

Bansang Hospital Appeal

Transforming healthcare delivery in The Gambia since 1992



Our physiotherapy unit has undergone its first renovation in 70 years

A message from Anita:

I never cease to be amazed at the support generated each year for Bansang Hospital, from right around the world. I also find myself most humbled on every visit; watching as exceptionally resilient and passionate staff deliver exceptional care in such a harsh and challenging environment. To then be awarded the BEST public care provider in the whole of The Gambia is just wonderful!

This remarkable story continues to unfold from the same kitchen table on which it started. The same trustees that embarked on this long journey 26 years ago still support me today. Linda Nicholson from her home in France, our accountant Richard Harvey from across the way in our home village of Orlingbury – and our medical adviser, Dr Peter McCormick, from a few miles yonder!

We also still have many of the same standing order donors, whose donations each month (large and small) have been instrumental in allowing this charity to make long-term strategic plans. I am quite sure that without such steadfast support, we wouldn't have made such a transformative impact in Bansang, or at its associated 26 rural health clinics and catchment of 600,000 people.

Yet this isn't even the whole story. We also have an incredible collective of organisations and companies that are often providing ongoing support far beyond their original intentions.

It is impossible to name them all here; but we have a myriad of different Rotary clubs that continue to support us hugely. We also have individuals like Dr Theo and Mathilde Keller from Switzerland who continue to provide an unending amount of financial and in-kind support. There are also new companies assisting, such as Form Nutrition, along with companies like Scott Bader that have returned to help after 20 years away!

This incredible and diverse collective is enabling the staff of Bansang to turn ideas into tangible projects, many of which are helping the hospital to become enterprising, resilient, and self-sustaining. To everyone that refuses to turn their back; this newsletter is for you.

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

CHRISTMAS APPEAL: Patient Monitoring Equipment

£6,046 to provide Bansang with vital real time patient monitoring equipment for the first time in its history



The Need:

When I first arrived at the hospital back in 1992, there was just one 'operating theatre'. The room was scarcely deserving of the title given the almost complete lack of equipment, power to work the few machines, or even trained medical staff to undertake medical procedures.

Thanks to your help, the situation has seen dramatic improvements over the years. The existing theatre has been renovated, with two further theatres built – all now having vastly expanded suites of equipment. These improvements would be nothing without a dedicated team to use them. We are therefore extremely proud to have been awarded a score of 98% by the Gambia Public Procurement Authority (GPPA) and 93% by Ministry of health (Government) for our quality of care for the public including mothers in both normal and complicated births (the highest rating in The Gambia).

But for all the skill and dedication of our staff, they are still bearing witness to unnecessary morbidity and mortality that we absolutely know we can overcome. That is why we need you this Christmas...

The Project:

Our anaesthetists and surgeons currently have no means of monitoring the vital signs of patients under their care. Respiratory rate, blood oxygen saturation, ECG readings and blood pressure are either taken manually or unable to be taken at all. Although we've long recognised the need for monitoring equipment, the available tech has been utterly unsuited to the harsh Bansang environment

It is with these fruitless years of searching in mind that I am thrilled to confirm that Diamedica (a specialist award winning medical equipment manufacturer from Devon) have built a robust patient monitoring system designed for harsh environments. We already know they are the right company for the task; their Glostavent anaesthesia machines have been in use for 10 years now in Bansang.

With your support, we are hoping to purchase two of their patient monitoring machines for £5,560, as well as a rechargeable pulse oximeter for a further £486. With this equipment, our staff will be able to make the very best care decisions; and undoubtedly save lives.

Project Breakdown

£5,560 - 2x Diamedica Patient Monitoring Machines, including insurance and shipping
(For use in both operating theatres. Measuring blood oxygen/pressure, ECG, respiratory rate)
£486 - 1x rechargeable pulse oximeter
(primarily for use in Accident & Emergency)

Total cost: £6,046

How You Can Help

Donate Online; www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/PatientMonitoring
Or 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 is happy to make a PDF gift certificate detailing the project and dedicated to a person of your choosing

2018 CHRISTMAS APPEAL UPDATE: Homes for doctors



The derelict building prior to renovation into new homes for staff

For those that have supported this charity for many years, I'm sure you will be aware that staff retention and motivation is central to all our work. The justification for doing so seems obvious, yet Africa remains full of examples of costly healthcare projects that seemingly ignore this most important of all resources. Even so, it was overwhelming to see the response to our 2018 appeal. Within a month, you helped raise £25,000 for the renovation of a dilapidated block into three housing units for doctors, senior medical staff and their families.

With dependable contractors, and a dedicated hospital management team headed by CEO Baba Jeng, those renovations were completed rapidly and on budget. Two doctors and their families are now living in quality accommodation that befits the contribution they are making to the health and well-being of all Gambians.

FUNDRAISING: Scott Bader donate £25,000 for housing



Back in the very earliest days of this charity, Scott Bader, a Northamptonshire based specialist polymer company, funded the refurbishment of the hospital's operating theatre. More than 20 years later, we are proud to announce that they have awarded us a £25,000 grant to refurbish a second housing block for our doctors (in support of our staff retention and motivation strategy).

It feels wonderful to be partnered with Scott Bader once again; and to know that they still share the same desire and vision for a better world that I do. Special thanks to Scott Bader employee, David Harris, for informing us about the availability of the Scott Bader Commonwealth Fund Award. Thanks also to my son, Laurence, for working on the application whilst over in Tasmania.

DONORS: Family Feeding Fund sponsors visit Bansang



Form Nutrition CEO Damian Soong (centre), Director Natalia Bojanic & crew, with BHA accountant, Richard Harvey (second from right)

One of our most transformative initiatives over the years has been our 'family feeding fund'. Prior to its creation, families that had trekked for days to bring loved ones for treatment would often abscond before they'd been given the medical clearance to do so. They didn't do so out of choice but out of hunger-fuelled necessity. Our family feeding fund changed all of that. Families now had the food and financial support to allow them to wait for loved ones to be discharged – effectively stopping the damaging and often tragic readmissions cycle.

With all this in mind, it was a real thrill back in 2017 when Form Nutrition, a plant based natural food products business co-founded by Damian and Natalia, committed to supporting the fund into the future. As the business has grown, so have the quarterly donations. Thanks to Form Nutrition, the programme extends to male, female and maternity wards (alongside the children's ward).



Given all their support, it was a pleasure to host Damian, Natalia and the Form Nutrition film crew whilst they visited Bansang. It was also fascinating to watch as they used all sorts of camera and drone equipment to capture the various aspects of the project; from crop harvesting on land donated to us by local villages, all the way to the ultimate beneficiaries...the families it supports. In recognition of their support and growing contributions, we are now calling the project the 'Form Feeding Fund'. You can learn more at www.formnutrition.com

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

PROJECTS: New sewage tanker arrives in Bansang



Diarrhoea is the 8th largest cause of mortality worldwide. The illness is vectored into human populations through unsanitary conditions and a lack of access to safe drinking water. It is a problem that the Bansang community has been relatively powerless to effect owing to a persistent lack of waste management vehicles in the Upper River Division of the Gambia.

However, thanks to the incredibly generous support of our long-term donors, Nikki and Jim Livingstone, as well as other friends of the BHA, the appeal has now been able to invest in a Scania sewage tanker from the Netherlands. For the first time in 26 years, the hospitals septic tanks will be emptied regularly and reliably.

The vehicle will be commercially administered by our innovative Bansang Hospital Voluntary Staff Association, who have already shown great skill in putting our tractors to good use in the wider community. Funds raised from the hire of the tanker will be put into future projects and medical supplies at the hospital.

VOLUNTEERS: Australia to Bansang, via London



Aidan & staff with HA analyser donated by Dr Jo & Peter Loughton

We've had many medical elective volunteers over the years. But few have travelled as light (just 5kg of hand luggage), or as far as Australian, Aidan Tan. He is presently spending 4 weeks volunteering in Bansang. We wish him all the best with his stay and hope he takes our story to New South Wales and beyond! For anyone that is looking to volunteer, there are all sorts of ways you can help. Please do get in touch to find out more.

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MEDICAL: CPAP child therapy improves and expands



Jeanette Payne giving a training session on CPAP therapy

The loss of a child is one of the most traumatic events any human being can endure. It is also a form of tragedy overwhelmingly shouldered by the world's poor. Nearly half of all under 5 deaths per year (2.5 million) are from pneumonia, premature births, malaria and sepsis. These are eminently treatable conditions in developed nations, but life threatening in places like Bansang. We struggled for years to bring an end to this reality; often failing due to issues as simple as a lack of supply of oxygen cylinders.



Tim & Laurie Marks alongside Diamedica CEO Robert Neighbour

It again took the ingenuity of Robert Neighbour and his company, Diamedica, to finally provide Bansang with a low cost and sustainable alternative. Their £1,700 'Continuous Positive Airway Pressure' (CPAP) therapy system is designed to help neonates and young children to breath. Introduced in January 2018 by NHS neonatal nurse, Jeanette Payne, our 3 CPAP machines have already made a truly astounding difference in Bansang. One of these machines was donated by Safe Anaesthesia Worldwide to whom we are very grateful. To find out more about CPAP therapy, visit www.diamedica.co.uk

PATRONS: Congratulations on your marriage, Simon!

On behalf of the staff in Bansang, I'd like to congratulate our patron, Simon Scarrow, on his marriage to Louise. We send you our best wishes as you begin this wonderful new chapter together. I'd also like to thank you for your unwavering support to this appeal over the years. You've truly been the difference on so many occasions.

REPORTS: BHSa self-sustaining projects are thriving



We've always been acutely aware of the chequered history of aid intervention in Africa. The idea of 26 years of blood, sweat and tears being washed away by an unforeseen event is a fear that has guided development decisions for many years now. Essentially, everything we do is channelled through the simple prism of 'can it be sustained without our continued intervention'.

Giving ourselves a development challenge like this (at a primary healthcare facility!) has certainly been a test. But it has also helped us to sow seeds that are now truly blossoming. A perfect example is the Bansang Hospital Staff Association (BHSa). Created to bring together local communities and Bansang's health workers, the BHSa has helped foster understanding, positive working relationships and a true sense of shared ownership between all Bansang Hospital stakeholders.



Since its inception, local village chiefs have given their overwhelming support to the BHSa; donating extensive areas of farm land in the vicinity of the hospital as well as in Senegal. These parcels of land produce cous, maize and groundnuts; providing harvests that sustain entire villages as well as our own patient feeding programme and tapalapa bread baking business (the produce of which is baked on site in clay ovens built by the BHSa)

As these projects expand, so do the BHSa's ambitions. Their next venture will be an on-site shop selling drinks, food and rice. With its success will come extra revenue that will allow us to fund more hospital services locally. I'm so proud of everyone that is part of the BHSa.

VOLUNTEERS: Dr Jo brings new ideas to Bansang



Dr Jo first heard about Bansang Hospital when Dr Peter McCormick and I gave a talk at the Kettering General Hospital post graduate centre in 1997. The stories she heard that day remained with her until, 21 years later, she too made the long journey to Bansang.

Her main objective on the trip was to learn how she could best support the hospital in the future. To that end, she went trekking with the outreach team where she discovered the urgent need for a haematocrit analyser (HA). The analyser will be used primarily in antenatal care, helping our outreach teams to make effective on-site care assessments; saving mothers the often-distressing trek to hospital for those same tests. Dr Jo is presently in the UK, working on protocols for making better abdominal pain history assessments. Given her energy and determination, I am sure Dr Jo will prove to be a positive and inspiring force in Bansang.

PROJECTS: Physiotherapy renovations are complete



Renovation work has been completed on the dilapidated physiotherapy department that had remained largely untouched since 1938. The building was re-configured, allowing patients to access it from all wards and departments via a covered walk way. Our special thanks to the Rotary Clubs of Brentwood a Becket and Seaford, along with Nether Heyford, Isham, Raunds and Woodford Baptist churches, Duston United Reformed Church, and the myriad of individuals who donated money in support of this project. Once on the periphery, our physio department is now at the absolute core of what we do in Bansang; helping ensure that our patients can adapt and overcome once debilitating ailments.

ADVOCACY: Anita joins Prince Charles for his 70th!



His Excellency, Adama Barrow, President of The Republic of The Gambia, extended an invitation to Anita to attend a Gala dinner in honour of Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall. This visit coincided with The Gambia's readmission to the Commonwealth after a peaceful transition to democracy

During his speech, the Prince reflected on photos of The Gambia shown to him by his father when he was seven. He then spoke at length about the collective goodwill that exists between the nations of the Commonwealth; and the importance of those ties as we all seek to address the environmental issues that have been at the heart of his own advocacy efforts for many decades now. It was a lovely evening, and certainly a very memorable way to share the 70th birthday of a Prince!

FRENCH CONNECTION: Linda & Terry Nicholson retire



After 26 years of long and loyal support, my dear friends and charity partners are retiring. Linda and Terry have been responsible for raising funds for every department, working tirelessly organising annual garden parties, car boots, Halloween events, carol singing and the annual Christmas market. They have achieved all this whilst making a new home for themselves and their family in the Dordogne region of France. We thank them for their wonderful and selfless contributions over the years.

ADVOCACY: British High Commissioner visits Bansang



Despite her busy schedule, British High Commissioner Sharon Wardle kept a promise given to me in 2017 and made the 400-mile round trip to visit the hospital. She follows in the footsteps of former British Ambassador and friend of the BHA, Colin Crorkin OBE, as well as Phil Sinkinson OBE, the former British High Commissioner to the Gambia and now long-term friend and patron of this charity. As is so often the case, her arrival was met with warmth and love from staff and community alike.

Given our exchanges via email, I already knew Sharon would embrace the hospital and really engage with the staff on her visit. But what I've really appreciated has been her objectivity and perspective (evident in the support given by many British diplomats over the years). To have someone with Sharon's experience reflecting upon the exceptional camaraderie at the hospital is a real vindication of what we've tried to achieve.

DONORS: Rotary Clubs, Brentwood-a-Becket & Seaford

The Rotary Club of Brentwood a Becket has been one of our most steadfast supporters over the years. Alongside Seaford, they've helped renovate the pharmacy, physio department, conference and training centre, admin office, two operating theatres, the conference/training centre...as well as rewiring throughout the hospital! The latest plan is to attempt to secure £15,000 of funding for the renovation of the male surgical and medical wards, along with the attached toilet/shower block. Their hope is that they can reach out to other clubs at a Rotary district conference in order to secure the funding.

It is most unusual for any Rotary club to support year on year in this way, and we cannot emphasise enough just how truly grateful we are for their continued support. There is barely a part of Bansang untouched by their expression of shared humanity. We therefore wish Rotary National and Rotary District 1240 committee member Ray Ball all the very best as he and fellow club members try to secure this funding on behalf of the Rotary Club of Brentwood-a-Becket.

CHRISTMAS APPEAL: Patient Monitoring Equipment

~ HOW YOU CAN HELP ~



With your support, we are hoping to purchase two Diamedica manufactured patient monitoring machines for £5,560, as well as a rechargeable pulse oximeter for £486. This equipment will transform the way we monitor patients at the most vulnerable points in their care. It's a Christmas gift that will make an immediate and lasting impact. To support this campaign, please visit;

www.virginmoneygiving.com/fund/PatientMonitoring

You can also support our work in many other ways;

- Donate monthly:** Monthly donors are the lifeblood of this charity. The financial assurance they offer helps us make long-term strategic plans. If you would like to contribute in this way, please do get in touch
- Fundraise for us:** Running a marathon? Swimming across Scotland? Scootering across the Sahara? Whatever the idea, we'd love to support you!
- Contact us:** Anita Smith, MBE MRG. Bansang Hospital Appeal, 4 The Leys, Orlingbury, NN14 1JE
anitasmith@bansanghospitalappeal.org // 07783 551945
- 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](#)
- Follow us on Instagram:** We've just opened an Instagram account, and will be posting pictures to it regularly. If you'd like to see our pictures, please follow us [follow us here](#) (and share with your friends and family)
- Raise awareness:** If you work or socialise in a place that would be happy to highlight this charity, please get in touch. We have lots of information leaflets and fundraising boxes that you can take with you. They may just help us reach someone that becomes the difference in future years.

GIFT AID NOTICE

Many of our regular donors have signed enduring Gift Aid Declarations which allow us to boost all their future donations by 25p of Gift Aid for every pound that they donate. In order to sign a valid enduring Gift Aid Declaration the donor must be a UK tax payer who has paid or will pay an amount of tax (income tax and/or capital gains tax) for each tax year that is at least equal to the amount of Gift Aid that is claimed on all their charitable donations in that tax year. **It is important that donors let us know as soon as possible if their circumstances change so that they no longer pay sufficient UK tax on their income and/or capital gains to cover the Gift Aid claims and they, therefore, need to cancel their Gift Aid Declaration.** Can donors also let us know if they change their name or home address so that we can update our Gift Aid records. Thank you to all our fantastic donors for their continued support.



Thanks to your help, more mothers are going home with smiles on their faces, and babies in their arms



Cooking up a broth in the hospital kitchens



Penny for your thoughts



Children's ward in-charge, Mariama Jawneh, monitors the health of twins that were beneficiaries of the Form Feeding Fund.



Our efforts have delivered improvements right across the hospital. Our pathology laboratory captured here by photographer Jake Baggeley



Surgical teams are the best equipped they've ever been



Mariama on the children's ward, with one of her charges looking on



You don't have to search for long to find big smiles in Bansang

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