

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 30<sup>th</sup> 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 |
|------------------|----------|

### Receipts

|               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| Donations     | £1262.50 |
| Sale of stock | £30.23   |

|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Total Receipts | £1292.73 |
|----------------|----------|

### 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 |
|-------------|----------|