

RECONNECT

(Company limited by guarantee)

<https://reconnectonline.org.uk/>

**Report and Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 December
2023**

Charity no. 1105016

Company no. 4978651

Legal and administrative information

Constitution

Reconnect is a company limited by guarantee incorporated on 27th November 2003 (company no. 4978651) and a registered charity (charity no. 1105016) governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Directors and Trustees

The directors of the charitable company ("the Charity") are its trustees for the purpose of charity law and throughout this report are collectively referred to as the trustees.

As set out in the Articles of Association, the number of trustees shall never be less than three and the maximum number shall be determined by a General Meeting. The trustees may at any time co-opt any person (who need not be a member of the Company) as a trustee, either to fill a casual vacancy or by way of addition to their number.

At each Annual General Meeting one-third of the trustees for the time being (or if their number is not a multiple of three then the number nearest to one-third) shall retire from office. A retiring trustee shall be eligible for re-election.

The trustees serving during the period and since the period are as follows:

Elected Directors and Trustees

Sarah Buxton, Chair

Stephen Desmond

Belay Gessesse

Lucia Dube

Dr Maknun Ashami

Director of the Charity and Chief Executive

Theodros Abraham

Registered and Administrative Office

Resource for London
356 Holloway Road
London, N7 6PA

Bankers

HSBC
31 Holborn Circus
London EC1N 2HR

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 December 2023

The trustees (who are also company directors) are pleased to present their report together with the financial statements of the Charity for the year to 31 December 2023.

The legal and administrative information set out above forms part of this report.

Objects of the Charity

The objects for which the Charity is formed are:

- to relieve need, hardship, and distress in developing countries principally but not exclusively by facilitating the employment in such countries of persons living as refugees or displaced persons in developed countries who have skills useful to improving conditions in developing countries
- to advance education and relieve unemployment among refugees and displaced persons:
 - a. by providing and fostering the provision of appropriate training so that such persons may participate in employment opportunities principally but not exclusively in developing countries
 - b. by identifying and fostering such employment opportunities and assisting such persons to participate in them.

Organisation

The Charity is governed by a board of elected trustees which delegates the day to day running of the Charity to the Executive Committee comprising two of the trustees and the Director of the Charity, Theodoros Abraham, who is a paid full-time member of staff and is assisted by a number of part time volunteers. The board of trustees meets for regular and extraordinary meetings. Minutes of Executive Committee meetings are emailed to all the trustees, together with information relating to significant project developments and funding.

Related Parties

The Charity has no related parties.

Public Benefit

The trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning future strategy. The trustees have considered how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

Financial Review

Total income for the year was £80,487 from grants and donations. During the year £98,358 was spent on charitable activities and £2,570 on fundraising. The charity held unrestricted reserve of £78,905 and restricted reserves of £8,220 at the year ended 31 December 2023.

Reserves Policy

The trustees have adopted a policy of aiming for the Charity to have unrestricted reserves equal to at least six to nine months' core expenditure. As at 31 December 2023 these were £78,905 in line with this reserves policy.

Risks

The trustees regularly review the risks to which the Charity is exposed and are satisfied that the systems in place to minimise those risks are satisfactory.

Investment Policy

Funds not immediately required for the objectives of Reconnect are held in a deposit account. The Charity does not have any other investments.

Directors and trustees

All directors of the company are also trustees of the Charity and there are no other trustees.

Volunteers

At end of 2023 there were 9 volunteers, including 5 trustees.

The trustees are grateful to all those who have volunteered to work with the Charity and promote the Charity's goals throughout the year. Volunteers are committed people who share the aims and values of the Charity and have skills and experience to assist it with its work.

The trustees are also grateful to members of its advisory group who have readily and generously given their time and skills.

Our thanks to Mr. Mike Butler, a highly experienced fundraising consultant of Resource for London, for his committed support since April 2020 to the Charity's fundraising initiatives.

Review of activities in 2023 and future developments

1. Guidance and support to individuals

The Charity has continued to provide one-to-one guidance, signposting and support to individual refugees and asylum seekers who want to progress in higher education, including teacher training. During 2023, 3 cohorts comprising 68 learners, refugees, and asylum seekers, participated in the Preparation for Higher Education course, and others were also supported by the Director to make informed choices about courses and training.

Approximately 136 were supported in this way in 2023. The Director of the Charity has 37 years' higher education teaching experience and 30 years' experience of advising students with a refugee background in higher and further education.

2. Pathways to Teaching and Higher Education

Part One: Preparation for Higher Education

In September 2018, the Charity, in partnership with UCL Institute of Education, commenced a unique 30-hour preparatory programme, the Preparation for Higher Education course, for refugees and asylum seekers living in London. Participation in this course enables refugees and people with a refugee background to progress into higher education and to a course leading to a teaching qualification. Since the programme started, a total of 324 refugees and asylum seekers, 174 females and 150 males, from 36 countries, have been supported. ReConnect pays course fees and cost of

travel to participants on the programme. Whatever their level of education or employment, refugees usually experience disadvantages, in education and employment. Following completion of a Post Graduate Certificate in Education, participants would then be able to work in the teaching profession in UK, or elsewhere. There are many other successful outcomes of this course, highlighted by some of the selected quotations in Section 5 below.

A total of 68 participants from 24 countries were supported and successfully completed the programme in 2023, offered in three cohorts - Spring term (January to March). Summer term (April to June), and Autumn term (September to December). For outcomes see section 4 below.

- Gender: 36 Female (52.9%), 32 Male (47.1%)

- Country of Origin: Afghanistan, Albania, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Grenada, Hong Kong, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Malaysia, Mali, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Syria, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.

- Academic background: 2 PhD (2.9%), 16 Master's (23.5%), 36 Bachelor's (52.9%), 3 Incomplete Bachelor's (4.4%), 8 Diplomas (11.7%), 2 Certificates (2.9%), 1 GCSEs (1.5%).

- Age group
 - 20 - 30 (18) 26.5%
 - 31 - 40 (30) 44.1%
 - 41 - 50 (14) 20.6%
 - 51 - 60 (3) 4.4%
 - 61 - 70 (3) 4.4%

- Immigration status
 - 41 Asylum Seekers (60.3%)
 - 9 Recognised Refugees (13.3%)
 - 5 Leave to Remain/ Enter - Ukraine Scheme (7.4%)
 - 8 Indefinite Leave to Remain (11.7%)
 - 2 Exceptional Leave to Remain (2.9%)
 - 1 Humanitarian Protection/ Discretionary Leave (1.5%)
 - 2 British Citizens/ refugees prior to Acquiring British Citizenship (2.9%)

Applicants to this course face major barriers, such as inadequate exposure to English for Academic Purposes and study skills, undeveloped IT skills, and lack of knowledge of the UK education system. They are further disadvantaged as they lack information about their overseas qualifications compare to qualifications in the UK, barriers which need to be overcome if they are to be able to access higher education courses. This group of Londoners comes mainly from non-English speaking countries and have sought refuge in the UK because of persecution and conflict, mainly during the past two decades. The Preparation for Higher Education course (30 hours over 10 weeks) develops knowledge and understanding of the UK education system, curriculum, policies, entry requirements and progression routes, as well as academic skills.

In implementing the programme, the Charity publicises the opportunity to a wide network of organisations and individuals, to inform prospective participants. This included our extensive contact lists, the many organisations, large and small, who are part of The Refugee Council distribution network, approx. two hundred organisations working with and for asylum seekers and refugees, including refugee community organisations and Refugee Education UK (formerly Refugee Support Network).

The admission process includes guidance and assessment, through one-to-one discussions with the Charity's Director, as well as information and Skills Diagnosis Sessions, run by UCL Institute of Education staff. The Charity coordinates the applications process. Selection of participants is done by academic staff at UCL Institute of Education. Applicants are considered on first come first basis provided they meet the eligibility criteria. The Course provides training in academic writing, critical reading, presentation, and ICT skills, (especially virtual learning environments - Moodle and associated applications) familiarisation with teaching and learning practices in UK universities, and intercultural understanding. The course develops the participants' personal and intellectual confidence, and ability to collaborate with each other and the tutors. Structured time is spent focusing on future training options, supported by the Director and individual meetings with UCL Institute of Education staff.

The Charity is very grateful for the dedicated teaching and pastoral support offered by staff at UCL Institute of Education, including providing individual consultations and writing references. Staff regularly go out of their way to ensure that participants gain as much as possible from the course and are well informed about future training options.

In 2023, the Charity and UCL Institute of Education, organised a face-to-face Refugee Week event on 19 June 2023, to celebrate the work of ReConnect and IoE and the achievements of the participants. The barriers experienced by refugees and asylum seekers in accessing higher education and proceeding to professional employment were highlighted.

Past donations (which included a legacy from the Estate of the late Sarah Hayward, a grant from an international foundation raised by our partner Computer Aid International, and grants from Network for Social Change Charitable Trust) enabled the Charity to re-establish the Pathways to Teaching for Refugees at UCL Institute of Education in 2018 and build the Preparation for Higher Education Programme. During 2023, we are grateful to have been offered funding by five trusts, and several individual donors.

MSN Fund grant of £5000 has made an important contribution towards the total expenditure required to support refugees and asylum seekers into higher education in the 2023 Preparation for Higher Education Programme, implemented in partnership with University College London (UCL). The programme has provided refugees and asylum seekers with advice and guidance, training, fees, travel costs and support with the cost and process of securing official assessment and confirmation of overseas qualifications from the Education Counselling and Credit Transfer Information Service (ECCTIS).

As part of the programme, UCL Institute of Education initiated a mentorship scheme in autumn term 2019. The *buddy scheme* has been further developed and participants have been partnered with a number of volunteer academics. For example, a past participant has developed a PhD proposal in the field of ophthalmology and another past participant has been buddied with an academic to find courses which will recognise the partial completion of his studies in his home country. Connections have also been made in the fields of electrical and civil engineering.

The Charity strives to learn from the experience of individual beneficiaries, and to be informed by outcomes achieved by them, in developing future programmes.

A 3-minute video featuring participants in the Charity's Preparation for Higher Education course <https://youtu.be/6DNZWezOXUU> was made by UCL Institute of Education during 2020. A longer video of the overall work of UCL Institute of Education also included a section on Preparation for Higher Education. These can be seen on the Charity's website, under 'PRESS.' <https://reconnectonline.org.uk/> (In July 2024, a new video has been added to the website.)

Extract from a Report by Aine McAllister, the Programme Leader, on the Preparation for Higher Education Programme, Institute of Education, University College London,

Participants request and require a great deal of individual guidance. To supplement the in-course content on applying to university, we have created a portfolio document to assist participants which can be completed over time, but participants still indicate the need for individual dialogic ongoing support. We have had a STAR trained volunteer this year who participants report was helpful. Participants require and receive support as alumni too.

...Most participants enrolled on time and engaged well with the activities. Many of them took the opportunity to submit a piece of academic writing and received formative feedback which they can draw on in their future HE studies. Presentations were to a high standard and generated dynamic critical discussions. One issue that did arise was the use of AI generated text by some participants – this has prompted us to develop further materials to raise awareness of acceptable use of AI in HE UK institutions, to demonstrate assistive use of AI and to introduce UCL AI policy in order to further prepare the participants for study at UK institutions.

For Outcomes of the Preparation for Higher Education course 2023, see pages 9-10 below.

Part Two: Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) Post-Compulsory Programme

From 2007 the Charity worked as part of the London Hub for Refugee Teachers, and channelled funding from the UK government Department of Education to the Institute of Education, which enabled the Charity to support refugees to gain a PGCE. 54 students gained the qualification before this funding ended in 2011. (See Section 4 for Outcomes of this programme). Below are reports which were included in Newsletters numbers 8 and 10,

from two graduates of the PGCE programme, now working full time in London colleges, teaching Maths, IT and Computing.

“I am Mesay Gashaw, holding an MSc, NPQLTD (National Professional Qualification for Leading Teacher Development), and FSET (Fellow of Society for Education and Training). I arrived in the UK 32 years ago as a refugee and met my wife, Ms. Aster Dejene. She supported me during the trials and tribulations of settling in and finding my purpose.

After arriving in the UK with a B.Sc. degree in Mathematics and prior experience in computer programming, finding a job related to my qualifications and experience was difficult due to a lack of information and delayed settlement permission. I completed a Diploma in Education at the Institute of Education, UCL from 2008 to 2010 through the ReConnect program. The course provided theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and placement opportunities. I received exceptional guidance from Dr. Sam D. and Dr. Jay D., and learned from an experienced subject mentor, Mr. Gebre B., and a supportive lecturer, Mr. Rawa, during my placement at Hackney Community College.

I taught at Tower Hamlets College while studying and later taught at various colleges including Southwark, LeSoCo (Lewisham Southwark College), Orpington, Bromley, and London South East College. As a teacher, I held diverse roles such as Maths and IT/Computing Lecturer, Course Leader, Internal Verifier, Lead Internal Verifier, and Tutor.

I have been improving my skills by participating in CPD programs. Recently, I finished NPQLTD course at IOE, University College London.

Currently, I hold Fellow status of SET (Society of Education and Training) and I am a member of a PAG (Practitioner Advisory Group) of SET.

It is worth highlighting that ReConnect has been going strong for two decades, shining a light and being a beacon of hope in the lives of refugees. I would like to wish them many more years of providing unparalleled service.”

“Ben (not his real name) is in his early 50s. He came to UK in 1998 as a refugee. He held BA degree in Arts and Master’s degree in Animation and taught in the same field for four years in his home country. After arriving in UK he was confronted with the challenges of adjusting to his new life in the country. He managed to enrol on the ReConnect Pathway into Teaching- Post Compulsory Education course provided at the Institute of Education, University of London where he successfully completed his two year part time study. As part of his course, he practised teaching media and web design for the period of 6 months at Hackney college.

Using the best opportunity offered to him by ReConnect Ben managed to reconnect himself to his chosen academic and vocational field and is now working as a lecturer and head of department at a college in London providing distance teaching course. He appreciates and values all the contributions of ReConnect for helping refugees access higher education and academic careers in UK.

Ben remains grateful to ReConnect for helping him realize his potential in his chosen teaching career at higher learning centre. He would be happy to associate with ReConnect sharing his experiences to promote the established aims of the charity.”

In academic year 2018/19, the Charity was able to support 2 students on the full time Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) Post-Compulsory programme at UCL Institute of Education, having received a legacy from the Estate of Sarah Hayward (whose work at Employment Forum secured the funding from the Department of Education in 2007). Both students successfully completed their studies in September 2019 and are now working in further education colleges in London.

The three students supported by the Charity on the PGCE Post-Compulsory Programme, who successfully completed their two years part-time studies (2019-21) at UCL Institute of Education are now teaching in London further education and higher education institutions. Two of them were featured in the Charity's Newsletters, Winter 2020 Issue 4 & Summer 2022 Issue 7: extracts below:

“Yasmin (not her real name) is in her 30s, MA in Sociology, worked as a journalist and teacher in her country of origin, before she came to the UK in 2016. She was determined to find her way back into the classroom and to re-establish her career as a teacher. ReConnect offered Yasmin the opportunity to undertake the Preparation for Higher Education Programme, followed by a place on the PGCE at University College London (UCL) Institute of Education (IOE) one year ago. She has studied part-time and has been successful with her coursework. Crucially, Yasmin is completing a work-placement as part of the PGCE as a teacher of sociology in an FE college. Yasmin says “”Living in another country is not easy as you need to start from scratch, you need to prove yourself all the time and you need to change all stereotypes exist about your background and history. However, there are always great opportunities that give you a chance to feel success and efficiency”.”

“Amirtha participated in the ReConnect ‘Preparation for Higher Education’ 10 week course in 2019 and again in 2022. She is a 1st class graduate in Agricultural Science from Sri Lanka, where she was selected to help first year students with practicals and was then promoted to Assistant Lecturer. She taught Biology practicals and led field visits. After 7 years in the UK she learned about Reconnect, and the course at the Institute of Education, via a WhatsApp group. ‘Theodros helped me, and the course was so helpful, it gave me a path back to my profession. I realized that I could teach in the UK.’ Amirtha was accepted onto the Post Graduate Certificate in Education in 2019 but lost her place because she just missed the required score in the IELTS test (International English Language Testing System). She has worked hard towards the test since then, through self-study (course fees are too high), using model papers and materials on the website, and will take the test again in July. Meanwhile she is a volunteer Learning Support Assistant in a London Further Education College, supporting 16+ students in maths and biology GCSEs. ‘I know this is the place for me’! Amirtha took GCSE Maths and English herself, and Level 2 ‘Supporting Teaching and Learning’, both free in college. Paying £500, she has begun Level 3 Education and Training (a national qualification through City and Guilds). It will help her Plan B, if she cannot do PGCE, and will continue to support students to achieve their aims. Amirtha remains committed to teaching, knowing it is her way to contribute and be part of life in UK. I admire her energy, enthusiasm, commitment, and optimism.”

Amirtha has successfully enrolled on Post Graduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) Post-Compulsory Programme at UCL Institute of Education.

3. Outcomes of ReConnect training programmes

Post Graduate Certificate of Education, Post Compulsory Programme 2005-11

In this period, 54 refugees and people with a refugee background completed courses leading to a teaching qualification, with the support of the Charity. These included:

- 14 trainees (5 men, 9 women) from 9 countries in Africa, Asia, Middle East, and Latin America who completed a Postgraduate Level Certificate in Teaching in Lifelong Learning, at Birkbeck, University of London. The programme was funded by the Home Office Refugee Integration Challenge Fund.
- 40 trainees (24 men, 16 women) from 14 countries in Africa, Asia, Middle East, and Latin America, who successfully completed PGCE Post-Compulsory Education programme, leading to a qualified teaching status, at UCL Institute of Education. The programme was funded by the Department for Children, Schools, and Families (DCSF) through the London Hub for Refugee Teachers led by Employability Forum.

Since those courses ended in 2011 the Charity has continued to gather information about the employment outcomes of graduates of these programmes.

Outcomes of 2018-19 Pathways to Teaching for Refugees

The two PGCE students whom the Charity supported successfully completed their studies in September 2019 and are now working in further education colleges in London. One is teaching Health and Social Care courses, leading to the Higher National Certificate. The other is teaching Computer systems and Computer networks.

Collaboration with Warwick University regarding Impact of ReConnect programmes

As part of the collaboration with Warwick University on a research project “Refugee Narratives - World University Service’s Ethiopian and Eritrean Scholarship Programme,” the Charity hosted Miss Zhen Yang, a PhD candidate, to enable her to undertake an Impact Survey for the 59 PGCE students supported by the Charity between 2007 and 2021.

Ms Yang’s starting point was a survey conducted by ReConnect in 2020, when 38 (74%) of the original 54 PGCE graduates responded. Of these 38, 23 were in teaching, and 8 had entered other employment. Ms Yang’s report of February 2023 indicates that only 12 graduates responded out of the total of 59 who had completed PGCE at that date. This low response rate is disappointing, but understandable as the majority of the group had completed their training by 2013. Many of this group are in London and attend and contribute to ReConnect events. Her research illustrated the many challenges faced by this group of qualified and experienced teachers: positions available are often part time or Hourly Paid Lecturer, so other work had to be secured as well; insufficient placement experience to overcome the lack of teaching experience in UK; finding out about positions to apply for; and health issues and family responsibilities.

This Impact report also documents the many ways in which participants gained from the programme, apart from their professional development. These include increasing self-confidence and self esteem; increased ability to assist and support members of their own and other refugee communities; and the ability to contribute to the host community through their increased participation in work, and the community of a college.

The report concludes “ReConnect’s PGCE programmes offer an invaluable opportunity for refugees who aspire to return to teaching; however, currently only a few can access it. ReConnect needs the support of various partners to provide PGCE programmes and support services to help refugees reconnect with their prior professional work, re-certify themselves, and utilize their broad knowledge and experience to benefit students in the UK Education sector.”

Ms Yang has successfully completed the Impact Report. and presented the summary of the report at a World Refugee Week Event, organised by ReConnect and UCL, held on 19th June 2023 at UCL Institute of Education. The Report can be accessed at:

<https://reconnectonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Impact-Report-The-ReConnect-PGCE-Programme-2005-2021-March-2023.pdf>

Outcomes of Preparation for Higher Education Programme, 2023

The Director has to date received feedback from 13 participants who successfully completed the Preparation for Higher Education Programme during 2023. Their feedback has provided strong evidence of the value of the course to this cohort, who have very varied educational and employment backgrounds, but who all faced obstacles in gaining employment, particularly at a professional level, in the UK. The feedback confirmed the commitment and determination to enter or re-enter higher education, and professional work, which motivates this group, albeit facing major challenges relating to funding and asylum status. Each individual takes a number of steps towards their goal, which may change as they gain more experience. There is an ongoing need for more educational and careers casework than the Charity, and other organisations, are currently able to provide.

In December 2023 the Charity was delighted to have been given a small grant by Network for Social Change Charitable Trust, to fund a consultant to increase our capacity to give one-to-one and group educational and career guidance. Dr Jay Derrick, formerly Programme Leader for our Preparation for Higher Education course, has been appointed as our consultant and has begun work. Jay will take some pressure off our Director, Theodros, who accomplishes as huge amount.

Extracts from feedback received from participants on their progress and challenges:

“After I finished the course, I started working on a Saturday school conducting classes with girls aged 12-14. I also applied some teaching agencies to be a teaching Assistant and I’ve enjoyed working with them at different schools. My plan is to get to know the environment better in UK mainstream schools and then to apply for further education in teaching.” A female refugee from Uzbekistan.

“I am working as an Aircraft Mechanic with British Airways.”
A female refugee from Ethiopia

“I remember during the programme I was granted my residency(refugee) which made it easier to access higher education, I got unconditional offer from Goldsmith to study Anthropology, I attended it in September 2023, but after a while I realized that this is not what I really wanted, but my options were limited because my high school

certificate (the equivalent of A levels) from my home country Jordan is not considered here, I then register for A level as a private candidate for Alevels (Math, Further Maths and French) I applied again to UCAS (Maths UG degree) and got offers almost from all the universities I applied for (conditional offers), I did my a level in a very short period of time (started self studying in October 2023 and did my exams in May-June 2024), most universities gave me a special consideration because I am a refugee and an estranged from my family. now I am waiting for my result in August, then I will drop from Goldsmith to pursue something that match my potential in a Russel Group university.” A male refugee from Jordan.

“Since completing the Preparation for Higher Education course, I have been volunteering with an organization and serving as an ambassador for City of Sanctuary. Additionally, I have been working on improving my English language skills and am planning to study next year Master's.

In terms of challenges, I have faced some difficulties in accessing higher education and training opportunities due to language barriers and the availability of financial resources. Despite these challenges, I remain committed to my educational and professional development. “. A male refugee from Yemen.

“I have been trying to continue my study for my PhD at a new university. I was also a PhD student but I couldn't pay the tuition fees, so I stopped studying PhD at the old university. I wrote in the new PhD application that I am an asylum seeker, and I will apply for scholarship. They want to accept self-funded students only. Fees is the barrier for me to continue my PhD even I passed my MBA degree with merit gaining high marks.” A female refugee from Myanmar.

“I deeply appreciate (your) ReConnect's sponsorship, continued follow-up, and support, which were crucial in completing the 2023 summer term Preparation for Higher Education program at UCL. The course content, especially its focus on multicultural differences, was immensely beneficial for me as a newcomer to the UK. Additionally, through ReConnect, my LLB and MA degrees were evaluated by ENIC. Since completing the Preparation for Higher Education course: I have been volunteering in various capacities:

- As a mentor, and Advice & Guidance officer at WHEAT Mentor Support Trust (in fact started since Jan. 2022).*
- As an Event Organizer at Abdul Mageed Educational Trust.*
- Recently, as a Volunteer Advisor at Citizens Advice Westminster.*
- I earned a Level 3 Certificate in Advice and Guidance from the City & Guilds of London Institute, sponsored by St Giles.*
- I am currently enrolled to learn two different courses, i.e. Level 6 Diploma in Public Services Interpreting (DPSI), and Level 3 in Community Interpreting courses.*
- I attempted to secure an LLM scholarship at the University of London but was unsuccessful as the scholarship was designated for Commonwealth countries.*
- Despite my efforts, I have yet to secure a scholarship for a master's degree in legal studies.*

I am extremely grateful for your continued assistance and encouragement, which have been instrumental in my journey to continue higher education and volunteer in institutions related to my career. This, in turn, will help me to better integrate into the UK system.” A male refugee from Ethiopia.

“ I attend online English classes offered by Leicester City of Sanctuary (LCoS) and don't work. Although I'm not currently volunteering with any organization, I try to help local hotel residents, who are asylum seekers, whenever I can. I guide them through asylum processes, assist in addressing complaints against accommodation provider, translate and interpret documents, and help communicate hospital appointments. For me, the comes from the Home Office. The obstacles it creates not only undermine my aim to continue higher education but also make it impossible at this point.” A male asylum seeker from Russia.

“I have finally received my Certificate for Completion of Secondary Course Studies. This is an important milestone in my academic journey, and I am pleased to share this update with you. Moreover, I am currently working towards obtaining my Bachelor's degree certificate, having forward to sharing further updates once I have secured the official documentation. In addition to my secondary and bachelor's studies, I am excited to inform you that I have completed. the ESOL Level 2 course. Following this accomplishment, I have applied for both GCSE and Functional Skills courses in London to further enhance my qualifications and skills. I have also applied for a Teacher Assistant course, aiming to broaden my expertise in the education sector. Furthermore, I have successfully completed an IT Digital course, equipping me with essential digital skills relevant to today's technological landscape. I am also proud to share that I have been nominated as a top student from Newham College, an honour that recognizes my dedication and hard work. Thank you for your continued support and guidance throughout my educational journey.”

A male refugee from Iran.

4. Supporting Higher Education Institutions in South Sudan and Ethiopia, through placement of UK trained teachers with a refugee background

One of the Charity's aims is to support higher education institutions in South Sudan and Ethiopia, through the transfer of the skills of experienced UK based teachers, who may have a link with the region. We hope to harness the commitment of trained teachers who have lived in the UK as refugees, but who wish to put their skills to service in their regions of origin. A feasibility study, including visits to these two countries, was undertaken in 2014, following which the Charity consulted widely and developed a proposal for the implementation of a pilot project to support higher education institutions in South Sudan and Ethiopia, by the transfer of the skills of UK based refugee teachers. The pilot project received a very favourable reception from the governments of South Sudan and Ethiopia as well as from international organisations, including the UNHCR. The adverse political and security situation in both countries since has not allowed the Charity to progress its work there.

Progress has been made in building a relationship with Samara University, in Afar in the Northeast of Ethiopia. Our director visited Samara University (during a private visit to Ethiopia) in summer 2018 and met members of the leadership team at the university as well as British Council staff in Addis Ababa. The Charity hopes to support the capacity of the university by the transfer of the skills of two teachers with a refugee background.

A trustee of the Charity, Dr. Maknun Gemaledin Ashami, who is originally from Afar, visited Samara University in the summer of 2019. His visit informed the Charity about the current situation facing the university, as well as the wider issues associated with higher education in Ethiopia. In response to the needs and request of Samara University, preparation is underway to deploy the skills and experiences of Dr Ashami at the University for a period of two months to

support the University's efforts in rebuilding its capacity especially in developing links and collaboration with UK higher academic institutions. Due to security issues in Ethiopia since 2021, this visit is on hold.

The Charity raised funds from the Big Give Christmas Challenge Fund in 2017, for work towards these objectives. Other attempts to raise funds for this programme have not been successful.

5. Networking

The Charity is pleased to work with Student Action for Refugees (STAR), based in the same building, to share experiences and support people with a refugee background into higher education. Many of the scholarships coordinated by STAR are located at universities outside London, and most of the Charity's participants need to stay in London, for work, accommodation, or family reasons, so regrettably most of the Charity's students have been unable to benefit from the STAR scheme.

6. The Charity produced two Newsletters in 2023, Summer June 2023/ Issue 8 and Winter December 2023/ Issue 9. These are available on the website, please look under 'HOME/ Newsletters.'
7. A promotional film of ReConnect, funded by the Department of Culture, Communication and Media, and produced by UCL Education. The film was recently launched at the World Refugee Week Event organised by ReConnect and UCL, on 20 June 2024. The film can be accessed at: <https://mediacentral.ucl.ac.uk/Play/99481>
8. The Board of Trustees and the Director of ReConnect attended an awayday event on 6 September 2023, at NCVO in London. The event provided an opportunity to reflect on the work of ReConnect to date, its current challenges, and the way forward.
9. The Charity is a member of the Refugee Council, and the National Council for Voluntary Organisation (NCVO).

10. Current activities

- i. Providing one-to-one assessment, guidance, referrals and support to refugees and asylum seekers and individuals with a refugee background who are seeking advice on higher education and career progression, including those who have completed the Charity's Preparation for Higher Education, and PGCE in the Post Compulsory sector. We are grateful for the grants received from the Equator Fund which has enabled the Charity since 2013 to sustain its vital work. We are also grateful for a grant received from The Network for Social Change Charitable Trust, to fund a consultant to increase our capacity to give one-to-one and group educational and career guidance.
- ii. Implementing the Charity's Preparation for Higher Education Programme, in partnership with UCL Institute of Education, to continue to provide a unique opportunity for refugees and asylum seekers to benefit from an integrated assessment, guidance, support and induction service, together with English language, study and ICT skills and an introduction to the UK education system.

- iii. Working with UCL Institute of Education to restore the Pathways into Teaching for Refugees project, which provides an opportunity for refugees who want to teach in the Further Education sector, to undertake a PGCE in post-compulsory education.
- iv. Statements of Comparability: Since the initiative started, in June 2021, the Charity has continued to support refugees and asylum seekers to secure authoritative Statements of Comparability of their overseas qualifications from Educational Counselling and Credit transfer Information Service (ECCTIS, formerly NARIC), giving educational institutions information about their level of achievement, and enabling them to make an informed decision on their preferred options in higher education. ReConnect offers this to asylum seekers and refugees anywhere in the UK. So far, the charity has paid for and coordinated 128 Statements of Comparability.

11. Future developments

As well as continuing the above work, the charity seeks to extend its funding base, to enable it to support more trainees, and extend its work.

ReConnect is working with Institute of Education to seek funding to revive the PGCE programme, hopefully in 2025.

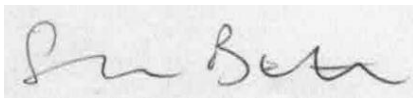
A priority is to recruit an additional member of staff, to take on some of the administrative and finance work and free up some of the directors' time.

We would also like to further strengthen our educational casework capacity.

The trustees are grateful for the dedication of the Director, and his tireless work to deliver the goals of ReConnect.

Approved by the Board of Directors on 30th October 2024

And signed on its behalf by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sarah Buxton', written on a light-colored background.

Sarah Buxton (Chair of Trustees)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(including Income and Expenditure Account)
for the year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	Funds		TOTAL	TOTAL
		Restricted	Unrestricted	2023	2022
INCOME RESOURCES:					
Donations and Grants	3	5,400	74,191	79,591	131,338
Investments	4		896	896	144
TOTAL		5,400	75,087	80,487	131,482
RESOURCES EXPENDED:					
Raising funds	5,6		2,570	2,570	2,416
Charitable Activities	5,7	9,760	88,598	98,358	93,975
TOTAL		9,760	91,168	100,928	96,391
Net income/(expenditure)		-4,360	-16,081	-20,441	35,091
Balances brought forward 01 Jan		12,580	94,986	107,566	72,475
Balances Carried forward 31 Dec		8,220	78,905	87,125	107,566

The statement of Financial Activities includes gains and losses recognised in the year. All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The Statement of Financial Activities also complies with the requirement for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006

The notes on pages 18 to 21 form part of these accounts

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

		2023		2022	
	Notes	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible fixed assets			-		-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Debtors & prepayments	10	398		333	
Cash in hand and at banks		86,965		107,233	
			87,363		107,566
LIABILITIES: Amounts falling due within one year	11	238		-	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			87,125		107,566
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			87,125		107,566
NET ASSETS			87,125		107,566
FUNDS					
General unrestricted	12		78,905		94,986
Restricted			8,220		12,580
TOTAL FUNDS			87,125		107,566

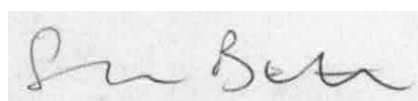
The company was entitled to exemption from audit under s477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006. The accounts have been examined by an independent examiner whose report appears on page 22.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies subject to the small companies regime and in accordance with FRS102 SORP

The Notes on pages 18 to 21 form an integral part of these accounts.



Sarah Buxton (Chair) 30th October 2024

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
for the year period ended 31 December 2023

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. Basis of preparation of accounts

1.1 The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention in accordance with:

- The Charities Act 2011
- The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005
- The Charities Accounts (Scotland) regulations 2006 (as amended)
- The Companies Act 2006
- The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland: FRS102
- Accounting & reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP FRS 102) (effective January 2015)

The Charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

1.2 Incoming resources

1.2.1 Donations and grants

Income is recognised and included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when the charity becomes entitled to the income.

Donations and grants were received during the year by the Charity from a number of bodies and individuals for the purpose of relieving hardship and distress of people living as refugees and providing training for such persons in any country including the United Kingdom.

1.2.2 Interest receivable

Interest is included when receivable by the Charity.

1.3 Resources expended.

Resources expended are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on an accrual basis. Reconnect is not registered for VAT and, therefore, VAT forms part of the costs.

Certain expenditure is directly attributable to specific activities and has been included in those cost categories. Support costs, which are attributable to more than one activity, have been apportioned based on the proportion of time spent by staff on those activities.

1.4 Fund Accounting

Unrestricted general fund is used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the trustees and for designated projects.

Restricted Funds.

- Skill Transfer to Ethiopia
- MSN
- Lottery grant
- NSCCT

1.5 Tangible Fixed assets

Any assets included at cost less depreciation but as at 31 December 2023 the charity did not have any capitalised tangible fixed assets.

1.6 Depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost and are depreciated by annual instalments as follows:
Office computers and equipment – over 3 years.

1.7 Retirement Benefits

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The assets of the scheme are independently administered. The employer's pension costs represent contributions payable by the charity to the fund.

2. Legal Status of the Charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to £1

3. Donations and grants

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total 2023	2022
	£	£	£	£
Donations		73,291	73,291	116,388
Grants	5,400	900	6,300	15,000
TOTAL	5,400	74,191	79,591	131,388

4. Investment Income

	2023		2022
	£		£
Bank interest	896		144

5. Support Costs

Support costs have been allocated based on staff time.

Support cost	Raising funds costs £	Charitable Activities costs £	Total Costs 2023 £
Rent and office costs	454	8,635	9,089
Payroll costs	30	564	594
TOTAL	484	9,199	9,683

6. Expenditure on Fundraising

	2023	2022
	£	£
Salaries – direct cost (note 8)	1,870	1,785
Fundraising costs	216	216
Support costs (Note 5)	484	415
TOTAL	2,570	2,416

7. Expenditure on Charitable Activities

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2023	2022
			TOTAL	TOTAL
	£	£	£	£
Direct Costs:				
Staff Costs (Note 8)	1,370	34,160	35,530	33,915
Student allowances and tuition fees	3,464	43,902	47,366	45,892
Other charitable activities	4,926	1,337	6,263	6,292
Indirect Costs:				
Support costs (Note 5)		9,199	9,199	7,876
TOTAL	9,760	88,598	98,358	93,975

8. Staff Costs

	2023	2022
	£	£
Salaries	37,400	35,700
Social Security costs	-	-
Employer pension contributions	935	1,106
TOTAL STAFF COSTS	38,335	36,806

No employee received remuneration amounting to more than £60,000 in either year.

The average monthly number of employees during the year was as follow:

	2023	2022
	1	1

9. **Taxation**

The company has been constituted as charity number 1105016 and so is not liable to income tax or capital gains tax on its charitable activities.

10. **Deferred Income and prepayments**

	2023	2022
	£	£
Prepayments - insurance	398	333
TOTAL	398	333

11. **Liabilities Falling Due Within One Year**

	2023	2022
	£	£
Pension	238	-
TOTAL	238	-

12. **Movement in Funds**

	As at 01 Jan 2023	Incoming Recourses	Outgoing resources	As at 31 Dec 2023
<u>Unrestricted Funds</u>				
General Fund	94,986	75,087	91,168	78,905
<u>Restricted Funds</u>				
Skills transfer to Ethiopia	4,420	-	-	4,420
MSN	4,375	-	4,375	-
Lottery grant	3,785	-	3,785	-
NSCCT		5,400	1,600	3,800
TOTAL FUNDS	107,566	80,487	100,928	87,125

13. **Related party transactions**

No Trustee or related parties received fees or other emoluments.

A donation of £70,000 was received from The Equator Fund, a private CAF Trust set up by Sarah Buxton, chair of Reconnect.

14. **Members Guarantee**

The company is limited to the guarantee of £1 per member.

15. **Directors and Trustees Statement**

The directors confirm that they received no remuneration or reimbursement of expenses, there was no indemnity purchased, and that there were no transactions which would need to be disclosed.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Reconnect

I report on the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023, which are set out on pages 16-21

Responsibilities and basis of report

The charity's trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ("the 2006 Act"). The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

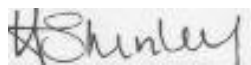
Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's Statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS102)

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



31st October 2024

Signed

Helen Sturdy FMAAT, MCIE, DChA

The Stables, Waterhouse Lane,
Kingswood, KT20 6DU