

**SUPPORT
NETWORK**

Institution of
**MECHANICAL
ENGINEERS**

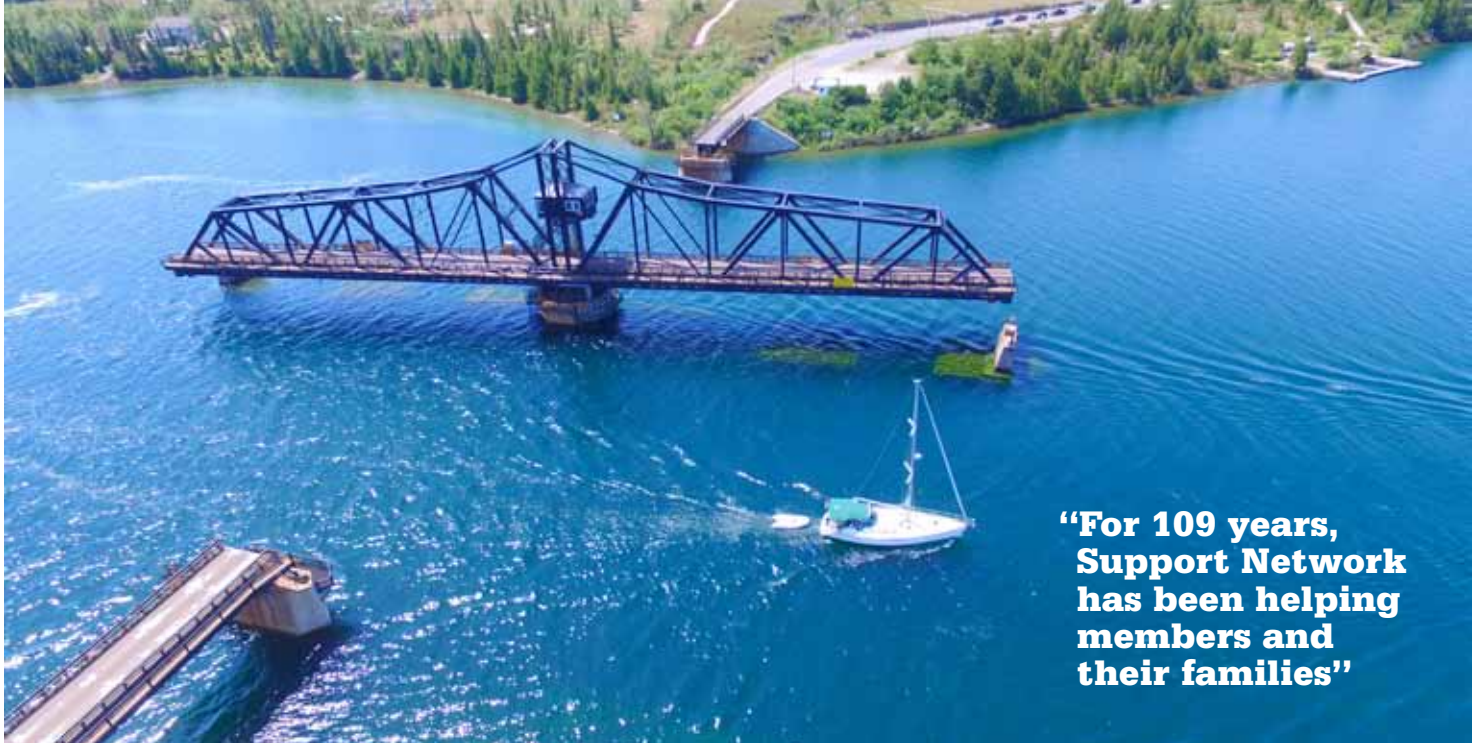
Supporting members and
their families in times of need

BRIDGING THE GAPS

Support Network Annual Review 2021



BRIDGING THE GAPS



**“For 109 years,
Support Network
has been helping
members and
their families”**

WHEN MEMBERS NEED EXTRA SUPPORT, WE SWING INTO ACTION



Chief Executive of
Support Network,
Anni Broadhead

As the Institution currently celebrates its 175th anniversary, it is also timely to note that, for 109 of those years, Support Network has also been helping members and their families too. Originally ‘The Benevolent Fund of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers’, Support Network was established in 1913, (through the gift of £1,000 in shares of a member’s company), to help the widows and orphans of deceased members and to financially aid those members who could no longer work. At the time there was no welfare state, so members bridged the gap to prevent other members falling into difficulties, and we have been doing that ever since.

Although times have changed, enabling members to help other members is still at the heart of

what we do. All of our Trustees are either employees or members of the Institution, with representation across all grades, so we are a truly member-led organisation. We also have a volunteer team of members to deliver our face-to-face services, and member donations are fully used as grants and loans back to other members and their families.

We work throughout the world – wherever there are IMechE members. In 2021 we recruited our first international member to the Board, and bridge the geographical gap through using online meetings, so that we are all in the digital room together.

When the pandemic has kept people apart, we have continued working to bridge that sense of isolation, through maintaining social contact and increasing our range of support services. We prioritised relieving the issues that can cause poor mental health and stress and did so with an emphasis on prevention. Our webinar series on financial wellbeing was a particularly popular offering and our sleep support service is growing too.

Good stewardship of our funds through the past decades has provided the opportunity for Support Network to extend our impact by also funding organisations that deliver social improvement in an engineering context. We use member donations to help other members and we use our investment returns to meet our own costs and to also fund organisations which are aligned with our charitable objectives. In this way, and shaped by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we aim to bridge the gap through supporting STEM focused international development and education initiatives, as well as helping engineering start-ups and scaling of existing projects, particularly where this also promotes diversity, inclusion and equality and contributes to meeting our climate change responsibilities.

Support Network continues to adapt to emerging and changing needs whilst staying focussed on our original purpose – supporting our members, their families, and their contribution to society.



Support Network welcomes Chukwuma Onukwo, our first international Trustee

GOVERNANCE WITHOUT BORDERS

As an international member, I felt I had little knowledge of IMechE Support Network, other than making a voluntary minimum £10 pounds donation each year and during my early careers years, qualifying for a reduced membership subscription fee and receiving associated grant help from Support Network. I got elected as a member of the Board of Trustee in 2021, in the thick of the Covid 19 pandemic.

I had some personal and long-term ambitions for joining Support Network. Firstly, I wanted to learn by working in a non-profit board. Secondly, I am passionate about

giving my time and energy to support an important cause, such as assisting students with hardship grants (UK & international) to ensure they complete their Mechanical Engineering programme, plus counselling and employment coaching. The world shows that it is possible to work effectively virtually. The relationship built working with other board trustees has been immeasurable.

After Covid 19, I would like to help Support Network reach out more to UK & international IMechE members/families who are undergoing financial and mental health issues.

WORKING CLOSELY WITH THE INSTITUTION



Chief Executive of the IMechE, Dr Alice Bunn

I have been delighted to learn of the tremendous impact that the Institution's Support Network delivers, acting as a source of genuine support and kindness to those in need.

We're all responsible for bridging the gap across our membership, this year I've really enjoyed working with Anni to identify all the various ways in which we can also strengthen the links between the Institution and the support network. 2022 will see the launch of a new strategy for the Institution with our core effort focussed on just two clear objectives (1) developing and supporting our members, and (2) maximising their positive impact for the benefit of society.

The role of Support Network on that first objective is clear, but we are also working closely to deliver shared impact. I believe our

impact will be greatest if we focus on some key priorities, such as climate and sustainability, future transport, and infectious disease control. Underpinning all of these is a renewed effort on education, where already we are identifying shared interests and new ways of working together. To be successful, our values must sit at the heart of everything we do, acting with integrity, innovation, impact and inclusivity.

"We're all responsible for bridging the gap across our membership"

We were delighted last year that the importance of our values to staff shone through in our Investors in People assessment, achieving gold for the first time. It's a natural next step to ensure our members and volunteers feel that same level of support and commitment to our values, and we're excited to work together with Support Network to achieve this!

BUILDING SECURITY AND CONFIDENCE

"My apologies for the late reply, the past few weeks have been extremely busy with interviews and interview prep. And it all paid off! I was offered two jobs and accepted one a couple of days ago.

I'm really excited to start my new role and I'm looking forward to the relief it will bring for both me and my partner. The last few months were becoming harder and it was taking everything to remain positive and keep ploughing on.

"And it all paid off! I was offered two jobs and accepted one a couple of days ago"

The Renovo experience has been so, so positive. It's really important to dedicate the time to career prep for long lasting changes and as a result I've learned so much. I understand myself better in a professional capacity and built my confidence.

Your loan to help pay off my debts has helped greatly: my monthly payments are much smaller now so the money I have saved from servicing the fees and interest charges can go towards our household shopping. It has been tough and we've had to scrape by at times but we're coming out of it now with my new job on the horizon which will bring with it financial security and a chance to pay off the remaining debt.

The grant I was awarded to see my mother when she had her accident helped greatly to fund the various visits to see her in hospital and I have been able to take her to her out-patient appointments. It relieved a lot of stress for both of us.

Knowing that Mum was in a good space enabled me to focus on landing that new job and to move forward.

Support Network has made such a difference to me and my family. Thank you to you and the team. We really appreciate it."

Support Network developed the foundation funding stream of our work in order to rise to the challenge of using more of our resources for relieving poverty and improving the world through engineering. Accordingly, we can now fund organisations working in a STEM-related way in the areas of international development, education, and/or engineering innovation – areas chosen to also align with the objectives of the IMechE.

During 2021 we made awards to enable:

- ocean plastic recycling and conversion into 3D printer filament in Watamu (Kenya)
- promoting indigenous cotton cultivation in Manipur (India)
- training young people in seed banks in Chhattisgarh (India)
- capacity building for female farmers in West Bengal (India)
- environmental health initiatives in Bamako (Mali)
- equitable access to fertilisers in Macina (Mali)
- a school sanitation unit to be built at Tarnos School (Uganda)
- young people to start a motorbike repair business in Fort Portal (Uganda)
- new branches of disability customisation charity Remap to open in Grimsby, Portsmouth and Merseyside (UK).



Rapid Foundation at Eco World



Tarnos School, Uganda



Foundation funding is currently focussed on six of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

WHAT ABOUT 2022?

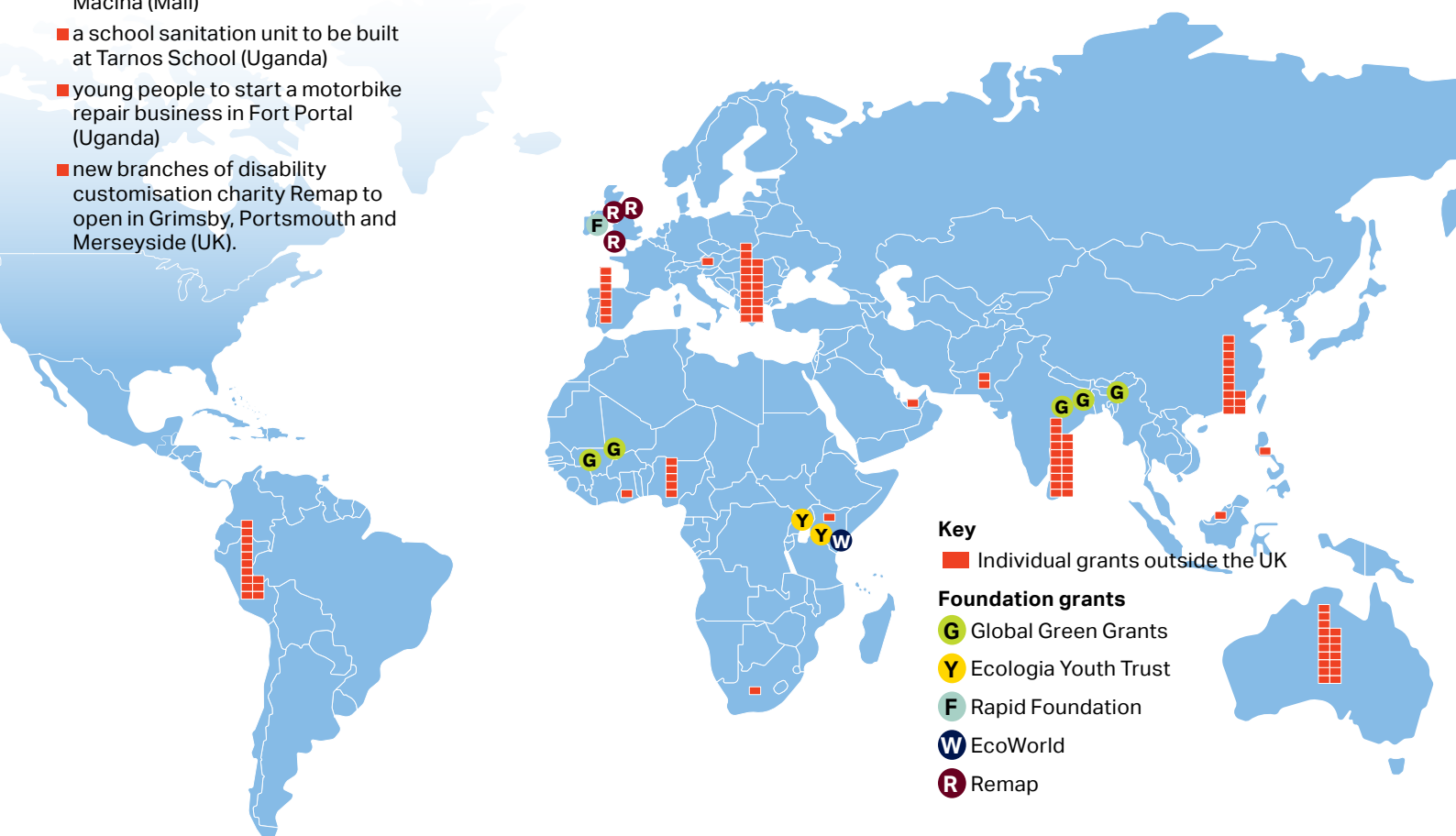
During 2022 Support Network plans to continue our core work whilst responding to additional needs and challenges faced by members and their families. As such we will work to:

Focus on mental health initiatives through introducing wellbeing webinars, parent support, and counselling for young people to meet the long-term effects of coping with the pandemic.

Assist with engineering career futures through focussing on our next generation of mechanical engineers both in the UK and internationally, including supporting quality work experience and transition into work programmes.

Expand our foundation funding through increasing the number of grants made and ensuring that each of the strands of education, engineering innovation and international development is supported.

Ensure that diversity & inclusion is at the heart of all that we do through undertaking an equality audit of our organisation and the work that we do.



HOW MEMBERS HELPED IN 2021

LINKING MEMBERS WITH SUPPORT NETWORK



Diana Charles
CEng MIMechE,
Support Network
volunteer

As engineering professionals we are good at solving problems - that is our *raison d'être*, but when work disappears or other life challenges come along, we can't always solve them without

help, and this is a strange situation to be in for an engineer. Reaching out for help can be daunting. Support Network offers a broad scope of services and as many are delivered by engineers to other engineers, this appealed to me, so I joined as a volunteer.

Nina was the first person I was asked to contact, as she had mortgage pressures following redundancy during the pandemic. Through our conversation I was able to recognise a number of other areas where Support Network could help her, and we did. Being able to bridge the gap between Support Network's services and Nina's need for help was hugely satisfying.

We provided 101 grants and employment assistance to support members in 15 countries outside the UK, totalling £53,445. This meant 11.6% of our total expenditure went directly to help non-UK members and this figure represented 13.5% of all grants made during 2021.

IF YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE...

To enquire about volunteering, donating, applying for grants or our services, please email supportnetwork@imeche.org or or text/call us on 07552 669160 or 020 7304 6931 or see www.imeche.org/supportnetwork



WELLBEING SUPPORT

24 respite, personal alarms and care costs paid for carers to take a break, or to take a trip away with the person they care for.

55 given counselling, funeral costs & bereavement support to help members through close loss or personal crisis.

158 social visits, calls and online contact made by member volunteers to help other members feel less isolated.

275 first-time contacts' problems solved with casework



PRACTICAL HELP

75 supported with employment coaching. Working with our career and CV specialists, we helped members and their dependants to regain work.

137 used the legal helpline & factsheets for advice on employment, family, tax, probate etc.

11 supported with health, disability, autism and dyslexia related costs and/or access to support.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

102 Breathing Space grants to help pay members' essential bills in times of financial stress.

130 Fuel and Winter Warmth grants given to older members on fixed incomes to pay fuel costs.

76 housing costs and repair payments given to members in need

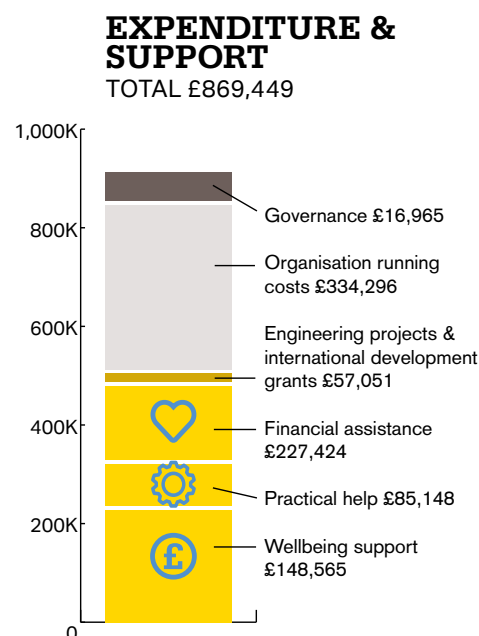
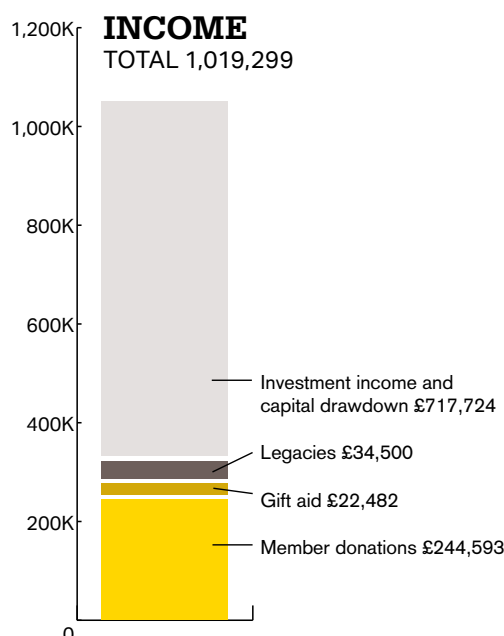
9 secured loans either issued or increased helping members make repairs or disability-related adaptations to their homes.

18 student and apprentice grants helped student and apprentice members to focus more time on their studies.

18 parenting support and children's activities for families to keep going during difficult times.

14 newly-qualified grants assisted new graduates and apprentices transitioning into work.

12 Covid-related grants supported members through the pandemic.



To view the full 2021 financial statements and activities report visit www.imeche.org/support-network/governance



Many find it difficult to ask for help. You can help by encouraging IMechE members who are under pressure, with mental or physical health needs, or experiencing financial problems (of their own or their family) to contact us – or you could contact us on their behalf.

We do not want anyone to miss out on the support that could be available to them.

Your intervention could make all the difference.

Trustees, Officials & Professional Advisers 2021

Chief Executive & Company Secretary
Anni Broadhead

Auditors
Kingston Smith LLP,
Devonshire House, 60 Goswell
Road, London EC1M 7AD

Bankers
National Westminster Bank plc,
38 Strand, London WC2N 5JB

Charity Solicitors
Bircham Dyson Bell, 50
Broadway, London SW1H 0BL

Property Solicitors
Withers LLP, 20 Old Bailey,
London EC4M 7AN

Investment Managers
CCLA Investment Management
Cordea Savills LLP
Fidelity International
M&G Investments
Schroder & Co Ltd

Chair
Bruce Dagley CEng MIMechE

Deputy Chairs
Anne Woodbridge CEng FIMechE
Christian Young CEng MIMechE

Treasurer
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Other Trustees
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John Cornforth CEng MIMechE
Tony Frater CEng MIMechE
Chukwuma Onunkwo CEng MIMechE (from July 2021)
Nicole Rinaldi (until July 2021)
Chirantan Shukla CEng MIMechE
Chris Taylor FREng CEng FIMechE
Sarah Templey CEng FIMechE (until July 2021)
Elisabeth Wilson Eur Ing CEng MIMechE (from July 2021)

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