



Marlborough Brandt Group
Linking people for a fairer world

October 2015

Appointment of New Director

Following the decision by Nick Maurice to retire as Director of MBG, much time has been taken up by the Trustees, Executive committee and staff in deciding "Whither MBG?".

Thanks to a wonderful legacy and the promise of a grant for the purpose from a hugely generous benefactor it has been decided that we should appoint a paid part time (3 days per week) Director.

Please do look at our website www.mbg.org/about-mbg/recruitment for details and please either apply (!) or pass this on to friends that you think might be interested.

MBG as Advocates

We see the advocacy role of MBG as crucial, given the work we are doing at community level in The Gambia. It is vital that the learning we are gaining is passed on to policy makers.

We were in correspondence earlier in the year with Justine Greening the Secretary of State for International Development about our concerns about unemployment amongst young men, leading to migration and potentially radicalisation and the need to encourage training and employment as we are doing in Gunjur by sending young people for skills training at the Gambian Technical Training Institute (GTTI) and encouraging business entrepreneurship.



St James' Place Grant

We are very pleased to have been awarded a grant by St James' Place which will provide training for 16 young students at GTTI for the next two years and will also enable us to give loans to a further ten young entrepreneurs to develop new businesses.



With £250 Ebrima Bojang has set up a thriving internet cafe and is paying his loan off faster than scheduled.



The Jalisut beekeepers have shelves stacked with honey and beeswax candles and are doing great business.

Climate Change in The Gambia

We made mention in the last newsletter of the investigation that the students from Cambridge and Oxford, Alice Jones and Tanglewest Douglas undertook looking into people's perceptions of the impact of climate change.



Amongst other things their research concluded that the rainy season had shortened in the past 50 years such that whereas in the past people were able to obtain three rice harvests per year, now they could only reap one harvest. The consequence of this is that 90% of rice is now having to be imported whereas it used to be 10%.

In addition due to the decrease in rainfall the salination of the River Gambia has drifted upstream by 50 miles meaning that there is less available fresh water for irrigation of crops of groundnuts, vegetables and rice.

We sent Alice and Tanglewest's report to Justine Greening and were pleased to receive a long response from Grant Shapps, Minister for Africa in the DfID in which he congratulated MBG on its work and took notice of the findings in the report and wrote of the efforts that DfID are undertaking to mitigate the impact of climate change in Africa in particular.



The report is also going to get a hearing at the forthcoming COP Conference in Paris in December.

Read the report in full on our [website](#).

MBG as facilitators - Working with Bath Spa University

Andrew Mallinson, MBG's volunteer Marketing Director and Nick Maurice held a very positive meeting with lecturers at Bath Spa University to discuss the possibility of entering a partnership between MBG and Bath Spa to enable us to facilitate opportunities for undergraduates at the University to spend time in Gunjur and The Gambia undertaking research, working and studying there in order to further their studies in a variety of disciplines from International Development to Geography.

Andrew and Nick will be in The Gambia in November / December and will be talking with the Vice Chancellor of the University of The Gambia about the possibility of forming a partnership with Bath Spa.

Working with UN Family Planning Association (UNFPA)

We were delighted to hear that following the introduction of our partners in Gunjur TARUD to the UNFPA there is the possibility of a partnership developing whereby TARUD will deliver some of UNFPA's programmes relating to health education and family planning in Gunjur and the Kombo South region. In terms of enabling TARUD to be less dependent on MBG and becoming more sustainable as an organisation this is potentially a really important development.

The Arkleton Trust Project



Thanks to the Arkleton Trust, last year we ran a competition for students in groups of five in secondary schools in Wiltshire to come up with a business proposal which would be appropriate in a West African setting.

The first prize was a trip to The Gambia to share their proposal with a group in Gunjur.

The winners were five students from **Pewsey Vale School** who came up with a scheme to develop tiles from plastic waste. This fitted excellently with a group of volunteers who for the past two years have been collecting the awful plastic litter that was lying around in the streets of Gunjur.

Initial contact was made with the plastics group on the second day of the visit and we were all hugely impressed with the amount which has already been collected – numbers varied between 2 and 3 million bags but whichever, it was a lot! The impact on the village has been incredible – in the 18 months since I have visited, the village has been completely transformed and areas of the village which were basically large rubbish dumps have been cleared, in some areas into productive areas for cultivation. Alieu Darboe, CEO of the Nianitama group, talked of the effect of plastic on the ground in terms of soil pollution and as places to harbour stagnant water (and therefore breed mosquitoes leading to a higher incidence of malaria). The plastics group was hugely enthusiastic about the possibility of constructing tiles from the plastic.

Day 1 of tile construction was a day of some frustration and small triumphs. Initial attempts to melt the plastic in a large cleaned out paint tin over a charcoal stove led to charred plastic, an incorrect consistency and much experimentation; for the boys it was a brilliant example of how a process which worked on a kitchen stove in the UK with the ability to control temperature at will, weigh accurately etc would need to be adapted to different circumstances in a southern country.

Read the [report in full](#).

Summer Visit to Gunjur 2016

Interviews have been held and fourteen young people from St John's Academy have been selected. They will be leaving for Gunjur in July, to spend four weeks living with families and working alongside young Gambians on a community project.

We are hoping that the project will be the construction of an additional classroom for a preschool/primary in Kulucochi a suburb of Gunjur, and that there will be enough funds for school furniture as well. The young people will now be very busy fundraising.

Auction of Promises

Thank you to everyone who took part in our Auction of Promises and raffle earlier this year, including those who donated some fabulous promises! We raised a grand total of **£2,540**.

Christmas Party

Our Christmas Party is being held Thursday 17 December, 7pm at Nick and Kate Maurice's house, 42 London Road, Marlborough - invitations to follow.

Brilliant Young Pianists at St Peter's Church

- Harry Nowakowski-Fox (piano) & Judith Choi-Castro (violin)

- Sunday 22 November 2015, 7.30pm
- St Peter's Church, Marlborough
- Tickets £10 / £8 MBG & St Peter's Trust members

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