



COVID-19 Update 5th April 2020

I thought that you would all appreciate an update on life in Jinja, as so many people have messaged to ask what is happening there during these difficult times.

We approached the end of the spring term with great optimism and hope. The Twinkle dormitories were all ready, and the children moved in. We were at the point of getting solar power installed, which would change the lives of the children and staff.

Great Hope just had a new kitchen built, repairs to school after the heavy rains were completed and we were serving porridge every day to all the children.

All the schools had their results for the last end of year and reported good upward trend in all subjects. School assessments for the nursery children in all schools were taking place, and all was going well.

Then reports of a new virus causing a worldwide epidemic (not yet a pandemic) made us rethink a few things. Although Covid 19 was yet to cause real disruption to the UK, let alone reach Uganda, we decided now might be a good time to instil some extra health and welfare lessons.



Nurse Pauline taking to Gt Hope



Lorna and Pauline at Buyala

At this stage the emphasis was on hygiene, hand washing and distancing if you were unwell.

We made sure all the contractors on any of our sites followed safe practices and also understood the importance of it.

As a precaution both Son Rise and Mama Jane orphanages were provided with plenty of mosquito nets. Malaria is serious enough without an extra virus attack. They were also visited by Pauline.



Practicing handwashing! Water for washing on Site. Social distancing not quite!

This all seemed sensible and Lorna, who was planning to be back in the UK for Easter brought her trip forward a week as things started to get serious.

Uganda got its first case of Covid 19 after a Ugandan national brought it back from a trip to Dubai. This subsequently spread through his family, and others on that trip had symptoms too. President Museveni ordered the country to practice social distancing, wash hands well and to not travel much. Schools and non essential shops were closed. He was also going to close Entebbe Airport the next night.

This meant a frantic few hours to get Lorna out and back to the UK. We feared for her safety during a lockdown more than the fear of catching Covid. Luckily she got out on one of the last flights and is safely back.

We have made sure the orphanages have plenty of food, all our staff are paid in advance and the schools are locked and secured. Not before time as with 45 confirmed cases the president has ordered a total lockdown with no one allowed to use cars or go out except to buy food. In a country where food is scarce for many and medicine not available these are frightening times.

All staff are safely with their families and in constant contact with Lorna and myself. Thank goodness for WhatsApp!

We are monitoring the situation daily and hoping that the situation there doesn't escalate to a dangerous level.

Three trustees, including myself, were meant to be in Jinja now and we hope that we will be able to honour our trip in July. The wonderful people there need our support and help more than ever now. Please keep all of them in your thoughts.



All the very best to you all. Keep well and safe . Sue and all at JET