



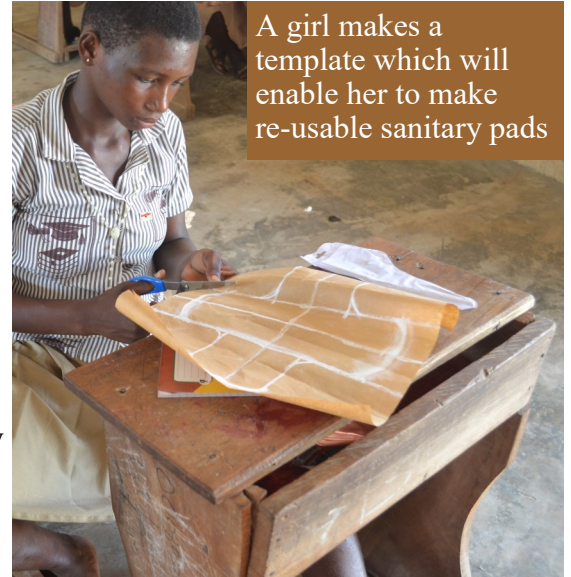
Jacob's Well Appeal

Christmas 2021 Newsletter



Re-usable Sanitary Pads Project

In the current 'ecologically aware' climate we are very focused on re-usable items. In Africa they are desperate to find re-usable solutions because of limited finances and resources. In the Upper West Region of Ghana, the teenage girls often miss school during the week of their period because they are unable to buy any sanitary products. They haven't the money and there are no pads available even if they had. Girls' education is not seen as important, so they are encouraged just to stay at home. The girls have to use old rags and have very limited water resources to wash them in. It is estimated that 11.5 million women in Ghana lack hygiene/sanitation facilities that adequately separate waste from human contact. Many girls drop out of school altogether when they start menstruating.



A girl makes a template which will enable her to make re-usable sanitary pads

Jacob's Well Appeal was approached by Skegness Rotary Club who wanted to supply sanitary products to a school. To supply one pack of pads to 1000 senior high school students in two deprived schools would cost £886. This would last each girl one month (one period max). After discussions we agreed to teach the girls how to make re-usable pads. So, for the same amount of money we can provide a pack of reusable sanitary pads to around 2-300 senior high school girls and teach them how to make these pads for themselves. At the same time, the girls are also given some sexual health education. This means that not only the teenage girls, but also all their female family members benefit. Skegness Rotary club is trying to raise the money for this project. If you are interested in supporting this we would be very grateful for your help! The more money we get the more girls we can help.

Burkina Faso

The violence, insecurity and poverty seems to be increasing all the time in Burkina Faso. At our partner school in Bobo-Dioulasso, in addition to feeding the 800+ school children per day, the school is now having to feed approximately 6000 poor people who have no job, no money and no other way to survive. Every day they queue outside the school hoping for some food. Jacob's Well Appeal has sent tens of thousands of pounds to buy sacks of maize and rice for these desperate people. However the need is so great that it's hard to make an impression. Within Burkina Faso since April this year, another 275,000 people have been forced to flee their homes, making a total of over 1.4 million refugees in the country. Almost 1/3 of the country now doesn't have enough food to eat as huge areas of the nation are now empty of people, with the fields lying fallow.

Earlier this year, as a response to the desperate situation, Jacob's Well Appeal helped to drill a borehole on a 5 hectare field of land owned by our partner school with a view of enabling them to grow food to give to the poor, rather than having to purchase it all the time. They are now able to grow crops such as cabbages, tomatoes, beans etc. all year round and in much larger quantities than before. For workers they are using poor women who otherwise have no work and paying them in cash or food every day.

We hope and pray for the Jihadist uprising to end and for peace to return to this nation. But in the meantime we want to continue doing all that we can to help those who are suffering the most.

One encouraging moment in the midst of all this difficulty was at the annual award ceremony that is given for the most hard working pupil in the school. The winner was a girl from one of the poorest families in the area. She won the equivalent of £70, which is a fortune for a poor girl over there. Her friends and teachers suggested all the things that she could buy.

(Continued Inside)



Women harvest our partner's field in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso continued

A smart phone (a great status symbol in Africa), some pretty new dresses or something else really nice for herself. But what the girl asked for touched everyone's heart. She asked if she could buy food for her family. Her father is sick and so can't work. Her mother is looking after 7 children and has no job. They live in a tiny place and they often go without any food. On a good day they only eat once. Without the school canteen and the food aid for her family, most of the family would have died by now. The girl was so happy to be able to buy some sacks of rice and maize and to be able to provide food for her family for a few weeks.



The winning girl

Jacob's Well Appeal's New Stock Control System

Have you ever wondered how much administration lies behind the sending of our aid containers overseas? It's probably a lot more than you imagine. In each container that we send, every item in every box has to be listed, along with its weight, category, expiry date, price and export code. When a container can contain several thousand different boxes, you can imagine how long the list is! Up to now, our system has been a combination of volunteers writing packing details on A4 forms and scraps of paper which has then been laboriously entered by the office staff into Excel spreadsheets. These are later collated, with columns copied and pasted from one document to another, re-formatted, with values adjusted for different currencies and then hopefully added up into a summary that might make sense to a non-english speaking customs official in darkest Africa!

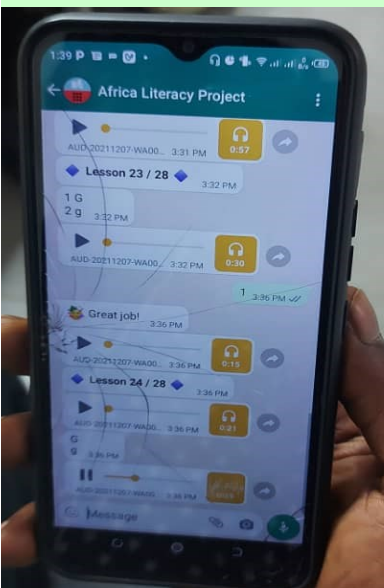
Up to now, we've not really had stock control system that keeps a tab on all that comes into the warehouse, or where everything is located. So we've often been asking ourselves the question "How many hospital beds do we have?" or "Where did that pallet of dressings end up?". Before loading a container, someone has to walk around the warehouses with a clipboard and note whatever we have that might be useful.

Not everything is on view – in addition to 2 large warehouses we also have 7 shipping containers in the carpark that we use for storage, and the pallets and other items at the back of these cannot be seen and are sometimes forgotten about. All in all, we've been due a new system for years. So this year, we have bitten the bullet and commissioned a new, bespoke stock control system that we are hoping to launch in January 2022.



Ian Reed, our new Warehouse co-ordinator enters data on the system. Many thanks to our previous warehouse manager, Anthony Walker for his years of service. He finished in November.

The system has yet to be given a name, though I expect within a few weeks people will call it various names that are unprintable in a newsletter! Instead of hand written notes on pieces of paper, volunteers will use a tablet to record what they are packing. On the paper system, the packer makes up their own description of what is going into a box. The same item could be called a dressing, a bandage, a wound care item, a sterile dressing, a pressure dressing etc, and so because of this, the list of "different" products that we sent abroad annually was around 2200 lines long. Now packers will choose from a drop down menu on a tablet, which will only give them the choice of 60 generic descriptions. This will greatly simplify the listing and pricing process, and once they have entered the data on a tablet, the system will do the rest. The system will enable us at a glance to see which pallets contain items which expire the soonest and where each item is located. The office work of listing and pricing containers should shrink from days to minutes. In theory!



Mobile Literacy Project

Have you ever been to a cafe where the waitress has to ask you to work out your own bill because she can't read, write or do simple adding up? This happened to Drs Alistair and Margaret Robertson on their last trip to Freetown in Sierra Leone. Fortunately the shop owner shortly came in and was able to sort things out.

In Sierra Leone, the literacy rate is 43%, with women performing worse. Disabled people also struggle. The Africa Literacy project, managed by "Jobsearch", aims to help people in this situation by using old smart phones which they use to put simple lessons on. If you have any old mobile smart phones that you no longer want, we would be happy to receive them.

They must be unlocked, and be able to run WhatsApp! Please factory reset them, remove the Sim Card before donating them. With charging wire if possible.

Troubles ahead?

Managing Jacob's Well Appeal is a constant balancing act. The volume of medical items that we get in has to equal the volume that we are able to send overseas. The amount of money that we spend has to be no greater than the amount of money we raise. And at the same time, we have to keep a check on items not going too far out of date, and not having too much of any one product.

The pandemic has caused significant disturbances for us, with delays in transit, a massive rise in the price of shipping and containers, etc. However even before that, we have been finding that it is becoming increasingly difficult to get aid into some of our main recipient countries because of ever increasing customs requirements. You would think that the fact that many of their own countrymen are dying through lack of medical and food aid would make it easier to get the aid in. But in fact this isn't the case, and the Red Tape at the ports is becoming more difficult every year.

Some of our problems centre around the fact that many of our medical supplies are short dated or even out of date, even though items like bandages and colostomy bags never go out of date. Another factor is that for us to be able to send aid, we need their governments to give us a tax exemption. The market value of the aid in our containers (if all the products were in date) would often be £3-500K. When governments put an import tax on containers of 25%, you can see how that makes it impossible for us. We are not selling the products at commercial value, but giving them to the poorest of the poor. Sadly many African governments seem to have no compassion for the fate of their own poor people. Those in power prefer to rigidly keep to systems which create the possibility of cash ending up in their own hands.

Presently we have 2 containers stuck in port in Ghana. In spite of hundreds of hours of work by our partners and the hospitals in Ghana along with our staff here in the UK, these containers will be auctioned off to the highest bidder unless we can get the government to change their mind. We are starting to come to the conclusion until something changes in Ghana, we won't be able to send any more containers there, though our agricultural and educational aid will still be able to continue.



Of course, cutting out one of our main recipient countries unbalances the input/output ratio. In a world of increasing poverty, it is getting harder to find any countries that will allow us to send containers of aid to them.

Seed Bank Projects

We are continuing to run seed banks with various communities in Northern Ghana. This year, our ground nut project has been very successful and the communities helped are extremely grateful for the support they have received. Two communities have told us that the money generated from this project enabled them to start sending their children to school.

Left Villagers from the **Beeli Seed bank Project**

Value and Destinations of Aid sent in 2021

Education	£33,754	Albania	England	Nigeria
Food	£36,300	Barbuda	Ghana	Philippines
Agriculture	£42,023	Burkina Faso	India	Sierra Leone
Household	£22,282	Cameroon	Iraq	Yemen
Medical	£3,023,520	Columbia	Malawi	Zambia
Total	£3,157,879	Congo Brazzaville	Moldova	Zimbabwe

Literacy Projects

In the rural areas of Ghana many of the women with children have not attended school and are unable to read and write. They struggle to live by farming during the rainy season and in the dry season often make charcoal. This is bad for the environment but they have little alternative to survive. Our partners in Ghana run literacy projects, which enable these women to develop basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic. At the same time, they teach them a skill which can help them earn money such as soap making or growing an alternative crop to maize, such as soya or groundnut. These courses are really well received by the women who attend. Basic literacy and numeracy enables them to sell their produce at the market at a profit as well as giving them a better understanding of the value of education to pass on to their children. Our partners have been asked to help several very poor, remote rural communities which are struggling to survive. They plan to visit the villages and then identify women who are eager to learn and need support. We'd like to say a big thank you to the Doncaster and St Leger Inner Wheel who are financing one group of women to take part in a literacy project. These women will be trained in beading, which enables them to make products that can be sold at market, so that they no longer have to make charcoal to make ends meet.



Above. The Beading project helps women generate income

Below. Women take part in the literacy project.



The new medical clinic in Banfora, Burkina Faso

Earlier this year we reported that we had finished construction of a new clinic which will provide free health-care for the poorest people in the border town of Banfora. The clinic is now very busy with dozens of poor people coming every day for treatment which they would otherwise not be able to afford. Their greatest need now is for a borehole to provide water. The water supply of the town is very poor. Often they go for hours or days without water, which makes running a medical centre very difficult. It would cost around £5000 to drill a borehole for the new clinic. Please contact us if you'd like more details.

Solar Panels for Kabala

We have mentioned before in previous newsletters that we have supported the Sierra Leone Autistic Society (SLAS) which has set up the 1st schools for disabled children in this country. As you may recall, disabled children are perceived as a curse and often left to die in the jungle. SLAS is trying hard to alter the perception of the people of this country and have managed to change government policy to the benefit of the disabled people. SLAS has also built two day centres, one in Makeni in the Northern Province and also Kabala, which is more rural. Kabala had no electricity and a generous donor has paid towards solar panels. Despite several setbacks (including the solar panels engineers being involved in a car accident leading to several broken limbs – they have all recovered) they had an open day on 4th December when they are launched the solar panels at the same time. They are so very happy that you have enabled this to happen.

DONATIONS: - Via Internet Banking

Account Name: Jacobs Well Appeal

Account Number: 71090704

Sort Code: 40-10-12

Do you have email? If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by email, save costs and the environment, please send your email address to office@jacobswellappeal.org with your name and postal address, so we can update our database. Thank you!

A HUGE thank you to all our amazing volunteers and to all those who support us by donating money, medical supplies, items to sell, knitting blankets and making shoe boxes. **If the monies raised exceed the amount needed for the projects mentioned in this newsletter, we will use the extra money to fund similar projects.**