



NEWSLETTER

February 2021



A very Happy, belated New Year to all of our wonderful donors, supporters and volunteers who continue to support us in our mission to provide free education of the highest possible standard to the most disadvantaged children in our community.

School reopening

As of Jan 25th, Kenya's Covid cases stand at 99,983 with deaths of 1,744.

The government has managed to maintain as much control over this Pandemic as possible with its very early lockdown. This, for us, resulted in one of the longest school closures of the continent and we're the last country in East Africa to re-open.

This lockdown, while hugely beneficial, had a flipside with reports of thousands of children, nationally, unable to return to their schools when loss of income meant parents couldn't afford to pay tuition or buy school books, uniforms and masks. Together with an increase in child pregnancies, things appear bleak for some of our vulnerable and most treasured children.

We provide everything here that a child needs to have the benefit of an education. Early on, we established a mentoring and counselling service for our Grades 5 and 6 pupils – assisted by volunteers from the community – which helped ensure they felt looked after and valued.



We're absolutely thrilled to say that, from January 4th, all of our grades are back in school. Children are learning and our sponsored students, thanks to you, will not be without an education.



Safety in School



Though Covid figures are encouragingly low, we've made every effort to ensure the safety of pupils and staff on their return to a school. Strict statutory rules dictated that extensive and costly work was done in the classrooms and we were given a rousing all clear after an inspection by officials from the Ministry of Education. We were free to re-open.

To comply with Covid-19 regulations, we worked creatively – we had a budget. So, we turned 6 classrooms into 4 and made use of the dining hall and kitchen to create 2 new ones. Fortunately, we were complying with one of the Ministry of Education's requirements which stated that lunch had to be eaten in class so losing the dining hall wasn't any loss at all.

A minimum classroom size standard was imposed which meant extending almost all of our classrooms to allow for this. Additional desk and chairs were bought to ensure pupils were spaced at least one metre apart. Hygiene stations were set up and sanitisers provided. Temperature taking occurs daily and is recorded. It may take a little time to adjust but pupils are getting used to adhering to social distancing guidelines, wearing masks and using the sanitation provided



GlobalGiving Campaigns

Return to School



Your wonderful response to our most recent Global Day of Giving Appeal (December 1st) raised a grand total of £1,987 (\$2,724). This included GlobalGiving's generous incentive of £487 (\$660) in matching funds. You've helped us to protect our school with new security surveillance cameras and you've also financed the purchase of desks, chairs, classroom storage cupboards, uniforms and text books.

We have also achieved a long term aim in obtaining a WiFi connection at the school. The WiFi connection will bring huge benefits to the school with regards to teaching, learning, pooling of resources and will increase the ability to link with other schools.

New School Link

GRADE 4 AND 5 LINK WITH CATALONIA

Volunteer Teresa, a teacher from Catalonia, worked with us at in January 2020 for three months. She spent her time setting up and developing our Learning Support Programme. So inspired was she by the work we do here that she pledged, upon her return to Catalonia, to continue supporting us in any way she could



Teresa developed a video communication project to link our students with the ones she was teaching in her home country. This allowed both sets of students to learn about how another culture lives by actually talking to the children who live there. They communicate in English and language skills at both ends are improving and friendships are being forged. Plans are underway for a second video link before the end of March so that our children may make friends and learn about life in many other countries.



What a talent! The mother of our pupil Rita has produced a wonderful song drawing on her life experiences. The music is in the typical Kikuyu style. There was much revelry in the school when a film crew came to record the accompanying music video. Members of the local community discovered untapped acting talent with even one of our school builders landing a starring role. If you watch closely, you'll spot cameo appearances by our School Manager Job and, all the way from Milford Haven in Wales, our School Director Tracey.

Watch the video on YouTube and please Like it. This will support Rita's mum and help promote Kikuyu music to the rest of the world.

Xmas Party



Covid-19 restrictions meant that 2020 was the first year Roko 20 missed out on a Christmas Party. Our good friend and donor suggested we use the donated money to provide a gift of maize and bean seeds to each of our elderly ladies group.

A lovely gesture and the ladies were grateful for her thoughtfulness.

Teacher training programme



Additional costs were incurred in guaranteeing the safe re-opening of the school. So, we adjusted our teacher training programme to deliver a more economical Continuous Development Training Programme.

This training programme, conducted by a respected local Government Teacher and

Based Curriculum, learning outcomes and improving the preparation of work schemes and lesson plans.

An intensive 5 five days training was followed-up with another five days of monitoring to ensure that teachers understood and implemented the training.

The programme was such a success that we will retain the Trainer's professional expertise. The Trainer will offer our teachers continuous professional development throughout 2021.

Rest assured, teacher training will remain the forefront of our plans to improve learning at Roko 20 Academy. Teachers returned to school with a competence and a new confidence in their ability to teach our pupils putting everything they had learnt into practice.

Our vision has been and always will be to provide our pupils with the best education possible. Thanks to you and your continued support and generosity we can achieve this.

JanRUNary



Former volunteer and current Board Member, Jonny Sutton, and good friend Bryan Hughes set up an endurance challenge in January to raise funds for the school.

Enticing friends - Andrew 'Moley' Cole, Sophie Cole, Ieuan Davies and wife Kim, Chris Banner, Roxanne Kehoe, Mathew 'Mossup' Barker and Jonny's Father Geoff - a 256 epic challenge was set and accomplished.

The Challenge involved running, walking or cycling miles on a daily basis - Starting on the 1st of January the group conquered 1 mile and an additional mile was added per day until the 16th January (16 miles).

On the 17th January and every day after a mile less was travelled until the challenge was complete with 1 mile on the 31st January

Over £3000 pounds has been raised by this amazing challenge.



Budget

We are pleased to report that we kept well within our 2020 Budget.

With the additional costs that the COVID pandemic brought, this was excellent news and a great sign of how Job can adapt to ever changing situations.

Due to the success of JanRUNary and a very generous donation we start 2021 in a healthy financial position.

If you are interested in receiving our Annual Report please contact roko20academy@gmail.com

Sponsorship



When you sponsor a child at Roko 20, you are not only guaranteeing them an education. You are giving them (and their family) support in terms of food, uniform, books, clothes etc. We currently have 62 children being sponsored and we are so grateful for the support you are giving them.

For less than the cost of 3 takeaway coffees per week, a child's future can be transformed. Sponsorship goes much further than financial support.

By sponsoring a child, you are profoundly affecting their sense of empowerment as they learn, grow and dream.

Thanks!

As well as sponsoring 118 to a free education Roko 20 Academy is a recognized source of employment within the community employing 11 full time staff and offering casual work as and when needed. We work closely with the Community's Health and Social Worker and have maintained good relations with the District's Chief and officials from the Education Office.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to all those who have supported us and those who continue to do so. Your generosity allows us to continue the work we do and provide help to those who need it. Quite simply without you and your support we would not be able to carry out our work.
