

# people and places:responsible volunteering

## SUPPORT PLAN FOR WORK OF VOLUNTEERS IN SCHOOLS AND WITH TEACHERS IN THE GAMBIA 2022-2023

This plan describes ways in which volunteers can help this project to develop their aims and goals and gives examples of ways in which volunteers have contributed in the past.

Comments are based on the work of volunteers in the period up to December 2021, and are derived from questionnaires completed by the projects and reports written by the volunteers. New aims and actions, if any, are shown in **green** and these have either been identified from requests made by the projects or have arisen from the work done by volunteers. Any completed aims or actions are shown in **blue**.

AIMS	ACTIONS AND COMMENTS
1. To work remotely with the Principal of Futures Training Foundation and staff at Mary's Little Lambs, to provide ongoing support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers could work remotely with the Principal of Futures Training Foundation to produce presentation and written materials for training courses within the Gambia. <b>Working in this way, two volunteers have helped to produce two major pieces of work – one a training course for a new early year's curriculum and the other a parents' training manual, both of which are now national resources for training.</b></li> <li>Volunteers could hold regular online meetings with specified members of staff to mentor them in various aspects of their work. <b>One volunteer joined MLL staff for weekly meetings, using videos prepared by another volunteer, to learn about techniques for learning through play.</b></li> <li>Volunteers could read stories or demonstrate craft activities on video, to be used by teachers at Mary's Little Lambs in their lessons. <b>A number of volunteers have sent videos which have been reviewed by MLL teachers and slotted into their curriculum for use in the classroom. These videos have included stories, activities and a video about growing plants.</b></li> </ul>
2. To help the teachers to plan lessons based around a variety of child-centred activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers have demonstrated different methods and techniques to provide variety and give the teachers ideas for new approaches to learning (e.g. stories, games, songs, art and craft work). <b>A recent volunteer focused on practical activities in Maths and Science lessons, demonstrating simple</b></li> </ul>

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	<p>experiments. One volunteer emphasised that the idea that a child learns through play was a bigger learning curve for the teacher than the children. Future volunteers could continue this approach and extend it to further classes and schools. A recent volunteer demonstrated ways of working with slow learners to improve their focus and ability to learn. Another worked as a teaching assistant to provide slow learners with one-to-one help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers have begun to help with classroom management techniques, showing the teachers how to manage a variety of simultaneous activities within the classroom. One volunteer provided furniture for the nursery classroom in the school where she worked to facilitate the organisation of different activities.</li> <li>• Volunteers have worked with some teachers to implement the idea of free play, and this would be a priority for future volunteers. One recent volunteer focused on outdoor play, providing materials for sand and water play, which was very popular with the children. An experienced nursery teacher based her whole placement around the development of outdoor play, helping to develop the outside area to demonstrate a wide range of strategies to encourage imaginative play.</li> <li>• Volunteers could help the teachers to produce more focused lesson plans which make better use of time. One volunteer helped with time management, helping the teachers she was working with to structure lessons to fit into the allotted lesson time.</li> <li>• Volunteers could help to ensure that every day has at least one learning objective and that both children and teachers know that this has been achieved.</li> <li>• A volunteer with appropriate skills could help to develop a system of assessment for the nursery classes based on observation of children over time and the collection of a portfolio of evidence.</li> </ul>
3. To help the school to develop their thematic approach so that they cover effectively all learning areas/subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers with appropriate knowledge could focus on particular learning areas or subjects e.g. numeracy, science, and work with the teachers to develop new ways of teaching this subject. Volunteers so far have covered work in different subjects, especially maths. A recent volunteer taught IT to the older children, introduced new games into PE lessons and had a lot of fun creating</li> </ul>

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	<p>and demonstrating new Arts and Craft activities. The thematic approach is relatively new and future volunteers could help teachers to implement this successfully.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers could work with the teachers to further develop their method of theme-webbing so that a greater variety of ways is shown in which the different learning areas can be covered.</li> </ul>
4. To help to train the teachers in early reading including Jolly Phonics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers with appropriate knowledge and experience have worked with the teachers in some schools to develop this approach to learning, explaining the reasoning behind this method of language learning and it is in use in both schools where volunteers are likely to complete their placements. Some limited training has also been provided within the Gambia. Future volunteers could continue to implement this method.</li> <li>Some volunteers have brought some Jolly Phonics resources but these are not available in the majority of schools so will be unfamiliar to most teachers attending workshops. Volunteers could teach the children and the teachers where necessary the Jolly Phonics songs so that they can implement this method of teaching even without CDs, books and posters.</li> <li>Volunteers with appropriate experience could support the teachers in the use of other methods of teaching early reading, such as word recognition.</li> </ul>
5. To help the teachers find or make teaching and learning aids to supplement the children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteers have begun to work with the teachers to identify areas of their teaching where they would benefit from having teaching aids. A recent addition to the curriculum is the requirement for all schools to have a garden so teaching aids linked to this would be particularly relevant.</li> <li>Volunteers have helped the teachers to think of ways these resources could be made from local materials (e.g. bottle tops, shells from the beach, local fruits), and helped to produce them. Future volunteers should continue to help the teachers supplement their resources for learning. For example, one volunteer showed how painting numbers onto plastic balls immediately turned them from toys into fun learning aids. Designing and making teaching and learning aids is a key priority for future volunteer placements.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One volunteer showed teachers how to make their own playdough using flour and water and showed them how to use this to encourage fun ways of learning for the children.</li> <li>• Volunteers could help to find ways of converting internationally available books and resources into a form more applicable to The Gambia – for example producing flashcards for ‘The Very Hungry Caterpillar’ to show foods eaten in The Gambia.</li> <li>• Volunteers could help the teachers to find ways of storing these materials safely so that they can be used again in the future, and encourage teachers to use them regularly. One volunteer has helped several schools to organise their Dream Corners and distribute the resources effectively to different classes. <b>Another volunteer worked with MLL teachers to sort and categorise the resources they have to make them easier to use effectively.</b></li> </ul>
6. To work with Lisong and Michelle to develop training materials for workshops and to help run them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers could help to produce training materials to address needs identified by the teachers in the schools and needs identified by Lisong and Michelle in their work with the teachers (e.g. hands-on teaching techniques, classroom management techniques, development of teaching aids, special educational needs, development of creative arts). <b>A volunteer able to run workshops on dyslexia would be particularly welcome.</b> One volunteer helped to prepare and run a day’s course on the ‘greenie project’. Another ran workshops for the teachers at her school on using stories for literacy, phonic work and numeracy. <b>An e-volunteer has helped to produce a training course for the new Gambia early years’ curriculum and a series of training videos on learning through play, linked to different areas of the curriculum.</b></li> <li>• One volunteer ran a training session on child protection and behaviour management, based on areas in which parents had requested support.</li> <li>• A volunteer ran a workshop on learning through play – this involved many active learning opportunities for the teachers which they thoroughly enjoyed.</li> </ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A volunteer could run a workshop on computer skills – the school has some computers but no experience in how to use them with children, or knowledge of appropriate software.</li> <li>• Volunteers could run workshops in areas in which they have expertise e.g. active learning techniques</li> <li>• Volunteers could help to run a workshop with heads and deputies to help them decide on areas where they would like further training e.g. leadership skills, education management</li> <li>• Volunteers could help train teachers in the use of IT including the use of IT to create teaching aids and accessing useful teaching materials through the Internet.</li> </ul>
7. To work with the house heads and volunteer gardener to develop, plan and manage the garden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The garden was started from scratch in February 2019 – a volunteer worked with the school to prepare and plan the garden – she worked with children and staff and volunteers to identify the best design for the garden and an initial crop rotation plan, using local resources and methods, with particular emphasis on fun and learning for the children.</li> <li>• Volunteers could work with the house heads and the volunteer gardener to sew and plant appropriate vegetables and fruits in rotation for harvesting throughout the year, to maintain the children's interest. A further volunteer helped the children plant seeds.</li> <li>• Volunteers with practical building skills could help improve the built environment of the garden</li> <li>• Volunteers could help design and implement a syllabus that would create cross curricular learning between the children's hands-on gardening and the classroom</li> <li>• Volunteers could build on work already done by the first volunteer to identify indigenous plants and appropriate horticultural methods to ensure the garden is sustainable and appropriate for The Gambia</li> </ul>

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<p>8. To use practical skills to train local craftsmen to build materials to improve the school environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A volunteer with skills and experience in building could work alongside local craftsmen to build a playground for the prep school children containing play equipment that is age-appropriate and safe to use – the school has some equipment in storage but training is required to make it safe to use</li> </ul>
<p>9. To help with long-term strategic planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers could help with strategic planning, including costings, <a href="#">to expand Mary's Little Lamb Nursery (currently run by Lisong as a model nursery)</a> so that it can also take grade school (primary) pupils. This aim has been achieved, but strategic planning is still needed to help the school plan for future expansion and to deal with the implications of success and good reputation, which means there will always be greater demand for places than can be offered.</li> <li>• Volunteers could help Lisong with long-term plans to formalise her teacher training programme, meeting the requirements of the national Education Policy for 2015-2030 which enables private institutions to deliver teacher training courses.</li> </ul>
<p>10. To build the managerial and organisational capacity of Futures Foundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers could share education management techniques</li> <li>• Volunteers could share IT, graphics and web design skills</li> <li>• Volunteers could share Human Resource management skills</li> <li>• Volunteers could share book keeping skills</li> <li>• Volunteers could share report writing and funding application skills</li> <li>• One volunteer with experience in social work helped the school devise a questionnaire for parents to assess their parenting needs. With the school's operational manger she visited families to deliver the assessments, and this will form the basis for a database to be used to help identify families most deserving of sponsorship.</li> </ul>