

St. Mary's Africa

February 2020

Edition 1

Thank you for all the generosity of the pupils, parents and staff of St Mary's School in Rickmansworth.

The three countries who have received donations from St Mary's are Malawi, Zimbabwe and Nigeria.

Malawi

Malawi is a landlocked country in Southern Africa and is amongst the world's least developed nations. The village of Makhanga - which St Mary's School has been supporting with donations of clothes and school uniform, is situated in the southern region of Malawi.

Makhanga was badly affected in 2019 by Cyclone Idai which passed through Malawi causing devastating floods before reaching Zimbabwe and Mozambique. It became one of the worst tropical cyclones on record to hit the continent.

The people living in Makhanga are very poor, relying on basic subsistence farming for their food. In the aftermath of the cyclone, many people in the villages had lost not only their homes but also personal possessions and food stores. Crops were devastated by flooding and they do not have the means to purchase maize seeds to replant their crops. All this has heavily impacted on the community.

In recent weeks, the rains have started and once again Makhanga is faced with further flooding.

There is an urgent need of clothing for both adults and children. The children have no school clothes.



This is Ruth who is 13 – she has just started school in Year 1. Thank you to the parent who donated this dress – she wanted to model it for us!

The distribution of the donations is managed by Louisa, and she sent the following message, “the people of Makhanga are extremely grateful for all the St Mary's school uniforms and other donations of clothing received to date. Please keep up the good work, we love you.”



Unfortunately there were not enough school uniforms or clothing to go around and children who came later had to be turned away – this was one such group.



The little girl at the back of the picture in a black top was crying as she got nothing to wear.

Someone donated the blue dress and Hawaiian garland which are proudly worn by one of the girls but look at the other children – the only clothes they possess, are the ones they are wearing. The boy to the right of picture with the green t-shirt has two huge holes in his shorts

Zimbabwe

Once known as the continent's breadbasket for its fertile farmland, Zimbabwe today is ranked amongst the world's poorest countries. The country has gone from bad to worse with basically nothing left of anything – water shortages, no food, no medicine, power is often off, petrol stations are dry and banks have no money.

A village called Mutya near the town of Gweru in Zimbabwe has received bicycles and adult clothing donated by families and staff at St Mary's.

Nigeria

The distribution of donations from St Mary's to Nigeria is managed by Jaafaru. After the previous donations from St Mary's he sent the following feedback - "May I express my gratitude and appreciation to the entire students, parents, teachers, especially the school authority that made charitable donations available to some of the most needy people in Nigeria."

When St Mary's Nursery closed in September, all nursery furniture, toys, books and equipment were collected by Jaafaru and shipped to the Chinade in Nigeria. This consignment has arrived and the photos are below.



Meet Jaafaru (Jaffa)

Jaffa is a theatre nurse at Hillingdon Hospital. Jaffa has been involved in supporting his community in Chinade, Nigeria.



Meet Louisa

Louisa is a mother who lives in Coventry and grew up in Makhanga. She is pictured with her granny who is 100 years old. This is a rarity as most people die much younger in such a poor community. Louisa travels frequently to Malawi to support her village and will be returning there in March and has asked for further donations of school uniform, clothing and shoes to distribute. Any donations received will be collected after half term.



Louisa is travelling across the river to Makhanga village. Due to flooding, the only way to get there and transport the donations is by boat and then by bike.



Meet Elizabeth

Elizabeth is a carer and lives in Chorleywood. She also travels frequently back to her home in Mutya to support her village. Elizabeth is pictured balancing a bag of shoes on her head and getting ready for her trip to Mutya with some of the donations received.

