



Hands Across Nations – Sharing the Love of Christ in Practical Ways

**Feeding the Hungry During the Corona Virus Lock Down**

5 May 2020

Living in Uganda is both a joy and a trial as we face the unknown yet knowing that God is in control. Coming back this year during the Corona Virus Pandemic has been a real adventure in listening to God and doing what He desires for “the least of these brothers and sisters of mine”. When we give them food and water, clothe them, and visit them when sick and in prison, we’ve done it for Him. And there is an eternal reward for those acts of kindness. (Matthew 25: 31-46) It is not hard to see the hungry right now in our area of Uganda – they are everywhere....in the streets, out in the byways of the villages, and coming to our gate.

Ugandan President Museveni closed the borders to all but trucks carrying necessary products. The only international airport has been closed for over 6 weeks, busses and all public transportation have been completely stopped and car, motorcycle and bicycle taxis can carry only cargo, not people. People owning a car, motorcycle or bicycle can ride them with just 1 driver, no passengers. Essentially, most of us are on foot, bicycle or motorcycle, if we want to go anywhere. It has been successful in keeping the Corona Virus at bay with only a few truck drivers who are positive bringing it in. They are quarantined along with all those with whom they have associated. So there have only been just over 80 positive tests with no deaths as yet.

That's the good news. There has been much donated to Uganda from other countries and even from some organizations and people inside the country. However, it has not worked its way to the Lango Sub Region except from a few churches and charities and those sources dried up several weeks ago. We decided to use some HAN and other funds to purchase food for the beggars we take food to every Friday, and for the needy people known to our staff members both in town and out in the villages, starting with those in our neighborhood.



At first, we had just a few, then it grew quickly to upwards of 100 in a few short days!

Soon we received a phone call from the District Internal Security Officer (DISO) who we know quite well, and he told us that we needed to stop or we could be arrested and charged with attempted murder and treason! Not wanting to be arrested, Keith went to see the DISO, and the Deputy Regional District Commissioner (RDC) who is actually the one in charge of food distribution. He deferred to The Regional Red Cross Director, Alice Akello, who is in charge of taking the food out with the Distribution Task Force.....The outcome of their discussion was that they had nothing to distribute as the little donated was already gone so Alice could provide us with a pick-up truck with driver, the distribution team and a security police officer! She would go with us and coordinate the give outs, to any group that we desired as long as we had a list of names!!



God is so good!! Instead of being arrested we've had a wonderful, hardworking, cheerful team of people (Alice in center) who are happy to go whenever and wherever we have a needy group! Who would have imagined that? In the last 2 weeks we've reached over 1,000 desperate people and given them enough food to keep them going for at least a week.



This room has been completely filled, double decker, with bags of flour, beans and salt five times already! Keith is the chief of coordinating packaging the food for easy distribution.

So far, our small band of Lucy our single mom office manager and her 3 children, Keith and me have packaged up over 11,000 lbs. of corn flour (posho), beans, peas, rice and salt. With several donations that came in just recently we can purchase enough food to distribute for another week to additional people! As long as we can purchase the food, the Red Cross Team is there for us for the cost of fuel, snacks for the team and a bit of “motivation” (money) to each member. Keith and I are finding our muscles are getting stronger each day packing the food and hauling it to the truck! Never did we imagine we would be doing something like this! I’m ecstatic to be getting out of the compound, connecting with those whom we are serving.





Our small “family of lepers” is always at the top of our list to keep them fed and with enough charcoal for cooking. They are always grateful.



This elderly woman was praying that someone would buy her brooms so she could buy food for her grandchildren. When we stopped and bought all of her brooms and also gave her food, she was just beside herself with happiness and said she now knows that God has not forgotten her.



What a nice surprise meeting again with Alex, we met 2 years ago who was the impetus for starting a literacy class of 300 in his home village.



It warms our hearts when the people receive their packets of food with this kind of reaction!



Isaac, our illustrator (with the stick) did a “bang up” job of organizing the most needy people in his village! Our team loved him!





“Thank Yous” come in all sorts of ways!



Beyond food distribution, we have also been cleaning and painting the “boys quarters” behind our home/office which had been occupied by our landlord’s brother. He was not in agreement with the President’s lockdown orders so he decided to find another place to live, leaving us with some ideal extra space for the gathering and preparation of the food for the hungry.

Lucy’s children have been fantastic, helping with cleaning and painting, packaging food, and household tasks. Keith has been working with them on woodworking and mechanical projects and I have been “teaching” reading in English, times tables, sewing, new recipes and having movie nights in the evenings. It’s been delightful working with all of them. Good thing because the President just last night has extended the lock down for 2 more weeks, with some lifting of business restrictions. The travel restrictions remain.....



Mercy, Jovan and Ketra all worked together to bake their first cake ever, a banana cake covered with vanilla frosting! They've also made sugar/cinnamon cookies, muffins and meat balls.



Just prior to the lock down, our 2 Literacy Coordinators, Peter and Jonathan quickly distributed charcoal and supplies to all 16 prisons in the Lango Sub Region. The charcoal, mortar and pestles, strainers and other equipment and many copies of written instructions are for the production and use of charcoal powder for colds/flu, diarrhea, wounds and snake bites. We could see the great need to have some way to protect the inmates while they are on lock down with minimal access to medical care.

There have been locust swarms in districts nearby but none in our district! In fact, God has been providing for us in an amazing way. The mango tree we



almost cut down last year because it had produced bad, buggy inedible fruit every year, has suddenly grown huge, juicy mangos that can feed many people. In the 7 years we have been here it has grown from just taller than Keith and bearing no fruit, to about 28 ft with several hundred mangoes! There are many spiders with webs on the tree so we're thinking maybe they're keeping the bug population down. And we have two more types of mango trees producing well along with all the orange and lemon trees producing more than ever before! Add to them, we have tangerine trees that have a bit of fruit, 2 over loaded papaya trees and about 5 green banana (Matoke) trees. The casava that was planted last year is producing a bumper crop too! God has sent plenty of rain so we can also plant greens to give away to the beggars weekly.



Jovan, Mercy and Ketra picked samples of all the fruits to show you the beauty from our trees!



We thank you for your generous donations, making this unexpected project possible. We've extended the deliveries for another week providing food for 100 new people every day through our staff members who can mobilize and organize extremely well! Many food recipients have said they now know that God cares for them. Please continue praying for them as you pray for the world during this difficult time.

Keith and Carolyn Jones, Co-Directors, Hands Across Nations

[www.handsacrossnations.org](http://www.handsacrossnations.org)

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