



# Kenya Children's News

November 2020

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## Vital help when it's needed most

Thank you once again for responding so generously to our emergency food and hygiene parcel campaign – probably our biggest ever – and for helping us to feed 3,000 desperately vulnerable children, disabled and old folk. Schools are opening later this month and thanks to your donations, children will return to the classroom brighter, stronger and ready to learn.

We knew we had to act quickly. In April, our day centres and school projects - which enabled 400 very disadvantaged children to receive their daily meal - were shut down due to Covid. Although the number of COVID cases and deaths have been low in Kenya, the lockdown has created an income and feeding crisis for the poorest families with unemployment, poverty, dilapidated housing, poor health and malnutrition at the forefront of their daily struggles. We had to find a way to continuing to support them.

Several agencies attempted to distribute food in April, but this led to riots and violence, so the government banned public feeding programmes. Negotiating a solution which was acceptable to the government and the police, met the new social distancing regulations, kept our social workers safe and dealt with the internal travel constraints was a challenge to say the least. We finally settled on two solutions to suit different locations:

- Voucher system: The voucher entitles each family to collect an emergency box with a month supply of essential food, household and hygiene items from a local grocery store.
- Direct distribution: Where there are no local shops, our team purchase the maize flour, rice, lentils, various types of beans, vegetables, oil, sugar, soap and masks, pack them in large sacks and distribute them to the families, who may have to walk several kilometres to get to the distribution point.

The project provides a lifeline for the children that have no other reliable source of food during lockdown. After seeing the benefits, local officials asked us to support many more extremely needy children in other desperately poor rural communities. As a result, the project has expanded from our original 400 children to over 3,000 individuals now!

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### ***Cocooned and re-connected***

In spite of COVID restrictions, our social workers managed to track down the young mums of two babies at our abandoned baby home. These mums genuinely want to care for their babies and with regular counselling they will spend several months re-bonding before taking their baby home. Our partner adoption agency is finding safe, caring new parents for five other babies that have been with us for a year. It is heartening that, after a sad start in life, seven babies will now have a brighter future.



### ***Young Women's Health – a new project***

Very poor families can only afford to buy basic food items to survive – hygiene products are out of reach. So, in September, we launched a “Young Womens Health Programme” that’s providing sanitary pads and health counselling for 300 girls and young mums in four slum communities. Girls aged 10-18 learn how to use pads, general female hygiene and other life skills while young women are counselled about family planning, responsible sexual behavior and parenting. We want to help inform and empower many more girls in the future.



### ***Bowls of goodness***

When schools re-open, we will be providing hot lunches for vulnerable children at three additional schools in poor rural communities. Experience from our day centres and three existing school projects shows that a hot lunch dramatically improves the health, wellbeing and academic success of vulnerable children. It is extraordinary that a hot meal costing just £5 per month can transform a child's life.



### ***To Kenya, with love***

A large shipment of clothes made by members of “Big Heart Square” and “Crafted with Love” craft groups, will dress babies in our home and help clothe hundreds of poor children at our outreach projects. Our bumper haul of boxes featured 3,000 items, including kind donations from our donors, for all ages from babies to teenagers. Thanks to all the donors and to Hawk Freight Logistics (one of our generous sponsors) for organising the air freight to Kenya.