



Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Annual Report, and Unaudited Accounts
For the Period 1st January - 31st December 2020

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name	Empower International
Charity Registration Number	1168552
Charity Registered Address	59 Colston Road, Nottingham, NG6 9JN
Trustees	Mandy Simpson
	Phillip Edmundson
	Marie Rogers

Empower International

Trustees' Report

Introduction

Empower International was granted status as a UK charity on 2nd August 2016. We consider it a privilege to work towards reaching, empowering, and resourcing marginalised and disadvantaged people in Romania and beyond.

Structure, Governance and Management

Empower International operates within the CIO Foundation Model Structure and Constitution.

The charity decision making process is actioned in accordance with the constitution and our working practice document dated May 2017.

The appointment and retirement of trustees is to be in accordance with the constitution. The lead trustee proposes the appointing of a new trustee to the trustees, and upon a unanimous endorsement by the trustees, is appointed.

Objectives and Activities

The objects of the charity as set out in its governing document are...

- 1) The relief of unemployment for the benefit of the public, including the provision of training to those socially disadvantaged, to provide them with the skills to improve employability.
- 2) The relief of poverty (or financial hardship) by offering support services such as advice, coaching, mentoring, to assist individuals to help themselves, in order to enable those individuals to generate a sustainable income and be self-sufficient.

Summary of the main activities of the charity in relation to these objectives are...

- 1) To provide employable skills training through the Empower Romania project to both men and women of various ages, including (but not limited to) carpentry, construction, sewing and embroidery.
- 2) Empower Romania training programmes also include mentoring and assistance in developing wider skills necessary to become a valuable part of the workforce. This includes, for instance, encouraging daily consistent attendance, punctuality, the need to retain a good attitude, respect for authority and colleagues, and teamwork.

Empower International have taken the charity commissions' public benefit guidance into account when making any decision that it is relevant to.

Achievements and Performance

As we begin our review of 2020 it may be advantageous to provide a brief summary on the charitable work we have undertaken in North-West Romania in our latest project during the past 3 years. In 2017, we presented opportunities to the whole community of Sanpaul to be involved in training programmes called 'Empower Romania'. Over time we needed to choose smaller groups of people to create 'core' teams with both men and women and did so by providing clear parameters and criteria in which we would make selections about who we could work more closely with, and who would most benefit from the training. This was how we chose an initial team to work with. In 2018 we worked closely with a team of 5 men and 5 women, and in 2019 we were able to extend the programme with the women further and successfully work with 10 women (including the original 5).

In short, Empower Romania consists of two separate training programmes, one an apprenticeship in carpentry and construction, and the other for sewing and embroidery called the Lydia Project. Our Apprenticeship programme which offers training in carpentry and construction skills did not operate during 2019 or 2020.

The Lydia Project is a programme designed to teach employability skills whilst both learning to operate a sewing machine, and produce hand-embroidered items to a high standard. Whilst the women are creating products, they are also being mentored, and learning a wider skill set that could help them to become a valuable part of a workforce. The programme also encourages the women to independently consider how they may use their skills to enhance their homes, to be able to help others, and also work and earn money in a flexible way whilst navigating their complex family commitments.

2020 was a year when our planned transition of departure from Romania suffered major disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Having worked very closely with families in Sanpaul for over 3 years, we had planned a phased withdrawal that was due for completion by June 2020. Training opportunities have become more widely available to Roma communities in Romania through EU funding in recent years, and with the close proximity of the Corabia Foundation (our former partner organisation) to the community, we are encouraged that there is adequate ongoing support available to the people we have had the privilege to serve during our time in Romania.

In March 2020 the trustees of Empower International were forced to return to the UK due to travel restrictions in Europe and there was an unexpected pause to the Lydia Project training programme. Travel to Romania remained against UK government advice for several months and Romania remained in a lockdown situation with several restrictions lasting for much of the year. Schools remained closed and only operated remotely during 2020, which meant that 3 of the Lydia Project attendees who had been enrolled in a sewing school in the city of Cluj-Napoca were unable to attend and finish their course, although they were still able to access help and support online. The women were learning traditional Romanian embroidery patterns for clothing and other items that can be sold locally. The 3 women were able to teach the other 7 women what they were learning so that all 10 women were able to benefit from this teaching. The ability to create these traditional patterns and clothing is hugely beneficial to the women, creating sustainable empowerment in these women's lives.

During the first 3 months of 2020 we were focused primarily on the Lydia Project, but also involved in some children and youth work through our partnership with the Corabia Foundation. Consequently, we were able to offer their international visitors the opportunity to engage with the Lydia Project. Empower International did not directly organise any visitors other than trustees of the charity during 2020 due to coronavirus restrictions and travel uncertainty.

After our sudden and unexpected departure from Romania in March 2020 we planned to return at the earliest viable opportunity to finalise the ongoing packages of support that all 10 women in the Lydia Project would receive, as well as organising the closing down of all rented premises and the transportation of possessions to the UK. During July 2020, the trustees successfully organised and accomplished a fundraising event to provide sufficient funds to deliver support packages for the Lydia Project women. The packages consisted of a Singer Mademoiselle Sewing Machine, materials, threads, embroidery supplies, and patterns worth in excess of £175 per person. The team were finally able to return to Romania during late September to complete this work and departed for the final time on 1st November 2020.

During our time in Sanpaul from 2017 to 2020, we have been excited to receive visitors from the first Empower Romania project we implemented in Lazareni from 2014. The visitors have included previous graduates from the training programmes, who have been able to help teach new recruits the skills they have learnt, but also and perhaps most importantly, they have provided inspiration to both men and women to join and stay involved and committed to the Apprenticeship and Lydia Project programmes in Sanpaul.

The purpose of the training programmes is for the benefit of the public, to help those in financial hardship, and to help marginalised people from Roma communities to learn skills that could help them to become employable, and also in some cases to see the value of employment. The men and women in Sanpaul have limited education and literacy skills. Since our first visit to Romania in 2013, Empower International trustees have witnessed a cycle of relative poverty which affects many Roma communities. We have been steadfast in our commitment to assist the dismantling of this and have been encouraged by the results we have witnessed through the Empower Romania project training programmes, and the individual and group mentoring.

Looking forward to 2021

After the completion of the Sanpaul Empower Romania project, it is our intention to consider ways in which we can add value in a UK context to supporting people suffering marginalisation, oppression and injustice. It may be necessary to repurpose and possibly restructure the charity and due consideration will be given to this during 2021 as we recover collectively from the global pandemic which has affected people's lives in so many different ways.

Financial Review

Our funding was received through individuals and churches who chose to support the charity during 2020.

Donations	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£5,680.23	£2,870.86	£ 8,551.09
Expenses	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
Charitable Activity	£ 2,861.52	£ 3,998.85	£ 6,860.37
Website	£ 244.99		£ 244.99
Accountancy	£ 373.90		£ 373.90
Funds Transfer Fees	£ 32.57		£ 32.57
General Administration	£ 71.96		£ 71.96
Legal Fees	£ 75.57		£75.57
	£ 3,662.16	£ 3,997.20	£7,659.36

Carryover from Community Account 31 December 2019 **£1,513.64**

Opening Balance 01/01/2020 **£1,513.64**

Donations £8,551.09

Direct Charitable Expenses £6,860.37

Support & Administration £798.99

Closing Balance 31/12/2020 **£2405.37**

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Trustees by Mandy Simpson

(Chair of Trustees)



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Empower International

1168552

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01/01/2020

To

31/12/2020

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
	5,680	2,871	-	8,551	7,152
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	5,680	2,871	-	8,551	7,152
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	5,680	2,871	-	8,551	7,152
A3 Payments					
	3,662	3,997	-	7,659	8,203
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	3,662	3,997	-	7,659	8,203
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	3,662	3,997	-	7,659	8,203
Net of receipts/(payments)	2,018	1,126	-	892	1,051
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	387	1,126	-	1,513	2,564
Cash funds this year end	2,405	-	-	2,405	1,513

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	2,405	-	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))		OK	OK	OK

[illegible]

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

[illegible]

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

Mandy Simpson

08/06/2021