

HANDS ON DECK



CONTRIBUTORS

in this issue of Hands on Deck

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“For this is what the high and exalted One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: “I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.” - Isaiah 57:15



“Something we did was play a game about carrying one another’s burdens. Quickly they saw that their disunity caused them to not carry others’ burdens.” – Melody Masuku

SERVING TWO KINGDOMS

At the beginning of the year, Hands at Work started working in the community of T Kloof in South Africa. Recently there was a Maranatha Workshop for the Care Workers, facilitated by the Regional Support Team and the local Hands at Work team in Oshoek. The purpose of the workshop is to share the heart of Hands at Work and who Jesus is and can be in their lives.

Audrey Sibya, African Volunteer (South Africa), Regional Support Team

“We always ask for Jesus to come – it is the meaning of Maranatha. This week was very tough and we recognised there was a stronghold that resisted us being there.

During the week, we talked about the two kingdoms, and part of that was mentioning that we can’t serve God and worship our ancestors. Those in attendance reacted very strongly and were upset that we said this. They said, “You can’t come here and tell us these things!” We showed them in scripture where we see that we cannot worship in that way, but they didn’t see it. When they did see it for themselves they agreed, but they were slow to join in faith. The next day they said, “We can’t leave

these things.” The church in T Kloof is so traumatised.

One thing that struck us was that it was the pastor who resisted most, and many of the Care Workers were going to that church. They said that in many churches they do as they are taught and have these traditional beliefs. The pastor said that women can’t change their beliefs or the husband will send her back to her family, but that they would not be welcomed back by their family. The person who accepts Jesus must have permission from the husband to believe that way. There are many familiar and social pressures that are real life for these women. It was heavy and deep. We pray that the husbands also accept Jesus. One Care Worker mentioned how she was really happy that we were mentioning these things that they are unable to talk about in their churches.

Melody Masuku, African Volunteer (South Africa), Hazyview Service Centre

On the second day the Care Workers were crying on their way to the Maranatha Workshop, as they talked about the issue from the previous day. We started to praise God because we could see that He was with us. The Care Workers saw that they had broken relationships among themselves and we were not even sure if they would continue to serve the children. Something we did

was play a game about carrying one another’s burdens. Quickly they saw that their disunity caused them to not carry others’ burdens. The meetings were tense and highly emotional. They had a lot to express and were able to share, but they shared with some anger. One of the pastors has two wives, which was hard for us. We stayed with the first wife and that night, when we were very tired, she started a relationship group! She said that they hadn’t been doing relationship group amongst the Care Workers, because it always broke down, and we ended up talking about witchcraft and gossip. We encouraged them to continue with relationship groups and we, as the Service Centre, would help them. If the adults have such trauma, imagine the children’s.”

Please stand with us in prayer for the Care Workers in T Kloof. Pray that God will break through the lies and belief in ancestral worship, and that people will come to know and understand that God is the one true God. Ask God to do deep work in the life of each person living in T Kloof.

AN OPEN DOOR

Xolani Makwakwa, African Leader (South Africa), Zambia Regional Support Team Leader

In April/May Xolani travelled to Nigeria where he spent four weeks supporting both the Lagos and Ibadan Service Centres as they care for the most vulnerable children.

“I’ve been wanting to go to Nigeria for many years but because of my severe fish allergy and the city of Ilaje being a fishing community, I was unable to go. Over the last couple of years, we started intentionally praying and trusting in God that He can answer our prayers and make a way for me to go. And God answered in a mighty way. I still went to Nigeria with my EpiPens and medications for the allergies, but I was totally fine. I touched the fish and smelled it, but God kept me and He healed me from my allergy. It was such a huge testimony and answer to prayer. I could finally be there on the ground to support a team that I have been supporting from afar for years. I’ve met the team in Zambia and in South Africa, but I’ve never been on the ground. I was so thankful that God opened the door for me to go.

During my first week, I got to participate in a youth camp, which we have talked about doing for so long. It was a huge privilege! I connected with a young 18-year-old by the name of Reuben* from Amokoko Community, which is located within the wider community of Ilaje. He lives in a small place with 30 other people and is the main provider for his family. He goes out onto the water to try and catch some fish, some of which they’ll use to eat and the others, they’ll sell. But he knows Jesus. He knows his Bible well, and he desires to make something out of his life.

Ilaje is a hard place to live. There is water everywhere as it is located on the ocean. The community smells because there are no toilets and sewage is everywhere. There are broken families, men taking more than one wife, people walking naked, kids running around everything, prostitution. Yet there is something beautiful that God is doing in the brokenness. God is doing something in Reuben’s life. Reuben has seen brokenness after brokenness and he’s experienced it for himself, but his prayer is that he’s going to be different. He wants to make a difference even in his family. I was very impacted and deeply convicted by that and want to continue walking with him – even from a distance.

I was also given the opportunity to spend time with the Ibadan Service Centre, which cares for three communities: Alugbo, Apatuku and Onilemo. Particularly in Alugbo and Onilemo, there is a huge Muslim stronghold and Christians are being persecuted. The persecution sometimes comes in the form of intimidation or the fear that you can’t speak about God or proclaim the name of Jesus. It goes so deep. Onilemo is a hard place but there is a lady named Mama Bola who intentionally moved there to start a church (which has eight members). She even started a makeshift school that is falling apart, but this is a ministry that she uses to reach out to people. We are partnering in this community. I visited the chief, who I shared the gospel with, but he looked at me and said, “I wish I can say Jesus, I accept you, but my family will suffer”. I looked around and thought, “What would he be missing?”, because his house, everything, even as the chief, is vulnerable, but it’s the little that he can get that makes him say that he can’t accept Jesus. We pray that he will accept Jesus one day!

As we continued to walk in the community, we spoke life and we could see that God was moving. Our Care Workers are starting to see the light. They know who Jesus is, even though they haven’t taken that step, but we trust that God will do something new.”



Xolani and Reuben in Amokoko Community



Mama Bola's school in Onilemo Community

SACRIFICIAL GIVING

Jo Poulsom, International Volunteer (UK), Zambia
Regional Support Team

In May, Jo travelled to the DRC alongside Jeff Giesbrecht (International Volunteer, Canada) and Jackie Okinda (African Volunteer, Kenya) to support the Likasi Service Centre as they hosted a team from Canada.

"It was a huge privilege to be with the team from Canada in the communities that they have supported over many years. It was such a joy to see these faithful men and women investing in relationships with both Care Workers and children. They had such a generous approach, giving of themselves physically, spiritually and emotionally. They were open and prayerful in sitting with those they met on Holy Home Visits; they allowed the pain and brokenness to impact them and gave of their themselves not only to those in community but also in encouraging the Service Centre and each one of us.

Their main focus was in the communities they support in Kitabataba and Toyota B. Since church mobilisation in Kitabataba it has been so encouraging to see the pastors coming alongside the Care Workers and serving with them. When the team wanted to go to church it was natural to go to these pastors' churches in the community, which was such a blessing not only to the team and us but also to the pastors, who felt lifted up to have visitors.

One of the activities that we did was painting a tree with the children's handprints as the leaves in Kitabataba Community. Just looking at it, it's just a tree of handprints, but it says SO much more – it shows the children that this is a place where they belong, this is their safe place, and together they have made something so beautiful.

One of my roles is supporting the Likasi Service Centre so it was a huge blessing to be able to get to know the amazing Service Centre team who work long hours in communities both in Likasi and much further away. I loved meeting the Care Workers from the nine communities they support and understand a little more the challenges which they face each and every day.





ZIMBABWE GO TEAM

The foundation of Hands at Work's 'go teams' comes from Matthew 28:16-20, where Jesus is ascending to heaven and leaving His disciples with the commandment to go and make disciples in all the nations. Sending these teams is one expression of how we 'go'. These teams are multidisciplinary and comprise volunteers with different roles and responsibilities who come together with one purpose of serving. At the end of April into May, a 'go team' was sent to Zimbabwe to serve and support the team there.

Audres Baloyi, African Volunteer (South Africa), Hazyview Service Centre

"My time in Zimbabwe was focused on walking with the Mutare and Honde Valley Service Centres. I learned so much from walking with them that I can bring back to the Hazyview Service Centre. We visited a family in Sakubva community where the grandfather was very ill. They had nothing, and there was no food in the house. After the visit we debriefed with the Care Workers, but they didn't wait for the next day. They went with clothes, blankets and beans to the house right away. They didn't wait. In the Honde Valley, I saw men from the Service Centre dancing with the children, which was a huge blessing."

Catherine Clarkson, International Volunteer (UK), Support Team

"On one home visit in the slum community of Chinyausunzi, we met a young lady named Margret*. She's a single mother living in a tiny wooden shack. A small bed is all that fills her entire house. Margret has three children, aged 10, 7 and 2, who come to the daily Care Point in their community. On the day we met Margret, we discovered she had not eaten for four days. Hearing more of her story, we heard how, on a good day selling fruit in the market, Margret makes two dollars and then faithfully puts away a dollar for rent. But on the day we met her, Margret shared how her entire month's savings had been stolen by a family member breaking into her home. She was in a desperate situation. Although her story is not happily resolved yet, we knew God had directed us to her home on that day, and through her story we were reminded that it's to these people that we are called."

Pinky Ngutshane, African Volunteer (South Africa), South African Regional Support Team

"As part of our time in Zimbabwe, I was doing financial checks. These financial health checks are about regularly making sure that our finances are being done well. It's like an internal audit. Are the processes and procedures being followed? It was a good week because we had our daily priority and we had time to meet suppliers and Care Workers, right down to the child getting a blanket. Each receipt tells a story and, although some of us sit with books, receipts and filing, it's very important, and there is a child behind each one."

Pray for Margret, that God will make a way for her and her family. Ask God to give the Service Centres wisdom and a sensitivity to the Holy Spirit as they address the situations that they're seeing in the communities.

PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

Praise God for healing Xolani's fish allergy and allowing him to spend time in Nigeria.

Thank God for the team from Canada and the impact that they had in the communities they visited. Pray that now they have returned home they will continue to advocate and share the stories that they heard. Pray that people will be willing to listen.

Pray for each team still to come to Africa this year. Pray that they will have willing hearts to invest and be invested into. Pray that they will have the eyes to see and the ears to hear all that God has for them.

Pray for Reuben from Amokoko, that he will continue to seek God. Pray that God will use him to make a difference in his community.

Pray that as a global Hands at Work family, we will continue to remain reliant on God and His Holy Spirit to guide us and direct our steps. Pray that we will be sensitive to His leading.