

# **Charlene's Project TRUSTEES' REPORT**

for the financial year ended 31 August 2024

The trustees present their Trustees' Report and the unaudited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 August 2024.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The Trustees' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Trustees' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The trustees of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the trustees of Charlene's Project present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 31 August 2024.

The company is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice (Charities SORP effective January 2015), the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

## **Mission, Objectives and Strategy**

### **Objectives**

We continue to aim to inspire and motivate people here in NI and further afield to make a difference in the lives of children and their families in Uganda.... just as Charlene set out to do when she first founded the project This is done through provision of education, sport and health promotion programs, the provision of clean water, humanitarian distribution, and assistance of any kind that will help the communities we are involved with in Uganda to become healthier, more self-sufficient and better educated communities.

Charlene's Project was established in September 2009 by Charlene Barr, a teenager with failing health due to terminal cystic fibrosis. When Charlene became too ill to continue school, she decided to start fundraising to build a school in Uganda. Her enthusiasm, despite her poor health, motivated young and old right across Northern Ireland to support her efforts to build Hidden Treasure School in Mayo District, Kampala, Uganda. Charlene died in October 2010 but not before she achieved her fund-raising target and established Charlene's Project as a Charity.

The main objectives of the Charity are the relief of poverty, hardship and distress, and the advancement of education for children in Uganda and beyond. The charity will aim to provide school and educational facilities, accommodation, staff to provide care and education, and financial and ongoing material support.

The continuing aims and objectives of the Charity will be to continue to tell Charlene's story and journey to inspire the people in Northern Ireland, Uganda and beyond.

The information that follows is a snapshot of the progress and success of the charity over the last twelve months, which we trust will both encourage and inspire you as you see how Charlene's vision continues to be fulfilled.

## **Structure, Governance and Management**

### **Structure**

The organisation is governed by its Trustees. All new Trustees go through an induction and training process and are appointed as and when required and based on their skills and experience. The Trustees do not retire on an annual basis.

The Trustees meet on a regular basis throughout the year to manage and control all aspects of the charity and also conduct regular risk assessments of the various operational risks impacting the charity and its projects at home and abroad.

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## Review of Activities, Achievements and Performance

### INTRODUCTION

This year has seen great progress in Charlene Secondary School and Diika Health Centre in Uganda. The financial year 2021 – 2022 saw the beginning of the building of the much-needed secondary school for the children of the 8 neighbouring Kiryandongo primary schools. The 2022 – 2023 financial year saw the completion of Phase 1 of the building of Charlene Secondary School, and the beginning of fundraising towards Phase 2 of the school. Therefore this 2023 – 2024 financial year has seen work on Phase 2 of Charlene Secondary School commencing as we work towards completing all the building work that is needed and work towards the school being self-sufficient. Thanks to a very supportive church partner the work on improving the facilities and building a maternity unit at Diika Health Centre was completed during this financial year. Additionally, for the first time post-Covid we were able to bring a large team out to Uganda in July 2024 to carry out teacher training with school management and teachers, while the rest of the team carried out kid's clubs and sports with the pupils. Charlene's Project continues to serve the local Ugandan community through Charlene Education Foundation, empowering them to take forward themselves the vision of improving access to and quality of education and health services in their communities. Additionally, through the support of people in Northern Ireland sponsored children have been able to continue their education through Youth Sport Uganda, Destiny Christian High School, and Kahara Primary. None of this would have been possible without the financial and prayerful support of people here, and most importantly without the efforts of the community in Uganda and the Trustees of Charlene Education Foundation (CEF).

### CHARLENE SECONDARY SCHOOL



Charlene Secondary School



Pupils in class at Charlene Secondary School

Phase 1 of the building of Charlene Secondary School was completed in January 2023 ready for the first full intake of pupils at the beginning of the school year in February 2023. Phase I of the Secondary School build included 1 classroom block, 2 laboratories, teacher accommodation to house 4 teachers, a girl's and a boy's dormitory and shower block, kitchen and dining hall, school latrines, and resources such as lab equipment, laptops and desks. Over the next 3 years numbers accessing secondary education in this community are expected to rise to over 1,000 as the school grows. This is **transformative** in this community, where many parents were unable to access secondary education for their children due to lack of provision and resources. Phase 2 was projected to include another classroom block to facilitate the extra year groups, more dormitories to allow for more students to board, further fencing around the compound for added security, and more latrines to ensure good health and sanitation through a good ratio of latrines for student numbers.

Phase 2 building of Charlene Secondary School commenced officially in August 2023. This included an additional classroom block which was completed for the 2024 school year commencing in February 2024 to allow the school to expand to teach up to GSCE Level for the first time. Money was also sent out to purchase textbooks to allow the teachers to teach the up-to-date Ugandan curriculum as well as further desks and beds to accommodate the growing number of pupils. During this financial year work also commenced and is nearing completion on an additional girl's dormitory to allow more girls to board at Charlene Secondary School, and work will soon commence on a girl's washroom to accompany this dormitory. It was also a blessing to be able to contribute towards the purchase of vocational materials to allow vocational learning to commence at Charlene Secondary School and ensure students can leave school not only with academic knowledge, but skills and experience they can use to help create a living for themselves. Finally, fire safety materials were also purchased and installed at Charlene Secondary School this past year ensuring safety is at the center of the school and ensuring that students can learn in a safe and comfortable environment. At the end of this financial year money went out to commence work on the completion of fencing around the perimeter of the school. Previously work was carried out to create a secure perimeter around the dormitories to provide the students with safety at night; however, work needs to be done to complete this fencing around the rest of the school compound. This work will therefore be carried out and completed in the next financial year as well as further buildings needed to complete Charlene Secondary School.

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**New 4 classroom block**



**New Girls Dormitory being built**



**Computer Class**



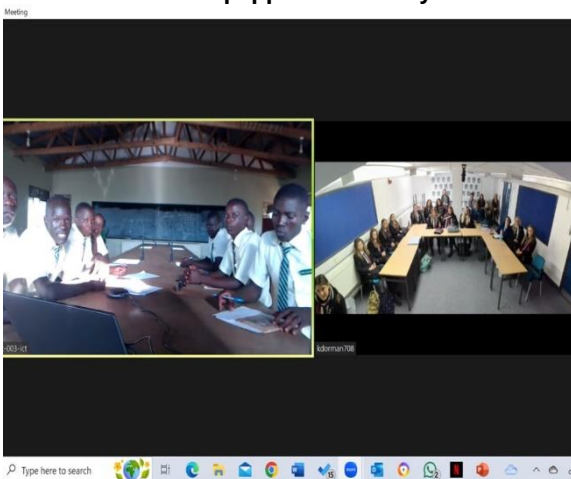
**Classroom work**



**Well equipped laboratory**



**Vocational studies**



**International connection via ZOOM**



**International Contribution to Pastoral Care award**



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Once all the buildings are in place, the long-term vision for Charlene Secondary School is self-sustainability. Charlene Secondary School has thus continued to be supported in the process of becoming self-sufficient through training in accounting and QuickBooks software, regular meetings with CEF Trustees and management of the school, and working towards the licensing and registration of the school. Additionally, training with management and teachers at Charlene Secondary School has been ongoing periodically on a range of topics through a teacher trainer from Northern Ireland by ZOOM. Additionally a team travelled out in July 2024 to carry out teacher and management training in person in Charlene Secondary School and the surrounding primary schools.

### MASINDI CLUSTER PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The 8 cluster primary schools around Charlene Secondary School that we affectionately call the Kiryandongo Cluster have so many needs, many of which we are unable to meet due to being a small organisation with limited funds. However, it was such a joy to be able to visit each of these 8 schools in July 2024 when a team travelled from Northern Ireland to Uganda. This allowed teacher training to occur in each of the primary schools and sports to be promoted through the purchase and distribution of netballs and footballs in each school. Additionally, money has recently been sent to purchase goalposts for each of the eight primary schools to allow a 'Premier League' football competition to take place yearly between the eight schools to encourage participation in sport and building of relationships between the schools and the communities. During this financial year we have also continued to support Kahara Primary School to allow for teachers to receive some stability of pay as it continues to work towards receiving Government funding. Finally, it was a blessing at the end of the 2023 school year to be able to purchase Bibles for each of the P7 pupils and staff in the eight primary schools, as well as all the pupils and staff of Charlene Secondary School. This was made possible thanks to a funder and is something we are passionate about as it allows children to hear and learn about the most important thing in life, the love of Jesus Christ.



**Opportunities to learn**



**P7 Pupils receive their Bible**

### SPONSORSHIP

We are so thankful for those who sponsor children in Destiny Christian High School, Kahara Primary and Youth Sport Uganda. Some of these children have or are nearing completion of their secondary education. None of this would have been possible without the help of their sponsors. The long-term vision is that as Charlene Secondary School becomes established in the community, more children will be able to attend there, reducing the need for scholarships that have been used in the past to enable young people to receive a secondary education.

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**Destiny children receive sponsor letters**



**Glenlola pupils receive sponsor letters**

### **DIIKA HEALTH CENTRE**

This past year saw the completion, kitting out, and opening of a new Maternity Unit at Diika Health Centre thanks to the generous support of a church partner. This will transform lives as Diika will be able to cater for the needs of more women and babies in the surrounding communities. Pregnancy is a scary time for any mother; however, in these rural communities, maternal healthcare statistics have been poor due to lack of resources, poor access to maternal health services and women having to travel long distances. This new unit will save women's and babies lives and make such a difference in these communities for generations to come. We will continue to work with CEF and local government officials to work towards upgrading Diika to a Level III Health Centre meaning it will receive more staffing, funding and resources.



**Official opening of Diika Maternity Unit**



**Team visit Diika Maternity Unit**



**Maternity Ward**



**First baby born in Maternity Unit**



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## WORK WITH QUEENS UNIVERSITY ON THEORY OF CHANGE

Throughout this year we have worked closely with researchers at Queens University Belfast to carry out a “theory of change” evaluation to see what has and has not worked in the activities Charlene's Project has been doing over the years. This involved a trip to Uganda in November by researchers to carry out workshops with the local community to hear their input first-hand and their experiences to help form the theory of change. Individual interviews have also been conducted with all the stakeholders.

Additionally, work has been done through a Ugandan organisation and survey provider, Uwezo, who helped train primary school teachers and community members on data collection of literacy levels of pupils in the 8 communities we work in. It is hoped that this will form a baseline for future literacy training interventions we have planned for the 8 primary school communities. Good literacy teaching in these early primary school classes will improve the performance of the children not only in primary but also in secondary education and beyond.



## UGANDA SUMMER TRIP

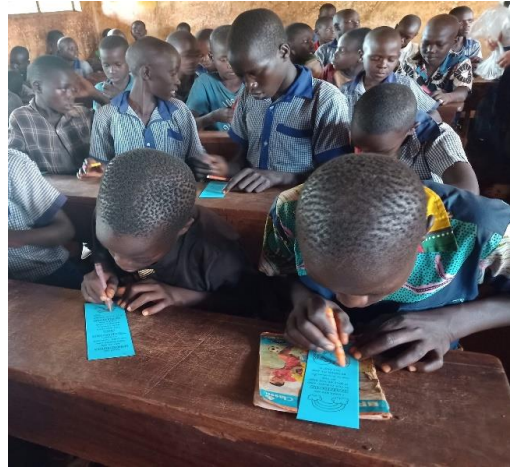
A team from Ireland travelled to Uganda in July 2024 to carry out work in the 8 primary schools and in Charlene Secondary School. The team was made up of long-term supporters, and pupils and teachers from Glenlola Collegiate. Glenlola has generously supported the vision of a local secondary school for the children of these communities for quite a few years. In each of the schools, the team carried out kids clubs, sport and classroom activities with the students in order to free up the teachers and school management to receive specialist teacher training. This is so important in an area where many teachers have not been able to access high quality training and have no way of receiving continuous learning opportunities. The teacher training in each of the schools was a real success, with one trainer working with the teachers and another working with the school management team. They all were so keen to learn and soaked in the material being taught. It was such a blessing to be able to bring out resources to help them in their teaching and to spend time building relationships with them. Overall, it was a humbling trip as it once again reminded us of the extreme poverty in so many of the communities in which we work. Each primary school has massive needs and challenges, but each school also showed so much resilience and creativity as they dealt with these challenges. It has been such a blessing to partner with these communities in such a small way over the years, and each time we visit we are so blessed by the welcome and love we receive in each school, and we learn so much more from them than we could ever hope to be able to give back.



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**July 2024 Team**



**Colouring in bookmarks**



**Bubbles fun**



**Sports**



**Teacher training**



**Teacher and management support**

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## CONCLUSION

Thank you so much to all who have made the work of the past year possible through their prayers and their financial support. We are so thankful to God for all the work that is going on in Uganda and we are grateful to be able to do the small bit that we can as we work alongside our Ugandan partners.

## Financial Review

The Trustees are once again very humbled and thankful for the support Charlene's Project continues to receive and the 2024 year has been no exception:

- Income of £273,134 has been received
- Expenditure of £285,328 has been incurred during this current financial year
- Expenditure continues to be spent directly on project costs
- Deficit of £12,194 (Note 14) as anticipated has been reported for the year

The Trustees are very satisfied with the financial results for the year and aim to continue to build on Charlene's legacy.

## Results and Dividends

At the end of the financial year the company has assets of £140,472 (2023 - £204,623) and liabilities of £23,708 (2023 - £75,665). The net assets of the company have decreased by £(12,194).

## Reserves Position and Policy

The Trustees continue to monitor and update the reserves policy in order to establish the level of reserves that are required to continue to provide support and investment into all the projects for the next twelve months. Separately designated funds have been set up and are detailed in the notes to the Accounts.

Reserves (Note 14)

## Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards

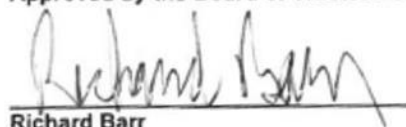
The company engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. Charlene's Project subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

## Going Concern

The trustees have reviewed the budgets for the year ahead and are satisfied that there are adequate funds in place to ensure that the charity can continue its activities and the current year financial statements have been prepared on a going concern.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 25/11/24 and signed on its behalf by:



Richard Barr  
Trustee