

Meeting of the Bendon Bursary

Wednesday 30th March 2022: 17:00 @ Kololi Beach Hotel, The Gambia

Present: Lamin Njie; Chernor H. Jallow; Alieu Jadama; Ebrima K Jallow; Maimuna Njie; Nfamara Sanyang; Marilyn McMenemy; Jane Gay; Robert Simpson

Apologies: Naffisatou Saidykhan; Karafa (Jassy) Marong

AidgambiaTCHC Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for making the effort to attend. The Trustees were very grateful for the opportunity to meet with recipients past and present of the Bendon Bursary. Chair acknowledged the successful graduation of THREE Bursary recipients, Chernor, Ebrima and Jassy.

Chair then detailed the **aims of the meeting:**

- find out about each other;
- ask questions;
- identify the support that is available;
- explain roles;
- celebrate achievements to date;
- explain the Charity and who we are.

Introductions of Bursarians

Chernor H JALLOW: Clinical Advisor to the Trustees (CAT) - eyes and ears in The Gambia for the Trustees; the first Bendon Bursary recipient; graduated in July 2020 with BSc. in Public and Environmental Health; January 2021 COVID restricted graduation ceremony with no family in attendance; currently applying for Masters course and seeking sponsorship - decisions imminent; key link and initiator of collaboration between aidgambiaTCHC and ECFA Charities.

Lamin NJIE: Clinical Advisor to the Trustees (CAT) - eyes and ears in The Gambia for the Trustees; coming to end of his BSc in Nursing/General BSN degree course at the American International University of West Africa; currently on internship and due to graduate in May 2022; looking to specialise in geriatrics or paediatrics; founder of Japalleh Healthcare Association Charity; key organiser of the Youth Health Cup to be held Sunday April 10th 2022.

(Both Chernor and Lamin known to Trustees through their work at the 5-year Project 2013-18 Tallinding Children's Health Centre aidgambiaTCHC).

Ebrima K. JALLOW: works for the Ministry of Health; Bendon Bursarian; BSc graduate May 2021 from University of The Gambia; currently engaged in Field Epidemiology Training (FETP) Programme which he completes in mid-August - currently writing his dissertation; now works for Ministry of Health as Deputy of COVID testing programme which he is heading up in the Director's absence; looking to do a Masters degree in Epidemiology in Ghana, Europe or even Canada.

Alieu JADAMA: 1st year of BSc Public and Environmental Health at the University of The Gambia; previously completed HND Public Health; been working 5 years for Ministry of Health and currently engaged in mass birth registration campaign.

Maimuna NJIE: 1st year HND studies in Public and Environmental Health at Gambia College - January 2021 start; aims to move on to full degree; experiences travel difficulties as it takes 1.5 hours to get to Gambia College.

Nfamara SANYANG: now in his 3rd year of medical studies and about to enter 4th year; just the one year credit for completed BSc in Nursing degree; looking to be an eye specialist; currently active volunteer in ECFA Charity; recently led the ECFA match funded by aidgambiaTCHC Prison Mask project; 4 more years to study.

Not in attendance:

Karafa (Jassy) MARONG: BSc Public and Environmental Health graduate July 2021 from University of The Gambia; currently up country on outreach eye project; wants to be cataract specialist surgeon; communications officer for the Charity Eye Care For All (ECFA)

Naffisatou SAIDYKHAN: Year 1 of 3 year General Nurse and Midwifery Training Programme @ The School for Enrolled Nurses and Midwives; her course delayed by one year due to COVID restrictions; Naffisatou sent her apologies via a recorded video posted on the Chris Bendon WhatsApp in which she explained clash of meeting time with last lecture of the day + lengthy bus taxi ride.

Introduction of AidgambiaTCHC CAT's

Chernor explained the role and responsibilities of the two CATs and how they acted on behalf of the Charity to establish contacts in The Gambia, identify potential Bendon Bursary beneficiaries and how they supported applicants.

Lamin gave details of the football match organised for Sunday 10th April at 10am at the FIFA Goal Project between the two football academies supported by Aidgambia TCHC, AVIC and Yarambamba. Two Under 10 teams would contest the AidgambiaTCHC Youth Health Cup to promote awareness of health issues affecting the young eg Hypertension and smoking.

The strap lines for the event are:

- Football for Health
- Make footy a habit, not SMOKING
- Make GOALS your SCORE
- Hypertension risk management
- Health and Wellness
- Create a space for children to play.

All were encouraged to attend and to promote the health theme.

Aims of aidgambiaTCHC

The Chair then briefly detailed the aims and activities of the Charity and how, after a five year project supporting the Tallinding Health Centre focus had switched to 1. supporting the studies of health professionals through the Bendon Bursary, 2. match funding outreach projects run by the two charities EyeCareForAll and Japalleh Healthcare Association Charity and 3. supporting two football academies to promote exercise and healthy living among the youth of The Gambia. She emphasised that AidgambiaTCHC is not a big Charity, has limited funding and is realistic in what it can offer.

All three Trustees present introduced themselves and explained their roles. At the same time, emphasising that their combined backgrounds were education – related, thus underlining the need for CATs' roles... to advise on health issues and direction. In addition, Chair pointed out that none of the Trustees are spring chickens, so very important that Gambians take control and offer direction. Trustees valued ideas and ownership by the group. On that note she asked the Secretary to distribute the hardware brought from the UK.

Hardware distribution

The Secretary explained how a man called TK who runs a business called Revive My Device in London, reconditioned equipment donated to the Charity. TK himself is African, from Zimbabwe, and sympathetic to the situation of Gambian students. He does all the work at cost price to the Charity and does not charge for his labour.

Thanks to TK from the group were noted.

The Secretary explained that there were five laptops to distribute. Each had been reconditioned and were ready to go. Office was installed on each machine and new batteries installed where needed. 1 terabyte SSDs (solid state drives) had also been installed.

The two CATs then handed over the laptops:

- Lenova Yoga 520: touch screen > Nfamara
 - Lenova T420S: THINKPAD (Includes charging station. Can be used separately but best in fixed office space. NB docking Station = media extender. Tracker pad dodgy with no replacement available, so advised to use a MOUSE) > Ebrima
 - Lenova G500: new battery. Office > Alieu
 - DELL Inspiron: pink...new battery...Office > Maimuna
 - Acre ASPIRE 5349 2.7k...new battery > Naffisatou
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- Chernor received a black Dell computer bag
 - Lamin received a brown Antler computer bag
 - Naffisatou received a grey Antler computer bag

Many photos were taken and the Trustees concluded that everyone was happy.

Mentoring Scheme

The notion of widening participation had been introduced prior to travelling to The Gambia via the TCHC Aidgambia WhatsApp group. In response, Chernor had set up a TCHC (Chris Bendon) WhatsApp group.

Jane, Trustee/Education introduced the idea of establishing a mentoring support scheme which would assist the group. Jane explained the dual notion of mentorship and Ambassador schemes with the latter promoting health-related role models to younger Gambians.

The Chair emphasised the aim to achieve sustainability. The mentorship scheme could provide support among the group especially the graduate experience of those who had completed their studies. The Ambassador/role model scheme would promote community outreach. This prompted members of the group to explain their own experiences and journeys to arrive where they find themselves. Trustees were keen to pursue Nfamara's idea of producing information in pamphlet or small book publication along the lines of 'What's Your Story' / 'Our Lives'.

Community outreach.

The Education Trustee and the Chair agreed to pursue this and offer some guidance.