

Impact Report 22 - 23



MISSION STATEMENT

RefuAid provides people who have fled their homes with tailored support to build independent and dignified lives in the UK.

@refuaid
www.refuaid.org
www.equalaccessloan.org

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RefuAid is a restricted fund under the auspices of Prism the Gift Fund (charity no 1099682)

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INTRODUCTION

Since we launched RefuAid in 2015, we've witnessed the world change in so many ways.



Over this time, the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide has increased by over 60%, with over 108 million people now considered to be displaced. An increase in conflict, natural disasters and political persecution has exacerbated the situation, forcing more and more countries into political and social instability.

We've also watched as safe and legal routes have become increasingly restricted, leading to more people undertaking dangerous journeys; we've watched as a shift in public and political rhetoric has unfolded, with a sense that empathy and compassion are no longer the prevailing sentiments; we've watched as the rights of those who have claimed asylum in the UK have been debated, targeted and diminished.

And yet we've also witnessed, with admiration, how the power of hope can form some of the most beautiful relationships. We've seen first-hand how resilience and unity can overcome huge obstacles and can empower communities to achieve change. We've watched individuals rebuild their lives after street homelessness and destitution, and families who, having overcome huge adversity, have flourished professionally, academically and socially.

"Over 108 million people now considered to be displaced."

We're so proud to have built an organisation that focuses on empowering people to achieve their goals and find independence. As we continue to navigate this crazy ever-changing world around us, this will remain our priority and we will always take inspiration from the people we work with.

As we reflect on another year, we're so thankful to have such an amazing network of support around us and we hope this report demonstrates the collective impact we're able to have together.

Anna Jones
Co-Founder & CEO



"My journey has been a remarkable testament to resilience and determination. After I left my homeland, I embarked on a treacherous journey in search of safety and a chance to rebuild my life. After overcoming numerous obstacles, I arrived in a new country, where I faced the daunting task of navigating through unfamiliar systems and cultural barriers. Throughout my journey, I remained committed to my dream of becoming a healthcare professional and contributing to society. The process of obtaining my GMC registration was a significant milestone in my path towards achieving that dream. It required unwavering perseverance, countless hours of studying, and the support of mentors and fellow refugees who became my newfound family. Through the rigorous examination and assessment process, I demonstrated my knowledge, skills, and dedication to providing quality care to patients. Today, as a registered GMC professional, I am honoured to contribute my expertise and passion to the healthcare field, serving as a beacon of hope and inspiration for other refugees who are pursuing their own dreams amidst adversity."

Safa, Iraqi Doctor and RefuAid Equal Access Loan recipient.

LANDSCAPE

Applications for support we have received to date



44% of all applications were received in the last 12 months alone

260



average applications each month

We supported over

1,610

May 2022

April 2023



individuals across our various programmes

Applications received by nationality



- Ukraine: 21%
- Syria: 14%
- Iran: 11%
- Sudan: 9%
- Turkey: 8%
- Afghanistan: 5%
- Iraq: 3%
- Yemen: 3%
- Saudi Arabia: 3%
- Egypt: 2%
- Libya: 2%
- Pakistan: 2%
- Ethiopia: 1%
- Eritrea: 1%
- Russia: 1%
- Kuwait: 1%
- Other: 1%

Awards for our work



- 1 **Business Charity Awards 2023**
Consortium of the Year
- 2 **Charity Awards 2023**
Funding and Grantmaking
- 3 **Global Good Awards 2021**
Community Partnership of the Year
- 4 **Covid-19 Response Awards 2021**
Charity Sector
- 5 **Nesta New Radicals 2018**
- 6 **Third Sector Awards 2018**
Charity Partnership of the Year

LANGUAGE: A GATEWAY PROGRAMME

"As someone with lived experience and working with RefuAid, we forge bonds with individuals. Everyone, whether they are a teacher, a school, or a generous volunteer who extends a helping hand, becomes part and parcel of our lifelong journey. I have seen firsthand how even the smallest support strengthens individuals who strive for a better future, carrying hope and showing resilience in the face of numerous hardships. Together, we rebuild extraordinary and inspiring lives for which our community is always grateful and for every single opportunity, especially studying in a classroom with other students.

The classroom environment is a pivotal experience that allows our community to learn English, integrate, and gain diverse experiences. The support from schools and teachers is shaping the lives of so many, making a positive impact which fills me with happiness and drives me to keep doing what I am doing. I hope you, as a supporter and ally, feel the same. Thank you to everyone on behalf of our resilient and hopeful community."

Mohib Ullah, RefuAid's Head of Language

We supported

598

May 2022 April 2023



individuals on our language programme

192

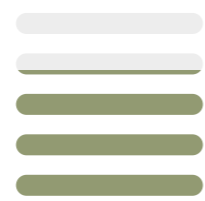
students graduated the programme with the English language qualification they needed



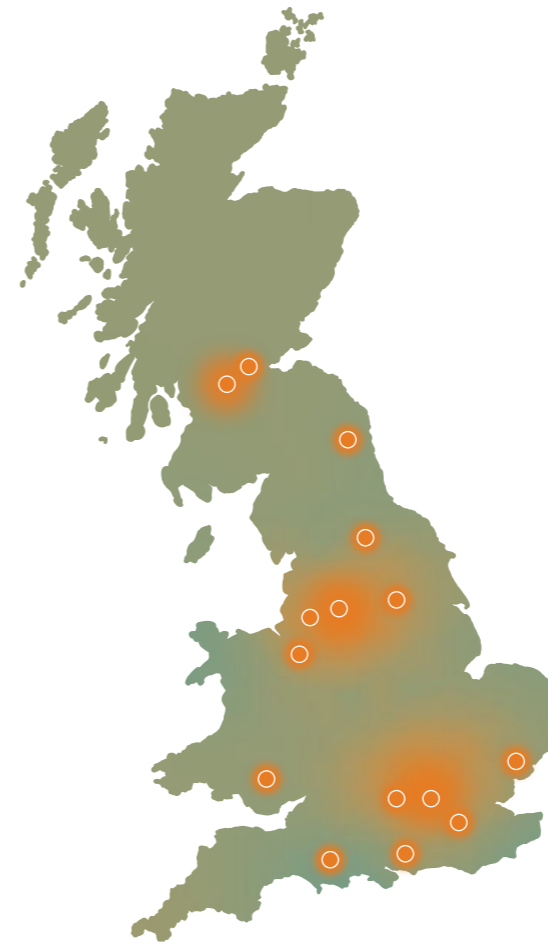
41%
are students who have gone on to study at a UK university



27%
are healthcare professionals who are now in the process of completing their requalification



32%
includes other experienced professionals including engineers, lawyers, data scientists and vets



We currently partner with

130

schools and language providers across the country

Including:

- | | | |
|-------------|------------|------------|
| London | Cardiff | Eastbourne |
| Manchester | Canterbury | Glasgow |
| Bournemouth | Edinburgh | Sussex |
| Brighton | Leeds | Sheffield |
| Liverpool | Newcastle | York |
| Cambridge | Colchester | |

We also work with online providers to support RefuAid students with self-study materials:

Perfectly Spoken	Sensation English	Reallyenglish
460	35	1,717
students supported	students supported	students supported



175

of our previous language students have graduated or will graduate from university between summer 2022 and autumn 2023.



Courses include Aeronautical Engineering, Business Management, Fashion, Maths, and Renewable Energies, to name but a few.



98%
of Language Programme graduates surveyed were happy with the quality of tuition and support provided.



49
volunteer tutors, who generously offer RefuAid students tailored one-to-one tuition. Cumulatively, our volunteer tutors have donated roughly £50,000+ worth of tuition this year alone.

“There is no word in English or other languages to express my gratitude. Organisations like RefuAid give so much hope to people at critical thresholds of their lives, especially during these tough times for asylum seekers and refugees. This means a lot, and this meaningful support from various volunteers shows that another world is possible.”

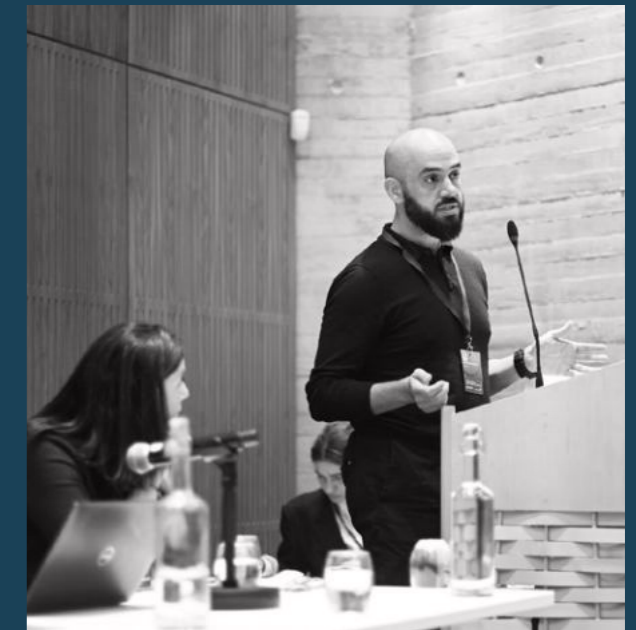
Aslan* studied on our language programme in 2022 and is now studying an LLM with Human Rights and Criminal Justice at Goldsmiths



“RefuAid students add diversity to our classes and the students seem to have a great attitude to learning and are very conscientious; they are so focused on their goals and what they can achieve in the UK. It’s amazing to be able to give them these opportunities so they can return to their careers and hopefully build our country up as well. They are all highly skilled - quite a lot of them are medical professionals - so we’re crying out for them. And they’re all incredibly grateful to be here.”



Sian Matos, Head of Operations at English Path



“The work that RefuAid do in supporting those forced to flee their homes is absolutely vital. Their holistic approach in helping people break down the barriers to accessing education and employment are critical for ensuring that people can restart their lives, and they have uniquely identified the importance of the language component in ensuring that this is a success. Kaplan International are thrilled to be able to support RefuAid with this particular part of their programme, helping people obtain the necessary English language skills to fulfil their potential here in the UK. We love working with RefuAid – they are so helpful, organised and quick to respond to any questions we have. We look forward to continuing to support them with their incredible work for as long as it is needed.”



Paige Grinter, Director of CSR at Kaplan International Languages

EQUAL ACCESS LOAN PROGRAMME

"Our Equal Access Loan programme flourished this year and we would not have achieved as much as we did without the support of our generous donors, partners, mentors, accreditation bodies including the GMC and GPhC, and the continuous efforts of the team. We want to extend a special thank you to Street UK, our loan administrator, who have been supporting us since 2017.

As we move to a new loan provider in 2023, we recognise that our achievements would not have been possible without Street UK and their fantastic team.

As always, our loan recipients continue to amaze us with their resilience and determination and we have loved meeting as many of them as possible face-to-face this year.

The Equal Access Loan programme enters the new financial year having won the Charity Awards in the Grantmaking and Funding category and migrating to our new loan provider, Moneyline."

Maisie Dolman, RefuAid's Head of Loan & Requalification

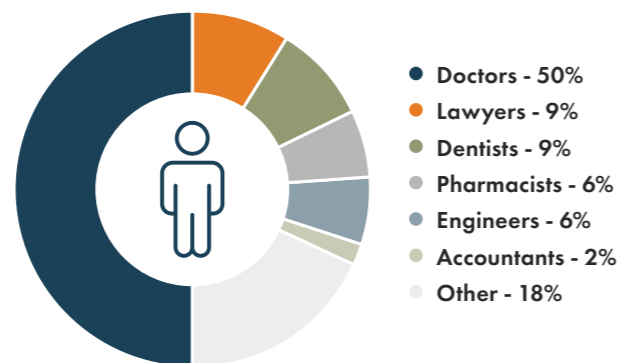
We have now lent a total of

£1,816,709

and maintained a repayment rate of over

98%

Professions of loan recipients



Average loan amounts by profession



We have received over

£630,000

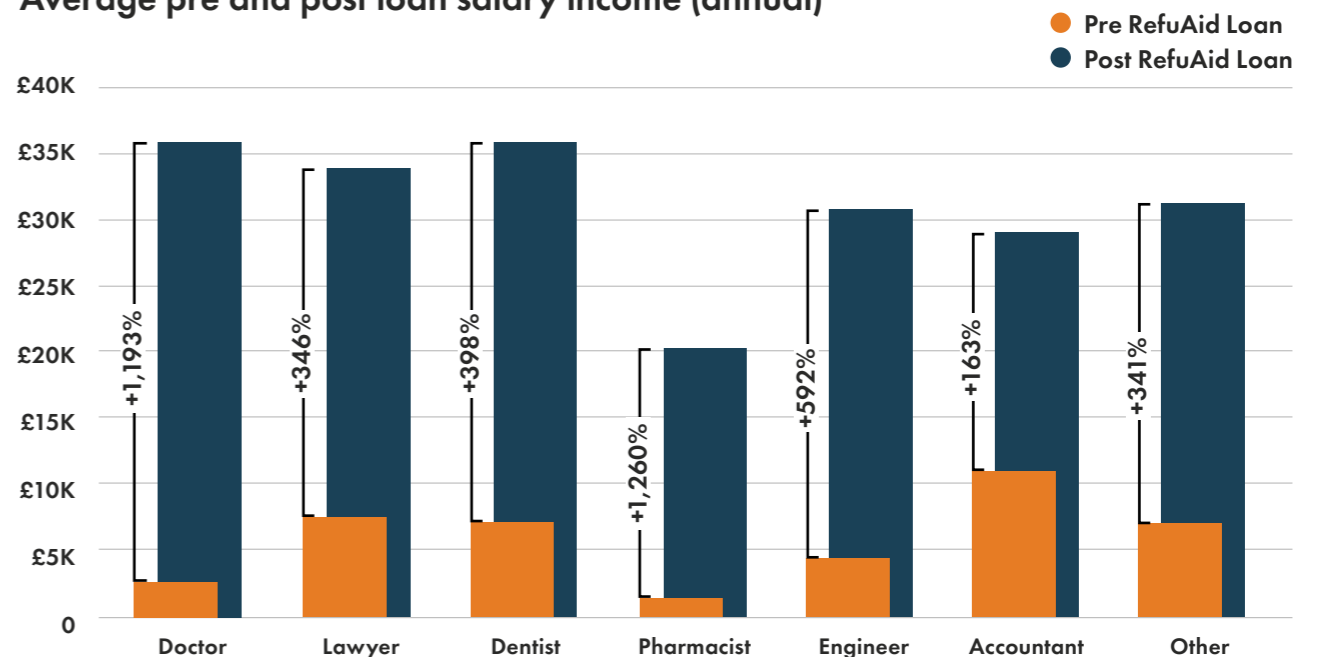
in repayments to date

Of those who have completed their requalification, the average starting salary is

£33,788

Comparatively, the average pre-loan income of those who were in work prior to requalifying is **£4,379**. This represents a **672%** increase in income.

Average pre and post loan salary income (annual)



The Equal Access Loan programme is enabling a

net gain of over

£3 million

each year to the UK economy*



*when considering both the savings in state benefits for those in work, alongside their tax and national insurance contributions. Based on 188 individuals.

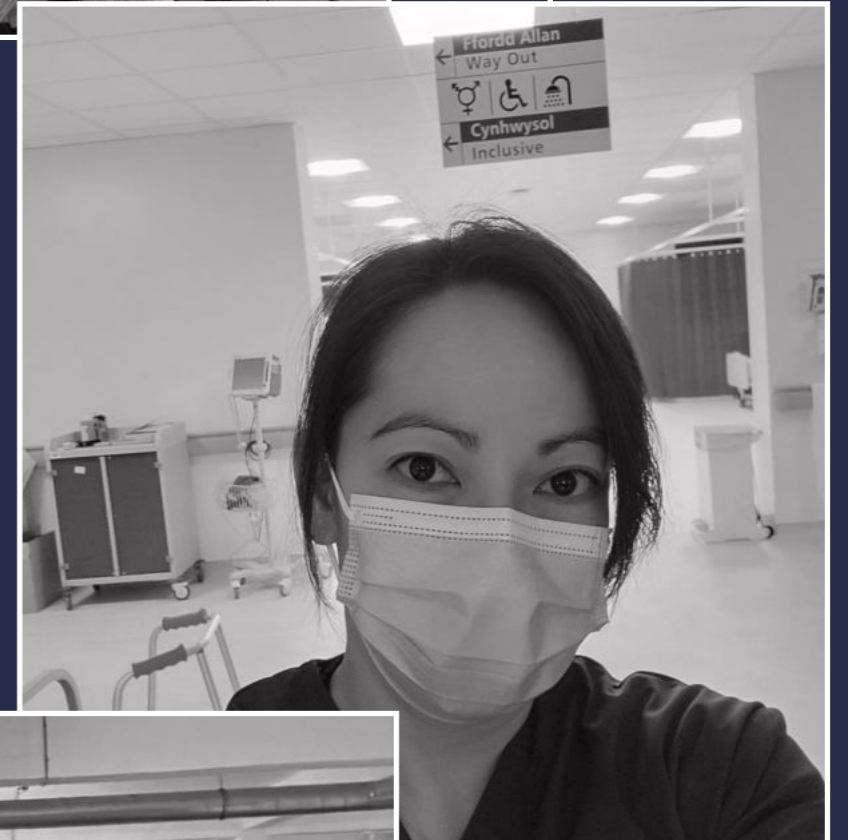


In June 2023, our Equal Access Loan Programme won the Charity Award for Grantmaking and Funding. Judges were impressed by the sustainability of the scheme and the potential for scale. **"A real virtuous circle"**.



72%

of Equal Access Loan recipients were receiving state benefits prior to requalifying



41

of our loans are due to be repaid next year, in addition to the 36 which have already been fully repaid



“My name is Israa, one of the Sudanese doctors who is currently working in Sandwell and West Birmingham Trust, City Hospital, Emergency Department. I would not have reached my destination and start working again as a doctor in the UK without RefuAid’s massive help and support. They held my hands towards the right track. To begin with, financially, they offered me a loan. I used the loan to pay for my courses and exams, which were very expensive and unaffordable. Within a six-month- period I have passed my PLAB1 and PLAB2 exams and registered [with] the GMC.

I joined the NHS in 2019, and I have worked in many departments in different hospitals in London and West Midlands. Since then, I have been working very hard as a frontline doctor during COVID till now. I would like to thank every member of RefuAid for making my dreams come true.”

Israa, a doctor from Sudan and Equal Access Loan recipient



“I am a refugee with hope and a great personality who arrived in the UK in the summer of 2018. Although I have a Bachelor’s degree from my home country, I could not able to take up any employment or study opportunities due to immigration rules. Moreover, to pursue further studies, I needed to obtain an English qualification (IELTS), so I searched for charities that could support me.

That’s when I discovered RefuAid, the organization that I proudly call my family.

I reached out to them, and they assisted me in obtaining a scholarship at a private English school. Thanks to their support,

I was able to attend the English course and passed my IELTS qualification. Moreover, the qualification fee and six-month transportation expenses were covered by RefuAid.

The next challenging step was applying to university and seeking a scholarship, as I wasn’t eligible for a student loan, I had to rely on small donations and scholarships. Finally, I achieved my dream of securing a place in the course I wanted to study, along with a sanctuary scholarship. Throughout the application process, RefuAid provided me with incredible support.

While studying, I also started looking for jobs, and once again, RefuAid assisted me in revising my CV and help me build confidence for job interviews. I successfully graduated and obtained a job. I now work for an organization that supports refugees including Ukrainians who are fleeing an illegal invasion. Thank you to RefuAid I am rebuilding my life in this country while doing the job I love. RefuAid has made a significant difference in my life and also hundreds of others like me.

I am grateful for their unwavering support and the opportunity to make a positive impact alongside them.”

T, who graduated the language programme in 2022

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

"Forced migration is one of the leading issues of our generation. Whilst governments must be called upon to provide safe and legal routes to sanctuary, more support is needed to enable people to rebuild their lives in the new communities they find themselves. Our work with our employment partners over the past year has demonstrated the amazing capacity businesses and the third sector have to create meaningful change, by working together to support

people into employment that is commensurate with their skills, experiences and qualifications.

As we enter a new financial year, we are looking forward to working with - and expanding - our network of supportive industry leaders, including NHS England, BP, PwC, Ovo Energy, Gleeds, Kier, and so many more."

Anna Jones, RefuAid's CEO & Co-Founder

To date, we have supported over

440

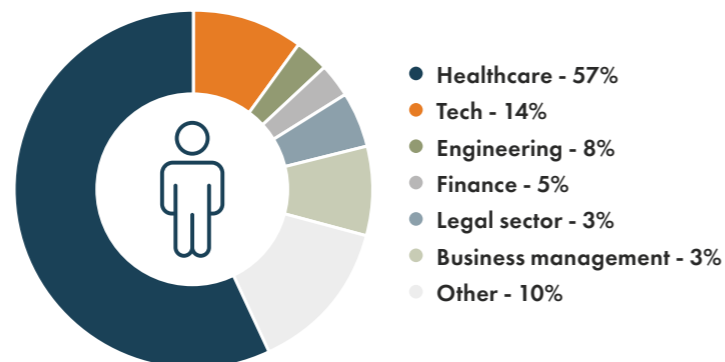


individuals into work commensurate with their skills and experience, across all of our programmes

The average starting salary for those now in work, across all sectors, is


£33,290

In the following sectors



Our Business Consortium, launched in 2022 in partnership with EnterpriseAlumni continues to be a vital support network for both our graduates and experienced professionals. We're currently working with over 100 businesses who support us in multiple ways, including hiring RefuAid candidates, donating funds, offering mentoring and running employability days and workshops. In May 2023, this work won the Business Charity Awards in the Consortium category.



Since May 2022, we've supported

197

people with pre-employment support, including one-to-one mentoring, sector specific insight days, and enhanced recruitment support (including interview practice and mock assessment centres).



7

Insight and Employment days with businesses including Allen & Overy, BP, IQVIA, PageGroup, PwC, the Royal College of Anaesthetists and Weil, Gotshal & Manges

11

organisations actively offering longer term mentoring and interview preparation, with 3 more cohorts currently in the pipeline.



“My journey with RefuAid started in 2020, when I came to the UK and my biggest dream was to continue my education and complete a master’s degree. RefuAid helped me overcome the language barrier. I received support in English classes from RefuAid and financial help for the IELTS test, which I took and achieved the required score from the first attempt. I completed my master’s degree in Environmental Engineering in 2022. Further on RefuAid signed me [up for] employment support to prepare me for interviews and the job market. Due to these sessions I was successful in securing the job of my dreams in the engineering field. Thank you RefuAid for all the support, help and guidance you keep on providing to refugees.”

Mune, supported on RefuAid’s Language and Employment Programmes, and now working as a Graduate Sustainability Consultant



Over the past year we’ve worked closely with Kier to provide mentoring to 10 of our engineering candidates. Mentors were matched in alignment with professional experience, specialisms and expertise, and over the course of 3 months supported our clients to gain hands-on experience of the UK sector, including networking, site-exposure and interview preparation. 2 of our candidates have since been offered full-time positions in roles including Sub Agent and Mobile Engineer.



In December 2022, 18 RefuAid candidates with tech and engineering backgrounds joined bp for an Insight and Employment Day at their Sunbury-on-Thames site. Following the event, 93% of attendees said they felt more confident about their job search and employment prospects.

Nick West, Global Crisis and Continuity Lead at bp, said “As part of our sustainability framework, bp is committed to improving people’s lives. We aim to support a just energy transition which advances human rights and education and includes a commitment to social mobility. Helping refugees and displaced individuals enhance their skills and find meaningful employment, with bp or another organization is important to us.

We recognise that there are incredibly talented and resilient individuals that can bring diversity and innovation to an organisation, if they are given an opportunity. We are delighted to partner with organisations such as Refuaid to help us deliver on this commitment.

Our first initiative together was to host an “open house” employability event in December 2022 at the bp Sunbury campus with RefuAid clients. We ran CV and interview skills workshops, practice interviews and assessment centres, and provided coaching. 100 bp employees volunteered to support the event and there was incredible positive energy and a real desire to demonstrate care and to learn from the experiences of others. The event resulted in one RefuAid client being hired by bp. We look forward to running many more events with RefuAid.”

HOMES FOR UKRAINE PROGRAMME

"It was an intense, bright and emotional year. We are proud to have launched our Homes for Ukraine programme within RefuAid and it was such an honour to work on it during the last 12 months. Since the programme started we have helped 216 people to obtain visas and arrive in the UK safely. We guided them through the whole process and helped them to settle in the UK. Of course it would not be possible without our trusted partners Refugees at Homes who

have provided tailored sponsors for our Ukrainian clients. Though our involvement in the project is coming to an end, we are certainly not saying goodbye to our clients, as some of them may move to our other programmes where they will receive further support."

Nadiia Mackowiak, RefuAid's Homes for Ukraine Coordinator

To date, we have received

481 applications on our Homes for Ukraine programme, from families hoping to find safety and stability in the UK



This corresponds to a total of **948** individuals

- 625 adults
- 323 children



We've supported **216** (148 adults and 68 children) in applying for their Homes for Ukraine sponsorship and visas. The remaining families have either chosen to return to Ukraine, or stay in neighbouring countries closer to home.



With huge thanks to our partners, and friends, at Refugees at Home for their support and collaboration.

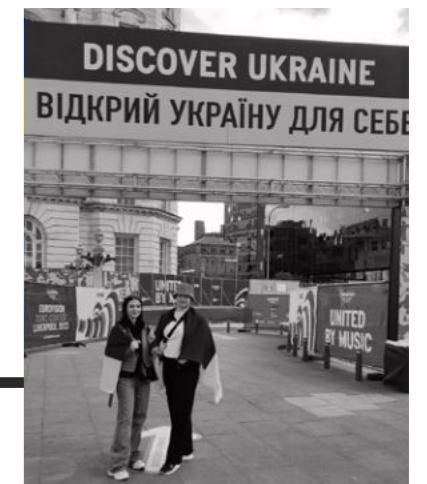
Hanna and her 4 children, Anton (12), Olha (10), and 3 year old twins Viktor and Dariia, arrived in the UK in January 2023 and are being sponsored within Pinewood Studios. Back in Kyiv, both Anton and Olha were engaged in professional swimming and aerobics, and were part of the National Team of Ukraine.



Olha has always been fascinated by the UK's Heathrow Gymnastics Team, and has always dreamt of meeting them one day. Whether by luck or by fate, their new home in Shepperton is 20 minutes from the team. Both Anton and Olha have now joined the club and are already back to competitions, with Anton recently reaching 2nd place and Olha 1st. Their Homes for Ukraine sponsors have also been a huge support, even ensuring that Olha, who also plays piano professionally, has access to a keyboard within the house.

"My name is Viktoriia, I'm from the city of Luhansk, which is now under occupation. With the help of RefuAid, I came to the sponsor in the UK and I am very happy about it. My wonderful sponsor is from Liverpool, so when it became known that Eurovision will be held in Liverpool, I was over the moon and wanted to be involved in this event to make my contribution to Great Britain. I applied for volunteering and was lucky to be chosen for this role as one of 500 volunteers (there were about 3000 applicants) who were selected for the Eurovision Village. Our role was to answer the questions of visitors, guide them to correct exit/entrance etc, and scan entry tickets - the number of visitors that day in Eurovillage was about 16,000 people! Among the volunteers there were a large number of people from various cities in the UK, as well as a number of guys from Ukraine, now I have got a new friend from Ukraine, which makes me very happy. It was an unforgettable experience for me."

Viktoriia, supported by RefuAid and Refugees at Home on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and volunteer at Eurovision 2023



FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROGRAMME


“Being together with loved ones is something many of us may often take for granted, but which can underpin so much of our success and progress as individuals. Our family networks can strengthen and support us, provide comfort and reassurance, and build our confidence. Over the last few years we have been providing financial support in the form of interest-free loans, to families who have spent years apart and are in the process of finally reuniting in the UK.

This work has been incredibly inspiring and re-affirms the enduring power of love, hope and unity. As we begin to wind down our reunification support, we are grateful to have worked so closely with our partners at Together Now, who truly are leading the way in this field, and whose work is needed now more than ever.”

Kate Higgins, RefuAid’s Chief Operating Officer

To date we have reunited

126


This corresponds to a total of

↓
251 individuals] **124** adults] **127** children



We’ve lent a total of
£146,068

→ with a repayment rate of
96.4%

“I was going through some financial problems as my current job and Universal Credit income were not sufficient to cover the day to day expenses of our family. During the application process I did not have enough spare money to get the ticket for my mom to travel to the UK. The application process was easy and swift. Before I applied I was worried as I was looking for a friend to give me the loan but was not sure who to contact. The repayments will be easy and comfortable with the offered options. For me the benefit was that it helped me to quickly get the ticket as my mom to travel as soon as possible. In the future of course, I plan to pay back my plan and complete my bootcamp course to look for better job opportunities to facilitate a good life for my family and contribute back to humanity using my newly gained skills in the field of software development.”



Fawad* from Afghanistan took out a Family Reunification Loan in order to reunite with his mother

TEAM

None of this would be possible without the hard work and unwavering dedication of our team. Working in this sector can often be so incredibly challenging, so we’re grateful to be doing it alongside such passionate colleagues.



Today, as I stand as a proud graduate, I am filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude and accomplishment. This moment is not just a personal triumph for me, but a symbol of hope and resilience for all those asylum seekers and refugees who have faced adversity, barriers and fought against the odds to pursue their dreams. Today I graduate as living proof that dreams can be realised, no matter how difficult the journey may be.

I dedicate my degree to all Afghan girls who have been denied access to education and to all displaced people in the UK who are facing challenges and barriers to access education. Together, let us strive for a future where no girl is left behind, where education becomes the weapon that dismantles the barriers of prejudice and ignorance. Let us continue to fight for justice, equality, and the empowerment of every individual, regardless of their gender or background.

This is not just my achievement but a collective victory for the indomitable spirit of every refugee, every girl denied an education, and every dreamer who refused to surrender to the darkness. Let us celebrate this milestone together and carry the torch of hope and resilience into a brighter, more inclusive future.

To all the individuals, my family, friends, mentors and professors who have played a part, big or small, in my journey, I say thank you!"

Tamana studied at International House Newcastle in 2020, passing her IELTS and going on to study an MSc in NGO and Development Management at the University of East London. She graduated with distinction in January 2023, receiving a special commendation in recognition of her high academic grades and extracurricular work, which included campaigning for access to education for displaced students. She is now working at Routes, an organisation that works to empower displaced women with mentoring opportunities and leadership training.





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