



SHULE FOUNDATION

COVID-19 Pandemic Report 2020



Good things are coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda for street-connected children.”

– Shule Foundation

MISSION

Shule Foundation works to move children off the streets, reunite them with their families and get them back into the classroom.

VISION

To equip vulnerable children with the numeracy, literacy and wider skills they need to realize their potential and grow into responsible citizens of society.



SHULE FOUNDATION'S CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC RESPONSE

On March 21, 2020, Uganda registered its first case of coronavirus virus. As the government began implementing directives (social distancing, closing of shops, etc.) to combat the spread of the virus, the ability for street-connected children to make a living began to dwindle – leaving them unable to purchase something to eat. Going days without eating, the kids began to lash out at each other, and in several cases wounded other boys.

Shule Foundation could not sit idly by and do nothing. The following is a timeline of our coronavirus pandemic response.

MARCH 24-30, 2020: SHULE DISTRIBUTES FOOD IN KISENYI SLUM

The Shule team cooked and distributed food at our skills training center in Kisenyi Slum. We implemented government safety guidelines, such as limiting the number of children allowed in at once, maintaining social distancing measures, taking temperatures, and making sure the kids sanitized their hands upon entering and leaving.

As the days passed, local authorities began to brutally attack homeless children, scared and tired of the abuse the kids dispersed to nearby slums. With children now scattered, we decided to bring the food to them. Packed in plastic bags, the Shule team distributed meals on foot – increasing the total number of meals served from 130 to 220 per day.

MARCH 28, 2020: SHULE SEEKS PERMISSION TO FEED CHILDREN LEGALLY

It is illegal to feed street children in Uganda; many believe this is what brings and keeps kids living on the streets. And under the president's directive, anyone caught handing out food would be arrested and charged with attempted murder. As kids began to starve, we had to do something. Our objective became to get permission to feed the homeless children for the duration of lockdown legally.

Jacqueline contacted Dr. Richard Walyomo, Head of Surveillance for COVID-19 Task Force for Kampala Capital City Authority.

Understanding the concerns and impact if the children were left to fend for themselves, Dr. Walyomo connected with Charles Sserunjogi, Mayor of Central Division Kampala, who was willing to listen to Shule's concerns and interventions. Jacqueline asked for two considerations:

1. Allow Shule to feed the homeless children; and
2. Identify a place where Shule could quarantine the children until the lockdown ended.



Under the protection of the mayor, Shule was allowed to continue feeding until a better intervention could be put in place.

MARCH 31, 2020: SHULE CONVERTS ITS SKILLS TRAINING CENTER INTO A QUARANTINE CENTER

Children began showing up looking for refuge. Unable to turn them away, we converted our skills training center into a quarantine center. Children had to commit to staying at the center throughout the countrywide lockdown. Those expressing interest in going home were guaranteed to be resettled once transport resumed.



APRIL 1, 2020: PERMISSIONS GRANTED

KCCA granted permission for Shule to legally feed homeless children living in Kisenyi Slum, while the government took up the search for a quarantine center for street kids.

APRIL 2, 2020: SHULE BEGINS PUBLIC FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Our first public food distribution took place outside a community center in the slum, run by local leaders, with proper safety measures in place. The feeding program was a huge success, proving to KCCA we are equipped to manage such an initiative while working within the guidelines handed down by the president of Uganda. Public feeding continued for 10 days. Shule also handed out an additional 100-150 meals to children residing in other slums.



APRIL 10, 2020: QUARANTINE SITE IS ESTABLISHED – FIRST ATTEMPT.

Mayor Sserunjogi, KCCA and several Uganda-based organizations attempted to move 200 children into Nakivubo Blue Primary School, located in the center of Kampala, without the Shule team. However, without the familiar and trusted presence of "Auntie Jackie," the kids threatened to leave – so Jacqueline was escorted to the school to put the children at ease.

Unfortunately, the task force's first attempt failed. They lacked the necessary items to properly care for the children – mattresses, plates, food, cups, sporting equipment, games, etc. The children were fed and released until the task force was better prepared.



APRIL 12, 2020: QUARANTINE SITE IS ESTABLISHED – SECOND ATTEMPT.

On Easter Sunday, which coincidentally coincided with International Day for Street Children, Shule Foundation in partnership with the Mayor, KCCA and other NGOs, successfully moved 200 kids into the school to wait out the remaining days of the lockdown.

APRIL 13 - MAY 18, 2020: LIFE AT THE QUARANTINE CENTER

Uganda is a country where street-connected children's rights are often violated. Throughout the lockdown, Shule remained involved at the quarantine center to monitor



the wellbeing of the children. Our role at the center was to counsel and interact with the boys and engage them in extra-curricular activities such as chess, card games and other creative activities.

MAY 4-7, 2020: YOUNGER CHILDREN RELOCATED TO REGISTERED HOMES

With a total of 180 children remaining at the quarantine center, all children under 15 were relocated to registered homes, with the intent of resettling those who wanted to go back to their families and the rest would remain in their respective houses for the time being. Those 15 and older remained at the center.

A rumor began circulating that the boys left behind would be transferred to Kampiringisa – Child Prison, located in Mpigi district. With kids considering a return to the streets, stepped in to reassure the youth that nobody would be taken to prison. Thankfully the boys trusted us enough all stayed.

MAY 18, 2020: OLDER CHILDREN RELOCATED TO AN EDUCATIONAL CENTER.

The remaining 62 children were moved to Uganda Children Center, a technical and vocational school. The boys who stay will be enrolled in vocational training for free once schools reopen.

MAY 20, 2020: SHULE ENDS ON-FOOT FEEDING PROGRAM

As Kampala began to reopen slowly, Shule ended the on-foot feeding program and decided to focus on the kids who remained in quarantine at the center.



MAY 29, 2020: SHULE RESUMES RESETTLEMENT

Having assessed the boys throughout quarantine, Shule began taking those who were ready and willing to go home — opening up space for new kids to get off the streets.



CHALLENGES

- The Minister of Gender, who is responsible for the wellbeing of all children within Uganda, did her best to put a stop to our intervention efforts — preferring instead to round-up and incarcerate street-connected children. Fortunately, her efforts failed.
- To date, approximately 33% of the children at the quarantine center have returned to the streets for various reasons.
- Contributions collected to be used to quarantine more children or sustain the children remaining in the program went unaccounted for.
- A lack of data on the number of children living on the streets in Kampala, resulting in many children being left out of the quarantine center.



OUR IMPACT

Since March 21, 2020, Shule has:

- distributed more than 10,000 meals to children living on the streets of Central Kampala;
- taken the temperature of every child we interacted with;
- sanitized countless hands;
- quarantined 200 boys;
- resettled 10 children back with their families;
- sponsored two entrepreneurial endeavors for resettled children
- engaged 13 quarantined children in tree planting on Shule's farm, resulting in more than 1,500 Eucalyptus seedlings being put in the ground.

Throughout the lockdown, the kids received counseling and participated in various educational activities. Shule also purchased computers and launched our Computer Program, teaching boys basic computer skills.

A NEW NORMAL

As the country reopens and adapts to our new normal, Shule is making adjustments to our regular programs to meet the guidelines implemented by the Ministry of Health of Uganda.

We continue to provide emergency medical care and quarantine small groups of boys for an extended period of time, and we are resettling those who are ready to return home.

We will resume our feeding and showering programs. And, through our outreaches, we continue to educate street-connected children on the importance of social distancing and how they can best protect themselves from contracting COVID-19.

For the boys in Shule's Sponsorship Program, we have hired individual tutors to keep up with their studies as schools remain closed. The boys' goal is to be promoted to the next grade when they return to the classroom in 2021.

HOW CAN YOU HELP? Your support will help our team continue these essential programs, provide critical safety measures throughout the pandemic, and ensure the street-connected children of Kampala have access to regular meals, personal hygiene, education — and ultimately, the opportunity to leave street life behind.

Visit www.shulefoundation.org/donate today to support our work.



