

# Sierra Leone Education and Development Trust

*Registered charity number 1158253*

## **Our work in 2018**

*Including our annual report and accounts for the year ending 31 December 2017*



Fatmata Conteh cannot walk because she suffered polio when she was a little girl. Soon we will deliver her adapted tricycle called a 'mobility cart'.

## **Our approach**

We are a small charity set up in 2013 to support children in one of the world's poorest countries, where most people live on less than one pound each day. We use our money to enable children and young people in several villages to benefit from education and vocational training opportunities. We know every one of our beneficiaries personally. In January 2018 there were 69. Not a pound is spent on administration. All our printing and postage costs are met by donors. Everybody involved in the charity is an unpaid volunteer. We have no paid staff and our UK trustees claim no expenses whatsoever.

## Our four programmes

### 1. Sponsoring the brightest primary school leavers so that they can go to secondary school

Thanks to the generosity of a growing numbers of donors we were able to expand our programmes in 2017.



Alhusine Kamara is an orphan living with his grandmother in poverty in Mahera village. A very bright boy, we are sponsoring his school education.

When the Trust was launched in 2013 we had only one programme. We supported the secondary school education of the brightest children from primary schools in the villages of Mahera and Shenge. This remains our biggest programme in terms of spend. We now pay the school fees of fourteen children for the seven years of secondary education. Children are usually selected for us by primary school head teachers on the basis of their exceptional performance in the final year national examinations.

Without our support, these able children could not afford a secondary school education. The words of Haja Kamara, head teacher of Mahera school, are worth quoting: 'Thank you for sponsoring Fatmata. Before you helped her, she was doing nothing in the village. Now she is doing well in her fourth year at secondary school. I believe she has the potential to be a community leader in the future'. Fatmata was the first student we supported back in 2013. To leave

these clever girls and boys with no hope of improving their lives through education seemed to us profoundly unjust.

Our founding trustee, Kevin Curley, visits every student each November, travelling to Sierra Leone at his own expense. This enables us to identify other needs. For example, sometimes we buy a mosquito net or a desk, chair and small solar lamp for a student. If they are to succeed our students must avoid malaria and be able to study comfortably at night. It costs between £160 and £200 to sponsor each student.

In 2018 one of the students we support – Charles – will complete his secondary education. He has already asked us if we will pay his university fees. This presents the trustees of the charity with a real challenge. University fees are much higher than school fees. If we support Charles to go to university we will not be able to support four new students at secondary level. To date the trustees have resolved that only students with ‘exceptional performance’ in the final secondary school examination will be supported to go to higher education. We welcome donors’ views on this dilemma.

With the help of our volunteers in Sierra Leone we have found out about some higher education sponsorship opportunities from wealthy individuals and private sector companies. We will tell our students about these and help them to apply.

## **2. Providing mobility equipment for disabled children and young people**

This year we gave a total of 20 disabled children and young people either a wheelchair or an adapted tricycle – called a ‘mobility cart’ – or both. In December, wheelchairs and ‘carts’ were taken by boat to several remote villages on Shabro Island and the Turtle Islands. Nobody living in these villages had ever seen a mobility cart before. Large crowds of villagers came together to celebrate the occasion.



Boima Kallon lives in Shama, a fishing village on the island of Shabro. She suffered polio when she was very young and cannot walk. We gave her this adapted tricycle, called a 'mobility cart' so that now she can get to school and enjoy a dignified and independent social life.

Many of these youngsters are so disabled that they could only get to school or visit their friends by crawling, often in sand or dirt. They would often miss school, especially when it rained. Most were disabled by polio in early childhood, at a time when the national vaccination programme fell apart because of the civil war. It is clear to us that mobility equipment restores dignity to young people and gives them a measure of independence.

When we visit villages and tell people about the equipment we can provide we are often asked to help older disabled people as well as young people. It is very difficult to justify to village leaders why we only help young people and we have now decided to help disabled people of all ages. The programme is not expensive. The mobility carts are donated to disability charities in Sierra Leone by Mobility Worldwide, a charity based in the USA. We pay for the assembly and distribution costs and for the travel expenses of volunteers who promote awareness of the equipment in the villages and then deliver items to disabled people.

It costs less than £150 to deliver a mobility cart to a disabled person and £180 to deliver a wheelchair. Wheelchairs cost more because we have to buy them in Freetown. Most disabled students and adults want a mobility cart but if their upper body is very weak a wheelchair is more suitable.

### **3. Supporting the Mustard Seed Foundation's children's home**

The Mustard Seed Foundation was established 20 years ago by the Freeman family in Moyamba, a small town about 110 miles from Freetown. It provides a loving home and primary school for 28 disabled and disadvantaged children and young people under 19 years of age. The founder is now an old lady in her eighties, but she still helps the older children to prepare food each evening. Her daughter Roselyn runs the home, and Skynie, Roselyn's daughter, is a senior care worker.

There are few children's homes in Sierra Leone which cater for disabled children, some of whom have severe learning difficulties. Mustard Seed receives no support for the state and relies on donations from well-wishers in Sierra Leone and abroad. Kevin Curley discovered the home by chance on his second visit to the country in 2010 and recognised the exceptional quality of care provided by the Freemans. We have helped them since 2012 by funding new beds, physiotherapy equipment and the salary of one additional care

worker who focusses on the needs of the most severely disabled children. In 2017 our support totalled £1520.

#### **4. Small business development**

Our first request to support a small business came from Sidiki, a skilled motor bike mechanic who had set up a repair workshop on the edge of Mahera village. When Kevin Curley visited the workshop in 2013 he found six young guys being taught by Sidiki to repair motor bikes. All of them were primary school leavers without any other source of income. Both repair work and learning was limited by a lack of hand tools so we bought a large number of them to support the trainees.

In 2017 the first young man, Abu Bakar, left the workshop and set up his own workshop in a neighbouring village called Rotifunk. We have now equipped his workshop too with a large number of hand tools. Both workshops are doing well and have taken on a total of four more 'apprentices'. Motor bikes are more numerous than cars in Sierra Leone and the number is increasing all the time. Demand for repair services can only grow.

We have directly contributed to the creation of 10 training opportunities for young people at a cost of about £800.

We have also supported three young people to start very small trading activities so that they can make money to pay their educational expenses. We have given them a combination of small loans and grants. One is selling headphones, another food stuffs and the third is running a video games room. Recognising the risk involved, we will see how these three young people get on in 2018 before helping anyone else in this way.

#### **Trustees and Volunteers**

The Trust has five trustees. They are Richard Bogg, Kevin Curley CBE (Chair), Mike Clemson, Mike Martin MBE and Ralph Steen. The trustees decide the policies of the charity, fundraise and scrutinise the work and the expenditure.

The work is carried out by volunteers Kevin Curley, Chernor Barrie, Sulaiman Bah, Alimu Sitta, Foday Conteh, Haja Kamara and Skynie Freeman. All the volunteers except Kevin are Sierra Leoneans. Nobody is paid but the Sierra Leone volunteers receive modest travel and phone expenses. Chernor Barrie,

a 24 years old university student of peace and reconciliation studies, is our Country Representative in a voluntary unpaid capacity. We want to acknowledge the huge amount of voluntary work our volunteers carry out for the Trust and the very special contribution of Chernor Barrie from Bonthe on the island of Shabro. In 2017 Chernor organised the delivery of 20 'mobility carts' and wheelchairs, distributed grants to all our sponsored students, opened our Sierra Leone bank account and began the process of registering our charity with the Ministry of Social Welfare in Freetown. He really is an exceptionally dedicated young man.



Mohamed Mustafa is 13 and lives in Hanging Side village on the island of Shabro. At the age of 6 he suffered severe burns in a kitchen fire and cannot walk easily. With the 'mobility cart' we gave him he can now get to school every day and enjoy life with his friends.

## **Donors and Finances**

We are indebted to all our donors. We want to express our very special thanks to Stag Geological Services Limited, based in Berkshire. This company has funded the Trust each year since 2013. Their donation in 2017 was £2000.

We now have 21 monthly donors. Together with tax refunds under 'Gift Aid' these donors guarantee the Trust an income of £4400 in 2018. Your support is invaluable to us, enabling us to plan ahead with confidence.

In addition to our monthly donors 27 people donated a total of £2600 to our Christmas Appeal 2017.

Our income in 2017 was £11,811 and our expenses were £10,600. At the end of December 2017 the balance in our bank account was £12,658. We maintain a healthy balance so that we can be certain of meeting our commitments to all our sponsored students should there be a dip in income in the future. At the end of December 2017 we reserved £7,800 to ensure that we can meet these commitments. Trustees keep a close eye on the balance and will not permit it to grow to an unreasonable level.

We employ no paid staff. Trustees of the charity claim no travel or any other expenses. Our volunteers in Sierra Leone are given modest travel expenses and a contribution to their mobile phone costs. They use their phones to communicate both with beneficiaries and with trustees in the UK.

We incur no fundraising expenses other than the website hosting fee. The website is our principal fundraising tool. Annual reports are printed without charge by Stag Geological Services, our principal donor. Postage costs are funded by a donor. We have no administration costs. Unfortunately, as the accounts show, we incur bank charges in both the UK and Sierra Leone.

Our income and expenses statement is attached to this annual report.



## Can you help us?

We need donors to support our work. A regular monthly donation enables us to plan ahead with confidence. £10 each month, for example, produces £150 in 12 months including 'Gift Aid' if you are a tax payer. That sends another bright child from a poor home to secondary school or provides vital mobility equipment to a disabled student.

The best way to donate is through our website so that we get the income tax refund back quickly under 'Gift Aid' arrangements. Please go to [www.sierraleoneaid.org.uk](http://www.sierraleoneaid.org.uk) and click on the MyDonate button on the home page.

If you prefer, please send a cheque payable to Sierra Leone Education and Development Trust to Kevin Curley CBE, 6 Cumberhills Road, Duffield, Belper, Derbyshire DE56 4HA



Alhusine Kamara (in the red shirt) on the beach in Mahera with his friends. We sponsor his school education, paying fees and giving his grandmother money for his uniform, bag, books and other expenses. He did very well in the 2017 exams so we bought him a football. He was very pleased – and so were his mates!

## Sierra Leone Education and Development Trust

### Income and expenditure in 2017

#### Income

Donations from individual supporters through MyDonate	£7,230.37
Other donations from individual supporters	£2,567.00
Donation from Stag Geological Services Limited	£2,000.00
Give as you live	£7.26
Triodos bank interest	£7.25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£11,811.88</b>

#### Expenditure

Support for secondary school students	£5,736.99
Support for disabled students and adults	£1,787.91
Support for Mustard Seed Foundation children's home	£1,520.00
Small business development/training grants	£1,044.99
Triodos bank charges including foreign transfers	£232.40
Sierra Leone volunteers' travel and related expenses	£179.37
Website hosting fee	£60.00
Sierra Leone bank and phone charges for distributing grants	£39.25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£10,600.91</b>

Funds held at Triodos bank at year end £12,658.24

*Note: of this amount £7,800 is reserved to ensure that we can meet our commitments to sponsored students throughout their 7 years of secondary education.*