

Meeting November 22nd, Gambian Board.

Location: Kairoh Garden, Tanjeh.

Present: Nanko, Barbara, Kawsu, Jessica, Anne.

Topics discussed:

1. The Contact Person workshop at 21st and 22nd of November 2024:

Overall: We had very valuable days! Visiting Kuntaur did add a lot of value to the days. The contact persons became more of a group. Some of the contact persons never visited Kuntaur before. Travelling together, sharing rooms, being on a boat trip together etc had a positive effect of feeling connected.

The new contact person Ousman Ceesay, blended in easily. He is very talented and energetic, we are happy that he joined as a contact person. He has excellent writing skills as well and wrote short reports after every day. We will explore with him how to benefit from this, for example by starting a Yiriwaa facebook account and a LinkedIn account and/or a newsletter two times a year.

Overview

Day 1:

- Visiting Sarja at the Ousman Bun Affan Arabic School in Jaffaba
- Check-in
- Getting to know each other
- Facts and figures:
 - All contactpersons made an overview of their Yiriwaa students
 - Contactpersons shared their reports with each other and gave advices.
- Policy and procedures: contactpersons read this again, they recognized all points, except the decision to stop sponsoring university students entirely. Probably because we talked about the scenario of admitting max 2 university students for sponsoring each year. The decision to stop this entirely has been made in the Dutch board meeting and only communicated by app. It started a new discussion on this topic. We assembled arguments pro and contra. The final decision is up to the board.
- Walk on baboon Island.

Day 2:

- Wisdom of the night
- Video message of Ron and /Roelien followed by a group assignment and reflection.
- Problem tree (assignment where we dived into the root causes of 'drop out')
- Student workshop January
 - Multiple ideas where shared: health, learning strategies, communication skills/self expression and skills training.
- Difficult conversations (short role play)
- Actions for CP's:

- Think about a teacher/expert or something (exercise) you could do yourself if we decide for the communication skills.
 - Think of ideas and places to visit and other ideas (f.e. make something) if we decide for the subject 'skills'
 - Contact person meeting: online (Omar and Fatou Bojang will organise). In Tanjeh at beginning of July (Mbemba and Ousman and Fatoumatta) will organise.
 - Talk with students who are at grade 9 and grade 12 about their future.
 - Check-out
 - Boat trip
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Follow up from this workshop

- Anne en Jessica will add the information from the overview to Barbara's overview
- We will share the outcome of the problem tree exercise

How the contactpersons perform:

- We are satisfied about the way most of the contactpersons perform. They seem to know a lot about their students and the reporting is getting better. The way of reporting the students developments is improving. The financial reports are lacking behind, only Ousman sent this the last term. Agreement: Barbara sees if this will improve further. If not we will discuss again if we have to switch to interviewing instead of asking for written reports.
- Barbara shared being worried if the money for text books is used properly, Kawsu will check.
- Barbara will inform the contactpersons that they can they can add new students according to the amount of students that will leave the foundation this year.
- There are doubts about the performance of Mbemba as a contactperson. It seems that it would be better to find another contactperson because of problems in the past and him not being able to visit the Yiriwaa students as often as we expect. The policy of the foundation is that we prefer contactpersons that are teachers themselves. Nanko will search for a new contactperson at the school in Brikama -Ba. Kawsu will meet this new person to see if this is a fit for a contactperson. After this Kawsu will speak to Mbemba and have a thankful and respectful ending of his contactperson years.

2. Discussion on the focus of the Yiriwaa foundation: stop with university students?

- The Gambian board advices to focus on grade 7 till 12, one of the important arguments is that there could be competition between the contact persons if we limit the university students.
- Anne and Jessica will share the report of the contactpersons meeting where you find all arguments the contactpersons gave for either stopping entirely sponsoring university students of continuing sponsoring a few.
- We will explore the option to have a separate branch of the Yiriwaa Foundation for University students.
- The Dutch board will decide in the end.
- If we decide to stop, we would like to think of a way to get more information about other possibilities for sponsoring for students that wish to continue at the university. We have

to make sure we are very clear if GTTI and Gambian college are excluded also or if we allow this as it is a kind of vocational education.

3. The Future of the Yiriwaa Foundation:

When we think of the long term, our board members in the Netherlands and in Gambia will become older. To have a sustainable Foundation we started conversations about the future of the Yiriwaa foundation.

Topics we will explore the coming years are:

- Higher purpose of Yiriwaa
What is our higher purpose? And do we believe that how we are organized is in alignment with this purpose?
- Way of working
- Future board members for the Gambian and for the Dutch board

We want to change the way of working in the annual student workshops. We already decided that we want to work with less Dutch people during this workshops and more Gambian people. Reasons behind this are reducing flights (less negative effect on the environment and reduction of expenses), better understanding and more bravery of the students during the workshops (they are more brave to speak up to Gambians instead of foreigners).

4. 2025 annual workshop for students

- In this board meeting we decide to choose for 'communication skills/self expression'. It is easier to organize than visiting skillscenters / crafts workshops.
- Maybe we can use materials from a workshop an Ardis intern (Yiwen) has that has been developed for workshops in Togo about self-esteem. Jessica will check this.
- Three colleagues of Ardis will visit: Johan, Femke and the third name will follow shortly.
- We decide later: two or three workshop days. For the workshop in Kuntaur there are 18 students (Mbemba and Sarja). In Tanjeh there are 37 in total (Fatou Bojang, Ousman and Omar). This is a big group, especially for a topic that requires practice and role playing. Maybe it is better to have 2 workshops-days in Tanjeh, one day for Ousman + Fatou Bojangs students and 1 day for the students of Omar. We have to have a closer look at the schedule, as it would also be good to have a meeting with the students in tertiary education. We have to see if this is all possible in 1 week.