

The logo for ACH, consisting of the letters 'A', 'C', and 'H' in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. The 'A' is stylized with a triangular cutout at the top.

ACH

A woman wearing a red hijab and glasses, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a blue patterned top. In the background, other people are visible, including a man in a black shirt and a woman in a yellow jacket. There are some white bowls and spoons in the foreground.

Impact Report 2022

**Building a better future for
refugees and migrants in the UK.**



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Welcome

Welcome to our 2022 Impact Report. I am incredibly proud of the work ACH has been doing over the year to support refugees and migrants to build a better, brighter future in the UK. In this report, you can read about some of ACH's achievements, as well some inspirational stories of the people we are so proud to support.

However, 2022 hasn't been without challenges. The year began with the horrific war in Ukraine, and we are now witnessing the greatest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. ACH has adapted to provide vital support to Ukrainian refugees living in South Gloucestershire through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, as well as delivered crucial entrepreneurship and careers support for people fleeing the conflict to restart their lives in the UK, in both Bristol and the West Midlands.

At the same time, we must ensure that all refugees who flee war and persecution are treated equally, consistently and with respect.

At ACH we are committed to stand with those seeking sanctuary, today and always, to advocate for equal rights to safety and opportunity for all people



seeking asylum and refuge in the UK.

This is why we were deeply concerned that the Nationality and Borders Act passed into law in April 2022. Nevertheless, we must continue to fight to defend the right to seek safety, and speak out for a UK that is welcoming, kind and fair to people fleeing violence and persecution, who are looking for sanctuary in our country.

But there is hope.

We have been developing innovative partnerships this year to ensure we can continue to grow and develop our vital housing and support offer to help end homelessness for newly arrived communities. Whilst our training subsidiary Himilo has secured further funding to increase their capacity to break down barriers to opportunity for refugee and migrant communities.

I'm proud of the work ACH and Himilo have undertaken this year to ensure a better service for the communities we serve.

Fuad Mahamed, ACH CEO



Photo Credit | Zhenya, MBS Client

Who we are

Our Mission

ACH now has 15 years' experience of delivering holistic support for newly arrived communities. It is our mission to create spaces and opportunities for people from a refugee or migrant background to not just survive in the UK, but to thrive and live ambitious lives. In 2014, we started our training subsidiary, Himilo Training, to offer tailored training to our clients.

Our Vision

Our vision is to empower refugees and migrants who reside in the UK to lead self-sufficient and ambitious lives.

The client journey

This report will take you on a journey that mirrors the journey one of our refugee clients may undertake after they first receive their refugee status.

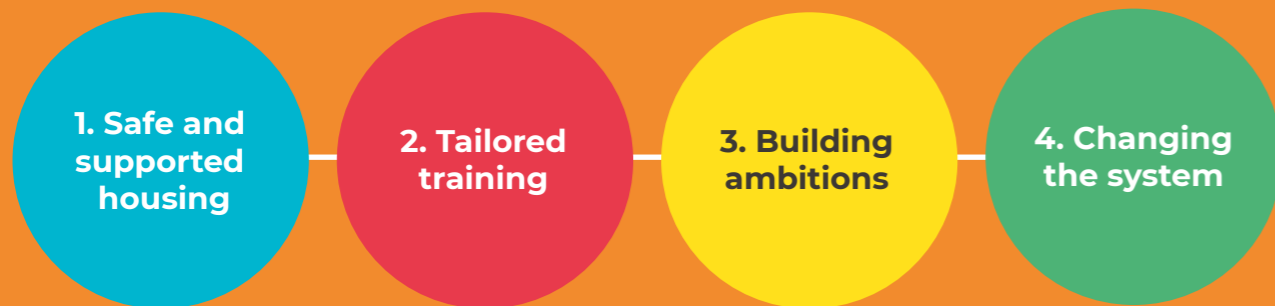
The first challenge people encounter is finding safe and secure housing. When a person first receives their refugee status, they are given just 28 days to leave

their government NASS accommodation and find a place to live. Without references, employment or social networks in the UK, this is a near impossible task. Social housing associations like ACH fill this gap.

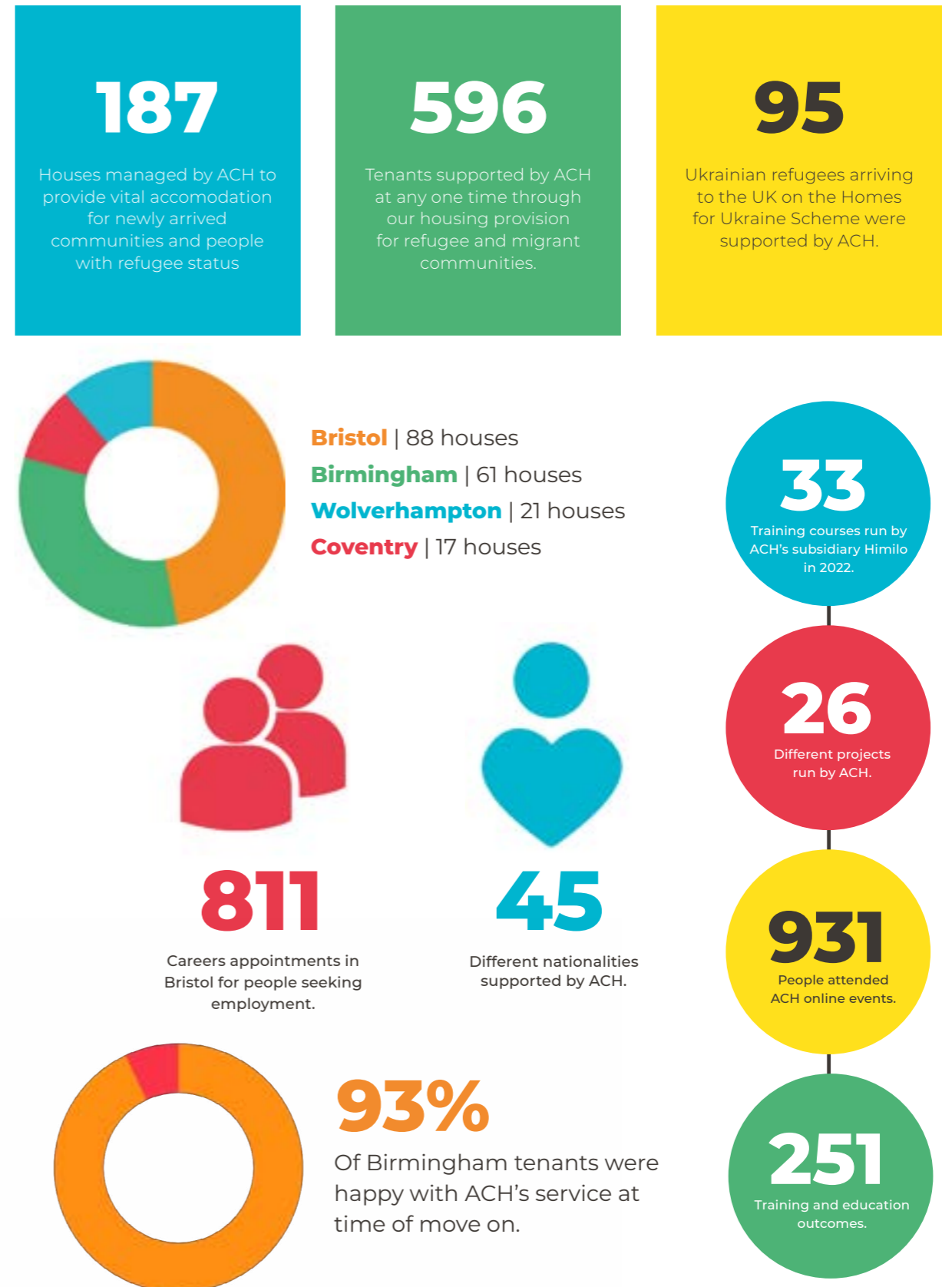
The next obstacle a person encounters is accessing integration support. We provide support breaking barriers to key integration activities such as registering with a GP, creating social networks and accessing universal credit.

Next, we guide our clients towards building their ambitions, accessing training, education and enterprise support. We believe wholeheartedly that people arriving to this country have the skills, drive and ambitions to build successful lives in the UK. ACH offers the tools to climb the ladder.

Our work does not end with helping an individual to success. We work to change the system and advocate for change to open up opportunities and support for our communities. ACH campaigns for doors to be opened, and barriers permanently broken down for newly arrived communities in the UK.



In 2022, our teams supported...



1

Safe and secure housing

Housing is the first step towards a safe and successful life in the UK. In the UK asylum system, when a person has their asylum claim accepted and their refugee status granted, they are given 28 days before they have to leave government accommodation.

Imagine trying to find a house, an income, a bank account, a GP in 28 days in an unfamiliar country. At ACH, we aim to bridge this gap, helping newly arrived refugees build lives in the UK by providing safe and supported housing, free training, family reunion guidance and entrepreneurship advice. Housing is the first step towards building a better life in the UK, yet it is one of the hardest rungs of the ladder to climb.

In 2022, we grew our supported, move-on and emergency housing provision, from 131 houses year ending Dec 2021, to 187 houses year ending 2022. This means we can offer 56 more houses to provide a lifeline for people with refugee status at risk of homelessness.

<p>187</p> <p>Supported, move-on and emergency houses for vulnerable refugee and migrant communities in Bristol and the West Midlands.</p>	<p>57</p> <p>Houses acquired in 2022, providing a lifeline for people with refugee status at risk of homelessness.</p>
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Our locations

ACH works in Bristol and the West Midlands to provide safe and secure housing to refugee and migrant communities. Our locations are:



Bristol



Coventry



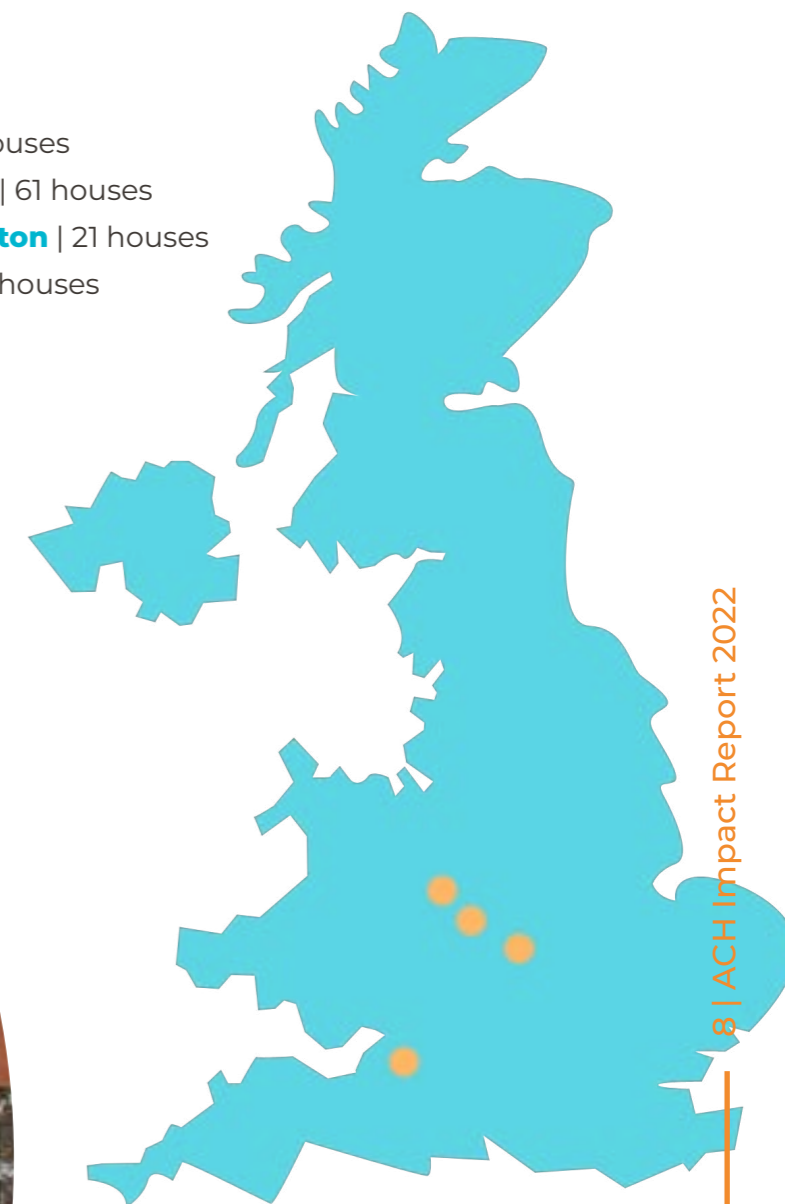
Birmingham



Wolverhampton



Bristol | 88 houses
Birmingham | 61 houses
Wolverhampton | 21 houses
Coventry | 17 houses



Firming foundations in Birmingham

In 2022, ACH expanded housing capacity in Birmingham, responding to housing needs for vulnerable newly arrived communities in the city and acquiring 3 new properties.

Since 2012, ACH had been delivering this support in Birmingham to build firm foundations for the people we support to build new lives in the UK. Expanding and building on our capacity to deliver safe and secure housing over the past 10 years, ACH is proud to have increased housing capacity in the city through challenges such as the cost of living crisis and Covid-19 pandemic.



Tenant welfare and activities

The ACH Birmingham Support Team have been running tenant welfare and activities to boost social networks and wellbeing for our tenants. During 2022, we've run:

- World Cup Pizza Evenings
- Persian New Year Celebration
- Polinations Art Project

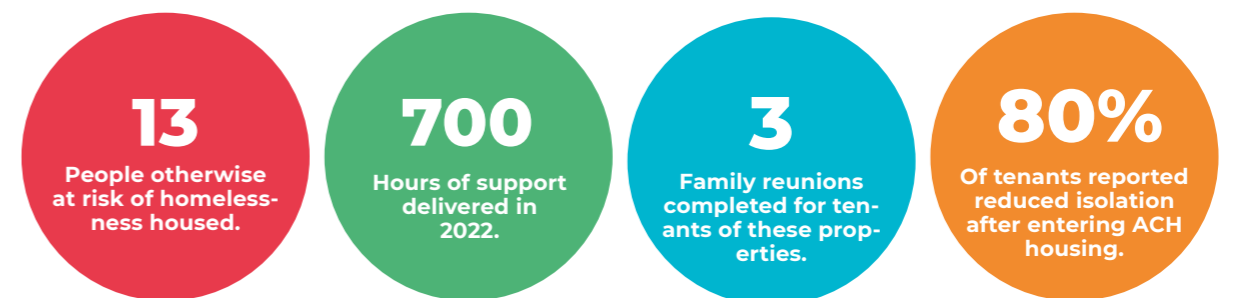


147 People supported into training or education who reside in ACH Birmingham supported housing.
93% Of ACH Birmingham tenants were happy with ACH's service when they moved on in 2022.
496 People with refugee status supported through supported housing in Birmingham during 2022.

Three new properties for Birmingham in 2022

In 2022, ACH acquired three new properties in Birmingham, increasing supported housing capacity and supporting 13 more people at risk of homelessness. This has been truly life changing for the tenants we've supported.

During the course of the year, our Support and Integration Team has delivered over 700 hours of culturally-sensitive support to tenants of these three properties. With 80% of tenants feeling reduced isolation as a result. ACH has also referred tenants to organisations offering family reunion support, resulting in three families being reunited. 65% of tenants have attended English or skills for employment courses.



Hamid's story

Hamid is a former ACH tenant and volunteer in Birmingham.

In December 2020, Hamid arrived in the UK to seek asylum. Hamid initially faced homelessness and felt isolated, a feeling heightened by the outbreak of the pandemic. 'I experienced mental exhaustion, especially during the quarantine period caused by the Covid-19 epidemic in the hostel'.

Although Hamid struggled to adapt to life in the UK, he felt welcomed in Birmingham. 'Fortunately, the city of Birmingham embraced me and helped me recover by comforting me.' When Hamid gained his refugee status, he was able to access supported housing through ACH. ACH provided Hamid with supported accommodation and career support services to help him rebuild his life one step at a time.

'I felt supported when ACH gave me a home and its caring staff planned for my future. I would like to thank Sukhi, a Careers and Enterprise Officer at ACH and Lina, my English Teacher at ACH for their support and kindness, they treated me like an equal human being'.

Hamid is a successful film-maker, direc-

93%

Of ACH Birmingham tenants were happy with ACH's service when they moved on in 2022.

tor and photographer. Whilst Hamid was living in ACH supported accommodation, he took the opportunity to volunteer at ACH Birmingham's events as a photographer to gain experience in the UK.

'I wanted to volunteer at ACH during a period in which I was weak mentally and needed to get out of the house to meet new people doing what I love. During my time here, it has been memorable and worthwhile because I was treated with love and respect. Since then, my overall mental well-being has improved a lot. I am grateful for the support ACH has given me'.

'They have supported me to grow in confidence, giving me self-worth and value. Creating opportunities to volunteer within ACH to utilise my existing skills in events by taking photographs and creative videos. Thank you so much ACH for giving me hope and raising my aspirations'.

Hamid has recently reunited through family reunion with his daughter, son and wife who are settling in Birmingham. He aspires to establish his career as a film-maker and photographer in the UK and will continue to make short films and take photos until he achieves his goals.



Hamid's photography | Top left, self-portrait, top-right and bottom, ACH crochet workshop

'They (ACH) have supported me to grow in confidence, giving me self-worth and value. Creating opportunities to volunteer within ACH to utilise my existing skills in events by taking photographs and creative videos. Thank you so much ACH for giving me hope and raising my aspirations'

- Hamid, former ACH tenant

Working in partnership to provide vital housing in Bristol

At ACH, 2022 has been a year of partnerships for impact. We've built strong partnerships to expand and diversify our housing stock during a housing crisis in the city.

During 2022, ACH has been developing innovative models of delivering crucial supported and emergency accommodation for people with refugee status in the UK.

ACH has also partnered with organisations and landlords to lease properties to vulnerable people at risk of homelessness.

Working in partnership with Borderlands

ACH and Borderlands are now working together to provide housing in Bristol to homeless people with refugee status, through the management of a four bedroom supported house in the city. Borderlands is a charity based in Bristol working with refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable migrants to help them move from exclusion to belonging.

After running the property as a move-on house for their clients at risk of homelessness, Borderlands decided to partner with ACH in the management and support provision of the property. Our maintenance team at ACH were able to undertake essential improvement works in the house, including; painting and decoration, installing new flooring and undertaking safety checks.



Susanna Revolti, CEO of Borderlands and Saed Mohamed, ACH Housing Manager | Photo Credit ACH

Hampton Lodge

In Bristol, ACH has developed a partnership to provide temporary housing for refugees in the city. Alongside FORE Partnership, Amicala and Socius, we've transformed an empty building into vital accommodation for people seeking sanctuary in Bristol.

FORE Partnership, Amicala and Socius are the team behind the development of St Christopher's Square in Bristol. Whilst the site awaits the outcome of its planning application, ACH has been working with the development team to transform an empty building on the site into apartments for people with refugee status in vital need of interim housing. We are offering one-bedroom properties which are fully-furnished and fitted with white goods, to make sure our tenants have a place to

call home whilst they receive integration support and training from ACH. Tenants will be offered a minimum lease of 12 months, with at least 3 months' notice of future development works.

'Hampton lodge is good I work full time and I'm able to support my family in the future I will have enough money to save and get a flat' - Jamac, ACH Hampton Lodge Tenant

2

Years of guaranteed move-on housing for our clients in Bristol, at affordable rent prices.

12

People supported into move-on housing at Hampton Lodge, supporting their independent living.



2

Tailored Training

Our targeted training for refugee and migrant communities provides education and training in English and skills for employability and confidence, to help our clients build ambitious lives in the UK.

Our training courses are tailored to the needs of newly arrived communities in the UK, they are delivered through ACH's training subsidiary, Himilo. Himilo is a training provider, delivering vocational training courses, careers advice, business support and employment opportunities. We deliver high-quality courses and programmes designed to prepare students to meet the current market skill requirements.

All of our training courses and education programs start with assessing the learners to make sure they are put on the correct career path. Our continuous support is here to help you gain the necessary skills to progress into the career you want.

2
Year project called the MyCoventry Project, a £1.7 million project delivered by 6 partners in Coventry.

Partnering to deliver in Bristol

ACH and Himilo have partnered with a diverse range of organisations to make an impact for our communities. Alongside others, we've worked with, Babbasa, Somali Resource Centre and the West of England Combined Authority.

Courses run this year include:

- Reading and writing for adults
- Maths for life
- Driving Awareness
- Health and social care



'Really ACH has been helpful and they give me confidence again, it is like somebody is giving you a hug and they make me feel part of a big mission'

- Debesay,
ACH Coventry Learner



Abdulazim's story

'I like ACH because they make me feel like I have family here because I just go there and they support me quickly'

- Abdulazim

Abdulazim first came to the UK from Afghanistan as a refugee in 2020. When he arrived the UK was under full Covid-19 lockdown. This made starting his life in a new country, meeting new people and learning English a challenge. After leaving government accommodation, Abdulazim came to ACH in search of housing and support, and was offered supported housing with ACH.

In Afghanistan, Abdulazim had been a self-employed skilled trades-person, but in the UK he didn't know how to start a business or become employed to use his skills. After reaching out to his support worker, ACH's Coventry team sprang into action, supporting Abdulazim to access workshops on coping mechanisms, confidence building and personal agency. The ACH Coventry team encouraged Abdulazim to register for the MyCoventry program, through which ACH offers English for Work and Community Leadership modules as part of an Employability Course.

After completing his courses, Abdulazim had the opportunity to interview for employment opportunities, having seen a huge boost in his confidence in his English and employability skills. Abdulazim is now eager to work on his CV and build his entrepreneurship skills, and he is working towards a dream of setting up a translator business so he can assist his community with integration into UK life. Abdulazim now has the confidence to become an active member of society, and is volunteering at a Coventry based non-profit and feels ready to enter employment in the near future.

The MyCoventry Project

In July 2020, the EU's Asylum, Migration and integration Fund awarded more than £1.7 million to Coventry to develop the MyCoventry project, a 2-year initiative that aimed to break down barriers faced by people from a refugee and migrant background in the city.

Social, economic and local inequalities were hindering the way that newly arrived communities in Coventry could fully participate in local society. To tackle this, the MyCoventry Project brought together Coventry City Council, the Job Shop, St Francis Employability, ACH, Coventry University and Positive Youth

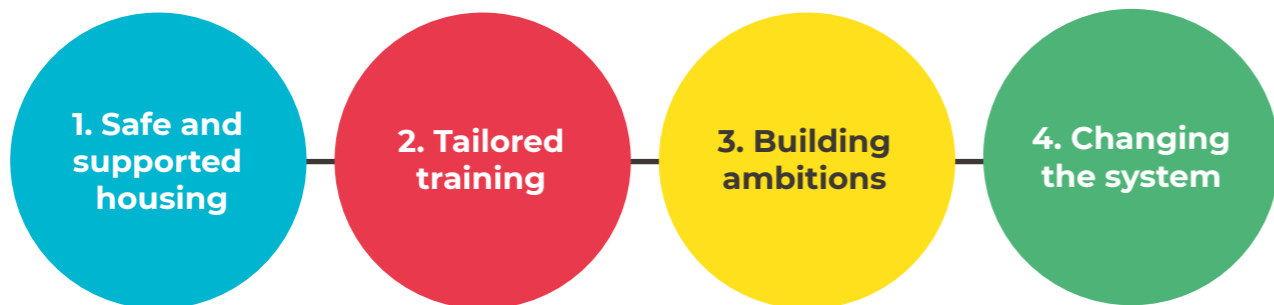
Foundation to work for change in the city. The specialist partnership that MyCoventry has developed will bridge service gaps, provide mentoring, coaching and holistic interventions to support client progression and integration.

Over the past two years, ACH has supported people through the MyCoventry Project, working to deliver employability, confidence-building and leadership courses to people from a refugee or migrant background in Coventry. In 2022, we supported 133 people to take their ambitions in the UK to the next level.

3

Building Ambitions

ACH's employability and entrepreneurship support services open up opportunities and build ambitions for refugee and migrant communities in the UK to achieve their dreams. Building aspirations and breaking down barriers is a key step on the journey to building an ambitious life in the UK



Our entrepreneurship and careers teams have made a huge impact this year to the lives of refugee and migrant communities in the UK during 2022.

In 2022, we increased our capacity to deliver entrepreneurship support to people from a migrant background, opening up more opportunities for the communities we serve.

Our business support projects aims to help entrepreneurial people from a migrant background to expand or begin their business journeys. Through this work, we work to change narrative and

systems, breaking down barriers faced by migrant communities in the UK when setting up a business.



The Migrant Business Support Project

During 2022, ACH has supported 406 entrepreneurs from a refugee or migrant background get their businesses off the ground, or take an existing business to the next level. Alongside our partners West of England Combined Authority and University of Bristol, we're delivering tailored business support to clients, helping to break down the barriers faced by refugee and migrant communities when entering entrepreneurship.

Our Migrant Business Support Project has been running since 2021, and has made a big impact during 2022. Over year two of the two year project, our business consultants have provided continuity of support to see real results. Working closely with our community engagement and careers advice teams, our business consultants have ensured clients receive holistic support that is truly tailored to their needs. This is an EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Funded project, with ACH as project leads of the £1 million project.

<p>£1 mill</p> <p>Worth of EU AMIF funding for the Migrant Business Support Project, with ACH as lead partners.</p>	<p>'ACH, I am very, very grateful for because they coached me and said, 'you can make it!'. They are always there with me, and if I have a problem, I will go meet them and set up a plan'</p> <p>- Migrant Business Support Client</p>	<p>406</p> <p>Clients supported through the Migrant Business Support project.</p>
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The Pathways to Enterprising Futures Project

The Pathways to Enterprising Futures project is a partnership with CREME at Aston University, Citizen's Advice and Punch Records working to deliver an innovative service to open pathways and support enterprise skills for communities in Birmingham. The project aims to help nearly 200 people from diverse communities gain the tools they need to pursue their employment or start up a business.

'I hope this project and the research analysis that comes out of it will enable policymakers to become more aware of how they can support the needs of entrepreneurs, and provide a practical framework for operating accessible support and networks for marginalised communities, with aim of combating the ever so present barriers that they face in their journey to employability, enterprise, and entrepreneurship.' - Brenda Wangari, PEF Project Careers and Enterprise Officer

Nesrin's story

'When I am with people in ACH, I feel a little bit better and that I can speak more. I became more confident.'

- Nesrin

Nesrin joined ACH's Migrant Business Support Project in November 2021, working with one of our Business Consultants in Bristol to bring her business idea to life.

Discovering ACH by chance after noticing an advertisement while walking, Nesrin signed up for some free training classes with one of our tutors. During this time, she became curious as to whether she could start a business and if ACH could support her. Growing up in Egypt, her aim was to start an Egyptian Street food business that could appeal to everyone; vegans, vegetarians, and meat eaters alike. Already knowing ACH, Nesrin felt comfortable and trusted us to support her with her business idea.

After establishing Nesrin's business idea, and name - Nessie Cuisine, she needed support financially and in promoting her business. Our business consultants helped Nesrin to design and print flyers for her business and also to gain the confidence to take the steps to set up Nessie Cuisine. Nesrin then launched her business, Nessie Cuisine, in February 2022 making Egyptian Street food.



Photo Credit | Zhenya, MBS Client

406

Clients supported through the MBS project in 2022.

811

Clients supported with Careers Advice in Bristol through our National Careers Service contract.



Photo Credit | ACH

Empowering women in Bristol

Working with Bristol Old Vic, we've been partnering to deliver a three year National Lottery Heritage Funded Project, which started in 2022.

The project aims to use heritage as a tool for integration at the same time as developing opportunities, experiences and skills for employment and entrepreneurship for clients of ACH.

The 2022 first iteration of the three year project engaged with refugee women in Bristol to develop their own drinks product, which could then be sold at Bristol Old Vic's Kitchen+Bar. After a 6 week course, they created an iced tea drink called Homemade by Bristol Women. Homemade has since been sold in the Bristol Old Vic and widely across Bristol at craft markets in the city.

'Through HOMEMADE, a Bristol drink made from ingredients and people who have migrated here, we want to remind Bristol how food, culture and people cross borders and add layers to British culture. The 'British' identity owes a lot to migration' – HOMEMADE Booklet, 2022

The drink takes inspiration from the cultural heritage of tea making and drinking discussed by the women taking part in the project.

'The drink is an iced tea syrup. You can add it to still or sparkling water with a slice of lemon, mint and a blackberry and its tastes delicious. It includes Bramble Leaf, Lemon balm and a hint of mint. Ingredients inspired by our planting and foraging. A product made from Bristol, by Bristol women.' – Shalini Sivakrishnan, ACH Business Consultant



HOMEMADE Project Flyer | Bristol Old Vic

Neelam's reflections

Neelam is a participant on the Bristol Old Vic and ACH Heritage Project.

'The one ingredient in the tea product we created that invokes a memory for me is the mint, because in Afghanistan, culturally, we use lots of mint when we prepare salads for guests. We also have some naturally made drinks in Afghanistan that we use mint in and sometimes also lemon. That we have made a tea mix from these ingredients is so brilliant.

This project, it connected me a lot with all the staff that meet at every meeting that we had, and every day that we studied, we enjoyed it a lot. We connected with all the Bristol people.

So now I can recognise that Bristol people are more friendly, they are so kind, they are helpful people that are just enjoying what they do. And they are accepting us like their family members. We appreciate them because, they make a family for us to enjoy in, to have happiness, to bring happiness in the future and to have power for women.

We came from a land, where it is not possible to have opportunities for women, especially for girls, but they bring us such opportunity to connect with Bristol, with Bristol women. There were lots of amazing people, amazing works that we did together. So I just hope one day the Afghan lady and the Bristol lady, they are just joining together and they make the world better for humanity.'



HOMEMADE Drinks Product | Photo Credit | ACH

Accessing employment through careers advice

Our careers advice and guidance helps our clients make a career choice that is right for them. Too often, refugee and migrant communities are excluded from the job market.

According to the UK Home Office (2022), people with refugee status are 20% less likely to be in employment than the rest of the UK population. For women with refugee status, this statistic is even lower, with employment rates 30% lower than the UK average. People from a refugee or migrant background, can face additional barriers to employment, such as language and cultural differences.

ACH's Careers Team supports people to navigate these barriers, through:

- Completing job applications and applying for jobs.
- Searching for work experience and volunteering opportunities.
- Interview practice and preparation.
- CV writing and updating.



Photo Credit | Hamid, former ACH tenant

Mohamad's story

20%

People with refugee status are 20% less likely to be in employment than the rest of the UK population.

Mohamad is an ACH client supported in Birmingham through the Syrian Vulnerable Resettlement Scheme.

After Mohamad came to the UK from Syria through Birmingham City Council's Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme (SVPRS), he was supported by ACH through the SVPRS Project. We then supported Mohamad through our employment and careers service, where ACH Employment Coach Lina helped him complete volunteering and job applications. With Lina's help and references, Mohamad was able to secure a volunteering role with Refugee Action in Birmingham.

ACH then partnered with The Refugee Council in London to provide referrals in the West Midlands region for applicants to their new programme with IKEA. Mohamad was very keen to take part. He came to the first online sessions in the ACH Birmingham office and Lina supported him to prepare for the end of course interview.

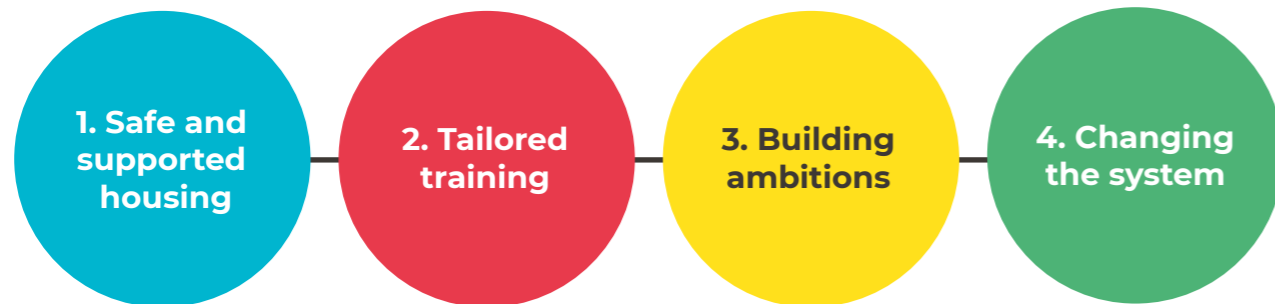
Mohamad then prepared and revised thoroughly for his interview by doing research and practising questions and answers with the team. His hard work paid off and along with some other candidates Mohamad was offered a paid 8-week work placement for 20 hours a week with IKEA at their Birmingham store.

During this placement, Mohamad moved around various departments, working in the warehouse, order desk and customer service. At the end of the placement, he was delighted to be offered a permanent contract with IKEA. He is now enjoying being part of the IKEA family and says his English and self-confidence has increased, he is learning new skills and his family is happy. We're proud to work with organisations like the Refugee Council and Refugee Action to make a real difference to the lives of newly arrived refugees. And we're so proud of Mohamad's achievement as he builds a better, brighter future in the UK.

4

Changing the system

At ACH, our task is not complete once we support a person through accommodation, career, education and integration support. We know that barriers won't be broken down and newly arrived people will never have equal opportunity in the UK until the system is changed.



During 2022, ACH has been working to change the system through innovative projects, campaigns and events. We've been working with local authorities through the MILE and Changemakers Project to empower local refugee and migrant communities to have their voices heard at the city level. Through these projects, we've been breaking down barriers at the city-level, ensuring refugee and migrant voices are heard.

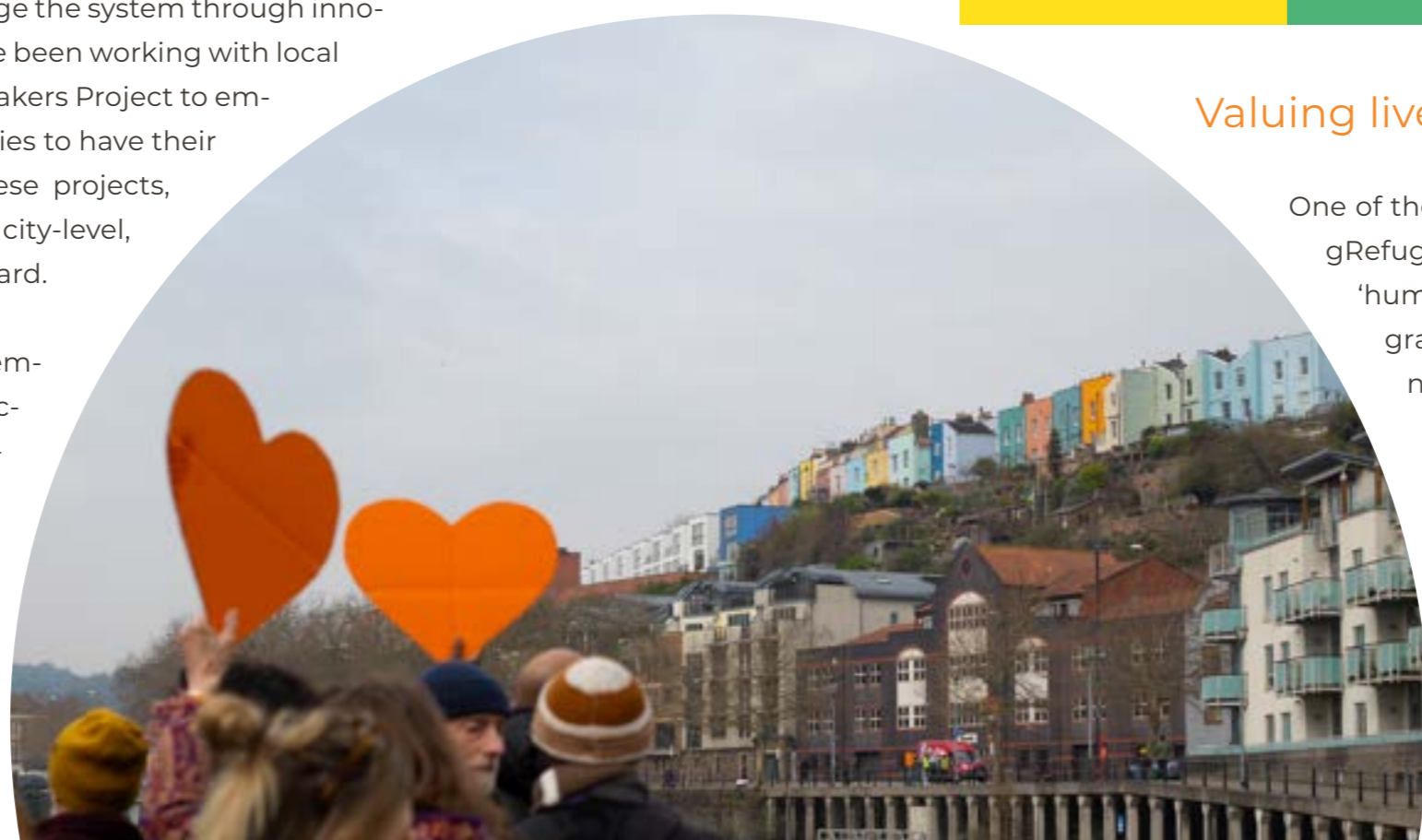
We have also been tackling inequality in employment and breaking down doors to sectors which are often hard to access for people from a refugee or migrant background. Through the Community Climate Action Project, we've been calling for change and equity in Green employment and climate action.

The Rethinking Refugee Campaign

The #RethinkingRefugee campaign began in 2015 as a reaction to the so-called 'refugee crisis' portrayed in the media at that time. We felt we needed to confront the language used to talk about refugees and migrants in the mainstream media, and challenge any stereotypes, misconceptions, or politically motivated rhetoric.

Through the campaign, we want to create a space to discuss how to change broken systems for refugees and migrants that restrict opportunities for people seeking refuge in the UK. We believe that by changing the conversation, we can advocate and innovate for increased access to support, training and education that will in turn create the spaces and opportunities for people to thrive.

<h1>6</h1> <p>Years of the #RethinkingRefugee campaign, working to change the narrative.</p>	<h1>22</h1> <p>Funded projects, aimed at creating positive change for refugee and migrant communities.</p>	<h1>931</h1> <p>People joined an ACH online event, engaging with our system change work.</p>
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Valuing lived experience

One of the reasons ACH developed the #RethinkingRefugee campaign in 2015 was to counter NGO's 'humanitarian' approach to refugee and migrant support. Depicting people as being 'in-need' of assistance, whilst well-intentioned, created an imaginary of people seeking sanctuary as without agency, as a burden on society. In reality, people coming to this country bring diverse skills, knowledges and opportunities for our communities and economy. We are committed, each and every year to value the lived expertise of ACH staff.

The Changemakers Project

The Change Makers Project is a 5-year collaboration between ACH and RAMP, funded by Comic Relief, which aims to identify strategic opportunities with the wider refugee sector to influence city-level and regional strategies.

This year, we launched our first project report, 'From Sanctuary to Opportunity', and we hosted our first large in-person event since the pandemic. Here, we welcomed refugee organisations, council members and stakeholders from across Bristol.

This report was extremely timely, launching during the unfolding of the war in Ukraine. We must ensure that all refugees who flee war and persecu-

tion are treated equally, consistently and with respect.

The launched research report examined local and regional policy effects on refugees from these conflicts in the UK and identifies opportunities for positive economic and social change to ensure refugees could lead happier and self-sufficient lives in their new home.



100

People from Bristol's refugee sector joined our Changemakers Project report launch 'From Sanctuary to Opportunity' in Feb 2022.

The EU-funded MILE Project

2

Year project funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund.

ACH is proud to be a partner on the MILE project, a two-year project that aims to empower migrants and refugees and help to build lasting connections between migrant groups and local governments in Europe.

MILE stands for Migrant Integration through Locally designed Experiences and is about empowering the local community as a whole, including migrant communities. Co-funded through the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, MILE aims to create positive change across Europe with partners in six European countries: Belgium, Greece, Latvia, Spain, the Netherlands, and the UK.

ACH's partners are the Centre for Research in Ethnic Minority Entrepreneurship (CREME) at Aston University and Birmingham City Council represent local partners on the project.

MILE will produce research-based and locally-tailored responses that can address the current needs and priorities of municipalities and migrant communities. The participation tools developed by partnering research teams, municipalities, and migrant-led organisations aim to serve as a springboard for deeper social, economic, and political inclusion and long-term development.

18

Project partners from six European countries: Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK, Spain, Latvia, and Greece.



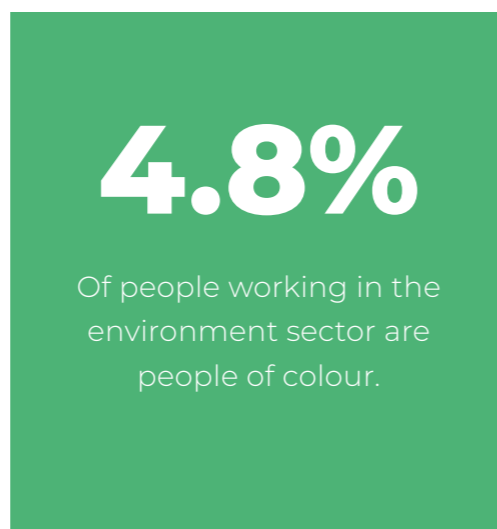
Equity in climate action

Since August 2020, ACH has been a proud partner on the Community Climate Action Project, a Bristol-based partnership between 6 diverse non-profit organisations all working towards grassroots community climate action in the city.

In September 2022 the National Lottery granted the project a £2.5 million funding boost, allowing ACH to continue working with refugee and migrant communities to help tackle the climate crisis. Bristol's innovative approach to community-led climate action has been pioneered by Bristol Green Capital Partnership, who are leading the project to fulfil the city's climate ambitions, whilst also improving quality of life for local people.

Over the past 2 years, we've learnt that refugee and migrant communities are often most affected by climate change, whilst being amongst the lowest contributors to carbon emissions in the city. We conducted a Carbon Footprint Survey with our tenants, finding they had one of the lowest carbon footprints in the whole city. The survey found that on average, a Bristol resident's annual emissions (kg.CO2e), are 145% more than an ACH tenant's annual emissions.

As a result, our approach to the project has been informed by equity, climate justice and co-production, focusing on raising awareness of inequality and equity. The next phase of the Community Climate Action Project, will be the Demonstrator Project, which will deliver tailored training courses aimed at green employment and entrepreneurship for refugee and migrant communities.



Jah's reflections

As an ACH Project Officer working on the CCAF and Demonstrator Projects, I'm pushing for a more inclusive, holistic approach to environmental action from our clients focusing on their values, needs, and priorities.

During the first phase of this project, ACH found that refugees and migrants had a lower carbon footprint than their local Bristolian counterparts by 60%. However, our clients are the ones who tend to suffer most from climate change, not only in their home countries but even locally in Bristol because they often reside in areas where air pollution is the highest.

The Demonstrator Project also aims to tackle key issues faced within the envi-

ronmental sector. It is the second least diverse field in the UK. Only 4.8% of environmental professionals are people of colour (Students Organising for Sustainability UK, 2022), which is significantly and disproportionately lower than the 12.6% average across all industries (UK Government, 2021).

The environment is something that affects us all. However, not everyone has been included in the discussion. Moving forward, we hope to provide a platform where our clients are moved and empowered to step into the environmental sector as we transition into the green economy. In doing this, the sector will become reflective of the wonderfully diverse population we live in and certainly benefit from it.



Photo Credit | Zhenya, MBS Client

Campaigning for change

ACH is campaigning for change for refugee and migrant communities. Since 2015, we've been working towards our #RethinkingRefugee campaign, to change the narrative and policy landscape for people seeking sanctuary.

Over 2022, ACH has been campaigning for a fair and equitable policy landscape for people seeking sanctuary in the UK. We see this work through the lens of our #RethinkingRefugee campaign, which ACH has been running since 2015 to rethink the ways refugee and migrant communities are represented in the media, and treated through local and government policy.

This has been crucial during 2022, as we saw threats to the right to seek asylum enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention through the Nationality and Borders Act passing through parliament. We're committed to campaign for those seeking sanctuary to be treated with fairness, empathy and consideration.

At ACH we believe that safe and legal routes should be accessible to all people fleeing violence, persecution and war, and that the UK should uphold its commitment to the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.

70

People joined ACH's seminar to explain the effects of the Nationality and Borders Act on asylum seekers and refugees.

Together with Refugees Campaign

This year, we've joined the Together With Refugees Campaign, a diverse coalition of organisations working for a kinder, fairer approach to supporting refugees. The coalition includes grassroots, community and refugee-led groups, international development charities, trade unions and faith groups. Through this coalition, our voice has been amplified.

On the 9th March, we joined together with Refugee Council and 40 other NGOs in the refugee sector to call on the UK government to do more for people seeking sanctuary from Ukraine. We were signatories on a joint letter, urging the UK government to commit more safe routes to resettlement for people seeking sanctuary from Ukraine. On the 14th March 2022, the UK government announced the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

40

ACH joined more than 40 refugee organisations to sign Refugee Council's joint letter in support of Ukrainian Resettlement Schemes.

160

ACH joined 160 other organisations to call for safe routes to resettlement for people fleeing Afghanistan.

10

Local and national press engagements advocating for increased support and safe routes for newly arrived refugees.

The Nationality and Borders Act

The Nationality and Borders Act is a profound threat to the right to seek asylum enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention, signed by the UK. If implemented to the full extent, the Act will criminalise 'irregular' asylum routes, whilst failing to provide safe and legal routes.

To advocate for change, in December 2022, ACH held a workshop to explain the effects of the Act, and determine next steps forward for the refugee and migrant support sector. Our speakers included: Beth Wilson, CEO of Bristol Refugee Rights, Colin Yeo, a barrister specialising in immigration and Emma Gaspar-Yates, ACH's Senior Support and Integration Team Leader. The online seminar reached 70 audience members, and called for the sector to join together to respond to the legislation.



Marwa's story

I grew up in a remote refugee camp in northern Jordan. Over 38,000 people call 0.75 square kilometres home; this fact alone made the United Kingdom feel enormous to me. To further my goal of making a positive difference in the lives of refugees everywhere, I came here to earn a master's degree and gain professional experience. It's difficult to leave Gaza camp, but I always knew I would need to put in double the effort of other people to achieve even half of their success.

Even though I speak English, my tongue was tied the first few days as I stood in front of the train station in Birmingham with my bags and stared at the enormous structures. I had a hard time communicating in English.

I've met a lot of amazing people and participated in a wide variety of activities. In no time at all, I was off to pursue the line of work that truly makes me happy as a Support and Integration Officer at ACH. I learned about ACH from an Iraqi man who has been supported by ACH in a café in Birmingham. Great non-profit organisations like ACH are working to support refugees and make England seem a little bit like a home for them, despite

the fact that conditions for refugees are still quite challenging and require a lot of rule modification to make life a little less harsh for them.

Having experienced life as a displaced person, I can attest to the difficulty of feeling like an outsider and an out-cast. It's lonely, and I felt that way a lot in Jordan, even though it is an Arabic country. It's even harder for refugees to adjust to life in the United Kingdom due to the vast differences in culture, language, and norms. What I desire to see accomplished at ACH is the creation of an environment where everyone, including those on the run, feels safe, respected and welcome.



17,000

More than 17,000 people visited the ACH website in 2022, engaging with our campaigns, services and research.

8,775

People following ACH's social media, where we campaign for system change.



5

Research and policy

ACH is working with academia to bridge the gap between research and delivery, to co-produce research and projects which have the voice of the refugee and migrant community at its forefront and centre.



ACH and Aston University Partnership

The partnership between ACH and CREME is one of shared values as the organisations aim to implement integration through enterprise in Europe, hoping to erase inequality through joint projects that ACH and CREME have collaborated on. Collaborations include: The Pathways to Enterprising Futures Project, Productivity from Below, Enactus - Aston University and the MILE Project.

ACH and CREME both have their organisation specific vision as ACH aims to ‘create spaces and opportunities for refugees and migrants to thrive by providing supported accommodation, and tailored integration services that not only help individuals, but also disrupt the systems that have entrenched inequalities in our society’.

ACH and University of Bristol Partnership

ACH MMB Seminar Series

Since the first ACH MMB seminar in February 2021, we’ve grown our audience base to create a cohesive joint event appealing to a diverse audience base. This year, 340 people came to two workshops we ran in partnership with MMB. Our audience demographic for these seminars cuts across different sectors, both academia and refugee organisations. In this way, we can determine that the main aim of the seminar series – to join up discussions from policy, research and delivery services – is being met through this innovative format.



Everyday Integration

Everyday Integration was an ESRC funded project for which the University of Bristol was lead partner and ACH a partner organisation. Our work here focussed on the Economy Work Package. This produced a series of outputs especially around precarity and its impact on refugee communities. This work continues to impact on the delivery of ACH activities in relation to employment and business support. This project was led by Professor Jon Fox and took place between 2018 – 2022.

6

Future forward

This year has brought immense challenges, but also huge opportunity. We are proud of the work we have done to support our communities in an ever-changing political landscape. Our aims for the forthcoming year include:

1

Build our housing capacity. ACH is responding to the UK housing crisis by expanding our housing provision for vulnerable refugee and migrant people at risk of homelessness.

2

Improve and build our community. In 2023, ACH will expand our tenant activities, community engagement and network building capacity to give our clients the social capital to succeed.

3

Make our voice heard. ACH's priority for 2023 will be to expand campaigns, policy and advocacy outputs to make sure our voice, and the voice of our tenants is heard at the decision-making level.

4

Valuing lived experience. We will ensure that the lived experience of our staff and service-users remains valued and utilised within all service design and research.



Join us

If you are interested in supporting ACH in 2023, and join together for a better, brighter future for refugees and migrants in the UK, then we would love to hear from you!

How can I get involved?

Four colored circles representing different ways to get involved:

- Rent your property with ACH** (Orange circle)
- Join the conversation on social media** (Blue circle)
- Work with us as an employer** (Green circle)
- Partner with us** (Red circle)

- **Become an ACH landlord** | Renting your property to refugees through ACH makes business sense: saving you money on fees, earning you a competitive monthly rent, whilst providing someone with the foundation to build a life in the UK.
- **Follow us on social media** | Join the campaign to make a real change and build a better, brighter future for refugees and migrants in the UK.
- **Employer partnerships** | We can work with you to help your business find the right match. Running bespoke courses, supporting with training and settling people into your company.
- **Project partnerships** | We partner or lead on a variety of projects across the world that aim to enhance integration services for refugees and migrants and disrupt the systems that have entrenched inequalities in our society.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all of our funders, partners and supporters who have made such a huge contribution to the lives of refugee and migrant communities we support over 2022.

We would also like to thank the photographers who contributed to the photos included in this Impact Report. Special thanks goes to Hamid and Zhenya, who are talented photographers, but also ACH clients. We are continuously in awe of the skills and talents of the people we support.

If you would like to learn more about businesses we support at ACH, please contact us at business.support@ach.org.uk

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