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Programmanus av Steve Hankey

ALANNA LESLIE: Hi, I'm Alanna Leslie and welcome to Newsreel World. Today, we're off to Kashmir, Barbados and South Africa. But first Uganda.

Covid-19 has caused a crisis in Ugandan education, with many teachers deciding to not return to the private schools that have been shut since the pandemic began.

To tell us more about the impact this is having, Halima Athumani reports from Kampala.

Halima Athumani: There are twice as many privately run schools in Uganda than those run by the state and this means that more teachers are employed by privately funded institutions compared to government schools.

During the lockdown, while teachers in government institutions continued receiving half their salaries, teachers in private schools got nothing and many were forced to find other means of survival.

I visit a village private school in Iganga district Eastern Uganda and spoke to the head teacher Mabinda Micheal about how he has been surviving during the lockdown.

Mabinda Micheal: "It has affected us so much. Because right now, the children in the community, they are not studying.

We as teachers, we are not getting any income. We are used to work here and get money to support our families but now we are just struggling.

And we expect the teachers, most of them not to come back. Because even last time when they opened a bit, around February there, in March, some teachers never came back."

Halima Athumani: With no money in his pocket, Mabinda started a small business.

Mabinda Micheal: "I decided to start poultry. Maybe by December, I will be selling some few chickens."



Halima Athumani: Government encouraged online studies, even though many parents can neither afford smartphones, laptops and above all mobile phone data to connect to the internet.

To maintain teachers, schools set up WhatsApp groups onto which parents were added and sold to the idea of continuing with online classes.

14-year-old Nasejje Shifah at the time of the first lockdown had just joined high school.

Nasejje Shifah: “Well, our teachers introduced some zoom lessons. But our network is so poor. You can find a teacher can start a lesson, starts stammering. And the lesson might end and we get nothing in our heads.”

Halima Athumani: Nasejje says teachers taking them through zoom lessons are overworked because not all their teachers are working.

Nasejje Shifah: “Yes, I think they should increase their payments. Because they are doing so much. Teaching in holidays, going back to school, teaching again, marking assignments, all that work.”

Halima Athumani: Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni end of October announced that schools shall reopen in January 2022.

But after nearly two years of being closed and with many teachers moving on to new jobs, it remains to be seen how many private schools in Uganda will be able to come back at all.

This is Halima Athumani reporting from Kampala, Uganda for Newsreel World.

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Halima.

ALANNA LESLIE: Barbados has elected its first ever president as it prepares to become a republic, which means the queen of the United Kingdom, Elizabeth II, will no longer be Head of State.

Dame Sandra Mason was sworn in on 30 November, on the country's 55th anniversary of independence from Britain.

But Barbados is not the first former British colony to become a republic. Guyana in South America took that step in 1970.



ALANNA LESLIE: Caribbean islands Trinidad and Tobago did the same in 1976 and Dominica followed suit two years later.

Josh Cavallo: “Hi everyone it’s Josh Cavallo here. There’s something personal that I need to share with everyone. I’m a footballer and I’m gay.”

ALANNA LESLIE: That’s Australian men’s footballer Josh Cavallo speaking on his social media channels.

Josh has just come out as gay, making him one of only two openly gay male footballers active in the professional game, alongside San Diego Loyal midfielder Collin Martin.

According to the latest FIFA report on men’s football, there are over 128,000 professional footballers around the world.

But unlike in other sports there is still a strong taboo about being gay in men’s football though there have been a number of campaigns to stomp out homophobia within the game.

ID by Ahmer

ALANNA LESLIE: That’s ID by Kashmiri rapper Ahmer.

Ahmer is a 25-year-old hip hop artist based in Jammu and Kashmir, a previously autonomous region divided between India and Pakistan.

Ahmer sings in Hindi and his music is inspired by growing up in a part of the world that’s seen almost constant unrest since the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947.

Here’s Ahmer talking to the BBC about writing in this environment:

Ahmer Javad: “You see people, you see kids, depressed. And I started penning down things that I saw. It’s unfortunate, but our inspiration is conflict.”

ALANNA LESLIE: The College of Magic in Cape Town teaches young South Africans skills in magic tricks and its associated performing arts.



But for many of the young people who pass through its doors, the college helps prepare them for a range of non-magical careers and gives them a start in life they would not have had otherwise.

Catherine Boulle has visited the College in Cape Town to tell us more.

Siphesihle Ndayi: “My favourite trick... “Floating wand”. I still remember how to do it, and I’m still performing it to people. It is a wonderful trick.”

Catherine Boulle: This is Siphesihle Ndayi, a former student and now volunteer teacher at the College of Magic, in Cape Town, South Africa.

Siphesihle Ndayi: “And also, the one called “Water newspaper”. Where you take water and then pour it in the newspaper. And then you make water disappear. And then you make water reappear again. And people love it.”

Catherine Boulle: The College of Magic is a unique institution. A place where students aged ten and upwards are taught the art of magic. To learn juggling, card tricks, puppetry, how to levitate wands and even people.

The College teaches over 200 students. Students like 17-year-old Duma Mgqoki, who lives in Samora Machel, a township about 20 kilometres outside of Cape Town, and who is fast becoming one of the College of Magic’s best jugglers.

Duma Mgqoki: “Me, I’m a person who likes eyes, like... audience. So as I arrived here at the college, I realised that there were a lot of people to watch me. And I also wanted to be on TV. So I was there on TV.”

Catherine Boulle: When were you on TV?

Duma Mgqoki: Last of last year. SABC news. So that was my goal. But I still want more.

Catherine Boulle: What would “more” look like?

Duma Mgqoki: Like, travel the countries.

Catherine Boulle: Students at the College of Magic are trained by a passionate group of 30 permanent and volunteer teaching staff.



Catherine Boule: Sinethemba Bawuti, who first taught Duma how to juggle completed his teacher training in 2012, and now runs the College’s “Magic in the Community” programme.

Sinethemba Bawuti: “So what we do each and every year, we give a student opportunity to become the student of the College of Magic, which they are not going to pay.”

Catherine Boule: What is it like working with kids and seeing them grow over a period of time?

Sinethemba Bawuti: “It’s a wonderful feeling to be able to develop somebody’s future. All of us, we are the teachers, we feel proud you know because you contributed to somebody’s life.”

Catherine Boule: But students at the College of Magic don’t just learn how to astonish and entertain. Self-confidence and self-esteem are perhaps the most important values that the college instils. Anela Gazi, who grew up in Mfuleni, a township 30 kilometres outside of Cape Town, says that when she first started at the College of Magic, she was going through a particularly difficult time in her life:

Anela Gazi: “I was in a zone whereby I felt like life was over, you know. Because from my background, since I was growing up as a child, life wasn’t easy. It was very difficult because of the circumstances.

I always dreamed of being visible to people, so that people would see me.

So when I got here I was like ‘Is this a place?’ and step by step, I felt like, oh, people are seeing me. It’s happening, it’s happening the way I wanted it!

It’s not just like about College of Magic. It’s about you, in person. They build you, they help you develop, they give you hope.

So that’s why it has been so amazing to be here. And as I am today, and as I have the confidence I have to speak, it’s because of the confidence in the things I’ve been taught here. And the hope I’ve been given.”

Catherine Boule: Spend a day at the College of Magic and what you’ll see are cards emerging out of thin air... But what you’ll hear is that the College of Magic is like a second home; a supportive space of imagination and openness where students feel free to express themselves, and to be themselves.

This is Catherine Boule reporting for Newsreel World from Cape Town, South Africa.

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Catherine. That’s all from me today. Speak to you soon. Bye!