



Friends of Sierra Leone

May 2021 Newsletter

Sierra Leone Diamond Jubilee 1961-2021

On April 26th, the Sierra Leone Embassy hosted an online event to recognize the 60th year of Sierra Leone's Independence. This was followed up with a dinner at the Swahili Village Bar and Grill in Washington, DC. Friends of Sierra Leone board members, Peggy Murrah and Gary Schulze attended to represent our members.

The event was unique in that no government money was used to hold the event. Sierra Leonean diaspora raised the money needed to host it. This included all Sierra Leonean political parties, community-based organizations, and religious groups.

Ambassador Wai recognized Friends of Sierra Leone in his introductions and expressed appreciation for the work FoSL carries out.

He spoke about the challenges of the 11 year civil war, Ebola, the 2017 mudslide, and now Covid-19. The Ambassador praised Sierra Leone democracy and its principals of freedom of speech, checks and balances, and transparency. He explained President Bio's New Direction Agenda guaranteeing



the rights of all citizens as well as their access to basic necessities.

One of these is education. Free food and free textbooks is one way the government is trying to keep kids in school. Teachers' salaries have been increased and 21% of the budget is allocated to education. Additionally, the diaspora is working toward funding an Academy of Excellence school.

Ambassador Wai then discussed the progress in health. More facilities are being built and efforts are being made to provide treatment in country instead of people having to travel to other countries for some treatments. One important development is the First Lady's work for gender equality and the protection of women and girls. Her project is Hands Off Our Girls and combats rape, child

marriages, and domestic violence. Other areas such as infrastructure, tourism, food production, etc. were mentioned too.

One big achievement concerns the fight against corruption. Enough progress was made that Sierra Leone received a \$400 million Millennium Challenge Corporation grant for poverty eradication and economic growth.

With these ideas in mind, we hope you will join us in the upcoming Zoom meeting with Ambassador Wai. This will be the time to learn more and ask questions of the Ambassador concerning the current status of Salone.

Mid-term report on school building project at Kagbanka



SITUATIONAL REPORT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL AT KAGBANKA BANA, PAKI MASABONG CHIEFDOM, BOMBALI DISTRICT.

After the transfer of funds to the school account, it took us a month before we could access the money as some of those who were signatory to the school account left the community. The school and the community held an emergency meeting in order to appoint people that could operate the school account. Three people were appointed and minutes of the meeting were made available to the Bank Manager for the change of signatories. We were

referred to the Accountant General in Freetown, who after several weeks wrote the bank to grant our request. The school finally accessed the money on 12th December, 2020.

Before anything was done, we conveyed a meeting where stakeholders and teachers had lengthy discussions on how the project was to be managed. Brilliant ideas were suggested and were strictly followed during the implementation. Members of the two communities divided themselves into groups and each group was assigned to a role. For example, the groups were assigned to the provision of stones, sand, sticks, making of blocks, fetching of water, transferring of blocks from the production center to the project site etc. and they were very cooperative.

During the laying out and partitioning of the school foundation, the teachers made an appeal for the inclusion of an office space and a store to keep the school materials. At the moment, books and other school materials are all kept in community houses in the village which are not properly cared for and some got disappeared. Their request was accepted by the stakeholders and an office and a store have been included in the project.

The work has gone far; they are now on concreting the floor and plastering the walls both in and outside the building. The roof will soon be completed as the corner ridges are yet to be fixed up. The work on the windows is also in progress as the balusters are yet to get dried before they are fixed. Painting is also going to be done after the windows have been completed. Materials for the construction were all bought and currently available in the village.

The last report will be sent to you in May ending together with a complete picture of the school building. Your name will be inscribed on the wall as the funder

of the school building.

This report is written to keep you informed where the project work is at the moment. Following are photos of project activities carried out.

This report is to break the long silence between the project community and the donor partner, FOSL, USA. We highly appreciate your tremendous support you have given to our community that has changed the facelift of our community and has also made us and the children very proud. May God continue to bless you and the entire FOSL family in USA.

The final report will be sent soon after the completion of the entire project in May ending.

Wishing you every success in your undertakings,

Yours Faithfully,
Foday Sesay. Headmaster.



Community Welcoming building materials



Stakeholders on project planning meeting



School building is roofed



Partitioning of the school foundation



plastering of school building

Projects Report

Jim Hanson, Committee Chair

Attached are pictures of the water well funded by FoSL in June of last year. The digging was delayed until the dry season to ensure the well would produce water throughout the year. The grant was for \$2896 and will serve the orphanage that is home to about 25 Ebola orphans. A cover and hand pump will be installed when the digging is completed.

In December , the Board of Directors voted to fund three additional projects, all of them agricultural works. The Kamande Agricultural Project in the Jedia Community, outside of Kabala, received \$2950 for the purchase of cassava processing equipment. A rural beekeeping project in Kailahun received \$2500 for hive construction, equipment, and extension activities. Golden Drop Investments will train local farmers in beekeeping in the Borbu Town area. One Village Partners received \$500 for their work in Megbema Town in Kailahun, constructing drying floors and a rice store.

New applications are coming in as I write this before the April 30 application deadline. Donations to the projects fund are always welcomed and will be put them to use in Sierra Leone as soon as these new projects are selected and approved. Thank you for your continued support.



Water Well Construction

Gary Schulze Orphanage Center, Kakama Village

The under mention funded project from Friends of Sierra Leone for the well construction of a water well at the Gary Schulze Orphanage Center is ongoing. A comprehensive and final report will be made after the digging and fixing of the hand pump.



Announcements

For those who are looking for friends you've lost contact with or who have an announcement others may be interested in, this is your place to post it. Please send your request to Peggy at info@fosalone.org. Announcements regarding marriages, births, new jobs, deaths, or any other item of interest are welcome. Keep in mind newsletters usually come out twice a year.

Looking for

I am writing an article on John Weinberg who served in the Peace Corps in Sierra Leone from 1961-1963. Of interest is whether (other than Gary Schulz, Jim Sheahan or Mike Woldenberg, with whom I've already been in touch) anyone else from that group remembers or has **photographs of Sargent Shriver's visit from April 15-17, 1961**. Please e-mail me at rwhobe@gmail.com. (I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Libya 1968-1969.) Thanks.

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I was so pleased to see that we could drop you a line and see if you can help us find old friends from our PC days. I am looking for a friend named **Mark Jacobs** who was in my Peace Corps group 1969-71, stationed in northern Sierra Leone. Would it be possible to put me in touch with Mark? Thanks so very much, Carroll Long (Please email info@fosalone.org if you can help Carroll.)

In remembrance

Merrily Watters Thomas, a member of Friends of Sierra Leone since the 1990s, passed away on New Years Day. An inveterate traveler who visited six

continents, she considered her 1989 trip to Sierra Leone to be the highlight of her voyages.

Roberta Rabinoff Kaplan (Sierra Leone I) died July 10, 2020, in Washington, D.C. following a brief (non-COVID) illness. Roberta was much loved by her Peace Corps colleagues. She taught in the Magburaka Government Secondary School, and loved every minute of her time there. After leaving the Peace Corps she organized reunions of and kept in touch with fellow volunteers throughout her life.

Roberta was born in Colorado Springs, the youngest of four daughters of Abe and Rae (Wayt) Rabinoff, and grew up in Denver. She was valedictorian of her South High School graduating class in 1954. She went on to the University of Denver, which she attended on a highly-competitive statewide merit scholarship, and again graduated valedictorian of her class, and was also voted her class's Outstanding Woman. She was part of the first cohort of Peace Corps volunteers, serving for two years in Sierra Leone in the early 1960s, and remained an enthusiastic supporter of the Peace Corps' work throughout her life. A first career as a journalist followed, when she worked as a reporter for a Honolulu newspaper. She returned to the mainland to teach English for many years, primarily and most notably at the Benjamin N. Cardozo High School in Washington, DC., where she also served as yearbook advisor. After teaching, she worked first as a writer/editor at Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW), and later as an editor for the U.S. Department of Labor. In addition, she edited The European Payments Union, co-authored by her husband and Gunther Schleiminger, while living in Basel, Switzerland.

She leaves behind her sister Donna Peterson of Denver, eight nieces and

nephews, and many dear friends. She was predeceased by her husband of 43 years, Jacob (Jack) Kaplan, and is also survived by his daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She is also predeceased by sisters Shirley Duke (Jackson MS) and Virginia Boggis (Denver).

In Memory of Aiah Fanday's Mother one year anniversary, who passed on May 3 2020 and his Brother's three years anniversary, who passed on April 30 2018. May Their Souls Continued to Rest In Perfect Peace



Thank you to all who shared information.

FoSL Equity Statement

We are an affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA).

NPCA is the nonprofit alumni network at the center of a vibrant community of over 220,000 people who share the Peace Corps experience. NPCA champions lifelong commitment to Peace Corps ideals by connecting, engaging and promoting its members and affiliate groups as they continue to make a difference in communities in the U.S. and abroad.

Annual Meeting Update

Last year Friends of Sierra Leone had to cancel the planned annual meeting scheduled to be held on Sapelo Island. Even now, no plans for an in person meeting have been made. Instead, there will be a series of virtual meetings beginning in May. Our first speaker will be His Excellency Sidique Abou-Bakarr Wai, Sierra Leone Ambassador to the United States, Canada, Brazil, and several other countries. We are indeed honored to have Ambassador Wai take time from his schedule to meet with us.

This meeting is limited to Friends of Sierra Leone members only. It is necessary to be current in your dues in order to join the meeting. Information will be shared via the membership listserv.

Peter Andersen, Friends of Sierra Leone board member and the former Special Court Outreach and Public Affairs spokesperson, will be the speaker in our second virtual meeting. Future meetings include Ambassador David Reimer, the new US Ambassador to Sierra Leone. If you have an interest in anyone else connected to Sierra Leone, please let us know and we will see what we can do.

We look forward to having you join us.

NPCA is also dedicated to advocating for, contributing to, and supporting the betterment of the Peace Corps. Visit NPCA to learn more.

As an affiliate, we endorse and recommend the National Peace Corps Association's statement and action plan to fight racial injustice. It is time for change and it will start with us!

Link to the NPCA's statement on racial injustice:
<https://advocacy.peacecorpsconnect.org/stand-against-racial-injustice>

FoSL Election

Have you voted? If you are an active member and did not receive an email with voting instructions, please contact membership@fosalone.org. Voting closes May 25. Following are the 8 candidates nominated by the board.

President **Peggy Murrah (Social Circle, Georgia)**



Peggy Murrah retired in 2010 after 34 years of teaching, including two years as a primary teacher trainer in the Moyamba District in Sierra Leone from 1978 to 1980. The rest of her career was spent in Social Circle

City Schools teaching various subjects from 3rd through 12th grade including 17 years as a special ed teacher specializing in vocational training and job placement for high school students of all exceptionalities. She received her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Georgia. She has two daughters, a son-in-law and a grandson. Peggy joined the board of directors for Friends of Sierra Leone in 2002. She has served on various committees with FoSL and has helped plan and implement the three previous annual meetings held in Freetown and several in the States. She has served as president since 2005. She was part of the advocacy efforts to get the Peace Corps to return to Sierra Leone. She has served on the projects committee, annual meeting committee and participated in the advocacy committee efforts. In addition, beginning in 2004 and continuing, until her retirement in 2010, she managed a scholarship program funded by the students, faculty and community members of her school system

that funded all educational needs for a group of girls in Taiama, where she lived as a volunteer. She also raised the funds needed to open a primary school in Kenema Blango, a very remote tiny village in the Bo District near Mandu. The school includes 6 classrooms, a well, a teacher workroom, a storage area and latrines. This is the first school in the village. Per Peggy's plans at the last election on ways to assist in the recovery from the tragic and far reaching effects of the Ebola epidemic, she has worked with a donor to build a health clinic in Kenema Blango. The clinic will allow quicker and more direct access to health care in a fairly remote village. Peggy's plans for the future include continuing to work toward the goals of Friends of Sierra Leone

Vice President **Aiah Fanday (Silver Spring, Maryland)**



Aiah Fanday is a product of Prince of Wales Secondary School, Freetown Sierra Leone. He currently owns and manages his own company, Fanday's Events Rental, located in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. He is also a Manager for Burlington Company. He is actively involved in the Sierra Leonean Community. He is the past president of the Kono Union USA. He currently serves on the Friends of Sierra Leone (FOSL) Board as Vice President. Aiah has served on the projects committee, annual meeting committee and participated in the advocacy committee efforts.

Aiah earned both a Bachelor of Science in Business Management, and Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degrees from the University of Maryland. Aiah and his wife Sia are proud parents of two lovely boys and a daughter Sahr, Allieu and Nyambeh.

Secretary

Patty Flocch Bruzek (Lombard, Illinois)



Patty Flocch Bruzek was a PCV in Gbaima, Gbo Chiefdom (outside of Bo) from 1978-1980. She was a primary education volunteer while there. She taught briefly in the village and did workshops for Primary school

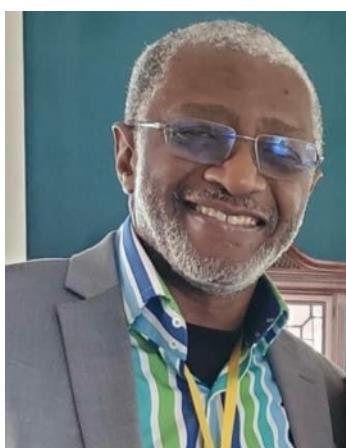
teachers with the Ministry of Education and other PCV's, and was also a volunteer leader for Education volunteers in the South for one year. She went back to Salone in 1987 for a visit, 2011 for the FoSL Annual Meeting, 2014 for a visit and 2018 for a wedding and to visit projects sponsored by FoSL. Patty also taught in Tokyo, Japan for 3 years at the American School in Japan.

Presently, Patty is retired from teaching 8th grade math in Lombard, IL and is married to Ken and has a son, Scott, who is working near Lexington, KY. She has been involved with FoSL for a number of years and is happy to be a part of a group that supports a country of people who mean so much to so many of us.

Public Affairs (Sierra Leone)

Amadu Massally (Sierra Leone)

Amadu Massally was born in Magburaka, Sierra Leone, but he moved to the United States as a young man in order to obtain higher education. He is, thus, a man of two worlds - both Africa and America - and he has used his knowledge and experience to help



bring those worlds together in positive ways.

He returned to Sierra Leone in 2009, and worked in both the private and public sectors. Massally is currently employed as a Consultant with the World Bank and coordinating a Sierra Leone Diaspora Investment and Trade Study. He recently was in the Office of the President as National Coordinator of the Open Government Initiative. Among the few things he does for his native Sierra Leone, he sees himself as an activist for national development. Amadu Massally is a true son of the soil and he exemplifies this every day in the activities he is involved in geared towards his native Sierra Leone.

Public Affairs (US)

Jim Sheahan (Atlanta, Georgia)

Jim Sheahan is retired from the Siemens Corporation where he was director of community and state government relations.



He previously served as communications director and public relations for Siemens Energy & Automation, Atlanta, Georgia. Earlier in his career he was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Sierra Leone ('61-'63); and on the Washington, DC staff Public Affairs staff. Following his service he was a publicist for MGM Films; director of public relations for U.S. Industries, Inc. in New York City. Jim has also been active in several local and national organizations including the Friends of Sierra Leone and the Georgia Youth Science & Technology Centers. Additionally, Jim was on the board of trustees at MedShare International, the Georgia Public Policy Foundation and past chairman of the Emory University Public Affairs Advisory Council. He holds a BA in History and English from Providence College and an MA in History and Government from Boston College.

Director at Large

Judi Figi (Janesville, Wisconsin)



Judy Figi served as a PCV 1964-6 at Harford School, Moyamba, where she taught music and French. She met her husband Dave there and they have 3 adult children, one of whom also was a

PCV, and a granddaughter and two grandsons. She also serves on the board of The Magic Penny. She is a Wisconsin native and earned her bachelor's and master's degrees at University of Wisconsin. She taught music for many years in Wisconsin before retirement.

She has served on the FoSL board for many years, working mainly in advocacy.

She is proud to have worked to return Peace Corps to Sierra Leone.

Director at Large

Gary Schulze (New York, NY)



Gary served in the first group of Peace Corps Volunteers to go to Sierra Leone in 1962. Taught Government, Art, and Civics at the Albert Academy in Freetown. Helped

establish the Sierra Leone National Museum. Serves as Vice President of The Magic Penny, an NGO which operates a primary school in the Moyamba District. Was installed as Honorary Paramount Chief Pieh Gbabyior Caulker of Kagboro Chiefdom in 2013. Awarded the Order of The Rokel (OOR), Sierra Leone's highest civilian honor by President Koroma at State House in 2014 "in recognition of his

tremendous contribution to the development of Education and the History and Culture of Sierra Leone." In 2013, discovered and brought to Sierra Leone the only existing photograph of Bai Bureh, the country's national hero. In 2019, he became a naturalized citizen of Sierra Leone.

Director at Large

Mohammed Barrie (Massachusetts)



Mohammed is a community activist and religious leader for the Sierra Leonean community in Massachusetts and fosters relationships with other communities to promote the welfare of Sierra Leoneans.

He is employed as a Global National Accounts Manager for Tyco Integrated Security. He is charged with the responsibilities of managing some of the major fortune 500 customers of Tyco Integrated Security in all phases of Business Development, systems design, Sales, service and installation of highly integrated industrial security solutions. This position has afforded me a wide range of international travel to Latin America countries, some part of the Middle East and Europe building network of business professionals.

In May of 2013 Mohammed was appointed Hon. Consul to serve the New England States by the President of Sierra Leone.

He is married to Jalahan Sisay Barrie and blessed with 5 children-4 boys and one beautiful girl. Received post Secondary education at Graham Junior College (now owned by BU) and Suffolk University.

20 ICONS OF SIERRA LEONE WHO SHAPED HISTORY

CURATED BY AKINDELE T.M. DECKER & ADRIAN Q. LABOR

ILLUSTRATED BY SAMANTHA EVERETTE



20 Icons of Sierra Leone Who Shaped History by Akindele T.M. Decker and Adrian Q. Labor

The Sierra Leone Icon series is a creative effort by Sierra Leoneans, Akindele T.M. Decker, a Poet & Writer, and Adrian Q. Labor, a Civil Engineer. Born in Sierra Leone and currently based in Maryland, Akindele attended the Sierra Leone Grammar School in the 1990s, and Adrian attended the Prince of Wales in the 1980s. Akindele's grandfather is the prominent Sierra Leonean Playwright and Journalist, Thomas A.L. Decker. Adrian's father was the notable Professor Adonis F. Labor, who taught at the Education and Mathematics Department at Fourah Bay College. For the past 13 years, Akindele has been involved in several cultural and tourism-based efforts such as the Sierra Leone-Gullah Connection. Adrian, through his

work as a Civil Engineer in Sierra Leone, led several engineering efforts inclusive of historic preservation of some of the country's national monuments. Both Adrian and Akindele are history enthusiasts, whose interests crossed paths when each were researching their family genealogies. Collectively, they have been researching their family histories for over 13 years, and they have been able to uncover family genealogy going as far back as the 18th century. Through their conversations on each other's family history, they realized their ancestor's stories were intertwined with many important and significant histories of Sierra Leone in general. This led the two history buffs to follow the trail of history and with each information unearthed it became clear that Sierra Leone history is rich and needs to be rediscovered. There are many important historical facts about Sierra Leone and its connections to world history that is not generally available to Sierra Leonean communities, especially the younger generation. They decided to take on the challenge of igniting a renaissance of Sierra Leone's history using new and emerging technology in authoring, illustrating, disseminating and publishing via the Internet and learning environments.

Sierra Leone has the oldest westernized university in West Africa, Fourah Bay College; the oldest westernized boys secondary school in Grammar School and girls school in Annie Walsh Memorial School. Maroon Church was founded by Jamaican Maroons from Jamaica who made Freetown their home in 1800 and some of their descendants remain there today. The same can be said for Zion Methodist Church, founded by black American Settlers in 1792. Sierra Leone's harbour was one of the most strategic in Africa for the Allied Forces during World War II. Sherbro Island is likely home to one of the first black (Afro-European) westernized communities in West Africa. Bunce Island with a centuries-old slave fort, is just as important to the middle-passage narrative, as Ghana's Elmina and Senegal's Goree. Akindele and Adrian felt that it is important that within the educational, tourism and cultural sectors, there needs to be more appreciation for Sierra Leone's history, beyond what is known in the mainstream.

After much deliberation, the two Sierra Leoneans decided to pursue their interests and passion for Sierra Leone history, by curating and publishing a

series centered on Sierra Leone's Icons. They embarked on a year-long period of researching Sierra Leone history books, several primary sources, and conversations with historians. One of the challenges they faced was that many of the sources were primary accounts of European Missionaries and Colonial Officials working in or travelling around the country. It was their perspective of Sierra Leone, that mainstream history kept in the forefront. The duo came across several stellar history books and articles written by Sierra Leoneans that weren't in the mainstream as leading narratives of Sierra Leone history. Historians such as Dr. Arthur Abraham and Dr. Arthur Porter, among others, tried to and actually changed a lot of those perspectives by telling our own stories. Being that Adrian and Akindele aren't Academic historians and also first-time self-publishers, they tried their best to confirm accuracy of facts, though their ultimate goal was to present creative curated books for children and students, with enough to encourage them to seek and learn more about Sierra Leone history. For young people today, many are aware of the names, but not necessarily aware of what they did, what impact they had, the magnitude of their achievements.

In December 2020, the 1st edition in the series, covering mostly generally known Icons and several lesser known Icons, called "20 Icons of Sierra Leone Who Shaped History" was published. It features an Icon who composed the music to the National Anthem; a Limba Chief; 3 Women Paramount Chiefs; a World War II Hero; a Sherbro who was enslaved during the transatlantic slave trade and returned to help establish Freetown. Also featured is a world-renowned young Sierra Leonean fashion designer who's fashion brand took Sierra Leone to the world stage, a Hero Scientist who was featured in Time Magazine because of his courage during the ebola pandemic, the 2nd woman to graduate from Fourah Bay College, and many more. For several weeks after publishing in December 2020, the 1st edition made it to the top 100 list for Amazon's Bestseller in African Literature. The overwhelming support from the Sierra Leonean community since the launch of the book exemplifies how much books like these are needed.

One of the interesting things about these Icons is how they represent not just the diversity of Sierra Leone, but the hybrid and mix of our people. Dr. Easmon, a Krio essentially, worked in Moyamba

as a Medical Official for decades, even learning to speak Mende fluently. He ended up becoming Chair of the Monuments & Relics Commission, likely because of his travels around the country. John Akar, who was part Lebanese, born in Rotifunk, composed the music to the National Anthem.

Another goal Adrian and Akindele had in mind was to have a variety of output for the series. In addition to a written portion of the book, the visual illustrations were valued just as much. The illustrations would help showcase these Icons around the country, in local museums, public spaces, schools, offices, and places that Sierra Leonean communities can get constant reminders of the immeasurable value of the country and people. Sierra Leoneans have achieved many great things, and this needs to be visible in the most beautiful aesthetic way possible. The Illustrator for the book series, Samantha Everette, is an African American Artist and Photographer based in North Carolina. She is also a very well known personality in the global black travel movement, having led excursions to various places around the world.

Icons such as Bai Bureh, Madam Yoko, Sengbeh Pieh and John Akar are well known among Sierra Leoneans. Bai Bureh and Madam Yoko's paintings are on walls around central Freetown and at the Museum. Adrian and Akindele wanted young people to have access to these Icons beyond the paintings on the walls on the street, and into their homes, in their hands. It goes a long way for a child in Moyamba, Bombali District or Kono to hold a book in their hands and look into faces that look like them. Even if they can't read well yet, the illustrations may still be a tool to empower them, to believe they can achieve something because someone from their area did as well. It is important that empowerment and national identity awareness isn't only limited to the Freetown. Young people should know that there have always been efforts through decades of industry and science, education, and visionaries that originated from provinces other than Western area.

Since the publishing of the children's and student versions of the 1st edition in the Sierra Leone Icons series, much has been achieved. Many books have been bought by families in Sierra Leone and in the Diaspora. Organizations such as Schools for Salone, which administers over 20 schools have bought several of the children's

versions for schools across Sierra Leone. A former NFL footballer, and Sierra Leonean descendant, bought bulk copies of each version. Reading sessions were made available to pre-school centres such as Narnia Daycare and the Freetown City Council Early Learning Adventure Centre at Congo Water, Wellington. Adrian and Akindele held a zoom learning session for students at a Charter school in New York, and are working with an elementary school in Freetown to host another zoom learning session with all of their students. A key objective is to make each book in the Icon series available to as many children and young people in Sierra Leone as possible. Through their history curation company, the two founded in 2020, called African Curator, they hope to utilize various forms of technology tools, creativity, and partnerships to make the books available in various formats and platforms that children and young people can have access to.

On April 30th, a few days after Sierra Leone's 60th Independence anniversary, African Curator, in collaboration with the Sierra Leone National Museum, Yasmin Tells, Monuments and Clerics Commission and the Ministry of Tourism installed a Sierra Leone Icons exhibit at the National Museum in Freetown. The exhibit, which will be available for the public for a month, showcases each of the Icons featured in the 1st edition. One of the Icons featured in the 1st edition is Dr. M.C.F. Easmon. Dr. Easmon served as Curator and Chairman during the initial years of the Sierra Leone Museum and the Monuments and Clerics Commission. The hope is that this can be another platform that families in the communities and students can access and be empowered by the amazing stories of impact and achievement, each Icon presents.

Adrian and Akindele are already working on the 2nd edition in the series, "20 Women of Sierra Leone Who Shaped History". They have added Edleen Elba and Dr. Aisha Fofana Ibrahim, two well known Sierra Leonean contemporary women pioneers. The 2nd edition is anticipated to be published in May 2021. The ultimate goal is to continue with the Icon series for as long as possible, and along the journey, inspire more young Sierra Leoneans to develop an interest in the country's history and become its primary storytellers and cultural preservationists.

African Curator continues to explore several other areas of Sierra Leone history and foster its

vision to make more historical data available to communities that need them.

The Sierra Leone Icons Website:
www.sierraleoneicons.com
African Curator Website:
www.africancurator.com
Contact Email:
info@africancurator.com

New Email List Server

Yahoo has discontinued their email list service which they provided to us for many years. Please update your addressbook by replacing the old address with fosl_mbr@googlegroups.com. Not on our email list? Subscribe at <https://fosalone.org/listserv.php>

Report from the FoSL sponsored Golden Drop Project

FUNDING REQUEST TO FRIENDS OF SALON

Project Name/Title : Golden Drop, rural beekeeping

Project Location : Kailahun District, Sierra Leone

Applicant's Postal and Physical Address: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)-Kailahun

Contact Person : Fatoma Joe Momodu, Alex Vandi Saffa

Contact number : +23276504557 / +23277020962 / +23276946363 / +23288175747

Email: fjmomodu95@gmail.com vandialexsaffa123@gmail.com

Project Duration: 6 months

Total Project Budget:

73,225,000 LE (7,515.23 USD)

Community Contribution: 45,225,000 Le

Amount Requested: 28,000,000 Le

The Kailahun District of Sierra Leone is one of the furthest areas from the capital city of Freetown. Large scale economic operations are almost non-existent and most of the population lives in a rural setting, supporting themselves through subsistence farming or petty trading. The goal of this project is to make a substantial change in the economic landscape of Kailahun by introducing a honey cooperative. Outside of what the project team has already done, sustainable honey production doesn't exist in the Kailahun district.

The main objective of the project is to provide sustainable income to farmers by providing them with training and tools (reusable beehives) to produce and sell their own honey. Secondary objectives are to increase crop yields by more effective pollination and environmental restoration. The first objective will be completed by manufacturing and constructing 225 reusable bee hives which will be distributed to farmers in Baiama Pelewama, Baiama Lelah, Nganyagohun, Nyanyahun, Talia, and Nyandahun in the Kailahun district. After the distribution farmers will receive training on how to effectively keep bees. The project will target ~120 farmers and their families. The total budget for the project is 73,225,000 Le. Golden Drop requests a grant of 28,000,000 Le to help enable use to reach the minimum threshold for the project budget.

This project will have a significant economic impact on the Kailahun community. The model that is being proposed in this project will allow rural farmers to sell a product that doesn't spoil, has a growing demand domestically and an estimated 10.4% growth rate internationally¹. Furthermore, beekeeping has been shown to preserve nature and improve agricultural yields².

1. <https://www.marketwatch.com/press-release/organic-honey-market-2019-global-industry-demand-recent-trends-size-and-share-estimation-by-2024-with-top-players---360researchreportscom-2019-09-25>
2. <https://www.apjol.info/index.php/qjass/article/view/79068>

presentation on beekeeping and then interested farmers will be selected to participate. Each farmer will receive 3 - 5 bee hives and a portion of beeswax (to attract the bees) all free of charge. They will also have access to bee suits and smokers. After receiving their supplies, they will participate in a 3-day training on the installation and monitoring of hives. The Golden Drop team has already conducted similar training in the past, and has built over 30 bee hives. This first phase will be a simple replication of the process in new communities.

PHASE 2: Farmers will harvest the honey after a short waiting period. (Note: it takes about one year for the first harvest, then subsequent ones will happen every 3-4 months.) The harvesting process is relatively simple and only requires a bee smoker and bee suit, which will be available to the farmers. 60% of the honey yield will go back to Golden Drop, to sustainably expand this model to other communities, and 40% will go to the farmer. It is expected that the farmers will earn 300,000 - 400,000 le in the first year and then 1,200,000 Le in the following years once the hives have been established. Based on the scope of the project this amounts to providing an additional 220,000,000 le per year to the various communities this project is targeting.

The Golden Drop team has already built a storage facility where farmers can either buy or sell their honey. The team has also paid for a gravity filter (~5,000,000 le) for further filtration of the honey.

Project Activities:

No.	Activity Description	Timeline
1	Contract carpenters in the target communities and explain bee box construction	Month 1
2	Host meetings in the target villages explaining the project and recruiting participants	Month 1
3	Bee boxes completed	Month 2
4	Three day training for farmers	Month 2
5	Distribution of hives and beeswax	Month 3
6	Setting up hives in the forest	Month 3

Introduction: The project team has already successfully executed on similar projects and has the necessary experience for the proposed one. The two executive members of the project both work for the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, each with in-depth knowledge pertaining to agriculture and rural farming. In early 2019, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry they provided 30 beehives to a local farming group in Borbu village, Kailahun District. The farmers have been able to realize over 675 lbs or 306 kg of honey and are expecting more. Similarly, between December 2019 and March 2020 the project team built and distributed an additional 60 hives to a new group of farmers. Furthermore, the project team constructed a honey processing facility with an office, saleroom, meeting room, and honey processing area.

Problem: Kailahun district is primarily a farming district with the majority of farmers focusing on cassava, lowland rice, ground nut, pepper, coffee, and cocoa. Unfortunately, based on a field survey conducted in July 2019 of the farmers who focus on subsistence farming they only average ~1.5 sources of income. Furthermore, the average income for most of the farmers in rural Kailahun district doesn't exceed 350,000 le (\$35 USD) per month. Evidence suggests that with an average of 5.1 number of dependents this income is already insufficient. However, with low income and a single source of income many of the farmers are at a significant risk of having no income if drought or disease were to impact their crops. Value added production, such as processing cassava into gari, is one way farmers can increase their income and income diversity. However, most lack the requisite training and capital to buy the required machinery to perform such value added activities. Ultimately the farming and trading activities in rural Kailahun district don't currently meet household income requirements and there isn't a reliable option for farmers to earn more income..

Project Description: The proposed project will be carried out as follows.

PHASE 1: The team will contract a carpenter in each target village to build reusable bee hives. The carpenters will be instructed on the specifications of the hive as to replicate the hives currently being used. The team is targeting 225 bee hives spread across Nganyagohun, Baiama Pelewama, Baiama Lelah, Talia, Nganyahun, and Nyandahun villages all in Luawa Chiefdom, Kailahun District. Once the hives are complete farmers from the community will be invited to

7	First harvest (delayed)	Month 12
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Beneficiaries: This project will have an impact on a large swath of the rural population in the Kailahun district. The primary beneficiary group is farmers. However, since this is one of the few farming activities that requires little physical capacity there is an option to expand it to physically disabled communities as well. The project will directly impact 120 farmers and their families in year one with exponential growth in the following years. The indirect beneficiaries are the farmers' families and the petty traders who will be selling the products at market.

Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan: The project team has formulated several safeguards to ensure the project stays on track.

1. When selecting carpenters there will be a first and second option in the community. If the project starts falling behind on time, the second option will be used to speed up the construction process.
2. In the timeline outlined above there was a buffer month added between the completion of the hives and the distribution of the hives. In the event construction falls behind schedule that month will be used.
3. The executive team has committed to meeting every week to confirm both budget and project timeline are progressing as expected. Furthermore, the executive team is committed to visiting project sites every week during the construction of the hives and then monthly after the hives have been distributed to support the farmers.
4. At each meeting a detailed budget on what was purchased, how much laborers were paid, and any other expenses. If unexpected expenses come up those will be addressed during these meetings.

Community Contribution or Startup Capital: The community has already made significant contributions towards the success of this project and plans to make more during the project period.

4. It is expected that Golden Drop will have 260,000,000 le yearly after the second year to reinvest in building storage facilities, processing centers, distribution networks in other communities in Sierra Leone.
5. Farmers will have opportunities for continuous training and collaboration, thus leading to more opportunities for efficiency.

No	Items Contributed By Community	Cost / Estimated
2	Labor involved with securing timber, setting up hives, and organizing training sessions.	TBD
3	Donation of land for storage facility	TBD
3	Community / Golden Drop team will fund training for farmers (food & transport)	~4,000,000 le
4	Community / Golden Drop team will fund the production of sheets of timber	~17,000,000 le
5	Administration & Salaries (2 workers) – 6 months.	12,000,000 le

Sustainability of the Project: The project proposed is only the first phase of what the Golden Drop team plans to do in the impacted communities. The project will be the catalyst for further expansion. The proposed model works as follows:

1. Hives are given out free of charge to farmers
2. Farmers are trained on sustainable beekeeping. *Note: In many parts of Sierra Leone beekeeping isn't sustainable, both the hives and bee colonies are destroyed after harvest. This is a cheaper model, but long term isn't as economically or environmentally friendly.*
3. Farmers will give 60% of the honey they produce back to Golden Drop, which will be sold and the profits used for funding further expansion into other communities

Project Committee: Create a Project Committee to provide oversight of the project management and activity implementation. Members of the Project Committee must come from the community. Provide names, titles and phone numbers, like this:

Name	Title	Number
FATOMA JOE MOMODU	Project Manager	+23276504557/+23277020962
MORIE FATOMA	Logistics Officer	+23275481746
MORIE ANSUMANA	Secretary General	+23277261180
GBESSAY KAMARA	Hive Monitor	+23277210759
AMINATA VANDI	Admin / Financial	+23276542942
MARTHA MORIE	Advisor	+23276360748

Business Plan: The project is a hybrid in that it will both be a business (for sustainability) and a community support project (free hives to local farmers).

Feasibility: The critical factors in implementing this project are maintaining a consistent supply and finding wholesale buyers. The team has already but in place strategies for both. In regards to maintaining supply, the team will hold a percentage of the product as a surplus to provide a cushion during shortages. Since honey doesn't have an expiration date if properly stored a certain proportion of it can be kept in reserve to offset a weak harvest. For example, the Golden Drop team is expected to produce between 1700 - 2000 batas available per sale in a given year. Not all of those will be earmarked for sale.

The team's strategy for maintaining strong a strong network of buyers is to use both domestic and international sales funnels. The Golden Drop team has already opened a line of communication with an international honey exporter based in Makeni. Since the demand for pure honey is also strong domestically the team plans on selling the product wholesale to local petty traders in the villages where they operate. One critical advantage Golden Drop has is they will be able to sell throughout the whole year, not just during the harvesting periods, which is when most farmers sell since they don't have a sustainable source of honey.

Market Research: The organic honey market is still early in the growth phase of its lifecycle. The demand for organic honey products exceeds current supplies and thus prices have been increasing over the last few years in developed economies. Europe and America have the highest demand at 39% and 31% respectively. According to research, "the organic honey market is expected to grow at a CAGR of roughly 10.4% over the next five years, will reach 910 million US\$ in 2024" ([360 Research Reports](#), Organic Honey Market). Furthermore, the African market has a growing demand, with the continent consuming three times more than what the region produces. ([Bizcommunity](#), Growing Demand for Natural Honey from Happy Bees).

Budget: For international buyers (wholesale) the Golden Drop team expects to sell one 45 gallon drum of honey for 400,000 le and for domestic trading the price per drum will be 500,000 le as we expect those trades to happen on a smaller scale. We expect that within the first twelve months of the completion of this project the total revenue from over 500 hives will be at least 30 million leones a month. 90% of that revenue will be reinvested in building new hives to give away for farmers in Eastern Sierra Leone. 10% will be held as a reserve for major repairs, to buy new products, or one time advertising.

Map and Location:

After reaching Kailahun town you take the road that goes to the Topumbu section of Kailahun. You will pass the Kailahun Government Hospital and continue on to the next town, Bobobo. Once you arrive at the town, the office and storage facility is on the right after passing over the bridge.





Budget

No.	Item	Unit Price	Quantity	Amount
1	Beeswax	25,000	12	300,000
2	Nails	15,000	450	6,750,000
3	Wood Boards (1x12x14)	35,000	450	15,750,000
4	Labor / Carpenter (per box)	50,000	225	11,250,000
5	Zinc / Tin	23,000	225	5,175,000
6	Training Food	24,000	55 (people)	1,320,000
7	Training Facilities	24,000	55 (people)	1,320,000

8	Facilitators	340,000	4 (3 day trainings)	1,360,000
9	Bee Suits	400,000	35 suits	14,000,000
10	Bee Smoker	200,000	5 smokers	3,000,000
11	Transportation			1,000,000
12	Admin / Salaries (2 people) : 6 months	2,000,000 / month	6 months	12,000,000
	Current Contributions / Purchases			
	TOTAL			73,225,000
13	Storage Facility Construction / Construction of 60 bee boxes			29,992,500 (Already Built NOT in budget)



GOLDEN DROP INVESTMENT MEMBERSHIP ON TRAINING



COLONIZED BEE HIVE



CONSTRUCTION OF HONEY PROCESSING CENTER



COMPLITION OF HONEY PROCESSING CENTER AT BORBU



COLONIZED BEE HIVE



BEE HIVES READY FOR DISTRIBUTION



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