

Genieri Collections - Newsletter No.23 – May 2021

Things are looking up (Again).



So much has been happening that we thought it wise to put out another newsletter quite soon after our previous publication.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE CENTRE

Refurbishment of the Primary Health Care Centre is now complete, and it's looking great. The villagers are really delighted with the new look centre,

and consider themselves lucky to have us looking after them.



Perhaps more importantly we're beginning to get some meaningful numbers together, and clearer sight of how the finances of the Centre work in real life, although it's certainly still early days. Given that the numbers are somewhat vague right now, they are surely grounds for optimism. We suspect we can get the Centre (at least partially) self-sufficient and sustainable in the very near future - the signs are good that with just a few policy changes they will turn that critical corner. Reporting processes are being put into place at the suggestion of the senior nurse Alimamey Susso, and that will provide us with much clearer sight of what's *actually happening* on the ground.

Alimamey says ["First and foremost I will to express my heartfelt and warmest greetings to you and the entire donors for this magnificent gesture."](#)

[I am really glad and Thanksgiving to Allah, for successful completion of the PHC rehabilitation project on time. Again on behave of the people of genieri we are saying a big thank you. We shall continue praying for you and the entire donors for the support, which had and shall improve the health of the villagers."](#)

Job done for the time being.

Things to watch

Food prices in The Gambia have remained remarkably stable for quite a long time, but it's caught up with the Villagers now as their economy has suffered. The effect has been a rise in our feeding costs at the Day Care Centre, with foodstuffs now costing £0.09 per meal, and a whole cost of £0.12 including cooking and fuel. Fortunately the GBP/Dalasi rate has remained strong, so we can manage for the foreseeable future. Rest assured we'll keep a very sharp eye on all factors to ensure that our primary objective of feeding the children cannot be compromised.

COVID-19

Gambia has done extraordinary well, with a death rate of 71/Million, and their new case and death rates are both declining. It'll take them some time though to get clear, with only 21% of the population willing to be vaccinated. 56,000 vaccine doses were supplied via COVAX, and 20,000 have been administered. 69% of Gambians believe that prayer is more powerful than vaccination. We can only hope that their progress continues.

Summer and Early Winter.

This period always brings the Village two very real and very natural problems.

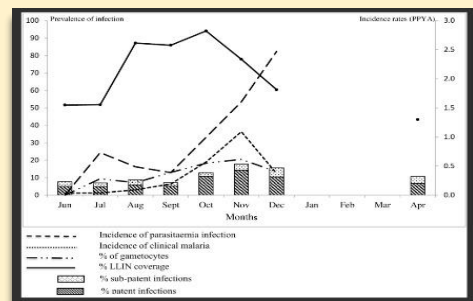


“.....thank you, thank you for feeding my children, and it means that there’s a little bit more for everyone”

Seasonal Hunger. As usual July, August and September see cereal crops depleted, and people cannot live on watermelons alone. So for those months we provide money to deliver the children a breakfast in addition to the standard school lunch.

That breakfast reduces the impact of them going to bed hungry, only to wake up even hungrier, and then have a long wait for the school lunch. By feeding the children everyone has a little bit more to eat, so we see it as a double win from your donations, and we’ve got just about enough money salted away to cover this.

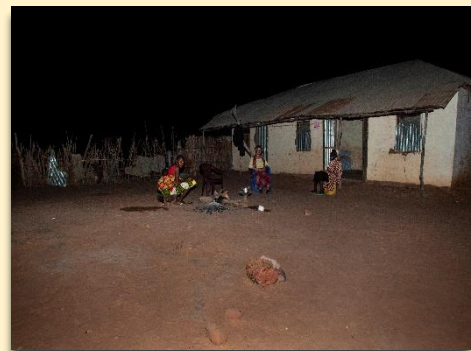
Beyond that **Malaria is still a significant issue.** Despite Gambia’s long term progress Malaria is still a problem all year, rising strongly from September to reach a nasty peak in November, misery ensues, and lives are lost. Over the past couple of years we’ve managed to have some spare cash to help supply the Village with a drug called Coartem which is highly effective against local variants. With an adult treatment course costing £6.00 (that’s all of a whole week’s wage for most wage earners in the Village - before eating and ALL other costs), and even a paediatric course costing £2.00, they cannot afford it. Bearing in mind that most families have NOTHING left after eating, even being tested is prohibitively expensive at £1.50 per test.



Malaria has already started in the Village with 5 recorded cases on 25/05/21.



Some sense of proportion can be gleaned from the fact that these poor people cannot afford solar lighting at an approximate cost of 3p. per night when priced against candles which cost



them 1.5p. for 5 or 6 nights. There’s nothing quite so dark as night in the Village.

We can help but only in a small way. With a fair wind we’ll be able to salt away a bit of money to help them over this inevitable high-risk and threatening period for them. So let’s hope against hope that they don’t have a bad season.

Jim, Sophie and Bob