



IMPACT REPORT 2024

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INTRODUCTION

This year, more than ever, I am grateful to be part of building and nurturing refugee leadership across the country. Britain's record of offering safety and an environment in which people seeking asylum can thrive must be talked about confidently and celebrated. This welcome flows directly from the safety and stability of our society, and the depth and breadth of British culture - which inspires those who call it home. These British values are under assault from a fearful and narrow politics that OSH plays a small role in challenging and changing.

Many of our young people in OSH deeply feel the current political winds; a fresh trauma at a time when they are working hard to build new, purposeful lives.

Despite all this, OSH remains a community of hope. Within OSH we nurture souls and build a blueprint for the future. We do this through developing practical skills in leadership, education, public speaking, and English fluency. We also achieve this more deeply by building community, creating friendships, celebrating successes, and modelling a society we can take out into the wider world.



Every year we grow; in numbers who attend our events, in skills that we use to shape the world around us, and in our belief that in spaces such as these, we are nurturing a better future for all of us.

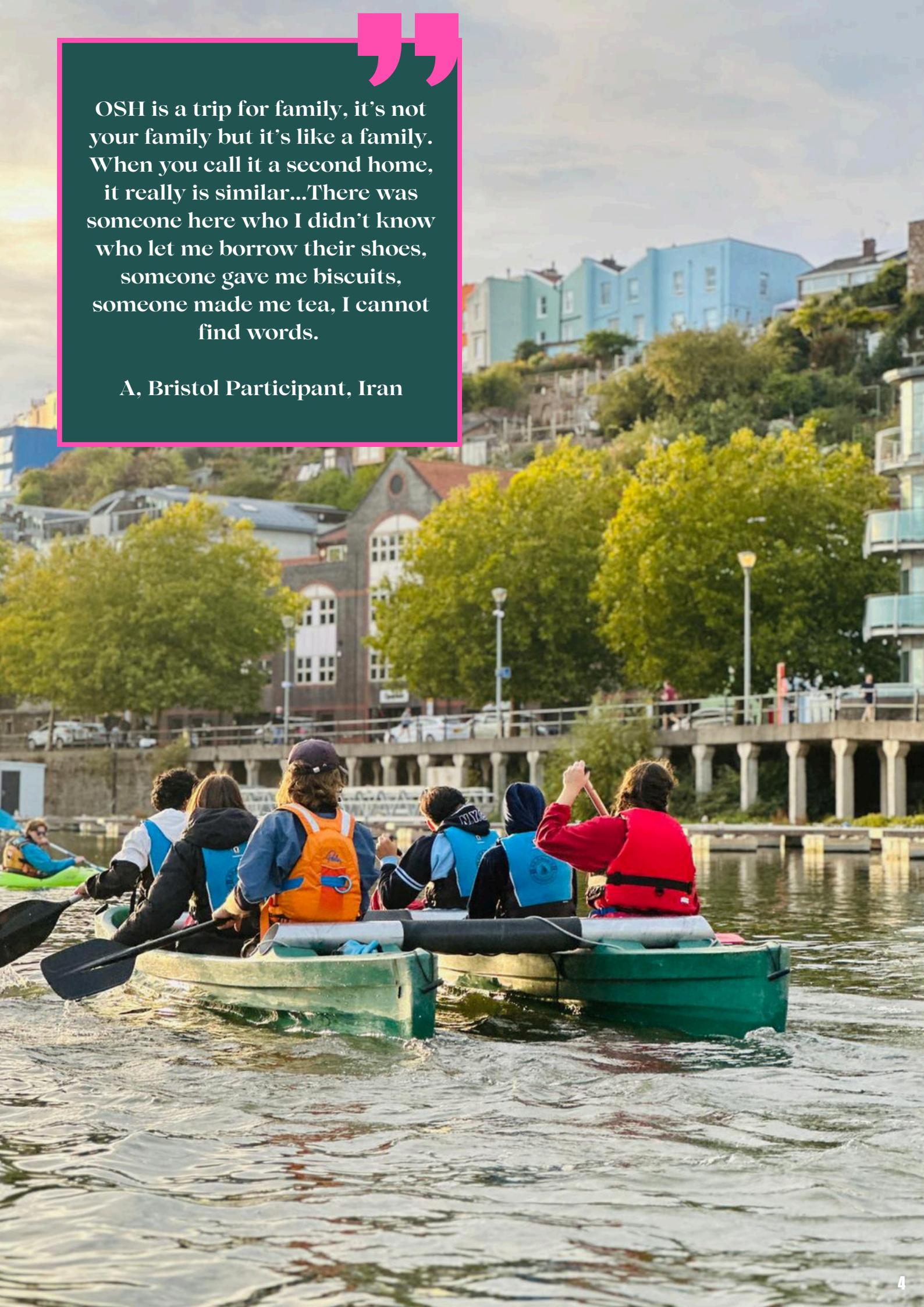
We have a dynamic new strategy to share with you that will transform us into a truly national movement, dramatically expand our reach, and deepen the core activities and programmes that have such a profound impact on all our beneficiaries.

Young people do not just inherit the future; they build and shape it. Thank you for all you do to make it one we can all be proud of.

Nic Schlagman
Chair of Trustees

OSH is a trip for family, it's not your family but it's like a family. When you call it a second home, it really is similar...There was someone here who I didn't know who let me borrow their shoes, someone gave me biscuits, someone made me tea, I cannot find words.

A, Bristol Participant, Iran



WS STORY

We first met W in November 2023 on the OSH Girls Weekend. She graduated as a leader in Summer 2024, and is an active leader and role model for her peers.

 I came to the UK 3 years ago when I was a teenager. I came alone, though I do have 2 brothers in the UK. I was initially placed in London where I didn't know anyone, so the first months were very lonely and chaotic and full of culture shocks. The 16+ care home where I was placed was really under-resourced with ever-changing staff members. I kept myself to myself as I felt unsafe with so many damaged young people thrown together without enough support.

It took a year for me to be processed and finally I was moved to be near one of my brothers. More importantly to me, it meant that I could finally restart my education. For as long as I can remember I have wanted to be a doctor. After missing a crucial 13 months I was very worried that my dream was dead.

I went to college to do a BTEC in Applied Science – unfortunately the nearest place that I could do 3 A-levels-worth was an hour away! I was still being moved around by social services and having to adjust emotionally and logically to new settings, such as my complex commute to college, but no matter the distractions, I was focused on getting a distinction and seeing if I could salvage my career dreams.

Towards the end of 2023 a refugee organisation who had supported me in London contacted me to see if I wanted to go on a girls' residential with an organisation called Our Second Home.

I had no idea what it was, but just said 'yes!' to a chance to get away from the chaotic place I was living, a rare break/holiday and a way to maybe make friends. Up until that point I hadn't made a single friend in the UK.

From the first moment, OSH felt like home (something I hadn't felt since leaving Eritrea) – I felt safe and understood. It was the first time that I had shared my story in the 18 months I had been in the UK – my feelings, what I left behind, how consumed I was with it. Entering this healing space was so powerful, especially hearing others tell their stories and the comfort of not being alone.



WS STORY

Most powerful to me were the conversations with leaders...

One leader asked me what I would like to do. I told her about medicine, but that I thought that probably wasn't possible anymore with my break in education, being forced to do BTEC rather than A-levels, and all the other barriers. She introduced me to a leader who was doing medicine and I realised that I was the one limiting myself. There is a direct line between that conversation and the fact that this autumn I'm off to the University of York to study medicine.

The other conversation that changed my future was when I was asked if I would like to join the leadership track. I so desperately wanted this to be my place and find ways to come back. Through becoming a leader I communicate better, I have important teamwork skills and so much more confidence. It helped me with my university interview and, more generally, has given me the confidence to represent myself in the many ways that I have to as a lone young refugee.

I've joined this amazing community and built one around myself. There is real care between all of us in OSH. I have learned so much being guided in life by the older leaders. Everyone is so generous with connecting me to people who can help, like with my university application or work experience.

If I had just been left with my social worker, I'm not sure that I would have had the energy or the path to thrive. I would definitely be many years behind. OSH is that wider family and community that OSH members otherwise lack.

I'm always looking for ways to help others in OSH - I particularly love inspiring young OSH participants academically, especially that conversation about goals and ambitions that my leaders had with me. I always ask girls what they want to become. So many say "I did want to..." so I tell them my story and encourage them to pursue it.

I recently spoke to a participant with a dream of becoming a pilot. He said he had given it up because it felt impossible. I didn't want to accept that, so I did loads of research about bursaries and scholarships. A few of us supported him and he is now in college on a course, on his way.

OSH changed everything for me. It helped me to heal, to make friends, to settle, to find community, to pursue my career dreams, to gain vital skills. It's because of OSH that I found the strength and support to thrive. When I think about me becoming a doctor in the UK, I think that my future patients should be grateful to OSH!

“

WE ARE OUR SECOND HOME

We are the UK's youth movement for refugees and migrants. We believe in the unbounded potential of these individuals, and are driven to empower them to flourish in the place they call home. Our movement is the start of this journey, creating transformative residential activities where we build communities and spark new futures.

The OSH Model



It works like this: young refugees and asylum seekers come on an OSH residential trip. They cook together. Play games. Learn dances from each other's cultures. Many had their childhoods taken away from them, and with OSH they just get to be kids.

The graduates of these trips take part in leadership training and go on to be the ones who take the reins. They become the leaders of the movement.

This is just the beginning of a positive cycle that just needs one big push. OSH is building the next generation of leaders from refugee backgrounds. These displaced youth people will become role models and leaders in our movement and in local communities, supporting those coming after.



WHY WE EXIST

Displaced young people face considerable challenges in establishing and rebuilding their lives here in the UK.

Accessing education has proven to be a challenge: where many did not have formal education prior to arriving in the UK, resettled refugee children are academically over 1.5 years behind their peers by age 16, while unaccompanied asylum-seeking pupils are over 3 years behind. They are 6 times less likely to go to university according to global averages. Later in life, displaced people are 22% less likely to be in a job, and those who are working tend to earn less and work fewer hours than the UK-born workforce. This combination of basic English, low confidence, and limited family support, results in a higher susceptibility to social and financial exploitation.

Rates of anxiety, PTSD and depression vastly outstrip their peers, as is acute mental health distress. This has been exacerbated by the disproportionate impact of the isolation and digital poverty highlighted by COVID-19. Further, as anti-migrant sentiment grows in both politics and media, the need to build resilient and supportive communities increases significantly.

A positive experience in a youth movement can be transformative for these young people. They experience joy and fun, gain social and employability skills, grow confidence in English, a strong and resilient community, and build connections with new and relevant role models. These are crucial for OSH's participants, who, since fleeing violence and persecution from their country of birth, have been robbed of their adolescence.



OUR APPROACH

Our Second Home (OSH) is a peer-powered youth movement that supports young people from refugee backgrounds (aged 14-25) to build lasting relationships, gain leadership skills, and create a thriving community. We believe that if young refugees have access to transformative experiences, strong peer networks, and leadership opportunities, they will develop the confidence, skills, and agency needed to navigate and shape their futures.

Our approach is built on a cycle of leadership development. This theory of change not only supports individual development but also fosters long-term, systemic change by equipping young refugees with the tools to become advocates, professionals, and leaders in their communities.

1 Engagement

Young people join OSH through residential trips and local youth hubs, where they experience belonging and develop friendships.

2 Growth

Through mentorship and skill-building programmes, participants gain confidence, communication skills, and leadership experience.

3 Leadership

Many return as peer leaders, running programmes and mentoring new participants, ensuring a self-sustaining, community-led movement.

The Hub is a great place to socialise and to meet new people. It's a great place to relax your mind and to be happy. I gained new experiences, and it has helped me to set new goals for my life. I am very happy when I'm there and excited for the workshops.

M, Female Participant, Somalia

OUR WORK

OSH delivers a range of programmes that support young refugees in overcoming the barriers of displacement:

Residential Experiences

Intensive, community-building trips where participants form friendships and step into leadership roles.

Leadership Training

A nationally certified course that equips young people with the skills to lead, advocate, and contribute to society.

Youth Hubs

Regular peer-led activities in London and Bristol, providing a space for ongoing support and development.

Mentorship & Advocacy

One-to-one support that helps young people navigate challenges and access education and employment opportunities. These are delivered in collaboration with over 30 referring organisations, including youth clubs, local authorities, and housing providers.



2024 IN NUMBERS

196

young people participated in OSH programming up 20% on last year

827

attendances up 83% on last year

68

events, including 8 residential trips

89

workshops including campfires, circus skills, ESOL, cycling, and boxing

24

participants in our AQA-certified course tripling our total from the year before.



162 boys, 34 girls
83:17

28

countries represented (top 5 were Sudan (49), Afghanistan (36), Iran (18), Eritrea (15), and Syria (14)).

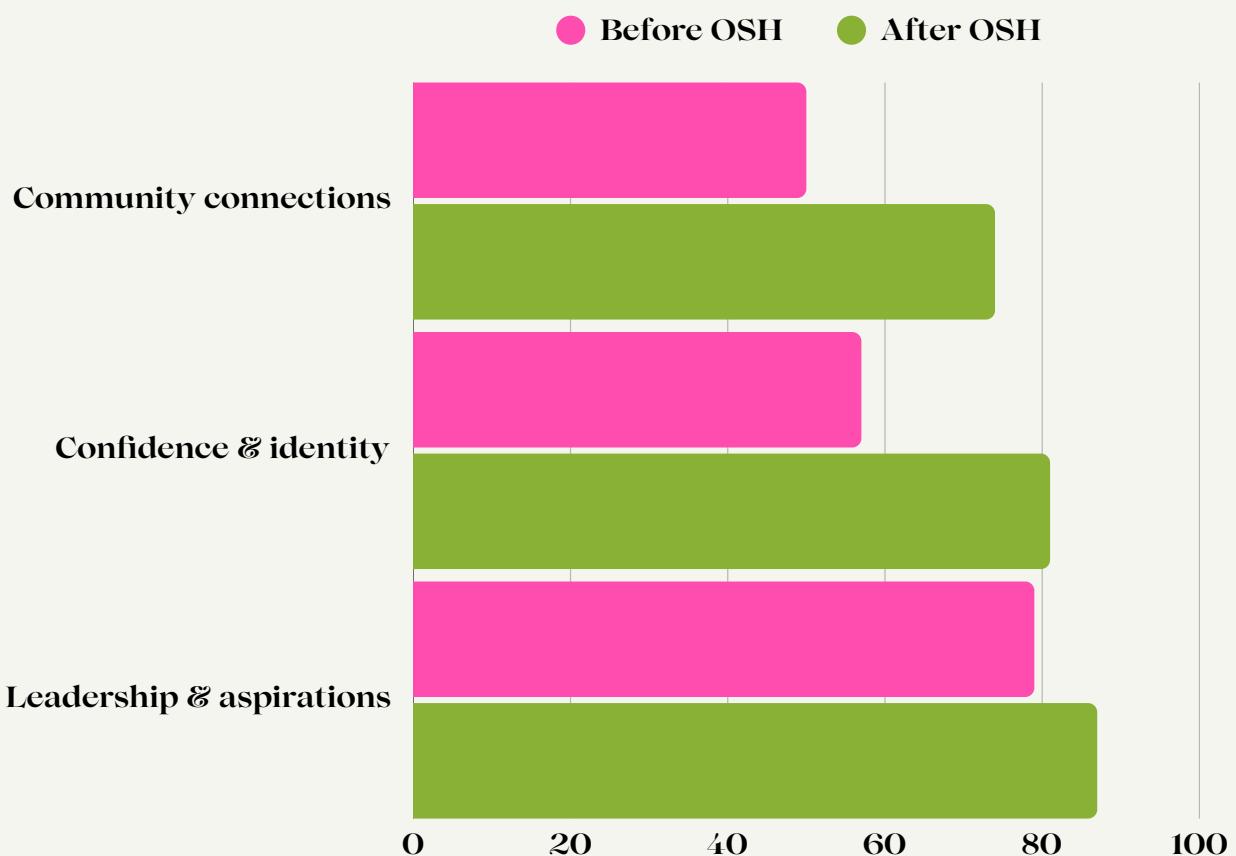
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As a leader I learned that I could lead the participants, the young people, when I tell them to do something they listen to me and my confidence has increased because I'm giving instructions and they listen.

M, young leader, Syria

2024 IN NUMBERS

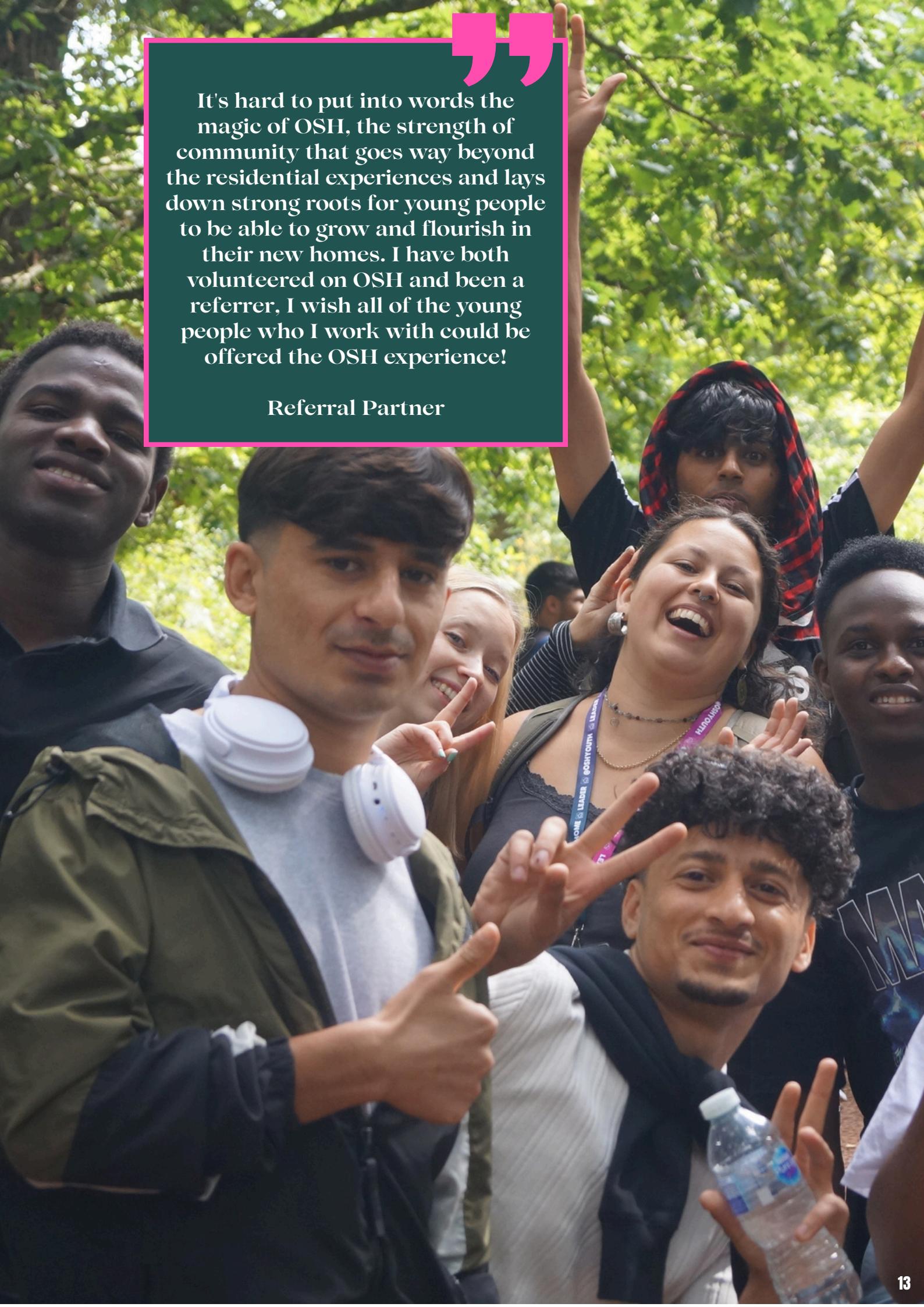
What we have learned over the years is that our work is integral to integration, acclimatisation and flourishing through three main areas of impact: identity, community and leadership. Over the summer, we surveyed all our participants, and learned that:



Community connections: The percentage of participants who report having close friends in the UK increased from 50% to 74% after joining OSH.

Confidence and identity: Those who felt comfortable communicating in English rose from 57% to 81%.

Leadership & aspirations: The number of young people excited about their future in the UK increased from 79% to 87%.



It's hard to put into words the magic of OSH, the strength of community that goes way beyond the residential experiences and lays down strong roots for young people to be able to grow and flourish in their new homes. I have both volunteered on OSH and been a referrer, I wish all of the young people who I work with could be offered the OSH experience!

Referral Partner

LOOKING AHEAD

2025-2028 Strategy

In late 2024, OSH launched a new three-year strategic plan designed to build on everything we've learned and achieved so far: positioning ourselves for ambitious, sustainable growth.

Our plan centres around one clear goal: to triple the reach of our programmes, expand leadership opportunities for young people with refugee backgrounds, and deepen our impact across the UK.

We believe that young people with refugee experience should feel at home, grow as leaders, and flourish in the place they live. Over the next three years, we will work to make that vision a reality for hundreds more young people. To realise this growth, our plan focuses on three interconnected developments:

1 Growth

We will expand from 8 to 20 residential a year, increase our hubs from 2 to 6, and grow our participant community from 196 to over 500 unique young people annually.

3 Investment in People & Partnerships

We'll expand our team to 9 FTE staff, with at least 25% from refugee backgrounds, and develop new funding partnerships, including statutory contracts and per-participant commissioning models.

2 Regionalisation

OSH will move from a centralised delivery model to one rooted in regional hubs, each delivering local residential, leadership courses, mentoring and weekly programming, supported by a national team.

OUR AIM FOR 2028

20

residentially annually, led by regional teams

6

active hubs offering weekly activities, leadership training, and mentoring

100

leaders with lived experience, across volunteer, paid and decision-making roles

750K

annual income, supported by trusts, donors, contracts and corporates

A codified curriculum for residential, hubs and leadership courses

A national evaluation framework collecting consistent, powerful data on impact

What It Will Take

The success of this bold yet achievable plan depends on generous, forward-thinking investment. We're prioritising fundraising and deepening our work with partners to make it happen. With the right support, OSH can reach even more young people and make an even greater difference in the lives of displaced youth across the country. **Let's build it together.**

FROM OUR FOUNDER

A movement is shaped by the people who build it. This year, that movement – Our Second Home – has grown louder, stronger, and more vital than ever.

We've worked with nearly 200 young people from refugee backgrounds, delivered 8 transformative residencies, expanded local youth hubs in London and Bristol, and tripled participation in our leadership training programme. Young people have stepped into leadership at every level: leading activities, coordinating residential programming and logistics, joining our Youth Advisory Board, mentoring others, and helping shape our ambitious 2025–2028 strategy.

This growth has taken place against a stark national backdrop. From the far-right riots in the summer to the continued pursuit of policies like the Rwanda plan and the use of the Bibby Stockholm barge, many of our young people have felt not just overlooked but actively targeted. In that context, OSH has been a place of radical hope. While national rhetoric divides, our spaces nurture community, restore confidence, and equip displaced young people to lead.



And we are only just getting started. Our new strategy sets out a bold plan to triple our reach, invest in regional hubs, and build a truly youth-led national movement. Already, with Ava Riby-Williams joining as Programme Manager, we've taken vital steps towards expanding our offer for women and girls, and embedding lived experience across our leadership.

None of this would be possible without our supporters. To our donors, referral partners, and allies: thank you. Your trust allows us to dream big and act boldly. And to our young people and leaders: thank you for your passion, care, and courage. You are reshaping the present, creating a new future, and OSH is yours to lead.

Amos Schonfield
Founder and CEO

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all those who have supported us and partnered with us in 2024, most often as donors or as referrers. Some have asked to remain anonymous, and we thank them too.

OUR PARTNERS

- The Dost Centre
- A B Charitable Trust
- City Bridge Foundation
- Goldberg Family Charitable Trust
- London Cycling Campaign
- Prism the Gift Fund
- Rabbie's Tours
- Rayne Trust
- Seneca Trust
- Shoresh Charitable Trust
- This Day Foundation
- Trace Charitable Trust
- The Weisz Foundation
- WFH Foundation
- Young Roots

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

- Anas
- Khaled
- Mehraveh
- Mishkat
- Tomi
- Tosin

**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT**

Supporting young people with refugee backgrounds to build communities, become leaders, and flourish into adulthood in the place they call home

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www.oursecondhome.org.uk