

MASS ACTION ANNUAL REPORT

April 2020 – March 2021



Migrant and Asylum Seeker
Solidarity and Action
15 Ravensbourne Road, London,
SE6 4UU
Charitable Incorporated
Organisation
Charity Number: 1177804

MASS Action Annual Report

April 2020 - March 2021

ABOUT MASS ACTION

MASS Action is a registered CIO that believes in collective action and solidarity for change. Our work centres the needs of migrants and asylum seekers by providing financial and logistical support through collaborations with projects that align with our core values. A big part of this is that projects are led by, or aim to centre and amplify the voices of those with lived experience of migration and asylum systems. We are proud to collaborate with projects that recognize the importance of community, build non-hierarchical relations and maintain financial transparency. As well as our work with partner projects, a priority for the association is advocating for political change and the free movement of people.

OUR MISSION

To support grassroots projects that provide dignified and sustainable initiatives for migrants and asylum seekers. To increase awareness of the social, economic, political and ecological factors which cause migration thereby challenging negative public perceptions on the movement of people.

CORE VALUES

- Equal rights regardless of legal status, nationality, religion, gender, age, sexuality or any other identity marker.
- Honest and dynamic engagement with the communities we work with
- Breaking-down hierarchies that are not just around us but between us
- Financial transparency and efficiency
- Collective action to challenge and overcome violent migration policies and border regimes

HISTORY

MASS Action was founded by nine individuals who felt frustrated by the lack of access to funding for small grassroots initiatives doing impressive work with very little resources . We saw how hard it is to juggle running impactful projects alongside applying for funding and maintaining social media campaigns. Donors, whether they are individuals making small donations, or big trusts giving out grants, are usually attracted to large scale projects with quantitative results. We can understand this, but we also felt there was a huge need to increase funding for projects that focus

on social impact through building relationships and communities; where small donations have a big impact. We registered with the UK Charities Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2018 and since then have been working with three partner projects to provide funding to sustain their operations as well as logistical support and advice.

MEETING OUR OBJECTIVES

Our idea for bringing about change is based on an understanding that we need financial redistribution to projects who are facilitating sustainable and dignified initiatives as well as collective action against violent migration policies. This was central to the inception of the association, we wanted to advocate for a new way of viewing the movement of people to challenge and overcome negative discourse. In this past year of operations we have prioritised fundraising to provide stability for partner projects.

We achieve our objectives in two ways:

1. First, by granting money to and fundraising in collaboration with projects we are either partnered to or consider within our supporting scope. We are holding an annual open call for funding applications in order to reach more projects. We are currently fundraising through grant applications as well as online fundraisers.
2. Second, MASS Action raises awareness of issues around migration more broadly. We do this with regular posts on Facebook and Instagram, sharing reliable news sources and publishing longer informative social media posts that reflect the reality of being a migrant or asylum seeker in the UK or more generally in Europe.

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the guidance contained in the charity commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the trust's aims and objectives in planning future activities.

PROJECT FOCUS

Following on from our first year of operations we have since partnered with two more organisations - LGBT Unity and Chamomile - taking our number of partners to six. What is important to us, is that although each of these projects have different goals, they all share our values of solidarity.

Khora

Athens - Partner since 2018

Khora is a self organised collective of individuals, registered as an association in Athens, Greece. It began in 2016 when a group of volunteers working in Lesvos came to Athens and opened a community centre. Contained within an eight-story building, Khora Community Centre provided a vast array of services that aimed to meet both short and long term needs of migrants, asylum seekers and locals in Athens. This included food, clothing, education, legal support, information sharing and signposting, safe spaces for children and women, creative workshops and a whole host of other events. More than anything, what Khora offered was a feeling of community, a friendly environment that welcomed everyone, without judgement or labels. Sadly the centre had to close down in 2018 due to building licensing issues. After a long search Khora now rents two new spaces in addition to the already existing Free Shop space. One of these new buildings houses the Khora Asylum Support team, a makerspace group called The Beehive, The United African Women Organisation and a music space. The other building houses the activities of the Khora Kitchen and Cafe.

Mazi Housing Project

Athens - Partner since 2018

Mazi is a housing project which provides a home to six displaced young men who are in Athens on their own and were previously homeless. Mazi, meaning together in Greek, speaks to the sense of community and support central to the initiative. The project is aimed at a group that is often ignored by both governments and NGOs: young men. The project challenges cycles of dependency by empowering residents to overcome social exclusion through holistic and collaborative support. Without housing in Greece you cannot access vital services including non-emergency health care, registered employment, financial support, a bank account, public education, or even a public transport card. While minors are given a certain amount of support, many young individuals find themselves in a highly vulnerable position when they turn eighteen and are suddenly no longer able to access this support. A safe, secure house can provide protection not only from exposure to crime, violence, drug abuse and sexual exploitation whilst living on the streets but also allows these young men to go to classes, get a job, receive financial support and build basic autonomy.

Play Up! (formerly Kids Klub)

Athens - Partner since 2018

Play Up! creates safe play and learning spaces inside informal living spaces in Athens. Play Up! consists of a team of volunteers who run daily play and learning sessions for children. The aim of Play Up! is to provide spaces (classrooms, family spaces, outside playgrounds), for children and their parents to come to play and to learn. Through the long term connections made within these family spaces, a supportive community of parents, children and volunteers is established.

Syrian Greek Youth Forum

Athens - Partner since 2019

The Syrian and Greek Youth Forum (SGYF) – an international activism movement in Athens, Greece. They work to support community-building activities, provide pathways to employment, and to contribute and participate in research to find and implement sustainable solutions for an inclusive society.

LGBT Unity

Glasgow - Partner since 2020

The LGBT Unity Glasgow group is a space where LGBTQ+ people navigating the asylum system, and people supporting them come together to share ideas, interact and to express their feelings. The group is only open to people who identify as LGBTQ+. LGBT UNITY Glasgow is supporting its members with food vouchers, mobile phone top-up vouchers and other essential items on a weekly basis especially to those who are destitute without any support while they are still in asylum process and those living at the hotels, and those with mental health issues.

Chamomile

Athens - Partner since 2021

Chamomile Housing Project provides holistic supportive accommodation and social support to previously homeless displaced people (refugees, asylum seekers, migrants) with psychosocial challenges with the final aim of independent living for all residents. Chamomile Housing Project grew out of Amigos de Ritsona Accommodation Project - an informal accommodation project that has been working with displaced people who have mental health challenges since 2017. They provided accommodation and connections to psychosocial support encouraging independent living throughout the program and with the aim of full independence from the project itself. In 2020 the opportunity emerged to expand the project both in numbers and scope. A formal partnership was cemented with Babel Day Centre (LINK) and in August 2020 they began taking

referrals for a new program which provides housing, psychosocial support and material support. Eight apartments are currently operating; three more will open in the coming month.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Capacity Building:

- Advertised and inducted three new volunteers
- Established active working groups for communication, fundraising and grant writing, Funding Pot coordination.

Projects Supported:

- Emergency grant awarded to Mazi Housing Project
- Open Call funding awarded to:
 - Free Movement Skateboarding
 - Infomobile Greece, Khora Social Kitchen
 - FORGE for Humanity
 - Becky's Bathhouse
 - Lesvos LGBTQI+ Refugee Solidarity
 - African Rainbow Family
 - Women Of Colour/Global Women Strike
 - Swansea Asylum Seekers Support
 - CARAG
 - LGBT Unity Glasgow
 - Migrants Organise for Rights and Empowerment
 - Khora Social Kitchen

Fundraising + Events:

- Play Up! Fundraiser: distributed 2100 story books to displaced children in Greece. The book was translated into 12 languages and used the extra money for printing 900 extra resource packs and buying crayons packs to go with the books.

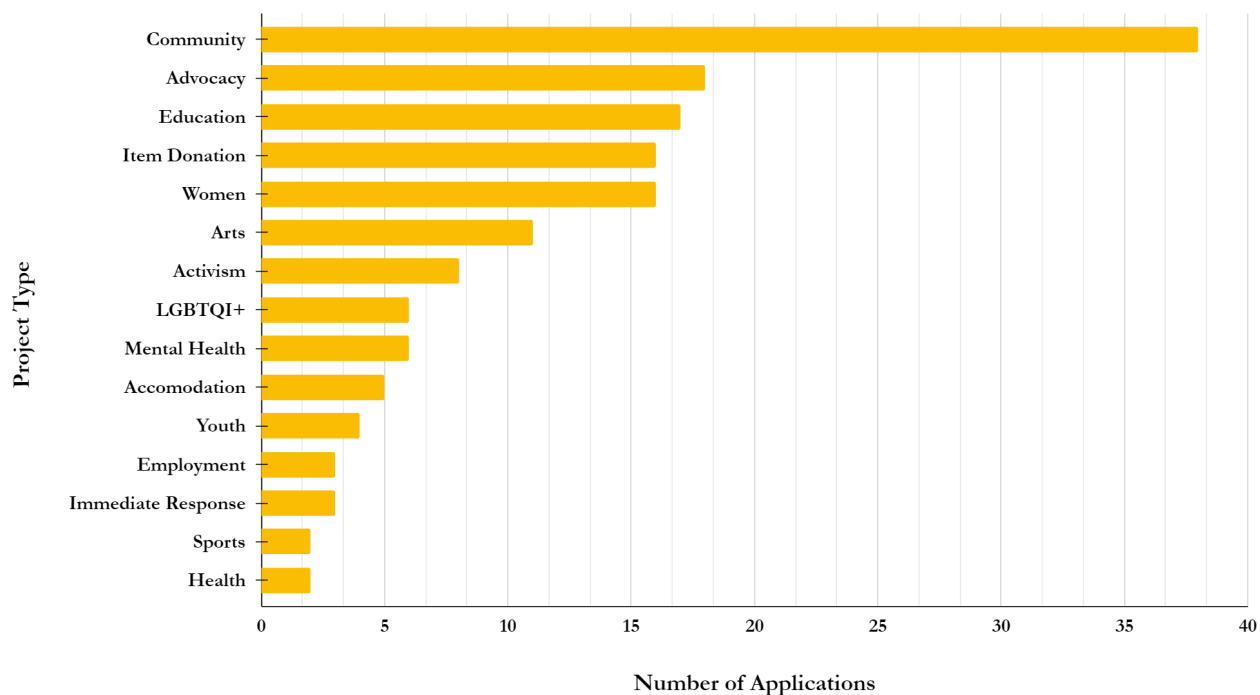
Outreach:

- Enhanced our social media presence on Facebook and Instagram through regular posting, inter-organisational campaigns and advocacy.
- Expanded our geographical reach through our Open Call Funding Pot to projects across the UK.
- Broadened outreach through the Open Call by supporting projects across a range of sectors (healthcare, physical wellbeing and sports, digital support, advocacy, LGBTQIA+ rights)

Open Call Funding Grants- Spring 2020

In 2020 with the advent of COVID-19 and a recent first installment of a 3-year flexible grant from The Britford Bridge Trust, we launched an Open Funding Call whereby we distributed £28,353 to UK and Greece based organisations and groups which provide support to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and who had been impacted by COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to the launch of the funding, MASS Action created promotional materials which were distributed through social media platforms and through our network. The application criteria was developed to encourage applicants from those entities that often struggle to access funding. The criteria and assessment method was designed to ensure a non-biased consideration of all incoming applications. . The call was open between 14 April 2020 - 28 April 2020. We received 121 applications from a diverse set of groups spread across the UK and Greece.

Open Applications by Project Area



Awardees

Of the 121 applications assessed, 12 organisations were successful. These groups were awarded grants between £1000 to £3216. Seven of these grantees were based in Athens and Lesbos, Greece

(including the emergency assistance we provided to our long-term partner Mazi housing project) and 6 were based in cities across the UK. Below is a breakdown of each project and how they used the grant:

African Rainbow Family: £3,000

African Rainbow Family (ARF) is a Registered Charity set up and run by and for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTIQ) refugees and people seeking asylum in the UK. We provide inclusive LGBTIQ safe space for practical and social activities for mutual support, empowerment and solidarity. The grant was applied for to pay their coordinators.

Becky's Bathhouse: £3,216

Becky's Bathhouse is a women and children's centre and shower facility serving families residing in Moria camp on the island of Lesbos. We're here not only to provide hot showers, however: our primary aim is to create a safe, warm, and welcoming place for women and children to disengage from the everyday realities of Moria." The grant was applied for to buy a distribution vehicle and support long term volunteers.

CARAG: £1000

Coventry Asylum and Refugee Action Group (CARAG) is a Community Organisation run by Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Migrants with the help of local volunteers. It is Constituted and run by a Committee of 10 members who act as Volunteers. Only those with experience of the UK Asylum and immigration system can be elected into the committee. The grant was applied for to purchase phone credit for 50 members for a month.

Forge for Humanity: £3,000

FORGE for humanity's 'Unlocking Potential' project is unique in its focus on male refugees who are travelling solo...FORGE operates primarily as an information hub from a small space in central Athens, sharing much-needed knowledge about the asylum process, and offering information on accessing Greek government and non-profit services. Through FORGE's employability program, the project highlights an important path towards autonomy, by identifying individual roadmaps to employment, and more immediately, obtaining unemployment benefits and other vital support. The grant was applied for to equip their space.

Free Movement Skateboarding: £2,692

Free Movement Skateboarding (FMS) are a non-profit organisation who provide access to meaningful sport to empower underprivileged youth and bring communities together. Operating in Athens, they offer skateboarding workshops and an educational program which focus on improving physical and mental wellbeing, promoting gender parity and aiding integration. The

grant was applied for to cover running costs of the FMS van/mobile skatepark would be covered for the duration of one year. They reported back to us that: funds were allocated to Fuel, Road tax, Maintenance and a secure parking space, as the van was broken into and damaged and parking it on the street was no longer an option.

Khora Social Kitchen: £3,000

Khora is a volunteer-led organisation based in Athens, which aims to provide services and create community spaces for people who have been forced from their homes because of oppression, poverty, climate change and war. Khora Social Kitchen had a massive rise in demand for free meals because of COVID-19: from 500 meals a day to 2,500! With the grant and a fundraising partnership set up in response to COVID-19, Khora Social Kitchen was able to deliver food packages to 20% of its waiting list.

Infomobile: £3,000

Infomobile is a project that has been sharing information, creating resources, documenting human rights abuses and providing support and a source of connection in Greece since 2009. With networks across borders, Infomobile provides a platform for the voices of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and others self-organising for freedom of movement. The grant they received enabled them to reach camps and make legal interventions when necessary.

Lesvos LGBTIQ+ Refugee Solidarity: £3,000

Lesvos LGBTIQ+ Refugee Solidarity has been active since July 2017. They aim to build community by providing a safe space for LGBTIQ+ refugees in Lesvos, where everyone is free to express their sexuality and/or gender identity in an environment of mutual support and respect, without fear of judgment or harm. Due to COVID-19, legal issues, systemic delays and police disruption, many were unable to leave Lesvos to access mainland medical support, or could not afford to travel. The MASS Action grant was used to pay for travel expenses, renting additional accommodation for safe housing and providing legal support for urgent cases.

Migrants Organizing for Rights & Empowerment (MORE): £1000

MORE is a grassroots, migrant-led organisation established in 2018 and based in Glasgow. Their work is focussed around 4 major strands - campaigning for asylum seekers' access to education, employment, decent housing and that they are treated with dignity. This is done through practical support, capacity building, befriending and creating an environment that supports critical political, economic and social awareness and self-actualisation, valuing the lived experience and potential of their members. Their initiatives are designed and run by asylum seekers and refugees. As a response to the pandemic, they raised funds to purchase top-up vouchers for almost 600 asylum seekers and provided dignified food access to 136 families through a cash first principle. The MASS grant went

towards these efforts.

Swansea Asylum Seekers Support: £2,500

Swansea Asylum Seekers Support is a volunteer-led registered charity, run and managed by its members, who include asylum seekers, refugees and other local people. They welcome people seeking sanctuary in Swansea through our twice-weekly drop-ins, and offer practical support, educational and recreational opportunities. Local people started the support group in 1999. Their drop-ins began in 2001, organised by some of the first asylum seekers who joined the group. MASS funding was used to support their community through the pandemic.

Women of Colour/Global Women Strike: £3,000

GWS is an international grassroots network campaigning for recognition and payment for all caring work, in and outside the home. They advocate for all mothers and other carers to be entitled to a living wage. They campaign for a caring economy end, and to end power relations of sex, race, class, income, geography and immigration status. They are using MASS Action funding to research and publish two Fact Sheets and to organise webinars/workshops on the themes of “Theft of Africa and of the Indian Sub-Continent” from the point of view of women of colour.

LGBT Unity Glasgow: £1,575

LGBT Unity Glasgow/Scotland is an organisation run by and for refugees and asylum seekers. They aim to tackle racism, homophobia, transphobia, and sexism by holding meetings, supporting members, and running events. LGBT Unity Glasgow/Scotland used their grant to tackle isolation and the barriers to integration by financially supporting members throughout Covid-19.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Strategic: As an organisation which uses consensus-based decision making and functions through a horizontal structure, MASS Action works towards dismantling the hierarchies in place across the third sector. While this structure allows all members of the team the opportunity to offer opinions, work in cooperation and individually to solve operational problems, it also presents the challenge of slower decision-making processes. This is coupled with changing capacity and availability of team members. MASS are striving towards more regular meetings, and revolving responsibilities so pressure does not fall on a few individuals. Other risks include intensifying government migration policies in Greece and the UK, which pose heightened risks to our partner projects, their service-users and staff. Other challenges relate to funding/fundraising due to changes within the

sector and the ongoing impact of Covid-19. MASS Action is alert to these developments and is constantly adapting to support our own team and partner projects through these uncertain circumstances.

Operational: Since MASS Action is run exclusively by volunteers, we face the ongoing risk of fluctuating capacity, availability and participation. A central risk for MASS Action is therefore the dual possibility of having limited capacity for important projects, and too much work falling on a small number of individuals. We simultaneously support several partners across several geographic regions yet no longer have team members situated physically in Greece. This presents an operational risk in terms of operations management and sustaining strong communication with partner projects.

Financial: We maintain similar financial risk to the previous year due to our continued fundraising focus towards our partner projects and the open funding call. This makes it difficult to ensure we have enough in reserve to accommodate for our modest annual overheads. Good accounting and awareness of the amount of unrestricted funds as well as outgoing costs is needed to ensure there is enough in reserve to pay all bills and fees. Future grant proposals and unrestricted fundraisers should include a percentage contribution to our overhead costs.

Compliance: This is a medium risk area, the most important areas where MASS Action needs to ensure that it is compliant include GDPR, safeguarding, and areas of donor reporting. MASS Action has some systems in place to manage most of these, but we need to strengthen and evolve our policies to ensure there are clear roles and responsibilities, and ultimately accountability to individual, institutional and project stakeholders.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITY

The charity's trustees are responsible for ensuring the preparation of the trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and its compliance to all legal requirements. They are also responsible for safeguarding the reputation of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud or other irregularities. The Trustees take pride in maintaining the integrity of the charity and financial information included on the charity website and other social media.

TRUSTEE COMMENTS

Given the success of our fundraising, advocacy and team expansion in the previous year, we anticipated to build capacity, expand our network and launch our first Open Call in this year. We had hoped to collaborate with more grassroots organisations through advocacy events, and to consolidate our fundraising team both through grant applications and in-person events across our diverse locations.

The global impact of Covid-19, however, brought unprecedented challenges and changes to all our partner organisations, to us as individuals and as a collective. While the pandemic has undeniably shifted our priorities, timelines and working style, it required us to respond quickly, efficiently, and hone our attention into where it was most needed, and to the ways we as an organisation could offer support in the midst of a global health crisis.

While it has not been possible to host in-person fundraising or advocacy events, we expanded our volunteer base and constructed more robust working groups. This allowed us to work further towards our main objectives by incorporating diverse experiences and skillsets.

Through our Open Call, we successfully distributed £30,000 to 13 grassroots organisations across the UK and Greece. This was an exciting step for MASS Action, and we look forward to putting the experience and learnings from this into next year's Open Call. One of our successful applicants, LGBT Unity (based in Glasgow) joined MASS Action as a partner project in March 2021. We warmly welcome both groups and look forward to working together in the coming year.

Financial review:

Charity income was £20772 for the financial year ending 31st March 2021 compared with charity income of £54339 for the financial year ending 31st March 2020. Total expenditure of £45540 for the financial year ending 31st March 2021 compared with expenditure of £21328 for the financial year ending 31st March 2020. Migrant and Asylum Seeker Solidarity and Action 2020-2021 financial year total fund balance was £9797.

Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to and been associated with MASS Action during this particularly difficult year. To the members of the MASS team, our partner projects new and old, and to all those who have supported and funded our work, we extend our deepest gratitude to you all.

Firstly, we would like to thank all those who organised fundraising events, both for specific projects and for assisting our overall objectives. Furthermore, we greatly appreciate the time and effort put in by all those involved in our first Open Call. The pooling of knowledge, ideas and motivation, in an otherwise stressful and uncertain landscape of Covid-19 was extremely inspiring. Furthermore, it has established a solid base for us to work on similar projects in the future. We also greatly appreciate the time and energy spent by all those who applied to the Funding Pot, and look forward to receiving applications and collaborating with new projects through the next Open Call.

In October 2020 Jane, our previous Chair, stood down. We would like to express our thanks to Jane, and to all the previous board members and volunteers for their hard work and dedication to MASS Action. We wish them all the best for the future. We appointed a new trustee to the board, Lily, and have since welcomed several new volunteers to the team. We are very much looking forward to working with these new members.

Josie Dibnah

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josie Dibnah', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Calum Frost

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Calum Frost', with a stylized, cursive script.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking to the future, we will continue to further the impactful work of MASS Action, by building on the successes of all the activities carried out this year and incorporating key learnings. To enable us to do so, we have summarised the main steps we will be taking to enable us to sustainably grow in five categories:

1. People and structure:

- As our capacity has fluctuated throughout the year, we intend to build a more robust working group system, within each we will have several volunteers.
- Building our volunteer base will allow us to engage in our activities more effectively, and will help us to build relationships with other projects and organisations.
- We will ensure overhead costs are covered for all volunteers.

2. Outreach and Engagement:

- Through our second open funding call, we are hoping to continue to reach a broader range of projects, both within Greece and the UK, and possibly beyond should capacity allow, and a clear need identified.
- We intend to continue to expand our social media presence through more regular posts relating to events, news and advocacy.

3. Fundraising:

- Our Grant Application working group will continue to apply for grants and put on fundraising events in order to secure a minimum of £30000 for our next funding call.
- We will continue to host online fundraisers on behalf of our partnered projects at their request
- We will continue to support our partnered projects in the application of grants, using our charity status when applications require it
- We will ring-fence a percentage of unrestricted funds to cover any operational expenses, determined by our predicted overhead costs.
- Develop clear guidance on what organisations we are willing to apply for funding from.

4. Projects:

- Continue to increase the number of projects we support and diversify the geographical distribution of projects
- Continue to work closely with supporting projects beyond fundraising activities.
- Develop a clear Monitoring & Evaluation framework to support an efficient MEL.

- Ensure we remind projects to complete and submit the required Monitoring & Evaluating forms.
- We will develop a robust process for launching open calls and will define specific criteria to support the shortlisting process.

5. Networking and advocacy:

- We intend to organise more advocacy events, this will allow us to further develop our networks with other projects campaigning for issues around asylum and the movement of people
- We will center people with experience of the asylum system as well Black, Indigenous and People of Colour when organising advocacy events.
- We will continue to work with projects and people across the UK and Greece. We hope to build a stronger, more diverse network with projects in multiple locations to share perspectives and grow collectively.

MASS Action
Statement of Financial Activities (Receipts & Payments)
April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

	Total	General Fund (U)	Chamomile (R)	Khora (R)	Mazi (R)	Play Up! (R)	Silent University (R)	Syrian Greek Youth Forum (R)
<i>Receipts</i>								
Income and Endowments								
Income from Donations and Legacies	11,043.53	2,530.70			4,206.27	4,073.47	38.61	194.48
Gift Aid Claimed	9,728.92	6,224.91			1,200.00	863.80	38.83	1,401.38
Total Receipts	20,772.45	8,755.61	0.00	0.00	5,406.27	4,937.27	77.44	1,595.86
<i>Payments</i>								
Expenditure								
Charitable Activities								
Charity Management & Administration	28.85	28.85						
Bank Charges	109.00	109.00						
Project Grants	45,402.92	33,803.00			4,200.00	5,383.06	421.00	1,595.86
Total Payments	45,540.77	33,940.85	0.00	0.00	4,200.00	5,383.06	421.00	1,595.86
 All Receipts	 20,772.45	 8,755.61	 0.00	 0.00	 5,406.27	 4,937.27	 77.44	 1,595.86
All Payments	45,540.77	33,940.85	0.00	0.00	4,200.00	5,383.06	421.00	1,595.86
Net Movement in Funds	-24,768.32	-25,185.24	0.00	0.00	1,206.27	-445.79	-343.56	0.00
Total Funds Brought Forward	34,565.15	33,492.36	0.00	283.44	0.00	445.79	343.56	0.00
Total Funds Carried Forward	9,796.83	8,307.12	0.00	283.44	1,206.27	0.00	0.00	0.00

Josie Dibnah



Calum Frost

