

Gambian Children First

Stichting
The Gambian Children First
Nicolaas Witsenkade 15-huis
1017 ZS Amsterdam



ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

FOUNDATION GAMBIAN CHILDREN FIRST

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Gambian Children First

Dear Donor,

Please find below the Foundation **The Gambian Children First's** annual report and the financial statements covering the period running from August 2018 up to and including July 2019.

In the school year 2018-2019, we were able to support a total of 74 pupils (mainly girls). Last school year, we collected almost € 13,000 in regular donations and on top of that more than € 10,000 in specifically allocated subsidies and donations. It is heart-warming that people have been so generous for Gambia's youth.

During this year's visit, we were again confronted with stories about migration to Europe. This now involves over 30,000 Gambians, many of whom undoubtedly died in the desert or at sea. The people who do make it to the other side are almost certainly returned. Once back in Gambia, they are often considered as 'losers'. Sometimes, their family had collected a lot of money for the gruelling journey, thus hoping to create a flow of money from Europe. We want to offer young people a future in their own environment by sponsoring them in the poor rural areas - where they are most needed!

It is clear that your donation is badly needed, also in the current school year. Our project is concrete, small-scale, and focused on individuals. Money does not end up in the wrong hands and we work with local experts.

For the school year 2019-2020, the average costs are still about € 155 per pupil. Of course, you are free to give more, or less: each contribution is welcome.

You can transfer your contribution to our ING account (IBAN **NL86 INGB 0005 2533 50**) or our Rabobank account (IBAN **NL72 RABO 0343 1927 13**) in the name of *Stichting 'The Gambian Children First'* in Amsterdam.

The foundation (in Dutch: "stichting") is recognised by the tax authorities as a "Public Benefit Organisation" (in Dutch: "*Algemeen Nut Beogende Instelling (ANBI)*"), which means that your gift (in compliance with the applicable rules) is tax deductible (see our website).

Best regards,

On behalf of the Board of the Foundation The Gambian Children First,
Caroline Schaap
Chairwoman

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Overview

During a jumpy ride in a cab over a dusty road straight through Serrekunda, on our way to one of our appointments, we listen to the hearings of the Truth Commission, which are broadcasted on the radio. Most Gambians are glued to the radio every day now so they can hear how the “friends” of the previous president Jammeh confess which brutal acts they committed under his regime.

However gruelling these brutalities are, the Gambians are proud that democracy is being shaped and that a clean sweep is now made with dignity, after the difficult years under the dictator.



Much is changing in Gambia, and it is changing fast. The Chinese build bridges and roads at a phenomenal speed. The bridge near Farafenni (the construction of which had begun under Jammeh) is now officially put into operation. The fast crossing of the river will certainly yield economic benefits. Cargo traffic (notably

from Senegal) can now cross the country faster.

However, change does not take place quickly enough in the eyes of the population. So far, the “average citizen” does not benefit from the big political reversal in any way, be it in cash or in kind. While employment increases, the Chinese prefer to do the work themselves. UN and EU funds entering the country are generally labelled. And what to do when all those funds will have to be repaid... that will become very difficult.



However, the overall trend is upwards. The current president, Mr Adama Barrow, would like to stay on for more than three years, the term he promised to stay on, in order to make it possible to continue on the chosen path. Elections in 2021 will demonstrate whether he will get that chance. From time to time, there is an argumentative atmosphere between the political parties, which (unfortunately) is part of life in a (young) democracy.

We remain hopeful and continue unabated to support the schools, the youth, Gambia's future. Each time we go to Gambia and meet an alumnus of one of our schools at work, we see that another woman or man has grasped the concrete chance to have a better life. Their work means income, income results in better living conditions and better personal development, which in turn directly influence their environment.

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This is so valuable! With the help of your contribution!

Fundraising Day October 2018



For the first time in the foundation's existence, we organised a Fundraising Day. To mark the 15th anniversary of our foundation, we thought the timing would be perfect to invite our local manager Phoday Touray and ask him to come to the Netherlands and speak to the donors on this day.

(The members of the Board paid for Phoday's trip.)



While we were secretly hoping for a higher turnout, we can wholeheartedly say that it was a very successful day. Phoday's presentation, the film *Welcome to the Smiling Coast*, on the migration of Gambia's youth (Bas Ackermann, director, and Emiel Martens, producer), the delicious food cooked by Elyes Khechana - a friend of one of the members of the Board - and the rhythm of the Gambian djembe player all contributed to the African atmosphere.

Our goal was to improve the relationship with our donors and give them a lively image of what has been and will be done with their contribution.

On this day, contact was established with the Caritas Group of the **Matteus Church** in Zaandam. The proceeds of their Winter Market, held in February 2019, went to Gambian Children First. We were delighted to be there and speak about our work. There was much to see and sell and at the end of the day we received the great news that we could look forward to a bank transfer of more than € 1,800.

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Wintermarkt voor tieners in Gambia

Zaandam * De Mattheus kerk aan het Papenpad 13 in Zaandam houdt zondag vanaf elf uur (na de wekelijkse viering) een wintermarkt. De opbrengst is voor de scholing en ontwikkeling van tieners in Gambia. Er wordt onder andere creatief haak- en breiwerk verkocht, evenals keukenheerlijkheden en creaties van dames met groene vingers. Ook met een tombola en koek-en-zopie.



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Wormerland cares for . . .

Looking across borders and providing support where it is desperately needed is a characteristic and goal of the interfaith collaboration **Wormerland cares for** Our foundation was nominated to collect money in different religious communities over the next three years for investment in the future of Gambia's youth. It was with this goal in mind that Nella Heijnen illustrated the needs of the skill centres in Gambia and the effects of education on young people there on 30 June in a packed church in the village of Jisp. The reactions of the public were heart-warming and the donations were generous. In the years to come, conscious of the responsibilities we carry, it is our great pleasure to help and give a the lives of these young people a boost, thus helping them to move away from a life in poverty.



Where Are We Active



Our Visit in May 2019

The Board travelled to Gambia in May. We believe it is important to remind you that the Board members always pay for this working visit themselves. A visit that is always made with pleasure!

Our visit took place from 24 April to 8 May. Unfortunately, it turned out that many schools were closed because of the holidays. As a consequence, we have not been able to speak with the pupils while they were in their classrooms.

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Therefore, we went to visit a number of pupils who either have a good job or work hard as an intern.



Mamud Njie - hotel management
Taku Leggaye, permanent position
in the exclusive Coco Ocean Hotel



Lamin Jarju (PIA)
intern in a garage



Lamin Ceesay (PIA)
trained as an electrician;
he has set up a chicken
farm

Wonto Tamba, permanent
position as secretary for the
governor in Janjangbureh



NAQAA

The National Accreditation & Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) is responsible for all forms of vocational training, higher education and academic education. NAQAA grants licenses to the schools. To obtain these, the schools have to be able to prove that they have their bookkeeping in order, that their curriculum fulfils the requirements, that the teachers are certified, that the security requirements for the school building are complied with and that they have enough hygienic sanitary facilities. A license is granted for three years. Schools that do not have their papers in order in time will get fined and can even be closed.



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As the foundation has concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with NAQAA, it is possible to speak freely about the developments in the schools.

Thanks to the MOU, information on the wellbeing of the schools is mutually exchanged and new education plans are shared with us. The visit to NAQAA has become a fixed point on the agenda during our visit to the country.



Julangel

It is still a long drive to this school. This time, we held our meetings, ate and slept at the premises of the school.



The school has a location manager, Mr Baldeh, and is directed by the Gambian Technical Training Institute (GTTI) in Banjul, for which reason Mr Jallow, who is the head of the GTTI's Technical Department, was also present. In the current school year, the school has about 115 students, twenty of whom are sponsored by our foundation. All pupils successfully completed the first year, both in theory and in practice.

Safety shoes and overalls are indispensable for the practical lessons. They were paid for by the foundation.



To improve the chances of getting a good job, it is useful for the pupils to follow the second year of the curriculum as well. We promised to continue and support the pupils we previously sponsored also in their second year. The programmes that can inter alia be followed in Julangel are carpentry, motor mechanics, tiling, welding, agriculture and horticulture. Both men and women follow these courses. As the school is often relatively far from the surrounding villages or a city like Basse, dormitories for the students are constructed so that the students can sleep there. Commuting through the week will no longer be necessary.

While the available teaching material is used creatively and effectively, it is necessary to expand and improve it. We are very positive about the future of the school and we will sponsor a



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total of thirty students in the new school year, ten in their first and twenty in their second year.

PIA Kerewan



With the aid of 5,000 euros from the Hofstee Foundation (Hofsteestichting), 2,000 euros from our foundation and about 1,500 euros from the PIA itself, we were able to realise two classrooms, toilet blocks and a staff room. Unfortunately, the construction was suspended at the time of our visit because of the delivery of unsuitable sand for the cement. Then

Ramadan started and subsequently the rainy season caused a further delay. From a Dutch perspective such eventualities may be difficult to understand, but in Africa such (cultural) delays must be taken into account.



This year, we sponsored twelve students in the motor mechanic programme, while the “Hair & Beauty” and “Tailoring” programmes could be added to the curriculum thanks to the extra classrooms. All over the area there is much interest in these programmes. A good tailor is hard to find in Kerewan and surroundings, just like beauty salons. It will therefore not be difficult to find work or create employment in these fields. Last year we already mentioned that this part of Gambia (north of the river) has become vulnerable as a consequence of the loss of young men to Europe. By expanding the curriculum on offer, it is possible to attract more students and in doing so we contribute to a reduction of the number of young people leaving this area. For the next year, we have decided to increase the number of students that is to be sponsored to twenty.

President International Award (PIA) Bakau



Mr Drammeh (director of PIA) travelled to Kerewan for the meeting. We also spoke with him about the situation of the school in Bakau. He told us that the Gambian Youth Empowerment Project and the IOM (International Organisation for Migration) have started a programme for young returnees from Europe. The purpose of the programme is counselling young men and women in their quest for work and/or education. As they are

seriously traumatised, they should also be offered psychological help. Unfortunately, there is no attention for this problem and increasing criminality is a risk. PIA has contacted both organisations to see whether PIA can receive funding so they can start working with the returnees.



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At the location in Bakau, the demand for the Hair & Beauty programme is high as well.

The products donated by the Babor Beautysalon Wormer should be good teaching material for the pupils.

Taku Leggaye

Last year, we already signalled that the health of the director was fragile. When we visited him at home in May, we realised that it could well be that this was our farewell visit. When we were writing this annual report, we received the sad news that **Mr Momodou Jagne**, who continued to be involved in the developments of his school from his sickbed, passed away on 12 November 2019. The team has done its very best to keep the school going for its beloved boss and it has received our unconditional support in doing so.



On top of that, the Taku Leggaye School was confronted with an unavoidable renovation of staircases and classrooms. The renovation was necessary for compliance with the strict requirements of NAQAA. While it first seemed to be impossible to carry out the required works in a relatively short lapse of time, a miracle was achieved thanks to extra money for the renovation and our active involvement in the

choice of the contractor during the summer months.

Moreover, the staff of the school also had to work on its skills and the contents of the entire curriculum. We were able to help by involving an expert in the field of school management and education. Mr Musa Sanneh has done all he could to help and rewrite the curriculum, train the team and complete all required documents. Secretary Serah deserves special mention for her relentless dedication: the perseverance and power of this young woman are incredible.

In these turbulent times, the students continued to work hard in order to make their time at school a success.



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After all these years, the reception at the school has become a familiar sight: the food the students prepare is always delicious and we are cared for as if we were having dinner in a top restaurant. At the end of our working lunch, all TGCF students gathered around us in a circle and expressed their profound gratitude. Of course, we pass it on to you! All this is made possible by your support.

Prison Project

The big initiator of this project is Mr Ismail Ceesay, who works at the Insight Training Centre (ITC). After the collapse of the regime, he understood the importance of educating prisoners. If they learn a trade, they get better self-esteem and their value for society upon their return increases. Mr Ceesay has successfully implemented the project with one-off contributions from the Dutch Embassy in Dakar (Senegal) and MRC Holland. We were asked to offer more structural help by paying the tuition fees. Our visit to the prison's direction and its "inmates" has made a deep impression on us.



The prisoners are not only learning a trade, there is also attention for their mental wellbeing. In groups, they discuss what they have done and how things have gone awry. It is possible to get in touch with victims to ask for forgiveness. So far, none of the students enrolled in this project has relapsed into crime. This is an admirable initiative for which we have much respect. We would very much like to contribute by sponsoring fifteen prisoners. Indeed, everyone deserves a new chance!



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Thank You for Your Ongoing Support



Will you continue to help us to give future craftsmen and craftswomen an education? Much is about to change in Gambia in the next few years. We are very grateful to you for allowing us to be part of it, together with you.

Vacancies Board The Gambian Children First

Like last year, we include a vacancy in this annual report. We are still looking for an extra Board member. Our foundation is small, but it does big things in Gambia. Our foundation is a reliable partner for the schools we support since 2002. With our help more than 650 young girls and boys have been able to follow a vocational training. Being able to 'touch' a life and give it a positive turn is inspiring and energising.

To be able to continue and do this (voluntary) work, we are looking for new Board members. We can certainly use two enthusiastic people. Of course, affinity with Africa and participation in the yearly visit are decisive.

Have we raised your interest? Do you have any questions? Please contact one of the members of the Board or call us on +31 06 26 84 44 09.

Composition Board

Chairwoman	Caroline Schaap	Caroline-in-afrika@hotmail.com
Secretary	Ernst Faber	ernstfab@xs4all.nl
Treasurer / Contact person schools	Nella van der Laan	Tgcf.nellaheijnen@gmail.com
Special advisor/ photographer	Simon Heijnen	Spm.heijnen@gmail.com
Local manager in Gambia	Phoday Touray	
English translation annual report	Sophie Verschuur	



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Balance sheet of the Foundation The Gambian Children First 31 July 2019				
	31 July 2019		31 July 2018	
ASSETS				
Student loan Phoday Touray (GMD 23,000)	€ 0.00		€ 71.67	
Real estate	€ 5,000.00		€ 5,000.00	
Cash	€ 25,040.50		€ 21,179.21	
TOTAL	€ 30,040.50		€ 26,250.88	
LIABILITIES				
Capital	€ 11,233.12		€ 12,250.88	
Short term debts (rest 20% tuition fees '18-'19)	€ 873.51		€ 0.00	
Long term debts (reserved for Mam Tuti Darboe)	€ 3,933.87		€ 0.00	
Long term debts (reserve fund decreasing revenues)	€ 9,000.00		€ 9,000.00	
Reserve for possible negative sales profit real estate	€ 5,000.00		€ 5,000.00	
TOTAL	€ 30,040.50		€ 26,250.88	
Profit and loss account Foundation The Gambian Children First 01-08-2018 - 31-07-2019				
	2018-2019	2018-2019	2018-2019	2017-2018
	Result '18-'19	Budget '18-'19	Difference	Result '17-'18
RECEIVED				
Received donations	€ 12,732.89	€ 15,000.00	-€ 2,267.11	€ 12,966.55
Special donations (with destination)	€ 10,996.25	€ 0.00	€ 10,996.25	€ 0.00
Other revenues	€ 565.00	€ 0.00	€ 565.00	€ 210.00
Interest	€ 1.37	€ 15.00	-€ 13.63	€ 12.19
TOTAL	€ 24,295.51	€ 15,015.00	€ 9,280.51	€ 13,188.74
EXPENSES				
Production costs (mailing and postage)	€ 643.38	€ 100.00	€ 543.38	€ 87.60
Bank costs + currency differences	€ 489.25	€ 450.00	€ 39.25	€ 459.91
Costs in Gambia	€ 450.00	€ 400.00	€ 50.00	€ 400.00
Fee and costs Phoday Touray	€ 810.00	€ 1,080.00	-€ 270.00	€ 1,080.00
Other costs	€ 30.00	€ 150.00	-€ 120.00	€ 200.71
Website	€ 0.00	€ 250.00	-€ 250.00	€ 0.00
Special projects	€ 8,493.03	€ 7,000.00	€ 1,493.03	€ 4,789.23
Teaching costs 2018-2019	€ 9,792.69	€ 11,150.00	-€ 1,357.31	€ 5,771.78
TOTAL	€ 20,708.35	€ 20,580.00	€ 128.35	€ 12,789.23
RESULT	€ 3,587.16	-€ 5,565.00	€ 9,152.16	€ 399.51

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*Will you continue to support us?
We need your help!*

Foundation The Gambian Children First	
Nicolaas Witsenkade 15-huis	Bank accounts
1017 ZS Amsterdam, the Netherlands	NL86 INGB 0005253350
info@gambianchildren.nl	NL72 RABO 0343192713
www.gambianchildren.nl	
Printing sponsored by Saint Michaël College, Zaandam, the Netherlands	