

Gambia School Support (GSS)

UK Registered charity 117613.

Project summary at 31 July 2024

Project summary

1. GSS now assists 12 pre-primary schools with 1,700 pupils (aged 3-7) and 60 teachers. We top-up salaries, provide good infrastructure and teaching materials, teacher training and 'on the job' coaching, food (at 8 of the schools) and the project is implemented by a strong team of locals.
Cost £90k a year (£52 per pupil)
2. On 11 June GSS trustees agreed to assist our 12th school, the struggling Madina Pipeline Nursery. Restoration work is well advanced and a plan in place to transform the school (details on page 3).
3. Training. Our program of training workshops, follow up coaching and funding trainees to become qualified is reckoned to amongst the best in The Gambia.
All teachers were assessed recently and are steadily improving (see page 4).
4. UNICEF ECDI2030 measurement. From October you will see reports on the impact our project is having on the education and development of the children through our adoption of the ECDI measurement process. Last term we ran a pilot scheme at the Brufut ECD and initial results are on pages 5 & 6.
5. Leadership team. Kemo Bah and his team of 3 coaches are gaining experience and the team is soon to be augmented with input from Ebrima Bah (no relation) a specialist trainer from Gambia College.
6. Finances. Balance in CAF Bank £121k, Trust Bank of The Gambia £7k (details on page 7).



60 teacher attending the 2-day training workshop on 19 April (temperature 35C at times)

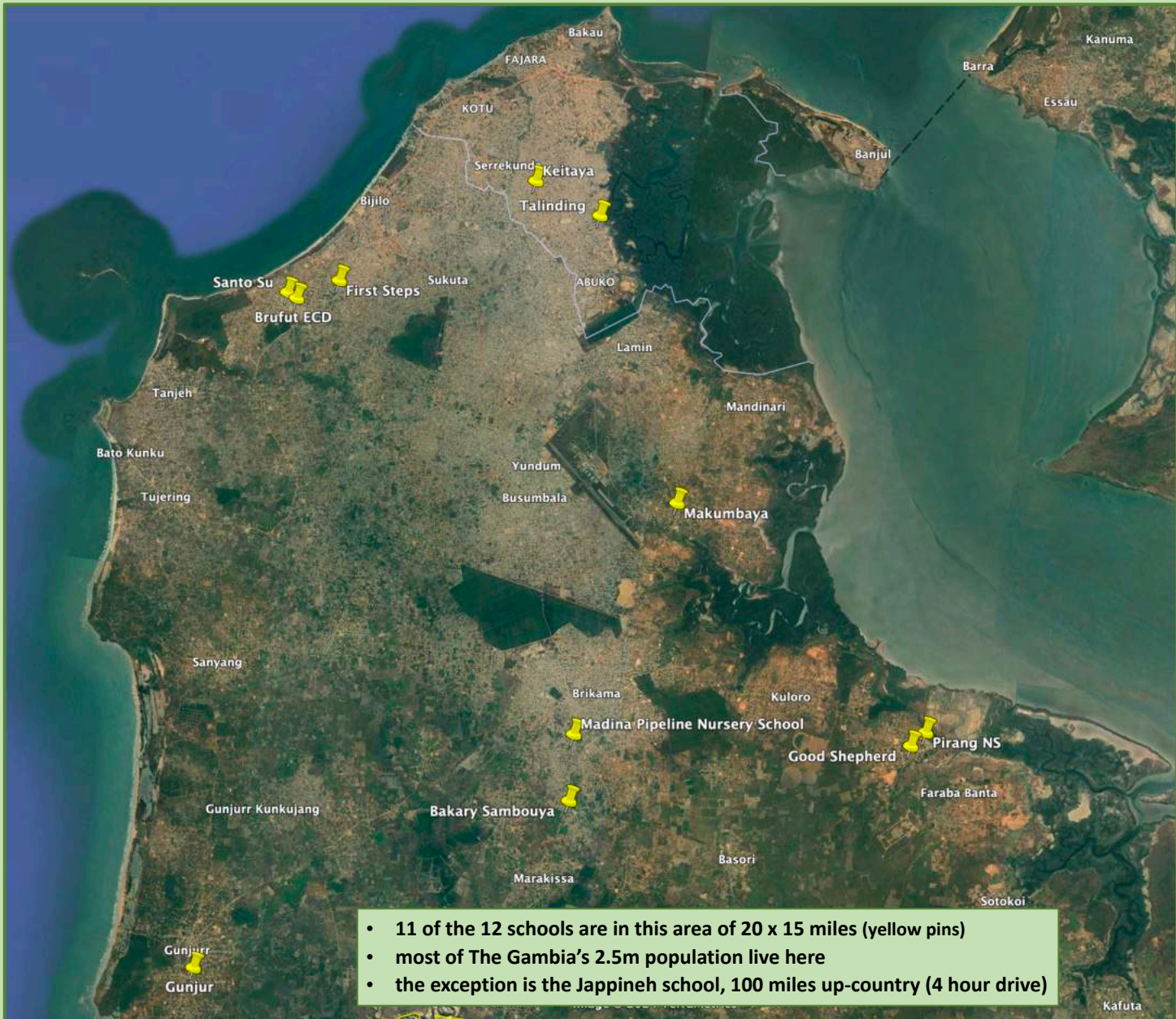


led by Kemo Bah one of the foremost educators in The Gambia



all Head Teachers attend a workshop to improve their leadership and administrative skills (3 times a year)

The locations of the 12 schools GSS assists



- 11 of the 12 schools are in this area of 20 x 15 miles (yellow pins)
- most of The Gambia's 2.5m population live here
- the exception is the Jappineh school, 100 miles up-country (4 hour drive)

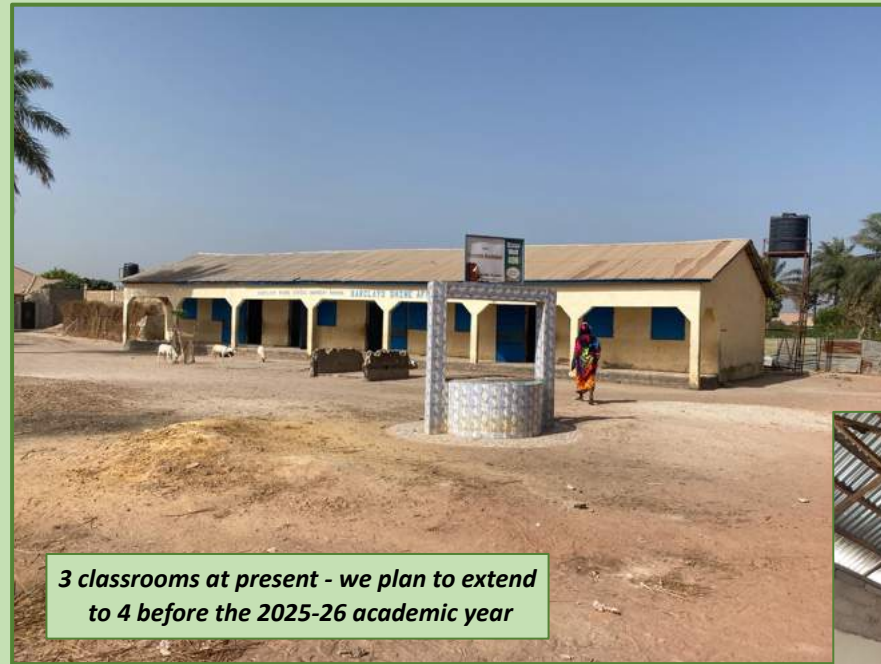
School locations	pupils	Qualified teachers	Trainee teachers
Brufut schools			
First Steps	153	5	-
Brufut ECD	193	6	1
Santo Su	147	5	-
Pirang schools			
Pirang NS	186	3	3
Good Shepherd	124	2	2
other schools			
Bakary Sambouya NS	219	6	3
Madina Pipeline Nursery (from 1 Oct 24)	69	1	
Mariama Mae - Gunjur	126	4	2
HENS - Talinding	82	2	-
Stepping Stones - Keitaya	148	4	1
Makumbaya NS	125	4	-
Jappineh NS	114	2	1
Total	1,689	44	13

Madina Pipeline Nursery – GSS assistance will start 1 Oct 2024

- Madina Pipeline is a fast growing suburb of Brikama (2nd largest city in The Gambia)
- This community owned school has declined and has struggled since the funding from its European sponsors dried up during Covid.
- It now has only 69 pupils (capacity 105) and one qualified teacher (the Head). The Head Teacher impressed our team who considered her capable and receptive to change.
- Its 3 classrooms are in reasonable condition though roof is nearing the end of its life. Toilets are unhygienic and inadequate and there is no boundary wall.

The plan

- Year 1 2024-25
 - assist the school along similar lines to the other 11 from 1 Oct – first year’s cost of assistance £3,000
 - daily porridge will be provided, cost £900
 - build a boundary wall, install a metal gate, rebuild and extend the toilet block, provide playground equipment and repaint throughout, cost £9,300
 - pay for 2 teachers to qualify at Gambia College, cost £220 each
- Year 2 2025-26:
 - increase enrolment to 140
 - build a 4th classroom for a ‘Year 1’ (3 year olds) reception class, build a kitchen, cost £6,000
 - new roof, cost £4,000
 - annual cost of assistance, including porridge, will rise to £5,500 assuming full enrollment and an additional teacher



3 classrooms at present - we plan to extend to 4 before the 2025-26 academic year



toilets need to be rebuilt and extended



roof needs to be replaced with metal trusses

boundary wall with railings along front so that parents can see the school in operation (enrolment only 50% at nursery level in The Gambia)



new cesspit and 5 cubicle toilet block nearly completed

The teachers continue to improve

At the end of each term the Head Teachers and Qualified Teachers are assessed and rated. Bearing in mind that most of the schools we assist had previously experienced years of neglect, mismanagement and parlous finances, we are pleased to have witnessed a steady improvement in the teachers capabilities. However, much still needs to be done.

Our local team has worked hard to transform the teacher's morale through investing in them and ensuring their full participation in our training program.

We have adopted a straightforward ranking score: 8 = excellent, 6 = above average, 4 = below average, 2 = poor (the system prevents the 'easy option' of a 5 score).

Head Teacher performance

- Kemo has focused on building the skills of the HT's through mentoring and specialist workshops each term.

Qualified Teacher performance

- of the 32 QT's, 10 have been rated higher since March and 2 lower.

Head Teachers	Mar 23	July 23	Dec 23	Mar 24	July 24
Excellent	3	3	3	4	7
Above-average	1	5	8	6	4
Below-average	5	2	0	1	0
Poor	2	1	0	0	0
overall average score	4.9	5.5	6.5	6.5	7.3

Qualified Teachers	Mar 23	July 23	Dec 23	Mar 24	July 24
Excellent	3	4	7	9	8
Above-average	6	18	17	14	16
Below-average	22	13	9	6	7
Poor	4	0	1	2	0
overall average score	4.5	5.4	5.7	5.9	6.1

Teacher assessments are made by this team



Kemo Bah leads the rating proces



Kira Dalton and Josh moderate proces



the 3 coach/inspectors assist Kemo reporting to him on the teachers at the schools they are responsible for

UNICEF ECDI2030 child assessments – update on the roll out

Our March report described the ECDI measure of assessing children and how we planned to implement it across all our schools during the academic year 2024-25. We trialed the methodology in a pilot scheme at the Brufut ECD school during Term 3 (just ended) and the process we followed is described below:

1. The assessments were made by the GSS project leader Kemo Bah, the Head Teacher of the Brufut ECD and the pupil's teacher
2. The child was not questioned directly as it is important not to put pressure on children at this age
3. Some work was needed to get the correct DOB's of the 193 pupils
4. A form was prepared with the 20 questions for the assessors to use and then they were trained on how to carry out the assessment
5. 25 pupils aged between 48 and 63 months were assessed between the 8 June and 9 July
6. The results were processed by Dr Nick Stevenson a GSS trustee (his career was in research in the financial sector)
7. Our conclusions and 'sample' results are shown on the next page

Several lessons were learned from the pilot including:

- The 'Date of Birth' records were incomplete and work was needed to get them straight.
- Some questions, for example the 'Psychological well-being' questions 4 & 5, need rephrasing to ensure the correct 'box' is ticked. This may well have resulted in scores being lower than they should have been.



Kemo working on the pilot at the Brufut ECD

UNICEF's 20 questions

Learning

1. say at least ten words?
2. speak using sentences of three words e.g. "I want water"?
3. speak using sentences of five words?
4. name an object he/she knows well?
5. correctly use any of the words 'I,' 'you' e.g. "I go to the store"?
6. recognise at least five letters of the alphabet?
7. give you three objects e.g. three stones?
8. count 10 objects?
9. know all numbers from 1 to 5?
10. write his/her own name?
11. do an activity such as colouring without giving up too quickly?

Psychosocial well-being

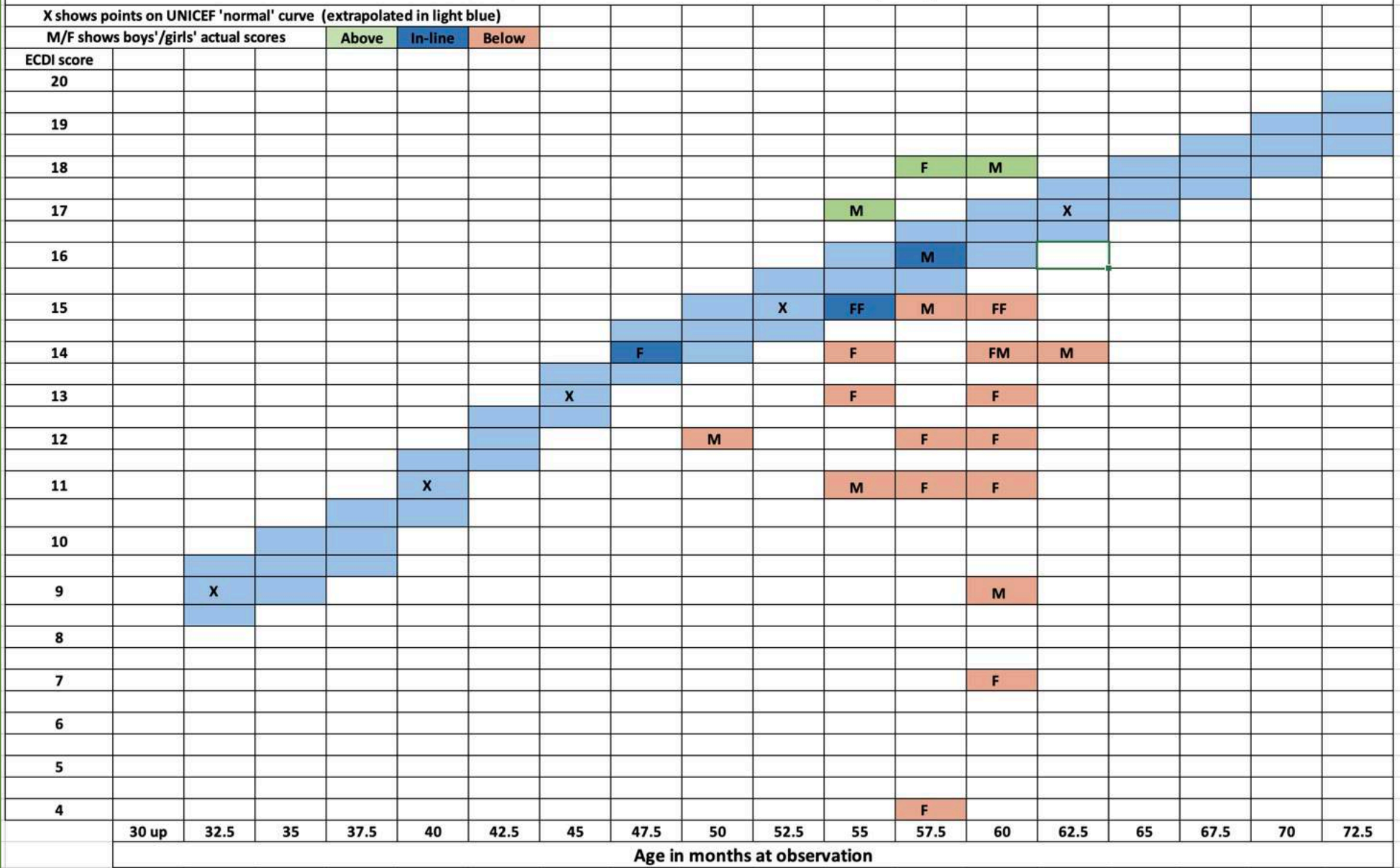
1. get along well with other children?
2. ask about familiar people other than parents e.g. "Where is Grandma?"
3. offer to help someone who seems to need help?
4. seem to be very sad or depressed?
5. compared with children of the same age, how much does the child kick, bite or hit other children or adults?

Health

1. dress him/herself, that is, put on pants and shirt without help?
2. fasten and unfasten buttons without help?
3. jump up with both feet leaving the ground?
4. walk on an uneven surface e.g. a bumpy path without falling?

ECDI2030 pilot result – 25 pupils assessed at the Brufut ECD

UNICEF's EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT INDEX (2019)

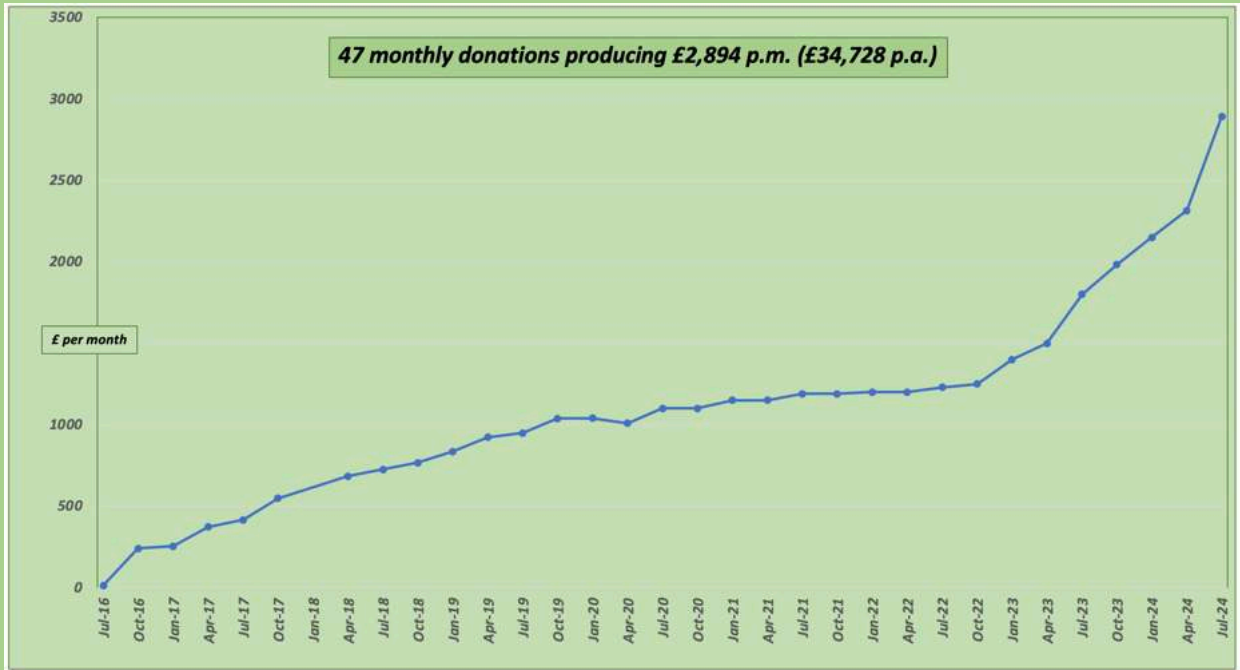


Commentary

- light blue band shows the UNICEF 'norm'
- 3 pupils above, 4 'in-line' and 18 below
- this is a prototype graphic which could be used to show the results, probably school-by-school
- a greater number of sub 50 month observations will give us an idea of how the nursery school experience is bringing our pupils closer to the UNICEF 'norm'
- in other words, we want the GSS assisted schools' trendline to rise faster than the UNICEF norm, irrespective of where it is on the vertical scale in the early years
- the pilot suggests that these pupils are 15% behind the 'normal development path' calculated by UNICEF
- this would represent our project's 'baseline'
- note that it is likely that 2 of the questions were incorrectly scored (see previous page), suggesting that the 'baseline' might be nearer 5% than 15%

GSS's financial position remains strong

- Fund raising track record (GSS's year end is 31 July):
 - 2019-20 £57,926
 - 2020-21 £75,196
 - 2021-22 £117,182 (boosted by a one off donation of £65k from a Charitable Trust that was closing)
 - 2022-23 £114,214 (boosted by a £48k one off donation from AOT when we took on their 4 schools)
 - 2023-24 £100,086 (income now better diversified e.g. £10k is our largest donation)
- GSS's cash in bank £121,000 plus equivalent of £7,000 held in The Gambia
- Reserves policy is to retain one year's running costs - currently £90k (rising to £95k next year)
- monthly donations – now meet over a third of our costs:



this painting 'Woman, baby & bananas' was donated to GSS by the artist Holly Brown and raised £1,000 – a big thanks you

Gambia School Support

Trustees

← *the partnership* →

Gambian Management Team

GSS's implementing partner



Josh Dale-Harris
Chairman
Oct 14

former Senior Director
at CBRE Global Investors



Kemo Bah MSC
Managing Director

- Has led our project for 5 over years
- One of the foremost educators in The Gambia
- MA's in Education & Public Administration
- 25 year teaching experience (8 as Headmaster)
- Senior posts in the Min of Ed and GTTI



Fanding Manjang
consultant heading
maintenance &
construction



Pa Gibba
general assistant



Tim Lodge
Trustee
Jan 19

former CFO
Tate & Lyle

Ran their
operations in
Zambia

Nick Stevenson
Secretary
Jun 17

Former Head of
Equity Research at SG
Warburg and then
Mirabaud



**Robert
Whitcombe**
Treasurer
Oct 14

Oversight of
agricultural
project in Ghana



Ed Dale-Harris
ARB
Trustee
Oct 14

Built schools in Sierra
Leone and Senegal



Lady Kira Dalton
consultant to the GMT

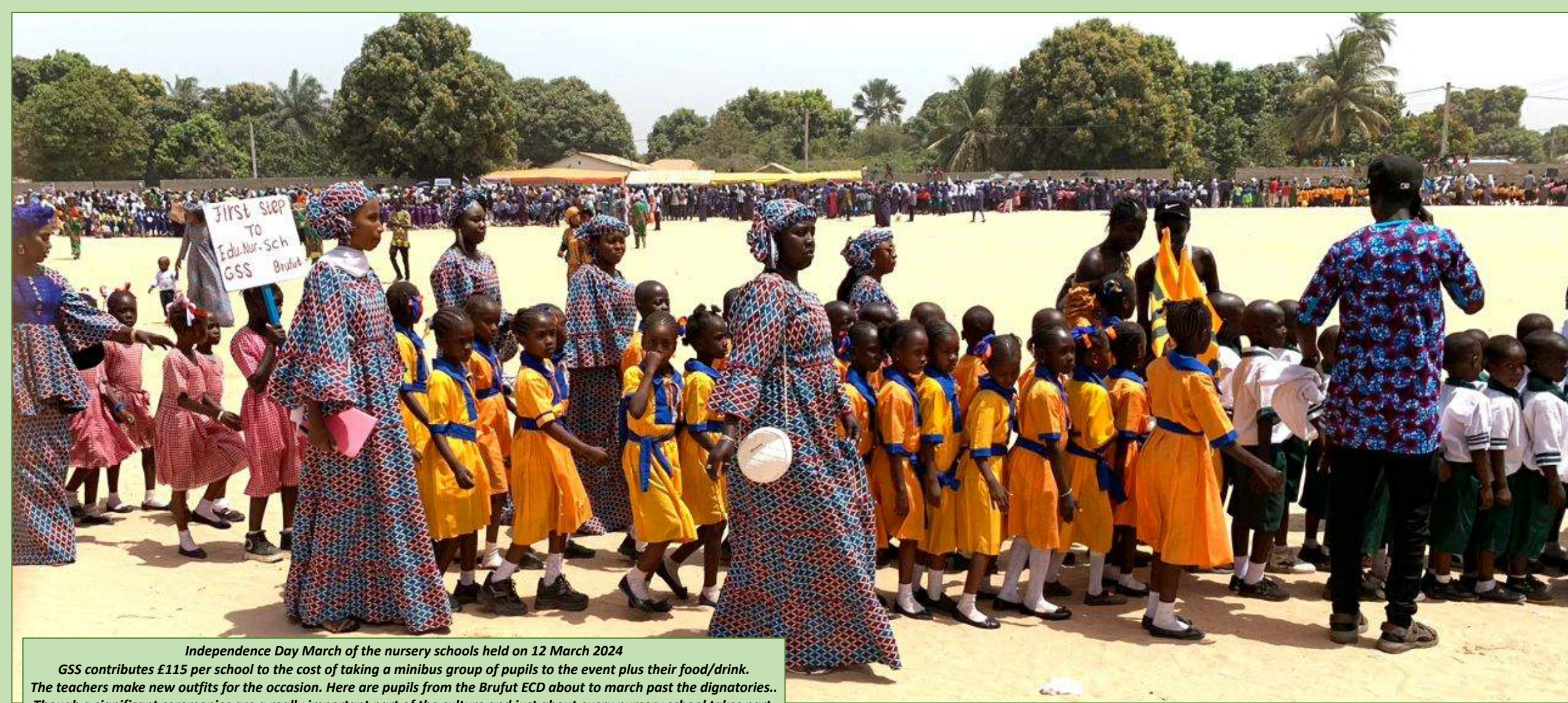
- lives in The
Gambia and set up
the GMT in 2002
- extensive local
experience and
connections



Fatoumatta Bah
administrative
assistant

Mrs Ada Bright
Independent Examiner
of GMT's accounts
appointed by GSS

(no photo at Ada's request)



Independence Day March of the nursery schools held on 12 March 2024

GSS contributes £115 per school to the cost of taking a minibus group of pupils to the event plus their food/drink.

The teachers make new outfits for the occasion. Here are pupils from the Brufut ECD about to march past the dignitaries..

Though a significant ceremonies are a really important part of the culture and just about every nursery school takes part.

Gambia School Support charity Commission number 1176136 registered on 6 December 2017

Chairman of Trustees: Josh Dale-Harris Goulds House, Petersfield Road, Greatham, Hampshire GU33 6HA mobile: 07990 563440 email address: daleharrisj@gmail.com
website URL: <https://gambiaschoolsupport.org/>

GSS does not hold any assets or are party to any contracts in The Gambia. GSS works through a trusted implementing partner.

This document was prepared in August 2024 by Josh Dale-Harris

GSS's Trustees give our heartfelt thanks to all our donors

218 private individuals

and the following organisations:

**All Saints Church (Fulham)
African Oyster Trust
Austin Bailey Foundation
Arcadya Charitable Foundation
BPL Global Charity Committee
CBRE Charitable Trust
CBRE Global Investors
Frost & Willan
Gambia Schools Project
Greatham Nursery School
Help in Progress (Stuttgart)
Highclere International Investors
Kambeng Trust
Mad Hatters Nursery School
Marie Helen Luen Charitable Trust
Nakupenda Sana (Malaga)
Philip King Charitable Trust
Rising Brook Community Church
Sage Publishing
St AVI Foundation (Holland)
The Mercers' Company
The Peter Cundill Foundation
XPS Pensions Group**

and brilliant Mike Willan of Frost & Willan who audit GSS accounts and Steve Watson who manages and pays for the GSS website