

Genieri Collections - Newsletter No.11 - October 2018

Some Good News for the Village

Progress with money and food security.

Recently Bob Woodcock has been working hard, trying to find a way through HMRC's legislation to help us achieve Gift Aid status, and in the past few days has found a way through a truly extra-ordinary labyrinth of documentation. Finally he sorted it out, and we managed to achieve a submission which is now with HMRC, and we fully expect this to be successful in the next few weeks.



When completed we'll be able to claim from Gift Aid a 25% return on all ongoing donations from UK taxpayers, and as you can imagine this will make a very real difference to the children of Genieri. In addition to that we can claim "back-payments" (about £1,000) on most payments since May 2016 when we registered as a Charity with OSCR (Office of the Scottish Charities Register).

The upshot of this is that we'll be well able to make significant improvements to the children's dietary quality, but without compromising the small reserve we hold for them to ensure food security in times of very poor or failed harvests. Particularly the children crave potato - and it's interesting to note that potato is almost exactly the same price in Gambia as it is in the UK. It's an interesting comparison when you consider that a typical up-country daily wage is about £0.50 for a woman and £1.00 for a man. Potato is a truly expensive, almost inaccessible commodity. Now they can have some on a much more regular basis. We should also be able provide them with some oily fish, such as sardines, both to vary the diet a wee bit and add significant health benefit, as oily fish is rich in omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, which have been shown to reduce inflammation and potentially lower the risk of heart disease, cancer, and arthritis.

The Centre's Population

After several years of a very stable number of children, about 70, varying only about 2 or 3 per year we now understand that this year's roll comes to 78, with consequential extra load on the feeding budget. The Gift Aid reclaim make a lot of difference of course, and we'll just about be able to keep up once it's in place, but we'll certainly have to keep an eye on it.

The Children's Toilet



We now have signs of progress on this health front, as the building is now complete. The Village decided the entire toilet block, being over 15 years old was past its best, and put up a new one using our money to help with this – so the entire school community will benefit. Humble though this looks it's difficult to describe just how much better this is than the original version.

We're waiting for additional photos to come from the Village showing us the inside.

Poorer News



On a sadder note old Mr. Sanneh died recently at the age of 89, being the second oldest occupant of the Village, and a friend of ours. He was enormously experienced, and remained active till the last, and we enjoyed picking peanuts with him during our last visit. But perhaps the most poignant memory of him must be his kindness to the children, particularly the very youngest ones, some of whom had never seen a fair skinned individual and were truly terrified. Mr. Sanneh would patiently and softly explain to them that we "were human beings – just like us", and that there was nothing to fear. It worked, and the children would come closer.

We'll keep you up to speed with the Gift Aid initiative when we know more.

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