



Love Sierra Leone Annual Report 2017

Charity Registration No. 1157847

www.lovesierraleone.org

Trustees: Richard Bayfield (Chair), Rev David Bendor-Samuel, Ian Gill (Secretary), Norm Robins (Treasurer)

Thanks to all Supporters and Trustees

The most important message within this short note is to thank you, our Supporters and our Trustees. The gifts of your time and money are truly appreciated by our friends in Sierra Leone. Indeed, recently Pastor Yatta wrote to us all and ended with the words:

“2017 was a difficult and challenging year to the people of this nation. The year 2017 brought pain and tears to many families due to the flooding and mudslides in August... We thank you for your support in 2017”

I must thank all our trustees for their work in 2017, particular mention goes to Diana Snape for several years grateful work for the charity. Diana has now retired from Love Sierra to become chair of Ahkom charity, a related Sierra Leone charity that works in education and with whom we have a very close association.

Sierra Leone 2017 – Mudslides in Freetown – Church Ministry



The mudslides and flooding in the capital Freetown were the tragic back drop to the year 2017 in Sierra Leone. In some ways there were parallels with the effect of the Grenfell Tower fire in London. Pastor Yatta recalls the morning of Monday 14th August:

“On Monday morning Sierra Leone is awoken up again to a news of devastated and deadly mudslide. Like the Rebel War and the Ebola epidemic. This is the worse this country has suffered in recent history. It has been reported over 400 bodies discovered at the moment. I am

impressed by the response, empathy and compassion shown by everyone near and far...I have friends and relatives affected. Some are homeless, some without Food and Clothes, they lost everything. Many Children again that have lost their parents.

This lady was taken away by the flood and was rescued at Lumley beach unconscious. We spoke and prayed with her, she lost her two children, husband and her parents she is the only survivor. We have to give her a special gift”.



Many of you supporters gave to an emergency fund which raised almost £7,000 for the flood victims. This money was passed quickly to Pastor Yatta and his church ministers who were given discretion to distribute the funds to the most needy. The gifts were passed in the form of food and also cash to buy food and shelter. There are moving records on YouTube of

some of those affected receiving our gifts shortly after the flooding. In early November Pastor Yatta reported as follows:

"I write to say a big thank you for the assistance you gave to Victims of the mudslide. They appreciate it very much, it was indeed a blessing to them, to some we gave money to help with their children schooling.

There were many displaced camps set up for the mudslide and the flooding we concentrated on two DON BOSCO and YA BUNDU respectively. We concentrated on Don BOSCO where women and children are kept. After spending a long time with them I am happy to let you know that every Sunday we have over 25 people that comes to our service because of the act of goodness we have shown to them. They will be around until 15th December then everybody will go. Where I don't know yet. We will keep in touch with them".

Education and St Andrew's School, Maima

The Sierra Leone Ministry of Education took over the running St Andrew's School in 2016, which was always our long-term aim. Yatta remains involved in an advisory capacity. Some of the school infrastructure is now a bit 'tired' and Yatta and his team are trying to encourage Government investment but money is very short. We (Love Sierra Leone) are not making any regular payments to St Andrew's. However, the Sports Ministry team in Freetown provide several classes each week in Physical Education (PE) as part of the curriculum at several schools in Freetown.

Sports Ministry

A youth Camp for several hundred children was held in December. It was open to children from around the country including several who had been victims of the flooding and lost members of their families.





Right to Read



Thanks to the generosity of a few supporters we were again able to fund RightToRead, our technology-enabled English improvement project, in Ahkom School and Technical/Vocation Centre with about 130 pupils (11-16 year olds) and 30 youth and young adults in the Tech-Voc centre. As with previous year we measured a significant improvement in pupils' English reading and comprehension skills – the average mark went from 41% at the start of the year to 70% at the end.

UMC Girls School and Kono Model Academy, both in Koidu, are eager to adopt RightToRead. We are seeking funding to expand the program to these and more schools, though funding is proving hard to come by. RTR engaged a fundraising consultant who researched organisations that we could approach for funding in 2018.

Financial overview

Income for 2017 was £32,542 including £5,708 in Gift Aid, with expenditure of £32,607. In 2016 a separate charity (Ahkom) was set up to support Ahkom School and in 2017 we received just over £300 in donations that were intended for Ahkom – we passed these donations to the new charity. Our flood appeal raised £6,812 including Gift Aid, which was used to support victims of the floods. Excluding flood-appeal income our overall income for 2017 was about the same as 2016. We disbursed funds as below:

Christian Community Church £19,568

- Teachers' Salaries £4,800
- Pastors' salaries, Church & Sports Ministries £6,750
- School Buildings & Equipment £399
- Travel & other administrative costs £806
- Support for flood victims £6,700
- Flood appeal online fees £113

RightToRead Sierra Leone £12,598

- Salaries £9,250 (including pre-payment of Jan & Feb 2018 salaries)
- Equipment (petrol, oil, batteries, etc.) £1,298
- Travel, fees, etc. £650
- Fundraising £1,400

Outlook for 2018

We continue to support the 3 strands of Education, Sport and Ministry. However as was the case with the flooding in 2017 it is both morally and ethically right that we spontaneously help those in greatest need at a time of tragedy. Moreover, the Act of helping our neighbour fits with our Christian perspective, although many of us ask whether we can do more.

We recognize we need to stabilize our support for our current commitments to 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 but we will continue this search.

The full content of Pastor Yatta's newsletters, other news and ways to support are on our website.

Giving

You can donate on line (one off or standing order) at www.lovesierraleone.org or by cheque, payable to "Love Sierra Leone". For further information please contact Richard Bayfield, 25 Davenant Road, Oxford, OX2 8BU, (01865 311800), email info@lovesierraleone.org.