

The Trust for Child Soldiers

Annual Report April 2021 to March 2022

Charity Commission Number 1144484

Objectives:

- (i) To relieve the sick and promote good health in particular but not exclusively by promoting the psychosocial wellbeing and social inclusion of children and youth experiencing psychological distress as a result of armed conflict in Africa.
- (ii) To relieve poverty and distress amongst children and youth affected by armed conflict in Africa, generally and individually, by provision of grants, items, services or facilities to those in need.
- (iii) To undertake research and publish the useful results on issues affecting the psychological welfare and security of children and youth affected by conflict in Africa and the rest of the world, in order to advance public education.

The Trust has pursued objectives (i) and (ii) in the financial year.

Activities and public benefits

The Trust has made grants benefitting 168 households to the value of £12,008 during the financial year and provided medical assistance to 230 individuals to the value of £5,427. In addition, many hours of volunteer input have been directed at assisting beneficiaries in a number of ways. 97% of our expenditure was given directly to beneficiaries, with only 3% used for administration costs, including building a website and money transfers.

Report on Activities

We have continued trying to mitigate the effects of Ugandan Covid-19 restrictions on those who have been hardest hit. This has mainly involved making small business grants, as well as emergency assistance to destitute families. This included 45 destitute families to whom we provided emergency support, 61 children who we helped with school fees, 44 families helped with small business grants, 15 families who we helped relocate to more supportive environments and 54 other grants for multiple purposes, including help with funeral costs or following thefts. We were assisted in this with a very significant increase in our donation income.

This range of contributions reflect our commitment to a model of direct giving, where we make contributions based on the individual needs of households.

Schools, which had closed for the period March 2020 to January 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions, restarted for candidate classes but closed again in March 2021, and remained so until January 2022. This was clearly hugely disruptive of the education of a whole generation of children. From the point of view of Trust expenditure, education costs were minimal for the first two terms of the financial year. However, in January 2022, with the reopening of schools for all classes, we invested heavily in

this area, as Covid lockdowns had impacted many families' incomes, limiting their ability to cover school costs. While a substantial increase in our predictable income from standing orders allowed us to make a few longer-term commitments to school fees, we have continued our policy of focussing on children close to completing a major stage in their education: primary leaving exams, or 'O'- and 'A'-level equivalents.

The Trust established two restricted funds during the year:

The **Children Born in Captivity Education Fund** supported 35 young people born 'in the bush' while their mothers were held by the Lord's Resistance Army. The fund aimed to support these children's education for one academic year (2022), supported by funds raised by Dr Sophie Mylan for this purpose, and distributed by Jacky Atingo, a researcher who has worked with the cohort for a number of years and is now a Trust volunteer.

The **Medical Fund** covering any medical costs (this has been supplemented by general funds).

Medical costs

Most of this expenditure was in small amounts for outpatient treatment for malaria or other minor conditions. However, some contributions were substantial: we have continued to support Alex to complete his reconstructive surgery following severe burns incurred through his heroic rescue of two children from a burning hut in 2017, who received assistance totalling about £540; and Shaban, a severely disabled boy suffering from Sickle Cell Disease (£215); and we have supported others with major conditions including cancer care and operations. In three cases we have been able to help secure or repair wheelchairs.

Very sadly we lost three longstanding beneficiaries to whom we had been providing medical and other assistance. Abalo Alice died in June 2021 of a chest condition, possibly Covid-19, and her eight-year-old son Daniel died of sickle cell disease complications in November 2021. Akello Irene, 18, had a congenital heart condition. In previous years we have provided transport and feeding costs for her and her mother for her to receive treatment at the Uganda Heart Institute in Kampala. In January 2021 she travelled to Khartoum, Sudan, as part of a programme providing specialist heart surgery, but very sadly the surgeons decided there was nothing they could do, and Irene returned home to Gulu. Irene died on 30th September 2021. We are continuing to support her mother, Helen, who has devoted her life to trying to keep Irene alive and is now devastated.

We and our beneficiaries have continued to benefit from our agreement / account with St Phillip's Health Centre, a non-profit clinic run by Gulu Anglican Diocese about two kilometres from our Gulu base. Administratively, it is much easier to give beneficiaries vouchers than cash, and St Philip's is heavily subsidised and provides excellent medical care.

Financial review: financial position, relevant policies adopted and concerns or risks

Income for the year was £18,848, an increase of 69% on 2020-21. We spent £17,435 directly on beneficiaries.

Whereas in past years our only regular and predictable income was thanks to trustees' standing orders we now have five additional monthly payments. In addition, we received a number of one-off grants, some of them substantial.

This increase in income is largely thanks to the fundraising efforts of trustees, and of our supporters Dr Sophie Mylan and Helen Saunders, who came to know of the Trust while working in Gulu, and Tom Elton. These efforts were assisted by our website, created by trustees Eliana Lafone and Anna Phillips, which came on-line in May 2021. We went into 2021-22 with reserves of £563 and ended it with reserves of £1,480. We made a Gift Aid claim of £875 (for donations made in 2020-21) and will be able to claim £3,471 in 2022-23 for donations made this year.

The Trust is now in a much stronger financial position than in previous years and has been able to expand its work accordingly. However, over half our income was in the form of one-off donations and we will need to continue to actively fundraise in order to maintain and expand our level of operation.

Income and Expenditure

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES				
for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022				
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total	Total
			Apr 2021 - Mar 2022	Apr 2020 - Mar 2021
	£	£	£	£
INCOMING RESOURCES				
<i>Activities to further the charity's objects</i>				
Donations and legacies	15,428	2,546	17,973	9,124
Gift Aid	875	-	875	2,005
Total incoming resources	<u>16,303</u>	<u>2,546</u>	<u>18,848</u>	<u>11,129</u>
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
<i>Charitable expenditure</i>				
Grants disbursed to 128 households to relieve poverty	11,154	854	12,008	8,566
Medical assistance to 230 individuals	4,773	631	5,404	3,952
Activity costs	40	-	40	-
Management and administration	479	-	479	120
Total resources expended	<u>16,447</u>	<u>1,485</u>	<u>17,932</u>	<u>12,637</u>
FUND BALANCES AT 1 April 2021	563	-	563	2,071
FUND BALANCES AT 31 March 2022	<u>419</u>	<u>1,061</u>	<u>1,480</u>	<u>563</u>

Structure, governance and management

The Trust is governed by the trustees. A minimum of two trustee meetings take place each year.

At the start of the year one new trustee, Charles Ogeno, was appointed. He had previously served as the Trust's Secretary. Diana Birkett continued as Chair.

Trustees who served during the year were:

1. Diana Birkett (Chair)
2. Julian Hopwood
3. Eliana Lafone
4. Charles Ogeno (appointed 1st April 2021)
5. Anna Phillips
6. Kim Silburn

Administration

Joseph Okello has continued to make a major contribution to the Trust's work as our administrator and bookkeeper and is also heavily involved in our work with beneficiaries.

Jackie Aciro, Dick Kinyera, Denis Gumokayi and Kevin Apiyo have all made important contributions supporting particular beneficiaries.

Jacky Atingo has managed identification of beneficiaries and distribution of grants for the Children Born in Captivity Education Fund.

The Trust's registered office was Garden Flat, 6 Old Devonshire Road, London SW12 9RB.