

**LIFE AT THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL  
MBAGATHI DURING  
CORONA VIRUS SCHOOL CLOSURE  
On the day of the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
All photos taken on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
By Judith Brown- School Leader**



On the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020 the Kenyan government confirmed their first Corona Virus case, and it was off a small road on Masai Lodge road which is approximately 1 km from the school, some of our children came from this very block. We started to think if we should close the school, but we needed to follow government directives. On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March I attended a meeting from the residents of Masai Lodge road to gather further information on the situation. Then on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March the Government announced that all schools were to close from the next day Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March.

After the Sunday evening meal on 15<sup>th</sup> March all the boarding children were gathered into the mini-hall to be informed of the closure. The children were told they would be going home; there was a bit of excitement in the air. They were told about the virus, and key preventative measure such as washing hands, then the children asked many questions - how is it passed, is it in Kenya, when are we leaving..... and many more; the children were eager to know. Parents were contacted and by the end of Tuesday all children were collected and the compound was quiet. Day children never returned for a formal farewell.

Anyone coming to the school will first meet Francis Mugambi our watchman, he welcomes you as you are required to wash and sanitize your hands. All those working on the compound are expected to keep social distancing and be updated with all government guidelines e.g. on how to keep safe, symptoms of the virus, protecting oneself and others. These guidelines are on display in the dining area.



Nandi flame tree flower



Francis the gate man



Sanitizer



Information board

Only the essential staff are now in school, teachers are at home, office staff are working from home, the minimum staff are here. Neema and Jane from the finance department are preparing



salaries to be sent to the banks. There is work going on behind the scenes in the finance department, preparing for the audit of 2019 accounts.

Work on the farm is important to continue, cows need to be fed and milked, hay is being collected from the field, greens are being collected for lunch and new plants are being transplanted from the nursery. Anthony, Joseph and Mutua are working hard with Francis Kilonzo who is overseeing the work.



In another corner of the compound a parent who is a carpenter is mending the backs to our chairs which are then being varnished by a casual.





Gift is here taking care our plants and the grounds need to be kept in good shape. On the farm a leak for the drip system is being mended by a plumber.

Security is an issue, our watchmen Mohammed, Tippetet and George are very important for us at this time. All property must be secure overnight. Isabella the cleaner and Kibet the Cook are also at work.

The work by our contractors of installing our solar project continues, here we see wonderful progress.



Francis our Farmer/Caretaker taking a warm lunch, Kibet our cook at lunch time and staff in our dining hall.

Work will continue as much as possible in regards to finding more sponsors and fund raising. The sponsorship group (Clara, Mercy and Judith) has to continue to be active as we strive to create financial security for the school. Emails and skype calls will be ongoing as we move into the coming weeks. Photo: Skype call with Mercy





We need to maintain the school throughout this time of closure and to be ready for the return of the children, when this will be we do not know. The Government has asked people to stay at home and this has a big impact on the social and economic lives of many people. The school's compound lacks the life of the children, though the birds are singing much louder than usual. We are concerned about our children, some who live under very severe home situations where eating one meal a day is a challenge. Due to the recommended social distancing parents and guardians do not go to look for work and even those who go, do not find casual work.



Our older children who are sitting their primary exam at the end of the year will be studying from home with texts books as best they can. Children came into school to collect the necessary books. Parents and students alike miss the school environment due to its nurturing nature. The teachers are considering ways how best to offer guidance to the children at home, how to keep in contact with families - though this is a big challenge.

By early afternoon all of a sudden the sky darkened and thunder roared and then the rains came down heavily, this only lasted 15 minutes before the rain became lighter. This time of the month is traditionally the beginning of the long rains and so therefore this maybe the start of the rainy season.



There is a lot of concern for the future months, parts of the population are going about their business, and others are locked away. The roads are fairly empty. Presently there are 28 corona virus cases officially reported in Kenya, one case has been reported to have completely recovered and no deaths. Many people are upset since a deputy governor and a pastor who travelled from abroad did not self-quarantine on their return and are corona positive and held meetings and gatherings in different parts of the country therefore spreading the virus. They have now been forced into quarantine. Since the virus is in 5 parts of the country we were expecting the government to put further restrictions on travel and late today the government announced a curfew to start this Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March from 7 pm to 5 pm.

We appreciate all our support from funders, friends, sponsors, co-workers; we are grateful that salaries are now being sent out and that we are able to do this for our staff. Our children remain in our hearts and minds as we move forward. Keep safe and our thoughts are also with you.



Evening sunset sky of the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Judith Brown 25.3.2020