

History and Objectives

In 2015 the Trustees were committed to support Education, Sport and the Church in Sierra Leone. In fact 2015 was the first full calendar year of operation for the Charity. We had previously worked with our friends in Sierra Leone through our local church, St Andrews, Linton Road, Oxford.

Whilst our prime objectives are channelling support through Education, Sport and Church the work in 2015 was greatly overshadowed by the effect of the Ebola virus.

Ebola

At the beginning of April 2015 Pastor Yatta wrote to us *“It has not been easy this period, it has been a difficult time for us, but thank God we have people like you that has stood behind us in prayers and for supporting us financially, putting food on our table every day. We are grateful to God for people like you. On behalf of the Sierra Leone ministry I say a big thank you, may the good Lord bless you and double for you whatever you have given.*

He continued *“Please keep praying for us and for the Ebola Survivors.... Those who were affected by the virus were taken to treatment centres and where cared are now stigmatized, they are referred to as results of witchcraft. Indeed everyone is running away from the Survivors so many have lost families and friends. For example "Fatmata"...A lady who survived the Ebola virus said, I am learning to live a new life in the home without a husband and without my 2 children as they ran away from me when I returned from the hospital. What a shame.*

One of the problems we will be facing as a nation is with the children that have lost their parents. I went as part of the delegation with the Government Ministry responsible for Children in Bo, Makeni and Kenema. I tell you my friends it is pathetic what I saw were two year old children without parents....”

The full content of Pastor Yatta’s newsletters is at: www.lovesierraleone.org/

Education

In furtherance of our goal of supporting education we have been pleased to work with Ahkom Vocational Centre and the “Right to Read” project. We were pleased to learn that Ahkom became an independent charity in its own right in December 2015.

Financial overview 2015

In 2015 we introduced support for Ahkom School and a RightToRead project, both of which brought new donors so our income increased. We also received about £3,000 in back-dated Gift Aid. We collected just over £30,384 in donations and Gift Aid and we spent just over £29,296 broken down approximately as follows:

Christian Community Church £16,900

- Teachers’ Salaries £7400
- School Buildings & Equipment £500
- Church & Sports Ministries £6000
- Travel & other expenses £3000 (including online donation fees and bank transfer fees)

Ahkom School and Vocational Centre £7,600

- Teachers' Salaries £6200
- Travel & other expenses £1400

RightToRead Sierra Leone £4,600

- Salaries £1000
- Educational equipment (laptop, projector, speakers, books, etc.) £1700
- Teacher training & local publicity £800
- Vehicle repairs £1100

The schools were shut for much of 2015 due to Ebola. Indeed sometimes even the churches had to be closed. The Trustees took the view that Pastors and Teachers needed to be paid throughout the year irrespective of whether their place of work was open or not. The Trustees decided that getting funds to those whose need was great was the correct action in the face of such an awful humanitarian crisis. This action also helped retain staff and was an entirely appropriate response for a Christian charity.

Thanks to Trustees

I must thank all our trustees for their endeavours. To Diana for her unstinting phone calls and messages to Pastors Yatta, McCarthy and friends. To Norm for his invaluable administrative / accountancy expertise and hard work. To Ian for his promotion of Education in Sierra Leone and practical collections of phones, laptops, books and lab equipment. To David for his charity expertise, encouragement and prayers.

Retired Trustee

Thanks to Canon Reverend Andrew Wingfield Digby who retired as a Trustee in November 2015. Andrew provided the introduction to Pastor Yatta in 2002, without which this charity would never have been constituted.

Outlook for 2016

We continue to support the 3 strands of Education, Sport and Ministry.

We recognize we need to stabilize our support for our current commitments C3M Church and Sports Life. We consider that "stabilize" means knowing that we are able to support them for some months/years ahead. This would mean finding longer-term donor commitments and a contingency fund.

We recognize the need for a communications role in Sierra Leone to give us up to date news and stories. We have tried to recruit without success as at the year end and we will continue this search.

Richard Bayfield (Chair)