



# 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 2021

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**Figure 1:** Breakfast at Heri Junior

## 1 Introduction

After initial concerns about surviving, Porridge and Rice settled into a COVID-19 routine looking for new ways to raise funds. The charity expanded its offerings on-line and supporters continued to raise funds from friends and families. While the phased end of lockdown made matters a little easier for the charity, continued concerns about the spread of COVID-19 meant that little changed.

The schools in Kenya remained shut until the end of 2020 when the government ended lockdown in Kenya. Despite the re-opening of the schools, attendance numbers remained low with parents unable to find work and choosing to remain in rural areas. In addition, many of those who returned were unable to pay fees.

In Ukraine, COVID continued to spread making travel to the country almost impossible and orphanages remaining isolated. The relationship with Future for Orphans grew with discussions and planning taking place on-line.

Despite the charity's income being much lower than previous years, it established a steady income enabling it to continue working in Kenya and Ukraine enabling the charity to have a positive impact in the two regions of its operations.



**Figure 2:** Breakfast at Excel Emmanuel



## 2 The UK

Lockdowns and restrictions in the UK had a huge impact on Porridge and Rice with all summer fairs and club meetings cancelled. Years of hard work building a name and relationships that yielded support and funds came to an end overnight.

The charity had become really well known at local community and school fairs with people seeking out the Porridge and Rice stall at events to buy another knitted hedgehog or pet the guinea pigs. The petting zoo and sales of food, crafts, jewellery, and books became staple offerings raising more and more money each year and engaging new volunteers and supporters. The first year that Porridge and Rice had a stall at Hands Fair on Twickenham Green it raised just over £400 while the year before lockdown the charity with its three stalls at the same fair, raised over £2500. In addition, the charity had developed a full round of speaking events and quarterly petting days. Organisations like Rotary halted all meetings and restrictions meant that petting days were not permitted. Overnight the charity's means for raising funds and marketing itself came to a sudden and inflexible end.

Volunteers that had travelled to Kenya were the first to step up, raising funds through their contacts - friends, families, colleagues, schools, universities – anywhere they could. Money came in from New York, Munich, Bristol, and several other locations, in effect, anywhere that a volunteer lived. Their response was unexpected and invaluable.



**Figure 3:** Handmade decorations for sale on Amazon

Former volunteers came to the charity's rescue as quickly as COVID-19 lockdowns had descended. They provided essential funding for the charity to continue its work while it sought new means of fund raising. They were exceptional and the charity will forever remain in their debt.

A former volunteer to Kenya is worthy of special mention – Olivia Cowell. She discovered the charity's volunteer scheme on-line and travelled to Kenya in Summer 2019. When Olivia heard that the charity was struggling for funding, she turned her mind to fundraising designing, marketing and selling a range of outstanding products month after month, donating all the profits to Porridge and Rice. Olivia worked incredibly hard giving freely of her time funding the enterprise on her own. She proved to be a wonderful supporter of the charity and an exceptional individual, a person of enormous integrity, creativity, and dedication. The charity remains deeply grateful to her.

The charity Amazon store selling second-hand books and craft items was established before the COVID-19 pandemic providing the charity with a steady source of funds. Book donations remained steady and Amazon sales of second-hand books increased in lockdown, however, the logistics of picking, packing and despatching orders became very complicated as did managing customer expectations as Royal Mail struggled to deliver. Before the pandemic, the process of fulfilling Amazon orders involved a small number of people visiting the charity's official address to pick and wrap orders before taking a walk to the local post office to post items. Lockdown rules meant that volunteers could not visit the charity's address and complicated, even inconvenient ways, had to be devised to keep the orders being despatched.



**Figure 4:** Olivia Cowell with the cards she designed and made



The main person managing the process of despatching Amazon orders generated a picking list and postage labels remotely. The people living at the book location then picked the books, printed the labels and then returned them to be wrapped and labelled. The wrapped parcels were then collected and driven to an open post office half an hour away as all local post offices had closed. Because of long queues, the post office was not happy to accept a single customer with 30 to 50 parcels each visit. It took careful conversations and co-operation to find a solution that worked for the charity and pleased the post office. Eventually orders went out regularly despite the increased effort and time. However, given the charity's need for funding, it was worth the effort and inconvenience.

The charity explored new products and sales channels with seeds and plants on eBay proving very successful alongside existing clothing sales. Plants grown to sell at fairs were listed on eBay. Sales were steady with the income quickly reaching the same level as that of Amazon. Despatching plants was as complicated as Amazon products with one serious complication – delivery times.

Royal Mail struggled with deliveries during COVID-19 with large piles of post building up in sorting offices. Guarantees like next day for first class were suspended which was not just frustrating for customers but time-consuming for the PaR team responding to queries, but also meant that plants often died before reaching their destination. Fortunately, most people were very understanding but it nonetheless cut profits as orders had to be sent out multiple times. There were a small number of people that refused to accept that delivery times were beyond the control of the charity but for the sake of the charity's reputation, they were given refunds.



**Figure 5:** Bearded Iris rhizomes were sold on eBay

Delivery challenges affected charity supplies, not just delivery, when for example onion seeds sold out and more needed to be ordered to satisfy orders, the order was placed, and instead of arriving in 48 hours, it took nearly 3 weeks leading to challenges managing customer expectations. Despite the challenges, selling plants and seeds on-line produced valuable income for the charity.

The logistics of packing and despatching orders remained time-consuming and awkward for the bulk of the year. The processes devised were cumbersome but necessary to safeguard the health of volunteers and the people they interacted with. The charity worked hard to follow lockdown regulations and to uphold the best scientific advice to play its part in not facilitating the spread of COVID-19 even after the phased exit from lockdown began on 8 March 2021.

Lockdown stopped all local activities, not just fund-raising activities. Some transitions like committee meetings were easy and seamless moving to Skype - no meetings were missed. Other transitions required creativity and planning. Volunteering for Duke of Edinburgh became virtual with students being set tasks to support the charities social media goals like finding new subscribers for the charity YouTube channel and promoting Facebook posts. Some tasks worked well and others were unsuccessful but the goal of enabling students to complete their charity volunteering component for Duke of Edinburgh was achieved.



**Figure 6:** Kenyan leadership team meeting at Heri Junior



### 3 Kenya

Even though Kenya did not lockdown for as long as the UK, the impact of COVID-19 was severe for the country and devastating for the poorest members of society. The UN estimates that African lockdowns have been a major set back in the fight to eradicate poverty with experts suggesting it could take over 10 years to get back to pre-COVID19 levels of absolute poverty.

The forced closure of schools meant that they had no income so were unable to pay teachers and landlords. Life in the slums is month to month – people and institutions do not earn sufficient to save. In addition, there was no assistance from the government so teachers and schools were left penniless as a result of lockdown.

Parents in the slums lost their jobs when businesses closed terminating casual labour and homes told domestic servants stay away as families isolated. Large numbers were evicted by impatient landlords as they were unable to pay rent. Rather than being homeless and hungry in the Nairobi slums, many families moved to rural areas to join family where they had rent-free accommodation and could subsist on the land despite the government ban on travel away from home.

The charity stepped in to assist with rent and salaries. This was essential to enable schools and staff to survive but it meant cutting back on established programmes.



**Figure 7:** Excel staff meet to prepare breakfast



The Feeding and Nutrition programme was reduced to a breakfast programme, and the Rights and Gender programme only maintained the supply of sanitary pads to girls from partner schools. While there were some small amounts spent on the other programmes, they were very small so for all practical purposes they were shelved. For example, the Furniture and Facilities programme only paid for a single project, namely the repair of the roof at Excel Emmanuel. The roof at the Excel Emmanuel was in such a poor state that classrooms and furniture became thoroughly wet every time it rained. The charity decided that the damage that would be caused to the school furniture meant that the roofs had to be repaired and could not wait until post COVID-19.

The charity paid partial salaries to all school staff. The charity did not have the money to pay full salaries but was able to afford about a third of what staff were usually paid. This enabled some staff to survive in the Nairobi slums. For others it was not enough and they followed other people returning to their traditional villages. It did mean though that while life was very difficult financially, the staff at partner schools were not penniless.

In addition, the charity paid part rent to landlords. Most landlords demanded the full rent and negotiations were tricky and sometimes fraught as the schools had not money and the charity refused to pay the full rent. The charity also demanded that their partial payment was accepted as full payment for the period to ensure that schools were not saddled with a crippling post-COVID19 debt. Landlords in the slums are not used to being forced to negotiate. The inhabitants of the slums do not have the funds to enforce the few protections they have in the law (there aren't many) and landlords will evict people with no hesitation where the people will go the day rent is due.



**Figure 8:** Breakfast is served at Excel

The landlords exercise considerable power of the inhabitants of the slums, so did not welcome push back from the charity. Some demanded. Some threatened. Most screamed and shouted asserting that it was not their problem that schools had been closed. One landlord said he considered it no different to when schools close for school holidays. The charity did not budge and eventually landlords realising that there would be no movement and they could not get alternative tenants agreed to the charity's terms. The charity required landlords to drop rent to 40% of what it was before lockdown, allow staff full access to the premises as before, and keep the rent at 40% for a number of months when lockdown ended. Each school was different but slowly landlords agreed. One school was an exception Heri Junior, where the landlord, also a parent, simply told the school not to worry – such landlords are rare and it is possible that his child being at the school had an impact on his decision.

The Feeding and Nutrition programme became the breakfast programme serving Uji to pupils and staff remaining in the slums, and later including other children that local staff were aware were from homes that were struggling and some street children living locally. It wasn't simply a matter of continuing to serve each day as COVID-19 restrictions required masks, social distancing and the permission of the Chief. Local staff did a wonderful job persuading the Chief but it took several meetings and considerable assurance to get him to agree.

There were no visits to Kenya organised by the charity. WiFi access is poor in the slums so communication was reduced to email and messaging. Mobile messaging is very affordable and there are numerous located in the slums so while it wasn't possible to speak to any of the Kenyan staff, communication continued and was very effective.



**Figure 9:** New roof at Excel

Lockdown ended completely at the end of 2020 in Kenya with all restrictions lifted.

Schools opened in January 2021 but attendance was poor. Many students were with their parents in the rural areas and not knowing if there would be further lockdowns, parents were reluctant to return to seek new employment preferring village life and subsistence farming for survival. Parents that had remained in the slums were on limited incomes as businesses and homes were slow to rehire. Large numbers of people in the slums work as servants in nearby homes in areas like Karen, and many families were hesitant to allow outsiders back into their homes, aware that COVID-19 was still a very real threat to health. It took several months for families to return to hiring domestic staff. Some such parents decided to hold off sending their children back to school aware they could not pay the fees, while others sent their children back asking the schools to wait until their jobs normalised for them to pay the fees. The consequence of both decisions was the same for the schools – no fees.

The charity believes it will probably take the year for pupil numbers to return to pre-COVID levels, and that there is little chance of many parents who sent the children back in the first term, being able to catch up on fees. Realistically, it is the view of the charity that not only will it take a year for pupil numbers to rebuild but the same length of time for school income to return to pre-COVID levels. So despite all restrictions being lifted, 2021 has been and will continue to be a very difficult time for the charity's partner schools.



**Figure 10:** Anti-FGM workshops



Teacher Mary of Excel Emmanuel had a serious accident. Walking to the school one day, she was hit by a vehicle. She had to hospitalised and required surgery to pin broken bones together. The charity raised the money to cover the cost of her care. The Kenyan government does not provide more than the most basic health services on the state. Without the assistance of the charity, Mary would have had to borrow large sums from friends and family, or allow her leg to heal deformed possibly never walking again. Mary is now well and active, with only a slight, slight limp.

The charity has always supported the best medical advice and so started a campaign for staff to be vaccinated against COVID-19. With considerable amounts of misinformation doing the rounds in the slums, there were a lot of questions so it took a while to address these and persuade people that it was a wise step to take. Some staff had medical conditions which made them rightly nervous, so the charity paid for them to see a physician to ensure that it was safe for them to be vaccinated. All the staff who visited a physician were cleared for vaccination. In two, the physician identified other treatment which was needed – the charity paid for the treatment. The staff thus benefited both by being assured that it was safe for them to be vaccinated, and by having other conditions identified and treated.

When restrictions were lifted, Kenyan leadership meetings resumed with the local team working together to support each other and discussing common interests.



**Figure 11:** Community Gatherings resumed in 2021

Compassion School has been housed in the grounds of a local church since the school was founded. The church and the school have worked together fine for years until the recent partner took over a few years ago. From the outset, he has sought to evict the school from the church grounds, grounds which are not even owned by the church. The pastor has employed a number of tactics ranging from trying to double the rent paid to the church and removing classroom windows. Despite numerous discussions, the pastor seems unwilling to listen. This year it got ugly with classrooms and furniture destroyed by supporters of the pastor and Evanson the head teacher of Compassion attacked. Evanson has demonstrated patience and resilience refusing to allow his school to be evicted by the pastor and his supporters. The charity considered helping the school move but with COVID-19, funds were not available.

The wonderful work done by Evanson, head teacher of Compassion, resumed once restrictions were lifted, and workshops to combat FGM were held. After seeing his sister mutilated, Evanson has been a tireless campaigner against FGM working as hard at educating and campaigning, as he does in running his school. He leads a group of activists that travel the country, teaching girls about their rights and educating local communities on the serious harm done by FGM.

Life in Kenya is returning to normal but even though restrictions were lifted at the beginning of 2021, the impact of COVID19 on communities is still being felt with partner schools being no exception. It will take time for the damage done by the necessary measures taken to save lives. To be reversed. The charity will work with local staff to help bring this about for partner schools.



**Figure 12:** Damage at Compassion School



## 4 Ukraine

In 2018, Porridge and Rice first considered working with under-privileged orphans in Ukraine. The charity had a number of items ranging from stationary to clothing that had been donated but which could not be taken to Kenya cost effectively, and was looking for a worthy cause.

Ukraine is a poor country with a disproportionately large number of orphans compared to other European countries. After considerable research and thought, the charity made contact with a charity in Ukraine that was working with orphans and decided to work with them. The organisation is known as Orphans Future Ukraine, founded and led by Andriy Nazarenko. After a number of discussions, it was found that both charities share the same primary goal, empowering and enabling disadvantaged children held back by poverty.

With shared values, PaR quickly built a relationship with Orphans Future Ukraine and started making plans for working together. Volunteers were signed up to visit Ukraine to help in summer camps teaching orphans important life skills, plans were made for young Ukrainians to visit the UK staying with local hosts, projects were discussed to support young orphans when they age out of orphanages, and much more. Orphans Future Ukraine and Porridge and Rice quickly found common ground.



**Figure 13:** Young graduates supported by Orphans Future Ukraine



Plans were suddenly and unexpectedly halted when COVID-19 hit. Travel to Ukraine became impossible with UK and Ukrainian regulations to combat the spread of the pandemic, and orphanages in Ukraine were isolated to protect the children and staff. All plans involving travel were shelved immediately and indefinitely.

PaR and Orphans Future Ukraine continued to talk building a good relationship based on shared goals. New ideas for support were discussed on a case-by-case basis and a number of good projects were identified ranging from financial support for the staff of Orphans Future Ukraine to the growing of vegetables for sale by the charity and even buying raffle tickets for a local fund raiser. While it was very frustrating not being able to meet in person, Skype made it possible to talk regularly and identify constructive ways to assist. PaR were able to contribute to the work of Orphans Future Ukraine for the betterment of orphans in Ukraine.

As regulations lift in both countries and travel becomes possible again, the original plans will be revisited and reconsidered. The hope is that as soon as possible, a team will travel from the UK to meet the team in Ukraine and work on plans to play an active part in assisting orphans in Ukraine. It is clear that both charities have shared values in the fight against poverty especially child poverty, and that the teams have a rapport, so the expectation is that a long-term relationship will be built with PaR partnering with Orphans Future Ukraine.



**Figure 14:** Cultivating vegetables by Orphans Future Ukraine

## 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](http://www.porridgeandrice.co.uk) and [www.porridgeandrice.com](http://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 15:** Serving Breakfast at Heri Junior



## 6 Governance and management

In the UK, Porridge and Rice is run by a committee that meets once a month, on-line using Skype since the start of the pandemic. 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 16:** Gloves knitted by supporters of the charity always sell 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 was forced to put a lot of its work on hold as a direct result of the pandemic reducing its income. The bulk of the money raised by the charity in the year was spent on wages and rent. In addition, the charity decided to continue the breakfasts of the Feeding and Nutrition programme including street children and sanitary pads of the Rights and Gender programme plus a few urgent projects like replacing the roofs at Excel Emmanuel.

In previous years, UK trustees and volunteers visited Kenya multiple times throughout the year to monitor the work of the charity and to learn from local staff. The visits were very valuable enable the charity to build strong relationships with people the charity serves in Kenya and understand the challenges first hand. The pandemic ended all trips to Kenya, and communication was reduced to messaging and email. Fortunately, strong relationships had been built in previous years, and hopefully this has enabled UK charity leaders to stay aware of the needs for the partner schools.

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 17:** Cards designed and produced by Olivia Cowell

## 8 Financial Review

The pandemic had a major impact on fundraising for Porridge and Rice. Events which had previously been crucial to the income of the charity were closed indefinitely, and the charity was forced to consider whether it could even continue to work through the pandemic.

Former volunteers came to the rescue of the charity raising funds from their local contacts and families providing the charity with essential income that allowed the charity to continue a very scaled back set of programmes while exploring on-line opportunities.

Amazon book sales rose and new products were added. Amazon provided a steady stream of income for the charity. In addition, the charity continued to sell clothes on eBay and added plants which did particularly well. Amazon and eBay became an important source of income for the charity during the pandemic.

Income from standing orders remained steady with some supporters increasing their monthly donations on hearing about the loss of event income. The income from standing orders is important to the charity because it is reliable and constant.

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 in Kenya as much as possible. While some administrative costs are inevitable, Porridge and Rice will monitor these costs 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 18:** Craft products for sale on-line

## 9 Accounts for 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021

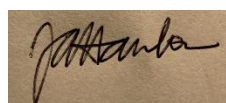
These accounts were prepared on a receipts and payments basis using an exchange rate of KES124.11 to £1.

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>GBP</b>
Balance Year End 2020	1,371.72
Donations	8,920.52
HMRC Gift Aid	460.35
Standing Order	6,070.00
eBay	5,295.57
The Giving Machine	195.80
World of Books	342.50
Amazon	3,963.46
Music MagPie	16.47
Goods & Services in Kind	4,458.40
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>31,094.79</b>
<b>Payments</b>	<b>GBP</b>
Bank Charges	11.00
Postage	1,046.58
Website	335.00
Seeds	120.00
Wages	2,464.00
Ukraine	1,490.00
Education and Sponsorship, Kenya	0.00
Facilities and Furniture, Kenya	483.44
Health and Hygiene, Kenya	1,830.31
Rights and Gender, Kenya	0.00
Extracurricular Activities, Kenya	0.00
Sustainability and Accountability, Kenya	0.00
Feeding and Nutrition, Kenya	9,076.95
Salaries, Kenya	9,643.30
Rent Assistance	1,466.88
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>27,967.46</b>
<b>Balance Total</b>	<b>3,127.33</b>

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



Ken Surridge (chair)  
Date: 30 August 2022



Judith Hanlon (trustee)  
Date: 30 August 2022