

TRUSTEE ANNUAL RETURNS

January – December 2023



Educate An African Child

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Charity Commission Annual Return 2023

EDUCATE AN AFRICAN CHILD

Charity registration number: 1197100

The Chair's Summary

Introduction

Educate an African Child is a charitable organisation that was first established in 2022. Its primary objective is to raise funds to support a nursery school in Enugu, Nigeria, which offers primary education to children from families who cannot afford a basic standard of education. This institution aims to provide a high-quality elementary education for children living in extreme poverty. The beneficiaries primarily include very poor families residing in substandard housing and destitute conditions. Consequently, many parents struggle to adequately feed and clothe their children, living in abject poverty, or at best subsisting on a very low weekly income.

Rationale and Overall Aims of Educate an African Child

Joseph and Agnes school as the main beneficiary of the funds raised by the charity, is committed to delivering a holistic education that provides a solid foundation for its young pupils, thereby improving their prospects for social mobility, however small. The school is a well-equipped institution that offers a high standard of teaching and learning, in addition to social and emotional support for the children.

The charitable initiatives of Educate an African Child raise funds to sponsor the education of each pupil, providing essential resources such as books, uniforms, writing materials, recreational equipment, and other learning tools that promote full engagement in the educational experience. This approach aims to develop pupils into confident, well-rounded learners capable of realising their potential both academically and personally, through a holistic educational ethos.

The school emphasises the modelling of good behaviour and habits in its educational practices. In addition to core academic content, the curriculum includes a variety of extracurricular activities, such as constructive play, maintaining good personal hygiene and encouraging the children to participate in sustainable vegetable gardening.

In October of this year, the charity undertook its main annual fundraising event, this being the "Come Walk with Me" sponsored walk. The walkers were able to raise approximately £2,600 that added to the monies donated by a few individuals who sponsor a handful of children which meets with some of the costs to pay staff.

The aim of the fundraiser was to raise sufficient funds to buy and construct a climbing frame and slide for the children's playground. Sufficient funds were raised

to buy, ship and successfully construct the play equipment. As a result of the charitable support of the agents UPSAT, transportation of goods from the UK to Nigeria were subsidised which significantly reduced our spending on this important undertaking.

This installation has allowed the children to enjoy participating regularly in imaginative play, enhance their physical co-ordination as well as their social and emotional well-being. The children have also learned to take turns in their play and interact with each other empathetically.

The School's Progress to date-An Economic context:

The school has continued to grow from strength to strength despite the significant challenges it has countenanced in maintaining the daily financial running of the premises. A downturn in the economic climate in Nigeria caused by a rampant increase in inflation in 2022 to approximately 20.8%. The price hike of essential commodities such as food (up to 23%), petrol, as well as other energy-based utilities, has warranted a cost-effective approach to spending in the maintenance of the running of the school. This has allowed the establishment to continue to support and provide high quality free education for 9 children between the ages of 1 to 5 years. This is more poignant considering the fact that the National Bureau of Statistics reported that 63% i.e. 133 million Nigerians lived below the national poverty line.

There is further scope to do more to meet with the future objectives and activities of the school. There is significant potential to improve and widen its facilities by way of action plans devised by the charity's governing body in close collaboration with the school's manager/founder and other stakeholders. The plans that intend to be action are to:

1. Recruit a fundraiser to increase funds for larger projects such as establishing the primary school build.
2. Undertake our annual "Come walk with me" fundraiser to raise £4-6K to purchase a minibus to transport the children to and from school in light of the soaring and thus prohibitive costs of transportation.
3. Undertake more outreach work so that we can increase the number of pupils in attendance to meet our target number of 12
4. Develop a library hub to 21st century standards
5. Develop the primary school classrooms for 40-60 places

Closing remarks: The charity and its stakeholders have come a long way and have endeavoured to meet with their aims this year as in previous years. We will continue to work in a collaborative manner to meet with the above objectives. In doing so we are confident that the school that will continue to excel in providing an enriching and high standard of education that every impoverished child in Enugu should have the opportunity to enjoy to maximize their life chances.

Executive Director's Overview

Introduction

This annual report is prepared in accordance with the Charities Commission Act and outlines the performance, challenges, and key statistics relevant to our charity, Educate an African Child (Charity Registration Number 1197100). Our mission focuses on improving educational access for underprivileged children in Nigeria, specifically the Igbo State region.

Aims, Objectives, and Purpose

Aims:

Educate an African Child aims to enhance educational opportunities for children in Nigeria, particularly those from vulnerable families facing socio-economic barriers.

Objectives: These are to:

Advance the education of the pupils at Joseph and Agnes Educational Foundation in Enugu State Nigeria by providing and assisting in the provision of facilities for education at the school.

Develop the educational capacity and skills of the members of the socially and economically disadvantaged community of Nigeria in such a way that they are better able to identify and meet their needs to allow them to participate more fully in society. ????

Purpose:

Our core purpose is to ensure that every child has access to quality education, enabling them to break the poverty cycle so as to build a better future for themselves and their communities.

Achievements

Despite the economic and logistical challenges, Educate an African Child has made significant strides over the past year to meet their aims and objectives. Below are some specific examples of our achievements:

Partnerships with Local Organisations:

Established partnerships with local community groups to increase the number of outreach visits to the places where women and children are commonly found begging for food and money. This is a very challenging task as it can sometimes take more than a year to persuade an individual to leave the perceived security of begging on the streets.

Challenges

In addition to the challenges outlined previously, the 2021-22 annual return highlighted several additional challenges that have continued to impact our operations:

A lack of awareness or acknowledgement of Impact of Poverty:

Many communities in Igbo land lack awareness of the real impact of extreme poverty and generational educational poverty, particularly for girls and widows. Ingrained societal attitudes towards education, particularly for girls and marginalised groups, pose challenges in ensuring equitable access to education.

Volunteer and staffing challenges:

The charity continues to face difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified volunteers and staff, exacerbated by economic pressures and limited funding for competitive recompense.

Maintaining long-term sustainability

Maintaining the long-term sustainability of educational programs is challenging due to fluctuating funding sources and increased operational cost. This has limited our ability to plan and implement initiatives effectively.

Financial challenges

Based on insights from the 2021-22 financial report, Educate an African Child has faced specific financial challenges:

Reduced financial donations:

The charity experienced a decline in individual donations and sponsorships. This has been as a result of the economic downturns affecting donor capacity. This reduction impacted our funding especially

as most of our income is generated from individuals residing in Nigeria and the UK. Both populations have experienced significant economic hardship in light of the major increases in inflation and other domestic fiscal matters that have occurred in the last 2 years particularly in Nigeria.

Funding Dependency:

High reliance on a limited number of funding sources has made financial stability precarious. Any reduction in support from main donors can significantly affect our operational budget. We desperately need to attract more funding so more reliable and consistent funding streams can be created.

Increase in operational costs:

Rising costs of essential supplies, transportation, and logistics have outpaced the rate at which our funding has increased. The rampant enhancement in inflation rates in Nigeria has further increase running costs of the school in real terms. This has impeded our ability to retain our key teachers as their monthly income is insufficient to maintain a reasonable standard of living as a result of the ever cost of transport. Recruitment of new/replacement staff remains equally difficult for the same reasons. This therefore restricts our ability to increase our outreach operations and intake to meet with our annual recruitment targets.

Administrative expenses and sustainability concerns

The school need to employ a funding development officer as well as more administrative staff. This has been hampered by the increased operational costs required to run the school. This includes a reduction in the percentage of funds available for maintenance of marketing and social media. It is imperative that a re-evaluation of budget allocations and fundraising strategies is undertaken to enable the school to be able to eventually employ a funding development officer who can then take on the chief responsibility of providing the consistent funding stream that the school so desperately requires.

There is clearly a pressing need for long-term funding commitments seeing that short-term grants and the current funding cycles eg yearly sponsored walk do not align with our strategic goals for sustainable educational impact.

Statistical data to provide an Economic and social contexts in Igbo states

Literacy Rates:

Current literacy rates in Igbo State are estimated at 62%, according to the National Bureau of Statistics. This figure is significantly lower in rural areas, where literacy can drop to as low as 50%.

Poverty Rates:

Approximately 43% of the population in Igbo State lives in poverty, severely limiting their ability to afford school fees and educational materials (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023).

Cost of Living crisis:

The cost of essential goods such as food and utilities are rapidly rising, with a report from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics indicating that the average price of food items has increased by 32% in the past year, directly affecting household budgets.

Food Inflation:

The National Bureau of Statistics reported that food prices increased by over 30% in 2023. This rise has severely impacted nutrition, with 20% of households reportedly experiencing food insecurity, further hindering children's ability to learn effectively.

Academic context

Pupil numbers for the nursery and pre-school sections fell slightly from 8 to 6 mainly as a result of families being forced to vacate their dwellings and move from one location to another.

We proudly promoted 6 children to primary 1 stage. This was highly satisfying to witness especially as they had made leaps and bounds in advancing their STEM skills as well as the ever important ,reading writing and numeracy skills commensurate with this stage. Their IT skills

have however not shown the level of improvement expected this being partly due to infrastructural limitations such as issues with connectivity.

The teacher /pupil ratio is slightly below our target. This currently stands at 1: 8 instead of the expected 1:10.

There are a number of factors that have contributed to this discrepancy. Firstly, we work with hard to reach families living on the streets of Enugu. Who as aforementioned, are extremely difficult to persuade to leave behind this street life. Secondly, more volunteers are needed to assist us with the outreach programme. Currently, only the Founder Ms Amuzie, is able to do this work as the “boots on the ground” contributor. We are however endeavoring to increase this activity by liaising with more charitable/volunteer grassroots organisations associated with the field of social care. Thirdly, the rise in social and economic hardship due to the government has had the impact outlined earlier in this report. Non-inclusive policies such as removal of fuel subsidies, have in turn increased the cost of food fuel and utilities, and in particular housing accommodation (driven mainly through private landlord/ accommodation). This has resulted in parents not being able to afford to meet the transport costs required to bring their children to school. This can often culminate in parents needing to make the difficult decisions between meeting transport costs or the family suffering from a lack of food for that day.

Unfortunately, some families have experienced eviction from dilapidated buildings as a result of owners needing to carry out refurbishment causing homelessness. We lost 2 of our nursery children as a result of this . By the end of September 2023, we found that it was not possible to finance the children’s travel expenses because of increased financial restrictions.?????Female children who had happily progressed into the primary level.

We are truly happy to report. That's the children progressing from preschool. We are already able to read 2,3 and 4 letter words phonetically. This demonstrates the teaching staff's commitment effort and hard work through group activities 1:1 attention as well as challenging the children's abilities. Notwithstanding, they are family backgrounds, generational illiteracy as well as the effects of educational

poverty, We are truly happy to report that our children approximating more rapidly and confidently. As would have been expected bearing.

In mind that they do not have home support or any additional out of school. Support and curricular activities.

At Joseph and Agnes We endeavor to develop our children's learning through discovery. This also involves developing their curiosity. They are questioning skill as well as their social skills. This has made possible With the support of a UK based link schools such as UCL nurse and St Winefred's Primary schools. We are truly grateful to receive their support in terms of teaching/learning resources, especially books and furniture.

Furthermore, without the support of shipping agents such as Opsat Ltd and Worldwide Links in form heavy discounting to transport items back to the school. We would not be able to finance such quality, play equipment, furnishings, and resources, enhancing our provision to the children.

Breakfast and lunch. Most of them receive simple lunch and / or breakfast if they come to school without eating. This purchase is on a daily basis, ensuring that no child is trying to learn on an empty stomach.

Our greatest challenges:

1. How to engage with the mothers to help them address their multiple dimensional facets of their needs of their family, the most essential being the ability to get a roof over their heads. The nature of their poverty doesn't allow them to earn or make sufficient money beyond what could be eaten in the short run. Homelessness is often caused when the husband (main bread winner) dies either at the hands of the Fulani Herdsmen attacking them in the villages and homes, forcing them to escape to the closest neighbouring state. The majority of our families are from Ebonyi State, and they escape to Enugu State as refugees begging in the streets.

2. Lack of school transport ie school bus would increase our ability to economically reach more children pushed out further into more rural lands. Our 2024 'Come Walk with Me' event will aim to raise sufficient money to purchase a bus.

3. Staffing Needs

The need for staffing both for Educate An African Child and Joseph and Agnes Educational foundation is rapidly on an increase beyond what the Founder/Exec Director and Trustees can voluntarily manage in the medium to long term. The charities are now at a developmental stage requiring the employment of a fundraiser/ administrator and teachers and headteacher in Nigeria. Even if we can encourage more women and their children of the street, recruitment difficulties for well qualified and experienced teachers would be a hindrance. Rapidly increasing transport cost dissuading experienced and qualified teachers being prepared to travel. Long distances to work, no matter how good the school is. Our only option is to remain competitive. And in order to do that, we will need to increase our salaries and offer some benefits to the staff.

Future plans.

1. Celebrate Labour Day
The staff will teach the parents basic literacy, including writing their names and sign in signatures.
2. Student exchange via video of zoom conferencing with partner. Schools in the UK
interact and share their views. Learn about each other's culture language and heritage.
3. Environmental/hygiene awareness, day involving parents and children from local private schools School bus drivers awareness. Day to improve their skills and update them on the road safety rules and regulations as well as basic emergency. In case of accidents here, they will discuss the rules and responsibilities as school bus drivers.
5. introduction of zoo/WhatsApp story nights for those children whose parents have access to Android or iPhone zoom facilities.

We will involve UK parents who read to their children at night to also allow are children to listen to the stories.

6. Engaged in advocacy campaigns in order to raise awareness and promote the children's rights to early childhood education we hope to begin a realistic dialogue with state education authorities to improve school facilities and resources.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges presented by economic conditions and social factors in Igbo State, Educate an African Child remains committed to its mission. We aim to adapt our strategies to address these obstacles and continue to seek partnerships and funding to ensure that every child has access to quality education.

Thank you for your continued support in helping us make a real difference to the lives of children in Nigeria as we endeavor as best we can to enhance their life chances

Educate an African Child

Financial Statement

For Period 1st January 2023 to 31st December 2023

	2023	2023
Incoming Resources		
Monthly Donations	2224.00	
Go Fund Me	28.88	
CAF Interest Received	2.95	
Total Income Resources		2,255.83
Resources Expended		
Direct Expenses		
Salaries and Running Costs	1,246.00	
Total Direct Expenses		1,246.00
Admin & Management Expenses		
Website Hosting	150.00	
CAF Monthly Fee	60.00	
Total Admin & Management Expenses		210.00
Total Expenses		1,456.00
Excess Income / Expenses		799.83
Opening Balance		2,204.90
Closing Balance		3,004.73
<u>Statement of Assets & Liabilities as at 31st December 2022</u>		
Fixed Assets		0.00
Current Assets		
Cash at Santander	1561.78	
Cash at C.A.F.	1442.95	
Total Current Assets		3004.73
Current Liabilities		0.00
Net Current Assets		3004.73
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		3004.73
Long Term Liabilities		0.00
Net Assets of the Charity		3004.73