

## 2019 Project Gambia Newsletter



Our focus on this recent trip was all about numeracy- the beauty of understanding and working with numbers, and its numbers that we thought we'd start off this update with.



Project Gambia now has **968** children in **7** Preschools.



We encourage great practice from **46** early years teachers, and **17** of those are currently funded to attend college during their holidays to secure qualifications.



**28** Classrooms provide a stimulating and fully resourced learning environment for the children and teachers.

**4** of the 7 Preschools have funded feeding programmes which provides a lunch for the children.



**3** of the Preschools have electricity and all **7** have running water.

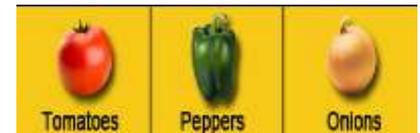
**Currency**  
**Dalasi (GMD)**

All of the teachers are receiving a salary.



All of the Preschools have girls' and boys' toilets.

All of the Preschools have vegetable gardens and space to play.



Our January 2019 trip benefitted from **800** volunteer hours.

**Numeracy** is everywhere and being numerate is a crucial life skill; enabling children to use numbers and mathematical concepts in all aspects of their lives. In many ways, the word numeracy is ambiguous, it means so many things- reasoning, recognising and working with patterns, sequencing, order, organising, matching, calculating, estimating, problem solving, making sense of numbers, understanding time and so on. Helping to make all of these concepts and skills easy and fun to learn has benefitted from some funding that we were fortunate enough to be awarded by **St James Place** in 2018. This enabled us to purchase a wide range of maths resources for each of the three levels, in each of the Preschools and this became the focus of the training sessions during our visit in January 2019. Who can remember playing

dominoes, matching dots on animals, fishing, playing with number tiles, building number towers or playing shops? All of these activities and learning experiences have been shared with the teachers and they in turn have already started sharing these with the children as you can see. It's this immediate application of learning, use of the resources and enjoyment for the children which makes us so proud.



**Fund raising** has again kept us busy this year; sponsored walks, bake sales, curry nights, Teas for Tourists, applying for grants, selling tickets for the Swindon Duck Race (which Neil was extraordinarily good at!), collections at speaking events and presentations, individual donations, company matching and trying to increase the donor numbers of our Club 200. Every fund-raising event continues to remind us of the kindness and generosity of individuals and organisations that support us and provides us with an opportunity to share stories, updates and current challenges. **If you would like us** to come and speak at a group that you organise or attend, we'd be more than delighted. **Teas for Tourists for 2019** will be held on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July at Avebury Village Hall, 10am- 5pm. All cakes and cake eaters welcome.



We've had so much positive feedback about the success of our **Boogie Night** that we're beginning to put our heads together to plan another. It seems that dancing the night away for a great cause is the perfect way to enjoy yourself and raise money. Do let us know if you have any ideas, links, contacts or suggestions.

You may recall that in January 2018 we enjoyed attending the official opening of the **Lanuwarr Community Preschool** building. The summer was spent getting the Preschool ready for children and teachers and in September 2018 it opened its doors to 60 new children and 4 new teachers. The Lanuwarr Management Committee decided that opening with children starting at level 1 and level 2 made sense and those 60 places filled up in super quick time. As we get to September 2019, the Preschool will have 'grown its own' level 3 students and all three levels will be full and with "many families begging us for admission". Visiting the Preschool in January 2019 was a complete joy.



The donor of the land for the Preschool at Lanuwarr was Afang Lang Darboe. He was a strong advocate for quality early education of young children and took an active interest in the build of the Preschool. His dream was 'to hear children's voices in the Preschool' and we are so very glad that he did. Living next door to the site, he visited regularly as the Preschool was under construction and he helped to guide the process to completion. Although, not well enough on the opening day to physically be in the Preschool, nonetheless the children all walked past his compound and stopped to greet him. They did this every day and his dream was realised. We were deeply saddened to hear in mid-September 2018, two weeks after the Preschool opened, that Mr Darboe Senior had passed away. Words seem inadequate to describe the loss felt both in The Gambia and in the UK. We know however, that his spirit lives on daily through the voices and laughter of the children.



Our teachers who are attending **training to access their qualifications** at The Gambia College and the Arabic College once again shared their learning with us during our recent visit. They put us through our paces as they taught us about fruits, numbers, new vocabulary, songs and stories. This year we also started delivering some **Leadership development** with the Headteachers, thinking about management of teams, performance of teachers and all the lovely things that come with being in charge!



Other **highlights** from our recent trip include a wonderful Sports Day, unpacking the shipments and distributing resources, the children making 'snow', water play, exploring the home corner, sand play, nature walks, hand washing procedures, toilet inspections and playing with parachutes. We also heard about the success and effectiveness of Parent Management Committees in most of the Preschools and plans to instigate these in those who don't currently have them. We also planned for all Preschools to attend Neem Cream workshops so that they can teach their parents how to make this mosquito repellent cream before the rainy season starts; this health initiative will reach 900+ families.

Throughout 2018, we continued to work together as a group of Trustees and volunteers, meeting regularly and making plans. We've been lucky enough to be joined by another volunteer of the dog variety- Snowy, Anita's dog who now attends all meetings but sadly has still not learnt to take the minutes!



This last year we've also worked hard to make sure that we are compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), we've accessed Gift Aid to make sure that we can do even more and are working within the guidance of The Charity Commission. We're looking forward to another busy year in 2019. Thank you once again for being part of that and enabling us to change the lives of 1000 children each and every day. That investment will last them their whole lives. We hope to connect with you in person throughout 2019.

*Neil, Anita, Steve and Rosemary*

Trustees of Project Gambia

Project Gambia. Registered Charity Number: **1166472**  <https://projectgambia200.wixsite.com/welcome>



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