



December
2020

HELWEL TRUST NEWSLETTER

www.helweltrust.co.uk

supporting Rural Development Projects in
northern KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Hope and Fear for 2021

How is the pandemic affecting KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) now? The South African lockdown is over and most restrictions have been lifted other than the hygiene, distancing and mask-wearing requirements that we too are familiar with, in the UK. These requirements make our partners' training activities rather more difficult to deliver, but they have resumed. Crèches and schools are re-opening. And as we know, vaccines have been developed, and the latest expectation seems to be that they will begin to be delivered to South Africa from mid-2021. The plans and finances for a vaccination programme are unknowns at present.

Against these positive signs are a list of negatives: the unemployment rate in KZN has risen because of the pandemic and is now measured at 47%. Loss of income stifles families' spending on any more than bare necessities. We suspect that the extent of Covid-19 infection has been under-reported in rural areas for many reasons, including stigma and fear of the community's response (e.g. arson).

There is also a fear of a new rural wave of Covid-19, as winter approaches in the coming months. The health services are ill-equipped to respond: track-and-trace operations are hindered by the long distances that samples have to travel, wasting valuable time. Setting up new facilities like the UK's Nightingale hospitals is not impossible, but will require a mass movement of ill, infectious people.

At Helwel Trust, we are doing what we can to ensure continuity of our programmes, sustaining livelihoods and equipping children with a good start. We hope our Friends will in turn continue to sustain Helwel Trust!

Andrew Pemberton (Chairman)

Early Childhood Development

TREE (Training & Resources in Early Education)

In the last newsletter we reported on the relief efforts by our partner TREE in providing food supplies to the neediest families using the crèches. Since then, their focus has been first on providing Covid-19 compliance training for the field facilitators, to take out to the ECD sites in rural areas, and secondly on re-opening and resuming TREE's training activities, and the crèches themselves.

Our cohort of trainees has had their training period extended by six months as a result of lockdowns and we are continuing to support these trainees with stipends in place of the income they might expect from the families using their crèches.

Crèches are indeed re-opening. As at November 20th, 11 of the 15 where we are supporting trainee ECD practitioners had reopened, two were about to reopen; and two were still closed. But in these early days the numbers of children attending are much reduced – only one crèche is at around full strength. The reduction may be caused partly by requirements for distancing and hygiene measures. But how much is down to fear, or sheer poverty, preventing payment of the modest fees? We don't know. But the consequence is a loss of income to sustain the crèches.

TREE is taking part in a campaign to ease the ECD registration process and funding systems in South Africa, to make them fairer and more



Crèches in their different shapes and sizes

inclusive; and to assist practitioners and ECD centres throughout SA to access state funding. We hope for that the campaign is successful in prompting the South African parliament to consider 5 key reforms to be added to the Children’s Amendment Bill currently being debated.

“Siyabonga Helwel” – a trainee is equipped with a tablet for online learning



uKhanye Community Care Centre

News from Ukhanye is limited at present. As of late October, the crèche and other activities had not re-opened after lockdown, the crèche awaiting hygiene checks by the Department of Social Development. Only three students were working at the centre, with their Facilitator.

Sustainable Households & Entrepreneurial Development

ACAT (Africa Co-operative Action Trust)

This year has been different: the ACAT teams have had to find new ways of doing training, keeping communication going, and making sure that they adhere to all the new safety protocols. They have not been able to do everything that they had planned, but members of the “G5” groups were able to benefit from well-timed input – both in terms of training, but also in terms of seedlings and agricultural supplies. The group members have been so grateful for ACAT; they were able to implement the lessons they learned in developing home food security. And they are able to weather the Covid storm more easily than those who do not have their own gardens, crops, livestock and savings for ‘the rainy day’. Here is the story of how the seedlings were distributed:

“Early on in the Covid-19 Lockdown, which was originally imposed for 21 days(!), when Programme participants and community members alike would normally be busy planting their winter vegetable gardens, the ACAT Extension Co-ordinators (ECs) began receiving requests for assistance with the supply of vegetable seedlings.

By this stage, ACAT was allowed to issue special permits for people involved in “Essential Services” to continue operating, and each EC duly received a permit. In the Nqutu area, Thembi [Madondo -the EC for the area -] resolved from the outset that the Community Extension Officers (CEOs), Sipho Manyathi and Shiela Ngobese, should take charge of co-ordinating the ordering, payment and delivery of seedlings to those who needed them. Requests for seedlings came from G5 members and community people alike, and Thembi had urged the two CEOs to make it clear to all that there would be no handouts in this process. Each person had to pay when an order was placed. Sipho and Shiela, in their respective zones and assisted by their respective Zone Facilitators (ZFs), thus took responsibility for collection of the money, placing of the orders, receiving the orders when they arrived, and balancing all these amounts of cash and numbers of different kinds of seedlings, and ensuring that each person eventually received what they had ordered. On each occasion, once Sipho had the final quantities for each consignment, he phoned the nursery in Richmond to place the order.



On the arranged date, the lorry delivered the load to Dundee, where Thembi assisted with the ACAT vehicle, to transport the seedlings to Nqutu. In the case of seed potatoes, the ACAT vehicle, a Toyota Avanza, did not have sufficient load capacity for the number of bags delivered. It had therefore been arranged,

ahead of time, that those who ordered the potato seed would pay for the hire of a trailer. The CEOs, together with their local facilitators and volunteers, had arranged drop-off points for seedlings, and the recipients had to collect their orders from there. Thembi reports that nearly 23,000 vegetable seedlings were supplied, and seventy-three 25kg bags of seed potatoes. During this time, many community members saw the service provided by ACAT and the Extension Teams in their communities, and asked to join the Programme and receive training.”



Mr Mbatha is a G5 member in the Nquthu area He produces vegetables, and a variety of crops including maize. He says: “I learned my vegetable production skills from ACAT, and I love to pass this valuable information on to other group members. As a result of my improved financial situation, my life has improved so much that I intend to expand to establish a broiler production unit”.

As we were going to press, the very sad news reached us that the Director of ACAT, Gerald Dedekind, passed away on 1st December. We extend our condolences to his family and colleagues on their loss. In the words of Howard Mowbray: “For all the years that we have been partnered with ACAT Gerald has been so much our inspiration, main contact and good friend. His enthusiasm and commitment were amazing, and very many people in KZN can be very grateful for all that he as leader of a good team have been able to achieve.”

He is succeeded as Director by Rick Phipson, with whom those of us on the Helwel group trips to KZN have spent several days in the field, and for whom we have developed huge regard.



Gerald on the right, Rick on the left, with Liz Williams, Andrew Pemberton and Moira Pinkney on the last group trip, visiting ACAT headquarters near Howick, KwaZulu-Natal.

Sustaining livelihoods:
members of ACAT G5 groups
in the Nqutu area, showing
their enterprises



Helwel Hikes 2020

Good result!

A huge thank-you to all those who organised, walked and / or donated towards our special target of £10,000 to be raised by hiking activities this year, in substitution for the usual Helwel Hike. It is sometimes hard to separate Hike giving from other donations but our most accurate counting (including Gift Aid) has now reached a wonderful £12,076. This amply covered our first special grant towards countering the effects of the pandemic, and contributed to the follow-up grants we have made for monthly stipends for the TREE ECD trainees to replace the income they would normally have from running crèches.



Sussex



Norfolk



Pembrokeshire



Dorset

The date and whereabouts of the 2021 Helwel Hike will be published in our next newsletter

Helwel Trust AGM

Held on October 23rd 2020, via Zoom

Helwel Trust in “numbers” for financial year 2019-2020 (2018-19)

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----------|
| • Donor Income: | £85,155* | (£31,609) |
| • Grants to programmes in KZN: | £34,658 | (£47,829) |
| • UK admin expenses: | £1,122 | (£1,185) |
| • Balance of funds at end of year: | £74,023 | (£24,648) |

*includes an exceptional item of a £50,000 legacy

From the Chairman’s report:

“Over the last two years and more we [trustees] have been looking at the possibilities of a partnership or merger as a route to providing more continuity and/or greater strength for the Trust. Several charities I contacted had no appetite to expand their own portfolio or focus. We have considered very carefully the pro’s and con’s of one particular opportunity; however, our conclusion was that no other UK-based charity has similar-enough goals with the same geographic interest combined with the network of personal connections to “our area”, which together form our Helwel Trust’s raison d’etre. The trustees have therefore brought this investigation to a close.

“Sadly, it is not possible to plan the day when any of us may be able to visit KZN again to see our projects “on the ground”. We rely for the time being on communications technology, and the trust we have built up with our (now long-established) partners doing their work in Zululand. We are all a lot better at using this technology than we were a few months ago!

“And finally, I offer (as always) thanks to all those who have given donations to Helwel Trust in the past year, which have enabled us to continue what is truly life-changing work.”

HELWEL'S ANCIENT HISTORY

Leo Aylen

When did Helwel¹ start? Whose idea was it? I guess it may have had an official launch by Anthony and Maggie Barker, who did so much for it.

But Helwel was in existence before the Second World War. Was it started by my father, Bishop Charles Aylen? Or did he take it over from his predecessor as Bishop of Zululand, Bishop Wilmot Vyvyan? I suspect we shall never know.

My reconstruction of pre-war Helwel is what my parents told me about it. The crucial person was a certain Miss Balmain. I did meet her, but I never heard her Christian name, and my parents always referred to her as Miss Balmain. A somewhat Victorian personality. I imagine her as a strict disciplinarian to the nurses she trained. I was thinking about the woman I call my honorary godmother, Lizzie Mqwebu, who was a very special friend, and the only person still alive in the twenty-first century who knew my father, and was devoted to him as Bishop.

Lizzie was Matron of St Mary's Hospital KwaMagwaza for many years, and known there as a strict disciplinarian. I heard her, for example, expressing impatience with Zulus who asked for church services in Zulu. "Why can they not learn English?" Lizzie would say, being mission-educated and an excellent English speaker! I was thinking about Lizzie, and her sense of strict discipline. It then struck me she was almost certainly trained by Miss Balmain at St Mary's. Miss Balmain was of the age which would have meant she learnt her nursing during the First World War. She was a good friend of my parents; it is possible that it was my father who brought her out to Zululand. In that case it is likely that he, rather than Wilmot Vyvyan, started Helwel.

¹ Helwel was the common abbreviation, from early days, for what was officially entitled the Zululand Churches' Health & Welfare Association (as distinct from Helwel Trust our charity in the UK)

There is only one Helwel story of that time which I know; I heard it several times. It was how Miss Balmain trepanned a Zulu's skull by candlelight. This is the operation which Stephen Maturin, played by Paul Bettany, performs on a sailor in Master and Commander, the Peter Weir film based on a story by Patrick O'Brian. It was a surgical procedure which was developed early. But it is still a tricky operation to perform. And think of doing it by the light of a candle. It raises the question of surgeon responsibility: when is it permissible to perform an operation which might lead to the death of the patient? A question which probably confronts every medic at some time in the wild. I, as a layman, would answer that the operation would be justified if the medic was convinced that without the operation the patient was certain to die. Anyhow, Miss Balmain succeeded. Good for her. I find that a glorious story, to serve as an example of Helwel devotion and skill in its early days before the Second World War.

*Leo Aylen wrote and sent us these recollections in September, whilst working on a film he has been making about Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi called "Warrior for Peace". In the course of capturing footage in KZN, Leo met our some of our partners at ACAT and uKhanye, who will make appearances in the film as - in Leo's word - **heroes**, combating rural poverty.*

News of HELWEL TRUSTEES

In our October AGM we bade a farewell to Mike French who has retired as a trustee. Mike served as our treasurer for many years and put in many hours and days of work to keep Helwel Trust on the straight and narrow. As Mike's wife Carol continues as a trustee, we shall not lose touch. Thank you, Mike!

Former trustee and volunteer Sally Walker (née Hanning) has moved to Scotland with husband's work for RNLI, and is enjoying the scenery and big outdoors, according to social media!

Make a donation to HELWEL TRUST

Online: To donate securely online, either for one-off gifts, or for fundraising events, or to set up a regular payment, please visit:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/giving/make-a-donation/>
and enter **Helwel Trust** in the “search box”

(Virgin Money takes a small fee but handles Gift Aid for us).

You can also donate via internet banking directly from your bank account to our account, the details of which are as follows:

Sort Code: 20-33-83 (Barclays)
Account Name: Helwel Trust
Account Number: 90330264

Please put your surname (and event name if relevant) in the Reference.

When you use internet banking please let Amanda Arthurton, our donations secretary, know if you can “Gift Aid” your donation (and have not already signed up for Gift Aid with us). Her contact details are given below.

During the pandemic restrictions we would prefer online donations rather than physical cheques if possible. However, you can still post cheque donations to Amanda Arthurton, to her address at 18 Bellamy Street, London SW12 8BU. Again, please “Gift Aid” your donation if you can.

If you have questions, please write to Amanda, email her at amanda.arthurton@btinternet.com or call her on her mobile 07586 293 699.

Legacies: Please consider making a gift to Helwel in your Will. Please ask Amanda for more information if you need it.

Reminder: Shopping online for Helwel Trust

- Generating funds for Helwel Trust won't cost you a penny when you shop using the website www.thegivingmachine.co.uk. Online retailers, such as John Lewis, M&S and Amazon will make a donation to Helwel Trust every time you shop with them by this route.
- At www.justcardsdirect.com you will find a range of products, including cards for sale. 20+ charities, including Helwel Trust, benefit from the sales.
- Helwel Trust cards and envelope re-use labels are available to buy from Liz Williams: see our website for details : www.helweltrust.co.uk

Please help us save on postage by receiving our newsletters by e-mail— send an e-mail to andrew.pemberton@btinternet.com, to request.

If you have received this newsletter by post or email and if you no longer wish to receive our Newsletters or Updates in future, please let us know by email (as above) or by post to Andrew Pemberton at The Grange, Selsley Road, N. Woodchester, Stroud GL5 5PJ Tel 01453 872813

For any information about **Helwel Trust**, please contact our Organising Secretary, Liz Williams at Swallow Barn, Common Road, Mitchel Troy, Monmouth NP25 4HZ Tel: 01600 711518 e-mail: helwel@outlook.com

If you would like to see a copy of our most recent submitted accounts, please visit the Charity Commission Website (www.charitycommission.gov.uk and look up Helwel Trust (Registered No 271713).

KZN Photographs taken by trustees and partners, thank you.

Edited by Andrew Pemberton.