



GETS News!

Summer 2014
New from the final term at the
Sunrise Centre, Gambia
([click here](#) to access our printable version)



INVITATION



Gambia Education and
Teaching Support

To all of our friends, old and new, please consider joining us for our annual general meeting. Lunch is provided, free, at 12pm and the meeting starts around 1pm. It's a great chance to meet the trustees, other supporters and get a round up of the year's events. It also give you a great opportunity to ask questions and have a say in how we spend your donations.

AGM
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

30th August
Martin Heath
Hall
Lichfield
WS13 8AY
12pm



Building Plans for 2015

We have been talking about building a Nursery playground for some time now, but we actually made a start on it this year. We started by bringing in fresh sand and removing the rubble to improve safety for the little ones, then provided a circular shady tiled seating area around a new tree (about to be planted) and along the rear of the Nursery classrooms. However, this used much of our budget and it was not until we got a generous promise of cash from supporter Angela Longoni-Sarr that we could begin to complete our plans. Angela works with the Driffield Air Cadets and has been a tremendous help in funding developments at Sunrise.

www.gets.gm
www.facebook.com/gambianeducation
www.twitter.com/GambiaTeaching

R.S.V.P.
nelson sue4@googlemail.com

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Gambian Registered Charity No. 10/2004

We also have plans to increase the size of the smallest of our Nursery classrooms (from 5x5m to 5x7m) and also add an extension block for a Nursery Reception classroom (to allow us to take in 3-4 year olds), extra toilets and a new secure Store. The picture shows the completed school.

This work will be initially funded by a Winchester based Catholic Church charity (Covenant with the Poor or CWP - www.hampshiredownswinchester.org/outreach-and-mission-ministry/covenant-with-the-poor) but we are likely to need much more cash so our fund-raising this year will target this important development (see our fundraising feature).



More Food and Drink – Help Required!!

We have been lucky enough to have been offered a FREE stand at the Nantwich Food and Drink Festival (www.nantwichfoodfestival.co.uk). This event is held annually and attracts thousands of visitors. Building from our success at the Chester Food Fayre, where we gained 12 new regular donors, we are very excited to be offered a stand here. The only issue is that **we need help** manning the stand. Presently we have no-one to run it on Friday 5th September, helpers on the 6th and 7th would also be welcome. The role involves handing out Gambian recipe cards and chatting about the charity. So if you live locally and could spare a few hours (and would like a day out at a food festival!) please contact us. If you're not local, but would like to help out, our trustee, Maxine Beech, can offer free accommodation to anyone who would like to help out and see a little bit of Cheshire! Maxine (maxine@sponsoraclass.co.uk) will be happy to give you some more information about the event.



A Review of 2013-14 Academic Year - By Madam Fofana (Education Director)



The 2013/2014 academic year has been a fruitful one and the credit goes to the staff of sunrise centre without them it will not be possible. The Lower Basic grew to floor level two and the building completed fully furnished with items which arrived from the UK. The Skills Training students have graduated 25 young women and a man, 50% of them have got jobs in various industries like tourism and tailoring. (In addition, 2 more will be working within Sunrise next year)
As learning should not be confined to the four walls of the classroom, the nursery, lower basic and skills students went for Educational visits to Myfarm and Banjul Museum and all the visits registered success.



Sewing machines and sowing seeds!

The commitment of Gambia Education and Teaching Support in providing quality education to the needy Gambian children is a clear testimony. During the year under review a lot of infrastructural developments were undertaken by GETS, the expansion of the sewing class because of the high demand the previous room cannot cater for our needs. New sewing machines were bought, the garden walls built and a sports area also built.



The staff and students appreciation of GETS support, the students also embarked on gardening and they were able to raise five hundred and fifteen Dalasis (D515.00) which will be used to buy some garden tools. Although a Charity school, there is still a need to embark on little income generating activities, some tie and dye materials were sold bulk of them still in store.

Beautiful fabrics made by skills students



On the area of capacity development for the staff I must say bravo to GETS, one of the Nursery teachers Fatou Sanneh has completed her Early Childhood Development (ECD) training at the Gambia College and she was sponsored by GETS. Fatou A Cham and Fatoumata Darboe (our new Lower Basic Teacher) are going to the College to do Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC) also funded by GETS (*update - sadly our new teacher has had to postpone the PTC training course until next year due to family commitments). Alimatou Jammeh is also sponsored by the trustees of GETS to do a diploma in cookery at the Gambia Hotel School.



Alimatou Jammeh, our cookery teacher, will start her diploma

The successes are numerous though there are challenges as the centre is growing, due the high demands by parents to enroll their children at Sunrise Nursery there is need to have three classes for the Nursery so that the school can enroll aged 3 to 4 years but due limit funds we are unable to start the building yet. The play ground for the Nursery is of urgency as little children have short attention span of 30 minutes at most. We have started the development and have now found the funds to enable us to complete it.

As staff recruitment for higher grades for the Lower Basic is a challenge, there need for support to capacitate the staff to be able to handle the higher grades. The demand for sponsorship by poor parents of the Gambian needy children is high and we will be grateful to have more sponsors for these children to access quality education. As our ambition to expand the Skills Training to serve the developmental needs of the Gambia would like to introduce new skills but we lack the capital to introduce these new areas like Hair Dressing and cosmetics, engineering programmes. In introducing these areas we need to expand the infrastructure but the equipment and space still remain a challenge.

I wish express my sincere gratitude to the Trustees and supporters for making the year a success.



Travelling FROM the Gambia?

We know that many of our supporters come to the Gambia heavily laden with gifts and goodies for the students. What we're appealing for is anyone travelling back home with a little luggage space to spare after the goodies have been dished out. We often produce fabrics at Sunrise that can be sold in the UK, but getting them here is often difficult.

Please get in touch if you think you can help courier a few small items, in particular anyone coming back to the UK before Christmas. Many thanks!



FUNdraising



In this edition you will have read about our ambitions for the new nursery class. We really think this is so important to the future of Sunrise, and we're in desperate need of funds to get the building work started. We've seen a variety of fundraising events over the last year – summer fun days, food festivals, selling valentines roses, car boot sales, WI talks, selling goods made at Sunrise and so on. We had some responses to our 'Give it up for GETS' campaign – a trustee giving up eating in daylight for Ramadan, and a student giving up crisps and chocolate. We've also had some other thoughtful and meaningful ideas such as donations in lieu of wedding anniversary gifts ('Gifts for GETS').

But we need more, and we know our supporters have got some very creative fundraising ideas. If you can think of any ways to raise even more funds, or if you've already organised an event we've not yet heard about please do contact us. We'd love to feature your event in the next newsletter!



Fun Fundraising ideas:

- *Afternoon tea
- *Raffle
- *eBay sale
- *sponsored challenge (fancy this? www.zipworld.co.uk)
- *Quiz night
- *Supermarket bag packing (in fancy dress?!)
- *Film night
- *[Give it up for GETS!](#)



Calling New Sponsors!



This year has seen the start of our Sponsor a Class project in action. We've had a great response, especially after visiting Chester Food and Drink Fayre – but we need to do more! This project can generate much needed funds for our school, and helps us to plan our budget for the year, so the more people who get involved the better. If all of our supporters could tell just one or two new people about it just think what we could achieve! We are urging you to spread the message wherever you can. If you'd like some free leaflets to hand out, or know of a prominent place they could be displayed (with permission), please email maxine@sponsoraclass.co.uk and she'll be happy to send some out to you.

Did you know we also offer Sponsor a Class as a gift package? This can be tailored to birthdays, weddings, Christenings – and although it seems a long way off, Christmas will be upon us before you know it! Each gift sponsorship will include a greetings card that you can personalise, plus a gift hand made by the vocational skills students at Sunrise. Each sponsor will also receive a Christmas card hand signed by someone in the class they support. If that's enough to tempt you, you can download our sign-up and gift forms from our dedicated website: www.sponsoraclass.co.uk



RIYKA



Former Student London Debut!

GETS is so proud to learn that a former skills student, Elizabeth Lopy, has been offered some work for a London fashion designer! Rebecca at Riyka (www.riyka.com) heard about Elizabeth through one of the trustees, and sent off a sample for Elizabeth to sew. Rebecca was so impressed with Elizabeth's level of skill and attention to detail that she has commissioned her to make 20 bags that will be sold on the Riyka website before Christmas! We'll certainly let you know when they go on sale. It seems the sky is the limit for students learning skills in the Gambia and we wish Elizabeth every success.

Getting to know your Trustees . . .



Paul, a retired accountant, and Dawn (Webster), a retired teacher, have been married for 55 years. They have two daughters, both maths teachers and one grand-daughter, currently studying for an Open University degree as she did not want to graduate with a huge debt!

How did we get involved with GETS?

One cold January day in 1999 we were passing a travel agent's bargain window and saw a last minute bargain holiday to Lanzarote. Great idea, we thought and in we went. However the date was for the half-term holiday and we had already decided that now Dawn had retired from teaching we would rather take holidays at a less busy time. Not wanting to miss a sale the agent said "It's always warm in Gambia! You might like Gambia, some people do - though some don't". Her words aroused our interest and a couple of weeks later we were in Gambia. We thoroughly enjoyed our holiday in Gambia and have been back there nearly every year since then.

We met Francis Glynn and joined Gambia Tourist Support, helping raise money to build the little nursery school in Bakoteh (see right). Then the educational part of GTS grew to such an extent that it was decided to start a new charity, Gambia Education and Teaching Support. When the original Treasurer retired, no-one could be found to take her place and Francis feared we would have to pay an accountant to be our Treasurer. Knowing how much this would cost, I volunteered to be the new Treasurer as my husband, Paul, was an accountant and could help me. As GETS grew and grew the accounts became more complicated so I eventually persuaded Paul to become the Treasurer, responsible for preparing these very detailed accounts and explaining them to members at the AGM.



Late on, when our Sponsorship Secretary resigned, I offered to take her place as I had been involved with the sponsorship accounts when I was Treasurer and knew I could cope with these accounts! I have followed the progress of our sponsored students with great interest and am delighted to see the difference that GETS sponsorship has made to their lives.

Sunrise Centre is another area where GETS has made a great difference to many lives - the students, the teachers and also others employed in the smooth running of the centre. We receive a warm welcome from everyone at Sunrise and see new developments on every visit. GETS contributes to the future of Gambia by providing education to young Gambians and their teachers. We are proud to be part of GETS.



How I support GETS By Gillian Hinks

I usually give to charities in the UK such as British Heart Foundation due to family links, but when I heard about sponsorship in the Gambia I liked the idea of a close personal link with the charity. Sponsorship means I get updates about where my money is going.

I saw Ma Binta Fofana on the GETS website and she's about the same age as my daughter. She needed funding to complete her third year in Sunrise skills, so I signed up to support her. It's been great to see how she has progressed over the year, and how she has now graduated and is working in a restaurant in Kairaba Avenue called 4Seasons.

I'm now intending to [sponsor a class](#) so that I can see the progress of around 30 children over the years. I love the idea of getting termly updates and letters or drawings from individuals. I'm looking forward to seeing the photos when they start back at school in September!

Gillian Hinks and Ma Binta Fofana



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