

NEWSLETTER 2017



Annual Report

Birthing Daughters of Africa Foundation (DOAF 2016- 2017)

Early in 2017 Pauline Bailey and Odiri Ighamre twinned their journeys to create 'Daughters of Africa Foundation (DOAF). Pauline has over 30 years in the creative sector as an independent artist and as an arts facilitator, covering community groups, prisons, and schools. Odiri has 29 years working across education with a foundation in storytelling and youth and community work, founder of 'KORI' a youth development charity in North London.

KORI was intrinsic to this journey as one of its programmes is 'The Vessel UK' sources participants from the UK to inspire, train and nurture the individuals and groups that are affiliated to the Daughters of Africa Foundation in The Gambia.

Context

The Gambia is one of the smallest countries in Africa with a population of roughly 1.9 Million people. Youth account for 60% of all Africans unemployed (Ighobor, 2013). According to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) at least 2,247 people have died or are missing after trying to enter Europe in routes termed as 'The Backway', via Spain, Italy, or Greece in the first half of this year. Last year 5,096 deaths were recorded (Chowdhury & Sundaram, 2017). The majority- including 'economic migrants', victims of 'people smugglers' were young Africans aged between 17 and 25 (Chowdhury & Sundaram, 2017). This is of special concern to DOAF, as Gambian youth are very much part of this illegal migration, and it is our motivation for embedding our work in this country with the aim of using the model we establish to work and foster partnerships across the region.

A Partnership for Sustainability

The determination to create a sustainable model twinned the DOAF and The Vessel UK. DOAF was registered in the Gambia in November 2016. We work closely with community groups, organisations and their leaders using the learning provided from delivered projects for on-going development. Sustainability is enabled through training trainers which will gradually produce a cohort of Gambian leaders that can lead training across The Gambia. Alongside this is the work of building relationships with established Gambian professionals to further their own projects and have them feed into reciprocal programmes.

Affiliated Groups

Abuko Youth Association (AYA)

Abuko Youth Association (AYA) was started with the support of The Vessel UK in 2014. It is now a youth led association with 32 young members and a growing football academy, led by two young voluntary female youth leaders and fully registered in The Gambia. Much support is needed to build skills in Math's, English, Art, and IT as local schools lack resources and training. AYA also does not have a community space for the children to use and have to meet in local compounds. Families also need help with school expenses, food and clothes and shoes.

CENTRE FOR STREET CHILDREN AND CHILD TRAFFICKING STUDIES (CSCARTS)

The centre was founded by Mr Lewis and managed by Hhamadou Jallow. The focus this year has been developing a children's library for more than 200 children local to Bakoteh, that use the space. We found that most of the books were outdated and unsuitable for the children's use, so we began to locate books through UK donations that were then sent to re-stock the library. The aim is to develop the space into a general learning centre for young people and adults.

Inspiring Young-Stars

The organisation was founded and is led by Alagie Ndow, a local charity worker committed to community work. He rents a local space to provide a library and studying space for local youth from Abuko and Wellingara, Gambia. The service is well used and has a registered youth association. There is a need for up-to-date books, especially medical books as a resource for the medical students that use the space into the night for their studies. We have currently donated over 100 such books, donated by Leeds University. The library needs more tables with the aim of developing the space into a learning centre providing computer literacy, internet access and after school activities for the area it serves.

SOS Children's Village, The Gambia

This represents a significant partnership with a leading and international organisation that tries to work with the welfare department to provide for the needs of families struggling with destitution in The Gambia. It is structured to provide home to orphans and children from destitute families. Providing shelter, carers, schooling, training, and medical facilities. SOS have been integral to DOAF'S development, providing meeting and training space for the management and leadership training of the community leaders. In return vessel UK participants have worked directly with their youth, trained their football coaches and we have now formed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), so we can develop training for their youth leaders.

St Peters Technical Junior and Secondary School

It has also been an important part of DOAF's development to form this partnership. The school has 3,000 students and so far, the leaders in the school have benefited from the Vessel UK providing project involvement for their students and staff in: drama training, football coaching and management. St Peter's have recently offered a residency space for DOAF for office and studio space and to develop a community learning centre open to the whole community.

The Leadership and Management Group (L.M.D)

This groups formation began in January 2017 when Management trainer, Michael Hamilton offered to train the community leaders DOAF were working with. This led to an interesting orientation session in May 2017. 17 leaders from across five diverse groups came together for two days to look at the role of leadership. Some Members from this group have now chosen to form a committee within DOAF guiding its development and keeping it informed and relevant to developments in The Gambia.

Kampeng Kaffo

Kambeng Kaffo began with an invitation to women in the community of Abuko to form a group focused on enterprise development. This brought together a diverse group of 16 women: single women, mothers, and grandmothers. Some already had started small enterprises, others had the desire to create them. This new venture allowed them to work together with investment from the support of DOAF's *tabletop banking system* giving the group £1,200 towards individual business development. The group managed the investment effectively and grew their enterprises successfully.

In May 2017 Director Pauline Bailey who leads on artistic development joined hands with Gambian artist Abdoulie Coker to identify women within the group who had the desire to build on their knowledge of textile creation to the point of them becoming saleable products. Six women took part, demonstrating their talent in design. Abdoulie taught a range of tie-die techniques and Pauline developed their designs. The development of the arts curriculum is one of our identified priorities.

Spring Projects

Laurie Fitzgerald a Vessel UK Leader was funded by the 'Alma Jean Henry Trust' in London to deliver a project she called 'Abuko Stories' focused on facilitating the young people in Abuko Youth Association in developing their speaking and writing in English using their knowledge of their local community. Through this they developed their grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills. There was both a basic and intermediate session each day for 32 young people with varying levels of English. Using informal learning methods, she

used a variety of activities including group work and one to one development, introducing new vocabulary and grammar challenges worked into icebreakers and games.

In addition to the English Development Project with the Abuko Youth Association she also designed and facilitated a career identification workshop for a group of 20 young people in the SOS Children's Village Gambia. DOAF also delivered workshops in self-development, African history, project management and organisational development for the youth and their leaders in SOS and AYA.

Autumn Projects

Grassroots Football Gambia - Coaches

Fabian Robertson started to design his project in London early in 2017. He designed a project that pulled on his own passion of football. He had led a football team and worked as a trained coach and referee for many years in Tottenham, North London. Fabian related to Gambian coach Sanna Yaffa, assistant secretary to the Gambian Football Coaches Association and the West Coast Football Association. Sanna coordinated the project and prepared the participants.

The training was delivered over seven days for seventeen coaches from five youth academies. DOAF decided that working with the coaches to raise their skills would provide the most sustainable in-put for the youth they worked with through the year. The groups included SOS, St Peter's Technical Secondary School, Lafta, Brusibi and AYA academies. The training covered topics such as role of a coach; first-aid, the physical, psychological, social and technical development of players and an overview of global football. A tournament was also held to allow 52 youth to compete and show of their skills. St Peter's Secondary School won the tournament after a hard battle in the blazing sun.

During a feedback session the Gambian coaches emphasised the importance of receiving the training and spending time looking at the role of the coach in the development of young people. They especially valued looking at learning styles and first aid as they felt this learning was instantly applicable to their practice.

EmpowerUS Project

Funmi Abari and Ava Ansari worked with the Vessel UK to prepare for their project 'EmpowerUS' in London. The underlying focus of their project was gender in-equality in The

Gambia. They decided the best way to tackle this was to build a project that enabled the young people to explore what it meant to be a man and woman in The Gambia through building skills in communication, debate, group work and presentation. Leaders and Young people attended from all DOAF's affiliated groups, in total 13 leaders 42 young people. Spaces for the project's actualisation was provided by St Peter's and SOS. Over 10 days the young people came together from across Gambia's Kombo area to work together, building new friendships whilst they learnt and rose to the challenges. The co-ordination of travel and logistics was led by the group leaders and donations sourced by Funmi Abari paid for the expenses of travel and refreshments. There were many highlights but the day off for the young people, where they chilled and played on the beach was especially memorable followed by the showcase where the young people shared their learning with invited guests.

One to one evaluation interviews were conducted with the young people and the leaders to find out how the project had impacted them personally. For most of them the most important impact was from the public speaking and debate learning. The chance to hone their skills and practice through the 10-day project built their confidence in this very important area. They were also enthusiastic about the importance of the invited guest lecturer, Midwife Modu Ketteler, who was invited to teach sexual health especially with regards to the practice of female genital mutilation, still popular with some groups in The Gambia. Socialising with a large mixed group of young people from different parts of The Gambia was a great experience that all mentioned, requesting that the group had the chance to work on projects together in the future. The leaders spoke of their increased sense of leadership and cherished the practice and recognition the project had afforded them.

Donations

Since 2014 DOAF have consistently gathered donations from the UK to support the growth of the individuals and groups we work with. Kit-Aid a football charity, have been especially generous enabling football kits to reach a wide range of young people in The Gambia. We have also been able to provide; laptops, clothes, school wear, books for those in our affiliated groups by the company Emerald Live. Most recently, Funmi Abari heralded a donation of medical books from the students at Leeds University and The Pentecostal

Church of Balham in South London sent a huge donation of food stuffs and school equipment for the young people of AYA.

End of year thoughts

It has been a fruitful but difficult year in a changing West African landscape and more has been learnt than we ever imagined about navigating within this environment. We aim to apply for UK and international funding to support roles and develop the work further enabling DOAF leadership and Vessel UK Leaders to achieve more without the weighty responsibility of fully funding their projects and us to find new ways to further support the progress the work. The new DOAF committee are bound to change our approach this coming year and we are especially delighted to have been proposed a space to use and develop in St Peter's School. We envision this becoming multi-purpose training and learning space once refurbished. Currently, we are seeking partnership work with the university of Gambia to develop visual arts and youth work curriculums so watch this space! This encapsulates our thoughts and plans going forward into 2018.