

Blossom Africa

Report of the Trustees and Unaudited Financial
Statements for Year End 31st March 2021



Registered charity name and number: Blossom Africa –
1161993

Principal address: 1 Station Approach, Caerleon, Newport, NP18
1NJ

Blossom Africa Trustees (as of 31st March 2021)

Aimee Parker (Chair)
Yvonne Forsey (Treasurer)
Linnea Renton
Holly Welsh
Hannah Fisher
Luke Armitage

Structure, governance and management

Blossom Africa is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), governed by a CIO constitution adopted on 10th January 2015 and registered at the charity commission on 3rd June 2015.

The charity is managed directly by its Board of Trustees, who make all decisions relating to the charity. The Board consists of six trustees as of 31st March 2021. The constitution states a minimum of three trustees and a maximum of 12 trustees.

Trustees are appointed following a formal recruitment process, including completion of an application form and undertaking an interview. The Board of Trustees agrees all new appointments and new trustees are formally appointed at the next Board meeting. All trustees are given a copy of the Constitution, the Trustee Handbook and Business Plan when they commence their role.

Public benefit statement

The Trustees of Blossom Africa confirm that they have complied with their duty under the Charities Act 2011 to have regard for the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and that the public benefit requirement has informed the activities of the charity in the period up to and including 31st March 2021.

Objectives and activities

- To support communities in Uganda to adapt to climate change

- To understand the specific needs of communities in Uganda through community engagement and consultation
- To source and deliver training programmes specific to the needs of the community
- To support the communities to initiate and own a range of sustainable projects, which have wider community benefit and have been developed and implemented by the community themselves
- To develop a network of individuals and groups who share learning and support each other in their development
- To grow Blossom Africa and to thoroughly monitor and evaluate its work and use the knowledge gained to influence the process of developing future projects and a sustainable funding base in the UK.

Overview of activities in 2020/2021

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic struck which led to the suspension of all field activities due to social distancing and government restrictions in Uganda. Blossom Africa responded by talking to the community in order to understand their needs and seeking funding to support them during this challenging time.

Thanks to a grant of £13, 559 from the WCVA Wales and Africa Programme, we were able to offer a comprehensive package of support to the communities throughout this financial year.

The grant enabled us to continue paying wages to our team throughout this period and we also purchased bicycles and other essential equipment for our Field Officers in Bunambutye.



Ezra (Blossom Africa Field Officer) with his bicycle

Prior to COVID-19 we established 6 village savings and loans (VSAL) groups with a membership of almost 200 people. For the first three months of the project, when heavy restrictions on movement and trading were in place, all of the group members received laundry soap, maize flour and salt. These were the items deemed most essential by the group members. We also supported each group member with maize seeds (2kg per person) and bean seeds (3kg per person) at the beginning of the planting season.



Winnie and Ezra (Blossom Africa Field Officers) with the seeds prior to distribution



A group member receiving soap, salt and flour

We were also able to provide each of the VSAL groups with additional funds. Each was given a 'revolving fund' which increased the capital available to them and enabled them to offer more loans to group members. This was important as livelihoods were affected due to the restrictions put in place on movement and trading. Each group was also given a 'crisis fund' which was distributed to group members experiencing hardship who would have been unable to pay back a loan at that time. All group leaders were given mobile phone credit to enable them to communicate with each other and group members when the tightest restrictions were in place.

We were also able to provide training in the community on the importance of handwashing, accompanied by practical training on building 'tippy taps' (simple handwashing devices made with jerrycans that hang on a stand and are tilted with a foot-operated lever). This knowledge has been shared with the wider community and tippy taps are now widely available and used within the area.



Handwashing training session with Jenga Uganda



'Tippy tap' training session

During this time we have strengthened our relationship with the local community health team and we have supported them with the provision of PPE equipment and funds for them to travel around the community raising awareness of COVID-19.

We have also been building relationships with the newly resettled community from the landslide-prone area of Bududa. Our project team and partners were accompanied by district officials on visits to the community where they undertook a needs assessment which will be used to guide further engagement and support. As part of the COVID-19 project,

Blossom Africa funded handwashing facilities and awareness raising activities within this community.



Handwashing facilities for the resettled community

With the funding from WCVA we also ran a successful Goat Keeping pilot project. Thirty goats were purchased and 5 members were selected from each group to be the recipients. These members received training on goat-keeping and were given a goat that had been checked and vaccinated by a local vet. Each recipient agreed to pass on the firstborn kid to another group member which will ensure sustainability for this project and bring wider community benefit.



The Blossom Africa team with the beneficiaries of the Goat Keeping pilot project

In this financial year we also funded technical support from our project partner Jenga Uganda, which was essential as we were implementing several new components that required specific expertise (handwashing / community health / goat keeping / working with a resettled community). This was therefore a great opportunity to build our organisational capacity and explore new ways of working with our Ugandan counterparts, drawing on their local knowledge and experience.

We were grateful to receive funding during this time and believe that it has had a large impact on individuals, families and the wider community in Bunambutye, Uganda, providing vital support during the pandemic crisis period but also helping to sow the seeds – both literally and figuratively – for longer-term recovery.

During this financial year, the team in the UK have developed a new website which will launch shortly. The framing of Blossom Africa is now much more focused on supporting the communities we work with to adapt to and become more resilient in the face of climate change.

In this financial year we continued to receive monthly donations of over £180. We continue to use social media and regular newsletters to engage and inform our supporters.

Plans for 2021/2022

We recently secured funding through the Austin Bailey Foundation to train two new groups in VSAL in the newly resettled community. We are keen to continue building a relationship with this community and to explore the most appropriate way to support them.

As an organisation we are keen to move our operations closer to the communities we work in. Until recently our Project Manager and Project Partner were based in Mbale which is over an hour away from Bunambutye. We are therefore currently

exploring new partnership opportunities in Bulambuli district (of which Bunambutye is a sub-county).

The climate crisis is deepening and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the community to grow their own food and make a living. We will continue to explore the most appropriate ways to support the community in the face of climate change. This may be through training in business skills to diversify income or through other climate smart interventions such as rainwater harvesting, irrigation or harnessing solar energy. As an organisation we have an appetite to learn and develop and will seek out like-minded organisations to enable us to progress this aim.

Financial Statement - Year End 31st March 2021

Start of year balance	£ 7,215.59
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INCOME

Regular donations	£ 1,920.00
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Single donations	£ 12.32
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Fundraising activities	£ 207.00
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Gift Aid	£ 736.40
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WCVA Grant	<u>£13,559.00</u>
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Total	£16,434.72
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EXPENDITURE

WVCA Project delivery	£13,969.56
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Website hosting	£ 213.28
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Project work in Uganda	<u>£ 1,433.15</u>
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Total	£15,615.99
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End of year balance	£ 8,043.32
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Reserves Policy

Blossom Africa will endeavour to maintain reserves of at least six months' running costs.