



# Project 1: Jacari



## Background

Jacari is a small charity providing free English language support to refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant children delivered by our volunteer tutors in Oxford and Bristol. Jacari's vision is for a society where children from all backgrounds have the confidence and language skills to achieve their full potential.

Jacari helps young people who use English as an additional language (EAL) to build their confidence and language skills so they can achieve their potential and access an education. We do this by recruiting, training and supporting a team of volunteers who provide fun, informal tutoring to local school children. Volunteers visit their pupils for an hour a week during term-time either in their school or at their home.

Jacari also organises regular trips to local attractions and fun activities for the young people they support and their families. These activities are an important part of Jacari's programme as they give children a chance to do something fun in their city that they may not usually have access to, and practise their English skills in a relaxed environment.

The children and young people we support are a diverse group from the refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant community in Oxford. Between them they speak over 30 different home languages. We work in partnership with 12 schools to identify pupils most in need of our support, prioritising those who have recently arrived, who are new to English or are struggling at school due to low confidence in using their English.

Jacari was founded as a student society at the University of Oxford in 1956 as the Joint Action Commission Against Racial Intolerance (J.A.C.A.R.I.) in response to the growing levels of racial intolerance both internationally and in the UK. The society organised regular, often high profile, speaker events as well as campaigning against racial intolerance. By 1959, J.A.C.A.R.I. claimed to be the largest university club, with over 2000 members. Jacari members started tutoring immigrant children in the 1960s and this became a core part of its activities. During the 1970s Jacari stopped campaigning and became entirely focused on tutoring.

Jacari registered as a charity in 2005, with a board of trustees, helping provide long-term stability. Jacari was run entirely by Oxford University students until 2008 when we employed our first Coordinator. We still have close links to the University of Oxford and the majority of our volunteers are Oxford students.



## Task

Our challenge: can you help us find and reconnect with our alumni?

Jacari has thousands of former members and volunteers from the Oxford University alumni who we would like to reconnect with. We also want to find people who were tutored by a Jacari volunteer when they were at school in Oxford. We would like to bring everyone together at a "Jacari Reunited" event in the summer of 2024.

We want to regularly engage with our alumni, sending out monthly newsletters and posting on LinkedIn, so they feel connected with the charity they volunteered for. Ultimately we would like alumni to become supporters of the charity, either as regular or major donors, or to help us raise awareness of Jacari's work. We also want to encourage alumni to volunteer their time again by providing specialist advice, becoming a trustee or, if they are local to Oxford or Bristol, tutoring a young person.

We have been trying to find and reconnect with Jacari alumni since our 65th anniversary in 2021 when we employed an Alumni Engagement Officer who was tasked with finding Jacari alumni.

We don't hold any contact details for alumni who volunteered prior to 2010, however we do have an archive which includes term cards dating from the 1950s to 1970 which have lists of names of the committee members and College reps. Former Coordinators and committee presidents also helped us contact alumni in their networks.

We are not allowed to access the University's alumni data as we are not a department or college. Instead, we contacted all the Oxford Colleges and asked them to include a piece about reconnecting with Jacari in their communications to alumni, with 13 Colleges doing so in 2021. The central university alumni office also wrote an article in QUAD magazine and shared this via their alumni newsletter. These activities resulted in about 85 former volunteers and members getting in touch with Jacari, including three founder members of Jacari who were involved in the 1950s.

We also used LinkedIn to search for alumni who were involved with Jacari and made 350 new connections. We regularly use our social media channels to ask alumni to help us reconnect with former Jacari volunteers and pupils.

We have only managed to find a few former pupils - this is more of a challenge as it relies on volunteers staying in contact with them, as Jacari doesn't store contact details of pupils.

Questions to consider:

- How can we find more of our alumni (both former volunteers and pupils)?
- How can we involve alumni with our charity and make them feel more connected to what we do?
- How can we increase our alumni regular and major donors?