

The following pictures will give you some idea of the work we have done in The Gambia, West Africa



☞ Our first Project - Rehabilitating a well, and funding a hand pump at Sinchu Baliya Primary School

Completed in January 1999

Classroom Block at ☞ Sinchu Baliya Primary School

Completed in December 1999



☞ Raising the Jersey Flag on the Accommodation Block (built for JOA Team)

March 16th 2004

# The Jersey Gambia Schools Trust



**Originally Formed in 1998 to Help Education in The Gambia, West Africa**



*Member of the Association of Jersey Charities reg.No. 217  
Registered in The Gambia Charity No: 111/2002*



## Jersey Gambia Schools Trust

The original 'Gambia Schools Trust Fund' came to life in May 1998, after the Founders, Robin and Carol Mallet had been on their second holiday to The Gambia. To comply with Gambian politics, and to enable us to apply for charity status in The Gambia, the name was changed on 27th February 2002 when we became Registered Charity No. 111/2002 in The Gambia; in Jersey the name was changed on 1st July, 2002 to 'Jersey Gambia Schools Trust'.

The first 'project' was Dictionaries, of which 38 were transported in their suitcases on their second visit in November 1997. This was at the request of the Headmaster at a Primary School which was included in the Itinerary of a 'Four Wheel Drive Tour' on their first visit.

It was during this second visit that it was brought to their attention that the roof of the Canteen/Kitchen Block had been blown off during a particularly windy and wet rainy season. It was also noticed that the Well, in the School playground, was unuseable because there was no hand pump available.

On returning to Jersey several 'Agencies' were approached for financial help/guidance to re-roof the Canteen/Kitchen, but it soon became apparent that one school in The Gambia was of no great concern to the larger Agencies. We were also unable to apply to the Jersey Overseas Aid Committee for financial aid, unless we went through another recognised agency such as UNICEF or OXFAM, who at that time were committed to larger projects and so were unable to help us. It was then decided that if help was to be given, then it would have to be 'self-help' and the idea of 'The Gambia Schools Trust Fund was born'.

With the guidance and assistance from an Advocate friend in Jersey a 'Constitution and Aims' was written. This was accepted by the Comptroller of Income Tax as acceptable to enable a Trust Fund to be formed. This was duly done with the help of very good friends who were happy to form a Committee to oversee the running of the Trust fund.

After the Committee had their first Meeting it was decided to apply to the Association of Jersey Charities for membership of that organisation. We were very fortunate to be accepted as members, on the proviso that we would not be able to apply for Financial aid as our work was being done outside the Island of Jersey.

It was decided to go ahead on our own, and several fund raising events were held during the summer of 1998. These events raised enough money for us to finance the rehabilitation of the Well, and also to provide a hand pump. The work was started during a third visit to The Gambia in November 1998, and completed in the middle of January 1999. The now useable Well and pump were officially handed over to Sinchu Baliya School by representatives of the Trust Fund in March 1999.

On that visit it was agreed that should enough money be raised then we would renovate one of the classroom blocks, which had been badly damaged during the previous rainy season. However, on returning to Gambia in November 1999 it was realised that the building in question was too unstable to be repaired, so it was decided that a new block would have to be built. This was started in November 1999 and the keys of the new building were handed to the Headmaster on December 29th of that year.

It was then decided in Committee that we should now move on to other schools. We approached Education Authorities for guidance as to where to go next, and were informed of three schools that required wells and latrine blocks further up country, so it was agreed that we would raise funds for these projects.

In the year 2000 the Jersey Overseas Aid Committee formed a Sub-Committee to give aid to local Charities working overseas. We are extremely grateful to them because since then we have received substantial Grants to enable help us to continue our wells and latrine projects. All money received from this Sub-Committee is accounted for after each project, and they are kept fully informed of project progress.

In 2002 we were given Charity Status by the Gambian Authorities. To comply with regulations we now have a sub-committee in The Gambia, who oversee all our projects for us. We also have a Projects Coordinator there, who investigates all requests for help from the schools. If he thinks they warrant a 'hand up', he acquires costings etc. before we put them on our files as 'Future Projects'.

At this point we must say that no money is 'sent' to the Gambia - it is all 'taken' and exchanged in the country. Projects are not taken on without a Contract being properly drawn up, and signed by all parties concerned. In this way we ensure that no money donated to the Jersey Gambia Schools Trust is misspent. Whoever goes to the Gambia on our behalf is expected to pay their own travel expenses to and from The Gambia. Local administration costs are kept to an absolute minimum by the generosity of our Committee and their friends.

The Trust Fund also gratefully accept donations of PC's, Printers; Typewriters - (Manual & Electric); School Text/Reading books and School Furniture, such as tables and chairs. Obviously all equipment is checked for 'usability' before it is shipped, as there is no point in sending anything that needs repairing before it can be used!

Having been in constant contact with the Education Authorities in The Gambia, it is now realised that 'Education for Living' is all important and this begins at Primary School. All schools are now encouraged to have their own gardens, so that the children can learn about growing food for their own benefit from an early age, particularly in the rural areas. Also, the need to grow their own vegetables for use in the school kitchens is important so that money, which is scarce, does not have to be spent in buying food. Hence the need for wells to be sunk in close proximity to these vegetable gardens.

In 2004 the Jersey Overseas Aid Committee funded the building of a Skills Centre in the village of Sohm in the provinces, as one of their three main projects for that year. This Skills Centre is to provide practical training for those students who wish to learn a trade such as Car Maintenance, Carpentry, Metalwork, Dressmaking, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry. We hope to open to Students in September 2006.

We hope that this has given you an insight into what The Jersey Gambia Schools Trust is all about. We know that there are a great number of people in Jersey, and elsewhere, who go to The Gambia on holiday, and when they are there want to do something to help. With this in mind we have now formed 'The Friends of Jersey Gambia Schools Trust'. If you would like to apply for Membership please contact:

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