



**Marlborough Brandt Group**  
*Linking people for a fairer world*

## **September 2016**

### **Welcome**

It has been a busy few months in the MBG office since Karen Bulsara joined as MBG's new director. There has been a strong focus on aligning the MBG student summer visit with the current British Standard for UK Venture Providers - thank you to everyone who contributed to this. The summer visit was hugely enjoyed by the participants, and the local community have a new up and running classroom. Karen Bulsara and Nick Maurice travelled to Gunjur this July, accompanied by Karen's 16 yr old daughter Zoe, where they were warmly welcomed by the community who were still in full swing of the Koriteh celebrations. The trip was a chance for Karen and Nick to meet with key members of the link, and others further afield. And Zoe kept herself busy photographing and filming participants in the Youth Development Project.

### **AGM June 2016**

Thanks to those who came along to our AGM to raise a glass to Nick Maurice, who retired earlier this year. It was with great pleasure all round that Nick was named MBG Founder Patron. After 5 years in the role Anna Quarendon stepped down as MBG chair, the role will now be shared between all trustees - thank you Anna for the all the time and energy you have brought to supporting MBG. It was also an opportunity to formally welcome Karen as MBG's director. A special thanks to the Gambians that joined us during Ramadan, some travelling from as far afield as Leicester.

### **Garden Party**

And thanks to everyone who made Nick's retirement party such a success, in particular Anna Quarendon and Richard Draper who hosted the event. The rain held off and a great time was had by all, young and old. It was so nice to meet with people who have worked with MBG over its 35 yr history, and it is safe to say that there were a few tears during Lilli Loveday's heartfelt speech to Nick.

### **Gambia Update: Gunjur Community Link**

Karen was impressed with the Gunjur Community Link (GCL) members, who did an excellent job of hosting the summer visit students and providing the necessary pastoral care to oversee the building project.

### **TARUD**

You may have been aware that TARUD's director Sandang Bojang had a period of sick leave earlier this year. We are pleased to say that Sandang has now recovered and has returned to work at the TARUD offices.

### **Youth Development Project**



Now in its second year the business loan and student grant scheme is going well. The next round of loan recipients have been selected and loans distributed, including a loan for a tailors (pictured above), the project is being overseen by Gunjur Business Steering Committee, supported by generous funding from St James' Place. The Steering Committee are exploring the possibility of extending the training component to include teaching qualifications, in addition to the technical skills. This would enable graduates to take up teaching posts immediately, there by guaranteeing a job, and addressing the shortage of qualified teachers in the Gambia. Although it must be stressed that future funding for the project has not been secured yet.

### **Colin Crorkin UK Ambassador**

Karen met with Colin Crorkin the UK Ambassador to The Gambia during her visit. Crorkin reported that there is a unprecedented level of interest in the outcome of the presidential elections in December. The economy is still in poor shape and outside investment is limited. Significant numbers of young Gambian men continue to take the back way to Europe, the recent trend now is

to enlist in the army to build up strength and capacity and then use as a stepping stone to take the back way out of the country. Another strong indicator for MBG and other organisations to focus on building internal resources to attract Gambian youth to in-country careers and opportunities.

### **St John's Summer Visit to Gunjur**



13 St John's students and 3 leaders spent one month in Gunjur this summer as part of the MBG volunteer programme for sixth formers. The group worked alongside Gambian volunteers to build a new classroom (pictured below) for pre-schoolers in Kulucochi, a suburb in Gunjur. The group fundraised for the build and received grants from St James' Place, Lloyds Bank and East Wilts Twinning. The students gave an excellent presentation at the Theatre on the Hill that was well attended by parents, Mayor Noel Barrett-Morton and MBG supporters.

***St John's student Ann Cannon writes***



Every week, we worked 9-1, Monday-Friday, with the weekends off to explore. Most afternoons were spent picking mangoes, buying what they called "groundnuts" (peanuts) coated in milk and sugar, and cycling on death-trap bicycles around the village (I had one bike with no brakes, pedals or handlebars). In the evenings we often 'dined' at Calla Calla's, a small roadside restaurant. The menu was chicken with chips, rice or pasta. They flavoured everything with a stock they called Jumbo. I bought little packets of Jumbo back home, and after exclaiming to my parents how delicious the food was there because of it, we realised it was MSG. Every evening back at my compound, while the family crouched round a bowl of fish and rice, I was given a separate plate of omlette, bread and fresh avocado from their garden. [Read article in full](#)

### Summer Visit 2016



## WGEC news

We had a very busy summer term this year, with our Global Entrepreneurs Competition, Commonwealth Clubs and Trade Roots Swindon presentations.



Now in its second year the Global Entrepreneurs Challenge (formally VIBE challenge 2015), is a fantastic competition for secondary schools in Wiltshire. Five teams made it to the final which took place at The Platform in Swindon: – three from Hardenhuish, one from Lydiard Park Academy and one from Pewsey Vale, the school which produced last year’s winners. The students had all taken part in a Gambia workshop run by WGEC which focused on the need for small, environmentally-friendly businesses to be set up in the village.

All 5 teams impressed the judging panel of ‘dragons’ with their well thought through plans to set up environmentally-friendly businesses, from producing biofuel, making toys with glue from fish bones, selling sandals made from tyres to setting up a tailoring co-operative. But the judges were unanimous in deciding that the Hardenhuish team (pictured above); Jacques Tagholm, Matthew Dempsey, Rebecca Harborne and Rachael Mytton’s plan to produce charcoal briquettes made from peanut husks was the winner.

The prize for the students and their teacher is a trip to the Gambia, paid for by the sponsors of the Global Challenge, the Arkleton Trust, during this October half term. During the visit, they will work with Gambian secondary school students who are taking part in a similar competition. They will also meet up with women from a local co-operative who are already involved in producing

charcoal from sawdust.

### ***Trade Roots Swindon***



We had a fantastic day of Trade Roots celebrations with Peatmoor, Goddard Park and Liden primaries at STEAM Swindon. It was great to see the exciting work that participating Swindon schools had been doing on this project which looks at the global connections of Swindon's industries and engages with people who have moved to the town to work or for other reasons. The children worked really hard on their displays and gave some very engaging presentations. It was also a great opportunity for the children to meet with other schools and work together on some fun global activities. We have a new round of Swindon schools taking part for year 2 of this project, workshops starting in October. Take a look at the impressive short films made by each school and photos of the celebrations on our website [www.mbg.org/global-education/trade-roots-blog](http://www.mbg.org/global-education/trade-roots-blog).

We are involved in an exciting new project funded by the Community Covenant running after school Commonwealth Clubs in schools around Tidworth on the Salisbury plain which will run to 2017. It wasn't until we started preparing for the project that we realised that Commonwealth values are so closely linked with our own – democracy, human rights, protecting the environment, freedom of speech and so on. Two schools have had a wonderful visit to the Gurkha Museum in Winchester – part of our brief has been to look at the contribution

made by overseas armed forces to British war efforts and nowhere is this more informatively and comprehensively illustrated than at the museum. Pupils had great fun in dressing up in Nepalese clothes and working with artefacts before spending more time in the museum itself which is full of brilliant displays, dioramas and fascinating old pictures. If you are in the area, it's well worth a visit.

### **MBG the Future?**

MBG will be holding a meeting of the Trustees, Executive Committee and staff in mid October to hear from the new Director possible strategies for taking MBG forward into the future. Following the consensus of the outcome of this meeting, plans for charity will be shared with the members and other stakeholders.

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