



GETS News!

May 2016

Issue 29

[\(click here to access our printable version\)](#)



Our New Education Director

My name is Mr Alkali Cham and I was born to typical Mandinka parents who were not lucky enough to taste the fruit of modern education. I am married to Fatoumatta Mbanga from the Wolof tribe and we are lucky to be blessed with a daughter called Mariama Cham. Mariama was named after my late mother who died when I was just 5 years old.

Formerly, I was with a private school named Munazamt- Al-Dawa Al-Islamia Kotu Lower Basic School, located in Kotu just 5 minutes drive from Sunrise. This is run by an Arabic charity with its HQ in Sudan. The charity's key purpose was the preaching and spreading the principles of Islam to Gambian people through the modern education system. I was the Deputy Headteacher at the school where there were less than 200 pupils which made it very easy to administer.

From my first moments at Sunrise I had to use a wide range of skills on different management components. This is the first time I am privileged to run such a school with different academic disciplines but with the commitment of the teaching staff and the support from the GETS Trustees I feel that I am paddling the "boat of administration" in the right direction.



Mr Alkali Cham

I really want to praise the staff and students of Sunrise for their relentless efforts in making sure the standard is maintained at Sunrise and the administration for ensuring that policies designed to complement this effort are complied with.

Introducing Georgette

As Alkali has said, the Sunrise Administration is key to making everything as smooth as possible, given all the challenges of working in the Gambian environment and we are delighted to welcome Georgette Coker to our team in the office.

Georgette joined us at Sunrise in February as the newly appointed Office Administrator. She previously worked at the British Embassy as a Senior Receptionist for nearly 23 years. In her spare time she enjoys singing, mainly with her church group.



Georgette Coker in the Sunrise office

The Sunrise Nursery classes joined with children from London Corner Nursery school.



180 small children aged below 6 competed in races like 50m sprint, potato race, sack race, bean bag and hard fought tug-of-wars. Prizes were given to individuals, and to the winning team – Father Kenny's group.

Sulayman Jobe LB Classroom Assistant demonstrating the bean bag race

Sports Day



My Visit to Sunrise Centre – Barry Young



Alkali Cham and Barry Young

I arrived in the Gambia on April 6th to the usual warm sunshine and warm greeting from Forday Jarju and Alijeh Mbye from Hibiscus House Hotel who met me at the airport. On the way to the hotel in Brufut I caught up with all the news from the Hotel. It seems that it has been another quiet tourist season in the Gambia, perhaps due to the Ebola outbreak that hit other parts of West Africa, but not Gambia, though it seems that visitors are still nervous about this. Hence Hibiscus House was also quiet when I arrived. When I leave on April 20th Hibiscus House will close for the rainy season and the staff are worried about how they will survive for the next six months with no job and no regular income and the same can be said for many seasonal hospitality workers throughout the Gambia.

I like staying at Hibiscus House where my wife and I have holidayed for a number of years (although she has not accompanied me this time) but the drawback is that it is a twenty minute car ride to the Sunrise Centre. Alijeh Mbye has been given the job of driving me to the school each day. He is normally the tourist guide at the Hotel but is acting as my taxi driver at this time.

I spent six weeks at the school as a volunteer in 2014 but this is my first visit as a trustee. As a volunteer, one perhaps has the luxury of only becoming involved in matters within one's field of knowledge and turning a blind eye to other issues! Now, as a trustee I am quickly involved in many other areas – school sports day, maintenance of sewing machines in Skills, leaking toilets and many other maintenance issues. My head is spinning and I find it difficult to concentrate in the small office with four of us working in hot and sticky conditions. Perhaps I am getting too old for this!

In one break time I met the two young girls that my wife and I sponsor. My wife has put together a folder for them both with photographs, a colouring book and some crayons. I also met a young lad sponsored by a friend of ours.

One of my final tasks is to oversee a Fire Drill to practice the safe evacuation of the premises in the event of an emergency. Alkali gives the signal – three blasts on a horn and evacuation is completed in 3.5 minutes. A great result!



Fire drill practice – all out in 3.5 minutes

All too soon it is time to return to the UK, leaving me thinking that I still have a lot to learn about the workings of the school, but I know more than when I came! I say my farewells to those at the school and to my friends at Hibiscus House hoping that they will all be around when I come next time.

Trips to the Monkey Park and Albreda

We try and provide a broad range of activities at Sunrise so that the children and young students are learning both within the classroom but just as importantly about life outside too.

This year was no exception with a Nursery Sports Day, another Ebbeh Day, trips to the Monkey Park and the beach but also a more adventurous couple of days traveling up the country to Albreda, where they stayed in a local school.



Mrs Cham having fun with her LB pupils on the beach at Kololi.



Trips continued. . .



Albreda is where the world famous Roots Museum is situated. This museum houses important exhibitions about the dark days of the slave trade from The Gambia, symbolised by the statue with broken chains and the phrase "Never Again".



Pupils from LB4 and Students from skills travelled on a ferry boat and local Gelle-Gelles to reach Albreda where they caught another boat (a pirogue) to Kunta Kinteh Island (formerly James Island).



Year 3 Skills students practice a graduation cake

Teachers use lots of varied methods to help the children learn new concepts. Fatou Sanneh (right) is explaining the idea of a plan using the classroom as an example.

Doing Well at Sunrise

We're always thrilled at the progress that we see the youngsters at Sunrise making. Whether they are learning new skills in the classroom or growing in height or stature and maturity. The teaching style and content seems to work at all levels and can be seen everyday.

We have just learnt that 70% of our Skills Training year three students have been promised jobs following their work placements in the January-April Term.



Fatoumatta Darboe (left) has brought back the idea of running a classroom shop from her teacher training course, to help with maths tuition. Students 'purchase' items, all in Gambian dalasi.

And of course the children love to show and are proud of their work as Paul Lopy clearly demonstrates by showing his school book.



New Trustees?



As our current newsletter shows, GETS is making a real difference in The Gambia and we want this to continue. We are planning to help nearly 450 children every year within Sunrise (when complete) or in other local schools. To ensure that this keeps going the trustees are appealing for other supporters to **join the GETS leadership** team and do a little more to help.

Going forward we need new ideas, more skills and the enthusiasm that comes with someone new helping us to invest sponsors money in a developing country. This is a really worthwhile activity that can consume a little or a lot of time, depending on what is available. We prefer to have trustees that have experience in Africa but even this isn't as essential as we have all learnt as we go along and continue to do so.

Please come and help us. For more information contact tony@gets-sunrise.org



Students Seeking Sponsorship



Paul Mendy

D.O.B. 25/01/1999



Peter Mendy

D.O.B. 25/01/1999



Anthony Correa

D.O.B. 16/05/1999

We are appealing for help for these three boys because they have been sponsored by our supporters for many years but due to a tragic accident their sponsor has recently passed away. The father of the twins is also responsible for their cousin Anthony and although the father is in work he does not earn enough to feed, clothe and educate all three boys. They are currently in Grade 10 at St Augustine's Senior School and will need help to pay their Grade 11 and 12 fees so they can sit the Grade 12 school leaving certificate.

We do not usually ask for sponsors for students at schools other than Sunrise, but as we feel that this is a very special case we appeal for sponsors or contributions towards the completion of their schooling.



Gambia Education and Teaching Support

www.getsuk.org

www.facebook.com/gambiaeducation

www.twitter.com/GambiaEducation

UK Registered Charity No. 1110998

Gambian Registered Charity No. 343/2011



AGM
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Advance notice of this year's AGM. To be held on Saturday 3rd September at Macclesfield Methodist Church Hall, SK10 1BX.

More details to follow, but you are all invited to join us for a free lunch at 12pm, followed by our meeting at around 1pm.