

**TRUSTEES ANNUAL  
REPORT FOR THE PERIOD  
FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2015 TO  
31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2016**



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**A. Reference and administrative details of the charity, its trustees and advisors**

Charity name

Other names charity is known by

Registered charity number

Charity's principal address

124 Princes Boulevard	
Bebington	
Wirral	
Merseyside	CH63 5LP

**Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity**

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
James Tyrrell	Chairperson of Trustees		
David Cartmell	Treasurer		
Mark Neal	Secretary		

**Names of the trustees for the charity, if any, (for example, any custodian trustees)**

Name	Dates acted if not for whole year

**Names and addresses of advisors (Optional information)**

Type of Advisor	Name	Address
Bankers in the UK	Royal Bank of Scotland	1 Dale Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L2 2PP
Bankers in Sierra Leone	GTB	12 Wilberforce Street, Freetown

Auditor in Sierra Leone	Peter Kamaray &Co	20 Wilberforce Street, Freetown
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Name of chief executive or names of senior staff members (Optional information)

Moses Sheriff ( Country Director in Sierra Leone)

James Tyrrell (Country Director in the UK - in a volunteer capacity).



## **B. Structure, governance and management**

### **Description of the charity's trusts**

**Type of governing document**

**Constitution adopted on 02/04/2013**

**How the charity is constituted**

**Charitable Incorporated Constitution**

**Trustee selection Methods**

**The existing trustees are responsible for the recruitment of new trustees. Each new trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of Laughter Africa.**

### **Trustee training and induction.**

Once a new trustee has been appointed, they will be given all the necessary training in accordance with Laughter Africa's 'Trustee Induction Policy' which outlines the induction, support and training programme involved.

As well as training, the following documents will be given to a newly appointed trustee:

- A copy of the constitution
- The latest Annual Trustee Report and accounts
- All of Laughter Africa's policies and procedures (particularly highlighting the code of conduct, Safeguarding children and vulnerable Adults policy, accepting donations from Companies policy and the whistle blowing policy).
- The corporate risk register
- Trustee job description.
- Contact Details of Trustees
- Minutes of previous trustee meetings
- Organogram of Laughter Africa
- Financial Framework
- Details of resources and assets that belong to the organisation.

A number of publications from the Charity Commission are also provided including the guidance on Charity Law and Public Benefit. This ensures that new trustees are aware of the scope of their responsibilities under the Charities Act 2011 and to brief them on their legal obligations.

### **Risk management**

The trustees have established a risk management policy for Laughter Africa. The key to Laughter Africa's risk management policy is the 'Corporate Risk Register and Assurance Framework' which identifies the key risks pertinent to Laughter Africa in meeting its objectives and map out the key controls in place to manage them. The risk register is updated annually. The major risks to which Laughter Africa is exposed have been identified and reviewed: procedures have been established to mitigate those risks. The trustees are confident and satisfied that strong systems and procedures are in place to manage the risks that have been identified. The risk register is available for the Charity Commission to see upon request. Appropriate insurance cover is in place for Laughter Africa both in the UK and in Sierra Leone to cover every eventuality. Laughter Africa also insists that all staff and volunteers receive a DBS check (in the UK) or a Police Clearance certificate (in Sierra Leone) as part of the safeguarding policy and procedures.

### **Trustee's remuneration**

All of Laughter Africa trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or other benefit for their work with Laughter Africa.

### **Laughter Africa's organisational structure and how decisions are made**

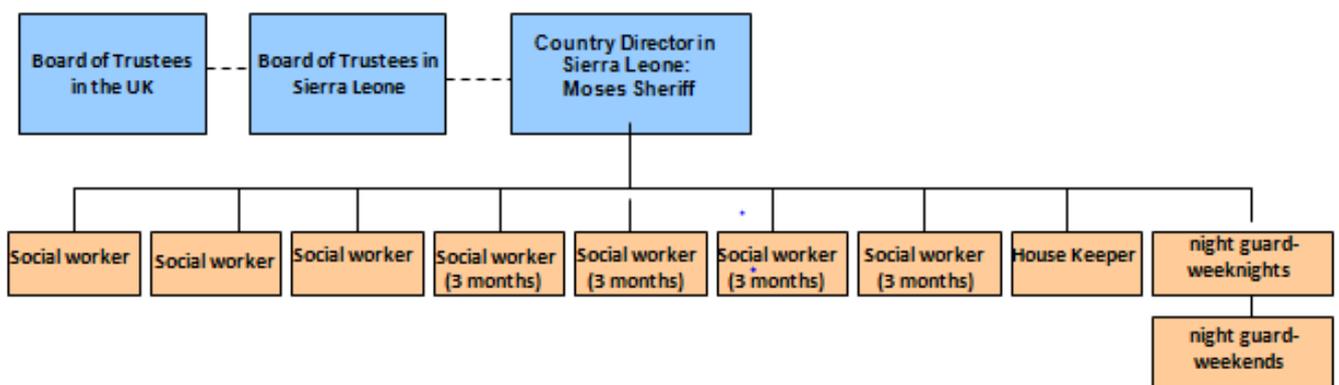
The Trustees both in the UK and in Sierra Leone have delegated the running of Laughter Africa to the Country Director in Sierra Leone. The Country Director, Moses Sheriff, is responsible for the day to day operation of Laughter Africa in Sierra Leone and managing the national staff. The Country Director reports to the Trustees regularly and the Trustees delegate to the Country Director accordingly.

The Trustees are responsible for the overall direction and decision making for Laughter Africa. The Trustees are ultimately responsible in law for the charity, its assets and activities. They take responsibility in the following areas ensuring that:

- Laughter Africa complies with its governing document, charity law, employment law, health and safety legislation, safeguarding legislation, equal opportunities legislation, data protection and fulfilling any other relevant legislation, regulations or statutory duties.
- Laughter Africa prepares reports on its work, and submits Annual Returns, the Trustees Annual Report and financial statements in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
- The organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.

- Laughter Africa applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives (Laughter Africa must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are).
- Laughter Africa’s vision, mission, values and identity are promoted and maintained.
- There is accountability to all Laughter Africa’s stakeholders.
- All employment procedures are in place.
- All the potential risks to Laughter Africa are mitigated.
- Operational management of the organisation is supported.
- Policies are established, monitored and implemented.
- Proper accounting records are kept.
- There is effective and efficient administration of Laughter Africa’s resources including funding, insurance and premises.
- They give firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- The organisation is financially stable.
- The property of Laughter Africa is protected and managed.
- There is proper investment of Laughter Africa’s funds.
- The budget is approved and that there is agreement on all financial planning.
- Suitable accountancy policies are selected and then applied consistently.

Here is an Organogram of how decisions are made currently at Laughter Africa (as of 1/5/2016):



### **Laughter Africa's Policies and procedures**

The Trustees, staff and volunteers are also held accountable by the Laughter Africa constitution and all the internal policies which can be requested via the open information policy. The organisational policies include:

1. Acceptance of gifts and hospitality	2. Environmental Policy
3. Data Protection Policy	4. Evaluation Policy
5. Dignity, Diversity and Equality Policy	6. Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures
7. HIV Workplace Policy	8. Safeguarding Children Policy
9. Bullying and Harassment Policy	10. Position statement on vulnerability and inequality
11. Health and Safety Risk Assessment	12. Communications about children policy
13. Laughter Africa's statement of Accountability	14. Security policy
15. Laughter Africa's safer recruitment statement	16. Security manual
17. Laughter Africa's human resources policy for all staff working in Sierra Leone (This includes our grievance policy, disciplinary policy, probation policy, redundancy policy, maternity leave, paternity leave, annual leave policy, sick leave policies etc.. in compliance with Sierra Leonean law).	18. Risk management policy
19. Laughter Africa's vision, mission and values	20. Trustee Induction policy
21. Whistle blowing Policy	22. Register of Trustees
23. Staff Code of Behaviour	24. Capability Procedures
25. Trustee declaration of interests forms	26. National staff job descriptions and contracts
27. Conflict of interest policy	28. Trustee Declaration Forms
29. Health and safety policy	30. Volunteer policy
31. Security Manual version 2	32. Gender policy
33. Vehicle policy	34. Laughter Africa's volunteer handbook
35. Supply Chain Manual (procurement policy)	36. Laughter Africa's Open Information Policy
37. Security country plan for Sierra Leone	38. Trustee Job Descriptions
39. Grievance Policy	40. Disciplinary Policy
41. End of Contract policy	42. Redundancy Policy
43. Probation policy	44. Laughter Africa's working time and office hours
45. Retirement policy	46. Laughter Africa's flexible working policy
47. Maternity Policy	48. Paternity Policy
49. Annual leave policy	50. Sickness and absence Policy
51. Adoption policy	52. Time off for personal reasons policy

Please note that the financial policies are listed under the financial review (section E). Laughter Africa has every applicable policy recommended by the Charity Commission.

## C. Objectives and activities

### Summary of the Objects of Laughter Africa set out in its governing document

The object of the CIO is the relief of poverty, particularly but not exclusively by the provision of housing, and the advancement of education for street children and other children or young people at risk in Africa.

### An explanation of Laughter Africa's strategies for achieving the stated objectives

Laughter Africa carries out a wide range of activities in pursuance of its charitable aims. The trustees consider that these activities provide benefit to street children aged 0 to 18. Laughter Africa works with street children in Freetown, Sierra Leone to fulfil their aspirations and to help them to bring about positive change in their lives. Laughter Africa delivers its charitable aims through the following three-phased approach:

- 1) **Outreach Work.** This involves the social workers meeting the children living on the streets through day or night surveys. The first priority is dealing with the immediate needs of the street children. They may be hungry and need food. They may be ill or in need of medical care. They may be lonely or grieving and just need a listening ear. They may have been raped and need someone to talk to. They may be having legal trouble with the police or judiciary and need someone to advocate on their behalf. Whatever they need, Laughter Africa is willing to provide. Whilst Laughter Africa's trained social workers will try to encourage them to leave the streets, they are not forced to do so.
- 2) **The Interim Care Centre.** The Laughter Africa Interim Care Centre is a safe place for street children to live while attempts are made to find their families. At the Interim Care Centre food, clothing, health care, education, counselling, support and other essentials are provided. Activities such as drama, music, sport, arts and crafts are also made available. The Interim Care Centre is a place where the street children can be children and learn to laugh again.
- 3) **Home-tracing and family reunification work.** This is an integral part of Laughter Africa's approach, through which social workers trace the street children's families in the hope that the parties can be reunited. Once the children have returned home, Laughter Africa offers continued support, such as paying for the child's school fees or vocational training. We keep in touch with each child and their family to check on their progress and make sure that all is well. If any problems arise then the staff will try to intervene before the child is tempted by the streets again.

## **Activities**

### **A summary of the main activities undertaken by Laughter Africa in order to carry out its charitable purposes for the public benefit:**

Laughter Africa officially started work in Sierra Leone on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The work consists of three major strands; outreach, the interim Care Centre and family reunification work.

The work usually follows the same structure. The beginning of the month starts with a week of outreach work (day or night surveys), then for the next six weeks, activities take place at the Interim Care Centre. Activities include games, cultural dance, arts and crafts, education and counselling. The children are provided with medical care, clothing, food and other support. While the children stay at the Interim Care Centre, social workers trace the children's families and once the families have been found, reunite the child with a family member. Once the child returns home, Laughter Africa pays for school fees or vocational training as well as other educational equipment such as uniforms, bags and school shoes. The social workers then carry out intermittent follow up visits making sure that the children are still at home and school. The way Laughter Africa works is evolving and kept relevant and applicable to the needs of the street children in Sierra Leone. The underlying factor which pushes most of the children onto the streets in the first place is that they don't feel loved or cared for at home. Through the activities and their interactions in the centre, the team at Laughter Africa try to make the street children feel valued and to show them that someone does believe in them no matter what and that they are not worthless. That is the key job of Laughter Africa to give the street children hope and build up their self belief.

In the last year, Laughter Africa has worked with over 57 children and young people. Many of whom were extremely vulnerable. Many have been abused either at home or while living on the streets. Some have been involved in commercial sex work while most of them have turned to drugs while living on the streets.

To read all about the individual children with whom we have worked with over the last year, please visit:

**<https://www.theonlinebookcompany.com/OnlineBooks/LaughterAfrica/>**

Throughout the year, Laughter Africa has developed relationships with local organisations, government departments, individuals and communities-to let them know that Laughter Africa exists. For instance, in July and August, the founder visited local headsman in all the major villages in the Western Rural Area, asking for permission to work in their communities. The areas visited were chosen because they are known for fishing, tourism or commerce and more likely to attract street children. Meanwhile the Country Director met with all the '5-oh's in the city centre to ask their permission to work within their areas. '5-ohs' are adults who live on the streets and take charge of the street children living in their areas.

Laughter Africa also established a Sierra Leone Trustee board over the last year. The Trustees oversee Laughter Africa’s work in Sierra Leone so that Laughter Africa is truly locally empowered. Laughter Africa’s Sierra Leone Board of Trustees consists of all Sierra Leoneans including:

A representative from the Ministry of Labour	A representative from NRA (National Revenue Authority)
The Director of Caritas Sierra Leone	The Head of FSU (Family support unit).
The head of SLANGO	A human rights lawyer
A representative from the Ministry of Social Welfare	A representative from the NGO unit at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
A community member from Adonkia	A local accountant who works at GTB Bank
A staff member from CAFOD	

### **Public benefit**

The trustees of Laughter Africa have complied with their duty in section 17 (5) of the Charities Act 2011 and The Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 to have due regard to the Charity Commission’s public benefit guidance when exercising any powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant. The Trustees paid particular attention to the guidance when reviewing, planning and shaping Laughter Africa’s aims, objectives and activities for the year ahead. The trustees have considered how the charity’s planned activities would contribute to the aims and objectives that had been set.

### **Volunteers**

Laughter Africa has no paid staff in the UK and about 30 volunteers. Most of these are fundraising volunteers who may organise an event or run a marathon for us once in a while. We also have a full time volunteer working in Sierra Leone; the founder James Tyrrell. Laughter Africa also introduced a new volunteer and internship scheme in Sierra Leone in March 2016. The Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank all of Laughter Africa’s volunteers both in Sierra Leone and the UK. We are so grateful for all you do for Laughter Africa. Your continued generosity and loyalty is astounding. Words cannot express how much your support means to us. To see some of our volunteers, visit:

<https://www.theonlinebookcompany.com/OnlineBooks/LaughterAfrica/>

## **D. Achievements and performance**

### **Summary of the main achievements:**

- Working with over 57 street children since 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015 which is when Laughter Africa commenced its work in Sierra Leone. Of the 57 children that Laughter Africa has reunited with their families, 50 are still at home; representing a success rate of 88%. Given the differing needs and backgrounds of every child, this figure is likely to fluctuate; it does however indicate the positive and lasting impact of Laughter Africa's activities even after only one year of operations.
- Laughter Africa is having real success with children whom no one thought would ever leave the streets. One particular success has been with a boy called Almammy. Almammy had lived on the streets since he was 4 years old; he is now 12. Although he had been reunited with his family by other charities in the past, he had never stayed home for more than a few days. In December 2015, Laughter Africa reunified Almammy with his family and he is presently still at home. He is attending school daily and his behaviour is much improved.
- The former street children trust Laughter Africa enough to come back to the Interim Care Centre if they face difficulties at home or are tempted to return to the street. Coupled with this is that the street children have given Laughter Africa very positive feedback. In fact some of the former street children who have been helped by Laughter Africa are now volunteering with the social workers during the outreach work.
- Appointing Moses Sheriff as the Country Director in Sierra Leone.
- Launching the Laughter Africa website in March 2016. The feedback has been really good and allows Laughter Africa to be more accountable and accessible to supporters. The Laughter Africa Facebook group has grown steadily over the past year too.
- The Country Director launched a new internship/volunteer scheme in March 2016. In March there was one volunteer from the local community and three interns from a local university all studying social work. It was a great success and this volunteer scheme will be extended over the next year.

### **Factors affecting achievements**

- **Staffing issues**

Laughter Africa has been short staffed since its inception in June 2015 because many of the staff employed did not pass their probationary period. However, Laughter Africa now have a hard working and honest staff who have proven their loyalty and dedication to Laughter Africa and the children that we serve.

- **The initial setting up of Laughter Africa took longer than anticipated**

2015 was Laughter Africa's first year working in Sierra Leone and the founder did not anticipate how long it would take to get established in Sierra Leone. Finding the right staff, finding the right accommodation, registering with the government etc.... all took more time than was anticipated. It was originally hoped that Laughter Africa would be operational by March 2015 but this was not the case.



## E. Financial Review

### **Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves**

The Trustees of Laughter Africa have established a general Reserves Policy which is in place to protect our overseas programme work from risk of disruption at short notice due to a lack of funds and other financial risks that the organisation faces, while at the same time ensuring that we do not retain income for longer than required. The trustees have determined that Laughter Africa's general reserves should be equivalent to approximately three months' running costs and expenditure for each country programme where Laughter Africa is based. The trustees believe that the reserves should be maintained at this level as it will ensure that Laughter Africa's core activities could continue for at least 3 months during a period of unforeseen difficulty. At the moment Laughter Africa is only working in Sierra Leone so the reserves are quite low. However in the future, the Trustees hope to expand Laughter Africa's work in other African countries too which would increase the reserves needed. Laughter Africa's current reserves are **£5025.46**. The trustees will review Laughter Africa's reserves policy each year, ensuring a balance between spending on the immediate needs of our charitable programmes and setting aside a reserve to protect Laughter Africa and our work by providing time to adjust to changing financial circumstances. The basis of determining the target reserves level is kept under periodic review and will be adjusted as perceptions of risk and other factors change.

### **Details of any funds materially in deficit**

Not Applicable

### **Laughter Africa's principal sources of funding and how expenditure has supported the key objectives**

Laughter Africa's principal sources of funding in the financial period came mainly from donations from supporters. In the financial period the total raised from supporters was **£42,045.86**. Laughter Africa also raised **£141.07** from the 'Give As You Live' scheme and ebay online giving schemes which are both raised via supporters shopping online. **£3261.63** was raised from Gift Aid. **£0.44** was earned through bank interest. In total, **£45,449** was raised in 2015/2016. Because of multi currency Exchange rate differences between sterling and Dollars and Dollars and Leones, Laughter Africa received an extra **£4,766.16**. Laughter Africa had **£5951.07** remaining from the previous year. In total, **£56,166.23** was available for Laughter Africa's use in 2015/16.

At the moment, the charity only has unrestricted funding and no restricted funding sources. The trustees have purposely decided to stay away from government institutional funding sources such as DIFID, European Union or European Commission for the time being. The trustees have also decided that Laughter Africa will not fundraise via direct marketing methods or telephone fundraising and instead will concentrate on generating funds via individual supporters, schools, churches, community groups, businesses/companies and trusts or foundations.

**Discussion of how Laughter Africa spent the money and how this expenditure has supported the key objectives.**

Laughter Africa's total expenditure in the financial period was **£38,636.259** and there was **£17,529.97** held in the bank accounts and petty cash at the end of the financial year. A total of **£56,166.23**. You can see a full breakdown of our costs in the table below:

**Expenditure in Sierra Leone**

<b>Type of expenditure</b>	<b>Cost (Pounds)</b>
Security costs for the Interim Care Centre	£4843.70
Rent for the Interim Care Centre	£6756.76
Salaries for National Staff	£5812.92
Country registration fees	£1459.36
Assets for the Interim Care Centre	£6452.29
Food for the Interim Care Centre	£746.73
Non- food items for the Interim Care Centre	£449.31
Games and entertainment Costs	£265.29
Staff travel costs	£991.66
Educational equipment for the street children	£920.28
Generator fuel for the Interim Care Centre	£101.84
Street children travel costs	£280.26
School fees/vocational training	£870.25
Medical costs for the street children	£1073.66
Safeguarding costs	£16.00
Street children travel accommodation	£35.59
Volunteer costs	£187.38
Travel subsistence for staff	£63.98
Food support for the street children	£75.47
Clothing for the street children	£461.67
Toiletries for the Interim Care Centre	£78.10
Staff travel accommodation	£85.60
Travel subsistence for the street children	£14.78
Membership fees for SLANGO	£512.63
Audit fees	£761.53
Bank Charges in Sierra Leone	£453.289
Staff recruitment	£105.63

PO Box	£20.25
Withholding Tax	£314.60
Electricity for the Interim Care Centre	£33.38
Health and safety	£68.14
Insurance	£265.18
Life Assurance	£152.06
Medical Insurance for National Staff	£1089
NASSIT	£869.78
PAYE	£609.12
Rent tax	£1033.79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£38,331.259</b>

#### Expenditure in the UK

<u>Type of expenditure</u>	<u>Cost (Pounds)</u>
Bank Charges in the UK	£305
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b><u>£305</u></b>

The most important thing to note when looking at 2015/2016's accounts is that as it was Laughter Africa's first year of operation, the founder of Laughter Africa used his personal savings to purchase items for Laughter Africa while Laughter Africa was garnering support in the UK. Laughter Africa now has a steady regular income per month from our supporters in the UK. However, to begin with, the founder heavily subsidised the charity and paid for most things including the following:

All Laughter Africa's administration costs e.g. paper, ink etc,	The rent for the Interim Care Centre in 2015
All the repairs to the Interim Care Centre	Rent tax for 2015
SLANGO membership for 2015	Registration with the Ministry of Social Welfare for 2015
A post office box for 2015	The Laughter Africa signboards
A permit from Freetown City Council for the signboards for 2015	Electricity for the Interim Care Centre
Household items like coal stoves and pots	Food for the Interim Care Centre
School fees/vocational training / educational equipment	Travel for both staff and the street children

Clothing, toiletries and other non food items	Medical costs for the street children
Travel subsistence for staff and the street children	Police checks and safeguarding
Staff recruitment	Fuel for the generator for the ICC.
Volunteer costs	Games and Entertainment costs

This is why some of the different amounts appear lower than one would expect for certain things like food, medical costs, clothing etc.... All the above expenses are part of our charitable objectives, without them, Laughter Africa couldn't function.

Now that there is money from supporters coming in from the UK, the founder will no longer be subsidising the charity, so expenditure across all areas will increase over the next year.

### **Assets**

In the first year, Laughter Africa spent £6452.29 on furniture/assets for the Interim Care Centre as without furniture, there wouldn't be an Interim Care Centre. The items purchased include:

11 bunk beds	2 armchairs
3 wardrobes	Printer
2 beds for the house mother/ housefather	DVD player
Dining table and 6 chairs	Fridge/freezer
Desk and chair	Generator
Table for television	Standing fan
3 seater sofa	Television
2 seater sofa	Playstation 2
Filing Cabinet	Table Football
Basketball hoop and stand	Volleyball net and stands

These are a one-off payment and the trustees do not anticipate this much being spent on furniture/assets ever again in Sierra Leone. Without an Interim Care Centre, we would not be able to carry out our key objectives as it is crux to our work.

### **NASSIT, Rent Tax, Withholding tax and PAYE**

These payments totalled £2827.29. These tax payments are legal requirements from the Sierra Leone government.

### **Country registration fees**

To work in Sierra Leone, Laughter Africa has to pay registration fees to the NGO unit at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development as well as the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs. These costs totalled £1459.36. There are other costs associated with country registration fees as well including membership to SLANGO. SLANGO is the Sierra Leonean equivalent of the Charity Commission. To be an operational charity in Sierra Leone, a charity must be a member of SLANGO. These costs were £512.63. To be re-registered as a charity in Sierra Leone, an audit must be completed. The audit costs were £761.53. Another requirement of being a registered charity in Sierra Leone is that the charity must have a PO Box. Laughter Africa rented one for £20.25.

### **Security costs for the Interim Care Centre**

One of the biggest expenditures this year has been on security which was £4843.70. From April 2015 to March 2016, Laughter Africa signed a one year contract with SSGI- a security firm. It was a necessary expense. The street children in the Interim Care Centre are constantly fighting and are very violent at times. For the street children's safety it is imperative that we have good security in order to protect the children as well as staff. It is also important that Laughter Africa has security in place as the children in our care are particularly vulnerable and we don't want people breaking into the centre and putting the children at risk. However, the Country Director and Trustees were concerned about the expense spent on employing a security firm so from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016, Laughter Africa didn't renew the contract with SSGI and now employ their own private security guards which will be much cheaper than paying a private company.

### **Costs associated with the Interim Care Centre**

The main expense connected to the Interim Care Centre is the rent which is **£6756.76** per year. The founder paid for Laughter Africa's rent in 2015. When the founder was seeking a suitable property to become the Interim Care Centre, most quotations received were \$25,000 or above. A suitable property was eventually found in Adonkia for \$10,000, despite the fact that some of the neighbours are paying over \$55,000 for their rent. Laughter Africa is aware that other organisations are paying over \$80,000 per year for rent.

Adonkia is the perfect place for the Interim Care Centre. It is a very quiet, safe area and the community have welcomed Laughter Africa. There is access to stream water for washing and a drinking water tap

nearby. The electricity supply is manageable from August to January. The centre is near the beach so sometimes the staff take the children on trips there. Over the next year, the Country Director will attempt to look for a cheaper alternative to rent for the Interim Care Centre. His eventual aim is for Laughter Africa to purchase their own land and build their own property. This depends on income. Ultimately this would be much cheaper than renting a property and would create long-term sustainability for the project.

Another big expense which takes place during the children's stay in the interim Care Centre is the medical costs for the street children which were £1073.66. There is no free medical care in Sierra Leone so Laughter Africa has to pay for all medical tests and treatment. All the children who stay in the centre are taken for tests at a local hospital soon after they arrive. Most of the children have malaria and some of them have had liver problems, hepatitis or HIV.

Other costs associated with the interim Care Centre include electricity (£33.38); health and safety e.g. fire extinguishers (£68.14); food for the street children (£746.73); fire and burglary insurance (£37.85); Non food items like coal, washing powder, towels, plate/cups, mops etc... (£449.31); games and entertainment costs like art & craft materials, board games, DVDs and sports equipment (£265.29); clothing (£461.67); toiletries (£78.10) and generator fuel (£101.84). The founder heavily subsidised all the payments noted above over 2015. Therefore, over the next year, Laughter Africa will expect to see much more money spent on all the above items.

### **Costs associated with staff**

Another big expenditure was on national staff salaries which was a total of £5812.92. However without staff Laughter Africa wouldn't be able to complete its work or charitable objectives. It is Laughter Africa's policy that only national Sierra Leoneans will be appointed as staff. Laughter Africa will never employ an international staff member in Sierra Leone. Since June 2015, there have been five staff employed each month (the minimum number required by the NGO policy in Sierra Leone). All staff are paid above the minimum wage and receive life insurance (£152.06), hospital and medical insurance (£1089) and GPA insurance (£227.33). The Country Director plans to recruit more staff from April 2016 as Laughter Africa has been short staffed since we started. Therefore staff costs will be higher in the next financial year. The more staff Laughter Africa employs, the more street children we can reach. It is expected that spending on volunteer costs will increase in 2016/17 because of the new internship/volunteer scheme. Last year the volunteer costs were £187.38. The founder subsidised staff recruitment (£105.63) and safeguarding costs (£16) during 2015 so it is likely that these costs will increase in the next financial year.

### **Outreach/reunification costs**

The three major expenditures in outreach and family reunification were school fees/vocational training (£870.26), staff travel costs (£991.66) and educational equipment like uniforms, school bag, school shoes, stationary (£920.28). It is expected that these costs will increase in the next financial year as Laughter Africa will continue to pay the school support for the children we worked with in 2015/16, as well as the new children with whom we will work in 2016/17. However, outreach and family reunification are key objectives of the work and paying for school fees is a major factor in keeping the street children at home. Providing school fees and vocational training is crux to our charitable objectives. Other costs associated with this strand of work include; street children travel costs (£280.26); travel accommodation for staff and children during the reunification process (£121.19); travel subsistence for staff and children during the reunification process (£78.76) and food support for the most vulnerable street children once they have returned home (£75.47).

### **Bank charges in Sierra Leone**

The bank charges in Sierra Leone were £453.289. However, many of these charges were related to withdrawing dollars from the bank account in order to pay the security firm. However, as we have ended the contract with the security firm, this will no longer be the case. The only dollar payments from 1st April 2016 will cover rent and country registration fees to the NGO unit (both annual payments). This should greatly reduce the charges from the bank. The Country Director is investigating the possibility of using a cheque book for the dollars account which will further reduce the charges.

### **Bank charges in the UK.**

The only expenditure in the UK is for bank charges when money is transferred to the Laughter Africa Sierra Leone Bank Account. This is because the Trustees believe that the money entrusted to us by supporters should not be spent on fundraising or administrative costs in the UK but on the street children themselves. The Trustees see each donation as an honour and a privilege as there are so many other charities which people could chose to support instead.

### **Non financial support**

The trustees would like to thank the charity KitAid for providing football kits to the street children. They loved them. Laughter Africa also received two old laptops which had been discarded by CAFOD.

### **Principal Financial policies in force throughout the year**

Laughter Africa has the following financial policies in place:

Laughter Africa's Earmarking policy
Foreign currency and exchange rate policy
Laughter Africa's Paying staff policy
Sierra Leone Financial procedures
Reserves and investment policy
Anti- bribery policy
Fraud and loss policy
Acceptance of donations policy
Policy on safeguarding resources from terrorist abuse
Credit card policy
Authorisation of expenditure policy
Payment of expenses policy
Internal financial controls policy
Laughter Africa's Accountancy manual

The trustees have also prepared financial templates and documentation for Laughter Africa including assets registers, chart of accounts, budgeting templates etc. All are available upon request.

### **Investment Policy**

At the moment, Laughter Africa has no investments as the charity is still so new and we are using every penny that we receive for our work in Sierra Leone. However, there is an investment policy in place for when the charity is ready to make investments. This policy governs how cash resources are managed, which institutions may be used, security ratings and risk management etc. The policy is as follows:

The objective of the investment policy is to maintain high liquidity while ensuring maximum security by avoiding risk to capital. This is to comply with Laughter Africa's ethical standards and to achieve the best possible return within these limiting parameters. To meet this objective, the charity plans to invest in sterling deposits with financial institutions that hold a high security rating, ordinarily spreading the total invested across fixed terms from overnight to 12 months, and limiting the amount invested with any one financial institution. In response to the increased risks highlighted by the credit crunch, Laughter Africa plans to have limited deposits to UK domiciled banks for shorter periods to enable the charity to react more quickly to the fluctuating financial environment. Laughter Africa's investment policy is reviewed by the Trustees annually. The charity has no long term investments.

## F. Other Optional information

### Plans for the future

- Laughter Africa will be carrying out the usual cycle of outreach, Interim Care and family reunification every six weeks. By the end of March 2017, Laughter Africa hopes that another 110 children will have stayed at the Interim Care Centre and will have been reunited with their families.
- Location work. The premise behind the location work is to reach out to those street children who at present, perceiving no better alternative, wish to remain on the street. At present, social workers focus primarily on those street children who express a wish to be reunited with their families, and the current outreach work consists solely of day and night surveys. To date we have been unable to work with those children who make an active choice to remain on the streets. In order to reach out to even more children in need, the staff of Laughter Africa believe it is vital to establish trust with those children who are less accessible or wary of outside actors. Trust will be strengthened through the organisation of activities (for example football games) on the streets. Engaging in these activities with the children will allow us all to become better acquainted and strengthen bonds of trust, while moving us closer to our goal of helping children break free from street life. Laughter Africa is hopeful that once trust is established, the street children will be willing to at least move off the streets and into the Interim Care Centre and leave the streets behind. Meeting the street children in their own environment is a crux of this work. The location work will take place in an outdoor space close to where the majority of street children can be found. The work will take place five times a week from Monday to Friday for a three month period. Activities will take place from 4pm to 8pm each day. Each day, the following will be available:
  - 1) **Medical and health care.** From our experience over the last year, the majority of street children often have malaria. Some of the children also have been diagnosed with hepatitis, HIV, liver problems or sickle cell. Therefore, it is necessary that the street children receive medical checkups and any treatment that is needed will be provided.
  - 2) **Food and water.** This means that the children will receive at least one meal every day.
  - 3) **Clothing and toiletries.** Sometimes the children walk around in ripped clothing or even sometimes with no clothes at all. One boy we met was wearing a sack as his clothes had been ripped off in a fight.
  - 4) **Counselling, basic education and workshops.** Workshops will be provided on sex education, drug education, basic hygiene and other life skills that will help the children survive the realities of street life.

- **Activities.** Each day, the children will decide the activities. They will set the agenda; nothing will be imposed on them. However, from our consultation with some street children we know that they would like to participate in the following: Cultural dance; Sporting activities like football; Drumming; Dancing to pop music; Bingo; Drama and storytelling; Music and song writing; Arts and crafts; Games; and trips out to the beach, the chimpanzee park etc.....

Through the location work, it is hoped that the majority of these children will trust Laughter Africa enough to have moved into the Interim Care Centre. The Interim Care Centre is the next stage of their journey towards reunification with their family and finally leaving the streets behind. Our hope from the location work is that if the street children face any challenges or difficulties while living on the streets, then they will turn to Laughter Africa for support so that we can walk alongside them. We want them to know that we are standing with them side by side on the frontlines of street life. It is hoped that this activity, depending on funding, will commence in September or October 2016 to coincide with the beginning of the dry season in Sierra Leone.

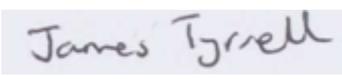
- Laughter Africa plans to carry out follow up visits to all the children with whom we have worked in 2015/16 to check up on their progress. In September 2016, Laughter Africa will also pay the school fees and educational equipment of all the children for the new academic year. For those who have chosen to complete an apprenticeship rather than attend school, Laughter Africa will purchase tools for those who have completed one year of their vocational training.
- Laughter Africa will be completing outreach in new areas with the help of former street children whom we have previously supported. For instance, one boy Rueben will be showing us certain areas in Waterloo, Calaba Town and Aberdeen where street children can be found at night. He will be introducing them to the social workers, letting the children know that they can trust Laughter Africa.



**G. Declaration**

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature(s)		
Full name(s)	James Francis Robert Tyrrell	Mark Quentin Neal
Position (e.g. chair or secretary)	Chairperson	Secretary
Date	13/05/2016	13/05/2016

