

---

# Annual Report 2022

Indigo Volunteers

---



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Overview</b>	<b>2</b>
Indigo's Purpose, Vision, Mission & Values	2
<b>Indigo Recruitment Programme</b>	<b>3</b>
Impact data 2022	3
Creating a ripple effect	4
Achievements	4
Challenges	7
Testimonials	8
<b>Wellbeing support</b>	<b>10</b>
Humanitarian Wellbeing Pilot	10
Indigo Support Network	11
<b>Organisational Development</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Stakeholder Engagement</b>	<b>17</b>
Marketing	17
Other Indigo Partnerships & Collaborations	18
With Thanks To	20

# 1 Overview

## Indigo's Purpose, Vision, Mission & Values

Indigo Volunteers is built to unleash everyone's potential to help. We envision a world where people are inspired and equipped to help each other and have set our mission to ensure that grassroots humanitarians have the resources and connections to provide vital assistance to refugees and displaced people. In working towards this goal, we are guided by our organisational values and the principles of Responsible Volunteering.

### ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

#### *Humility*

We acknowledge that we do not have all the answers; we welcome feedback and strive to continuously learn.

#### *Accountability*

We follow through on our commitments; we are honest and transparent.

#### *Human-centred*

We put relationships, lasting collaborations and human wellbeing at the centre of everything we do.

### RESPONSIBLE VOLUNTEERING

For Indigo Volunteers, Responsible Volunteering is centred around the needs, preferences and aspirations of the recipient communities. It focuses on sustainable solutions rooted in collaboration between volunteers, organisations and those whom they support. Responsible volunteering

nurtures the safety and wellbeing of all parties and acknowledges everyone's inherent human worth.

## 2 Indigo Recruitment Programme

The Indigo Recruitment Programme sits at the core of our operations. It involves the matching of suitable volunteers to the needs and requests of grassroots organisations supporting refugees and displaced people along the European migratory route.

### Impact data 2022

#### 326 VOLUNTEER PLACEMENTS

<i>Number of volunteer applications</i>	1,325
<i>Number of days worked by volunteers as a result of Indigo matching</i>	19,256
<i>Financial value of donated hours in £<sup>1</sup></i>	2,397,372

#### 49 CHARITY PARTNERS

<i>Total number of charity partners</i>	49
---	----

<sup>1</sup> Calculated assuming a single working day contains 7.5 hours of work at a rate of £16.6 per hour (average UK salary). Both numbers are stipulative in that working hours may vary between organisations and that hourly rates vary depending on the skill level necessary for the placement.

<i>Total numbers of partners and non-partners supported</i> <sup>2</sup>	106
<i>Number of new partners/projects onboarded</i> <sup>3</sup>	9

## Creating a ripple effect

As an umbrella organisation our impact goes beyond the work done by volunteers, the organisational development and training sessions we facilitate, and the wellbeing support we help provide for our humanitarian partners. Volunteering lights a fire in people that inspires them to stay active and create positive change when they return to their home countries. As a result of their placement with Indigo, volunteers have, for example, 1) inspired friends and family to get involved; 2) returned to volunteer with the same organisation directly; 3) raised funds for the organisation they volunteered with; 4) spread awareness about the refugee situation; 5) volunteered or became politically active in their home countries; 6) pursued a humanitarian career or even started their own NGOs. Indigo is proud to serve as a stepping stone for volunteers to become proactive humanitarians and caring activists aspiring for a kinder world.

## Achievements

### Partner engagement

This year we put our Partner Communications plan into full motion. We had recurring virtual check-ins with each one of our 49 partners throughout the year, and visited 20 charity partners in Greece and France. This virtual and in person communication proved vital in collecting feedback on the services we deliver, how to better integrate them into our partners' operations, and on the kinds of additional programmes we should consider in the years ahead. We also continued conducting due diligence

<sup>2</sup> This number includes our 49 registered charity partners, and another 57 charity organisations that benefitted from our additional services (excluding volunteer-matching).

<sup>3</sup> Projects refers to new missions within existing partners.

reviews with each partner and began collecting information and content from the ground for promotional purposes. Through improving communication, our goal of increasing the effectiveness and sustainability of our partnership management efforts was achieved.

## Geographical expansion

Following the Russian army's invasion of Ukraine, Indigo quickly became a major point of contact for individuals looking for a way to get involved and show their support. In response, we formed a fast-tracked onboarding procedure for grassroots charities operating in countries neighbouring Ukraine and have now expanded our reach offering support to organisations in Moldova, Poland and Slovakia.

While the threat of COVID-19 was no longer a major obstacle in 2022, it became obvious that a shift in financial resourcing took place for our volunteers. In order to find a solution for more accessible volunteering, we partnered with 2 new charities which work remotely and can therefore offer online placements: Language Linkers and The Educational Equality Institute.

## Volunteer engagement

To increase the engagement of our volunteers and create a more personalised experience, we started offering opportunities for virtual calls with the Indigo coordination team. Volunteers can now book us in for a one-on-one call at any time during their application or placement period. They can also attend our monthly Volunteer Welcome meetings where we thoroughly discuss the volunteer journey and Indigo's support resources, as well as answer participants' questions.

## System & Process Analysis

Following up from the roadmap of our 2021 in-depth systems review, 2022 saw many of the suggested changes and updates implemented, allowing us to provide a smoother experience to those engaged in our services while also significantly decreasing the administrative burden we face.

## Volunteer Journey

At the core of these changes is a more granular data model allowing us to increase the precision of the data we capture on both volunteers and partners. Prospective volunteers are now able to provide a flexible, yet detailed account of their skills and qualifications during sign-up that remains machine-readable once on our CRM system. This allows for highly-integrated and largely automated data processing and paves the way for semi-automated matching of volunteers and partner requests in the future.

Additionally, we have undertaken a thorough rework of the application process as a whole which can now provide volunteers with detailed information on the location they plan to volunteer in (e.g. minimum stay requirement), can manage updates to previous applications, and can automatically verify an applicant's email address without the need for our coordinators to get involved.

## Partner Management

A significant development has been the introduction of a dedicated Partner Hub, an online space for each one of our partners to manage their volunteer requests and update us on the success of connections we have facilitated with them. Previously, this was a process heavily reliant on our coordinators reviewing emails and entering relevant information into our CRM system, the latter is now configured to do the majority of the heavy-lifting for us. With the click of a button, partners can now decide to accept or decline a connection we propose thereby automatically updating our records and triggering subsequent actions.

## M&E

With the above changes, we have seen significant improvements to our monitoring and evaluation efforts too. Where in the past, some of the metrics we wanted to track needed to be estimated due to a lack of accurate and timely data, we are now collecting much more of the necessary data on an ongoing and low-labour basis. This has had large effects on our day-to-day decision making with our strategy having become more data-driven overall.

## Complaints procedure

We restructured the complaints procedure for our stakeholders, creating diverse pathways suiting the nature of different complaints (see our [website](#)). We also created an extensive, internal procedure for managing complaints impartially and responsibly.

## Challenges

### General shift in support climate

The decreased attention paid to the displaced has also severely affected our recruitment efforts. While the need for volunteers continues to be high throughout our network, the sourcing of applicants to meet said need has posed major challenges during the reporting period. While many of the reasons for this dynamic remain speculative (e.g. public unawareness, economic concerns, health concerns in light of the pandemic), the immense public response to the invasion of Ukraine as well as the subsequent support for people fleeing Ukraine suggests something else: A degree of compassion fatigue towards those forced to flee from North African and Middle Eastern countries.

### The invasion of Ukraine

Once Russian imperialist interests had translated into the invasion of Ukraine, grassroots groups saw an immense swell in public interest for those affected. Indigo quickly became a major point of contact for individuals looking for a way to get involved and show their support. However, as the various hotspots along Ukraine's border were outside of the well-known territory of our partners, we were forced to evaluate the situation remotely until a team could be sent. In these early days of the war, a chaotic emergence of various initiatives and communication channels between actors wanting to get involved as soon as possible raised questions about the role Indigo could play in such situations. In the months



following the invasion, this led us to establish a presence in Poland with a dedicated team of local volunteers.

### Paused partner onboarding

Capacity is often a challenge for charities of our size. Funding changes that took place at the beginning of the year took a toll on the capacity of our operations team, and one of the areas that was affected was our partner expansion plan. We identified that at our current capacity could not support more than 50 organisations and therefore paused the onboarding process for new charities. The need for volunteers from many charities has remained high and the recruitment of volunteers in a post-pandemic era has increasingly become difficult. As a result, all our resources have been placed on meeting the volunteer needs of our current charity partners. We hope to expand our network further in the coming years. We had over 30 charities join our waiting list in 2022, and to not leave them unsupported we created a "[Charities](#)" page on our website providing access to resources and training opportunities to any interested organisation, whether they are an established partner or not.

## Testimonials

"About a third of our volunteers come via Indigo so they are critical to our operation. Not only do they save us time and money advertising and appealing for new volunteers but the quality of the people they send our way is frequently very high. They respond quickly to our requests for extra help, they are good at supporting us with professional development and they are incredibly easy to deal with. You can tell that they understand what we need and have tailored their service to that. They're impressive and we're very grateful."

*Paul Hutchings, CEO at Refugee Support Europe in Cyprus and Greece*

"For a long time I had been searching the internet for organisations that seemed aware of the problem of so-called "voluntourism" and work against that. With many platforms and

organisations it can seem that they focus more on the volunteer's to have an experience - some sort of vacation. With Indigo I saw a focus on what benefits the people in need the most. I greatly appreciate that Indigo uses its network to put aspiring volunteers in contact only with organisations who need someone with the prospects specific set of competencies. It's positive for everyone involved - the organisation, the beneficiaries and the volunteers. From the point where I sent my application to Indigo it took less than a week before I was put in contact with two organisations, with whom I could then choose for myself which I felt the most comfortable going to work with. Also I can only give praise to the team of Indigo. They provided me with just enough info before I started my placement, and they checked up on my well being and my relationship with the organisation I worked with several times during the placement."

*Ainsley Galipeau, Volunteer at Movement on the Ground in Lesvos, Greece*

## 3 Wellbeing support

### Humanitarian Wellbeing Pilot

This year we spent time reviewing the results of the first “Humanitarian Wellbeing Pilot” project delivered - in collaboration with The Human Hive and Amna - to 9 organisations in 2021. A final report of the pilot was created incorporating the feedback received from participants and an external evaluator.

Overall the pilot was a great success:

- 100% of volunteers reporting increased knowledge of wellbeing,
- 86% of project participants indicate they are better able to care for their own personal well-being in field
- 100% of Wellbeing Coordinators indicated that the training made them feel more confident in providing wellbeing support to their teams

Reflections from a participant (trigger warning: suicide)

“In February 2022, we were faced with a difficult and extremely sad situation, as a young boy in the camp we provide support to committed suicide. This of course had a strong impact on the communities living in the camp, including our community volunteers, and the rest of the volunteer team. The training we received enabled the senior leadership team to respond quickly, setting up emergency meetings with the volunteers to inform them of the situation, before having a debrief at the end of the day and again at the end of the week. I also held individual check ins with each volunteer, particularly as a few of them were young and visibly shocked. Learning how to facilitate an open space to allow volunteers to express uncomfortable feelings/experiences and reflect on how we could move forwards with it as a team came from the training pilot. I felt comfortable knowing the types of questions to ask/avoid, knowing how to notice volunteer’s energy levels through the following week, knowing when to check on them etc. The volunteers fed back that they felt included in the discussions and supported in the team.”

Various recommendations for the pilot were identified, and with those in mind a proposal was created for the second “Humanitarian Wellbeing Pilot”. The proposal has been submitted to funders and foundations, and we hope to get the needed budget to get the pilot running in 2023.

## Indigo Support Network

### Programme Overview

All Indigo volunteers and partners can access mental health and coaching support through our free Wellbeing Support Network should they want to. Shared as a contact list of support professionals, volunteers receive this resource before they go on the field and can access it anonymously and confidentially throughout and after their volunteering placement. Through this we hope to stimulate conversations regarding self care within the sector as longer term support can help combat issues of stress and burn out, and hope to challenge the unhealthy culture that often permeates the sector. We aim to normalise the discussion around mental health and remind partners of the natural incentive to take it seriously: Only a healthy team can operate effectively.

To make this service more accessible, this year saw us transfer the relevant information onto a dedicated page of our website. All the services - coaching support, mental health support, and additional support resources designed for the refugee and migrant community - can be accessed at a centralised platform that is frequently shared with volunteers and partners. As a result, a lot more partners and volunteers have made use of this service. In addition, three new mental health and coaching professionals were onboarded into our network, contributing to the continued expansion of this service.

### Impact Data

**113 HOURS OF SUPPORT (140% increase since 2021)**

<i>Number of mental health support sessions</i>	77
<i>Number of coaching support sessions</i>	39
<i>Number of new people who made use of our support network</i>	51
<i>Total duration of support sessions provided in hours</i>	113
<i>Number of in-person wellbeing support visits</i>	1

## 4 Organisational Development

### Connect, Share, Collaborate

As an umbrella organisation, we share knowledge and resources amongst our network and actively encourage collaboration between projects. Having connections with a huge network of charities and other professionals, we believe it would be a lost opportunity not to take advantage of all the skills and knowledge at hand. After all, only by exchanging the lessons learnt along the way can we progress as a sector. To organise these efforts more formally, the “Organisational Development” programme was called to life.

In a nutshell, it involves using knowledge, training and resources to help organisations run better and aims to improve existing operations and engagement in ethical humanitarian work.

#### CONNECT, SHARE, COLLABORATE

<i>Number of times we shared individual resources and opportunities</i>	108
<i>Number of times we connected people outside our regular recruitment program</i>	7

This year, various needs for knowledge, skills and resources were identified through conversation and feedback from our charity partners. The following activities were initiated to meet those needs.

### Fundraising Support

At the beginning of the year various charities struggled with funding and were at risk of ceasing operations. For a month we ran a weekly series on Fundraising Support that included the sharing of materials and opportunities to support organisations get back on their feet. Some examples included a list of active grant opportunities, resources on writing a good funding application, and connections with professional coaches to support coordinators manage their teams through this difficult period.

### Calmness & Relaxation workshop

In collaboration with Ermina Isanovic, a certified cognitive, behavioral hypnotherapist with a bachelors in Psychology, we began running the Calmness & Relaxation workshop once a month. Considering the high-stress environment many of our partners operate in, we wanted to provide a space for volunteers to develop self-care skills and learn to manage their wellbeing. The workshops equipped participants with evidence-based tools to manage stress and anxiety and to learn how to move from “survival mode” to “thriving mode”. We were happy to see the workshop grow more popular as the year went by. Indeed, 93% of participants said they would recommend this workshop to other humanitarians. Throughout 2022, 9 workshops were delivered and attended by a total of 58 participants.

### The Kindness Method workshop

Continuing our focus on wellbeing, we collaborated with Shahroo Izadi to deliver a workshop drawing on “The Kindness Method”, a tool to empower humanitarians and the people they work with. The training covered topics of burnout, de-glamorisation of overworking, creating healthy coping strategies & self care.

### Trauma Informed Care training

The population of people on the move are at high risk of experiencing and being affected by trauma and are often the population with least access to services and resources. A common need across our charity partners has therefore been to access training on trauma informed care. We were fortunate to

reconnect with Courtney Perkins, a social worker with extensive experience working with refugees in the voluntary sector and in resettlement agencies, who volunteered through Indigo. Together we organised a specialised Trauma Informed Care training to equip organisations with a tool to avoid retraumatisation of the people they support. The training was delivered to 58 participants from 8 organisations.

### Shape your Next Steps workshop

Another need we had previously identified comes from volunteers who end their placements and return home. We noticed many struggle to re-adapt to their home environment and are often left with feelings of guilt and inability to find meaning in their old life. We collaborated with one of our coaching specialists, Emily Frost, to deliver a one-off workshop for anyone who had recently volunteered and was now starting to think about their next steps. Through coaching, Emily delivered an interactive and engaging 40-minute workshop, uncovering the highlights of the participants volunteering experiences, and looking at how to best use these experiences when deciding on their next steps.

### The Pandora Project partnership

At the end of the year we officialised our partnership with The Pandora Project, an organisation focused on building resilient humanitarians through support and training. By speaking to our partners, we identified the training topics that yielded the highest interest - Psychological First Aid, Privilege, Intersectionality, and Allyship - and have created a plan with the Pandora Project to deliver those in 2023. Each training will take a humanitarian and intersectional perspective, and will embed communicative activities based on non hierarchical pedagogy. We hope this paid training series will fill various knowledge and skills gaps our partners and volunteers have.

### Empowerment Self-Defense training

Finally, we renewed our collaboration with Empowerment Self Defence (ESD) Global for another year and supported the promotion of two ESD training sessions. ESD provides humanitarian workers with a



better understanding of setting boundaries, assertive communication techniques strengthening intuition and identifying, setting and maintaining one's boundaries. This training was made available across our network of partners and volunteers, and one of the sessions took place in person in Athens, Greece.

## 5 Stakeholder Engagement

### Marketing

Despite many changes in the refugee crisis in Europe, the demand for volunteers from our grassroots partners has remained high. Soon we realised the importance of growing our reach and engaging more volunteers with Indigo in order to meet the great need for help on the ground. We learnt how important it is to invest in marketing and how much marketing can affect every element of our work, such as fundraising, the recruitment of volunteers, and the showcasing of our charity partners.

Due to low resources in the past, we had often found ourselves unable to invest in marketing or be strategic with our marketing actions in general. This year, however, we were fortunate to start working with very experienced marketing managers. After a targeted outreach campaign, our marketing manager set up a partnership with a PR company, Gong Communications, that landed us opportunities for our CEO to promote our work through podcasts. We were really excited to speak with Charity Chat, Hermes, Be More Good, and Jaz from the WorldWideTribe to name a few. Further, we began working with The Tree, a marketing consulting company. They created quality content for our marketing efforts, such as a [60-second intro video](#). Our marketing team was completed at the end of the year, when we recruited our first marketing intern.

In the second half of 2022, we revisited our marketing strategy and created a volunteer recruitment expansion plan to spread Indigo's work, mission and opportunities through different platforms and to more diverse audiences. Since then, our marketing has grown exponentially, primarily due to the diversity and expertise of people and groups we have gotten in the team. Our current strategy has at its core the targeting of different audiences from the moment someone first hears about Indigo up until after they have finished their placement. 1. Some of the most common activities included increased content creation, increased focus on content from our partners and volunteers, promotion of volunteer

roles on job platforms and outreach to universities.

Finally, a huge focus for Indigo was the synergy between marketing and fundraising. In order to reach more people and remain a sustainable organisation, those two areas must go hand in hand. In 2022 we set up various fundraisers like a fundraising auction, and created a Fundraising Deck that can now be easily shared with future funders and partners. The year ended with our participation in the Big Give Christmas Challenge 2022. Thanks to a collective team effort the goal of raising £4k was achieved.

## Other Indigo Partnerships & Collaborations

### Steen Yde

Our board member, Steen Yde, delivered a training on Project Development to our leadership team after a request for the same earlier in the year. As the organisation is growing and keeping a sharper strategic focus, it was very helpful to receive expert knowledge on project planning, creation, management and implementation. The training sessions will continue in 2023.

### Emily Dunne

At the beginning of the year we collaborated with Emily Dunne, a strategic consultant, who facilitated a series of workshops on Impact Management for our team. Specifically, she helped us develop a *Theory of Change*, and guided us through identifying our own impact statement and strategy.

### Alex Green

We were fortunate to collaborate with Alex Green, a marketing consultant with extensive experience in the sector. He shared various ideas when reviewing our marketing plans and provided valuable

feedback on the direction that Indigo should be taking. Alex also gave us advice on what to look for when recruiting our marketing manager, and created a proposal on Indigo Merchandise as a pathway to diversifying our funding streams.

## Legal Support

In continuous collaboration with legal support from field experts, we have introduced a new privacy policy for Indigo team members and updated our data protection policy. These documents make it clear what Indigo team members can expect from Indigo when it comes to the processing of their personal data and they built the foundation on which training regarding the ins and outs of data protection is designed.

## Bradley Employment Consulting

We gained valuable legal support and advice from Prisca Bradley from the Bradley Employment Consulting firm.

## With Thanks To

We would like to extend a big thank you to our Board of Trustees who have been a steadfast form of support throughout this year. We have been truly lucky to receive expert advice from a board with such a diverse mix of skills and experiences and are grateful for the time they have given our charity.

Further, Indigo continues to enjoy great support from the people it engages into its mission. Not only do volunteers offer their time and expertise to work with us and our partners, we are also grateful to the great number of people and partners who have expressed their support and trust financially.

Delivering our projects was only made possible through the support of our funders

 **CHOOSE  
LOVE** **LUSH** **LRQA** convex

and the over 140 donations from private individuals and businesses who supported us by donating over 200 times.