

## SCHOOLS LINKING JANUARY 2021 REPORT

Wow what a year it's been for everyone! It's certainly not been a year any of us expected. Both countries (UK & Malawi) have been learning how to adapt to these rules and changes that have been put in place over the year. UK schools learned how to deliver lessons online and send work home for those who had to isolate.

Before Christmas, our objectives for our Clean Hands Project were to learn how to wash our hands properly and effectively. We learnt how to build our own tippy taps here in the UK and some schools did a brilliant job of these.

Below are some pictures of Tippy Taps made by students at Salehurst Primary School:



From January, The UK have gone into their third national lockdown. So, the UK team came up with an activity for the students to do while they're at home. We've asked the students to take a picture of their toys washing their hands. We can't wait to see the pictures when they come in and look forward to publishing them on our website

You may or may not know that we have a Schools Linking website. As no one can visit schools at the moment (due to them being open for key worker children only) we've been using our time to update our website and create our new Clean Hands Project webpage: [Clean Hands — Schools Linking \(starfishmalawi.com\)](http://Clean Hands — Schools Linking (starfishmalawi.com)). It's definitely worth having a look at and it's being updated regularly.

As I'm new to this position (having only started in January) I would like to take this opportunity to thank my team for being so accommodating and supportive of me so far. They have been a massive help and their support has been crucial to the work I've been doing. I can't wait until this lockdown is over and I can start visiting the schools and meeting the teachers I've been talking to via email in person!



We've been working hard on getting our WhatsApp groups up and running. This has proved to be a really efficient and easy way of communicating with Malawi and school teachers here in the UK

The following report from Malawi is a good representation of what's been going on over there. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I did.

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Schools linking was established to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the linked UK/ Malawi schools through the sharing of good classroom practice. Over the years, Starfish Malawi has organised exchange visits, providing opportunities for teachers to meet face to face and appreciate each other's' teaching disciplines. It has also helped to enhance the engagement of learners in various projects that directly involve them, promoting a range of skills across the curriculum such as literacy and numeracy.

### Teachers Exchange Visit 2020

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, schools in Malawi were closed in March and were later opened in October. So sadly, the much-anticipated teachers' exchange visit was cancelled as a result of the surge of the pandemic.

### Clean Hands Project

The project was launched in Malawi in October following the re-opening of local schools. The main objectives of the project are to understand how poor hygiene and lack of first aid knowledge contributes to disease and ill health and appreciating the importance of clean water. Children both in the UK and Malawi share their experiences, similarities and differences through the project.

As part of the project, Starfish donated 27 washing stations to various schools in Salima and Kasungu. The project will also help learners to wash hands properly and frequently as part of the preventive measures of the Covid 19 virus. We also donated facemasks to children in schools as part of the preventive measures.



*Left: PhA learner at Chikombola washing hands*

Mr William Chiweyo, a teacher at Kapira primary school, received facemasks and a 200-litre washstand. He said, "We are thankful that Starfish Malawi thought of coming up with this important project. Times are hard and the only thing we can best do is follow preventive measures like that of washing hands and wearing facemasks. The washstand and liquid soap will reduce the infections that are passed on through contact".

*Right: Mr William Chiweyo.*



The Clean Hands Project is being taught over the course of 2020/2021 with much emphasis to improve health and caring for one another through the thorough washing of hands, healthy living and clean toilets.

Many schools have welcomed the project whole heartedly.

Sadly, cases have been rising again in Malawi since the end of 2020 and, like in the UK, schools have had to close again in January 2021. The Malawi government has instructed people to stay at home and these measures are set to remain in place for the foreseeable future.

We have been encouraging schools to form WhatsApp groups with their partner schools. Some Starfish representatives from both countries are included in the group so that we can keep in touch and share information even while the schools remain closed.

We look forward to the time when these restrictions are lifted and this important work for the health of our children and communities can continue

