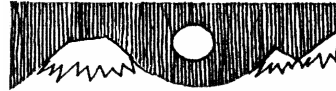


The Mexico Child Link Trust

CHARITY I.R. REFERENCE NUMBER XR18919

ANNUAL REPORT April 2009 – April 2010



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OFFICE BEARERS AND TRUSTEES

Chairperson

Mrs. A. R. Mc Murray, B.S.Sc., M.S.W., M.Sc. (Management Consultant)

Treasurer

Mr. R. P. Yarr, B.Sc., (Financial Adviser)

Secretary

Dr. M.G.A. Mc Ginnity, M.B., F.R.C. Psych. (Consultant Psychiatrist, Learning Disability)

Trustees

Mr. G. F. Mc Elroy, LL.B., (Solicitor)

Mr. N. Mowbray, B.A., P.G.C.E., (Special Education Teacher)

Mr. John Donaghy, B.A. M.Sc., Dip. H.S.M. M.H.S.M. (Management Consultant)

Prof. Roy Mc Conkey, B.A. Ph.D. (Chair of Learning Disability, University of Ulster)

EMPLOYEES

Jonathan Getty, B.Sc., P.G.C.E., D.E.L.E. Project Co-ordinator

STAFFING

The Trust is a small organisation with one salaried employee. Our low level of staffing enables overheads to be kept to a minimum. Mrs. June Getty works as a part-time volunteer in general fundraising and administration. Mexico Child Link also relies on the help of voluntary collectors and supporters, who organise fundraising events on our behalf throughout Northern Ireland.

Mexico Child Link made a monitoring and evaluation visit to the project in Mexico during January and February 2010. The visit involved the monitoring of the programmes funded by Mexico Child Link and the continuing development of the project.

AIM

Our main aim is to improve the quality of life of abandoned children and young people with learning disabilities in Mexico. We work in partnership with a Mexican organisation called Fundación Trébol de Puebla A.C., which we helped to develop and now partially fund and advise.

FUNDACION TREBOL – Our partner organization in Mexico



The Mexico Child Link Trust has a long-term partnership with Fundación Trébol, supporting its work and programmes in the state of Puebla, Mexico. This includes a residential project in Atlixco, Puebla for abandoned children with learning disabilities. Two houses constructed on a 2.5-acre site during 1995 are home to 11 children and young people aged from 9-28. Work continues to develop a small farm based on a system of sustainable

agriculture. The Coordinator of Mexico Child Link maintains regular contact by E-mail and SKYPE telephone and also makes regular project evaluation visits.

Management of funding

Assets in Mexico are owned by *Fundación Trébol de Puebla A.C.*, a tax-deductible Mexican charitable organisation. Their accounts are published monthly for inspection and are subject to an annual audit from an independent auditor, in accordance with Mexican law. Mexico Child Link has put many systems in place for internal control and accountability such as a fortnightly spreadsheet listing income and expenditure of the two houses (food, medicine, clothing etc.) There are also systems in place to safeguard the income of the young people, most of whom have a poor understanding of money management.

Introduction

This year our project celebrates its 15th Anniversary. It is hard to believe that so much time has passed since the first staff group got the project up and running with a group of nervous children - including Esteban and Paty who still live there today. Cristina Ramos, who was part of the first staff group still works part time in the project. The impact of the project on the lives of the residents has been remarkable - in areas such as; speech and language, employment training, social and personal skills, independence training in general and above all - in their self reliance. The security afforded by the project has enabled our residents to develop a considerable degree of self confidence and overcome the traumas which all of them had lived through as younger children. Mexico is a tough place for children from a poor background and it is even tougher for those with a learning disability. Some of our residents had spent time living rough on the streets or even in jail. The majority of them are now young adults and many of them have done very well in holding down a job, a great achievement in a country where unemployment is high and there is currently a recession.

Another area where the project has had success has been through developing links with local organizations, businesses and other funding bodies. As well as Mexican social services (DIF) the project has regular support, mostly donations in kind, from Walmart and Fundación Simi, the charitable arm of a national chain of pharmacies. An organization known as Mex27 gave a significant amount of support which included replacing two gas storage tanks and purchasing tools for the farm. It also helped to set up a small productive project involving rearing chickens.

It has been difficult to find funding at times, and this is a constant worry as the children and young people, as well as the dedicated staff group, depend upon Mexico Child Link for the greater part of the project running costs. Last year Mexico Child Link granted £39,394 towards the running of the project and raising funds will probably become more difficult as belts are tightened due to current economic difficulties.

The project has remained true to its ideals since it opened and one of the enduring commitments has been a focus on sustainability, and good environmental practice. A small working farm based on sustainable agricultural practices has served as a skills training base for the residents of the project and the wider community.

Our partner organization is currently implementing a series of safety measures to comply with new legislation in Mexico. This is affecting all NGOs and businesses and is a result of legislation belatedly brought in after a tragic nursery fire in Hermosillo in which 47 children lost their lives. The work includes minor structural changes to strengthen some adobe walls and the application of a fire retardant chemical to the wooden ceilings in the two houses.

The report contains the following sections:

- a) **General news update**
- b) **Project evaluation visit**
- c) **Report on the residents of the project**
- d) **Thanks**
- e) **Finance and fundraising**

a) **General news update**

BBC broadcast appeal

Mexico Child Link was given an opportunity to undertake one of the BBC charity broadcast appeals on Radio Ulster. This generated a lot of positive comment and also brought in over £500 of donations.

The broadcast profiles two of the young people, Esteban and Lucero and highlighted how the project had made a positive impact in their lives.

CAF-America

Documentation was submitted to CAF-America in March 2010 and Mexico Child Link was authorized to receive tax deductible donations from the U.S. for another 3 years. We do not yet receive a significant amount of income via this source but it is important to keep the channels open, should funding or support become available.

Annual Report and News Bulletin

The annual report was posted to over 200 individuals and organizations in August 2009. The document is available on the website and includes a summary financial statement.

A news bulletin was posted to over 500 supporters in December 2009 and this brought in welcome donations.

b) Project Evaluation visit

(27th December 2009-18th February 2010)

The annual evaluation visit was carried out between the above dates and a report including recommendations was left with the Director Karina Durana.

The main recommendations left were:

- Continue to hold regular staff meetings. It was noted that some meetings were cancelled due to pressures or staff shortages at times.
- Implement new Government rules and regulations regarding safety
- Update the Escúchame (Listen to me) profile for each resident at least every 12 months and involve other key people in the lives of the residents such as teachers or employers.
- A series of recommendations was also left for the work to be carried out with each resident.

Colette McGinnity also made a two week visit to the project in August 2009 and the staff and residents organized a party to celebrate her 50th birthday. She reported that the atmosphere was good and that the residents were settled and happy.

c) Report on Residents

Three young people who are working all have saved significant sums of money in their personal bank accounts.

The provision of a wide and varied programme of activities is critical for the development of the residents.



A 19 year old who has a more significant disability than most of the others is now helping enthusiastically on the farm. He has struck up a good relationship with an older resident who also works on the farm and they are working well as a team. This is very pleasing as it was thought that he may need to move elsewhere long term but he is now much more settled.

The older resident (25) would like to work outside the project but his motivation can be variable which would make this difficult.

Another 19 year old has shown a considerable deal of improvement both emotionally and socially in the last year. He finished the special school which he attended in Atlixco last June, and he now goes to a speech therapy class one day a week as well as attending courses run by DIF (Social Services) in Puebla. The courses include occupational therapy, dance therapy and some use of computers. He has recently started an Equinotherapy class in the nearby town of Chipilo and this is helping to build up his confidence. His behaviour can be challenging at times but he responds well to having a full timetable of activities although he can get bored if this is not the case.



The oldest resident who is 28 is still working on the ranch where he has been in employment for nearly ten years. He is the most physically active of all the residents and he gets on well with his workmates and the other residents of the project. He has his hearing checked recently to see if it may have been a factor in some of the accidents he had last year.

A 24 year old woman has been working in the CINIA factory for four years. She is an enthusiastic worker who has received positive reports. She enjoys her work, but finds the workload and daily commute difficult at times. A considerable part of her salary is spent on bus fares as the local bus companies do not offer a concession rate.

It has been recommended that she have surgery for her varicose veins. Karina the project director has suggested that she needs a 6 month break from work in CINIA as it is very demanding. There is a possibility of a job in a plant nursery near Atlixco.

A twenty five year old resident left his job in CINIA where he had been working for 3 years and is now working in the Atlixco Walmart, mostly on cleaning duties. He works 3 shifts including a night shift and now has his own room which he rents in Atlixco. He returns to the project several times weekly at mealtimes, or just to visit friends.

Two brothers aged ten and eight are at regular Primary school and are coping well. The older brother has improved his reading skills significantly but he still has a lot of difficulty with arithmetic. The younger brother has integrated well and has made many friends. His teacher

reports that he is a cooperative but mischievous youngster. He is still having some difficulty with reading but has started to show some improvement.

An eighteen year old who is deaf and used sign language had a full programme of activities throughout the year. She worked one day a week in a neighbour's house under the supervision of the independence trainer. She also attended a carpentry workshop and equinotherapy classes. She is still very involved in training for Special Olympics events. She has just started her first proper job in March at the Cinia factory. There is a special unit there for deaf people working with textiles.

A 26 year old has left her job at the launderette and is working at the project and doing a day's work for various people from time to time.

A 19 year old who is the most able resident has finished school and completed a computer course which he was taking in the afternoons. During the year he variously worked part time in a car wash, full time in a dental lab, and is currently helping on a building site. His behaviour continues to improve and he is showing much more maturity.

d) Thanks

Mexico Child Link would like to take this opportunity to thank those who fundraised on our behalf, or gave support in kind, as well as the many people who made a donation to support our work.

Corranny P.S., Roslea
Ulster Bank Charity Fund
Edgecombe TRC
Newell Stores Dungannon
MKB Russells
June Getty, May Blair and friends
Maurice Dawson
Roslea Choir
Brackaville Parish Church
Loughrey College

The Paget Trust.
Bertrand Pritchett Trust Fund
Moore Trust
Willy Brown
Cookstown High School
Bob and Pearl Mc Clean
Fitzroy Presbyterian Church
St Tierney's P.S., Roslea
Finaghy W.I.

Retailers: Supervalu, Spar, Asda, Tesco, Bow St. Mall, Lisburn, Springisland, Coalisland
95 Monthly donors who give from £1 to £50

e) Finance and fundraising

Last year was another acceptable year income wise and we were able to grant over £39,000 towards the running costs of the project. June Getty, May Blair and friends raised nearly £8,000 organizing street collections for which we are very grateful. A Gift aid tax reclaim of £3,542 was received in August 2009.

In Mexico, several of the young people with learning disability who are in employment make a contribution towards overheads and the project also received a lot of donations in kind, mainly from a local organization in Puebla called Mex 27. This included two new gas storage tanks and equipment for the farm. Over £48,000 in total was raised last year. The Paget Trust continued its long term support with a grant of £1000. We anticipate that fundraising could become more difficult in the short to mid term due to the general economic malaise. The Mexican economy is also struggling so it is unlikely that significant new sources of funding will be found there. Although our income has generally been steady over the years, at times we have been very fortunate to be remembered in a legacy or to have received a significant one off donation at key moments - when reserves have been low. The challenge from a fundraising point of view is to try and generate as much fixed year on year income as possible so that we can plan for the future with a greater degree of security. There is no room for complacency in the world of fundraising with so many good causes chasing a diminishing pot of resources.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME & EXPENDITURE 2009-2010

(12 months to 5th April 2010)

All values are in £ Sterling

Incoming Resources

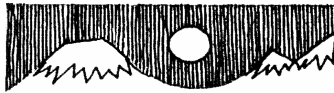
Street collections	7,758
Donations	21,220
Website Donations	626
Give as you earn	646
Bankers order	12,056
Schools	1,051
Grant Making Trust	1,020
Gift Aid	3,543
US Donations	300
Fundraising	386
Church	215
Bank Interest Received	53
Total Incoming Resources	48,874

Charitable Expenditure

Salaries	12,259
Grant to Mexico	39,394
Pension scheme	960
Printing, postage and stationery	933
Telephone	320
Expenses incurred abroad	2,568
Audit	140
Bank interest and charges	100
Sundry	59
Depreciation	92
Total Charitable Expenditure	(56,825)

Funds held as of April 5th 2010 (29,265)

Mexico Child Link accounts are audited by *Dawson & Company*, 171 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HR, N. Ireland.



What is Mexico Child Link?

The Mexico Child Link Trust is a UK registered Charitable Trust, governed by a group of seven trustees with an interest in learning disability.

Mexico Child Link is an independent charitable organisation, not linked with any religious or political group. UK donations are fully tax deductible through the Gift Aid programme and US donors can ensure their donations are fully tax deductible by supporting us through CAF-America.

Mexico Child Link was founded in 1992 by Jonathan Getty & Colette Mc Ginnity, in response to the needs of abandoned & orphan children with learning disability in Puebla State, Mexico.

Mexico Child Link works in partnership with Fundación Trébol de Puebla A.C., an independent Mexican charitable foundation, which we helped to set up and now partially fund and advise. This close relationship allows the project in Puebla to be run efficiently by Mexican staff trained in the field of learning disability.

Mexico Child Link provides a range of services for people with or affected by learning disability. The core project is a home for abandoned & orphan children with learning disabilities, near the town of Atlixco. Many of them are ex street children. The children live on a small farm in 2 specially built adobe houses where they are cared for in a family setting. The farm, based upon sustainable agriculture, provides a degree of self sufficiency for the project and allows the children to learn practical skills. The aim is to help them gain employment as adults.

If you would like to get involved, or support our work, please get in touch. We are particularly interested in getting involved with local schools and making contact with individuals who have fundraising experience.