



VEGAN COMPASSION GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Dear Friends,

In last year's Annual Report we listed our **aims for 2024** - to fund **school feeding programmes** in Ethiopia and Uganda, to help in some small way in the **war zones of Ethiopia and Ukraine**, and

to become involved with efforts to reduce the suffering of **street dogs in Nepal**. I'm pleased to report that we achieved these goals, albeit in some cases in a smaller way than we would have ideally liked. In addition, we have funded a **new project in El Hato in Guatemala**, providing vegan meals at a vacation camp, mostly for economically deprived Indigenous children.

While there is some satisfaction in reaching targets, it is no excuse for complacency. Almost daily, the world seems to become darker and more dangerous. Even a small charity like ours has not escaped the impact of violence, hatred and intolerance. In the last twelve months we have seen the 130 olive trees we planted in Gaza destroyed by Israeli bombs and our brave partners in Ukraine forced to abandon their vegan meals for refugees scheme in Ukraine. Less than a month ago we learnt that the school feeding programme we have been financing for several years in Ethiopia has had to be suspended because of security issues caused by the ongoing civil conflict. Funds have had to be diverted to emergency food aid for displaced families.

What we can offer in response is inadequate, but at least it is something tangible. Small acts of kindness that have at least made a difference to a few hundred lives, quietly delivered with a message of compassion to all living beings and an explanation of the benefits and relevance of living without cruelty.

While I'd like to end this introduction with the heartfelt thanks due to everyone who has supported our work this year, it is a curse of running a charity that I also have to ask for your help to continue with that backing in 2025 -or even to do more. We have grown slowly over the last five years and, in the process, committed to more projects. There are others we have reluctantly had to refuse because we simply don't have the resources.

Can you spare a donation, organise a fundraising event, take on a sponsored activity or set up a direct debit? Or just let others know about our work? Whatever help you can give will be gratefully received and put to good use. Thank you.

Mark Gold, Founder

December 2024

School feeding programme in Ethiopia

Jihur Primary School is situated in the Amhara region, to the north of this vast country. It is one of the areas badly affected by what the influential *Foreign Affairs* magazine described as 'arguably the worst armed conflict of the twenty-first century so far'. Even though an official peace deal was signed in 2022, the violence continues, leading the same journal to describe the country as 'back on the brink' of catastrophic war.

Given these conditions, it has taken a heroic effort from our Ethiopian partners (International Fund for Africa (IFA)) to continue providing 10kg monthly parcels - each containing varied and essential nutritious grains and pulses -for 124 schoolchildren and their struggling families. Everything has been locally grown and therefore helped local communities by creating reliable incomes for farmers. Recipes have also been integral to the project, particularly culturally appropriate breakfast suggestions such as Genfo (thick porridge), Chechebsa (torn flatbread) and Atmit (a much-loved comfort food/ beverage, also used as a nutritional supplement during periods of scarcity).

As explained in our introduction, the programme has recently had to be suspended because of increasing violence in the area. Our partners have informed us that 'the unrest escalated to armed conflict that resulted in school closure. IFA staff were unable to travel, supervise and monitor food distribution'. We can only hope that the service will resume before too long

You have been a great support to IFA and I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for all your kind donations.

Seble Nebiyelou
IFA Co-Founder and Country Director



School feeding programme in Uganda

We began a **second school feeding programme** in 2023, funding a nutritious daily meal for 50 children at Kasikombe Primary School in the Kampala area. Wherever possible, food is locally grown. As part of the scheme, children also learn about plant-based diets and their benefits.

Our contribution is part of a wider initiative by our partner Magic Marble Foundation that reaches 400 children at two schools and has already helped to reduce malnutrition rates by 20%.

By providing free, plant-based meals during school hours, this project has significantly increased student attendance and engagement, creating a foundation for educational progress.

The programme's impact extends beyond immediate nutrition and education. It introduces recipients to healthy eating habits

while supporting local agriculture. The goal is to break the cycle of economic poverty by addressing both immediate needs and long-term educational goals.



Thank you everything you have helped us accomplish so far, your help has meant the world to us!

Jennifer George, Founder, Magic Marble Foundation

New Project in Guatemala

We are currently funding our first initiative in Latin America, covering the costs of 500 healthy vegan meals at a vacation camp for children in the small community of El Hato in Guatemala. Most of the children are from an Indigenous local population that suffers particular economic hardship in a country that has the sixth highest malnutrition rate in the world. Nearly half of all children face chronic malnutrition, with 47% of those under the age of five displaying stunted growth, rising to 70% among Indigenous children.

The camp is part of a 'Garden of Hope' initiative that aims to combat hunger in the community through education. The local population is encouraged to opt for affordable, healthy and environment-friendly plant-based food systems.

Sixty participants at the camp engage in a combination of leisure activities and education. In addition to receiving healthy vegan meals, they learn about humane living through lessons in vegetable growing and cooking. There is time for fun as well, with children also enjoying opportunities to express themselves through art activities and games.



The grant has been safely received. It will be of great support to our small organization in Guatemala. We really appreciated it.

David Santa Catalina, Executive Director, **Asociación
Juntos Podemos**

Emergency Help for War Victims

In an ideal world, our resources would be focused solely upon long-term educational programmes that both alleviate present hunger and create the conditions for longer-term benefits. Unfortunately, however, emergency aid is sometimes so desperately needed that our partners on the ground have requested immediate help. We have felt compelled to support them as best we can.

Ethiopia

Our modest contribution to helping victims of the civil war this year has been to feed roughly 110 children aged 0-2, surviving in a camp for displaced people. By funding the purchase of Famix - a locally prepared vegan flour mix specially formulated to be palatable for children and easy to prepare in the refugee camp where our contributions have been distributed - we were able to prevent short-term hunger and hopefully reduce the incidence of stunting and related ill-health.

In November we provided additional aid. After hearing that the Ethiopian school feeding programme has been suspended (see above), we provided our latest war relief donation to supply 250 displaced families in the Addis Ababa region with basic foodstuffs - oil and wheat flour - plus more Famix for their young children.



We thank you for your concern and commitment to the cause of supporting vulnerable communities in Ethiopia. Even one meal has an impact when families are caught in unforeseen circumstances.

Tsedaye Bezabeh, Programme Director, International Fund for Africa

Ukraine

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, we have sponsored hundreds of meals for those fleeing the fighting, and have also funded a fundraising vegan festival in Kiev. But with our Ukrainian partners no longer able to operate their food for refugees scheme, this year we instead provided nutritious meals for vegans serving in the military. There are currently no official provisions for those following a vegan diet, so they are

dependent on parcels from families, friends and charities for healthy food.

Working with the Ukrainian group *Every Animal*, we provided more than 300 meals, with each recipient receiving parcels containing 18 pre-prepared meals.



The meals include rice, buckwheat, peas, kidney beans—all with plant-based meat. We also provided soups such as borscht, rice soup, and pea soup, all made with plant-based meat.

Your support has been invaluable!

Tamara Human, CEO, Every Animal, Ukraine

Veterinary Centre in Nepal

In late summer we provided equipment to help our trusted partner Magic Marble Foundation set up a temporary tent and recovery rooms allowing safe sterilisation for street dogs living

at a garbage dump in Kathmandu. The dog population there has continued to multiply, resulting in increased hunger, ill-health and disease. Sadly, sterilisation is generally accepted as necessary to develop a better long-term future for the street animal population.

The same sterilisation equipment will then be suitable for a soon to be opened state-of-the-art veterinary centre that will house animal cancer patients, isolate those with infectious diseases, and provide recovery space for sterilised homeless dogs.

Every amount of support is a blessing for us as we have little support on the whole.

Jennifer George, Founder, Magic Marble Foundation



Our Aims and Principles

- The Vegan Compassion Group was registered as a charity (Charity Commission number 327281) in 2019, though it had supported one or two projects as the Living Without Cruelty Trust prior to this. It is run by a board of four trustees who include its founder.
- We aim to demonstrate compassion in action by applying our vegan beliefs to small-scale humanitarian projects. Donations are made for

specific schemes, so that we know and can accurately assess exactly what our funds have achieved. We are able to eliminate expenses (apart from bank transfer costs). To date, all outside help for advertising, design and printing has been generously donated and our trustees take no expenses.

- The key to our initiatives lies in forging trusting and mutually respectful relationships with charitable organisations who work in the countries where we are active. Mostly, these are fellow vegan organisations that share our vision. On the rare occasions where this is not the case, we are confident that our partners understand and respect our beliefs
- Our approach is inclusive, quietly emphasising our core values while encouraging other sympathetic souls who might support our individual projects without fully embracing the wider vegan vision. 'Exclusively vegan but not exclusive to vegans' is our motto.

Special thanks

Vegfest UK has continued to offer wonderfully generous support and *Lush Cosmetics* kindly contributed to our emergency aid donation to help children living in a refugee camp in the Amhara region of Ethiopia.

Our gratitude also to *Quadrant2design* who designed, produced and donated a striking pop-up banner to brighten up our stalls.

Ned Buyukmihci revamped our website and also continues to run *Action for Primates* – a valuable website resource that encourages compassion and respect for primates worldwide - actionforprimates.org

And to end where we began, grateful thanks again to everybody who has supported us in
2024

For more information, visit
vegancompassiongroup.co.uk
Email: info@vegancompassiongroup.co.uk
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