

THE AKILI TRUST
ANNUAL REPORT
October 2015 – September 2016

Charity Name and Number

The Akili Trust: Registered charity number: 1114275

Akili Community Libraries (Kenyan NGO) registered number:
OP.218/051/2008/017/5057

Website: www.akilitrust.org

Correspondence Address

119 Victoria Road, London N22 7XG



Trustees

Ruth Beedle (resigned February 2016)

Pam Dix (*Chair*)

Lucy Evans (resigned March 2016)

Laura Gavshon

Dan Gavshon Brady (*Treasurer*)

Carly Hardman

Seonaid Macleod (joined April 2016)

Mark Orchard

Jenny Pitkin

Martin Ransley (joined April 2016)

Jess Rolfe Dix (joined April 2016)

Margaret Sills

Anne Sofer

HISTORY, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE TRUST

The Akili Trust was established in January 2006 with a remit to establish and support community libraries in Kenya and East Africa. Charitable status was granted in May 2006 and NGO status in Kenya, as Akili Community Libraries, in 2008. This was our 10th year of operation

Kilifi District (previously known as Coastal Province), where the Trust's libraries are based, is one of the least developed areas in the region. Electrification is slowly being made available but is not affordable in the majority of homes and transport is limited. English is the language of instruction in all Kenyan schools, but there are few books available for people to read, and many adults cannot afford to buy a newspaper.

In Kenya, primary schools are universally free. However, this is a deceptive statement: many schools are desperately under-funded and under-resourced, with parents expected to pick up the shortfall through the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) as well as ancillary costs for schooling (uniforms, materials, and so on, which aren't cheap). Secondary schools take up is particularly low in Kilifi District and the take up of further education in the region is one of the lowest in Kenya. Only 18% of the population is educated to secondary level or above. Yet, there is a real thirst for education and information and libraries are well respected and are seen as key places of free access to learning.

Schools in Kenya have been through a very challenging period with prolonged teacher strikes, student arson attacks and challenges to the security of the examination system. In addition school fees have increased considerably with schools also making additional charges during the course of the academic year. The Minister of Education is trying to regularise many of these anomalies and we are hopeful of a period of more stability from 2017.

The Akili Trust aims to work with local communities to improve literacy and expand access to information and education. In practical terms, this means:

- Supporting the existing libraries and establishing new libraries as appropriate and when funds are available;
- Ensuring that the libraries have suitable collections of books in English and Kiswahili;
- Ensuring that the libraries have adequate IT provision and run suitable training programmes for the school and the community
- Ensuring that the libraries are adequately staffed with locally appointed personnel;
- Funding librarian salaries and running costs, including daily newspapers in English and Kiswahili;
- Providing support and training for librarians;
- Establishing local management committees to run the libraries and liaising with them and with local schools and other relevant authorities;
- Maintaining a bursary programme for secondary education
- Looking at other opportunities for partnership working within the community.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The Akili Trust was created by a Declaration of Trust dated 23 January 2006. The Trust Deed provides for a minimum of three trustees, who are appointed for two or three year terms, with the opportunity for standing again. When there is a requirement for new trustees, these are identified and appointed by the existing trustees. The Chair of Trustees and Treasurer are responsible for the registration and induction of any new trustees and for managing the UK bank accounts with CAF Bank.

During this reporting period, two of our original trustees decided to retire from the Trustee Board, having given 10 years of invaluable service. We decided to consider our skills gap and look for trustees who could offer a range of new skills to help us move forward, particularly in terms of communication and social media and fundraising. We have successfully recruited three new trustees to fill this gap.

The Trust Deed gives trustees the power to apply the funds in such a manner as they think fit to further its stated aims. As the Trust aims to spend as much as possible of its funds directly in East Africa, costs in the UK are kept to a minimum. The Trust does not make grants to individuals or organisations that apply for funding speculatively.

Trustees meet at least four times a year to plan developments and monitor progress and finances. The committee reviews quarterly reports and correspondence from the libraries, decides on financial priorities and plans fundraising. Minutes of these meetings are held at the Trust's address. Sub-committees are formed from time to time as required. This year the trustees had a forward planning and review led by one of the members of the committee who works for a business branding and re-design organization.

The Akili Trust operates in Kenya through a local NGO, Akili Community Libraries (ACL), wholly funded from Akili in the UK. ACL is effectively the business operation in Kenya. It has its own bank account held at KCB (Kenya Commercial Bank) in Kenya and accounts are audited by independent auditors. Annual reports are lodged with the NGO Board and returns prepared for the KRA (Kenyan Revenue Authority). It is agreed that a meeting will always be held with whichever of the UK trustees visits Kenya.

In Kenya, each Akili Trust library has a Management Committee, appointed from the local community. The Management Committee also includes representatives of the primary school where the library is based, normally the Headteacher and the Chair of the Primary School Management Committee. This Committee provides support, encouragement and advice to the Librarian and Assistant Librarian, as well as being a further point of contact and information for the Akili trustees. They are responsible for the selection of staff, monitoring of staff performance and for the management of the selection process for the bursary students and also a delegated budget for running costs and incidental local spending. The larger sums relating to salary costs, bursaries, and book purchase are managed by the UK trustees through the main KCB account. The libraries are required to prepare a mid year and end of year financial report.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE OF THE TRUST

During the year ending September 2016, the Akili Trust has continued to support the libraries in Dabaso and Kakuyuni, with an increasing level of support for various local primary schools. This is normally through the provision of loans to these schools as well as class visits. There are now two satellite libraries in two local secondary schools and two primary schools.

Dabaso Library

Dabaso Library is now firmly established both in the school and as a part of the local community. It is well used by students from the school during the school day and by students from the nearby local secondary schools. It has a good number of regular adult borrowers, who use the library for book borrowing, for reading the newspapers and for learning to use the computers.

The headteacher at the school has been successful in building the school's achievements, reputation and thereby attracting considerable support. As a result the school has become extremely popular in the area and is working with other local schools to support their development. We have, as explained above, started to support some of these local schools with books and advice. The school has received a government grant for a computer suite so we are re-considering the role of the library computers.

Kakuyuni Library

Kakuyuni School struggles with inadequate budgets and high student numbers. It has not managed to attract much external support and is very short of funds for even basics including an adequate number of classrooms and the provision of water. In this context, the library provides a haven in the school for both staff and students and provides a very calm and studious environment. The two librarians and the chair of the library committee work very well together and the library is very busy with both readers and computer users. It is well used by the whole community as a study environment.

The school has a very inadequate supply of water, so the Trustee Board took the decision this year to build a toilet with its own water supply for the use of the library staff.

Books

The libraries are stocked with a mixture of books shipped from England, about every 15 months, and books bought locally. The shipment consists of books donated by publishers and individual donors, mainly children's picture books, fiction and non-fiction and some popular adult fiction. Money is provided for the local purchase of East African curriculum materials, Swahili books and fiction in both English and Swahili. The particular local focus has been the provision of revision guides at all levels.

Library Bursaries

The bursary programme is now well established and well known and respected in the local area. Annually, we offer two bursaries, one for a girl and one for a boy, in each of our two main schools. This is funded from the general Akili budget together with individual donors. The Hutton Dabaso Trust also provides funds for bursaries, now set at four bursaries at any one time for Dabaso School students only. Additionally, we have a number of students in the programme who are funded through grants from the Cassel Trust. The students are selected in January each year at the beginning of the Kenyan school year through a very carefully monitored process.

The progress of the students is closely monitored and supported by the library staff and reported on regularly to the Akili trustees. The librarians carry out this responsibility with considerable care, attending regular meetings with the secondary schools. They have applied sanctions or additional support to students when necessary. The students are required to work in the library at certain points during the academic year, carrying out general library duties and helping younger students with their school work. We have now set up a system of reporting on this annually, in December each year, and these reports are available on our website.

In addition, following a trustee visit in January 2016, we have set up a system for an annual meeting for all current and past bursary students. This gives an opportunity for students to share their experiences, concerns and needs and for the older students to mentor the younger ones.

Girls' Education

Over our years of working in Kenya, we have become increasingly concerned about the difficulties that many girls in our communities face in accessing education. This is caused by multiple factors including commitments at home, lack of sanitary protection and the need for more role models. We are exploring ways in which we can work on this and to find funding opportunities to support a girls' programme.

Communications with Kenya

Communications with Kenya are now mainly through Skype and What's App for a speedy response, with email for more detailed communications.

Other Activities

Regular newsletters and website

A comprehensive mailing list is maintained through the website and regular newsletters are produced to keep funders and supporters informed about developments in Kenya. The website is used for current information and updates. During the year, we have launched our new website. One of our trustees is taking responsibility for managing and developing the site, and for our social media and communications.

Trustee visits

Jenny Pitkin visited the libraries in January 2016 and arranged for the bursary students' meeting, mentioned above, as well as a programme of minor repairs for the libraries and a liaison with our new payroll providers. This was followed by a visit from Carly Hardman in February where she was able to check on all works and help with the re-stocking of the health centre on behalf of the Hutton Dabaso Trust.

In the summer of 2016, Jess Rolfe Dix arranged for one of the Debate Mate summer schools to be held in our districts. Ten university mentors taught programmes to both secondary and primary students with great success. Their visit and the interviews with girl students that they carried out for us are now available on our website. They were able to network on our behalf and invite many of our local contacts to their events.

NGO

Our new payroll provider prepared the 2016 audit and NGO returns for us and the process was managed more smoothly. We now need to re-structure the NGO membership because of changes to staff and trustee bodies.

FUNDING

The Trust's funding comes from a variety of sources.

- There are a number of key donors with regular standing orders, together with a good network of occasional donors.
- Grants from charitable organisations are applied for whenever possible.
- Fundraising events are run throughout each year. These also help to maintain interest in our work amongst the Akili 'community' in the U.K. This year's highlights included our annual quiz evening. Regular features of the calendar like the cricket tournament and the coffee mornings are also important fundraisers.
- There are a number of links with schools in London and donations came from several schools this year, including the Garden Suburb Infants School who raised money for books through cake sales.

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

It is clear that, with world economies in a state of flux and the impact that this has on exchange rates, budget monitoring is a priority to ensure that the Trust does not become over-committed.

It is also clear that the continuing state of tension in East Africa continues pose a threat to travel and to future visits. The outcome of the elections to be held in the summer of 2017 will need to be monitored to see if the programme of education reform will be maintained.

We recognise the challenge of managing staff and keeping in touch with developments from a distance and the fact that this will become more difficult if regular visits are not possible.

FUTURE PLANS

Our priorities for the next year include:

- Ensuring that there is an annual visit by Trustees whenever possible;
- Looking for opportunities for partnership work with other organisations based or working in Kenya;
- Looking at other funding opportunities in Kenya;
- Continuing to provide funding for the purchase of relevant books, especially books in Kiswahili and featuring African writers and those important for the Kenyan school curriculum;
- Consideration of e-learning and e-reading platforms to check their suitability and look for appropriate funded projects to support any development;
- Looking at the future opportunities for our bursary students and seeking advice about work experience, university and HE opportunities in Kenya;
- Considering the issues around the performance of the girls, both at the

end of primary school prior to the bursary selection process and during their sponsored years as it has become clear that girls are underperforming;

- Working on our fundraising strategies and a long-term strategy for the future of the Trust.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Incoming

Total income - £19,520¹

Standing orders - £3,000

Donations - £8,653

Bursaries - £3,246

UK Events - £4,621

Grants – £0²

Gift Aid - £0³

Total outgoing - £32,404

KCB - £28,200

Transfer Charges - £120

Maintenance - £749

Shipping - £0

Web, media and printing - £1,560⁴

UK Events (costs) - £1,333

Travel and visits - £133

Books - £75

Bursary Students Meeting - £234⁵

¹ Due to an accounting error from CAF Bank, the Akili Trust temporarily had an extra £7999.01 in its account between 12th August and 20th September, when it was rectified by the CAF Bank. We have not included this figure in our Total Income or Expenditure

² A grant from the Cassel Trust was awarded but income was received after this reporting period and will be included in the following year's accounts

³ Gift Aid from this period was submitted in the following financial year

⁴ Trustees decided it was important to invest in a new website as the existing one had become unwieldy and unstable

⁵ This was a new event to boost and increase the Akili community through its network of bursary students. We expect this to become an annual fixture