

A COVID 19 update from the Gambia.



It's early days yet, but things are looking a little bit better in Genieri. Last Newsletter we reported that the Gambian Government was rumoured to be supplying much needed feeding to a significant portion of their population of about 2.4 million. That has happened and our village contacts



say that, with our direct contributions the villagers are very happy indeed. This is so much better than earlier comments "...some of the families are really struggling", and we shudder to think what "struggling" really means, knowing what they consider to be normal. They're deeply grateful and not afraid to say so.

Your donations have made this possible, totalling a nett of £1,584, this grosses to £1,832 once Gift Aid is recovered from HMRC. This was so much more than we had expected, and leaves us a healthy reserve, as this thing is not going away any time soon. It's our current conclusion that they'll be relying on us for a long time to come.

We sent out food money, and topped it up with a bit extra for Eid al-Fitr, which they weren't really be going to enjoy with so little available to break their fast with. Shortly after the Eid gift we received the note "Greeting, Community thank you for your support and share among 25 family". The Eid gift was distributed by the Alkalo (Headman) to favour the poorest families.

There appears to be just about enough food in the Village for the moment, we'll keep an eye on it as the month goes on and we'll need top them up again in July.



**The Good News.** On the COVID front itself Gambia seems to have done extraordinarily well. Their death rate of 0.4 deaths/million compares rather well with the UK at 611/million (12/06/20). Maybe they've got something to teach us. They closed Gambia fast, they closed it down hard, and they're keeping it tightly closed, right down to the level of individual family groups, eg. Banjul



airport is still closed to all but mercy flights, borders are closed, villages are closed, and extended family compounds are isolating. Distancing is practiced robustly at the children's lunch sitting, with compound-based groups distant from each other. It's also likely that their persistent total fear of contagion is a massive factor, leading to strict obedience of laid down rules. Everyone in the Village knows at least one person who has died of a contagious disease.

**The "iffy" news.** Covid.19 is on an accelerating trend throughout Africa, and much of Africa isn't shut down. Add to this the fact that Gambia that has a rather porous border with Senegal (which almost surrounds Gambia), and cases there are rising quickly. The jury's still out on this one, and we can only hope.

Time alone will tell - but thanks to yourselves we have good reserves and should be able to help them see this thing through. We'll keep you informed.

Jim, Sophie and Bob

Ps. You can find our recently published accounts for 2019 -2020 [here](#).