

Gambia School Support (GSS)

Report for Term 2 2025-26

at 31 March 2026

Snapshot of GSS's progress over 5 years

**GSS assists 14 community owned
pre-primary schools with 2,021 pupils (age 2-7)
with 86 teachers**

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- *Number of schools assisted increased from 1 to 14.*
- *Of these 6 were on the point of failing, 7 were at risk of failing and the other we founded.*
- *Pupils numbers risen from 140 to 2,021.*
- *Teachers supported 4 to 86.*
- *Founded our implementing partner the GSP (Good Schools Project Charity). Registered in 2024.*
- *Set up a Teacher Training & Development Program in 2021. Now considered one of the best ECD programs in the country.*
- *Maintenance & construction*
Built a new school (£23k), restored 6 dilapidated schools (£77k), repaired and improved 6 other schools (£31k). Every project was carried out to a high standard, on time and within budget.
The restoration of another school (Aisha Memorial) is underway (see page 2).
- *GSS adopted the UNICEF ECDI2030 assessment method in 2024 to measure our impact.*



contrast between Year 1
classes. 2019 = 50+ pupils
and (right) 2025 = 35 pupils

Aisha Memorial School, Tujereng

At our trustee meeting on the 13 Jan we agreed to assist this, our 14th school.

This community school comprised 3 classrooms with 75 pupils and in our last report we described the risk of its failing and the challenges we faced to secure its future.

We have already made much progress with 2 new classrooms completed (see photo below right).

Work has started on converting the 3 undersized classrooms to provide 2 good sized classrooms (see photos above right).

Once this has been done, the school will have 4 classrooms providing 140 places.

The classrooms are being upgraded with additional tables, chairs and playmats. Playground equipment has been made to order and will be delivered shortly.

When the new school year starts in September we expect the enrolment to increase close to capacity of 140 pupils.

The teaching staff have been reorganised with a new head appointed and 3 qualified teachers working with him.

A breakfast 'porridge' will be provided to all pupils and staff.

these 3 classrooms are too small, work starting soon to convert them into 2 large classrooms



ground being broken on 26 Jan to build 2 new classrooms.

below job finished on 11 Mar



Maximising the potential at each school site

In the last 12 months we have completed new classrooms at:

- **Madina Pipeline Nursery**
Opened a Year 1 (age 3-4) class for up to 40 children (Oct 25)
- **Santo Su Community Nursery School**
Expanded the school to 8 classrooms (2 classes in each of the 4 levels) providing 280 places. Built a new classroom for Year 1 for £6k and restored an disused classroom for £1k.

Going forward:

- **Pirang Nursery School.**
Go ahead given to expand the school to so that it will have 8 classrooms (from 6 today), providing 280 places .

GSS started assisting this struggling school in 2021, rapidly turning it around. Enrolment has grown from 180 to 233 and now two new classrooms are needed to cope with demand for places. Total cost will be £18k and we expect the classrooms to be ready for the start of the new academic year (Oct 26).

- Six other schools in the GSS network of 14 schools have spare land and when we are convinced that the places will be filled and we have the funding, we will expand these schools.



Madina Pipeline Nursery - showing a 4th classroom which was completed in Jan 26 cost £7,750 (including a new kitchen/store)



*the completed classroom for a new Year 1 nursery (the mango tree will survive!)
Cost £6,000*

'Permaculture Garden' at First Steps, Brufut



The planting and layout of the scheme is the brainchild of local permaculture expert, Sandy Martin, and her team at the Africa Organics.

The scheme incorporates:

- trees for shade and fruit/nuts
- a natural balance of plants which compliment each other.
- layout of the 'garden' so that it is child friendly.



teachers are being trained to hold classes in the 'garden' and get the pupils to take an active role



The Project

Aim is to employ this 0.5 acre of spare land to integrate horticulture into the school curriculum e.g. 'village life', numbers, colours, counting etc.

Also, introducing the pupils to simple gardening techniques and an appreciation of the natural environment.

The program:

Nov 25 invasive 'Elephant Grass' removed

Dec 25 Phase 1 – planting and teacher training

Feb 26 Phase 2 further planting cashew, mango, cassava, tomatoes, lettuce, marigolds and many more species.

Water from the school's solar borehole

Cost: £1k set up and then £30 per month oversight fee
If a success, we will rollout to the other schools with suitable sites.



tyre planters allocated to groups of pupils

Measuring teacher performance, step-by-step progress

Kemo Bah (Project Leader) comment:

“I am happy with the overall performance despite the minor dropping in the rating. Every teacher is keen to learn, though there is always room for improvement. I am happy to report that the style of teaching is increasingly shifting from being ‘teacher-led’ to ‘learning through play’.

Head Teachers (13)

The table opposite suggests a decline in Head Teacher standards.

However, we think that the change is mainly due to the involvement of our 3 ‘cluster monitors’ in the process.

Kemo Bah is widening their responsibilities which includes assessing and rating the teachers in the schools they are allocated. Kemo’s h play’.

Qualified Teachers (44)

Similar comment applies to that of the HT’s.

However, as teachers come and go over time and we add new schools to the network, this measure better reflects the overall standard of teaching across the GSS network.

below are the results of rating the teachers and Head Teachers
with a simple system of scoring
‘2’ poor performance, ‘4’ below average, ‘6’ above average, ‘8’ excellent

Head Teacher	Mar 23	Jul 23	Dec 23	Mar 24	Jul 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jul 25	Dec 25	Mar 26
Excellent	3	3	3	4	7	7	6	7	8	4
Above-average	1	5	8	6	4	4	5	4	4	8
Below-average	5	2	0	1	0	1	2	2	1	1
Poor	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>average score</i>	4.9	5.5	6.5	6.5	7.3	7.0	6.6	6.8	7.1	6.5

Qualified Teacher	Mar 23	July 23	Dec 23	Mar 24	July 24	Dec 24	Mar 25	Jul 25	Dec 25	Mar 26
Excellent	3	4	7	9	8	8	10	7	17	13
Above-av	6	18	17	14	16	18	18	21	19	17
Below-av	22	13	9	6	7	5	9	13	7	12
Poor	4	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	2
<i>average score</i>	4.5	5.4	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.2	6.5	5.8	6.5	5.9

UNICEF ECDI2030 assessments - update

ECDI2030 (Early Child Development Index)

- *launched in Nov 2020 by UNICEF this is designed to collect data on children's development between the ages of 40 and 60 months*

- *it uses a straightforward 20 question assessment method carried out by their teacher in 3 categories:*

Learning, Psychological well-being, Health

The challenges:

a) some teachers tend to be over-enthusiastic about the skills of their charges! To rectify this we are introducing more training and checking.

b) the spreadsheeting skills of the local team are limited to listing the results, not analysing them. We have formed a link with volunteer IT specialists at BPL Global who are a one of GSS's main funders. They have kindly agreed to set up an efficient process to analyse the results, compare them to their UNICEF 'norms' and portraying the effectively.

When we are happy that the assessments are being done well, we will report the results.

GSS's assessment program

- 1. Each child will be assessed 3 times during their career at a GSS assisted school, at 40, 52 and 64 months.*
- 2. The results will be compared to the UNICEF norm by age/sex.*
- 3. GSS will report on the impact its intervention has or has not had.*
- 4. At present we are setting a baseline with the measurement of the younger children.*

	number of pupils assessed	date assessments carried out
cohort 1	139	Mar 25
cohort 2	109	Jun 25
cohort 3 (40 mth)	147	Jan 26
cohort 4 (52 mth)	130	Mar 26
cohort 5 (60 mth)	128	Mar 26

GSS's financial position is strong and our income is growing

from Annual Accounts submitted to the Charity Commission (GSS's year end is 31 July)			
	income	expenditure	cash held at end of year
2020-21	76,219	68,610	73,229
2021-22	121,555	76,970	117,814
2022-23	114,214	117,551	114,477
2023-24	101,324	94,716	121,085
2024-25	156,514	131,053	146,546

At 31 March 2026 GSS held:

- **£100k in its reserve (a high interest account at Shawbrook Bank)**
- **£48k in its CAF Bank account**
- **£11k in the GSP account at Trust Bank in The Gambia**

The cost of supporting the current project in 2026-27 is expected to be c. £150k

We estimate GSS's income will be c. £200k for the same period. The surplus will enable us to expand and improve the project.

GSS has been working to build a regular and reliable income. In the coming year, we expect GSS's income to be derived from the following sources:

- **£30k from 39 individuals**
- **£74k in commitments from 7 charitable trusts, church groups and UK & overseas charities**
- **£27k corporate benevolent schemes**
- **£20k from a range of supporters through the Christmas BigGive (including £5k match funding from GSS trustees and £5k from a 'Champion Funder')**
- **about £15k one-off donations from individuals who regularly support GSS**
- **£4k interest on reserve**

Total £170,000

Several applications to charitable organisations are in progress with more in the pipeline as part of a continuing effort to grow the GSS project and its impact.

Gambia School Support (GSS)

UK registered charity 1176136



Josh Dale-Harris Oct 14
Chair of Trustees & Executive
former Senior Director
at CBRE Global Investors

Role: day-to-day operations,
including 'investor' relations
and co-ordination with the GSP



Tim Lodge Jan 19
former CFO Tate & Lyle,
ran their operation in
Zambia

Role: Oversight of GSS
and it's strategic
development



Nick Stevenson Jun 17
Trustee & Secretary
former Head of Equity
Research at SG Warburg,
Mirabaud

Role: Governance &
compliance, ECDI and
assessing GSS's impact



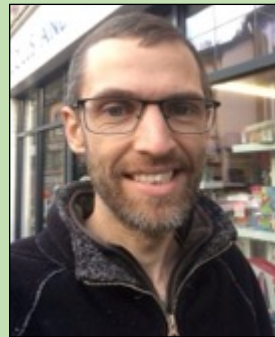
Robert Whitcombe
Oct 14
Trustee & Treasurer
farmer & former agricultural
project operator in Ghana

Role: banking and
financial arrangements



Nicola Kelly Oct 24
Trustee
Client Manager Ley &
Wheeler

Role: promotion, use of
social media and
communication



Ed Dale-Harris Oct 14
Trustee
built schools Senegal, Sierra
Leone

Role: sustainability,
horticulture and
permaculture

The Team



Lady Kira Dalton
GSS/GSP consultant
- lives in The Gambia since 2002
- extensive local experience and
connections
- Chair of UK charity African
Oyster Trust

Mrs Ada Bright
Independent Examiner
of GSP's accounts

Good Schools Project Charity (GSP)

Incorporated under the Gambian Companies Act 2013

Kemo Bah MSc
GSP General Secretary
One of the foremost ECD educators in The
Gambia
MA's in Education & Public Administration
25 year teaching experience (8 as
Headmaster)
GSS project leader since 2019



3 member GSP coach/inspector team



Adama Camara



Alhassan Jarju



Alex Gomez



Fanding Manjang
consultant heading maintenance
& construction



Fatoumatta Bah
assistant



Pa Gibba
assistant

GSS's network of 14 schools

(Jappineh is up-country (see map bottom right))



Aisha Memorial School, Tujereng

School locations	pupils	Qualified teachers	Trainees
Brufut schools			
First Steps	140	4	0
Brufut ECD	113	6	1
Santo Su	197	6	0
Pirang schools			
Pirang NS	233	5	1
Good Shepherd	114	4	0
other schools			
Bakary Sambouya NS	244	7	0
Madina Pipeline Nursery	107	2	3
Madina Talokoto Nursery	130	3	2
Mariama Mae - Gunjur	150	4	3
Aisha Memorial - Tujereng	76	4	2
HENS - Talinding	111	5	0
Smart Steps - Keitaya	151	4	2
Makumbaya NS	147	4	1
Jappineh NS	108	2	2
Total	2,021	56	15

The Gambia - 28 miles at its widest and 203m long

Big strides have been taken in teaching methods with these interactive techniques being used at the schools. A 6 year old pupil at the rural Makumbaya Nursery.



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

over 250 private individuals and the following organisations:

African Oyster Trust
Allan & Nesta Charitable Trust
All Saints Church (Fulham)
Ashworth Charitable Trust
Austin Bailey Foundation
Arcadya Charitable Foundation
Be Global Foundation
BPL Global Charity Committee
CBRE Charitable Trust
CBRE Investment Management
Coles-Medlock Foundation
De La Rue Charitable Trust
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)
Palca Stevenson Giving
Pat Newman Memorial Trust
Philip King Charitable Trust
Prudence de Lotbiniere Trust
Review Hairdressers
Rising Brook Community Church
Sage Publishing
Sir E Lewis Foundation
St AVI Foundation (Holland)
St Mark's Overseas Aid (SMOAT)
The Mercers' Company
The Peter Cundill Foundation
UK charitable trust (does not want to be named)
UK educational trust (does not want to be named)
XPS Pensions Group
Mike Willan of Frost & Willan who examine GSS's accounts
Steve Watson who manages and pays for the GSS website

Gambia School Support UK Register charity 1176136 - report prepared by Josh Dale-Harris on 31 March 2026

GSS does not hold any assets or are party to any contracts in The Gambia. GSS works through a trusted implementing partner, the Good Schools Project Charity 2024/C23843