



UGATUGA *Press Release*

14th de December 2009

- **Trip to The Gambia cancelled, by the organization of the event, due to recent terrorism attacks in Mauritania.**
- **New version of UGATUGA Project:**

Trip to Morocco



Flight to The Gambia





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It was with a lot of sadness that we learned, on the 10th December, from the organization of the Plymouth-Banjul Challenge, that the **charity challenge to the Gambia had been cancelled** due to the recent kidnappings by Al Qaeda terrorists in Mauritania. After an emergency meeting, the English FCO (Foreign & Commonwealth Office) amended the recommendation to travel to the Gambia from "All But Essential Travel" to "No Travel". They also consider there is an increased likelihood and risk of new similar attacks soon. Alternatives were studied, such as the use of armed escorts, but they were not authorized.

Does this mean the cancellation of the rally the end of the UgaTuga project?

Definitely **NOT!** Every effort and work we had in recent months, the involvement of friends and colleagues, the responsibilities assumed with the NGOs do not allow us to abort the project.

Adapting to a new reality

Although some of the teams decided to continue the trip to the Gambia, we understand that we must respect the advice of the organizers of the event, in line with the suggestion made by Management of the company where we work. We must not cross Mauritania and the other alternative routes to reach the Gambia are also not recommended (Algeria, Libya and Mali). There is, in fact, a real risk of being kidnapped or killed by crossing Mauritania.

The solution found

After careful consideration, we decided to keep the charitable UgaTuga project, with some changes that do not compromise and in fact, in our opinion, reinforce the spirit of the project and its main components (Charity, Adventure and Team Spirit).

In short, we will divide the initial trip to the Gambia in two new charity journeys:

1- With the Volkswagen Combi, we will be two weeks in **Morocco**. We will cross the Atlas and the Sahara and visit remote villages and projects of local NGOs. We will distribute school supplies and gifts kindly provided by friends and colleagues.

2- We will travel **by plane to the Gambia** where we will stay one week. There, we will deliver the toys collected in Lisbon to local children and visit and help some NGOs who work directly with poor communities in the Gambia. In particular, the NGO "La sonriza of Africa" (www.lasonrisadeafrica.org). More details of the NGOs attached.

We will keep the 3 pillars of the project:

Fundamental Pillars	Original Actions	Updated Actions	Impact
1) Charity	Charity Fund raising for Terra dos Sonhos (1,200 € already delivered)		=
	Car Auction in the Gambia and hand the money to local NGOs	Car Auction in Portugal and hand the money to NGOs in the Gambia	+
	Delivery of toys to children in Gambia	Delivery of toys to children in Morocco and Gambia	= / +
	Delivery of school supplies in Rufisque (Dakar)	Delivery of school supplies in Morocco	=
2) Adventure	Travel 5000 Miles in the Volkswagen Combi to the Gambia (no more than 80Km / h), on a journey without any support, for 3 weeks	Travel 4000 Miles in the Volkswagen Combi in Morocco (no more than 80Km / h), on a journey without any support, for two weeks.	+
		Travel for a week in the Gambia, in canoe, by jeep to lost villages.	
3) Team Spirit	Involvement of family, friends, colleagues and other supporters of the UgaTuga project		=
CONCLUSION	Turning negative news that generated frustration in an excellent opportunity to strengthen the common charity project: we will help more NGOs, live two adventures in one and strengthen the team spirit! UgaaaaTuuuga!		+



FAQ



1) Dates – will the dates of the initial project be maintained?

YES. From 26/12/2009 to 19/01/2010 (from Dec. 26 to Jan. 11, we will be in Morocco and from 12 to 19 Jan., we will be in The Gambia).

2) Why the option to fly to the Gambia?

In a way, we had a commitment with some NGOs in the Gambia. The desire see in loco the work that these institutions perform with local children, left us no choice, but to arrange a flight to the Gambia (the return was already booked). These children and their NGOs are not guilty of acts of terrorism committed in Mauritania.

3) Why not sell the car in Morocco as we were going to do in the Gambia?

In Morocco is not possible to sell foreign cars (all cars that enter have to leave the country). To comply with the essential spirit of the UGATUGA project, we decided to sell the car on arrival in Lisbon and keep the idea of donating money to NGOs

4) Will it be easy to sell the car in Lisbon?

The car is now better prepared than ever, thanks to the tireless efforts of our mechanical Pardal. In the Gambia, the car would probably be sold for just over 1,000 euros. In Lisbon, we estimate it to be sold for at least 3 times that price (still below its real market value, but we decided to sell it as soon as possible). Thus, we can donate more money than initially planned to the NGOs with whom we had established contact in the Gambia (www.lasonrisadeafrica.org). With the money that remains, we will recognize the work of our mechanic and will cover the costs of the changes in travel.

5) Sponsorships and Raffles: Feedback?

Once we realized that there was no willingness on the part of companies to sponsor this project and in order to help us cover the costs of the project, we decided to launch the UGATUGA Raffles. By buying a raffle for 10 euros, in addition to helping us take this project forward, you will be part of the Raffles draw (on the 19th December) and have the possibility to win a kitchen robot (better known as "Bimbi"). So far, we managed to sell 197 raffle tickets and raise 1.760 euros that will help funding some of the costs of this project, namely: petrol, repairs, insurance, visas, vaccinations, etc. The UgaTuga raffles **were a SUCCESS! Thank you to all who helped and good luck for the draw!** If you still want to, you can buy a raffle at www.ugatuga.com until the 18th December.

6) Will we continue to inform about the development of the trip?

"Absolutely!" Now, more than ever, we feel a greater responsibility to share with you all the adventures and humanitarian help we will provide. We now have the opportunity to spend more days than originally planned in the Gambia, which will certainly allow us to experience memorable moments! Your gifts will be handed out to several children and associations, both in Gambia as in Morocco. We will try, whenever possible, to update you through the blog on our site www.ugatuga.com.

DISCLAIMER (Formal): We are only two well intentioned guys who want to help those most in need, while spending a few different days full of adventure and with fun! We are not and don't want to be a professional NGO. Thus, with the available resources (ourselves, with many hours of dedication and sleepless nights, as well the dedication of our friends and colleagues, who tirelessly helped in keeping this project alive), we will try to continue to provide our best efforts and not disappoint any expectations.

DISCLAIMER (Informal): After a few minutes of frustration and feeling lost after we found out about the cancellation of all land travel to the Gambia, we are now quite excited about the new version of the UGATUGA project! We can't wait to leave for these two countries and tell you all the stories and adventures of our trip. We will share the experiences we will live, the joys of the children and the people we will get to meet.



ATTACHMENTS



- **Link to the British FCO (Foreign & Commonwealth Office) recommendation with “No Travel” advice to Mauritania**

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/middle-east-north-africa/mauritania>

“This advice has been reviewed and reissued with amendments to the Summary and Terrorism and Road Travel sections (kidnap of three Spanish nationals). We now advise against all travel to some named provinces and continue to advise against all but essential travel to the rest of the country.”

- **NGOs in The Gambia that we help** (directly from NGOs web site www.lasonrizadeafrica.org / www.thefutureisourcountry.org)

“ Objectives

- To **promote the integral development** and the dignity of children in The Gambia.
- Help children to go to school. Also provide training in response to the demands of the labor market.
- **Help feed families** in the neighborhood of Manjai Kunda.
- Provide **health care** for children and their families.
- Contribute to a Culture of Peace, Justice, Tolerance and Non-Violence in the community in which we work.
- Develop, beyond actions supported, the means to enhance knowledge of culture and history of their country.
- Implement any initiative that serves to fulfill the purposes described.

Manjai Kunda

Manjai Kunda is a small suburb with around 11.600 inhabitants. **The whole population lives in poverty or extreme poverty conditions (less than a dollar per day)**. The suburb has no electricity, no drinkable water, nor does it have a sanitizing or draining system. All this at a distance of a few minutes from hotels equipped with swimming pools, air conditioning, restaurants, etc. This tourist area generates a generous amount of trash, which has to be dumped somewhere. Where? In **Manjai Kunda**, the suburb that until not long ago hosted **the largest garbage dump in the whole country**.

Most of the income of the families in Manjai Kunda came from the direct sale of "recyclable" or "useful" garbage that tourists and the rest of the population dump. To this purpose, hundreds of people worked in the dump, striving to find metal objects, tin or anything that could be sold in order to achieve the daily 25 dalasis (**0.9 € necessary for a family to eat**).

Among the workers in the dump, there were many children in school age, who like their parents had never seen any school education due to its high cost. Furthermore, they were exposed to infections generated by the multiple cuts they suffered, to gastrointestinal diseases caused by the ingestion of contaminated water, respiratory diseases caused by the gases exhaled by garbage, chronic conjunctivitis caused by the dirt found in the environment, along with the rest of endemic diseases of the country like malaria. These hygienic and health conditions cause **high child mortality and bring life expectancy below fifty**.

Recently, most of the dump has been closed and the number of families dedicated to garbage collection has greatly been reduced. This partial closure also provoked an economic crisis among the families who were accustomed to this way of life and has originated disorders which resulted in a higher degree of crime and insecurity.

Thanks to "**The future is our country. Don't loose your life on the sea**", most of the "garbage kids" does not have to work anymore and be exposed to an obvious health risk. They have exchanged their daily jobs among piles of garbage and rubble for books and the rooms of the school of Bakoteh.

In your hands is to help us in order for these children have a better life. It is precisely your support that helps us to go on jumping hurdles, getting stronger with every challenge, and making us think that, little by little, this project will eventually stop being a dream to convert itself in a work well done, achieved among all of us.

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