



Safety
Solidarity
Action for Change

Bristol Refugee Rights
Annual report 2013 - 14



Chairs' Report

The last year has been one of great change and also considerable success for Bristol Refugee Rights (BRR). We were all really sad to see Caroline Beatty retiring from her post. She had been involved with BRR from the start, and had given many years of her expertise, energy and commitment to the organisation; it would not be as successful and member (service user) focussed as it is without her vision and compassion. We are pleased she is happy to continue to support us in different ways. We have been incredibly lucky to have recruited a new Director, Beth Wilson, who started in March and comes to us with a proven track record of working with refugees and asylum seekers and is already showing herself to be a great asset to the organisation.

We are so fortunate to continue to have a dedicated team of paid staff and volunteers who run the organisation so effectively and we would like to thank them all, as they give so much in terms of time, their ideas, commitment and skills. We would like to acknowledge all of the support from staff and volunteers who left us this year, but to pay a special tribute to Radha Ruskin and Moniek Koster who led the AID and Crèche teams so effectively and are both much missed.

The Welcome Centre is now well established at the Malcolm X Community Centre in St Paul's and is seen as a place of safety and solidarity for the hundreds of refugees and asylum seekers who access our services. BRR is becoming better known as a key player in the asylum field; and the event that we organised for Human Rights Day, 'Health Care for All', was a particular success with inspiring speakers talking to a packed audience, who then went to work with

the useful resources we produced. Our projects (BRILL, AID, Crèche and VOICE) have all continued to provide essential services and to develop in response to members' needs; and we work closely with other partners to provide destitution support, campaigning and awareness raising.

This year saw the tragic murder of Bijan Ebrahimi, a local man from a refugee background who faced discrimination, prejudice and ultimately death. We are constantly reminded of the hostility that some refugees and asylum seekers face, often fuelled by negative media portrayal and a background of discriminatory legislation and lack of services. BRR needs to survive to continue to challenge these issues and to provide the safety and solidarity and to promote action that can make the changes that are so desperately needed.

The next year will be extremely challenging, as we have a number of grants ending and a significant funding gap to address, and so we are pleased to now have the help of a fundraiser, Ruth Soandro-Jones as part of the team.

Finally, we would also like to thank all our Trustees for their unique voluntary contribution to our organisation, and particularly to Malcolm Jenner for his work as Chair last year and current Treasurer. The final word has to be a tribute to our members who are always keen to give as much as they receive, and to support us in every way and are increasingly speaking out on key issues and helping us to run BRR.

Ruth Pickersgill and **Abdi Mohamed**, Co-Chairs
Bristol Refugee Rights



Bristol Refugee Rights

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Registered Company no: 5669208
Registered Charity no: 1126646



Vision

Everybody coming to Bristol to seek sanctuary is welcomed and treated with dignity and respect.

Mission

Our mission is to welcome asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol. Together we create a place of solidarity and trust. We challenge the injustices that we experience and witness in the UK. Learning from each other we develop partnerships and links with the wider community to promote equality of opportunity for asylum seekers and refugees.

Goals

Safety

- Provide a place that feels welcoming and safe for asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol to meet and socialise
- Provide services to support the wellbeing of asylum seekers and new refugees in Bristol

Solidarity

- Develop a programme of activities according to the needs and wishes of members
- Work towards becoming a refugee-led organisation
- Contribute to strengthening communities in Bristol through seeking out and facilitating social engagement, educational and volunteering opportunities in the wider community for asylum seekers and refugees

Action for change

- Work to strengthen the visibility, voice and representation of asylum seekers and refugees in local affairs in Bristol, and raise awareness of asylum and refugee issues
- Promote and protect the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees

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VOICE - VOLUNTEERING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - member volunteering in the Welcome Centre and at local organisations and businesses

Solidarity

التضامن

团结

VOLUNTEERS - around 120 with at least 40% being members

We celebrate equality and diversity, learn from each other and develop new understanding and through this promote community cohesion and mutual respect.

Safety

السلامة

Ammaanka

THE WELCOME CENTRE - practical support, wellbeing improvement and social hub open 3 days a week

We offer a unique community hub for transforming the lives of those seeking asylum; we are a key partner in Bristol being a City of Sanctuary.

操作

La sécurité

AID - ADVOCACY AND INFORMATION DESK - support with housing, financial support and accessing justice

سهلا مافتي

MEMBERS

People who are in the asylum process, or who have recently received their refugee status. Our sanctuary seekers are fleeing some of the world's bloodiest conflicts and terrible human rights abuses. Since 2006 we have welcomed approximately **250 new members each year**, bringing our total to more than **2000 members**, from **more than 60 countries**.

DESTITUTION SUPPORT - hardship payments and mini food bank

CRÈCHE - play based sessions for children up to 5 years 5 times a week

BRILL - BRITISH LIFE AND LANGUAGE CLASSES - English, IT, literacy and IELTS

Bristol Refugee Rights

Safety • Solidarity •
Action for Change



We build grassroots movements to break down segregation, uphold and defend human rights and actively campaign on issues affecting asylum seekers and refugees. We support asylum seekers and refugees to utilise their skills and take a full and active part in the community of Bristol.

tallaabo isbedelka

تغییرات در فعالیتهای

کار کردن، بوی گور انکاری

l'action pour le changement

变更安全

Action for Change

العمل من أجل التغيير

Midnimo

هاوکاری

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
- 9 trustees (50% from refugee backgrounds)

La Solidarité

STAFF - 11 part time staff and sessional creche workers

انسجام

PARTNERS – referrals for legal advice, healthcare and accommodation

CAMPAIGNING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS – public meetings, demonstrations, lobbying, speaking out

ARTS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - through music (LARA), theatre (acta) and Refugee Week celebrations

-الحدیث

A Year in the Life of Bristol Refugee Rights

20 April 2013

LARA presented **Bristol Reggae Orchestra** - LARA (Lorraine Ayensu Refugee Arts) Fund presented an evening at The Station in support of refugee arts with Bristol Reggae Orchestra.

16-22 June 2013

Refugee Week – Members, staff, volunteers and Trustees took part in Celebrating Sanctuary Day in Queens Square and welcomed members of the public to the Welcome Centre on Refugee Week Open Day.



29 June 2013

Dignity for Asylum Seekers March - More than 300 joined the march through Bristol to show solidarity with asylum seekers in their demand for dignity and an end to forced destitution.

September 2013

Beach Trip – Members, volunteers and staff had a day of fun at the beach.

October 2013

BRR AGM - Featured an evening of entertainment and the sad news that Caroline Beatty, Manager, was retiring.

October 2013

Listen To Our Story tour - An original play written and performed by refugees and asylum seekers, supported using public funding by The Arts Council.

October 2013

BRR member appeared on Sunday Politics Show – A BRR member met the Immigration Minister on BBC Sunday Politics. The response demonstrated why it is so difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to speak out.

INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 10 DECEMBER 2013

BRISTOL REFUGEE RIGHTS www.bristolrefugeerights.org

HEALTHCARE FOR ALL?

The Government plans to end access to healthcare for refused asylum seekers and other migrants



COME AND HEAR THE REAL STORY...
Tuesday 10th December 2013
Malcolm X Community Centre from
6pm until 10pm



6-7pm Fundraising **International Feast**
7-30pm Public Meeting with **Phil Murwill** (Doctors of the World: London) and **BRR members**
9pm Dancing and music with **L.A.R.A.** – Doors closed at 10pm –

Please book in advance at info@bristolrefugeerights.org or pay on the door. Cost = donation £5-£10

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH BORDERLANDS – BRISTOL DEFEND ASYLUM SEEKERS CAMPAIGN – BRISTOL HOSPITALITY NETWORK – BRISTOL CITY OF SANCTUARY – BRITISH RED CROSS – B.FRIEND – MIGRANT RIGHTS CENTRE BRISTOL – REFUGEE ACTION – REFUGEE WOMEN OF BRISTOL – THE HAVEN – STAR



10 December 2013

Human Rights Day Event – Healthcare for All – 300 attended the public meeting where 4 refused asylum seekers explained the reality of being destitute.

January 2014

Launch of Friends Scheme – A new scheme to encourage and reward our loyal supporters was launched.

February 2014

Caroline retirement – Marked by a lovely party planned by staff, members and volunteers including singing, dancing and celebrations.

March 2014

New staff - Director Beth Wilson started and new fundraiser Ruth Soandro-Jones started; new crèche team Laura, Kat and DjeDje all in place.

Plans for 2014/2015

Our primary aim for 2014/2015 is raising the funds we need to keep Bristol Refugee Rights open and maintain the vital services it provides to asylum seekers and refugees in Bristol. We plan to diversify our funding activities to secure our future sustainability; we believe this is key to continuing to meet our goals of Safety, Solidarity and Action for Change. We hope to grow our group of Friends and supporters and particularly encourage regular giving. We also want to take more action and campaign for more rights for asylum seekers and refugees through Refugee Week, Human Rights Day and involvement in the Bristol City of Sanctuary Conference.

To keep up to date with what is going on at BRR or to become a supporter visit our website: www.bristolrefugeerights.org



The Welcome Centre



The ethos of the Welcome Centre has always been about greeting people with a friendly smile and giving our members a place to feel at home: to relax, to drink tea, to find a piece of clothing or a book in the free shop, to play a game of scrabble or paint a picture. Our Reception and Welcomers teams are essential to creating this atmosphere.

253 new members
(total of over 2000 in 8 years)
from 42 different countries
Average 81 members per session



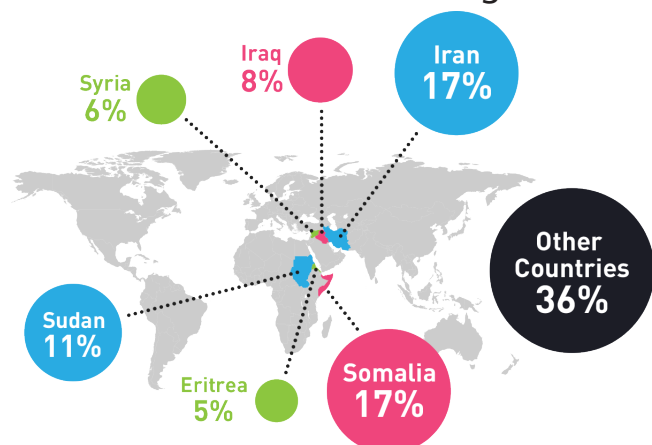
As well as our monthly open mornings, this year we have held specific open mornings including for medical students, prospective volunteers and members of the public and received an average of 70 visitors (including partners) per month (average based on visitor numbers over 4 months: September, October, February and March). We have also facilitated research for academics and provide information to local agencies about the asylum process.

"When you are a refugee or asylum seeker, everything is new to you, it is very stressful, you are scared. What you need is someone to smile at you, make you feel welcome and treat you well. The Welcomers' job is to stay positive and show people who come to BRR for the first time that there are good people in the world who can help them." Hassan, Welcomer

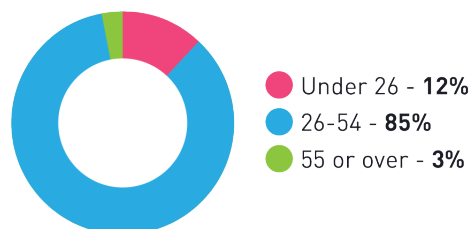


Impact Summary

We monitored 221 members during 1 week in March 2014 and found the following:



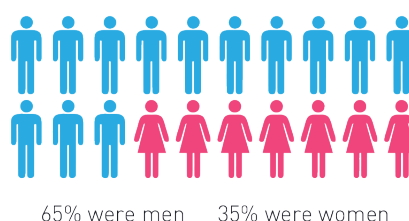
Countries of Origin of our Members



Age of our Members



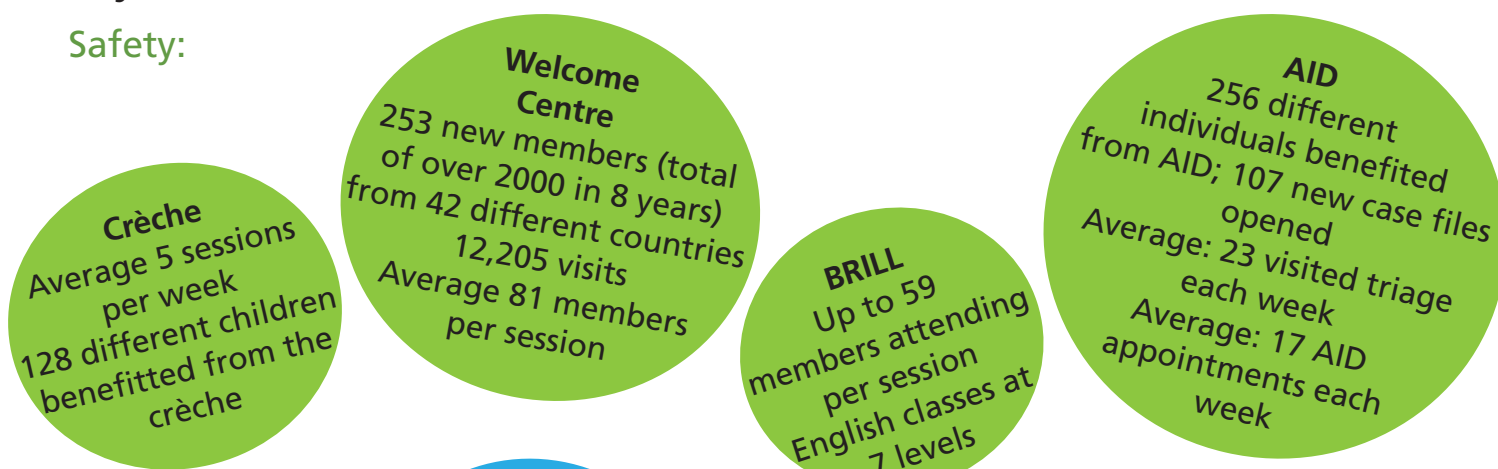
Status in the UK



Gender of our Members

Key achievements for 2013/2014 were:

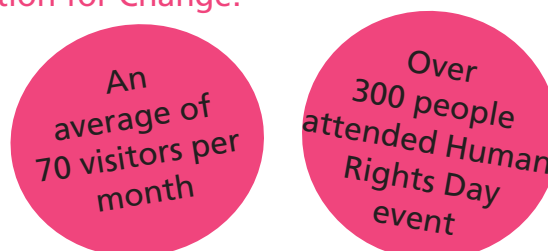
Safety:



Solidarity:



Action for Change:



Wellbeing

The work we do in The Welcome Centre contributes to the wellbeing of our members.

Connect: Someone friendly to talk to;
Partnership with The Haven (local NHS service);

Information on accessing GP, pharmacy.

Be active: Somewhere to go in the mornings;

Gym referrals through Red Cross;

Weekly referrals to Bike project;

Sign up for walks and trips;

Arts and crafts table

Take notice: Celebrating good news

Learning: Regular health sessions

Give: Volunteering and feeling useful;

A weekly cooked meal

In 2013 we set up a Wellbeing Group. We know that a very large proportion of our members suffer from mental health problems including: anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and insomnia. The experience of being separated from home and family alone can be damaging, but it is often compounded by experience of war, oppression, violence, traumatic journeys, loss of loved ones and the anxiety related to the asylum system itself. Even when people win their right to remain, the emotional scars left by all the above can take many, many years to heal. Volunteers and staff can also be impacted by working with people in distress.

BRR grew out of mental health professionals recognising the need for a safe and welcoming place to rebuild sense of identity and a new life. We have always had good links with The Haven, local social and mental health services and specific services such as Trauma Foundation South West. However, we also know that for many there are cultural barriers to discussing mental health.



"The recent setting up of a Wellbeing group at BRR has brought many diverse health issues to the attention of its members, successfully acting as a bridge to help them be more informed and empowered to access other voluntary and statutory health services when these are needed."

Julia Gresty, Wellbeing Team



"The Wellbeing Group is trying to open up conversations about the difficult topic of mental health, to normalise these conversations. We hope that this will help everyone to support each other and also access professional support"

Alice Cutler, Welcome Centre Manager

Massage and therapeutic services at the Welcome Centre

In an average month about 60 members, (of whom 26% are women), enjoy a relaxing session delivered by one of three volunteer practitioners offering neck and shoulder massage, osteopathy and chiropractic.

The most common problems they treat are: neck, shoulder, lower back pain and chronic headaches. One volunteer said, *"The presenting symptom is often the tip of an iceberg."* The majority of cases are exacerbated by anxiety, stress and lack of sleep. *"For some [massage] is a physical relief, for many it is a time to feel cared for."*

One member said these sessions were *"A wonderful asset to the centre."*

So far since November 2013 we have:

- Organised an information session from Samaritans on suicide and self harm
- Arranged a Mental Health First Aid Training day
- Attended training on trauma and memory
- Met four times as Wellbeing Group and expanded our membership, including a session from Mary Griggs, Clinical Psychologist working with trauma treatment
- Attended meeting with ROADS, alcohol recovery service at Bristol Drugs Project

Staff and volunteers completing the two day Mental Health First Aid Course



BRILL

British Life and Language Project

The British Life and Language (BRILL) Programme, managed by Karen Davies, has gone from strength to strength over the past year, thanks to renewed 3 year funding from the Henry Smith Charity.

Many of our members at BRR have limited or no access to statutory ESOL provision. BRILL classes are vital for our members who cannot access classes elsewhere. The classes are not only about improving language skills, they are also a place to form friendships, to encourage mutual understanding, to learn about British culture and to build confidence.

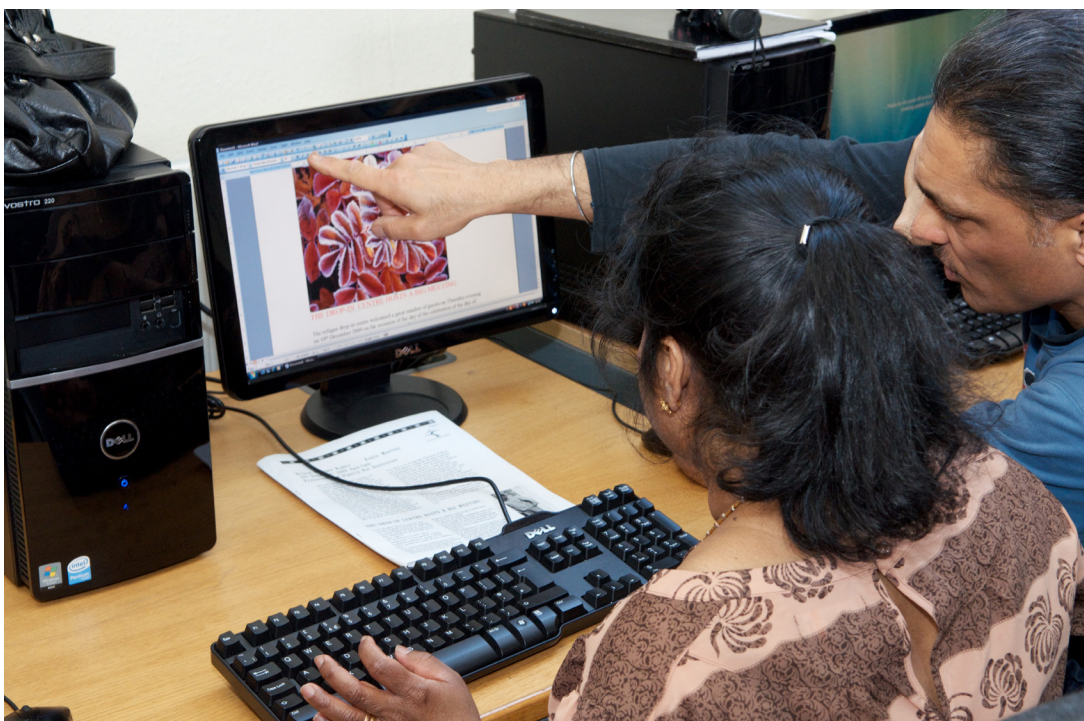
At the core of the BRILL service are our weekly drop-in English language classes, which run during term time and through the holidays. On two mornings a week there are 7 classes catering for all levels, from complete beginners to advanced, with our on-site crèche available for parents. Classes are all taught by a dedicated and

talented team of volunteer teachers and teaching assistants, with support from member volunteer reception/administrators. The BRILL team undertake specialist teacher training throughout the year.

As well as the English classes, we hold supplementary courses to help to meet our members' needs. A popular computer class runs every Thursday offering one-to-one support. On Wednesday afternoons there are reading and writing courses. Visits to and from the Welcome Centre this year have included a GP led Women's Health Session and field trip to Tyntesfield National Trust estate.

Important partners we've worked with this year are the City Council's Learning Communities Team who are running a film making course with us to mark the anniversary of WW1 and the National Careers Service who run free monthly advice sessions at the Welcome Centre.

"English language is such an important skill for all our members. Our programme is for learners of all levels, it supports members who cannot study English anywhere else, it helps to build people's confidence. Classes are there for our members when they need them most." Karen Davies, BRILL Manager





Patricia Oгри

Patricia Oгри, a BRR member and BRILL volunteer, is a qualified and experienced English teacher. She co-teaches the beginners class:

"Volunteering as an English Language Teacher has offered me the chance to use my existing knowledge and to give something back."

It has helped me make a difference to the lives of the learners, some have never been to school before coming to the classes and it feels so good to see them speak, write and read simple English sentences."



Weekly, all year round, English classes at 7 levels for 4 hours a week taught by 36 volunteer teachers and assistants
Up to 59 learners attending per session



IELTS – International English Language Testing System

A major development in BRILL this year is our IELTS preparation course. Taking the IELTS test is essential for many of our members who want to progress onto higher education or a vocational career in the UK. It is a rigorous test that requires support to study for, which can be expensive or inaccessible for our members.

Ezzeldin, a qualified doctor from Sudan, joined the Welcome Centre in 2012. He volunteers as a Community Interpreter at BRR and attends our IELTS classes every week.

Ezzeldin said "In order to register with the NHS as a doctor I need to take the IELTS exam, which is expensive – there are no free IELTS lessons in College. Since I joined the IELTS classes at the Welcome Centre I have become more confident, for which I give credit to knowledgeable and expert teachers."

Shantha, a qualified IELTS teacher and trainer, runs writing classes for the IELTS course. She said "Learning to write well is a challenge for most people and it is more so for our members, who know English as a second or even a third language. Getting a good IELTS score is very important for them, as it is the first step in realizing their ambitions and fulfilling their potential. Despite the obstacles they face, I am really pleased with the way they are progressing and learning to express themselves clearly and meaningfully in English."

AID

Advocacy and Information Desk

The Advocacy and Information Desk (AID) Project managed by Tony Jaffray offers asylum seekers and refugees support, signposting and referrals to enable them to access the national and local services to which they are entitled in order to obtain high quality legal advice and medical care; asylum support and accommodation; find ways out of destitution; to assist them in navigating the complex asylum procedure and to ensure the protection of their human rights.

In addition to the manager, AID is staffed by an experienced team of hardworking and dedicated volunteers and volunteer interpreters, whose work can, at times, be extremely pressurised and emotionally stressful given the diverse nature of our members' problems and issues.

This year, AID has recruited and trained six new volunteers, in both advocacy and administrative roles and these six have included member volunteers. Sadly we have had to say goodbye to Robert, Laura, Simon and Rachael, who have had to leave us due to other commitments but we welcome back Sandy after a short break.

As always, we are indebted to our partner agencies with whom we continue to maintain close relationships, including British Red Cross, Bristol Hospitality Network, Refugee Action, The Haven and Migrant Legal Project. We are indebted to Indrani from Avon and Bristol Law Centre and Ruth and Lucho from British Red Cross, who provide invaluable expert advice and support for our members during our drop-in sessions.



"This year has seen an increase in the members coming to AID and of the problems presented by members, over 99% were either resolved or are ongoing. This represents an extremely high level of positive service for members accessing the service." Tony Jaffray, AID Manager



Davoud

Davoud came to the UK from Iran in 2013. He was forced to leave his wife and two children behind. Davoud's claim for asylum was refused and his appeal was dismissed. His fresh claim was also rejected. When Davoud came to AID, he was destitute, his support having been terminated and he was sleeping where he could. He no longer had a solicitor to help him. Davoud was desperately worried about his wife and children.

With the help of the AID team, Davoud found a local solicitor who successfully challenged the rejection of his fresh claim and his support was reinstated. Following a further appeal, which was allowed, Davoud was granted Refugee Status.

Davoud's wife and children now have an appointment at the British Embassy in Istanbul to be granted visas to join him in the United Kingdom.



"When I came to AID, I was in despair, I had nothing, I felt I had nothing left in life. AID gave me hope and a second life". Davoud

Rosemary

Rosemary has been a volunteer with the AID team for six years. When she joined the team, there were just three volunteers. She says that things have changed a lot since then, with many volunteers coming and going.

"The biggest change, however, was the appointment of our first paid coordinator three years ago, which I feel really transformed the experience of being an AID team volunteer, and, more importantly, the service that we could offer to members."

Much of the work of the AID team is advocacy on members' behalf, and liaising with and referring to other agencies, but it also important to make sure that members understand what is happening and what their options are.

"The work of the AID team can be quite tough at times, when members' asylum claims fail, for example, and they are faced with the frightening prospect of destitution and homelessness, or when someone is detained and is at risk of being removed. On the other hand, there are also times of joy and celebration when someone finally gets their status, or small triumphs when someone gets back onto support or finds a good solicitor."

In the year from April 2013 to March 2014:

256
individuals
received AID
appointments. They
came from **36**
different countries

59 were
women and
197 were
men

20% of
those accessing
AID were **25**
years of age and
under

18.5%
of AID
appointments
were related to
destitution

The
average number
of members
coming to AID at
each drop-in was
22

BRR Community Crèche



Crèche manager, Laura Hamilton has been in post since February 2014. She works with the current crèche staff team Kat Abdi, Afrah Hussein, Sam Sam Abdi and Djedje Ngele and volunteers Sybil, Foulanisana, Sadiyah and Kate. The crèche continues to be funded by BBC Children in Need having been awarded a second grant at the start of 2013/14.

The children continue to settle in quickly and thrive in the safe, caring and stimulating environment we provide. We can now have access to a garden and the children can enjoy outdoor play, water and sand play.

The activities and toys we provide encourage the development of the children through the different stages of the early years. Every child is unique and we aim to meet the needs of each individual child. The staff team have a wealth of experience and knowledge and continue to learn and grow with the children. We encourage healthy eating by providing a healthy snack for the children.

The crèche runs 5 sessions weekly (for BRR and Refugee Women of Bristol) with an extra session once a month.
128 children benefitted from the crèche





Aboubacar

Aboubacar started in the crèche when he was 2 weeks old. Coming to the crèche enabled his mum, Sarah, who is from the Gambia to attend English classes.

She said *"The crèche is good for both of us. It helps him – playing with the other kids and making him friendly and active. The staff are supportive – without you guys I wouldn't know what to do – I would have nowhere to leave him."*

Kat Abdi, crèche worker, has known the family since they first came. She said *"In the past 6 months, we have developed a very good relationship with Aboubacar and his mum. We have seen the family going from strength to strength. He's developing well for his age and has become very popular and an indispensable member of the crèche."*

Sarah's English has improved greatly – at first she didn't say much but now she is much more confident and sociable."

"It is very rewarding to see children come to the crèche usually reticent at first but then go from strength to strength in the warm and safe environment we provide here. I hope to develop strong positive relationships with our families and also with local partners so that families feel supported in raising their children and also feel part of the community." Laura Hamilton, Crèche Manager

Nahro

Nahro who is Kurdish started at the crèche when he was 3 months old. He is now 2 and a half years old. His mum is attending English classes. She said it is good for both of them that he comes here – she knows he is safe and they are both learning English. When she first came with him he used to cry a lot and it was hard to leave him. Now, she only needs to stay for the first five minutes and then she can go. He now goes to nursery and his mum feels that the crèche has helped him prepare for this experience. Nahro has made some strong friendships at the crèche. He has improved in leaps and bounds since he has been coming here – his confidence has grown and his understanding of English is very good. He still comes to the crèche occasionally and settles in to play very quickly with his old friends.



Nahro's mum said: *"I am very happy with the crèche – he talks to other children and it's good for him. The teachers here are very good and we both talk in English a little at home."*

Volunteers

The fantastic team of volunteers at BRR is fundamental to the work of the organisation. Without the energy and commitment of volunteers we simply could not deliver our services.

The way members and non-members work together at BRR is one thing that makes the organisation so special. Everyone learns from each other, people build lasting friendships and provide essential support to help each other through the challenges and the injustice we witness and experience. We also celebrate together. Good news brings the whole community together and special events are filled with music and dancing.

Many of our volunteers stay with us for years. Recently a panel of volunteers were asked what makes volunteering at BRR so special. Everyone agreed that it is the sense of community, the opportunity to build relationships across cultures and the fact that people of all ages and walks of life support each other in the centre.

"It is a privilege to work with such a committed team full of skills and ideas. BRR couldn't happen without our amazing volunteers." Andrew McCarthy, Volunteer Manager

"Free Shop"

BRR runs a Free Shop where members can pick up clothes and household goods which have been donated to BRR. Since last autumn the volunteer team have been able to really change the feel of the Free Shop. Firstly, items are distributed much more fairly. Second, and perhaps more importantly, by establishing a system for members to request items the Free Shop has become a place where members can talk about what's going on in their lives, the places they live and what they need.

Fariba, who is a key member of the Free Shop team, said *"I come here to help people, to talk with everyone and improve my English."*

In total this year BRR has had 203 volunteers: 37 in BRILL, 16 in AID, 143 in the main hall and 33 interpreters
Of these 91 are members and 112 are not





BRR Volunteers 2013/14

* Those with a star are in more than one team, or come more than one day!

Reception

Ali Parvez*, Bee Hayes, Christine Lambert, Faisal Malik*, Helen Vegoda, Kitty Odell*, Lucy Gilbert, Masa Miglic, Muburak Ibrahim, Mulugeta Gebreamlak, Murtada Mohammed, Pauline Marshall, Rafal Sobis, Samia Saidi, Saynab Jama, Sindi Silongwe, Spela Godec, Susan Oldham, Umul Ali*, Valerie Lewis, Yousef Alamin

Welcomers

Alex Johl, Bunmi Ofugara, Cara Shaw, Colin Thomas, Dharmesh Patel, El Ammri Mohammed, Eleanor Fairbrother, German Tomas, Joe Gaywood, John Patrick Njau*, Jonathon Lee*, Lydia Mbogoro, Mushin Al Najim*, Nuradin Aydanis, Pam Hudson, Rosie Merson, Sue Smailes*, Tserina Ponder Meares, Vlad Buxton

Arts

Sara Barna, Jethro Brice, Penny Clarke, Emmy Broughton

Kitchen

Abdinoor Ahmed Yusuf, Abdullah Faraj, Adam Abdullah, Afshar Zarai, Ahmed Mussa, Alhaj Mohammed, Ali Reza Abdi, Allawia Djabir, Amie Feika, Ayan Yusuf, Ayan Ali, Bassil Adam, Caroline Jones, Deeqa Sharif, Eki Cynthia, Fran Howe, Frances Annan, Gaia, Genevieve Davis, Habtom Okube, Hafiz Abdul Qarim, Haji Osman Saleh, Hamed Ali, Hua Ping*, Ibrahim Abdallah, Islam Ahmed, Karen Bruni, Kate Kimaro, Katharine Abbot, Khodeza Begum, Maha Farooqui, Mahamat Diffa, Megan Jones, Mohamed Ahamed, Mohammed Ali, Mohammed Hamid Hammad, Morteza Talachian, Murtada Mohammed, Nona Anderson, Riffat Bibi*, Rob Porteous*, Sadyeh Bathaei*, Shavram, Thomas Denk, Towfeeg Abubaker

Thursday Lunch Crew (TLC)

Bevan Richardson, Emmy Oldenbourg, Esam Amin*, Francesca Cella, Iain Shewan, Isy Schultz, Mike Atkins, Morzina Ahkter, Nathan Kerubairasa*, Ned Edwards, Pravashnee Neer, Serena Nicolosi, Sharon McDonald, Siva, Thulani Ndlovu, Zahra Azari

New Member Interviewers (NMI)

Becca Lloyd, Dammy Le Grand*, Danny Vincent*, Maureen Prior*, Moira Bryne*, Naomi Roberts*, Sophie Gale*

Destitution Support

Jenny Vooght, Mona-Lisa Chaka, Silvia Jimenez*, Andrew May, Aly Vernon, Kyla Darrell, Rhys Mayes

Free Shop

Angela Hill, Cathy Salisbury, Fariba Bayat, Lucy Bence-Wilkins, Julia Gresty*

Barbers and hairdressers

Ahmed Al Nuri, Annie Musango, Farinaz, Ismail Quadir, Mohammed Rashid Joma, Mariam

Creche

Kate Walker, Khodeza Begum, Foulanisana Djane, Sadiyah

BRILL Admin

Abdulfadil Mussa*, Asia Hamaseed*, Monsurat Ayodele

Computer Class

Darren Baker, Tej Bhandal, Ullubiy Isaev

BRILL Teachers

Adedayo Salako, Ann Brook, Anna Schiff, Chitra Kovoov, Darren Baker, David Mytton, Derris Whitson, Elaine Logan, Jane Cullen, Katie Goldsmith, Laurence Daly-Rossin, Mary Serjeant, Patricia Ogri, Richard Henderson, Richard Lawrence, Rosie Nanji-Rowe, Sammy Devonald*, Shantha Arulanantham, Silu Pascoe, Sue Smailes*, Teresa Long, Tina Ash, Tom Dixon, Vicky Sullivan

Osteopath and Chiropractor

Claire Ballard, Nick Shipton

Interpreters

Ahmed Al Nuri Ali, Asia, Baker Said, Daahir Mohamed, Dastan, Esam Amin, Ezzeldin Mohammed, Goran Mohammed, Hassan Sharif Ahmed*, Jamal Hassan Ali Bekhit*, Khaled Abdulaziz*, Leila, Mahin Torfisaedi*, Mahsa Aseman, Mohammed Osman*, Mostafa Golestani, Mostafa Nasser, Nabiullah Hojabri Manesh Qays Hayyars Naym*, Reza Mousaee, Said, Saman Mohammadi, Shima Pourmokhtar, Simon Abraha, Ting Ting Xu, Yafiet Abraha*, Yousef Alamin, Yufen Ying, Zahra Nadeen

AID Team

Agrippa Ogri, Chris Macleod, Chrys Kelson, Jessica Hambly, Ludovica Bello, Lynn Goh, Mary Todd, Naomi Millner, Rachel Pearce, Robert Muston, Ron Griffiths, Rosemary Andoh, Sandy Baker, Simon Shakespeare, Tom Daly, Laura Wills

Community Interpreters

The VOICE (Volunteering and Community Engagement) project has developed an even stronger team of volunteer Community Interpreters over the past year. We have interpreters for Arabic, Amharic, Farsi, French, Mandarin, Somali, Sorani (Kurdish), Tigrinya and Tigre. Our volunteer Community Interpreters are also sharing their skills through our partnerships with the Red Cross, Refugee Action and Bristol University Medical School. We hope to offer our Interpreting Team a nationally recognised qualification in the next year through a partnership with City of Bristol College.

A member using an interpreter in AID said:
"BRR interpreter help me express what I feel. Interpreter helps me to solve my problems."

"It is vital to have Community Interpreters in the AID team because many of our members need help to communicate in English accurately. This year our interpreters are first rate, better than ever!" Tony Jaffray, AID Manager

Amharic: Simon, Mulugeta, Jamal;
Arabic: Ahmed, Ahmed, Baker, Ezzeldin, Jamal, Khaled, Mahin, Mohammed, Muna, Hassan, Qays, Yousef;
Kurmanji: Khaled;
Tigre: Jamal;
Tigrinya: Jamal, Yafiet;
Somali: Muna, Hassan, Said;
Farsi: Karwan, Manesh, Mostafa, Mostafa, Reza, Shima;
Kurdish: Samani;
Mandarin: Hua, Mei, Ting, Yufen;
Kurdish Sorani: Dara, Esam, Goran, Hero, Karwan;
Urdu: Ali, Faisal, Zahra

"Many members, especially those fairly new to the country, have very limited knowledge of English. Our interpreters are essential for us to be able to understand the problems that these members bring to us, and then to be sure that the members understand and agree to any action we take. We couldn't do our job without them." Rosemary, AID Volunteer

"Every time I interpret, I gain new skills and experience." Jamal, Interpreter

"Volunteering for BRR got me a job as an interpreter with Bristol Community Health." Khaled, Interpreter





Staff

Current staff at end of 2013/2014: Beth Wilson, Ruth Nott, Alice Cutler, Andrew McCarthy, Karen Davies, Rachael Bee, Joy Kenyah, Laura Hamilton, Ruth Soandro-Jones, Tony Jaffray, Kat Abdi, Sam Sam Abdi, Afrah Hussein, DjeDje Ngele.

Worked for us during the year: Moniek Koster, Caroline Beatty, Radha Ruskin, Hilary Cole, Hibaq Jama, Hassan Sharif Ahmed, Mary Todd, Danny Vincent, Claire Hall, Sabah Egeh, Saado Hussein, Asha Yusuf.



Governance

Member Consultation Group

Every month a group of members meet at the Welcome Centre, and consider matters of BRR policy and direction at the request of the staff team and the Board of Trustees. This group is usually well attended by members and is supported by Jo Bloxham, an independent facilitator. Jo circulates notes back to the organisation. This is an important organ of decision making within our governance structure.

Members of the MCG commented on it as follows:

"The people who come to the MCG are the people who come to the centre and so they know what is needed and can help the Trustees to make the right decisions."

"It is a voice for members."

"It brings people who are delivering the service and receiving the service together."



Jo said: *"In the last 12 months the MCG has fed back on many issues from the Drugs and Alcohol Policy to Human Rights Day to the BRR website and Business Plan. BRR has recruited lots of new members for the MCG group in this period and we now average ten people at each meeting (for the corresponding previous period the numbers were half that). These new members have injected a new life and enthusiasm to the group. We have some confident members of the group now and the group looks set to consider a model with less support from an external facilitator."*

Serving Trustees from November 2013:

- Malcolm Jenner
- Richard Henderson
- James Jatta
- Zahra Kosar
- Forward Maisokwadzo
- Daahir Mohamed
- Abdi Mohammed
- Ruth Pickersgill
- Claire Stern

Public Benefit

BRR is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status and abides by the requirements set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. Trustees reviewed their compliance with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Commission. Our Annual Report indicates how BRR meets the public benefit guidance.

VOICE

Volunteering and Community Engagement

The VOICE project – Volunteering and Community Engagement – enables our members to unleash their potential, gain valuable skills and experience and integrate into the community. Volunteering opportunities also help reduce isolation, promote mental and physical well-being and help members improve English quickly. The project increases members' self-esteem and sense of purpose and has a significant positive contribution towards community cohesion.

The VOICE project is funded by the Big Lottery Fund. Coordinators Rachael Bee and Joy Kenyah support members to volunteer at the Welcome Centre and find placements outside BRR. Our vibrant Welcome Centre benefits greatly from the work of member volunteers, who now make up 50% of the volunteer team, and from the experience and energy they bring.

Volunteering outside the Welcome Centre

Monsurat

Monsurat, from Nigeria, joined the volunteering team in 2013 in the Crèche, she has now moved into BRILL admin. Monsurat is also doing an external placement at Rosemary Early Years Centre while she undertakes her NVQ childcare course. This provides her with work experience which enables her to complete her course.

"I'm delighted to see Monsurat and all our members getting involved in our community, developing skills and showing us what they can do." Rachael Bee, VOICE Manager

"We are eager to support ASR because we are aware of the numbers in the area. The placement has been very successful, Monsurat is lovely and capable, she is an asset and supported the setting well. We are expanding into a Children Centre and we will have a variety of other roles, we would like to have more volunteers from BRR and continue to build the partnership." Rosemary Early Years Centre, Headteacher



Monsurat said *"It's a great opportunity for me volunteering at BRR as a way to say thank you for all the support that I have received.*

Through the BRILL project I was able to secure funding for my Childcare Course, also the VOICE project organised a placement for me at Rosemary Early Years Centre (Nursery) which has been really helpful. The Nursery has provided me with a Mentor and the right support to help me complete my NVQ. It's been an amazing opportunity."



Volunteering in the Welcome Centre

Jamal

Jamal, from Eritrea, came to the UK in September 2013 to seek asylum. He got Refugee Status in October 2013. In Sudan he was a teacher, did outreach work with Save the Children and worked with the International Organisation for Migration. Jamal joined the volunteer team in September 2013. The VOICE project has helped him gain training in Community Interpreting, Food Hygiene, Mental Health First Aid, IT and 'Stop Smoking'. He interprets Arabic, Tingrinya and Tigre for other members who cannot speak English, volunteers in our busy kitchen and is now doing 2 hours paid work per week in the community as a Stop Smoking Advisor.

Jamal said "I gained a lot from being a volunteer at the Welcome Centre. Most important I feel very confident looking for a job now because I have gained good experience. Helping others and giving back made me feel happier."

"Jamal has been a brilliant volunteer, within six months he has gained lots of experience which will in future benefit him to get into work. He is an example of many who want to make a difference and contribute to the community." Joy Kenyah, VOICE Coordinator.



This year the VOICE project has trained and supported 59 member volunteers in the Welcome Centre and supported 25 external placements

"The Welcome Centre has blossomed this year with so many members taking up volunteering opportunities. The numbers have risen and the Centre feels much more member-led. It's been a great joy to see members grow and flourish because they have this amazing opportunity to contribute and give back. 100% of our volunteers reported that their self-esteem had increased through volunteering." Joy Kenyah, VOICE Coordinator

Campaigns and Communications

Bristol Refugee Rights is an organisation that both delivers a service (the Welcome Centre and associated projects) and also has an awareness raising and campaigning purpose – to promote the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees. Asylum seekers and refugees are marginalised and it is important that Bristol Refugee Rights supports them to have a voice. The whole Bristol Refugee Rights community believes strongly in having solidarity with asylum seekers and refugees and in providing them with the platform to speak out and build public support.

Activities such as Refugee Week, Human Rights Day and other campaigning activities allow us to work through and with members of the

Welcome Centre community. As the community of stakeholders, developed through the Welcome Centre, becomes stronger, it is now both possible and necessary to focus more explicitly on this area. In 2013 we developed a Communications Strategy to enable and support this aspect of our work.

Over the past year we have continued to work on campaigns and communications through our VOICE project, through close working relationships with Dignity for Asylum Seekers, Bristol Defend Asylum Seekers and City of Sanctuary and through LARA.



LARA Lorraine Ayensu Refugee Arts Fund

"Since the LARA fund officially launched its activities in April 2013 with a concert featuring BRR members performing with the Bristol Reggae Orchestra, more members have been benefiting from the work of the fund." Danny Vincent, LARA Coordinator

Collaboration with the Bristol Reggae Orchestra has continued, with BRR members featuring as regular lead vocalists at concerts in Cardiff, Salisbury and festivals around Bristol, and a new arrangement of a Sudanese song contributed to the orchestra's set-list. The LARA fund has also sponsored the development of a new band of BRR members through provision of rehearsal space and mentoring, and they have subsequently appeared at festivals, concerts and recently on BBC radio. We have also been able to facilitate school visits by musicians from BRR who have delivered workshops and performances for school assemblies and exhibition days.

Kora player Moussa Kouyate, a master Kora player from Senegal has visited Sidcot School and St Brendan's College, giving performances, and he has said *"The LARA fund is very helpful. I am looking forward to future projects, and working with music students."*



2013/2014 projects have included:

20 April 2013 – LARA presents Bristol Reggae Orchestra

16-22 June 2013 – Refugee Week

29 June 2013 – Dignity for Asylum Seekers March

October 2013 – Listen To Our Story tour

10 December 2013 – Human Rights Day Event – Healthcare for All

Human Rights Day - 10th December 2013

Organised by the VOICE Team in partnership with Migrant Rights' Francesca Cello and BRR volunteers and members, the event had over 300 attendees! We had a really successful meeting this year with Phil Murwill from Doctors of the World in London and Adam Hundt from Pierce Glynn solicitors, Bristol as keynote speakers. Amie, Sindi, Thulani and John Patrick spoke powerfully about the impact of healthcare cuts for refused destitute asylum seekers.

We asked John Patrick and Sindi what it had cost them to speak out in public in this way and if it was worth it. John Patrick said *"Sometimes speaking about my life feels like a knife piercing my heart...but if I keep it inside it would be worse. If we all keep quiet, the people in power would think it's alright. IT IS NOT ALRIGHT!"*

Sindi said *"It was a bit emotional. I needed to speak because we need people's help. Philosophers say 'help comes to those who help themselves'. Speaking out is helping ourselves!"*



100% of those attending said they were committed to take action when they left.

"We got over 300 petition signatures and presented our petition to the Clinical Commissioning Group in Bristol to ask them to treat refused asylum seekers in Primary Healthcare services in the city. We also bombarded our MPs with letters asking for the Immigration Bill to be challenged and plans to cut healthcare for the most vulnerable migrants to be scrapped. Unfortunately, despite our efforts, the Immigration Bill was passed and is now law. We need to keep campaigning to change unjust laws." Rachael Bee, organiser

You can keep up to date with developments and campaigns via:
www.migrantsrights.org.uk

Finance Report

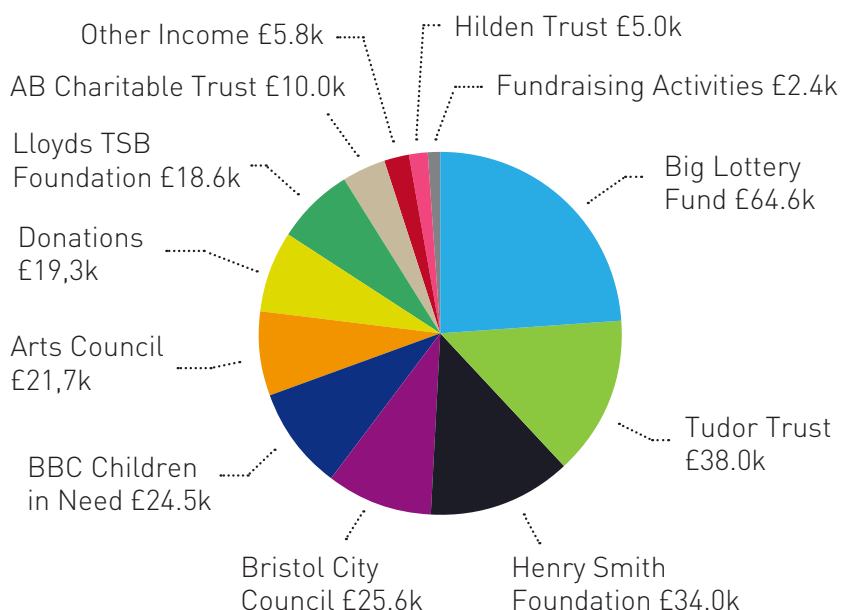
Our total income for the year was £270,984. Our total expenditure was £265,411. A breakdown of these figures is shown in the charts. These figures summarise a lot of detail, which is available in the accounts to be submitted to the Charity Commission. We now separate our internally designated funds from our free (unrestricted) reserve to give greater clarity. The free reserve has increased from £16,432 to £17,797. This is a move in the right direction towards our target of 15% of our expected total annual expenditure. However, it is still well short of where we need to be to guarantee continuity of our work.

Our main work is covered by grants. Several of these grants will run out during the year 2014-15, and, as I reported to the AGM last year, obtaining replacement grants is getting progressively more difficult. We have used one of the small grants we received during the year to employ a specialist fundraiser to help us in generating the necessary income for our work.

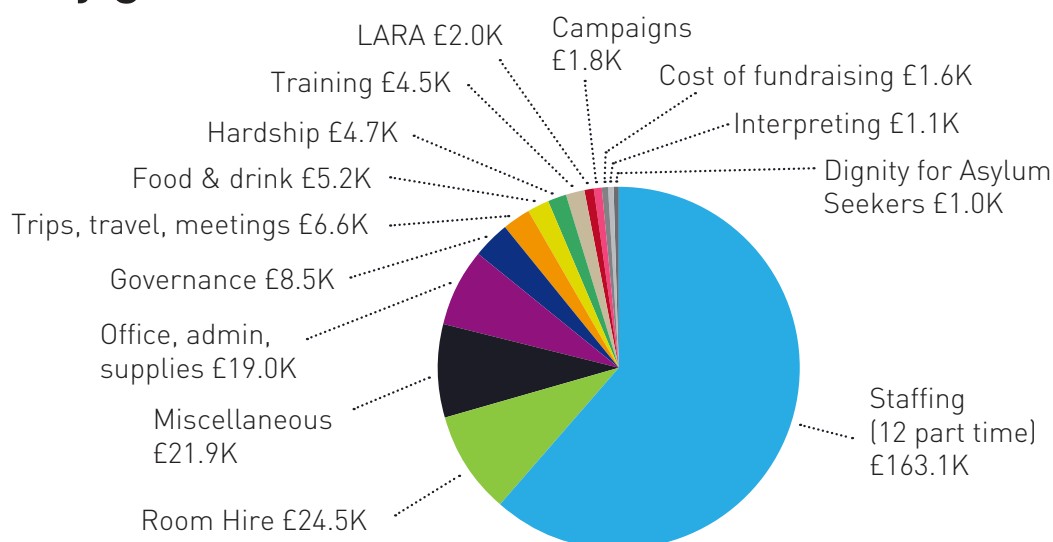
My thanks as ever to Ruth Nott for her meticulous work, which makes my task very straightforward.

Malcolm Jenner
Treasurer, Bristol Refugee Rights

Where did our funds come from?



Where did they go?





Our Thanks

Our main funders:

Bristol Refugee Rights has been supported in 2013-2014 by grants from: AB Charitable, BBC Children In Need, Big Lottery Fund, Bristol City Council, Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales, The Henry Smith Charity, Hilden Charitable Trust, Tudor Trust, Allen Lane, JP Getty, Church Urban Fund, Arts Council, The Bristol Commonwealth Society, Ethicall, Quartet.

Other organisations and individuals who have supported us include:

Fareshare, Bishopston Breadstore, Mothers' Union, local Quaker meetings, Leigh Court Farm, BMCS, Multi-faith Forum, Trinity Centre, Chandos Bakery, Horfield Parish Church, Thinking People and many individual friends and well wishers.

Key Partners

The Welcome Centre works closely with many other local organisations. The following successful projects have evolved through the work of people who are members or who have volunteered at BRR: Bristol Bike Project, Bristol Hospitality Network, Borderlands at the Assisi Centre, Bristol Signing Support Group, Dignity for Asylum Seekers.

We are also pleased to work closely with the following established agencies, who deliver/ have delivered their services within the Welcome Centre itself: British Red Cross, The Haven at Montpelier Health Centre, Careers Service.

Other key partners include Refugee Action, Refugee Women of Bristol and Migrant Rights Centre Bristol.

Special Thank You:

We would like to say a special Thank You to Caroline Beatty our former Manager who left Bristol Refugee Rights early in 2014. Caroline was Bristol Refugee Rights' first staff member and was instrumental in making Bristol Refugee Rights the thriving organisation it is today.

We would also like to say a special Thank You to our Community Interpreters without whom we could not offer the services we do to many of our members for whom English is not their first language.

Special funds:

1. Sue Njie Fund Sue Njie (1953-2009) was the founder of Bristol Refugee Rights: she was always ready to give away the little that she had to someone with less. The Hardship Fund was launched in her name on Human Rights Day 10th December 2012 as a memorial to her.



2. LARA Fund – see p.22





A B Charitable Trust

Church Urban Fund

J PAUL GETTY JNR CHARITABLE TRUST

The Henry Smith Charity

founded in 1628

Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales



THE BRISTOL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
Affiliated to the Royal Commonwealth Society



the Tudor trust



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