

Genieri Collections - Newsletter No.35 – December.2024

Some good things have been happening since our last newsletter, which we must confess was some time ago..

A New Primary School is being extended.

Now the Day Care Centre children are located close by the new school, and they've been provided (or nearly so) with a proper dining hall to replace the old version you can see below.



Even in the partial state of build we can see very significant improvements, particularly with what looks to be a well tiled floor in construction, and a roof that's fundamentally better than the previous one. Indeed, this may well be the best roof in the Village. Note also that light fittings already installed.



What's particularly notable is that the bulk of the work done was by the men of the village rather than all by contractors, so there may well be a growing centre of skill developing here, which bodes well for the sustainability of the Village in the longer term. Outside labour was used for more skilled work like roofing.

It all still seems so very primitive, as there's little possibility of them having tables and chairs that we take so very much for granted in the UK.

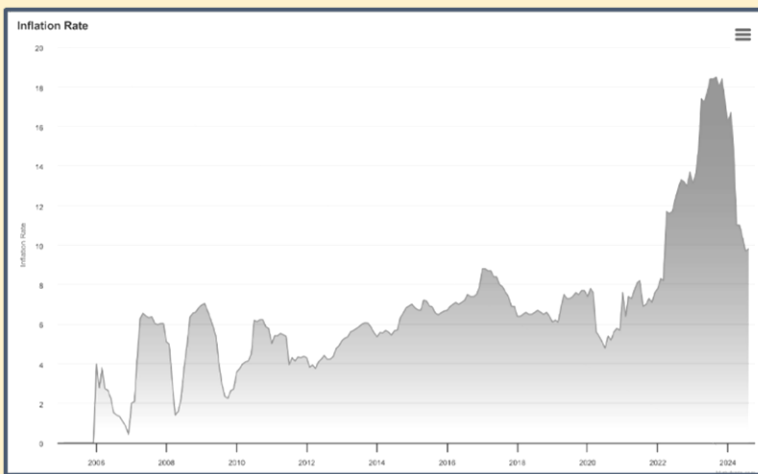
Past and Futures for Feeding.

As we said in our last newsletter - cost inflation rates have been truly horrible for them, rising to 24.32% pa. in September 2023. Things have eased a little since then, dropping to 19.74% a few months ago, and 15.26% more recently. Moving even further forward The Gambia appears to have

managed to bring inflation even further down – to just under 10% according to the Bank of Gambia.

This has to some extent eased our fears about a major funding gap.

We're sending a little bit more food money in any case, as historic inflation has certainly made life exceptionally difficult for them. Interestingly we think we've got a major problem with inflation in the UK, and we wonder just how we



might react to the levels these poor people have endured.

£GBP continues to remain relatively high against the Dalasis, We do of course have to keep a wary eye on it, as £GBP growth has stalled since about mid- August 2024, and it might catch us out in the long run. At the time of writing, it's slid to about 6% above last year's number. It must also be difficult from a national point of view, as some 23% of all Gambian imports are foodstuffs, that is, the little country cannot feed itself and their currency is weak.

Some time ago there was a national initiative entitled "Grow what you eat and eat what you grow".

It was a great idea surely, especially as the country is very substantially rural, and well populated with small farms and small holdings.



Almost every rural household (known as a compound) will have a small patch of land attached. The problem is there's just not enough good arable land, and the methods used are genuinely backbreaking in the poor, low yield soil. Mechanised agriculture is very uncommon indeed. The cost of fuel is also prohibitively high, and tractors unaffordable. Ground water is freely available, but the cost of pumping is simply too high for almost all compounds.

The Gambian belief is that "Water is a gift from God". Sadly, this adage doesn't extend to solar powered pumps.

Malaria and the Hungry Season.

Malarial infections have been very high this year, and we suspect this is due to no more than abnormally high levels of rainfall which have gone on longer than normal. There were a lot of infections, which stressed our budgets for malaria meds for the children, but thankfully there were no fatalities in the entire Village. Thankfully that's all over for the season as is their "hungry season", so it's a lot easier on the charity's budget.

However, Christmas is almost upon us – so please consider how much you might send for them over our festive period.

Those Christmas donations that many of you send are critically important, and we husband them over the whole year to make Hungry Season breakfasts possible. They also contribute greatly to our ability to supply treatment for the inevitably high incidence of malaria during their wet season.

One most vulnerable group is well established to be children under 5 years, certainly within our own focus group.

This Coartem supply not only cures almost all malaria very quickly, but also much reduces the incidence of the disease, by reducing the number of infected children which themselves provide a major reservoir of infection for onward transmission to others.



Treatment for an infant costs approximately £1.80 if caught early enough. Even if the malaria itself is cured somewhat later, in many cases the acute kidney damage is often permanent, commonly resulting in lifelong ill health, and in some cases with a fatal outcome. Whilst the much more common "simple" malaria is cheaply curable this form can so easily become "complicated" and is



fearsomely expensive and difficult to cure. So – please see what you can do, and we'll ensure that all you donate goes to the intended destination.

So that's all for now folks, and thanks so very much from the children for all the support you've provided over the past years.

Jimmy, Sophie and Bob