



Registered Charity No. 1090901

**Trustees' Annual Report
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

**The Kanji Project
34 Vicarage Drive, Eastbourne, BN20 8AP**

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

Aims and Objectives

The Objects of the Charity, as defined in its constitution, are:

- the advancement of education in India
- the relief of those in need in India, by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage.

The constitution permits the Charity Trustees to meet these Objects in such ways as they think fit, in particular, but not exclusively, by providing grants.

Partners

During 2023 The Kanji Project continued to work with two organisations in Tamil Nadu, India:

- St Antony's Foundlings (SAF) is an Indian-registered charitable Society. The Society runs St Antony's Matriculation School and Shanthi Lumin children's home. It also assists local people in the community who are in need. Its work is centred around the small rural town of Kanji in the Tiruvannamalai District of Tamil Nadu.
- The Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (FIHM) is a religious Congregation of women based in Pondicherry. The Congregation runs The Sunshine Special School from its centre near Pudupalayam, about 12 kilometres from Kanji.

Enfants de Kanji, a small French charity, also works with St Antony's Foundlings and liaises with The Kanji Project, sharing knowledge and experience.

Public Benefit

The Trustees of The Kanji Project are mindful of their responsibility to ensure that the Charity provides a public benefit. They communicate frequently with the key personnel in their Indian partner organisations so that they can be confident that the work being funded is indeed providing such a benefit.

In 2023 the Trustees have maintained regular contacts with our partners in India via online meetings, telephone and email.

Governance

The Trustees have continued to meet regularly online via Teams throughout 2023. In total, the Trustees met online as a quorate group 6 times for a regular Trustees' meeting and once for a dedicated discussion of fundraising options.

This year, the Kanji Project has made changes to arrangements concerning the community outreach activities which we have been delivering through The Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (FSIHM), informally known as the Rose Sisters. The Rose Sisters, as part of a wider

redirection of their work, were no longer able to carry on with the valuable work they had hitherto been providing in the local villages surrounding the Sunshine Special School. We initiated conversations with Lourdusamy and SAF in early Spring 2023 about the need locally around Kanji and about the possibility of initiating outreach work in the village surrounding Kanji where SAF is already known and established as a source of trusted support. Following thorough scoping, Lourdusamy presented a project and budget plan for this new programme which were gratefully accepted and approved by the trustees for immediate implementation. The programme operates in 5 village and delivers homework support, children's parliaments, health promotion activities run by the children, as well as an income generating cooperative and loan scheme for women. One outreach worker is employed, and teaching support is procured from teachers at St. Anthony's School.

The Rose Sisters continue to receive funding to successfully deliver their outstanding work to ensure that children with mental and physical disability can attend an educational setting at the Sunshine Special School.

Moreover, trustees from The Kanji Project and Enfant de Kanji have been working closely with Lourdusamy (Head of St. Anthony's) and Maria (Leader of Shanthi Lumin) to carry out a feasibility review of the Shanthi Lumin hostel during this financial year. The review has come about because of a number of changes in the local environment following the pandemic. The review looked at three key parameters to determine viability: need, project set-up and finance:

Need: the number of children enrolling has significantly reduced. Families and children are increasingly wanting to remain together at home and are encouraged to do so by a significant improvement in government provision of education and subsidies for both adults and children in rural areas.

Project set-up: It has been impossible to recruit live-in staff to the project with the necessary skills. Whilst Maria has done a great job keeping the project running, it is not a sustainable set-up.

Finance: the upkeep and day-to-day running costs of the project cannot be scaled down sufficiently to reflect the dwindling number of enrolled children to provide economy of scale whilst still allowing for the project to remain operational.

The review has concluded that Shanthi Lumin as a live-in facility for young girls is no longer fit-for-purpose to meet the needs of the local community and the review panel has unanimously agreed to cease the operation with effect from the end of the school year 2023/24 in April 2024.

All parties acknowledge the huge impact Shanthi Lumin has had on hundreds of children who have benefitted from it over the 24 years it has been running. The trustees are immensely grateful for the outstanding contribution that Maria, her staff, and the project have made locally.

With regards to the distribution of funds, The Kanji Project has remained committed to being led by its partners on the ground. Regular communication has allowed for swift decisions to be made and to ensure that funds are used where they are most needed. The new outreach program run by SAF is a prime example of the agility with which we can make changes to optimise the impact of the money we receive from donors.

Key fundraising successes in the year have included a quiz night in Purbeck organised by our Patron Lady Cotton. Key supporters have continued to carry out their individual fundraising activities and kept up their sponsorship arrangements providing highly valued stability and continuity to the charity's finances. The Trustees have continued to prioritise communication with the charity's regular membership and are continuously reviewing how we can make the most of our website and social media platforms to engage new supporters.

This year we continued the post-pandemic arrangement of conducting the AGM as an online meeting. The annual meeting saw a live presentation from Lourdusamy Michael, the head of St. Anthony's school.

Education and Relief of Need

There are three distinct strands to the educational work funded by The Kanji Project.

St Antony's Matriculation School takes pupils, boys and girls, regardless of caste or religion, from the age of 3 through to 15. The school has high academic standards and its results in the external examinations for 15-year-olds are consistently among the best in the area. These results are complemented by the school's achievements in sports and a range of extra-curricular activities. The school involves itself in the community with ecological projects and health awareness programmes. St Antony's, which is run by St Antony's Foundlings, is a fee-paying school, with the fees set by the Tamil Nadu Education Department. It takes a proportion of children whose parents cannot afford to pay the full fees. Depending upon the family's circumstances, there may be up to 100% remission of fees.

The Kanji Project provides grants to top up the fee income and so enable the subsidised places to be offered. Grants also help to finance some of the community involvement.

In 2023 the school commenced work towards the opening of Plus 1 and Plus 2, the additional tier of education, equivalent to A-levels in the UK. This involves building of new facilities on site and eventually recruitment of additional staff with English language abilities. Plus 1 is set to launch in early summer 2024, and Plus 2 in the following academic year. The Kanji Project is not currently contributing funds to this development.

The **Sunshine Special School** takes up to sixteen children who have learning disabilities. Some of the children also have moderate to severe physical disabilities. The aim of the school is to enable each child to develop social, practical and academic skills to the extent to which he or she is able. The school is staffed by two teachers with special interest in the education of children with special needs, assisted by two ayahs with a particular interest in working with these children. There is close liaison between the staff and the children's parents.

The children's attendance records are excellent, and parents are pleased by the ways in which their children are benefiting from the school. There have been some significant improvements in children's speech, physical agility and learning.

The Sunshine School is run by the Franciscan Sisters. No fees are charged by the school which is supported entirely by grants from The Kanji Project.

12 children have been consistently in attendance during 2023, each with their own educational plan and each making significant progress .

Village Outreach work is carried out in 5 rural villages surrounding Kanji. The work is led by SAF and has an employed outreach worker plus several peripathetic homework club teachers. Support offered in the villages include after-school homework clubs for children attending either local government schools or St. Anthony's School, Children's Parliament sessions, health promotion activities and an income generating cooperative and loan scheme for women. This work is receiving significant interest in the villages and has great potential for scaling to include more villages in the locality.

Children's Parliaments bring together boys and girls from different castes and religions to work together for the benefit of their communities. The parliaments are well-structured, with individuals taking responsibilities for particular roles e.g. chair, secretary, and subjects e.g. education, environment and so on. The parliaments are held in 'neutral' places such as schools, to ensure that children from differing castes or religions feel welcome. The Children's Parliaments are effective in disseminating information, such as the prevention of diseases like Dengue Fever, and in lobbying village elders for small but significant improvements such as the repair of street lighting, the cleaning up of public wells. Through the work of the Children's Parliaments, young people are growing up with a greater sense of social responsibility and the common good.

The women's income generation scheme runs through self-help groups. These groups, each with up to 15 women, meet monthly to discuss progress and future plans. Monthly subscriptions enable them to provide loans to members in urgent need, while they also access government loans to support various family needs such as education, healthcare, and livelihood development. With the co-operative support women are assisted in buying livestock and setting up market stalls to improve their household incomes.

Financial support from The Kanji Project to relieve need focuses mainly on long-term benefits rather than short-term handouts. However, the locality is vulnerable to the immediate impacts of natural disasters, weather conditions (droughts, floods), and downturns in the wider economy and SAF therefore holds a small fund, provided by The Kanji Project, from which it can give **emergency grants** to families and individuals, most often in the case of a medical crisis. It is only these people who receive assistance in cash.

Safeguarding

Following release of the Charity Commission's Inquiry Report, The Gail Trust (March 2018), which emphasised the safeguarding responsibilities of UK charities who do not do direct delivery abroad but whose overseas partners have contact with potentially vulnerable individuals and groups, the Kanji Project's Board of Trustees, in conjunction with staff at St Antony's Foundlings, has undertaken a thorough review of our safeguarding policy and procedures. Processes for ensuring due diligence within our partner organisations have been added to our processes and a system

which will alert us to potential safeguarding issues within the projects has been put in place. No incidents requiring involvement of The Kanji Project have been noted by partners during 2023.

Data protection and GDPR

Leading up to the introduction of new regulations in May 2018, the Trustees undertook a data flow analysis and updated privacy statements and consent forms to be GDPR compliant. The legal basis underpinning The Kanji Project's data processes are Consent and Legitimate Interest. There have been no recorded breaches during 2023 and the Trustees continue to review the data that we hold on supporters to ensure that it complies with legislation.

Publicity and Liaison with Supporters

The Kanji Project sends out 2 yearly, larger newsletters and also use the news tab on our [website](#) extensively to communicate with supporters about current issues affecting our projects and the local area in which they are situated. We use Mailchimp to share regular news updates with people on our database and to launch new fundraising initiatives. We are also exploring new opportunities to expand our publicity on social media, both through our Facebook Page and on other platforms, with trustees exploring the possibility of starting an Instagram as part of an upcoming fundraising activity.

Financial Review

As in previous years, regular donations, including Gift Aid where applicable, form the mainstay of the Charity's income. The Trustees are particularly grateful to the supporters who continue to contribute to the Charity in this way. All donations to the Charity are, of course, much appreciated and mean that the Charity can continue to support the worthwhile work being done in India.

Fundraising events are valuable not just for the income they provide but as a way of increasing the visibility of the Charity. This year we were fortunate to benefit from the proceeds of a quiz night in Purbeck and also from a Lenten lunch and a garden party organised by one of our long-standing supporters. Together, these three events raised over three thousand pounds.

As in the previous year, the budget plan for 2023 anticipated that expenditure would exceed receipts. In the event, the deficit of £1,457 was smaller than expected. Our income was higher than our budget predicted, boosted by the income from fundraising and also by a legacy from the estate of a long-standing supporter.

Expenditure was somewhat lower than we had planned for. During the year, we have seen some changes in the work we support with our two Indian partners. Our outreach and family support work has now transferred from Idhaya, which runs the Sunshine Special school, to St. Anthony's Foundlings. This led to a reduction in expenditure while the new arrangements were put in place. The number of children attending the Shanthi Lumin children's home during the year has remained significantly below the project's capacity and funding for the home has been reduced to reflect this.

The Charity continues to have a healthy balance sheet. We aim once again to spend somewhat more than our potential income in 2024, and if necessary to use some of the money held in reserve to support this.

Both of our Indian partners do their utmost to make the most of every rupee that we provide. We receive regular updates and photographs from them which give both trustees and supporters a very clear picture of the positive impact of our funding.

At the end of 2023, the Charity held £12,848 in the General Account and £15,240 in the Reserve Account, a total of £28,088.

Reserves Policy

We hold £15,240 in a Reserve account which would cover about 6 months of expenditure. However, we believe it is no longer necessary to hold back as much as this. At the same time, we consider that it would not be prudent to commit any of this money to fund on-going expenditure over the long term. Therefore, we intend to use some of this money to support particular projects or urgent needs as the occasion arises.

Risk

The Trustees are aware of the risks associated with aid to overseas countries: exchange rate fluctuations, cultural differences, creation of dependency and so on. These are taken into account when making grant decisions. They discuss with the Trustees of St Antony's Foundlings and with the Franciscan Sisters the impacts, positive and negative, that different forms of aid may make upon the Indian village communities. They also periodically review risks more generally.

Structure, governance and management

The Kanji Project is an unincorporated association registered by the Charity Commission on 4th March 2002 and governed by a Constitution (last updated 25 April 2015). It is managed by trustees.

Trustees

Trustees are elected by members at the Annual General Meeting. They may also be co-opted until the next Annual General Meeting by the existing Trustees. Trustees are themselves members of the charity.

When seeking to recruit new trustees, the existing Trustees are mindful of the skills, knowledge and experience needed by the Board of Trustees. We continue to review the Trustee Board's need for new membership.

Prior to appointment, potential trustees are interviewed, two references are obtained, and, if successful, the new trustee is required to sign a declaration confirming their eligibility to serve. New Trustees are provided with information giving them an overview of the charity's operations, but much of the Trustee induction is done informally with further information being supplied as needed in Trustee meetings and in other communications.

Trustees meet about every six weeks. They do not receive remuneration for their work with the charity, but expenses incurred solely for charity business are reimbursed on request.

Trustees who served in 2023 were:

Jennifer Cruse	re-elected 02/07/2022
Veronica Clark	re-elected 08/06/2018
George Foden	re-elected 02/07/2022
Sofie Franzen (Chair)	re-elected 02/07/2022

Pamela Jones	re-elected 14/06/2019
Alison Worgan	re-elected 02/07/2022
Peter Dacombe	re-elected 02/07/2022
Benjamin Skinner	elected 17/06/2023

Patron and President

Lady Cotton is a Patron of The Kanji Project.

Mr Ian Parr is the President of the Charity.

Volunteers

The Kanji Project is run entirely by volunteers: the Trustees plus the many other people who give of their time and their skills to the Charity. It is thanks to all these people that the Charity can commit such a large proportion of its income to its charitable purposes.

Serious incidents

The Trustees are legally obliged to report to The Charity Commission any serious incident (e.g. fraud) adversely affecting the charity. No such serious incident has occurred during 2022.

Bankers

CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

Honorary Legal Adviser

Elizabeth Jones

Approved by the Trustees on 20th May 2024 and signed on their behalf by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Cruse'.

Jennifer Cruse
Secretary

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of The Kanji Project Trust

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of The Kanji Project Trust ("the TRUST") for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act).

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
2. the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Nick Westcott Retired Bank Official
15 Motcombe Road Eastbourne
East Sussex BN21 1QT
07 February 2024

Financial Statement for the year ended 31 December 2023

CAF Cash General Account

	2023	2022
RECEIPTS		
Regular donations	21,962	19,837
One-off donations (1)	2,552	7,257
Fund-raising events	3,026	1,640
Gift Aid payment from HMRC	5,151	5,651
Sale of Indian artefacts	345	155
Bank interest	31	15
TOTAL	33,067	34,555

PAYMENTS

Grants to St. Antony's Foundlings		
- School + Shanthi Lumin grants	16,950	18,900
- Village outreach work	1,500	0
- House building grant	0	2,000
Sunshine School grants	6,220	7,640
Salaries (India)	8,500	6,000
Bank charges	280	319
Printing - newsletters and cards	299	593
Postage	96	0
Website hosting and helpdesk	161	143
Purchase of Indian artefacts	266	119
Membership fee	50	50
Trustee expenses	202	0
TOTAL	34,524	35,764

Excess of Payments over Receipts **1,457** **1,209**

CAF Gold Reserve Account

Receipts

Interest **174** **43**

Payments **0** **0**

Balance Sheet

Assets

CAF Cash General Account 12,848 14,306

CAF Gold Reserve Account 15,240 15,066

TOTAL **28,088** **29,372**

Notes to accompany the 2022 annual accounts

1. Prior to this year, the majority of income from the CAF donate platform was recorded as 'one off payments'. For 2023 this has changed to reflect the number of regular donations being made through CAF-donate.