



Trustee Annual Report

From 05th April 2023 - 04 April 2024

Legal charity Name: Soora Association

Charity number: 1185315

Operational address: 17-19 wednesbury road, Walsall, West Midlands, WS1 3RU.

Trustees: Trustees who served during the period from formation and up to the date of this report were as follows:

Farhan Mohamed Chairperson

Garad Baaw Secretary

Hassan Egeh Deputy chair

Introduction

Soora Association is a non-governmental non-profit making charity organisation founded on 17th January 2018 in Walsall, United Kingdom, and legally registered from the UK Charity Commission as a CIO Foundation on 16th September 2019. Soora values the local existing potential and resources from the communities and aims strengthening of the community cohesion, improving community development and self-reliance to achieve better life for all. Our vision targeted the diversity of people's different backgrounds and cultures to have similar life opportunities. The organisation as set up to relieve the needs of the community in UK & Somaliland who are in need by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances, in particular but not exclusively those who are from immigrant and refugee communities, by:

- The relief of financial hardship, Isolation and disadvantaged persons in the community
- The relief of unemployment for the benefit of the public in such ways as may be thought fit, including assistance to find employment and self-reliance.
- The advancement of education and training of those in the community who are in

need thereof so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within the wider community.

- Reduction of crimes, violence and anti-social behavior in the community.
- The preservation and protection of good physical and mental health
- The provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure-time occupation with the object of improving conditions of life.

Aims and objectives review.

As part of our commitment to ensuring transparency and accountability, SOORA's Trustees conduct an annual review of the charity's aims, objectives and activities carried out during the year. This process helps us assess the progress we have made in fulfilling our mission and ensures that our work remains focused on the public benefit, as outlined by the Charity Commission. The Trustees have used the guidance in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims, objectives, and planning our future activities.

In the review period of April 2023 – April 2024, SOORA continued to fulfil its mission of supporting disadvantaged communities, particularly those from refugee and migrant backgrounds, in the areas of education, employment, welfare support and mental health. The Trustees ensured that all activities were aligned with the charitable objectives and the work carried out during this period demonstrated significant positive outcomes for the community.

Achievements and performance.

SOORA has made significant progress in 2023-2024 and successfully implemented 3 key charitable activities that have had a transformative impact on the lives of individuals in the West Midlands. Through our projects, we have supported marginalised groups, empowered individuals and enhanced the community's cohesion. Below are the key activities that SOORA carried out and their outcomes.

1. The Relief of Hardship

SOORA has focused its efforts on alleviating financial hardship and isolation for low-income and marginalized families in the Birmingham area, particularly those who are refugees or from disadvantaged backgrounds. The ongoing cost of living crisis and rising inflation have made it increasingly difficult for many individuals and families to make ends meet, which has only exacerbated issues such as poverty, mental health

challenges, and social exclusion. SOORA has been committed to providing essential support to mitigate these challenges, helping individuals to navigate financial difficulties and regain stability.

Key Activities and Achievements:

Financial Support and Welfare Guidance: In the reporting period, SOORA assisted 246 clients in understanding and accessing a variety of welfare benefits. Many of our clients were struggling to navigate the increasingly complex benefits system, particularly those affected by changes in government policies. SOORA's welfare guidance was crucial in supporting clients through the application process and ensuring they understood their entitlements.

Services Provided:

- Universal Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Housing Benefit, Child Benefit, and Personal Independence Payment (PIP) applications.
- Eligibility clarification: We helped clients understand the eligibility criteria, including income and residency requirements.
- Application process support: This included helping clients complete application forms, gather the necessary documentation, and navigate any issues that arose during the process.
- Benefit assessment guidance: Our team supported clients through medical assessments and provided information about the implications of different benefits on household income.

Impact: Clients who received our support were able to access the financial assistance they were entitled to, which helped to alleviate some of the financial pressure they faced. This also provided individuals with greater financial stability and reduced the risks of poverty and homelessness.

- **Employment Support:** SOORA offered job-seeking support to 77 individuals, focusing on providing the tools and guidance necessary to help them secure

stable employment. Many of our clients faced significant barriers to employment, including language barriers, lack of formal qualifications, and limited access to the job market.

Support services included:

- CV building: We worked one-on-one with clients to create or update CVs, ensuring they were well-positioned to apply for jobs.
- Interview techniques: We offered coaching on how to prepare for and perform in interviews, covering aspects such as body language, responses to common interview questions, and how to present oneself professionally.
- Job applications: We provided guidance on filling out online job applications and job-search strategies.
- Referrals to local recruitment agencies: To enhance job opportunities, we connected clients with local recruitment agencies such as Tudor and recruitment agencies specialising in placing individuals into permanent roles.

Impact: The employment support services helped clients become more confident in their job search and provided them with the resources and guidance they needed to secure employment. Many participants were able to improve their financial situations and build their self-reliance.

- **IT Support:** With technology playing an essential role in today's job market, access to technology is vital for disadvantaged individuals. SOORA supported 73 low-income individuals by providing them with the tools and resources to access job opportunities and essential services online.

Support Services Included:

- IT access: We provided access to computers, the internet, and other essential tools for clients who did not have these resources at home.
- Online job applications: We supported clients in creating professional emails, filling out online job applications, and building CVs using word processing software.

- Training on digital skills: In addition to specific job application support, clients received guidance on how to use technology for other essential tasks, including communication with service providers and social services.

Impact: IT support helped bridge the digital divide for disadvantaged individuals, enabling them to participate in the modern workforce and access public services, which were increasingly available online.

- **Disability Support:** SOORA also provided crucial support to 11 individuals with disabilities, helping them navigate the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and Employment Support Allowance (ESA) applications. For many individuals with disabilities, the application process can be daunting and difficult to understand, which is why our team was dedicated to providing personalised support through these processes.

Support Services Included:

- Application assistance: We guided clients through the process of applying for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and ESA, ensuring they had the necessary documentation and understood the forms.
- Medical assessments: Our team helped clients prepare for and understand the implications of medical assessments related to their disability claims.
- Entitlement explanation: We helped clients understand their eligibility and entitlements regarding financial support related to their disabilities.

Impact: This support empowered individuals with disabilities to access the benefits they were entitled to, ensuring they were able to meet their basic needs and maintain their independence. Many of the individuals supported through this service reported feeling more confident and less isolated as a result.

2. The Advancement of Education

Education is a key pillar of SOORA's mission, especially for refugees, immigrants & marginalised adults. This year, we delivered targeted English language classes and computer literacy sessions aimed at helping adults with refugee backgrounds, particularly Sudanese, Syrian and Somali communities to overcome the barrier of language and integrate into society.

Our English Language Classes and Computer Literacy Sessions were specifically designed to address the linguistic and digital literacy challenges faced by refugees, including individuals. These initiatives provided opportunities for personal growth increased independence and community.

Language Classes: This year, SOORA delivered English language classes for 46 participants from various ethnic backgrounds, many of whom were refugees and migrants' status that recently arrived in UK. These classes were essential in providing participants with foundational skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening while translated. The classes focused on practical language skills needed for daily life such as communicating with local services, interacting with healthcare providers and navigating public transportation, as well as enhancing participant's ability to seek employment and further educational opportunities.

Program Highlights:

- 12 hours of English language instruction each week, divided into four levels to cater to the varying abilities of participants.
- Emphasis on practical communication, focusing on speaking and listening skills for real-life situations.
- Creation of a supportive and encouraging learning environment, where students could interact, share experiences, and build their confidence in using English.
- Support for Single Parents: A significant number of our participants were single parents, many of whom faced barriers to employment and social inclusion due to their limited proficiency in English. For single parents, learning English is not only crucial for improving their employment prospects but also for effectively engaging with their children's education, healthcare services and other vital community resources. We ensured that the learning environment was supportive and flexible

recognising the specific challenges that single parents face, including childcare responsibilities and limited time availability. By offering 12 hours of English classes weekly, SOORA empowered participants to build their confidence, learn new skills and engage with local services, which will ultimately improve their socio-economic opportunities and reduce isolation.

Computer Literacy Sessions: In addition to English language support, SOORA also provided computer literacy sessions to enhance participants' ability to use technology in everyday life. Many refugees and marginalised adults face a digital divide, which further hinders their ability to seek employment, access government services, and communicate with others.

The computer literacy sessions focused on:

- Basic computer skills, including using word processing software, accessing the internet, and managing emails.
- Job search and application skills, helping participants navigate online job portals and prepare digital CVs.
- Accessing government services, such as Universal Credit and NHS app, through online platforms. This initiative was crucial in enabling participants to use technology confidently and effectively, which is essential in today's job market and for overall integration into society.

Impact Evaluation:

At the conclusion of the English language classes, we conducted an evaluation to measure the impact of the program on participants' skills development and personal outcomes.

- 58.4% of participants reported significant improvement in their ability to speak and understand English, which directly impacted their ability to communicate with local services, pursue further education, and secure employment.
- Many participants gained confidence in engaging with local services such as healthcare, housing, and welfare support, which reduced their dependence on others and increased their self-reliance.

- Some participants successfully secured employment or enrolled in further education programs, further advancing their integration into the local community and economy.
- Enhanced sense of community: The language classes also fostered a sense of community among participants, with many sharing positive feedback about the new friendships and networks they had formed, which reduced feelings of isolation.

3. Mental Health Awareness and Referral Support

This year, SOORA delivered several initiatives to raise awareness of mental health issues, provide community mental health support and reduce stigma, particularly among disadvantaged ethnic minority communities.

- **Community Mental Health Workshops:** We held several mental health awareness workshops focused on promoting social connections, building resilience, and improving overall mental well-being. These workshops also encouraged participants to speak openly about mental health and seek support when needed.
- **Physical Wellbeing and Outdoor Activities:** We organised physical activity sessions in local green spaces such as Small Heath Park, encouraging people to engage in light physical activities like walking, cycling and jogging. These activities not only improved physical health but also had a positive impact on mental well-being by fostering social interactions and reducing isolation.
- **Referral Support and Partnerships:** SOORA worked closely with local mental health service providers such as Forward-Thinking Birmingham, Better Pathways and Black Country Mental Health to ensure that individuals in need of higher-level mental health care received the appropriate support. SOORA broke some cultural barriers that preventing the community to seek support by building trust within the community and facilitating access to mental health services.

Public Benefit

SOORA's activities have directly benefited vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals in the community, aligning with the public benefit requirement outlined by the Charity Commission. The charity has worked to improve the lives of individuals from refugee, migrant and ethnic minority backgrounds by providing essential services in education, employment, welfare support and mental health care. Through our work, we have contributed to the reduction of hardship, the promotion of education, and the enhancement of mental well-being in marginalised communities.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

The Trustees are responsible for preparing financial statements for each financial year that provide a true and fair view of the charity's activities during the period and of its financial position at the end of the period. This includes ensuring the charity adheres to accounting and auditing requirements as outlined in the Charities Act 2011.

The Trustees also have a duty to safeguard the charity's assets, ensuring that appropriate steps are taken to prevent fraud and other irregularities. In line with this responsibility, SOORA has implemented internal controls and monitoring systems to ensure financial accountability and the effective use of funds.

The Trustees are also responsible for ensuring that the charity's website and financial information are maintained with integrity and they confirm that the financial statements give a true and fair view of SOORA's financial position.

Conclusion

SOORA has had a successful year in delivering impactful services to vulnerable communities in the West Midlands particularly (Walsall and Birmingham). We are proud of the positive changes we have facilitated in the lives of the people we serve. Moving forward, we will continue to focus on meeting the needs of marginalised individuals and communities while adhering to our charitable objectives and ensuring that we provide high-quality services that truly make a difference.

We are grateful to our funders, partners and the dedicated staff and volunteers who have contributed to our work. The Trustees are confident that SOORA will continue to grow and deepen its impact over the next twelve months.

This report was approved by the board and signed on its behalf by:

Chairperson:
Farhan Mohamed

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Farhan', is positioned below the printed name of the Chairperson.

Date: 26/01/2025

Independent examiner's report

For the year ended 04 April 2024

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 04 April 2024, which are set out on pages 12 to 17.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 43 of the 1993 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 43(7)(b) of the 1993 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

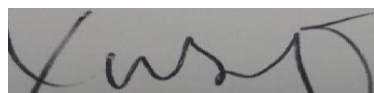
Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention, which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met;



Hassan Ali (Accountant)
Aflah Accounting Services
Unit 8, 122-126 Coldharbour Lane
Hayes, Middlesex UB3 3HL

Date: 26/01/2025

SOCIAL ORIENTATION & RELIEF ASSOCIATION (SOORA ASSOCIATION)

Statement of Financial Activities

For the year ending 4 April 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
<i>Incoming resources</i>					
From charitable activities	2	8,103	9,942	18,045	16,634
Investment income	2		-	-	-
Total incoming resources		8,103	9,942	18,045	16,634
<i>Resources expended</i>					
Charitable activities	3	7,245	20,821	28,066	12,356
Governance costs	4	300	-	300	300
Other resources expended					-
Total Resources Expended		7,545	20,821	28,366	12,656
Net resources for the year		558	(10,879)	(10,321)	3,979
Fund balances at 5 April 2023		756	19,527	20,283	16,304
Fund balances at 04 April 2024		1,314	8,648	9,962	20,283

SOCIAL ORIENTATION & RELIEF ASSOCIATION (SOORA ASSOCIATION)

Balance Sheet

For the year ending 4 April 2024

	Notes	£	2024 £	£	2023 £
<i>Fixed assets</i>					
Tangible	5		<u>1,767</u>		<u>2,357</u>
			1,767		2,357
Current Assets:					
Cash at bank and in hand			<u>8,494</u>	<u>18,226</u>	
			8,494	18,226	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	6		<u>(300)</u>	<u>(300)</u>	
Net Current Assets			<u>8,194</u>	<u>17,926</u>	
Total Assets less current liabilities			<u>9,962</u>	<u>20,283</u>	
Funds of the charity:					
Balance for the year			(10,321)	3,979	
Balance brought forward			<u>20,283</u>	<u>16,304</u>	
			<u>9,962</u>	<u>20,283</u>	

For the financial year ended 04 April 2024, the Charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (2011 Act).

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that they keep charity's accounting records in accordance with s130 of the 2011 Act and preparing accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act.

The financial statements on pages 7 to 12 were approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:



Mr Farhan Mohamed
Chairperson

Date: 26 January 2025

SOCIAL ORIENTATION & RELIEF ASSOCIATION (SOORA ASSOCIATION)

Notes to the Accounts

For the year ending 4 April 2024

1 Accounting Policies

1.1 Basis of accounting

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, and have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, *Accounting and Reporting by Charities* (Revised SORP 2005) and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities.

1.2 Incoming Resources

Grants and donations are recognised on accruals basis.

Incoming resources are reported gross.

1.3 Resources Expended

Resources expended are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on accruals basis, inclusive of any VAT that cannot be recovered.

Expenditure that is directly attributable to specific activities has been included in these cost categories. Where costs are attributable to more than one activity, they have been apportioned across the cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of those resources.

1.4 Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation.

Provision for depreciation of tangible fixed assets held by the charity is made at an annual rate of 25% on reducing balance basis.

SOCIAL ORIENTATION & RELIEF ASSOCIATION (SOORA ASSOCIATION)

Notes to the Accounts

For the year ending 4 April 2024

2. Grants and Donations

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Walsall Council	-	-	-	-
The Albert Hunt Trust	3,000	-	3,000	-
National Lottery	-	9,942	9,942	9,034
Everson Grant	-	-	-	500
Tesco Community Grant	-	-	-	5,000
Heart of England	4,998	-	4,998	-
Fund Raising	-	-	-	610
Donations from members & the public	105	-	105	1,490
	<u>8,103</u>	<u>9,942</u>	<u>18,045</u>	<u>16,634</u>

2. Investment Income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Interest receivable	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Total Incoming Resources	<u>8,103</u>	<u>9,942</u>	<u>18,045</u>	<u>16,634</u>

SOCIAL ORIENTATION & RELIEF ASSOCIATION (SOORA ASSOCIATION)

Notes to the Accounts

For the year ending 4 April 2024

3a. Direct Charitable Expenditure

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restrict ed Funds	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Premises	-	4200	4,200	2,400
Staff cost	-	6,825	6,825	1,445
Operational/Activity Cost	-	8,545	8,545	2,803
Utilities	-	1,251	1,251	1,024
Food bank for Covid-19	-	-	-	-
Printing & Publication	1,975	-	1,975	910
Volunteer Expenses	1,200	-	1,200	700
Training	1,562	-	1,562	500
Telephone & Internet	269	-	269	260
Publicity	1,050	-	1,050	878
Travel Expenses	-	-	-	-
Charitable activities	-	-	-	-
	<u>6,056</u>	<u>20,821</u>	<u>26,877</u>	<u>10,920</u>

3b. Support Costs

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restrict ed Funds	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Insurance	600	-	600	650
Repairs and Maintenance	-	-	-	-
General Administration	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	589	-	589	786
	<u>1,189</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,189</u>	<u>1,436</u>
Total Charitable Activities	<u>7,245</u>	<u>20,821</u>	<u>28,066</u>	<u>12,356</u>

4. Governance

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restrict ed Funds	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Audit and Accountancy	300	-	300	300
Professional Fees	-	-	-	-
	<u>300</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>
Total Resources Expended	<u>7,545</u>	<u>20,821</u>	<u>28,366</u>	<u>12,656</u>

SOCIAL ORIENTATION & RELIEF ASSOCIATION (SOORA ASSOCIATION)

Notes to the Accounts

For the year ending 4 April 2024

	Office Equipment £	Total £
5 Tangible fixed assets		
Cost		
At 05 April 2023	4,904	4,904
Additions	-	-
	<u>4,904</u>	<u>4,904</u>
Depreciation		
At 05 April 2023	2,548	2,548
Charge for period	589	589
At 04 April 2024	<u>3,137</u>	<u>3,137</u>
Net book values		
At 04 April 2024	<u>1,767</u>	<u>1,767</u>
At 04 April 2023	<u>2,357</u>	<u>2,357</u>
6 <i>Creditors: amount falling due within one year</i>	2024 £	2023 £
	-	-
Accountancy fee for 2023/24	<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>
	<u>300</u>	<u>300</u>