

DA'ARO YOUTH PROJECT



ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2020/21

FROM
28 APR 2020 -
31 MAR 2021



FOREWARD

Dear Friends,

In late 2017, in response to the deaths by suicide of a number of Eritrean teenage asylum-seekers, our community came together to mourn. We saw the impact these deaths were having on other young people as well as the wider community – and felt compelled to help in any way possible. We had ideas on how to build a strong community response to offer these young people a sense of purpose and hope.

I was part of a group of community volunteers who met to further brainstorm ideas on what we could do to maximise the support and impact we could offer these young people arriving here alone from Eritrea. These community meetings led to the election of a trustee board for our project and offers of support from volunteers.

The trustees, volunteers and I were working full time jobs, but we were passionate about getting our project up and running and this is what kept us going despite the very long days. We met Ben and together, he and I had countless meetings on a Saturday morning in McDonald's and after work in Costa to bring together a plan of action.

Just as we felt the momentum was finally picking up, we lost another young person to suicide which was very hard for us all, especially for all his friends. This fuelled us further to act fast and formalise a youth club – our community gathering – which would come to be known as 'Injera Club', and we invited as many of the young people we had access to.

Our first Injera Club with the young people was held in the back garden of the South London Refugee Association (SLRA) in Summer 2018. I have to especially thank Celia and the SLRA team for all the support and guidance they have provided us since that first day. Then we were invited to open the youth club doors again at Knights Youth Centre in October 2018.

Witnessing the progress that has been made from inception to today makes me extremely proud. We have come a long way from some of our early sessions where we had no young people attend – just Ben and I sat in the youth centre alone – to a peak of 48 young people attending in one week.

We have helped over 300 young asylum-seekers find a safe space to meet and interact, to offer them a sense of community and family, and to help them understand that they are not alone. During the lockdown it has been especially difficult for these young people, living in isolation, but we have tried to offer them support over the phone and have managed to deliver over 350 homemade food packages to them, as well as protective masks and hand sanitisers.

In April 2020, we finally registered Da'aro Youth Project as a charity. It is a testament to all the hard work and commitment from the whole community in making this charity a success. I have no doubt Da'aro Youth Project will continue to grow from strength to strength and I would like to thank every single person that has supported our mission.

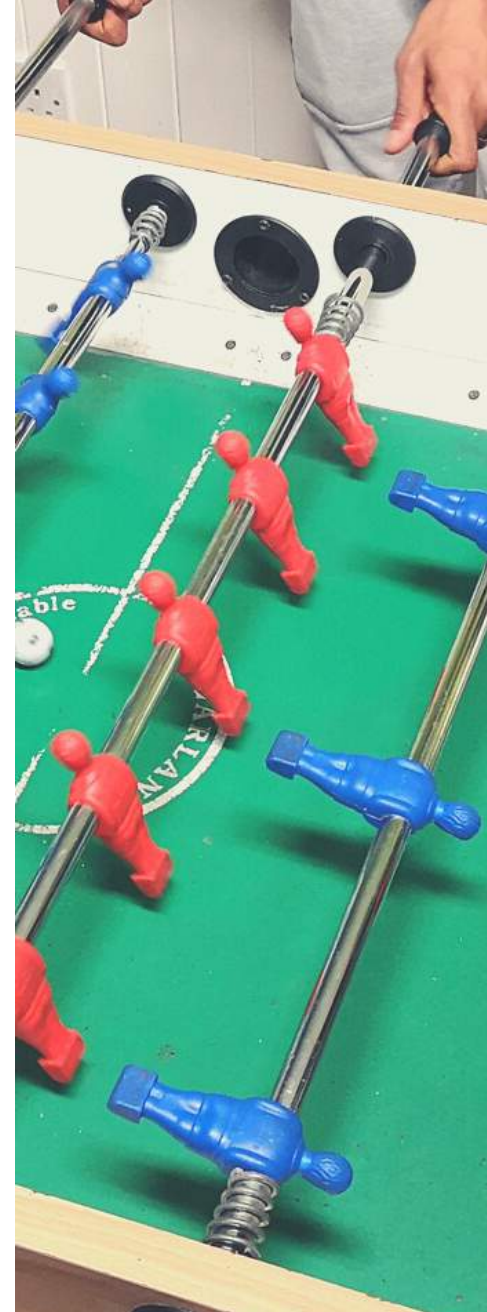
Thank you all for your continued support.

DEHAB WOLDU

Founder and Operational Manager



OUR 2020/21 RESULTS



200+

YOUNG PEOPLE
REACHED

115+

ATTENDANCES OF
INJERA CLUB PICNIC

27

NEW CASEWORK
CASES OPENED

550

FOOD PARCELS
DELIVERED

DA'ARO YOUTH

Da'aro Youth Project was established in 2018 by members of the Eritrean community in London in response to the deaths of a number of teenage Eritreans by suicide.

Eritreans and Ethiopians together were the largest nationality group of unaccompanied minors to arrive in the UK in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Asylum-seeking children and young adults arrive here after traumatic journeys through the Sahara Desert, Libya, the Mediterranean Sea and after crossing borders in Europe, such as in Calais. Once here, young people often struggle to adapt to new lives separated from their families, and find that navigating the complex asylum system can be stressful and traumatic. They face social isolation, discrimination and sometimes even hostility.

We aim to promote the wellbeing of these migrant young people living in the UK, through direct support, through building bridges in the Eritrean community and through advocating for changes to unfair and discriminatory systems which undermine their wellbeing. We believe that building sustainable relationships of trust and support within the Eritrean community is the best way to empower young people and enable them to overcome their marginalisation within society.



FIGURE 1.

Above: Our first Injera Club.

*Below: Table football at
Knights Youth Centre*



INJERA CLUB

We run a weekly youth club in south London for 14-to-21-year-old unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children and young people from the Horn of Africa: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia (and their friends). At Injera Club, young people are invited to socialise with others, play games, pool, table tennis, football and to enjoy a home-cooked traditional Eritrean meal. We mark special occasions, birthdays and holidays (such as Eritrean Christmas) at Injera Club by throwing extra special parties.

Injera Club is a social space – an environment where young people can interact with their **culture**, **food** and speak to others in their own language. Through the work we do at Injera Club we are looking to build **community**, improve wellbeing and strengthen the resilience of the young people who attend.

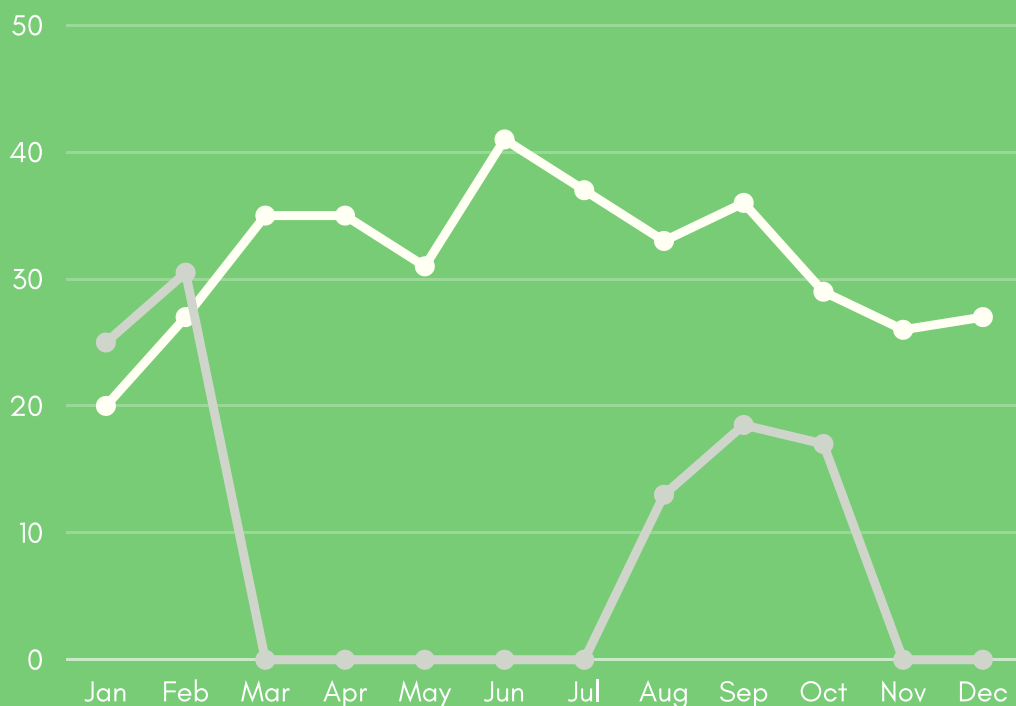


FIGURE 2.

Our average weekly attendances to Injera Club throughout 2019 (white) and during the months we could open in 2020 (grey).

We're thankful to Knights Youth Centre for allowing us use of their space in Streatham Hill – where we have access to kitchen facilities, recording booth and a sports hall.

During 2020/21, Injera Club was closed due to the Covid-19 lockdowns. However, we were able to hold **12 Covid-Safe Injera Club sessions**, outside in the park in South London during the Summer months of 2020.

A social worker told us about how important Injera Club was to the teenager she works with: *"He made a new friend, had fun, really connected with his community, and it gave him the boost he needs at the moment – his carer said he was like a different person the next day!"*

Young people have commented on how important socialising with their friends at injera club is and also mixing with older persons from their community. One said: *"When I get injera, it feels like I am having dinner with my mum."*



COVID-19

2020 has been a really tough year for everyone – but we feel especially that it has been difficult for newly arrived young asylum-seekers. Restrictions and lockdowns meant that throughout 2020 we were often unable to convene injera club, and had to find alternate means to reach young people and keep up support for them.

We gave out **clear information** about lockdown rules and health and safety in Tigrinya, Amharic, Arabic and in English to the young people we work with, via WhatsApp and phone.

We delivered approximately 550 **parcels of home-cooked food**, including injera and sauce, during periods of national lockdown, to help young people who are isolated to stay connected with their community and their culture. We also distributed hand sanitiser and face masks.

Our staff and volunteers made hundreds of **support calls** to the young people who regularly attend our project – we called everyone we had contact with at least once during each lockdown.

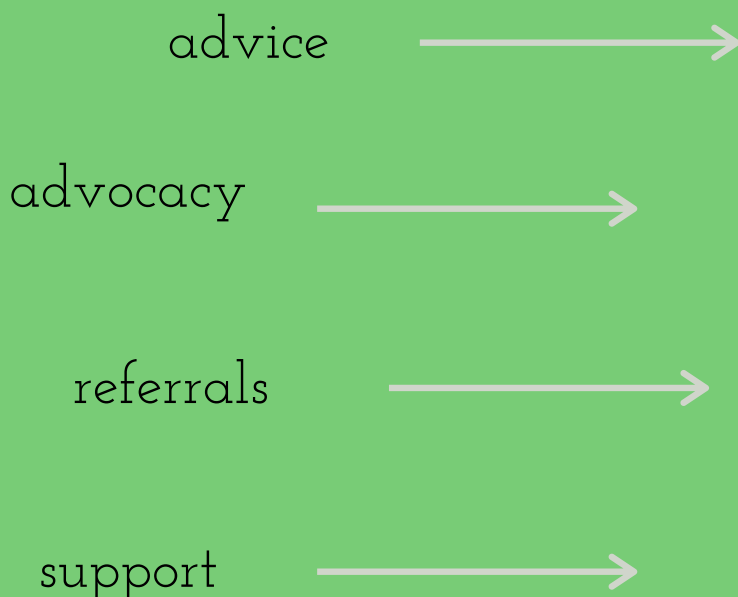
We undertook a **group trip** in the Summer 2020 to Guildford for a walk along the canal and bowling in the town centre – allowing everyone some time away from busy London. We're really looking forward to being able to do more trips when the pandemic is over.



CASEWORK

Having built a community space that is trustworthy, we're thankful that young people who attend injera club feel like they can turn to us in a crisis. During 2020/21, we opened a casework file for **27 young people**, helping them to deal with a major difficulty by way of advocacy, referrals, support and guidance, helping young people to empower themselves as much as possible. In the same period, **13 already open cases were closed**, after resolving a casework issue.

Young people experience numerous difficulties after they arrive in the UK – stress in the asylum system, worries about age assessments and disputes with social services. They deal with these problems while being away from their families, their culture and their home. In the last two years, we have done what we can to support young people through these challenges.



We supported a number of young people undergoing a **mental health crisis**, including one young man who had made himself intentionally homeless and intended to cross back to France (we supported him by raising a safeguarding concern and gently encouraging him to seek help from social services and at A&E). We referred a number of people to counselling and attended psychiatric assessments with them. A large part of our support work involves emotional support to young people on a daily basis – and even more so during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We supported an increasing number of young people who had their given **ages disputed** by the Home Office or by a local authority Children's Service. Where we believed them to be children, we wrote supporting statements for use in their legal appeals. We tried to provide additional emotional support and assistance to those young people who are age disputed and end up in the NASS system for adult asylum-seekers, some of them sharing rooms with other adults or staying in hotels with no social or financial support. We supported one child who became homeless after a local authority age assessment found him to be an adult – we helped him to find somewhere safe to stay by referring him to Refugees at Home and attending a hosting with him, supported him when he was in NASS accommodation, and attended court to advocate on his behalf – the age assessment was later overturned by a judge and he was then brought back into care. He continues to attend our project.

We advocated on behalf of young people when they had a **dispute with social services** or with their accommodation providers about the level of support they were receiving. Where we couldn't find any easy resolution we helped refer young people to appropriate advocacy services and to community care solicitors.

Poor housing and homelessness continues to be an issue that affects the young people we work with. We supported a number of young people who had either become street homeless or destitute, or had fallen through the cracks of the system and were staying with friends. One young person we worked with was moved from a room with bed bugs (after months of pushing) only to then be housed in a room with water leaking from the ceiling. We made referrals to advocacy services and housing solicitors, and pushed social services and local authority housing departments to quickly resolve these housing issues.

There is currently no rule that allows for child refugees to apply for **reunification with their families**. The only option available is for young people to undertake a complex visa application. We supported seven young people with 'outside-of-the-rules' family reunification applications – four of which involved extensive casework, including referrals to solicitors, tens of visits to solicitors appointments, DNA appointments, psychiatric assessments, and writing detailed supporting statements. During these applications, young people are experiencing heightened stress and worry for the wellbeing of family members, including mums, dads, brothers and sisters in exile in France, Saudi Arabia, and in refugee camps in Ethiopia and Sudan. We continue to support most of these clients, including one teenage boy whose younger brother has been trapped by the civil war in Tigray.

We visited three young people in **hospital** – two who suffered serious injuries in traffic accidents, and one who had been the victim of a random attack. On each occasion we brought them food, gave them positive encouragement, and helped them to feel less alone and afraid.

We supported four young people with **criminal justice issues**, referring them to good criminal solicitors, writing supporting statements, attending court with them (sometimes on multiple occasions), liaising with support services and their solicitors, and visiting them in prison. Without their families to support them, the criminal justice system can be utterly overwhelming, and so we try to help these young people to navigate this stressful process and to know that everyone gets a second chance.

We made numerous other **referrals** to partner organisations, including charities like Young Roots, South London Refugee Association, Off the Record Counselling, the Baobab Centre, May Gardens Project, Victim Support, Breaking Barriers and more. Thank you to all our partners for your hard work.





FIGURE 3.

Above: An Injera Club trip out for dancing and dinner at Adulis restaurant.

Below: Eritrean Christmas time at Injera Club.



TEAM DA'ARO YOUTH

In 2020/21 our team expanded from mostly volunteers and one paid staff to include three members of staff working part-time. We hired our founder **Dehab Woldu** as Operational Manager, leading on managing injera club, case work and community organising. Dehab joins Da'aro Youth Project with decades of experience working with asylum-seeking young people and with a very strong connection to her community. **Benny Hunter** moved on from leading on youth work and is focusing just on being Project Coordinator, managing finance, fundraising, admin and communication. We brought on board our volunteer **Raheal Amare** as a Sessional Youth Worker, to assist Dehab with casework and running injera club.

We continue to be thankful to our incredible volunteers for their patience and hard work. That includes our youth work volunteers from the last two years: Ruby, Grace, Aden, Sienna, Geordie, Nahel and Mikal – and our kitchen volunteers, helping prepare yummy food: Nebiyat and Gnet. We're so hugely thankful to the community members who have brought food or otherwise helped in whatever way to make Injera Club a success.

We said goodbye to our treasurer **Bella Solomon** and welcomed a number of community members to the trustee board, joining us from 2021 onwards. Thanks also for the ongoing hard work of trustees **Futsum Kahsa** and **Elaine Chase**.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Thanks to our supporters and funders, who first put their faith in us as we embarked on this new project in 2018.

In the year ended 28 April 2020 – 31st March 2021, our total income from donations and grants was **£88,798**.

Expenditure during that same period was **£38,774**.

Reserves at the end of the financial year are **£60,575**. This amounts to **£13,595** in unrestricted reserves and **£46,980** in restricted reserves, consisting of 3 restricted funds.

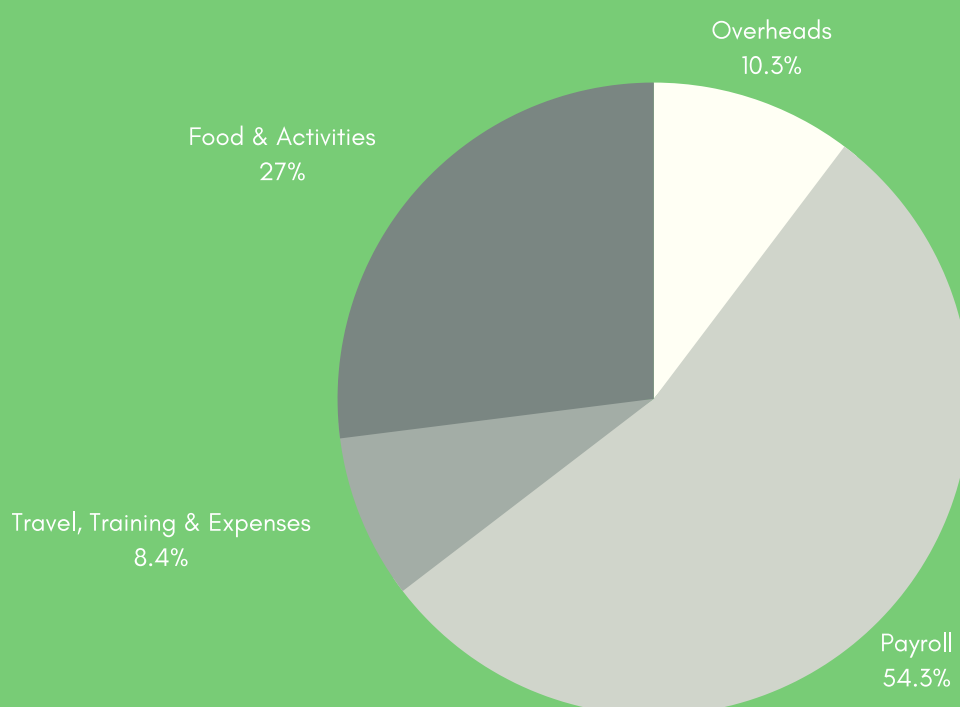


FIGURE 4.

What we spent money on in 2020/21.

Reserves Policy

DYP is currently dependent on mainly grant funding to sustain its activities. This means that if there were to be a shortfall in grant funding level it is likely that DYP would have to close services.

To avoid closure if funding difficulties were to happen the Trustee Board has agreed to keep a certain level of financial reserves to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of 3 months minimum.

The main concerns of the Trustee Board are to ensure:

- that staff can continue working, primarily to secure new funding
- that clients are supported to move on to other services

Reserves will be built up from unrestricted income.

THANKS

Thank you to everyone who donated and fundraised for us in 2020/21. Every one off contribution, donation to a fundraiser, and monthly contributor, has allowed us to grow month on month and continue to support the young people that we support.

We are very grateful to our funders, without which we couldn't do the work that we do: Choose Love, City Bridge Trust, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Manpin Foundation, London Community Response, Invesco Cares Foundation.

**CHOOSE
LOVE**

**CITY
BRIDGE
TRUST**



**LONDON
COMMUNITY
RESPONSE**



Governance and Management

Da'aro Youth Project is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Our governing document is a 'constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with voting members other than its charity trustees'.

There must be at least three charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. The maximum number of charity trustees is 12. The charity trustees may not appoint any charity trustee if as a result the number of charity trustees would exceed the maximum. The majority of trustees must be people who claim Eritrean heritage.

At every annual general meeting of the members of the CIO, one-third of the charity trustees shall retire from office. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office, but if there is only one charity trustee, he or she shall retire. The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot; The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting.

The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed, or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded; A person so appointed by the charity trustees shall retire at the conclusion of the next annual general meeting after the date of his or her appointment, and shall not be counted for the purpose of determining which of the charity trustees is to retire by rotation at that meeting.

TRUSTEES

During the period 2020/21, the following persons were trustees:

Dehab Woldu		Appointed as trustee on 28th March 2020 Resigned on 19th October 2020
Bella Solomon	(Treasurer)	Appointed as trustee on 28th March 2020 Resigned on 5th November 2020
Elaine Chase	(Secretary)	Appointed as trustee on 28th March 2020
Futsum Kahsa	(Chair)	Appointed as trustee on 28th March 2020

All of our activities are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the benefit of the public. The Trustees have had regard to Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006.

Declarations

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

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Petros B Tesfai (Treasurer)



28/02/2022

Dr Y Bahru 01.03.22

Dr. Yohannes Bahru (Trustee)



c/o Streatham Space Project,
Sternhold Avenue,
London,
SW2 4PA

info@daaroyouth.org.uk

Charity No. 1189245



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name
Da'aro Youth Project

No (if any)
1189245

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period	Period start date	To	Period end date
from	28th April 2020		31st March 2021

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
Grants	2,625	58,185	-	60,810	13,399
Donations	6,041	-	-	6,041	9,303
Fundraiser for Victim of Acid Attack	-	21,892	-	21,892	-
Refunds	55	-	-	55	38
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	8,721	80,077	-	88,798	22,740

A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	8,721	80,077	-	88,798	22,740

A3 Payments					
Freelance Workers	-	9,885	-	9,885	3,150
Salaries incl. HMRC	-	10,891	-	10,891	-
Payroll Expenditure	-	140	-	140	-
Staff Recruitment	-	169	-	169	-
Staff Travel and Expenses	879	-	-	879	256
Training and Supervision	-	1,763	-	1,763	795
Volunteer Costs	597	-	-	597	1,086
Insurance	-	254	-	254	-
Materials and Equipment	647	-	-	647	100
Youth Activities	-	184	-	184	776

Youth Club Food and Delivery Costs	-	8,036	-	8,036	5,470
Young Person Direct Support	751	-	-	751	-
Youth Club Rent	-	853	-	853	-
Office Rent	-	-	-	-	-
Fundraising	96	-	-	96	-
IT Equipment	2,195	-	-	2,195	110
Stationery, Postage and Printing	101	-	-	101	215
Telephone	325	-	-	325	187
Attack Victim Expenses	-	920	-	920	-
Miscellaneous Costs	87	-	-	87	130
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	5,677	33,096	-	38,774	12,275

A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-

Total payments	5,677	33,096	-	38,774	12,275
Net of receipts/(payments)	3,044	46,980	-	50,024	10,465
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	10,551	-	-	10,551	86
Cash funds this year end	13,595	46,980	-	60,575	10,551

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				
	Advice Project Funds	-	-	-
	Injera Club Funds	-	7,832	-
	Fundraiser for attack victim		20,971	

Core Costs	13,595	18,177	-
Total cash funds	13,595	46,980	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))			
	OK	OK	OK

Unrestricted funds to nearest £

Restricted funds to nearest £

Endowment funds to nearest £

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)
Printer	175	-
Laptops	1,126	-
	-	-
	-	-
	-	-

		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
		-	
		-	
		-	
		-	

B5 Liabilities

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

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
<i>E Chase</i> <i>ET</i>	Elaine Chase Petros Testai	16/02/2022 20/2/22