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Library restocking continued even though students were not in school. Assistance from librarians and sponsored students made sure that libraries like this one at Buganda Road Primary received new books - 5,000 at this school.

Lockdown in Uganda

Schools are closed, but our work continues

By Trudy Marshall

Executive Director

Dear Friends,

This is a difficult newsletter to write. My heart is torn each day between my family that I miss desperately, and the work to which God has called me.

The lockdown in Uganda began in March. For three months, there was no transportation allowed. Motorcycle taxis, passenger taxi vans, buses, and private cars could not travel. The President gave a 30-minute notice in his speech before the lockdown of transportation began. One could only walk. Many deaths resulted because people didn't have transportation to hospitals, or they had no income to pay a doctor as all shops were closed also.

Finally, about three weeks ago, private cars were allowed to travel if all passengers wore masks, and no more than four in a car. Taxi vans could travel with half the normal passengers. Motorcycle taxis – which are a huge business here – will finally be allowed to carry passengers this month on the 27th.

Schools were closed. We were told that students could learn by using a radio. A radio for each family would be supplied. However, four months ago, it was stated that each person would receive a mask and food. We are still waiting for those, so are not expecting radios. The latest is that this might be a “dead” year for students, and they will have to repeat next year.

2020 Libraries – A Success

Thankfully our shipment arrived from the States and traveled from Kenya into Uganda. Since cars couldn't move, I had to call an important friend, a General, who supplied a ride for the principal to the school where we would unload the container. She arrived along with some school workers who lived near enough to walk, and the 430 heavy boxes were unloaded. Eventually, the boxes made it to schools in five towns. Ten libraries were restocked with thousands of new books and one new library was provided.



What fun we had! Thirteen of our sponsored students met me at the church. So wonderful to see them. Front row l-r: Trevor, S Ignacius, Solomon, Dorcus, Esther, Jovia. Back row l-r: Moses, Bonny, Moses F., Florence, Godfrey, Sarah. In front - the adorable Favour! Libraries of Love has 7 college graduates and 65 sponsored at present. So thankful for those who sponsor!

Sponsored families and librarians get support

Because our librarians are considered auxiliary workers, they have not been paid since the first of March. The government doesn't pay their salary. It is paid through student fees. The majority of our sixty-five sponsored students come from homes where they are being raised by a grandmother or a single mom. It has been stressful for the moms to have all their children home eating, instead of at school. Many families were having tea for breakfast and one meal a day. Thankfully, because of our wonderful sponsors and donors, we have been able to supply food for each of the 117 families (sponsored and librarians) at the beginning of each month.

I received this note from Sylvester, who has been sponsored since 3rd grade and will start at the university this year: “Mum, good morning. I do believe you were that person in Isaiah 6:8. “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying: Whom shall I send? And who will go for us? Then I said, “Here I am Lord. Send me.”

I'm thankful that God gives us "other" family when we can't be with ours.

Daily life

in my village

The small village that has been my home during this lockdown is one block long. A positive note is that everyone knows everyone. I go walking each day for exercise. On the way back, I sit and visit with the banana kiosk lady, three ladies that fix hair on the sidewalk, those sitting in front of our tiny grocery, and other friends that live on the main street. In the evening, we sit under trees to visit with



neighbors. I love that all the kids know me and start yelling when they see me. I love that boda drivers zoom past yelling, “Hi my friend!” There are many animals in the village such as cows, goats, and chickens, plus many crops that are growing.



Village Kids!

Each day, I have kids from the neighborhood who come asking for books or cookies. I know I have spoiled them, but how can you say no to those cute little faces. The last four Sundays, when the sponsored young men were here, we gave out paperback books, one for each child. The word reached surrounding villages after the first time. The next Sunday, about 200 children appeared walking down the paths and through the crops. The sponsored guys put the kids in lines to keep some distancing. We quickly handed them a book, marked their hand with marker so they didn't get in line again, and sent them on their way.

Some have actually gone home and changed clothes to try and slip in line again. Last Sunday, the kids received a 96-page paper notebook in which to write, with some crayons. This Sunday, we will hand out a bar of soap and a sucker.

To return or not?

The airport is still locked down. There were three flight going out in July, though none coming in. I very, very much miss my family and friends. I wanted to be with them. However, I knew in my heart that God wanted me to remain here during this time to serve as His hands and feet to those desperately in need. I couldn't leave and feel good about it, so I chose to stay. Each day, God places different people / needs in my path. Those situations are difficult to write about, so I will stop here. Please keep me and those I serve in your prayers.

* * *

It has always been about more than books. It's about enriching the lives of deserving children, knowing that lifelong readers become lifelong learners. Here is what you've helped do for these children:

- 39 school libraries in Uganda
- 7 school libraries in Kenya
- 65 sponsored students (includes 6 college students)
- 7 college graduates

There aren't words to express my gratitude for the prayers, words of encouragement, and financial support to help those in need at this time. I'm also thankful for those who donate books and our volunteers at home who are already preparing books for 2021. They are incredible. May our God keep us until we meet again.

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