Choose Love
Our impact
2022

Photo credits: Kaz Firpo, Ukraine
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Year in brief:
- 2.9 million people reached
- £28.4m ($35.8m) raised
- 241 partner organisations funded
- Working in 29 countries
Welcome message from CEO

At the start of 2022, we could not have predicted the humanitarian catastrophes that would unfold in the year ahead. With the war in Ukraine, causing the largest mass migration of people in Europe since World War II, came not only vast humanitarian needs but also the diversion of a significant proportion of international aid and resources from other crises. No one wants to make a hierarchy of need, but with so many calls for help, we at Choose Love have the daily task of making difficult but crucial decisions. Our presence in areas of protracted crisis remains critical. People on the move throughout European and Middle Eastern migration routes, as well as on the US-Mexico border, are surviving increasingly hostile border regimes. Over the last 12 months this has been compounded by a surge of climate disasters and extreme weather events, making life in refugee camps even more gruelling. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continues to be felt intensely.

Choose Love celebrated its seven year anniversary in 2022. When I founded the organisation in 2015, I could never have anticipated the scale of our work today. We of course wish we didn’t have to exist; I sincerely hope that I will live to see a more just, humane and peaceful world where Choose Love is no longer necessary. But in the meantime, this year we funded 241 partner organisations in 29 countries, supporting almost 3 million people. Our impact is built on the strength of our relationships with our partners, with the public and with our donors, all driven by an incredibly focused and hard-working team. This strength is reinforced by the unshakeable roots Choose Love has grown to support the ecosystems of grassroots and civil society organisations along key migration routes - the networks that come to the fore and lead the way in times of hardship, as we have seen this year.

We bear daily witness to the racialised and discriminatory distribution of global wealth, with displaced communities and people living in countries away from the media’s glare suffering disproportionately as a result of systems built on inequality. Over the last 7 years, Choose Love has developed a new and necessary model of democratising funding, to provide community-based services to displaced people in a fast, flexible and person-centred way. We adapt in a context that is changing by the minute and work in real-time to find dignified, holistic, and sustainable solutions.

The past year has exacerbated the pressures on already fragile humanitarian organisations that are working tirelessly to support refugees. We are acutely aware of the worldwide economic challenges and the real-life impact these are having for the communities we support. We do not take for granted the unwavering generosity of the public and all of our supporters during hard times, where people continue to choose love through their actions every day. One of my great privileges is to regularly speak with our partners, hearing the magic stories of their thoughtful and creative responses that ensure people are accessing dignified support rooted in humanity and respect. From the comfort of a child’s soft toy to long-term therapeutic support, Choose Love is striving to provide holistic care for those impacted by the traumas of war and displacement.

Our vision as an organisation remains clear - to live in a world that chooses love and justice for everyone. We remain fast and flexible, both as a funder through releasing emergency response grants, and in our campaigning and communications work through adapting to a constantly shifting political environment. The global landscape we’ve found ourselves in has demonstrated continually over the last year why Choose Love’s agile approach is so important to saving lives.

With love - Josie

Photo credits: Yousif Alshewaili, Greece
Our mission and model

Our mission as an organisation is clear: to identify, close and prevent gaps in services and protections for refugees and displaced people.

We achieve this mission through the following steps:

**NEEDS**
We run continuous and rigorous needs assessments to identify gaps in services at three stages of people’s displacement journeys: a) emergency response, b) daily survival, and c) securing futures.

**FUNDRAISE**
We creatively and sustainably raise funds from diverse sources to resource grassroots organisations closing and preventing the gaps identified by our needs assessments. Our vibrant network, deep programmatic intelligence and ability to fund granularly enables us to support hundreds of local organisations in high-risk areas.

**CAPACITY BUILD**
We build, maintain and refine a powerful grantmaking infrastructure that deploys rapid, flexible, and frequently unrestricted funding, to hundreds of community-based frontline organisations along key migration routes.

**DEPLOY**
We support grassroots organisations to identify their main institutional challenges and connect them with relevant local experts – including mentors, trainers and coaches that help them to address these challenges.

**COMMUNICATE**
Using the powerful Choose Love brand, we run strategic communications campaigns and advocacy initiatives that amplify the voices of communities we assist. We do this in order to change public narratives, laws, and policies and practices around forced migration.

**THE RESULT**
Since our inception in 2015, Choose Love has provided vital humanitarian aid to over 4 million displaced people across 34 countries. Our network covers migration routes from the Middle East through to Europe, the U.S-Mexico border and Brazil.
Our impact in numbers

2,900,000 people supported in 29 countries
241 partner organisations funded
£28.4 million ($35.8m) raised

- 1,900,000 people reached with anti-trafficking campaigns
- 370,000 people accessing food support
- 267,000 people accessing warm clothes and non-food items
- 250,000 people accessing WASH support
- 103,000 people accessing medical support

- 490,000 hot meals
- 285,000 weekly food packs
- 47,000 people safely evacuated
- 32,700 people receiving cash assistance
- 25,000 legal cases supported
- 8,200 women and girls accessing safe spaces
- 23,600 people housed in emergency shelters
- 3,800 legal cases supported
- 25,000 children support back into education

*Sample of programme results reported by Choose Love partners between 1 January and 31 December 2022. Efforts are made to avoid double counting of service users across reporting timeframes (where we receive multiple reports from one partner), and across partner organisations (where multiple partners support the same population). Page 27 has more information on how we approach impact measurement, monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

Photo credits: Jeremy Snell, Lebanon; Byron Smith, Greece
24th February – Russia launches a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. More than 10 million people leave their homes over the following weeks in search of safety.

March – 8 months after taking control of the country, the Taliban bans girls from going to secondary school. As the year rolls on, journalists, university students and women in other professions see their basic rights and freedoms curtailed.

27th April – the UK Nationality & Borders Bill is passed into law.

28th July – a leaked report from the European Anti-Fraud Office finds that Frontex, the EU border agency, was routinely involved in covering up illegal pushbacks in Greece.

22nd June – A 4.0-kilometre (2.5 mi) deep earthquake measuring magnitude 5.9 strikes southeastern Afghanistan killing 1,163 people and injuring more than 6,000 others.

14th June – the UK government’s first attempted flight to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda is halted at the last minute after a legal injunction from the European Court of Human Rights.

16th September – widespread protests break out in Iran, following the death of Jîna Amini while in government detention.

September – A major cholera outbreak is declared in northern Syria.

3rd October – Brazil celebrates election wins for two trans and two female Indigenous leaders to its national congress.

27th December – the US supreme court refuses to lift the pandemic-era ‘Title 42’ ruling, continuing to deprive thousands of asylum seekers the right to due process and sending many back into danger.

October – 4,000 refugees are found detained in unbearably overcrowded conditions, in the UK’s Manston Processing Centre.

September – floods in Pakistan kill over 1,700 people, including 640 children, and 2.1 million are left homeless as one third of the country goes underwater.
Ukraine response

*Russian troops invaded Ukraine on 24th February 2022.* As civilians fled west, we saw the largest displacement of people since the Second World War - a devastating humanitarian crisis unfolding on an unprecedented scale. A year since the invasion began, more than 14 million people, including 5 million children, have been displaced from their homes. The UN estimates that 17.6 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian aid, as millions remain uprooted from their homes and trapped in war zones, with limited access to basic goods and services including food, water, and medical support.

A day after the invasion began, Choose Love launched its [Ukraine Emergency Appeal](#). We were overcome by the response and since then have focused our efforts on developing a strong network of local responders delivering humanitarian relief and essential services to people affected by the war across Ukraine and in the main refugee-receiving countries. Both in and outside of Ukraine our partners are delivering essential humanitarian assistance, covering gaps in a range of sectors including evacuations, emergency medical care, cash assistance, support for children with disabilities, food packs, non-food items, LGBTQ+ rights and support, housing, legal assistance and advocacy. They are reaching some of the most vulnerable and marginalised communities including People of Colour fleeing Ukraine, people with disabilities who have been internally displaced, the LGBTQ+ community, low income households, and others who have been rendered more vulnerable either through discrimination or the intersection of multiple disadvantages. Inside Ukraine we have supported 27 local organisations, many of whom are ensuring vital, life-saving aid is reaching people trapped in some of the most inaccessible parts of the country. With the help of our amazing supporters, we have raised over $14.9 million in support of 98 humanitarian organisations working across 12 countries. To date, these efforts have assisted more than 2.3 million people in need.

Photo credits: Byron Smith, Ukraine
Meet Artem & Alina.

After a decade of building their dream home in Bucha, just north of Kyiv in central Ukraine, war arrived on Artem and Alina’s doorstep in February 2022. Artem, 7, and his sister Alina, 12, survived the early days of the invasion by hiding in a neighbour’s basement.

A Russian rocket took everything they had - the home their father Oleksiy had been building for his children, all his life, everything they owned, and their family dog of 15 years. But in the rubble, Alina found that something had survived - a pup named Alpha, now their best friend and good luck charm.

Choose Love has been working with the incredible Ukrainian organisation Save Ukraine to provide funds for the Fort Home Project, providing fast modular housing to families in need before the winter ahead. After its liberation, Artem, Alina and Oleksiy returned to Bucha – determined despite everything to rebuild their home. Theirs is one of a thousand such stories from a free Ukraine, where goodness and pain in equal measure have become a part of daily life, where the spirit of the Ukrainian people will shine resiliently.
Since the start of the Russian invasion, Choose Love has focused its efforts on mobilising an international donor base and network of community groups who were among the first to respond in Ukraine and the surrounding countries. Our initial areas of focus were central and eastern Ukraine, and Poland, which saw the highest numbers of people arrive in the early stages of the invasion. Our work has since expanded to assist people affected by the war in Czechia, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, the UK, USA, and many other countries.

From February to May, we targeted our grants on emergency support: primarily channelling funds to local, grassroots groups who were struggling to access international funding, but who were uniquely placed to respond effectively. Choose Love was quick to fill these gaps, and we swiftly developed relationships and disbursed funds that reached people in meaningful ways before many other international actors. In parallel, we used our channels and social media presence to platform the situation and the critical work of our partners.

In the second phase of our response, we continued to solidify partnerships while reassessing where and how our funding could be best placed. We spent time with our partners and used their knowledge to inform our strategy and next steps. Since June, we have been focusing our grant-making on reaching underserved areas and marginalised groups across different geographic regions, building on lessons learned to ensure we are most effectively delivering on our mission to close and prevent gaps in protections and services.
In parallel to our frontline grant-making, we allocated more than $1,000,000 in 2022 towards our partners’ longer-term organisational growth and development – to help enhance and maintain their responses, diversify their income streams, and generate support for their work. One arm of this is a new initiative launched in partnership with Nonprofit Builder and Czech Fundraising Center, through which we are providing more than 40 partners responding to the Ukraine crisis with tailored, on-demand support over a 15-month period. This is being delivered by a network of experienced local consultants, who provide training and guidance across a range of areas, including: leadership and governance; strategic communications; campaigning; fundraising, monitoring, evaluation and learning; security, responsible succession planning; and safeguarding.

This is one of the first times that local organisations will receive organisational development support in the early stages of a refugee response – and it is something we believe is critical to ensuring displaced and war-affected populations remain effectively supported and protected.

Learning from conflict zones elsewhere in the world, we understand that as the war in Ukraine turns into a protracted crisis the risk of burnout from civil society responders is high. This, compounded by donor fatigue and diminishing support to their work, renders individuals and charities vulnerable to collapse. We hope this investment in locally-led and thoughtful capacity development will build sustainable and resilient organisations, the impact of which will be felt in years to come.

“Choose Love have been stalwart in their support since February, showing patience and understanding for the complexities and sensitivities of the project, and have facilitated one of our most significant operational partnerships on the program in the form of medical donations from GIVMED. We have been incredibly grateful for their contributions to our mission, but also more holistically for their advice, signposting, encouragement and kindness. Their team have been clear and helpful and have continuously looked for mechanisms and programs that would benefit MOAS, not only in relation to MOAS Mission Ukraine, but also in terms of HQ capacity building and general growth.”
Ukraine - An equitable response

Through our support to partners working at the Polish-Belarusian border since 2021, we have witnessed the extreme violence and racism that many people on the move in the region experience. As such, we have paid close attention in our response to Ukraine to assisting Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities, as well as other minority and marginalised groups that have fallen through the gaps of mainstream humanitarian responses. While we do not wish to contribute to divisive narratives - hoping that all people who are displaced are met with compassion and equality - the disparity in treatment of refugees, along racialised lines, since the invasion of Ukraine has been stark.

BIPOC, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, MEMBERS OF ROMA, LGBTQ+ AND OTHER MINORITY COMMUNITIES, ARE AT HIGHER RISK OF EXCLUSION AND VIOLENCE IN TIMES OF CRISIS. THIS IS DUE TO THE SYSTEMATIC DISCRIMINATION EMBEDDED IN THE INSTITUTIONS MEANT TO SUPPORT THEM.

One organisation we’ve been uniquely proud to support in this vein is Foundation for Migrants GOOD START (formerly Foundation for Somalia). Based in Warsaw, Poland, GOOD START was set up in 2007 to respond to huge disparities in services and legal provisions available to BIPOC and other marginalised communities across Poland. Today, they have a team with extensive experience of providing new arrivals and long-term residents from these communities with Polish language support, access-to-employment, psychosocial care, and legal aid, enabling often extremely vulnerable individuals to access their rights and integrate well into Polish society.

In response to the invasion, GOOD START saw an immediate surge in demand for its services, as hundreds of BIPOC refugees faced active discrimination trying to leave Ukraine across the Ukrainian-Polish border, and were later excluded from accessing the support of many government and humanitarian actors.

In turn, GOOD START has played a vital role in addressing the immediate needs of BIPOC refugees that have arrived from Ukraine in the past year, with food, medicine, transport, legal aid, and assistance in finding long-term accommodation.

In 2022, Choose Love is proud to have committed more than £1.3 million ($1.6 million) to organisations supporting marginalised groups in Ukraine and the surrounding countries - including BIPOC people, people with disabilities and chronic illnesses, Roma communities, families with children on the verge of survival, and LGBTQ+ communities.
“IT IS NOT OUR DIFFERENCES THAT DIVIDE US. IT IS OUR INABILITY TO RECOGNIZE, ACCEPT, AND CELEBRATE THOSE DIFFERENCES.”
- AUDRE LORDE

LGBTQ+ support

In times of crisis, LGBTQ+ people face some of the gravest risks. According to our partner Outright Action International, puts it, at best, LGBTQ+ folks are left behind by mainstream humanitarian efforts due to a lack of cultural competency and understanding of their needs; at worst, they are actively discriminated against and excluded because of who they are, their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. LGBTQ+ people are often cut off from traditional aid because the organisations and people meant to support them do not understand their unique needs, vulnerabilities and wishes; because they deem them less worthy of help; or because they and their families do not meet the narrow definitions of a ‘household’. For LGBTQ+ folks who have had to flee their homes because of persecution, being LGBTQ+ then adds an extra layer of danger, and poses unique challenges in seeking asylum and attaining safety. It is understandable then why so many LGBTQ+ refugees learn to fear formal systems and institutions in countries they arrive in.

With this in mind, Choose Love has made a concerted effort to focus our support on local, LGBTQ+ led organisations meeting the needs of these communities. This includes people facing multiple layers of discrimination, like BIPOC LGBTQ+ folks. From funding network-based relocation for LGBTQ+ people as part of our Ukraine emergency response, to LGBTQ+ safe spaces and shelters on the US-Mexico border, and tailored legal support in the UK, Choose Love now funds organisations that specialise in supporting LGBTQ+ people in all the major regions where we work.
This year, we have been proud to support the incredible Moldovan organisation, Genderdoc–M, providing essential safe spaces and shelters for LGBTQ+ refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.

M and D, a lesbian couple who fled the war, approached Genderdoc for support after arriving in Moldova. The women stayed in Genderdoc’s shelter for two months, receiving everything they needed including food, non-food and hygiene support and, critically, specialised psychological assistance.

They now live independently in an apartment they are renting themselves, receiving ongoing support from Genderdoc’s team.

“We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the GenderDoc Organization for the manifestation of openness and assistance, which we so needed and need to this day. My girlfriend and I were forced to flee and we managed to get to Chisinau. It was very hard... I accidentally stumbled upon your organization’s website. We did not fully believe that you really provide such comprehensive assistance, but when we came to you, all doubts disappeared. This is the first time we have felt safe... A very kind, responsive team received us very warmly. In fact, I can’t convey the joy that I experienced, and then my girlfriend after arriving in, so to speak, “an environment that ACCEPTS you as you are”! They gave us shelter, food for every week, took care of our dog and our health. We are sincerely grateful for all the services and the help that we are provided to this day. It is very valuable, especially in such a difficult time.”
Intersectionality has always been a driving force in the work of Choose Love. The needs we see and seek to respond to cannot be disentangled from gender inequalities, which often compound the challenges faced by women and girls uprooted from their homes. Since we began in 2015, Choose Love has funded over £11 million ($12.5 million) on projects supporting women and girls and unaccompanied children, recognising the importance and need for specialised services tailored to these groups.

It is in this setting that one of our amazing partners has created something special. At the start of 2022, we began collaborating with Makani—a female-led organisation delivering unique poverty-reduction and economic empowerment programmes for refugee women in Lebanon.

Their 'Oshana' programme has to date taken over 50 Syrian women, many of whom live in extreme poverty, and provided them with training to form a business collective, which now creates stunning handmade home and fashion items out of block printing, embroidery, crochet, and other techniques. Alongside generating money for them and their families, these artisans nurture their creativity in Makani’s safe space outside of the camps, and use it to heal from the traumas they have been through and to share their stories and experiences. Makani’s work is so important, as it not only helps women to generate a stable income, but it empowers them personally and disrupts the often harmful and oppressive gender practices that affect them in society.

“I have been in Lebanon since 2017. I live in Shatila camp. I love working with Oshana as my life completely transformed. I can contribute to the rent and food and I can buy my children all they need. Since I started working with Oshana I started to feel like I am part of a family, seriously Oshana is my family. I feel so happy when we meet at the centre. I didn’t know anyone in Lebanon but now I have real friends. My husband respects me and treats me better now than I am independent. He now helps me with the housework as before he didn’t help at all. I feel so happy with my work. I love making tops and blankets and seeing the beautiful work I am producing.”
Working with children

Children are dramatically over-represented among the world’s displaced: people under 18 make up less than a third of the world population but more than 40 per cent of its refugees and IDPs. With the ongoing war in Ukraine alone, more than 5 million children have had to leave their homes. The impact of such traumas are felt for generations: on average, a person’s displacement lasts for 20 years, meaning a child’s displacement often stretches across their entire early development, into adolescence and adulthood. This is why Choose Love makes a conscious effort in our grant-making to fund organisations that specialise in supporting young people and especially unaccompanied children and orphans.

“The Flying Seagulls sessions were amazingly helpful for the children. Most importantly, they allowed the children the chance to just be children for a while. To play, laugh, sing, draw, dance, without having any other cares in the world.”

Our one-of-a-kind partners, The Flying Seagulls, believe that happiness, play and self-confidence are crucial elements of a nurturing childhood. In 2022, we were humbled to support The Seagulls in delivering two exceptional programmes of creative play, entertainment, music, arts and crafts, and circus skills workshops - which brought happiness and relief to over 3,000 young refugees. In the UK, The Seagulls ran the remarkable ‘Emergency Laughter Relief Project’, touring 42 hotels used as ‘temporary’ accommodation centres, which house thousands of refugees, many of whom are Afghans who have been in limbo for over a year. In tandem, The Seagulls responded to the invasion of Ukraine by launching the ‘Playtime Poland’ project across ten Polish orphanages and institutional care centres. In partnership with Happy Kids, they extended their joyous model to bring smiles to over 2,260 Ukrainian children who had to flee their homes without even a parent to provide them with comfort. What The Flying Seagulls do, in providing silliness and respite from everyday life, is to transform the most challenging environments a young person can face into places where they feel safe and joyful - recapturing what it means to be a child, despite the fear and chaos around them.
Children’s education

Close to half of all refugee children in the world – 48 per cent – do not have access to education. Those early years – so crucial for a young person’s development – are stripped of the joy, wonder, and security that every child and life deserves.

One partner we’ve been humbled to work with since January 2021 are PILAglobal. PILAglobal is an organisation that specialises in delivering high-quality education programmes for refugee children, delivered through an innovative and evidence-based model of ‘nests’. Nests, like the Canyon Nest that Choose Love supports on the US-Mexico border in Tijuana, are culturally responsive, safe and beautiful learning spaces that provide play-based early education for young children and their families.

The Tijuana Nest serves children from a nearby shelter, where hundreds of asylum-seekers from Central and South America and other parts of the world await resettlement to the US. Monday through to Friday, the Nest provides schooling for around 250 children between the ages of 3 and 10, alongside psychosocial support and educational classes for their guardians – a peaceful refuge from the overcrowded conditions that families must endure as they often wait months for their immigration interviews at the US border.

Raising children in the context of such a shelter, so far from their homes, friends, and familiarities, presents a myriad of dangers that can be overwhelming for adults and children alike, as they struggle to reconcile the traumas in their pasts with the uncertainties in their futures. With so few safe learning spaces for displaced children around the world, and next-to-no support for their parents and guardians forced to leave their homes, the work of organisations like PILAglobal and their unique nest approach provide a lifeline to so many people.

Photo credits: PILAglobal, Mexico
Food security

Throughout 2022, the EU and Greek governments continued to foster hostile and cruel environments for people seeking asylum and the organisations that seek to support them. At the start of the year, the Greek government fomented a widespread hunger crisis in refugee camps across the country, by halting food provision for people no longer in the asylum system. Overnight, this decision left over 6,000 people without access to food, more than 40% of whom were children. Additionally, as the war in Ukraine has contributed to rising prices for basic food items like cooking oil, hunger and food insecurity have become major issues across both the Greek mainland and islands, which are often the first point of arrival for many refugees in Europe.

In parallel, the Greek refugee housing scheme was closed in 2022, as many state-run camps were shut down - often through violent means - driving thousands of vulnerable people into unstable living conditions. Elsewhere, the Greek asylum procedure has flipped from unbearably long waiting times to rapid mass rejections of people's claims at the country's land and sea borders, with many people arriving not even having the chance to speak with a lawyer before their asylum interview. This has been done on the basis that Turkey can be deemed a 'safe third country' for refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Greek government has sought to further tighten its hold on people's movement by constructing remote 'Closed and Controlled Access Centres' across its islands. Few non-state actors are allowed access to these sites, which have been widely condemned by NGOs and the people housed in them. In the context of a rapidly shrinking space for civil society, alongside growing humanitarian needs, our partners have had to adapt in 2022 to continue meeting gaps in services and supporting people in need.

Throughout the year, Choose Love funded the work of 55 partners in Greece, including 20 organisations running critical food programmes. Alongside this, we have supported women and children's centres, language and integration programmes, holistic services for unaccompanied children, WASH programmes in camps, skill-building courses, legal aid, and human rights monitoring projects. The breadth of work we support has given us a unique insight into the needs of displaced people in Greece and the flexible resources required to meet these. The ecosystem of grassroots projects in-country has strong roots and we are proud to support such creative and resilient partners.

In 2022, with the help of our partners around the world:

- 370,000 people accessed critical food support
- 490,000 warm, nutritious meals were eaten
- And 285,000 weekly food packs were received
Medical aid

As 2021 marked a decade since the peaceful uprising in Syria descended into a brutal and drawn-out war, 2022 has brought increased suffering and hardships for millions of people across the country. With the deadly consequences of over a decade of fighting – particularly concentrated in Idlib and the surrounding areas, in the country’s north-west – millions of Syrians have been living among the ruins of this long and bloody conflict – suffering and dying in displacement camps, as the international community turns away and humanitarian support for the region grow scarce.

While the country was still reeling from the impacts of Covid-19, a new health crisis came to the fore in 2022. In September, the World Health Organization issued a report indicating that a major epidemic of cholera was rapidly spreading across Idlib and the neighbouring provinces. The number of confirmed and suspected cases continues to increase daily at the time of writing in early 2023. Of the suspected cholera cases, 1 out of 4 are children under the age of five - for whom malnutrition and diarrhoeal diseases can be immediately life-threatening.

Our long-standing partner, Hand in Hand for Aid and Development, has been acting as a first responder to this epidemic. Its team sprang immediately to action, delivering frontline health interventions and community engagement programmes, building on decades of medical and hygiene expertise. Their programmes include providing access to safe water, rehydration treatments, and improved sanitation facilities in camps; deployment of cholera treatment supplies in homes and hospitals, establishing two new isolated cholera treatment centres, and engaging communities to raise awareness around hygiene practices to prevent the spread of the bacteria. Their work has saved thousands of lives and we are incredibly proud to stand with them.

This year, Choose Love supported 22 partners across Syria and the Middle East, strengthening civil society organisations with much needed resources. Crucially, we remain as firm as ever in our commitment to use our platforms and influence to stand in solidarity with Syrian and other Middle Eastern activists and organisations.
On 22nd June, a major earthquake measuring 5.9 on the Richter scale hit Paktika province in eastern Afghanistan. As the tremors echoed as far as India, more than 1,100 people lost their lives, 6,000 were injured and over 70% of houses in the region collapsed into rubble. Following this, Paktika was hit with heavy rain and flooding which worsened the devastation and hampered any search and rescue efforts.

Since August 2021, Choose Love has partnered with 14 amazing organisations who have been delivering evacuation and resettlement programmes and addressing the dire food and health crisis in Afghanistan. Among these remarkable partners was the Association of Afghan Healthcare Professionals UK (AAHP-UK) who was among the first on the ground to provide relief in the aftermath of the June earthquake. This was both via direct efforts but also in close partnership with other organisations based in Afghanistan. AAHP-UK set up mobile medical camps which treated over 900 patients, including 280 children injured by the quake. They also delivered emergency food packages to one hundred families in need.

As people in Afghanistan continue to face the horrors of hunger, poverty, and lack of education, it is crucial that the humanitarian community and wider world does not forget them.
Legal support and interpretation

Every voice deserves to be heard, no matter what language it speaks. One of our wonderful partners, Comunidades indígenas en liderazgo (CIELO), puts this belief into action on a daily basis.

CIELO is an organisation led by indigenous women that advocates for indigenous communities’ rights across the Americas. In 2022, CIELO was put in touch with a man imprisoned for seven years - despite the judge admitting he did not know whether we had committed a crime. This was all because the court had been unable to get the man – an indigenous speaker – an interpreter, someone who could translate the language that he speaks.

CIELO’s interpretation programme – the Center for Indigenous Language and Power (CILP) – exists to prevent these kinds of injustices from occurring. CILP was set up in response to the vast and growing number of indigenous people who are arriving to the USA, Mexico and Guatemala, fleeing violence, land-grabs and destruction of their ancestral homelands.

Today, with its vast network of multilingual interpreters based across these countries, CIELO translates for between 200-300 people a month, alongside training new indigenous translators to do this work. Interpretation services like this are so important right now, with thousands of children and vulnerable individuals separated from their families, awaiting decisions on their asylum cases, or held in detention. CIELO’s interpreters serve as a bridge, cultural mediator and advocate, and provide an essential touching point for people to access services like hospitals, courts, and counselling. This simple act of translation is a lifeline for so many indigenous people and speakers of lesser known languages who are seeking asylum, and whose voices would otherwise go unheard. Choose Love are proud to support this work, contributing to the core costs of CIELO’s interpretation programme in 2022.
Monitoring human rights abuses

The routes that people use to seek safety are continuously shifting and evolving. In 2022, we saw the corridor through the western Balkans, through Serbia and Bosnia into Hungary and Croatia, become one of the busiest and frequently used routes for people seeking safety in Europe. In tandem, 2022 also saw a distressing increase in the number of pushbacks both along this frontier, in Europe’s seas and across other land borders – with human rights violations committed by both border regimes and far-right vigilantes.

No Name Kitchen, a long-standing partner of Choose Love, has reported from its Bosnian teams in Velika Kladusa and Bihac that pushbacks are now a common occurrence across the region. While evidence suggests that physical violence during these incidents has fallen, people on the move are often insulted and humiliated verbally, locked into closed vans, and driven around for several hours before being left in the middle of the forest or mountains. There have been many reported cases of pushbacks across the border of families with children as well as unaccompanied minors, who are often exposed to theft, harassment and physical violence.

Choose Love stands in solidarity with all people on the move and denounces the use of violence as a means of control and border securitisation.

In 2022, Choose Love supported 20 incredibly brave organisations around the world running legal programmes and carrying out human rights and border violence monitoring work. The importance of the basic humanity and dignity that our partners like No Name Kitchen provide – by offering food, first aid and other assistance, while bearing witness to these abuses and people’s suffering – cannot be overstated.
Refugee leadership and participation is not an add-on for Choose Love. Making active choices about diversity, equity and inclusion is at the heart of all aspects of our work. As refugees and asylum seekers experience tremendous discrimination globally, it is a central aim of our mission to ensure that people have agency over their lives and that we work in partnership to overcome prejudices, racism and bigotry, while recognising the diversity of refugees’ experiences.

This is why we seek to amplify BIPOC and refugee voices in all that we do. Centering this wisdom, and that of people with lived experience of displacement, ensures that humanitarian funding recognises, respects and builds on grassroots connections and expertise by experience. We seek to expand our horizons beyond money as the central driver of change, and place value on other kinds of infinite non-financial resources like knowledge, trust and relationships. Equity at all levels of our organisation allows us to build a future that is negotiated, participatory and - we hope - owned by our partners and supporters, as much as by Choose Love.

One partner we want to highlight is the incredible African Rainbow Family, founded and led by Aderonke Apata. Aderonke qualified to become a barrister in 2022 and we are so proud to have witnessed part of the long road to this amazing achievement. For 13 years, Aderonke lived in limbo, and was almost forcibly removed from the UK on a flight back to Nigeria, due to horrific accusations that she was lying about her identity as a lesbian.

From late 2011 to early 2013, Aderonke was detained in Yarl’s Wood immigration detention centre. While there, she learnt the complexities of the Home Office’s legal jargon, and took it upon herself to explain the terminology and complex system to the women she was detained with. With very little help available to her, Aderonke represented herself - fighting against her own removal and successfully granting herself freedom from the charter flight to Nigeria. Thankfully, she then went on to secure her right to remain in the UK.

From there, Aderonke began her formal legal training in 2018, and in September this year, the LGBTQ+ activist and African Rainbow Family CEO was formally called to the bar. We are so grateful for Aderonke for all that she does and proud to support African Rainbow Family’s work across the UK.
Choose Earth

Indigenous defenders on the frontline of the climate crisis

Forced migration in the 21st century, across all contexts, cannot be separated from our planet’s rapidly changing climate. People displaced as a result of environmental disasters do not have the privilege of waiting for global frameworks and funding protocols that are painfully debated over at international climate conferences. Reparations for climate injustice arrive too late or never at all.

Choose Love’s movement - people helping people - is essential to saving lives in the midst of this inaction. As always, we believe that grassroots responses are the immediate solution to both the causes and consequences of climate-related displacement – and until global governments are ready to take bold and decisive action, we as individuals must meet the human needs in front of us.

This is why on Earth Day 2021, we launched Choose Earth. In partnership with nine Indigenous leaders from across Brazil, Earthrise Studio and The Rodrick Foundation, Choose Earth’s mission is to network resources and platforms to a network of frontline Indigenous defenders - the real experts on environmental conservation and climate change - who are putting their lives at risk on a daily basis to protect the future of our planet.

Throughout 2022, the Voo da Vespa fund (the Indigenous-led fund that Choose Earth directly resources) has provided 54 Indigenous leaders with direct cash assistance that has been used on a diverse collection of climate-related solutions and initiatives. Examples of how frontline defenders have used these funds include: training leaders and chiefs in strategic communications; procuring cameras and digital equipment to create advocacy campaigns; constructing and reconstructing houses for Indigenous people displaced from their land; supporting local income-generating programmes; and purchasing food, medicine and other supplies for the most vulnerable members of their communities.

In 2022, and for as long as we need to, we will continue to support Indigenous communities, their voices, and their rights to protect their territories, which sit at the heart of global climate solutions and the growing climate refugee crisis.
Advocacy and campaigns

Stories matter. They shape how we think, feel and understand our world. They influence how we treat each other and how we shape society. They can ignite and sustain change or lock us in the status quo. But often the wrong stories dominate and distract, dehumanising others and sidelining injustice and inequality. Choose Love are proud to be creative storytellers. We use the established web of our network to not only fund changemakers but to also influence those in positions of power – by launching and supporting campaigns that challenge discriminatory narratives and policies.

This year we are proud to have supported the brilliant Asylum Aid for their work providing expert legal guidance and representation for asylum seekers. We have also funded Asylum Aid’s staff costs related to their judicial challenge against the UK Home Office’s Rwanda Policy, after the European Court of Human Rights stepped in at the last minute to ground the first deportation flight to Rwanda. We were appalled to see the courts rule that the Home Office Rwanda policy was deemed legal, but remain hopeful as Asylum Aid has been granted permission from the High Court to appeal this decision.

For every legal case we challenge, every activist we platform, and every advocacy campaign we deliver – we stand in solidarity with the hundred million displaced people who are striving for their rights to be respected and upheld. Choose Love reminds people of the kind of society we could be. We create space to celebrate the amazing work being done by so many unique individuals and organisations around the world. And we excite people with our vision of the future. Together, we are building a movement that people want to join.
The Choose Love Store

In 2017, we created a world first – a store like no other, where you can buy real items and life-saving interventions for refugees around the globe. Five years on, the Choose Love store has gone from strength to strength and has raised more than £11 million ($13 million) for refugees and displaced people worldwide.

This year’s stores were developed with new and emerging needs across the world in mind. We now work in more regions than ever before and wanted to represent both our new and existing communities and their needs in the shop. The public has sent bundles of love and warmth, legal aid, LGBTQ+ support, heating fuel and so much more directly to where it is needed most.

**3,280**

# of people that shopped in our stores in London and New York

**49,174**

# of vital items and services that were purchased

**£1,260,630**

$1,560,155

amount raised over the 2022 festive period

A HUGE thank you to Shaftesbury, XAG Studios and Seaport who donated beautiful store space to us in London and New York - to our celebrity ambassadors for coming down to the shop and for spreading our message to millions on social media - to every volunteer who helped out and worked on the store floor - and to every musician, artist and creator who brought joy and colour to our store this year - and mostly, thank you to all of our incredible friends and supporters for helping to keep thousands of people warm and well this winter.

Every year we are blown away by the beautiful ways our community finds to show solidarity and love. Your support means the world to us.
What the Choose Love store means to our partners

“Oh that’s amazing news! Thank you all so much!... We have seen increasing numbers of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants at both our clinics in Mexico and will be staffing through Christmas and New Years weeks.” – Global Response Medicine, Mexico

“Thank YOU SO much for this fantastic news and taking away our worries for next few months during these uncertain times. This grant would be a massive support for us and would enable us to help the most vulnerable and marginalised refugees/asylum seekers in the area of Gateshead. You have no idea how pleased and grateful we are to receive this news. THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH.” – Peace of Mind, UK

“The funds for nappies and baby essentials just arrived!...This is such great timing. Without it, we would have run out of supplies by early January. We were starting to get worried.” – Just Action, Greece

“We wanted to thank you for additional funds for hot food! It’s such a lifesaver! It has been a couple of days without electricity, heating and water.” – 100% Life Cherkasy, Ukraine

“Thank you ever so much for letting me know that Choose Love has been able to fundraise for African Rainbow Family to reactivate the voucher system for warm clothing and hot meals for our service users....We are very grateful for your support and love.” – African Rainbow Family, UK

“The shop was an uplifting experience in these torrid times.” – Young Roots, UK
Partnerships

Our wonderful partnerships team is building Choose Love’s visibility and incredible, supportive network. We form strong and meaningful connections with brands and celebrity ambassadors, as well as festivals and other exciting events, spreading our message to millions of people around the world.

Here’s a few highlights from 2022...

- Benedict Cumberbatch, Nicola Coughlan, Olivia Colman and Hassan Akkad starred in our winter fundraising video as dozens of celebrity ambassadors volunteered in the Choose Love store.
- We collaborated with the brilliant artist Majid Adin to make the delicious Choose Love KIND bars, available in stores across the UK.
- We launched exciting new partnerships with household consumer brands like TK Maxx, Anthropologie, Pangaia, ASKK, Toast and Tangle Teezer.
- The wonderful Sebastian Croft and Charlie Mackesy designed unique t-shirts to raise funds for our LGBTQ+ and Ukraine response partners.
- We partnered with Letters Live for two unforgettable nights at the Royal Albert Hall, featuring Little Amal, John Kerry, Ibeyi and many more!
- We launched exciting new partnerships with household consumer brands like TK Maxx, Anthropologie, Pangaia, ASKK, Toast and Tangle Teezer.
- The incredible Emmanuel Jal and the House Gospel Choir performed sets at our pop-up store, as part of a dazzling season of events.
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- The Swimmes, for Working Title Films and Netflix, was released in November 2022 to critical acclaim. The film tells the story of teenage Olympian refugee, Yusra Mardini, and her sister, the humanitarian Sara Mardini, and their incredible journey from Syria to Germany. It was an honour to be selected, along with UNHCR, as charity partner for the film. Choose Love works in all of the countries the young girls travel through on their journey and the opportunity to raise awareness of the situation for refugees in Europe has been huge. In December 2022, The Swimmers was the number one film on Netflix around the world.
- Tom Odell came with us to Romania to perform his hit song ‘Another Love’ in support of Ukraine.
Since July 2022, Choose Love has been in the news 74 times, with a combined estimated reach of 2.7 million people. This included:

**Social media**
- In 2022, we continued to reach hundreds of thousands of people online, as our social media, website presence, and mailing list grew.
- **540,000 Visits to our websites throughout 2022**
- **19 million Instagram profile reach in 2022**
- **460.0K Choose Love online following as of December 2022**
- **150.7K Instagram followers (+12% vs. 2021)**
- **114.0K Facebook followers**
- **55.8K Twitter followers**
- **51k new Instagram followers (+12% vs. 2021)**
- **460,000 Visits to our websites throughout 2022**
- **TikTok likes since launching in November 2022**
- **inc. 23k new subscribers in the US (+412% vs. 2021)**

**Highlights from our blog**
- “Woman, Life, Freedom”: Solidarity with the People of Iran
- The Choose Love Shop is BACK!
- Benedict Cumberbatch & Olivia Colman at Choose Love!

**Print and broadcast coverage**
- Since July 2022, Choose Love has been in the news 74 times, with a combined estimated reach of 2.7 million people. This included:
- Dawn O’Porter, one of our co-founders, writes powerfully for The Independent about her wish for enhanced support for displaced children around the world.
- An interview with our CEO, Josie Naughton, on the BBC, in response to the Rwanda Plan December court decision in December. Josie calls the ruling a ‘dark moment for human rights in the UK.’

**Comments on Channel 4 from our Communications Director, Hassan Akkad, on the Nationality & Borders Bill and treatment of asylum seekers at Manston Immigration Centre.**

**inc. 23k new subscribers in the US (+412% vs. 2021)**

*’Reach’ refers to the number of unique accounts that might have seen our Instagram profile at least once in 2022. This metric is estimated.*
Our approach

In light of these obstacles, our approach to impact measurement at Choose Love is to be:

• Led by our partners – we do our best to support our partners to collect information on their work that is most helpful for them. We aim to have open, honest conversations with our partners about the impacts of their work, how Choose Love’s contributions fit into these, and to follow their lead when we present this to our donors and the public.

• Human-to-human – while striving to be data-driven, we endeavour to remain first and foremost, human-to-human. This means, primarily, that we’ll uphold our core values in our interactions with others – our partners, the people they support, and the public. It also means that we keep central to our work the belief that ‘facts and figures’ are no substitute for human stories – which is why much of our impact is story-telling based and seeks to empower displaced people by amplifying their voices.

• Flexible, pragmatic and focused – we allow our grant reporting to adapt to partners’ capacities – never imposing blanket requirements for impact data to come in this way or that - and we ensure that all data collection and analysis has a clear purpose and is immediately relevant to improve our work and the support we provide to displaced people.

• Open to change – we know that measuring impact is difficult and rarely perfect, and so we need to constantly evolve over time, as our contexts and priorities change.

In 2022, we continued to work hard at embedding these principles in all that we do. We focused on re-evaluating and simplifying our grant reporting requirements for partners, and refreshing how we approach needs assessments. We hope that in doing so, and in following these principles, we will be well placed to accurately capture, understand and enhance the impacts of Choose Love’s work.
Financial summary

Global income and expenditure in 2022

Total income: £28,460,628
($35,863,907) +150% vs. 2021

Total expenditure: £17,040,066
($20,864,239) +35% vs. 2021

Income by source

- Trusts & Foundations: £20,020,459 (70%)
- Crowdfunding: £4,108,210 (14%)
- Corporates: £1,199,783 (4%)
- Choose Love Shop: £1,134,910 (4%)
- Events: £674,765 (2%)
- Gift Aid: £469,629 (2%)
- Individual Donors: £430,004 (2%)
- Merchandise: £302,955 (1%)
- Interest Income: £20,597 (0.1%)
- Total: £28,460,628

Expenditure by type

- Programmes: £14,149,839 (83%)
- Core costs: £1,998,599 (12%)
- Fundraising: £567,178 (3%)
- Total: £17,040,066

Income by region

- Ukraine: £5,135,500 (36%)
- Greece: £2,544,134 (18%)
- Poland: £1,479,461 (10%)
- UK: £1,146,820 (8%)
- Lebanon: £950,460 (7%)
- Moldova: £456,390 (3%)
- USA: £382,018 (3%)
- US-Mexican border: £379,407 (3%)
- Other*: £1,675,649 (12%)
- Total: £14,149,839

*Other regions include: Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bosnia, Brazil, Central Med, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Hungary, Italy, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Pakistan, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Syria, and Turkey.

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Expenditure by region

- Ukraine: 34%
- Poland: 10%
- UK: 8%
- Lebanon: 7%
- Moldova: 5%
- Greece: 18%
- USA: 3%
- US-Mexican border: 3%
- Other*: 12%
- Total: 33%

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Entity

- Income
  - UK: £16,471,996 ($20,702,966)
  - US: £11,988,632 ($15,160,941)
  - Total: £28,460,628 ($35,863,907)

- Expenditure
  - UK: £11,329,676 ($15,901,832)
  - US: £5,710,390 ($7,962,407)
  - Total: £17,040,066 ($20,864,239)

Expenditure by region

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Our partnerships

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We are incredibly thankful to everyone who is supporting our journey. A group of friends with an idea to fundraise £1,000 to support refugees at the UK border have, seven years later, raised over $100,000,000 and created a global movement of people providing life-saving and essential support to displaced people. Choose Love runs fast to keep up with fast-moving situations. We are privileged to be able to use the momentum of our organisation to meet others with radical love and empathy that is both practically and financially resourced. We are needed now more than ever.