

September 2020

Dear Child of Hope UK link schools

We are certainly living in unusual times, with children's education across the world being severely affected by the pandemic. I know that in the UK you have just started back to school for the new academic year and I wish you well with all the challenges that may bring.

The situation in Uganda has been very difficult for our children and their families. Schools closed here on March 20th and there is no indication at the moment as to when schools will re-open. Certainly, it is extremely unlikely that schools will re-open this year. This will mean our children will have effectively missed an entire year of schooling. Our children have no access to radios, televisions or computers so have not had the opportunity to access any learning. Children have been helping out their parents to help earn money for their families (like Isaiah, pictured).



At the start of the pandemic in Uganda a strict lockdown was imposed. This included shutting all borders (including the airport) for everything except cargo; imposing a curfew from 7pm until 6.30 am; suspending all public transport and private cars; and closing all shops (except food and pharmacies), schools, churches and mosques. The lockdown has gradually been lifted though a curfew remains in place and borders, schools, churches and mosques remain closed. As the lockdown has lifted, there is an increasing amount of Covid-19 cases and deaths.



Child of Hope is currently supporting 600 families through this crisis. As the majority of our families live on money they earn daily they have found their income at this time has dropped significantly. People were even having to resort to eat rats to help with hunger.

We have tried to utilise this closure as effectively as possible both to ensure the safety and health of our children and to give them the best possible education when they return. Our social workers have been moving daily in the

community monitoring our children; our school nurse has been monitoring the health of our children, particularly the most vulnerable; and our teachers have been visiting some of the children in their homes to give them some work, particularly those children in the final year of Primary. I have been working with the teachers on improving the curriculum in both Lower Primary and Nursery, so it is more engaging, creative and challenges our children in order for them to make excellent progress.



One of our main priorities for when the school re-opens is reading. In Uganda reading for pleasure is not really part of the culture. People mainly read for information. We want to empower our children to change that view and enable them to develop a love of reading. As you know reading opens so many doors for children and will help develop their imagination, creativity and writing skills.



Although we have some books in school, the majority of them are old and are about a life that is so different from what our children experience. In order to inspire them we would like to both purchase a reading scheme and also some fiction books that our children can relate to. A few weeks ago, I visited Kampala, Uganda's capital city, to visit the large educational bookstore there. I was delighted to find a great reading scheme written in Kenya and some fantastic picture books that will really motivate and enthuse our children.

This is an area we would really love your support. It would be fantastic if schools would be able to do a fundraising event for us to purchase the books.

If possible, it would be great if that was able to be done before Christmas, so we can purchase the books before the children return. Maybe you could do something to link with reading like a sponsored read?

I would really like to strengthen our links with our UK schools. For example, maybe on World Book Day a class in each school could link with one of ours for a Zoom video story-telling session? Our children love receiving letters from their friends in the UK so perhaps some can be sent by email?

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, I'm unable to visit the UK this year. However, I hope to be able to visit next year and would be happy to visit schools to share Child of Hope's work and life in Uganda with your children.

Please feel free to email me with any questions or any ideas on how you would like the link to develop with your school.



Best wishes,

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