Natalya's Fund News

Lent 2023

Making Room to Learn

Reducing average class size from 130 to 87 at Bughungu Primary School, Uganda

8 February 2023

The first new classroom was completed on budget and on schedule. Our sincere appreciation goes to Teddy, her builder and all the team who worked on the project.

We have decided to aim to complete this project. The next stage is to construct the second classroom on the foundations already laid. The estimated cost of that build is £4,630 at the current exchange rate. It would be good if we forward the money just before Easter, i.e. in Holy Week (w/c 3 April). Construction will then start just before the end of their second term and be completed during the ensuing school holiday, which is from 5-28 May.

Teddy expressed her delight with the decision. "God bless you all ... thankful to all your members about the decision of completing the project. God bless your team members and all works."

Cleaner soap for export

A sustainable business in soap manufacture, run under the guidance of Lilongwe Youth Organisation (LYO), which provides much-needed employment and training

15 February 2023

Export

STOP PRESS

LYO has been nominated to be one of the organisations to display its products at the National Trade Fair scheduled for Thursday 2 March in Blantyre, at which the president is to be guest of honour. They plan to scale up production as they know demand will be high at the Trade Fair and orders from new customers are already coming in.

Soap samples the group sent to Zambia and Mozambique proved very popular, and a market has opened up in those countries. Because of this the group would like to increase output by purchasing advanced soap-producing equipment from South Africa, for mixing and cutting. Coupled with the change of formula to overcome major price rises (especially of palm oil), the machines will be used for production not only of soap but also of shampoo and toilet cleaners. The machines – an oil boiler, soap mixers, advanced moulds and cutters – together with installation and some additional materials, come to £1,950. The group has saved £450 and will put that towards the total, leaving a balance of £1,500. If they can get this support then they will train another group and give them the materials and equipment which they are using now – to maximise use of resources.

We have today initiated a payment of £1,500 to LYO for the above.

Yamikani (a.k.a. Mike), our main contact at Lilongwe Youth, is a 2015 fellow of the Mandela Washington Fellowship for Young African Leaders. The Fellowship is the flagship programme of the U.S. Government's Young African Leaders Initiative. He was one of eight that were selected out of 800 applicants from Malawi.

Cleaner

Currently they use charcoal to heat the oil, which goes against their purposes as they want to reduce this environmentally-damaging practice; however, the proposed boiler is designed to use briquettes made of waste paper, which can be collected from local primary schools. The briquettes are made by a local firm, but they will consider buying the required equipment and making their own briquettes, and even selling them. The collection of waste paper for this purpose motivates the pupils not to drop litter. LYO may also use waste paper in the production of sanitary pads.

Start-up barber gives Yamikani a haircut

Other outcomes

SOMAYEEP (Soap-Making for Youth Economic Empowerment Project) is not just about soap manufacture. So far it has also provided business management training for 32 young people, and 23 revolving loans for start-up businesses, which have included hairdressers, barbers, retail of maize, a restaurant and a bicycle taxi.

The Malawian Ministry of Youth paid a visit and asked them to train five other groups around Malawi, which they have done. Group members found that a highly motivating experience.

Lent Appeal – "Give thanks in all circumstances"

Week 1: Ash Wednesday – Saturday 4 March

In the UK we have easy access to soap, shower gel, shampoo, washing-up liquid, laundry detergent, etc., yet that is not the case in all countries. Lilongwe Youth Organisation in Malawi has set up a business making and selling soap. They have opened up markets in other African countries and are now looking to expand and mechanize their production. Of the funds required to do that, they have raised nearly a quarter, and we have provided the balance.
Please give a gift of thankfulness for cleanliness and hygiene in your own country to enable future similar projects to proceed.

Week 2: Sunday 5 March – Saturday 11 March

Whilst the British government abolished tax on feminine sanitary products in 2021, and products are available, there is still period poverty. In other countries people do not even have access to sanitary products and, as a result, girls often miss school. Through Starfish Malawi, for the past two years we have funded reusable sanitary kits for girls at school and would like to help the girls in future intakes.
Please give a gift of thankfulness for readily available sanitary products in the western world, to enable girls in Malawi to feel confident enough to continue with their education throughout the year.

Week 3: Sunday 12 March – Saturday 18 March

Teachers in the UK usually only have to manage classes of up to 30 children, but imagine what it would be like to have more than four times that number of pupils in one class. That is what it is like at Bughungu Primary School in Uganda. We are fundraising for them to reduce average class sizes from 130 to 87 by raising money to build three new classrooms and a staffroom. We have already given a grant, which has enabled the building of the first classroom, plus the laying of foundations for the second.
Please give a gift of thankfulness for the education you received, and for teachers who are educating the next generation, to enable children in Uganda to have a more personal education.

Week 4: Sunday 19 March – Saturday 25 March

Children should have numerous positive role models in their lives whom they respect and look up to, and who encourage them in various aspects of their lives. Some children in South Africa are not so fortunate – they know who their fathers are, but their fathers do not play a role in their lives. Helderberg Academy works with such children, encouraging them and boosting their self-esteem by teaching and playing team sports. We have already funded more-durable sports kit, and also uniforms for the coaches, who are older children.
Please give a gift of thankfulness for the positive role models who have influenced your life, and for the role models who enable children in South Africa to feel valued through team sports.

Week 5: Sunday 26 March – Saturday 1 April

We are fortunate in the UK to have access to various kinds of training and courses, enabling us to further our skills in particular areas, or learn completely new skills. The original team of young soap-makers at Lilongwe Youth Organisation have passed on their knowledge and trained other groups to make soap elsewhere in Malawi, and the sports coaches at Helderberg Academy are passing their skills on to younger children in South Africa.
Please give a gift of thankfulness—for the numerous opportunities we have to further our education, skills and career prospects—to enable future similar projects to proceed.

Week 6: Sunday 2 April – Saturday 8 April

Over the last five weeks we have been thinking of those less fortunate than ourselves, and being thankful for what we ourselves have, or have access to.
Please give a gift of thankfulness in your own circumstances.

Confidence for 140 girls

GATEWAY – helping increase attendance at school in Malawi by supplying the girls with sanitary pads which are locally-made, reusable, and last about 2 years.

13 December 2022

Today we transferred £427.85, the total collected including some Gift Aid, to Starfish Malawi for their Gateway project at Kaputu School, with the excess to go to Gateway at nearby school(s). Judging by previous results, that sum should make a huge difference to the confidence and attendance of 140 girls.

We are continuing to support this project, as every year there will be new girls needing the kits.

Encouraging leadership

Helderberg Academy – teaching life-skills, through the medium of sport, to the 'fatherless generation' in South Africa – providing prizes, equipment and kit for holiday clubs, weekly coaching, and leadership development

8 February 2023

Thanks to our generous donors we have been able to pay for the coaches' uniforms. Once we have an up-to-date quotation we will be sending the money through to Helderberg Academy. The order will be sufficient to provide uniforms for 3 to 5 years.

This payment will be on top of the money for durable equipment and kit, which we sent on 13 December.

To Donate

Please send a cheque payable to 'Natalya's Fund' to our address below. Let us know if you would like a Gift Aid Declaration.

Or visit our website, where you can pay by card, PayPal or Direct Debit.

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