



## WORKING TOGETHER SO ALL CHILDREN IN CHELTENHAM THRIVE

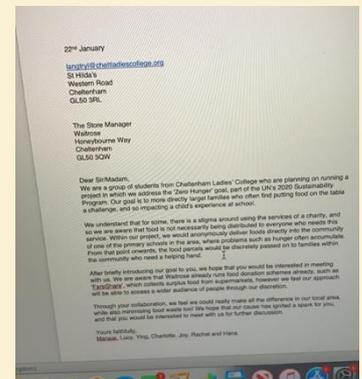
--The Footprints from Cheltenham Ladies' College

### Summary of our project

Our project was divided into two aspects: raising awareness of the **No Child Left Behind Campaign** and assisting families with **essential food and hygiene items**, helping to meet the **Zero Hunger and Good Health and Wellbeing goals**. The campaign, which was run last year, brought attention to the number of children living in poverty in Gloucestershire. It is predicted that there are **4,300 children and young people** growing up in poverty. These children are at greater risk of suffering challenges such as being victims of crime, poorer education, higher rates of exclusion, and being open to social care, to name a few. We first saw Ms Charlotte Blanch, the headmistress of **Saint Gregory's Primary School**, on a BBC documentary, 'Inside Out West'. She spoke about the challenges of having a low income in what is perceived to be a rich town like Cheltenham. We really wanted to work with her after watching the documentary because her initiative was a key factor in addressing the social problems in our community.

We centred our project around Saint Gregory's, which we felt was a hub of our very immediate community, and where we could make the biggest impact. Ms Blanch explained to us that families on low incomes will often miss certain food items and hygiene products off their shopping list as a way to limit their weekly bills. Thus, she put in place **a collection point for these families to alleviate some of their burden**. Such a gesture may be seemingly small but is meaningful for those in need. From then on, we **wrote to many supermarkets, food stores and cafés** asking whether they would be able to donate their food items which have been left over from the end of a business day. **Chaplais Kitchen very generously agreed to help us. They were also happy to be reducing their food waste**, which is often inhibited by Health and Safety regulations.

Our team name, **Footprints**, represents our mission to reach out to our **community**. One such way was through the food deliveries and collections. The most important aspect to this process was the anonymity. This method of distribution is a more sensitive and empathetic approach to reach a wider audience as there is no shame involved in comparison to the Food Banks. By the end of our project, we had delivered **a mix of 69 sandwiches and baguettes, and 102 pastries and pasties by our 16 volunteers who collected the foods during the evening and delivered them during their lunch breaks**. Our project was unfortunately inhibited by some Health and Safety regulations, namely the concern over delivery and storage of the food. Our school decided to shut down the operation after 6 weeks. Despite the setback, we instead **focused our efforts to raise the awareness for the No Child Left Behind Campaign**.



This brought about another goal, to give **Easter eggs** to children at Saint Gregory's who might not necessarily get one. By doing so, we hoped to increase their happiness quotient and help them feel integrated within their peer group and community. In pursuit of this goal, we ran various sales around College. This included **selling handmade jewellery made out of dried resin and baked goods**. Through this experience, we learnt how to run a book of payments and how to best advertise our goods. Our customers found it awe-inspiring how their money was going directly to help better the community! We also managed an **Instagram account, @footprintsgsl, through which we successfully raised awareness** for the Campaign. Our efforts drew the attention of many of our friends who donated generously. Our principal, Ms Jardine-Young, also contacted Ms Blanch for further cooperation and ordered baked goods from us for the school staff.



In total, we spent an estimated **60 hours** on the project and **raised £172**. This left us with some remaining funds with which we bought washing powders and tablets. We delivered these goods to Saint Gregory's on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March, in time for the closing of schools the following day! In doing so, we hope that this helped families prepare for isolation in the coming weeks. We also wished to cheer up the children's spirits during Easter, especially in this darker time of lockdown. Hopefully, they could realise the love and solidarity from the Cheltenham community.



### Our journey of learning

We have developed **evaluative and practical thinking skills** as a result of planning and executing our project. We understood the SDG goals better: aiming to end all forms of hunger and malnutrition by 2030, making sure all people—especially children—have sufficient and nutritious food all year. By ending hunger, health and well-being will be greatly improved. This led us to a realisation. Instead of contacting big supermarkets such as Waitrose, Tesco and M&S, which were already in cooperation with similar charity organisations, we should focus our efforts on local coffee shops. We also recognise that depending on money donations was not **sustainable**.

We also developed **communication skills**. When going around the boarding houses for fundraising, we not only managed to raise awareness of the campaign but also persuaded others to help people in need. Thus, raising a significant amount of money successfully.

At first, **the knowledge of underprivileged areas in wealthy towns like Cheltenham** was shocking to us. However, it led us to the realisation of the significance of economic inequality. We then became much more **aware and grateful of our privileges and decided to pay back and contribute to our community**.

**Our biggest challenge was learning the importance of organisation and cooperation.** During the project, some arguments were raised on the subject of our responsibilities and titles in the group. After some long discussions, we established the principle that **empathy is essential, and we need to compromise and care for each other**. This allowed us to resolve our conflict and work as a single organism, which greatly helped us in the following bake sales and fundraising events. In addition, we also realised the importance of being **well-organised** as group. We carefully recorded the members responsible for each day's meal delivery and the items we had managed to deliver using excel. As a result, **each member strived to fulfil their responsibility and our group's delivery was perfectly on time as a whole**.



Through the competition, **we not only learnt teamwork but also realised the privileges we enjoy unknowingly. We were also filled with the confidence to change the world for the better.** In a world filled with ignorance and arrogance, empathy is a gift to everyone around us. Using this, we can understand those in need as well as learn how to help them.

**“Yes, the profound reforms the society needs to tackle challenges may only be achieved through political battles, but every bit of kindness count. Only when one flower of smile flourishes can there be thousands stretching out to the end of our horizons.”**

