



European  
Network on  
Statelessness

# Impact Report 2019-2020

We celebrate the gains the network has made over the last two years to help protect stateless people and ensure everyone has their right to a nationality upheld. This report forms part of our commitment to be fully transparent about our work and evidence-based in how we understand the difference we make.

Explore our report using the quick links below.



**Message from  
our Director**



**Who  
we are**



**Our staff**



**Members  
& Board of  
Trustees**



**Our activities  
& impact**



**Finances  
& funders**



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**First and foremost, it has become clear stateless people are among those most adversely affected by the pandemic.**

Chris Nash, Director

## Message from our Director

It's fair to say that 2020 has been an exceptional year. In the face of the pandemic, ENS has been determined to maintain a positive and outward-looking focus to continue our work. But we have also had to accept it is not business as usual. We have adapted and learnt valuable lessons that will improve our future impact. This report, covering both 2019 and 2020, offers a moment to reflect on our achievements both before and during the pandemic, but also to look to the future beyond it.

First and foremost, it has become clear stateless people are among those most adversely affected by the pandemic. They are also often the first to react on the ground and support their communities. It is critical that stateless people and affected communities are heard and better resourced. Working together with stateless people, we seek to address the protection gaps exposed by the pandemic. Next month, we will publish new research assessing the intersecting impacts of COVID-19 and governments' responses to it, providing key recommendations for reform.

When the pandemic reached Europe just over 12 months ago, we quickly adapted to our new virtual world. We were determined not to slow down in pursuit of our strategic objectives or to vacate advocacy spaces where we felt that we needed to be heard. In place of a planned major regional conference in Alicante last May, we held a series of online webinars. These attracted combined registrations from over 1700 participants and allowed us to engage new audiences. Working remotely has helped us make events accessible to stateless people and affected communities, some of whom lack identity or travel documents. Our new website, launched in November last year, was designed to improve understanding of statelessness, mobilise new audiences and to connect stateless people with legal representation. We have also found new ways of communicating virtually with our members, and supporting them with the challenges they have faced in maintaining legal advice and other services. We are very proud of the continued impact that we have been able to achieve together despite the pandemic.

We have expanded and restructured our Secretariat, introducing three new staff posts and strengthening our ability to coordinate action across our Network. We have seen our membership grow to over 160, including 14 stateless people and community-led organisations who have joined over the last two years. Our Statelessness Index continues to provide a strong platform and evidence base for our calls for law and policy reform across Europe. It now covers 27 countries, and has been accessed by over 19,000 users since being launched in 2018. Through our #StatelessJourneys initiative, injected with new resourcing from Comic Relief, we continue to mainstream statelessness in asylum and migration policy debates, including ongoing negotiations on the EU Asylum & Migration Pact. We are also seizing new opportunities to further influence policy towards addressing childhood statelessness, as well as Roma and other marginalised groups affected by statelessness. We are excited to be developing a new litigation database, as we recognise that part of the fight to end statelessness must happen through the courts.

All of this enables us to move through 2021 with increased energy and confidence despite the difficulties we all face. As always, this is only possible due to the incredible engagement and support of our members, donors and other partners. We really appreciate this and look forward to being able to see you all in person again soon.



A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Chris Nash". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized.

Chris Nash, Director

# Who we are



The European Network on Statelessness (ENS) was established in 2012 as a coordinating body and expert resource for organisations and individuals working to promote the right to a nationality in Europe. Since then we have grown into a dynamic organisation with a dedicated staff team of eight and a committed membership spanning 41 European countries. We strive to be an effective catalyst for change, mobilising key actors and galvanising civil society action on an issue that was previously hidden and ignored.

Our London-based Secretariat coordinates the activities of our growing and diverse membership across Europe ranging from large international NGOs to grassroots and community organisations, legal advice agencies, thinktanks, stateless activists, and prominent international law experts.

## What we believe

**Everyone has the right to a nationality.**

We believe this must be respected and that the human rights of people who lack a nationality – stateless people – must be protected. We are dedicated to working with stateless people in Europe to advocate for their rights. We aim to reach our goals through law and policy development, awareness-raising, and capacity-building.



## Our current strategy to solve statelessness

Our strategic plan (2019-23) outlines how we are moving forward in the next stage of our journey, to capitalise on the strength of our membership and our authoritative voice on statelessness and translate this into tangible change for stateless people in Europe.

[Find out more about our future plans](#)

# Our staff



Our London-based secretariat works closely with our members to deliver activities, including to oversee project coordination, development, and fundraising.



**Chris Nash**

Director



**Nina Murray**

Head of Policy & Research



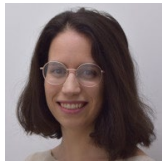
**Jan Brulc**

Head of Communications, Operations & Development



**Khadija Badri**

Advocacy & Communications Officer



**Patricia Cabral**

Legal Policy Officer



**Josephine Foster**

Operations & Partnerships Officer



**Liz Odette**

Finance Manager

# Members & Board of Trustees



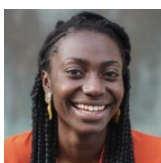
## Our members

We have over 160 members in 41 countries, which enables us to achieve change at regional and national levels. Over the last two years we were delighted to welcome 41 new members to the Network, 14 of which were individuals or community led organisations affected by statelessness.

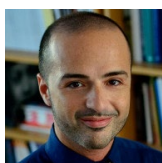


## Board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees has responsibility to oversee the governance of ENS with an operational focus on finance, funding, management and reporting.



**Christiana  
Bukalo**



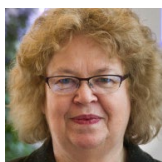
**Gábor Gyulai**



**Jack  
Heriz-Smith**



**Ivanka Kostic**



**Jean Lambert**



**Allan Leas**



**Anila Noor**



**Daniel O'Connor**



**Maurice Wren**

# Our activities & impact



## Strengthening our network's foundations: Secretariat restructure

ENS has been undergoing an exciting expansion and restructure of our Secretariat in response to our increased project commitments. Over the last three years, the ENS Secretariat has grown from three to eight staff, working on an increasing number, complexity and diversity of projects and activities. We have also established a Senior Management Team to help streamline decision-making.

We are confident that this expansion and restructure will allow us to strengthen our project coordination as well as streamline management and decision-making within the organisation, and our ability to respond and adapt to challenges such as COVID-19. Ultimately, it will bolster our work as a Network towards our vision of a Europe where everyone's right to a nationality is respected.



## Expanding our Board of Trustees

We have welcomed three new trustees to our Board. Jean Lambert, former Green MEP for London, brings her wealth of experience of engaging EU institutions. Anila Noor, founder of migrant and refugee-led organisation New Women Connectors brings knowledge and commitment to community organising and mainstreaming the voices of migrant and refugee women living across Europe. Christiana Bukalo is a social change maker and founder of [www.statefree.world](http://www.statefree.world) – a digital space, which connects stateless people and creates links with their allies.

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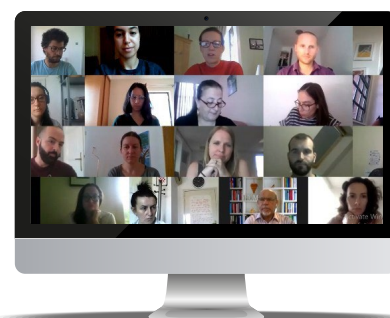


## Standing up for the rights of stateless people in the COVID-19 response

ENS has been monitoring the fast-moving regional picture in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 2020, we surveyed our members to understand how COVID-19 and governments' responses to the pandemic were affecting stateless people across Europe. Drawing on this, our [COVID-19 policy statement](#) recommended action in five areas that governments and regional institutions needed to urgently consider in responses to the pandemic. With funding from Rosa Luxembourg Stiftung we've expanded on this work and are planning to publish new research into the nexus between health rights and statelessness.

We believe responses to the pandemic must be developed with and informed by communities affected by statelessness. Individuals and community representatives from across Europe came together online in May 2020 with our support to discuss the consequences of COVID-19 and what needed to be done to address the emerging problems. The discussions were worked into a [position paper](#).

We also [came together](#) with 83 other civil society actors globally, including our sister networks and the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion, in urging states, donors & other stakeholders to protect & promote the rights of stateless people in their COVID-19 responses.



November 2020 – ENS has run a number of online consultations with our members and key stakeholders on the impact the pandemic has had on stateless people living in Europe.



## Building a diverse Europe-wide alliance

Over the last two years, ENS was delighted to welcome 41 new members to the Network. **Our membership** now includes over 160 members in 41 countries, strengthening our network and our reach across Europe. It is encouraging that 14 members have joined ENS either as individuals with experience of statelessness or organisations representing communities affected by statelessness, further increasing the participation of stateless people in our activities. This is a key objective under our current strategic plan.

In June 2019, we brought together our members collaborating on joint projects to discuss progress made, challenges faced and provide peer-to-peer feedback and advice on how to maintain and improve impact. Participants also attended Strategic Litigation and Community Engagement workshops to share knowledge and experiences and discuss how to develop the new ENS litigation database.

In November 2020, we brought together over 35 members at our first Annual General Conference held online. The conference was an important opportunity to update and consult members on our upcoming plans as a network, including on our research project on the nexus between statelessness and health rights in the context of COVID-19. We also discussed how we can work together to foster diverse and representative partnerships, ensuring stateless people and communities are included in the work we do.



Amsterdam, June 2019 – Over 30 ENS members gathered in the Netherlands to discuss progress made through joint projects and to plan future strategic litigation activities.

## Galvanising action to address statelessness in Spain and across Europe

Following the postponement of our major 2020 regional conference in Alicante, we organised a webinar series in partnership with our member **Fundación Cepaim**, seeking to shine a light on the key issues faced by stateless people in Spain and across Europe, and to identify routes to necessary reform.

We were pleased to be joined by over 180 participants for the first webinar in this series, who heard from a range of speakers discussing what Europe is – or should be – doing to better protect stateless people in these complex and challenging times. Following this webinar, a series of online discussions were organised to assess and address statelessness in Spain, outlining specific opportunities for law and policy reform in the national context.



You can watch the first webinar in the series **Addressing statelessness in Europe** on our Youtube channel.

## Fresh opportunities to tackle statelessness through a new Council of Europe initiative

ENS remains committed to advocating for pan-regional solutions to statelessness, and constructively engaging with different regional institutions such as the Council of Europe, to further raise the profile of statelessness within these institutions.

In June 2019, we attended an ad-hoc meeting on Statelessness Determination Procedures organised by the European Committee on Legal Co-operation (CDCJ), **providing expert input** and showcased our **Statelessness Index**, as an invaluable tool to support the CDCJ's initiative on statelessness. At the end of 2019, the CDCJ adopted a **report** from the meeting, confirming follow-up activities to be implemented over the next two years.

Part of the genesis for the CDCJ's work on statelessness can be traced back to our #StatelessKids campaign, which helped pave the way for the inclusion of an action on ensuring every child's right to a nationality in the Council of Europe's **Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe (2017-2019)**. ENS has also provided recommendations for a new Action Plan being developed by the Secretary General's Special Representative on Migration and Refugees and looks forward to continuing our strong collaboration with the Council of Europe.



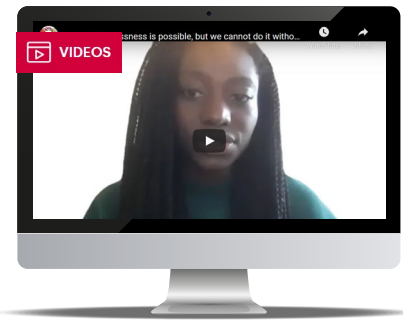
Strasbourg, June 2019 – ENS Director, Chris Nash, and Head of Policy & Research, Nina Murray, providing expert input at the CDCJ ad-hoc meeting on statelessness.

## Ending statelessness is possible, but we cannot do it without the people affected

Nobody understands the impact of living without a nationality better than **stateless people themselves**. They also know what solutions are required to better protect stateless people and to stop statelessness from happening in the future.

We are working hard to build long-term relationships with individuals and communities affected by statelessness. In 2019, we piloted a community engagement approach in three countries, working with ENS members in Spain, the Netherlands, and the UK to plan and deliver workshops with representatives from communities affected by statelessness. We also organised two workshops with refugees in Athens together with ENS member the Greek Forum for Refugees as part of our #StatelessJourneys work.

We originally planned to organise a regional workshop for stateless individuals and community representatives at our Annual General Conference in Alicante in May 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the postponement of an in-person conference, we instead organised a series of four online Zoom calls in May focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. After seeking feedback from participants, we have since organised a Zoom call once a month for the group, providing a space for mutual solidarity and support, information sharing, skills building, and identifying potential opportunities for joint action and activities.



Ending statelessness is possible, but we cannot do it without the people affected by it.

## Bolstering global efforts to end statelessness

In October 2019, the UN Refugee Agency convened the **High-Level Segment on Statelessness**, marking the halfway point of the #IBelong campaign to end statelessness by 2024. It was great to hear the High Commissioner for Refugees acknowledging work by ENS and other regional networks to link up efforts of national NGOs and put pressure on States towards achieving the eradication of statelessness. ENS prepared a **briefing note** ahead of the event outlining our main concerns and the actions needed if Europe is to end statelessness, which we shared with government delegations we met in Geneva.

At the event, more than 85 governments, civil society and international and regional organisations pledged over 300 new commitments to end statelessness, in what was described as a **historic moment in the global fight against statelessness**. Several European Governments **made concrete pledges**, including following advocacy efforts by ENS and our members.

ENS Director Chris Nash moderated a **civil society side event**, co-organised together with other global NGOs in partnership with UNHCR. The event was introduced by the High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi and included an address by Azizbek Ashurov, the 2019 Nansen Award winner for his work on ending statelessness in Kyrgyzstan. ENS joined a global coalition of civil society organisations in issuing a **statement calling for action** by governments and the UN with the support of civil society, to address seven key challenges to end statelessness.



Geneva, October 2019 – UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi speaking at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness on the work of civil society in support of the #IBelong campaign, alongside ENS Director Chris Nash and Nansen Award Winner Azizbek Ashurov.



## Collaboration through international human rights advocacy

Statelessness is fundamentally a human rights issue and one of the ways in which we seek to address it is through advocacy and engagement with human rights mechanisms. In partnership with the Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion and our national members, we have made submissions to the UN's Universal Periodic Review process on [Belgium](#), [Denmark](#), [Latvia](#), [Italy](#), [Bulgaria](#), [Croatia](#), [Turkey](#), [Spain](#), [Austria](#) and [Slovenia](#), highlighting statelessness and nationality rights-related issues at national level and making recommendations for action. We also provided submissions on Hungary and the UK to the Working Group of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the right of every child to acquire a nationality. The [Statelessness Index](#) has been an invaluable tool to support human rights monitoring and advocacy, alongside the expertise and input of our national members.



November 2020 – ENS Individual Associate Member, Leonhard Call, giving an oral statement at the 37th Universal Periodic Review Pre-Session on Austria. ENS and ISI made a joint written submission on Austria in partnership with Asylkoordination and Diakonie.

## Continuing our work to end childhood statelessness

Through our continued collaboration and engagement with regional forums, we have been working hard to seize new opportunities to further advance regional action to ensure no child grows up stateless in Europe. In early 2021, the European Commission will adopt and publish a new EU [Strategy on the Rights of the Child](#), providing a framework for EU action on children's rights. ENS has been closely engaging with the development of the strategy, contributing to a [joint position paper](#) endorsed by 27 other organisations including UNICEF, and presenting at the [13th European Forum on the Rights of the Child](#). We submitted a [position paper](#) to the Commission's online public consultation on the strategy, laying out clear and targeted recommendations for action.

Our [policy briefing](#), developed as part of the Initiative on Children in Migration, further outlines recommended actions at national and regional level to ensure the right to a nationality for children in migration in Europe. You can [watch the webinar](#) which provides an overview of the briefing's key points and recommendations on our YouTube channel.

We were also invited to participate in a civil society roundtable with Members of the European Parliament from the [Intergroup on Children's Rights](#) to develop its new work programme, and joined an informal coalition of international and European NGOs working to mainstream child rights across the EU institutions and Member States.

With the support of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, we started our 'explore and test' project aiming to evidence and [promote the reduction of childhood statelessness in the UK](#). We are working with our UK members and other key stakeholders, including communities affected by statelessness, to better understand, promote solutions and capacity building initiatives towards reducing childhood statelessness.



Brussels, November 2019. ENS attended the EU's High-Level Conference marking the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Tackling Roma statelessness and antigypsyism

In October 2020, the European Commission launched the new [EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation](#). Positively, the framework explicitly calls for stateless Roma and those who face barriers to accessing civil documentation to be included in national action plans, and, in its guidance, the Commission calls for countries to end statelessness among Roma populations. These commitments are a positive step towards ensuring the right to a nationality for Romani people in Europe, but will require a strong focus on implementation, working closely with Roma civil society and communities.

We are already working with the Regional Cooperation Council, Open Society Foundations Roma Initiatives Office, our members, and other actors in the Western Balkans to support governments to implement commitments they made at the end of 2020 to adopt roadmaps towards ending statelessness in the region under the Berlin Process and Poznan Declaration.

We submitted a [written submission](#) on progress towards addressing statelessness in EU Enlargement countries to inform the European Commission's (DG NEAR) 2020 Enlargement Package. The submission covers six countries and is based on information provided by our members working at national level, our Statelessness Index, and our [#RomaBelong](#) project.

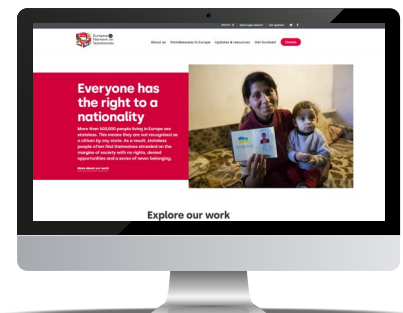
We [continue to build links with and work alongside Roma civil society](#), laying the ground for a new project beginning in 2021 to influence regional and national policy agendas towards ending Roma statelessness in Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.



Vienna, October 2019 – Alongside ENS Head of Policy and Research Nina Murray, European Roma Rights Centre, and TLAS, ENS Head of Policy & Research participated in a joint UNHCR-OSCE practical seminar in Vienna on childhood statelessness, speaking on a panel about Roma statelessness in the Western Balkans and Ukraine.

## Finding and engaging new supporters

During the pandemic, digital communication has become even more important in helping us achieve our main objectives to drive change through increasing awareness, working together with stateless people and mobilising key audiences to act. Our [new website](#) helps us better present the main issues and our work to address these. For stateless people, it provides important information about where to find legal advice and support, with the option to search through our members who provide legal advice by country.



## #StatelessJourneys – Addressing statelessness in Europe's refugee response

Statelessness is often overlooked in migration and asylum debates. It is a hidden but very real issue affecting many refugees and migrants in Europe. In 2019, together with our members, we created an online [#StatelessJourneys knowledge hub](#), with tools and information to help protect the rights of stateless refugees. In partnership with our members, we organised information sessions across Europe in 2019, published information about statelessness and nationality rights in key countries of origin of refugees (Syria, Kuwait, Iran, Iraq, and Myanmar), organised online meetings and webinars, and translated leaflets for refugees and asylum seekers affected by statelessness (and those supporting them).

In 2020 we secured a four-year grant from Comic Relief to continue our work on forced migration with our members, building links with refugee community organisations, delivering training and capacity building, researching the particular risks of statelessness faced by refugee children, and carrying out targeted advocacy and awareness-raising. In 2021 we will be launching a new regional campaign to raise awareness about the protection gaps facing stateless refugees in Europe and mobilise new audiences to take action. We will support this with regional advocacy for law and policy reform leading to improved routes to protection for stateless refugees in Europe.



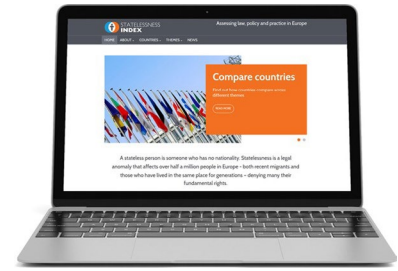
Athens, June 2019. Together with our member the Greek Council for Refugees, we brought together key stakeholders to discuss moving towards a more effective system in Greece of identification, determination and protection of stateless persons.

## Statelessness Index – Comparing how different countries address statelessness

With over 19,000 users since it was launched, the [Statelessness Index](#) has become an important tool for raising awareness and focusing advocacy on the actions needed to end statelessness and improve the treatment of stateless people around Europe.

Over the last two years, we have expanded our Statelessness Index to cover 24 countries (27 from March 2021). Each country profile includes detailed analysis of law, policy, and practice on statelessness, which is updated yearly in collaboration with our national partners. The analysis is also available as short, translated country briefings, which provide a summary of five main thematic areas and set out recommendations for governments on how to improve the protection of stateless people and prevent and reduce statelessness in their national context.

In 2020, we published the first in a series of thematic briefings using extensive country analysis of law, policy, and practice from our StatelessnessINDEX. The [briefing](#) examines data from 24 countries to identify good practice and barriers relating to birth registration. The briefing was launched at a [webinar](#), organised in collaboration with the European Parliament Intergroup on Children's Rights. We presented the briefing's analysis and recommendations to over 500 registered participants.



The Statelessness Index is an online comparative tool that assesses how countries in Europe protect stateless people and what they are doing to prevent and reduce statelessness.

## Our new strategic plan: 'Solving Statelessness in Europe'

In May 2019, we published our new five-year strategic plan [Solving Statelessness in Europe](#). The plan outlines how we intend to move forward in the next stage of our journey and capitalise on the strength of our membership and achievements to date. A key overarching priority is to improve our work with stateless people and community representatives, working together to diversify the voices speaking out on statelessness. Other strategic goals One and Three focus on mobilising action to address statelessness, and monitoring and informing law, policy, and practice. Our [Statelessness Index](#) in particular, is increasing our ability to effectively contribute expert commentary and analysis to key debates, policy agendas and human rights advocacy processes. We also aim to strengthen collaboration and achieve change through a pan-European network by maintaining an effective and sustainable membership that is diverse, informed, engaged, and resourced to work on statelessness.

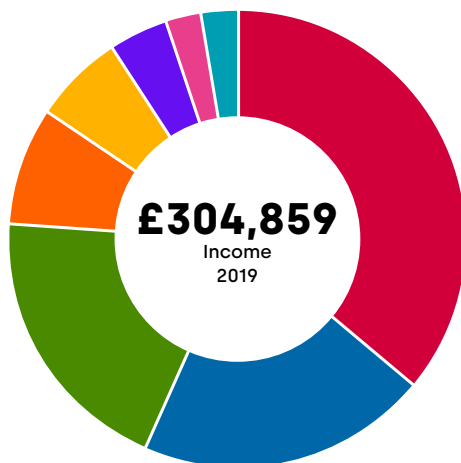




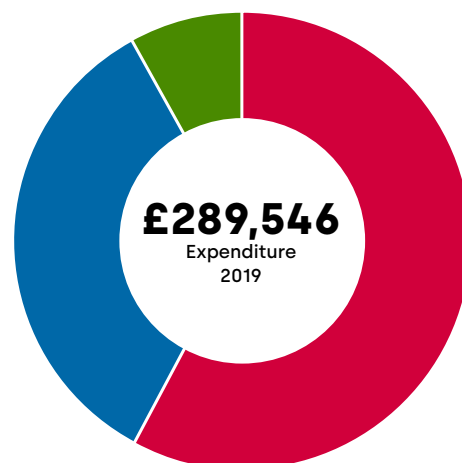
## Finances

Like many charities, our work is funded through financial contributions from a variety of supporters, foundations and organisations.

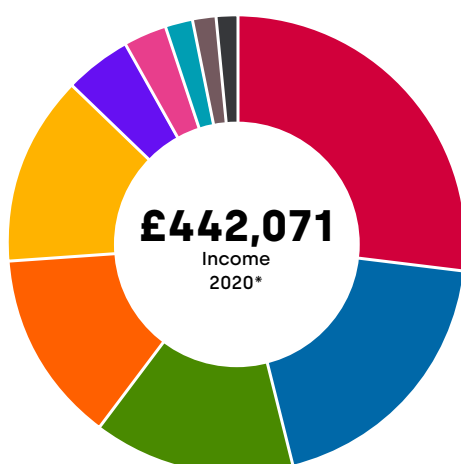
More information on our finances can be found in our annual [Trustees' Report and Accounts](#).



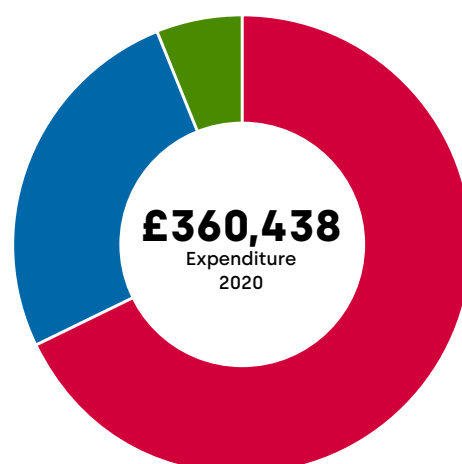
- UN Refugee Agency 36%
- Oak Foundation 21%
- Sigrid Rausing Trust 20%
- EPIM 8%
- Open Society Initiative for Europe 6%
- European Roma Rights Centre 4%
- Robbins Family Charitable Fund 3%
- Other 3%



- Staff 58%
- Activities and Project Costs 34%
- Governance and Core Costs 8%



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- Comic Relief 19%
- Oak Foundation 14%
- Sigrid Rausing Trust 14%
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation 14%
- Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung 5%
- European Roma Rights Centre 3%
- EPIM 2%
- Robbins Family Charitable Fund 2%
- Other 1%



- Staff 68%
- Activities and Project Costs 26%
- Governance and Core Costs 6%

\* These funds comprise monies from grants which are required to be expended by 31 December 2021.

# Funders

We would like to acknowledge the generous support we currently receive from Oak Foundation, Comic Relief, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, Sigrid Rausing Trust, European Programme for Integration and Migration (EPIM), Paul Hamlyn Foundation, European Roma Rights Centre, Akin Gump Strauss Heuer & Feld LLP, Robbins Family Charitable Fund, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the Foundation Open Society Institute in cooperation with the Roma Initiatives of the Open Society Foundations and the Initiative for Europe.



Our work is also made possible through pro-bono collaborations and knowledge exchange partnerships with several companies, organisations, and academic institutions. We would like to acknowledge the support of DLA Piper LLP, Akin Gump Strauss Heuer & Feld LLP, McDermott Will & Emery LLP, and the University of Bristol.

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