



ACTION UDOBO

UK Registered Charity no. 1138863

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Newsletter No. 36

June 2021

COVID
IMPACT
SPECIAL

“A year like no other” that is how the past months have been described.

In the UK we have seen relentless sickness, suffering and uncertainty and we have felt the effects of lockdown and isolation. All the evidence seems to suggest that if you are in poor health, poorly nourished or simply poor you are likely to be more vulnerable and your chances of suffering are even greater.

It doesn't take a lot of imagination to think about the vulnerability and anxiety being faced by the children of Udobobo School.

The school represents a single certainty in their young lives and their resilience comes from the care and love they experience there whilst faced with the fear that comes from uncertainty in the communities they are growing up in.



“People are desperate for affordable education for their children.”



Anne Snyders (School Principal) has written:

“Families have been very hard hit by Covid 19 – many people have lost jobs, been retrenched and even had to move away to family homes on farms. Some people who have lost their income have been in to see me, and as we never turn anyone away, these children have become ‘scholarship’ children which means that they don’t pay any fee. As some families have moved away we have managed to replace the children as people are desperate for affordable education for their children.”

She goes on:

“What is particularly heart breaking is when children who are making good progress and benefitting from their time at school are suddenly gone - all the language they were learning, the academic progress and the nutritious meals they were enjoying come to an end.”

She tells individual stories:

“One family, who was just hanging on when his uncle, who was paying us a fee, had to leave to find a job. The mother of the child looks after her very ill mother and the aunt makes just enough to cover the rent. There is no food in the home. We made the child free to come to school and she eats here every second day but we are now sending extra food and vegetables home to the family. This is just one family but the story is common to so many of our families.”

“Our teacher’s assistant who had a baby in December is not at all well so has not yet returned to us. She has a beautiful little boy but has not been well enough to fully enjoy him.”

We want things to return to a kind of normal – just getting by is the normal for Udoobo School but even that has become a challenge in the current circumstances!

And in happier times this is what we reported:

Young children finding fulfilment, and beginning to thrive, in an atmosphere of love and growing confidence.



Happy, smiley people celebrating hope and possibility – the stuff that dreams are made of – as well as a fulfilment of their heritage.



These were the practical things Action Udobó did to help support those hopes and dreams:



For us in the developed West, such simple things:

- *Installing a telephone line*
- *Making the building safe and fit for purpose*
- *Providing basics like cupboards and shelving*

A few years later, and just before the pandemic was declared, Anne Snyders reported:

1. **Wooden cupboards and shelves in classrooms and storerooms have been eaten by termites and woodboring insects and have had to be taken down.**
2. **The back fence of the school site is in a dangerous condition, requiring the children to be kept away for their own safety.**
3. **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.**
4. **The computers originally donated to the school have come to the end of their life, so the Resource Centre financed by Action Udobó cannot be properly used.**

There is still so much more to support:

Even if Covid had never struck we would need to expand our support for the school – but it is critical now.



And this is the kind of thing we rely on:

Thank you North Hertfordshire Methodist Walkers!

£1,800



GOOD FRIDAY WALK 2021 – GOOD NEWS!

This experimental dispersed walk has raised a record £3,600. This will be divided equally between our nominated charities, Bridge Builders in Stevenage and Action Udobó, supporting Udobó School in Durban, South Africa. It includes £672 in gift aid.. Thank you to everyone who took part by going on their own walk, and the many others who sponsored them. 55 people took part.

The charity's trustees are developing a strategy for the next 5 years to fulfil the vision and purpose for our existence.

It is likely to look like this:

1. Maintenance and development of individual and group giving as the foundation for the main income stream.
2. Development of partnership working to enhance both income, awareness of, and activity of, the charity by –
 - School, group and faith organisations by twinning with Udobo School
 - Corporate adoption of the charity over agreed periods of time, for projects or activities of common interest
 - Philanthropic sponsorships of the charity
3. Links with other charities where common purpose is identified
4. Greater publicity for the charity in the market place by the
 - Creation of charity patrons and ambassadors
 - Use of social media for both communication and fund-raising
 - Exposure in journals and all means of communication and extending an online presence.

This is going to take a lot of thinking about, and planning, and we are beginning an adventure – so why not join us? Your ideas are as good as ours and probably better – your experience may be greater.

The one thing we need most is your loyalty – as an active supporter and a sharer in the belief that the cause of this charity is about giving those young children the chance to be the best they can be.

... Carry on fishing by helping us!

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. We would especially welcome organisations, groups and companies who would be prepared to commit to support us over a number of years. But we always remember – ***every little helps!***

- 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 your involvement with this charity:

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.

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Or write to:

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

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