

20th June 2016

Friends of Effatha Organization's five-year intervention in deaf development in the Gambia in the form of supporting project implementation in partnership with the Gambia Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GADHOH) from year 2009 to year 2013

Part A (A brief introduction of the project)

“Friends of Effatha” organization based in the Netherlands has supported the following development projects of GADHOH. The nature of the support was financial, advisory service, practical teacher training, and sign language curriculum development. The project activities can be categorized as follows:

- Obtaining a plot of land at Brikama town for establishment of a permanent education center for GADHOH
- Recruitment, training and employment of Deaf sign language teachers at both our permanent and temporary education centers
- Facilitating travelling of needy Deaf children to and from the education centers
- Provision of school meals for deaf children at the education centers

The overall objective of the projects was to improve the lives of Deaf and Hard of hearing people in the Gambia. The project direct objectives were to facilitate education of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, youths, and adults in the Gambia qualitatively and quantitatively, and in a sustainable way. The immediate results of the five year (2009 – 2013) project activities which were highly satisfactory, were monitored and reported to Friends of Effatha immediately at the end of the project

Part B (An assessment of the project impact)

The following is a report on the assessment of the project's long term impact on the project beneficiaries.

1.) Brikama(permanent) Education center

The training of deaf children at the GADHOH Brikama education center did not only continue after the Effatha project ended but the intensity of training also increased. The center is now catering for both Nursery and Primary education (up to grade three) and clearing its way to becoming a full lower basic school for the deaf (grades one to six) which is recognized and supported fully by the government.

The Ministry for Basic and Secondary education has already taken over the monthly salaries and allowances of the teachers some of whom are on the verge of being accredited as qualified teachers.

Education officials make routine visits to the center especially when the student teachers who are attached there for teaching practices are being monitored.

Deaf children in the Brikama region are now spared the sufferings of having to travel the extremely long distances between Brikama and Kanifing in order to attend St. John school for the Deaf. This convenience has also resulted in decline in the rate of dropouts among the Brikama deaf students attending St. John's The GADHOH regional branch of Brikama which tasked itself with carrying out fundraising for the center and encouraging parents to send their deaf children there continue to be active in this regard. The branch has also established good relationship between the center and its environment

Enrolment of children from year 2013 to 2016

Academic year	Nursery	Primary one	Prim. two	Prim three	Total
2013/14	12	12	-	-	24
2014/15	9	12	11	-	28
2015/16	10	11	11	12	44
Total	31	35	11	12	96

2) Kanifing (permanent) Education Center

The Center received Effatha financial support and advisory service for provision of school meals and transport facilities for the deaf children and youths who learn at the center.

Although the enrollment rate of deaf children at the center declined over the years due to difficulties in deaf children accessing the center (transport difficulties), it has been providing education for deaf children, and vocational training for needy Deaf girls and women. It continues to graduate nursery children and prepare them for admission to St. John's school for the Deaf. Deaf and hard of hearing girls and young women continue to enhance their skills in cookery, tailoring, needle work, and cake production.

3) Basse(permanent) education center

Basse nursery school project which received funds from Effatha for feeding, and travelling of deaf children to and from school has led to establishment of a full-fledged special unit for deaf children attached to St. Joseph's Proper lower Basic school in Basse. (the special unit caters for Deaf children education up to grade 3 and an additional new classroom is created each year. A Deaf teacher in the employment of the government and the Catholic mission is in charge of the unit

§) Temporary education centers

The following temporary education centers: Barra, Farafenni, and Soma. These centers could not be developed into permanent centers to attract government support when the Effatha project ended due to limited financial support.

However, the effect of the project has left behind a core of deaf sign language users, allowing Gambian sign language and deaf culture to flourish in and around the location of each center. This means empowerment for the Deaf community of the areas.

Most of the school going age deaf children who attended the centers during the Effatha project were transferred to permanently based institutions to continue their education. Deaf adult on the other hand turned to learning trades, vocation skills, move away in search of employment or simply stay with their families and engage in farming. In any case they appeared quite different from the persons they had been before their participation at the education centers. This is to say they interact far much better and can use the service of a sign language interpreter. They acted with much self-confidence, appeared more conscious and aware of their rights and the world around them. This new situation will surely open door for their lifelong learning

6) Sign language teachers programme

The Effatha project supported recruitment, training, and employment of Deaf sign language teachers to the above named education centers during the project period.

At the centers the Deaf teachers trained sign language, Deaf culture, human rights, literacy, epidemic diseases, and organization. Trainings were carried out at special centers or at schools, or at some self-help learning initiatives. Opportunity to learn sign language and Deaf culture was also provided for families and friends of deaf people. The teachers also engaged in research and teaching material production. The initiatives of using Deaf teachers for general deaf education, information, and sign language skills were adopted by other GADHOH partners who subsequently worked with GADHOH when the Effatha project ended in 2013. The sign language teachers (now called Deaf trainers) continued to train sign language and deaf awareness under other donor projects until to date. Many deaf and hearing people benefited from the training. In the upcountry they work with visiting teachers, regional education officers, and local government authorities, and law enforcement officers, families of deaf persons, medical workers, and local sign language interpreters. Etc. The Deaf trainers also train literacy and health care to deaf communities located there.. Due to the work of the teachers, many mainstream schools are encouraged to admit and try to teach deaf children.

7) Getting Deaf teachers enrolled at the Gambia college

The Effatha project also facilitated GADHOH visits to schools in many parts of the Gambia for the purpose of identifying deaf students who are qualified and competent enough to enroll at the Gambia College and compete with the normal hearing students.. Today there are three deaf students learning at the college (two males and one female). One female has already graduated and one on the waiting list, waiting for the next intake. All the deaf teachers who graduated from the college will be employed by the government and posted to work at deaf schools and units across the country.

8) Effect of the Effatha project on the College admission of deaf applicants

The College authority has come to rely on GADHOH for identification and recommendation of qualified deaf applicants. The following are deaf youths

pursuing or have pursued college education on the way to becoming professional deaf teachers:

Karamo sanyang (male)- final year student

Ramou jagne (female) – college graduate

Mariama Baldeh (female) – final year student

Abdoukadir Drammeh(male) – second year student

Edrisa Sankareh (male) – final year student

Fanna .s.secka (female) –Applied for admission for the 2016/2017 academic year

Note: Edrisa Sankareh is a normal hearing college student who who choose to specialize in teaching the Deaf. As a result he does his teaching practices at the GADHOH centers under the supervision of the education authorities.



Photo: Miss Mariama Baldeh- a college student on teaching practice at the Brikama center

9) Case stories

Miss Hawlatou Jallow

Miss Hawlatou Jallow was born in Brikama on 25th December, 1993 to a hearing family. She became deaf at an early age. Her parents loved her but could not communicate with her like the other children of the family. They grew worried about her and did not know how to help her. Physically she grew up fast but mentally, she lagged behind her brothers and sisters. The family did not agree to

send her to school because they believe she would be laughed at because as she grew older she looked more like a fool in the eyes of the community she live in. Since the parents show nothing around them that encouraged them to contribute to her development they began to look negatively to her future.

Hawla's family were very relieved and very grateful upon their receiving information from their family friend that there exists a Deaf training center somewhere in Brikama . where deaf children can learn. They were informed that Hawla can learn there because there are many other children like her.

When Hawla finally got admitted at the Brikama center her parents awareness about deaf people began to improve. Each day a family member escorted Hawla to school he or she would stay not less than 30 minutes staring at the other deaf children of the center whom they noticed communicating through gesturing in an unbelievable rapidity. As Hawla continuously attended the center training, attitudinal changes which were taking place in her were apparent. The family noticed that Hawla no longer hid herself upon seeing people enter their family house. At the center, during break, she used to sit quietly alone, watching the other children play, but she later gathered the courage she needed to join them.

Hawla was later transferred to St.John's school for the Deaf. She sat to her grade 9 exams in May this year, and wanted to continue with her education. Today, she is a confidently looking girl who looks promising. She has made friends with many other deaf youths and go out with them at their leisure time. During weekends she helped the family with meal preparation and cleaning.. Her dream is to become a teacher.

Master Haruna Ndure

Haruna Ndure also became deaf at an early age , and as a result he he became a typical signer.his parents were very sensitive about his vulnerability to being asulted by other children, or being knocked down by a passing motor vehicle.

Haruna like Hawla,underwent changes when he got admitted to the Brikama center. He learn sign sign language quickly and took a pleasure in teaching his mother and the other children of the family. He always tell them stories about what happen at the center, but conceals whatever he thought might get him in to trouble with them.

After learning at the center for a year, the parents' feelings about his vulnerability changed. They no longer worried when he wanted to go out with other children.

Haruna also has completed grade 9 this year at St. John's.

His dream is to attend the Gambia College and become a teacher for the Deaf.

Miss Odet Almada

Odet is a young woman, at the age of 24. She lives in Brikama Jammisa. She was born deaf. Her inability to communicate with her parents worried them. Odet gradually grew from childhood and realizing the world of silence. As she grew up she embraced the belief that she is different from and inferior to other children. This feeling did not help her growth and the family felt that on their own they could do very little to help her until when they got her admitted to the Brikama Education center.

At the center Odet learned vocational skills from 2009 to 2013. She is now married to a young deaf male and volunteering as a Cook at the Brikama center. She helps prepare school meals for the children.



Photo: Odet Almada

END OF REPORT