

Annual Report 2024

Dost Centre for Young Refugees and Migrants

Newham Leisure Centre

281 Prince Regent Lane

London, E13 8SD



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Charity Number: 1173622

Welcome from the Board

Welcome to the 2023/24 Annual Report for Dost Centre for Young Refugees and Migrants.

During the 2023/24 period, as the demand for support grew, so too did Dost's commitment to its core mission: providing safe and supportive space and services for young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds from all over London, to feel empowered and equipped to reach their full potential.

More and more young people continue to be forced to leave their home countries, many arriving in the UK without family and having survived unimaginable migration journeys.

As the UK asylum system, as well as narratives around those seeking refuge, grow more hostile, Dost Centre recognises the need not only for support to navigate the complexities of building a life here, but also for a place that offers emotional support, trust and community connection.

The numbers, testimonies and successes highlighted in this report offer an insight into the highly impactful service that Dost Centre has once again delivered this year, that Marian and the staff and volunteer team have worked so hard to achieve, and that we as Trustees are immensely proud of.

Dost Centre punches well above its weight with the range and number of holistic and inclusive activities being provided - twice weekly youth club sessions, trips, residentials, English classes and other skill-building projects - during which we see the young people develop, learn, build friendships and create memories.

We hear from them, as well as from carers, local services and partners, how invaluable these provisions are in fostering hope, agency and a sense of belonging and fun. This year, we were also privileged to strengthen our network of partners, funders and donors, all of whom play an essential role in making our work possible and opening up more pathways for these young individuals to thrive.

These partnerships are a testament to the strength that collective action brings, and we are deeply grateful for each contributor's dedication.

At the very heart of Dost Centre are people and relationships. The Trustees cannot thank the staff and volunteers enough, for their commitment to building trusted relationships with each individual and supporting Marian to deliver a truly engaging service.

As we look forward to the coming year, we are inspired to continue pushing boundaries, exploring new ways to support, and in creating spaces where every young refugee and migrant feels valued and supported.

We hope you enjoy this report, which is a tribute to their strengths and an invitation for continued collaboration as we work toward a more inclusive, compassionate future.

If you'd like to get involved, or find out more about Dost Centre, please get in touch.

Thank you - Bejal Shah - Trustee since July 2023, On behalf of the Board of Trustees

Welcome from the Director

It's been another busy year at Dost, with 224 sessions over the year and 517 young people attending. This number has gone down since last year, which may be due to changes in Social Workers, Foster Carers, Supported Housing Providers and new staff not knowing about Dost as well as the fact that many Oyster Cards for young people didn't work for over 2 months, which meant that travel was not subsidised or free. It would also appear that less young people are being housed in London and more seem to be losing their age assessments and being moved to Hotels or other cities. It's still a lot of young people!

Our staff team has remained the same since last year, with most staff working at Dost for more than 2 years and up to 14 years, which means that we have a consistent team who can offer the young people stability and some kind of sense of security and we can build much stronger, more meaningful relationships.

Our volunteers also remain committed and volunteer regularly, which is beneficial both for themselves and for the young people and for Dost as an organisation.

At every level of Dost, we listen to and involve the young people and have members on the Board, the staff and volunteer team who have lived experience of being in the asylum system, (either in the past or at present); therefore we are able to ensure that we remain relatable to the young people and have people who can directly identify with their situation and can often speak their language as well.

Being able to plan and run so many trips and residentials with and for the young people, means that we get to really know them and see them in a relaxed environment, where they feel safe enough to open up and to be themselves; that's what I love most about Dost! I've been on around 120 residentials whilst at Dost and they are all an experience, if nothing else!

So much of what we do and why we are successful at it, is due to the relationships; often very long term, that we build up with the young people and I love being able to watch them grow up, develop, build in confidence and make their way in life; it really is amazing when you see and hear what they have achieved, given all the obstacles they have had to overcome..well done to you all! Here's to next year!

Marian Spiers, Director
Director - since June 2009



Our Aims

Dost: (which means friend in a number of languages); Pashtu, Dari, Hindi, Urdu) , was established as an independent Charity in 2017 and has gone from strength to strength, seeing around 500-600 young people each year with constant new arrivals.

Our aim is to advance in life and relieve the needs of young people from a refugee and migrant background and those seeking asylum.

We work with young people, aged 13-19 years of age, from all across London, to feel empowered and equipped to reach their full potential, by providing a varied and diverse programme of physical and educational activities in order to reduce their isolation, improve physical and mental well-being and increase their skills, access to opportunities and to develop capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as independent, mature and responsible individuals and ensure they are not excluded on the grounds of their social and economic position.



Our Impact in 2024

517 Young People

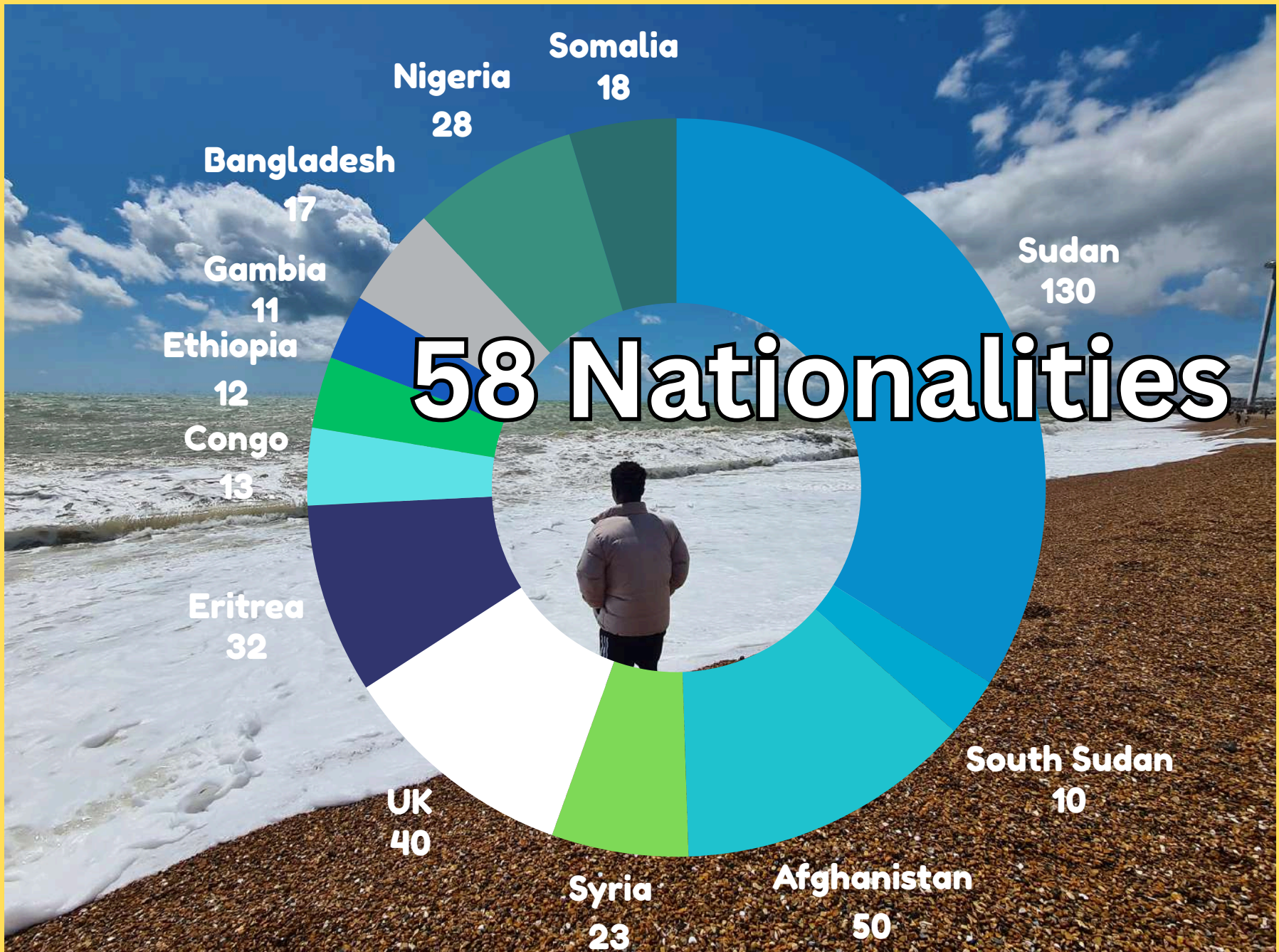
497 Male

20 Female

**6434 Individual
Attendances**

224 Sessions





58 Nationalities



90 Youth Club Sessions



**7 Residential Trips
29 days away**



9 Jack Petchey Award Winners



33 English Classes



3 Film making Sessions



**50 Bike Referrals
(to Bike Project)**



7 Breadwinners Graduates



42 Day Trips



9 Employability Sessions

Our Residentials in 2024



January - 3 days at Woodrow High House, Amerhsam - 30 young people

April - 5 days at Kingswood, North Wales - 20 young people

May - 5 days at Wey Island Trust, Addlestone - 14 young people

August - 3 days at Wey Island Trust, Addlestone - 18 young people

August - 5 days at Kingswood, Isle of Wight - 14 young people

August - 4 days at the Quadrangle, Kent - 11 young people

December - 4 days at the Quadrangle, Kent - 12 young people

Our Day Trips in 2024



Ice-skating

Skateboarding

Football Tournament/ matches

Theatre Trips

Boat Trips

Paddleboarding

Speedboating

Brighton

Cambridge

BMX'ing

Swimming/ Waterpark

Cinema

10 Pin Bowling

Toca Social

First Aid Session

Restuarants

Water Wipeout

London Zoo

Watching Football/ Basketball/

Baseball Matches

Let's hear from the young people!



Dost is like....

well it's like coming to my family...

with communication and lots of fun.

We can learn new things in Dost and make friends and have lots of celebrations and enjoying.

I like when we go to the cinema and 10 pin bowling ..when we watch a movie we can learn new words and in bowling we do team work, which is one of the best things in my life, because its important for my future.

Now we understand how to communicate to people and the public outside and if we go to work, we will know what we have to do.

M, Iran, Aged 16

116 attendances since July 2023



93 attendances since May 2024

**I want to learn something.
I enjoy playing football, pool and
the trips.**

**We went to the Isle of Wight and went to
the beach and to the mountains.
I have learned reading and I make
friends here.**

**All staff and all people
are good here.**

**E, South Sudan
Aged 16**

**I like the people and I
like everything.**

**I have so much fun. I did
ice-skating for the first time and I
liked it and I fell over!
My English is getting better.**

H, Senegal, Aged 18

29 attendances since July 2024





I come to Dost to meet my friends and I enjoy my time and I get a lovely time with them.

I learn a lot of experience when I come here - you have to be patient in this life and you have to be humble with people.

I enjoy because I practise my English and I learn new words from people.

I like the staff because they are so kind with us, (especially Marian).

I come here for sport - football, basketball and pool. I get a lot of things from the trips and I visit new places around the UK, like Wey Island and Isle of Wight.

We love Dost like our Mother.

115 attendances since April 2024

Jack Petchey Award Winner October 2024

Z, Sudan, Aged 16





Hi, I'm talking about the about Dost today.

Dost is wonderful people - staff and the young people, all the people from the Dost they're sooo good and lovely people and kindly people and also they're helping you, they will support you, especially Miss Marian and Emad, Khaled, there's a lot of staff they are so amazing, all staff from Dost they're so amazing.



Also, we did a lot of activities and trips.

I liked many of the trips we went - every time when we went to trips with Dost, we would play football, tennis, badminton, cleaning, cooking.

We knew each other different people ,we had a good communication and I will say thank you for everything.

Thank you for supporting us and thank you for so much from me.

A, Somalia, Aged 18

**149 attendances, since February 2023
Jack Petchey Award Winner October 2024**



We play football. I see my new friends, from my country.

All people are good, all friendly. All trips good and Dost help me with everything.

I learn English. Kelly good teacher - don't be shy, just speak English!

I am very, very happy to win Jack Petchey Award. I appreciate.

I always enjoy 5 day holidays.

A, Sudan, Aged 17

96 attendances since June 2024

Jack Petchey Award Winner October 2024



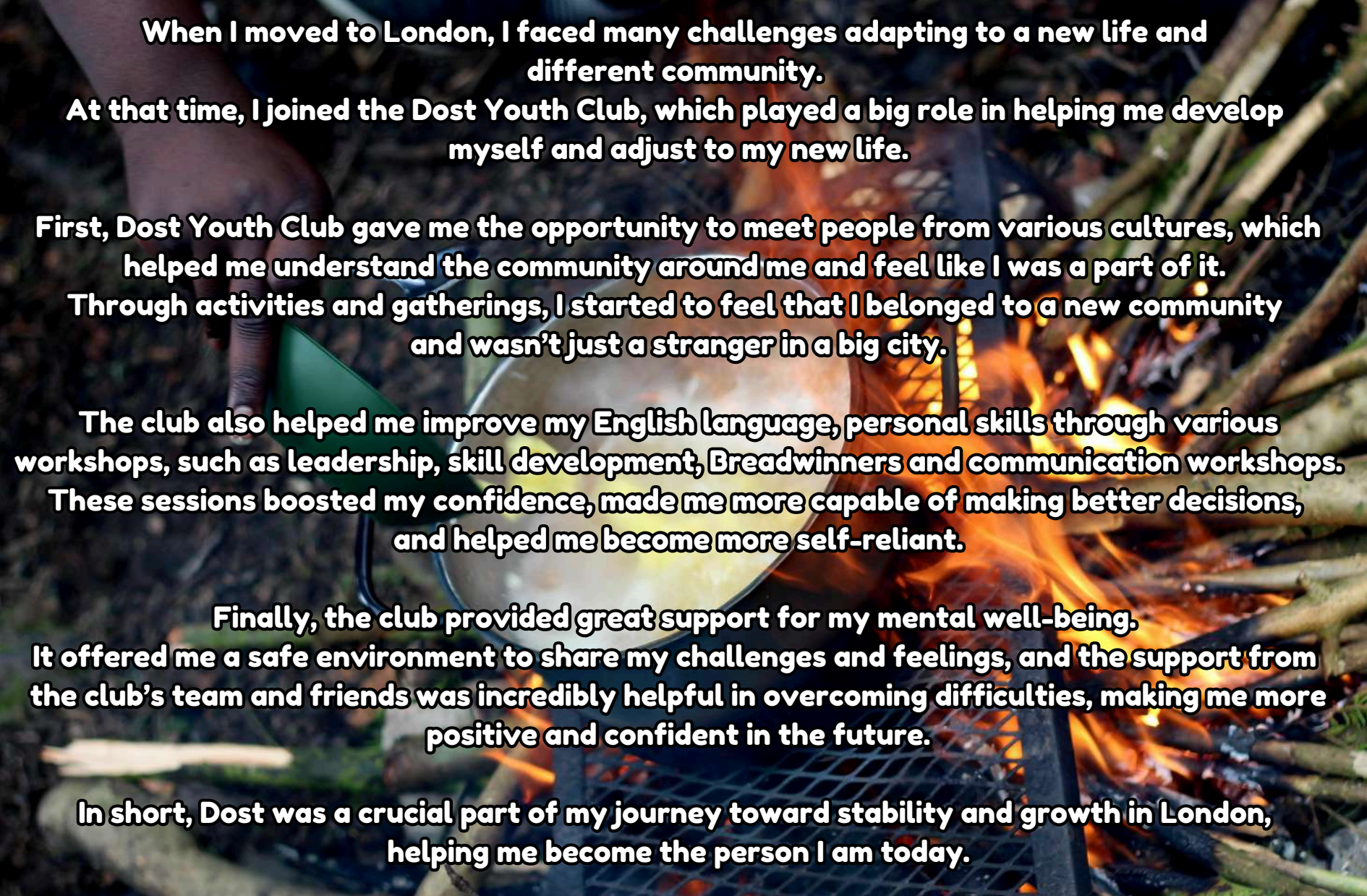
**I come here to play football
and see my friends and see Marian.
I enjoy the trips, especially when we
go on the 5 day day trips.
I made new friends here and I
improved my English.
Before I came to Dost, I didn't have
friends.**

Y, Syria, Aged 14



296 attendances since October 2021

Jack Petchey Award Winner October 2023

A close-up photograph of a person's hands cooking over a campfire. The person is holding a green funnel over a metal pot that sits on a metal grate over the fire. The fire is made of sticks and is burning brightly. The background is dark and out of focus.

When I moved to London, I faced many challenges adapting to a new life and different community.

At that time, I joined the Dost Youth Club, which played a big role in helping me develop myself and adjust to my new life.

First, Dost Youth Club gave me the opportunity to meet people from various cultures, which helped me understand the community around me and feel like I was a part of it.

Through activities and gatherings, I started to feel that I belonged to a new community and wasn't just a stranger in a big city.

The club also helped me improve my English language, personal skills through various workshops, such as leadership, skill development, Breadwinners and communication workshops. These sessions boosted my confidence, made me more capable of making better decisions, and helped me become more self-reliant.

Finally, the club provided great support for my mental well-being. It offered me a safe environment to share my challenges and feelings, and the support from the club's team and friends was incredibly helpful in overcoming difficulties, making me more positive and confident in the future.

In short, Dost was a crucial part of my journey toward stability and growth in London, helping me become the person I am today.

M, Sudan, Aged 18

**124 attendances since May 2023
Jack Petchey Award Winner February 2024**

I like to going dost because I like to play football with young people from dost, they are very friendly and now they are like brothers and I want to go with them to trip to make fun and I learn from Dost.

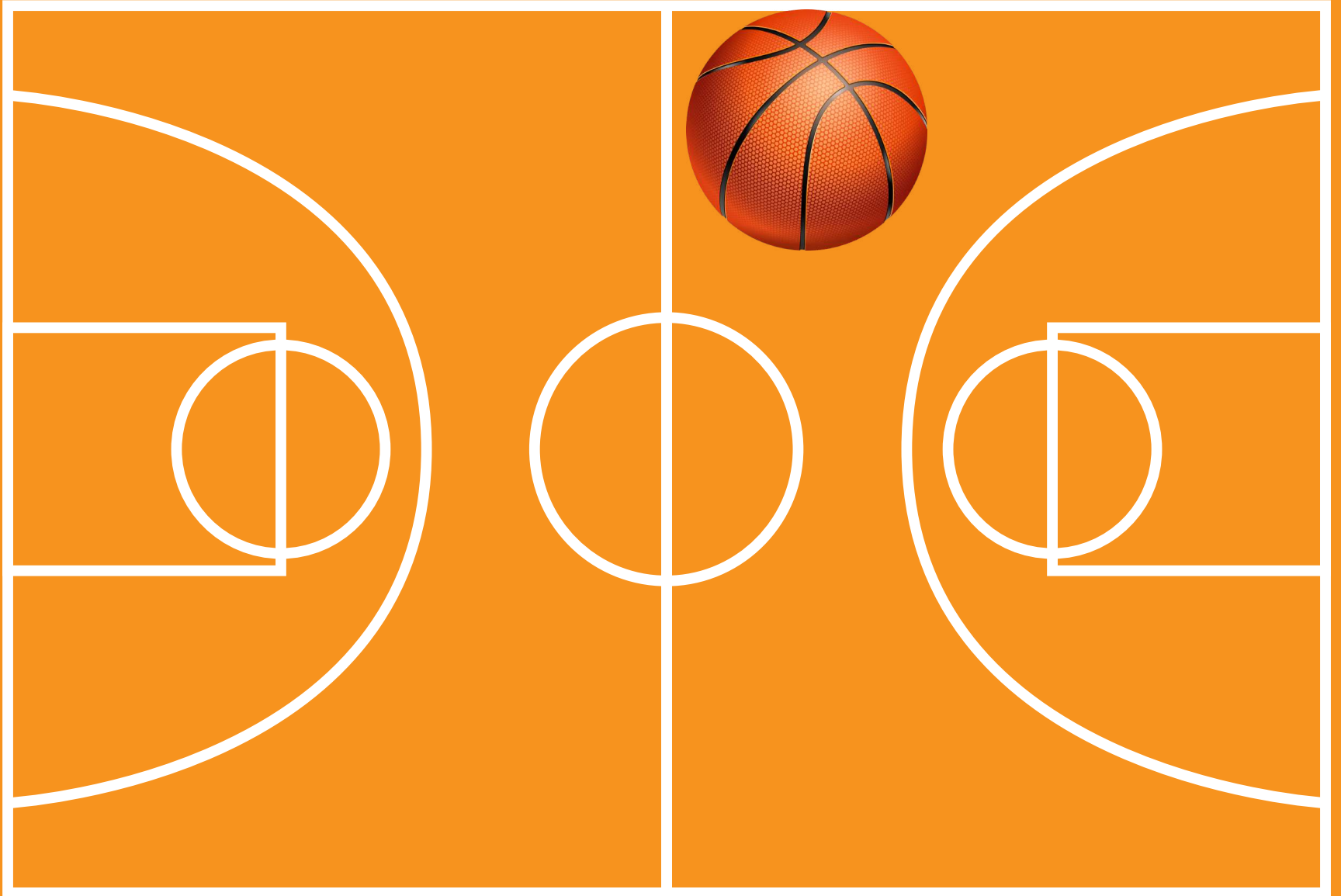
Dost helping people who have any problems and communication.

Dost is good for young people - helping to good communication with new people and clubs.

D, Eritrea, Aged 19



**214 attendances since December 2021
Jack Petchey Award Winner October 2023**



Let's hear from Staff/ Volunteers!

A man in a green jacket and dark pants stands on a rocky outcrop in a forest, with his arms raised in a celebratory gesture. The background is filled with tall, thin trees and a clear blue sky. The right side of the image features a green, textured background.

"I started with Dost as a young player, and now I'm enjoying coaching and inspiring here.

I love seeing young people stay active, make friends, and feel like they belong. Dost gives them a safe space to grow, and I'm proud to be part of it."

Emad Hamid

**Young person, volunteer and staff member
since June 2022**



“Working with Dost, first as a volunteer and now as a staff member, has always been rewarding and fun.

It’s especially rewarding working closely with the young people in the weekly English class. I think that the language learning that the Dost class provides, not only helps the young people in their daily lives, but also to feel more confident and at ease with life in the UK generally.

It’s fun working at Dost, because there’s always humour involved in whatever Dost does!”

Kelly Williams, Volunteer and ESOL Tutor since 2019

“I enjoy volunteering at Dost, it's a part of my week I look forward to. I'm proud that Dost support and champion young people facing great adversity. Sessions are consistent and reliable giving attendees a safe place to count on. Young people have the opportunity to enjoy themselves and build strong friendships. Dost is important because joy is recognised as a fundamental part of wellbeing.”



Charlotte Clements , Volunteer since April 2023



“My name is Khaled and I’m from Yemen and I came to the UK last year as a refugee. When I first heard about the Dost club, I didn’t know much about it, but I was eager to get involved.

Volunteering here has been an incredible experience.

Life at the club feels so natural, with friendly interactions between the manager, coaches, volunteers, and, of course, the children/ young people.

The kids are wonderful and there’s always something fun happening.

We have activities like football, basketball, volleyball, and even table games that keep everyone engaged.

I’ve also had the chance to go on trips with the club, exploring places like Wey Island, Brighton, and Cambridge.

We’ve spent time in parks, gone swimming and enjoyed so many memorable outings together.

What stands out most is the strong sense of family. I feel like I’m not just watching over the children/ young people but also sharing these experiences with my colleagues.

We’ve truly become one big family.

I want to extend my sincere thanks to the manager, Marian, for giving me this opportunity to volunteer. Her support and dedication have made such a positive impact on my experience here.

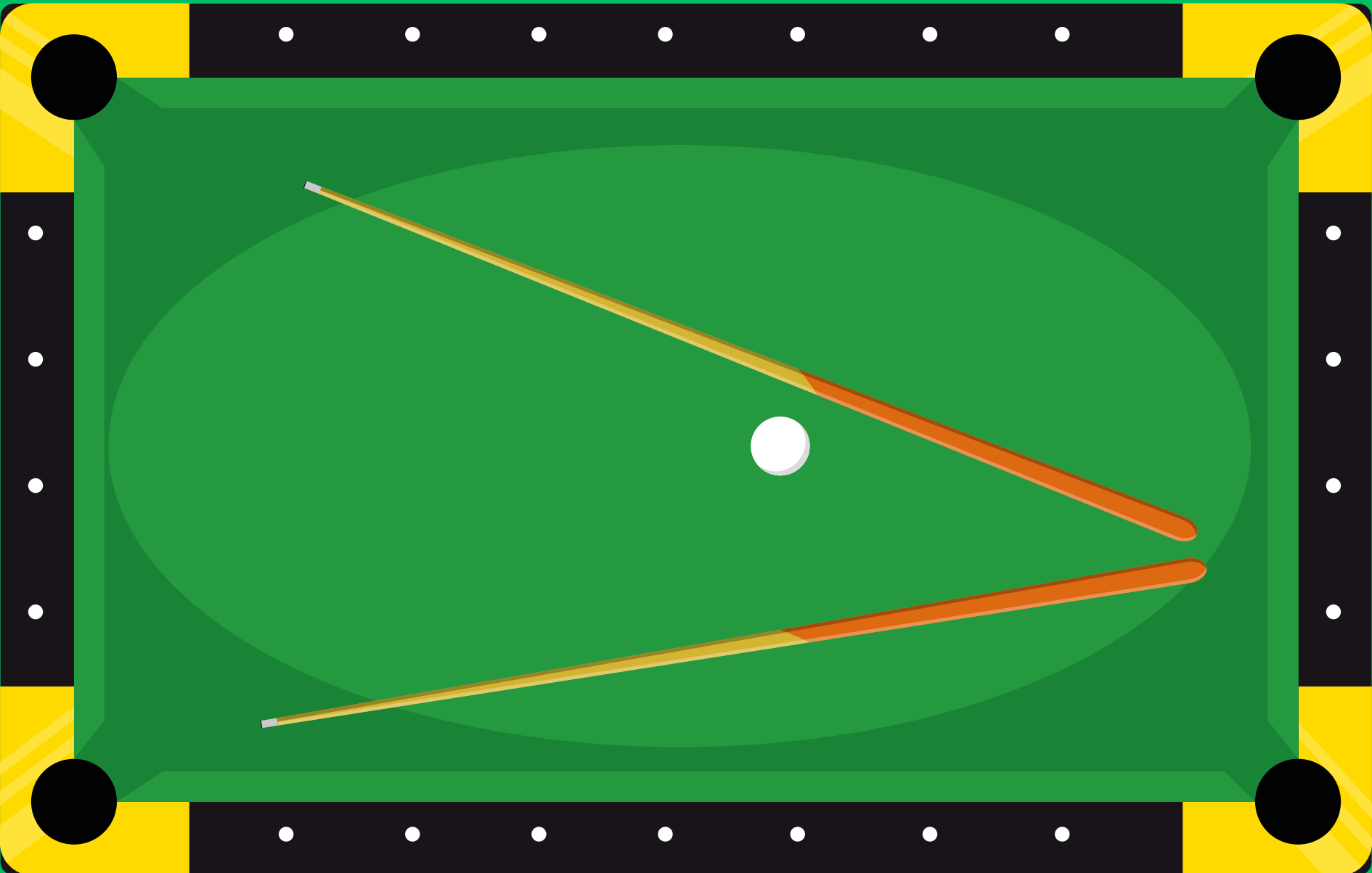
It’s inspiring to see her commitment to the club and to all the children / young people we work with. I truly appreciate the chance to be part of this team.

I wish everyone at the club, from my fellow volunteers to all the wonderful kids, all the best in their journeys.

This experience has shown me the strength of community and the joy of giving back, and I hope we continue to grow together as one family.”

Khaled, Abdul Rahman, Volunteer since May 2024

Let's hear from the Board!



“Being part of Dost is a great privilege.

Marian and the team bring together so many young people who have faced great difficulties.

Through a packed programme at the youth club and a variety of trips and breaks away, Dost creates spaces that offer a chance to connect, have fun and learn. This year, the centre feels more important than ever since the young people, on top of the challenges they have already met, are increasingly faced with a culture of anger and hostility, rather than compassion and care.”



Michael Havard, Trustee since June 2017

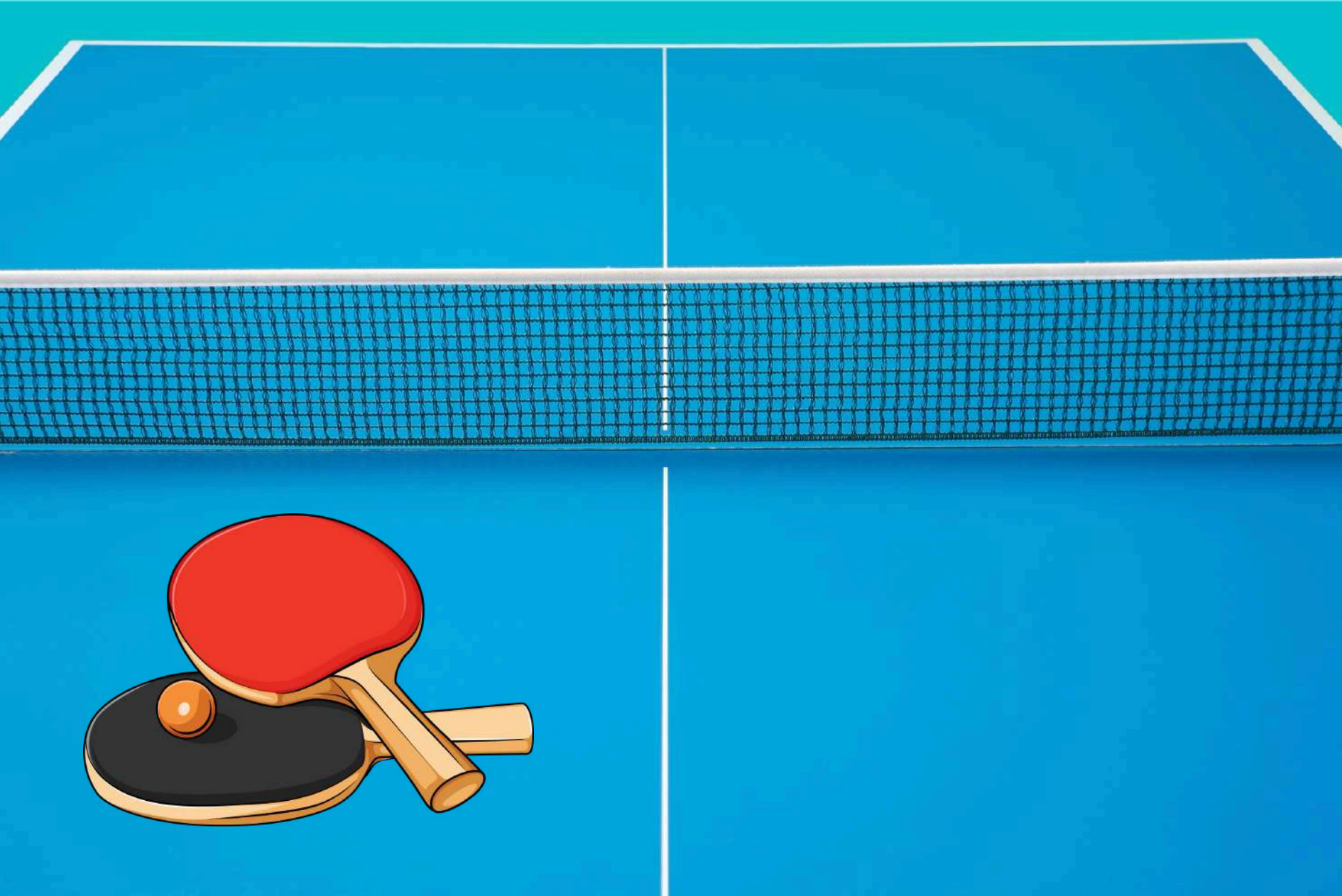
“Dost does amazing work to support young refugees from all over the world.

As a Trustee, it’s great to be able to support Marian and the team, helping them steer the organisation and offering support where I can.”

Zoe Mellis, Trustee - since February 2023



Let's hear from partners/ funders!





“As the Sports Development Officer at London Youth,

I see firsthand how Dost’s work transforms lives by empowering young refugees and asylum seekers in our communities.

Dost, as a valued member of London Youth, consistently attends our training sessions and sports events, demonstrating an inspiring commitment to the holistic development of the youth they serve. Their approach exemplifies the impact of high-quality youth work—providing a safe space, advocacy, and support for young people navigating challenging transitions.

By addressing the unique needs of refugees, Dost not only offers critical resources but fosters a sense of belonging, resilience, and positive identity, helping young people thrive against the odds.

Their work is a powerful reminder of how compassionate, well-structured support can unlock potential and build a stronger, more inclusive society.”

**Carl Reid, Sports Development Officer, London Youth
Funder**



“Dost Centre plays an important role in helping young refugees find a place where they feel safe, connected, and genuinely welcomed. It’s not just about helping them settle in—it’s about creating a community where they can start to feel at home, make friends, and find the support they need to thrive in a new country. We’ve seen first-hand through People Powered Places just how impactful the Dost Centre is, not just for these young people but for everyone in Newham, creating a more connected, welcoming community.”



**Natasha Abankwah
Community Neighbourhood Senior Officer | Plaistow
London Borough of Newham
Funder**

“As a charity based in London that also works with young people, we are in awe of the work Dost is doing to help young people.

From talking to many of the young people who have been a part of Dost over the last 5 years, it is clear how thankful they are to Dost for helping them when they arrive in London.

It provides an opportunity for young people to feel a sense of belonging when they arrive and to access opportunities and a network that can allow them to choose positive pathways for their future.

It is no coincidence that the best of our student athletes in the last 5 years have been students from Dost.

Having been involved in youth development in London for the last 8 years, in our opinion Dost is making the biggest impact of any organisation we have seen in that time.



The impact and provision is absolutely remarkable.

The fact that young people travel across London to attend Dost activities is testament to the friendly and supportive environment Marian and Dost provide. Her commitment to helping young people is astonishing.”

**Darren Wiltshire, co-founder,
Estudiantes
Partner**

Our Trustees

A person with their back to the camera, wearing a grey hoodie, is looking out over a large, crowded football stadium. The pitch is green and a match is in progress. The stands are filled with spectators.

**Jim Minton - Chair
June 2017 - present**

**Michael Havard - Treasurer
June 2017 - present**

**Tommy Edwards - Trustee
December 2018 - present**

**Stella Ogunlade - Trustee
January 2021 - present**

**Winnie Sham - Trustee
June 2022 - present**

**Zoe Mellis - Trustee
February 2023 - present**

**Bejal Shah - Trustee
July 2023 - present**

Our Staff

Marian Spiers – Director 2009 – present

Richard Shittu – Volleyball Coach/Youth Worker 2010 – present

Wendy Lee – Accountant 2018 – present

Kelly Williams – ESOL Tutor/ Youth Worker 2019 – present

Coltrane Morley-Williams – Football Coach 2019 – present

Ali Abbas Alshimari – Football Coach/ Youth Worker 2021 – present

Emad Hamid – Football Coach 2022 – present

Carl Reyes – Youth Worker 2023 – present



Our Volunteers



Khaled Moqbel

Charlotte Clements

Mohamed Easa Ahmed Ibrahim

Thomas Madrell

Abdalbari Mohamed Emam

Anei Atem Akoon

Fabrizio Radice

Kanan Thiyagarjah

Marielle Le Masle

Lex Karlin

Sofia Weber Sheldon

Alexa Sheldon

Rukkaya Khan

Rosamond Murdoch

Kazeem Anifowose

Our Supporters and Partners

[Capital Kids Cricket](#)
[Counterculture](#)
[Custom House Library](#)
[Lee Valley Regional Park Authority](#)
[Goods for Good](#)
[Newham Libraries](#)
[Iroko Theatre Company](#)
[Aquapaddle](#)
[Toca Social](#)
[Thames Rib Experience](#)
[Wey Island Trust](#)
[Parliament Hill Lido](#)
[The Bike Project](#)
[Surrey Hills and Rivers](#)
[Odeon Cinema](#)
[Hollywood Bowl](#)
[Breadwinners](#)
[Mouth That Roars](#)
[Migrant Help](#)
[TableTennis England](#)
[Sadlers Wells](#)
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[Woodrow High House](#)
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[London Lions](#)
[Care4Calais](#)
[YourStance](#)
[Calling London](#)
[Mental Health UK](#)
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Our Funders and Donors

BBC CHILDREN IN NEED

STREETGAMES

JACK PETCHEY

LONDON YOUTH

LONDON SPORT

L.B. NEWHAM

SPORTED

GROCCERS HALL

ALBERT HUNT TRUST

UK YOUTH/ PEARS FOUNDATION

MIGRATIONWORK TRUST/ WEAVING BONDS

LYLE'S LOCAL FUND

BARCLAYS COMMUNITY FOOTBALL FUND

THE BRYAN GUINNESS CHARITABLE TRUST

LONDON MARATHON CHARITABLE TRUST

BASKTEBALL ENGLAND

FOOTBALL FOUNDATION

LONDON CHURCHES REFUGEE FUND

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY – AWARDS FOR ALL ENGLAND

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY – COMMUNITY FUND

OUR NEWHAM LEARNING AND SKILLS/ONLS

KFC FOUNDATION

RESETTLEMENT UK



STORM BRYSON
KATIE SHAKERIFAR
NAVJOT SINGH
SOPHIE WHITE
THOMAS MADRELL
MARK HAMSTEAD
SANDRA KOURTSOUNIOTI



JOE EDWARDS
CAROLINE BARNETT
LUCIA LIMB
ANDREW MCINTOSH
CHRISTINE MINTON
GARY MEEK
JEREMY MINTON
ELLEN O'NEILL
RALPH BOER
LARA CASALOTTI AND FAMILY
FRENCHWOOD FAMILY TRUST

Charity Structure and Governance

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Guidance contained in the Charity Commissions' general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives and in planning all future activities.



Dost is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and our governing document is based on the Charity Commission's model Constitution for a CIO whose only voting

members are its' Trustees.

We received our independent charity registration and approval for this governing document in August 2017.

In line with the model constitution, we can have a maximum of 12 trustees and a minimum of 5, all of whom must be [redacted] over 16 years of age.

For the period covered by the 2024 Report, [redacted] we had 7 Trustees.

All are currently still serving and all [redacted] are over 16.

As we are a small and relatively new charity, (as an independent entity), we have used a variety of mechanisms to recruit trustees, all permitted by our governing document.

No Trustees left or joined the Board this year.

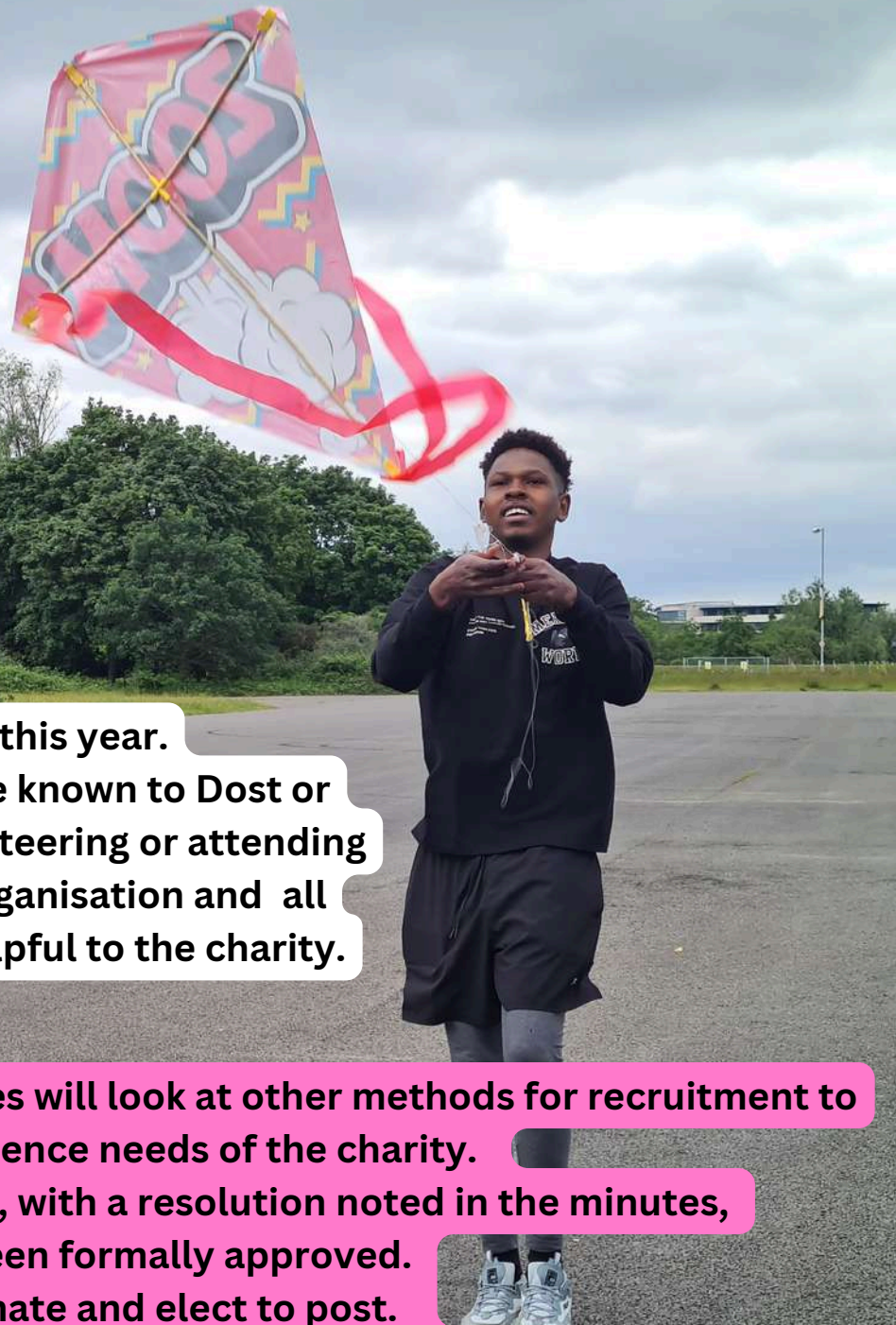
Trustees may join the Board because they are known to Dost or other Trustees or are directly involved in volunteering or attending Dost or may be recruited through another organisation and all bring an expertise, skill or interest which is helpful to the charity.

As the charity grows and develops, the Trustees will look at other methods for recruitment to [redacted] match the skills and experience needs of the charity.

All Trustees are appointed by the Board, with a resolution noted in the minutes, [redacted] to ensure they have been formally approved.

All Trustees can nominate and elect to post.

Their details are then uploaded onto the Charity Commission database.



Overview from Chair

We hope you have enjoyed this Annual Report, and it has given you a sense of the excellent and vital work done by Marian and the team over the year.

All of them show huge dedication, with Marian in particular holding everything together with incredible dedication, ably backed by her talented team.

Thank you to all the young people who have participated in Dosts' activities and residentials over the year: central to the ethos of Dost is the idea that all young people from whatever background should find a welcoming, supportive place, and enjoy the opportunities we offer for fun and personal development.

In a year where global disruption has caused huge challenges, forcing young people and families to flee many countries to seek safety, and too often politics in Britain has been dominated by debate about immigration, the need for Dost as a place of safety and support feels more important than ever.

As Trustees, we have been very proud to work together to help the charity continue to develop and thrive, so that more young people can be supported into the future.



Financial

Despite the fact that it is a challenging fundraising environment for all charities, we are pleased that Dost is currently in a position of some financial security.

We do not get any regular statutory funding or have any endowment or guarantor so need to raise all the income we spend each year, whilst trying to build a working reserve.

On both counts, 2024 has been another successful year.

Our income was £155,067; and our level of reserves grew to £115,417 giving us some security for the future.

We are hugely grateful to all of our funders, in particular, BBC Children in Need who have continued to support Dost over many years.





Safeguarding

We are proud that despite the challenges and trauma that some young people face, and the pressures that they find themselves under whilst new to London; at Dost they can enjoy the activities and support in safety.

Although of course we had instances when young people picked up small injuries while playing sport or other activities, we had no significant or reportable incidents.

All of our team and Trustees are DBS checked every 2 years and receive regular training and refreshers on safeguarding.

We have a strong culture of safety and support and keeping young people safe is our highest priority.

Looking Forward

We hope that we are able to continue our positive work into the future. Our base at Newham Leisure Centre changed hands in 2023/4, and we are enjoying the new relationship with Better (Greenwich Leisure CIC) who now provide the service.

We hope to keep evolving our services in response to need; and a Strategy day in October saw us commit to building the staff team to give Marian more support, so that she can focus on developing new opportunities for the young people. Dost provides such a vital service and source of support for young people, and we are grateful to everyone who has supported us or been involved in any way, and look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

Jim Minton

Chair of the Board since June 2017



No Trustees were remunerated or received any expenses or payments during the year.

Our Charity insurance provides Trustee Indemnity cover against executive risks to the sum of £250,000.

Our Public Liability covers us to £5,000,000 and £10,000,000 for Employers Liability.

Our reserves at year end were £115,417 of which £55,304 were restricted and £60,113 were unrestricted.

Dost's reserves policy balances the need to build up long term reserves against the need for short term spending on core activities.

The Charity's reserves exist to provide short term protection against downward fluctuations in annual revenues.

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's Trustees.

Signed by Chair of Trustees:

JIM MINTON

Dated: 16.12.2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JM', is written on a white rectangular background.



**Thank you to everyone who has supported
Dost and who make it possible for us to
continue to provide all our sessions/ services.**

**And thank you to all the young people who
bring their energy, positivity and fun and who
make Dost a great place to be!**