



25th Anniversary Brochure



Celebrating 25 years of KitAid

1,000,000

One million items of kit donated since 1998

A Time to Celebrate

Welcome to this special KitAid 25th Anniversary brochure which celebrates our journey from 1998 to 2023, along with the wonderful achievement of reaching our One Millionth item of donated kit.

It is incredible to think the little boy I spotted in a remote Tanzanian village, wearing a tattered Liverpool FC shirt, has inspired so much, and created partnerships to support projects across the developing world. I sometimes wonder where he is now and I wish he knew that a result of our chance meeting, he has enabled one million people to gain access to kit and equipment. I hope he still supports Liverpool FC!



The growth of KitAid has been phenomenal as only 5 years ago we were celebrating reaching 500,000 items, 10 years ago reaching 200,000 items, and 15 years ago reaching 70,000 items. In the last 5 years, which included all the Covid lock downs, we have sorted and donated as many items as we did in the first 20 years. This has only been possible thanks

to the wonderful support we receive from all of our incredible volunteers, as well as our kit donors. We now have over 100 volunteers across the whole of the UK and support from clubs at every level of the football pyramid.



We hope you enjoy reading the stories which have all played a part in the success of KitAid as well as bringing 1,000,000 smiles across the Developing World.

"It's more than just a shirt..."

**Derrick Williams MBE
KitAid Founder & Trustee**

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If you would like to view a report, they are all online at www.kitaid.net in the “Resources” section.



One Graham Taylor

Over our 25-year history our proudest achievement was having Graham Taylor OBE as Patron. Graham not only opened doors for us that would otherwise have been firmly shut, but he added the enthusiasm and drive to all of us to make KitAid something we could be proud of.

I vividly remember the very first phone conversation when he caught me off guard at work. He said thanks for your letter, you have got five minutes to convince me why I should become Patron. He stopped me after about three minutes and said I believe you, just don't ask too much of my time as I am Patron of so many different charities, and I may have to drop you after a few years. He didn't drop KitAid and he always supported us whenever we asked.

He wrote to all 92 Football League kit managers asking them to donate kit, he invited us to attend the opening of the Graham Taylor Stand at Vicarage Road and he gave lovely presentations at our 10th and 15th Anniversary celebrations.

We are proud still to be friends with Rita, Karen and family and as a mark of our respect, we took the decision never to appoint another Patron. For KitAid and many football supporters, there will only ever be "One Graham Taylor."



KitAid Ambassador Clubs

The Ambassador Club scheme was launched in 2006 with Chesham United FC becoming the very first member. The scheme is designed to recognise Clubs from the Non-League/Lower Division area of the football pyramid who have supported our work for a period of time.

Members are presented with a special certificate and are recognised on the KitAid website. Although membership has largely been restricted to semi-professional Clubs, we will extend the scheme to include grassroots teams as a part of our 25th Anniversary celebrations.



Current Ambassador Clubs are:

- Chesham United FC
- FC United of Manchester
- Witton Albion FC
- Stenhousemuir FC
- Marine AFC
- Everton in the Community
- Diamonds in the Community (Airdrie)
- Hibernian in the Community (Edinburgh)



Trustees/Regional Co-ordinators/ Volunteers

As an entirely volunteer run charity KitAid has always operated on the basis of no paid employees and goodwill. This has served us incredibly well for 25 years and we are very grateful to all our volunteers, present and past.

The Trustee role involves decision making and offering direction and we are fortunate to have a team who have always given their support and guidance. Our current Trustees are:

Derrick Williams MBE, Mark Smith (Treasurer), Janet Neville and Thomas Enright.

Retired Trustees include Sally Howe, Claire Whalley, Anne Ross, Julia Bell, Sean McGuigan and Nick Perchard.

The Regional Co-ordinator (RC) role has played a significant part in the growth of KitAid across the UK. We are very fortunate to have 100 people covering every corner of England and Scotland, but for some reason Wales is entirely bare! Some of our RCs have been involved from the early years and some have only just joined the team, but they all play a vital part in collecting and storing kit as well as promoting our work in their areas.

Our wonderful group of volunteers at boxing up sessions and events are key to activities running smoothly. We are so fortunate to have such a brilliant team and KitAid simply couldn't exist without them.



Thank you to everyone who has been involved as a Trustee, RC or as a volunteer between 1998 and 2023.
You are KitAid.



Boxing Up...

Since 1998 we have held boxing up sessions mainly in Hatfield but also on Merseyside and once in Manchester.

In the early years they were held at the now demolished Three Valleys Water, Bishops Rise site with just a few hardy volunteers. In the first couple of years, it was just Derrick sorting a few items of kit each evening after work and when the space was full of no more than seven boxes, they would be shipped off to WaterAid's freight company at Heathrow. As more volunteers came on board and more kit was donated, the sessions were held every quarter in the main foyer.

Boxing up sessions have always been good fun, occasionally with volunteers' coats and car keys ending up in a box. Once we lost Sean McGuigan for a couple of hours, only to find him in the back of the courier van with oil-stained fingers as the van doors blew shut trapping him inside!

In 2015 we started to hold sorting sessions in Liverpool at St Luke's Church Hall, at the corner of Goodison Park, the home of Everton FC. We have received help from Everton Heritage Society who collect and store kit for us and Everton in the Community, who supply volunteers.

Boxing up sessions today run like clockwork when we regularly sort and box over 5,000 individual items of kit in less than three hours. From a single volunteer in 1998 we now have 25 to 30 people helping.

Since 1998 we have filled more than 28,500 individual boxes of kit which would fill over 700 transit vans!!



Thank you to all our volunteers who have made this possible.



Awards

We have won (too) few!

For those of you who have seen Derrick on his soap box you will know that this is a bit of a sore point!

We did win the prestigious Third Sector **"Small Charity Big Achiever"** award in 2006 and three years later, a **"Gold Green Apple"** Environmental award. However, since then we have not received any official recognition at a time when our achievements have been on a massive upward trajectory.

The Third Sector award was a wonderful achievement at a time when KitAid was only really starting to make progress. It was presented at the plush Grosvenor House Hotel by Emma Freud and we had a great evening. The Green Apple award was presented at the Houses of Parliament but sadly, we no longer have the trophy, which was in the form of an apple, as someone squeezed it, and it ended up in many pieces!

Hopefully our trophy cabinet may one day hold more silverware but as he is often reminded when the soap box appears, it is not about recognition, delivery speaks louder than awards.



Famous faces

Over the years we have received support from many different famous footballers with some making a one-off appearance and others offering regular support. Here are a few.

Lee Sharpe – He arrived at Hatfield at the height of his “Love Island” fame and caused chaos in the Three Valleys Water Call Centre as many fans abandoned their phones to take a selfie and get an autograph!

Eniola Aluko – Eni regularly donated training kit, including some of her England shirts. She even donated her appearance fee on “Countdown” as KitAid was her nominated charity. We also once collected a bin bag full of shirts from her mother’s house quickly to discover they were all the prized shirts her brother had collected from his international career! We returned them the next day.

Bob Wilson – Bob arrived at the Hatfield reception with boxes of kit he had stored in his attic. He was in the process of moving house and dropped in unannounced.

Luther Blissett – Luther helped out at a boxing up session in Hatfield and he regularly supports our social media posts. We also donate coats to his Sunflower Ukraine charity.

Ikechi Anya – Scotland International Ikechi really understood the power of KitAid and he went out of his way to support our work. Definitely a footballer who wanted to make a difference through his position.

Tom Holmes – Tom supported our work as a very young apprentice at Reading FC. He is now a regular first team player and he sets a great example as a player from his community who understands the importance of giving back.

We have also had “one off” support from **David Fairclough, Nigel Gibbs, Pat Van Den Hauwe, Graeme Sharp, Paul Canoville** and even **Sir Mo Farah** who can still be found on a You Tube clip praising KitAid.

An interesting mix of players who all have given their time, support, and kit.





- Following Derrick Williams' trip to Tanzania with WaterAid the very first box of kit is sent to a village in the Dodoma region. KitAid is born!
- As the reaction to the donation of kit was so positive Derrick decides to keep collecting kit.
- The very first press article promoting KitAid appears in the Hemel Hempstead Gazette

- Boxing up sessions are held more regularly as new volunteers come on board.

- Sainsbury's in Harpenden donate World Cup cardboard display figures.
- Michael Owen, John Terry and David Beckham all make it out to the World Cup thanks to Julia Bell somehow managing to transport them with her luggage to Cape Town!

- Watford FC host a kit collection at Vicarage Road before their match against Norwich City.
- Kodak staff at their head office in Harrow collect kit and donate 100 disposable cameras.
- Surrey County Cricket Club donate unsold kit from their shop.

1998

1999

2000

2001

2002

2003

2004

- The very first kit sorting and boxing up session is held at the bottom of the staircase at the old Three Valleys Water office in Hatfield.
- Boxes of kit are delivered to the WaterAid shipping company at Heathrow and the first consignment of six boxes of kit leaves for Tanzania.

- WaterAid change their procurement policy to buy materials "in country" and not to ship from the UK.
- The new KitAid operating model is created as charity partners are found who can deliver kit to their projects. This model is still in use today and has been adopted by other charities.

- Debenhams in Luton make the first significant kit donation from a well-known High Street brand.

- KitAid hosts a Conference for partner charities to meet and discuss projects.
- FC United of Manchester, Witton Albion FC and Stenhousemuir FC become Ambassador Clubs.
- Derby County FC host half time pitch presentation and pitch sprinklers turned on, drenching Club Chairman! You Tube film clip watched and enjoyed by many!

- KitAid becomes the official charity of the Hertfordshire County FA.
- 250,000 milestone of donated items of kit reached.
- KitAid appears on Sky Sports News at Reading FC training ground as part of the launch of the 2014/15 EFL season.

- The National Football Museum in Manchester host a kit collection.
- The very first boxing up session is held in Liverpool with the support of the Everton Heritage Society and Everton in the Community.
- Supporters complete a 24 hour tour of every Premier League stadium in memory of Guy Judge and raise £2,600 for KitAid.

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

- KitAid is invited to become the official charity of the Northern Premier League.
- Sir Mo Farah recognises KitAid and records a thank you message.

- KitAid celebrates its 15th Anniversary at the Watford Hilton Hotel with Graham Taylor OBE as main guest presenter.
- The Pipeline Industrial Guild choose KitAid as their charity of the year.

- KitAid invited to attend the official opening of the Graham Taylor stand at Watford FC.
- Eniola Aluko, Chelsea and England player, appears on "Countdown" television programme and donates her appearance fee to KitAid as her chosen charity.
- Derrick Williams meets Derrick Williams after his game at Bristol City!

- Patron, Graham Taylor OBE, very sadly passes and in his honour, KitAid Trustees decide not to appoint another Patron.
- Airdrie Supporters Trust (now known as Diamonds in the Community) visit Gobi Desert and take kit on our behalf.



- KitAid becomes a Registered Charity.
- KitAid wins the prestigious Third Sector "Small Charity Big Achiever" Award at the Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane, London.
- Lee Sharpe visits the Three Valleys Water Head Office for a lunchtime signing session.

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

2010

- KitAid 10th Anniversary celebrated at the Watford Hilton Hotel with Graham Taylor and 150 supporters.
- KitAid featured on Soccer AM.
- Kit collection hosted by FC United of Manchester at Gigg Lane, Bury.

- The first visit to Africa as Sally Howe and Derrick Williams MBE are guests of the Royal Air Force charity on a week long trip to the Kibera slum area of Nairobi, Kenya.
- The Ambassador Club scheme is launched with Chesham United FC being the inaugural members.

- Graham Taylor OBE becomes Patron of KitAid.
- Les Ferdinand visits KitAid during a special lunch time signing session in Hatfield.
- KitAid is invited to attend a meeting at Liverpool FC to discuss their potential support for the charity.

- Watford FC host their second kit collection outside ground before the game against Man City FC.
- KitAid introduced to Ballysillan YFC and the Belfast football camp.

- KitAid supporters visit Football Camp project in Ballysillan, North Belfast.
- Wembley Stadium hosts KitAid as our logo is displayed on the main scoreboard.
- KitAid wins the Gold Green Apple Award for environmental best practice.

- 500,000 Milestone of donated items of kit reached.
- KitAid supporters visit Malawi and Sky Sports News film the trip.
- 20th Anniversary celebrated by supporters at the Noke Hotel, St Albans.

- Barry Lenton from Crosby reaches his target of collecting 20,000 items of kit.
- We sponsor the Bulindi Chimpanzee protection tournament in Uganda for first time.
- KitAid is chosen by the family of the late Jordan Sinnott to distribute over 1,000 shirts donated in his memory.
- Covid impacts donations and deliveries for most of the year.

- KitAid Australia formed with mentoring support and a shared model.
- 15th Anniversary of supporting/ sponsoring the Football Camp project in Ballysillan, Belfast.
- KitAid FC boys, Hanif, Davie and Zaniil all chosen to represent Malawi at U15/ U17 age groups.

2018

2019

2020

2021

2022

2023



- KitAid invited to collect kit at the Liverpool FC Legends game at Anfield.
- The second KitAid Supporters trip to Malawi, hosted by FOMO Malawi.
- KitAid FC formed in Mulanje, Malawi.

- Covid shuts down activities for part of the year, but we still manage to donate 114,328 items of kit in between lock downs.



- 1,000,000 Milestone of donated items of kit reached.
- Liverpool FC Foundation invite KitAid to attend Legends game and present a special 25th Anniversary LFC shirt on pitch at half time.
- 25th Anniversary celebration held at Vicarage Road stadium with 130 supporters.

Celebration Evenings

Tonight (8 September 2023), will be our fourth celebration evening following really great events for our 10th, 15th and 20th anniversaries.

We were incredibly fortunate to have Graham Taylor as our main speaker for the first two events and his presentations were superb. He also donated his last two pairs of football boots which raised a great amount in the auction. Incredibly a few years later we were able to lend them back as the sculptor for the statue outside Vicarage Road stadium wanted to use them to ensure he got the measurements right.

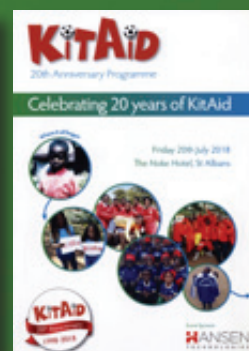
We have had samba dancers, football jugglers, opera singers and drummers as entertainment, incredibly moving speeches from charity partners but most of all, recognition of everyone's hard work.

The Watford Hilton hosted the 10th and 15th events, the Noke Hotel in St Albans the 20th and fittingly, The View at Watford FC for the 25th.

Tonight, we will not only celebrate 25 years of KitAid but also the amazing achievement of donating **1,000,000** items of kit.



Thank you and congratulations to everyone who has ever supported KitAid from 1998 to 2023 and beyond.



KitAid FC



In 2018 a group of boys patiently waited outside Mary Woodworth's house in Mulanje, Malawi, as they knew a group of KitAid supporters were visiting.

Once the KitAid group returned the boys approached Mary and told her they wanted to form a team and call themselves KitAid FC. We quickly found an orange Harpenden Colts kit and within minutes the boys were kitted out and planning their future!

Five years on, KitAid FC has grown to include over 60 boys, an U14 and U17 teams as well as a junior feeder team called Pineapple FC. They have won countless matches and trophies and three of the boys have been selected for the Malawi National youth teams. Zani Jussab even travelled to Lesotho to play in an International tournament.

There is now a proper structure and path for the boys to start in the feeder team and progress all the way through to the men's FOMO FC team and then on to Mighty Wanderers who play in the Malawi Super League.

We are incredibly proud of the boys, and they represent all the values and spirit of KitAid. They work hard at school and football is their passion and release. They look out for each other and thanks to the support they receive from Mary, they are able to keep the KitAid name burning brightly in Malawi.

The future is orange, the future is KitAid FC...



Not just for the boys

Throughout our 25-year history KitAid has always promoted sport for all, and we have actively promoted inclusion. This has resulted in many girls taking up football wearing proper kit, mostly donated by the English FA, and other women's and girls' teams from across the UK.

Athletics is also another sport where we have successfully supported girls' development through our partnership with the charity "Inspired By Sports" in Ghana. We have donated hundreds of running event t-shirts from the Jane Tomlinson Foundation which are used as training tops for girls.

Netball is very popular across Africa with the Malawi National Women's team competing in the World Cup. We have supplied netball kit and equipment as it became available but in 2023 we teamed up with the Hertfordshire Netball League and held collections at different events across the County. Over 25 big boxes of kit, balls and equipment were donated, and they will soon arrive in Malawi to support girls' teams in the Mulanje District League.

Possibly one of the most inspiring stories is how 15-year-old Afi Amezado was given the opportunity to play golf in Accra, Ghana as a "one off" activity. It turned out she had a unique talent and with additional coaching she went on to win the Ghanaian Junior Open title, played at a tournament in Houston USA, and has been offered a golf scholarship in the USA once she is 18. Although we would not claim credit for her achievement, we do know that she wore kit we had given to events and we have recently donated 15 full sets of golf clubs to her sponsor charity, Fafali.org in Accra.

We will continue to support and promote the development of girls and women's sport with our kit donations.



Supporter Trips

So far KitAid has organised two long distance self funded supporter trips to Malawi, and we were also guests on a trip to Kenya with the Royal Air Force charity, Taking Football to Africa and Beyond.

The Malawi trips to Mulanje were hosted by our very good friends (FOMO Malawi), where they run 14 orphan support centres, a school, a medical centre and even a driving school. On the first trip in 2018 we were joined by Adam Leventhal, who at the time was a reporter for Sky Sports News, and he made a wonderful documentary about our work and the trip. This is available to watch via a link on www.kitaid.net in the Gallery section.

Supporters who attended each trip were all moved by the experience and described it as life enhancing. To see kit at its destination and to see the difference it makes to so many people is very moving. Malawi is described as the "warm heart of Africa" and this was evident in the wonderful welcome we received at every centre we visited. To say it brought a tear to your eye is an understatement and the trips truly are the experience of a lifetime.

Closer to home we have also organised eight trips to Belfast to visit the final day of the Ballysillan YFC Football Camp which we have supported since 2007. In a different way, these trips are also incredibly moving which is why we have visited so many times with different groups of supporters.

We will be arranging another trip to Malawi in 2024 so please look out for details in the monthly newsletter and online.



Belfast Football Camp

We were first contacted by Peter Thompson from Ballysillan YFC in 2007 to ask if we could donate some kit as prizes for the boys attending a weeklong football camp. We sent a mix of Premier League shirts and had such a great reaction we wanted to get more involved.

Ballysillan is in North Belfast in an area that suffers from high social deprivation and limited opportunities for young people. Ballysillan YFC run a community outreach centre helping support hundreds of people across the whole year. Football Camp is a project for boys and girls from the ages of 7 to 13. It is one of the main highlights of the year and we once saw a boy crying on the final day as he said he couldn't wait for it to happen again next year. Peter has to check the ages put forward on the application form as it is so popular some will pretend they are younger to still qualify to take part!

From 2008 KitAid has sponsored Football Camp and we have visited on the final day many times. Every visit highlights how important the project is in bringing everyone together and what an incredible role the volunteer coaches play in mentoring the boys and girls.

It is a very special project and one that we are proud to be a part of.



Diamonds in the Community

We first became involved with this charity before they were even formed, as one of their founders, Dougy Allsop, was a KitAid regional co-ordinator for Airdrie in Scotland. At that time, they were all members of the Airdrieonians Supporters Trust.



Dougy left his role as commercial manager at Airdrieonians FC to form the new charity in 2019, and we have supported Diamonds in the Community ever since. They run many different schemes such as clothes banks, dementia support, walk and talk groups, walking football, art classes, mental health support and take referrals to help people in need.

Our main involvement is through the kit they collect on our behalf and thanks to the incredible network of contacts they have, they are the main hub for most kit donations in Scotland. They store it for us and then arrange transportation twice a year.

We recently visited their warehouse in Airdrie and were very impressed by their organisation and the dedication of their team of volunteers. Their hospitality was also first class!



Message from the FA



On behalf of us all at the Football Association, we congratulate Kit Aid on reaching your 25th Anniversary, as well as the remarkable achievement of donating your 1,000,000 piece of kit to communities around the world, where it is greatly needed.

Over the years, KitAid has helped the FA to make sure that our redundant England Kit is sorted, packaged, and distributed and your hard work and dedication are an inspiration to us.

We are proud to be associated with you and send our very best wishes and gratitude to your volunteers and supporters for the truly great work that you do.

Debbie Hewitt MBE
Chair
The Football Association



Hold the back page!

From the very start, the KitAid story has captured the media's interest and in the early days we were fortunate to receive a lot of press coverage from the Hemel Hempstead Gazette and the Watford Observer. This gave us the exposure we needed to spread the word and to build relationships with grassroots clubs across Hertfordshire.

Since then, KitAid has appeared in countless publications not only in the UK but also across Africa. We have given interviews on national BBC programmes and have built a good relationship with many local radio stations such as BBC Radio Merseyside, Lancashire, Berkshire and Three Counties (Bucks, Beds and Herts).

Sky Sports News filmed our 2018 trip to Malawi, Soccer AM filmed at an early boxing up session and we were part of the 2014/15 Premier League season launch when Sky filmed at all 92 Premier League and English Football League grounds on the same day. We were filmed at Reading FC as the players all dropped kit into our van.

We are looking forward to promoting the millionth item of donated kit which we hope will make the front pages and the airwaves across Planet Football.



Soccer strips cap and international call-up



Derrick (left) is pictured with the box of kit which chauffeur John Gardner delivered to the Water Aid shipper at Heathrow for the first leg of its journey to Africa.



It's all yours: The Rev Christopher Nyamwanji (right) hands a football over to Liverpool shirted village elder Haruna Kules in Ntalikwa.

Send your soccer kit to Africa



Encouraging people to donate football kit are (left to right): Darren Craggs, Sean McGuigan, Derek Fieldsend and Derrick Williams.



A Tanzanian team who benefited from an earlier shirt campaign.

The beautiful game helps aid workers



Helping out: Derrick Williams greets one of the local villagers.

Thank You

The 25-year journey has included so many people it is impossible to thank and individually name everyone. However, it would be remiss not to mention our much-missed former Patron, Graham Taylor OBE. We have a saying that we must do things the “Graham way” and his belief that everyone should leave a legacy they are proud of has spurred us on along the journey.

We have overcome setbacks, learned from mistakes, and developed as a charity. Trust is fundamental to our operating model and trust is something we value in all our relationships. Passion too, and it is evident that everyone involved in KitAid is passionate about helping those who do not have access to kit to participate and to be included.

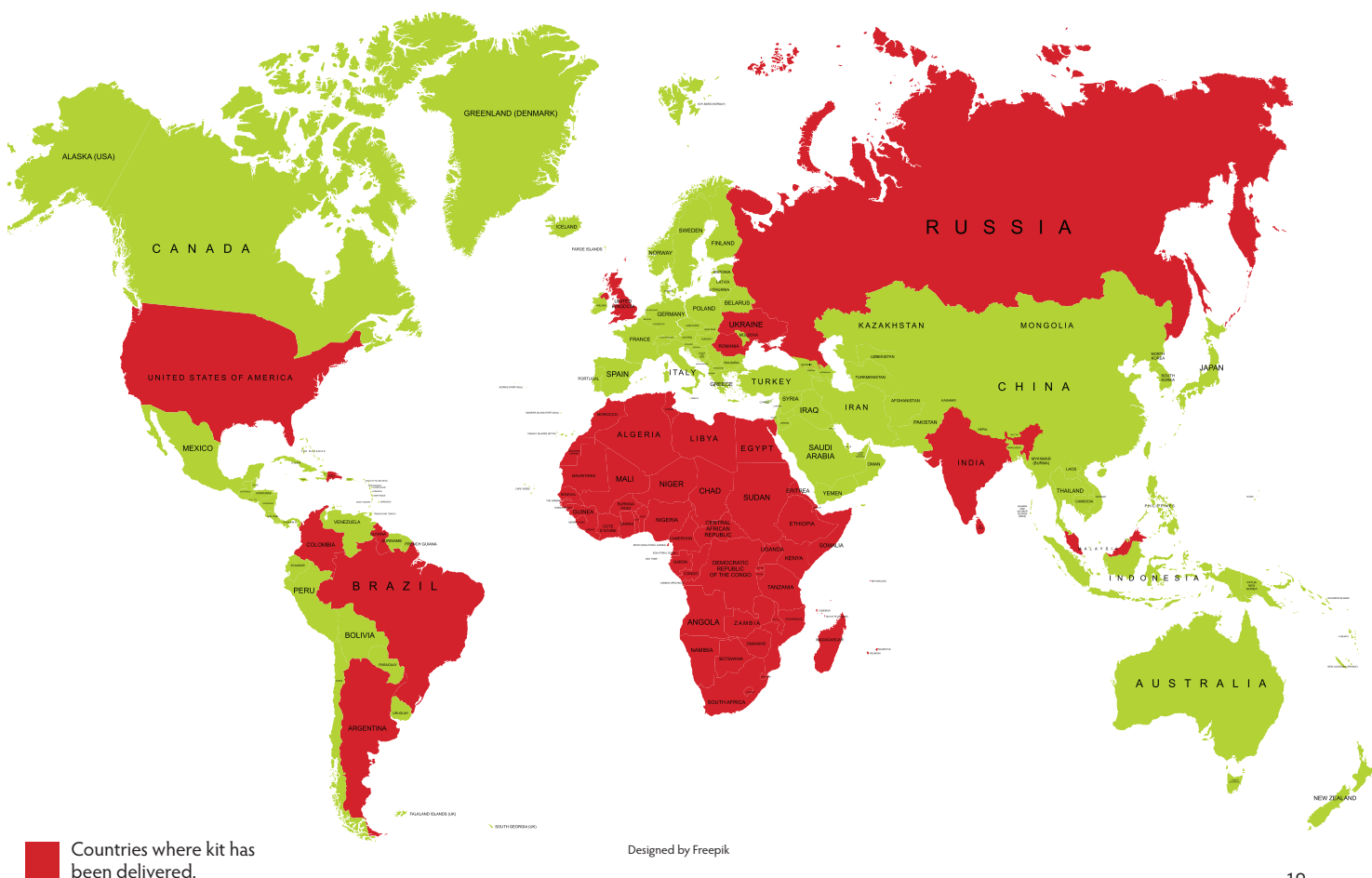
Thank you to everyone who has ever donated kit, collected kit, sorted kit or delivered kit. There are 1,000,000 smiles across the globe generated from your support and kindness.


“It’s more than just a shirt...”

Derrick Williams MBE
KitAid Founder



Distribution of Kit around the World



 Countries where kit has been delivered.

Designed by Freepik



1,000,000

One million items of kit donated since 1998



“It’s more than just a shirt...”