

Trustees Annual Report of the Project Uganda Link Group for the period November 2022 to November 2023

1. The Purposes of the Charity

The purposes of the Parish Uganda Link Group are to:

- provide access to food and clean water for families living in extreme poverty in the Parish of Kibiri, Kampala, Uganda and in other places in the Developing World;
- promote primary school education for children and young people in the Parish of Kibiri, Kampala, Uganda and in other places in the Developing World;
- provide appropriate medical resources and equipment to the Medical Centre and schools in the Parish of Kibiri, Kampala, Uganda and in other places in the Developing World.

2. What the Parish Uganda Link Group has done during the past year – An account of our activities.

During the period since the last Annual General Meeting of the group the following activities have been undertaken.

Meetings – The Trustees met on seven occasions during the year. The meetings were well attended and achieved an 88% attendance rate.

Education Support Initiative – Pupil Sponsorship Scheme

The administration and communication of the scheme continued to be managed by Kasia Wawrzynek and Geraldine Murphy while Una McClements looked after the management of the scheme finances.

The year, from November 2022 to the end of October 2023, was very challenging with the increases in the cost of living threatening the sustainability of the number of sponsors and the capacity of the Ugandan schools to provide food and resources for their children. Many of the Ugandan families have been facing additional hardships and have not been able to pay for their children to return to school. This has added considerable stress for the leaders of the Ugandan schools and has led to an increase in the demand for sponsored placements. The Parish Uganda Link Group has also been very conscious of the additional financial pressures on the sponsors but is pleased to report that the level of participation in the scheme has been maintained at a level comparable to 2021-22. As in 2021/22 the Ugandan schools reported that the Primary 7 children had enjoyed considerable success in their end of year examinations.

The communication with sponsors in November 2022 was very successful and it was reported at the March 2023 meeting that there were 153 children on the list to be sponsored and that there were 110 sponsors in the scheme. A small number of sponsors had left the scheme due to bereavement or illness and it was hoped that they could be replaced by new sponsors.

At the April 2023 meeting it was reported that there were now 155 pupils in the scheme with 115 sponsored confirmed. This would require £15,411 to cover the fees. This would be met by the contributions from the sponsors with some additional funds drawn from the surplus in the scheme account. It was agreed that the payments to the Ugandan schools would continue to be staggered and be made on a termly basis.

It was also reported in April that a local school, Holy Family PS, had provided a generous donation to St Dominic's PS. When asked, the Principal of St Dominic's indicated that most of the money would be used to provide improvements to the classrooms and school grounds.

Another excellent development in 2023 was the continued sponsorship of three children into post primary school. Two of these children are sponsored by St Colmcille's HS in Crossgar and it is hoped that a partnership between St Colmcille's and St Charles Lwanga Secondary School in Kibiri will begin to develop over the coming years.

Follow up activity to secure payments from sponsors continued into May and at the May meeting it was reported that three sponsors had left the scheme and that two new sponsors had joined the scheme. At the September meeting it was reported that the scheme was progressing well despite the considerable financial pressures imposed on the Ugandan schools by the increases in the cost of food and energy. Consequently, there was discussion for the need to levy an increase in the school fees donated by sponsors. It was decided that the two principals in Uganda should be consulted about this.

At the October meeting it was reported that there would be a delay in receipt of school reports from Uganda for circulation to the sponsors. It was also agreed that a 10% increase would be made to the fees requested of sponsors for both Day and Boarding pupils and that this increase would be communicated to our sponsors as soon as possible. Members also agreed a proposal to allow all payments to be made on a termly basis should be offered to all sponsors.

The Food Poverty Programme

During 2023 the group became aware that there is a significant level of food poverty in the two primary schools in Uganda. It was proposed that each school would receive a payment of £500 to be used exclusively for feeding children whose parents cannot afford to pay for a school meal. Discussion of further payments will take place on an ongoing basis.



Preparing Lunch - maize & beans



**Lunch with the Principal, Rose Nakato,
in St Dominic's PS**

Community Clinic in Kibiri

News from Kibiri indicated that work to the clinic was nearing completion. In April the group made a final payment to help with the completion of the community clinic in Kibiri. Support for the work to provide the clinic had been provided by the group for many years and members were pleased that the work had been completed and an official opening for the building was being planned by partners in Uganda. The clinic will be named in honour of the Parish of Kilmore and Killyleagh. Plans to provide an information update for the parishioners of Kilmore and Killyleagh Parish were discussed.



The completed community clinic at Kibiri

Fundraising 2022/23

In 2022/23 the group was not involved in any significant fundraising activities. Fortunately, the group received a number of individual donations which were used to alleviate the circumstances of the poorest families in Kibiri. It was hoped that a number of fund raising activities will be activated in early 2024. As the group is a registered charity it will be possible to engage with fund raising activities that require proof of Charity Commission registration.

3. How the activities of the Group have provided benefit to its beneficiaries and how this can be demonstrated

The main beneficiaries of the Group's activities have been the families whose children have been in receipt of sponsorship to allow them to attend one or other of the two primary schools in Kibiri and the large number of people who have received food donations acquired using the funding provided by the group. The Pupil Sponsorship Scheme is an extremely well managed initiative and it is very fortunate that many children have been able to benefit from the scheme during 2023.

The Pupil Sponsorship Scheme is not only of great benefit to the pupils who are supported by it but it also takes the pressure off many Ugandan parents who find it very challenging, if not impossible, to find the funding to pay for their children's education. When attending school, the pupils in the scheme receive a meal every day as well as their school books.

During 2022/23 the Parish Uganda Group has been able to provide a modest amount of funding which has been used to provide much needed food for many of the poorest people in Kibiri. This has helped reduce the levels of starvation among the poorest people many of whom are elderly and unable to receive the support of family and neighbours.



Fr Augustine (PP Kibiri) with parishioners during food distribution

Mitigation of Harm flowing from Group Purposes

The Group, as a Charity Commission approved body, follows best practice in terms of governance of our financial management practices and is careful to ensure that there is no likelihood of harm to recipients of our support. During 2022/23 we were in close contact with our Ugandan partners to ensure that those distributing food support were not in any danger.

4. Receipt of Private Benefit

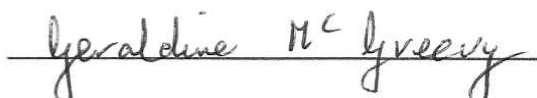
The Group is confident that no person has been in receipt of private benefit or been an unintended beneficiary of our charitable activities.

5. Compliance with the Charity Commission's guidance

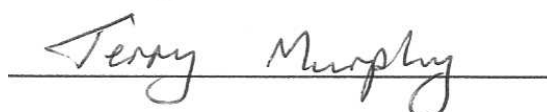
In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the Group Trustees have been careful to consider the Commission's guidance on public benefit to ensure that our activities have helped to achieve our purposes and provide the intended benefit to the beneficiaries.

6. Signatories to the Annual Report

Chairperson: Geraldine McGreevy

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Geraldine McGreevy", written over a horizontal line.

Secretary: Terry Murphy

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Terry Murphy", written over a horizontal line.