

ARDINGLY OLD JESHWANG ASSOCIATION: A.O.J.A

Chairman's Annual Report 2015-2016

The Trustees are pleased to present their report for the year ended 30th June 2016

AOJA was formed in 1993. Its aim is to provide affordable healthcare to the community of Old Jeshwang, an urban village of some 20,000 people, in The Gambia. To this end, in 2000, we built a modern health centre, which we now staff. Although unable to support it financially the Gambian government accepts our facility as an integral part of its health care system and it is now the permanent home of the Area Public Health Officer.

The Charity registration number is 1024627 and is governed by its Constitution dated 6th August 1993.

Registered Office: Avins Bridge Cottage, College Rd, Ardingly, West Sussex, RH17 6SH

The officers are :

Mr Stephen Doerr. : Chairman
Mrs Peggy Guggenheim. : Treasurer
Mrs Barbara Monk. : Assist Treasurer.

The trustees are the above and in addition : Mr Lynn Wilson : Vice Chairman/secretary
Mr David Ogilvie

The charity's bankers are Barclays and all three officers are signatories.

Finance

The detailed results of the year are set out in the annexed Receipts and Payments Account. The cash funds, without charge, remaining at the end of the year, of £19,324 reflect a busy financial year with capital spending on a new generator and essential additional office space. Although this planned capital investment has taken place against a backdrop of fluctuating exchange rates we have been able to maintain our 'six month running cost fund' in line with good financial governance, and necessary to our commitment to support the monthly salaries of our 45 staff.

As part of our sustainability programme, the increased income from the Dental Surgery and Pathology Lab is now coming on stream, and in the following year we expect to initiate our programme of transferring some financial support from 'salaries' to 'renewal and development'.

Sponsorship

The sponsorship scheme continues to be our main source of regular income with our sponsor pool constant at about 130 supporters, giving a monthly income of around £2000, which underpins the running costs of the Health Centre including salaries and overheads.

Inevitably we lose some of our 'more elderly' long standing supporters but their places are always filled by new sponsors who are often impressed by the directness of our funding chain to the Gambia, which allows little scope for loss or wastage.

The thoughtful loyalty of our individual sponsors, who periodically increase their level of subscription, has enabled us to establish a regular doctors presence every morning for child welfare. In addition income from increased clinic activity continues to enable the Health Centres management committee to fund its own staffing demands and decisions. Separate fund raising in the UK continues to support new initiatives and essential refurbishment. These events have included representation at local country fairs, charity dinners, BBQs, concerts talks to community groups and small family initiatives. We are particularly indebted to our group of corporate sponsors; St. Peters Church Ardingly, St. Nicholas Church Brighton, Worth School, Bidborough Primary School and Redcoat Express Gatwick.

Clinic Activities

The activities of the health centre continue to grow, with the infant welfare clinics thriving. Deliveries at the clinic continue at around 30 per month which could be the expected level for our catchment area. There were over 1700 Ante Natal visits during the year with approximately two-thirds of the women attending delivering their babies at the health centre. The general out-patient attendance, an important part of the clinics work, continues to increase and is now well above 1500 patients per month (1300 last year), as we maintain our high standards of care and friendly atmosphere. The clinic funds a doctor to be on site each morning, focusing on the 'under – fives' and we are now looking to increase this provision with a G.P. presence in the afternoons.

This year we were pleased to see the graduation of one of our own assistant midwives which will further strengthen our well experienced midwifery team.

The 'feeding' programme, initiated to meet any acute nutritional needs, continues, as does the anti-malaria 'bed net' project with the distribution of pre-impregnated nets.

As part of a Global Health Fund initiative the Health Centre continues to be a counselling and testing centre for HIV/AIDS.

After its first year our dental surgery is now well established with the work of our dentist and his technician proving very popular! The team have also been joined by an assistant whom they wish to send to Senegal for training, when funding permits.

The ambulance continues to provide key transport for patients from home to Health Centre and emergency transport to hospital. With its distinctive Old Jeshwang logo it is still doing much to make the services of the Health Centre known more widely.

We continue to work closely with the Area Public Health Officer based on our site. This year we have been able to further support her work by providing a new room for vaccinations, which will also take some pressure away from the main clinic area.

Pathology Lab

The lab now offers 25 different tests. The enthusiastic team of 9 staff are well led and they have set up their own training course for path lab assistants.

An amazingly well motivated team who deserve to have some of their equipment updated and added to! The expansion of our services have led to over 15,000 tests being carried out in the past year.

The immunisation programme completed over 3,000 for polio, nearly 1000 for measles and 577 for yellow fever! Our disease surveillance unit has also been at the frontline of reducing the incidence of Malaria with its insecticide nets, education programmes and prompt diagnosis and treatment.

Pharmacy

The revolving drug fund has kept us well stocked but the system still requires monitoring in terms of suppliers and rate of consumption. Additional deliveries from the UK and other sources have helped to maintain stocks of essential items but with provision in the Gambia continuing to be uncertain our health centre can often be the only source, for the general public, of some key drugs.

Education

The association continues to facilitate educational needs as they arise within the health centre with grants for staff training in specialist areas such as midwifery and accountancy. Individual children also continue to be supported at the primary and secondary level with its network of sponsors.

Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS)

The elective programme continues to be available with Brighton and Sussex Medical School and involving the Medical Research Council (MRC) in Fajara. Students stay at the MRC for 6 weeks, spending one day a week at our Health Centre, usually a Monday or Tuesday the busiest days, and the remainder of the week at the MRC. Generally two students from BSMS go out at a time, when they are able to visit other local medical facilities apart from helping with our Ante-natal and Infant Welfare Clinics. Provision also remains to support students studying for the M.Sc. in Global Health.

Research

With the increasing number of births at the health centre we continue to audit the birth outcomes. This study will examine the effect of maternal anaemia during pregnancy on the well-being of the mother and baby at delivery. It will also indicate what can be achieved in The Gambia in a health centre with facilities such as those available at Old Jeshwang. The first results of this study are expected in 2017.

A study of cardiovascular risk factors in Gambian adults (in conjunction with the MRC) is also planned.

Buildings and Plant

Infrastructure developments have been a priority this year culminating with a new 17kw generator being installed in a completely refurbished cage. It is fully automatic and can cut in several times a day to cover for the regular power outages which are a feature of Gambian life. Our previous, second-hand, generator had done noble service but was estimated to be at least 40 years old and after several serious ailments was finally condemned.

A purpose-built doctor's surgery had also been long overdue and this has just been completed within the main clinic building, making it easier to attract and retain a doctor's presence. Having been given approval by the Gambian Health Authority to be part of the embryonic blood transfusion service, blood collection started last year. The collection and storing of blood has been a long held aspiration of the Association and our Centre is one of a limited number of high quality facilities in the country able to provide this life saving service. To better facilitate this we have redesigned part of the Bantaba meeting place where the blood donation takes place, attracting much local support.

A much needed upgrade to the Path. Lab. water supply was also completed.

The buildings generally remain in good condition and decorative order with only the external toilets requiring serious re-ordering.

Future development.

Throughout the year individuals and groups have continued to visit our clinic to give specialist support in midwifery, primary health care, medical research projects and building maintenance. The retention of high standards in all these areas remains a priority and continues to be commented upon by both visitors and new patients to the centre.

The increased income from the Dentist and expanded Path Lab is now on - stream giving the centre some real financial independence. Although this is not part of the AOJA accounts, OJHC expect that this is likely to require additional monitoring on their part, to maintain a high level of transparency.

Old Jeshwang (OJ) Management Committee

The O.J. management committee continues to be ably led by its chairman Emmanuel Stafford who in supporting our administrator, Abdoulie Sowe, retains a good team spirit and sense of ownership amongst the staff.

The system of monthly reporting continues, enabling us to respond more accurately to changing circumstances at the centre where our staff work in an uncertain economic climate.

Risk Assessment

The trustees have identified and are aware of any risks to which the Charity is exposed and will keep this under constant review to establish procedures to mitigate those risks.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees

Stephen Doerr
Chairman.

31st July 2016