



February 2011
Issue 1

Welcome
to our very first newsletter
which we hope you will
find interesting.



Welcome

Thank you for requesting updates on The School Development Fund and welcome to our very first newsletter which we hope you will find interesting.

Although first set up in 1989 the fund was officially relaunched in June 2010 and since that time we have been busy selecting projects, creating our website and organising events which include the setting up of our very own school tuck shop and sponsoring a SDF team member to quit smoking, all in the name of raising money!

The purpose of this newsletter is to raise awareness of the School Development Fund and to provide our supporters with project updates. Our goal is to raise as much money as possible in order to help many of the worthy projects the fund is asked to support.

We thank you for your interest so far and hope you will continue to support the School Development Fund.

Help us by fundraising the easy way!

Easy Fund Raising is a free fundraising service where you can raise funds for a charity when you shop online. Many of the UK's best-known retailers take part in this scheme; you simply go to the Easy Fund Raising website

www.easyfundraising.org.uk and register your chosen charity as the The Gambia Experience's School Development Fund.

We are hoping that everyone supports this fundraising scheme, it costs nothing and you can still shop directly with each retailer, however, if you always go via the Easy Fund Raising site you will generate money for The School Development Fund every time you make a purchase.

Register before the end of February and you could win £300 to spend with House of Fraser.



A new library for school in Brikama

Jeddah Lower Basic School Brikama, Kombo Central

Thanks to your generosity the fund was able to donate £1,390 at the end of last year to Jeddah Lower Basic School towards building a library.

Having opened in 2000, Jeddah Lower Basic is a rapidly growing school with a roll of 1398 pupils. Currently all books belonging to the school are kept in the staff room so a request was made to cover the cost of the building materials for a dedicated library block to provide a more conducive environment for the students. Work is already underway and the local community are providing the transportation costs and labour.



Recently completed projects

All the school projects that were awarded funding back in March 2010 have now been completed, the latest being the kitchen at Kabafita and the perimeter wall at Kanuma.

A new kitchen for Kabafita

Kabafita Upper Basic School Brikama, Kombo Central

We are pleased to report that the kitchen at Kabafita is now finished.

'..the kitchen is completed and ready for use this academic year. The congestion that we used to encounter in the home science laboratory is now a thing of the past. We are therefore thankful for this big achievement and we wish you and your company continued success.'

Lamin Darboe, School Principal, 27th September 2010



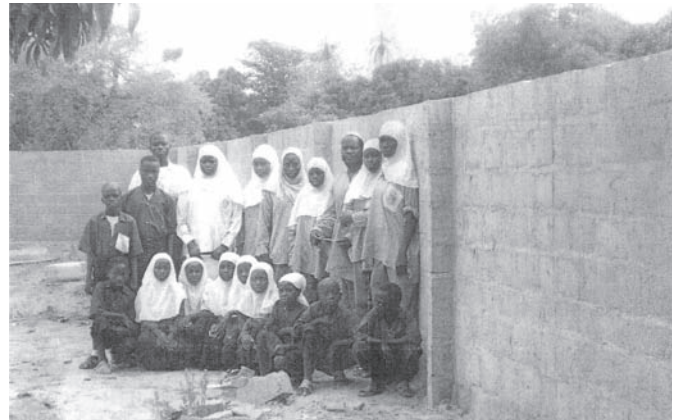
Vegetable garden now protected

Kanuma Basic Upper Basic School Foni Bintang Karanai

Funds were allocated to help erect a robust perimeter wall for the upper division of the school. The school reported in September that the wall is finished protecting the vegetable garden from stray animals.

'Thank you...for funding the fencing (wall). As a result of this fence, it has created a conducive learning and teaching environment as strayed animals will no more enter the school compound. It will also control students' movement in the school thus ensuring effective teaching and learning.'

Sainey Baldeh, School Principal, 22nd September 2010



FUNDS UPDATE: Since April 2010 the fund has raised a further £5,973.97 (31st January 2011). In December 2010 £1,390 was donated to Jeddah Lower Basic School (see previous page) and £1,640 to Buduk Lower Basic School (see following page). We hope to be able to make another presentation to schools including the Sinchu Gundo Lower Basic School, featured on the next page, this April. If you would like to make a donation please visit our website www.schooldevelopmentfund.org/donate



A customer's visit leads to a request for help...

Having visited The Gambia on numerous occasions since the mid 70s Gambia Experience customer, Jean, first visited the **Sinchu Gundo Lower Basic School** in Niamina East District, Central River Division in January 2008, however, the school was not open as the teachers were on a training course.

Her second visit was in January 2009, where she was greeted by a new, young and enthusiastic head master. "He was committed to raising academic standards in his school. This time it was a typical school day; well, it would have been had I not been there! After a long chat with Mr. Kanteh, the head I had a guided tour of the whole premises. I met the teachers with their classes. I found the children far more reserved than those in the tourist areas. Their manners were impeccable. Included in the rest of the tour was the school garden. Each of the older pupils has a small plot in which to grow vegetables of their choice. One of Mr. Kanteh's concerns was that animals could access the grounds through the inadequate fence and trample and/or eat the crops. At the time I was unaware as to how schools were allocated money from the School Development Fund. I was

so impressed by the head and his, obvious dedication to his job and the school, that I decided to try to give him my continued support."



Jean went back to Sinchu Gundo in January of last year, and was greeted like a long lost friend. The day was similar to that of previous year, except the football team was in training for a forthcoming inter-regional tournament. CRR came 3rd out of the five regions. Also the head had instituted a nursery class, which took children from the ages of 3 to 7. Jean had been advised by her hotel representative to suggest that Mr. Kanteh write to the School Development Fund applying for a grant to help with the building of a substantial perimeter wall that they so desperately needed, not only to keep the animals out but also to stop local

drivers using the school grounds as a thoroughfare between the two villages.

The School Development Fund is currently raising funds for this project. Jean will be re-visiting the school this year and we look forward to hearing all about it.

Purchase your medication online & help Gambian schools

You can now order your malaria medication online direct from Lloyds Pharmacy and they will deliver to your pharmacy the same day, or direct to your home the very next day. For every order made an 8% donation will go to The School Development Fund. Follow this link to **find out more**.

This is already proving very popular and is a great way of helping us raise funds.

A toilet block & fresh water

Buduk Lower Basic School
Nianija District, Central River Division

The school, which has 352 pupils aged between 7 and 12 years old, desperately needed a toilet block as well as safe drinking water. The existing well is currently unusable. As well as providing safe drinking water and water to wash hands with, the restored well will also be used to provide water for a vegetable garden. In December 2010 £1,640 was awarded to the school to renovate the well and build a new toilet. The staff and pupils send their thanks.



New School Partnership Opportunities

In addition to our School Development Fund, we have recently been investigating other ways to support Gambian schools. We are keen to promote partnerships between schools in the UK (initially in Hampshire) and The Gambia as we feel that it is a way of helping both UK and Gambian schools not simply through donations but by improving their cultural awareness. We will initially be looking at supporting the UK schools by providing information packs on The Gambia and helping to set up school links.

Please let us know if you know a local school that may be interested.

Thank you

None of the projects would be possible without the support of our customers. Their generosity makes an enormous contribution to The School Development Fund.

The School Development Fund Team in the UK would also like to thank the Gambia Resort Team and UK colleagues for their continued efforts and support.

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If you would like to make a donation please visit our website

www.schooldevelopmentfund.org/donate

Nyodema “Helping Each Other”

See for yourself how your support is helping in this short film by Lou Hamilton showing how tourists, The School Development Fund and Nyodema (a community group co-founded by The Gambia Experience staff member, Kathryn Burrington) are making a difference to the lives of children in The Gambia.

Follow this link to watch the film.



above top: Distributing presents donated by King's Ford Infant School, Colchester to their twin school Xavier Nursery School, Farrato
above bottom: Filming at Dairuharu of a school being built by Gambia Experience clients and Nyodema with project management support by the charity Karmic Angels

Share your experiences of The Gambia with us on our blog at www.thegambiablog.co.uk