*Salut-malawi*



*Sanitary Aid and Ladies Underwear to Malawi*

*Newsletter No 73*

*July 2018*

Dear Friends,

We are happy to report that the second year of our project enjoyed tremendous support from many organisations and individuals and resulted in 30 cartons for the Malawi Container Project. **That’s almost twice as much underwear and more than four times as many reusable sanitary pads as we sent in 2017!**

### As our efforts got started in February we sought feedback on the supplies we sent last year. In March *Maggie Nyoni*, Head Teacher at *Golomoti* Secondary School and previously at *Mkomachi* Secondary School, got in touch through Brian Wilkins to say:

*Firstly, as at present, nobody is staying in the hostels but starting from September this year, some girls under the "go back to school campaign" will be using the newly constructed hostels.*

*If assisted with re-usable pads, they are very easy to use and are the best for our village girls who use torn pieces of old clothes as pads. I call them village girls because Golomoti is a remote area and our learners do come from villages. The re-usable pads are most ideal because they will use them for many months or years hence saving the little money they have for other school needs.*

*As for panties and bras, you may pack them the same way as last year. We have no problem with any arrangement.*

*If I am lucky today, I will interview & record some girls for you & Jacqueline to see for yourself and perhaps [realise] how things are for our girls.*

*Let me thank you for the effort put into [this] project for our sake.   May God remember you always.*

*Maggie*

Maggie’s words helped us develop an outreach element to the project. We specifically targeted schools in the Sevenoaks/Tonbridge/Tunbridge Wells area to collect donations and raise awareness among secondary school students of the plight of their peers in countries like Malawi.

Four of the seven schools we contacted responded very generously. Our sincere thanks go to the teachers and students of **St Margaret Clitherow** **Primary School**, **Sevenoaks School**, **Bennett Memorial Diocesan School** and **Tonbridge Girls Grammar School**. Besides donating dozens of boxes of underwear and soap, they donated £1,210 towards the purchase of reusable sanitary pads. This represents more than 40% of all the money we raised. We are grateful to Reverend Rachael Knapp for allowing us to talk about our project to Year 10 of Bennett Memorial Diocesan School on 8 May 2018.

Sadly, snow hampered our Fisher Hall collection sessions leading to very few donations. However, posts by Susannah on the Tonbridge Daily Facebook page asking for support of our 25 March collection caused a stir as one person criticised us for helping girls abroad. Those comments drew quite a backlash and in our final session we were deluged with donations, collecting more in that last session than we had in the previous three put together!

The SALUT-Malawi team met on 6 April 2018 to sort the underwear donations according to type and size, removing all cardboard and plastic from new items, and pack them in cartons ready for shipment to Malawi. There was a much greater proportion of girls’ sizes donated this year, perhaps due to the schools’ outreach, which helped us to more specifically address girls’ needs this year.

Using donations of £2,765, we spent £2,770.56 to purchase 104 packs of 10 reusable sanitary pads each from *Cheeky Wipes* who renewed our 35% discount. *Helen* even threw in an additional 100 pads at no extra charge! We are truly grateful to *Helen* and her team who go such a long way to help girls in Malawi and other African countries to manage their menstruation and so continue their education.

All 1,140 reusable sanitary pads arrived on 9 April 2018. Using resealable freezer bags, we prepared sets of 5 pads of varying sizes, with each bag containing at least one large pad. This resulted in 228 bags which were packed into 6 cartons, each containing around 36 bags.

**As of 20 April 2018 we had received £2855 in donations**. After spending £10 on freezer bags as well as bin bags to line the cartons, SALUT-Malawi has £617 in the Malawi Twin account to buy more reusable pads next year.

The need that exists in Malawi exceeds what we can collect in one year. To help us decide on the destination of each of our cartons, Brian provided us with a breakdown of the student population of the seven secondary schools supported by Malawi-Twin. This showed that of 2,855 students, 1,161 or **40%** were girls. The disparity is greater in some schools than others. It will be interesting to see if SALUT-Malawi’s assistance brings about a more equal balance of girls and boys.

The six cartons of reusable pads and the two cartons of panties in girls’ sizes were sent to two secondary schools with large numbers of female students - *Golomoti* with 233 girls and *Mkomachi* with 171 girls. The rest of the cartons were divided among Chiringa Parish, St Joseph’s Secondary School in Karonga Parish, Changoima Parish, St Montford Parish, and the Good Shepherd Secondary School in Njuli Parish. Next year we will focus the reusable pads’ distribution on different schools.

This is a summary of our more comprehensive report which can be found on the Malawi Twin website - malawi-twin.org/projects

We are very grateful to everyone who supported our efforts this year and look forward to working with you again in 2019!

Sincerely,

Claire Churchill, Alexandra Lopez, Maria Neves, Jacqueline Nunes and Angela Saltaren-Ghent