



ECG Sibamor Health Centre Newsletter

November 2024

*Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:28*

Dear friends

We entered 2024 with great anticipation about what God would be doing in the clinic during the year. Once more we have experienced His faithfulness and would like to share with you some of the things that have been happening in the clinic.

Community nurse training

The school of CHN (Community Health Nurse) training has finally been started and the first twelve students have completed their first semester of studies and are currently on their first practical attachments in two Government hospitals. The journey from vision to reality has been long and sometimes challenging but the Lord has done it. All glory to God.

Special thanks go to the Head of School Christine and her team comprising a tutor (Penda Joy) and an administrator (Paul). We also extend gratitude to senior government officials who have given lectures on the Gambian health system and policies.



The two new buildings that will host the student common room, library, offices and demonstration room and are nearly completed. We praise God for our dedicated partners who have funded the buildings. May the Lord richly bless them.



Library and student common room



Administration and demonstration rooms

Visit from Salud

The clinic was happy to welcome a team from Spain under the auspices of Salud Mision. They worked in the malnutrition clinic and visited a community in collaboration with the outreach team. It is always a joy to have visitors who want to help the work of the Health Centre as well as broadening their own horizons through working in a new cultural setting. The interaction is always a mutually beneficial experience. We expect another team to visit later this month.

A major project that commenced during a Salud Mision visit in 2023 has reached the commissioning stage – namely the installation of a new solar system which will reduce the high cost of buying power from the national grid for the Health Centre. We are very grateful to Salud's partner organisation Energies Sin Fronteras for this new system, and look forward to continued collaboration with Salud Mision on future projects.



New solar panels



New solar power equipment

Burns unit

Our new burns unit is fully functional and also doubles as a busy dressing room. Many patients have expressed appreciation for their burn and wound care. We are extremely grateful for recently donations of both ordinary and specialized dressings.



Our wonderful volunteer Dr Margaret with another volunteer UK doctor (Margaret Clare) in the burns unit

Outreach

A team from the Health Centre goes out most Thursdays visiting one of the villages in our catchment area, taking with them one or more local pastors or evangelists. This is a God-given opportunity both to provide much-needed health screening services and to have the opportunity to pray with people and share the Gospel. Patients who are identified as hypertensive or at risk of having or developing diabetes are given a 'free pass' to attend a dedicated clinic at Sibanor for further tests and, thanks to some regular donations, we are able to offer those who are in need of regular medication a subsidised and affordable treatment plan that results in high levels of adherence to treatment regimes.



Two Outreach team members: Senior nurse Daba and Pastor Bakary. Ready to see you now!



Pastor Bakary assisting with waist measurement: one of our diabetes risk assessment checks.

Waiting Hall

Preaching in the waiting hall continues. It is our prayer that those who attend the clinic will receive the good news with joy and experience the love that God has for all.



Angela, a missionary nurse from Zambia who has joined us, has joined our regular evangelist Kebba on the waiting hall preaching team.

Shower and toilets for the ward patients

A project to build a shower and two new toilets is being jointly sponsored by the US ambassador's self-help fund in The Gambia and a generous donation from an individual supporter. These will replace the current old and dilapidated toilets.



Two old toilets are out of action



The third old toilet has no water supply

Student attachments this year

Physician's assistant

Simon, a student from Germany training as a Physician's Assistant, was attached to us for a period of five months. He was of great help as he worked alongside the doctors in often a very busy unit. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays are especially busy at the Health Centre and we have seen increased numbers in all areas of our work this year.

Dutch students

The three Dutch Students Eva, Sharon and Judith who had undertaken a placement with us in 2023 returned for a few weeks in May to undertake an audit of some of our diabetic patients and to help improve our services to this needy group of patients. They made some posters to assist with teaching about the components of a good diet, and leaflets for the staff to give to the patients. This was a great encouragement for our staff in the challenging task of encouraging and enabling patients to lose weight.

Gambian student

Hassan, a student from one of the private nurse training institutions was here on a three-month attachment. This collaboration will hopefully be extended to other training schools in the country. We look forward to receiving other students who will do student projects as part of their training requirements.

Looking after our staff

Last year we were able to have our Christmas party at Bintang Lodge, It was a really fun time and we came back refreshed and ready for another year of service to the patients.

Last month we were able to return to Bintang Lodge for a stress management party for our staff. Most of us went on a boat trip on the creek which was a lovely experience and we also were able to have a very nice meal in two shifts so that all staff had the opportunity to attend, with our ambulance ferrying staff to and from the Health Centre between shifts.



Some of the staff enjoying Bintang Lodge. One of our paraplegic patients came along also...

Looking after children

As in previous years this year's rainy season brought us many malnourished children, as families ran out of food stocks harvested at the end of last year's rainy season. Our poor patient fund, supported by regular donations, is particularly helpful during this period when many families are struggling.

Here's one of our little ones, ready to go home after her treatment and strong enough to carry her own 'baby' on her back!



New staff

For a while we have been praying for new staff members, because the existing nursing staff have been very highly stretched. Many nurses in The Gambia do not want to work in a rural area, but over the last 3 months we have been delighted to welcome 2 SRN nurses, an SEN nurse and a Community Health nurse. We are also delighted to have two volunteer nurses from Zambia – Ired and Angela with us, as part of a new collaboration between ECG and Operation Mobilisation, Zambia

Baby bags

We are always pleased to receive bags full of items for a new baby. These encourage the mothers to come to the health facility to deliver which is so much safer than delivering at home. We are grateful to our partners who regularly supply us with beautifully made and stocked baby bags.



Some mothers with their recently-arrived babies and their much-appreciated baby bags

Gifts/donations

Vineyard ministries

A very timely donation of uniforms, bed sheets, and medical supplies was received from Vineyard ministries in the United States of America coordinated by Pastor John Adeneji who has a big heart for Sibanor Health Centre. He served as a missionary in the Gambia for several years. We are really grateful to all who willingly donated such good quality items. May the Lord bless them.

Swiss container

A forty foot container was donated by Malteser and its clearance was such a miracle we cannot help marveling at the faithfulness of our God. The majority of the contents were the furniture (tables, chairs, and beds) for the nursing school, plus there were some other items such as lockers and sanitary materials which are of great benefit to the clinic.

Missionary Partnerships

Brother Charles Lentz who is an American missionary to The Gambia has visited a couple of times this year and donated money and miscellaneous medical items for which we are very grateful. We look forward to closer collaboration in evangelism and community outreaches supported by our evangelist who ministers the word from Mondays to Wednesdays at the waiting hall.

SHED The Light Gambia

A new charity SHED the Light Gambia (SHED = Sibanor, Health, and Education) has been launched in the UK. Our prayerful hope and that of its trustees is that this will be a means to extend the support base for the work at Sibanor and also enable us to apply for grants from some of the charitable trusts and philanthropic individuals and Companies in the UK. Please let us know (using the email address sibanortrek@gmail.com) if you would like more information about the charity. A website will be launched in due course.

Finally – thank you!

Thank you for reading this and for your prayerful and financial support to the health Centre. Your support on either or both of these fronts is so much appreciated.

Yours in His name,

Dr Mariatou Jallow

**For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth to all generations
Psalm 100:5**

Prayer Points

- Pharmacist: we are being challenged by the Government to have a qualified pharmacist or pharmacy assistant to work alongside our longstanding WEC-trained pharmacist. This would be an excellent role for a volunteer.
- Long term volunteer doctor
- Well fitted ambulance: we continue to pray for a generous sponsor to provide a much-needed reliable, robust and well-equipped ambulance
- Funds for renovation of outpatient rooms