

THANK YOU

To all those amazing people who have helped us this year in whatever way to turn hopes into reality once again

You're FANTASTIC



KUMBIJA has its new classroom block ready, a year ahead of plans, and also Library number 14. Lower Basic Grade 4 Classes will commence in September, all being well (and Covid-19 permitting).

Volunteer Roger adding finishing touches



Our new working relationship with **ADVENTURES FOR STUDENTS**

saw their first visit during October half term. 10 Students and 2 Staff from National Citizen Service spent a week in The Gambia, the highlight being three days living in the village of Kerr Chernon where they cleaned, painted, fitted out a classroom and set up Library number 13. A Tree planting exercise took place at a number of locations within the village. More trips with this organisation are planned for the future.

LOUMEN is putting its new classroom block to good use. Grade six pupils graduated in July 2019 and are now attending the nearest Senior Secondary Schools, Naygen Sanjal and Sinchu Njabo (where Library 15 is planned with Adventures for Students on their next trip.



Classroom being used for vaccinations against cervical cancer for girls.

JAMWELLY school and village are now enjoying fresh water from their new solar powered well thanks to Bradford Bronte Rotary Club's sponsorship. The orchard perimeter wall has also been completed.



KUNKUJANG ANNEX NURSERY continues to improve all standards under the guidance of headteacher, Kumba. A group of Plymouth University students visited in December to gain experience in Early Child Development and then also took part in relevant activities at the nearby Upper and Lower Basic Schools.



Steve with Annex Nursery Graduate

NEMASU did really well in the recent inter-nursery sports competition, especially pleasing with sport having been a regular part of the curriculum for some considerable time. Steve had the pleasure of attending ceremonies last summer when 38 students graduated at Nemasu and 55 at Kunkujang. (All students now move on at 7 years of age)



Nemasu-graduates

*We take this opportunity to remember our long-time, loyal supporter, **Carolyn Williams**. We mourn her loss and give thanks for her most generous legacy.*

Our **TREE PLANTING** and education project continues apace at our rural schools with thanks to all who donated for



this, and practical help in The Gambia. An example of this is Alieu Badara school in Brufut. With only about 100 sq metres of garden they have raised hundreds of tree seedlings- a truck load of these has been delivered and they are now growing in Kumbija, Loumen, Kunkujang and Kerr Chernon. We have been able to help in return by donating computers and a printer.

Hilary advising the planters



Careful management, expertise and hands on experience throughout ensure that we spend wisely and without waste. Everything possible including labour is locally sourced. All GST volunteers and Trustees are self funding. All admin is free, thus **we keep our costs to a minimum.**

This applies not only to the special projects mentioned in this newsletter, but equally importantly to all other essential activities - building maintenance, redecoration, wear and tear, emergency repairs, flood and storm damage, bore-hole and mechanical well pump replacement, preparation of computers for local use, storage logistics, transport planning etc, etc. The list goes on! All of these are absolutely fundamental in ensuring the longevity of what we create or enable and in getting the best value for money from every single donation.

EVERY PENNY, WHETHER GIVEN OR SPENT, IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT.



Container number 15

CONTAINER Number 16

planned for October providing we can collect resources over the next few months.

This year we are in particular need of:- school tables and chairs, all ages.



Reference books with pictures, all ages. Reading books for young children and young adults. Pencils, pens, paper and exercise books.

COVID-19 is in The Gambia. All schools closed indefinitely in March 2020 to ensure the safety of pupils and teachers and help contain the spread of the virus. Lessons are being broadcast on television and radio for those few pupils lucky enough to have access to media. Like many countries in the under-developed world it is virtually impossible to have a complete lockdown. A large percentage of the population lives on a day to day basis and no work or sales means no food. In addition to the potential human cost, the country is suffering badly economically. The collapse of Thomas Cook had a devastating effect well before the Covid-19 onset. The country has made great advances in education over this last few years and our help continues to be needed more than ever.

GST has grown from strength to strength, working increasingly with the Government to ensure the long term security of its projects and to make a positive difference to the lives of an increasing number of children (and adults). Our schools are expanding, teaching more children of greater age range in buildings used ever more efficiently throughout the full day. Whilst we have already achieved much, there is **STILL LOTS TO DO.**

THANKS AGAIN EVERYONE

To see how you can help, or to look for updates, please check our website and facebook, or contact the trustees:-

Christine Brown, Linda Gunn, Hilary Lawther, Steve Lawther, Paul Neimantas, David Oldfield