



### Dear friends,

As 2021 draws to a close with both the risks of yet more variants of Covid-19, we are continuing our efforts at MBG to work with the people of Gunjur and the charities that operate there.

### AGM date – Monday 27<sup>th</sup> December at 6pm

Please join us for a late 2021 virtual AGM on zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76060201074?pwd=aHFSdmticTgrR2dYSzMzQUVoNXZZdz09>

Meeting ID: 760 6020 1074

Passcode: MBG2021

The agenda & documents are available [online here](#).

<https://www.mbg.org/events/220-agm-2018>

Members will receive a direct invitation.

**If you'd like to know more about MBG and our work, please look at our [2020 Annual Report](#)**

### Update: Charity Commission Audit Report

We have received the report from the Charity Commission Audit completed in the summer. We are very pleased to say that not only did the report not flag up any risks, it recognised a number of areas of good practice that MBG is following.

There were three actions areas, the first two will be covered at the AGM.

1. Continue to review of the charity's governing document to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
2. Keep the charities policy on overseas cash payments (to TARUD) and the charity expenses policy in line with charity commission best practice. We are already doing this and to ensure transparency invite comments and suggestions during the AGM.
3. Review the charity commission documents on partnerships and use them to confirm best practice is in place with TARUD and Venture Force. The quality of our MOU agreements was recognised so this is about ensuring that we have regular reviews and due diligence checks. To be completed early 2022.

You can view the full report on the MBG website [here](#).

## 2021: Year in review

This has been a strange year for MBG. While at times it seems that group trips may be possible, the ongoing pandemic has prevented any volunteer MBG trips to Gunjur. Some members of other charities have managed to find windows to travel to Gunjur to re-start their work and check in on their projects delivered by their teams in Gunjur. Here is an update on our grants in 2021.

### Grants: WasteAid £3,500



**wasteaid**

The start of the year began with the match funding going to WasteAid to secure the future of the plastic recycling centre managed by TARUD. The movement restrictions

meant that waste plastic could not get to the site and staff were also asked to stay at home. UKAid funding was not delayed and so at the end of 2020 funding ended. However in a joint agreement between WasteAid, MBG and St. James's Place, funding was agreed for two more years. This was the first 6 month report from WasteAid with the second report due early in 2022.

#### Business training requirement

The designed project has two major areas of focus: to strengthen the business and the waste management capacity of the Gunjur Plastics Recycling Centre. WasteAid and TARUD decided collectively to approach this first area of focus by bringing on board a business training organisation. To that end, WasteAid held a fact-finding meeting with TARUD on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2021 to identify TARUD's needs for business training and to understand the climate of business training organisations in The Gambia. The selected business training organisation would be required to have a track record of working with early-stage businesses in The Gambia and will work with WasteAid and TARUD to identify the right investment needed to achieve sustainability.

#### Business training organisations

After completing a rigorous selection process, KawFa was given the contract for business development due to the impressive track record of its trainers, enthusiasm of the organisation to deliver a fulfilling programme and its suitability to meet the needs of TARUD. To that end, KawFa created an indicative timeline to deliver the business training element of the project commencing on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2021 and finishing in December 2022. The first deliverable will be the baseline assessment, due by the end of May 2021.

The base line assessment concluded that key for success was developing the skills of the local team in business and marketing, to increase the capacity of the site and productivity of the volunteers and secure more working materials and improve specialisation.

High winds in the rainy season have damaged the production site roof which will be resolved later in the year. Consideration is being given to investing in an extruder to allow for better ventilation to allow for a stronger building.

### **“One citizen one tile” campaign**

TARUD with other partners has launched its “One citizen one tile” campaign to promote recycled tile production. In this campaign, the price of a tile will be D50 (£0.7) and all the tiles sold will cover a popular roundabout in Gunjur. Old used car tyres will also be decorated as flower containers which will make the place more colourful and attractive. This campaign will also be an opportunity to involve the local community in the plastic waste segregation.

Year two will continue to focus on skills training, production scale and marketing of the product while also informing the local community of the issue of waste.

Read more about waste problems in the Gambia here:

<https://wasteaid.org/women-tackling-the-gambias-waste-problem/>

Find out more about WasteAid here:

<https://wasteaid.org/building-a-plastics-recycling-enterprise-in-the-gambia/>



*Picture 1 – from the first session out of three sessions scheduled for the baseline assessment of TARUD’s organisational capacity conducted by KawFa Solutions & Strategies. TARUD staff participate in discussions on the opportunities that converting plastic waste into products has provided their community.*

### **Grants: Gunjur Project Toilets £1,700**

In January MBG made a grant of £1,700 to Project Gambia to support the TARUD Pre-School.

Project Gambia is a small charity formed officially 4years ago but has been operating in the preschools in Gunjur for 18 years. We support and work alongside the teachers of 5 preschools in Gunjur helping them to give their children basic education whilst learning through play.

The Tarud Preschool is the oldest and largest preschool of the five Project Gambia is supporting. They have 183 children both boys and girls, with eight teaching staff plus cooks and cleaners.

During the rainy season this year, Gunjur experienced very heavy rains causing some of the toilets to collapse as they were already in a poor state of repair. This is causing much distress amongst the children and teachers alike, as well as being a severe health risk to all concerned.

The Project is to renovate the toilets where possible and rebuild where not. To provide long drop toilets for the children, a flushing toilet for the staff and hand washing facilities for everyone. This will improve the life of the children and staff at school enormously as at present they are having to go elsewhere. This is also important during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The photos from show the new toilets in place and built to a high standard, spacious and tiled for much easier cleaning.



Anita Bew MBE

[www.projectgambia200.wixsite.com/welcome](http://www.projectgambia200.wixsite.com/welcome)

MBG is agreeing another three year grant to Project Gambia and the pre-schools, teachers and children it supports.

## Grants: BEREEL - £3,500



The employability and micro-finance projects were put on hold in 2020 due to travel and movement restrictions imposed in response to Covid-19. In that time the facilities at The Gunjur Project were all completed and with MBG and support from St. James's Place the costs of 2020 were covered so funding could just be rolled over into 2021 to support projects for the lost year.

While Dr Nikki Swan and Dr Trevor Long had hoped to get out to Gunjur in January this was not possible. As a result the decision was taken to establish the Gujnur office as a charity to allow bank accounts to be set up and employee staff. After some difficult administration to get everything in place remotely the staff started work on March 1<sup>st</sup>. They began



conducting interviews with young local entrepreneurs and community members to assess the need and feasibility of running the programme. The revealed that the need is, as ever, still present and with so the business loan and business skills training programme is set to re-start. The aim is for the updated loan and training plan to be in place for August and loans to be issued in the last quarter of the year.

All applicants of the micro-loans will have to complete our business education programme and be an active member of the continued education and support process we offer. However, completion of the training will not guarantee them a loan as they will have to show their ability to manage and replay the loan as well as the effectiveness of having a loan in the first place.

Travel to The Gambia was finally possible in late May and Nikki and Trevor spent a month with the new staff running training events and formalising the administration processes. The community has struggled in the past 18 months of Covid-19 because foreign income has virtually ceased as the tourist industry was stopped and the need for financial and business education remains very acute. The value of this programme remains as vital as ever.

Dr Nicola Swan and Dr Trevor Long, BEREEL.  
Find out more about BEREEL here: <https://www.bereel.org/>

## Grants: Disability Africa - £3,500



The Gunjur Inclusion Project's core programme is the playscheme which is delivered at sites across the region. **Playschemes prove to be an inexpensive approach which enable us to raise awareness of the rights and needs of disabled children while developing and delivering services to meet their needs.** They also provide a context for assessment of

educational and medical needs and a springboard for development and delivery of other vital community-based services.

Disability Africa – The Gambia has continued to provide services to disabled children across Kombo South in 2021 following a challenging 2020 for the Gunjur Inclusion Project. We have seen 139 disabled children this year, in several different communities across Kombo South including in family homes, various locations in central Gunjur, Kunkujang, Madina Kunkunding, Madina Salaam, Sambuyang, Sanyang, Sinchu Wurri, Tanji and Tujereng.

It is because of the playscheme that we recognised the need to run other programmes like a Parents' Support Programme, Schools Inclusion Programme, Medical Support Programme, and a Young Adults Programme. We have delivered approximately 230 Schools Inclusion visits. Our aim is to ensure all disabled children who would benefit from help in the classroom, are supported in lessons by local playworkers and continually assessed. Currently, we support 20 children in the classroom. Our playworkers work closely with the teachers to deliver educational objectives and we are looking to expand the number of children supported. We have also delivered more than 137 Medical Support visits so far this year ensuring children with impairments receive vital medical support.

## For the Gunjur Inclusion Project, the best is yet to come. . .



We are delighted that the Gunjur Inclusion Centre (GIC) will be open in early 2022 after repairs to the roof. This will enable us to see more children, deliver more playschemes and other services. Without the building being open, we haven't been able to see as many children as we would have liked because children and staff teams have been using temporary sites. Moving into this multi-purpose facility with a plan for growth in place will ensure more children receive a quality service throughout 2022. The team are excited about getting back into the centre and the Project Coordinator has submitted a *plan for growth* which we will monitor together. The GIC will run five days a week and boasts a large playroom, space for community-based physiotherapists, an art room and lots of outside

space. It will prove to be a fun and stimulating place for children to develop – just what it's designed for! – and in turn be the National Centre for Inclusion in Africa's smallest mainland nation.

**Thank you to the Trustees at the Marlborough Brandt Group for your support and for your pledge to support us over the next three years.**

## Reflections and thank you,

Yet again in these difficult times we have seen the value of MBG as a supporting hub for funding and activity into Gunjur. The pandemic is encouraging more in country activity by Gambia volunteers and staff which is both excellent and the normal practice of all the charities we work with. They are always looking to build skills, ownership and sustainable delivery in and around Gunjur. All our key charities have come through the initial and now lasting impacts of the pandemic and found new ways to operate successfully.

The donations and membership contributions you have give continue to directly support people from all parts of Gunjur improving health, education and employment.  
**Thank you.**

### See you in 2022....

We wish you a very happy Christmas and joyous festive time.

As always, you can reach us at [info@mbg.org](mailto:info@mbg.org).

*MBG Trustees*

If you'd like to know more about MBG and our work, please look at our [2020 Annual Report](#):

<https://www.mbg.org/about-mbg/publications>

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

