

# 2022

# Report



[www.openarms.es](http://www.openarms.es)



**We protect  
human rights  
at sea and on land.**



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# 1. LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The events that have occurred during 2022 have made the year a crucial one for Open Arms, and we have once again shown our unwavering commitment to safeguarding the lives and dignity of people in vulnerable situations at sea, on land and in the air.



OSCAR CAMPS

Between the end of February and the beginning of March, the Russian army's devastating invasion of Ukraine forced millions of people to abandon their homes, loved ones and their homeland to escape cruelty, violence and death.

It's been more than 75 years, since around the time of the end of the Second World War, that we've seen a humanitarian crisis of this scale in Europe. Women and children, young people and the elderly have all had to leave everything behind in order to get out alive.

At the same time, Mission 89 aboard the Open Arms tugboat was coming to an end, after having safely brought 28 people we rescued at sea to an Italian port. However, for them and the thousands of other people that risk their lives crossing the sea to escape the torture, humiliation and terror they experience in their countries of origin and in the concentration camps in Libya, which are funded by European governments, there are no safe and legal routes. Institutions are not trying to help them and the press isn't paying attention. They continue to be treated like second-class refugees.

For us, **protecting lives in danger, wherever they come from, is our mission, our commitment and our obligation.** Because when life is at stake, there are only two options: save people or let them die.

Because of this philosophy, Open Arms established a base of operations in Warsaw (Poland) to provide immediate support to Ukrainian civilians who were experiencing indiscriminate violence. In record time, we put this project into action to protect the most vulnerable people in collaboration with other civil society organisations. We have carried out 16 humanitarian flights from Warsaw (Poland) to Barcelona, Madrid, Rome, and Canada, **in which we were able to take more than 2,873 refugees to safety.**



We sent 3 ambulances and 29 lorry trailers carrying more than 350 tonnes of essential supplies on land. We crossed the Mediterranean and the Black Sea and went up the Danube with our tugboat Open Arms (in a joint mission with chef José Andrés' organisation World Central Kitchen) to deliver 180 tonnes of food to the Ukrainian region of Odesa.

At this juncture, it is worth highlighting the importance of the agreement signed between Open Arms, the NGO Solidaire and the province of Saskatchewan in Canada to take in a thousand Ukrainian refugees. This is yet another example that legal and safe routes that protect people in vulnerable situations are not only necessary and possible but also a reality.

While the emergency in Ukraine has dominated headlines for much of the past year, we have kept our eyes firmly on the world's largest mass grave, the Mediterranean Sea. Deliberate inaction from European governments and EU institutions has led to the deaths of more than 2,406 people in the last year alone.

Despite the harassment from authorities from the comfort of their offices, which hinders the work we and other NGOs dedicated to humanitarian maritime rescue do, and long administrative blockades caused by futile reasoning, **we have carried out 6 missions in the Mediterranean in 2022.** These missions have been aboard our new tugboat Open Arms, our sailboat Astral and our new flagship boat, launched on the 8th of June to the public and the authorities in Barcelona, the ship's home port, with the slogan that 'it will be the ambassador for our citizens wherever it goes.'

During our missions in the Mediterranean, **we have saved 869 people from more than 15 different countries,** where economic and social conditions, conflict, abuse and the violation of fundamental rights drive thousands of people to undertake dangerous journeys.

Our commitment to life and the Law of the Sea, therefore, remains unwavering and we reiterated it again during the hearings in the judicial proceedings against Matteo Salvini, current Minister of Transport and former Minister of the Interior of Italy, for the alleged kidnapping of people during the Open Arms Mission 65 in August 2019. We have taken part in the proceedings as a private prosecutor.

In addition to reconstructing the events of those days and recounting the harsh conditions faced by the people on board our ship, who were illegally detained for 19 days, the hearings in the bunker hall of Palermo's Ucciardone jail are particularly important. They are an opportunity to better understand the provisions of the Law for maritime rescue, what the obligations of governments and ships at sea have been and are today, as well as the shortcomings and inefficiencies that continue to characterise the conduct of the authorities.

The hypocrisy of the Italian institutions has reached such a point that, during one of the hearings of the trial, we learned of the presence of an Italian Navy submarine, the SMG Venuti, that was in the same maritime area where Open Arms was carrying out a rescue operation in August 2019, which was monitoring the activity of our organisation's vessel, the Open Arms. It was only documenting the rescue operations, in videos and photos, instead of providing assistance or alerting the competent authorities of the location of boats in distress. As established by international conventions, the Law of the Sea and the IAMSAR Manual, **any vessel, even a military vessel, that encounters another vessel that may be considered in distress has an obligation to rescue it.** Instead, what is very clear is that the military submarine at no time alerted the coastal states' coordinating authorities of the presence of people aboard in distress. If the first responders on the Open Arms boat hadn't acted immediately, the people on board, amongst them women and children, would in all likelihood have capsized without anyone intervening.

We, therefore, decided to file a complaint with the Italian Public Prosecutor's Office at the Court of Rome and with the Prosecutor's Office of the Italian Military Court to clarify the legality of the conduct of the Italian Navy submarine. Reconstructing the events of those days will be useful to better understand the chain of responsibilities that in recent years has turned the Mediterranean into the **most lethal border in the world due to the deliberate inaction of European institutions**, the lack of governmental search and rescue operations, and the criminal agreements made with countries where human rights and life are systematically violated.

One of these criminal agreements has been re-signed by the Italian Parliament with the so-called Libyan coastguard authorities, whose function is to capture vulnerable people and return them - against their will, against what is stipulated by international treaties and against the Law of the Sea - to the hell that is Libya in exchange for more than 10 million euros of public funds. **The renewal of the agreements with Libya and the funding of its detention centres are a failure for democracy and for the entire European Union**, and a further affront to the principles of humanity and legality that are at the basis of international law.

For this reason, we launched the campaign "Non sono d'accordo" (I do not agree) in Italy. We want to reiterate our objection to the EU's cooperation with the Libyan authorities without concrete guarantees on the protection of the human rights of migrants and refugees and to demand the immediate evacuation of those held in Libyan detention centres, the extension of regular entry channels for migrants and refugees, the re-establishment of an institutional system of search and rescue in the Central Mediterranean, and the recognition of the essential role played by NGOs in safeguarding life at sea.



## **Because saving lives is never a crime.**

These initiatives are part of Open Arms's mission, which for years has also been trying to contribute to improving the situation of the population in countries of origin of insecure migratory flows, as we do with our Origen project in Senegal, which consolidates and expands its network of collaborators with international and local partners. As we continue to commit to our educational promise with the Education for Freedom project, we show the many ways in which it is possible to build a fairer world by working on empathy and critical thinking skills.

All of this would not have been possible without your help. That is why we would like to thank you and we hope to have you by our side to continue working on our commitment to leaving no life adrift.

**Yours faithfully,  
Oscar Camps**

## 2. TIMELINE

01

JANUARY

7/01 We conclude our Open Days aboard the Open Arms in the Port of Barcelona. More than 3,230 people visit us in Moll de la Fusta to learn about our work and discover the terrible reality of what is happening in the Mediterranean.

FEBRUARY

17/02 The tugboat Open Arms sets sail from the Port of Barcelona and heads for the Central Mediterranean. Mission 89 has begun.

24/02 The Russian army invades Ukraine and bombs its capital and several cities in the country, leaving hundreds dead and thousands more injured. Nearly 8 million people are forced to leave the country in the following months in search of refuge: it is the largest forced exodus of people in Europe since the Second World War.

In order to provide an immediate response to this humanitarian emergency, Open Arms established an operational base in Warsaw (Poland) and set up, in record time, different actions to protect the most vulnerable people, in collaboration with other civil society organisations.

02



03

MARCH

5/03 We rescue 28 people, including two minors, in international waters in the Central Mediterranean that are fleeing from Libya in a precarious wooden boat that is overcrowded, taking on water, and at risk of capsizing.

11/03 The first of 29 trailers leaves Lleida for Poland, loaded with more than 350 tonnes of medicine, food, blankets, electric generators and essential hygiene products to alleviate the emergency in Ukraine.







26/03 The tugboat Open Arms returns to the Port of Barcelona. Mission 89 comes to a close.

## ABRIL

1/04 We launch a new partnership with chef José Andrés' organisation World Chef Kitchen to alleviate the suffering of civilians in Ukraine.

6/04 Third humanitarian flight from Warsaw (Poland) with 185 vulnerable people from Ukraine on board, bound for Barcelona and Madrid.

8/04 New hearing in the proceedings against Salvini in the Court of Palermo, in which the former Italian minister has to answer for kidnapping people and the dereliction of duties. Open Arms has appeared as a civil defendant

12/03 The tugboat Open Arms arrives at its assigned port in Augusta, Sicily, where the 28 people rescued on board, who are from Nigeria, Syria, Eritrea, Chad, Sierra Leone and Ethiopia, disembark.

12/03 The first flight as part of a new humanitarian air corridor takes off from Warsaw (Poland) for Spain with 222 Ukrainian refugees, with mostly elderly people, women and children onboard. The scheme is organised by Open Arms in collaboration with the organisation Solidaire and various host organisations in Barcelona and Madrid.

12/03 More than 20 tonnes of humanitarian aid arrive in Lviv, Ukraine, in collaboration with the Ukrainian Consulate in Barcelona.

21/03 The first flight to Italy from Warsaw (Poland) via the humanitarian air corridor for refugees from Ukraine takes off. The flight is organised by Open Arms in collaboration with Solidaire and Caritas Italy.

23/03 Two trucks leave Barcelona for Ukraine with more than 14 tonnes of medicine, clothes, blankets and food. We carried out this project with the help of the dockers at the Port of Barcelona.

## 04





along with some of the people rescued during Mission 65.

13/04 New flight as part of the humanitarian air corridor for the evacuation of displaced persons from Ukraine, with 233 women, children, young people and elderly people on board, who arrived at welcome sites in Barcelona and Madrid.

16/04 The Open Arms sets sail from Barcelona with 24 tonnes of food on board on a new humanitarian mission to alleviate the suffering of the civilian population of Ukraine, in collaboration with chef José Andrés' organisation World Central Kitchen. Mission 90 begins.



## MAY

## 05

5/05 Another 238 displaced people from Ukraine fly from Warsaw to Barcelona and Madrid on our seventh humanitarian flight. The project is carried out in collaboration with the organisation Solidaire.

6/05 The Open Arms unloads 24 tonnes of food for the war-stricken civilian population in the Port of Izmail in the Odesa region of Ukraine, in partnership with chef José Andrés' World Central Kitchen.

15/05 Astral sets sail for the Central Mediterranean on a new observation, surveillance and reporting mission. Mission 91 begins.

24/04 The Open Arms arrives at its first port of call in Constanza, Romania, awaiting the opening of a humanitarian corridor to the port cities of Ukraine, in order to hand over the 24 tonnes of food on board.

28/04 We launch the Doctors for Ukraine initiative, through which we provide medical care to the Ukrainian population via an online platform.

29/04 Fabrice Leggeri, director of the European External Borders Agency (FRONTEX), resigns following a report by OLAF, the European anti-fraud office, which identified the exact responsibilities of the agency and its director for some illegal pushbacks in Greece. Alongside other humanitarian search and rescue organisations, Open Arms has been reporting FRONTEX's legal pushbacks for years, both in Greece and in the central Mediterranean.





18/05 Astral's first rescue in international waters of the Central Mediterranean. Forty-five people were in distress on board a small overcrowded fibreglass boat, after sailing for many hours to flee from Libya. We alerted the Italian authorities.

18/05 Astral locates a second boat with 70 people on board who have been at sea for more than 20 hours since they fled Libya. We request support from the Italian authorities and finally, the people on board are transferred to the coastguard's care.

21/05 Third Mission 91 operation since arriving in the area. Astral locates and assists 23 people on an overloaded dinghy in international waters in the Central Mediterranean.

22/05 The Open Arms returns to the Port of Izmail, in the Ukrainian region of Odesa, with another 24 tonnes of food for the civilian population. This is the second humanitarian mission carried out with chef José Andrés's organisation World Chef Kitchen.

23/05 Astral locates and brings 64 people to safety, including two young girls, thanks to a joint effort with the r42 team and their ships Nadir and Imara.



24/05 Mission 91's fifth rescue operation since arriving in the area. Astral locates and brings 110 people to safety, including a 2-year-old girl, on an overloaded dinghy in international waters in the Central Mediterranean.

27/05 Third humanitarian mission in collaboration with World Chef Kitchen. We delivered another 24 tonnes of food to the Port of Izmail in Odesa, Ukraine.

29/05 We held three Open Days on board the Open Arms Uno. More than 1,500 people come to get a closer look at our new flagship boat.

## 06

## JUNE



1/06 Fourth humanitarian operation with World Central Kitchen. The Open Arms delivers another 24 tonnes of food to Izmail port. In total, some 100 tonnes of food have been delivered to alleviate the emergency caused by the conflict in the Odesa region.

2/06 Eighth humanitarian flight Warsaw-Madrid-Barcelona with 235 people on board, in collaboration with the NGO Solidaire.

8/06 Official launch of our new flagship boat, the Open Arms Uno, in the Port of Barcelona in front of the public and the authorities.



17/06 The EmoHeads project is launched, a charity collection of 10,000 NFTs by artist and illustrator Javier Rojo. The aim is to generate conversation about mental illnesses and, in particular, those related to the digital sphere. 10% of the sales of these NFTs will go to Open Arms.

19/06 Weekend of Open Days on board the Open Arms Uno in the Port of Barcelona.

The debut ceremony, hosted by Santi Millán, featured an unprecedented show on board by the theatre company La Fura dels Baus, created and designed for the occasion by Carlus Padrissa, and with performances by Joan Dausà and Mar Esteve.

10/06 Benefit concert with the pianist and composer Laura Andrés on board the Open Arms Uno.

12/06 Ninth humanitarian flight departs from Warsaw for Madrid and Barcelona with 186 Ukrainian refugees onboard.



JULY

07

4/07 The tenth humanitarian flight with 25 refugees on board takes off from Warsaw, Poland, this time bound for Regina, Canada. This humanitarian air corridor is organized in cooperation with the NGO Solidaire and the government of Saskatchewan, Canada. Also on board is Phan Thi Kim Phúc, “the Napalm Girl” a woman who has been committed to peace and against all armed conflicts around the world for many years.

8/07 Eleventh humanitarian flight with 99 Ukrainian refugees on board from Warsaw (Poland) to Barcelona and Madrid.

25/07 We launch our “No mires para otro lado” (Don’t look the other way) campaign, an Open Arms initiative in collaboration with the creative collective PutosModernos. The aim is to directly condemn the tragedies that occur on a daily basis in the Mediterranean.

27/07 A new flight of the humanitarian corridor organized by Open Arms and Solidaire, together with the Sant' Egidio organization, arrives in Rome from Islamabad (Pakistan), with 217 refugees from Afghanistan on board.





3/08 Astral sets sail from the Port of Badalona and heads to the Central Mediterranean for a new surveillance, observation and reporting mission. Mission 92 is underway.

5/08 Astral responds to a call for help from a small boat that's adrift with 20 people on board, including a pregnant woman and a minor.

7/08 Astral carries out numerous interventions and helps two small boats in danger with 38 and 43 people on board respectively, amongst whom there are several minors. Once they have been rescued and are safe, they are transferred to the Italian coastguard.

9/08 The Open Arms Uno sets sail for its first humanitarian mission in the Mediterranean. Mission 93 has begun.

10/08 Astral aids and protects a wood boat in danger of capsizing and saves 7 people.

10/08 We organised another humanitarian flight to Canada with Solidaire, with 230 people from Ukraine on board. We are accompanied by Kim, "the Napalm girl" as an ambassador of hope, and by photographer Nick Ut, who immortalised her in the photo that became a symbol against war.

11/08 The Astral rescues 40 people, including a woman and a child. During the rescue operation, the boat capsizes due to difficult sea conditions, but fortunately, all the people are safe and are transferred to the Italian coastguard, who take them to Lampedusa.

12/08 The government of the Canadian province of Saskatchewan signs an agreement with Open Arms and Solidaire to take in a thousand Ukrainian refugees.



17/08 Open Arms Uno rescues 101 people in distress in the Central Mediterranean. It is its first search and rescue operation in its first humanitarian mission in the Mediterranean. Two people are evacuated.

25/08 Astral locates a boat adrift with 112 people on board. We carry out a rescue operation in collaboration with the Ocean Viking team from the French organisation SOS Méditerranée.

26/08 We launch "Cuentos a la deriva" (Stories Adrift), a charity collection of children's books based on the real stories of people that we've rescued in the Mediterranean. Lolita Bosch's 'La canción de Josepha' (Josepha's Song) and Miriam Hatibi's 'Sira y sus hermanas' (Sira and her Sisters), both illustrated by Chantal Vizcaino, are the first two books in the collection.

26/08 Astral locates and assists a boat with 20 people, including a woman and a baby, in international waters. After being taken in by the Italian coastguard, they are transferred and taken to a safe port.

27/08 The remaining 99 people on board the Open Arms Uno finally disembark in the port of Messina, Sicily.

28/08 The first mission in the Mediterranean aboard the Open Arms Uno comes to an end. Mission 93 is over.

09

SEPTEMBER



18/09 Open Arms Uno locates 294 people, including 43 women and 60 children, on a barge that had been at sea for four days, most with obvious signs of dehydration. In total, there are some 372 people on board and one dead body, with some cases requiring medical attention.

18/09 Open Arms Uno rescues 30 people from a very unstable boat. In total, there are now 402 people on board as well as the body of one person who did not survive.

22/09 Open Arms Uno arrives at their assigned safe port in Messina (Sicily) with the 402 people rescued from the Mediterranean and a young person's corpse.

29/09 Open Arms Uno arrives in the Port of Barcelona. Mission 95 has come to an end.

12/09 Open Arms Uno sets sail from the Italian Port of Syracuse and heads for the Central Mediterranean. Mission 95 has begun.

15/09 Open Arms Uno saves 19 people, including 4 children and 2 babies, from a boat that's adrift.

17/09 After 24 hours of intense searching, the Open Arms Uno brings 59 people and one corpse safely on board. There are 10 minors, 6 of them unaccompanied, and some medical cases in need of evacuation.

18/09 For 'Setmana del Llibre en Català' (Books in Catalan Week), we ran a week of storytelling sessions with our children's books 'Cuentos a la deriva' (Stories Adrift) aboard Astral, with the participation of Itziar Castro, Santi Millán, Gerard Quintana, Jordi Évole, Jordi Villacampa, Oscar Camps, Andreu Buenafuente and Silvia Abril.



10

OCTOBER



2/10 We held the Third Annual Volunteer Days in the Port of Barcelona in collaboration with Lavazza Spain, Greenvita, Ametller Origen, Coca Cola Spain, Abarka Coop and Can Pizza.

15/10 Charity music event "Beats for Relief" at The Cover Club, in Barcelona, for Open Arms. The artists involved included Tiny Balcon, Tia Einarsen, Breakfast, and Marc Pané; there was also an exhibition of Alba Duque's photography.





25/10 A new flight to Canada takes off from Warsaw, Poland, with 234 Ukrainian refugees on board, made possible by Open Arms and Solidaire and in partnership with the province of Saskatchewan. This is the 15th humanitarian flight in seven months, with almost 3,000 vulnerable people having been taken to safety.

30/10 We conclude our six Open Days on board the Astral in the Port of Badalona.

## NOVEMBER

11

1/11 We hold two Open Days on board Astral in the Port of Mataró.

23/11 Fourth humanitarian flight from Warsaw, Poland, to Saskatchewan, Canada, with 240 Ukrainian refugees on board. This flight was made possible thanks to the collaboration of Solidaire and the strategic partnership signed with the province of Saskatchewan.



29/11 Launch of our children's book collection "Cuentos a la deriva" (Stories Adrift) in Madrid with the publishing house La Galera. With the participation of Ángeles Schjaer, education coordinator at Open Arms; Laura Lanuza, head of communication at Open Arms; Pema Maymó, editorial director of La Galera, and photojournalist Juan Medina. The singer and activist Rozalén did a book reading of our collection at the event.

12

## DECEMBER



2/12 Our Christmas campaign with Abacus begins. Tens of volunteers start wrapping presents in Abacus shops in Catalonia, Valencia and Palma. All the money raised will go towards funding Open Arms missions.

5/12 We launch the "Humans being Humans" project. The campaign video, made for us as a charity project by a huge team of professionals from the audiovisual sector,





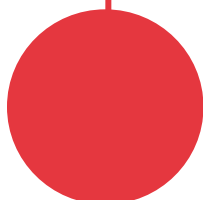
## HUMANS being HUMANS

18/12 We held a day of awareness-raising, empathy and solidarity at Espacio Rastro, in Madrid, for International Migrants Day. Hundreds of people joined us at the event to remember the thousands of people who have died while trying to flee poverty, torture and exploitation in search of a dignified life in peace. Dani Rovira, Anabel Alonso, Ana Pastor, Silvia Marsó, Rosy de Palma, Mariam Hernandez, Soly Malamine and Mónica García were also present. The event included the screening of the film Mediterraneo: Law of the Sea, live art by El Rey de la Ruina, storytelling from our collection “Cuentos la Deriva” (Stories Adrift) and an exhibition of images taken by several photojournalists at sea during our missions.

stars the American actor and activist Richard Gere, and other personalities from the world of culture and sport such as Pep Guardiola, Joan Manuel Serrat, Marc Gasol and Rigoberta Bandini, among others.

9/12 Astal sets sail for the Central Mediterranean from the Port of Badalona. Mission 97 has begun.

18/12 Astral locates an old, overcrowded fishing boat with 160 people on board. We distributed lifejackets and kept everyone safe until the Italian coast guard arrived.



# **3. OUR PROJECTS**

# MEDITERRANEAN





2022 was supposed to represent a return to normality for our operations in the Mediterranean, after two completely atypical years marked by the pandemic. However, harassment from the Italian authorities against maritime rescue vessels in SAR areas, bureaucratic problems and the consequences of the war in Ukraine significantly affected our operations.

Even so, thanks to a lot of effort and our ability to adapt, last year we carried out a total of 6 missions in the Mediterranean, 3 with the sailboat Astral (Missions 91, 92, 94 and 95), one with our tug Open Arms (Mission 89) and 2 with our new flagship boat, the Open Arms UNO (Missions 93 and 95). In 2022 we rescued and assisted a total of 4,006 people, ranging more than 15 different nationalities.



There were several particularly dramatic moments in 2022, which required all the professionalism, dedication and expertise of our crews to save the lives of hundreds of people.



One of these moments occurred at the end of May, during Mission 91 aboard the Astral which was carrying out observation, surveillance and reporting operations. After 5 different operations in a few days, bringing 312 people to safety (including many women and children), on the night of 25 May, Astral located a very unstable wooden boat that was overcrowded with 110 people and adrift. Despite having alerted the Tunisian, Maltese and Italian authorities of the boat's serious condition over several hours, they hadn't had a response from anyone.

The Astral crew tried to distribute life jackets to all the passengers, but the weight of the water in the boat made it very unstable and the adverse sea conditions caused the boat to sink. The lifeguards on board Astral worked very hard to recover the shipwreck survivors from the water at night using 3 life rafts, while the authorities continued not to respond to the MAYDAY 2-3 call.



The situation deteriorated and the weather conditions worsened. When a Tunisian coast guard patrol boat arrived, several people who had been rescued and were waiting in the life rafts jumped into the water and were then quickly rescued and taken aboard Astral. Finally, the Tunisian navy sent the 110 shipwreck survivors aboard Astral and, after lengthy negotiations with the Italian authorities, we took them safely back on land in Lampedusa.



Then, in August, another in-extremis rescue operation took place during Mission 92 aboard Astral. An overcrowded boat with 40 people on board, including a woman and a child, capsized in the sea despite numerous attempts to bring them to safety. In the end, there were no casualties and all of the boat's passengers were transferred by the Italian coastguard to Lampedusa.

In early September, during Mission 95, after 24 hours of intense searching, the crew of Open Arms UNO recovered 59 people and one body from an oil rig. The people arrived there after travelling in overcrowded conditions on board a precarious boat. Among them were 10 minors, 6 of them unaccompanied, and some medical cases in need of evacuation.

A day later, in the early hours of the morning, the UNO carried out another difficult rescue of 294 people - including 43 women and 60 children - most of them with obvious symptoms of dehydration after having spent four days at sea aboard a barge. Hours later, another 30 people were rescued from a very unstable boat.



A day later, in the early hours of the morning, the UNO carried out another difficult rescue of 294 people - including 43 women and 60 children - most of them with obvious symptoms of dehydration after having spent four days at sea aboard a barge. Hours later, another 30 people were rescued from a very unstable boat.

With 402 people and a cadaver on board, the Open Arms Uno finally arrived in Messina, Sicily where the people on board were able to disembark. The operation was a huge operational challenge for the crew which they managed to overcome thanks to their incredible generosity and professionalism.



# UKRAINE EMERGENCY



The devastating invasion of Ukraine by the Russian army has forced more than **8 million people** to leave the country in search of refuge. This is the largest forced exodus of people and the largest humanitarian crisis in Europe since the Second World War.

Two weeks after the start of the conflict, and as a result of the incipient saturation of the Polish refugee system, Open Arms decided to open a base in Warsaw with the aim of providing an immediate response to the emergency that could help displaced persons to relocate to other countries.



We started to organise a humanitarian air corridor to Spain (Barcelona, Madrid), Italy (Rome) and Argentina (Buenos Aires), in collaboration with the NGO Solidaire, owners of the Boeing 787 used for the flights, Caritas Italy, and Fundación Integralia, who were responsible for identifying people at their place of origin and coordinating and developing the reception network at the destinations.

From March onwards, we coordinated an operation with the help of volunteers at El Prat de Llobregat airport (Barcelona) to welcome the people and accompany them to other means of transport or to their respective host families.



We carried out **9 humanitarian flights and helped 1,858 displaced persons reach safety**. However, with the arrival of summer and peak tourism season, the capacity for receiving people in Spain started to become reduced. Open Arms looked for alternatives and made an agreement with the government of Canada to make a pilot flight to the province of Saskatchewan which would guarantee comprehensive refugee protection for 236 people at their destination.

The Boeing 787 then left Canada and headed for Warsaw with a cargo of humanitarian aid that would ultimately reach Ukraine, and then helped to transport another 108 people to Madrid.

On the 10th of August, we carried out our second flight to Saskatchewan, Canada, this time with 206 people on board. The next day, a **Memorandum of Understanding** is signed, in which Open Arms, Solidaire, and the province of Saskatchewan commit to a total of 5 humanitarian flights for Ukrainian people by 31 March 2023. In total, in 2022 we have organised 16 humanitarian flights (8 to Spain, 4 to Italy, and 4 to (Canada) for 3,140 people who have been displaced by the conflict in Ukraine.







In addition to the flights, Open Arms has been in charge of the emergency logistics coordination in the metropolitan area of Barcelona for the land shipment of medical supplies, basic necessities and food for the Ukrainian civilian population, under the coordination of the Consulate General of Ukraine in Barcelona.

We sent 29 trucks carrying over 350 tonnes of essential humanitarian aid (medicine, food, hygiene products, and clothes) and 3 ambulances to Ukrainian territory to try to help improve the lives of the civil population still trapped in the country.

At the same time, our tugboat the Open Arms, has travelled to the Ukrainian region of Odesa 4 times to deliver 180 tonnes of food as part of a joint mission with chef José Andrés's organisation World Central Kitchen.



# HUMANITARIAN FLIGHTS







As well as focusing our energy on the Ukraine Emergency, Open Arms, in collaboration with Solidaire and, both at the point of origin and destination, with ARCI, Federazioni delle Chiese Valdesi in Italia and Sant'Egidio, also carried out two other humanitarian flights this year.

The first one departed from Islamabad (Pakistan) for Rome (Italy) with 217 Afghan refugees on board that were fleeing the Taliban regime.

The second flight, which went from Niger to Italy, helped bring 50 refugees from Yemen, Cameroon, and Sudan, among other nationalities, to safety.





# ORIGEN PROJECT



With the gradual end of the pandemic restrictions, which had affected our courses from 2020 to 2022, we were able to resume our initiatives in **Senegal** at full pace in 2022. Our local teams continued to develop and expand the Origen programme, which has established itself as a project that is a model to follow for the empowerment of communities of origin of irregular migration and the search for real local alternatives. During 2022 we launched new partnerships and extended the projects that were developed during the previous year.

**Thiaroye Origen Project:** Empowering communities of origin of irregular migration and seeking training and employment alternatives in Thiaroye Kao (Senegal). Project carried out in collaboration with AECID, Asociación Educación Solidaria, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Dunia Kato and Clariba.



With the active collaboration of local authorities and partners, we empower young Senegalese people with information, digital training and job placements in Thiaroye Kao.

Thanks to a team of 50 Information Captains trained as community leaders, we conducted 120 informative sessions on the reality of irregular migration and local alternatives, involving more than **2,700 people**, intending to deconstruct the public imagination surrounding migration to Europe from Senegal and encourage community reflection on local alternatives to irregular migration.

We also provided training in digital skills, accounting and potentially resource-generating activities for the community. The project also supported the educational and professional inclusion of **240 young people**, through professional guidance and mentoring.

We equipped and fitted out an existing space as a Community Digital Knowledge Centre (CCD in French) as a training and orientation point with internet access and computers for training use where comprehensive professional and vocational training is offered to 300 young people and members of the community.



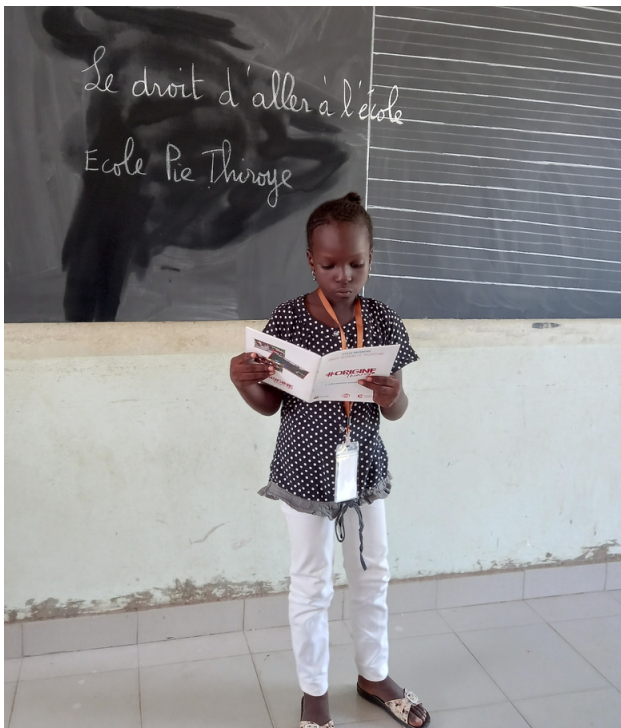


**Project Pikine-Guédiawaye:** Building alternatives to irregular migration. Project carried out in collaboration with Dunia Kato, Dunia Kato Senegal, ENDA JA, Terrassa City Council, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, and Fundació La Caixa.

This project aims to empower children and young people through training in human rights and migration and to promote alternatives to irregular migration in poor neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Dakar. We also support the labour integration of community members (in particular young people) through open and free training in computer skills, entrepreneurship and other sectors of interest to the community.



A team of 50 trained young community leaders (using the ‘Mbolo’ Open Arms Methodology) mentored and educated more than 1,000 minors on human rights and migration education and more than 400 adult members of the community, to build self-esteem and knowledge and generate community reflection on alternatives to irregular migration.



We conducted more than 360 educational sessions on human rights and migration, with a focus on a gendered perspective, led by Information Captains, involving more than 1,900 children and young people from the community aged 7 to 18 (in and outside of a school context).

In addition, 230 people were trained at the Community Digital Knowledge Centre (CCD in French) in Pikine (Yeumbeul). From this group, 90 people took the free certified training courses in IT and accounting, and 140 people benefited from courses in Arabic, revision and school support, introduction to IT for children, sports education, urban gardening, and English and mathematics classes. In total, more than 1,500 people attended the training courses.

We organised two entrepreneurship mentoring days with the aim of bringing potential future young entrepreneurs closer to established entrepreneurs so that they could learn and be inspired by their experiences. 15 local start-up entrepreneurship projects, which were previously selected, spent this time receiving support, monitoring and mentoring at the Yeumbeul CCD in collaboration with the African Institute of Management (IAM). After a careful selection process, 3 entrepreneurship projects with the potential to become community resource-generating companies received financial support to help them develop and start putting everything they'd learnt from the personalised mentoring and coaching scheme into practice.

**Origen Project in Saint-Louis 2022:** To inform communities of origin of irregular migration about the risks of migratory travel by unsafe routes, and to accompany them in the search for local alternatives through digital training and entrepreneurship. Project carried out in collaboration with Open Arms Italy, DIADEM, Otto per Mille Chiesa Valdese, Ajuntament de Castellbisbal.

Origen Saint-Louis trained 13 community leaders (Information Captains) who have developed 60 community information and reflection sessions on the public imagination of Europe, the reality of migration and alternatives to irregular migration.

This project also offered more than 250 people from the community access to a digital training space (CCD) where they attend free training courses to acquire or reinforce digital skills (digital literacy, office skills, among others). The project has helped more than 15 people to find employment, mainly young people, through personalised and free support in entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, 10 local entrepreneurial projects received training, support and mentoring from experts at the CCD in Saint-Louis.



**Thiaroye Sam-Sam Origen Project:** To empower the communities of origin of irregular migration and look for training and employment alternatives in the outskirts of Dakar (Senegal). Project carried out in collaboration with Asociación Educación Solidaria and Tarragona City Council.

Origen Thiaroye Sam-Sam empowers young people and key members of the community of origin of irregular migration through information, digital training and entrepreneurship mentoring in two of the most vulnerable neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Dakar. Thanks to a team of 20 Information Captains, who have been trained and empowered as local community leaders, the public imagination of Europe and migration from Senegal is being deconstructed and the community is encouraged to consider local alternatives to irregular migration. The campaign targets 30 community groups (20 groups of adults and 10 groups of children between the ages of 7 and 18 from the Sam-Sam community) and will reach a total of more than 2,000 participants.

This project also offers training in digital skills, accounting, entrepreneurship and potentially resource-generating activities for the community. At least 150 people from the community will be trained at the Community Digital Knowledge Centre in face-to-face classes and/or online.





**Project Origen Yeumbeul 2022-2023:** Building local alternatives to irregular migration through support and entrepreneurial mentoring Project carried out in collaboration with Dunia Kato, Dunia Kato Senegal and the Terrassa City Council.

The Origen Yeumbeul Project 2022-2023 has based its intervention strategy on school support, training and personalised mentoring for local entrepreneurial projects in Yeumbeul Sur, one of the most vulnerable neighbourhoods in the outskirts of Dakar.



The project offered training workshops and support for local entrepreneurs to 15 people in the community (mostly young people) guiding them in the process of defining their entrepreneurial idea. In addition, support, individualised follow-up and personalised assistance were provided to local community economic development projects so that they can be implemented and become resource and employment-generating projects for the community.

An institutional advocacy and community visibility campaign will also be carried out to encourage regular and structured conversations in the community about the risks and the reality of migration and the alternatives based on training and entrepreneurship. In Terrassa, 2 talks/workshops have been held on co-development and on the importance of positively linking migration and entrepreneurship.

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# EDUCATION FOR FREEDOM





At Open Arms we strongly believe that a society has to be empowered for **the defence of human rights to be a non-negotiable condition for states and governments**. Faced with the constant violation of human rights that we witness on a daily basis, we are working to ensure that the protection of life at sea, as well as on land, is the compass that guides the action of citizens, civil society and public administrations. We believe that empathy, human rights, and civic spirit are essential for today's children and young people to become the adults of tomorrow that build a fairer future.



For this reason, over the years, we have been fine-tuning the tools of our **Education for Freedom** project, a pedagogical proposal to meet the needs of everyday life in the classroom and to respond to the reflections and questions that students might have. The essence of Education for Freedom (EPL in Spanish) is about working on developing values, i.e. learning to respect people, to take into account their dignity and to recognise their rights as individuals, just as it is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The programme's methodology enables students to develop strategies to recognise the feelings of others and to recognise and express their own feelings and therefore learn to empathise with others in the world. The project also aims to develop **dialogue and critical thinking skills** based on reflection and conversation, helping students to be critical of injustice, prejudice and inequalities.

The main goal of the project is to promote values such as **justice, empathy, kindness, dignity and respect for everyone**; respect for people, their choices and beliefs, their ideas and opinions and their origins; the development of critical thinking skills and respectful dialogue within a framework of coexistence.



The strategy that we employ to achieve this goal is to give students the skills to be able to interact with others in a respectful and conciliatory manner; to empower them as citizens to build an inclusive and respectful society; and to encourage their interest in and commitment to social justice causes.

To achieve these goals, the Open Arms educational team has created and patented a unique methodology based on **didactic components and presentations** that are shared in person in all educational centres in the way that best suits their students. This methodology has proved to be a success that complements the school curriculum by providing a unique and direct vision formed of real testimonies from our missions in the Mediterranean and at our Origen projects.



The project is aimed at infant, primary, secondary and baccalaureate students, as well as those in vocational training and special education. In addition, the methodology includes a programme for teachers that includes the learning objectives of the project, the content and the evaluation criteria in order to incorporate the project into the class schedule.

In seven years, we have reached more than **125,000 students** from more than 2,500 schools in Spain. Just in 2022, we held 610 talks, managing to talk to 21,377 students.

2022 has also been a year full of initiatives that have allowed us to expand our educational project beyond the walls of the classroom.





## STORIES ADRIFT

In collaboration with the publishing house laGalera, we have launched “Cuentos a la deriva” (Stories Adrift), a charity collection of children’s books (in Spanish and Catalan) based on the **true stories** of the people we have rescued in the Mediterranean. This project aims to help raise awareness amongst children about the reality of the world that we live in through protagonists from the animal kingdom, who are also migrants, who are currently under threat. The first two titles illustrated in full colour by Chantal Vizcaíno are ‘La canción de Josepha’ (Josepha’s Song), by Lolita Bosch, and ‘Sira y sus hermanas’ (Sira and her Sisters), by Miriam Hatibi.



At the start of September, during Books in Catalan Week (Setmana del Llibre en Català) several personalities from the art and entertainment world (including Sílvia Abril, Andreu Buenafuente, Jordi Villacampa, Jordi Évole, Gerard Quintana, Santi Millán, Itziar Castro and Marcel Barrena) came aboard the Astral in the Port of Barcelona to act as special storytellers for the dozens of children who came with their families to see the stories up close.

A few months later, in December, we showcased “Cuentos a la deriva” in the SGAE building in Madrid with the singer Rozalén as a special guest. Juan Medina, a photojournalist who specialises in migration and has been on many of our missions, also ran an exhibition of some of his work.

Finally, on the 18th of December, we travelled to Madrid to commemorate International Migrants Day with a fundraising day at Espacio Rastro Madrid. The event was attended by artists committed to the protection of life such as Dani Rovira, Anabel Alonso, Ana Pastor, Silvia Marsó and Mariam Hernandez, among others, who were our special storytellers, giving their voice and acting skills to our “Stories Adrift”. We were also accompanied by the journalist Ana Pastor, who introduced the documentary “Origen” produced by Newtral for the “Origen” Senegal project, together with the entrepreneur and director of Dunia Kato, Soly Malamine.



## TALKS ONBOARD ASTRAL

Under the framework of the Education for Freedom project, we organised two weeks of Open Days. In the first one, in the Port of Badalona (24th-30th October), we welcomed 820 people, including individuals, teachers and students, from 15 schools, institutes and academic institutions. During the second week of Open Days in Mataró (31st October - 4th November), **762 people** came aboard the Astral.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

- We took part in the Barcelona Ultra Clean Marathon, organised by Centre Platja, in which the Open Arms team and volunteers helped to pick up rubbish in Barceloneta and then catalogue it. We also gave talks to raise awareness about the impact of human activity on the ocean.
- Visit to the Sant Adrià de Besòs (Barcelona) recycling plant with other entities (Anèl·lides, Centre Platja, Residu Cero, Zero Waste, etc.) as part of the educational project and the environmental issues that we want to discuss as part of our work in schools.
- Human rights education for lifeguards from ISei, the OA crew and teachers from the Balearic Islands, using our Education for Freedom methodology.
- Forums and roundtables at several universities: Valencia UIV, Carlos III, UB, UAB, Extremadura, Granada, Elisava, Pompeu Fabra, Blanquerna, Salamanca...
- Ideation, preparation and publication of educational materials in collaboration with Teachers For Future on climate migration, available for free for schools. [[teachersforfutureSpain.org/climatic-migrations/](https://teachersforfutureSpain.org/climatic-migrations/)].
- Talks held as part of the activities for children at the summer camps that the Port of Badalona run. 100 students took part between the ages of 6 and 12.



# EVENTS AND VOLUNTEERS





Throughout 2022, Open Arms took part in and organised dozens of events throughout Spain (concerts, festivals, meetings, special events, open days, etc.). These activities represent an **essential opportunity** for our organisation to make our work known to the public, both at sea and on land, to raise awareness of what is happening in the Mediterranean, to strengthen the ties that bind us to civil society and to finance part of our operations. These events would not be possible without the commitment, generosity and dedication of the dozens of volunteers who make them possible.

In 2022 the most special event for our organisation was the official debut of the Open Arms Uno, our new flagship boat. The launch ceremony took place on the 8th of June in front of the Rambla de Mar in the Port of Barcelona, its home port, and featured a surprise show on board from the theatre company La Fura dels Blaus, which was created and designed for the occasion by Carlus Padrissa.

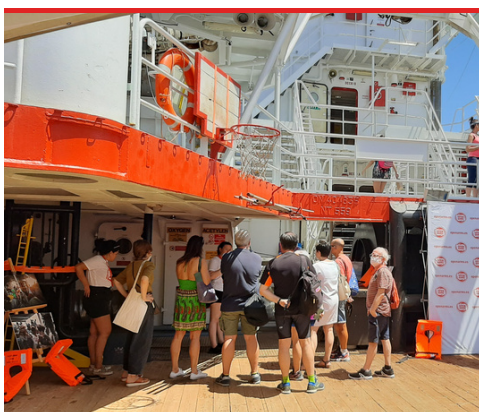


The event, which was hosted by Santi Millán, also involved a show from the singer Joan Dausà, who performed, amongst other songs, *Com plora el mar*, and the mezzo-soprano Mar Esteve. The ceremony was open to the general public and began with a maritime rescue drill in front of the Rambla de Mar gangway, where aerial nets formed from the performers' bodies represented humanity's unity.

More than **40 volunteers** took part in the event, and ensured that the show was well received and attracted the attention of crowds of people. In addition to Oscar Camps, founder and director of Open Arms, and Enrique Piñeyro, Argentinian philanthropist and director of the NGO Solidaire, which has lent the boat to our organisation, the opening ceremony was attended by Ada Colau (the mayor of Barcelona at the time of the event), the President of the Generalitat, Pere Aragonès, and the President of the Port of Barcelona, Damià Calvet.

## OPEN DAYS ON BOARD OUR BOATS

As well as the talks held for school groups on board the sailboat Astral, we have also run several Open Days for the general public as part of our **awareness-raising mission**.



At the beginning of the year, during the Christmas holidays, we opened the door of the tugboat Open Arms to the general public in Moll de la Fusta in Barcelona, and more than 3,230 people attended.

We also organised several Open Days on board the Open Arms Uno. The first Open Days, from the 27th to the 29th of June, managed to attract 1,439 visitors. The second round of Open Days, which took place in July, allowed 2,167 people to come and learn about the work we do on board up close.



## CONCERTS

After the restrictions due to the pandemic, this past year concerts and music festivals have finally returned. The most important ones that we took part in are the following:

- Benefit concert in Sala Luz de Gas in Barcelona (March)
- Benefit concert with Aliança Social Club's gospel choir in Poblenou (May)
- Benefit concert on the deck of the Open Arms Uno with the pianist and composer Laura Andrés (June)
- Cruïlla Festival in Barcelona (July)
- Benefit concert with Brian Caffrey & Arlo in Lleida (October)
- Benefit concert with the Fil de Gòspel gospel choir from Pineda de Mar (November)
- Anniversary benefit concert for Los Salvajes (60 years) at Sala Luz de Gas in Barcelona (November)



## CULTURAL FESTIVALS

- Dona i Mar Event, as part of the agreement with Badalona Marina (May)
- Batabat Fest Event, fundraising through merchandise sales, in Reus (May)
- Third Benefit Festival "Viure-ho tot", in Les Franqueses del Vallès (May)
- Canet de Mar Fiestas, street decorated with OA and Mediterranean theme, as well as an exhibition with life jackets and photographs (May)
- Maig di Gras Festival, in Burriana (May)
- Cultura Inquieta Festival, in Madrid (July). We ran an immersive experience space for the attendees so they could see what it's like to be adrift in the sea.
- Consciousness Festival, in Barcelona, we organised an immersive experience in which the participants were able to come aboard a dinghy and experience what it feels like to be adrift in the sea. We also carried out conferences and awareness debates over several days at the festival. (July)
- Bioritme Festival in Torelló (Osona)
- Event at the SalóN Náutico in Barcelona (October)



## SCREENINGS OF THE FILM ‘MEDITERRANEO: THE LAW OF THE SEA’

Throughout April at CICLE GAUDÍ cinemas the film ‘Mediterraneo: The Law of the Sea’ was screened in Granollers, Vilanova i la Geltrú, Alella, Badalona, Mataró and Barcelona.

In addition, throughout the whole of 2022, many screenings were organised for the film, which was inspired by the story of how Open Arms started, in various cities across Catalonia and Spain.

## VOLUNTEER DAYS

On the 1st and 2nd of October, we held the Third Annual Open Arms Volunteer Days at the World Trade Center, in the Port of Barcelona. Over two days we ran informative sessions for professionals from a range of fields in which all of the NGO’s projects were explained. We also held training sessions and workshops.

## CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN WITH ABACUS

For the second year in a row, Abacus shops ran a fundraising drive to raise money for Open Arms missions. From the 1st of December until the 6th of January, 150 volunteers were wrapping presents in exchange for a €1 donation in 23 of their shops across Catalonia, the region of Valencia and Palma. In the other 23 shops, pre-cut wrapping paper was available so that people could use it to wrap their presents themselves at home. The campaign was a success: **€57,228.65** were raised.

On December 13, together with the publishing house La Galera, we organized an afternoon of solidarity storytelling in the Abacus bookstore on Còrsega street in Barcelona, with the participation of the singers Alfred, Laura Andrés and Nil Moliner and the Olympic medalist Jordi Villacampa. During the storytelling session, the first two stories from the children’s collection “Cuentos adrift” were read, with live illustrations by Chantal Vizcaíno.





# **4. COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGNS: AWARDS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

In July of 2022, whilst millions of people were enjoying their summer holidays on beaches in the Mediterranean, the very same sea that the European Union's deliberate inaction has turned into the biggest mass grave on the planet, Open Arms launched the 'Don't look the other way' ('No mires para otro lado') campaign. This initiative, run in collaboration with the creative collective **PutosModernos**, was designed to directly condemn the tragedies that occur on a daily basis in the Mediterranean and to raise awareness in society about how the same sea that has brought us so much joy on holiday has turned into the most lethal border in the world.

The campaign consisted of hanging up several pairs of posters on beaches: one poster that contained a tragic statistic next to a second poster that ironically condemned society's passivity when faced with this sort of information. Each poster had a different website link connected to it (in Spanish, Catalan, and Italian) that would show the user a different message depending on which URL they used.



In December, Open Arms launched the campaign "Humans Being Humans". The project was a charitable endeavour produced by a team of professionals from the audiovisual sector which aimed to appeal to the innate essence of people, to their sense of empathy, care, and the need to stand up for lives are in danger in a call to action to build a more human and fairer world together.



The first audiovisual part of the "Human Being Humans" campaign stars the American actor and activist Richard Gere, and other personalities from the world of culture and sport like Pep Guardiola, Joan Manuel Serrat, Marc Gasol and Rigoberta Bandini, among others. The objective of the campaign was to show that **all people, regardless of their origin, sex, religion, or skin colour, have something in common: life, emotions, projects and, above all, rights.**

The main video was shown various times during the Christmas period on TV channels which have large audiences like RTVE and TV3 and it was also broadcast on the radio on Catalunya Radio and Rac1.

This is not the first time that actor Richard Gere and his wife, Alexandra, have actively supported Open Arms. In fact, in 2017 the couple worked as spokespeople for the NGO and actively collaborated with us to help protect the lives of vulnerable people.



On the 14th of August, during the 13th Starlite Porcelanosa Gala in Marbella, the Starlite Foundation organised a night of philanthropy to raise funds for its charitable projects. The gala also recognises important figures in business, celebrities and artists who, due to their commitment to social causes, use their fame, influence and media attention to actively help.

Amongst the many celebrities that attended the event, Alejandra and Richard Gere stole much of the media spotlight. Alejandra was awarded for her work with Open Arms and the foundation Hogar Sí.

**[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO OF HUMANS BEING HUMANS](#)**

