

Hope365

Trustees' Report

The trustees, who are directors for the purposes of company law, present the annual report together with the financial statements and auditors' report of the charitable company for the year ended 31 October 2023. The Trustees confirm that they comply with the requirements of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, The Charities (Annual Return) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015, The Charities (Annual Return) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice which applies to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

THANK YOU

As I look back over the previous 12 months, I am so thankful to God to see what has been accomplished. Without the wholehearted support of so many people we would not have been able to see such progress. Whether through volunteering in one of our shops, taking on fundraising activities, joining our "Shareholder" scheme, our "One to One" child sponsorship scheme or supporting in whatever way, the message is the same: THANK YOU!

I have again had the privilege of seeing first-hand the change in the lives of many of the children in Ethiopia and this year we were able to bring a team of 16 to see for themselves the challenges facing the vulnerable kids. This team gave the children an incredible week of new activities including sports, crafts, singing and Bible based activities. It was genuinely humbling to see how much all the children appreciated the visit from the team and also to see how the children from the very beginning of the project have now grown to be great role models for the younger children.

Michael Holmes, Chief Executive

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Hope365 is a registered charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104718) and a fully licensed International NGO (Non-Government Organisation) in Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (3730).

Hope365 is a company limited by guarantee.

Trustees who served during the year were as follows:

Alistair Bennett (appointed 17.01.24)
Richard Crowe
Stephen Hamill
Stephen Hunter
Chris Jamison

Chief Executive: Michael Holmes

Finance Officer: Diane Davidson

The trustees are responsible for the overall governance of the charity. The number of trustees shall not be less than three, nor more than seven.

TRUSTEE SELECTION, APPOINTMENT & COMPETENCE

When a Trustee vacancy exists, the current Trustees will appoint a replacement or additional Trustee.

EXTERNAL INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS

At the Trustees' Meeting on 17 January 2024, TB Millar were re-appointed as external independent examiners for the period 1 November 2023 to 31 October 2024.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW AND RESULTS FOR THE YEAR

The results for the year and the charity's financial position at the end of the year are shown in the attached financial statements.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk is an everyday part of the Charity's normal activity. The Trustees have considered and identified the major risks to which the charity is exposed and having taken appropriate professional advice have been assured that adequate systems and procedures are in place in order to mitigate or manage those risks.

RESERVES POLICY

The Charity does not have a reserves policy.

PENSIONS

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme (which meets the requirements of The Pension Regulator as a qualifying workplace pension scheme) for the benefit of its permanent staff and those who are eligible under Auto Enrolment. The assets are administered by insurance companies in personal pension plans and are held independently from those of the charity. Contributions are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

In setting our activities and planning our activities for the year the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped to achieve the charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

PURPOSES

Hope365's purpose is to rescue and care for Street kids in Ethiopia. Our aim is to provide for the physical, emotional, spiritual and educational needs of the children. Our intention is to help each child realise they are loved by God and achieve their potential, being well equipped for adult life and making a positive contribution to their local community and country.

There is no harm associated with the purposes.

BENEFICIARIES

The charity's beneficiaries are:

The poorest children and young people of Shashamene in Ethiopia who are homeless and sleeping on the streets of the city.

PRIVATE BENEFIT

The only private benefit arising in the period was the remuneration of those employed to manage and operate the charity both in Northern Ireland and in Ethiopia. This benefit is incidental to and does not outweigh the public benefit.

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PUBLIC BENEFIT AND REVIEW OF THE YEAR

During the period, the charity has continued to provide benefits from its activities as follows:

(i) - At Home

To achieve our objectives in Ethiopia we must generate financial support at home. Our range of finance generating schemes currently includes:

- Two large Charity Shops: one in Ballyclare and the other in The Junction in Antrim,
- Online pre-owned Furniture Base (Ballyclare)
- Monthly Direct Debit "Shareholder" scheme, (Project Sponsorship)
- "One to One" Child Sponsorship Scheme for reunified Street Kids
- Speaking engagements in schools and churches
- Fundraising activities,
- Trust Fund applications,
- Developing business relationships with local companies and partnering them with our projects
- Throughout the year all charity shops have performed very well
- The number of participants in our "Shareholders" regular giving scheme also remains encouraging,
- Our "One-to-One" child sponsorship scheme for reunited Street Kids has increased significantly during the year.
- We continue to develop new relationships with Primary & Secondary Schools and continue to use our specially developed resources (KS2).
- Income from fundraising activities has improved as slowly people have reverted to normal after the pandemic. Also, with more normal travelling options being available.
- We were able to have our first "Transform Team" visit Ethiopia. This team consisted of 16 people who paid for their flights and costs in addition to fundraising for our projects in Ethiopia. The trip was a great success.
- Finally, our "Trailer for Change" which is a portable clothes and bric-a-brac donations trailer visited many churches, businesses, and schools throughout the year. These additional donations contributed significantly to the profitability of shop sales.

HOW WE ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE

(ii) - In Ethiopia

Using the funds generated at home we employ Ethiopian staff (currently 14 people in our original project of Transition Centre and Group Homes, along with 15 staff in our "Hope365 Academy" School) to outwork the objectives of our approved projects in Ethiopia. Our status as an International NGO status gives us the scope to consider additional strategic projects as we uncover the core needs. In addition, it allows us to ensure that all key staff who will be working closely with the children in our care should be followers of Jesus. Children are accepted into our care regardless of their faith or ethnicity; however, our projects will operate in accordance with the example and teaching of Jesus.

We have developed good relationships with local churches in the regions where we work, to maximize the chances of children continuing to grow in their faith.

The Hope365 Academy continued to operate from excellent rented facilities. This school project offers all important education as well as school dinners to vulnerable boys and girls in Shashemene including many former Street Kids. This year we have introduced the provision of breakfasts for the children to address the problem of children fainting with hunger in the mornings. This current school year (commencing Sep 2023) has seen 378 vulnerable children registered in the Hope365.

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OUR FIRST PROJECT: Transition Centre

“Tesfa Manoriya Bota” (Hope Home) is a great facility which has the capacity to sleep up to 20 boys at any one time. All children are referred to us by Shashemene Women’s & Children’s Affairs in conjunction with the local Police Force.

Tesfa Manoriya Bota is central to our project as it acts as the starting point in a journey of hope for street boys. There are two strands to our Project Proposal.

- (i) Long term care for Street Kids who have no one able to care for them.
- (ii) Reunification of Street Kids with extended family members.

The staff team have come together well throughout the year and have created a very loving environment for all the children, whether long term or shorter term. A variety of techniques including play therapy, drama, art therapy etc. are used by our staff to help unlock the backgrounds to the traumatic stories of each of these individual children. All children have full medical check-ups and enjoy a well-balanced diet, showering facilities and new clean clothes.

Strand 1: Long term care.

When children are referred to us by the local government we assess each individual case to determine the best possible long-term plan for the child. Our staff team includes a psychologist, social worker, counselling staff, nanny’s etc. as well as experienced project managers etc.

GROUP HOMES

Where there are no family links, or where reunification with extended family is not possible, we will form “Group Homes”. These replicate as closely as possible a traditional family environment with our specially trained live-in nanny’s and up to ten children. The children all attend school and church and essentially grow together as a family as part of the local community, thereby eliminating any stigma of “institutional care”. This year we opened a third Group Home and so we now care for a total of 30 orphaned children. Each Group Home provides care for 10 orphaned Street Kids.

The homes have been operating very successfully with all the boys having a very stable environment. We rented suitable homes and trained and employed house parents to live with, and care for the boys. In line with Ethiopian Government policies the “family” is well integrated into the local community. The boys are really enjoying this safe, stable environment and are thriving at school. They continue to have psycho-social input from our staff but are remarkably well adapted after having spent so long on the streets.

Outside in the garden the boys have been learning about growing various vegetables and how to rotate the planting to maximize yield.

- After detailed investigations throughout previous years we have established that 30 of the children in our care have no one to care for them and so reunification will be impossible.
- All have been enrolled in schools in Shashemene where they will receive an excellent education, including at the Hope365 Academy. The boys live in one of our “Group Homes” where they have settled extremely well and still receive e-psychological support from our staff team. All have been verified as being orphans by the relevant Government department (Women & Children’s Affairs).
- Given the boys’ circumstances the choice of school was crucial and so we ensure the boy’s carers meet weekly with the teachers to ensure their good progress continues.
- All the boys are all actively involved in doing chores around the house such as brushing floors, washing clothes, doing dishes etc. to help provide as normal an upbringing as possible. Even a simple request like asking permission to bring school friends home to play are a very healthy sign that the boys really do feel secure and that their lives are being normalised.

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Strand 2: Re-unification of kids to extended family

Where appropriate and where a biological family exists, we believe it would be in the child's best interest to reunite them with blood relatives. However, one major challenge relates to the family's ability to provide adequately for the child. Many kids are on the streets because families are simply too poor to care for them. One way of helping successfully reunite a child into a family long-term is to come alongside the family and help them. Our "One to One" Child sponsorship program for reunited children, as the name suggests, encourages sponsors to support one specific child and his family with a monthly Direct Debit of £20. This money is used to improve the quality of life not only for the child but also for the family. Typically, we use the funds to provide food and clothing. We also provide educational resources and medical support etc.

With no Social Services in Ethiopia, it is our responsibility to undertake home assessment visits before reuniting a child. We are also responsible for regular follow up visits to ensure the reunification is continuing to be successful. Given the geographical spread of the reunited children, this is a significant challenge.

- We are delighted to have reunited well over 250 children with members of their biological family. Once reunited we cover the associated educational costs of ensuring the child goes to school.
- Some of these children come from rural areas outside Shashemene while others live within the town limits.
- Approximately 30 families of reunited children have so far benefitted from the Income Generation Micro Finance Loan scheme and performances have been encouraging as have the repayment of loans in a timely manner.

HOPE ACADEMY

We are delighted with the progress of the Hope365 Academy. This school comprises 8 classrooms for grade students and 3 classrooms for the KG pupils plus a school office. All grade pupils have a distinctive school uniform which they proudly wear.

- 378 pupils (both boys and girls) aged between 5 and 14yrs are now receiving a good education as well a nutritious hot meal each day. Provision of breakfast has now also been introduced to help the children learn effectively. Reunited Street Kids who live close enough are admitted into the Hope Academy in line with the strict admission criteria developed in conjunction with the local government authorities.
- The staff team comprises 23 teachers and support staff.

Trustees and officers

The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year end were as follows:

Trustees:	Richard Crowe
	Stephen Hunter
	Christopher Jamison
	Stephen Hamill
	Alistair Bennett (appointed 17 January 2024)

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Plans for the future

As we plan for the future we are committed to expanding the number of clothes donations points and shops. We also plan to grow our Child Sponsorship programme and other monthly subscriptions schemes.

Small companies provision statement

This report has been prepared in accordance with the small companies regime under the Companies Act 2006.



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Stephen Hamill
Trustee