				Trustees' Annual Report for the period													
						Period start date			Period end date										
						01 April 2022			31 March 2023										
		From							To										
Section A														Reference and administration details					
Charity name Across Borders																			
Other names charity is known by																			
Registered charity number (if any) 1170882																			
Charity's principal address 20 Ringlet Drive, East Leake																			
Loughborough																			
Leicestershire																			
Postcode LE12 6XU																			

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

		Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
	1	Fiona Cameron	Chair		
	2	Rosie Watt	Secretary		
	3	Temitope Yusuf	Treasurer		
	4	Emma Goldie			
	5	Wafa Sulieman			
	6	Abuzar Abagna			
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
	11				
	12				
	13				
	14				
	15				
	16				
	17				
	18				
	19				

	20			
	Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)			
	Name	Dates acted if not for whole year		

☐ **Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)**

Type of adviser	Name	Address

Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

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Section B Structure, governance and management

Description of the charity's trusts

Type of governing document (eg. trust deed, constitution)	Constitution
How the charity is constituted (eg. trust, association, company)	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods (eg. appointed by, elected by)	Other trustees

Additional governance issues (Optional information)

You **may choose** to include additional information, where relevant, about:

- policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees;
- the charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works;
- relationship with any related parties;
- trustees' consideration of major risks and the system and procedures to manage them.

Across Borders works in partnership with the University of Nottingham and St Andrew's Refugee Services in Cairo.

Section C Objectives and activities

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

- (1) To advance the human rights of and relieve poverty of migrants and refugees in the Middle East and North Africa (Across Borders engages with refugee and migrant service providers operating in the MENA region, which we define as Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.)
- (2) in particular but not exclusively by working in partnership with organisations that provide advice, training and assistance in the Middle East and North Africa, including but not limited to St Andrews Refugee Services.
- (3) To advance education and promote racial harmony for the public benefit by providing information, sharing best practice and raising awareness on issues relating to migration and refugees.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects (include within this section the statutory declaration that trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit)

The Remote Legal Clinic project continues its important activities to support St Andrew's Refugee Services' (StARS). StARS remains the only legal aid provider for asylum seekers and refugees in Egypt seeking legal support and representation with UNHCR processes. Demand for this legal support continued to stretch the casework capacity of StARS' Refugee Legal Aid Department (RLAD) throughout the first half of 2023. Implementation of the 2022/23 remote legal support to refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt (the Project) increased RLAD's capability to reach more clients and meet this demand, maintaining a high-quality standard and ensuring support to at-risk refugees.

During the past year, mentors on the Real Resettlement project provided one-to-one meetings with their mentees through phone calls and text messages. The phone calls include providing emotional support, information about life in the UK, signposting to the services in Egypt and the UK.

In collaboration with our amazing partners Voices in Refuge, we offered a free interpreting course for those interested in community interpreting. The training project continues the Across Borders theme of refugee leadership by giving refugees the opportunity to take a professional course, which recognises the importance of interpreting, recognizing the vital part it plays in ensuring that asylum seekers and refugees are able to access their rights, and teaching the participants an additional number of transferable skills which will come in useful during their employment journey in the UK.

Additional details of objectives and activities (Optional information)

We are grateful for all our volunteers, whom without we will not be able to achieve all that has taken place in this year.

You **may choose** to include further statements, where relevant, about:

- policy on grantmaking;
- policy programme related investment;
- contribution made by volunteers.

Section D

Achievements and performance

Section D	Achievements and performance
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Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Please see below

Section E	Financial review
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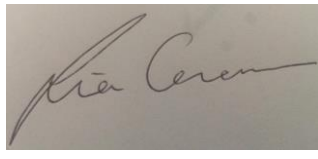
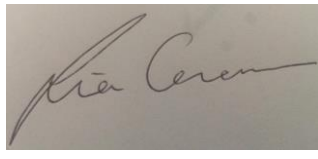
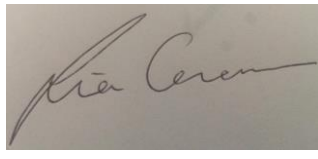
Brief statement of the charity’s policy on reserves	Across borders has a policy in which three months of running costs for the charity’s activities should be held in the case of the charity winding down.
Details of any funds materially in deficit	

Further financial review details (Optional information)	
You may choose to include additional information, where relevant about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the charity’s principal sources of funds (including any fundraising); how expenditure has supported the key objectives of the charity; investment policy and objectives including any ethical investment policy adopted. 	Grants were received from the Evan Cornish Foundation and Synergi. Other funds have been raised through individual donations.

Section F	Other optional information
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Section G	Declaration
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The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees’ report above.																		
Signed on behalf of the charity’s trustees																		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></div>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; vertical-align: top;"> Signature(s) </td> <td>  </td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> Full name(s) </td> <td> Fiona Cameron </td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; vertical-align: top;"> Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc) </td> <td> Chair </td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; vertical-align: top;"> Date : </td> <td> 26/01/2024 </td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> </table>	Signature(s)			Full name(s)	Fiona Cameron		<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; vertical-align: top;"> Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc) </td> <td> Chair </td> <td style="width: 40%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"> <table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; vertical-align: top;"> Date : </td> <td> 26/01/2024 </td> </tr> </table> </td> </tr> </table>			Position (eg Secretary, Chair, etc)	Chair		<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%; vertical-align: top;"> Date : </td> <td> 26/01/2024 </td> </tr> </table>			Date :	26/01/2024
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Date :	26/01/2024																	



**Trustees' Annual Report
and Financial Statements
for the Period
1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023**

Trustees' Annual Report

Fiona Cameron – Chair
Temitope Yusuf – Treasurer
Rosie Watt – Secretary
Emma Goldie
Wafa Suleiman
Abuzar Abagna

Report from the Chair

Across Borders was founded in December 2016 to promote refugee rights using refugee perspectives to support programming for refugees so that people can meaningfully access their rights and entitlements. We do this through capacity building, supporting refugee-led organizations and sharing good practice across borders.

The objectives of the charity are as follows:

- 1) To advance the human rights of and relieve poverty of migrants and refugees in the Middle East and North Africa (Across Borders engages with refugee and migrant service providers operating in the MENA region, which we define as Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, West Bank and Gaza, and Yemen.)
- 2) In particular, but not exclusively by working in partnership with organisations provide advice, training and assistance in the Middle East and North Africa, including but not limited to St Andrew's Refugee Services.
- 3) To advance education and promote racial harmony for public benefit by providing information, sharing best practice and raising awareness on issues relating to migration and refugees

Throughout the year we continued to support our partner StARS in Egypt. The partnership continued to thrive, as we hosted a visit from their Deputy Director who provided training for our partners at the University of Nottingham, raised money for their unrestricted donations, and took referrals from their clients who were due to be resettled.

In December 2022 we held a community event for all those who had been involved in our work during the previous year. This included students from the Law Clinic, volunteers from the Resettlement Project, Trustees and even some of our clients. Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Refugee Forum generously donated their space to us and we heard presentations about all the different projects.

We want to pass our gratitude to our funders, the National Lottery, the Evan Cornish Foundation and Synergi. Also our thanks goes out to our trustees, our volunteers, our partners - in particular, StARS, Nottingham University Law School and Voices in Refuge, and of course, to our clients.

We look forward to 2024.

Remote Legal Clinic

Introduction

Ongoing Programme delivery

St. Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS) remains the only legal aid provider for asylum seekers and refugees in Egypt seeking legal support and representation with UNHCR processes. Demand for this legal support continued to stretch the casework capacity of StARS' Refugee Legal Aid Department (RLAD) throughout the first half of 2023. Implementation of the 2022/23 remote legal support to refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt (the Project)

increased RLAD's capability to reach more clients and meet this demand, maintaining a high-quality standard and ensuring support to at-risk refugees.

StARS recruited a Senior Legal Officer (SLO) to join the Refugee Legal Aid Department team in mid-November 2022 and has coordinated the project throughout its duration including delivering training, assigning cases, providing detailed guidance to students on approaches to casework, supervision sessions, and project reporting. This role trains students and ensures the smooth workflow for the students including supervision and feedback, other related practicalities related to the running of the project including reporting, compliance with GDPR and safeguarding standards.

The SLO trained the volunteer students. Training includes three core areas: Refugee Status Determination, Resettlement representation and protection referrals. 100% or 4 out of 4 students received training and demonstrated knowledge gain.

The students expressed finding the training content engaging. Prior to the training the students completed a questionnaire containing 28 questions pre and post training to assess their knowledge gain. Each of the four students demonstrated knowledge gain in every area of training. Via the end-of-project evaluation survey that was completed by the students about their overall experience, they fed back that they had assessed that they had deepened their legal knowledge and enhanced their practical skills including in the summarizing and drafting of testimony, legal assessment and analysis.

In regards to their overall experience of volunteering on the project the students reported satisfaction and overall gains with respect to knowledge and skills, and all provided positive responses regarding balancing the Project casework alongside their university commitments - this had been a focus for ongoing improvement for the model. Each of the students confirmed that they would recommend their experience volunteering on the project to other Nottingham law students.

In regards to this, in coordinating with the students and allocating their casework each week, the Remote Legal Support SLO remained mindful of the students' competing priorities and adjusted workloads accordingly to reach achievable goals. Other feedback included that the casework was more difficult than one student had expected, but still reported that they had improved over the course of the Project; another student indicated that the recruitment phase for the law clinic could be clearer on expectations, particularly with respect to time and effort involved in the commitment to the Project over the academic year which has been fed back to the university for review. Feedback from at least one of the students also indicates their preference for more direct involvement with clients. In light of this a hybrid model has been proposed (with students spending part of their academic year in Cairo) and is now under discussion between the university and StARS, facilitated by Across Borders.

131 individuals (56 cases) reached in Cairo through legal representation by receiving Refugee Status Determination, or resettlement legal representation, or protection counseling and interventions. Following the completion of their first training (refugee status determination (RSD) casework training and shadowing), the students were assigned weekly casework with detailed guidance and feedback from the Remote Legal Support SLO on a weekly basis. The students drafted 23 RSD legal submissions, **supporting 68 individuals**. A focus on RSD submissions throughout the project was necessary owing to the influx of RSD rejections issued by UNHCR in 2022. In addition, the students worked on drafting witness testimony in the form of affidavits. This remote support provided by the students has enabled StARS to clear its backlog of pending 2022 RSD appeal cases. This has been critical as it's allowed a focus on balancing the current appeals caseload with other casework priorities, in particular, the urgent need to support registration related 4 derivative refugee status requests and UNHCR file reopening submissions for Sudanese nationals with sur place claims that have arisen as a result of the emerging conflict in Sudan.

Following the completion of online resettlement and protection casework training in March 2023 the students drafted 12 protection referrals, **supporting 14 refugees**. The majority of these cases were for LGBTQI+ refugees who face ongoing, targeted, and severe protection risks, including sexual violence. Assisting with resettlement representation was more challenging because of the tight review and submission cycle for StARS resettlement referrals which did not regularly align with student availability and time allocated for clinic work from week to week.

By the end of the Project, the volunteer students from the University of Nottingham **completed a total of 56 legal submissions and referrals for StARS' clients, benefitting 131 refugees**. All submissions and referrals drafted by the students were submitted to UNHCR Egypt, resulting in positive progression of each case.

Awareness raising during Refugee Week 2023: interviews with StARS and Across Borders were conducted for the University of Nottingham's Refugee Week publication targeting the student community. In May 2023, to coincide with Refugee Week, Across Borders and the SLO collaborated with the University of Nottingham to provide Q&A responses about StARS' work and the collaboration with UoN students as part of their University of Nottingham E-Newsletter. With the theme of 'compassion,' the aim of this contribution was not only to highlight the impact of the Project and explain how students can get involved in future, but also to provide insight about Across Borders' values and aims in addressing the needs of people forcibly displaced and into how StARS' model uses a holistic and client-centered approach.

Programme expansion / what's next?

Across Borders initiated conversations with University of Birbeck (London), University of Bedfordshire, University of Glasgow and Vrije University Amsterdam towards expanding the legal remote project. Our proposals were well received and led to discussions about how current university curricula would benefit from an applied learning experience and how this might be practicable within wider department agendas and working practices. Insights and know-how from the University of Nottingham's experience have been shared with these universities to increase understanding and credibility of the opportunity.

Having reviewed materials about the project's offer, the Vrije University (Amsterdam) explained that their work focuses on expert opinions, therefore differing to StARS' needs. This interaction, however, led to a referral to a further university, the University of Amsterdam, and we're currently following up with the Director of Amsterdam Law Clinics about this. Following a meeting between the University of Nottingham and the University of Bedfordshire to explore some additional technicalities of how the project works in practice, the latter committed to come on board as a partner. This plan has, unfortunately, had to be postponed because of the refocus of StARS' legal work on emerging casework related to the Sudan conflict.

As well, though we have not been able to take forward collaboration with Vrije University (Amsterdam), our contact there has proposed a collaboration with a legal advice service which assists asylum seekers and refugees in Tangier, Rabat and Agadir, the Hijra Legal Clinic which presents an exciting opportunity for expansion and for Across Borders to fulfill its mission to support partners across the Middle East region.

The Real Resettlement Project



Introduction : Resettlement is now a key part of the UK immigration system. However, refugee resettlement is not always successful and much of this is predicated on the refugees' understanding of what they can expect when they get to the UK. The main purpose of the resettlement project is to provide accurate information about life in the UK, such information include education, employment, service providers etc, thereby, the newcomer refugees from Egypt should guide by this information to integrate easily into UK culture.

What's happened so far?



The Project depends completely on seven volunteers who are refugees themselves and were previously resettled in the UK, and fully trained to provide genuine information to refugees in Egypt as well as refugees who arrived in the UK. During the past year, mentors provided one-to-one meetings with their mentees through phone calls and text messages. 292 phone calls and 39 text messages were made to mentees. The phone calls include providing emotional support, information about life in the UK, signposting to the services in Egypt and the UK. Positive feedback was received from mentees expressing their satisfaction of the services that mentors provided, especially the emotional support, given the difficult life situation our mentees face in Egypt. Mentees were grateful to meet someone who has similar experience to talk to him about their issues and get support.

During the past year there were eight families who arrived in the UK who were receiving services from the Real resettlement project and they continue to get these services in the UK which include general information about life in the UK including the UK culture, connecting with communities. Although the first plan of the project was to continuously provide services

to mentees for a maximum of six months from the time of arrival, this was extended as mentees expressed their needs to be following up with them and continue receiving support from their mentors.

Unfortunately in the report period the project has lost three volunteers due to various reasons because of their studying and work which makes it hard for them to dedicate time for the project. A plan is in place to recruit new volunteers to the project to take over the communications with mentees of those who stepped down.

What's next?

We plan to recruit six new community mentors and provide them with training, and to raise further funds to develop the project. The funds will help in recruiting interpreters for certain languages such as Oromo, which is a current issue for mentors to communicate with mentees who speak this language.

We hope to develop networks with service providers in the UK to increase opportunities of services for our mentees in the UK. We also hope to do an event to gather all our mentees who arrived in the UK.

Community Interpreting Project

In collaboration with our amazing partners Voices in Refuge we offer a free interpreting course for those interested in community interpreting.

This year we have run three courses, *An Introduction to Community Interpreting*, reaching over 60 individuals from 19 nationalities, including Ukraine, Sudan, and other countries who are currently seeing large numbers of people who have been forcibly displaced.

The training project continues the Across Borders theme of refugee leadership by giving refugees the opportunity to take a professional course, which recognises the importance of interpreting, recognizing the vital part it plays in ensuring that asylum seekers and refugees are able to access their rights, and teaching the participants an additional number of transferable skills which will come in useful during their employment journey in the UK.

One of our participants said:

For over 15 years, I've been passionately teaching English for speakers of Arabic, but recently, I decided to venture into the uncharted territory of community interpreting. I had the privilege of attending introduction to community interpreting training sessions provided by Voices in Refuge and Across Borders, and I can't emphasize enough how profoundly useful and eye-opening this experience was. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Barbara, Halima, and Matt for their exceptional dedication

in delivering the interpreting course. Their approach was not only friendly but also highly informative, making the learning process both engaging and enlightening. Now as I finished the training sessions, my journey as a community interpreter has only just begun. I plan to use these newfound skills to continue helping my community and explore opportunities for collaboration with local organizations. Together, we can create a more inclusive and harmonious environment.



Voices in Refuge/Across Borders graduates from *An Introduction to Community Interpreting*, summer 2024

Fundraising for StARS

Introduction: Since Across Borders started, we have been raising funds for St Andrew's Refugee Services (StARS) which is based in Cairo, Egypt. StARS is our main partner organisation for both our legal and resettlement projects.

What's happened so far?

In this year, although we saw a reduction in the number of regular donors, we were able to retain a few donors who continued to donate on a monthly basis.

The funds raised will be used towards the Real Resettlement Project.

What's next?

We continue to collect money for StARS through one off donations and regular giving. Every penny we raise goes directly to StARS programming. You can gift aid your donation and you can donate through our website [here](#).

Communications

We have been building on our online engagement and used our social media channels to raise awareness of the work we are doing with our partner organisations. We have three main social media platforms which we use:

Instagram: @acrossborders_uk

Facebook: Across Borders

Twitter: @acrossbordersuk

We understand that social media can be powerful in helping to reach more people and extend the reach of our work as well. We want to continue to use the platforms for fundraising and awareness raising purposes.

Plans for 2023/2024

As we move into a new financial year, it is clear that the situation for refugees and asylum seekers all over the world is more acute than ever. With the UK government pursuing an aggressive anti-immigration policy, focused on a very small number of asylum seekers, increased hostilities worldwide and a looming economic crisis, it is difficult to plan for the future.

In 2023/2024 we hope to expand our services through:

- Taking on and training new volunteers as community mentors in our Resettlement Project to enable us to work with more people being referred from Egypt.
- Bringing in more universities in the UK to boost the capacity of StARS Egypt to manage casework research.
- Finding additional funding to employ a project manager.

The interpreting project is done in partnership with Voices in Refuge (www.voicesinrefuge.com), and we are working with universities on the legal project.

If you are interested in volunteering for the organisation or becoming a trustee, please contact us on info@acrossborders.org.uk.

If you would like to donate to StARS, or to Across Borders please go to <https://www.acrossborders.org.uk/donate>.

	Across Borders			1170882		CC16a	
	Receipts and payments accounts						
	For the period from	1-Apr-22	To	31-Mar-23			

Section A Receipts and payments

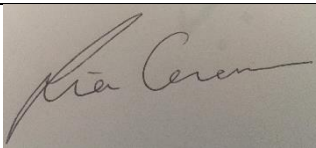
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Matrix			-	-	4,500
National Lottery			-	-	9,650
Evan Cornish		4,500	-	4,500	-
Synergi		3,000	-	3,000	-
Individual donations	30	977	-	1,007	3,530
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	30	8,477	-	8,507	17,680
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	30	8,477	-	8,507	17,680
A3 Payments					
Donation to StARS	-	915	-	915	10,019
Evan Cornish Grant to StARS		4,510		4,510	-
Matrix Fund to StARS	-	-	-	-	4,500
Souter Trust Fund to StARS	-	-		-	1,400
Bank charges	-	-		-	20
Volunteer expenses	-	1,638	-	1,638	444
Consultancy fees	-	6,000	-	6,000	5,500
Trainer Fees	-	1,067	-	1,067	1,150
Mobile costs	-	324	-	324	345
Insurance	-	369	-	369	-
Email costs	-	132	-	132	170

Website costs	-	187	-	187	144
Zoom licence	-	144	-	144	144
Advertising	-	-	-	-	20
Misc	-	-	-	-	33
Sub total	-	15,287	-	15,287	23,889
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	
Total payments	-	15,287	-	15,287	23,889
Net of receipts/(payments)	30	- 6,810	-	- 6,780	- 6,209
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	30	- 6,810	-	- 6,780	- 6,209

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash in Bank	30	6,625	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	30	6,625	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	Agreement Error	OK
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
	Details	to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

		-	-	-	
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	
B3 Investment assets			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)	
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
			-	-	
	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)	
B5 Liabilities			-		
			-		
			-		
			-		
			-		
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees	Signature		Print Name		Date of approval

				Fiona Cameron	26/01/2024

Independent Examiner: Rhys Williams