



The Summer 2025 Newsletter is online!

It's hard to believe it's only been a year since we shared our plans for the Ability Center! Since then, land has been purchased and an entire building has gone up. As we write this, the roof is already being installed! No one could have predicted that!

In this newsletter, we'd love to take you to our construction site and give you an update on the progress. We'll also share news about both existing and new training programs, introduce Lamin as our new watchman, and celebrate beautiful developments in The Gambia together with Louie. We'll look back on the stone campaign, take you along on a beach excursion with all participants, share a role-play session with microcredit recipients, and join Fatou and Mohamed in their gratitude for the assistive devices provided. Oh, and we've welcomed three new clients—so we'll introduce them too!

Plenty of news to share!

You can find the newsletter here: <https://us5.campaign-archive.com/...>

Photos of the construction site

After the complete foundation was laid in February and March, the builders started making all the pillars and placing the walls of the toilets and training rooms at the end of May. The roof can then be placed. This must be done before the rainy season, because then the interior finishing can then be carried out in peace. It looks like this will work! A small photo impression

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Stone action result

Really awesome! We held our stone campaign in May. A total of €1,075 was donated. And that means that a large number of bricks can be made again. In the photo you can see which stone is used. The stones are pressed on site and then left to dry for two weeks. It is always impressive to see so many people involved in the project. Thank you very much to all donors!



Ceremony laying the foundation stone of the center

That was a great next step for our Small Steps 2 Success foundation! After the foundation was laid in April, it was time for the laying of the foundation stone of our center on Sunday, June 1. A ceremonial moment, in the presence of, among others, the alikalo (mayor), the imam of Tujereng and the chairman and elders of the VDC (municipality council) of Tujereng. We started by saying prayers for the well-being of our center and the village of Tujereng. It was then the turn of the alikalo to place the first stone, followed by Mirjam as chairperson of the Gambian foundation and Martin as representative of the Dutch foundation. Finally, there were short speeches by the alikalo and Mirjam. It was good to see that the village is genuinely proud of this specific project, which is quite unique for Gambia. And we are proud too! Thanks to all those wonderful people who support the foundation (financially)!



Promotional film SS2S

It has already been viewed a lot: our own SS2S promotional film! Nice and encouraging responses! It's also nice to see how the Gambia itself is reacting to it. During all the conversations we have, Ebrima suddenly takes his cell phone out of his pocket and shows the conversation partners the film. This film is of great value to us, especially now that we are in discussions with ministries and larger companies and institutions such as Q-Cell and Q-TV.

Have you seen it yet? Then visit smallsteps2success.com

New course started: making cement blocks

In June we started the Blockmaking training. There is a lot of construction going on in Gambia and everyone needs stones. So the trainer Moro has started with two students for the time being: Alfusenie from Tanji and Louie who we already know from the Methodist school. And then it begins: the right ratio between sand, stones, cement and water. Mix well with the shovel, then pour into the mold, tamp well and turn over. Another stone finished! For example, they process one bag of cement every Wednesday. In a next step, the students will help process the stones, for example when constructing a fence. By selling the stones we can ultimately buy new materials. Oh yes, the gentlemen are neatly fitted with overalls by our own in-house tailor Kebba! Thanks to the **Wilde Ganzen** who made this training possible!



Louie discovers The Gambia

Sometimes things happen that you didn't anticipate. Such as with Louie, the young man who works through the foundation at the Methodist school in Kanifing. We thought it would also be fun for him to participate in the cement block making training. So that was discussed with the family and everyone was enthusiastic! And so, on a Wednesday, Louie went to Tujereng, picked up by our bus. He enjoyed it so much that he was back at the boarding point the next day! That was not the intention, but Ebrima took him to the garden anyway and watered him there for a few hours. On the way back they passed through Tanji, the famous fishing village. Known? Well, not for Louie, who has lived 15 kilometers away from Tanji all his life, but has been amazed at all the activity. Ebrima then parked the bus and together they walked through the fish market, where Louie also saw the beach and the ocean for the first time...

Louie enjoyed it! Nice side effect of our work there!



Microfinance: the role play

On June 24, almost all clients who received microfinance were present at the meeting in the Community Center. The aim of the meeting was to provide more insight into how you can best spend your profits. Not an easy matter, especially when you realize that many clients have no school education or only have a short education.



The form of a role-playing game with real materials and real money was chosen. One participant, Ebrima, received D 500 for purchasing clothing. The other participants were instructed to ultimately buy the clothing (purchase value D 50) for D 100. This resulted in hilarious scenes, because there was intense negotiation, over-charging and under-bidding. Big smile on the face, all mobiles in movie mode! But in the end, Ebrima D had a profit of 500 and we were able to provide insight into what could be done with the profit. He gave D200 to his wife (food money), D200 was placed in the savings account and D100 was used to pay off

the debt. Everyone participated enthusiastically and in the end a lot was learned! Nice to see that this form of role playing is completely unknown and anything new is fun, right?

With a group photo at the end!



Three new clients for the Hairdressing training

This training is going to be quite full! In June we welcomed three new clients to the Hairdressing & Make-Up training. Although... one young woman was already in the picture, Anna Marie. She also works through the foundation as a classroom assistant at the Methodist school, but she was also interested in following the Training. She has one daughter and is slightly mentally challenged herself. The first time someone accompanied her to the boarding point, but now she can also go to the center unaccompanied.



Anna Marie (in blue dress) in action

The other two ladies come from the village of Tujereng itself and can therefore easily be picked up. Hawa is 27 years old, has a mild mental disability and still lives in the family compound. She stands out because of her cheerfulness! And Jainaba is a mother of four children and walks with a walker due to a physical disability. The two ladies were so tense during the first few minutes, but how nice to see how quickly they were absorbed by the other ladies! And proud and beautifully made up they returned to their compound. We are still looking for sponsors for these two ladies, but we have already given them a place here. They deserve it, right?



Hawa



Jainaba

Photos of the training sessions

Every Thursday there is a full house at the Tujereng Community Center. And now there is a waiting list and we are considering creating an extra group. Of course, this is dependent on costs...

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Introducing: Lamin Sambou

It is good to introduce you to someone who is quite crucial for our Ability Center: Lamin Sambou. He is now 48 years old and became partially paralyzed due to incorrect medication in his youth. But the distances he bridges with two walking crutches is impressive! Lamin has been given the task of watchman. So he keeps track of who comes in and sleeps at the center at night to keep an eye on things. He also takes care of the two dogs on site, Lina and Rambo. Lamin is currently also growing his own vegetables on site, as long as this is still possible. He will then move to the adjacent plot, where the Blockmaking training also takes place. He has now harvested the onions and sold them on the local market. And now there is papaya, corn, peppers, mint, cabbage and much more in the ground. Lamin is really proud that he can stay here. If you ever visit our center, you definitely will meet him!



Fatou gets her own wheelchair

On Monday, June 2, we picked up Fatou Jabang in her compound. Since Fatou became ill seven years ago and could no longer walk, she has been sitting on the floor almost all the time. Sometimes she moves on the bottom step of a walker. She was so happy and grateful that she received her own wheelchair through Caring 4 Mobility! It's fantastic that this organization can make so many people happy with tools that are almost self-evident for us Dutch. But in Gambia this is certainly not a given! She proudly drove back into her own compound when we brought her back. Mohamed also received a new walking crutch through this foundation, so a big thank you to Brit and her team!



A day at the beach!

On Thursday, June 26, following the training, we drove to Tujereng beach with all the clients for a nice get-together with some food and drinks. Not an easy task, because upon arrival it turned out that the road had broken up, meaning that three wheelchairs had to be pulled through the loose sand. But in the end it worked! Under the supervision of Saffiatou, the food was prepared on the BBQ on the beach. Nice to see that many people saw the sea for the very first time, even though they live nearby. Yaay asked a lot, carefully put her foot in the water and also tasted the salty water. A world opened up for her when she heard that the fish she eats every day comes from the ocean here. She can barely imagine it. And then people like Hawa, Mariama and Bubacarr, who sat in the surf and had a great time! Well, the fact that on the way back the bus got stuck in the sand and it took more than an hour before it was free again, didn't spoil the fun! Fantastic day, again next year!



Thank you to all sponsors, donors and stakeholders for your support!

On behalf of the board,

Martin Abbès