

# The Gambian Schools Trust Newsletter - Spring 2018

[www.gambianschools.org](http://www.gambianschools.org)

find us on Facebook 

[gambian.schools@gmail.com](mailto:gambian.schools@gmail.com) <> 01274 585431



Charity no.1093083

## WELCOME to our new look newsletter.

**Library number 11** Opened in February 2018 at **Loumen** Nursery and Lower Basic School. Special thanks to the donors (they wish to remain anonymous) who funded the project in memory of Syd and Margaret. Thanks also to the volunteers who painted the whole school and library and stocked the shelves - Anne and Steve Worsman, Gloria Calveri and Paul and Steven Neimantas.



**Teachers Quarters.** In The Gambia, teachers are posted to schools, rather than applying for a position, and are frequently a long way from home. They are expected to find lodgings nearby, very difficult in rural villages where homes are already overcrowded! These quarters provide staff with their own space, a comfortable bed and a social environment with their colleagues whilst away from home. Thank you to the Holden family for their kind donation in memory of Margaret.

### First Gambia School Trip.

74 pupils from **Loumen**, with four teachers, a cook and a member of the school management committee, made a 300 mile round trip of The Gambia visiting sites associated with both its history and present day life. For the majority it was their first trip away from the village, a first sight of the river, the ocean, a ferry and, most exciting, the airport and an aeroplane!! We plan to organise a similar trip with pupils from Jamwelly next year.



*Fantastic Success - how things grow when seeds are sown and nurtured!*

**Hassan Jallow**, a young pupil at **Essau**, our first Library site, had an insatiable appetite for books and learning. Now he has his own company writing and developing software for large organisations such as the UN, Government and the Chamber of Commerce. He is now developing commercial apps including iOS (Apple) and Android, games and other programmes. He and his associates are currently working on our soon to be launched new GST website.

**Container number 14** Loaded in October 2017 by volunteers at a location donated by Bizspace. Unloaded in December at our storeroom in The Gambia. Full of items donated by generous schools, businesses and supporters in the UK. Each year we collect exercise books, pencils, art materials, stacking tables and chairs, metal cupboards, computers, science equipment, gardening tools and books both reference and reading. Items are distributed to the five schools maintained by the charity AND many others throughout the country.



**Future secured for Schools.** Two of the charity owned schools have been transferred to the Gambian Ministry of Education to be staffed by them. In both cases the schools are now being run by a local Community School Management Committee. **KUMBIJA** is being expanded and has now added Grade 1 classes

with plans to add a grade class each year up to grade 6. The school formerly known as Naata has been renamed **KUNKUJANG KEITAYA ANNEX NURSERY** where the new and very active SMC has increased the roll by 80% and organised both Commonwealth and Independence Day celebrations for the enjoyment of the pupils. The charity continues to support with uniforms, food, materials and maintenance exactly as before the handover.



**NEMASU** continues to improve its already excellent level of teaching. The staff have all qualified as Early Years teachers and the school now has four classes catering for pupils from 3 to 7. Many are able to graduate straight into 2nd and sometimes the 3rd year of their next school.

**Future plans.** The largest and most urgent requirements are for an additional classroom block and teachers quarters at **LOUMEN**. A temporary classroom has been built by the School Management Committee but it is neither suitable or waterproof. Grade 6 will be added in September bringing extra staff and the need for a more permanent solution. The existing staff are currently lodging in the nearby villages sometimes sharing a room with several others They need and would greatly appreciate a place to stay! To provide these facilities will cost in excess of **£15000**.



At **JAMWELLY**, the roll is now over 300 pupils with nursery and grades 1 to 6. They wish to extend the school garden but need a further source of water to do this. Either another hand pump well or solar bore hole is required.



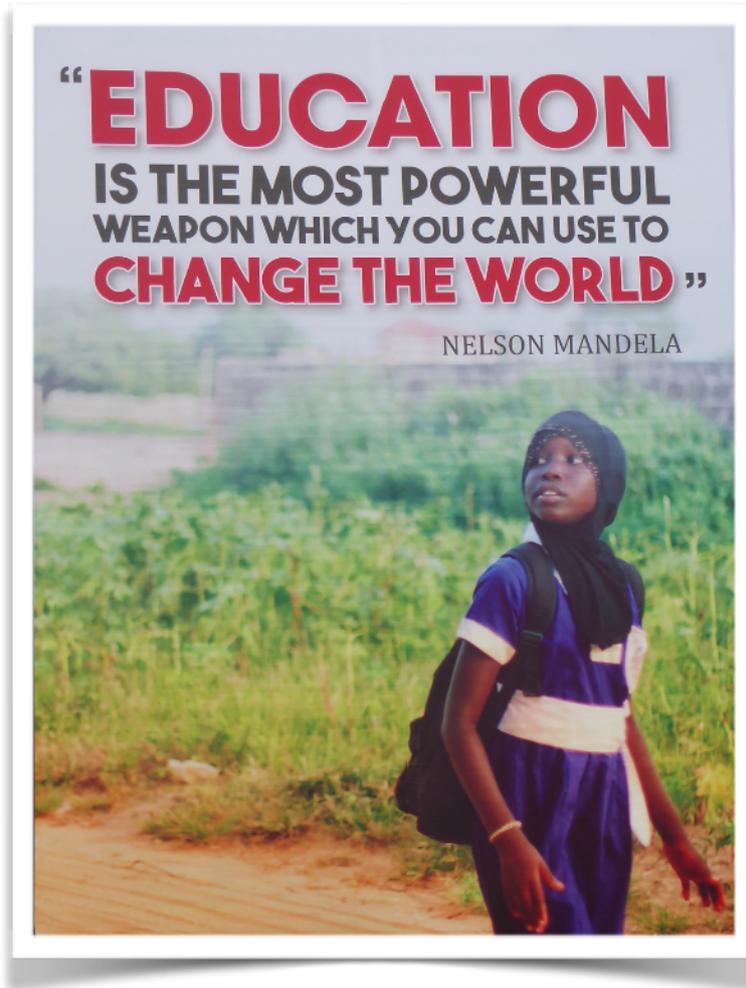
**How do we do all this?** All projects are undertaken only when all the funds are in place. The Trustees oversee every aspect of a building from Design, Costing, Purchasing and Employment of local labour. This eliminates the need for a contractor thereby keeping costs to an absolute minimum. All Gambian Schools Trust Volunteers and Trustees are self funding. Every penny raised for a project is spent on the project for which it is raised or donated.



**Nothing would happen without the tireless efforts and generosity of our supporters** who organise fund raising events from garden parties to jumping out of aeroplanes, donate monthly by standing order, hold coffee mornings, or attend curry nights, bring books and donated items for the container and help pack and load everything for shipment.

**So, why do we do it?**

**This picture says it all much better than we can!**



### **Still Lots to do...**

Education is at the forefront of the new Gambian Government plans with hopes and aims to make it compulsory when practical in the future. Our three rural nursery schools have been such a success that they have now added primary school classes in each. Buildings are being used all day long and helping pupils to access education locally rather than having to travel, or not at all. Literacy levels which were at 10% when our charity was founded are now rising dramatically amongst the younger generation who have had the opportunity to attend free schools due, in no small part, to GST efforts. Senior Schools are being built or classes added to existing schools, because of these increasing numbers, to help further develop the country.

Plans to develop the infrastructure and electrical supply are beginning to bear fruit, opening up access to more remote areas and villages where there is widespread poverty and great need. The World Bank is now helping, but The Gambia is still a VERY poor country. The World Food Program has returned at long last and is providing food at some of our rural schools. This is allowing the trustees, to channel the money saved to other areas or aspects of GST work where there is even greater need. There is plenty more to do.

With your much needed help we can continue to make a major difference well into the future  
and turn their hopes into reality....

# **A VERY BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE**

**Trustees:- Christine Brown, Linda Gunn, Hilary Lawther, Steve Lawther, Paul Neimantas, David Oldfield**