



## LISBON: WHAT IF IT WAS ME?

### Objectives

- To address the most common hate or uninformed comments a lot of citizens have about refugees arriving in Portugal.
- To inform civil society about the costs of becoming a refugee, not just economic but also psychological - create empathy and respect.
- To make people aware that it is not an easy choice, that it is hard, that civil society is not paying for people to live comfortably forever, and that the journey is far from ending once they reach the new country.



Figure 22. Picture of the closing conference of the campaign in Lisbon.

### Thematic focus

Raising awareness among native-born people of what it means for refugees to leave everything behind and how the loss will never be fully repaired.

### Slogan & key messages

#### What if it was me?

We all enjoy family gatherings, our freedom of choice and speech, our friends... What if I was forced to leave all that behind to reach shelter, unsure if I would ever meet it again?

### Campaigner

JRS Portugal

### Target Audience

- People that although don't express hate towards the topic of migration but don't have a lot of info about it.
- People who are clearly against migration, either because they believe in the stereotypes or simply because they are very nationalists.
- Possible partners, who may not be aware of the JRS's work in Portugal and could be strategic in terms of facilitating the integration of the people they serve every day.

A social media campaign was designed in late 2022 with the help of an agency specialized in social issues to invite the audience to reflect on the difficulties refugees face after being forced to leave everything behind, moving the discourse from an economic angle to a human-entre approach. Pictures, banners, video testimonies broadcasted on YouTube and different informative posts were disseminated in the first quarter of 2023 to launch the campaign, raising awareness, and generating momentum towards the public event.

The "What if it was me" campaign was largely disseminated with news published about it on different platforms such as the following publications:

- <https://agencia.ecclesia.pt/portal/events/jrs-portugal-migrantes-partilham-testemunhos-no-encerramento-da-campanha-e-se-fosse-eu/>
- <https://setemargens.com/campanha-do-jrs-chega-ao-fim-com-testemunhos-de-migrantes/>
- <https://www.netthings.pt/2023/02/E-se-fosse-eu-campanha-tenta-sensibilizar-portugueses-sobre-situacao-dos-migrantes.html>

- <https://www.briefing.pt/2023/02/01/a-jrs-da-movimento-aos-refugiados/>

The closing event of "What if it was me" wanted to raise awareness of the vulnerable condition of migrants. At the event, various local initiatives and most importantly, migrants and refugees, shared very inspiring stories and initiatives in the context of the integration of migrants in Portugal and some commitments to continue collaborating were made.



The EPIC local alternative narrative campaign in Lisbon at EPIC website