



Porridge and Rice

Feeding for Education

Porridge and Rice Annual Report

Registered Charity Number 1155841

Trustees' report and accounts

For the year to 30 September 2020

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Figure 1: Washing station at Excel School funded by Rotary

1 Introduction

On 31 December 2019, the World Health Organization was informed of a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. COVID-19 arrived and changed everything,

Events like summer fairs and Petting Days, had become the charity's main source of income. In one fell swoop, the charity lost almost all its income. It came as a huge shock and forced the charity to think very carefully about its future, even it had one.

Making matters worse, schools in Kenya lost their source of income when schools were closed because of COVID19. Instantly, with no pupils, schools had no money to pay salaries and rent. Landlords were demanding money and threatening to throw schools out their premises, and teachers were forced to look for alternative sources of income, close to impossible with businesses laying off staff because they were forced to close, and families letting servants go to remain isolated from COVID19. Kenya has no welfare system so many staff headed back to their villages to live with their rural families, subsistence farmers, rather than remaining unemployed and hungry in the slums.

The charity was forced to think very carefully about its future, even it had one.

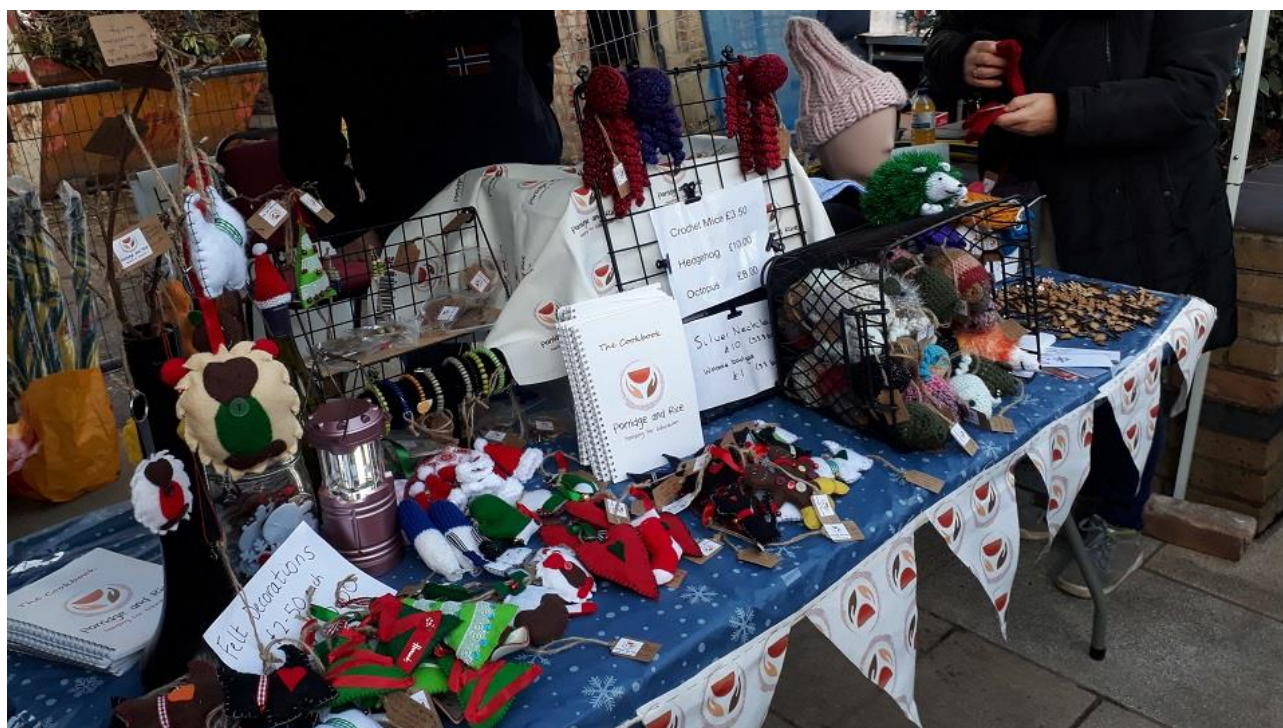


Figure 2: The charity stand at Church Street Fair before COVID19 struck

2 The Future

At first there appeared to be only two options for Porridge and Rice, either to suspend all operations until COVID19 was over, or to close the charity.

While the charity lost almost its entire income, it still has a small monthly income from monthly standing orders, gift aid and its recently created Amazon store. There was a concern that people would cancel standing orders because they may be experiencing financial difficulties themselves due to COVID19, but this did not happen, in fact when the charity informed its supporters that thanks to COVID19 it has lost most of its income, some actually increased their monthly donations.

Because it still had some income, the option to close the charity was rejected, and instead, other alternatives were explored.

First, the charity appealed to existing supporters and past volunteers to Kenya. Then the charity considered other possible sources of income. Finally, the charity sought to identify the greatest needs for its five partner schools.

As already stated, some supporters who already had monthly standing orders, increased their monthly payments, adding another £200 a month to the charity's income and the associated gift aid. The extra money was appreciated but still left the charity with an incredibly small monthly income.



Figure 3: Rotary visit Excel Emmanuel before COVID19

Past volunteers had a sizeable impact on the charity's funds. This was as surprising as it was heart-warming. Several young people who had spent time in Kenya, reached out to friends and family to raise money, with one volunteer raising almost £2,500 on their own. As volunteers raised money, the charity found it had some money with which it could actually do something.

Then the charity appealed for book donations and expanded its offering of second-hand books on Amazon. The store had been set up to sell a range of new and hand-made products, adding some second-hand books only because of a donation, so it came as a surprise when the second-hand books proved to be the best sellers. The clear decision was to simply focus on second-hand books. Book donations came in steadily and the charity was able to increase its income from its Amazon book store. Sales were good but delivery was a challenge. With isolation rules, few people could help to pick and pack books. Even worse, most post offices were closed and the open ones had long queues and limits on the numbers of items each person could post at one time.

Next, the charity decided to see if could sell other items on-line. The idea was to list donated items on eBay to see what would sell – most items did not sell or sold for so little that it wasn't worth the time and effort, with one the exception of plants and seeds.



Figure 4: Lunch served at Forrester School

Plants and seeds just took off with the charity selling everything from cuttings to established plants. The challenge was again packing and despatching orders. The closest post office that was open was a half hour drive away, and customers were only allowed to post 3 items at a time. Arriving with 20 to 30 orders to post at a time, was not well received, and it took a lot of negotiating with the post office to find a solution that suited both. The post office agreed to accept 5 items at a time after processing two customers from the queue. This was better than being forced to join the back of the queue every 5 items. It was still slow but meant the charity could do its posting.

Posting was further complicated by delays in delivery. The worst case was a pack of seeds posted from the charity address in SW London taking three weeks to reach North London. Fortunately, people were very understanding but sending live plants in the post in hot weather meant that until the charity improved its methods of packing to give plants the best chance of survival, several orders had to be sent out a second time when the plants did not survive.

Through fundraising by volunteers and its on-line sales, Porridge and Rice managed to generate enough income to actually offer help to its partner schools in Kenya.



Figure 5: Uji flour delivered for school breakfasts

3 Partner Schools

On March 2020, the Kenyan government closed all schools until further notice.

As all five partner schools generate their income from fees charged to students, this meant that overnight schools went from having a monthly income to have absolutely no money at all.

This created a huge problem for teachers because they depend totally on their monthly salaries. Schools paid out the little money they had left, not even enough for a full month salary, and then teachers were on their own. Alternative jobs were in short supply with business closing and laying off staff due to COVID19, and household and gardening jobs disappearing as families in the wealthy suburb of Karen isolating. While teachers tried, there were no real alternative jobs to be had. Faced with spending several months in the slums with no income, many teachers decided to move back to their rural ancestral villages to join family because they knew they would at least have something to eat from subsistence farming. Fortunately, even when born and raised in the Nairobi slums, most people retain close ties with their rural origins so it was a real option. The rules implemented by the government to stop the spread of COVID19 prohibited people living in the slums to leave but teachers chose to break these rules rather than live penniless in the slums.



Figure 6: Excel staff meeting at the school to prepare breakfasts

No money meant that schools could not pay their rent so when landlords came knocking, they were forced to plead for understanding. Landlords insisted that that it was not their problem and that they expected rent to be paid as usually threatening to evict the schools throwing school property into the street. The leaders of each school pleaded and pleaded, and only one landlord listened, the landlord for Heri Junior, probably because his daughter was a pupil in the school. Landlords became more aggressive threatening some staff and chaining schools shut.

The situation quickly became very desperate.

4 COVID19 Plan

As the charity's funds improved, it was possible for it to take action.

The charity started to pay all teachers a monthly stipend which in good months amounted to as much as a quarter of their salaries. This enabled some to return to Nairobi and put food on their tables. The salaries paid were incredibly small but they prevented teachers from becoming destitute and homeless. Teachers were incredibly grateful especially as they watched other people in the slums lose their entire incomes. As Kenya has not welfare system, when a person loses their income, they have nowhere to turn other than friends and relatives. The charity was relieved to be able to provide some support to school staff.



Figure 7: Kenyan Leadership team meeting and distancing socially

The charity started negotiations with landlords offering to pay a monthly amount if landlords halved rents for the duration of restrictions and agreed to give schools 6 months after restrictions were lifted, to repay outstanding rent. Negotiations were conducted vicariously with the head and deputy head negotiating on behalf of the charity with the landlords.

Landlords in the Nairobi slums are used to treating tenants incredibly badly, evicting them for the smallest of reasons. Tenants frequently do not know their rights and are always too poor to be able to afford legal redress. In addition, landlords can afford to bribe the police when tenants attempt to complain to them. Tenants are at the mercy of their landlords.

Not used to being challenged by their tenants, negotiations started very badly, with landlords shouting, demanding, and threatening. It took several meetings for landlords to understand that no amount of bullying and intimidation would enable the schools to generate money. When they did, they then turned their attention to the charity, demanding that the charity pay the rent in full, under the mistaken impression that all Westerners are wealthy.

It took a lot of meetings over around three weeks, before landlords began to negotiate seriously. While all accepted that they would have to accept only part rent for the time of the restrictions they resisted halving the rent and allowing the schools 6-months post restrictions to pay the outstanding rent. Eventually, each landlord when they realised that the charity would not change its stance and that it was the only chance of them getting any more, agreed to the charity terms in writing. Locked schools were unlocked and staff were allowed to use the facilities freely. The charity started making monthly payments to landlords.



Figure 8: Breakfast served at Excel Emmanuel during COVID19

The toughest task was cutting back the charity programmes. After years of developing them, it felt like a huge step backwards but without the funds, there was simply no choice. After discussion with the schools, it was decided that the charity was retain breakfast provision to pupils remaining in the slums. There wasn't enough money for the full feeding programme unfortunately, and hunger was becoming a real issue for many children as their parents lost their jobs. In addition, the decision was made to open the breakfast to other local children based on need.

For the first two months of the restrictions, schools were not allowed to even have children on the premises so nothing could be done, but after conversations with the local chief, it was agreed that with certain precautions, schools would be allowed to serve breakfasts, namely wearing masks and distancing socially.

With many families moving back to rural areas, the number of pupils remaining in the slums fell considerably to around a third of a normal school term. This meant that the charity had the capacity to open breakfasts to other children in the community, and staff were tasked with identifying families in real need, and inviting their children to receive Uji each day. In extreme circumstances, some adults were even invited to have breakfast provided by the charity.

Sadly, the charity was unable to continue any other programmes. It was a challenge supporting the breakfasts, staff stipends, and part-payments for rent, but with considerable effort, enough money was raised each month for this to be possible. On the positive side, the charity was able to do considerably more than was originally envisaged. It had come a long way from the initial and very real possibility of actually closing it down.



Figure 9: Exercise at Excel School during COVID19

5 Legal and Administrative Details

Porridge and Rice is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Its registered address is 64 Rydal Gardens, Hounslow, TW3 2JH, its registration number is 1155841, and it is governed by a constitution lodged with the Charity Commission. Porridge and Rice has registered Uji na Mchele with the Charity Commission as an alternative name, and the acronyms PaR and UnM for English and KiSwahili use respectively.

Porridge and Rice owns the domains www.porridgeandrice.co.uk and www.porridgeandrice.com. The latter is automatically directed to the former, and the charity's website is located at the former. The website is hosted by 123 webhosting.

Porridge and Rice is represented on Facebook under the name of Porridge and Rice. The Facebook page is frequently updated to reflect events of interest about the charity. Porridge and Rice is also active on both Twitter and Instagram with frequent updates and growing followers.

Porridge and Rice has a UK bank account with Barclays Bank and a Kenyan Bank account with Standard Chartered. The UK Barclays account number is 23708926, sort code 20-42-73, IBAN GB09 BARC 2042 7323 7089 26, SWIFTBIC BARCGB22, and address Barclays Bank Plc 210 High Street Hounslow Middlesex TW3 1DL. The Kenyan bank account is number 01-003340546-00 at Standard Chartered Bank Building, Kenyatta Avenue, Nairobi, Kenya, and swift code SCBLKENXXXX.



Figure 10: Serving breakfast to pupils during COVID19

6 Governance and management

In the UK, Porridge and Rice is run by a committee that meets once a month. The committee is made up of both members and trustees. Trustees are appointed for a term of 2 years and registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The names of the trustees of the charity can be viewed by the public on their website.

Porridge and Rice welcomes people who wish to participate in the running of the charity as members. Other than areas identified by the trustees such as the final accounts and the appointment of trustees, members are able to participate fully at committee meetings. Meetings are documented by minutes that are circulated after the event.

All members and trustees are volunteers. They not only do not receive remuneration and cover all their own expenses. The charity has no paid staff in the UK.

The current trustees of the charity are in alphabetical order

- Brigitte Pickersgill
- Jude Hanlon
- Ken Surridge (chair)
- Vish Arora



Figure 11: The Porridge and Rice Cookbook sold well

7 Operational review

Porridge and Rice is partnered with five community schools, Excel Emmanuel in Ngando, Lizpal in Ngando, Heri Junior in Mithonge, Compassion in Githingoro, and Forrester in Kawangware.

Porridge and Rice continues to lead with the Feeding and Nutrition programme when it partners with a school led by the Kenyan leadership team which continues to take on more and more responsibility on the ground. Existing programmes continue to evolve on what is learned in Nairobi and changing needs.

UK trustees and volunteers visit Kenya throughout the year to monitor the work of the charity and to learn from local staff. The visits provide the chance to cement relationships, remain up-to-date on life in the Nairobi slums, mentor the leadership team, and monitor projects.

The Kenyan Leadership team is made up of the head and deputy head of each school. The leadership team in Kenya is in alphabetical order of school –

Evanson Njeru (Compassion School); Priscillah Mmugoh (Compassion School); Titus Kimongo (Excel Emmanuel School); Mary Kinyanjui (Excel Emmanuel School); Rispa Auma (Forrester School); Pascal Otieno (Forrester School); Ruth Mbithe (Heri Junior School); Haggai Panyako (Heri Junior School); Beth Wambugu (Lizpal School); Grace Mwangi (Lizpal School)



Figure 12: Sweet potato cultivated to provide Vitamin A to children

8 Financial Review

Porridge and Rice remains active raising funds through events, foundation grants, and direct sales.

Events like Hands Fair and Petting Day are well-established part of the charity's fundraising schedule. In the beginning, the charity signed up for almost any local fair, but it has become more selective with time, choosing instead to attend fewer fairs where it can expand its offering and raise more money. For example, the first time the charity attended Hands Fair, it raised £300, whereas this year it raised £2,500, which is expected to increase each year.

The charity has successfully obtained financial support from foundations, and works to maintain good relations with donors. Grant applications are time consuming, so while the charity will continue to pursue this route, other sources of funding are underway.

Income from standing orders continues to grow providing a reliable monthly income. The charity remains committed to growing this source of income. Also, the charity has a number of initiatives underway to generate income all year round from its base. The leading project is building an Amazon store.

Keeping administrative costs in the UK to a minimum remains a priority for Porridge and Rice. The charity considers it important that money donated is used to aid the people in Kenya as much as possible. While some administrative costs are inevitable and these will grow as the charity grows, Porridge and Rice will monitor all costs in the UK very closely.

Costs in Kenya are incurred in Kenyan Shillings and currency conversion fluctuates.

Trustees and members do not receive a salary from the charity, and cover their own expenses.



Figure 13: Knitted sparkly hedgehogs sell well at fairs and on-line

9 Accounts for 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2020

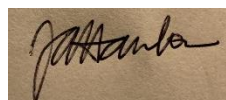
These accounts were prepared on a receipts and payments basis using an exchange rate of KES124.34 to £1.

Receipts	GBP
Balance Year End 2019	1,034.80
Fundraisers & Donations	19,336.81
HMRC Gift Aid	891.64
Standing Order	4,855.00
Stripe	541.28
The Giving Machine	50.80
World of Books	134.15
Amazon	8,176.62
Goods & Services in Kind	1,231.17
Total Receipts	36,252.27
Payments	GBP
Bank Charges	131.44
Postage	955.48
Website	323.69
Seeds	457.77
Wages	1,714.50
Fundraising Expenses	275.00
Education and Sponsorship, Kenya	402.68
Facilities and Furniture, Kenya	47.32
Health and Hygiene, Kenya	539.06
Rights and Gender, Kenya	123.00
Extracurricular Activities, Kenya	146.31
Sustainability and Accountability, Kenya	34.00
Feeding and Nutrition, Kenya	13,272.82
Salaries, Kenya	9,385.91
Rent Assistance	1,805.37
Total Payments	29,614.34
Balance Total	6,637.93

The annual report including accounts were approved by the trustees on and signed on their behalf



Ken Surridge (chair)
Date: 30 July 2020



Judith Hanlon (trustee)
Date: 30 July 2020



Figure 14: School staff travelling during COVID19



Figure 15: Teacher Andrew serving breakfast to pupils