



HAY2TIMBUKTU

Annual Report 2018 - 2019



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Overview

The political, security and social situation in Timbuktu remains very difficult. The UN still has a presence outside the town, as in the rest of northern Mali; the mission has the unenviable reputation of being the most dangerous UN peace-keeping mission anywhere in the world. Although the security situation within the town is relatively stable, commercial flights are still not operating and the road links to Bamako are still fragile and dangerous. Law and order has broken down in parts of central Mali as age-old tensions between different groups come to the boil. The safest way to travel at present is by boat up the river Niger, but this is expensive and takes a long time. Timbuktu is still in the area where the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advises no travel for security reasons, and contacts have had to be maintained as in past years by e-mail.

During the year Hay2Timbuktu fulfilled its commitment to provide funding to build new toilets in two secondary schools where we have supported girl students in the past, and a third where we have begun to deepen our relationship. The toilets were finished during the first term of the new school year and mean that there is now a dedicated toilet in each of the three schools for boys, girls and teachers. The total cost was £7,300 and was met by generous donations from the people of Hay and by collections during the Hay Festival. The trustees would like to record their thanks to the management of the Festival who facilitated this.

Two trustees were able to travel to Bamako in December 2018. They held discussions with our NGO implementing partner, the Association Malienne pour la Survie au Sahel (AMSS). AMSS, born in Timbuktu and still with a large presence there, is one of the largest NGOs in Mali and has a high reputation among donors for its reach and professionalism.

It receives grants from the United States Government, UN agencies and international NGOs for activities, including education, water and sanitation and peace-building in northern Mali.



Meeting with AMSS

The trustees also met the Mayor of Timbuktu, who expressed his appreciation for the interest taken by the people of Hay in the welfare of his town, and said that he hoped that the people-to-people link supported by Hay2Timbuktu would continue. Finally, a meeting was held with the British Ambassador in Bamako, exploring possible links between our education projects and British Government education initiatives in the country.



Mayor of Timbuktu

The main reason for going to Timbuktu was to agree the objectives and terms of implementation of a project supported with a grant from the Department for International Development, to continue the girls bursary schemes successfully supported by Hay2Timbuktu in the past. The grant, signed off by DFID in January 2019, amounts to £45,196 over two years.

The activities under the grant are described more fully in the next section. It is especially exciting that the grant allows for monitoring visits by members of the trustee team to Mali, although it is not expected that travel to Timbuktu itself will be possible in the lifetime of the project. This is a large grant by Hay2Timbuktu's standards and the trustees have been on a steep learning curve. However, the outcome is that girls are being supported in school who might otherwise be at risk of dropping out.

A public information meeting was held on 8 February in Hay to show pictures of the completed toilets and thank those who contributed so generously. A message was played from the Director of Programmes of AMSS who underlined the importance of the solidarity shown by the people of Hay towards Timbuktu (available at <http://hay2timbuktu.org/video-message-of-thanks>).



Community stall, Hay Market

The trustees plan to build on the momentum of the toilets project and the DFID grant by exploring other priority needs at the school. A top priority is to finish the toilets project by providing running water to the toilet blocks for hand washing; this should be in place by the time of the next annual report. A further option is to provide lamps with a central charging solar station to each school so that students can take the lamps home to study.

The trustees continue to look for opportunities to raise funds and to maintain the profile of the Timbuktu link within the town, by having a presence at community markets and the Christmas lights ceremony.

Education Report

The early part of the year consisted of contact with the programme director in the NGO with which H2T has worked previously to construct the project to support girls in school.

Application was made to the Department for International Development to fund the project in 3 schools with whom direct contact has been made and in the case of 2 of the schools similar projects have been trialled in previous years. The 3 schools, Yehia Alkaya, Mahamane Fondogoumo and Alpha Daouna are enthusiastic about the project and have proved positive in implementing the project once funding was agreed in January 2019.



Parents and daughters at Alpha Daouna School

AMSS (the Malian Association for the Survival of the Sahel) works through the programme director who has a strategic role in identifying needs in the school sector in Timbuktu and has regular contact with H2T, a facilitator who liaises with the schools and the head of AMSS in Timbuktu who oversees and reports on progress.

AMSS have established a monitoring committee in each school. This committee has 7 representatives made up from the elected members on the city of Timbuktu council, education authority representation, school management representation, representatives from the associations of parents and mothers and a representative of the girls from the project.

These committees follow the attendance of the girls in routine lessons, in remedial sessions and study groups and receive reports on homework.

The girls selected for the project are all vulnerable girls who are orphaned, from one parent families, have a disability and are at risk of dropping out of school. 20 girls were selected in each of the 3 participating schools made up of 10 girls in the 7th. grade and 10 girls in the 8th. grade. This should give the girls substantial support for the 2 years of the funded project.

AMSS tendered for the provision of school uniforms, school equipment such as note books, writing materials, books and dictionaries and teaching resource materials. A ceremony to present the materials to the girls was attended by school and community groups, elected members and representatives from the education authority.



Presentation of bursary materials

In identifying the need for remedial support it became apparent that the girls experienced difficulty with French, particularly reading and grammar.

Since French is the language through which other subjects are taught it is imperative to improve levels of knowledge and understanding. Many of the girls have only begun French lessons on entry to the participating Second Cycle Schools speaking other languages at home and in the primary schools. English is the third language studied and is important to enable links to be made with students in the Hay area.

Courses have been arranged for mothers by AMSS. These courses are concerned with persuading mothers to relieve their daughters of high levels of domestic work to enable them to be receptive to school study and allowing the girls to meet homework obligations.

257 women attended these courses together with 42 members of the parents and mothers associations and 18 representatives of the school staff. Reports from AMSS and from teachers suggest that these meetings have been important in developing views on the value of education for girls and result in mothers support for their daughters to attend school.

Health sessions have been arranged by the facilitator at AMSS and health professionals in Timbuktu. These sessions have focused on girls health and menstruation, information on contraception and the effects of early marriage on the health and well being of girls, gender based violence and support needed to retain girls in the school system has also been included.

During the 15 sessions organized the girls received information on the cleaning and maintenance of school classrooms, toilets and the school surroundings.

This indicates the involvement of the girls in the work needed to enable the school to function and demonstrated the low level of funding for the schools.

The impact of the project is demonstrated by the academic results of the girls. 100% of the girls passed the internal school examinations in the semester to the end of the first 6 months of the funded project. Teachers report the positive attitude of the girls, the improvement in motivation and concentration developed during the remedial sessions and the regular attendance of all the girls involved.



Maths remedial class at Yehia Alkaya School

The mothers of the girls appreciate the financial support to enable the girls to attend school since most would not have the funds necessary to provide the uniforms and materials needed for study. Mothers also have gained a greater understanding of the value of education for their daughters and have adjusted their expectations of domestic help to enable the girls to study.

The school staff are appreciative of the financial support to enable remedial courses to be provided. Staff are very enthusiastic about the support from H2T which includes advice on training and methods for teaching in large class situations and teaching materials.

There are positive responses from elected members, the mayor of Timbuktu and education authority representatives. Funding for the schools is provided locally and the difficulties faced by the north of Mali mean that funding is very limited. School buildings are in dire need of repair and replacement, teachers are poorly paid and there have been periods of strike activity resulting in school closures and equipment is very limited in all schools.



Lessons at Yehia Alkaya School

The impact of this project is seen not only as financial support for the girls and schools but also a demonstration of support for teachers.

There is an associated project supporting 2 girls in training as obstetric nurses. The girls are in the second year of their training and have been provided with the materials and books necessary for their studies at Bouctou Sante School. They have been involved in advanced training in the gynecology section of the Timbuktu General Hospital. The girls have, reportedly, attended regularly and performed well. They have a third year of study before qualifying and will be joined by 3 girls, 1 from each of the partner schools, at the start of the academic year.



Lessons at Mahamane Fondogoumo School

Visit to Bamako December 2018

The trustees agreed to two representatives visiting Mali to finalise arrangements for the DFID project to support girls in school and to determine the progress with the toilets built as a result of funds raised in Hay to provide a new toilet block in each of the 3 partner schools.

Programme

Monday 3rd. December. Met with Ali Sidi , a teacher from Yehia Alkaya Second Cycle School who is currently studying at the University in Bamako. He is bubbly, enthusiastic and delighted to improve his English. He is able to give an overview of the situation in Timbuktu, from his perspective, an overview of the schools, the projects and project delivery, future plans.

Met with Adoul, a University colleague of Ali and took a taxi to the river Niger to see sand extraction. Visited the University. (Future visits might want to build on this)



River Niger

Late evening visit to Songai Blues club/bar for local music.

These visits would not be possible without local accompaniment but are helpful in developing relationships and ideal that Ali is currently studying at the University. It provided an opportunity to pass on gifts and in particular books for English study and teaching.



Bamako market

Tuesday 4th. December. Met with Elmehdi at AMSS offices, some considerable distance across the city. AMSS provided transport to and from the office.

We were able to finalise the plans for the next stage of the education project, to amend the results framework, operational plan and monitoring plan and discuss the MOU for signature following translation.

We also discussed the Toilet Project, project delivery and development., possible next steps,, solar lighting installations for students to take lamps home for home studying and school project development. These are for discussion by trustees and consideration in an action plan going forwards.

Elmehdi was also able to share his views on the current situation in Timbuktu, his perspective on the schools and H2T relationships with the schools and shared the more strategic picture of AMSS work in the region.

We had lunch at Elmehdi's house where we met his wife who unusually shared lunch with us. His older sons are currently working in Timbuktu and his younger daughter and son were in school. We did not meet his elder, married daughter who lives with them.

Mossa Cisse , an AMSS employee from Timbuktu, was also at lunch and we were able to inform him on progress with the next stage of the project.

Hopefully Elmehdi will discuss the details and requirements for monitoring since it is Mossa and the female animator in Timbuktu who will be responsible for this.

We agreed with Mossa that plaques will be installed in all three sets of toilet block to indicate the support from H2T and Clyro School. Arrangements will be made for H2T to receive photographs of the ceremony when the plaques are installed. In discussion with Ali it would appear to also be very beneficial for the profile of H2T in the schools.

We were able to leave the messages from Hay, gathered at the Christmas lights stall with Elmehdi for Mossa to take to the mayor of Timbuktu on his return later in the week. We also left a set of maths books for Alpha Daouna School, letters from pupils in Hay School for students in Alpha Daouna school, books for help with English, chalk and Christmas cards for each school.

Wednesday 5th. December

We met the mayor of Timbuktu Aboubacrine Cisse, he was in Bamako for a monthly meeting for which he travels on the UN flight from Timbuktu. He was able to give us his view of the situation in Timbuktu, the view of H2T education projects, his wishes for expansion and other possible practical support.

We met the British Ambassador, Cat Evans, at the Embassy using transport we arranged. She recognized the contact made at the British Library in September and would have included us in the invitation to the handover of the manuscripts hard drive at the National Archives if we were in Bamako on Friday.

She outlined her work to develop British interests in Mali and is keen to reflect the contribution of H2T.

She had been planning a visit to Timbuktu on that day but security protocols made this impossible. She would not be able to visit the city on future visits but is able to bring visitors from Timbuktu into the UN camp with suitable security clearance and is keen to have our contacts with the mayor to follow up to facilitate this with the possibility of other personnel from H2T project in Timbuktu.

She is keen to involve Hay Festival in some activity in Bamako, possibly linked with the Great Britain campaign and culminating in an event around the Queen's birthday in 2019.

She described the scoping work with the British Council currently underway. This focuses on three aspects to professionalise the teaching of English, provide training the teachers training and the development of online English Language teaching resources. She expressed an intention that one of the places on the training could be provided for one of H2T contacts.

In the evening we went to the Sleeping Camel, a backpackers hostel, restaurant and bar to meet Phil and learn more about his interests in Mali, his perspective on travelling in the country, security and the decline in tourism even in Bamako. Postcards from Timbuktu is something to promote.

Sophie Sarin was staying in preparation for the event to launch the manuscripts digitalization. She believes that it would be possible to exhibit the British Library display in Hay and she will follow this up with British Library.

Financial statement for the year to 31 May 2019

| | 2018-19 | 2017-18 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Opening balance | 9,213.15 | 3,595.63 |
| <u>Income</u> | 17,351.74 | 11,786.68 |
| Festival collections | 312.40 | 1,760.60 |
| Other fundraising | 1,201.47 | 3,360.46 |
| Medics fundraising | 25.06 | 1,481.00 |
| Waterloo Foundation grant | 0 | 4,640.00 |
| Subscriptions, donations, gift aid | 151.21 | 544.62 |
| DFID grant | 15,661.60 | 0 |
| <u>Expenditure</u> | 21,955.60 | 6,108.53 |
| Girls education transfers to AMSS | 0 | 4,640.00 |
| Maternal health transfers to AMSS | 812.98 | 1,192.53 |
| DFID grant transfers to AMSS | 12,650.00 | 0 |
| Toilets project transfers | 7386.06 | 0 |
| Communications/fundraising | 209.31 | 86.00 |
| Insurance | 187.50 | 190.00 |
| Refund of donation | 100.00 | 0 |
| Trustee travel | 612.75 | 0 |
| Closing balance | | 4,669.92 |
| <u>Funds held</u> | | |
| Education general | | 22.31 |
| Education girls | | 277.39 |
| M4T general | | 1,236.16 |
| General fund | | -444.50 |
| Designated | | 566.96 |
| DFID balance | | 3011.60 |

Thank you

Thank you for your ongoing support of Hay2Timbuku

Keep up to date with our news by visiting our website: hay2timbuku.org

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Donations

We are grateful for any donations to support our work. We are currently raising funds for solar lamps and hygiene stations.

Paypal

We can accept donations via Paypal, just transfer funds to: treasurer@hay2timbuku.org

By post

You can send a cheque for your donation. Please make cheques payable to 'Hay2Timbuku' and send to The Treasurer, Hay2Timbuku, c/o West Cwm, Cusop, HR3 5RF.

