accompany faithfully those who experience so much rejection and absence in their lives.

Education

Education

The House ensures that the children have the opportunity to continue an active education in Serbia. Beneficiaries who stay longer than a month, are enrolled in the local school system while informal educational and creative activities are organized to strengthen their education. Pedagogues at the House are available to help with schoolwork and maintain a strong connection with the school. Apart from school, pedagogues at the House are also working on cultural integration. *“We are working on breaking the border between two cultures. We have stereotyping here among Serbs and behavioral issues among the boys that we are working on,”* says Nemanja Rajic, a pedagogue at the House. To help break these cultural boundaries, activities done together with local students are also arranged. During summer break, English and Serbian classes along with other workshops from life skills to the effects of drugs and alcoholism are run to provide more opportunities for their education.



R.S. (15) Afghanistan

„First months of my life here were not good. I was an enemy to myself. Then something changed, and since then I feel that I became a better person. JRS supported me so much in that period. I finally stopped overthinking about my past, my family, I improved in school and art... In future, I would love to help others the way JRS helped me. A few days ago I saw a report about a young Afghani girl selling pens on a street. People didn't want to help her. They were even rude to her. It broke my heart, and I started crying. I want to help these people...; What would I say to myself I could go back to past? I would tell „do good and have good“. If we do good, it will return multiplied.“

Fun



Fun

The Integrational House gives children the opportunity not only of a good education but lets them have leisure time to have fun and explore their environment and passions. *"I think we are doing a good job helping unaccompanied children be children again. Not having to start working but to be able to go to school and play football,"* says Violeta Markovic, Country Manager. The boys at the House often play football or tennis in the backyard or go to the nearby schoolyard to play. During summer break, day excursions such as visits to the beach, orienteering, hikes and picnics outside Belgrade and kayaking trips are frequent.

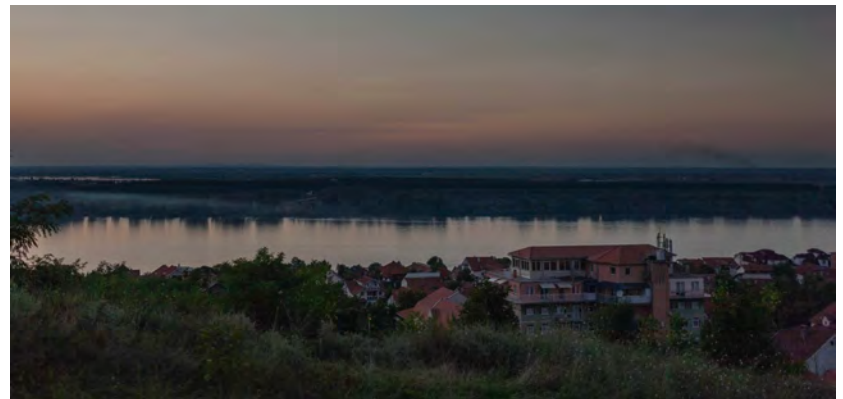
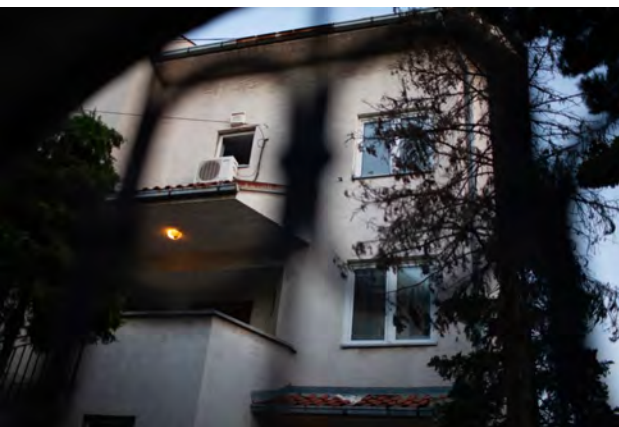


The Facilities



The Facilities

Integration House "Pedro Arrupe" provides the boys with safety, comfort and privacy. Having five rooms fitting between two and four people, the House can accommodate up to sixteen children. There is a living area, kitchen, porch, IT room, classroom and a yard all of which the children can freely use.



The Area

The House sits in a quiet neighborhood at the outskirts of Belgrade. *"I like it here because there are not too many people,"* says Z.E. (16) a new user a few hours after arriving from the more chaotic places many refugees in Belgrade have to stay. *"I remembered the heroes in movies opening their window in the morning to a beautiful sunrise. I wished I could have that. It is amazing... now I do."* Here the boys enjoy a garden, a neighborhood schoolyard, tranquil views of the Danube, and a forest only a five-minute walk away.



Staff



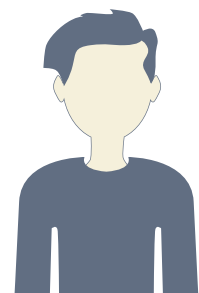
The Staff

The staff of the House are very important in the integration and wellbeing of the children.

"I think we live everyday life here at the House. We are trying to create for them something like a family, something like home. If they have a problem and they need to speak, we are here to listen to them," says Maya Markovic who provides legal assistance at the House. The boys of the House think likewise. *"People here at JRS are kind... I have crossed through four countries, but I feel that this is my House,"* says S. A. (17) a user who has stayed here for a longer period. The House tries to make a home-like family-like environment which unaccompanied children often do not have access to.



„When I think about my life in Serbia, I realize how I got used to this place. It would be difficult to go from this house one day. I am here for two years already. I know every step on these stairs, I could walk here blindfolded. Before I came to this house, I lived in another house for a short time. There were many problems there, I didn't like it. But when I came here, I felt like I found something like a family. When I go from this place, I will miss all of the staff members. They helped me a lot with studying, they supported my talents and helped me enroll in the school I always wanted to attend. I could meet many people from all around the world and made friends with some. I will miss my room also. Everything happened there, good moments, bad moments, lots of studying... I have so many memories..."



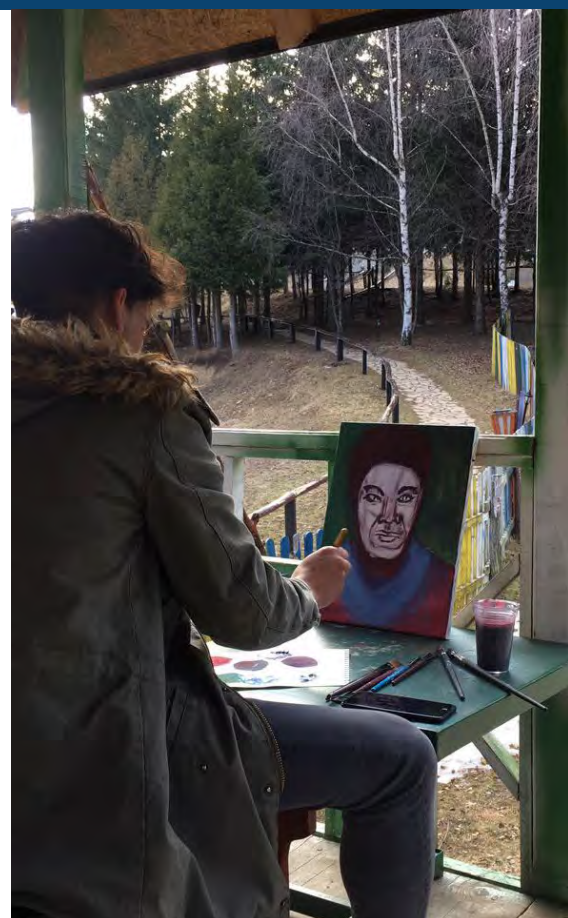
S.R. (17) Afghanistan

The future

Future of the House

For the future, the House plans to improve its services to unaccompanied children and provide more opportunities to further integrate them into society. “While we teach the children and it is our job, we learn from them every day,” says Nemanja Rajic, a pedagogue at the House.

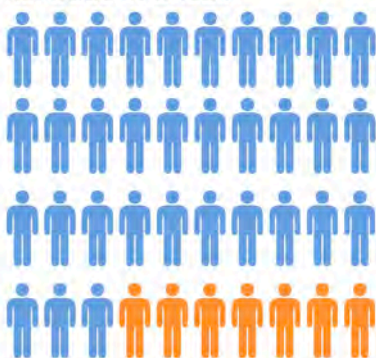
Laszlo has seen us better than we can see it. Working every day to make this place a little bit better for the childhood of our beneficiaries we are trying to help them be what they should be – children. We are hopeful that we will be able in the coming years to do the same, to make more happy childhoods for more children in our country. What we show them today, will lead to what kind of person they will become in future. The brighter future for all of us is our mission here.



Current situation

>4.000

REFUGEE IN SREBIA



>400

UNACCOMPANIED
AND SEPARATE CHILDREN



72

BEDS CAPACITY IN
SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS



40

BEDS IN
GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

Prevention and suppression of violence against children is a priority of national policies in Serbia. The number of children on the move worldwide is still on the rise. In the EU, in 2018, total 19.700 asylum seekers applying for international protection in the Member States of the European Union (EU) were unaccompanied and separate children (UASC). At the same time, more than 2.800 UASC were identified in the Republic of Serbia. Unaccompanied minors are one of the most vulnerable groups in the refugee population giving that they are traveling alone, and there is no one to protect them; providing safe accommodation for this group of refugees should be an imperative considering their vulnerability. Government of Serbia has put the protection of UASC high on the priority list, but due to the big influx of UASC since 2015, most of them are being accommodated in refugee camps and reception centers together with adults, where they are exposed to risks of violence and exploitation.

Available shelters specialized for accommodation of UASC can accommodate a small number of children present in Serbia – only 5 to 10% (in 2019 there were nearly 1.500 UASC identified in Serbia, and capacity of accommodation facilities is 72 beds – 40 in state institutions and additional 32 beds in JRS and another shelter).

Having experienced staff members who are working directly with UACS since 2017 JRS is the most relevant NGO in Serbia that have the capacity to provide support and trainings to employees of key actors on the field.

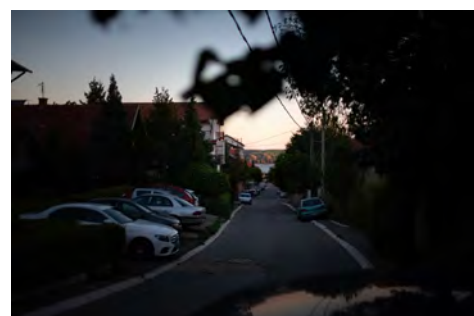
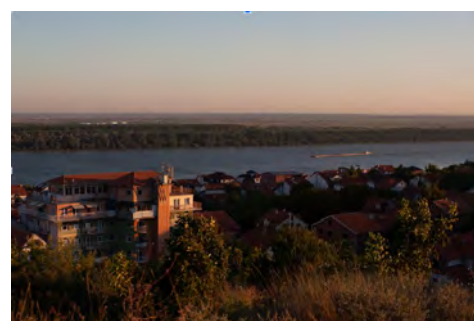
Our target group are unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), asylum seekers and employees of the state institution for childcare protection and CSOs employees in this field.

The work with highly traumatized children is hard and request a specially designed approach. This job needs to be done by professionals who well trained to work with UASC and asylum seekers. Those, especially working with institutions, are often changing, and it is necessary to provide them with a training to help them protect children in the best way possible.

JRS Vision

A world where refugees and other forcibly displaced people attain protection, opportunity, and participation.

Integration house “Pedro Arrupe” work in direct cooperation with Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of Republic of Serbia (Ministry in charge for migration and refugees), City Center for Social Welfare Belgrade (in charge for guardianship over UASC), Center for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, primary and secondary schools in Belgrade area and different CSOs working with unaccompanied children.





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