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Gambia Education and Teaching Support NEWSLETTER

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Sunrise Lower Basic School Opened - September 2012

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The new primary school

The big news this year is that we managed to do what we promised and open our Lower Basic School just in time to take our graduating nursery children. 13 children were able to leave Mrs Sanneh's Nursery 2 class and continue their education at Sunrise for 2012/13. This makes life much simpler and we hope will help to improve their education.

We did have some fun with the rains causing flooding, damaging the new toilets' "soakaway" and our new water storage system had teething problems but generally things went to plan.

Once the problems with the rains were past we got on with opening the school and teaching the children, many promoted from Sunrise Nursery 2 class.

We had a teacher and classroom assistant (trained and ready to start), a classroom full of furniture (and children too!), new uniforms (produced by Sunrise Skills Students), text books and the curriculum as recommended by the Gambian Education Department. So we were well equipped to open the school.

We have coped well with the challenges that faced us and as our Lower Basic teacher explains below, we are educating children...

Working in a New Lower Basic School

– with words from LBS Teacher Mrs Kaddy Jawara

Our first teacher was interviewed to get her thoughts on how the new school was working. Kaddy said about the new text books "We use them for reading and looking at the pictures, they are easy to use and the children love looking at them."



On the differences between Nursery and Lower Basic School Kaddy said; "The bigger classroom is a big help. We can move the tables easily and the children can move freely in between without any problem. They are now learning Integrated Studies, Islamic Studies, spelling, handwriting, reading, maths and art/crafts. The difference is Islamic Studies but the other subjects we have them in the Nursery too but it has to be more advanced now.

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Do you keep up with the blog each week? Bookmark our page!
http://www.gets-sunrise.org/Blog/2013Jan_Apr.htm

Cover story... Kaddy commented on how new external students coped compared to the promoted Sunrise Nursery students; "most of the things that we are doing here, the other children don't do that in their schools. One like puzzles, the external children find it hard doing puzzles when we started but now they have improved."

When asked about working with Mama Nabaneh, our LBS classroom assistant Kaddy said; "Mama is being used each day to help with the group that I am not busy with. When I am out she takes care to occupy them with something. She is very useful"

Third Year Work Placements – Erica Wren (with words from the Students)

All of the Year 3 Skills students have been helped to find employers who would offer them a training place for 3 months. We caught up with two of them for the GETS Newsletter.

Fatou Bah was in her second week working at Two Rays, a business run by brothers, Ansu and Jerreh (Chef), good friends of Helen's, who now have two restaurants. Fatou told us "I'm doing both cooking and serving, to get more experience. I'm coming 9 o'clock to 10 o'clock, so I can learn as much as I can. Last week I was cooking, this week I'm waitressing, then next week I'm cooking again." When we asked what she was cooking she said "So much! They tell me take this, do this, now add this - I'm learning so much." And does she enjoy it? "So much!"



Fatou Bah at Two Rays



Edda Bass at Aida Fashions

Edda Bass (who designed our GETS Christmas card this year) initially started working at Aida Fashions, run by Mrs Aida Jallow in the very up-market Senegambia Hotel. She had only started her placement that week (late Nov), so she was spending most of her time watching the two tailors as they worked. She told us "I didn't sew yet. I'm watching how they do it, and anything they ask me to do, I'm doing it." When does she start work? "They are opening at 9 o'clock but I am coming before 9 o'clock and sitting here waiting for them." So what time must she leave her home in Serrekunda? "6 o'clock." And when does she get back to her compound? "Around 7(pm)." Edda later changed to Salif Fashions after 1 month when workload decreased.

Two young women determined to make the most of their chances! We felt very proud of them.

Christmas Card Competition 2013



I hope that GETS supporters will now have seen our Christmas Card from competition winner, Edda Bass. Edda lives in Dippa Kunda (near to Serekunda), has been coming to Sunrise for 3 years now and she is now doing a work placement position. (See previous article)

We also had many other entries including runners up from Awa Gaye, Marie Cham and Ramatoulie Jarju (from left to right here).



The Peer Health Training – 2nd – 4th November 2012 (Saihou Darboe/Ali Bah)

The training was on the second of its type that was conducted in Sunrise Centre since its establishment. The training focused on reproductive health, teenage pregnancy, early marriage, sexual transmitted infection.



Thirdly, students participated on this training and it was successful. According to the programme trainer Addou Kanteh, this training was one of the most successful that he had ever conducted in Region One.

He was so pleased with the student's participation and contribution and hope that the knowledge and the experience they inculcated will be disseminated to the society.

Mr. Bah (pictured right) and Mr. Darboe (left) were the staff that also participated and also disclosed that the training was successful."

Note - For more information about the background to Peer Health Training via the Novascotia (Gambia) Association, please see—<http://novascotiagambia.ca/> "

Friends Bearing Gifts

People often come to Sunrise to bring us their time or freely give money or the gift of resources, even when it's not Christmas. This Christmas Sue Nelson came to help produce information to formalise the courses that we run in Skills Training. She is currently working to produce a text book for Batik, written by Mr Darboe. Sue also carried an English/Wolof dictionary and presented it to our Education Director (Nurudeen Mbye), actually bought with cash from Mary and Tom Ikin –thank you.



Sponsoring Education

GETS still helps more than 55 children and young people by directly paying for all or most of their school costs (eg Fees/Travel/Food/Uniforms/Books). Our preference is to help those at Sunrise because we can support more quality educational places per £ compared to state or private schooling.



We are delighted that we have found sponsors to help 2 of our skills students come back to Sunrise to complete their course. Fatou Ndong (pictured left) and Kaddy Sanyang (pictured right) had to drop out of school because their parents couldn't afford to pay the fees required to run the course. Fatou was in year 2 and Kaddy in year 3 of the course. Maxine Beech appealed to students in her UK school (Bishop Heber High School) and 2 kind sponsors came forward to help.



Rachel Jones (pictured right) will help Fatou and Lucy Hobson (pictured left) will help Kaddy.

The sponsors from UK are saving money from their part time jobs to send out to The Gambia "to make a difference". This really will help young people gain a second chance at an education. Thank you to both.

GETS has found a number of other sponsorships again this year to help educate children. This is especially pleasing give the current economic difficulties in Europe.

Tools with a Mission kindly donated two electric sewing machines and an overlocker to GETS!



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Fundraising Events

We have been lucky to benefit from a number of fundraising events this summer, like the big one by Angela Longoni-Sarr mentioned in our weekly blog in late September. Thanks to all who helped us in any way.

Maxine Beech, a teacher at Bishop Heber High School in Cheshire has also been fundraising for GETS with 10 of her Sixth Form students by holding a Christmas Fayre on 8th December. The students are all studying sociology as an A Level, and will be visiting the Sunrise Centre in their February half term to do a comparative study of Gambian culture, as well as finding out a bit more about how the Sunrise centre runs.

The Fayre was well attended and offered a range of homemade Christmas gifts, nearly new goods, cakes, a 'water into wine' stand, children's craft activities, as well as a raffle and auction. The Fayre and raffle raised around £2,000 to help complete the building of the lower basic school.

Thanks to all GETS supporters who purchased raffle tickets—18 winners were drawn and contacted by the students on 17th December.

More from Maxine and her students in the Blog during February about their adventures in The Gambia.



Christmas
fun in Malpas

We are Extending again at Sunrise

Following a grant from the Allen and Nesta Trust Fund of £15,000 to GETS we have been able to begin our next phase of building works within the Lower Basic School. Known as Phase 2 this provide a further 4 classrooms (for 112 pupils) and puts us well ahead of our vision to complete in time to retain our students when they finish the second year of LBS education.



Of course we need to do many more things to complete the further classrooms, like providing desks, chairs books and recruiting teachers. All of which we will still need to fund. We also need another £8,000 to complete the actual fabric of the school; providing internal finishes, blackboards, tiling and electrical works (our Phase 3) before things are finished. However we are very hopeful that this can all happen in time.

As Sunrise becomes a building site again we are excited to be growing our school to provide more for local people. The progress is already to the ground floor window lintel height.

The current work provides a secure building and hopefully better protection from the heavy rains that come every year (around June).



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<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Gambia-Education-and-Teaching-Support/130145797115686>