

HANDS ON DECK

ISSUE SEVENTY-ONE



“We fail our children by our lack of planning and our need to look busy...” – Busie Sityata-Jones

OCTOBER GATHERING THEMES

From the 6th–12th of October a group of Hands at Work volunteers from across Africa gathered in Zambia to plan, prepare and dream for 2020. It was an amazing week together in Zambia and the presence of the Lord was tangible. Throughout the week, people were challenged and inspired as to how we can more effectively care for the most vulnerable children.

Jackie Okinda, African Volunteer (Kenya), Regional Support Team

“Throughout the week, one thing we returned to several times was the story of rebuilding the broken walls of protection around our most vulnerable children, as we read in the book of Nehemiah. We wrestled with lessons that God has been teaching us over the years, like the Life Centre, the Nine Commitments and the Nine Non-negotiables, and saw how all these fit in the eight layers on

the ‘Nehemiah Wall’. It can be easy to think that the lessons above are different or separate from the ‘Wall’. For example, when we discussed what we learnt last year – the Nine Non-negotiables – we recognised that this is only one layer of the ‘Wall’, i.e. the 3ES, Food, Health and Security layer. Isaiah 58:12 says, ‘You will be called Repairers of Broken Walls...’ We were struck by the realisation that this calling is not only to rebuild walls in our communities but also walls within our own lives and within the teams we serve on.”

Busie Sityata-Jones, African Leader (South Africa), Regional Support Team

“We fail our children by our lack of planning and our need to look busy. Lynn Chotowetz (International Office Volunteer in Canada) introduced the concept of people operating out of three different boxes. The first is ‘urgent but not important’, meaning that we get distracted by many things and we allow other people’s priorities

to become urgent over what we are meant to be doing. The second is ‘urgent and important’, speaking to the idea that we are always putting out fires and on crisis mode. The third is ‘important but not urgent’, meaning that we should know what is important and prioritise. She shared that, as people, we should spend around 80% of our time operating out of the third box. We work with a higher excellence and provide the best care for our children when we plan and are organised. I was deeply challenged as I realised the third box is where Personal Daily Rhythms fit and, without them, I will always be driven by box one and two.”

Dan Waspe, International Volunteer (UK), Regional Support Team

“Another significant focus was on our youth, as we heard stories of the importance of making it personal and how we can do that in a way that best supports our youth. When people commit to walking with someone, we should do that in pairs and with the council of many. We don’t take on the responsibility alone because it’s a personal and ongoing commitment. But we love excuses. All of us has an excuse as to why we can’t. Yet what are our excuses not to be walking with a youth when Jesus calls us to disciple one another? Together we have a responsibility.”

+ CONTRIBUTORS

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GATHERING IN SOUTH AFRICA

While a group of Hands at Work volunteers from across Africa gathered in Zambia to plan, prepare and dream for 2020, a group of Hands at Work volunteers stayed at the Hub in South Africa. Throughout the week, they studied the scripture that was being looked at in Zambia and had a time of deep fellowship and hearing from God.

Charissa Cloete, African Volunteer (South Africa), Finance Team

"In the scripture from 2 Chronicles 7:14, God says, 'those called by my name'. The question was asked, what is keeping you being called a child of God? We spent a lot of time reflecting on the verse and digging deeper as a family and being vulnerable with one another. Throughout the week it felt like one body but in two places: South Africa and Zambia. There was an intimacy amongst the group at the Hub that was easier to achieve within the smaller group. We discussed the importance of relationships and having conversations one on one. We tried to focus on how we are one body and together in this work."

Ian Bone, International Volunteer (Canada), Regional Support Team

"An encouragement for me has been seeing Futhie, a member of the Eswatini Service Centre, who was very nervous before going to the October Gathering in Zambia, come home and be on fire for her work. She has a deep and genuine passion for making it personal and taking it to heart. She came back from Zambia and immediately put things into place. Futhie has been keeping me accountable and helping me to realise that when I procrastinate a child is affected. As a Service Centre team in Eswatini, we have received Futhie's passion and she has helped fill up our energy."



OCTOBER GATHERING HIGHLIGHTS

Jo Poulsom, International Volunteer (UK), Partnerships Team

"This was the first time I was going to be part of the October Gathering so I went with much expectation.

The first half of the Gathering was tough to be part of. It was clear that God is there fighting for our children in our communities across Africa, and that His spotlight was on us, and me, and how we had let our children down. That whatever our role in Hands, we are part of His plan to come alongside and help His vulnerable and hurting children, and we were being called to account for our actions or lack of them. As we looked at the 9 Non-Negotiables that were set a year ago, I could see my personal negligence in meeting those standards.

By Wednesday I was feeling "how much more can we confess". In my quiet time I read John 14:23: 'All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them and we will come and make our home with each of them.'

I was so grateful that my Father reminded me that He loves me, that it is in this secure, safe place of being loved that the spotlight was being shone, and that love was His motive for both His children in our communities and for me, His child. God broke down walls that I had built up and then showed me how I can be part of building those walls of protection around His children. I was so grateful to have been there."

Jon Mycio, International Volunteer (Canada), Finance Team

"Something that struck me throughout the week came from the primary

scripture from 2 Chronicles 7:14, which centres around humility, confession and seeking God. I said yes to this passage, and the focus on humility. I know, and I think agree, that humility is important, but I often don't know how to become more humble. My prayer to God was "Ok, I agree it's good to be humble, and if I don't humble myself then I'm damaging our relationship and preventing you from doing what you need to do in my life, but I don't know how to do it." If God says to be more loving or compassionate, I know where to start, but humility? How do I actually become more humble?

One thing I learnt is that pride is the enemy of humility, so that's a good place to start. God revealed my pride in my desire to be right. It comes at the expense of my relationships, when I want to defend myself and justify my actions over caring for the person across from me.

I've learned that humility is teachable, and I need to accept that I might not have the perfect answer all of the time. During the week, we had Service Centres come to the front, weeping and asking for forgiveness for one area in which they had failed. Seeing people embrace accountability and come forward was humbling. If I was to achieve 90% of what I set out to do at the beginning of a year, I'd want to be celebrated. It takes humility to ask forgiveness for the areas in which you fall short, and to acknowledge that it lets others down. I am grateful for the way that God spoke into my life during that week. I trust that God will continue to speak to me, and I pray that He continues to humble me."



OCTOBER GATHERING AUDIO LINKS

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” - 2 Chronicles 7:14

As a Hands at Work family, we invite you to listen to the audio recorded at the October Gathering in Zambia. Be inspired and feel connected to our family. **LISTEN NOW**

PRAYER REQUESTS

As each of the Service Centres continues to share with the rest of their teams what they learnt, pray that they will be able to share well and that they will implement everything that was discussed and planned within the communities that they are serving.

Pray for the Service Centres as they communicate everything that was discussed in Zambia with the Care Workers; that they will have wisdom and come with a humble spirit. Ask God to give the Care Workers receptive hearts to what the Service Centres are going to share.

Ask God to continue doing deep work in the heart of each Hands at Work volunteer and ask that He will continue to challenge and speak to us from 2 Chronicles 7:14.

As the end of 2019 is quickly approaching, pray that people will be filled with energy, and that in places where they feel weak, God will provide His strength and wisdom. Pray that, as Hands at Work, we will finish 2019 well.