

SDF's activity report for December 2016

SDF held a Village meeting on 11th December 2016

A meeting was organised with the villagers to reaffirm SDF's aspirations to empower the villagers
The meeting opened with the usual prayers for peace

Executive Committee members in attendance: Kemo Sonko, Ma-Lamin Janneh, Lang Kamara, Bajerreh Cham, Omar Janneh

Villagers in attendance: Bolong Ceesay, Famoro Sonko, Kawsu Jaiteh, Lang Kamara, Fabakary Jaiteh (aka Ndemba Kebba), Modou Janneh, Ebrima Sonko (aka Ba-Solly).

The meeting agenda and the points discussed were as follows:

1. **Loans owing on the boats:** After some deliberations, it was agreed that those who have not paid anything towards the cost of the boat loaned to them (i.e., Bolong Ceesay and Adama Jah) and those who have not completed the payment of their boat (Kawsu Sawo, Fakeh Barjo, Lang Kamara) be given until the end of April 2017 to pay for their boat in full or face the real prospect of SDF having to pursue the actions necessary to recover its money. Such actions include SDF asking the guarantor of each individual Fishermen to pay and or referring the matter to the Chief. In response, Lang Manneh gave his assurances that he would act as a second guarantor for Adama Jah and that he would do all he could to make sure that Adama's loan is paid by the end of April 2017. The Executive committee told the meeting of their ambition to see that all those owing money on the boats pay what they owe before the term of the serving Executive ends in August 2017.
2. **Medicare:** It was expressed and impressed upon the villagers that it is SDF's ambition to do more in the area of healthcare. However, we are only able to take to make baby steps towards reaching our objective in the area of healthcare due to the lack of commitment of the villagers and members at large in paying their annual subscriptions. Further, it was expressed that the lack of repayment of the loans on the boats is having a damaging effects on SDF's capacity to do more. The meeting was told that those who owe money to the organisation would have to bear some responsibility should SDF fail to continue its work in the village. Ndemba Kebba expressed his frustrations about the low uptake of the healthcare record books, which were being sold at a discounted price of D15.00. The meeting was told about the importance of buying the patient healthcare record book. That they must see book as their healthcare passport which could help save their lives should their illness take them to seek treatment from another healthcare professional or health centre. They were told that in such a case, the duty Health Care professional needs to know what treatments they received previously which would avoid 1) duplication of effort, 2) ensure continuity of treatment; 3) avoid cases of drug over-dose or drug-drug interactions which can have life threatening consequences. Also the Villagers are alerted to the possibility that they could go to Ndemba kebba for treatment but find that the specific medicine needed to treat them had run out. They were advised to accept this message in good faith and they must remain steadfast in their support of our efforts and that of Ndemba Kebba to bring healthcare to them. It was clearly expressed to them that the medicines were not for free. SDF gave the medicines to Mr Jaiteh at a cost of D41276.00 which he must repay in 1.8 years. However, it was clarified that SDF is not expecting Ndemba Kebba to pay the whole amount at once, but that he was encouraged to pay by instalment. It was expressed that it was beyond the scope of SDF to set the price at which the medicines have to be sold to the Villagers. They were told that this is in line with the way SDF handled the support it gave to the Fishermen, in that none of the Fishermen were told what price they must sell their catches. Similarly, it was

explained to them that just as it is the case with the Fishermen, Ndemba Kebba keeps all of the profits from the sale of the medicines. It is expressed to them that given that the drugs and the consultations were being brought to their door steps without the need for the early morning wake- ups to travel to Albreda, Essau or Banjul, they would see the services brought to them as a big coup for them and they would embrace it whole-heartedly.

3. **Annual subscription payments:** It was expressed that the responsibility lies with everyone to pay their annual subscriptions. The villagers were advised to pay their annual subscriptions and to encourage their family members to do the same for without that, the healthcare and other projects we aspire to will remain as dreams
4. **SDF donated 500 exercise books to the pupils of Sika Lower Basic School and other students attending Albreda Secondary School.** The donation of the 500 exercise books worth D7000 was a success. You may recall that the 500 exercise books of 80 pages each were in Kemo Sonko's office. He transported the exercise books to Sika. Unfortunately, it was a public holiday, and not many of the pupils were able to attend the distribution of the books. However, Lang Kamara junior, a teacher at the school took the names of all of the pupils who received the books so that the remaining books could be distributed to those who did not make it for the presentation on 12th December, 2016. It was agreed that Ma-Lamin Janneh would store the rest of the books to be later distributed to those pupils who hadn't received a copy. Any other remaining copies would be distributed to the students attending Albreda Secondary School. Photos were taken on the day of the presentation of the exercise books (12th December, 2016) for a press release, which was recently published in some of the major new papers in The Gambia, e.g. The Point <http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/sika-school-receives-educational-materials>, Daily Observer <https://observergm.com/sika-lbs-boosted/>, and The Standard Newspaper <http://standard.gm/site/2017/01/05/sika-lbs-receives-educational-materials/>.
5. **SDF donated some British Medical Journals, BNF and MIMS to The Edward Francis Small Teaching Hospital (aka RVTH):** We donated some 150 copies of British Medical Journals, BNF and MIMS to the RVTH. The donation was received by Dr Amadou Samateh and in attendance at the presentation ceremony were Mr Omar NR Sonko, Kemo Sonko and Omar Janneh. As you may have noticed, this also generated some welcome publicity in the major newspapers for SDF (insert the hyperlink to the website).
6. **Permanent co-opting of Lang Kamara and Borry Janneh into the executive:** The meeting agreed that Lang Kamara and Borry Janneh be co-opted permanently into the executive to facilitate the collection of the annual subscriptions in the village. This makes strategic sense, not only given the geographical location of both Borry Janneh and Lang Kamara, but also the energies and or patience both have for this initiative.

Matters that arose from the meeting:

It was expressed that the village needed an ambulance: This matter was addressed by explaining to the meeting that it is the ambition of SDF to do much more in the area of healthcare, but our capacity is limited because we are all failing to see the initiative as our own and as such must all work and encourage others, in our own households – in the village, the greater Banjul area (Kombo) and the diaspora, to do the same to help realise SDF's overall ambitions. Having told them how much money SDF has in its various accounts, it became apparent that SDF is a long way off from realising the acquisition of a vehicle/ambulance for the village. The meeting was told that it is not that the paying members are unwilling to see more done, but that SDF cannot realise its dreams for the village from the subscription payments of a few paying members and that and SDF runs the risk of dying if the majority think that it is the work of a few paying members that will sustain the organisation for all to benefit from. It was pointed out that we will be able to address many of the

healthcare needs of the village if we all pay our annual subscriptions and encourage each other to do the same. The expectation that it is those in the diaspora who will send their hard-earned cash to help develop Sika should be rejected. This will not happen unless the people of Sika also take ownership of SDF by contributing to the efforts of other paying SDF members. Further, it was expressed that many, if not all, of the villagers have family members in the Kombos, and others also have family members in the diaspora who do not pay their annual subscriptions. If we take it upon ourselves to speak to our own people and encourage them to pay, then the ambulance project may not remain a dream. Further, the meeting was told that the village has at least a couple of village taxis that could help meet the needs of the village in this regard. But to make that happen, we must take a bit of responsibility for each other if we are to make any progress in changing our fortunes.

A structure to serve as Village Health centre: At present Mr Jaiteh does all of his consultations at his house. This is not desirable. A strategic location preferably close to the main road would be ideal. This can be composed of a seating area, a consultation room

Projects to think about for the future:

Sika Lower Basic School: Speaking to Borra Janneh (a teacher at Sika LBS), he mentioned that the following facilities of the school needed improvement:

School's kitchen: poorly ventilated and the roofing is in a bad shape; also the veranda to the kitchen needs improvement

School plates: At present, the pupils share a large basin with six to seven pupils to a basin. That they would need plates.

Spoons for the kids: The pupils use their hands to eat which they wash in one container – the water gets filthy with cross contamination and spread of infections being a serious concern.

Chairs and tables for the School

Estimated number of pupils at the school: 250

It was the general view expressed by the Villagers that any help targeted at the School be carefully managed to avoid wastage and the pilfering of its resources.

SDF received drugs from Stop Step Pharmacy: We (Kemo Sonko, Omar Janneh and Ndemba Kebba) made a curtesy call to Mrs Shallop, proprietor of Stop Step Pharmacy who expressed her willingness to do all she could to help SDF realise its dreams in the area of healthcare. She donated a carton full of drugs: antimalarial, antibiotics, antiseptics, etc.) to SDF which was passed onto Ndemba Kebba. We remain grateful to Mrs Shallop and her team, especially Mr Mahawa Njie, for their commitment to help us realise SDF's dreams in the area of healthcare provision for our people.

Monies received in December 2016

- Fakeh Barjo paid D2000.00 towards his fishing boat

Annual subscription payments received from Sika in December 2016

- D1200.00 was received from Sika as annual subscription payments

Annual subscription payments received from the following SDF members

- Lang Sally Jaiteh: D400.00, being payments for 2016 and 2017
- Binta Sonko (daughter of Sonko Jileng): D200.00 being annual subscription payment for 2016
- Commissioner General of Gambia Revenue Authority (**Yankuba Darboe**) facilitated the publication of our press release in the print newspapers and the online media. He also donated D1000.00 towards the cost of the publication of our press release. We hereby express our sincere gratitude to the Commissioner General for his support.

Expenditure:

- SDF paid D500.00 towards the cost of publication of the press release

