

Hope and a Future
Company Limited by Guarantee
Directors' Annual Report (Incorporating the Director's Report)
Year ended 31 March 2024

The directors, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Hope and a Future
Charity registration number	100154
Company registration number	NI622198
Principal office and registered office	7 New Street Randalstown County Antrim BT41 3AF

The directors

Mrs C Keenan
Mr W Pollock

Independent examiner

Dermot Corr
29B Main Street
Randalstown
County Antrim
BT41 3AB

Structure, governance and management

Hope and a Future is a company limited by guarantee and as such it does not have share capital.

Every director being a member of the Executive Committee undertakes to contribute to the assets of the Company, in the event of the same being wound up while he is a member, or within one year after he ceases to be a member, for payment of debts and liabilities of the Company contracted before he ceases to be a member, and of the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, and for the adjustment of rights of the contributors among themselves, such amount as may be required not exceeding £1.00.

The Company is registered with HM Revenue and Customs as a charitable body for taxation purposes (HMRC Charity Number XT7910). The Company was incorporated on 8 January 2014 and its governing instruments are the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The address of the Company's Registered Office, which is also its principal address, is shown on page 1.

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Objectives and activities

Hope and a Future is a small Northern Ireland charity based in Randalstown, County Antrim. The charity was initiated by local couple Kevin and Christine Keenan following a trip to the town of Shashemene in the south of Ethiopia in 2006. They were moved by the high level of poverty and the lack of education for some of the poorest children. Many of these children worked from as young as 5-6 years of age or made a living by begging on the streets.

The Hope and a Future Charity was formed in 2007 and is overseen by a committee of local people from Randalstown and Antrim. The initial aim at the start was to provide education for some of the poorest children in the town of Shashemene in South Ethiopia, 250 kms from Addis Ababa.

From a very small beginning of a small rented building with 150 children the charity has grown over the past 12 years to the extent that in 2019 support was being provided for two schools with up to 500 children. The first school was purpose built and provides education for children 8yrs to 16yrs. This school is called "School for Humanity" and currently provides education for up to 400 children. A second school called Tesfa had around 100 children attending of age 5-7 years. The decision was made to cease the second school in June 2019 and the children would be transferred into the first school as places became available. From September 2019 the Charity was maintaining the School for Humanity with 400 children.

All children were provided with school uniforms and for many of the children it is their main items of clothing. Each child receives a nourishing meal each day which greatly helps the health of the children but this also presents a challenge due to increasing costs of foodstuffs. Children also are provided with new shoes when required as well as medical treatment when necessary. All teachers and support staff are employed from the local area and the charity up to June 2020 were employing more than 50 staff as teachers, cooks, cleaners, admin, stores and management.

In 2015 the Hope and a Future charity began to plan towards building a Therapeutic Centre for children with a Disability and a Youth Centre in Shashemene. At that time there was very little provision for children with a Disability with many of these children living in isolation in their shack houses. They have no access to education, therapeutic interventions, healthcare or opportunities for socialisation with their peers. Construction of this new building was completed in 2019

From 2015 the Charity began to gather Disability equipment into store facilities connected to the Charity shop outlets with the aim of sending a Sea Container loaded with this equipment from N. I. into Ethiopia and on to the new building in Shashemene. Arrangement was made for the Container to leave N. I. in September 2019, laden with the equipment which had been gathered up over the previous years. The container arrived at its destination in Ethiopia in November 2019.

In the years from the beginning of the Charity, teams of volunteers from N. Ireland have travelled to Ethiopia to provide direct support and encouragement for all ongoing projects. These trips are generally 10 to 14 days duration. The last trip was in November 2023 and four people visited the various projects in Ethiopia and brought back good progress report.

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Achievements and performance

In September 2019 there was a formal opening of the new Youth Centre in Ethiopia, attended by Local Authority including the Mayor and also representatives from N. Ireland. The Youth centre on the upper floor would provide local children with somewhere to meet and socialise. They would have access to a library and a place to study and complete homework. During 2019, due to increasing expense of maintaining the school with rising costs for food, salaries etc, there were delays in achieving full operation of the Disability Centre and Youth Centre. At this time the Charity Committee were looking at ways to reduce the financial burden.

The financial situation intensified in March 2020 when Coronations came into N. Ireland bringing the first Lockdown when our shops had to close and the main source of income ceased. By June 2020 any reserve finance was depleted and decision was made to terminate our finance input to the School for Humanity and to the Disability and Youth Centre. At this time the Charity was still in Lockdown with no income and no reserve finance to maintain Projects. Letters were written to Authorities in Ethiopia explaining the Charity position and giving the Projects over to their administration.

Following the first Lockdown the Charity shops reopened in July 2020 and income began to be restored but still with limitations due to the ongoing Covid 19 Pandemic. In July 2020, this Charity began to send finance support to two smaller schools in the same region of Ethiopia. The Charity finance position remained very low during the Covid threat in the country and there was a second Lockdown from Dec 2020 til April 2021. Our shops were closed for this time.

Following the second Covid lockdown our shops reopened in April 2021 and began to restore income for Charity funds. In the months following Charity support was restored to the School for Humanity and also support continued for a second school called 'Mululalem'. The School for Humanity continues to have 400 children and the Mululalem school also has up to 400 children so in total our Charity is providing education for 800 children and also provincialities for more than 50 staff across the two schools.

Many of the students from School for Humanity have proceeded into higher levels of Education and may proceed into University Education which will bring good prospects of Employment and future finance support for their families.

Since the summer of 2021, thanks to steady income from our Charity shops, we have maintained regular monthly finance payments to the schools in Ethiopia.

We also support a Deaf community of around 40 families with monthly finance as their disability limits their employment potential. We also support a community of people whose adults have leprosy, supporting an Agriculture programme to encourage self sufficiency in the future. The Deaf group and Leprosy group live in the same region as our schools in Ethiopia.

In addition to our projects in Ethiopia, the Charity also aims to support small local needs in our local Area of N. Ireland. This includes single parent families, migrant families, people on low incomes and others with disability, addictions and/or mental health issues. At present time the Charity may support people experiencing stress due to National economic downturn. Our Charity shops have become popular social locations where people find friendship and encouragement. Our Charity shops serve mainly Randalstown and Antrim and surrounding regions. Many of our volunteer staff speak of the personal benefit of engaging in worthwhile work and escape from isolation and loneliness. We also encourage involvement of people who may have disability or mental health issues and this is therapeutic for individual health.

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Financial review

Both the level of activities and the year end financial position were considered satisfactory. The directors expect that income to increase in the year to 31 March 2024 and this will be maintained for the foreseeable future.

The Statement of Financial Activities shows a net decrease in Unrestricted Funds of £27,758 and a no change to the Restricted Funds.

The Company had Total Charity Funds of £129,170 at 31 March 2024.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The directors' annual report was approved on 17 December 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:



Mrs C Keenan
Director