

THE LABAID FOUNDATION.

England & Wales · Charity number 1168144

Details

Other names LABAID

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2016-07-08

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

Address 39 Raglan Gardens
Watford
WD19 4LJ

Phone 01923245356

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Website www.labaid.org

Activities

Objects: TO SUPPORT THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BY THE PROVISION OF DONATED SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT TO SCHOOLS, OTHER APPROPRIATE ESTABLISHMENTS AND INDIVIDUALS WORKING TO SUPPORT THEM IN THOSE COUNTRIES.

Activities: We receive donated science apparatus from UK schools. We carry out electrical safety checks where appropriate and then pack this apparatus for schools in developing countries who have requested help. These schools must have an agent who can collect the boxes from our working premises in Amersham, Bucks. Repairs are funded by car boot and ebay sales of apparatus which is not suitable to send.

Classification

- **How:** Other Charitable Activities
- **What:** Education/training
- **Who:** Children/young People

Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-06-30	£4,467	£3,232	-	-
2024-06-30	£2,975	£3,069	-	-
2023-06-30	£2,599	£2,069	-	-
2022-06-30	£1,293	£2,084	-	-
2021-06-30	£1,745	£3,162	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
DR. PETER BORROWS	Chair	2016-07-08
DAVID JOHN GODWIN		2016-07-08
DAVID REX HALL BSC, PGCE		2016-07-08
Ian Douglas		2023-05-24
MR. MIKE BANKS		2016-07-08

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Accounts

Annual Report 2024/25

The LabAid Foundation

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Web site: www.labaid.org

E-mail: labaidfoundation@labaid.org

In some ways, 2024/25 was LabAid's most successful year since it was started more than thirty years ago by the late Alan Welch, MBE. We sent out about 26 boxes of equipment per month, as against 17 per month the previous year, which in itself had been a 50% improvement on the year before. Between July 2024 and June 2025, we supplied 27 schools/colleges in 8 countries: Cameroon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Uganda and Zimbabwe, sending out 313 boxes of equipment (206 boxes in 2023/24). This improvement was largely the result of newly-recruited volunteers which enabled us both to pack more quickly and to repair and sort our stock better. One volunteer who returned 252 working microscopes (plus some scrap metal) to our store in the whole of 2024 by the end of June 2025 had already returned 251, with the result that for the first time our stock of unchecked microscopes reached zero, although not for very long because more soon arrived via *The Entertainer*.



Mansen Senior High School, Ghana: a student using one of the microscopes we sent in September 2024.

Alan Welch, founder of LabAid, taught science to the young Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary-General, at a methodist school in Ghana in the 1950s.

We continue to be grateful to *The Entertainer* toy shop chain which transports boxes of apparatus from its shops around the country to their warehouse in Amersham., where our volunteers pick it up. We have also had help from CLEAPSS (through publicity in its *Bulletin* and on courses) in informing teachers and technicians about the ability of LabAid to accept school science equipment for which they no longer had a use. CLEAPSS is also helping with the disposal of hazardous waste. However, the publicity we used to have from the ASE in its journal *Education in Science* has disappeared now that ASE has become an entirely virtual organisation and ceased to publish that journal.

As a result of the increased distribution, our stock has reduced at a time when equipment donations seem to be declining. It is hardly surprising that schools are not replacing equipment so often, given the economic situation. It has also proved difficult sometimes to arrange collection of packed boxes, which has resulted in clogged packing areas. We rely on former science teachers/technicians to select suitable items to send out (and, occasionally, decide what to buy) and such volunteers are in short supply. Advancing years are having an effect on our trustees but the newer volunteers are reluctant to become trustees.

We are grateful to the Amersham Free Church for financial donations and allowing us to store our stocks of

equipment in their Sycamore Hall. However, they are concerned about the increasing costs of maintaining this dilapidated building and have replaced our 5-year licence to use the building by a rolling 1-year licence. We have started to look for alternatives but so far without success. Accommodation is available but at a price which means we would have to become a fund-raising charity, for which there is little appetite amongst the trustees, so we have started to think about the long-term future of LabAid. The Royal Society of Chemistry again made a significant, but reduced, donation to support our work. We also had a useful donation from a charity associated with the NATO base at Northwood. Donations totalled just over £3000 and these supplement what we are able to raise by selling unsuitable or broken equipment as scrap metal, at car boot sales or by auction. These sales totalled £1450. We need the money not only to cover administrative costs but also to purchase those items of equipment we are rarely given, for example burettes, and, this year, to pay for the disposal of hazardous waste in the form of a large number of unsuitable mercury thermometers.

Dr Peter Borrowes (*Chair of the Trustees of the LabAid Foundation*).

LabAid Foundation Financial Report 1July 2024 - 30 June 2025

Starting Balance £1550.06

Receipts

Donations	£3016.25
Auctions	£635.12
Internet sales	£640.00
Car Boot sales	£74.00
Scrap sales	£101.21

Total Receipts £4466.58

Expenditure

Purchase of stock	£2225.01
Insurance	£313.15
Other	£694.02

Total Expenditure £3232.18

End Balance £2784.46

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Annual Report 2023/24

The LabAid Foundation

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In the last couple of years, the Trustees of the LabAid Foundation have been surprised at the very high level of used scientific equipment donated to us by schools and colleges across the UK. This is enabling LabAid to continue, and improve on, the work started more than thirty years by the late Alan Welch, MBE. Indeed, we have been slightly embarrassed about the amount coming in, which has put some pressure on our storage space.

We continue to be grateful to ASE (through *Education in Science*) and CLEAPSS (through its *Bulletin*) for informing teachers and technicians about the ability of LabAid to accept donations of school science equipment for which they no longer had a use. Thanks, too, to *The Entertainer*. Their toy shops throughout the country transported boxes of



Namasagali College, Kamuli, Uganda.

LabAid despatched equipment to this school in June 2021, with transport arranged and paid for by their alumni. It arrived in July 2022 and in April 2024 the school reported that, as a result, their students are more attentive in lessons, have developed a better understanding of science, and improved their examination grades as well as developing practical skills, which are expected to be of value in everyday life.

apparatus to their warehouse in Amersham, whence one of our volunteers made a number of journeys, with his car boot full.

We placed an advertisement in a local free magazine, asking for (unskilled) volunteers and were very successful in recruiting a number of people ranging from retired maths teachers and accountants to current science sixth-formers. They have been able to help packing boxes, as well as sorting huge numbers of bungs into different sizes and making sense of the range of metric and Imperial threads used on clamp stands. One volunteer managed to return 147 working microscopes (plus some scrap metal) to our store in the first 7 months of 2024. As a result, of all these contributions, last year we were able to send about 17 boxes of equipment per month, as against 12 per month the previous year. Sadly, we learned that Ron Howe, a former turkey farmer, who was our packer-in-chief for many years, had died.

We only supplied 11 educational establishments in developing countries between July 2023 and June 2024, as against 14 educational establishments the previous year. However, they received a total of 206 boxes of equipment, an almost 50% increase on the previous year's total of 145 boxes. That included 25 boxes, containing 31 microscopes (amongst other items) going to a health college in Nigeria and 33 destined for the Somali National University in Puntland. Although we don't generally supply university-level equipment, this was for a foundation-type course for otherwise competent students whose practical background was almost non-existent. The 11 establishments we supported were in 6 countries: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Uganda.

The Royal Society of Chemistry again made a significant donation to support our work. This supplements what we are able to raise by selling unsuitable or broken equipment as scrap metal, at car boot sales or by auction. We need the money not only to cover administrative costs but also to purchase those items of equipment we are rarely given, for example burettes. We are grateful to the Amersham Free Church for allowing us to store our stocks of equipment in their Sycamore Hall although they are moving us from 5-year licences to use the building to rolling 1-year licences.

We rely on the receiving school having a UK agent who can organise transport so we do not have to pay transport costs. Whilst this mostly this works well, we had some problems last year. Generally speaking, our waiting list stays reasonably constant, although in the past year, by sending out extra boxes to fewer establishments, our current waiting list would probably take about 18 months to clear.

Dr Peter Borrowes (*Chair of the Trustees of the LabAid Foundation*).

LabAid Foundation Financial Report 1July 2023 - 30 June 2024

Starting Balance	£1643.81
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Receipts

Donations	£882.50
Auctions	£1289.72
Internet sales	£460.00
Car Boot sales	£210.00
Scrap sales	£133.16

Total Receipts	£2975.38
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Expenditure

Purchase of stock	£2121.01
Premises rent	£510.00
Other	£433.34

Total Expenditure	£3069.13
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End Balance	£1550.06
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THE LABAID FOUNDATION.

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Annual Report 2022/23

After the disruption caused by covid, the LabAid Foundation has had a successful year, continuing the work started by the late Alan Welch, MBE. We accept donations of used scientific equipment, mainly from schools in the UK and sort, check and pack it for sending to schools and similar establishments in developing countries. Mostly these gifts arise when a UK school is closing, moving site or refurbishing its laboratories although we have accepted items from universities doing the same or from suppliers closing warehouses etc.

As with many charities, we rely on volunteers and need more, especially people who could easily reach our store in Amersham, to help sorting and packing equipment. You don't have to have a scientific background, just an ability to turn up for a couple of hours one or two afternoons per week. Scientists, and especially former science teachers or technicians would be particularly welcome and we might be able to find more specialist jobs you could do - checking, testing or repairing equipment. Last year, we sent out about 12 boxes per month, but with more hands-on local volunteers we could send out more.

We are grateful to teachers and technicians throughout the country, who responded to information about LabAid in ASE's *Education in Science* and the *CLEAPSS Bulletin* to supply us with a record amount of equipment for which they no longer had a use. The shelves in our rather cramped store are over-flowing. We had been worried that the supply



The campus of Alliance Model School in Kilembe, Uganda was swept away in floods in 2020. It set up again in abandoned mine buildings and LabAid supplied apparatus, here being used in the holidays as students try to catch up after covid lockdowns.

was drying up but this year's bumper harvest means we can offer a much better selection to those schools in developing countries with a 'laboratory' – but nothing to put in it. Thanks, too, to *The Entertainer* chain of toy shops which transported several pallet-loads of boxes of apparatus to their warehouse in Amersham, whence one of our volunteers made a number of journeys, with his car boot full.

Despite a limited number of volunteers, from July 2022 to June 2022, we managed to supply science teaching equipment to 14 educational establishments - everything from microscopes to magnets, beakers to balances and clamp stands to cathode ray oscilloscopes. All of that was in a total of 145 boxes, rather more than last year. The recent tidal wave of donations will allow us to send out even more equipment per school in the coming year, if we can find enough volunteers to help pack it. In all, we supported establishments in 6 countries: Ghana, Libya, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Uganda. One such establishment was the University of East Africa, in Somalia. There is a need to educate science students, in a foundation course, who have had little or no experience of practical work at school, hence apparatus suitable for A-level teaching is very much needed.

Sadly, we learned that Chandu Shah, who had volunteered with us for many years, checking and repairing equipment, had died. However, his family and friends made donations totalling nearly £500 in his memory. This will be very helpful because although we are a re-cycling charity, there are still expenses for insurance or the web site, or to purchase items needed to complete kits. We are also grateful to the Amersham Free Church for allowing us to use its Sycamore Hall for storage and also for a generous donation following a collection amongst those attending a service. The Royal Society of Chemistry

again made a significant donation to support our work. Some of the equipment we are sent is unsuitable – large glassware that would be difficult to transport or would cost a fortune in chemicals to fill – but we can often sell it by auction or at car boot sales to help defray expenses.

We rely on the receiving school having a UK agent who can organise transport so we do not have to pay transport costs. Sometimes the agent is an expatriate who wants to give something back to her/his homeland or a UK school or church has links to a particular village or a charity or an individual with such contacts. Mostly this works well.

Generally speaking, our waiting list stays reasonably constant, with establishments being taken off the top of the list at about the same rate as new ones are added at the bottom. At present, there are about 14 on the waiting list, which at the current rate of progress would take about year to fulfil, although packing the extra equipment may slow us down unless we can find some additional local volunteers.

Dr Peter Borrows (*Chair of the Trustees of the LabAid Foundation*).

LabAid Foundation Financial Report 1July 2022 - 30 June 2023

Starting Balance	£1113.12
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Receipts

Donations	£1542.75
Sale of stock	£1056.56

Total Receipts	£2599.31
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Expenditure

Purchase of stock	£1197.63
Hut costs	£510.00
Other	£360.99

Total Expenditure	£2068.62
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End Balance	£1643.81
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THE LABAID FOUNDATION.

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Despite all the disruption caused by the pandemic, the LabAid Foundation has been able to continue the work started in 1991 by the late Alan Welch, MBE. In effect, LabAid recycles donations of used scientific equipment, mainly from schools in the UK and sorts, checks and packages it for sending to schools and similar establishments in developing countries. Mostly these gifts arise when a UK school is closing, moving site or refurbishing its laboratories although we have accepted items from universities doing the same or from suppliers closing warehouses etc.

As for many charities, the pandemic has caused us some problems. We rely on volunteers and need more! We would especially value someone who could check and clean donated microscopes (at home – training could be given). Our trustees are unpaid and one resigned a year ago and another during the course of the year. A third, who had had some health problems, decided he could nevertheless continue for the time being (for which we are grateful) and we did recruit one new trustee. However, as a result of covid some of our previous hands-on volunteers do seem to have stopped permanently and others are only able to give limited help. Despite these limitations, from July 2021 to June 2022, 13 schools were helped with a total of 123 boxes of science equipment sent out, only marginally less than last year. In all, establishments in 8 countries were supported in this way: Cameroon, Ghana,

Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

The volunteer who organised the incoming equipment donations had to resign part way through the year because of the ill-health of her husband, which led to some disruption in our record-keeping. However, our impression is that whilst offers of equipment are not yet up to pre-covid levels, they are gradually picking up again and we are reasonably confident that the LabAid model is viable from that point of view. Our arrangement with *The Entertainer* chain of toyshops, whereby their shops across the country generously accept boxes of equipment for free transport via their vans to Amersham does seem to be picking up again after the covid hiatus.



Teachers from the Hooke Court-supported school in the Bandawe district of Malawi unpacking the boxes from LabAid

LabAid has continued to receive good support

from the science advisory service, CLEAPSS. We had intended to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the first appearance of LabAid at the Annual Conference of the Association for Science Education (ASE) in 2021 but the conference had to take place on-line not only in 2021 but also in 2022. There was a further generous financial donation from the Royal Society of Chemistry. However, sales of equipment unsuitable for schools in developing countries via E-bay and car boot sales ground to a halt as a result of the pandemic. Although essentially a re-cycling charity we do need some cash for expenses such as insurance or the web site, or to purchase items so as to be able to complete otherwise viable sets of equipment or for expendables such as batteries. Without more financial support we will be restricted in what we can offer. The Amersham Free Church, as well as making a generous financial donation in effect also allows us to use the Sycamore Hall at no cost, for which we are very grateful, and hope this arrangement will be able to continue.

We do not pay to transport equipment out of the UK. Instead, we rely on the recipient school having a UK agent who can organise transport, perhaps an expatriate seeking to give something back to her/his homeland or a UK church with links to a particular village or an individual with such contacts. Mostly this has worked reasonably well but we had unexpected problems with 2 schools towards the end of the year.

Generally speaking, our waiting list stays reasonably constant, with schools being taken off the top of the list at about the same rate as new schools are added at the bottom. At present, there are about a dozen schools in the pipeline, which at the current rate of progress would take about 9-12 months to fulfil. We do have sufficient stocks to meet these requests (and more) but the need for more volunteers is slowing the process.

Dr Peter Borrows (*Chair of the Trustees of the LabAid Foundation*).

LabAid Foundation Financial Report 1July 2021 - 30 June 2022

Starting Balance	£1904.67
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Receipts

Donations	£1262.50
Sale of stock	£30.23

Total Receipts	£1292.73
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Expenditure

Purchase of stock	£1101.14
Hut costs	£637.50
Other	£345.64

Total Expenditure	£2084.28
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End Balance	£1113.12
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England & Wales - Charity number 1168144

Accounts



Annual Report 2020/21

The LabAid Foundation

Registered charity no: 1168144

Web site: www.labaid.org

E-mail: labaidfoundation@labaid.org

The LabAid Foundation continues the work started in 1991 by the late Alan Welch. In effect, it is a re-cycling charity, accepting donations of used scientific equipment from schools etc in the UK. Mostly these gifts arise when a school is closing, moving site or refurbishing its laboratories. Often, the equipment is still serviceable or can be cannibalised/ repaired. After sorting and checking, it is packaged and sent to schools in developing countries.

So far LabAid is surviving the covid pandemic better than we had feared a year ago. We had totally shut down during the lockdown from March to June 2020 but made a cautious re-start in July following a risk assessment. Social distancing was impossible in the storage area so only 2 volunteers could work at a time, at opposite ends of the building. Despite this limitation from July 2020 to June 2021 we sent out 130 boxes to 15 schools in 7 countries: Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Rwanda and Somaliland, almost exactly the same as in the previous year 2019/20 up to the time coronavirus struck, when we entered lockdown and activities were completely



Unpacking the delivery from LabAid at Mchengautuba Community School in Malawi, May 2021.

suspended for the remainder of the truncated year.

Whilst we had feared schools would be under too much pressure to sort out redundant equipment for LabAid, we were heartened by an increase of about 50% in the number of donations offered by schools/colleges, including some large ones, as well as a warehouse clearance by suppliers Scientific & Chemical. However, transport did prove a problem in that for most of the period *The Entertainer* chain of toyshops was unable to accept boxes of equipment for delivery via their vans to Amersham. We set up some *ad hoc* routes which were partly successful and the net effect is that stock levels are higher than this time last year.

LabAid has continued to receive good support from the science advisory service, CLEAPSS, which for example agreed to add some unsuitable thermometers which we had been given to its own waste collection. 2021 would have been the 30th anniversary of the first appearance of LabAid at the Annual Conference of the Association for Science Education (ASE) and we had intended to celebrate that but unfortunately the conference had to be held on-line although we did get publicity in the November 2020 issue of the ASE journal *Education*

in Science. There were further generous financial donations from the Royal Society of Chemistry and the Amersham Free Church. We were approached by the family of a former physics teacher, Tim Akrill, who had some connections with Africa. They wanted to encourage friends and family to donate to LabAid in his memory and this generous thought raised about £600. However, sales of equipment unsuitable for schools in developing countries via E-bay and car boot sales ground to a halt as a result of covid. Although essentially a re-cycling charity we do need some cash for expenses such as insurance or the web site, or to purchase items in order to complete sets or for expendables such as batteries.

We do not pay to transport equipment out of the UK. Instead, we rely on the recipient school having a UK contact who can organise transport, perhaps an expatriate seeking to give something back to her/his homeland or a UK church with links to a particular village or an individual with such contacts. Mostly this has worked reasonably well and serves to reduce the demand to something we can manage to supply, given our limited resources. At the end of the financial year, we had about a dozen schools in the pipeline, which at the current rate of progress would take about 9 months to fulfil. We do have sufficient stocks to meet these requests (and more) but the need for social distancing and the declining numbers of volunteers are slowing the process.

Probably our greatest concern at present are our volunteers. One trustee resigned recently as a result of ill health and two others have stated an intention to do so at the next AGM because of increasing age. Whilst we don't have a succession plan as such, we were expecting that some of our other/younger volunteers would fill the gaps but covid is causing some of them to drop out. We are continuing to look for new recruits but often people volunteer who live a long way from Amersham, which limits what they can usefully do. So, although we have had a more successful year than might have been expected, both in terms of continuing to send out equipment to schools in developing countries, and receiving equipment and cash donations, the long-term future of LabAid must remain in doubt.

Dr Peter Borrowes (*Chair of the Trustees of the LabAid Foundation*).

LabAid Foundation Financial Report 1July 2020 - 30 June 2021

Starting Balance	£3322.65
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Receipts

Donations	£1645.00
Sale of stock	£99.51

Total Receipts	£1744.51
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Expenditure

Purchase of stock	£2490.59
Hut costs	£382.50
Other	£289.40

Total Expenditure	£3162.49
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End Balance	£1904.67
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