



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 curved
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

