



# I Am

Annual Report 2019/2020

**“I praise you for I am  
fearfully and wonderfully  
made...” Psalm 139**

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## CEO Report

It was my pleasure and honour to accept the offer to succeed Richard Spratt as **CEO of Fields of Life**. Richard left Fields of Life in August 2020 after 10 years of service and I started on 02 November. Despite the restrictions due to COVID-19, I have been able to meet all the staff and trustees based in Northern Ireland and to meet the other trustees, some of the Uganda staff and some of our major donors via video conferencing. I have been so impressed by the quality and commitment of all the people it has been my privilege to meet and I so look forward to meeting more of them in person.

First of all, I want to acknowledge the enormous contribution that Richard Spratt has made the past 10 years. I take over the leadership of an organisation that is passionate about serving the poor of East Africa, that is experienced and skilled. Thank you, Richard and trustees, for building such a great team. Because of the relationships with our donors that the team has built, our funding remained strong throughout the financial year and continues to be in good shape.

The construction of the Vocational Training Institute in Gulu was a big step of faith, the single biggest financial commitment that Fields of Life has ever made. It would not have been possible without the enormous generosity of our donors. We are looking forward to welcoming our first students in the first quarter of 2021. This is just the beginning, we have great plans to expand the range of courses offered.

COVID-19 has not yet had a major impact on the health of East Africans who are more concerned about the risk of malaria and hunger. But it has had a huge impact on the

economy with schools closed, restrictions on movements and the absence of foreign visitors. Vaccination against COVID-19 in East Africa is not expected to start until April 2021 and will continue throughout 2021 and into 2022. Economic recovery is expected to be slow.

East Africa's young people face many difficult challenges ahead. Uganda is the second youngest country in the world, with almost 70% of the population under the age of 25. When I first arrived in Uganda in 2007 the population was 30 million, today it is 46 million and doubling every 21 years. This is increasing the demand on education, employment, food, and livelihood, pushing more and more young people into poverty. Birth control is a complex issue in East Africa but it is known that the most effective way of reducing the birth-rate is to educate girls. So our focus on girls' education, quality education and vocational skills including sustainable agriculture, are very relevant for the future of East Africa and the young people we serve.

None of our work would be possible without the faithful support of so many donors. I want to thank everyone who sponsors a child, the many churches, foundations and individuals who have helped us build schools and drill wells and Irish Aid which is the main sponsor of our I AM GIRL project. Thank you.

I am excited to work with a great team of staff, trustees and supporters, and I am confident that as we work with the poor, we are about the Lord's work.

  
Geoff Andrews  
CEO



# I Am Valued

## Tom's Story

**“At the training, I was encouraged that despite the challenges, I can make the teaching of mathematics more practical and enjoyable.”**

“I am a teacher at St Marglex Primary School, a partner school of Fields of Life. We had a training day that was hosted by experienced teachers, in which we explored problems surrounding the teaching of mathematics. In our classes we face many problems, such as large numbers of pupils, lack of time and a gender attainment gap.

At the training, I was encouraged that despite the challenges, I can make the teaching of mathematics more practical and enjoyable. We were mentored on how to approach hard-to-teach topics, and how to make lessons more engaging to pupils. I have resolved to particularly encourage the girls in my classes to enjoy maths and make sure that every child has an equal learning experience.

We learnt that good teaching is not limited to the classroom, but that it can be encouraged through communication between teachers, forming student clubs and nurturing a love of learning in the school community.”

*Fields of Life works with our partner schools in all areas of school life, including staff support. Teachers may receive incentives and help with their accommodation if working away from their home village, as well as tailored training which addresses needs within the school and community. This can include additional educational skills training, agricultural skills training and child protection training.*



# I Am Joyful

## Esther's Story

**“I have found immeasurable joy in starting a small project and watching it grow.”**

“I am the headteacher at St. Apollo Kivebulaya Kasizi Primary School in Uganda. My school has an agricultural project that was started back in 2016, with funds donated to the school by Christ Church Lisburn. With the support of Fields of Life, the school purchased 5 piglets. The staff and pupils looked after the pigs for two years then sold them. The profits allowed us to buy 11 new pigs.

Since then, our agricultural project at the school has continued to grow. We purchased some land to grow our own sweet potatoes, which supplement the pigs' food and reduce our costs. The staff and students are excited to develop even more projects that will help the school become more self-reliant.

I have found immeasurable joy in starting a small project and watching it grow. It has reminded me that some big things start small, and encouraged me regarding the future of my school. I am very thankful to our dear donors, and to Fields of Life.”

***Many Fields of Life partner schools benefit from agricultural projects. As well as helping staff and students develop valuable skills and knowledge, these projects also provide schools with a sustainable income which benefits the whole community.***



# I Am Fed

## Hellen's Story

**“Fields of Life gave us more than food, they gave us hope.”**

“I live in Katanga, a slum area of Kampala, where I run a shop. I look after 17 orphans, and Fields of Life supports me with their food and education. In March, the government announced a lockdown, meaning that my shop had to close, and all of the children had to stay home from school.

I was struggling, and worried about how I would feed my children, when Fields of Life contacted me to tell me they were distributing emergency food parcels in Katanga. I was so grateful. Fields of Life gave us more than food, they gave us hope. The supplies meant that the 17 children I look after had healthy, nutritious meals, and I didn't have to worry about them going hungry. The food distributed by Fields of Life helped thousands of people, and I can't thank them enough.”

*When the president of Uganda announced a strict nationwide lockdown at the end of March, Fields of Life was one of the first organisations to work with local partners and begin distributing emergency food supplies to vulnerable families across Uganda.*



# I Am Thankful

## Cecelia's Story

**"I'm overwhelmingly thankful to you for giving us a well."**



"I settled in Kogbo village in 1991, and since then I have suffered from a lack of clean water. The whole village had to collect water from Kogbo stream, which is dirty and contaminated. Drinking the water caused stomach pains, diarrhoea and typhoid. All the women in the village would get up at dawn to start the journey to fetch water. The stream was always crowded and it meant that by the time I returned home, my six children would all be crying.

Now, everything is different. The borehole is so close to my home that it only takes 5 minutes to fetch water, making the household chores much easier. As a member of the Water User Committee, I will make sure that everyone in the village plays their part in ensuring the well is kept clean and in good order so we will have safe water for many years to come. I'm overwhelmingly thankful to you for giving us a well."

*There are still 663 million people worldwide living without access to clean water. Fields of Life's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) projects aim to make safe, clean water a reality for communities across East Africa. Drilling boreholes and wells is just one way in which communities are being transformed through the provision of life-giving water.*



# COVID-19 Response



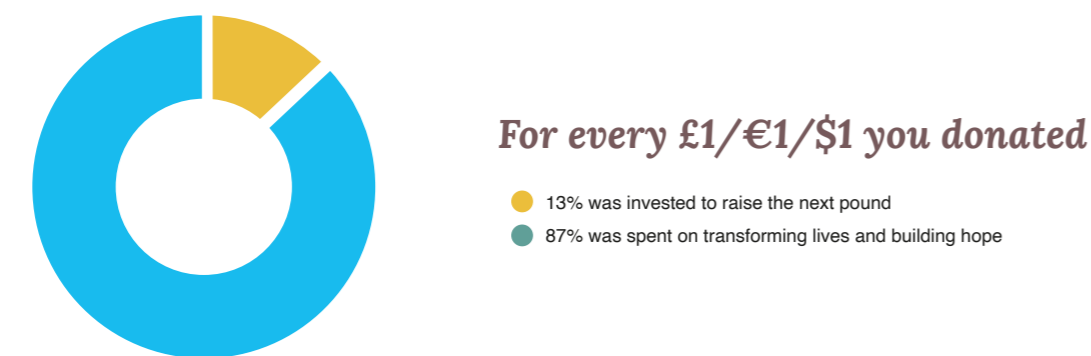
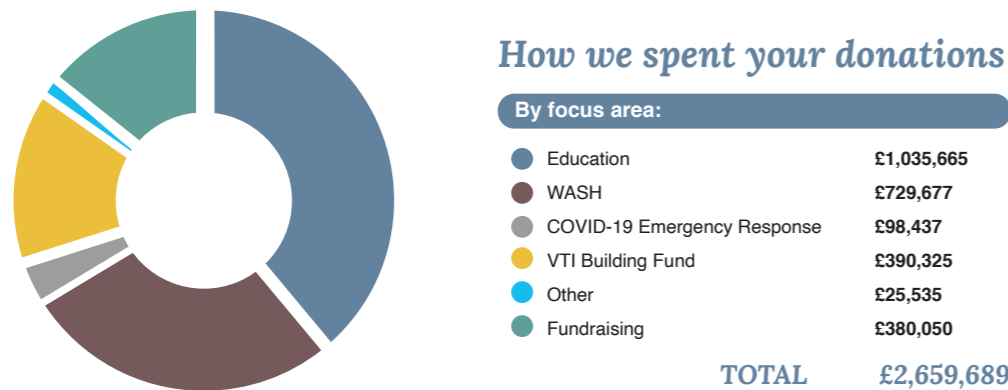
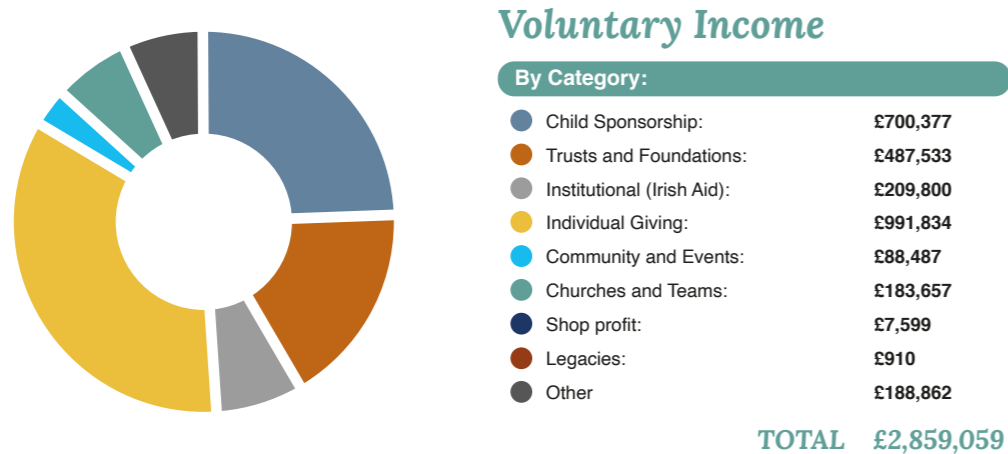


# Finances

The financial accounts for Fields of Life in Northern Ireland (NI), Great Britain (GB) and Republic of Ireland (ROI) have been audited by PKF-FPM Accountants Ltd. The signed audits for the year ending 30th June 2020 are available at [www.fieldsoflife.org](http://www.fieldsoflife.org). Overall consolidated income is down circa 14% on the previous year due entirely to the completion of support from one major donor. Generally support from donors has remained very strong in a difficult fundraising environment.

Fields of Life strives to keep operating costs and overheads as low as possible while ensuring good governance and appropriate administrative capability. Investment in fundraising activities is essential as we seek to grow our income and transform more lives in East Africa. Thanks to specific donors investing in fundraising and the receipt of gift aid claims, we are delighted that we can send 90% of all restricted funds to East Africa. We are thankful to all our supporters who have generously donated and so enabled the results seen in this report to be achieved.

David Hall, Director Operations & Programmes  
Maurice Donaldson, Honorary Treasurer



Thank you to everyone who supported Fields of Life.  
Your donations are changing lives.

# 2019/2020

## 214,265 vulnerable people impacted through FOL programmes



- 72,890 children in FOL partner schools
- 2,804 sponsored children



- 21 schools who have teachers trained in Mathematics and ICT
- 46 schools supported with scholastic materials and uniforms



- 19,700 children fed daily at FOL partner schools
- 19,980 people given emergency food during COVID-19 lockdown



- 12,600 households with safe, clean water
- 66,000 people provided with handwashing facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic

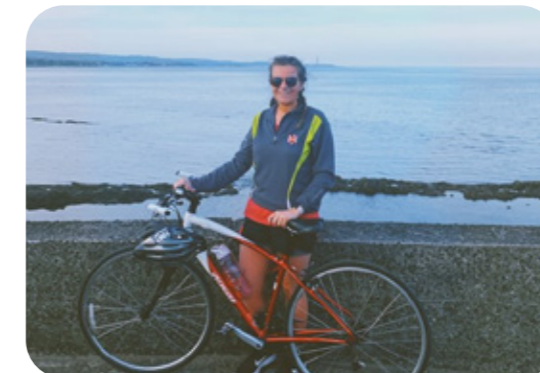
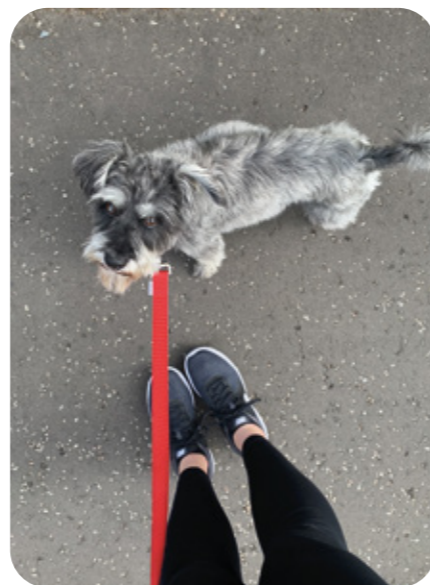


- 22 Water User Committees established
- 84 Village Savings and Loans Associations



- 20 Child Protection Committees formed and trained
- 1,882 adolescent boys and girls educated on puberty, personal hygiene and menstrual health management

# Virtual Walk to Uganda



# I Am Empowered

## Christine's Story

**“My committee's planning meant that the community was not without clean water for long.”**

“Before the well was drilled in my village, the community got their water from a spring, which was also shared by the animals. This contamination created many health problems, such as diarrhoea and typhoid.

Before the borehole was drilled, Fields of Life supported us to set up a Water User Committee to ensure that the well would be looked after. More than half of the committee are women, and I was chosen as chairperson. When the well was drilled, we came up with rules that govern borehole usage, to prevent improper pumping or children playing on the pump, which could cause damage.

The Water User Committee negotiated that everyone in the community pays a small, affordable fee each month. This allows us to save up some money for maintenance and repairs. Some time ago, the pump did break, but we were able to quickly organise and pay for the repairs. My committee's planning meant that the community was not without clean water for long.”

***Water User Committees are formed in each community where Fields of Life drills a well. We support communities to take ownership of their boreholes, and empower them to make decisions that improve the lives of everyone in the community.***



# I Am Safe

## Lovinsa's Story

**“The work of the men has definitely helped us to keep more children safe during the lockdown. They don't just talk to parents, but to children as well.”**

“I am very grateful to Fields of Life for training the Male Action Group in my village. The men were trained on issues surrounding child protection and gender-based violence. It has been very timely because of COVID-19, when so many children are out of school. The lockdown has seen an increase in child labour, as well as physical and sexual abuse as more families are kept at home.

Our village is close to a busy fishing town, which means that many children are kept away from education and forced to work at the fish landing site. It is challenging to keep children safe, but the increased awareness of child protection issues has helped.

The Action Group men have been able to visit homes and ensure that children are being well looked after, and that families are on board with continuing education. The work of the men has definitely helped us to keep more children safe during the lockdown. I appreciate that they don't just talk to parents, but to children as well.”

*Fields of Life is committed to supporting child protection efforts across communities in East Africa. During the COVID-19 pandemic when large community gatherings have not been possible, the I AM GIRL project team have been supporting local advocacy groups and raising awareness of issues through local radio.*



# I Am Inspired

## Rhodah's Story

**“I even wish to become a seamstress in the future so I can make affordable reusable sanitary pads for other girls like me!”**

“I am in the P.7 class at St Apollo Kasizi Primary School, but I will never forget how difficult life was before I came to this school, especially with regards to menstrual management. My guardians couldn't afford sanitary pads, so I had to use material from clothes and toilet tissue. I didn't know who to ask for help, but I talked to a friend and she told me that her school had helped her. With my guardians' permission I transferred to St Apollo.

In my new class, there were some girls and boys who had been taught how to make reusable sanitary pads. I admired them and was so inspired that I asked to learn too. Now whenever I need them, I can ask the senior female teacher and she will give me a supply of reusable pads.

My life has changed because I can participate in games and sports, which I was scared to do before. Most importantly, I no longer stay home from school every month, and my performance has improved. I know how to look after myself to stay safe and strong.

I thank Fields of Life for introducing the I AM GIRL project at our school because I will never again face the same challenges. I even wish to become a seamstress in the future so I can make affordable reusable sanitary pads for other girls like me!”

*The I AM GIRL project is a health initiative that works in schools like Rhodah's to improve school attendance of girls by educating both girls and boys on issues such as menstrual health. One initiative sees school communities trained to make reusable sanitary pads, providing sustainable solutions to period poverty.*



# I Am Changed

## Moses' Story

**“I have changed my behaviour because of the training I received... and my home is much happier.”**

“When Fields of Life established a Male Action Group as part of their I AM GIRL initiative in my community, I was chosen to be a part of it. As part of the group, I attended training, which increased my awareness of issues such as child protection, communication and health.

I am 33 and have been married to my wife for 6 years, but I would often get into arguments with my wife and it was affecting my role as husband and father. I was short tempered and never took advice from anyone. That was until the Male Action Group received training about communication skills. I realised that my poor communication was causing my disagreements at home, and I resolved to do better.

I have changed my behaviour because of the training I received, and as a result my wife and I are bonding again and my home is much happier. I am very grateful for the I AM GIRL project; it has changed my life for the better.”

***The I AM GIRL project seeks to improve school attendance of girls, and one way this is done is through training to address gender-based issues within communities. Teachers and other community leaders receive training which aims to spark conversation around taboo topics and increase understanding of the issues that girls face.***



# I Am Educated

## Solomon's Story

**“My turning point came when I was offered a sponsorship by Fields of Life.”**



“I was born in an obscure parish in the little-known village of Apye Adok, in a formerly war-torn region of Northern Uganda. I had 20 siblings, so I never expected to receive any education past primary school, but I was fortunate to get a place at a local high school. My parents struggled to pay my fees and I was in danger of having to drop out. My turning point came when I was offered a sponsorship by Fields of Life. That security allowed me to work hard and get the top marks in my school, enabling me to go on to an excellent college.

I received a government scholarship to attend Gulu University to study for a bachelor's degree in Agriculture, followed by a master's degree. I then began working towards my doctorate as a fully sponsored PhD student, at Gulu University. In June 2020, I graduated with a doctorate in Food Science and Nutrition.

I believe that, irrespective of where one comes from, all things are possible. All dreams can come true if someone is simply given the opportunity. I am so grateful to Fields of Life and my sponsor for providing a firm foundation on which I could build my dream.”

*Our sponsorship programme allows a sponsor to support a child throughout their education. As well as supporting the child, sponsorship also supports school development projects such as feeding programmes and sanitation projects. This ensures that the whole school community is transformed through the sponsorship programme.*

# I Am Healthy

## Sarah's Story

**“Fields of Life not only provided us with new bathroom facilities, they also trained a School Sanitation committee”**



“I am the senior female teacher at Nabwita Primary School. Our school latrines were in a very poor state, which meant that children could not hygienically go to the toilet or wash their hands before lunch time. This was especially hard for the older girls, who would sometimes stay home from school during their period due to the lack of good bathroom facilities.

Our school used to have a water tank to provide sanitation and handwashing facilities, but it was vandalised by some in the community, and no one knew how to fix it. This was a major worry, because due to COVID-19, when the children return to school they will need to wash their hands more regularly.

Before, this would have been very difficult, but Fields of Life not only provided us with new bathroom facilities, they also trained a School Sanitation committee, who were able to fix the water tank! The committee has also improved relations with the community, knows how to look after all of our sanitation facilities, and will be able to fix them in the future so that our school will never be without safe sanitation again.”

*Our water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme is committed to bringing clean water and good sanitation to communities across East Africa. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this work has continued, as it is now more vital than ever.*

## Dear friends,

### **What a year 2020 turned out to be.**

For me personally I was not able to travel for family reasons to Uganda to the head teachers' conference and board meetings in early 2020. The onset of COVID -19 probably took most of us by surprise and that put paid to any possibility of any travel to Uganda for any of our teams or staff. The coronavirus disrupted our usual line of work but I thank God for our staff who were able to adapt to the challenges COVID-19 brought. It was amazing to see so many communities receive personal protection equipment, soap and food where necessary.

On the staff front, Ednar, our Executive Director in Uganda, resigned her post for personal reasons and we thank her for all her work in bringing Fields of Life to the next level. Richard, our CEO, resigned his position to take up a post with a cancer charity in Northern Ireland. He has been a great ambassador for FOL and brought the organisation forward in so many ways.

Of course, with these two staff members leaving, it left two vacancies that needed to be filled. No easy task when you consider that COVID-19 meant we could not travel to Uganda so most of the interviews were done through Zoom (something I had never heard of before last April). We were delighted after many interviews that Esther was appointed as the ED in Uganda. She brings a wealth of experience in management and already we see her gifts working to a very high standard. Then it was time for interviews for the CEO post. Some of the interviews were done virtually but thankfully, for the final interview, travel was allowed. Geoff was appointed and he began his position in November. Already we can see Geoff's imprint on FOL which is very positive and he is filling us with much enthusiasm and passion about the future

direction of the organisation. We thank God for these two amazing appointments. The staff between Richard's departure and Geoff's arrival were superb but a special mention goes to Tony who led the organisation for two or so months with grace, good will and hard work.

It was great by the end of the year to see all this change positively affecting the running of FOL. With a very strong staff team led by Geoff and Esther, a strong, hardworking Ugandan Board of Directors and the Irish and International Boards playing a crucial role in seeing FOL fulfil its mission. There is great excitement and a renewed passion for the work that needs to be done.

Despite COVID-19, the building of the Vocational Training Institute continued, all be it at a slower pace, but I am delighted that the college will be open for students in 2021. This is a great and exciting project and again thanks to all who made this possible under the careful eye of Scott Brown. A sincere thanks to all his team in getting us this far.

I would like to thank all our Fields of Life family who have encouraged us during these challenging times, who have prayed for us, walked with us and given so sacrificially. Without you none of the work would be possible. We thank God who has guided us through these peculiar times and thank Him for using us to reach out to some of the neediest communities in the world.

**Every Blessing.**



**Trevor Stevenson.**  
**Founder**







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