



May
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HELWEL TRUST NEWSLETTER

www.helweltrust.co.uk

supporting Rural Development Projects in
northern KwaZulu Natal, South Africa

Resilience

I wish I was writing this without having seen any news about KwaZulu-Natal in UK media since the last newsletter – if only there could be “business as usual”. But after the riots last year, this April we have seen pictures of flooding and storm damage in KZN, and containers in Durban tossed about like matchboxes. The statistics of loss of lives, homes and livelihoods are shocking to read. Climate change is fingered as a significant factor in such extreme weather events. What is required to cope with climate change is resilience – ability to recover and survive when extreme events happen. The flooding revealed a lack of “civic” resilience on a grand scale. Through Helwel Trust we are helping to build the capacity for *personal* resilience, never more needed. In our reports from ACAT and TREE we have learned of the extra challenges they have faced but also of the good news stories that our grant funds from Helwel Trust are bringing about. So do please raise a metaphorical glass (or an actual one) to the ECD trainees who have recently graduated, and to the newly-established

entrepreneurs who are feeding themselves and earning money from their activities – read more inside...



Again, I thank all of you our donors for enabling Helwel Trust to play its part in making the good news stories. It would be so good to meet you on our Hike in September.

Andrew Pemberton (Chairman)

Sustainable Households & Entrepreneurial Development

ACAT (Africa Co-operative Action Trust)

Climate change, AIDS and Covid all continue to amplify the precarious nature of the lives of rural people in KZN. ACAT continue to play a wonderful part in addressing these needs through their key strategies of:

- Establishment of new groups to promote Entrepreneurial Development including income generation, savings schemes and food gardens.
- HIV & AIDS education programmes
- Business skills training
- Training programmes specifically designed for children and young adults.

Happily, the floods that swept through the coastal regions of KZN in April did not have the same disastrous effect in the Nqutu region. Shortly after the floods, Rick Phipson of ACAT wrote to us:

".....most of the Field Team has been contacted telephonically. Problems across the whole area include the following:

- *Amongst the houses & toilets that were affected are the ones made up of mud blocks... particularly those poorly constructed.*
- *In some areas there are water and electricity disruptions as the floods damaged the pipes and power lines.*
- *Of course, crops and vegetables were washed away by the floods and some in the flat lands got waterlogged.*
- *Some roads are impassable, especially with small bridges over the river."*

In our 6-monthly reports from ACAT we ask to be given both the challenges and the good news stories:

Challenges first!

- 1) The negative impact of **Covid** on the rural economy, with even more child-headed households, has resulted in entrepreneurs finding it even harder to make profits as people's income has been so drastically reduced.

- 2) Young people have become disillusioned and helpless leading to **drug abuse**. Happily, our friend Pastor Smanga Sithole is creating initiatives to provide young people with worthwhile things to do.
- 3) **The weather!** Nquthu has suffered drought, destructive gale-force winds, and severe thunderstorms in 2021, leading to destruction of crops. Our friend Sipho lost 30 of his chickens when the run was flooded in a heavy storm, and stock thieves stole eight of his goats.

Good news stories from Nquthu area:

Mr Sikhakhane is involved in many projects including vegetable production, fruit tree planting, maize crop production and shield making. His enthusiasm and dedication for gardening has motivated the whole family as they work together to produce fresh home food. Mr Sikhakhane says:

“When I joined ACAT, I did not have much knowledge on how I could stand up and do things for myself to improve my family’s situation. I have now been trained in savings, gardening and business skills. Life in my family has improved through the training I have received from ACAT. I buy cattle hides for R100 and make 3 shields



from them and sell them at R350. I therefore make a profit of R950 per hide. Things have changed in my household, with this good income. I sometimes share my produce with my needy neighbours, particularly those who are sick.”

Xolile Mbatha joined Sisonke G5 after attending an Asilimeni event in her area.

She said her situation was very bad as she was unemployed and had no food to feed her children. The house she lived in was falling apart and needed some repairs. She says:

“There was no hope until I decided to join the programme in order to improve my life. I grow vegetables, and now I am able to buy household



necessities. I motivate other people by telling them about my life which was in shambles, and how me and ACAT has changed my life both spiritually and economically. I have been able to renovate my house and buy household items”

In the neighbouring Tugela Ferry area, a mother says,

“I am always thankful to ACAT for motivating and training me to live a more productive life. As a result, my whole family is committed to gardening fresh vegetables. We need to eat fresh produce so that our children can be healthy. Lately my family has added livestock. Both my husband and I are unemployed.



But being trained by ACAT has helped us to sustain our family very well. Our family business involves selling the surplus from our garden and livestock when they are ready. My husband concentrates more on livestock, while my daughters and I work in the vegetable garden. We

*have learned to plant seasonally and to rotate our crops. Our family has grown spiritually and we attend church regularly. Lethiwe, 13, and her sisters are doing well at school, but Covid-19 has complicated their schooling. Lethiwe enjoys playing netball and likes music very much.” **Liz Williams***

Early Childhood Development

TREE (Training & Resources in Early Education)

After all the ups and (mostly) downs of the past two years experienced by our partners in South Africa, I was so happy to be invited to the graduation ceremony for our most recent group of Early Childhood Development (ECD) trainees. This had of course been delayed by the destruction of the TREE training centre in Durban last year. The great news is that repairs and refurbishments have now been completed in double-quick time thanks to the

support of multiple TREE donors including Helwel Trust; many thanks (again) to all who contributed to our appeal last year. Subsequent to that of course, there have been the recent devastating floods: the only-just-refurbished centre was inundated, with the toy shop, manufacturing workshop and the training centre underwater. Some practitioner files were drenched and all electricity was lost! We were however relieved to hear that our ECD practitioners in Nkandla and Nqutu were not affected.

Of course my attendance at the ceremony had to be by Zoom - but how wonderful to be able to do that; who would have thought of it two years ago? There was of course joyous Zulu dancing and singing followed by speeches and the presentations. With some

trepidation for me, my voice was transmitted over loudspeaker allowing me to represent Helwel and our donors in congratulating the students we had funded on their achievement – and what an achievement at the end of a three-year course extended by nine months, and accompanied by all the



privations, sickness and grief meted out by Covid. How wonderful to see them all smiling and dressed up for graduation. “This Qualification will enable recipients to facilitate the all-round development of young children in a manner that is sensitive to culture and individual needs (including special needs), and enable them to provide quality early childhood development services for children in a variety of contexts, including community-based services, ECD centres, at home and in institutions.”

For 440 children in Nkandla district attending ECD centres run by these Helwel supported trainees, this translates into a huge boost to their future education at the most crucial point of childhood development, with lifelong personal and societal benefits. These trainees will be further supported over the next 12 months in an enrichment programme called Sizanani, funded by Helwel. At the

same time, in Nqutu district, a new group of 15 have just started their training and we will be able to provide updates on their progress in due course.

We have been further heartened to hear news of the **Community Toy Library** in Nqutu district funded by Helwel Trust. We continue to support a stipend for the librarian, Nozithelo, who has proved herself as an amazing force for good in the community. The primary function of the library is of course to provide resources for learning through play. However, it is so much more than that. Nozithelo runs Friday workshops for parents and carers – so important in a community where deprivation and historic lack of education means that understanding of the most basic needs of children in terms of child development and early learning has been lost. It provides an after school venue for homework where children have nowhere for this at home. Nozithelo



has further developed a strong relationship with other local partners such as the Child and Youth Care Centre in Mphondi village. Nozithelo attends community meetings to help bring awareness about the importance of play in children lives as well as to help recruit new children. Recently the Ward Councillor has proposed an extension of the container to accommodate more children. In terms of professional development, she has attended a two day community toy library conference and is finalizing her Learnership programme with HWSETA.

At our most recent meeting of Trustees we agreed a further one year of funding for the Toy librarian stipend, hygiene packs and the very necessary monitoring and support by TREE. A further bid was made for repairs and replacement to infrastructure and play equipment including an outdoor swing which is of course in constant use. Thanks to a recent generous donation we have further been able to contribute another R15,000 (£750) towards that.

Rollo Clifford

Diocese of Zululand: news of social development projects

Following our initial contact with Bishop Vikiinduku last December, some of the Helwel trustees have held another meeting with the bishop and members of the Diocese's Social Development team. The team presented information about their project on church land near Nongoma, which enables the community to grow their own vegetables, and where they hope to enlarge the area of cultivation and develop the land's agricultural potential.



Small-scale production on diocesan land at Emahashini (Nongoma)

The Helwel trustees are welcoming the work going on to make the church-owned land productive. With our committed programmes at ACAT and TREE we do not currently have regular funds available to support the Diocese of Zululand, but are continuing to hold discussions with the team to understand how sustainable the project is, whether it builds up the capability of the participants in any way comparable to the ACAT programme, and give what advice and support we can to raise funds.

Since that meeting, the needs for humanitarian relief following the floods further south in KZN have prompted the bishop to lend whatever support he can from the Diocesan team as part of a wider church effort.

Helwel Hike 2022 – Saturday 3rd September

Gloucestershire Cotswolds

Helwel Hikes have a fine tradition of good company and some interesting and worthwhile encounters. We also use the Hike as an opportunity for raising money by sponsorship and special donations. This year we are raising money to go to our partner ACAT for its programmes to promote food production for sustaining households and to start small enterprises for generating income.

Join us on Saturday 3rd September for our annual Hike which this year takes place on **Minchinhampton and Rodbrough Commons**, near Stroud. In clear weather there are fine views down into the neighbouring valleys and across the Severn to the Forest of Dean. The commons are Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Our morning circular walk (approx 5 miles) will be mostly on the level, returning to a pub for lunch, and for those with more energy the optional afternoon circuit will take us down into the valley and up again. Longhorn cattle roam loose, so if you bring a dog (dog adventures are another tradition), please keep it under control when the cattle are nearby. I will be sending out the details of routes and joining instructions by email. We can pick you up and return you to Stroud railway station if you prefer to use public transport. We gather at 10.30 for an 11.00 start. Please email andrew.pemberton@btinternet.com or call 01453 872813 and I will send you the details. **Andrew Pemberton**



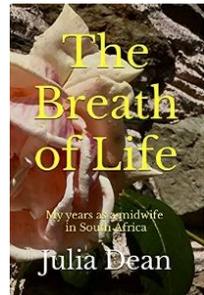
The view from Rodbrough Common looking across the Severn

Group visit to KZN in February 2023

A number of the trustees are planning to visit our partner organisations and rural areas in KZN in February 2023. We have done several such trips in the last decade and find them hugely useful in maintaining relationships and understanding what's happening "on the ground". If you are interested in joining the trip, please contact Andrew Pemberton (contact details elsewhere in this newsletter).

New book: *The Breath of Life*

One of our supporters, Julia Dean, worked at the Charles Johnson Memorial Hospital and has written a book: "The Breath of Life: My Years as a Midwife in S Africa". There will be some of you Friends of Helwel Trust who knew her! (It is available through online purchase at Amazon and you may find it elsewhere).



Make a donation to HELWEL TRUST

Online Donations: Our previous facility with Virgin Money Giving has come to an end, and we have chosen an alternative donation platform called **GoFundMe**, and created a target sum of £10,000 to raise through this channel.

To donate securely online, either for one-off gifts, or in response to fundraising events, please visit our website <http://www.helweltrust.co.uk/> where there is a link on the home page to our GoFundMe page. Alternatively, you can go to the Go Fund Me website and search for Helwel:

<https://www.gofundme.com/en-gb>

You can also use internet banking directly from your bank account to make one one-off donations or set up standing orders 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 overleaf.

We would prefer online donations rather than physical cheques; 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.

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.

ALSO:

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, North Woodchester, Stroud GL5 5PJ or call 01453 872813.

For any information about **Helwel Trust**, please look at our website **www.helweltrust.co.uk** or 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.



*On our last group visit (2019)
superior teamwork enabled the home team to trounce the visitors*