

ANNUAL REPORT

2022



I HAVE
RIGHTS.



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FOREWORD

Dear reader,

2022 was a year marked by crises that had a significant impact on the situation of migrants and refugees around the world. With the opening of the Samos Closed Controlled Access Center (CCAC) - a prison-like EU funded camp for asylum seekers - 2022 presented new challenges to human rights.

In this context, and working outside of the CCAC in the town of Vathy, I Have Rights (IHR) began its work on Samos in February 2022. As our first year of operation, it was crucial for us to establish organisational structures, explore our fields of activity, and most importantly, earn the respect and trust of people on the move and other organisations in Samos and wider Greece.

In this report, we will outline our work, goals, achievements in 2022. We hope you will join us in our efforts to create positive change and improve the lives of those seeking safety.



Paulina Böse
Board Member



Greta Wessing
Board Member

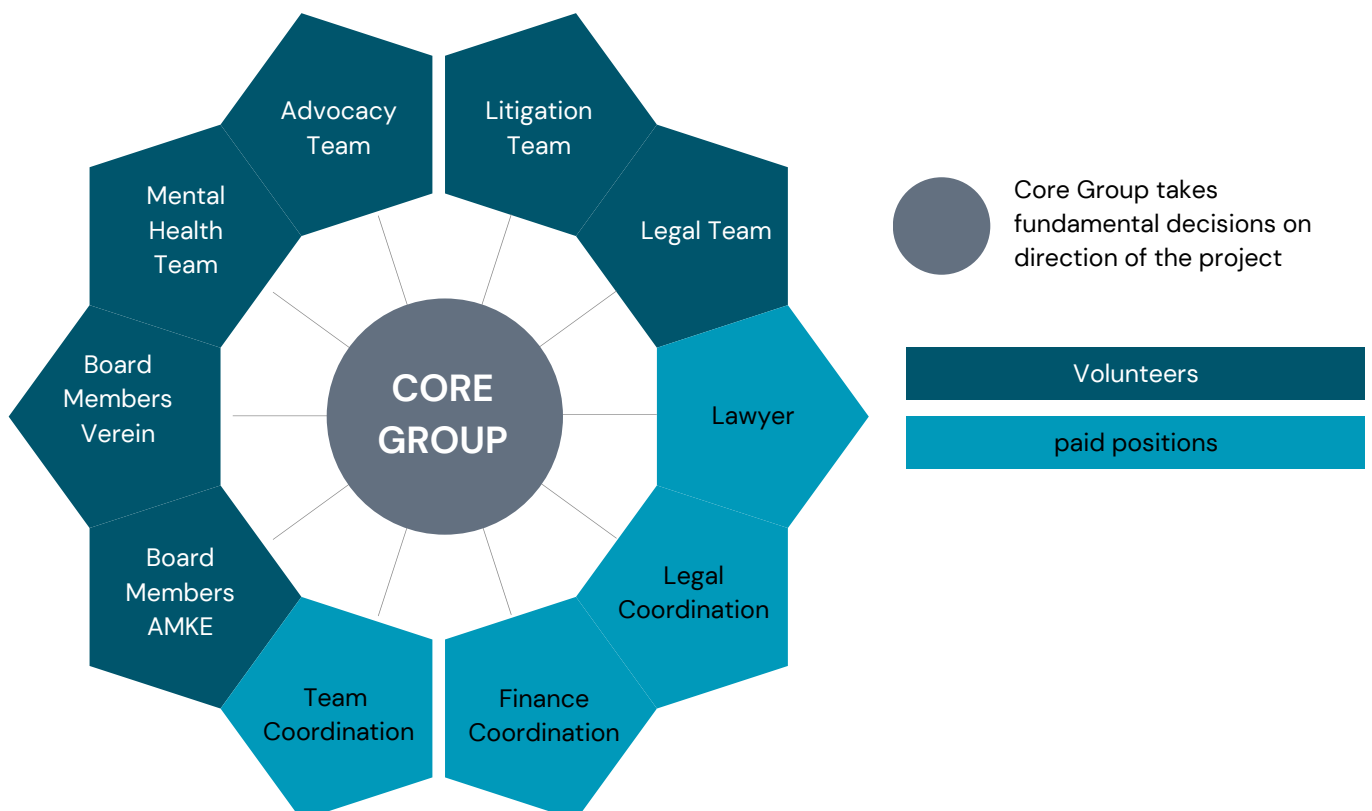


Klara Kothe
Board Member

STRUCTURE

I Have Rights e.V. (IHR) is a German-Greek human rights organisation based on the island of Samos in Greece. Samos is one of the five hotspot islands in Greece and serves as a key point of entry for people seeking safety in Europe. IHR provides independent and free legal information and representation to people on the move at the EU's external border on Samos and supports them in asserting their rights.

IHR has two legal entities: a German and a Greek association (Verein and AMKE). In addition to a full-time Legal Coordinator and Lawyer, IHR also employs two half-time Administrative Coordinators, one responsible for the team and the other for funding. The organisation is structured into various teams, each responsible for different aspects of IHR's work.



LEGAL TEAM

The legal team runs the core activity of IHR by providing one to one legal information and representation to people on the move on Samos. It consists of the Legal Coordinator, Greek Lawyer, three to four Caseworkers at a time and an Arabic interpreter on Samos. The team is supported by remote volunteer interpreters for Arabic, Amharic, Farsi, French, Krio and Tigrinya.

LITIGATION TEAM

The litigation team supports the legal team in bringing legal challenges to defend the rights of people on the move. The team consists of the Legal Coordinator and 10 remote volunteers, most of whom are lawyers and/or previous IHR caseworkers.

ADVOCACY TEAM

The advocacy team drives change, participates in IHR's advocacy networks and communicates IHR's work. The team consists of the Legal Coordinator and one or two long-term volunteers.

MENTAL HEALTH TEAM

The mental health team consists of ex-Samos based volunteers. As the work on Samos can be challenging, the team offers emotional support to IHR's team.

TEAM COORDINATION

The **Team Coordinator** is responsible for recruitment, onboarding and feedback calls. It is coordinated by an Administrative Coordinator, who is supported by two members of the Core Group.

FINANCE COORDINATION

The **Finance Coordinator** is responsible for the accounting, financial planning and funding of IHR. The Finance Coordinator is supported by three members of the Core Group.

The core group, which serves as the primary decision-making body, is composed of members of each team, as well as board members and employees.

At IHR, we prioritise flat hierarchies and consensus-based decision making. During meetings, we receive updates from the teams and discuss both operational and strategic matters.

CORE GROUP



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VISION & VALUES



Our vision: safe and legal routes to access a fair and dignified European asylum system that i) upholds the rights of people seeking safety and ii) recognises the effects of climate crisis, poverty and precarity caused by the economic exploitation of the Global North as reasons for asylum.

SOLIDARITY

To achieve our aims, we work in cooperation and solidarity with local civil society, NGOs, people on the move and other actors. We act in solidarity with asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees, as well as with all marginalised and discriminated individuals and groups.

INDEPENDENCE

We all have a right to dignified living. This includes access to work, education and health care, including psychological support, regardless of our legal status. Vulnerable individuals deserve special protection and care. We oppose all forms of detention, including the hotspot approach and isolated and prison-like living conditions as seen in the Samos CCAC.

DIGNITY

Every asylum seeker should have access to independent, individualised, and confidential legal counselling. We are independent from political parties, governmental institutions, other state actors or religious organisations. Our work should not be influenced by our donors.

EQUALITY

We work to support beneficiaries whom we take seriously and treat as equals. Our services are free and open to provide equal access to legal support for all asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants on Samos, regardless of their legal status, origin, religion, social and educational background, gender, sexual orientation, and regardless of our sympathy. We commit to continuously working towards overcoming discriminatory structures in our association. We want to reflect on our own privileges and act accordingly.

LEGAL INFORMATION & REPRESENTATION

Access to legal information is a fundamental human right and crucial for individuals seeking asylum. During our interview preparation appointments, individuals have the opportunity to discuss their experiences in a safe and supportive environment, and receive information about their rights.

This helps to prepare our beneficiaries to effectively explain their experiences during interviews with the Greek Asylum Service. Through interview preparations and legal representation, we not only anticipate but also monitor human rights challenges that asylum seekers encounter during the asylum process.

INFORMATION

Asylum seekers contact us with a wide range of inquiries related to their asylum procedure. The workload for each case varies significantly from person to person. While some questions can be addressed in a one-hour appointment, interview preparations typically require eight hours of clinic work per beneficiary.

Additionally, we conduct phone appointments with those who are unable to leave the CCAC and run a hotline information service which receives hundreds of messages a week.





WORKSHOPS

In collaboration with Avocats Sans Frontières and the Human Rights Legal Project, two other legal NGOs on Samos, the legal team holds legal information workshops hosted by various community centres and NGO on the island.

The goal of the workshops is to engage in community outreach and provide individuals with essential information about the asylum procedure and their rights. In 2022, we held 15 legal workshops, four of which were exclusively for women, at three different locations.

REPRESENTATION

Alongside providing information to people on the move, IHR's Lawyer legally represents people in their asylum procedure, which allows us to provide additional support to our beneficiaries. For example, the lawyer will accompany vulnerable beneficiaries to their interview and submit a memorandum with supporting information in support of their asylum claim. She also takes legal actions for them, like demanding the lift of a geographical restriction, submitting an appeal against a rejection and accompanying people to hearings before the Appeals Committee.

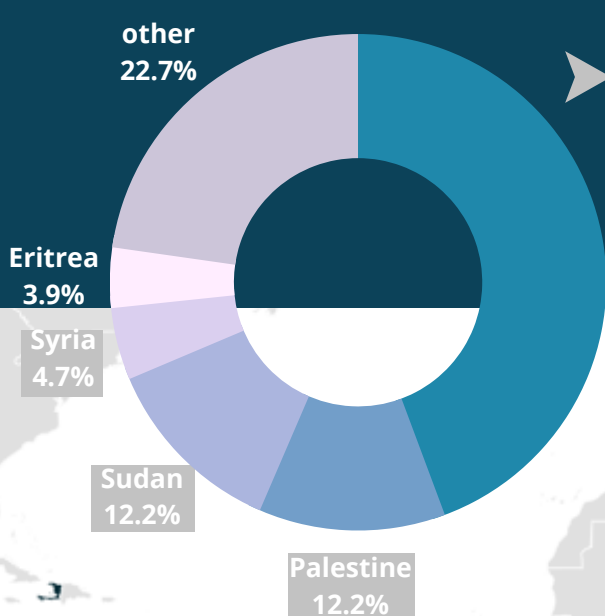
In 2022 we:

provided legal information
to **255** beneficiaries from **27** countries.
(198 men and 57 women)

▶ assisted **215** people with **interview preparation**, which usually takes around 8 hours of clinic work per beneficiary.

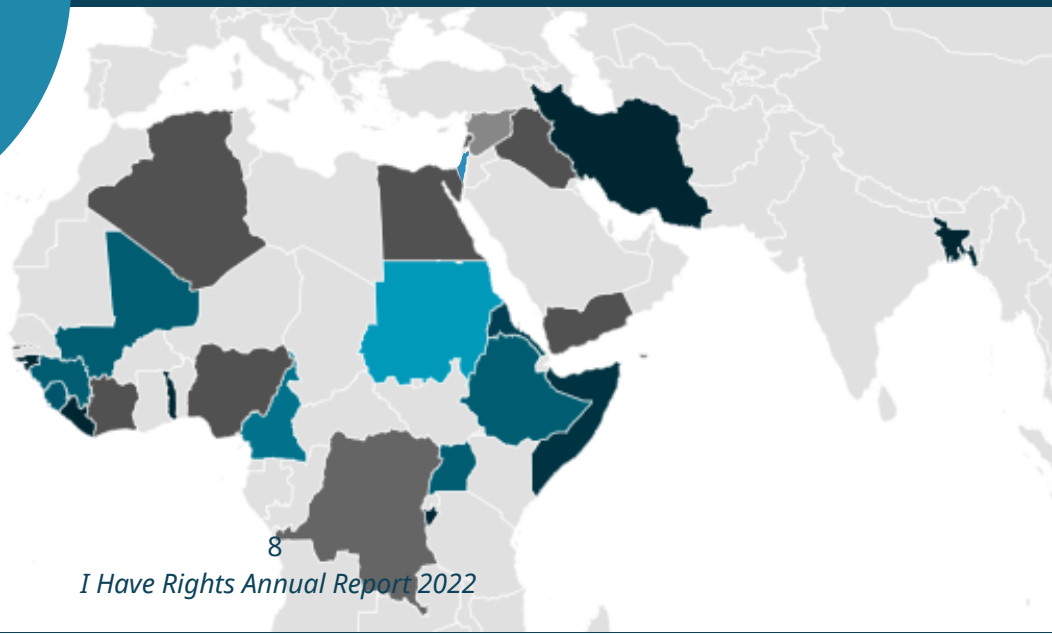
▶ supported **23** people in **lifting their geographical restriction**.

▶ have filed **28** appeals against negative asylum decisions.



▶ responded to **16,883** messages through our hotline information service.

Sierra Leone
44.3%



**"THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR WORK AND
DEDICATION WITH MY CASE. I NEVER FELT
ALONE IN THE PROCEDURE AND KNEW YOU
WOULD ALWAYS BE THERE FOR ME.**

I WILL NEVER FORGET YOU."

- K.S. a beneficiary of IHR



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This picture is a fictional drawing and does not portray our beneficiary. Out of respect and for the protection of our beneficiaries, we portray faces and stories of our beneficiaries only when justified and with the explicit consent of the persons concerned.



IMPACT STORY

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LEGAL SUPPORT

During a workshop held in the women's space of the organisation Samos Volunteers, we met K.S. who had an upcoming interview.

We scheduled an appointment for her for interview preparation and, during our sessions, we identified K.S. as a survivor of trafficking and sexual violence. We informed her of her rights and referred her case to the National Monitoring Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking.

Our lawyer then represented K.S. in her asylum procedure and accompanied her to her interview.

At the recommendation of our lawyer, K.S. was given an appointment with the camp psychologist and we referred her to Médecins sans Frontières for mental health support.

A few months later, K.S. was granted refugee status.





LITIGATION

The litigation team works to challenge human rights abuses on Samos, defend the rights of IHR's beneficiaries and promote structural changes to prevent future human rights violations. In collaboration with the legal and advocacy teams, the litigation team focuses on:

- defending the right to asylum,
- ending the detention of people on the move and
- fighting to end illegal pushbacks.

ACTIVITIES

- Litigation before the European Court of Human Rights due to violations of the right of a child asylum seeker on Samos.
- Successful application for Interim Measures before the European Court of Human Rights for two of IHR's beneficiaries with urgent medical needs.
- Complaint to Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons on behalf of 13 survivors of trafficking.
- Submission to the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture.
- Three complaints to the Greek Ombudsperson.
- Submission to the EU Commission's 'Call for Evidence' regarding the Frontex Regulation.
- Joint submission to the Committee on the Rights of the Child with Still I Rise.

IMPACT STORY

SUBMISSION TO THE UN COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

In May 2022, we presented evidence of the violation of children's rights in the Samos CCAC to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), in collaboration with Still I Rise (SIR), a children's rights organisation previously working on Samos.

In particular, we highlighted *de facto* detention, inhumane living conditions, deficiencies in age and vulnerability assessment procedures, and lack of access to asylum. Following our submission, the Committee found violations of the rights of child asylum seekers in Greece. The UNCRC specifically confirmed all topics of concern raised in our submission and called on Greece to stop detaining asylum-seeking children.





ADVOCACY

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The advocacy team aims to raise public awareness about the situation on Samos, amplify the voices of people on the move, engage stakeholders to promote structural change, and advocate for dignified asylum policies and practices across Europe.



To achieve these goals, we work closely with other organisations. For instance, at the regional level, we are a member of the Border Violence Monitoring Network, a Balkan-wide network that documents and advocates against illegal pushbacks.

At the local level, we collaborate with the Samos Advocacy Collective, a group of organisations and individuals who advocate for humane migration policies, with a particular focus on reception conditions and the current situation for people on the move on Samos.





ACTIVITIES

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In 2022, the advocacy team engaged in 53 advocacy projects, including:

ON THE SAMOS CCAC

- A joint report with the International Rescue Committee on 1-year of the CCAC.
- Two open letters to the Greek Ministry of Migration.
- Four reports with the Samos Advocacy Collective, including a report on people's lived experiences in the Samos CCAC.

ACCESS TO ASYLUM

- Article on Are You Syrious focusing on procedural violations in the asylum procedure on Samos.
- 10 written complaints to the Greek Asylum Service and the CCAC Reception and Identification Services r.e. procedural violations that undermine the right to asylum.

PUSHBACKS

- An open letter of concern calling for Frontex to leave the operational area of Samos in accordance with Article 46(4) European Border and Coastguard Regulation (EU) 2019/1896.
- Briefings to Members of EU Parliament LIBE Committee regarding Frontex shortcomings in filing Serious Incident Reports in operational Area of Samos.
- An online campaign on pushbacks from Samos, including Frontex's potential involvement.

IMPACT STORY

WORK ON FRONTEX

Based on our experience as an organisation on Samos and the numerous credible reports of pushbacks from the island, we launched a campaign targeting Frontex. Along with six other organisations based on Samos, we called on Frontex to fulfil its obligations under EU law and, due to human rights violations, leave Samos and wider Greece. We simultaneously briefed the European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and initiated a public campaign for the general public and civil society.

Days after our campaign, the OLAF report was leaked by the German watchdog "Frag den Staat" in collaboration with "Der Spiegel", leading to the resignation of the previous Executive Director, Fabrice Leggeri, in April 2022. Since then, Frontex has faced increased pressure.



Systematic Cover-Up by EU Border Police

Revealed: The OLAF report on Frontex

An infamous internal report by the EU anti-fraud agency OLAF shows how Frontex tried to cover up human rights violations. We are publishing it for the first time.



TIMELINE OF LN'S CASE

To defend the human rights of people on the move in Samos, IHR's teams collaborate to support each other's work. For example, in our work with survivors of trafficking, all three task forces played a role in defending their rights.



LEGAL TEAM

- Point of first contact.
- In an appointment for interview preparation L.N. discloses her experience of labour and sex trafficking and medical complications arising from sexual violence.

LITIGATION TEAM

- Successful Interim Measure application before the European Court of Human Rights for access to urgent medical care.
- Complaint made to Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in persons on behalf of L.N. and 12 other survivors of trafficking.
- Complaint made to Greek Ombudsperson.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

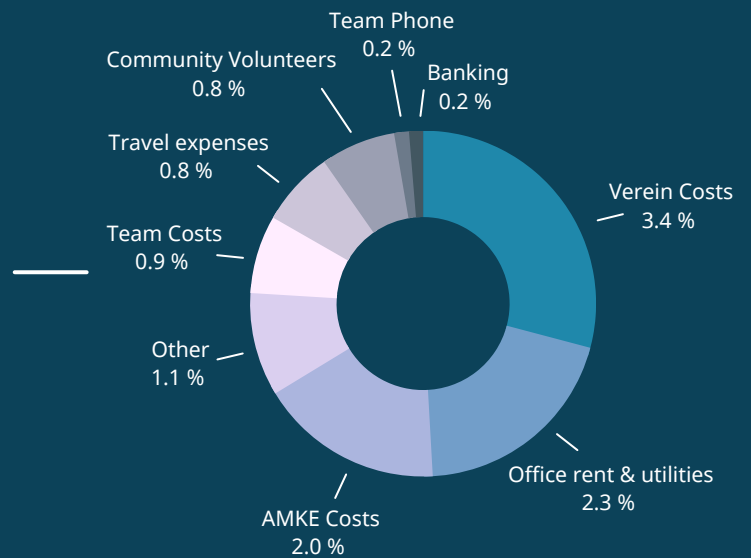
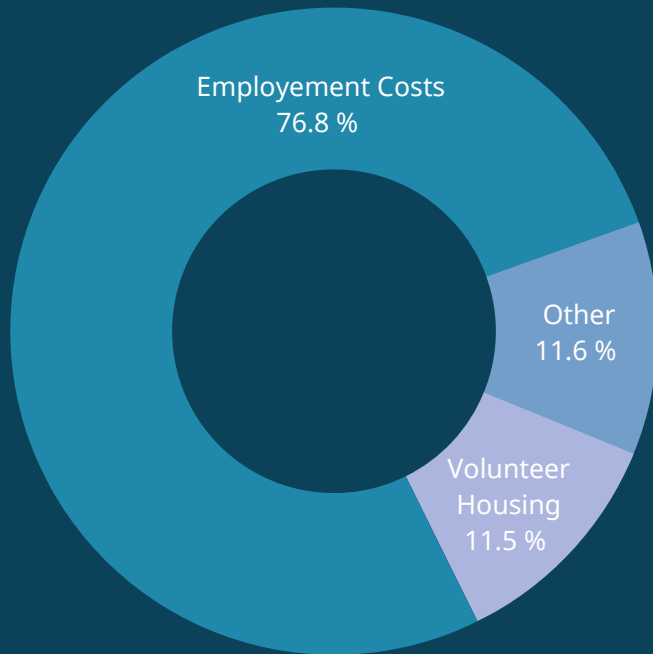
- The lawyer communicated with the authorities about the need for medical care and vulnerability assessments.
- Advocated for the lift of L.N.'s geographical restriction.
- Referral made to National Monitoring Mechanism for trafficking.

ADVOCACY TEAM

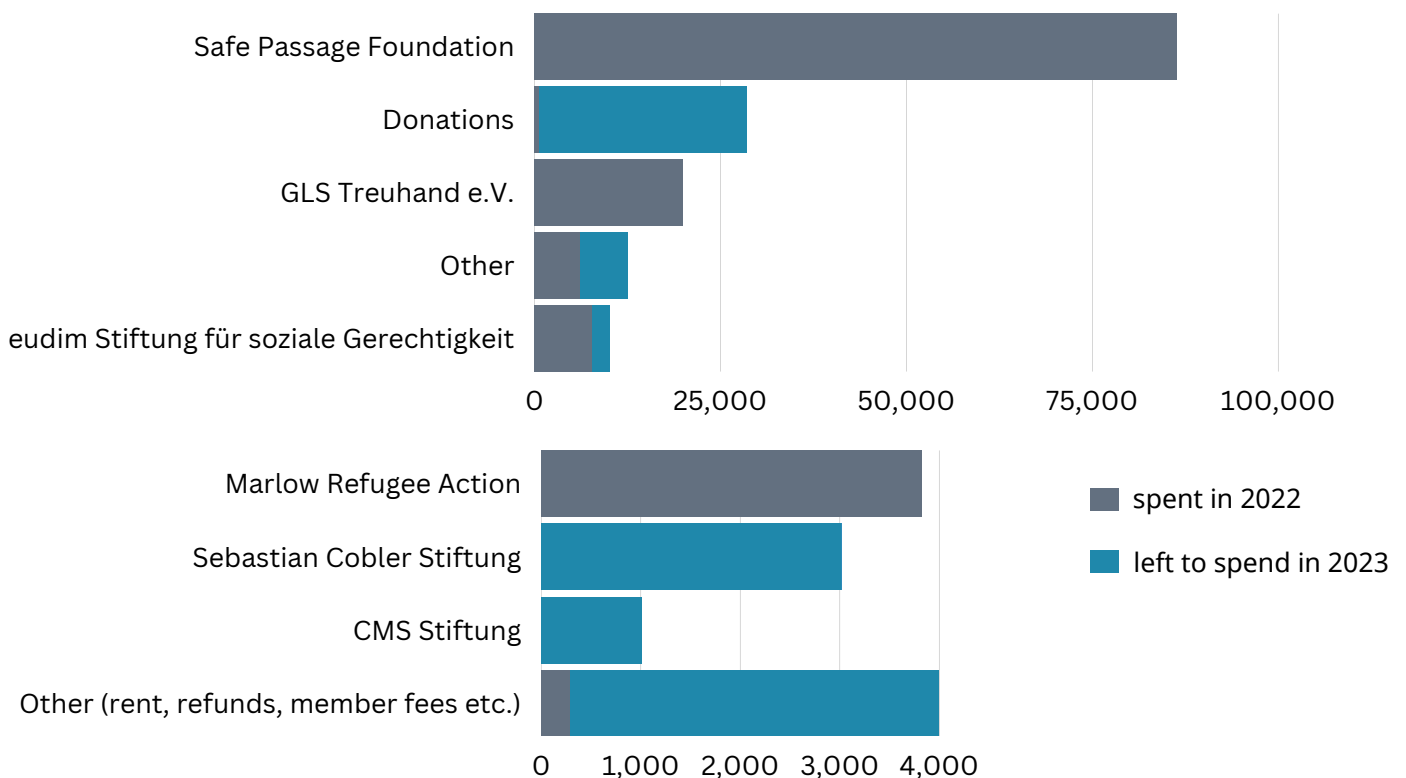
- Currently working on a wider report on the situation for survivors on trafficking in Samos that will call for structural changes and more comprehensive protections.

ANNUAL BUDGET

120,649.29 €



INCOME 2022





THANK YOU!

We are incredibly thankful for the hard work and dedication of everyone who has contributed to IHR and we are deeply grateful for the support and encouragement of our beneficiaries. We are fortunate to collaborate with other organisations on Samos who share our commitment to improving the lives of people in need.

We are especially grateful to the foundations and individuals that have generously supported our efforts through their financial contributions. Without your generosity and solidarity, our work would not be possible.





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