



FOUNDATION HUMANITARIAN AID GAMBIA NEWSLETTER 2009



DEAR GAMBIA FRIENDS,

This newsletter is a little later than usual due busy periods in The Gambia as well as in The Netherlands.

Furthermore, it has been quite an eventful year.

ORGANISATION

The regeneration of the board in The Gambia, on which we reported in our previous newsletter, is paying off. Many and intensive efforts are made to expand the organisation in The Gambia. Many projects are on track and new ones are being set up.

The cooperation with the various Ministries is becoming more structured. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Agriculture has been signed.



Collaboration with the NGO office has been further increased and broadened. Our operation procedure has even been commented on in the local media and thus we have been cited as an example of how an NGO should operate in The Gambia. This is a feather in the cap of the hard working board in The Gambia, who devote their time and energy almost unselfishly, while working for an NGO usually results in ample remuneration.

The Foundation Humanitarian Aid Gambia-Belgium has celebrated its first anniversary and has set up a project inland. More information is available on <http://www.stichtinghumanitairehulpgambia.be>

Frans Roffel has joined the Management Committee in The Netherlands as Treasurer. Frans has been closely involved in the activities of the Foundation and we are very pleased that he has agreed to become an executive committee member.

We have been approached by many people / organisations to actively participate in projects in The Gambia. Bearing in mind that together we are stronger, we give those proposals due attention but our point of view remains that we want to be more than just passing on information.

FUNDRAISING

General

This year too we wish to thank all those who enable us to carry out the work of the Foundation. We can assure everyone that the funds are being well spent.

Again we received a generous income from the sale of the vehicles which were driven by various teams to The Gambia in the Amsterdam Dakar Challenge.

Further revenue was received from the lent activities in Millingen aan de Rijn en Keerderdom. At the same time we would like to thank all the schools who through their fundraising activities enabled us to cover the extra costs for food and other necessities.

In the spotlight

This time we wish to put our former committee member Marijke Hol in the spotlight. Regretfully she has had to resign from the committee but nevertheless she ensures that Millingen aan de Rijn continues its support of the Foundation.



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A special reference must be made of the Town of Bussum, that in the framework of the Millennium goals, decided to support the application made by the Foundation with a substantial subsidy. More information about this can be found in the projects progress reports.

PROJECTNEWS

General

In our last newsletter we reported that granting loans in the form of micro-financing would become one of the Foundation's objectives.

We have made a cautious start, but the requests for financial aid are abundant. The requests exceed the offer by far. And thus we have had to review our position on this. We do not want to act as a bank in The Gambia. Together with the board in The Gambia we have set up stringent rules with which an applicant and his/her project need to comply with. On a small scale a few micro-finance related projects have been set up, which are carefully monitored.

Schools



Worth mentioning is the new teachers' accommodation at the school in Nafugan. 'Funds for Africa', one of the teams of the Amsterdam Dakar Challenge, was able to contribute a large amount for this objective. Together we can be proud of the new living quarters for the teachers. This has taken some time to complete, but the end result is gratifying on all accounts.

Some buildings received the required maintenance. The food programme is maintained satisfactorily through the continued sponsorship of an elementary school.

Sint Vitus Health Center.

After quite a few false starts the Centre is now fully operational to a satisfactory standard. At first the Ministry of Health had agreed to supply the medical staff. However, they reneged their promise and we had to search for funding for personnel and medical staff. Not every applicant is suited to work in often very difficult circumstances, far from the civilized world. A qualified nurse was found, but he did not last in the job for more than two months. Finally a nurse was found who is from the local area and who understands life in the country. The clinic is very busy. A trainee has also been appointed to assist with the workload.



A vehicle which was driven from Amsterdam to The Gambia was turned into an 'ambulance' and was handed over to the community in Bakadaji during an official ceremony.

The Minister of Internal Affairs visited the Clinic and the teachers' quarters while touring the country. He was very complimentary of the work carried out by the Foundation.

Vrouwen tuin project Kanubeh



The new garden project received an enormous boost when the Town of Bussum agreed to sponsor this project.

Initially we intended to set up a traditional vegetable garden, but now the opportunity arose to cooperate with the garden's women group to choose an entirely different working method. This inevitably necessitates a lot more preparation and coaching. Therefore it will only officially be launched in 2010. All this will be under the banner of micro-financing and thus aiming for the garden to become self-supporting.





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To achieve this an irrigation system, operating on solar energy, has been installed which can pump up water from a borehole 30 to 40 meters deep. As a consequence it will be possible to harvest several times a year, in contrast to a traditional garden which can only be harvested once a year.

Women's garden project Nafugan



Through the efforts of the Belgian SHHG a small traditional garden is being established which will provide women involved in the project with food. The Belgian branch wished to start with a small project and will evaluate future development. The fundraising activities in Belgium are commendable and worthy of attendance.

Somita health center.

The Somita Health Centre now also has a small eye clinic thanks to the aid and support of a Dutch doctor. This enhances the charisma of the Health Centre and avoids that patients with eye problems, which are quite common, have to travel all the way to Banjul.

The stream of medical supplies continues to run smoothly and we hope that this year too we will be able to receive sponsoring for a further year of medical supplies.

SINGULAR PROJECTS

For a number of these projects an annual sum was put aside on the budget of the Foundation in The Gambia. Inevitably not all requests – and there are many – can be granted.

After media interest in some of the projects numerous applications were received at the Foundation's office in The Gambia.

The following singular projects came to fruition:

1. Sponsoring of a few orphans to ensure their continued schooling as well as supplying new, neat clothing
2. Providing a military group with tools to set up their own vegetable garden
3. Support to a women's group for starting up an ornamental jewellery-making cooperative
4. Aid in the purchase of cleaning material for a town



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FURTHERMORE

A number of new projects are in the offing. We hope to use the revenue of the Amsterdam-Dakar Challenge 2009 (in which our committee members are taking part, driving a vehicle to The Gambia! More info at <http://www.amsterdam-dakar.com/2009/Team/1133.aspx>) to be able to fund two projects: firstly accommodating orphans in their natural environment and secondly helping to fight deforestation in The Gambia.

Also we continue to expand the websites and improve communication with you our sponsors or interested parties. Would you like to receive a digital newsletter? Please send an e-mail to webbeheerder@stichtinghumanitairehulpgambia.nl mentioning "request digital newsletter". Moreover if you are a hardened webmaster, would you be able to assist us with our websites? Send us an e-mail at the address mentioned above and we will gladly get in touch with you.



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To be able to continue the work of the Foundation we would like to ask you, as in previous years, for your financial support as sponsor.

The amount remains at € 75.00. We would also like to enroll your assistance in recruiting new sponsors. Especially in this time of recession, the poorest need your help. Unfortunately they suffer the most in these difficult financial times.

Warm greetings and advanced thanks for your generous donation.

The Committee of the Foundation Humanitarian Aid Gambia