

From the Other Side of the Table (Appendix) ~Vol.34~

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To all of you participating at TABLE FOR TWO(TFT) programs:

Thank you for all your warm support to TFT programs!

TFT activities are two-fold: promoting healthy diet habits in Japan and supporting school meal programs abroad. Through this newsletter "The other Side of the Table," we would like to share with you our activities abroad and unique activities made by participating organizations of TFT programs in Japan.

It is our wish that you enjoy and keep supporting our activities. We welcome your comments and opinions so we can improve our programs further.

Activities in the countries where COVID-19 infections are expanding

The effects of new Coronavirus infectious disease has been spreading in TFT supporting countries. In East Africa, Tanzania reopened schools as early as June, while schools remain closed in Kenya and Rwanda at the end of August. Online distance learning was introduced by the government in those countries but having access to internet access and therefore to online classes is not always easy, especially for rural homes in areas without electricity or economically disadvantaged families.

TFT explored ways to continue school meal programs by assessing on the ground situation of each country by consulting and coordinating with local organizations. In some areas, the food prices had increased and more people became unemployed, thus negatively affecting those our supporting communities. Under these circumstances, we strongly feel the importance of maintaining meal and nutritional supports, more than ever.

(Based on information at the end of August 2020)

About our fundraising and awareness building activities

<Donations dated till date>

Total 7,7376,905 meals (At the end of July, 2020)

Support for school meals, and horticulture and agriculture projects in five countries in East Africa and Asia. (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and the Philippines)

<Onigiri Action 2020>

This year again we are organizing "Onigiri Action 2020" on October 16th, commemorating the World Food Day.

The event is a social action that each photo of Onigiri posted, five school meals are donated to the children in Africa and Asia. We started this initiative to change the world through Washoku. This is the 6th year. So far, we could provided 4.5million meals.

Event is on from October 1st (Thursday)~ 31st (Saturday). We look forwarding your participation.

Event site : <https://onigiri-action.com>

Check out our Facebook



www.facebook.com/tft.jp/

Expanding COVID-19 in Africa



Above : Vegetables in school garden are glowing well.
Right : Taking a mask off when eating.



In early August, the number of new infections with COVID19 reached 1.1 million in Africa. While the infection rates in South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya have been declining in late August, countries such as Rwanda and Ethiopia, the number of infections are increasing. In those countries, the spread of infections from capital or large cities to rural areas where medical systems are weak is a serious concern.

Tourism and hospitality industries are important sectors for earning foreign currencies in East African countries. However, hotels and tour companies were seriously affected by the spread of coronavirus. Tanzania reopened its international borders in middle of May. Kenya and Rwanda opened their international borders on August 1st. Restrictions of movements between the cities were also relaxed at the same day in those countries.

Tanzania opened schools while schools in Kenya and Rwanda continue to be closed

Tanzania and Zanzibar reopened their schools in June. Kenya and Rwanda are assessing the situation and waiting for the spread of COVID 19 to subside before opening their schools.

Education ministries of Kenya and Rwanda encourage distance learnings via online, TV or radio. But it is not easy for children in rural communities to receive distance lessons because of no or poor internet coverage or families do not have TVs or computers. Many children stay homes alone while parents and guardians are out working during daytime. Also, school closures mean children can not be benefitted school feeding programs. There are concerns about health and mental cares of those children. We, TFT continue assessing local situations, provide school meals where schools are reopened. In countries schools remain closed, TFT provide food packages to supporting families so children can get necessary nutritional support from the program.



Distribution of food material

Continue to Provide Nutritional Porridge in Rwanda

At Banda village in Rwanda, TFT continue to support kindergarten children even their schools are closed. 557 children receive food packages for Igikoma, the local porridge. Igikoma is made of the mixture of maize, soy and sorghum flours and has high nutritional values. In the village, the number of children with malnutrition was 46 in May. In July, 24 more children were identified as malnutrition, bringing the total number to 70. Economic damages caused by COVID 19 are negatively affecting some families that some children may not get enough and necessary nutrition at home.



Lunch is provided after work in the school yard

Rwandan government announced a plan to reduce the number of students in each class as one of the measures to prevent COVID 19 infection at school.

Since existing number of classrooms are not enough, communities including students are engaging in the construction of class rooms. Students come to schools to work in shift and help construction. TFT provides porridge or lunch to students who attend the work in the schools.



A mother receives a food package for Igikoma

Hoping for earliest reopening of schools

Long lasting school closures are negatively affecting children in Banda village. Rwanda government promotes distance learning to substitute for classes at schools. But getting access for online lessons are not easy in Banda villages since the electricity has not reached to the village. Many homes do not have TVs or radios, let alone computers. Even some homes that have radios, they need to buy batteries but their priority is to spend limited money to buy food not the batteries.

A school teacher at the village feels that it is difficult for students to learn alone while their parents or family are out for work and without any disciplines they get in the school. Distance learnings in the remote village have too many challenges. This is not only in Rwanda. International organizations alert that the domestic violence cases have been on a rise since lockdown started. Teachers and people in the Banda village are hoping for days when students can safely learn in schools will come sooner.



Wearing mask is a must in the kitchen

Kenya : Some voices against school closures till 2021



Students submitting their homework to their teacher

As the number of COVID 19 infections increases, in July, the Ministry of Education in Kenya announced the cancellation of school year of 2020. All the students will repeat the same year in January 2021. National examinations for primary and secondary schools, normally conducted in every November will also be postponed. The Education Minister explained that the reason of this decision is based on the safety of students are considered as priority. But he said the reopening of school in January 2021 is not the final decision. If the infection curb is flattened for 14 days continuously, the reopening of schools will be considered again.

There are opposing voices against the decision of prolonged school closures. In August, representatives of parents filed a law suits against the Ministry's decision arguing that schools closures are violating the children's rights to learn. In addition, some politicians and international organizations called for early reopening of schools. Since the number of infections of COVID 19 has been declining in Kenya from mid. August, people are paying attention on the news on reopening of schools.

Kenyan society, returning to normal

In Kenya, movement restrictions between the cities started in mid. March and ended in the end of July. There is no restrictions of domestic travel except night time curfew.

Still People have to wear masks and restaurants have to close early, and bars and drinking facilities remain closed.

Nevertheless, the streets in Nairobi are returning to pre-COVID days.

Public sanitation rules remain to be enforced. Public minibus, locally called Matatu, can only carry 8 passengers even though the bus has 14 seats. As shopping malls and restaurants, and even at the National parks, temperatures were taken and people must wash their hands.

Masks are available at shops and on the streets of Nairobi. There are masks with Kenyan flags or some restaurant staff wear masks with the restaurants' logos. Now, the masks are becoming a part of fashion among fashion conscious Kenyans.



A mother and daughter washing hands from the bucket water