



## **SOUTHERN WOMEN'S AID NETWORK (SWAN)**

Welcome to our report of the trustees for year ending 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**The Trustees of SWAN present their annual report and audited accounts from the inception of the charity on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2021**

### **Objects**

The relief or prevention of poverty amongst people in London or in other parts of the United Kingdom or abroad in such ways as the trustees from time-to-time think fit, in-particular, but not exclusively by:

- a) providing emergency food and household items to individuals and families in need
- b) such other means, including (but not limited to) the provision of support or signposting to relevant information and other advisory services and the support of other organisations working to relieve or prevent poverty

### **Introduction**

Our registration as a CIO in March 2020, coincided with the first lockdown and the closure of the foodbank at Streatham Islamic Centre - that we have been running since Ramadan 2012. The decision to provide a Covid19 response with doorstep food parcels, proved to be the beginning of a very busy time for our team and volunteers. We became a life saver for so many families in the community. As our service grew we were flooded with referrals from other organisations, establishing SWAN as a recognised provider of aid in South London. We have built relationships and partnerships with charities and community groups in London, who have assisted in our growth and on our journey.

Ramadan 2020 was a Ramadan like no other, families had opportunities to spend time together and despite, or perhaps because of the pandemic sweeping the world, it felt like a really spiritual time. Sadly because of the closure of mosques and restrictions on communal prayers, many who previously relied on iftar meals at the mosques, had nowhere to turn. This led to our 200 Meals a Day campaign which provided meals from Thornton Heath and Croydon Islamic Centres. This campaign was incredibly well received by hundreds of beneficiaries and well supported by the South London community. The end of Ramadan signalled the start of our Monday Soup Kitchen at Thornton Heath Islamic Centre which has been providing meals to 120+ refugees, low income families and homeless people every week since.

For a small charity, we have reached so many people, suffering so many hardships, in London and in so many countries around the world. Our bread project in Lesvos, Greece has consistently provided 1000's of flatbreads every week. We have responded to emergency situations and provided food packs, shelter and clothing to refugees in Bosnia, food packs in Azerbaijan and Lebanon and Ramadan food packs in Pakistan and Yemen and supported Muslim Hands in providing blankets to Syria.



In London, through our community support project - SWAN500 - we have helped families in a number of different ways; from purchasing essential aids to paying debts. But we haven't stopped there, we have provided laptops to children from low income families, we have carried out countless aid collections for refugees and we have distributed clothes, shoes and food to hundreds of beneficiaries. Together with Tooting Community Kitchen we run a soup kitchen every Saturday, specifically for refugees.

### **Policies and Procedures**

Since we became a charity in 2020, we have documented a number of policies and procedures at SWAN, including:

Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Volunteer Management, Code of Conduct, Risk Management, Financial Management and Volunteer Expense policy.

### **Current Trustees**

Saiqa Ali BEM – Chair

Amber Siddiqui – Treasurer

Nasreen Khawaja – Secretary

Saman Jung

Smaira Wahid

Naheed Nizam

### **Trustees who have resigned**

Kareena Nelson

### **Premises**

We have a rented property which we use as Community Hub. We secured Lottery funding of £10,000 to cover the rent and overheads for the hub. The hub is used as a base and a weekly foodbank.

## **OUR WORK IN LONDON**

### **Foodbank**

Foodbanks provide emergency food and support to people locked in poverty; in the UK, more than 14 million people are living in poverty – including 4.5 million children. Food poverty, social isolation and unemployment affect many people across the UK, with many people having limited funds to buy food for themselves and their loved ones. In 2020/21 approximately 2.5



million people used a foodbank in the United Kingdom, over 600 thousand more than the previous year. The number of foodbank users has increased every year, from 346,992 people using foodbanks at the time of SWAN's genesis.

SWAN Foodbank which has been running since 2012 by our amazing team of committed volunteers, provides food parcels to the community every Tuesday in Streatham Mosque. Over the past 12 months we have provided food parcels to over 2000 families, during the lockdown we provided over door to door food parcels deliveries. We have teamed up with a number of organisations and receive weekly food donations from Dons Charity, JR Butchers, and Gails Bakery, and Supermarkets such as Lidl's, Waitrose, M&S, Aldi, and Tesco. We also receive regular donations from our local community, Orchard Primary School and Balham Mosque.

### **Asylum Seekers/Refugee Aid**

At SWAN we are committed to supporting refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Why? Because everyone has a right to be treated with dignity. Everyone has a right to be safe from persecution and everyone has the right to make a better life. The stories we hear are heartbreaking and frustrating. We wish we could do more. But for now, we do what we can, whenever and wherever we can to help. It's our duty as human beings to show compassion and empathy without labelling who is worthy of help. We all bleed the same and we all have human rights.

From 2020 to present SWAN has provided hundreds of Refugees/Asylum seekers with aid including clothes, shoes, coats, baby items, phones, hygiene products, supermarket vouchers and food.

We did an aid run to two hotels housing refugees in West London in December. We took a van and car load of winter clothes, shoes, clothes, books and toys and distributed £1260 Tesco/Asda gift cards for food. The desperation was overwhelming. It's utterly heart-breaking that families are living in such dire conditions in the UK. So many kids with no shoes and no coats. One little boy just wanted a football. Imagine in a world full of kids with electronics and expensive toys, how little he must have to want a football so much.

The food provided in hostels/hotels is often of a very poor quality and families are desperately in need of nourishment. Our Soup Kitchens provide refugees/Asylum seekers with hot food, fruit and treats.

### **Soup Kitchens**

A Soup Kitchen is a place where a hot meal is offered to those in need of a hot meal for free. Soup kitchens are generally often run by volunteers. There is a rough estimate of 25 known soup kitchens across London, with SWAN running three of them.



SWAN started our first soup Kitchen at Croydon Mosque during the Ramadan period in 2020. Since lockdown and with the increasing rise of financial strain on families, in less than 12 Months, SWAN has opened a further two more soup kitchens across south London; Monday at Thornton Heath mosque, Wednesday at Croydon Mosque and Saturday at Euro Hotels Clapham South where we work in conjunction with Tooting Community Kitchen to provide hot meals for free to those who need it.

We have weekly rotas where volunteers offer their time and food donations from bottles of water to baked cakes. Our hot meals are purchased from Biryani House Ltd which allows us to provide a nutritious meal at a budget cost thus enabling us to feed hundreds of people each month across South London.

### **Community Support**

The past year has been a strange one for social interaction and personal relationships. On the one hand, lockdown measures and work-from-home arrangements have made it harder to meet and connect with others, so feelings of isolation and loneliness are on the rise.

However, that hasn't undermined the importance of community. On the contrary, these changes have prompted many people to reconsider the significance of neighbourhood feeling, bringing the concept of meaningful belonging back into the spotlight.

During the past year we have seen our community coming together to support each and every one of our initiatives; from donating funds or food, baking for our soup kitchens, packing dates and volunteering at the foodbank, for aid collections and the soup kitchen. The community has provided invaluable support to our team. Together we have helped so many families and individuals who have been desperately in need of help.

Through our SWAN500 project we have supported multiple families in a number of ways; from fixing a ceiling, replacing carpet, buying cookers and fridges, paying off debt and helping the homeless off the streets. The support we have been able to provide has been priceless.

### **Hampers**

Since 2020 we have distributed hundreds of hampers to women's refugees, the elderly and disadvantaged families in the community. For a family suffering hopelessness and loneliness receiving a hamper with essential items and treats sends a message of support and recognition that is invaluable. The feedback we receive for our hampers is incredibly heart-warming.

### **Laptops for Deprived Children**

For thousands of children across the UK, one of the most challenging aspects of the past year has been finding the means to complete their schoolwork.



Around 1.8m children in the UK (around 9 per cent) did not have access to a laptop, desktop computer or tablet at the start of the pandemic, according to estimates from Ofcom, while more than 880,000 children are living in households with only a mobile internet connection. Among homes with an annual income of less than £13,500, around 18 per cent do not own or have access to a desktop or laptop, according to research from Deloitte.

The lack of access to electronic devices to help children participate in remote lessons and complete homework threatens to undo a decade's worth of social mobility, widening the gap between rich and poor pupils nationwide. SWAN responded to the need for laptops by providing laptops to children at Ernest Bevin School.

## **OUR WORK ABROAD**

### **Greece**

Refugees in Lesbos, Greece have escaped from war zones, crossed hostile borders, and braved the sea, only to end up on the Greek island of Lesbos, where the EU's racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic migration policies intensified during the coronavirus pandemic.

Since our CEO's visit in 2019 to Moria – long a symbol of the failures of EU migration policy – has burned to the ground. Thousands of people are living in Kara Tepe II, a quickly erected, makeshift camp on a windswept, lead-contaminated, flood-prone patch of land next to the sea.

Conditions in Kara Tepe II are arguably worse than in Moria, where the situation was already beyond dismal. And greater restrictions on refugees' movement due to the pandemic have seriously hampered their ability to access basic services, like healthcare.

The sanitation facilities in Kara Tepe II are inadequate, and refugees are only provided two meals a day, often consisting of rotten, inedible food. Many refugees used to rely on grocery stores outside the camp to supplement meagre rations. But the pandemic has made even this small, autonomous act more difficult as security guards use social distancing measures as an excuse to deny refugees access to stores.

Our bread project in Lesbos started in Moria camp in 2019 and proved to be a lifesaver for countless families when the camp burned down as it was the only regular source of food for many weeks. SWAN has consistently provided 1000s of flatbreads to refugees every week.

Since the beginning of COVID lockdowns, there has been a 66 percent increase in attempted suicides and other self-harming behaviours amongst refugees on Lesbos. It is clear that this is what happens when racist, xenophobic, and Islamophobic border policies collide with a pandemic: People who have already been dehumanised are neglected, or worse, targeted.



This dehumanisation started long before the pandemic, but COVID has provided a pretext for it to continue largely under the radar and with impunity – as evidenced by the increase in violent and illegal pushbacks at the EU's external borders in the past year.

Since we started our relief efforts in Lesvos we have successfully distributed: Prayer

Mats

Clothes

Shoes

Dates

Food Packs

Qurbani Meat

Iftar meals

Weekly flatbreads

### **Bosnia Border**

Bosnia-Herzegovina became the main hub for migrants hoping to reach wealthier European countries after authorities closed the previous migration route through Serbia and Hungary in 2016. Now it's the shortest possible way to access the EU. But the bloc is failing to effectively address the humanitarian crisis unfolding on its doorstep. Meanwhile, Bosnia's poverty, complex political system, corruption, high unemployment — and its people's difficulty in burying the legacy of their past war — all stoke resentment against migrants, creating a crisis within a crisis.

Nearly 70,000 refugees and migrants from the Middle East, South Asia and Africa have passed through Bosnia-Herzegovina in the past three years, according to the International Organization for Migration. Today, some 6,000 live in five main camps run by the United Nations agency in coordination with local authorities scattered across the country, according to the IOM.

In response to a plea for help from a desperate family stuck in the snow on the border we first started our relief efforts in Bosnia, when we helped hundreds of families with food, winter clothing, shoes and materials to repair shelters.

Since then, our partner Salam Aldeen of Team Humanity has visited the Bosnian border multiple times and our latest distribution provided foodpacks to families living in horrendous conditions. The situation on the border is unlikely to change anytime soon, with more and more refugees traveling across the route. Consequently, as one of the only charities assisting these desperate and displaced families, it is inconceivable that we can stop efforts to aid and assist as best we can.



## **Lebanon**

For nearly two years now, Lebanon has been assailed by compounded crises—specifically, an economic and financial crisis, followed by COVID-19 and, lastly, the explosion at the Port of Beirut on August 4, 2020.

In a report written by The World Bank earlier this year, the bank blamed what it called "deliberately inadequate policy responses" from the governing elite for worsening a financial meltdown "likely to rank in the top 10, possibly top three, most severe crisis episodes globally since the mid-nineteenth century".

More than half the population is now probably below the poverty line, said the report. The 12-month inflation rate has risen to 157.9% in March this year from 10% in January last year. Unemployment has risen to nearly 40% late last year from 28% in February 2020. Access to healthcare has become limited.

Our first aid distribution took place in response to the explosion in Beirut when we distributed hundreds of packs to struggling families in Beirut.

## **Pakistan**

Pakistan's poverty rate has decreased in recent years. However, the country's current economic crisis, mixed with its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, has put many Pakistani citizens out of jobs. This has further increased the poverty rate. The government of Pakistan is doing its best to fight both the COVID-19 pandemic and poverty in Pakistan. So far the government has provided many social welfare programs at a scale that they have never done in history until now. However, there is so much more to do in order for the country to defeat poverty.

**The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected the poverty-stricken citizens in Pakistan.** These people consist of women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities. They are far more likely to suffer from malnutrition and their health may be weak. Thus, the virus has spread in poverty-stricken communities faster.

We have been working in collaboration with Global Humanitarian Relief Foundation (GHRF) for five years. We have supported each other's efforts to help as many people as possible. During 2020/21 we have successfully carried out the following:

- 11 water pumps for families living in abject poverty.
- Sewing machines and vocational training.
- Microfinance grants for people to set up businesses.
- Food and practical aid to widows and orphans.





## **Yemen**

For years, already the poorest country in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Yemen now suffers from the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. Embroiled in conflict since early 2015, fighting has devastated its economy—leading to serious food insecurity—and destroyed critical infrastructure. The UN has estimated that 24.3 million people in 2021 were “at risk” of hunger and disease, of whom roughly 14.4 million were in acute need of assistance.

In 2020 we partnered with Food4Humanity and set up bread factories in Sanaa and Taiz in Yemen and distributed food packs to desperate families.

## **Azerbaijan**

Longstanding hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh renewed at the end of September 2020, dominating events in Azerbaijan for the rest of 2020 and into 2021. All parties to the conflict committed violations of international humanitarian law. The Azerbaijani military carried out attacks using banned cluster munitions.

National solidarity during the war served to suspend an intensifying conflict between the government and political opposition, however the government remained hostile to dissenting voices. Authorities misused restrictions imposed to slow the spread of Covid-19 to target critics, particularly those affiliated with the opposition Azerbaijan Popular Front Party (APFP).

By February 2021 the political unrest had a devastating effect on the civilian population and we responded to a request to help 183 families with food packs who lost their homes and breadwinners in the unrest.

## **Seasonal Campaigns**

### **Ramadan 2020**

#### **In London**

Ramadan 2020 was an extraordinary one; due to the lockdown, many Muslims were unable to attend mosques, have iftar gatherings or congregate with their family and friends.

Furthermore, many vulnerable individuals and families who had always relied on mosques for hot meals in Ramadan couldn't get them because due to Covid19 restrictions, mosques were not open and those reliant on mosque iftars were unable to access meals.

SWAN felt it was imperative that these individuals and families had access to nutritious and wholesome food during fasting. Therefore, we together with Muslim Association of Croydon and Tooting Community Kitchen collaborated to ensure that no one went hungry during the month of Ramadan.





We launched the #200MealsADay campaign which commenced on the 23d April 2020. The initiative provided up to 200 iftar meals and suhoor packs to refugees, the elderly, disabled, NHS workers and poor families; every day during the month of Ramadan.

We were inundated with requests for support from vulnerable families and this initiative provided a vital service for people observing Ramadan in South London and ensured that the most vulnerable on our doorstep were taken care of during the Ramadan.

### **Abroad:**

In Lesvos, Greece we distributed:

- 557 food packs
- 1330 prayer mats
- 5000 Iftar meals
- 64,000 bread

### **Qurbani**

In 2020 we organised 13 Qurbanis in Greece and 10 Qurbanis in Yemen.

### **Charity Statement of Financial Activities for the year ending 31 April 2021**

Under charity law, the trustee is responsible for preparing the trustee's annual report and accounts for each financial year which show a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the excess of expenditure over income for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, generally accepted accounting practice requires that the trustee:

- selects suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- makes judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- states whether the recommendations of the SORP FRS 102 have been followed, subject to any material departures
- disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- states whether the financial statements comply with the trust deed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- prepares the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.
- The trustee is required to act in accordance with the trust deed and the rules of the charity, within the framework of trust law.
- The trustee is responsible for keeping proper accounting records, sufficient to disclose at any time, with reasonable accuracy, the financial position of the charity at that time, and to enable the trustee to ensure that, where any statements of accounts are prepared



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by the trustee under section 132(1) of the Charities Act 2011, those statements of accounts comply with the requirements of regulations under that provision. The trustee has general responsibility for taking such steps as are reasonably open to the trustee to safeguard the assets of the charity and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

Signed on behalf of the trustee:

Name: Saiqa Ali (Chair)

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> February 2022

**SWAN (Southern Women's Aid Network)**

**Receipts and payments accounts**

**For the period from 20 March 2020 to 30 April 2021**

<b>Income and endowments from</b>	<b>£</b>
Donations	278,635.39
Grant	10,000.15
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	288,635.54
<b>Expenditure on</b>	
Charitable activities	251,257.40
<b>NET OPERATING INCOME</b>	<hr/>
	37,378.14
<b>Administrative expenses</b>	
Travel and subsistence	35.00
Motor expenses	60.00
Rent	7,500.00
Telephone and fax	216.90
Accountancy fee	1,020.00
Advertising and PR	2,649.98
Other legal and professional	143.90
Printing, Postage and Stationery	130.81
Office/General Administrative Expenses	1,815.09
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	13,571.68
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)</b>	<hr/>
	<b>23,806.46</b>

**SWAN (Southern Women's Aid Network)****Balance Sheet****As at 30 April 2021**

	<b>2021</b>
	<b>£</b>
<b>Current assets</b>	
Cash at bank and in hand	34,056.36
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>4</b> (1,020.00)
<b>Net current assets</b>	<b><u>£33,036.36</u></b>
<b>Net assets</b>	<b><u>£33,036.36</u></b>
<b>The funds of the charity</b>	
Unrestricted income fund	<u>33,036.36</u>
<b>Total Charity funds</b>	<b><u>£33,036.36</u></b>

**Notes on the accounts****1 Accounting Policies****Basis of preparation**

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011 and UK Generally Accepted Practice as it applies from 1 January 2019.

*The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared to give a 'true and fair' view and have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a 'true and fair view'. This departure has involved following 21 Charity Commission, Charity reporting and accounting: the essentials, 2016 Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued in October 2019 rather than the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice effective from 1 April 2005 which has since been withdrawn.*



The trustee considers that there are no material uncertainties about the ability to continue as a going concern.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had an impact on the charity's fundraising income for although this was partially offset by the generous donations made by members of the public in the first lockdown and a grant given by the Lottery commission.

#### Resources expended and irrecoverable VAT

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to each category of expense shown in the Statement of Financial Activities.

#### Expenditure is recognised when the following criteria are met:

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to each category of expense shown in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the category of resources expended for which it was incurred.

#### Debtors

Debtors are amounts owed to the charity. They are measured on the basis of their recoverable amount.

#### Creditors

Creditors are amounts owed by the charity. They are measured at the amount that the charity expects to have to pay to settle the debt.

#### 2 Related Party transactions

There are no related party transactions

#### 3 Income from donations and legacies

Donations from individuals are gifts from members of the public. The charity received £10,000 grant from the Lottery commission.

#### 4. Creditors

Creditors have been fully paid post year end.