

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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