



May
2021

HELWEL TRUST NEWSLETTER

www.helweltrust.co.uk

supporting Rural Development Projects in
northern KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Vital Help

While the effects of the pandemic in South Africa are now inconspicuous in the global league table of reported infections and death tolls, life is certainly not easy for communities in rural KwaZulu-Natal. There is a continuing toll on people's livelihoods. The vaccination programme is in its early stages. There is still a need to distribute emergency food supplies to rural families that have lost their sources of income.

We continue to be impressed with our partners' efforts to sustain the training programmes that we fund, and to adapt to the pandemic conditions by ensuring that the trainees can keep going, as far as possible without loss of momentum or hope. Do read the latest from TREE and ACAT in the following pages.

And we again thank you, Friends of Helwel Trust, for sustaining our income in these unusual times, so that the good work can continue.

Andrew Pemberton (Chairman)



Early Childhood Development

TREE (Training & Resources in Early Education)

Since our last newsletter we have continued to hear positive reports of how our 15 Early Childhood Development (ECD) trainees are progressing; 13 will qualify in the summer and we hope that all will then progress on to the Sizanani enrichment course in the autumn. Two others are replacements for drop-outs and qualify later. It is good to learn that the trainees are receiving recognition and support from the Nkandla municipality, which is funding the transport of trainees from Nkandla to Durban to attend their training sessions. This support is really helpful as the taxi prices have increased during this pandemic season.

The ECD resource library (for short, Toy Library) continues to be a fantastic resource in the midst of so many difficulties under our wonderful new librarian Nozithelo; and TREE are supporting her in making contact with other librarians and enlarging her practice. She has even planted a garden and hopes to harvest mealies to benefit the children.

One positive outcome from the pandemic is the technology we are now using, in the form of Zoom chats directly with our main contact in TREE, the irrepressible Tereza Ngobese. TREE staff and their families have all been touched by Covid but continue to work on through this relentlessly looking for solutions – and mostly finding them but not without extra costs. For instance, the number of practitioners per classroom has had to be reduced from 20 to 10 creating obvious resource implications. In the field, TREE has worked hard with partner organisations, including Helwel Trust, to provide food and financial support to communities. Within the Nqutu and Nkandla area Helwel Trust has this year supported TREE in:



- Our existing grant to train another cohort of 15 ECD practitioners.

- Provide emergency relief stipends to support practitioners through their training – necessary due to initial closure of ECD centres and then greatly reduced numbers
- Grants to support restocking of the Nqutu ECD resource library (Toy library) with equipment including a refurbished playground and new toilet.
- Provision of tablets to our practitioners allowing on-line learning, access to ECD resources, peer support and, recently, application for the SA ECD stimulus package.



New play equipment at the toy library

TREE has been pivotal in a campaign to extract promised, but undelivered, funding to prevent ECD centres from going under during this pandemic. One important outcome has been an agreement to allow unregistered ECD sites to apply for the one off “ECD stimulus package”. ECD centre registration is a complicated process. It has been an uphill and bureaucratic struggle to get all TREE ECD sites to complete the necessary applications. This is all on-line and, of course, many sites do not have internet access. The “Helwel” practitioners were so grateful to be able to apply via their tablets and hopefully all were completed in good time. This will be a one-off grant amounting to R4667 - just under £240 - but really essential to support practitioners who are literally struggling to feed their own families. They are still waiting and so far there has been no government support during the whole pandemic – hence the incredible importance of the stipends provided by Helwel. If you use Facebook, do follow TREE and give them lots of “likes”. They need all the encouragement they can get. **Rollo Clifford**

uKhanye Community Care Centre

We have been very concerned, because of Covid, about UKhanye and the Community Care Centre in the Barker Memorial building near Nqutu. The Head of the organisation is Phyllis Sikhosana who was a nurse at the Charles Johnson Hospital during the Barkers' time so she has plenty of medical training and understanding. When there have been group visits from Helwel, she always impresses us with her dedication and energy. It was very good to have a recent message from her which I summarise below.

The Centre is open but they have not been able to fully complete the identification of the OVC children (Orphans and Vulnerable Children) for this academic year at the local primary school as the children are attending school less often because of Covid-related issues. Until this process is completed it is not possible to implement the feeding scheme properly.

The creche has 14 children registered which is only half the expected number. The teachers (I think there are two) are doing well and one is supported by the local municipality. A company named "Feed the Baby" has promised to provide the creche with nutritious porridge.

The Volunteers (who are local people) are keeping free of Covid and working in nearby schools to assist in the Covid 19 preventive measures. There are also



Our welcome at uKhanye (2019)

TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) students doing work placements with UKhanye. After 18 months, they have just finished their placements. There is no talk of having more

students like this allocated but I think that this would be on hold in the present pandemic.

Covid vaccine has not yet reached the Nqutu area and, worryingly, Phyllis reports that “most people are hesitating that this vaccine will work”. I have replied to her to stress that vaccine take-up (when available) is essential to save lives and said that all the Helwel people have had their jabs, both Pfizer and Astra Zeneca without any problems! There have been some cases in the area, including the death of the husband of one of the child and youth care supervisors, but overall it seems that local preventive and shielding measures are working, probably aided by the rural conditions.

We continue to support Phyllis and the volunteers with prayers and words of encouragement. ***Carolyn Mowbray***

Sustainable Households & Entrepreneurial Development

ACAT (Africa Co-operative Action Trust)

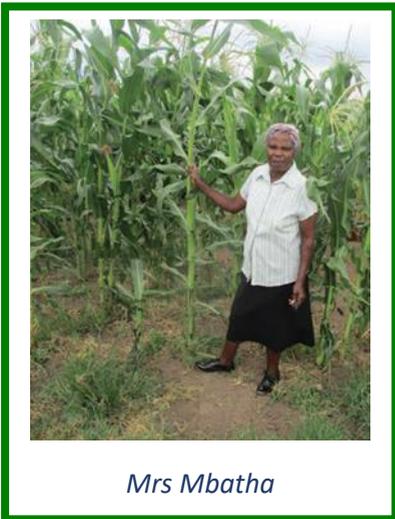
Just as we went to press in December, we learnt of the death of ACAT’s executive director Gerald Dedekind who, with his wife Philippa, had been with ACAT since 1981. Initially they were fundraisers and travelled extensively in Europe raising ACAT’s profile and securing funding to turn the small organisation to what it is today having programmes over much of Africa. He never departed from ACAT’s vision ‘to help the poorest of the poor to help themselves through the Gospel’. That vision is what drew Helwel Trust to partner with ACAT in 2004. I have always found him easy, efficient and humorous to work with.



Gerald Dedekind

Founding Trustee of ACAT, Lawrence McCrystal, wrote “In Gerald’s forward-thinking manner, he had already secured the future of ACAT by the appointment of Rick Phipson” with whom we Helwel Trust have already had much contact in his role heading up the Entrepreneurial Development Programme. We’re pleased to learn that Gerald’s wife Philippa continues to work in the office using her vast amount of experience and expertise.

Since his appointment as Executive director, Rick has hit the road running answering my emails just as promptly as Gerald did!



In the annual report that we received in March we learnt that the pandemic has been an incentive for people to join the ACAT programme because they saw that participants had food to eat and cash in their pockets. One such person is Mrs Mbatha who ‘joined the ACAT programme to improve her family’s health, and to gain new knowledge in business and agricultural skills. Now she has a thriving vegetable garden where she produces fresh and healthy vegetables for her family. She also plants maize for her family to eat, and sells dry maize in 50 kg bags’.

In terms of health during the pandemic, we’ve learnt that vegetable gardens have helped people to stay in relatively good health though restrictions have meant that they may not have been able to travel to collect ARV and other medication. The strain on hospitals and clinics has been high with a disproportionate death rate of pastors who officiate at many funerals that is unsettling for the communities particularly as there has also been an increase in child-headed households due to parents dying from Covid. However, amongst all this sadness, there have been business opportunities too – making and selling face masks!



Shiela Ngobese

Our long-time friend at ACAT, Shiela Ngobese, who is one of the Extension Officers in the Nqutu area wrote, “We thank ACAT for the harvest of water. It is the only reason we survive”. With this in mind we have decided that half of the funds raised by the Helwel Hike on 4th September will go towards more water tanks. The cost at present for a tank is £250 of which the community pays half.

We thank you for your continuing support that enables us to make a small difference to our friends in KZN who are travelling through so many difficulties and adjustments. **Liz Williams**

Helwel Hike 2021: Dorset – 4th September

Through our Helwel Hike this year we aim to raise funds to subsidise water tanks via ACAT (as mentioned above) and to sustain the Community Toy Library at Mphondi near Nqutu (via TREE – also mentioned above).

Please join us if you can on Saturday 4th September 2021, gathering at 10.30am for 11.00 start: this is a round walk from Abbotsbury Castle on the South Dorset Ridgeway, planned by Rollo and Frances Clifford, and assisted on the day by Robin Boston, so there should be plenty of guides allowing us to spread out.

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



The view from the start (on a good day!)

footpath up onto the ridgeway. There are three other lay-bys nearby but we will aim to double park with the group and those who are happy to share a lift can park in Martinstown near the pub. 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, which a short drive away – either in the pub garden, or 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. Further details, maps etc will be available to participants nearer the time.

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 01305 889400.



Cattle in Zululand – local culture at odds with reducing climate change?

Helwel Trust income

Our accounts for the financial year to April 2021 are still to be finalised and inspected, but we are delighted that donations have continued at a level sufficient to maintain our “core” programmes delivered by TREE and ACAT. Summary figures for the financial year will be provided in our next newsletter. In addition to two substantial donations by individuals, we are most grateful to Christ Church, Ipswich, and St Luke’s Church, Battersea, and their congregations, for their donations of £1,000 or more.

If any reader as a Friend of Helwel Trust would like to introduce us to their church or community as a cause deserving support, please let me know and I can either pay a visit or send materials about our aims and about our partners in Kwa-Zulu Natal. **Andrew Pemberton** (*contact details on final page*)

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.

Another way to give to HELWEL TRUST

Shop Online using **The Giving Machine** – it's easy!

Generating funds for Helwel Trust won't cost you a penny when you shop using the website www.thegivingmachine.co.uk.

Join in by selecting Helwel Trust as your "cause" and register yourself with your email address and password.

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.

HELWEL TRUST AGM 2021

Our AGM will be held on-line again this year using Zoom, on Friday 12th November at 2.30pm. All are welcome to join: in addition to the formalities, we will share the latest news from our partners in KZN.

If you would like to attend, please email Liz Williams at helwel@outlook.com and Liz will send you the joining instructions before the meeting.



KZN Trivia: do you recall the distinctive cries of the hadada ibis?

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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

**KZN Photographs taken by trustees, partners, and Friends - thank you.
Edited by Andrew Pemberton.**