

# GENEROSITY IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

A Curation of Ugandan Giving During  
the Pandemic

Period Covered | July - August - 2021



# ABOUT CIVSOURCE AFRICA

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CivSource Africa is a philanthropy support and advisory organization committed to nurturing a more sustainable, effective and connected civil society that advances the dignity and voices of all people. We do this by promoting reflective, responsive, and accountable philanthropic practice.

CivSource Africa is also passionate about promoting African philanthropy and telling the stories of African giving and generosity.

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# WHERE PHILANTHROPY MEETS CIVIL SOCIETY

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# Foreword

This is a compilation of stories of generosity that took place during the Covid-19 lockdown in Uganda in July 2021. Just like in 2020, it is our utmost honor to share a glimpse of the giving heart of Ugandans, as part of our contribution to building a body of knowledge on African Philanthropy.

Community is at the heart of our giving as displayed in these stories.

The stories shared here will open your eyes to recognize the strength in giving and how lives can be touched and changed. I recommend this report for everyone that is searching for deeper meaning at a time when all hope seems lost. We are a community of givers.

**Karibu Sana**  
CivSource Africa Team.

# Acknowledgements

are Grateful for your **Omutima Omugabi.**

**WE**

**owe a debt of thanks to  
all Ugandans who give.**

**thank Ms.Caroline  
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us compile these  
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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AGF</b>	<b>African Guarantee Fund</b>
<b>ATIC</b>	<b>Advanced Treatment Information Centre</b>
<b>CBO</b>	<b>Community Based Organisation</b>
<b>CDC</b>	<b>Centre for Disease Control and Prevention</b>
<b>CEO</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>
<b>Covid-19</b>	<b>Coronavirus Disease of 2019</b>
<b>CSR</b>	<b>Community Social Responsibility</b>
<b>CTPH</b>	<b>Conservation Through Public Health</b>
<b>DHO</b>	<b>District Health Officer</b>
<b>DPI</b>	<b>Defenders Protection Initiative</b>
<b>FETADFA</b>	<b>Faculty of Engineering, Technology, Applied Design and Fine Art</b>
<b>RHITES-E</b>	<b>Regional Health Integration to Enhance Services in Eastern Uganda</b>
<b>ESPP</b>	<b>Expanding Social Protection Programme</b>
<b>HIV</b>	<b>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</b>
<b>ICU</b>	<b>Intensive Care Unit</b>
<b>IDI</b>	<b>Infectious Diseases Institute's</b>
<b>IFC</b>	<b>International Finance Corporation</b>
<b>ISER</b>	<b>Initiative for Social and Economic Rights</b>
<b>KCB</b>	<b>Kenya Commercial Bank</b>
<b>KCCA</b>	<b>Kampala City Council Authority</b>
<b>LGBTIQ</b>	<b>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Questioning</b>
<b>OPM</b>	<b>Office of the Prime Minister</b>
<b>PCAU</b>	<b>Palliative Care Association of Uganda</b>
<b>PPE</b>	<b>Protective Personal Equipment</b>
<b>PWDs</b>	<b>Person's with Disabilities</b>
<b>SCG</b>	<b>Senior Citizens Grant</b>
<b>SMSE</b>	<b>Small and Medium Sized Enterprises</b>
<b>SoE</b>	<b>State of Emergency</b>
<b>SOPs</b>	<b>Standard Operating Procedures</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Governmental Organisations</b>
<b>NTV</b>	<b>Nation Television</b>
<b>NUDIPU</b>	<b>National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda</b>
<b>MADUFAFA</b>	<b>Making A Difference in Uganda Face to Face</b>
<b>MRI</b>	<b>Medical Research Institute</b>
<b>MP</b>	<b>Members of Parliament</b>
<b>UCU</b>	<b>Uganda Christian University</b>
<b>UNNGOF</b>	<b>Uganda National NGO Forum</b>
<b>UJA</b>	<b>Uganda Journalists Association</b>
<b>URAA</b>	<b>Uganda Reach the Aged Association</b>
<b>UGANET</b>	<b>Uganda Network on Law Ethics and HIV/AIDS</b>
<b>UVRI</b>	<b>Uganda Virus Research Institute</b>
<b>UMA</b>	<b>Uganda Musician Associations</b>
<b>Ugx</b>	<b>Uganda Shillings</b>
<b>VHTs</b>	<b>Village Health Teams</b>

## Background

In a televised address, Uganda's President, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni announced a strict 42-day lockdown that started on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June and would end on the 31<sup>st</sup>-July 2021. "In this wave, the intensity of severe cases and critically ill Covid-19 patients and deaths are higher than what we experienced in the first wave of the pandemic," he explained the need for the lockdown.

At that point, the country's new infections were reaching over 1,500 daily and the government worried the already struggling health system would crumble. News of lives cut short gripped the country with most deaths linked to a shortage of oxygen and overwhelmed hospitals.

The SoE stipulated that all learning institutions be closed, communal and cultural gatherings be suspended, weekly non-food markets be suspended, all travel via private and public transport means (buses, taxis, boda bodas) between and across districts be suspended except cargo cars. Arcades were to remain closed all through the forty-two days, as did many of the entertainment places.

Despite the good intentions, these restrictions came at a cost to most of Uganda's vulnerable population that needed these places up and running in order to earn a living. Many found themselves without food, let alone access to health facilities.

This, therefore, is what informed our decision to document the philanthropy happening in reaction to the dire needs of the population caused by

the lockdown. Some of the giving was directed to the vulnerable populations while some went towards helping the Government mitigate the spread of the coronavirus.

Ear to the ground, we bring you a host of tales of giving in many sectors, especially the Civil Society. We have noticed how much of the burden brought by the coronavirus is shouldered by the Not-for-Profit world who take on roles that not only complement the Government's strides but also offering advise, both solicited and unsolicited.

You will notice that unlike most of our previous reports, this one doesn't specifically gazette a chapter to regional giving. This is because some of our philanthropists spread their kind wings across the country and it would be repetitive to isolate the tales of giving in each incident.

Interestingly, this would be the 6<sup>th</sup> of our Giving Reports; we published four last year and two this year. In this report, we appreciated the fact that despite relaxing the movement after the forty-two days, many philanthropists continued to help Ugandans recover. We saw donations trickling past the 31<sup>st</sup>- July and documented them.

Also, because we acknowledge the fact that giving is multifaceted, our tales of giving take various forms. All the same, we are looking to celebrate Ugandan philanthropy like we have done through our twitter hashtag [#KutoaNimoyo](#) [#OmutimaOmugabi](#). This means a hearthat gives!



Chapter One

**PHILANTHROPY  
AND THE BUSINESS  
COMMUNITY**

As the profit world continues to explore creative ways to support the community in their time of need, we have observed philanthropy morph into many acts of kindness. A generosity that takes various shapes; the agreement between Equity Group Holdings and the African Guarantee Fund (AGF) is one such example.

A series of communications, some dating back to March-2021 tell of an agreement that has seen Uganda's women-led Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMSEs) recently start to benefit from the \$75 million grant meant for East Africa.

“With this facility from African Guarantee Fund, whom we share a mission of supporting women SMSEs, we will be strongly positioned to continue to offer our customers particularly women in business access to funding at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact negatively on businesses,”

Dr. James Mwangi, Managing Director and CEO of Equity Group Holdings stated.

He acknowledged that women MSMEs are key players in driving livelihoods for many families, communities, and growth of the economy. This support will ensure livelihoods and opportunities within the economy continue to accelerate as we revitalize economic activities to enable the economy to bounce back amidst the rollout of the vaccine.

AGF Group CEO Jules Ngankam said, “This partnership will also foster sustainable development particularly for women-owned businesses who will be supported under our Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa initiative and green business who will be supported under our Green Guarantee Facility.”

Additionally, in response to the Covid-19 crisis, Equity Bank launched an offensive and defensive approach to support customers to sustain themselves while innovating

alongside SMSEs who are leveraging on the opportunities that has presented within the crisis.

The group committed to loan repayment accommodation for up to 45% of the customers whose cashflows and operation cycle were deemed likely to be negatively impacted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### **Absa's Partnerships and Philanthropy**

According to the Global Banking and Finance journal, Absa bank's CSR department has been active on ground. They noted that the bank is enthusiastic about the role it has to play in CSR in Uganda, a passion that is heavily supported by several initiatives on its roster.

<https://www.globalbankingandfinance.com/absa-bank-uganda-a-flexible-speedy-and-accessible-banking-experience/>

“Absa Bank Uganda undertakes annual programmes such as the Ready to Work soft skills development programme, country scholarships and the Mandela Centennial fellowship programmes,”

Mumba Kalifungwa, the managing director of Absa Bank Uganda Limited, said.

“This is in addition to the SME Academy which this year partnered with IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, to train over 300 Ugandan SMEs and help them navigate the difficult operating environment caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.”

When they noticed the private schools and teachers therein struggling, Absa bank sprung to action.

“We have also supported 139 teachers and school owners looking to recover from the effects of the pandemic by offering post-Covid resilience training support,”

Mumba explained. Interestingly, as the bank did better by Ugandans, their employers borrowed a leaf. They reached out to the vulnerable in their communities through the 'Absa We Care' initiative, where they

procured PPEs for Masaka Hospital and relief items for five organisations, including Katalemwa Cheshire and SOS Children’s Villages Uganda, among others.

### KCB Bank Gives to Lira’s Ayile Primary School

When next they return to school, Ayile Primary School learners will have the means to social distance. This is courtesy of the KCB bank’s CSR initiative that saw them deliver a Ugx8.7 million (about \$2,500) cheque to the school’s management for the procurement of desks. The Lira-based school also received 500 masks and several other PPEs to help prepare for when schools re-open.

KCB’s Daniel Ayena said that the bank was committed to fighting against Covid-19 as guided by the Ministries of Health and Education. He explained that every year, the bank seeks to impact the lives of the communities it operates in and this year, it put emphasis on health and education of children as key factors for community development.

“We are confident that masks and desks will foster a culture of social distancing, but also one of minimizing the spread of the micro-organisms that results from coughing and sneezing by an infected student or teacher, thereby enabling our pupils have a healthy & safe education,” Ayena explained.

An elated Musa Owiny, the Head Teacher of Ayile Primary School said that he was optimistic the donation would keep his school afloat and help them implement social distancing.

“We are very grateful to KCB for this pragmatic gesture and are now more than ever, equipped to do our best to ensure that we help our children achieve their dreams,” Owiny said.

### A Philanthropy That Targets Women

Though best-placed to help a country prepare for the worst, lockdowns have birthed a teenage pregnancy crisis. This has added the pre and post-natal burden on the country’s already strained health system. With this in mind, Stanbic bank reached out to Kawempe Referral Hospital with a donation of UGS 24 million (about USD 7000\$).

Emma Mugisha, the Executive Director, Stanbic Bank Uganda told online journal PML Daily that increasing the maternal survival rate at this time should be community’s prerogative.

“Because it shows that we are addressing the one thing that binds us together,” he said. “We started the campaign after realising that it was up to us to step up and take action because all of our lives begin at birth.”

<https://www.pmldaily.com/business/2021/07/stanbic-bank-donates-mama-kits-worth-ugx-24m-to-kawempe-referral-hospital.html>

PML Daily reported that Kawempe Referral Hospital receives over 4000 pregnant women a month from all parts of the country and delivers an average of 100 babies daily.

When she spoke, Dr. Diana Atwine, the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Health told of how critical the situation was. She applauded the bank for the kind contribution at a time when most of the country’s attention was going towards ensuring Ugandans beat the deadly coronavirus.

“We are sure that this contribution will provide clean and safe delivery to our mothers at Kawempe Referral Hospital especially at this critical time when the country is battling the Covid-19 pandemic,” Dr. Atwine told PML Daily.

### Pushing for Gender-Sensitive Covid-19 Responses

Stanbic Bank’s commitment to women can also be traced through the various statements made by their Chief Executive Officer, Anne Juuko. She argues that Africa’s progress in empowering women risks being undone if the authorities’ responses to the Covid-19 crisis do not take gender issues into account.

“Most notably, access to funding will be critical for the survival of many small businesses; yet we know that women entrepreneurs face significantly greater obstacles than men when it comes to accessing financial services,” she observed.

“If policymakers are not cognisant of this in their responses, including in their fiscal stimulus packages, Africa’s strides forward in financial inclusion could be reversed in the months and years ahead.”

Juuko asserts that women are shouldering most of the burden as we tackle Covid-19 with the majority of frontline healthcare workers being female, and unpaid household work – which has become even more time-consuming as schools

are shut – remains skewed towards women. Sadly, lockdowns had seen an increase in violence against the very women shouldering the burden.

“The crisis before us is a turning point for humanity. If we fail to act in a responsible manner, we risk regressing and giving up recent gains in economic development and women empowerment,” she warns.

“On the other hand, Covid-19 is an opportunity for introspection and reflection – a moment to consider the kind of future we want and the urgent steps we need to take to get there.”

More than ever, she says that we need empathetic leaders who seek innovative solutions to unprecedented challenges. These are qualities that many women possess, which is why we need to ensure that women are better represented in African parliaments, businesses, and civil society at a leadership level.

She ends by telling of how the Standard Bank Group, which houses Stanbic Bank, is committed to playing its part.

“We have been working with policymakers to ensure their responses are thorough, pragmatic, and practical,”

Juuko explains.

“By assuming our role as an advisor and partner to clients and governments – with the aim of collectively building a better tomorrow – we are acting in accordance with our membership of the United Nations Principals for Responsible Banking,” she shares.

### Over A billion Shillings for Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital

Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital received five oxygen cylinders and five Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds to help in the Covid-19 battle at the beginning of July. The items donated less than ten days into the lockdown mainly came from EpiCenter, Mbarara branch.

This was timely as it came at a time when the hospital was struggling to treat Covid 19 patients as the second wave was approaching its peak. The procured items valued at Ugx1.1 billion (over USD 300,000\$) were donated under the watch of Dr. Juliet Muwanga.

She said the organization had decided to make their mark on the fight against Covid-19.

“The pandemic required and still requires a concerted effort from individuals, organizations and everyone out there. We need to hold each other’s hands, lest we perish,”

Dr. Muwanga noted, while commenting on this kind gesture.

The organization pledged 10 cylinders and promised to chip in with the remaining five soon. Nile Breweries Limited contributed over 30 cylinders almost at the same time. The hospital director Dr. Celestine Barigye, says this was a huge relief to the strained facility.

Politicians from different parts of Western Uganda also contributed cash support to the hospital in thousands of dollars. The donations came in at a time when the hospital had been hit by a shortage of oxygen, with a record number of patients and deaths being attributed to this.

### Movit Continues to Give Back

When the New Vision reported that Movit Products Limited had donated sanitizers and hand washing gel worth UGS 30 million to KCCA, we were not surprised. It has been generosity upon generosity for the company since the country’s maiden coronavirus-induced lockdown.

Movit, arguably the leading manufacturer of cosmetics in Uganda specifically donated these items to help in Covid-19 interventions in the Kampala City markets. These spaces many will argue have the most exposure to the virus and heightened prevention would go far in reducing the number of infections.

According to Herbert Egessa Skin Guard Brand Manager, the donation, which was one of the company’s CSR activities was their way of looking out for their consumers in the market area.

“This donation to KCCA is part of our corporate social responsibility contribution towards Covid interventions. We decided to work with KCCA to ensure that we keep our consumers especially round Kampala markets safe during the Covid season,” Egessa said.

Before these items were dispatched, Movit Uganda and E-Commerce platform Jumia had entered another agreement that would foster philanthropy. It was confirmed that Jumia customers across the country would be given a free Movit hand sanitizer on every single Jumia Express Order to limit the spread of Covid-19.

“Uganda is going through an unprecedented Covid-19 crisis that has devastated families all over the country. We appreciate Movit for this generous support of sanitizers that will help thousands of families stay safe,” said Mr. Ron Kawamara Jumia Uganda CEO said.

### Fuel from Nile Breweries

Fresh from their donation of oxygen cylinders to the Health Ministry, Nile Breweries Ltd once again donated fuel to support Covid-19 district task forces. According to their media team, the fuel donations totaling 5500 litres, was a culmination of the company’s support to the Covid Task Forces of districts Kampala (1500litres), Jinja (1000litres), Buikwe (1500litres) and Mbarara (1500litres).

“The humble contribution is to ease the transportation of the Covid-19 task force teams, distribution of vaccines, contact tracing, and other related activities,”

said David Valencia, Managing Director, Nile Breweries Limited.

“We as the private sector have a big role to play in supporting government efforts in the fight against the Covid 19 pandemic as it has posed both health and economic challenges to our communities. A time like this calls for combined efforts.”

He added. Collectively the fuel donation has cost the company Ugx19 million (over \$6000). The fuel donation is the latest of the company’s efforts to join a consortium of companies to support government efforts in this time and encourage Ugandans to practice safety and health precautions as advised by Ministry of Health.

According to Onapito Ekomoloit, the company’s Legal & Corporate Affairs Director, they are living up to the purpose of the beer, which is ‘Bringing people together for a Better World’. He maintains that this prerogative remains as relevant as ever in these challenging times.

“This is our commitment. Supporting our communities especially at times such as these is critical for all stakeholders as together we have a stake in our country,” he said.

### Inside Bidco’s \$100,000 Donation

A story run by an online journal Nile Post, stood out for us. It delved into a Ugx 350 million (about \$100,000) donation by Bidco to the country’s national task force on Covid-19.

<https://nilepost.co.ug/2021/07/28/bidco-donates-100000-to-national-covid-task-force/>

The company said that it was a response to government’s plea to help procure vaccines through the Prime Minister, Rt.Hon. Robina Nabbanja. Bidco Uganda, known mostly for their vegetable oil and soap production based in Jinja City has consistently donated to Uganda’s battle against the deadly coronavirus.

Kampala Metropolitan State Minister, Hon. Kyofatogabye Kabuye, affirmed that indeed the company was among those in private sector quick to respond whenever there was need.

“We are out to combine efforts in the fight against the pandemic and as government, we are grateful to Bidco and its management for the philanthropic gesture,” Kyofa said.

In the first 2020 lockdown, Bidco donated Ugx 521 million (about \$150,000) cash with other products from their conglomerate and have since renovated Walukuba Health Centre IV to a tune of Ugx 100 million (about \$30,000).

Rt.Hon.Robinah Nabbanja reiterated minister Kabuye’s appreciation by explaining what the donation would do for the government. “Bidco’s support will go a long way in procuringsome doses for our people and I want to thank them for their humanitarian support as we battle the virus,” she said.

It was confirmed days later that the money had been delivered and that of the twenty-five thousand vaccines that would be procured, at least 5,000 would go to the company's staff and vulnerable people in the communities they work with.

### An SOPs Affair

While the country battled its worst Covid-19 phase yet, insurance firm UAP Old Mutual, donated masks worth Ugx10 million (about \$3000) to the Nakawa Division Covid-19 task force.

The company made it clear that their goals were to improve the lives of the communities they work with and they would continue to carry out other initiatives in line with the fight against Covid-19.

“Our head office is located right here in Nakawa and we thought it prudent to donate and support our local council,” Caroline Owomuhangi the company's Marketing and Communications specialist said.

She explained that the decision to procure masks came from the fact that Ugandans had been constantly advised to remain vigilant against Covid-19 by following standard operating procedures (SOPs).

### Crest Tank's Border Visits

While UAP sought out the Nakawa area, Crest Tanks went to the border district of Busia to ensure the schools and locals there were ready to wash hands and prevent Covid-19.

Through a partnership with Water Schools, the company handed over several tanks to the Busia District Local Government Covid-19 taskforce in what they called their contribution to fighting the coronavirus. “We are in this together,” they assured Ugandans.

### Mbale Grain Millers Gifts Kabale Hills FM Listeners

Kabale-based radio station, Hills FM broadcasting on the 100.4 frequency, in July partnered with Mbale Grain millers limited to gift their listeners with bags of posho.

According to Station Manager Nick Kanyesigye, the promotion-format philanthropy required listeners to call in and answer a few questions about the milling company and its products

and get to walk away with at least a 10kg bag of posho.

He says that this was a timely intervention and not necessarily a marketing strategy. “You may want to call it a marketing gig, but we set it in a way that at least everyone who managed to call in would pass the questions,” Kanyesigye says

He adds that winning was so easy in that even those who didn't get the questions right took home a bag of posho; this he argues was fair enough even for those struggling to put food on the table.

“I called in the morning show Bwashesha, and I was asked about what I know about 'Mbale posho' and I answered that it is sweet. The presenter Matama, right away declared me a winner,” Milton Mbamanya, one of the lucky listeners shared.

The giveaway programme lasted for more than three weeks and saw over 100 bags of posho in proportions of 10 kgs handed over to the lucky listeners. Interestingly, we later learned that Mbale Grain Millers had this arrangement with a couple more radio stations in Western Uganda.

### Inside the Kikagati Traders Association's Covid Fund

Upon losing one of their members, Robin Butugugu to the corona virus, a group of traders under the Kikagati Traders Association, formed an initiative to support members battling coronavirus.

Different members came up with a suggestion of voluntarily raising at least Ugx3 million (about USD 900\$) for any member that was confirmed be Covid-19 positive.

“We noticed that we were more likely to get Covid-19, because of our constant movements while going about our trading business,” John Mukwase, the Chairman to this association, narrated.

Most of these traders buy the merchandise from major cities like Mbarara and Kampala. In fact, the fallen Robin Butugugu had returned from a two-day business trip from the Capital, Kampala when he developed a fever and

stomachache. His family rushed him to Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital but he succumbed to the virus 17 days later.

Hillary Mushoborozi, a member of the association says that the association tried to support the family in the middle of the crisis, albeit a little too late for Butugugu.

He says, the committee later convened a small meeting in the wake of Butugugu's death and agreed to sell the 'Covid Fund' idea to the other members.

"It didn't take long until the late Butugugu's speculated contacts started emerging. The wife was struck with the virus approximately 5 days after the husbands' burial," Mukwase the chairman reminiscences.

The traders sprung to action and helped with the medical bills to ensure no one else dies.

### Kaliro Sugar in a Charity Drive

“Let's fight the pandemic!” that is how the Kaliro Sugar team announced their charity drive. “When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed.”

The company donated to the Busoga-based Kaliro TV scribes among other community members affected by the lockdown. “We thank the Kaliro TV Spokesperson Alex Tabingwa, for receiving our heartfelt donation of 200 kgs of posho and 250kgs of sugar on behalf of the needy in Kaliro,” their media team noted.

With the same enthusiasm, they reached out to vulnerable women and children in Busoga area with food items that included. Mothers with younger children were the first to benefit.

### Quality Chemicals Hears 'Mama and Papa's' Cries

The story about an elderly couple losing all their savings to a termite infestation broke many a Ugandan heart. The socials reported that the Amuru District-based 75-year-olds, Bicentina Alal and husband Tito Okema lost

a whole Ugx1.6 million (about \$500), the only money they had.

Even worse, it was reported that it had come from toiling for 3 years in their pottery, wood curving, poultry, and piggery projects. With a raging pandemic, the old people's strides had been weakened and their savings were all they had; suddenly their future was bleak.

Then came the call from Quality Chemicals Limited. Hope! A radio station in Lira called QFM delivered the news of a donation of the entire sum lost to the elderly couple and bottles of the termite killer treatment, Termidor to ensure it never happens again.

“Our team, led by General Manager, Ajay Mahadik and Head of Crop and Public Health Division, Nicholas Katongole traveled to Amuru district to meet the couple,” Quality Chemical's media team confirmed to the relief of everyone.

“They handed over bottles of Termidor to the family, as well as a receipt showing proof of the deposit that had been made to the couple's bank account at Stanbic Bank, Gulu.”

They also gave the couple a demonstration on how to use Termidor and helped them treat a large termite mound near their home. The team also ensured the community neighbouring the couple benefited from this illustration to ensure total eradication of termites.

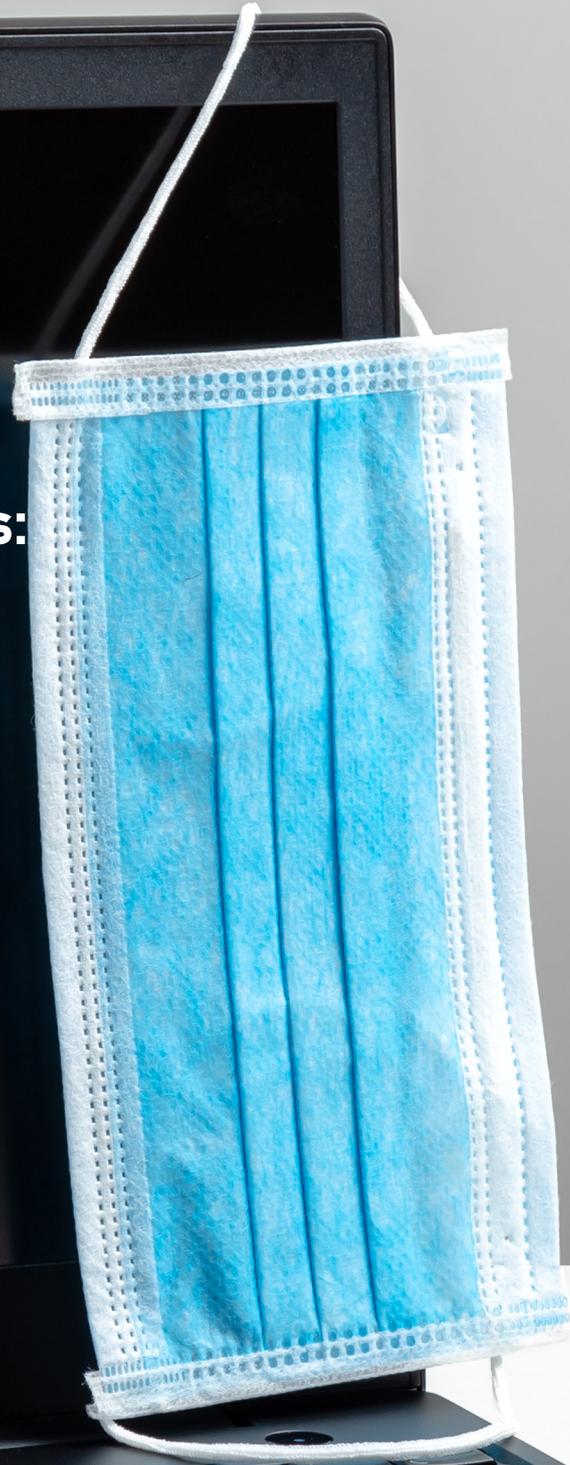
Gibson Opio, a Village Health Trainer with various Civil Society Organisations in Amuru confirmed this news and told of what it meant to the old people.

“When you see that money, most of it was from 2019, these people didn't make money last year, it has been tough!” he explained. “From the way Mama and Papa were disappointed, that loss would have killed either one or both of them.” He added.

## Chapter Two

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# A Change in Plans: How Non-Profits Are Tackling Covid-19



**W**hen the coronavirus first set foot in Uganda, many non-profit organisations did not have a project weaved around it. It, therefore, has been humbling watching how the non-profits and social enterprises have had to re-adjust and find ways to stand with Ugandans during these trying times.

In the spirit of true activism, the Not-for-Profit world has been the voice of reason in the thick of the Covid-19 conversation. The Daily Monitor of July-24<sup>th</sup> reported that they questioned the Government's priorities after it made available Shs105b (over \$30 million) to 529 Members of Parliament to acquire cars and claimed not to have money.

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/mps-car-cash-could-buy-7-5m-covid-jabs-3484292>

“The government has spent Ugx50 billion (about \$15 million) on 491,000 vulnerable persons and then the same government spent over Ugx100 billion on only 529 legislators!” a bewildered Moses Isooba, the head of Uganda National NGO Forum, lamented. “Monies should be directed to procure vaccines, giving out gifts such as vehicles for MPs, is puzzling.”

He implored the Government to take vaccination seriously. That would be the only way Uganda would get out of the woods in this pandemic through mass vaccinations, not repeat lockdowns. He argued that locking people down was to help prepare governments for battles ahead and not a strategy to fight the wildly infectious virus.

The Daily Monitor quoted Dr. Denis Kibira, the executive director of the Coalition for Health Promotion and Social Development's remarks on the very issue. He argued that giving MPs Shs200m (about USD 55,000\$) when Ugandans were suffering in a struggling economy was wrong.

“Ugandans are struggling to meet high costs of treatment for Covid-19 in private facilities. It doesn't augur well with the public that a certain section is receiving so much money,” he said.

### Joining Global Calls for Vaccines

Away from calling the Ugandan Government out on its priorities, the Civil Society, through its forum, the Uganda National NGO Forum,

added its voice to the global call for equal vaccine distribution.

They noted that while less than 2% of Africans are fully vaccinated to date, a whole 30 Europeans are vaccinated every second.

“We at the Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF) wish to convey our dismay at European Union (EU) leaders' refusal to countenance sharing vaccine knowledge and capacity with potential vaccine-producing countries around the world, especially in Africa,” they stated.

They argued that it had been proven time and again that this would be the only and best way to ensure the whole world is safe from the Covid-19 pandemic.

They implored all and sundry to add their voices to this call through the hashtag #Vaccines4All.

“Join us in calling for EU and United Kingdom (UK) leaders to overcome vaccine hegemony, support manufacturing capacity in other countries and support vaccine delivery in-country. We need to act now and ensure #Vaccines4All.”

### Words of Caution and Pointers

The country's voice of reason and unsolicited yet vital advice often comes from the Non-Profit world. Since Uganda got its first case of Covid-19, experts in the various philanthropic fields have generously offered solutions and words of caution to the Government. The Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) is one such organisation using its platform and expertise to sound the drum on Government's strides in battling Covid-19.

In a report dubbed, Ten things government should urgently address to deal with Uganda's Covid-19 surge; the organisation implored Government to account for what it has done to prepare for the second wave.

[https://iser-uganda.org/images/downloads/10\\_things\\_government\\_should\\_address\\_on\\_COVID\\_surge.pdf](https://iser-uganda.org/images/downloads/10_things_government_should_address_on_COVID_surge.pdf)

“Unlike the first wave, this second wave was anticipated as we watched our neighbors get impacted and saw the impact of B.1.617 Delta variant in India,”

they observed. They then went on to list these ten issues of concern that would impair the battle against Covid-19:

- Limited access to Covid-19 Testing
- Failure to ensure Widespread Covid-19 vaccination
- Failure to ensure affordable and sustainable oxygen
- Failure to ensure adequate ICU
- Availability of and safety of health workers
- Limited access to clean and safe water, particularly in urban slums
- Lack of accountability for Covid-19 funds
- Lack of regulation of the private sector testing and treatment of Covid-19
- Need for more financing and supervision of the public health sector
- Ensuring Continuity of Care

They did not just stop at listing the issues but also explored the solutions in a section dubbed recommendations. First was a call for urgent repairs of oxygen plants that have broken down and immediately secure funds to buy more oxygen concentrators, generators, and cylinders. They advised the authorities to avail more pulse oximeters to enable timely diagnosis of patients who require oxygen.

“Avail oxygen to those areas that do not have,” they started. “Prioritise and strengthen emergency medical oxygen production and supplies to ensure that oxygen is accessible, available and affordable to all, including persons in hard to-reach areas.”

ISER also urged the Government to prioritise and ensure access to free Covid-19 testing for those with symptoms while ensuring the availability of ICU beds in the country.

“Reinstate the trace and contact approach and operationalise Namboole for mild cases since home isolation is impossible in some settings; reinstate the ambulance service and provide contacts people can call,” they added.

Even with these measures in place, the organisation believes that putting more effort into vaccination would be most effective.

“Prioritise vaccination including expeditiously obtaining vaccines either through bilateral donations or procurement,” they advised. “Address the barriers that caused low Covid-19 vaccine uptake initially especially up country and among the urban poor.”

To do this, ISER recommended that the Government regulate the private sector that engages in Covid-19 testing and treatment, monitor and take action against those providing fake Covid results and engage in price gouging.

“Set up a rate cap for Covid 19 services,” they suggested. “Undertake meaningful engagement and share information with key stakeholders including marginalised groups and civil society organisations during the design and implementation of covid-19 related projects.”

They said these recommendations would work if they included the Covid-19 village teams that partner with VHTs and implement the national community engagement strategy.

In conclusion, they suggested that the Government provide accountability on utilising the received Covid-19 financing responses, including various donations received by the various task forces, indicating the utilisation of cash and in-kind donations. “This may win back public trust!” they counselled.

### Giving much-needed relief

Organisations like Compassion International, known to be about education mostly, have taken to feeding the vulnerable in communities. Their staff members distributed over 120,000 food packs and almost 472,000 hygiene kits to Compassion-assisted families. They also provided medical support to nearly 120,000 vulnerable individuals.

Furthermore, to ensure young people in vulnerable communities continued learning, the organisation helped facilitate the process. Victor Mukisa, a student at the Kawempe-based Omuntu Womunda Child Development Center, confirmed this.

He told us how the organisation’s contact person, fondly called Aunty Milly, helped him access school websites that provided study guides for his reading. Some of these websites even had videos that made it easier for Victor to understand the work. Others

had instructions that Victor could print or photocopy, and he was able to use the internet at the centre anytime he needed it.

“At first I felt helpless, I spent two days without reading but later I remembered Aunt Milly saying, ‘Keep moving, keep going,’ he tells of his first days in the lockdown.

In the days that followed, the youngster reached out to the jolly custodian, and she let him, and a group of other learners browse the web for study materials. “Even though they don’t open schools now, when they open, I will be ahead of the class and it will be to my advantage,” he boasts.

### Even More Books for the Vulnerable

When schools in Uganda were shut down due to Covid-19, literacy advocates through an organisation called Enjuba found ways to keep going. Their biggest worry was that learners with no access to technology (which research has affirmed), would be left behind by their tech-advanced counterparts.

According to the team headed by Aron Kirunda, they especially worried about the millions of children in rural Uganda who have not had a chance to continue learning as they don’t have electricity and computers.

“We came up with a number of initiatives to reach children with limited access to technology while also using our social media platforms to support continued learning for urban children,” they explained on their various platforms.

Their social media platforms were awash with learning and parenting materials accessed by thousands of parents to teach their children at home. Their analytics confirmed that the tips and materials enabled 60% of parents to start reading with their children.

They took to a fundraising drive of which nearly USD 30,000\$ was raised to do even more literacy work in the communities.

“We worked with community-based libraries to mobilise children and parents and we had enriching literacy activities such as reading a loud, storytelling and spelling games in addition to parents’ talks,” they noted.

Enjuba distributed over 100,000 books to children directly or through community libraries and 100 solar lamps to help with night reading. These events gave hope for learning for both parents and children.

“In a bid to continue promoting reading on a wider scale, we turned our books into TV content – creating a new show – “Storytime with enjuba” and broadcast them on UBC TV - the National Broadcaster,” they explained.

The organisation reached out with books and reusable menstrual pads to encourage further reading in a community where several girls had gotten pregnant. This encouraged parents and girls to participate in the cluster learning classes where they got pads and books.

### Education Must Continue

When Fosca Driciru, a learner at Ematong Primary School in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, heard that schools would be closed, she thought it was all over. She prepared herself for the worst; an early marriage probably would be in the pipes for her.

Then one day, she received a visit from her teachers who had been supported by Windel Uganda to keep education going.

“I had gone to fetch water when the visitors came, but my mum said that they were coming back,” she narrates in pure innocence. “They left for me self-help study materials and immediately, I felt happy.”

The books’ content were the subjects taught at schools like science, social studies, and mathematics. Shortly after, there was another visit, and this time they insisted on ensuring that she was studying.

“The teachers came and talked to my parents to give me time for revising and doing some other schoolwork,” she explains what happened during the visits. “My parents gave me time; I would stay revising up to 10:00pm using the materials they gave us. I also listened to the teachers over the radio, my favorite subject was mathematics.”

The school's Headteacher, Lawrence Abacha Etwao, confirms that home learning was possible because of Education Philanthropists like Windel International Uganda.

“These home learning materials were textbooks designed by Uganda National Curriculum Center,” he says. “Windel International Uganda ensured we had the logistics to distribute them to each learner in the entire settlement and the host communities,” he says.

He says that despite having a mammoth 1,662 learners in his school, the organisation ensured they received the books.

### Remembering the Tea Farmers

When lockdowns are announced, most of the attention is put on the urban dwellers. While this is necessary, a group of philanthropists begged to differ and went ahead to raise about \$5000 for the tea farmers of Kahangi Village in Kabarole District.

This money trickled down to the vulnerable farmers through an organisation called the Justice Tourism Foundation. The organisation with a foot in budget travelling has seen firsthand how the lockdown can indirectly affect communities settled in tourism hotspots, even when they supplement this with farming.

“Most families in Kahangi village earn their living by working as casual laborers in tea farms, while other families have been relying on tourism for income which has been severely impacted by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic,” the team at Justice Tourism Foundation contended.

They argued that some rural communities own small vegetable kiosks where they sell items each day and have now been stripped of their livelihood during this current Covid-induced lockdown.

“Where food is available, the prices of basic items such as beans, salt, potatoes, sugar, rice and others have more than doubled,” they explained.

They said that there was no government support package to assist these rural

communities, unlike some vulnerable urban groups.

“We cannot close our eyes and ears to our communities where we work. We refuse to fold our hands and watch while they pine away in hunger,” they added.

The money collected went into purchasing food packs such as rice, cornflour, sugar, salt, cooking oil, soap, and medicines for more than 200 families in Kahangi village near Fort Portal town in western Uganda.

### Cash Transfers To the Vulnerable

Child rights organisation, Plan International Uganda, has extended Covid-19 relief through a cash transfer of UGS 70,000 (approximately USD20\$ to 31,498 families in the districts of Nebbi, Kamuli, Tororo, and Lira. The one-off transfer is aimed at supporting children and their families.

They maintain that Covid-19 has significantly affected children's growth and development environment. Thousands of children, mainly from vulnerable families, have been constrained in various ways in terms of health, social and economic well-being.

Some of the most significant impacts on children have resulted from the closure of schools for over 12 months coupled with restricted economic activities making it very difficult for them to access essential items pertinent to their lives.

“We know that families have been hit hard by Covid-19, as well as the government lockdown which has seriously impacted economic activities of families and affected other structures in place to support and protect children,” Plans media team explained.

Families that received the cash were identified through the sponsorship programme and accessed through mobile money and physical cash distributions at designated locations.

“Existing structures with which we have been working, including district, local leadership and at community level were critical in contributing to the success of the exercise,” they noted.

Rather than use the funds for immediate needs, some families planned to invest in income-generating activities to offset the long-term economic hardships of the pandemic.

They further said that while the pandemic has presented a host of hardships, recipients were particularly encouraged to prioritize spending on meeting children's needs, including education, health, safety, and food. The cash transfer initiative was supplementary to other direct Covid-19 response activities being delivered. For example, in the Lango area, Plan Uganda donated Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) worth Ugx 140million (about \$40,000) to three District Taskforces in the region, Lira, Apac Alebtong districts.

The equipment, including; face shields, gumboots, temperature guns, sanitizers, surgical overalls, and gloves, were respectively disbursed to over five facilities currently managing Covid-19 patients. Plan Uganda has also helped train health workers and village health teams in Covid-19 case management and provide meals to isolated Covid-19 patients.

### Preparing Community Health Workers for the Battle

As noted in this section's genesis, organisations have put aside initial plans and instead taken on the battle with Covid-19. This, many reckon, will be the only way countries like Uganda will even stand a chance against the raging virus.

Organisations like Regional Health Integration to Enhance Services in Eastern Uganda (RHITES-E) have trained 320 health workers across 13 districts, including the Malaba border, to prevent the virus.

“We have established 203 handwashing facilities and trained mentors and health workers in 15 districts on water, sanitation, hygiene, and infection prevention and control. And we work with districts every day to make sure essential services are not interrupted by Covid-19,” they explained through their public relations team.

In addition to all the generosity last year, Living Goods Uganda continued building on their existing Covid-19 response, focusing on maintaining essential services. First, they appreciate a need to strengthen health systems as the Covid-19 pandemic has moved from an acute to a prolonged emergency.

“We are emphasising ongoing protection and support for community health workers, thus allowing them to care for themselves while they continue to maintain essential health service delivery to communities,” the communication's team explained.

Living Goods is also holding campaigns to encourage early vaccination uptake among frontline health workers and other high-risk populations. They have since put in place a plan to prepare for the successful and equitable distribution of Covid-19 vaccines when they become much more widely available in the countries in which we work.

“Remaining innovative and responsive, recognising opportunities to leverage existing competencies for flexible approaches as needs arrive (i.e. adapting health worker training & digital app workflows originally developed for two-dose childhood immunisation tracking to serve Covid-19 vaccination rollout),” they said.

Immunisation has been painfully slow in Uganda; therefore, any help therein would be a bonus. As the global conversation on equal distribution of vaccines for all continues, strides like those seeking to remind us to prioritise health workers should be applauded.

### Looking Out for Kabale's Vulnerable

They would typically be going about other community health issues like malaria. However, when the philanthropists at the Kabale-based Kigezi Healthcare Foundation saw a looming coronavirus crisis, they sprung into action. They explained how the lockdown would birth another crisis should nothing be done. Most importantly, they needed to help the poor prevent the virus as much as possible.

“Many people cannot come out of their homes because the single cloth masks distributed by Government last year are either worn out or lost,” they explained the need to start fundraising.

“There is urgent need to procure PPEs, rapid testing kits for Covid 19, repair the ambulance to evacuate pregnant women from the rural areas.”

They committed to repairing the ambulance as maternal mortality had increased by over 30% during the first lockdown.

“These are from the official reports, but the unofficial numbers are likely to be much higher because many women died in the rural villages unreported,” they explained. “Many teenagers got pregnant, and our district registered over 1,500 teenage pregnancies.”

In the end, they raised over Ugx4 million (over \$1000) and distributed cloth masks, hand washing facilities in the markets, soap for washing hands and highly needed PPEs to the health workers.

“Health workers have been trained to test, screen and isolate Covid-19 cases but they do not have the resources to effectively manage the condition. All available ambulances are involved in transporting critical covid cases and there is urgent need to evacuate mothers in labor,” they said.

Their strides saw the organisation not only protect the community but the health workers and pregnant women. Unlike last year, they argue that more must be done to help prevent more teenage pregnancies and mothers from dying while giving birth.

### Capital For Farmers Affected by Lockdown

Through their organisation called Cosma Sustainable Rural Development, a group of young and enterprising philanthropists reached out to farmers affected by the Coronavirus-induced lockdown.

First, the organisation with activities in the greater Masaka districts of Sembabule,

Bukomasimbi, Gomba and Lwengo delved into a fundraising drive of which they raised nearly USD 9000\$. This money was put into the re-capitalisation of existing farmer cooperatives that faced an unexpected financial crisis due to Covid-19.

According to George Mugenyi, the project leader, the member cooperatives can borrow money from the community fund to help individual member farmers overcome socio-economic hardship arising from the Covid-19 lockdown.

“In Uganda, agriculture employs 73% of the total labor force and agribusiness hinges heavily on savings in village cooperatives. Due to the Covid-19 lockdowns, most village cooperatives are no longer allowed to meet to maintain regular savings and borrowing,” he explained in attempts to raise more funds for the cause.

Mugenyi argues that the lockdowns have rendered many people jobless, and most farmers have pulled out their savings to take Care of basic household needs during the lockdown. This has drastically drained the working capital of most village cooperatives.

Before the lockdown, the organisation had been establishing these village cooperatives and maintaining their longevity. In imploring many to donate towards their survival, they sought to re-capitalise the cooperatives and allow for extended credit services (as soft cash and input/seed loans).

“This will revitalise and strengthen structured agribusiness and farming among cooperative members, enabling them to generate money for regular savings in the community fund as well recover from any other economic shocks,” Mugenyi explained.

All the monies raised have since been disbursed to farmers and their various SACCOs to help them start afresh. The initiative has been a boost to many farmers who are back to selling produce, especially vegetables.

### Endless Pleas for the Vulnerable Children

“In our community many children have been traumatized by the loss of their parents/guardians, unemployment of their parents, school closure, lack of essential basic needs at home and food supplies,” Children Reachout cried out to the public.

“As an organisation we support vulnerable children at risk among these are special needs children and children with HIV, but due to the Covid-19 pandemic we can’t support our children at risk due to limited resources.”

Besides the drive to raise funds later distributed among seventy families and nearly one hundred children, they also started a relief package for the elderly in the Kampala area of Nakulabye, where they operate.

Fliers with glowing elderly persons holding tins of milk graced the internet as they launched this drive that sought to attract more Ugandan philanthropists. Every single money raised would be accounted for through their various medium platforms.

### Reminders about the Elderly

When the lockdown was announced, Ugandan philanthropists with a foot in elderly Care implored the world not to forget the elderly. Through Help Age International, Robert Mukholi, a program officer with Uganda Reach the Aged Association (URAA). This organisation brings together more than 100 older people who elaborated on the trials of the elderly.

“The ban on public transport has had the most impact on the lives of older people. As public transport is affordable, including the use of hired motorcycles, older people prefer this mode of transport to access markets, healthcare facilities, social-care services, and other support,” he explained.

He noted that a week after the lockdown, older persons and persons with disabilities reported difficulties accessing healthcare services and basic needs such as food.

“The lack of transport has also substantially reduced the support older persons and persons with disabilities were receiving from their children from major towns,” Mukholi argued.

The philanthropists observed that this coupled with social distancing restrictions has left many of these groups more at risk of increased health complications, isolation, and lack of social support.

Even worse was that despite being the group most at risk of severe symptoms, many elderly people were not getting tested for the deadly coronavirus.

With this in mind, URAA continuously reminded stakeholders, including the Government, to develop modalities of how older people can continue to benefit from the Senior Citizens Grant (SCG) and the Expanding Social Protection Programme (ESPP), which provide cash payments to older people.

“Currently, older people cannot access these funds due to the social distancing restrictions. This leaves older persons with no alternative source of income for their livelihoods,” they expounded.

In the meantime, they have taken to a community-based model to support older people through the door-to-door provision of information. They believe that once elderly persons understand how to prevent and manage the disease, they might have a fighting chance.

### Protecting Patients on Palliative Care against Covid-19

Indeed, like many activities in the country, provision of hospice and palliative care services in Uganda was affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. This was confirmed by the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU), who continue to extend kindness to those with terminal illnesses.

According to the organisation's communications team, PCAU has offered over Ugx70 million in grants and materials support to member organisations to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic challenges.

“PCAU handed over various items to hospices including personal protective equipment, temperature guns, tents, umbrellas, tables, chairs, bicycles, and other medical sundries to 11 hospices in Uganda,” they reported.

They also enabled hospices to set up screening areas at their facilities to catch the virus early and manage it among those on palliative care.

“PCAU through its different partners will continue to offer support to other organisations as the need arises for the control of the spread of Covid-19,” they promised.

The hospices that received support include Rays of Hope Hospice Jinja, Hospice Africa Uganda, Joy Hospice Mbale, Ibanda Central Clinic, Peace Hospice Adjumani, Makerere/Mulago Palliative Care Unit, Reach Out Mbuya, Santa Maria Hospice, Kitovu Mobile, Kawempe Home Care, and Hospice Tororo.

Note that Palliative care, an interdisciplinary medical caregiving approach aimed at optimising the quality of life and mitigating suffering among people with severe and complex illnesses, is a pertinent part of health provision. It allows for absolute comfort and decency for patients who might not have much time to live.

### Fighting Violence Against Women

It is pertinent to note that advocacy is one of the many forms of philanthropy, especially as it looks to weed out social injustice. When activists took on what they called the shadow pandemic, we recognised it. Yes, violence against women and girls sored through the roof during the lockdown.

Unlike the last lockdown, where many were caught off guard, organisations like Uganda Network on Law Ethics and HIV/AIDS (UGANET) endeavoured to remind the country about this evil.

Their team leader, Dorah Kiconco Musinguzi, joined a host of panelists to have conversations on the issue on NTV. First, she would put out a message on her socials calling on all to do better by the victims.

“You are powerful, please do something

that increases safety for women and girls in your household and within your community,” she implored. “For many women and girls, staying home is not safe; Look out for the girls, and women that you care about; you can call me, if you ever need me to walk with you!”

She then told of how a mammoth 17,000 cases of domestic violence were reported in 2020, with defilement taking a whole 13,000. “About 10,000 girls’ futures and potential were cut short! Violence against women is a looming epidemic, but how come it appears normal?” she wondered.

Even as this conversation raged on various social and traditional media platforms, UGANET run stories on their website highlighting this injustice. An article run on 13<sup>th</sup> August explored teenage pregnancies in Bulange Subcounty in Namutumba District.

<https://uganet.org/who-will-account-for-the-over-300-teenage-pregnancies-in-bulange-sub-county/>

“It may be a very long time before the adverse effects of Covid-19 are overturned. Unfortunately, some may never be reversed for several girls who have lost their innocence at an early age in Bulanga sub county in Namutumba District,” the organisation’s media team noted.

They called attention to worrying statistics recorded by a midwife at Bulanga Health Center III, which told of a total of 321 girls between the ages of fifteen and eighteen seeking antenatal Care.

“On average we receive eight girls who come here for antenatal Care every day. While some claim to be fifteen years old, they look much younger than that. Mostly coz they seat with their mothers on the same bench seeking the same services,” Nanyiri Christine, a nurse at the health centre, told the UGANET team.

The organisation’s legal officer Boaz Ongodia worried that these numbers would only get worse with schools closed. It has been reechoed that schools are a safety net for many teenagers and are known to delay pregnancy.

“We call upon leaders at all levels to stand up to the challenge before us. Lack of education for a girl child today creates many more problems for her in the future. We are yet to hear of a plan to handle these issues which have been quite overwhelming,” Ongodia advised.

UGANET’s pleas for the Government to find solutions to teenage pregnancy and or violence against women and girls has been made by many other organisations. Their biggest worry is the vulnerable girl that now finds herself cooped up with her abuser for longer hours.

### Seeking Out Minority Groups

Known for their stance in fighting for the minority groups, it did not come as a surprise that Defenders Protection Initiative (DPI), a Ugandan human rights non-profit, would reach out to said groups. Unlike their usual activities rooted in the fight for human rights, the organisation also distributed relief food items.

While capturing this, online journal 76 Crimes noted that DPI leveraged the knowledge it learned about supply distribution during the 2020 Covid-19 lockdown.

<https://76crimes.com/2021/07/28/food-starts-to-reaches-hungry-lgbt-ugandans-stranded-by-lockdown/>

The food was delivered to at least two hundred minority groups across the country. These included the Ugandan LGBTIQ community members, sex workers and human rights defenders. This act of generosity was also informed by a plea made by transgender rights defenders at the onset of the country’s 42-day lockdown.

Speaking to the journal, Leah Munokoh, the organisation’s Legal and Protection Executive, also said that the lockdown in itself would be hard on key populations.

“Drawing from the experience of the lockdown from the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, and the drastic challenges faced by our constituencies in line with food shortage, lack of access to health services, restricted movements to the general public, we deemed it prudent to reach out to key populations in Uganda,” she said.

### Journalist Association rescues their own

Through their umbrella body, the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA), scribes received relief food packages to help them sail through the tough times. Interestingly, this help continued to trickle in even after the 42 days of lockdown elapsed.

According to the Association Spokesperson Kabuye Ronald, they mobilised over one thousand kilograms of maize flour in the first phase of distribution. They accompanied it with one hundred more kilograms of beans.

To do this, they reached out to various stakeholders, individuals and civil society organisations. The biggest donation came from an organisation called Making A Difference in Uganda Face to Face (MADUFABA), which gave 1000kg of maize flour, with the help of individuals like Pastor Wilson Bugembe and Makidy Division Mayor Hajji Ali Mulyannyama Kasirye.

The other contributors were Media Internship Center, M.S Real Property Developers and Mirandira Foundation, who donated 270kg of maize flour and 100kg of beans.

An elated Kabuye celebrated this generosity and promised to do more for the journalists who have since found themselves without jobs due to the coronavirus-induced lockdowns.

“We are in our advanced stages of engaging media owners to rehire the laid off scribes. This would go so far in helping many who have been struggling since the lay off a year ago,” he explained.

### A call to prioritise Persons With Disability

The country's unique needs groups have been vocal about getting left behind whenever the Government has projects. When the mass vaccination exercise against Covid-19 started, the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) said Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) had been sidelined. Philanthropists have taken to activism to voice their dissatisfaction to the effect.

The organisation's programs manager, Martin Ssenoga, said PWDs needed to be prioritised given their condition.

“PWDs need special care because they are not normal like other people. If these people get infected by Covid-19, it is likely to affect them more because of their health conditions. They need to be supported,” he argued.

NUDIPU cried out when they felt that the Ugx100.000 (about \$30) disbursed to the population to offset some of the burdens of the national lockdown had left out many PWDs.

Speaking to the New Vision of July-23<sup>rd</sup>, NUDIPU argued that the initial list of beneficiaries, including taxi drivers, bodaboda riders, and single mothers, did not specifically target PWDs.

<https://www.newvision.co.ug/article/details/107900>

“We have been left out with nothing to feed on. Other government programs such as SAGE (Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment) and the special grant which the Minister of labour, Gender and Social Development, Betty Amongi spoke of are purely for poverty eradication, not Covid-19 related,” Mpindi Bumali, the organisation Chairperson said.

He implored the Government to plan for PWDs since many were already overwhelmed going into the lockdown.

“Some of the parents have children with disabilities such as cerebral palsy, psycho-social disabilities, epilepsy among others, and these require a lot of medication and proper feeding for the survival of these disabled people,” he said.

The New Vision further said that Mpindi had requested the government to extend medical facilities and drugs for easy access since private and public transport had been halted.

Besides all the issues listed by Mpindi, NUDIPU's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Esther Kyozira was glad they had at least found ways to keep some PWDs informed about the deadly coronavirus.

Also, when relief cash was announced, the organisation managed to pass on information to all the PWDs to go and register with their village leaders so that they do not miss out. “Please, don't forget PWDs, they need all the extra information and support,” she cautioned.

### CARE's Hospital Equipment Donations

As has been repeatedly stated, the pandemic has seen philanthropists change projects towards mitigating the effects. Many philanthropic organisations like CARE Uganda have taken to reducing the Government's load by addressing some of the pressing needs.

In doing this, they have seen the Ugandan population receive otherwise unavailable or limited services. An article in the country's leading daily New Vision confirmed a donation to various health centres in Kamwenge District by Care.

<https://www.newvision.co.ug/article/details/112105>

Dr. William Mucunguzi, the DHO, noted that before the donation, Kamwenge District had been struggling with medical supplies in several health facilities and had impaired service delivery.

“I am happy that CARE has come out to aid the health facilities in the district. We are going to start managing some of the cases in our health facilities and only refer patients with complicated cases to Fort Portal regional referral hospital,” Mucunguzi said.

He said that the donated equipment will not only be used in the management of Covid-19 cases but will also be used to huddle other cases. “Even when Covid-19 is no more, we shall still use the equipment,” Mucinguzi said.

Mucinguzi told New Vision that health facilities like Biguli health centre IV, which were recently commissioned, have struggled with patients sleeping on the floor due to a lack of beds.

While handing over the oxygen cylinders, beds, mattresses, and patient monitoring machines, Ronald Ogal, the projects manager for CARE Uganda, said that besides the donation, they also offered training to the health workers.

“We expect the health workers to offer quality services because of the training we took them through. We shall continue supporting them,” Ogal told New Vision.

### The Much-Needed PCR Test

A severely overwhelmed health structure defined the country’s battle with the coronavirus. This informed Volunteer Action Network’s decision to seek out philanthropists’ help with Covid-19 tests for the population in the northern region.

The organisation’s team leader, Muusa Bukenya, observed that despite manifesting the symptoms of Covid-19, the vulnerable populations would not bother to go for testing.

“People cannot get tools and resources to prevent the spread of the epidemic, and medical services are weak and cannot effectively manage either,” he said.

They have since set out to provide aid and assistance to low-income families to confront the spread of the pandemic using two approaches.

“We assisted poor families to confront the spread of the epidemic by providing them with the necessary health equipment and tools to limit the spread of the epidemic, we are also raising awareness to prevent the spread of the epidemic.” he explained.

Besides the above, the philanthropists sought to make their beneficiaries, most of whom are in the informal sector, self-reliant. “The closure of business is already affecting millions of Ugandans who depend on them for employment,” he started.

“The informal economy alone employs 84.9% of the population, 90% of whom are women.” Until the vaccine is available to all, Bukenya says they are committed to helping the vulnerable battle Covid-19. He believes that only through acts of kindness like this will communities reach the finish line.

### Food for Quidditch Players and Vulnerable Women

When their players needed relief food, Quidditch Uganda partnered with Economic, Social Empowerment for Local Communities- Uganda (ESLA-Uganda) and came to their rescue. First, for those who might know, quidditch is a team sport played while straddling broomsticks, in which goals are scored by throwing a ball through any of three hoops fixed at either end of the pitch.

Explaining her decision to help, Nakanwagi Racheal, who doubles as the spokesperson for Quidditch Uganda and ESLA Uganda, told the Nile Post that she was touched by the players’ plight and that of vulnerable women. Despite relief cash distribution by the Government, many of the people they reached out to had barely received a coin. <https://nilepost.co.ug/2021/07/17/quidditch-players-receive-food-stuffs-to-ease-covid-lockdown/>

“You know most of our quidditch players come from slum communities and their families cannot look after them so they spend most of the time with their coaches mostly in this period of the lockdown,” she said.

She further implored the public to join in the acts of philanthropy given how dire the situation was.

“I know times are tough because of Covid-19, but we should not stop helping each other,” she advised.

### Giving to the Wild

Conservation enthusiast Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka has been working around the clock to ensure the coronavirus does not ravage the Ugandan apes like it did the global human population.

Together with teammates Ampeire Annaclet, Mary B Leakey, Kaamu Bukenya, Sharon Akampurira, Richard Bagyenya, Ebenezer Paul, Elizabeth Kaniwabo and Oscar Nuwayamba, she has set up a series of community initiatives.

Through their organisation Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH), they have carried out training for VHTs on the mitigation of Covid-19, its spread amongst people and from people to gorillas.

Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka vividly explained the work they had been doing in an interview uploaded to the organisation's site.

<https://ctph.org/conservationist-gladys-kalema-talks-tourism-and-the-pandemic/>

“This includes enforcing Covid-19 SOPs mainly mask-wearing, social distancing, hand hygiene – frequently washing hands with soap and using hand sanitisers, boot disinfection while in the forest, and vaccination education,” she explained.

They have also trained the Uganda Wildlife Authority rangers in Bwindi on practising responsible tourism during the pandemic. Also, outside of ensuring the apes are coronavirus-free, the team has

ensured the local farmers in the Bwindi areas stay afloat.

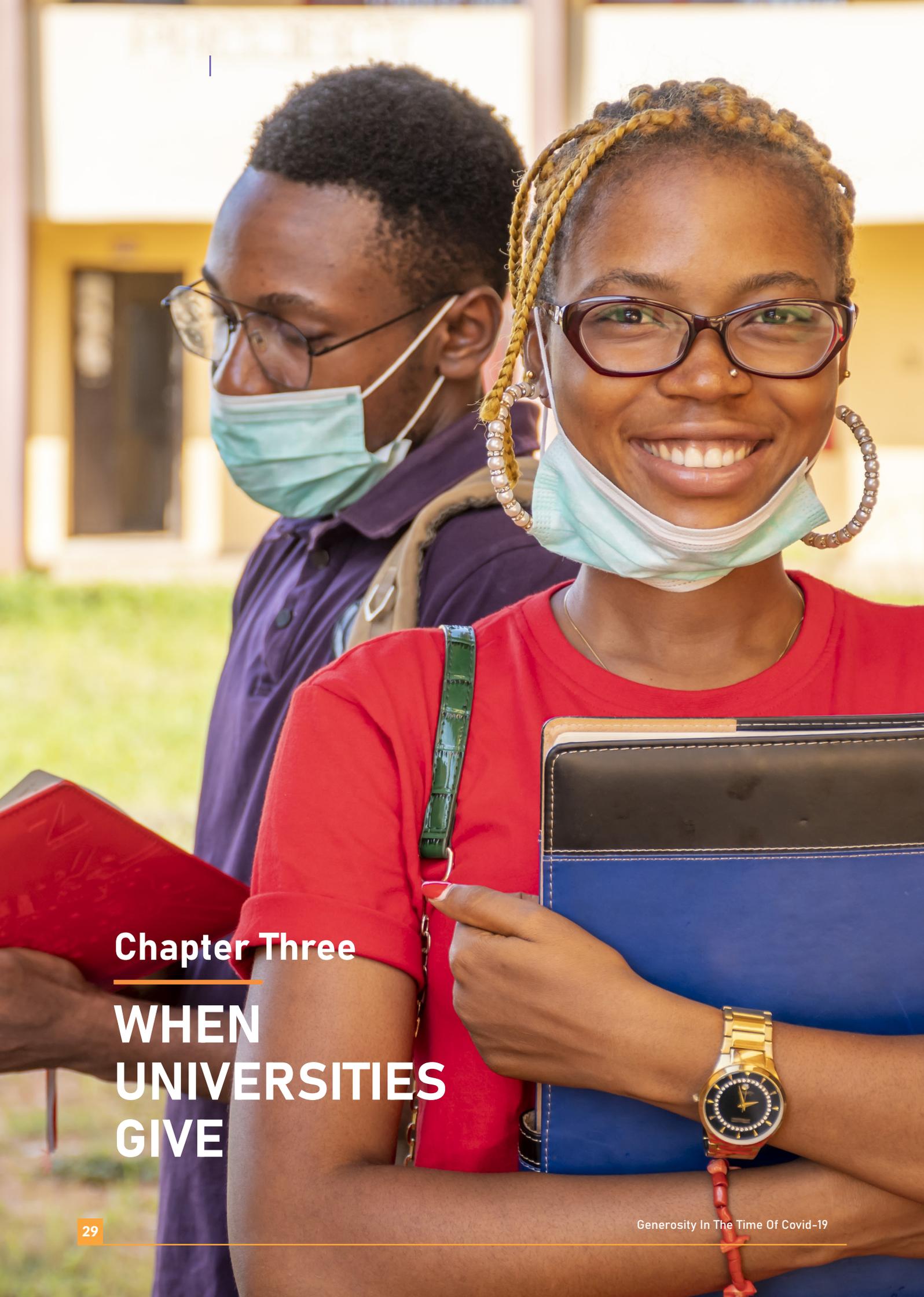
In doing this, the passionate Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka believes that they are reducing poaching around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, arising from a lack of basic needs.

“Gorilla Conservation Coffee, that supports local coffee farmers in Bwindi is a critical initiative during the pandemic when other sources of income and employment have disappeared,” she explained. “We have been able to find markets for coffee outside Uganda – where we were mostly dependent on tourism for coffee sales.”

The organisation is now calling upon everyone to embrace the One Health movement that has gained recognition because of the pandemic. “The One Health approach emphasises the interconnection of the health of humans, animals, and the environment,” Dr. Kalema-Zikusoka explains.

“There is a need to increase research to identify pathways of transmission and increase understanding around zoonotic disease transmission and spill-over events to prevent and predict pandemics.”

She further calls for more community sensitisation on the dangers of eating bush meat and encouraged the closure of wet animal markets, which often lead to transmission of diseases from animals to people.



## Chapter Three

# WHEN UNIVERSITIES GIVE

**W**e can say without a doubt that higher institutions of learning have given to the battle against coronavirus. We have noted several acts of philanthropy that manifest through research, information and direct donations. Being that they hold authority in many of the conversations that inform policy, their role remains pertinent.

For example, campaigns against stigmatizing people with the coronavirus are visible on the different Makerere University platforms. **“Do not alienate your friend/relative/colleague who has been diagnosed with Covid-19. Make a choice to check on them by phone call or message and reassure them that you care,”** they advise.

They also have a mental health campaign that seeks to help those psychologically overwhelmed by the pandemic. **“We care about mental health in Covid-19,”** their messages read.

**“Call the Makerere University Infectious Diseases Institute’s (IDI) Advanced Treatment Information Centre (ATIC) toll free number, 0800200055 for more information.”**

### A Handy Covid Alphabet from Makerere

Noticing the information gap, Makerere University’s Dr. Gloria Seruwagi designed a behavioural change communication model to support the government fighting against the pandemic.

Dubbed the Covid Alphabet (A-Z of Covid in Uganda), it was developed to help with the anticipated challenging period, given the coronavirus strains that had started to show up.

Seruwagi, a lecturer at both Makerere University’s College of Humanities and School of Public Health, said she designed the simple and relatable evidence-based product after conducting a series of Covid-19 studies in different communities.

**“If somebody wants to know what the key issues are about Covid-19 in Uganda, they can look at this Alphabet and have it all at a glance, without having to go through the long process of reading a 4 or 15-page document. This is not just an alphabet for learning phonetics or numbers. It is a Know, Think and Act (KTA) tool packed with nuggets of information,”** Dr. Seruwagi emphasized.

The university’s publicity team further explained that the Covid Alphabet is easy on the eye and deliberately factual, straightforward, and anchored in research. It should resonate with anyone at any level – from the busy policymaker or program manager to someone outside Uganda in need of quick facts.

**“The Alphabet also speaks to today’s virtual workplace teams, community leaders, and any person on the street or at home. It contains critical study findings compressed into a quick and concise summary of the Covid-19 trajectory, experiences, and outcomes,”** they further explained.

This alphabet gives key pointers on key population groups, sectors, mitigation strategies, and action points for different stakeholders. **“The alphabet begins by stating that Awareness of Covid-19 is high but adherence extremely low,”** they expound.

Before the lockdown, it warned that community transmissions were on the rise, as is prevention complacency, while deaths, infection and recovery were a mystery.

Makerere called upon senior policymakers to use the model as a guiding tool to support the national response. They advised that it calls to attention the urgent need for effective behavioural change messages now more than ever; this should be done even more than knowledge-only messages.

“As a country we already crossed a line where infections were managed at facility level. With the current community spread, let’s reflect on this Covid-19 Alphabet and let each person pick at least one action point,” Dr. Seruwagi said.

### Kabale University reaches out to the Community

On 10<sup>th</sup> August, some faculties in Kabale University reached out to the community, and the school’s media hub took note of the activities as they played out. <https://www.kab.ac.ug/category/community-outreach/>

“As part of the community engagement mandate of Kabale University, the Faculty of Engineering, Technology, Applied Design and Fine Art (FETADFA) is supporting two vulnerable families within the neighboring community by providing them with 4,000 litre capacity rainwater harvesting tanks,” they reported.

They explained that this initiative was informed by the fact that some urban people did not have safe drinking water because they couldn’t afford it.

Before they set out to give, the students and their lecturers involved the local authorities in Rutooma, Nyakiharro and Nyakambu communities to carefully identify the most vulnerable families.

“They engaged engineering students to construct 4,000 litre rainwater harvesting tanks and install a water harvesting system comprised of gutters and downpipes on their houses,” they explained.

Jane Munyampetere and Regina Tibifumura, both elderly widows with enormous responsibilities, were among the beneficiaries. The university’s goal is to reduce water-related diseases and encourage frequent hand washing among communities. Today, the

beneficiaries have set up hand-washing points in their compound to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

### Gulu University to the rescue

When a three-day notice was given, and many students had to find their way home amidst a shortage of public means, Gulu University sent two buses to rescue the learners. This was just one of the many ways the university has given to the country during its time of need.

Besides its known Covid-19 treatment drug, Covyllice, the free corona virus testing the University offers to all vulnerable is to be celebrated in Gulu, Kitgum, Agago, Gulu, Pader, Lamwo, Omoro, Nwoya and Amuru, among others is to be celebrated.

This has been happening since its laboratories were accredited by the Ministry of Health and Uganda Virus Research Institute – UVRI. At the height of infections, the sixteen-man lab was collecting nearly one thousand samples every day.

Tabu Komagum, a potter in Gulu town, says that for the longest time, they did not believe that the service was free for low-income earners like him, as most private facilities had hiked the price.

“In fact many people were saying that if you don’t have 300,000 ((over \$80), then don’t even bother going there. “But my friend encouraged me to go, and I was checked free of charge. Like most, Tabu first believed that he had been exposed to the virus from a neighbour and decided to self-medicate without testing. “I came out negative, and they didn’t charge me anything,” he giggles. He says once they had tested him, they informed him it would be free of charge.

For those wondering how the lab stayed afloat, it used the monies from the corporate entities who regularly tested their workers. With this income, they found ways to give to the populations that couldn’t afford the pricey test.

### Looking Out for Masaka's frontline workers

The Medical Research Institute and Uganda Virus Research Institute donated much-needed PPEs to support medical teams working on the Covid-19 response. This act of philanthropy also attracted a close ally of theirs, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine to join in the activity.

Together, the group donated items worth Ugx47 million (about \$13,000) to the Masaka District Covid-19 task force. These included thermometers, masks, sanitizers, gumboots, face shields, aprons, body bags, oximeters, and gloves to help keep healthcare providers as safe as possible.

Speaking on behalf of all the researchers, Dr. Freddie Mukasa Kibengo, the Head of MRC Masaka field station, said they did this after witnessing a shortage of protective gear.

“We appreciate the challenge of limited PPE throughout the country, and the subsequent risk of exposure to Covid-19 for healthcare providers,” he said.

“Our donation therefore, is to contribute towards providing a safe work environment for healthcare providers in Masaka and consequently improved care for Covid-19 patients.”

### Relief food to UCU's Students

Uganda Christian University's (UCU) Dalton Mujuni starts by quoting the Bible to tell this story on the school's visibility platform. Proverbs 3:27 says:

“Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act.”

This verse Mujuni says, inspired the administration of ThornyCroft Chapel at UCU food donation to lockdown-stricken students living in hostels around Mukono.

“This distribution occurred under the strict adherence to the Standard Operating Procedures for safety during the Covid epidemic in the country and was officiated by UCU Chaplain Rev. Eng. Paul Wasswa Ssembiro,” Mujuni explained. He noted that a total of fifty-four students each received a pack of maize flour, beans, sugar and soap.

“This is a very good gesture from the Chaplaincy,” Silas Ayesiga, a third-year student pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Finance, said. “This food is going to take me for the next couple of days in such a period characterized with economic hardships and escalation in prices of essential needs.”

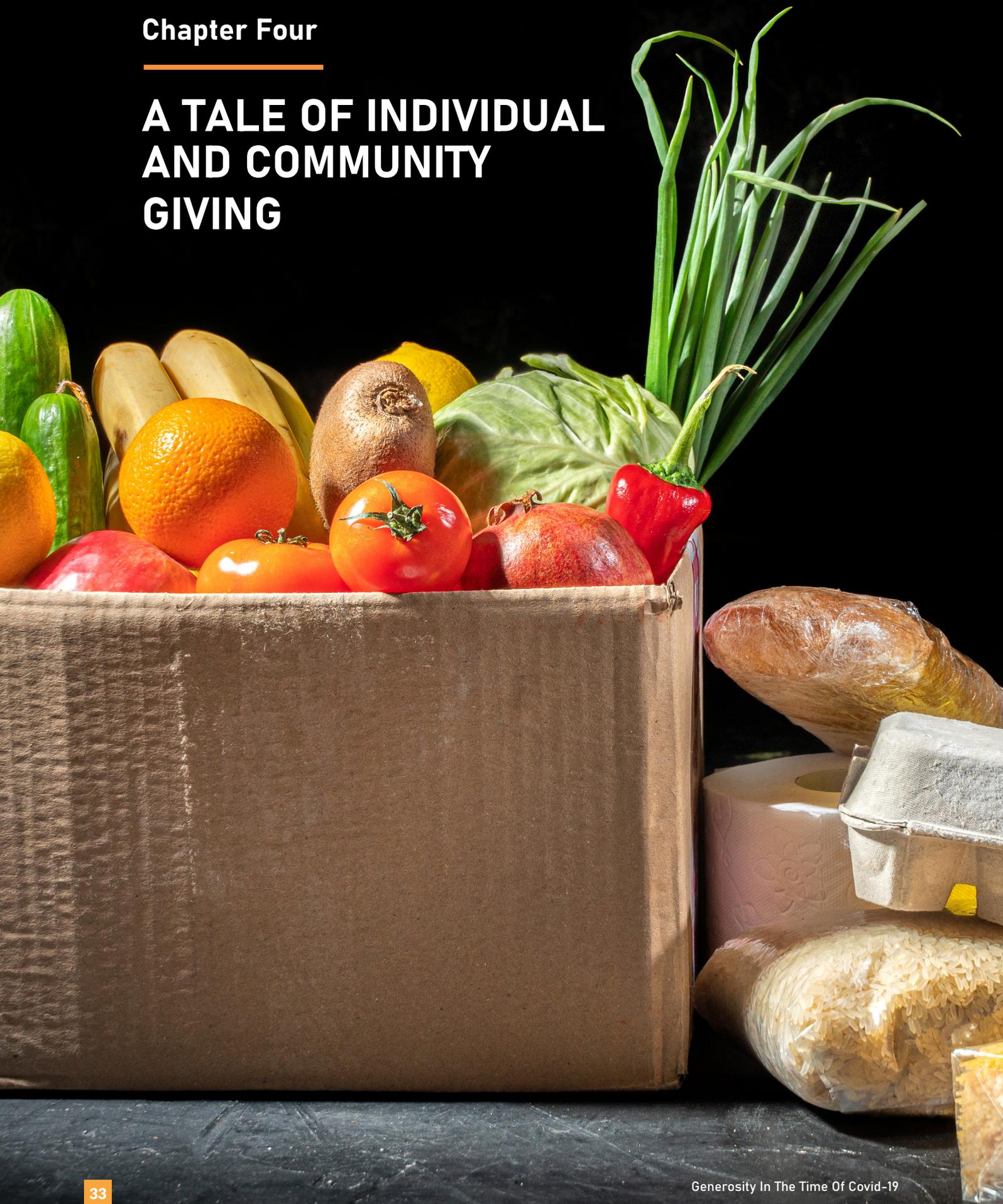
According to Rev. Wasswa, his ministry's philanthropy is guided by following the example of Christ. “We need to meet the needs of our congregation holistically, not only in spiritual but also material needs where we can,” he said.

The Rev. Paul Wasswa worried about the emotional impact of the Ugandan lockdown and has since set aside a contact through which individuals can make phone calls to the ministry team for counselling.

## Chapter Four

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# A TALE OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNITY GIVING



**T**he coronavirus has shown that while some people are lone givers, others love to do so in groups. In the end, we noticed that giving, no matter the nature, attracts more giving. Take the example of a story shared by the renowned baker, Asha Batenga.

It was beautiful! It was a post that made rounds on socials about two mysterious drivers feeding street children. Verbatim, it read:

“What this driver did, made me cry many tears. Yesterday I was on the road running different errands, so when we reached the traffic lights along Lugogo bypass, I saw street vendors and street children running towards this car, this pulled my attention.

I saw two men with packed food in a big sack, divided into individual packs serving vendors and street children. These two men gave out free ready-to-eat food and with happy faces. I think they were moving on all Kampala streets just giving out food. I was so touched; I told my husband that we should also do something in that line.

Witnessing an act of kindness is a very strong fulfilment. I believe we can all help each other. We don't need to be super-rich. We can share the little we have. Thank you so much gentlemen. You have awakened something priceless.’

### The Doctor's Recommendation

When the country was immersed in confusion about what to do with the coronavirus, opposition politician Dr Kiiza Besigye offered solutions on his socials for free. Besides advising on governance issues, the doctor offered information on what he called an immunity booster.

“Blend the following in a blender for 5mins: One litre of hot water, garlic 10-15pcs, lemons 2, big (fleshy) onion, ginger (thumb size), red pepper 5. Let it cool down, take 2 tablespoons 8 hourly,” he advised.

Many have attested to receiving a semblance of better health because of Dr. Besigye's immunity booster. When taken frequently, they say, it has helped ease many people's battles against many other illnesses and not just the coronavirus.

### Mobilising the Community

“Thanks to everyone that contributed towards helping Sharif Wakabi and his family. I received a total of 3,220,000/- (about \$900), and some sent the family help in kind (matooke). Uganda is not short of caring people,” Lecturer, columnist and cartoonist Dr. Jimmy Spire Ssentongo posted on his socials.

What started as a personal initiative to help a sick young boy and his family in dire need during the lockdown had become a community affair. Indeed, Dr. Ssentongo's philanthropy would not stop at personal giving.

First, he explained that he had met the young Wakabi while consulting with a CBO called Kitubulu Child Rights Initiative. When he heard how the family had lost everything at a time the young boy needed to do further tests on his tumour that would later turn cancerous, Dr. Ssentongo chose to do something about it.

“Working with the family, the CBO, which the family said they trust, will help to ensure that the restocking is done and that the medical expenses contributions are well utilized. The family admitted that anything could happen if it is all left in their hands,” he explained.

“I deposited the Ugx 2,700,000 (about \$800) on the phone of Sharif's mother. They will work out the utilisation and accountabilities with the CBO, and I will follow up.”

He kept updating everyone about the patient's situation, the monies sent, and how it was spent.

“We used Ugx 520,000 (about \$150) to buy food and some other basics for the family and those at hospital. They were overjoyed, overwhelmed, and so grateful to all of you that contributed. It's so fulfilling seeing such people happy in their circumstances,” he updated.

Whenever the little boy asked for something, Dr. Ssentongo quickly updated his followers, who generously gave. Once the boy complained about boredom at the Cancer Institute and needing to shut out the groans of pain around him, he received a package.

“Maama nyabo, tonight I won’t sleep,” Dr. Ssentongo told about how delighted Sharif had been to receive the radio and headphones. “You know how a child expresses joy over something unexpected. He touched it, cleaned it, smiled at it, tried to read the note enclosed by the radio giver (Iduwat Ochom - he said you write like a doctor), raised his hands, clapped and hummed along a song.”

### Beatrice Achieng is rooted in Philanthropy

In the Eastern district of Tororo, the mention of the name Beatrice Achieng is synonymous with philanthropy. She has been at it for over a decade and has since crossed into other districts to do good.

“We went touring Buwenda village and giving foodstuff to some of the poorest families. We reached out to 8 homes, they were very grateful and are truly deserving,”

Achieng shared in the thick of the lockdown.

“I was touched seeing children walk miles to collect water. I helped some of them carry their heavy loads, it’s not easy for a 5–7-year-old child walking uphill with 10liters of water.”

From spending personal money to reaching out to friends in Uganda and abroad, Achieng ensures that she continuously finds ways to help the vulnerable.

“Thank you so much Max, Pauline and Shelby. We are using your donations to reach out to Buwenda community,” she celebrated her donors.

She reminded the public that the people were

not just dying of Covid-19 but also starvation, HIV/AIDS and other illnesses.

“Treatment is a constant struggle, as people at the grassroots would rather spend every penny within their means to buy food than to buy medicines,” she explained.

Impressively, she managed to mobilise over \$4000 and reached out to as many people as she could.

“In just one month we have distributed food and detergent to 370 households and 1,052 masks to the communities in Tororo and Jinja districts. All together we have reached over 2,900 people with relief aid,” she said.

### Bombo’s Knight in shining Armor

Lubega Ibrahim’s resolve to reduce his patients’ load is inspirational. While media was awash with reports of oxygen shortage, Lubega, a nurse with Link Biomedical Supplies beat all odds to keep his patients hooked onto a cylinder.

Taking to a door-to-door delivery of medical supplies that included oxygen cylinders, he made sure to reach the frailest of patients in Bombo District. Besides helping in monitoring the vulnerable patients, Lubega was worried about the possibility of infecting others should the patients venture out to find the supplies themselves.

“By doing this, I reduced the risk to other citizens as the sick ones who would have been lining in hospitals were home,” he says. “I would also offer medical advice to the patients on these health trips.”

When the orders became overwhelming, with many coming from Bombo’s hard to reach areas, the kind Lubega hopped onto his bicycle.

“Luckily I was able to acquire a motorcycle which rather eased my mobility and access to many remote places.”

Asked why he chose to risk exposure to the

virus when many were safely keeping away, he said that it was all for his patients.

“I feel fulfilled that my effort has not gone in vain as most of my patients successfully recovered,” he said. “I have been able to touch so many lives of people in the community at such a critical time regardless of the risk of the exposure.”

#### Kitgum’s pastor reaches out to the needy

Richard Okot, a pastor with Kitgum Pentecostal Church in Kitgum District, has been feeding the poor during the various lockdowns. Not that he has much himself, but the preacher used his platform to make a plea to all to help those in dire need.

The response was positive, and though his target was to feed at least 300 people, he offered some basic needs to 45 needy children. He offered some basic needs packs to 45 needy children. The packs included clothes, food, sugar, soap, and cooking oil.

With every delivery that was made, the news reached many needy people in the district.

“To our shock, the number that came was higher than those we had expected. In fact, the number doubled, it was a clear indication that there were many whom we did not reach,” he said.

The man of God then pleaded with well-wishers to help some more.

“I have witnessed people looking for food from composite pits. I have seen adults crying for food. What you call trash may be of great importance to your brother or sister here,” he said.

The plea was heard by many who helped him deliver food to families struggling to even get a day’s meal.

“I am happy that through our fundraising, another 85 families received 5kgs of maize, 3kgs of beans, a half a bar of soap and packet of salt. We pray that our benefactors receive God’s continuous blessings,” an elated Okot said.

Even as he fed the deprived, Okot emphasized the need for hard work and savings for such challenging times. He said that it is good to believe in God’s provision, but humans must also ensure that they have played their part.

#### Opio’s Call for Help

Upon seeing the struggles the people of Nyapeya cell had gone through since the lockdown, the Gulu-based social worker Opio Kennedy made a plea for help. He mobilized friends and reached out to those in this cell in Gulu City.

“Everyone is hit by Covid-19 differently. With the current situation in the country and the world at large, I have teamed up with four more people to give a helping hand to the worst-hit people; those who have nothing to eat or hope of getting it tomorrow.” he said.

Kennedy and his friends said that while the urban areas had their fair share of people struggling to stay afloat, they would start with the rural areas.

“As of now, we have managed to move to 10 homes in Nyapeya cell located 20km from Gulu Regional Referral Hospital and helped out with posho (maize meal), beans, and soap,” he said with a whiff of pride.

Opio and friends later teamed up to gather even more help for those starving. However, the relief was not enough, and they have since taken to imploring well-wishers to join them.

Despite allowing vehicles back on the road, the group says that some families in Nyapeya Village could barely get a day’s meal. Life as they knew it had changed, and they would need all the help they can get. That was the next mission for Opio and his friends; ensuring Nyapeya village’s vulnerable are fed.

#### A social media campaign yields

Recently, a section of private school teachers in Lira City and surrounding areas launched a campaign dubbed, **Feed our Teachers or Open our Schools**. They took it to various social media platforms as soon as a considerable number of teachers had signed up.

Upon seeing this, Calvary Chapel in Lira district was among the first to reach out with relief food donations. Nearly 500 teachers, mainly from private schools received food packages at their doorsteps. Each teacher received 10 kilograms of maize flour and 5 kilograms of beans.

Shadrach Ayo, a beneficiary of the campaign and a teacher at Amach Secondary School, said the food had been timely. Due to the closure of schools, he had resorted to backyard gardening for income, but even that was not yielding much. **“This food came at the right time,”** he said.

#### Local church supports kakoba residents.

Weeks later, the congregants of Mbarara City's Christ in Heaven church located in the Kakoba Division are still raving about what they call the 'Nabbanja' module.

The philanthropic initiative saw the much-needed relief food distributed like Prime Minister Robinah Nabbanja did to some of the country's vulnerable population.

Pastor Tom Tumubweine, the church leader, affirms that they distributed 50,000 (about \$14) cash relief to 124 adult church members.

“My team decided that distribution of money would be better because we didn't want crowds in the community,”

he explained their decision to replicate the government's relief cash distribution module.

“Secondly, this arrangement was for the church members and a few elderly community members. We didn't want to cause commotion and trouble with non-church members,” Tumubweine explained.

Muganga John, one of the beneficiaries, shared that the money came as a surprise.

“I received the money at my lowest; my church stood with me and will continue to fellowship with them,” Muganga beamingly shares.

To this day, the church's office is open for counselling and psychological support for

any members who have been dealt emotional blows by the coronavirus.

“Any one that feels distressed with life after the lockdown is welcome.” Pastor Tumubweine says.

#### Relief items for Katete's teachers

In the heart of the second lockdown, the chairman Katete village, Nyamitanga division in Mbarara City, mobilized over 50 parents whose children go to two schools in the village; Katete Primary school and Katete Preparatory School.

According to the 67-year-old Chairman LC1, Bukangi Ponsiano, the two schools have served generations in the village.

“These schools have shaped futures of many children of the soil. It is a shame that teachers who went to school and graduated into the profession are now idle and unemployed,” Bukangi noted.

He says, together with the community, they engaged the farming community of Katete to give food, especially to teachers whose homes are far away.

“We have teachers from as far as Kasese that had just returned after the first lockdown. We organized beans, potatoes and some bunches of matooke,” he recalls.

Willy Byonanenebye, a teacher and father of two, whose ancestral home is in Bushenyi district, wonders how he would have managed without the community's support let alone the parents' support.

“The residents here surprised me a lot; throughout the lockdown, I didn't lack,” Byonanebye emotionally adds.

#### Kitanga Church of Uganda helps sick member

Kitanga Church of Uganda congregants woke up to the news of a critically ill member. Tom Kalabaye had been rushed to the Kitanga Health Centre IV, located at least 500meters from the church.

Kalabaye spent two days in a critical state. He had a severe headache and fever until one of his close family suggested that it could be Covid-19. He was rushed to Kabale Regional Referral Hospital, which is approximately 54kms away.

“The next 23 days were the hardest of my life. I always thought Covid-19 was for the urban dwellers until it knocked on my door,” he narrates. “After the first 14 days, I had accumulated a bill of Ugx3.5 million (about \$1000).”

According to his wife, Geneva Kalabaye, they had Ugx2 million (about \$600) in savings. They started contemplating selling off a piece of their land until their church members stepped in.

“I travelled back from Kabale town, purposely to sell off something. The next day, the chief church warden visited me early in the morning,” Mrs. Kalabaye shares.

Peter Mujurizi, in the company of two church members, had come to deliver Ugx960, 000 (about \$300) to help on the accumulated hospital bills of their fellow believers.

Mrs. Kalabaye could not believe the gesture. She immediately made a swift change of program and right away boarded back to be beside her husband’s sickbed.

A week later, they were discharged with no outstanding bill, thanks to the church members and a few other relatives who topped up. The family were presented with a list of the contributors on arrival back home. “We were very blessed and lucky!” she says.

The group has since helped four more members battling Covid-19. None has succumbed to the virus since, and over Ugx6 million (about \$1,700) has been collected and spent.

### Orphan Gives to community that raised him

35-year-old Kwizeera Moses set off for Kibikula village, Bugongi, in Kabale Municipality with a plan. He would give back to the village that raised him since he was a

little boy.

Kwizeera lost both his parents at a very tender age and turned into what he calls the ‘community kid’. He might not have lived on the streets but was undoubtedly for the community.

“When my parents died, it was quite tough but the entire community was there for me and my little sister. I would randomly have lunch anywhere and I was always welcome,” he narrates.

Several years later, the University graduate has niched himself in the textile business and wants to give those who helped him. Unlike the first lockdown where he was stuck up in Kampala City, this one would find him in his village.

“When it became imminent that the President would announce another lockdown in June, I drove to Kabale. The mission was to spend time with people who took care of me and pass on a token of thanks,” Kwizeera passionately narrates.

Upon reaching Kabale town, he bought 1,000kgs of posho, 500kgs of beans and 200kgs of sugar. He secretly sneaked the items into his house. The idea was to distribute the items when the lockdown hits hard.

Two weeks into the 42 days, it was visible people in the urban suburb of Bugongi were already struggling to make ends meet. This is the point Kwizeera rolled out his surprise package.

Close to 100 families benefitted from Kwizeera’s humble yet impactful gesture. One of the beneficiaries, Viola Nyiramakuba, 42, a mother of two, could not hide her excitement when asked about what Kwizeera’s gesture meant to her family.

“I only wish him the best!” she chuckled.

### Kamuntu’s appreciation giving

Rubanda West elect MP, Moses Kamuntu’s track record of giving was and is still well documented. Before seeking political office, he was known for mineral

development, mainly iron ore and giving out cash and food donations to several families in his area.

“In the first lockdown, he served us posho. We thought it was a political move to sway us in his favor but coming back in the second lockdown where he ideally didn't need us was so thoughtful and generous of him,” says Muntu Robert, a resident of Muko sub-county.

He cannot recall how much he has spent since he has been at it from before he even sought office.

“The least amount of money he gives especially to the women and elderly is 50,000 (about \$13) shillings. On his happy day, he can give out up to 200,000 (about \$50) to whoever he deems needy,”

Address Kyokushaba, who was a beneficiary of UGS 100, 000 (about USD 25\$) in July shares.

Moses Kamuntu also set out to support families of church leaders with cash vouchers which remain unrevealed. He made personal visits to the church leaders both from the Catholic and Anglican divides.

Indeed, it is something worth applauding, considering many Ugandan politicians never go back to support electorates or look out for them, whether they win or lose. For Kamuntu, many beneficiaries of his generosity say it is never about the political season.

### Ntungamo's women stick together

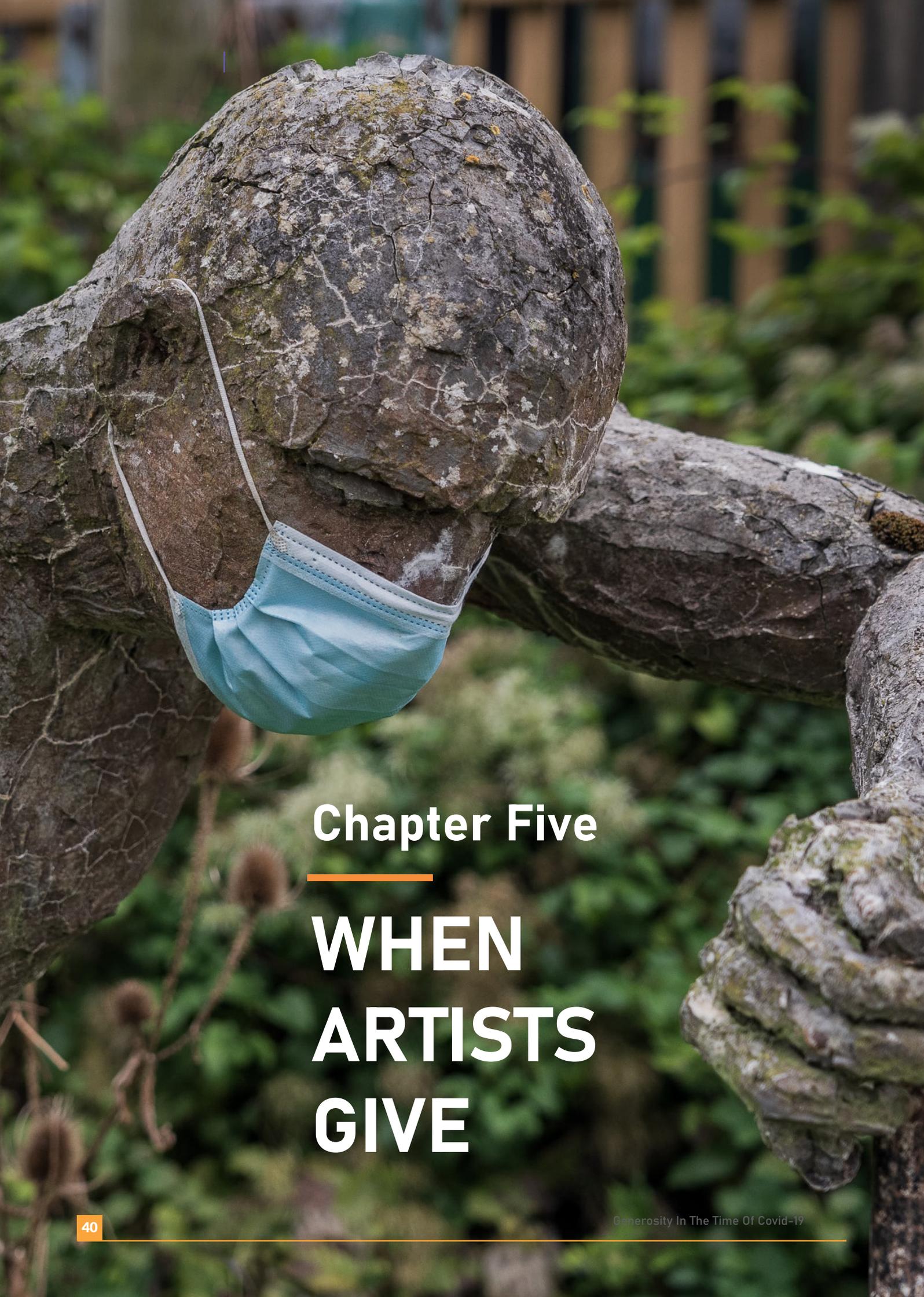
In early July, Women Shine, a social movement of women in Ntungamo district, set out to support women who are either widowed or were abandoned by their husbands during the lockdown. The movement was started by retired female professionals comprised of retired nurses and teachers, to mention but a few. Spearheaded by 63-year-old Margret Tumwetegyize, the group says that the decision to help was agreed upon after seeing what the younger mothers who had less or nothing to feed their families go through.

“We have nothing much to give them apart from free land to till. We have been blessed to have idle land and we felt it would be appropriate enough to share it with our fellow mothers,” said Tumwetegyize.

Women Shine mobilized land equivalent to 4 acres amongst their members and gave it free for six years. Tumwetegyize says the idea was to ensure that if the lockdown is prolonged or if there is another, these mothers would be in a position to fend for their families.

Sarah Nyiramahoro, 33, is one of the beneficiaries and has since planted beans and peas in her allocated small piece of land owned by the movement's treasurer, Jonova Tayebwa, a retired primary school head teacher.

The movement dominated by senior citizens has supported these mothers in other social aspects like counselling and acting as their support system. They hope to formalize it as a non-profit organization in future that essentially supports single mothers.



## Chapter Five

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# WHEN ARTISTS GIVE

**T**alent, relief items, information, among others, those are some of the ways artists have given. Unlike last year, which had various creatives looking to sensitize the public, many turned to ways other than their talents to give this year. We celebrate this because we realize the Corona virus has greatly affected the performing arts. Before exploring the other ways, they gave, how about a delve into a song by Northern Uganda's lyrical master, Ochan Walter alias Bush Boy?

True, the passionate singer released a coronavirus themed song to sensitize the region on the deadly virus. The Rhythm and Blues (R&B) song titled Coronavirus is laced with urban slung that the youth relate to.

The choice of words is deliberate and cuts straight to the point. The singer starts the song with a strong call to caution. He goes on to emphasize just how pertinent it is to adhere to safety regulations. He urges all to stay united against Covid-19; prevention is better than cure; maintain social distance and quarantine; wash your hands.

The song reechoes some of the known symptoms of the virus which are dry cough and flu accompanied by high fever. He further advises people to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth, especially with unclean hands and encourages them to wear masks.

The artiste reminds all to buy and use effective sanitizers as well as practice good hygiene by washing hands with ordinary soap and water. He raps about nutrition; advises people to eat food rich in vitamins, and to drink lots of water.

In his second verse, Bush Boy cautions against being in overcrowded places and shaking hands while insisting that everyone wears a mask. Both rhythm and lyrics are catchy and easy to remember, with the chorus being a repetitive call for all to unite and fight the virus.

In both English and the local dialect, Luo, the star sings: United against Covid-19, prevention is better than cure, keeping social distance and quarantine. In Luo it goes:

Gund ngom ceke ube wa,  
wanenu piwange  
ciru acira uloyu keye akeya  
wabed ku wangwa yo pi  
Coronavirus

### The Artist and Food Donations

Good morning Uganda!  
The land of love and freedom  
Our love and labour we give  
And with neighbours all  
At our country's call  
In peace and friendship we will live  
Waoh  
What a great commission  
What a powerful call  
To love, to care, to share

The above poem is a glimpse into Lovidex's world of giving; a recitation of a stanza in the Uganda national anthem above, crowned off with a call to philanthropy.

Because of this, many call him Lovidex and not Bright Ntakky Arinaitwe, which is his real name. The artist explains that this poem was inspired by a Ugandan Covid-19 herbal remedy called Covidex.

He might be passionate about his visual arts and poetry, but philanthropy seems to be a calling he is embracing. Asked by the Daily Monitor newspaper what informed his philanthropy, Ntakky talked about his experience while battling the coronavirus.

**I didn't have anyone to prepare a meal for me or give me a glass of water.**

Being that I stayed alone in the compound, I promised myself that when I got fine, I would reach out to others who might be going through similar or worse, he told the Daily Monitor reporter on 3<sup>rd</sup>-August-2021.

<https://www.scoop.co.ug/202108/features/a-ride-of-hope-for-needy.html>

He said that tales of people struggling to get through the day made him want to do even more. So first, he sold some artwork and used the proceeds to buy relief food packages for the vulnerable.

“I have been writing and reciting poetry, which saw me perform before the President twice, author and publish two books, and I won an award for HIT best artist of the year,” he added.

Despite living in Sonde, in Mukono District, Lovidex told the Daily Monitor that he rides up to suburbs like Rubaga, Kansanga, Mulago, Kitukutwe, and other places to share with those in need.

He also said that one of the ways he chooses whom to reach out to is through recommendations from friends, family and, recently, his social media following. He has since taken to delivering much-needed drugs to various patients, including those living with HIV/AIDS.

Ntakky argues that even if the lockdown was lifted, there will always be people in need.

“So, we shall keep reaching out. I would love to invite everyone aboard, to pray, to love, to care, to share; one bite, one coin, one cloth and whatever you can. Who knows what smile we may widen in these uncertain times,” he adds.

#### More giving in the Arts world

Recently, online entertainment blog, Mbu Uganda, told of a 10<sup>th</sup>-August relief food donation by singer and Pastor Wilson Bugembe. Through his Nansana-based Worship House Church, he extended food aid to the less-privileged.

<https://mbu.ug/2021/08/10/pastor-wilson-bugembe-donates-foodstuffs-as-he-celebrates-birthday-photos/>

The pastor did this while celebrating his 37<sup>th</sup> birthday to remind him of how far he had come. He was joined by singers Spice Diana and Catherine Kusasira, with whom he shares the same birth date, to give out foodstuffs which included matooke, posho, sugar, soap, among other items.

#### Big Eye's Delivery

A week later, the same site told of a giving activity by controversial singer Ibrahim Mayanja, better known as Big Eye.

<https://mbu.ug/2021/08/18/big-eye-delivers-uma-donation-to-ghettos-in-bwaise/>

The foodstuff given to residents and musicians in the slums of Bwaise was an initiative of the singer and colleagues at the Uganda Musicians Association (UMA).

To ensure the food reached the targeted group, it was delivered to artist Mr. Wind's Love Square Camp, a space that often hosted ghetto youth. Mr. Wind ensured that the food was distributed equally, and no one was spotted complaining that they had not received the food support relief from UMA.

Among the delivered items were posho, beans, and sugar which were well packaged and presented to the recipients that eagerly awaited them.

#### Lilian's Generosity

A day before this story was published, the same site had news about singer Lilian Mbabazi's generosity.

<https://mbu.ug/2021/08/17/lilian-mbabazi-extends-foodstuff-support-to-residents-of-bwaise/>

Like Big Eye, she sought out the vulnerable population in Bwaise's slums and extended help in form of foodstuff. They reported that she donated to a gathering at an open playground with numerous people from different walks of life. She chose the venue to help observe the set SOPs.

#### Desire's Shared Birthday

“Giving a meal or helping someone in need on such a special day is the most fulfilling thing I have ever experienced. I thank God for the provision and as long as I live, I hope to always do that and more by the Grace of God,” Desire Luzinda stated.

Despite being oceans away in the United States, the singer had decided to share her birthday with the less privileged children. Turns out that this kind gesture that happened on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August-2021, has been the norm since 2017, when she first decided to turn birthdays into an opportunity to give.

Last year, Desire celebrated it by giving to a few individuals in dire need.

“This year saw us back to uplift a children's orphanage in Lugunja,” she said. “This was done in partnership with Hair by Zziwa, who also gave the children a haircut.”



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