



# PARTNERSHIPS FOR TRAUMA RECOVERY

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## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

*Healing the psychosocial impacts of human rights  
abuses for a more peaceful tomorrow*

## Meet Azucena

Azucena, a Guatemalan woman, fled to Oakland to escape domestic violence, only to find herself trapped in it once again. Without any support or resources, Azucena felt isolated and alone. After a desperate suicide attempt led her to Highland Hospital, she was referred to the Human Rights Clinic (HRC). Due to our close partnership with the HRC, Azucena was offered psychological and psychosocial services at PTR, and her life took a transformative turn.

With the assistance of an in-person Spanish interpreter, Azucena engaged in weekly case management sessions at PTR. At first she experienced extreme somatic responses when sharing her history of traumatic events and expressed feeling defeated. After establishing a trusting and safe relationship with her Case Manager, Azucena regained her strength and her mental and physical wellbeing slowly started to improve. Azucena's Case Manager helped her navigate the complexities of the healthcare system and introduced her to valuable local resources to assist her with becoming more self-sufficient.



With PTR's culturally responsive care and support, Azucena found comfort and confidence in her journey towards healing. After 24 weeks of ongoing psychosocial support and advocacy, Azucena secured Medi-Cal coverage for a \$20,000 medical bill and received funding for over 40 therapeutic sessions from the California Victim Compensation Board.

Empowered by these resources, Azucena joined a local partner organization dedicated to supporting Latina and Indigenous immigrant women, where she discovered healing through drumming, knitting, and storytelling alongside fellow survivors. Azucena has become self-sufficient and is beginning to thrive in her newly established community. Azucena's resilience illustrates the profound impact of PTR's strength-based approach in empowering survivors on their path to recovery.

**"Before, I was very scared and lost, but now, I've grown more comfortable and confident."**

**~ Azucena**



# Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Community,

According to the 2023 Emergency Preparedness and Response report published by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the **UNHCR issued the highest number of emergency declarations in the last ten years**. The number of forcibly displaced people has reached a record high — now exceeding 117 million people — serves as a stark reminder of the importance of the collective work we do to support the psychosocial and psychological needs of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.

In the midst of the challenges of global displacement that characterized 2023, **PTR also experienced a year of transition and growth**, including a transformation of our leadership team: our Executive Director stepped down after six dedicated years of service, and we welcomed a new Clinical Director, our first Human Resources Director, and five exceptional individuals to our Board of Directors.

Each new addition to our leadership team has brought with them a wealth of diverse experiences, perspectives, and insights, enriching our capacity to navigate complex challenges and provide exceptional services.

Against a global landscape of escalating crises and increased displacement, our dedicated staff demonstrated remarkable resilience and an unwavering commitment to serve the needs of our clients and community with intention, kindness, and respect.



In 2023, we continued to provide holistic mental health services while expanding our comprehensive case management services and strengthening our community outreach. In addition, we held our first strategic planning retreat, which served as a cornerstone in charting the course for our future work.

The strategic plan — along with the recommendations identified through PTR's Community Needs Assessment conducted in late 2022 — creates a visionary roadmap; we are poised to embark on a journey of even greater significance and impact in the years to come.

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, we must take a moment to acknowledge and appreciate our clients' amazing courage, bravery, and resilience.

**We are forever grateful to our clients** – for providing us with the incredible opportunity to walk beside you and share in your healing and personal growth. We look forward to continuing this journey together as we strive to improve and expand our service delivery in the years ahead.

**In community,**

Gianina Pellegrini, Ph.D.  
Executive Director



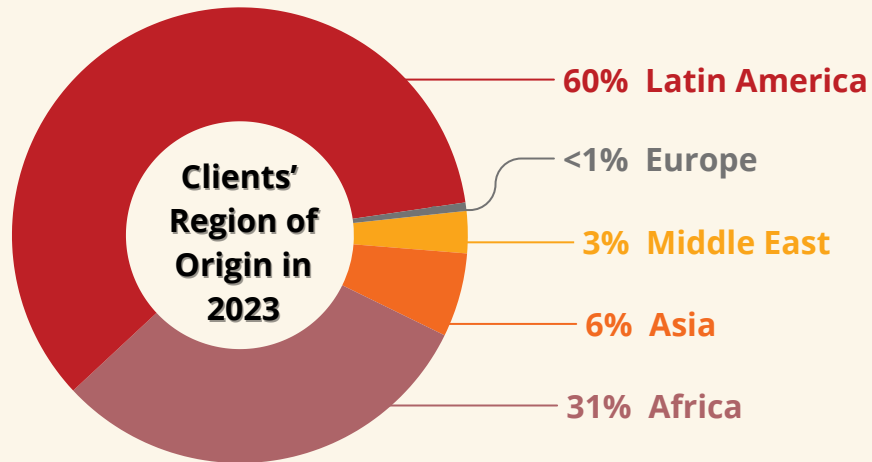
# Our Global Impact



PTR provides psychological and psychosocial support to international survivors of human rights abuses, persecution related to identity and beliefs, and forced displacement resulting from war, torture, gender-based and other forms of interpersonal violence.

In 2023, PTR provided psychological and psychosocial support to **154 clients** from **33 countries**. The majority of our clients came from the following countries: Guatemala (19%), Eritrea (12%), El Salvador (12%), Nicaragua (8%), and Honduras (8%).

**32 interpreters** partnered with PTR to offer interpretation in **19 languages** including: Arabic, Amharic, Bambara, Cantonese, Dari, Farsi, French, Haitian Creole, Lugandan, Mandarin, Malinke, Mam (linguistic variant spoken in Santiago Chimaltenango), Mam (linguistic variant spoken in Todos Santos Cuchumatán), Mongolian, Pashto, Spanish, Songhai, Tigrinya, and Urdu. In response to our clients' diverse languages, we prioritize language translation services, demonstrating our commitment to meeting our clients' unique needs.



To support our clients on their journey to healing, we held **2,323 psychological and psychosocial sessions** in 2023, 72% of which were conducted in a language other than English.

Our clients were forcibly displaced from their countries of origin due to a number of different types of human rights abuses, including but not limited to physical assault, sexual assault, domestic and family violence, mass violence (such as war and ethnic conflict), torture, and hate crimes. Approximately 75% of clients who received services from PTR in 2023 experienced more than one type of human rights abuses.

**Since opening in 2016, PTR has served 713 clients from 60 countries in 24 different languages.**



# Mental Health Care

Mental health care remains the core of our work. Our trauma-informed, culturally reflective, and contextually adaptable therapeutic approaches provide our clients with the psychological support they need to heal from their traumatic experiences. Our clients — who come from diverse backgrounds and have experienced a range of human rights abuses — receive up to two years of therapy with our experienced Trauma Therapists.

When trauma treatment is provided, clients' overall functioning improves, enabling them to engage in activities of daily living, restore a sense of safety and relational security, and prevent severe psychological and social problems. Through holistic psychological support, survivors can live healthy and meaningful lives, ultimately benefiting their families, communities, and surrounding societies.

Recovery after experiencing complex trauma is possible. Of the clients who completed a follow-up assessment in 2023, **81% reported a decrease in depression, anxiety, and/or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms.**

"This program changed my life. Before [PTR], I did not want to open up. I felt something special about [PTR] that helped me to open up and feel confident."  
~ PTR Client

The charts below reflect the changes in clients' self-rated psychological well-being, ability to accomplish daily activities, ability to manage emotions, and physical well-being from intake to follow-up.



# Healing Through Outreach: The African Communities Program

"I feel very good and blessed. I am eternally grateful to God and [PTR]."

~ PTR Client

African communities in the Bay Area face many challenges that make accessing counseling services difficult, including limited access to linguistically accessible and culturally appropriate services. Our African Communities Program (ACP) increases access to culturally responsive, strengths-based emotional support, outreach, education, counseling services, and community-based healing.

## African Communities Gathering

The annual African Communities gathering was organized by PTR, the African Advocacy Network, and collaborators in conjunction with the Juneteenth celebration. **115 community leaders** provided a space for connection, networking, and enjoyment.

The ACP continued to host **monthly psychoeducational gatherings** to share information on topics of significance to the community, such as coping strategies, postpartum depression, Autism awareness, the importance of storytelling, eliminating barriers to seeking mental health support, and demystifying trauma. In addition, ACP held several gatherings to support the unique needs of **survivors of the Rwandan genocide**.

## Decolonizing Mental Health

Initiated in 2021 by PTR and Wellness in Action (WIN) at the Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants (CERI), the 'Decolonizing Mental Health Series' focused on connecting with communities, providers, and community leaders through diverse lived experiences, **honoring ancestral wisdom**, and challenging the status quo for positive change.

Under this series, PTR co-facilitated two educational workshops: *Decolonizing Mental Health Stigma: Unveiling Shadows and Inspiring Creative Solutions* and *Learning From Organic Healing Approaches to Heal Complex Traumas*. Both workshops engaged **38 providers from the Bay Area and beyond**.

## Afro-Soccer Wellness Event

The ACP partnered with CERI, Soccer Without Borders, AAN, and Street Soccer to conduct its first event for the **Healing Through Sports Initiative**: the Afro-Soccer Wellness Event. The team arranged an 8v8 friendly soccer tournament, which included teams from across the Black/African diaspora throughout the Bay Area. PTR promoted wellness by having a collective discourse on the importance of coming together through sports, sharing fliers and brochures on mental health resources, and enjoying local artistic performances.

**153 community members** were engaged, including CBO and faith-based leaders, athletes, football players, men, women, boys, and girls from diverse communities.

## Strategic Partnerships

The ACP expanded collaborations and partnerships with service providers such as Burma Refugee Families and Newcomers (BRFN), Wellness in Action (WIN), African Advocacy Network (AAN), Priority Africa Network (PAN), University of San Francisco, Center for African Studies, and other Community-Based Organizations.

To bolster community ownership, the program **involved community leaders directly in activities**, with consultations and dialogues to understand and respond to community-specific needs.



# Interpreter Program

Our interpreter team provided **844 hours of interpretation** for individual and group sessions. In addition to having the capacity to provide interpretation in 19 languages, our contracted interpreters completed the **translation of all PTR consent forms into the 10 languages** spoken by our current clients: Amharic, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, French, Haitian Creole, Mongolian, Pashto, Spanish, and Tigrinya. Interpreters also completed the **translation of our 2022 Community Needs Assessment into the four languages** spoken by the focus group participants.

Recognizing the potential for interpreters to experience vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue, interpreters were offered a *Compassion Fatigue Among Interpreters* training and a *Somatic Experience* training, both aimed at helping interpreters recognize and manage their own symptoms of stress, shock, and trauma that can result from witnessing clients share their stories and experiences during counseling and case management sessions. Our knowledgeable Interpreter Program Manager began facilitating a **monthly Interpreter Peer Support Group** to identify and enhance the ways interpreters can uplift each other collectively.

"To me, being an interpreter is a great and rewarding job. At the same time, it is a very isolating job [because] we hear the clients' issues, carry their story and trauma with us, which would add to our stressful life. This type of training will help us overcome all the issues we are facing. I do appreciate it very much."

~ PTR Interpreter

## Psychosocial Care Program

Our forcibly displaced clients are attempting to rebuild their lives in an unfamiliar place with structural and systemic barriers to accessing support. Our Psychosocial Care Program offers **16-24 weeks of holistic psychosocial support** to help clients establish and maintain safety, stability, and self-sufficiency.

Our skilled and compassionate Case Managers assist clients with navigating complex systems and connecting with local resources, while ensuring that clients maintain their right to self-determination, autonomy, and personal dignity. Case Managers support clients with establishing and executing **thoughtful and client-centered plans to achieve personal goals**. Our clients receive financial assistance to support them with meeting concrete, basic needs that have the most direct impact on their psychosocial wellbeing.

The majority of our clients are asylum seekers who do not qualify for public benefits due to their immigration status. For these reasons, the Psychosocial Care Program launched offering clients a Welcome Kit with a variety of essential hygiene products designed to promote health and overall wellbeing. The kits were available in individual and family packs and were distributed to **138 clients**.



"Before PTR, I felt like a feather floating around aimlessly. Now I feel grounded and hopeful about the services offered to newcomers in the United States."

~ PTR Client

## Supporting Survivors of Torture

In partnership with the Northern California Human Rights Clinic (HRC) at the Eastmont Wellness Center in Oakland, 292 survivors of torture were offered **pro-bono forensic medical evaluations**, serving as an entry point to holistic services for survivors.

The HRC collaborates with attorneys, various departments within the Alameda Health System (AHS), and other nonprofit organizations to offer a spectrum of services, including full (physical/psychological) evaluations, psychological evaluations, physical evaluations, Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) exams, and exams for forms N-648 and I-693. HRC also served as the most significant entry point for clients who seek longitudinal care for case management and counseling services through PTR.

In 2023, the Human Rights Clinic (HRC) prioritized training new providers to care for torture survivors. **Seven medical residents underwent forensic evaluation training**, while two providers shadowed at the clinic.

Additionally, in partnership with PTR, the HRC organized a free, day-long CME-accredited training in forensic medical evaluation. The event attracted 29 participants from diverse healthcare backgrounds. It featured interactive presentations and practice sessions led by a multidisciplinary team, including physicians, interpreters, an immigration attorney, a psychologist, and a retired immigration judge. This collaborative effort underscores the commitment to equip healthcare professionals with the skills needed to provide **compassionate care to torture survivors**.

**292 SURVIVORS OF TORTURE RECEIVED FORENSIC MEDICAL EVALUATIONS FROM THE HRC**

**119 PTR CLIENTS WERE SURVIVORS OF TORTURE**

**74 SURVIVORS OF TORTURE RECEIVED THERAPY SERVICES AT PTR.**

**63 SURVIVORS OF TORTURE RECEIVED CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES AT PTR.**

"I am very thankful for the services and assistance [PTR] provided in case management. I am even more grateful to have found a French speaking case manager who was dedicated and helpful. It helped to communicate directly. Nothing got lost as I was able to clearly express my feelings firsthand."

~ PTR Client



# Financials

**Government grants** continued to be our largest source of funding in 2023. In the coming year, we look forward to diversifying our funding sources and increasing our funding pool to support our growing team and impactful work. **Total expenditures were approximately \$2.47 million.**



## GRANTS

- Alameda County Behavioral Health Care • California Department of Health Care Services, Community Services Division •
- California Office of Emergency Services • California Victims Compensation Board • Kaiser Permanente •
- Office of Refugee Resettlement • Sills Family Foundation • Zellerbach Family Foundation •

## INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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- Cathy Chen • John Lee • Law Offices of Haregu Gaime •

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**Thank you for your continuous support and generous donations!**  
**Because of people like **you**, we continue pursuing our mission passionately.**



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Strategy and Implementation Consultant



# Key Partners

Our ability to deliver impactful work is deeply rooted in the invaluable partnerships we foster with individuals and organizations. Together, we provide vital support to clients, from **legal assistance** and **medical care** to **job training** and **English language education**.

1951 Coffee Company  
Alameda County District Attorney's Office  
Alameda County Victim/Witness Assistance Division  
African Advocacy Network  
African Civil Rights Center  
Asian Americans for Community Involvement  
Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach  
Bay Area South Sudanese for Unity Association  
Black Alliance for Just Immigration  
Burma Refugee Families and Newcomers  
California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation  
Catholic Charities of the East Bay  
Center for African Studies, Berkeley University  
Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants  
Centro Legal de la Raza  
Community Health and Wellness Inc.  
Congolese Community Association  
Diversity in Health Training Institute  
East Bay Community Law Center  
East Bay Sanctuary Covenant  
Eastmont Wellness Health Center  
Eritrean Community Association  
Eritrean Soccer Federation in North America  
Ethiopian Cultural Community Center  
Global Communication Education & Arts  
Global Society of Tigray Scholars  
Highland Hospital  
Immigration Center for Women and Children  
Immigration Institute of the Bay Area

Instituto Familiar de la Raza  
International Rescue Committee of Northern California  
Ivory Coast Community Association  
La Clinica de la Raza  
Labor Center for Immigrant Justice  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the SF Bay Area  
LGBT Refugee Services: Jewish Family & Community  
Services of the East Bay  
Mentor a Newcomer  
Mujeres Unidas y Activas  
Northern California Human Rights Clinic  
Oakland International High School  
Oasis Legal Services  
Palo Alto University Sexual and Gender Identities Clinic  
Pangea Legal Services  
Physicians for Human Rights Asylum Network  
Priority Africa Network  
Refugee and Immigrant Transitions  
Rwandan Communities of Northern California  
San Francisco Public Defender  
Soccer Without Border  
Street Level Health Project  
Tahirih Justice Center  
The Bread Project  
The Wright Institute Graduate School of Psychology  
UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare  
UCSF Health and Human Rights Initiative (HHRI)  
University of San Francisco African Students Association  
Upwardly Global



# PARTNERSHIPS FOR TRAUMA RECOVERY

## OUR MISSION

To address the psychosocial impacts of trauma among international survivors of human rights abuses through culturally aware, trauma-informed, and linguistically accessible mental health care and case management, community outreach, training, and policy advocacy.

## OUR VISION

A world in which mental health and freedom from violence are central components of policy and program priorities.

## OUR VALUES

**Empowering Self-Sufficiency:** Our mission is to instill empowerment and self-reliance among our clients. We aim to equip them with the essential skills and confidence to attain their goals and enrich their lives.

**Promoting Belonging & Inclusion:** We aim to establish a sanctuary where everyone feels valued and included. We respect and appreciate diverse life experiences, creating a safe, respectful space where everyone feels seen, heard, and acknowledged.

**Nurturing Compassion & Support:** Our approach to service is rooted in empathy and kindness. We strive to alleviate suffering by offering a supportive, caring atmosphere that promotes recovery and well-being.

**Pursuing Justice & Advocacy:** Our commitment to justice is unwavering. We acknowledge and address the systemic failures that affect our clients. We take proactive measures to fill these gaps, advocating for changes that promise enduring impact.

**Cultivating Community & Service:** Our ethos is grounded in a collaborative community spirit. We endeavor to learn from and amplify the resources within the communities we serve, fostering a sense of service and shared growth.

## Connect with Us



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