

MBG News – April 2020



Marlborough Brandt Group
Linking people for a fairer world

Dear friends,

We are writing to you as a friend of the people of Gunjur and supporter of the Marlborough Gunjur link (past and present) to ask whether you would consider contributing to an Emergency Fund that we are setting up to support the poorest members of the Gunjur community who will suffer greatly as a result of the COVID-9 pandemic.

As well as a greatly reduced health service, The Gambia is not self-sufficient in food and as we heard from Essa Sumareh two weeks ago, food prices are already rising quickly, significantly impacting the poorest families in Gunjur

This will be a long and difficult time for our friends in Gunjur and MBG is looking to provide support in a number of ways, including an emergency fund to look to provide sustained support for the people of Gunjur.

MBG has committed to match fund up to £20,000 of donations –
www.mbg.org [mbg.org]

MBG is in close contact with Baai Jabang, the Director of TARUD, the Gunjur development agency we set up in 1997. Baai provides this latest report:

"While so far, only 4 cases of coronavirus and one death have been reported by the Gambian Government 240 people are in quarantine and measures are being put in place across the country to limit the spread of the disease. Schools are closed down, shops are being closed apart from food and essential supply shops, all entry in and out of the country are banned and borders closed, commercial vehicles are asked to carry only half of the vehicle capacity and many other engagements are cancelled to reduce contact and minimize social/community transmission. Some public offices have closed down including TARUD and staff asked to start working from home immediately."

"CRITICAL

More than 80% of Gambian staple food (Rice) is imported from Pakistan, America, Thailand, India, Japan and other countries hard hit by the coronavirus pandemic. Farm activities are hindered and rice production in these countries is at stake. We might reach a stage where available food in these countries will only be for their

countries and we will be secondary. Food reserves in the Gambia are sufficient for not more than 6 months or even less.

I am concerned that a 6 months household food security/availability is key and an immediate priority for especially the very poor families in Gunjur."

In response to a desire to support the poorest members of the Gunjur community Baai writes:-

"I have discussed the matter with the Alkali and the council of elders, the Village Development Committee, Linking Without Borders, Gunjur Development Association and TARUD. Yesterday (31.3.20) we had a meeting with the team, the Alkalo (Mayor) and the council of elders and a 7 member task force/response committee was constituted.

The team will be responsible for assessing abject poor families and rank them based on the levels of poverty: ability and frequency of buying a bag of rice, daily ration purchase - per cup buying from the shop and how often is this done, the ability to provide minimum of 2 square meals per day, family or household head - M/F, family size, means of living, other livelihood activities, sources of income if any and other measure of variables.

The team will meet again today for review and feedback from the assessment exercise which started yesterday. The team with Fabakary Boyo Touray, a member of TARUD board of trustees and myself, will participate and guide them in the ranking process. I will then send you the first list as the task force continue with the identification and ranking".

If you felt able to make a donation, the people of Gunjur would clearly be hugely grateful and it may literally save lives. You can make a donation using PayPal on the MBG home page: www.mbg.org [mbg.org], more make an online transfer this CAF account:

The Marlborough Brandt Group a/c number 00005756 sort code 40-52-40.

Could you title your donation **Emergency Fund**

Until next time, please stay safe and our best wishes to you all

As always, you can reach us at info@mbg.org.

MBG Trustees

If you'd like us to stop emailing you, or you'd like to get in touch, please contact: info@mbg.org
