



Annual report and accounts | 2022/23

Dignity knows no borders



Contents

INTRODUCTIONS	4-5
WHERE WE HAVE HELPED	6
1 Consolidated our foundational support in Cyprus	6
2 Set up a large and ongoing Centre in Moldova	7
3 Emergency response to the Türkiye earthquake	8
4 Successfully resettled a family in Birmingham	9
5 Handing over a fully operational Dignity Centre in Ioannina Greece	10
ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS	11
Measuring our impact: When is a shop not a shop?	11
Volunteering as a selfishly altruistic act	12
Spreading the word through other channels	12
OUR TEAM	13
Big changes to the Board	13
Trustees Team	15
Our other Trustees	15
Rock for Ukraine	16
Coordinators and volunteers	16
Building the management team	17
Refugee Support Europe Team	18
ANNUAL ACCOUNTS	19



This year has been one of huge growth and change. Our emergency visit to Moldova became our largest ever operation, we responded immediately to the Türkiye earthquake and never served so many people in such a short space of time, and we maintained our critical service in Cyprus.

The war in Ukraine triggered an enormous outpouring of support which enabled us to begin fulfilling our plan to help more people in more places. We took the decision to focus on emergency needs so were happy to find such a good partner in Greece who could take over our Dignity Centre Ioannina. And that gave us the flexibility to make a real difference in the chaotic aftermath of the disaster in Türkiye. This increase in operations needed more robust management systems, so we were delighted to welcome so many new trustees and expand our team of regular volunteers. As the year ends, it feels like we have all the pieces in place to create a world where refugees can lead a life with dignity. The challenge for the coming year is how—as their needs increase, Europe becomes increasingly hostile, and donors feel the cost-of-living squeeze—we can continue to fund it all.

Paul Hutchings | Chief Executive





This year showcased everything that Refugee Support represents and clearly delivered on our strategic goals. The doubling of our revenue highlights the fact that our community is committed, active and reacts positively when called upon. During this year, this community reaction was due to horrendous incidents including the war in Ukraine and the earthquake

in Türkiye. These incidents showed again that our dynamic approach to emergency relief is not only fast and efficient but also financially viable and built upon strong systems and processes. There is no doubt that we are operating in extremely tough times. However, we continue to operate effectively with admin costs accounting for a little over 10% of our revenue. This, combined with our nimble, dynamic approach to both fundraising & operations means we can look forward positively to 2024.

Chris Goodson | Chair of Trustees



WHERE WE HAVE HELPED

1 Consolidated our foundational support in Cyprus



We began our fourth year operating in [Cyprus](#) firmly established as one of the core services offering support to new arrivals to the island. All asylum seekers have to register at the Pournara refugee camp before finding somewhere to live and getting a job. We helped between 100-200 new people every week to navigate this heavily bureaucratic process, with practical help and reassurance. We also ensured they

did not go hungry by providing four to five weeks' worth of food support from our unique Dignity Market.

People are invited to register for the shop and issued with a shopping card, which has their Dignity Centre membership number and expiry date, for using the shop. Every item in the shop is priced in points where €1 = 100 points. We give every adult 840 points to spend each week (and every child in the family is allocated 420 points).

It's dignified, offers choice and allows for a little normality. The food is critical, but what we are really doing is feeding spirits. Fundamentally, people are given choices, and they have agency.

People are happier and chat more to volunteers. They're not there just to pick up some supplies. They appreciate efforts to make the shop look the best it can. It's community. All items stocked in the shop are sourced from local businesses.

From April 2022 to March 2023, we served 16,098 adults and 1,793 children with a shopping basket of food and hygiene items chosen by them. They were from



44 different nationalities—primarily Nigeria, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Iraq and Somalia. We also completed 2,877 Labour Cards, 687 CVs and 602 haircuts to help people get a job.

2 Set up a large and ongoing Centre in Moldova

Less than one month after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we arrived in Moldova to help where the need was greatest. Once again, we went with the knowledge that we could help and the understanding that our offering would be shaped by the specific local needs and context. By connecting with other good people, listening carefully and thinking hard about how best to help and then acting quickly, it all came together.

In just two weeks, we **created a beautiful Dignity Market**, supporting 1,200 Ukrainian refugees—more than half of them children—every week, with essential food and hygiene items. We work in partnership with a local organisation, **Moldova for Peace**, which refers people to our centre.



Our community of donors funded our operations there until September 2022, and then we worked as a delivery partner of **Action Against Hunger**, which secured

funding from the Disasters Emergency Committee. Since we set up in March 2022, we have served over 50,000 Ukrainians at our Dignity Centre in Chisinau, Moldova.



Then, in March 2023, we also started serving vulnerable Moldovan households identified by the Chisinau Social Services Department. Even before the war, Moldova was struggling economically—that's one of the reasons we went to help there. Since the war the country has faced increased **security threats**; the

arrival of almost **800,000 refugees, of whom 100,000 have remained**; trade disruptions; an inflation rate of over 30% in 2022; and a severe energy crisis. The cost of all this has fallen most heavily on poor Moldovan households.

3 Emergency response to the Türkiye earthquake

The earthquake on 6th February in Southern Türkiye was truly devastating. More than 50,000 died and two million people were forced to move into temporary shelters. It was an area where many displaced people were already living—in Gaziantep and Hatay, about 20% of the population were refugees from the war in Syria, and many Afghan refugees also lived in the area.



When we arrived, we saw endless rows of collapsed and crumbling buildings, emergency services and people on the move. And everywhere there were tents. Nowhere was it worse than in Hatay province: the whole city of Antakya was laid to waste, entire blocks exposed or destroyed. Amid mountains of rubble were field kitchens, security forces, heavy machinery and a huge number of Turkish workers and volunteers.



After an initial exploration and rapid needs assessment, we set to work.

One of the most pressing problems was the lack of available toilets and showers. Poor sanitation was causing serious infectious diseases to spread, putting vulnerable people at even greater risk.

Within two weeks of arriving, we partnered with local organisations and started **delivering essential hygiene items to those in greatest need**. We relied heavily on our

local coordinators, Ibrahim, Hatim, Lina and Rami, who worked tirelessly in the most difficult circumstances.

What we achieved in **Türkiye** surpassed all our expectations. We served over 10,000 people in just four weeks, distributing a more than 38,000 much-needed food and hygiene items to some of the worst affected communities in both urban and remote areas. At the same time, our new local partners became lifelong friends.

4 Successfully resettled a family in Birmingham

In June 2021, under the [Community Sponsorship Scheme](#), we welcomed a family a family of six, originally from South Sudan, to the UK, direct from a refugee camp in Jordan. This is one of the 'safe and legal routes' the government talks about. It is a great scheme, but in six years it has only managed to settle 169 families – a pitifully low number.

It took a lot of preparation and, thanks to a team of volunteers led by our co-founder John Sloan, they moved into a comfortable house in Birmingham with three good sized bedrooms at an affordable rent. Then the hard work started of getting the three oldest children into school, both parents into college to start learning English, opening a bank account, applying for Universal Credit, registering with GPs, getting Covid vaccinations, and all the small but significant parts of rebuilding a life.



The difficulties did not end there. The family faced the same challenges as so many others in the UK: the impact of Covid on everyone's mental health, the limited options for getting work, the increase in the cost of living, dealing with an unsympathetic Universal Credit system, and a private landlord who would not invest to resolve a severe black mould problem.

One year later, [our responsibility](#) for supporting the family has ended as they move into the

next stage: an independent life with links forged in their local community. While it has been rewarding to witness the family settling into a new life in the UK, away from the dead end of a refugee camp, we are also acutely aware of how difficult it has been for them, and will continue to be.

5

Handing over a fully operational Dignity Centre in Ioannina Greece

When we returned to [Ioannina](#) in October 2021, it was clear that life was tough for a large number of refugees in the area. So, when we located a former Community Centre, we thought it was too good an opportunity to miss. It was empty and



run-down, but had huge potential as a hub in the city centre. We spent 2 months renovating it, and Refugee Support's Dignity Centre Ioannina was born.

Since then, we had **1800 visits to our Dignity Market and served a total of 5,000 people with an essential basket of items that they chose for themselves**. They also had a place where they would be welcome and the opportunity to access other

services like sports activities and language learning. Half were from Afghanistan, a third from the Middle East and the rest from 15 other nations.

In June 2022, we transferred management of the Dignity Centre and all the services it offers to another organisation, [Be Aware and Share \(BAAS\)](#).

Our strengths as an organisation are in building new projects and providing short-term, emergency support. We invested a huge amount of time and energy in converting that run-down shell of a building into a vibrant and welcoming community place for the refugee community in the city once again. We were happy to hand it over.

Our plan was to run a Dignity Market offering food and hygiene at its heart and to have other services delivered by other organisations. That was beginning to work out but, since March 2022, a lot of our key resources were being taken up responding to the emergency in [Ukraine](#). The needs of the local refugee population in Ioannina were also changing, increasingly focused on services to help them integrate or move on.

In humanitarian work, you need to stay flexible and take advantage of great opportunities when they come along. We were so impressed with BAAS's professionalism, communications and dedication to helping refugees. As expected, the Dignity Centre has been in good hands with them.

ADVOCACY AND CAMPAIGNS

Measuring our impact: When is a shop not a shop?

We collect a large amount of data on what we give and how we serve, and this year, with the help of anthropologist Jonathan Newman, we sought to understand more about our impact on the ground.

Jonathan concluded that we help refugees foster resilience in their daily lives. His finding is backed by [abundant research](#) which demonstrates that people who become refugees are better able to adjust to their new environment and develop resilience when given opportunities to practice familiar daily routines among community, where they can be proactive players in their transformed lives, making choices that fit their own needs and meeting people with similar and relatable life experiences.

Building resilience has different pillars, including economic and social support, which helps people maintain a [sense of identity and belonging](#).

Addressing the loss of resources and control, which define much of a refugee's experience, is a key intervention to support [resilience](#) and [adaptation](#). A [2020 study](#) defined resilience as the, "...aesthetics of life-making in the everyday, requiring the employment of those micro-strategies which help one to live with the present despite an uncertain future."

The Dignity Centre offers a safe place for people to help support each other not just with material things like food, but also with warmth, compassion, respect and a sense of solidarity.



Volunteering as a selfishly altruistic act



We advocate for the benefits of volunteering and are always careful to give people the opportunity to show solidarity without undermining refugees' independence.

Volunteering is a deeply fulfilling experience, and to optimize its impact for all involved, we have clear codes of conduct. We carry out training and education to change the perspectives

of those who might see themselves as 'saviours' or in a position to impose what they think is best.

We spread that message through our podcast series, [The Selfish Altruist](#), which features insightful reflections from volunteers about their experiences.

We published nine episodes, which are available through all the main channels.

Spreading the word through other channels

[Hannah Kleine](#) volunteered in Cyprus last year and then gave Chief Executive, Paul Hutchings, the opportunity to talk about our work on the [European Student Think Tank](#) podcast. We were also really happy to show journalists [Giacomo Sini](#) and [Dario Antonelli](#) what we do at Nicosia's Dignity Centre—they came to Cyprus in October to report on the situation and published an article in Swiss publication, Echo Magazine.

Tastes and Tales: From a Distant Homeland is our unique cookbook created by two amazing volunteers who worked with us in Katsikas camp in northern Greece. This year we gave out or sold over 200 copies. It's a wonderful collection of authentic recipes, inspiring thoughts and heartfelt stories from refugees from the Middle East and Africa, featuring the dishes that they miss from home.



OUR TEAM

Big changes to the Board

This year saw big changes to the board of trustees. We said goodbye to three trustees:

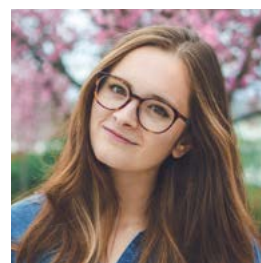
Alan Strang, our Chair for two and a half years, together with his wife Katherine, helped steer Refugee Support Europe through some of its most challenging times with Covid-19, promoting and then sunsetting our sewing cooperative Refumade, and supporting asylum seekers stuck in **Birmingham**. We are still selling their fantastic recipe book **Tastes & Tales from a Distant Homeland**.



Bethan Edwards helped take our **volunteer operation** to a new level. With her hard work and sound guidance, we created an improved feedback programme, aftercare support and our team of **Ambassadors**. She could also always be counted on to ask probing questions about our accountability and be a friendly, helpful support to our Chief Executive.



Amanda Solomon was a trustee for Refugee Support Europe for two years, helping us to build a strong and united volunteer community. She put together a fantastic **Volunteer Handbook** for volunteers and supports, which detailed the need for our projects, and how people can get involved and build a strong movement.



And in order to drive our development, we substantially increased the strength of our trustee team with these six new trustees:

Chris Goodson has been part of the Refugee Support family since 2016, volunteering and coordinating across various camps on five occasions. He was part of the small team who set up The Dignity Centre in Moldova, aiding Ukrainian refugees—we talk about that difficult and rewarding experience here. Every time he's volunteered,

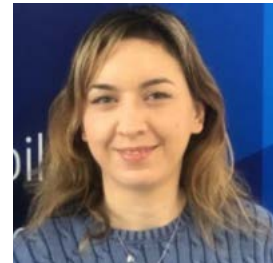


he has completely immersed himself into the role, raised large sums of money and helped us strive for improvement. As our new Chair of Trustees, Chris brings brilliant leadership skills and critical experience as founder and MD of a [successful recruitment business](#) with offices across the UK.

Mohammed Nour, a former member of the [White Helmets](#), first became a member of the Refugee Support community when we met him in a camp in Greece in 2016, where he was living with his family after fleeing Aleppo in Syria. We saw almost immediately that Mohammed was a compassionate leader, always eager to get involved and help where he could. Mohammed and his family now live in Switzerland and their story is one of resilience, determination and compassion.



Serra Cinar, originally from [Türkiye](#), has a breadth of knowledge and experience with all things Finance, having worked for 15 years in various roles with large multinational corporations. This year saw a substantial increase in our revenue and spending, so Serra introduced more rigorous processes to improve our accountability, transparency and financial control. With her contacts in Türkiye, she was instrumental in guiding us to our support there in February.



Dina Nayeri is a multi-award-winning author, who regularly writes about refugee experiences and actively works to build a better understanding of migration in public discourse through her writing, sharing her story at events and speaking in schools. She was born during the Iranian revolution and lived as a refugee for two years before being granted asylum in the United States. Dina has been a part of our movement since she travelled to Greece with Refugee Support in 2017 and 2018, her first visit to a refugee camp since living in one as a child. The experience was transformative and inspiring. She wrote about it in [The Ungrateful Refugee](#) and has been writing and speaking about Refugee Support since then.



Michael Thompson was born in Malawi and has worked in and visited over 70 countries. He is a biochemist with an MBA and a day job as Managing Director of [Enchange](#), an international supply chain and route to market consultancy firm. He's worked with well over 100 organisations and led several 100's of projects, many of which have been transformational.



Alison Behrens has a strong business and marketing background. From our very first days she has been central to our growth and development. A key advisor to the team, Alison gathered feedback from returning volunteers and was part of our volunteer interviewing team. She has also walked many, many miles to raise funds!



Our other Trustees

Gulwali Passarlay is author of [The Lightless Sky](#) and a tireless campaigner for refugee rights. This year he visited our Dignity Centre in Chisinau. He said: "It was lovely visiting [our centre] and spending time with the volunteers. I saw dignity in action with the way people receiving help were treated with kindness and respect. This was a humanising experience for me to see refugees provided with agency and choice of what they need and want without being judged. I enjoyed my visit and time here in Moldova".



Eve Linieres organises our flagship fundraising event, **Dignify**, and for the third year running we had 300 people fill [The Bedford](#). This year we raised an incredible £58,800! Eve's organising committee of Philippa Brown, Nick Kidney and Tony Moore secured generous sponsors such as [Talon Outdoor](#), and three brilliant floor-filling acts who gave their time for free to raise money for the cause: [My Fine Companions](#), [Yardlander](#) and [Police Dog Hogan](#). For something a little different, they were joined by incomparable and outrageous drag act Boss and Tamara, and the night was rounded off in style with Glastonbury veteran DJ [Rob Mello](#).



Rock for Ukraine

The financial planning community also organised an event to support our work and raised over £45,000. Following on from the [PFS](#) and the [Lang Cat](#) conferences which each raised over £4,000, the organisers once again rallied



the community to mark the [one year anniversary of the invasion of Ukraine](#) with a brilliant night of song, dance and auctioneering. The band Consumer Duty played two sets of floor fillers. With any event of this scale, there are a huge number of people involved in helping: Phil Billingham, David Crozier and Mark Polson were instrumental in organising it, Ruth Sturkey was our MC, Kate Shaw collected

pledges on the night, Mark Locke ran around raising sponsorship, Tom Baigrie facilitated the fantastic auction, and Carmen Reichman was photographer.

The people who came along dug into their pockets on the night and we had solid sponsorship support from Nucleus, Novia, Morningstar, M&G Wealth, Quilter, Transact, the Lang Cat, Threesixty, ABRDN, The Yardstick Agency, and Lifesearch.

Our major supporters

And special thanks to these particularly generous individuals and organisations who were instrumental in helping during the year:

- Individuals Giles Palmer, Peter Nagle, Eugene Tsyklevich
- Fundraisers Gerry Clancy, Cathie Amin, Barry Kenny, Jen and Mohan Dsouza, Scott Nadler, Gerard Garnica, Anne Baker, Jodie Brookes, Andrew Smith, Ashley Stockwell, Chris Goodson, Clemmie Linieres, Stephen Summers, Josie Mossman, Peter Greenburg, Tony Conn, Kay Haytch and many more
- The Lyceum School
- Trusts and foundations JP McManus, LDS Charities, Aid for People Affected by War, Souter Charitable Trust, Humanity Now, Carry the Future, CAMCrag, Share and Herts for Refugees

Coordinators and volunteers

Critical to our operations are the talented Coordinators, who support our members, manage volunteers and ensure the Centres run efficiently. This year, [Paula Tamarit](#), who has played a critical role in our success and development,



completed three years at the heart of RSE. She's a true gem who always goes the extra mile and prioritises the needs, thoughts and feelings of refugees above all else, while remaining fair and compassionate to volunteers and considerate of all our stakeholders.

We're tremendously lucky at RSE that we've had so many superstar coordinators over the years. This year the team included Summer Koplin, Maggie Duff, Abi Izzard, Maria Marga and Anna Lyttle.

They have been supported by 201 volunteers from 23 countries who freely gave a total of 3,790 days. They even paid for their own travel, accommodation and food, and raised money to help fund our activities.

Building the management team

In May, we welcomed Hannah Phillips to run head office and improve our admin systems. Then, in January, we welcomed friend of Refugee Support, [Natalie Holmes](#), as our Fundraising and Communications Manager to help fund all our important work.



The organisation relies on a huge team of 50 people who perform the critical job of keeping everything running smoothly. Here they all are (as of the end of the year):

TRUSTEES Oversight and Governance

Chris Goodson Chair
Eve Linieres Events
Alison Behrens Volunteers

Dina Nayeri Advocacy
Gulwali Passarlay Advocacy
Mohammed Nour Advocacy

Michael Thompson Development

PATRON Glamour

Ian Shaw Musician

Vacancies!

AMBASSADORS Support and Promotion

Alison Behrens
Gerry Clancy
Dan Ransom
Bea Shrewsbury
Andrew Robillard
Mel Hughes

Bob Maddams
Natalie Holmes
Maddie Holder
Maggie Duff
Ian McAuslane
Bella Aquilina

Cathie Amin
Desiree Birinci
Leslie Lunga
Frederica Cerqueira
Tony Conn

PAID EMPLOYEES Office

Paul Hutchings
 Chief Exec

Rachel Ellis
 Office Manager

Natalie Holmes
 Fundraiser

OPERATIONS IN MOLDOVA, CYPRUS AND TURKIYE

Operations

Paula Tamarit Operations Director

Coordinators

Summer Koplín Senior Coordinator

Abi Izzard Centre Coordinator

Anna Lyttle Centre Coordinator

Maria Marga Centre Coordinator

UNPAID VOLUNTEERS

3-5 people for 2-4 weeks in each location

INTERVIEWING TEAM Volunteer recruitment

Ian McAuslane
Cressida Stanley Williams
Frederica Cerqueira
Qusay Salama

Ellie Kostick
Alison Behrens
Cathie Amin
Bea Shrewsbury

Leslie Lunga
Elisabeth Mailhac
Marina Malthouse

DIGNIFY Annual music festival fundraiser

Eve Linieres Organiser
Philippa Brown Organiser

Nick Kidney Music
Tony Moore Music and venue

Jen Stobart Volunteers

COMMUNICATIONS Getting the message out

Maria Nuñez Instagram & Podcast
Rachel Ellis Twitter
Benny Bruce Social Media
Tim Lay Social Media

Andy Mattock Design
Emily Wetherby Content
Bob Maddams Film and stories
Tony Conn Film

Natalie Holmes Book store
Louise Shara Fundraising

ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT Growth and efficiency

Alison Behrens Research
Jonathan Newman Research

Jeff Rodrigues Strategy
Tom Bamford IT Support

Shane Kaye Auditor
Lisa Barnard Counsellor

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Financial note

The Financial year ending 31st March 2023 saw a doubling of our income over the previous year to just over £700,000. The most noteworthy increases came from a 13x increase in grant income, a near 4x increase in fundraising event income and a 64% increase in individual donations reflecting the amazing generosity of all involved.

The increase in income meant that we were able to help more people by supporting more wonderful projects. 89p in every £1 raised was spent directly on projects that directly helped refugees in a dignified manner, as described in the rest of the report.

As we were unable to help directly with the aftermath of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan we donated nearly £50,000 to a charity that could via direct donations for that cause.

We completed the year with a healthy reserve of over £200,000.

Brenda Shrewsbury | **Trustee for Finance**

Profit and Loss

Refugee Support Europe CIO For the year ended 31 March 2023

	2023	2022
Income		
Company Donations	28,926	123,332
Grant Income	206,358	15,457
Gift Aid from HMRC	25,647	7,750
Volunteer and Individual donations (after cost)	353,019	215,344
Non-Financial Donations	1,014	-
Fundraising Profit (loss)	88,361	23,569
on-line sales Profit (loss)	469	(3,190)
Interest Income	413	8
Total Income	704,207	382,271
Cost of Refugee Projects		
Cost of Country Specific Personnel	63,149	37,926
Cost of Dignity Centres and Warehousing	68,247	58,015
Childrens activities Materials	18	273
Cost of Clothing for Refugees	-	122
Cost of Food Purchased	369,934	83,786
Cost of Misc. Activities for Refugees	14,592	12,467
Cost of Misc. Items for for Refugees	57,354	8,985
Sewing Room Materials - not for items to be sold	-	18
Donation to another Charity	48,481	-
Project Office Printing & Stationery (not HO)	1,398	-
Project Phone, mobile and internet (not HQ)	971	-
Total Cost of Refugee Projects	624,146	201,590
Surplus (Deficit) after Direct Costs	80,061	180,680
Less Operating Expenses		
Salaried Staff	77,919	31,395
Insurance	503	96
Legal expenses	329	23
General Head Office Costs	9,858	9,569
Depreciation	965	18
Banking Costs	1,902	1,937
Total Less Operating Expenses	91,477	43,039
Surplus after all Costs	(11,416)	137,642
Surplus (Deficit) Carried Forward	(11,416)	137,642

Balance Sheet

Refugee Support Europe CIO As at 31 March 2023

	31 MAR 2023	31 MAR 2022
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	1,707	1,780
Total Fixed Assets	1,707	1,780
Current Assets		
Cash at bank and in hand	190,662	204,591
Prepayments and accrued income	681	681
Accounts Receivable	34,100	21,243
Employee Loan (Cycle to work)	980	1,491
Stock to resell	2,000	2,000
Total Current Assets	228,423	230,006
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors including credit card and cash accounts	13,887	8,137
Salaries and HMRC Payable	9,238	5,227
Total Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	23,124	13,364
Net Current Assets (Liabilities)	205,299	216,642
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	207,006	218,422
Net Assets	207,006	218,422
Capital and Reserves		
Retained Income account	218,422	80,780
Current Year Earnings	(11,416)	137,642
Total Capital and Reserves	207,006	218,422



Refugee Support Europe

14 Hollingbury Park Avenue, Brighton, BN1 7JF

Registered with the Charity Commission of England & Wales No 1174070

report design: bn3design.co.uk