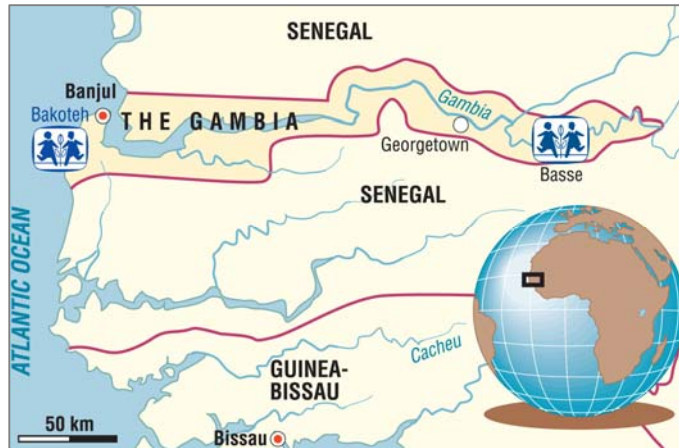




SOS Children's Village, The Gambia
Basse update – August 2009

We are very much glad to share with you some news of SOS Children's Village Basse during the first half of 2009. We have faced a lot of challenges within the six months under review but, thanks to the support rendered and the team spirit of all co-workers and to our partners and friends, we have overcome most of them. We continue to sensitize the population about child abandonment and as of now we have not got any new case of abandonment in Basse as yet.



National news

As for the major national news over the past months, the gallant U-17 football team of The Gambia better called the Baby Scorpions were the heroes of the African Cup of Nations this year thus paving the way for them to Nigeria in October for the junior world Cup competition. This is a boost for the football fraternity and the President, overwhelmed with joy, had declared a public holiday after the victory.



The heavy economic burden is still lingering as prices of commodities remain high, and heavy taxation and employment burden continue to be the order of the day.

The political situation is very cordial and the President of The Gambia, Professor Doctor Alhagie Yahya A.J.J. Jammeh continues his country-wide tour called 'Dialogue with the People' to visit and have a firsthand message from the people. This took him to the five administrative regions of The Gambia and SOS Children's Village Basse

was privileged to be visited on May 15th 2009. The President and his ministers was highly impressed by the care for the children and quality and upkeep of the facilities, and recommended many of his officials to follow the good example of SOS Children's Villages The Gambia. He also made a considerable donation to the village.

Village Life

Presently, Basse Children's Village is accommodating 86 children and we hope to increase the number of beneficiaries in the near future. Out of these, 29 are girls and 57 are boys. All are of school going age except 6 babies.

To assist the SOS Mothers, monthly stress management meetings are held and outings are arranged for the mothers and children to help them interact and try to overcome some of the stress developed during the course of the month.

The Information Technology classes for the mothers and aunties (held at the Primary school) and additional classes for some of the children continue to aid their progress and really pay dividends.





Co-workers' capacity-building was also very active over the past months. A successful workshop was organised at the village on Fire and Disaster Prevention/Management with The Gambia Fire and Ambulance Services and was attended by all staff members.

The Village Administrative Secretary, who also has the function of Sponsorship Co-Worker in Basse, attended a



Regional workshop on Sponsorship matters which will really help her in the execution of her job.

The Village Director, Kindergarten Head and the Principal of the Primary School

attended a week long Performance Management and Evaluation workshop at the Regional Office in Bakoteh which was coordinated by the Regional Human Resource Adviser for North West Africa Region. This is in line with the empowering and upgrading all project heads in the implementation of their jobs in their various capacities.



SOS Schools

The Kindergarten has 183 pupils, of which 47 come from the village. The Primary School counts 157 pupils, of which 33 come from the village. The Schools held their annual inter-house sports day and this brought together members of the Parents and Teacher Association committee, parents, friends and well wishers to the school grounds. For this fun and sporty day, children displayed their athletic talents most of which were based on the Montessori teaching style. Commonwealth day was celebrated on the 2nd Monday of March and children commemorated the day by dressing in their traditional dresses and all brought along traditional foods. It was really a colourful day, as one could see the different ethnic groups from The Gambia and beyond running around and playing in the facilities.

Kumba's story. Kumba came to live in the village at the age of 4 months. She was admitted to hospital the very first day she arrived after being diagnosed by the doctor as malnourished. She was under observation at the hospital for a week, under strict doctor surveillance. Now, she is one of those lovely little angels one would love to see, being healthy again and looking good and strong. Kumba regained the nutrients she lacked thanks to the diet she is undertaking and still has regular medical check ups. She is a very active little girl who can now crawl very well and even started using her baby walker. Very soon she will start to walk by herself and discover all the corners of her new home! But for now, she's particularly attached to her SOS mother, who is happy to see how strong she has become and to witness her daily improvements. Kumba is now very good at laughing and playing with her SOS Mother, brothers and sisters and really enjoys the safety and care provided in her home. Kumba has got to know the regular visitors that come to her family house (children and staff). Thanks to you, many children like little Kumba have found a loving home where they can grow healthily and enjoy the simple joys of being children.

On behalf of the Management team of SOS Children's Villages The Gambia Trust and its affiliated projects we thank you profoundly for your benevolent and noble gesture.

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