



# UPSTART PROJECTS & VOICE MAGAZINE

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24





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Charity number: 1157864  
59 Trinity Street, Shrewsbury, SY3 7PQ

# WELCOME

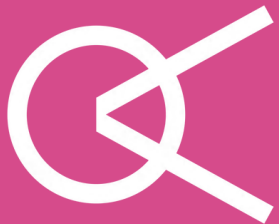
This year Upstart Projects and Voice Magazine celebrate their 10th anniversary! We're marking the milestone by bringing all of our work together under the Voice brand. While Upstart Projects will continue as the registered charity, we will use the Voice brand for our programmes: our arts magazine, our projects with young people, and our training.

We've made this move to celebrate the success of Voice Magazine, which has built up a reputation among young people and professionals alike as a platform for arts and culture, attracting over 2 million readers and supporting thousands of young people to share their creative work and opinions.

Voice is much more than an online magazine: we run local journalism and arts reviewing projects in the Midlands and we provide training and work experience for young people heading towards cultural careers. We support young people from less advantaged communities to enter a workforce which is still dominated by people from privileged backgrounds. Hear from young people about the impact this has made on them on p8.

However, despite growing and thriving since 2014, we are now facing a tough period when there is very little funding for arts charities – the dip in our annual income shown in our accounts reflects this. In future, we'll be increasing our paid-for services and reaching out to donors and corporate sponsors to supplement grant funding. Please do get in touch if your company would like to discuss this.

And supporting Voice is not just something for companies or trusts and foundations. Individual donors make a huge impact on our work. We are so grateful to the numerous people who have joined us as Patrons and Friends of Voice – please consider supporting us to reach more young people by donating at [voicemag.uk/friend](https://voicemag.uk/friend)



Holly Howe, Chair of Trustees, Upstart Projects



# OUR MISSION



Voice Magazine and Training supports young people aged 13-30 to develop their creativity, skills and confidence by taking part in the arts and media.

Our projects open doors for young people to explore their personal interests and potential jobs.

We focus on those with fewer opportunities to take part in the arts or pursue creative careers.

We champion youth voice, leadership and co-production through all our work.



# OUR KEY PROGRAMMES

**Voice Magazine** is an online culture magazine and an open platform for young people's views on the arts and society. Voice provides work experience, training and first jobs for young people interested in careers in the arts and media.

Voice attracted **269,656 readers** and our community of young users has grown to **7,268 members**. Visit **[voicemag.uk](http://voicemag.uk)**

**Creative Pathways** reaches out to young people in disadvantaged communities. They explore the arts on their doorstep, meet professionals, become local arts reviewers and work as young journalists on Voice magazine.

**66 young people** became young arts reviewers or undertook work experience on the magazine.

**Youth Voice Training** offers courses and services to organisations, helping them embed youth voice in their work.

We trained **106 professionals** and worked with **13 organisations**, running bespoke training, facilitating youth participation or undertaking commissions.



# VOICE MAGAZINE HIGHLIGHTS



Voice supports young media-makers, journalists and arts reviewers and provides a platform for young people aged 13+ to showcase their art work and publish reviews, interviews and opinion pieces.

We encourage and support young audiences and amplify young voices. Our training projects are designed to increase diversity across the cultural sector by enabling those with fewer contacts and resources to develop portfolios and build their career path.

This year young people have posted **323 reviews | 341 blogs | 100 interviews | 13 features**

## **Voice Managing Editor, Tom Inniss selects his highlight of 2023- 2024**

Each year Voice supports a young creative to get a foothold in the cultural sector. This year we welcomed Sienna James in her first job after university as Voice Content Editor.

She produced a wide range of thoughtful and audience-engaging themes, including the exploration of craft and activism, the relationship between art and community, and I was impressed by her series on The Young Vote. In advance of the general election, she canvassed our readers for the issues they cared about and discussed their views in interviews with a range of policy-makers.

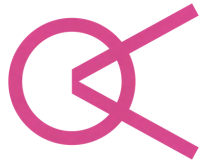
Read Sienna's series round up at: [voicemag.uk/young-vote-24](https://voicemag.uk/young-vote-24)



# VOICE MAGAZINE HIGHLIGHTS



# VOICE IN NUMBERS, 2023/24



## VOICE READERS

**367,600+ visits**

**227,600+ unique visitors**

**Age** 34% are between 18-24, 22% are 25-34, 40% are over 35. *We can't track under 18s*

**Gender balance** 57.5% female and 42.5% male

**Location** Readers are spread across the UK, with 60% outside London, concentrations in many cities and reach to rural areas too.

## VOICE MEMBERS & PARTICIPANTS

**7,203 Voice users** registered users who post and comment

**5,715 Arts Award participants** using Voice for guidance and to post work for assessment

**22 Local Reviewers** exploring the arts where they live

**36 Voice Reviewers** reviewing the arts for Voice at national level

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE of our members and participants:

**Disability** 23% record a disability

**Ethnic background** 3% Arab, 3% Asian Indian, 6% Asian Pakistan, 3% Black African, 6% Black British, 6% Mixed Any Other, 3% Mixed White & Asian, 6% White Any Other, 61% White British, 3% Any Other

**Educational attainment on joining a project** 6% GCSEs, 38% A Levels, 10% Foundation Degree, 40% Bachelors Degree, 6% Masters Degree

**Sexual orientation** 50% Heterosexual, 17% Bisexual, 7% Another Sexual Orientation, 3% Gay Man, 23% Prefer not to say

# CREATIVE PATHWAYS



Creative Pathways is our progression programme, supporting young people with fewer advantages to explore the arts at local level, before progressing to opportunities, training and paid work with Voice magazine. Judy, our Creative Pathways Manager, explains how it works.

*'This year we developed two young arts reviewer groups in Shropshire, working in partnership with Shrewsbury Colleges Group and Ludlow College, offering weekly training sessions for young people aged 16-25. As well as attending events, our reviewers worked with professionals from across the creative industries, including event programmers, podcasters, theatre directors and BBC Radio Shropshire journalists. They learned multi-media skills and reviewing skills with our Voice Editor and also heard from Voice Reviewers and Voice Contributors about their pathway from being a young reviewer to working on the magazine.'*

*The young arts reviewers had diverse abilities and backgrounds and many lived in rural localities with limited access to the arts. Collaboration with Theatre Severn, Ludlow Assembly Rooms and Arts Alive Rural Touring offered valuable opportunities to attend a variety of events, opening doors to new experiences and building young audiences. Their next step will be to join our national reviewer network or undertake an internship on Voice'*

Meet participants in Creative Pathways overleaf





# CREATIVE PATHWAYS: CASE STUDIES



## **William Richards**

**Voice Local Reviewer Spring 2024 - William has a mild autistic spectrum disorder and is currently studying on a College Ready programme. He embraced the role of Local Reviewer, supported by his family.**

'This programme opened my eyes to a range of events that are happening in my local area. I have felt involved, supported and hope others will find my articles interesting or inspiring. I have definitely improved on my social skills, I have met several professionals during Voice sessions who showed me lots of opportunities in accessing events around Shropshire and out of the county. My English comprehension has developed as well and I know how to write a review from visiting different events.'



## **Primrose Jarvis**

**Voice Local Reviewer, Spring 2024 - Primrose lives in rural Shropshire with limited access to arts and culture provision.**

'My time at Voice rekindled my love for the arts. Initially, I attended the young arts reviewer sessions intending to improve my communication through the written word, not expecting that I would also improve my verbal skills, as well as gain confidence in my ability to interact with others, approach arts organisations and try new things.'

The project gave me valuable work experience and helped me make informed decisions about what I want out of my life and future career.'



## **Adam Khan**

**Voice Intern Spring 2024 - Adam is a Social Sciences student at Queen Mary University planning a freelance career in the media.**

'Working with Voice enabled me to gain more experience in a different media outlet, one with a focus on the arts and culture, and a solely online presence. This enabled me to see how organisations work on a digital platform as well as being able to develop a wider pool of stories than I usually tackle. It has given me insight into the media and on writing about contemporary issues in the arts.'



# TRAINING & COMMISSIONS

This year **209** people have taken part in our Youth Voice Training programme.

Our work has ranged from training courses in youth voice, media skills, governance and facilitation to research into play-based education across five countries. Find out more at: [youthvoicetraining.uk](http://youthvoicetraining.uk)

We have delivered commissions for the Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership, ChalleNGe (The Nottingham Cultural Education Partnership), Royal Opera & Ballet, Area 43, Trinity College London, Barca Leeds, English Heritage, Nottingham City of Literature, Tees Valley Combined Authority, Kids in Museums and Norwich Theatre.

Some feedback from trainees:

'The trainers were engaging and clearly enjoy what they do.'

'I thought [the trainers] were both brilliant – provided a clear and full picture of their experiences, gave great answers to questions asked by the group and made time for participants to feedback.'

'An engaging combination of theory, examples, discussion. It felt less dry and more accessible than other trainings I've been on.'

**TRINITY**  
COLLEGE LONDON

**challeNGe**  
nottingham's cultural education partnership

Kids in  
Museums

  
Nottingham  
UNESCO City of  
Literature

  
**ROYAL  
BALLET &  
OPERA**

# COMMISSION CASE STUDY



## Nottingham Youth Cultural Partnership - Connecting Notts

Connecting Notts is a group of young professionals who represent the arts and youth organisations in Nottingham. We also have independent members who represent different arts practices and are often young freelancers working across several organisations.

We have supported the development of the group, facilitating monthly meetings and event planning to bring young people together to learn new skills and influence change in the city.





# COMMISSION CASE STUDY

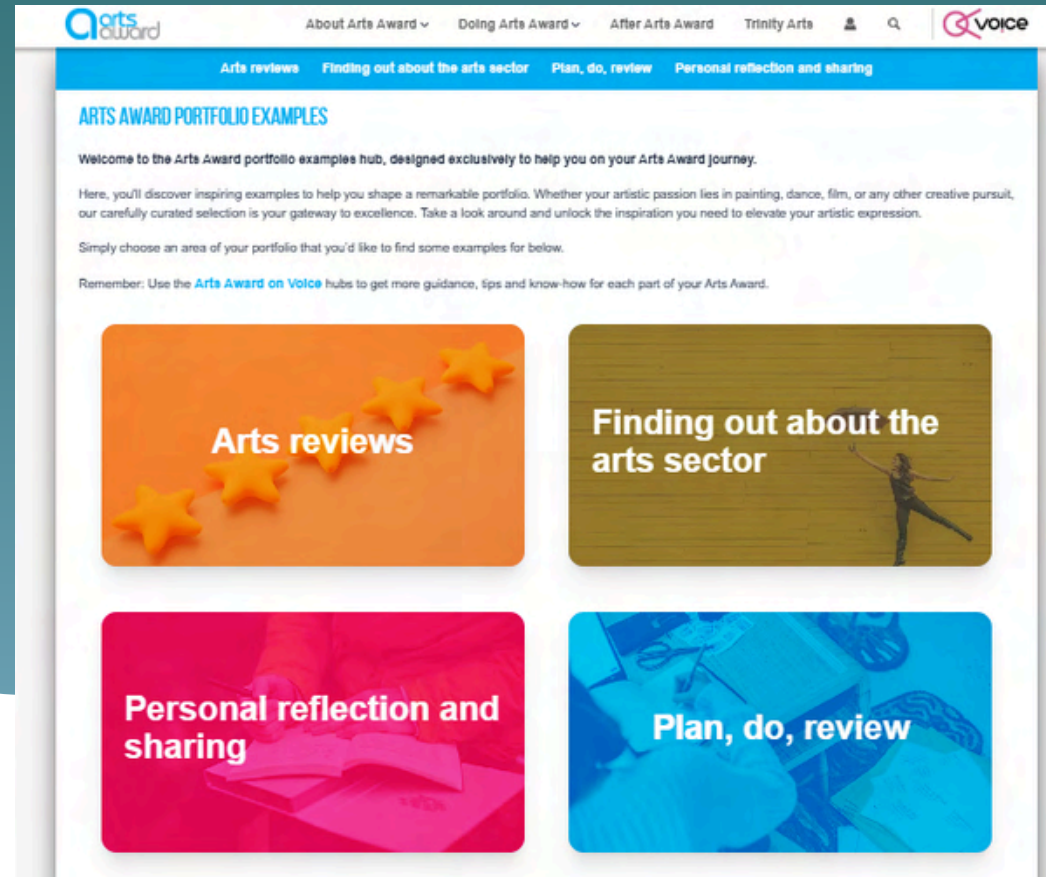


## Arts Award Portfolio Examples

Our mini-site Arts Award Voice has been developed with Trinity College London over the past 10 years to support young people working through Arts Award, a qualification which enables young people to develop creative achievements, review the arts, find out about the cultural sector and share their skills with peers.

This year we developed a new platform which showcases examples of Arts Award portfolios to inspire young people to explore creative ways of presenting their work for assessment.

See: [artsawardvoice.com](https://artsawardvoice.com) and [portfolios.voicemag.uk](https://portfolios.voicemag.uk)



# GOVERNANCE



## Upstart Projects board

We are grateful for the expertise and commitment of our board members who bring a wide range of skills and perspectives to the charity, including arts education, enterprise, environmental awareness, fundraising, HR, journalism, marketing and youth participation. This year we said goodbye to Martin Russell, our Deputy Chair, after ten years of dedicated support.

[Meet our trustees](#)

## Upstart and Voice staff team

Our team this year has consisted of five core part-time roles plus freelance associates running projects and courses, supported by paid young trainers.

[Meet the Voice team](#)

Holly Howe (Chair)  
Martin Russell  
(Deputy Chair)  
Amy Clewlow  
Tom Edwards  
Phoebe Hill  
Frances Perraudin  
Olivia Porritt  
Beth Troakes  
Nikeria Tannis  
Michael Zdanowski

### CIO Governing Document

The CIO Foundation Constitution  
Trustees are appointed through  
recruitment and invitation.

### Reserves Policy

To build reserves of 3 months of core running costs  
(£20,783)  
At 31 March 2023 our reserves were £18,019

**Charity number:** 1157864

**Registered office:** 59 Trinity Street, Shrewsbury SY3 7PQ

**Independent examiner:** Community360, Winsley's House, High Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1UG

**Bankers:** The Co-operative Bank, P.O. Box 250, Skelmersdale WN8 6WT

### Note to accounts

The accounts show a drop in income for 2023-24. This is partly due to the end of a government programme we were delivering since 2021 and partly due to new grants falling into the 2024/25 financial year.

# INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

## For the Year Ended 31 March 2024



I report on the accounts of Upstart Projects for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 15 to 23.

### Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 (The Act) but that an independent examination is needed).

It is my responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- To follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- To state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### Basis of independent examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes considerations of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the accounts.

### Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of the 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 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:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shelley-Marie Rudling'.

Shelley-Marie Rudling FMAAT AATQB  
For and on behalf of Community360  
Winsley's House, High Street, Colchester, Essex CO1 1UG

Date: 14/11/2024



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024



	Note	Unrestricted Total £	Restricted Total £	Designated Total £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
<b><u>Incoming resources</u></b>						
Donations & legacies	2	3,066	-	-	3,066	2,302
Charitable activities	3	32,987	40,267	-	73,254	119,373
Investments	4	519	-	-	519	105
<b>Total incoming resources</b>		<b>36,572</b>	<b>40,267</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>76,839</b>	<b>121,780</b>
<b><u>Resources expended</u></b>						
Charitable activities	5	43,712	40,267	-	83,979	190,310
Fundraising costs		1,925	-	-	1,925	-
<b>Total resources expended</b>		<b>45,637</b>	<b>40,267</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>85,904</b>	<b>190,310</b>
<b>Net incoming resources before transfers</b>		<b>(9,065)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(9,065)</b>	<b>(68,530)</b>
<b>Transfer between funds</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Net incoming resources after transfers</b>		<b>(9,065)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(9,065)</b>	<b>(68,530)</b>
<b>Total funds brought forward</b>		<b>18,011</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,019</b>	<b>36,030</b>	<b>104,560</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>8,946</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>18,019</b>	<b>26,965</b>	<b>36,030</b>

Signed:

Holly Howe  
Chair of Upstart Projects' board of trustees

Date: 5th November 2024

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024



	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Current assets</b>			
Debtors	9	1,775	3,029
Cash at bank and in hand		43,637	52,546
		<u>45,412</u>	<u>55,575</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	10	<u>18,447</u>	<u>19,546</u>
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>26,965</b>	<b>36,030</b>
<b>Total assets less total liabilities</b>		<b><u>26,965</u></b>	<b><u>36,030</u></b>
<b>Income funds</b>	11		
Designated funds		18,019	18,019
Restricted funds		-	-
Unrestricted funds		8,946	18,011
		<u>26,965</u>	<u>36,030</u>

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024



## 1. Accounting policies

### **Basis of accounting**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement on 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) (effective 1 January 2019). (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy notes.

### **Cash flow**

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

### **Assessment of going concern**

Preparation of the accounts is on a going concern basis. The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the Charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

### **Incoming resources**

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



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024



## **Tax reclaims on donations and gifts**

Incoming resources from tax reclaims are included in the SOFA in the same financial period as the gift to which they relate.

## **Resources expended**

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

## **Fund accounting**

Unrestricted Funds are funds received which have no restrictions placed on their use and are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided to set aside to use for a specific purpose.

Restricted Funds are funds which are to be used for purposes as specified by the funder.

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024



**Taxation**

As a registered charity, the organisation is exempt from income and corporation tax to the extent that its income and gains are applicable to charitable purposes only. Value Added Tax is not recoverable by the company and is, therefore, included in the relevant costs in the Statement Of Financial Activities.

2. Donations & legacies	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Donations	3,066	-	3,066	2,302
	<u>3,066</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3,066</u>	<u>2,302</u>
2023	<u>2,302</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>2,302</u>	
3. Charitable activities	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Commissions to run activities	32,987	-	32,987	18,555
Grants	-	40,267	40,267	100,818
	<u>32,987</u>	<u>40,267</u>	<u>73,254</u>	<u>119,373</u>
2023	<u>18,555</u>	<u>100,818</u>	<u>119,373</u>	

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024



4. Investment income	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	2024 £	2023 £
Interest	519	-	519	105
	<u>519</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>519</u>	<u>105</u>
2023	<u>105</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>105</u>	

5. Total resources expended	Staff costs £	Other costs £	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Charitable activities</b>				
Management team	26,072	-	26,072	26,361
Delivery of activities	25,428	29,993	55,422	150,254
Accountancy	-	794	794	844
Trustee expenses	-	563	563	900
Administration	-	1,129	1,129	11,951
	<u>51,500</u>	<u>32,479</u>	<u>83,979</u>	<u>190,310</u>
2023	<u>114,540</u>	<u>75,770</u>	<u>190,310</u>	

## 6. Staff costs

The average number of employees for 2024 was 0 (2023 - 9). No employee earned more than £60,000 in the financial years being reported on in these accounts.



# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024



**7. Trustees**

The trustees were reimbursed £563 (2023 - £163.23) for travel expenses.

**8. Related parties**

There were no related parties during the period.

**9. Debtors**

Trade debtors

2024	2023
£	£
1,775	3,029
<u>1,775</u>	<u>3,029</u>

**10. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year**

Trade creditors  
Accruals and deferred income

2024	2023
£	£
5,657	4,070
12,790	15,476
<u>18,447</u>	<u>19,546</u>

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024



## 11. Statement of funds

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	Carried Forward £
<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<u>18,011</u>	<u>36,572</u>	<u>(45,637)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>8,946</u>
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
Trinity College	-	25,267	(25,267)	-	-
Postcode Lottery	-	15,000	(15,000)	-	-
Subtotal	<u>-</u>	<u>40,267</u>	<u>(40,267)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Designated funds</b>	8,000	-	-	-	8,000
Reserves	10,019	-	-	-	10,019
Subtotal	<u>18,019</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>18,019</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u>36,030</u>	<u>76,839</u>	<u>(85,904)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26,965</u>

Transfers from restricted to unrestricted funds covers the core costs attributed to the grant projects.