



UK Registered Charity

1110998

Gambian Registered Charity

343/2011

Gambia Education and Teaching Support NEWSLETTER

Issue 16 April 2012

www.getsuk.org.uk

What does more than D0.5m (half a million Dalasi) achieve at sunrise? Investments since January 2011

Inside this issue

Page 1

Investments since Jan 2011

Page 2

Beyond Sunrise Nursery

Ebbeh Day

Page 3

Volunteering at Sunrise

A sponsorship story

Page 4

Could you help sponsor a child through GETS?

Obituary—Francis Glynn

Page 5

Our thanks to volunteers and fundraisers

New Sunrise Education Director

Sometimes it is worth looking back over a list of achievements to encourage everyone with how much has actually been done in the last 12 months. Tony did this to parents at the PTA meeting in December, held in the Hall in the Sunrise centre. It is quite a list and when you add the cash invested (especially in Dalasi) it does sound very impressive. Indeed the parents were very impressed. This is a list of building related things and doesn't include all of the essential educational design work that GETS advisors spent many more hours developing, for which we are also grateful.



Daniel English, teaching with Mr Bah

Before GETS even began to operate Sunrise we spent some D250,000 (£5,500) giving the whole building a face-lift. This included improvements to the kitchen (New fridge/freezer, new gas supplies, new work tops and cupboards for storage), new desks and chairs (giving 64 places in 2 Skills classroom), toilet repairs, painting the whole building (both inside and out), making the lighting, electrical wiring and system work (and safe), more shelves and new storage cupboards for resources, refurbished blackboards, fitting a fan, UPS, internet and desks to a newly formed office space, finally fitting a new secure office door and working locks everywhere. The picture shows our volunteer, Daniel English (mentioned later) working in the refurbished classrooms with Mr Bah, who teaches English and Maths.

It is over 6 years since the centre was built and given to the community and during that time very little maintenance had been completed, mostly due to lack of funds.

The next major improvement was the addition of a Bantaba, following a very generous donation by Erica Wren and Tony Bound. This is a large open-sided, building which effectively gives us two more classrooms, mainly for practical work. The key thing is that it allows the students to work under cover from the very hot sun,



The Bantaba, used by skills students

Continued on page 2...

Cover story...



The new Watchman's hut and store room

area to allow the chemicals to be safely washed into a separate caustic soakaway. The cost of this facility is a further D250,000 (£5,500) when completed.

We then started to make space for a new Lower Basic (or primary) School which GETS is building (see lots of information from the blog, link below) by moving the main gateway into Sunrise and also building a Watchman's hut and store, again following another generous donation from Chris Rice and Helen Lee from Brisbane, Australia. This added another D50,000 (£1,100) to the investments in the site.

In terms of the future, we have already committed to and started Phase 1 of the new school, but that is another story. Our many Blog pages show the excellent progress we are making towards completing the first 2 classrooms of the Sunrise Lower Basic School which we hope to open in September 2012 – see http://www.gets-sunrise.org/Blog/2012Jan_Mar.htm

in a clean environment. Skills students used to always work outside on the sandy surrounds or on plastic tables in the hall, previously. Half of the building is used for cookery, with tables for preparation, charcoal oven for baking (when finally fitted), sink area and blackboard. It has also been used for sewing layout space and other practical purposes. The other half is used for Batik "stamping". Special soft top tables (made of foam rubber with lino tops) allow material to be patterned with stamps covered with inks to form the intricate patterns. Outside we also included a fabric washing

Ebbeh Day



One of the many pots of Ebbeh prepared by the students

On the 24th February we had another "EBBEH DAY" at Sunrise Centre. This day was an interesting and enjoyable event organised for the second time at Sunrise Centre, It started at 12:00 pm and finished at 5:00pm.

Sendeng was tasked with organising the event. She prepared invitation cards which were distributed by Mr. Bah, Mrs. Cham (Nursery Teacher) and Mrs. Sanneh (Nursery Teacher) to different schools in the local area.

This day is called "EBBEH DAY" because different African dishes were prepared for sale (usually at D5). These dishes were "Ebbeh", "chakeri", "naan buru", "wonjo" and "fufu" alongside with music. These various dishes were cooked by Mrs Mendy and the 2nd year students, the students soon realised their talents in cooking because the food turned out delicious and sweet.

The most interesting part of this event was almost everyone danced and our able Trustees present in The Gambia were no exception!

It was a successful event because we all enjoyed ourselves with the delicious foods and dancing to melodious music from very loud speakers!

Where did our nursery children go after Sunrise Nursery ended? (2011)



With reference to last academic year, 22 nursery students moved to local state run Lower Basic schools like Bakoteh Proper and Bakoteh Annex after their completion of nursery 2 in Sunrise Centre.

This year in

consultation with the parents, we would like the present Nursery students to move into our new Sunrise Lower Basic School by September this year. .

Our Lower Basic School will be well equipped with qualified teachers to run the school in a good administrative system. It will be a Lower Basic School with excellence because quality education is always our first priority in Sunrise Centre.

By: Sendeng Suso and Fatou Sanneh



The crowd of enthusiastic dancers

Many people come to help at Sunrise but what do they actually do?



Sunrise volunteer Steve Humphries with a steady hand!

over the class, which gives Mr Bah a well deserved break occasionally!

Regular volunteers Steve and Chris Humphries are currently with us again for 5 weeks and as usual we have found some painting for Steve to do. He will also be moving some mango saplings when we have decided where to transfer them to! Chris has been doing her usual sterling job helping small groups of Skills students improve their English reading and writing.

This term we have had a number of volunteers in the school - some longer term than others. Daniel English is still with us, generally he comes in to Sunrise once a week to support Ali Bah teaching English and will be doing so for the rest of this academic year. He is confident enough to take

over the class, which gives Mr Bah a well deserved break occasionally!

We also had a 'random' volunteer! Sophie Longton came on holiday with her parents and, having seen our website, visited Sunrise to see what we get up to. Sophie enjoyed it so much that she came back for a day to help some of the nursery children with their spelling. The message for volunteers is - no matter how long you volunteer for, a day or a year, you will be able to contribute and even if you feel you have no transferable skills, we will almost always find something that needs doing.

Volunteering is fun and greatly rewarding. If you plan to volunteer let us know and we will send you a volunteer pack. If you want to be a 'drop in' volunteer please call Helen first so that we can make sure that there is someone to give you the paint brush!



Visitor Sophie Longton plays word games with the nursery students

SPONSORSHIP STORY

“How it has helped my family to be sponsored through GETS”

Mariama Jallow, a single mum has 3 children, Alhagie (eldest), Isatou and Modou. P B Design (www.pbdesign.co.uk) a company that makes Standby Power solutions (based in Clevedon) sponsor the 3 children and this is administered through GETS. Mariama told Helen that if the children hadn't found sponsors then they would not be going to school.

Alhagie wants to be a doctor, Isatou wants to pursue a career in nursing and Modou wants a career in engineering. All the children work very hard.

Mariama added –

“I wish to extend and express my deepest appreciation to your company (PB Design) for the healthy gesture you shower on to my children in sponsoring them to school.

Really, words cannot express my utmost feeling towards the sponsorship you render to my children and only God Almighty

can reward you.”

It is worth noting that GETS supports almost 50 children's education outside of Sunrise by making sure that the money given from sponsors goes directly to the school for the purposes intended, monitoring progress of pupils for the sponsors and facilitating feedback as appropriate. Not quite as easy as it sounds at times.

We also ensure that gift-aid from the UK government is collect and re-invested in educating children in The Gambia.

Turn over for information about sponsoring a student.



Mariama Jallow, with children; Alhagie, Isatou and Modou.

www.getsuk.org.uk —Don't forget the latest news from The Gambia Blog!



Over 500 Gambian children have been provided with an education thanks to the generosity of GETS sponsors.

Kebba and Awa need sponsors now.

We plan to start Lower Basic education at Sunrise in September 2012 so that our nursery children can continue to be educated at Sunrise. £6 per month would pay for a 7 year old to be educated at Sunrise, as we subsidise the fees to make high quality education more affordable.

Have a look at our sponsorship Web page at: www.gets-sunrise.org/Sponsoring.htm



Kebba Cham

D.O.B. 01/05/2004

Kebba left Sunrise nursery in July 2011. He lives with his father, grandmother, older brother and younger sister. His older brother goes to school, but as the family do not have enough money to pay two school fees, Kebba could not move on to Lower Basic education and is unable to go to school now.

Awa Saidy

D.O.B. 13/07/1999

Awa is the daughter of Dembo, one of the Sunrise watchmen. She attends Bakoteh Upper Basic School and had a very good first term report.

The cost of supporting Awa through GETS is about £6 per month.



Please note that the school fees are similar at Sunrise to Gambia's state schools but the teacher pupil ratio is about half. (Sunrise has around 25 children per teacher). This allows us to provide more time to each child and coupled with classroom assistants, help from volunteers, additional teacher training and resources, should give a greater opportunity for children to progress. GETS subsidise costs in order to make this possible.

The Sudden Death of Francis Glynn

The sudden death of Francis Glynn, also founder and leader of Gambian Tourist Support, came as a great shock to us all at GETS and without doubt to many people who have over the years benefitted from his friendship and support in many different ways.

Fran's great enthusiasm for life and for The Gambia and its people was second to none. He was a man of great charisma, humour and expertise and we the trustees and supporters of GETS send our heartfelt sympathy to Filly his wife and to his family all of whom he loved very much.

Fran is sadly missed – but we whose lives he enriched were fortunate to be counted among his friends.



An Advance Date for your Diaries –

GETS AGM planned for 1st September 2012 starting at 1230 in Letchworth. Further details to follow

“We GET by with a little help from our friends”

GETS should formally say thank you to many, many people for giving their money and support. There is however, a real danger of leaving out a thank you to important contributors, this is never our intention. All who go the extra mile to allow GETS to invest in the Education of under privileged children in The Gambia, deserve a vote of thanks and formal recognition. Here I can mention just a few:-

Thank you to Mario Spatuzzi and the team at The Print Room UK (www.theprintroomuk.com) for giving us yet another 1,000 leaflets and post cards. They look fabulous and allow us to leave a tangible reminder of what GETS is all about.

Thank you to the 'Two intrepid swimmers, Claire and John, who braved the bitter cold seas on the south coast last Boxing Day, raising £328 for GETS. Grateful thanks also to their sponsors from all the trustees and also to friends who raised additional monies via swimming and a sponsored dance.'



Claire and John's Boxing Day dip

Thank you to Jeff and Mandy, who generously donated to GETS the money friends and family gave them when they married. After a lovely wedding in the UK, they came to Sunrise during their honeymoon and presented Helen with a £365 donation in cheques

and cash collected by all their friends to help us complete our Lower Basic School.

As a small charity we rely heavily on a small but wonderful group of people donating time, materials, skills and of course cash. Thank you to all for being part of this growing group of friends.

Our next challenge is starting up a new Lower Basic School and still needs regular contributions to pay our teachers and ship resources out (mostly second hand desk and chairs from British schools). If you know of anyone who can help us then please point them to our brilliant web site or request some of our leaflets to inform them. Right now GETS really needs even more friends



Jeff and Mandy, Sunrise donors

GETS welcomes a new Education Director to the Sunrise Centre

Mr Nurudeen Mbye

I live in Latrikunda Sabiji in the Kanifing Municipal Council.

After gaining a Higher Teachers' Certificate (HTC), I taught in Tahir Ahmadiyya Senior Secondary School from 2003-2005. I also taught in other senior schools and by 2010 I work as Principal of Marie Bennette Skill Training Centre after completion of Bachelor in Educational Studies.

Presently I work for GETS as Education Director and I am a Law student at the Gambia University. Among my aims is to work very hard in the improvement of the teaching and learning conditions of the centre. This requires dedication and well trained staff with high motivation and I hope to achieve this in the quickest possible time with the support of the Charity.



Our new Sunrise Education Director

For more information about sponsorship, volunteering and fundraising for GETS, or for details of how to contact us, please visit our website:

www.getsuk.org.uk

