

KONGOLESE CENTRE FOR INFORMATION & ADVICE

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

2023/2024

The Management Committees of Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice
Present their Annual Report for

The Year ended 31st March 2024



1. ORGANISATION'S BACKGROUND

Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice was established in May 2000 but formalised in May 2001 to cater for the needs of the Black African French & Lingala speaking refugee and asylum seekers communities in Westminster in particular and in Great London in general. It uses the name "Kongolese" as opposed to "Congolese" to highlight the historical links between the communities from the once Kingdom of Kongo, which is now divided up in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and the Republic of Angola.

Most Black African refugee communities in Westminster cater for English and Arabic speaking people with no other provider in the borough able to cater for the needs of the Kongolese communities.

Kongolese Centre is a Community Legal Services and the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner exempted centre providing **Free** general advice & guidance and legal representation on welfare rights issues (**Immigration, Housing, Education, Employment, Health and Social**) experienced by refugees, asylum seekers and ethnic minority in general. It is a charitable organisation registered under charity number 1090079.

2. SUMMARY OF OUR OBJECTIVES

- To improve social life of refugee groups and ethnic minorities
- To promote social justice, equality of opportunities
- To promote personal development of its members, welfare of individuals and refugee groups.

3. Vision

- To oppose and challenge discrimination and the denial of human rights against Refugees and Asylum Seekers.
- To support local refugee and their families by the provision of better quality services and
- To provide effective services to all who seek refuge in Westminster Borough.

4. Our Mission Statement

"The protection and preservation of local refugees and ethnic minorities' health, by the provision of free advice, information, guidance and a translation service".

5. The Chair's Report

It has been a difficult, competitive, and challenging year for the organisation both in terms of funding and service delivery, but an exciting year in terms of achievements, reaching out, impact, partnership – working and service development.

As the Chair of the organisation, I believe that this report will illustrate the impact we have had in the delivery of services to improve the quality of life of the individuals and communities who form the core of our mission.

Welfare advice and guidance is at the heart of everything we do as an organisation, from service delivery through to our commitment to organisational learning. In the last past year more adults and young people than ever have benefited from our sporting and physical activities and to our welfare rights services.

To complement our welfare services, we have expended our advice & guidance services; developing local partnerships which enable advice services to be targeted to most of Westminster's most disadvantaged residents – those without immigration status, risk of evictions, lone parents, children in risk of expulsion from schools, unemployed, young people without education, employment and training.

More than 1,330 individuals with different single welfare issues benefited from our services in 2023/24 and we are proud to have achieved the Recognizing Excellency Quality Mark, endorsing the investment we have made in the quality of the advice service and the mechanisms for our client's feedback.

Another highlight from 2023/24, was the work we did in support of our governance capacity. Using resources developed by the governance hub, we undertook a governance audit and identified a number of key areas to focus on in the years ahead, particularly trustees' diversity, beneficiary voice and impact reporting. As a result, we have developed a plan to attract Black, Asian and minority ethnic candidates in future trustee recruitment and beneficiaries activities.

We are grateful to all our partners for their steadfast support in developing and improving our service delivery. None of our service would be possible without their ability and cooperation in so many local activities. A huge thank to all of them and we also hope that this report will encourage prospective partners to contact us and support us in our future work.

Once again, thank you for your unconditional support.

The Chairperson



Kanwar Bhan

6. Project Coordinator's Report

The past year has been a time of lots of change and growth for the organisation (**KCIA**). 2023/24 has been a very difficult and challenging year for the organisation as a whole and this is why we are especially proud that we have achieved so much and surpassed our expectations for the year. The organisation has been able to help more asylum seekers, refugees and ethnic minorities from different backgrounds and their families than ever before despite our very limited fundings that we had managed to secure.

The organisation's activities benefited about 1,336 individuals and 12 community organisations through referrals and signposting. This year we have managed to achieve this and delivered a planned programme of activities, including training activities for volunteers, trustees and community engagement events. The organisation supported other local refugee community groups, in particular French and Portuguese speaking community groups in running activities and organising workshops. The Centre has been providing direct help to refugees, ethnic minorities and asylum seekers through our Immigration and Welfare Rights programme. However, our work does not finish there. We worked to raise awareness of the new asylum legislation on "Failed Asylum Seekers" and welfare rights changes that affect millions of people across the UK in particular people on benefits. We also support local colleges and refugee communities with training, work placement and counselling. We are proud to provide to individuals and local organisations direct and indirect services which positively impact on their daily life and work.

As part of the **Kongolese Centre's** service delivery strategy, it is important to know that the level of individual casework with failed asylum seekers applications and representatives had increased dramatically **from 63%** per month before April 2023 **to 92%** per month after April 2024 (**about 29% increased**) due to new legislation on the Asylum, Immigration and Nationality Act 2004, which came into force in December 2023. An increasing number of vulnerable asylum seekers are being criminalized and demonised under the Legislation. We know that this figure could be higher as the government's new legislation on Immigration and welfare rights affecting thousands more of dispersed asylum seekers who most of them become homeless and returned to London for diverse reasons. With a great need on Advice and Representation for this particular targeted group, the request and support provision enabling the organisation to respond positively to the demand should immediately be looked closely and as a matter of urgent during 2023/24 financial needs. Every day more than hundreds asylum seekers and immigrants are denied legal aids and most of these cases are dealt by local and voluntary organisation such as the Kongolese Centre, with free access to welfare rights.

We hope to undertake a strategic review of both restricted and unrestricted funding streams through the help and support of the Management Committee Members and local partner Voluntary Organisations on a regular basis. Need to further develop our plans of establishing the organisation as a Pan London's French, Portuguese and Lingala representative Network Centre. Amongst service delivered for 2023/24, we had as followed: 728 people benefited from our legal welfare rights services, 113 were parents & children learning new skills (After School Club, ESOL & IT), 6 were trained as volunteers, 86 people with disabilities and detained at Immigration Centre were outreached, 408 were children and young people participating in sports.

The Kongolese Centre's Annual Account maintains a healthy and positive position; however, it must be noted that this has been achieved through the dynamic work and support by both Management Financial Sub - Committee and the staffs enabling sufficient funds to be raised through successful grants applications relevant to the agreed schedule of activities. I am pleased to inform that through this pursuance we have been successful in having obtained sufficient funds to continue with the major work related to welfare rights and social exclusion for the forthcoming years from the **Trust for London, Lloyds Bank Foundation, Westminster Council and Community Fund (Big Lottery)**. The 2023/24 accounts and finance are in line with actual spend and projected forecast.

2024–2025 will be a very significant year for the **Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice (KCIA)** as we look to build on the transition and consolidation achievements of the organisation implemented over the past three (3) years. The Centre will be reviewing and recalibrating its current strategic priorities for the future to determine a new **KCIA Strategic Plan** for 2025–2028.

I, personally acknowledge and sincerely thank all our trustees who give of their valuable time to guide the overall direction of KCIA and, in many instances, assist with many aspects of the work. Our staffs and volunteers for their significant commitment, and hard work on behalf of our beneficiaries. Their drive and real support of what Kongolese Centre does and aspires to do. We are very fortunate to have an amazing group of talented and passionate people dedicated to enhancing volunteering and civic participation. I also thank our partners and other agencies that provided pro bono assistance, for their quality services that they provided us this year through referrals and volunteers exchanges. We could not achieve our mission without their valued support.

Project Coordinator



Peter Nsumbu

7. Organisation's Structure, Governance and management

7.1 Organisation's Reference and Administrative Details

Registered charity name: Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice (**K.C.I.A**)

The Governing Document: The Constitution

Charity registration number: 1090079

7.2 The Administrative Office of the Organisation:

Bangladesh Centre, 19 Samford Street
London NW8 8ER

Solicitors: **Community Law Clinic Solicitors**,
71 Chamberlayne Road, Kensal Rise,
London NW10 3ND
Tel: 02089644222

Banker: **NatWest Bank**, 315 Station Road,
Harrow Middlesex HA1 2AD

Accountant: **MMF Accountants**, 506 Hertford Road, Enfield Middlesex
EN3 5SS Tel: 02039300472

Email: info@mmfaccountants.co.uk
www.mmfaccountants.co.uk

Website:

Staffs: **Peter Nsumbu**, Project Coordinator
Anette Wilkins, Community Welfare Officer

Volunteers: Floresse Lembe, Andrew Kapiano, Tania Bridge, Solange
Kandu, Jessica Nsimba, Yvonne Zahina, Fahrída Lengelo
and Ellie Iyampango

8. Organisation's Trustees

KCIA's trustees bring a range of experience and expertise. They include individuals with backgrounds former Refugees, Lawyers, Nurses, I.T technicians, House Wife's, fundraising, finance, organisational development, and they draw on professional experience in both corporate and charity sectors.

At the end of this reporting period the organisation (KCIA) had 8 trustees. KCIA's trustees were elected at the Annual General Meeting 2023 and interviewed, with at least one member of the panel being a user of our services. One third of trustees must retire at every AGM with those longest in office retiring first and the choice between any of equal service being drawn by lots.

Trustees meet every last Saturday of the two months, reviewing strategic progress, financial position, and monitoring against the charity's stated aims. No trustees receive any benefit for their service.

Names of Trustees and Positions

Mr Kanwar Bhan	The Chair
Mr Christian Carlton	Vice Chair
Ms Katia Andrade	General Secretary
Ms Anamarie Especiosa	Treasurer
Mrs Jeanne Boketshu	Senior Advisor
Ms Sylvie Rose Bamoshi,	Advisor
Mrs Essiya Muzumu,	Senior Advisor
Miss Rose Vita	Advisor

The Resources Sub Committee Members

- **The Executive Committee:** Mr Kanwar Bhan, Ms Katia Andrade and Jeanne Boketshu
- **The Finance Sub Committee:** Ms Anamarie Especiosa, Mr Christian Carlton and Mrs Essiya Muzumu
- **The Fundraising Committee:** Ms Sylvie Rose Bamoshi and Miss Rose Vita

9. Organisation's Risk Management

During every meeting, the trustees discuss and assess the major risks to which KCIA is exposed, in particular those relating to the specific operational areas of KCIA and its finances. The trustees believe that by monitoring reserve levels, by ensuring controls exist over key financial systems, reviewing quarterly financial statements, and by examining the operational and business risks faced by the organisation, they have established effective systems to mitigate those risks.

10. Particulars of Employees

The average number of employees during the year, calculated on the basis of full-time equivalents, was as follows:

No employee received remuneration of more than £60,000 during the year (2022 - Nil).

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

11. Related Parties

There were no related parties within the year and none of the Trustees received any remuneration during the year.

Independent Examiners Report

I report on the Accounts of Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice for the year ending 31st March 2024.

1. Accounting Policies

The Trustees, who are also called the Management Committees of the charity for the purpose of the recommended practise applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the England and Wales.

The trustees present their report with the financial statement of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2024. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with accounting and reporting by the Charity Commission under section 145 (5)(b) of the Act.

Cash Flow

The financial statements do not include a cash flow statement because the charity, as a small reporting entity, is exempt from the requirement to prepare such a statement under Financial Reporting Standard 1 "Cash flow statements".

Incoming resources

Grants receivable are recognised in the accounts when conditions for their receipt are satisfied. Grants with conditions attached to their use are included in restricted funds. Donations, legacies and other forms of voluntary income are recognised as incoming resources when receivable.

Resources expended

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and is recognised when there is a legal or constructive obligation to pay. Expenditure has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to a particular heading they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources.

Costs classified as governance relate to the general running of the charity and include the operations of the Board of Trustees and addressing constitutional audit and other statutory matters. Resources expended include attributable VAT, which cannot be recovered.

Reserves and reserves policy

Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice is committed to using its resources in pursuit of its charitable objects. It is also committed, however, to maintaining a level of reserves that is prudent to meet ongoing liabilities, sufficient to ensure that all service delivery commitments can be met and to protect the long-term future of our operations. Our reserves policy seeks to balance these priorities by holding a level of reserves sufficient to:

- Ensure the availability of sufficient working funds in hand
- Provide a breathing space in case of unexpected loss of income to ensure that services can be maintained; and to
- Provide sufficient funds for an orderly winding-down in the event of a need to cease activity.

2. Incoming & Expenditures for the year ended 31st March 2024

Sources	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £	2023 Total Funds £
Westminster Amalgamated Charity	-	5,000	5,000	6,500
Lloyds Bank Foundation	27,250	-	27,250	25,000
John Lyon's Charity	-	18,000	18,000	15,000
Trust for London	-	21,500	21,500	20,000
Big Lottery Community Fund	-	32,300	32,300	32,300
Octavia Foundation	-	9,280	9,280	9,280
Westminster Emergency Fund	10,000	-	10,000	10,000
Westminster Council Core Fund	-	15,000	15,000	-
KCIA Trustees Yearly Contribution	3,395	-	3,395	3,680
Cash at bank/cash in hand	11,892	4,722	16,614	14,126
Total Income received	£52,537	£105,802	£158,339	£135,886

3. Expenditures on Charitable Activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total Funds £	2023 Total Funds £
Office & administration	3,654	-	3,654	2,825
Equipment	965	425	1,390	965
Advertise & promotion	2,830	2,150	4,980	2,980
Postages	240	68	308	483
Travel	2,190	-	2,190	2,580
Telephone & broadbands	995	-	995	635
Insurance covers	895	480	1,375	1,045
Membership & subscriptions	4,350	1,020	5,370	4,520
Rent & rates	655	6,800	7,455	7,060
Bank charged fees	352	-	352	215
Volunteers	2,750	2,290	5,040	2,780
Wages & Salaries	3,100	78,605	81,705	71,120
NI & Payroll	1,730	8,886	10,616	9,025
Accountancy	2,200	-	2,200	680
Meetings & Hires Costs	3,790	3,405	7,195	9,170
Refreshments	3,528	1,030	4,558	4,490
Total	£34,224	£105,159	£139,383	£120,573
Depreciation – Fixtures & Fittings	-	219	219	88
Total Expenditure	£34,224	£104,940	£139,164	£120,485
Surplus/deficit for the year	£2,879	£15,800	£18,679	£15,312

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total funds £	2023 Total funds £
Fixed Assets				
Tangible assets	£6,821	£13,075	£19,896	£12,769
Current Assets				
Debtors	£102	£2,820	£2,922	£6,167
Cash at bank	£38,395	£74,480	£112,875	£94,700
	£38,497	£77,300	£115,797	£100,867
Creditors				
Amounts falling due within 1 year	-	(£2,145)	(£2,145)	(£13,343)
Net Current Assets	£34,207	£79,445	£113,652	£87,524
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	£41,028	£92,520	£133,548	£100,293
Net Assets	£41,028	£92,520	£133,548	£100,293
Funds				
Unrestricted funds			£41,028	£8,089
Restricted funds			£92,520	£92,204
Total Funds			£133,548	£100,293



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name

Kongolese Centre for Information & Advice

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31st March 2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

1090079

Set out on pages

7 - 12

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31/03/2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:



Date:

19/08/2024

Name:

Mr Etienne Momavuli

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

MMF Accountants

Address:

506 Hertford Road,

Enfield Middlesex

EN3 5SS

Section B**Disclosure**

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

None

Approved by the K.C.I.A's Trustees on the.....5th September 2024.....

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kanwar Bhan', written in a cursive style.

Mr Kanwar Bhan

The Chairperson