

Company number: 05559173

Charity number: 1113288

The Equal Rights Trust

Report and financial statements

For the year ended 30 September 2023

The Equal Rights Trust

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The Equal Rights Trust

Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 30 September 2023

Company number 05559173

Charity number 1113288

Registered office and operational address:

Second Home London Fields, 125–127 Mare Street, London E8 3SJ (to 31st October 2023)

167–169 Great Portland Street, 5th Floor, London, W1W 5PF (from 1st November 2023)

Country of registration England & Wales

Country of incorporation United Kingdom

Trustees Trustees, who are also directors under company law, who served during the year and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Evelyn Collins	Chair
Andrew Charles Danby Bloch	Vice-Chair (retired December 2023)

Robin Allen	
Ferdous Ara Begum	
Paddy Coulter	(appointed March 2023)
Niall Crowley	
Tarunabh Khaitan	
Virginia Mantouvalou	(retired April 2023)
Quinn McKew	
Helen Mountfield	(retired April 2023)
Maria Rachid	(appointed June 2023)
Nomfundo Ramalekana	(appointed March 2023)
Novide Refahi	

Key management personnel	Jim Fitzgerald	Director
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Bankers Coutts & Co
440 The Strand
LONDON, EC4M 6YH

The Equal Rights Trust

Reference and administrative information

For the year ended 30 September 2023

Solicitors

Bates Wells
2-6 Cannon Street
LONDON, EC4M 6YH

Auditor

Sayer Vincent LLP
Chartered Accountants and Statutory Auditor
110 Golden Lane
LONDON, EC1Y 0TG

The Equal Rights Trust

Trustees' annual report

For the year ended 30 September 2023

The Trustees present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2023.

Reference and administrative information set out on page 1 forms part of this report. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements, the memorandum and articles of association and the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities: SORP applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102.

Objectives and activities

Purposes and aims

The objects and purposes of the Equal Rights Trust, as set out in our Memorandum and Articles of Association, are to promote equality of treatment and diversity throughout the world, in accordance with the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations covenants, conventions and regional human rights and equality codes, by all or any of the following means:

- Promoting understanding of the importance of equality and diversity in the context of human rights generally;
- Encouraging good practice in relation to equality and diversity;
- Promoting equality of opportunity and treatment without discrimination on any ground;
- Promoting awareness and understanding of the effective enjoyment of human rights without discrimination;
- Working towards the elimination of unlawful discrimination;
- Obtaining redress for victims of unlawful discrimination;
- Conducting research, providing education and training; and
- Giving advice and guidance on appropriate legislative, administrative and voluntary measures.

The Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and consider that both the objects and purposes of the Trust, and the activities undertaken to achieve these objects and purposes are for the public benefit. When reviewing the charity's aims and objectives and in planning its future activities, the Trustees have regard to the public benefit of the organisation. In particular, the Trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

The Trustees review the aims, objectives and activities of the charity throughout each year. The Trustees review the success of each key activity and the benefits the charity has brought to those it exists to help. The review also helps the Trustees ensure the charity's aims, objectives and activities remained focused on its stated purposes. This report looks at what the charity has achieved and the outcomes of its work in the reporting period.

Our vision and mission

Our **vision** is an **equal world**: a world in which everyone – irrespective of their identity, status or beliefs – can participate in every area of life on an equal basis with others. We work towards this vision by addressing one of the root causes of inequality: discrimination. We focus our efforts on eliminating discrimination, its consequences and its legacies. We do this through the law. We recognise the limits of the law but know that comprehensive and effective equality laws are necessary – if not sufficient – for the creation of an equal world. Our **mission** is **to work in partnership to support the development, adoption, implementation and use of equality laws**.

Eliminating discrimination and its consequences requires a collaborative, global movement. We see our role as enabling and supporting this movement. Our expertise is in the development, adoption and implementation of comprehensive, effective equality laws. We work to put that expertise at the service of those working to combat discrimination and promote equality. We seek impact, not credit. We aim to respond to the needs and demands of civil society and others fighting for equality, through providing research, analysis, training, guidance and support. We work in partnership, providing expert input to those on the frontlines of the fight against discrimination, to enable them to develop, enact, implement and use equality law.

Our objectives and programmes

In 2023, we adopted a new strategic plan, [Equal in Dignity: Equal in Rights](#). It builds on our 15 years' experience of supporting the adoption and implementation of equality laws around the world and is informed by discussions with hundreds of equality activists, advocates and academics. This new plan sees us focus our efforts on responding to four major challenges – **gaps** – which those on the frontlines of the fight against discrimination have told us must be addressed.

- (1) **The protection gap**: Despite the growing consensus at the international level on the need for comprehensive equality laws, still more than 60% of countries in the world do not have laws which provide effective and comprehensive protection from all forms of discrimination and advance equality in practice, on all grounds and in all areas of life.

- (2) **The implementation gap:** In those States which have enacted equality laws, gaps in awareness, enforcement and implementation mean that rights-holders are often unable to secure remedy and sanction, while the potential of the law to not merely remedy, but actively prevent, discrimination and to advance full equality in practice remains largely unrealised.
- (3) **The application gap:** The rapid pace of change in many spheres of our lives and the major challenges which our societies continue to face – whether from new phenomena such as climate change or the increased use of algorithmic decision-making or longstanding problems such as economic inequality – demand new responses from equality law if it is to be effective.
- (4) **The practice gap:** Organisations working to advance equality or promote rights for marginalised groups are not making full and effective use of equality law, while those working to address the causes and consequences of inequality in different ways – from fighting corruption to promoting sustainable development – are not always using equality law as a tool.

Under our new plan, we aim to achieve four **objectives**, each responding to one of these gaps.

- (1) To **promote the adoption of comprehensive equality laws** through supporting equality movements engaged in developing and advocating for comprehensive equality laws, building consensus around the need for and content of these laws, and improving public understanding of, and support for, these laws.
- (2) To **strengthen the implementation of existing equality laws** through two global research initiatives, one focused on identifying problems and solutions in access to justice and remedy and the other on how to make equality law more effective in proactively preventing discrimination.
- (3) To **support the development of equality law in response to new challenges** through new collaborative programmes focused on developing understanding and consensus on the role of equality law in responding to three global equality challenges: artificial intelligence; climate change; and poverty.
- (4) To **support the use of equality laws by civil society, business and public bodies** through providing research, training and technical guidance on the use of equality law for those working to tackle different forms of inequality and through supporting civil society, business and government bodies to integrate an *equality by design* approach into their work.

We implement our work through two **programmes**. In our **research and analysis programme**, we undertake and support research on patterns of discrimination and on legal frameworks; analyse equality laws and their implementation; develop legal principles and standards; and produce evidence and resources. Through our **advocacy and collaboration programme**, we work with and support equality activists through: training, mentoring and capacity-building; legal analysis, advice

and guidance; and advocacy and strategy support. Our programmes are mutually-reinforcing – all of our research is collaborative, and all of our collaborations are underpinned by evidence.

Collaboration and partnerships

The way we work is summed up in the phrase **together for equality**. Together for equality means not only that we work to address discrimination and inequality in a comprehensive, holistic and intersectional way, but also that we do so through working in partnership with others. Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do.

At the **international level**, we collaborate closely with the [United Nations](#) and other international organisations to develop and advance standards on equality law and its application; at the **transnational level**, we work in multilateral, multidisciplinary partnerships to undertake [comparative research](#) and to [foster collaboration](#) between those fighting different forms of discrimination; and at the **national level**, we work with equality activists, providing research, training, guidance and support in response to their needs. All of our projects and initiatives are developed and delivered in partnership.

This partnership model is crucial to ensuring that our work is relevant to the needs of the equality community in question, be that the global expert community or specific groups or communities at the national level, with a particular focus on civil society. Partnership working is also key to ensuring the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of our work.

Partnership working is essential to ensuring that we operate in line with our values of inclusion, solidarity, collaboration and accountability. With the launch of our new strategic plan, we strengthen and expand our commitment to working together for equality, through moving from consultation to co-creation; adopting a new approach to partnership – focused on our role as a supporting partner providing expert advice and support in response to the needs of our stakeholders; becoming more responsive to demand and embracing the benefits of multilateral, multidisciplinary working.

Achievements and impact

As elaborated above, we organise our work in pursuit of four strategic objectives, each of which is designed to address the four challenges preventing the elimination of discrimination, its consequences and its legacies identified by those on the frontlines of the fight for equality. The

highlights of our activities, achievements and impact against each of these strategic objectives are set out below.

Objective 1: Promote the adoption of comprehensive equality laws

Our work under this Objective focuses on supporting equality activists to promote the adoption of comprehensive equality laws, in particular through the use of the [*Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Laws*](#) which we published with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in December 2022. We implement three programmes to achieve this objective:

- **Supporting equality movements:** We partner with organisations and coalitions engaged in developing and advocating for comprehensive equality laws, working with them to design and deliver country-specific programmes of training, research, legislative guidance and strategic support to meet their needs.
- **Building international consensus:** We promote the adoption and use of the *Practical Guide* by international and regional human rights bodies, intergovernmental institutions and international non-governmental organisations, in order to broaden the consensus on the need for comprehensive equality laws and so support campaigners in influencing governments.
- **Improving public understanding:** We develop public education materials, resources and training programmes to increase public understanding of, and support for, comprehensive equality laws.

Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation

In December 2022, together with the United Nations Human Rights Office, we launched [*Protecting Minority Rights: A Comprehensive Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation*](#). The Guide is the result of a three-year long collaborative research and consultation initiative, implemented in partnership by the Trust and the United Nations Human Rights Office. It is the first authoritative, definitive, comprehensive guidance from the United Nations on States' obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the right to non-discrimination. The project to develop *this guidance* was initiated in response to the needs and demands of our partner equality organisations around the world.

The *Guide* sets out the core content of the rights to equality and non-discrimination, as derived from international human rights instruments and their interpretation by UN and regional human rights mechanisms and provides practical guidance to States on the measures needed to ensure that

their legal frameworks are consistent with the requirements of international law. It synthesises and harmonises existing international legal standards, to provide clear and accessible guidance on the necessary scope, structure and content of comprehensive anti-discrimination laws – laws which provide the foundation for creating societies where all are equal in dignity and rights and where no-one is left behind. In addition, the publication provides concrete country-based practices and practical guidance. The *Guide* provides a roadmap to developing comprehensive and effective equality laws for anyone involved in the legislative process.

From the outset of the project, an independent Advisory Committee was established. The Committee was composed of 13 leading experts including, among others, three former United Nations Special Rapporteurs, leading academic experts in comparative equality laws and experienced litigators, judges and representatives of independent equality bodies. The Advisory Committee members represented a range of different legal systems and traditions, from every global region which had steered the project from its inception.

The process to develop the *Guide* involved research into international legal standards on the rights to equality and non-discrimination and equality, combined with broad consultation with both Governments and non-governmental organizations to identify relevant practice at the national level. The development of the *Guide* involved four research methods. First, the joint research team carried out legal research to identify relevant international legal standards on equality and non-discrimination. This involved exhaustive consideration of the relevant international human rights instruments, the interpretation of these instruments by UN treaty bodies, and analysis and commentary on these standards by academics, non-governmental organizations, national human rights institutions and others. Second, and in parallel, the partners issued calls for evidence. In mid-2020, the United Nations Human Rights Office distributed a note verbale to States Members of the United Nations, requesting sample provisions from national anti-discrimination laws and examples of good practice, and opened a public call for evidence. In parallel, the Equal Rights Trust engaged expert contributors from selected national jurisdictions with comprehensive anti-discrimination laws to provide examples and inputs. Third, the partners convened four online global consultations to discuss key themes, issues and problems identified in the research process. Fourth, drafts of the guide were submitted to experts for verification and validation. This included scrutiny by the members of the independent Advisory Committee. A draft was also issued for review and validation to more than 50 experts from academia, civil society – including, in particular, the leading international organizations working with and on behalf of different groups exposed to discrimination – and the UN Human Rights Office itself.

The *Guide* was launched on 6 December 2022 by the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ilze Brands Kehris at the University of Peace in Costa Rica and formed part of [Human Rights Week](#). The launch was accompanied by a [video](#) delivered by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, which called on States to “renew and reinforce their commitments to the equal enjoyment of human rights through enacting enforcing and implementing comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.”

On 7 December 2022, an unprecedented group of 32 UN Special Procedure Mandate Holders issued a [joint-statement](#) which urged all UN member States to “prioritise enacting, enforcing and implementing anti-discrimination legislation” to give effect to their international human rights law obligations. The statement calls on States to take the publication of the *Guide* “as a catalyst to action” and to use its contents as “practical tools for the development and reform of their legal frameworks on equality and non-discrimination.”

Throughout the year, the Trust and our partners at the UN Human Rights Office developed and implemented a plan to disseminate and support the use of the *Guide*. Between February and June 2023, **10 global online briefings** were convened to inform those involved in efforts at equality law reform at the national level. The first two briefings were provided to UN Human Rights Office thematic and field staff. Subsequent briefings were public and were aimed at equality activists, advocates and academics, governments and legislators. Briefings were provided in Arabic, English, French, Russian, Spanish and International Sign language. More than 500 equality activists, advocates and academics were engaged, from over 50 countries, from every global region.

Supporting equality movements

In March 2023, we began a **global mapping, consultation and engagement exercise** aimed at identifying existing movements for equality law reform, assessing the political and legislative context for legal reform, establishing relationships with those leading these movements and understanding the kinds of support they want and require.

To bolster this strand of work, in February we established a new **Equality Law Fellowship**. Three fellows were selected, each coming from different global regions, with diverse experiences and backgrounds. These fellows worked alongside UN staff to conduct country assessments, using a standardised methodology and toolkit. During the year, the global review exercise was completed in Central and South America, West and North Africa, the Middle East, Central, South, South-East and East Asia. As assessments were completed, the Trust and the UN team engaged with equality

activists, national human rights institutions and governments and legislators to identify and respond to support needs.

Through this process, we identified priority countries where movements are actively engaged in developing or advocating comprehensive anti-discrimination laws, and we began to engage partners in these countries to identify whether – and how – we can best support their efforts through training, research, legal and technical advice and strategic support. These countries include Armenia, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, the Philippines and the Republic of Korea. Between June and September, we received and responded to various requests for support from partners in these countries.

In April 2023, we were contacted by representatives of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in connection with ongoing reform initiatives in **Costa Rica**. The first proposed a series of amendments to the Criminal Code, including the principal non-discrimination guarantee, whilst the second initiative proposed the introduction of a new law that would establish a wider degree of protection against discrimination. The Trust provided comments on both laws, focusing on the latter and the ways in which it could be brought into line with international standards. Our comments were well received and shared with the relevant parties in advance of a meeting that took place in mid-May.

In September 2023, we supported the UN Human Rights Office to provided training on the *Guide* to Deputies of the Congress and members of Inter-Institutional Commission on Human Rights in the **Dominican Republic**. The training was initiated by the government of the Dominican Republic, which plans to develop a draft anti-discrimination law in 2024 and is seeking our support in this endeavour.

Also in September, we participated in an online briefing on the *Guide* organised for civil society organisations in **Japan** by the International Movement Against Racism and Discrimination (IMADR). The briefing brought together – for the first time – organisations working on discrimination on a range of different grounds, to discuss the strategic and legislative benefits of advocating for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.

Shortly after the end of the financial year, a Portuguese version of the *Guide* was launched in **Brazil**, by Defensoria Pública da União (DPU), one of the national human rights institutions in Brazil. The DPU planned and undertook the translation and publication of the *Guide* at its own initiative, because the institution believes that the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination law is essential in Brazil, and considers the *Guide* to be an essential tool to make this case. The Trust participated in

the launch event, which was well attended by representatives from the DPU, civil society and government.

Building international consensus

While prioritising engagement with equality activists working to promote anti-discrimination laws in their respective countries, we began efforts to engage with a wider range of international and intergovernmental organisations. Alongside the launch of the *Guide* in December 2022, for example, the Trust's Director was one of three speakers in the opening keynote session of a High-Level UN **Seminar on the Contribution of Development to the Enjoyment of Human Rights**, where he highlighted the foundational role of effective, comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation as a means to support sustainable development.

In March 2023, we received a request from the **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** to provide feedback on a child rights legislative reform website that is currently in the process of development. We made submissions in early April, focusing on how to ensure consistency between the materials and international legal standards on equality and non-discrimination.

In May 2023, the Director participated in an Expert Meeting hosted by the European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) as part of the **OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities' (HCNM)** 30th anniversary celebrations. The meeting, which was attended by the High Commissioner and relevant experts from across the region, focused on lessons learned and new priorities for the mandate. In our intervention, the Trust presented the *Practical Guide* and proposed that the High Commissioner's office develop a policy recommendation on the need for comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation.

In June 2023, we participated in the Annual **Meeting of the Chairpersons of Human Rights Treaty Bodies**. The meeting focused on improving treaty body coordination and strengthening, in line with the broader objective of the treaty bodies to improve "systemic coordination on substantive issues". Our intervention focused on the use and referencing of the *Guide* as a tool to support the development of coherent, coordinated recommendations to States in the critical area of the rights to equality and non-discrimination.

Improving public understanding

During the year, we worked with the UN Human Rights Office to establish a new collaborative initiative with university law clinics focused on developing public education and sensitisation

materials to simplify and communicate the *Practical Guide* for non-expert audiences. The project was initiated in response to feedback from organisations in Francophone countries during one of our global briefings, and is being led by a law clinic at Université Aix Marseilles and the University of Cape Town. We plan to engage universities in other countries to participate in the project, which we anticipate will become a global multi-stakeholder initiative, and we are currently in dialogue with universities in Beirut, Leeds and Manila about participation.

Objective 2: Strengthen the implementation of equality laws

Our work under this Objective focuses on meeting the need for improved evidence and understanding on how to make equality laws effective in providing justice, remedy and sanction, and on the mechanisms, tools and processes required to move from remedy and sanction towards a proactive, preventive model of equality law. In 2024, we will launch two new collaborative research initiatives to develop this evidence:

- The **Remedy project**: We will establish a global network of research partners to undertake global, comparative, empirical research on access to justice, enforcement and remedy in equality laws. We will examine every aspect of the system – procedures and institutions, approaches to evidence, models of sanction and remedy – in order to evidence common problems, understand “what works” and identify good practices.
- The **Prevent project**: We will bring together expert thinkers to engage in an “ideation” process, focused on examining how equality law can be adapted and developed to become more effective in proactively preventing and eliminating discrimination and advancing equality.

During the 2022–23 year, our work in this area focused on completing a major new study examining the implementation and enforcement of equality laws, which will provide the foundation for our two new initiatives.

In September 2023, our report with the [Solidarity Center](#), provisionally entitled ***A Promise not Realised: The right to non-discrimination in work and employment*** was finalised. The report is a comparative study on the implementation of the right to non-discrimination in the area of work, drawing on the findings of legal analysis and stakeholder interviews with over 100 experts in six countries – Brazil, Colombia, India, South Africa, Tunisia and the United Kingdom. Alongside a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the legal frameworks in these countries, the report includes more than a dozen examples of good practice or promising developments to

strengthen the enforcement or implementation of equality laws, based on interviews with experts from across the globe.

Alongside an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of different legal frameworks themselves, the report focuses on the factors which inhibit access to justice, remedy and sanction and critiques the lack of proactive, preventative measures in most equality law systems. The experts with whom we spoke confirmed that lack of awareness, confidence and resources prevent victims from seeking justice, while ineffective procedures and inadequate sanctions undermine enforcement. Even where remedy and sanction are secured, outcomes are individual and reactive, rather than collective, proactive and preventative. The report makes detailed recommendations for the strengthening of equality laws, improved access to justice, enforcement and remedy, and strengthened proactive and preventative measures. The report has now been through several rounds of expert review and is currently being finalised for publication in 2024.

Alongside work to finalise this report, our focus under this objective focused on discussions with experts and other stakeholders on the development of the two new initiatives, and the identification of experts to join the two project working groups to support the two new initiatives. These discussions were undertaken with partners including the World Justice Project, Equinet, Solidarity Center and with academic experts and institutions from a wide range of jurisdictions.

As an immediate outcome of these discussions, in early October 2023, we participated in a conference convened by **Equinet**, the European Network of Equality Bodies, entitled [*The other side of the Law: Enforcement of Anti-Discrimination Legislation*](#). The conference discussed the findings and recommendations of a report, [*Preventing and Reacting to Discrimination through Sanctions and Remedies*](#), for which our Director was interviewed in 2022. We used the opportunity to critique the individualised, reactive-responsive and remedial nature of the enforcement regime in most equality law systems, and to call for the development of proactive, compliance-based models focused on equality duties.

Objective 3: Support the development of equality law in response to new challenges

Our work on this objective focuses on exploring the role of equality law in addressing three global equality challenges – climate change, AI and algorithmic systems, and growing economic inequality. We aim to address the knowledge deficit both about how equality laws need to adapt in response to these challenges and about the potential of the law to contribute to tackling these problems. We intend to develop and implement initiatives in each of these three areas:

- **Algorithmic discrimination initiative** – launched in 2022, and already under implementation, this initiative focuses on the challenges posed by artificial intelligence for the enjoyment of the rights to equality and non-discrimination. Last year, working with others, we mapped patterns of algorithmic discrimination and developed a new set of legal principles which explain why and how States must adopt a proactive, precautionary and pre-emptive approach to identifying and addressing potential equality impacts of these technologies, in order to meet their international human rights law obligations
- **Equality law and climate justice initiative** – We will launch this new initiative in 2024. We will undertake collaborative research into the links between discrimination and climate change and work with others to both explore the potential of equality law to form part of the response to climate change and examine how the law needs to develop to respond to challenges such as interstate and intergenerational climate inequalities; and
- **Discrimination and poverty initiative** – This new initiative is to be launched in 2025. Working with anti-poverty activists and advocates, we will investigate the ways in which discrimination and poverty fuel one another, develop guidance on the ways in which equality laws can be deployed in the fight for economic equality and produce recommendations for how the law needs to adapt to address poverty as both a cause and consequence of discrimination.

Our work in this period has focused on the next phase of the Algorithmic Discrimination Initiative, with the publication of the *Principles on Equality by Design, in Algorithmic Systems* and engagement with interested stakeholders on the use of these Principles.

Algorithmic discrimination initiative

Throughout the year, we made significant progress in the development of our Algorithmic Discrimination Initiative. Work was undertaken in three mutually supporting strands: the development of the *Principles on Equality by Design*; development of a report on algorithmic discrimination, and advocacy at the international level.

In September 2023, we finalised the [*Principles on Equality by Design in Algorithmic Decision-Making*](#). Equality-by-Design is an approach to system design which requires and enables the discriminatory impacts – and any potential positive equality impacts – of algorithmic systems to be identified, assessed and addressed as an integral part of the development process. The *Principles on Equality by Design* elaborate why States and businesses must adopt such an approach and

provide detailed guidance on how to implement equality-by-design, as an integral element of wider human rights impact assessment procedures and processes.

The *Principles* were developed by the Trust in consultation and collaboration with experts and activists from across the globe. They were endorsed by a group of international equality organisations who work with groups exposed to discrimination on a wide range of grounds – the Alliance for Universal Digital Rights, Equality Now, Help Age International, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, Minority Rights Group International, and Women leading in AI. The *Principles* were launched on 6 October 2023.

To accompany the principles, we produced a report entitled [*Discriminatory by Default: Case studies on algorithmic discrimination*](#). This report presents fifteen case studies that exemplify some of the many different ways in which the use of these algorithmic systems can cause discrimination. It includes examples of discriminatory impacts arising on the basis of a wide range of protected grounds – including disability, nationality, sex, race and religion – in various areas of life and at every stage in the development and use of these systems. It includes case studies from across the globe, ranging from Paraguay to the Republic of Korea.

Through the year we engaged with the [UN Global Digital Compact](#) process and began to engage with “pathfinder” businesses to encourage the use of Equality-by-Design principles in the deployment of algorithmic decision-making systems. In June 2023, we made oral and written interventions to consultations on the Global Digital Compact, including at a “deep dive” discussion on Artificial Intelligence and other emerging technologies. Our submissions focused on the need for an equality-by-design approach to the development, design, deployment and use of algorithmic systems.

Objective 4: Support the use of equality law and standards by others

Our work under this objective involves working to meet the needs and demands of other stakeholders – civil society, business and governments – who are working to address inequality and want to use equality law and standards to do so. By its nature, our work in this area is demand-led, with the Trust engaging on a consultancy or partnership basis in projects designed or initiated by others. We use our objectives and values to assess which initiatives we engage in. We aim to partner only where we are responding to demand and where we are uniquely placed to add value. Our work in this area consists of three main programmes:

- **Research and analysis:** We develop, design and deliver research initiatives in response to requests from other equality organisations. In order to maximise impact and avoid duplication, our focus is on research which we are uniquely placed to undertake: global, collaborative and comparative research to document patterns of discrimination and inequality arising on multiple grounds; interdisciplinary research to explore the links between discrimination and other harms; and analysis on the interpretation and application of international legal standards on equality.
- **Training, guidance and support:** We provide training, technical guidance and support to civil society organisations in response to requests for assistance with the use and application of equality laws in particular contexts or in response to specific problems or opportunities.
- **Equality in practice:** We work with civil society organisations, businesses and public bodies who are seeking to be more equality-sensitive in their ways of working, supporting them to integrate an equality by design approach into their work.

Over the year, we continued to implement a number of partnership projects under this Objective.

Research and analysis

Since October 2021, we have been a partner in an ambitious project led by **Sightsavers**, that aims to facilitate inclusive work for persons with disabilities in Kenya. The [Inclusive Futures](#) project is funded by USAID and involves a consortium of national and international partners. Alongside the expected impacts in Kenya, the project is designed as a research project, aiming to test different approaches to inclusive work and gather data on what works. Our primary role is to support the development and implementation of work under the Labour Markets Governance Domain of the project, which examines how to strengthen the legal, policy and institutional framework governing access to work for persons with disabilities. Amongst our other roles, the Trust developed an *Assessment of the Kenyan legislative framework on inclusive work and employment*, which includes an analysis of international and regional standards on the right to work for persons with disabilities, and an in-depth assessment of the Kenyan national legal framework to identify areas for potential reform. In August 2023, this [Report](#) was launched at an event for stakeholders from government and civil society in Nairobi. The purpose of the report is to support the work of civil society organisations, policymakers and others through providing a detailed assessment of national legislation against international human rights standards, and providing an evidence base on where, how and in which ways this framework needs to be reformed and strengthened.

Since October 2020, the Trust has been working with **Fundación Saraki**, a disabled persons' organisation based in Paraguay, in its project aimed at **improving the implementation of the right to work under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in Latin America**. Amongst other activities, we have been leading on the development of a regional study examining the extent to which Articles 5 and 27 (the rights to non-discrimination and the right to work) of the Convention are implemented in the project's 10 target countries. In the period October to December, we completed the process of compiling and analysing the findings of legal research which had been undertaken by disabled persons' organisations with the support of *pro bono* law firms and university law clinics. We collated and systematised the findings of the research, finalised the framework for comparative analysis and completed the part of the report comparing and analysing the national laws. Between March and June 2023, we worked with Saraki to develop plans to conduct key stakeholder interviews on the application of the legal framework and non-legal barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing and participating in employment on an equal basis in seven target countries. We engaged a researcher, developed with them a research methodology, stakeholder selection plan and research questionnaire. Interviews were conducted throughout the remainder of the year and to the end of 2023. We expect that the report will be published in mid-2024.

Together with our partner **BLAM UK (Black Learning Achievement and Mental Health UK)** and with funding from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, we continued work on a project focused on implementation of the United Kingdom's equality law obligations to adopt measures in its educational system to combat prejudices which lead to racial discrimination and to eliminate discrimination and harassment within schools. The aim of the project is to **support the use of equality law by those working to decolonise the National Curriculum** and ensure that Black history and the history of the UK's colonial past becomes a mandatory element of the history syllabus. During the year, we continued to work with BLAM to support the completion, finalisation and launch of a research report on this subject. The report sets out and analyses the findings of an opinion poll designed and commissioned by the partners and conducted by the social research company ICM, together with qualitative research undertaken by the BLAM team with students, parents and teachers. Alongside this, our team developed a second report examining the UK Government's legal obligations in this area and the extent to which these have been and are being met in practice. This report finds significant evidence that the Government is not meeting its obligation (under section 149 of the Equality Act) to have due regard to the need to foster good relations, tackle racial prejudice and promote understanding between racial groups. We supported BLAM to integrate these findings and conclusions into its report and to set out the case that the Government is in violation of both international and domestic law as a result of the failure to provide a complete and balanced education on the UK's colonial past. We expect that the report will be published by BLAM in mid-2024.

In February 2023, we commenced a new collaborative project as part of our ongoing collaboration with **Transparency International**. The project aims to document and explore the mutually reinforcing **relationship between land, corruption, and discrimination** and will build upon the findings of our 2021 [Defying Exclusion](#) report, with Transparency International, on discriminatory corruption. The research was conceived in three principal phases. The first phase consisted of a desk-based review of existing literature on discrimination in the land sector and corruption in the land sector. In the second phase, we provided training, guidance and support to Transparency International chapters in Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe to enable them to undertake semi-structured interviews with equality organisations and other stakeholders in their countries. With the research completed by the end of August, we began the third phase, developing a report analysing these findings. The report will be published in early 2024.

In August 2023, we initiated a new collaboration with **Transparency International**, as part of its [Inclusive Service Delivery in Africa](#) project, focused on discriminatory corruption in access to healthcare and education services in Africa. In common with the land, corruption and discrimination project, this project involves work to develop a research report, combining desk-based review and analysis with stakeholder interviews and case studies, and the research process includes the same three phases. During August and September, we designed a research methodology, process and tools based on those used for the land corruption project, with adaptations to address lessons learned during that project. Our team provided training to the five Transparency International chapters involved in the project on the methodology, tools and approach, as well as introductory training on discriminatory corruption.

Training, guidance and support

In March 2023, the Trust's staff provided training to the staff of **Transparency International** Chapters in Cameroon, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The training sought to build their understanding of the rights to equality and non-discrimination, discrimination concepts and the links between discriminatory corruption, to support work under our joint project on land, corruption, and discrimination.

As part of our role in the **Inclusive Futures** project with **Sightsavers**, we provide legal, technical and strategic advice to the national project partners on the application of international legal standards on equality and non-discrimination, in order to support their advocacy and engagement with government on the legal framework governing the rights of persons with disabilities. In March, a new [Persons with Disabilities Bill 2023](#) was introduced in the Senate and opened for public consultation. A

group of organisations convened by the United Disabled Persons of Kenya came together to develop a written memorandum setting out a joint civil society position on the Bill, and areas for improvement. At the request of United Disabled Persons of Kenya and others, the Trust supported this process, providing a detailed analysis of the provisions of the Bill, and making recommendations for aligning it with the requirements of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

As another element of the Inclusive Futures project, the Trust was responsible for developing a training programme for organisations of persons with disabilities and trade unions representatives, with the aim of capacitating organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and trade unions (TUs) to promote and ensure the increased protection of labour rights, including the rights of persons with disabilities to equal work and employment. The Trust was engaged to develop and deliver a training-of-trainers workshop, with the objective of equipping participants with the knowledge, understanding and capacity to train to 220 organisations of persons with disabilities and 220 trade unions on the rights of all persons to work on an equal basis with others. Between June and August, together with experts from United Disabled Persons of Kenya and the Central Organisation of Trade Unions – Kenya, we developed a training of trainers curriculum. In September 2023, we delivered a four-day, residential training course to 20 representatives of organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) and 20 trade union affiliate members. The workshop strengthened participants' capacity to train effectively on labour standards, disability inclusion, and equality and non-discrimination to their constituent members, providing the foundation for the wider training programme.

In September 2023, the first of five Multi-Stakeholder Forums under the project was convened. It brought together organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), civil society, semi-autonomous government agencies, and representatives from the National Assembly and Senate to discuss the challenges and opportunities for people with disabilities in work, with a particular focus on the Persons with Disabilities Bill and the National Disability Policy. The Forum drew heavily on the findings and recommendations in the Legal Analysis which the Trust had developed, and which had been published the month before.

Equality in practice

As part of our work with **Transparency International** on its Inclusive Service Delivery in Africa project, we supported the development of an Equality and Inclusion Strategy for the project team. The Strategy sets out how the project team should operationalise Equality by Design as an approach to integrate equality considerations into project design, planning and implementation.

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The Strategy will inform the delivery of the project, and we are working with Transparency International to examine how to roll out this approach more broadly across the organisation.

Other impacts

As part of the review process to develop our new strategic plan, in late 2022, the Board of Trustees agreed to discontinue the Trust's litigation and legal services programme, to enable us to better respond to the needs and demands of equality activists. Nevertheless, a number of strategic interventions and initiatives launched in previous years came to fruition during the year.

On 14 April 2021, the Trust requested the European Court of Human Rights permission to intervene in the case of [Kazanbiyeva v Russia](#). The case concerned the State's failure to protect from – and adequately investigate and prosecute allegations of – domestic violence in the North Caucasus. Our request was successful, and we submitted our intervention on 3 June 2021. On 4 October 2022, the European Court of Human Rights [issued judgment](#) in the case. Joining *Kazanbiyeva* with a large number of additional applications, the Court found Russia in violation of Article 3 of the Convention under its substantive and procedural limbs, citing the absence of gender-based violence legislation in its decision.

On 10 January 2023, the European Court of Human Rights [held Russia in violation](#) of Article 3 taken in conjunction with Article 14 of the Convention, for failing to adequately recognise the hate-motivation behind an act of homophobic violence. Whilst the Trust did not participate directly in the case, the Court directly cited its recent decision in the case of [Genderdoc-M and M.D. v. The Republic of Moldova](#). That case concerned the State's positive obligations under Articles 3 and 14 of the Convention to "carry out an effective investigation into serious allegations of ill-treatment motivated by homophobic reasons." The European Court of Human Rights [issued judgment](#) in the *Genderdoc-M* case in 14 December 2021; citing the Trust's submission directly, it held that the domestic "authorities fell short of their procedural obligation to investigate" the allegation of hate-motivated violence "with particular emphasis on unmasking any discriminatory motive for the violence."

Also in January 2023, the European Court of Human Rights issued judgment in the case of [Machina v. The Republic of Moldova](#). The Trust had previously been granted leave to intervene in the case by the President of the Section. The Court held Moldova in violation of Article 3 of the Convention on account of the lack of adequate care for the applicant during her detention in prison, and the failure of the State to prevent the transmission of Hepatitis C in prison. Whilst the Court did not consider whether Article 14 of the Convention had been violated, it did refer to the Trust's intervention in finding a violation of Article 3.

Pro-bono acknowledgment

It is not currently possible for the Trustees to attribute an economic value to the contribution made by our *pro bono* partners, but the contribution which these individuals make to the Trust's work is significant and highly valued by both Trustees and staff. We would like to acknowledge and thank the following organisations for their contributions: Advocates for International Development; the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights, Bristows LLP and Cloisters Chambers.

Plans for the year ahead

Between April 2018 and April 2023, the Trust organized our work around the three Goals in our first strategic plan. During 2022–23, we developed a new Strategic Plan – *Equal in Dignity: Equal in Rights*. This new plan builds on our achievements and reflects our learning over the last five years, while responding to the needs and demands of those using the law to combat discrimination and advance equality. In the year 2023–24 we will move forward with the implementation of this plan, pursuing each of our four strategic objectives. Priorities for the year include:

Objective 1

- Expanding the programme of legal, technical, strategic support we provide to equality activists, organisations and coalitions working to promote the adoption of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation in countries such as Armenia, Brazil and the Philippines
- Publishing and launching, with the UN Human Rights Office, the *Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation* in Arabic, Russian and Spanish and working with University Aix Marseilles to develop accessible public information materials

Objective 2

- Launching *A Promise Not Realised*, our study with the Solidarity Center on the implementation of the rights to equality and non-discrimination
- Launching our two new research initiatives – the Remedy Project and the Prevent Project – in collaboration with experts from across the globe

Objective 3

- Promoting the use of the *Principles on Equality by Design in Algorithmic Decision-Making* within the UN Global Digital Compact, with civil society and with businesses

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- Launching our new Equality Law and Climate Justice initiative, in collaboration with experts and activists working on the equality aspects of climate change

Objective 4

- Expanding our programmes of research and capacity-building support to international and national non-governmental organisations seeking to make effective use of equality law in their efforts to fight inequality

Principal risks and uncertainties

Over the course of the year, the Trust identified, assessed and managed risk by reference to our organisational risk policy. Starting in quarter 2, we began a process to revise, update and improve this policy as well as our risk register and our procedures for identifying and managing risks. The result is a strengthened risk management framework, which enabled the staff to identify and manage risks more effectively.

The main risks which the Trust faces are as follows:

(1) Liquidity and funding

Liquidity and funding risk is the risk that the Trust fails to secure sufficient income to sustain its activities. The Trust maintains financial forecasts which are used to monitor progress towards income targets and ensure that operational costs remain within budget. This means that where potential shortfalls in projected income are identified, the organisation is able to take cost reduction measures in a timely fashion. This is our primary mitigation against loss of income.

The Trust fell somewhat short of our income targets in 2022–23, for the first time in several years, having secured 74% of the income we had forecast compared to 99% in each of the last two financial years. We identified three factors contributing to the shortfall against target, which are detailed below. Having initially identified a potential income shortfall for the year early in quarter 3, we deferred discretionary expenditures of £65k to the 2023–24 financial year, and in total through the year, operating expenditure for the year was reduced by £89k against forecast. These cost reductions mitigated almost 90% of the income shortfall. However, an unexpected decision by one of our long-term partners to discontinue their funding coming late in the financial year, meant that the organisation incurred a deficit in the year reducing unrestricted reserves to £33,508. Our risk

mitigation to defer or reduce discretionary expenditure was not fully effective in this case. As a result, the Trust has reviewed our approach to income and expenditure forecasting, in order to improve risk management in this area.

In addition to failing to secure sufficient income, the Trust can experience unexpected loss of income as a result of recovery orders by our funding partners for expenditure they deem ineligible; exchange rate movements; reallocation between restricted income funds and unrestricted reserves required by Charity accounting rules; and the write off of unrecoverable debts. In recent years, the Trust has experienced loss for each of these reasons, with the result that we have developed procedures to track, minimise and mitigate the risk of loss in each area.

For many years, the Trust relied for the majority of its income on restricted grant funding, in particular from the European Union which imposes restrictions and conditions on the recognition of expenditure. There is a risk of the European Union recovering income where documentation is adjudged to be ineligible, including in relation to projects which finished up to seven years in the past. In previous years, the Trust has been subject to recovery orders which have resulted in loss of income and reduction in unrestricted reserves. Since 2017, the Trust has reviewed and improved its financial procedures, mitigating against the risk of future losses. During the year, the Trust was contacted regarding the outcome of an audit which had been conducted in 2017 on a project implemented between 2012 and 2016. The European Commission sought recovery of funds in relation to items identified as ineligible through that audit. Following a negotiation process, the Commission accepted the eligibility of certain expenditures, while the Trust agreed to return a sum of £7,000.

In addition to this risk, in the period 2019–2021, the Trust was exposed to losses as a result of exchange rate movements in connection with the implementation of restricted income projects. These losses resulted in a reduction in the organisation's unrestricted reserves in 2019, 2020 and 2021, as the Trust was required to transfer unrestricted income to cover these losses. While this risk cannot be fully mitigated, the Trust has taken steps to identify and project future losses and account for these in our budget forecasts in order to minimise the impact on unrestricted reserves. In 2023, the Trust experienced net losses as a result of foreign exchange losses of £8,498. Our improved financial procedures meant that this loss was forecast, and we were able to manage operational expenditure to minimise the impact on the unrestricted reserve.

Related to risks connected with recovery orders and foreign exchange rate losses, the Trust has, in previous years, been required to transfer funds from the unrestricted funds to restricted income funds for particular projects. The Trust has both improved systems and controls to minimise

unexpected losses and undertaken work to identify and forecast losses. In 2022 and 2023, the Trust experienced no losses as a result of the need to balance restricted income accounts.

Prior to 2021–22, the Trust experienced three years of loss of income as a result of the write-off of debts which it had deemed unrecoverable, despite all efforts made at recovery. While this process had an adverse impact on levels of unrestricted reserves in each of these years, by 2021, this process was largely completed. In the year 2022–23, the Trust wrote off £1,360 for unrecoverable debts and made a provision of £4,260 against a debt of £9,374 which has been outstanding for a number of years, as a result of challenges faced by the debtor.

In addition to specific measures taken to continuously improve controls, the principal mitigation against risk in liquidity and funding is to increase the Trust's unrestricted reserves, through pursuing a strategy to diversify and increase income. We continued to pursue this although the Trust was unable to increase unrestricted reserves to the target level for 2022–23.

(2) Safety and security of staff, partners and beneficiaries

Safety and security risk is the risk that the Trust's staff, our partners or our beneficiaries are subjected to physical harm, deprivation of liberty or other damage to their personal safety. The Trust considers the impact of risk in this area to be sufficiently severe that these risks are always subject to review and mitigation, even where the likelihood is considered to be low.

In the period prior to 2016, the Trust established partnerships and projects in a number of hazardous environments where conflict, instability or repressive regimes posed a risk to the safety and security of human rights defenders. To counter these risks, the Trust developed and followed safety and security risk assessment procedures and standard operating protocols. Starting from 2018, pursuant to our five-year strategy, the Trust began to focus its work increasingly in countries where we and its partners can make a tangible impact on law and policy. This in turn has driven a continuous, gradual reduction in the number of high-risk countries in which the Trust is working. Accordingly, we assess this risk as low. Nevertheless, we maintain a full set of procedures for working in high-risk environments, which can be reactivated if needed.

3) Reputational risk

The Trust's reputation as a rigorous, expert research organisation and a respectful, accountable and collaborative partner is one of our most valuable assets. Reputational risk is the risk that this

reputation is damaged or undermined as a result of action or inaction or by association with a third party.

Reputational risk includes the risks that the Trust's legitimacy is undermined or damaged as a result of actions which are perceived to be neo-colonial, disrespectful, exclusionary or otherwise inappropriate; that our reputation is damaged by association with a donor, partner or other collaborator with a bad or compromised reputation; or that a partner relationship breaks down as a result of failure, miscommunication or misunderstanding leading to reputational harm; or that our reputation is damaged by a partner or a third party who misrepresents the organisation or our work.

A number of these risks are inherent in the nature of our work – for example, all of our work is delivered in partnership, and therefore the risk of reputational harm by association or as a result of miscommunication is always present. Nevertheless, the Trust has a number of procedures in place to minimise and mitigate risk. This includes due diligence procedures for partners and funders and clear, transparent contractual agreements between us and third parties. More broadly, our commitment to partnership working and the values in our strategic plan – inclusion, justice, solidarity, collaboration, accountability and optimism – provide a framework for evaluating our plans and our work, which we use to ensure that our interventions are appropriate and responsive to need and demand. The staff use our risk management framework to assess reputational risks on a rolling basis, to ensure that these can be mitigated.

Reputational risk can also occur as a result of the Trust producing work which is poor, inaccurate or inadequate; or the failure of the Trust, our Fellows or our partners to deliver work of the requisite quality within agreed timeframes. We have a number of management tools in place to manage these risks. In addition, three elements of our collaborative approach act as risk mitigations: (1) all of our work is undertaken in partnership with others, including the intended beneficiaries, thus ensuring that our work responds to needs, demands and expectation; (2) all of our major initiatives are implemented under the guidance of expert steering committees; (3) all major research reports and subjected to independent, external expert verification and validation.

4) IT and data systems risk

IT and data systems risks are those risks associated with our use, management and storage of data and digital systems. These risks include the risk that the Trust's digital systems are breached, with the result that individuals or organisations are exposed to harm; the risk that digital systems fail or are breached leading to business disruption or financial loss; and the risk that the Trust fails to meet its obligations to protect personal data and manage digital information.

The Trust has digital security procedures in our employee handbook and a number of digital security tools and procedures which are designed to mitigate risks in this area. We intend to review and upgrade these system tools and procedures during 2024, in order to ensure that our approach is in line with best practice.

5) Operational risk

Operational risk is the risk of financial loss or reputational damage that arises as a result of inadequate or failed internal processes, people and systems, or external events (including legal risk). The Trust has put in place systems and controls that it believes are necessary to minimise its operational risk. These are reviewed at least annually or more frequently if required. If there is a breach of its systems and controls, the Trust undertakes an in-depth review to ascertain the cause and enhancements that are required

Financial review

The financial results for the year which ended on 30 September 2023 are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 40. The Trust's financial position at the end of the year is set out on page 41.

Financial performance

In 2022–23, the Trust fell short of our income targets for the year, securing 74% of the income we had forecast, leading to a deficit of £18,336 reducing unrestricted reserves to £33,508. This is the first time in several years that income fell below target, the Trust having secured 99% in 2020–21 and 2021–22. We identified three principal factors that contributed to this shortfall:

- (1) **Shortfall in projected income (£35k):** We secured 95k of the £120k in new income which we had forecast to generate during the year. This shortfall was largely the result of a decision to postpone a major fundraising initiative due to the time required to complete the Trust's new strategic plan.
- (2) **Unexpected decision by a long-term funding partner to not make an expected grant (£37k):** Late in the financial year, one of our established donors – which has provided generous support to our work over the last two years and had indicated its intention to provide ongoing funding – informed us that they would not be able to make a further grant during 2023 due to a change in their circumstances.

- (3) **Delays in project activity leading to a delay in receiving income (£28k):** As a result of operational delays in four ongoing projects, we were unable to reclaim income for these projects during the year in line with our forecasts. The receipt of these funds has been delayed until next financial year (2023–2024).

In June 2023, the staff identified a potential income shortfall for the year, as a result of the delay in the completion of our strategic plan and the planned funding drive. In response, the Trust deferred **discretionary spending of £65k** to next financial year 2023–24. Together with other expenditure reductions made earlier in the year, **operating expenditure for the year was reduced by £89k against forecast** for the year.

These expenditure reductions were not sufficient to fully mitigate the income shortfall. Trustees agreed with staff that it was not appropriate to take more stringent actions to reduce costs as that could adversely impact the execution of the Trust's strategy. As a result, the organisation incurred a **deficit in the year of £18,336**, reducing unrestricted reserves to £33,508.

Income

The Trust's total income in the year (£285,657) was 37% lower than the previous financial year (2022: £452,979). This compares to our forecast at the beginning of the year of a 15% reduction in income (£67k) driven by our ongoing strategy to reduce reliance on large restricted income grants involving significant re-granting to partners. In addition, our income fell short of our forecast for the year by £100k, for the reasons set out above.

The Trust's total income in the financial year was secured from a combination of restricted grant funding from institutional donors (11%); unrestricted grants from trusts, foundations and donations (71%); and consultancy fees (18%).

While total income reduced, income from unrestricted grants and donations (£201k) remained at a similar level to the prior year (2022: 197k). Conversely, income from advisory service fees (£52k) reduced by 62%, in large part as a result of the profiling of project delivery resulting in income being delayed into 2023–24. Total unrestricted income (grants and donations income and fee income together) in 2022–23 (£254k), decreased by £80k (24%) from the previous year. While total unrestricted income was lower than in 2022, it was at a relatively similar level to 2021 (£260k) and was higher than in any of the five previous years.

The Trust's total income from restricted income grants in 2022 was £31k, down 74% from £119k in 2022. This reflects our strategic decision to reduce reliance on restricted income grants where a

significant part of the income is restricted for re-granting or expenditure on activities in project countries. Restricted income funds constituted 11% of the organisation's total income in 2022-23, compared with 96% in 2017-18.

The Trust held total net assets of £41,783 at the end of the financial year (2022: £60,119). Of these funds, £8,275 (2022: £11,521) was restricted income carried forward, representing funds which the Trust received for the implementation of a grant-funded project.

Expenditure

Total expenditure in the year (£303,993) was 28% lower than the previous financial year (2022: £423,193).

This reflects the ongoing reduction in the number of large, restricted income projects which the Trust is implementing. This is the expected outcome of the organisation's long term strategic shift in partnership working, with the organisation increasingly working as an expert partner in projects managed by our national partners, rather than acting as the main grant recipient and project manager. As a result of this transition, the organisation has reduced expenditure on regranting and direct funding of project activities while our national partners lead on the management of grants.

The reduction also reflects decisions to defer planned expenditure that was conditional on the results of fundraising and income generation activities as discussed above. The Trust's operating expenditure – expenditures on staff, overheads, fundraising and visibility – was reduced by £89,000 over the course of the year, in response to projected shortfalls in expected income.

The Trust developed and adopted a new strategic plan during the year, through which we organise our work to achieve four objectives, each responding to a gap identified through our engagement with equality activists, advocates and academics. Expenditure was distributed across these four objectives as follows: (1) Promoting the adoption of comprehensive equality laws – 39%; (2) Strengthening the implementation of equality laws – 24%; (3) Supporting the development of equality law in response to new challenges – 11%; (4) Supporting the use of equality law and standards by civil society, business and public bodies – 26%.

Reserves

At the end of the financial year the organisation held total reserves of £41,783 (2022: £60,119). Of this amount, 20% (£8,275) (2022: 19% (£11,521)) was restricted income carried forward. The Trust's unrestricted reserve at the end of the year was £33,508, a reduction of £15,090 from the previous year (2022: £48,598).

The Trust's reserve policy was developed in line with prevailing best practice and bases the Trust's reserve target on a calculation of the risks to which it is exposed. The policy establishes both a reserve "floor" – equivalent to the costs required to ensure orderly closure in the event that the business ceases to operate – and a reserve "target" – calculated to meet identified risks in respect of income, expenditure and working capital. The Trust's policy is that the reserve floor should be maintained, and that any expenditure which would cause reserves to drop below the floor should be subject to specific approval by the Board of Trustees. The Trust aims to build reserves to reach the reserve target as quickly as possible.

Based on this policy, the unrestricted reserve floor for the year 2023 stood at £58,250, while the unrestricted reserve target stood at £71,000. Thus, the level of reserves at the end of the 2023 financial year was 53% of the reserve floor level and equivalent to 44% of the reserve target.

Income secured in the first quarter of the current financial year (2023–24), has increased the Trust's unrestricted reserves to above the reserve floor level, and our financial forecast shows that the organisation is on course to retain reserves at or above the floor level throughout the current financial year.

The Board is currently reviewing the reserve policy, and we expect to adopt a new reserve target during the financial year.

Financial position

The Board considers that the Trust remains a going concern.

In September 2023, we adopted a new Fundraising Strategy, following the finalisation of our new five-year strategic plan. In the first four months of the financial year 2023–2024, we exceeded our targets under this Strategy, raising 63% of our new income target for the full year.

We have been successful in securing further unrestricted grant-funding from the Sigrid Rausing Trust for the period 2024 and 2025, and in diversifying our funding base more broadly.

We have already initiated one new funding partnership and extended three other existing partnerships since the start of the new 2023–24 financial year. We have plans to initiate new funding partnerships throughout the year, and our new strategic plan is exciting interest from a range of different funders, donors and partners.

At the beginning of quarter 2 of the new financial year 2023–2024, we have secured more than 85% of our forecast operating costs for the year and 69% of total target income. The staff consider our plans to raise the remaining 31% of our income target to be realistic, given past experience and the ongoing improvement in the Trust's visibility, reputation and impact.

The Trust's budget for 2023–24 targets growth in income and unrestricted reserves. We also target an accompanying increase in operating expenditure conditional on the achievement of income targets. Accordingly, should the organisation fall short of our fundraising targets, this could be managed without compromising the organisation's ability to operate, as costs could be reduced from forecast uncommitted expenditures.

Funding in the financial year 2023–24 is currently secured from nine different sources. Of income secured in the year to date, 59% is from unrestricted grants and donations, 24% is from professional fees and 17% is from restricted grants. This funding mix ensures that the organisation has flexible funding to adapt to unforeseen circumstances.

As part of the audit process, the organisation undertook analysis of the Trust's ability to operate as a going concern in various different scenarios. This focused on consideration of the impact – on both cashflow and overall operational budget – of the Trust falling short of its fundraising projections for the coming year. We identified actions which should be taken in order to safeguard against impact of a fall in income, should this occur. Through this exercise, the Board satisfied itself that such action could be taken in a timely fashion to ensure that the organisation could continue to operate as a going concern.

Fundraising

During the year, the Trust did not run any public fundraising campaigns, though an appeal for funds was made to known friends and supporters of the organisation.

The Equal Rights Trust does not use professional fundraisers or commercial participators. We nevertheless observe and comply with the relevant fundraising regulations and codes. During the

year there was no non-compliance of these regulations and codes and we received no complaints relating to our fundraising practice.

Structure, governance and management

The Equal Rights Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It was incorporated on 9 September 2005 and registered as a charity on 15 March 2006. The company was established under a memorandum of association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company. It is governed under its articles of association. The Trust is based and administered in the United Kingdom.

Board of Trustees

The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees who are also Directors of the company. The Board meets at least four times each year to: provide strategic guidance; review and provide guidance on programmes and projects; review and advise on the management of risks; review the assets and financial position of the Trust; and adopt plans of action and budgets.

During the year 2022–23 Evelyn Collins served as the Chair of the Board and Danby Bloch as the Vice Chair of the Board and the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Mr Bloch stood down at the first meeting of the new financial year, in December 2023, after serving four terms – a total of 12 years – including 5 years as Vice Chair. Staff and Trustees are grateful for his service. We are also grateful to Trustees Virginia Mantouvalou and Helen Mountfield who retired during the year, at the end of their third term.

In anticipation of these departures, in 2022, the Board initiated a process for the identification of new Trustees. This began with a self-assessment and audit of skills, knowledge and expertise, leading to the identification of gaps and needs. Following this process, the Board made three appointments during the year. Paddy Coulter and Nomfundo Ramalekana joined the Board in March and Maria Rachid joined in June 2023

The full Board of Trustees are listed on page 1 of this report.

All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in note 7 to the accounts.

Staff

The Trustees delegate day to day management of the organisation to the Director. The Trustees take advice from the Director in respect of the Trust's programmes and projects, risks, financial position and budget, and action plans.

Jim Fitzgerald is the Trust's Director, who has held this position since 1 August 2019 (prior to which he was Co-Director from June 2016). During the year, Jim led a team of four staff, two focused on delivering the Trust's programmatic and project work and one on financial and operational management.

Two of the Trust's staff departed during the year. As a small organisation with limited scope for internal career progression, relatively high staff turnover is unavoidable, though nevertheless disruptive. The Trust works to minimise staff turnover by seeking to create an open, supportive and flexible work environment; provide opportunities for professional development; and provide competitive remuneration and conditions for our sector. The Trust introduced flexible hybrid working arrangements in 2021 and completed a remuneration review – including benchmarking within the sector in the same year. We work to mitigate the impact of staff turnover through sharing information, skills and knowledge and ensuring effective handover procedures. We recruited a new team member – a Researcher – in early 2023.

We plan to increase the number of staff positions to 5 in the organisation in early 2024, and aim to expand the team further in 2025.

Appointment of Trustees

In accordance with the memorandum and articles of association there shall be at least three Trustees.

As noted, during the year, the Board discussed the need to expand the number of Trustees and undertook an exercise to identify needs in respect of skills, knowledge and expertise.

Decisions on appointments are made by the full Board, in accordance with the articles of association.

All Trustees serve for an initial term ending at the third Trustees' annual meeting after the year in which they were appointed. All Trustees may serve for two additional terms of up to three years. No Trustee may serve for more than nine consecutive years, unless the Trustees consider that it would

The Equal Rights Trust

Trustees' annual report

For the year ended 30 September 2023

be in the best interests of the organisation for a Trustee to serve beyond that period, and the Trustee is then reappointed in line with the articles.

Trustee induction and training

Trustees are inducted through introductory meetings with the Chair and Vice Chair and the Director before participation in their first Board meeting. The Trust does not have the in-house capacity to provide formal training for Trustees, though Trustees are encouraged to participate in online training provided by third parties.

Related parties and relationships with other organisations

During the year, the Trust received no grant from any entity in which Trustees had an official role: (2022: £16,870). The Trust also received no fee from any entity in which a trustee had an official role: (2022: £15,475).

Aggregate donations from related parties were £14,500 (2022: £5,000), which comprise donations from members of the board and staff.

Other than the items noted here, the Trustees have declared that they have no conflict of interests.

The Trust has no subsidiaries and is not part of a wider network. The Trust implements all of our work in partnership with other organisations – either civil society organisations based in the relevant country for country-specific work, or relevant international, intergovernmental or international non-governmental organisations for our global, comparative and thematic work. These partnerships are a central element of the Trust's approach to its work, ensuring the relevance and suitability of our projects and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in implementation.

Our partnerships are bi-lateral relationships, in which the parties are equal. Where partnerships involve funding, these are regulated by a partnership agreement setting out the respective rights and obligations of each partner. Within this legal framework, the Trust and its partners seek to develop a fully cooperative, mutually beneficial relationship, in which the organisations act as genuine partners in the implementation of projects which both parties consider are relevant to the achievement of our objectives.

Remuneration policy for key management personnel

During the 2020–21 year, the Trustees undertook a remuneration review to develop a policy on remuneration which would: (a) systematise the process through which remuneration is set and reviewed, through the establishment of fixed pay bands, and clear procedures to regulate movements within the pay bands; (b) ensure, to the greatest extent possible, comparability and competitiveness with similar organisations; (c) ensure fairness within the organisation, particularly with respect to proportionality between roles with different levels of responsibility.

The review was led by the Chair and the Vice Chair. As part of the review, the staff undertook research on pay policy at comparable organisations – that is, international or national human rights organisations headquartered in London, with a similar “legal” focus to their work. The review included an assessment of both (a) remuneration policy and procedures and (b) benchmarking salary levels.

Following the review, the Board adopted a remuneration policy with three elements: (1) fixed pay bands for each level within the organisation, set at levels considered to be appropriate and comparable to other organisations in the sector; (2) annual pay increases within these bands, composed of (a) a percentage increase to reflect increases in cost of living; and (b) a fixed “step” increase within the band, subject to satisfactory performance as reviewed at annual performance reviews.

Funds held as custodian Trustee on behalf of others

The Trust does not hold any funds as custodian Trustee on behalf of others.

Statement of responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees (who are also directors of The Equal Rights Trust for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent

The Equal Rights Trust

Trustees' annual report

For the year ended 30 September 2023

- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation

●
The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware
- The Trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Members of the charity guarantee to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 to the assets of the charity in the event of winding up. The total number of such guarantees at 30 September 2023 was 11 (2022: 10). The Trustees are members of the charity, but this entitles them only to voting rights. The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Auditor

Sayer Vincent LLP was appointed as the charitable company's auditor in 2017 following a competitive process.

The Trustees' annual report has been approved by the Trustees on 4 April 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Evelyn Collins
Chair, Board of Trustees

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Equal Rights Trust (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 30 September 2023 which comprise the statement of financial activities, balance sheet, statement of cash flows and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 *The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland* (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion, the financial statements:

- Give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 30 September 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended
- Have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice
- Have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the ISAs (UK) require us to report to you where:

- The trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is not appropriate; or
- The trustees have not disclosed in the financial statements any identified material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the charitable company's ability to continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the trustees' annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The trustees are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- The information given in the trustees' annual report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements
- The trustees' annual report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the trustees' annual report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- Adequate accounting records have not been kept, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- The financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- Certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- We have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or

Independent auditor's report

To the members of

The Equal Rights Trust

- The trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies' regime and take advantage of the small companies' exemptions in preparing the trustees' annual report and from the requirement to prepare a strategic report.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the statement of trustees' responsibilities set out in the trustees' annual report, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Independent auditor's report

To the members of

The Equal Rights Trust

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Noelia Serrano (Senior statutory auditor)

08 May 2024

for and on behalf of Sayer Vincent LLP, Statutory Auditor

110 Golden Lane, LONDON, EC1Y 0TG

The Equal Rights Trust

Statement of financial activities (incorporating an income and expenditure account)

For the year ended 30 September 2023

	Note	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2023 Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2022 Total £
Income from:							
Donations and legacies	2	201,789	–	201,789	196,954	–	196,954
Charitable Activities	3						
Adoption		4,574	11,530	16,105	20,026	8,377	28,403
Implementation		18,297	11,530	29,827	24,838	53,967	78,806
Development		–	–	–	36,627	–	36,627
Use		28,840	8,374	37,213	55,224	56,760	111,985
Charitable activities subtotal		51,711	31,435	83,145	136,715	119,104	255,819
Investments		722	–	722	206	–	206
Total income		254,222	31,435	285,657	333,875	119,104	452,979
Expenditure on:							
Raising funds	4a	8,535	–	8,535	12,633	–	12,633
Charitable activities	4a						
Adoption		108,699	5,994	114,693	92,250	25,045	117,295
Implementation		55,120	16,166	71,286	37,187	58,343	95,530
Development		30,446	213	30,659	54,862	30,047	84,909
Use		59,512	19,308	78,821	93,532	19,294	112,826
Charitable activities subtotal		253,777	41,681	295,457	277,832	132,728	410,560
Total expenditure		262,312	41,681	303,993	290,465	132,728	423,193
Net (expenditure) / income for the year and net movement in funds	6	(8,090)	(10,246)	(18,336)	43,411	(13,625)	29,785
Transfers between funds:		(7,000)	7,000	–	(534)	534	–
Net movement in funds		(15,090)	(3,246)	(18,336)	42,877	(13,091)	29,785
Reconciliation of funds:							
Total funds brought forward		48,598	11,521	60,119	5,721	24,612	30,333
Total funds carried forward		33,508	8,275	41,783	48,598	11,521	60,119

All of the above results are derived from continuing activities. There were no other recognised gains or losses other than those stated above. Movements in funds are disclosed in Note 16a to the financial statements.

The Equal Rights Trust

Balance sheet

Company no. 05559173

As at 30 September 2023

	Note	£	2023 Total £	£	2022 Total £
Fixed assets:					
Tangible assets	11		2,382		-
			<u>2,382</u>		<u>-</u>
Current assets:					
Debtors	12	58,011		113,690	
Cash at bank and in hand		69,310		65,065	
		<u>127,321</u>		<u>178,755</u>	
Liabilities:					
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	(87,921)		(118,636)	
		<u>(87,921)</u>		<u>(118,636)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>39,401</u>		<u>60,119</u>
Total net assets			<u><u>41,783</u></u>		<u><u>60,119</u></u>
The funds of the charity:	16a				
Restricted income funds			8,275		11,521
Unrestricted income funds:					
General funds		<u>33,508</u>		<u>48,598</u>	
Total unrestricted funds			<u>33,508</u>		<u>48,598</u>
Total charity funds			<u><u>41,783</u></u>		<u><u>60,119</u></u>

Approved by the trustees on 4 April 2024 and signed on their behalf by

Name: Evelyn Collins
Title: Chair

The Equal Rights Trust

Statement of cash flows

For the year ended 30 September 2023

Reconciliation of net expenditure to net cash flow from operating activities

	2023 £	2022 £
Net (expenditure) / income for the reporting period (as per the statement of financial activities)	(18,336)	29,786
Depreciation charges	596	–
Dividends, interest and rent from investments	(722)	(206)
Decrease in debtors	55,679	142,701
(Decrease) in creditors	(30,715)	(125,439)
Loss on disposal of fixed assets	–	–
Net cash (used in) / provided by operating activities	6,501	46,842

	Note	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Cash flows from investing activities:					
Dividends, interest and rents from investments		722		206	
Purchase of fixed assets		(2,978)		–	
Net cash (used in) / provided by investing activities		(2,256)		206	
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		4,245		47,048	
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		65,065		18,016	
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		69,310		65,065	

1 Accounting policies

a) Statutory information

The Equal Rights Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee and is incorporated in England and Wales. It has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding up is limited to £1.00.

The registered office address is 167–169 Great Portland Street, 5th Floor, London, W1W 5PF (Second Home London Fields, 125–127 Mare Street, London, E8 3SJ to 31st October 2023)

b) Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) – (Charities SORP FRS 102), The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006/Charities Act 2011.

Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy or note.

In applying the financial reporting framework, the Trust made a limited number of subjective judgements, for example in respect of the split of income and expenditures between different programmes of activity. Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances. The nature of the estimation means the actual outcomes could differ from those estimates. Any significant estimates and judgements affecting these financial statements are detailed within the relevant accounting policy below.

c) Public benefit entity

The charitable company meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

d) Going concern

The trustees consider that the Trust remains a going concern. The Trust has been successful in securing unrestricted grant-funding from the Sigrid Rausing Trust for the periods 2023–24 and 2024–25, and in diversifying its funding base more broadly. As at January 2024, sufficient income has been secured to cover 75% of the Trust's forecast operating costs for the financial year 2023–24. Forecast operating costs include spending that is conditional on achieving income targets. Should the Trust fail to secure its forecasted unsecured income, this can be managed without compromising its ability to operate, as these uncommitted costs can be postponed or stopped. In this way, the reserve floor level set by the Board can be maintained, even in the event of a reduction in forecast income.

The trustees do not consider that there are any sources of estimation uncertainty at the reporting date that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period and cannot be mitigated.

e) Income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and that the amount can be measured reliably.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

For legacies, entitlement is taken as the earlier of the date on which either: the charity is aware that probate has been granted, the estate has been finalised and notification has been made by the executor(s) to the charity that a distribution will be made, or when a distribution is received from the estate. Receipt of a legacy, in whole or in part, is only considered probable when the amount can be measured reliably and the charity has been notified of the executor's intention to make a distribution. Where legacies have been notified to the charity, or the charity is aware of the granting of probate, and the criteria for income recognition have not been met, then the legacy is treated as a contingent asset and disclosed if material.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

1 Accounting policies (continued)

f) Donations of gifts, services and facilities

Donated professional services and donated facilities are recognised as income when the charity has control over the item or received the service, any conditions associated with the donation have been met, the receipt of economic benefit from the use by the charity of the item is probable and that economic benefit can be measured reliably. In accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102), volunteer time is not recognised so refer to the trustees' annual report for more information about their contribution.

On receipt, donated gifts, professional services and donated facilities are recognised on the basis of the value of the gift to the charity which is the amount the charity would have been willing to pay to obtain services or facilities of equivalent economic benefit on the open market; a corresponding amount is then recognised in expenditure in the period of receipt.

g) Interest receivable

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

h) Fund accounting

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria is charged to the fund.

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for the charitable purposes.

i) Expenditure and irrecoverable VAT

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds relate to the costs incurred by the charitable company in inducing third parties to make voluntary contributions to it, as well as the cost of any activities with a fundraising purpose
- Expenditure on charitable activities comprises the costs of delivering the Trust's four objectives – (1) Promoting the **adoption** of comprehensive equality laws; (2) Strengthening the **implementation** of equality laws; (3) Supporting the **development** of equality law in response to new challenges; and (4) Supporting the **use** of equality laws by other actors. Such costs include inter alia salary costs for the Trust's staff and its partners, costs of hosting workshops and events, research consultancy fees and grants, design and printing costs, travel and other costs, undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

j) Grants payable

Grants payable are made to third parties in furtherance of the charity's objects. Single or multi-year grants are accounted for when either the recipient has a reasonable expectation that they will receive a grant and the trustees have agreed to pay the grant without condition, or the recipient has a reasonable expectation that they will receive a grant and that any condition attaching to the grant is outside of the control of the charity.

Provisions for grants are made when the intention to make a grant has been communicated to the recipient but there is uncertainty about either the timing of the grant or the amount of grant payable.

1 Accounting policies (continued)

k) Allocation of support costs

Resources expended are allocated to a particular strategic objective where the cost relates directly to that objective, or are split between objectives where an activity results in impact under more than one objective. The allocation of support costs – the cost of overall direction and administration of each activity, comprising the salary and overhead costs of the central functions of the organisations – is apportioned between these objectives of activity based on the proportion of total direct programmatic expenditure on each objective.

Where information about the aims, objectives and projects of the charity is provided to potential beneficiaries, the costs associated with this publicity are allocated to charitable expenditure.

Where such information about the aims, objectives and projects of the charity is also provided to potential donors, activity costs are apportioned between fundraising and charitable activities on the basis of area of literature occupied by each activity.

Support and governance costs are allocated to each programme of activities on the basis set out below. This is based on the proportion of the organisation's total staff expenditure on charitable activities which falls within each programme.

● Promoting the adoption of comprehensive equality laws	37%
● Strengthening implementation of equality laws	20%
● Supporting the development of equality law	14%
● Supporting the use of equality law	29%

Governance costs are the costs associated with the governance arrangements of the charity. These costs are associated with constitutional and statutory requirements and include any costs associated with the strategic management of the charity's activities.

l) Operating leases

Rental charges are charged on a straight line basis over the term of the lease.

m) Tangible fixed assets

Items of equipment are capitalised where the purchase price exceeds £500. Depreciation costs are allocated to activities on the basis of the use of the related assets in those activities. Assets are reviewed for impairment if circumstances indicate their carrying value may exceed their net realisable value and value in use.

Where fixed assets have been revalued, any excess between the revalued amount and the historic cost of the asset will be shown as a revaluation reserve in the balance sheet.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write down the cost of each asset to its estimated residual value over its expected useful life. The depreciation rates in use are as follows:

● Computer Equipment	5 years
● Office Equipment	5 years

n) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

o) Cash at bank and in hand

Cash at bank and cash in hand includes cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

p) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

q) **Financial instruments**

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

r) **Pensions**

The charity operates a contributory pension scheme. It is a defined contribution scheme and contributions are charged in the statement of financial activities as they accrue.

2 Income from donations and legacies

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2023 Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2022 Total £
King Baudouin Foundation	–	–	–	16,870	–	16,870
Mary Kay Inc	41,576	–	41,576	46,098	–	46,098
Sigrid Rausing Trust	110,000	–	110,000	110,000	–	110,000
Cello Health	–	–	–	15,768	–	15,768
Lumanity	18,792	–	18,792	–	–	0
Other	31,421	–	31,421	8,218	–	8,218
	201,789	–	201,789	196,954	–	196,954

Individual organisations have been listed where the amount received is £5,000 or more.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2023 Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2022 Total £
Adoption	4,574	11,530	16,105	20,026	8,377	28,404
Implementation	18,297	11,530	29,827	24,838	53,967	78,806
Development	–	–	–	36,627	–	36,627
Use	28,840	8,374	37,213	55,224	56,760	111,984
Total income from charitable activities	51,711	31,435	83,145	136,715	119,104	255,819

The Trust allocates restricted income between our four strategic objectives based on assessment of the proportion of activities within each restricted grant-funded project which fall within that objective.

Note 3 sets out restricted and unrestricted income from charitable activities received during the year, allocated against our four strategic objectives. It does not include unrestricted donations or legacy income which was used to achieve these objectives – such as income which we chose to fund our work on our Development objective.

Note 3 does not include any income carried forward from previous years. Income for restricted grant-funded projects is frequently provided in advance, with unspent funds carried forward as restricted reserves (see Balance Sheet – £11,521 in restricted income funds was carried forward into the financial year 2022–23).

We have reclassified £255,819 of charitable income for the 2022 financial year between the four Objectives in our 2023–28 Strategic Plan. Previously this income was classified against our four programmes of activity. This change has no net impact on the financial position.

The Equal Rights Trust

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 30 September 2023

4a Analysis of expenditure (current year)

	Charitable activities								
	Raising funds £	Adoption £	Implementation £	Development £	Use £	Governance costs £	Support costs £	2023 Total £	2022 Total £
Staff costs (Note 7)	8,535	54,182	28,697	19,953	41,957	19,104	19,659	192,088	239,201
Rent, rates, utilities & insurance		-	-	-	-	-	13,229	13,229	17,238
Office supplies, maintenance, IT Costs		-	-	-	-	-	2,975	2,975	1,048
Partners' expenses		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,294
Sub-grants (Note 6)		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15,066
Workshops, forums & roundtables		444	-	-	-	-	-	444	975
Research & publications		28,510	19,957	-	8,553	-	-	57,020	92,248
Project travel		486	-	-	-	2,738	-	3,224	(246)
Project consultants		-	3,529	-	1,176	-	-	4,705	19,444
Litigation fees and costs		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1,066)
Audit and accounting fees		-	-	-	-	10,778	-	10,778	20,699
Bank charges		-	-	-	-	2,943	-	2,943	4,366
Depreciation and loss on disposal of fixed assets		115	214	-	267	-	-	596	-
Forex movement		687	1,273	-	1,588	-	4,950	8,498	331
Other costs		1,198	2,219	-	2,769	1,308	-	7,494	9,594
Total direct costs	8,535	85,623	55,889	19,953	56,309	36,871	40,813	303,993	423,193
Allocation of support costs		15,273	8,089	5,624	11,827	-	(40,813)	-	-
Allocation of governance costs	-	13,797	7,308	5,081	10,684	(36,871)	-	-	-
Total expenditure 2023	8,535	114,693	71,286	30,659	78,821	-	-	303,993	423,193
Total expenditure 2022	12,633	117,295	95,530	84,909	112,826	-	-	-	423,193

The Trust applies a consistent methodology in designating expenditure between our four strategic objectives. Staff costs are allocated based on assessment of the proportion of total staff time spent on activities within each objective area. This is informed by staff time recording during the course of the year, though the final proportions are estimated, given that many of our activities sit across multiple objectives. For non-staff costs, expenditure items are allocated by the senior management team, based on the objective which each activity contributes to; this is informed by allocations made by budget holders. Again, a degree of estimation is required, given that many activities contribute to multiple objectives. Differences in the proportion of staff costs and non-staff costs attributed to each programme reflect the fact that certain programmes of work require a higher proportion of staff expertise, while others involve higher levels of direct expenditures. As set out in note 1k, support and governance costs are reallocated to programmes of activity based on the proportion of staff time and cost allocated to each programme.

The Equal Rights Trust

Notes to the financial statements

For the year ended 30 September 2023

4b Analysis of expenditure (prior year)

	Charitable activities					Governance costs £	Support costs £	2022 Total £
	Raising funds £	Adoption £	Implementation £	Development £	Use £			
Staff costs (Note 7)	12,633	66,560	31,308	46,633	47,351	15,428	19,288	239,201
Rent, rates, utilities & insurance	-	-	-	-	-	-	17,238	17,238
Office supplies, maintenance, IT Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,048	1,048
Partners' expenses	-	-	2,147	-	2,147	-	-	4,294
Sub-grants (Note 6)	-	-	7,533	-	7,533	-	-	15,066
Workshops, forums & roundtables	-	975	-	-	-	-	-	975
Research & publications	-	18,450	27,674	18,450	27,674	-	-	92,248
Project travel	-	-	-	(246)	-	-	-	(246)
Project consultants	-	3,889	11,667	-	3,889	-	-	19,444
Litigation fees and costs	-	-	(1,066)	-	-	-	-	(1,066)
Audit and accounting fees	-	839	2,329	1,082	3,309	13,139	-	20,699
Bank charges	-	-	-	-	-	4,366	-	4,366
Depreciation and loss on disposal of fixed assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Forex movement	-	37	102	47	145	-	-	331
Other costs	-	586	1,625	755	2,309	-	4,320	9,594
Total direct costs	12,633	91,335	83,319	66,721	94,358	32,933	41,894	423,193
Allocation of support costs		14,534	6,837	10,183	10,340	-	(41,894)	-
Allocation of governance costs	-	11,426	5,374	8,005	8,128	(32,933)	-	-
Total expenditure 2022	12,633	117,295	95,530	84,909	112,826	-	-	423,193

The Trust applies a consistent methodology in designating expenditure between our four strategic objectives. Staff costs are allocated based on assessment of the proportion of total staff time spent on activities within each objective area. This is informed by staff time recording during the course of the year, though the final proportions are estimated, given that many of our activities sit across multiple objectives. For non-staff costs, expenditure items are allocated by the senior management team, based on the objective which each activity contributes to; this is informed by allocations made by budget holders. Again, a degree of estimation is required, given that many activities contribute to multiple objectives. Differences in the proportion of staff costs and non-staff costs attributed to each programme reflect the fact that certain programmes of work require a higher proportion of staff expertise, while others involve higher levels of direct expenditures. As set out in note 1k, support and governance costs are reallocated to programmes of activity based on the proportion of staff time and cost allocated to each programme.

5a Grant making

	2023 £	2022 £
Cost		
Undisclosed grant 4	–	15,066
At the end of the year	–	15,066

As part of our grant contracts, we work with partner organisations to implement our charitable activities across the world. In order to deliver certain activities and objectives, this includes either ourselves or our partners making sub-grants to third parties, within the framework of grant agreements with them. This note discloses those sub-grants made to third parties, with reference to the overall grant under which they took place.

Undisclosed grants are not disclosed due to the sensitivity of these grants.

6 Net income/expenditure for the year

This is stated after charging / (crediting):

	2023 £	2022 £
Depreciation	596	–
Operating lease rentals:		
Property	6,171	11,064
Auditor's remuneration (excluding VAT):		
Audit	9,200	8,000
Other services	–	6,300
Foreign exchange losses or (gains)	8,498	331

7 Analysis of staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses, and the cost of key management personnel

Staff costs were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Salaries and wages	166,922	207,259
Social security costs	13,553	18,573
Employer's contribution to defined contribution pension schemes	11,613	13,369
	<u>192,088</u>	<u>239,201</u>

1 employee received employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs and employer's national insurance) during the year that fell within the band of £60,000 to £70,000 (2022: one).

The total employee benefits (including pension contributions and employer's national insurance) of the key management personnel were £77,581 (2022: £71,817).

The charity trustees were neither paid nor received any other benefits from employment with the charity in the year (2022: £nil). No charity trustee received payment for professional or other services supplied to the charity (2022: £nil).

Trustees' expenses represents the payment or reimbursement of travel and subsistence costs totalling £1,308 (2022: £nil).

8 Staff numbers

The average number of employees (head count based on number of staff employed) during the year was 4 (2022: 5).

Staff are split across the activities of the charitable company as follows (full time equivalent basis):

	2023 No.	2022 No.
Charitable activities	3.0	4.0
Management and administration	1.0	1.0
	<u>4.0</u>	<u>5.0</u>

9 Related party transactions

The Trust received no grant from any entity in which trustees had an official role: (2022: £16,870). The Trust also received no fee from any entity in which a trustee had an official role: (2022: £15,475).

Aggregate donations from related parties were £14,500 (2022: £5,000), which comprise donations from members of the board and senior management.

10 Taxation

The charitable company is exempt from corporation tax as all its income is charitable and is applied for charitable purposes.

11 Tangible fixed assets

	Office equipment £	Computer equipment £	Total £
Cost or valuation			
At the start of the year	229	9,885	10,114
Additions in year	–	2,978	2,978
Disposals in year	9	120	129
At the end of the year	220	12,743	12,963
Depreciation			
At the start of the year	229	9,885	10,114
Charge for the year	–	596	596
Eliminated on disposal	9	120	129
At the end of the year	220	10,361	10,581
Net book value			
At the end of the year	–	2,382	2,382
At the start of the year	–	–	–

All of the above assets are used for charitable purposes.

12 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	10,283	79,076
Other debtors	2,991	16,147
Prepayments	2,407	2,669
Accrued income	42,330	15,798
	58,011	113,690

Trade debtors included a provision made for bad debt of £4,259.91 (2022: £nil).

All of the charity's financial instruments, both assets and liabilities, are measured at amortised cost. The carrying values of these are shown above and also in note 13 below.

13 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	13,763	14,431
Taxation and social security	5,678	6,550
Other creditors	31,408	49,005
Accruals	37,073	48,649
	87,921	118,636

14 Pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution scheme. Contributions are charged in the statement of financial activities as they accrue. The charge for the year was £11,613 (2022: £13,369). There were 4 (2022: 5) scheme members at the balance sheet date. £1,402 (2022: £1,588) of contributions was owed to the scheme as of that date.

15a Analysis of net assets between funds (current year)

	General unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	2,382	–	2,382
Net current assets	31,126	8,275	39,401
Net assets at 30 September 2023	33,508	8,275	41,783

15b Analysis of net assets between funds (prior year)

	General unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total funds £
Tangible fixed assets	–	–	–
Net current assets	48,598	11,521	60,119
Net assets at 30 September 2022	48,598	11,521	60,119

16a Movements in funds (current year)

	At 1 October 2022 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 30 September 2023 £
Restricted funds:					
Colonialism and Education – Joseph Rountree Charitable Trust	11,521	–	(3,246)	–	8,275
Global Labor Program – Inclusive Futures – Sightsavers		38,435	(38,435)		–
Other Projects		(7,000)		7,000	–
Total restricted funds	11,521	31,435	(41,681)	7,000	8,275
General funds	48,598	254,222	(262,312)	(7,000)	33,508
Total unrestricted funds	48,598	254,222	(262,312)	(7,000)	33,508
Total funds	60,119	285,657	(303,993)	–	41,783

The narrative to explain the purpose of each fund is given at the foot of the note below.

16b Movements in funds (prior year)

	At 1 October 2021 £	Income & gains £	Expenditure & losses £	Transfers £	At 30 September 2022 £
Restricted funds:					
Colonialism and Education – Joseph Rountree Charitable	23,645	52,520	(64,644)	–	11,521
Undisclosed Project 4	–	38,661	(38,661)	–	–
Global Labor Program – Inclusive Futures – Sightsavers		27,923	(27,923)		
Other projects	966	–	(1,500)	534	–
Total restricted funds	24,611	119,104	(132,728)	534	11,521
General funds	5,721	333,875	(290,465)	(534)	48,598
Total unrestricted funds	5,271	333,875	(290,465)	(534)	48,598
Total funds	30,333	452,979	(423,193)	–	60,119

Purposes of restricted funds

General Restricted Funds

Restricted funds are those provided for various programmes that the Equal Rights Trust is commissioned to perform throughout the world.

Undisclosed Project 4 was a grant contract worth approximately £576k over 45 months. It finished in September 2021

General Restricted Funds (continued)

The Colonialism and Education project is a grant contract funded by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust worth £105k over 25 months. It is due to finish 31 March 2024

The Global Labor Program – Inclusive Futures project is a sub-grant contract funded by the U.S Agency for International Development, awarded by The Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind (Sightsavers) worth approximately £125k over 30 months and is due to finish September 2024

Each of these projects aims to promote the realisation of the rights to equality and non-discrimination through the delivery of one or more of the core charitable activities of the Trust – Adoption, Implementation, Development and Use of comprehensive equality law – in one or more jurisdictions. These projects together represent 100% of the restricted funds held at 30 September 2023.

Transfers between funds

£7,000 was required to transfer between the unrestricted and restricted funds for Other projects. This was due to an agreed settlement between the European Commission and the Trust regarding expenditure which the Commission had deemed potentially ineligible.

17 Operating lease commitments

The charity's total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases is as follows for each of the following periods

	Property 2023 £	2022 £
Less than one year	595	893
	<u>595</u>	<u>893</u>