



YOUNGROOTS

Helping young refugees to realise their potential

YOUNG ROOTS **2016 ANNUAL REPORT**





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FOREWORD

Dear friends,

Children and young people deserve a safe and loving environment where they can learn, thrive and find their own unique selves. Since 2004, Young Roots has been there for young people in London, Lebanon and Nepal who haven't been lucky enough to have a carefree childhood and who had to leave their homes fleeing war, poverty and hardship.

In 2016, we saw an increasingly challenging environment for refugee and asylum seekers in the UK and elsewhere. Many young people make the perilous journey to a safer life, sometimes with families, but often alone. We are facing the prospect of a "lost generation" of young people missing out on valuable education, adequate protection and safe spaces to play at the most formative times of their lives.

All the more reason for Young Roots to continue to grow our youth work, strengthen our public voice and solidify our governance structures.

In September 2016, we appointed a new Director, Jo Cobley, who has already begun setting out the future strategic direction for Young Roots. I am proud of where we have come so far with Young Roots and confident that with her leadership we will go from strength to strength.

Thanks to your support, we reached an estimate of over 600 children and young people this year. In London, our biggest project, we offered after school activities, holiday residential trips, day trips and more to over 350 young refugees and asylum seekers making their home in the UK. We also launched a casework service, which was immediately at capacity, showing us a real need.

Thank you all for you continued support

Siobhan Foster-Perkins
Chair of Trustees

OUR 2016 RESULTS

In 2016, Young Roots reached over 600 young refugees and asylum seekers through our projects in London, Lebanon and Nepal. Together with the tremendous support of our donors and partners, we are giving them a little bit of their childhood back. Thank you!

The wellbeing and development of the people we work with is central to everything Young Roots does. We believe that every child in our projects deserves the best possible care and equal opportunities to grow into flourishing adults. Our projects provide a safe space for young people where they can **connect, share** and **learn** with and from each other. We also help them to **stand strong** in the turmoil of building a secure life in a new country.

WE REACHED OVER 600 CHILDREN



IN LONDON, OUR NEW CASEWORK SERVICE, SUPPORTED **44** YOUNG PEOPLE SINCE IS STARTED



IN NEPAL, WE RAN A NETWORK OF



21 CHILDREN'S CLUBS.

IN LEBANON, WE INCLUDED **20** DISABLED CHILDREN



IN OUR SUMMER PROGRAMME.

WE HIRED A **NEW DIRECTOR**, WHO WILL LEAD YOUNG ROOTS IN **FURTHER GROWTH** AND **PROFESSIONALISATION**.





Croydon Young Refugee Network coming together after the attack on an asylum seeker © Young Roots

OUR MISSION

is to improve the wellbeing and life chances of young refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and overseas.

OUR VISION

is of a world in which all young refugees and asylum seekers can realise their rights and fulfill their potential.

OUR AMBITION

is to be respected and known for our innovative and participatory approach to young refugees and asylum seekers self-advocacy and learning.

LONDON

Young Roots has worked in London since 2004, where we continue to build our presence, expertise and knowledge. Last year we reached hundreds of young refugees and asylum seekers in Croydon and North London, supporting them to improve their English, to make friends, be more confident, access services and realise their rights.

TOTAL CHILDREN REACHED IN LONDON:



FEMALE



MALE



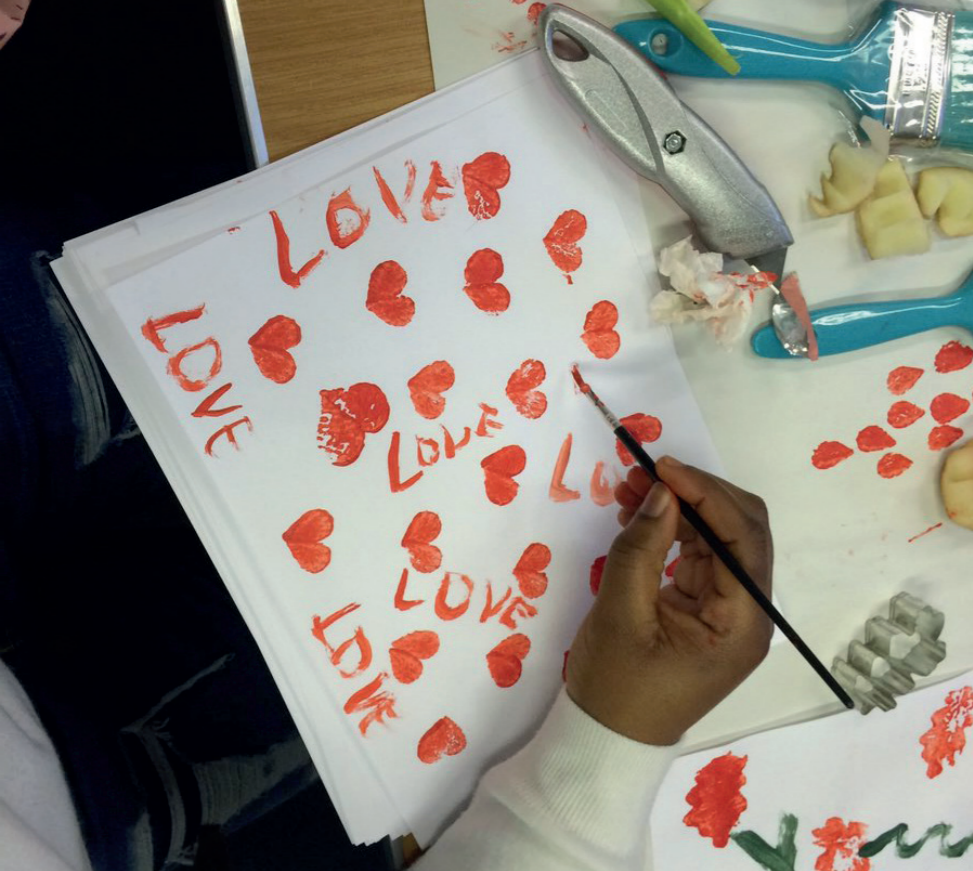
NATIONALITIES :



ATTENDING OUR CROYDON PROJECT



ATTENDING OUR NORTH LONDON PROJECT



Activity at Girls Group © Young Roots © Young Roots

CONNECT

Many young refugees and asylum seekers risk becoming socially isolated. They are often insecure about their language skills, are traumatised from all they have experienced and don't have many friends.

Young Roots runs regular youth groups where young people enjoy a social environment and where they learn skills to help them to integrate.

I've made lots of friends at the club – some go to my school but I met them here!

Young person from Croydon Youth Club

Each week 40-50 young refugees and asylum seekers come to our Youth Group in Croydon where they dance, take

part in drama and music sessions, enjoy wellbeing sessions like mindfulness, play games and learn about important issues like health.

We also run a special weekly Girls Group (together with the Refugee Council), which includes over 20 girls from all parts of the world. It's the only one of its kind

A young person described our cultural excursion as 'the best Friday of his life.'

in Croydon and its numbers have grown rapidly.

Our Youth Club and Lunchtime Group in North West London run an equal number of activities, including homework support, boxing and theatre. Our lunchtime group often sees 25 young people and our youth club is attended by about 10 young asylum seekers and refugees weekly.

Each Thursday evening, we run a football project in North West London. This is extremely popular and the boys get so much out of the physical activity, teamwork and benefits to mental health.

Still highly valued are our cultural trips. Each month we organise fun activities such as environment, integration into the UK and help with orientation around London. We also run a

range of trips in the holidays.

We find that many of our young people meet each other outside of the activities and we observe increased confidence in their communication with staff and volunteers as they take part in our activities.

SHARE

Practicing English and strengthening young people's communication skills run as a thread through our activities.

Being able to communicate is essential for a young person's personal development and social networks. Our activities improve language skills, creative expression and teach how to define and express opinions.

Our innovative Peer Support project is one of the most popular activities for young refugees. This accredited programme benefits both those who are mentors and

Coming to the group helps me not to feel alone. They're like my brothers and sisters.

Young person from Croydon Youth Club

those who learn from them as mentees.

In North London, where this project started, the programme is flourishing and expanding to a

second campus at the College of North West London. We also run this project in Croydon.

We recently invited one of our participants to be on an interview panel. "I was euphoric on that day because I have gained more experience than I had".

LEARN

Young refugees do not often get the opportunity to shine. Being part of marginalised communities, discrimination and trauma affects their confidence and threatens their personal growth.

At Young Roots, we make sure we give our young people access to opportunities to learn, grow, explore their talents and be heard. >>

STAR OF OUR NORTH LONDON TEAM

A star of our North London team is Zanoobia, a Syrian refugee now settled in London and a Project Worker at Young Roots. Her direct experience of being a refugee along with her academic background and experience of working with young people has allowed her to develop a special bond with some of the newly arrived participants.

JACK PETCHEY AWARD

Six of our young people won a Jack Petchey award. They were rewarded for their attitude, their efforts to learn English and for encouraging others to learn. The winners were given the chance to enrich the youth clubs in different ways. With the support of our project workers, they each researched ideas, looked at costs and invited people to take part. One winner organised a trip to the zoo, another used the money to start a library at the youth club.

Together with the London Youth's City Leaders Programme, a team of our young people in Croydon undertook a project to improve our Youth Club. Based on thorough research, they decided to organise English lessons and buy a table football table. Their project will see 500 young people benefiting over the next 2 years.

To further strengthen the opportunities for young people

A foster carer told us: 'He really enjoys attending. He tells me how he practices English and people are nice and supportive.'

within our organisation, we are now developing a strategy and toolkit to ensure that we embed youth participation at all levels of the organisation.

Terry from London Youth was on the panel where they pitched their idea. "I was very impressed with their dedication and enthusiasm and had no hesitation in signing off their project."

STAND STRONG

Establishing our new one-to-one Casework Service has been a key achievement this year. This service was developed in response to an unmet need for more specialist support, advice and guidance for young asylum seekers and refugees.

Our experienced and skilled caseworkers support young people access high quality legal advice and representation, access mental health support, resolve issues with their foster carers, support them through age assessment processes and help them access education. Increasingly, we support young people find emergency and then longer-term accommodation. Since May 2016 we worked with 44 young people. The service is extremely busy and we've had to expand the provision to help meet demand.



Young people learning the guitar with Alex Perkin, intern at Young Roots © Young Roots

ADVOCATE

In response to the increasing hostile environment for refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, Young Roots is working with Amnesty International UK to campaign for Child Family Reunion. Through media work and public campaigning, we share our grass roots experience. We have written to the Minister for Vulnerable Children and Families who is conducting a Review of Safeguarding of unaccompanied asylum-seeking and refugee children. We also gave evidence to the 'Greater London Authority's' Children's Rights Inquiry for London in November. ●

CHILD FAMILY REUNION

Unlike adults, child refugees who have been through the rigorous asylum process are not allowed to bring family members to the UK. However, it is usually in the best interests of children to live with their parents or close relatives. Families can be key to helping children learn, grow and integrate into their new lives. There is no basis for discriminating between the position of adult and child refugees as regards their entitlement to family reunion.

LEBANON

Now in its twelfth year, our Lebanon Project is based in the Al-Bass refugee camp in southern Lebanon. This camp receives no education, health or public service support from the Lebanese government. There is no designated safe space in the camp for the children to play or any opportunities for young people to access organised activities outside of formal schooling. Together with our partners on the ground, Young Roots provides both these elements, as well as exemplary schooling in English and Arabic literacy.

TOTAL CHILDREN REACHED IN LEBANON:



FEMALE



MALE



NON-DISABLED



DISABLED

PARTICIPATED IN PREVIOUS YEARS



NEW COMERS TO THE PROJECT



WORKING WITH PARTNERS

We work through trusted, long-term partners in Lebanon's Al-Bass refugee camp and Nepal's Bhutanese refugee camps. Having established the projects using the ethos and aims of Young Roots, we lead on raising funds and supporting our partners on the ground in their direct work with the young refugees.

In August and September 2016, we ran a five week summer activities programme for 100 refugee children aged between seven and fourteen years of age.

A typical day consisted of a group activity attended by each class group followed by literacy support and craft activities. The activities of each week were planned around a specific theme, namely, environmental, health, education, cultural topics, and social and moral issues.

CONNECT AND SHARE

In the difficult circumstances of the refugee camp, disadvantaged groups struggle to get by and are often excluded. Our project makes a conscious effort to be open to all children, and we actively seek to include those who are tend to be forgotten.

In the past year, hundreds of children escaping violence in Syria have arrived in Al-Bass, living in makeshift shelters and struggling

The children learn good manners and how to respect and behave with others. It has taught them how to depend on themselves and feel more self-confident.

Mother of participant

to access basic services. Our project included 25 Palestinian refugee children from Syria, which was a great opportunity for them to integrate into their new community in a positive way. In addition, the inclusion of Palestinian refugees from Syria in the project continues to promote a sense of community and social cohesion in Al-Bass.

The inclusion of children with disabilities in the project continues to leave a lasting positive effect on both the disabled and non-disabled children. Children with disabilities are particularly vulnerable in Al-Bass camp as they do not have access to formal education. Working closely with the Sour Community Disability Project (SCDP), we make a real effort to make sure disabled children are included; allowing them to play and learn while interacting with others outside their homes. Young Roots remains the only NGO in the camp providing such inclusive activities.

This year's project included a cultural open day, where children could share some of their cultural heritage with folk dances, poems and traditional food. The project ended with a graduation ceremony attended by parents, committee members, and representatives of local NGOs.

LEARN

Given the insecure situation Al-Bass camp, children and young people face challenges to their self-esteem and confidence. Our project enables both the participants and Youth Workers to take on leadership roles and build skills and confidence.

The children were increasingly encouraged to lead activities, mentor their peers and offer opinions about the structure of the programme. Children were also asked to evaluate to each other, teaching the children how to offer and accept constructive criticism.

An enhanced training programme for Youth Workers

This activity has also opened the chance for our children to learn how to deal with disabled children and how to accept them in society.

Mother of Disabled Participant

I feel that I have another family other than my parents and siblings. Youth Workers treat us as if we are one family.

12-year-old participant

was introduced this year, with a particular focus on working with children with disabilities and the Palestinian refugees from Syria.

The addition of Youth Assistants to the project, many former participants of the project, allowed these young people to develop their leadership skills and increase their confidence. ●

One of the participants with a disability © Young Roots



NEPAL

Young Roots works with Bhutanese refugee children in Nepal, a forgotten group who live in camps that seriously lack any child appropriate facilities.

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Group of participants in Nepal © Young Roots

Since our work in Nepal started in 2007, we have seen a large resettlement campaign. This has left a group of some 11,000 refugees (35% of which are children) who had to stay in Nepal in a very vulnerable and unprotected situation.

Together with our partner organisations, the Bhutanese Refugee Children Forum (BRCF) and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Young Roots works to support the most vulnerable children. We support refugee children living without their parents, those who care for elderly relatives and those who have dropped out of school to work. We provide them with targeted support through regular visits, weekly group activities and life skills training opportunities.

CONNECT AND SHARE

Joint initiatives between local Nepali and refugee young people continued to strengthen

relationships. A network of 21 children's clubs, from both the refugee and host community, came together every other month. 29 children and young people attended these meetings.

We also strengthen local staff's capacity by sharing knowledge with peers. 39 project staff members spent 2 days on a knowledge exchange project which involved visiting local children's clubs in the host community. Particular focus of their discussions was on strengthening the child protection mechanism at local government level.

LEARN

We organised weekly educational and social activities for vulnerable children across the two camps including drama, debating, music and sports. Complex issues, such as child labour and sexual violence, were discussed in a child-sensitive manner. Every »

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week, over 100 children attended the activity clubs.

We provided children at risk of dropping out of school with additional homework support. These after school study clubs reached over 150 children. We also assisted children to return to education and 13 children were supported to be re-enrolled.

STAND STRONG

We supported young people to implement activities to raise awareness of child rights. For example, this year refugee children and children from the host community learnt about child labour. They designed their own posters, which were displayed at local schools.

With the declining levels of support from international NGOs for refugees in Nepal, Young Roots has been working to ensure that refugee children have access to local government child protection mechanisms. To increase the

awareness and understanding of local government staff of the specific protection needs of refugee children, we facilitated camp visits, organised child protection training, contributed to regular child protection working committee meetings, and ran workshops.

Another way we protect children is to carefully log their specific needs and share this data with other agencies. In 2016, we referred 97 children to the Child Protection Working Group (CPWG) for additional support. ●



Group of participants in Nepal © Young Roots

TEAM YOUNG ROOTS



NEW TEAM

In September 2016 we appointed a new Director, Jo Cobley. Under Jo's leadership of our staff team, and the direction of our dynamic, experienced Trustee Board, we are strengthening our strategic and operational planning, and expanding our fundraising and communications work to ensure the sustainability of Young Roots' future. We use our knowledge and understanding of working directly with young people to affect change for the wider population of young refugees and asylum seekers.

As we have developed new services and built on the success of our previous work in London, we are delighted that we have retained experienced staff in key roles and have appointed Hayley Cohen as our Projects Manager to oversee our activities and services across London.

Our team has implemented some key organisational improvements, including an activity database, which enables us to better monitor and manage our work and measure our impact.

OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Young Roots continues to rely on a great team of Trustees, all of whom are experts in their fields. We are pleased to have approved an integrated operational plan that ensures our activities will be delivered in an integrated and effective way. We have appointed an experience new Treasurer, Stephen Corker and our previous Vice Chair, Siobhan Foster-Perkins, has become the Chair of the organisation. We have audited the Trustee skills mix and will be building on the skills and dedication of current members. ●

OUR HISTORY

Young Roots was founded in 2004 as Refugee Youth Project by Roz Evans, Rachel Yarrow and Kathy Brook. They established the charity with the aim of supporting refugee children and other young refugees in the UK and internationally.

Young Roots became a UK registered charity in April 2005 and has been run as a company limited by guarantee since early 2011.

Dear friends

I have loved my first eight months at Young Roots. I have long admired the charity and its great grassroots work. It's been an absolute pleasure to lead the highly skilled, talented and dedicated team of staff and volunteers and to work with the Trustees. Every week, I meet young refugees and asylum seekers whose lives have been improved hugely by their involvement in Young Roots.

My focus is on developing the long-term sustainability of the charity and ensuring we have a clear organisational strategy incorporating an integrated approach to fundraising. Importantly, I'm also leading our work to ensure that what we learn from our direct experience of working with young refugees and asylum seekers to inform wider debates. Our work is vitally important for so many vulnerable young people. It's been fantastic to be in touch with supporters who want to contribute by fundraising for us. Thank you.

I'm looking forward to the next year and to meeting many of you during this time.

Very best wishes

Jo Cobley

Director

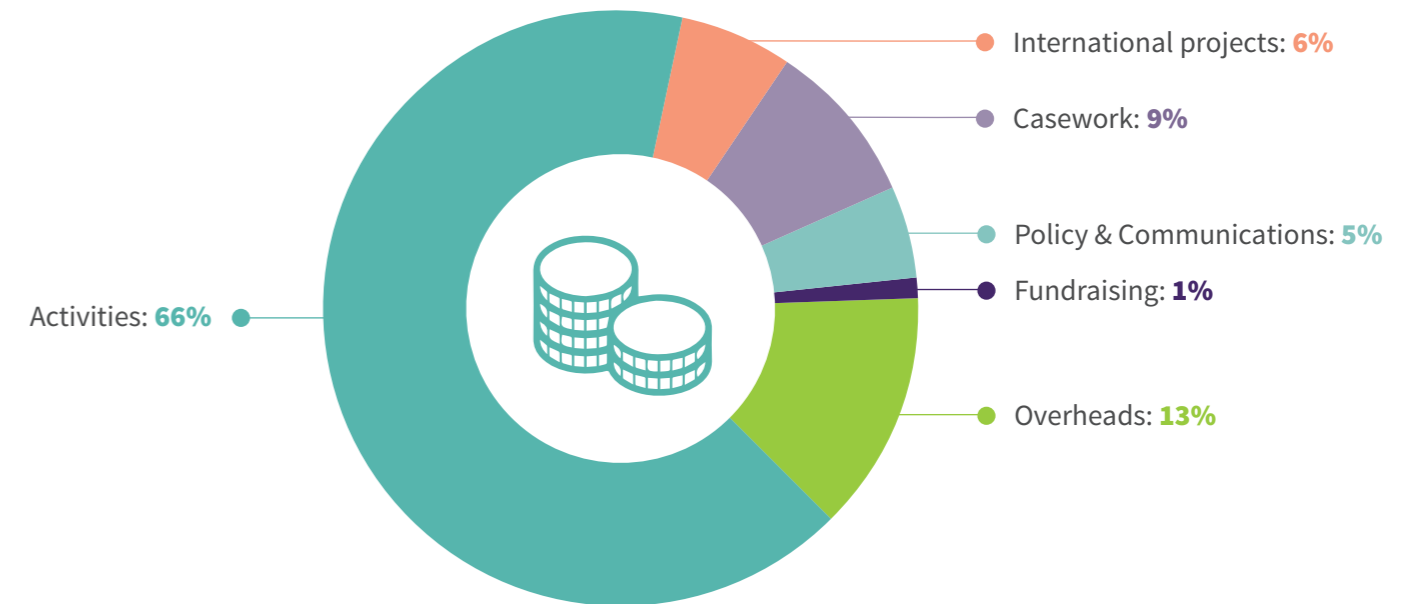
FINANCIAL REPORT

Thanks to the support of our partners and donors, Young Roots maintains a strong financial position, allowing us to extend our activities every year and ensure stability for our staff.

In the year ended 30th November 2016, Young Roots total income from grants and donations was £267,655 (2015: £186,375). More details are available in our published Financial Statements.

We make sure that most of our money goes directly to the work with the young people we work with. In 2016, we spent 81% of our funds on activities.

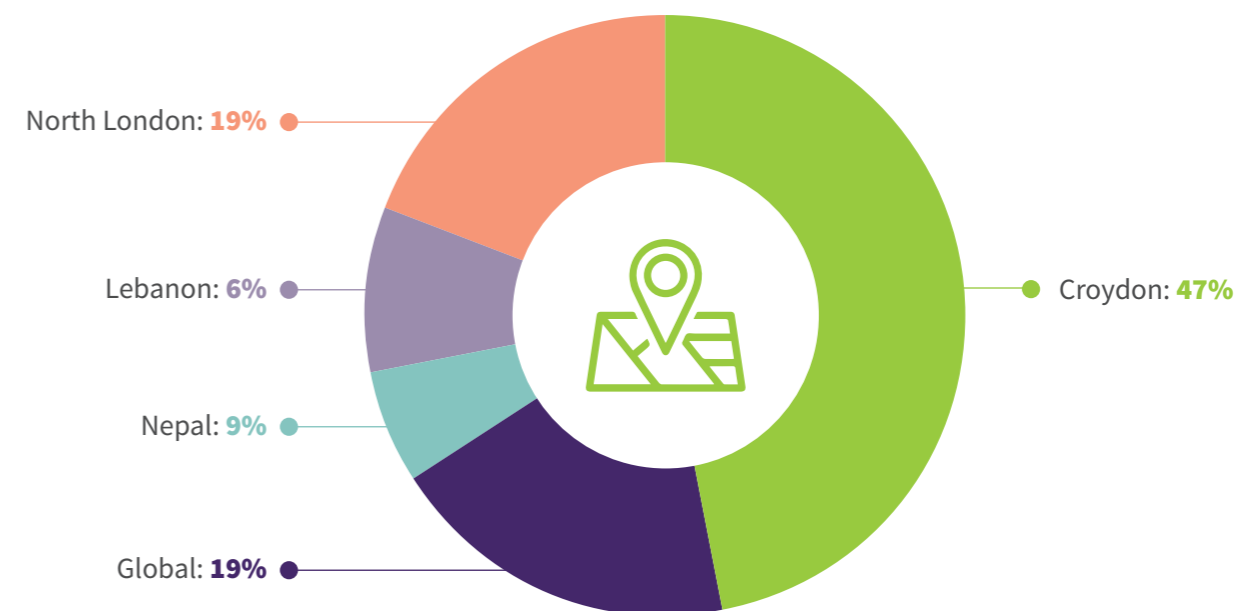
WHAT WE SPENT OUR MONEY ON:



Art activity at Girls Group run by Kazzum © Young Roots



WHERE WE WORK:



THANK YOU

Our supporters are very important to us and we keep in touch with them through regular newsletters, events and social media.

We are very grateful to our funders without whom we simply wouldn't be able to support the young refugees and asylum seeker we work with. The Big Lottery, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Lloyds Bank Foundation and Children in Need have our huge thanks and appreciation. We are also extremely grateful to London Catalyst, Wembley National Stadium Trust and Woodward Charitable Trust who funded us during the year. Amongst our funders are individuals who have generously given us a one off contribution, or very helpfully give us a regular monthly donation.

We are very grateful to various grants and donations received for our work in Lebanon, without which the project would not have happened. The project will run again in summer 2017 thanks to generous grants from the Allan and Nesta Ferguson Charitable Trust, the Network for Social Change and Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP). Securing longer term funding support for 2018 and the following years is now the focus of fundraising.



BOARD OF TRUSTEES R BAYLEY

G L Capel

K M Elton

(appointed 03.09.16)

S Fekadu

S A Foster-Perkins

V Ing

D E Jones

J Mawby

(resigned 21.04.17)

T S S Mawby

(resigned 21.04.17)

N Prendergast

K Van Balen

G Ayres

(resigned 03.09.16)

M Burnett-Stuart

(appointed 03.09.16 then
resigned 19.11.16)

S Singleton

(resigned 08.10.16)

S R Corker

(appointed 1.12.16)

CHARITY INFORMATION

Registered Office:

Young Roots,
Cornerstone House,
14 Willis Road,
Croydon,
CR0 2XX, UK

Young Roots is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales.

Registered Company no: 7448744 **Registered Charity no:** 1139685

THANK YOU

TO ALL THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO
HAVE PARTICIPATED IN OUR PROJECTS AND SHARED
THEIR EXPERIENCE, ENERGY AND ENTHUSIASM WITH
US THIS YEAR.



YOUNGROOTS
Helping young refugees to realise their potential