



Led By Women for Women



ANNUAL REPORT

2024 – 2025

SAFETY, RECOVERY & REBUILDING

A Year at Glace



Chair's Foreword

This year, more than ever, I have been reminded of the extraordinary resilience of the women at the heart of our organisation. Every day, we work alongside Middle Eastern, Kurdish and North African women whose strength humbles us. Many have experienced war, displacement, domestic abuse, poverty, isolation or the trauma of rebuilding their lives in a new country. And yet, despite these challenges, they show remarkable courage. They come to our organisation not only seeking support, but carrying hope for safety, opportunity, dignity and for a better future for their children.

Their strength is steady. It is the quiet determination to attend English classes week after week. It is to seek support after abuse. It is a willingness to build a community in an unfamiliar place. It is strength in its most genuine and moving form.

In supporting these women, our staff demonstrate resilience of their own. In a time when the women's sector globally is under strain, facing funding cuts, political uncertainty, shrinking civic space and rising demand, our team continues to show professionalism, compassion and deep commitment. They work with complex cases, respond to crisis, advocate tirelessly, and create spaces of trust and belonging.

Globally, women's rights organisations are operating in a difficult climate. In many parts of the world, hard-won rights are being challenged. Funding for grassroots women's groups remains limited and insecure. Yet it is precisely these organisations that provide life-changing and life-saving support. Our organisation is part of that global ecosystem of women-led resilience.

I am immensely proud of our staff, whose cultural understanding and expertise ensure that the women we serve feel seen and respected. I am equally grateful to our volunteers, trustees, partners and funders, whose belief in our mission sustains this work.

As Chair, I see not only the challenges ahead, but also the strength within our community. The resilience of the women we support inspires the resilience of our team. Together, they remind us why this work matters.

In uncertain times, solidarity is powerful. Community is powerful. And women's resilience is transformative. It is an honour to stand alongside all of you in continuing this vital work.

Dr Janan AlJabiri



Director's Foreword

This year has been challenging in many ways. Across the UK, the women's sector continues to face limited, short-term and uncertain funding, while the need for our services keeps growing. Every month, more women are coming to us with complex and urgent needs. Many are affected by the cost-of-living crisis, housing insecurity and unemployment on top of the domestic abuse and harmful practices. We have also seen an increase in women arriving in the UK because of war and conflict. Many refugee and asylum-seeking women come to us after experiencing trauma and loss. They need safety, stability and support to rebuild their lives. For many, learning English is the first and most important step. This year, the demand for ESOL classes has grown significantly.

We are also supporting more women with No Recourse to Public Funds, as they cannot access most government benefits or housing support. Without help, they are at a serious risk of poverty, homelessness and further abuse. We have had to stretch our resources to provide essentials such as food vouchers, basic household items, and digital access so women can stay connected and apply for jobs or services.

Unemployment continues to affect many of the women we work with. Many are highly skilled but face barriers such as language, childcare responsibilities, discrimination, or lack of recognised qualifications. Our employment and skills support has never been more important. At the same time, funding for Black and minoritised women's organisations remains limited and often short-term. Yet our work is essential. We provide culturally sensitive, specialist support that many survivors cannot access elsewhere. Sustainable funding is critical if we are to continue meeting this growing demand.

Despite these pressures, our staff have shown incredible professionalism, care and dedication. They manage high and complex caseloads with compassion and expertise. They support women in crisis, advocate on their behalf, and create safe spaces where women feel heard and respected. I am deeply proud of their commitment.

I would like to sincerely thank our staff for their resilience and hard work. I also want to thank our trustees for their guidance and leadership during uncertain times. To our volunteers, your generosity of time and energy makes a real difference to the women we serve.

And finally, thank you to Islington Council, our funders, partners and supporters. Your trust and investment allow us to continue this vital work. Without you, we simply could not do what we do.

The challenges ahead remain significant. But so does our determination. Every day, we see the strength and courage of the women we support. That inspires us to keep going — and to keep working toward a fairer, safer and more equal future for all women.

Sawsan Salim



About KMEWO

Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women Organisation (KMEWO) is a led by and for Black and Minoritised Women's organisation in London, dedicated to improving the quality of life of Kurdish, Middle Eastern, and North African women who have experienced domestic abuse and harmful practices. Our mission, grounded in equality and empowerment, began 26 years ago to promote their fundamental rights, and provide opportunities through specialist and holistic support, accompanying them in their journey towards safety, recovery and rebuild.

Mission

To ensure KMENA Women living in the UK are supported and empowered to achieve a better standard of life, free from any violence and with legal freedoms promoted and protected.

Aim

Our aim is to promote KMENA's women Human Rights and quality of life supporting them to recover from distress and suffering due to the dreadful experiences of domestic abuse and Harmful Practices by increasing their opportunity for better education, employment and social engagement.

We Strive For All Women's

Equality

Justice

Empowerment



Taking Women to a Journey Towards

Safety | Recovery | Rebuild



Our 2024-2025 Impact in Numbers

Total Service Users directly supported



2507

Total Service Users indirectly supported



1314

All Services at a Glance

- VAWG Advocacy and Support - 627 women
- Community Advice and Support - 140 women directly and 933 indirectly
- Mental Health - 123 women
- Women's Development and Employment Programme -286
- Afghan Refugee Resettlement Programme - 90 families and more than 300 people
- Support with the Cost of Living Crisis - 103 women
- Harmful Practices Training for Professionals - 81 professionals
- Events and Activities - 1228 individuals

We create safe and confidential spaces where all our services are provided for free in mother tongue:

Kurdish Sorani, Arabic, Farsi, Amharic, Tigrinya and in English in a culturally appropriate environment.

Intersectional Violence Against Women and Girls Advice and Support

We provide essential intersectional advocacy and specialist support to survivors of Domestic Abuse and Harmful Practices, including Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and so-called Honour-Based Abuse.

Guided by our strategic priority that “No one is left behind,” we create women-only safe spaces where survivors can access confidential, culturally competent support delivered by frontline professionals in their mother tongue: Kurdish Sorani, Arabic, Farsi) as well as in English.

Our holistic approach ensures that survivors approaching KMEWO receive coordinated, trauma-informed support that addresses both immediate safety needs and longer-term stability and empowerment.

Our Support Includes

Intersectional Advocacy

- Tailored one-to-one advocacy recognising the impact of gender, culture, migration status, language, and lived experience
- Culturally competent casework delivered in a safe and non-judgemental environment

Legal & Immigration Pathways

- Referrals to specialist immigration and family law services
- Guidance on available legal protection routes

Risk Assessment & Safety Planning

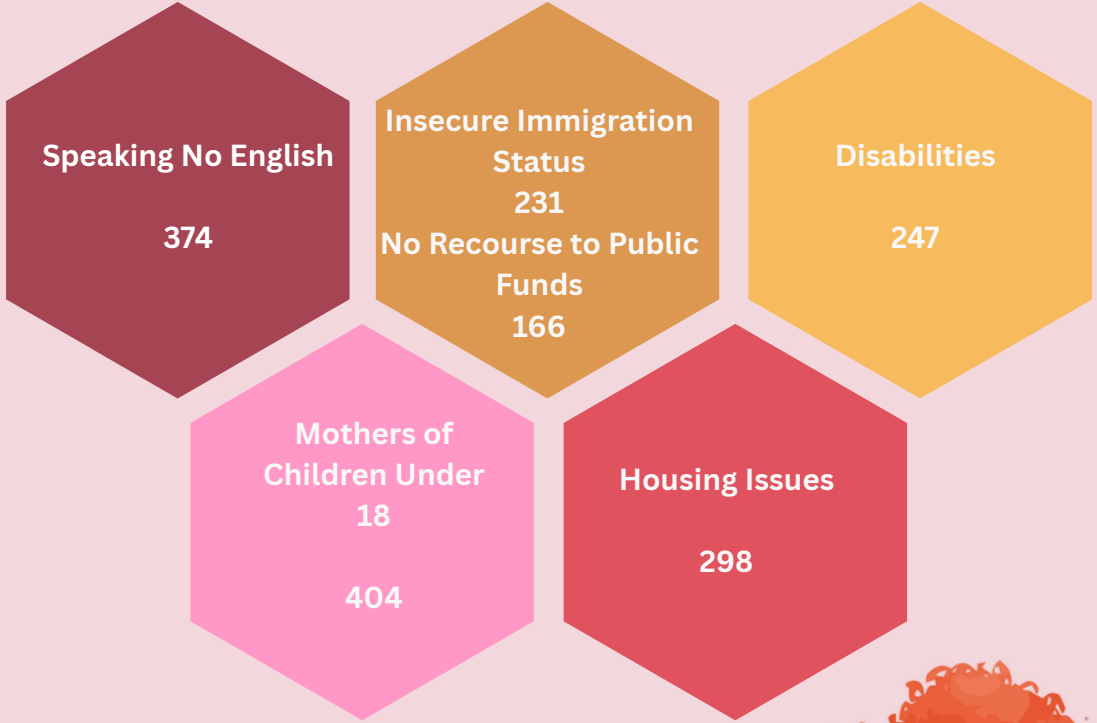
- Comprehensive safe-life risk assessments
- Crisis intervention and immediate safety support
- Personalised safety planning
- Support to access and navigate the criminal justice system

Emotional Support

Our frontline professionals, all coming from the communities we serve, provide constant emotional support to survivors which is culturally competent and in mother tongue.

KMENA's Women's Needs in the UK

KMENA women in the UK present multiple, complex and intersected needs. Indicatively, in 2024-2025 we supported 627 survivors of Domestic Abuse with the following needs:



Safety

Samira Project

Partnered with **IMECE Women's Centre** and **Latin America Women's Aid (LAWA)**, we support Black and Minoritised women with a focus on Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North African (KMENA) women in Islington who are survivors of domestic abuse and harmful practices. Our culturally sensitive services vary between VAWG advocacy and support (crisis intervention, support with the criminal justice system and welfare benefits needs). In **2024-25**, we supported **123 women** in their mother tongue.

Prevention and Action Through Community Engagement and Training (P&ACT)

A London-wide partnership of 12 'led by and for' Black and Minoritised women's organisations, led by Asian Women's Resource Centre, providing VAWG advocacy and support, counselling, therapeutic groups, and community engagement. In **2024-2025**, we supported **64 women** with one-to-one support in their mother tongue.

ASCENT Safe Accommodation Floating Support Services led by Refuge

The ASCENT Pan-London Floating Support Service is run by 11 'led by and for' organisations providing specialist domestic abuse support, trauma-informed counselling, wrap-around support for those in safe accommodation, across London. In **2024-2025**, we supported **40 women** living in safe accommodation.

ASCENT Safe Accommodation Floating Support Services for NRPF women led by Asian Women's Resource Centre (AWRC)

An ASCENT pan-London Partnership providing one to one domestic abuse and harmful practices advocacy and support in mother tongue ensuring women's access to safe accommodation, supporting them with Migrant Victim Domestic Abuse Concession (MVDAC), support with cost of living and welfare benefits advice. In **2024-25**, we supported **34 survivors**.

London Community Fund- Home Office

We provide one to one Domestic Abuse advocacy and support in mother tongue, women's only therapeutic group sessions and Harmful Practices training to frontline professionals in the statutory and voluntary sectors to raise awareness on the complex nature of harmful practices when intersected with domestic abuse. This year, we supported **40 women**.

Survivors 2 Thrivers II

KMEWO and Middle Eastern Women's and Society Organisation (MEWSO) partnered to provide holistic support to Black and Minoritised residents of Haringey, Hackney, Westminster and Barnet. During this time, **89 women** received culturally competent VAWG Advocacy and Support in mother tongue (Kurdish Sorani, Arabic, Farsi) and in English.



Ascent



The London
Community
Foundation

MOPAC

MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

Recovery

Couselling

We provide up to **14 sessions** per survivor of culturally competent counselling in Arabic, Farsi, Amharic, Tigrinya and English. In individually tailored sessions, offered by BACP registered therapists in a safe and confidential space survivors who have experienced VAWG, harmful practices, loss and trauma are supported. In 2024-2025, we **50 women were benefited**.

Women's Only Therapeutic Groups

Our therapeutic groups create safe spaces for women to come together, share and learn from their peers. They are provided by psychologists or in partnership with other organisations offering sessions about mindfulness, stress management, relaxation techniques, financial stress better sleep and more. In 2024-2025, **73** women attended therapeutic groups including Art Therapy Sessions.

Recovery



Home Office

Cripplegate islington
Foundation giving

MOPAC

MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

The London
Community
Foundation



Women's Only English Classes and Digital Inclusion

Our ESOL classes create safe spaces for women to come together, tackle isolation and language barriers. In **2024-2025, 100 women** participated in ESOL classes provided face to face in different community hubs and online. On loan tablets and free SIM cards were also distributed to survivors.

One to one support

in mother tongue and in English providing advice on education, volunteering and employment. In **2024-2025, 165 women** received mother tongue education and employment support.

Online Coaching Workshops

supports women with confidence building, job searching techniques, volunteering and CV writing. In **2024-2025, 21 women** attended **8 coaching** sessions exploring employment routes, CV writing, interview skills and more.



Advice and Support

Islington BAMER Advice Alliance is a partnership consisting of seven organisations in Islington providing one to one community advice and support in mother tongue, community engagement activities, advice on housing and homelessness as well as welfare benefits. Our aim is that marginalised communities in Islington will break the cycle of exclusion and will be enabled to equally access general information and services being aware of their legal rights. In 2024-2025, we supported **140 women directly** and **933 individuals indirectly**.



Support with the Cost of Living

The rise of cost of living has a detrimental effect on survivors of domestic abuse making them often reluctant to leave the abusive relationship as otherwise they can't make ends meet. **103 women** received immediate responses to Cost-of-Living Crisis through emergency fund, food vouchers, clothing, and donations.

SMALLWOODTRUST

Harmful Practices Training for Professionals

KMEWO traditionally provides Harmful Practices Training for professionals in the statutory and voluntary sectors to raise awareness on the complex nature of harmful practices when intersected with VAWG.

In 2024-2025, 81 professionals attended harmful practices training for professionals.



Home Office

MOPAC

MAYOR OF LONDON
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

“All the stories and videos provided around legal system (of harmful practices) made it solid in my mind”



The Afghan Refugee Resettlement Programme

A Legacy

In 2021 KMEWO partnered with Islington Council and the No Recourse to Public Funds Team leading the Afghan Refugee Resettlement Programme. The programme aimed at supporting newly arrived Afghan families in Islington to settle and integrate.

A Legacy of Trust, Dignity and Community: Supporting Afghan Families

When Afghan families arrived in the UK seeking safety and stability, KMEWO along with Islington Council and the No Recourse to Public Funds Team, stood beside them from the very first days. In our first year, our team was present daily at a London hotel, responding to urgent and complex needs with cultural understanding and practical support. We provided tailored advice, emotional support and integrative activities for Afghan women and their families during a time of profound uncertainty and transition. Recognising that recovery and integration is a longer-term work, in 2022 KMEWO established the STARS Group, a women-only safe space aimed at connection, confidence and belonging.

Each week, Afghan refugee women and their children came together to participate in wellbeing sessions, money management workshops, health awareness discussions, art for healing activities and educational and cultural outings across London. STARS became more than a programme. It became a community. Women who initially arrived feeling isolated and uncertain began forming friendships, rebuilding their confidence and engaging more actively in public life.



Many were referred to our English classes, which quickly became the most popular service opening pathways to independence, employment and social participation. Through public events and community engagement, women were empowered to step beyond isolation. Three women from the Afghan community started as volunteers with us and they eventually became staff at KMEWO, a real life evidence of our holistic support from safety to recovery and rebuilding.

What began with just 9 families grew steadily through trust. By the programme's completion in March 2025, KMEWO had supported over 90 Afghan families each with their own story of resilience, strength and hope. Today, the Afghan community in London continues to return to KMEWO for guidance, advocacy and education. The relationships built through consistent presence, cultural sensitivity and commitment have created a lasting legacy of trust. The STARS programme demonstrated what is possible when support is holistic, community-led and rooted in dignity. It is a testament not only to the resilience of Afghan women and families, but also to the dedication of our staff and volunteers who walked alongside them every step of the way.

**This is more than a programme completed.
It is a community strengthened.**



Organisational Development Core 24 Programme

Over the past year, KMEWO was selected to be part of the **Core 24 Programme** provided by Big Alliance.

The aim of the programme is to support charities with capacity building and it is delivered by volunteers in the corporate sector.

More specifically we received support from **Macquarie Group, Slaughter and May** and **Expedia Group** in fields including HR and recruitment, business planning as well as reporting and monitoring. The outcome was very positive; we tackled recruitment issues with new job description in place, while we were enabled to recruit **four new members of staff**. We updated our **5-year business plan**, a tool that will strategically guide the organisation in terms of service shaping and fundraising.



BIG ALLIANCE

Building Social Support Networks

2024-2025 Activities

STARS Group	KMEWO
Women's Only Therapeutic Groups	KMEWO
ESOL Classes	KMEWO
Money Management Workshop	Money Charity
Diabetes Workshop Menopause Breast Cancer	Healthwatch
Picnic	KMEWO
Celebrating the Aghan Resettlement Programme & Internattiona Women's Day	Islington Council KMEWO
16 Days of Activism	KMEWO IMECE LAWA
Nowruz Celebration Refugee Week	Islington Council KMEWO IRMF

We tackle exclusion and isolation by creating safe spaces for women to meet, learn and socialise. Last year we hosted two public events on the occasions of 16 Days of Activism and International Women's Day attended by more than 100 service users each as well as key stakeholders.

We also participated in Nowruz Celebrations held by the NRPF Team of Islington Council. More than 1228 women attended our events, activities and workshops during the reporting period.

We also raise awareness on Domestic Abuse and Harmful Practices.

Campaigning and Networking

We continue to be a voice for Black and Minoritised Women in the UK by actively participating in national and local campaigns, consultations, surveys and inquiries.

Campaign Against the 1959 Personal Status Law in Iraq

As what happens in the regions, that women we support come from, it matters here, we campaigned against the **Amendments of the 1959 Personal Status Law in Iraq**, which effectively allows child marriage and it gives extra power to religious courts and Sharia Law. We wrote a letter, kindly signed by **62 women organisations** in the UK and shared with the Iraqi Embassy in London, the United Nations and Amnesty International.

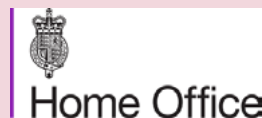


Participation in Conferences and Networks

KMEWO's staff has also participated in conferences, networks and forums talking about domestic abuse and harmful practices.

- **Honour Based Abuse and Hymen Reconstruction/Virginity Testing-** Sazan Salih & Anastasia Papapetrou - Hackney Online Event- Honour Based Abuse, National Day of Remembrance for Victims of Honour-Based Abuse
- **A 'By and For' Perspective on Civil Orders-** Anastasia Papapetrou, 16 Days of Activism, Harmful Practices Conference Harmful Practices Operations Group
- **Female Genital Mutilation-** Avan Dawood, NCL Study Day: Female Genital Mutilation and De- infibulation Workshop- NHS
- **DHR/DVA Criminal Justice Summit** on 29th November 2024, Sazan Salih
- **Unlocking Doors- Sustainable Solutions to the Crisis Facing BME Women with NRPF-AWRC-** Sazan Salih

A Big Thank You to Our Funders



Trustees

Dr. Janan Aljabiri	Chair
Tanya Ahmad	Treasurer
Dr. K Rahsid	Member
Tina Saeed	Member
Gilda Partoandaz	Member
Naz Jamal	Member
Tara Ahmed	Member

Sessional Staff

BACP Accredited Counsellors:

Sega Habtom	Counsellor
Fariba Shahbakhti	Counsellor
Monika Schwartz	Clinical Supervision
Sharifa Joya	Afghan Resettlement Support Worker

Tutors

Shahnaz Kinoo	ESOL Classes
Nagah Elsayed	ESOL Classes

Volunteers

Asoda Ayob	Volunteer
Parniyan Kosha	Volunteer

Staff Members

Sawsan Salim	Director
Sazan Salih	Operations and VAWG Services Manager
Anastasia Papapetrou	Fundraising and Communications Manager
Avan Dawood	VAWG Services Manager
Lanya Abdulrahman	VAWG Advisor and Caseworker
Parastoo Nakshbandi	Senior VAWG Adviser
Zeinab Khalid	VAWG Case Worker
Jwan Faris	Community Advice Worker
Gul Ghutai	Project Coordinator
Chiman Swan	Employment Support Worker
Zahra Djoudi	Employment Coordinator
Sharifa Joya	Afghan Resettlement Support Worker
Fakhria Joya	Afghan Resettlement Support Worker
Dunya Al-Azawi	Employment Support Worker

Annual Accounts

KURDISH AND MIDDLE EASTERN WOMEN'S ORGANISATION LIMITED				
DETAILED INCOME				
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025				
	Unrestricted	Restricted	2025	2024
INCOMING RESOURCES	Fund	Fund	Total	Total
Grant, Donations and Legacies	£	£	£	£
Henry Smith Charity	0	94,300	94,300	78,000
Islington Council / VCS	20,000	1,500	21,500	20,000
GLA -Refuge	0	64,706	64,706	41,740
GLA - AWRC	0	63,060	63,060	45,094
Islington Samira Project -IMECE	0	41,891	41,891	21,901
Islington Afghan Refugees support	0	22,412	22,412	60,000
Islington IBAA- Advice	0	16,092	16,092	15,292
CCG Healthwach Project				
	15,975	0	15,975	450
Cripplegate Foundations	11,000	20,000	31,000	36,500
Lloyds Bank Foundation	2,500	0	2,500	25,500
CAF	6,000	0	6,000	0
Good Thing Foundation	0	6,000	6,000	0
MOPAC- PACT/ AWRC	0	39,935	39,935	39,935
Smallwood Trust Fund	0	19,946	19,946	19,946
Grass root -Partnership-MOPAC	0	11,043	11,043	0
Tech Lending Hub Fund	-	-	0	12,763
Church Trust	0	2975	2975	3,425
LCF/Big lottery	0	0	0	66,274
Treebeard Trust	25,000	0	25,000	25,000
LCF/ Home Office	0	38,860	38,860	22,640
The Blue Thread	5,000	6,000	11,000	11,000
Women's Aid Foundation	0	6,771	6,771	5,000
Others	17	0	17	0
TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES	85,492	455,491	540,983	550,460
			-	
KURDISH AND MIDDLE EASTERN WOMEN'S ORGANISATION LIMITED				
DETAILED EXPENDITURE				
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2024				
	Unrestricted	Restricted	2025	2024
Outgoing Resources	Fund	Fund	Total	Total
Salaries	92,000	132,819	224,819	210,273

Annual Accounts

Taxes and NI	9386	51,358	60,744	58,060
Beneficiary Payments	0	13,045	13,045	14,367
Rent/Rates	22391	0	22,391	22,840
Counselling/ Tutors	0	39,862	39,862	29,131
Office Need/Cleaning	0	823	823	308
Volunteer Expenses	0	426	426	1,286
Travel	0	5,924	5,924	1,116
Refreshment	4,000	7,890	11,890	7,513
Legal & Professional fees	0	403	403	7,562
Publicity/Advertising	0	560	560	773
Stationery/office supplies	0	4,209	4,209	5,677
IT Support	0	6,980	6,980	8,035
Membership Fees	0	626	626	490
Equipment	0	5,028	5,028	3,083
Capacity Building- QM/ Events	0	0	0	350
Repairs & Maintenance	0	1,600	1,600	3,100
ICO	0	35	35	0
Vouchers	0	1,600	1,600	1,630
Accountancy Fee	1,500	0	1,500	1,500
Staff Training	0	5,506	5,506	7,432
Payroll Services	0	891	891	1,000
Insurance	1,000	901	1,901	1,536
Staff costs/ Recruitment	0	761	761	0
Sundry Expenses		200	200	0
Total Resources Expended	130,277	281,038	411,315	386,843



Kurdish And Middle Eastern Women's Organisation (KMEWO)

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