

St. Nicholas Children's Centre Kemondo (NCKK)
Bukoba Catholic Diocese
Stefanie Köster, Directress



P.O. Box 1777
Bukoba, Tanzania

Phone: +255 756 751 605
E-Mail: SEKoester@t-online.de
Webseite: www.nikolaushaus.com



*The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world
And that which contains all things
Understands what is said, Alleluia. (Wisdom 1:7)*

Pentecost 2020

Dear Friends and Supporters of St. Nicholas!

50 days have passed since my Easter Greetings. What is new at St. Nicholas? How badly has the Corona-Pandemic affected the people in Tanzania? I presume that you do not hear much about Africa on the news. So far we are fine at St. Nicholas. Our children have been in isolation on our compound for the past two and a half months. The kids have tolerated this much better than I had expected. The Tanzanian government announced that universities and vocational training schools for young adults will open June 1st. We are guessing that primary and secondary schools will reopen in July. But not one of our kids is missing school. They have plenty of play mates and enjoy free play time over studying hard! Five youngsters from our house are supposed to graduate from school this year. However, we do not know if their final exams will take place on the originally scheduled dates or if they will be postponed.



From the closing of the schools in Mid-March until Easter our kids were supposed to study on their own which of course did not happen. After Easter we hired a school teacher who comes to our house Mondays to Fridays and is homeschooling our kids in three age groups. This does not substitute going to school but it is better than not studying at all.

Some schools are sending homework per phone that I have to print out and distribute. We also set up TV reception (which we did not have before) so that the children can watch the Tanzanian education program. Naturally they are quick to change the channel as soon as no one watches them. Those of you who have kids at home might relate to this.



In general, daily life in Tanzania continues without major restrictions. We never had a lockdown which is good in a society where life is lived outside and most people are self-employed as farmers, workmen or they have small scale businesses. People depend on daily income and they neither have money saved, nor food

stored. Some African countries ordered lockdowns and the people suffered more from the lack of income than from the pandemic itself. Tanzania states to have about 500 people infected with Covid-19 and 21 confirmed deaths. The actual numbers must be much higher. Testing is only done in Dar es Salaam, the biggest city of the country. However, in our region of North-Western Tanzania I do not see sick people nor do I notice more people dying



than usual. I wear a face mask when I need to go out and I keep a distance to people but I do not see people trying to keep any distance to each other. "Balakoa" – Masks are only mandatory when entering public offices and institutions. At least we are all washing hands frequently.

We did lots of renovations in the past weeks. The walls are freshly painted, the floors are tiled, and minor repair work is done. Any house that withstands 44 children needs a fresh coat of paint and some reinforcement from time to time!



Maybe you have heard about the locust plague on the news. Our region is actually known for its locusts. After heavy rains the locusts come in big swarms. Our village of Kemondo has

contraptions to catch the locusts. People turn on strong lights at night to attract the insects. They catch them in big funnels made out of tin

roofing sheets that end in a barrel. The next morning locusts are being sold in bags right on the street. It is a local



delicacy! But the locusts that are invading our neighboring African countries and are destroying the crops are obviously different from the ones we eat.



Possibly

climate change contributes to weather conditions that allow the locusts to multiply and spread out of control.

Here in East Africa we experienced significant rain falls since November of last year.



The water level of Lake Victoria is at its highest since 50 years. Hotels and houses built too close to the lake are now flooded and many had to be demolished. The dry season is starting now in June and we are hoping for the lake water level to drop down again.



In the past years my two daughters and I have gone for a home visit to Germany in June. This is not possible this year due to the current travel restrictions. But we are still planning to move to Germany in August for the beginning of the new school year. Anita and Aisha (both 12) will go to a German high school. We have experienced these past months more intensely knowing that the time of our departure is getting



closer and at the same time having all the children home from school. The farewell will be very hard. But it is only a farewell for some time as we plan to return during school holidays and we will be in touch by phone and Internet. I will continue to support and advise the new leadership team from Germany.

Thank you so much for your faithful support! Wishing you happy Pentecost and an end of the pandemic!



Stefanie Köster, children and caregivers