



Update from The Mary Wood Trust - September 2020

It is many weeks now since schools, churches and other institutions in Uganda were closed because of Covid 19. Some businesses are slowly starting to open again, and in the president's latest address, there is hope that schools will be able to open in mid-October in a limited way- to allow those studying for their O and A levels to get back to studying. However, there are strict Covid 19 protection protocols which need to be put in place first. Churches will also be allowed to hold services again but with congregation numbers limited to 70 and also with temperature checks in place. In Kinkiizi diocese alone there are 290 churches that will need temperature guns, which of course is a cost that they can ill afford. (A total for the diocese of approx. £20,000). Doing these things is hard enough here in the UK, putting all the appropriate precautions in place. To do this in Uganda, where the numbers are much greater and the facilities limited, is going to be very difficult. The church workers rely on the weekly offertory for their salaries and so without this it has been a real struggle during the past 6 months.

Our students from Nyakabungo Girls Secondary School (NGSS) and those at University have not been able to study at home. They don't have laptops or internet connection in their villages. The school year starts in February and so most of them will have lost almost a whole year of teaching. It is not clear yet how those taking O and A level exams will have a chance to catch up or when their exams will take place. We also have great concern for our girls at University, but we understand that those who delayed sitting their final exams in May will soon be able to sit theirs. During this Covid time the teachers employed locally have not been paid and of course the girls themselves have been left to their own devices in their villages. It all sounds rather gloomy, but some good things have been going on during the lockdown.

In May work was carried out to protect the spring near NGSS and the local village chief at long last agreed to allow a pipe to be taken from the spring to the school. No longer will the girls have to trek the 4 or 5 kilometres outside of school to gather water during the dry season.



Last month work was started on building the new kitchen and store at NGSS. We are very grateful for the donations received over the past couple of years which is allowing this to happen. The hope is that it will all be completed by the time the school re-opens, providing a dry place to store goods and a more efficient cooking system.

Here in the UK we have managed to sell pretty well all the 80 cotton bags that the girls at NGSS made and the proceeds from this will enable the purchase of 5 new reconditioned sewing machines and also an overlocker and other small items to enhance the sewing room.



Despite the lockdown, e-baying has continued apace, helping to boost the charities Further Education account. Maybe you have some unwanted items that you would like to get rid of? China? Jewellery? Vintage tablecloths? Bric-a-brac? Please do get in touch or you can sell through e-bay yourself and allocate the Mary Wood Trust as the charity for support.

Thinking positively about returning to school next year, we are trying to raise money for the Fine Arts room at NGSS. This is a subject that is popular with the girls and taken at both O and A levels. Our visit in March this year highlighted the shortage of art supplies and so we would like to be able to buy the pencils and paper and paints that are needed as well as buying some new work tables and stools.



ART SUPPLIES

We have a target of £1300. If you would like to know more about this project or help with this in any way, then please do get in touch with Pippa Hutchins who is heading this campaign.

(pippa_hutchins@hotmail.com).

You can also donate directly through the [MWT website](#) or [Facebook page](#).

We have also been very conscious of the fact that all our regular sponsors and supporters have generously continued with their giving, despite the fact that both NGSS and Ruth Memorial Nursery School (RMNS) have been closed. At our last MWT

trustees meeting on September 11th we all agreed that some of this money should be used to give a one-off payment to all the staff at NGSS, both teaching and support staff, to show our care and concern for them during this very difficult time. Without the teachers there would be no school and we certainly want to be sure that they will return once the school is allowed to fully open again. With regard to RMNS, the plan is to distribute food to teachers and students' families, in the hope that this will help a little as they are all struggling during this pandemic.

Our University students will receive support as and when they particularly need it and when they start returning to full time studies.

We are very grateful indeed for this continued support at this very difficult time. If you have any concerns at all about your regular giving, then please do get in touch.

Thank you as always and God bless you.

Clare, Pippa, Kath, Anne, Peter
(The Mary Wood Trust Trustees)