



DA'ARO YOUTH ANNUAL REPORT

2021

2022



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MESSAGE FROM DEHAB

It has been a humbling and life changing experience to see the tremendous impact Da'aro Youth Project has made to so many young people over the past 4 years.

The project has gone from strength to strength with the unwavering support of all the donors, volunteers and staff who have helped us to raise the profile of the charity and increase our outreach.

There have been many exceptional moments during my time at Da'aro. Witnessing a teenager reunited with his mother after 8 years of separation and another reunited with his brother after 7 years makes all the effort extremely fulfilling.

It has been an honour and privilege to be part of Da'aro's incredible story and it's a cause very close to my heart.

I look forward to seeing the Charity continue to flourish and increase it's outreach.

Dehab Woldu

Founder and Operational Manager



OUR 2021-22 RESULTS

Our achievements at a glance, during the financial year 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022:



250 Young People Reached



1200+ Hot Meals Served



81 New Cases Opened



14 Contributions in News and Media



DA'ARO YOUTH

Da'aro Youth Project was established in 2018 by members of the Eritrean community in London in response to the deaths of a number of teenage Eritreans by suicide.

Eritreans and Ethiopians together were the largest nationality group of unaccompanied minors to arrive in the UK in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Sudanese minors were the largest nationality group to arrive in the UK in 2020. Asylum-seeking children and young adults arrive here after traumatic journeys through the Sahara Desert, Libya, the Mediterranean Sea and after crossing borders in Europe, such as in Calais. Once here, young people often struggle to adapt to new lives separated from their families, and find that navigating the complex asylum system can be stressful and traumatic. They face social isolation, discrimination and sometimes even hostility.

We aim to promote the wellbeing of these migrant young people living in the UK, through direct support and through advocating for changes to unfair and discriminatory systems which undermine their wellbeing.

Towards this aim, we currently run two projects for young asylum-seekers and refugees: a weekly youth club and casework support, both involving the Eritrean community in London. We are also advocate on behalf of our community by campaigning on issues that affect them. We are particularly focused on issues that impact the mental health and wellbeing of unaccompanied young people.

INJERA CLUB

We run a weekly youth club in south London for 14-to-21-year-old unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children and young people from the Horn of Africa: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan and Somalia (and their friends). At **Injera Club**, young people can socialise with others, play games, pool, table tennis, football and to enjoy a home-cooked traditional Eritrean meal. We mark special occasions, birthdays and holidays (such as Eritrean Christmas) at Injera Club by throwing extra special parties.

Injera Club is a social space – an environment where young people can interact with their culture, food and speak to others in their own language. Through the work we do at Injera Club we are looking to build community, improve wellbeing and strengthen the resilience of the young people who attend.

Number of young people who attended injera club

250 young people.

Number of attendances / hot meals served

1218 attendances and hot meals served.

Average attendance per week across the last 6 months of the financial year

38 young people.

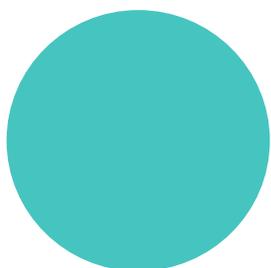
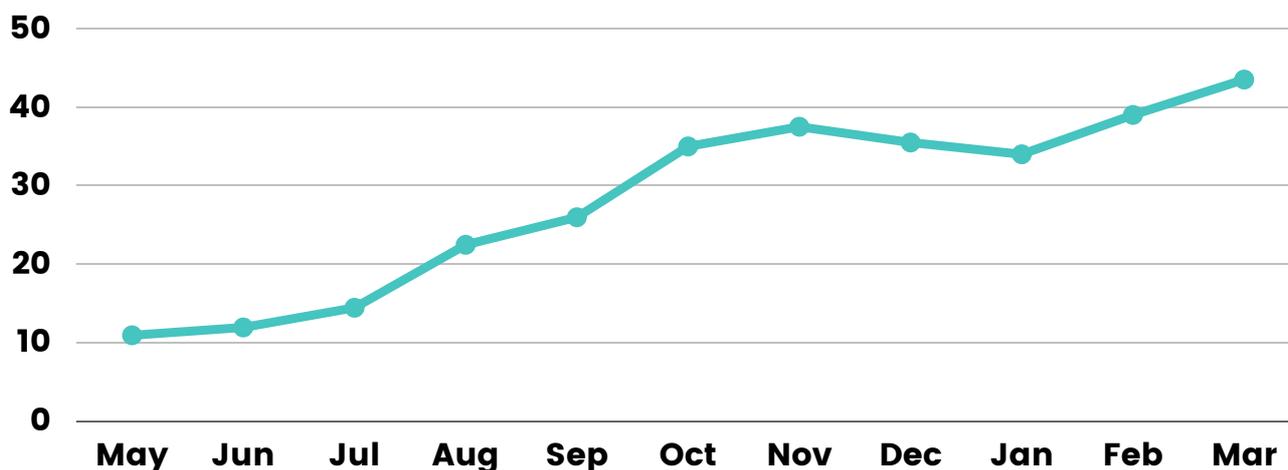
Injera Club closed during periods of national lockdown due to Covid-19.

We then re-opened in May 2021.

Since re-opening, we have seen a gradual increase, month by month, on the number of young people who attended injera club each week.

Weekly Average Attendance 2021-22

How many young people attended injera club each week, on average?



Young people have commented on how important socialising with their friends at injera club is and also mixing with older persons from their community. One said: "When I get injera, it feels like I am having dinner with my mum."



YOUTH CASEWORK SERVICE

Our Youth Casework Service was established in July 2021. The Youth Casework Service is trauma-informed, holistic and responsive to the needs that our community present with. Young people who attend our weekly youth club with an issue can approach our youth caseworker. They are then triaged within our team and invited to attend a face-to-face meeting with the allocated caseworker.

Since we were established in 2018, in total we have supported **78 young people** (between 14 and 21 years old) who needed 1-to-1 support, including with advocacy, advice, emotional support and referrals to specialist legal and other third-sector organisations.

For those young people **we have worked on 138 issues** (or we call them 'cases') – including immigration and asylum issues, social services disputes, housing and homelessness, health and mental health matters, family reunion cases and more. Of this number, we started working on **81 of these issues** during the 2021-22 financial year.

We have been able to refer many of these young people to specialist legal and third-sector support, thanks to our connections with those organisations – this includes law firms specialising in “outside of the rules” family reunion and complex immigration matters, community care law firms, homelessness organisations, counselling and mental health support orgs, mentoring and educational organisations and many more. We work hand-in-hand with social services, and advocate for young people when their voice isn't being heard.

Of that 138 cases, 90 cases have now been resolved and have been closed and 48 cases are still ongoing and are still currently being worked on.

Since being established in 2018, our organisation has supported:

No.	Issue	Support Offered
11 young people	dealing with a criminal legal issue	by giving help to access specialist legal support and supporting when attending court.
31 young people	dealing with a housing issue or homelessness	by advocating, making referrals and providing advice.
20 young people	struggling to access mental and physical health care	by ensuring their voice is heard and making referrals to support.
10 young people	who had been disbelieved about their age	by referring to children's services, to legal support and providing other advice and support.
15 young people	dealing with an immigration or asylum matter	by making referrals to specialist legal support.
10 young people	in dispute with children's services	by advocating, making referrals and providing advice.
5 families	who were navigating the inquest process after the death of a loved one	by making referrals to specialist legal support and ensuring the voice of the family is heard.



FAMILY REUNION

Da'aro Youth Project specialises in supporting complex family reunion work due to the skills of our caseworkers and the relationships we have built with legal organisations. Our organisation has supported 21 young people to begin the complex legal process for an 'outside of the rules' family reunion application. We have been successful in bringing to the UK and reuniting 3 lone children with their siblings; an older sibling of a man who was blinded; and a mother with her child, so far. Each family reunion case has had a profound and lasting impact on a marginalised young person living alone in the UK. An example of this Arun* (name changed) who we began working with on a family reunion application in 2019. We supported this young person to attend appointments with his solicitor, ensuring his voice was heard, and ensured his case was progressing. When the Home Office refused the application, we provided the solicitors with statements and additional evidence to prove the need of the young person at appeal. In 2022 Arun's mother arrived at Heathrow airport. They were reunited after 8 years of separation and now live together in North West London.



POLICY & CAMPAIGNS

We've been campaigning on issues that impact negatively on unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people - fighting against the erosion of their rights and for a better settlement for young people who seek safety in the UK.

01

Letter

In July 2021 we wrote to the government with the support of 46 other organisations, raising the alarm about deaths by suicide amongst young refugees.

02

Voice in media

We've been a voice for unaccompanied young people in press and media (incl. BBC News, Guardian, Independent and Financial Times), speaking out on issues that affect them.

03

Cross-sector work

We've been supporting the work of the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium, actively leading on mental health policy work.

04

Parliamentary work

We've worked with parliamentarians to raise issues in parliament, including supporting an amendment to the Borders Bill, and speaking out against changes to age assessment process.



Alex, Filmon, Mulue and Osman thought they were safe in Britain. So why did the teenage friends take their own lives?

After perilous journeys fleeing human rights abuse in Eritrea, the four boys had arrived safely in the UK. Yet in the space of 16 months they were all dead. What went wrong?



Amelia Gentleman

@ameliagenteleman
Wed 23 Feb 2022 10:00 GMT



Clockwise from left: Alexander Tekle, Osman Ahmed Nur, Mulubrhan Medhane Kfleyosus and Filmon Yemane. Composite: Guardian Design; Courtesy of Benny Hunter

For a while, the four teenage boys, Alex, Filmon, Osman and Mulue, did a reasonably good job of looking after each other. Filmon and Mulue had met in Eritrea before they embarked on their long, dangerous journey to Britain; the others became friends en route or in London, in a park near a Home Office registration centre for unaccompanied child refugees. Their similar backgrounds drew them together, as did the shared experience of travelling 3,300 miles in search of safety.



We've been a voice for young asylum-seekers and refugees in the Guardian and on BBC News

NEWS

Home War in Ukraine Cost of Living Coronavirus Climate UK World Business Politics Tech Science

England Local News Regions Coventry & Warwickshire

Are asylum suicides an unfolding national tragedy?

11 October 2021



FAMILY PHOTO

Henok Zaid Gebrsslasie arrived in Coventry in May 2020

After fleeing his native Eritrea as a child and living for years as a refugee, Henok Zaid Gebrsslasie hoped to make a life for himself in the UK. Aged 23, he was found dead at a mental health facility in Coventry, West Midlands, and is thought to have taken his own life. His death is one of a growing number among young asylum seekers which a charity said could just be the "tip of the iceberg".

TEAM DA'ARO YOUTH

In 2021/22, our team grew from two staff to four staff. We welcomed two new staff members as part of our new Youth Casework Service: **Sarah Akberet Robson** and **Ibtisam Adem** joined us as Youth Caseworkers, both working part-time. They join **Benny Hunter** as Project Coordinator and **Dehab Woldu** as Operational Manager.

We continue to be thankful to our incredible volunteers for their patience and hard work. That includes our youth work volunteers who helped out during the last year: **Mikal, Aden, Adonay, Aron, Desta, Geordie, Jessica, Miheret, Simon, Yohana, Yordanos and Yorsalem** – and our kitchen support who was busy preparing yummy food: **Freweyne**.

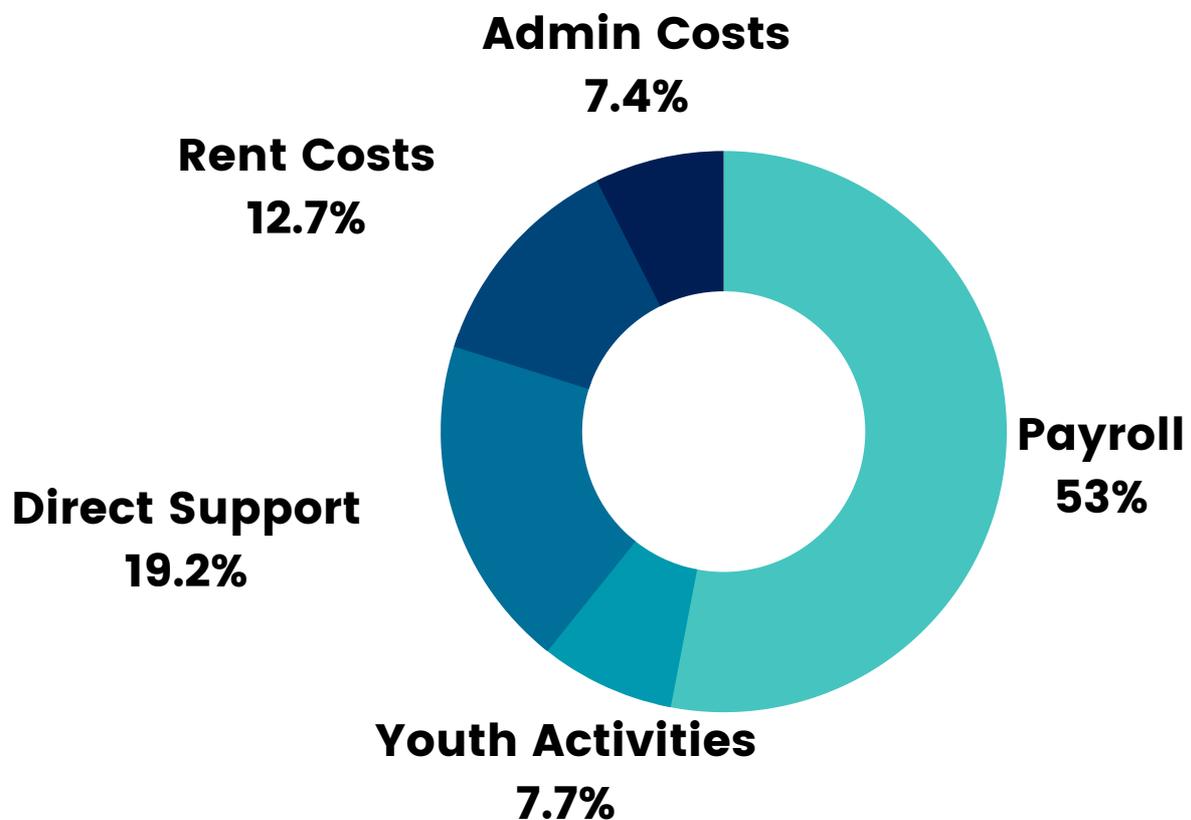
We're so hugely thankful to the community members who have brought food or otherwise helped in whatever way to make Injera Club a success.

We welcomed seven new trustees to the board during this year, bringing our total to nine trustees.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

What we spent money on in 2021-22



In the year ended 31st March 2022, our total income from donations and grants was £102,943.

Expenditure during that same period was £114,340.

Reserves at the end of the financial year are £49,178. This amounts to £21,715 in unrestricted reserves and £27,463 in restricted reserves, consisting of 3 restricted funds.

Reserves Policy

DYP is currently dependent on mainly grant funding to sustain its activities. This means that if there were to be a shortfall in grant funding level it is likely that DYP would have to close services.

To avoid closure if funding difficulties were to happen the Trustee Board has agreed to keep a certain level of financial reserves to ensure that main operations can continue for a period of 3 months minimum.

The main concerns of the Trustee Board are to ensure:

- that staff can continue working, primarily to secure new funding
- that clients are supported to move on to other services

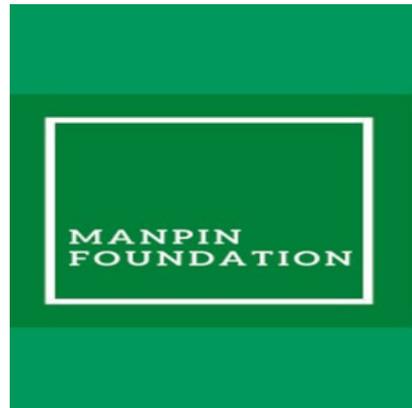
Reserves will be built up from unrestricted income.

THANKS

Thank you to everyone who donated and fundraised for us in 2021 – 2022. Every one off contribution, donation to a fundraiser, and monthly contributor, has allowed us to grow month on month and continue to support the young people that we support.

We are very grateful to our major funders, without which we couldn't do the work that we do: Choose Love, Manpin Foundation, Do It Now Now and The National Lottery Community Fund.

**CHOOSE
LOVE**



TRUSTEES

During the period 2021/22 period the following persons were trustees:

John Abraha		Appointed as trustee on 8th April 2021
Yohannes Bahru		Appointed as trustee on 20th September 2021
Elaine Chase	(Secretary)	Appointed as trustee on 28th March 2020
Futsum Kahsa	(Chair)	Appointed as trustee on 28th March 2020
Hadgu Kiflai		Appointed as trustee on 8th April 2021
Berhane Semere		Appointed as trustee on 8th April 2021
Petros Tesfai	(Treasurer)	Appointed as trustee on 8th April 2021
Yacob Woldehiwot		Appointed as trustee on 8th April 2021
Nardos Yemane		Appointed as trustee on 8th April 2021

Governance and Management

Da'aro Youth Project is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

Our governing document is a 'constitution of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation with voting members other than its charity trustees'.

There must be at least three charity trustees. If the number falls below this minimum, the remaining trustee or trustees may act only to call a meeting of the charity trustees, or appoint a new charity trustee. The maximum number of charity trustees is 12. The charity trustees may not appoint any charity trustee if as a result the number of charity trustees would exceed the maximum. The majority of trustees must be people who claim Eritrean heritage.

At every annual general meeting of the members of the CIO, one-third of the charity trustees shall retire from office. If the number of charity trustees is not three or a multiple of three, then the number nearest to one-third shall retire from office, but if there is only one charity trustee, he or she shall retire. The charity trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment or reappointment. If any trustees were last appointed or reappointed on the same day those to retire shall (unless they otherwise agree among themselves) be determined by lot; The vacancies so arising may be filled by the decision of the members at the annual general meeting.

The members or the charity trustees may at any time decide to appoint a new charity trustee, whether in place of a charity trustee who has retired or been removed, or as an additional charity trustee, provided that the limit on the number of charity trustees would not as a result be exceeded; A person so appointed by the charity trustees shall retire at the conclusion of the next annual general meeting after the date of his or her appointment, and shall not be counted for the purpose of determining which of the charity trustees is to retire by rotation at that meeting.

All of our activities are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the benefit of the public. The Trustees have had regard to Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006.

Declarations

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees



c/o Streatham Space Project,
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London,
SW2 4PA

info@daaroyouth.org.uk

Charity No. 1189245