



Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended: 30 May 2021

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Legal and Administrative Information

Charity number	1170215
Registered address	Flat 98 Artillery Mansions Victoria Street LONDON SW1H 0HY
Trustees	Madeeha Ansari (Chair – term renewed for three years on 20 January 2021) Nabeela Ijaz Khan (Treasurer – appointed for a three-year term on 11 January 2020) David Walker (term renewed for three years on 20 January 2021) Jetske van Dijk (Appointed for three-year term on 10 September 2019) Cleo Fatoorehchi (Appointed on 17th March 2018) Muneezay Jaffery (term renewed for three years on 11 January 2020)
Bankers	Barclays Bank UK PLC

CITIES FOR CHILDREN (Reg. 1170215)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 30 May 2021

The Trustees present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 30 May 2021.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the receipts and payments basis in accordance with the Charity Commission guidance

Structure, governance and management

The charity is a CIO Foundation and governed by a constitution dated 02 July 2016. The charity registered with the Charities Commission on the 16 November 2016 (Charity reg no 1170215).

Trustees are responsible of setting strategies and policies and for ensuring these are implemented.

Risk management

The charity's trustees have considered the major risks to which the charity is exposed and have reviewed potential risks. Systems and procedures have been put in place to manage the risks and to mitigate any adverse outcomes, and a risk register is being maintained. A Child Protection Policy has existed since 2016 and is being updated to a Child Safeguarding Policy for Board Approval in the next financial year.

Objectives and activities

Drawing from the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Cities for Children seeks to protect what we frame as the “right to a childhood” – the right to read, the right to play and the right to feel safe - for children facing the challenges of urban poverty. These include children from refugee and migrant backgrounds who experience risks of neglect, abuse, exploitation and exclusion from basic services like education.

Our model is based on partnering with small, under-resourced organisations giving crucial education or protection services to under-served children. We have been set up to improve the quality of what our partners offer through three interwoven strands of work, creating holistic programmes for child development and wellbeing:

- The Right to Read: education support, particularly through provision of books and materials that can constitute real barriers to accessing school.
- The Right to Play: structured recreation programmes, carefully designed to build socio-emotional skills and motivate children to continue attendance at places of learning.
- The Right to Feel Safe: staff capacity building to offer psychosocial support to children facing the trauma of displacement and stressors of urban poverty.

Achievements and Performance

During this financial year, we demonstrated the ability to adapt to an uncertain and rapidly changing world, as evidenced by our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns in 2020 disproportionately affected children in urban poverty, with economic pressures and school closures threatening their connection with learning as well as a safe and carefree childhood. Our “Seekho Sikhao Saathi” or “Partners in Learning” programme was piloted in Pakistan as a response to school closures, for children without access to digital learning options. Through this, we engaged over 1300 children in playful learning sessions that supported positive mental health as well as maintained a connection with education, for children at risk of dropping out. We also began our foray into advocacy for street-connected children, and held high-level events engaging policy-makers including the Minister for Human Rights in Pakistan.

Highlights

- “Partners in Learning” piloted across eight Pehli Kiran Schools during the uncertainty of COVID-19
- A version of “Partners in Learning” taken to a Malala Fund school in the rural Shangla valley in partnership with Zindagi Trust
- Positive caregiving animation and resources created to address the rise in protection risks for children during lockdown
- Thought leadership role expanded through engagement in several online events, including a webinar we co-hosted with British Council on the “Role of Play in Education”
- Grant from the Consortium for Street Children for formal advocacy activities in this and the next financial year
- Grant from Montessori Group to expand Partners in Learning

In detail:

a) Right to Read

Total costs on this strand of work were £5,413.15. This was achieved initially with minimal resources through crowdfunding for the pilot and obtaining a seed grant from SAPChangemakerXchange. The MCI grant was used for the second iteration with PKSS in the same financial year.

This financial year we implemented the Partners in Learning (Seekho Sikhao Saathi) programme with two partners. This was based on a tried and tested Child to Child school readiness programme in which older children between 10-14 years (who we called “Baray Saathi” or “Big Partners”) were trained to deliver early learning sessions to preschool aged children (“Little Partners”) in safe ways within their communities. We adapted the content to infuse our own ethos of playful learning; Montessori principles including sensory-motor learning; and local stories and materials.

The first iteration (June-August 2020) was in partnership with the Pehli Kiran School System (PKSS) in Islamabad, a network of eight nonformal schools serving children from refugee, migrant and internally displaced communities. We also implemented a shorter version of the programme with Zindagi Trust in the remote Shangla valley. While this was beyond the scope of “children in cities,” the Board decided to move ahead in order to build a new strategic partnership and also to test the viability of delivering in a rural location. This was particularly powerful in terms of drawing upon the agency of children to become **champions of learning in their communities during a difficult time**. The playful ethos also added value, with many of the activities being built on the premise that “happy memories build resilience” for children.

The programme had several levels of impact:

- For “Little Partners,” there was demonstrable impact particularly on numeracy during the pilot with PKSS, when there was no other form of learning available. Other domains of impact that were tracked in a baseline and endline assessment included literacy, motor skills and socioemotional skills, with some of the most significant results at the playgroup level where the number of children who:
 - Could count to 1-10 more than doubled.
 - Could interpret a 3-step story more than doubled.
 - Could sort objects by shape rose by 60%.
- For Big Partners, weekly reflection records and focus group discussions showed gains in socioemotional competencies. Some of the major themes identified were self-confidence, leadership, group management, empathy and problem-solving.
 - *‘First I couldn’t speak in front of other people. When I stayed with the kids and saw their confidence, I got confidence in me too.’*
 - *‘First, my heart did not want to be a Big Partner. Now that I have been teaching the kids my heart says I want to stay with them.’*
- At the school and community level, there was a change in adults’ perceptions of what children could achieve. In addition, many non-literate parents were engaged in their children’s learning for the first time, as they were brought on board to supervise the sessions in a safeguarding role.
 - Parents’ views of Big Partners changed and they started to view them more as “Grown Up”.
 - *‘Now they are more responsible and aware of being on time.’* - Mother
 - *‘The kids had a routine and a mindset to learn. We also had a lot of new admissions.’* Principal Pehli Kiran School 2

- *'We learnt many things as a Bari Saathi. I learnt that I too can teach which means that I can become a teacher when I grow up.'* - Bari Saathi in Shangla Girls School
- The outgoing Acting School Director, Anam Palla, shared during the course of the project that ***this had been one of the most meaningful interventions they had undertaken during this time.***

Programme success was also shown by uptake - PKSS asked for a second iteration, delivered in May-June 2021 in which the **teachers stepped up to co-create content** in keeping with their learning priorities. This iteration had a greater emphasis on literacy and storytelling.

Lessons learnt:

- Delivery was tailored for each school context, and we learnt we needed to strike a balance between giving our partners the autonomy to adapt the programme according to their needs while also ensuring that certain standards were adhered to in terms of safeguarding, COVID-19 protocols and the principles of children's participation as well as playful learning.
- We developed an evaluation framework with support from the board and advisors, and in future want to build in more data collection around the impact on Big Partners - particularly in terms of agency and wellbeing.
- We offered a high level of support to partners on a weekly basis with calls and check-ins, but realised the need for having our own local programme staff.
- Weekly in-person touchpoints for Big Partners with teachers were seen as crucial for programme quality - while also offering constant support to teachers from the CfC side. With Zindagi Trust, lockdown in the valley meant that the support for Big Partners was entirely virtual (via Whatsapp), with weaker engagement from parents. While it was still a feat for the Big Partners to have delivered the programme in difficult circumstances, there were higher challenges and threats to programme quality. The project was especially valuable for the older girls who tapped into their own agency and perseverance to complete the program during a time of complete lockdown and no in-person support.

b) Right to Play

This year due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic we could not implement new iterations of the Happy Hoods programme. However, we included an element of play within the Partners in Learning programme, through games, storytelling, poems and the use of creative materials like playdough.

We continued to build our niche as thought leaders in the realm of playful learning, through engagement in multiple events and conferences. In August, we partnered with British Council Pakistan to co-host a webinar on the "Role of Play in Education," engaging Dr. Paul Ramchandani, Lego Professor of Play, Development and Learning at Cambridge University as well as Ms. Umbreen Arif, Education Advisor to the Federal Government of Pakistan. Through this - the first event of its kind on this theme in Pakistan - we had a ground-breaking conversation exploring the rationale behind promoting wellbeing for children in education, and how playful methods can help reinforce learning. We were also approached later in the year to present at multiple prestigious online events including the Keeping Children Safe Annual Conference; a Montessori Centre International webinar and the Consortium for Street Children Annual Conference 2020.

c) Right to Feel Safe

Overall cost this financial year: £641.36.

As a response to rising protection risks during COVID-19, we created a pack of positive caregiving resources and launched a campaign called 'Maar Nahi Pyaar' (Care Don't Scare). with the aim of building a case against violence and a case for love. This acknowledged the rise in parenting and caregiving responsibilities due to school closures, and the increased stress that the pandemic placed on the family unit. The animation and resources provided the rationale for positive caregiving, along with simple, practical strategies and alternatives to corporal punishment.

The campaign launching the animation and resource coincided with landmark legislation being passed against corporal punishment in Islamabad Capital Territory, and were widely shared and appreciated. After its release website visits spiked, with 80% of visits being from new individuals. During the two week campaign, our tweets earned 18.2K impressions and on Instagram, the number of accounts reached increased by 34%. At the same time, we were able to write in Pakistani mainstream media and communicate more widely about the importance of combining legislation with training, support, and resources for both parents and teachers to change the culture around corporal punishment.

Both the animation and online resources had Twitter engagement from relevant organisations globally, including the Global Initiative to End Corporal Punishment, the Global Partnership to End Violence and Zindagi Trust (leading the charge against corporal punishment in Pakistan). The animation was also shared in Whatsapp groups/networks of teachers, in the Maple Advisory Group (international group for education practitioners) and used by researchers to facilitate discussions with teachers. It led to interest from The Citizens Foundation (TCF), the biggest education non-profit in Pakistan. They made an offer for collaboration, as a training session resource for teachers. We are now exploring developing the animation into a series, with the next one focusing on positive caregiving in the classroom.

d) Advocacy and thought leadership

Overall cost this financial year: £600.40.

- **Campaigns:** We started engaging in advocacy in response to what we saw as violations of the rights of street-connected children during the pandemic. Not only did we contribute opinion pieces in mainstream media, but also conducted a “Myth-buster” campaign challenging stereotypes in November 2020, linked to Universal Children’s Day.
- **Engaging policymakers:** On 12 April 2021 – International Day for Street Children – Cities for Children along with the Special Parliamentary Group on the SDGs in Pakistan held a national consultation to review policies related to street-connected children and how best to support “Access for Street Children.” The event was supported by the Consortium for Street Children, framed with a view to understanding who “street children” are, and how to facilitate access to fundamental rights, in particular access to education and justice. The event was moderated by Hon. MNA and Convenor of the Child Rights Group Ms. Mehnaz Akber Aziz, with keynote speakers being the Hon. Minister for Human Rights, Dr. Shireen Mazari and the Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Mr. Hamza Shafqaat.
- **Documentary video:** For the policymaker event we created and released a short documentary video capturing some of the lived experiences of street-connected children in Pakistan, with a special focus on how the pandemic has impacted their lives. This was important in bringing the voices of “street children” into the “room” with policy-makers, highlighting their challenges in accessing justice and promoting empathy and a rights-based approach. The video is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uyupucFKCis>

Publications

Title and theme	Date of publication	Publication	Link
Protecting Childhood – mental health and play	July 3, 2020	Dawn newspaper (print)	http://www.citiesforchildren.co/protecting-childhood/
Criminalizing Poverty - Advocacy for street-connected children	November 4, 2020	Dawn (print)	http://www.citiesforchildren.co/criminalizing-poverty/
A case for love - Positive caregiving	February 28, 2021	Dawn (print)	http://www.citiesforchildren.co/a-case-for-love/
Changing the story - Advocacy for street-connected children	April 25, 2021	Dawn (print)	http://www.citiesforchildren.co/changing-the-story/

Events that we presented in:

Event	Date	Detail
Role of play in Education (British	4 August 2020	Co-hosted with British Council Pakistan, and moderated by

council, co-hosted)		Chair/Founder Madeeha, with panelists Dr. Paul Ramchandani (LEGO Professor of Play at Cambridge University); Umbreen Arif (Government Education Advisor); and Nishat Riaz MBE (British Council).
ITA webinar on “Early Years Learning in COVID-19: Global Response and Adaptations in Pakistan”	4 August 2020	Panel included representatives from government, regional ECD networks, academics from NYU and the Lego Foundation. Was given the opportunity as a “spotlight speaker” to present on Partners in Learning along at the end.
Beaconhouse “School of Tomorrow” Conference Panel on Supporting vulnerable & SEN learners during school closures: Negotiating Access and Inclusive Learning for All	12 July 2020	On panel including Maggie Atkinson, former Children’s Commissioner for England, award-winning novelist Mohsin Hamid. Shared our experience in supporting learning for vulnerable children.
Keeping Children Safe (KCS) Summit	7 October 2020	Presented a webinar on “Protecting Childhood” – Engaging caregivers in safeguarding and encouraging children’s participation through “Partners in Learning”
LSE Alumni event – “Innovating your Future”	30 July 2020	Spoke to current LSE students about careers in international development
Consortium for Street Children Conference	2 November 2020	Delivered a presentation and hosted an interactive session on “Innovative approaches to learning and wellbeing for Street Children”
MCI- Talking Montessori – Cities for Children	19 November 2020	Presented our work on ECD in a webinar with the Montessori group
National Parliamentarians’ Consultation on International Day for Street Children	12 April 2021	Virtual consultation co-hosted with the Parliamentary SDGs Secretariat, engaging policy-makers and government officials in Pakistan
Teach for Pakistan- Learning to Lead	30 April 2021	Hosted session and presented on early childhood work for Teach for Pakistan Fellows and Alumni
“The Right” Podcast – Research Society of International Law (RSIL)	May 2021	Invited as a speaker on child rights and a rights-based approach for street-connected children

Progress against strategic objectives

Cities for Children was set up to plug identified gaps in awareness as well as service provision for children in urban poverty, including but not limited to street-connected children from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

There was progress against each of the strategic objectives set out for the period 2020-23:

<i>1. Developing and expanding signature programmes that promote learning, play and wellbeing.</i>	We substantially expanded our playful programming under the Right to Read strand, piloting several iterations of what is now our signature early childhood programme.
1.1 Developing a model for program selection based on impact vs effort (measured as time, effort, power, resources.)	We also continued evidence-based advocacy by engaging in international events and webinars, writing in mainstream media and communicating our ethos via social media.

1.2 Expanding our work under the Right to Read, particularly through playful learning in early childhood. 1.3 Conducting evidence-based advocacy around the importance of the Right to Play and carving a thought leadership role. 1.4 Expanding our work under the “Right to Feel Safe” strand, particularly with regard to protection from violence.	Finally, we were able to work on the safety strand for the first time since our initial mental health workshops, and through the “Maar Nahi Pyaar” animation and resource have laid the basis for future work.
2. <i>Capturing evidence</i> 2.1 Laying the grounds for gathering evidence of impact from the very beginning, in order to demonstrate credibility to our partners as well as future donors.	For Partners in Learning, we developed an evaluation framework with our advisors and board that we have now further refined, based on our experience. We have created internal reports with lessons learnt, fed back to our partners and also laid out results in ways that we can share with donors.
3. <i>Communicating effectively</i> 3.1 Building a niche and brand awareness in the sector by engaging with relevant networks and participating in events and conferences. 3.2 Documenting our work and communicating stories of impact. 3.3 Conducting advocacy through our research and our existing communication platforms, creating a case for supporting our priorities especially in terms of play and wellbeing.	Since all communication moved online during this financial year, we worked on building our thought leadership role. We participated actively as presenters in 10 events, sharing our work and impact. Our advocacy focus shifted from a focus on learning and wellbeing to promoting a rights-based approach to street-connected children, in response to the emergence of what we saw as problematic policies. We also explored an effective new medium of communication, investing in our first animation and documentary video.
4. <i>Fundraising for sustainability</i> 4.1 Raising adequate resources through grants, community philanthropy and events. 4.2 Exploring channels for income generation.	We had large input in terms of voluntary support from the Founder and Trustees, but less in-kind and more material fundraising this year. We obtained our first grants from SAP as well as Montessori Centre International, and also received Zakat donations. The fundraising in this year enabled us to hire our first staff members in the next financial year.
5. <i>Organisation building</i> 5.1 Setting up policies and systems to ensure smooth functioning, including recognition of risks. 5.2 identifying resources and recruiting personnel (for programmes, administration, finance, communications).	We set up a process for recruitment in the next financial year.

Public Benefit Statement

The section of this report below entitled 'Objectives and activities' sets out the objects and aims of the charity. The trustees have considered this, in conjunction with the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, and have concluded that:

- 1) the aims of the charity continue to be charitable;
- 2) the work done by the charity gives identifiable benefits to the charitable sector and both directly and
- 3) indirectly to individuals in need;
- 4) the benefits are for the public; not unreasonably restricted in any way;
- 5) there is no detriment or harm arising from the aims or activities.

Volunteers

The growth during this time can be attributed almost entirely to voluntary contributions in terms of time from our trustees, and the following:

- Development Intern Nawaal Zareef contributed essential programme support for Partners in Learning
- Data Analysis Volunteer Zehra Mohsin enabled the quantitative analysis of results from Partners in Learning
- Research Intern Hajra Khan helped us with our campaign and rights-based advocacy for street-connected children

Financial review

During the period, the Charity received total income of £16.2k (2020: £21.4k). Income includes in-kind donations of £750 (2020: £6k). The charity incurred expenditure of £8.4k (2020: £10.2k). The carried forward cash fund balance is £35k (2020: £27k).

Reserves Policy

The trustees believe that the fundraising plans in place are sufficiently robust to cover the next 12 months costs.

Trustees' responsibilities statement

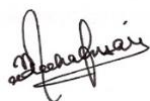
The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with the United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the constitution. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This report was approved by the trustees on...28 March 2022.....and signed on their behalf by:



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Madeeha Ansari

Trustee

CITIES FOR CHILDREN (Reg. 1170215)

Receipts and Payments Accounts

From 1 June 2020 to 30 May 2021

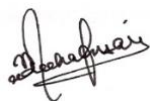
	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Receipts				
Voluntary Donations	772	1,546	2,318	8,330
Events			0	4,885
In-kind donations	750		750	6,070
Grant	3,000	10,130	13,130	761
Gift Aid			0	1,376
Sub total	4,522	11,675	16,197	21,421
Assets and Investment sales	0	0	0	0
Total receipts	4,522	11,675	16,197	21,421
Payments				
Fundraising/Events	61		61	52
Project costs (Animations)	641	6,014	6,655	1,872
Support costs	606		606	2,160
Governance costs	360		360	0
In-kind spend				
Evaluation Framework	750		750	0
Videos			0	420
Consultation			0	1,200
Montessori course			0	750
Trustee Travel			0	700
Legal advice			0	3,000
Subtotal	2,418	6,014	8,432	10,154
Assets and Investment purchases			0	0
Total payments	2,418	6,014	8,432	10,154
Net of receipts/(payments)	2,104	5,662	7,765	11,267
Transfers between funds				
Cash funds last year end	26,988	-	26,988	15,721
Cash funds this year end	29,092	5,662	34,754	26,988

CITIES FOR CHILDREN (Reg. 1170215)**Statement of Assets and Liabilities**

As at 30 May 2021

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2021 £	Total 2020 £
Cash Funds			
Cash at Bank	34,754	34,754	26,988
Total Cash funds	34,754	34,754	26,988
Assets Retained for the Charity's Own Use			
Freehold Land & Building	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0
Liabilities	360	360	360

Approved by the Board on28 March 2022..... And signed on its behalf by:



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Madeeha Ansari

Trustee

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 30 May 2021

1. Accounting policies

(a) Basis of preparation

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the receipts and payments basis in accordance with the Charity Commission guidance.

(b) Charity status

Cities for Children is a CIO foundation and is registered with the Charity Commission under the reference of 1170215.

(c) Fund accounting

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by donors or which have been raised by the charity for particular purposes. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

(d) Receipts

All incoming resources are included in the Receipt & payment Accounts when the charity actually receives legally entitled income.

(e) Payments

All expenditure is accounted for on payments basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all costs related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with use of the resources.