

UPDATE

MIFUMI PRIMARY SCHOOL, UGANDA

Babies born this year may be called Corona or Sanitizer

Did you know that we in Africa have a way of marking significant events that occur in the world by naming our children after the event? For instance, I have a cousin who was born in 1966 when Uganda had its last major earthquake. And what is he called? You're right he is called earthquake or Musisi in my vernacular.

In Zimbabwe in the time leading up to independence, the children born were named in a way which illustrated the moment of celebration. And it is seen not least in the names they give their children "Happiness, Prosperity, Fortune, Joy, and even Ceasefire.

Not many of you may not be aware of the earthquake in Uganda in the 60s or of the story of the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe, but more recently and still currently affecting us is the Corona virus COVID-19 pandemic. This is a major pandemic affecting the whole world and it has forced us into a new way of life and introduced a whole new vocabulary of its own.

Therefore, it shouldn't come off surprised that people have started naming the children in order to reflect the significance of and commemorate this period. First names are now in tandem with the epidemic (and are being used all over Africa). Thus, it has been

reported that the Luo council of elders, (who live near Mifumi in neighbouring Kenya) have also released new names to be used for babies born at this time of the year. This is in tandem with the customs, traditions and culture of naming children after major events in life. Here are some of the names:

- Corona Atieno
- Self-Quarantine Adhiambo
- Isolation Ochieng
- China Apondi
- Sanitizer Jaber
- Indoors Soko
- Handwash Olwete
- Covid Anyango
- Locusts Amollo
- Wuhan Adhiambo

A Day in the Life of a Ugandan Village Girl:

In a small town of Tororo district, lies a beautiful village with breath taking scenery of natural wild vegetation cover. The sight is captivating with lots of fresh air and you can enjoy the natural way of life in full resting. There is almost nothing artificial in these areas and the place looks divine, mysterious and satisfying during the slower pace of the day.

Catherine lives with her five siblings in this village, where they spend most of their time farming. They grow cereals, vegetables and food crops like millet. The area is highly traditionalized with spoken language being Dhopadhola.

Catherine and her siblings wake up an hour after their parents every morning, before the sun is out. Electricity is not in the hut, but small strands of pre-dawn rays slip through the cracks on the walls and offer just enough light. She washes her face and brushes her teeth using a chewed stick and ash or salt before joining her parents in the garden.

As all schools are still closed, save for the candidate classes, Catherine shadows her mother in cooking and taking care of her siblings, the sick and the elderly. The houses are built near each other to maintain respect, peace and harmony. She fetches water from village wells down the road; it takes an hour to fill six 5-gallon buckets of water.

Firewood collected from the nearby bushes is for cooking and grass used to light up the wood in the stones called "kendo". Catherine collects firewood with her young sisters. Lunch is at 1.00pm sharp, and her young brothers wash the utensils thereafter.

Catherine and her friends play afternoon games i.e. dodge the ball, skipping etc. By 5pm, playtime ends so they take their baths behind the hut. Preparation for the evening meal begins. They normally prepare millet bread called 'konekale' and meat or silver fish for dinner at 8pm. They tell stories up 9:30pm, say prayers and go to bed. Catherine and her sisters sleep on a mat on the other side of the hut.

Happy To Be In School Again: A Ugandan Child's Tale

Ugandan school children in candidate classes; Primary Seven, Form Four, Six and finalists at tertiary institutions returned to school on Thursday 15th of October, after being home for close to six months due to the 'lockdown' that was instituted to contain the spread of corona virus. For some, life has not been so rosy with the majority wishing to return to school.

We take pleasure in sharing with you different children's stories related to COVID-19.

Collins Othieno, 13 years

A Primary Seven pupil at Mifumi Primary School

I couldn't wait any longer to resume school! I was over the moon when I heard that candidate classes were resuming classes in October....it was indeed the best news ever, since the time when schools were closed due to the novel coronavirus.

While at home, life has not been easy for me and now that we are to resume classes, I can't wait to see my friends and teachers again! I greatly missed the lessons and fun we used to have while at school.... we were so happy back then and everything was moving on smoothly until the pandemic came!

I still vividly recall that day, when the head teacher called us to the assembly and told us we were going home because there was an outbreak of corona virus.

"Sickness comes and goes, but never had we ever experienced one that would bring the world to its knees by having schools closed. We were all so worried and at the same time.... restless because we thought we were all going to die!"

I hated staying at home because food was not always enough and we had only two meals and at worst, one meal a day. I was equally worried that schools may not re-open soon and that would mean staying home longer!

My typical day during the 'lock-down'

I would wake up at about 6am; wash my face and head straight to the garden with my mother and younger sister whom I live with. My mother is a widow and I have five siblings, four of whom are living with my elder brother in a neighbouring village.

In our garden we grow cassava, beans, soya peas, maize and millet. While in the garden, we dig till about 9am when the sun is out and scorching. While at home, I wash plates and sweep the house and compound, and then prepare lunch for my younger sister. We take turns in cooking with my mother,

who also has to fetch water and firewood.

My best moment is when I am playing football with my friends after having lunch. The game goes on till about 4pm when I retire home to revise the reading materials that were provided to us by MIFUMI. This is done till about 6 pm, when I join my mother in preparing supper at about 7pm before darkness sets.

What I loved most about the 'lockdown' was the time I spent playing football with my friends. Sometimes, we would just sit and relax while catching up with the latest news.

Due to our situation, I was forced to make chapattis to earn some money. Each day, I would make about 21 chapattis, which would earn me about 40 pence and this would be spent on scholastic materials and other personal items.

'I will enjoy staying at school because we do not have to do house chores that are so tiring and time consuming leaving no time for revision. The meals are also served on time and in plenty as compared to the ones at home. I want to devote the remaining times reading hard so that I excel in the forthcoming Primary Leaving Examinations that is due next year in March'.

"Let's help Collins achieve his dream of excelling in his forthcoming final examinations by supporting with scholastic materials". Donations can be made through Paypal www.paypal.com/gb/fundraiser/charity/3268943



Othieno Collins

Mifumi Primary School
Securing the basic right to education
C/o MIFUMI Uganda
Plot 1, Masaba Road
P. O. Box 274,
Tororo, Uganda
www.mifumi.org

Also find us on Facebook, Flickr, Twitter <http://www.youtube.com/user/theMifumiProject>