

## 2018 Project Gambia Update



2018 has certainly begun in style as we had the privilege of opening a brand new Preschool called Lanwarr Community Preschool. A joyful opening ceremony took place on January 12<sup>th</sup> 2018, exactly one year after breaking ground and laying the first bricks. We were joined by distinguished guests representing religious, political, educational and community leaders and elders. Many members of the local community attended, eager to see this new school open. All those involved in its construction were congratulated and our inspirational Headteacher, Sarjo Manneh delivered an equally inspirational speech and cut the ceremonial ribbon with her husband Momodou Darboe (known to us as Pa) and Neil Griffiths, Chair of Project Gambia.

Huge thanks were offered to Sarjo's Father-in-law, Afang Lang Darboe who so generously gifted the land to the community for the Preschool ensuring that his dream of hearing the sound of children being educated in his back garden will be achieved. We presented him with a photobook of the build.



We were fortunate to be successful in applying for some funding from Thomas Cook Children's Charity to help to resource this Preschool and we are very grateful for their generosity and support.





Students from Shekou International School in China who were learning about water, kindly fund raised for the toilets for Lanwarr Community Preschool, helping them become more aware of the importance of and access to clean water. They are entering a major competition at the end of January about their challenge of working with us and we wish them the very best of luck.

This means that the Gunjur Preschool group now totals 7, with 28 classes and almost 1000 children and 40 teachers. Who would have believed this possible when it all began with one Preschool in Gunjur 16 years ago?

The Preschools are now fully resourced to deliver their early years curriculum which they created and have professionally reviewed and updated on four occasions to date. This has ensured that it offers an appropriate education for young Gambian children. In terms of progress, all the Preschools now have water taps, gardens, outside play areas, water play tables, individual books corners in each classroom and clean toilets.

Each child has a midday snack and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Preschools now offer lunchtime meals through food programmes. It's interesting to note that a food programme for a Preschool costs £1000 for a year to feed 90 children every school day. That's approximately £5.55 per day food costs or 6 pence per child, per day. If you would like to support this vital area, please do get in contact with us.





We are delighted that every Teacher will have become fully qualified in Early Years education through the Gambia College by the Summer of 2019. We currently have 11 Teachers accessing their training there, which they attend in all of the school holidays. They are actively sharing their new learning as they put ideas into practice not only in the classroom, but through sharing with all of the Teachers from all 7 Preschools at regular teacher training events.



An extensive ongoing training programme has also been completed covering all areas of the curriculum including lesson planning and delivery, classroom organisation, literacy, early writing and mark making, PE and physical development, Art and creativity, model making, role play, music, sand and water play, working with puppets, gardening, storytelling and the use of resources. In the future, we hope to explore numeracy in more depth.



The wonderful Headteachers have carried out their own analysis of current focus areas and have created an annual development plan. They meet regularly to review each area and to provide in-house training. Project Gambia aligns it's training programme to this development plan so that we are all working as collaboratively as possible to support the quality and relevance of the Gambian curriculum.



To broaden the experiences for the children and to bring learning out of the classroom, our children now make planned visits to the market, the Women's Garden's, the Art Village, the seaside and the river and the health clinic. They get involved in cooking and learn how to plant and grow vegetables.



So much has been achieved and the Headteachers and teachers have made progress well above our expectations and should be congratulated.

But none of this would have been possible without the tireless work of all those involved in Project Gambia which is about to celebrate it's 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday as a registered charity with the Charity Commission in April 2018.



This year has also been a busy one in terms of fundraising; we've eaten curry, baked cakes, made hundreds of sandwiches, accompanied sponsored walks, given talks and presentations, folded 1,000's of raffle tickets and danced into the night. Thank you to everyone who helped to make these events successful. There's always a great deal of work that goes on behind the scenes to prepare for any type of event (and the clearing up afterwards!) and we've been privileged to be surrounded by people who are willing to do this and we are eternally grateful for their generosity and love them being part of the Project Gambia family. We've also been fortunate that links with some corporate companies have enabled us to receive some match funding from some of our events which has bolstered the help that we can give to the children and families in Gunjur. We have increased the number of people who are now kindly making a regular monthly donation through our 200 Club which helps us to make it possible for more young children to attend Preschool, receive a uniform and meals. If you'd like more information, please just ask or visit our website:

<https://projectgambia200.wixsite.com/welcome/support-us>

We are planning more fundraising events for 2018, and any ideas of the type of thing you'd like to attend would be welcome. We're open to suggestions!





The Trustees of Project Gambia wish to thank family, friends, all Club 200 donors, all supporters of our events, Thomas Cook Children's Charity, Metro Bank, Mothercare plc, Shekou International School, Nationwide Building Society, Microsoft, Intel, Pop of Ages, Bengal Square Restaurant, Swindon Rugby Football Club, Swindon Town Football in the Community Trust, MBG, Meadow Park School, Origin Designs, NHBC, Wiltshire Scrap Store, The Puppet Company and everyone who has so kindly helped us along the way. Thank you for your generosity. We are looking forward to the year ahead and hope that you will join us to make it another successful one for the children and their families in Gunjur.

*Neil, Anita, Steve and Rosemary*

Trustees of Project Gambia

**Our contact details:**

Project Gambia

Registered Charity Number: **1166472**



projectgambia200@gmail.com



23 Watermead, Stratton St Margaret, Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 4WE



07734 653779



[www.facebook.com/ProjectGambia200](http://www.facebook.com/ProjectGambia200)



[www.twitter.com/Gambia200](http://www.twitter.com/Gambia200)



<https://projectgambia200.wixsite.com/welcome>

