

Democrashe Ltd
Company Limited by Guarantee
Unaudited Financial Statements
31 July 2022

Finegan Gibson Ltd
Chartered accountants
Causeway Tower
9 James Street South
Belfast
BT2 8DN

Democrashe Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

Financial Statements

Year ended 31 July 2022

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Democrashe Ltd

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)

Year ended 31 July 2022

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 July 2022.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Democrashe Ltd
Charity registration number	103802
Company registration number	NI073060
Principal office and registered office	23 Rugby Road Belfast BT7 1PT

The trustees

Ms L Carvill
Ms E Law
Ms F MacMillan
Ms F McCausland

Independent examiner	Finegan Gibson Limited Causeway Tower 9 James Street South Belfast BT2 8DN
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Structure, governance and management

DemocraShe is a company limited by guarantee (NI073060) and not having a share capital operating under the Companies Act 2006. It is based in Northern Ireland and registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (NIC103802). It is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Trustees are appointed by ordinary resolution at an annual general meeting through rotational retirement and filling of vacancies, those retiring by rotation being those longest in office since their last appointment. In addition, the Trustees have the power to appoint a person who is willing to act to be a Trustee until the following annual general meeting.

Work is undertaken by an individual associate or small teams of associates who come together to undertake projects under the leadership of a senior associate who reports to the Trustees.

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Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 July 2022

Objectives and activities

Objects

DemocraShe's objects are

- the advancement of human rights (as set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and subsequent United Nations conventions and declarations), conflict resolution or reconciliation or the promotion of religious or racial harmony or equality and diversity; and
- the advancement of citizenship and community development; through education, raising awareness, conducting research and promoting dialogue and co-operation, enhancing leadership and governance for the benefit of the public in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and internationally hereinafter called the "area of benefit".

Activities

In support of the objects DemocraShe's activities can include

- building the capacities of individuals and organisations, including in leadership and governance;
- conducting and engaging in education and training programmes, meetings, events and activities;
- promoting and facilitating dialogue, understanding and cooperation;
- conducting and disseminating research and information;
- informing, educating and advocating;
- cooperating, partnering and participating with other organisations in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, United Kingdom, Europe and internationally.

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Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report) *(continued)*

Year ended 31 July 2022

Achievements and performance

During the year ended July 2022 DemocraShe advanced its work in Northern Ireland, Ireland and internationally. We continued to promote gender equality and women's leadership as well as share lessons and build capacity on women, peace and security. We engaged with women's organisations, academics, politicians and officials in central and local government. Throughout, we were alert to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when planning and carrying out our work.

Strengthening civil advocacy: DemocraShe's senior associate, Bronagh Hinds, was appointed by the Department for Communities as the Gender Expert to its Gender Equality Co-Design Group to maximise their influence on the Northern Ireland Executive's Gender Equality Strategy (GES). Working alongside a co-facilitator from the Strategic Investment Board, intensive work between February and July 2022 (and beyond) resulted in a comprehensive Position Paper and Strategic Framework of Priority Goals. Enabling consensus involved multiple meetings of the Co-Design Group, individual consultations and separate women's and men's workshops dedicated to addressing their different priorities, consistently mediating differences and reframing positions. This inclusive approach, coupled with strengthening advocacy capacity, prepared the Co-Design Group for a series of dialogues with policy makers, senior officials and politicians in Autumn 2022 which, unfortunately, was interrupted by the continued suspension of the Assembly and Executive. The GES Position Paper and Priority Goals were framed within a clear vision and principles with the goals aligned with Programme for Government outcomes.

Principles

Leadership - Human Rights - Equality and Fairness

Dignity, Respect and Choice - Multiple Identities and Intersectionality - Participation and Inclusion

Collaboration and Partnership - Gender Mainstreaming - Transparency and Accountability.

Vision

'An equal society in which no-one is disadvantaged on the basis of their gender, and which respects, protects, promotes and fulfils the rights of people of all genders so that they have an equal share of power, resources and influence and can fully participate in society'.

Local Government: Our senior associate continued to be a member of the Local Government Equality and Diversity Working Group. Chaired by a Council Chief Executive, the purpose of the Diversity Group is to prioritise and influence initiatives across local government, stretching commitments beyond compliance with statutory equality duties. The year saw the Group launch a Strategy and Action Plan based on an equality and diversity model that incorporates diversity ambassadors, talent management, codes on recruitment and selection, mental health, and learning and development; it also paid attention to gathering baseline data to enable measurement of progress, benchmarking and best practice. Bronagh collaborated with the Local Government Staff Commission and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association in planning and facilitating a best practice event on diversity ambassadors. Her introductory remarks set the scene for the event by outlining the legislative framework and strategic context of equality, diversity and inclusion in local government; she subsequently prepared a written brief that was circulated to councils and stakeholders. Local government's sole minority ethnic Councillor, Councillor Lilian Seenoi-Barr from Derry City Council, gave a keynote speech, followed by a case study on mainstreaming diversity from Antrim and Newtownabbey Council. Bronagh invited a panel of six elected members from different councils to describe their diversity activities and facilitated a discussion among attendees on reshaping and redefining the role of elected members as diversity ambassadors.

Equality and diversity: We contributed to equality and diversity through a range of mediums.

- We engaged actively in the Gender Budgeting Group in planning, meetings and engagements with the Head of the Civil Service, senior departmental officials and the Fiscal Commission.
- We took part in research conducted from January 2021 by the *Gender Equalities at Work* project. The senior associate is a member of the Project Advisory Board alongside academics from several universities and women's rights practitioners. The project is investigating workplace equalities law over the last 50 years across the 4 nations of the UK from a number of angles and with specific strands on equal pay, sex discrimination and sexual harassment.
- We aided research on *Routes to Power and Influence* exploring women's sector infrastructure to inform strategic funding decisions that will enable women's organisations thrive, advising the researchers on interviewees in Northern Ireland and taking part in an interview and a workshop.
- Our senior associate was a discussant with commentator Sarah Creighton, activist Elaine Croy and Women'sTech CEO Lynn Carvill following a screening at The MAC theatre of the film *Women's Work* by Nuala Haughey which examined the role of women in politics in Northern Ireland. As Lynn Carvill noted *"It is an unfortunate truth that in many career areas, we still don't have to look far to find the old attitudes and explicit misogyny which still must be tackled head on."*
- Bronagh spoke at an All Island Women's Forum Women's Hour Storytelling event on identity, in particular how identity has been impacted by Brexit and changing political attitudes.

Recording women's history: The senior associate took part in research, including a two-day roundtable in Cardiff, led by Dr. Rachel Minto, Cardiff University and Dr. Paul Copeland, St Mary's College London as part of their research on feminist civil society organisations across the UK. With support from the James Madison Charitable Trust they set out to chart the establishment and development of the UK Joint Committee on Women (UKJCW) that was established to coordinate the UK's representation to the European Women's Lobby (EWL), founded in 1990 as the principal women's civil society organisation in the European Union (EU). Bronagh had founded the Northern Ireland Women's European Platform (now Women's Platform) as one of the four organisations constituting the UKJCW and to collaborate with sister-EWL member, the National Women's Council of Ireland, in representing women's interests on the island of Ireland. Minto and Copeland note that the UKJCW is underpinned *"by a quasi-federal, partnership of equals between four sister organisations in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England in a model of intra-UK working that was remarkable in its innovation, established as it was against a backdrop of highly centralised interest representation"*.

Gender and peacebuilding on the island of Ireland: We contributed to a Gender and Peacebuilding panel for the 50th Anniversary of the Irish School of Ecumenics in Trinity College Dublin. The inputs and discussion focused on the opportunities and challenges on the island of Ireland with suggestions on how to overcome challenges going forward. Bronagh addressed a number of key issues such as Brexit, devolution practice and centralising tendencies in the UK, democratic challenges within Northern Ireland and its political governance, paramilitary impacts on women and communities, the links between poverty and conflict, women's rights and representation, and safeguarding and extending rights and equality generally. She stressed the importance of Brexit mitigation measures; the Good Friday Agreement's commitment to parity of rights and equality North and South which offers a pathway to a level playing field in protections; investing in extending relationships between the vibrant women's, and civil society, organisations and activists North and South; building strong links between the Women's Caucus in NI Assembly and the Irish Women's Parliamentary Caucus; and continuing collaboration on all elements of women, peace and security North and South. In identifying challenges and means of overcoming these the event's focus was on ensuring greater representation of diverse perspectives, such as gender, in shaping the agenda for sharing the island.

Dialogue on the future: Compass Points is a civil society dialogue group which brings together people from nationalist, unionist and cross community backgrounds to reflect on the seismic changes that began with Brexit and now raise fundamental questions about the future of the state. The senior associate was invited to contribute to a dialogue event along with commentator Alex Kane, former Victims' Commissioner Patricia McBride and writer Glenn Patterson in response to former BBC Newsnight presenter Gavin Esler's keynote address *The break-up of the UK?*, based on his book *How Britain Ends: English Nationalism and the Rebirth of Four Nations*.

Work with Kurds on WPS: The Berghof Foundation invited the senior associate to be the keynote speaker on strengthening the inclusion and participation of women in political leadership at a workshop for Kurdish female politicians and activists. This Berghof work was part of a Norad-funded project on Supporting Women in Resistance and Liberation Movements in Peace Negotiations and Post-war Transitions; in particular, supporting women from all four Kurdish regions (in Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran) through capacity-building, peer-learning and exchange, and tailor-made workshops. Bronagh focused on the experiences of women political leaders in the Northern Ireland context, the experience of women in party politics, how to change narratives around women's political participation, and how to be encouraged and empowered once in politics. She drew on experience from

- the NI Women's Coalition and in negotiating the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement;
- Democrashe's work since 2000 with political parties to build women's political capacity and access over several election cycles, in local government with the Women's in Local Councils initiative, and with the Assembly and its Women's Caucus on increasing skills among existing political activists and delivering programmes to the Next Chapter of women across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland;
- the richness of Northern Ireland's women's activism which produces Women's Manifestos to hold parties to account at election time, collaborates on issue-based campaigns, agrees collective policies in the N.Ireland Women's Policy Group and Women's Budget Group and advocates with politicians and senior officials.

Championing women peace builders in Ethiopia: The Irish Ambassador to Addis Ababa invited the senior associate to speak at the Embassy's St. Brigid's Day event devoted to women in peace building, focusing on the participation and promotion pillars in the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda. The key objectives were to (i) highlight women's contribution to sustainable, peaceful coexistence in Ethiopia and promote the continuation of their role in restoring and maintaining peace, and (ii) advocate for enhanced women's participation and active role in ongoing national dialogues and sustainable peace-making efforts. Bronagh championed women's voices at all tables, outlining the added value that women bring and sharing examples from Northern Ireland including

- the Women's Coalition seizing and maximising an opportunity;
- civil society's role and value in building the foundations for sustainable peace;
- building networks, including across sectors to encourage business and labour groups as well as community organisations to play a positive role;
- the importance of mobilising and amplifying women's voices in all spheres;
- creating space for dialogue, bridging differences, facilitating and mediating as honest brokers between those with differing opinions;
- the essentiality of including the range of stakeholders and views in national dialogues and negotiating processes;
- the strength of working from an agreed set of core values and principles, and championing the universality of human rights and equality;
- building trust and confidence, unblocking impasses and working actively towards solutions;
- the importance of enabling buy-in by ensuring that dialogues and settlements address the issues that are important to local communities and those most affected by conflict.

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HerStory: HerStory is a multi-disciplinary storytelling platform founded in Ireland in 2016 by Melanie Lynch that illuminates and celebrates female role-models. It aims to inspire, educate and empower youth, the nation and sister movements across the world to overcome the amnesia of women's stories through pioneering education and arts programmes. DemocraShe's Bronagh Hinds is included in two of its initiatives. Bronagh's portrait was among those painted by young women artists still at school that were broadcast in light shows across public buildings. Over 2021-22 HerStory developed an ambitious Peace Heroines touring exhibition to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement in partnership with the National Museums NI and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs. It features portraits and text telling the story of decades of women's actions, including those of the senior associate; with HerStory also running youth workshops exploring the concept of power.

Sharing lessons on women, peace and security: The senior associate continues to provide students, academics and others with interviews on women, peace and security and information and analysis on the role of women in peacebuilding and politics in N.Ireland from the grassroots to peace negotiations and the political process. She delivers an annual lecture to Fordham Law School Summer Programme; and facilitates workshops for groups such as the Jewish youth peacebuilding organisation, Yachad. She participated in a Women's Coalition panel speaking to a visiting group of WPS Ambassadors from the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. She contributed to several BBC radio programmes on women in politics and leadership, including reviewing the iconic *Derry Girls* final programme as an excellent learning tool on the Good Friday Agreement. In 2021 Bronagh's address to a Charter 88 Constitutional Convention, Women in the House, was included in the Linen Hall library's extraORDINARY women project.

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Year ended 31 July 2022

Financial review

DemocraShe's business model is to undertake work within its powers on discrete projects which meet its objects. Business is led by senior associate Bronagh Hinds, who reports to the Trustees. Work is undertaken by a single associate or small teams of associates according to the project. All associates are self-employed.

DemocraShe's overheads are minimal and expenditure is on work carried out on projects advancing the objects for which DemocraShe was established. Income and expenditure primarily reflect delivery time spent on projects.

The income sources in 2021-2022 were the Department for Communities, the Local Government Staff Commission and the Berghof Foundation with smaller sums from a variety of organisations.

DemocraShe does not have any restricted funds. It aims to carry over a small reserve from year to year. DemocraShe reported a deficit of £3,496 (2021: surplus £2,975) during the year, with overall unrestricted funds carried forward of £23,807 (2021: £27,303).

Plans for future periods

DemocraShe plans to continue its work in Northern Ireland, Ireland and internationally on promoting gender equality and women's leadership as well as sharing lessons and building capacity on women, peace and security. Work during the year 2022-2023 will include contributing to marking the 25th Anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, in particular ensuring that the story and lessons of women's contribution to those negotiations are widely shared.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 3 June 2023 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

Fiona J. MacMillan

Ms F MacMillan
Trustee