

22 June 2019 all-OGS and supporters meeting day

Report of Trustees

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Meeting context

OGS scheduled a 3 hour plenary meeting for trustees, key supporters, and friends who had travelled to our schools (principally Mbollet-ba) or were thinking of doing so. We decided to do this at this time in order to:



- Mark 10 years of connection with our first school partner Mbollet Ba in 2009
- Mark 5 years since the start of Regular visits to The Gambia in 2014
- Mark 3 years since the Foundation of the charity OGS - with need to reappoint at least one Trustee (Jenny Brown)
- Review our original founding aims with our supporters and consider with them if the charity still had valid functions and mission, and if so how our supporters would like us to shape upcoming projects

Attendance was approximately 30 of whom 8 were school-age teenagers who had been on trips to Gambia while at primary school. Moderation and the running of the session were by Caren Owen based on guidance document from Trustees.

The total costs of hosting the meeting were £100 venue hire and £27 materials for presentation and brainstorming EG flipcharts stickies etc. An informal picnic was held beforehand.

What do people value about their experience of The Gambia?

Notes of some key phrases as each participant in the day introduced themselves and described the significance of the experience of The Gambia for them.

Contagious camaraderie family combined with study come to me know me already contribute ideas freedom for children community experience empathy sustainable farming water understand limitations changing of plans friends I don't want to live in Gambia but my heart is there observing developing country thoughts find out what I can do used it as a reflection exercise climate change and environment and waste put things in perspective I see myself being involved in the future I remember the tree quite an experience sharing of skills life changing experience the major currency is family and community take the idea of community survival and work it back into our lives a great experience I have never been to Africa before collect data look forward to see you in the future why not? Be an observer established connections and see how things move on brought maths project exchanged and collaborated with Salusbury keep going every year invest in collection and drop-off mechanisms always been attracted to Africa this is the opportunity third home country fell in love I love it for the way I feel when I'm there I feel life everything is real I always had a love of Africa I feel comfortable there be involved in a vision of opportunities for young people sharing practice with teachers realise the difference we have made amazing part of my life for the last 10 years teachers can live with our families I wanted a mother-daughter thing we could do together I can serve here I can give back I can just share my skills community passionate along game of commitment inspired by the richness of community values inspiring to see how development takes place over time tremendous experience it sounds wonderful the enthusiasm in children and women good for me to go to Africa and live with the people inspiring and lovely sense of community

Scenarios for the future - Mbollet-ba

During the Feb 2019 visit the OGS team undertook a scenario planning exercise. Scenario planning gives us a range of possible future environments (without any view of which one is most likely or preferred) and we can test our projects and actions against how they might work out in all of the scenarios, to ensure we are prepared and relevant. Our scenarios were discussed widely with many village members at levels in dialogues about possible future paths the development of Mbollet village could take. Several pathways for Mbollet's future, and possible themes for growth, were tested for local resonance and support. We have continued only with those scenarios where there was an engaged local response from stakeholders in the village. We want to share the scenarios with our supporter community as backgrounds for thinking about the steps OGS can take to best support the capacity of the school

We set the context for this as follows in a briefing statement set by moderator Caren Owen

Where is Mbollet heading?

Sub-saharan farming is not a sufficient future for a village of 3,800 and counting. Climate change will bring temperature rises in this region of 50% higher than the global average. Land will demand more intensive cultivation. We are partners to the community, by supporting its transition towards income from jobs or trade in towns or abroad, and increasing its citizens' engagement in activities that command more profit or steadier earnings. What possible futures exist and how can we help to prepare for them?

Some scenarios for Mbollet-ba 2025 emerged through many conversations with the people of Mbollet and those conversations and the local responses were boiled down to four scenarios during a day with teachers at the recent visitors' Jinnack brainstorm. As well as acknowledging these scenarios, we reflect on which can we most easily help with? Which is least risky? Which brings most opportunity to women? Most chance of social equity?

- **9Xi WU]cb`7 YbfU**. Learning about sustainable farming livelihoods, with a food industries college, creates a rural education zone
- **9W:]j J`U] Y"** Getting rubbish and environmental degradation under control to protect health and livability will secure the wellbeing of citizens
- **: ccX7\ U]b**. Traditional food growing activities evolve into food processing with local cash-paid jobs and exports of finished products not raw harvests
- **J]g]rcf '9W]bca m'** With its hospitality and roadside positioning for Fataleh traffic, Mbollet becomes a community welcoming to high-value visitors and providing service

Notes of some key phrases as the attendees responded on the scenario planning exercise:

- Legacy of lost investments in many charities – we at OGS have continuous involvement history which has helped drive success support future transformations around climate change.
- Opportunities to react to challenges. School as the centre for interventions.
- Challenges on climate change and land ownership we need to support.
- Development is an iterative and shared process.
- How to intervene sustainably and aligned with social norms.
- Back up everything with conversations in village
- Contrast education in schools with what people can do when they finish. Need for skills. Industries on clothes shoes factories

- Vocational studies on top of schooling. Manual skills

This was not intended to be a conclusive discussion and OGS has no brief to align to any scenario. The supporter response to the scenario exercise does suggest an appetite in the core supporters for retaining a deep and long term involvement in the school's development, focussing on supporting locally led and championed initiatives. There is specific support for broadening our thinking to embrace two wider challenges beyond school gates

- Community livelihoods/skills
- Climate change adaptation/response

Planning for next Mbollet-ba investments and projects

Break-Out Groups worked on 3 near-term projects at Mbollet using set briefs for projects that are currently in planning. The aim is: to help our thinking about how a project quality and impact could be improved. Each group was led by a moderator with experience of the topic.

In addition the young people at the meeting formed their own separate breakout group to gather their perspectives on the future of their own relationships with the Gambia.

The prepared briefs for each group are inserted here:

How can Our Global School make a fantastic next big project?

OGS has shown that in Mbollet-Ba we can deliver big projects that change things for the good. (Example: in 2015-17 we improved nursery education with a new curriculum & buildings). There are three potential "next big projects" at Mbollet-Ba lining up for 2020-2022. In Mbollet each already has local champions and would be approved by the local community. We may do one, some or all. First we want to understand the potential of each one, and grow its power. Help us!

Brainstorming groups - please work to enrich these 3 project ideas. Do the creative thinking and give us achievable plans, and then tell us all about it, for your project. Please think about:

- Local engagement: getting involvement and communication in our UK communities
- Project quality: benefiting all Mbollet citizens, increasing impact, being sustainable
- Funding: widening the support including donors and agencies, fundraising ideas

Here are the 3 projects.

1. Buildings for a growing school. Mbollet is now expanding to Year 7-9 students. Very soon they will need classrooms. An extended school brings great opportunities for school completions especially by girls and for adult literacy in night-school classes. We have a model for constructing school buildings with participation of UK architecture students. Funders like to leave a solid legacy structure. But how can we make this more than a simple bricks and mortar programme. What can we do to add sustainable benefits and deeper positive impacts?
2. Self-sufficiency in food & income. Lack of cash for teacher salaries and school food means the school and kids are always at half-power. We could invest in setting up a campus farming model, copying other Gambian schools which run profitable small chicken farms or fruit orchards. If it succeeds, the school could be getting income and subsidised nutritious food on site. Students might have to contribute labour but this could be linked to learning about farming and better dietary health from addressing nutrition problems. Can we control the risks to ensure this would work in the long term? Would it come across well to our supporter communities?
3. Health and sickness prevention. Mbollet has no local health facility, and a high disease burden (mostly preventable) often hampers families and education. The Gambian Govt agrees to fund the running and staffing under the Health Ministry of a village health post (2 community nurses, 1 orderly, dispensary, ambulance) if we build and equip it. We could add a public health education programme based in the school for prevention and awareness on the main local health problems - tooth decay, diabetes, malaria, infectious disease, accidents. How can we make this project reflect

our aims and roots in education and schooling? What can we add to the project, to make sure it does improve health for all?

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In the next 5-10 years two things are going to happen. For you they may be linked

- The young people who went to Mbollet-ba as children will go through teenage and University years, discovering their interests and paths to adulthood.
- Africa is likely to emerge as the world's most important continent for economic growth, food production, and employment.

Please help OGS to understand how this is going to work out for you. Think about 2025 and about 2030 and how old you will be then, and what you might be doing and looking for.

1. Imagine and describe the scenarios that you think might come about.

Your history with The Gambia and Africa might remain strong, especially if it is meaningful and useful to you.

Alternatively: it might fade away and become a memory. Something your parents once did, and you don't do, or you do in a different way.

Which of these do you want. Which do you expect?

2. Tell us what you want.

In your next 5 and 10 years, what things do **nci** want from your connection to this African village? We want you to imagine the role for Mbollet-ba in your life in 2025 and 2030.

- Might you visit?
- Would you follow updates?
- Will you talk about it at school or to friends/family?
- Would you think about it or rather forget about it?
- Is it going to be relevant or helpful to other stuff you might be doing eg a school or university project or getting a job?

Here are the reports of the various group leaders on their discussion breakout sessions

Buildings for a growing school

Moderated by Ines Saltalamacchia. The local champion in Mbollet who argues this is a priority, and who has a clear grasp of the issues, is Maget Njie

Participants: Ines, Serena, Riccardo, Lynne and Shelley

- All participants think that the expanding of the school is not a great idea - school needs to improve the education it is currently providing and expanding to year 7-9 will move the attention away from the current

classes. That said, as this is something that has already been decided and happening, we have discussed the pros of this expansion:

- greater possibility to have a more competent Head Master from September 2019
- school may become more attractive for teachers and TAs who are not local
- better salary for teachers
- greater possibility for teachers' CPD, including management/leading roles
- more educational opportunity for Mbollet-bah children, especially for girls
- The group questioned what kind of curriculum will be delivered as the common feeling is that a skills based education would be a better choice, with greater opportunities for the Mbollet-bah young people, and especially for the SEN and the less included groups - I said that my impression is that this goes behind the school's control, so we came up with the idea that eventually the new classrooms could be used to provide skills based education courses in the evening
- We analysed the cons of the expansion to year 7-9 WITHOUT building new classes:
 - toilets facilities will not be enough - they are already not enough for the current number of students
 - possible negative impact on the school meals
 - possible negative impact on the school resources
 - negative impact on the school timetables - the school is already struggling in organising the timetables and the use of the current classrooms with the current double shifts, there are strong doubts that they will be able to manage a situation where the current classrooms will be used by 3, 6 and then 9 new classes
- We analysed the pros of having new classrooms:
 - easier organisation for the school timetables
 - as they will be built for older children, there are opportunities to use them for adults or young people skills based education courses, especially if they could be supplied with solar panels and electricity to be used in the evening
 - for us it would be fundamental that new toilets will be built alongside with the new classrooms
- In terms of how we organise the project, considering the success obtained with the building of the new nursery classrooms, the general feeling is that the same format could be used, i.e. link with architecture universities
- Fundraising could be done through a campaign run with the architecture universities involved and QPCS (considering that the classrooms will be used to expand the primary into secondary classes)
- Last point: the general feeling is that it is fundamental to have a local champion who could coordinate the local people involved in the project and feed back to us. The group welcomed the idea of having a budget that the local champion will be responsible to manage, which could include a salary for her/him but also money he will responsible to use to deliver the project, e.g. to create and manage a small team to support him

Local food economy: self-sufficiency and income.

Moderated by Vivienne Adami. The local champion is Modou Corr who is excited by the idea of the school as a productive community growing/training centre linked to the farming economy.

Generating a stronger internal economy emerged as the message of this session. Using change methods such as behavioural economics, complementing attitudinal change with programmes of construction and capital investment. Too much of Mbollet income leaves the village (eg all chickens imported for feeding Salusbury guests). Food supply is precarious or low quality.

Food is a focus for this but also: active involvement of parents, development of land use, agricultural curriculum and the extension of current model of visitor/hosting activities and garden supervision by Fatou Modou Sarr

The generation of school income using the Arabic School model: enclose land for school to raise income from farming chicken, cashew etc. - would need OGS to

- Employ a farm manager
- Create infrastructure eg irrigation, cages, security
- Education on water conservation, growing techniques
- Validate and scaffold use of school students in farming labour (NB precedent in US see [Hechtinger Report](#))

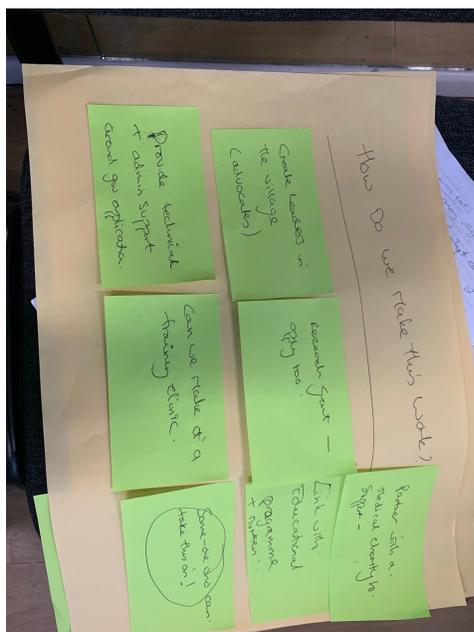
Outcomes:

- Stimulation from community farm investment
- Mothers groups - responsibility for procuring and producing food at school with local ingredients (builds on sellers of snacks and SPS model Salusbury World with Spice Caravan)
- Inventory of land that could be given to school growing use
- "Food Union" concept with economic and nutritional improvement

Health and sickness prevention

Moderated by Sophie Hulme. The local champion is Musa Corr who has a health administration background and has long argued for local public health provision.

Notes by Sophie: (image for flavour, written up below)



HEALTH CENTRE: M'BOLLET BAH

Opportunities:

- Government initiative we can explore
- Existing dialogue with the Ministry of health
- Potential champions in the village
- Space for a building (that hasn't already been built out of gov guidelines)
- Good levels of trust and relationships with medical related people in the village
- Already initial discussions with the village
- Clear need for basic support on areas such as:
 - Sexual health
 - Pregnancy
 - Contraception
 - Basic health
- Will create job
- We have success of the Architecture project behind us
- We can demonstrate a range of other successful projects we have worked on the village for Grant applications

Threats:

- Advocates moving on and leaving the village
- Lack of experience re: getting funds from the gov
- Possibility of having to pay bribes
- Lack of infrastructure: clean water / power
- Cost to train up staff
- Long term project: will take time to see results

How do we make this work?

- Create leaders in the village
- Provide technical and admin support around gov application
- Research relevant grants to support work
- Make it a training clinic too, bringing over to the village
- Link with an educational program
- Partner with a medical charity to support (including getting medical advice)

The group feels the current capacity of OGS for delivery of this project is too low and that a professional or voluntary specialist project leader would be required.

Taking some "baby steps" in the form of a small health ed programme, micro-clinic etc, would be the way to get this rolling.

Youth Breakout Group

Moderated by Jenny Brown and Steve Cripps

From Jenny Brown: A summary of our session with the young people, in addition to their written feedback.

The teenagers, along with our young participants, were all 100% in agreement that they would like to visit again at some point and that their experiences were valuable, having gained a great deal. Some last visited when there were quite a bit younger and were not specifically able to express areas learned but generally said the feel of experiencing another culture, the people, the welcome, school and the freedom was very valuable.

They said that if they went back now, it would be easier to become involved in a particular project.

Ideas were discussed around what they could do here in support of the community out there.

For example - being part of some kind of club where they could initiate fund raising ideas, raise

awareness within the school - it was suggested that at QPCS perhaps this could fit in with Citizenship and charity work that is part of the curriculum - year 9 was mentioned as a possible age particularly in involvement as far as curriculum was concerned.

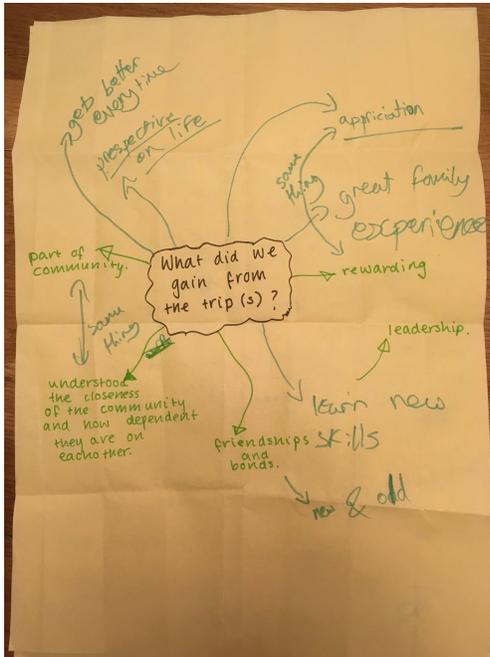
Discussions around making things from recycled material.....

The idea of being involved in fundraising did appeal. A young enterprise company was mentioned. Shoe Shop format and shoes made from waste.

Also a suggestion that OGS could be part of the wider curriculum - Global education.

Kayamandi at present is specifically for 6th form.

In summary, definitely a keenness to become more involved on another visit if the opportunity arose - but no concrete ideas as yet



Brainstorm notes taken by the young people's breakout group

Event conclusion

In a closing discussion, after the presentations of each project sub-group to the whole session, the discussion went on to identify two topics requiring action and response from the Trustees

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- We should be using a Facebook Channel for sharing our work in London to Mbollet-Ba followers.
- Opportunity to use shorter and breathe out communications eg WhatsApp group for all members
- Outreach/fundraiser event - meal catering offered by Sarah and Stuart. Autumn 2019.

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The work of OGS may be supported by its stakeholders with moral and financial inputs but the reliance on Chair (stephen) for an estimated 60%+ (David Hodge's estimate) of OGS output is a weakness and risk. Needs addressed- possibly with additional roles eg project delivery/project champion

Sarah and Stuart affirmed they would help to organise a catered event/fundraiser for autumn 2019.

Further comments received by mail after the meeting.

1. Let me know how `i can support the work with my Uni. Like the idea of creating a partnership for students to go and use their skills in a productive manner to them and the economy. (Angela Braga)
2. Quick thought about the projects since we started going to Mbollet I have not heard of a case of child or children dying of hunger - and although the nutrition idea is a good one it has to wait for an appropriate time or go alongside with the other more urgent needs. On the other hand there are many cases of mothers dying during a child labour, children with infections, old people with their illnesses so for me the project HEALTH CENTRE is the one to go for (Kasia Haggard)
3. Any other comments received by anyone?

Procedural

Trustee Jenny Brown at moment of charity formation was designated for retirement at this point. she indicated her willingness and interest in continuing to serve. The trustees will meet within two weeks to decide appointments.

All the points covered in the supporters day will turned into actions and policies in a July meeting (scheduled for 12/7/19) of Trustees.