



THE GESHEREU SUPPORT NETWORK

Registered Charity Number 1157062

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS

for the year ended 31st December 2020

Registered Address:
21 Maple Street
London, W1T 4BE

THE GESHEREU SUPPORT GROUP

Trustees' Annual Report 2020

TRUSTEES

Bernard, Robert	Re-appointed 11 th November 2020
Weber, Peter	Re-appointed 11 th November 2020
Name withheld by agreement with Charity Commission	Re-appointed 11 th November 2020

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

The activities of the Charity are governed by its Constitution dated 4th May 2014.

STRUCTURE

The Charity commenced activities on 1st January 2014 and those involved at the start agreed to formalise the organisation by registering with the UK Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) whose voting members are its charity trustees. The registration was completed on 15th May 2014. This is the sixth annual report.

APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES

Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed by resolution passed at a meeting of the charity trustees. Every trustee so appointed must satisfy the eligibility requirements as set out in the constitution.

OBJECTIVES

The objects of the charity set out in the constitution are as follows:-

'To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people of all ages who have been raised in or have spent a significant part of their lives in strict closed religious communities (in particular ultraorthodox Jewish communities) and having left their communities, from remaining socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society and to do all such other things as are necessary for the achievement of the objects.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of one or more of the following factors:

unemployment; financial hardship; youth or old age; ill health (physical or mental); substance abuse or dependency including alcohol and drugs; discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, disability, ethnic origin, religion, belief, creed, sexual orientation or gender reassignment; poor educational or skills attainment; relationship and family breakdown; poor housing (that is housing that does not meet basic habitable standards); crime (either as a victim of crime or as an offender rehabilitating into society).'

MAIN ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT

The trustees have satisfied themselves that GesherEU's activities are compliant with law and guidance for charities on public benefit. The charity's charitable purposes are set out in the 'OBJECTIVES' above. In planning our activities for the year we have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit at our trustee meetings.

The activities described in the section below are focused on:

- 1) Rebuilding a community for each individual who has lost contact with family and friends from the community in which he or she grew up. Many of our service users now keep in touch with each other outside meetings. The use of a secure WhatsApp group and 'private, hidden' Facebook group both restricted to those who attend GesherEU has continued to be popular and improves communications outside meetings.
- 2) Have contact in social settings, with volunteers of all ages, who have not come from a Charedi background. This enables service users to build a network of friends and contacts that do not originate from their old communities and introduces them to cultural "protocols" with which they are not familiar. It also helps them develop colloquial language skills.
- 3) Introduce service users to concepts and culture (art, theatre, science, sports etc.) with which they did not grow up.
- 4) Supporting service users through the family court system. However, we do not finance legal costs from core funds.
- 5) Giving the GesherEU community a voice.

Often the above activities overlap or are combined.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE YEAR

GesherEU has continued to operate within its financial means and has been effective in both strengthening the GesherEU community and helping individuals. During the year there has been a 12% increase in the number of individuals using the services of GesherEU. We have 84 service users, 55 of whom we have been in regular contact with throughout the year. They range in age from 20 - 45, with approximately an equal number of men and women.

We continue to welcome new service users, some of whom are just starting their journey into the wider community and others who have been living outside of the Charedi community for a number of years. New service users continue to come from across the various Charedi communities with the vast majority now living in Barnet and Harrow. GesherEU has continued to grow in the Manchester and Salford area with their own regular social activities.

We continue to encourage service-users to engage with governmental bodies as part of our efforts to give them a voice. We cooperate with other charities where appropriate. Our concerns are primarily with education provision as this is a significant obstacle to our service users exercising their choice to lead a lifestyle of their choosing.

During this year, GesherEU continued to benefit from a National Lottery Awards for All grant to fund a community coordinator. We also secured a 3 year restricted grant from Trust for London (£14k/year) to continue this work.

The social sessions are a key starting place for service users to make new connections, lost when family and friends break off contact when individuals leave or are forced to leave their communities. We started the year with bi-monthly 'drop-in' sessions, weekend visits and Friday night meals. In February we held a very successful community weekend away in Derbyshire with increased input from service-users in its organisation and execution.

Following the March lockdown due to COVID-19 our sessions moved online via Zoom. These sessions have been very successful in keeping service-users in touch with each other and have continued to enable us to widen their horizons by welcoming session leaders from a wide range of backgrounds, cultures and professions. From a diplomat to a space scientist and from a Yiddish singer to session on the history of Christianity, the variety of session types has attracted a very good attendance from service-users in London, Manchester, as well as those away at University and who have moved to Israel and the USA.

Following a substantial donor commitment we have been able to offer professional counselling to a number of service users from a counsellor who has undertaken training in the impact of leaving high control communities. We have more service users in need of counselling and will be looking to fundraise to help increase the number to whom we can offer counselling.

Again this year, we have provided emotional and practical support to a number of individuals as they negotiate the family court system. Our volunteer social worker continues to meet service users and provides invaluable guidance.

We have again helped a number of service users with small zero interest loans or bursaries (or a combination) where we have not been able to help them find other sources of support. A number have lost income and employment due to the series of lockdowns and restrictions in place over the year. We prioritise those that will help in earning a living in the short or longer term but also help in emergency situations such as an unexpected cut in or non-payment of benefits. We see this as replacing the family support our service users no longer enjoy and believe our rapid assessment process has prevented use of high cost alternatives that may be the start of a debt crisis. We see a high adherence to repayment schedules which enables us to help others. Education has been a focus for our support this year.

CHALLENGES

The COVID-19 restrictions have made it very difficult to integrate new service-users into the GesherEU community. Zoom is not the best place to get to know new people and make new friends. Some new service users have become regular attendees however we look forward to them cementing relationships when face to face meetings resume.

A number of our service users saw their income drop or stop due to the pandemic. We have sought to keep in touch with those impacted, helping where we can. We registered as a referring agency to the local Trussell Trust food bank. As mentioned above, we are supporting in a small way those impacted and have been able, so far, to use core funding not used on curtailed activities. Due to their short history of registered work since leaving their communities, most do not qualify for government help. We are seeing requests for help increase and the likelihood of repayment of advances reduce as the situation drags on.

We continue to see service-users struggle to catch up on their education. Although we have relationships with organisations that can give tuition, the need to work in low paid jobs in order to pay high rents leaves little time and energy to catch up some 15 years of missed education.

We have seen little real change in the education of service users leaving the community. We are still being contacted by young men with not a single recognised qualification. We need to seek new ways of ensuring that those responsible give all young people emerging from Charedi communities the life skills they require to function in the outside world.

POLICY ON RESERVES

The charity does not intend to build up reserves other than those required to ensure that it can meet its day to day expenses and budgeted projects.

TRUSTEE APPROVAL

The trustees declare that they approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R E Bernard', with a long, sweeping horizontal line underneath.

ROBERT BERNARD
Trustee
28th January 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P Weber', with a long, sweeping horizontal line underneath.

PETER WEBER
Trustee – Hon Treasurer
28th January 2021

THE GESHEREU SUPPORT NETWORK (Charity number 1157062)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE GESHEREU SUPPORT NETWORK

I report to the Trustees on my examination of the accounts of The GesherEU Support Network (the Trust) for the year ended 31st December 2020 which are set out on pages 7 and 8.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

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

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act: or
2. the accounts did not accord with the accounting records: or
3. the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

Signed:



Donald Glazer B.A, F.C.A.

8 Darnhills, Watford Road, Radlett, WD7 8LQ

Date: 29th January 2021

THE GESHEREU SUPPORT NETWORK

Registered Charity number 1157062

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2020

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

RECEIPTS	GENERAL FUNDS £	DESIGNATED FUNDS £	RESTRICTED FUNDS £	TOTAL 2020 £	FULL YEAR 2019 £
Income from Charitable Activities					
Loans & Advances repaid	0	2,318	0	2,318	4,498
Income from Residential Events	0	830	0	830	2,536
Income from other Events	0	60	0	60	568
Sub Total	0	3,208	0	3,208	7,602
Voluntary Income Sources					
Donations received	134	10,500	7,000	17,634	1,869
Grants received	1,000	8,000	14,200	23,200	17,600
Gift Aid	224	0	0	224	198
Sub Total	1,358	21,708	21,200	44,266	27,269
Other Income					
Interest	17	0	0	17	12
Total Receipts	£1,375	£21,708	£21,200	£44,283	£27,281
PAYMENTS					
Charitable Activities					
Emergency Support	0	2,535	0	2,535	3,038
Emergency Advances	0	3,600	0	3,600	7,045
Educational Support	0	3,745	800	4,545	550
Shabbat & Festival Dinners	0	430	0	430	1,138
Counselling Support	0	2,880	0	2,880	125
Drop-Ins & Socials Exp (incl virtual events)	0	671	0	671	620
Community Development Project	0	0	7,336	7,336	2,377
Expenditure on Residential Events	0	274	200	474	7,196
Expenditure on other events	0	143	250	393	1,364
Sub Total	0	14,278	8,586	22,864	23,453
Operating Costs					
Insurance	191	0	0	191	191
Telephone	43	0	0	43	73
Travel Expenses	0	0	0	0	238
Bank & Credit Card charges	37	0	0	37	80
Sub Total	271	0	0	271	582
Total Payments	£271	£14,278	£8,586	£23,135	£24,035
Surplus for the Period	1,104	7,430	12,614	21,148	3,246
Cash & Bank Balances at 1st January	1,138	9,799	7,223	18,160	14,914
Balances at 31st December	£2,242	£17,229	£19,837	£39,308	£18,160

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

Monetary Assets

Bank Current Account
Bank Deposit Account
Paypal Account
Soldo Accounts

Balances at 31st December

2020 £	2019 £
654	717
37,930	16,412
4	215
720	816
£39,308	£18,160

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NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st DECEMBER 2020

1. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements of the charity have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis and generally in accordance with the latest Charities Statement of Recommended Practice and The Charities Act 2011

Funds and Reserves

General funds represent the funds of the charity that are not subject to special restrictions regarding their use and are available for application to the general purposes.

Designated Funds are held at the discretion of the trustees and therefore Unrestricted.

Restricted Funds are held to be used specifically in accordance with the donor's instructions

2. DESIGNATED FUNDS

	Balance 1 Jan 2020 £	Transfers Gen Funds £	Received in 2020 £	Paid out in 2020 £	Balance 31 Dec 2020 £
Emergencies Fund - Grants	578	5,000	0	2,535	3,043
Emergencies Fund - Advances	0	2,000	2,318	3,600	718
Educational Enablement	889	6,500	0	3,745	3,644
Shabbat/Festival Dinners	857	500	0	430	927
Counselling	475	1,000	2,500	2,880	1,095
Drop-Ins & Socials Expenses	1,000	1,000	0	741	1,259
Residential Events	3,600	0	870	274	4,196
Other Events	2,400	0	20	73	2,347
	£9,799	£16,000	£5,708	£14,278	£17,229

3. RESTRICTED FUNDS

	Balance 1 Jan 2020 £	Received in 2020 £	Paid out in 2020 £	Balance 31 Dec 2020 £
National Lottery Community Dev Fund	7,223	0	7,223	0
Trust for London	0	14,200	563	13,637
Educational Fund	0	7,000	800	6,200
	£7,223	£21,200	£8,586	£19,837

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Robert Bernard

Peter Weber

28th January 2021


