

# ANNUAL REPORT

# 2024



**GRACEDOM ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH 2024**

**INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE IN  
ORDER FOR THEM TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN THEM**

# A WORD FROM OUR CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

## A strong community brings impactful change

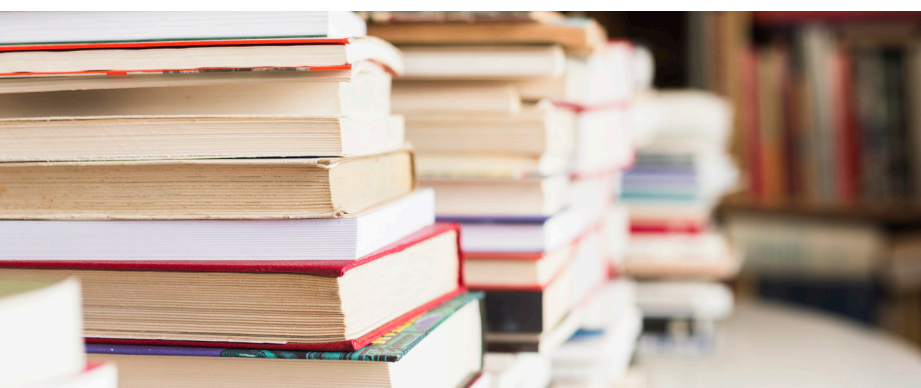
The past few years have been a challenging and changeable time due to global issues that affected economies in diverse ways. Gracedom has overcome their share of uncertainties and have had to look deeply within to reinvigorate its sense of being. With every challenge there comes learning and we took the opportunity to instigate a significant review of our mentoring community. As a result, we created a new mentor community strategy aimed at fostering shared learning, better human connection and promoting greater diversity within the community. The overarching goal? To provide the best support possible for the young people we work with.

Having reflected on the past ten years, we're looking forward to what we want the next ten to look like. Our underlining focus is on making sure the organisation remains values-led, financially sustainable and ultimately centred on the needs of the young people we serve. We want our products and programmes to be tailored to address the challenges they face in the post-pandemic environment. We want to harness our networks to create a deep and long-lasting impact for our young people. We're excited at the prospect of seeing some of our original mentees coming full circle and 'paying it forward' as mentors within our programmes.

It has been a privilege to work with all my fellow Directors who bring their time and energy to the organisation. I am pleased that we have welcomed new volunteers who bring formidable experience from relevant sectors, with backgrounds such as in finance and infrastructure. I am confident we have a rich mix of skills to ensure strong governance of our organisation.

Our achievements and the recent Covid-related challenges have shown us that we are best when we are nimble, innovative, unafraid to adapt and resilient. This is especially important in what may be an even more challenging future financial climate for all public and voluntary sector organisations. But new opportunities are there if we look for them and are bold enough to grasp them. Our forward-looking review have helped us prepare for these new possibilities. Key to this will be working in closer collaboration with stakeholders and delivery partners, especially those in health and education, to give better and more joined-up support. Most importantly, we must ensure the diverse voices of young people informs all that we do.

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# WHY WE ARE NEEDED

Young people from the least advantaged communities face a double disadvantage. Gender inequality is exacerbated by poverty: both the 'glass ceiling' and the 'class ceiling' continue to hold young people back.

The Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis continue to impact young people's confidence, mental health and emotional maturity. The attainment gap for the least advantaged young people and those privileged is widening, significantly affecting their life chances. If we want to break the cycle of disadvantage and inequality that more and more young people are facing, we need to equip them with:

- ❑ the self-belief to realise their ambition
- ❑ the opportunities to develop a voice and a platform for it to be heard
- ❑ the support needed to overcome obstacles, for as long as they need

We believe no young person should have their futures limited by gender, sex, ethnicity, background, or parental income and that they should be supported to reach their true potential, discover their self-worth, and develop their capacity to shape their world and their futures.





## WHAT WE DO

We deliver mentoring with relatable role models, access to unique opportunities and a life-long network of support, to empower young people to raise their aspirations and build their confidence, supporting them to achieve their full potential in life. We have supported countless young people to believe in their unlimited futures.

We work with young people from the least advantaged communities in areas where deprivation indices or child poverty rates are highest. Many of the young people we work with qualify for Free School Meals or receive additional support due to other challenges.

## We offer:

- **1-to-1 mentoring**

We match young people with a mentor who has 3+ years' professional experience, who we vet, train and support throughout the programme. Mentoring sessions focus on building confidence, resilience, CV writing, interview skills, knowledge of opportunities and awareness of the working world. Our mentors are drawn from a range of business sectors including the arts, STEM, transport, finance, media and law, as well as community organisations and civil society.

Work experience, insight talks, visits and skills workshops We partner with businesses, community leaders and organisations to offer work experience, site visits, career round-tables and 'A Day in the Life of' talks.

- **Workshop programme**

Our workshops support young people to develop confidence, articulate their skills, interests and talents, and be able to talk about themselves in a positive way. They also offer insights into the world of work through round-table sessions with local businesses.

- **Ambassador Community**

After participating in the mentoring programme all mentees can become Ambassadors and are invited to join this free, lifelong community, similar to an alumni network, enabling them to access support, networking and employability opportunities, and a platform to develop their voice.

# Mentoring Approach

We do this through one-to-one mentoring with positive role models and team activities to promote leadership, trust and responsibility.

Mentors use their skills and experience to support these young people, guiding them through a period of significant change. This may involve helping them build professional networks, complete applications, access internships or work.

**Friday Evening Diversionary Activities** Friday evening activities were an effective tool in engaging young people with the project. Each Friday, a high quality offsite activity took place. These included bowling, cinema trips or a meal at a restaurant. Friday evenings were identified as a high risk time of the week both for getting into trouble and for associating with negatively behaved peers. Therefore, the activities were an effective diversion.

**High quality activities were used so that they were a realistic and attractive diversion:** young people were not prepared to 'give up' their Friday evening unless the offer was really good. An unexpected positive outcome of the Friday activities was the informal group discussions that mentors were able to facilitate. Young people shared information with each other about their offending history in an appropriate way. Many young people felt they had to live up to certain stereotypes with their peers to maintain their status. These discussions enabled them to understand the similar patterns of behaviour and circumstance by which many of them had got into trouble and how this can be avoided. Importantly, it dispelled many myths and the glamorisation of their offending behaviour.

## Money Sense

**Money for Life** Money for Life is a programme designed to inspire a generation to make the most of their money. From empowering young people to feel confident and start talking openly about money to providing high-quality training and crucial support systems, Money for Life equipped 14-25 year olds across the UK with the knowledge, life skills and provision needed to manage their money. The programme, supported by, involved both face-to-face and online training, as well as opportunities to use social action to embed new skills. The programme culminated in an award ceremony where a group of young people with disabilities won the top prize for their project to support other young people with disabilities to lead more independent lives and equip them with the skills to manage their own money.



## Our Schools

We believe children learn as much, if not more, outside the classroom as they do inside it. The curriculum at Gracedom Schools is designed to build resilience, improve self-discipline, and develop the skills required to work effectively as part of a team. Our tutorial system also helps to ensure that children are reflective about themselves and their experiences with the aim of understanding how they might improve, which helps to build self-reliance and a sense of personal responsibility. However, for all its educational benefits, our aim is to ensure that the co-curriculum is a source of fun and enjoyment in an ever more stressful modern age. So, learning environment allows students to work in the social action sphere. We are also determined that children should be able to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible and that they are not restricted to a narrow programme. Talent in any activity is respected but participation is hugely valued, too, and children are encouraged to work hard in areas where they may not feel comfortable rather than sticking solely to well-known territory. In some activities we look to them to develop leadership skills, but in others we hope they will be effective 'followers'. It is our goal that children develop positive values, encouraged by the example of their peers and their teachers. Although we make no apology for aiming for excellence in all we do, our teachers and coaches see themselves as educators first and foremost.

Working together with children and we are building a different future. One where every child receives an education and has their voice heard. One where all young people are free from violence, in control of their own body and know their rights. To get there, we deliver long-term development programmes and respond to emergencies. We campaign with young people on issues that matter to them and call on governments to do more to protect children's rights. That means working closely with children, young people and their families and communities. They are experts in their own lives. They help us understand the challenges to change. And they work with us to find ways to do so.

We also know that young often face the greatest disadvantage because of their age and gender. That's why ensuring young people get equal chances is central to all our work. We listen to and work with them to learn how we can support them. When we work together, a better future is possible.





## THRIVING CULTURE

We have continued to embed our Values and our Feminist Leadership Principles to enable our people and organisation to thrive. Fostering an inclusive, empowering culture that supports staff wellbeing and effective delivery is crucial for our impact. We have continued to implement both our Diversity and Inclusion, and Anti-Racism Action Plans. This has included work to make our recruitment systems and processes more inclusive, and introducing Anti-racism and Allyship training for staff.

We have reviewed our experience of hybrid working and we continue to evolve the way we work so that we are enabling flexibility for staff and promoting productive ways of working. We've improved our ways of working including with a new user-friendly intranet.

We have also started a process of reviewing our organisational structures to ensure that these are aligned to our future needs. We completed a review of our International Programmes, Finance and Senior Leadership Teams.

# LOOKING FORWARD

Looking forward, we have started a project to review our pay and benefits architecture. As we develop our new strategy, will be setting priorities for how we continue to create a culture and environment where our organisation and people can thrive.



# THINK DIGITAL

To engage new audiences, increase income, and have the most impact for children and young people, we need effective technology and tools. This year we launched the Technology that Works Framework that ensures standardised and supported management of technology projects. Within this portfolio we have had several successful technology launches this year, including a new database for managing donations. We have also launched a new recruitment web microsite and applicant tracking system ensuring a better experience for those applying for roles.



Our work to improve the supporter digital experience and increase income online has continued apace this year, including significant progress towards a website launch.

Think Digital combines with our Fluent Online. 'FLUENT O' addresses the lack of skills in computer science in young people, empowering them to become digital creators in an ever-changing global society. Working with young people aged 11-25, many of whom have no

prior coding experience, the programme sparks an interest in code and builds technical skills through themed activities that are relevant to the young people's passions, whether that be fashion, sport or space. We were very pleased to be recognised as winner of the Tech 4 Good: Digital Skills Awards – profile the importance of our work and connecting us to tech organisations and funders who could further our work in building digital skills of young people. 3900 young people took part in computer science sessions as part of Fluent O 54% of these young people were female – a group that has traditionally been under-represented in the tech industry 95% of young people improved their coding skills "Fluent O has allowed us to bring computer science to groups of young people that always thought this was something that 'other people did' youth worker. We plan to continue this programme next year – aiming to address the lack of embedded, sustainable digital provision in the youth sector by inspire and upskilling youth workers to become Digital Transformative Agents. We look forward to sharing more positive impacts.

## IDEAL SANITATION

Together with our partners we exceeded all three of our targets on the number of people who directly benefited from our work installing clean water and decent toilets, and promoting good hygiene, in their homes, schools and health care centres. We also indirectly benefited millions more by influencing and strengthening the policies and practices of governments, businesses and civil society organisations, so that we can spark lasting change on a bigger scale. We advocated strongly for the Sustainable Development Goals on water, sanitation and hygiene, and are early adopters of the new counting standard for people to gain access to them. This is a much higher standard and is championed by the Joint Monitoring Programme, which is tasked with reporting on global progress towards everyone, everywhere having clean water and decent toilets by 2030. We are determined to make a big contribution we can to the Sustainable Development Goals, especially Goal 6 – water, sanitation and hygiene for all by 2030. This means that, while we will always carry out work directly with the poorest communities, our direct reach figures only tell part of the story. We make lasting change happen on a bigger scale for many more people by: convincing governments to change laws and policies strengthening service providers' capacity changing attitudes and behaviours pooling knowledge and resources rallying support from people and organisations around the world. Along with other international nongovernmental organisations, we are currently developing our own method of recording our impact on people who benefit from clean water, decent toilets, or good hygiene through the activities above. This is a challenging area of measurement, where there is little precedent, but we are committed to establishing appropriate measures in this area for our future reports. We made good progress on this last year and already, in addition to our direct reach



numbers, we can report that we: influenced 14 national policies, strategies or standards improved the management of water services in 26 public utilities strengthened the management capacity of 84 rural districts so they are better able to deliver clean water, decent toilets, or good hygiene to their constituents

We welcome the increasing global attention being paid to hygiene. However, this has focused mostly on handwashing with soap, when people benefit more by combining this with food hygiene, staying clean during their periods, and keeping homes and hospitals clean. This takes more than adequate facilities – hygienic habits are essential. And changing behaviours is hard. But growing evidence shows that behavioural psychology approaches work better than traditional one-off hygiene lessons. Our experience also demonstrates what is needed to make it normal for everyone, everywhere to practise good hygiene. Integrating a package of interventions, including evidence-based hygiene promotion with water and sanitation improvements, and with health, nutrition and education policies, is key.

# LOOKING FORWARD

We are now entering the final stage of the new website build, with launch. We will also be testing new approaches to social media and digital fundraising tools to attract, engage and retain our audiences and increase income

## FUNDRAISING STATEMENT

Gracedom aims to build strong, respectful and transparent relationships with our financial supporters. It is only through the generosity of individuals, companies and other organisations that our work is possible. We know that for our supporters, their charitable giving is an important and positive part of their lives. We will always strive to achieve the highest standards in our fundraising and communication with supporters.

### The following principles guide our fundraising:

- ❑ We aim to inspire people to give or raise money for Gracedom.
- ❑ We thank our supporters appropriately and demonstrate the difference their money makes.
- ❑ We keep supporters' data secure and do not sell or share it for marketing purposes.
- ❑ We demonstrate our commitment to the Code of Fundraising Practice and the Fundraising Promise.
- ❑ We ensure that all of our fundraising is compliant with the Code of Fundraising Practice, and we monitor this regularly through our Fundraising Compliance Working Group: there are currently no areas of non-compliance.
- ❑ We manage agencies and professional fundraising organisations working for us closely and demand high standards of them to ensure supporters and the wider public do not feel pressured to give and are treated with respect at all times, with a particular focus on the protection of vulnerable people.
- ❑ We undertake a series of checks to ensure fundraising partners and agencies are financially viable and meet our ethical criteria, prior to working with them.
- ❑ We listen to supporters and act on their communication requests.
- ❑ We endeavour to build long-term relationships with our supporters, enabling them to support the charity in all the different ways they choose.
- ❑ We genuinely appreciate feedback from supporters and the public and have procedures in place to review our fundraising activities in light of feedback and complaints we may receive.



# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO

## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Gracedom, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and the related notes. 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). This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's trustees 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 charity and the charity's trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed. In our opinion the financial statements:

- ☐ give a true and fair view of the state of the charity's affairs as of 31 August 2023, and of its incoming resources and application of resources, for the year then ended;
- ☐ have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- ☐ have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

## 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 charity 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

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Peter Dema

Dema Accounting and Marketing Consultants

18 Pilton Green EH4 4HT

# Strategy Ahead

As we enter the final year of our current strategy, we will be looking to consolidate our work of the past few years and complete any outstanding tasks linked to achieving our strategic goals. We anticipate that this will continue to be a time of change for the country as we navigate the United Kingdom's likely departure from the EU. This will inevitably have consequences for young people as less time is spent on policy development that might benefit them and central funding for the youth sector remains unchanged. Our purpose remains unchanged and ever more important in this political context. We will redouble our efforts to demonstrate the value of youth work in providing positive activities for young people, keeping them safe and developing their life skills. In this way we can play a vital role in equipping young people for education, training, work and life. We will build a Gracedom Movement and work with the relevant bodies to set out their cross-departmental commitment to young people. Through working in partnership with other leading national youth charities and the grassroots youth organisations across the country who form part of our movement we believe we can win much needed support and investment for the sector. Over the past year we have sought to address rising levels of serious violence, declining mental health and well-being and poor-quality employment opportunities for key groups of young people. These three areas will remain an important focus. To support the Gracedom Movement, we will launch a range of collectives and masterclasses for youth work practitioners, bringing them together to explore best practice and share learnings. We will continue to deliver our much-needed free safeguarding training to ensure all young people have access to high quality provision in their local community.

As the evidence base around the importance of developing life skills grows, we will continue to invest in and build our portfolio of national skills development programmes across Arts, Wellbeing, Citizenship and Enterprise. Through these programmes we achieve a triple benefit; training local youth workers and volunteers with vital skills that will remain in their community, training young people in skills that will equip them for life, and upskilling members of the wider community through their participation in youth led volunteering and social action initiatives. In addition, we are excited about the continued growth and success.

We plan to welcome more young people with disabilities as we sustain our continuous investment and improvement plan for the centre; adding new equipment to improve accessibility and learning opportunities. To deliver our strategic aims we will deliver against our financial targets, ensuring the charity remains in robust financial health.



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Gracedom is committed to employing and partnering with people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, and with a wide range of experiences, to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in everything we do. We aim to bring together people with different points of view and operate in a way that enables such differences to be embraced and respected, where everyone feels valued and we get the best outcomes. It is this diversity of talent that allows us to deliver the work we do directly for and on behalf of young people. We have established a diversity and inclusion taskforce to give our employees the opportunity to shape a great place to work.

We are committed to providing accessible programmes and services and try to involve different users to help shape what we do.

Our equal opportunities, dignity at work and diversity policy sets out our commitment to promoting equality for all and guarding against discrimination on the grounds of disability or any other protected characteristic, including through our approach to recruitment, selection, training, development and promotion. The charity firmly believes in gender equality across all aspects of our employment. When it comes to diversity and inclusion, we want to set a high benchmark. And, while we know we still have a long way to travel, over the past year we have made progress over the past year and we will work hard to continue to progress and improve our diversity, inclusion and equality.

**Risk management** The Board of Trustees have a risk management strategy that comprises:

Ongoing review of the risks the charity may face The establishment of systems and procedures to mitigate those risks identified.

The implementation of procedures designed to minimise any potential impact on the charity should those risks materialise We have implemented a system of review and reporting on the identification and management of risk with the aim of continuous improvement in all our related policies and procedures. This work is carried out by the Senior Leadership Team, supervised by the Organisational Development Committee and reviewed on a regular basis by the Board of Trustees. It has enabled the charity to plan emergency procedures and make contingency plans where these are appropriate.



Gracedom ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31st March 2020																	
DATE	DETAILS	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	CHEQUE NO	ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE							Rent with bills	Cornerstone Coll	Foodbank			
					Mentoring	Youth Center	StreetKids	oneries/Equipm	Missions								
01/04/2019	Balance b/f	1,800.00															
30/04/2019																	
30/05/2019	Members contribution	1,100.00	1,100.00														
31/05/2019	Members contribution	900.00	900.00					600.00	70.00								
30/06/2019	Members contribution	25,644.50	25,644.50														
30/07/2019	Members contribution	23,250.00	23,250.00			1,000.00			550.00	1,344.50	5000	2,000.00	10000				
30/08/2019	Members contribution	22,500.00	22,500.00			2,000.00			1,250.00		2,300.00	2,000.00	14,700				
18/09/2019	Members contribution	15,262.50	15,262.50			1,000.00					2,500.00	2000	15,000				
29/10/2019	Members contribution	21,500.00	21,500.00			2,000.00			2,000.00		1,000.00	1000	10,000	1262.5			
30/11/2019	members contribution	17,875.00	17,875.00			2,000.00					2,500.00	2,000.00	11,000				
30/12/2019	Members contribution	10,000.00	10,000.00			2,000.00					2,000.00	2,000.00	9000	875			
16/01/2020	Members contribution	17,625.00	17,625.00			2,000.00		2,000.00			1,000.00	2,000.00	2000				
22/02/2020	Members contribution	12,750.00	12,750.00			2,000.00		2,000.00			1,000.00	1,000.00	7625				
30/03/2020	members contribution	16,750.50	17,678.00			1,000.00					1,500.00	1,000.00	6250				
											1,000.00	4,500.00	9,000	1,187.50			
		186,957.50	186,085.00			15,430.00	4,600.00	3,870.00	1,344.50	19,800.00	19,500.00	95,475.00	7075				