

HANDS ON DECK



CONTRIBUTORS

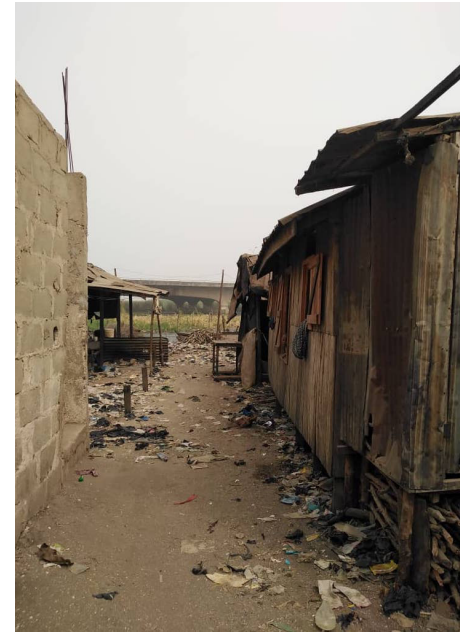
in this issue of Hands on Deck

Pragcidence Mwenda
 Sylvia Mwelwa
 Kay Chizu
 Pinky Nazombe
 Jeff Giesbrecht
 Brooke Wilson
 Gideon Mbuzi
 Tommy Malster

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

- Luke 15:1 - 7



“By the grace of God, many of the ladies gave their lives to Christ, and were able to share the things in their lives that they were going through.” – Pragcidence Mwenda

MARANATHA WORKSHOP IN NIGERIA

Pragcidence Mwenda, African Volunteer (Zambia), Regional Support Team

Recently Prag, together with Jackie Okinda, African Volunteer (Kenya), travelled to Nigeria for two weeks. It was Prag's first time in Nigeria. The purpose of their time in Nigeria was to share the watchword with the Lagos Service Centre (SC) and to support the Lagos SC in facilitating a Maranatha Workshop for the Care Workers from the communities located in the Ilaje area: Eagles Wings, Temitope and Amokoko.

“The Maranatha Workshop was extremely tough. It was challenging to get the Care Workers to come because they were busy selling things in the market. Each morning at 9am, when we went to the building where the Workshop was taking place, we would have to do Holy Home Visits to go and find the Care Workers and fetch them. Throughout the Workshop, we shared in a way that I have never shared before during a workshop because the Care Workers were only able to pay attention for 20

minutes before they started dozing. At one point I was feeling extremely discouraged and I felt like we should leave and go to Apatuku, another one of our communities about four hours away. It was in that moment that God opened my eyes to what He was doing. On Thursday, the Holy Spirit showed up as I shared my personal story. As I started sharing, the ladies began crying, and the brokenness that they carry became apparent. By the grace of God, many of the ladies gave their lives to Christ, and were able to share the things in their lives that they were going through.

On Monday, a pregnant 18-year-old girl came to the Workshop. However, the following day she didn't come. When I asked why, I was told that the night prior she had received a message from her pastor saying that she wasn't allowed to leave her church building until she gave birth or something bad would happen. Recognising her vulnerability, I, along with another Care Worker and a member of the Lagos SC, did a Holy Home Visit to the church where she was staying, and saw that she was dehydrated and hadn't eaten since the morning. My heart broke

for her. We brought her food and tried to encourage and share with her that God knows and loves both her and the baby. We desperately wanted her to understand that nothing would happen to the baby but as she has grown up in that culture, and even though she is young, if the pastor tells her that something will happen if she leaves, then she will listen. Coming away from my time in Nigeria, I arranged with Jackie, who remained in Nigeria for an additional few weeks, and the Care Workers to continue taking food to this young girl. We need to pray for something beautiful to be birthed out of this brokenness.”

These are the types of churches that our Care Workers attend. It is challenging because although they accept the 'Jesus that We Know', which is amazing, they return to churches that are leading people astray. Please pray for churches which know the 'Jesus that We Know' to speak truth to be planted in Ilaje and for the Care Workers to have the courage and strength to go against the cultural norm and start attending these churches.

AFRICAN LEADERS' TRAINING

Sylvia Mwelwa, African Volunteer (Zambia), Luanshya Service Centre
Kay Chizu, African Volunteer (Zambia), Zambia Hospitality Team
Pinky Ngutshane, African Volunteer (South Africa), Hazyview Service Centre



A group of Hands at Work's African leaders spent a week together in Kabwe, Zambia, in February. Together with George Snyman, they looked carefully at what scripture says about humble, servant leadership and discussed the way Jesus taught and lived out this specific leadership style – and how we are challenged to do the same.

Sylvia shares, "At the beginning of the week, Kay spoke of Leviticus 6:13, which says 'the fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out'. This was challenging for me, as I realised that the reason the light doesn't keep burning is because we aren't using the right firewood. Knowing the right firewood is reading the Word of God. How many times daily do I read the Word of God? It should be something that I'm reading each and every day.

We talked a lot about leadership and how it is a privilege and a calling that comes from God. It's not a right. Being a true leader is to be humble. I realised that it's not about what we do, but about how we do it. When we think about poverty, often we think

about it in the physical sense – not having enough food, water or shelter. But poverty is so much more than that. We need to think about how we can also be poor in the mind and in our spiritual lives."

Kay says, "I went into the week with the mentality that I was going to be fed. I went with my hands empty. It turned out that I was leading the first devotion, which was way out of my comfort zone, but God gave me a word. It was both an encouraging and challenging week. There were times when we would start singing a song, and George would come in and ask why we were singing that particular song. What did the words mean to us? Why were we singing those words? Coming away from the week, there is a fire in my bones that I never knew would be ignited, but that I pray continues to burn."

Pinky shares, "On Monday we talked about the 'call to lead'. It can be easy to think that we shouldn't be here and that there are others who are more qualified. But it's not about this, it's about following our calling because God has called us. As a group, we had time in community playing and interacting with the children. I don't speak the local language, yet I was trying to communicate. I ended up frustrated because I couldn't understand them but, thankfully, we ended up being able to communicate through sign language. The whole situation gave me a deeper appreciation for our teams when they don't understand the language.

We also had the opportunity to go Pastor Sanday's church in Susu Community, where we encountered a huge storm that came out of nowhere. During that time, George suggested that we spend time worshipping, which we did. Suddenly the storm stopped. In that moment, God taught and showed each one of us that He will calm the storm and that He is with us."

VULNERABILITY IN ESWATINI

Brooke Wilson, International Volunteer (Australia)
Jeff Giesbrecht, International Volunteer (Canada)

Recently, the new intake of Hands at Work family members had the privilege of spending a few days in the communities in Eswatini, serving alongside the Eswatini Service Centre (SC).

Brooke shares, "We had the opportunity to go to Bhandeni and do Holy Home Visits, alongside Nomfuthi, who is a member of the Eswatini SC. On one Holy Home Visit I was able to visit a nine-year-old girl who has no identification documents. Her mum isn't actively involved in her life and, needing money, she sold her daughter's documents. This means that her father is unable to put her into school. It was difficult to see a mother place more value on money than on her own child. We are the hands and feet to do His work. It was encouraging to be reminded that God values this girl and her life."

Jeff says, "We had an amazing time in Eswatini and I was touched by the communities of Bhandeni and Shoka that we visited. I was encouraged to see the Care Workers making food and the children playing. It was difficult to see the journey that the children make daily to the Care Point and to realise how vulnerable they are. In Canada, I often try to think about my children being in the place of the children we care for in community, living in these situations, because I don't want to lose what God showed me and I want to make it personal. Seeing the situations of the children and how hard it is broke my heart, but it doesn't just break my heart, it breaks God's heart."

MAIZE DISTRIBUTION IN BARAKA

For the past three consecutive years, the Kabwe region in Zambia has faced drought, which has had serious implications on individuals' abilities to plant their fields and yield a harvest. Recognising the desperation of people living in our communities, particularly in Balaka, the Zambian Regional Support Team knew that they needed to respond.

Gideon Mbuzi, African Volunteer (Zambia), Regional Support Team

"The primary purpose of our community stay in Balaka was to spend time with David, the coordinator of the Balaka Community Based Organisation, because we wanted to see and observe the way that he does things. When we arrived at his home, I saw that it was busy; there



was a constant stream of people coming in and out. In the evening, we had a good time of conversation and I asked why there were a lot of people coming in and out of his home. He shared how, because of the drought that has impacted the region for the previous three years, people were coming to his home for food. He has multiple pieces of different fields that he has been cultivating, and one of his fields is located in an area where they have received rain, and so he has received a sufficient harvest. He is sharing this harvest with people in desperate need. In that moment I didn't know what to do, so I contacted Levy, to see if we could come up with a solution. I was struck because before I did that community stay, I didn't know what David or the other Care Workers were going through. It opened my eyes."

Tommy Malster, International Volunteer (UK), Finance Team

"In response to the drought in the Balaka region and the realisation that many people were going without food, we identified a list of Care Workers and Primary Caregivers in need of extra support and committed to supporting each family with one 25kg bag of maize per month for the following three months. In the last week of February, my wife, Morgan, and I, along with our son, Finn, travelled to Kabwe, to support the Service Centre in distributing the maize. Going into the week, there was something in me that was nervous, yet it was in my discomfort and nerves that I felt God saying, 'don't worry, I've got this'. As we distributed the maize, we heard story after story of Care Workers and Primary Caregivers who had literally nothing to eat and were resorting to eating the roots of pumpkin leaves to survive. As people received the maize, we had to remind people that it wasn't because of us that they were receiving the maize, but it was through God alone.

It was encouraging to hear one of the teachers from the community school say, 'I want to thank you, but I also want to encourage you as Primary Caregivers. Your children were going out and trying to find food but now you have maize, so your children can come to school'. It was amazing to see God moving amongst us."

PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Praise God for the women in Nigeria who gave their lives to Christ during the Maranatha Workshop in February. Pray that they will continue to grow in their understanding of God's love and desire for their lives.

Praise God for the way that He moved and spoke to each person attending the African Leaders' Training in Zambia.

Pray that, as a Hands at Work family, we will be bold in seeking out the lost one and fighting on behalf of the most vulnerable. Pray that we will make the stories of the children personal, and commit to interceding on their behalf.

THE LAST MONTH THROUGH PHOTOS

