



Food and facemasks

- fighting the impact of coronavirus

Covid 19 struck Kenya in March. In response, the Kenya government shut schools, closed shopping malls and government offices, and imposed travel restrictions.

This has resulted in immediate economic hardship as tourism has collapsed, and hotels and flower farms which employ tens of thousands of people have closed.

The Kenya government told children's institutions such as the Sunshine Centre to return children back to their relatives where possible to reduce crowding and the risk of spreading the disease.

On 16 March, our staff sent the boys to their homes, but, recognising that they were now at high risk because they are likely to revert to the streets for survival, began an immediate relief effort, taking emergency supplies to our Sunshine Boys



and their families. Each family received a pack containing flour, beans, oil, soap, and green vegetables harvested from the Sunshine Centre farm.

In April and May, we scaled up the effort to reach all of our Sunshine families, and a further 100 families in Naivasha town who have been hit hard by the crisis.



Sunshine radiates help

With our (former) street boys back with their families (and therefore back in the conditions that drove them to the streets in the first place), our Sunshine Centre team launched a massive effort to get emergency aid packs to each and every family.



Our aim was to ensure that the boys had good reasons to stay at home, minimizing the risk of them reverting to scavenging on the streets for survival.

Over a period of 4 days in April, and again in May, the Sunshine Centre team supplied emergency packs to 100 families, helping a total of 602 beneficiaries (we are helping the whole family, not just 'our' Sunshine Boy).



ucts and prepared packs (1), then laid on transport so that each family could collect their pack safely (2). When they arrived, they were given hygiene advice (3) and allowed to pick fresh vegetables from the Sunshine farm (4).



Joseph Njoroge, a former street boy whose college course is suspended, was one of many Sunshine Boys who came to collect an emergency pack for his family (5).



We provided each family with a month's supply of food, soap and hygiene products. As well as providing practical help, we wanted to reassure our boys and their families they were not forgotten.

To carry out this relief operation, our team bought the food and hygiene prod-

Reaching the remote

Street boys often migrate across the country so some of our boys' homes are a long way from Naivasha, providing a significant problem in getting help to them.

In April, our team delivered emergency packs in vehicles, but this is expensive and, with increasing travel restrictions, became impossible in May.

The solution to helping those who live further away was to send money to food stores near the boys' homes using Kenya's Mpesa (cash via mobile phone) system. The money arrives within seconds, and the families can then collect their (already paid for) emergency pack.

Eric Chege is waiting for his university to

re-start . He received his emergency pack via Mpesa - the photo (6) shows him preparing a family meal on a jiko.

Kelvin Kiplangat's home is in Rongai -120 km from the Sunshine Centre. The photo (7) shows him with his parents and many brothers and sisters, holding up their food supply for the month.



Lockdown learning as schools close

The empty desks at Church on the Rock School (1) tell their own story.

Although the Kenya government has encouraged children to access lessons through the radio or TV while schools are closed, the children in Nairobi's slums will have little chance of accessing lessons that way.



School director Ruth Ndeti told us that, with the schools closed, they are currently unable to supply the free school meals that the children have depended on.

Closure of the school will also have a negative impact on the children's edu-

cation because a lot of learning time will be lost.

The orphaned and abandoned children we care for at Tumaini in Mombasa are all staying in the home. House-dad Charles Osaleh reports:

"We are all fine, and home school is going on well. We can access lessons on TV - except when there are power cuts! (2).

But getting food is now hard and prices have gone up. Our children used to have their lunch at school during the weekdays, but now we are feeding them at home." (3)



Our top priority is to make sure that the children we care for have enough to eat, and to protect our carers by ensuring they have enough money to buy food and can access healthcare which is not free in Kenya.



Standing with the needy Naivasha community

The closure of hotels, schools and shops in response to Covid 19 has had an immediate negative impact on Kenya's economy.

Many people are no longer earning, or their income is greatly reduced.



With little or no government help, the poorest are being hit the hardest. Mothers who earned a small amount packing vegetables and doing washing report that their earnings have dried up because of social distancing measures. Fathers who do casual work in quarries report that

their earnings have dropped as construction slows down.

The Naivasha Technical Training Institute (NTTI) was closed to students in early March, but in April became the base to provide emergency aid to the most disadvantaged people in the local community who have been badly hit by the crisis (5).



In just two days, the NTTI management team prepared and distributed 100 emergency packs (food and hygiene products) to help a total of 513 beneficiaries (6).

One beneficiary who came to collect an emergency pack said: "We were scared that we would not have food for the children." Another said, "Your help is an act of God's mercy to me and my family."

Steve Mwangi is a hotel waiter. He told us he has been out of work since mid-March, making it hard for him to provide for his wife and two small sons.

Our team was able to deliver an emergency pack to him (7). "Thanks a lot from me and my family," said Steve, "We really appreciate your warm heart."



Giving more than food

The photos below show some of the 200 families we have provided with emergency aid packs in the past few weeks.



Top: Peter Mutegi and John Njuguna at home with their brothers in Karati.



Bottom: Stephen and his brother Mbugua at home in Molo

Each pack costs £35 and includes maize flour, beans, sugar, rice, oil and soap.

As well as providing essentials to survive the crisis, the



Top: Peter Njenga with his grandmother and their emergency pack, Karati, Naivasha.



Bottom: Peter Kariuki in Kuresoi looking happy with the supplies for his family.

pack is also reminder that someone cares.

Thank you to all who have donated generously to enable us to meet these needs.





Top: Dennis Mwangi and his father Ernest with their emergency pack in Highland





Bottom: Moses and James with their family and emergency pack in Subukia.

Footsteps International in Kenya:

 Transforms the lives of 140 former street boys at the Sunshine Centre

 Cares for 28 orphaned and abandoned children at the Tumaini Centre, Mombasa

 Strengthens education of 400 children in Nairobi's slums

 Helps train 300 young people in life-skills

We work with trusted partners to ensure that donations actually get where they are needed.

We do not discriminate against any needy person on the grounds of their religion, tribe or nationality.

Footsteps is managed by five trustees, all unpaid volunteers, committed to putting their Christian faith into action.

They are: Martin and Mary Print, Barbara Huntley, Barrie Francis and Paul Robinson.

Under normal circumstances, trustees carry out regular visits at their own expense to check progress on the projects.

We are delighted to receive single and regular donations in support of our work.

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Virtual Kenya Marafun

Our next Kenya Marafun was supposed to be the on 27 June but that isn't going to happen the way we planned.

As we can't travel, we are planning to do a jog/walk/run on 27 June near our homes instead.



Our older Sunshine Boys are going to join in too by running on the same day near their homes in different parts of Kenya.

Our aim is to get as many people to take part as possible, with each one sending in a 'selfie,' giving us a virtual Marafun run in different countries.

Anyone can take part by doing any distance you choose up to 13 miles, and at any speed you like.



To take part, please make a donation if you can, and share the link below to raise some sponsorship for 'Team Sunshine' too.

The sponsorship page is ready and waiting:

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/kenyamarafun2020>