



# *Singing Gorilla Projects* **DEALING WITH COVID-19 IN UGANDA**

## Sandra's update

In this article, Aleksandra Kamanyire, General Manager of Singing Gorilla Projects, gives a perspective of how the virus has affected the people, the businesses and the communities in both the cities and the villages of Uganda.



## Big changes

As it has across the world, COVID-19 has had a huge effect on the day-to-day lives of people in Uganda. While it has affected those in the cities more than the people who live in villages, the virus has still changed the lives of many people across the country.

## Businesses closed

As in many places around the world, essential businesses remained open in Uganda, such as food markets, grocery shops, banks, hospitals, pharmacies & clinics. However, all non-essential businesses were closed. Public transport was stopped, with only essential employees with an identity card or those in branded vehicles being allowed to travel. Both bicycles and motorcycles were allowed, but could only be used for deliveries or to travel to work. Public transport has since restarted, but the prices have doubled, as have the waiting times.

## Increasing poverty

Most of the people who have been affected are those in the cities, as that is where many people rent premises. This is particularly prevalent in hand-to-mouth businesses, who rely on short-term income to keep themselves afloat. Many small businesses have been forced to resume work as they rely on the money brought in, despite a drop in demand due to people cutting expenditures in these uncertain times. Some of these businesses are now barely making any profit.

## Changing work patterns

Many bigger companies have now implemented shift work for the employees that need to go in to work, while many others have instructed employees to work from home. Some employees of private universities, schools and similar institutions have moved out to the villages, or in with relatives as their salaries have been stopped.

## Housing crisis

Many people who were in the processes of building houses have had to move into half-finished houses to ensure they have somewhere to live. For those who had not started building work, they have had to construct one or two rooms in which to live in the short term.

In the villages, as most people grow their own food and live in their own huts (which they do not pay rent on), they have been less affected by the pandemic.

## Struggle for many

On a personal level, the pandemic has been a huge struggle for many in Uganda. Many people have lost their jobs and many businesses are struggling as people have changed their lifestyles to cut down expenditure, often through eating fewer meals or through buying lower quality ingredients. This has resulted in countless people struggling with depression, alongside problems with meals, jobs and housing. Due to the nature of the virus, most people are wary of engaging with others, creating a distance between people.

## Positives

However, there have been some positives. The people in Uganda have become more empathetic towards each other, as each person understands and is likely to have experienced some sort of lasting effect of the pandemic. Additionally, it has been a fantastic time for the children of Uganda, as they have been able to spend a lot of quality time with their parents, which they are not often able to do.

---

✉ [cread@singinggorillap.com](mailto:cread@singinggorillap.com)

☎ +44 (0)23 9282 2254  
+44 (0)79 6858 2327

