

The Edith M Ellis 1985 Charitable Trust

Sona Tech C.I.C.

#XPP2VB1XRK submitted on 1 January 2023

1.1 Please summarise what you are seeking from us

Sona Circle adds value to local communities by connecting dependable people with areas of organisational need, changing cultural perceptions and reducing the social and financial burden of refugees in the UK.

We are seeking £5,000 in grant funding to purchase 3 new laptops required for project expansion.

1.2 Tell us more about your project, the impact it will have on those it aims to help, and why you consider the proposed approach to be innovative

We work with refugee candidates on a one-to-one basis to help them support their families and smoothly integrate into their local communities, by providing them with the skills and connections they need to achieve long term employment.

In the past 12 months alone, we have provided long term employment and internships to 115 refugees in the UK, providing stability and income, and building skillsets for future work. In the process, we have also supported 27 organisations, including the charity sector, to onboard skilled resources and improve their workforce.

These are much more than just numbers, for refugees, this represents 115 households/families that are able to feel safe and secure, provide for themselves and their children and feel confident and dignified in their everyday lives. For the 27 organisations, it represents roles being filled by a hardworking, dependable and skilled workforce, and enabling businesses to provide high quality goods and services to members of the community. For the UK Government, these numbers represent lower unemployment rates, higher employee and business tax revenues, lower number of dependable people claiming benefits, and a much needed boost to the recovering UK economy.

The refugee unemployment rate in the UK is 18%, more than three times the British population. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the situation is now far worse than ever before. Skilled refugees are not being connected to the right employers to obtain long term employment and provide stability for their family and communities.

- Refugees struggle to access employment due to a variety of reasons including; language barriers, lack of UK recognised work experience and qualifications, no knowledge of the UK job market, low confidence and a lack of cultural awareness.
- Employers are not benefitting from the diversity that comes with recruiting refugees as they do not know how to access this untapped workforce in the UK, where to find them and are uncertain about the legalities and process of hiring and working with refugee candidates.

Sona Circle serves as a bridge between employers and refugee candidates. We place dependable people into areas of organisational need, changing cultural perceptions and adding value and stability to individuals and local communities. By helping people find long term employment, Sona Circle provides stability and security to peoples families and communities in their transition to life in the UK.

We help organisations to recruit a diverse workforce and address skills gaps by linking brilliant people

to brilliant workplaces.

Supporting Facts

- We have helped 115 refugees to find roles suited to their skills and experience, through their employment they have provided stability for themselves and their family.
- Due to the compounded effects of Brexit, Covid-19, and the UK recession, there is currently a huge employment gap in the Hospitality, Construction, manufacturing and other sectors.
- In the last year, we have organised 4 Job Fairs working alongside the DWP at Job Centres in South London. Over 150 refugee candidates from Afghanistan and Ukraine who recently arrived in the UK were present. Over 60 training shifts and second interviews were secured following the sessions and 41 job offers have been made since (so far).
- Our non-profit social enterprise provides significant benefits for organisations, refugees, communities and the UK economy.
- Benefits of hiring refugees for companies include; increased retention rates, a diversified workforce, highly skilled employees, highly motivated staff and attracting socially conscious consumers (and staff).

1.3 Which grant-giving categories does your project fulfil?

E - Work with forced migrants, including internally displaced people

1.3e Work with forced migrants, including internally displaced people

Social integration has a domino effect on building high functioning and cohesive communities. Through our social media campaigns, blogs, podcasts, videos and the book "Refugees are here to stay, get used to it", we are re-writing the narrative about refugees in the UK, thereby facilitating the assimilation of refugees into society and communities.

1.4 Which country is the project based in?

United Kingdom (GB)

1.5 Will the project continue after initial funding has ended?

Yes

1.5b Please give details of how you plan to continue after initial funding has ended

Sona Circle generates income through four sources. These are as follows:

1. Recruitment fees: commission received from companies
2. Sponsorship fees: generated through organising the SonaTalks events
3. Fund raising campaign: We receive donations and contributions through the JustGiving
4. Grants: We continue to apply for grants and funding.

1.6 How will the project be monitored and evaluated?

Our activities are regularly reviewed and developed to support our core purpose. This is achieved through a fair balance of qualitative and quantitative techniques.

At a quantitative level, we review:

- the number of individuals engaged in our community
- the number of opportunities created via employment, training or other means and;
- the number of partners actively engaged with our approach.

2.1 Expenditure

EXPENDITURE ITEM	AMOUNT	NOTES
Computer/IT Maintenance	£10,800	This includes both hardware and software required including 4 laptops required for current and future team

		members, camera equipment and external hard drives.
Marketing	£13,800	This includes social media and direct marketing across social media, direct sales and marketing and strategic marketing avenues.
Personnel	£64,000	This is based on one full time member of staff at and two design/marketing consultants.
TOTALS	£88,600	

2.2 Income

INCOME SOURCE	TARGET AMOUNT	AMOUNT RAISED	NOTES
Grants and Funding	£65,000	£45,000	2022
Recruitment Commission	£32,000	£27,500	2022
TOTALS	£97,000	£72,500	

2.3 What is the total amount (in £ sterling) your organisation is requesting from The Edith M Ellis Trust?

£5,000

2.4 Has your organisation made an application to The Edith M Ellis Trust before?

Yes

2.4b Please provide the date of the previous application

11.06.2021

2.4c Was this previous application successful?

No

2.5 Please state your organisation's annual turnover (in £ sterling)

£99,700

2.6 Do you wish to upload your audited accounts or financial statement?

Yes

2.6b Upload File

https://theedithmellischaritabletrust.org/assets/uploads/2023/01/Management-and-Filed-Accounts_Sona-Tech-CIC_2021-2022.pdf

2.7 Please tell us where payment should be made if your application is successful

Sona Tech C.I.C.

50566016

602107

3.1 Your name

Onaeye Onabolu

3.2 Your contact telephone number

07886105836

3.3 Your position within the organisation

Director

3.4 Your email address

onaseye@sonacircle.com

3.5 Organisation name

Sona Tech C.I.C.

3.6 Please state the status of your organisation

Community Interest Company

3.7 Please summarise what your organisation does

Sona Circle Refugee Employment adds value to local communities by connecting dependable people with areas of organisational need, changing cultural perceptions and reducing the social and financial burden of refugees in the UK.

3.8 UK correspondence address for organisation

319 Boldmere Road
Birmingham
B735HQ

3.9 UK telephone number

07886105836

3.10 UK charity number (if applicable)

10821870 (Company Number)

3.11 Year established

2017

3.12 Website (if applicable)

<https://sonacircle.com/>

3.13 Social media accounts (if applicable)

https://www.instagram.com/sonacircle_refugees/

<https://twitter.com/SonaCircleEqual>

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6YK6YZK21nRglgM-iAqZbw>

<https://www.facebook.com/sonacircle>

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/sona-circle-app>

4.1 How did you hear about The Edith M Ellis Trust?

Internet