

ANNUAL REPORT



2024

Prepared by
**ASYLUM SEEKERS
SUPPORT TRUST**



Our Guiding Principle

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata!

What is the most important thing in the world? It is people, it is people, it is people!

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Partners,

2024 has been a year of growth, challenge, and success for the Asylum Seeker Support Trust (ASST). As these times are increasing hard and tough for most people in the country because of cost of living and housing crises, asylum seekers and refugees as **forcibly displaced** people are in a more precarious situation than others because most don't come to Aotearoa New Zealand with any reserves on them.



At ASST, we (the entire team of staff at ASST and the board) have kept momentum with **advocacy, service delivery**, and have made significant strides to meet up with **ever-growing** demands even though still paddling behind the wave. The lives we have impacted and gains we have made would not have been possible without your **advocacy, support, individual donations, grant funding, MBIE funding, and many other supporters**. Ngā mihi.

We look forward to building on this **momentum** in 2025 as we continue to **serve people** who are seeking Aotearoa New Zealand's protection as refugees because they are victims and have fled devastating conflicts (as in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Myanmar, etc.), political persecutions, **human rights abuses**, and climate change in other parts of the world.

Sincerely,
Dr. Bernard Sama
Chairperson, ASST

Since

1989

Serving asylum seekers

09

Full time - Staff

2,155

Current Clients



MEET OUR BOARD

The ASST Board is a dedicated team with diverse expertise in **humanitarian work, law, accounting, teaching, social services, and advocacy**, all committed to creating a **welcoming** New Zealand for asylum seekers. Their skills drive ASST's **mission** and **values**, ensuring impactful, compassionate, and legally sound support for those seeking safety in New Zealand.



Bernard Sama
Board Chair



Andrew Barron
Deputy Chair



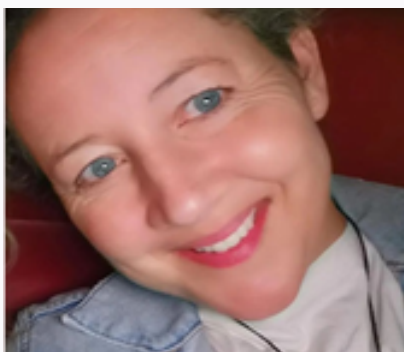
Baptist Lobo
Treasurer



Maithili Sreen
Board Member



Jen Lander
Secretary



Bella Munro
Board Member



Colin Jeffery
Board Member



Judy Wilford
Board Member



OUR OPERATIONS TEAM

I want to take a moment to recognize and deeply appreciate the **hard work** and **dedication** of each member of the ASST staff. Your **commitment**, teamwork, and resilience are inspiring, and it's clear that this team is filled with **remarkable talent** and **passion**. Every challenge we face, we face together, and every success is a **shared victory**. Thank you for consistently going above and beyond, for **supporting** each other, and for fostering an environment where we can all **grow** and thrive. I'm truly **grateful** to be part of this team and look forward to all we'll achieve together.

To our dear Volunteers: your **dedication** and **compassion** are the **backbone** of our organization, and we couldn't do this work without you.

To our Donors and Funders: your **generosity** fuels our mission, enabling us to make a difference and support those in need. Thank you for **believing** in our vision and helping us bring it to life.

Sincerely,

Dawit Arshak

General Manager, ASST



Dawit Arshak
General Manager



Christina
Client Service Manager



Shilear Basharati
Senior Social Worker



Kidist Tegegne
Community Development Lead



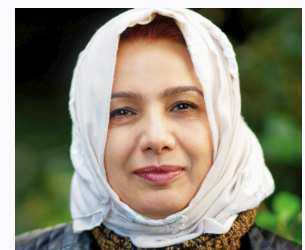
Vijitha Visagan
Support Worker



Shamis Ismael
Support Worker



Regina Kwok
Residential Social Worker



May Eqbal
Support Worker



Tim Maurice
Finance / Admin



Feras Alhantosh
Driver



Asif Ahmad
Communications Co-ordinator

ASST OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS



Hannah Hyder



Abdul Yusin Salleh

We express our deepest **gratitude** to our outgoing board members for their **remarkable service, dedication, and leadership**.

Hannah Hyder and **Abdul Yusin Salleh**, each of you has been an invaluable part of our journey, shaping the direction of our organization and contributing in **countless** ways to our mission.



WHO WE ARE?

ABOUT US

The Asylum Seeker Support Trust (ASST) was founded in **1989** as the **Auckland Refugee Council Incorporated (ARCI)** and adopted its current trading name in 2015.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide humanitarian support to asylum seekers in New Zealand. We offer essential services, with a focus on dignity, **inclusion**, and **empowerment**.

We currently support **2,155 clients**, ensuring they have access to basic necessities, community connections, and opportunities to **rebuild their lives**, addressing any challenges that arise along the way.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023/2024

CLIENT SERVICES GROWTH

- We have expanded our Client Services team to meet the growing needs of asylum seekers arriving in Aotearoa. With **9 full-time staff members**, our team now offers support in over **14 languages**, ensuring comprehensive assistance for our diverse client base.
- We have rented a new office space in **Mt Albert**, it has a great location with excellent **bus** and **train** connections nearby.

ADVOCACY AND LEGAL SUPPORT

Collaborated with **legal experts, academic, government and non-government bodies and community organisations** to address challenges in the Refugee Status Determination process.



MBIE Funding

\$500,000



Foundation North

\$142,000



Vehicle (Hugo Foundation)

2023 KIA

FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Secured **\$142,000** in funding from Foundation North, enabling us to continue providing essential services.
- Established a strong partnership with MBIE and funded **\$500,000** for three social worker and manager position plus for hostel operational cost. We are hoping this new partnership with MBIE will be a **benchmark** for long term collaboration.
- JR McKenzie has funded an Impact Assessment Report of ASST, which is being completed. This document will **highlight the impact** of our work, what we do well and where we can improve. We'll share the report via email to all our stakeholders and on ASST website and social media platforms when it is completed.
- We received a new **2023 KIA**, eight passenger seaters, funded by Foundation North and Hugo Charitable Trust, to replace our old and worn-out van.
- Kristin School students donated two Vegepod **greenhouse** to ASST as part of their community outreach initiative. This is helping our residents to grow their own fresh vegetables and herbs, and it promotes sustainability and therapeutic outcomes.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Successfully hosted our first community event in **August 2024**, offering new information and engagement opportunities for asylum seekers and the public.
- A ZOO trip was organized for **77 people**, providing our clients and their families the opportunity to enjoy a day out with Nature. It also served as a chance for social interaction and connection.



- **Monthly dinner for hostel residents** (sponsored by **Pearls of Island** and **Everybody Eats Onehunga branch**), provides an opportunity for them to dine off-site and fosters social cohesion.
- We organised/facilitated a workshop for our clients on child safety laws in Aotearoa New Zealand. Speakers came from the **Ministry of Education (MOE), Plunket Whānau Āwhina, and Neighborhood Support**.
- We organised/facilitated another workshop for our clients on **asylum seekers' entitlements and support services but also their responsibilities** in Aotearoa New Zealand.



CINEMA TRIP

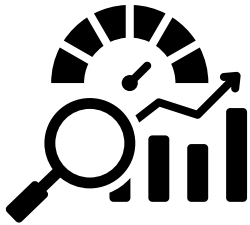
We had the privilege of taking **52 people** to the cinema during the school holidays, providing a special outing at a time when there is barely anything that they can afford as leisure for themselves and their children.



OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

- **Improved hostel management**, including **repairs, cleaning**, and the installation of new equipment to ensure a **safe and welcoming** environment.
- We hired a contractor to **manage our media efforts**, leading to a **rebranding of our website** and an **increase in social media engagement** by creating additional platforms. Our news and stories are now shared through **newsletters, podcasts, and YouTube**.
- ASST has replaced one of our older vehicles to ensure the **safety** of our **staff** and **volunteers**, as it had developed several issues. This new car will be **essential** for delivering **food parcels**, transporting clients, and managing various logistical tasks.
- We expanded the shed at the hostel to address **challenges staff** and **volunteers faced** in preparing food boxes during the **rainy season**.





OVERVIEW OF FINANCE PERFORMANCE

In 2024, ASST achieved financial stability through generous **donations**, successful **grant** applications, and diligent **budget** management, allowing us to maintain a strong financial position. This secure footing has enabled us to continue providing **high-level** support to those in need.

Looking ahead to 2025, our financial strategy will focus on diversifying funding sources, enhancing **donor** engagement, and securing additional long-term grants to ensure the **sustainability** of our programs.





Treasurer's Report for the Annual General Meeting

It is my pleasure to be able to report that 2023/2024 was our strongest financial year ever. Asylum Seekers Support Trust has been well supported financially by our funders and donors including JR McKenzie Trust, Foundation North, Lotteries, Cathro and Butland Trusts, Auckland Council, Hugh Green Foundation, Catholic Caring Foundation, the Hugo Charitable Trust, The Trusts Charitable Foundation, and The Wahine Fund (Ministry for Women).

In addition, ASST has received our first direct funding from the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) under a contract arrangement for our work with people seeking asylum. This significant income from MBIE has allowed us to expand our team and the assistance which we provide. The growth in staff numbers and the support we could give during the second half of the financial year to 30 June 2024 is referred to in the Annual Report. The board is very pleased to be in the position to be able in our accounting to allocate amounts to reserves. A sum of \$200,000 has been allocated to a long-term reserve so we have monies to close down operations in an orderly fashion for our clients and staff, should at some point our funding ever dry up. As well \$250,000 has been allocated to a client services reserves to allow us to reach more people in need. In our current financial year, the board has budgeted to spend \$80,000 of this reserve, in part because of a timing difference between when MBIE funds have been received and when some costs will be incurred, and primarily as we respond to the record number of people currently seeking asylum in Aotearoa.

The Audit of our Annual Accounts for the year ending 30 June 2024 is due to be completed in the second week of November, a little too late to be available for you at this AGM. At this point I have attached for your information the two key financial pages from the draft annual accounts, being the Statement of Financial Performance showing the income and expenses for the year and the Statement of Financial Position which sets out the net assets at the end of the financial year.

As soon as the Auditors have completed their Audit Report, the 2023/24 Annual Accounts will be uploaded, as in previous years, to Charities Services. These can then be viewed on their website, or ASST website, or alternatively you can contact ASST (email: secretary@asst.org.nz) and a copy will be provided when the audited accounts are available.

Baptist Lobo CA, CPA
Board Member/Treasurer

Asylum Seekers Support Trust A Division of Auckland Refugee Council Inc.

PO Box 78 024, Grey Lynn, Auckland 1245

4 Warnock St, PO Box 78 024 Grey Lynn www.asst.org.nz



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

"How was it funded?" and "What did it cost?"

For the year ended

30 June 2024

1- Revenue

Revenue	Note	Actual This Year \$	Budget This Year \$	Actual Last Year \$
Donations, fundraising and other similar revenue*	1	928,330	995,634	393,490
Fees, subscriptions and other revenue from members*	1	88	300	152
Revenue from providing goods or services*	1	91,730	89,120	89,703
Interest, dividends and other investment revenue*	1	30,343	5,000	9,313
Other revenue	1	9,317	1,000	6,626
Total Revenue*		1,059,808	1,091,054	499,284

2- Expenses

Revenue	Note	Actual This Year \$	Budget This Year \$	Actual Last Year \$
Expenses related to public fundraising*	2	-	-	880
Volunteer and employee related costs*	2	545,895	812,554	371,668
Costs related to providing goods or services*	2	159,295	271,700	121,271
Grants and donations made*	2	-	-	-
Other expenses	2	8,675	1,800	13,062
Total Expenses*		713,865	1,086,054	506,880
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year*		345,942	5,000	(7,596)



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

"What the entity owns?" and "What the entity owes?"

As at

30 June 2024

	Note	Actual* This Year \$	Actual* Last Year \$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Bank accounts and cash*	3	414,196	341,616
Debtors and prepayments*	3	4,467	2,253
Inventory*	3	-	-
Other current assets	3	342,503	8,911
Total Current Assets		761,166	352,780
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment*	4	62,616	17,843
Investments*	3	-	2,000
Other non-current assets	3	-	-
Total Non-Current Assets		62,616	19,843
Total Assets*		823,782	372,623
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Bank overdraft*	3	-	-
Creditors and accrued expenses*	3	7,823	6,568
Employee costs payable*	3	87,097	41,905
Unused donations and grants with conditions*	3	245,300	198,515
Other current liabilities	3	12,000	15
Total Current Liabilities		352,219	247,003
Non-Current Liabilities			
Loans*	3	-	-
Other non-current liabilities	3	-	-
Total Non-Current liabilities		-	-
Total Liabilities*		352,219	247,003
Total Assets less Total Liabilities (Net Assets)*		471,563	125,620
Accumulated Funds			
Capital contributed by owners or members*	5	-	-
Accumulated surpluses or (deficits)*	5	21,563	125,620
Reserves*	5	450,000	-
Total Accumulated Funds*		471,563	125,620
		FALSE	FALSE

This performance report has been approved by the [Trustees/Committee/Officers/Board], for and on behalf of [Entity name]:


Date **30/08/2024**

Signature 

Name **Bernard Nde**

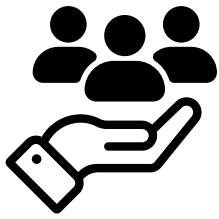
Position **President**

Date 30.08.2024

Signature 

Name Baptist Lobo

Position Treasurer



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OVERVIEW



Emergency Housing

We run a hostel and a few other accommodations in the community, providing safe temporary housing to asylum seekers, helping them transition from a place of crisis to a place of stability.



Advocacy & Support

Our team worked tirelessly supporting asylum seekers throughout their asylum journey with Immigration NZ and the Courts (where applicable), and ensuring they receive fair treatment and access to their entitlements from essential services such as Legal Representation, WINZ, IRD, and the health and education sectors.



Food Assistance

ASST distributes around **130** vibrant and nutritious food boxes twice a week, providing essential support to approximately **500 to 600** people every Tuesday and Friday. With the dedicated efforts of our staff and volunteers, and the invaluable support of Kiwi Harvest and Fair Food, we ensure that no one goes hungry.



Warm for Winter Project

This initiative provided **270 blankets**, **150 pyjamas** and **60 heaters** for over **350 Clients** helping them cope with New Zealand's harsh winter conditions. This included **140 Children**.





STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2025

As we look ahead to 2025, our focus will be on



STRENGTHENING ADVOCACY EFFORTS:

We aim to lead a national campaign that addresses gaps in asylum seeker rights.

EXPANDING HOUSING SOLUTIONS

With the increasing number of arrivals, finding long-term, sustainable housing solutions is a priority.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS:

We plan to strengthen our collaboration with government agencies, local businesses, and other NGOs to expand our services and impact.

500-600

people fed weekly

670 +

items provided During Warm for Winter Project

350+

received blankets, pyjamas, and heaters for winter warmth.



PROPOSED LEGAL STRUCTURE CHANGE

The overarching goal of the Auckland Refugee Council Incorporated (ARCI), through the Asylum Seekers Support Trust, is to help create a New Zealand where Asylum Seekers and Refugees are **welcomed**, supported and **thriving**. This will continue as we **grow** and **develop** into the future. It is important to ensure that our organisation is **sustainable** and adaptable with the right **legal structures** in place to support our work.

CHANGE FROM INCORPORATED SOCIETY TO A CHARITABLE TRUST

With this in mind, ARCI is planning to transition from its current status as an **incorporated society to a charitable trust**. This would mean that the ARCI's constitution is replaced by a new trust deed. Both types of entities can achieve the same **goals**, however they have **administrative** and **governance** differences.

01. Clear Purpose

We continue to have a clearly defined mandate to support Asylum Seekers and Refugees in New Zealand, based on the existing purposes and objects of ARCI. We want to reassure you that switching to a charitable trust will have no impact on our purposes and objects, or the support we provide to our community. We would continue to hold our charitable status, registered under the Charities Act 2005.

02. Simplified Governance

A simpler structure of governance. While we currently have elected board members, we would transition to having appointed trustees. This would mean that we would no longer have any "members", and all decisions would be made by the appointed trustees. We understand the importance of representation and involvement of our stakeholders and would look at ways to include that in the new structure.

03. Specialist Trustees

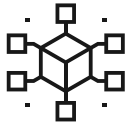
We would appoint trustees with diverse skills, expertise and passion to serve our community best. As part of the appointment process, the Board would be required to take into account the ability of any prospective appointees to represent Asylum Seekers and Refugees on the Board (including some through their lived experience or membership of the Asylum Seeker or Refugee community in New Zealand). The first trustees of the charitable trust would be the current Board members of the incorporated society.

04. Reduced Administration

Greater freedom around when we have our annual meetings and the records we are required to keep, allowing us to focus on the more important things. We would still have reporting requirements as a charitable trust, including the requirement to publish annual financial information through Charities Services. We are working with our key funders and suppliers to ensure all our key agreements and assets are smoothly transitioned to the new charitable trust.

We are working with our key funders and suppliers to ensure all our key agreements and assets are smoothly transitioned to the new charitable trust.

At the AGM, it is proposed that the members of ARCI vote on the following resolutions:



1-Change of Structure

to change the ARCI's legal structure from an incorporated society to a charitable trust;



2- Establish Charitable Trust

to authorise ARCI's Board to finalise the form and content of the charitable trust and do all things necessary to establish the charitable trust;



3- Transfer of Assets

to transfer ARCI's assets, liabilities, undertakings and obligations from the incorporated society to the new charitable trust deed in accordance with the requirement to "direct the method of disposal of funds" in clause 23 of the Constitution; and



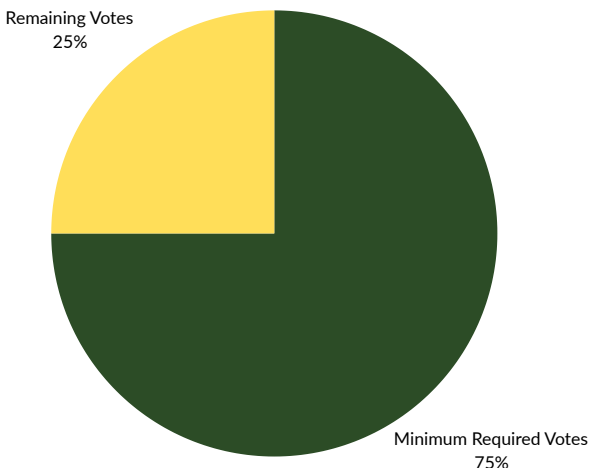
4- Dissolution of ARCI

once the transfer is complete, to dissolve ARCI in accordance with clause 23 of the Constitution.

For the resolutions to pass, **75%** of the voting members of ARCI will need to vote in favour of the resolutions at the AGM. The resolutions will then need to be confirmed at a further special general meeting, not earlier than **30 days** after the AGM.

If you have any questions about this proposed legal structure change, you can email Jen Lander at secretary@asst.org.nz

Minimum Voting Threshold for Resolution Approval at ARCI AGM



Days Waiting Period for Resolution Confirmation Post-AGM



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



* **Our Funders:** Your generosity enables us to continue our mission and support those in need.

* **Our Volunteers:** Your dedication and compassion are the backbone of our organization.

* **Our Donors:** Your donations of clothing, appliances, food, and other items greatly assist us in providing essential support to those we serve. Thank you for helping us meet the needs of our community.

* **Our Clients:** You inspire us every day with your resilience and courage.

* **Our Partners:** Government and Non-government bodies, Community organisations, Our Alliances, Faith based groups and all the individual supporters, we are grateful for your ongoing support and cooperation.

Clients

2,155

Volunteers

30+



Together, we are building a more inclusive, supportive community for asylum seekers and refugees in Aotearoa.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ASYLUM SEEKERS SUPPORT TRUST

Email/

info@asst.org.nz

Website/

www.asst.org.nz

Address/

875 New North Road
Mount Albert, Auckland 1025

Follow us on Social Media



[asylumseekersnz](https://www.instagram.com/asylumseekersnz)



[fb.com/arci.nz](https://www.facebook.com/arci.nz)

Our Generous Supporters

