

# **GIFT** **International**

Grassroots Initiatives Funding and Training

CCNI 104617

## **Gift International Annual Trustees Report**

**April 2022 – March 2023**



### **Purposes of the Charity:**

1. Advance education and promote the preservation of health of the people in the area of benefit by the provision of resources, training and grants with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants of the area of benefit.
2. Relieve poverty and hunger in the area of benefit by any charitable means and in particular the provision of grants and training to empower economically challenged people to establish and maintain projects which will enable them to relieve their own poverty.
3. Recruit, select and send out volunteers from the UK for service within the area of benefit and any other method the committee may from time to time decide.

Gift International has considered the Commission's guidance and the criteria for public benefit:

Benefit must:

- flow from the charity's purposes
- be capable of being demonstrated

- be beneficial, not harmful.

GIFT International activities endeavour to reflect The United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

The seventeen goals aim to focus on the following:

1. No poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and wellbeing
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry innovation and infrastructure
10. Reduced inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate action
14. Life below water
15. Life on land
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships for the goals

Through strategic planning, community consultation and beneficiary feedback, Gift International has ensured that our activities clearly support and flow from our purposes, are clearly demonstrated and have been beneficial and not harmful in any way.

Gift International is a 'Grassroots Initiatives Funding and Training' provider for remote and economically challenged communities mainly in Kenya, but also retains the ability to support projects in similar developing countries. By fundraising through, for example, community events, coffee mornings, illustrated talks and lectures, and receiving general donations, Gift International raises funds in NI and beyond, for use in the areas of benefit. Funding facilitates a variety of needs including the provision of teacher training workshops, bursaries for student education, the building of schools, resourcing of classrooms and individual student support where there is demonstrable need, health and nutrition initiatives, capacity-building training workshops for local community representatives and the provision of small start-up funds for sustainable enterprises in identified communities.

Community consultations and the identification of self-managed projects have enabled development of local enterprises ranging from the planting of tree nurseries and expansion of existing woodlots to incorporate more native species, bee-keeping projects for the production of honey and wax products, a range of agricultural developments including maize mill construction and equipment, training for and set-up of dairy cow and poultry projects, to facilitating driving qualifications, dressmaking and tailoring courses and the provision of sewing machines.

Health benefits come from initiatives such as adult education with a special focus on women's education, provision of mosquito nets, sustainable provision of milk through dairy cow projects and training in basic hygiene and access to emergency medical aid through provision of mobile phones for rapid communication in remote areas. A Mother and Baby project in the Masai Mara enables

mothers-to-be in one area of GIFT International operation to attend a maternity clinic, if desired, for the birth of their baby and provides essential inoculations and a starter pack of requisites for the newborn babies and their mothers.

Education benefits come from initiatives such as school construction and provision of equipment, teacher training, school fees funds, tertiary student bursaries, adult training course provision and knowledge and skills shared by volunteers in the areas of benefit.

### **Impact of the Pandemic.**

While the Coronavirus pandemic has become much less impactful on a day-to-day basis in both the UK and Kenya, the legacy of this difficult time remains: During 2022 the GIFT International programme of talks resumed but the momentum was reduced and, sadly, a number of groups we would have engaged with on a very regular basis prior to the pandemic have decided to cease operation, largely due to their age demographic. GIFT would like to acknowledge the long-term support and friendship of these groups, not only for the financial support they provided over many years but also the ongoing encouragement and their care for beneficiaries in Kenya.

With regard to events, we have not initiated any new public events since the pandemic, so, in this reporting period, fundraising has been limited to regular givers and one-off donations, for which we are most grateful. We attended one community fair at the end of 2022, raising £75.00 from sales.

On top of Kenya's difficulties with covid, continued drought, believed to be associated with climate change, has affected much of the country, with some areas reporting 4 consecutive years without significant rainfall. Access to clean drinking water, water for livestock and availability of food have been serious issues and we have on occasion stepped in to assist with food provision.

The way in which we budget – one year in advance - means that we only take on new projects that we can comfortably budget for and have raised the funds to deliver. Some projects ideally roll on from year to year (e.g the Mother and Baby Project) but again we ensure that the funds are guaranteed before we undertake to deliver them in the communities. Despite financial concerns arising from the impact of the pandemic years, through the generous commitment of donors, we have been able to maintain all existing ongoing projects, for which we are most grateful.

Once again, throughout 2022/23, we were greatly heartened to receive reports and individual messages from the communities to say that the measures we had implemented over the years were helping to sustain them through uncertain and economically challenging times.

For budgeting purposes and for ease of reporting we manage projects under four headings:

- A) Sustainable Community Development - agricultural projects, beekeeping development, water harvesting.
- B) Education and Training – education/training bursaries for individuals, whole school development, community training courses.
- C) Community Health and Well-being - Mother and Baby Support, Cleft Palate surgery and community medical support.
- D) Humanitarian Fund for families and individuals experiencing hardship – feed the children, medical emergencies etc



Projects under A), B) and C) are planned and budgeted for a year in advance based on available funding. Ideally, some projects will deliver goals under more than one heading e.g. the Gede Beekeeping Project which supports the expansion of honey production across the area but also provides training for individuals and groups. Where communities can demonstrate a range of benefits, these strengthen their application for funding. Projects under D) are reactive and subject to availability of residual funds in that funding year. In most such cases relatively small amounts of funding will be made available and not exceed single payments of £500.

### **Main Achievements 2022 -2023:**

The main achievements of the charity during the year 2022 - 2023 addressed all purposes of the charity. Although a very small charitable organisation, Gift International continues to make a significant and lasting impact on the lives of beneficiaries in Kenya.

#### **A. Sustainable Community Development eg, agricultural projects, beekeeping development, water harvesting.**

##### **Tree Planting in Kenya**

Over the past two decades GIFT International has funded the planting and maintenance of several tree nurseries and supported training programmes for those engaged in developing tree nurseries.

Planting trees is a relatively simple task, yet the results can be hugely valuable to people and the environment. Once a tree is mature it can absorb 20kg of carbon every year from the atmosphere, thereby making a major contribution to mitigating climate change.

Planting trees in Kenya will provide shelter, food, timber products and an income. Trees enhance biodiversity, improve soil quality and provide the income that funds education and healthcare for some of the most challenged communities.

Building on earlier successes, GIFT International seeks to expand tree planting in selected areas.

In 2022/23 we provided funding for further woodlot planting and maintenance at Gede in the coast region, including the maintenance of a variety of fruit and nut trees lots (cashew, coconut, neem and mango) that are not only a source of income and food, but also act a vital carbon store.



## Bee Keeping Enterprises

GIFT International has worked in association with Northern Ireland beekeepers who have for many years provided funding towards running beekeeping training courses, supplying bee-keeping equipment, starter hives, smokers, along with honey separators that are essential for production of quality honey.

Under the management of a former GIFT-funded university graduate, working with a fellow beekeeper from the coast area, a programme of funded training courses for 6 local bee-keeping groups with 'on the ground' coaching, mentoring and on-going support continues to operate. The programme also includes restoration of the local environment, such as replanting depleted mangrove swamp, to ensure suitable foraging for bees. Considerable progress was made within the local communities, and honey production provided much needed revenue to group members. Comprehensive reports are submitted to GIFT in a timely manner, and we continue to be happy with the progress being made.



Our grateful thanks go to our N.I. beekeeper supporters who initiate and host fundraising events and in so doing spread the word across the N.I. community.

We acknowledge with thanks once again, during 2022, the fundraising efforts of beekeepers Robert and Helen Ditty, who along with their friends provide generous support for GIFT International beekeeping enterprises in Kenya.





Plans to expand the beekeeping project in Laikipia continue to be delayed due to prolonged drought. Despite these issues, where the bees have been sustained, the existing project continues to bring in valued revenue to the community. The fundamental problem of water supply is critical to the well-being of people, livestock, and the environment in general. The provision of boreholes is currently outside the financial scale of GIFT International and, indeed, such consideration is a highly complex matter requiring rigorous technical knowledge. The recent proliferation of borehole schemes in some areas has brought additional problems with ground water, salinisation etc so must be approached with caution. When we are in a position to revisit the area, we will discuss appropriate development opportunities and hope we can resume expansion of the beekeeping project in a way that meets the local communities' needs.

### **Posho Mill Expansion**

The GIFT-funded posho mill at Gede continues to be of support to the local community. Funding was made available for the addition of equipment enabling production of higher quality products to be achieved locally.



### **Nashula Poultry Project, Laikipia.**

GIFT International was approached by a long-standing contact from the Laikipia North district seeking support for development of a community poultry farming project.

The problem of water availability is escalating as drought and climate change impact deeply. Previously the community was able to draw water from the Nanyuki River, the source of which is Mt Kenya. In recent times, the permanent river has dried up and the community is having to bring in water in tankers. However, storage of large enough quantities of water to justify the cost of hiring tankers is inadequate and they requested funds for two new tanks. Stage one of this support, the provision of two tanks, and associated pipework, will help with forward planning to ensure they are not left without vital water supplies for the community and the poultry project.



**B. Education and Training – education/training bursaries, whole school development, community training courses.**

**Kakayuni School for the Deaf**

Gift International continues to make significant contributions to Kakayuni Special School for the Deaf. This school caters specifically for deaf pupils from a very extensive geographical area. Pupils are all boarders and GIFT International has worked with the Principal, Staff and School Committee representatives to develop sustainable enterprises that bring immediate financial and material benefit to the school that will also help to enhance the skills of these very disadvantaged young people, helping to prepare them for life after school.

Our relationship with Kakayuni School for the deaf continued and although lockdown had made it impossible for our project representative to travel to Mombasa to purchase resources as planned, we were able, just at the end of the 2021-22 reporting period, to fund the purchase of a comprehensive assortment of toys and games for the children, providing them with a range of suitable activities for pupils aged 4 – 19, outside of formal lessons. In addition, we had provided much needed physiotherapy equipment for use by the school. We were therefore very pleased to receive a report from the school during 2023 that these additions had been well received by the children and staff alike.

During 2022 we became aware of a shortage of beds at the school due to high demand for places at Kakayuni, and were delighted to provide funding for the construction of 8 new bunk beds along with associated bedding and good quality, long-lasting mosquito nets.

A letter of appreciation was received from the school principal:

KAKUYUNI SPECIAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

P.O. BOX 115-80202, WATAMU

DATE:31/01/2023

MOTTO: Abled different

Email:kakuyunischoolfordeafchildren@gmail.com

TO,

GIFT INTERNATIONAL;

THRO' JANET;

APPRECIATION FOR GIFT OF BOARDING MATERIALS TOWARDS DEAF CHILDREN AT KAKUYUNI

We acknowledge receipt of donation from Gift International. To us this is a New Year Gift. The deaf children were over joyed for receiving such a gift that came at a time when it was really needed, our population has increased. Acknowledge our appreciation.

As a deaf community in Kakuyuni we were delighted to receive a gift in form of a donation thus:-

- 1) 8 Decker beds -4 beds for each gender
- 2) 16 Maasai sheets- 8 for each gender
- 3) 8 mosquito nets -4 for each gender

In this regard therefore we wish to ask you to deliver our profuse thanks and appreciation to Gift International for their continued support and love towards the deaf children in Kakuyuni school for the deaf.

We again wish to thank you for your Big Heart towards the needy and in particular, the deaf children in Kakuyuni School for the Deaf.

Thanking you once again



Naomi Sesi



## Student Funding

During this reporting year, Gift International continued to fund education fees and school materials for students at all levels of education. Such support ensures continued attendance, tuition and boarding fees. We were pleased to support the final graduation of one of our GIFT-supported students in May 2022. We are currently supporting one young girl from the coast to pursue secondary education and have funded driving lessons for a project contact in Laikipia. Support for a student who we funded through his Primary education at Kakuyuni School for the Deaf has been extended to cover his secondary school fees and upkeep at a boarding school that caters for the deaf. It is very pleasing to note that not only has this candidate continued to progress well academically, he is also performing well in sports. We have been in discussion with staff from Kakuyuni School to see how GIFT might continue to offer support for students once they leave Kakuyuni and hope to implement a suitable project in 2023/24.

## Training

Under Phase 2 of the Nashula Poultry Project, GIFT International provided funding for key members of the project team to attend a five day consortium on Poultry Farming Training with the aim of implementing key findings where possible and cascading the learning to the community and beyond. The report from the Training was very positive and the co-ordinator set up a further training day for the Nashula group within a month of attending the course.



The Nashula Project members meet quarterly and share dividends with the needy among the community. Their support includes a programme of outreach to families and the elderly in need of food and water.

**C. Community Health and Well-being. Mother and Baby Support, Cleft Palate surgery and community medical support.**

**Mother and Baby Support Project, Trans Mara district, Kenya.**

Following a consultation facilitated by a local GIFT International associate in which the ladies of a Maasai village GIFT has worked with for many years in Transmara District, it was established that there are expected to be around 20 births in the village each year.

It is well documented that where a mother-to-be can attend a maternity facility, it is likely that the mother will have an opportunity to rest a little before the birth, potential complications can be detected quickly, and in the majority of cases the baby will be delivered well, with no spread of disease between mother and baby.

Of the mothers consulted, everyone opted for a clinic delivery, if possible, but the reality of the costs associated with attending a facility and the challenge of travelling to and from a clinic result in most mothers giving birth at home without professional medical intervention or support.

In partnership with GIFT International, a family of long-term supporters successfully piloted a programme of support for mothers-to-be during the calendar year 2020 where a percentage of sales of Little Love blankets, designed and marketed locally in Northern Ireland, supported mothers and new-born babies in the Masai Mara.

The project is managed and administered by a local GIFT associate who keeps records of the births. Assisted by members of the local Ladies Group, he purchases baby requisites and ensures they are delivered to the mothers prior to the birth of their babies. Additional support is provided by a GIFT representative in Nairobi and, where applicable, a generous volunteer from Northern Ireland assists with transportation of resources.

Transport to the clinic is provided either directly by the project coordinator or by organising taxis for mothers in labour/returning home. A supply of blankets and other baby items are issued to the new mothers.

Every new-born baby receives essential vaccinations throughout the first year and all return home with a new mosquito net.

In agreement with the main funding provider for the Mother and Baby project, it was agreed that where possible, funds could also be made available for emergency infant medical intervention. This has proved very helpful in several instances where we have been able to react quickly to relieve physical suffering and/or financial hardship that would have prevented intervention taking place.





N.B. The recipient community is aware that funding is not guaranteed beyond any given year. We will, however, be in discussion with the project supporters at the end of 2023 to assess future funding opportunities, and with the recipient community to identify current needs and costs. We are particularly keen to establish if there is something we can fund in support of maternal health that will benefit the entire community in addition to the mothers and babies in direct receipt of support.

**Cleft Palate Support.** During 2020 GIFT had initiated a project to raise funds in support of children in need of cleft lip and cleft palate surgery.

Although the condition is not fully understood, there are many factors believed to be the cause of cleft lip/palate deformity, resulting in 1 in 500 – 700 births in Kenya presenting with cleft lip and/or cleft palate. These include inherited genes, early or unhealthy pregnancy, lack of access to maternal health services, poor diet, exposure to toxic elements, including smoking and alcohol consumption in pregnancy.

Cleft lip or cleft palate need not be a disability, and yet, to be born with this condition in a community that lacks access to medical support, condemns many to a life of abandonment, bullying, and difficulties with eating or learning to speak, with negative consequences for education and life opportunities. It doesn't just affect the individual child, the whole family may be stigmatised, which can further exacerbate the tendency to hide children away.

Effective surgery to repair cleft lip and cleft palate can change all that and GIFT International, along with our Kenyan travel providers, FACT Safaris Ltd, who will assist with overseeing the project, seek to establish a project to support cleft palate surgery for children in need.

Problems encountered through the pandemic led us to put the project on hold until such times as we can meet with relevant medical teams to ensure that everything goes ahead as planned. One aspect we want to be very sure of is the aftercare of children receiving surgery as this is vital to their full recovery and wellbeing.

Donations already raised towards cleft palate support have been reserved for this purpose and, post pandemic, and upon our return to Kenya when we will meet with potential partners, we will seek a new delivery partner. We will continue to raise funds for this worthy cause.

**D. Humanitarian Fund for families and individuals experiencing hardship – feed the children, and individual medical emergencies.**

During the past two years we supported intervention for twin baby girls displaying hip and leg problems soon after birth. It is pleasing to report that both little girls are doing well, with one now demonstrating good mobility and the other showing significant improvement. Support for continued physiotherapy is a big help in this case and we will keep the situation under review throughout the childrens' pre-school years.

This support demonstrates the importance of early intervention. Through our long association with schools for children with physical disabilities we have encountered many children who, through lack of early intervention, have suffered disabilities that could, at an early stage, have been greatly improved.



**Emergency Feeding Programmes.** The Committee agreed that one remote Masai community near Ngong, Kajiado County, with whom we have had a longstanding relationship, should continue to receive regular support from general funds for the provision of food and water (brought from Nairobi). This community is severely disadvantaged by drought and the support provided has been gratefully received.

Throughout the year we made several additional donations towards essential health and well-being including funds towards critical medical operations and aftercare.

**Conclusion.** The activities outlined above clearly require significant funding. GIFT International has been the recipient of funds through community talks, activities and events run by the Committee and others, general donations, and the generosity of regular givers to facilitate these projects. Amazon Smile provided valuable funds from supporters during 2022 but regrettably, due to a policy change, will cease to be a source of funds in 2023. We continue to benefit from payments via Easyfundraising which brings additional and very welcome funding. We are grateful to a Benevity supporter for yet another very generous donation during this financial year. We gratefully acknowledge our beekeeping friends, who once again made a generous donation to our beekeeping projects. We are grateful to a broad denomination of churches and community groups who invite us to speak about the work of GIFT International, a number of whom ask us back year on year. We are also very grateful to all our individual supporters who have made substantial donations, and those who provide support in kind both in Northern Ireland and in Kenya.

GIFT International is a small, entirely voluntary, organisation and without the kind generosity of all our supporters we could not provide the range of support provided by GIFT International in Kenya. The encouragement and support of all means everything to us.

Many messages of gratitude have been sent throughout the year by recipients, both individuals and community groups, and we wish to pass a general message of thanks from recipients in Kenya to each and every supporter here in Northern Ireland.

“Other than our bank account, we have no other assets or liabilities”.

Note. In keeping with our policy on project sensitivity, permissions to use photos included in the report have been granted.

Janet Wilson. Chairperson, GIFT International.

June 2023