

# A Z B G C NEWS

AGNES ZABALI BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

| Living with COVID-19 in Kamengo | Editorial | Graduates | CRECS | From School Fees to Food Security | Fundraising 2020 |



“ We miss the community centre, we miss basketball, we miss using the computers, and we miss going to the library to read.

## HOW COVID-19 HAS CHANGED LIVES IN KAMENGO

*By Chris Mutebi, Project Coordinator*

Uganda has been on lock down since March 2020, and while some restrictions were eased, many remain in place. The measures taken have had adverse effects on the community.

Parents are accumulating debt as they try to buy essentials. Food supply is increasingly scarce and unaffordable as farmers struggle to transport their produce to the few markets that remain open. Despite the costly struggle, AZBGC strives to keep providing food, as much as possible.

15,000,000 students and 500,000 teachers are affected by school closures. Though the government suggests parents ensure their kids study through reading material, television, and radio, children are experiencing a lack of access to such educational resources. Due to the inability to provide necessities since the beginning of the lockdown, tensions in the home have risen, and the number of cases of child neglect, domestic violence, and gender-based violence have increased.

COVID-19 has affected AZBGC greatly. Business operations can no longer take place, and with closure of all project activities, fewer kids are coming to the community centre. The effects of the pandemic have doubled the work for staff, who now visit the kids' homes at the request of parents. We are working very hard in this time to make sure that AZBGC remains open and continues supporting the community. Your donations to the AZBGC emergency fund will help us provide food and basic hygiene products to children and families.



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## EDITORIAL

By Jimmy Sebulime

We began 2020 without our beloved friends Mzungu Joe Granata and Coach Miiró Martin. It was, and still is, very difficult to continue on without them but continue we must. The first item in 2020 was planning for the 13th annual CACHA Medical Camp. Volunteers from CACHA were, as always, compassionate, determined and outstanding teammates. There is always a great deal of excitement when the volunteers reach Kamengo, Uganda and this year was no different. CACHA works hand in hand with local Ugandan healthcare workers to provide free medical services to anyone that shows up. Needless to say, the patient line up was long as always. In addition to providing free medicine and creating short-term employment to some locals, lifetime friendships are formed. Check out the many ways CACHA serves vulnerable communities at [www.cacha.ca](http://www.cacha.ca)



Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the medical mission was cancelled on the 3rd day and all volunteers had to return home before international borders closed. Volunteers were so fortunate to get flights out of Uganda thanks to the hard-working staff at CACHA. The disappointment and sadness of the mission being cancelled was felt by everyone, especially the patients and hosting members at AZBGC and the local hospitals.

The past four months have been challenging at AZBGC. The young people in the project remain at home without the ability to go to school and are fearful, hungry and confused due to the strict measures put in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Despite the challenges, the pandemic has allowed the youth in the project to be creative and work on a few small projects on the ground like farming, planting trees, looking after animals and borrowing books from our library. We continue providing meals at the community centre, and are keeping the library, computer lab, recreational areas and women's resource centre open for basic services



The women's resource centre has to stay open because the situation that the majority of young girls and women in the project and the community face is often very challenging and difficult to bear even under normal circumstances. And sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic has created additional challenges for our community, including violence. Therefore, we are thankful to all those that are being creative and working hard to keep the project a safe place for all vulnerable children and young adults.



Youth employment remains an issue in 2020 and the lockdown has slowed down some of the project's businesses so we are now looking into opening a hardware store that will sell building material such as cement, iron sheets, wheelbarrows etc. The washing machine (see fundraising) and hardware store will hopefully generate enough revenue to keep the community centre and women's resource centre open throughout the year. A big thank you to all those that support AZBGC and things will only get better with your continued support!

## 2020 GRADUATES

The end of a program of study is always a time for celebration and this year we join AZBGC Kamengo in celebrating three AZBGC graduates from the Buganda Royal Institute of Education, Kampala.

From left to right in the photo we congratulate: Buwembo Balikuddembe, Mechanic; Joan Namwanga, Hair Dresser; and, Deo Katende, Mechanic. Deo is now working for AZBGC as community center manager, driver and transport maintenance.





## SPOTLIGHT ON AZBGC UNIVERSITY PARTNER: THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA CENTRE FOR RESEARCH ON EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES (CRECS)



The uOttawa Centre for Research on Educational and Community Services (CRECS) has been a significant fixture in the Faculties of Social Sciences and Education since it was first established as an inter-faculty research centre in 2006. Over the years, professors, students, and community partners have collaborated through CRECS to produce and mobilize knowledge from applied forms of research aiming to improve policies, programs, services, and practices in community organizations. CRECS works to ensure authentic, inclusive partnerships with community groups, both local and international, that will contribute to long-term, sustainable practices. Since its inception, CRECS has made valued and substantive contributions to social betterment, especially for those communities whose members are vulnerable or have been historically marginalized. Through research, evaluation, and knowledge mobilization, training and capacity building, and community engagement, research-based knowledge and evidence have been collaboratively produced and leveraged into actionable influences. CRECS has been working with AZBGC since 2015 as part of our commitment to training, capacity building and community engagement. CRECS Director Ruth Kane, staff members Julia Pilon and Kaitlyn Paul (see below) and doctoral candidate Leva Rouhani are working with the AZBGC Kamengo and Ottawa committees to develop participatory program evaluations with youth lead businesses within Kamengo and to support local capacity building. The goals of AZBGC align closely with the guiding principles of CRECS that call on us to ensure that our research, evaluation and knowledge mobilization activities contribute to social betterment for community members. If you are interested in finding out more about the different work conducted by CRECS professors with AZBGC and other with other partners visit our website [CRECS](https://crecs.uottawa.ca) and/or contact [crecs@uottawa.ca](mailto:crecs@uottawa.ca)

### THE CRECS / AZBGC CONNECTION

#### *Julia Pilon - CRECS Admin and AZBGC Ottawa Committee Member*

I am a third-year student in the Faculty of Social Sciences at uOttawa, and I also have a diploma in Police Foundations from Algonquin College. I first met Jimmy Sebulime during my time as a Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI) student with the City of Ottawa Police. I remember sitting in a lecture hall and watching Jimmy give a presentation on the AZBGC of Kamengo, Uganda.

Needless to say, that presentation has influenced my life and career trajectories. In 2018, I participated in the Education Project to the AZBGC lead by Ruth Kane. While in Kamengo, I discovered my passion: supporting and connecting with individuals and communities of diverse life contexts. I returned from the project with a change in perspective and priorities and continued helping the project to my fullest capacity as an AZBGC Ottawa Committee member.

Ruth was my first introduction to CRECS. Since my hire as a Work-study in June 2019, I have supported the CRECS administration and operations. Now, I act as a liaison for the CRECS and AZBGC collaborations.



#### *Kaitlyn Paul - CRECS / AZBGC Communications*



I am a third-year Political Communication student at uOttawa. Through my studies and previous jobs, I have gained valuable digital, written, and organizational communication skills, which I intend to draw upon for my role with CRECS.

My main tasks over the summer of 2020 will be to develop and implement an external communication plan for AZBGC

that we can test, refine, and subsequently leverage to develop a model of communication for CRECS and its community partners moving forward. I will be working closely with AZBGC through Jimmy Sebulime, Chris Mutebi and the youth in Kamengo, while at the same time with CRECS through Julia Pilon and Ruth Kane.

I am a strong advocate of the notion that every individual must direct their attention, energy, and skillsets to worthy causes that contribute to positive development. With that, I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to spend my CO-OP term working with CRECS and the AZBGC team!





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## FROM SCHOOL FEES TO FOOD SECURITY

The COVID-19 Pandemic has shifted priorities for AZBGC Kamengo and in turn for the Ottawa Committee since March 2020. The Ugandan President took steps to lock down the country and severely restrict movement of citizens with very short (overnight) notice. On 31st March, schools and shops (except for food stores) were closed, a curfew (7pm to 6.30am) was introduced and enforced by local police, and the AZBGC community centre was closed.

In Kamengo, COVID-19 restrictions meant AZBGC children and youth were confined to their own households. Ugandans were caught unawares by the severe restrictions on movement and many people found themselves without food – especially since in Uganda, without electricity and limited sources of income, food is often sourced daily. With the possibility of AZBGC children and families facing starvation, the AZBGC Youth Committee increased their food production on the AZBGC farm and invited students to come to the AZBGC community center individually to retrieve one meal a day. As the lock-down continued, it became clear that some families in the community had no means of gaining income and no food left.



The AZBGC Food and Hygiene Program ensured that 85 households each received 2kgs of rice, 2 bars of soap, 2 kgs of sugar – at a total cost of 2 million UGX – or 720 CAD! We commend the AZBGC Youth Committee who continue to demonstrate innovative and compassionate leadership. When schools return, we will refocus on ensuring we have funds for school fees but for now – we need to focus on the survival and well-being of families within Kamengo. AZBGC supporters in Canada have responded generously and we are extremely grateful to all those who contributed to our food and hygiene programs during the pandemic lockdown.

## AZBGC REVISED ACTIVITIES

AZBGC students returned to Kamengo with the closure of their schools, but they have not been idle! Basketball and dance training have continued – albeit in slightly modified formats – and children are able to visit the library or Women's house to read quietly and study. Coach Derrick has continued to call on children and youth to maintain their sports skills and to attend modified training sessions with only five players practicing drills and skills on the basketball court at one time.

The newly formed AZBGC Cultural troupe have used this time effectively with hours of training and practice under the leadership of Deo, Brain, and Malik.



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## FUNDRAISING 2020

COVID-19 has impacted life across the globe and the AZBGC Ottawa Committee is facing an uncertain year in terms of our normal fundraising activities; it is unlikely we will be allowed to gather for our annual fundraising dinner in November. Nonetheless, we are committed to ensuring our children and families stay safe and healthy during the pandemic and also to raising funds to pay for school fees and resources when schools reopen. We just have to be a little creative! So expect to hear from us in early September with plans for "virtual fundraising."

### MZUNGU JOE LEGACY FUND

Friends and family of Mzungu Joe Granata wish to honour his memory by continuing to raise funds for the children and youth of Kamengo. Help us to continue Mzungu Joe's legacy and ensure the children and youth of Kamengo can continue to attend school (when they re-open) and grow to be leaders within their own community. If you wish to contribute you can donate through the [CACHA Mzungu Joe Granata Memorial Fund](#) and receive a tax receipt for donations over \$25, OR you can make an electronic transfer directly to the AZBGC RB account via [azboysandgirlsclub@gmail.com](mailto:azboysandgirlsclub@gmail.com). Please indicate in notes that your donation for the Mzungu Joe Memorial.



### WASHING MACHINE FOR THE WOMEN'S HOUSE

Many young women in Kamengo, Uganda use eco-friendly, reusable feminine hygiene products by necessity, as disposable products are expensive and difficult to access. They wash these feminine hygiene products by hand on a monthly basis.



To help improve sanitation and ease of washing these products, we seek to purchase two non-electric washing machines powered by foot pedal – the [Drumi](#) by the company Yirego for the Women's Resource center and the guest house. In just 10 minutes, this device can wash up to 2 kg of clothing. Furthermore, this machine may be used by young women in Kamengo to start a clothes washing business for others in the community. The cost of the device is \$389 CAD. The machine will be transported to Kamengo, Uganda during the next in person AZBGC project. Last weekend Ottawa committee member Ela Wnuk raised \$592 through her "garage sale" – all conducted with appropriate social distancing – huge thanks to Ela. Yes, this would be the first washer in the entire village, and it will generate employment for a number of young women - if funds allow we hope someday to purchase an Industrial washing machine. Please help us reach our goal! E-transfers are accepted at: [azboysandgirlsclub@gmail.com](mailto:azboysandgirlsclub@gmail.com)

### POP-UP VIRTUAL FUNDRAISER

*By Rebecca Zunder, Ottawa  
Committee member*

I'd like to give a huge THANK YOU to everyone who donated for my 29th birthday fundraiser. With donations from 59 of my friends and family members, we were able to raise \$2,649 to help with renovations for the Library and Women's Centre. Congratulations to Amanda Hodgins who won the raffle prize filled with beautiful handmade Ugandan crafts and a nice bottle of wine! Stay tuned for more raffles and auctions in the coming months to build on this amazing fundraising momentum!

