



Welcome

Salaam Alaikum to all MBG members and friends. Here is our latest update on MBG over the summer months.

We were able to meet many of the previous MBG Executive in Marlborough very recently and thank them all again for the years of support for MBG and hours of effort they contributed earlier in the year.

We have not been idle since the office closed in March and some great steps forward have been made. Here is just a summary.

Upcoming event – November 2nd, free entry

With the dynamic help of Dr Nick the Harvest Lecture, to replace the Lent Lecture missed earlier this year, is all set.

We are delighted that Mark Goldring, Chief Executive of Oxfam GB, will be this year's speaker on the topic:

Ending global poverty: great progress but what do we have to do to complete the job?

It will be an excellent and thought provoking evening. Entry is free, retiring donations are in aid of MBG.

Join us at **The Theatre on the Hill, Marlborough, SN84AX. Thursday 2nd November, 8pm start, arrive in advance.**

Linking Trips

We are delighted to say that there are several trips in progress with the support of Venture Force, the small expedition company we have partnered with to manage group trips to Gunjur.

We are pulling together the details of a 2018 Summer Trip and Anita Bew, Alex Davies and Venture Force will be presenting to St John's Academy 6th Form in October. We also intend to invite students from Marlborough College as we have done in years gone by. This is a large scale endeavour and even with the help of Venture Force we will be looking for an MBG young leader to accompany the two professional leaders. As usual we will be talking with our partners in the Gunjur Community Link and Gunjur Village to pick a suitable community project. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this trip, please get in touch.

We have been supporting Steve Atyeo as he pulls together a second science trip of students from St John's Academy to stay at Halahin Lodge between Gunjur and Kartong in Autumn 2018. This unique

trip will see students working on science education with fellow students from in and around Gunjur and make use of the science lab he has created there. Steve has established a new charity to support this work and MBG is looking forward to supporting it. Steve is working with Venture Force to see if this trip can be offered to science students in other schools as it offers a trip to students who many not usually put themselves forward for such an adventure.

St. James's Place also have a pilot staff trip booked for November this year with six staff traveling out to Gunjur for eight days with two Venture Force staff. Alex Davies will be on the trip and be supported by Jess Masters who works in the companies HR department and is a previous Summer Trip participant. She is delighted to have the opportunity to return to the village. The group will follow the style of the Lloyds trips we used to run between 2010 and 2015. The group will be working on the community centre opposite the medical centre in partnership with young people and professionals from the village. There will also be a photographer/cameraman from the company on the trip and we hope to capture some excellent new images and footage of the community. He is looking into the feasibility of taking a drone with him to film aerial shots of Gunjur. We anticipate a second trip of around 12 employees from St. James's Place to travel out in April for a first full size trip, again working on the community centre.

Gunjur Youth Development Project and TARUD update

This project to support local business with start-up and expansion loans has just reached the end of its third and final year of funding. This project has been supported by a Business Committee of business people from across Gunjur to provide business loans to small enterprises in Gunjur with loans repaid and then reused to support more businesses. It has been in a holding phase for the last few months, but we have good news.

We are delighted to say that in September United Purpose (previously Concern Universal) signed a contract to take over from MBG the management/direct delivery of the majority of this programme. MBG has provided funding for a fourth year, based on unspent funds from this year as well as additional new money. United Purpose will partner with TARUD (one of the core delivery partners of the project, and represented on the Business Steering Group) to oversee the downward delivery of the project.

United Purpose have this year's funding to develop a plan for a further three years of funding in Gunjur as well as to consider potential growth of the project by duplicating the model elsewhere in The Gambia. In the immediate term, they will work to establish the future of the project in consultation with stakeholders. TARUD has also held consultations with other members of the Business Steering Group to ensure continued community engagement and ownership in the delivery model going forward.

United Purpose has a well-established and existing relationship with TARUD, including on a recently started multi-year, EU-funded project, and is working to support TARUD and their new Director Baai Jaabang to build a long term future for TARUD. MBG has committed to provide some funds towards another three years in addition to the core funder. For MBG this is an excellent outcome. We have secured the long-term future of the programme with a charity who has a Gambian office and is already working to re-establish TARUD and strengthen their delivery capacity. We will keep up informed with the progress.

Vibe Challenge

As part of our Vibe challenge global education funding, we have been supporting the winning students in their further education after school. Two have selected courses - **Buba Jallow** began his course in August at MDI and it's going well - he says it's challenging, and he's reading every day - but he's enjoying it! His exams start in December. The course is a Foundation in Accounting, initially six-months in duration, and he hopes to proceed to the next level upon completion. **Fatou Bojang** has selected a course in Agriculture at the Gambia College, which will begin soon and is a two year-

course. The other students are still selecting courses, having received the results of their formal examinations recently.

Empower The Gambia

We have made some contact with 'Empower The Gambia' who run 'The Emporium of Loveliness', the boutique in Hilliers Yard behind Waitrose. Do go in when you have time and chat to Jo about the extensive work they are doing up country. It's another great local charity, in Marlborough, supporting the country and people we love.

This is their Facebook page: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/EmpowertheGambia/>

Until next time

Over the next months we will be meeting to agree our grants processes and continue to tie up all the loose ends and reporting from legacy projects. You can reach us at info@mbg.org.

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