

Impact Report
2022/23



Celebrating 40 years of Praxis



We celebrate our 40th anniversary with pride this year. Founded in 1983 Praxis initially served to support migrants in exile, acting as a forum for diaspora groups engaged in human rights struggles across the globe, from Chile, Colombia and Argentina to South Africa, Namibia and Uganda. In the face of 'Fortress Europe' in the 90s, we began to provide frontline advice and employment support projects for people who had suffered forced migration and were struggling. We shifted our focus again after the financial crash and years of austerity in 2008, and again at the start of the hostile environment in 2012. To support migrant communities marginalised by hostile immigration policies. Over the last decade, we have developed our legal expertise supporting people marginalised and pushed into poverty and homelessness by the hostile policy agenda. We established strong partnerships with other charities and developed our capacity to campaign for immigration justice, following our work unveiling the Windrush scandal in 2018.

During these 40 years of Praxis, one thing has remained constant; the Praxis community stood together in solidarity. Together we made a difference. Together we have supported tens of thousands of people to build a safe life in the UK. 40 years promoting the human rights of people who've migrated. It is a legacy we are extremely proud of. Our stories across the decades paint a vivid picture of policy and socio economic change in the UK's approach to immigration and of Praxis' ongoing work championing human rights and social justice for migrants.

We have gathered those stories on a dedicated web site, you can read them all here:

www.praxis.org.uk/40-years





40 YEARS
FIGHTING FOR
MIGRANT RIGHTS SINCE 1983.



Praxis does not just react to the external environment, it seeks to change it and in this report you can read about today's challenges and the amazing work of staff, volunteers and our campaign activists to create a world of safety and belonging. As we celebrate 40 years, we renew our commitment to end social exclusion of migrants; and together, we the Praxis community will continue to work for and with people who are marginalised because of their immigration status, to strive for an equitable and just immigration system and society.

In 2024, after a decade of leading this wonderful organisation, I will retire from Praxis and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our supporters, funders, volunteers, staff, campaigners and partners who make Praxis' work possible and who join in the struggle for justice now and in the years to come.

Sally Daghlian OBE
 Chief Executive

Our progress in 2022/23

This financial year (2022/23) has unfortunately been another year marked by the shocks and significant political and economic changes caused by high inflation leading to a Cost of Living Emergency and the war in Ukraine. The externally driven obstacles have been challenging for us as an organisation, BUT for the thousands stuck in a quagmire of exclusion and hardship generated by the systemic failure of the immigration system, it can restrict every aspect of their lives.

The complexity of finding pathways out of extreme financial hardship and insecurity placed a heavy toll on most of the individuals and families we support. In a survey we carried out in September 2022 two thirds of parents affected by the 'No Recourse to Public Funds' visa condition said they were struggling to feed

their children while 1 in 10 reported spending one night or more on the streets. More than 50% of the people we supported this year stated that they were worried about feeding their children.

We redoubled our efforts to find solutions to prevent crisis for individuals and families through our holistic advice and support to counter this devastating trajectory. And we increased our efforts to influence systemic change. Frontline advice and support is crucial; but to solve the root causes of discrimination and marginalisation of refugees and migrants; and to stop the escalation of hardship and discrimination we need to change the policies and systems that underpin and perpetuate discrimination.

On the frontline - advice and holistic

“

The help we have received has opened doors for us”

>> Nila¹



Praxis' immigration advice and casework support refugees and migrants to leave crisis and find long term pathways to safety and belonging in a new community. **The service is delivered by 20 accredited, specialist immigration advisers.**

¹All names have been changed to protect people's identities



More than 50% of the people we supported this year stated that they were worried about feeding their children.

support



Our advisers supported 2171 people with expert advice and casework support on immigration issues.

They also provided additional information on welfare, housing, education and family matters according to each person's specific circumstance. This information is a vital part of the process of establishing a new home, a new life, building belonging in a new community.



The challenges people face accessing free, specialist, immigration advice meant that people contacted the service seeking and accessing our support from further afield.

Requests for support came from more than 67 different geographic locations in the UK from Tower Hamlets to Tyne and Wear.



800 people we supported had their application to the Home Office granted during the year (the time frame for decisions does not align with submissions and lengthy delays affected when decisions were received).



Fees associated with visa applications pose a significant financial challenge for people on low or no income seeking to extend visas or regularise their status here. The help we provide accessing fee support assisted many who were previously unaware of the possibility of receiving assistance with fees. This was especially helpful for families whose total fee bill can reach 5 figures. **This year a total £591,194 in financial support was won or accessed for people in urgent need.**

“

Ruby and Felicia's story

Ruby and Felicia are two young women and good friends who met at Praxis' peer support group for young people: **Brighter Futures**.

They both arrived in the UK when they were children, but for reasons beyond their control, they found themselves with no leave to remain as they became adults.

Not having 'leave to remain' has devastating consequences for anyone affected. Without it, people can't work, rent a home, have a bank account or access education. For young people like Ruby and Felicia, it also imposes an extended, seemingly indefinite, halt to their progression into adulthood. It occurred at a time when they were full of potential and hopes for the future. A time when they were looking forward to building their life.

Brighter Futures offered them a place where they met people facing similar circumstances, and made new friends who understood the challenges they faced. People just like them, fight to move on and lead 'normal' lives.

After joining Brighter Futures, Ruby and Felicia gained confidence, and after some time they got involved with the group's campaigns against the hostile environment. Both spoke up and were featured in the media about the impact of the hostile migration policies that kept them and so many more like them, in a form of limbo where they were unable to move forward with their lives.

At the same time, Praxis' advice team worked with them on their immigration cases, to find a way to secure the vital documents they needed to apply for the crucial 'leave to remain' status they needed to move on. These are complex applications that often take years to process. While they waited, Ruby and Felicia had each other and the other members of Brighter Futures to rely on and help them keep their hope alive.

“

It took years, but today both have their 'leave to remain', they have started to move on with their lives.”

>> Praxis



Praxis volunteers improve access to advice and support

The number of people seeking advice and support from our services has grown continually in recent years. We found a way to add value to our services with the new Link Project and through growing volunteering.

The project recruits, trains and supervises volunteers to provide a link between our advice and support provision. It offers volunteers an opportunity to gain practical skills in advice and support work, to engage with high quality advice and support training, to work towards and gain qualifications in an accredited immigration advice qualification and to contribute to supporting migrants establish a safe home in the UK.

40
volunteers
supported
and added
value across all
Praxis teams

contributing hundreds of hours towards changing lives. We are particularly proud of the representation of people with lived experience of the immigration system who joined our volunteering teams this year. Group members progressing from group participation to becoming volunteers supported the groups team and people who had used our advice service joined brought invaluable knowledge and lived experience to these services.

**17 dedicated
and trained
volunteers
supported**

106
people

by providing additional support on topics such as access to housing, health care, education and financial hardship amongst others. They also signposted to other specialist support where appropriate.

The Link Project has also contributed to increasing the number of accredited advisers

available to provide access to legal advice and supplement the dearth of immigration advice available in London.

12 of the volunteers are undertaking their OISC training and receive ongoing

support from Praxis. Two volunteers completed their training, achieved their qualifications and went on to paid employment during the year.



One person supported through the Link Project told us:

“

Praxis first and foremost was very compassionate and showed more care on my first day of drop-in even though the normal amount of people that were supposed to be taken in that morning had already been seen I was still taken care of and made me wish to do whatever I can to support other people who are going through the same problems”.

Praxis community groups

Our community groups are at the heart of our approach. They are co-produced by group members, Praxis staff and creative partners.

People from diverse backgrounds, ages and cultures come together with their peers to build a sense of belonging, to reduce isolation, improve wellbeing, build resilience and solidarity through the group work. The groups support people with lived experience to share their stories, advocate for change and develop leadership skills.



GIANTS:

A space where men who are fighting against isolation and poor mental health come together. They use creativity to explore and express feelings, opinions and challenge stereotypes.



Brighter Futures:

Young people who work together to speak up for the rights of young people who have migrated and use creativity as a tool to challenge negative perceptions of migration in the UK.



WINGS:

Women who, with their young children, come together to nurture their wellbeing, build relationships, discuss issues that affect them and share knowledge and experience.

130 adults and 95 children engaged with the groupwork activities during the year.

“ After joining the group I realised how effective Praxis is with each person they dealing with. Realised it’s a community of people that have different issues that are dealt with by a few people. I love the support and I could say as much as I felt it was slow at the beginning, realising the weight and magnitude of people that Praxis is taking care of, I think they are doing very well. Would recommend to anyone.”

GIANTS member

“ I feel like I belong to a community now and my input into that feels like it is appreciated and makes me feel like I’m part of something bigger.”

GIANTS member

This is how they told us that the groups contribute to improve their lives:

- Reduced isolation:
“I am not alone”, “The group is a family”
- Improved wellbeing:
“meeting new people and listening to their experience it gives you positive energy”
- Strengthened resilience:
“I feel supported and stronger”
- Increased self-confidence:
**“I feel more confident”,
“I can express myself”**
- Increased opportunities for their voice to be heard:
“Coming to Brighter Futures has made me know that I have a voice and that my voice has been heard”

Innovation and collaboration to End Migrant Homelessness



This year continued to expand our long-standing collaborative approaches to reduce migrant homelessness. We widened our partnership from the existing pan-London initiatives to deliver and grow innovative projects in partnership with homelessness organisations. These provided immigration advice and sustainable pathways out of crisis to people who had previously been excluded from many services. We began new work in partnership with Crisis, Refugee and Migrant Forum of Essex and East London (Ramfel) and Tower Hamlets Law Centre delivering immigration advice.

An important corner stone in developing innovative solutions with partners is our second-tier advice service which supports frontline workers to understand better the rights and needs of people that have migrated and how to support them. We delivered second-tier advice to frontline workers across a host of sectors including health, social work and housing.

790 participants from 361 organisations attended our courses.



Participants said:

“really useful and informative”,

“this course should be a must for anyone working in homelessness”,

“has increased my awareness in terms of immigration and I will be able to identify things I can do to help now”.



To supplement the training courses and offer ongoing access to practitioners we provided advice through our **SLACK channel which has 290 members.**

We use our knowledge and experience to build capacity and improve wider services.

In November we worked with The Pan- London Frontline Network delivering a hybrid conference ‘Ending Migrant Homelessness for Good’, it was attended by **150 people** from a range of central and local government departments and charities to consider the practical and policy blocks to ending migrant homelessness. The conference re-vigorated efforts to develop cross sectoral solutions.

Advocating and campaigning for migrant justice

Securing policy change in the face of continuing and growing hostile legislation **and policies from central government that force thousands of people into crisis continued to be a key priority.**

Our public advocacy and influencing work together with people with lived experience of the immigration system speaking out for change and campaigning as part of the 'NRPF' Action Group this year continued apace.

Our long-term campaign to build support and momentum for change around the 'No Recourse to Public Funds' (NRPF) visa condition, which prevents people in crisis from accessing a welfare safety net and excludes low-paid migrant workers from in-work benefits continued to gather momentum, increasing numbers of supporters and partners support our recommendations.

50 committed activists for change worked tirelessly alongside a small staff team to speak out and mobilise support during the year. Their efforts influenced 2 policy changes to improve the lives of people who have migrated and their families!

- A permanent extension of eligibility for free school meals to children living in poverty, regardless of their parents' immigration status.
- An extension of the 15 hours per week of government-funded childcare for 2-year-olds living in poverty to families with NRPF.



Parliamentary relationship-building – we convened a parliamentary launch event attended by 8 MPs to introduce them to our campaign .

Building awareness and support:

We sought expert advice and invested to scale up our digital communication to amplify our voice and reach, to make more people aware of the alternatives to the hostile environment and offering meaningful actions to influence change.


We began to reach many more supporters who joined us to pursue change. More people joined us to volunteer increasing the numbers of volunteers.

When we launched a petition in October 2022 calling on the Home Secretary to cap routes to settlement at 5 years we achieved 13,000 signatures.

Over 300 people took our action to email their MP on cost-of-living crisis and its impact on people excluded from wider support mechanisms by their visa conditions.



Building the evidence-base: In partnership with the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) and the Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit (GMIAU), we published a research report on the impacts of the 10-year route to settlement. This rule was introduced in immigration rules in July 2012.



(Under these rules, some people who have a claim to remain in the UK on the basis of their family or private life, but do not meet the normal eligibility rules, including minimum income, are required to make repeated, costly and destabilising visa applications over a ten-year period before they can apply for indefinite leave to remain.)

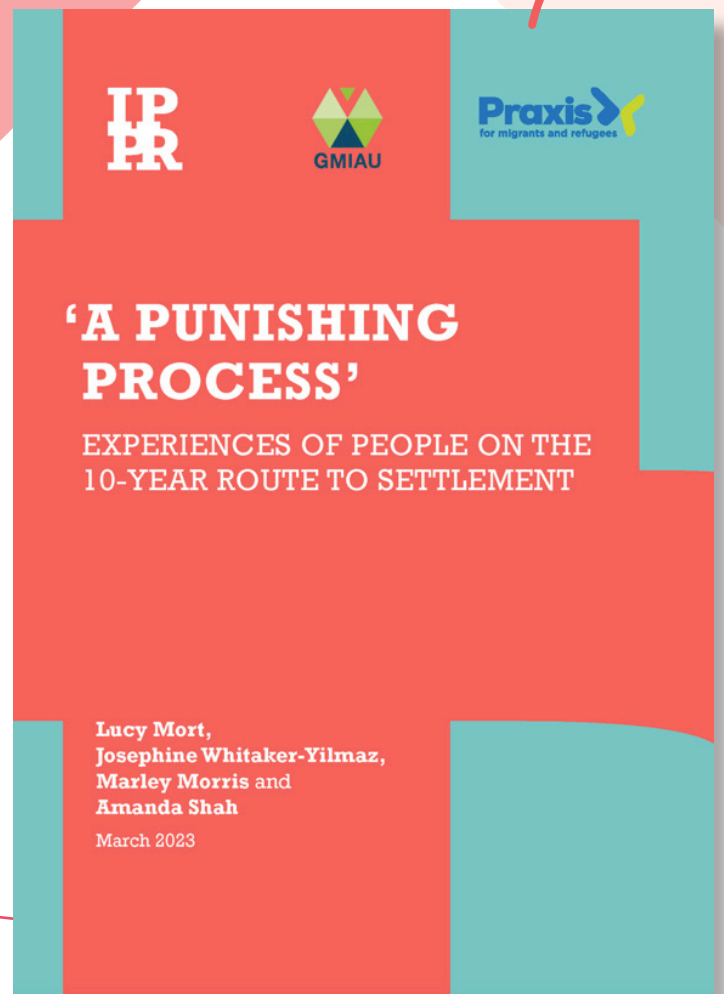
Advocating and campaigning for social justice for migrants

More than 300 people with first hand experience of the impacts of this immigration rule, shared these and contributed to the research. This is the first report that documents the impacts on health and wellbeing of the 10 year route to settlement on a large scale.

This is how a person with lived experience of the ten year route commented on the research:

“

It is so thorough and no element of our suffering has been overlooked in that report and the suggestions that are made in the report are just what we want.”

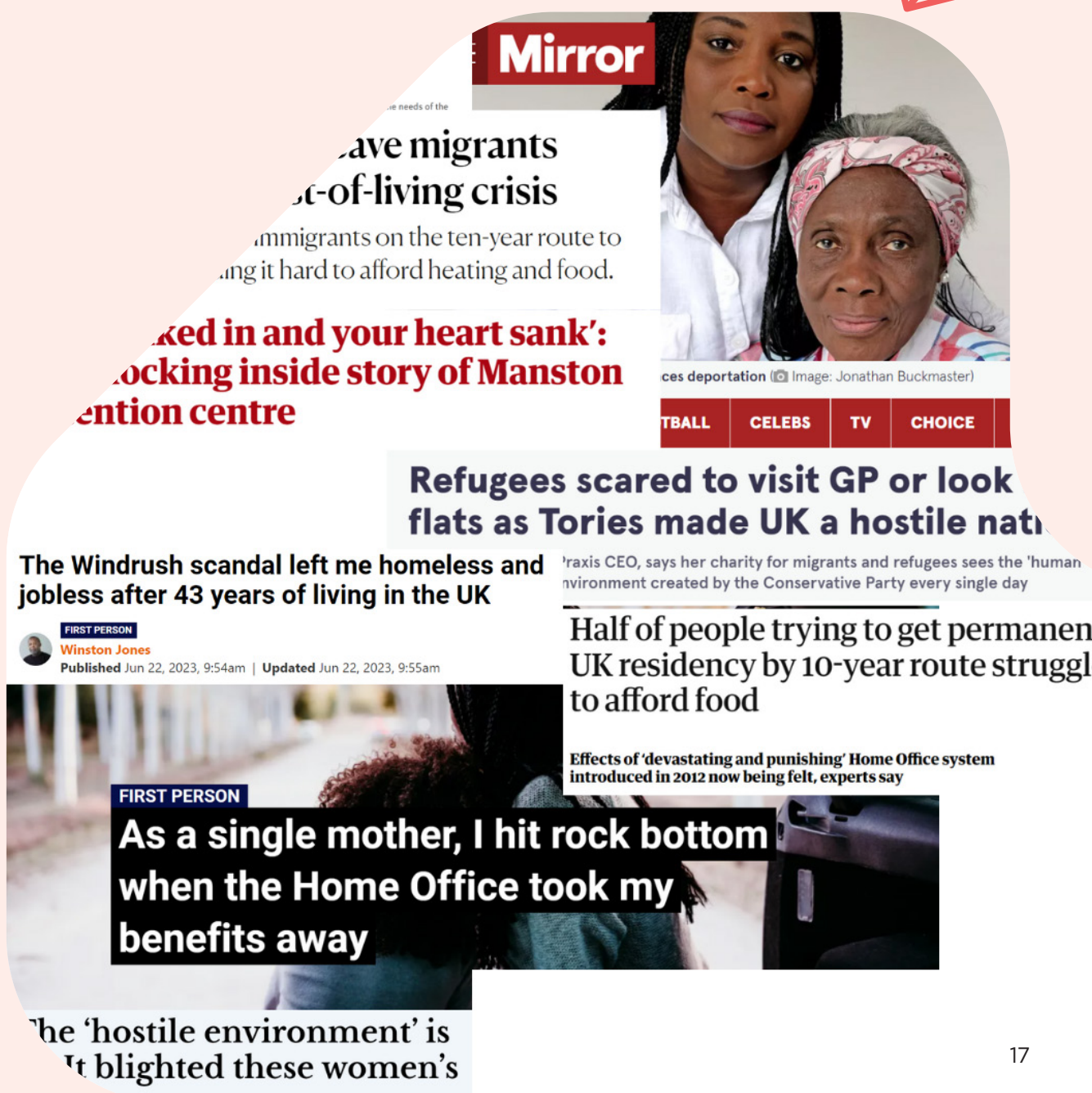


We used evidence from our research to feed into a House of Lords Justice and Home Affairs Select Committee inquiry on family migration in September 2022. The committee's report, published on 28th February 2023, picked up most of the recommendations made in our submission.

We joined a reference group for a new research project on migrant destitution in the UK, which is led by COMPAS at the University of Oxford.

Media output

We increased our media output this year securing coverage telling the stories of people who came to our services in a variety of outlets throughout the year. The launch of the research report resulted in more than 14 media outlets involving interviews with people who use our services, case studies, interviews and quotes from staff.



Financial information year 22/23

Praxis' total income in 2022-23 was £2,327,218, an increase of £238,472 (11%) on 2021-22. Total expenditure amounted to £2,510,740, an increase of £282,934 (13%) on 2021-22 in line with planned investment and agreed expenditure on restricted funds carried forward. During 2022-23, the Charity chose to invest in:

1. Fundraising capacity to secure long term financial sustainability and the development of an income strategy to facilitate income generation to achieve the strategic plan for 2021-26.
2. Continued the development of finance and resources' analytical functions to secure the fourth objective of our 2021-26 Strategic Plan (i.e., long-term stability and risk management); and,
3. New campaigns and advocacy capability necessary to deliver the third pillar of our Strategy – influencing for systemic change.

This was a challenging year with high inflation impacting on our costs. Overall, at year end the Charity saw a net draw down on general reserves of £150,000 (6% of annual turnover and 25% of the reserves total). At 31 March 2023, reserves stood at £451,403 (2022: £601,515), which is 67% of the target level for 2023/24. In addition, the Charity holds £143,381 in two designated funds to support costs associated with a future move to new premises and for business development. Incorporating the unrestricted designated funds within the reserves gives an overall unrestricted reserves figure of £594,784, which is 88% of the target level.

The Trustees are satisfied that their decision to invest in longer-term sustainability was a good one; the fundraising outlook for 2023-24 is strong and the campaigns and advocacy strand of Praxis' 2021-26 strategy is starting to have significant success. The budget forecast for 2023/4 is positive and plans are in place to rebuild reserves.

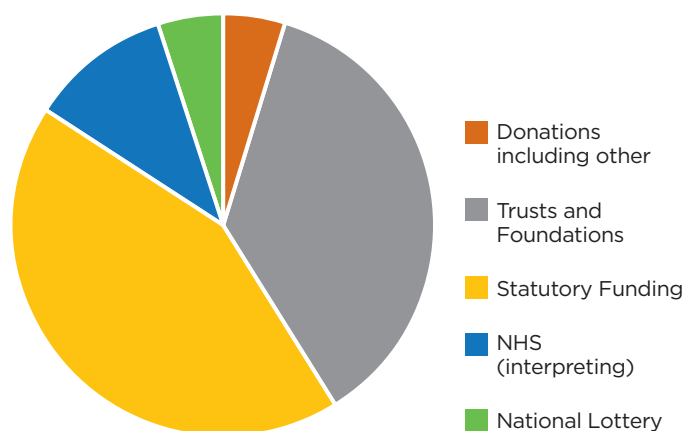
Financial Information 22/23

	Financial year 22/23 £
Income	2,327,218
Expenditure	2,510,748

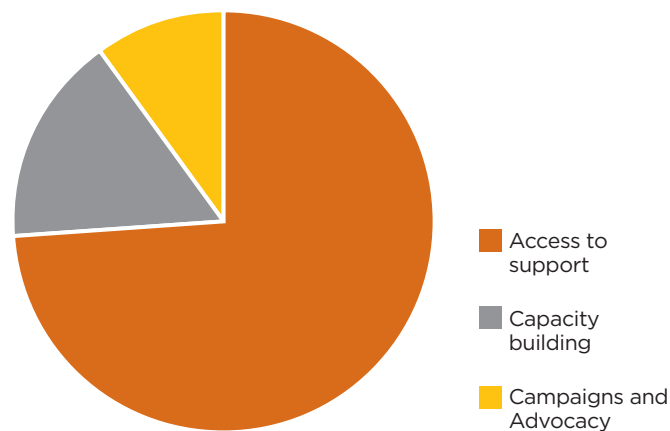
Charity Balance Sheet

	31-Mar-23 £
Fixed assets	
Tangible fixed assets	13,522
Current assets	
Debtors	310,530
Cash in bank and in hand	599,649
Creditors	
Amounts falling due within one year	232,574
Net current assets	677,608
Total assets less current liabilities	691,157
Creditors	
Amounts falling due after one year	-2,983
Charity funds	
Restricted income funds	93,390
Unrestricted income funds	451,403
Designated funds	143,381
Total charity funds	688,174

Income by source 2022-23



Expenditure by activity area 2022-23



Our main funders 2022-23

AB Charitable Trust
 Allen and Overy Foundation
 BBC Children in Need
 Clarion Futures
 Justice Together Initiative
 London Legal Support Trust
 Milton Damerel Trust
 The French Huguenot Society
 Garfield and Weston Charitable Trust
 Greater London Authority
 The Oak Foundation
 Paul Hamlyn Foundation
 The Arpad & Alena Rosner Foundation
 The Aurum Charitable Trust
 The Henry Smith Charity
 The National Lottery Community Fund
 The Charity of Sir Richard Whittington
 The Souter Charitable Trust
 Trust for London
 29th May 1961 CT
 The Metropolitan Migration
 Foundation
 London Councils
 Refugee Action
 St Mungo's
 St Martin in the Fields
 LB Hackney
 LB Tower Hamlets
 LB of Newham
 Shelter
 St Mungo's
 Edmee Leperque
 Katarina and James Burton

A special thank you to the organisations, local authorities, charities and companies who collaborated with us:

Allen and Overy
 Alternative Trust
 Crisis
 Babel's Blessing
 Goldsmiths University
 Greater Manchester Immigration
 Aid Unit
 Homeless link
 Hackney Migrant's Centre
 IPPR
 Islington Faith Forum
 JCWI
 Kazzum Arts
 Margins
 Members of Praxis groups
 Members of NRPF
 LB Hackney
 LB City London
 LB Newham
 LB Tower Hamlets
 Queen Mary's University
 Pathways
 Praxis Service User Forum Members
 Praxis Service User Representatives
 Praxis Volunteers
 Public Interest Law Centre
 Refugee Action
 Refugee and Migrant Forum of
 Essex and East London - RAMFEL
 Refugee Kitchen
 School of African and Oriental
 Studies
 Shelter
 St. Martin-in-the-Fields Charity
 St Mungo's
 The Union Chapel
 Tower Hamlets Law Centre
 United Reform Church
 School of African and
 Oriental Studies - SOAS the
 University of London



The Trustees of the Charity, who are also the Directors of the Company, who have held office since 1 April 2022 are as follows:

Dr Debbie Weekes-Bernard (Chair)
Pasha Michaelsen (Vice Chair) (retired 25th March 2023)
Constance Cullen (Vice Chair) (since 25th March 2023)
Raphael Perret (Treasurer)
Tom Brand
Martin Cosarinsky Campos (retired 12th November 2022)
Ruby Giblin
Dylan Matthews
Kemi Ogunlana
Jumana Rahman
Satbir Singh (appointed 10th December 2022)
Ruth Stuart (appointed 3rd April 2023)

Chief Executive
Sally Daghlian OBE

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Company Number:
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