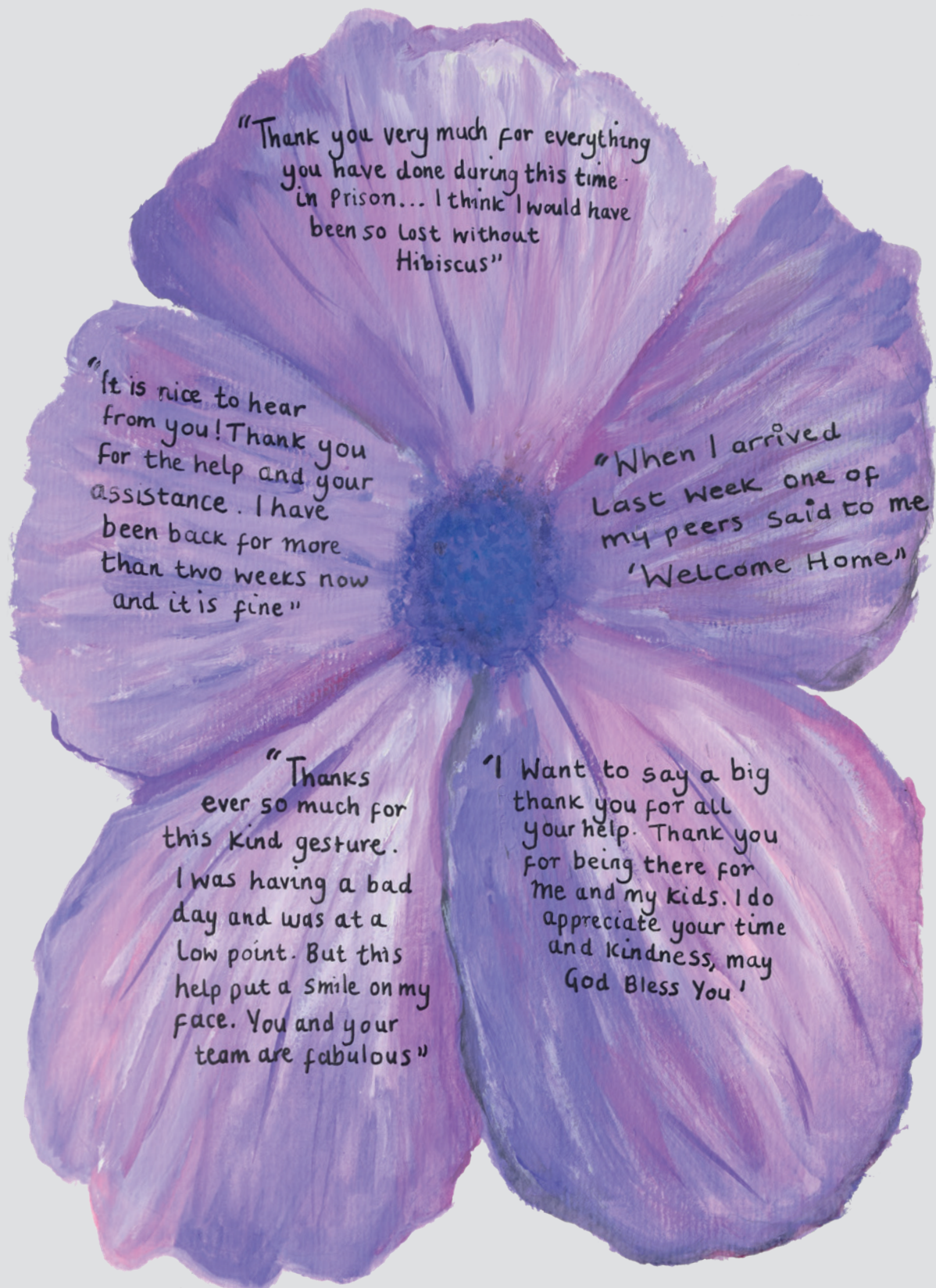


ANNUAL REVIEW

2019-2020

 **Hibiscus**
for social justice



Our Vision

A fair and just society where inequalities are eliminated from the criminal justice and immigration systems

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND CEO

“In the last year we reflected on our strengths and achievements while planning the future direction of the organisation and setting the strategies needed for future success.”

Hibiscus has provided services to marginalised people in vulnerable situations over the last 30 years.

In this time, our work has adapted and expanded to meet the changing needs and profiles of our clients. We now provide specialist holistic services from our Women’s Centre, in women’s prisons, at courts, in Immigration Removal Centres (IRCs) and with families facing removal from the UK.

We deliver a variety of projects with a range of partners and each year the number of female clients increases. The intensity of our engagement with clients varies according to need. We provide trauma informed support to empower clients to resolve deeply complex, multiple, long-term issues including immigrations restrictions.

Within the last year we introduced new projects including a successful and much sought-after legal help project for mothers in two women’s

prisons where we worked with a firm of solicitors to provide a comprehensive immigration advice service.

We have begun to realise our ambition of evidencing the inequality of access to safe accommodation to potential victims of trafficking by conducting research with our ‘Closed Doors’ report. We are optimistic that the findings will impact on future policy through our continued engagement in this work with clients and partners.

Funding from the Trust for London has enabled us to employ our first Policy worker. This work will complement and enhance our work with those who have experienced trafficking and our research to develop a model of service.

In the last year we reflected on our strengths and achievements while planning the future direction of the Organisation and setting the strategies needed for future success.

We welcomed Louise Hatch as Head of International Resettlement and Detention Services in May 2019. To ensure future operational strength the newly created role of Director of Operations was filled by Chloe Geoghegan who joined us in February 2020.

With these senior staff leading teams of skilled dedicated workers, Hibiscus is well placed to meet the many and varied challenges ahead including recovery from the pandemic, longer term funding struggles as well as legislative, political, economic, and societal changes. Our Trustees have the combined skills and experience to govern in these turbulent times and are committed to ensuring appropriate training and development opportunities for staff.

In looking to the future, we are strengthening governance with targeted recruitment of new Trustees and training for current Trustees.

We are delighted to have recruited our new CEO Marchu Girma who will replace Adrienne Darragh after seven years’ service to Hibiscus. Adrienne led the Organisation through many challenges and achieved significant success, with year on year development. Marchu shares our passion and commitment and will drive the Organisation forward to implement our strategic vision.

The Board and staff are excited to have a renewed commitment to focus on racial justice and equality, amplifying the voices of our clients and developing innovative ways of delivering services while retaining quality and evidencing the impact of our work.

Adrienne Darragh
CEO



Rachel Youngman
Chair of Trustees



ABOUT US, OUR MISSION AND VALUES

About us

Hibiscus Initiatives is a voluntary sector organisation with a track record of delivering high-impact services for over 30 years. We have distinct expertise in working with marginalised Foreign National (FN), Black, Minority ethnic and Refugee (BMER) women in prison, in the community, and in Court, with women and men in immigration removal centres and families facing imminent removal.

We provide advocacy, advice, support and specialist services to empower our clients to make informed choices and positive changes to their situation.

Support takes many forms and can include help to access services such as legal advice/representation, family reunification, social services, housing, mental health and wellbeing support, education, and skills training, as well as providing assistance to reintegrate into the community. We also conduct research and raise awareness of the challenges faced by our clients with a view to influencing policy makers.

Our values

Social justice

We are committed to social justice. We aim to impact positively on the lives of our clients

Integrity and Respect

We work with integrity, respecting the diversity of our clients, to overcome inequality of access to social justice

Learning and Innovation

We promote a culture of learning and innovation

Inclusivity

We promote a culture of inclusivity for everyone in our organisation

Our mission

To support and empower primarily women who are vulnerable Foreign Nationals (FNs), Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugees (BMER), who are affected by the criminal justice system and immigration restrictions.

Our principal activities fall into these strands:

- Community Services to Women
- Specialist Advocacy and Advice Services to Women in Courts and Prisons
- International Resettlement and Detention Services
- Specialist Support to Families Facing Forced Removal
- Specialist Gender Specific Welfare Support to Women in Immigration Removal Centres
- Anti-Trafficking

Our goals 2022

We will be a stronger, client centred organisation excelling in the delivery of responsive, innovative services, working collaboratively, and influencing policy and research in the UK and internationally.



OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

April 2019– March 2020

We partnered with Pram Depot and Little Village to support disadvantaged pregnant women and those with newborn babies.

Our partnership with Street Talk, Sophie Hayes, Women at the Well allowed us to facilitate counselling services, employability and empowerment workshops.

April 2019– March 2020

Hibiscus further developed partnerships and collaborated with King's College, London South Bank University, Hammersmith and Fulham Law Centre and CAPA through offering legal services, internships and student placements.

July 2019

In collaboration with Street Talk we held an exhibition showcasing the images taken by our clients entitled 'pieces of London'. This represented a day in the life of how our clients viewed London.



October 2019

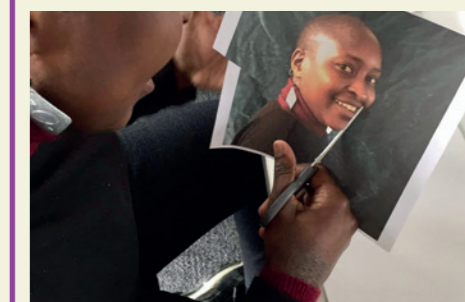
We celebrated Black History Month across all departments through facilitating five workshops, this included a drumming workshop creating African music, a theatre workshop and several creative writing workshops.

We also started a new legal help pilot project offering specialist legal services for vulnerable foreign national and BMER women who have been affected by violence.



January 2020

We started a new project called "Voices of the women" which involves foreign national women from the community, prison and Yarl's Wood IRC who are currently going through the National Referral Mechanism process.



April 2019–March 2020

We organised and delivered 500 workshops on a range of topics including, mental health, employability, dance movement therapy and domestic abuse.



May 2019

Couples Come Dine With Me.



September 2019

Our team at Yarl's Wood IRC organised our yearly International 'Bake-off' event, and as a special addition this year, we introduced a 'Come Dine With Me' for the couples staying at the centre.

Staff held an international language day workshop where residents from all over the world came together and celebrated through group arts and crafts activities.

December 2019

This year the Women's Centre held a Hibiscus Christmas party. The women sang as a choir after previously training with a singing coach. They also showcased work from the sewing workshops and the children received Christmas gifts.



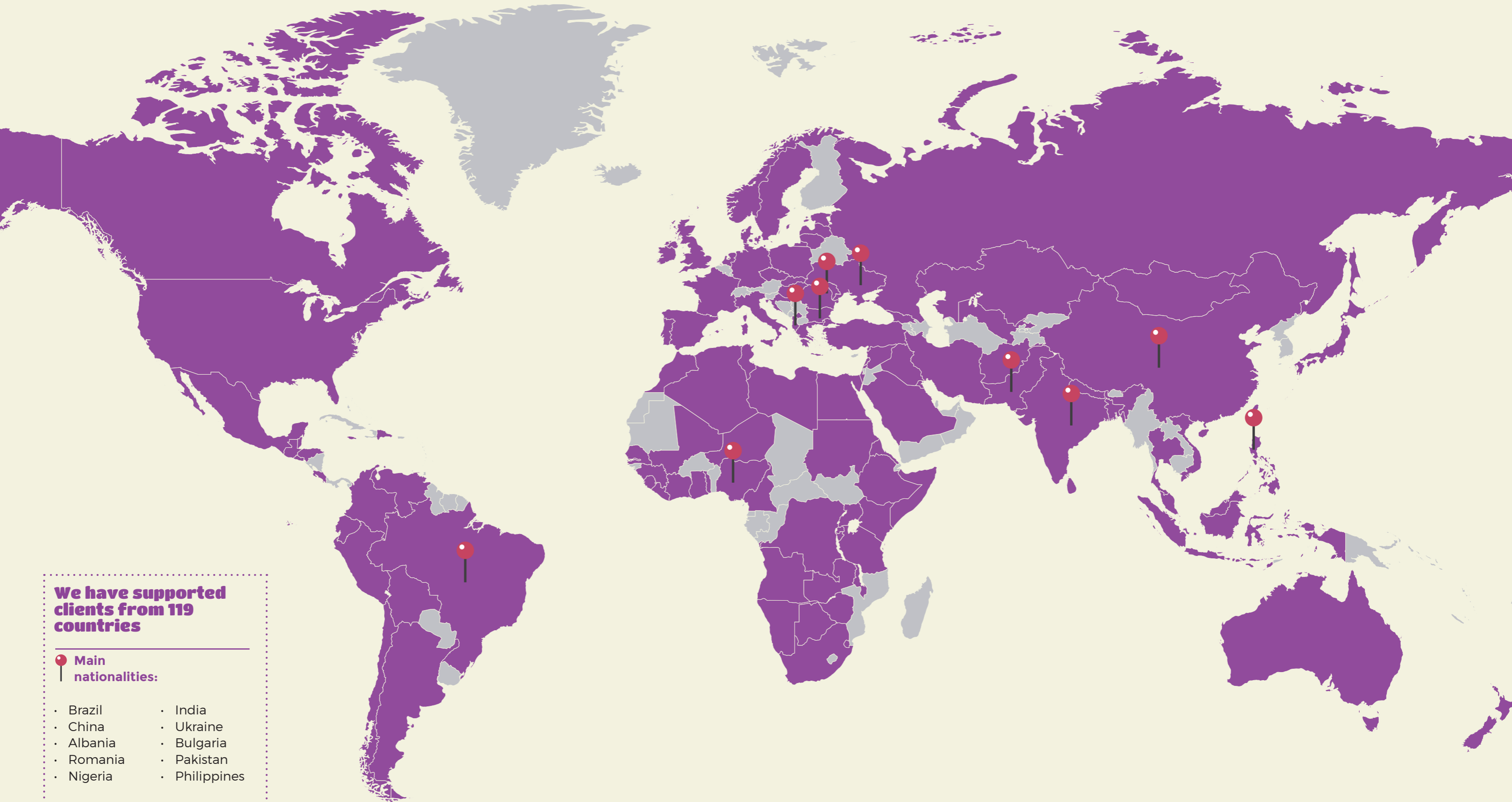
March 2020

For a second year in a row we have delivered an employability workshop across departments aimed to provide women with skills and knowledge that they could use in the future to gain a livelihood. The wig-making workshop was a success and was joined by eleven women over a period of two days.



WHERE OUR CLIENTS ARE FROM IN THE WORLD

● Purple colour indicates the countries our clients are from



We have supported clients from 119 countries

Main nationalities:

- Brazil
- China
- Albania
- Romania
- Nigeria
- India
- Ukraine
- Bulgaria
- Pakistan
- Philippines

COMMUNITY & PRISON SERVICES

The Women's Centre

With funding from Big Lottery Women and Girls, we enter the fourth year of our specialist women's centre with dedicated, multilingual staff. Casework is central to our work, enabling us to engage closely with women to assess needs, provide practical support, and link clients with other specialist agencies when needed.

Through our 1-1 casework we also provide educational services, emotional support, and wellbeing sessions to empower women to enhance their self-care, increase confidence and develop additional skills. The need for this has become more evident as we move into the COVID-19 lockdown, with the increased risk of our clients experiencing isolation and anxiety.



Diversion service

The Female Diversion Scheme was established by MOPAC, with the aim of diverting women who have committed low-level offences away from the criminal justice system and into support services, to break the cycle of reoffending. The project has a multi-agency approach, with Advance, WIP, Pecan and Hibiscus providing trauma-informed and gender-specific support to women in London.

The Diversion project asks the Metropolitan Police Service to give all eligible women a conditional caution instead of a charge, with the condition being that the woman attend two mandatory appointments with the support organisations. Hibiscus provides emotional and practical support to all foreign national women referred to the project, with the aim of providing stability and preventing future offending.

WrapAround service

We continue to provide a Pan-London service to the WrapAround project, funded by MOPAC, in partnership with Advance Minerva and South London Women's Hubs. The project provides holistic support to women with multiple complex needs who have committed crime and are at risk of reoffending.

All foreign national clients facing immigration issues are referred to the Hibiscus WrapAround keyworker and receive specialist support to align with their individual needs and lived experiences of trauma. The service is a "whole system" response to the Criminal Justice System, and women are encouraged to access all statutory and non-statutory provisions available to them, including group-work and mentoring at Hibiscus and other WrapAround centres. In doing this, women achieve life skills, improved confidence, increased safety and stability, and the risk of reoffending is significantly reduced.

Rose's story

After being in the UK for over 10 years and completing her prison sentence, Rose was detained under immigration powers. Under immigration law, Rose could be detained for committing a crime while in the UK and could not return to her children after spending a lengthy time in prison. While detained Rose applied for Immigration bail, but after attending the hearing and putting forward her case, she was denied bail.

At the beginning of 2020, our team invited her to Hibiscus/Birnberg Peirce Legal Immigration Group. Rose was unaware of the support she could receive and was happy to attend. A presentation was given explaining Immigration procedures providing Rose and the other women present with information on the legal proceedings and ensuring they understood the options available to them. Rose then arranged a 1-1 appointment with a solicitor to explain her case.

Birnberg Peirce agreed to assist her in applying for immigration bail. They supported her in gathering the necessary information, prepared immigration bail forms and spoke to family and friends to encourage support for Rose.

Birnberg Peirce advocated for her at the hearing and expressed that it was a lengthy and difficult process. But, after being detained for four months, Rose was released on bail. Alongside this, Rose was granted Exceptional Case Funding, enabling Birnberg Pierce to continue to assist her through appealing her deportation.

Rose has continued communication and expressed her gratefulness to the Hibiscus Prison team for all their support during the process. She has continued to comply with the conditions and stated she is happy to be out "so I can sort myself out" and spend time with her children.



We supported

249

clients across our community projects.

We provided support to

161

clients within the Hibiscus community who had trafficking concerns.

Overall,

65%

of our clients in the community are survivors of trafficking.

Our clients' main concerns in the community:

Food
Health/Access to GP
Housing

PRISON SERVICES

We currently provide support to women in three prisons (HMP Bronzefield, HMP Peterborough and HMP Downview), through a combination of one to one casework and group sessions.

We have completed a six-month Legal Help pilot project from October 2019, funded by the Violence Reduction Unit (through Advance charity and Women in Prison). This provided specialist legal services for FN and BMER mothers who had immigration issues. Birnberg Pierce solicitors delivered the service in partnership with Hibiscus staff.

Through this project we supported over 50 new mothers and the solicitors subsequently took on 10 new cases. Funding secured from Comic Relief provided additional women-centred, trauma-informed support to clients affected by gender-based violence. Women who attended the workshops reported being more aware of warning signs and different types of domestic violence, having a better understanding of where to seek help, and feeling more empowered to deal with difficult/controlling relationships.

We have maintained a collaborative relationship with the prisons and our aim is to continue and expand our support for FN and BMER women in prisons. Hibiscus has faced some challenges; with the move away from Service Level Agreements by the prisons, we have become more reliant on voluntary sector grants to deliver specific projects.

Although securing regular funding for our work in prisons has continued to be challenging during this year, we hope to work with other partners in the future to develop and expand our essential prison services and work.



We supported

201

clients in three prisons (HMP Bronzefield, HMP Peterborough and HMP Downview).

.....
We identified and provided support to

10

clients who had trafficking concerns.

.....
Overall,

5%

of our clients in prisons are potential survivors of trafficking.

.....
Our clients' main concerns in prison:

Immigration

Language barriers

Understanding of the Criminal Justice System

WESTMINSTER MAGISTRATES' COURT

The number of requests for language interpreting and translation services in Courts is rising every year, having risen 7% since 2016.

For many people, they are put on remand before having their trial or while awaiting their sentence. In the year to June 2019, 29,566 people were received into prisons before their trial. According to Bromley Briefings data, many women remanded in custody do not go on to receive a custodial sentence.

Figures from 2016, showed that 60% of women remanded by the magistrates' court and 41% by the Crown Court did not receive a custodial sentence.

What we offer

Funded by the National Probation Service London and MOPAC as co-commissioner, the Westminster Magistrates' Court project works to identify and support vulnerable FN women appearing at court. It aims to support the reduction of FN women disproportionately entering custody and to improve delivery of a trauma-informed, gender-informed and equal service.

Our team have a daily presence in the Court and have continued to successfully engage with a range of professionals. This includes Probation, Liaison & Diversion, Legal Advisors, and the defence community on a local level. We are trained in anti-trafficking and therefore are continuously alert to indicators of trafficking.

Our priority when having a presence in Court custody, is to conduct an initial assessment with FN women and be aware of their support needs and vulnerabilities. A high number of FN defendants come from an Eastern European background; with our team speaking Bulgarian and Romanian, it allows key support to be provided in defendants' native language.

We have a close working relationship with other members of Hibiscus, who work in the community, HMP Bronzefield and Yarl's Wood IRC. Therefore, we can signpost clients when they enter the community or receive a custodial sentence, allowing staff to provide support at every level to FN women who have complex needs.

This project contributes to the goals of the National Probation Service (NPS) to collect data and tackle the high number of black and minority ethnic defendants who are disproportionately given custodial sentences in place of community sentences.

The Magistrate's Court project has run into several barriers since the Covid-19 lockdown was implemented. This includes: the closure of courts and the postponement of hearings, preventing Hibiscus workers from conducting face to face assessments, as well as NPS staff implementing remote working and virtual hearings. We have been in communication with senior staff from NPS to develop innovative ways of providing remote support for FN women appearing in court.

Lucy's story

Lucy, a foreign national, had to leave her home due to being forced out by her abusive partner. This unfortunately led to Lucy becoming homeless. Her situation became even more complex after she was arrested. Prior to this she had previous theft-related offences, meaning the chances of her receiving a custodial sentence became higher.

A Hibiscus court worker had an extensive conversation with Lucy and noted several of Lucy's vulnerabilities, including an extensive history of trafficking, sexual exploitation, a battle with depression and drug dependency. Alongside this, Lucy was known to the National Referral Mechanism as a recognised potential victim of trafficking and she had previously been placed in a safe house.

After an assessment had been conducted, the Hibiscus worker provided the information to both the solicitor and mental health team, to ensure they were aware of all relevant factors in Lucy's life. The case was adjourned for a Pre-Sentence Report (PSR), meanwhile she would spend time in custody due to having no fixed abode. We referred Lucy to our colleagues working in HMP Bronzefield, to ensure she would receive emotional and practical support whilst in prison awaiting her hearing.

Detailed information surrounding Lucy's case was sent to the probation officer writing the PSR prior to the interview, to highlight Hibiscus' concerns and ensure the probation officer was aware of Lucy's vulnerabilities. This included informing the officer that immediate housing after the hearing would be needed. The court team then approached a domestic violence agency and as a result an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA) attended the next hearing and secured a safe house for Lucy immediately after her release from court custody. Lucy received a four-week custodial sentence which was deemed served. The team remained in contact with the IDVA to ensure Lucy was now residing in a safe house.



We supported

93

clients in Westminster Magistrates Court.

We supported

3

clients who had experienced trafficking concerns.

Our clients' main concerns:

Language and cultural support

Affordable housing

Employment opportunities

INTERNATIONAL RESETTLEMENT & DETENTION SERVICES

We support those who are actively interested in returning to their country, as well as those who are unclear about the route they wish to pursue.

What we offer

Hibiscus works across three Immigration Removal Centre's (IRC): Heathrow, Colnbrook, and Yarl's Wood. Our team provides one to one person-centred emotional and practical support to clients, both whilst in IRCs and on return. Our clients have complex and difficult situations. By providing advice and resettlement planning, we ensure our clients are aware of their options and feel supported at each step. We have a close working relationship with other stakeholder organisations,

non-government organisations and charities based in the UK, enabling us to refer clients to the most appropriate support during their time in the IRCs.

Across our team, we can speak eleven languages, including those most prominent throughout the centres, reducing the need for translators and increasing direct face to face support. Through extensive research and international field trips, we have collated a broad range of reputable international organisations, so that we can signpost clients, ensuring specialist, tailored support is provided upon their return.

In the past year, a common trend highlighted is the number of clients needing practical support upon return. **We have been able to provide 441 clients with financial support.** The need arises because they face enormous challenges upon returning and securing work.

Common areas of support include:

- Education and skills training
- Assistance to set up a small business
- Counselling services
- LGBTQAI+ support
- Safe accommodation
- Meet and greet at the airport
- Employment assistance
- Gender-based violence support



Huan's story

Huan arrived in the UK as an EU Extended Family Member, through her daughter being married to an EU citizen. After living in the UK for seven years, Huan had her application revoked due to her daughter and son in law separating. This led to her being detained in Yarl's Wood.

While living with her daughter, Huan built up an important relationship with her grandson and became his primary carer. Her role included providing emotional and practical support, taking him to and from school, and caring for his needs through cooking lunch and dinner, while her daughter worked full time to financially provide for the family. As a result, Huan became very attached to her grandchild.

Hibiscus interacted with Huan as she appeared very emotional trying to cope with the separation from her daughter and grandchild. The project worker opened a client support plan, offering emotional support, meetings with the CBP lead, Hibiscus support groups and assistance with contacting Huan's family and representatives.

This support led to Huan seeing the Hibiscus worker almost daily throughout her two months stay. One day, Huan arrived extremely upset and explained to us that her daughter was struggling with childcare and having to take time off work due to Huan not being there. Hibiscus conducted in-depth research and discussed the childcare options with Huan to help put her mind at ease. She discussed this with her daughter and expressed her gratitude for the information. An extra strain on Huan was regularly being unable to get hold of her representative. She was unhappy with how her case was being dealt with.

The team called and emailed them on her behalf and explained how to find alternative representation if she wished. Huan was grateful for Hibiscus' help.

We supported

90

potential survivors of trafficking.

.....
We supported

1785

across the three immigration Removal Centres.

.....
Our clients' main concerns:

Resettlement support including accommodation and livelihood

Understanding their immigration case

Property collection

GATWICK PRE-DEPARTURE ACCOMMODATION

We have a small specialist team providing independent returns planning and preparation to support families held at Gatwick Pre-departure Accommodation (PDA) who are facing imminent removal.

Alongside this, our team build relationships with international organisations through conducting extensive research into NGO's and charities abroad, to ensure our clients have a variety of specialist support in place for their return.

The team provide practical support in what is a difficult time for the families, to help prepare them for their removal and to aid their resettlement in the country of return. This includes creating detailed, bespoke resettlement plans centred on the individual needs of each family. In discussions with the family, an assessment is conducted to establish the support required. Our team then contact and signpost the family to organisations abroad, to ensure support is continued when they return. We provide emotional support by being a listening ear and through the use of 'Capacitar', which is a trauma-informed holistic approach aimed at giving the family coping mechanisms in dealing with stress.

Third country unit booklets (TCU)

Our team noticed a trend in families facing return to third countries. To enhance our support further and extend the range of resources we provide, our team conducted widespread research in EU countries and created 12 new booklets specifically to support people facing removal as a TCU case.

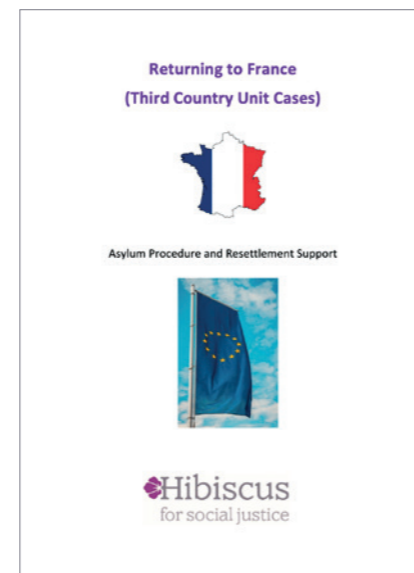
The booklets contain general information on health services, emergency accommodation, onward travel, education and organisations who can provide support. These can be accessed online by clients and agencies, as well as provided to families in the PDA.

SPECIALIST WELFARE SERVICES

Our Specialist Welfare Service (SWS) has continued to develop. Hibiscus was successful in securing a funding extension for this work until December 2021.

Thanks to this, we have continued to offer specialist support via our Chinese speaking buddy programme, to all Chinese speakers. Emotional wellbeing continues to be the focus for the service. Also, our services have seen an increase in work with women who have been trafficked. Three staff members are now registered as 'first responders' with the Salvation Army, including our SWS project worker.

Our work within Yarl's Wood has also been invaluable in terms of providing stakeholders with the voices of the women, as well as being an advocate and independent voice within the centre.



A FIELD TRIP TO BRAZIL



In March 2020 a small group of staff members travelled to Brazil to carry out field research, meet overseas organisations and reunite with former clients.

The main objective of the field trip was to carry out research and collect reliable data to better inform our work and services with Brazilian nationals, while also acquiring further knowledge and insights into the resettlement needs of Brazilian returnees. Among the services we hope the trip will improve, are to measure the accuracy of the advice we provide to Brazilian returnees and subsequently produce a 'Returning to Brazil' booklet that will help with resettlement needs. Additionally, we want to continue to establish contacts with agencies and organisations to which we can refer our clients for support and to document the experiences of our clients who have returned, to understand the challenges they faced upon returning.



Our team travelled to the state of Goiás and visited Brasília and Goiânia, and later São Paulo, all of which are areas where most of our clients were from.

Over the course of 10 days, our team met up with different local, national and international organisations that provided useful information and valuable insight into the social issues and situations that Brazilians face in Brazil each day. In Brasília, our team met up with Caritas Brasileira which provides practical support to migrants and refugees, and also helps Brazilian families to access governmental welfare services. We also visited the British Embassy and discussed with them the recent migration patterns between

the UK and Brazil as well as the difficulties that Brazilian returnees face once returning from the UK. Brazilian nationals constituted one of the main three nationalities supported by Hibiscus projects located at Yarl's Wood and Heathrow IRCs.

Overall, our International Resettlement team has supported 374 Brazilian clients, 19% of the total nationality of clients across the entire organisation. At Yarl's Wood, Brazilian females comprised the top nationality among female clients.

In Goiânia we visited two local organisations, Projecto Resgate, which offers advice and support to female survivors of trafficking and helps them to reintegrate into society in a secure way, and Astral-Go, which offers support to those that represent the "feminine gender" and those from the LGBTQIA+ community. They run two shelters and provide practical and psychosocial support to the women there. Both organisations do important work and offer valuable services in Goiânia to anyone who identifies as a woman, and especially trafficked women. They provided our team in the field with data about the trafficking of women and trans-women from Goiânia.

In São Paulo, our team met up with several local organisations including Sefras, Compassiva, CDHIC (Centro de Direitos Humanos e Cidadania do Imigrante) and Casa 1. They all offer support to vulnerable migrants and help returnees in different ways by referring them to the correct departments and municipalities within the returnee's hometown, so they can access reintegration support from the government. Casa 1 also offers safe accommodation to the LGBTQIA+ community as it was explained that violence and discrimination against people who identified as LGBTQIA+ is on the rise in Brazil. We also visited the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), which offers support to most returnees in Brazil, and discussed with them the different resettlement programmes that they offer to Brazilians returning from Europe as well as the challenges they face once in Brazil. In Sao Paulo our team also visited the



favellas (slum or shantytown located within or on the outskirts of large cities, a favela typically comes into being when squatters occupy vacant land and construct shanties from salvaged materials). Alongside an organisation there called Associação Comunitária Monte Azul that provides vital support to people and families living there in the form of education, employment and training, and health and social care. Lastly, we met with an association of female advocates and lawyers called RedeFeminista de Juristas that do incredible work promoting the rights of women and fighting for gender equality and justice in Brazil.

Despite the limited time frame of our visit, through prior research, careful planning and clear objectives, we achieved and exceeded the principal aims of this international field trip. We heard first-hand accounts concerning the housing and economic crisis in Brazil, endemic racism, the influence of the church and religion, and the impact of current political rhetoric. We also learnt about how the political dynamics of the various towns, cities and country as a whole can cause confusion and difficulties for many of those we support, especially in terms of gaining access to support, guidance, and services.

As for our meetings with clients who returned to Brazil over the last year, they were generous in talking about the various, often complex, factors which influenced their decisions to leave Brazil. Not only this, however, they also explained the methods of deception used against them, their experience of living in the UK, their perspectives of being detained and the return process as well as the multitude of barriers they have faced to successfully reintegrate. Finally, we heard about the very real dangers facing LGBTQIA+ people living in and returning to Brazil.

We left at a critical time for Brazil, just as the pandemic began to hit the nation. With its arrival, the uncertainties surrounding health, survival and the global economy were brought into stark relief, particularly for those who are most vulnerable. Yet, the resettlement work that Hibiscus does with Brazilian nationals will be all the more effective thanks to the new links, shared visions and cultural exchanges that were forged with the various organisations and individuals we were fortunate enough to meet in Brazil.



ANTI-TRAFFICKING

The support we offer

We continue to identify and support those that have been trafficked. In the community, we provide services to survivors, who receive conclusive grounds decision and are no longer able to access 45-day reflection period support. We also partnered with the Sophie Hayes Foundation to deliver coaching and via our partnership with Women at the Well, Albanian survivors of trafficking can access counselling in their first language.

Our Cultural Mediation project, funded by the Bell Foundation, has been in development; it will be delivered by a combination of a part-time project worker post dedicated specifically to women who have been trafficked, and preparatory research on cultural mediation.

New Anti-Trafficking Policy Officer in Hibiscus

We have appointed our first Anti-trafficking Policy Officer thanks to funding from Trust for London. The officer has started a new project called "Voices of the women" which involves foreign national women from the community, prison and Yarl's Wood who are currently going through the NRM process, have been through it or decided it was not the right decision for them.

The project's main aim is to highlight the challenges our clients face regarding the NRM to policymakers, so women's accounts contribute to the practical implications of the NRM reform and new Victim Care Contract. The project will use the lived experiences of foreign national women to develop an evidence-based resource for influencing policy, ensuring that women's voices are at the centre of the work.



Amaya's story

Amaya lived in Ukraine in a small village with her family. Unfortunately, she suffered emotional abuse from her parents and siblings, and later in her life she was sold to a trafficker. Amaya was taken to Greece and forced into sex work for a few years before arriving in the UK in 2006. The exploitation continued and Amaya was commanded to take care of the new women who arrived at the brothel. Due to being terrified of her trafficker she had no choice but to say yes to their demands. The traffickers would make constant threats and through fear of the consequences she never tried to escape.

The police eventually found the brothel and Amaya was taken into custody. She was accused of running the brothel and was convicted and given a custodial sentence of over 12 months. During the process, she disclosed that she was a survivor of trafficking, but no one recorded it. After she served her sentence, she was sent to an Immigration Removal Centre where she was awaiting deportation. She approached the welfare services in the centre and spoke about her experiences. She received specific support and was then referred to the NRM and released from the centre. She also made an asylum application. Amaya's NRM conclusive grounds decision was negative, but her solicitors requested a review of the decision. Her asylum claim was also refused. Eventually, Amaya was referred to Hibiscus for support in December 2019.

When Amaya first came to our Women's Centre, she was anxious but keen on receiving support. She spoke about her struggles and constant fear for her safety. The team began to provide emotional support, encouraged her to attend Hibiscus workshops and activities, liaised with her solicitors and accompanied her to a court hearing. While with Hibiscus, Amaya's trafficking decision reconsideration was accepted, and the team helped her connect with the Salvation Army for 45-day reflection period support. At the end of February 2020, Amaya's trafficking decision was reconsidered, and she received a positive conclusive grounds decision. She was very happy and relieved that finally someone believed her. Amaya was extremely grateful for the support.



We supported

37%

of the clients with trafficking concerns received a positive conclusive grounds decision from the NRM.

34%

are still pending.

We identified and supported

264

potential survivors of trafficking in community, in prisons and in IRCs. 14.5% more than the previous year.

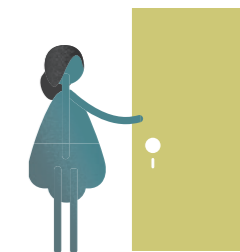
Main nationalities with trafficking concerns:

Albania: 34%

China: 17%

Nigeria: 15%

CLOSED DOORS REPORT



Inequalities and injustices in appropriate and secure housing provision for female victims of trafficking who are seeking asylum.

With funding from Commonweal, we undertook research around securing appropriate housing for female survivors of trafficking. The reports highlight the injustices and gaps in housing support provision for women who are formally identified as potential victims of trafficking by the UK Government's trafficking identification process, the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

This report specifically focuses on housing provision for female victims of trafficking who are seeking asylum, as the evidence suggests this group experiences some of the greatest injustices owing to their immigration status. The report reflects on two elements of housing provision: safe houses – safe, supported housing for victims of trafficking, where women are meant to be housed; and Asylum Support accommodation, where women too often end up being housed inappropriately.



"For years now, the government has stated it is committed to tackling trafficking and modern slavery, but this commitment is insincere when viewed alongside its hostile immigration policies."

Woman seeking asylum, made destitute in the UK

Some of the main findings of the research are:

Housing challenges for women accessing Hibiscus's Women's Centre

Many women who have been identified as potential trafficking victims live in accommodation unsuitable for the purpose of their reflection and recovery period, such as in asylum accommodation.

Only 2% of Hibiscus' clients referred to the NRM were allocated a place at a safe house.

The other women were housed in asylum accommodation, other forms of temporary accommodation, or stayed with friends and family. Four women in our Women's Centre were also identified as homeless.

The Salvation Army – insufficient safe house provision for foreign national women

Only 25 foreign national women were able to access safe accommodation in a two-year period, despite foreign national women accounting for 1,188 of the women referred to The Salvation Army in the year July 2018–July 2019 alone.

The majority of female potential victims of trafficking are not accessing the safe house accommodation which they are entitled to and suggests flaws in filling available beds. Most foreign national women, some with children, are not accessing the safe houses they are entitled to under the VCC and are being disadvantaged and marginalised owing to their status as foreign nationals.

Lost in the system

An additional issue of concern is the number of people getting lost in the system after initial contact with The Salvation Army.

A total of 934 individuals were not supported in their recovery and reflection period after their referral to The Salvation Army.

This was despite them being recognised as potential victims through a positive reasonable grounds decision and, thus, eligible for support. The Salvation Army notes that this is because they could no longer be reached after initial contact. However, this is a significant number of people to disappear in this process and warrants further investigation into how follow up retention rates can be improved.

Asylum accommodation

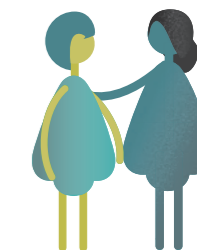
Women going through the NRM who have a pending asylum claim are treated as asylum seekers instead of potential trafficking victims.

A significant number of victims who have been referred to the NRM, including 64 of Hibiscus' Women's Centre service users, access housing provided through Asylum Support.

This accommodation is not designed to provide round-the-clock support to individuals who have experienced the type of trauma associated with trafficking. As a result, this accommodation cannot be seen to amount to a safe place for people recovering from the traumatic experience of being trafficked. Poor-quality asylum accommodation can often be the type of exploitative environment that can further expose vulnerable women to the risk of trafficking and modern slavery.

This data is based on a more detailed report produced by Hibiscus Initiatives. To access the full report please go to hibiscusinitiatives.org.uk

WORKSHOPS



Community and Prison services

We held

375

workshops and classes.

World Women's Day self-portrait workshop

A workshop run by the Community Team as part of the Big Lottery Fund project.

An art facilitator held a workshop in the Women's Centre where women could express themselves using art materials to create a self-portrait. Each woman had a photo of themselves taken and through art materials they were asked to recreate the original photo to express who they were.

During the workshop, discussions were held about how the women perceived who they were and the choices behind the art materials they had chosen to present themselves. The question of 'What does it mean for you to be a woman?' framed the three hour workshop.

We provided a total of

50

workshops and informative activities in prisons.

Women's gender roles workshop

A workshop run by our prisons team in HMP Bronzefield as part of the Comic Relief project.

In that workshop, we discussed stereotypes and gender roles assigned to women by society. We analysed different images of women from magazines and newspapers and discussed openly and in a safe environment how women are portrayed in the media and how we feel about it.

The picture with the two collages represents "What we see in the media" (dress well, perfect bodies...) and below "What we should see in the media" (wrinkles, strong women, women in "predominantly male" sports like football and boxing). Our clients created these collages, struggling to find accurate representations of themselves in the magazines.



International Resettlement & Detention services

We held

36

creative and education workshops.

The Chinese New Year workshop

In January 2020 we celebrated Chinese New Year with some of the residents across three IRCs; Yarl's Wood, Harmondsworth and Colnbrook.

The workshop focused on creativity, with the residents making Chinese dragons and celebrating the day by enjoying traditional foods.

In the process of the workshop clients got to discuss topics which were important to them, including their concerns and how Hibiscus could support them.

We ran

34

workshops as part of our specialist welfare services in Yarl's Wood.

Dance Movement Therapy workshop

As part of our focus on the women's wellbeing at Yarl's Wood, one of our volunteers prepared and ran a workshop on dance movement therapy and wellbeing.

It was a session where a safe and supportive space was created in which women could move and dance as they wanted, and also explored their own dance while relaxing and de-stressing.

Music and creative materials such as scarves and pillows were used for the women to enjoy and relax.

Hibiscus will continue to embed anti-racism practice across the organisation through an action plan to encourage staff, trustees and stakeholders to practice self-development and awareness. Alongside introducing a variety of training.

Research and developing international partnerships will continue throughout the year to ensure our team can offer up to date, safe and reliable resettlement support for those that wish to return home. Hibiscus have developed a unique set of return booklets providing extensive information. These are accessible to anyone on our website.

A strong focus this year will be to embed anti-trafficking into all areas of our work. This will include a variety of training for all staff to increase awareness and knowledge. An inclusive anti-trafficking steering group aims to ensure our anti-trafficking strategy is upheld within the culture of the organisation.

We are delighted to introduce our new CEO Marchu Girma who will replace Adrienne Darragh after seven years' service to Hibiscus.

FUTURE INITIATIVES

Our new Cultural Mediation project, funded by the Bell Foundation, will be delivered over the coming months. The project aims to research and develop cultural mediation while supporting Albanian survivors of trafficking and will initially be for a period of six months, with a view to extending longer-term.

We will be recruiting new Trustees. We welcome diverse leaders who have significantly influenced thinking and action in the social justice and immigration movement.

Hibiscus will continue to support and work alongside the Alternative to Detentions project as the second pilot is underway.

We envisage online communication will become a more integrated part of our service provision in supporting vulnerable clients remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic.

OUR PEOPLE



Our Trustees

Rachel Youngman, Michael Greenwood, Margaret Crisell, Liz Hogarth, Sara Khan, Anne Stephens, Roz Morrison, Erika-Maria Szasz, Louise Swan.

Our staff

Adrienne Darragh (CEO), Chloe Geoghegan (Director of Operations), Hazel Alcraft (Head of Community and Prisons), Louise Hatch (Head of IRC) Abdul Ahmed, Aleksandra Stankova, Amanda Williams, Amy Mills, Blodina Rakovica, Elena Brihan, Ella Wooster, Izabela Ignatowska, Joanne Potter, Julie-Anne Ntege, Juste Marcinkeviciute, Katrina Struthers, Keira Johnson, Kelly O'Sullivan, Kerry Smith, Mercy Chieza, Monica Ortiz, Rakie Ceesay, Seika Aziz, Shmailish Anwar, Silvia Berastegui, Simona Blaj, Waseem Saghir

Languages spoken by our staff

Arabic, Albanian, British Sign Language, Bulgarian, Catalan, Czech, English, French, German, Hindi, Gaelic (Irish), Italian, Khmer, Lithuanian, Luganda, Malay, Mandarin, Ndebele, Patwa, Polish, Portuguese, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Shona, Spanish, Somali, Turkish, Urdu.



OUR FUNDERS

We would like to express our thanks to the funders and individuals who support our work and activities. Without their consistent support our work would not be possible.



FINANCES

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total 2020	Total 2019
Income from:					
Donations and grants	—	—	367,993	367,993	335,334
Charitable activities	875,993	—	—	875,993	848,071
Investments	269	—	—	269	175
Total	876,262	—	367,993	1,244,255	1,183,580
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	16,276	—	—	16,276	15,860
Charitable activities	777,601	—	369,177	1,146,778	1,135,170
Total	793,877	—	369,177	1,163,054	1,151,030
Net income/(expenditure)	82,385	—	(1,184)	81,201	32,550
Transfers between funds	(33,223)	32,513	710	—	—
Net movement in funds	49,162	32,513	(474)	81,201	32,550
Total funds brought forward	367,677	175,000	45,035	587,712	555,162
Total funds carried forward	416,839	207,513	44,561	668,913	587,712

Financial review and summary of accounts

Hibiscus Initiatives, year ended 31 March 2020. This is a summary. For the full Accounts please go to Companies House, Charity commission or Hibiscus Initiatives

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