

Bansang Hospital Appeal



Transforming healthcare delivery in The Gambia since 1992

Summer Newsletter, 2015

A MESSAGE FROM ANITA:

When I embarked on this project in 1992, I could never have envisaged the journey that would follow. Peppered with tragedy, frustration and despair, those early years felt like I was operating in a very long tunnel with only the smallest ray of light at the end of it.

Fast forward nearly a quarter of a century. I now found myself reporting about a hospital brimming with pride – one whose staff are happy, contented and honoured to work in support of their community. We still have a near 100% staff retention rate (completely unparalleled in Sub-Saharan Africa). We can also now report on a **34% reduction** in patients being transferred the 200 miles from BH to Banjul for further treatment. This remarkable statistic is due to a variety of reasons;

- ***Opening of the new operating theatre facilities***
- ***Arrival of two Gambian surgeons who have chosen to serve the rural poor***
- ***Inspirational management team and incredibly dedicated staff***
- ***Countless other projects have brought advanced capabilities to Bansang***

That incredible reduction in patient transfers has had a direct impact on the hospital's finances. Precious money is now being redirected towards front-line patient care rather than vehicle running costs. **Helping Bansang become ever more self-sufficient is what this charity is all about.**

I am immensely proud of all that has happened in Bansang. I am equally proud that you, my fellow countrymen, along with thousands of others from around the world, have embraced this little community in the heart of Africa. In a year when West Africa has been battered by Ebola, it is comforting to know **we can make a difference!**

Anita Smith, MBE MRG
(Founder & Director of the BHA)

A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL WHO SUPPORTED OUR MOTHER'S DAY CAMPAIGN



Back in March, we launched an urgent (and long overdue) appeal for more regular standing order donors. Prior to the fundraising appeal, we were facing a **£1,200 monthly shortfall** on the wages of our 50 staff. This shortfall was putting a huge burden on Anita...and seriously affecting the charities ability to implement the long-term projects that are so vital to improving the hospital.

We are therefore HUGELY grateful to **Greg and Cara Samways, Tony Robbs, Mark Dodds, Eleanor Bah, Steve Williams, Simon Scarrow (our patron), Chris & Yuki Bonham, Patricia Bruen, Rotary Club of Kettering, Mary Sheldon, Barbara Philips and Ian Byrnes**. They all answered our call. Between them, they are contributing an extra **£290 per month** – which is the equivalent wages of **NINE members of staff!**

What does this mean for the charity? It means those members of staff will never have to fear the misery of being destitute. They will never again have to explain to their children why they can't feed or school them. It also means the BHA can put more focus into the future of the hospital, and less on fundraising for staff wages each month.

Added to our other standing order donors, the wages shortfall has now dropped to £910 per month. **This is still a huge burden for Anita**. We therefore hope that those who can afford to donate a few pounds per month will click on the link below and discover how easy it is to make a genuinely HUGE difference to the lives of others

<http://bansanghospitalappeal.org/urgent-appeal/>

SPECIAL GUESTS VISIT BANSANG HOSPITAL



CEO Baba Jeng, Anita, Patron Phil Sinkinson & British Ambassador Colin Crorkin outside the hospital

British Ambassador Colin Crorkin, former British High Commissioner Phil Sinkinson OBE, ambassadors for the BHA James Robinson and Richard Clements from Ibiza joined Anita on her latest visit to Bansang hospital. Staff of BH, school children, a marching band, village chiefs and dancers all turned out to welcome them.

We are delighted to report that Ambassador Colin Crorkin and patron for BHA, Phil Sinkinson, have helped secure the support of Isolux Corsan (an engineering company currently contracted to build the Trans-Gambia Border Bridge). As part of their corporate social responsibility, Anita and CEO Baba Jeng will be meeting Isolux's senior project manager in August to discuss their plans to provide a bore hole that will provide a 24/7 water supply to the hospital. **It is inconceivable in this day and age to think of a hospital not having a reliable water source.** With Isolux's support, that glaring issue hopefully be a thing of the past!



The devastating aftermath of the bush fire

As is so often the case in Bansang, the excitement and jubilation from the arrival of so many dignitaries was juxtaposed with some devastating news. It was reported that a bush fire had swept through a local village, turning homes and harvests into little more than ashes.

Richard, James, Anita and the hospital management team visited the following day with clothes and two sacks of couscous from the hospitals harvest. James and Richard also pooled all their money which they handed to the village chief. The chief's words on receiving our modest contribution was "this is too much". We were all lost for words as this was such a small token when so many families had lost everything.



Richard & James with some of the young victims of the fire

It was a truly humbling experience to see how resilient everyone was under such desperate circumstances. We saw children sifting through the ashes to salvage but a handful of groundnuts. Villagers collected grasses for roofing, whilst others set about making mud blocks to rebuild their homes. No time to stop and feel sorry....life has to go on. **We never cease to be amazed at the resilience of these hard working people who so readily help and share in times of hardship.**

BANSANG HOSPITAL'S "GARDEN OF EDEN"

Anita was lost for words when she viewed what was once scrub land...now transformed into the hospital's organic fruit and vegetable gardens. The project is part of our wider effort to help Bansang become as self-sufficient as possible.



The project is a perfect demonstration of how cohesive the hospital has become. Each year, after the rains, the management team along with the rest of the staff come together to cultivate the land. We are hoping our knowledge from previous years will allow us to extend the growing season.

The gardeners are amongst some of the 50+ staff that are sponsored by friends of BHA. Anita will be reporting on the Charitable Farming Association projects later in the year. To date the rains are late, for the second year running.

NEW HOME FOR THE CEO AND HIS FAMILY



Sainabou, Baba Jeng, their daughter and her two friends

On what was a very emotionally charged day, hospital CEO Baba Jeng, his wife Sainabou and their two daughters moved into their new home - **the latest in a whole string of accommodation blocks renovated by the BHA under our staff retention and motivation initiative.**



BEFORE: The once dilapidated building – unfit for habitation

Sainabou had visited the site every day watching the workmen transform an uninhabitable slum, occupied by termites and rats, into a beautiful home fit for an amazing chief - one who is respected and loved by the entire staff and community. This structural transformation would not have been possible without financial support from our friends, **Janice & John Brotherton.**



AFTER: Transformed into a wonderful family home

Additional thanks are extended to The Ministry of Health for providing a range of furniture for the family home, including a suite of chairs, bedroom furniture, refrigerator, cooker & satellite television.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: BOB PARFITT

'Uncle Bob' as he is affectionately known by staff in Bansang is a treasure who has dedicated his life to helping others around the world, wherever he sees the need! Uncle Bob has supplied a huge amount of quality gifts, clothes and medical supplies to the hospital – all sent from his 'Aladdin's Cave' warehouse in Wellingborough.



He has so far visited the hospital twice, so is well aware of the hospital's needs. His donations are sent alongside those of the BHA – with his warehouse having hosted a large number of the 54 containers of aid that the charity have sent to Bansang since 1992. It costs **£3,000** to send a container from the UK to Bansang...a cost that we are ALWAYS trying to cover via donations or sponsorship. **If you'd like to fundraise towards the cost of a container, please do get in touch!**

SUPPORT FROM INTERNATIONAL HEALTH PARTNERS (IHP)

IHP are a registered charity that source pharmaceuticals and medical supplies from companies throughout Europe. The supplies they collect are used in emergencies all over the world. The latest donation was shipped to Bansang in May and arrived in June – benefitting patients greatly ever since. **Thank you IHP!**

BRITISH PLUMBING EMPLOYEES COUNCIL (BPEC) LEGACY AWARD 2014

Renovating a maintenance department may seem like a low priority in a hospital that is operating in such an acutely challenging environment. Yet it is our maintenance teams that keep the facilities running and ensure our medical teams have facilities that allow them to do their jobs to the very best of their abilities.

With those things in mind, **Anita was honoured to collect the BPEC legacy award in 2014** – one that afforded us the funds to finally attend to urgent plumbing needs across the hospital.

Much to the excitement of the maintenance team, the funds also extended to building a new maintenance department and adjoining offices. These works (began last January) are now completed with the team fully operational in their new headquarters!



The old maintenance department (now demolished)

These latest works are a continuation of those first overseen by trustees of BPEC back in January 2013. On that occasion, the BPEC team oversaw the completion of various aspects of the plumbing works that their award had so generously helped fund. Staff, patients & trustees were delighted with the construction of new bathroom facilities, toilets, showers and sewers throughout the hospital.



The brand new (fully operational) maintenance department!

This isn't the end of BPEC involvement with the hospital. **As a direct result of their visit in 2013, the trustees of BPEC created an annual "Legacy Award"**. They will be returning in January 2016 with Anita to discuss the second phase of this three part award. It will be specifically focussing on improving the health and safety of staff through the provision of new plumbing tools along with additional training.

Thank you BPEC for making such a wonderful ongoing contribution – it is making a tremendous difference to the lives of patients and staff alike. We are sure BPEC's founding Chairman, the late **Raymond J Brooks**, would be very happy to see the lives that have been enhanced by this award.

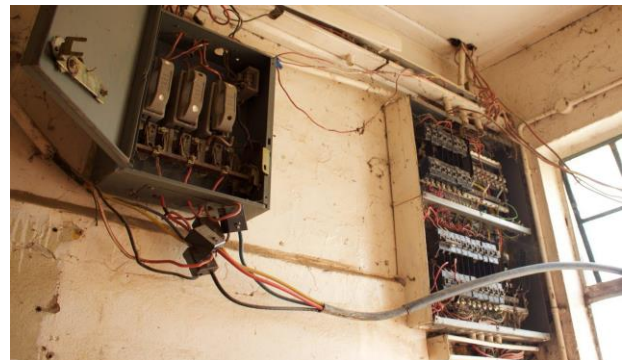
OLD FEMALE WARD TO BE TURNED INTO THE ADMIN OFFICE AND TRAINING CENTRE

The Rotary Clubs of Brentwood a Becket and Seaford are continuing with their invaluable support by **funding the refurbishment of the old female surgical ward** into a training facility for health professionals. Sub-Saharan Africa is faced with a huge disease burden and regular refresher training is one strategy to continuously improve the capacity and competence of health workers.



Volunteer James in the old Female Ward isolation room

It can be so easy to overlook preventative measures such as these. However, the **outbreak of Ebola** located in the same geographical region of West Africa was a stark reminder of the need to continuously improve the competence of health workers and to be able to respond to major outbreaks. **The hospital will be encouraging all charities relating to health, education and agriculture to use the facility.**



Old circuit boards

Our sincere thanks go to the organisations and individuals who are helping fund the complete refurbishment of this old medical unit. Alongside the new training facilities, the funds will be used to create new store rooms, toilets, a shower block and new offices for our hard working admin staff.

Work carried out to date includes the careful removal of the old asbestos roof and the new aluzinc roof being installed before the start of the rainy season. Aluminium windows, doors and partitioning are on order and the first phase of electrics has been completed.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: OLIVE DANIELS GOES TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE

This charity is all the stronger for the rich tapestry of people who come together in its name to support Bansang Hospital. **There is no-one that fits that picture better than Olive Daniels.** She is a lady that can paint a most incredible picture of the life she has led; from the terrible hardship & fear of living in London during WW2, to the humour and joy that has sustained her to this day.



A premature baby wearing clothes knitted by Olive

For as long as Anita can remember, Olive has devoted ALL her time to helping others – both at home and abroad. The blankets and toys she has knitted over the years have helped bring comfort to the sick babies and children that are an all too frequent sight on the Children's Ward. It was therefore wonderful to hear that Olive's work and selfless desire to help others was recognised by the Queen via an invitation to a **Buckingham Palace Garden Party**. Having spoken with Olive, Anita is pleased to confirm that Olive had a truly wonderful time!!

SAYER VINCENT DONATE SECOND HAND OFFICE FURNITURE

Earlier in the year, Anita's sons Grant and Laurence, alongside a number of volunteers, gave up their time to collect a whole host of office furniture for the new admin block. The only problem? The furniture was spread across 3 floors at an inner London office block; and it all had to be dismantled prior to loading in the lorry!



After a long and back breaking day, the lorry was finally unloaded at 8pm in Wellingborough. **The next stop for the furniture? The new admin block!** There was also the small matter of collecting 20 wheelie bins – donated to the charity by Southwark Council. (These bins will be put in alongside the 50 already at the hospital – all of which have made a dramatic difference to people's attitudes towards rubbish disposal).

Our thanks to the following volunteers for helping make the collection that much easier; *Joanna Pittman, Tracy Grundy (office manager, Sayer Vincent), Janet Sarll (office manager JDRF), Andy Nichols, Kryisa Mansfield, Oscar Pacey, Andrew Chandler (manager of enviro' services), Ken Parry (Southwark council)*

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

The Appeal **urgently** needs funds to support the hospital. These funds pay for drugs and medical equipment as well as the projects mentioned above. All donations make a huge, lasting difference!

Donate via Standing Orders: We desperately need ongoing monthly donations. To find out why they are so important, please contact Anita or visit; <http://bansanghospitalappeal.org/urgent-appeal/>

Donate via text message: You can donate from your mobile through Vodafone's JustTextGiving. To make an instant £5 donation TODAY, just text **BANS14 £5** to telephone number **70070**

Like us on Facebook: Liking us on Facebook helps spread the Bansang story to all your friends. It doesn't cost you anything, but it helps us no end! So please, **PLEASE** go and click the like button ☺

Fundraise for us: Running a marathon? Having a sponsored silence? Whatever your fundraising idea, we would love to support you! We have pamphlets that you can give out. We also work with Virgin Money Giving – so a fundraising page is just a few clicks away! Whatever your idea, **please** get in touch.

Contact us: *Anita Smith, MBE MRG. Bansang Hospital Appeal, 4 The Leys, Orlingbury, NN14 1JE*
anitasmith@bansanghospitalappeal.org
07783 551945