



Spring
2020

HELWEL TRUST NEWSLETTER

www.helweltrust.co.uk

supporting Rural Development Projects in

Northern KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Responding to the pandemic in KwaZulu

This newsletter provides not the usual record of achievement and challenge but instead a snapshot of what's happening with our programmes in KwaZulu-Natal. As you may have seen in the media, the South African government moved relatively early to introduce lockdown in response to the risk from Covid-19 virus and has earmarked substantial financial resources to help businesses and individuals weather the pandemic. Whether these are sufficient, and whether rural communities are in practice able to benefit from the emergency aid, are unknown outcomes at present. Our partners TREE and ACAT have had to suspend their training programmes during the lockdown, but are doing what they can to help the G5 members, the ECD practitioners and their communities, as you can read below.

I hope you will agree with the Helwel trustees' agreement to give our partners discretion to use our funding as best they can towards supporting their rural client communities, and towards the continuity and completion of the training programmes they had started.

I will communicate further to you, our Friends and donors, as the situation develops; and in the meantime, I thank you for your continuing support and interest. Wherever this newsletter reaches you, I hope you are in good health and good spirits.

Andrew Pemberton (Chairman)

Helwel Trust—Registered Charity No. 271713 (England & Wales)

ACAT (Africa Co-operative Action Trust)

Gerald Dedekind, Director of ACAT, emailed us in late April and we can do no better than quote his words:

“Our infection rates are “low” – and we wonder if they are accurate – we know they are always a bit behind of the actual figures. This of course adds to the difficulty of keeping people locked down if they think they are in no threat whatsoever. Our reports are that most of our rural communities are getting on with life (and trying to work around the restrictions!). Our fear was that the children (and then later adults) who went back to the rural areas for the lockdown would bring the virus to these communities. However, we don’t yet see if this has indeed happened.

“Lockdown restrictions makes it illegal to hold meetings of any kind – the exception being funerals. Funerals are being monitored, must have less than 50 people, and have strong protocols given to limit the social practices of many hands digging graves (and using the same spades), and communal/ceremonial after burial washing of hands, etc. I am not sure how they are monitoring this.



Rush mat production, pre-lockdown

“We have not been allowed to exercise outside our homes, but thankfully, that will change tomorrow when we will be able to walk (in a 5km radius from our homes) and only between 6 – 9 am. It is now mandatory to wear a face mask when going out in public. A curfew will be imposed from 8pm to 5pm each day! Businesses have to prove their ‘essentialness’, have all their permits

approved before they can open, and limit their workers to no more than a third of their staff! The government would have liked to keep us all in level 5 lockdown, but has had to take into consideration that in trying to protect people from dying from COVID, they are causing devastation in most communities. This is affecting all classes in SA.

“Whilst the ACAT staff are able to work from their homes, the Covid situation has not allowed ACAT to continue with some of its community activities like training at the Centre, normal field work and obviously group meetings”.

Gerald goes on to list the unbudgeted items that ACAT will probably need to buy, in the form of sanitizers, masks for staff, infra-red no touch thermometer/s, seedlings and (possibly) food relief packs.

“Please bear with us as this is very new territory, we need to carefully consider ways of responding as and when field-staff make requests. Food relief packs are a possibility, but we have to be so careful not to duplicate or cause unrest. Government has now tried to address this by increasing various social grants. This will enable more food to reach into homes.

“May God be with us all throughout this awful storm”.

TREE (Training & Resources in Early Education)

TREE’s training had to stop with the lockdown in March although the practitioners had some paper-based work they could take away with them. TREE is clearly working very hard to maintain contact with ECD practitioners via WhatsApp, including engaging them in education about protection from COVID-19; they are also being encouraged, where possible, to maintain contact with parents to encourage and advise on activities with the children at home. They are looking at providing monthly food parcels to see them through where they are suffering deprivation of income.

TREE is already characteristically ahead of the game and are already planning for “after lockdown”. Director Ruby Motaung’s latest report includes a table of “Threats and Proposed Adaptions” covering the practitioners themselves, parents, children and practitioner training facilities – all very embryonic of

course but the key thing is they are already thinking about this and researching their own government and WHO recommendations.



Hand washing - lucky to have a standpipe!

TREE have sent us a list of the ECD practitioners whose training Helwel is funding, indicating that, of those successfully contacted, only a third are currently in receipt of the grant from the Department of Social Development which provides them with a reasonable rate per child at their nurseries; the rest rely on the tiny weekly rate they may be able to get from parents. Since 18th March the

South Africa lockdown has meant that all ECD facilities have had to be closed. It is reasonable to suppose that there is some chance that the practitioners in receipt of DSD grants *might* still be receiving some proportion of these but I can only imagine that the rest will have entirely lost their income.

The Nqutu toy library is also on lockdown with the site now apparently only being used as a stop-off for a mobile clinic. The librarian is in a somewhat better position than the ECD practitioners as she should remain in receipt of her stipend funded currently by Helwel. TREE is maintaining telephone contact and trying to provide some form of remote refresher training.

The children who benefit from the child development programmes obviously must lose out, and the degree to which this will affect them will obviously depend upon the length of lockdown in SA and how effectively education can be restarted (with social distancing) afterwards. There will be nutritional consequences for many: for example, the toy library was part of a supplementary feeding programme.

It is fortunate that, so far, figures for cases in South Africa are low compared to Europe, and that they started their lockdown early in the process; but their ability to get out of lockdown without a bounce-back in cases will, as elsewhere, depend upon testing, contact-tracing and isolation - which one can

only imagine as being nigh on impossible in crowded townships, shanty towns and poorer rural districts.

Rollo Clifford

Other News

uKhanye: Phyllis Sikhosana wrote to us in late March confirming that she and her team had also been affected by the lockdown but were all safe. They have made some progress in securing their water supplies, and have been running with 30 children in the crèche up until lockdown. Whilst they have just three TVET students working on vocational qualifications, they need to have access to qualified Assessors to broaden their training in Health and Welfare, and in her typically persistent style she indeed has a plan to get hold of those Assessors!



Phyllis Sikhosana

Rev Cyprian Mncwango sent us Easter greetings and tells us that he and his wife Boni are safe and sound, and that he is enjoying tending his vegetable garden during lockdown. KwaNzimela is closed, “bringing depression to its staff” - and loss of services to the Diocese of Zululand, which is already suffering from having had no diocesan bishop in post for the whole of 2019.

Helwel Hike 2020 - overlooking the Dorset coast

Please join us if you can on Saturday 5th September 2020, gathering at 10.30am for 11.00 start: this is a round walk from Abbotsbury Castle on the South Dorset Ridgeway, planned by Rollo Clifford and Robin Boston.

The route will start from a very large tarmac'd lay-by which is at the top of the hill going west out of Abbotsbury towards Bridport. It is bang opposite the footpath up onto the ridgeway. We have an amazing view straightaway, out to sea and over towards Portland, and will start with that view over to our



right as we walk along the ridgeway. Turning down into the valley, we have lovely inland views. There is a short section of woodland with a little surprise in the middle (and probably the coffee-stop) before a straight slow climb on a well-surfaced track to our starting point. The plan is then to take lunch from the pub in Martinstown (assuming it has re-opened), which is a short drive away – either in the pub garden, or (to keep socially distanced) in our own garden across the road; bring your own picnic if you prefer. The pub is well-used to parties of walkers, and is convenient for getting onto the road back home.

In the afternoon Helwel Hikers can walk from the pub to Maiden Castle and back which is about 1.5 hours, or there are plenty of other options. We will be able to provide advice about staying locally – B&B or Campervan.

If you don't feel able to join us in person for "shielding" reasons, could you undertake a "virtual Hike" of the same length at home? ...and still get sponsored "à la Major Tom"?

Please let us know **by 15th August**, by email or phone, if you can join us for the Hike this year, and if you need a sponsorship form.

Rollo Clifford email rollo.clifford@outlook.com or phone 07785 562287.

Reminder: Shopping online and helping 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

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 "Hike" 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 lockdown period 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.

Thank you for agreeing to receive our newsletters by e-mail — do please forward this newsletter to your friends who may be interested. They can be added to our mailing list if they send an e-mail to andrew.pemberton@btinternet.com.

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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 our partners, thank you.

Edited by Andrew Pemberton.