



GamBLE on National TV

LOOK WE'RE ON TV!

TV cameras and national papers covered the ceremony at Yalding School, Farato on 24 November. The new Alkalo (head of the village) opened the proceedings to thank GamBLE for all it had contributed to the village, Tony, Peter Mack (Trustee) and Karen



all spoke about the development of the school and its teachers. That night the programme was broadcast and for weeks afterwards we were greeted in Farato and far beyond with "We saw you on television." The extent to which supporters of GamBLE have impressed upon the lives of families in the school is now widely recognised.

GAMBIAN VOICES



COMING TO FOLKESTONE

We started a brand new venture in November. Yalding Farato choir meets twice a week to learn English language songs that are concurrently being learnt by a community choir in Folkestone. In addition a group of women in Farato taught songs in Mandinka to the choir and these will be taught to the Folkestone singers. We hope to combine the two choirs across the seas with video links.

89% CLASSROOMS COMPLETE

The fifth classroom was built from start to finish during our stay November – December and the efficiency with which this took place was directly related to Tony's presence. It is so much easier to deal with the proceedings first hand and so we have decided to delay the completion of the 6th and final classroom until we are there again in March. We have funds to complete that phase which means we have classrooms for children from 8 – 16 years old. We can use the present classrooms for a second shift to accommodate children from 14-16 years. BUT..... we still need to raise £22,000 to finish the building of an office and resources room. It is going to be tough to reach this figure so *we appeal for help with ideas and funds.*

BREAKTHROUGH TO LITERACY

Last November we introduced a handwriting programme and started phonics. Both approaches are radically different to anything that Gambian teachers have experienced and so we have had to progress very carefully and thoroughly and give lots of support through demonstration and workshops. The teachers are really keen to learn more and already we can see a huge difference in the pupils' handwriting. It is exciting too, to hear the children try to blend sounds to make a word. The bottom line though, is that English is not their first language and so we have written a very specific curriculum to support the development of vocabulary before the children learn to read. *More on p2...*

COMPUTERS R US

Thanks to the very generous of donation of Yalding Primary School, we were able to ship 4 computers to Farato and set them up in the little "back" office which has electricity. Baba, whom we appointed to teach Grade 3 last April, has turned out to be a real whiz on computers and connected them all as a network and has started giving all the teachers regular lessons.



FUND RAISING

To up our income we are planning 3 new events this year so please keep these dates free and tell your friends.

May 16th

FOLK BAND at Hunton Village Hall

July

ANNUAL BBQ

2,3,4 October

CHOIR FESTIVAL in Yalding



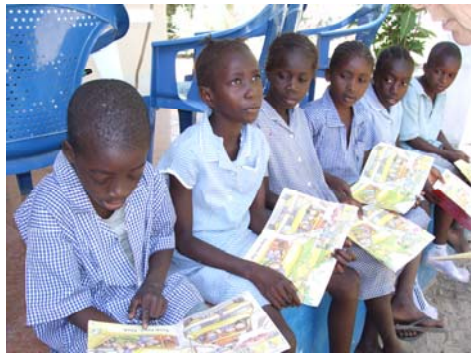
Karen links weekly with the staff via email to advise and support the teachers

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READING BEGINS HERE

A complete reading scheme, donated by schools in Kent, is now in place and Royal Mail donated hundreds of Reading Diaries. Karen was able to hear every child read in 3 classes and some in Grades 3 and 4 and has created a reading plan for each pupil. This is a huge step on from the teachers calling out a passage from one book and the whole class committing it to memory.



LADDINGFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

donated pencil cases, filled by the pupils with writing materials and sufficient to equip every child who started in Grade 1 in September. THANKS very much indeed!

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The number of staff has now reached 10 plus 3 students that we have taken on a voluntary basis to act as classroom assistants in the Nursery. GAMBLE is sponsoring one of these students, Mamhajom, to train as an Early Childhood teacher and she covered for Jainaba whilst she was on maternity leave. The teachers requested workshops so we gave two, a fortnight apart to focus on developing literacy and to introduce the reading scheme and library. Plans next time are to focus upon practical uses for Maths and Science.



ABIBATOU'S VISIT

Abibatou, Deputy Head of the Nursery School, had a very busy visit to Yalding last summer. For the most part she attended Twyford Preschool and Yalding Primary School but she also spent time at Sutton Valence, Boughton Monchelsea, Old Bexley, Bower Grove and the crèche at Maidstone Hospital. Everyone greeted her warmly and she took lots of ideas back to Farato as well as very generous donations of materials. She will gradually introduce the ideas into Yalding Farato, backed by her own experiences.



VOLUNTEERS AT WORK

Pauline and Peter, who is a Trustee, paid their first visit to Farato and worked tirelessly. Pauline worked in Nursery 1 and created a new borrowing system for the library and Peter trained Ansumana to organise his work on computer

Naomi, from Brighton, taught Grade 2 about Healthy Living



Peter & Tony meet daily with Ansumana, the Project Co-ordinator



APPEAL TO SPONSORS

Regular sponsorship goes directly to pay the teachers' salaries. We desperately need to increase our regular donations. With each new classroom our staff increases and since many of our sponsors set up their kind donations, the £ has fallen 20% against the Gambian Dalasi. If you know of any potential new sponsors or are able to increase your own current contribution, even by as little as 10%, please let us know.