



COGS
UNITED IN CARE & LEARNING

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2020

We, the Trustees, Staff and Pupils at COGS, would like to begin by saying that we sincerely hope this newsletter finds you and all your family safe and well.

Over the last 6 months, throughout the world everyone has been experiencing a range of different situations, many that none of us have ever experienced before. Of course, COGS Nursery School in Gambia has been no different. All schools went into lockdown in the middle of March and at the time of writing this newsletter they remain closed.

Pa and Nina were in Gambia when the lockdown was first imposed in Gambia, which was just before the lockdown in the UK. This, of course was a very worrying time for everyone. They had 48 hours of uncertainty as to how and when they would get back to the UK. The Gambia immediately closed its borders and the airport except for any medical and food supplies that were coming in. The British Embassy in Gambia worked together with the Tour Operators and arranged their repatriation flights back to the UK. During this time, they went through a range of emotions from yes, they really wanted to get back to their family in the UK... to... they did not want to leave their family and friends in Gambia. Throughout, their time away, they were extremely fortunate to be kept fully informed by their Travel Agent, Liz from Travel Counsellors.

Despite, all the uncertainty over the last 6 months, we have stayed in regular contact with our team in Gambia and we are delighted to say everyone is keeping safe and well.

As many of you know, Nina's work is within the Education Sector and training is a large part of her job role. Every time she visits the Gambia, she always conducts School wide training, enabling those that attend, the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills. Generally, her training focuses on aspects associated with education including Classroom Behaviour Management, the Importance of Play, How to Communicate Effectively as well how to Be Creative with Resources readily available.

Nina reported, "When we arrived in Gambia at the beginning of March, it was at the time Coronavirus was in the early stages of being diagnosed in patients in the UK but had not arrived in Gambia. As we know this situation quickly changed."



"As a group of Trustees, we had already decided that it was important to train the staff, children, families and communicates on 'How to Wash Your Hands Correctly'.

I explained as part of my training, this was to stop cross infection and it was going to be an important skill to know, not only with the current Pandemic but also to stop any infections being passed on.



I lost count of the number of people I ended up training, but in excess of 300 and that included staff from local hotels too. As part of the training, we were able to donate a bar of soap to everyone who attended, which was down to the amazing support from you our donators, so Thank You!



As part of the schoolwide training, I also implemented a new hand washing procedure at the Nursery, and we purchased water barrels with taps added. During the training, I also explained about social distancing and at the time of writing this newsletter, the school is being prepared so social distancing can take place."

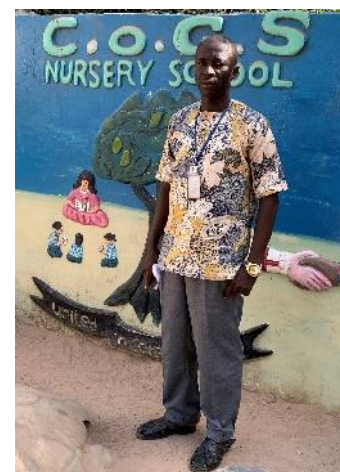


During her visit, all the children and staff were presented with their own personalised cup. Again, this will help massively with the stop of cross infection. It is the aim of COGS, that all children will receive their own personalised water bottle, which they will be able to take to and from school. This will help keep the children hydrated on their journey to school. Many of children do not live in the immediate vicinity of the Nursery and therefore walk a considerable way.



We are pleased to report that, Mr Joof, School Coordinator, has settled well into his position at COGS Nursery School and has already shown to be a real asset. With over 25 years of teaching and education experience, he is supporting Simon and his team. Part of his duties with Simon include, carrying out lesson observations, allowing staff training to be focused on the teacher's individual needs, supporting the teaching staff with their planning, as well as ensuring the Quality Improvement/Development Plan (QIDP) is implemented and actioned.

COGS developed their QIPD in line with the Department of Education Guidelines and as well as including school actions it also has links to development within the community of Jabang. On behalf of COGS



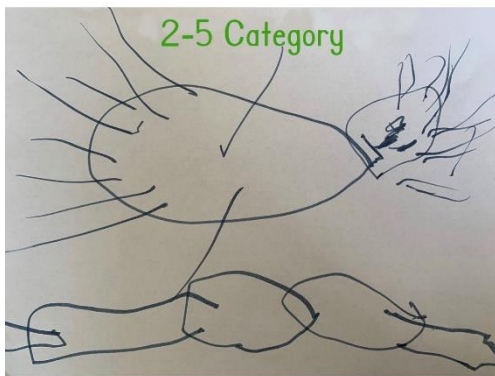
Trustees and the Team in Gambia, we welcome Mr Joof to our COGS family.



As part of COGS Aims and Objectives, we support other schools and communities by providing school resources and clothes. To support our community links, Pa has funded the purchase of a complete football kit including, football boots, socks and shinpads for the football team in his home village of Darsilami. He was keen to spread the COGS name throughout Gambia and decided to include this on the Darsilami kit. Thank you, Pa.,



During lockdown, COGS ran a drawing competition for children between the ages of 2-16 years. The competition was not as popular we had hoped it would be, however the drawings we received were amazing. Well done to all who entered! The three winners below, each received a £20.00 Amazon Voucher. Our thanks go to Jonathan, Toni, and Maxine for their donations of the Amazon vouchers to the worthy winners.



A Donkey by Alfie - Age 3



6-10 Category

A Kangaroo by Hannah - Age 8



A Lion by Henry - Age 12



A **BIG THANK YOU**, goes out to everyone who voted for COGS in the Educational Category for the **APS Charity Award 2020**. Thanks to all your votes, **we won** the category and received a cheque for 10,000D. This equated to around £160.00 (always depends on exchange rate) which was much needed boost to our income, especially as we have not been able to do any of our usual fundraising this year.

Another **BIG THANK YOU**, goes to everyone who has

purchased and made donations for face coverings.

More than 120 have been made by Nina and Corrie another Trustee who is also a sewing enthusiast! All materials needed for the face coverings have been donated, so there has been no cost to COGS which is amazing! The fabric designs have ranged from tractors, cars, busses, aeroplanes, and helicopters to flowers, butterflies, bees, dogs, cats, and unicorns. Of course, there has been a variety

of plain, spotty, and stripy fabrics, covering every colour imaginable. We

even had a specific request from Carol who loves anything with lighthouses....

Of course, we wanted to oblige, and a lighthouse mask was made. All ages have been catered for and

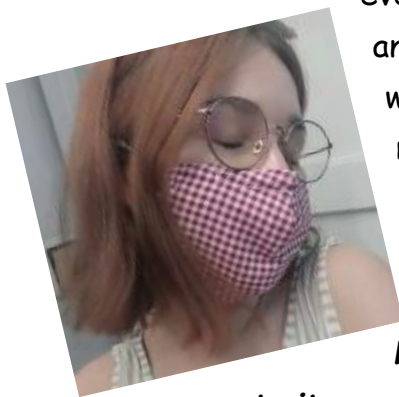
different sizes. We have received re-orders,

with people commenting ' *they fit so well and*

glasses do not steam up' together with ' *the strip for the back of the head that has been supplied with my face mask is*

great, it means the elastic does not go around my ears, this means there is no

fear of losing my hearing aid when I take the mask off, thank you.....' In addition to the lovely comments, the masks have been sent throughout the UK as well as further afield including Gambia, Greece, and Canada.



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We are continuing to make face coverings and we are already taking orders for masks made of Christmas fabric! So, if you would like your own personalised mask, don't miss out, please contact COGS HQ to request a photo of the fabrics/masks available. Not only are you supporting COGS, but you are also protecting yourselves and others!



Although face to face fundraising is not happening right now, there are still many ways you can support COGS. Why not sign up to



All you need to do, is to register with easyfundraising.org.uk. and select COGS as your chosen charity. Each time you want to make a purchase from a retailer, and there are over 3,600 to choose from, they will donate a % of your purchase to COGS. There is NO additional cost to you for using this facility, but the benefits to COGS are significant. Retailers include John Lewis, Boots, Argos, eBay, and Gap to name just a few.



You can also sign up to Amazon Smile. All you need to do is register and select Children of Gambia Services Tuti Nursery Medical Centre. Then, every time you shop on Amazon Smile a % of every purchase is given to COGS. It really is easy to sign up for both **EasyFundraising**

and **Amazon Smile**, **all purchases benefit COGS**. As they say, every little helps!

Every term we make sure the children have resources that we in the UK take for granted every day. These include pens, pencils, paper, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap & face flannel.



Have you considered adding one of the above items to your next week's shop and donating to COGS? This enables us to keep the children's hygiene bags replenished which at this current time with Covid-19, is even more important. Remember!! All donations, and money raised go direct to COGS. This allows us to sustain the project and keep 85+ children registered at school and 10 Gambia staff employed.

I cannot end this newsletter without saying a special thank you to Toni, a Trustee of COGS. Toni took on the role of Sponsorship Coordinator 7 years ago and recently decided to hand over the 'sponsorship' reins to Maxine and Harriet due to increased work commitments. Both Maxine and Harriet are looking forward to their new role and to corresponding with you our sponsors and donors. They can be contacted at COGS HQ on maxine@cogsgambia.org and harriet@cogsgambia.org. I am delighted to say, Toni remains a Trustee and part of the COGS family.



Finally, do not forget, you can keep up to date by visiting, COGS website www.cogsgambia.org or our Facebook Page, Twitter and Instagram. Why not invite your friends, family, and neighbours to follow COGS on Social Media... We love sharing our stories and keeping our sponsors and supporters up to date with all the developments at COGS Nursery school and the community of Jabang.



To each one of you, thank you for your continued support. Best wishes from the Board of Trustees, COGS Staff, Children and Jabang Community. Stay Safe.



Pre-Nursery Class 2020