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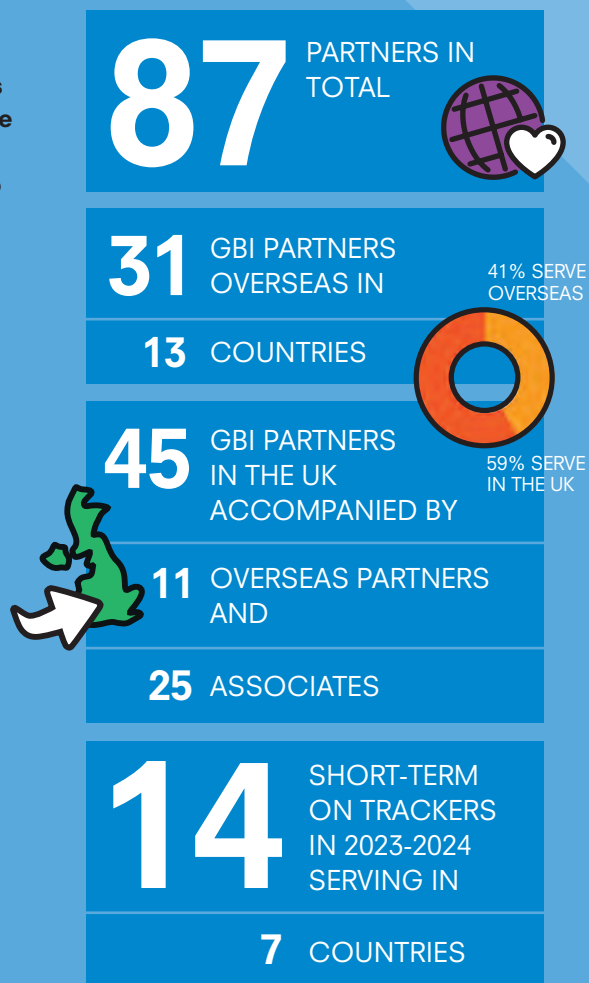
report
2024



Contents

God's infinite outpouring of love: Daniel's story	4
He pulled me in: Esther's story	6
From death to life: Chan's story	8
It was God who put me here: Ali's story	10
You make a tangible difference	12
God will make a way: Sumaya's story	14

Please join us in thanking God for each of the individuals and Partners who have shared their stories in this magazine. Ask that God will continue His work of transformation in each of them, so that they can continue to share the good news of Jesus with others in the months and years to come.



Transformation is a work in progress

A REFLECTION FROM OUR NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Lives and communities transformed through encounter with Jesus Christ.

This is the vision of Interserve. This is what we long to see in the varied contexts around the world where Interserve teams live and work. This edition of our annual impact report is a collection of individual testimonies of Jesus-enabled transformation. They represent a small selection of what Interserve Partners and short-termers are blessed to be a part of across the UK and around the world. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, the apostle Paul reminds us, "if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here!" Death to life, darkness to light, despair to hope!

One theme that runs through these testimonies is that transformation is a work in progress. Indeed, we know it is a life-long process. If we are to be involved in God's work of transformation in the lives

of others, we ourselves must be willing to be transformed. That is the call for each of us as individual followers of Christ, and it is also what we seek for the Interserve community. We continue to see steady growth in the numbers joining Interserve GBI from Asian and African heritage backgrounds, as well as internationals coming to serve with our national team. We desire to grow more in this way as we seek to serve an increasingly diverse church in Great Britain and Ireland and across the world. We have so much we can learn from our sisters and brothers around the world.

We saw God's faithfulness in so many ways in 2023, not least through the faithfulness of you, our supporters, as you prayed and gave financially. Through your support, you have also become partners in God's transformation of lives and communities. I hope you are encouraged and inspired as you read through this Impact Report. Let us not give up. God is at work!

Chris Binder
National Director



God's infinite outpouring
of love:

Daniel's story

**WHEN HUSSEIN AND INTERSERVE
PARTNER MATT STARTED UP
A CONVERSATION ON A PARK
BENCH, NEITHER HAD ANY IDEA
OF THE JOURNEY THAT GOD HAD
PLANNED FOR THEM**

In March 2020, I met a Syrian refugee where I was living in Southeast Asia. Hussein was sleeping rough, had no money, and was on the point of suicide. He had fled Damascus with his wife and infant sons, and spent nine years in a refugee camp in the Jordanian desert, a world of barbed wire, heat and dust, until he decided to risk everything to make it to Europe.

He failed, and like a piece of human driftwood he had washed up at the park. While my kids played, I noticed him sitting alone, and struck up a conversation. As we talked he told his story and started to weep. When, after two hours, my kids announced they were

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He simply could not understand why I would help him. I told him that I was a Christian who had experienced God's infinite outpouring of love.

hungry, we ordered pizza to the park and ate together.

Over the next few days I returned to the park to bring food and toiletries and simply to listen as he poured out his grief. He was depressed, was tormented by mosquitoes, and had waking nightmares of demons surrounding him. He simply could not understand why I would help him. I told him that I was a Christian who had experienced God's infinite outpouring of love, and I wanted to share that love with others. So he asked for a Bible.

Before the pandemic started, I was able to find Hussein a place in a refugee safe house. Over the next few months he had little to do except read his Bible. Gradually he came to know Jesus and was baptised in a paddling pool by Christian friends from Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

By that point my family and I had left Southeast Asia. Hussein – who chose the name Daniel at his baptism – was

heartbroken. When I said goodbye I promised him that I would bring his family to join him. In 2022 I was able to fulfil my promise, flying to Amman to meet his wife and sons and travelling with them to Southeast Asia. The joy of reunion was cut short when Daniel announced that he was now a Christian. His wife's fury was unimaginable. She told him that she wanted to return to Syria, tried to divorce him, and eventually poisoned his food and nearly killed him.

Daniel and his wife came to lead separate lives. Daniel had a growing ministry among Muslim refugees, sharing his testimony with remarkable boldness. His wife, meanwhile, delved deeper into Islam, teaching Qur'an classes and adopting the *niqab* for the first time. When I visited the region, Daniel and I would meet to pray, but his wife ignored me with cold anger.

Earlier this year I visited Southeast Asia again. I received a message from Daniel's wife, "Could I come and visit the family?" I was welcomed with full Arab hospitality. We ate, chatted and laughed together; I helped their sons practise English; Daniel's wife apologised for her previous rudeness. We parted on wonderfully good terms, to my total amazement. Who knows what the future holds for this family?

All of this is God's work. God ordained that we should meet in the park on that day in 2020. God appeared to Daniel in his dreams. God spoke to him through the Bible. God made it possible for Daniel to be reunited with his wife and sons. God shaped Daniel for his current ministry among Muslim refugees; God is enabling his story to be heard by thousands of people around the world. And God invites us to be part of his work. The joy of it is beyond description.

He pulled me in:

Esther's story

ESTHER* REFLECTS ON GOD'S TRANSFORMING POWER IN HER LIFE THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF HER LOCAL CHURCH AND INTERSERVE PARTNER JO

I had a good life in the Middle East, but my husband was wanted by the police of my country because of his political activities. We arrived in England with our two children and applied for asylum. The Home Office gave us two rooms to live in, and we shared the kitchen with another family who lived downstairs. Sometimes a lady called Jo came to visit my neighbour and read the Bible with her. I knew that she was a member of a church near our house. We were going through a very dark season in our lives. The pressures we were facing caused my husband and I to argue a lot.

One day after an argument with my husband, I left the house. My throat was tight. I wanted to cry, but I didn't know where to go. I felt very helpless. I was walking in the street and I didn't want people to see my tears. I don't know why, but I suddenly thought about the church. I wanted a safe haven. So I said to myself, 'I will go to His house' - the house of God.

When I got there, no one was in the church - just a corridor with all the doors closed. Then a woman came forward. As soon as she asked if I was ok, I started crying, causing me to have a panic attack. The church pastor and others came and called an ambulance.

After that, I felt embarrassed. I didn't want to see Jo or anyone from the church. But the next day the church pastor came to see me with flowers. Migration and instability had made me feel insecure and this love from her was like water on a thirsty plant. After that, I saw Jo again. She came to see my neighbour who was having a baby soon, so she could not continue volunteering in the church. Jo encouraged me to volunteer instead of my neighbour. But I thought, "Not at all!!" After that incident, not at all! I didn't want to go.

Jo told me about a lady who had come to the church very upset and taken off her clothes, but a few days later she had been able to return to the church. Then she said, "What happened to you is never as bad as that!" I realised she was right! So I went to church with great shame and helped in the toddler group once a

week. At the end of each morning, we had lunch together, gave thanks to Jesus for his love to us and prayed for each other. Soon my heart and soul felt like it belonged to Jesus.

I am so deeply grateful for the support I have received from the church. They listened to our story. They prayed for us. They supported our immigration case. They wrote reference letters for my son and daughter's university applications. My voluntary work at the church was seen as work experience so I was able to get a job at a hospital nearby.

From the very first day that I came to church, I have been surrounded by so much genuine kindness and warmth. The church members are my family now and I will always love them sincerely. I know that the church is the house of God, and Jesus is my everything.

* Name changed for security reasons

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Migration and instability had made me feel insecure and this love from her was like water on a thirsty plant.



JO IS JUST ONE OF **56** PARTNERS IN INTERSERVE'S **GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND COUNTRY TEAM**, EACH ENGAGED IN MINISTRY WITH PEOPLES OF ASIA AND THE ARAB WORLD.

From death to life: *Chan's story*

10 INTERSERVE GBI
PARTNERS ARE
CURRENTLY
ENGAGED IN
MEDICAL CENTRES
ACROSS THE GLOBE.



INTERSERVE PARTNERS AT A CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL IN SOUTHEAST ASIA SHARE THE RECENT STORY OF A YOUNG PERSON IN THEIR CARE

Chan,* a fifteen year old boy, arrived at our hospital to receive palliative care last December. He was close to death, and those caring for him wanted to ensure he was in a safe place and could receive visitors from his orphanage as he approached the end of his life. The orphanage staff were scared that he would die in their building. Here in Southeast Asia there is a great fear of death, and many organisations fear that if someone dies in their care, a government investigation and punitive measures may follow. We were keen to offer a place for Chan when other doors were closed.

Chan's story is one of great sadness. Having lost his parents at an early age, he was trafficked and sexually abused along with his younger sister. He also had a chronic heart abnormality from birth. If born in the UK he would have had corrective heart surgery as an infant, but there is no funding or opportunity for heart surgery for an orphan boy here. He came to us with pneumonia, transferred from another hospital where he had not been treated with the correct medications. He was struggling to breathe, and in much pain and distress.

Chan stayed at our hospital for a week. Staff were moved to compassion to accept and care for him, even though this meant working extra unscheduled hours. We treated the infection and provided effective pain medication. As we are not a government hospital, morphine is very difficult to obtain here, but by God's grace we had just enough donated morphine for

him during his time with us. We prayed for him and talked with him about Jesus.

As Chan spent time in our care, he began to regain strength. He began to play on his phone and started to talk more - it seemed he finally started to feel safe. He enjoyed listening to praise songs when he heard a church meeting in the patient waiting area, and quickly decided to accept Jesus as his Lord. We saw his anxiety lessen and peace increase. All praise to the King of Kings!

After only six days, Chan was significantly improved, and transferred to a different hospital for longer term care. Recently we heard that he was able to return home to the orphanage with his sister. From his poor prognosis arriving with us, the reality of him walking back to his friends seems like a miracle.

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*As he met with
God, he received
peace, hope and
healing.*

We are hugely encouraged and grateful seeing how God made a way to bless Chan through the love, expertise, and prayers of the team here. As he met with God, he received peace, hope and healing. Luke 9:2 is at the heart of our mission as a Christian hospital: “he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.” This work of love is such a privilege that God entrusts to us, and we thank and praise Him for it.

* Name changed for security reasons

It was God who put me here:

Ali's story

WE HAVE BEEN HEARING MANY STORIES RECENTLY OF INDIVIDUALS FROM IRAN WHOSE LIVES HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED THROUGH ENCOUNTERING JESUS HERE IN GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND. AN INTERSERVE PARTNER IN LONDON SHARES ONE SUCH STORY

I don't remember when I first met Ali.* I think it was about five years ago. He lived in a house locally with four other men seeking asylum in England from Iran – they all came to my English class and attended a local Farsi fellowship that I'm involved with. After some time I visited their home with another Partner, and they offered us food and a warm welcome.

In time, each of the men was granted asylum by the Home Office – except for Ali. Sadly his case was rejected, and eventually he was forced to move out of the house. There is no support from

the government when this happens, so individuals must rely on friends and charity to survive. When people are in this situation you can often see it in their faces – the fear, the confusion, not knowing what to do or what's going to happen next. Ali started the appeal process, but he was very distressed by the situation.

With nowhere to live, a local church allowed Ali to sleep in their building for a while. Then, a local Interserve family decided to offer two rooms to those who needed them. Ali was welcomed into their home with another Iranian man from our church, and they would cook meals and pray together. It looked like an ideal situation, especially during the pandemic lockdowns, and we praised God for answered prayers.

Months later, Ali heard from the Home Office that his appeal would be heard, so accommodation was again provided for him. He was given a small poky room in a central London hotel, a long way from the community and churches who'd been supporting him. It seemed such a shame, and we wondered, "God, what are you doing in this?"

However, in the midst of all these challenges, this 'wilderness' time, Ali's trust in Jesus had really come alive. I knew that God had touched him, because I saw a

very different Ali. His Bible was highlighted all the way through in orange, green, blue, and yellow pens. He began to speak passionately about his faith. To my shame, Ali's passion and zeal often exceeded my own.

It turned out that there were about 40 other Iranians staying in the hotel. Ali started talking to them about Jesus, and we visited when we could, sharing gifts like chocolate and toiletries with everyone. Since they could not afford to travel far, many of the residents began to attend Farsi Bible studies online. Ali's faith continued to grow as he discipled other residents and began leading a course online for new believers. In time we began to understand that this was all part of God's plan. "It wasn't the Home Office that put me here. It was God who

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It wasn't the Home Office that put me here. It was God who put me here.

19

INTERSERVE GBI PARTNERS ARE WORKING DIRECTLY WITH **MIGRANT AND REFUGEE COMMUNITIES** ACROSS THE GLOBE.



put me here.” Those were Ali's words, if I'm not mistaken. And as these residents have gradually dispersed to new locations across the country, they have taken their newfound passion for Jesus with them.

After six months at the hotel, Ali's appeal was heard. There was much celebration when he was finally granted asylum, and reunited with his family. They were moved to Brighton, where his wife was delighted to have a flat overlooking the sea! Ali continues to pastor the Iranian community online both here in England and overseas, and has begun a Farsi theological training programme. He feels God's call on his life to study the Bible and prepare for further ministry.

When I think of Ali, I think of Jesus' story about a farmer sowing seeds. Some fall on stony ground, some among thorns, but some on good soil. I've been involved in Christian ministry for a long time, and you get all kinds of reactions and responses along the way. And when I think of Ali, I realise that Jesus was spot on. There is much resistance to the gospel and it's easy to get discouraged. And yet when seed falls on good soil, it goes on to do so much more. It is not just one life that you've touched, but through them so many others.

* Name changed for security reasons

You make a *tangible difference*

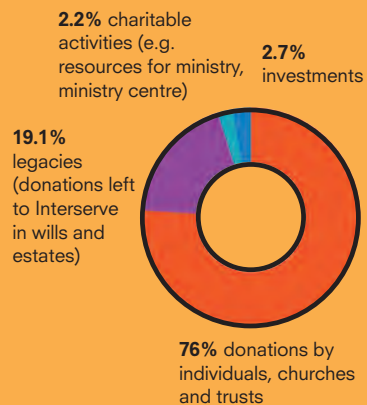
THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF GOD'S WORK SEEING
LIVES AND COMMUNITIES TRANSFORMED ACROSS
ASIA AND THE ARAB WORLD

HERE IS A QUICK SNAPSHOT OF OUR FINANCIAL STANDING DURING 2023

We continually seek God's guidance in our stewardship of your generous support. We trust in God to provide all that is needed and are thankful that He chooses to do this through the generosity of people like you.

INCOME

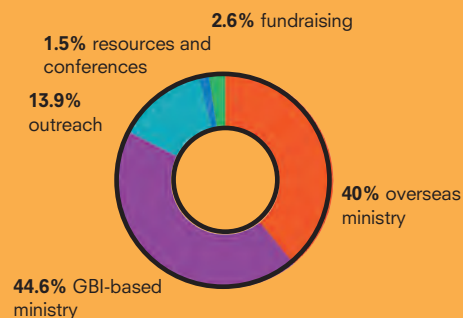
Total income: £2,628,736



- ◆ 52.7% of our donated income (£1,384,511) was given in support of Partners and their projects (designated income).
- ◆ 77.4% of donations come from regular giving and approximately 22.6% from one-off gifts.

EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure: £2,542,319



- ◆ £1,404,511 (55.2% of our total expenditure) was spent directly in support of Partners and their project work.
- ◆ We gave out £184,071 in direct project funding.
- ◆ Outreach includes producing GO magazine, our various prayer materials and other printed resources; £36,913 was spent on these.

*All figures taken from our 2023 accounts



God will make a way: Sumaya's story

AN INTERSERVE PARTNER IN CENTRAL EUROPE SHARES HOW GOD IS OPENING DOORS TO BE PART OF HIS TRANSFORMING WORK INSIDE A NEARBY DETENTION CENTRE

'God will make a way where there seems to be no way' – these are the lyrics of a popular worship song. This recently became real when I was awoken in the middle of the night by a clear instruction from God: "Go to the detention centre and visit your friend, Sumaya.*"

Sumaya and her family live in a detention centre near the community centre where I volunteer. Her husband had brought her and their daughter there several times. However Sumaya has a serious health condition that makes it difficult for her to leave the detention centre. Too many trips outside had taken a toll on her health, so Sumaya was unable to visit us anymore.

At the detention centre security is tight. It is well known that no-one gets inside except residents and employees. No visitors are allowed inside, although

residents are permitted to come and go. How could I obey God's instruction? How could I visit Sumaya?

On top of the security issues, there was another problem. Nobody at the detention centre speaks my language, so communication would be a huge challenge. I reminded God about these problems, and He prompted me to take my Chaplaincy ID card with me, and to trust him to make a way.

The following morning, as I approached the entry gate, another resident whom I knew well was on his way out. I explained that I wanted to visit Sumaya, so he took me to a security guard. I thought I heard the guard say that Sumaya was in the hospital ward, so I quickly pulled out my chaplaincy ID and confidently said, "Hospital Chaplain!" He considered the card for a while, looked me up and down, and then made a phone call.

The next thing I knew, the guard handed me an entry permit. I thanked him and quickly followed my friend into the courtyard, before he could change his mind!

It was quite bewildering to suddenly find myself inside the centre, and I then realised that I had no idea how to find Sumaya! Thankfully, my friend stayed

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They were amazed and delighted that God had made a way for me to visit.

and directed me to the building where Sumaya lived. Security was very tight. Guards were patrolling the grounds outside, at every doorway and in every corridor. I was confused. Why wasn't my friend taking me to the hospital ward? I had misunderstood the guard. Sumaya's husband was at the hospital, but she was still in her room.

There was great excitement when I knocked on Sumaya's door. Once inside, Sumaya and her daughter began dancing around the room, overjoyed to see me. They were amazed and delighted that God had made a way for me to visit. I explained that God had spoken to me in the night to come and pray for Sumaya. Then Sumaya became even more ecstatic. She explained that she also had a dream that night, where she saw herself well again.

We prayed together then. Sumaya didn't experience a healing miracle that day. But even so, she could not stop speaking the name of Jesus. She had undeniably encountered God and this filled her with peace, joy and hope. Sumaya assuredly knows that God sees her. I continue to pray that the miracle foreseen in her dream will come true in Jesus' name.

* Name changed for security reasons

Do you want to play a part in God's transforming work with Interserve?

Could you serve in ministry among people of Asia and the Arab world here in Great Britain and Ireland or overseas? We would love for you to journey with us.

At Interserve we have dedicated teams working with individuals and local churches to guide you through every step of this journey, from your first enquiry, to supporting you in your ongoing ministry, wherever God is calling you to serve.

The stories in this Impact Report reveal how God's transforming work happens through ordinary people and local churches, as we allow Him to transform us for his service.

If you would like to find out more about how you can get involved please go to **www.interserve.org.uk**



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