



Dear Donor,

Happy New Year! It is especially so as schools in Uganda reopened last week after the longest school shutdown of any country in the world! In returning to school, our students are among the lucky ones in Uganda where up to 1/3 of Ugandan schoolchildren will not return to school at all after the prolonged lockdown and its divers downstream effects.

The effects of COVID-19 in Northern Uganda have been truly profound. The loss of jobs in the region has had far reaching economic implications for our students and their families. Schools have been shuttered for over two years. Teachers went unpaid. Students who depended on school lunch for their daily meal went without. Virtual/online education was impossible for students in Northern Uganda and thus, most have spent the past two years at home in their villages with no education whatsoever.

With schools closed for so long many students in Uganda will never return to school. Teenage pregnancy rates have climbed in Northern Uganda where young students, who would have otherwise been away at school, have fallen into difficult situations and forced young marriages. Other students have returned to subsistence farming as a way of life and abandoned education. If you'd like to know more about Uganda's school shutdown and its far-reaching effects, please have a look at this recent feature from CNN:

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/10/africa/uganda-reopens-schools-covid-intl/index.html>

To combat the myriad negative effects of school shutdowns, The Child is Innocent has implemented a number of programs over the past two years to support the 106 students in our care: Our staff and peer mentors have visited regularly with the students in their home villages to provide guidance and encouragement through this challenging time. We have implemented food relief programs for our students and their families as food insecurity has increased. Our most recent food relief program distributed cornmeal, rice, beans, soap, salt and chickens to all 106 families of our TCII students throughout Northern Uganda.



John Odoch, a member of our staff Helping with food distribution.



Our students at Hope Academy arriving to collect the food distribution this past December.



The Child is Innocent has continued to pay our teachers and teachers' aids from our nursery/primary school, Hope Academy, their full salary throughout the shutdown to mitigate the impact on our teachers' families.

With international travel to Uganda highly restricted, the US team was not able to travel to Gulu this January to run the annual leadership training program. In the face of this, something remarkable happened - the graduates of TCII, ages 25-30 years old, themselves prior sponsored students through our program, took the initiative to independently organize a leadership training program for their younger peers focused on health, adjusting to returning to school, career planning and peer mentorship. It was a huge success!



Students gathered a Gulu Primary School for the Leadership Training Organized by our graduates this month

Odoch Allan, one of our graduates, speaking to the students about his career as a Civil Engineer at the career panel our graduates organized

I am thrilled to confirm that schools are open and students have returned as of January 10th!

Thank you for all of your generous support and we are thrilled to return to our core mission in 2022 of providing exceptional educational opportunities and leadership training to children from Northern Uganda! As always if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions please email me at: kevschwartz@gmail.com

Kevin Schwartz

US Sponsorship Director