



**CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES**

Trustees' Annual Report for the period

From (Period start date): 1 April 2023

To (Period end date): 31 March 2024

Charity name: Across Borders

Charity registration number: 1170882

Objectives and Activities

	SORP reference	
Summary of the purposes of the charity as set out in its governing document	Para 1.17	<p>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.</p> <p>The objectives of the charity are as follows:</p> <p>(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.)</p> <p>(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.</p> <p>(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</p>

<p>Summary of the main activities in relation to those purposes for the public benefit, in particular, the activities, projects or services identified in the accounts.</p>	<p>Para 1.17 and 1.19</p>	<p><u>Remote Legal Clinic Project</u></p> <p>Across Borders secured funding to support a further year of collaboration with the University of Nottingham law school between September 2022 to July 2023. Over this year the students were fully trained enabling them to support 131 individuals (56 cases) through legal representation in relation to Refugee Status Determination, or resettlement legal representation, or protection counseling and interventions. Across Borders initiated conversations with four other universities in its efforts to expand the programme. The universities recognised how curricula would benefit from an applied learning experience however only one of the establishments found the initiative currently practicable (the University of Bedfordshire). The war in Sudan has meant that the backlog of Sudanese cases that the students typically supported no longer required this assistance. In addition, the influx of Sudanese refugees increased pressure on StARS' already limited resources meaning that they were unable to commit staff time to facilitate the other types of casework that the students would undertake. Owing to these conditions the project has been paused.</p> <p><u>The Real Resettlement Project</u></p> <p>We noticed that from 2023 there was no resettlement for families to the UK; this, we understand, is related to housing stock shortages in the UK. Owing to this, as most of our mentees receive calls from the UNHCR offering them the opportunity to opt to be resettled in a different country, unfortunately we had to take the decision to close the project because the project had two phases; one in Egypt and one in the UK. The second phase of the project depends totally on the UK side.</p> <p>All the cases on this project are closed and the real resettlement project has ended.</p> <p>In consultation with the Real Resettlement funder we started a new project in the UK called 'Refugees for Refugees'. We have a number of trained volunteers ready to support refugees and Asylum seekers on this new project.</p>
---	---------------------------	--

		<p><u>Community Interpreting Project</u></p> <p>In partnership with Voices in Refuge (www.voicesinrefuge.com), Across Borders undertook two training courses online. 41 individuals participated from all over the world. The training is designed for those who already find themselves interpreting in refugee contexts and provides the basic theoretical concepts such as the cardinal rules of interpreting as well as sessions areas such as safeguarding, and practice sessions.</p>
Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit	Para 1.18	The trustees of Across Borders have had regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit. All of the charity's activities are for charitable and public benefit purposes only.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

	SORP reference	
Policy on grant making	Para 1.38	
Policy on social investment including program related investment	Para 1.38	
Contribution made by volunteers	Para 1.38	
Other		

Achievements and Performance

	SORP reference	
Summary of the main achievements of the charity, identifying the difference the charity's work has made to the circumstances of its beneficiaries and any wider benefits to society as a whole.	Para 1.20	See above and in the full annual report below.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Achievements against objectives set	Para 1.41	
Performance of fundraising activities against objectives set	Para 1.41	

Investment performance against objectives	Para 1.41	
Other		

Financial Review

Review of the charity's financial position at the end of the period	Para 1.21	<p>The charity is in a good financial position as we have funding to continue our 'Refugees for Refugees' project for a set period of time.</p> <p>We continue to seek funding from donations and grants to continue our work.</p>
Statement explaining the policy for holding reserves stating why they are held	Para 1.22	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. However, due to funding being restricted to the project delivery, we are yet to achieve this target.
Amount of reserves held	Para 1.22	
Reasons for holding zero reserves	Para 1.22	X
Details of fund materially in deficit	Para 1.24	
Explanation of any uncertainties about the charity continuing as a going concern	Para 1.23	There are no uncertainties about the charity as a going concern. Nonetheless, we heavily rely on grants to fund our projects and activities.

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

The charity's principal sources of funds (including any fundraising)	Para 1.47	
Investment policy and objectives including any social investment policy adopted	Para 1.46	
A description of the principal risks facing the charity	Para 1.46	
Other		

Structure, Governance and Management

Description of charity's trusts:		
Type of governing document (trust deed, royal charter)	Para 1.25	Constitution
How is the charity constituted? (e.g unincorporated association, CIO)	Para 1.25	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustee selection methods including details of any constitutional provisions e.g. election to post or name of any person or body entitled to appoint one or more trustees	Para 1.25	<p>Apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees or shorter term in order to stagger trustee appointments.</p> <p>In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.</p>

Additional information (optional)

You may choose to include further statements where relevant about:

Policies and procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees	Para 1.51	
The charity's organisational structure and any wider network with which the charity works	Para 1.51	
Relationship with any related parties	Para 1.51	
Other		

Reference and Administrative details

Charity name	Across Borders
Other name the charity uses	
Registered charity number	1170882
Charity's principal address	20 Ringlet Drive, East Leake, Loughborough Leicestershire 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	Rosie Watt	Secretary		
2	Temi Yusuf	Treasurer		
3	Emma Goldie			
4	Fiona Cameron			
5	Wafa Sulieman			
6	Abuzar Abagna			
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				

Corporate trustees – names of the directors at the date the report was approved

[illegible]

Name of trustees holding title to property belonging to the charity

[illegible]

Funds held as custodian trustees on behalf of others

Description of the assets held in this capacity	
Name and objects of the charity on whose behalf the assets are held and how this falls within the custodian charity's objects	
Details of arrangements for safe custody and segregation of such assets from the charity's own assets	

Additional information (optional)

Names and addresses of advisers (Optional information)

Type of adviser	Name	Address

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

--	--

Exemptions from disclosure

Reason for non-disclosure of key personnel details

--

Other optional information

--

Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)

Rosie Watt

Full name(s) Rosie Watt

Position (eg Secretary,
Chair, etc) Trustee

Date 26 January 2025



ACROSS BORDERS
CHOICE FOR MIGRANTS & REFUGEES

**Trustees' Annual Report
1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

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:

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.)

In particular, but not exclusively by working in partnership with organisations providing advice, training and assistance in the Middle East and North Africa, including but not limited to St Andrew's Refugee Services.

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.

We would like to thank our funders: the National Lottery, the Evan Cornish Foundation, and Synergi. We also express gratitude to our trustees, our volunteers, our partners - in particular, StARS, and Voices in Refuge, University of Nottingham, and our clients.

We look forward to 2024.

Remote Legal Clinic Project

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. Across Borders secured funding to support a further year of collaboration with the University of Nottingham law school between September 2022 to July 2023. This enabled the recruitment of a Senior Legal Officer to join StARS' Refugee Legal Aid Department team in mid-November 2022 to facilitate key parts of

the project including delivering training to students and assigning them cases, providing tailored guidance to students on approaches to casework and supervision sessions, and project reporting. Over this year the students were fully trained enabling them to support 131 individuals (56 cases) through legal representation in relation to Refugee Status Determination, or resettlement legal representation, or protection counseling and interventions. All submissions and referrals drafted by the students were submitted to UNHCR Egypt, resulting in positive progression of each case. During this period StARS' Senior Legal Officer collaborated with the University of Nottingham to provide Q&A responses about the project and key outcomes in the University of Nottingham E-Newsletter, raising awareness about the situation in Egypt for refugees and the difference the project makes and publicising opportunities for students to get involved.

Across Borders initiated conversations with four other universities in its efforts to expand the programme. The universities recognised how curricula would benefit from an applied learning experience however only one of the establishments found the initiative currently practicable (the University of Bedfordshire). Disappointingly this plan couldn't be realised owing to the shifting needs amongst Sudanese refugees approaching StARS for legal assistance: the war in Sudan has meant that the backlog of Sudanese cases that the students typically supported no longer required this assistance. In addition, the influx of Sudanese refugees increased pressure on StARS' already limited resources meaning that they were unable to commit staff time to facilitate the other types of casework that the students would undertake. StARS instead advised that students' in-person support in Cairo would be more practicable; an ongoing conversation with the University of Nottingham to explore this has, unfortunately, not proffered a solution mainly owing to funding constraints and security concerns. Owing to these conditions the project has been paused.

The Real Resettlement Project

Introduction

We noticed that from 2023 there was no resettlement for families to the UK which we understand is related to the UK housing stock shortage. As most of our mentees receive an option from the UNHCR to opt to be resettled in an alternative country, unfortunately we had to take the decision to close the project because the project had two phases; one in Egypt and one in the UK. The second phase of the project depends totally on the UK side.

According to these developments we were not able to continue our support to the families. So we communicated with all families and provided a safe exit to them making sure that they are aware and they are able to make their own decisions in relation to the support they were receiving from Across Borders. We also provided the advice they needed at that time.

What's happened so far?

All the cases were closed and the real resettlement project has ended.

What's next?

Refugees for refugees project:

In collaboration with the funder of the Real Resettlement project, we started a new project in the UK called 'Refugees for Refugees'. We have a number of trained volunteers ready to support refugees and Asylum seekers on this new project.

When refugees arrive in the UK, they get a cultural shock and need time to become oriented, until they are used to the UK system. Meanwhile, people feel lost and lonely, and those who are coming with high hopes may also become frustrated. This project also extended to include migrant families as well as refugees in recognition that they are facing many challenges during their asylum journey where they need emotional support, how to access available services, and link them with their communities.

People who do not speak English need more support to navigate the UK systems and become oriented. After the long journey to a new country needing a lot of support, getting this support from volunteers with lived experience is more supportive and relevant, and therefore effective. The volunteers who provide this support are the best people to support those refugees and migrants, they can share their own experience and they can show how they cope with different challenges themselves.

Integration is not always an easy process. Asylum Seekers can face real challenges with adaptation and integration to the UK, as well as in accessing needed services and opportunities. Some of this is predicated on the understanding refugees have of what they can expect when they get to the UK. Activities completed during the reported period include:

- We conducted a focus group with refugees and asylum seekers to address the needs and gaps in the services they get.
- We have created a referral system.
- After an initial assessment, they are then supported by volunteers who have experienced migration and being refugees themselves.

Community Interpreting Project

In partnership with Voices in Refuge (www.voicesinrefuge.com), Across Borders undertook two training courses online. 41 individuals participated from all over the world. The training is designed for those who already find themselves interpreting in refugee contexts and provides the basic theoretical concepts such as the cardinal rules of interpreting as well as sessions areas such as safeguarding, and practice sessions. The interpreting training not only equips individuals with the tools to provide safeguarding services within their communities but also equips people with the skills to look for work.

Fundraising for StARS

St Andrews Refugee Services (StARS) is a charity based in Cairo, Egypt that we have been fundraising for. We also partnered with them on the remote legal clinic and real resettlement projects.

We have a handful of regular donors who give monthly towards the work done by StARS. Funds raised are passed on based on the wishes of the donors.

In 2022-23, Across Borders received £529.35 in donations for StARS. However, for this year 2023-24, there was a 289% increase in the monetary donations received which brought the total to £1,532.59. This was made up of a single donation of £967.10 and the remaining £565.49 from regular monthly donors.

We are grateful to donors and supporters who continue to give generously. We intend to continue to collect donations for StARS through one-off donations and regular giving. Donors can gift aid their donation when donating through our website [here](#). They can also indicate if the donation is for us, Across Borders, or for StARS.

Communications

In 2023/2024 we continued to use our three main social media platforms to highlight our work, advertise for new volunteers, and make requests for donations.

We have three main social media platforms which we use:

- Instagram: @acrossborders_uk
- Facebook: Across Borders
- Twitter: @acrossbordersuk

These continue to be run and updated by board members.

Plans for 2024/2025

2023/2024 has been a difficult year for Across Borders. The turbulence experienced in Northeast Africa has impacted the work at StARS in a way which has meant that both the Remote Legal Clinic project and the Real Resettlement project have had to be paused, temporarily at least. 2024/2025 will be a year of refocusing for the organisation, whilst we repurpose our funds and volunteers to support refugees and asylum seekers who are already within the UK. We therefore will be focusing on building partnerships with organisations working with refugees working in the UK, and training and working with refugee mentors and volunteers to build their skills.

We will continue to raise funds for StARS and hope that in the future we will be able to work more directly with them again.

As our long-time Chair and Treasurer both feel that it is time to step down from the board, after several years, we will also be looking to reinvigorate the board with new people and new ideas.

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-23	To	31-Mar-24	

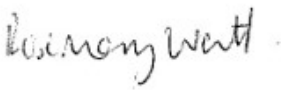
Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestrict ed funds	Restricted funds	Endowme nt funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
National Lottery	-	10,000	-	10,000	-
Evan Cornish	-	-	-	-	4,500
Synergi	-	-	-	-	3,000
Individual donations	25	£1,532.59	-	1,558	1,007
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	25	11,533	-	11,558	8,507
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	25	11,533	-	11,558	8,507
A3 Payments					
Donation to StARS	-	-	-	-	915

Evan Cornish Grant to StARS	-	-	-	-	4,510
Bank charges	-	-	-	-	-
Volunteer expenses	-	-	-	-	1,638
Consultancy fees	-	£6,756.00	-	6,756	6,000
Trainer Fees	-	-	-	-	1,067
Mobile costs	-	102	-	102	324
Insurance	-	352	-	352	369
Email costs	-	£132.48	-	132	132
Website costs	-	£172.80	-	173	187
Zoom licence	-	£143.88	-	144	144
Fundraising costs	21	50	-	71	-
Sub total	21	7,709	-	7,730	15,287
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	
Total payments	21	7,709	-	7,730	15,287
Net of receipts/(payments)	4	3,823	-	3,827	- 6,780
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	-	-	-	-	-
Cash funds this year end	4	3,823	-	3,827	- 6,780

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

Categories	Details	Unrestrict ed funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds
		to nearest £	to nearest £	to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Cash in Bank	4	10,478	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	4	10,478	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	Agreement Error	OK
		Unrestrict ed 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	
		Rosie Watt	26/01/2025	

Independent Examiner: Rhys Williams