

- **Carry on fishing!**

**As the very name of Udobo School tells us we need to fish to grow.**

[‘Udobo’ means ‘fishing rod’]

So Action Udobo grows by personal contact through its committed donors. Please tell your family and friends about its work and commend it to them as a charity deserving of their support

**Remember 97% of the income received goes directly to Udobo School.**

Leaflets on the work of the charity, standing order forms and gift-aid forms are always available from our Treasurer.

Simply make a request via our e-mail address, or by post, remembering to include your name, address and contact details, and resources will be posted out to you.

Your support is of immense value to these vulnerable children and their hardworking families. Without you we could not maintain our funding to the school.

So on behalf of the Trustees, the Principal, staff, governors, helpers and most importantly the children of Udobo School we thank you once again for being part of:



UK Registered Charity No. 1138863

**To advance the education of disadvantaged children of pre-state school age attending the Udobo School, Montclair, Durban, South Africa.**

Website: [www.actionudobo.org.uk](http://www.actionudobo.org.uk)

Email: [actionudobo@gmail.com](mailto:actionudobo@gmail.com)

or write to:

The Treasurer, Action Udobo  
19 Le Jardin, Station Road  
Letchworth Garden City  
Hertfordshire SG6 3BA



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Udobo School Principal Anne Snyders distributes certificates to Grade R graduates

Newsletter No. 35

March 2021

- **Annual General Meeting 2021 receives positive reports**

The Annual General meeting of the Trustees of Action Udobo took place (via Zoom) on 16 March in a much more hopeful spirit than was the case a year ago, when the charity seemed in danger of being unable to meet its commitments to Udobo School. Thanks to the successful appeal of May 2020, new donors have been recruited and existing donors have increased their giving, raising our income by 38%. This is a remarkable tribute to your ongoing commitment and generosity, especially during these very difficult times, so the Trustees send their sincerest thanks everyone who contributed to this outcome. As a result, the Trustees were delighted to confirm a steady level of financial support to the School, at the existing level, until at least March 2022. As the school emerges from lockdown new challenges of maintenance and improvement are arising, so Action Udobo must look to further fundraising if we are to help with targeted grants towards future projects. We shall come to you with more information about a structured programme of capital projects in the coming months.

- **Changes of the Charity's Officers and Trustees**

After his very successful year as Acting Chair Peter Lang has stepped down as a Trustee. His long and generous service to the charity has been highly valued. The Trustees are pleased to welcome a new Trustee, John Bowman (right) whose background is in education and consultancy and who is already bringing new thinking and an enlarged vision for the future of Action Udobo. John Sharman, for many years our Treasurer, has agreed to become Acting Chair for the forthcoming year. Caroline Howard will continue to combine the roles of Treasurer and Secretary and our other trustees, Revd. John Allan, David Latter and Patrick and Susan Hughes continue to serve. Our thanks go to them all for their commitment and service to Action Udobo over the years.



- **New Donors and Trustees are always welcome!**

As it faces the challenges of the future, the charity would welcome new Trustees who could bring renewed energy and vision to its work. An interested mind, and a giving heart is all that is required - could this be you? If this might be, then please do not hesitate to contact us through our email address: [actionudobo@gmail.com](mailto:actionudobo@gmail.com) to make initial enquiries. We hope to hear from you.

- **Donate to Action Udobo via Amazon Smile**

If you buy online from Amazon, use Amazon Smile and nominate Action Udobo as your chosen charity, Action Udobo will receive a small donation from Amazon – 'every little helps'.

- **Give as 'You Earn'**

Most of our donors already use Gift Aid to boost their giving, and Gift Aid reclaim from HMRC provides a significant part of the charity's income. **If you are employed** you may be able to manage your giving by using **Give as You Earn** [GAYE] through which a regular deduction is made from your salary **before tax**, making it tax-effective for you, especially if you pay tax at a higher rate. A £20 donation would cost you only £16, but the charity receives £20. You need to check that your employer operates the scheme, and nominate Action Udobo as your chosen charity, after which the process is handled by your employer. For further details contact the Treasurer.

This Christmas time when many are apart from family and friends, reminds me of a couple travelling away from their family and friends as they obeyed the call to register in Bethlehem. They were far from family and friends when their baby arrived in a borrowed room far from home. They had unexpected visitors who spoke of angel chorus who came to worship the baby. Somehow this Christmas is a time of real connection to that first time – we may not have experienced all that they did, but the nativity seemed very close, just a breath away. I know that this year God can speak to us in our homes as we cannot attend church, and in a quieter time open our eyes more fully to the Gift that is Jesus,

However, through all of this, through it all and miraculously, the staff has been fully paid during the whole of 2020 – I give God all the glory. He remains faithful and gracious to His school and those who work in it. I ask that you continue to pray for God's favour and that in the new year we could redouble our efforts to bring these little ones to a deeper understanding of how much God loves them. Please pray for my Governing Body -they have worked hard this year. Prayers for the KZN market who provide us with fruit and vegetables. The Friends of Udobo who help to keep our doors open – thank you – we appreciate what you do for us. To all those who have given and helped and prayed for and loved us – thank you!

As always, I am humbled by God's grace, joyful at His presence and incredibly grateful – God is so good,  
May God richly bless each of you,

Anne Snyders

Principal



Mawande, who assists Toinette in our youngest class, safely delivered her little boy, Bandile. The whole staff is delighted at the arrival of 'our' baby. What a joyous event.

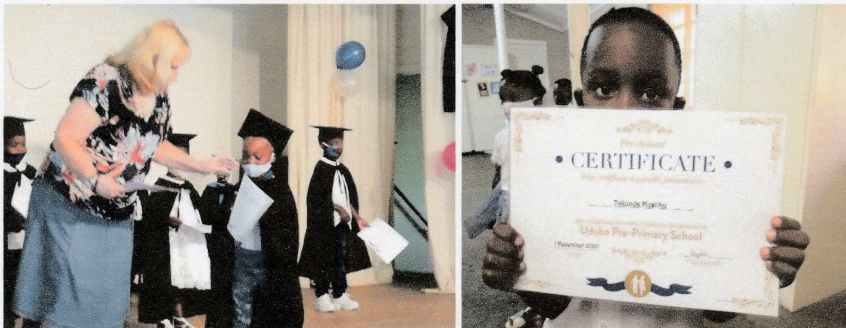


We always have bright spots though. A woman from the Montclair Methodist Church managed to access three grocery vouchers from our local Pick and Pay and three of the most needy families received R1000.00 x 3 vouchers for October, November and December!

We did not plan to have a Graduation Ceremony for our Grade R children, but this is something our families dream of from the time their children begin at the school. So, this year we had three graduations, one per class. Once again, we sanitized the church hall and complied with all regulations, only two people per child were allowed to attend the function. I begged parents not to buy special clothes and once again the children arrived looking like angels in their white dresses and boys in white shirts. I take comfort that they will wear the clothes at Christmas and family events! We had a low-key hour, the children said a poem, we watched a video presentation about the school before the children received their certificate, photograph, school report and a lovely package that we were able to put together for each child. We could not gather to share tea and snacks, but the parents went away happy.



As you can imagine we missed out on months of fees as well as children returning where I had to adjust low fees even lower because of jobs lost or short time payments.



The Udobo Pre Primary School is funded through parents' contributions, fundraising and donations from charitable organisations.  
Telephone & Fax +27 (031) 469 0029 E-mail: anneudobo@gmail.com Website: udoboschool.com Fund-raising No. 031-161-NPO

### • News from Udobo School – the challenges of the Pandemic

After being closed by the South African Government lockdown from March to August 2020 and then again from December, over Christmas and the New Year, the school was eventually allowed to open in February 2021, with Covid-19 restrictions in place. There are 91 children currently enrolled - before Covid the school's intake had reached 120 a year. The children aged between 4 and 7 years attend on alternate days, with a maximum of 12 in a class. The very youngest, 3-year olds, who would be confused by attending every other day, come every day with a maximum of 10 in a class – this restricts the number of older children who can attend. Everyone – children, staff and help, helpers have to wear masks and practise social distancing, no easy task with young children.

Anne Snyders, the Principal, recently expressed her thanks for the support given by Action Udobo:

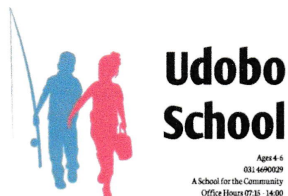
***“Thank you for all you do for us, I am humbled every month when I am able to pay the staff: during last year’s lockdown my staff received their salary every month and I am so grateful for that”***

Anne reports just some of the problems faced by the school as it returns from lockdown:

- Wooden cupboards and shelves in classrooms and storerooms have been eaten by termites and woodboring insects and have had to be taken down.
- The back fence of the school site is in a dangerous condition, requiring the children to be kept away for their own safety.
- Ventilation in the classrooms – originally stables - is inadequate: the rooms are dark and the high windows do not allow the airflow needed to combat Covid-19, so doors have to be left open to troops of monkeys who come in and scare the children! The governors would like to create larger windows to overcome this problem.
- The computers originally donated to the school have come to the end of their life, so the Resource Centre financed by Action Udobo cannot be properly used.
- The school would like to be able to employ specialist staff to support autistic children and those with speech difficulties.

Action Udobo would like to help the school fund capital projects such as these, as and when finance is available. In the meantime, Anne and her team continue to provide a learning environment of love and care to their deprived children as the following newsletter covering the last term of 2020 shows.





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**Tell: 031-4690029**  
**Email: anneudobo@gmail.com**

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Term Newsletter 2020

Dear Udobo Family and Friends,

At the end of a very different year, we continue to praise God for His hand over us. This year began wonderfully and not only was the school full (always the prayer of my heart) we even opened a sixth class to accommodate a third Grade R class. Such joy and then towards the end of the first term Covid19 hit and the country went into lockdown.

Our Grade R teachers especially did all they could to assist the children in their classes over this time. We put out daily work on the whatsapp groups so the parents could instruct the children and then send in photographs of the completed work. Later we put together workbooks for Literacy, Numeracy and Phonics and guided the parents in how to assist their little ones. Altogether we put out nine books – three books three times and the children did a page of each every day.

I was delighted when we could go into school and prepare for the return of our children – the staff came in and together we scrubbed, packed away anything which could not be cleaned every day, prepared a quarantine area and put up posters. We supplied the staff with sanitizers and protective masks. We trained for dealing with day to day 'new normal'. We sent the chef and another staff member on a 'Food handling in the time of Covid19' course as well as two other staff members on a course dealing with quarantine regulations in the event of one of the children having a fever or other symptoms. We intended opening in June, but the schools were told to open at the end of August, so we went back into lockdown.

Eventually we opened on the 24<sup>th</sup> August but had to place the children into A and B groups so that we could 'social distance' in the classroom. Every morning we have a team of three at the gate where the children were sanitized, had their temperatures taken, questions asked and finally walked through bleach infused water before they went to class. We were incredibly blessed by the Yellowwood Park Evening Woman's institute who made us 190 child sized masks in attractive child-friendly designs. We gave them out when children forgot to wear their masks and I suspect some hid their masks in order to be given one of our special ones!!



We had to take pictures of our children, the graduates in cap and gown and the other little ones in uniform. Then there were reports to prepare and graduation certificates to copy and laminate. We have been incredibly blessed by a volunteer, Sharon, who came in to help in the office and she quickly became Pat's right hand as she helped by photocopying work for the staff for next year, dealt with people who needed information about placing their children and sanitizing people who came in for interview. Sharon was our special angel and helped in countless ways – we will miss her as she moves from the area and wish her well in her new home! Wendy Kirstin from the church printed the certificate in colour and they looked beautiful!



I dealt with what seemed like endless families coming to place their children in the school. Schools have closed down, due to the virus and people have lost jobs or have been retrenched and the school is needed now more than ever. People have come in with stories of such loss that I felt emotionally exhausted just listening, but these families have to live the experience every day.. Udobo Pre-Primary is here for such a time as this.

The Udobo Pre Primary School is funded through parents' contributions, fundraising and donations from charitable organisations.  
 Telephone & Fax +27 (031) 469 0029 E-mail: anneudobo@gmail.com Website: udoboschool.com Fund-raising No. 031-161-NPO