

You are the salt of the earth
You are the light of the world
let your light shine before others
and glorify your Father in heaven

August 2025

As we reach the end of another academic year, we want to thank you wholeheartedly for standing with us and helping sustain the work of the ACET family with your generous financial support and prayers.

The stories we are sharing with you in this newsletter are just a snapshot of the programmes that you make possible: you really do make such a tangible difference in many people's lives.

We feel particularly blessed to have your support at this time, in what has been a difficult couple of years for charities, especially smaller charities like acet UK.

As the whole world has been rocked by COVID-19, followed by a cost-of-living crisis and rising inflation, the charity and voluntary sector has experienced an unpredictable and challenging time.

In 2024 and 2025, we have seen what The National Council for Voluntary Organisations described as *"the 'perfect storm' created by funding falling, costs increasing, and demand climbing."*

We are sure this will sound familiar, as these global crises have impacted all our lives -



many people simply now have less to give. Research from the Charities Aid Foundation found that the percentage of UK individuals now giving to charity has fallen to 50%, compared to 58% in 2019. This might not sound like a large drop, but it equates to four million fewer donors.

We have also seen a drop in government funding for the voluntary sector, and many trusts and foundations are giving less, or putting their grant-making on hold to review their strategy, as they cope with a 30% to 100% surge in grant applications from charities who desperately need funds to continue vital work.

Many charities have had to dip into their cash reserves to survive the unexpected financial pressures of the last two years.

So, we are truly thankful for every penny that you donate to our work.

For every person that your gifts help.

For every month that our programmes can continue thanks to your generosity. THANK YOU!



In the 2024/25 school year, your support has helped us:

- Provide Relationships and Sex Education sessions for 6,522 secondary-aged children in London and the North West.
- Provide Relationships Education sessions for 1,116 primary-aged children in London and the North West.
- Train 80 teachers, youth workers and other educators through our comprehensive course, with 72 choosing the option to gain a level 4 accreditation in 'Teaching Relationships and Sex Education.'
- Train 121 primary school teachers through school-based workshops.



Supporting children in care, UK

We are really passionate about seeing looked after children thrive in their choices around healthy, consensual relationships. Statistically, children in care are more vulnerable to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and sexual harm, but this can be significantly reduced by having a safe, consistent environment and learning the skills to recognise risky or exploitative relationships.

At the heart of this is the support of caring and trustworthy foster carers who they can talk to without judgement or shame: important role models in the young people's lives.

This is why we are excited to be working in partnership with Foster4, which was set up in 2024 to promote and support foster carers. We have been providing free workshops for foster carers in eight local authorities in Cheshire and Merseyside.

These workshops facilitate conversations around how to discuss important topics at home, such as relationships, puberty, consent, sex and media, along with tips for answering tricky questions.

Many foster carers work with a wide age range of children, from babies to teenagers, so our Relationships and Sex Education timeline, which looks at what topics to discuss at home and when, can help them to start conversations that will keep their young people safe from CSE and relational abuse later on in life.

Simple strategies such as talking about TV storylines over dinner, or looking at the lyrics of popular songs, can open up a means of discussing these topics.

We encourage the foster carers to participate in simple activities that they can then try out at home.

The workshops have been very well received: carers say they have come away feeling more comfortable and confident with having conversations about healthy relationships and sex, and that the content of the session is full of useful information and strategies.

We are really glad to be working with these amazing carers and would love to reach out to more local authorities across the Northwest. If you would like to know more about this, please email info@acet-uk.com for details.

Foster carers trying out an activity they can use with their young people.





Viktoria, a new youth volunteer, helping deliver sessions in schools.

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Ukrainian youths building healthy relationships

16-year-old Viktoria shares her story: *“Over the years with ACET, I can confidently say that I have become a new person, I have radically changed my life. I began to take care of my younger sister (she is 12). She and I became real friends – we used to hate each other. I help her get through difficult situations, take her to the ACET club. Thanks to ACET, I know a lot about adolescence and understand exactly how to help my sister, how to communicate with her. Although I am only 16, I feel like her mother.*

I'm still trying to improve my relationship with my mother. She began to drink after the death of our father and now spends her time with friends drinking and spends very little time with us. But I learned to forgive her, to support her. I believe that it will also change.

ACET is not just a training or a club, it is my family. I have now trained as an ACET trainer. I am very happy that I can help other teenagers: I want to help children protect their lives.”

Although the possibility of a peace deal with Russia seems more distant than ever, the amazing life-changing work of ACET Ukraine is still ongoing across 14 regions. They are even continuing to run programmes in 3 cities in Germany and the Netherlands, for children who have fled the war.

ACET Ukraine currently has 341 active volunteers, including those who are working in areas of occupation and those who are refugees abroad.

ACET's 'University of Healthy Youth' programme includes topics about respect, love, cybersecurity, relationships with those closest to us, and appreciating life. These sessions are at times held in bomb shelters and often against the backdrop of air raid sirens.

Fantastically, the team reached 5,862 young people in 91 educational institutions, in the first half of this academic year.

Also amazingly in these difficult times, ACET Ukraine is managing to run 7 youth clubs, helping 410 young people with teaching and support. One club is in the frontline city of Zaporizhzhia and uses playing football as a team to create a place where young people can experience comfort, hope, and security.

ACET Ukraine also runs a club for mothers, to share ACET values, and provide information and assistance to families. This club takes place in Berdychiv and has become a place of faith and support for mothers who have been through so much.

Responding to rape in Zimbabwe

15-year-old Monife is living with HIV, lost both her parents to HIV-related illness years ago, and lives in a single room with her aunt and two cousins.

Monife became pregnant while in form 1 at high school. Unfortunately, the school dismissed her as they would not permit her to attend while pregnant.

CCP director, Willard, hopes to discover who the father is as, if it is an older man as Willard suspects, this would be a police case of statutory rape. Willard told us, *"The team is seeing more teenage pregnancies these days, even 13-year-olds. Sugar daddies have been a problem - older men who offer incentives like a bag of sugar, or other food, or a dress, to a teen to sleep with them. But the main problem these days is men who go to mine illegally and come back with money. The girls have no money, and may be very short on food at home, and can't resist the transactions proposed."*

The Community Care Programme (ACET CCP) in Zimbabwe was established to respond to the increasing number of people affected by HIV in the rural communities of the Gutati district, where drought, poverty, and unemployment make life especially difficult.

With over 200 volunteers, ACET CCP provides school breakfasts, food packs, educational support and operates a youth skills training centre to reduce levels of unemployment in the community. Local youth, some of whom are AIDS orphans, learn skills such as dressmaking, carpentry, peanut butter-making, and poultry raising.

Zimbabwe has long struggled with teenage pregnancy and child marriage. Although progress was made in reducing these prior to 2020, the COVID pandemic saw a significant rise, especially in rural areas. Many of these girls view marriage and pregnancy as a way out of poverty - or they are victims of sexual abuse.

According to a 2023 UN report, 31% of adolescent girls are forced to have sex on their first sexual encounter.

In June, Willard attended a meeting about the problem of teenage pregnancies and early marriages. *"The National AIDS Council is asking CCP to run a programme to educate the community on the effects of these two issues. And they want to make contraception available so the girls can access it at local clinics without being asked questions."*

Zimbabwe struggles with teen pregnancy and sugar daddies.

Coercion, rape and sexual abuse are common, meaning many teens end up pregnant, through no fault of their own.





Adaku with one of her HIV negative children.

Thank you for protecting unborn babies in Nigeria

Nigeria has the second-largest HIV epidemic in the world after South Africa, but unlike South Africa, progress in preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Nigeria has been slow - only 35% of pregnant women living with HIV are on treatment, partly due to a low take up of antenatal care services.

But your support enables early intervention so that babies of women living with HIV, like Adaku, can be born without the virus.

"I used to feel pain in my head frequently, accompanied by a strong fever. I was staying with my grandparents, and the journey to school was 4km: the stress triggered the illness, and it was so challenging for me.

As a result, I was often absent from school.

When I complained of pain, my teachers insisted I participate, and they would say I was only being crafty and smart.

My grandparents and uncles also said I was pretending to be sick, due to my inability to attend to house chores and do farm work.

I thought - I am not loved. Why should I be so sick, but no one understands and cares? I was always crying and traumatized, and it seriously affected my educational performance.

Those days were difficult: I don't want to remember them.

Then there was a convention in the church and ACET carried out free HIV testing, awareness, and counselling. It was the first time I embarked on a voluntary test to know my status, and it was confirmed that I had HIV.

It was a difficult moment for me, but ACET gave me proper counselling, I accepted my status, and they helped me overcome most of my challenging fears.

ACET took me to General Hospital Wannune and enrolled me on ARV.

They took care of transportation to check-ups, my food and hospital bills, and supported me by calling daily to encourage me to take my drugs.

This change has helped me seriously regain my health. I soon became stronger and active in school and at home. I continued and completed my secondary school.

I married and we have had three children. To the glory of God, all three were born in good health and without HIV, thanks to ACET.

They helped me enrol in antenatal care and I learnt that I should deliver in a hospital and not give my children the breast.

HIV could not stop me from getting married or having children. I am so happy to be a mother of a healthy boy and two healthy girls."

Home care in Thailand

In 2003, ACET Thailand was invited by the Ministry of Health to commence a home-based care programme for people living with HIV, in Singburi Province, 100 miles north of Bangkok.

ACET Thailand director, Nataya, explains, "We began home visiting, hand in hand with the hospital. They send patients to us so we can take care of them. The patients get their ARVs and consultations from the hospital, everything is free, and the nurse will teach them the importance of taking the meds regularly."

"When they start ARVs, we will visit them and check they are taking them as per the regime. Some of them are very fearful. We'll encourage them that it'll be alright. They'll get rashes and after a few days they will want to stop taking the meds. But we encourage them that the rashes will stop. The nurse doesn't have the time or capacity to do this."

"We spend time with them and talk with them. It is very encouraging. Because it changes lives, they then have hope. Most of the people are older, some of

them we have been visiting for 10+ years. They have bad health and no work. Our visits improve their lives. If they have nothing, we pray for it!"

"We bring food as they need necessities – rice, oil, soy sauce, eggs. They need the basics to cook basic meals. They don't have anything, and they need to have food to be well while taking the ARVs."

"One young lady who is almost blind because of HIV weighed only 30kg when we met her. She didn't have a house. We helped her and now she weighs 100kg and has a house and husband, and teaches her family about the grace of God. Next month, we will use her house as a centre, to reach out to the neighbourhood. Building good relationships make it easier to reach out."

Could you or your employer donate bags of rice, oil and sauces for ACET Thailand's home care programme?

Please get in touch with us at info@acet-uk.com.



Home visiting.



Building public speaking confidence!

Peer Education in South Africa

*"Life for young people in my community is difficult. We have issues of no water and electricity. Most of the time, **you feel stuck because there's no change in the situation** that you're in. Crossroads give us breakfast porridge every day. They also give us soup and bread, which is tasty.*

*I was scared to speak English when the Peer Education classes started. I have always felt more comfortable speaking Zulu. But last year, we were **preparing for the reading advocacy** and Senette and Vernon **believed in me and they kept pushing me to step out of my comfort zone**. So, I ended up saying a poem in English and all **my teachers were so impressed**."*

Young people in the Hlomantethe community in KwaZulu-Natal face issues like poor transportation so they **have to walk great distances to get to school**, and **scarce employment opportunities**. They are, however, blessed with strong community ties and a close connection to nature.

When Crossroads started their Peer Education programme at Mqedi Primary School and became aware of the **illiteracy** issues in the school, the team ran a Reading Advocacy campaign. Here they met 13-year-old Bonginkosi.

"We learnt that one of the best ways to build our self-esteem and confidence is to work on our weak areas. This is because nobody is bad at

something, it is just because we have not practiced it enough to be good at it and we cannot quit because it is hard.

*We did a session on communication and active listening which was very helpful. I enjoyed learning this because it is a **good skill to have for a job**. I will remember to first understand the question they are asking me in an interview, then answer.*

***My confidence in myself has grown**, from being the person who sits quietly in class discussions, I am now **the one who can lead the discussion** during activities.*

I love what I learn during class time. They are very different from our teachers and they do not make fun of us when we make a mistake. I really love the different things we do and no week is the same.

*I am **adamant that I will complete my Matric** as **this will help me secure a good job** and improve my family's life.*

*As a peer educator, I tell my friends that right now **we are just children**, we cannot financially support a baby and we are not ready for marriage because we do not even know ourselves yet.*

After we finish matric and achieve our goals is the right time to think about getting married and having a baby."



Having lunch at the new clinic in South Hyderabad.

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Caring for the community in India

Ruth's story: *"In 2020, my husband suddenly had a stroke and was rushed to the hospital. He was diagnosed with HIV and passed away just 13 days later. I was advised to get tested along with my two children, and I found out that my daughter and I also had HIV. Within a month, my husband's parents said I had to leave my husband's house."*

During one of my visits to the government hospital to get my ARVs (antiretrovirals), a social worker told me about Nireekshana and the opportunity to learn sewing.

Since then, I have received treatment here when I am unwell and have learned sewing skills and can sew products to sell. Nireekshana is like a family. They care about every aspect of our lives."

Nireekshana ACET's community-based clinic has treated and cared for over 8,000 HIV patients since it began in Drs Sujai & Lavanya Suneetha's home 21 years ago. The team also provide treatment for other diseases brought on by poverty, such as leprosy.

Nireekshana ACET focuses on holistic care including counselling, prevention and treatment of opportunistic infections, education of children, and support for widows. The Hyderabad clinic includes a dentist and fully equipped service and research laboratory, where they do their own testing, biopsies and scans. Each day the clinic provides a meal for the patients to improve their nutrition.

Training is also a significant component of their work. Topics such as HIV prevention and counselling are taught to patients and communities through seminars and workshops. Educating young people about puberty, prevention of abuse, and child trafficking is also a part of their training programme.

For the past few years, a new clinic in the Shamshabad Mandal district in the south of Hyderabad has been built. At the new clinic, the team will offer the same holistic services which they provide in the centre of the city for people living with HIV and leprosy, but with deeper and more specialized research.

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CONTACT
US

01244 566111

info@acet-
uk.com



@esteem-
acetuk.bsky.social



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