



# Spring Newsletter 2020

WE at COGS HQ are thrilled to announce that we have been nominated and shortlisted for the **APS Charity Awards 2020**. The awards were created to recognise and reward Charities that do exceptional work in the Gambia, supporting local communities and we have been shortlisted for the Educational category.

# COGS

UNITED IN CARE & LEARNING

What an amazing endorsement for all the hard work and everything we have accomplished over the last decade. And when we say we, **WE** include, the team in the Gambia and all of our sponsors, supporters, donators and friends. Without you, none of this would have been possible. And for this, we say **A VERY BIG THANK YOU**, especially as there has been several charities in The Gambia, who started like us over 10 years ago and for a range of reasons are no longer in existence. We at COGS HQ, are delighted to announce that we are still going strong and we are eager to update you on all the news from Jabang Village following Nina's recent trip in December.

In between catching up with family and friends, Nina visited COGS Nursery most days during her trip and was super excited on her return to inform us of all the new initiatives undertaken by Simon Mendy, Headteacher and his team.

Including the implementation of the Emotion Expression chart. This chart was created by Simon to encourage and enable the children in an easy, fun way to open up and say how they are feeling. About what is making them happy or sad. As we know ourselves, we can all have down days and of course children have those too. This chart then aides the team to monitor the children and support their wellbeing whilst they are at School. Results are already being achieved as Simon reports the system is working well.



BIRTH CHART				
ABDOU AZIZ COLLEY 08/10/10	SIRRA JAMA 04/07/10	MALEN SENGHORE 11/07/11		ADAM JUM 15/07/12
MAMA TOURAY 08/03/11	SARATA JANNESH 24/06/12	ABDOU KARIM BADJIE 18/10/11	DAVID CHISOM OSUNWA 09/01/12	MARIAM COLLEY 08/07/11
ATA MARIE BADJIE 20/10/11	OUmie SANDENG 07/03/11	TIDA SAMBOLU 24/01/11	SALLY JATTA 06/10/11	NDEY COLLEY 26/06/11
YASSIN GAYE 15/11/11	PHILOMENA MENDY 19/07/12	AWA JUM 15/07/12	OMAR SAHRO 03/05/11	BAI MALICK JANHA 02/07/12

Traditions are very different in the Gambia to the UK. Parties and celebrations tend to be for specific occasions such as Religious days, Commonwealth Day (9<sup>th</sup> March) or Independence Day (18<sup>th</sup> Feb). When a child is born, the Gambians hold a very special ceremony called a "Naming Ceremony." This usually means a very big party about a week after the child is born, when he or she is introduced to

family, friends and neighbours. Birthdays, however, are very low key; the children don't get presents and may only celebrate with a small family gathering. A new tradition has been started this year at the Nursery, as they have decided they want to celebrate the children's birthdays each day. A chart has been created in each class listing everyone's birthdays, they then celebrate each other's special day by singing Happy Birthday.

Nina also reported that it was lovely to see the children and staff using the outside area to its full capacity. They know they are very fortunate to have such a space and so take advantage of using the area before it gets too hot in the morning sun.

Sand is such a useful resource and there is an abundance of it in The Gambia. In addition, as you can see from the picture, there are also the



animals, shapes, colours and numbers painted on the walls to assist the children and Teachers.



All this allows for the environment to be very interactive for the children and encourages fun learning. A video of our children using the area can be seen on our face book page.

The children have been learning about shapes and colour and have decorated the display board with these in the classroom.

Linking the planning to the theme of shapes allows the Teachers to plan all areas of the curriculum with one theme.

It's important that the teaching staff update and learn new aspects of their job role and so during her next visit, Nina is delivering a workshop with a focus on 'Planning and Differentiation.' As we know, everyone is individual, we do not all learn the same, but to be able to accommodate all children's needs, we need to know as much as we can about





them. This is learnt through observation, listening and supporting their educational development. The Teachers need to have an activity and to adapt so all children can participate and learn. Nina will be using a topic-based approach to planning which will be a new concept for the team. This concept will incorporate all the school environment including the garden area. Watch out for more details of this in the next newsletter.



During her visit, Nina delivered training on "Managing Behaviour in the Classroom." It wasn't just for COGS Nursery Staff but there were also attendees from other Nursery Schools and the local Primary School.

Despite it being a long, day the Teachers were keen to learn and the training was very well received with lots of positive comments including "I didn't realise if I was in a bad mood in the morning that the children would pick up on this" ... "I've learnt so much and see how important it is

that I use the correct tone of voice and don't shout" .... "Thank you so much for good training, lots learned."

We think from those comments it was clear the training went well - Well done Nina!



We are also very pleased to report that the children of Nursery 3 graduated in the summer and everyone had a great end of year trip with the Teachers and Staff. This means that over 150 pupils have now graduated from COGS Nursery onto a range of Lower Basic schools in The Gambia. Which is an amazing achievement and couldn't be done without our dedicated team in the Gambia. Joining that team is Mr Joof and he is joining as our new COGS Coordinator and will be part of the Gambian Management team.

Having been in Education since 1986, with experience of being an established Headteacher, Mr Joof's role will be focusing on supporting the educational team as well as overseeing the whole project. He will work very closely with Simon, liaising with the Board of Trustees in the UK, ensuring our children are receiving quality focused education whilst following the Early Childhood curriculum. More updates from Mr Joof as he settles into his role.



## WE NEED YOUR HELP....



As we said at the beginning of our newsletter, we have been very fortunate to receive this nomination, but **we need your votes!** Voting is free, it takes just a couple of minutes via this link: -

<https://www.apsinternational.com/contest/aps-charity-award/submission/1037/>

**1<sup>st</sup> prize is D10,000** which, as many of you know is a lot of money in the Gambia and money we could use elsewhere. If, we were fortunate enough to win, that money would pay for the feeding programme for a whole month. That is would mean feeding all 88 children and 10 members of staff a meal a day

for a whole month. Please help, please vote, closing date for voting is 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

Reminders: - We are looking forward to seeing everyone who can make it for our fundraising lunch at the London Beach Country Hotel and Spa on 26<sup>th</sup> April. What a wonderful way to raise funds for COGS with good food and great company. £30.45, all money goes direct to COGS. Places are still available.

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) or <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> Two easy ways to raise money for COGS. Both sites offer a donation to a charity of your choice each time you make an online purchase through them. Register your details with both sites and every time you buy something a retailer like EBAY or Amazon, they donate to COGS at no additional cost to you!

Alternative Easter Gifts, stuck for ideas for that person who has everything? Wrap up a COGS gift, make a donation and the recipient receives a lovely gift certificate. £4.00 a Chicken, £3.00 salt and pepper - very reasonable costs.

Thank you from everyone at COGS HQ