



**Extraordinary
people Extraordinary
challenges**



Extraordinary people **Extraordinary** challenges

Foreword by Sally Daghlian OBE, Praxis Chief Executive



Access to justice is increasingly barred for those who cannot pay for legal advice and assistance.

The free specialist advice and holistic support Praxis provides is therefore vital for migrants who find themselves in precarious circumstances. We were proud to be awarded Centre of Excellence status by the London Legal Support Trust in July; recognition of the quality legal advice that we provide.

Looking back on the year, my most beautiful Praxis moments were listening to the live performance of powerful and moving lullabies written by mothers from our WINGS group in partnership with the Irene Taylor Trust and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The moving lyrics reflected the universal feelings of love, hope, passion and pride of a mother for her child, expressed in unique and distinct ways. This project exemplifies our holistic approach – whilst providing vital help with accommodation, support and legal advice, we also bring people together to find a sense of belonging and inner strength, and to help them to thrive despite their precarious circumstances. Moreover, working with partners enriches the support we can provide, and enables our service users to have a wider voice and influence.

2018 promises more hardship for migrants on the margins, who face ever tighter restrictions; who struggle to have their humanity acknowledged, let alone their human rights respected. Support services are increasingly linked to immigration status and people are placed at incredible risk, without access to the most basic necessities including food, shelter and clothing. Long-standing residents who have built their lives over decades but cannot show their documents are threatened with deportation; young people who have grown up in the UK but don't have the right documents face an uncertain future, denied access to work and education; women enslaved, trafficked, suffering violence and exploitation struggle to find help.

Praxis stands alongside and for our service users, extraordinary people who inspire us with their resilience, dignity and solidarity despite the extraordinary challenges they face. We want to see a world where people who have migrated are seen as individuals, and are not defined by their struggles or their immigration status. A world where people are able to live in dignity, thrive and take control of their own destinies.

Our work is only possible thanks to the support of our funders, partners, volunteers, supporters and service users, for which we are very grateful. We look forward to working together in 2018 so that we can continue to make a difference.



“Praxis stands alongside and for our service users, extraordinary people who inspire us with their resilience, dignity and solidarity.”




At Praxis we work with migrants who are in extremely challenging situations, and often have nowhere else to turn: survivors of trafficking and domestic violence, homeless families with nowhere to go, people who have fled war or persecution. We specialise in working with people who have multiple needs and highly complex cases, which often require months or even years to resolve.


However, we don't define people by the struggles they face or their immigration status.

Despite their hardships, our service users have hopes, dreams and talents. Praxis' holistic approach is to help them overcome the difficulties that prevent them from taking control of their own destinies while helping them become agents of change for themselves and others.

Extraordinary people



 We are constantly inspired by the extraordinary resilience and solidarity of the people we work with. 2017 has seen dozens of our service users speaking up publicly about issues that affect them closely, such as migration policies, racism, mental health and discrimination.

 “One of the ladies at WINGS has gone through the same process I’m going through. It’s nice, every stage I ask her what’s next. I make sure I call and visit the other women, just to make sure they’re ok, because I know what it’s like.”

Member of our WINGS group for mothers and children

For example, using their expertise on navigating the immigration system, our Brighter Futures youth-led group advised on the development of new Bar Standards Board guidance on how to recognise and access good immigration advice.

Several of our projects and activities received wide public exposure: poems written by young people as part of the Brave New Voices project run by English PEN were published in the anthology *Imagine Your Shadow*; a group of women performed a powerful drama at the House of Commons, to highlight the discrimination and injustice of the ‘no recourse to public funds’ condition; and over 50 service users displayed their talent through dance, music, drama and song at our annual celebration of Human Rights Day.


Despite their own challenges, many of our service users gave time back to Praxis, becoming volunteers and using their experience to support others.

 “Praxis’ reputation and role is that of a service which will operate across London where virtually no others will for this client group, and provide high quality support and advice which is client-centred.”

Independent evaluator



Extraordinary challenges

 The rise in the imposition of 'no recourse to public funds' as a condition of stay in the UK means that many people who fall on hard times through illness, relationship breakdown or job loss have no access to a welfare safety net. Homelessness, hunger, poverty and destitution are growing problems both for newly arrived migrants and those who, whilst long settled, have a migrant background and are caught in the complex webs of immigration legislation, social welfare law and restrictions on access to services. More and more people have increasingly complex cases requiring intensive and long-term casework and support.

Praxis operates in this context by offering three streams of interconnected services:

- **Immigration and other advice**
We provide people with specialist legal advice and help them make their case to the Home Office and

other governmental institutions, so they can access the support they need. We also help people to find external specialist advice and representation, and we sometimes provide support at court appearances. In 2017 alone, our advice team worked on 1,718 cases, securing status, access to welfare and documentation for over 100 people.

- **Housing**
We find people safe accommodation across London either in our projects, or in those managed by our partners or by local faith groups. In urgent situations, we use our extensive networks to find emergency housing and support. We also prevent homelessness through our casework and advocacy.
- **Group work**
When they come to us, our service users are often isolated, lacking in confidence and needing emotional

support – which is why our user-led groups and activities are essential to our holistic approach. They empower people to find confidence, build resilience, develop new skills and make friends. Many group members move on to publicly advocate for themselves and others, thus becoming agents of change.

Through this person-centred approach – and thanks to the skills, commitment and passion of our staff and volunteers – we can support people to overcome the extraordinary challenges they face.

Creating my own change



“The only thing keeping me going was coming back to Brighter Futures.”

PRAXIS
STORIES



“Brighter Futures is a group for young migrants to support each other and speak out about issues affecting our lives”

Read Praxis volunteer Emmanuel's inspiring story, in his own words.



"Life now is good. I wake up feeling optimistic about what the day holds. I want to go back to university to study youth work and help other young people. Maybe my story can inspire them.

I came to the UK when I was 14. Back in Rwanda I was forced into being a child soldier. My sister was in London, and eventually I managed to join her here. Soon I was introduced to Brighter Futures – a group at Praxis for young migrants. When I was in college, my leave to remain expired and I suddenly became what they call an "undocumented migrant". It means that most doors shut in front of you. No more study, no more housing, no more jobs, no more welfare support.

Around that time I started hanging around with the wrong crowd and getting into trouble – I wasn't in a good place at all. Eventually my uncle, who I was staying with, kicked me out.

I was homeless on the streets for six weeks. I was so frightened. To be 18 and to be on the street, with no one looking after you, it's a nightmare. Eventually I turned to Praxis to ask for help. Although I didn't have any papers they found me accommodation, and then they started working on my case.

At that time I felt so weak and worthless. The only thing keeping me going was coming back to Brighter Futures. That was my motivation not to give up – sharing my burden with everyone in the group, who were going through the same thing. I realised it was time to pull my socks up, to start contributing to society.

I started to rebuild broken relationships, especially with family. I did a lot with Brighter Futures – public speaking, giving training, running events. It helped with my confidence, my self-esteem. I knew my voice would get heard regardless of what was going on in my life.

I also started volunteering with Praxis, helping with phone calls and caretaking. After a while, with Praxis' support I started a men's group, GIANTS. The very first meeting, I was nervous. What if no one came? In the end three people came, and then five the next week. After a while 10 or 11 people were coming regularly, providing support for each other. And I needed that support too: a court hearing for my case was approaching, and the closer it got, the more nervous I was.



"I'm so proud of every member of GIANTS, they're all brave and talented people"

On the day of the court hearing, 17 people came with me. Brighter Futures, family, friends, people from Praxis. I was feeling scared, I was shaking. When I saw 17 people all together, it put me at ease. Having so many people on my side, it's the proudest moment I've ever had.

After a month, we got the result: the judge said yes! I was granted leave to remain in the UK, I was so happy. I couldn't wait to tell everyone. I started applying for jobs straight away, and shortly afterwards I started working with TFL.

Looking back, when I first joined Brighter Futures, holding a conversation with someone was too hard for me. Just recently, I hosted Praxis' Rhythm and Rights event, on stage in front of 150 people. What a massive change!"



75

**PEOPLE
HAVE
SPOKEN
PUBLICLY
ABOUT
ISSUES
THAT
AFFECTED
THEM**

**PRAXIS
WORKED WITH
PEOPLE
FROM
68
DIFFERENT
COUNTRIES**

**OVER
400
PEOPLE
TOOK
PART IN
PRAXIS
GROUPS**



**OUR ADVICE TEAM
WORKED ON
1,718 CASES**

**2017
OUR IMPACT
IN NUMBERS**

75%

**OF PARTICIPANTS
SAID THAT THEY
HAD GAINED HOPE
THROUGH PRAXIS
GROUPS, AND**

60%

**SAID THAT THEY
NOW HAVE A VOICE**



WE PROVIDED **16,779** **NIGHTS** **OF SAFE** **ACCOMMODATION TO** **HOMELESS PEOPLE**

PRAXIS
INTERPRETING+
DELIVERED
5,171



HOURS OF
INTERPRETING
IN 25
LANGUAGES



OVER 50 SERVICE
USERS PERFORMED
AT RHYTHM AND
RIGHTS - OUR
CELEBRATION
OF HUMAN
RIGHTS DAY

WE
SECURED
STATUS,
PUBLIC
FUNDS &
DOCUMENTATION
FOR
124
PEOPLE



At Praxis we do much more than just deliver services. We make change through building alliances, influencing and advocating. We use the evidence from our frontline work to inform our strategic approach, and we build innovative partnerships to find sustainable solutions to the problems vulnerable migrants face.

Building partnerships, making change

Housing conference

Alongside Arhag and Innisfree housing associations, we held the Migrants' Access to Housing Conference in June. The conference, attended by 84 representatives from across the UK, aimed to better equip housing providers to house and support migrant tenants. Expert speakers covered topics such as ensuring fair access to housing, keeping up with the law in a time of rapid change and preventing homelessness and destitution among migrants. Speakers included the Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation.

Legal challenge

In 2016 the Home Office started detaining and removing EU citizens and their family members solely for sleeping rough, claiming that they were abusing their EU treaty rights. Working with FEANTSA, a European federation of homelessness organisations, Praxis supported a complaint to the European Commission that under EU law simply being homeless cannot be considered a reason to revoke the right of residence of an EU mobile citizen. In September the Commission agreed with our position and in December, following a separate legal challenge, the Home Office policy was ruled unlawful by the High Court. Praxis is now encouraging homelessness organisations and the Greater London Authority to improve support for homeless EU migrants.



“We believe people who are homeless should be supported, not criminalised.”



“The Lullaby Project was my favourite because I made a song for my kids. My children sleep well when they hear it. It reminded me of my childhood.”

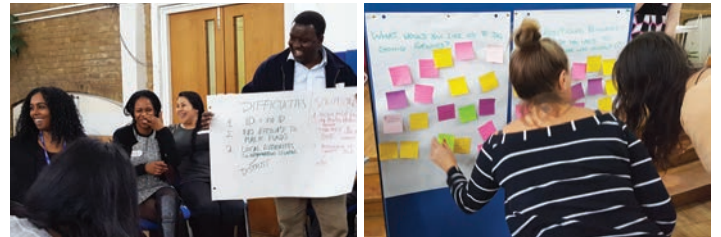
Lullaby Project

During the summer, women from our WINGS group for mothers and children took part in the Lullaby Project – a collaboration with the Irene Taylor Trust and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Women from the group worked with professional musicians to compose lullabies for their children, turning their emotions, love and hopes into songs able to accompany their children into the future. The lullabies expressed a shared experience of motherhood for the group. The project was featured on BBC Radio 4’s Woman’s Hour and one of the lullabies was sung at Carnegie Hall in New York.

Tackling homelessness and destitution

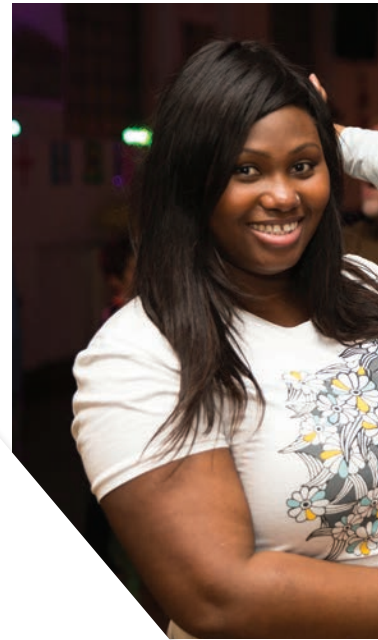
Praxis collaborates with organisations and networks tackling homelessness and destitution at a national and international level. We share our expertise on working with migrants through partnerships with Homeless Link and other homelessness organisations, and as part of the St Martin’s Frontline Network. We have provided information and training on understanding migration status, what entitlements people have, and how frontline workers can help people accessing support services and healthcare. We also organise events and bring together key stakeholders in the sector. We worked in partnership with Crisis, the homeless charity, convening a roundtable discussion of organisations in the migration and homelessness sectors to identify policy solutions to address the root causes of migrant homelessness, as part of Crisis’ Plan to End Homelessness.

Through the Street Legal project, financed by the Big Lottery Fund, we convinced the Greater London Authority to provide some bed spaces for rough sleepers with a ‘no recourse to public funds’ condition.



Hear from some of the many extraordinary people who make Praxis what it is

Praxis people



Najma, Intern from University College Lillebaelt, Denmark

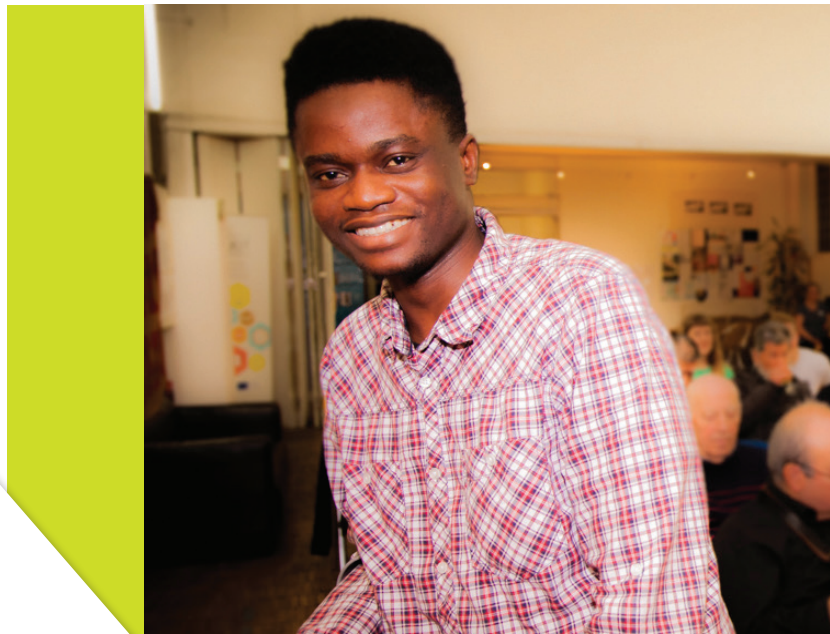


“I’m studying for a degree in social work, and I’m doing my work placement here at Praxis. I’ve learned so much! Praxis is a place open to migrants who are struggling, where they won’t get judged in any way. My best experience was helping with the case of a woman with a one-year-old child who was homeless. She’d been sleeping on night buses for three weeks. We managed to find emergency accommodation for her, until Praxis can work on her immigration case. I felt like I really helped someone that day! Clients give you the strength to fight even more for people in the future.”

Raphael, Trustee & Treasurer



“I became a trustee because the work of Praxis makes a real, direct and lasting impact on people’s lives. I am humbled to see how people referred to Praxis at their most vulnerable points in life, emerge months or years later with renewed confidence, hope and self-assurance. The board of trustees helps to steer Praxis’ operations to deliver maximum impact for our beneficiaries, to ensure long-term sustainability and growth for the organisation and to establish a robust risk management framework. Central to all our work is our staff members – we have a responsibility to ensure we provide the most effective platform for them to do their best work. The passion, talent and dedication of everyone involved in Praxis is truly inspiring.”





Maria, WINGS member



“Praxis has been very supportive in every single angle – helping me with my immigration issues and with housing. The Praxis house is great, it’s a home for my kids and a safe place. The other women in the house are like my sisters, we all help each other. Every time we have a problem, Carlos [Praxis housing officer] is there. I also go to WINGS, a group for mums and children. Being with other mums, we share what’s happening in our lives. We learn about our rights, it helps to make us stronger. The kids love it too! It’s good for them to play and make friends from other cultures.”



Prity, Adviser



“I volunteered in the advice team at Praxis for three years, which enabled me to get my OISC accreditation, then I got a job here 18 months ago. Being a migrant myself, and understanding the problems we face, I wanted to help people overcome similar challenges me and my family faced – struggling to integrate, not understanding the system. I’ve been working with a particular family for nearly a year. When they first came in they were really vulnerable. I’ve been able to give them much-needed immigration and benefits advice, as well as casework support. They’re in a much better position and much happier. Seeing that change in someone because of how you’ve helped them, it feels really good.”

Ola, Brighter Futures member



“Praxis first helped me to access housing, and then I got involved in groups. Brighter Futures is like a family – young people with shared experiences who want to better themselves.

Most of us have been through a lot, so we really support each other. We also develop skills – I had poetry published through Brave New Voices, which made me feel like I can do anything. Brighter Futures is a place to get away from your worries, get information, meet people and have fun. The people at Praxis are the most amazing, patient and compassionate people you could meet.”



Support US

Our work for vulnerable people is only possible thanks to the energy and generosity of our supporters. Here's how you can help us to do more in 2018:

Donate

Every donation, no matter the size, helps us to support someone in their time of need. Regular donations are very welcome as they enable us to plan ahead and work on long-term solutions:

www.praxis.org.uk/donate



Volunteer

Our volunteers support all aspects of our work – helping our team to provide vital advice, supporting group activities and working with our housing project. For a small team like Praxis, the time given by each and every volunteer really does matter. Find out more:

www.praxis.org.uk/volunteer

Fundraise

From bake sales to bike rides, raffles to runs, there are so many different ways our fantastic supporters help to fundraise for Praxis. You can make a real difference to our work and have some fun along the way! Visit our website for more information:

www.praxis.org.uk/fundraise



Praxis Community Projects

2016/17 financial year

£1,601,507
total income

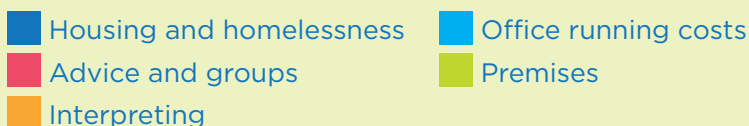
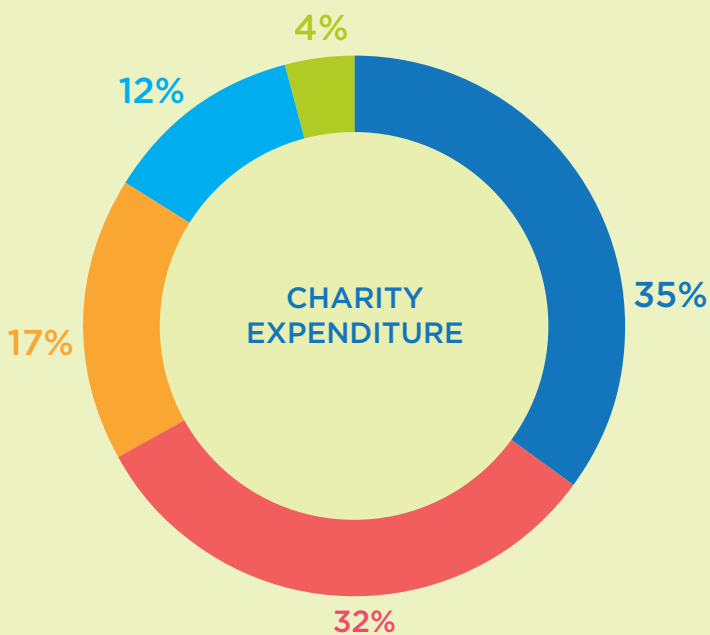
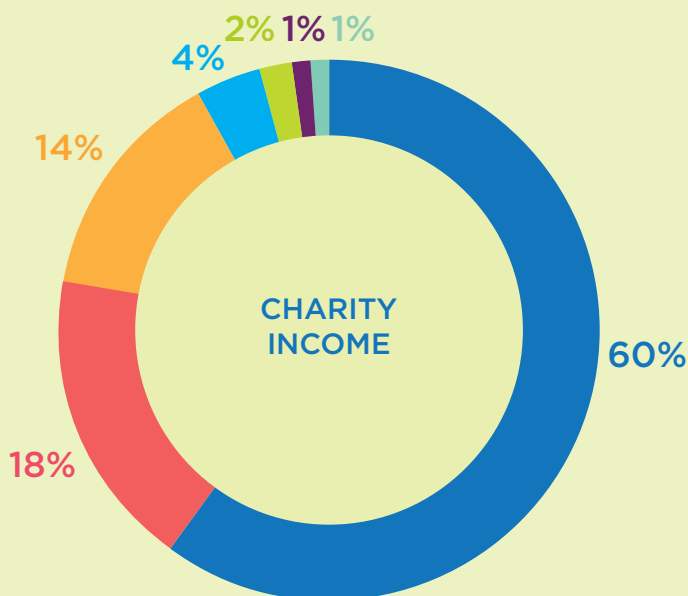
£1,443,462
total expenditure

83% of our expenditure went directly into charitable projects

CHARITY BALANCE SHEET 31 MARCH 2017

Fixed assets	£
Tangible fixed assets	10,172
Current assets	
Debtors	192,065
Cash in bank and in hand	241,385
	433,450
Creditors	
Amounts falling due within one year	(166,158)
Net current assets	267,292
Total assets less current liabilities	277,464
Creditors	
Amounts falling due after one year	(72,049)
Net assets	205,415
Charity Funds	
Restricted income funds	67,493
Unrestricted income funds	137,922
Total charity funds	205,415

Full audited accounts are available on our website at www.praxis.org.uk/resources



Thank you to all our supporters, donors, partners, staff and volunteers who helped us to achieve so much in 2017.

Our funders 2016/17:

AB Charitable Trust
Allen & Overy Foundation
Big Lottery Fund
British Red Cross
City Bridge Trust
The Clifford Chance Foundation
Comic Relief
The Cruach Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Paul Hamlyn Foundation
The Legal Education Foundation
London Catalyst (Samaritans)
London Churches Refugee Fund
The Metropolitan Migration Foundation
NHS Tower Hamlets CCG
Oak Foundation
The Orp Foundation
Souter Charitable Trust
St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Trust for London
The Tudor Trust
Garfield Weston Foundation

Special thanks to:

VIA University College, Aarhus
University, Denmark
Akwaaba
Allen & Overy
Arhag Housing Association
The Attlee Foundation
Babel's Blessing
British Red Cross Refugee Unit
Commonweal Housing
Coram Children's Legal Centre
Crisis
London Borough of Croydon
John Daghlian
Deighton Pierce Glynn
Doctors of the World
East End CAB
East London Housing Partnership
London Borough of Enfield
English PEN
FEANTSA
Garden Court Chambers
Goldsmiths, University of London
GrowTH
University College Lillebaelt,
Denmark
London Borough of Hackney
London Borough of Havering
Homeless Link
Housing Justice
London Borough of Islington
Just Homes
Kazzum
London Catholic Worker
London Diocesan Fund
London Hosting Network
The London Legal Support Trust
Martha House

Maternity Action
John McClean and the Clan
Metropolitan University College,
Denmark
MigrationWork
NACCOM
Open University
Pan Intercultural Arts
Project 17
Wendy Quill
London Borough of Redbridge
Refugee Action
Refugees at Home
Relief Creche Care
London Borough of Richmond
Rights of Women
Roehampton University
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Right to Remain
Signature Law
Sisters of the Church, Ham
Spitalfields City Farm
St Martin-in-the-Fields
St Martin's Frontline Network
St Mungo's
Strategic Alliance on Migrant
Destitution
Irene Taylor Trust
Timebank
London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Toynbee Hall
United Reformed Church
V&A Museum of Childhood
Vicar's Relief Fund
London Borough of Waltham Forest
London Borough of Westminster

And a huge thank you to all of our skilled and dedicated volunteers

Trustees of the charity:

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David Carrigan	Tony Wright
Elijah Sambo	Raphael Perret (Treasurer from 10 March 2017)
Pasha Michaelsen	Martin Cosarinsky (appointed November 2017)
Clare Doube (retired September 2017)	

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Praxis
COMMUNITY
PROJECTS

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