



Autumn Newsletter 2020



Personal note from John and Sue.

2020 has been an unpredictable year for all of us with Covid 19 affecting all areas of the world with this years program disrupted as fresh challenges have emerged over the past few months.

We returned to Uganda in February to continue our work when the pandemic hit and everything was immediately locked down from the end of March.

President Museveni closed all the country's borders and shut the airport within days of the first reported cases of Covid 19.

Public transport and private cars were banned meaning we were trapped on the island, we couldn't travel anywhere other than on foot.

The country was in total lockdown and an enforced curfew put in place every evening from 7.00pm until 6.30 am.

Schools, shops, businesses, churches, restaurants, hotels and bars were immediately closed.

Market workers had to sleep at the market, factory workers had to camp at the factory unable to return home to risk spread of infection.

Non compliance meant arrest and resulted in the offenders spending 21 days in prison.

These drastic measures however did restrict the spread of Covid and at the beginning of September there had been only 3000 cases with only 32 deaths, yet over 1500 recoveries. Most of these cases and all of the deaths coming after the president allowed the repatriation of Ugandans back from other countries and failed to successfully enforce their quarantine.

We ordered groceries which were delivered by motorcycle once a week and had to make do with what was available, no fast food outlets, no restaurant deliveries, so we had to be both creative and resourceful.

The schools we work with were shut down mid term meaning that parents didn't pay outstanding school fees leaving shortfalls to pay teacher salaries, security staff and to maintain the buildings.

Strategies were put in place for home schooling where pupils had to purchase work books to continue their learning. Obviously without home computers there has been no internet teaching available.

For our sponsored children we had already fully paid their term fees up front and so they could use the workbook system.



We thank our sponsors for sticking with us through these challenges which at the moment show no sign of disappearing anytime soon. Équipe has helped with food packages into needy communities, assisted with medical bills, helped with teaching materials etc.



In East Africa there is no welfare system or government bail out scene. No furlough option if you can't work you can't earn and you can't buy food or pay rent, you can't buy work books, you can't pay medical bills.

Équipe is continuing to monitor the East African communities where it has been working and will continue to assist with donations of basic foodstuffs, soap and salt which will be distributed by our on the ground partners.

In Kenya some schools are going back this month while others may stay closed until the new year.

In Uganda they are gearing up for a return but with social distancing measures which will decimate class numbers, at the moment only certain class levels are able to return. Parents will not have money for schools fees so our sponsored children will have a big advantage as their place in class will be assured thanks to you.

Here in the UK we have government handouts, food larders and the incomparable NHS for which we are eternally grateful especially as John is currently undergoing treatment for prostate cancer free of charge on amazing equipment in first rate facilities.

SPONSORED CHILDREN

Here are a few of our sponsored children:

1, George Kanene who is a pupil at New Rock Foundation School in the suburbs of Kampala. He has been sponsored for 4 years.





2, **Christine Nassaka** is a pupil at Chosen Children Centre in Nansana a few miles north of Kampala. She has been sponsored for 3 years.



3, **Amnet Neema** is a pupil at Kibanga Primary in Kalangala, Sesse Islands. She has been sponsored for 3 years.



We have many other pupils being sponsored most who have a difficult family background and we are so grateful to all of you who support these children.

LOOKING FORWARD

Although jobs, careers, education, holidays and even medical treatment have been put on lockdown, life itself cannot be put on hold. Feeding programs can't be put on hold, helping the less fortunate cannot be put on hold. Lockdowns do not mean shutdowns, we must review what we do, evaluate, adapt and adjust how we do things so that we continue to be effective in bringing hope to the less fortunate. Schools are beginning to return for the final term of 2020 and schools fees have been sent out for all our sponsored children in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. Monies will also be sent out to continue supporting the feeding programs in our schools.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

We have been reviewing our relationship with our Kenyan and Tanzanian links as there have been some non Covid related issues over recent times which have caused us concern. In light of these concerns the trustees have concluded that in line with our responsibilities to our sponsors and our accountability to the charities commission, that we discontinue these two programs from the end of 2020. This coincides with the end of the academic year and we will be offering our sponsors the opportunity to transfer their child sponsorship to a needy child in Uganda if they are willing to continue supporting Equipe and the work we do.

OTHER PROJECTS

Last year Equipe became involved with a new project, the Eunice Memorial Medical Centre (EMMC) in Kalangala. Sesse islands have 70,000 inhabitants and almost no diagnostic medical equipment or facilities. We received donations to assist with the renting of suitable buildings, to assist with supplying medicines and the purchase of the first Ultrasound machine. Last month the islands power plant was struck by lightning, the island had no power so all medical services on the island were suspended for two days until power was restored. **They need a generator!** After hearing that 3 babies had died this year from pneumonia another group donated an oxygen concentrator and Equipe was able to provide the £460 required to have it shipped to Uganda. The day after it arrived a young man, Maurice turned up barely alive, he immediately went onto the oxygen concentrator but his chest injuries required an X-ray. He was referred to the mainland hospital for X-ray but his family being unable to afford the transport costs, approximately £4 for the 100km trip, decided to keep him at home. When the doctor rang two days later to ask how he was doing he was told that Maurice had died only minutes earlier. - how tragic.

Équipe would like to look into how we can obtain more diagnostic medical equipment while in the meantime trying to find a way to get sick patients to mainland hospitals for further tests, diagnosis and treatment.

Please if you are a child sponsor, continue to support the work we are doing. Please if you have any ideas of how we can improve what we do, let us know. Please if you know of any help or anyone who can help with any of the areas mentioned in this newsletter, contact us by email or telephone.

