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The Nova Scotia - Gambia Association is a non-profit development organization based in Canada that works in partnership with West Africans to pursue initiatives for equitable and sustainable futures for youth.

Dear Friends and Partners of the NSGA,

Eid Mubarak! This was written in the icing on our cake in the office on August 31, 2011. Our newest Canadian staff member had just finished his Ramadan fasting and it was time to celebrate the "blessed festival" of Eid. Our very own Muhammed Ngallan, who worked for a dozen years in the Gambian NSGA office, recently moved to Canada with his wife Kelly. The Halifax office was so very fortunate to be able to hire him on a contract and it has been wonderful having the cultural divide shortened by his presence (not to mention how hard he works!). In addition to this fantastic news, I am pleased to report that the NSGA successfully completed one of the largest summer schools we have ever held in The Gambia. Read on to learn more about that! And of course, our very own Erin Poirier successfully completed her run across The Gambia. What an amazing achievement, and I was so thrilled to be there to watch her reach the sea. Read on to learn more about Erin's run....this is certainly not the last you will be hearing from her, though: there are more exciting things on the horizon! And last but not least, as we enter the fall, our Fall Fundraising Campaign: *Donate to Educate* officially kicks off. We need your support friends. With the launch of this fundraising campaign, we are showing how your donations are put into action. From 22 NSGA staff, in 158 schools in The Gambia, with 316 teacher coordinators, and 4,740 peer health educators, we reach 1,083,362 citizens. The population of The Gambia is approximately 1.7 million. I hope you agree with me when I say that the NSGA is capable of making an enormous impact on the lives of Gambians. But we need to keep those 22 staff members going. And for this to happen, we need you to continue to support the work that they do. Read on and learn more about what the NSGA has been doing and some of the up-coming events!

Claraeal

Summer School 2011

The NSGA, under the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded Gender Equity and Youth Leadership through Health and Human Rights Education Project, recently concluded a four-week intensive summer school program for its peer health educators and teacher coordinators in the North Bank, Lower River and Central River Regions of The Gambia. Concurrent summer school programs ran at Bansang Senior Secondary School in CRR and Tahir Senior Secondary School in LRR between July 25 and August 19, 2011. More than 260 students and 88 teacher coordinators from 43 schools in The Gambia benefitted from the summer school program.

During the month-long program, students and teachers received training on reproductive health, gender education, STIs, HIV/AIDS, mathematics, English language, and presentation skills and strategies. Four Canadian volunteers, Markita Balfour, a nursing student at Dalhousie University, Cathy Faulkner, a teacher at Redcliff Middle school, Robin Campbell, a Master's student in recreational management at Acadia University, and Allison Reeves, a PhD student in health communication, served as trainers. Working with NSGA staff in The Gambia and identified professional teachers, the Summer School succeeded in building the life skills of the students and greatly improved their abilities in making better choices, informed decisions, and self assertiveness to become more responsible citizens. The Summer School also helped Canadian volunteers share experiences, learn from their Gambian counterparts, and experience the culture, which inadvertently improved their growth as professionals.

Interactive community cinema shows in Bansang and Mansakonko relayed relevant health information that will help community members in the prevention and management of public health diseases. The 2011 Summer School was a great success! Both CIDA and NSGA gained plenty of publicity during this period, and the support and cooperation of the government and its officials was phenomenal. The Summer School was an inspiring way to conclude the three-year Gender Equity and Youth Leadership Project.



NSGA Today

New NSGA Scholarship Fund: Announcing the Heller-Skinn Scholarship

At the 2010 Annual Dinner, a competition was waged between two bidders for the trip to The Gambia. The winning bid went to Dennis Heller and in December of that year, he, his wife, Barbara Skinn, and their daughter, Charlotte, travelled to The Gambia. By all accounts it was an excellent trip, with NSGA staff showing them the hospitality that Canadians who have gone before them have raved about. The Hellers visited schools where Peer Health Education programs are being undertaken and were impressed by the work of the NSGA; so much so they decided they wanted to assist with furthering the educational opportunities of peer health educators. For this reason, they provided a generous donation to establish the Heller-Skinn Scholarship. This scholarship will enable students from across The Gambia, to apply for funding to pursue their university or college degrees. The Hellers hope more individuals will want to contribute to this scholarship fund to allow it to grow and to enable more Gambian youths to achieve higher education. If you would like to make a contribution to this fund, please go to the "Donate Now" link on the NSGA Web site (www.novascotiagambia.ca) and simply click on the "Heller-Skinn Scholarship Fund" in the Fund/Designation section.

Love4Gambia: The Inspiring Journey by Erin Poirier

On Tuesday, July 26, Team Love4Gambia - Erin Poirier, Ashley Sharpe, Pa Modou Sarr, Kebba Suso and Dodou Bah - victoriously jumped into the Atlantic Ocean in Banjul after running 424 km over 17 days across The Gambia. We reached the ocean because we believed we could do it and because we supported and took care of each other every step of this crazy journey.

We learned plenty about the human body and spirit on the long road to Banjul. I became stronger and faster each day. My body was able to do it! I ran more kilometers with my teammates than I did solo. The heat (37-42C) never impacted my running performance because I chose not to let it.

Still, it was far from easy. Sometimes we hurt and were tired. But each time we were joined by children and youth, all traces of fatigue and pain vanished. We were running for these kids, for NSGA programs that impact their lives, and with them running next to us, we felt like we could fly.

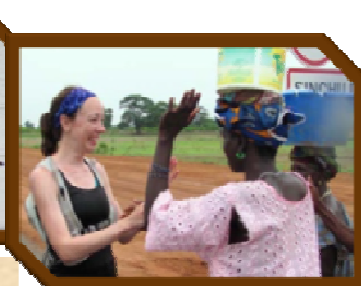
We all walked away from Love4Gambia with something really amazing inside of us: what we achieved together when we ran into the Atlantic Ocean in Banjul. We gained brothers and sisters. We ran and drove through long hours together where our bond and friendship turned into family. We raised more than \$34,000 that will support Pa Modou, Kebba and our NSGA Gambia staff as they continue our lifesaving work in the field: keeping kids alive. You can read more in our detailed blog chronicling our journey at www.love4gambia.com.

I don't think this will be the end for me and my amazing team and our work to support the NSGA together. I hope you will continue to support the NSGA as our story continues to unfold.

Stay tuned for the release of a Love4Gambia Radio Documentary produced by Dick Miller and a Love4Gambia Documentary Film produced by Mentor Films.



Victory! Team Love4Gambia reaches the Atlantic Ocean in Banjul



Erin and Mamas in Sinchu Demba



Erin and Kebba on the road in Soma



Your donations help promote healthy lifestyle living, stronger communities and access to a brighter future.



Building families and communities, one step at a time, volunteers make the difference!





NSGA Today

NSGA Over the Years

In 1996, the NSGA commenced an environmental education curriculum program in The Gambia ("Project 22") in partnership with the National Environmental Agency of The Gambia. Responding to the 1994 Gambian Environmental Education Strategy, Project Director Anne Muecke and Nova Scotian and Gambian teachers worked together over two years in 35 schools across The Gambia.

This project included workshops and mini-schools to broaden the environmental awareness of Gambian teachers and students, "train the trainers" workshops to develop the skills of environmental education teacher trainers, development of a teacher's lessons and resource book, and opportunities to practice student-centered teaching methodologies. In addition, hands-on, community-oriented environmental experiences such as an interactive urban nature walk and planting of a school orchard broadened the environmental awareness of Gambian and Nova Scotian participants alike.

As noted in the preface to the Teacher's Resource Book by founding NSGA Executive Director Burris Devanney:

It is a fundamental principal of this project that teachers and schools can play a pivotal role in community development and that students in particular can have a profound impact upon the behaviours of their peers, their parents and the community at large with respect to actions that affect the environment.

This year the NSGA celebrates its 25th anniversary as a registered charity in Canada.

Fall Fund Raising Campaign: *Donate to Educate*

In the past, our generous friends and supporters have helped to enable the NSGA to continue to "Learn and Teach Others". We need your continued support. We are requesting that you give serious consideration to supporting our outstanding health education programs in The Gambia.

Something that is new to our fundraising campaign this year is a "catalogue" that you can browse to select a dedicated gift. We plan to email this out to you by mid-October and to send hard copies in the mail. It will also be available on the NSGA website. We hope that you and your friends and family will consider donating to one of these "tangible" financial contributions to support the NSGA in a variety of ways. Of course, you can also make a donation that is not attached to a specific aspect of the NSGA. We assure you your generous donations will be used to enable our dedicated staff to teach children and youth across The Gambia about issues that are helping to save lives.

So stay tuned for more details and information about this initiative in your inbox and mailbox this fall! On behalf of the youth of The Gambia, their families and communities, and the NSGA, we thank you for your kind gift.

Grand Challenges: We need your vote!

The NSGA is partnering with Christa Brosseau, a researcher from Saint Mary's University, to test the viability of a new tool that could improve the lives of pregnant women in The Gambia and across Sub-Saharan Africa. Christa's project proposal is entitled *A Rapid Point-of-Care Sensor for Early Detection of Preeclampsia: A Tool for Improving Maternal Health in Developing Countries*.

As part of the grant proposal requirements, Christa has prepared a two-minute video outlining the significance of her project. This is where *you* come in: the videos will be judged by individuals like yourself. Please go to the Grand Challenges Canada website at <http://www.grandchallenges.ca> and vote for her submission. Videos should be posted for voting by October 1st.

Healthy Water, Healthy People

The NSGA is fortunate to be a partner with Saint Mary's University in a new Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) *Community-University Research Alliance* (CURA) grant on community-based watershed management. As the international partner, NSGA will focus peer health education on issues related to water quality, water-borne diseases, water scarcity, and conservation education. This past July, 2011, NSGA Executive Director Cathy Conrad, along with Melissa Healey and Emma Garden from SMU, travelled to The Gambia to provide training on the new Peer Health Water Education Manual. Staff at the two summer schools in Bansang and Mansa Konko as well as in the Kanifing office of the NSGA, participated in the training sessions. The training was very well received, and we look forward to launching this program in three schools this coming fall semester.



NSGA staff Che, Lamin, Kebba, Mamadi, and Nuru



SMU graduate student Melissa Healey teaches NSGA staff about water quality, water quantity, and sanitation while NSGA Media Man Baba Jallow films sessions for future use.



NSGA Today

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Contact us:

1574 Argyle Street
Halifax, NS B3J 2B3

Telephone:
902-423-1360

Email:
Info@novascotiagambia.ca

Website:
www.novascotiagambia.ca

Privacy statement

The Nova Scotia-Gambia Association respects your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legislative requirements with regard to protecting privacy. We will use the information you have provided to keep you informed and up-to-date on the activities of the Association. If at any time you decide you do not want to be contacted, please call us at (902) 423-1360 or email us at june.boswell@novascotiagambia.ca and we will gladly accommodate your request.

NSGA In the Field

The following profiles highlight two NSGA staff members who were essential members of the Love4Gambia team- Pa Modou Sarr and Kebba Suso.

Momodou M. Sarr, aka Pa Modou, was born on 1 October 1982, in The Gambia. Pa Modou's parents were teachers, and he graduated from Essau Senior School on the north bank of the Gambian River, just past the ferry port town of Barra. Pa Modou studied computer science and journalism at the post secondary level with a specialization in radio and video production. .

Pa Modou has worked with the NSGA in The Gambia since 2003, holding many positions, from drama trouper, associate coordinator to assistant coordinator, trainer, and, most recently, media officer.

Pa Modou is an enthusiastic footballer (soccer) and basketball player. Not surprisingly, this athlete ran 136 km across The Gambia as part of the Love4Gambia team. Holding the team together with his easy, caring nature, Pa Modou was the logistics man, in charge of lodging, food and water. He put his media skills to use as photographer and videographer of the expedition. In his blog he noted,

The whole team has evolved from Canadians and Gambians to a cemented brotherly and sisterly tie that has been built to not only foster the relationship we have as a team but to save the lives of young Gambians and West Africans through the peer health education program of the Nova Scotia-Gambia Association.

"Love4Gambia Run!!! YES WE CAN!"

Kebba Suso was born on March 25, 1966 in Bwiam in the western region of The Gambia. He went to school from 1976 to 1986 in this same town. Kebba and his wife Jai are blessed with three sons. His eldest, Lamin is 15 year old. Saikouba, the middle boy is 13 years old and the youngest, Sheikh, is 11. Kebba and Jai live in Brikama, 30km from the NSGA office. All three boys attend school in Bwiam, where they stay with Kebba's mother. The boys come home to Brikama every weekend and for holidays.

Kebba works with NSGA as a driver. He loves running and playing chess. Kebba also ran a lot of kilometres next to Erin as part of the Love4Gambia team. His smile and laughter lighted up the support truck as the kilometres clicked by. He led team members and followers alike in song, singing "1, 2, 3 Love4Gambia," raising the spirits of the runners. As Kebba explained to a little boy en route, "We are running for the youth of this country."



Pa Modou



Erin and Pa Modou on the road to Banjul



Erin and Kebba in Basse



Kebba, his three sons, and Jakob Conrad

It's Citrus Sale Time Again!

WHEN: Friday, November 25: 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Saturday, November 26: 8:30 am to noon

WHERE: 1200 Bedford Hwy, Bedford United Church,
Upper Parking Lot on Sullivan's Hill

PRICES: Navel Oranges: \$40.00 full box/ \$22 half box
Indian River Red Grapefruit: \$40.00 full box/ \$22 half box

To place your order please contact:
June Boswell 423-1360 (office) 835-4505 (home)
june.boswell@novascotiagambia.ca

ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY NOVEMBER 1ST.