



AKWAABA ANNUAL REPORT

Reporting Period: April 2022 - March 2023

Charity Registration Number: 1181291

PART 1: ABOUT AKWAABA



Akwaaba is a Hackney-based social centre for migrants. We offer a space for rest, play, learning and mutual support. Akwaaba is for all migrants regardless of immigration status, 'race', religion, country of origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and (dis)ability.

We believe that no-one is illegal. We are committed to actively opposing racism and all other forms of discrimination and oppression.

Our aim is to build community and foster care, cooperation and solidarity. As a community, we try

to make decisions collectively and give all members an equal say in how the social centre is run.

Akwaaba is a volunteer-run space.

Our primary aims are to:

- Offer a safe and welcoming space for migrants of all backgrounds for social activities and mutual support
- Foster solidarity and build a shared community of people from different backgrounds
- Provide material support including food, travel bursaries and other donated items to migrant members experiencing hardship



Summary of changes to Akwaaba's activities between April 2022 to March 2023

PART 2: ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

In April 2022, Akwaaba re-opened at Stoke Newington School. We hold Sunday drop-in sessions twice a month from our base in Stoke Newington Secondary School. Our regular activities include a hot meal, a children's programme, arts workshops, English conversation classes, computer support and a barbershop. We also host monthly outreach visits delivered by a partner charity Positive East which provide free STI testing and sexual health advice.

Our sessions are attended by an average of 150 people including up to 30 children. Each week we distribute £5 travel bursaries to half the attendees (around 70 people) according to a rota system. We cover travel costs for volunteers up to £10, although some volunteers travel from far afield and pay more than this to get to our sessions.

Our Sunday sessions are run by and for migrants. The majority of Sunday volunteers are migrant members with lived experience of the hostile environment who originally attended the space in order to access support or participate in an activity. Core Akwaaba programmes are led by migrant volunteers including the kitchen, the travel support scheme, the arts workshop and the barbershop, as well as special events like our annual beach trip and Christmas party. Three quarters of the participatory budgeting group (which has determined Akwaaba's annual budget and approved discretionary spending over the past two years) are migrant members with lived experience. Similarly Akwaaba's financial transactions through our bank account are approved by migrant volunteers.

External support with internal relationships and communication

During the covid pandemic, the various teams in Akwaaba started working a lot more autonomously than before, which allowed us to expand dramatically in response to the emergency situation, focus on lots of different things at once and get a lot done. However it led to some communication issues between teams as we struggled to maintain a forum through which all of Akwaaba could come together in discussion. We hoped that these issues would be resolved once we returned to regular face-to-face Sunday sessions, but we found it really difficult to create the time and space to work through them. There always seemed to be more urgent things to address



than organisational health and relationships. This year, we found that some conflicts and tensions continued to crop up between volunteers and teams stemming from disagreements about how we should run our sessions and the absence of a forum to talk them through.

For that reason, we put together a cross-team working group to arrange a series of externally facilitated discussions for volunteers. The aim of these sessions has been to help us talk through our differences, establish more sustainable ways of working and rebuild trust between volunteers. We identified an organisation called Navigate who provided a facilitator and we have been working with him through one-on-one conversations, small focus groups and larger meetings to support organisational communication.

Kitchen Performance:

Both of Akwaaba's regular kitchen volunteers are doing great and people love their meals. At present Akwaaba is open twice a month and they usually serve 200 to 250 meals every session for both adults and children. The cost of cooking for each session adds up to £300-£350 per session.

Kids Team

In the last year, the kids' team has focused on re-opening and establishing its regular kids sessions, running during Akwaaba sessions across two self-contained children's spaces (indoor and outdoor). These sessions provide a safe, fun, child-centred space for kids whose parents/carers are onsite engaging with the wider community, with a range of games and activities.

- Providing a safe environment for as many kids as possible. The pandemic saw a significant drop in volunteer numbers, so we have dedicated significant time to recruiting and inducting new volunteers.
- We have begun regular "child liberation" reading and reflection sessions, where we discuss new ideas relating to child-centricity, children's rights, and innovative practice, and how to implement changes in the space as a result.
- We have sought to ensure the longevity of the kids team by making sure we share power and decision-making as evenly as possible between volunteers, ensuring we don't become overly dependent on specific long-serving team members.

Pictures of zine making, and one of the kids' favourites - slime!

AKWAABA



Art Project

Our inaugural art festival took place on 11 June, when for the first time, members of the public were invited to attend an Akwaaba session. We displayed around 50 pieces of work throughout our main space, created by members of the art project. The work was on sale and several pieces were purchased by visitors, raising funds for the art project. Alongside the exhibition, we held an open mic musical concert, and several members and volunteers got up on stage to perform for the attendees. It was a memorable occasion and one that we hope to repeat on an annual basis.

Decorations made during the Christmas party art workshop:



Beach Trip

This year, the beach trip working group decided to organise two trips on 6 and 27 August to ensure that the maximum number of members could attend. The group chose to go to Broadstairs, which

AKWAABA

has a direct train connection to Stratford offering £1 tickets to children. Both trips were attended by around 120 people, half adults and half children. People brought and shared food and as the sun was shining, lots of people went into the water.

View from the promenade at Broadstairs:



Christmas party

Our Christmas party took place on 11 December and was attended by 300 people including 50 children. We provided a festive meal, themed conversation classes and hosted a performance by a Ukrainian refugee choir. As part of our regular arts and crafts sessions members designed and made Christmas decorations. We issued 205 cost of living grants to members in need, totalling £10,250. The grants were part funded by a council programme and part funded through a crowdfunding campaign.

After the party, lots of members chose to send thank you messages on our whatsapp channel. A selection are included below.

“Thank you Akwaaba management personnel. You made us and the year 2022 with smiling faces. First the meal was very well cooked with the inclusion of a big chunk of turkey! You have made my 2022 Christmas celebration easy. For the first time, I even got a beautiful hair cut.”

“Thank you all Akwaaba staffs including kitchen team, from chef and his staff, for the nice thing they had done. Everything was prepared in a brilliant way, I’ve never seen before like that. And again thank you very much for the money - they are very happy because they needs that money.”



“Thank you to the Akwaaba organisation and its employees for this beautiful and exceptional day. The management of the organisation has spared no effort in providing all possible assistance to all members. It is one of the leading organisations in the field of volunteer and humanitarian work.”

PART 3: GOVERNANCE OF AKWAABA

The Board of Trustees continued to meet quarterly to monitor and oversee the activities of these working groups while individual trustees participated in other working groups.

During the 2022-2023 financial year Akwaaba continued to function in decentralised way, in which our working groups came to the fore:

- The Budget Group, which is open to all members to join, met regularly to determine the budget for the coming quarter and authorise changes to funds allocated to different parts of the project.
- The Fundraising Group continued to source funding for Akwaaba’s operation

Akwaaba’s community ethos continues to be its strength, allowing the project to rapidly respond and making dramatic changes according to the needs of our members.

PART 4: FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Akwaaba’s income was £75,427 (2021-22 - 82,663).

Akwaaba’s income dropped slightly compared to previous financial year as we moved away from Covid-response towards pre-pandemic operations Akwaaba ended the financial year 2022/23 with a surplus of £11,215. We would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to all those who contributed funds to Akwaaba’s operations as well as those who continue to put in efforts into our fundraising.

Net assets at year-end (ie. cash balance) was £78,089 (2021-22 £66,874), of which £57,654 (2021-22 £40,422) was unrestricted funds and £20,435 (2021-22 £26,452) restricted funds.



Akwaaba's main costs are running Sunday sessions, members' travel to the sessions as well as newly introduced Winter Resilience Support. Overheads were for insurance, fundraising and employing an accountant.

This year we maintained reserves of around £35,000 to continue running sessions. This provides for approximately six months of essential costs required to run sessions. Any restricted fund balances that cover operational costs are taken into consideration when calculating the required unrestricted reserve.

The main financial risk is the loss of income from recurring donations/grants over a sustained period of time, particularly during current difficult socio-economic conditions in the UK which are seeing household and organisational incomes heavily impacted. During uncertain times, Akwaaba is committed to making plans based on existing and confirmed funds only, protecting its reserves and monitoring funds to avoid a deficit position.

PART 5: ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity name	Akwaaba
Registered charity number	1181291
Charity's principal address at 31-03-2023	154 Sandford Road LONDON E6 3PX

Names of Trustees at 31-03-2023

1. Bukola Akinniyi
2. Omolola Alimi
3. Ibtisam Imam
4. Gargi Bhattacharyya



5. Naomi Byrne
6. Tomasz Muszynski
7. Lucy Rix
8. Shanthi Sivakumaran

Statement confirming whether the trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit

This is to confirm that the Trustees have had due regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit set out on their website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/public-benefit-rules-for-charities>.

Approved by the order of the members of the board and signed on behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tomasz', is shown within a light gray rectangular box.

Tomasz Muszynski
(Trustee)

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF AKWAABA (CHARITY NUMBER: 1181291)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of AKWAABA Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) for the period ended 31 March 2023, which are set out on pages 10 to 11.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the CIO you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act").

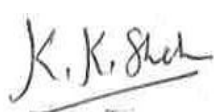
I report in respect of my examination of the CIO's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- 1 the accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- 2 the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3 the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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



Kalpesh Shah
Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
5 Dacre Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 3DL

Dated: 30 January 2024

Section A Receipts and payments					
	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Donation Income	41,458	-	-	41,458	52,458
Grant Income	262	33,706	-	33,968	30,205
Fundraising Income	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	41,721	33,706	-	75,427	82,663
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	41,721	33,706	-	75,427	82,663
A3 Payments					
	-	-	-	-	-
Sunday Session Costs	9,336	10,810	-	20,146	7,490
Sunday Kitchen	6,040	1,837	-	7,877	8,584
Sunday Children Activities	315	3,500	-	3,815	5,992
Travel to Sessions & Activities	893	5,288	-	6,181	6,671
Winter Resilience Support	3,750	12,690	-	16,440	-
Daytrips	- 0	3,412	-	3,412	3,397
Citizenship Support	50	-	-	50	50
Covid-19 Response	-	-	-	-	86,625
Volunteer Training	650	-	-	650	150
Volunteer Devices & Data	170	1,783	-	1,953	5,173
Overheads	2,832	380	-	3,212	1,166
Governance	452	23	-	475	450
Sub total	24,489	39,723	-	64,212	125,748
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	24,489	39,723	-	64,212	125,748
Net of receipts/(payments)	17,232	- 6,017	-	11,215	- 43,085
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	40,422	26,452	-	66,874	109,959
Cash funds this year end	57,654	20,435	-	78,089	66,874

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

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank	56,049	20,435	-
	Petty Cash	240	-	-
	Paypal Account	1,365	-	-
	Total cash funds (agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	57,654	20,435	-
		OK	OK	OK
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Details	-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
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 asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
B5 Liabilities	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature



Print Name

Tomasz Muszynski

Date of approval

30/01/2024