

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: MY EXPERIENCE

My name is Isaac. I live in Kasese District, Western Uganda. My village borders Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). I am 20 years old, and I was in my A' Level (S.6) vacation by the time the Covid-19 pandemic broke off. We are four children and I am the last born and the only Boy. My parents parted ways when I was in Senior Three. So, we were staying with my father.

Unfortunately, two years ago my father was arrested and jailed in Congo. To date, we don't know the reason for his arrest and imprisonment. With our mother away and father in jail, we had to take care of ourselves.

When we started hearing about COVID-19, we didn't care much because it all seemed like some dream far away. Soon, we started hearing stories of people suffering and dying. I was scared. I imagined how life would be if the virus reached Uganda. The biggest question on my mind was 'if people in developed countries were dying, who would save us in Uganda?'

In no time, the disease was nearer to us. We heard of cases in neighboring Kenya, which is a stone's throw away. To make the matter worse, we have relatives living in Kenya. Now, this was neither a dream nor a bad joke. I could not settle down as we were terribly scared.

When the nationwide lockdown was announced by the President on 18th March 2020 to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, I knew it was bad news. Everything and everyone was stopped except essential staff like health workers. Days, weeks and months passed and there was no change. The people dying from this new virus continued to grow by each hour.

In Uganda, schools and places of worship were closed. They are still closed even today. Every day I prayed to hope that one day the sun will rise and schools will be opened. This is because in my village the situation was getting from worse to worst by each passing day.

Young girls of my age were getting pregnant and others married off by their parents because of poverty. Presently, many parents are not working. Some lost their jobs and for others, their businesses collapsed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result, many parents are failing to provide for their families. Many parents who were involved in border trade are just seated at home not engaged in any other income activity as the border is still closed.

In our own case, life became hard. Some days, we went without food. My Sisters just gave up trying for fear of contracting COVID-19 or getting arrested for violating the health guidelines. We were left to fate. I cried endlessly remembering how much our parents used to take care of us when they were together.

With time, I lost hopes about joining the Higher Institution of Learning (University). As the only boy, I bore the brunt of looking for what to eat for myself and my Elders who were in most times not in position of getting Daily food for us all. I would sit at home and think of how we could get through this bad situation.

I started wondering why I was born only to be abandoned by my mother and my father imprisoned in a foreign country. Now, education was the only hope for the future but now all schools were closed. I continued to lose hopes.

Amidst all sorrows, I never gave up my faith in God. I continued praying to God for intervention in our lives. I prayed to God to protect our country Uganda.

Vaccination of a targeted number of people was also later activated. The major targets were the essential workers for example; teachers, Doctors and Nurses, Students and other population at large. This activity is still taking place even up-to-date and the government of Uganda is ably working out to execute the targeted number of people wholesomely.

Luckily enough, the Educational Programs of higher institutions of Learning Like Makerere University, Kyambogho and many other Universities also later resumed. We started Applying to institutions of our choices and in March 2020, we reported to our respective places of study however under strict observation of SOPs and new modules of Learning like ODEL system (E-Learning system).

I have encountered a lot of experiences during this Covid-19 Pandemic which I can't elaborate and make an End.

Therefore in my conclusion;

The coronavirus disease continues to spread across the world following a trajectory that is difficult to predict. We only have to stick to the available measures that the Ministry of Health put in place in order to ably control the Spread of this Infectious disease.

The health, humanitarian and socio-economic policies adopted by countries will determine the speed and strength of the recovery.

THE END