



CARAS (formerly the Klevis Kola Foundation)

Registered address: 25A Blakemham Road, London, SW17 8NE

Company number: 6462487

Charity number: 1124376

Accounts for period 1st October 2013 to 30th September 2014

Income statement for the year ended 30th September 2014

	2014	2013
Revenues		
Unrestricted donations	£8,161.82	£22,014.12
Restricted donations	£19,408.77	£14,910.08
Gift aid	£235.83	£0
Fundraising activities	£4,554.61	£3,156.93
Grants	£81,317.22	£67,530.07
Trading	£10,127.27	£4,179.35
Investment income	£11.51	£26.70
Other	£593.02	£425.81
Total revenue	£124,410.05	£112,243.06

Expenditure

Charitable Activities

Children's Projects

After school club	£15,551.31 ¹	£8,304.89 ²
Mentoring	£698.76	£623.43
Summer scheme	£2,742.80 ¹	£5,643.58
Trips & residentials	£1,141.88 ¹	£0 ²

Youth Projects

Education Outreach	£2,330.93	£1,221.60
Mother Tongue	£3,624.10	£696.40
Youth Club	£6,957.57 ¹	£2,923.02 ²
Young Volunteers	£1,000.00	£86.43
Weekend Project	£19.82	£0
STAR FC	£0	£1,616.00
Trips & Residentials	£2,054.09 ¹	£0 ²

Adult provision

Women's Coffee Morning	£1,687.52	£2,913.33
Women's Cooking Project	£4,783.56	£3,248.75
Advocacy	£930.43	£597.28

Other services

Outreach	£706.40	£623.13
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Salaries	£69,304.34	£62,190.70
Minibuses	£0 ¹	£19,549.27

Notes

1. *For the purposes of these accounts, expenditure on minibuses has been allocated across specific projects rather than shown separately.*
2. *In 2012 / 13 trips and residential expenditure was included in specific project costs rather than shown separately.*

Support costs

Office	£10,336.37	£15,406.58
Bank Charges	£120.00	£45.00

Generating funds and trading

Fundraising	£5,585.89	£384.59
Trading	£940.00	£0

Total expenditure	£133,642.58 ^{a,b}	£126,073.98
Income over expenditure	-£9232.53	-£13,830.92
Total funds brought forward	£29,094.88	£42,940.40
Total funds carried forward	£19,945.21	£29,109.48

Notes

- a. There is an irreconcilable discrepancy of -£82.86 between the expenditure in the profit loss account (Quick Books) and that in the cash book (bank statements). These accounts reflect the later.*
- b. Expenditure includes £2,188.69, accounting for cheques written in last financial year but cashed in this financial year*

Balance sheet as at 30th September 2014

	2014	2013
Current assets		
Debtors	£1,085.00	£696.40
Cash at bank	£19,945.21	£29,094.88
Creditors	- £1,337.33	-£2,049.84
Net current assets	£19,692.88	£27,741.44
Total assets less current liabilities	£19,692.88	£27,741.44
Net assets	£19,692.88	£27,741.44

Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15

Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers



CARAS

**supporting diversity
challenging adversity**

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Charity Overview

CARAS (formerly the Klevis Kola Foundation) is an organisation rooted within the community around Tooting, south London. Working across four boroughs - Wandsworth, Merton, Lambeth and Croydon - the organisation offers practical support to refugee and asylum seeking young people and families, helping them to play their full part in the community.

Arriving as a refugee in the UK can be a terrifying and disempowering experience. Difficulties with language, accessing services and overcoming prejudice are ever-present. CARAS exists to help refugees overcome those challenges, and to help them rebuild their lives at the centre of the community. We work with a number of organisations and statutory providers in south London to deliver services for refugees and asylum seekers, which include after school and youth clubs, mentoring, a women's coffee morning and visiting scheme, a weekend drop-in for separated children and advocacy and outreach services.

Charity Details

Name

CARAS (Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) Ltd. Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers is a private limited company also registered as a charity with the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

Registered Company Number

6462487 (memorandum and articles of association incorporated 3rd January 2008)

Registered Charity Number

1124376 (registered on 6th June 2008)

Registered and Principle Office

29, Marlborough Road, Colliers Wood, London SW19 2HF

Trustees

Jennifer Barron, Ruksana Chowdhury, Ladan Hall, Christopher Hands, Katherine Harvey, Shirley Hodgson, Rick Hood, Richard Smith and Jessica Thomas.

New trustees may be appointed by the directors in accordance with the provisions of the articles of the association.

Objects

1. To preserve and protect the physical and mental health of those seeking asylum and those granted refugee status and their dependants.
2. The provision of facilities for recreation or other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of those persons who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disablement, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances.
3. To advance the education of those seeking asylum and those granted refugee status and their dependants in need thereof so as to advance them in life and assist them to adapt within a new community.
4. To advance the education of the public in general about the issues relating to refugees and those seeking asylum.

Financial Information

In the year 1st October 2013 - 30th September 2014, CARAS (Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) received revenues of £124,410 and incurred expenses of £133,643.

CARAS has a reserves policy (approved April 2011, reviewed May 2015) setting out a target range for reserves of 16%-20% of the charity's annual expenditure.

Funding

Approximately two-thirds of the foundation's income in the year 1st October 2013 - 30th September 2014 was from grant-making organisations, one third primarily from private donations and trading.

We very much appreciate the generosity of the private donors who fund one of our salaried posts as well as all those who support us where they can with both regular and single donations. Over the past year we are also very grateful to have received grants from the Sir Walter St John Educational Charity, the Open Society Foundation, Joseph Ettedgui Charitable Foundation, BBC Children in Need, Henry Smith Charity, the Santander Foundation, Chances, the Wimbledon Foundation Community Fund, the Wandsworth Community Fund, Mazars Charitable Trust, the Tudor Trust and Jack Petchey Foundation.

Our team

CARAS is made up of a small staff team who are supported to deliver projects by more than 100 dedicated community volunteers. At different levels of the organisation, volunteers play a vital role in ensuring that services are delivered, whether through undertaking a part-time internship, attending activities on a weekly basis, offering regular one-to-one support, or joining us for annual events such as summer trips. Without the contribution of our committed and experienced team of volunteers, many projects simply could not run.

Staff team

Molly Abraham, Egle Banelyte, Eleanor Brown, Shelton Graham, Jenny Love, Andreja Mesaric, Anna Rudd, Alexa Sidor.

Interns

Maria Alphonso, Kim Critchell, Lily Pollock, Susanna Revolti, Katy Reynolds, Rachel White, Merenna Wilson.

We are also grateful to Kwasi Owusu-Ankomah, Zara Hosany and Zurah Dica who serve on our management committee as well as volunteering in projects.

View from the Chair

2014-2015, the year that Klevis Kola became CARAS, has brought many changes, both internal and external. CARAS - Community Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers, 'friend' in Gaelic, and 'faces' in Spanish, is true to its name, a place where people find support, friendship and community.

Our new office at Derinton Community Centre provides a welcoming, safe space, and now is a base for most of our activities.

We are working with growing numbers of young people, the majority of whom are separated children. Many attend the Saturday drop in, where they come to learn and have fun together, creating an atmosphere where young people feel cared for and where they can be themselves. The youth team also run activities during the week and provide intensive one to one support and case work.

We have also increased our focus on mental health, strengthening our links with CAMHS and SW London and St George's Mental Health Trust, as well as voluntary mental health providers, and securing funding to build some psychologist time into our services for young people. We look forward to developing this much needed strand of our support over the coming year.

We are standing side by side and supporting vulnerable families through the challenges they face in the current social and political climate. Our advocacy service advises many families in precarious housing situations, and volunteer family visitors build strong relationships and undertake complex casework with those who face the greatest barriers to accessing services.

The CARAS Women's group goes from strength to strength, based on shared learning, cooking and eating. This year has also seen the development of the Chickpea Sisters into a successful catering business, and we wish them well as they launch their community interest corporation.

As always, our success is fuelled by our diverse and committed teams of volunteers, a growing number of whom have been beneficiaries in the past. We look forward together to the coming year as we develop the work through our shared vision and values.

Chris Hands, Chair of Trustees

Our activities

Children's support

Over the course of the past year, we have made some changes to the way we work with younger children. In the summer, alongside our regular activity days and local trips, we ran a 3-day camping trip with a small group of 14 children. With an equally high number of volunteers we were able to create a nurturing environment where members of the team could spend quality time with children with a range of emotional and behavioural difficulties, as well as those who just needed some respite. For each of the children our team identified goals to work towards during the camping trip, ranging from building more trusting relationships with key volunteers, challenging themselves to do something new, and increasing their sense of responsibility by helping to make the camp run.



Many of the children we know continue to attend the weekly after school club, with 38 children benefitting from a range of exciting activities in this safe, supportive and fun space over the course of 2014-15. We have continued the work begun in the previous academic year on supporting our volunteer teams to embed literacy and numeracy practice into the activities we offer. We have also undertaken some targeted work to better support and include children with additional needs, including Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Communication Disorders, by offering training to existing volunteers and providing a range of simple, but helpful resources including sand-timers, visual timetables and pencil guides for use during sessions.

“...we always gather on Tuesdays and do lots of fun activities - it's like a community...”

This year we have been fortunate to work in collaboration with a number of different organisations, allowing us to offer a broader range of activities and experiences to the children attending the after school club. These collaborations included a partnership with the renowned Polka Theatre who came to run a series of workshops, before hosting a trip to see their production, Operation Magic Carpet; a project delivered by trainee medics from Team Up who ran 10 workshops on children's health, nutrition, staying safe and first aid; and, visits from a music therapist to run rhythm and singing activities with the younger groups. As in previous years, our committed volunteer teams have also delivered a range of trips for children from each age group who have visited sites such as the National Maritime Museum and Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens and taken part in activities like ice skating, swimming and soft-play.



As well as the support we provide through regular activities, this year has seen an increase in the individualised support we can offer for children. Using as a springboard the relationships built with children at the after school club and with their families at our advocacy service and coffee morning, we have been increasingly active in facilitating communication between schools and families; we have supported a number of families

through the process of SEN assessment; and, we have helped families to self-advocate in a range of situations, including the secondary transition process.

To support these developments, we have created new systems for recording and monitoring all of the children's progress throughout the year. After every after school club session, volunteer teams record observations about children which are combined with information and feedback from parents, schools, mentors and other professionals. The aim is to create a holistic picture, which allows us to understand both where children are making progress and their ongoing needs and develop support accordingly for each child. As part of an organisational focus on empowerment, children have been included in this process with, for instance, children in the Year 3-6 groups working with volunteers to set and review individual goals around behaviour, participation and learning.

“...at home, I’m normally bored, after school club makes me feel entertaining and there’s lots of stuff like art, and you get to make stuff, and cooking...”

Elsewhere, individualised support has continued to be made possible through our mentoring programme: this year five children from the after school club have benefitted from mentoring relationships. These year-long relationships with trained, individually-matched mentors can provide children with an important point of stability, a space to enjoy themselves outside the family home and an additional safe and trusting relationship in which feelings and aspirations can be shared and nurtured. Here again a more integrated approach, with improved communication channels between mentors, mentor supervisors and the children's support team, has helped us to plan interventions and support children more effectively, both within the mentoring relationship and in other areas of their lives.

Youth support

This year we have worked with almost 100 young people, approximately 70% of whom are unaccompanied minors- young people seeking asylum on their own. Many of them live semi-independently with the support of a social worker. They have a wide range of support needs, from friendship and fun, to finding evidence for their asylum claim, to health and mental health needs. Our activities for young people include ESOL, study support, youth club, mentoring, and a variety of activities at our Saturday drop-in. These services are delivered by 3 staff members and supported by 35 committed volunteers.

This year we've worked with almost 100 young people from 15 different countries

Since launching our Saturday project, specifically designed to meet the needs of unaccompanied young people, our provision for young people has increased to 12 hours of activities each week, including two very popular English classes. Working in partnership with Tooting Community Garden, Border Crossings, Kazzum, The Bike Project, SOAS radio and The Grange, we have been able to offer exciting and varied opportunities to the young people attending these activities, including:

- writing and performing a multilingual play using Somali, English, French and Pashto with Border Crossings
- building and decorating benches and troughs to start a garden with Tooting Community Garden
- visits to the British Museum, The Science Museum, Tooting Community Garden, Springfield Hospital Fair Share Garden, Greenwich
- two residential trips to The Grange in Norfolk

"...we have fun and I can make more friends in there, and we can speak English with each other...thank you [Saturday] club..."

Trips to The Grange

We are in our second year of working with Ben Margolis and Sophie North who run The Grange in Norfolk. It is a beautiful large house set in 10 acres of land and is run as a therapeutic retreat for refugees and asylum seekers. People are welcomed into the house and encouraged to use it as a home for the duration of the stay. Everyone can do something useful that contributes to the week, or even to the long term growth of the site- last year, we helped weed the chicken run of nettles, plant vegetables, and paint the shed. This year, a small group will take the John Muir Award which encourages awareness,

learning and conservation of wild places. The Grange has already given us many happy memories, and we hope to build many more.

Tooting Community Garden

Volunteers from Tooting Community Garden offered up time to come and work with the group on Saturdays, beginning to design and build a garden. We currently have two handmade benches and brightly coloured planters, and a grand plan to beautify the whole site. There is huge enthusiasm in the group to work on the garden; with tasks ranging from designing and building to planting and watering everyone has been able to find a role that suits them. Creating the garden has opened a whole host of conversations about people's home countries, giving people space to share memories, pass on skills, and discover new things about each other.

Border Crossing and Origins Festival

Border Crossings worked with a group at Youth Club to create an ambitious 30 minute play, working in four languages! The play was entirely led by young people and became a story dealing with loneliness, belonging, exploitation, and searching for family. Following that success, Border Crossings invited us to take part in their exciting Origins festival. We have taken part in workshops on Aztec dancing, the Haka, Aboriginal storytelling, and Peruvian music.



As well as welcoming young people to our activities, we have delivered individualised, one-to-one support through intensive case work, mentoring and short term pairings for 20 young people. This has included working with social workers, foster carers, schools, colleges, and support organisations across 10 different boroughs; providing letters of

support for 12 asylum appeals; and, attending 8 asylum appeals. We are delighted that in the last year 6 young people have been given leave to remain. We are equally happy that four young people, who we have worked with since they arrived in London, have been offered university places which they intend to take up in September 2015.

The majority of young people we work with have recently made long, arduous journeys alone, many of them travelling through Africa to reach Libya and wait for a boat crossing across the Mediterranean. Journeys are fraught with danger and many we work with speak of family and friends who died on the way. Most are part of the exodus from Eritrea, where conditions are summarised by Amnesty International as follows: “No political opposition parties, independent media, civil society organizations or unregistered faith groups were permitted to operate. There were severe restrictions on freedom of expression and association. Military conscription was compulsory, and frequently extended indefinitely. Thousands of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners continued to be held in arbitrary detention, in harsh conditions. Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment was common. Eritreans continued to flee the country in large numbers.” (Amnesty International Eritrea Report 2014/15).

Young Eritreans have found friendship and solidarity at CARAS, sometimes sharing stories of their journey to get here. Some have had chance encounters, being reunited with friends from their home villages, and many are keen to show their route on a map to volunteers. It is a phenomenally difficult undertaking to leave home, family, friends and all things familiar behind, and take numerous risks to travel 8,000 kilometres across Africa and Europe. We feel privileged to be able to welcome and support these teenagers when they arrive in London, and see in them people with enormous skills, talent and drive.

We continue to develop our knowledge and understanding of mental health and well-being in young refugees, ensuring that all of our staff and volunteers are able to include and support people who are likely to be experiencing grief and loss, as well as some who experience depression, anxiety and sometimes reach crisis point. We have actively sought to strengthen our professional relationships with mental health services, social services and foster carers in order to offer holistic support to all.

We hope that 2015-16 will be just as fruitful and exciting, building on the firm foundations we have put in place this year.

Adult provision

Whilst CARAS (then Klevis Kola Foundation) began as a charity with a strong focus on working with children, supporting parents has always been part of what we do. In the past 12 months we've taken a fresh look at the way we work with parents and adults of refugee background who face a complex range of barriers to participating in UK life. We currently run three projects specifically for adults - our advocacy service, a women's drop-in and the Visiting Project.

The Visiting Project, developed in the last 12 months, pairs trained volunteers with adults who fall into one of the following categories and are eligible for intensive one-to-one support:

1. Difficulty engaging: people may have just arrived in the country, or have had such negative experiences en route to and in the UK that they are wary of engaging with support services. In addition, there may be a cultural barrier to accessing local community activity and support.
2. In crisis: crisis is defined as someone facing serious risk of physical harm, whether that is the threat of domestic violence, imminent eviction or someone experiencing destitution as a result of state support being withdrawn.
3. Move on: these are people who have adapted so well to life in the UK that they no longer need refugee specific support agencies and merely need some signposting and moral support in order to access mainstream services.

Visiting relationships tend to last between 3 and 6 months with pairs meeting fortnightly on average. Wherever possible our beneficiaries define the relationship by exploring and setting their own goals. This ranges from working through complex advocacy needs or something as simple as meeting in a cafe to practice English and find out more about the local area.

We continue to offer weekly advocacy appointments, in community languages, where people can come and access support and information regarding their personal circumstances. The advocacy team works very hard to ensure people get access to their rights and entitlements, whether that's dealing with landlords who won't carry out serious house repairs, challenging benefit sanctions, or helping people provide evidence to fight decisions to move them out of the area and into cheaper accommodation outside of London. For people who have already been forced to leave their countries of origin and have worked hard to settle somewhere new and make London their home, this further forced migration can be extremely difficult and disruptive.

Our women's drop-in is thriving. We see between 10 and 15 women each week at our warm and friendly drop-in. As well as providing a safe, women-only space, we offer English classes at three different levels in each session. Earlier this year, we introduced cooking and we now prepare and share a meal every week - supported by the fabulous Chickpea Sisters - and people share tips and recipes from their countries of origin. In addition, we try to do something creative or physical - sometimes both. In recent sessions we have made elderflower cordial, utilising locally harvested flowers, stored in beautiful jars to take home; we've also made hand-bound notebooks trying out different book binding techniques; and, we like it so much that we've had two laughing yoga sessions. In addition

we have expanded our crèche facility, employing a new member of staff and sourcing new creative resources to keep the children occupied while their mums have time to themselves.

This summer, for the first time, we are piloting Family Activity Days - a series of 4 educational activity days bringing families together to try out a range of new activities and get to know more people from their local area. This is an exciting collaboration from across different areas of CARAS' work with sessions being supported by young volunteers from our youth projects, the Chickpea Sisters (who will be providing lunch) and staff and volunteers from the after school club and our women's drop-in. We feel that this kind of cross-project collaboration really exemplifies CARAS' commitment to working holistically with our beneficiaries.

We look forward to further developing our work with adult beneficiaries in 2015-16 - we certainly have a lot of ideas in the pipeline!

The Chickpea Sisters

The Chickpea Sisters are a catering social enterprise run by thirteen refugee and migrant women and supported by CARAS. The idea of setting up a beneficiary-led business came about in 2013 when women who had been attending our cooking group expressed an interest in profiting from their brilliant culinary skills. The women we worked with had come to the UK with many skills and qualifications but had all struggled when attempting to enter the British job market. Lack of familiarity with the working culture, difficulties with the English language and a significant shortage in childcare provision meant that women weren't able to put their skill-sets into practice.

Over the last 2 years, we have been working intensively with a group of 13 women doing all that is required to set-up a booming catering social enterprise in London. The women have been developing a strong business model and finding their roles within it: they have been building-up a bank of loyal customers; they have taken part in extensive training; and, most importantly, have been cooking delicious food for a wide range of events.



Since September last year, the women have catered for 45 events, feeding a grand total of 3,600 people. They have made a turnover of £16,000, of which £900 has been reinvested. The women earn around £9 p/h and have worked an average of 27 hours per month. In addition to this, the women have been featured in a wide range of publications including: The Independent, Al Jazeera, Reuters, BBC Worldview and Reprise Magazine. The Chickpea Sisters will soon be launching their new website www.chickpeasisters.com.

We are now in the final stage of our funding plan and by September this year The Chickpea Sisters will be a completely self-sufficient social enterprise that functions without regular support from CARAS. Our organisation has never run a project of this kind before and therefore has learnt a great deal along the way. We are hoping to build on the skills we have developed when planning and running future adult projects.

Learning, teaching and training

We continue to enjoy strong relationships with St George's Medical School and Kingston University social work department. Having students learn with us provides enormous mutual benefits. Students gain hands-on experience and are privileged to hear stories first hand. Beneficiaries feel empowered by being listened to and sharing their experiences.

Over the course of the year CARAS has hosted two social work students on three month placements, five medical students on refugee health special study components (SSC), and a further two undertaking research SSCs. We've also run workshops for medical students on psychiatry placements, first year medical students learning about community organisations, psychiatrists in training, and primary and secondary school teachers. We very much hope we are helping to shape better informed and more empathetic professionals of the future.

This year we've trained 50 newly qualified teachers and 83 trainee medics

This year we have also launched our new integrated training program. We run seven multi-media, interactive sessions covering topics including safeguarding, mental health, refugees in the UK, and practical aspects of working with children, young people and adults.

CARAS staff and volunteers “feel like a family. I feel like I belong here. They are more than community- they are family...”