



Jacob's Well Appeal

Summer 2021 Newsletter

The story of a container



You may have wondered what happens to the containers of aid when they leave our yard. Well, sometimes they go smoothly from end to end with no delays or problems. Mainly in our dreams. Often they get delayed at the docks, rebooked onto a different ship, stuck in customs whilst corrupt officials go through every box looking for something that they can use as an excuse for a fine, which will probably end up in their pockets. They will find one box that is out of date, or an item that it not listed on a list that is several hundred lines long! Or a new regulation will be cited (sometimes one that no-one had ever heard of before). "If an item is made of leather it's not allowed to transit through our country" (shoes, belts all have to be removed). "No aerosols allowed through that border" (all colostomy boxes have to be unpacked and the sprays

removed). Every day that it's waiting in customs for the paperwork to become acceptable, costs money. Sometimes the waiting fee can run into thousands of dollars.

All the above is just part of a normal day's work for our long-suffering Jacob's Well staff. But sometimes things go even more badly wrong. Take for example, the latest container we sent to Zambia. It left our warehouse on 16th February. It was supposed to be delivered to Zambia by mid-late April, 8-10 weeks later. We knew that there were long delays at Immingham port, so we were a little unsure if the container would leave on time, but it did. We were encouraged. Then we heard that our container was on one of the 369 ships stuck at the entrance to the Suez Canal which was being blocked by the grounded container ship the Ever Given. That caused a few more weeks delay. (Continued on the back page)

Farm Project in Burkina Destroyed by a storm

We are very sad to report that the main barn at our farming project at the Parole de Vie school in Ouagadougou has been destroyed by a storm. Every Tuesday and Saturday the kids from the school would have a class at the farm to learn how to bring up animals. The farm also provided milk, yoghurt and meat to the children. Starting with 5 cows bought by Jacob's Well, the herd has grown to over 30 cattle. **The cost of replacing the barn is £2470.** Please let us know if you'd like to help with this.

Picture. Before and after the storm.



Vaccine Storage in Ghana

We were approached by the medical director of the regional hospital in North West Ghana who said that they had been unable to store their vaccines safely. This hospital is also responsible for all the local medical clinics throughout the region. Vaccines need to be stored in a large fridge to maintain their potency. Often Vaccines can be destroyed by the high temperatures whilst shipments are being transported, or when they are stored in a normal hospital pharmacy.

They had started work on building a cold vaccine storage facility, but the government said that it was unable to fund more than 50% of the costs. Through Jacob's Well a generous donor stepped in to meet the rest of the expenses, with the result that the people of the north western region of Ghana will now have a facility so that they can safely store vaccines for many years to come.



Picture. A medical worker checks one of the fridges in the newly built cold storage facility in Wa, N.W. Ghana. Portable insulated boxes are used to take the vaccines to outlying clinics.

Providing a morgue and an X-ray machine in Burkina Faso

In Ouagadougou our partners who run the Source de Vie Hospital were struggling because their x-ray machine had broken and was no longer repairable. Someone donated a new table but they had to hire a machine to take the x-ray photographs. They were also struggling with no place to lay a body after someone had died. Through a special donation, we were able to cover the cost of replacing the x-ray machine and also of building the morgue. The hospital staff are so very grateful for this support which will benefit the patients greatly.

You may remember that last year we appealed for money to install Solar Panels at this hospital. Electricity is very expensive in Burkina, with the hospital's average electricity bill over £1500 per month. We were able to send £25,000 to install solar panels on the hospital, which will provide over 40 KiloWatts of power. The solar panels are now all in place and are already significantly reducing the electricity bills. This enables the hospital to continue providing free and subsidised medical care for the poorest people in the capital city.



Feeding the desperate in Burkina Faso

Whilst Covid has caused many problems in the UK, in Africa it has caused total devastation. Thousands of businesses have shut, millions of people are unemployed. In Burkina add to that an Islamic insurgency where people have been driven out of 1/3 of the country and are now living as refugees in relatives' houses, church halls and government camps. Plus the rains were very bad last year. At our partner school in Bobo, a few months ago we had 400 people per day queuing up for food as they had nothing to eat. **Now it is 6000 people per day. People are desperate and dying. We need money to send over there to buy sacks of rice to give to these poor families.** We have already sent additional money to finance a bore hole and seed to enable the school to grow food for all these people throughout the dry season on a large field they have outside of the city.

Literacy & Business Projects

For the last few years we have received funding to run literacy projects for deprived women in N Ghana. The women also learn a trade – soap making or dying of fabrics etc. One group of women wanted a grinding mill to grind the shea nuts that they collect during the dry season. Shea nut oil is a highly sought-after ingredient for the cosmetics industry. The women pick the nuts from the trees that grow wild in their community. Once collected, the women grind the shea nut to get the oil which they can sell. By hand, this was very hard work. However now it is easy and they can produce so much more oil because of a grinding machine that we provided.



Agricultural Projects

We have continued to plant mango trees despite Covid and have planted an orchard in Sing, N. Ghana where we have a dry season project both sponsored by Skegness Rotary Club. We have also planted three other orchards in Northern Ghana this year.

Picture. Dry season farming in Sing.

Finance

The value of the aid that we sent in 2020 was £3.46 Million. Most of this aid was medical supplies which are given to us free of charge

8% of our turnover was spent on operating costs, 2% was spent on shipping and 90% was given as aid.

In addition to the aid that went in containers, we also sent £158,295 in cash to support our medical, agricultural and educational projects overseas.



Monitoring Projects in N. Ghana

In April Liz Lyle braved the Covid travel restrictions and went to N. Ghana. She was able to visit the Physio department at Tamale Hospital, where they continue to make standing frames and other mobility equipment, thanks to training from Liz and Helen Hyams who have visited them previously. She went onto Wa in the north west, from where she was able to visit our agricultural projects. Jacob's Well also helped to finance a small medical clinic for the local prison. Liz helped to deliver the hospital beds there which had just arrived on one of our containers. Monitoring our overseas aid and discussing current and future projects is an important part of ensuring that all the aid that we send ends up making a real difference to those in need.

Medical Clinic in Banfora (pictured right)

We are very happy to announce that this clinic, financed by Jacob's Well, has now opened. It will now provide medical care for the poorest people who would otherwise not be able to afford medical treatment, including ante-natal care with an ultra-sound machine we sent. Along with general consultations, a laboratory will enable testing for various diseases and a pharmacy will provide cheap medication for a fraction of the normal price.



The clinic's Christian leadership team are now praying for money to drill a bore-hole as their water supply is very intermittent. They also hope to build a ward where they can provide in-house care for those who need to stay in hospital for their treatment.

The story of a container (continued)

Then, when the container finally reached the port of Beira in Mozambique, we heard that the container now had a huge gash down one side. The port couldn't possibly let a damaged container leave. There was a fine for dangerous cargo. Could we prove that it hadn't been like this when it left our yard? Yes. We had a photo of it. How did it get damaged? There had to be an official inspection and someone would have to pay for the container to be repaired. But who? Was anything damaged inside the container? In the end, we had to pay £2350 for a repair that had been almost certainly been caused by the port's crane driver swinging another container into it. So finally the container was on its way again. Now it was the end of May.



We had been told that the container was meant to enter Zambia through the customs point at Chanida. That way, we were told, there would be no problems. The customs there were efficient and fair. However, the lorry driver, for reasons best known to himself, decided to go through the customs post at Chirundu. The load was once again impounded. Our clearance codes were for entry at Chanida, so they couldn't let it through. Whilst impounded, they discovered that there was cough medicine on board. The Zambia Health authority decided it needed to be tested to ensure that it was safe (in spite of the fact that it had come straight from a licensed British pharmaceutical company).

Safety certificates were duly emailed across, though in vain. The cough medicine was unloaded and placed in a warehouse until the Zambia health authority could have it "tested"! If we wanted it back, we would have to pay for a separate lorry to go and pick it up from the border point when it is finally cleared. Meanwhile, transit fees were accruing, \$2000, we were told. With some haggling, it was agreed that by paying \$1000, the container could move, though without the cough medicine.

Today (21st June) we just heard that the container arrived. Hallelujah. Sadly, when it was opened, it was discovered that at one of its "customs inspections", someone had helped themselves to some of the contents. Missing items included laptops, a camera, bikes and items from the children's gift boxes.

Difficulties like this sometimes make us wonder if it is worth sending aid containers to places like Zambia. However the aid is desperately needed, and so we continue. Sadly I don't suppose that these shipping problems will be our last!

Since January, in spite of Covid lockdowns and furloughed staff, we have sent 5 containers. 2 have gone to new partners in Cameroon, 1 to Zambia, one to a large regional hospital in the North West of Ghana. These containers have included many hospital beds and mattresses donated by Innova, and also much PPE. We have also sent a load to Moldova, the poorest country in Europe, which included 32 pallets of Colostomy, medical disposable products and dressings. Ora international will distribute these to 20 different hospitals around the country.

DONATIONS: - Via Internet Banking

Account Name: Jacobs Well Appeal
Account Number: 71090704
Sort Code: 40-10-12

Do you have email? If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by email, save costs and the environment, please send your email address to office@jacobswellappeal.org with your name and postal address, so we can update our database. Thank you!

Our warehouses have been absolutely crammed full of aid supplies to the point where we have had to refuse some valuable items because we have had no-where to put them and not enough money to ship them abroad! The cost of containers has gone up by 75% since Covid and so each container now costs around £7-10K to ship abroad. This year we hoped to send 15 containers, but are unlikely to be able to afford to send more than 10-12. Last year, sadly, due to Covid we were £90,000 below our budget, so money is very tight at the moment.

A HUGE thank you to all our amazing volunteers and to all those who support us by donating money, medical supplies, items to sell, knitting blankets and making shoe boxes. **If the monies raised exceed the amount needed for the projects mentioned in this newsletter, we will use the extra money to fund similar projects.**