

**Committee Members and Posts 2019/2020**

Rob Isdale	Chairman and Projects Manager
Jeff Phillips	Secretary and Sponsorship Secretary
Richard Hughes	Treasurer and Vice Chairman
Alhaji Camara	Twinning
Lynda and Mike Redfern	Drumbeat
Emily Cardinal	Website and Facebook

# FOTGA

# DRUMBEAT



The Newsletter of The Friends of the Gambia Association CIO

**USEFUL INFORMATION:**

Friends of the Gambia Association CIO  
Charity No. 1171620

NGO in The Gambia No. A92

Website: [www.fotga.org.uk](http://www.fotga.org.uk)

Telephone 08454 968078



**HOW TO CONTACT US:**

8 Essex Close, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4NP

[info@fotga.org.uk](mailto:info@fotga.org.uk)

[membership@fotga.org.uk](mailto:membership@fotga.org.uk)

[sponsorship@fotga.org.uk](mailto:sponsorship@fotga.org.uk)



If you change your address it would be really helpful if you notify us in writing, or by phone on 08454 968078 or email :

[sponsorship@fotga.org.uk](mailto:sponsorship@fotga.org.uk)

## DRUMBEAT



When you have finished with your copy of Drumbeat, why not pass it on to friends or family who may be looking to sponsor a child?

**African Proverb**

**For tomorrow belongs to the people  
who prepare for it today.**

## Chairman's Message



Dear Members and Sponsors,

I feel privileged to be nominated as chairman of FoTGA having to fill the boots of Jeff who has carried out the role magnificently over the last three years.

Friends of The Gambia Association, at the time of writing is changing its status to a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) which has certain administrative advantages. The charity will now be known as "Friends of The Gambia Association CIO" but will still use the acronym "FoTGA"

The old FoTGA bank accounts have to be changed so the old ones will be closed in due course and funds transferred to the CIO.

Margaret and I visited The Gambia with a group of friends in January and we could see big changes in the country. For those who wish to go to the north bank, the new Trans-Gambia bridge is now open between Soma and Faraffeni.

We have a good team working in the office on the Kotu highway under the direction of our country representative Modou with Sulayman and Jariatou assisting. If you are in The Gambia on holiday do call in and say hello to the team.

Jim and Violet, after six years covering the role of membership and sponsorship secretaries have moved on. They will be concentrating more on raising funds for cataract camps. I am grateful for all the work which they have put into developing the sponsorship scheme and for the enthusiasm which they put into funding cataract camps. I have seen the positive results of the cataract operations in The Gambia.

Our group was privileged to attend the PTA prize giving ceremony in January. We saw the difference that your sponsorship money makes to those young Gambians, ex sponsored students like Mammy Saidykhan who is studying journalism and has had a number of articles published, Peter Mendy who has trained as a lawyer and has now been called to the Bar. Mariama Jallow is a fantastic seamstress who has almost completed her skills training. Do not underestimate what your gifts do for these children and young people.

Thank you for your support; without it FoTGA would not be able to function.

In Wolof, "jerijeff", in Mandinka, "abaraka baki" and in English, "thank you very much".

Rob Isdale

Chairman



Distribution of baby clothes at a hospital



More donated items being distributed at the hospital.

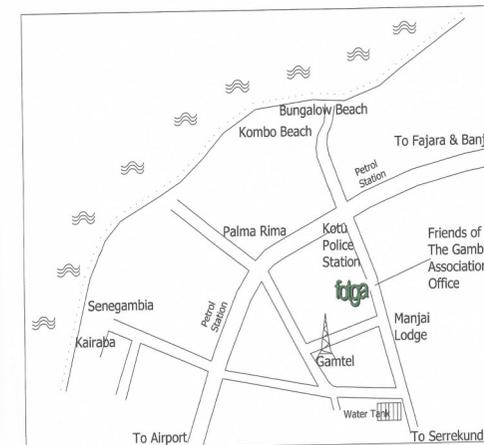


Presentations and Speeches at the Pride of FoTGA awards 2019



Award to a pupil at the Pride of FoTGA ceremony

Location of the office in The Gambia for anyone wishing to drop in during their stay.  
Office telephone no. +(220)7129469



### THE GAMBIA OFFICE in KOTU

You are welcome to visit our office in The Gambia. (See map on the next page) if you ask a taxi driver to take you to Manjai Lodge you will see the office on the opposite side of the road. You may wish to telephone before, calling on +(220)7129469.



The Office Manager, Momodou Camara sent the following report of a few of the activities which took place in 2018.

2018 was a beautiful year. During this period we have been able to interact among ourselves very well. Due to the fact that it was my first year in the office I was able to meet some of the committee members who came on holiday.

It was a period when we also received a big box from Rob containing books, clothes, and Bags of Love which were distributed to students and children who visited the office. We gave the books to Pastor Joseph for his school.

We also received slit lamps from Jim and Violet that were delivered to Sheikh Zayed regional eye care center at the Serrekunda hospital and they were received by the chairman of the board with the program coordinator and they expressed their delight in receiving the donated items as there is a particular region that does not have any.

During Christmas too we received boxes of baby clothes and football jerseys sent by Jeff and we visited some health centers and a hospital to distribute them. We took photos of some of the newly born babies as well as their mothers and they were very delighted to receive them. Some of the football clubs too expressed their happiness to receive the jerseys.

Rob and some committee members came on holiday around January and we had the opportunity to do the Parent Teacher Association meeting which is now called the Pride of FoTGA awards. It was a memorable day as different speeches were made from various speakers and prizes were awarded to outstanding students. In the night we were invited to a dinner by the Chairman Mr Rob Isdale and we all enjoyed the food with our family members.

### FoTGA's Annual General Meeting

will take place on

Saturday 13th July 2019 at

The Royal Oak Hotel, Car Colston, Notts. NG13 8JE

ALL WELCOME

If you are able to attend it would be helpful if you could let us

know for refreshment purposes

### NEW BRIDGE ACROSS THE GAMBIA

#### RIVER OPENED IN JANUARY 2019

A newly constructed bridge has recently been opened near the town of Farfafenni linking not only the two halves of The Gambia but also north Senegal with south Senegal (a country which completely surrounds The Gambia). The bridge took seven years to build, is 1.2 miles long and was opened by The Gambian President Adama Barrow and the President of Senegal, Macky Sall. Construction was funded largely by a loan of \$65 million from the African Development Bank, with remaining funding coming from the Gambian government. On the opening day many Gambians walked across the bridge. Lorry drivers will certainly benefit as they could spend many days waiting to cross on the ferry., but will have to wait until July to use the crossing as final construction work is completed. Only cars are allowed to use it now with a levy of £4. per crossing.



**My new role as Sponsorship Secretary.....**

This is a new challenge for me.

We currently have just under 200 students on the books, spread through all the grades from Nursery up to University. There tends to be more students in the upper grades.

The basic sponsorship scheme covers grades 1 to 12 (see page 13). However, we can still help if the sponsor wants to cover further education such as college or university or a practical hands on course.

Each one gets around three reports a year and many also write letters to sponsors.

We ask the students or their parents or guardian to bring their student's report to the office as soon as they get it after the end of each term.

When a report is received the office will make a copy and send it to the UK along with any letters. These will then be forwarded to their sponsor.

If everything is OK arrangements are then made to authorise a cheque for the next term's fees.

Countless students have been given help with their education with generous donations from members of FoTGA. Even if it enables them just to be able to count or to go on and become a technician or a teacher or even a medical practitioner, it has all been worthwhile.

Jeff Phillips



**We do need more help with operating the charity. If you could give a few hours now and then, we would be very grateful.**

**What Evie Tunstall did.....**

Evie, 8 years of age, is the daughter of sponsor Nicola Tunstall. One day a friend found a pound at the local park and said Evie could keep it if she turned it into something good, so Evie had a think about how best to 'put it to some good'. She decided to buy a pack of sweets and do a 'Guess the number of Sweets in a Jar' competition, asking school friends, teachers and family to guess. Within the first two days she had raised £42., reinvested her initial pound to buy more sweets, and ended up with £70. after just four days!



Needless to say Mum is so proud of her achievement! Evie wanted to raise enough money to pay for rice for their sponsored child Abdoulie Jallow, but now has enough for rice AND oil and £20. to spare which will be put to good use.

**Well done Evie!**

**To become a member:**

Go to the FoTGA website <http://www.fotga.org.uk> Click on Support Us. Scroll down to Members Page and 'Become a Member' where you will find a Membership Form for completion.

For donations cheques should be made payable to Friends of the Gambia Association CIO and sent to Mr. J. Phillips, 8 Essex Close, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4NP

To donate via internet banking use sort code 20-57-76 account number 30745340 but also send us your information so that we can contact you to: [info@fotga.org.uk](mailto:info@fotga.org.uk)

By completing the GIFT AID declaration you are ensuring that 25% is added to each donation.

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH**

**FUNDRAISING**

A simple way for you and your family to help us!

FoTGA has signed as a Charity with Amazon via: [www.smile.Amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.Amazon.co.uk)

FoTGA will receive .5% of the net purchases made by **anyone who signs up**

Next time you go to Amazon to buy something, simply go to [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk)

Type in Friends of the Gambia Association and bingo you are done.

After that every time you shop by going to Amazon.uk a pop up (see right) will appear to remind you to go through [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk) The screen and everything else is the same!

Amazon donated £40.05 to FoTGA as a result of the Amazon Smile programme activity between 1 October and 31 December 2018. It includes the donation generated by the offering of an additional 4.5% on qualifying purchases from 29 October to 2nd November.



### A New Era for FoTGA

In January 2019 FoTGA entered a new phase in its development as it transferred to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Although it is now a new organisation, with a new registration number and a new constitution, it will continue to operate in the same way. It is still a member's organisation, run by Trustees and will still operate in The Gambia with the same office and staff.

The main objective will continue to be 'to relieve poverty, alleviate pain and suffering and advance the education of the people in The Gambia'.

It was important to keep the same name which is known and respected in The Gambia. It is now officially Friends of the Gambia Association CIO, but will still be known as FoTGA.

You may wonder what is the point? These are some of the advantages:

- The new constitution ensures that the members will not be financially liable in the event of FoTGA having to close. Previously, the members would have had to make good any shortfall in funds.
- The regulations relating to accounting reports and procedures and the annual independent review are more comprehensive, so that members can be sure that their donations are being spent wisely.
- Consequently, other Organisations and Government Institutions who fund charities will have greater confidence in FoTGA, which will give us the opportunity of applying for grants to fund future projects such as the Bakindik Health Outpost.

Of course, the downside is the administration work involved in the changeover, including new registrations, opening new bank accounts and closing the old ones, changing standing orders and obtaining new gift aid declarations and so on,,,,

You should all have received some forms in the post. Please could we ask you to complete and return these as soon as possible. If you have not received them, or if you are experiencing any difficulties, please let us know by contacting the Sponsorship Secretary, Jeff Phillips, or any of the Trustees and Committee Members, who would be pleased to help if they can.

Jackie Massey. Voluntary Finance Officer and Advisor.

### Contribution from Mammy

Saidykhan,

### A sponsored student



My name is Mammy Saidykhan and am 21 years and an orphan, lost my father at a tender age, am from a nuclear family with two siblings.

My mother is a helpless woman, who toils and moils to make ends meet in making sure that her children get the education they deserved despite all odds, she keeps the struggle with the hope that someday, her dream shall become a reality.

However, in 2005, still on the struggle, she came across a charitable organization called **FRIENDS OF THE GAMBIA ASSOCIATION (FoTGA)** she tried her chance and lobbied for 3 children but unfortunately she was able to secure one, and that's **ME**. Since 2005, I was under the sponsorship of the Phillips family (*Jeff, Kate, Catlin and her mum and dad*) through FoTGA.

Today, am able to tell my story thanks to FoTGA for making my dream come true, from primary one till date they are with me. From high school, they continue to support me pursue my dream career of becoming a **JOURNALIST**.

Am now studying Journalism at one of the best journalism institution in Gambia called **Media Academy for Journalism and Communication (MAJAC)**, I did my certificate and diploma course with Merits and now am doing my advanced diploma course in Journalism and communication, also doing part-time internship at the most followed social media platform in Gambia called **The Fatu Network** as a reporter, which has 3Million followers...

FoTGA didn't only help me in building a brighter future, they helped me realise my potentials and today my STORY is able to inspire a lot of young people to work harder and take their education seriously.

Today, I serve as a role model to other young people at a tender age, all thanks to FoTGA for the love and support.

SPONSOR A CHILD, AND GET TO BRIGHTEN HIS\HER FUTURE.

GAMBIAN CHILDREN NEED YOU.

THEY NEED YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT NOW!

## A WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE GAMBIA

In the early hours of May 1<sup>st</sup>, I set out from my home in Toulouse with mixed feelings of excitement and trepidation. I was travelling independently, flying to Banjul via Brussels and Dakar, to spend the next two weeks on a working holiday for FoTGA, introducing and providing tuition on new financial software and reviewing financial procedures. After several delays, including two hours waiting on the runway at Dakar in a plane without air conditioning, we reached Banjul. I was very pleased to see Jeff Phillips, the Sponsorship Secretary, waiting to meet me. I had finally arrived in The Gambia, but too exhausted to take it all in.

The next morning, as I sat on the balcony of my apartment with my cuppa, overlooking the Bertil Harding Highway, I watched The Gambia come to life; cars; trucks; buses; workers; traders; mothers; school children; donkeys; goats; taxis galore; hooting; shouting; smiling; laughing! It was certainly going to be an eventful trip.

Jeff introduced me to the office staff, Modou, Sulayman and Jari, who were all very welcoming. It was wonderful to meet them at last after communicating for so long by email. Now I was able to put a face to a name, see their working environment and learn about the cultural differences. On Friday, they came to work, looking so splendid and colourful in their traditional dress. How different from our dress down Fridays!

I was immediately impressed by their enthusiasm and keenness to engage with the project. Sulayman, was going to have the hardest task. He had to complete the practical training, with everyone looking over his shoulder whilst I issued instructions. He managed very well and quickly took everything on board, spotting the essentials as well as the pitfalls. Within a short time, he was able to write up the records, reconcile the bank accounts, make corrections and produce reports, which he quickly learned to personalise. The records would now be up to date and could be incorporated into the UK Accounts to give ongoing information.

Modou, the office manager, was very observant and quick to learn. He easily understood how the software works and will be able to oversee the finances and make good use of the reports to manage the office budget. He was also very helpful in completing my review, explaining about the education system in The Gambia and pointing out many social and cultural differences which exist in the workplace.

This was always going to be an eventful trip and during this time, Sulayman's wife gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, Ramatoulie and the naming ceremony took place the following week, to which we were all invited. It was a wonderful, all-day event, with friends and family popping in and out. I felt very honoured to have been invited.

Coming back to the topic for today, education is important for many reasons. It makes one self-sufficient, self-dependent, confident and well informed about issues that revolve around you.

Education gives one a happy life and enjoys the good things the world has to offer. When one is educated, it opens opportunity for a great job for a stable life, and a good social reputation.

Education breaches the gap between the rich and the poor. If one wants to do away with the existing differences between different social classes, education is the total tool that opens a whole world of opportunities for the poor so that they may have an equal shot at well-paying jobs.

When you are educated the chances of you becoming self-dependent person is undoubtedly high. It also makes you wiser and gives you the ability to make decisions that affects your life

Education opens a chance to realise your dream. If you dream for a career or an extremely successful person who is respected, you need education because your degree is what helps you realize all your dreams.

Education has great impact on your understanding of the different issues. If you are educated, you are well aware of your rights, the law and your responsibilities towards the society. Hence, education is an important factor which contributes towards attaining social harmony and peace. In addition, if you are educated you have more chances of being heard and taken seriously. If one is uneducated it is hard to express his views and opinions. In other words, education gives you the confidence to express your views.

Education helps you become an active member of the society and participate in the ongoing changes and developments for the economic prosperity of your country. It is education that can save you from being exploited and fooled about. If you are not educated, you are not aware of your rights, as such; many can take advantage of you.

I am therefore challenging the students here present to take education more serious. If you want to change your present story to a better one, you must work harder, ever more hard to get educated. In our society, many want to go to school but they cannot because they do not have the opportunity you are given by FoTGA. Consequently, you need to work hard not only to make FoTGA proud but to also better your lives.

I also want to implore all the parents, to encourage their children to work harder. Parents, you should not be indifferent about what your children are doing. Check their books from time-to-time and also visit their schools, meet their teacher and ask about how your child is doing. That way you know what your child need and what you as a parent should do to ensure that your child feels comfortable studying. Help your children now and they will make you proud later.

On that note, I wish to thank Terry and Susan, FoTGA and everybody once again for your help and kind attention.

**Peter Mendy**

**EXTRACT FROM A SPEECH GIVEN BY**

**MR. PETER MENDY**

**AT FoTGA's ANNUAL PRIZEGIVING DAY 2019**



**STATEMENT**

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, the esteem representatives of Friends of The Gambia, Mr. Rob and his team, the hardworking personnel of the Fotga office in The Gambia , the parents, and students.

I felt so happy when I got an email from FoTGA inviting me to represent as a guest speaker in this great occasion. I will be speaking to you later on the topic “The Importance of Education”. But before I do so, I wish to inform this gathering that I am fortunate to be part of those who benefited from the benevolence of the Friend of the Gambia.

A couple of years ago, when I just finish my university studies in law, I could not collect my academic papers because I was having arears to settle. I don't know what to do nor do I have any idea who to ask for help. One very good day, while I was going about, I spotted the signboard of FoTGA with a text that reads “Sponsorship for Children”. Though it was clear to me that the project was for the children, I thought I should just walk in and say my story. Fortunately for me, when I got in, I met a group of people who were introduced to me as trustee of FoTGA. I told Sulayman my story and he told me that they do not sponsor university students but I should wait and talk to the trustee. The trustee such as David Smith, Rob and the rest granted me audience. After saying my story, David took my details and say to me, Fotga is not in a position to help now but he will take my story back to England and he will discuss it in the meeting of trustees. Not long after he left I received an email from him which reads that one family opted to help with my arears. I was over the moon, sing praises for the great miracle. The family that God used to bless me was Terry and Susan. These two do not only settle my arears but they also contributed to funding my Master's program and Bar Professional Training Course. They do not only stop there but they continue to assist me in different ways. Anytime I call they respond without hesitating. I call them my parents because they have done what my late parents could not do.

While they were helping, I never disappoint them. I always try to make them proud by passing all my exams not only to make them proud of me but also to change my story by becoming self-sufficient. I am now crowned a qualify Barrister and Solicitor in my country through hard work. I started working and helping my family with feeding, tuition fees etc. because I am the bread winner of my family. At this point I wish to return my sincere gratitude and appreciation to FoTGA but a special thanks to Terry and Sue for their immeasurable love contribution to making me who I am today. I am highly indebted to them. I pray that God will continue to bless them with good health.

What I want to say to this gathering is that I would not have reached this far if I had not value need for education. I am from a very bad background. Normally people from my background do not think of becoming lawyers, because the means of becoming that is not at your disposal. In my case, I change the trajectory by believing that I can become who I want to be though I see no way of getting there. It was determination that triggered my confidence.

I was also keen to see some of the projects that FoTGA has supported and Sulayman escorted me on a trip across the river to the Northern bank territory, to visit Bakindik, a place I had heard a lot about. The morning ferry from Banjul to Barra was packed and being off season, I was a magnet for everyone with something to sell. Sulayman, looked after me well, he managed to get us ‘priority boarding’ and had already arranged a taxi to meet us at Barra, so we were soon through the crowds and on our way, through Berending and across countryside, towards Bakindik, a region considerably more rural, undeveloped and away from the main tourist area.

First of all, we visited a Nursery School in Bakindik, where FoTGA has been sponsoring a teacher. It was lunchtime, but we were soon surrounded by children all wanting to shake hands and say hello. Sadly, we learned that the future of the school is uncertain at the moment.

On to Bakindik Health Centre, where we were lucky to have arrived during the nursing mothers’ clinic, which takes place twice a month. Medical staff were in attendance, weighing and checking over the new babies and giving advice to new and pregnant mothers. Outside, the mothers and babies sat under the shade of the Yam tree, while the children played. It is now some time since the building had been completed by FoTGA and progress has been slow, but the village has now built some staff quarters and outpatients facilities, so that it is hoped it will soon be fully operational.

My background is in Chartered Accountancy and International Development and I have had some previous experience volunteering as an accountant in Africa. I believe, wholeheartedly that education is the most important need for developing nations. Small grassroots organisations need all the help and advice we can give and it is a great privilege for me, now in retirement, to be able to give back some of the knowledge and skills I have learned over the years to benefit the developing world. But it is not all one sided, there is always so much to learn.

Overall, I think the trip was a success. The training went well and even though I didn't achieve everything I had planned, taking each day as it came, there was certainly plenty to keep me busy and by working with the office on a daily basis, I learned so much more about The Gambia and its people.



Jackie Massey  
May 2019

Jackie with the staff in the Gambian office. Jariatou, Modou and Sulayman in traditional dress on a Friday morning



## THE STORY OF MY LIFE

Awa Touray

(A sponsored student)

My parents divorced when I was eight (8) months old, shout out to my mum who managed to take care of me and my two elder sisters even though she remarried. She enrolled both my sisters in a public primary school, I was the only lucky one amongst my sisters who started from nursery school.

As we grew older things started to become hard and harder, imagine a petty trader paying for the educational needs of her three children. Fortunately, my elder sisters' got someone helping them with part of their educational requirements and my mother will complete the rest of it which was very hard for her thus taking care of my baby brothers, doing the domestic at home and also the petty trade.

I decided to help my mum with the business when I was aged 8 whilst in primary 2. Every afternoon, I will walk from one house to another with my lovely plate of groundnuts to sell around the neighbourhood, it's from the sales that I will get something to take to school the next day. Although life on the streets proves to be treacherous for children who find themselves enthusiastic to do something positive, it becomes extraordinarily resilient in order to survive.

Few years later I was lucky to meet a lady who promised to pay for my school fees. Things were going smooth having a helping hand until when the lady felt ill and have to go back to her country and never came back, and then I was in primary six heading to a junior school. It was really heartbreaking but I never lose a bit of hope in life. I believe that everything happens for a reason and I won't give up which lead to a fruitful discussion about changing our business plan.

My mother who inspires her children through an exemplary life and never neglect to correct us from our faults decided to add selling of salt to the business which was not a bad idea. I will walk from one house to another around my village and the neighbouring villages just to make a better business while she will sit at the market entrance, I will be selling until twelve noon then rush home to prepare for school but by then I was in grade 7. Although I will sometimes feel exhausted before reaching the school but I try all means that my grades will not be affected.

## SCHOOL TWINNING PROGRAMME



FoTGA's twinning initiative aims to create school-based projects to develop and extend learning opportunities by building partnerships between UK schools and the communities in which they operate, with ones in The Gambia. This would benefit a generation of young people by:

Communicating at a global level to create a better understanding between cultures, religion, art and technology.

To begin the process the UK school contacts FoTGA's twinning co-ordinator, Alhaji Camara, to request twinning with a school in The Gambia. Alhaji will then send a short list of schools that match the request and tests the viability of the process in conjunction with each of the schools and the FoTGA's Gambian staff. A formal declaration is signed by both schools and the twinning proceeds with Alhaji supporting both sides.

If you, or you know of anyone who may be interested in this worthwhile exercise please contact Alhaji by email [alcamara@live.co.uk](mailto:alcamara@live.co.uk) or telephone him on **07412223085**

## SPONSORSHIP AND SCHOOL GRADES

The Sponsorship Scheme is intended to support students in state schools up to Grade 12 by providing money to the student's family for school fees, uniforms, a satchel and stationery, and lunches. Some sponsors continue to support their students if they go on to further education.

Grades	Approx. Age	School
1—3	4—6	Nursery
1—6	7—12	Lower Basic (Primary)
7—9	13—15	Upper Basic (Middle School)
10—12	16—18	Senior Secondary (High School)

There is a wealth of information on education and all aspects of Gambian life on the following website [www.accessgambia.com](http://www.accessgambia.com)



Dear FoTGA supporter,

Oh how I miss writing to you with news- good and bad of your students and also hearing your news.

Here is ours!

Standing down from our positions of Sponsorship Co-secretaries was quite a wrench after 6 years of service but with increasing age and family commitments ever pressing, it was the right thing to do. As you probably know we maintain our links with all our friends in the charity.

At Christmas we decided to start up a small Charity of our own concentrating on eye care in The Gambia. Jim, especially, was particularly taken with the huge life change that a cataract operation can bring for such a comparatively small amount of cash. We hold such high regard for all Gambians and we well understand the difficulties experienced by those who live away from the tourism areas. There is little opportunity to meet up with kind holidaymakers who may provide cash to help them overcome the devastating effects of loss of sight.

Forming Cataracts are Curable has been a surprising difficult endeavour, but at last we have all our ducks in a row and we have been given this initial opportunity to link with the first of our partners Friends of The Gambia Association CIO and to introduce ourselves. So here we are. Me, Jim and Allie Bailey who is our daughter.

We have a set of formal aims and objective, we have a website, we are registered at Company's House as a not for profit company limited by guarantee and just last week our bank account was set up. All this information is available to you. See: [www.cataractsarecurable.org](http://www.cataractsarecurable.org)

Cataract camps will be run as before but with us able to concentrate exclusively on driving it forward. We will collect the funds and our friends at the Sheikh Zayed Regional Eye Hospital will be the recipients of any money, equipment and or other support we can muster. You all know that we, along with FoTGA, provided 500 cataract operations, we provided lots of other eye related equipment which has been used in many of their health outposts, some very far from Banjul. All items donated by individuals and companies who will, we hope, become our partners in the near future, along with FoTGA

We intend to ask for donations from individuals, companies and organisations. Violet will go and give educational talks to Women's Institutes, Rotary Clubs and other such organisations with a view to collecting donations. Furthermore, we intend to develop links with specialists in eye care provision.

**PLEASE, if you are interested in hearing from us in the future YOU must contact us,** either through our website or by calling us personally on **01202 885671**

We appreciate you taking time to read this and if you are able to offer any assistance at all we would be very grateful.

Our best wishes to you all, Violet and Jim Phillips

Cataracts Are Curable – The Gambian Project is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee

Registered in England, No. 11971279, Registered Office: 1, Royston Drive, Wimborne, Dorset, UK BH21 1HL

After each day of selling I will feel lot of joint pain due to the lifting and dropping of my basin of salt because it is very heavy and sometimes suffer loses during the raining season, so I decided to quit the selling of salt. Quitting the salt business was not the end of story, I then start helping my mother selling items such as groundnuts, oranges, mangos etc. at the compound gate.

One evening as I was from the market to buy some oranges for the business, I met a group of white people locally Tubab while I was carrying a bucket of fruits on my head. A lady among them called Sue (Susan) approached me and asked if she could take a photo of me while carrying my bucket of orange and I agreed. After taking a photo of me I gently whispered if she could help me with my education, the response was nice but it was not a YES.

The following year I met her again at the same place while I was from school and I saw her my report book. She seems very happy about my performance at school, she did not promise to sponsor me but she promise to pray that Jesus to protect me which I greatly appreciated.

Few months later I was sent home because I did not pay my school fee that same month Sue heard someone telling her to help mand and that time Rob and Margaret were in the Gambia too. That was the very time I urgently needed help and was the same time Rob came looking for me with my picture in his hand, he told me to go to the Friends of the Gambia Office the next day.

I was so eager for the day to pass which cause me a sleepless that night because all I wanted was to see myself in that office. I was the first person to wake up that morning. I went with my mother but we could not locate the place after a long walk and time was against her because she was supposed to cook for the family. I release her to go home and promise her that I will find the place which I fulfilled.

I was told by one of the late staff of the office Mr Yahya Camara may his soul rest in eternal peace that I got a sponsor which was the happiest news I ever heard in my entire life. I was happy to the extent that I did not know where I really was. It was the miracle I will never forget, thanks to Terry and Susan Stock that I finished senior school. It was through their benevolence gesture that I did a diploma in social work, currently at the University and also working at the same time.

Life has taught me to look and listen, to think and explore, to adapt and adjust in every given environment.

**"PLEASE IF YOU SEE THE NEED, TAKE THE LEAD"** . You may never know the person you are helping whether he/she would benefit your directly or indirectly.

Thank you.



**SAMI COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCE**

Striving to provide quality training for improved delivery of health science

www.samicollege.co.uk

Tel: 0044 07412223085 / 7543025/ 002207331527

Email: info@samicollege.co.uk

Mr. Alhaji Camara, SRN, MSC, a member of the Royal College of Nursing (UK), is a Fotga committee member. The Sami College of Nursing and Health Science was registered in February 2017 under registration number SRN:1710018365 with the objective of setting up a Nursing College in The Gambia.

**The Purpose:**

The main purpose of setting up the College is to address the need of providing qualified trained nurses in The Gambia. There are few institutions that provide nurse training and that includes The School of Nursing and Midwifery and School of Enrolled nurses. They offer high quality professional training but have failed to maintain the constant demand of the industry thereby not taking the opportunity to dominate the market. Sami College aims to fill that gap by giving an opportunity to the high number of students who were unable to be enrolled, to have another chance to achieve their professional goals.

**Mission:**

To delivery a quality and affordable nurse and healthcare training requirements to meet the increasing demand of health care delivery in The Gambia and the Sub-region.

**Vision:**

Becoming a champion in the provision of innovative, result-orientated teaching, and coaching in health education to develop the technical skills of self-motivated nurses and health professionals ensuring they are capable of serving in a highly demanding working environment.

Alhaji Camara

May 2019

**Brufut Marathon 13th April 2019**

This annual event attracts runners from all over the country and for many years now FoTGA has donated 10 bags of rice for distribution amongst the winners. The races of 7km, 10km, and 21km allows runners of all abilities to take part and the bags of rice will be greatly prized by the recipients. Entertainment was provided by the Scout band and culture and drama groups.

