



Transforming learning for special needs kids in Sri Lanka



Supporting homeless people through the pandemic

Newsletter of the Halcrow Foundation Friends

Spring/Summer 2021 - Issue 02

# INTOUCH



## Join our community

We're building a network of Halcrow Foundation Friends.

If you want to learn more about our work, have a project we may be interested in supporting or would like to make a donation, we'd love to hear from you.

Everything you need to know is on our website. Join our social media channels for regular updates and get involved!

[www.halcrowfoundation.org](http://www.halcrowfoundation.org)



Halcrow Foundation

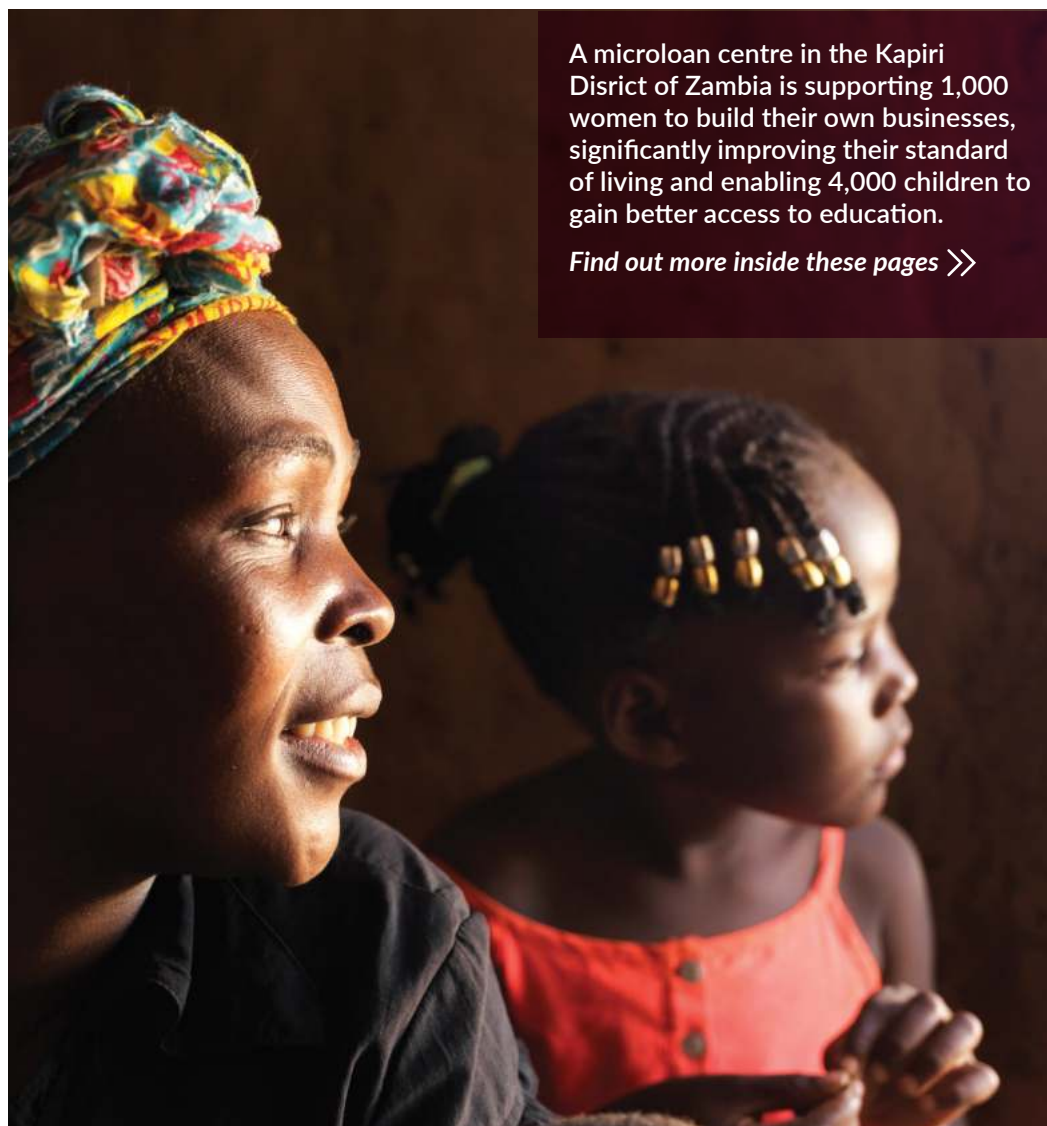


@HalcrowFNDN



Halcrow Foundation

## Empowerment through enterprise



A microloan centre in the Kapiri District of Zambia is supporting 1,000 women to build their own businesses, significantly improving their standard of living and enabling 4,000 children to gain better access to education.

*Find out more inside these pages >>*

## What's in this edition



Rare playground means fun and games for children in rural Zambia



Fuel-saving stoves in Ethiopia offer income and improved health



Deep-bed farming increases crop yields in Malawi



## Our team

All our trustees are former employees of Halcrow and we are honoured to volunteer our skills and time to the Halcrow Foundation. We're delighted to be supported by Clare and Lucy, who work together to help us with our administration and communications, which includes managing our communications channels.

(From left to right, top to bottom)

- Anna Mann, Trustee
- James Billingham, Trustee
- Malcolm Wallace, Trustee
- Clare Dorey, Communications
- Andrew Yeoward, Trustee
- David Kerr, Chair and Trustee
- Lucy Mason, Communications

Email us:

[firstname.surname@halcrowfoundation.org](mailto:firstname.surname@halcrowfoundation.org)

# Welcome!

## From the Halcrow Foundation trustees

The coronavirus pandemic and subsequent restrictions have impacted all of our funded projects in the UK, Africa and Asia, creating challenges for everyone involved.

As always, we're inspired by the strength and determination of our charity partners and the communities they support. All of our funded projects operate at a grassroots level, which means they can help to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and adapt to changes and lockdowns imposed by local governments.

In this newsletter, we provide updates on how our partners have adapted to overcome the many challenges caused by Covid-19 to continue supporting vulnerable communities, as well as details of some new projects.

The Halcrow Foundation provides financial resources to projects that make a tangible and lasting improvement to the lives of people

suffering poverty and hardship. Our work focuses on:

- Improving access to education, healthcare and safe water
- Increasing household food, health and income security by supporting livelihood development

Embracing our engineering heritage, we value a disciplined and project orientated mindset and we apply this rigour and way of thinking to all of our activities.

**“ More than £2 million has been spent on projects since our charity was established following the Asian tsunami on Boxing Day 2004. ”**

Our board of trustees is made up of former Halcrow employees, and most have been involved with the foundation from the beginning in early 2005. We've kept up our work

throughout the pandemic, meeting virtually on a regular basis.

In 2020, by building more partnerships with organisations that share our values, we brought lasting direct benefits to 9,193 people, with a further 15,542 people benefitting indirectly from Halcrow Foundation's support.

In these pages, you can read more about some of the ways we're preserving the legacy of Halcrow by bringing transformative improvement to communities around the world.



Education and training empowers special needs kids in Sri Lanka



24-hour helpline supports victims of domestic abuse in Swindon



My story: from homelessness to a brighter future with Groundswell

## Africa

### Education and play



The playground will add an exciting element to learning.

## Fun and games in Zambia

We've extended funding to Baraka Community Partnerships to enable the building of a second dormitory and a playground at Baraka's learning centre in rural Zambia.

The learning centre was built with funding from Halcrow Foundation. Since opening its doors in 2019, the centre has welcomed children from 20 local schools to classes such as reading and basic computer literacy. Community groups and workshops also make use of its facilities, which include an IT room, library and classrooms.

The new dormitory will help increase the centre's catchment

area, and develop teacher training programmes. It will also allow some of the older children from more rural schools to access study workshops and holiday activities.

Playgrounds are rare in Zambia, so the new 33-metre by 40-metre space will add an exciting element to learning for the children, and feed into the centre's ethos of 'healthy body, healthy mind'.

The structures and equipment in the playground will use locally-sourced timber, and the facility will include a small, supervised area to allow for after-school sports and games.



The new dormitory means more children can access study workshops and holiday activities.

## Africa

### Education and sanitation



Permanent hand-washing stations help combat the spread of Covid-19.

# Supporting education and sanitation in Zambia

Overcrowded schools, lack of teachers, and poor sanitation all contribute to the high number of children and young people who don't finish their education in Zambia. So we've supported a project that meets the sanitation and education needs of almost 500 pupils at Chitukuko Community School near Lusaka, giving families better access to education and training, and the chance of a brighter future.

The project is run by Build It International, a charity that builds schools and clinics in Zambia, and runs construction skills training programmes for young people.

Our funding enabled the building of separate, private toilet facilities for girls, which is a proven method for keeping older girls in school once they reach puberty. We also funded

additional hand-washing facilities to promote good hygiene practice and to reduce the spread of sickness, including Covid-19.

The remote location of the school makes it difficult and expensive for teachers to commute to the area. Our funding also paid for the construction of two teachers' houses with private latrines. These facilities will attract more qualified teachers, significantly improving educational standards at the school.

### Impact of Covid-19

When the Zambian government imposed lockdown measures in March, building work at the school continued but with fewer people on site. Hand-washing facilities were upgraded, and training programmes put on hold.

Crowded urban schools in Zambia are at high risk from the spread of Covid-19, and rural schools have a lower risk of transmission, but are poorly resourced.

In July, Build It International launched the Safe Hands Appeal to provide permanent hand-washing facilities to 18 schools near Lusaka, benefitting up to 20,000 children.

Halcrow Foundation trustees agreed that money saved from the Chitukuko project could be diverted to this project instead, which funded five hand-washing stations.

Each station has the capacity for 18 children to wash their hands at the same time, serving 500 children at school. This funding also helped train Build It International construction graduates to deliver the project.



Separate, private toilet facilities for girls.



*Women making fuel-burning stoves, which will reduce the need for firewood.*

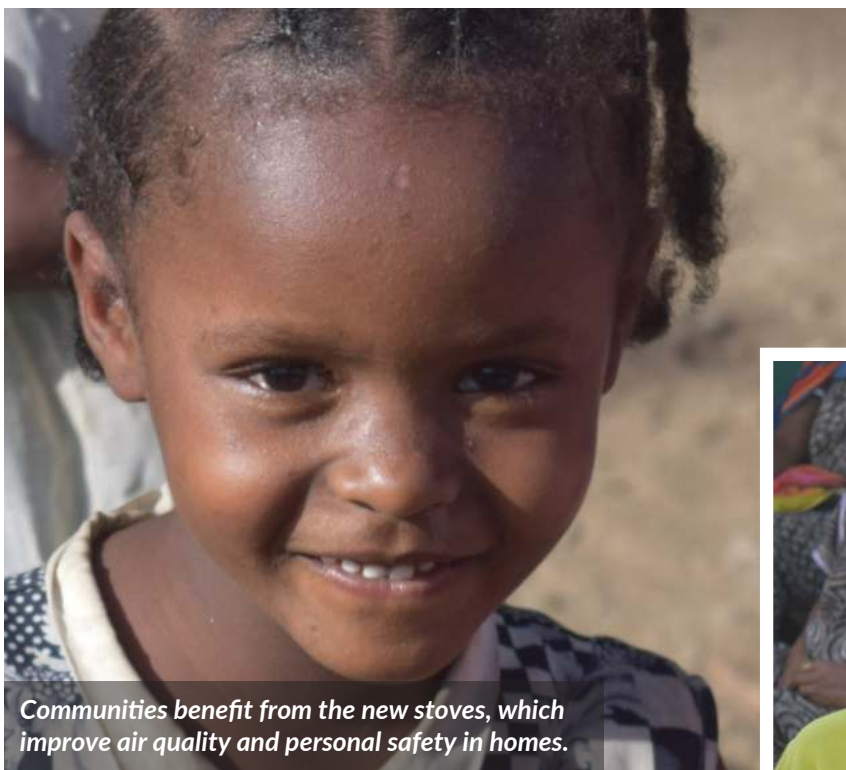
# Fuel-saving stoves in Ethiopia

We're funding the creation of small businesses to manufacture and sell fuel-saving stoves in Metema Woreda, Ethiopia. The project improves income for 300 women, while reducing firewood consumption and forest deprivation.

Working with Action Ethiopia and its sister organisation, Sunarma, we're funding businesses in three rural communities to produce fuel-saving stoves. These are an alternative to open fires, and reduce the need for firewood and time spent collecting wood for charcoal. They also create less smoke than an open fire, improving air quality and personal safety in homes. The businesses are run by women and are formally registered, which gives them access to a savings and credits system, and a degree of financial security.

The project also enables rural communities to earn income from harvesting frankincense and myrrh, while protecting the natural environment. It builds on a three-year Comic Relief-funded programme to protect forests in north-western Ethiopia that provide protection from the Sahara.

In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in Ethiopia, we're also working with Sunarma to increase the capacity of local health centres. Our funding provided medical supplies, personal protective equipment and training to three centres and 20 healthcare workers, benefitting rural communities around Metema Woreda.



*Communities benefit from the new stoves, which improve air quality and personal safety in homes.*



**Africa**

**Enterprise  
and farming**

# Microfinancing female enterprises in Zambia

We're funding MicroLoan Foundation (MLF) to provide free financial and business training and small, affordable loans to women in the Kapiri district of Zambia. This allows them to pay for food, healthcare and education for themselves and their families.

All applications are assessed to ensure the women have solid business plans and aren't borrowing more than they can afford. No loan collateral or previous business experience is required, and MLF never repossesses assets in case of default.

Instead, the women are given free financial and business training in their villages, where locally based officers help them form support

groups. Due to Covid-19, the Kapiri branch adjusted to smaller group sizes, shorter meetings, and outdoor spaces.

Despite this time of upheaval and uncertainty, the programme has exceeded expectations. More women have been empowered to run businesses effectively and make savings, which has generated steady incomes to rely on.

Our funding supports around 1,000 women to take part in the programme, with an estimated 4,000 children gaining better access to healthcare and education as a result. These opportunities are particularly valuable for girls, who are more likely to be deprived of the chance to fulfill their potential.



*Micro loan support enables women to access better education and healthcare for their families.*



*Women receive free financial and business training in their villages.*



My story

# Florence's story

*Florence owns a successful tailoring business.*

A determined and driven entrepreneur, Florence was already running a business making school uniforms when she joined her local MicroLoan group. She had been operating for 10 years, but was still not making enough money to put food on the table for her family, which includes six children and two grandchildren.

Since taking out a microfinance loan, Florence's profits have more than doubled. She also benefits from business and finance training, which has taught her to reinvest her profits to buy more stock. She is delighted she can meet her customers' needs.

Florence and her husband are also now able to buy nutritious food for their family, and pay for their children's school fees.

When schools closed due to Covid-19 restrictions, Florence's business took a hit. But as schools reopen, she is confident her business will recover.

Thanks to the Microloan Foundation, supported by funding from the Halcrow Foundation, Florence now has a secure future and dreams of opening her own tailoring school to inspire the next generation of hopeful entrepreneurs.

“ Florence was one of the first women to join the MicroLoan Foundation project in Kapiri, Zambia, which is funded by Halcrow Foundation. This is her story.

*A farmer prepares the hard soil for crops.*



## Deep-bed farming in Malawi

Farming communities in Manyamula, Malawi, are well on their way to self-sufficiency thanks to our project with Tiyeni, a charity that trains and supports farmers in a deep-bed method of farming.

Unlike Malawi's traditional method of farming, which is considered to be both labour intensive and environmentally unfriendly, Tiyeni's deep-bed farming technique improves drainage and helps protect soil and plants from extreme weather caused by climate change.

As the project moves into its third year, farmers are refining their skills and creating new ways of working. Many are extending their fields and have enough profit to buy more materials, such as maize seeds. Compost making is now a well-established practice, and Tiyeni's Pass on Pig scheme has also grown, with new generations of piglets passed on to more farmers to produce manure for their crops.

Despite Covid-19 restrictions, Tiyeni's training department continues to operate, contacting farmers by phone and WhatsApp, and visiting the fields while observing safe distances. Farmers also follow social distancing guidelines for in-person training and meetings.

**UK**

**Care and support**



*Sophie's role as a dedicated triage worker is funded by Halcrow Foundation.*

24 hr / all year round helpline  
**01793 610610**  
swadomesticabuse.org

**LOVE  
SHOULD  
NOT  
HURT.**

## OUR SERVICES

- 24hr Helpline
- Emergency Specialist Refuge Accommodation
- GP Drop in Service
- Specialist IDVA based at Great Western Hospital
- Recovery Programmes for adults and children
- Training and Consultancy Awareness Programmes in Schools & Colleges

## Helping victims of domestic abuse in the UK

Lockdowns have put extra pressure on many households in the UK. This has caused greater demand for the services provided by Swindon Domestic Abuse Support Service, which supports female and male victims of domestic abuse.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also temporarily closed the Wiltshire charity's shop in Swindon town centre, and this has had a big impact on fundraising.

So Halcrow Foundation has stepped in to fund a year's salary for a triage worker to answer the charity's helpline. As a first point of contact, the helpline receives around 50 or 60 calls per day. This number has increased by 41 per cent since April 2020, largely due to the effects of lockdown.

The helpline is answered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year by professional staff at the charity's refuge as part of their already-heavy workload.

The dedicated triage worker takes calls and completes referral forms and risk assessments and decides if and how cases need to be referred on for further support.

Depending on the outcome of these referrals, women can come into the Swindon Domestic Abuse refuge, with their children, if they have any, or remain in the community.

Male victims of domestic abuse are also supported in the community and, if needed, will be helped to access male-only refuge accommodation.

Callers will now have a dedicated point of contact able to offer support, establish a safety plan and signpost them to other support services, if necessary. This not only increases a person's safety, but potentially reduces the risk of domestic homicides (currently around 100 per year nationally). It also reduces the need for emergency services like the police and hospitals.

UK

Health and  
wellbeing

# Supporting homeless people through the pandemic

We've extended our funding of Groundswell's Peer Progression Programme which supports staff and volunteers who have experienced homelessness, to deliver essential health services to people in the UK without a home.

This enables the peers to contribute to society and help create solutions to homelessness, while receiving support for a range of issues including finding stable housing, claiming benefits and overcoming debt.

As Groundswell grows as an organisation, so does demand for this programme. Restrictions imposed as a result of Covid-19 have also increased pressure on the charity.

Before the pandemic, Groundswell's peer team were used to face-to-face support and frequent interaction with colleagues and friends in Groundswell's open, friendly office.

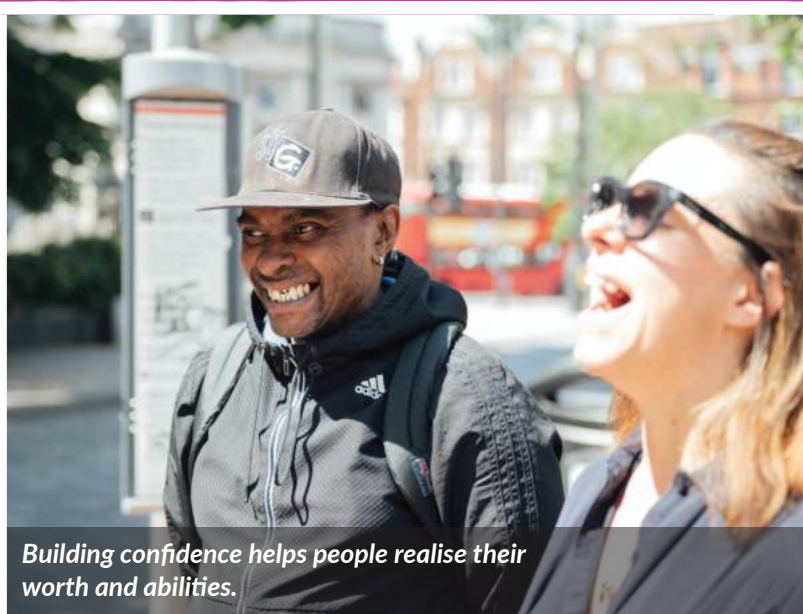
During Covid-19 restrictions, Groundswell's peer progression team has tried to replicate this friendly culture with frequent phone calls to staff and volunteers to check in on their well-being, while continuing to offer progression support.

Several peer caseworkers also worked on London's homeless Covid-19 response, including visiting people who had been moved off the streets during lockdown and into hotels. One staff member, who used to focus on Hepatitis C testing and treatment support, tested more than 100 people for Covid-19 in one day.

“Our renewed funding is part of a three-year plan and focuses on peer progression. It continues to pay towards the salary of a Progression Manager, and funds associated activities to help staff and volunteers move towards a sustainable, independent future.”



Helping staff and volunteers to identify their goals and overcome barriers.



Building confidence helps people realise their worth and abilities.



## My story

# Mat's story

“ As a Groundswell volunteer, Mat benefited from its Peer Progression Programme which is part-funded by Halcrow Foundation. He is now employed as a full-time member of the team. Here, he tells us his story.

Mat is now employed by Groundswell.

“ I can't express just how cathartic it has been to find an organisation like Groundswell where I don't have to hide stuff, like my issues with addiction, mental health and homelessness. Instead, I'm encouraged to talk about those experiences and utilise them in the work we're doing to help others who are still out there.

At 40 I owned a four-bedroom house in Brixton outright. I was set so I thought, for life. But life can be fragile and so it proved; I lost everything and spiralled into depression. Over the next six years I went through every stage of homelessness, including a stint on the streets.

Eventually I said enough is enough. I set a date to be clean by, and things started to change. I got the counselling I desperately needed. From this counselling my case worker got me onto journalism training with the Pavement magazine, which took me to Groundswell and where I am today – working a full-time job doing something I have a genuine passion for.

I knew I loved Groundswell from when I first met them. The trust and support you get from your colleagues and the progression coaches at Groundswell is considered, but the human touch it's delivered with makes you want to engage.

When I first joined Groundswell, I realised how the experience of being homeless had robbed me of my sense of identity, confidence in myself and my ability to use my initiative. Half a dozen years of being blamed and feeling useless had done that.

Groundswell's holistic approach has taught me how to use my life experience to help others. This, coupled with the research and admin skills I've picked up on the job and various courses I've taken, have given me back my sense of self, as well as a valuable skillset.

**South Asia**

**Education and  
development**

## Empowering special needs kids in Sri Lanka

We're supporting the education and development of up to 250 children in Sri Lanka who have a range of special needs and learning disabilities.

Social Economical and Environmental Developer (SEED) supports marginalised communities and their children in the Vavuniya District.

The non-government organisation is working with the District Education Authority to mainstream special needs education in schools, including establishing special education units and training teachers.

We're funding its project to support 35 children at the Empowerment Campus, a special needs school managed by SEED, and 174 children in special education units across 32 mainstream schools.

The children have a range of needs and learning disabilities including autism, Down's syndrome, cerebral

palsy, and hearing and speech impairments. SEED's pioneering work in special needs education is transforming their learning and development, as well motivating parents to participate in their schooling with support from SEED's trained staff.

Depending on their abilities, these children can progress to learning vocational skills such as leatherwork, carpentry and jewellery making. Some also move to special education units in mainstream schools.

We're also supporting SEED's work in setting up special education units in mainstream schools and help establish a sustainable framework for special needs education in the district.

With limited government support available, SEED offers workshops and training programmes for teachers and volunteers to help integrate students with hearing and speech impairments.





Supporting children with a range of learning needs and disabilities.



The children are led through morning exercise and prayer.



Supporting marginalised children and their families.



SEED's annual sports meeting for special needs children in Vavuniya.

### EDA-E Ethiopia

Entoto and Tullu Nacha villages in Ethiopia will benefit from improved water supplies, thanks to Halcrow Foundation funds. The projects were run by Environmentalists Development Association-Ethiopia (EDA-E), and involved developing a community spring. Local people helped with construction, and villagers were trained to maintain and manage the water supply to ensure the projects are sustainable. Clean water benefits the villagers in many ways, including better health and hygiene, increased income and improved food security.



### British Asian Trust, India and Pakistan

We have continued our successful partnership with the British Asian Trust, supporting the Women's Economic Empowerment Programme alongside other funders, including the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.

The programme equips more than 12,000 marginalised women from urban and rural areas in India and Pakistan with the skills, materials and opportunities to find work or grow their own businesses.



Receiving business training and support.

## Prison Phoenix Trust, UK

The Prison Phoenix Trust (PPT) continues to support prisoners and staff in the UK and Republic of Ireland through teaching yoga and meditation via workshops, correspondence, books and newsletters. Our funding supports PPT's work with young offenders, providing opportunities for self-reflection and changing the way they behave and interact with others. It was one of the few interventions that prisons were able to continue throughout lockdowns.



## Karuna Trust, India

We're supporting The Women's Livelihood project run by the Karuna Trust and India NGO partner, Jan Sahas, which helps women born into manual scavenging in Madhya Pradesh retrain in garment and incense making skills.

Manual scavenging is usually done by women and involves disposing of human excrement from the toilets in their community. The job is usually passed down through families and brings huge health risks, as well as caste-based discrimination to the woman's family, including her children.

Before the coronavirus pandemic, the Women's Livelihood project was transforming the lives of hundreds of women who worked in collective and individual centres.

When India went into lockdown in March, skills training sessions had to be postponed and production paused. However, training was rescheduled, and the women were supported by telephone instead. Women were also encouraged to produce face masks for sale in their villages, which helped them sustain some of their income.



# The Halcrow Foundation our journey



Trustee Andrew Yeoward talks about how the Halcrow Foundation has evolved since its inception in 2005. Andrew is a chartered civil engineer who worked for Halcrow for more than 40 years. During this time, he specialised in major bridge crossings in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the USA. He has worked in many countries and cultures, leading multi-disciplinary and multinational teams on projects such as the Second Severn Crossing, the Øresund Link in Scandinavia, and a major bridge in Bandung, Indonesia. Since retiring in 2016, he continues working as a freelance consultant for large bridge projects across the world.

“ When the Indian Ocean Tsunami struck in 2004, there was a huge outpouring of support from Halcrow staff because many of us had lived and worked in the countries affected, and had strong connections to the communities there.

At the time, I was working in Java, Indonesia, and I offered to help. Working in transportation instead of water systems and rehabilitation projects meant I wasn't usually close to community aid and support. It felt good to be involved in the guts of improving people's lives for a change, which I believed was what Halcrow was all about. That led to an invitation to become a trustee of the foundation.

We formalised the Halcrow Foundation as a charity in 2005, and the company supported us with a percentage of its profits. Working for Halcrow meant we could see first-hand how tough life is in some countries, but were fairly

constrained in what we could do. The foundation allowed us to change this.

We worked on some fantastic projects during those first years, including providing a fishing vessel for a village in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, and reconstructing houses in Sri Lanka. When Halcrow was bought by CH2M Hill in 2011, the US company already had a charity foundation, but we wanted to continue with the Halcrow Foundation so we could carry on supporting people in need. Our financial situation changed too because we lost our main source of funding. Over the course of two years we negotiated a portion of Halcrow's sale proceeds with the Halcrow Trust, which has enabled us to continue our work in perpetuity.

These events forced us to think more carefully about Halcrow Foundation's purpose. We formulated a new strategy as a truly independent charity. I was particularly involved in corporate

governance, which involved formalising the principles we live by, and the policies for selecting and funding projects. These policies demonstrate to the Halcrow diaspora that we're looking after the foundation properly. Their money is in good hands.

I'm really proud of the projects we've supported, and I hope our work continues to reflect Halcrow's legacy as one of the UK's greatest engineering companies. When I was 15, a school friend told me about his uncle who was a civil engineer. It was a job that required maths, physics and lots of travel, and I thought it sounded like a great career. And it has been. I'd recommend it to anyone. When I crossed rivers in China, Bangladesh or South America to build a bridge, often the big story was how we would make it across the river in the first place. This is how the foundation works. We learn of a problem, and then work together with partners and communities to solve it.