



MPC

Monthly Newsletter

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Mukuru Promotion Centre **NEWSLETTER**

Empowerment Step by Step

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From the Director

Dear Friends

I hope that you are all well and did not suffer from the CoVid19 outbreak. The effects of the outbreak here have been the increase of hunger, poverty, crime, domestic violence and police brutality leading to a number of deaths and serious injuries among the very poor. Thankfully, we have not seen signs of contagion in the Mukuru slum villages we serve, but the disease is definitely in other villages of Mukuru such as Kwa Njenga, Pipeline and Ruben. We experienced challenges in paying our May salaries as payment of fees in secondary was down this year due to increasing poverty and closure of schools. No income has been received since 16th March for the secondary school or the vocational centre, yet staff are depending on their salaries to live. There is no social welfare or Government help for teachers who are not working. The Government has supplied funds for some hotels, lodges and for wildlife services in order that they do not collapse. Sr Mary Gitau, Province Leader, met twice with the MPC Board to study our financial situation and to advise on the way forward. It was decided to pay working staff their full salaries for May and those who are not working to give them a CoVid19 allowance of half salary so they can live. We will review the situation on 10th June at the next Board meeting.

Nairobi experienced water shortages due to flooding and landslide damage to the dams supplying water to the city. The Government drilled boreholes in two of our schools: St Elizabeth's, Lunga Lunga and Sancta Maria, Mukuru to supply water to the schools and community. Sancta Maria was used as a CoVid19 testing site by the Ministry of Health for the villagers of Kayaba who turned up in the thousands but only a few hundred were tested due to lack of enough testing kits and reagents. There were no positive results. Soon St Elizabeth's will be used for testing the Lunga Lunga and Kingston villagers. We had prepared St Catherine's as a testing site, but as we only had one suspect

case in our Clinic, up till now it has not been used. We are truly fortunate so far, as Kibera slums have registered many positive cases.

The students in our vocational training centre produced washable masks for use of clients, students and community members. Team Pankaj continue to supply food for those without income in the surrounding slums. Many of you have assisted in supplying nutrition parcels to those suffering effects of malnutrition. For this we are incredibly grateful. We have been meeting and discussing with various stakeholders on how to enable past secondary and vocational students earn their living. Officially the lockdown is still in place in Kenya until the 6th of June, but many slum dwellers have returned to work due to need to get income for living. The number of confirmed cases in Kenya has gone above 2,000 and is expected to keep climbing. The number of deaths has been 70. We pray and hope for control or containment of CoVid19 which has had such an impact on us all and on the work we do.

May God bless you all for the interest you show, the support you give and most of all for our prayers which enable us to do what we do. With best wishes for your health and well-being,

Sr Mary Killeen

Education

Despite the slowdown in the education and closure of all learning institutions due to the pandemic, the Government of Kenya is busy working on the provision of water to communities and schools in informal settlement schemes.

The National Youth Service (NYS) and the youth in the slum areas have been deployed at a daily wage to clean up the environment. The Government has dug more boreholes in MPC schools in the month of May. Two more boreholes have been dug after the first borehole at St. Elizabeth Primary School. The borehole is a big solution to perennial water problems that have existed at the school. The school was not able to pay high water bills to Nairobi Water Sewerage Company due to inadequate, late or non-allocations on utilities from the Government. It has been very difficult to manage the populous schools due to lack of water for cooking and for the ablution block. This solution will go a long way in availing water for the schools and communities in Mukuru slums. Schools within the slums like Sancta Maria Kayaba and St. Elizabeth will share the water with the surrounding communities but from different drawing points once the water tanks are put in place.



Sancta Maria Mukuru Primary School

The youth in the conjunction with NYS are cleaning up the environment in the informal settlements at a daily wage rate of Ksh. 650/ (\$6US). This is keeping the youth in the slums busy and from getting into crime.



Cleaning by the youth in progress at Kayaba

At one point we had the community living along the walls of the schools especially Sancta Maria Kayaba as well as dumping rubbish into the school compound. We had to approach the Chief and Community Elders for this to stop. The rubbish was cleared by the youth.

During the month the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Professor Magoha, convened a special 10 member task force to evaluate the best way to reopen schools in the country since they had been closed since 16th March. The 10 member task force is comprised of specialists in the areas of primary, secondary, vocational, tertiary, special needs, parents, health as well as County representatives. He also called on the Kenyan public to give their views to the Task Force Committee. After discussions with our parents, staff, teachers and Head teachers MPC submitted its application to re-open their schools. Here are some of the reasons identified to back up the need for immediate opening:

- ✓ Many children from the slums are likely to drop out of school completely with the extension of the closure of schools.
- ✓ Most of the slum children have gone back to the streets to beg.
- ✓ Students are exposed to drug abuse, petty crime, prostitution, and pornography.
- ✓ Many of our children are now exposed to sex predators who allure them to their houses under the pretext of giving them work and food.
- ✓ Children have no supervision when parents are busy looking for food.

The current 'e-learning plan' by the Ministry of Education has locked out our students because many households in Mukuru do not have digital devices to support distance learning nor electricity to power them.

The Task Force will probably take submission for at least until the end of the month and then take another fortnight to evaluate. It is our hope that the schools will open mid-June but there is no guarantee, but ultimately it will place our students at a further disadvantage because of where they live.

Sponsorship

Although the schools remain closed the Government has encouraged the continuity of learning through television, radio and the Kenya Education Cloud. The reality for our students remains the same, for many it is simply not possible.

Reopening of the schools will be determined by the Government's Task Force Committee who will evaluate and make a recommendation to the Minister. We have only a few students who came to help out in the office. Since most of our students are living in desperate situations, they have received the food donations from various donors.

Agnes Akinyi trying to concentrate in her Zoom class. She cannot afford better devices to have a convenient session, as is the case with most students.



In the process of collecting the donations, we were able to invite some students to write their appreciation letters to their sponsors. This is an ongoing exercise as we are limiting the number of students coming to the office, to avoid any kind of gathering. Upon meeting them one by one, we are able to assess their welfare situation. It has also been a welcome opportunity to get to know them better and how they are coping with their studies during the pandemic.



Joshua Atandi writes his appreciation letter.

Most of the students have continued with their revision at home, as they assist in other chores. Nonetheless, the situation of E-learning on the ground especially for students living in the slums is different. The inequalities are stark. The homebased learning is a challenge with parental engagement due to low levels of ICT, literacy and accessibility of devices as well as other competing priorities of the household levels. Even so, most of our students have been trying hard to study from home as well as accessing our library for revision purposes.

The boys in the Rehabilitation Centre are in a better position with the ProFuturo tablets and computers in the library. The learning is ongoing. They have the support from the teaching staff who resumed teaching from the beginning of Term 2 (May 4th). With the library open throughout the holiday period in April, it makes their learning less interrupted and more desirable.



Daniel Isaiah & John Wachira both from the Rehab catching up on revision.

Both boys are incredibly grateful for the opportunity and feel privileged. For others, the closure of schools in the country has had severe consequences. The marginalised have not only their learning halted their nutrition has been compromised, childcare issues have increased and the economy has stalled. The prospects of finding casual work are extremely scarce.

The living standards of most of our beneficiaries is well and truly below the poverty line. All is not gloomy, as with your generosity, MPC has facilitated food donations to most of these destitute families during the pandemic. We are delighted to say that the sponsored students have received support and have not been left behind.

St Michael's Secondary

We hoped that the Ministry of Education would have concluded its collection of information from the public and given direction before the end of May. However, this has not happened. It was speculated that the schools would re-open in the first week of June. There are many schools around the country that are receiving on-line instructions, but this is not possible for our students. We hope that this gap will be closed very soon, and everyone can have the same education playing field from which to learn.

Kenya's education system provides for 173 days of teaching time with its students. At the end of May the number of face-to-face teaching days lost was 36 (20%). The number of teaching days from June until end of October is 90. Students have already received 57 days (32%) of the 2020 academic year. What remains is 90 days (52%). The Ministry will need to work out how to recover the lost days which means there could be Saturdays or extended period times each lesson to catch up. We wait for the Cabinet Secretary's announcement.

Our teachers have provided the senior students (Form 4s) with revision materials but we cannot contact all of them. Only those with WhatsApp on their mobile phones can access the materials as well as those who physically come to the school. Only 25% of the Form 4s have a phone. The social workers are facilitating contact tracing to ensure that we contact as many students as possible. In June we will need to work out a plan to help bridge the gap between those who were able to do some revision and those who could not. By the end of the month the students would have missed out. The Government has insisted that the end of year exams (KCSE) will be conducted.

Social and Health Services

Most of the activities for the month centred around the distribution of food to thousands of families in need. We continued to follow-up on cases, medical referrals, and home visits. The activities were the same as in previous months, but it has been the intensity from the increased poverty that was more striking.

The support provided often goes beyond nutritional help. There were dozens of patients who received waivers at the Clinic as they could not pay for treatment. Others were helped with clothes, diapers, face masks, and hand sanitizers. Cheshire Disability Kenya assisted nine families with house rent for two months.

May Activities

Case Type (Activity)	Number of Clients
Home Visits	8
Abuse Cases	3
Amaranth Client (Nutritional Supplements HIV/AIDS)	60
Nutritional Support	1,996
Malnourished Babies	25
Support to Needy Families	116
Profiling	121
Medical Cases	44
Total Clients Served	2,373

Pauline (Songa) was complaining of pains in her limbs. The mother brought her to the Clinic where she improved after received treatment. The family was also supported with some food supplements and a food hamper.

The nutrition support made available to the needy and patients with chronicle conditions helps reduce the cases of children with malnutrition. Thankfully, the therapy sessions for the children have resumed.



We are grateful to many people who clear out their wardrobes and help with clothes, blankets and other materials. These items are always needed in the slums.

Even though we make thousands of interventions within a month, we suspect that the CoVid19 pandemic has created a dependency syndrome where many feel that they have a right to receive food. It will be a developing Catch 22 situation. They cannot earn income because there is little work around.

Team Pankaj Food Hampers



Immunity Booster Parcels



A social worker prepares and distributes the Immunity Booster parcels

During a home visit in Kayaba



MPC Clinic

The month was quite busy at the Clinic. The schedules increased as our patient attendance accelerated. Even with the challenges caused by the pandemic we still managed to attend to patients fully. What is called genius is the abundance of life and health, and so our team and the MPC management made sure that our patients not only received treatment but also went home happy with immunity booster parcels.



MPC Clinic Team

To reduce the spread of the virus our staff change their clothes when they arrive at the Clinic. The Ministry of Health requested disposable items but this was prohibitive for us. Instead each staff member received 2 sets of scrubs which are washed daily. We are thankful to Manos Unidas who provided emergency funding to help with the pandemic. This funding enabled us to provide the immunity booster parcels, improved diagnostic laboratory equipment and supplies, testing kits and a washing machine.

The major development for the Clinic was the new laboratory equipment. The items included incubator, incubator oven, biochemistry analyzer, centrifuge and a washing machine. The new equipment will allow us to run several extra tests in our laboratory and to minimise our referrals as well. We are very grateful to Manos Unidas for their quick response in support the people of Mukuru slums.



Biochemistry Analyzer



Incubator Oven



Centrifuge

During the month we received other essential donations. Thanks to Klaus Rauber from Austria who donated a nebulisation machine. Another person donated cartons of baby diapers which were distributed among our MCH mothers and antenatal mothers.



Nebulizer machine



There was 669 immunity booster parcels and food hampers distributed from the Clinic during May. All the boys (52) at the Rehabilitation Centre received deworming tablets along with 11 staff as a precaution to the virus.

A journalist from the “Daily Nation” newspaper accompanied by the Director, conducted an interview at the Clinic on the effects of CoVid19 on our facility. The interview also touched on the common types of illnesses treated, how the pandemic has affected people from our catchment area. The article was featured on *May 18th 2020 (page 19)*.

There was a meeting held to discuss the comprehensive care unit (CCC) with the Ministry of Health officials. The meeting was attended by the Director Sr. Mary, the clinician, lab technologist, VCT providers and two officials from MOH. It was agreed that we would start up the program to meet the needs of our HIV /AIDS positive clients. The Government’s view is that a VCT facility should also provide treatment. We agreed, together with the officials, that continuous medical examination training should be provided on the CCC guidelines and TB clinics as well.

There were 14 patients on tuberculosis medication in May with one new case. There are three of them on supplementary foods. There were 82 antenatal clinic mothers while 112 children were immunized.

There was a total 387 laboratory tests conducted during the month with the top five listed below.

	Highest Laboratory Tests for May	No. of Tests
1	Stool for ova and cyst	75
2	Full Haemogram	55
3	Urinalysis	109
4	Antenatal Clinic test	37
5	Rheumatoid Factor	26

Patients Treated in May

Category	Gender	Under 5	6-13yrs	Above 13	Total
New Cases	Male	57	20	117	194
	Female	91	30	302	423
		148	50	419	617
Revisits	Male	106	41	146	293
	Female	119	21	290	430
		225	62	436	723
Total May		373	112	855	1,340

Most Common Treated Diseases in May

Disease	No. of Cases
Acute Upper Respiratory Tract Infection	312
Respiratory Tract Infection	46
Urinary Tract Infection	222
Gastroenteritis	248
Abdominal pregnancy	52
Hypertension / Diabetes	54
Skin Infections	55
Fever	51
Gastritis / PUD	67
Neuralgia and Neuritis unspecified	87
Other Diseases	297
Total	1,491

The difference between the number of patients treated and the most common treated diseases is often some patients come with multiple ailments.

Songa Mbele na Masomo

Thankfully, we resumed the therapy sessions for the children during the month. This has made a big difference with their mobility. The parents had requested for the sessions as they could see the difference the therapy was making to their children.

The essential workers have been coming to give the services to the children and the parents. The administration workers have been at work during the whole time of the pandemic.



It is good to know that many people want to do something for the less fortunate in our community. The member of parliament for Starehe, Honourable Jaguar Kanyi visited the Centre and provided some food parcels for the families.

We had a visit from the Miss Africa Elite who talked with some parents and promised to link them with an institution which will be giving lessons on becoming an independent earner. She also promised to help with the childrens' medicines. The Star Kids Initiative also donated some maize and beans to support the needy families.



Becky and Bianca happy to resume therapy sessions

An autistic boy enjoys the new play equipment

An improvement has been noted in the children whose parents are continuing with home program. For those who have regressed the parents have been advised to bring the children each day for therapy so that they catch up.



Taking the precautions against CoVid19 Sr Mary demonstrates how to wash hands thoroughly to the students at the Centre.

The construction of the new facility continues. The contractor cleared and levelled the area after the demolition of the old classroom and kitchen block. The hoarding has been erected and the excavation for the foundation has commenced.



Clearing the site



After heavy rains



Site inspection



Actual area and determined levels.



There were several Zoom meetings during the month between the contractor, consultants and MPC representatives to discuss the finer details of the project.

MPC Rehab Centre

We had high hopes that the curfew and lockdown would be lifted by the end of May, but not so. We carry on regardless. As a team we continued helping the boys catch up on what they lost academically while on the street.

We resumed learning fully energized on 4th May after the long holiday. In Year One most of the boys have settled down and are able to read and write simple words and sentences and can tackle simple arithmetic sums. The Year Two boys have shown tremendous improvement and class participation is great.

The boys are now quite proficient on the ProFuturo tablets. They read well and complete all the exercises. They are all very keen to learn.



Year One



Year Two



Year 8 Class

The re-deployment of 2 teachers from the primary school to the Rehabilitation centre has made a big difference to the Class 8 students. Teacher Josephine is also taking them for Kiswahili and CRE and it is amazing how all 7 boys have become serious with their studies.

The carpentry boys are doing well. They are eager to learn more skills in woodwork. They can already do the simple joints and are now making tea trays and cooking sticks using timber from the pallets that were donated by KWAL. Anthony Mwangi, a second year student has shown a lot of creativity in his work. He has been constructing different types of doors; glazed, panel, framed and battened.

Carpentry boys on their tea tray project



Although the lessons have resumed, the boys are still very active in extracurricular activities. They have drawing and beadwork on Tuesdays and Saturdays while acrobatics are done on Mondays and Fridays. We have discovered very good dancers during the talent shows. Football is played on daily basis after classes and during PE lessons especially by the bigger boys while the small boys prefer indoor games. Scouting drills are practiced every morning.



Scouts drilling

Farming too has not been left out as we now enjoy our farm produce on our tables – some of the boys have good farming skills that need to be nurtured.



Planting in progress



Adding more space for veggies

The counsellor has had sessions with each class as per the timetable. The sessions aimed to help the boys be empowered as a group hence peer encouragement. Some content is taught in all groups but the discussions vary with the age group.



During the pandemic we are very fortunate that there are many good people around who want to help. Mr Pankaj Shah and his team have been wonderful to us. The boys have gotten to know the team by names. Mr Nganga, who is currently in Rwanda, continues to provide meat donations.



Ugali with veggies and meat donated by Mr Nganga



Food donations from Team Pankaj



Donations from Association of Sisters in Kenya



Hand washing containers from Stanbic Bank and Rotary Club



Donation of veggies from Action Focus



Bread donations from Team Pankaj

CoVid 19 halted all excursions, even to the Church. When Mr Pankaj visited the Centre he promised to treat the boys to an excursion which happened at the end of May. They enjoyed the natural environment and learned about different animals in the orphanage. There were three buses to ensure the social distancing was observed. After the orphanage we toured Nairobi City through Upper Hill. The drivers and staff were the tour guides on the road and the tour was awesome. We had the whole place to ourselves.



One of the 3 buses – observing the 1.5m rule



Hand washing at the Park



Instructions from the Centre



Watching the animals



Lunch time at the orphanage



Mr Shah shares with the boys



Tour recount back at the Centre



Yoga with Team Pankaj

Vocational Training Centre

The main activity for the month was to catch up on paperwork in preparation for the reopening of schools perhaps in June. The teachers have submitted their schemes, course outlines and records of work for last term. President Uhuru Kenyatta hinted at a partial reopening of schools. The Hairdressing and Beauty for example has been grappling with congestion and social distancing is almost impossible due to the nature of the course.

Besides the paperwork, teachers in the Art and Craft course have been busy making get-well cards. We wish our sick a speedy recovery and comfort them. Andrew has been instrumental in designing, drawing and decorating ceramic tiles that will go onto the new therapy classroom block yet to be built. The art students have also painted water tanks donated by Cheshire Disability Services Kenya to Mukuru Promotion Centre in order to provide hand washing point for staff.



If you love looking good and feeling beautiful, then Ann Chege our Hairdressing and Beauty instructor has been doing exactly that to Mukuru staff at a low cost. The CoVid19 pandemic has brought about a lot of fear and visiting a salon has been a hard thing to do. She has been receiving clients who need hair and nail care. She has also done haircuts, braiding and styling. With the economic downturn our clients have not able to pay the standard cost for hairdressing and beauty services. The practice keeps the students engaged and skilled.



Hair and manicure services



Happenings...

- ✚ We received funding from Miva Austria for a desperately needed truck. This will be a great assistance with the many food provisions that need to be collected and distributed each week. We also receive calls from people who upgrade their furniture and want to donate their household items to MPC. This will reduce the number of times the pick-up (ute) is required to collect the items.
- ✚ Our Annual Report was sent out to all our partners, supporters and friends. If you missed a copy please go to the website. The reports, newsletters and CoVid19 updates are posted there.
- ✚ We hope that the CS Professor Magoha will announce the re-opening of schools in June. There is speculation that the President will be announcing the lifting of restrictions in early June and resumption of commercial flight from mid-June.
- ✚ The On-line donation platform. We were advised by Absa Bank Kenya that some overseas banks may have extra security hurdles for your credit card. We apologise for the inconvenience some of you have experienced. Please let Sr Kathy know on kathyk@mercymukuru.co.ke so she can follow up.

Stay Safe and Keep Well!!!

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.