

Rush for the Goals

Supporting Education, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene at Mwayi Orphan Care in Malawi



Our Global Goals group at Saint Andrew's International High School (SAIntS) consists of Ilana Morse, Sage Bertrand and Junaid Nassah. At the start of our project, we spent 2 sessions (each one hour long) brainstorming ideas and decided that our project name was "Rush to the Goals" so we could be flexible and change plans at any time without having to change our name. Our school already has contacts with Mwayi Orphan Day Care Centre. This centre feeds, waters and teaches over 120 orphans during the day but

the children return to their guardians' homes by night. We decided that we wanted to help them. The Centre is situated in Ndirande, which is a slum in our city of Blantyre. There is no running water and the centre has one tap of running water that can be used for dishes or laundry. Houses and buildings are crowded close together, and poverty is extreme. By talking with the staff members of Mwayi, we decided that the best way to help them was by focusing on three goals: "Good health and well being" (SDG 3), "Quality Education" (SDG 4) and "Clean water and sanitation" (SDG 6).



In the beginning before we had visited the centre, we thought we might raise money for sustainable containers to store clean water. We then, went to the Orphan Day Care Centre to take a tour and to talk to the director about any other needs they had. As we were on our tour, we saw that they did not have enough mats for all the children to sit on and most of the children had no shoes. The director informed us that he would like us to help provide the children with uniforms to decrease the wear and tear of their 'normal' clothes. After much consideration we decided that the fact that the children had no shoes was a problem that maybe we could help with because the Orphan Day Care Centre is located in a very filthy and unclean part of the city. We also decided to maintain our first activity of finding water containers, to help make water available for drinking and

hand washing when the main supply goes off, as is often the case.

To obtain shoes, we thought of asking SAIntS students for gently used shoes, but then decided that their shoes would be too big. We therefore, approached a feeder school (Phoenix International Primary School) and asked if we could come to the school and talk to the students and ask for donations of shoes in an assembly. The headteacher, Mr Morse, responded very quickly and told us that he would be happy if we came in. We decided on a date and went in on a Friday and asked all the students (and teachers) for shoes and also told them why people need to wear shoes and told them about the orphans and the needs they have. We also sent home a note to the parents telling them about our collection. By the end of the week we had 147 pairs and stopped there because there were no more shoes being donated. This was enough to give at least one pair for each of the 120 children. Having shoes reduces the chance of children cutting their feet but also protects against infections from helminths, which can burrow into their feet from this dirty environment.



St Andrew's International High School, Malawi



We decided the best way to fundraise for the water storage was to make and sell bottle cap badges with water droplets painted on them. So for two weeks we attempted to make them but after making almost no progress we decided that it was taking up valuable time. We eventually found an alternative fundraiser. We asked permission from our school to hold a “Red Accessory Day,” on Valentine’s Day. Students who came to school wearing red accessories had to pay MWK1000 (£1.10). Through this fundraiser we raised MWK 70,000 (£78), which we used to buy containers for water storage as we had initially intended. However, in light of the Coronavirus, we also decided to focus on sanitation and hand washing. Therefore, we needed to buy supplies for washing hands (because the one tap at Mwayi Orphan Centre is insufficient for 120 children to wash their hands). We bought 6 jugs, 6 water basins, 36 cups, and 4 drinking water containers.

The jugs and cups are for pouring clean water onto children’s hands while they wash them, and the basins are for catching the rinse water. We also received donations of soap (150 bars) from Candlex and 25kg of chlorine (to treat over 1700 litres of water) and buckets with taps from Mr Ferreira (a local business man) to provide to Mwayi and the children.



We contacted Taonga Mwapasa who teaches children about hand washing to assist us in presenting our donations and teaching the orphans about proper hand washing to reduce the spread of disease such as COVID19. On March 23rd we went to Mwayi with all the donations: the shoes, chlorine, bars of soap, basins, jugs, cups, long-term water storage containers and smaller storage containers with taps. Taonga asked us to bring paint. She used it to cover her hands with paint, and then she demonstrated how bacteria and viruses could be spread by high-fiving other people and touching her

face. Then she showed that the paint wouldn’t come off if she only used water. When she used soap and water, she could get rid of the paint. She had the children sing happy birthday as she scrubbed to show how long it takes to get rid of germs. Then we painted all the children’s hands and had them make a mark on a piece of paper. We wrote on the piece of paper (in Chichewa – the local language) “ Wash your hands. Kill Coronavirus.” We hung it on the wall along with other posters to help them remember what they learned. Before we left, we gave every orphan and the teachers a bar of soap to take home.



During our visit we also saw that the toilets at Mwayi were full and could not be safely used, so we got a further donation from a charity called FROM Scotland to get a company to empty the toilets and make them safe for use. This will also prevent children from getting diarrhoeal diseases.

Mr Farao, the Director of Mwayi, messaged us to ask for more leaflets to help spread advice about Corona virus to people in Ndirande. We provided these leaflets. He also told us that, “the children are very thankful for the donations and that they have now made a group called the house to house hand washing group who are teaching their fellow friends about hand washing with soap.”

We learned so much from undertaking this project. We learned how poor the neighbourhood is next to our own school, and how important it is for us to know how people are living and how we can help them. It was also important for us to realise that although we had some preconceived ideas about what Mwayi needed, it was more important for us to talk to people there to see what they really needed! Something we would definitely do in the future. We also learned from Taonga how to communicate with children about how to improve hygiene practices even when you have very little, and make this fun and interesting.