



## **Annual Report 2022-2023**

Brighter Path was registered as a charity in England and Wales in May 2019 and this is our fourth annual report, covering the period 1 May 2022 to 30 April 2023. In the past 12 months we have continued making grants to individual care leavers, we have provided emergency food aid to care leavers facing starvation in the worst of a period of severe economic crisis, we have supported organisations on the ground in Sri Lanka which work with care leavers and have started funding a boys' and girls' home for care leavers in Colombo. We have amended our charitable purpose to enable us to provide support to children in care as well those who have left care.

### **Trustees**

The trustees remain Caroline de Bono, John de Bono, Patrick Marshall, Henrietta Woolf and Alice Pilcher.

### **Banking**

Brighter Path banking remains with CAF Bank who specialise in supporting the charitable sector. Our bank and platform fees (Stripe/ Paypal) were £429.33.

### **Funds received**

In the period of 12 months to 30 April 2023 we received cash donations of £22,748.02 and £30.23 from Amazon Smile. This was a significant increase from the previous year (£12,521.43).

### **Website**

Our website and its running costs remain entirely funded by private donation from the trustees.

### **Funds distribution**

We made charitable grants of £20,101.45 which was a significant increase on the previous year (£6,924.77). At the start of the period we were using Xoom (part of Paypal) to distribute funds to individuals but following a review of our procedures now only make transfers through CAF Bank. At all times we have followed our own banking policy and have been aware of the importance of complying with best practice to avoid money laundering.

### **Conflict of interest**

Two trustees (Caroline and John de Bono) are directors of Brighter Path (Sri Lanka) a not for profit company registered in Sri Lanka which provides support to children in care and to care leavers. Where any grants were made to Brighter Path (Sri Lanka) a potential conflict of interest was declared, these grants were approved by the other trustees and John and Caroline did not vote.

### **Working with other organisations**

Brighter Path is keen to work with any reputable organisation in Sri Lanka which offers support to care leavers or, following the amendment to our change of purpose, with children in care. With the exception of SOS Villages, which provides support to care leavers who have been cared for as children in orphanages run by SOS, Generation Never Give Up, Emerge (which supports girls who have been sexually abused) and Brighter Path (Sri Lanka) we are aware of no other organisations focussing on supporting care leavers.

We are also aware of the importance of ensuring that our donations are spent on their intended purpose and of the risk that comes from working with organisations that we don't know either of the funds being spent ineffectually or of those funds being diverted away from our intended purpose. These factors combine to make it more common for us to work with Brighter Path Sri Lanka, but we remain open and committed to assisting other organisations working with children in care or care leavers where appropriate.

We have a Child and Young Person Code of Conduct for Brighter Staff and Volunteers working in Sri Lanka. We also have a safeguarding policy.

Sri Lanka is a national jurisdiction which operates to high child protection standards and has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. See the website of the Department of Probation and Child Services, [http://www.probation.gov.lk/index\\_e.php](http://www.probation.gov.lk/index_e.php)

### **Change of charitable purposes**

In November 2022 the trustees approved, with the permission of the Charity Commission, a change to our charitable purpose. We are a charity which focusses on supporting those leaving care rather than a charity for the relief of poverty in the general population. However we increasingly came to realise from work on the ground that the situation in respect of care leavers is quite nuanced. Whilst in Colombo and other big cities there are formal orphanages (most run as businesses) the reality for many children 'in care' is that they are brought up by neighbours, friends or relatives (aunts, cousins etc) and also that in the poorer villages in particular the precise line between family and friends is not always clear.

We also increasingly came to realise that waiting until a child has left care to help them can leave the child in a much worse position, and us with much more work to do, than if we intervene early. With this in mind we have made two changes.

The first is to recognise that a 'care leaver' may have been brought up by wider family/friends rather than having lived in an orphanage.

The second permits us to provide assistance before a child has left care, so for example we might now make a grant to provide food to a family who are destitute but have taken in the child of a friend or relative. Second, there might be a child in a children's home who needs a wheelchair or go on a course but the children's home cannot provide it. Under our previous constitution we were unable to provide such assistance because she had not yet left care.

Our revised charitable purpose is therefore:

*To advance in life and relieve the needs of young people in Sri Lanka, who by reason of natural disaster, poverty, destitution, bereavement, the ill health of others, their own ill health or for any reason are living in or have lived in residential care or under the care of others who are not their parents, by providing support and monetary grants with a view to ensuring these people are equipped with the necessary skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.*

### **Ethical image policy**

Images play an important role in helping us to raise awareness of the challenges faced by young people in care and care leavers. However the gathering and use of images can also cause harm or offence if they are intrusive, manipulative or used inappropriately. Our images must show a true and accurate account of the ways in which people live. We have introduced an ethical image policy to manage and guide our use of photos in fundraising which is in line with leading NGOs including Unicef and Save the Children.

### **Activity**

Whereas the period covered by our previous report (2021-22) will be remembered for the impact of Covid and lockdowns in Sri Lanka the period of this report was dominated by economic crisis.

### **Economic crisis and emergency food distribution**

In May/ June 2022 the economic situation was deteriorating almost by the hour – <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/16/asia/sri-lanka-fuel-crisis-five-days-stock-intl-hnk/index.html>

Caroline visited Sri Lanka in May 2022 and saw long queues for fuel, there were extensive power cuts and even normally well off people were left cooking food on wood stoves in their gardens. As she left the country demonstrators were on the street and there was a real threat of civil unrest. The situation continued to deteriorate after she left.

The poor economic situation was compounded by Covid, political mismanagement, the Easter bombings in 2019 which decimated tourism and a disastrous plan to switch overnight to organic farming which meant that Sri Lanka is for the first time dependent on rice imports.

We made a grant of £2,500 to Brighter Path Sri Lanka for emergency food aid. A plan was made with a retired local headmaster in Anuradhapura District is Northern Central District of Sri Lanka. This is a remote and poor area of Sri Lanka, about 200km (4 hours' drive) north

of Colombo. With his help Brighter Path (SL) identified a list of 70 families in desperate need. All of these families were care leavers – either one or both parents were in care, or an individual who has been in care, or children who have been in care and have returned to live with family or friends. 100% of the funds were spent either on supplies or the cost of transportation. We were able to provide rice, red dhal, wheat flour, chickpeas, tea, chilli, dried fish, onion, soya, toothpaste/ soap/ sanitary products, and school stationary for children aged 11+ (during the crisis there were such significant shortages that children had to bring their own paper to school and the children we were able to help would not otherwise have had anything to write on).

In October 2022 we made a further grant to Brighter Path Sri Lanka of £1,500 as a contribution to its second food distribution, this time in Dimbulagala and Welikanda, a remote area about six hours' drive northeast of Colombo. Over the course of four days food was distributed to a total of 75 families in conjunction with the help of local community leaders and the Divisional Secretariat. This is an area which has suffered from years of poor agricultural practices and the persistent misuse of fertiliser has left many adults with chronic kidney disease and children disabled by congenital injury.



### **Financial support for individual care leavers**

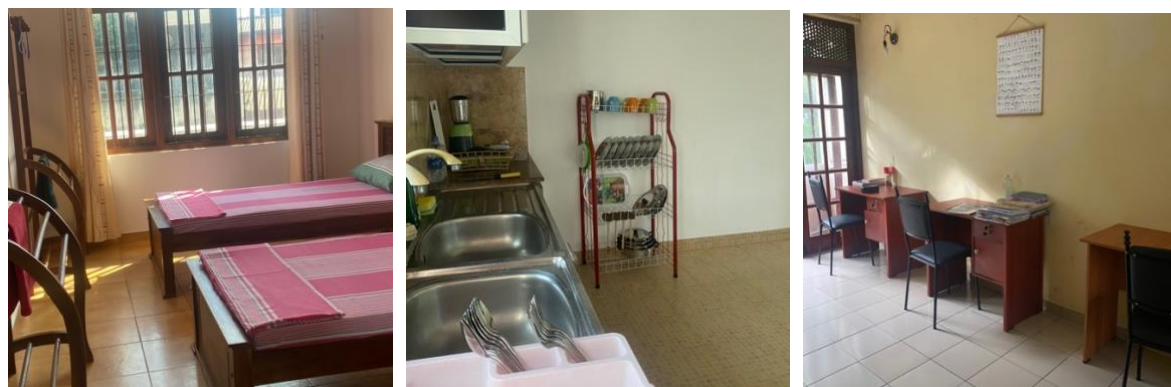
During the year we were funding at various times between 5 and 10 care leavers at any one time. These were boys and girls who had left orphanages and who relied on our support to access training courses. Our funding helped with training course fees, accommodation and living expenses without which these care leavers would not have been able to stay in training. By accessing training and obtaining qualifications they are able to access higher paid work which, without family support, they would not otherwise be able to do.

### **Bicycles**

We have provided funding for three bicycles to be used by care leavers in Colombo to get to work or training, together with locks and helmets. In the financial crisis and with petrol shortages there were serious interruptions to public transport and bicycles were hard to come by. The bikes were soon in regular use and this meant that the care leavers we were supporting were able to remain in work where otherwise this would not have been possible because of the transport difficulties.

### **Transition homes**

In January 2023 Brighter Path took on the funding of two transition homes in Colombo run by Brighter Path Sri Lanka. This is one of the most effective ways we are able to help individual care leavers improve their life chances. Brighter Path Sri Lanka has run a boys' transition home in Colombo since October 2018. Up to 10 boys live in good quality, shared accommodation whilst studying, training or working. They sign up to a mentorship programme and are supported whilst they adapt to life away from the institutional care in which they have grown up. Brighter Path Sri Lanka was looking to offer the same opportunity to girls and opened its first girls' home in Colombo in February 2023.



### **Generation Never Give Up**

We continued to support Generation Never Give Up with funding for its resource centre, which operated in premises provided by SOS Villages. GNG is an organisation founded and run by care leavers that campaigns on care leavers issues. GNG wanted a resource centre to provide support, training and employment opportunities to care leavers and also to create a voluntary database of care leavers so that they would have better access to work and other opportunities. We had made an initial grant in September 2021 with a commitment of up to 3 years to fund staff, computers and office equipment and provided a second six months' funding in April 2022. The amount of the April 2022 grant was 498,000 LKR (approx. £1,857). In September 2022 we made a final grant to Generation Never Give Up of 240,000 LKR. The trustees decided that in the light of the prevailing economic conditions we should not continue to fund GNG beyond that because our funds could have a bigger impact on care leavers if we distributed funds directly to those in need or supporting individual care leavers with training and education.

### **Support for care leavers at university**

In the period covered by this report we continued to support a severely disabled care leaver who is a wheelchair user. During the pandemic he had returned to live in the children's home where he had grown up but we funded more suitable accommodation, closer to the university as well as helping with his transport and funding a computer. This care leaver has now completed his degree and has obtained a graduate job. Our support made a significant contribution to his being able to complete his university studies, obtain his degree and secure an independent future.

We also started funding a second university student who is also a wheelchair user. She was also living in the orphanage where she grew up and remained there because they were able



to provide for her care needs but she was unable to continue her studies at Colombo University without transport. We made a grant to fund her transport to and from the university, allowing her to continue her degree.



### **Conclusion**

Our fourth year demonstrated a significant step up both in our income and expenditure. We have expanded our range of activities whilst keeping our focus firmly on making the biggest difference we can to individual care leavers and now, children in care. We are able to look to the future with confidence with future as we continue to evolve, learning from experience on the ground. I am very grateful to my fellow trustees for their time and support, financial and otherwise, and to all our donors. We could not do what we do without you.

Caroline de Bono  
Oxford  
February 2024

**Brighter Path**  
**Financial Report for Year Ending 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

	<b>Total 2023</b>	<b>Total 2022</b>
<b>Incoming resources</b>		
Donations	£22,748.02	£12,521.43
Other income	£30.23	£31.21
Gift Aid	-	£2,885.15
Bank Interest	£11.98	-
<b>Resources Expended</b>		
Bank/ fundraising charges	£429.33	£537.75
Grants	£20,101.45	£6,924.77
<b>Net resources</b>		
Total incoming/ outgoing	£2,374.45	£7,975.27
Total funds carried forward	£17,831.37	£15,456.92

The notes on pages 2 to 3 form part of this financial report

**Balance sheet as at 30<sup>th</sup> April 2023**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Cash in CAF Bank	£16,631.73	£10,111.57
Paypal balance	£1,199.64	£5,345.35
Total assets	£17,831.37	£15,456.92



## Notes to Financial Report

1. Brighter Path is a CIO with annual income of less than £25,000 and therefore the accounts require approval from trustees but are not subject to independent examination. The accounts must show receipts and payments with a statement of assets and liabilities.
2. Donations received: £22,748.02.
3. Amazon Smile: we received £30.23.
4. Gift aid: whilst many of our donations are eligible for Gift Aid we did not submit an application for repayment of tax in this reporting period, but have not lost the ability to do so at a later date.
5. Website: at trustee continues to donate the value of hosting the website and plug-ins to allow the website to operate<sup>1</sup>
6. Charitable grants: £20,101.45
7. Governance: bank and platform payment fees were £429.33.
8. Trustee remuneration: No remuneration was paid or was payable for the year directly or indirectly out of the funds of the charity to any trustee. Attention is drawn to the heading 'conflicts of interest' below.
9. Conflicts of interest: Caroline and John de Bono who are trustees of Brighter Path are also directors of Brighter Path (Sri Lanka) a not for profit company in Sri Lanka which provides support for care leavers and those in care in Sri Lanka. In accordance with the Charity Commission's guidance on conflicts of interest neither trustee voted on any grants to Brighter Path in Sri Lanka.

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<sup>1</sup> Hosting costs £50.99 per month

**Stripe:**

Opening balance: -£0.12

Closing balance: £0

Received (before fees): £5,466

Fees £122.80

Total payout: £5,343.08

**Paypal**

Opening balance: £5,345.35

Closing balance: £1,199.64

Fees: £87.41

Payments received: £2,135.

Payments made: £6,193.30

Transfers to paypal account: £500?? (check, but I think this was when we couldn't find a way to make international payments, there is a note to explain).

**CAF**

Opening balance: £10,111.57

Closing balance; £16,631.73

Payments made from CAF: £14,162.15

Payments received: £15,189.23