

October 2025

# Annual Report and Accounts 2024

Unaudited



**BEARR**  
THE BEARR TRUST

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## Letter from the Chair

For over thirty years, The BEARR Trust has supported community-based organisations working to improve the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. In the context of Russia's continued war against Ukraine and challenging political and economic conditions across many of the countries in which we operate, grassroots groups making a practical difference in their communities are more important than ever.

In 2024, we continued to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to displaced people and others in need in Ukraine and Moldova. From the start of our Ukraine Emergency Appeal in 2022 to the end of 2024, we sent over £550,000 in small grants to community organisations – many of which were working close to the frontline and were often able to reach vulnerable people more quickly than larger aid agencies. Increasingly, our funds have been used for mental health support, as war has continued. Building on the Ukraine Emergency Appeal, we also concluded a project funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, which provided grants to community groups delivering therapeutic support in Ukraine as well as support for the resilience and wellbeing of their volunteers and staff.

Our annual Small Grants Scheme focused in 2024 on the integration of displaced people across the ten countries in which we operate. Beyond grant support, we continued to provide a source of information on civil society, through our website, newsletter and social media channels. Our annual conference focused on innovation in health and social welfare at a time of crisis, sharing the experience and knowledge of our partners with a wider audience, and we were delighted to host lectures by Olesya Khromeychuk and Sir Lawrence Freedman.

As The BEARR Trust continued to grow, we invested in 2024 in our own policies and systems. We welcomed a new trustee to our board, and we embarked on the development of a new five-year strategy, which we will conclude in 2025. We also thanked Nicola Ramsden for her leadership and support over six years as chair of The BEARR Trust. Alongside this, we maintained our cost-effective, volunteer-led model which keeps us focused on the community groups and the people we seek to support.

All our work is made possible by the generosity of charitable trusts and many individual donors, friends and volunteers. We are very grateful: thanks to all those who support us, we will continue to help those making a difference in their communities.

**Ross Gill**

**Chair, The BEARR Trust**

# 1. Introduction

This report sets out The BEARR Trust's activities and finances in 2024. It explains the difference we have made in supporting communities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, where our funding comes from and how we use it, how we ensure good governance, and our plans for the future.

## Introducing The BEARR Trust

- 1.1** The BEARR Trust is a UK-registered charity that aims to **support and strengthen community-based organisations (CBOs) working to improve the health and social wellbeing of vulnerable people across Eastern Europe and Central Asia**. Established in the early 1990s, we support cooperation between CBOs focused on health and wellbeing in the region, and we help to build connections with those doing similar work in the United Kingdom. We are the only British charity working in Eastern Europe and Central Asia that combines grant-giving and networking activity. We promote locally led initiatives, believing that small grass-roots organisations have the potential strength and resilience to help vulnerable people and to solve local problems most effectively.
- 1.2** We are funded by charitable contributions. Our work is enabled by an active Trustee Board and a network of volunteers, and by an Information and Administration Officer, a freelance Small Grants Scheme Officer and a freelance translation and website assistant.

## Our activity in a changing context

- 1.3** The BEARR Trust has three main strands of activity:
- Directly supporting small and innovative grass-roots health and social wellbeing projects in the region through an annual **Small Grants Scheme**. We believe that small, community-based organisations can make effective use of modest grants to develop new approaches and build partnerships.
  - Sharing **information and good practice** through a range of services designed to promote networking, exchange experience, build partnerships and support organisations committed to reform in the health and social wellbeing sectors.
  - Supporting community-based organisations in Ukraine in response to Russia's ongoing war. In February 2022, established a **Ukraine Appeal**, supporting refugees and other vulnerable people impacted by the war, through our partners in Ukraine and Moldova. The Ukraine Appeal is established as a Restricted Fund for accounting purposes, with all donations to the Appeal going directly to community organisations on the ground.

- 1.4** In 2024, we also concluded delivery of a programme known as **From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion**. Funded with £50,000 from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) through the British Embassy in Kyiv, this built on our experience of the Ukraine Appeal, supporting our established partners in helping people cope with the psychological stresses of the war, and bringing them together to build partnerships and share their experiences.

### Where we work

- 1.5** Our work is focused on the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.
- 1.6** Until 2022, we also offered grants to organisations in Russia or Belarus. This stopped following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, we continue to report on health and social welfare developments in those countries in our newsletters and on our website.

### The impact of conflict and the political situation

- 1.7** **Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to a sustained social and humanitarian crisis..** Communities closest to the frontline, in Kharkiv, Kherson, Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions have faced the most extreme needs, although the war impacts the whole country. Community-based organisations have played a vital role in protecting the most vulnerable, ensuring that assistance is distributed effectively and supporting social cohesion.
- 1.8** Beyond Russia's war against Ukraine, **the wider political context has been challenging across much of Eastern Europe and Central Asia**. This includes the aftermath of the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2023, the consequences of war and economic sanctions on labour migration, and the implementation in some countries of restrictive measures on civil society organisations (such as the application of 'foreign agents' laws in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan). Funding has also been very challenging for many of our partners: although outside the scope of this review, this has been exacerbated in the first months of 2025 by the ending of USAID support and increased pressure on those remaining international donors.
- 1.9** In this context, The BEARR Trust's ongoing support for grassroots community organisations making a real and practical difference on the ground remains more important than ever.

### Public benefit

- 1.10** When planning our activities for the year, the Trustees have considered the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

### The Global Goals

- 1.11** Our work also sits within the broader framework of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (the Global Goals), which emphasise collaboration across all sectors of government



and society. The seventeen Global Goals are interrelated, and BEARR's work is relevant to several:

- Good Health and Wellbeing
- Quality Education
- Gender Equality
- Reduced Inequalities
- Partnerships for the Goals

## Report structure

**1.12** The remainder of this report is structured in nine sections:

- Section 2 reports on our **Small Grants Scheme** in 2024, summarising the projects we supported and what they have delivered.
- Section 3 reports on our **Ukraine Appeal**, covering both delivery in 2024 and the cumulative activity since the Appeal was launched.
- Section 4 reports on our **FCDO-funded project**, which concluded in 2024, building on our earlier experience.
- Section 5 turns to our **networking and information** sharing activity, including our programme of lectures and conferences.
- Section 6 sets out our approach to **evaluation** and building our understanding of what is needed and how BEARR can help.
- Section 7 explains **how The BEARR Trust is managed**, how we are investing to improve our systems, and our approach to future strategy development.
- Finally, Sections 8-10 set out our **financial review, statement of financial activities** and the report of our independent examiner.

## 2. The Small Grants Scheme

In 2024, The BEARR Trust supported 16 community-based organisations in Armenia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine through our Small Grants Scheme. Projects focused on the community integration of displaced people, especially those who are additionally vulnerable. We also provided funding to partners in Ukraine to support the resilience and wellbeing of their staff and volunteers working in the context of ongoing war.

**2.1** Our annual Small Grants Scheme is a major part of our activity, enabling us to provide direct support to projects that are delivered by grassroots organisations in the region, encourage partnership development and contribute to wider knowledge exchange.

**2.2** Each year, we select a theme, which is published on the BEARR website alongside application details and funding criteria. Applications are then reviewed by BEARR Trustees, and we will match fund up to half of a project's costs, within a maximum agreed grant value.

### The 2024 Small Grants Scheme

**2.3** In 2024, we made grants available through two strands:

- **Strand A: Projects that supported the community integration of displaced people,** with a maximum grant of £4,000. This theme is highly relevant in the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine – there were around 3.7 million internally displaced people in Ukraine at the end of 2024<sup>1</sup>. But it is also important throughout Central Asia and Eastern Europe, for example as a result of the war in Nagorno-Karabakh and recent border clashes in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The focus on displaced people included those who have been internally displaced as a consequence of violence and war, as well as those who have sought refuge in other countries.

Strand A was open to applicants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Applications were sought from two or more community-based organisations working together. As in previous years, we aimed to support displaced people who are especially vulnerable, for example as a result of disability or age.

**Strand B: Activities to improve the welfare of organisations' own staff and volunteers and to improve organisational resilience,** with a maximum grant of £1,000.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to some 6.9 million refugees from Ukraine living in other countries, including in Moldova and elsewhere in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Source: UNHCR

This strand was only open to organisations in Moldova and Ukraine that had previously received a grant from us, either through the Small Grants Scheme or the Ukraine Appeal. Strand B projects were funded from the restricted Ukraine Appeal fund.

- 2.4** In line with our principle of supporting locally designed initiatives, we encouraged a wide variety of responses to both strands, relevant to local need, and we ran a **webinar for prospective applicants** in January 2024, explaining the process and criteria and offering tips on how to write a strong application.

### Applications and grants awarded

- 2.5** We received **82 applications in total**. These included applications from all countries in which the scheme was open, with the exception of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- 2.6** We awarded 16 grants, with a total value of £40,821. Of this, £36,321 was for 11 projects in Strand A, and funded from the General Fund. Including the 2024 grants, **BEARR has supported 122 projects since 2016, with a total grant value over these eight years of over £310,000.**
- 2.7** The 2024 Small Grants Scheme Strand A projects are summarised below:
- **Contribution to Women and Children** (Armenia): Craft-based skills development bringing together women displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh with local women in the Tavush region of Armenia, accompanied by psychological support.
  - **Mutabor** (Armenia): Integration of displaced women through economic empowerment, involving training, mentoring and support in small-scale entrepreneurship.
  - **Imedi** (Georgia): Bringing together internally displaced people (mainly from Abkhazia) to understand their rights in relation to healthcare, housing, employment, etc., and become advocates for change in their local communities.
  - **Oasis** (Kyrgyzstan): Developing resource centres for social workers, providing training and new resources for social workers and teachers on victim-centred and trauma-informed approaches in working with at-risk children and young people.
  - **Educational Assistance** (Ukraine): Raising awareness of the challenges facing deaf people and people with hearing difficulties through drama and discussion.
  - **ASSA** (Ukraine): Providing art therapy, playback theatre and video production to help children and adults express and release their emotions in a community subject to frequent shelling and aerial attack.



- **Ukrainian Sisters are Kidfriendly** (Ukraine): Delivering a course for IDP women based on the principles of non-violent communication and effective group work, helping participants to manage their emotions and creating a peer-support network.
- **Country of Goodwill** (Ukraine): Integrating psychological, medical, legal, educational and career support for women in a rural community. This was especially focused on women experiencing crisis, and provided the first safe space in the community to welcome transgender women.
- **Tvory Dobropillya** (Ukraine): Helping displaced women and elderly people who had lost their homes integrate into a new community through creative workshops and psychological support.
- **Voznesensk Community Foundation** (Ukraine): Helping displaced people find new opportunities for self-employment through small-scale agricultural activity.
- **The Leader** (Ukraine): Supporting communication and integration between displaced people and local residents. This supported adults through psycho-emotional recovery and motivational sessions, and children and teenagers through educational programmes.

**2.8** In addition, five grants under Strand B of the Small Grants Scheme helped volunteers and staff in community-based organisations in Ukraine overcome stress and emotional burnout.

**2.9** Based on monitoring reports submitted by partners, **funding from BEARR via Strand A directly supported at least 1,520 people**, through counselling, art therapy and other forms of emotional and mental health support, training and support in accessing economic activity, access to crisis facilities, and other activities. This equates to a notional 'cost per beneficiary' of £24. The number of indirect beneficiaries (such as family members and the wider public benefiting from greater awareness) is likely to be substantially greater. Beyond beneficiary numbers, projects delivered significant wider benefits, as the case studies on the following pages illustrate:

## Integration through creativity in Ukraine

Kharkiv constantly experiences shelling, but is home to approximately 1.2 million residents, and internally displaced persons from settlements close to the front lines are constantly arriving. These include many elderly people, people with disabilities, and children who have lost their homes, their usual way of life, and sometimes their loved ones. They are all experiencing stress, so the issues of psychological support and socialisation in their new place of residence are becoming key. Support from Strand A of the Small Grants Scheme helped ASSA, a local community organisation, and the Kharkiv Volunteer Centre to address these problems through creativity.

Art therapy sessions were conducted for children and adults, with yoga and relaxation sessions, collage and colour therapy and intuitive drawing, for children and their parents. Teenagers created short videos up to a minute long on their smartphones, expressing and releasing the emotions that have accumulated. Participants also became familiar with and engaged in Playback Theatre.



Training sessions on community cohesion and civic engagement were also conducted with the aim of socialising internally displaced people, involving them in community activities and joint initiatives with existing residents and exploring opportunities in relation to social entrepreneurship, volunteering and community work and media literacy and countering propaganda.

## Empowering displaced people in Georgia

With support from Strand A of the Small Grants Scheme, Imedi, a small community-based organisation in Zugdidi, western Georgia, has turned limited resources into a powerful engine of empowerment for Georgia's internally displaced people, mostly from Abkhazia.

The initiative has supported **92 displaced people** from five major IDP settlements, enabling them to better understand their rights, speak up more confidently at community meetings, and draft proposals to fund ideas that benefit others like them.

Imedi organized 15 information meetings, equipping IDPs with the knowledge they need to claim their rights—covering crucial topics such as housing, employment, healthcare, and education. It also facilitated a **round-table discussion** that brought together IDPs, civil society experts, and local representatives. This opened up new channels of communication and mutual understanding at a time when relations between NGOs and the government have become increasingly strained. Through **local-level collaboration** and maintaining a non-political, community-centred approach, the project established a model of resilience and flexibility that others can follow.



Perhaps the most inspiring aspect of the project has been the **leadership and advocacy training** provided to **15 women and young people**. Participants gained the tools to champion their rights and support their communities—skills that strengthen not only individuals, but also the entire social fabric of the displaced population. The project also looked inward, focusing on sustainability. Training in **project proposal development** was provided to 15 staff members and volunteers, boosting the organisation's capacity to carry forward its mission beyond the lifespan of this grant.

## Taking care of mental health to overcome stress, prevent emotional burnout and regain self-confidence

The **Association of Mothers and Wives of Defenders of Ukraine** secured funding from BEARR through Strand B of the Small Grants Scheme for a project to support the psychological health of its members and volunteers, and through that, to support the resilience of the organisation.

The project aimed to help women overcome stress, prevent emotional burnout, and regain self-confidence. Thanks to the grant, the Association was able to hire a professional psychologist who conducted 60 hours of counselling for 23 women from different regions of Ukraine.

The counselling sessions provided a safe environment where women were able to open up and share painful feelings. In some cases, they talked about their experiences for the first time. For many of them, this was the first step towards recovery. One of the participants admits that for the first time in a long time she felt calm and able to focus on herself:

*"Working with a psychologist gave me not only self-help techniques, but also the strength to get back to life. I realised that my emotions are important and I can work with them. I realised that my feelings are normal. That I can be sad and cry. Because before that I had only heard: "Be strong. Hold on." And where do you get that strength from? Now I know that any emotions are normal. Now I know how to take care of myself."*

The self-help techniques mastered by the participants included breathing exercises, relaxation techniques, and self-reflection. They helped participants to reduce anxiety and stress, and to regain a sense of control over life. Increased emotional resilience became the basis for improving teamwork and efficiency throughout the organisation.

*"Sometimes it seems that no one needs you. Your pain, your worries. And it's unbearable. And then I saw women like me. Who, despite their losses, do not give up. This pain gives them strength. And they don't wait for someone to do something for them... I gained some self-confidence. Felt that I could do the same. That my fellow villagers will support me. Plus, I learned how to write appeals, monitor responses, and generally communicate with the authorities."*

The Association now plans to introduce annual retreat sessions for the teams from the regional centres and head office. This will allow women to immerse themselves in an atmosphere of peace and restore emotional balance away from everyday worries and challenges.

### 3. The Ukraine Appeal

In 2024, we supported 25 organisations in Ukraine and Moldova to provide emergency humanitarian assistance in response to Russia's war against Ukraine. This was distributed in 53 small grant payments to community-based organisations distributing food, medicine and hygiene products to vulnerable people and providing vital mental health support.

- 3.1** In February 2022, shortly after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we launched an **Emergency Appeal for Ukraine and Moldova**. The Ukraine Appeal led to a significant expansion of BEARR's work as the war led to an ongoing humanitarian crisis.
- 3.2** At the start of the Appeal, we asked former Small Grants Scheme beneficiaries in Ukraine and Moldova (which was receiving large numbers of refugees from Ukraine) whether they were active in providing humanitarian support, making grants of up to £2,500 available based on a simple application form<sup>2</sup>. Subsequently, we have supported several other groups delivering vital humanitarian work on the ground, many of which made contact with us through our networks. The Appeal has especially focused on supporting people who are vulnerable (for example, because of age or disability) and on supporting small organisations that are rooted in their communities.
- 3.3** The Ukraine Appeal is treated as a restricted fund. All donations that we receive for the purposes of the Appeal are used to fund partners delivering practical support in Ukraine and Moldova, with all of BEARR's administration costs (including financial transfer costs) paid for from our general funds.

#### The Ukraine Appeal in 2024

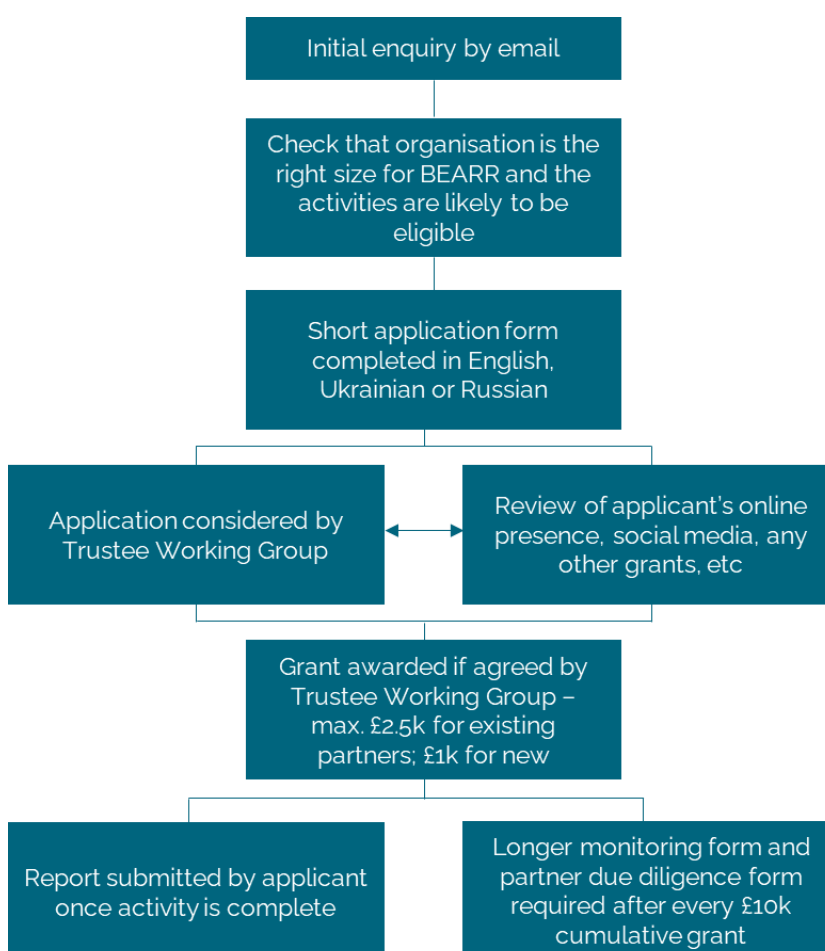
- 3.4** In 2024, we distributed £94,885 in grant payments to partners (in addition to £4,500 on Strand B of the Small Grants Scheme, already discussed in the previous section). This means that between the start of the Appeal and the end of 2024, we had spent a total of £555,123 on the Ukraine Appeal – all of which had gone direct in emergency support to partners on the ground.
- 3.5** Expenditure in 2024 supported 25 organisations through 53 individual grants, meaning an average grant payment of £1,790. Our partners are all small community-based organisations, and include some partners with whom we have been working since before the start of the war, and who we have funded several times, and groups that are new to us, but which have sometimes been working alongside established partners. As funding

<sup>2</sup> Or a maximum of £1,000 (\$1.3k) for organisations with which we have not had a previous relationship.

has become more challenging for all working in humanitarian assistance in Ukraine, we have frequently been approached by larger organisations seeking funds, but we see our role as supporting smaller groups that are active in their communities, and which are likely to remain active after the war ends.

**3.6** Throughout the Appeal, we have sought to strike a balance between ensuring an application process that is accessible and swift, while also making sure that we carry out appropriate due diligence and monitoring. Over the course of 2024, we continued to strengthen our processes, and we sought feedback from our partners in doing so. A summary of the application journey is illustrated below:

**Figure 3-1: Ukraine Appeal partner application journey**



**3.7** Of grant recipients in 2024, 23 were in Ukraine and two in Moldova. Increasingly, our grant support has been focused on eastern Ukraine, in those areas close to the front line and often furthest away from other sources of international assistance. We continued to fund the delivery of food, hygiene products and other emergency aid to vulnerable, often older people, and one of our regular partners made frequent trips to bring aid to people in de-occupied villages. Increasingly, we funded mental health and other therapeutic activities, such as art therapy for children and adults, as the pressures of living with war grew. We



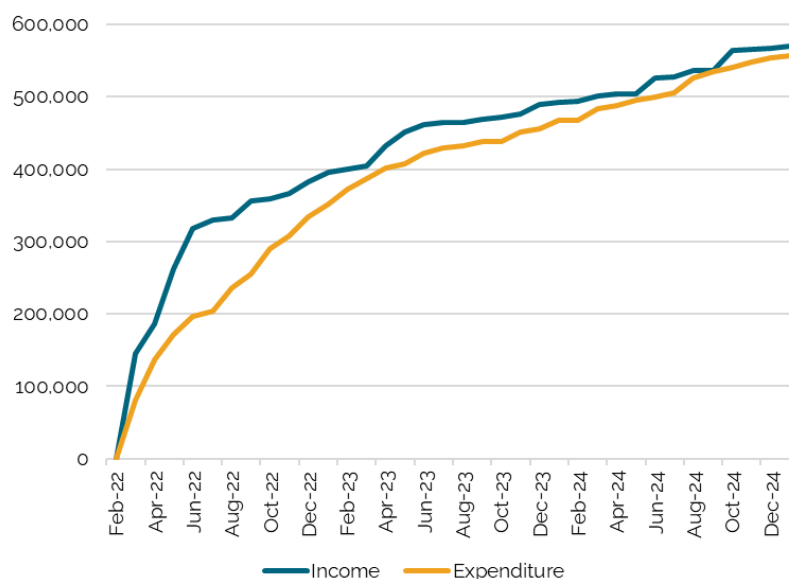
also supported activities that brought displaced people together with existing communities, continuing the theme of the 2024 Small Grants Scheme. Some examples of the projects that we supported are given at the end of this section.

### Raising funds for the Ukraine Appeal

**3.8** We raised £61,933 into the Ukraine Appeal in 2024. This came from a variety of sources, including around £29,800 from three charitable trusts and a range of smaller donations from trustees, friends of BEARR and other members of the public. We were especially grateful to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which agreed to match a staff fundraising initiative: in total, this raised £12,226 for the Ukraine Appeal. We also relaunched the Appeal in March 2024, with an online lecture by Dr Olesya Khromeychuk (see Section 5 for more details).

**3.9** Despite these fundraising efforts, expenditure on the Appeal substantially exceeded income in 2024, as we continued to respond to a steady stream of requests. This was supported by an accumulated balance going into 2024, which enabled us to sustain our activities, and we were also able to continue to run the Appeal into 2025. **Figure 3-2** below illustrates how income and expenditure has cumulated over time:

**Figure 3-2: Ukraine Appeal cumulative income and expenditure from launch to December 2024 (£)**



**3.10** In May 2025, we launched a new **Ukraine Community Resilience Fund** to replace the Appeal, with an increased focus on responding to the demand for first-line mental health support: at the time of writing, we have been successful in raising new funds for this initiative and we have issued our first grants. We will report on this further next year.

## Supporting humanitarian relief in Kharkiv

Kharkiv, in northeastern Ukraine, is close to the front line and has been subject to constant shelling and aerial attack. There are also around half a million displaced people in Kharkiv region, forced to leave their homes as a result of the war.

The BEARR Trust has been working with a partner organisation in Kharkiv since 2022, providing regular small grant payments. It has 18 regular staff and, when necessary, hires additional staff for specific projects. They found out about BEARR through an article in the media and we have built up an ongoing relationship with them.

**Figure 3-3: Distributing aid to displaced people in Kharkiv region**



Ivan, the head of the charity, explains that in the region, there is a strong community of about 400 civil society organisations (CSOs) coordinated in a "humanitarian cluster". These clusters have been established in each region in Ukraine, and bring together local and international relief workers and local administrations. The local CSOs also coordinate among themselves and have a regional coordination centre established by local activists.

To decide which community to help, they contact the local authorities to find out what assistance has been received, consult about needs, and then they go to the humanitarian cluster to obtain approval for meeting the request. This is to ensure there is a genuine need and to check for duplication. The BEARR Trust was one of the first donors to this CSO, and its small grants help them not only to deliver assistance but also to obtain partner funding to cover operating costs – they can go to other donors and say "we have a grant for this project, will you fund our salaries and other costs (petrol etc)?" But most of them have ongoing problems raising funds to cover core costs.

The CSO has four current priorities: humanitarian assistance – food, hygiene kits etc (with hygiene products a high priority because of the hot weather and risk of illness); mental health and psychological support; reconstruction of homes and other buildings; and sports events and holidays for children.

## 4. From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion

In 2024, we concluded delivery of a £50,000 project funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. As part of this, we worked with nine Ukrainian community-based organisations to increase therapeutic support to displaced and other vulnerable people and support the resilience and wellbeing of those community groups providing services.

- 4.1** In 2023, The BEARR Trust secured £50,000 from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office Conflict, Stability and Security Fund via the British Embassy in Kyiv for a project known as *From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion*. This built on our experience of the Ukraine Appeal, working with nine partner organisations in Odesa, Zaporizhzhia and western Ukraine, all of which had received support through the Ukraine Appeal and had provided detailed reports on their activities.
- 4.2** *From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion* focused on approaches to addressing the psychological stresses of the war. The aim was to demonstrate how community-based organisations can increase their therapeutic support to displaced people and other vulnerable groups, while also building their capacity and skill-sharing networks so that these groups can be better represented in local decision-making and resource allocation processes.
- 4.3** The project involved small grant payments to support the participating partners' work. Exchange of experience and practice was also a key element, and the project included a retreat and workshop in the Carpathian Mountains in western Ukraine, facilitated by BEARR Trustee Megan Bick. While most of the activity delivered as part of the project took place in 2023, it concluded in the first quarter of 2024, and we submitted our final report and received our final payment in March 2024.

### Key outcomes

- 4.4** BEARR has effectively facilitated the formation of a CBO network supporting more marginalised groups and individuals in a more inclusive and cooperative manner:
- We worked with nine grassroots organisations in identifying challenges facing people uprooted by war and facing multiple disadvantages, helping them find some relief from the traumas they have faced, meet local like-minded people, create better ties in community and gain improved access to services. Each of the nine CBOs who received one or two grants worked with a minimum of 100 children and 100 adults: in total, grant support reached over 4,000 people experiencing trauma across Ukraine. New

beneficiaries to group therapy sessions included: women affected by domestic violence, women that had been newly widowed, veterans and their families, as well as ethnic and sexual minorities.

- Partners are now regularly conducting therapeutic classes to reduce the consequences of psychological trauma from combat (optimisation of self-esteem, self-doubt, stabilisation of emotional state, organisation of personal boundaries, search and maintenance of resources, partnerships, conflict resolution, etc.) and reported that by learning from each other, they have grown in confidence. There are examples of new projects being developed, such as the 'Mental Brunch' café in Odesa, which makes it easier for people to drop in to access support not labelled as counselling. Another group in Odesa have started a programme for pre-school children and for mothers of children with special needs traumatised by war.

*"One of the main things we taught our staff was how to look after their own mental health while working intensively with people who have suffered. 32 members of staff benefited, most of them members of mobile teams helping hundreds of people in rural areas across southwestern Ukraine. Our main target group are families of displaced persons forced to leave their homes in conflict zones. Due to poor rural infrastructure people in villages do not have access to psychological support. The mobile teams use the knowledge and skills they received as part of this project training.*

*By learning more about maintaining mental well-being ourselves we plan to extend this as fully as possible with new colleagues, particularly those in a formerly occupied region."*

- Most of our partners reported that they are working more collaboratively with each other as well as with local authorities and promoting the needs of vulnerable groups to them and international stakeholders. Linked with this, they have expanded their work geographically into neighbouring regions with mobile teams visiting those in need in rural areas of Kherson, Mykolaiv and Dnipro as well as the regions in which they are based.

## Key lessons learned

**4.5** Our final report to the project funders identified three key lessons, which will be important for our future activity, and will hopefully inform the approaches taken by international funders in working with community-based organisations in Ukraine:

- The importance of **a bottom-up approach** - setting up channels to listen to those doing the real work. We heard from those providing humanitarian assistance the great need to provide non-medicalised, easily accessible therapeutic activity as well as aid. Each

partner ran their own local programme to suit the differing needs of the people coming to them for support, nothing was prescribed or centralised, only the collection of data and sharing of issues. By stressing downward accountability, the CBO leaders retain ownership and remain in touch with the needs of the beneficiaries and work to support them, rather than their donors.

- The importance of **cooperation** is particularly relevant for smaller groups who can benefit from each other's successes and failures – small groups feel stronger when part of the bigger picture. To maintain the spirit of the network and cooperation has been challenging for our partner CBOs working nearer to the frontline, many of which have suffered from office or home damage, stress and various health problems due to rising demand for services and more regular bombardments. Voluntary sector cooperation is reportedly much improved since the war began and our partners continue to make themselves better known and respected in their regions with IDPs, their communities, local authorities and larger NGOs.
- The importance of **investing in people** – both those doing the work and the organisations themselves. The Carpathian sojourn was both a workshop and a retreat, participants all left refreshed and valued with renewed vigour to make their respective organisations stronger and more effective in supporting new groups of vulnerable people. By encouraging partner CBOs to appreciate the various skills they have within their staff and volunteers they have become stronger, reallocating roles and developing new approaches.

*"Overall, we have improved the psychological welfare of our staff, their ability to deal with stress, and their stamina to continue work in a difficult situation. We were also able to improve the delegation of authority and division of responsibilities within the organisation, as staff members discovered organisational skills that surprised even themselves... We have noticed that giving our staff the chance to be creative at work has a positive effect on their psychological well-being and enhances their commitment to our charity."*

- 4.6** The project was also a new approach for BEARR, involving direct delivery of the workshop and retreat and ongoing dialogue with partners as their activities developed. The insights from the project have been important in informing our approach to the new Ukraine Community Resilience Fund, which we launched in 2025 and our emerging strategy for the next five years.

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## 5. Partnerships, networking and sharing

An important part of BEARR's work involves sharing good practice and building partnerships between community-based organisations in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and with organisations in the UK, through our annual conference, regular lectures, webinars and our newsletters and social media presence. Through this, we have raised awareness of the Small Grants Scheme and the Ukraine Appeal and the role of smaller CBOs, as well as raising further funds.

### Annual Conference

- 5.1** BEARR's annual conference took place on 29 November on the subject of **"civil society innovation in health and social welfare at times of crisis in the BEARR Trust region"**. It brought together civil society organisations from Eastern Europe and Central Asia to share innovative responses to recent crises – including the pandemic and economic and political dislocation, as well as war. Once again, the conference was a hybrid event, held in London and online and delivered in English, Ukrainian and Russian, and it attracted over 60 participants. We were especially pleased to welcome representatives of one of our Ukrainian partner organisations to London.



- 5.2** Several recent and current BEARR partners contributed their views and experiences to the conference. The first panel discussion explored **innovation in supporting vulnerable and marginalised groups**. Gulrukhsor Abdullaeva from Tajikistan described the Gulrukhsor Women's Centre, which has provided a confidential helpline, shelters and support to victims of domestic violence since 1996. She especially highlighted the need for economic independence and peer support for women. Armen Alaverdyan of Unison in Armenia discussed efforts to improve accessibility and employment for people with disabilities, including during the COVID-19 and Nagorno-Karabakh crises. Ivan Vostroknutov from Ukraine shared how Kharkiv City Boxing Club provided humanitarian aid and psychological



support to internally displaced people and those in frontline areas, stressing the importance of coordination and long-term planning.

- 5.3** The second panel focused on **strategies to maximise civil society impact**. Daria Rybalchenko from Ukraine's National Network of Local Philanthropy Development advocated for empowering local CSOs and reducing bureaucracy in international aid. She highlighted some of the challenges of working with larger aid agencies, which sometimes lacked the agility to respond quickly on the ground. Iryna Los from Open Doors in Nikopol described the mental and physical toll on volunteers working under constant shelling, and the importance of retreats for recovery. Meerim Osmonalieva from Oasis in Kyrgyzstan discussed the challenges of responding to more restrictive laws on civil society.

## Annual Lecture

- 5.4** The 2024 Annual Lecture was given in October by Sir Lawrence Freedman, Emeritus Professor of War Studies at King's College London, on the subject of 'Ukraine: What next?', with the lecture moderated by the former British ambassador to Moscow, Sir Roderic Lyne. The Annual Lecture is important in raising awareness of and funds for BEARR: once again, we are grateful to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which hosted us at their offices in Canary Wharf, and generously provided refreshments.



## Other events

- 5.5** In March 2024, we relaunched the Ukraine Appeal with an online talk by Dr Olesya Khromeychuk, director of the Ukrainian Institute in London and author of *The Death of a Soldier Told by his Sister*. Entitled 'Loss, defiance and the fight for justice', the talk marked two years since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the launch of the Appeal. The talk focused on the powerful stories of three women in Ukraine and their experiences of the war.
- 5.6** In January, we ran a webinar introducing our **Small Grants Scheme** and explaining the theme for 2024 and what we are looking for when we assess an application. The webinar was helpful in supporting the quality of applications and in demonstrating our friendly and accessible approach. We ran the webinar again for the 2025 SGS and intend to continue running support webinars for the SGS in future years.

## Website, newsletter, social media and Annual Review

- 5.7** Our website and regular newsletters are crucial in driving awareness of our work and in raising the profile of community-based organisations and health and welfare in the region. Our newsletter mailing list is substantially higher than it was before the war, and we also ran Twitter/X, Facebook and Instagram accounts, as well as a YouTube channel, which is important in disseminating our lectures and webinars to a wider audience.
- 5.8** In 2024, we increased the content in Ukrainian on our website, greatly assisted by the appointment of a new Ukrainian and Russian-speaking translator and website assistant.
- 5.9** As well as our regular reporting materials, we produced an **Annual Review** in 2024, covering the previous year, which we distributed at the Annual Lecture and Conference, and which provides a more accessible and engaging way of explaining BEARR's objectives and achievements.

## Networking activity in the region and the UK

- 5.10** Within Eastern Europe and Central Asia, a BEARR Trustee contributed to a mental health conference in Kyiv in 2024, organised by one of BEARR's patrons.
- 5.11** Technology has also meant that we have been able to widen participation to all our events: about half of the attendees at our Annual Conference joined remotely, mainly from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Improved simultaneous translation has also aided participation. We have also been able to keep in touch with partners on a more frequent basis, and we have had regular dialogue via Zoom with established partners.
- 5.12** Within the UK, BEARR trustees and officers have regularly attended lectures and other events at Chatham House and elsewhere. We also had a stand at the 2024 British Association of Slavonic and East European Studies conference in Cambridge, and trustees and other friends of BEARR have given a number of talks and participated in several events within their local communities.
- 5.13** In 2024, we also progressed discussions with a number of potential strategic partners. In Ukraine, these include the National Network of Local Philanthropy Development (Daria Rybalchenko spoke at our conference on their behalf), and we have provided references to other international aid organisations on behalf of some of our established partners. We also began a dialogue with Rotary Great Britain and Ireland, which has progressed further in 2025.

## 6. Monitoring and evaluation

We encourage an honest and open approach to considering 'what works': one that welcomes acceptance of mistakes and things that did not go well, as well as successes, with the aim of focusing on accountability to local communities, not to international funders. We continue to improve our reporting systems as our grant schemes expand, while remaining non-bureaucratic and accessible to small community-based organisations.

### 6.1 Our approach to evaluation is described as follows:

*"The BEARR Trust sees evaluation as much an ethical issue about power and purpose as a technical exercise. When asking for project reports, we try to demystify the process and encourage an open and honest approach that welcomes acceptance of mistakes made. We aim to thus improve the learning process and encourage greater ownership of both evaluation findings and subsequent project changes.*

*While we carry out evaluations to provide evidence to funders of the impact of their investment, we believe that the evaluation process should have as much (if not greater) justification in raising the profile of project achievements and providing downward accountability to the communities being worked in".*

### Monitoring and evaluation in practice

### 6.2 We have followed this approach in measuring the effects of the Small Grants Scheme, Ukraine Appeal and the FCDO-funded *From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion* project. In the case of the latter, we explicitly reported on 'downwards accountability' in our final report to the funders (cited in more detail in Chapter 4). We also sought to strengthen our processes in 2024.

### 6.3 Day-to-day **monitoring** of all projects is carried out by our Information and Administration Officer, who keeps in regular contact with our partners:

- For the **Small Grants Scheme**, we ask grantees to complete projects within six months if they can, and to provide us with regular updates and photos for our newsletter, website, and social media. We also ask for a report at the end of the project, for which we provide a standard template.
- For the **Ukraine Appeal**, we request evidence of the activities that were carried out: for single grant awards, we have been flexible in the form that this should take, although partners have generally provided evidence of purchases (receipts, etc.), photographs

of activities, and a short written report. For cumulative grants of £10,000 and for each additional cumulative £10k thereafter, we also ask partners to complete a standard monitoring form that asks for further detail on the activities delivered and the people who benefited, as well as more information on how these activities align to other initiatives locally, and how BEARR's funding adds value to funding that the partner may have sourced from elsewhere.

- For the **From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion** project, we supplemented project reports from partners with structured discussions facilitated by BEARR. We also provided standard quarterly monitoring information to our funders at FCDO.

**6.4 Evaluation** is based on partner reporting, online discussions and (in the case of the FCDO-funded project) the workshop and retreat in the Carpathians, which provided an opportunity to reflect on what had worked in project delivery and in partners' wider operations. Insights from the 2024 Small Grants Scheme project reports suggest a number of ways in which BEARR's support has helped to make a difference, including:

- Bringing communities together in ways that would not otherwise have happened, but which can be sustained in the longer term. In 2024, this included projects that enabled in-person interaction between children and families (often difficult in parts of Ukraine where education has to be via remote delivery and many people are displaced), and in developing practical activities that bring IDPs and 'host' communities together.

*"Children formed a real-life community through training sessions – something rare among displaced families who often only connect via Telegram. This physical, social support network remains even after project completion."*

Partner in Ukraine

*"[The project] showed that the need for 'soft' psychological support does not decrease. Many people do not go to psychologists, despite their mental state. But they are happy to attend creative art therapy".*

Partner in Ukraine

- Providing the initial tools and capacity for self-employment and small-scale economic activity, increasing self-belief and a sense of belonging, in addition to practical economic benefits.
- Providing better evidence of the effectiveness of services offered by community-based organisations, especially in reaching vulnerable people who may be less likely to trust and interact with government bodies.

*"We have also presented analyses showing that victims of violence and exploitation are more likely to seek assistance from non-profit organisations rather than government agencies. This indicates that crisis centres and charitable organisations often serve as valuable partners, providing crucial support to the country".*

Partner in Kyrgyzstan

**6.5** Evaluation visits to partners have been challenging to organise, given the current situation. However, our Small Grants Scheme officer visited Moldova in September 2024 to meet with four SGS and Ukraine Appeal partners. This highlighted the significant reductions in funding that local organisations are experiencing – both in relation to support for Ukrainian refugees and vulnerable Moldovans – and the shifting need away from basic humanitarian aid towards help in navigating health systems, accessing employment, etc.

**6.6** We also maintain relations with other organisations and individuals in the UK who have regular contact with local CBOs. In particular, Anna Bowles, a UK-based freelance writer who spends extended periods in eastern Ukraine supporting local groups, has introduced us to several partners and has been a valuable source of information.

### Future approaches to monitoring and evaluation

**6.7** Looking to the future, we have had discussions with one of our larger funders about a 'Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning' (MEAL) approach that it has been exploring. This will require us to develop more systematic systems for reporting outputs consistently (such as the number of beneficiaries and categorising that by demographic and need). Our recent investment in the Salesforce customer relationship management system (discussed in the next section) ought to help with this, as will the strengthened approach to reporting that we have introduced for the new Ukraine Community Resilience Fund.

### Civil society survey

**6.8** In 2024, we ran a **civil society organisation survey**, building on previous surveys that we carried out in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

**6.9** 250 CSOs responded to the survey. As in previous years, many (70%) reported reliance on international funding: a major challenge given current pressures. 76% reported an increase in the demand for their services over the past two years; 75% reported an increase in the number of clients seeking psychological help; and 49% reported burnout among volunteers and staff (compared with 31% in the 2021 survey). This gives an indication of the pressures that our partners are under – although 52% said that attitudes to CSOs in wider society had improved in recent years.

## 7. Managing BEARR and planning for the future

The BEARR Trust has an active board of trustees, supported by a network of special advisors, patrons and volunteers and by our Information and Administration Officer and freelance staff. In 2024, we invested in our IT infrastructure and systems to improve security and efficiency, and we have also made strong progress in developing our next five-year strategy for 2026-30.

### Constitution and regulation

- 7.1** The BEARR Trust is constituted by a Declaration of Trust dated 27 April 1992 and Supplemental Deed of Variation dated 14 December 1995.
- 7.2** The BEARR Trust is regulated by the Charity Commission of England and Wales. Its registered charity number is 1011086.
- 7.3** We are also registered with the Fundraising Regulator

### Trustees

- 7.4** At the end of 2024, BEARR had 13 **trustees**. In December, Nicola Ramsden stood down as chair after six years of leading BEARR through a period of significant change and expansion, including the launch of the Ukraine Appeal. Ross Gill, who has been a trustee since 2015 and, more recently, BEARR's treasurer, took over the role of chair.
- 7.5** We welcomed Clare Brooks as a new trustee in 2024. Clare has over 30 years' experience of working with community foundations and grant-making trusts.
- 7.6** Trustees who served at any point in 2024 are:
  - Megan Bick
  - Clare Brooks (appointed April 2024)
  - Jane Ebel
  - Charles Garrett
  - Ross Gill (chair from December 2024)
  - Helen Goodman
  - Janet Gunn
  - Ali Lantukh (resigned July 2024)



- Ann Lewis
- Marcia Levy
- Nicola Ramsden (chair until December 2024)
- Michael Rasell
- Sam Thorne
- Sabrina Vashisht (resigned February 2025)

### Appointment and training of trustees

**7.7** Trustees are appointed by a resolution of the Trustees. Potential Trustees are sought through recommendation by existing Trustees, or through advertising.

**7.8** Trustees are appointed for a period of three years, renewable by mutual agreement.

**7.9** All Trustees are given a copy of the Charity Commission publication, 'The Essential Trustee: An Introduction', and are referred to the full version of this document on the Charity Commission website and to The BEARR Trust's annual report and accounts.

**7.10** New Trustees are given an induction pack consisting of The BEARR Trust's governing documents, minutes of the most recent meetings of Trustees, and policies and process notes prepared by Trustees and volunteers, describing all aspects of BEARR's operations.

### Trustee meetings and roles

**7.11** Meetings of the full Trustee Board are held every two months.

**7.12** Trustees frequently take responsibility for specific areas of work, such as the conference and the website. In 2022, we established a Ukraine Appeal Working Group to assess applications to the Appeal and maintain track of progress. We also continued to operate an editorial sub-group for the Newsletter, and a Trustee led our review of IT systems.

### Patrons

**7.13** The BEARR Trust is supported by 11 patrons, who are senior figures in public life. Our patrons in 2024 were:

- Vladimir Ashkenazy
- Elena Bashkistrova Barenboim
- Robert Brinkley CMG
- Lady Ellen Darendorf
- Myra Green OBE

- Bridget Kendall MBE
- Sir Roderic Lyne KBE CMG
- Michael McCulloch
- Mike Simmonds
- Dr Robert van Voren, PhD, FRCPsych (Hon)
- Sir Andrew Wood GCMG

**7.14** We are grateful to one of our patrons, Sir Roderic Lyne, for introducing Sir Lawrence Freedman at our Annual Lecture and for moderating the subsequent discussion.

### Special advisors and volunteers

**7.15** **Volunteers** make an important contribution to news research, translation, social media and financial supervision. We estimate that voluntary work, including by trustees, is worth around £60,000 each year to BEARR.

**7.16** Three volunteer '**special advisors**' support the work of the trustees. These are Charlie Walker, Biljana Radonjić Ker-Lindsay, and Armorer Wason. Our special advisors help us to draw on a wider range of expertise in working with CBOs in the region and academic research, reflecting BEARR's increased activity.

### Staff

**7.17** We welcomed Valdonė Šniukaitė as BEARR's **Information and Administration Officer** in January 2024, succeeding Alexia Claydon. Over the course of the year, we increased the hours of our Information and Administration Officer, reflecting BEARR's increasing volume of work.

**7.18** Anna Lukanina-Morgan continued to support BEARR on a freelance basis, especially in relation to the Small Grants Scheme. We also welcomed Oksana Yurchenko as a Ukrainian and Russian language translator and website assistant, also working for us on a freelance basis.

### Infrastructure

**7.19** In 2024, we moved our London office to new space at Voluntary Action Islington, where we are fortunate to work alongside a number of other charities. VAI also once again hosted our conference.

**7.20** We also carried out two major infrastructure projects in 2024. We undertook a comprehensive **review of our IT systems and cybersecurity** protections and processes, addressing a key issue on our risk register at the start of the year. As well as improving data security, this has also meant much greater efficiency in storing and accessing documents.

We also invested in a new **Salesforce** CRM (customer relationship management) system to keep better track of partners and donors, and to enable us to gather further insights into the beneficiaries we have helped. We have continued to develop this during 2025.

## Policies

**7.21** The BEARR Trust has the following policies in place, all of which are subject to regular review:

- Code of Conduct for Trustees
- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Data and Cybersecurity Policy
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Expenses and Reimbursements Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Sanctions, Financial Abuse and Terrorism Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

## Safeguarding

**7.22** The BEARR Trust adopted a Safeguarding Policy in 2021. This is regularly reviewed, and we approved a revised policy in 2024, which is published on the BEARR website.

**7.23** Our Safeguarding Policy is shared with all partners. We ask all partners in receipt of grant to act in accordance with the principles our policy sets out. We also encourage partners to develop their own safeguarding policies, recognising the challenges that many face in operating within different legal frameworks. We are committed to promoting the adoption of robust approaches to safeguarding in a way that can be genuinely embedded within the operations of community-based organisations.

**7.24** We also take measures to safeguard our partners. For example, we do not publish the names or specific locations of partners in Ukraine, other than with their explicit consent. The examples used in this report have all been published by BEARR with the agreement of the organisations concerned.

## Risk management

**7.25** The Trustees have considered the main risks that might prevent BEARR from fulfilling its charitable objectives. Our approach has been reviewed and updated in the light of the

increase in BEARR's activities since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Alongside the Risk Management Policy, a consolidated risk register is in place and is regularly reviewed by the Trustees.

## Looking to the future

**7.26** Our current five-year framework runs to the end of 2025. In 2024, we began the process of preparing a new five-year strategy, for 2026-30. This process began with a strategy workshop in August, to discuss BEARR's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with trustees, advisors and patrons. Subsequently, we prepared an initial draft strategy in the autumn, which has been substantially developed in 2025.

**7.27** The current draft strategy sets five **strategic objectives**, which are to:

- Improve our **fundraising capabilities and increase income**, enabling us to increase the number of high-quality projects that we are able to fund through the Small Grants Scheme, and to maintain and expand our support for partner organisations in Ukraine.
- Improve the **efficiency and effectiveness of our grant making activities**, with the aim of increasing the proportion of SGS applicants that are successful.
- Increase **partners' voices in BEARR planning** and decision making.
- Strengthen our **approaches to evaluation and knowledge exchange**, improving the way in which we gather and analyse information and use it to inform the design of our grant schemes and other activities.
- Raise our **profile and extend our reach**, promoting both BEARR's work and that of our partners to a wider audience.

**7.28** We are continuing to develop the new strategy, which will be finalised by the end of 2025.

**7.29** In the meantime, we responded in the first half of 2025 to the changing needs of our partners in Ukraine and the challenging funding context by launching our new **Ukraine Community Resilience Fund**, which replaced the Ukraine Appeal from May 2025. This builds on the learning set out earlier in this report: we anticipate that we will raise around £48k into the new Fund in 2025, and we will be able to report on this next year.

## 8. Financial review

In 2024, The BEARR Trust secured income of £147.3k. Expenditure was £183.5k, resulting in a deficit for the year of £36.2k. This deficit was entirely due to restricted funds, and mostly due to the absorption of the accumulated balance on the Ukraine Appeal.

- 8.1** The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the current statutory requirements and comply with the Charity's governing document and the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in January 2019.

### Financial performance

- 8.2** The financial performance of the Charity for the year is set out in the Statement of Financial Activities.

- 8.3** Total income for the Charity was £147,292 (2023: £244,576). Although lower than in 2022 and 2023, income remained substantially higher than in the years before the start of the Ukraine Appeal. In 2024, income consisted of:

- £80,299 (2023: £77,328) in unrestricted funds (known as the 'General Fund').
- £61,993 (2023: £122,248) in a restricted fund for the Ukraine Appeal. Of this, £36,405 was received in the form of grants from charitable bodies, and the remainder from individual donations and fundraising events.
- £5,000 in a restricted fund from the UK Conflict, Stability and Security Fund managed by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. This was the final payment of a £50,000 grant awarded in 2023 to support our project 'From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion' in Ukraine.

- 8.4** Total expenditure for the year was £183,478 (2023: £236,620). This consisted of:

- £70,652 (2023: £78,334) in unrestricted expenditure. Of this, £36,501 (2023: £36,431) was on the Small Grants Scheme<sup>3</sup>.
- £99,395 (2023: £121,349) in restricted expenditure on the Ukraine Appeal. It should be noted that all restricted expenditure was on direct grant payments to civil society

<sup>3</sup> Including the costs of transfers and monitoring and evaluation

organisations for humanitarian activity in Ukraine and Moldova, with all administrative costs paid for from unrestricted funds.

- £13,441 (2023: £36,937) in restricted expenditure on the FCDO-funded 'From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion' project. This included a contribution to administrative costs, as set out in the application to the FCDO and the final claim.

**8.5** Consequently, the Charity made an overall deficit of £36,186 (2023: surplus of £7,956) in the year. This consisted of:

- A surplus in unrestricted funds of £9,647 (2023: deficit of £1,006).
- A deficit on the restricted Ukraine Appeal of £37,392 (2023: surplus of £899). This substantial deficit reflects erosion of the surpluses in 2022 and 2023, as need remains great despite the challenges of securing continued funding.
- A deficit on the FCDO-funded project of £8,441 (2023: surplus of £8,063), as per the final claim.

**8.6** Cash at bank and in hand on 31 December 2024 was £72,405 (2023: £87,904).

### Reserves policy

**8.7** The Trustees seek to maintain an adequate level of reserves to enable the Charity to carry on its activities in the event of financial difficulties, to enable restructuring if necessary and the avoidance of unplanned closure. To support this, the Trustees seek to hold unrestricted reserves equivalent to at least six months of annual General Fund expenditure, excluding grant payments. Based on expenditure in 2024, this would equate to £17,075.

**8.8** This level of reserves had been achieved at the end of the year. Total unrestricted funds on 31 December 2024 were £50,015 (2023: £40,386). There were no tangible assets with a value greater than £2,000.

**8.9** The view of the Trustees at the end of 2024 was that the overall position of the Charity and the balance of funds were sufficient to enable the Charity to operate, and that there were sufficient liquid assets to enable restricted and unrestricted funds to be applied as necessary.

### Fundraising

**8.10** The BEARR Trust is reliant on grants and donations from a wide range of charitable trusts, philanthropic organisations and private individuals. To support our efforts, we operate a Friends scheme, to encourage regular donations, and we run an annual conference and a programme of lectures, which also encourages donations. In 2024, this included a lecture generously hosted by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as our annual conference and an online lecture in support of the Ukraine Appeal.



**8.11** The Charity is registered with the Fundraising Regulator; consequently, everyone who supports us may be assured that we comply with the regulatory standards for fundraising. All our fundraising activities are managed in-house, and we do not pay for fundraising advice.

**8.12** In 2024, £56,704 (2023: £59,664) was received from a private trust as the fourth instalment of a five-year unrestricted annual grant. The Trustees would also like to acknowledge the generous support of the following organisations, all of which have provided larger donations:

- The Mulberry Trust
- Just Trust
- British East West Centre

**8.13** The Trustees are also grateful to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, which matched donations to the Ukraine Appeal through a staff fundraising initiative. This raised £12,226.

**8.14** Many other donors and benefactors have also supported the Charity, including church groups, private donors and charitable trusts which have asked that we respect their anonymity by not including them in this report. Some of these have made multi-year pledges, which will also ensure funding in 2025. Many private donations were enabled by a link to CAF Donate via our website. £17,753 was secured in donations to the Ukraine Appeal via CAF Donate.

**8.15** We also benefited in 2024 from a donation of £15,000 from a private trust via the CAF American Trust Fund, which was granted in 2023 (and was therefore included in the 2023 accounts), but received in the following year.

**8.16** Fundraising for the Ukraine Appeal was more challenging in 2024 than in the two previous years, despite a great need for funds to be directed towards those community-based organisations that are responding to local needs. While we maintained sufficient funds to continue to respond to a steady stream of applications, fundraising will be a high priority in 2025, especially as we enter the final year of our major five-year grant agreement.

**8.17** The Trustees are very grateful for the generosity of all our donors, especially during the ongoing need to support community-based organisations at a time of war.

### **Bankers and independent examiners**

**8.18** The BEARR Trust's bankers are:

CAF Bank

25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ

**8.19** Our independent examiner is:

Lucy Hammond BSc FCA

Kreston Reeves LLP

9 Donnington Park, 85 Birdham Road, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 7AJ

**Statement of Trustees' responsibilities**

**8.20** The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

**8.21** The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles of the Charities SORP (FRS 102);
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Charity will continue in business.

**8.22** The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the Charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 and the provisions of the Trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

**8.23** Approved by order of the members of the board of Trustees on 2 October 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Ross Gill, Chair

## 9. Statement of Financial Activities

### Statement of financial activities (including income and expenditure accounts) for the year ending 31 December 2024

		2024			2023
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds	Total funds	Total funds
	Note	£	£	£	£
<b>Income from:</b>	2				
Donations and legacies		77,306	66,993	144,299	240,115
Charitable activities		2,344	-	2,344	3,541
Investments		649	-	649	921
<b>Total income</b>		<u>80,299</u>	<u>66,993</u>	<u>147,292</u>	<u>244,576</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>	3				
Raising funds		2,820	-	2,820	3,173
Charitable activities		67,832	112,826	180,658	233,447
<b>Total expenditure</b>		<u>70,652</u>	<u>112,826</u>	<u>183,478</u>	<u>236,620</u>
<b>Net movement in funds</b>		<u>9,647</u>	<u>- 45,833</u>	<u>- 36,186</u>	<u>7,956</u>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward		40,368	56,666	97,034	89,077
Net movement in funds		<u>9,647</u>	<u>- 45,833</u>	<u>- 36,186</u>	<u>7,956</u>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<u>50,015</u>	<u>10,833</u>	<u>60,848</u>	<u>97,034</u>

## Balance sheet at 31 December 2024

	Note	2024		Total this year	2023
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted income funds		Total
		£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>		-	-	-	-
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	8	1,476	-	1,476	15,270
Cash at bank and in hand	10	61,572	10,833	72,405	87,904
Total current assets		63,048	10,833	73,881	103,174
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	9	13,033	-	13,033	-
Net current assets/(liabilities)		50,015	10,833	60,848	97,034
Total assets less current liabilities		50,015	10,833	60,848	97,034
Total net assets or liabilities		50,015	10,833	60,848	97,034
<b>Funds of the Charity</b>	12				
Restricted income funds		-	10,833	10,833	56,666
Unrestricted funds		50,015	-	50,015	40,368
<b>Total funds</b>		50,015	10,833	60,848	97,034

- 9.1** The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the Trustees on 2 October 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Ross Gill, Chair

## Notes to the financial statements for the year ending 31 December 2024

### Note 1: Accounting policies

#### Basis of preparation of financial statements

- 9.2** The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) - Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).
- 9.3** The BEARR Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.
- 9.4** The financial statements are prepared in British Pounds (£) and are rounded to the nearest Pound.

#### Going concern

- 9.5** The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis as the trustees believe that no material uncertainties exist. The trustees have considered the level of funds held for 12 months from authorising these financial statements.

#### Income

- 9.6** All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.
- 9.7** Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the Balance Sheet.
- 9.8** No material item of deferred income has been included in the accounts.
- 9.9** No legacies were received during the accounting period.
- 9.10** One Government grant, of £5,000 from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), was received during the accounting period. This was the final instalment of a £50,000 grant awarded in 2023.

#### Gift Aid

- 9.11** Gift Aid receivable is included in income when there is a valid declaration from the donor. Any Gift Aid amount recovered on a donation is considered to be part of that gift and is treated as an addition to the same fund as the initial donation unless the donor or the terms of the appeal have specified otherwise.

- 9.12** In practice, most donations from private individuals are received via CAF Donate, which processes Gift Aid on the Charity's behalf. CAF Donate Gift Aid receipts are therefore included within the overall donation value.

Donated goods and services

- 9.13** No donated goods or services were received in the accounting period.

Voluntary help

- 9.14** The value of any voluntary help received is not included in the accounts. However, the Charity relies on significant in-kind support from volunteers and trustees. Volunteer time is estimated at around 100 hours per year. Trustee time is substantially in excess of this, although we do not formally maintain timesheet records.

Expenditure

- 9.15** Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.
- 9.16** Expenditure is classified by activity. Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support. Governance costs comprise all costs involving public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice.
- 9.17** Expenditure on raising funds includes all expenditure incurred by the charity to raise funds for its charitable purposes and includes costs of all fundraising activities.
- 9.18** Expenditure on charitable activities is incurred on directly undertaking the activities which further the charity's objectives, as well as any associated support costs.
- 9.19** All expenditure is inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Interest receivable

- 9.20** Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the institution with whom the funds are deposited.

Tangible fixed assets

- 9.21** Tangible fixed assets costing £2,000 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. However, the Charity held no tangible fixed assets with a value of that amount or greater in 2024.



## Debtors

**9.22** Debtors are recognised at the settlement amount.

## Cash in bank and in hand

**9.23** Cash at bank and in hand includes cash and short-term highly liquid investments with a maturity of three months or less. In practice, this applies to all the Charity's cash assets.

## Fund accounting

**9.24** The General Fund is an unrestricted fund which is available for use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which is not designated for other purposes.

**9.25** Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. In 2024, the Charity maintained two restricted funds:

- The Ukraine Appeal, established to provide emergency humanitarian assistance to people in Ukraine and Moldova who have been impacted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This was established following the Russian invasion in 2022.
- A restricted fund to manage the grant from the FCDO's UK Conflict, Stability and Security Fund.

## Note 2: Analysis of income

		2024		2023
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
		£	£	£
<b>Donations and legacies:</b>	Donations and gifts	11,713	25,588	37,301
	Gift Aid	473	0	473
	Legacies	0	0	0
	General grants provided by government/other charities	65,120	41,405	106,525
	Other	-	-	-
Total		77,305	66,993	144,299
<b>Charitable activities:</b>	Lectures and conferences	2,344	-	2,344
	Total	2,344	-	2,344
<b>Income from investments:</b>	Interest income	649	-	649
	Total	649	-	649
<b>Total income</b>		<b>80,299</b>	<b>66,993</b>	<b>147,292</b>

### Note 3: Analysis of expenditure

	2024			2023		
	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds £
<b>Expenditure on raising funds</b>						
Incurred seeking donations	1,226	-	1,226	1,304	-	1,304
Incurred seeking grants	1,226	-	1,226	1,304	-	1,304
Staging fundraising events	368	-	368	565	-	565
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,820</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,820</b>	<b>3,173</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,173</b>
<b>Expenditure on charitable activities</b>						
Small Grants Scheme	36,501	-	36,501	36,431	-	36,431
Ukraine Appeal	792	99,385	100,177	850	121,349	122,199
FCDO project	-	13,441	13,441	-	36,937	36,937
Information and Networking	4,422	-	4,422	4,981	-	4,981
Administration and Governance	26,117	-	26,117	32,897	-	32,897
<b>Total</b>	<b>67,832</b>	<b>112,826</b>	<b>180,658</b>	<b>75,160</b>	<b>158,286</b>	<b>233,447</b>
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>70,652</b>	<b>112,826</b>	<b>183,478</b>	<b>78,334</b>	<b>158,286</b>	<b>236,620</b>

#### Breakdown of expenditure on charitable activities:

	2024				2023			
	Direct activities £	Grant funding £	Support costs £	Total £	Direct activities £	Grant funding £	Support costs £	Total £
Small Grants Scheme	-	36,321	180	36,501	-	35,946	485	36,431
Ukraine Appeal	-	99,385	792	100,177	-	121,349	850	122,199
FCDO project	-	9,500	3,941	13,441	9,661	26,000	1,276	36,937
Information and networking	2,358	-	2,064	4,422	3,554	-	1,428	4,981
Administration and governance	-	-	26,117	26,117	-	-	32,897	32,897
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,358</b>	<b>145,206</b>	<b>33,094</b>	<b>180,658</b>	<b>13,215</b>	<b>183,295</b>	<b>36,937</b>	<b>233,447</b>

## Note 4: Analysis of support costs

### 9.26 Support costs are apportioned as follows:

#### 2024

	Small Grants Scheme £	Ukraine Appeal £	FCDO project £	Information & networking £	Admin & governance £	Total £	Basis of allocation
Small Grants Scheme - Monitoring & Evaluation	-	-	-	-	-	-	Actual costs of monitoring and evaluation incurred
Small Grants Scheme - Finance costs	180	-	-	-	-	180	Actual costs in transferring funds to SGS beneficiaries
Ukraine Appeal - Finance costs	-	792	-	-	-	792	Actual costs incurred in transferring funds to Ukraine Appeal beneficiaries
FCDO - Finance costs	-	-	40	-	-	40	Actual costs incurred in transferring funds to FCDO project beneficiaries
Information and networking	-	-	-	2,064	-	2,064	80% of funds spent on website and IT costs (the remaining 20% are allocated to Fundraising)
Administration and governance - Small Grants Scheme	5,176	-	-	-	-	5,176	100% of time of SGS Support Officer
Administration and governance - FCDO project	-	-	3,901	-	-	3,901	Information & Admin Officer and office costs in Q1 as per final FCDO grant claim
Administration and governance - General	-	-	-	-	20,941	20,941	90% of remainder of Information & Admin Officer time, plus all workstation rent, insurance and governance costs.
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,356</b>	<b>792</b>	<b>3,941</b>	<b>2,064</b>	<b>20,941</b>	<b>33,094</b>	

#### 2023

	Small Grants Scheme £	Ukraine Appeal £	FCDO project £	Information & networking £	Admin & governance £	Total £	Basis of allocation
Small Grants Scheme - Monitoring & Evaluation	355	-	-	-	-	355	Actual costs of monitoring and evaluation incurred
Small Grants Scheme - Finance costs	130	-	-	-	-	130	Actual costs in transferring funds to SGS beneficiaries
Ukraine Appeal - Finance costs	-	850	-	-	-	850	Actual costs incurred in transferring funds to Ukraine Appeal beneficiaries
FCDO - Finance costs	-	-	170	-	-	170	Actual costs incurred in transferring funds to FCDO project beneficiaries
Information and networking	-	-	-	1,428	-	1,428	80% of funds spent on website and IT costs (the remaining 20% are allocated to Fundraising)
Administration and governance - Small Grants Scheme	4,114	-	-	-	-	4,114	100% of time of SGS Support Officer
Administration and governance - FCDO	-	-	1,106	-	-	1,106	Costs associated with Activity 1 (Support) for the FCDO funded project (other than finance costs)
Administration and governance - General	-	-	-	-	28,784	28,784	90% of remainder of Information & Admin Officer time, plus all workstation rent, insurance and governance costs.
Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,599</b>	<b>850</b>	<b>1,276</b>	<b>1,428</b>	<b>28,784</b>	<b>36,937</b>	

#### Note 5: Fees for the examination of the accounts

- 9.27** The cost of independent examination of the accounts for 2024 is £2,340 (2023: £2,160) including VAT. This will be paid in 2025 and is included in the accounts as a creditor.

#### Note 6: Paid employees

- 9.28** The Charity employs a part-time Information and Administration Officer.
- 9.29** Total costs of employment in 2024 were:

	<b>2024</b>
	<b>£</b>
Salaries and wages	18,036
Social security costs	-
Pension costs (defined contribution scheme)	354
Other employee benefits	-
<b>Total staff costs</b>	<b>18,389</b>

#### Note 7: Grants

- 9.30** In 2024, the Charity paid £145,206 (2023: £183,295) in grants to third party organisations. These were made up of:
- Grants via the Small Grants Scheme: £36,321 (2023: £35,946). This consisted of 11 grants (2023: 10) to support partnerships between two or more civil society organisations promoting the health and welfare of vulnerable people.
  - Emergency humanitarian assistance grants via the main Ukraine Appeal: £94,885 (2023: £112,927). This consisted of 52 individual grants (2023: 66).
  - Grants to support the organisational resilience and staff welfare of civil society organisations funded through the Ukraine Appeal: £4,500 (2023: £8,423). This consisted of 5 grants (2023: 8), funded via the restricted Ukraine Appeal
  - Grants through the FCDO-funded project, From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion: £9,500 (2023: £26,000). This consisted of 4 grants (2023: 12). This concluded the FCDO project, bringing total grant payments across the project to £35,500.

#### Note 8: Debtors

- 9.31** Total debtors were £1,476 (2023: £15,270). These were made up of Gift Aid claims due (£743) and donations made via CAF Donate in December 2024 which were received in 2025 (£734).

## Note 9: Creditors

- 9.32** Total creditors were £13,033 (2023: £6,141). These were made up of employee costs for work carried out in December 2024, payments to suppliers for goods received in 2024, expense claims relating to 2024 and received after the end of the year, grant payments made in 2024 and processed in 2025, and the cost of independent examination of the accounts.

## Note 10: Cash at bank and in hand

- 9.33** Cash at the bank and in hand was as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Cash at bank and on hand	72,060	87,558
Other	345	345
<b>Total</b>	<b>72,405</b>	<b>87,904</b>

- 9.34** 'Other' cash relates to £345 held in a dormant PayPal account.

## Note 11: Exposure to financial risk

- 9.35** The Charity's exposure to financial risk is assessed as follows:

- **Credit risk:** Low. The only outstanding debtors relate to Gift Aid payments yet to be claimed. No payments have been advanced against this funding.
- **Liquidity risk:** Low. There is no liquidity risk in relation to the Ukraine Appeal, since no grants are issued unless funds are already received. BEARR's Reserves Policy sought to maintain six months' core expenditure less the costs of the Small Grant Scheme.
- **Market risk:** Zero. The BEARR Trust has no investments. All funds are held in CAF Bank accounts, or in accounts with international payment providers (in the case of the latter, only a minimal amount is held to meet immediate needs).

## Note 12: Funds analysis

### 9.36 Movement within The BEARR Trust's restricted and unrestricted funds is set out below:

2024

Fund	Restricted/ unrestricted	Purpose and Restrictions	Fund balances brought forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Fund balances carried forward £
General Fund	Unrestricted	No restrictions	40,368	80,299	- 70,652	50,015
Ukraine Appeal	Restricted	Restricted to use on direct support for humanitarian assistance to people in Ukraine and Moldova impacted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine	48,603	61,993	- 99,385	11,211
FCDO - UK Conflict, Stability and Security Fund	Restricted	Restricted to the implementation of project 'From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion' funded by the FCDO	8,063	5,000	- 13,441	378
<b>Total Funds</b>			<b>97,034</b>	<b>147,292</b>	<b>- 183,478</b>	<b>60,848</b>

2023

Fund	Restricted/ unrestricted	Purpose and Restrictions	Fund balances brought forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Fund balances carried forward £
General Fund	Unrestricted	No restrictions	41,373	77,328	- 78,334	40,368
Ukraine Appeal	Restricted	Restricted to use on direct support for humanitarian assistance to people in Ukraine and Moldova impacted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine	47,704	122,248	- 121,349	48,603
FCDO - UK Conflict, Stability and Security Fund	Restricted	Restricted to the implementation of project 'From Group Therapy to Community Cohesion' funded by the	-	45,000	- 36,937	8,063
<b>Total Funds</b>			<b>89,077</b>	<b>244,576</b>	<b>- 236,620</b>	<b>97,034</b>

## Note 13: Transactions with Trustees and related parties

### 9.37 No Trustees have been paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from an employment with the Charity or a related entity.

### 9.38 £3,483 (2023: £14,860) was received by Trustees in reimbursements. This consisted of:

- Trustee expenses and reimbursements for goods and subscriptions purchased:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Travel	313	728
Subsistence	-	210
Accommodation	-	349
Other	667	4,419
<b>Total</b>	<b>980</b>	<b>5,706</b>

- Reimbursement for grants paid to beneficiaries of the Ukraine Appeal: £2,503 (2023: £9,155). This applied to two Ukraine Appeal grant payments, where Trustees arranged



initial payment and were subsequently repaid, both in circumstances where it was not possible to use Convera, the charity's usual international payments provider.

**9.39** At the end of the year, the charity owed £1,668 to trustees in reimbursements due.

**9.40** Trustees made direct donations of £10,965 in 2024, including Gift Aid.

## 10. Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The BEARR Trust

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024 which are set out on pages 29 to 43.

### Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: *Kristen Reeves LHP*

Name: Lucy Hammond BSc FCA

Address: 9 Donnington Park, 85 Birdham Road, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 7AJ

Date 31 October 2025



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Charity registered in England and Wales  
No. 1011086



The BEARR Trust is a UK-based charity committed to strengthening community-based organisations and civil society across Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Since 1992, we have partnered with over 500 grassroots organisations in twelve countries – mobilising resources, building capacity and connecting local leaders with international expertise in health and social development.

A strong civil society is the foundation of resilient, thriving communities. In a region shaped by diverse political systems, complex transitions and persistent social challenges, local organisations are lifelines for vulnerable and marginalised groups. They promote social cohesion and deliver essential services where they are needed the most. In the context of war in Ukraine and mounting social pressures, their role has never been more critical.

By strengthening local partners, we help to foster long term change, giving communities the tools they need to adapt, thrive and advocate for themselves.