

## **Report on SOS Children's Village Basse – 2011/2**

We cannot stop appreciating your efforts and making you understand how your support is special, especially during these times of economic crisis around the globe, as it makes a difference in many lives. Our major obligation is to share with you dear sponsor, the activities during this period. We hope this will equally give you an insight of our SOS Children's Village and its affiliated projects. Now that the elections are at our doorstep, political parties are campaigning and selling their manifestos to the people, and it is done without violence, in a very calm and responsible manner. Three Presidential candidates have been nominated and campaigns are on-going. We are expecting to have a fair and peaceful election. It also marks the 4<sup>th</sup> presidential election cycle since the dawn of the second republic.

SOS Children's Village Basse is looking very beautiful after the rains. With the start of the rains, the hibiscus flowers embraced new leaves giving a lovely environment to our children and mothers. Presently the roll count is 112 with 8 waiting for approval from the Department of Social Welfare to bring us at full capacity of 120 children in 12 family houses. 2 youth boys and 1 youth girl were taken through a carefully planned transition plan. The monthly stress management for all the children and their mothers is really making an impact in the lives of both the children and their mothers. The Regional and National Donor Services Coordinators came on a working visit to monitor and evaluate sponsorship work at village level which was a success. The village cultural group composed of children and staff continues to practice and give quality performance at our various events, and these are one of those moments when they are at their best and happiest moods. The Family Strengthening Coordinator continues to train all the children in decorating. The yearly medical check did happen and all the children were examined and determined fit by the doctor. A one day refresher Child Protection and Child Centered Approach training workshop for Core Care Co-workers was conducted in the village, it was a very participatory, fruitful and informative exercise.

### **SOS Kindergarten**

This year the SOS Kindergarten has a roll call of 125 pupils and toddlers. 29 of our children are attending the Kindergarten of which 12 are girls and 17 are boys. With a high demand of enrolment because of the outstanding performance of the children and staff alike we could not enroll the long list of people who wanted to come into our school for placement as we are running a single shift. All their programmes are carefully carried out by the educators. Mothers and aunties continue their visits to the Kindergarten especially during Montessori lessons. This motivates them to also develop interest in helping the children with their home work. Educative visits and excursions were also undertaken.

### **SOS Herman Gmeiner Lower Basic School**

The school has a roll call of 205 of which 130 are boys and 75 are girls. Out of this number 69 are SOS children. We underscore the excellent performance of our teachers and students leading to our success during this academic year. This year the first batch of students from our school entered Upper basic school and 3 SOS youths were amongst them. A teacher in the school was awarded the best Early Grade Reading ability teacher and won a certificate and a cash prize. Our SOS School was also rated the best school for the year 2011 by the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education for providing outstanding and quality education for students in Region 6 – Upper River Region. It is with high regards that the award for the best teacher was also won by the head teacher of our school. These are laudable achievements that we

promise to maintain. In the National Assessment Test conducted for Grades 3 and 5 by the WAEC, our school got 100% success. Thanks to the combined efforts of our dedicated teachers and the parents. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare in collaboration with the National Environment Agency dispatched a team of Health Inspectors and Environmental specialists to all the schools in the region to inspect the general sanitary condition and associated health risk in all schools. Our school was recommended as the most outstanding in terms of cleanliness. The school received this national award on the 19<sup>th</sup> November by a teacher and a student representative at the ceremony health in MansaKonko in the Lower River Region. They received a certificate and a cash donation.

### **Family Strengthening Program**

SOS Family Strengthening Programme, Basse is in its second year now. Currently we have a total of 750 children from 220 families as programme beneficiaries and we have reached full capacity. 10 shelters were repaired for our programme beneficiaries. Our programme was identified as one of the best Luxembourg MFA funded programme by a team of PSA from SO Luxembourg. We were able to maintain the motivation of our Child Welfare Committees to actively participate in the implementation of the programme. Programme beneficiaries have more and more understanding of the programme's objectives and policies. 216 children are currently benefiting from our Education packages and we have successfully completed the nutritional supplementary support we were giving to our beneficiaries (18 families for a period of six months).

### **A life story worth telling!**

Isatou is an 11 year old girl and resides in Basse Santu – Su, one of our programme's zones. She is currently attending Koba Kunda Lower Basic School and is in her second grade. Isatou did not go to school at the required age due to the fact that her parent's concept about western education was negative. After a thorough sensitization by the FSP team her parents' mind set were changed to accept conventional education. This is why her age does not correspond with her grade. After enrollment to school, at the initial stage she felt isolated in the class due to her age compared to the other children. Currently, her emotional status is improving and this has some positive impact on her educational performance. She takes active part in class activities and is always happy to go home and narrate what she learnt in school to her peers who are yet to have the opportunity that she has. When asked as to what profession she would opt for after completing her education, she proudly says that she wants to be a Nurse. "I want to be a Nurse to help the sick" in society and contribute my quota in nation building.

On behalf of SOS Children's Villages The Gambia Trust, we thank you immensely for your continued support and collaboration in our strive for the protection of humanity and wish you a very Happy Christmas and a Progressive New Year in Advance.