

# Bansang Hospital Appeal

Transforming healthcare delivery in The Gambia since 1992



## Winter Newsletter, 2016



### A foreword from Anita

**As many of you know, this has been a very challenging year. Chronic sciatic back pain forced me to undergo lumbar surgery, which has only been partially successful. I have therefore been unable to visit the hospital I so love (though I will be there in January!).**

As devastating as this has been on a personal level, my absence has brought into sharp focus just how much progress has been made over the last 25 years.

As an example, the hospital's governance structure has changed beyond all recognition. There is now full oversight and accountability on every project; with clear traceability on every single penny spent. It is a powerful feeling to know that every penny raised is spent diligently, in pursuit of the best care outcomes.

Speaking of care outcomes; the statistics by which we judge healthcare delivery have continued to make dramatic improvements. These aren't just hollow numbers either. They conceal a myriad of human stories about hope, survival and love...where once there would have been the same unrelenting tide of needless mortality. THIS is our legacy, and it is one that we should all be immensely proud to have enabled.

What is also incredibly positive to see is the dynamism of the staff. All those years of focussing on motivation and retention have helped light a collective fire of ideas – ones which are helping bring a great sense of collective purpose to everyone working in Bansang.

There is clearly much to celebrate in Bansang. Yet despite the positive signals, I am acutely aware of the risks that the hospital and this charity continue to face. As an example, the near 20% depreciation of the British currency since late June has had a dramatic impact on the exchange rate – which in turn means our fixed costs (such as wages) have risen significantly. It is a cost we can bear for the time being, but one which I am determined to mitigate as quickly as possible.

It is with that in mind that I hope you'll come together as you have done so many times before, and give your support to our Christmas fundraising campaign.

You can read more about it below this foreword; but in short, we are seeking £12,000 to fund the purchase and shipment of a second Massey Ferguson tractor (along with associated cultivation equipment). This represents the final phase of funding for the staff farming project, after which it will become entirely self-financing. Simply put – the hospital will be able to feed patients in perpetuity...and will have significant additional revenues for all manner of other projects! It's everything we strive for in development.

We hope you'll join us in making it a reality

**Anita Smith MBE MRG**

Founder & Director, Bansang Hospital Appeal

*Patrons: Mr Phil Sinkinson OBE, former British High Commissioner to The Gambia & Mr Simon Scarrow, international bestselling author*

# URGENT CHRISTMAS APPEAL:

£12,000 to complete the final stage of funding for the staff farming project



## The project so far:



*Anita with team members in the early days of the farming project*

Set up in 2006, the aim of the Staff Farming Project was to bring together all the health workers within the hospital in a bid to nurture common understanding and foster good working relationships. In that regard, it has been an unparalleled success, with 225 hospital staff members working together for the common good (each of whom donate 10 dalasis per month to support its objectives). The project currently spans 5 farms, covering 160 acres of community donated land. The 2015 harvest provided enough funds to cover the cost of fertiliser and seeds, maintenance of the tractor, as well as the building of a community bakery.

## Funding objectives:



*New hospital bakery: funded entirely by profits from the 2015 crop*

This final stage of funding will enable us to buy a second Massey Ferguson along with the associated ploughing machinery (for a total of £12,000 including shipping). The provision of this additional tractor will give the hospital a year-round source of additional income, helping dramatically boost not only our own crop yield, but also those of the communities who will pay to use it. The profits from crop sales will make the project entirely self-sufficient, and allow the hospital to fund new patient care initiatives (along with a canteen for the hospital). On a personal level, this project will also help take a great fundraising burden off my shoulders

### How you can help

**To donate online;** visit; [www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/BHAFarming](http://www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/BHAFarming)

**To donate by cheque;** Anita Smith MBE, 4 The Leys, Orlingbury, Northamptonshire, NN14 1JE

**(ETHICAL GIFTS:** As ever with our Christmas Appeals, if you would like your donation to be made into an ethical gift, please email me once you have donated. My son would be more than happy to make a PDF document detailing the project and dedicated to a person of your choosing).

### Project Cost Breakdown:

Massey Ferguson 165 2wd	£6150
Sun Canopy	£400
New 3 disc, disc plough	£1275
New 24 disc, disc harrow	£1250
4 ton tipping trailer	£1850
20-ft freight to Banjul port	£1600
<b>Total (incl' £525 discount)</b>	<b>£12,000</b>



## **OBITUARY: Alaghie Bah; a dear friend, gone too soon**



We are so sorry to announce the passing of our dear friend and colleague, Alaghie Bah. Many of you will recall that he was one of our first amputees to visit the UK to have a prosthetic limb fitted. His transformation since those formative years was so incredibly profound. From an uneducated and shy boy, Alaghie grew into a trusted friend and brilliant hospital colleague – one whom I miss profoundly.

Although his passing came far too soon, I know that his family were incredibly touched by the outpouring of support from the friends of the BHA. Thanks to your collective generosity, we managed to raise £675 to support the education of Alaghie's children; a legacy that will give them something he never had. Alaghie would be so happy to know his friends have given such opportunities to his children. Rest in peace Alaghie

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## **PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS: BH goes to Singapore**

When fundraising for Bansang, I often find people who wonder why we help such a distant community. When I hear such things, I am immediately reminded of the feelings that are seared into my heart; that the children I have seen die so needlessly could so easily have been any one of ours. It is purely geographical fortune that makes us the fortunate few; and it is therefore my immense privilege to be able to help.

Yet I know that such feelings aren't shared by all. It is therefore great to be able to support brilliant initiatives that not only help Bansang, but that also directly help the rest of the world. An example of this was the Healthcare and Pandemic Preparedness course that our Administrator, Baboucarr Saine, undertook in Singapore (for which the BHA funded the flights). The lessons learned are already being applied to the hospital's emergency procedures...helping ensure that tragedies like that of Ebola will be far better contained, and less globally destructive. Supporting cohesive healthcare systems in the developing world is therefore of direct benefit to us all – both morally, ethically and pragmatically.

## **PROJECT NEWS: #BHASafePower project is complete!**



I am pleased to confirm that Bansang Hospital now has a safe electrical system! The project commenced before we had even raised the full £38,000 – with completion happening way ahead of schedule. Our huge thanks to Malcolm Robertson of LED Solutions for pushing the project forward so quickly – and for donating additional items such as emergency lighting.

It's an incredible relief to sleep at night knowing that all our hard work over the years won't be needlessly undone by an electrical fire. It is also very positive to know that the LED lighting will generate 60% savings; helping the hospital divert extra funds to where they are needed most. My most sincere thanks to all the wonderful people that supported this campaign. You have made a profound and ongoing difference to the wellbeing of all the staff and patients of Bansang.

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## **VOLUNTEER NEWS: Grant Hamilton-Smith (my son ☺)**



We have been helped in the past by the Community Development Foundation, so it was rather bittersweet that their largest donation yet came as a result of them ceasing operations. The 40ft container worth of office equipment was steadfastly dismantled by my son, Grant, over the course of several months. He then recruited a team of volunteers, who helped load the container in London, before it headed to Bob Parfitt's warehouse in Wellingborough. The container was then filled with additional pharmaceuticals from International Health Partners, as well as a myriad of other items from Bob's own charity aid warehouse. A huge thank you to everyone that contributed; the hospital now has a huge array of quality office furniture

## **SURPRISE PROJECT: Bansang has a conference hall!**



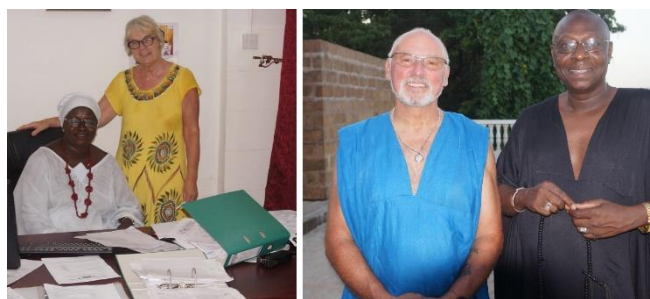
Almost without exception, every single infrastructure project at the hospital has been built with my input. It was therefore a tremendous surprise, last January, to be guest of honour at the ceremony to unveil the brand-new refurbished training/conference centre. Renovated by our own maintenance team together with our contractor, this new facility has an imposing double door entrance, opening-up to a very impressive conference room (with furniture built by hand in Bansang). The first event to be held in the building was a retirement reception for departing staff. It was a wonderful way for us to celebrate the fantastic work of our dedicated staff, to wish them well, and to remind them they will always be a part of the 'Bansang Family'. We are hopeful that the new facility will attract other organisations/charities to venture up country – and in turn this will bring development and funds to Bansang.

## **VOLUNTEER NEWS: Sarah Barwell & Jeannette/Chris**



Many of you will know Chris & Jeannette Payne from numerous other newsletters. They have been some of our most dedicated volunteers, making big impacts every time they visit. As a matron in the NHS, Jeannette has focussed on bringing her expertise to the staff of Bansang. Using the new conference facility, she has extended her training program to include SEN students, whilst also continuing her close involvement the paediatric and neonatal wards. Jeanette's husband, Chris, has been fitting high tension wires around the male ward/outpatients and paediatric ward. These cables hold screens that ensure patient privacy – a key part of a dignified care environment. Sarah by contrast has been sharing her 20+ years of auditing skills, whilst also helping in non-clinical areas.

## **VOLUNTEER NEWS: Glenis Haynes & Dennis Robinson**



My August visit to Bansang was unavoidably cancelled just 3 days before departure (due to sciatica). It was therefore a huge help to have my dear friends Dennis and Glenis step into the breach and head out at the very last minute on my behalf. By all accounts, they were kept incredibly busy whilst in Bansang (not least because of my rather extensive to-do list – which was already longer than usual!). Thank you so much.

## **VOLUNTEER NEWS: Mark Antrobus & Neil Colishaw help cement the BPEC development legacy**



It was a privilege to have Mark and Neil bring their BPEC expertise to Bansang. Their time was spent training staff and overseeing the latest developments in the second phase of the Legacy Award (granted to BHA in 2015). Their trip coincided with the opening of the conference/training centre, which afforded them the opportunity to bring in some health and safety as well as more general plumbing training. Mark and Neil went the extra mile to research and purchase new overalls, helmets, boots, goggles and lots of quality tools for our maintenance team.

As a reminder to you all, BPEC's involvement at the hospital has been incredibly extensive. They have replaced all the sewers, and created/upgraded a myriad of new washrooms throughout the hospital. These contributions are hugely important – helping to significantly reduce cross infection, and keep the site safe and clean during the torrential summer rains. The final phase of the 3-year award will concentrate on additional training for 4 of our 26-strong maintenance team at the Gambian Technical Training Institute.



## **VOLUNTEER NEWS: James & Richard visit Bansang**



We were again pleased to welcome back a couple of the hospitals most steadfast supporters; James Robinson & Richard Clements. James is particularly interested in micro biology, and has thus helped fund additional diagnosis equipment that will allow us to test for more illnesses and diseases (saving patients the daunting 400-mile trip to Banjul). It's these kinds of often unseen interventions that are helping to dramatically reduce mortality rates. The guys also took the opportunity to visit a local village to help raise awareness about donating blood. Although he wasn't intending to at the outset, Richard gave his blood whilst at the village in order to show to the concerned locals that there was nothing to fear. The whole blood donation outreach effort was undertaken on the venerable fleet of Honda C90 scooters (donated by Dennis Robinson and the Scooters in The Sahara team over the last few years).

## **VOLUNTEER NEWS: Joe Scarrow**



I met Joe for the first time when giving a presentation at his family home some 5 years ago. His father, Simon, has been a fantastic supporter of this charity – and as an international bestselling author, has also been kind enough to become a patron of this charity. It was therefore a pleasure to welcome eighteen year old Joe to Bansang, where he got stuck in with auditing the pharmaceuticals in the BHA funded pharmacy, as well as clearing rubble in order to make a badminton court for the staff. We wish Joe well with his army career.

## **OUR THANKS TO: Linda and Terry Nicholson (France)**



*"We had a successful 2015, raising 5,774€ by attending 4 Vide Greniers (empty the attic) events in the local communes. We also organised a 70's disco, along with carols and mince pies in a local restaurant (the Sense de La Terre in Piegut). The final 2015 fundraiser was our annual big event called the Marche De Noel in Abjat Sur Bandiat. We have raised a further 1253€ in 2016 through 4x Vide Greniers. We hope to be equally successful with future events. Of course we couldn't do any of this without the help of a few wonderful friends that help to organise the events, and of course all the many generous supporters who attend and donate. We might be in a very small and rural area of the Dordogne, but the locals and expats have very large pockets! Wishing everyone who has helped Association Aide Pour L'Hopital Bansang de Gambie a very happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2017"*

## **STAFF NEWS: Our CEO meets President Obama!**



It has been an exceptional year for Bansang in terms of global outreach. Perhaps most exceptional of all was our inspiring Administrator, Baboucarr Saine, meeting the equally exceptional, President Obama! He did so as part of the Mandela and Washington Fellowship Award – a multi week course designed to foster leadership skills and help nurture positive global change.

**Patrons: Mr Phil Sinkinson OBE, former British High Commissioner to The Gambia & Mr Simon Scarrow, international bestselling author**

## HOW YOU CAN HELP:

Please help us as we seek to raise **£12,000** for the final stage of funding for our staff farming project. This project has already demonstrated the wonderful synergy that exists between this hospital and the local communities. We want to take the project to the final point, where it becomes entirely self-sustaining. Please help us reach that goal;

To donate, **please** visit our dedicated donation page;

**[virginmoneygiving.com/fund/BHAFarming](http://virginmoneygiving.com/fund/BHAFarming)**

**Donate monthly:** 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:** 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 go and click the like button on our [Facebook page](#)

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



**FINAL THANKS:** A huge thank you to the following for your help throughout the year

*Brentford a Becket & Seaford Rotary Clubs, Holland Hydroponics, Duston United Reformed Church, Nether Heyford Church, Isham Church, Ringstead Baptist Church, Olive Daniels, Jon Walsh (Shambala), Woodford Baptist Church, Dr Jo & Peter Loughton, Margaret & John Webb, Kettering Medical Society, Holy Trinity Church Rothwell, Ruth Moore, Irthlingborough Ladies Group, Susan Walpole, Union of Catholic Mothers, Timson Family Trust, Students of De Ferrers Academy, Dr Bella Noel, Joyce Smith, Unicorn Auto, Pat & Tom Brennan, Mr & Mrs P Crouch, Philip Imison, Ann Jarvis*

(Please forgive me if I have missed anyone that has helped this year)

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