



Sight4Bwindi Newsletter #5 – Autumn 2020

October 2020 - we should have been in Bwindi! We were so looking forward to seeing the Eye Clinic first hand. But alas, as with so many plans this year, the global pandemic has forced us to postpone.

What does life in Bwindi look like now? Well, Uganda opted for a complete lockdown back in April; not only to prevent the spread of Covid-19, but to allow more time to prepare. For 2 months there was no public transport (not even motor cycles); businesses were forced to shut; the airport shut; people were not allowed out. Lockdown was strict and enforced.



However, it soon became clear that the number of people dying from Covid-19 were being dwarfed by the numbers who were dying as a result of the restrictions. Because, for many Ugandans, if they don't work, they don't eat. The Government was forced to ease sanctions to allow people to move about again, albeit with caution.

Obviously, the number of patients being seen at Bwindi Community Hospital has dropped dramatically, especially as Out Reach Services (a vital life-line to remote communities) had to stop. Accurate numbers of those with Covid-19 remain impossible because there is little or no testing. BCH have confirmed 4 cases (which were referred to the Government designated Covid-19 facility in Kabale) and one death in the community – but these figures could simply represent the tip of the iceberg?



Like so many countries, Uganda is emerging cautiously from lockdown. Entebbe airport has re-opened and those who test Covid-negative, are free to travel. Pedson, our Ophthalmic Assistant, has returned to College to continue his training; during lockdown he gained valuable experience working with Alex, our qualified Ophthalmic Nurse, at the Eye Clinic.

Living with Covid-19 is the new reality for us all. At BCH, staff are required to wear masks at all times; patients are screened at the gates where their temperature is taken. The Eye Clinic is open, but business is far from usual. Patient numbers are low but starting to creep up; however, the situation is fragile. Thankfully, the Eye Clinic is well equipped and well run. Roll-on a safe and brighter future for everyone.

Enormous thanks to everyone. Your support is more important than ever during these challenging times!
from Fiona, Kirsty, Rosemary and Debbie

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