



Annual Report and Financial Statements

Year ended: 30 May 2024

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Legal and Administrative Information

Charity number	1170215
Registered address	13 Wynnstay Gardens LONDON W8 6UP
Trustees	Jetske van Dijk (Chair – appointed 21 January 2023) Usman Qureshi (Treasurer – appointed 30 November 2024) Nabeela Ijaz Khan (appointed for a three-year term on 21 January 2023) David Walker (term renewed for three years on 13 February 2024) Cleo Fatoorehchi (Appointed on 17th March 2018) Ali Nabi Nur (Appointed 16 March 2023)
Bankers	Barclays Bank UK PLC

CITIES FOR CHILDREN (Reg. 1170215)

Report of the Trustees for the year ended 30 May 2024

The Trustees present their annual report and accounts for the year ended 30 May 2024.

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 updated. A Child Safeguarding Policy is in place and has been adapted for work in both Pakistan and the UK.

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: non-formal education programming supporting literacy, numeracy and socioemotional learning particularly in early childhood.
- The Right to Play: structured recreation programmes, carefully designed to build socio-emotional skills and motivate children to continue learning.
- The Right to Feel Safe: resources and training to build adults’ capacity to create safe and nurturing learning spaces, free from violence and corporal punishment.

Achievements and Performance

During this financial year, our sister entity in Pakistan (Chotay Shehri Education Foundation) grew more independent with international grants, and our focus in the UK was to grow our footprint locally. This

was a year of outreach, particularly with organisations providing services to refugee and asylum-seeking children. We were able to identify a niche in which we could add value to existing service provision, particularly in the realm of supporting positive mental health and easing the transition for children, through playful learning programmes.

This year, we decided to invest in staff for UK programming. For this, we drew upon savings from the previous year. Fundraising efforts continued, but raising from trusts and foundations was a greater challenge this year - one that was felt more widely in the sector.

Highlights

- Raised nearly £9,000 in Big Give Christmas Challenge to work with refugee children
- Delivered a second iteration of the signature Partners in Learning programme in Brent, forming new school partnerships
- Became the first organisation to deliver services to children in a West Sussex hotel for newly arrived refugee children, conducting a pilot playful learning programme
- Advocacy partnership on ending corporal punishment with the National Commission on the Rights of the Child, Pakistan

Detail:

a) Partners in Learning



Since its pilot in 2020, Cities for Children has implemented tailored variations of the Partners in Learning programme in diverse contexts, reaching over 4,000 children to date. This is based on a Child to Child model infused with our playful learning ethos, through which we train cohorts of older children to become champions of early learning for younger, preschool aged children within their communities.

In April 2023, we began tailoring and adapting our Partners in Learning programme to engage boys from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds at Newman Catholic College (NCC) - a secondary “School of Sanctuary” - to deliver playful learning sessions to about 40 children at the Reception level at a local school, Harlesden Primary School. The project began with sessions focused on the older boys,

building their confidence and skills to become Big Partners and role models and eventually deliver science and SEL sessions with the Little Partners.

In this financial year, we completed the first project and initiated a second one with NCC, building a new partnership with another local school, Furness Primary School (FPS). This built on our experience from previous implementations in Pakistan as well as the UK, with modifications such as the creation of visual content and pre-session deoms to prepare the Big Partners rather than relying on them to be reading the manuals. This version featured introductory sessions to build connections and mentally prepare the older boys to support others, followed by sessions designed to blend playful learning, experiential science, and socioemotional learning to foster literacy, numeracy, and curiosity among younger children ("Little Partners") while developing leadership and confidence in older children ("Big Partners").

This was the sixth iteration of Partners in Learning as a model and the second to focus on refugee and asylum-seeking children in London. We reached 49 Little Partners through the support of 16 Big Partners, creating an inclusive, supportive learning environment.

Big Partner Highlights

A focused effort was made to nurture socioemotional skills among our 16 Big Partners. These older children acted as mentors, developing confidence, empathy, and leadership while engaging with the younger children. Some key outcomes were:

- 90% felt more confident in managing groups of children. One shared, *"I worked well with the children. Before, I felt nervous."*
- 82% reported an increase in confidence when leading activities, with one piece of feedback being *"I love to be a leader."*
- Many Big Partners brought creative ideas to sessions, demonstrating a sense of agency and ownership. They gained a sense of being able to create a positive change in their lives and communities, saying, *"I can play an important role in helping a group of children learn."* Another shared, *"I was always nervous during the sessions because I was worried about the children. I felt happy because I did a good job."*

Little Partner Highlights

For the 49 Little Partners, the sessions focused on reinforcing literacy, numeracy, and socioemotional skills through creative and hands-on activities. Our emotional learning sessions are aligned with national Personal, Social and Hygiene Education (PSHE) objectives, and we looked for evidence that children learnt to recognise and name different feelings, what others might be feeling and the different things they can do to manage big feelings. The weekly programme sessions were displayed on the PSHE board in the classroom, showing alignment with teaching goals.

Key outcomes included:

- 75% of Little Partners could confidently sequence the stages of a butterfly's life cycle by the end of the programme.
- 75% were able to name and recognise emotions confidently.
- Many Little Partners expressed admiration for their Big Partners, and some of their feedback is shared below:
 - "They know my name"

- *"It was super duper fun!"*
- *"We were scientists."*

Teacher Observations

- *"Their more boisterous boys benefited from the programme, as they looked up to the Big Partners as big brothers, finding a space where they could be themselves."*
- *"The sessions allowed the Little Partners to express themselves more freely."*
- *"The Arab-speaking group felt comfortable speaking Arabic in front of others, enhancing both their English and Arabic skills."*

b) Playful Learning for Newly Arrived Refugees



One major breakthrough this year was building a connection with Home Office representatives working with refugee families, who invited us to do a series of pilot sessions in a West Sussex hotel for newly arrived children. These were Afghan children coming via third countries on a path to resettlement, who were not able to access local schools and had no other form of activities or access to learning. We started out tailoring sessions drawn from our pre-existing Partners in Learning and Happy Hoods content, and our CEO and Programme Officer went in to deliver two sessions a day for two different age ranges - 4-11 and 12-17 years.

This was challenging programming, as we had to factor uncertainty into the design - children could be resettled at any time, and the group could change on a weekly basis while some families with different needs could be there for a much longer time period. Our emphasis was on building spoken English skills and key vocabulary, while supporting positive mental health and wellbeing for the children. These weekly sessions helped add structure, gave them something to look forward to and provided opportunities for creative expression as well as meaningful interaction with peers. The purpose was to ease the transition and time of uncertainty, providing a welcoming environment to children as they entered their new lives.

Although we only delivered sessions over the summer, the feedback from the Home Office and the Council was overwhelmingly positive and we were able to open the doors for further collaboration.

c) Programming in Pakistan

A total of £10,000/- GBP was transferred to our sister entity to support core staff costs and signature programme activities in Pakistan. An additional £3,000/- was sent from Zakat funds, to provide direct support in terms of nutrition and early learning activities for out-of-school children. Reporting on these activities will occur in the next financial year.

d) Advocacy and Thought Leadership



We continued to build Cities for Children's niche as an organisation committed to creating safe, nurturing and playful spaces that not just enhance learning but also wellbeing and resilience for vulnerable children. In particular, we refined our impact and evaluation frameworks concerning socioemotional learning (SEL), and through our work in Pakistan and the UK began to really unpack what this means. This means we are part of a broader movement in the international development sphere to explore how to measure SEL and wellbeing, and are adding substantial value to broader discourse.

This was demonstrated by the renewal of government partnerships in Pakistan, and in the UK by the invitation to present our work on "Humanising Data" - analysing qualitative data on SEL at a panel event hosted at Cambridge University's PEDAL Centre.

Building on our work on "Maar Nahi Pyaar" – advocating for an end to corporal punishment in learning spaces, we also built a relationship with the National Commission on the Rights of the Child in Pakistan. This culminated in a joint social media campaign on the International Day to End Corporal Punishment (12 April 2024); the creation of a poster for display in schools, endorsed by NCRC; and the creation of

an opportunity to delivery training workshops on safeguarding and ending corporal punishment in government schools in Islamabad Capital Territory. A notification was issued by NCRC for our training to be accommodated by the Federal Directorate of Education, and in May 2024 we began to roll out a two-part workshop series reaching 125 teacher participants from 60 schools.

Publications

Title and theme	Publication/Authors	Link
Case Study on Pakistan - Parenting Support for Flood-hit Families	Parenting for Lifelong Health Initiative at the University of Oxford	https://www.citiesforchildren.co/our-resources/university-of-oxford-case-study-parenting-in-crisis/
Born in Pakistan (identity for refugees)	Madeeha Ansari for Dawn Newspaper	https://www.dawn.com/news/1788356/born-in-pakistan
Partners in Learning UK	Organisational	https://www.citiesforchildren.co/our-resources/partners-in-learning-uk-report-2024/
Seekho Sikhao Saathi - Inspiring Out of School Children to Learn	Organisational	https://www.citiesforchildren.co/our-resources/out-of-school-children-2024/
Seekho Sikhao Saathi - Girls Leading Learning	Video (organisational)	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5fr6sGi1_A&t=4s

Key External Engagements

Event	Date	Detail
UNstoppable Women: Breaking Barriers	13 March 2024	Panel event around International Women's Day, organised by P3 Connect
"Humanising Data"	7 May 2024	Panelist at Cambridge Faculty for Education, event organised by the "Quant Group"

Key Fundraising efforts

- Big Give Christmas Challenge (£8972 raised)
- Community Iftar event and Ramadan Fundraising (almost £3,000 raised)
- Regents Park 10k run involving team of runners from one corporate organisation (5,899 raised)

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 Founder/CEO.

Financial review

During the period, the Charity received total income of £20k (2023: £48k). The charity incurred expenditure of £ 30 k (2023: £40.6k). The carried forward cash fund balance is £37.8k (2023: £47.7k).

Reserves Policy

The trustees believe that the fund-raising 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.

28 March 2025

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



.....

Jetske Van Dijk

Chair

CITIES FOR CHILDREN

Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of CITIES FOR CHILDREN

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 30 May 2024 which are set out on pages 13 to 15.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees of CITIES FOR CHILDREN you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the CITIES FOR CHILDREN 's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of CITIES FOR CHILDREN as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Nasir Rafiq

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Nasir Rafiq
ICAEW

Dua Governance
123-131 Bradford Street
Bradford Court
Birmingham
B12 0NS

29 March 2025

Date:.....

CITIES FOR CHILDREN (Reg. 1170215)**Receipts and Payments Accounts**

From 1 June 2023 to 30 May 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Receipts				
Donations	17,087	0	17,087	37,335
In-kind donations	0	0	0	0
Grant	0	0	0	5,290
Gift Aid	0	0	0	0
Consultancies	0	0	0	0
Zakat	0	3,073	3,073	5,361
Sub total	17,087	3,073	20,160	47,986
Assets and Investment sales	0	0	0	0
Total receipts	17,087	3,073	20,160	47,986
Payments				
Fundraising/Events	636	0	636	214
Project costs	13,751	13,588	27,340	37,184
Support costs	1,973	0	1,973	2,032
Governance costs	60	0	60	1,200
In-kind spend				
Evaluation Framework	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	16,420	13,588	30,009	40,630
Assets and Investment purchases	0	0	0	0
Total payments	16,420	13,588	30,009	40,630
Net of receipts/(payments)	667	(10,515)	(9,849)	7,356
Transfers between funds				
Cash funds last year end	36,254	11,442	47,697	40,341
Cash funds this year end	36,921	927	37,848	47,697

CITIES FOR CHILDREN (Reg. 1170215)
Statement of Assets and Liabilities
As at 30 May 2024

	Unrestricted Funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Cash Funds			
Cash at Bank	37,848	37,848	47,697
Total Cash funds	37,848	37,848	47,697
Assets Retained for the Charity's Own Use			
Freehold Land & Building	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0
Liabilities	420	420	360

28 March 2025

Approved by the Board on And signed on its behalf by:


.....
Jetske van Dijk
Chair

Notes forming part of the financial statements for the year ended 30 May 2024

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 a 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.