



Porridge and Rice

Feeding for Education

Porridge and Rice Annual Report

Registered Charity Number 1155841

Trustees' report and accounts

For the year to 30 September 2022

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Figure 1: Pupils at Heri Junior participate in serving breakfast

1 Introduction

When COVID19 lockdowns and restrictions ended, and it looked like life was returning to some sort of normal, the Omicron variant struck reminding everyone that it would take a while before the charity can return to its pre-pandemic schedule of fairs and fundraisers.

Given how important public events were to the funds of the charity before the pandemic, it was tempting to take every opportunity to attend such events as they arose. However, the charity had to think about the risks to volunteers and supporters of attending events with large numbers of people in attendance and close proximity. In addition, the charity needed to consider the enthusiasm of the public to attend such events. The charity chose to be cautious evaluating the facts and the advice of the experts for the foreseeable future.

By contrast, Kenya lifted all restrictions at the beginning of 2021, and people returned to pre-pandemic behaviour incredibly quickly. Schools re-opened with pupils in classes without masks and teachers resumed lessons without any thought for PPE or social distancing. Kenyans appeared to regard the pandemic as over and a thing of the past, in stark contrast to continuing concerns, hesitant behaviours, and intermittent restrictions like wearing masks on public transport. It is hard to say for certain, but from the UK it seemed that COVID19 did not disrupt Kenya to same extent it did the UK and the rest of Europe.



Figure 2: Teacher Ruth gets her COVID19 vaccination

The Kenyan government offered vaccinations to the public free of charge. Initially, the government was relaxed about vaccination, making no effort to promote them. In the face of anti-vax misinformation, many people hesitated, until the government changed its position, and made vaccination compulsory for government workers and select groups. PaR remains committed to following the best scientific consensus, so promoted vaccination of all school staff. In the face of considerable misinformation and genuine health concerns, the charity paid for advice local medical practice in Karen to ensure staff could talk in confidence about their concerns and receive sound medical advice. Staff at partner schools are now working towards their second vaccination.

Multiple members of the PaR UK team visited Kenya each year before the pandemic, and the hope is that this will one day resume. However, with travel restrictions and concerns about COVID19, the charity has had no visits since the first UK lockdown and no plans for visits until at least 2023 provided it is safe for both visitors and residents. The charity has a long history of teams of volunteers supporting the charity programmes in Kenya, but sadly these have had to be put on hold. Provided it is considered safe in 2023, the charity will again look for volunteers who want to make a difference or further their skills in Kenya.

Plans to visit Ukraine and consolidate work and plans were first impeded by COVID19 and then by the war that broke out in February 2022 when Russia invaded. The tragic situation in the country is incredibly distressing and the charity has worked hard to support orphans in meaningful ways, but living under such awful conditions, it has not been easy. For example, when children were unable to go away for their school holidays, the charity bought them a swimming pool. The charity has assisted on other ways such as medical supplies. The charity intends to continue its work in Ukraine and hopes the conflict will soon end with a free and democratic Ukraine. In the meantime, it will continue to look for ways to support the orphans it can.



Figure 3: Swimming pool for orphans in Ukraine

2 The UK

While restrictions were lifted, people remained cautious with events taking precautions from hand sanitising to wearing masks to limit the spread of COVID19, especially Omicron. While the charity moved steadily back towards pre-COVID practices, the move was quite rightly slow and careful.

Plants continued to sell on eBay but at a slower rate than during lockdown. In addition, the charity had sold so much of its stock during lockdown, that it did not have much to sell. The charity is working on expanding the quantity and variety of plants it can offer engaging others to grow for PaR. The charity is working on the idea of a virtual nursery where plants are grown by several local volunteers. This source of income has not been without its challenges, in particular, learning how to package plants to ensure that they arrive in good condition, and the impact of heat on plants in the post. The charity has learned a number of good lessons, and is steadily improving its service.

Selling clothes on eBay has provided the charity with some income. While the charity receives clothes donations regularly, the quality is seldom suitable for sale. The charity has tested what does and doesn't sell by listing a wide variety of clothing on eBay and branded clothing in reasonable condition sells best. Unfortunately, the bulk of clothes donated are old and unbranded. The charity will need to decide whether an appeal for better quality clothing will work or whether to simply accept that this is an irregular source of income that should be treated as a bonus but not relied on.

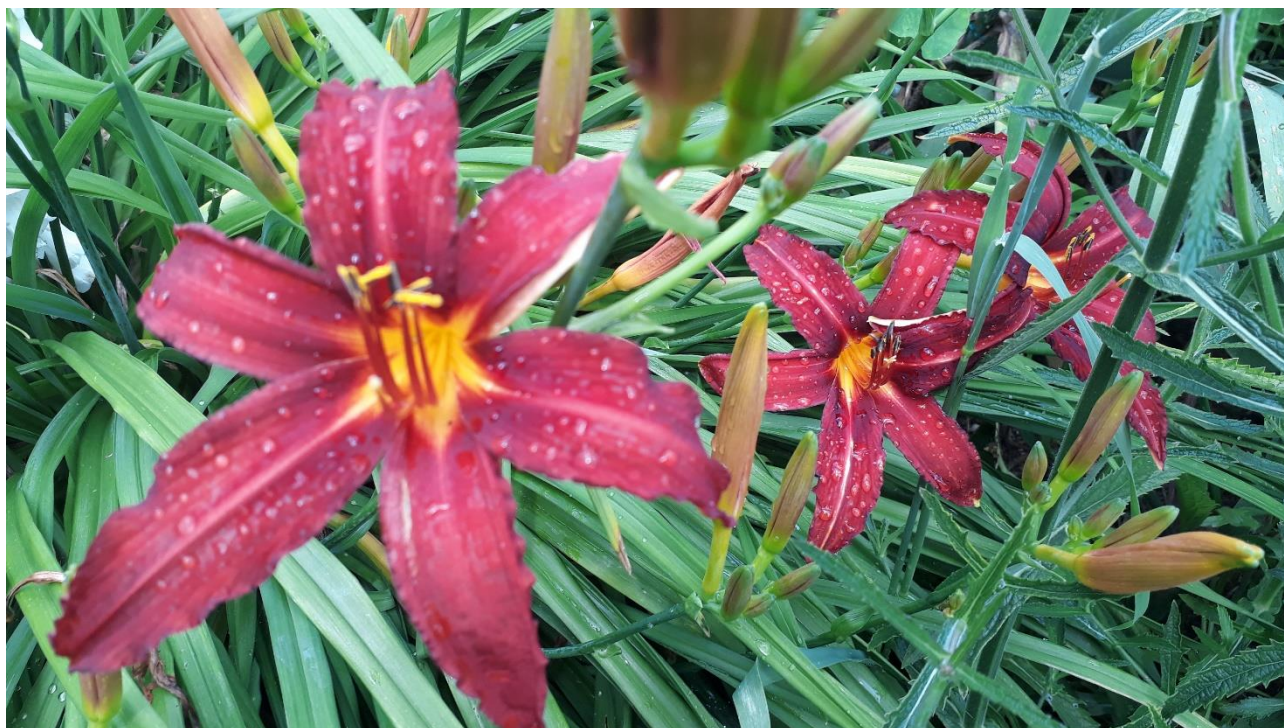


Figure 4: Hemerocallis sell steadily on eBay

Second-hand books on Amazon have been an important source of income for the charity. Unfortunately, problems with Amazon reduced the income that has been raised in the past. Book donations remain steady without the need to appeal for donations. Several schools have become regular donors providing the charity with literally hundreds of books.

Amazon's administrative process of verifying the charity is cumbersome and deeply flawed. Because the verification staff simply do not seem to understand what a CIO is, the charity has spent months proving that as a CIO, the charity does not have articles of association but a constitution. Communication with the intermediaries is done through intermediaries who write a report which is then sent to the verification team. The process is slow and ineffective. It has regularly taken months to verify the charity each time there is a review, resulting in the charity shop being closed for months and income from sales being held by Amazon. It has cost the charity time and a significant amount of money. Unfortunately, no other organisation has the reach of Amazon.

In addition, low value sales grew especially fast, and the charity found itself investing considerable time despatching books producing a profit of 20p to £1. The decision was made to raise the profit on each sale thus reducing the number of books. This meant a complete overhaul as all existing stock, a project is still ongoing. Fewer books listed will mean less time is required for orders to be packed and despatched placing a reduced need for volunteer time for the same if not more money.

As 2021 came to a close, fairs started up again which given how important these events were to the income of the charity, was a real relief. The charity chose only to attend the Church Street Christmas Fair on 21 November. As soon the charity signed up, volunteers quickly engaged producing craft items to sell. The charity had a good range on offer on the day and raised just over £800. Attendance was lower than before the pandemic, and people more hesitant about buying. It was good to be back selling at a fair, even though takings were lower than before the pandemic.



Figure 5: Handmade Christmas decorations for sale at Church Street Fair

It was particularly good news when Hands Fair announced that it would be reopening in June 2022. Hands Fair had become the highest earning fair on the charity's calendar, and the charity was hoping to increase its takings again as it had each year before. Preparations were well underway when the organisers decided they could not meet the COVID requirements imposed by Richmond Borough and cancelled the event. The announcement was very disappointing.

When Hands Fair was cancelled, the charity accepted an offer to have a stand at Thistleworth Tennis Club Fair summer on 5 June 2022, a lovely family event. The charity has attended the Thistleworth Fair before and while it is a wonderful event providing PaR with important exposure, it has never been an event where the charity takes much money. It was a good day with PaR offering a good range of plants and craft items for sale, but as was expected, takings were no more than a few hundred pounds. It was a good team-building event with volunteers catching up while they manned the stands, but it wasn't a profitable event.

The charity will not be attending more fairs before the financial year end of 30 September. There are not a lot on offer but also the charity does not yet have the same number of volunteers that it had before COVID19.

The charity will watch what fairs will be open around Christmas. Based on prior success, it is likely that the charity will attend the Church Street Christmas Fairs - usually there are at least two – and no others. Hopefully footfall will be better than last year, and consumer confidence will return. It is not easy to predict what will happen but current events suggest that this may not be the case. The charity will still attend if this becomes clear because it needs the income and the events have proven to be excellent events for growing awareness of the charity and the work it does.



Figure 6: Thistleworth Tennis Club Fair

3 Kenya

There have been no COVID19 restrictions in Kenya since January 2021 – no lockdowns, no masks, no social distancing, or anything else. The government did not believe it necessary to continue restrictions implemented in 2020, and lifted them at the beginning of 2021.

COVID19 vaccination is available free of charge to everyone in Kenya. All a person needs to do is to get to a clinic providing the vaccination. The government was initially neutral about vaccination saying publicly that it was entirely a matter of personal choice then a few months later, changed their position making vaccination compulsory for all government employees and workers, as well as classes of workers like hospital staff.

The charity has consistently followed the scientific consensus and so it promoted vaccination to all school staff. There were individuals with medical conditions that made them concerned about whether it would affect them adversely, and the charity engaged Karen Surgery, a small local general practice, to see staff with concerns and queries. Most staff simply got vaccinated but a small number booked appointments at Karen Surgery with PaR paying the costs. One such person actually discovered that she had a condition of which she was unaware, and the charity paid for her treatment and medication. The goal of the charity was to remain sensitive and respectful of the concerns of school staff while upholding best practice as established by expert scientific consensus.



Figure 7: Breakfast Uji being served at Excel

No charity members visited Kenya. Concerns about Omicron and possible subsequent variants, as well as the costs associated with testing and travel, led to the decision to hold off and re-evaluate in 2023. By contrast, the charity Taking Football to Africa did visit Kenya and delivered football and kits to all the charity partner schools.

The seven programmes have remained limited for the year with the focus being on providing Uji for breakfast, and salary and rent support. Salary and rent support have been steadily decreased as pupils return to school and parents begin to pay fees. The goal is to phase out all such support by the end of the 2022 calendar year if not sooner.

Even when salary and rent support ends, the charity will not be able to return to pre-COVID19 levels of activity because it is still rebuilding its income. The return to pre-pandemic activity will be driven by charity income. While the charity will work as hard as possible to rebuild its income, it is not known how long this will take, so it is expected that programmes will be implemented cautiously in increments as sustainable income is rebuilt. This will take time and patience. For the time being, the charity will continue to support breakfast in all schools and sanitary pads for girls.



Figure 8: Football to Africa visit Lizpal School

4 Ukraine

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in a major escalation of the Russian-Ukrainian Aggression that Russia began in 2014 towards Ukraine. This act of aggression by Russia on the independent and democratic country of Ukraine has launched horrors that Europe hasn't seen since the collapse of Yugoslavia. PaR stands by Ukraine, a decision which is consistent with its principles of upholding human rights and democracy.

Despite the difficult circumstances, the charity has maintained communication with Orphans Future Ukraine led by Andriy Nazarenko discussing how it can help. War creates immense suffering and leads to long term damage for everyone involved, and the goal of the charity has been to find ways to reduce the long-term impact for orphans who through no fault of their own, were dragged into a dangerous nightmare.

It will come to no-one as a surprise that the lives of the orphans supported by PaR were turned upside down. Children were required to practice emergency evacuation drills in response to fire warnings and bomb sirens after moving essential items to their newly furnished bomb shelters. Bedrooms looking out over fields and gardens were swapped for underground bunkers, dimly lit and smelling of damp. Happy, loud laughter and conversation was replaced by subdued voices, children having been warned that noises might draw attention to their location. Children watched as adults going about their normal business gathered to make camouflage nets for the army. Overnight, life changed dramatically.



Figure 9: Supplies for Ukrainian orphanages

As people fled the country, the Ukrainian government started to evacuate orphans from the East of the country to safe countries like Poland. Mykola Kuleba, Ombudsman for Children with the President of Ukraine, called for organisations that could assist and PaR put their name forward, offering to support and facilitate the relocation of orphans to Ireland. The evacuation of orphans from Ukraine did not last long because it became too dangerous with concerns that convoys of orphans could be attacked on route. It was a hard decision and PaR shifted to looking at ways it could assist the orphans where they remained.

Each summer before the war, Orphans Future Ukraine organised holidays away for as many orphans as possible, usually to a wilderness area where the children could play freely outdoors in a safe and pleasant environment under the supervision of adults organising walks, games, picnics and a range of other activities. With Russia dropping bombs on Ukraine, leaving the orphanages with quick access to bomb shelters, was not an option. Orphans were forced to stay at their orphanages with limited freedom to play and move around.

PaR decided that the most constructive thing to do would be to support initiatives to entertain and to secure essential needs for the orphans. For example, the charity provided the funds for the purchase of a swimming pool for one orphanage. There is no way that the charity can undo the harm and hurt caused by war, but it might be able to mitigate it in some small way, or at least be able to provide the children with some happy memories in an unhappy time.

PaR remains committed to supporting the orphans of Ukraine in the long term through its partner Orphans Future Ukraine. Sadly, long-term plans are on hold for now, but the charity will continue to support in constructive ways until Ukraine is again at peace.



Figure 10: Egg painting with Ukrainian orphans

5 Legal and Administrative Details

Porridge and Rice is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. Its registered address is 64 Rydal Gardens, Hounslow, TW3 2JH, its registration number is 1155841, and it is governed by a constitution lodged with the Charity Commission. Porridge and Rice has registered Uji na Mchele with the Charity Commission as an alternative name, and the acronyms PaR and UnM for English and KiSwahili use respectively.

Porridge and Rice owns the domains www.porridgeandrice.co.uk and www.porridgeandrice.com. The latter is automatically directed to the former, and the charity's website is located at the former. The website is hosted by 123 webhosting.

Porridge and Rice is represented on Facebook under the name of Porridge and Rice. The Facebook page is intermittently updated to reflect events of interest about the charity. Porridge and Rice is also active on both Twitter and Instagram with periodic updates.

Porridge and Rice has a UK bank account with Barclays Bank and a Kenyan Bank account with Standard Chartered. The UK Barclays account number is 23708926, sort code 20-42-73, IBAN GB09 BARC 2042 7323 7089 26, SWIFTBIC BARCGB22, and address Barclays Bank Plc 210 High Street Hounslow Middlesex TW3 1DL. The Kenyan bank account is number 01-003340546-00 at Standard Chartered Bank Building, Kenyatta Avenue, Nairobi, Kenya, and swift code SCBLKENXXXX.



Figure 11: Swimming pool funded by PaR for Ternopil orphans

6 Governance and management

In the UK, Porridge and Rice is run by a committee that meets once a month, on-line using Skype since the start of the pandemic. The committee is made up of both members and trustees. Trustees are appointed for a term of 2 years and registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The names of the trustees of the charity can be viewed by the public on their website.

Porridge and Rice welcomes people who wish to participate in the running of the charity as members. Other than areas identified by the trustees such as the final accounts and the appointment of trustees, members are able to participate fully at committee meetings. Meetings are documented by minutes that are circulated after the event.

All members and trustees are volunteers. They not only do not receive remuneration and cover all their own expenses. The charity has no paid staff in the UK.

The current trustees of the charity are in alphabetical order

- Brigitte Pickersgill
- Jude Hanlon
- Ken Surridge (chair)
- Vish Arora



Figure 12: Heri Junior sits their national exams

7 Operational review

Porridge and Rice is partnered with five community schools, Excel Emmanuel in Ngando, Lizpal in Ngando, Heri Junior in Mithonge, Compassion in Githingoro, and Forrester in Kawangware.

Despite restrictions being lifted, PaR has continued to limit its work to breakfasts, sanitary pads, and emergencies. It will take time to restore the charity's income to pre-pandemic levels, and until this happens, the charity will not be able to restore shelved programmes. The charity is working hard to restore its income.

Visits to Kenya will not be resumed until 2023 at the earliest. While the restrictions have been lifted, ongoing concerns about new variants like Omicron and added costs to travel, mean that the charity is not yet comfortable taking volunteers to Nairobi.

The Kenyan Leadership team is made up of the head and deputy head of each school. The leadership team in Kenya is in alphabetical order of school –

Evanson Njeru (Compassion School); Priscillah Mmugoh (Compassion School); Titus Kimongo (Excel Emmanuel School); Mary Kinyanjui (Excel Emmanuel School); Rispa Auma (Forrester School); Pascal Otieno (Forrester School); Ruth Mbithe (Heri Junior School); Haggai Panyako (Heri Junior School); Beth Wambugu (Lizpal School); Grace Mwangi (Lizpal School)



Figure 13: Excel pupils present their map of East Africa

8 Financial Review

Despite restrictions being lifted, continuing concerns about COVID meant that public events were only being reinstated slowly and often with very strict rules. In addition, the number of attendees at events remained lower than pre-pandemic levels as does spending.

PaR decided to review its Amazon listings because of the large number of books being received and the increasing number of low margin sales. It was decided to focus on higher margins and fewer sales. This meant a complete overhaul of listings. Sales of plants on eBay were steady, and the charity is considering ways of expanding the range of plants it can offer.

Standing orders from supporters remain important to the charity. They provide a steady and predictable income.

Keeping administrative costs in the UK to a minimum remains a priority for Porridge and Rice. Costs in Kenya are incurred in Kenyan Shillings and currency conversion fluctuates. Trustees and members do not receive a salary from the charity, and cover their own expenses.



Figure 18: The PaR stand at Church Street Christmas Fair

9 Accounts for 1 October 2021 to 30 September 2022

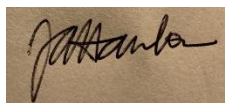
These accounts were prepared on a receipts and payments basis using an exchange rate of KES143.75 to £1.

Receipts	GBP
Balance Year End 2019	6,637.93
Fundraisers & Donations	2,933.34
HMRC Gift Aid	1,734.70
Standing Order	5,565.00
eBay	1,114.34
The Giving Machine	25.33
World of Books	173.87
Amazon	965.00
Goods & Services in Kind	4,542.00
Total Receipts	23,691.51
Payments	GBP
Bank Charges	5.79
Postage	1,042.00
Website	184.51
Ukraine	2,716.80
Wages	4,500.00
Fundraising Expenses	609.60
Education and Sponsorship, Kenya	125.22
Facilities and Furniture, Kenya	-
Health and Hygiene, Kenya	543.65
Rights and Gender, Kenya	-
Extracurricular Activities, Kenya	-
Sustainability and Accountability, Kenya	-
Feeding and Nutrition, Kenya	7,963.13
Salaries, Kenya	834.78
Rent Assistance	104.35
Total Payments	18,629.83
Balance Total	5,061.68

The annual report including accounts were approved by the trustees on and signed on their behalf



Ken Surridge (chair)
Date: 8 October 2022



Judith Hanlon (trustee)
Date: 8 October 2022



Figure 19: Sanitary Pads delivered to Lizpal school



Figure 20: Pupils from Excel school wearing kit donated by Taking Football to Africa