



Annual Report 2020

The Corona pandemic and hunger

Shortly after my return at the end of February, the Kenyan government ordered strict measures against the spreading of Covid-19. As in most third world countries, the poor suffered most from the long lockdown and its consequences.

Almost overnight, most slum dwellers no longer had any day jobs. Nobody needed housekeeping help anymore, many stores had to close down, and vendors lost their occasional work. Construction sites were brought to a standstill and unskilled workers were not even able to work occasionally for a meagre wage. Even large companies sent their employees home, usually without any further pay.

All schools and universities were closed for an indefinite period of time and did not reopen until the beginning of November, albeit on a very reduced scale.

The children in the Kibera slum had to stay in their huts without toys, books or anything to do. And worst of all, most of them were hungry! Their parents or caregivers did not know how to buy food and pay the rent of their huts without any daily income.

Our Kenyan co-worker Jackline was in Kibera every day, and she told us about the suffering of the people. Many of our (former) students wrote emails telling us about their desperate situation: no work, no income, no food, and reports of landlords (i.e. hut owners) who wanted to chase people out of their huts because people could no longer pay their rents.

At a very early stage, we started to support our young students and their dependents and many families in the slum with financial help for food. Jackline spent long days in the huts of the poorest and gave them money in the amount of about CHF 50.00 each, which was enough for at least one month to buy the basic foodstuffs (unga = maize flour, beans and rice).

At the beginning of July, Jackline informed us that small groups of a maximum of 10 people were now allowed to gather again, but that the schools were still closed. Immediately, we instructed her to form groups of children and to ask teachers as well as our suitable students and electricians if they could teach these children.

The interest and the enthusiasm were huge, and soon there were centres in 8 slum villages with 5 teachers each; each taught 2 groups of 10 children, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. All of them received lunch that was cooked together. It is vital that all children receive one nutritious, substantial meal every day. Otherwise, they are not able to learn and study.

Many other hungry children were also provided with a little bowl filled with the popular rice and cabbage dish.

In the countryside, there were also several (prospective) teachers whose training we made possible and who were more than happy to form and teach the permitted groups. They also cooked lunch together with the children and reported extensively on a weekly basis (photo above right).

As a former teacher, I became and still am active: I am taking a lot of time to provide the teachers with practical ideas for teaching through play – without books, blackboard and specific school materials. I comment weekly on their experiences and give suggestions, which they greatly appreciate.

The kids were given plasticine and coloured pencils, cardboard, yarn, and more. Finally, they were given the opportunity to show their full creativity! There was also a lot of singing and dancing (video on website).

The success of creative teaching, which was new to everyone, was quickly visible and is still continuing: The teachers can see and feel the joy and enthusiasm of the children, and they have a lot of fun teaching. In their weekly reports, they describe concrete learning sequences and successes. They explain that the children are much more active thanks to the new, freer teaching style and that they come to class every day with enormous enthusiasm – even during heavy rains!

Since September, 25 children have been allowed per group. We are now teaching about 2,000 children in 8 centres and are able to feed another 1,000.

Everyone is happy about our programme because it helps them enormously: children and teachers receive food and have a joyful occupation, parents are grateful for the free offer and meals for their children, and teachers get a weekly salary and can feed their families and pay their rents. Unfortunately, there is no comparable offer in the huge slum, which is very disappointing.

We plan to run the improvised primary school centres until the end of November. In January 2021, the schools are supposed to reopen their gates.



Thanks to many large and small donations, we were able to build up reserves in recent years. Now, we were very happy to be able to draw on these reserves. We were able to provide a lot of emergency relief and to run a lively and successful programme for primary school children for months. This was mainly possible thanks to the tireless efforts and organizational skills of our staff member Jackline, the experienced supervisors, the enormous commitment of the teachers and the enthusiasm of the children and their caregivers. And, of course, thanks to your great support!

Time and again the reports state how grateful everybody is and that I am to wish the CHaCHaCHI Family good health and express their deep gratitude. God bless you all!

Check out our website for more information: www.chachachi.org

We are still passing on 100% of all your donations to the children and young people in Kenya.

In November 2020

Heidi Brenner, Managing Director