

# GGD Team Member Biographies

March 2018



## **Brianna Parsons – Project Manager**

Brianna grew up in Eastern Pennsylvania and earned her B.A. in Biology and Neuroscience & Behavior at Wesleyan University in 2014. She spent a semester abroad in Tanzania studying Wildlife Conservation and Political Ecology, which first inspired her to think about the need for productive agriculture in families that rely on livestock for health and income. Before starting veterinary school, she worked on an organic goat dairy in rural Virginia, where she confirmed her desire to work in agriculture (and first fell in love with goats). Brianna was selected as a Student Extern with the American Veterinary Medical Association Government Relations Division, where she advocated for policies beneficial to the veterinary profession. Brianna studied food animal medicine throughout veterinary school at The University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, serving as the school's Food Animal Club Vice President and the AABP Senior Delegate. Throughout her time at Penn Vet, Brianna has been interested in understanding agriculture as a tool to create wealth for farmers, both globally and domestically. She sees GGD as the start of her a career in global health and food security.

## **Corey Spies – Project Manager**

Corey grew up in Northern New Jersey and received his BS in Biology in 2015 at McGill University in Montréal, concentrating on ecology and evolution. At McGill, he worked as an undergraduate researcher in the developmental evolution lab of Dr. Ehab Abouheif, investigating the role of heat shock proteins as capacitors for morphological evolution. As a third-year student at The University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, Corey is concentrating on animal health economics and the role of sustainable livestock systems in the developing world. Corey was elected President of the PennVet One Health Club, where he organized and led lectures and events focusing on the intersection of human, animal, and environmental health. He was also recently selected as a Student Extern with the American Veterinary Medical Association Government Relations Division, where he will explore a range of policy issues facing the veterinary profession on Capitol Hill. Corey hopes that GGD's success will help him foster an impactful career in the fields of environmental conservation and global food security.

## **Saja Kora – Herd Manager**

Saja has long been employed in and involved with the livestock sector of The Gambia. He was employed by the International Trypanotolerance Center (ITC) from 1985 until recently, and has received extensive training in animal husbandry and livestock science in The Gambia, Kenya, Belgium, and Germany. He has experience with livestock projects, handling experiments and research, and following experimental protocols. He was the manager of the small ruminant unit in Bansang (Eastern Gambia) for 15 years, where he played a pivotal role in a number of cross breeding research studies and has been published in The Journal of Veterinary Parasitology and The Veterinary Record. He is proficient at sampling blood, giving vaccines, recording weights, sampling feces, and similar lab work. Mr. Kora was the Niamina East site manager for the Projét régionale de gestion durable du bétail ruminant endémique (PROGEBE), where he coordinated and implemented the activities of the project's Gambian chapter across 47 villages. Specifically, he worked with local authorities and trained communities in official use of livestock. Currently,

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Sanyang Village, The Gambia

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Mr. Kora is employed as a consultant by The Gambia Livestock Marketing Agency (GLMA) and The Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA). His GIEPA team was just recognized as “best in the Central River Region.” He is also working to form an NGO entitled “National Breeder’s Association.” Mr. Kora has been involved with GGD since its inception, providing vital information about the prospect of rearing small ruminants for milk production in West Africa and participating in our stakeholder seminar to help develop a business plan for the organization.

**Dr. Carla Chieffo – Advisor**

Dr. Chieffo chairs the advisory board for the Gambia Goat Dairy. She holds a veterinary degree (VMD) and PhD from the University of Pennsylvania. After several years in clinical practice, she completed a residency in medical genetics, pediatrics and reproduction at Penn Vet. She was president of the University of Pennsylvania Veterinary Alumni Medical Society, member of the Dean’s Alumni Council, and is a member of the Student Inspiration Awards committee at Penn Vet. She participated in the Wharton Penn Executive Veterinary Leadership Program – Making an impact as a Global Health Leader. Dr. Chieffo is the author of several published scientific articles and has presented at numerous scientific meetings throughout her career. Dr. Chieffo is also president of the Paoli-Malvern-Berwyn Rotary club and is the chair of grants. She is also chair of the Christian Adult Education committee at her church. Dr. Chieffo worked in the Pharmaceutical Industry for over 20 years and has recently “semi” retired.

**Dr. David Galligan – Advisor**

Dr. Galligan holds a veterinary degree (VMD) from University of Pennsylvania and an MBA from Wharton. He is currently Marilyn M. Simpson Endowed Chair Professor Animal Health Economics and is Director of the Center for Animal Health and Productivity at the University of Pennsylvania, School of Veterinary Medicine. He is also Director of the Wharton VMD/MBA program. His area of research is in understanding the economic value of veterinary and associated technologies applied to food animal production systems. During his academic career he has written many computer programs that have been used by the dairy industry to promote production efficiency. His group at Penn Vet is globally recognized for their work in dairy nutrition and economic modeling of managerial decision making. He is keenly interested in issues regarding global food production. He has been to China several times where he is working on adapting US food animal (dairy cattle) nutrition models to conditions in China. He was an invited speaker at the First Large Herd Conference in China (last year) as well the Second Large Herd Conference (this year). He has published over 70 manuscripts on economic concepts and methodologies in food animal production. Dr. Galligan is also a founder and former board member of the Avon Grove Charter School, in West Grove PA, a K-12 school with over 1,300 students.

**Dr. Shannon Márquez – Advisor**

Dr. Márquez is the Vice Provost for Global Health & International Development at Drexel University. She serves as the Director (and Founder) of the Dornslife Global Development Scholars Program which leverages an innovative capacity-building partnership between Drexel

and World Vision International to provide global health training, experiential learning and funding for faculty/student research and student field experiences in 36 countries across Sub-Saharan Africa. Dr. Márquez has garnered international recognition for her work in water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH); health systems strengthening and capacity building; and the environmental burden of disease in developing countries. She holds a BS in mechanical engineering from Prairie View A&M University; a master's in civil engineering from Texas A&M University; and a PhD in environmental sciences and engineering from the UNC-Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health. She is a Professor in the Dornsife School of Public Health, as well as the Department of Civil, Architectural & Environmental Engineering (College of Engineering), and the Department of Biodiversity, Earth & Environmental Science (College of Arts & Sciences) at Drexel. She teaches graduate courses in WASH, global health ethics, public health in developing countries and maternal and child health—including graduate public health field courses in The Gambia and Cuba--and also helps support a number of interdisciplinary global health research, academic and training activities in Europe, Asia, Latin America, and Africa on behalf of Drexel. In addition, she has held distinguished faculty/research appointments at The University of The Gambia and Gambia College School of Public Health; the Université Gaston-Berger de Saint-Louis in Senegal; as an Erasmus Mundus Scholar at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Santé Publique (or EHESP, The French School of Public Health), and the University of Sheffield (UK) School of Health and Health Related Research (SchARR); and as an Associate Scholar at the University of Pennsylvania, Perelman School of Medicine-Center for Global Health. Dr. Márquez also serves on numerous boards and committees including, Power Up Gambia, the African Family Health Organization (AFAHO), and the Board of Directors of the Consortium of Universities in Global Health (CUGH).

**Ms. Lynn McConville – Advisor**

Ms. McConville is the Executive Director of Power Up Gambia, and non-profit organization that provides solar power to hospitals in Gambia Africa. Her previous work included non-profit project manager in watersheds and water quality education, and project management and administrative oversight on federal Transportation Enhancement grants awarded to Pennsylvania Resources Council from 2007 to 2009. She has served as a wetlands biologist with various private engineering firms and with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; as a research associate at the University of Pennsylvania and Oregon State University in acid rain and old growth forest ecology studies' and worked in West Africa in the 1980's as a Peace Corps volunteer managing reforestation projects as part of a USAID Reforestation Project in Senegal. As Executive Director of Power Up Gambia, Ms. McConville provides project management for Power Up Gambia projects in the field; provides administrative support for the organization; coordinates work of all volunteers and interns; assists in fundraising; and works with the board of Power Up Gambia on organizational strategy and project implementation.

**Briana Wilson – Veterinary Student**

Briana is a second year veterinary student at PennVet. She obtained a dual undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences and French Language from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master's of

Animal Science from Drexel University. During her undergraduate career, she traveled to Madagascar to study biodiversity and natural resource management. She has worked in the veterinary field for over 10 years, most recently as a companion animal emergency nurse at the Veterinary Specialty and Emergency Center and as a large animal anesthesia nurse. A lifelong Pennsylvania resident, Briana currently lives in Philadelphia with her three pet rats and enjoys eating, yoga, and running in her free time.

**Madeline McGovern – Engineering Student**

Madeline is a senior at The University of Pennsylvania studying mechanical engineering with a focus on entrepreneurship. She has spent time in Rwanda as a team member and leader of a Penn Engineering program that focuses on information communication technology projects and water projects in Gashora, Rwanda. While an engineering student, she has an interest in architecture and development and has always wanted to work in agriculture. She hopes that GGD will give her experience in food security and international development.