

# Non-Profits' Mentor Program Works to Combat Pandemic Setbacks

*Following Covid-19 Challenges, Village Book Builders Brings Virtual Learning to Students in Developing Countries.*

SALT LAKE CITY, CA, UNITED STATES, April 26, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While children everywhere continue to feel the weight of the pandemic, this weight is especially heavy for those children growing up in developing countries. After almost 10 months of modified education, students in countries with less access to technology and educational resources continue to face struggles that will carry into a post-Covid world.



Classroom in Nepal post-pandemic.

[Village Book Builders](#) (Village Book), a nonprofit organization based out of Utah, is working to minimize pandemic effects on children through their mentoring program. By pairing up high school and college students in the US with children in developing countries, Village Book aims to bring “hope through books,” and allow all children a chance to learn. According to [UNICEF](#), 463 million children—more than 31% – do not have adequate access to remote learning resources such as broadcast platforms and the internet. Consequently, a large number of children are falling behind due to school closures and remote learning circumstances, much of which they cannot access.

“

Each year that [a student stays in] school increases their income by 10% when they grow up, so that’s pretty important to us.”

*Mayra Vargas*

The Village Book program works within their libraries across the globe to virtually connect students and their mentors, who are trained through the organization. Typically, mentors meet with their mentee once a week, building a consistent relationship while helping them learn. Over the past few years, the Village Book program in Mukono, Uganda, has helped students continue to learn, even when schools are not in session. Located in Eastern Africa, Uganda

opened schools on Monday, Jan. 10 after being closed since March of 2020. Although there were attempts to set up remote learning, around half of the students in Uganda fully stopped their education when the government closed schools almost two years ago according to an article by the New York Times. Due to the lengthy shut down, many students are simply not returning to school and many schools will not reopen due to staffing shortages.

Mayra Vargas, director of the Village Book mentor program, has paired mentors with students in Mukono to help them rediscover their passion for learning.

"Kids were kind of learning from home, but they didn't have that guidance, because they don't have the technology that we have," Vargas said. "Here [in the United States], you can just take your classes online and your professors are going to be there. But in this case, it's difficult because they don't have computers." Thanks to the Village Book mentor program, kids can travel to their local Village Book libraries to meet with their mentors virtually. "I think mentors have been really helpful for these kids," she said.

According to Vargas, one of the main benefits of the mentor program is the one-to-one attention that students receive. "It is very difficult for the school environment in Africa, because one teacher has 70 students," said Vargas. "It's very difficult for them to focus on each individual student."

Through the mentoring program, students are given individual attention tailored to their needs. "They start to focus on what the kid needs," Vargas said. For example, if the kid needs help with math, then the mentor is going to focus on that."

Hibah Alam, a high school junior from Austin, Texas, has been mentoring with Village Book for over two years. "A typical mentoring session occurs once a week for about an hour," Alam said. "I try to get a sense of what the student likes and what they're drawn to, so that learning can be something fun for them." Given that she began during the height of the pandemic, Alam has seen firsthand the struggles that children are facing with remote (and even asynchronous) learning. "When I first started mentoring, a lot of students were just doing work at home, and they had to take home packets with a special curriculum that was just for home," Alam said. "That was really difficult because a lot of mentees don't have the facility and resources to teach themselves that curriculum, so it really set them back."

With time, Alam says she has been able to suit the sessions to the needs and interests of her mentees, incorporating reading comprehension, math and science as well as fun games and videos related to the lesson. Her goal for 2022 with Village Book is to help her mentees revive their passion for learning, and retain lessons from previous years.

For Vargas, working on the directorial side of things, she hopes to have 300 students enrolled in the mentor program by the end of the year. "Our goal for every year is to keep these kids at school, we don't want them to drop out," she said. "Each year that they have at school increases

their income by 10% when they grow up, so that's pretty important to us."

Uganda is just one example of a developing country struggling with education in a Covid world. With programs globally, Village Book is constantly working to extend their reach to as many children as possible. Entering into a post-covid world, this program will be especially beneficial. As we move into 2022—and year 3 of the pandemic—it is necessary to consider how education remains disrupted, and that a large percentage of children, particularly in developing countries, have yet to experience a fully in-person learning experience. Instead of waiting for the pandemic to be eradicated, programs like Village Book are determining how best to work around these effects and help children catch up.

Article by: Emma Nicholson

#### About Village Book Builders

Founded in 2015, Village Book Builders is a 501(C)(3) non-profit organization headquartered in Mapleton, Utah. Village Book Builders receives funding for their educational initiatives through their socially responsible partnerships with corporations.

Julie Arko

Village Book Builders

[email us here](#)

---

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/569949469>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2022 IPD Group, Inc. All Right Reserved.