

## **Teaching online in Nairobi.**

On March 17 Tangaza University College closed because of the lockdown announced by the President in response to the presence of Covid-19. Since that time 2,600 people have tested positive with 82 deaths.

At this time of the year we usually offer students courses of ten weeks and five hours of face to face contact. I teach Decision making for managers to 3<sup>rd</sup> year BA students. When the lockdown started many of the students returned to their rural homes. To stem the transmission of the virus to the country areas Nairobi has been sealed off so that no one may enter or leave except for transport of food and other necessary items. The result is that our students are scattered across the country. We thought all our classes would be postponed until we reopened, however our VC designate Professor Wang'ombe decided that we offer the courses online! This sent us all scrambling to learn how to teach online and to redesign our courses to be delivered electronically. Our IT people stepped up to the mark and have been very helpful and supportive.

My course started four Saturdays ago and I teach for three hours in the morning. The first day the power went off!!! Fortunately it only lasted 20 minutes. The next Saturday I wanted to put the students into 'breakout' groups and the server refused, even the IT guy couldn't get it to work. The following Saturday the echo did not turn off so the first 20 minutes of the class the students heard nothing and I was bombarded by my own echo. IT came to the rescue and sorted it out. Last Saturday everything went smoothly, so I finally achieved my goal except I didn't put the students into groups.

Yesterday I asked the class what skills or tasks they liked or disliked when learning on line. I was surprised at how positive they were about the experience; they were appreciative of the college continuing to offer the courses so that their time of study is not prolonged. Some were happy that they didn't have to spend time travelling to and from the college while others commented that there were more distractions when learning at home. Many have improved their computer skills and have a sense of achievement.

To make up the extra hour of teaching I have given the students 3 different assignments for each week which they have to complete and send to me before the next class. Of the 55 students taking the class I receive work from 51 of them, which is rewarding the other 4 have sent nothing so they will get an email from me this week asking them to explain their situation.

I find the teaching demanding but also enriching as the students are able to ask questions and we have had some very good discussions. Next week I will be asking for a review of the course to date, hopefully the students will let me know how they are managing and whether or not they are making sense of the content.

There is no time to feel lonely my days are full with corrections, checking the next topic for the course, rewriting my course outline for research and planning online conversations for the Professional Development program for sisters in congregational leadership. The weather is sunny and the air cool and refreshing. I have a rooster who visits me each day and stands on the wall outside my front door crowing loudly until I appear and take his photo. I have to keep an eye on him and his hens as I have just

planted some fresh basil. Attached is a photo of the eldest student David Wanyama who because of his life experience has much to offer to the younger ones and asks thoughtful questions. The other is of Sr. Susan a Precious Blood sister who is a class leader and most helpful when I need to get information quickly out to the students.