

August 2020 Newsletter

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Announcement

Covid-19 Situation

Kenyan authorities have so far confirmed 28,754 COVID-19 infections with 460 deaths. New cases are now on the increase. We are pleased to report that to date all our pupils and families have remained healthy.

Delay to Schools reopening

• Due to the trend of COVID-19 cases rising steadily, the Government has shelved the initial proposal to reopen schools in September and announced that schools would reopen in January 2021. Education Minister George Magoha said students would have to repeat a year.

• The government has been providing school programmes via the radio, television and online since schools closed. There are however many pupils, ours included, who do not have access to the technology.

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Teachers' programme

Teachers are keen to resume classes however the Government directive means that no learning is to take place.

During school closure teachers will instead be actively improving upon their teaching methods to give our pupils the best possible learning experience.

Roko 20 teachers will:

1. Complete an 11-unit programme called 'Reducing violence in schools'. This will be teacher led and involve reflective discussions in learning circles.
2. Prepare for opening the first term next January 2021 ensuring lesson plans are written and resources prepared to facilitate more interactive lessons.
3. Help to obtain updates on each of our sponsored children to find out how they are coping with the current situation and the challenges they are facing. We already know that some of our children are just eating one meal a day.

Roko 20 Academy programme:

Of concern to us right now is the increase in teenage pregnancies during the Covid pandemic. With schools closed and no learning taking place we see this as an opportunity in the coming months to support our older Grade 5 and 6 pupils with a series of mentoring and counselling sessions, and for the girls, self defence classes. Volunteers from the community will assist us in ensuring that pupils are supported



Food distribution...

We are pleased to report a good harvest of kale, sweet potatoes and cowpeas on the school land.

Peter, our admin assistant and our two cooks, Agnes and Rachel have been busy ensuring our families are supported with a supply of soap, rice, oil, salt, beans and maize.





Some pupils are showing entrepreneurial skills. Take John for example, who over one week, planted over 300 mubariti (Silky Oak) tree seedlings in his tree nursery. Each tree plant will sell for 20 Kenyan shillings in town and 10 shillings in the rural area. This means he can make a profit of no less than 3000 shillings (equivalent to 25 GBP).

Pupil update

- During the pandemic our children have not been idle. Their work at home will be fetching water from the river, collecting wood for the fire, washing clothes, cutting feed for the animals and helping to prepare the evening meal. This is routine.

- Louise and younger brother Wilson are active on their shamba. Over the past few weeks these two young children have helped their mother to plant vegetables. They planted an avocado and a mubariti tree and spinach and kales in sacks.

Sales from the produce will help bring in an income for the family.

- Our Grade 5 and 6 pupils are keen to help at school with whatever needs doing and were there to water plants, carry out weeding and assist with the distribution of food.



Roko 20 finance

In a recent survey (June 2020) by the Small Charities Coalition 77% of Small Charities working in International Development reported significant falls in income and 45% reported they are at significant risk of closure in the next 12 months.

This fall in income has come about primarily for 3 reasons:

1) Charity fundraising events have had to be cancelled because of COVID 19.

2) Because of the economic downturn people have had to stop personally giving.

BOND (UK Network of Charities working in International Development) reported in April alone a 41% reduction in direct debit income for charities

3) Many Trust Funds have switched from supporting work overseas to supporting work in the UK.

At the same time, the vast majority of Small Charities such as Roko 20 do not qualify for government financial support packages leaving us all extremely vulnerable.

We had planned a number of summer events including a Charity Bingo event, an evening of

Brazilian music with a live Samba band and lastly, a sponsored run.



Equally livelihood opportunities in Kenya has reduced and we continue activities supporting the most vulnerable families of our children.

Teachers are receiving 80% of their salaries which is not happening in any other private school in the area.

In order to stay in control of our finances we created a risk matrix which prioritises our potential risks and the proposed action to tackle such risks. With the support of our trustees we are monitoring our finances.

We are happy to report that we are not in any danger of closure due to lack of funds.

That is basically because of the generosity of those who individually give to us through child sponsorship, GlobalGiving donations or other schemes.

Without your generosity, Roko 20 would be not be able to carry out its work.

THANK YOU ALL EVER SO MUCH



Fundraising

Thanks to all who responded to our GlobalGiving July Bonus Day Campaign to raise funds for our Teacher Training Programme.

To date we have raised £2,651.

A great effort and that's just £1,954 short of our target of £4,605.

Our GlobalGiving campaign is still open for donations.



March in May

Jonny Sutton was due to run an Ultra Marathon called 'Race To The Castle' (Bamburgh Castle) this year to raise money for charity.

Covid put a stop to that. He and Gavin Rowland thought of an initiative to walk or run the length of the British Coastline and in the process raise funds for 5 local charities.

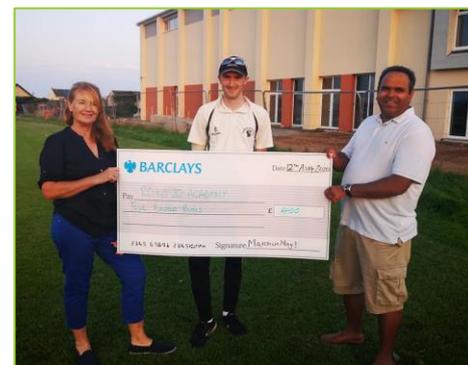
"As a community we want to raise funds for charities that our patrons have links and interests with". It was very much a collective effort.



Members of the town's football, rugby, cricket, bowls and rika teams, as well as staff members of the club, joined forces to try and walk and run the length of the coast path during May.

A total of £2,102 was raised and shared between Roko 20 and four local charities.

We are so very grateful to all who participated and donated.



Tracey joined by Governing Board Member Douglas Fernandes receiving the 400-pound cheque from one of March in May's participants and organisers, Tom Pritchard.

Job and Tracey

