

GIVE REPORT

Following Volunteer Programmes

In The Gambia

2019

Introduction:

The GIVE mission is to develop a collaborative and supportive partnership between working Gambian teachers and Irish teachers for the benefit of education in The Gambia and since 2011 Irish volunteers have been sharing their experience with their Gambian colleagues in furthering this mission.

Much has been accomplished since 2011 thanks to the dedicated service of many volunteers and the fruits of that service are now very evident in schools in The Gambia.

There is now a group of Gambian teachers in the Early Childhood sector who are facilitating workshops with their colleagues on aspects of their professional practice and some Irish volunteers have observed a number of these workshops during the year. This is the sustainable programme that GIVE has brought about through its work since 2011 and a new programme of facilitator training by GIVE is being planned for 2020. Professional Development with teachers from Grade 1 of the Lower Basic schools continues and this year GIVE responded to the request for this type of programme to be extended to cater for teachers in Grade 2. GIVE's vision is to continue with this work and also to enable teachers at this level to become facilitators of professional development workshops with their colleagues in their own schools and in clusters of schools. This year we were delighted to co-host a meeting of Principal teachers who are committed to supporting the GIVE programme of professional development with the teachers in their schools. The meeting also engaged with the Principals' professional issues and GIVE would dearly wish to facilitate further engagement with them on the issues identified by them.

Nine GIVE volunteers continued with the literacy programme and computer skills training in three Skills Centres. A sustained literacy programme to meet the needs of many of the students in these skills centres is vital to their progression into the world of work and the GIVE programme is geared to meet the most urgent needs.

Vital to the success of the GIVE programme is the contribution made by the Catholic Education Secretariat in The Gambia, particularly by Mr. Edward Gibba, Fr. David Jarju, Mr. Faya and the staff of CES. GIVE is very conscious of the enormous challenges which they face and commends them, the teachers and the Principals of their schools for their dedication and commitment to the welfare of their school communities. GIVE is deeply indebted to all of its volunteers for their contribution to its mission and to its benefactors who have been of outstanding support to it in the cause of education. We acknowledge with sincere gratitude the financial support of the Irish National Teachers Association and of the Retired Teachers Association of Ireland.

Our sincere thanks to Michael McHugh and to the staff in Comhar Linn Credit Union and to the Gambian Teachers Union Credit Union for facilitating our arrangements and to Club na Múinteoirí for their constant support throughout the year

We also wish to record our thanks to Cómhlámh for their continued guidance and support throughout our programme.

Preparation

Following agreement on the GIVE programme with the Catholic Education Secretariat and the selection of the team to deliver the February 2019 programme volunteers attended three days of training in preparation for their visit to The Gambias. This training on 19th November, 3rd December 2018 and 7th January drew on the experience of volunteers from previous visits and as well as familiarising the team with aspects of the programme these training sessions prepared volunteers for the individual journey they would undertake, their understanding of “development” and on how that understanding may be very different from that of the people with whom they would engage while in The Gambia. Sive Bresnihan, Development Education Officer of Comhlámh delivered a very interesting module on our understanding of the developing world and volunteers familiarised themselves with Comhlámh’s Volunteer Charter Sandra Neville brought us through best practice on Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding and cautioned volunteers to challenge cultural norms when they were being put forward to condone unjustifiable behaviour.

Information was exchanged regarding everyday life in The Gambia, cultural awareness, personal health and safety issues, practical day to day tips on shopping, requests for donations.

Margaret Cunningham and Patricia Britton gave a very practical illustration of using a TEFL approach (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) to teaching English. It was clear from the response of the volunteers that they found it immensely useful in their preparation for their engagement with teachers and young adults in the Gambia.

A group of fifteen volunteers departed from Dublin on 24th January and returned on 27th February. The report attempts to capture some of the 2019 programme and its implementation in the various sectors.

Early Childhood Education 2019.

GIVE

Since 2011 GIVE volunteers have been supporting teachers in the Early Childhood sector in The Gambia. The Bishop of Banjul at that time, Bishop Robert Ellison and the Catholic Education Secretariat (CES) with whom GIVE works closely were very keen that this is where the Irish volunteers should concentrate their efforts so that their contribution would have maximum impact. Since teachers at this level receive less training than teachers in the other sectors the objective of GIVE to build a supportive partnership between the Irish teachers and their Gambian colleagues was readily accepted by all of the partners in the project. The delivery of the programme by the GIVE team (2011 to 2018) through a workshop formula concentrated on the areas of greatest need as identified by the teachers, Oral English, Phonics, Maths, P.E. activities, and the development of good classroom management skills. The work in 2018 was concentrated on supporting a core group of twelve teachers who had emerged from the programme as potential facilitators of workshops for their colleague teachers. Since September, 2018, these facilitators, as well as fulfilling their teaching roles have been delivering workshops to support teachers in their own schools and in clusters of schools in the local areas.

In September 2018 GIVE grant aided the CES in order to maintain this core group of Gambian facilitators in the system as they were being actively “poached” by schools outside the CES system which can charge higher fees from their pupils and offer better pay to their teachers. Over the course of 2018 / 2019 six workshops were delivered by these facilitators and GIVE volunteers have attended at least three of these workshops, (November ’18, February ’19, April ’19) in a supportive role and as observers of the programme.

A group of facilitators had been allocated to each workshop, each delivering a curriculum subject. During these workshops, ample time had also been given to the participants to prepare concrete materials for use in their classrooms when they returned to their schools.

GIVE acknowledges the difficulties and challenges which teachers, facilitators and the CES encounter in organising and attending these workshops. The number of workshops - 6 - that had been delivered through the year is perhaps challenging and over-ambitious and three cluster workshops a year for ECL would seem a more realistic target.

It is gratifying that, in their evaluations of these workshops, the participants and facilitators of these workshops are very positive in their appreciation of the impact of this professional development on their individual practice. (See **Appendix One**)

Seven of these facilitators delivered a workshop in Brikama over three days, 5th to 7th February, and in their discussions with GIVE volunteers, Angela Griffin and Eibhlín McNamara, the facilitators suggested areas for future workshops:

- Art and Craft; training on how to produce simple materials for use in art
- Story and Drama
- Handwriting
- Oral language for teachers to help them express themselves better
- Communication between teachers. Good relationships essential to team work;
- How to support each other and gain confidence in teaching
- Communication with parents and how to approach parents and speak in a professional, non confrontational way
- Classroom management
- Maths skills
- Literacy skills
- Listening skills
- Evaluation and assessment
- How a child learns
- Teaching through the medium of play...play as a methodology.
- They would like more ideas for teaching topics,
- They would like opportunities for the facilitators to meet to discuss what they are doing,
- They think further training by GIVE should be a different model time wise; not four weeks but 2 weeks: it would be more effective in cluster groups as more teachers would get the opportunity to learn.
- They continue to need the backup and guidance of GIVE as they feel the presence of GIVE facilitators gives more importance and value to what they are doing.

Margaret Cunningham and Patricia Britton visited The Gambia in April 2019. The purpose of their visit was :

- the on-going professional training of the 12 Gambian facilitators (April 11th, 12th, 15th)
- to support five of these facilitators as they delivered a three day workshop to 23 of their Gambian ECL colleagues (April 8th, 9th, 10th).

The workshop which started at 9.30 a.m. Monday 8th in the CES went very smoothly. The enthusiasm of the twenty three participants was very obvious - some arriving at 7.00 a.m in order to start or complete the “concrete materials”, and notes to bring back to their classrooms. As the workshop was the responsibility of the facilitators, Margaret and Patricia maintained a “respectful distance”, stepping in only when requested or when an obvious clarification was required and by helping the participants prepare for the afternoon sessions which required considerable paperwork.

The on-going professional training of the twelve facilitators focused on two areas:

- to improve their understanding and ability in the use of the English language (TEFL)
- to improve their ability to deliver efficiently cluster workshops (Workshop Management)

Aware of the difficulties they experience when using English as the medium of instruction the facilitators responded with eagerness and enthusiasm to the many aids, activities and opportunities offered to consolidate and to practise their knowledge of the language. As the Workshop Management course followed closely on the three day cluster workshop, it was helpful to use that experience to highlight good practice and to reflect on what wasn't best practice.. Many practical observations, suggestions and conclusions were reached with particular emphasis on “being prepared” as a facilitator, when called upon to help run a workshop.

So, during the workshop, boxes containing all the required homemade charts were prepared and personal envelopes (with a checklist) that contained all the necessary tools e.g, scissors, pencil, markers....were also

distributed to each facilitator.

An important suggestion made and adopted by the group was the future use of “station teaching”, when running cluster groups. This would mean dividing participants according to their Nursery levels classes - 1 to 3, especially when teaching phonics and Maths. This would involve greater participation on the part of each facilitator - e.g. three facilitators could be involved at any given time teaching phonics with group 1, 2 and 3.

This method would also be very beneficial to the participants as all would become familiar with the curriculum requirement at each level, even if not teaching that level at that time.

Above all, it would ensure that all the content in Maths and phonics is presented within the three day cluster workshop so that all participants feel they’ve received a worthwhile course.

Observations

- Hold three ECL quality workshops a year, one per term
- if possible give the facilitators time to meet as a group beforehand
- training in “station teaching” is required so as facilitators make best use of their time.
- the facilitators are becoming more reflective in their use of English

Recommendation

- TEFL needs to be an integral part of any future planning for all Gambian teachers.

To ensure the sustainability of this professional development of the teachers in the Early Childhood sector GIVE is planning the next programme of training workshop facilitators to commence in 2020. While GIVE will take the lead in developing this programme it is hoped that there will be a substantial contribution by some of the Gambian facilitators to its delivery. GIVE regards their experience of workshop delivery to date and the suggestions which they have made (above) as important considerations in the design of this next phase of facilitator training.

Principal Teachers

GIVE team: Michael Griffin, Pauline Moran and Liam Burke. **CES** Mr. Edward Gibba

In conjunction with CES, GIVE co-hosted a meeting of Principals from CES schools on Tuesday, 29th January. Following consultation with Mr. Gibba and CES after the 2018 programme it was agreed that a meeting of Principals / Head-teachers would be very useful in garnering their support for the GIVE Professional Development programme. It is recognised that the principals are key stakeholders in the education system and it was felt that GIVE should elicit their views on the programme and also explore some professional issues that pertain to themselves as school leaders. There were 41 Principals or senior teachers representing their school in attendance, many of whom had travelled long distances.

Mr. Gibba opened the workshop and referred to the good work that the GIVE programme was doing in schools attached to the Education Secretariat. He drew the notice of the Principals to the school-based workshops where the teachers from Gambia were empowered to become trainers themselves and educate their teacher colleagues.

Michael Griffin said that the GIVE mission is to build a supportive, collaborative partnership between Irish teachers and teachers in the Gambia. Volunteer Irish teachers have been drawn from both the primary and secondary sectors and the GIVE volunteers have been coming to The Gambia since 2011. He acknowledged the huge challenges faced by Principals and thanked them for releasing teachers from their schools to participate in the GIVE workshops and learning experiences.

Michael also stated that it is the teachers in the school that are the best and most effective resource available to principals in terms of successful teaching and learning and he complimented the principal teachers for making a huge effort to attend the workshop given their busy schedules.

Pauline Moran explained to the Principals the work of the GIVE team with teachers from early Childhood to Grade 2, Lower Basic. Recognising that the most important resource is the teacher she made the following points:

- the need for teachers to be familiar with good planning and preparation.
- Active learning strategies are important and equally it is also important for teachers to use display posters on classroom walls, which pupils can refer to.
- the virtue of the Jolly Phonics Programme and in the majority of areas it fitted very well with the Gambian

curriculum and the Gambian English programme. Phonic awareness is an essential element in early years teaching of the English language. Displays related to the programme can be easily catered for with limited resources such as a line across the room with cards.

- In Maths and English it is important for teachers to use the Gambian curriculum suggestions rather than just focussing on the textbook.
- In the Maths curriculum teachers who rush ahead rather than using concrete materials and dwelling on concepts until they are understood are less successful in their teaching. Concrete materials in Maths are not expensive as resources such as bottle tops, sticks, number strips and 100 squares are not difficult to organise.
- Talk and discussion and effective use of questioning are important.
- Pair work is also a strategy that helps teachers develop their lesson and also helps pupils understand the lesson.

The Principals were invited to consider the Give programme with teachers in Lower Basic schools and to put forward their suggestions. Among the suggestions were

- Teachers should share their information and learning from the workshops with their colleagues
- Follow up visit by GIVE to the schools
- Senior Teachers to be invited to participate in the workshops with their colleague teachers
- Strategies and techniques to deliver lessons
- Decentralise the workshops
- Produce materials (resources) for use in the school
- Training teachers locally
- Build vocabulary and numeracy

The Principals also considered the question “What are the strengths of a good school”.

In four groups they engaged with the question and arrived at the following:

Good teamwork; adequately trained staff; good leadership; capacity building for school leaders; capacity building at all stages of career, curriculum that meets the needs of each grade level; teacher / pupil relationship; school action plan; mission statement to be visible and implemented; time management; maintaining standards; full participation by community; learners’ participation; unified teaching staff; good policies; school based workshops; problem solving within school; preparation of teaching aids; adequate finance; transparency / communications; attendance of pupils and teachers; environment conducive to teaching and learning; constant monitoring of teaching and learning.

Responding to the feedback Liam Burke suggested that there is a well of expertise among the Principals and he spoke of the importance of networking among principals and schools and the mentoring of new principals by experienced principals. He also drew attention to the importance of delegation by principals not merely to lessen their workload but also to increase experience for teachers through the school.

At the end of the meeting the Principals were invited to complete an evaluation form. These have been condensed into one document which appears as **Appendix Two** to this report.

Lower Basic Schools

GIVE/CES Lower Basic Workshops 2019

Lower Basic Team 2019: Mary Cunningham, Sandra Fee, Eibhlin MacNamara, Anne Buckeridge, Pauline Moran.

Introduction

The GIVE programme at Lower Basic level involved four short courses over a four-week period from Wednesday 30th January to Friday 22nd February 2019. The first of these courses was for experienced Gambian teachers. These ten Trainers of Teachers (ToTs) participated in GIVE workshops over the past two/three years. Each of these ToTs later delivered a session on Maths, Phonics, Integrated Studies or English during our following three courses/workshops for Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers. Almost all teachers attending this years’ GIVE workshops for Grade 1/Grade 2 had not previously worked with GIVE volunteers or attended workshops of this nature.

Each of the 5 GIVE volunteers visited schools and had the opportunity to meet with Gambian teachers and observe clear practical examples of teaching methodologies and strategies currently in use.

GIVE/Lower Basic Course and workshop content

At all times exercises and practical demonstrations of teaching were based on the Gambian Syllabus books

of *The Gambian Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education* for Grade 1 and Grade 2. There is a Teacher's Guide and a Pupil's Book available in English, Maths and Integrated Studies for each Grade level 1 – 6.

Practical exercises in **English** were based on a particular unit in either Grade 1 or Grade 2 text books as appropriate. An emphasis was placed on developing vocabulary and oral language skills among pupils. Active, child-friendly speaking and listening exercises were practised.

Eibhlín MacNamara encouraged teachers to build on the reading element of the pupil's texts, drawing on sight words already known to the pupils. By extending the text in this way, pupils will be exposed to reading familiar words in a wider context. This is important as the range of reading materials available to pupils is generally very limited.

Knowledge of **Phonics** as a key reading skill was very much encouraged. Teachers in all C.E.S schools are expected to teach the 42 sounds most commonly used in English in Grade 1 and to consolidate this work in Grades 2/3. Examples of classroom strategies, at both Grade 1 and Grade 2 level, for teaching phonics were explored and practised during our workshops. The Gambian teachers made a chart from fabric showing the 20 letter/sounds which are common to all Gambian languages and to English. These charts are washable and eco-friendly, making a great addition to classroom resources.

Maths sessions throughout all GIVE Lower Basic workshops involved building teacher confidence in the use of concrete materials. Each teacher made teaching resources such as number lines (1-20), wall-chart 100 squares and number cards to take back to their classrooms. Tens and Units (bundles of sticks) were used when demonstrating methods to improve pupils understanding of addition and subtraction problems. Teachers were given opportunities to use a variety of materials for counting and for problem-solving. Mary Cunningham led discussions comparing the methods they had used and the teachers discussed practical ways to utilise these with children.

Materials used at the GIVE workshops for teaching Maths were always low-cost, no-cost, items that are easily available or that teachers can make from card/cartons for their own classrooms.

Classroom Management: Anne Buckeridge led this area of work. Planning and preparation of lessons was highlighted throughout the course. Teachers also took part in small-group discussions on issues ranging from time-keeping, professionalism and classroom discipline. Feedback from these discussions was then shared and considered by all.

Both Gambian teachers and Irish volunteers loved the **Music and Song** element of this year's workshops. Several new songs were taught and committed to memory. Under the expertise of our Music teacher and with the use of a keyboard which Mr. Gibba sourced for us, these sessions brought the groups at each workshop together in a very special way.

Our Gambian Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers very much enjoyed the **Integrated Studies** sessions. GIVE was fortunate to have on our team, Sandra Fee a Science teacher with many practical ideas which held both Gambian and Irish teachers in awe. Using simple, readily-available household materials Sandra led experiments such as filtering sand from water, examining the components of soil and through her expertise teachers developed a greater understanding of air-pressure. Teachers explained to us that they usually use the Integrated Studies text-book as the only source of information. They were very interested in adapting these lessons to 'hands-on' experimentation and really appreciated taking part in these demonstrations.

Each member of the GIVE Lower Basic team brought great energy, enthusiasm and a sense of fun to their lessons. Our Gambian teachers were actively engaged throughout the workshops. As always, our Gambian teachers shared their ideas and knowledge with us and were always generous in their reception of our ideas.

The GIVE Lower Basic team appreciate the efforts made and distances travelled by Gambian teachers to attend our workshops. The ToTs were a great support to their Grade 1 and Grade 2 colleagues. We would like to thank the C.E.S. for facilitating the workshops and for their advice and support throughout the four weeks we spent in the C.E.S. hall. Mr. Gibba, Co-ordinator of Nursery Education was always on hand and we remain most grateful for his assistance.

Recommendations for Lower Basic Workshops 2020

- Greater participation of ToTs alongside GIVE volunteers during the delivery of Grade 1 and Grade 2 workshops.
- Workshop duration to extend to five days where possible to allow for 'micro-teaching' demonstrations either in the C.E.S. hall or at a local school. (We had expected to observe 'micro-teaching' in teacher's own classrooms but distance to schools and traffic conditions mitigated against

this.)

- Consider the possibility of one (or more) GIVE volunteer working closely with a ToT in their own classroom in order to build the Irish teachers' understanding of everyday learning and teaching situations and to provide opportunities for both the Irish and Gambian ToT teacher to explore issues around planning and preparation of lessons.

Evaluation

All 62 teachers who attended the workshops were invited to evaluate their experience of the workshops and their individual feedback has been compiled into a joint document. It appears in **Appendix 3** of this report.

Pauline Moran on behalf of the GIVE Lower Basic Team.

Skills Centres:

There are three Skills Centres with which GIVE has had an involvement since 2011 – St. Peter's, Lamin, St. Martha's Fajikunda and Presentation, Banjul.

Skills Centres cater for girls aged 16 to 24 some of whom have been out of the education system for some time but have returned now to these vocational settings. The majority of the students come from areas near the three skills centres; however, some travel long distances in order to join this much sought after "last chance" option. Their educational standards vary greatly but generally they have many difficulties with English and Maths.

All three centres cater for young women who are learning skills that will prepare them for employment. The skills in which training is offered in the centres are sewing, embroidery, hairdressing, cooking, business studies (Commercial) and computer skills.

English and French are also taught. While English is the official language of the centres many of the students speak their own tribal language in non-classroom social situations and can also communicate freely and easily in at least one other tribal language.

The GIVE programme in the three skills centres is concentrated on English Language literacy while Computer and Office skills training is delivered by a GIVE volunteer in St. Peter's, Lamin. Some of the students are mothers of young children and an important extra value of helping them to read is the assistance it offers to them to enable their own offspring to read.

Prior to departure the volunteers engaged with training and orientation in preparation for their visit to the Skill Centres. Past volunteers offered their views on the language capacity of the students with whom volunteers would be working in the Skills Centres and on the approach that was taken in previous years. During the training it was agreed that an adult education approach was the most appropriate. The students, all female, range in age from 16 years to 24 years and come from a variety of educational backgrounds and of engagement with the English language. Typically the reading (English) ages of the students with whom these volunteers worked in recent years ranged from 4yrs 6 months to 8 years. The Irish volunteers would endeavour to create a partnership approach with the teacher of English in the Skills Centre, if possible, and a conversation / oral module would be a key part of every lesson.

St. Peter's Skills Centre, Lamin:

Jean Geraghty, Liam Burke and Mary Hayes worked in St. Peter's; Jean and Liam worked on the literacy needs while Mary addressed the computer skills programme. All three found that Ciarán Black was a great help; Ciarán is a retired Irish teacher who spends much of his time in The Gambia; prior to the arrival of the Irish volunteers in St. Peter's he had the class groups divided according to their levels of ability in Oral English and literacy and was fully supportive of the volunteers and their work throughout the programme. Ciarán's goal for the visit was that as well as working to improve the literacy levels of the students the volunteers would give the students a positive and enjoyable experience whereby they would expand their general knowledge of life outside the compound. GIVE acknowledges the generous support which Ciarán offers to GIVE and recognises his enormous contribution to the education of young people in The Gambia.

The essence of each lesson was vocabulary, sounds and reading- establishing an atmosphere where the students could converse in English with some confidence on issues of interest to them and working on the areas of greatest weakness in the particular groups together with some grammar and spelling for the more able students.

Typical working day: 9am Group 1; 10am Group 2; 10.45 Group 3; 11.30 Break; 12noon Group 4.

Oral work: We tried hard to establish a confidence among the students in speaking English, 15 minutes approx: News items, , Gambia Districts and Divisions, Coat of Arms, Independence Day, Sports Day, Cooking – various recipes, Shopping and markets, Tribes and customs and we tried out a few phrases in Wolof language. Computer – relevant vocabulary.

Reading Skills: 15 to 20 minutes: Phonics + Word attack skills varied according to ability of group. Reading from a variety of texts viz. Pupils Books 2, 5 & 6 The Gambia Basic & Secondary Education Course, Integrated Studies Pupils Book 2, 3 and 4. Newspapers.

Computer work: First year students had no previous experience of computer training – Mary began with basic keyboard training. She found that students very eager and enthusiastic to learn but some were academically weak with very poor English. She found that greater progress was possible with second year students and taught these students more advanced word-processing techniques.

St. Martha's Skill Centre, Fajikunda:

Tom Mullins and Eilís Fagan Shiels taught in St. Martha's Skills Centre. Tom concentrated on oral language, reading of simple texts and teaching basic word attack skills including phonics.

As well as teaching English reading to the students Eilís spent ten hours, one to one, up-skilling the teacher in the centre on various aspects of the teaching of English, especially on grammar. She observed her teaching and supplied extra materials and class lessons for her. The teacher felt happy that her own command of English was improved and was enthusiastic about bringing this to bear on her own teaching.

Both Eilís and Tom used the graded PM readers and the "Flying Start" non-fiction textbooks which had been purchased by GIVE in 2018.

Presentation Skills Centre, Banjul:

Four volunteers worked in Presentation Skills Centre, Banjul, Carmel Harrison, Catherine Slevin, Imelda Traynor and Michael Griffin. They had a total of 62 students with reading ages ranging from 4 years 6 months to 7 years 8 months and concentrated on literacy work. The accommodation for the groups was less than ideal – the staff room and two small rooms, one of which was shared between two.

Every lesson began with conversation on a topical issue – issues such as Markets, Food, Festivals, Independence Day, Naming ceremony, Water, life in the compound, finding The Gambia on the world map and Fishing. Integrated Studies Books 1, 2 and 3 were very useful in this respect.

Preparation for reading followed the session of oral work – having selected some key words from the text (eg. PM readers and Flying Start) and writing them on White Board – drew students' attention to various word attack skills. Some progress was achieved over 4 weeks though it was clear that there is an urgent need for a concentrated long-term literacy programme in the centre. To consolidate the reading and to provide an enjoyable experience the team used split sentences, broken sentences, matching pair game, rhyming words exercises, Hangman and used Bingo to strengthen visual recognition of the Dolch list of most frequently used words.

Writing: Dictation of the words from the phonics list which tested the students' ability to recognise consonant and vowel sounds.

GIVE had purchased in Ireland a supply of suitable high interest / low ability reading texts of varying levels of difficulty which are culturally more varied than the norm and which proved appropriate for these beginner readers.

The conclusion of the group is that, while some progress was made during the four weeks, the literacy needs of many of these students would best be met by a year-round programme established at centre level.

We were pleased to see that the 15 lap-tops which GIVE provided to the centre in February, 2018 are being used by the students in their Commercial (Business Studies) studies.

GIVE volunteers in The Gambia, February, 2019.

Front Row (L to R) Tom Mullins, Carmel Harrison, Michael Griffin, Eilís Fagan Shiels, Pauline Moran, Eileen Mac Namara; Back (L to R) Imelda Traynor, Jean Geraghty, Ann Buckeridge, Mary Cunningham, Liam Burke, Mary Hayes, Catherine Slevin and Sandra Fee.

Missing from photo is Angela Griffin.

Volunteers Margaret Cunningham and Patricia Britton visited the Gambia in April, 2019.

Appendix One

Feedback from the facilitators who facilitated a Workshop in Presentation of Mary Basic Cycle School, **Brikama**. This workshop was conducted over 3 days from 6th to 8th November 2018 and a total of 29 teachers participated..

Five (5) facilitators delivered this workshop.

(4) **In the days before the workshop how did you feel?** Three (3) replied **Confident** and two (2) replied that they felt **well prepared**.

(5) **How would you rate the success of the course?**

- (a) Overall very successful 3 (b) Some parts were very successful 2
(c) Most of the teachers took an active part (d) Only some of the teachers took an active part.

(6) **What aspect of the course were you most pleased with?**

Classroom management and numbers were well done. I will love to teach numbers because I believe that. I was really pleased with the activeness of the participants and the confident delivery by the facilitators. I was pleased with all the subjects presented; Yes, Jolly Phonics was well done and participants really gain something from it; The Jolly phonics and the numbers were well handled.

(7) **If you were facilitating another workshop**

(a) **Is there anything that you would change?**

Yes, I would like to change from Numbers to Phonics or to Classroom Management. I am better in Numbers.

Yes, I would like to be facilitating in other areas. Yes, I would like to change from Management to Numbers.

The number of facilitators should be limited – not more than 5, maybe 3 can do.

Yes. The number of facilitators should be reduced from 5 to 3 because if all 5 are around it would be very difficult to motivate them at the end.

(b) **Is there anything that you would do more of?**

Yes, I would love to do more on the other subjects than numbers all the time.

Yes, I would love to be in a position to be facilitating of areas e.g. Management, Numbers and Language.

Yes, I will try to give more stuff in all the areas and make sure that they make good use of what is given to them during the workshops.

Yes, I will give them more training with the phonics and also make sure they get it well and be sure they carry it back to the schools and deliver very well.

(8) **Would you like to receive more support from CES / GIVE in preparing you to facilitate this type of workshop?**

Yes, I would love to receive more support from CES / GIVE to be able to help other teachers to improve on in our classrooms. I think there should be more of these kinds of workshop to help ourselves and the children that we are handling.

Yes, because the course is really helping me to upgrade myself.

Yes, I would like to have more support from CES about upgrading myself.

Yes we would need more support from GIVE especially we the facilitators to help ourselves more and also improve our language skills. We will need more of the training in order to help our teachers so as to be very good in the classroom. Some of them really love to be trained more and get what is needed in all the areas of how they can handle the children in class.

Yes, we will need more support especially from GIVE in order to adjust ourselves more with the trainees in the language session. We will need more training in order to help our teachers more in the classroom.

Feedback from the 29 participants, all of whom completed a questionnaire.

(2) **Before you came to the workshop what were you hoping to learn from it?**

I was hoping to learn different skills and I was also expecting that after this workshop I will have greater experience in my field of teaching. I was hoping to learn new things to help our children back to our school. I was hoping to learn from my weak areas where I need to improve.

My hope before the workshop was how to learn the Jolly Phonics letter sounds and blending in order to

inculcate reading skills in children. I was hoping to learn the letter sounds.
To learn new Skills – learning is too wide – we learn a lot through such gatherings;
I was hoping to learn new things like e.g. adjusting my class management, songs and sounding of two letters.
How to help the slow learners during lessons; Communication with children;

(3) What did you learn during the workshop that you would now use in your classroom?

I learn more skills in Jolly Phonics. Letter sounds and blending to encourage reading skills. I learn about how to teach the letter sounds, about classroom management, how to control my class, how to solve problems in my class without the involvement of the parent,
Sorting objects, , number, sorting and matching. classifying objects, matching objects.
I learned a lot from the workshop – how to control your class and children and how to teach a topic.
About Classroom management I learn a lot – how to monitor the child – the cordial relationship between the teacher and the child (love & care). Numbers and Oral. I will improve in all of them for sure.
How to teach numbers – sorting, matching and classifying which I shall implement in my class, classroom management where effective learning can take place;
Songs and rhymes, sorting objects, how to do blending;
I learn to be a good teacher and not a bad teacher; I learn to interact with children like whites – the parents too (love, respect);
I learned about the 42 letter sounds in phonics, how to produce or make teaching aids, how to handle a classroom e.g. arrangement, decoration; how to solve problems and oral English

(4) Should there be more of some topics in these workshops?

Yes. There should be more topics like Science and Environment Study.
There should be more of these workshops. They should add other subjects on it.
I think the reading should also come in next time ; Oral lesson should be done for the student to understand the language;
Yes, like PE – not all teachers can help children in this area ... games ... play ...it would be good;
Yes, Personal Health – by inviting one of the health facilitators.

(5) Is there some other aspect of teaching that you think should be covered in these workshops?

I wish the area of Schemes and Lesson Plan was taught so as to equip teachers in their preparation.
Handwriting, Physical Education, Lesson planning so that teaching and learning can take place effectively.
Time management, schemes and lesson planning;
Yes, make short drama after teaching or storytelling; test all the teachers and make them think about the next day.
No I don't think so 'cause they used all the method of teaching for easy understanding.
I think the facilitators have done all their best so it's left to us the teachers to go and deliver to our children because these children believe in what we told them.
The introduction of more skills when teaching the topics we discuss during the workshop.
Do handiwork so that student can know how to fold and make patterns

(6) Any other comments about the workshop.

Elaborate further on certain topics such as health, family and Arts / Crafts.
If materials are given to the school, learning will be easy for the teacher,
There should be more of these kinds of workshops.
Well educative to teachers and would be of great help to pupils at Nursery level. The workshop was good and enjoyable. I would like to thank Irish teachers for giving me good knowledge and it's what I will take to my school to teach the children.
The workshop is excellent because we learn new things and gather different ideas on teaching and learning – how to deliver their lesson in class which they may have forgotten.
The workshop is very nice. I really enjoy it, I learn a lot – blending orally, tricky words, matching and sorting.
The workshop teaches us how to help build the standard of good students in schools; we build good role from the facilitators. It brings good unity and changes in teaching methods.
It was very good and helps us to learn how to interact and teach well and be able to manage our classroom; it helps us improve on our weak subjects to be able to have more concepts especially in number.
The pictures of the 42 letter sounds should have been included in the workshop – this would facilitate better

understanding of the 42 letter sounds;

It is more attractive and educative to each and every participant through our interaction with our fellow teachers and the trainers as well.;

I really enjoy the workshop and we are very grateful about it and we thank our friends from Ireland and Catholic Secretarial who make this workshop possible for us and we said thank you.

Anyway I like the workshop and I learn a lot on the classroom management side, numbers and phonics. I want to thank the visitors from Ireland, Mr. Gibba and our lovely facilitators for giving us the chance to be part of this workshop.

Appendix Two

Evaluation of the workshop conducted with Principal teachers

DID YOU FIND THE MEETING USEFUL?

COMMENTS: Very useful and educative; useful because I learnt things that will be useful as principal; very useful; useful for sharing of ideas; useful as it gave a feeling of ownership; gave principals knowledge of relevance of GIVE team to schools; I learnt a lot; useful as heads are now aware of what teachers do; yes as we interact; yes as it was good to know what teachers went out to learn; yes, useful, interactive and educative; somehow a refresher course; it afforded us new innovative skills; broadened our capacity on being able to handle teaching and learning situations; yes as teachers from different schools were able to identify what makes schools good;

WHAT ISSUES DISCUSSED TODAY WERE MOST RELEVANT TO YOU AS HEAD TEACHER?

COMMENTS: The strength of a good school; very relevant discussions; enabled people to discuss the strengths of a good school; qualities of a leader; management of the curriculum; development of staff, students and the way forward for a school; brief history of GIVE; shared strengths of a good school; group discussions as we learned from each other; issues for head teachers; need for trained teachers; link curriculum with great ideas; teaching of Jolly Phonics; use of Gambian textbooks; shared knowledge and experience; quality of a good leader and how to share responsibilities; capacity building; lesson preparation and presentation; quality leadership and maintaining standards; proper planning and curriculum coverage; involvement of headteachers in the GIVE programme; follow-up after training; staff cooperation and teamwork; mission and vision statement; community/stakeholder participation; proper monitoring of pupils and teachers; attendance and punctuality; training of trainees; time management; team work as opposed to individual work; innovation; leadership qualities; planning and quality management; sharing feedback; building capacity of young teachers;

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE FOR FUTURE MEETINGS?

COMMENTS: Carry out workshops during school holidays, would mean not losing contact hours; more frequent workshops; workshops could be carried during school holidays to capture headteachers, deputies and senior teachers; future meetings should involve deputy teachers; good that principals were brought along; meeting agenda would be useful; continuity of the gathering of head-teachers and Grade 1 and 2 teachers; heads need to come and hear more about the programme; more training and resources; decentralise workshops and provide breakfast and lunch; some lesson demonstrations you teach to the teacher; breakfast at future meetings; decentralise the workshop; give the heads a brief explanation on how to observe the presentation in the school; more than a day's meeting would be better; more notice of meeting and agenda information; handout for participants; decentralise the meeting; postings for trained teachers (movement); more interactions with heads, teachers and GIVE team; methodologies be taught in every school; better notice for meeting; well done for organising the workshop and I hope more will be done; meeting like this at the beginning of every school year; extending the meeting to two days; giving handouts; tea-breaks and good session that should be continued; timely notice of meeting; senior teachers should also be involved; workshops at the beginning of the academic year.

Appendix 3

C.E.S/ GIVE /Grade 1 and Grade 2 Teachers Workshops Participants Evaluation Form

Note: The feedback given below includes several important points under each question and a brief

summary of the most common answers to each question. Many teachers stated that pupils will have a better understanding of Maths when using materials. They also stated that they understand the use of the pupils' book and Teachers Guide in English and Integrated Studies for planning purposes.

Did you find the workshop useful?

- *Yes, the workshop was very useful to me because this is the first time of coming to attend a workshop like this and I have learnt a lot.*
- *The workshop helps you to be able to deliver well in the classroom.*
- *Yes, I find this workshop very useful because it refreshes our mind in terms of teaching.*

What did you learn about Phonics which will be useful to you in the classroom?

- *I learn about sounding and blending and also how to bring phonics to the English lesson.*
- *We learnt about the sounds, the blending which is reading and the identification of sounds which is for writing, it is very useful and will help us in the classroom.*
- *The phonics will actually help the pupils to pronounce the words and it will also help them to read and write.*
- *I learn phonics, and simply, it will help me relate my teaching easily to my students.*

What did you learn about teaching Oral Language and the use of the Pupils book and Teachers Guide in English?

- *I learn that Oral Language makes learning easy for pupils and with help of the Teacher's Guide makes the teacher to deliver well in the lesson.*
- *More teaching aids are needed than the use of the chalkboard.*
- *Some teachers don't teach Oral English at all. This has given them an opportunity to know that Oral English is very important.*
- *Teaching Oral language and the use of the pupils' book and Teachers Guide in English helps the children to learn by listening, by watching, by doing or making or by connection. And is central to learning.*
- *Oral English is useful because it helps me and the children in the classroom and outside the class.*

What did you learn about teaching number, using concrete materials, and the use of the Pupils book and Teachers Guide in Maths?

- *Teaching number by using concrete material can help the pupils to add and subtract numbers in different ways.*
- *It might be difficult for teachers because he/she has to prepare concrete materials before the lesson. Inside the class it will be easy for him/her because the children will be happy using the materials and understand easily with less talking.*
- *We used concrete materials like bottle tops, water bottles, and cut-out cartons as counters which was very interesting.*

What did you learn about Integrated Studies?

- *I learnt that it is very important to use experiment when teaching and involve the pupils. It enhances more understanding and gives out new ideas of doing things.*
- *I learnt about water filtration, and about soil.*
- *I learnt about Integrated through using concrete materials to see the reality of the idea by observing and experiences.*
- *I have learnt that it is important to get the children to use materials in demonstration rather than just telling children what it is, i.e direct from the text book.*

Many teachers stated that they had learnt a lot from participating in the experiments on types of water filtration, and on the mixture of components in soil.

What did you like about the music and singing lessons?

- *Music makes me feel active and I find the lessons interesting.*
- *It is lovely, as we know pupils are easily bored so, songs normally can help to boost or keep them awake or involved.*
- *Making songs and games to engage the learners.*
- *What I like is the fact that when we arrive the first day for the training we didn't know each other but the singing lessons helped to bond us really well.*

All of the teachers responded positively to this question.

What ideas will you find most useful in the classroom?

- *Teaching by using materials as much as I can in order for the pupils understanding.*
- *The display of charts in the class. The group of presenters really did a good work in their presentations.*
- *-Bringing materials all the time in class. – Making sure all the pupils have access to the thing they use for the lesson. – Teacher must be watchful in the classroom.*
- *Demonstration, visual material, concrete material, explanation, assessment, etc.*
- *Ways to write lesson plan and schemes and preparation of lessons.*