

Bansang Hospital Appeal

Transforming healthcare delivery in The Gambia since 1992



Welcome to Bansang Hospital, landscaped gardens, mango trees, hedgerows, shrubs and green grass.

Well done Environmental Team

A message from Anita

At the time of this newsletter going to print shamefully only 17% of the population in Africa will have been vaccinated against Coronavirus by the end of 2021. In my view no one is safe until everyone has been vaccinated, this is a shockingly sad statistic. My last visit came to an end in February 2020, at this point I had no knowledge of what was about to unfold around the world, a tsunami of utter devastation and loss of so many lives. The staff in Bansang remain ever vigilant to protect everyone that works and enters through the gates of this unique establishment. There is no room for complacency when dealing with sick patients and where resources are severely limited to that of the Western World.

My two-year enforced absence has been made so much easier with almost weekly updates via WhatsApp and Zoom meetings, subject to having a steady internet link in Bansang. It is however a far cry from years gone by when I would walk for 30 minutes, torch in hand on a potholed dirt road in the pitch darkness, before joining the queue and entering an oppressively hot mosquito infested booth to call home.

I have had the time to reflect on the extraordinary volunteers that span every conceivable profession over the past 29 years. Almost without exception, they leave

Bansang humbled and galvanised to do more for the hospital. The years of focusing on motivation and retention of staff that have helped light a fire of collective ideas helping to bring a great sense of purpose to everyone working in the hospital. There is much to celebrate in Bansang, but health care doesn't stand still. To think that over half a million people could have lost their health facility in 1996 due to the decaying facilities, depletion, and isolation.

Every person that has donated their time and money to Bansang Hospital Appeal has helped to transform the hospital into a dynamic, vibrant and a happy place to work.

Together we have encouraged staff to be resourceful and resilient, they have turned ideas into enterprising projects for the greater good of the patients, you have inspired and changed lives for that I say a herculean THANK YOU.



Anita Smith MBE MRG

Founder & Director, Bansang Hospital Appeal

Christmas Appeal 2021

Urgent need to lower the temperature



Maternity Ward

Bansang hospital is the main referral hospital for 55 Health Clinics in both Central and Upper River Regions of the country, this includes two in neighbouring Senegal. Imagine that you are a new mother in recovery, you will be taken to the ward where you will suffer the most intolerable temperatures that can exceed 50° Celsius; the ideal temperature is less than half that at 22° Celsius.

I can only describe the existing Maternity Ward as a feeling of being inside a giant oven. The Aluzinc roof is a conductor of heat and the noise is deafening when the tropical rains hammer down on the roof. High humidity in the ward can also be a breeding ground for very nasty infections. It is not the picture we paint in our minds when we envisage the blissful moments of a mother bonding with her newborn baby.

We know from the success of our past projects that plaster ceilings greatly reduce the room temperature by trapping the hot air within the roof space. To achieve this we need to cover 200 square metres with a plaster ceiling, skilfully made by hand by specialist craftsmen.

Mothers will also have the benefit of air-conditioning that we will supply, new aluminium windows, LED lighting and fans. It will create a calmer and a more relaxing environment allowing mothers to recover and bond with their babies.

We need your help to raise the funds to help transform this ward and save mothers from the existing intolerable conditions.

Total cost to update the Maternity Ward: £6,640.00

Feed a staff members family at Christmas



First delivery of rice for the staff in March 2020

No greater gift could you give a family than a 25kg sack of rice that will feed a family for one to two weeks.

A Nurse Attendant's gross weekly wage of £12 just covers the cost of a 25kg sack of rice!

Please help us to recognise and give thanks to the 497 remarkable members of staff who have worked tirelessly and courageously throughout the pandemic. Their priority is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all their patients, always going over and above the call of duty.

Climate change has been knocking at the door of Sub-Saharan Africa for many years now, greater distances must be covered for cattle to graze, the second year running the crops have failed and have had to be replanted. Substantial price increases across the board on all food items and all commodities.

As a result of the magnanimous support from Doctor Theo and Mathilde Keller from Switzerland we were able to provide sacks of rice for every member of staff when lockdown measures were introduced throughout the country in March 2020. As a result of everyone's generosity my phone was blocked with messages of heartfelt thanks from the staff, their profound gratitude and relief that people who live so far away should care so much.

Please help us to make the start of 2022 another year to be remembered.

Total cost to supply a sack of rice to all Staff: £5,964.00

The ways you can support these Appeals to raise the sum of £12,604.00

Donate Online; <https://www.gofundme.com/f/christmas-appeal-urgent-repairs-to-maternity-ward>

Or by cheque made payable to; Bansang Hospital Appeal

Send to; Anita Smith MBE, MRG. 4 The Leys, Orlingbury, Kettering, Northamptonshire. NN14 1JE

We Reached our 2020 Christmas Appeal Target with your extraordinary generosity



Renovated from top to bottom, two 2 bedroom homes for newly recruited Gambian Doctors

Our annual appeal last year was to renovate four homes for doctors, this was a tall order given the constraints of a worldwide pandemic, supply shortages and spiralling costs! Incredibly we managed to get all four homes renovated from top to bottom, on time and on budget.

Incredible, the hospital now attracts Gambian doctors and senior staff who would never have given a second thought about leaving the comfort of their homes, their families and the amenities that are available on the coast to work in such a challenging environment. Being able to offer a fully furnished home was vital, with the prospect of discovering what an inspiring place Bansang is to work.

The first home to be occupied is "Livingstone House" named in honour of long-time very generous sponsors Nicola and Jim Livingstone and Family (visit [their business hollandhorticulture.co.uk](https://theirbusiness.hollandhorticulture.co.uk)) The link to this remarkable family came about after Jim and other totally mad men rode Honda C90 Scooters from the UK to Bansang under the leadership of the indomitable Dennis Robinson. Livingstone House is now home to the hospital's first "Infection Control Officer" and his family.

Thank you to our Patron Simon Scarrow, the International Bestselling author, the last fifteen of Simon's novels have been Sunday Times bestsellers. Special editions of Simon's latest book "The Emperor's Exile" were auctioned with all proceeds going to the hospital. To honour the generosity of those who bid, from around the world, the house will be officially opened and named "Cato's Cottage" after one of the main characters in Simon's book. Visit Simon at simonscarrow.co.uk

Dr Amadou Jallow is now able to call Cato's Cottage HOME. In a letter to Simon he wished to convey his

heartfelt thanks. "The house is very comfortable with all the main appliances new and the utilities second to none. This has really helped me settle down quickly and has given me a good mind-set to perform my duties properly. This will go a long way in supporting the hospital, the people living in this region and the country at large as doctors will be motivated to come and serve their people. You and your team are creating an immense positive impact in the health of people in this region".



PNO Mr Kanyi and Administrator Mr Badgie

The third house to be renovated is now occupied by Dr Mamatumaneh Bah who has been assigned as the Medical Officer to the Surgical Department.

We are now awaiting for the imminent announcement from the Minister of Health as to the doctor who will be taking up residence in the last of the four homes that have been renovated thanks to YOU.

Very special thanks to our long-term supporters Rotary Clubs of Brentwood a Becket and Seaford and the many contributions made by my family, friends, and long-term supporters. You are the reason we were able to turn this dream into reality and in the long term it will have an impact on the health care of all patients.

Form Nutrition

Co-Directors Damian Soong and Natalia Bojanic first visited Bansang Hospital in 2018. They witnessed first-hand the impact that their donations had made to the most vulnerable patients that often needed long term care such as pneumonia, burns, premature babies, malnutrition, surgical cases and fractures to name but a few.



In Charge Mariama handing over baby formula and funds



Orphaned triplets will benefit from FFF

This is one of the most transformative initiatives, Form Feeding Fund (FFF) is now reaching out to more people who felt utter hopelessness at their situation to one of reassurance and overwhelming relief. No relative absconds with a patient before being discharged, they are allocated a daily amount of money to purchase freshly cooked food from the sellers outside the hospital gates.

Milk formula is provided for orphaned babies and mothers who are unable to feed their babies, prescriptions are paid for if they need to purchase drugs that are not available in the hospital and living expenses when a patient needs to be transferred to the Teaching Hospital in Banjul whilst investigations are carried out, this is a 400 mile round journey.

Delays in getting to hospital from the rural areas is one of the leading causes of death for neonatal surgical patients. The word of FFF will encourage people to make those exhausting long journeys, often on horse cart with their loved ones in the knowledge that they will receive support.

You can learn more about this amazing company by visiting www.formnutrition.com

Magnificent 80 Bed Children's Unit

Magnificent it really is..... after a total refurbishment costing £60,000 to include an additional Premature baby unit, a dedicated Intensive Care area, Isolation bay for burns patients and a dressings room, all departments are now fully functional.



This was achieved entirely due to your support

A conducive and safe environment for the most vulnerable babies and children, they all receive the love and the care from the dedicated team under the supervision of Mariama Jowneh.

I will be seeing the ward in January for the very first time since my enforced absence due to Covid travel restrictions. I will take copious photos of the ward in action and share these with you on my return.

It is you, our loyal friends of the BHA that have made it possible to renovate this huge and magnificent Children's Unit.

To help with the problems faced with Covid-19 an Infection Control Officer has been employed, he now occupies one of the newly renovated homes that were sponsored by our long term supporters "The Livingstone Family"

Sponsorship

A huge thank you to everyone who has a Direct Debit and has been helping to support the wages of the 47 staff that are sponsored through the BHA. Every member of staff regardless of position is respected and is vitally important to the smooth running of the hospital. It is the staff that make the hospital the very special place it is today.



Nurse Sainbou and patient

Resources may not be plentiful but the staff use their initiative, they are inventive, hardworking and resourceful.

They care for their patients and have taken ownership of their hospital. Many taking on additional voluntary roles

to reinforce care for ALL and to ensure that the accolade they have received as “The Best Hospital for Care and Services in The Gambia” is upheld.

For those of you that sponsor staff I hope to be visiting in January and you will once again receive an updated short video recording from your sponsored staff member.

Aid2Gambia Supply Hospital Beds

Aid2Gambia is a Nottingham based charity who collect predominantly medical and educational equipment that is no longer needed in the UK. I received a call to say that if we could fund a 40-foot container they would provide 36 nearly new hospital beds and mattresses.



UK to Bansang arrives with the beds & mattresses

This is the 55th container that we have sent out to the hospital. It is back breaking work that requires a lot of volunteers on hand to assist when loading. The current economic situation has almost doubled the cost of shipping a 40 foot container directly to the hospital to an eye watering £4,000.00.

A Graduate of Global Leadership School

If ever there was a young man who showed leadership skills and is motivated to inspire others, then one had to look no further than a member of the Bansang Hospital staff, Tata Jobe.



Tata Jobe

He commenced work in 2017 as an Ophthalmic Technician and In 2021 Tata was selected to represent his country in the “International Global Leadership School Mentorship Programme for Business Growth, Leadership Development and Purposeful Living

Towards National Significance and Global Relevance School Conference”.

Tata has a passion that is rare, striving to make changes and to encourage others to follow. BHA was happy to contribute towards the cost of the course. Tata was awarded the ‘Best Video Project and the Most Exciting Hero’ Just watch this space, this young man is going far.

Virtual Walk Around The World

Mr Bhalla and his super fit friends did a virtual walk around the world. Stopping off at Bansang Hospital to donate £500 allowing the hospital to purchase 65 Acacia trees that have been planted, staked and protected from the goats/donkeys by the hospital’s environmental team. The trees stretch from outside the perimeter wall of the hospital to the edge of the town.



Some of the Acacia trees



Lawnmower in action

The Acacia tree is drought tolerant and in years to come will provide oxygen, improving air quality, store carbon, help to stabilise the soil and support wildlife. Local ladies will also be very happy as they will be able to sit under the trees and sell their garden produce, the trees will also provide essential shade to the Children’s Unit.

The grounds of the hospital are slowly being transformed, providing an environment that will assist in a patient’s recovery. A lawn mower to keep the tough Bhamus grass in trim was purchased in the Gambia and the cuttings will be fed to the hospital’s two donkeys that manage the hospital refuse cart. .

Farming Project

Climate change is taking a hold on the farming activities that are vital for the hospital patient feeding program. Seven village communities generously donated land to the hospital, including land over the border in Senegal. This is their way of the village people saying thank you for the care and services provided by the hospital.

The villagers sow the seed, thin the crop and harvest the crop..... BY HAND! It was disastrous, after all the back breaking effort to sow the seeds, the rains stopped and the couscous shrivelled under the unrelenting scorching sun. The task of re-sowing the seed later in the season meant only one thing, a reduced harvest, this was almost a mirror image of the previous year’s erratic rainfall. This has compounded what is already an unbearably hard life for nearly 96% of the population that the hospital serves who are subsistence farmers.

Luigi's Complex

The first port of call for all our volunteers on arrival in The Gambia is "Luigi's Complex". Dear friends Julie and Luigi are the perfect hosts that cater for their every need.



Luigi and Julie

This introduction to The Gambia is most welcome before the long onward journey to Bansang the following day. Not only are they perfect hosts they have been invaluable to the hospital with their rich source of local contacts and suppliers over the years. It is essential that, whenever possible, the BHA and the hospital support the local economy

Visit Luigi's; www.luigis.gm

No One Forgets Bansang

An indelible mark was left on Richard Clements and Dr James Robinsons hearts after they visited Bansang Hospital in 2015.

Shortly after arriving at the hospital we were told of a terrible bush fire that had destroyed an entire village. The images of children sifting through the ash for a few burnt groundnuts and the resilience of the villagers as they set about making mud blocks and collecting grasses to re-build their homes.



Richard and James with villagers after the fire

We pooled our money, it was a modest amount, and handed it over to the chief of the village, who replied, "this is too much". We were left speechless as this was such a small token when so many families had lost everything.

Richard now runs a career and interview coaching business, clearcutselection.com and he has committed to giving a percentage of his company's earnings to BHA, for this we are truly grateful.

Thank you, Richard, hope to see you and James back in Bansang in the not too distant future.

Finally and Most Importantly

A ship does not run smoothly without a great Captain at the helm, for that I am truly grateful to CEO Baba Jeng and his Magnificent Crew.

In the photo below from left to right; Procurement Officer Alhagie Nyang, CEO Baba Jeng, Principal Accountant Isatou Ndimballan, Administrator Burama Badjie and Principal Nursing Officer Sheriffo Kanyi



The Magnificent Management Team

I have no words that effectively describe this small dynamic team who enable the smooth running of the hospital that serves 600,000 people. I marvel at their commitment and their tenacity that I have not witnessed anywhere else.

There are so many challenges that this remarkable management team face. The daily outages of electricity that deem it necessary for them to meet at the hospital and work long into the night when the power is on. However, they still find the time to spend with staff encouraging them to look at ways that they too can support their hospital especially through the "Voluntary Staff Association".

Most importantly, all the staff regardless of position are treated equally and with respect, this is what makes Bansang Hospital stand out, an ever-growing Family with roots firmly planted for generations to come.

Join the BHA Mail List

If you currently receive this Newsletter through the post and would like to receive it via email together with periodic updates on my work in Bansang. Then please visit my website, click on Join Us and signup;

<https://bansanghospitalappeal.org>

The following photos speak for themselves



Final stage plaster ceiling in refurbished Children's ward



Mariama caring for baby in the new Neonatal Unit



Motorbike village ambulance arriving at BH



Newborn Triplets cared for in Premature Baby unit



One of two donkeys used for hospital waste collections



We are not going to smile!!



Senior children's nurse Mariama, taking a break



Relatives relax in the cool of the Bantaba

You can support the Bansang Hospital Appeal in so many ways

- ONE OFF DONATION:** <https://www.gofundme.com/f/christmas-appeal-urgent-repairs-to-maternity-ward>
or send a cheque made payable to: Bansang Hospital Appeal (address on Gift Aid form)
- DONATE MONTHLY:** Monthly donors are the lifeblood of this charity. The financial assurance they offer helps us make long-term strategic plans. If you are able to contribute in this way, please get in touch anitasmith@bansanghospitalappeal.org
or download the Standing Order form and Gift Aid form from the BHA website <https://bansanghospitalappeal.org/contribute-donate/>
- FUNDRAISE:** Perhaps a coffee morning or a garage sale or a jumble sale, whatever the idea, we'd love to support you!
anitasmith@bansanghospitalappeal.org
- LIKE 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 click the like button on our Facebook page.
<https://www.facebook.com/BansangHospitalAppeal>
- FOLLOW ON INSTA:** 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 and possibly share with your friends and family.
<https://www.instagram.com/bansanghospitalappeal>
- RAISE AWARENESS:** If you work or socialise in a place that would be happy to highlight this charity, please get in touch. This may just help us reach someone that becomes the difference in future years. I am always very happy to arrange a visit and give a Power Point presentation of my work at Bansang over the last 30 years.
anitasmith@bansanghospitalappeal.org
- CONTACT US:** Anita Smith, MBE MRG. Bansang Hospital Appeal,
4 The Leys, Orlingbury, Kettering, Northamptonshire. NN14 1JE
anitasmith@bansanghospitalappeal.org // 07783 551945
- GIFT AID:** Please help us to maximise your gift by ticking the Gift Aid box whilst donating on-line or by completing a Gift Aid form at the end of this Newsletter.

I'm sure many of you will have heard of Gift Aid. It's a UK government scheme that allows our appeal to claim an additional 25 pence for every £1 you donate. To collect Gift Aid on your behalf, we need to ensure the following;

- ✓ *You are a UK taxpayer who has paid or will pay an amount of tax (income and/or capital gains tax) for each tax year that is at least equal to the Gift Aid claimed on your charitable donations in that year.*
- ✓ *You have completed, signed and returned an enduring Gift Aid declaration form allowing us to reclaim Gift Aid on your behalf (the Gift Aid form can be found on the last page of this newsletter).*

If you are a regular donor who has not signed a Gift Aid Declaration, please consider doing so as this will maximise your donations. If you have already completed a Gift Aid form, then we also need your help to ensure your declaration is valid and our records are accurate. If any of the following applies to you, please get in touch;

- ✓ *Your name or home address has changed.*
- ✓ *Your circumstances have changed, and you are no longer paying sufficient UK tax on your income and/or capital gains to cover all Gift Aid claims.*



Thank you for your continued support and for helping us to maximise your donations with Gift Aid, it really does makes a considerable difference.

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



Gift Aid Declaration - Bansang Hospital Appeal

Boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate

Donating through Gift Aid means charities and community amateur sports clubs (CASCs) can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you give. It will not cost you any extra. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

In order to Gift Aid your donations to Bansang Hospital Appeal you must tick the box below;

☐ Please treat all donations I make or have made to Bansang Hospital Appeal for the past 4 years as Gift Aid donations until further notice.

I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year then it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

My details: *(please note we can only accept your home address)*

Title _____ First name or initial(s) _____ Surname _____

Home Address _____

_____ Post Code _____

Email *(optional)* _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Join us:

Would you like to be kept informed via email about our latest news and campaign updates?

Yes please ☐

No thank you ☐

Please notify Bansang Hospital Appeal if you:

- Want to cancel this declaration
- Change your name or home address
- No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Please return the completed form to:

Anita Smith, 4 The Leys, Orlingbury, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN14 1JE

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