

Ultrasound machines for maternal and child health in the Gambia

Ardingly Old Jeshwang Association and Portable Ultrasound Machines

At Portable Ultrasound Machines it is important to us that our work makes the greatest difference possible for practitioners and those benefitting from the multiple uses to which ultrasound machines can be put. We jump at the chance to work with charities and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) making a positive impact on the world. Welcome to the second of our series of global case studies in which we shine a spotlight on Ardingly Old Jeshwang Association (AOJA)¹ - a charity relieving sickness and promoting the preservation of good health in The Gambia - and our recent role in supporting their work.

Ardingly Old Jeshwang Association: Supporting self-help for Maternity and Child healthcare in The Gambia

In the early 1990s members of the Old Jeshwang Village Development Committee approached members of the community in Ardingly (West Sussex, UK) with a background in healthcare, to discuss the formation of a partnership to support maternity and child health in the village. AOJA, a UK registered charity, was formed and with the support of National Lottery funding the Old Jeshwang Maternity and Child Healthcare Clinic was designed and built, opening in 2002 and serving a population in excess of 30 000.

AOJA encourages direct cooperation between communities and organisations in the United Kingdom and The Gambia in Tesito (self-help) projects, which have included raising funds for an ambulance, dental surgery and blood transfusion clinic. AOJA continues to work with the Healthcare

Clinic, raising funds and supporting initiatives to build capacity, whilst continuing to pursue Tesito and working toward independence.



Old Jeshwang Maternity and Child Healthcare Clinic, Old Jeshwang, the Gambia © AOJA 2023.

The challenge: developing obstetric ultrasound capacity

The picture of maternal and child health in the Gambia is a challenging one. The most recently available data from the World Health Organisation² suggests the neo-natal mortality rate³ is 25.74/1 000 live births; the infant mortality rate⁴ is 34.74/1 000 live births and the under 5 mortality rate⁵ is 49.37/1 000 live births. UNICEF data shows that maternal mortality is decreasing, however most recent information suggests the rate remains at 597/100 000 live births.⁶

¹ <https://aoja.org/>

² <https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/countries/country-details/GHO/gambia?countryProfileId=79ffc757-a3a8-4853-a041-77a8fa1fc3e7>

³ Probability of baby dying within 28 days of birth

⁴ Probability of dying between birth and age of 1

⁵ Probability of dying between birth and age 5

⁶ Women aged 15 – 49 years old:

https://data.unicef.org/resources/data_explorer/unicef/?ag=UNICEF&df=GLOBAL_DATAFLOW&ver=1.0&dq=GMB.MNCH_MMR.&startPeriod=1970&endPeriod=2022. The rate in the UK for the same time period was modelled to be 7/100 000 live births:

https://data.unicef.org/resources/data_explorer/unicef/?ag=UNICEF&df=GLOBAL_DATAFLOW&ver=1.0&dq=GMB.MNCH_MMR.&startPeriod=1970&endPeriod=2022

Against this background, AOJA have successfully collaborated since the early 1990s to build and equip the Old Jeshwang Maternity and Child Healthcare Clinic. In addition the capacity of local people has been built, resulting in a full staffing of trained midwives and nurses to provide antenatal, perinatal and post-natal services. Sadly the previous Chair of AOJA, Stephen Doerr, passed away in 2021. Following generous donations at his 2022 memorial service AOJA were able to consider the purchase of a more sophisticated ultrasound machine for obstetric use. .

Our role

PUM were delighted to be contacted by AOJA to support in the purchase of an appropriate ultrasound machine for neonatal use. After discussion regarding the needs of the Old Jeshwang Maternity and Childcare Clinic, Sonographer and PUM Founder Catherine Stowell recommended the Apogee 1000 Lite. Working closely with AOJA we supplied the machine ready to be shipped to The Gambia for use.



SIUI Apogee 1000 Lite supplied by Portable Ultrasound Machines © PUM 2023.

The impact

Lynn Wilson, Chair of AOJA, said *“Catherine Stowell was immediately responsive with helpful suggestions. Her advice obviously came from hands-on experience which gave me the confidence that we could obtain the right piece of equipment, at an affordable price, and that it would be supplied without unnecessary delay and therefore be received at the Clinic as soon as possible.”*

PUM’s Catherine Stowell said *“We are delighted to have worked with AOJA to support their acquisition of an ultrasound machine that will go on to make such a difference to the lives of those in this Gambian community. This powerful example of improving the*

health outcomes of women and children by empowering local people continues to motivate us to work with charities and NGOs to achieve positive impacts through the use of ultrasound.”



Members of Jeshwang Health Centre staff receive their SIUI Apogee 1000 Lite © AOJA 2023.


What next?

The work of Old Jeshwang Maternity and Childcare Clinic continues to go from strength to strength: in 2021 the Clinic saw 281 births, over 12 000 outpatient appointments, and over 16 000 individual uses of its lab services. In addition to ongoing maintenance and renewal of existing buildings and machines, there are always specific projects to further develop the Clinic. Recently identified opportunities include obtaining appropriate delivery beds; appropriate dental chair(s) and growing the size of the admissions ward. You can help through monthly sponsorship; a one-off donation; or a legacy in your will.

If you work or volunteer your time in the international NGO sector and feel PUM might be able to support you with equipment or training, please don’t hesitate to contact us via phone, email or online chat. We would be delighted to discuss your requirements and provide no-obligation information and advice.

Contact us!

Please find our contact details below:

 +44 (0) 020 3972 227

 catherine@portableultrasoundmachines.co.uk

 www.portableultrasoundmachines.co.uk

 [@PUM_Ultrasound](https://twitter.com/PUM_Ultrasound)