



ANNUAL REPORT

2023 - 24

CONTENTS

Directors' message 1

‘Invest in her Future’ campaign success 2

Mentorship programme & success story 3

Recipient of UniArk Women’s Scholarship for Afghanistan 5

Changemakers’ Fund 6

Financials 8

Looking to the future 10

Thank you 11

DIRECTORS' MESSAGE

Dear UniArk members,

This year has been an extraordinary one for several reasons.

First, we successfully completed our "Invest in Her Future" scholarship campaign, receiving donations both large and small from a wide range of generous supporters. We are incredibly fortunate to have such broad-based support who have helped us offer our first ever full Masters scholarship!

Second, we received such a great volume of applications for our women's scholarship. We were delighted by the quality of applications that we received. Many of the applicants were admitted to prestigious universities like Oxford, Cambridge, MIT and elsewhere. This has only demonstrated the crucial need for and importance of our scholarship.

Third, our mentorship programme has achieved remarkable success, helping numerous students gain admission to prestigious universities, including Stanford!

Please read this report as we reflect in more detail on the incredible work of our team and outline our even bigger goals for the coming year.

With many thanks,

Danielle, Najib, Goncalo and Shukria



‘INVEST IN HER FUTURE’ CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

Earlier this year, UniArk successfully completed Invest in her Future campaign, fundraising for a fully funded masters scholarship for a woman from Afghanistan. Coinciding with Women's History Month 2024, we met our £35,000 target, made possible through the generous support of donors such as **Rob Harley, Sir Philip Pullman CBE FRSL, Susannah Herbert, Kate Clanchy, Shirin Dehghan, and Pooya Kamvari**, and the tireless efforts of volunteers from Homerton College, University of Cambridge, and Imperial College London, as well as global contributors via our GoFundMe page.



Rob Harley

The UniArk Women's Scholarship Campaign serves as a beacon of hope for talented women who represent the aspirations of countless education-deprived girls in Afghanistan. I urge everyone to support this invaluable and inspiring initiative."



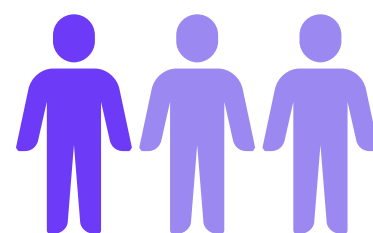
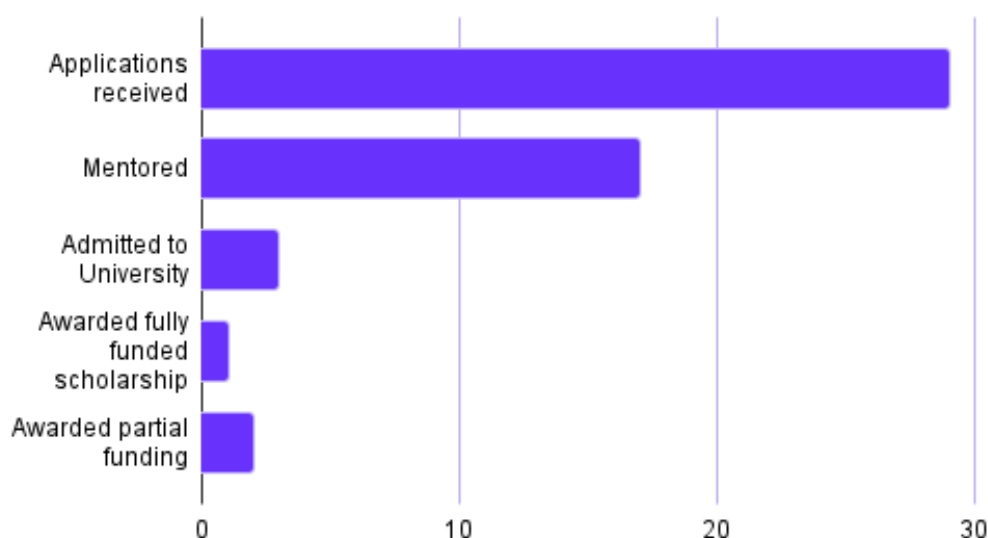
Susannah Herbert

"I am proud to support UniArk in their tireless campaign to widen education opportunities for the women of Afghanistan. Their bravery, motivation and talent deserve the widest possible backing. This particular scholarship will change a life, and through that change, it will impact many others in practical and important ways."

OUR WORK (2023-24)

UniArk's backbone is not formed of interlinking vertebra stacked one on top of the other, but rather pairwise mentor-mentee relationships that stretch through time. Our focus of providing direct, one-to-one support with deserving students has enabled many students make competitive applications to UK/US and other global universities world wide.

Figure 1: Statistics on UniArk's 2023-2024 Mentorship Programme.



**Only 1 of 17 mentees
was awarded a fully
funded-scholarship**

Figure 2. Diagram on number of fully funded scholarship awarded to UniArk mentees.

What these numbers do not adequately convey is an enormous amount of hard work and dedication, countless iterations of personal statements, hours spent sifting through university after university, funding calls, and visa requirements, the plans A, B, and C for each student, and underpinning it all, the hopes and dreams of students who have endured so much. We are grateful to connect with every student we work with and celebrate their growth on an individual basis.



MENTEE SUCCESS STORY

From the 21 mentees admitted to our mentorship programme, we are proud to report that 17 of them have successfully gained admissions to their desired institutions. Most notably, one of our mentees, **Morteza Ehsani**, from Herat Afghanistan, has been awarded a prestigious fully-funded scholarship to Stanford to study Computer Science. Morteza's journey is particularly inspiring—he faced numerous challenges, including interruptions in his education due to the political upheavals in Afghanistan. Despite these obstacles, Morteza's determination and the support of his mentors enabled him to secure admission to Stanford University with a fully-funded scholarship, marking a significant achievement for our programme.

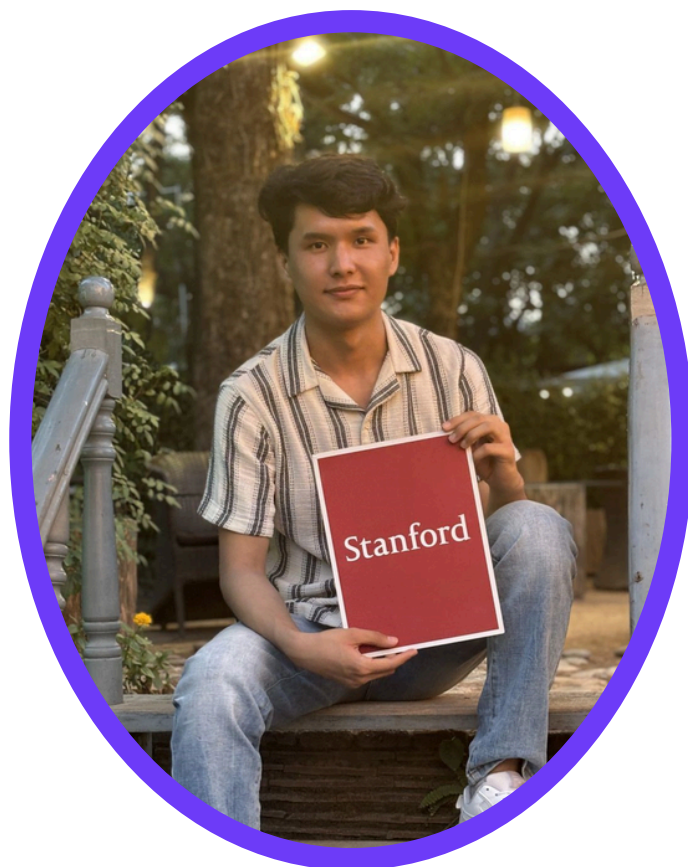
Morteza Ehsani

UniArk Mentee 2024-25

BSc Computer Science at Stanford University

“The biggest obstacle to our dreams is often ourselves. Have faith in the process and take that first step towards achieving the dream that keeps you awake at night (for me, it was going to Stanford!). If it feels daunting, don’t hesitate to ask for help. Someone out there is willing to offer you genuine support. You just need to show up.”

Read more about Morteza on our website [here](#).



RECIPIENT OF UNIARK WOMEN'S SCHOLARSHIP FOR AFGHANISTAN

UniArk is delighted to announce **Shukria Rahimi** as the recipient of the UniArk Women's Scholarship for Afghanistan. The scholarship selection process was highly competitive, but Shukria's application stood out due to her exceptional academic background, passion, activism, and clear goals. Her courage in organising protests for women's rights during the Afghan government's fall in August 2021 particularly inspired us. Shukria will enrol in the **MA Transitional Justice, Human Rights, and the Rule of Law** programme at Geneva Academy in Switzerland in September 2024, pending the issuance of her student visa in Pakistan. We look forward to sharing further updates through our social media channels and website.

Shukria Rahimi

Winner of UniArk Women's Scholarship for Afghanistan
MA Transitional Justice at Geneva Academy

"For me, strength isn't just about remaining unbroken or impervious to challenges. It's about the resilience to keep standing up after falling, even when hope seems distant. True strength is found in the courage to persist and not give up, despite the struggles we face. Therefore, I am grateful for this scholarship opportunity for being my hope that has gotten me back up standing and chasing my dreams again. I wish for more women and girls from Afghanistan and around the world to have such opportunities."



To find out more about Shukria's journey, follow us online on our social media channels.

UNIARK WOMEN'S SCHOLARSHIP FOR AFGHANISTAN APPLICATION STATISTICS

This fundraising effort had a clear target, namely to sponsor a woman from Afghanistan to pursue higher education. The focus on women was because of the unprecedented obstacles they faced in that country. UniArk was therefore strict on both the gender and residency criteria. Another crucial consideration was the ability of our scholarship to fully fund their degree, in line with our commitment to help students pursue their dreams free from financial uncertainty. This criterion ended up representing a substantial filter, as seen below.

201 Applications Received



98 eligible based on UniArk's criteria

Figure 3: Statistics and shortlisting of Women's Scholarship Applications for Afghanistan.

Figure 4. Breakdown of UniArk Women's Scholarship Applications for Afghanistan by Subject Area (from those fully eligible)

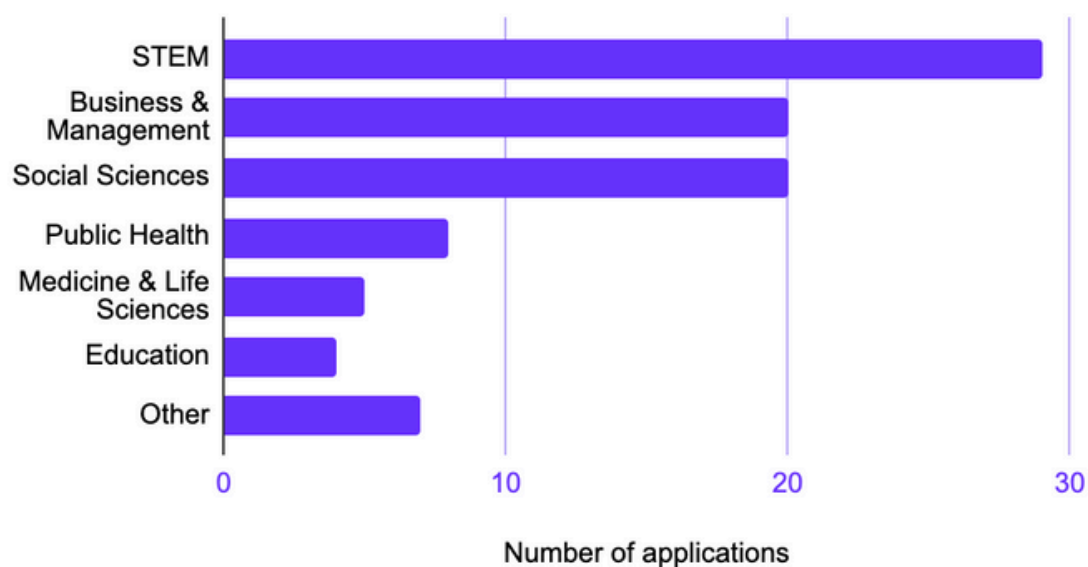
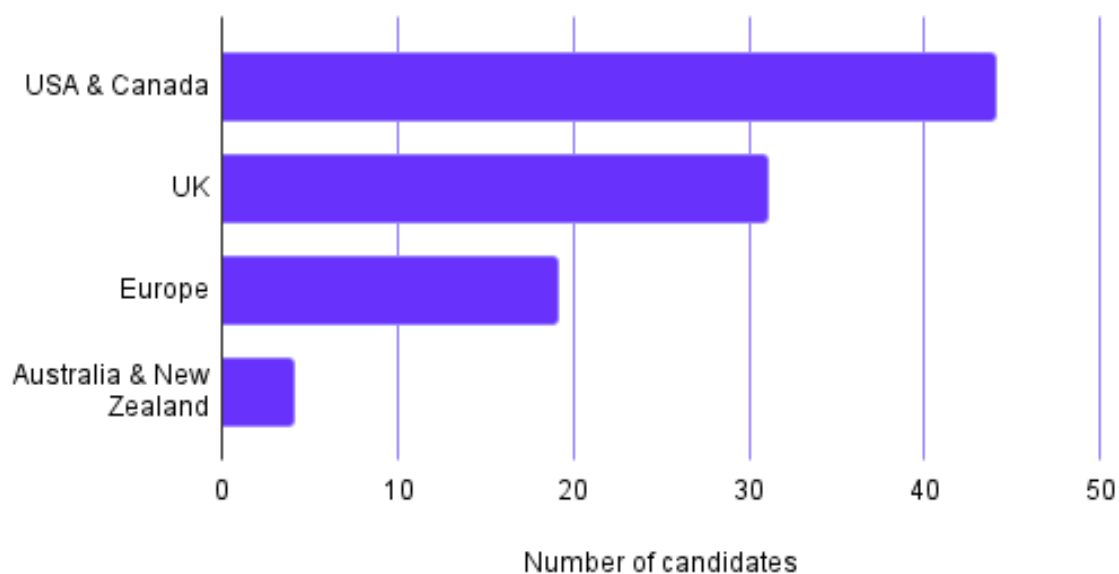


Figure 5. Breakdown of UniArk Women's Scholarship for Afghanistan by country of university



A short paragraph to explain and put into context the statistics and importance of raising further funds for more scholarships.

Particularly highlight the limit of the scholarship and the need for a wider encompassing scholarship...

A BREAKDOWN BY COUNTRY ASWELL??? - It's in the document

It would be great if we had stats on the average financial requirement of the applicants. Very long to do though...

CHANGEMAKER'S FUND

In May 2024, UniArk received a small grant from Homerton College Changemakers, made possible by the generous donation from Rupert Baines.

The grant has facilitated the creation of videos that effectively communicate our mission and the services we offer. These videos will play an important role in enhancing our online presence, as share them on our website and across various social media platforms.

UniArk received a generous £500 grant from Homerton College Changemakers. The grant is instrumental in addressing a critical need of UniArk: creating impactful videos to communicate our key messages and expand our reach through social media and website communications to both possible supporters and target students.

In this project, we have carefully drafted the content for these videos, ensuring the messages were clear, compelling, and resonant with our target audience. Subsequently, we hired a professional digital content creator to produce two high-quality videos. These videos encapsulate the essence of UniArk's mission and services.

These videos will play a critical role in UniArk's mission to provide life-changing educational opportunities to talented students from marginalized and persecuted communities around the world. We are immensely grateful to Rupert Baines and the Homerton College Changemakers programme for enabling this to happen.

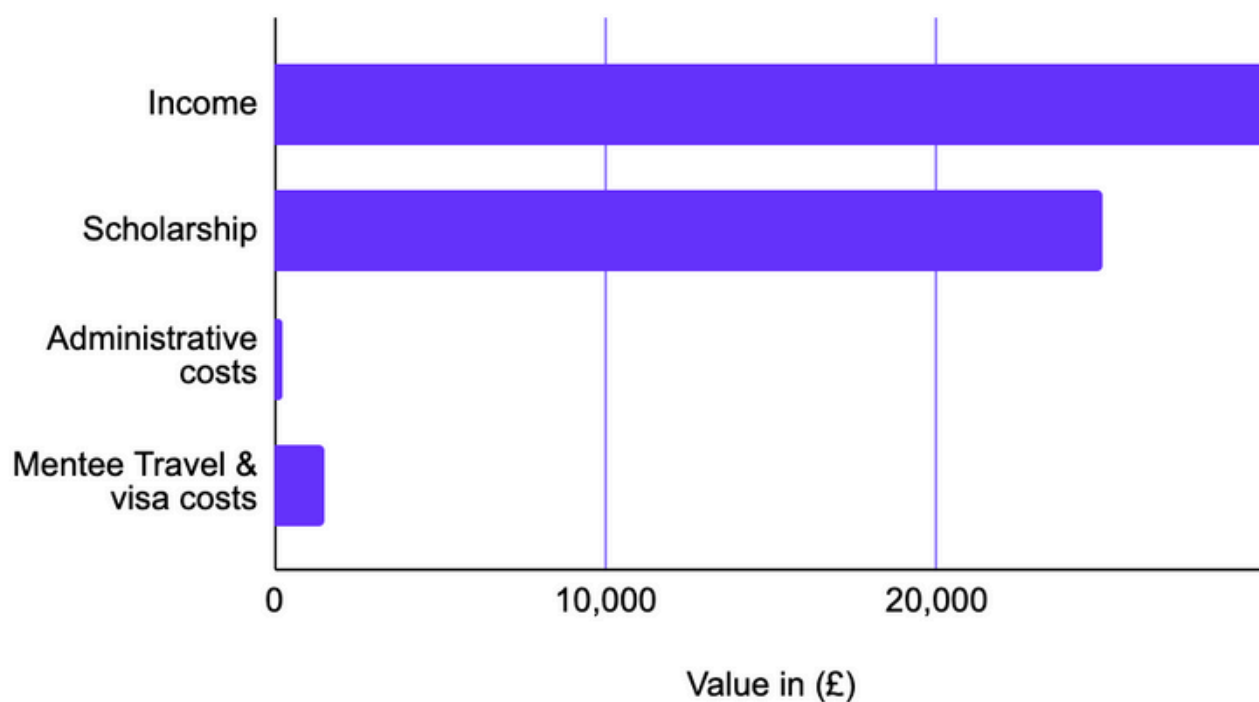
FINANCIALS

Overview

UniArk's income is on the rise, thanks to the generous donations from our supporters and funding grants from organisations like Homerton College Changemakers (see pg. 8). This financial support has enabled us to fund scholarships for two students so far. Their journeys from Afghanistan to their respective universities have been fraught with challenges, and UniArk has been there to support them every step of the way.

The graph below illustrates our income and expenditure, highlighting the growth and the allocation of funds towards our mission.

Figure 5. Income and expenditure for 2023 - 24



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

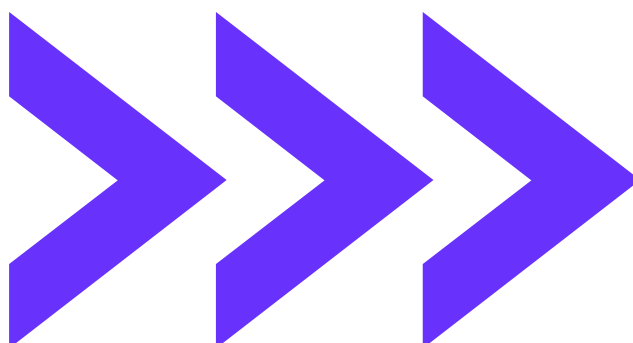
- **Fundraise another fully funded scholarship through crowdfunding, public donations and school charity fundraising.**

Following the successful completion of our Invest in Her Future campaign, we're determined to fundraise for another scholarship and grow our supporter base.

- **Explore the role of technology assisted mentorship in furthering UniArk's mission.**

Providing 1-on-1 mentorship can be resource-intensive, requiring many hours of online research.

One of the strengths of UniArk is the immense talent present in the team. Leveraging the expertise of members with backgrounds in engineering, technology, and software, we are actively investigating ways to optimise our mentoring service and use tech innovation to address UniArk Challenges. Their efforts aim to streamline processes, reducing time commitments for both mentors and mentees alike.



THANK YOU

Dr Alison Wood
Dr Soraya Jones
Mark Hardie
Judith Coplowe
Dr Georgie Horrell
Prof Jason Howk
Kerry Ritz
Joe Divana
Evelyn Gilbert-Bair
Ishaan Sethi
Dr Bashir Kazimi
Freya Lambert
Amna Farooq
Yat Li Lung
Hardika Kukreja
Ritheka Sundar
Puja Pallavi
Swetha Umashunkar
Gull Imaan Ali
Evelyn Atat
Eleanor Luxton
Sophie Dodman
Jacob Huckle
Adam Poole
Kate Godfrey
Mohammad Sadiq
Dr Andre Lo

Rob Harley
Sir Philip Pullman FBE FRSL
Susannah Herbert
Kate Clanchy MBE
Pooya Kamvari
Dr Shirin Dehghan
Giorgia Sensi
Homerton College MCR & JCR

UNIARK CIO
Financial Statements
For the Period Ended
31st December 2023

Contents	Page
Legal and Administrative Details	1
Trustees' Annual Report	2
Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities	4
Receipts and Payments Account	5
Statement of Assets and Liabilities	6
Notes to the Financial Statements	7

Trustees

S Rezaei (Chair)
N Sharifi
G A Regado
D. Kurtin

CIO Address

71 Hawkeshead Road
Manchester
M8 0QZ

Legal Status

Charity Registration Number 1199070

Bankers

Barclays Bank
9-11 St Andrew's St
Cambridge
CB2 3AA

UNIARK CIO

Trustees' Annual Report

The Trustees present their Annual Report and the financial statements for the period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023. This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions under section 133 of the Charities Act 2011 which allows for the preparation of receipts and payments accounts by charities with income less than £250,000.

Trustees

The trustees who held office during the period were:

S Rezaei (Chair)
N Sharifi
G A Regado
D Kurtin

Legal Status and Objects

UniArk is a registered charity with Charity Registration Number 1199070.

The objects of the Charity are to advance the education of persons of disadvantaged backgrounds in such ways as:

- Providing general academic advice and in particular, any guidance, advice or work done relating to university applications which includes providing interview practices and feedback on personal statements and assisting on the preparation for admissions tests and scholarship applications
- Awarding to such persons subsidies, maintenance allowances or grants associated or in connection with their university application process, including
 - application fees for admissions aptitude tests (such as, amongst others, the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT), Mathematics Admissions Test (MAT), National Admissions Test for Law (LNAT), Sixth Term Examination Paper (STEP) and University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT)), and
 - Shall include the travelling or transportation fees incurred for the purpose of taking such tests or for attending university entrance interviews.

In reviewing its activities, the Trustees have been mindful of the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

The charity may:

- Raise funds, receive grants and spend funds in order to further the charity's objectives;
- Cooperate with and support other charities with similar purposes; and
- Do anything which is lawful and necessary to achieve its purposes

Appointment of Trustees

There must be a maximum of ten and a minimum of three trustees in any year, drawn from its members. Up to two additional trustees may be appointed during the year. All the trustees must retire at the AGM. The members must elect the trustees at the AGM. The trustees should hold at least three meetings a year.

One new Trustee was appointed: Dr Danielle Kurtin.

Review of Activities and Financial Performance

In an exceptional year, UniArk has reached new milestones in its mission to support educational opportunities for students facing adversity. The "Invest in Her Future" campaign was a resounding success, securing £35,000 to fund a full master's scholarship for a woman from Afghanistan. This campaign was supported by generous donors and volunteers from prestigious institutions. We proudly announced Shukria Rahimi as the recipient of the UniArk Women's Scholarship for Afghanistan, enabling her to pursue a master's at Geneva Academy. Her story of activism and perseverance is inspiring and aligns with our mission. This is the second scholarship that UniArk has raised money towards after providing a scholarship to Nematullah Ahangosh (approximately £20,000) to study a master's at Sussex University, UK.

Our mentorship program continues to thrive, with 17 out of 21 mentees gaining admissions to top universities, including a notable full scholarship to Stanford for Morteza Ehsani from Herat, Afghanistan. His journey exemplifies resilience and the transformative power of education.

A small grant from Homerton College Changemakers facilitated the creation of impactful videos to enhance our outreach and support. Financially, UniArk's income has grown, allowing us to fund scholarships and support students through their educational journeys.

Looking ahead, UniArk aims to fund another fully funded scholarship and explore technology-assisted mentorship to optimize support for students. Our commitment to breaking financial barriers and providing educational opportunities remains unwavering. UniArk's journey is a testament to collaboration, resilience, and the belief that education can transcend barriers, ensuring every student has the opportunity to thrive regardless of their circumstances.

The financial activities of UniArk include helping a number of students financially, these include a scholarship to Nematullah Ahangush, a student from Afghanistan who is studying a masters at University of Sussex and other students like Roqia Ibrahim who has been fully funded by UniArk to study a masters.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the legislative requirements of the Charities Act 2011 as applicable to smaller charities in England and Wales.

The Trustees have taken the option available to them to prepare the accounts on a receipts and payments basis because the gross income of the charity is less than £250,000.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees are satisfied that the level of cash funds, currently are adequate to meet the objects of the Charity.

Approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Dr Najib Sharifi

Date: 29/07/2024

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Law applicable to Charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the Charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees should follow best practice and:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent; and

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the Charity, and which enable them to ascertain the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, supporting regulations and the Trust Deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

UNIARK CIO
Receipts and Payments Account
for the period from 1st January 2023 to 31 December 2023

	Note	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
		2023	2023	2023	2022
		£	£	£	£
Receipts					
Donations		15939	51.77	15990.77	24282
Grant		-	2000	2000	0
Total Receipts For Year		15939	2051.77	17990.77	24282
Payments:	3	3031.55	0	3031.55	
Debts repayment					
Grants to individuals	4	22491.76	-	22491.76	231
Communication and website costs		0	184	184	1145
Insurance		-	-	-	-
Travel and subsistence		-	-	-	-
Purchase of equipment		-	-	-	-
Total Payments for Year		25523.31	184	25707.31	1376
Net (Payments)/Receipts being Net Movement in Funds		-9584.31	1867.77	-7716.54	22906
Transfer from unrestricted funds					
Cash Funds At Last Year End		22037	869	22906	-
Cash Funds At This Year End		12452.69	2736.77	15189.46	-

UNIARK CIO
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
31 December 2022

2023

£

Monetary Assets**Cash at bank**

Bank account 1 (Barclay's bank)

13437

Bank account 2 (PayPal)

1752.39

Debtor

Gift aid receivable

500

Total Monetary Assets

15689.39

Non Monetary Assets

Equipment

-

Total Assets at Cost

15689.39

Liabilities**Creditors** – restricted fund sum owed to trustee (note 5)

698.50

Approved by the Trustees and Signed by:**Dr Najib Sharifi****Trustee****Date: 30/07/2024**

1 Accounting Policies

The financial statements have been prepared under Section 42(3) of the Charities Act 2011 and the Statement of Recommended Practice on “Accounting and Reporting by Charities” issued March 2005.

Particular accounting policies adopted by the trustees are described below.

a) Income and Expenditure

Income and expenditure are accounted for on a receipts and payments basis.

2 Trustees’ Remuneration

None of the trustees received remuneration or expenses during the current or previous period. During the period one trustee paid expenses on the charity’s behalf (see note 5) and was reimbursed only for these costs.

3 Donations

Reimbursements outstanding from 2022 carried on as debts were reimbursed. See note 5.

4 Grants

UniArk provided grants to a student travelling from Afghanistan to US via Pakistan. Accommodations were book directly where possible rather than sending money to the student.

5 Creditors

UniArk experienced technology problems with the bank account where transfer to students and payment for student admissions costs were not possible. In these cases, a UniArk trustee (Najib Sharifi) paid for the students from his own private account. Once the payment transfer was sorted through paypal, this debt was removed. However, due to limited cash in charity paypal account, the trustee covered some costs. This amount is raised as debt. Receipts are available for all payments and transfers.

6 Restricted funds

The charity received donations towards assisting 3 individuals. Where the grants to these individuals exceeded such donations, the deficit is funded by unrestricted donations and is shown as a transfer from unrestricted funds. At the period end, there were unspent restricted donations for 3 individuals totalling £12452.69.