

Home-Start Worldwide

Annual Data Report 2024



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Executive Summary

The Home-Start Worldwide Annual Data Report 2024 presents a clear picture of the scale and impact of Home-Start Worldwide's work across 20 countries. Over the past year, the network supported more than 72,000 families and 94,000 children, with nearly 18,000 volunteers at the centre of delivery. Their time, care, and commitment provided reassurance and practical help to parents, strengthened family relationships, and created a sense of connection during times of stress and isolation.

Alongside these achievements, the report highlights ongoing challenges. Many organisations continue to face financial uncertainty, difficulties in recruiting and retaining volunteers, and pressures on staffing and leadership. Despite these constraints, member organisations have shown resilience and adaptability, introducing new services in mental health, parenting, education, and community engagement, while maintaining Home-Start's core strength of volunteer-led support in the home.

The findings underline the importance of belonging to a global network. Membership of Home-Start Worldwide gives local schemes solidarity, credibility, and opportunities to share learning, helping them to strengthen their work in diverse contexts. Looking ahead, the report identifies priorities for the network: improving funding stability, supporting volunteer engagement, making better use of data, and expanding opportunities for shared practice.

Taken together, the 2024 insights reaffirm Home-Start's enduring role in giving children the best possible start in life. Through compassion, innovation, and international collaboration, the network continues to make a lasting difference for families worldwide.

Introduction

Home-Start Worldwide (HSW) works with member organisations in 20 countries, all committed to helping families give their children the best possible start in life. With the support of trained volunteers, guided by staff and trustees, families are offered a listening ear, encouragement, and practical help in the early years of parenthood.

Each year, Home-Start gathers information from across the network to understand both the scale of our work and the difference it makes for families. This 2024 Annual Report brings together figures on staff, volunteers, and families supported, alongside reflections on achievements, challenges, and learning from member countries. It offers a picture of the many ways Home-Start adapts to local needs while remaining connected by a shared purpose.

The report shows not only the reach of Home-Start, but also the strength of its people and communities. We are grateful to the staff, trustees, volunteers, families, and supporters whose commitment makes this work possible.

Methodology

Data for this report relate to the 2024 reporting year and were gathered from Home-Start member organisations through the annual survey, circulated in January 2025. The survey was completed by all 20 of the member countries using Microsoft Forms: Australia, Belgium, Burundi, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Malta, Norway, Romania, Spain, Tanzania, The Netherlands, Uganda, UK, and Zambia.

The questionnaire combined numerical questions—covering staffing, trustees, volunteers, families supported, and children reached—with open-ended prompts on funding, services offered, achievements, and challenges. Quantitative data were analysed descriptively and compared with the 2022 and 2023 datasets to identify patterns and trends over time. In a small number of graphs, the results are shown with the note ‘excluding [country]’ where a single country’s response was notably higher than others; this was done to avoid skewing the overall patterns and to ensure a clearer comparison across member organisations. Qualitative responses were examined using thematic analysis, drawing out common themes and insights based on the experiences reported by member organisations.

Responses were collated and reviewed for completeness, with data cleaned to remove duplications and check for inconsistencies. In all tables and figures, a dash (–) is used to indicate missing or not submitted data, while a zero (0) indicates a true reported figure of none.

As with earlier reports, the survey reflects the diversity of contexts in which Home-Start operates. The methodology is not only intended to provide accurate figures but also to recognise the wider value of the work—capturing how families experience support, how volunteers contribute, and how schemes adapt to local needs. Together, these perspectives offer a fuller understanding of Home-Start’s reach and impact in 2024.

Data Analysis

This section presents an analysis of data submitted by Home-Start Worldwide member countries for the 2024 reporting year. The dataset includes both quantitative and qualitative responses, offering a broad view of organisational structure, staffing, volunteer engagement, service delivery, and the reach and impact of support provided to families. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire comprising numerical questions (e.g. number of staff, volunteers, and families supported) as well as open-ended prompts relating to funding, service types, challenges, achievements, and the value of international collaboration.

To support clarity and coherence, the analysis is organised into thematic areas: organisational structure and staffing; volunteer involvement; service reach and activities; funding and sustainability; and reflective insights from participating schemes. Quantitative findings are illustrated using graphs, with high outlier responses noted in the accompanying text for visual clarity. Qualitative responses have been thematically analysed to identify common themes, notable variations, and shared learning across countries.

1. Organisational Structure, Staffing and Funding

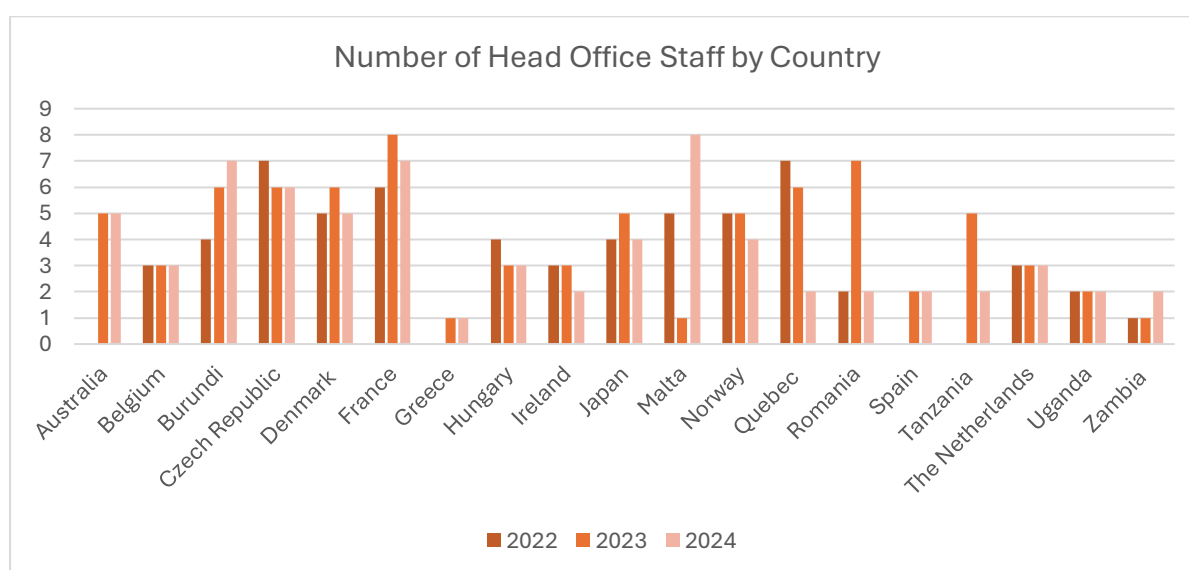
Number of Head Office Staff by Country

The number of Head Office staff reported in 2022, 2023, and 2024 are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1: Number of Head Office Staff by Country

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	5	5
Belgium	3	3	3
Burundi	4	6	7
Canada	7	6	2
Czech Republic	7	6	6
Denmark	5	6	5
France	6	8	7
Greece	-	1	1
Hungary	4	3	3
Ireland	3	3	2
Japan	4	5	4
Malta	5	1	6
Norway	5	5	4
Romania	2	7	2
Spain	-	2	2
Tanzania	-	5	2
The Netherlands	3	3	3
Uganda	2	2	2
UK	53	46	51
Zambia	1	1	2
TOTAL	114	124	119

Figure 1: Number of Head Office Staff by Country (Excluding: UK)



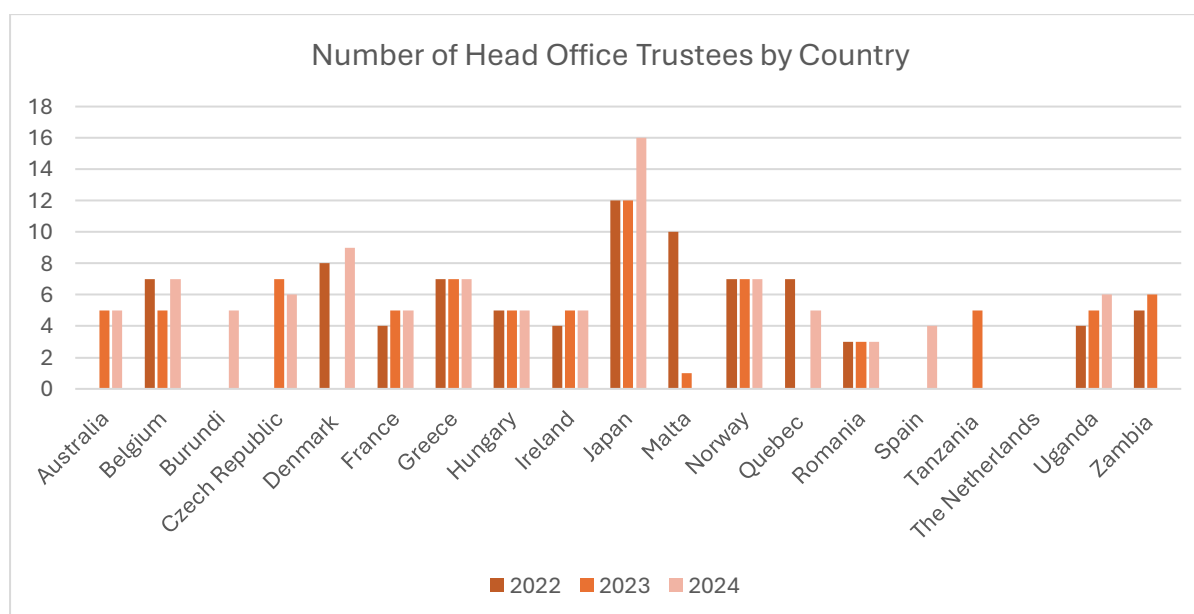
Number of Head Office Trustees by Country

Participating countries reported the number of trustees serving at their Home-Start head offices in 2024. These figures are shown in Table 2 and Figure 2.

Table 2: Number of Head Office Trustees by Country

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	5	5
Belgium	7	5	7
Burundi	-	0	5
Canada	7	0	5
Czech Republic	-	7	6
Denmark	8	0	9
France	4	5	5
Greece	7	7	7
Hungary	5	5	5
Ireland	4	5	5
Japan	12	12	16
Malta	10	10	9
Norway	7	7	7
Romania	3	3	3
Spain	-	0	4
Tanzania	-	5	-
The Netherlands	-	0	-
Uganda	4	5	6
UK	8	13	9
Zambia	5	6	-
TOTAL	91	100	104

Figure 2: Number of Head Office Trustees by Country



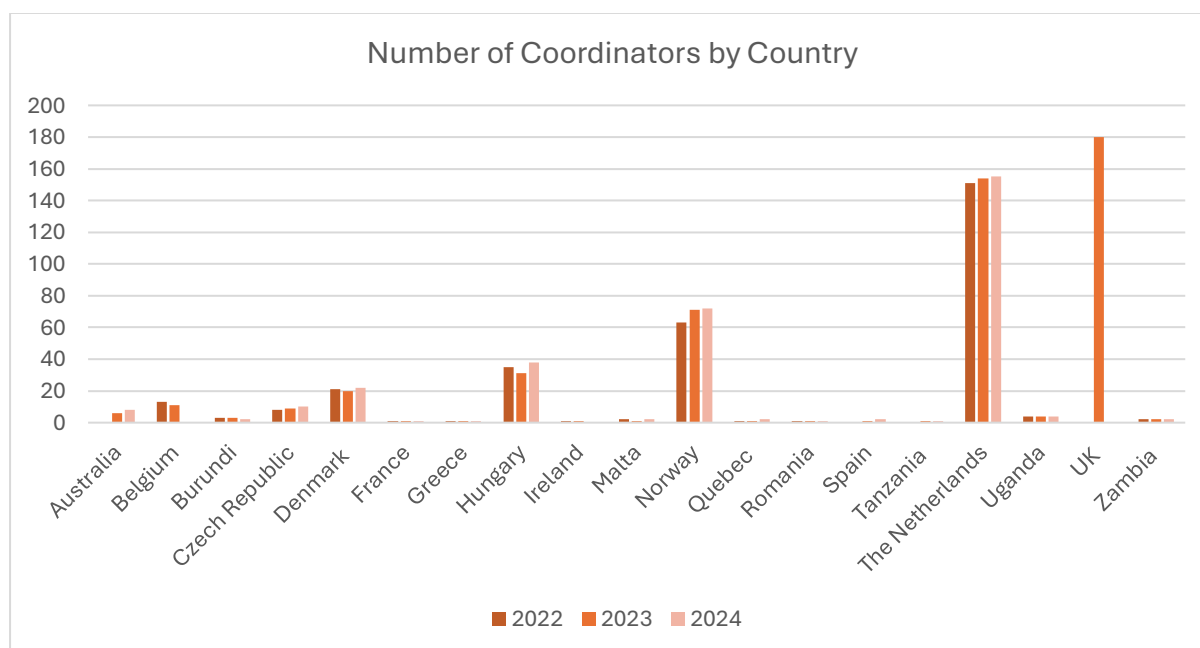
Number of Coordinators by Country

The number of coordinators reported across each year is shown in Table 3 and Figure 3.

Table 3: Number of Coordinators by Country

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	6	8
Belgium	13	11	12
Burundi	3	3	2
Canada	1	1	2
Czech Republic	8	9	10
Denmark	21	20	22
France	1	1	1
Greece	1	1	1
Hungary	35	31	38
Ireland	1	1	1
Japan	300	350	542
Malta	2	1	2
Norway	63	71	72
Romania	1	1	1
Spain	-	1	2
Tanzania	-	1	1
The Netherlands	151	154	155
Uganda	4	4	4
UK	182	180	177
Zambia	2	2	2
TOTAL	789	849	1055

Figure 3: Number of Coordinators by Country (Excluding: Japan)



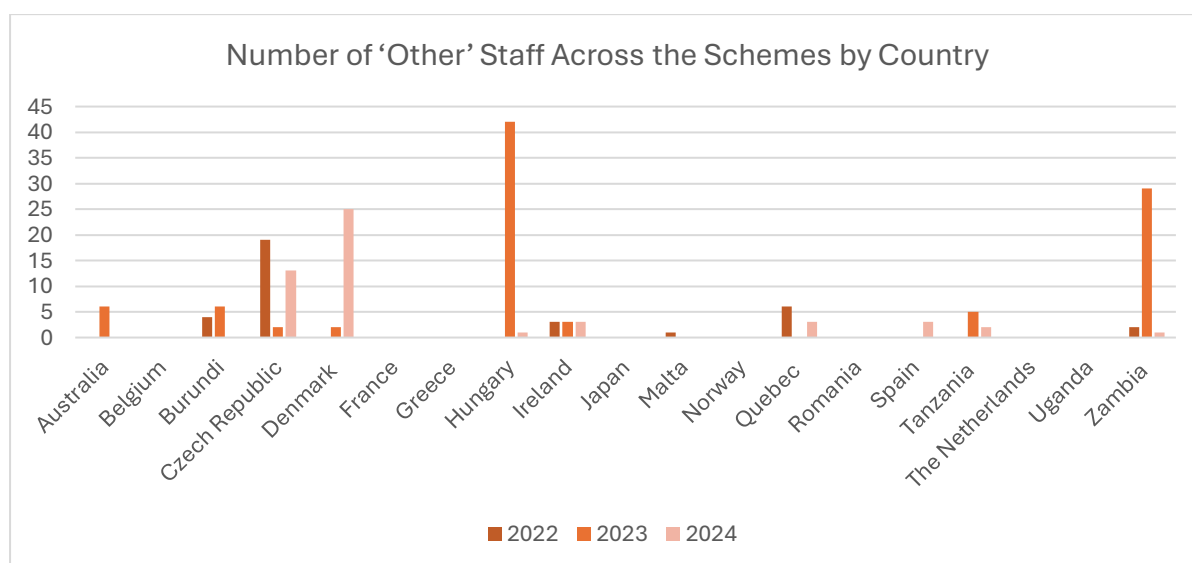
Number of 'Other' Staff Across the Schemes by Country

The number of other scheme staff (excluding head office) across each year is shown in Table 4 and Figure 4.

Table 4: Number of 'Other' Staff Across the Schemes

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	6	-
Belgium	-	0	0
Burundi	4	6	0
Czech Republic	19	2	13
Denmark	-	2	3
France	-	0	0
Greece	-	0	0
Hungary	-	0	1
Ireland	3	3	3
Japan	-	0	-
Malta	1	0	0
Norway	-	0	-
Canada	6	0	3
Romania	-	0	0
Spain	-	0	3
Tanzania	-	5	2
The Netherlands	-	0	0
Uganda	-	0	-
UK	1541	1592	1645
Zambia	2	2	1
TOTAL	1576	1613	1674

Figure 4: Number of 'Other' Staff Across the Schemes (Excluding: UK)



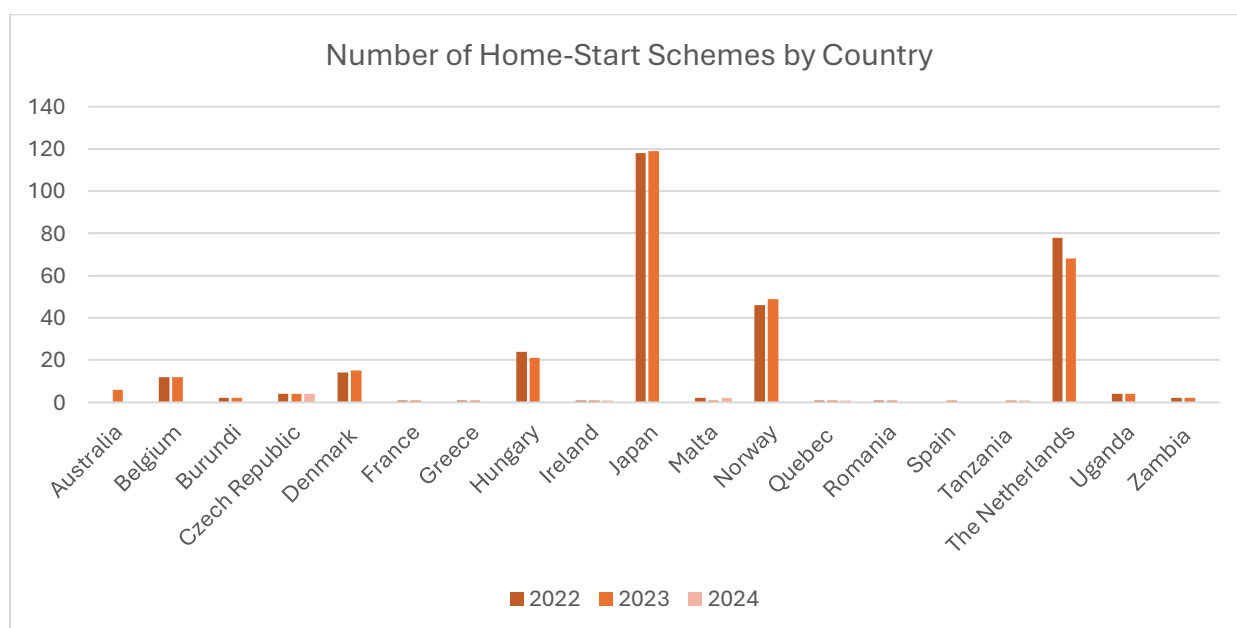
Number of Home-Start Schemes by Country

The number of Home-Start schemes operating across each year is shown in Table 5 and Figure 5.

Table 5: Number of Home-Start Schemes by Country

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	6	6	6
Belgium	12	12	15
Burundi	2	2	2
Canada	1	1	1
Czech Republic	4	4	4
Denmark	14	15	15
France	1	1	1
Greece	1	1	1
Hungary	24	21	22
Ireland	1	1	1
Japan	118	119	115
Malta	2	1	2
Norway	46	49	50
Romania	1	1	1
Spain	-	1	2
Tanzania	-	1	1
The Netherlands	78	68	69
Uganda	4	4	4
UK	182	180	177
Zambia	2	2	2
TOTAL	499	490	491

Figure 5: Number of Home-Start Schemes by Country (Excluding: UK)



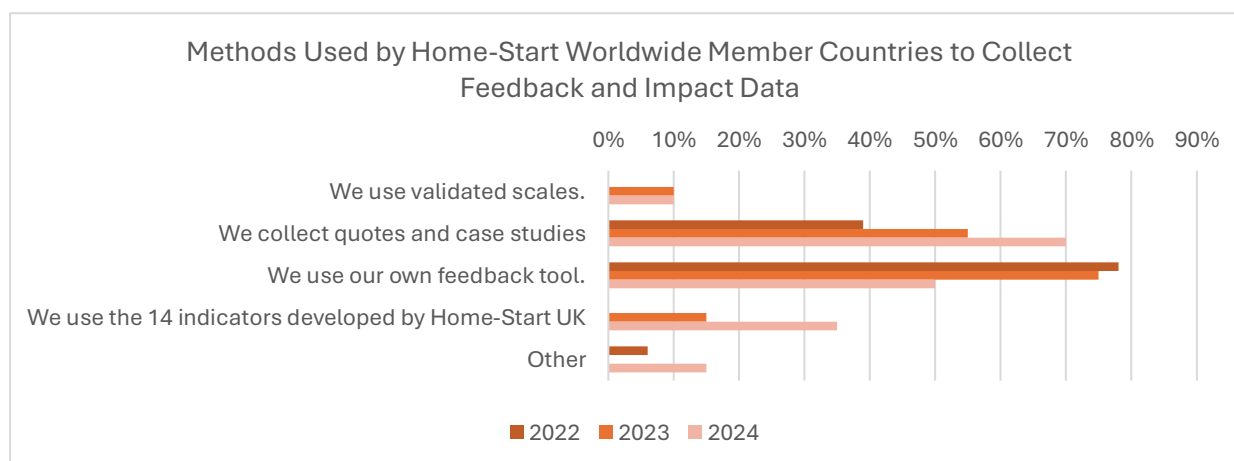
Percentage of Member Countries Using Different Data Collection Methods

Table 6 displays the percentages of Home-Start Worldwide member countries reporting how they currently collect feedback and impact data. The figures show the proportion of countries using each method in 2022, 2023 and 2024.

Table 6: Percentage of Methods Used by Home-Start Worldwide Member Countries to Collect Feedback and Impact Data

Data Collection Method	2022	2023	2024
We use validated scales.	0%	10%	10%
We collect quotes and case studies	39%	55%	70%
We use our own feedback tool.	78%	75%	50%
We use the 14 indicators developed by Home-Start UK	0%	15%	35%
Other	6%	0%	15%

Figure 6: Percentage of Methods Used by Home-Start Worldwide Member Countries to Collect Feedback and Impact Data



Funding and Financial Sustainability

In 2024, Home-Start organisations reported drawing on a wide variety of funding sources. The most frequently mentioned were trusts and foundations (10 member countries), followed by municipal or local authorities (9), private donations, membership fees, and community contributions (9), and other income-generating activities such as second-hand shops, project-based grants, or service fees (9). Public funding also featured prominently, with national or federal governments (5) and regional governments (4) providing important contributions. Less commonly cited were corporate or business sponsorships (4) and international or EU-level programmes (2). A small number of organisations reported having no formal funding, relying instead on goodwill, in-kind contributions, and voluntary support (2).

In terms of stability, reports of stable funding (3) highlighted long-standing statutory or institutional arrangements that provide a reliable base of support. At the same time, cases of volatile funding (2) underscored the risks of reliance on annual renewals, political cycles, or short-term project-based resources. These findings highlight the importance of securing long-term, flexible funding to ensure the continuity, quality, and growth of Home-Start's support for families across diverse communities.

2. Volunteer Involvement

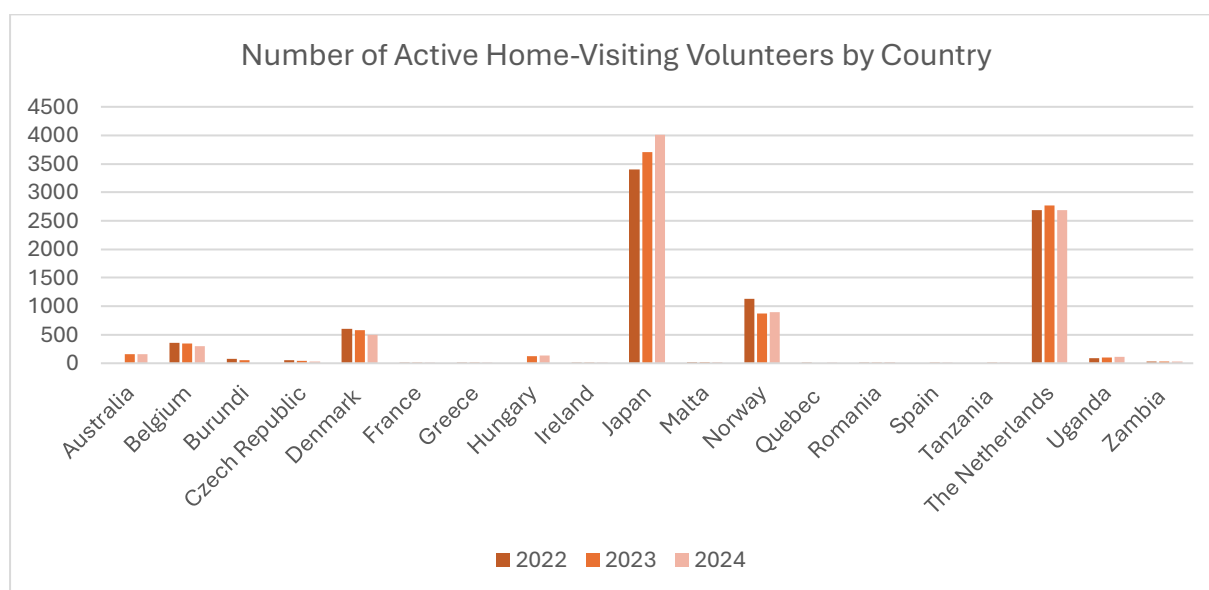
Number of Active Home-Visiting Volunteers by Country

The number of active home-visiting volunteers across each year is shown in Table 7 and Figure 7.

Table 7: Number of Active Home-Visiting Volunteers by Country

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	158	161
Belgium	363	352	304
Burundi	75	50	0
Canada	3	-	5
Czech Republic	48	45	35
Denmark	599	585	500
France	9	3	8
Greece	6	4	6
Hungary	-	120	140
Ireland	6	4	3
Japan	3405	3704	4007
Malta	15	18	14
Norway	1134	874	897
Romania	3	7	14
Spain	-	1	5
Tanzania	-	5	5
The Netherlands	2690	2772	2682
Uganda	92	105	109
UK	8687	9069	5856
Zambia	25	29	33
TOTAL	17160	17905	14784

Figure 7: Number of Active Home-Visiting Volunteers by Country (Excluding: UK)



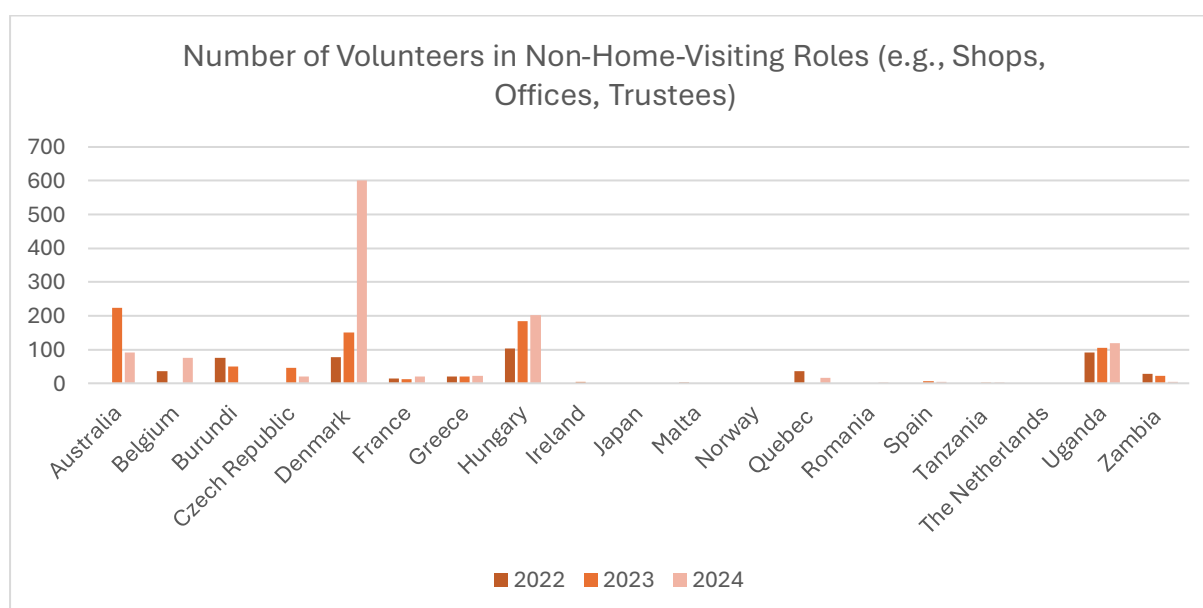
Number of Volunteers in Non-Home-Visiting Roles (e.g., Shops, Offices, Trustees)

Table 8 and Figure 8 highlight the number of active volunteers engaged in non-home-visiting roles across the years.

Table 8: Number of Volunteers in Non-Home-Visiting Roles (e.g., Shops, Offices, Trustees)

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	223	92
Belgium	35	0	75
Burundi	75	50	0
Canada	36	0	16
Czech Republic	-	45	21
Denmark	77	150	100
France	14	13	21
Greece	20	20	22
Hungary	104	185	201
Ireland	-	5	0
Japan	-	0	-
Malta	3	0	0
Norway	-	0	-
Romania	-	0	2
Spain	-	7	5
Tanzania	-	1	3
The Netherlands	-	0	0
Uganda	92	105	118
UK	1541	-	1585
Zambia	28	22	5
TOTAL	2025	826	2266

Figure 8: Number of Volunteers in Non-Home-Visiting Roles (e.g., Shops, Offices, Trustees) (Excluding: UK)



Volunteer Voices: The Impact of Giving Time

Volunteers are at the heart of Home-Start's impact, and their reflections illustrate how giving their time profoundly affects not just the families they support, but their own lives as well. Each volunteer experience is unique, yet common themes emerge; finding renewed purpose, making a tangible difference through small acts, developing meaningful connections, and experiencing personal enrichment through helping others.

Many volunteers describe gaining a renewed sense of purpose and meaning through their involvement with Home-Start. For some, volunteering provides clarity and fulfilment after a long career; for others, it's an opportunity to feel connected and useful in a deeply personal way.

"In the two years since completing my volunteer training with Home-Start, I have felt a deep and somewhat surprising sense of finding my purpose after 35 years in the education sector and corporate world. My experience with the two families I've supported has been revelatory. It's astonishing to realise that such a relatively small effort for such a minimal time commitment (three hours each week) can actually make a profound impact on people's lives." – Home-Start Australia Volunteer

"I feel happier as I serve these families. It makes me feel useful and I also learn what families are going through in the journey of children upbringing." – Home-Start Tanzania Volunteer

Volunteers frequently reflected on the powerful impact of simple yet consistent acts of support. By offering practical help—whether assisting with homework, providing emotional support, or giving parents a chance to rest—volunteers see firsthand how small gestures can significantly improve a family's daily life.

"It makes me see how easy it is to help someone in a difficult time and how with small actions, I can make a big difference in their life." – Home-Start Spain Volunteer

"Sometimes I stay with [another volunteer] so [the mother] has extra support, other times I help [her daughter] with homework, making sure she feels seen and appreciated as well. It's about practical help where it's needed most, offering [the mother] a bit of breathing room and making life a little less overwhelming." – Home-Start Malta Volunteer

Many volunteers spoke warmly about the meaningful relationships they build, not only with the families but also with fellow volunteers and coordinators. They often describe Home-Start as a welcoming, supportive community—almost like a second family—where they feel deeply valued and connected by shared goals.

"The experience is an absolute enrichment. Actually, I recommend it to everyone. It's not easy. Sometimes I feel powerless because you can't help with everything. [The coordinator] then helps guard the boundaries. Volunteering puts your own situation in perspective and makes me very grateful: grateful for what I have been given and grateful that I can help." – Home-Start Belgium Volunteer

"The Home-Start team welcomes and embraces all the volunteers and, although it sounds clichéd, they make us feel like family. The office is a safe and welcoming space where we are united in a common purpose of supporting families to live their best lives. I am truly blessed to be part of Home-Start." – Home-Start Australia Volunteer

Finally, volunteers emphasised how much they personally benefit from the experience of volunteering. They mentioned learning from the resilience, courage, and humanity of the families they support, describing it as a meaningful exchange that enriches their own perspectives.

“It’s so simple and beautiful to be able to help just by listening. There are so many people who just need to be listened to, understood and maybe a little hugged. And despite everything, when you also get the sincere smiles of some children, you feel blessed... It is a unique feeling that cannot be expressed in words.” – Home-Start Romania Volunteer

“The role of the volunteer is often slow to yield the expected fruits. But when the right time comes and the results become visible, you feel that everything made sense and a small miracle has occurred!” – Home-Start Greece Volunteer

3. Services Reach and Activities

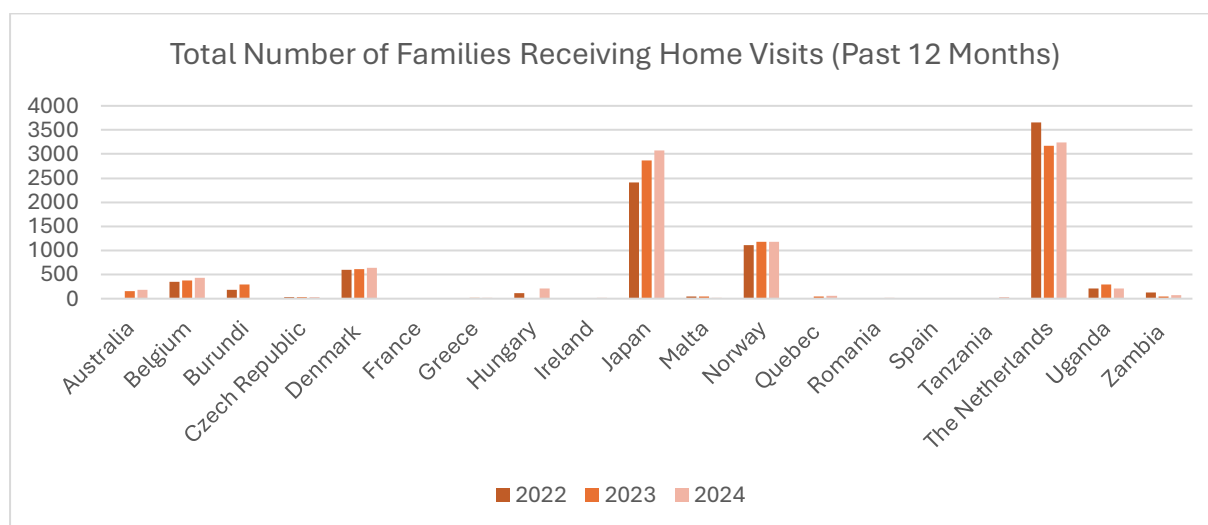
Total Number of Families Receiving Home Visits (Past 12 Months)

The number of families receiving volunteer home visit support over the years is summarised in Table 9 and Figure 9.

Table 9: Total Number of Families Receiving Home Visits (Past 12 Months)

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	158	181
Belgium	343	377	436
Burundi	179	300	0
Canada	3	52	60
Czech Republic	28	38	35
Denmark	599	613	644
France	6	4	1
Greece	12	14	19
Hungary	117	371	216
Ireland	12	5	15
Japan	2414	2867	3081
Malta	43	46	19
Norway	1104	1185	1182
Romania	5	7	14
Spain	-	1	5
Tanzania	-	12	25
The Netherlands	3658	3166	3242
Uganda	217	291	205
UK	37664	43692	19761
Zambia	122	42	75
TOTAL	46526	53241	29216

Figure 9: Total Number of Families Receiving Home Visits (Past 12 Months) (Excluding: UK)



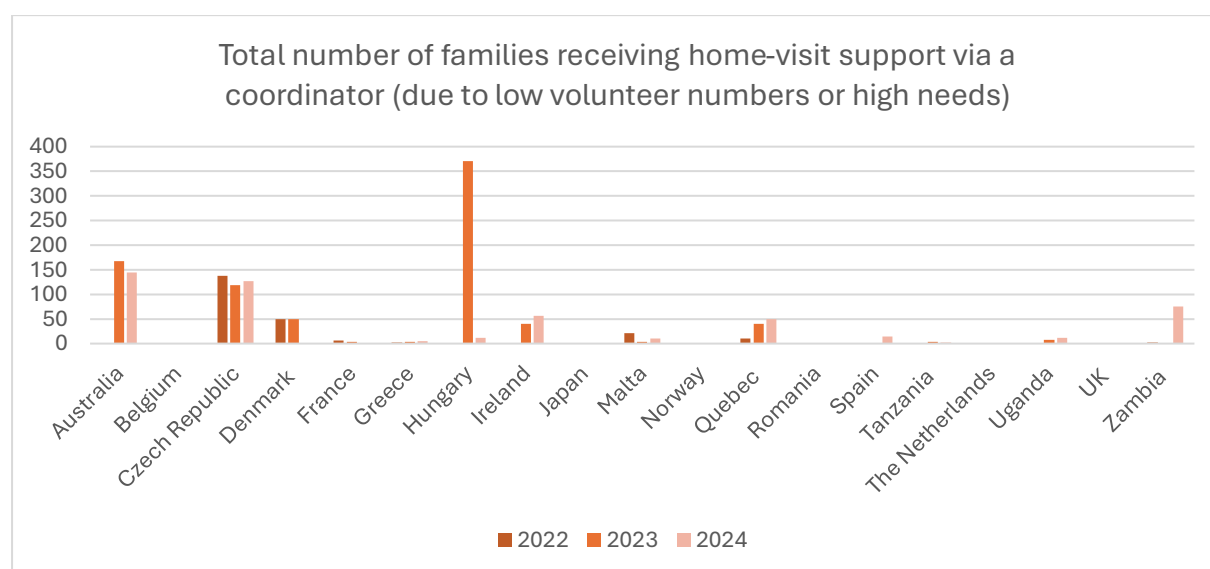
Total number of families receiving home-visit support via a coordinator (due to low volunteer numbers or high needs)

Table 10 and Figure 10 show the number of families supported directly by coordinators, rather than volunteers, across the reporting years.

Table 10: Total number of families receiving home-visit support via a coordinator (due to low volunteer numbers or high needs)

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	167	144
Belgium	-	0	-
Burundi	50	850	0
Canada	10	40	50
Czech Republic	138	118	127
Denmark	50	50	-
France	6	4	0
Greece	2	4	5
Hungary	-	-	12
Ireland	-	40	57
Japan	-	0	-
Malta	21	4	10
Norway	-	0	-
Romania	-	0	0
Spain	-	0	15
Tanzania	-	4	2
The Netherlands	-	0	0
Uganda	-	8	12
UK	-	0	-
Zambia	2	0	75
TOTAL	277	1289	509

Figure 10: Total number of families receiving home-visit support via a coordinator (due to low volunteer numbers or high needs) (Excluding: Burundi)



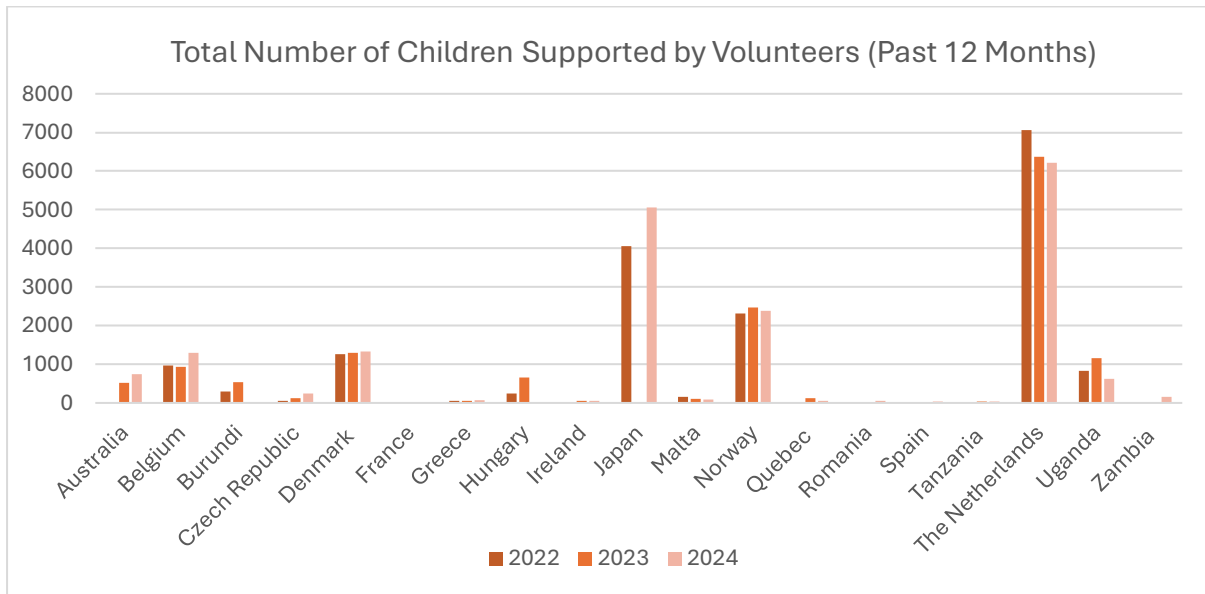
Total Number of Children Supported by Volunteers (Past 12 Months)

The total number of children supported by volunteers throughout the years is presented in Table 11 and Figure 11.

Table 11: Total Number of Children Supported by Volunteers (Past 12 Months)

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	518	747
Belgium	963	926	1288
Burundi	298	530	0
Canada	6	125	56
Czech Republic	51	130	238
Denmark	1254	1294	1327
France	22	14	2
Greece	56	56	68
Hungary	244	655	-
Ireland	24	59	62
Japan	4052	-	5067
Malta	154	106	87
Norway	2307	2463	2384
Romania	23	21	48
Spain	-	13	33
Tanzania	-	31	30
The Netherlands	7063	6375	6213
Uganda	830	1164	615
UK	65133	78900	75415
Zambia	15	3	150
TOTAL	82495	93383	93830

Figure 11: Total Number of Children Supported by Volunteers (Past 12 Months) (Excluding: UK)



Distribution of Children by Age Group at Start of Support

Figure 12a, 12b and 12c show the percentage of children by age at the start of support in 2024 across all Home-Start Worldwide member countries. Table 12 presents the annual proportions by age group for 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Table 12: Distribution of Children by Age Group at Start of Support

Year	Pre-Birth	Infancy	Preschool	School Age
2022	2%	31%	40%	26%
2023	4%	38%	33%	25%
2024	4%	38%	32%	27%

Figure 12a: Distribution of Children by Age Group at Start of Support (2022)

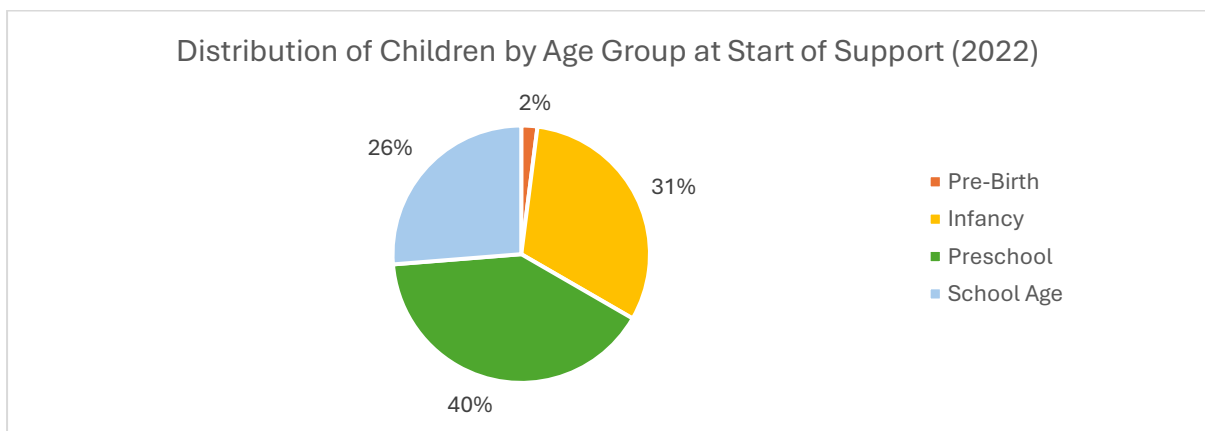


Figure 12b: Distribution of Children by Age Group at Start of Support (2023)

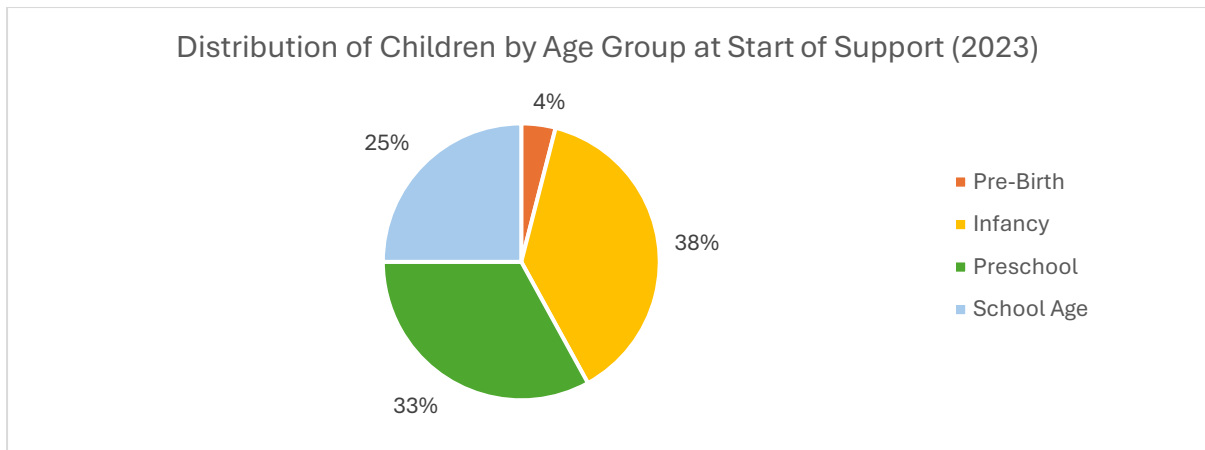
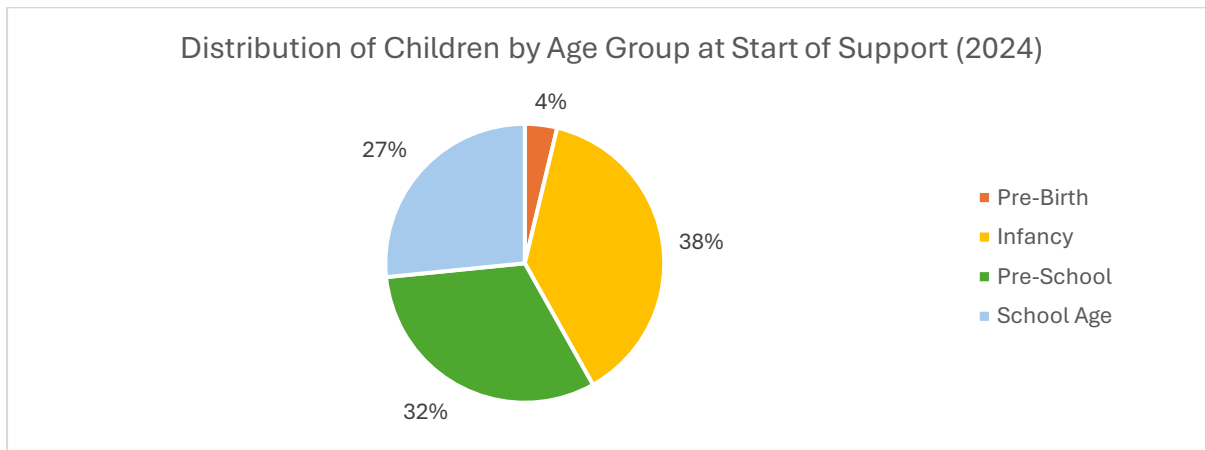


Figure 12c: Distribution of Children by Age Group at Start of Support (2024)



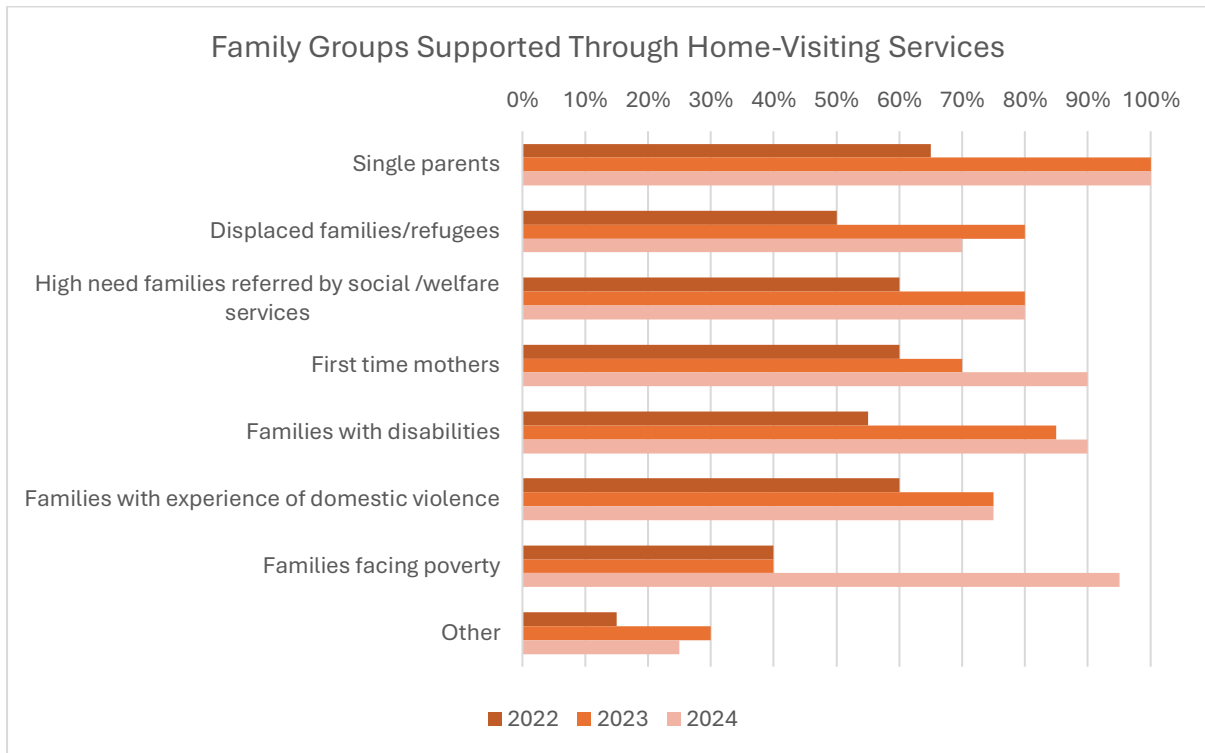
Family Groups Supported Through Home-Visiting Services

Figure 13 displays the percentages of home-visiting services across all Home-Start Worldwide member countries that support each family group. Table 13 provides the figures for each family group supported in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Table 13: Family Groups Supported Through Home-Visiting Services

Family Groups	2022	2023	2024
Single parents	65%	100%	100%
Displaced families/refugees	50%	80%	70%
High need families referred by social /welfare services	60%	80%	80%
First time mothers	60%	70%	90%
Families with disabilities	55%	85%	90%
Families with experience of domestic violence	60%	75%	75%
Families facing poverty	40%	40%	95%
Other	15%	30%	25%

Figure 13: Family Groups Supported Through Home-Visiting Services



Other Services Offered to Families Beyond Home Visiting

Home-Start schemes in 2024 in many of the member countries offered a wide range of other services beyond home visiting, reflecting their responsiveness to the varied and evolving needs of families. The most frequently reported theme was parenting and family support (5 member countries), including playgroups, peer and parent support groups, and structured parenting programmes. Practical assistance (5) was also prominent, with schemes offering food delivery, clothing and toy donations, baby banks, and help with budgeting and household management. Social and community engagement (5) was highlighted through family outings, cultural events, community groups, and networking activities to reduce isolation. Mental health and crisis support (5) featured counselling, perinatal support, and specialist domestic violence programmes such as the Phoenix Project. Educational and developmental support (5) included afterschool programmes, homework help, school readiness, and training in digital or language skills. Finally, therapeutic interventions (4) were noted, including play therapy, speech therapy and counselling/psychotherapy.

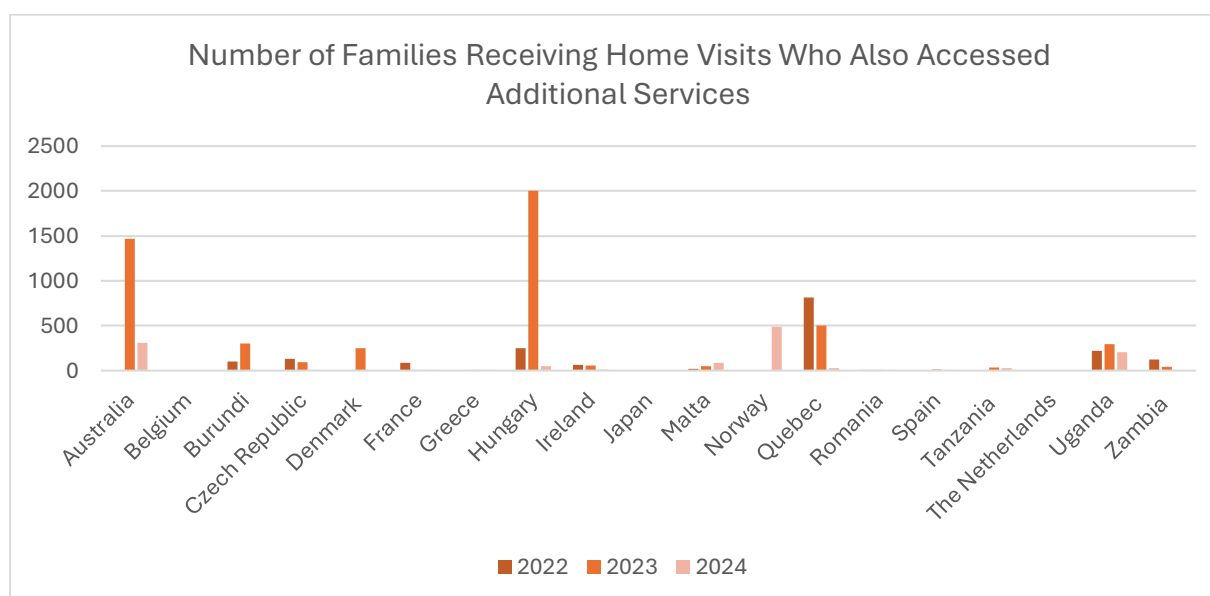
Number of Families Receiving Home Visits Who Also Accessed Other Services

Table 14 and Figure 14 detail the number of families receiving both home visiting and other services over the reporting period.

Table 14: Number of Families Receiving Home Visits Who Also Accessed Other Services

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	1471	306
Belgium	-	0	-
Burundi	100	300	-
Canada	816	500	30
Czech Republic	131	95	5
Denmark	-	250	-
France	88	4	1
Greece	-	4	1
Hungary	250	200	50
Ireland	61	59	10
Japan	-	0	-
Malta	19	50	87
Norway	-	0	486
Romania	5	7	6
Spain	-	9	5
Tanzania	-	31	30
The Netherlands	-	0	-
Uganda	217	291	205
UK	37664	43692	5183
Zambia	123	42	-
TOTAL	39474	47005	6405

Figure 14: Number of Families Receiving Home Visits Who Also Accessed Other Services (Excluding: UK)



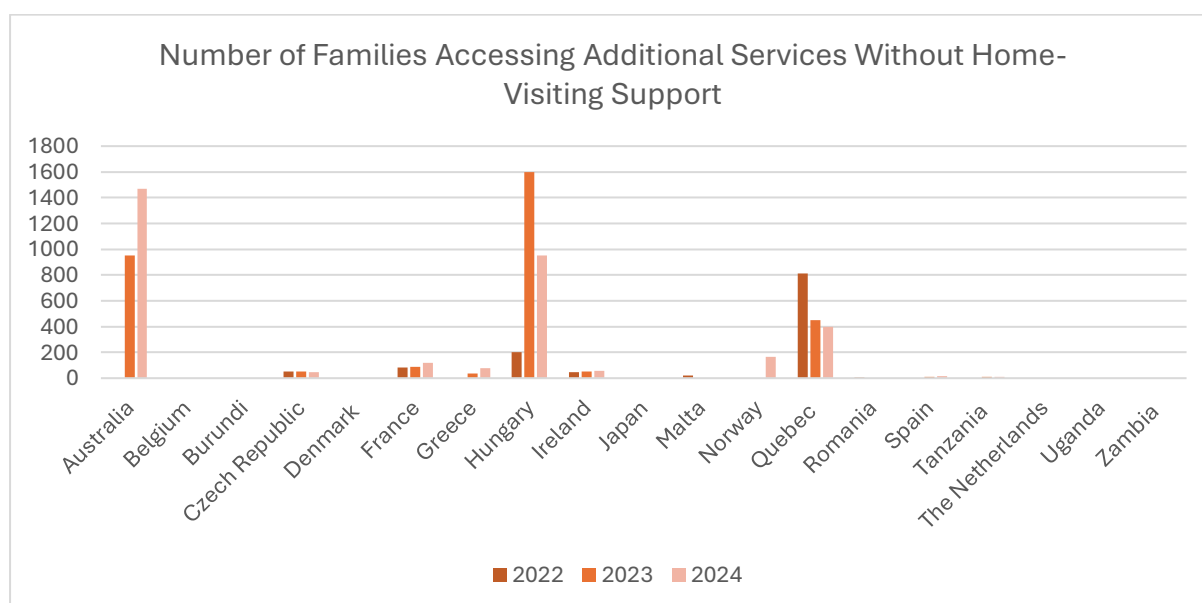
Number of Families Accessing Other Services Without Home-Visiting Support

The number of families accessing only other services, without home-visiting support, across the years is shown in Table 15 and Figure 15.

Table 15: Number of Families Accessing Other Services Without Home-Visiting Support

Country	2022	2023	2024
Australia	-	953	1471
Belgium	-	0	-
Burundi	-	0	85
Canada	811	450	400
Czech Republic	50	50	45
Denmark	-	0	-
France	84	87	120
Greece	-	35	75
Hungary	200	1600	950
Ireland	49	53	57
Japan	-	0	-
Malta	19	0	0
Norway	-	0	167
Romania	3	0	0
Spain	-	9	15
Tanzania	-	10	10
The Netherlands	-	0	-
Uganda	-	0	0
UK	-	0	39089
Zambia	-	0	0
TOTAL	1216	3247	42484

Figure 15: Number of Families Accessing Other Services Without Home-Visiting Support (Excluding: UK)



Other Organisational Activities Conducted Under the Home-Start Banner

In 2024, Home-Start organisations engaged in a wide range of activities beyond direct family support. The most frequently reported were advocacy and policy engagement (7 member countries), including child rights advocacy, parliamentary hearings, coalition membership, and the preparation of vision papers and position documents to influence family and social policy. Volunteer support and training (6) also featured strongly, with organisations emphasising recruitment, capacity-building, and ongoing support for their volunteer base.

Active participation in steering groups and networks (5) was another common area, reflecting Home-Start's role in collaborative platforms and committees that address broader social issues affecting families. At the community level, organisations reported engagement activities (5) such as awareness days, community fairs, and seminars that helped promote Home-Start's work and strengthen local connections. Complementing these efforts, communications and promotion (3) were used to raise visibility, recruit volunteers, and engage stakeholders through media, official documents, and meetings.

Taken together, these activities highlight the variety of ways in which Home-Start contributes beyond home-visiting, supporting volunteers, strengthening networks, and engaging with communities in ways that add value to its core mission.

Family Voices: The Power of Being Supported

Families supported by Home-Start have commented about the great impact of compassionate, consistent support during their most challenging moments. Each experience, though unique, highlights shared themes: relief and reassurance, practical help, renewed parental confidence, and meaningful mutual relationships.

For many parents, simply having someone non-judgmental and compassionate by their side was deeply reassuring, reducing feelings of isolation and providing much-needed emotional support.

"[The volunteer] means a lot to us. She offers so much support during the difficult moments. We can always count on her, she has no judgment on us and can feel us very well, like a friend or a neighbour who pops in from time to time." – Parent, Home-Start Belgium

"Before giving birth, I had a Covid infection as a result of which my baby boy was born by emergency caesarean section... I didn't feel that I could take care of the household and my little boy without help. The change became a slowly evolving system [when I] received [Home-Start] volunteers. Within a short time, what I needed most and what volunteers were doing met and soared. What did I get? Attention, devotion and care, altruism, love and much more." – Mother, Home-Start Hungary

"I had so much stress and fears. Fears of pain because I was circumcised. I had no fixed place to live, let alone bring a baby into the world. My biggest worry was that I would have to give birth on the street. [The volunteer] assisted me in the search for housing, childcare and baby gear. She brought me to the right social workers and listened to my concerns." – Mother, Home-Start Belgium

For other families, even small acts of practical support—such as childcare, guidance, or companionship—eased their day-to-day burdens, creating space for joy, rest, and relief.

“It’s like a weight lifting off my shoulders, having someone come and watch the children, while I manage to take care of other things on my own, knowing my children are safe and happy.” – Parent, Home-Start Romania

“I wanted to thank you for coming into my life. My daughter is happier every day, and knowing you is a treasure for me. Before, I felt exhausted all the time, but now I feel like I have someone to lean on.” – Parent, Home-Start Spain

Families frequently expressed how volunteer support restored their confidence and strengthened their parenting skills, empowering them to feel more capable and secure in their roles.

“Thanks to the volunteer, I’ve learned to enjoy the little moments with my children more. Before, I felt like stress kept me from being the mother I wanted to be. Now, I feel stronger to face things.” – Mother, Home-Start Spain

“I loved the experience with my volunteer. She helped me do things I didn’t dare to do before, like going out more with my daughter or asking for help. I feel much more confident and less overwhelmed.” – Parent, Home-Start Spain

“The volunteer who visits us always talks to us about the limits we should set for our children and stick to them. I thought that if I gave in to their stubbornness, everything would be calmer, but in the end I was wrong. When I followed her advice, I realised how right she was.” – Parent, Home-Start Greece

“Before I met Home-Start, I did not know how to become friendly with my kids when I direct them how to do things. I was harsh and impatient. Now I love my kids more as I understand them better and they are more cooperative.” – Parent, Home-Start Tanzania

Finally, some parents reflected on the meaningful connections formed through Home-Start, emphasising the reciprocal nature and mutual benefit of their relationships with volunteers.

“It’s got to a point where I feel like the relationship is less about a desperate parent needing support and is now mutually beneficial where I can also offer something to my volunteer and fill a need for her. It’s a rich, fulfilling relationship.” – Parent, Home-Start Australia

4. Reflections, Impact and Learning

As part of this year’s reporting and strategic reflection, Home-Start members from across the global network shared qualitative insights into their recent experiences. The themes below are drawn from open-ended responses to four key questions: What are some of your proudest achievements over the last year (2024)? What are some of your major challenges you have faced over the last year (2024)? What does being a member of HSW mean to you, your team and your schemes? and How could HSW help you to reach your goals, or overcome your major challenges, for the coming year? Together, they offer a picture of the current strengths, challenges, and support needs across the Home-Start network—highlighting both the impact of local schemes and the ongoing value of global collaboration.

Key Achievements in 2024

In 2024, Home-Start organisations reported a wide variety of achievements that demonstrate both growth and adaptability. The most frequently mentioned were about specific projects and initiatives (9 member countries), such as exhibitions, nutrition and education programmes, art therapy, new parenting support groups, and recognition on evidence-based lists. Achievements in community support and outreach (8) were also common, ranging from summer camps and open activities to seasonal support that strengthened connections with families.

Strong emphasis was placed on partnerships and networking (7), with organisations building collaborations with NGOs, municipalities, regional authorities, and professional platforms. Volunteer development and involvement (5) was another important area, with expanded training opportunities, new roles, and creative approaches to recruitment and engagement. Further progress was seen in service growth (4), including new schemes and coordinators, and in internal development (4), with database upgrades, new staff, and improvements in organisational infrastructure. Finally, achievements in advocacy, visibility, and recognition (4) included memoranda, public campaigns, publications, and greater visibility in professional platforms.

Taken together, these achievements highlight the range of ways in which Home-Start organisations continued to evolve in 2024—by piloting new initiatives, deepening community support, strengthening partnerships, and investing in volunteers and organisational capacity.

Key Challenges Faced in 2024

Home-Start organisations also reported challenges that reflect the pressures of sustaining services and responding to external change in 2024. The most frequently cited difficulty was funding and financial insecurity (11 member countries), with organisations highlighting insufficient or unstable funding, difficulties in securing long-term resources, and financial pressures linked to local government constraints or broader economic conditions.

Challenges in volunteer recruitment and retention (9) were also widespread, with organisations describing difficulties in attracting new volunteers and maintaining engagement among existing ones. Staffing and leadership (6) was another area of concern, including staff shortages, leadership transitions, and the impact of illness or limited human resources on service delivery.

Some organisations pointed to programme delivery and development (4) challenges, such as adapting new systems, testing approaches for specific groups, managing referrals, and integrating research and digital tools while expanding their reach. Finally, a smaller number highlighted external structural factors (2), including shifting government requirements and legislative changes that created additional uncertainty.

Taken together, these challenges underline the ongoing need to strengthen financial stability, attract and retain volunteers, and build organisational resilience, while remaining responsive to changing external demands.

Sharing Across Borders: What Members Learned from One Another

Members reflected on the ways in which they had gained from HSW or from other member countries, pointing to both tangible benefits and deeper forms of connection. The most frequently mentioned gain was learning and exchange (10 member countries), with members emphasising the value of sharing practices, visiting other schemes, and adapting best practices to their own contexts. Examples included working together on research groups, exchanging approaches to organisational management, and learning from visits to schemes in London and Norway.

Another important area was participation in HSW projects and groups (3), with organisations highlighting their involvement in the branding and research groups, as well as contributions to HSW's research project. Direct support and consultation (3) were also valued, with members appreciating personalised guidance from HSW representatives and advice from other member countries, such as consultations on establishing new schemes.

Membership also strengthened credibility and recognition (3), with some countries noting that being part of an internationally recognised network enhanced their legitimacy with governments, donors, and partners, and reinforced their identity as part of a respected global movement.

In addition, members benefited from training and resources (3), including webinars, e-news, and advice on digital tools and social media use. Finally, some members reflected on intangible yet meaningful gains, pointing to values and spirit (2), such as resilience, persistence, and a renewed sense of commitment.

Taken together, these responses show that HSW membership and peer connections are valued not only for practical knowledge, training, and credibility, but also for the solidarity and spirit of being part of a global family support movement.

The Value of Global Belonging: What HSW Membership Means to Member Countries

Across countries, members described Home-Start Worldwide (HSW) membership as both practically valuable and emotionally meaningful, offering solidarity, learning, and recognition within a global movement for families.

The most frequently mentioned theme was a strong sense of belonging and solidarity (10 member countries). Members emphasised the feeling of being part of a global family, united by shared values and mutual support, which offered motivation and reassurance during difficult times. Closely linked to this was the value of networking and exchange (8), with organisations highlighting the opportunity to connect across countries, share experiences, and learn from diverse approaches.

Membership was also associated with strength and credibility (6), with organisations noting the added legitimacy and visibility that comes from being part of an international network. Alongside this, learning and development (6) were highly valued, including access to training, workshops, knowledge sharing, and quality assurance.

Several members pointed to the impact and purpose (5) of belonging to HSW, stressing how it reinforces their mission to promote positive parenting, support families, and improve children's wellbeing. A smaller number highlighted membership as helping to secure the future of their services and ensure continuity (3), describing it as a way to expand influence, ensure long-term sustainability, and strengthen their leadership in family support services.

Taken together, these reflections show that HSW membership is not just symbolic. For many organisations, it provides identity, credibility, and opportunities to connect and learn, while reinforcing their commitment to families within a wider global movement.

Looking Ahead: How HSW Can Support Members in the Coming Years

When asked how HSW could best support them, organisations most often pointed to funding and fundraising (9 member countries). Members emphasised the importance of stable resources, joint fundraising initiatives, links to international opportunities, and sustaining core home-visiting activities.

A second strong theme was research, impact, and data (6). Several organisations highlighted the request to support in developing impact measurement tools, standardising data collection, and sharing research that demonstrates the value of Home-Start's work. Closely linked to this, training, exchange, and learning (6) were also widely valued, with requests for continued webinars, peer exchanges, and opportunities to share good practice.

Volunteer recruitment and support (4) also emerged as a priority, with members asking for help in attracting volunteers, keeping them engaged, and providing additional training. Similarly, visibility, partnerships, and advocacy (4) were highlighted as ways HSW could strengthen member organisations, through international partnerships, enhanced credibility, and support with social media and messaging.

Finally, some organisations pointed to programme development and expansion (2), such as consolidating existing services or extending Home-Start to new communities.

Taken together, these responses show that members see the most value in HSW's support for financial stability, impact measurement, and opportunities for learning and collaboration, while also recognising the importance of help with volunteers, visibility, and programme growth.

Recommendations

The 2024 analysis highlights both progress and persistent challenges across the Home-Start Worldwide network. While member countries continue to provide vital support to families, the data also shows variation in reporting, ongoing funding instability, and volunteer shortages. At the same time, the wide range of innovative services and strong qualitative insights demonstrate the network's adaptability and creativity. The recommendations below build directly on these findings and focus on practical steps to strengthen consistency, sustainability, and shared learning across countries.

1. Improving data consistency

Review and simplify overlapping survey questions and provide short guidance notes with the annual survey. This would support more accurate and comparable reporting across countries.

2. Using data more effectively

Encourage members to draw on both numbers and stories in local fundraising and advocacy. Providing simple templates or examples would help schemes present their data clearly and consistently to funders and partners.

3. Supporting funding stability

Share practical examples of how countries combine public funding with foundation grants, donations, or small-scale income generation. Providing adaptable resources for proposals and reports could help members approach new funders more confidently.

4. Volunteer recruitment and retention

Volunteer shortages remain a challenge across the network. Sharing low-cost strategies for recruitment, recognition, and ongoing support could strengthen volunteer engagement and retention.

5. Sharing learning across the network

Schemes offer a wide range of additional and innovative services, from play therapy and perinatal mental health support to parent groups and cultural activities. Creating more opportunities to share these approaches—through webinars, case studies, or conferences—would enable members to learn from one another and adapt ideas to their local context.

Conclusion

The 2024 Annual Report highlights both the resilience and the adaptability of the Home-Start network. Across 20 reporting countries, member organisations have supported tens of thousands of families and children, often in the face of funding pressures, volunteer shortages, and shifting social needs. While challenges remain, the stories of impact, innovation, and solidarity demonstrate the enduring value of Home-Start's volunteer-led model.

This year's findings show that, alongside core home-visiting support, members are expanding services, piloting new approaches, and strengthening partnerships to respond to families' changing needs. The voices of parents and volunteers captured in this report remind us that Home-Start is not only about numbers, but also about relationships—moments of trust, encouragement, and relief that ripple through families and communities.

At the same time, persistent challenges—particularly in securing sustainable funding, recruiting and retaining volunteers, and ensuring consistent data collection—underscore the importance of working more closely together as a global network. Strengthening collaboration, sharing practical tools, and amplifying the collective evidence base will be vital as members seek to sustain and grow their work.

Looking ahead, Home-Start Worldwide remains committed to enabling its members to thrive: supporting families locally while drawing strength from a shared global identity. By combining compassion with evidence, and innovation with solidarity, the network is well placed to continue giving children everywhere the best possible start in life