

ANNUAL REPORT BELGIUM 2023



**SOUTIEN
BELGE
OVERSEAS**



FOREWORD

“—
The words that carry me every day are those of Leila, an orphan who found refuge within Camp Jasmine, and those of Fatima, a child learning to read in our school located in the Aarsal refugee camp, who has expressed her desire to dedicate herself to future children who, like her, have lost their parents. Every day, our mission is to save the lives of thousands of children in Lebanon, Turkey, Syria, and Palestine. These successes are not only ours but belong to the entire community that united to make the impossible possible. We have also faced unexpected obstacles, which reminded us of the importance of staying flexible and adapting quickly to changes. These moments tested our resilience but also strengthened our determination to continue our mission with even greater vigor. The end of each year is a precious opportunity to reflect on the achievements of our association over the past year, while looking to the future with hope and determination. I want to express my deepest gratitude to each of you for your unwavering commitment to Belgian Support Overseas. Together, we have accomplished much, and together, we will continue to realize our vision —”

Louma Albik

FOUNDER AND CHAIRWOMAN



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ABOUT SOUTIEN BELGE OVERSEAS

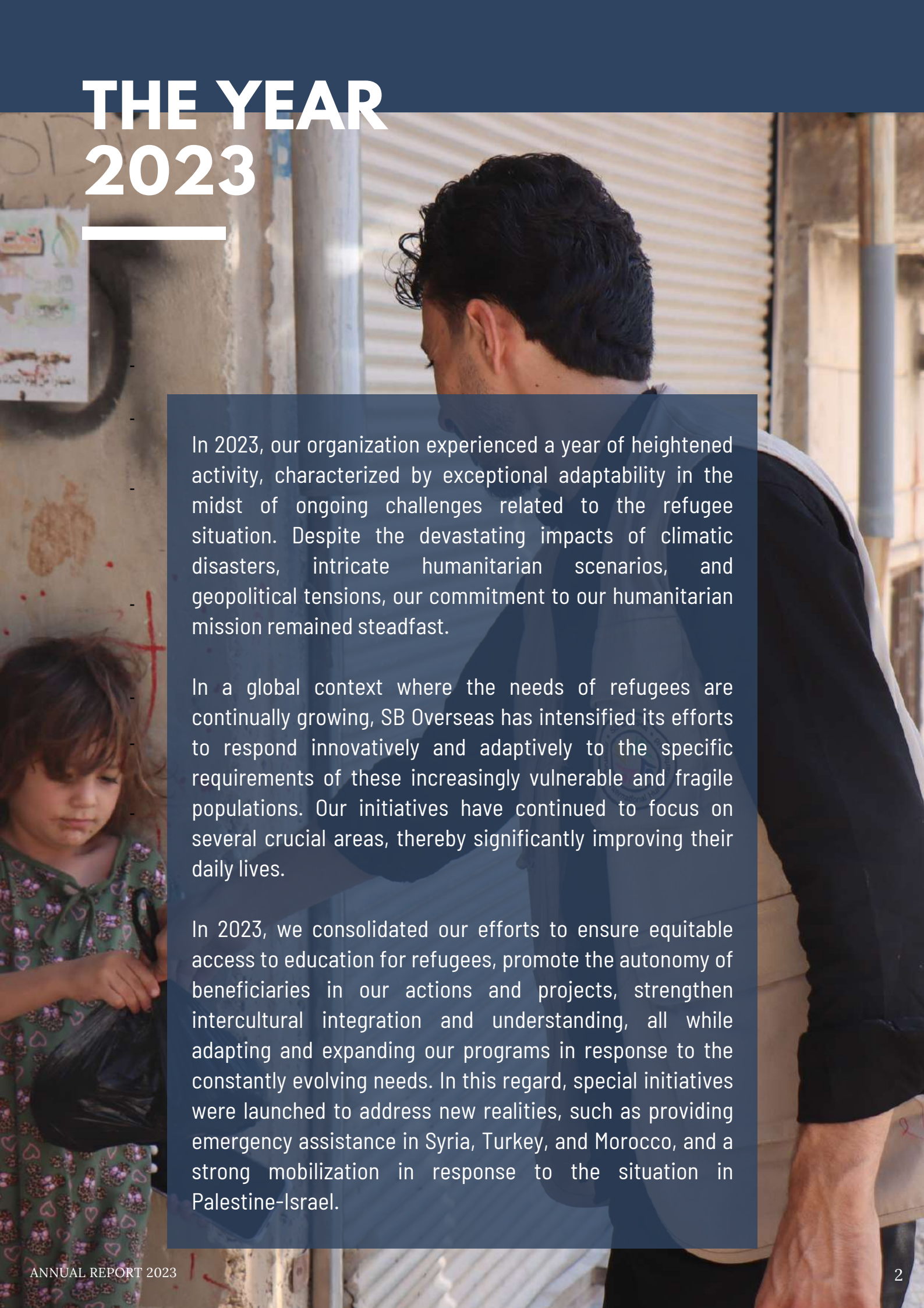
Celebrating
— 10 YEARS —

B Overseas is a **Belgian non-profit non-profit organisation founded in 2013** by the Chairwoman Louma Albik in response to the unfolding Syrian crisis, which has highly affected neighboring countries such as Lebanon. Lebanon is now the country with the highest ratio of refugees per capita. The initiative emerged as a collective effort to alleviate the suffering of refugees in Belgium and Lebanon. That's why we have been providing education and empowerment programmes to refugee communities for the past 10 years.

Our **MISSION IN BELGIUM** is to provide psychosocial support and integration assistance to unaccompanied minors and adult women in reception or transit centres in Brussels and to advocate, on their behalf at the local, national and international levels.

Our **MISSION IN LEBANON** is to provide education, empowerment, psychological support and emergency assistance to refugees while defending their rights. We achieve this through strong community involvement in our formal and informal refugee settlements

THE YEAR 2023



In 2023, our organization experienced a year of heightened activity, characterized by exceptional adaptability in the midst of ongoing challenges related to the refugee situation. Despite the devastating impacts of climatic disasters, intricate humanitarian scenarios, and geopolitical tensions, our commitment to our humanitarian mission remained steadfast.

In a global context where the needs of refugees are continually growing, SB Overseas has intensified its efforts to respond innovatively and adaptively to the specific requirements of these increasingly vulnerable and fragile populations. Our initiatives have continued to focus on several crucial areas, thereby significantly improving their daily lives.

In 2023, we consolidated our efforts to ensure equitable access to education for refugees, promote the autonomy of beneficiaries in our actions and projects, strengthen intercultural integration and understanding, all while adapting and expanding our programs in response to the constantly evolving needs. In this regard, special initiatives were launched to address new realities, such as providing emergency assistance in Syria, Turkey, and Morocco, and a strong mobilization in response to the situation in Palestine-Israel.

SB ESPOIR



SB Espoir is a flagship project of SB Overseas. This project involves organizing **activities and workshops for unaccompanied foreign minors living or residing in transit, reception, and accommodation centers** managed by the Red Cross and the Federal Agency for the reception of asylum seekers. The goal of our project is to enhance the development of relational, cultural, and professional skills for young refugees in Belgium, particularly **in Brussels**.



The main goals of the SB Espoir Project are:

- **To provide individuals fleeing conflict and violence with concrete educational and professional tools** to start a new life and regain control over their own lives.
- **To build sustainable development projects** aimed at offering **social and economic opportunities** to asylum seekers, enabling them to integrate and find their place in their new country or reintegrate into their country of origin.
- **To strengthen local and national solidarity** by building connections and establishing bridges between diverse communities that, in their daily lives, have limited opportunities to meet and exchange.



We conduct our program through activities spanning around **three axes: cultural initiatives, sports activities, and professionalizing workshops**. In 2023, SB organized **26 activities with young refugees and unaccompanied minors (MENA) from Red Cross and Fedasil centers**. These activities and workshops welcomed **153 beneficiaries, 54 volunteers, and 3 partners**.

During cultural initiatives, the youth had the opportunity to explore the **diverse museums in Brussels** (Musée des Instruments Musicaux, MiMa, Musée Magritte, Musée Art et Histoire, Musée de la ville de BXL, Trainworld, BelExpo) and participate in a **workshop on the solar system**, along with **heritage-focused treasure hunts highlighting Brussels' cultural and historical aspects**.



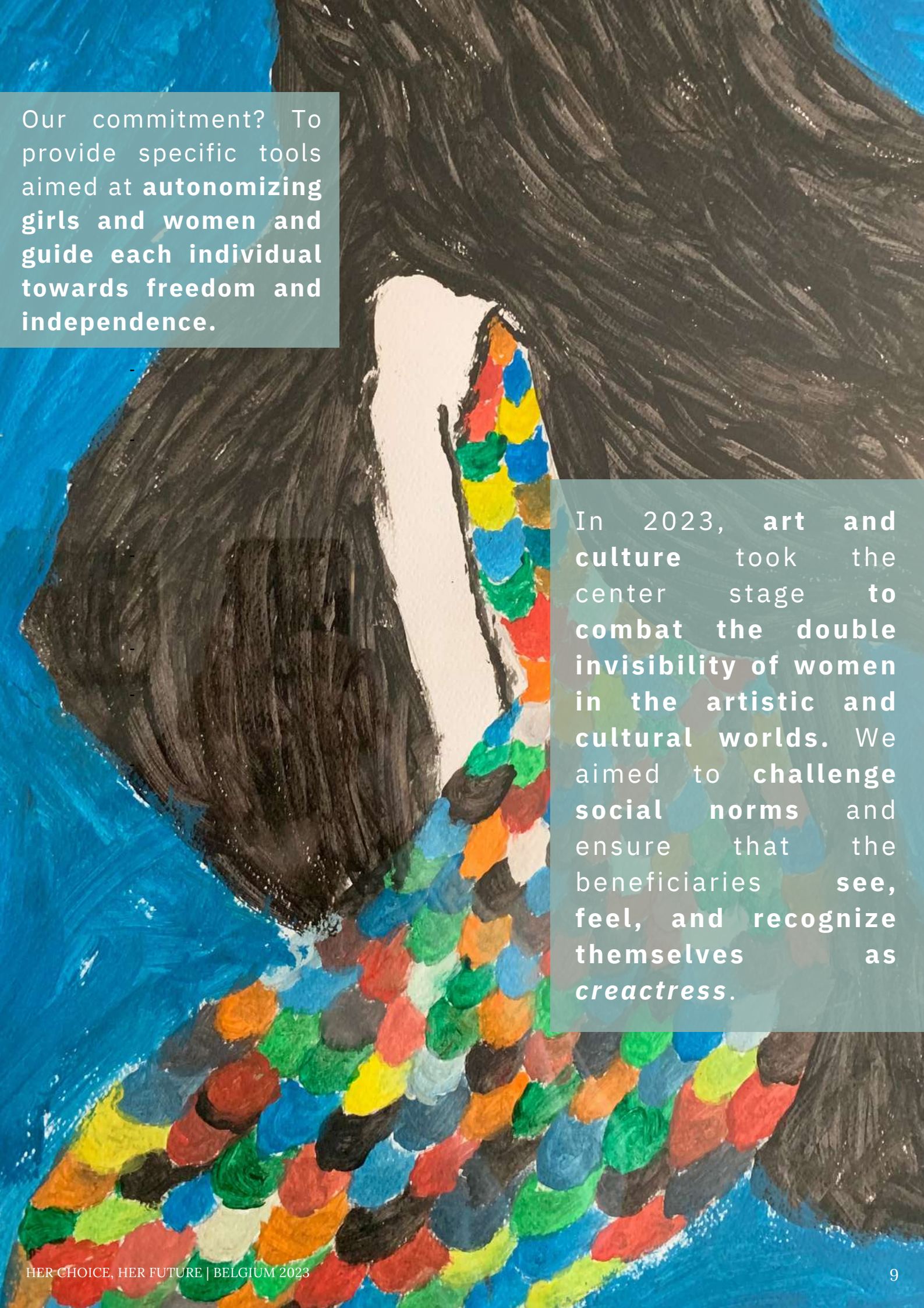
During sports activities, they engaged in boxing sessions, mini-golf, and yoga, where they learned to manage anxiety and stress, as well as practice daily values such as mutual respect, endurance, and determination. Additionally, they had the opportunity to enhance their non-verbal communication skills to promote positive and diverse social interactions. They also learned how to find their way in nature, build trust, and take on leadership roles.



Finally, **during professionalizing workshops**, the unaccompanied minors (MENA) explored the **STIB (Brussels Intercommunal Transport Company) infrastructure and the challenges of urban mobility**. They also gained insights into **farm organization and various agricultural professions** through the experience of **sustainable and community-focused agriculture professionals**.

HER CHOICE, HER FUTURE

"Her Choice, Her Future" is a project dedicated to **women and girls** residing in reception, accommodation, or transit centers in Brussels. The aim of this project is to **facilitate the inclusion and integration of refugee women and girls by providing tailored support**. We seek to further **incorporate a gender perspective into our actions and missions**, recognizing the specific challenges faced by women and minor female asylum seekers.

A painting of a cave entrance. The cave interior is dark brown with thick, expressive brushstrokes. A path of colorful, rounded stones in shades of red, yellow, green, blue, and orange leads from the bottom of the frame towards a bright white opening at the top. The sky outside the cave is a vibrant blue with white highlights, suggesting a bright, open world.

Our commitment? To provide specific tools aimed at **autonomizing girls and women and guide each individual towards freedom and independence.**

In 2023, **art and culture** took the center stage to **combat the double invisibility of women in the artistic and cultural worlds.** We aimed to **challenge social norms** and ensure that the beneficiaries **see, feel, and recognize themselves as *creactress*.**

OUR EVENTS

A photograph showing two women from behind, wearing high-visibility orange and yellow safety vests. They are leaning over a large white cardboard box, sorting through its contents. The woman on the left has her hair tied back, and the woman on the right has long dark hair. They appear to be in an outdoor setting, possibly a distribution point for aid supplies.

ORGANIZED BY SBO

SOLIDARITY DAYS

Following the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey on February 8, SB Overseas mobilized to provide emergency aid through two campaigns – one targeting Aleppo and the other focusing on the Turkish-Syrian border. Thanks to the generous contributions from citizen and associative donors and the dedication of volunteers during the two *Solidarity Days*, nearly €15,000 and 25 tons of essential items (clothing, tents, blankets, hygiene products, and children's items) were sent to the victims. We would especially like to thank *our partner PWC* for their ongoing commitment to us.




Thanks to financial and material donations, we were able to directly impact the lives of the disaster-affected individuals. A "free shop" was also established so that women, men, and children could access what they needed while regaining a **semblance of normalcy** and **their daily lives** before the earthquakes. These small gestures hold great symbolic significance and importance

A young boy with dark hair and rosy cheeks is smiling at the camera. He is wearing a dark grey Puma sweater with green and white stripes. He is holding a clear plastic bag filled with food items. The background is a simple, slightly textured wall.

HUMANITERRE MONTH

In March 2023, the organization initiated the **sustainable shelter** funding program for earthquake victims: the "**Humaniterre Month**". It was a month of **mobilization and solidarity** that commenced with the **funding of food packages.**

1



This month of actions extended through **two days of selling products** (bags, dolls, embroideries, etc.) **crafted by the women from our Empowerment Center in Lebanon, at the European Union Council.** Our products delighted the interested employees. This event also provided us with the opportunity to **raise awareness among them about migration and asylum issues and the realities faced by refugees.**

2



In April, we organized our **9th annual *Iftar Gala***. This edition was dedicated to **fundraising for the opening of Jasmin Camp, a housing camp for 100 families, mainly widows and children, affected by the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.**

3



In mid-April, **families in Lebanon** received food supplies and children rejoiced as they were provided with **toys and clothes** for the end-of-Ramadan celebrations.

4

A close-up photograph of hands holding a small white paper with a simple line drawing of a leaf. The background is slightly blurred, showing other hands and papers. A semi-transparent dark blue box with white text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

YOUTH DINNER

Carriers of hope and empathy, about ten volunteer students mobilized and launched the *Youth Dinner* initiative. They gathered with a noble objective: to bring a ray of light into the lives of those who lack it. These young individuals, guided by a deep desire to contribute to **the well-being of the refugee community**, visited unaccompanied minors at the Auderghem center with hands full of deliciously prepared dishes. **Conviviality, exchanges, indulgence, and smiles** adorned every face.



BREAKFAST FOR SOLIDARITY

Following the **natural disasters in Syria and Turkey initially, and later in Morocco and Libya**, we organized **solidarity breakfasts to raise funds for the victims and those affected**. This allowed us to provide **emergency aid, temporary shelter, and medical supplies**. These breakfasts also provided an opportunity for those involved to come together, fostering increased **awareness** of the challenges faced by victims of natural disasters.

A group of people, including children and adults, are sitting on a grassy field. Some are wearing blue shirts. They are gathered under a large, leafy tree. The scene is outdoors on a sunny day.

HUMANITY CHALLENGE CUP

On the occasion of the **International Refugee Day**, Soutien Belge Overseas, in collaboration with the Mayor of the municipality of Jette, AFC Evere, and our partner Trane Technologies, organized the **Humanity Challenge Cup**. A charitable football tournament day aimed at providing our audience with a beneficial and solidarity-filled sporting interlude, thus promoting access to sports for all.



BACK TO SCHOOL

Like every year, SB Overseas launched its ***Back To School campaign***. This campaign holds major significance in ensuring that every child has access to education. **Education** is a **fundamental basic right**, a **transformative power** that must be guaranteed for all.



VOLUNTEERS MEET-UP

Throughout the year 2023, our former and new volunteers dedicated themselves to meeting the needs of refugee and migrant communities in Brussels as well as the Middle East. At the end of 2023, we organized a Meet-Up to bring all our volunteers together, allowing them to reflect on the impacts of citizen efforts and exchange ideas about the world of tomorrow.

SUSTAINABLE FUTURE WORKSHOPS

This year we were able to rely on our partner **Trane Technologies**. This partnership holds a special place in our hearts as it brings together passionate, humane individuals dedicated to working towards a better world, particularly during the **Sustainable Future** event where employees shared **their commitment to volunteer and international solidarity projects**. SB Overseas and Trane Technologies share a core idea: **the awareness of businesses to foster a culture of collective responsibility**. By supporting philanthropic initiatives, adopting sustainable practices, and promoting transparency, companies strengthen their status as **corporate citizens**. This approach is crucial to complement the work of civil society organizations, as it underscores **the importance of social and environmental engagement by private sector actors**. Our collaboration throughout the year has demonstrated the positive impacts that arise from building bridges between different local communities, particularly in terms of **inclusion, promoting diversity, education, well-being, and mutual understanding**. Once again this year, we have shown that corporate **citizenship transcends the traditional boundaries of the business world**.

FESTA DELL'A UNITA

In October, SB Overseas was invited to the *Lets Stay Human* roundtable organized by the Partito Democratico. Alongside Amnesty International, Sous les Palmiers d'Eléonore, and Les Cuistots Solidaires, we engaged in discussions about the current challenges faced by people on the move. We shared our respective projects and programs, exchanging best practices in support of unity, social inclusion, and the dignity of refugee and migrant communities.

OTHER EVENTS

In 2023, we were actively involved in various meetings, both on a large and smaller scale. For example, we participated in the new edition of the **Nocturnes Key2Advanced**, bringing together members of the humanitarian/associative sector and students at the end of their academic cycle. We also attended the **European Migration Forum, the 7th Dialogue Day for the Future of Syria** organized within the European Parliament, and **charity evenings by Humanikot** on the Alma Campus in Brussels, to name just a few.

COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP

ARRIVALS
AANKOMST - ARRIVÉES - ANKUNFT

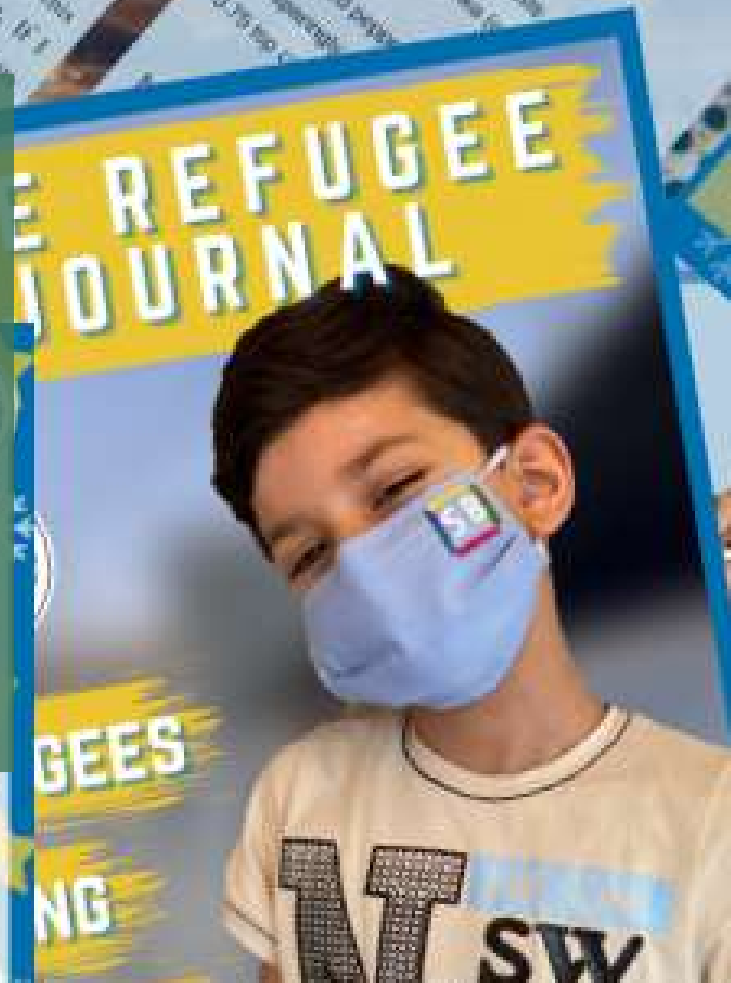


In 2023, we concluded our **Community Sponsorship** project. This project provides an alternative to existing migration routes in Belgium through a system of citizen sponsorship. One year after the resettlement of three families, we are proud of their **journey, resilience, and inclusion within Belgian society**. We are delighted to have assisted these three families in building promising futures and **once again thank all the volunteers who contributed to the rebuilding and the start of their new lives.**

COMMUNICATION

A new edition of the *Refugee Journal* was released! The collection of voices from those who are too often unheard was eagerly anticipated since its last edition.

Visit our [website](#) to dive in it and listen to their voices.



We also have developed a range of communication and information tools on migration, asylum and exile issues, creating a section called *En Bref* on our social networks, with the week's news on migration, and the *Did You Know* posts, because you need to be informed to become aware.





More over, as a result of our **solidarity actions to help those affected by the earthquakes in Syria and Turkey**, we were interviewed by **RTBF**, the French-speaking Belgian media, for a **feature on the TV news and a press article**. A mobilisation of civil society hailed by the media!

ADVOCACY

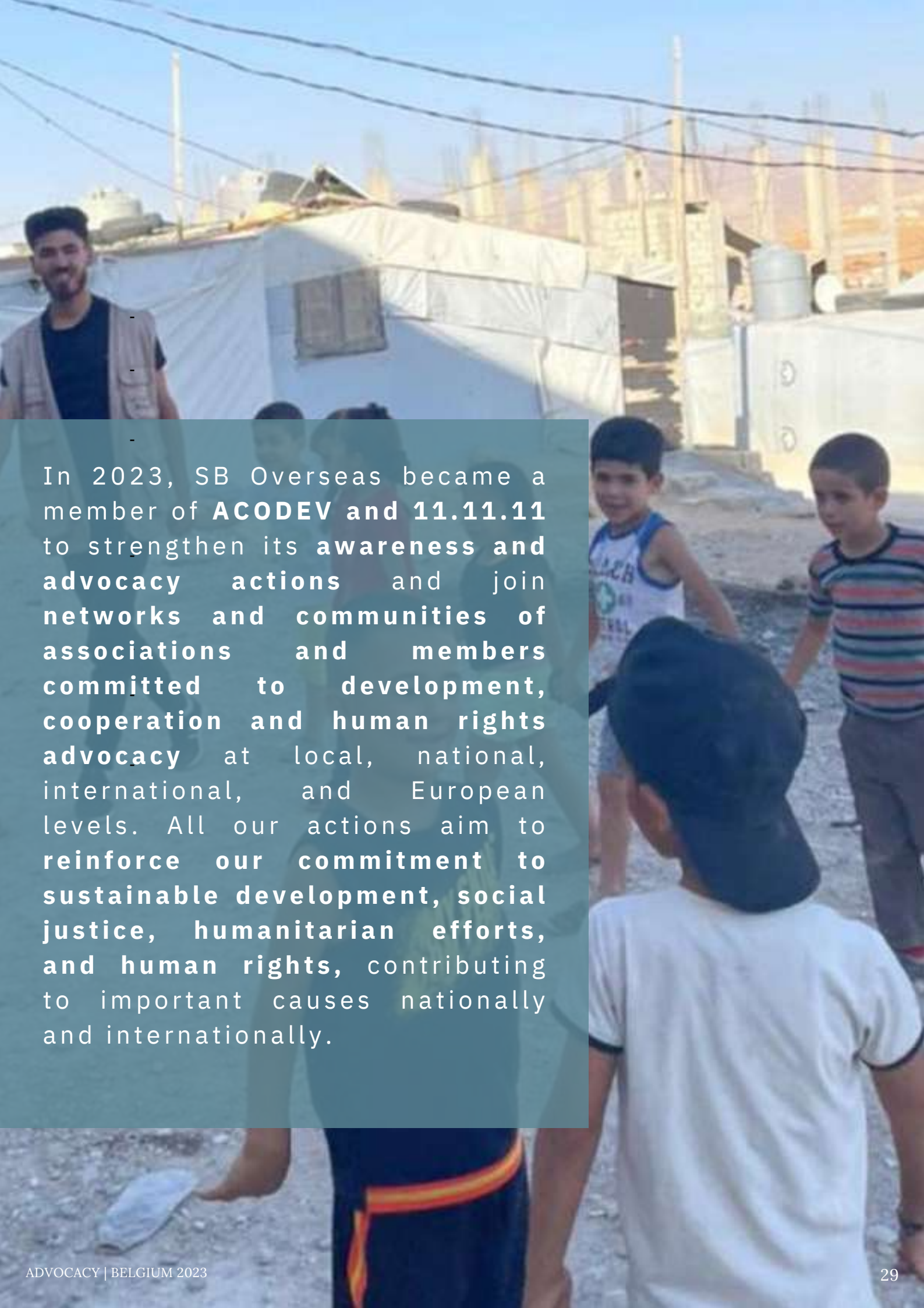


SSB Overseas has launched powerful awareness campaigns throughout the year. We have emphasized **our unwavering commitment to our humanitarian and human mission**, working with determination to bring about **significant changes** in the lives of those in need both in **Belgium and the Middle East**.

To achieve this, we notably publicly **opposed the European Pact on Migration and Asylum**, **directly challenged our leaders**, and **mobilized in large numbers for urgent and substantial political changes**. This year's advocacy highlighted the importance of **education, empowerment, and autonomy**, at the core of our daily work.




The challenges that shook 2023 could not leave us indifferent. That's why we mobilized to **raise awareness in civil society about fundamental values and the respect for human rights** in a world that too often disregards and denies them. We enriched our collaborations, campaigns, and commitments **to fight for a fair and dignified world where cruelty and superiority of any kind** (racial, religious, social, etc.) **have no place.**



In 2023, SB Overseas became a member of **ACODEV** and **11.11.11** to strengthen its **awareness and advocacy actions** and join **networks and communities of associations and members committed to development, cooperation and human rights advocacy** at local, national, international, and European levels. All our actions aim to **reinforce our commitment to sustainable development, social justice, humanitarian efforts, and human rights**, contributing to important causes nationally and internationally.

MOT DE LA FIN



For 2024, we commit to placing sustainability at the forefront across all our projects. In Belgium, we aim to strengthen our existing partnerships and expand collaborations to make our impacts even more significant, fostering the emergence of new connections between communities. We will continue to advocate for the importance of education at all ages and the agency of individuals in exile. For us, these are crucial factors in the participation and inclusion of migrant communities in society. A stable future is only possible by working together, demonstrating tolerance, and cultivating and celebrating diversity.