



MPC

Monthly Newsletter

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Mukuru Promotion Centre NEWSLETTER

Empowerment Step by Step

INSIDE:

Education	3
Sponsorship	5
St Michael's Secondary	6
Social and Health Services	7
MPC Clinic	9
Songa Mbele	11
MPC Rehabilitation Centre	16
Vocational Training	21
Happenings	22

From the Director

Dear Friends

What a month! It has been quite a roller coaster ride. With much speculation coming from all corners of the country we continued doing what we do, serving the community at the most fundamental level. We had expected to have a huge increase in patients in our Clinic during April but instead of that we had about 500 less patients than in March. We wondered why. We were not the only facility with lower than usual numbers. It seems that people who suspect that they may have CoVid19 were afraid to appear at health facilities due to fact that health facilities and hospitals have mostly to refer the suspected cases to Government centres. The cost of hospitalisation and the forcible quarantine imposed by the Government, that the individual had to pay 2,000 KHS (\$20US) per night for 14 nights in Government institutions or hotel, made people fear to be found positive. Residents of Mukuru cannot afford to pay 28,000khs for quarantine so some of them, stay away from the health facilities and self-medicate. They get advice from friends and relatives who work in the medical field.

For those who have tested positive for CoVid19, 70 % have no symptoms. This is different to the scene in Europe and US. The huge number who are asymptomatic is a challenge as it is hard to keep them in quarantine as they feel they are not sick and are receiving no treatment. However, they can carry the disease to others as they are contagious. Doctors wonder why so many have no symptoms and feel that the exposure of Kenyans to numerous viruses and to frequent chest infections may have made Kenyans more resilient than others. Kenyans have all received anti TB vaccination, they have had high exposure to anti-malaria, to anti-retroviral drugs for HIV and to deworming. Some of these medications have been shown to kill CoVid19 in laboratory settings. Kenya has a younger population in comparison with Europe. It is common for older people when they retire to move back up country. We therefore have less very old people in the city than is normal in other cities.

Of the 30% of Kenyans showing symptoms another percentage of 20% to 25% show mild symptoms. In 5% the disease is virulent, and patients become seriously sick. Four out five of this last group die. Some in this category have underlying conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. The figures I quote are from the Head of Infectious Diseases Unit in Kenyatta Hospital, Dr Loice Achieng Ombajo. These figures only became available recently when mass testing was done in Kawangware (west) and in Eastleigh (east) of the capital.

There have been two stories in the media of patients who were either put out of ICU through inability to continue to pay or who were not allowed by the security to enter the hospital due to lack of ability to pay the costs. Both patients died of CoVid19. There have also been stories of the huge costs in private hospitals for CoVid19 treatment. Patients are charged for the protective gear worn by staff and for boxes of gloves and other items used when treating them on top of room and other costs. Slum dwellers are unable to pay the costs even in public hospitals.

In our Clinic the rise in malnutrition was noted. We made an appeal for nutrition packs for affected families, to which we had a positive response. Residents who are not sick appealed for food as they have not had income since the 16th March. Our social workers packed the remainder of the €7,000 worth of food that we had bought at the end of February for the March school children's lunch and distributed to families in Mukuru who had no income. When we had exhausted our resources, Team Pankaj arrived to assist us and have assisted us with food packs for those in need. They have also assisted our former schools' administration to distribute food in Mukuru kwa Ruben and Mukuru kwa Njenga. This has been a constant task for the social workers as for distribution, permission has to be got from Government officials and regulations have to be followed. No more than 15 people can come together at any one time and they have to maintain social distance. This means that the distribution for hundreds has to be spaced out over days.

In the Clinic patients are treated for the normal illnesses they present. Some have coughs and sore throat. Only those with high fever are referred to Government hospital and we have had only one of those who was confirmed positive with the virus. We do not know whether the other patients are CoVid19 positive or not. We tried to get testing kits in order to test our street boys who had gone out of the centre, so that they could be readmitted, but so far have not managed. Friends in Spain are trying to assist us with the testing kits. The Government department dealing with Street families requested us repeatedly to admit 25 new street boys. We agreed if they were tested, but at the time the Government said it did not have the capacity to test the boys. The Government capacity is improving. It is since more testing was done in the community last week that we are more aware of the reality of the situation regarding CoVid19.

In Kenya clinical trials are taking place for the antiretroviral drug Redemsivir (anti Ebola) Hydroxychloroquine (anti malaria) and Lopinavir (anti HIV) in order to try to find a cure. In the meantime, patients are treated for the symptoms they present.

It is especially important that the Mukuru residents maintain their immunity by eating well. We are grateful to many of you who responded to our appeal for the immunity booster packets. It is making a difference to thousands of families. For the bulk of people who live in the slums, their concerns are about hunger and looking after their families. The coronavirus is, understandably, way down the list.

The end of April saw heavy destructive rains in a number of regions. We expect an increase in patient numbers at the Clinic with the normal coughs, chest infections and sore throats. The situation is dire for those thousands of parents who lost their jobs until further notice. We applaud the kind people who are helping us with food donations.

With grateful appreciation

Sr Mary Killeen

The effect of the CoVid19 Pandemic has continued to affect the education schedules for the year 2020.

The schools have remained closed for the month of April, but this is when schools are normally closed as it is the end of term break. The question is when will schools re-open. So far, all indicators are that the Government will postpone the start of term two for all learning institutions until June. It has been suggested that the schools are likely to re-open after Madaraka Day (Independence / Self Governance) celebrations due on 1st June, 2020 but will be confirmed by the Education Cabinet Secretary, Professor George Magoha.

The Government has undertaken the project of digging boreholes in the Informal Settlement areas. Two of our schools are located in these areas. St. Elizabeth Primary school borehole is currently underway. The story was depicted in the local newspapers.



Cabinet Secretary, Government officials and the school principal Mrs Okomol at the site.



The water sample from the borehole has also been taken to WARMA (Water and Resources Management Authority) for laboratory testing.

The other school to benefit is Sancta Maria Mukuru Kayaba Primary School. The boreholes are strategically placed to benefit both the schools and the communities in Lunga Lunga and Kayaba. It is claimed that the two boreholes will provide up to 2,000,000 litres of water per month to the residents.

The project will solve the perennial water problems that have persisted in these two institutions. The Government allocations for utilities like water and electricity have been little to meet the huge bills. We are grateful that the Government has provided such basic a necessity to the communities.

Our students are facing many challenges during this period. Face to face learning is an absolute must for our children. The *on-line learning platform* is not even a remote possibility. Our children live in the informal settlements which means that most don't have access to electricity and certainly do not have computers. A very small number may have a smart phone, but then the problem is buying data bundles to activate the content. There is a likelihood of children in the slum crowding into the few places with television sets, so this equally poses a danger to them as the houses are single room (2m x 1m) not exactly a conducive atmosphere for learning.

Sad to report that some youth have started involving themselves in crime. One youth was lynched by mob justice. There is fear that many more are likely to get into gambling, join gangs and drug abuse during the long break. We have approached the Ministry requesting that the Form Four candidates be allowed to return to school where they have space for private studies and can also have online connection for digital learning.



Daily Nation Newspaper

Even though there is a pandemic, it does not stop the basic human needs. Feeding thousands of children remains a major task for parents. Parents / guardians are not working at the moment and cannot afford to buy food. With Nairobi City locked down many produce suppliers are not able to access the city making it awfully expensive for the small-scale businesses to buy from the few who manage to bring their produce to the city. Some of them are not able to buy the supplies because they have already used the money to feed their families. There have been a few infections in South B, Mukuru kwa Njenga, Mukuru kw Rueben slums. Everyone must wear protection masks, wash their hands with soap and water. All these require finances that are currently not available. We do hope that the containment measures that are in place will take affect quickly.

Sponsorship

It has been six weeks since the first case of CoVid19 was reported in Kenya. This renders a prolonged interruption to scheduled activities for the departments.

Many activities involve students so that the community service program, mentorship sessions, appreciation letters, school reports and visits have not taken place during the month.

Several of our sponsored students' families have benefited from food donations that were distributed to them through the Social Office. Most parents / guardians have lost their jobs and are living in tough conditions during this time. The food donations provided a lifeline to hundreds of the families.



David Otieno



Fatuma Mukai & Haji Hamis Guardian



Sharon Adhiambo

Two of our former beneficiaries from Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre have greatly assisted by making face masks. The women produce up to least sixty masks per day. That's 1,800 for month of April. This has been a great benefit to Mukuru community. Earlier the Government directed everyone to wear a face mask while in public. This income generating activity will help the women provide for their families and also help the Mukuru community to be compliant with Government regulations and keep their families safer. At the moment to buy a mask at the shops will cost around \$5. These masks will certainly be more affordable.



Mask production by Zainab & Doreen

Much gratitude to all our donors whose continuous support has always been greatly felt. This kindness has seen most of the needy students benefit with their lives changing for the better.

Just to mention a few examples. A young teenage mother currently in Form 2, at St. Michael's Secondary has been receiving much support from her donor. Receiving assistance with the task of raising her child through food donations as well as other essential items. As a result, the girl concentrates well in class and her performance is exemplary.



Salome receives donation for support of her baby.

St Michael's Secondary

Since St Michael's has been closed since 16th March there is little to report. We have gone from being an education institution to a social welfare centre. We have identified the worst cases for support and provided donations of food and clothes to these families.

We have looked at all possibilities to keep the students learning, especially the Form 4s. We created a WhatsApp group for each year level. It gave us the opportunity to hear some of their concerns and clarify some issues. By the end of the month we have managed to reach 35% of the students. This is because most of the students do not have a mobile phone. We are trying other ways to communicate to as many students as possible. The teachers have been supplying some revision materials via the 'wall' at the school which is encouraging. The teachers are concerned that the Ministry has stated that the KCSE exams will proceed at the end of the year however they will find it extremely difficult to cover the syllabuses.

Social and Health Services

As Mukuru Promotion Centre, we were privileged to receive food donation from Team Pankaj which is aimed to help the needy and vulnerable people of Mukuru Slums. The food was received in four phases in April. The social workers in every department have been issuing the food donation to clients within the slums.



Team Pankaj package included:

- Cooking fat 500g
- Maize meal 2 pkts of 2kgs
- Curry powder 3 sachets
- Sanitary towels 1 pack
- Rice 1 kg
- Cowpeas 4 kg
- Chickpeas 2 kg
- Sugar 1kg
- Salt 250g
- Long bar of soap

Most of the Mukuru community are left jobless and unable to feed their families because they are casual workers. The guardians / parents who depend on washing clothes are not allowed into the estates. The families will at least have something to eat for a couple of weeks. The food parcels and immunity booster packs have been a great help.

The total number of families who have benefited from the food donations for the month is 841 out of the 1,493 received. Due to the restrictions on movements the social workers are staggering the distributions to comply with the Government directives.

Distribution Site	Number of Families
Clinic – Dunga Road	225
Skills – Head Office	34
St. Bakhita Primary – Head Office	82
St. Michael’s Secondary – Head Office	75
St. Elizabeth Primary – Lunga Lunga	93
St. Catherine Primary – Dunga Road	95
Sancta Maria Mukuru Primary - Kayaba	87
Songa Mbele na Masomo – Aoko Road	150
TOTAL	841



Some of the parents who received the food.

The social workers have been working with the village elders and the community health volunteers to reach as many families as possible in the slums. These families are not ones whose children attend an MPC school but those who live in the community with no supports. Apart from the food parcels the workers are raising awareness on the pandemic and encouraging the people to abide where possible with the Government directives.



St Catherine's Social Office



St Bakhita Social Office



Sancta Maria Mukuru Social Office

We can only imagine what the anxiety levels must be like when there is no guarantee of where the next meal will come from.

April has been an amazing month though with less activities due to the CoVid19 Pandemic. We have managed to keep safe and continue with our normal routines in the Clinic. The two main activities were the distribution of immunity booster packets and Ministry of Health training sessions on CoVid19.

We suspect that the reason why the numbers decreased in April was due to the '**STAY AT HOME**' directive from the Government. It would seem that people were quite scared of being arrested by the police.

The Clinic staff received training on detection and screening on the coronavirus from the Ministry of Health. This has helped enormously to identify the high probability. If patients think that they have it, they will not attend the Clinic for fear of being stigmatized and taken to a Government facility. The sensitization sessions for staff have enabled them to allay the patients fears.

The Clinic continued its distribution of immunity booster packets to over 215 malnourished patients and their families and a further 337 families received food parcels. The immunity packet contains: amaranth porridge flour, 5 kgs of maize, 3 kgs of beans, bunches of kales, oranges, sweet potatoes, cooking oil, washing soap and toilet rolls.

At the Clinic there was 1 new tuberculosis case taking the TB count to a total of 8 clients. Two of the TB clients are on supplementary food parcels. There were 80 antenatal mothers while 82 children were immunized which was above normal.



Patients receiving booster packets

Patients Treated in April

Category	Gender	Under 5	6-13yrs	14 yrs +	Total
New Cases	Male	42	12	110	164
	Female	65	18	203	286
		107	30	313	450
Revisits	Male	79	11	134	224
	Female	62	15	255	332
		141	26	389	556
Total April		248	56	702	1,006

The laboratory tests carried out number over 300 in April, this was down from the normal 600 tests per month. The top five are listed below:

Laboratory Tests In April

	Top Five Laboratory Tests for April	No. of Tests
1	Stool	56
2	Full Haemogram	36
3	Urinalysis	101
4	Malaria test	16
5	Antenatal Clinic tests	30

Most Common Treated Diseases in April

Disease	No. of Cases
Abdominal pregnancy	40
Allergies Unspecified	29
Acute Upper Respiratory Tract Infection	202
Respiratory Tract Infection	36
Gastritis / PUD	58
Gastroenteritis	158
Hypertension / Diabetes	62
Neuralgia and Neuritis Unspecified	46
Skin Infections	31
Urinary Tract Infection	219
Other Diseases	225
Total	1,106

**Songa Mbele na
Masomo**

The month of April was unique in the sense that most of the Centre activities did not take place due to the Government directives to close all learning institutions.

For Songa this meant that only essential workers were allowed in the Centre to carry out their duties. The Centre was frequented by so many families who needed assistance in terms of food provisions and therapies. The social worker coordinated the food distribution together with the available staff to ensure that they received the food parcels. We received donations from Team Pankaj, Star Kids Initiative and Naivas supermarket. We also received over 450 much needed diapers from Braeburn School Parent Committee representative, Indira.



Songa Families receive food parcels



Mr Pankaj and his Team distributing food parcels and face masks to needy parents from Mukuru slums.



The coronavirus has not stopped the construction industry. The construction of the new multi-storey facility started with the marking out of the building, demolition of the old classroom and kitchen building.

Down it comes!



The site was handed over to the contractor in the first week of April. Within a few days the old buildings were demolished to make way for the new. The hoarding is up and the area is ready for the next stage.

At the other end of the property the playground was completed during the month. The children can now further develop their motor skills, strengthen their muscles, and just have fun on some cool equipment. The children in wheelchairs can stretch out in the fresh air on the circuit. The playground equipment will certainly help the therapists at the Centre. We are really grateful to the An Garda Síochána Third World Fund and Paula Cullen for fixing up the area in preparation, leveling and laying of the pavers for wheelchair circuit. Noreen Walsh and her group 'Bridging the Gap' for the playground equipment. We do hope to erect some shade cloth / sails to help out of those really hot sunny days.



Swings and climbing frame



Slides, tunnel, rock wall and wheelchair circuit

Sr Patricia helps out with the planting of grass seeds for the playground. Hopefully, next month we will see a lovely green space surrounding the equipment.





The noise level has increased during the play time breaks!

The kitchen operated services at the Centre as usual though very minimally as only the essential workers were there. All food items that were donated this month went to supporting the needy families around the slums.



Starkids Initiative distributing food to parents at the Centre.



Some parents and children coming for food at the Centre.



The wheelchair friendly toilet is nearing completion.

The property is only 100 metres in length and the current toilets are pit latrines which makes things a little tricky for a disabled child. It was important to build a wheelchair friendly toilet next to the other toilets in the playground area. So, no need of accidents!

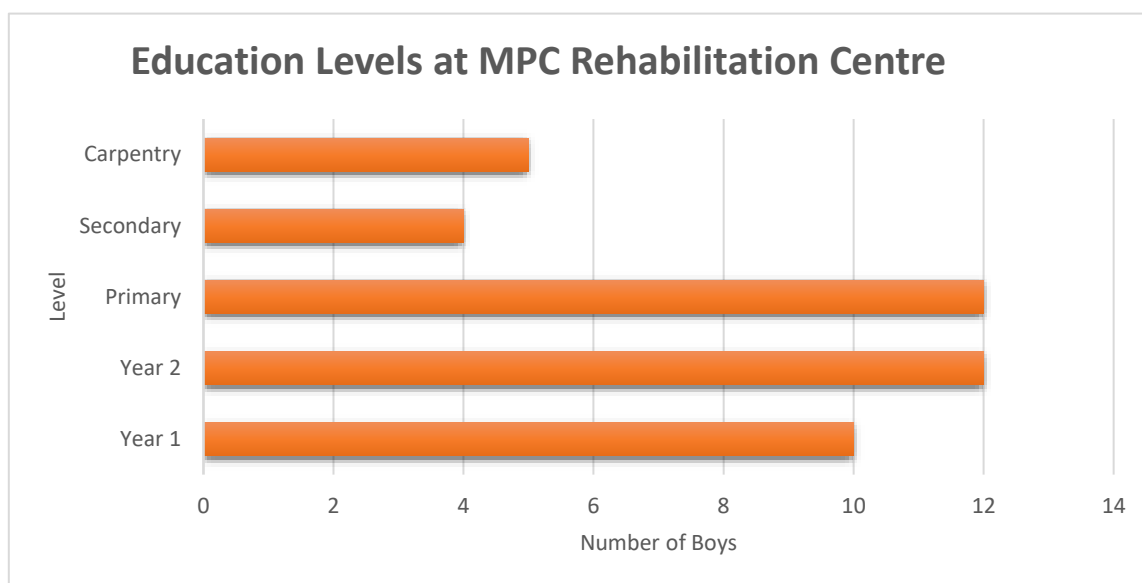
Luciah and Brian receive adult diapers from Braeburn School Parent Committee representative, Indira.



MPC Rehab Centre

Before CoVid19 there were many activities planned however, the month saw a slower pace than normal. The visitors that were expected had to postpone their trips. We do hope to see them later in the year.

There were 43 boys at the Centre who sat various tests to determine their academic level so that we can place them in the appropriate program and ascertain if there are any learning difficulties.



Identifying the correct educational level is especially important for the rehabilitative success of each boy. Finding the right fit develops their confidence.

The boys celebrated Easter very joyfully. They hunted for Easter Eggs and ate their finds. There were also chocolate treats. Just when they thought the Easter Season was over, they had chips and pizza courtesy of Paula Cullen and her group's generosity.





Boys enjoying Easter goodies

April being a holiday month we adjusted our program to ensure that the boys kept busy. Our activities included motivational talks, weeding, slashing around the compound, gardening, acrobatics etc.



Preparing the garden for the seedlings



Boys in Art class



Acrobatics instructor showing the boys how it's done.

Boys picking veggies for supper from the Shamba

Moral formation is a vital part of our rehabilitation program. Our social and health services department offered some life skills classes to the new boys. The other talks covered topics such as anti-bullying, HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, and the power of decision making, both at the individual and group level.



Counsellor and social worker giving talks to the boys

The education classes have been going on and the boys have enjoyed learning on their ProFuturo tablets. All is going well. The boys are challenged to read beyond the normal curriculum content. The flexibility of the ProFuturo tablets mean that extra curriculum content can be added. This is the great thing about ProFuturo. There is no limit to learning.



ProFuturo classes in session

We continue to take precautions to prevent the corona virus affecting the staff and boys. Each day the nurse from the Clinic checks everyone's temperature. St. Catherine's Primary school has been identified as a possible isolation Centre for patients with corona virus. In anticipation for this, if the need arises, a fence was erected between the Rehabilitation Centre and St Catherine's for safety measures.



Men putting up the fence for safety distancing



nurse checking temperatures

To keep the boys physically and mentally fit we have been privileged to have Sonia as our Yoga instructor. Sonia creates time for our boys whenever she is available.



Yoga exercises with Sonia



Staff meetings from a distance

Due to the current CoVid19 staff were unable to meet face to face for the updates in the usual meeting room. Consequently, the meeting was held outside Hekima House.

Despite the pandemic, we have had a few well-wishers keeping us going strong through their food donations and support.



Donation from Fr. Maurizio



Vegetables Action Focus



Visa Oshwal Community



Pallet donations from KWAL for carpentry class

The carpentry class received some old pallets from Kenya Wine Agency (KWAL). This will assist the class to make small items such as kindergarten chairs and desks. The major element in the Grade III carpentry curriculum is joints. They now have plenty of materials to perfect the skill.

Amy has been teaching the boys how to make soap. This exercise can in the future be used to generate income as soap is a universally used commodity. This time we made extra to sell at the market. With all the handwashing that is required during the pandemic, we think it will sell well!



Soap making session

Our Lady of Mercy Vocational Training Centre (OLMVTC) has continued to feel the pinch with over seven courses disrupted. Over 200 hundred learners are at home and fear forgetting what they had learnt in term one. The Computer class for example was remaining with only one module to complete. The tutor tried to teach that module through the online platform but did not work since most of them are not connected to the internet.

The Grade Two students, who were scheduled to sit for their exams in April, will need to wait now until perhaps August as they were cancelled.

Businesses have put student placements on hold. All our students were to complete their work attachment in early April, but this did not happen and has caused great anxiety for them as they need the experience for employment.

OLMVTC has started local production of face masks in an effort to protect staff and students from the pandemic. The masks are being produced by former students. They are able to make 80-100 face masks per day. Our masks are cost-effective and reusable after washing and disinfecting.

On the same breath, Jeff Kinyanjui from Nation Media group did an interview with Sr. Mary regarding the efforts the Centre has taken to curb CoVid19 which included the production of face masks. The interview was placed on YouTube. In the interview we shared about the challenges we are facing in purchasing materials for making the masks and fortunately two days later Jane Rose came knocking with enough materials. We thank Jeff, a reporter and former MPC beneficiary for doing the story and Jane Rose for her kind donation.



Jane Rose donates materials for production of face masks



Dressmaking students try their best to make face masks to stop the spread of CoVid19

Our computer tutor was able to criss-cross the 5 MPC sites and assist with the different IT issues during the month. From the St Bakhita Social Office to fix the unstable wi-fi connection over to the Director's office to set up a webcam for her Zoom meetings. Then off down to the Rehabilitation Centre and Clinic to transfer data from one old computer that had died to a new one. Just a little further down the road the unstable internet and a new configuration to network the printer. Phew, back at the Head Office to prepare the new computers for the new graphic design course, which fingers crossed, will commence in mid-June. We are appreciative to Irish Fest Foundation and the Third World Fund for supporting the graphic design program with the new computers.

Happenings...

Apart from the virus which has turned many things upside down we launched our new website. The new website contains our newsletters, annual reports and video clips. The on-line donation facility has now been added. Take care and stay CoVid19 safe!

Mukuru Promotion Centre

Empowerment Step by Step

Sponsored by Sisters of Mercy

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Thank you for your support to improve the quality of life for thousands of children, youth and seniors each day.