



ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY



THE QUEEN'S  
COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION 2021

**OKWARE OUR PANDEMIC EPIC**

**By Ethan Charles Mufuma, age 13 from Mukono, Uganda**

Welcome to my village  
Known but much  
The village of *Okware*  
*Okware* our pandemic hero  
*Okware* our pandemic mirror  
Whose story's sweetness  
Deserves every Commonwealth ear  
Ear to the ground, I shall narrate it all

My village *Asila*  
Ignorant we were about the pandemic  
Carelessly we lived with no panic  
Too strong we thought we were  
With bodies resistant to illnesses  
Illnesses including pandemics  
To us,  
It was a disease of the Whites

*Okware* smelt a rat

And without seeking extra support

*Okware* launched campaigns and campaigns

First,

Connected a community radio

Loud enough with clear audio

Morning, midday and evening

*Okware* cautioned the residents

In my native language, *Okware* met everyone

Bridged the gap between myths and facts

Spoke deep and wide about the pandemic

Every community member shifted the mind

In no time, we started to mind

Minding the Standards

Minding the Operations

Minding the pandemic Procedures

On his flat tyre bicycle

*Okware* fetched water

Dug from his pockets and bought soap

Supplied it to the elderly community

Reached them hut to hut

Cautioned them to stay home

Enlightened them on the killer pandemic

But never stopped preaching hope

*Okware*, misinterpreted by the police

Arrested and accused of politics

That he was carrying out campaigns

But even in prison

*Okware* kept to the reason

Alerted the other inmates about the pandemic

Urged them to create a distance

Prison, turned a pandemic school

*Okware*, released after community demand

Never shifted his stand

Continued with pandemic lectures

Continued with that generous heart

Shared every little bite

His garden turned a community donor

His farm remained a living hope by all

All, including the haters of oneness

How he discovered herbals

Only heaven can tell

All we saw him do

Was distributing leaves

Calling people to steam

Steaming became steaming

Solely, *Okware* remained the community hope

All he went through, none can tell

How he learnt tailoring  
Heaven is the witness  
All we saw were masks  
Masks in colours and sizes  
Labelled 'save life first'  
Thousands of masks he made  
Preached instructions on how to use  
And the pandemic avoided *Asila*

His haters turned lovers  
His doubters became believers  
Men in political power joined *Okware*  
Together we made an army  
And kicked the pandemic beyond repair  
Secured our hope, raised growth  
Worked in solidarity, in unison  
And the community sang '*Okware, Okware Okware*'

Thought it was done but wait  
The pandemic tricked and teased our intelligence  
When it claimed the life of *Okware's* son  
Oh! Oh!  
Our fear grew fresh  
How could this happen to *Okware!*  
Who was safe then?  
The community looked hopeless

Great people find opportunities even in a crisis  
In such a dark hour in *Okware's* family  
*Okware* stood strong, courageous and focused  
To the entire community he spoke  
'My son is sacrifice, a lesson or else a chance  
To teach the entire *Asila* and the world beyond  
That the pandemic is merciless to every soul'  
Not just death but a lesson above doubts

Ears turned more open to *Okware's* community radio  
Eyes became brighter and looked longer  
Every mind became cautious and vigilant  
And *Okware* remained the mastermind  
*Okware's* son rested in peace  
But *Okware* never rested at peace  
For he thought the community needed more  
If the pandemic was to be arrested

Where could our hope come  
Who could sacrifice beyond life  
None can count how many could the pandemic shallow  
*Okware* remains our pandemic hero  
In his name poems be recited  
In his image sculptures be carved  
In his memory books be written  
In his vision communities be driven

*Asila* continues to rise above the sky

*Asila* remains hopeful and matches on

The pandemic sits below the shadow

Our growth is never at a threat

Our lives passed the test

Praise be to that togetherness

No difficult beats a joined effort

No season, no pandemic, no situation

