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## Message from the Chair

Dear Friends

As I write this, I have been following a TV series starring Toby Jones called *Don't forget the driver*. The unlikely hero returns from driving a party of veterans to France to discover a young female Eritrean asylum seeker stowed away in the luggage compartment of his coach. As the series develops so the coach

driver's concern for the wellbeing of the stowaway deepens and grows, despite his very best efforts to put her and her troubles firmly out of his mind. Compassion triumphs over his more base instinct to walk by on the other side and we find him offering the woman sanctuary in his beachside home. The plot thickens as he realises that he has also put himself at danger from people-smugglers...

Grim humour indeed, but for me it was a demonstration of what John Donne meant when he wrote:

*No man is an island,  
Entire of itself;  
Every man is a piece of the continent,  
A part of the main.*

*If a clod be washed away by the sea,  
Europe is the less,  
As well as if a promontory were,  
As well as if a manor of thy friend's  
Or of thine own were.*

*Any man's death diminishes me,  
Because I am involved in mankind.  
And therefore never send to know for  
whom the bell tolls;  
It tolls for thee.*

The message is clear and lies at the heart of the Christian faith, that we are our brother and sister's keeper and that the agony of their plight, when their needs are ignored by their fellow human beings, cries out to the heart of God. He hears and is moved to save them, just as certainly as he heard the groans of the children of Israel enslaved in Egypt, and came to rescue them.

Where today are the Moses and Aarons and Miriams whom God is calling to be His eyes and ears and heart and hands? Those who will

provide financial and practical help to relieve the plight of the 'alien in our midst' - the vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees who have fled to us seeking sanctuary and succour from persecution, war, starvation and the threat of death?

Of course it is you, our wonderful supporters, who are enabling us to provide such help as we can, as well as often being involved in practical projects of your own. Without your help we would not have been able to make small grants totalling over £30,000 to 29 refugee projects across London in the past year, enabling them to buy travel cards, phone cards and other basic provisions that are a lifeline to the destitute asylum seekers accessing their services.

But the need far outstrips the resources at our disposal and we need more Moses and Aarons and Miriams like you. So do help us spread the word about the London Churches Refugee Fund to friends, family, colleagues and church members. Interspersed with the case studies in this report (pages 5-7) you will find suggestions for how they and you can assist.

And, equally important, remember to pray regularly for the Fund and our 'working Trustees' (the only 'staff' we have); for destitute asylum seekers and refugees and for peace with justice in the countries from which they are fleeing; for international organisations and the community of nations that support those displaced around the globe.

All of these ways of responding reflect the fundamental value and virtue of the insight that no nation, individual or community is an island. As John Donne realised, we are all involved when another human being suffers and we all have a responsibility to help alleviate that suffering. The alarm bell of need is ringing for me and for thee.

And if you missed *Don't forget the driver*, it may be available still to watch on i-Player or out soon on DVD!

With thanks to you all, and to Toby Jones.

*Revd Chris Brice*

[www.help4refugees.co.uk/donate](http://www.help4refugees.co.uk/donate)

## Trustees' activities 2018

The Trustees met regularly throughout the year, with two meetings to award grants and others to plan events and appeals.

We have no staff. All activities are carried out by the Trustees and other volunteers. We do need to find new people to help in the work: could that be you?

We are as ever very grateful to David Bond for his excellent work as Treasurer, and to those who host us for our meetings.

Our annual speaker meeting was held in September at Kensington URC. Many thanks to the church and to our keynote speaker, Sarah Teather, UK Director for the Jesuit Refugee Service. A summary of her speech can still be read on our website, [www.help4refugees.co.uk](http://www.help4refugees.co.uk).

Our annual carol-singing was held once again at Oxford Circus tube station, on 30<sup>th</sup> November. Thanks to all who sang or helped in any other way towards raising our best-ever total: over £2,560 on the day – or over £3,200 including Gift Aid. Well done everyone!

## Our grant-giving in 2018

In 2018 the Fund received £24,878 in donations – a drop of over £4,000 from 2017, attributable to lower donations from churches and organisations. With Gift Aid and interest, our total income was £28,783. We made grants of £31,182 (down £2,498), reducing our balance carried forward by £2,746.

In 2018 we helped 29 different organisations (three of which were first-time applicants) with grants of up to £850 in the spring and £800 in the autumn. Food parcels, toiletries, hygiene packs, travel cards and help with ESOL classes remain the most usual requests. In the rare cases when we reject an application it is normally because it is not felt to contribute directly to the relief of destitution among refugees and asylum seekers in London.

Thanks to our donors we were able to support the following agencies:

Action for Refugees in Lewisham	Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network
African Refugee Community	
Akwaaba	London Catholic Worker
Article 1 Charitable Trust	London Jesus Centre
Barnet Refugee Service	Migrants Organise
Black Women's Rape Action Project	New North London Synagogue
Children's Society	Notre Dame Refugee Centre
Croydon Refugee Day Centre	RefuAid
Freedom from Torture	Refugee Action Kingston
Hackney Migrant Centre	Refugee Council
Housing Justice	Room to Heal
Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants	South London Refugee Association
Jesuit Refugee Service	Southwark Day Centre
Just for Kids Law	Streatham Drop-In Centre
LEWCAS	Sufra NW London

Charities interested in applying for grants should see the information on our website, under the 'Grant Forms' tab. The application deadline for Spring 2019 has passed, the autumn round will be open in October.

## Case studies from some of the agencies we support

H & N, a Syrian couple, came to the UK when N was heavily pregnant. When they approached Action for Refugees in Lewisham (AFRIL), they were still in the immigration progress, seeking Leave to Remain and with no recourse to public funds. Their son was born while they were in a hostel, and the Fund's grant enabled them to buy food for themselves and their baby, to clothe him and to buy a cot and push chair. Since then, their immigration status has been determined and they have been housed by the local authority. After months of voluntary work at AFRIL, H was eventually able to find work and to provide for his family.

### Could you...

- Set up a standing order to the Fund of at least £10 a month?
- Include the Fund as a beneficiary in your will?

Since A, from East Africa, first came to Akwaaba (Ak), he has been a highly valued member of the volunteer team. As one of Ak's kitchen supervisors, A, who has extensive experience of chef work, regularly manages a small team of volunteers, preparing a meal for 100-150 people every Sunday..

Through Akwaaba, A recently completed a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate and participated in the Olive Course, a programme at the University of East London which prepares asylum seekers for higher education. Every week, when he finishes his volunteer shift, A attends Ak's advanced level English course. He is ambitious and hopes to attend university in the UK when his asylum application is resolved. Without the weekly travel bursary, A would not have been able to participate almost every week for nine months.

Croydon Refugee Day Centre (CRDC) used part of our grant to contribute to a client's fares to Liverpool so that he could make a fresh claim in person. The man had struggled as a refused asylum seeker for more than five years, and his mental health had deteriorated. Now that he has made a fresh claim, CRDC are supporting his application for Section 4 support, and helping with his fares to attend mental health appointments.

Ms Z from Somalia was trafficked to the UK as an unaccompanied minor aged 16, and kept in isolation for many years. She was raped and forced into prostitution by her agents, and advised not to try to escape otherwise her family back home would be in trouble. One day she ran away. She applied for asylum but when that was refused she lost her accommodation and financial support. She came to the African Refugee Community (ARC) homeless, disoriented and suffering from severe depression.

ARC supported her with food vouchers, transport costs, hygiene packs and phone cards. She also received advocacy, and is now in contact with a GP, mental health counsellor and a solicitor to help with her Fresh Claim application. Her mental, social and physical well-being is improving gradually because of the support she receives.

#### **Could you...**

- Give a presentation or notice in church, however brief, encouraging people in your congregation to support us financially
- Arrange with your Vicar, Priest or Minister for a speaker from LCRF to speak and preach about our work at a Sunday Service

Ms P, originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, was at real risk of becoming street homeless, which would have left her particularly vulnerable, given her physical and mental health. Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants (ICRM) were able to obtain accommodation for her through Refugees at Home. Her host kindly provided her with a room but travelled away regularly, without always being in a position to provide food for Ms P during these periods. ICRM provided emergency food grants from time to time, thanks to the support of the Fund.

R is a survivor of torture from Afghanistan who fled to the UK. As an asylum seeker he is barred from working, and delays in the asylum process meant that he was left with no financial support at all for some time. His therapist applied to Freedom from Torture (FfT)'s relief committee for emergency help, and FfT were able to give him £30 a week for six weeks so that he could survive. His therapist said: "It didn't just

give him sustenance, it gave him dignity during a very difficult and frightening time.”

K was imprisoned and tortured because of the opposition songs he wrote to protest against corruption in his country. When he came to Room to Heal (RtH) he was destitute, had no legal representation and had lost all hope of change. Through casework support he obtained legal representation, evidence for his case, and hosting when he was homeless. Through participation in RtH’s therapeutic groups he started to write and play music again. After RtH’s attendance in court he won his refugee status and has embarked on a Masters in Music. He is also mentoring newer members of RtH.

### Could you...

- Organise a fundraising event at your church or community centre, or request permission to take up a special collection for LCRF?
- Ask us to send you some flyers to display wherever you can?
- Give LCRF a mention on your personal or church website or Facebook page, link to our site or retweet our Twitter posts?

K is an Iranian man aged about 40 whose health has severely deteriorated due to homelessness. He has attended the Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers (SDC) for many years, but when his asylum claim was refused, he became extremely vulnerable. He received advice, support, food and clothing from SDC but slept rough during the really cold weather of 2017. Due to his poor mental health after a breakdown he was admitted to hospital for three weeks and then discharged back on the streets. His mental health issues meant that he could not be referred to hosting schemes, and yet mental health assessments failed to recognise him as being ill. SDC made an application for Asylum Support. This took some time to process, but eventually K was put in the temporary accommodation centre. He continues to use SDC for support and shows slow signs of improvement.

## **Asylum commentary: the *Lift the Ban* campaign**

*John Murphy, LCRF Trustee*

How can we best help refugees become, and feel they have become, members of our communities? And since that 'becoming' is bound to be a process, at what point should it begin? Common sense suggests that it should be as early as possible, yet for many asylum seekers the whole process of application brings its own insecurity and stress as well as risks of destitution, none of which is conducive to integration.

Lift the Ban is a campaign which seeks to do something about this.

### **What is 'Lift the Ban' and what is it aiming to do?**

Lift the Ban (LtB) is campaigning for asylum seekers to be allowed to apply for work while they wait for a decision on their claim. The campaign proposes that asylum seekers should be able – formally, be granted 'permission' – to apply for work after 6 months rather than the current 12, and not to be restricted to an extremely narrow range of employment.

The UK alone in Europe requires asylum seekers to wait 12 months pending their asylum claim; seven EU countries require 9 months, while in Germany the threshold is 3 months and in Italy just 2. One immediate impact of being able to work would be to reduce the grinding poverty of the meagre £5.39 per day that asylum seekers are given to live on.

### **Who is behind this campaign and what support has it gained?**

Refugee Action began to promote LtB early last year as part of its wider *Stand Up for Asylum* campaign which emphasised restoring dignity and respect to asylum applicants. Over the year, LtB has attracted over 180 organisations, initially non-profit but recently some local authorities, too.

There is some parliamentary support. Before the campaign was launched, and during debate for what became the Immigration Act 2016, the House of Lords backed an amendment by 280 to 195 in favour of allowing permission to work after 6 months. Sadly, this failed in the Commons. A Private Member's Bill also failed due to the 'complex arguments' involved.

There is also public support. Lift the Ban say that 71% of people surveyed agreed that asylum seekers should be allowed to work. ([www.refugee-action.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Lift\\_the\\_Ban\\_report](http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Lift_the_Ban_report)).

In March this year, a letter signed by 39 prominent citizens, including Dr Rowan Williams as well as actors Juliet Stevenson, Anna Friel and Jude Law, said: “We are denying this country the immeasurable aptitude and talents of the people who reach these shores. We are preventing people seeking asylum from integrating with and contributing to our communities”.

### **What now and what can I do?**

The answer at this moment seems to be ‘keep up the pressure’. Sign the petition found on the Refugee Action website and write to your MP. Key points recommended by the campaign are:

- to strengthen people’s chances of successful integration;
- to allow people seeking asylum to live in dignity and to provide for themselves and their families;
- to improve the mental health of people in the asylum system
- to help challenge labour exploitation and modern slavery.

Refugee Action points out that the annual immigration statistics released in February 2019 show that “the number of people seeking asylum in the UK who have waited longer than six months for a decision has reached a record high.” As Stephen Hales, Chief Executive of Refugee Action, commented: “More people than ever before are stuck in limbo in a system that dehumanises and damages them.”

In the words of one asylum seeker, “I want to work – I don’t want any hand-me-downs. I want to enjoy the reward of my sweat ... I want to work so I can prove myself to my children.”

While patterns of immigration and emigration shift constantly, LtB highlights a constant barrier that, reduced by half, could benefit the economy by £42.4 million – and immeasurably improve hundreds of lives.

## 2019 Dates for your diary

**Refugee Week:** 17<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> June. The theme is ‘You, me and those who came before.’ Could you organise a local service or fundraiser for us?

**Speaker Meeting and Carol Singing:** to be confirmed, watch our website or social media for dates.

### Online and social media

Our website, [www.help4refugees.co.uk](http://www.help4refugees.co.uk), is where we post news and updates throughout the year. It’s also the place to find articles, resources and grant forms. You can also follow us on **Facebook** (@RefugeeFundLondon) and on **Twitter** (@LCR\_Fund). Please ‘like’ us, retweet us, and generally help spread the word.

## How to donate to the work of LCRF

### By post

Please send a cheque, made out to London Churches Refugee Fund, to:-  
**Dave Bond, Treasurer, LCRF, 144 Ladywell Road, London SE13 7HU**

### Online

Visit [www.help4refugees.co.uk/donate](http://www.help4refugees.co.uk/donate) and look for the red ‘Donate Online’ button. From elsewhere on the site, hover your cursor over ‘Support Us’ then click on ‘Donate’.

### Standing orders

To make a regular donation, please use the form on the back page, download it from the ‘Donate’ page online (see above) or request one from the Treasurer. **If you are able to make a donation of £10 a month or more, you will be listed as one of our Foundation Donors.** We really value our regular supporters: could you be one of them?

### Gift Aid

If you are a taxpayer, please request a Gift Aid form from the Treasurer, download it from the ‘Donate’ page online or use the one on the back page.

## Annual accounts

LONDON CHURCHES REFUGEE FUND Accounts for the year ended 31st December 2018	2018	2017 for comparison
<b>RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT</b>	£	£
<b>RECEIPTS</b>		
<b>Donations</b>		
<b>Individuals</b>		
Standing Orders	9,836	9,590
Postal	6,720	6,075
On-line	820	570
Carol singing collections	2,568	2,376
	19,944	18,611
<b>Churches and other organisations</b>	4,934	10,378
	24,878	28,989
<b>Gift Aid reimbursements from HMRC</b>	3,905	3,114
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	28,783	32,103
<b>PAYMENTS</b>		
<b>Grants</b>	31,182	33,680
<b>Administration</b>	347	400
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>	31,529	34,080
<b>RECEIPTS less PAYMENTS for the year</b>	-2,746	-1,977
<b>STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>31st Dec 2018</b>	<b>31st Dec 2017</b>
	£	£
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Bank Balance</b>		
Co-operative Bank Community Directplus Account	24,491	27,237
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	24,491	27,237
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	0	0
<b>ASSETS less LIABILITIES</b>	24,491	27,237
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>		
Balance brought forward at start of year	27,237	29,214
Receipts less Payments for the year	-2,746	-1,977
Balance carried forward at year end	24,491	27,237

**GIFT AID DECLARATION London Churches Refugee Fund**

Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

**In order to Gift Aid your donation you must tick the box below:**

I want to Gift Aid any donations I make in the future or made by me in the past 4 years to the London Churches Refugee Fund (Charity no. 1121108)

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

**Data Protection. By ticking the box above you give consent to us using your data for the processing of your donation and Gift Aid. We would also like to contact you for other purposes and request your consent (which is optional) to the following:**

By ticking this box you give consent to the use of your name, address and other personal data by the London Churches Refugee Fund (LCRF) for the purposes of keeping you informed of activities and for fundraising. Your consent may be withdrawn at any time. LCRF complies with GDPR 2018 and will not pass on your data to any other party.

See our full privacy notice at [www.help4refugees.co.uk/privacy-notice](http://www.help4refugees.co.uk/privacy-notice)

*Please notify the charity if at any time you want to cancel this declaration, change your name, address or data consent, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.*

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

**Donor's details (all fields must be completed)**

Title..... First name or initial(s).....

Surname.....

Full home address.....

..... Postcode.....

Date..... Signature.....

**STANDING ORDER MANDATE**

**Complete this side only if you wish to make a monthly donation.**

Those donating £10 per month or more will be added to the list of "Foundation Donors"

To the Manager [Name and address of your Bank:]

.....

.....

Please pay the sum of £..... on (or as near to) the .....day of each month with immediate effect and until further notice to the credit of: **London Churches Refugee Fund, Account no: 65231704; Sort Code 08-92-99; Co-operative Bank, PO Box 250, Southway, Skelmersdale, WN8 6WT** and debit the following account accordingly:

Account held in name(s) of.....

Account no. .... Sort Code .....

Signed ..... Date .....

Name(s) .....

Address .....

.....

This Standing Order Instruction supersedes all previous standing orders to London Churches Refugee Fund.



Please return the whole of this form, once completed, to : **The Treasurer, London Churches Refugee Fund, 144 Ladywell Road, London SE13 7HU**