



**CHILDREN  
OF THE NATIONS®**  
UNITED KINGDOM

*Raising Children Who Transform Nations®*

## **CHILDREN OF THE NATIONS UK**

**Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 2023**

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Number NIC101681

# Children of the Nations UK

Trustees' Annual Report  
for the year ended 31 December 2023

The Trustees present the annual report and financial statements for Children of the Nations UK for the year ended 31 December 2023.

## *Reference and Administrative Information*

Charity Name: CHILDREN OF THE NATIONS UK

Charity Registration Number: NIC101681

Contact Address: 14 Eden Drive,  
Markethill  
BT60 1LA

Correspondence Address: c/o Dr Ruth Ford 14 Eden Drive,  
Markethill  
BT60 1LA

## *Charity Trustees*

Dr Ruth Ford

Mr Christopher Gardiner

Rev Ben Preston

Mrs Gillian Drennan

Dr Lynne Speirs

Mr Dylan Carleton

Rev David McCullagh (resigned 11<sup>th</sup> February 2023)

*Independent Examiner* Zoe Woodhams, 62 Moor Lane, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 1BW

*Bankers* The Co-operative Bank p.l.c., P.O. Box 101, 1 Balloon Street,  
Manchester, M60 4EP. Registered in England and Wales No. 990937

# Children of the Nations UK

Trustees' Annual Report  
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## *Structure, Governance and Management*

### **The Trustees**

The charity trustees of Children of the Nations UK are responsible for the management and administration of the Charity's property and funds in accordance with our Trust Deed.

The Trustees must hold at least four meetings each year. The Trustees must arrange at each of their meetings the date, time and place of their next meeting unless such arrangements have already been made.

### *Description and Purpose*

The vision of Children of the Nations UK is to raise children who transform nations.

Our mission is to provide holistic, Christ-centred care for orphaned and destitute children, enabling them to create positive and lasting change in their nations.

We were established to support by means of financial assistance and voluntary work any charitable project for the prevention and relief of poverty, suffering and distress, the advancement of education, the promotion of the Christian faith, the promotion of sustainable development and the promotion, preservation, and protection of health of the inhabitants, and, in particular children and young people. We serve beneficiaries in Sierra Leone, Uganda, Dominican Republic, Haiti and Malawi and promote the benefit of those inhabitants who are in need of assistance as a result of their poverty or social and economic circumstances by associating with the statutory authorities, community and voluntary organisations and the inhabitants of the area of benefit in a common effort to provide residential accommodation, education and facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure-time occupation to improve their conditions of life and in particular:

- to relieve poverty and hunger in the area of benefit by any charitable means and in particular through the establishment or support of homes for orphans and destitute children by the provision of food, clothing and care;
- the relief of sickness among the beneficiaries by the provision of medical facilities and counselling and by the provision of advice, information and financial assistance with the costs of medical treatment and the provision of items and services required to ease their suffering;
- to encourage new, and strengthen existing, partnerships with churches and evangelical groups in the area of benefit in an effort to enable local churches to support local communities in religious education and poverty alleviation;
- to advance the education of children and young people on the basis of Christian principles through their educational and leisure activities so as to develop their spiritual, physical, mental and emotional capacities in such ways as the Trustees may from time to time think fit;

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### *Description and Purpose (continued)*

- to promote Christianity, provide Christian literature and educate people in the area of benefit through evangelism and the provision of biblically based teaching, discipleship training, meetings, bible studies and social activities;
- to recruit, select and send out volunteers for both short and long term service ;
- to advance any other exclusively charitable purpose as the Trustees, may from time to time, decide in accordance with the law of charity.

Children of the Nations' core values are statements of belief which drive our vision, mission, operating principles, and everything we do as an organisation.

**Faith:** We believe in placing our trust in God for His salvation, provision, and direction. We are confident that a relationship with Jesus Christ is essential to genuine transformation. We are driven by an assuredness that does not rest solely on logical proof or material evidence.

**Integrity:** We believe in strict adherence to moral and upright conduct, in accordance to Biblical standards, in all our actions including spiritual, financial, and personal pursuits.

**Prayer:** We believe God works through the power of prayer. We are committed to praying for our staff, children, communities, goals, and all the work in which we are engaged. Prayer reminds us that we are partnering with God to accomplish His work.

**People:** We believe that God created all people in His image and therefore all people have value. We believe people should be treated with love and respect. We are dedicated to caring for orphans and destitute children because of God's mandate in James 1:27.

Children of the Nations' **Operating Principles** are driven by our core values. These foundational methods are the compass for COTN operations and influence the way we carry out our mission. As such they must have a profound impact on what and how we communicate.

**Child Centred:** We believe the most effective way to create positive and lasting change in families, communities, and nations is through a deep investment in individual children. Providing long-term holistic care to children in the most destitute situations results in transformation – children with healthy minds, healthy bodies, emotional well-being, an authentic faith in Jesus Christ, and Biblical ethics/values. It is through the lives of these transformed young people that lasting cultural, social, economic, and political transformation will occur.

**Holistic Care:** Holistic care is essential in order to raise healthy, well-rounded children who will become change agents in their countries. We seek to create an environment that meets our

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### *Description and Purpose (continued)*

children's basic needs, encourages their individual desires and passions, and promotes excellence in achievement. Children of the Nations is committed to caring for our children in four main areas: physical health, social welfare, spiritual care, and education. We are dedicated to working towards end results that have been established for each area of care – long-term goals that support COTN's mission and vision.

#### Holistic Care End Results:

- **Physical Health:** We are committed to raising children who are physically healthy with the ability to demonstrate and promote health in their lives, communities, and beyond.
- **Education:** We are committed to raising children who reach their fullest potential through quality education, enabling them to display life skills and independent, creative thinking.
- **Social Welfare:** We are committed to raising emotionally healthy children who can integrate their past experiences into their lives, maintain connections with their communities, achieve lasting and meaningful relationships, and thrive at home, in school, and the workplace.
- **Spiritual Care:** We are committed to raising children who demonstrate a vibrant and authentic faith in Jesus Christ.

**Learning and Development:** Continual learning and growth are foundational to ensuring our mission is best accomplished. We welcome the knowledge, skills, and passions of our partners. We embrace process improvement and seek to create standard operating procedures that are 'living documents' that can be built and improved upon as we grow and learn as an alliance.

**Stewardship:** Our resources belong to God. He has entrusted us to care and use them in a responsible manner – therefore, all resources will be wisely used to best support the holistic care of the children and communities we serve. All development efforts will be done in a manner that restores and protects God's creation.

**Sustainability:** Children of the Nations defines sustainability as the ability to endure with increasing independence. We believe a sustainable approach to caring for the children and communities we serve is the most effective way to empower individuals and transform nations. Children of the Nations International is committed to designing, assessing, and improving the sustainability of our projects and programs. Children of the Nations is also committed to providing communities with sustainable development tools and methods in key areas including water, agriculture, renewable energy, and microfinance.

**Partnership:** We are convinced successful work begins with relationships and continues through partnerships offering unique skills and knowledge. We also believe individuals are most effective within their own culture. For these reasons, Children of the Nations is not a 'missionary sending' organisation – rather, in each country where we work, Children of the Nations is started through relationships and strives to operate as its own non-profit run by competent nationals who share our

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## *Description and Purpose (continued)*

core values and commitment to our vision and mission. Children of the Nations strategically partners with churches, groups, and organizations in each country to best accomplish our mission.

**Family and Community:** God designed people to live in community. Strong communities are needed for individuals to thrive. Children of the Nations is committed to providing children a “home” atmosphere where they have a place to belong and are accepted as a valued family member. We are committed to providing children with loving and secure caregivers as well as creating and maintaining an environment that celebrates how God created each individual and fosters love, respect, sharing, serving, participation, and fellowship.

**Accountability:** We are responsible to answer for our actions or lack of actions, in accordance with Biblical standards, including our use of time, finances, and in our work and relational conduct. Children of the Nations' staff, children and operations are accountable to oversight from local and international boards – clear lines of authority are maintained. We seek to exercise authority with servant hearts, both to challenge our staff and praise their accomplishments, as well as protect the well-being of Children of the Nations.

## *Objectives & Activities*

In 2023, we furthered our commitment to this vision by offering administrative support to our partners, conducting program monitoring and evaluation and increasing awareness and support for our activities domestically.

## *Achievements & Performance*

### **Liaising with Implementing Partners**

A primary means of ensuring clear communication with Children of the Nations in Uganda, Malawi and Sierra Leone has been weekly meetings between Liaisons and the relevant Country Director. These meetings involve information gathering, problem solving and capacity building. Liaisons engage in a monthly meeting with the International President and facilitate monthly meetings between the International President and their respective Country Director. Liaisons also ensure monthly programme reports are completed as agreed and ensure accountability and grant compliance through detailed review of monthly financial reporting.

Liaison staff travelled to implementing partners in Malawi and Uganda in February to support the Founder's Tour events, connect with Boards and management teams in-person and undertake

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### *Achievements & Performance (continued)*

program assessments.

Liaisons collaborated with implementing partners on a detailed assessment of all Standards of Service relevant to each partner's administration and operations and the education, physical care, spiritual care, and wider programming provided to each child. Following a period of assessment and evaluation, detailed compliance reports were created and shared along with certificates of excellence where those had been attained. Following a period of review and discussion, Liaisons facilitated agreement with the relevant implementing partners on corrective action plans where those were deemed essential.

Liaisons assisted with the annual operational planning and budgeting processes of each implementing partner and the evaluation of submitted project proposals.

In Sierra Leone, the Liaison supported the following processes:

- the installation by World Light Africa of a centralised solar system for the main ministry site at Ngolala, Upper Banta, offering 24/7 electricity for the campus.
- initial feasibility studies considering launch of additional "Village Partnership" programming in two additional communities.
- ongoing ministry site construction projects relating to Children's Home renovation and school construction.

In Malawi, the Liaison supported the following processes:

- development of national board practice through delivery of governance training.
- development of a business plan for partner's farm, supported by an international consultant.
- emergency intervention in Chilombo and Mgwayi communities, feeding 487 children.
- rolling out the "One Toilet One Household" campaign, constructing concrete slabs for approximately 80 household latrines.
- recruitment and orientation of key staff including Education Coordinator and Farm Manager.

In Uganda, the Liaison supported the following local processes:

- development of a Strategic Plan to guide operations from 2024 until 2028.
- completion of A Level Classrooms and Floor 2 of the Boys' Dorm for 55 students.
- the continued advancement of social work best practice, through engagement with the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU) as an associate member.
- compliance with residential care standards and alternative care legislation in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.
- following a government inspection of the Children's Home, reviewed findings, documented compliance confirmation and reported outcomes to stakeholders.

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### *Achievements & Performance (continued)*

These steps seek to improve national programming which in 2023 in Sierra Leone, Malawi and Uganda included:

- 1,259 children attending school in Sierra Leone
- 1,415 children attending school in Malawi
- 929 children attending school in Uganda
- 184 students in tertiary education in Sierra Leone
- 78 students in tertiary education in Malawi
- 77 students in tertiary education in Uganda

Our staff team also contributed significantly to research and review of the Children of the Nations International safeguarding policy.

### **Impact of Local Partnerships**

Fundraising activities and the generous giving of our local partners enabled us to provide financial grants to Children of the Nations Uganda, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Haiti. This was the largest cumulative international grant we have been able to award to date. These funds were granted for the holistic care of children and young people in the programmes operated by each of these implementing partners in the following way:

Grant to Children of the Nations Uganda - £4,799

Grant to Children of the Nations Malawi - £28,639

Grant to Children of the Nations Uganda - £3,708

Grant to Children of the Nations Uganda - £1,032

Included in the grant funding provided to Children of the Nations Malawi was the remaining £5,739 provided by Granshaw Presbyterian Church for the construction of playparks for children in the programmes there.

A generous gift from The Souter Trust enabled Children of the Nations UK to fund on-campus mentoring sessions offered by our partners in Uganda, reaching 331 students – 160 boys and young men as well as 171 girls and young women. Student mentees were clustered according to their age, gender and level of education and mentors were assigned based on their all-round capacity to handle the needs within that group. The topics for mentoring were generated using mentoring handbooks provided for the appropriate age group, stage of growth, level of understanding and comprehension. Mentoring sessions took place every Wednesday afternoon of the school term. Discussions were interactive, incorporating time for studying the word of God, questions and answers and prayer. Children needing individual attention due to their unique challenges were referred for 1:1

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## *Achievements & Performance (continued)*

counselling and, during the sessions, children were provided with refreshments. During their holiday break, students in the University Vocational Programme were offered opportunities to participate in mentoring the young ones (primary and secondary aged children) by sharing their own journey and life lessons.

In 2022 support received from Action Renewables and another financial partner enabled Children of the Nations UK to partner with World Light Africa (WLA) to install a battery back-up system for the main ministry site of our partners at Children of the Nations in Malawi, significantly improving the reliability of electricity supply to their campus. In April 2023 our Liaison to Children of the Nations Malawi facilitated a trip by two members of staff from Action Renewables to see the system in action and learn about the wider work of the ministry. The team also participated in a regular food distribution programme and facilitated an interactive teaching session with school students on the principles of renewable power. They also visited Melanjie Mission Hospital where Action Renewables has supported an energy upgrade and Children of the Nations Malawi is supporting students to study nursing and midwifery.

We engaged directly with supporters in a number of ways throughout the year, from an evening at The Strand Arts Centre showing an Indiana Jones movie to sharing the vision of our ministry from a stand at Bangor Worldwide. Our staff team participated in events at Granshaw and Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian Churches, the latter taking us on as an Associate Partner. In October our staff helped lead a seminar on Short Term Mission at Belfast Bible College. At the end of the year, we held our AGM at Belmont Presbyterian Church and we celebrated Christmas at the Belvoir Players Pantomime shows, serving tea and coffee and introducing their audiences to our ministry.

Our two most significant fundraising initiatives this year were the 250K in May event when we were joined by 43 participants who committed to raise funds by taking 250,000 steps in May and the launch in June of our Just Imagine Monthly Giving Community. We are incredibly grateful to all those who supported these initiatives.

## **Volunteers**

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time to support the ministry of Children of the Nations. We are very grateful for their commitment and contribution and in everything we give praise and honour to God.

## **Charity Administration and Operations**

Wednesday morning prayer continued to provide an opportunity for staff, Board members and volunteers to come together, share updates and pray. Prayer is a core value of our mission and this has been a very significant weekly rhythm.

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### ***Achievements & Performance (continued)***

In March our staff team was joined by Children of the Nations International Liaisons to Haiti and the Dominican Republic for a weeklong Retreat in Belfast. The week provided for a time of prayer, Bible study and fellowship for the whole team as well as time for reflection and planning regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of our work together.

Our staff team helped lead the annual COTNI Homecoming Conference, a five-day event for international staff held in Silverdale, Washington and online in May. Our staff delivered presentations updating attendees on the activities and developments of COTN Sierra Leone, Uganda and Malawi. This event further informed international staff about progress and needs and equipped them with training and coordination for how to best share this with partners.

Regarding Trustee changes, Rev David McCullagh left the Board on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2023 and the entire Children of the Nations family is incredibly grateful for the years of service he provided.

### ***Public Benefit Statement***

Children of the Nations UK meets the public benefit requirements by working in the areas of the prevention and relief of poverty, suffering and distress, the advancement of education, the promotion of the Christian faith, the promotion of sustainable development and the promotion, preservation and protection of health of children. Our beneficiaries are primarily children and young people who have been orphaned, can no longer be supported by family members or are living with family members or guardians but in a destitute situation. We support families and communities who are in need of assistance as a result of their poverty or social and economic circumstances in Sierra Leone, Malawi, Uganda, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and such other countries that may be identified from time to time. We work with our partner charities in each of these regions to help deliver our charitable purposes which are interlinked and therefore benefits overlap between purposes. We further all of our charitable purposes through the provision of financial aid, expertise and volunteer placement.

### ***Financial Review***

The charity started the year with £77,433 and ended the year with £66,305.

Funds were raised in 2023 and earlier which will be granted to implementing partners for activities planned for 2024.

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## *Reserves Policy*

The Trustees' policy is to retain a level of free reserves or general reserves which matches its needs at the current time and in the foreseeable future. Free reserves are those unrestricted reserves not invested in fixed assets, which are available for general use.

The main reason for holding reserves is to ensure that the charity has enough resources to fund its programmes and to hold sufficient resources to meet its commitments. The Trustees believe that our reserves policy is both responsible and prudent but have not specified a particular level of reserves to be held.

At 31st December 2023 the Charity had unrestricted funds of £15,717 and held £50,588 in restricted funds (closing balance was £66,305).

## *Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others*

There are no funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others.

## *Plans for future periods*

The Trustees are considering plans to inspire financial giving from a larger group of supporters, churches, foundations and individuals through our "Just Imagine" giving. They are also expecting the work of the international liaisons to build the capacity of implementing partners, particularly in Sierra Leone, Malawi and Uganda. We hope to continue raising financial support for Children of the Nations in each country, with a focus in 2024 on grant funding provided to our partners in Malawi, Sierra Leone and Uganda.

## *Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities*

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements of the charity in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice.

As the charity's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payment account.

The Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 requires charity trustees to ensure that accounting records are kept which are sufficient to show and explain all the charity's transactions, which disclose with reasonable accuracy the financial position of the charity and enable them to prepare statement of accounts which complies with regulation under the Act. They are also responsible for safeguarding

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## *Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities (continued)*

the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed, subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operational existence.

Approved by the Trustee of Children of the Nations UK and signed on its behalf by

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dr Ruth Ford', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Ruth Ford – Chairperson

31st October 2024