

LI WAJHILLAH

Annual Report 2012-2013

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Bismillahir Rahmaanir Raheem

All praise is for Allah, Lord of all that exists, and may the peace and blessings of Allah be on His Messenger, his family and companions.

The Li Wajhillah charity group was formed in March 2012 by a few Muslim ladies concerned by the plight of the less privileged in society and determined to contribute their own quota in alleviating the situation from the grass-roots level by any possible means.

OBJECTIVE

To concentrate on categories of persons considered most in need of help, namely: orphans, widows, the sick, the disabled and the poor. The modes of assistance selected were feeding, medical, educational, renovation, micro-finance, redistribution of used clothing, shoes and accessories and any other gifts and donations in kind.

POLICY

The group is guided by the moral principles of honesty, transparency and organised dedication. It considers no donation too small, nor is there any compulsion in the contributions; the only requirement is that donations made must come from halal sources or income. It holds fast to its Motto of Sincerity embodied in the following verse of the Holy Quran that –

“We feed you for the sake of Allah alone, no reward do we desire from you nor thanks”. Quran 76:9

REVIEW OF YEAR 2012 – 2013

Membership grew from the less than ten core members to currently over forty, the majority of whom are based in The Gambia, with a few resident abroad. The group was able to raise a total amount of **D 156, 662** from April 2012 up until March 2013, all of which was used solely for charitable purposes in the different categories highlighted below.

ACTIVITIES AND SPENDING

Feeding Assistance

Feeding assistance amounting to **31%** of the total collections was distributed in the period from March 2012 to March 2013. The overall assessment of candidates was

based on perceived need; as well as support for micro-finance candidates thereby allowing them a buffer between trying to establish their newly set-up small businesses and feeding their families. General feeding drives were also conducted in the main Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital (RVTH) in Banjul and a mid-sized Quranic school based on the situations observed in house.

In May 2012, Li Wajhillah decided to start a weekly porridge distribution exercise for patients and escorts in RVTH Hospital. About 100 pots of porridge were distributed weekly to patients admitted in various wards in the hospital. Li WajhiLlah contacted RVTH staff on a weekly basis to choose the wards for the following week as well as to ascertain the patients' dietary requirements. This proved to be a most rewarding exercise both for the patients, staff of the hospital, as well as the Li WajhiLlah members. A similar exercise was carried out in July.



For the Special month of Ramadan, Li WajhiLlah handed out Ramadan gifts to several major Mosques consisting of food packages to be re-distributed amongst the needy. A donation package worth D6, 704, consisting of food, sanitary items (such as laundry soap, toothpaste and pads) and some used clothing was given to 70 inmates of the male and female wings of the Mile 2 Prisons. It was felt that the Muslim community in general tended to abandon the inmates in contrast to the Christian missions and charities which provide regular monthly donations.



There is a Quranic School in Banjul which hosts 40 orphans of various ages. Due to the reduced access to funds, the children typically do not have dinner on most nights and thus go around begging for dinner in the vicinity. Hence Li Wajhillah took it upon itself to provide dinner twice a week, sometimes in the form of bread with beans, groundnut porridge, cous porridge, and other such nutritional foods; which are sometimes accompanied by a cup of hot tea to make the dinner more filling. We

have been told that the children are very appreciative of these feeding sessions and eagerly anticipate the days of feeding. Li WajhiLlah plans to continue these feedings for the long term as long as funds permit.



Li Wajhillah also donated bags of rice, cous, corn and other staples to a temporary shelter for children and elderly people as well as an orphanage in Sinchu Alagie. Some of the children from the shelter end up in the orphanage if their situation becomes permanent. The temporary shelter – as of March 2013 – housed 5 elderly people, 11 babies, 4 toddlers and 1 mother with her child in the elderly people’s home. The Sinchu Alagie Orphanage houses 22 children at different ages.

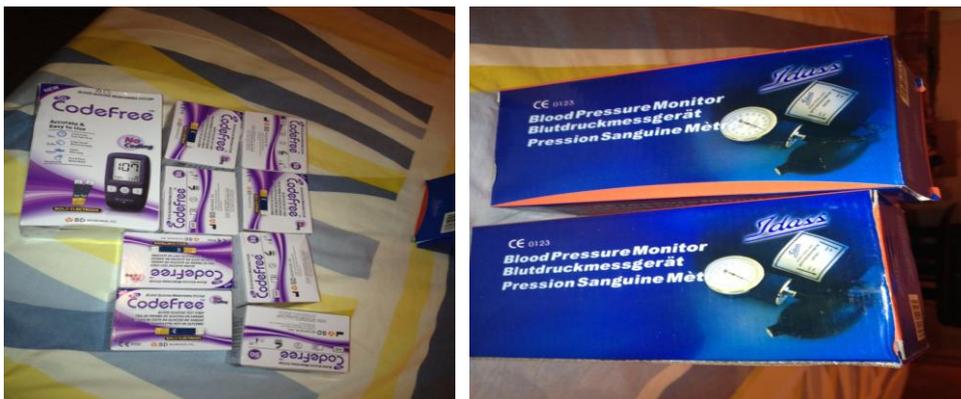


Thus it is estimated that close to a thousand people have benefitted from the Li WajhiLlah Feeding Assistance since March 2012. These include individuals, single parent families, several Mosque Congregations, Hospital Patients, Prison Inmates and Orphans as indicated above.

Medical Assistance

In the Li Wajhillah guidelines, assisting critically ill patients was one of the main categories highlighted. As a result of this, various members of the group had to work closely with staff of the main hospital in The Gambia, namely the Royal Victoria Teaching Hospital (RVTH), which is the referral hospital of last resort for most critical cases and constantly in dire need of as much support as possible. Almost a quarter of the total collections (**23%**) was spent on assisting patients and the staff of the hospital in the period March 2012 to March 2013.

Since March 2012, Li WajhiLlah has made significant contributions to the RVTH, starting from the 12 care packages (containing food and personal hygiene items) given to 12 HIV Patients in the Infectious Disease Clinic of the Hospital; to supplying medications and medical items whenever a shortage was made known – sometimes even ordering items from abroad. Some of the items given to the hospital include: digital thermometers, glucose meters and accompanying strips, and blood pressure meters. The glucose meters were ordered from the UK at a time when the ward had ran out of strips and the laboratory had ran out of the testing agent and therefore doctors found it difficult to monitor the sugar levels of their diabetic patients. Amongst the supplies that are most-often bought for RVTH patients are gauze bandages, iodine and hydrogen peroxide. Bandages were in such short supply at one point to the extent that nurses had to resort to washing bandages and re-using them – this increased the risk of infection. Prescriptions that a lot of patients could not afford included: frusemide, IV saline, ampicillin injections, injectable lasix and mororin injections. At the beginning of 2013, IV Flagil and cipro drugs were purchased in large quantities and supplied to 21 Amputated Diabetic Patients who could not afford them and thus risked infection and re-amputation.



In other instances, Li WajhiLlah contributed in small but significant ways. There is the example of the blind man who had undergone successful treatment for renal failure and was discharged but remained in the hospital for days due to lack of transport fare to go home. Li WajhiLlah paid a meager D200 and he was able to go home to his family. The most memorable assistance however was that given to a widower who needed a prostate cancer operation but lacked the necessary funds. The operation was successfully carried out with Li WajhiLlah funding. At the first three-month post-

surgery check-up session – also funded by Li Wajhillah – the improved quality of life of the widower was confirmed both by the doctor and the patient. Li WajhiLlah wishes the widower continued improvement and a better quality of life, Insha Allah. Li Wajhillah also paid some attention to those who had lost the healing battle and were on their way to the afterlife by donating rolls of “Percale” (a cloth used by Muslims to shroud their dead) to the RVTH Mortuary. Finally, in recognition of the excellent services they provide to assist vulnerable HIV patients at their own expense, Li WajhiLlah provided transportation allowance to the 10 RVTH Volunteers assigned to home-based care and palliative patients. This was most appreciated and helped to boost the morale of these hardworking individuals of good intention.

Educational Assistance

Educational Assistance is prioritised based on a family’s situation, with special regard given to the strain on the family income in order to send their child to school. In a lot of cases, assistance was given to those who would otherwise not send their child to school at all for lack of funds. About **12 %** of the total collections was spent in the period April 2012 to March 2013.

In May of 2012, Li Wajhillah dealt with the special case of an orphan boy living with TB, who was permitted by his doctor to go to school but was unable to pay fees for the 2012 academic year. After hearing his case, Li Wajhillah paid for tuition and books. Unfortunately, he passed away before the start of the new school year. In April, we had assisted the first child of a widow living with HIV to pay for school fees as she was about to be kicked out of school. Today, this child is being allowed to continue her education for free at the school since they have come to understand the family’s plight. Thus, now all we have to do is assist in the purchase of school uniform and school bags. Another of the same widow’s children was in the provinces but had taken ill; so he was returned to his mother. After his recovery, she decided to try and keep him closer. So she found a boarding school in Busumbala for him. Currently, we have paid for 50% of the total fees required and the Global Fund, through Action Aid, is supposed to pay the remainder. Our total educational assistance to *this widow* and her 4 children this past year was D7, 200.

During this first year, we assisted 2 widowers: one has 3 children and the other has 6 children. The educational assistance they received ranged from tuition fees, to books to school bags and study fees. We had a new case of a single mother who had managed to send 4 of her 5 children to school until they each graduated high school, but was struggling to send her last child to Grade 10. The boy had not started school at the beginning of the academic year with his peers for lack of funds. Li Wajhillah assisted the boy with tuition and book fees. The boy’s first term report shows him to be doing very well despite the fact that he started the academic year in November instead of September.

Micro-finance Assistance

Micro-finance Assistance usually targets able-bodied people who are having difficulty making ends meet. We usually interview the potential beneficiaries in order to assess their willingness to work hard in order to enable themselves stand on their own two feet. The investment in a particular type of micro-finance depends on the location of the person being assisted, what *they* believe is profitable and whether they are physically able to handle the labour involved or have someone within the family who can handle the daily operations of the micro-financed establishment. In many cases, we have proven that it does not take truck loads of money to make a dent in people's lives; but just a small amount of money, enough to start some sort of enterprise can give hope to a person who had none. This will in turn give them the motivation to strive for the best. **17 %** of the total collections was spent on micro-finance this past year.

We started off micro-financing the widow living with HIV who had 4 children so that she could try to be independent. She started off selling cooked food in the evening (beans with oil and roasted groundnuts); then she changed to selling vegetables during the day when they were in season and ended up selling coffee and breakfast at a transportation depot. She kept having relapses as a result of her disease, thus it was necessary on several occasions to help her revive her business. She is however, very determined to be independent, and even in the cases where we jump in to assist her revive her business, we find that she had tried to save up some funds and adds that to what we give her. She is actually the one who cooks the food for the orphans of the Qur'anic School in Banjul and eagerly takes the food to their residence to distribute it herself. When the Social Worker had first introduced us to this widow, they had told us that they believed she was suicidal due to all that she had gone through – she had even gone to the extent of rejecting her last born child. But now, one can visually see the improvement on her face and in her voice and demeanor. Where once she had given up hope, through the little assistance Allah had helped us give her, her hope in a better tomorrow has been rekindled and when we speak to her on the phone most days, her voice sounds happy; Alhamdulillah.

Another micro-finance case that was a success was that of the orphan boy in Lamin whose guardian had a stroke that paralysed one side of his body. He started with just D1, 700, selling perfumes, dates and several kilos of sugar towards the end of Ramadan. He had started out walking from place to place carrying his wares and selling to people on credit. Today he has managed to fix-up a small corner in the front of his house where he sells the same things but added new items such as Islamic clothing.

The widower with 6 children mentioned above was given assistance to start a charcoal retail business. However, some of it was stolen and this left the family disheartened. Thus they decided to switch to selling non-perishable food stuff such as sugar, rice, tomato paste, etc. at a location closer to home. Unfortunately, that location was in a very prime area and thus they had to go through some process with the local area council in order to have the space allocated to them. From October

2012 to January 2013 they went back and forth with the council officers on the allocation of the space. In the end, they had to look for another location and are currently trying to establish their business in non-perishable food items.

Agriculture is a major source of income for over half of the populace. However, farmers typically complain of the lack of funds to buy both seeds and fertilizer. Thus they usually take these on credit until after their harvests, when they can repay them. In order to help reduce this cycle of debt, Li Wajhillah financed two agricultural cases in a bid to make the farm owners self-sufficient. The first were the vegetable growers of a village called Daarul Lowen. They were given 200kg of fertilizer to help them realize a better produce. As the pictures show, the first of the produce definitely looks promising. Then a widow with a garden in Bakau Horticultural Gardens was given assistance in the form of fertilizer and seedlings. She had purchased D500 worth of seeds but due to lack of fertilizer, had lost the seedlings. Now the produce is beginning to mature and she should be able to harvest more than her usual amount.



Other micro-finance assistance targeted two married women who were struggling on a daily basis to make ends meet. One of them is a teacher and even though she is married, her husband is also in the teaching profession and has another wife with whom he lives in the provinces. Thus their meager salaries are typically stretched to the limit and in the case of the woman, having a house full of extended family members – none of whom are contributing to the household expenses – makes an already difficult life, tougher. Thus Li Wajhillah helped her start a fish re-sale enterprise where she buys fish from Gunjur and re-sells it in the provinces. She had started with 3 crates of fish. Currently, she is re-selling at least 5 crates every fortnight. The other woman had struggled hard to open a shop which she filled with merchandise. Unfortunately for her, when she took a trip to the provinces and left the shop in the hands of someone she believed she could trust, he stole all the items in the shop and left her with an empty shop. When she came back, as a result of the shock caused by the sudden loss of her means of livelihood, she essentially slipped into a depression. Thus Li Wajhillah helped her with feeding and micro-finance in the form of the re-selling of soap, rice, onions, etc. in an effort to remove her from her depression and try to get her back to where she was.

General / In Kind

Over the period from April 2012 – March 2013, Li Wajhillah donors made several donations in kind and these included numerous boxes of used clothes, shoes and accessories collected as part of a “Clothing drive” initiated by the Core Members of the Charity. Several boxes of children’s clothes and toys were also shipped internationally from the United Kingdom. The £20 cost of shipment for the items from the UK was absorbed by one of our donors. Some of the used clothing and shoes were subsequently distributed to some villages in the provinces whilst another batch was handed over to a family for re-selling to help make ends meet. The children’s clothing and toys were given to an orphanage.



Stationery packs were also donated to the Charity by two sisters from the UK and are intended for distribution to another charity group called Muslims Hands. This is because the majority of their charity’s money goes towards educational assistance. Six bottles of hand-sanitisers and several packets of gauze pads and bandages donated by two separate local donors were given to the IDC (Infectious Disease Clinic) ward of the RVTH.



A donor also donated a baby’s cot to the temporary shelter in Bakoteh.

At the beginning of 2013, one of our donors donated 300 euros to be spent specifically on agricultural assistance. Using this money, we were able to buy 7 bags and 24 cups of groundnut seeds; seed-preserving tablets to preserve all the seeds purchased up to the rainy season when they will be sown. Then the rest of the

money was used to transport the seeds over 10km from the supplier to the storage place in Daaru Lowen.



FUTURE PLANS AND COMMITMENTS

- We are in the process of registering the Charity with the local authorizes.
- Insha Allah, we intend to open a Bank Account once the Charity has been registered in order to facilitate the collection of donations.