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Kampala, 23.06.2020

Dear Friends and Supporters,

My last update on the situation in Uganda was on 21. May, just one month ago. The situation for the majority of people is still tough because of the restrictions: there is still lock down, but a bit relaxed; private cars, buses and minibuses are allowed to operate with less people, some more shops and restaurants are open. But there is still curfew from 7pm to 6.30am, and so many people have no chance to earn money in their small businesses. The number of hungry people is very high, children are malnourished, and especially sick people and pregnant women have huge problems. All schools, universities and institutes are still closed – since more than three months. And there is not yet a plan how to continue. There is a possibility for online learning materials and radio schooling, but not many people have access to internet or radio. The government has promised to distribute 10 million of radios and 137,466 solar TV sets beginning of June to enable audio and TV learning, but nothing has happened yet. Churches and mosques are still closed, no political or cultural gatherings. For all the border districts still the old nearly total travel restrictions are valid.

A. JRS Kampala:

We cannot re-open our English classes, the skills trainings and the child care center for the children. We are considering to distribute written materials for the skills trainings, but it is difficult to learn e.g. hair dressing from papers.

Our basic needs and psychosocial support program is running full speed, as you can imagine the situation in town. We have overcome the difficulties of the first weeks, when we were totally overrun by the huge numbers of hungry people. We started to give admission cards through the leaders of the different refugee communities, and this worked out very well. The leaders selected the most needy people and gave the cards. And these people could enter into our compound with all security measures in place. But it took long to explain to the hundreds without card, that there is now only this procedure. We had a very good support also through the Police and the LC1 of the local government, they were very much understanding the needs of the people.

All these weeks till last Friday we distributed admission cards in still high numbers, which we could manage because nearly all the team members were involved in the distribution. From 19th of May till 19th of June (last Friday) we served with food:

5.650 Households with 25.760 individuals. The costs were about 185,000 USD.

This is on average per day: 270 households with 1.230 Individuals.

World Food Program (WFP) started their support in Kampala only two weeks ago; this was at least 10 weeks too late and produced these huge problems we had. After these two weeks we have not yet seen any reduction in our figures. We hope we will see it next week, because we cannot continue the same way. One consequence is that by yesterday, Monday, we have started to distribute our admission cards only to the most vulnerable people, who have not yet received assistance.

In addition, we gave medical support to about 250 people, payed 3 months' rent for 15 families, distributed 60 non-food items and 2,500 face masks. And amidst all of this, 15 people received individual psychosocial counseling. These activities will continue for all in need, because the figures are not so high, and we still have some funds in those budget lines (except for the face masks).

The fashion and design instructor has organized 7 of her trainees to produce face masks in our classroom. They produce about 200 per day, which we distribute to our staff and to the refugees coming to our compound. And with a little incentive we support also these trainees.

With all our activities we have already by now overspent our budget for the whole year, and we are fighting desperately for new funds. We have spent the money because the people are hungry and in dire need now! But I trust, that in such a need we will find more supporters! And thanks be to God, we already found some! If you have new funding ideas for us, please let me know.

B. Adjumani:

The project in Adjumani is already since some weeks in full operation. We had to change our activities, because all the schools are still closed and all the trainings for teachers, catechists, community and religious leaders and peace facilitators are still suspended. I will give some short information about the different sectors:

EDUCATION SECTOR

JRS sponsored and organized in Adjumani district radio lessons for both Primary and Secondary Schools. Over 95,000 students (63,000 host community, 32,000 refugees) from 168 primary schools and 12,000 students (7,000 host community, 5,000 refugees) from 21 secondary schools are benefiting from these radio lessons. We also printed and distributed self-learning materials for 21 secondary schools. 12,000 students (7,000 host community, 5,000 refugees) received the materials (approx. 11,000USD).

In preparation for re-opening of the schools, JRS is planning to provide thermometers, detergents and PPEs for all 21 secondary schools targeting 12,000 students and 200 teachers. We are intending to construct hand-washing facilities in secondary schools and installation of water tanks for the neediest schools.

We also are planning to train at least 200 teachers in infection prevention, control measures and risk communications combating COVID-19 in collaboration with the District Health Office (DHO), and District Education Office (DEO), OPM and UNHCR.

The training will also include Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS), Child Protection, school management training.

In spite of all restrictions we were able to construct classrooms, administration block and library in Nyumanzi and Pagirinya Secondary Schools.

HEALTH SECTOR

JRS is advocating with and supporting the government for the inclusion of refugees in national COVID-19 preparedness and response plans by closely working with the district COVID-19 task force, UNHCR and OPM. We have already distributed personal protective equipment (PPE) for health staff (surgical masks, N95 masks, gowns and gloves), disinfectants, soap. We handed over items worth about 12,000 USD to 46 health centers. In addition, we also started the donation of 39 hand-washing facilities to be placed in markets and public areas.

JRS is intending to support the training of health workers in health facilities as well as community health workers on coronavirus preparedness and response. Plan is under way to train health care workers in refugee settlements to equip them with knowledge and skills in surveillance for COVID-19, case management, contact tracing, and infection prevention and control in collaboration with the district task force. We are also intending to increase the number of hand washing stations at collective shelters, reception and transit centers and other gathering points.

PROTECTION SECTOR

Community Sensitization on public health through radio talk show: JRS works closely with OPM Radio Usalama to educate and sensitize refugee and host communities on public health. Refugees, host community, and health workers within the settlements are receiving the key coronavirus messages on how the virus spreads, how people can protect themselves, and how to identify symptoms through radio talk shows. We also sensitize through leaflets, posters, and public address system.

Psychosocial support through Radio Therapy: JRS is helping refugees, children and the community to cope with their emotional and psychosocial distress during COVID-19 related to quarantining and potential loss of livelihoods. We are also targeting individuals who have experienced Sexual Gender Based Violence, children facing abuse and violence. Additional free telephone helplines are already in place and frequently used.

Child Protection Talk Show: The overall objective of Child Protection radio talk show is to help conflict-affected and vulnerable children through effective interventions in the following areas:

- Awareness raising on physical, emotional and sexual abuse of children.
- The role & responsibility of parents, religious leaders, and the community at large in child safeguarding during COVID-19 lockdown.
- Advocacy against all forms of discrimination; preventing and responding to abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation; ensuring immediate access to appropriate services; and ensuring durable solutions in the best interests of the child, legal procedures.

- Children at risk, including separated and unaccompanied children, children with disabilities and child survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)
- Raising awareness among professionals on child safeguarding.

Pastoral Care: The overall objective of pastoral care radio ministry is to provide listeners an opportunity to interact with God during the lockdown. We provide the following services through radio:

- Celebration of Prayer Services/Mass
- Youth program
- Family and married couples program
- Kids program
- Catechesis

Peacebuilding and reconciliation: Under COVID-19 crisis, we have observed that the number of cases of violence has increased within the settlements. A Radio Talks show (Talks Show: *Nothing but Truth, Justice, Mercy and Peace*) has been developed and is already on air with the following aims:

- Create awareness on the effects of COVID-19 on human behavior
- Address the increase of violence among the youth and the families during COVID
- Reinforce peacebuilding for the mitigation of conflicts during COVID
- Provide knowledge on reconciliation
- Empower youth and religious leaders through their participation
- Support the District task force

New Development

Yesterday, Monday evening, the President addressed the nation about the situation in Uganda. There are some small changes, like 4 instead of 3 people allowed in a private car or less travel restrictions in some border districts. But all the other restrictions stay in place: for example curfew continued, schools and universities, churches and mosques closed. There are 774 infected people, but already 631 healed and discharged. Nobody has died of Corona. But he said, that now we have the dangerous situation, that people can be infected within the communities, and therefore the strict measures to stop the spreading of the virus, are still needed.

So, we will face the same big challenges for the next weeks, in Kampala and Adjumani. We are very grateful to all our donors and supporters, who make it possible for us, to continue our service and have such a big impact in these difficult times. And we would be happy to do even more. The JRS Uganda team is in good mood, driven by our mission: to serve, advocate and accompany the displaced people in need, and I as the country director appreciate their dedication and selfless service very much.

Thank you again for being with us and kind regards from Kampala!

Fr. Guido Pappas