

Annual Report, 2021

Natalya's Fund

Charity registered in England & Wales, no. 1042890

21 April 2022



Summary

Our objectives for 2021 had been to recruit a trustee and a champion, increase our support base to 200 and give a grant. We appointed a new trustee but not a champion and, although our support base did increase a little, we did not meet our target.

There were new projects with new partners, funded by a pattern of donations similar to last year. Our Vilnius project does not seem to fit well with us anymore, and we are considering how we may close it down.

Projects

New Projects

Projects were started with two new partners, Starfish Malawi and Lilongwe Youth Organisation (LYO). Both arose from requests for funding.

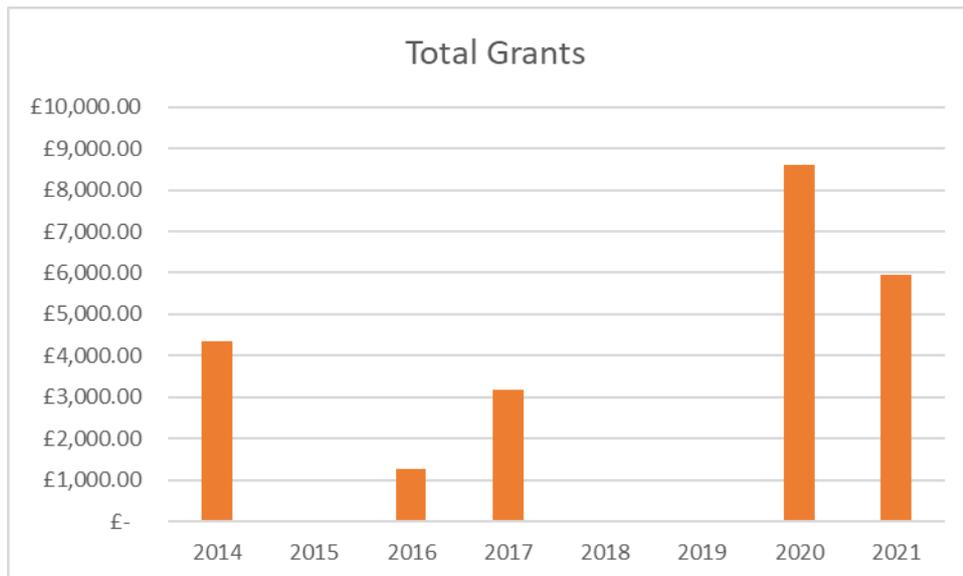
Starfish had asked for a grant of £300, which we were able to give them out of existing funds. After discussion with them it was agreed that our grant would be put to a specific need in a specific community – to provide sanitary kits for girls at a secondary school. The kits were rapidly provided, and there is the prospect of further involvement with that school.

LYO was one of the recipients of carpentry tools which we had provided via UK charity Tools for Self Reliance in 2020. They contacted us later that year for direct help. As the organisation has no UK base and we had had no direct contact with them, we asked them to complete our application form, then took time to review their project proposal and seek further information, holding a video meeting with them as part of that process. Their project was to set up a sustainable soap-making facility at their training centre – sustainable not least in the sense that the project would be self-perpetuating. Having identified certain risks with the project and taken steps to mitigate them, we decided to go ahead with the requested grant against the budget of around £1,800, for which we took 12 weeks to raise funds. Any further grants to LYO would be subject to the outcomes of this grant. Once the money was transferred the project was set up very quickly, and the product proved very popular with the local community, which had always been strongly in support of the undertaking. We await further news with interest.

Total of Grants to All Projects

The total of grants to all projects was £5,948, which included £3,828 paid to UK charity FISCH (Future for Iringa Street Children) in January – the proceeds of the appeal of Advent 2020. The total grant figure is a measure (admittedly not perfect) of goodness expressed by Natalya's Fund.

To ensure that donations are promptly passed on to those in need, every year we now aim to give a bare minimum of one grant.



Both the last two years show a considerable increase over the previous six.

Another (also imperfect) measure of the goodness we have been able to impart is the number of lives touched. This year we have touched lives in the following ways:

- Around 100 street children from Iringa now go to school because of uniform and stationary we funded for FISCH.
- 160 girls at Kaputu school, Malawi, are now confident to attend school during their monthly periods.
- Potentially 100 young people will be trained, employed, financed and encouraged to become self-sufficient in the first year of the soap-making programme at Lilongwe.

That gives a total this year of 360 lives directly touched, not counting the effect on family, friends and neighbours. It's a sobering thought that a life was touched with each £16.50 donated. That is the starfish effect (see <https://www.thestarfishchange.org/starfish-tale>).

Further Information

There is much more to read and see about these projects on our website:

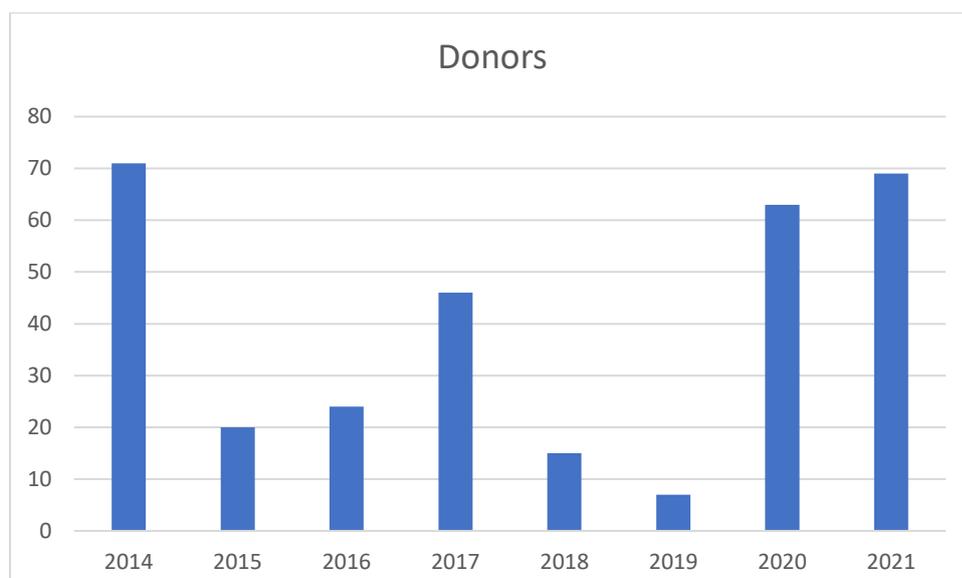
<https://www.natalyafund.org.uk>



Donors

Two churches, Mumbles Baptist and Ammanford Baptist, clubbed together to give a donation for our Iringa appeal of Advent 2020, the money arriving in January. We also received a substantial grant from another trust fund. Our remaining income, apart from Gift Aid and small miscellaneous sums, was from individuals.

We want as many people as possible to participate in our ministry, and we also consider that each donation is a victory for the forces of good. It follows that the number of donations received is a measure of our success. An approximate measure of the number of donations received over the last 8 years is shown below. (The measure used is the number of entries in the bank receipts log.)



Our performance in this respect was similar to last year.

Supporters

Our email list has 86 subscribers, up by three over the year. Of those:

- 29% often open and click on our newsletters (down by 2%)
- 30% sometimes do (up by 6%)
- 38% rarely do (up by 2%)

Informal analysis of the Mail Chimp list reveals that we have 31 'silent supporters', people who tend usually to open and click, but who rarely if ever contact us about it or donate. These may be praying for us and our projects, but so far have not engaged further.

Our postal list has 29 names, the same as last year. Since realising that these supporters tend to donate more, we do not try to move them onto Mail Chimp.

We have 67 Facebook supporters, up from 61 last year. However, some of these are counted twice, being on one of the other lists as well.

Ignoring double-counting (for simplicity), we therefore now have 182 supporters, up by nine over the year.



Easy Fundraising

An account had been set up with Easy Fundraising in 2020, to provide another income source for the General Fund, and was promoted in the newsletter and on the website. So far there are five supporters, and £17 has been received, with another £12 in the account ready to be paid to us once it reaches the minimum of £15.

Promotion

We are committed to ensure that 100% of money donated is put to the need in the field, and have reason to believe that this factor is very important to our supporters.

Our target for this year was to increase our support base to 200 from 173. Even though this was a modest target we somehow only managed an increase to 182. Action will be required to make more progress here, and perhaps it would help to have a stretch goal which will inspire new directions.

An increased support base would spread our message and help in our fundraising.

The possibility of a Twitter account was mooted, as research shows that Twitter is used by the sort of people who are more inclined to give to overseas concerns. Having a Twitter account is one thing – keeping it fed would entail a time commitment.

Newsletters

Two newsletters were sent out, in May and September, in each case via both Mail Chimp and post.

Website

The website was kept current with numerous updates.

Facebook Page

We have 67 Facebook supporters. Only a handful of people actually interact with the page and ‘like’ posts – the same ones all the time – but quite a few people ‘see’ them.

Trustees

We had discussions with four candidates during the year, and were able to recruit one new trustee, Mrs Rohan Lewis. Rohan has visited and lived in various African countries, where she was a teacher, with her husband, who is an agronomist. She has helped us in our dealings with one of our new project partners, the Lilongwe Youth Organisation, participating in our video meeting with them.

We are open to the possibility of recruiting one or two more trustees.

Champions

We had a champion in one area to promote our cause further afield, and thereby increase our support base. However our one champion stepped aside during the year to concentrate on other things, and so far we have not engaged a replacement. In the coming year we will need to engage not only a replacement, but also champions in other areas.

The Vilnius Project

In 1993 the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit of the Vilnius University Children’s Hospital (VUCH) in Lithuania was the first beneficiary of Natalya’s Fund. Over the years we have made several grants,



including for medical and IT equipment, and drugs. Initially the need was great because Lithuania had only recently emerged from Soviet domination and had not yet entered the EU. However, EU support came in 2004 when membership was granted.

The Ciurlionis CDs and cassettes were produced to raise funds for this project (see here: <https://www.natalyafund.org.uk/vilnius>). Everyone in the design and production chain gave their time free of charge on the basis that all the money raised would go to the VUCH. The money raised more than covered the costs, but despite that, there are many CDs and cassettes left. Sales have dwindled. Now we are adding the occasional proceeds to the Vilnius Fund with a view to contacting the hospital to donate it to them when it reaches £1,000, asking for information on what they will spend it on. This 'donation-led' (push) process is the opposite of our normal approach, where we are led by a project partner requesting funding for a specific need (pull).

Thus not only is Lithuania outside our target range of countries because of its EU membership, but also the project, being of a 'push' nature, is outside our favoured approach.

Sales of audio CDs have plummeted in recent years; e.g. in the UK sales dropped from 130 million in 2008 to 30 million in 2018. Whilst audio cassettes are enjoying increased popularity for some genres, this does not appear to apply to classical music. Therefore time is not on our side for selling the remaining stock.

We have therefore been looking at the possibility of donating the entire stock to another charity, which could be in Lithuania, along with the residue of £300 in the Vilnius Fund, on the basis that the proceeds would be donated to the VUCH. This work needs urgently to be completed if possible.

Objectives for 2022

Recruit Trustee(s)

Recruit one or more trustees who share a common vision for Natalya's Fund, and are able and available to contribute.

Recruit Champions

Recruit two champions (including a new person at Mumbles if possible) and provide resources needed for them to fulfil their role.

Increase Support Base

Increase support base from 182 to 300.

Give a Grant

Give at least one grant.

Close Vilnius Fund

Dispose of stock of remaining CDs and cassettes, preferably donating it, along with residue in account, to a suitable charity, UK or overseas, on the basis that the proceeds go to VUCH. Failing that, recycle the stock and redistribute the account residue appropriately.

