



A ST. MUGAGGA VOCATIONAL SECONDARY SCHOOL KKINDU

P.O.BOX 1680, MASAKA-UGANDA.

TEL: 0782327765 / 0702087922.

EMAIL: stmugaggass.kkindu@hotmail.com

School motto: 'A pen is mightier than a sword'

Dear Dorothea

We hope you are Ok too. Let us believe that your family and colleagues at school are fine too. On our side we are all fine, both the teachers and students.

When COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda started on the 18th March, 2020, our schools were closed by the President sending all the teachers and students to their respective homes hence communication with fellow teachers is by phone while for the students it's not possible. Three days later, public transport was halted hence keeping all of us in our respective homes until last week when private transport was permitted.

How exactly are the partner schools affected by the crisis?

The unprecedented health crisis we are facing is greatly affecting the day today lives of our teachers, students as well as the parents and the community in general. The development plans for the year 2020 are ruined, Germany tour which been arranged by our partner school in September was cancelled which left teachers and students with wounded hearts, bruised egos, disturbing questions and few answers.

COVID-19 pandemic came as a shock to our students' teachers, health system and the society. Although the stories of our parents had always pointed out the pandemics in the past such as leprosy and "kawumpuri" a plague that had instant killings, to us all seemed mythical. Nobody in our time has ever witnessed any pandemic

which called for the closure of Gods residences such as churches and mosques.

Amidst hopelessness caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the leaders under immense pressure to make decisions on managing immediate impact of the pandemic closed schools and places of worship introduced social distancing, lockdown, facial masks and curfew from 7pm to 6:30am. The decisions created a lot of fear among citizens and everyone is seen as a potential carrier of COVID 19.

Extraordinary challenges, uncertainty and countless personal tragedies have happened. The pandemic crisis has led to the closing of our school affecting the daily lessons and syllabus coverage for all learners. The closing of our school meant cutting off daily school income that is used to meet staff salaries, allowances and school maintenance. Besides since the lock down was abrupt, most students left without paying their school fees leaving a huge debt. This has made the school to be unable to pay their workers. The school is stuck with debts and yet there is a lot of uncertainty where this money will come from since we are not sure of the exact time schools will resume but still with crumbling rural economy especially with flooding in agricultural products we are not sure whether the parents will be in position to pay the school debts and send their children back to school.

The stopping of transport, social distance phenomena and the introduction of a curfew has made interaction between fellow teachers and students impossible. Our students are getting more stressed about uncertainty of when they will go back to school. This has hit had the candidate students who were preparing to finish their levels. It's not that all of them miss studies at school, some miss their friends, teachers, the fun at school, the meals they share at school, the varying school programs and we have a feeling that they will

soon begin to exhibit signs of stress and some might even change their minds about school.

The lack of private means of transport after the easing of the lockdown has crippled even the ability of the head teacher and teachers to visit some candidate students to offer guidance, while the lack of personal computers makes online teaching impossible too. The crisis has created a situation of fear among the teachers and students of each other, looking at one another as a potential carrier of the Covid-19 virus.

School supervision and monitoring is a scientific one. It is done on phone. The heavy rains destroyed the staff pit latrine and the school kitchen



Heavy rains made the ground soft and as a result the verandah of the kitchen sunk.



The birds and spiders are taking advantage of the situation to spoil the wall of the buildings.



Destroyed staff latrine

There are only few security guards a girl who is a school dependant who keep the school clean.





Deserted school



Two security guards who keep school.



Deserted boys hostel



Deserted school offices



Deserted girls hostel. The Limes Hostel at KKindu

How do the teachers and pupils of partner schools deal with the current situation?

Most teachers have kept themselves in their homes observing the lockdown. The ministry of education through curriculum development centre supplied learning material to students in rural areas to keep learners busy.

Televised and radio learning lessons have been organized by the ministry of education for students of all classes and a schedule for each class well stipulated. This arrangement is for those who can access TVs and radios. But however, majority of students miss these lessons since their parents engage them in different activities at home like gardening, and cleaning around their homes.

Teachers have put up Subject Whattsapp groups to assist some of our learners but majority of them do not have mobile phones and in case they had one, buying of data is a challenge for their parents.

We encourage parents to pray with their children and show them that God cares.

Through radio announcements we encourage students to be patient and remind them of the big picture ahead. We sympathize with them and advise the parents to make them busy and keep a close eye on them because a lot is going on in their minds, many questions in their minds need a lot of answers which are not readily available. We also advise parents to reduce on home stress.

What difficulties and problems rule life, even beyond the question of school education, currently?

Transport has become a great difficulty; the lack of private mean of transport for teachers makes movement a big problem. Communication is another big challenge due to the lack of personal computers.

Affording daily meals is a challenge since the economy is slowing down and money to buy food is not available.

General fear of each other has increased; this is a new phenomenon since we are always social. The long time spent at home has increased domestic violence which has resulted into death

Are there any special experiences and /or creative moments that give hope and strengthen people even now in the crisis?

There those moments, For instance our musicians have started having music shows on social media to uplift the spirits of the people while TV stations organize music shows every weekend with 1 or 2 musicians to give hope to the people. The crisis has given more time for family life as parents and children have become closer while farming has increased and there is more food in the community.

As a result of COVID-19 pandemic, hygiene has improved in the community as hand washing is a must in all public places and this has also gone into homes and even in the community you are supposed to sanitize and you enter from any outside location, this has reduced diseases in the community which are brought about by poor hygiene.

As a school we are working with the hardware shops who give us materials on credit to renovate and improve sanitation at school during this period to give our learners.

St.Mugagga with no teachers and students during the criss.





HAND WASHING FACILITY





A student who is a school dependant trying to clean the school.

From Peace and Abel.