

HANDS ON DECK



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness, and broke away their chains. Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.”

- Psalm 107:12-16



“It united us and exposed our cultural influences. It also helped us to realise the heart on which our ministry is built.” – Busie Sityatha-Jones

IMPACT THE BIBLE SCHOOLS ARE HAVING

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

In January, Busie came to Kachele to support the work that is happening in Zambia. It was a great opportunity to have Busie with the Hands at Work family at Kachele. While she was in Zambia, she was able to share some testimonies of things happening in South Africa.

“Recently we had a Bible school for our Eswatini, Hazyview and Oshoek Service Centres that was facilitated by George Snyman. Even though I was not there, I heard from some of the participants; they didn’t speak about what they learned, but about what happened in their hearts. We definitely feel a change in the atmosphere within the Service Centre. The passion in their hearts, the tenderness amongst one another and compassion towards the people we are called to serve is beautiful to see.

After that, we had a Bible school at

the Hub, which was like a spiritual revival. As people, we know how to be busy, and often find our identity in what we do, justifying why we don’t have time for anything else. It was a huge gift to sit under God’s word for three days. I knew we needed it but didn’t know how people were going to respond, and if it was going to be seen as an inconvenience. But at the end of our time together, everyone was saying, “I’m glad I didn’t miss this, what a privilege it’s been”. It united us and exposed our cultural influences. It also helped us to realise the heart on which our ministry is built.

The topic of discipleship was huge and it challenged me a lot – recognising the three stages that we engage with as we walk with one another:

- 1 - those who are learning to stand – the need to have grace as we understand that we too were once learning to stand.

- 2 - those who are learning to walk and are figuring it out, asking questions like how does this

Kingdom work? How is it different from the Kingdom I’ve been part of? It’s easy to give up on others at this stage, but remembering that people didn’t give up on us is important. How patient am I?

- 3 - those who are learning to engage in the battle. That’s maturity that we all want, but we don’t jump other stages to get here. We have to be disciplined and faithful.

The question is:

Who am I walking with?
Do I know what stage they are on?
Are they mature enough to engage in the battle?

We live in interesting times and we need to know the Word, otherwise we are at risk of compromising our calling and being irrelevant. I’m so grateful for what our Father is busy doing.”

POWER OF SHARING STORIES

Shana Brunt, International Volunteer (Australia), Regional Support Team



As Hands at Work, our dream is to raise up a generation who love Jesus, are committed to their families, belong to a local church, are generous to the poor, and who are positive role models in their communities. This is done through activities like youth discipleship programmes, youth leader exchange visits, youth camps and community-based youth groups. Recently, there was a youth camp in Chisamba, Zambia, for the youth from Chisamba and Miswa communities. There were over 20 youth who participated along with several of their Care Workers.

Shana says, "The first session that we did was focused on our identity in Christ. From that session, almost all of our youth stood up and said yes to Jesus for the first time. That was a really

powerful foundation for the camp. The second day was focused on talking about what it means to make the right choices. After that we heard Xolani (African leader, South Africa) share his personal story with the youth. It was really powerful for the youth as many could identify with his pain, but could also see the redemption that had taken place in his life. After that session, we separated into small groups, which gave the youth an opportunity to open up and share their own stories. The following day, we spoke about peer pressure, through acting out a skit. We had a great response from the youth and it started a deep discussion about how they can face peer pressure as young people.

From the camp, there were many amazing testimonies. One of the boys shared that, before the camp, he had been involved in drinking and smoking but coming from the camp, he decided to turn his life around and give it to God."

A HEART OF HUMILITY AND DISCIPLESHIP

George Snyman, co-founder of Hands at Work

Prudence Mthabini, African Leader (South Africa), Hazyview Service Centre

Sisanda Sityatha, African Leader (South Africa), Regional Support Team

Continually investing into our upcoming African leaders is a key priority for Hands at Work, because we understand that they are the next generation. Regular leadership training is an opportunity to go deeper into understanding what it means to serve the most vulnerable, and to study scripture about how God is calling us to live lives of humility and self-sacrifice. Recently there was leadership training in South Africa that was facilitated by George Snyman and other Hands at Work leaders.

George shares, "The thing I love about our model is that our training is different every time. We are led by the Lord on how to present the specifics of our model or core values. We have a group of unbelievable African leaders coming through, and through the training scenario leaders are shaping their lives and skills. We want to be laser focused in going deeper during our training times. I really believe a hallmark of a follower of Jesus is that they are always looking for more, deeper, stronger. During these times we sit around the fire and listen to each other, and this brings a richness to every one of us. We all want to know Jesus, the Holy Spirit and the Father more!"

Prudence says, "I thank God for His mercy on me that I could be part of this Leaders' training. What stood out for me was the idea of a church of silence and a church that is a voice. What church am I a part of? There are those silent churches in the communities but I want to be a part of the church that is a voice. I have to stand for my community. It's not just that I do it for the community, but I do it for God! I take ownership and follow up with issues I see. Are there people who receive that news from us who remain silent, or does that voice continue? The world is broken and families don't know Jesus. We can go and let them know who He is and why we praise Him. I can share this with the children at the Care Points and on Holy Home Visits. Some of these families have drama and the children would not choose to stay there if there was an option but they can know that they are cared for by a loving Father."

Sisanda shares, "George had heard about how African slaves were trafficked through Senegal. Many lived in dungeons for months. The shock was that above ground on that site there was a church where people worshipped. It made me think of us going to communities; we are working close to the dungeons. Your posture when you go into those places is important. We don't go looking like heroes. We go humbly and we are a voice to that church above the dungeons. We call them to be aware and to serve those in the dungeons. May all of us find ourselves at the door of the dungeon and hear the cries of those who are in need. We are thankful for the leaders who helped us grasp this heart of humility and discipleship."



ALREADY A LEADER

Barbara Singoyi, African Leader (Zambia), Regional Support Team

Recently Barbara had the opportunity to spend two weeks in the Democratic Republic of Congo, supporting the Likasi Service Centre.

“One day we went to Toyota B community, and were preparing to do Holy Home Visits with one of the Care Workers. Still at the Care Point, she shared the story of a six-month-old boy whose mother had died a week prior to our visit, leaving behind her baby and seven other children. The family of the mother refused to take care of the children, and so her younger sister took responsibility of her nephew. As we were walking, clouds started to form. Wanting to escape the rain, we ducked into a nearby house. That house turned out to be the Care Workers’s, and was leaking and in shambles. She is caring for her grandchildren who sleep on torn mosquito nets. We asked why she didn’t show us her house as part of the Holy Home Visits, and she said that there were other people to visit. That spoke to my heart. She didn’t care about herself but was willing to care for others. During our impromptu visit, we had time to pray for and encourage her in her own home.

After it stopped raining, we walked to the house that we were initially going to visit. Immediately I held the child and soon we were laughing together. While I was entertaining the baby, Angel (African Leader, DRC) was connecting with his auntie and discussing how they can care for this baby well.

Another highlight was spending time in Toyota A community. When we arrived there the children had started coming. Suddenly, a teenage girl stood up and started to boldly lead the other children in praise and worship. She was singing and clapping, leading them in one song after the next. Then they started praying. This is what we are supposed to do – to invest into the younger generation. She is already a leader.”

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- Barbara Singoyi



CATCHING THEM EARLY

Alicia Ralph, International Volunteer (Canada), Regional Support Team
Melody Masuku, African Volunteer (South Africa)

Recognising that a significant amount of a child's development happens between the ages of zero to five, Hands at Work is developing facilities and programmes for children under the age of five at Care Points. This includes a simple, repetitive and tailored programme incorporating breakfast, play, rest time, and learning basic skills – all while their older siblings are in school.

Alicia shares, "We have a heart to care for under-fives. The vision is simple: we want to provide these little children with the basics of safety, love, play, food and sleep, and we want to see this played out alongside our existing care for children at our Care Points. The dream is to see it become a natural part of what we do, like it has since we started caring for our children with the three essential services. The dream is to see the most vulnerable (who, more often than not, are under the age of five) have a safe, loving place to come to where they can have breakfast and lunch and play with their friends. Over the past six months we have seen transformation in the lives of these children because of this programme. Testimonies are coming from our Community Based Organisations

(CBOs) across Africa. We are hearing stories of malnourished two year olds who are gaining weight and walking for the first time. Grandmothers who are praising because they are free to work their gardens without the burden of a small baby on their back. Smiles and laughter rising from the Care Points as children sing and dance with the Care Workers.

We have really seen God moving and we stand in anticipation of what this is going to do as it spreads wider and further, eventually becoming the 'norm' in every single one of our CBOs."

Melody says, "In Sommerset community, South Africa, we have 11 children under the age of five. The first day was a bit stressful because we saw that no one came. It was a slow start. But the following day, the Care Workers were very excited to see that children did come. We welcomed them, shared Bible stories, and fed them. We even have a song that we do for toilet time for the little ones. After eating they might fall asleep, so we make sure that they go to the toilet. It really helps them to feel better about themselves if they can sleep dry."

PRAISE AND PRAYER

Praise God for the baptisms that have happened and for the way that people have publicly declared to live their lives for Jesus.

Thank God for each of the teams who have come to Africa and who will be coming in the next few months. Pray that they will see the heart of our Father at work in the lives of the most vulnerable.

Pray for our upcoming African leaders, that they will continue to grow in their understanding of God's heart for justice, and what it means to serve the most vulnerable.

Pray for the growth of our community gardens that have been planted across Africa. Pray that the Care Workers and Primary Caregivers will be united in maintaining the gardens. Pray that these gardens will stand as a testimony of God's goodness and faithfulness.

WEDDING CELEBRATIONS

April 30th was a day of celebration for the Hands at Work family across Africa as Sisanda and Brooke Sityatha committed to spending the rest of their lives together in marriage. Congratulations to the happy couple!

