



# **MASS Action Annual Report**

April 2022 - March 2023

Migrant and Asylum Seekers Solidarity Action  
87 Broadway, Cambridge, CB3 9NQ.  
Charitable Incorporated Organisation  
Charity Number: 1177804

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## **ABOUT MASS ACTION**

MASS Action is a registered CIO that believes in collective action and solidarity for change. Our work centres the needs of migrants and asylum seekers by providing financial and logistical support through collaborations with projects that align with our core values. A big part of this is that projects are led by, or aim to centre and amplify the voices of those with lived experience of migration and asylum systems. We are proud to collaborate with projects that recognize the importance of community, build non-hierarchical relations and maintain financial transparency. As well as our work with partner projects, a priority for the association is advocating for political change and the free movement of people.

## **OUR MISSION**

To support grassroots projects that provide dignified and sustainable initiatives for migrants and asylum seekers. To increase awareness of the social, economic, political and ecological factors which cause migration thereby challenging negative public perceptions on the movement of people.

## **CORE VALUES**

- Equal rights regardless of legal status, nationality, religion, gender, age, sexuality or any other identity marker.
- Honest and dynamic engagement with the communities we work with
- Breaking-down hierarchies that are not just around us but between us
- Financial transparency and efficiency
- Collective action to challenge and overcome violent migration policies and border regimes

## **HISTORY**

MASS Action was founded by nine individuals who felt frustrated by the lack of access to funding for small grassroots initiatives doing impressive work with very little resources . We saw how hard it is to juggle running impactful projects alongside applying for funding and maintaining social media campaigns. Donors, whether they are individuals making small donations, or big trusts giving out grants, are usually attracted to large scale projects with quantitative results. We can understand this, but we also felt there was a huge need to increase funding for projects that focus

on social impact through building relationships and communities; where small donations have a big impact. We registered with the UK Charities Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2018 and since then have been working with various partner projects to provide funding to sustain their operations as well as logistical support and advice. In 2021 we partnered with Thighs of Steel in order to support their charity fundraising cycle and to distribute the funds raised to grassroots organisations in the UK, Greece and Northern France.

## **MEETING OUR OBJECTIVES**

Our idea for bringing about change is based on an understanding that we need financial redistribution to projects who are facilitating sustainable and dignified initiatives as well as collective action against violent migration policies. This was central to the inception of the association, we wanted to advocate for a new way of viewing the movement of people to challenge and overcome negative discourse. In this past year of operations we have prioritised fundraising to provide stability for partner projects.

We achieve our objectives in two ways:

1. First, by granting money to and fundraising in collaboration with projects we are either partnered to or consider within our supporting scope. We are holding an annual open call for funding applications in order to reach more projects. We are currently fundraising through grant applications as well as online fundraisers.
2. Second, MASS Action raises awareness of issues around migration more broadly. We do this with regular posts on Facebook and Instagram, sharing reliable news sources and publishing longer informative social media posts that reflect the reality of being a migrant or asylum seeker in the UK or more generally in Europe.

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the charity commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the trust's aims and objectives in planning future activities.

## PROJECT FOCUS

Part of the functioning of MASS Action concerns support to partner projects in fundraising. We provide a platform through which projects can hold online fundraisers, claiming gift aid on all eligible UK donations. Furthermore projects can apply collaboratively for grants that require a UK charitable status for eligibility purposes. The following projects are our current partners:

### **Khora**

*Athens - Partner since 2018*

Khora is a self-organised collective of individuals, registered as an association in Athens, Greece. It began in 2016 when a group of volunteers working in Lesbos came to Athens and opened a community centre. Contained within an eight-story building, Khora Community Centre provided a vast array of services that aimed to meet both short and long term needs of migrants, asylum seekers and locals in Athens. This included food, clothing, education, legal support, information sharing and signposting, safe spaces for children and women, creative workshops and a whole host of other events. More than anything, what Khora offered was a feeling of community, a friendly environment that welcomed everyone, without judgement or labels. Sadly the centre had to close down in 2018 due to building licensing issues. After a long search Khora now rents two new spaces in addition to the already existing Free Shop space. One of these new buildings houses the Khora Asylum Support team. The other building houses the activities of the Khora Kitchen and Cafe.

### **Mazi Housing Project**

*Athens - Partner since 2018*

Mazi is a housing project which provides a home to six displaced young men who are in Athens on their own and were previously homeless. Mazi, meaning 'together' in Greek, speaks to the sense of community and support central to the initiative. The project is aimed at a group that is often ignored by both governments and NGOs: young men. The project challenges cycles of dependency by empowering residents to overcome social exclusion through holistic and collaborative support. Without housing in Greece you cannot access vital services including non-emergency health care, registered employment, financial support, a bank account, public education, or even a public transport card. While minors are given a certain amount of support, many young individuals find themselves in a highly vulnerable position when they turn eighteen and are suddenly no longer able to access this support. A safe, secure house can provide protection not only from exposure to crime, violence, drug abuse and sexual exploitation whilst living on the streets but also allows these young men to go to classes, get a job, receive financial support and build basic autonomy.

## **Chamomile**

*Athens - Partner since 2021*

Chamomile Housing Project provides holistic supportive accommodation and social support to previously homeless displaced people (refugees, asylum seekers, migrants) with psychosocial challenges with the final aim of independent living for all residents. Chamomile Housing Project grew out of Amigos de Ritsona Accommodation Project - an informal accommodation project that has been working with displaced people who have mental health challenges since 2017. They provided accommodation and connections to psychosocial support encouraging independent living throughout the program and with the aim of full independence from the project itself. In 2020 the opportunity emerged to expand the project both in numbers and scope. A formal partnership was cemented with Babel Day Centre (LINK) and in August 2020 they began taking referrals for a new program which provides housing, psychosocial support and material support. Eight apartments are currently operating; three more will open in the coming month.

## **Calais Food Collective**

*Calais - Partner since 2022*

Calais Food Collective (CFC) is a grassroots organisation established in March 2020 to tackle high levels of food insecurity for refugees and displaced people living in and around Calais. The formation of the project came about due to a desperate need for food and water provision caused by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension or dramatic reduction of other services. The Collective was founded by a group of ten volunteers who had long term experience of volunteering in Calais.

Their work is centred on standing in solidarity with and supporting the basic human rights of those ignored and neglected by the state. The focus of their operation is provision of dry food, ingredients and cooking equipment which enable displaced people to cook for themselves. This method of working helps increase autonomy and dignity; things the communities we support have had stripped from them daily. Through their work, people are able to cook food according to their preferences, at times that suit them and within their communities. Water has also become a large part of CFCs remit and one of the main focuses of our operations. As state provision of drinking water has become increasingly scarce, they have become the sole reliable providers of water by introducing semi-permanent water tanks local to living sites, refilled and cleaned by CFC daily.

## **Glasgow Autonomous Space**

*Glasgow - Partner since 2021*

Glasgow Autonomous Space (GAS) is an autonomous social centre and resource space that hosts groups struggling against capitalism and other forms of oppression. GAS provides space for anyone

who faces the unavoidable pressures of the white-supremacist heteronormative patriarchal capitalist society. As communities struggle against systems of violent oppression on the grounds of their race, immigration status, gender, orientation, class, poverty, sexuality or social practices, people consistently face the same obstacle – the lack of free, safe and accessible space to congregate in, incubate revolutionary struggles and support one another. GAS offers such a space in Glasgow and has established itself as a vital hub of these communities.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

### **Capacity Building:**

- Advertised and inducted five new volunteers (Silvia, Emma, Rafah, Rose, Lorna)
- Continued collaboration with established fundraising group Thighs of Steel (see below)

### **Outreach:**

- Enhanced our social media presence on Facebook and Instagram through regular posting, inter-organisational campaigns and advocacy.
- Broadened outreach through the Open Call by supporting projects across a range of sectors (healthcare, physical wellbeing and sports, digital support, advocacy, LGBTQIA+ rights)
- Expanded the geographical areas we work in to include Northern France in the Autumn 2022 Open Funding Call

### **Collaboration with Thighs of Steel**

Thighs of Steel (ToS) organises challenging physical bike rides with the aim of fundraising for refugee projects and organisations. Their main event, a relay from the UK to Athens, is Europe's longest charity bike ride. In 2020 and 2021, ToS organised two successful UK-based, pandemic-friendly adventures. In the summer of 2022, they ran a relay ride to Athens from Glasgow which raised £114632. Since 2016, ToS fundraisers have raised £760,000, more than half of which has been granted to Khora.

Thighs of Steel were looking for a group to manage the logistics of the online fundraiser and the distribution of funds. Due to our mutual collaboration with Khora we partnered with one another late in 2021 and signed a memorandum of understanding in 2022. The key commitments of our working relationship are as follows:

### **MASS Action commits to:**

- granting ToS £22,500 to cover all 2023 wage costs;

- providing ToS with an appropriate platform to raise funds for their project;
- claiming gift aid where legal on any donations made;
- providing ToS with the information and/or assistance for applying for grants
- distributing funds to projects in line with the timeline below; and
- communicating the chosen grantees to ToS in a timely manner and occasionally updating ToS regarding the projects of those grantees.

MASS Action and Thighs of Steel will mutually agree the target or aims of each fundraising campaign, before it is launched. This could include:

- specific organisations that will be funded, as long as that project meets MASS Action's funding criteria
- characteristics of organisations
- or types of outcomes that would be funded.

ToS commits to:

- reporting annually to MASS Action how ToS spent all grant funds received from MASS Action (by 31st December 2023 for current calendar year)
- carrying out any additional reporting requirements to external organisations upon receipt of grants

As was reported in the 2021-22 Annual Report, in 2021 MASS Action applied for a grant to the Britford Bridge Trust for a £45000 2-year flexible grant in order to support our open funding call to projects working with displaced people. The grant application was accepted and we received the first instalment of the grant (£22500) in September of 2021. This was used for the Spring 2022 Open Funding Call (more information below).

The second instalment of the grant (£22500) was received in September 2022. In February 2023 we transferred a wage grant of £22500 to Thighs of Steel to support their staff who coordinate and deliver the cycle ride.

The funds raised by ToS across the Summer of 2022 were distributed in an open funding call in Autumn 2022 following a similar model to that carried out previously. ToS and MASS Action also agreed to ring-fence a proportion of the raised funds to go toward Khora's running costs across 2022 and 2023.

## **Fundraisers**

- Push Bikes Against Push Backs - May 2022
  - In May 2022 Barty and Andy departed on a 4,000km cycle from Bristol - Izmir, Turkey in order to raise money for Legal Centre Lesbos and Yoga and Sport with Refugees

- Thighs of Steel ceilidh - June 2022
  - This fundraiser was hosted by Thighs of Steel in London, including food, drink, a raffle and a ceilidh, the fundraiser for the Thighs of Steel cycle ride and in turn the projects supported through the Autumn 2022 Open Funding Call
- Mazi Housing Project Marathon - November 2022
  - Mazi Housing Project ran 26.2 miles to provide 6 months of food for their residents.
- Help Khora keep its doors open in 2023 - January 2023
  - Khora raised funds online to keep the doors of the Free shop and Khora Asylum Support Team (KAST) offices open in 2023.

### **Open Call Funding Grants: Spring and Autumn 2022**

We launched an Open Funding Call in February 2022 which closed in March 2022. Of the 58 applications we received from projects based in the UK and Greece, 11 were successful and received grants between £630 to £3000. Prior to the launch of the funding call, MASS Action created promotional materials which were distributed through social media platforms and through our network. The application criteria was developed to encourage applicants from those entities that often struggle to access funding. The criteria and assessment method was designed to ensure a non-biased consideration of all incoming applications. The money distributed (£25000 total) was distributed to these projects:

Bahar

Chamomile

Echo

GAS

Infomobile

Khora

LGBT Unity

Mazi

MORE

Unity Centre/Unity Sisters

No Evictions



Following the success of the Spring 2022 funding call, the Autumn Open Funding Call was launched in September 2022, and grants were distributed in November/December 2022. We expanded the geographic reach of the Open Funding Call to include Northern France, and received a total of 84 applications. We distributed funds to 17 projects, with grants ranging from £2000 to £10,000. The successful applicants were:

Just Action  
Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group  
Mazi and FORGE  
LGBT Unity Glasgow  
Calais Migrant Solidarity  
ASSIST Sheffield  
Bikes for Refugees  
Babylon Project  
MUSIKARAMA  
Hakoura Organic  
Chamomile  
Wave Thessaloniki  
No Evictions Network  
Khora

We plan to run another Open Call following the Thighs of Steel cycle ride in the summer of 2023.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Looking to the future, we will continue to further the impactful work of MASS Action, by building on the successes of all the activities carried out this year and incorporating key learnings. To enable us to do so, we have summarised the main steps we will be taking to enable us to sustainably grow in five categories:

1. People and structure:

- As our capacity has fluctuated throughout the year, we intend to recruit more volunteers with specified roles
- Building our volunteer base will allow us to engage in our activities more effectively, we hope that our continued collaboration with Thighs of Steel may help to build our volunteer base.
- We will ensure overhead costs are covered for all volunteers.

2. Outreach and Engagement:

- Through our second open funding call, we are hoping to continue to reach a broader range of projects, both within Greece and the UK.
- We intend to continue to expand our social media presence through more regular posts relating to events, news and advocacy.

3. Fundraising:

- We will continue to host online fundraisers on behalf of our partnered projects at their request
- We will continue to support our partnered projects in the application of grants, using our charity status when applications require it. Also we will manage the diversity of application needs of our partner projects.
- We will ring-fence a percentage of unrestricted funds to cover any operational expenses, determined by our predicted overhead costs.

4. Projects:

- Continue to increase the number of projects we support and diversify the geographical distribution of projects
- Continue to work closely with supporting projects beyond fundraising activities.
- Develop a clear Monitoring & Evaluation framework to support an efficient MEL.
- Ensure we remind projects to complete and submit the required Monitoring & Evaluating forms.

- We will develop a robust process for launching open calls and will define specific criteria to support the shortlisting process. We will attempt to make the decision-making process of our funding calls more inclusive.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

**Strategic:** Our partnership with Thighs of Steel has quickly become central to our activities. This is because a large amount of the funds we distribute are those raised by Thighs of Steel. Therefore if for any reason this partnership did not continue or Thighs of Steel fundraising activities stopped then the amount of financial support available through MASS would be greatly reduced. We can minimise this risk as best as possible through maintaining the relationship with Thighs. We have formalised the relationship through an annually reviewed MOU detailing the responsibilities of Thighs of Steel and MASS. Furthermore, through regular check-ins with Thighs we gauge and communicate needs and risks within both operations to one another and try to cooperatively problem solve where appropriate.

**Capacity:** In regards to personnel, since MASS Action is run exclusively by volunteers, we face the ongoing risk of fluctuating capacity, availability and participation. A central risk for MASS Action is therefore the dual possibility of having limited capacity for important projects, and too much work falling on a small number of individuals. Furthermore the remote nature of our team may impact the cohesiveness of our group. However, our regular meetings and long-term distributed working structure puts us in a strong position to build and maintain good communication channels and working relationships.

As well as fluctuating capacity we are also experiencing a high turnover of volunteers. This could be at risk of limiting the quality and quantity of our operations. There is a necessity to recruit and induct regularly. As we have not recruited for a while our current activities are managed by a small team and therefore there is a high workload for each volunteer. All of this diverts our collective and individual capacity away from the objectives of MASS action. The implications of this risk are relatively serious as without engagement achieving the objectives of MASS action will be limited. This high turnover may be due to the nature and remoteness of the work. We need to either review the nature of our work or our recruitment process in order to rectify this.

**Compliance:** This is a medium risk area, the most important areas where MASS Action needs to ensure that it is compliant include GDPR, safeguarding, and areas of donor reporting. MASS Action has some systems in place to manage most of these, but we need to strengthen and evolve our policies to ensure there are clear roles and responsibilities, and ultimately accountability to individual, institutional and project stakeholders.

## **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITY**

The charity's trustees are responsible for ensuring the preparation of the trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and its compliance to all legal requirements. They are also responsible for safeguarding the reputation of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities. The Trustees take pride in maintaining the integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity website and other social media.

## **TRUSTEE COMMENTS**

If the previous year (2021-2022) had been dedicated to successfully acquiring funding to distribute towards migrant and asylum seeker projects. This year has been focused on distributing those funds. This distribution has occurred through two open funding calls: one smaller one in spring 2022, and a larger one later in the year.

The first, in Spring 2022, distributed a smaller pot of funds acquired from the Britford Bridge grant. This open funding call was a necessary refresher for the team as our last open call was some time ago in 2020. Additionally, it was good to review our process for the open funding call in advance of the larger and later funding call in 2022. We received great applications from some fantastic projects, some new and some more established. I think this gave us a good measure of the task that was awaiting us later in the year.

Our next focus was on recruitment as we identified that the funding call later in the year would be more labour intensive. We received lots of interest and recruited five new volunteers. There was quite a tight turnaround between inducting the volunteers to when the funding call actually opened. Everyone contributed to the task so thanks to them and to those that inducted them.

The larger open funding call held from September - November 2022 aimed to distribute the money raised by Thighs of Steel. We anticipated getting more applications for this funding call due to the increased amount of funding we expected to be available. The amount that Thighs of Steel raised was phenomenal and so was the number of applications we received. This proved to be a lot

of work but also gave us a greater range of projects to decide from. All-in-all the funding call went well, the projects we supported are doing great work which has been interesting to hear about as it progresses. Overall this first full year of partnership with Thighs of Steel has really shifted our operations in a positive direction. Due to the success, towards the end of 2022 we decided to continue our partnership into a second year.

MASS has continued to work with our project partners to give them financial stability. Projects that we have supported since the start like Khora, Mazi and Chamomile continue to operate and in some cases those operations have expanded. It is great that the dedication of these projects can continue within an oftentimes difficult funding landscape.

### **Financial review:**

Charity income was for the financial year ending 31st March 2023 £169596 compared with charity income of £60758 for the financial year ending 31st March 2022. Total expenditure of £186290 for the financial year ending 31st March 2023 compared with expenditure of £34195 for the financial year ending 31st March 2022. Migrant and Asylum Seeker Solidarity and Action 2021-2022 financial year total fund balance was £19666.

### **Acknowledgements:**

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who have contributed to and been associated with MASS Action during the course of this year. To the members of the MASS team, our partner projects new and old, and to all those who have supported and funded our work, we sincerely thank you.

We appreciate the time and effort put in by all those who fundraised for specific projects and for assisting our overall objectives. Furthermore, we greatly appreciate the contributions of all those involved in our Open Call, both those involved in the marking process and those who applied to receive funding.

We would like to express our welcome to Silvia, Emma, Rafah, Rose, Lorna, who bring a wealth of experience and insight to the organisation. It has been a great pleasure to begin our collaboration with Thighs of Steel and we sincerely appreciate all the hard work put in by their team and all those who participated in the cycle rides. We greatly look forward to developing MASS Action and Thighs of Steel together in the year to come.

**Josie Dibnah**



**Calum Frost**



**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF MIGRANT AND ASYLUM SEEKER SOLIDARITY ACTION FOR THE PERIOD OF 1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023**

I report on the financial statements of Migrant and Asylum Seeker Solidarity and Action (the Charity) for the year ended 31 March 2023 as amended.

**Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner.**

As the charity's Trustees of Migrant and Asylum Seeker Solidarity and Action, you are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the requirements of the charity regulations.

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the charity as amended are not required to be audited and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's financial statements as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act). In carrying out my examination, I have followed the directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

**Basis of the Independent Examiner's Report**

The investigation I conducted was carried out in line with the Charity Commissioners General Directions. An examination consists of reviewing the charity's accounting records and bank statements and comparing the financial statements to those records. It also entails reviewing any unusual items or disclosures in the financial accounts, as well as requesting explanations from you as trustees. Because the techniques utilised do not provide all of the information required in an audit, no opinion is issued as to whether the financial statements reflect a "true and fair view," and the report is limited to the issues indicated below.

**Independent Examiners' Statement**

In connection with my investigation and all amendments done, no matter has come to my knowledge that gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- The accounting records were not kept in accordance with Section 30 of the Charities Act
- The accounts were inconsistent with the accounting records
- The accounts did not comply with the accounting requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities 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 don't have any worries, and I haven't found anything else during the examination that should be brought up in this report so that the accounts can be understood properly

Regards



Oladele Olayiwola

(Accountant)

## MASS Action - Statement of Financial Activities (Receipts & Payments) - April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023

	Total	Calais Food Collective (R)	GAS (R)	General Fund (U)	Khora (R)	Mazi (R)	Push Back Against Bikes (R)	Thighs of Steel (R)
<i>Receipts</i>								
Income and Endowments								
Grants	44,100.00	3,000.00	3,600.00	22,500.00		15,000.00		
Income from Donations and Legacies	111,357.46			18.05	3,254.32	7,300.08	2,035.40	98,749.61
Gift Aid Claimed	14,102.08			105.48	98.55	1,656.52	329.35	11,912.18
Investment Income								
Interest Received	36.60			36.60				
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>169,596.14</b>	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>3,600.00</b>	<b>22,660.13</b>	<b>3,352.87</b>	<b>23,956.60</b>	<b>2,364.75</b>	<b>110,661.79</b>
<i>Payments</i>								
Expenditure								
Charitable Activities								
Charity Management & Administration	1,108.43			1,108.43				
Bank Charges	117.32			117.32				
Project Grants	185,039.45	3,000.00	3,600.00	47,503.36	1,000.00	23,683.32	2,366.28	103,886.49
Expenditure on Raising Funds	25.00			25.00				
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>186,290.20</b>	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>3,600.00</b>	<b>48,754.11</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>23,683.32</b>	<b>2,366.28</b>	<b>103,886.49</b>
 <b>All Receipts</b>	 <b>169,596.14</b>	 <b>3,000.00</b>	 <b>3,600.00</b>	 <b>22,660.13</b>	 <b>3,352.87</b>	 <b>23,956.60</b>	 <b>2,364.75</b>	 <b>110,661.79</b>
<b>All Payments</b>	<b>186,290.20</b>	<b>3,000.00</b>	<b>3,600.00</b>	<b>48,754.11</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>23,683.32</b>	<b>2,366.28</b>	<b>103,886.49</b>
Transfers Between Funds	0.00	0.00	0.00	-1.53	0.00	0.00	1.53	0.00
<b>Net Movement in Funds</b>	<b>-16,694.06</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>-26,095.51</b>	<b>2,352.87</b>	<b>273.28</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>6,775.30</b>
<b>Total Funds Brought Forward</b>	<b>36,360.53</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>34,166.05</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,194.48</b>
<b>Total Funds Carried Forward</b>	<b>19,666.47</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>8,070.54</b>	<b>2,352.87</b>	<b>273.28</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>8,969.78</b>

Josie Dibnah



Calum Frost

