

Genieri Collections - Newsletter No.30 – June 2023

On checking our records I realised that it had been an uncharacteristically long time since the last newsletter, and on reflection that's because very little has been happening to involve us over the past few months. Malaria went away as it does, and we simply kept feeding the children as we do.

MAINS ELECTRICITY.

Whilst there's been little movement to report we can say that Genieri now has access to mains electricity.

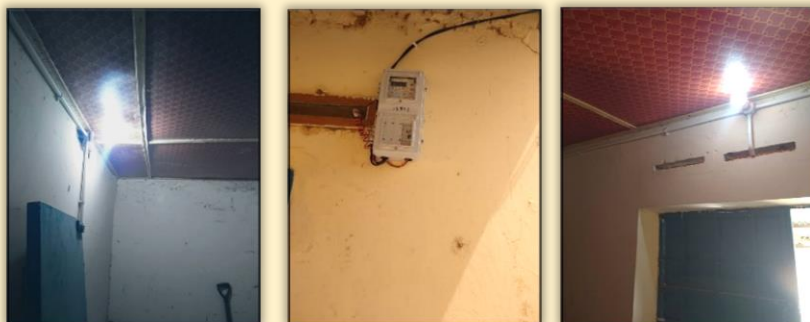
Mains electricity is almost entirely limited to major conurbations and certainly not commonly at all in rural villages. The Gambian Government has had a long-term electrification plan in place, and finally it's got as far as Genieri. And we suspect that they were lucky to be immediately adjacent to the major East/West Road on the south bank of the river.

The little Health Centre did ask for help with connection costs, and we felt that this was justified even given that the Centre is rarely used at night, and they use no electrically driven equipment.



It's a strange question to ask "*what do they need electricity for*", as within our culture and level of privilege we simply cannot imagine life without mains electricity on a fully reliable basis.

However, their examination room is at one end of the premises, with only a small window very high up delivering very poor light indeed.



So we thought that mains power was a good idea, and it will additionally allow the possibility of night-time use when appropriate.

Beyond the Health Centre we seriously doubt that many villagers will be able to afford to have electricity, given the cost of the meter supply,

connection and primitive consumer installation for the Centre was about £350, which we split with a sister charity. If any family can afford this, it will likely be limited to those families receiving remittances from their diaspora. Fortunately, electricity is charged on the basis of power used, with no standing charge.

We'll have a look at this in more detail shortly, but we're currently doubtful that there's anything can be done to help the general community.

MALARIA NEWS

It's that time of year again, and true to form Malaria has reared its ugly head, so we're sending money for Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDT) and Coartem. The bad period for them lasts until late September and they're truly miserable, with the mosquitoes said to be beyond fearsome.

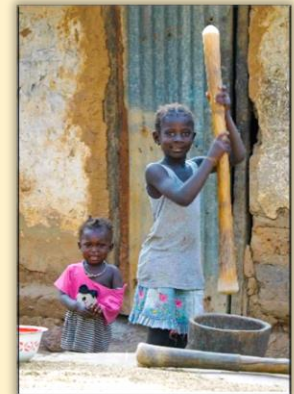
We had suggested some years ago that we might visit during the summer, to obtain a more thorough impression of life in rural Gambia but were strongly advised against it by the villagers themselves. As one individual said, "We would make you very welcome, but please don't do it – it's very unpleasant – and even we are struggling". Enough said I think.

We started supplying Coartem and RDTs in early June, for provision to the villagers free of charge, as it's just far too expensive. They would just have to suffer, and at the same time further spread the disease during the infection phase.

CHILDREN FEEDING



Were it not bad enough with mosquitos this is the time of year when local crops are all used up and the next harvest is not yet ready, and this "hungry season" lasts for the months of July, August and September.



As usual we'll be sending the Day Care

Centre enough money that the children have a breakfast in addition to a normal lunch, and we're told that this makes a big difference to them yet again. It makes a difference not only to the children themselves, as there's just a little bit more for everyone in the families.

It's notable that the school complement this year is down a bit to 68 children, so materials go a wee bit further, although food inflation is a constant problem, as it is all over the planet.

A summary of their view is taken from a mailnote in May,

"Thank you and sophie for the upport you to our children year round. We pray for you all long life and hiappiness and good health".

It says it all.

Jim, Sophie and Bob